#14 Monday 12-20-43

Dear Douglas:

Your letter dated December 8th was received on the 18th and makes us feel very much up-to-date on the state of your health, etc. We are at an utter loss to know where you are, sometimes we think you must be heading back to San Francisco, then again we think all your mail must be brought by incoming ships, but anywhere it gives us a topic of conversation every time we mention your name, which is very often, as you know. The climate that you are experiencing is so different from that which Tommie anticipates - he telephoned his mother just about an hour before he expected to sail, so we feel that he is definitely on his way.

Bill came home yesterday with news of his new berth - he is to be skipper of a heavy 65 foot fire-control and rescue ship, stationed at Bourne, which is only about five miles from Sandwich! He has routine duty around the canal such as taking boarding officers to the convoys, but is ready for call whereever needed and is sturdy enough to go across. We are all much pleased for it means that he will be with Marilyn and Daryl occasionally still. Yesterday they exchanged their Christmas presents for he does not expect to be home for Christmas and he gave Marilyn a very lovely diamond ring. Needless to say, she is thrilled and most surprised. There is so little that you can give to a service man, that Dad and I decided on something for his future home and picked out a very fine stag-handled carving set, thinking that it was something that he would personally use after the war.

There is much grippe around, and Dad has been fighting a touch of it over the week-end but has had no temperature and seems much better today so went down to the shop. Marilyn and I had a heavy cold about two weeks ago so I feel that we have had our bit for the winter.

I had planned to go to church Sunday but with Bill home, I had Daryl. You see Marilyn goes to the Schmids to sleep for Daryl is such a light sleeper that she wakes if anyone as much as speaks in her room. Then Marilyn comes for her after she has had her morning nap and brings her back for her supper and to go to bed at night. There was a five o'clock general Sunday School service yesterday afternoon which I wanted to go to but couldn't and Clara told us this morning that the last thing all the lights were dimmed and she sang "Silent Night" from the tower. I have invited the Schmids for dinner next Sunday so I am afraid it will be another week before I can go.

My Christmas shopping is all done, the turkey is ordered but not definitely promised, and the tree is out in the garage, so we are all set. The usual cone and ribbon decorated wreath is on the front door and the Christmas cards are pouring in with a few for Daryl adding to the sum total. Chip has heard the rattle of his present and skips upstairs every chance he gets for everything is up there, wrapped and waiting. You probably will not receive this until after the big day, so you will read it and then be able to go right on to the next letter, telling just what we received, etc. We will be thinking of you often, knowing you will be experiencing an entirely different kind of holiday than ever before but hoping that it will be pleasant enough so that you will look back upon it some day with even a bit of nostalgia.

I am reading "How Green was my Valley" and like it so well that I do hope it will be revived so that I can see it - I remember your experience of the sequence of the films being mixed by poor operating.

My first word when I enter the house is "Any mail from Douglas?" so don't grow weary of well doing! All our love and thoughts,

Mother