

2518 Shakespeare Road  
Houston 5, Texas

5 Oct 1944

Dearest Tidley [Alice Ray Pounds' nick-name],

No doubt you will be very surprised to receive this letter.

Today Rossie and I went downtown to see *Since You Went Away*, and after we came out we were so 'washed out' from approximately three hours weeping that we decided we would just scout around in town and try to snap ourselves out of the dumps. You can't imagine how pleasantly surprised we were to run into Lorna and Mavis. Honestly, for a moment I was positively speechless. I was delighted to see them. You will never know how often I have wondered about the Ray family and just how deep into it this war has dug. I have even kept my eyes and ears open at the various assignments Joe has had and wondered if by chance I would run into the name or face of a member of your family.

It seems, Alice, that our families have been touched about equally and you and I are the ones who realize most the loneliness that war can cause by separations which we trust and pray is temporary and will end one of these days. I was somewhat surprised to hear that Davis is in, yet I should not be. I honestly believe that Joe, by soul and thought, walked into the service on the evening of Dec 7, '41. He seemed to feel his responsibility so strongly that for me to have asked him to stay out would have been a great disappointment in the strength of my character. I refused to state my personal feeling, but told him to do as he pleased and I would try my best to back him. He filed his papers in May '42 and was commissioned in the Air Corps Intelligence Aug 4, '42. So you see I have been a war widow now over two years.

Have I liked it? No! Yet there are times I am very proud of Joe and I wouldn't want him to be a civilian with the best of our nation in uniform, but I have spent so many lonely, miserable hours, but when it is all over and we can have Joe and Davis back and start all over, I wouldn't think anything else but that we will be so proud of the sacrifices we are making now, which is bound to make us better individuals. And Alice, it is a cozy feeling to think ahead of when it's over and realize that when our boys [sons] are asked about what their Dads did, they can be so proud...and they will too. It doesn't matter how little their service may seem to us, it's going to be the most important part to those boys and we would be ashamed to claim them as our boys if they didn't feel that way. Honestly, I think Joe Boy's [her son apparently] happiness would just be complete if he could talk me into becoming a WAC. Well, I'm afraid that dream will not be fulfilled.

I think you are so smart to go on teaching if you can't be with Davis. The time passes so much faster when the mind is busy. I realize I am not telling you anything. For nine months after Joe went in, I continued to operate his business but I almost drove myself to a nervous breakdown. I couldn't get help at home or at the office either. We finally decided that happiness meant more to us than money, so we sold the business and Joe Boy and I joined Joe. I certainly wasn't happy with Army life; therefore, a great deal of my time has been spent between Joe and home. We sold our house in April '43 for a fair profit and I moved into one of our apartments. For the duration I am so much better off than in the house, but I am more crowded. It has, however, made it possible for me to lock my door and leave and come back as I have pleased. That has meant an awful lot too, because this year, just as it was time for Joe Boy to start to school, Joe received orders for Washington, D.C. for 30 days and we know his assignment would be changed at the end of that time. It would have been dreadful punishment to me to have had to stay where we were (Coffeyville, Kansas) and put Joe Boy in school. Now here I am for...how long? I don't know. Joe Boy's schooling has to come first now and we know so little about Joe's future assignment. Really, Army life for the wife is absolutely wasted time as I see it. I have never

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played so much bridge. I got so tired of it I could have screamed, and it is most definitely one of my pre-war favorite games.

I have folded enough bandages to supply a whole division, so it seems to me, but I had so much time on my hands I was always seeking amusement and entertainment to try to keep from getting too homesick for this darn old stuff locked up here in this old apartment.

But I met so many people from all over and I just thrive on new acquaintances and friends so I guess I have really received some good from my misery. But, I still think that old friends are our dearest and that is why I have told you tonight a few of the troubles I've had the past 2.5 years and I hope you still consider my friendship good enough to rate enough of your time to tell me all about yourself, your boys and your husband. Honestly, Alice, you and Homer [Alice' brother, 2.5 years her junior] will always seem as if you are just part mine but I think you understand what I mean. Kids can't play together, laugh together, cry together, fight together, love together and then just brush it off. You guys are part of my life, just as much as my arms and legs and I won't ever forget that. You'll always be in my mind and I'm always interested in your circumstances.

Please write.

Always--Ruby.

Notes: Alice Pounds' nick-name was "Tidley." Her younger brother, Homer, was known to the family as "Dink." I have not yet established exactly who Ruby \_\_\_\_ Bailey was but it is obvious that she was from the Troy, Texas, area and knew my mother's family well.