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Mann, Klaus

Rom, 1945-08-17

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From, Cpl. Klaus Mann (32697270),
The Stars & Stripes, Unit 1,
APO 512, c/o PM, New York

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To,
Mrs. Thomas MANN,
1550 San Remo Drive,
PACIFIC PALISADES,
CALIF.
U.S.A.



August 1945

THE STARS AND STRIPES

UNIT No. 1

MEDITERRANEAN

APO 512

ROME, 17 August, 1945

Madame Sweetie,

So the war is over -- a pleasant little thought. We are going to have a lot of trouble with the atomic bomb in the future; but maybe the present truce will last a few years at least.

I am still in Rome, as you can easily see. But my trip to Germany -- postponed again and again -- has not been canceled as yet. In fact, I am due to leave for Nuernberg within the next week, to "cover" the war criminals trial (which may also be delayed, according to recent reports). Erika, from whom I have heard at last, seems to be on her way to Nuernberg too. So the reunion may finally take place. That is, unless I renounce the whole trip in order to get out of the Army sooner.

Of course, I am in a state of happy excitement because of today's great news -- namely, the reduction of the age limit and the promise of liberty which it implies for me. At the same time, I am puzzled, intrigued. I am in a dilemma. Listen!

(At the time you receive this note I will probably have made up my mind already. Yet I feel like explaining my situation to you in a pedantically detailed manner -- partly in

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order to clarify the various possibilities in my own mind; partly because there is a chance that I may delay my final decision for some time -- if I go to Germany before having made my decisive application --: in which case your advice might still come in time and will be greatly appreciated.)

First Alternative: Normal discharge in the United States.

Advantages: It seems that this way might be the quickest one to get out of the Army. (There is no guarantee that this actually so: but "they say" that this particular kind of discharge on account of over-age will just take a few days.) -- It would be nice to see good old God's Country again, and especially to pay a visit to Pacific Palisades. I could take care of my various affairs -- seeing publishers in New York, etc.

Disadvantages: The unpleasant conditions in the separation center, on the troop transport, etc. (Not a very serious consideration, if the whole matter is being speeded up -- as "they say" it is.) -- It may prove rather difficult to get back to Europe, once I am in the States. I haven't seen quite enough of postwar Europe as yet -- not enough for my curiosity, not enough for a book I may want to write.-- I have signed a contract with an Italo-American film company to work on a movie script (about GIs in Italy). Which would mean an interesting experience -- plus \$ 3000. (I have already received an advance on this sum.) If I apply now for my discharge, there is a good chance that I will be sent home before this script is ready. On the other hand, I hate the idea of

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delaying my discharge because of a movie script.

Second Alternative: Discharge in Europe.

Advantages: I would avoid the nuisance of being shipped back as a corporal. -- I could stay here and finish my movie script, and take advantage of various other chances which I may have here in Italy and other Continental capitals. (Everybody everywhere in Europe is very eager to ~~do~~ do things with and for a noted anti-Nazi and American citizen. I have plenty of offers from publishers, magazines, movie people, etc.) -- I could travel about in Europe (especially if I get myself accredited as a war correspondent) and gather additional material for my book. I could visit places like Zurich, Amsterdam, Stockholm; and so forth, -- all of which I have not seen since 1938.

Disadvantages: The discharge in Europe may take longer than the normal procedure (to be shipped back to the States). -- I have not managed, so far, to get myself accredited as a regular war correspondent. (It is pretty difficult to get such an assignment, as each publication is entitled only to a very limited number of correspondents, and there seem to be no vacancies. Several other Stars & Stripes men with good contacts and records have tried the same thing -- without success. For a while it

looked as though Horch had made the necessary arrangements for me with TOMORROW Magazine, but at the last moment the whole deal fell through. There are some other possibilities, but nothing is certain.) ** Life here for civilians is immoderately expensive. I would have no clothes, and -- which is worse! -- I would have no cigarettes. (Somebody could send me some of my clothes from New York, and you might be good enough to send me some shirts and shoes. Also, I trust you would try to supply me with cigarettes. But would you be able to obtain sufficient quantities? Here, one pays from \$ 2.50 to 3.00 for one pack of Camels...) ** If I don't succeed in getting myself accredited as a war correspondent, or in getting some other kind of official position, I might have trouble when I want to go back to the States, in a few months or half-a-year from now. If, on the other hand, I accept a job with O.W.I. in Germany -- presuming that I could get such a job -- many of the advantages enumerated above (traveling in Europe, etc) would be out of the question. Besides, I don't really like the idea of working for O.W.I. in Germany.

Third Alternative: Discharge in the States, but with the intention to return to Europe almost immediately. This might be possible in connection with the Italo-American film.

Advantages: Practically all the advantages mentioned under One and Two apply to this third alternative.

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Disadvantages: The whole scheme might fail. The Italo-American film might be considered not important enough to grant me a visa or any other facilities. Even if I get the visa eventually, it might take so long that it would be too late for me to do any work on the movie script. ** I couldn't really relax in the States, nor could I spend much time in California, but I would have to rush to Washington, talk with Archibald MacLeish (Cultural Relations man at the State Department), etc. If everything works the way I want it to work -- that is, if I can return to Europe without delay --, my stay "back home" will be rather short and hectic. If, on the other hand, I find it impossible to return to Europe immediately, I will have to call off the movie deal, won't have enough material for my book, and shall be rather angry.

So there you are! Now what would YOU do if you were in my position???

Your suggestions will be considered most carefully, even if they should ~~be~~ arrive too late to influence my decision.

Looking forward to the pleasure of reading you soon,

Over-aged,

K.