

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Mann, Klaus

Rom, 1945-07-27

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THE STARS AND STRIPES

UNIT No. 1

MEDITERRANEAN

AP0 512

1445
Rome, July 27

Ma très chère et vieille,

It has given me considerable pleasure to have that little chat with you, the other day, even though the connection was not quite the way I'd have liked it to be -- the whole thing is like an exchange of radio messages, rather than like a direct conversation. Yet your dear voice was quite recognizable, and Dad's sonorous organ, too, sounded pleasantly familiar.

As I said on the phone, I expect to go to Germany again before long: in fact, I should ~~be~~ already be on my way, but my departure had to be postponed because of various technicalities. Yet my orders are likely to come through in a few days from now. So if you write to me in the near future, there is a danger that the letters will have to wait until my return; for it is practically impossible to forward any mail from here to Germany. But that should not prevent you from writing! For, first of all, I have no idea how long I'll stay away this time -- it may be a shorter trip than the last one was --; second, there is always a chance that one of our men may go from here to Germany and take my mail along; third, I expect to find several ~~personal~~ letters upon my return.

Naturally, I hope, and expect, to meet Schwesting -- somewhere in the Old Country. At this point, however, I don't know where she is -- not having heard from her since she left Weimar for Berlin, about five weeks ago. This silence may be due to technical reasons -- and again, it may have to do with her peculiar and rather disturbing animosity to letter-writing. Of course, it might happen that she'll ^{have} left Berlin, or Germany, the very day of my arrival there. A rather annoying idea!

As for my getting discharged and coming back to the States -- well, I don't know what to say... The age limit, as you know, has not been reduced as yet. Rumor has it, however, that it will be reduced before long. If so, I am free. Moreover, it seems likely that our paper here will fold up in about three months. Such a development, too, might somehow affect my status. It might simply mean that I'll get transferred to the Paris Edition of the Stars and Stripes -- which I would NOT like, for a number of reasons. On the other hand, the discontinuation of the Mediterranean sheet might also prove an opportunity for me to get myself demobilized. But presuming even that this more favourable possibility will materialize -- I am not quite sure what I would do, in this case. For I hate the idea of getting demobilized as an ordinary GI -- which means, hanging around in replacement depots, crowded ships, and separation camps, under the most unpleasant conditions -- for weeks, if not for months. I may therefore try to get myself demobilized here, in Europe, -- which can be

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2 APO 512

arranged, if one has a job. Maybe I could get myself accredited as a correspondent, or else there is still OWI -- notwithstanding Elmer's warnings... Whatever kind of job it may be -- it would keep me here, at least for six more months or so. I mention it -- just in case you two are beginning to make plans for the coming winter. I still think Switzerland would be the ideal meeting place. I would manage to join you there -- whether as a ^(a)civilian or in my present status.

An article on dear Bruno? But it's too late for an epitaph! No magazine would bring it, so long after the sad event. You must explain that to dear Lisula. I'll find some opportunity to write about him again -- she can be sure of that. I am often thinking of him, and find it difficult to realize that I will never see him again.

I hope that you may have managed to send a package to poor old Mimi-Goschi. Couldn't it be arranged through the Czech Embassy? Incidentally, it seems ages that I have not received a package from your-mother-knows-how-to-pick-things. Now,

frankly, food packages no longer are really necessary: we are well fed here, and for three or four dollars you can get a very delicious meal in any Rome restaurant. But how is the cigarettes situation? Still very tight? A little carton of Luckys or Camels (or any other brand) would be extremely welcome. Also, I have no watch! The one you sent me a year or so ago was for a while very cute and reliable but then began to do funny things -- jumping hours, and all --, so that I took it to an Italian watchmaker. He made the watch's condition a little worse, for which he was paid five dollars. I was quite relieved when a Roman girl -- quite a darling, otherwise -- stole the ailing watch, the other night. But now I never know what time it is. So maybe you try it again -- as a premature birthday present.

Assez! The Labor triumph in England is of course great fun -- the first encouraging event since the end of the war in Europe! Bad news for Franco, Leopold, the king of Greece, the House of Savoya, and also for the House of Wittelsbach which has been becoming rather active of late. I am against kings, but I must confess that young Prince Heinrich (Rupprecht's oldest son: the real pretender to the throne of Bavaria) happens to be a nice boy. I spent an evening with him, last week; a modest, well-bred, handsome young gentleman: Preetorius would be enchanted.

T. W. K.