

May 3, 1945
Germany

Darling,

I planned to write last night, but somehow got side-tracked, and then went to bed early, as it had been an exciting day.

I took Nick and my two men, Ruff and Yuvel, in my new car and went to see the Russki's! It was some trip, as contact in this Army is still strictly tenuous. We saw Magdeburg, scene of so many violent air-battles; "city-of-flak" to our airmen, where it was so thick you could walk on it." It would give them considerable satisfaction if those airmen who braved this hail of steel could see the results of their handiwork. The two spires of the cathedral stand untouched, watching over the crumbled ruins of the city. For blocks on end, no house remains standing; only walls, and chimneys, and piles of brick and masonry. It seems like a sort of symbol, or judgment, to see these stately spires standing midst the ruins.

Then, well on the east side of the river, we found those great big beautiful Russians! They are more like carefree, wild-western, cowboys on a spree than anything else I can think of. Hearty, rough and tough, apparently carefree, full of the devil, friendly. They seem to be as American as possible, only more so. Of course these were strictly their front line fighting men on a victorious campaign. We had some schnapps with a captain, - a large, powerful man, with close-cut hair, a chest full of medals and red ribbons, a booming laugh, and a crushing hand-shake, and a Major, a quieter man, with a keen level eye, and a crisp, decisive manner. Our visit was short. I had a color picture taken of myself with them - then we had to get back, while we could. We couldn't speak a word they understood, and vice-versa, though our linguist Nick finally found a soldier who spoke Hungarian. But it was a friendly, exciting meeting, and a fitting finale to our work here. When one thinks back a year or two and visualizes the situation as it was at the time of Stalingrad, or even just one year ago, a month before invasion, then one realizes that we have come a long way over a rough road. Yes, it was satisfying to stand in the heart of Germany, and shake hands with the Russians.

Meanwhile, the disintegration of the German resistance continues. Hitler & Goebbels suicides; Mussolini shot; Himmler (?); Goering (?) - probably also dead by now, either by the Wehrmacht or the Russians. It is better that Der Fuehrer should die at his own hand than to be made a martyr in the eyes of the German people. Meanwhile, the round-up of the stragglers and resistance groups continues. It is a long-term job.

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P.S. One of the exciting things yesterday was seeing about 50 truck-loads of French prisoners being taken back toward the evacuation camps. Singing and waving, they left no doubt in anyone's mind what it meant to them to be free at last!