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Dear Colonel De Wald:

Various odd matters will turn up first before I am done, but I'll deal first with the essential, my situation with regard to Austria.

I am, of course, deeply gratified to learn from Col. Ward Perkins, that you have put in for my services to help you in Austria. I hope that in doing so you have borne in mind two factors:

(1) I am needed here and will be, according to present calculations, until near the end of October;--You may remember writing (to CA Sec on 5 Mar 45) that I would not be available for transfer to Austria as long as an MFAA S/C functions with this HQ. I gather that I am counted on to be especially useful when the wind-up work of final documentation comes.

(2) With early release on grounds of age possible for me, it appears pretty clear that I would do myself, my family, and my professional future a dis-service were I, of my own free choice, to remain in the Army much longer. Until yesterday I should have had to wait until 1 Ja 46 (when I become 40) to put in for release, and on that basis I had hoped that you would make it possible for me to put in about 2 months of service in Austria, either chief-clerking again (should a gap in that position still exist) or in doing some special job like clearing one or two deposits. Now, however, since the publication of yesterday's S & S, it appears that orders have been issued and will any day reach this HQ. under which, as being already well over 38, I can apply ~~anytime~~ practically at once and expect at least initial action to be taken within 3 months as a maximum.

In the light of these factors I am wondering whether you will care to press your request for my assignment. As regards (1) I should think that other chief-clerk bodies capable of handling your job must be available, while what appears to make me, BMP, especially useful for the remaining MFAA job in Italy is the simple fact that, as it happened, I've lived through the ~~entire~~ S/C's entire life and am the only EM in the army of which this can be said. Naturally, coming to (2) my first inclination is to put in my release papers as soon as possible, which would be approximately tomorrow, making the arrival of shipping orders by mid-September not unlikely. But, since MFAA Italy (so dear to your heart as well) is very especially "my baby" too, I do not wish to abandon it when a little while longer will see the job done in a way that will give me personal ~~pleasure~~ satisfaction and possibly also a basis for some measure of just professional pride. Therefore I am now agreed with Col. Ward Perkins not to apply until around mid-September, when, if orders-procedure lags conveniently, I shall not be shipped out until towards the end of October and would still have more than a fair chance of being home for Christmas.

It's strange to be in this position of being able to choose: I only hope I am making my choices wisely. Austria, both the place and its traditions and the MFAA job there, has and has had a strong appeal for me. But I think it wrong to let it get into a position of being able to work on my ~~my~~ conscience as MFAA Italy now does. As I said to Mr. Walker recently (when he suggested that he might put in for me for MFAA Germany at officer level), it would be different if I were young, unmarried, childless, quite certain of my professional future at home, none of which I am. Having been forced to say No to Mr. Walker, I must correspondingly state that Austria must be out for me, if the choice is mine; if it isn't, and the powers that be direct it so, then (after MFAA Italy as now organized) there is no Army job I'd rather tackle and ~~none~~ no one I'd rather work for than yourself.

Time is short this overtime evening so I must curtail what else I had planned for this letter.

I'm sending you, with the Director's approval, a copy of our last report - for July.

The two envelopes contain the last remnants of the stuff you left behind when you pulled out some time ago.

Finally I take this opportunity to say formally how fortunate I regard myself in having worked with you and Col. Ward Perkins during these last 18 months. It's been a strange way to do my wartime service but somebody had to do it and, since, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ when Germany invaded the Low Countries, I wondered inside who will take care of the monuments and the objects of art, I'm afraid I rather asked for it and so it was not improperly myself who was chosen.

My regards to Lt. Cott and to the newly arrived Kunstschtzer, Major Hinkel.

Sincerely yours,

As regards (1) your job and (2) my release, while what appears to make me, ~~xxx~~ for the remaining MFAA job in Italy is the simple fact that, as it happened, I've lived through the said S/O's entire life and as the only one in the area of which this can be said. Naturally, owing to (1) my first inclination is to put in my release papers as soon as possible, which would be approximately tomorrow, making the approval of shipping orders by mid-September not unlikely. But, since MFAA Italy (so dear to your heart as well) is very especially "my baby" too, I do not wish to abandon it when a little while longer will see the job done in a way that will give me personal ~~xxxx~~ satisfaction and possibly also a basis for some measure of ~~xxx~~ professional pride. Therefore I am now agreed with Col. Ward Perkins not to apply until around mid-September, when, if orders-procedure lags conveniently, I shall not be shipped out until towards the end of October and would still have more than a fair chance of being home for Christmas.