

The notes below are extracts from the letters of Private Melvyn Kaufman from the USA who attended the Shrivenham American University in 1945. His daughter Kim kindly sent the extracts to go in our SAU file and listing. NBM. September 2023.

January 10, 1944

England

And now about England! From what little I've seen of it I like it. Everything is like out of a picture book. Little stone farmhouses in delightful greys and weatherbeaten reds. You do not know what a "*dale*"(?) is for this is the home of "dales.". The weather is somewhat on the style of Boston or San Francisco. However the Gulf Stream warms the entire island so that in the middle of winter they are still working their crops.

January 25, 1944

England

I went into town the other afternoon. It was very interesting. Around dust, which is very long here, I felt a bit like a character out of Dickens and went looking for a Mr. Micawber, and don't you think I found one. He was quite typical and delightful to talk with. I had fish and chips and tea with him. He told me of the history of the town.

March 5th, 1944

England

I saw a little of London and was quite impressed with a few of the avenues. However, there is nothing in London that you can't see in the movies. I did meet two women, sisters, who ran a tobacco shop in the Westminster Abby section. They were very intelligent and wanted to hear of America. I told them what they wanted to know and at each comment of mine, one would pass a remark to the other as as to say, "You see, such is the way of the capitalists." The capitalists were either in the States, at the time a glass of beer cost 20¢, or in England when cars ran around \$25.00. They were quite interesting and seemed to be bitter to, rather than hate, the Germans.

July 19, 1945

Geisenfeldt

I suppose the folks told you about the competition to go to the Shrivenham G.I. College, that I entered and made. I'm waiting for the call to saddle up and roll.

July 30th, 1945

Shrivenham

About school, well it starts Wednesday. I'm taking Advanced English Composition. I wanted Short Story Writing but the course was full. And I'm taking the Psychology of Adjustment. I think that it will prove to be a pretty good course because it will be a (*unclear word*) to the present belief that servicemen will need some sort of readjustment. And too I'm taking a course in Logic. The fact of the matter is that I feel that this course is perhaps the most important of my three. I've read a couple of books and research pamphlets on it and I'm very interested in what it has to offer.

August 7th, 1945

Shrivenham

Here at school I'm taking three courses. Psychology of Adjustment which is one of the most absorbing things I've ever *hit(?)*. And we have a prof. with 15 years of clinical psychology. A very remarkable and sparring course.

In my English we have Lawrence Beck the noted author and novelist. So far, in one week I have written two stories and I'm not supposed to have one in until the 15th. He is very good in literature but he is not a very sparkling lecturer (*word crossed out*) so we have a damn swell discussion session every day. I think Shakespeare and Keats would turn over if they heard some of the stuff we talk about.

But my logic course is something different. Our professor is wonderful and brilliant with a remarkable sense of humor. However that doesn't make understanding the stuff easier. It is tough. It's so abstract that you find yourself floating in mid-air. My grade so far is a B (on the papers we've handed in) but that's no guarantee. So I'm auditing or listening in on the same course earlier in the day. Helps some but not much. Maybe it will clear up.

September 13th, 1945

Shrivenham

First, I have made application to re-enroll here at school. I think I am too late but one can never tell. You see, Mr. Beck, my English prof, thinks my writing ability is good enough to warrant his private tutelage. In other words, I would take a college course with a class of one man, namely me. An opportunity like that doesn't come very often to many people. And too, upon presentation of that type of history to any college would throw a lot of weight. I might even stay as an assistant instructor and handle a class or two – maybe.

Oct 5, 1945

Schrobenhausen

In case you didn't know, I left Shrivenham with an 'A' in English, a 'B' in Psychology and a skinny 'C' in Logic. I told you in a previous letter that I was sending some of my short stories home. Well, they'll be a little late arriving because Mr. Beck wants to publish a couple of them in some magazine that is being distributed at Shrivenham next semester.