

## Aftermath of the 4th of July

The celebration of the 4th of July started a chain of events which were as heart-warming as anything that happened to me in Italy.

On the morning of the 5th of July I returned to my office in the Galleria and my Italian secretary announced that there was an American girl who wanted to see me immediately. As an American girl was quite a novelty in war torn Italy, it required no great thought to order her ushered into my office and thereby hangs a tale worth telling.

My secretary ushered into the office an American Red Cross girl who said her name was June. I found out later that she was from Carlson College in Minnesota. She had been on duty at the enlisted men's canteen helping the men who had just returned from a rough battle just north of Naples. The first thing I noticed about her was that her face and neck were badly scarred, similar to the scars of my younger sister Grace, who at the age of 3 years had pulled a pot of boiling coffee onto herself. I soon forgot the scars while listening to her story, which was as follows:—She had charge of the enlisted men's canteen which provided Coca Cola and soft drinks for the troops. She had been busy all day long on the 4th of July entertaining American, British and Canadian troops just back from a rather severe mauling north of Naples. The Italian civilians did not understand why we were celebrating the 4th of July but gladly welcomed an opportunity to join in any celebration. Unfortunately, while none was supplied by the American troops, the Italian civilians celebrated by providing Vino for the troops in celebration of the American victory on the Rapido. The result was inevitable. What the American Red Cross had intended as a decorous celebration of the American holiday turned into a brawl, exact details of which were never ascertained.

About midnight when the last drunken soldier had been persuaded to leave the canteen, one of the Italian civilians who spoke no English but worked as a handyman for the American Red Cross, went home to a well-deserved rest.

There was a certain amount of gunfire in celebration of the Fourth and just as Bruno and his wife were preparing for bed, a detachment of Military Police trying to locate where the shooting had been coming

from knocked on Bruno's door in one of the poorer areas of Naples. Neither Bruno nor his wife spoke any English and the American M.P. spoke no Italian but in their zeal to locate whoever was responsible for the gunfire the Military Police tried to force their way into Bruno's small apartment, where Bruno did his best to resist what he considered an unjust intrusion. The whole disgraceful affair ended with Bruno being charged with resisting arrest and spending what was left of the night under not too gentle military care until he could be properly charged in Court the next morning.

June was nearly hysterical in her efforts to obtain Bruno's release and showed me \$800.00 in American Express Checks which she offered as bail for her former employee. It seemed clear to me that it would be useless to try to explain to June that her possession of \$800.00 American Express Checks was a violation of law enforced in Naples at the time and I contented myself with advising her to put her American Express Checks in her handbag and allow my secretary to take her down to Captain Carluchio's Courtroom and tell her story to him.

Shortly after the opening of Court, the happiest girl in Naples Province stuck her head in the door of my office, uninvited, and said, "Thanks a million, Major, Captain Carluchio has fixed everything for us. He released Bruno and had us driven to Bruno's home, where he collapsed on the floor shouting Viva Americano".

I only hope that June was as happy as she sounded and did not attempt to violate the Exchange regulations by circulating her American Express Checks in the territory controlled by the American forces.