

UNITED STATES ARMY RECRUITING SERVICE
July 23, 1941 -- KOIN, 10:15-10:30 PM

ANNCR: KOIN PRESENT -----"SOLDIERS OF THE AIR."

MUSIC: THEME "SECOND CONNECTICUT REGIMENT" (475). UP AND FADE INTO BACK-
GROUND.

ANNCR: This evening KOIN is pleased to cooperate with the United States Army Recruiting Service in presenting the first of a second series of regular weekly broadcasts, bringing you the story of the Soldiers of the Air.

MUSIC: THEME UP AND OUT

ANNCR: Ladies and gentlemen, tonight we present the first episode of a new Soldiers of the Air program. You may recall that last week Sergeant Bill "Butch" Harris bade farewell to Larry Foster, when Larry, now a commissioned officer and pilot, was assigned to an Army air base. So tonight, let us look in on Sergeant Harris, a little lonely, perhaps, and certainly disgruntled. For, after fifteen years on active duty he has been transferred to the U. S. Army Recruiting Service. (FADING)

MUSIC: UP AND OUT

BILL: (DISGUSTED) Well, I must say this is the last place I ever expected to find myself! Me, Butch Harris, in a recruiting office! (LAUGHS IN SELF DERISION) A soldier for fifteen years and then -- poof! Just like that I find myself polishing an office chair! Me that's used to working with men ---

SOUND: KNOCK ON DOOR

BILL: (BITTERLY) Sounds like a customer. Well, Butch, old boy -- here we go!

SOUND: KNOCK REPEATED, THEN DOOR SQUEAK

BILL: (WEARILY) Co - ome in.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES

BILL: Hello, young fellow.

WINDY: Hello. That is -- how do you do?

BILL: (SNORTS) How do I do? (CONFIDENTIALLY) Badly, young man. Badly!

WINDY: Well, er -- excuse me. I was looking for the United States Weather Bureau. I must have got into the wrong office. This couldn't be the Weather Bureau. Or, I mean, I guess it couldn't. You look like a soldier.

BILL: (FIERCELY) I am a soldier!

WINDY: Well, I mean ---

BILL: Just because I'm sitting in a chair doesn't mean a thing! (SARCASTICALLY) Soldiers do sit down occasionally.

WINDY: (APOLOGETICALLY) I'm sorry, mister -- mister --

BILL: Sergeant Harris!

WINDY: (ADMIRINGLY) Are you a sergeant?

BILL: (RELAXING) You bet I am! The hardest working, most responsible rank in the whole U. S. Army -- a sergeant, and proud of my stripes! Those little V's on my arm. Three of 'em! Count 'em.

WINDY: Um-m. Nice. Sort of like my stripes. See. On my sweater, got 'em playing basketball. (CONFIDENTIALLY) You know, mister -- I mean Sergeant Harris -- they called me Windy!

BILL: (WITH MOCK INTEREST) Who called you Windy? And why?

WINDY: The high school kids. Because I covered so much territory on the basketball court.

BILL: Windy, huh?

WINDY: Well, (MODESTLY) there really was another reason.

BILL: (BORED) There was, huh?

WINDY: Yes. You see -- well, gosh, mister -- Sergeant Harris, I guess this will sound funny to an old army man like you, but I've always been interested in the weather. You know, in air pressure and velocity and ---

BILL: And so they called you Windy, because you studied the wind.
(ASTONISHED AT HIS DISCOVERY) Hey, wait a minute. What office did you say you were hunting?

WINDY: The United States Weather Bureau.

BILL: What for?

WINDY: Well, I sort of thought I might get a job.

BILL: What kind of a job? (URGENTLY) A job where you can monkey around with pressure gauges, anemometers ---

WINDY: (EXCITEDLY) Yes, that's it. Gosh, Sergeant Harris, how did you know?

BILL: (SOLEMNLY) Young man, you aren't hunting the United States Weather Bureau. You're hunting the United States Army!

WINDY: Who? Me?

BILL: Yes. You.

WINDY: (PUZZLED AND DISTURBED) But I want to be a weather man!

BILL: Exactly. A weather man in the U. S. Army Air Corps.

WINDY: But ---

BILL: Are you married?

WINDY: (ASTONISHED) Who? Me?

SOUND: RATTLE OF PAPER. SCRATCHING OF PENCIL.

BILL: (MUMBLING AS HE WRITES) Mm -- Unmarried. Age?

WINDY: Nineteen. Say ---

BILL: Nineteen. Mmm. How's your health?

WINDY: (DISGRUNTLED) How's my health! Say listen, mister -- Sergeant Harris. You don't exactly get the nickname Windy for being a physical wreck.

BILL: (CONFIDENTIALLY) Windy, my lad, how would you like to be a Soldier of the Air? How would you like to be Lord of the Wind?

WINDY: (ONCE MORE AT EASE AND LAUGHING) You had me going for a minute, Sergeant Harris! Lord of the Wind? (BRIGHTLY) That's from Leonardo da Vinci, isn't it?

BILL: Sure. Leonardo da Vinci, the old Italian boy who thought men could fly.

WINDY: But I don't want to fly!

BILL: Windy, the real lords of the wind are the Air Corps weather men -- men like Orville and Wilbur Wright --

WINDY: But the Wright brothers weren't weather men. They were inventors.

BILL: Inventors? Sure, they were inventors, but they were weather men before they were inventors. (THOUGHTFULLY) There's a story for you, lad -- (BREAKS OFF ABRUPTLY) The Army needs men like the Wrights. Weather men for the Air Corps.

WINDY: (DREAMILY) Weather man -- for the Air Corps.

BILL: The first time the Wrights became weather-conscious was when they were just kids. They'd been fussing around with all sorts of kid inventions, ever since their father had given them a helicopter. Know what's a helicopter, Windy?

WINDY: Sure. It flies.

BILL: Well, Orville and Wilbur Wright had been making kites and stilts and toys to sell to all the kids in Dayton. They decided they needed a turning lathe. So, they made one of some long lengths of maple stove wood, some old carriage parts, some marbles for bearings and an old bridle ring. It was run by foot power and took six kids to work the treadle. Finally they were ready to test --- (FADING)

SOUND: FADING IN RABBLE OF VOICES Aw, come on, Orvie, let me treadle. No, me! I gave you three marbles for the bearings. Let me.

KATHERINE: (IN HIGH TREBLE) Me, too! Me, too!

ORVILLE: Run on outside, Sis. Here, you kids. Six of you. That's right.
Now all together.

WILBUR: Here she goes!

SOUND: SLOWLY, THEN WITH INCREASING VOLUME, ALMOST DROWNING OUT THE
VOICE. MACHINERY. VERY CHOPPY AND IRREGULAR.

ORVILLE: Whee! It works. Wilbur! It works.

SOUND: RABBLE OF CHILDISH VOICES, AD LIB. FADE IN WIND OF CYCLONE.

WILBUR: Something's wrong! It shouldn't sound like that. It sounds like
a cyclone! (SHOUTING) Where's Katherine?

ORVILLE: I sent her outside. (FRIGHTENED) Hey! Watch out! The barn's
tipping over --

BOY'S VOICE: It is a cyclone!

WILBUR: Stop it, kids! Stop it!

ORVILLE: Run for your lives.

SOUND: MACHINE DIES DOWN. WIND UP. THEN CUT ABRUPTLY.

BILL: They found Katherine plastered against the side of the house,
pinioned by the wind. The children grew up. Katherine kept
house. Orville and Wilbur established a bicycle shop. They
studied wind and air currents and watched birds, kites, and
windmills, trying to discover some principles of aerodynamics which
would permit cooperation with the air in making it possible for
men to fly. Movable wings, like those of birds, were not
practical, yet birds had some way of working with the wind, not
against it. Orville and Wilbur built a glider. Then they racked
their brains to find a way glider wings could move in such a
manner as to change the attack of the air on them and so to
make control possible. Then one night in their little bicycle
shop Wilbur was selling a tube for a bicycle tire. (FADING)

WILBUR: (FADING IN) Yes, sir. Here's the tube you want, in this little box.

CUSTOMER: Let's see it.

SOUND: BOX OPENING, RATTLE OF PAPER.

WILBUR: There you are. Good tube.

CUSTOMER: Hm -- looks all right.

WILBUR: (MUSINGLY) Nice box. Flat -- like a glider wings. Now how on earth can wings be flexible and still be stable?

CUSTOMER: What's that you say?

WILBUR: If we could only bend them. Twist them like I'm twisting this box -- warping it! (EXCITEDLY) That's it. I've found it! Warp them! Warp the wings! Excuse me, but ---

SOUND: BLOWING OF BREATH, PUTTING OUT LIGHT - PUFF - PUFF

CUSTOMER: Hey, what's the idea? Putting out the light!

WILBUR: Closing shop. Got to see Orville right away. Got to see him! Sorry --- Warp the wings! Warp the wings! (EXCITEDLY) Orville! Katherine! (FADES OUT)

WINDY: Gosh, Sergeant Harris. You make it sound exciting.

BILL: It was exciting. They were on the right track to conquer the winds. But they hadn't won yet.

WINDY: No, they hadn't. Do you remember how they finally learned about air pressure? How they proved the old theoretical tables on aerodynamics wrong? That's the most exciting part, I think.

BILL: (LAUGHING) Sure. Riding bicycles. Grown men riding bicycles down the main street of Dayton, Ohio, with funny little toy windmills fastened in front of the handle bars. They could see the wind on the windmills, but they never could catch up with it. They could see the wind exerted pressure, but how much?

(cont'd)

BILL: And how did it vary with different angles? If they could only catch up with the wind -- but the bicycle never could!

WINDY: I'll bet all the kids in town laughed.

BILL: Sure. Everybody laughed. Maybe that's why the Wrights went so far away to try their experiments.

WINDY: No. It wasn't that. They went to Kitty Hawk on account of the weather. They needed a soft place to land and hills to take off from, and gentle wind. Mr. Moore, chief of the Weather Bureau advised Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

BILL: The first time they tried their glider, Wilbur found it uncontrollable and howled, "Lemme down"! They were so discouraged that they abandoned the glider to the wind, and went home, completely disheartened -- (FADING)

WILBUR: (FADING IN) It's no use, Orvie. We might just as well give up. Leave the air and the wind to the birds.

ORVILLE: I reckon you're right, Willie.

KATHERINE: Shame on you! Two grown mon, talking like children. (LAUGHING)
If you can't catch up with the wind, why don't you stand still and let it catch up with you?

WILBUR: (GENTLY RIDICULING) What an idea! What we want is to move, not to stand still.

ORVILLE: (EXCITEDLY) Willie! That's it! That's it! Stand still and increase the wind!

WILBUR: For heaven's sake, Orvie, what do you think you are? Elijah?

ORVILLE: Don't you see? Confine the wind! Put the windmills in a confining space. Then measure the pressure!

WILBUR: (WITH GROWING EXCITEMENT) Sure! Make your own wind artificially! Force it through a -- a funnel --

ORVILLE: A tunnel, not a funnel. Through a tunnel and ---

SOUND: FADING IN AND GROWING, THEN CUT WIND

BILL: The warped wings gave them the aileron principle. The movable rudder gave balance and control, and finally their toy windmills and wind tunnel made them masters of aerodynamics, -- real Lords of the Wind, as Wilbur proved in 1903 when he made the first successful flight of a power-driven plane.

WINDY: (DREAMILY) Lord of the Wind. That's what I want to be.

BILL: With two years' training in a special school for meteorologists.

WINDY: Yes, that's what I want.

BILL: And then a permanent job at one of the Army Air Bases?

WINDY: Yes! A permanent job! Gosh, I haven't had one since I graduated from high school.

BILL: (SOLEMNLY) It's a man's job, Windy, to be a Soldier of the Air.

WINDY: (WITH EQUAL SOLEMNITY) When can I start?

BILL: (LAUGHING) Wait a minute, son. There are a few preliminaries. Here. Take these leaflets home and look them over. Talk to your folks about it. And if you're sure, then come back. We don't want any high pressure stuff around here.

WINDY: Gee! Thanks! And I'll be back!

BILL: Hey, wait a minute. Don't salute me! I'm just a sergeant.

WINDY: Oh, that's O.K., Sergeant. I'm just practicing!

SOUND: HURRIED STEPS. DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES.

BILL: Well, I'll be ---

SOUND: TELEPHONE BELL

BILL: Army Recruiting Service, Sergeant Harris speaking.

VOICE: Hello, Sergeant Harris. This is Captain Kirk. Did you leave a call for me?

BILL: Yes, sir, I did, but cancel it. I was going to ask for a transfer, but this job is all right! I like it!

MUSIC: THEME UP AND OUT

ANNCR: And so we shall leave Sergeant Harris until next week at this hour when we shall again look in at the U.S. Army Recruiting Service. Next week Sergeant Harris will tell us about another hero who became the inspiration for the Air Corps. This program has been produced in cooperation with the U.S. Army Recruiting Service and the Oregon Writers' Project. Soldiers of the Air has been presented from station KOIN, the Journal, Portland, Oregon.