

SOLDIERS OF THE AIR

ANNCR: KOIN presents-----Soldiers of the Air!

MUSIC: THEME "SECOND CONNECTICUT REGIMENT" (475) UP AND FADE TO BACKGROUND.

ANNCR: This evening KOIN is pleased to cooperate with the United States Army Recruiting Service in presenting another chapter in the life of Sergeant Bill Harris, soldier of the air..

MUSIC: THEME UP AND OUT.

ANNCR: When his superior officers notified Sergeant Bill Harris that he was being transferred to the United States Army Recruiting Service they assured him that only the most competent men were honored by appointment to this division. After four weeks Sergeant Harris has begun to understand why it takes experienced men and top hands to handle the situations that arise. You never know what's going to happen or who may call -- but, let's listen -----

SOUND: TELEPHONE BELL..

BILL: (Brightly) Army Recruiting Service! Sergeant Harris speaking.

STUB: (FITTERED BY PHONE AND EXCEEDINGLY EXASPERATED) For the love of-- say that again!

BILL: (URBANE BUT WITH MILITARY PRECISION) Army Recruiting Service! Sergeant Harris speaking!

STUB: (AS ABOVE AND VERY ANGRY) Ten thousand names in the telephone book and I would grab the wrong one!

BILL: (INDULGENTLY) This is ATwater 6171, sir, and many a man has found it an exceedingly good number!

STUB: (AS ABOVE) What's good about it? I want a job! Not the United States Army! Not the Marines! Not the Fire Department! (FIERCELY) I want a job!

BILL: (PLACATINGLY) Well, don't get so excited about it--

STUB: (AS ABOVE, WILDLY) Don't get excited! Don't get excited! You'd be excited too if you'd just spent your last nickel on a phony telephone call that----For two cents I'd hunt you up and ---- and ---- poke you in the nose!

BILL: Hunt me up and I'll give you the two cents! And if you still want to -- ah -- poke me, why I'll give you a chance.

STUB: (AS ABOVE SAVAGELY) It's a date! Where are you?

BILL: In room 323, Main Post Office Building. Broadway and Glisan---

STUB: (AS ABOVE GLEEFULLY READY FOR FIGHT) Broadway and Glisan, huh? Well, Sergeant Harris, I'll be right over! I'm just across the street!

SOUND: SLAMMING OF TELEPHONE RECEIVER ON HOOK.

BILL: (PUZZLED BUT AMUSED) Well! He'll be right over! (PAUSE) Sergeant Lawrence!

LAWRENCE: (OFF MIKE) Yes, Sergeant Harris.

BILL: Can you take over the telephone for a few minutes? It looks as if I might be going to have a few -- ah-- maneuvers on my hands.

LAWRENCE: (FADING IN) What d'you mean, maneuvers? Fell a battle coming on?

BILL: Yep. And unless I'm mistaken it's just about time for the opening gun. Listen!

SOUND: HURRYING FEET FADING IN, THEN DOOR BURST OPEN AND SLAMMED SHUT.

STUB: (FADING IN AND BREATHING HARD) Where is he?

BILL: (WITH DIGNITY) May I help you?

STUB: (THROUGH HIS TEETH) Where is that guy Harris? The guy that wants his nose punched?

LAWRENCE: (TRYING HARD NOT TO LAUGH) That doesn't sound like Sergeant Harris. He's much too good looking to want his face disfigured!

BILL: (EVENLY) That's probably the reason he cleared out of here so fast.

STUB: (COMPLACENTLY) So, he ran away? A fine soldier!

BILL:* Yes, a fine soldier. (PROUDLY) A soldier thinks of the service first and himself afterwards. Sergeant Harris probably preferred to let you cool off before he saw you. He wouldn't take a chance on your making a disturbance and bringing any discredit upon the Army.

LAWRENCE: You see, Mr. ah -- what's your name?

STUB: (HALF ASHAMED OF HIS BLUSTERING) Stub Golden.

LAWRENCE: Mr. Golden, you see, probably he would rather you'd think him a coward than that the army should think him unsoldierly! Isn't that it, Sergeant Harris?

STUB: So! You're Harris?

BILL: (QUIETLY) Yes, I'm Harris.

STUB: (LICKED) Oh well, what difference does it make who's who? I guess you mean all right, and I'm sort of ashamed of myself, but----- (WITH RISING INDIGNATION) it's all right for you guys that are safe in the army. You are being taken care of. But sometimes it's pretty tough for a fellow like me that's out of a job and down to his last nickel---

BILL: (LAUGHINGLY) You forget you spent that last nickel.

STUB: (BEGINNING TO SEE THE HUMOR OF IT) That's right, I did.
I took my last nickel for a phone call, picked blind from
the phone book---

BILL: But wasn't that sort of silly? Just picking it blind?

STUB: If you'd tried as many places as I have to find a job,
you'd know that jabbing your finger on a number and calling
it is just as good as any other way. (SADLY) But I've
always had hard luck. I couldn't expect anything else.

BILL: Always?

STUB: Yep. Never started anythink in my life that didn't come
out wrong.

LAWRENCE: Pardon me, Mr. Gelden, and I'll get back to the telephone.
(FADING) Excuse me, Sergeant Harris.

BILL: Now, about this hard luck business--

STUB: Oh, I now how it sounds when I say it, but something went
wrong with the Geldens when I come along. (CONFIDENTIALLY)
I remember Grampa used always to be harping on the family
motto, something about Nunc Gelden and it meaning Never
Give up, -- no, it was Never Yield.

BILL: Sounds like a good motto to me.

STUB: Well, it might have been all right for Grampa, and even
for dad. They didn't dare give up. They were too busy
making money so they could ruin my life!

BILL: Whoa! Wait a minute! What do you mean, money to ruin
your life.

STUB: (AGGRIEVEDLY) I mean this. When I was a kid my folks were
rich, not filthy with dough, but they had enough so I didn't
have to do anything I didn't want to do. I never finished
anything in my whole life. (WITH RISING INDIGNATION) By

the time I was eighteen I was as spoiled a brat as you could find. And then, bloo-ey! Grampa died. Dad went bust and he died too. And -- well, there I was ---

BILL: (UNDERSTANDINGLY) Yes, I know. No training, no discipline, no adaptability, no--

STUB: No luck! (SIGHS DEEPLY) I think I've tried darn near everythin. Sergeant Harris --

BILL: (LAUGHING) Not quite everything. You can't be old enough for that!

STUB: I'm thirty.

BILL: (AS IF TO HIMSELF) H-m. Still young enough for the army.

STUB: What's that you said?

BILL: (LAUGHINGLY) I asked if you ever married.

STUB: (BITTERLY) Listen, Sergeant Harris, when a guy has dough and clothes anydame would marry him. When he's broke and looks like a last year's cactus, no dame wants him.

BILL: The army is pretty well dressed these days.

STUB: Sure, you guys get all the breaks, -- good clothes, good food -- but what's that got to do with me?

BILL: (EVASIVELY) Oh, nothing, nothing at all. I was just thinking--

STUB: What?

BILL: Of that Nunc Golden business. (MEDITATIVELY) Never quit. I was just wondering what would happen if you ever deliberately put yourself in a job you couldn't quit.

STUB: Hm-- I wonder.

BILL: You said your name was Stub Golden, didn't you?

STUB: Yeh. But I guess I ought to have said, Semper--Semper Golden---

BILL: (INTERRUPTING) Hey, wait a minute. That means always quitting!

STUB: (SADLY) Yes, -- that's me.

BILL: (DELIBERATELY) Listen, Semper Gelden. And get this straight. You don't have to quit. You can do one of two things; put yourself where you can't quit, or learn to believe in something so deeply you can't quit it. It has been done--

STUB: (SKEPTICALLY) Who did it?

BILL: Do you really want to know?

STUB: Sure. Go ahead.

BILL: Well, it's like this. I was in the United States Army Air Corps for fifteen years. In a way I sort of grew up with it. I never made the pilot's seat, but I was a flight sergeant. I learned a lot about flying and pilots. Right now I'm thinking about a couple of fellows who would have made good soldiers (DELIBERATELY) because they wouldn't quit. They could have -- anytime. But they stayed up --

STUB: Up? Up where?

BILL: You'll have to excuse me, Stub. I get so interested in my story I forget you don't know what I'm talking about. The fellows I'm talking about were couple of men from Spokane, Nick Mamer and Art Walker.

STUB: (PLEASED) You're talking about folks I knew, or at least knew of, Sergeant Harris. Spokane was my home town.

BILL: Then you should remember when Mamer and Walker made their long distance of refueling flight---

STUB: (ENTHUSIASTICALLY) Sure, I do. There was a big ceremony before they started. A bunch of us kids watched it. Mamer was a Lieutenant in the army or something and an adopted member of the Spokane tribe of Indians. Mamer named their ship the Sun-God in honor of his tribesmen and (FADING) when he and Walker were ready to set out the Spokanes held a pow-wow---

SOUND: INDIAN DRUMS UP AND FADE TO BACKGROUND.

CHIEF: (WITH GREAT DIGNITY) My son, and you, my friend, in your great winged bird, you will rise like the sun himself. Like the sun you will ride the heavens. May the sun-god himself, bless your long journey, and bring you safe home to your brothers, the Spokanes.

MAMER: Thank you, Chief Garry. Art and I will do our best to bring honor to the Spokanes, my tribesmen.

CHIEF: (EXHORTING) Children of the Sun! Spokanes! Call upon the sun god!

SOUND: INDIAN CHANT UP, HOLD THEN CUT.

BILL: You remember that their flight had been arranged to demonstrate to the public that a stock commercial plane was as safe as a stock commercial automobile,--that a long journey over all kinds of terrain could be made safely, with the necessary refueling done during flight.

STUB: Yes, I remember. People were just beginning to discover that air travel was more than a thrill of a curiosity. Mamer and Walker hoped to prove that refueling was entirely practical, and safe.

BILL: So, they planned carefully, arranging to the refueling points from San Francisco to New York and back to Spokane. On the afternoon of August 15, 1929 the Sun-God's (FADING) motors were ready and Mamer and Walker went roaring off.

SOUND: PLANE MOTOR UP AND THEN FADING TO BACKGROUND.

NICK: Where are we now?

ART: Close to Rock Springs, Wyoming, unless my calculations are wrong.

NICK: (LAUGHING) Well, I hope they're right! We're getting low on gas again.

ART: We ought to make better time on fueling than we did at San Francisco. Four hours to take on 180 gallons---

NICK: Yeh. That was slow, but we'll do better this time. (PAUSE)
Hey! What's that search light doing?

ART: Telling us we're at Rock Springs! Time to refuel again. I'll drop a note or two---

NICK: The fool! That guy with the search light is blinding me. I can't see a thing.

ART: (DERISEVELY) Well, if you don't like the spot light, Nick, you can always land--

NICK: (INDIGNANTLY) Land? Who, me?

ART: (LAUGHING) O.K., we stay up. Maybe I can persuade that fellow to ease up on the artificial sunlight. Here goes with another note.

SOUND: PLANE MOTOR UP AND DOWN.

NICK: I'll fly a little lower. See if they get the note.

SOUND: PLANE MOTOR UP IN SLIGHT DIVE AND DOWN AGAIN.

ART: It's on the ground all right. I can see it in the light but nobody is paying any attention to it. That's funny--- Hey! Watch out! There's the refueling ship right over us!

NICK: Hang on! I'll miss him---

SOUND: PLANE MOTOR UP QUICKLY, THEN CUT.

BILL: That was a close shave. Mamer almost cut the refueling hose with the Sun-God's propellor. The search light had blinded both pilots. (PAUSE) Well, it wasn't so hard from there on. Walker and Mamer learned a lot in the first refueling attempts. Omaha, Chicago, Cleveland-- on they went, tired, unkempt, unshaven--

STUB: I know how they felt. Look at me right this minute! I could do with a shave, a hair cut and a bath--

BILL: (SPECULATIVELY) Ha-m. So you could.

STUB: (DEFENSIVELY) Never mind me. Get on with your story.

BILL: Yes, that's right. I sort of got side tracked.

STUB: You were saying Mamer and Walker had refueled at Cleveland on the last lap toward New York.

BILL: Flying wasn't so easy in 1929, Stub. There wasn't any radio communication and Mamer and Walker had to depend entirely upon their droppen notes to make connection with the ground crews. They had left a shower of paper clear across the continent. Roosevelt Field at New York received its share of notes and the thousands of spectators eagerly watched the bits of paper (FADING) fluttering down from the circling Sun-God---

SOUND: PLANE MOTOR UP AND FADING TO BACKGROUND.

ART: Look at New York spread out down there below us!

NICK: Gosh, I'll bet there's a million bath tubs---

ART: And ten million barbers---My face feels like a curry comb.

NICK: And tea bone steaks---

ART: For heavens sake, Nick, shut up. I'm drooling.

NICK: I've heard it said that in life the first hundred years are the hardest-- and I'm positive in flying the first hundred hours are the longest. Let's drop that letter to

Mayor Jimmy Walker and ask for some water and food and ---
ART: Gasoline! After all, we must have gas or the Spokanes
will never see the Sun-God again.
NICK: O.K., I've got the note written. Give her the gun----
SOUND: PLANE MOTOR UP RAPIDLY THEN HOLD AND CUT.
BILL: At Chicago they completed their first undred hours, long,
grueling hours of flight. There was never a thought of
quitting. Those lads believed in what they were doing----
STUB: (MEDITATEVELY) Yes. They believed it---(INTERRUPTING HIMSELF)
Say, I saw them land when they got back to Spokane! The
Sun-God sure had taken a beating. It was smudged and dirty
from spilled gas and dirt, and ---- Mamer and Walker had a
forest fire too----
BILL: Yes, over Miles, Montana. (PAUSE)
STUB: Miles, Montana. I had a job there once -- As a matter of
fact it was the last job I had.
BILL: What made you quit?
STUB: I didn't really want to quit but ---
BILL: But you could, -- so you did? Old Samper Golden, eh?
Always quitting!
STUB: (SIDEREGLDING THE JIBE AS IF THINKING ALOUD) What does a
fellow do in the army -- quit if he gets mad?
BILL: (LAUGHING) QUIT THE ARMY? Sure -- just the way Mamer and
Walker quit. In the army a guy never quits! You know, Stub,
when a fellow walks up to the Recruiting Desk and deliberately
and thoughtfully dedicates himself to Service, -- Oh I
knew it sounds as if I'm preaching, and maybe I am.
(ENTHUSIASTICALLY) I believe in service. Well, if a fellow
is man enough to come jp here and enlist in the regular
army he knows he's not going to quit. I don't know what

happens to a fellow when he voluntarily pledges three years of his life to his country, but to me it's sort of like getting religion.

STUB: Yeh--like whatever it was Maner and Walker got that made them forget themselves during that endurance flight--

BILL: YEs, that's right. I don't know what it is, -- maybe it's the uniform. Maybe it's the good food, the regular hours, and the discipline -- Anyhow when you enlist in the regular army you suddenly discover you aren't the same man ----

STUB: (THOUGHTFULLY) Not the same man---

BILL: (PERSUASIVELY) How'd you like to change your name, Stub? No more of that Semper Golden ---- always quitting stuff ---

STUB: It sounds good to me. Where's that enlistment blank?

BILL: Here it is -----

SOUND: RATTLE OF PAPERS.

BILL: (VERY BUSINESS LIKE) Name?

STUB: (EQUALLY DECISIVE) Nunc Golden ----

BILL: Never Quits Golden?

STUB: Yes, sir! From now on, that's me!

MUSIC: THEME UP AND OUT.

ANNCR: And so we leave Sergeant Harris signing up another recruit for the regular United States Army at 323 Main Post Office Building. Next week at this same hour KOIN will present another in this series of Soldiers of the Air. Tonight's program was written by the Oregon Writers' Project and produced by members of the Youth Theatre Guild. The cast included;

Listen again Next Monday night atten fifteen over this
station when you will again hear -----

SOUND: TELEPHONE BELL.

BILL: Army Recruiting Service. Sergeant Harris speaking.

MUSIC: THEME UP AND OUT.