

UNITED STATES ARMY RECRUITING SERVICE  
October 27, 1941 --- KOIN 10:15 P.M.

22.2  
no. 10

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 Harris, soldier of the air.

MUSIC: THEME UP AND OUT

ANNCR: For once we find Sergeant Bill Harris of the United States Army Recruiting Service sitting quietly at his desk. No problems for the moment, not one applicant, although last week Sergeant Harris was swamped with ----- recruits, -- something of a record even for him. Right now he's sitting at his desk thumbing through a book he's been reading. The title is War Heroes of the Past, and it looks sort of interesting, but -- well, (FADING) let's listen in and see what's happening down at 323 Main Post Office Building

SOUND: TELEPHONE BELL

BILL: Army Recruiting Service. Sergeant Harris speaking.

VOICE: (VIA TELEPHONE) This is the Portland Public Library. I'm sorry, Sergeant Harris, but we will have to deny your request for a third renewal on War Heroes of the Past.

BILL: That's a great book, War Heroes of the Past, -- I suppose that's the reason other men want to read it. I have it right here on my desk. I'll return it to the library today -- sure.

VOICE: Thank you. Goodbye.

MARY: It is a great book, isn't it?

BILL: What's that?

MARY: Sorry, I didn't mean to startle you.

BILL: I beg your pardon madam, but I was on the phone and didn't see you come in ----

MARY: (PLEASANTLY) That's all right, sergeant. I should have addressed you before I began discussing that book.

BILL: Have you read, War Heroes of the Past?

MARY: Yes, I've read it. As a matter of fact I read it quite some time ago. I thought it was really inspiring. And then recently I've been trying to get it from the library but it's been out for three weeks --- I finally got it.

BILL: (LAUGHING) It's the kind of a book that every soldier ought to read, especially right now.

MARY: Yes, I suppose it is a good book for soldiers, but -- well, to my way of thinking, it's a better book for civilians ---

BILL: Why is it better for civilians?

MARY: I don't exactly mean all civilians -- I mean young men of army age who aren't in the army, might find that War Heroes of the Past could help them --

BILL: How could it help them?

MARY: Well, Sergeant Harris, it's quite a story, but my idea of War Heroes of the Past, and my trying to get it again from the library, are really part of the reason for my coming up here to talk with you.

BILL: (LAUGHING SOFTLY) You don't want to enlist, do you?

MARY: (SOLEMNLY) Yes, I do. But I'm too old now. (PROUDLY) I served overseas with the A.E.F. in 1918, and I'd go with the army -- anywhere -- again -- if they'd take me.

BILL: You're a registered nurse?

MARY: Yes, I'm a nurse -- but an old one -- and a tired one. I've too many dependents to ever serve in the army again.

BILL: I see you know the regulations ---

MARY: Yes, I know a man who has dependents can't enlist -- but my son has no dependents --

BILL: Your son?

MARY: Yes, my son. There's no reason why he can't serve in my place -- no reason except one --

BILL: And that reason it --

MARY: (UNHAPPILY) He won't! Just plain won't!

BILL: How old is your son, Mrs. -----

MARY: I forgot to introduce myself -- I'm Mary Payne. My son is Victory Payne and he's just twenty two. A fine looking lad that a mother could be proud of --

BILL: Could be proud of? Mrs. Payne, you speak as if you weren't proud of your son.

MARY: (BITTERLY) I'm not! I'm ashamed of him and ashamed of myself and I'm sick to hear him talking the way he does where the younger children can hear him.

BILL: What's he saying? What does he talk about?

MARY: It's all so intangible -- so hard to pin down to any one thing he says or does -- but somehow Vic -- we call him Vic, -- but his real name is Victory. Sounds silly, doesn't it -- Victory for a boy's name.

BILL: Why did you call him Victory?

MARY: Well, that's another story and perhaps a sentimental one. You see, Vic's father and I were married overseas. Jim -- that was my husband's name -- was in the army and when he was wounded they brought him in and it just happened that I nursed him -- and later when he was able to walk again we were married and when Vic was born we called him Victory.

BILL: Did you name him Victory for any special reason?

MARY: (CHUCKLING) Jim and I were still pretty young and very much in love. We said we named our baby Victory because the Allies had won the war, but the real reason was that we thought we'd sort of won life's battle and we were gloating over it.

BILL: (LAUGHING) In my experience Life has a way of winning the last round -- just when you're sure you've got it completely kay-ood!

MARY: That's exactly what life did to us. Jim never completely recovered from his war injuries. Half the time he was in the hospital. Year after year we'd think that surely this time would be the last and -- but let's don't talk about that. I want to talk about Vic.

BILL: (PLEASANTLY) Seems to me we started out to talk about a book, not Vic -- Remember? War Heroes of the Past?

MARY: War Heroes of the Past or Vic -- it's one and the same. In the book there are a lot of heroes who never went to war -- remember -- and many who did -- men who distinguished themselves for courage and daring --

BILL: Yes, and men who stayed at home and did the very necessary jobs.



MARY: That's right, but they all had one special quality that made them heroes. Do you recall what that was?

BILL: I didn't really think about it, Mrs. Payne --

MARY: Remember the banker who bankrupted himself to help carry on a war?

BILL: Yes, but --

MARY: And that sailor lad who went down in shark infected waters to release the anchor chain that was caught?

BILL: And Ethan Allen? And General Jackson? What was it they all had?

MARY: Unselfishness, or maybe self-forgetfulness would be a better way to express it.

BILL: Or maybe -- patriotism?

MARY: Whatever you call it, it was something that sprang from within each man -- it wasn't something someone compelled him to do -- every one of those War Heroes did what he did because he couldn't help himself. Something fine and noble within him made him give -- Oh, -- I sound like an orator I guess -- but Sergeant Harris, it makes a mother feel sort of queer when she is compelled to recognize that whatever it is that makes a man a hero -- well, whatever it takes somehow got left out of her son.

BILL: I'm sorry, Mrs. Payne --

MARY: It wouldn't be so bad if Vic wasn't descended from a long line of really heroic men and women -- Why, five of his ancestors are listed in that book --

BILL: Five! You mean to say that any one family can rate five men in one book of heroes?

MARY: That's right -- where's that book?

BILL: Here it is -- page one -- page two -- here's the table of contents --

MARY: Look, -- here they are. Payne, Morris, Phillips, Ostrander, and Victor. Well, now, that's funny! I declare I never before thought of how much like Victory that name Victor is.

BILL: Ham-m --- (REFLECTIVELY) Does your son, Victory -- that is -- Vic, know about all these family heroes?

MARY: I guess I'm pretty stupid. That's the point of this whole interview. He doesn't know about them and he just won't learn about them. I can't understand it ----

BILL: Mind telling me just how you've -- ah -- exposed him to his family heroes?

MARY: Not at all. I've tried to be subtle about it -- you know -- the way the child psychologists tell you to do.

BILL: Maybe you've been too subtle ---

MARY: Maybe I have been -- up to this morning -- but this morning --

BILL: What happened this morning?

MARY: I threw War Heroes of the Past at him!

BILL: You threw a book at your son!

MARY: (CONTRITELY) I'm ashamed to admit it, but I actually threw the book on the floor at his feet -- and I'm afraid I threw the whole table of contents at him verbally -- and the worst of it is -- he didn't even notice the title of the book. He picked it up -- but -- well -- War Heroes to him was just an object on the floor!

BILL: How did it all happen?

MARY: Well, you see -- oh, (PASSIONATELY) I've hoped for so much from my eldest son -- I wanted him to be like his father -- like his father's father and all the others that have gone before him -- unselfish -- noble --- far-seeing ---

BILL: I'm sorry he has disappointed you, Mrs. Payne -- but at least you can be grateful he is a fine physical specimen -- he is isn't he?

MARY: That's the worst of it! He looks like a soldier! He looks like a ---- a ---- colonel ---

BILL: (TEASING) Well, maybe just a little young for a colonel!

MARY: (SADLY) But inside he's just a ----

BILL: (HELPFULLY) A yardbird!

MARY: I'm afraid you're right. A yardbird! You know, that's a good word, Sergeant Harris. I know as well as you do that there isn't such a rank in the army, but -- there is in real life! And it looks as if that's where my Vic belongs. Why, only this morning -- But there! That's what I started to tell you. Only this morning, when he finally decided to take that ten dollar a day job was I sure of it.

BILL: (WHISTLING) Whew! Ten bucks a day. Maybe I was wrong about that colonel business!

MARY: (SADLY) No -- I'm afraid he's just a yardbird at heart! But I can't understand it! I just can't! Well, anyway, he told me this morning that he had been offered a job at ten dollars a day in one of the defense industries ---- honestly, Sergeant Harris -- what do you think a boy of twenty-two, who's never had a dollar a day for himself -- will do with ten dollars a day?

BILL: Well now -- that's really a hard one to answer. Off hand I'd say that unless he was a pretty steady lad it might go to his head. On the other hand, if he was level-headed, he would invest in insurance, defense bonds, and the like.

MARY: But Vic won't, Sergeant Harris! He's not ready for a ten dollar a day job!

BILL: Don't worry about it, Mrs. Payne. When it comes down to that, none of us are ready for it. Most of us would make a fool of ourselves if someone gave us ten dollars cash each day -- That's where Uncle Sam is smart in his regular army --

MARY: I don't quite understand.

BILL: I mean that men who enlist for a three year hitch in the regular army have all the benefits of a ten dollar a day job with none of the moral hazards such a job would carry in civilian life --

MARY: Of course, -- that's what shocks me so. Vic doesn't see it at all. I've never tried to cram the army down his throat but I've tried to teach him values -- real values in character, to give him the ideals -- that make heroes of little men. But this morning when he stormed out of the house, -- (SIGHING) well, I felt I had failed -- failed myself -- failed Vic, -- and worst of all -- failed all the men who have lived and died before him. And that brings me to the real reason of my visit, Sergeant Harris. Vic is coming down here to see you.

BILL: But I thought you said he was going to take that ten dollar a day job.

MARY: He was -- probably he still will, but when I -- (APOLOGETICALLY) yelled at him -- I guess I sort of said all the things the psychologists say a mother shouldn't. I said all the things I'd been thinking for months -- Oh, I'm so ashamed.



BILL: But why is Vic coming here?

MARY: Because of the bitter things I said. Sergeant Harris, I've never been anything but friendly and pleasant to my sons, -- Poor Vic -- he was terribly shocked. The look on his face frightened me -- so unbelieving -- so grieved -- so -- sort of disappointed. And then he clamped his lips together and drew himself up and --

BILL: And said he'd come down here and show you!

MARY: (ASTONISHED) How did you know?

BILL: (CHUCKLING) That's what I told my dad fifteen years ago!

MARY: Why -- why --

BILL: Oh, I'm no hero, but I was a boy once myself -- and I know --

MARY: Yes, but Vic -- Vic -- (DESPERATELY) Oh, don't you see, if he should enlist now -- he's really sunk! He'll only do it because of me. Just to "show me" as you say, and he'll hate me and hate the army and hate life! Oh, Sergeant Harris, you've just got to do something about it --

BILL: Wait a minute, Mrs. Payne! My job is to enlist men, not to turn them away, especially fellows like Vic, smart, well educated --- He is a high school graduate, isn't he?

MARY: (TRUCUDLY) He's finished two years at college too!

BILL: (MUSING) Might make an aviation cadet out of this lad ---

MARY: What's that you say?

BILL: I said -- I'm no miracle worker, but I'll do what I can for your son when he comes -- (PAUSE) Did you ever think, Mrs. Payne, that maybe your son is a hero at heart? Maybe you're too close to him to see it. Maybe it would just take some little thing ---

SOUND: OFF MIKE. OPENING OF ELEVATOR DOOR

VIC: (OFF MIKE IN DISTANCE) Which room did you say was the Army Recruiting Service?

MAN'S VOICE: (OFF MIKE IN DISTANCE) Room 323, sir, right down the hall and to your left.

VIC: Thanks.

SOUND: SLAMMING OF ELEVATOR DOOR

MARY: (ALARMED) That's Vic! He mustn't catch me here!

BILL: Vic! Your son -- here -- quick, go through that door into Colonel Hensley's office. He's out. Shut the door -- and if anyone comes ---

MARY: (FADING OFF MIKE) What shall I do if anyone comes?

BILL: Pretend you are deaf and dumb! Now quick ---

MARY: I'm going ---

SOUND: DOOR OPENED AND CLOSED QUICKLY

BILL: Phew -- never a dull moment -- Now for -- Hello, there, young man. What can I do for you?

VIC: (FADING IN) Look, mister ---

BILL: Sergeant Harris --

VIC: Okay, Sergeant Harris. (BITTERLY) There isn't anything you can do for me, but you can do a lot for my mother --

BILL: What do you mean?

VIC: Enlist me in the army.

BILL: What branch of service interests you, -- aviation, artillery, ordnance, cavalry --

VIC: None of it interests me -- (ANGRILY) none -- do you understand?

BILL: (QUIETLY) Look, mister --

VIC: Payne -- Victory Payne --- There's a laugh for you, Sergeant Harris! (BITTERLY) Victory Payne enlists! You ought to get a news story out of that! (LAUGHS BITTERLY)

BILL: I don't see anything funny about it. What's odd about your name? Right now I can't think of a more popular one -- Ever hear this sound ---

SOUND: ... \_ ... \_ ... TAPED OUT ON RECORD

VIC: (CURIOUSLY AND FORGETTING HIS ANGER FOR A MINUTE) Can't say I ever did. What is it?

BILL: Ever see those little V buttons everyone is wearing?

VIC: Oh, that. You mean V for Victory. Like the British ---

BILL: That's right. And if you ask me, I think Victory is a pretty fine name. Why do you dislike it so much?

VIC: (VEHEMENT AGAIN) I'll tell you why I dislike it! Ever since I can remember folks have laughed at me about it. When I was a little codger and would get into a fight, the rest of the kids would stand around and yell, (IN PIPING VOICE) Victory! Victory! He can't lose!

BILL: And so you'd win the fight?

VIC: Win the fight? I never had a chance! And when I got to high school -- I said my name was Victor -- and then some girl that was working in the principal's office discovered it was Victory -- and then --

BILL: She told it -- and you lost the girl --

VIC: THAT wasn't all I lost -- I lost everything I ever tried. Look, Sergeant Harris, I'm not dumb -- I've passed every kind of intelligence test away above the average. Theoretically Victory should be mine -- Actually I'm a flop. And now when for the first time I get a chance at a job that might give me a break on even terms with other men at ten bucks a day too --

VIC: Why mom breaks loose this morning and throws up that old Victory stuff again --- I tell you, Sergeant, I can't take it any longer. (REBELLIOUSLY) Why did mom and dad have to name me Victory --- to handicap a guy for life with a name he couldn't possibly live up to! Victory (BITTERLY) Victory! I'm laughing.

BILL: (VERY BUSINESS LIKE) Well, suppose you stop laughing long enough to give me some information about yourself. We'll need that for our files. Here, let's fill in this application blank --- Age?

VIC: Twenty-two.

BILL: Education?

VIC: Graduated from Lincoln High in Portland. Two years of mechanical engineering at Oregon State College.

BILL: Did you enroll in the ROTC there -- you know -- military science?

VIC: Oh yes, -- the usual -- but I didn't get anywhere with it. They found out my name was Victory!

BILL: (IGNORING HIM) Full name?

VIC: Victory Morris Anthony Payne ---

BILL: (EXCITEDLY) Hey -- say that again, will you?

VIC: Victory -- Morris -- Anthony -- Payne. And if you ask me --- that name's more pain than victory.

BILL: (REPEATS NAMES SLOWLY) Hm-m --- Victory -- Morris -- Anthony -- Payne! What a swell bunch of names!

VIC: What do you mean, swell bunch of names?

BILL: I mean -- I mean -- Say, how did your parents happen to give you four names like that?



VIC: (PUZZLED) I don't know. I never asked. Probably out of a book or something. (FONDLY) My mom's kind of sentimental. That's the reason she named me Victory, I think -- because I was born right after the Allies won the war ---

BILL: I wasn't thinking of Victory -- I mean the other names -- Morris -- Anthony -- Payne --- They couldn't by any chance be your ancestors, could they?

VIC: Why -- I don't know -- What makes you ask?

BILL: Oh, nothing -- only ---

VIC: Only what ---

BILL: Let's get on with these other questions. What was your last job?

VIC: (VERY MUCH INTERESTED) Oh no you don't. Tell me the truth. Who were these birds -- this Morris, this Anthony and this Payne?

BILL: You wouldn't be interested. None of them made ten bucks a day.

VIC: What'd you mean I wouldn't be interested? And what's that crack about ten bucks a day?

BILL: I mean that Morris or Anthony or Payne didn't make money serving their country, and that if you're interested only in making a lot of sudden money so you can spend it in a hurry -- why -- Anthony and Morris and Payne wouldn't interest you. They didn't care about money, -- they cared about courage. And courage, Victory Morris Anthony Payne doesn't pay ten bucks a day -- at least not all in one lump!

VIC: (PATIENTLY) Well, shoot the works, tell me about these (SARCASTICALLY) big courageous lads of the past.

BILL: Strangely enough, I don't have to tell you. Any history book can do that. Now this book, for instance -- See this book I've been reading -- it's called War Heroes of the Past. Here -- look at the table of contents -- take a gander at the chapter heads -- Listen, I'll read them --- No, read them yourself! (AS IF ANGRY) They're your ancestors -- not mine!

VIC: Gosh! Look at 'em! Anthony Wayne -- Mad Anthony! Gosh, was I related to him? I mean -- am I?

BILL: I wouldn't know.

VIC: Thomas Payne. (REVERENTLY) Say -- wasn't he something or other in the American Revolution? Gosh! He was a printer not a soldier -- but --

BILL: Nevertheless, he too was a hero.

VIC: Morris? (WITH INCREASING RESPECT) Morris! Why he was a banker, wasn't he? A real ten dollar a day man -- but he --

BILL: Popular legend relates that he bankrupted himself financing the continental army -- but I wouldn't know ---

VIC: Gosh! My gosh!

SOUND: ... \_ ... \_ ... \_ TAPPED OUT ON TABLE. FADE IN TAPPING SOFTLY AND LET IT COME UP UNTIL IT DRAWS VIC'S ATTENTION.

VIC: Morris! Anthony! Payne --- Hey, what're you tapping on the table for?

BILL: I'm tapping out your name, Vic, tapping out Victory. Listen --

SOUND: TAPPING IN STRONG AND THEN FADE TO BACKGROUND BUT LET IT BE HEARD ABOVE BILL'S SPEECH. LET TAPPING SIMULATE SOMEWHAT THE SOUND OF A DRUM ROLLING OUT TWO-FOUR TIME.

BILL: Listen, Vic --- I'm just a soldier, one of thousands, yes, one of hundreds of thousands whose feet are tapping out the measure of their personal victory! I haven't any illustrious ancestors to help me, but you -- why you have a whole company of them, marching down the years, -- marching down to 1941 to you. They believe in you, Vic. They believe in your name. They're not ten dollar a day men -- they're just the guys that get their names in the history books!

SOUND: UP A LITTLE WITH THE TAPPING

VIC: (REVERENTLY) Just the guys that get their names in the history books -- (THOUGHTFULLY) Why even I -- I -- Gosh! Sergeant Harris, do you mean I -- I --

SOUND: TAPPING IN LOUDER

BILL: Yes, Victory (THIS DELIBERATELY AND MEANINGFULLY) That's exactly what I mean. You -- too!

VIC: Me too! Here, give me that book! I want to go home and show it to mom --- I'll bet she doesn't know ---

SOUND: TAPPING FADES INTO ROLL OF DRUMS IN MARCH TIME

BILL: Here, take it --

VIC: Thanks! (FADING) I'll be back in a couple of hours and sign that application ----

SOUND: DRUMS ARE DROWNED IN MARTIAL MUSIC WHICH SWELLS UP, THEN CUT

BILL: You can come out now, Mrs. Payne.

MARY: (FADING IN) Oh, Sergeant Harris, -- I'm so grateful -- I'll never be ashamed of Vic again!

BILL: No, Mrs. Payne, he has that divine spark -- whatever it is -- that makes heroes. The trouble was he never knew before that he had it.



MARY: (SOFTLY) Maybe the psychologists are wrong -- Maybe I should have thrown the book at him sooner!

BILL: Did you hear him? He took War Heroes of the Past home to show you!

MARY: (LAUGHING) I heard him -- (PAUSE) Oh, I hope he'll never be sorry about that "ten bucks a day" as he calls it.

BILL: He won't. I can promise you that. You see, Mrs. Payne, a soldier gets a lot of things besides his basic pay, which runs from \$21 as a private to \$127 as master sergeant. That basic pay is actually just spending money. Show me any ordinary lad of twenty-two who has twenty-one dollars spending money each month.

MARY: That's right. I never thought of it that way. Vic will have his room and board ---

BILL: His clothes and all equipment --

MARY: (ANXIOUSLY) And insurance? He really ought to ---

BILL: Yes, even insurance. But that is one item that will cost him a few cents per thousand dollars. It's government insurance, however, and the cost is very low on young men like Vic.

MARY: But what about doctor and dental care?

BILL: He'll have those services too, at no cost.

MARY: (ANXIOUSLY) They do issue long underwear in cold weather, don't they?

BILL: I'll say they do! And rain coats and goloshes and all the clothes any man could want. I'll bet Vic never had as extensive a wardrobe as he'll have as Private Victory Morris Anthony Payne.

MARY: (PROUDLY) Private Victory Payne! Oh -- Sergeant Harris, I'm so proud of my son!

MUSIC: THEME UP AND OUT

16-16-16



ANNCR: And so we leave Sergeant Harris ready to sign 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 of the Work Projects Administration and produced by members of the Youth Theatre Guild. The cast included:

Listen again next Monday night at ten fifteen over this station when you will again hear ----

SOUND: TELEPHONE BELL

BILL: Army Recruiting Service. Sergeant Harris speaking.

MUSIC: THEME UP AND CUT