

SOLDIERS OF THE AIR

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

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

ANNCR: Young man, have you heard the thundering thousands winging across the skies to crush our enemies? Has your heart beat a little faster, a little prouder knowing that our air armada is topping the rising sun? Have you envied those young pilots with the gold bars on their shoulders, with courage in their hearts, and the controls of a fighter plane in their hands? Well, you can do what they have done: enlist in the Air Force, train eight months, -- eight months in which you will be paid, fed, clothed, insured,-- and then you can step out and do an intelligent job of fighting. Why, even if you are as young as eighteen, like Phil Raymond, the fellow who is just now walking down the hall at three twenty three Main Post Office, you can enlist. That tall fellow with Phil is Sergeant Joe Burns. Yes, you're right. They're the two you read about in the newspapers,-- Sergeant Joe Burns, home on a three day leave, and Phil Raymond, who never even considered enlisting until last night. What happened last night? Well, (FADING) let's get it as the boys tell it to Sergeant Harris---

BILL: Well, Joe Burns! Sergeant Joe Burns. Am I glad to see you?

JOE: Thanks, Bill. I'm pretty happy being home a few days. (PAUSE) This is Phil Raymond--

BILL: How are you, Phil? Quite a splash you and Joe made in the headlines this morning. How does it feel to be a hero?

PHIL: (BOYISHLY) Gosh, Sergeant Harris, I'm no hero. It was Joe here who trapped those Nazi spies, honest it was.

BILL: (LAUGHING) Not from what the newspapers said. They said you---

PHIL: (DOGGEDLY) They said what Joe--what Sergeant Burns told them--and he says--

JOE: (INTERRUPTING) Phil wants to enlist.

BILL: Well, now, that's fine. Here, take this application blank. (WITH ENTHUSIASM)
The army can use a few more guys like you, Phil.

PHIL: Look, Joe. Can't you make Sergeant Harris see I'm just scared and not a hero? If I'm going to be a soldier, I want to be an honest one!

JOE: Take it easy, Phil. (PAUSE) I've been trying to explain that it doesn't make any difference what a fellow was or has been, it's what he is now, what folks believe him to be, that he's got to live up to.

PHIL: But folks are believing something wonderful about me, and it isn't so.

BILL: Then make it so.

PHILL: (SERIOUSLY) Do you really think I could?

JOE: I know you could.

PHIL: I'll try. (PAUSE) You know, Sergeant Harris. I was sure a crazy kid, just yesterday, with nothing on my mind but eloping with--

JOE: (INTERRUPTING) Do you have to go into all this, Phil?

PHIL: I guess I do. I want Sergeant Harris to understand. (PAUSE) You see, I didn't have enough to do. I got to hanging around Jake's Place and talking with Gerda Lachner and the first thing I knew--well, I thought I was in love with her. And when I asked her to run away with me, she said she would. That is, she would if I could get Joe Burns to take us across the border in his plane. I ought to have suspected something then, but-- well, I know Joe was home on leave and-- I know I was crazy, but I went over to see him, and there he was out washing and polishing his plane. (FADING) So I walked over by the gas pump and---

JOE: (ENTHUSIASTICALLY) Well, dog gone if it isn't Phil Raymond.

PHIL: Hi-ya, Joe.

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JOE: Come on over and help me polish my crate. If I can't use it I can at least keep it clean and --

PHIL: Can't use it! What do you mean, can't use it? Here, give me one of those rags.

JOE: (CHEERFULLY) Nope. Can't use it. Not even on a three day leave. All civilian pleasure planes are grounded. Here's a rag. Hop to the polishing.

PHIL: I don't see any sense in polishing your plane if you can't take it up.

JOE: (LAUGHING) Can't fly, can't drink, can't get sugar---

PHIL: Can't, can't, can't! Isn't there anything a fellow can do now-a-days?

JOE: (PUFFING WITH EXERTION AS HE WORKS) Sure, he can enlist in the army!

PHIL: Sure, and get bumped off! Go out in a blaze of glory! Well, as for me----Gosh this plane is dirty! As for me (PUFFING) I've got a couple of years to play around in yet. Give me another rag, will you?

JOE: Here, I'll tear you off a chunk of this--

SOUND: TEARING OF CLOTH

PHIL: What's the matter with this one, this long stringy---Well, of all the fool things? What you got all these pieces tied together like a kite tail for? And a pebble in a handkerchief at the end?

SOUND: TEARING OF CLOTH

JOE: There you are, a deluxe polishing cloth, straight off the tail of pop's old night shirt.

PHIL: But what's this kite tail thing?

JOE: I couldn't find the stick I used to have to measure the gas storage tank, the underground one. So, I just tore off some strips of cloth, tied 'em together and tied the pebble on the end and dropped it down the intake pipe. Like this--

SOUND: PEBBLE AGAINST PIPE

JOE: --and when I draw it up, it shows how much gas I got. Simple isn't---

Hoy! Got your cigarette away from that kite-tail.

PHIL: That strip laying on top of the ground wouldn't ignite the tank underground, would it?

JOE: It's the fumes, the gas, that would burn, that explode.

PHIL: O-kay, I'll be careful. I don't want to blow myself up on my wedding day.

JOE: Wedding day! Are you crazy, Phil Raymond?

PHIL: Sure, I'm crazy. Crazy about Gerda Lachner.

JOE: That big blonde down at Jake's? Why, she's old enough to be your---

PHIL: (INDIGNANTLY) She's only twenty-four. And she's wonderful and--

JOE: (INTERRUPTING) And she's a phoney if ever I saw one. Wouldn't surprise me if she was one of Hitler's spies!

PHIL: Why, you--

JOE: And that pig-headed brother of hers, that Fritz. What's he do for a living? All he does is drink beer and listen to what folks are saying and paste his ear to the radio, and then disappear for days. Who's he working for?

PHIL: Well, if that's the way you feel about it!

JOE: Aw, don't be sore, Phil, but honest, you're crazy to think of marrying that woman. Besides, your father would never consent.

PHIL: (BRAGGING A LITTLE) Oh, I got that fixed up all right. Dad's been howling about me enlisting in the Air Corps and when he was busy I shoved a paper under his nose and asked him to sign a "consent", he did! Never even read it.

JOE: (ACCUSINGLY) You tricked your father!

PHIL: You figure it out. (PAUSE) Anyhow Gerda and I thought maybe you'd fly us across the border and--

JOE: (IN DISGUST) Hoy, give me that rag. I'll do my own polishing. I tell you this is one plane that is grounded!

PHIL: (PLACATINGLY) O-Kay. O-kay. Then Gerda and I will drive the sedan. Here, take your dad's old night shirt and shine up your plane for-- for-- Uncle Sam. A lot of good it does him here in the hangar!

JOE: I reckon it will be useful when the time comes.

PHIL: Well, I'll be jogging along. I'll drive by tonight when we leave. Maybe you'll change your mind about Gerda and--

JOE: Not a chance!

PHIL: (FADING) Well, you might just ride along with us. We'll see--

SOUND: AUTOMOBILE FADING IN AT SUSTAINED RATE OF TRAVEL, THEN TO BG

GERDA: (SLIGHT GERMAN ACCENT) We're almost there, Fritz.

PHIL: Gee whiz, Gerda, I don't see why we had to bring Fritz. Who's eloping, us or him?

FRITZ: (DECIDED GERMAN ACCENT) Let me tell him--- with this--

PHIL: Don't shove me in the back!

FRITZ: (COLDLY) That's a gun, you young fool. And it is I who elopes. And you who will help me.

PHIL: Hey, you! You can't--

FRITZ: (DELIBERATELY) You will discover I can! Drive to the side of the road and turn off your motor and lights.

SOUND: AUTOMOBILE COMING TO HALT, AND MOTOR CUT

FRITZ: Now, call to your friend at the plane and reassure him.

PHIL: I won't!

GERDA: A little more encouragement with the pistol, Fritz.

PHIL: But--- All right. All right. Quit shoving. (CALLING) Hey, Joe! Joe!

JOE: (AT DISTANCE AND CALLING) That you, Phil?

FRITZ: (THREATENING BUT QUIET) Tell him you're out of gas.

PHIL: (CALLING) I'm out of gas. Can you spare me some?

JOE: (AT DISTANCE) I was saving it for the plane but--

FRITZ: Come, Gerda. (PAUSE) Keep moving, young fool! And keep talking!

JOE: (FADING IN) Who's with you, -- Gerda? Hello, Gerda.

PHIL: And Fritz--

FRITZ: (THREATENING) Herr Lachner to you, swine!

JOE: Well,--nice friends you have, Phil.

FRITZ: It is enough that we trusted agents of the Fuehrer! We do not concern ourselves with your likes or dislikes. (PAUSE) Take the pistol, fraulein, while I examine the cockpit--(FADING SLIGHTLY) It appears in good order, but--

JOE: (BITTERLY) You'll find the plane in perfect order, Herr Lachner. I have just finished tuning it up! More's the pity.

FRITZ: (SLIGHTLY OFF MIKE) Now if you will ascend, fraulein--

PHIL: (FRANTICALLY) Don't let her, Joe! Stop them! They're spies!

JOE: Keep quiet, Phil.

FRITZ: (AS ABOVE) The petrol tank is empty. You will fill it.

PHIL: Me?

FRITZ: And you too, grease monkey!

JOE: (SUDDENLY COOPERATIVE) Sure, sure, we'll fill it. (WITH MEANING) Fill the tank, Phil. Spill in the gas. Spill it into the tank. Here, take the nozzle--

PHIL: (WHISPERING) Spill it? You mean--

JOE: I'll take the cap off ---

SOUND: METAL AGAINST METAL

JOE: Hey, you're spilling gas all over the wing. Take it easy--

PHIL: (WHISPERING) But you said spill it--

JOE: Here, wipe the gas off with this kite - tail, this rag!

FRITZ: Faster, you two! The fraulein and I have a long journey to make.

JOE: Sure--sure! (WHISPERING) Drop the end of the kite tail, the pebble, into the tank on the wing, Phil. (LOUDER AS MOTOR IS STARTED) She's full to the brim! (WHISPERING) And leave the cap off--

SOUND: (BREAKING IN BELOW TALK) AIRPLANE MOTOR GUNNED FOR TAKE-OFF

JOE: (WHISPERING ON MIKE) Let the rag tail hang free over the wing-- all twenty foot of it.

PHIL: (SUDDENLY EXCITED) I got it! And set fire to the tail. My lighter! It won't work! Yes,-- ah-- there it blazes!

SOUND: AIRPLANE TAKING OFF FADING TO DISTANCE

PHIL: (FADING) They're off! Look at that tail burn!

JOE: (FADING IN) Watch out! There she goes!

SOUND: EXPLOSION AT DISTANCE

PHIL: (BROKENLY) Oh, Joe, how awful! The plane blew up! Can't we save---

JOE: (FIRMLY) No. It's too late. (PAUSE) What a blaze! (SADLY) My plane-- died fighting for Uncle Sam.

PHIL: Can't we save anything?

JOE: Listen! There's a siren! Someone's seen the plane fall and turned in the alarm.

SOUND: AT DISTANCE SIREN FADING IN BUT NOT TOO LOUD

JOE: (DEEPLY MOVED) My plane---my plane went down fighting for my country. (PAUSE) That's how I want to go down, Phil--for my country.

PHIL: (VERY SERIOUSLY) Joe,-- Joe, that's what I want too. Do you think I could enlist?

JOE: Could you! Look, Phil. There'll be fire-wagons and reporters and ambulances here in a minute--

SOUND: SIREN UP LOUDER

JOE: And when the reporters get through with you, you'll be a hero and can write your own ticket---

PHIL: I'll write my ticket, Joe, and on it, it's going to read, Phil Raymond, Application for Enlistment in the United States Army!

MUSIC: THEME UP AND OUT

ANNCR: Young man, you too can write your own ticket in the United States Army if you are under twenty. You can choose the arm or service you believe best suited to your talents,-- infantry, cavalry, signal corps, engineers or Air Force. You will discover your chances for advancement particularly attractive in the Air Force as an Aviation Cadet. Call at three twenty three Main Post Office or phone Atwater 6171 for information about service with the colors in the United States Army. Your country needs you! You need your country! (PAUSE) Listen again next Monday night at ten forty-five over this station when you will again hear-----

SOUND TELEPHONE BELL AND RECEIVER LIFTED FROM HOOK

BILL: Army Recruiting Service. Sergeant Harris speaking.

ANNCR: Next week KOIN will present another in this series of Soldiers of the Air. Tonight's program was written by Claire Warner Churchill of the Oregon Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration, Harrison E. Devereaux, State Administrator, and produced by members of the Portland Civic Theatre. The cast included:

MUSIC: THEME UP AND OUT