

UNITED STATES ARMY RECRUITING SERVICE  
June 15, 1942-----KOIN 10:45 P. M.

SOLDIERS OF THE AIR

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

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

ANNCR: The battle fronts of the United Nations are not so far from three  
twenty three Main Post Office as you might think, and many a personal  
battle is fought by prospective soldiers before they finally approach  
Sergeant Bill Harris of the United States Army Recruiting Service and  
sign that important little piece of paper designated, "Application  
for Enlistment in the United States Army." Take these older men,  
these men up to forty-five who are now eligible for the Army Engineers.  
Many of them are civic leaders, with grave responsibilities that might  
easily enough be accepted as reasons for letting younger men do the  
soldiering necessary to win this war. There's Court Gable for in-  
stance, the man who just now is talking with Sergeant Harris. He's  
forty-four, attorney, and he holds an important elective office,--  
but he spends his spare time making ornamental iron work, doing a sort  
of high class blacksmithing. Court says the real reason he's enlist-  
ing is because George Washington led the Revolutionary Army and not  
because McArthur's army needs blacksmiths,-- He says that if George  
Washington's ghost hadn't been wandering around Portland at night---  
but wait, let's hear the story as he tells it to Sergeant Harris.

(FADING) Court is explaining where he saw Washington---

COURT: So, you don't believe in ghosts, Sergeant Harris?

BILL: (PLEASANTLY) I can't say I do, Mister Gable, especially ghosts in blue  
coats and buff-colored satin britches.

COURT: Well, that's exactly the way General Washington appeared to me, in the  
bright blue and buff of the Virginia Militia, but what really astounded  
me was the way he talked. It was--- it was---

BILL: (LAUGHING) Yes, it must have been!

COURT: Oh, I don't blame you for laughing, but it gave me a jolt. Such a jolt in fact that,-- well, that's the reason I'm here. If George Washington could give up what he did for a nation that didn't even exist-- why then I, --(STERNLY) Sergeant Harris, do you know what date this is?

BILL: Sure, it's June fifteenth.

COURT: (VERY SERIOUS) That's right. June fifteenth. Just exactly one hundred and sixty-six years ago today, Colonel George Washington was elected commander in chief of the continental army.

BILL: (POLITELY) Is that so?

COURT: And that's why he was wandering around out at fifty-seventh and Sandy--

BILL: Why, that's where that statue of George Washington is.

COURT: That's right. It was the statue that I went to see, but I certainly didn't mean to see Washington in the flesh--- I mean in the spirit-- no, I mean in--

BILL: You mean in a blue coat and buff colored satin britches.

COURT: Well, yes. (PAUSE) You see, I had to make a speech about Washington, the Builder, --- You know, he did a lot of planning and construction in his day.

BILL: Like the army engineers?

COURT: Well, yes. On that expedition into the wilderness with Braddock young Colonel Washington certainly built enough bridges and made enough roads --- funny too, when he knew they ought to be following Indian trails--- but here I go, getting ahead of my story.

BILL: Let's go back to the statue at fifty-seventh and Sandy.

COURT: Yes, let's do. (PAUSE) It does sound fantastic, the way I met him. I was improvising my speech. (FADING) There I was, walking around the statue of George Washington, talking of myself--- (PAUSE, THEN ORATORICALLY) General Washington, in the buff and blue of the Virginia Militia was a prepossessing figure of a man,-- a handsome face ---

GEORGE: (IMPATIENTLY) Boloney! I was'nt handsome. I had pock marks all over my face!

COURT: (ASTONISHED) You what? (CROSSLY) Who're you?

GEORGE: (PLEASANTLY) George Washington.

COURT: (AMAZED) General Washington?

GEORGE: (URBANELY) Colonel Washington. I won't be General until tomorrow. June fifteenth, you know.

COURT: Well, no, I didn't know.

GEORGE: (SARCASTICALLY) And you making a speech about me! Next I suppose you'll tell me you didn't know we started this camouflauge business back in seventeen hundred and fifty-five, --- Don't tell me you never heard of the Braddock campaign!

COURT: (HURRIEDLY) Yes, of course, that's what I was going to talk about, -- your experience as an engineer.

GEORGE: Well, tell these young whipper-snappers that just because they can sling a little paint and disguise a gun emplacement as a bunch of bushes doesn't mean-- Why, the Virginian Militiamen were disguising themselves as bushes and tree trunks long before that stubborn Braddock --- but, I forget my blood pressure. And besides, here comes Doctor Franklin,-- I can tell by the tapping of his cane.

SOUND: TAPPING OF CANE ON WALK

COURT: Dr. Franklin! You mean, Benjamin Franklin?

GEORGE: Of course I mean Benjamin Franklin. Dr. Franklin--- Hey, Ben, over here!

COURT: Why, he's bald, and with square-rimmed spectacles just like his pictures!

BEN: (AT DISTANCE AND FADING IN) Hi ya, George, old boy. Sorry I'm late, but I got to talking to John Adams, and cold blooded old New England cod-fish that he is,-- will you believe it? He's howling that no one can lead the Continental Army but that great big man from the South, (AS IF A MASTER OF CEREMONIES) George Washington! Let's give the boy a big hand.(PAUSE) Hey, who's he?

GEORGE: This is--- I beg your pardon. What did you say your name is?

COURT: Courtland Gable, attorney.

GEORGE: I'd like you to meet Doctor Benjamin Franklin, Mister Gable.

COURT: How do you do, Doctor Franklin.

BEN: (FORMALLY AND IN CHARACTER) How do you do, sir? I trust you are an advocate of liberty.

COURT: Why yes, I --

BEN: And that you are willing to fight for liberty and union.

COURT: Well, yes, of course. But you see there are so many things to consider--

GEORGE: (WITH FEELING AND IN CHARACTER) Yes, yes, we understand. You are like so many other colonials. They stand to lose everything if they fight, but if they don't fight-- What is left when liberty is gone?

BEN: Give men a flag to love, a leader to follow, and they'll fight.

COURT: That leader business, that general-- that comes tomorrow you said.

GEORGE: Well, that's the way we'd planned it. But if you want a dress rehearsal, I suppose we could arrange it, eh, Doctor Franklin?

BEN: Quite possible. Quite possible. (PAUSE) Come, we'll find a conveyance.

COURT: My car is at the curb, if you'd care to ride with me.

BEN: The very thing! Perhaps you'll permit me to operate this strange contraption.

COURT: I think perhaps I'd better--- but (FADING A LITTLE) here, step over to the door--

GEORGE: (FADING IN) Come, Doctor Franklin. The carriage awaits us.

BEN: (AS IF WADDLING AND GRUNTING A BIT) A plague on these old legs of mine! Help me up the stoop, Colonel.

GEORGE: A stoop is not required. See, the step is as low as the curb.

BEN: So it is. (GRUNTING) Thank you, my boy. Thank you. (SIGHING) Ah, a fine carriage and a comfortable seat.

COURT: Glad you like it. (PAUSE) Well, here we go.

SOUND: AUTOMOBILE STARTING, SHIFT OF GEARS AND RUNNING THEN FADE TO BG

BEN: (ABOVE MOTOR AND IN ALARM) We're moving! Moving! But where are the horses?

COURT: (ABOVE MOTOR) Under the hood. Ninety of them.

GEORGE: Under the hood! A woman's headpiece. How quaint!

COURT: We call that front part of the car a hood. We harnessed that little hot spark of electricity you discovered, Doctor Franklin, and transformed it into horses to drive our carriages. Quite an idea, eh?

BEN: Remarkable! Remarkable!

COURT: No more remarkable than doubling back into history, the way we're doing.

GEORGE: History is simple. You can shift around in it all you please once it is accomplished. It's the making of history that is difficult-- like this meeting of the Continental Congress we're going to. You see, it all happened years ago, but going back this way, I know ahead what I'm going to have to give up to lead the army.

COURT: I was thinking about that too. Only I haven't made my bit of history yet and I --- well, there's a lot I'd have to give up to enlist as a soldier, -- my home, my office, my salary, --

BEN: Colonel Washington gave up all that too, -- (INTERRUPTING HIMSELF)  
Colonel, are you sure it is proper to take this man into the halls of the Continental Congress?

GEORGE: Sure, sure! He's going to make a speech about me tomorrow.

BEN: Then I suggest we stop here, blindfold him, and lead him into the hall quietly.

COURT: Blindfold me! Why?

GEORGE: So you will not reveal historical information. Stop here, please.

SOUND: AUTOMOTOR UP AND TO A STOP AND CUT UNDER CONVERSATION

COURT: Whatever you say, but --

BEN: And do not speak to any of the other shades, please --

COURT: Shades? What're they?

GEORGE: He means historical personages-- long dead.

BEN: Do not speak to any of the other shades, not even to John Hancock.

Cont'e. BEN

He's not giving out autographs tonight. Besides he's had plenty of publicity with this life insurance business. And certainly not to Patrick Henry. We need hard-headed reasoning to elect a general, not fireworks--

COURT: You mean (CRATING) "Give me liberty or give me death!"

GEORGE: Of course. (PAUSE) Here, let me place this kerchief over your eyes.

COURT: Very well.

BEN: Come, then. (FADING) Let us step forward into tomorrow. Into the Continental Congress, June fifteenth, seventeen hundred and seventy-five.

SOUND: CONVENTION NOISE, GENERAL CONFUSION UP TO ESTABLISH SOUND, THEN DOWN TO BG

JOHN: (ABOVE NOISE AND FADING IN) Doctor Franklin! Doctor Franklin!

BEN: (GENIALLY) Mister Adams. Right over here, sir.

JOHN: I'm worried, Doctor Franklin.

BEN: I know, -- it's about Boston, still beleaguered by the British.

JOHN: Yes, but more than Boston, -- it's all the Colonies. We have already passed the resolution to choose a leader. We must choose that leader, -- a General today.

BEN: There is only one man who can unite the aristocrats of the south and the tradesmen of New England.

JOHN: You mean Colonel Washington? That is what Samuel Adams says. But will he accept? He stands to lose so much-- his home, his fortune, his very life.

BEN: Let us ask him now, -- Here he comes.

JOHN: Good morning, Colonel Washington.

GEORGE: (FADING IN) Good morning, Mister Adams, and to you too, Doctor Franklin.

BEN: Colonel Washington, I will not waste words. Tell me, which is most important to you: life at Mount Vernon in ease and luxury or freeing beleaguered Boston?

GEORGE: The most important thing in my life? (WITH DEEP FEELING) Seeing the thirteen colonies free and united!

BEN: (WITH GREAT SATISFACTION) There is your answer, John Adams! (FADING)  
Come, let us propose it to the Congress.

SOUND: CONVENTION NOISES UP STRONG THEN GAVEL POUNDING ON TABLE

HANCOCK: The meeting will come to order! (PAUSE THEN LOUDER ABOVE SOUND)  
Gentlemen! The meeting will come to order!

SOUND: CONVENTION NOISES DOWN AND FADE OUT AS JOHN SPEAKS

JOHN: (LOUDLY ABOVE NOISE) Mister Chairman! Mister Chairman!

HANCOCK: Mister John Adams!

JOHN: Mister Chairman!

HANCOCK: Mister John Adams has the floor. Proceed, Mister Adams.

JOHN: Gentlemen, from Charleston in the south to Nantucket in the North the urge of the Colonists to be free and independent is strong and widespread. But freedom lacks a rallying center,-- a leader to follow-- (PAUSE) New England is already in battle array, demanding a leader from among their own. Patrick Henry has fired the south with his impassioned plea for "Liberty or Death". There is, however, but one man, -- a man of destiny wearing the blue and buff of the Virginia Militia,-- who can unite us all to destroy the enemy. Gentlemen, I propose for your consideration,-- for commanding General of all the Colonial forces,-- Colonel George Washington of Virginia!

SOUND: APPLAUSE UP, SUSTAINED, THEN OUT

COURT: Well, that's all there was to it, except--

BILL: Except?

COURT: Except the curtain falls and Doctor Franklin and General Washington coming down into the audience to sell war bonds. (LAUGHING RUEFULLY)  
You see, it was all a play,--

BILL: But why did Franklin and Washington pick you up and take you there?

COURT: Just for a lark. At least it started as a lark for them. But it was all so real, I took it seriously. I cornered both of them when they'd finish selling bonds in costume and we had a talk and, well, -- (CALLING)

Cont. COURT

General Washington! Doctor Franklin!

BEN: (FADING IN) Got room for another man in the army's bald-headed row,  
Sergeant Harris?

BILL: (ASTONISHED) You mean--

BEN: I mean the Army Engineers. I hear you take them up to forty-five!

GEORGE: (FADING IN LAUGHINGLY) The Virginia Colonel, suh, reporting for duty!

BILL: You mean--

COURT: We mean business! There's nothing at home as important as what's going  
on in the army. Sign us up!

MUSIC: THEME UP AND OUT

ANNCR: You other older men, you too can sign up in the United States Army.  
If you know bridge construction, highway construction, have experience  
as a water supply expert, concrete foreman, as an electrical or chemical  
engineer and are under forty-five and in excellent health, Uncle Sam  
wants you in the Army Engineers. Inquire at three twenty-three Main  
Post Office for particulars on these special openings for older men.  
(PAUSE) Listen again next Monday night at ten forty-five over this  
station when you will again hear ---

SOUND: TELEPHONE BELL AND RECEIVER RAISED FROM HOOK

BILL: Army Recruiting Service. Sergeant Harris speaking.

ANNCR: Next week at this same hour KOIN will present another in this series  
of Soldiers of the Air. Tonight's program was written by Sara Wrenn  
and 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