

SOLDIERS OF THE AIR

United States Army Recruiting Service

KOIN ----- July 13, 1942 --10:45 P M

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

MUSIC: THEME UP AND OUT

ANNCR: Within the past few days Sergeant Bill Harris of the United States Army Recruiting Service has signed up everything from a deck hand to a draftsman in his effort to enlist the men necessary for the Army Engineers Amphibian Command. An amphibian is a creature that functions with equal ease on land or sea, and pretty well describes the Army Engineers. It's like this ---- If you have had previous military experience, and can distinguish a sturgeon from a silverside salmon or can tell a one-lunger gas engine from a deisel motor, more than likely you can find a place in the engineers. In fact, even if you are over forty-five, the age-limit on most army enlistments, you can become one of these amphibian soldiers. Sergeant Harris has signed up everything from an oysterman to a yachtman, and so many fishermen have passed his desk that it wouldn't astonish him if Izaak Walton in person presented himself as a candidate for enlistment. There was one fisherman, however, who didn't go up to three twenty-three Main Post Office to enlist. In fact this fisherman, -- Joe Nelson, -- wanted to stop a young fellow from enlisting but he ended by -- but let's hear the story from Joe Nelson himself. Right now he's standing by the desk (FADING) while Sergeant Harris is answering the phone -----

SOUND: TELEPHONE BELL AND RECEIVER RAISED FROM HOOK

BILL: Army Recruiting Service, Sergeant Harris speaking. (PAUSE) Yes, we're accepting enlistments in the Engineers Amphibian Command. (PAUSE) You should have completed at least eleven months of previous federal service, and have received an honorable discharge in the grade of corporal or higher. (PAUSE) Sure, for all marine work, -- mechanic, welder, radio operator, rigger, -- fisherman --- Come on down to three twenty-three Main Post Office and I'll give you details.

SOUND: RECEIVER PLACED ON HOOK

BILL: Next man, please. Next man.

JOE: (FADING IN) I guess I'm next, -- but I'm not enlisting, buddy, -- not this fisherman.

BILL: (COURTEOUSLY) What can I do for you?

JOE: Plenty, brother, plenty. (CONFIDENTIALLY) You can keep a kid from enlisting in the army.

BILL: My business is getting men into the service, not keeping them out.

JOE: Sure, sure, I know. But this is a special case.

BILL: Your son?

JOE: (CHUCKLING AND SLY BUT WITHOUT HUMOR) Sure, sure, -- my son.

BILL: What's the trouble? Is he under eighteen?

JOE: Nope. Eighteen today.

BILL: Mentally incompetent?

JOE: (DEFENSIVELY) Incom-- Say, I said he was my son, didn't I?

BILL: (ADMIRINGLY) Well, I don't need to ask if he's a good physical specimen. If he's your son, why, then he--

JOE: (PROUDLY) Hey, I am pretty well preserved for my age, ain't I?
That's what fishing does for you.

BILL: Fisherman, eh?

JOE: Sure. (HURRIEDLY) But not one of them ich--ichthyologist fellows,--
just a plain salt water fisherman, that's me.

BILL: Know anything about marine engines?

JOE: Now look, Buddy, I ain't enlisting, see?

BILL: (CHUCKLING) O-kay. No harm in trying is there?

JOE: Sure, I understand. You like the army. I like fishing. (PAUSE)
Now about this kid of mine-- I don't want him enlisting until I talk
with him, see?

BILL: Very well. If you'll just sit out there in the hall you can stop him
when he comes in.

JOE: But I don't know what he looks like!

BILL: You don't know your own son?

JOE: Funny, ain't it? He don't know me -- I don't know him.

BILL: But why--

JOE: Ich--ich-- ichthyology, that's why! (EXASPERATED) There I go, stutter-
ing over it! Sixteen years and I still get so mad I -- Aw, forget it.

BILL: (PLEASANTLY) Ichthyology is something about fish, isn't it? And you're
a fisherman-- incidentally the Engineers can use a few fisherman--

JOE: Aw, lay off the recruiting!

BILL: So, I don't see why you get so excited.

JOE: Well, I do get excited, see? On account my old man was an ichthyologist
-- thought the insides of a fish was more important than the outside,

if you know what I mean, and well, when I wouldn't study ich-- ich---
dog gone it, I wanted to be a fisherman, and so, -- well, the old man
left his money to the kid --

BILL: You mean your son?

JOE: Yeh. (PAUSE) Left it to him -- that is, the interest -- until he
was eighteen --

BILL: And then?

JOE: Then he really collects.

BILL: You mean you haven't seen your son since --

JOE: Not since he was two years old. I cleared out -- But today the kid
is eighteen. I've been trying to catch up with him, to see if I can't
pull a loving parent stunt and cut in on the dough. So far, no good,
but he's headed this way, and I mean to catch up with him -- When
little Jack Nelson shows up I --

BILL: (QUIETLY) Jack Nelson is out there in the hall now, -- making out
an application for Aviation Cadet. He's one of the finest. As for
you, -- (THREATENINGLY) Get out of here before I forget that a soldier
is always courteous to civilians!

JOE: O-kay, buddy. O-kay. (FADING) But you don't need to get so riled
up about it. (PAUSE - THEN FADING IN) Hello, kid. Care if I wait
here?

JACK: (FADING IN) No, sir. Sit down here beside me. (PAUSE) You
enlisting, sir?

JOE: (BITTERLY) Now that's a laugh!

JACK: I beg your pardon. (PAUSE, THEN TALKING TO HIMSELF) Now, let me see,
-- I respectfully submit -- Gosh, solemn, isn't it?

JOE: Sure, sure. (PAUSE) You ain't hardly old enough to be in the army,
are you?

JACK: (PROUDLY) I'm as old as my father was when he enlisted back in
nineteen seventeen.

JOE: Yeh?

JACK: Yeh. (APOLOGETICALLY) I mean, yes, sir! I forget sometimes --

JOE: Forget?

JACK: Having a soldier hero in the family is kind of hard to live up to.

JOE: I don't get it.

JACK: It does sound funny, but that's why I'm enlisting -- just as soon as
I'm old enough. I'm eighteen today, and that's when my father enlisted.
Look, -- Look at this.

JOE: Looks like a paper package --

JACK: (EAGERLY) Unwrap it!

SOUND: RATTLE OF PAPER AS PACKAGE IS UNWRAPPED

JACK: It's a -- a -- medal, -- a Medal of Honor.

JOE: Yeh.

JACK: For gallantry in action. My father won it.

JOE: Yeh?

JACK: So, I'm enlisting as an Aviation Cadet, because I know that's what
my father would want me to do, and I'm going to carry this for luck.

JOE: Your old man dead?

JACK: Yes sir, at least I think so. (INDIGNANTLY) But don't call him my old
man.

JOE: O-kay, punk.

JACK: (ANGRILY) And don't call me punk!

JOE: O-kay, kid.

JACK: (TO HIMSELF) Now, let's see-- Age? (PAUSE) Eighteen. (PAUSE) Hm-m, education? High School Graduate. Birth certificate? Yes, I've got that. References-- three -- Yes, got that. (PAUSE) Parents' consent-- (ALARMED) Parents' consent! I forgot to get that!

JOE: What's the matter, punk?

JACK: (WITH DIFFICULT CONTROL) Don't call me punk!

JOE: O-kay, but what's eating on you?

JACK: (STILL ANGRY) You wouldn't understand. You're too old to understand!

JOE: Hey, I'm not so dog gone old.

JACK: You're too old to be a soldier!

JOE: I am not! I could enlist in the Engineers Amphibian Command. Why, say, I could repair all the dog gone marine engines in the army, Why you young --

JACK: (APOLOGETICALLY) I'm sorry, sir. I didn't mean -- You see, I forgot to bring my mother's written consent to enlistment. I'm in a jam!

JOE: Yeh. Me too.

JACK: Gosh, I'm sorry. Is it serious? Won't they let you enlist?

JOE: Let me! Nope. It's a hundred thousand dollars -- and that's serious--

JACK: Your money?

JOE: Yeh.

JACK: Somebody steal it?

JOE: Yeh, an ichthyologist.

JACK: That's funny.

JOE: What's funny about it?

JACK: Oh, my grandfather was an ichthyologist, and if he hadn't been my dad
wouldn't have been a hero in the last war and I wouldn't be enlisting --

JOE: You got your old man all doped out, ain't you?

JACK: (WITH CONVICTION) My father was a gentleman, and a soldier, -- and a
hero. Nobody could tell him what to do, not even grandfather. That's
why he enlisted, -- and that's why grandfather disinherited him.

JOE: Cut him off because he enlisted?

JACK: Of course not. Because he wouldn't spend a lot of time in school
learning science, -- You know, ichthyology and stuff.

JOE: So he cut him off, huh?

JACK: Funny, isn't it? I got the money and I don't want it.

JOE: (EXCITEDLY) You don't want it!

JACK: Not really. It's mine today, on my eighteenth birthday, but gosh,
I'd trade it all for -- I mean ---

JOE: What for?

JACK: For a father. It's all right to have a dead hero for a father
but me, -- I'd rather have a live father, -- a real father than
anything in the world.

JOE: (SOLEMNLY) You would, huh?

JACK: Yes, because I know if I did have, why he'd be up here enlisting long
before I am. Because, -- well, when a man believes in freedom the
way my dad did, -- enough to give up his wife and son and money, --
He'd be in there pitching.

JOE: Yeh. I guess he would.

JACK: Say, I've been talking a lot and taking up your time. I better finish this application, and then dash home and get Mom to write that consent.

JOE: Yeh.

JACK: Then if I can just hurdle those aptitude tests, -- You know the ones that find out how sharp you are, -- There. I'll leave this with the sergeant. (FADING) Excuse me while I -- Say, (AT DISTANCE) I almost forgot! Give me that medal!

JOE: (AT DISTANCE) Sure, sure --- Here, catch!

JACK: Got to have that medal! It's to bring me luck.

BILL: All right, Nelson. Everything in order?

JACK: Sorry, sir, but I'll have to make a trip back home. I didn't realize I had to have Mom's written consent.

BILL: Only if you're under twenty --

JACK: That's me. Hold this application, will you? (FADING) I'll be right back.

BILL: O-kay, Nelson. (PAUSE) Next man, here.

JOE: (FADING IN) I guess that's me.

BILL: I thought I told you --

JOE: (CHASTENED) No, it was me telling you, but now, -- well, you can start telling me.

BILL: What do you mean?

JOE: Got any openings in that Amphibian Command for marine engineers?

BILL: No openings that would interest you.

JOE: Try me.

BILL: (HESITANTLY) Well, if you're sure --- We need diesel mechanics, coxswains, deckhands, fishermen, riggers --- engine specialists --

JOE: That's me. Hand me out one of them papers, buddy, -- You know, an application blank --

BILL: O'kay, but it sounds fishy to me. First you come in here acting like a --

JOE: Hoel --

BILL: And then you have a change of heart and want to be a --

JOE: Hero.

BILL: Hero!

JOE: That's what he said. And by golly if that kid of mine thinks I'm a hero -- I'm gonna be one. Give me that pencil! Uncle Sam, here comes an Engineer!

MUSIC: THEME UP AND DOWN TO BACKGROUND

ANNCR: And so we leave Sergeant Harris signing up another recruit for the United States Army Engineers Amphibian Command. If you want to serve your country, ^{even if you} ~~are over forty-five years of age,~~ ^{but physically} ~~the age limit for most army enlistments,~~ sound, investigate the Army Engineers Amphibian Command. You should have completed at least eleven months previous federal service and have received an honorable discharge in the grade of corporal or higher. So, if you're a ship carpenter, a welder, a rigger, mechanic, signalman, diesel or gas engine mechanic, here's your chance. Call at the United States Army Recruiting Service, three twenty-three Main Post Office for details.

MUSIC: THEME UP AND DOWN TO BG

ANNCR: Next week at this same hour KOIN will present another in the 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