

SECOND THOUGHTS

By javie aiche

All of us were exceedingly polite about the matter, but politest of all was Private Whittaker of the Maryland Traffic Patrol entrusted with public safety and preservation of the war effort along the undulating roads, treacherous curves and generally beautiful terrain of the State of Carrolls and Howards. Lord Baltimore's estate, of course.

In Washington they call me the bad-weather guy. One or another fate has seen to it that with each trip into the capital city I shall encounter the worst possible atmospheric conditions consonant with the season of my coming. For my part I have come to believe this. The town known as the heart of global war is either too hot, too cold, too wet or too dry and that the penalty of my own associations with it must be added in personal discomforts. I am just getting the best of neuritis and a cold contracted there late in October.

Well, December came to Wyoming Valley with a burst of weather for which only January and March could rightly be blamed, and even then it should be only a fifty-fifty culpability between those two horrendous months. Glad to be home and rejecting at least two suggestions of parties near at hand I was brain-deep in Fortune (the magazine and not the condition) when long-distance called. It was Washington. Worse yet, it was orders. I must be at Bedlam-On-The-Potomac by two o'clock the following afternoon.

Try and get there. Not a seat was available at the railroad station, even though the one train to suit my orders was departing at the terrible hour of three in the morning. The bus leaving an hour later could guarantee no more than the railroad. So, what to do? A year ago the answer would have been in the garage at the back of the lot. Now though, getting thirty-one gallons of gasoline, the amount required to cover the gap between Wyoming and Washington, counting the return journey, is a process not facilitated by a ration book in which the remaining coupons called for only twenty-one.

But, it was a case of using the car and trusting to luck. Luck finally came in the form of a distressed farmer, hopelessly broken down and needing at once emergency transportation from York to Arlington and return. On the share-the-car provision of national rationing he provided the gasoline and all appointments were kept. In fact, we both were ahead of time, a satisfaction that alleviated later distress in finding ourselves almost blown off the highway by the bumptious winds, blinded by snow squalls and twice compelled to hole up in roadside recesses to permit torrential and obscuring rains to subside. Oh, yes, and once we were completely lost by a mistaken turn into a mountain pass.

What was most heartening about the whole thing was the Maryland trooper. My companion and I probably had become a little careless and undoubtedly were a little nervous from the cold winds that beat out the car heat and left us chilled to the bone, even under our great-coats. One of us must have depressed the accelerator. A car with a yellow shield painted on its

front door shot up alongside, a horn tooted two gentle toots and we stopped for an interview. We were exceeding the Victory Speed Limit; we were past it by a good ten miles an hour.

To be usual about police encounters is to expect that the minion of the law will open conversation of rebuke with the question: "Where's the fire?" or "What's your hurry?" or with the blunt statement: "Pull over to the side of the road and get out your license cards." But not Private Whittaker. That chap has a refreshingly different procedure. He put his own car at the side of the road and stepped over to the lowered front window.

"How fast were you going?" he asked.

I didn't know and told him so. I added the few pertinent facts about wanting to get off the storm-ridden roads, being engrossed with the farmer in talk about the food shortages, and the utter necessity of obeying official orders as to that, two o'clock appointment in Bedlam.

"I'm Private Whittaker," he said. "My uniform will acquaint you with my duty. You were going forty-five miles an hour. Now, that's five miles under the legal speed limit but it's ten miles in excess of the speed required to win this war."

Without further comment we handed over our cards and he began writing.

After a time he handed a sheet of note-paper in through the window.

"Read that when you get to Washington," he said.

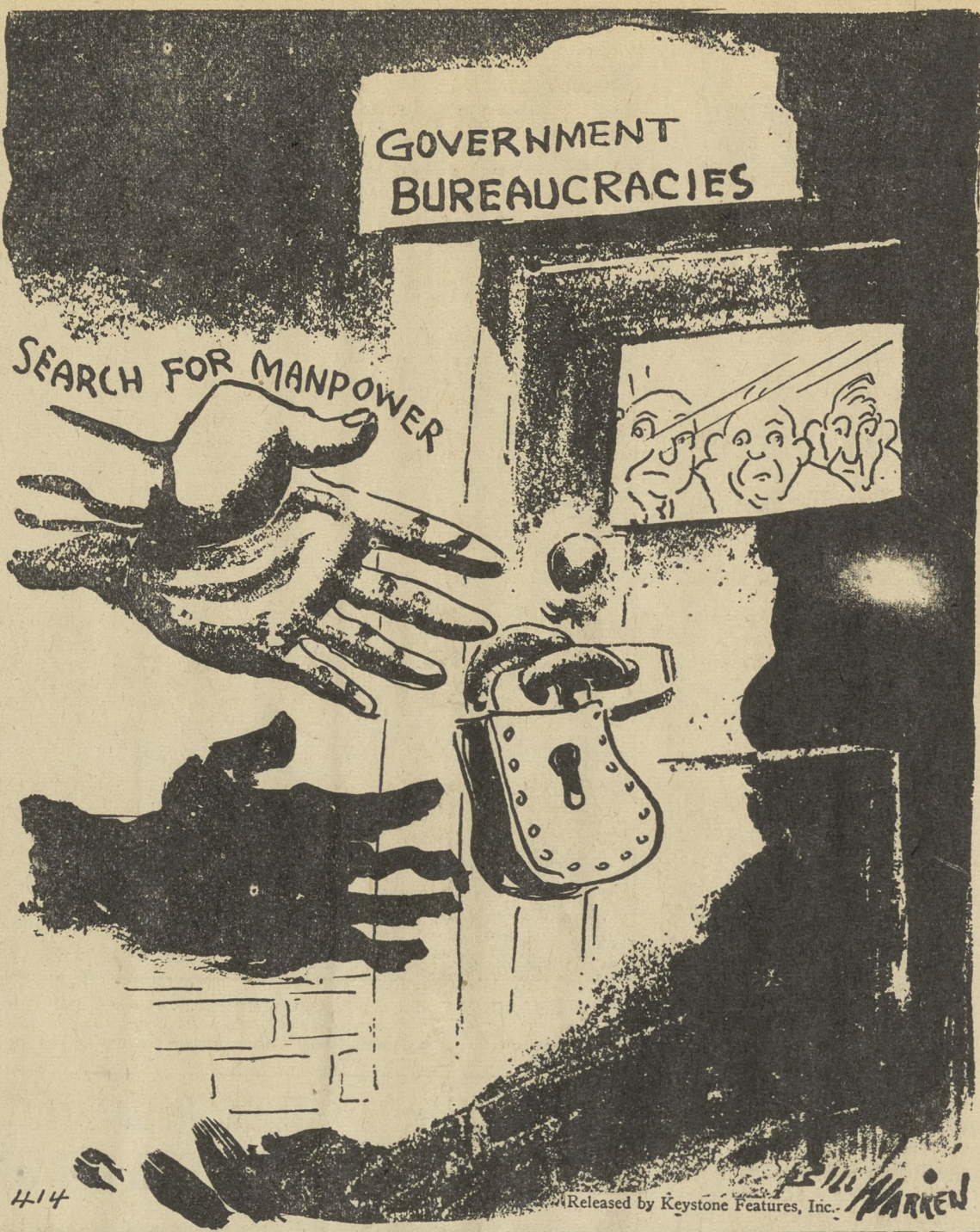
I read it. Over the signature of Governor Herbert O'Connor were the heartening words that informed the farmer and me that we were not arrested; that we had broken no law. We had only failed to cooperate with a measure considered necessary to achievement of victory. All that in contrast with expectation of being hailed to court and suffering at least confiscation of the one last asset for keeping faith with orders.

I thought there was a law. Now I find that Victory Speed depends only upon proclamation; the same as Thanksgiving, for instance, whether you get one of it or two.

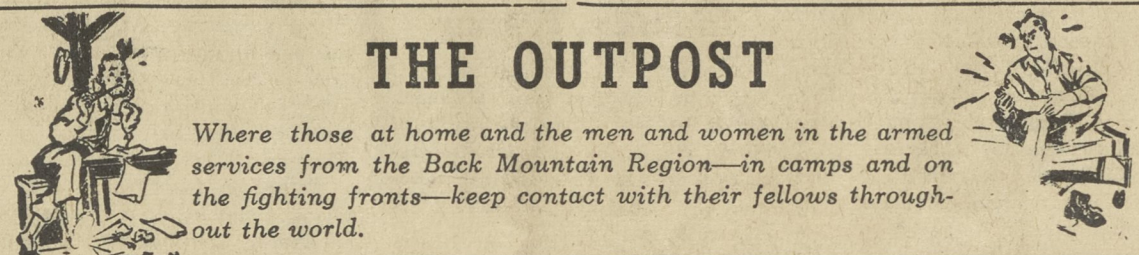
I wasn't surprised at all on the return journey when the hundred or more cars that passed in the same direction were hitting it up at fifty and sixty miles an hour. But I am not failing to remember that if enough of those information sheets are written up against any motorist he may be denied his ration book, with right of appeal to only a government bureau.

I'm determined to conquer even absent-mindedness to forestall any possible contribution I might make to what we already have too much of. I mean Bureaucracy, of course.

Don't Overlook This Hideout



THE OUTPOST



The Drummer Boy Of Virginia

Dear Mr. Risley:
After being transferred twice, I have finally arrived at my destination. I am stationed at the University of Virginia here in Charlottesville. We started here on December 1st and since then we have been so busy that we don't know whether we are coming or going. We have been having 2 hours of Math., Physics, Navigation, Radio Code and Civil Air Regulations every day. Sunday is the only day we have to ourselves. And let me tell you, we need it.
Monday our class divides into the two squadrons, the "Red" and the "Blue." The "Red" squadron will take flight training in the morning and go to classes in the afternoon. I have been assigned to "A" Flight in the "Red" squadron, so I will fly in the morning. The "Blue" squadron's schedule is just the opposite.
There are 30 cadets stationed

here now. They are from all parts of the eastern United States. My roommates are from Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina. They certainly are a fine bunch of fellows.
Well sir, as time is growing short,

I will have to close. If it is possible, I wish you would put my address in the Post. It will certainly make me feel a lot better to hear about the home town.
Sincerely yours,
Louis Kelly.
P. S.—Here is my address:
Cadet Louis M. Kelly, U. S. N.A.F.R.
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7 Elliewood Avenue
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THE SENTIMENTAL SIDE

By EDITH BLEZ

Dear Santa Claus:
I know you are going to be busier than ever this year but I wonder if you would mind doing a few things for me? I realize that one has to be a good girl to get real rewards from you. I don't know just what to say on that score, but when I tell you what I want you to do maybe you won't have to take my behavior into consideration!

THE LOW DOWN FROM HICKORY GROVE

This gas rationing, you know, it is maybe gonna turn out to be just what the doctor ordered. What we been needing is to compose ourselves for a half-hour or so. You can't ponder—or think—at a 50 speed limit in 4-way traffic.
"Alright," says Henry, "proceed, if you have something to say."
"Okay," I says, "it is to get woke up, somehow or other, before it is too late, on what kind of a mess we will be in after the war. The war is enough to be in, but when it is over we don't want to blink our eyes and find ourselves in the middle of some new kind of mess."
"Like what?" says Henry.
"Like socialism," I says. "Look how thick the 'E' cars are getting to be. Everybody in an 'E' car is on the taxpayer's payroll. And half the folks cruising around in 'E' cars don't produce a nickle's worth per annum. Getting the Govt. out of every business where it has a foot in the door, is staving off socialism. With tires getting thin and gas getting scarcer, we will have a chance to ponder." "Finally," says Henry, "you got an idea."
Yours with the low-down,
JO SERRA.

I know you get around all over the earth. I realize you can get into places where it is impossible for the rest of us to be. I wonder if on your long journey you could make a few side trips for me? Is it asking too much?
I want you to visit a few boys for me, boys who deserve Christmas presents, boys who possibly won't be expecting much for Christmas. First of all will you see to it that my Three Musketeers get their Christmas packages. They are some where in England. I have had Christmas cards from them and they seemed alright when the cards were mailed. Please help make their Christmas a good one because they really deserve it, Mr. Santa Claus.
Then if you don't mind will you look up Walter Kirby, Able Seaman who is on H. M. S. Delhi. He was here last December and I shall always remember him at the Christmas table. His blue jacket behind the tall red candles was something to remember. That was the first Christmas he had been on land for some time. He has been in the Royal Navy since he was fourteen and a half and I do want him to have another good Christmas. You might have a little trouble finding him. He might be in the middle of some ocean. He might be sitting in his gun turret waiting for the small bell to ring, the bell which is the only signal he has from the outside world when he is in battle. See that Wally has as good a Christmas as possible will you Mr. Santa Claus? Wally has been through a lot and he is awfully young!
Then there are a few more soldiers I would like you to take care of. Some of them I don't know by name but I remember their faces very clearly. I saw them come into Fort Dix and I saw them go out again. I don't know where they are now.
Maybe they are in Alaska, maybe they are in Egypt or Northern Africa. A few of them might be at Guadalcanal. Please Mr. Santa Claus, drop in on the boys if it is just to wish them a Merry Christmas in the good old American way. Tell them we haven't forgotten them for one little minute. Tell them that we would willingly give up our Christmas if we thought it would help them any. You know, Santa Claus, what Christmas means to American boys. Sure, they are spoiled, they are used to good things, they are used to all the good things we are going to have for Christmas but they are scattered all over the earth fighting so that we can always have a good Xmas. Please, Mr. Santa Claus, look out for all those boys. I have seen so many of them march away with their heads high and without complaint. They, above everybody else deserve a good Christmas, Mr. Santa Claus. See what you can do about it will you?

Health Topics

By F. B. Schooley, M. D.
Public Health
There is need for a nation-wide sustained effort for public health work. The family physician is the main line of defense of the health of the community. The preventive functions of physicians who are concerned with public welfare as related to the disease of the individual have not been rightly understood or evaluated. Rural communities have been considered fortunate in regard to health. In many instances urban mortality rates are lower than those in rural communities. Health and educational measures appropriate to rural conditions are necessary and essential. More attention must be given to the proper administrative control of medical services by qualified professional advisers. Modern health departments should be efficiently administered by qualified physicians or individuals who have been trained in public health, and free from political influences.
The trend in the distribution of medical care in the United States apparently has two main objectives: (1) a devotion to the search for the truth about the causes of disease; the development, testing and adoption of the appropriate means to alleviate, control or eliminate these causes and the elevation and maintenance of standards of medical education and medical service for all the people, and (2) a comprehensive knowledge and evaluation of the facts concerning the need for medical service, and an inventory of the means to meet the needs for medical care and an appraisal of the methods by which the services and facilities are made available to those in need of medical care. Local health programs would provide co-operation with state and federal health programs, educational preventive medicine endorsed by local professional groups, periodic health examinations for all ages and preventive inoculations.
With the apparent cheapening of human life by accidents and warfare, we must be more vitally concerned in conserving our human resources. The majority of our people are in need of better medical care and more adequate distribution of medical service. Better medical care through the family physician must and shall carry on for the common welfare.

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Did you leave in such a hurry that you left unfinished business behind? Could we finish it for you? Have problems come up since you have gone away that we can aid you or your family in solving? Your problems will be treated in the strictest confidence and handled with dispatch.

Somewhere among us there is probably someone who in his daily business or profession handles the very problem that is bothering you most, or who has gone through a similar situation and knows the ropes.

Perhaps it is a will . . . or an automobile for sale . . . a problem with regard to real estate or insurance . . . maybe it's alimony or a dozen and one other things. What have you?

We're on the ground. We want to help. We do not want to attempt to take your family's place, but we do want to aid you if our service will also aid them. Naturally this service is gratis. Write us. Give us a chance to help you. That is all the reward we want.

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