

As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

During the recent D-Day ceremonies held at the American Cemetery near Cambridge in England, an Air Force band played "In The Mood," reminding many present of the most popular band of that era - the Glen Miller orchestra.

Miller's name is among the 5126 names listed on a 472-foot "Wall of the Missing" at the cemetery. On December 15, 1944, his cross-channel flight to Bordeaux was officially reported missing. Major Miller was in a Norseman UC-64A aircraft, Serial #44-70285, powered by a Pratt & Whitney radial engine. His companions on the flight were Lt. Col. Norman F. Baessel and Flight Officer John R. Morgan.

In accordance with the War Department regulations, the required "Missing Air Crew Report" was filed in triplicate by the Abbot's Ripton command, and Adj. General Ma'or Albert Buchow telexed SHAEF Hq VIII AF confirming verbal information that: "At place missing and unreported since departure 'Winwood Field 1355 for France pilot FO Morgan

The wartime nation ran on Major Glenn Miller's music

and two passengers including Major Glenn Miller."

From a beginning struggle in 1937 (the Miller band made only \$200 playing from 8 p.m. to 3 a.m. at the Playland Casino in Rye, NY) to late 1942 when it disbanded grossing up to \$20,000 weekly, its music was implanted forever in the minds of millions. There are probably more romantic memories associated with Miller music than any other kind.

Miller himself was an unlikely image of a bandleader - he had more of a schoolteacher look. Yet his was a brilliant mind, artistic and imaginative, traits which show up in a letter he wrote to Washington in 1942. Some excerpts follow:

"...letters and reports all show that the interests of our soldiers and sailors lie in modern, popular music, as played by an orchestra such as ours, rather than in the music to which their fathers listened 25 years ago, and which is still being played by army bands as in World War I days."

"...I should like to go into the army if I could be placed in charge of a modernized army band. I am 38 years of age and in excellent condition, registered for the draft but not yet classified. I would suppose ultimately it would be 3A, and I mention this only because my suggestion stems from a sincere desire to do a real job for the army and that desire is not actuated by any personal draft problem..."

And so a great army band was born, under newly-commissioned Glenn Miller. His civilian band's first trumpeter, Zeke Zarchy, became the Army Miller band's first sergeant. Drummer Ray McKinley joined, as did bassist Trigger Albert and arranger Jerry Gray. From the Goodman band came pianist Mel Powell, others came from the bands of Artie Shaw, Harry James, Tommy Dorsey, Will Bradley and Jan Savitt.

During the band's formative stage a post commander objected to those great marching arrangements like "St. Louis Blues March." His argument was, "We played Sousa marches in the last war and we did all right!" Miller fired back with, "Tell me Major, are you still flying the same planes you flew in the last war too?" (Objection overruled!)

Famous band chronicler George T. Simon wrote that Glenn Miller was never a man who would or could stand still. Simon said, "Beneath that serene but stern exterior there whirled an active, probing mind - one that understood so well and respected so much all that was good in music and in human beings - the mind of a strong man who had accomplished so much in such a comparatively short time, and who almost certainly would have accomplished so much more - if he had only been given the chance."

One can only wish Glenn Miller had never written that letter.

Letters

Drivers: Please slow down when traveling Pioneer Ave.

Editor:
I have a request. Back Mountain residents, please slow down on Pioneer Ave.
The speed limit is posted as 35 mph all the way, except between Newberry and Main St., Dallas. There it is 25 mph.
Pioneer Ave. is a residential street with many children, older

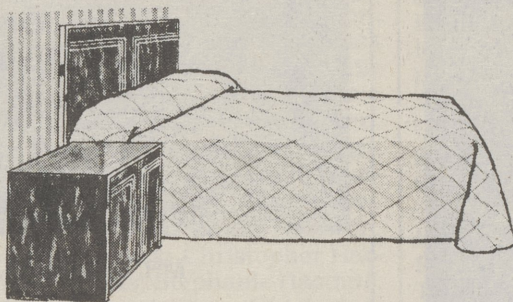
people and rural mail boxes.
If those commuters to the Back Mountain would observe the law, perhaps other would also.
Traffic has been substantially increased because of the highway construction.

J.C. Rockla
Dallas

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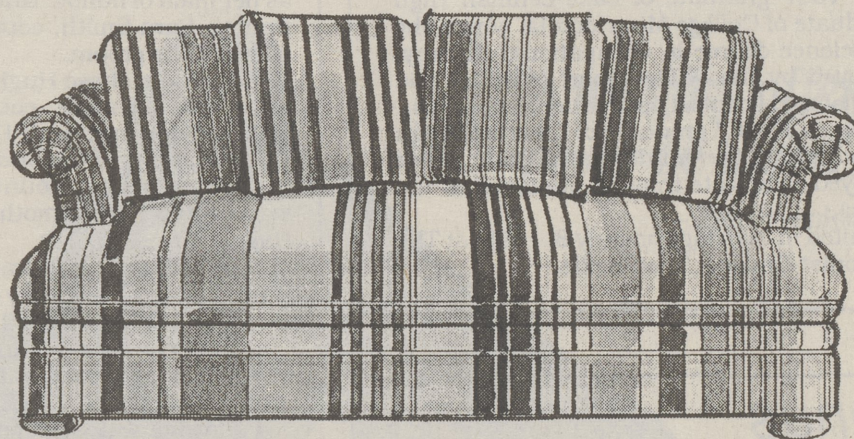
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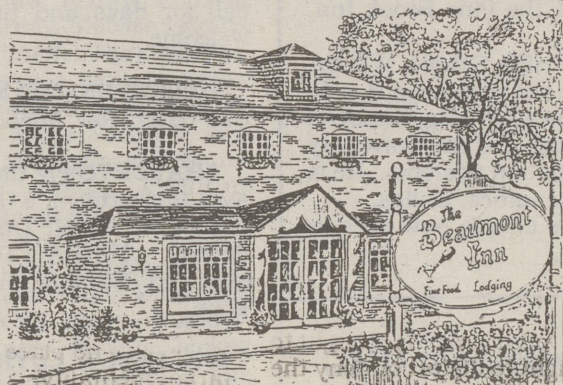
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