

"Still-Standing-By"—Captain Fried

By Appointing the Hero of the Antinoe and Florida Rescues as Sea Steamboat-Inspection Head at New York, the President Recognizes a Man Outstanding in His Field

By KENNETH STEWART

ON that stormy September night, when 124 lives were lost in the *Morro Castle* fire off the New Jersey coast, Capt. George Fried of the United States liner *Washington*, was in Hamburg, Germany, too far away to answer the doomed vessel's belated SOS.

On another stormy night, almost nine years ago, Captain Fried, then commanding the *President Roosevelt*, was near enough to heed the calls of a ship in distress, and thereby establish a reputation for meeting crises which led logically to his appointment last week as Supervising Inspector for the New York Division of the Bureau of Navigation and Steamboat Inspection.

It was in January, 1926, that the *President Roosevelt* arrived at the side of the disabled British freighter *Antinoe*, fighting a mid-Atlantic blizzard. For four days and nights, Captain Fried stood on the bridge directing disheartening attempts to reach the sinking ship through the mountainous seas and the blinding sleet. He saw two of his own men drown, helpless to save them, and he saw empty life-boats washed away, but there was no let-up until the last of the *Antinoe's* crew of twenty-five had been taken aboard the *President Roosevelt*.

Rescued From Rigging

Three years later, thirty-two men, half-naked and almost starved, were clinging to the rigging of the Italian freighter *Florida* when the liner *America* found them near the Virginia Capes, 150 miles off their course. Captain Fried's quick work saved them all.

Two years ago his ship picked up Lou Reichers from the wreckage of a plane south of Ireland when an attempted flight from Newark to Paris ended in the Atlantic. On October 17, last, this time aboard the *Washington*, Captain Fried directed the rescue of five men on a plane which had fallen into the sea after flying 600 miles out to pick up news-films from the liner. One man went down with the plane. Between these major "incidents," the commander figured in spectacular ship-to-ship transfers, and in record ocean-crossings.

The understatement of his laconic "still-standing-by" radio messages describing the *Antinoe* rescue characterizes the man.



Underwood

Captain Fried (right) receiving a distinguished service medal from the United States Lines for his rescue of five men on a plane which crashed near his ship, the *Washington*. (Left) P. V. G. Mitchell, Vice-President of the line; (center) Chief Officer Ralph C. Dooley, of the *Washington*

While England and America heaped honors upon him, he referred to the feat as an incident. When King George V gave him a gold cigar-box inscribed, "From the British Government to George Fried for fine seamanship, humanity, and courageous resource," he replied, "The opportunity came, and that was all there was to it. We did nothing which any other ship in our place would not have done."

Nevertheless, few others have done what he has done. Men who know the sea say that it is expert navigation, seamanship, and crew training, not luck. Altho Captain Fried will not talk about how he gets such results, he has about him the look of the sensitive disciplinarian.

"Please don't be sentimental," he pleads in his shy and soft-spoken manner. More harrowing to him than the perils of the deep are the storms of ticker-tape and thunders of applause which greet his return from each new exploit. Notes from his log give unstinted praise to his subordinates, and to the efficiency of his radio compass.

True to his Scandinavian ancestry, George Fried quit the Worcester, Massachusetts, farm where he worked as a boy, and joined the Navy at seventeen, became a petty officer, then a lieutenant. In 1917, he was commissioned an ensign in the Naval Reserve Force, and five years later, relieved from naval duty, he was put in charge of the newly launched United States liner *President Roosevelt*.

Like so many followers of the sea, he has nursed a dream of a little white house, with perhaps an occasional coastal cruise in a boat of his own. At other times, he

has said, "There is something calm and soothing about being aboard ship. There is not that continual bustle that goes on on land." His wife recently sold their home at Yonkers, and bought another at Coral Gables, Florida. But Captain Fried, after thirty-six years at sea, will not have an immediate opportunity to indulge in the peaceful life. "His is the biggest job of its kind," said Joseph B. Weaver, a Deputy Administrator in the NRA, with authority over shipping, "for it has the greatest responsibility." Captain Fried, who is fifty-seven, has been appointed to serve until the retirement age of seventy.

On his induction into service last week, Captain Fried said: "I am delighted to get a shore job. I want to see the green leaves come out. I have a hard job—I'll have to go back to school again."

The position of chief inspector in the New York Division, which includes Albany, New York, Philadelphia, and New Haven, is the most difficult of the country's eleven districts, made more difficult by conditions revealed by inquiries following the *Morro Castle* disaster.

Higher Standards

Explaining the plan to coordinate the Bureau of Navigation and the Steamboat Inspection Service into an effective adjunct to the marine industry, Mr. Weaver said:

"We must make ships more safe from fire-hazard, regulate life-saving equipment and training, have more traveling inspectors to maintain standards. We have a President who knows what it's all about, and Captain Fried knows what is sensible about steamboats and what isn't. Ship-owners know this and trust him."

That view seems general. Once more recognition has been paid to President Roosevelt's quality of seeking out a man outstanding in his own field and drafting him for a task with which he is familiar. The President "shot straight at the mark," the New York *World-Telegram* commented, adding: "With Captain Fried on the job here, passengers can walk up the gang-planks of outgoing vessels with a new confidence that they will not burn to death, or land . . . at the bottom of the sea."

Topics of the Day

**A Radical Calls
A Spade a Spade** Radicals will eulogize Gov. Floyd B. Olson of Minnesota for being a radical, conservatives will denounce him for being one, but both radicals and conservatives must compliment him for calling himself one, as he did the other day, and had done before.

A radical Governor Olson certainly is, if words and the platform of his Farmer-Labor Party mean anything. Nevertheless it is surprising that he should apply the label to himself. For some reason or other, most Americans hate to think of themselves as radicals, as reactionaries, or even as conservatives. Perhaps this is because they fear words more than do other peoples; perhaps it is because they doubt that any of these three words exactly describes their own complex body of beliefs. The average American, it may be, has a bit of the radical, a bit of the conservative, and a bit of the reactionary in him, and knows it.

Interestingly enough, the term "liberal" seems comparatively popular in this country, possibly because it is broad enough to include the average citizen's wide variety of opinion. Its very popularity, however, has deprived it of meaning. Political thinking becomes badly confused when radicals and conservatives both claim the title "liberal," as they often do. It helps to clarify things, therefore, when Governor Olson pins the tag "radical" to his own lapel. However popular or unpopular it may make him, at least it shows where he stands.

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**Horse-Trading
Might Do Here** When the United States was dickering with the principal Powers before the signing of the Washington naval treaty of 1921, "dollar diplomacy" was considerably assisted by a certain organization dubbed "The Black Chamber." So, at least, Maj. Herbert O. Yardley has written in a book of that title. This staff of cipher-experts, he reported, succeeded in "breaking" the code used by a certain Oriental Power, and, by means of this information, placed the American delegates in a position to obtain the five-five-three ratio which may be denounced soon.

Now, the "Black Chamber" is history. A nervous Secretary of State disbanded it, and naval intelligence activities slumped dangerously, how dangerously the naval negotiations in London are revealing.

Military and naval attachés of all nations work on a *quid pro quo* basis. If one country has a "diving bomb," let us say, and another has a new anti-aircraft gun, they exchange plans officially. But at London, the American delegates have found that nobody wanted to exchange data with them. They have been told all necessary information could be obtained "unofficially." To rectify this "leak" in Ameri-

can naval secrets, the Navy Department has clamped rigid restrictions on information concerning new devices. The wartime security section is going into action again.

It is up to the naval constructors and Yankee inventive genius to give the American delegates at London something to "trade" soon. Perhaps a little sharp horse-trading might save the conference.

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**Another Opportunity
For Those Technocrats**

Out of Washington, D. C., comes another story of technological unemployment, another tale of man displaced by the machine. A member of the Kenwood Golf and Country Club has invented a contraption which eliminates caddies, and, consequently, caddie-fees as well. This device, this infernal device, as caddies call it with variations, consists principally of an outgrown kiddy-car, with a golf-bag superimposed. Anyone who wants to pull it around a course can make one for seventy cents, tho, of course, no mechanical caddie ever found a lost ball, or concocted a flattering lie about a golfer's score.

Caddies stress these shortcomings at the top of their voices. Nevertheless, they would be wise to conserve their energy for close study of the club-car and possible means of improving it. There is just a possibility that the thing, catching on, will solve the very problem it creates. Suppose it turned out to be another Helen Wills eye-shade, and swept the country. In that case it might simultaneously sweep all the caddies in the country off the golf-courses, but mightn't it also sweep them into jobs constructing club-cars?

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**Law and Medicine
Join to Fight Crime**

Attorney-General Homer S. Cummings has invited Governors, police chiefs, and representatives of law-enforcement agencies to the National Crime Conference to be held in Washington from December 10 to 13. The question, how further to improve cooperation among Federal, State and local authorities both for the prevention of crime and for its punishment, will naturally engage much of the attention of the conference. In kidnaping cases such cooperation, as every one knows, has already reached a high degree of effectiveness. To better it, the Department of Justice proposes to establish a national institute of criminology to study crime problems and police work, which will be in addition to the technical laboratory the department now maintains.

In Cincinnati, law and medicine have joined forces with the police in organizing a crime-detection laboratory known as the Medical Legal Institute, while Northwestern University has had such a laboratory since 1930.

**Age No Determinant
Of Superstitions**

Many normal boys and girls are superstitious, it appears. Drs. Otis Caldwell and Gerhard Lundeen, of Teachers College, New York City, testify to the fact. Not long ago, as part of their job of determining the prevalence of superstitions in the United States, they submitted a series of questions to pupils at a junior high school in New Rochelle, New York, and received some interesting answers. Some of the pupils, they found, really believe that the good die young, that getting out of bed on the wrong side makes a person irritable, that sons of ministers go wrong more often than sons of other people, and that it is a sign of bad luck to have a black cat follow one.

Many may conclude from this that boys and girls are a good deal like their parents when it comes to superstitions, and, as a matter of fact, that conclusion is correct. Previous investigations have convinced Doctors Caldwell and Lundeen of several things. One is that country-dwellers are more superstitious than city-dwellers. Another is that women are more superstitious than men. A third, and the most interesting of all, is that everyone is superstitious to some extent. A person without a single superstition may conceivably exist, but the investigators have never found one.

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**Pauper Oil Company
Strikes "Black Gold"**

Two oil-drillers, J. W. Yeran, sixty-one years old, and John Hupp, sixty-nine, trudged from Oklahoma to Ohio three years ago vainly seeking work. They finally gave up the struggle when they entered the Washington County Infirmary at Marietta.

Yet the old urge to strike for oil remained active in their minds; as oil had been found elsewhere in Southeastern Ohio they felt there might be some in the poorhouse-yard. With the consent of the superintendent of the institution, they borrowed a drilling outfit and started to work.

For three weeks—from 4 A.M. until dark—the "plump-plump" of the drill chugged in the poorhouse-yard. They had nearly lost hope when at noon, one day, a burst of fluid shot from the casing. Oil was flowing.

At this point, according to the routine of fiction, the veteran oil-drillers should have said good-bye to the poorhouse, and set out in fine raiment for the bright lights of the big city. Instead, they organized the Pauper Oil Company, declared the poorhouse-superintendent in on the ground-floor, and announced that they had become so attached to his institution they could not bear to leave it. Their resolve may prove embarrassing to the county authorities. Meanwhile, the temptation to call it loyalty should be resisted.