

315 H. St., ne
Washington, D.C.
November 16, 1942

Mr. Frank Hall Praysur
Editor, Spect
1501 Broadway
New York, N.Y.

Dear Frank,

I'm sorry I couldn't write you sooner. Among other things, I wasn't well.

We discussed several stories when last I spoke to you, and I agreed to write you a letter with brief outlines of each. Here they are:

A story on William Power Maloney, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, in charge of prosecutions for sedition and related conspiracies. In several months Maloney's name will again be very much in the news. At the present time he is preparing more than 28 sedition cases for trial. He was in charge of developing the cases and presented them to a grand jury with marked success. Maloney is a devout Catholic, a dynamic sort of guy personally, and has a good record. He first started to get and make National headlines when, as counsel, he ran the U.S. Senate investigation of wire-tapping. It was from this job that he went to the Department of Justice, where he has been conducting the investigations of seditionists, the vermin press and other un-American people and things that will reach a climax in several months when the first of the cases goes to trial and makes really sensational headlines. Many pictures available at services and others should be easy.

The United States Information Service - Information for a Democracy. This is the story we discussed at some length, and I believe you have it pretty

well fixed in your own mind. It is the story of the services rendered America's smaller citizens by their government. Like Maloney, this service has had practically no publicity, and I believe no picture magazine has touched it. From the most unimportant citizen who wants some information to manufacturers who can not maintain Washington offices and representatives come a steady stream of inquiries which keep a large staff in one of the new temporary buildings more than busy. The center of the first floor of this building is pretty, well panelled and decorated. In the center is a large information booth, staffed by good-looking girls. To this booth come the thousands who have come to Washington looking for work, looking for friends they can't find, or even looking for a bed to sleep in. The USIS takes care of all. Surrounding this large room are a series of offices with glass sides. In these offices are the contact men who handle the problems of smaller business men. They are called "The Gold Fish Bowl Boys" because, unlike lobbyists and the like, they do everything out in the open. They have no privacy, and the theory of their jobs is they are not supposed to have any job secrets. Previously the USIS had been scattered all around Washington, in holes and high up in various buildings. They answered only written and telephoned inquiries. As soon as the emergency, however, President Roosevelt decided it could be important in the defense (and war, of course) effort. On his initiative it was located on one of the "best" corners in town, 14th. and Penna. Ave., nw. The USIS is one of the cheapest, most efficient and least publicized agencies among the war agencies. It is now, at least technically part of the OWI.

Another story you had pretty well fixed in your mind was that of Ft. Belvoir, about 30 miles below Washington. Here in the Engineer Replacement Training Center, the Army and individual soldiers, in a democratic way, have built a camp second to none in the world in the opportunities it offers the men to make their Army lives as comfortable as possible. Most of the barracks have large "living rooms", frequently with mezzanines. Some of these are panelled, all decorated with original paintings and the like. They have comfortable furniture, and the men have private dances (supervised, of course). They have powder rooms for the visiting girls, and lots of other things like that. When these barracks were built it was planned that two men would share a room. Now the rooms have been connected in pairs, and, if the men desire, they can build bunks in one room and use the other as a private sitting room. Many of the men have done this, and they have unusually nice quarters. Among the things done by the Army (the men themselves have done most of the other work themselves) that have improved the lots of the men was the construction of an amphitheater, larger than any around here for hundreds of miles, ~~at least~~ so a larger number of men can enjoy the plentiful entertainment. Most of the top-notchers going to Washington try and make a show at the Fort. At this camp, too, there is much "cultural" recreation available. Some of the soldiers have reproduced Army life at the camp in oils, and there are several good pictures available. I think this story has several values today, and I know I can get a lot of cooperation on it here, probably including the services of a photographer for the excellent camp magazine.

Production heroes. To date America's major contribution to the United Nations war effort has been on the production, ^{kind of} Outstanding contributions

have been made by men and woman (including girls) who work in the offices and factories. They have solved major problems, streamlined techniques and processes, invented devises and in literally thousands of ways made production more effecient and economical. I have made arrangements for an excludives on a selected group of 8 or 10 whose pictures and stories you might want to consider. They are both men and women, Negros and foreign born, and enough will be located close enough to you to solve any picture problem that might arrise. There are some pictures available. Here in Washington, as in the factories, there have been major problems that employees have solved. The Navy has swarded clerical workers ~~xx~~ commendations and about ,7500.00 in cash for their Auggestions, which have saved lots of work.

How the Post Office is helping to win the war. There are hundreds of thousands of post-office employees all of whom, every day, perform some war duty besides carrying the mails, in itself an important war service. They have handled major problems for the government, like alien registration. They have handled the collection of many millions of dollars in war bonds and stamps. Post Office investigations have been of outstanding importance in counter-espionage (though they may object to the use of this fact). There are hundreds of ways in which the mail carriers and clerks are quietly, but daily, doing their bit.

The Treasury income-tax story I suggested is one we should get busy on pretty soon if you want it. Ralph Daigh said he was going to look into it, I believe. What I have in mind is a story the average salary worker could use to fill out his blank. we could get it, officially, from the Treasury. For pictures you could have a "Spot Average American Family"

Navy heroes. You will recall that in speaking of this story I said there might be picture troubles. I still anticipate this difficulty. However, sketches might even work out better, but unfortunately, it is not often possible under the stress of action to shoot a man making a hero of himself. This story, as we discussed it, is the story of how foreign-born and first-generation Americans in the Navy have discharged their responsibilities to their new homeland with valor and courage "over and above the call of duty". The stories of heroic conduct are of a Swede, a Frenchman, a Hawaiian, a Chinese, an Italian and perhaps another. Their stories have not been widely told, and make good copy. I have made the necessary arrangements with the Navy.

In connection with our talk on this story, we also discussed the possibility of ^{regularly} uncovering "unsung heroes" and giving them the credit that is their due.

I suggested an American and a United Nation hero per story. Such stories can be obtained here from our own Armed Services, to whom I have already spoken, and from representatives of the various United Nations governments, with whom I have good connections. I know of several good Czech, Norwegian, Polish and Russian stories, and the picture problem will not be insurmountable. In half the cases they should be available.

Combat correspondents, or fighter writers. I'm surprised that none of the larger magazines has found this story. Most of the front-line stories we are getting, and as the war progresses, perhaps all of them, will be written by members of the various Armed Services. The Marines make the best copy. They have enlisted crack reporters and photographers from their comparatively sedentary jobs on newspapers, given them Marine training and sent them into action. Fighting in the vanguard, they must wait until they have established a beach-head before they drop their guns

and set up their typewriters or darkrooms. The news Americans have been getting and will get from ~~the same sources~~ such places as the South Pacific has been written by the combat correspondents who were first to leave the invasion barges and who fought until they had enough room to write. Good pictures of these men in training at a Marine Corps base are available, and there may, within a short while, be good action pictures of them that are the McCoy.

I believe this covers all the ideas you wanted me to put on paper. There are some others than might appeal to you, but there is no point in flooding you.

By the way, how did the pictures of the OPA party last Saturday night turn out? I hope you got enough. If you didn't, there will probably be a better story of similar nature in the near future.

Also, will you please speak to Williams for me and remind him I was to have heard from him about the Smythe matter, one way or the other, in about 10 days ago. If he doesn't want the story, please ask him to return the stuff to me as soon as he can, because I can use it. What is his first name, Frank, Bill or Bob? I couldn't remember, and that's why I didn't write him directly.

How goes Spot?

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg