

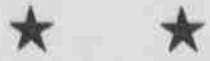


Article

Contributions from the student body.



Verse



Ron Ramp, Drummer Extraordinary

How a All-American ball carrier threw over a career on the snares

"Yeah, mister, that's the big lug out there tossing the old apple to those ends. The best passer in big time football, the sports writers say. He's a cinch All-American this year."

Johnny Bird, sports editor of the "Tiger's Claw," the University of Wabash student paper, had just pointed out Ron Ramp to an inquiring stranger who was watching the Tigers work out for the last time before their departure to Anhauser for the annual Thanksgiving Day game.

The stranger looked over the field and saw the huge "Tiger" fullback toss several perfect passes.

Ron, a problem

"He's been quite a problem to your coach, hasn't he?"

Johnny was startled. It had been three years since any one had mentioned that.

"Huh? Oh, yeah. We've forgotten about that around here. Coach swears by him now—says he's the perfect athlete. Ramp keeps training rules like nobody's business. Say, how in the deuce did you ever hear about that, anyway?"

The stranger smiled. "Things get around. I really don't know a whole lot about it, tho."

The editor of the "Claw" settled down. It's fun to be in the know, and in this case, he was really in the know. He guessed that he'd let the unknown in on the facts of the discussed matter.

A "snatch"

"Yeah, Ron was really a cyclone to handle for awhile. He came to the U with quite a high school reputation. I was in his class and we both pledged the same fraternity. He showed his heels plenty to the varsity his freshman year. They didn't mind, though, because they recognized a "snatch" when they saw one.

"You'd never believe it to look at the kid, but he was a nut on music. When he wasn't playing football, he was at the frat house, listening to all the latest records of the swing bands. He missed plenty of classes, but the Dean just gave him hell and dismissed it. Football players are allowed more skips than the average student. Coach talked to Ron and he began to hit the books a little more.

"Up in his room, he had a miniature drum which he had made himself. Well, every Tuesday night, that's when Benny Goodboy, the king of swing, came on the air, Ron really went to town on that darn drum. The actives objected for a time, then it wasn't long before the whole house was up listening to him match beats with Gene Kruper, Goodboy's hot drummer. It was a bit of all right.

Young hopeful.

"Football season passed very successfully for us and hopes were bright for an even greater team the next year. The brightest of these hopes was Ron Ramp. Great things were expected of him. The papers really gave him build-up. Just about like the way they built up Bill de Correvont of Northwestern last year.

"Ron was becoming studious as the devil. He never missed classes anymore, but he still had his regular Tuesday night 'jam' session. His room was crowded to the hilt every Tuesday night, 'cause the campus was wise. Everybody and his brother came to see and hear the football playing drummer. Just as you said, 'Things do get around.'

"Well, one night we had a party at the fraternity house. Everybody was having a swell time, including Ron. He was swinging out with some doll from the Theta Beta house, and, brother, when he swung out, he really swung out. The campus queens say that dancing with him is like taking a ride on the magic carpet."

Fireworks.

The bespeckled stranger was

amused by Johnny's expressions.

"Now here's where the fireworks start," continued Johnny. "Some spoke up and asked the band leader to let Ron handle the drums for a couple of licks. The leader hesitated for a moment but gave in when the boys started insisting. Mi. e., there almost went our All American!"

"It didn't take much persuasion to get Ron to sit in with the band, and when he started swinging those sticks the crowd went wild. The rest of the band got into the groove before long and things really started popping. And let me tell you, stranger, there isn't a beat known to drummers that Ron didn't use. It got around in a hurry that Ron was playing the drums at the party, and it wasn't long before the place was jammed with students. Jitterbugs galore!"

Ron a big hit.

"The leader was taken out. He could see that Ron had the stuff and he wanted to put the bee on him to play in his band. Ron r used the offer and we were plenty relieved. But that spook k n't coming around the house, seeing Ron about every day. The first thing we knew, Ron skipped out one Friday night to handle the drums on a campus job. It was just like before. Ron drew the entire campus. The band became a success overnight."

Johnny stopped suddenly to watch Ron get off a 75-yard kick. The big fellow certainly looked like an All-American.

Johnny got back to his subject. "We talked to him when he got home, telling him all the time that

football and drums don't mix. He said that football season was over and this was just fun to him. Nothing serious. Nothing to get excited about.

Name spread around.

"So we let it ride for awhile. Ron was playing every week end now. His name was being spread throughout the dance halls of the Middle West. He was a sensation!"

"Again, just like you said, 'Things get around,' and it was just a short time before Ron was playing with a better band. He now had to go out on school nights as well as the week ends. He was going nuts on drums. He was gradually flunking out of school.

"The dean called him in again, giving him a final warning. Ron let the warning slide off like water off a duck's back. He kept playing in the band. The coach, off on a vacation, got wind of it and flew back to school for a talk with his protege. Ron fluffed him off. Was the coach ever burned up! He came over to the house, raising hell with us and telling us we were to blame, and that if we didn't get busy, our big football player was going to be out of school.

Wouldn't give up.

"We talked and argued with Ron, but it did little good. He was stuck on drumming. We gave up, but took turns doing his lessons for him. He thanked us, but cared very little whether assignments were handed in or not. Finals were only a month off and we were plenty worried about Ron. If he flunked them, he was out of our friendly little institution.

"One morning a few of us were reading the city paper and we came upon an item in one of the entertainment columns that said Benny Goodboy was going on a

secret trip to look over some drummer who was becoming a sensation at some university. That was enough for us. We thought we knew where Goodboy was going.

"We ditched the paper so Ron wouldn't see it and sent one of the boys to the city to find out for sure where Goodboy was going. Just as we suspected! He was out to look over Ron.

"It was plain to see that we had to do some fast work. Benny was due down Friday to watch Ron go to town at the sophomore prom. Well, Friday afternoon we took our trouble child out with us, intending to talk him out of his drumming career. A local beer tavern seemed to be the logical place and we sat our problem down in a corner booth and started putting on the heat. We could see that he was getting plenty sore at our intrusion into his affairs, and we were plenty taken out when he ordered a beer. None of us had seen him take a beer before.

"As the conversation progressed, Ron ordered up and ordered up until he was getting pretty well along. We finally gave up talking and left him there to take care of himself. We had done our best, but, pal, it looked like we had failed.

All turn out.

"Practically the whole Frat turned out for the prom, 'cause even tho we were against his drumming, we loved to hear the big lug beat it out. And were we ever surprised when we walked onto the dance floor. There was Ron up there in the band, looking like he had been dragged thru several mighty small knot holes. Buddy, he was drunk.

"Everyone in the place knew, and it looked like old women's

club day the way the whole mob was whispering around. Pretty soon the dance started. We looked around for Goodboy. Guess he came inco' 'cause we never got a glimpse of him.' It wasn't long before we realized that Ron might just as well be out beating on a watermelon for all the good he was doing up on that bandstand.

In plain words, he stunk. His first drunk was no time to be playing the drums and he knew it. So finally he left the bandstand and went down into the wash room. I followed him down and found him beating his fists on the wall, an old trick for undergraduate drunks. His hands looked like pieces of raw meat. He was plenty disgusted with himself, and I could see that he was hurt. I rushed him out of there and took him to a doc. Our star had three broken fingers on his left hand and a mangled tendon. He hasn't been able to use his left hand worth a darn since. Of course his drumming career was ruined, for any person having stiff hands is no good on the drums.

The stranger was taking all this in very matter-of-factly.

"What about this fellow, Goodboy. Did Ron ever know about the audition he was getting?"

"Yes. We told Ron and he felt mighty bad for awhile. We never knew for sure whether Goodboy got there to hear Ron mess things up, but we have always thought he did, 'cause some stranger left the hall just as soon as Ron walked out on the band.

Johnny's companion coughed, apparently having some trouble with a cold.

"And how has Ron been doing since, he asked.

"Swell," replied Johnny. "He started studying right after the See DRUMMER, Page 5.

Europe's fantasy war

By Jon Pruden

Getting into the army was the best thing that had ever happened to German Soldier No. 2064. The food was good. The uniforms were comfortable and good-looking. And the travel gave a man a chance to see new places. It suddenly occurred to 2064 that, in taking part in the mass movement of troops from Poland to the Western Front, he was witnessing one of the great dramatic moments in history. "Great dramatic moment," he thought over and over. "Great dramatic moment." And it gave him a feeling of power and well-being that he had never known before. It made him feel almost like a big-shot or something.

The line was good, too. No. 2064 was gazing out over the dark green hills, and getting mildly excited at glimpses of the concrete observation towers and pill-boxes at their summits, and then suddenly the train rolled into the dark mouth of the entrance tunnel. About three minutes later they emerged into the glare of an electric sign that read: "Terminal Station. Fort No. 56. Saarbrucken Area." At a shouted command, the men were hurried out of the cars, placed in squads, and marched away to the barracks at double time.

"What's your name?" whispered the man with the heavy voice next to 2064.

"Karl."

"So's mine. Everybody I know's named Karl—or Adolf."

The man was talkative. He kept chattering in low tones about this being the impenetrable West Wall, the great Siegfried Line. The squad turned down another corridor and moved through an open doorway into the well-furnished sleeping rooms.

"Lights'll go out in half an hour. You better get to bed," said the squad leader. And he disappeared through another doorway.

The first night.

No. 2064 climbed into the upper deck of the bed assigned to him. The man in the lower bunk, below him, spoke.

"Just get in?"

"Ya."

"You'll like it here. Great life. Have a lot of fun with the French."

Next morning, after breakfast had been served in the great mess hall and the first instructions about positions and duties had been given, the men all went up in the elevator and watched the French parading up and down on the opposite bank of the river. They carried banners, painted in glaring colors, saying in very bad German, "We won't shoot if you don't." One of the banners bore a likeness to Der Fuehrer. Underneath it was written, "Hoch, der Kaiser!" There didn't seem to be much point to the parade because nobody was shooting anyhow, but the men laughed and shouted greetings across the river to the French, who shouted back and jumped up and down like excited children.

Get instructions.

A very stiff young orderly marched up, clicked his heels, and announced that No. 2064's division was to go back down to a meeting. In the big auditorium the old captain was waiting for them. He looked like he had indigestion. But he went about the business of explaining to them the location of oil and gas and food stores, the central position of the kitchens and mess-halls, and the use of gymnasiums, movies, and other facilities, efficiently enough.

"We must keep the army in good physical condition. You are here to use this equipment as much as you wish. The only work you must do is that entailed in keeping the fort clean," he barked. And it sounded like he meant that he wished there was more to do. Standing up there in front of them, he looked like he wanted to grin, but knew that some great thing called Prussian Military Discipline must be maintained.

"This is a good place," thought No. 2064.

"And now," said the captain, "I have a very important introduction

An imaginative interpretation of a soldier's life on the front as indicated by press bulletins

to make. In the skirmishing up the line near Fort 54, three prisoners were taken. Not wishing to be greedy, the officials at 54 decided to divide the spoils of war. They sent one of the prisoners to 55, and one to us here at 56. May I introduce to you the most exciting persons we have met since the war began, a real bona-fide member of the French army, captured in actual combat."

The Frenchman popped up from his seat beside the captain, bowed gravely, and said in halting German, "Ain't we all having a good time. When I get back I'll sure have some stories to tell. But, God, I hate to think of goin' home."

He sat down amid thunderous applause.

The prisoner was in conference and when he came out of the office a rumor went around that some agreement had been reached. Next morning an official notice was posted on the bulletin board in the mess hall. It said that the French had been contacted by radio after the conference the evening before, and that specified times had been set for all bombardments in the future. The French were to open fire each morning, not including Sundays, at 9 o'clock, and were to continue firing for one hour. After an interval of 45 minutes to allow the French gunners to get clear, the Germans were to begin their bombardment which was to continue until 11 o'clock. After that hostilities were over for the day, and everybody was to go to hunch.

"That means I'll have to remember to get inside every morning between 9 and 10," thought 2064.

Fixed it up.

The little Frenchman stopped at his side and stared up at the board.

"I fixed that up. No sense in wasting shells all day," he said.

"Ya," answered 2064. "By the way, how'd you get caught? I've never seen a prisoner of war before. They aren't very common around here."

"Just an accident. We were at-

tacking with the tanks up north there in the woods. It's sort of a race, you know. There's a line that runs down through an open place in the trees, and we run our tanks up on one side. You Germans run yours up on the other. When both sides get up there we shift into reverse, and see who can get back the fastest. Well, I got shifted into forward instead of reverse, and the gear stuck. I beat all of your tanks back to the German lines. And I couldn't get out, so there was nothing they could do but capture me—me and the gunner and the mechanic."

"Too bad," said a handsome young blonde with a pink face. "But accidents will happen."

Bombardments over.

In the afternoon, after the bombardments were over, the French came down to the river to swim and wash out a few clothes. The captain marched out to the men on the observation platform and said that the general had suggested that they might as well go down and swim with the French. He didn't look very happy about it. He looked as though he thought it was disgusting. But the general had said they could go, and that the prisoner could go along too if he'd come back, so there was nothing to be done but let them. So they climbed down the bank to the river, and, throwing their clothes on the sand, dove into the cold water. Some of the French swam across to them. And after some difficulty with the language, they decided to try racing back and forth across the river. It would lend excitement to an otherwise dull afternoon. The little pink-faced German won most of the races. But a great dark poliu shouted:

"I'll bet we could beat you at water polo."

"Bet you couldn't."

Game planned.

They talked the idea over for a while, and finally agreed that nicely under way, using partially See WAR, Page 5.