



# MR. WINKLE GOES TO WAR

By THEODORE PRATT

W.N.U. RELEASE



**THE STORY THUS FAR:** Forty-four-year-old Wilbert Winkle, who operates a repair shop in the back of his home, is notified by his draft board that he is in I.A. He breaks the bad news to his domineering wife, Amy, who is quite perturbed. On arriving at camp Mr. Winkle is given his physical, and to his great surprise and dismay, is accepted for the army. He takes the oath of enlistment and gets so many "shots" he cannot remember just what they all are for. He is sent to Camp Squibb, a thousand miles from home, where he meets Mr. Tinker, a man of his own age. Mr. Winkle gets KP and some bayonet practice, in which he does not do so well.

## CHAPTER VIII

Once more Mr. Winkle fired the machine gun. By moving it about sufficiently he managed to send several bullets where they were supposed to go. He clung to the trigger desperately, hoping to do well, if only by accident.

The Sergeant had to yell for him to stop. "Pop," the Alphabet told him fondly, "if it was anybody except you, I'd know he was gold-bricking. In that case I'd make him into the best machine-gunner on the range. But I guess you and any kind of a gun ain't the kind to make friends. You got to learn some more, but you'll never learn much.



He clung to the trigger desperately, hoping to do well, if only by accident.

All right, Private Tindall, let's see what the master mind can do."

Freddie sat nonchalantly at the gun. It was the first time he had followed an order with any kind of grace. He looked around. The Lieutenant was far down the line.

"You see that target?" Freddie asked Sergeant Czeideskrowski. "That's you."

"Shoot the gun instead of your mouth," Jack advised.

Freddie glared at him.

Freddie took his time at the gun. Finally he fired. Delicately he handled the bouncing death. He sliced the up and down marks on the target. He sliced those running across. He cut to ribbons those marked on a slant.

When he was through he asked triumphantly of the Sergeant, "How do you like yourself now?"

The Alphabet regarded the target with regretful admiration. "If there was somebody else than a rat who did that," he observed, "it would be One-A nice and I would send him a gold-engraved invitation to join the machine-gun crew I think the Lieutenant's going to let me make up."

The first Mr. Winkle knew of it was the sound of loud voices coming from the rear of the barracks. Running out with other men, he discovered that Jack hadn't waited to get Freddie away from camp.

When Mr. Winkle rushed forward to stop it, he was caught and held by one of the huge arms of Mr. Tinker, who advised fiercely, "Let'm alone."

The battle was progressing on pretty much of an even basis by the time the Alphabet arrived on the scene. Afterward, Freddie claimed that he was swinging at Jack when he hit the Sergeant. Jack recounted the same tale when one of his blows caught the Alphabet instead, and in his case he was sincere but not appreciated by the higher authorities.

As they were led off to the Lieutenant by Sergeant Czeideskrowski, Jack called to Mr. Winkle, "Please don't—"

"I won't," promised Mr. Winkle. He didn't even write home about the incident when both the warriors were given terms in the stockade.

Mr. Winkle was ordered to report to the orderly room. Wondering what serious breach of military etiquette he had committed, he departed to the accompaniment of encouraging remarks from his comrades.

"It was nice knowing you, Pop," "When you get to England, drop me a card."

The Lieutenant leaned back in his chair behind his desk and regarded him. "Getting along all right?" he asked.

"Yes, sir—that is, I hope so, sir." "We're satisfied with you in most respects, if that's what you mean. Like the Army?"

"I like it, sir." Mr. Winkle knew this to be the stock answer to the question.

The Lieutenant seemed to know it, too, and to want a little more information, for he rephrased the question. "Happy in it?"

Mr. Winkle hesitated.

"Answer just the way you feel," the Lieutenant instructed.

"Well, I can't say I'm happy, sir. I'm not exactly a fighter, that is, with my fists, so to speak. And being away from my wife and . . ."

"Your regular work? You miss that?"

"Yes, sir. But I recognize why I'm here."

"You know the new regulations that went into effect the other day. You're over thirty-eight and can get a discharge if you go into a war industry. Why haven't you applied?"

Amy had written that she would leave it up to him, and that she would be proud of him no matter what he decided. As yet he hadn't given her a formal answer. Now he prepared it.

"I'd like to stay in the Army," he heard himself telling the Lieutenant. "If you want me."

The Lieutenant glanced at him once, with approval. "I'm going to ask you one more question, Winkle. Think it over before you answer. Are you afraid?"

"Don't be ashamed of it," the Lieutenant advised. He smiled. "If you'd told me you weren't afraid, I would have known you weren't speaking the truth. And I don't mean you alone, but all the men including myself. It's a normal thing, like being nervous before making a speech. Usually you make a better speech because you're nervous. It's the same way with fighting. Fear makes you more aware, keener, alert—a better fighter. No soldier has ever gone into battle without being afraid—if he has, there was something the matter with him."

"Don't connect my lecture," the Lieutenant went on, "with the fact that I'm recommending you for the Motor Mechanics School. I simply feel that's where you belong, by previous experience, and at your age. And you may have to fight there, or be so close to it that it's virtually the same thing. That's all, and good luck to you."

It was a moment before Mr. Winkle could scramble to his feet and salute. "Good luck to you, sir—that is, thank you, sir."

Mr. Winkle felt that the Army had something of a soul after all. While he didn't exactly walk on air, which was impossible, anyway, being an Army mechanic was work he would like better than marching or shooting. At least it found a round hole for him to fit in more comfortably than the one he now occupied.

Mr. Tinker, on the other hand, when the reclassification notices were posted on the bulletin board and his name was listed with that of Mr. Winkle, was not pleased.

"Me!" he complained. "I ain't in the Army to be any nursemaid to a jeep. It ain't right! It ain't right for a minute!"

"You better write to the Secretary of War about it," advised one of his squad who was remaining an infantryman. "You just write to him and he'll fix it up for you."

The Messrs. Winkle and Tinker moved in new circles.

They changed to barracks at one of the far ends of Camp Squibb, so many miles away that it might have been a different world. Their associates were all mechanically inclined individuals. These spoke their language better than had their previous companions, and over them all was a slightly technical aura.

Their office during business hours was a large, hangar-like building. Two lines of engines, mounted on high wooden frames, were placed down its length. On these they worked, in select groups of four, with a Technical Corporal over each quartet, and a supervising Captain miraculously clad in coveralls like their own.

Mr. Winkle, who could repair anything, here really learned about Army regulations, which presumed that he knew nothing about a combustion engine. They also held that there was only one way to do a specified job, the Army way, and that anything else might as well not exist.

"We will now," lectured his Corporal instructor, "locate the trouble in this engine, which won't run." To illustrate, he turned on the ignition and pressed the starter with his hand. The motor turned over, but refused to start. The Corporal looked about at his four men, peering at their nameplates. "Winkle, you take it."

Mr. Winkle, who had been regarding the engine idly, had already noticed the trouble. "Why," he said, "the carburetor's out of adjustment."

He swiped briefly but expertly at the carburetor with his screw driver, snapped on the ignition, pressed the starter, and the motor roared.

The Corporal, looking appreciative, gestured wildly for him to shut it off.

Mr. Winkle obeyed.

Indignantly, the Corporal put the carburetor out of adjustment again and then addressed Mr. Winkle se-

verely, a good deal put out that this little ruse had been discovered so easily.

"Look," he said, "here we work up to be Thomas A. Edison slow-like. Starting from the ground. I think you heard the Captain mention something about procedure sheets. You got yours?"

Mr. Winkle held it up.

"What's it say you do?"

"First," Mr. Winkle read, "'crank engine by starter; if engine fires but motor won't run, pour gas in the carburetor.'"

"Now you got the idea," the Corporal ordered.

Mr. Winkle cranked the engine, which fired but didn't run. He took up a can and poured gasoline in the carburetor and tried again. The engine ran for a moment and then spluttered to a stop.

Mr. Winkle glanced longingly at the carburetor adjustment and then consulted his procedure sheet once more.

He learned he now knew that the seat of the trouble was the fuel system. He checked the gas supply, the lines and the connections. Finally he came, according to procedure, to the carburetor. He swiped with his screw driver again, and this time, when he pushed the starter, Army procedure was triumphant.

When he shut off the engine, he stood back with a puzzled expression on his face. "Can I ask a question, Corporal?"

"Something you don't understand?"

"Well," proposed Mr. Winkle, "supposing I'm out in a stalled truck with the enemy after me. Do I go through the procedure and get captured, or do I adjust the carburetor and escape?"

He knew by now it was heresy to make such inquiries, but the answer to this one worried him genuinely.

The Corporal regarded him witheringly. "Maybe your skin will tell you that if you think it's worth saving."

Mr. Winkle and his friend, Mr. Tinker, were in town to celebrate their completing the Motor Mechanics course and having received their certificates of graduation.

They stood outside the bar Mr. Tinker patronized. Mr. Winkle was about to be on his way down the street alone, as usual, leaving Mr. Tinker to the attractions within. Mr. Tinker had been wishing that he



"Getting along all right?" he asked.

would join him this time. "How about it?" he inquired.

"No," Mr. Winkle replied judiciously. "I don't think so."

"I know you're married and all, but that ain't any reason you can't enjoy yourself."

Mr. Winkle shook his head.

"I ain't trying to get you to do anything you don't want to do," argued Mr. Tinker.

While they stood discussing it, with Mr. Tinker making most of the comments, they saw two soldiers coming along the street. One was Jack, but they couldn't believe their eyes at first when they recognized the other.

They hadn't seen Jack or Freddie since the fight. Incredible rumors, which they refused to accept, had reached them that Freddie had finally been broken into small pieces and was being put together again in another form.

Now the soldier on Jack's arm stood straight. He was confident, but not arrogant. And no mustache blackened his upper lip, which was shaven clean.

Mr. Tinker was the first to speak, to Freddie. "That ain't you, Tindall."

Mr. Winkle stared, perplexed, from one to the other of the young men. "It can't be," he said.

Jack laughed. "Sure it is. He's an Army lug now." He nudged Freddie. "Go on, yardbird, speak your piece."

Freddie had been standing with his face slightly flushed, making no comment. Now he looked sheepish for an instant before he said "I guess I owe you an apology, Mr. Winkle."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D. Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Released by Western Newspaper Union.

### Lesson for December 24

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### THE GROUND OF UNIVERSAL JOY

LESSON TEXT—Luke 2:8-12; Hebrews 1:1-4; 1 John 1:14.  
GOLDEN TEXT—Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people.—Luke 2:10.

What would you like for Christmas? Could anything be better than to find for your heart and mind that spiritual safety, certainty, and joy which transforms life? Well, that is exactly what Jesus came to bring mankind. It was the first Christmas gift, and it is the best gift this year too.

**I. Safety (Luke 2:8-12).**  
Men need deliverance from their sin. They needed it when Christ came. They need it today. They must have a safe refuge, one in which they may rest secure.

All the efforts of this world to meet man's need are vain. As Joseph Parker put it: "The world did not want an adviser. The world had advised itself almost into hell. The world did not ask for a speculator. Everything that man could do had been done, and men sat in the darkness of their own wisdom. The world did not want a reformer, a man who could change his outward and transient relations, an engineer that would continually devote his time to the readjustment of the wheels and the pulleys and the various mechanical forces of society. The world wanted a saviour."

Jesus came as Saviour. The good tidings revealed to the faithful shepherds were to be "of great joy to all people" because they presented the One who could bring them redemption from sin.

That revelation is ready to be made again this Christmas, and as it came to the shepherds at their work in the field, so it may come to you on the battlefield, in camp, in the air, under the sea, in the kitchen, the factory—yes, anywhere. We rightly go to our churches to worship on Christmas Day, but let us remember that Christ is everywhere, seeking each one—yes, knocking at your door. Will you let Him in? Then you will have Christmas indeed!

**II. Certainty (Heb. 1:1-4).**  
God has spoken through the centuries in the messages of many faithful servants. We do well to give heed to God's Word through them. But after all they were only servants. This message of redemption is so vital and fundamental that God sent His Son, Himself the Redeemer, to declare it.

How final, and definite, and blessed is that truth. The heir of all the eternal glories of God the Father, and Himself the effulgence (or the flashing forth) of the glory of God, has spoken God's last word—His certain word—about redemption from sin.

We all know how full of uncertainty the world is, how our own minds are distressed by the very uncertainty of countless things about us. What a precious gift from God to realize anew the absolute certainty we have in Christ. He came to save, to satisfy, and to keep us.

Note that He has all the needed authority and power to carry out His loving purpose (vv. 3, 4). He who "made purification of sins" for us to believe, is divine. He has all power. He is glorious beyond our ability to describe. He is God. We can rest in perfect assurance in His redemption.

**III. Enjoyment (1 John 1:1-4).**  
God knew the need of man for real joy if life was to be pleasant and profitable. Being a Christian was never intended to be a somber, doleful business. No, indeed. "These things we write," says John, "that our joy may be made full."

What did he write? By inspiration of the Holy Spirit he wrote of Christ, "the Word of life." He had seen and known Him, the Redeemer. He had fine and uplifting fellowship with Him, and declares that we too (as believers) share in that fellowship.

One of the bright and gladsome things about the Christmas season is our fellowship with our family and friends. It brightens the whole holiday season. How much more delightful is the fact that we have "fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

That fact really "makes" Christmas! Many will be separated from family and friends this year, but Christ is there, and they may have this most precious of all friends with them. The empty place around the family table will be filled (if we wish) by the Lord Himself. Let's keep Christmas with Him as the unseen but nonetheless real Guest. In fact, let us do even more than that, let us count Him into the intimate fellowship of our family circle (and two can make such a circle). That is what He wants to be—to you and to me—this Christmas Day, 1944.

May his joy be yours in full measure. That is the wish of the writer of these lines, and it goes from his heart to the very last reader who may be in the uttermost part of the earth. A blessed Christmas to you!

## SEWING CIRCLE PATTERNS

### To Brighten Winter Wardrobe Make This Smart Accessory Set



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8684  
12-20

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## AROUND THE HOUSE

Sitting on the edge of a mattress weakens the edge and causes it to sag.

Lay your vacuum cleaner on the floor and pass your dust mop back and forth before the opening to clean the mop.

Wax ash trays with floor wax to prevent ashes from sticking to tray.

Add a handful of salt to the last rinse in cold weather, and the clothes will not freeze as they are hung out.

Weights on the barn and shed doors should be adjusted so that the doors will close by themselves, thus avoiding the necessity of stopping to set down a couple of pairs or a sack of feed to close the door.

For a glazed appearance on pies, brush lightly with cream, or beaten egg and water, before placing in the oven.

When putting a dish directly on ice put a rubber jar ring under it to prevent the dish from slipping off the ice.

Use discarded tea leaves to clean the inside of a flower vase. Moisten the leaves with vinegar and let stand in vase overnight. Next morning apply warm soap suds to finish the job.

## ASK ME ANOTHER?

A General Quiz

### The Questions

1. How many signers of the Constitution were foreign born?
2. Who kills the bull in a bull fight, the picador, the matador or the toreador?
3. What is a lee shore aboard ship?
4. What American woman fought for the emancipation of woman's clothing and the wearing of trousers?
5. Can you name one prominent American statesman who violently opposed the ratification of the Constitution?

### The Answers

1. Seven.
2. The matador.
3. The shore upon which the wind is blowing.
4. Amalia Jenks Bloomer.
5. Patrick Henry.

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