

# Presenting The Best Of The 1959-60 Tar Heel

## A Farewell To The American Hospital

By FRANK CROWTHER



St. Tropez is a small, expensive resort slightly above sea level on the French Riviera. The natives call it le coin toque of France. Three miles to the East is Cape St. Tropez. On this eastern shore there is the dried and sun-baked carcass of an Eskimo. No one has explained what the Eskimo was seeking at that latitude.

Paris is full of boys named Rocky, which is a diminutive of the name Pierre, and there is a Parisian joke about a father who came to Paris and inserted an advertisement in the personal columns of *L'Humanite* which said: ROCKY MEET ME AT RITZ BAR NOON TUESDAY FOR VIN ROUGE ALL IS FORGIVEN PAPA, and how eight hundred sad young men drank 4,800 glasses of vin rouge that Tuesday while waiting for their Papa (who didn't show up because of the Metro strike).

That has no bearing on my story, but I thought I would show you from the beginning that a man alone ain't got no chance (eh, reader?). I have not yet learned that there are some things that you have to put in abeyance when telling a story.

It was in the late summer of that year that we lived at the Ritz Hotel where we could look across Place Vendome to Van Clef & Arpels. Troops of tourists went by our rooms and down the rue de la Paix hopelessly trying to find the Cafe de la Paix. They raised a great deal of fuss and you could hear it until late in the afternoon. Sometimes you could hear it late at night. In fact, you could hear it constantly along with the rain beating down elegantly on the Roils Royces and the Bentleys. In the early fall my money ran out and I wrote my old man for fifty grand. Before he could reply, I fell from a bar stool and broke my leg. It was one of those nights when I had taken one too many rations of the great giant killer.

They took me to the American Hospital. The orderly in the emergency room wore a cap and a mustache. He was in shirt sleeves and a stethoscope hung from his pocket. Somehow he reminded me of an old billiards partner of mine, Count Ribaldi, who had given me many of the few grand ideas I then sported. He knew his business, that orderly, and you could tell it by the way he ordered the nurses around.

"Softly, woman, so softly. Straighten out his legs." He looked down at me and smiled gently. "You're going to be all right, baby. Just take it easy."

Another nurse put her arm around my neck and breathed in my face. It was like being trapped on the Metro during the morning rush. They finally got me up to the ward and into a bed which had no sheets. They were locked up and nobody knew where the key was. Later, I asked the attendant for a private room with a view. A clean, well lighted place.

It was then that I saw in my mind the railway stations and the snow-covered mountains and the rich women who had tricked and cheated me and all the half-wits I had known. These were the things I remembered. The good times and the quarrels and the changes, not just the events, that I knew I would finally write. The great thing was to hang on and fool around and oggle and eavesdrop and yearn; and when you convinced yourself that you understood, to write; sometimes before, and usually a hell of a lot after. But those weeks in the hospital were some of the bad days. Not being good or gentle or brave, I was sure that some day soon I could once more go to Harry's New York Bar on Saturday night and tell exciting stories to the American girls on tour. That was a good thing to have in reserve.

Several mornings later, while dreaming of onion soup in Au Chien Qui Fume and dinner a La Cloche d'Or, I realized that my St. Anthony medal was missing. Somebody had probably removed it at one of the undressing stations. I wasn't a Catholic but had heard that the medal was very useful. Not having it spooked me.

That afternoon I was still under the effects of my morphine shot and the demoral pills I had been sneaking on the side when I saw her, clearly, for the first time. She looked young and fresh and beautiful. I had never seen any one so beautiful. Her name was Brett Berkeley. She was one of the nurses who had been giving me the treatment. I knew then what would happen. And it did.

It is impossible to believe the emotional and spiritual intensity, the pure classic beauty that can be produced by a woman. She seemed to be one of those few simple people caught up in a primitive society. For some reason, I wished that I had been an ambulance driver but that, I knew, would never be. My French license had been permanently revoked for driving around the Arc de Triomphe the wrong way during the evening rush hour. The way she looked at me made me feel damned lonely and I suddenly decide to forget the sickness and the war and make a separate piece. Outside it was raining.

Brett was carrying a shillelagh under her arm. "What's the stick for?" I asked.

"It was given to me by a boy who was lost last year," she said.  
 "I'm sorry."  
 "He was a very nice boy. He was going to marry me but he was captured."  
 "In the war?" I asked.  
 "No, by one of the *Nouvelle Eve* girls."  
 "You have beautiful hair," I said, rallying.  
 "I was going to cut it off when he left," she said. "I wanted to do something for him."  
 "I didn't say anything."  
 "Do you suppose it will always go on?" she asked.  
 "What?"  
 "The tourist season."  
 "It will have to crack sometime," I replied, bravely.

She smiled and left. She had a very nice smile. It was still raining that night when the head nurse made her rounds. She picked up my chart and frowned. "You're originally from the Left Bank and yet in a Right Bank hospital?" she asked.  
 "Yes."  
 "How did that happen?"  
 "I was spurling in the Ritz with some friends when it was broken. My leg, I mean. Anyhow, I already spoke the dialect."  
 "I'm learning it myself," she said. "It's really a beautiful language. I'm from the Left Bank, too, you know."  
 "I said that I didn't."  
 "Do you know if Miss Berkeley will be around tonight?" I asked. She looked at me and she knew. I knew she knew.  
 "She'll be here in an hour." With that she left. Outside, it was raining harder.

I sent for the porter and when he came I told him in dialect to get me a bottle of Cinzano, a flask of Chianti and the *Paris Presse*. My dialect must not have been too good. He returned with a Coke, a pot of hot tea, and the *Herald Tribune*. It didn't matter. There wasn't a corkscrew on my wing. He left me alone and I lay in bed and read the paper for a while. There was news from the front at Little Rock and a list of the dead with their decorations from Governor Faubus. It wasn't a very good war, but it was all they had.

Later, as I was checking my lottery tickets and watching the rain, Brett came in without my noticing her.

She walked over to the bed and I turned and looked up. When I saw her I was in love with her. Everything turned-over inside of me. She sat on the side of the bed and leaned over to kiss me. I led the *to-toi* stage that soon, "we could have had heart beating. She had a cleanly smell, like grease and oil on a field piece. My instincts rose above my sickness.

"You mustn't," she said. "You're not well enough."  
 "I must. I have to."  
 "You can't. You shouldn't."

In my anxiety, I knocked over the Coke and the pot of tea. The Coke broke the urine bottle and turned over the bedpan. The tea spilled into her shoe. It was a hell of a commotion. We heard some one coming and she got up quickly.

"Oh, Mr. Henry," Brett said (my name is Jake but she called me Mr. Henry since we hadn't reached the *to-toi* stage that soon), "we could have had such a good time together."

"Yes," I said, "isn't it jolly to think so?"  
 She picked up her shillelagh and started crying. I liked the way she cried. As she got to the door she turned and said, "When we meet again, darling, you will be good to me, won't you? Because we're going to have a strange life together."

"Of course, sweet," I said. "But you will have to be good to me, too. Because I've always had the feeling we would have a short happy life. You won't be a witch, will you?"

"No, darling. I've already made up my mind not to. And, you know, it feels rather good deciding not to be a witch."

I didn't say anything. She was gone.  
 When I left the hospital it was still raining and I almost decided to get out of Paris. I thought that was a good thing to do since Monsieur Anzely wouldn't let me have my room back at the Ritz. He said he had doubts about my character. But I tried not to think about it by going to the Totipot Bar and asking for a chouchoute and a beer. Drinking that first one of the day, which is always the finest one there is, and looking down at a pencil and some paper and began writing furiously. Before the afternoon was over, I had written two stories, "Two Big-Hearted Rivers" and "The Gambler, The Hun, and the T.S.F." If those stories were as good as I thought they were, I thought what a hell of a writer I must be.

Soon I was taken very drunk and started talking to the bartender about the bull fights and boxing and being a kid up in Michigan. I had wanted to be a matador but found that I couldn't keep my feet still. In fact, it was soon discovered that I could have outrun any Flores, Galache or Miura bull in Spain. And if I had had a distaste for boxing I could have been middleweight champion of our school. They didn't have a boxing team, anyhow. I also told him about the time when I was a boy and on a camping trip with my old man. There was a swarm of ants on a log burning in the fire (It wasn't raining that time). They ran from end to the other but none escaped. I learned a great lesson from that. If you're ever an ant in the woods, stay the hell away from logs near a campfire.

I haven't seen Brett since being released from the American Hospital. But I know she will be there when I do decide to go back. And if I get her into trouble, we can always sneak over to the He de la Cite by night. They tell me we will find neutral territory over there. If we can just make it across the river and into the pews.

Mr. Young, a former student at the University of North Carolina and Louisiana State University is currently employed by the Wilmington Star-News in Wilmington, N. C. He has held both the Woodrow Wilson and Southern Fund Fellowships and is an Air Force veteran of the Korean War. This speech was delivered to 150 freshmen students at the YMCA Freshman Camp on Sept. 10, 1959. (The Editor.)

Peter B. Young

The great Army tank general, George S. Patton, once was pushed out on stage in front of a high school assembly in Iowa, or some other equally God-forsaken place. The general had a little canned speech all ready for the students, something about buying war bonds, but when he saw those alert, clean young faces he threw away his prepared text and tried desperately to get across a succinct expression of hard-earned wisdom.

He began his ad-libbed speech this way: "KIDS, DON'T BE A DUMB BASTARD AND DIE FOR YOUR COUNTRY! MAKE SOME OTHER DUMB BASTARD DIE FOR HIS COUNTRY!"

There is no record of the student's response to General Patton's advice. There is no evidence, either from Iowa or anywhere else in America, that indicates an understanding of Patton's fundamental principle that sound thinking can save our lives. On the contrary, there is considerable evidence that we have failed to take Patton's injunction to heart. We spend more money for highways than for schools. We spend more money for television advertising than for public health. We spend more money for booze and cigarettes than for missiles. The chances are excellent that this kind of topsy-turvy confusion will kill a majority of Americans within the next five years, and thereby end the great American saga.

On that cheery note permit me to add my small welcome as you begin your college careers.

At this precious moment we are all virgins. As far as the University of North Carolina is concerned, you are without a fault. And as far as you are concerned, the University is populated by intellectual giants about on a par with the late Albert Einstein. It will take about one week to dispel this false illusion of virginity. The University will find that most of you have been "had" by criminal, inadequate high schools, that you are unequipped for serious college work. You, in turn, will quickly discover that we are not intellectual giants, that we are, in fact, something very close to stumblebums. Having discovered these awful truths, we will then settle down to some sort of four year marriage. For a few of you, a precious few, it will be a marriage of love. For most of you, it will be a marriage of convenience or worse, a grim marriage of necessity.

Now I am supposed to address you this morning on the assigned subject: THE CHALLENGE OF THE WORLD SITUATION. The YMCA Committee that concocted this portentous title did so on the sound assumption that it was so meaningless as to enable me to say anything I wanted.

The first thing I want to do is to examine this title in the most literal sense. This title implies that there is something separate and distinct from us, something called "the world situation," and this something is a challenge. What nonsense! There is nothing out there that you are not intimately connected with.

YOU are "the challenge of the world situation." Such strengths as you possess are the hope of "the world situation." Your many abundances, your weaknesses are the despair of "the world situation."

YOU ARE THE CHALLENGE OF THE WORLD SITUATION. And around this simple, but radical formulation, I will build the rest of my talk.

The dominant fact about the "world situation" that you are a part of — that you are the challenge of — is that there is a war going on. The major belligerents are, of course, ourselves and the Russians. You will be surprised to have many supposedly intelligent people refuse to face this sad fact: that there is a war in progress and you may be in earnestly we are currently the losers. You

important part of your job as a student will be to rudely inject this nasty fact into every classroom.

Where is this war being fought? This is an important question, and I will answer it by telling a very personal story. Please forgive me.

The story concerns, in addition to myself, a beautiful and wonderful girl who once told me the most magnificent lie I have ever heard. The story takes place in 1950 when I was just about your age, and the girl was perhaps a little younger. We were spending the day on an isolated beach about 20 miles from Los Angeles. We had a portable radio, a few sandwiches and (truth will out) a six pack of beer. You dig the bit, I am sure.

Now this girl was a Polish Jew, and as a mere child she had somehow managed to survive the great Nazi death camp of Auschwitz. About three million Jews were exterminated at this camp while only a handful survived. A long chain of little miracles brought this girl to that Southern California beach, to the portable radio and the sandwiches and the beer.

We dozed off after lunch. If there were any cuckoos (which I doubt) it was a peaceful American scene: the boy, the girl, the blanket, the radio, the empty beer cans. I was awakened when the girl began talking in her sleep. Then she uttered wordless little cries and whimpers, and finally her whole body shuddered fearfully. She was having a nightmare and I gently woke her.

"Bad dream?" I asked.

"Yes," she said, "I was dreaming about the camp. I am so sorry."

For some reason, perhaps because it was so wildly grotesque for her to apologize to me for the nightmare, I broke up. I mean I bawled. At this point, our roles reversed. She attempted to comfort me. She held me in her arms, patted my head, and said, "Do not cry, Peter. We are in America, and the war is far away."

THE WAR IS FAR AWAY. NO! This was a lie, a magnificent lie, a lie motivated by love, but a lie nevertheless. The war was right there on that secluded California beach. And I mean to tell you that it was a hellishly tough war. That day in sunny California, she was wounded in that war, and so was I.

THE WAR IS NEVER FAR AWAY. That is the first corollary to our major formulation — that YOU are the challenge of the world situation.

How close to Chapel Hill is the purely military aspect of the great far for the world is currently being fought at Goldsboro, about 80 miles from here.

A few weeks ago, I saw a small paragraph buried in the back pages of the Durham newspaper that the Strategic Air Command had transferred a squadron of giant B-52's to the air base at Goldsboro. A squadron of B-52's consists of 15 planes. In addition, these particular planes were B-70G models, with the exception of the missiles and the B-59's now phasing in, the best offensive weapons we possess. This one squadron of B-52's at Goldsboro carries more of an explosive punch than all the planes of all the countries combined in World War II. This one squadron at Goldsboro is fully capable of killing perhaps 25 to 30 million Russians.

Now if I saw this little paragraph in the newspaper, you may be sure that Soviet intelligence also picked it up. These boys are good, and they buy a lot of American newspapers for just such tidbits as the one that I feel across. Therefore it is safe to assume that somewhere in the U.S.S.R., in an underground command post,



PETER B. YOUNG . . . a little neoplatonism

there is an enormous war map of the United States with a pin, of a particular color, placed squarely on Goldsboro. The color of the pin means that in the latest, revised Russian war plan a missile-carrying submarine or an intercontinental rocket or a long-range bomber has been assigned the routine chore of "taking out" Goldsboro. Taking out Goldsboro will also take out much of the sovereign state of North Carolina.

But if the fall-out pattern is of a certain configuration we in Chapel Hill may well survive. That is, we may survive if the administration of this University has the vision and the foresight to stockpile a two-weeks supply of canned foods to keep us going. This is the minimum civil defense recommendation and I see no reason why institutions cannot be urged to comply, as well as individual householders.

It is one of the great ironies of history that the metropolis of New York poses no immediate threat to the Russians and therefore can be allowed to live for a day or two or three, while Goldsboro, N. C. — the Peyton Place of Tobacco Road — must be obliterated instantly on the first strike.

In a deeper sense, the war is even closer to Chapel Hill than Goldsboro. This is a total war, a phenomenon peculiar to our century, which means simply that it is a war fought with every kind of weapon in every place. This war we are in, this war we are losing, is like a many-faceted diamond. Turn it one way and the light reveals a military aspect. Turn it another way and you see the political aspect. Turn it still another way and you get the economic slant of the conflict. Keep turning it, and you will see still more facets — ideological, psychological, subversive, etc.

The front is everywhere. Here in Chapel Hill the war is being fought on the education front. When you walk into a classroom at the University of North Carolina, your real competition does not come from the bright kid who sits next to you, that kid who keeps pushing up the curve and whom you just barely detest. No, he is not your competition.

Your real competition is sitting in a class room on the other side of the world. He is your Russian opposite number. And he is just as annoyed with his curve setters as you are with yours. Because, you see, your Russian opposite number, like you, is no genius. Like you, he is just a guy. His one advantage (an important one) is that he understands far more clearly than you the essential facts of the war now in progress. Because of this understanding, your Russian opposite number is a very hard-working boy.

The importance of this educational fact cannot be overestimated. In fact, it may well be the most important fact of all. What a man

thinks will largely determine the nature of his weapons. These weapons, in turn, will largely determine the nature of his strategy, and therefore, his chances of victory. Notice that in this chain THINKING comes first. And what comes even before thinking? TRAINING. You cannot think until you are trained. That is why you are about to enter the University of North Carolina. That is why your performance here is so critically important.

This brings me to the second (and last) corollary to our major formulation. THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME OF THE WAR VICTORY OR DEFEAT — WILL BE DETERMINED BY A CALCULUS OF EFFORT. This second corollary can best be illustrated by a little borrowing from the world of big-time football, surely a timely subject in itself.

Next week, when the sun goes down behind Kenan Stadium, the scoreboard will read (we hope) UNC 26, Clemson 7. (And UNC will be well on its way to the Sugar Bowl where my alma mater, LSU will beat their brains out.) But let's get back to this Clemson score, 26-7, and what it really means. On every play of the game, every man will have an assignment which will bring him into conflict with one or maybe more of the opposition. If there are 100 plays in the game, this means that there are perhaps 1100 little conflicts subsumed within the one big conflict which registers on the scoreboard. Each one of these little conflicts has a winner and a loser. So a more accurate rendition of the Carolina-Clemson score might well be Carolina 647, Clemson 453.

Which one of these little conflicts was the decisive one? That is impossible to determine. Actually, they are all decisive each and every one. That is why Bear Bryant, the great Alabama coach, says: "The name of the game is knock." The most fundamental idea in football is to belt that other guy on EVERY play. (And sometimes between plays.) That is why Paul Dietzel, coach of the LSU national champs, has a sign in his locker room which reads: "When the going gets tough, that's when the tough get going." If we belt that other guy on every play, if we smash him every chance we get, the cumulative effect of this kind of pounding will eventually crack him. He will get one straw too many, and we will find (much to our surprise) that we have broken his back. At that point we get the spectacular touchdown which even the fans in the stadium can see.

What holds true for football also holds true for international conflict. The great war for the world is actually made up of an infinite number of little man-to-man conflicts. As previously indicated, these little conflicts take place everywhere; these little conflicts are military, political, economic, psychological, ideological, etc. Which of these little conflicts will prove to be decisive? Again, no one knows, it could easily be that the fate of the world will be determined in a Chapel Hill class room. It may be that one of you will suddenly catch on fire in a freshman history class, and as a result, grow up to provide this nation with a portion of the distinguished, gutsy leadership it so desperately needs.

In any event, as your "coach" for today, I want to give you an assignment. For the next four years, your assignment is to belt that Russian kid, your opposite number, EVERY day. I mean I want you to smash him, and I'm not talking about how you do it. As your "coach" for today, you should know that I am not one of

these phony "character-builders." Like the late Jim Tatum, I believe the WINNING builds character far more effectively than LOSING. This is particularly true in the international conflict where the penalty for being a loser is death. I have yet to see a corpse which has any sore of character whatsoever.

Since we began with a Patton story, I suppose that symmetry demands another Patton story as we approach our conclusion. Patton was never the kind of general who stayed behind his troops. He was always out in front. (For those of you who have grown to maturity under Eisenhower, this particular quality is called "leadership.")

One day, Patton, accompanied by his driver, came across a detachment of GIs lolling on the edge of a small river in Western Germany. It was November of 1944, the river was just beginning to freeze with ice, and the pace of Patton's lightning advance had bogged down.

The general leaped out of his jeep and, with his usual gentleness, demanded to know just what in the hell was going on.

A young lieutenant came forward. "Sorry, Sir," he said. "We're waiting for the engineers to come up and build us a bridge." "YOU'RE WHAT?" roared the incredulous Patton. "YOU STUPID SON-OF-A-BITCH, I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO GET ACROSS THAT RIVER!"

With that, the general ripped off all his clothes, dove into the icy stream, swam across with powerful, lunging strokes, and clambered up the bank on the other side. There he stood, naked, the pride of the American Army. He yelled a few choice obscenities in German on the off-chance that there might be some Nazis present, turned around, and returned the same way he came. He stood in front of the lieutenant, wet and shivering and still naked. "That," he said, "is how you will get across the river."

In terms of your own situation, the point of that little story is this. Do not wait for our faculty to come up and build you a nice, easy "bridge." In the first place, the chance is good that our faculty (like other faculties) is never coming. In the second place, if by some miracle the faculty should make the scene, they will doubtless construct a bridge that will collapse the first time you put any weight on it.

No, you must rip off your clothes, (so to speak) and dive in. Dive in where? Try the library. In many respects, it is a third-rate library, but it is all we have and we must learn to work within its limitations. If you are devoted and ingenious, I can assure you that there is more than enough material even in our library which will enable you to carry out successfully your important assignment to belt that Russian kid every day.

And now we must summarize and conclude.

FIRST, you are the challenge of the world situation.

SECOND, the war is never far away. The war is everywhere.

THIRD, The eventual outcome of the war for the world will be determined by a calculus of effort. The decisive blow may be struck at any point, even in a sleepy Chapel Hill classroom.

If you keep these fundamentals in mind, you may yet live. Indeed, you may live to see and help build the bright tomorrow. Good luck, and God bless you.



by KELLY