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6 Wednesday Morning, May 16, 1945.

Control of News

The action of Allied supreme headquarters in cancelling the credentials of two Associated Press correspondents, Edward Kennedy and Morton P. Gudebrod, and ordering them to return to the United States was not unexpected. They were charged with breach of confidence in breaking prematurely the story of the signing of the German surrender at Reims. Discreditation and return home of correspondents who have ignored or violated regulations has been a consistent policy of SHAEF ever since it was established. Two others, John Groth of the AP and Virginia Irwin of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, were accorded the same treatment last week for their unauthorized trip into Berlin on the day it fell to the Red Army.

Mr. Kennedy must have known he was courting suspension and expulsion when he telephoned his story to London prior to its official release. And despite the fact that he gave the world one of the biggest news stories of modern times, the criticism which has been heaped upon him for it is justified. His defense that he turned the story loose only after he was convinced no element of military security was involved will not hold water. That was a point for Supreme Headquarters to decide, not Mr. Kennedy. And when he accepted accreditation as a correspondent he pledged himself to abide by official regulations, however irksome or unnecessary they might at times appear to be.

In addition to the obligation which Mr. Kennedy assumed in taking this pledge he impliedly, by his silence, agreed to hold the surrender story until it was officially released. If he had no intention of keeping such an agreement he should have so declared himself, in which event, of course, he would not have been permitted to witness the surrender.

By this breach of faith, Mr. Kennedy violated one of the cardinal principles of good newspaper practice—the strict and inviolate observance of confidence—and his offense poses a serious threat to modern news-gathering methods.

The custom of providing newspapers with advance copies of official documents and texts of reports and addresses, with the understanding that they will be withheld from publication until the proper time, has become widespread. Making such information available in advance of publication has been beneficial alike to the newspapers and to newspaper readers. But if newspapermen are not to observe the rules and respect confidences reposed in them the system will be broken down.

Being shorn of his credentials and sent home is a sad and regrettable end to Mr. Kennedy's brilliant career as a war correspondent. Although he stands largely condemned in newspaper ranks, the public generally seems to applaud his act, because it believes release of the news of the surrender should not have been delayed. With that view we agree, since the reason for the delay was not military, but political. The delay was not ordered by General Eisenhower but by the heads of the three Allied nations, and before Mr. Kennedy telephoned his story to London it had been announced by the German radio and confirmed by the Swedish radio.

So Mr. Kennedy at least has demonstrated the futility of government officials attempting to bottle up legitimate news, to be released and fed to the public when it suits their convenience and purpose. This does not excuse Mr. Kennedy for having broken a confidence or taking unfair advantage of his associates. But his act may turn out to have been a valuable

public service if it serves to put an end to such efforts to control the free flow of news.

They Can't Be Trusted

History records several instances of major battles being fought after the wars of which they were a part had ended officially. A classic example is the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815, fought after the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812 had been signed on the previous December 24. Another is the Battle of Palmito Ranch, fought May 13, 1865, near Brownsville, Texas, almost a month after Lee's surrender at Appomattox had brought the Civil War to a close. In both of these cases, continued fighting after the war was over was due to the slowness of communications. News of peace had not yet arrived, and thus no charge of breach of faith could be sustained on either side.

So much can not be said for Field Marshal Gen. Ferdinand Schoerner and Col. Gen. Otto Woehler, under whose orders German troops in Czechoslovakia and Austria fought on for nearly a week, contrary to the terms of the surrender at Reims. They knew the responsible heads of Germany had surrendered unconditionally, yet they continued the movement of troops and fought delaying actions to gain time so as not to fall into Russian hands. Their actions simply show again what has been demonstrated many times in the past: that little trust can be placed in German pledges.

At other places where the Germans had no choice but to lay down their arms they did so with poor grace. Gen. Franz Boehme, in announcing the surrender to the German troops in Norway, reminded them that they were unbeaten, still in full possession of their strength, and that "no enemy has dared to attack us," impertinently inferring that the Allies would have thought twice before coming after him.

Despite the fact that the German army was out-generaled and out-fought in every theater of the war, they are trying desperately to blame it all on Hitler and build up the myth that professionally it is still supreme. Getting that notion out of their heads, and the heads of the German people, should be one of the major objectives of the re-educational program for the Reich now getting under way.

Encouraging Signs

There are encouraging signs that at least part of official Washington intends to lose no time reconverting the structure of the federal government to a peacetime basis as soon as possible.

The House Appropriations Committee has voted to give the War Manpower Commission only 70 per cent of the amount requested in its budget estimate for the fiscal year beginning July 1. The 30 per cent reduction was made on the logical grounds that the work load of this agency will be lighter in the future than it has in the past.

Without waiting for Congress to take the initiative, John W. Snyder, newly appointed administrator of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, has requested Congress to abolish several RFC subsidiaries by merging them with the parent corporation. Recommended for the discard through this procedure are the Defense Plants, Defense Supplies, Disaster Loan and Rubber and Metals Reserve Corporations. The merger plan was suggested, Mr. Snyder said, to facilitate personnel reductions when cutbacks are ordered.

There are a number of other war agencies which can and should be trimmed to meet the requirements of a single-front war. A notable example is the overseas operations branch of the Office of War Information. End of the war in Europe sharply reduced if it did not entirely eliminate the need for further propaganda activities in that part of the world. This should make possible an early corresponding reduction in OWI's European staff, as well as a proportionate reduction in its supervisory personnel in Washington and New York.

Texas Out of Step

According to the Census Bureau, there were fewer deaths from motor vehicle accidents in 1944 than in 1943. Its figures, tallying closely with estimates previously made by the National Safety Council, show that the decline was small—from 23,823 to 23,300—but it nevertheless was gratifying.

It should be a source of humiliation to all Texans that this state was out of step with the national trend in this respect. Instead of fewer deaths in 1944, Texas reported a large increase, a total of 1,335 compared with 1,173 in the previous year.

Ugly as was Texas' record in 1944, the score for the first quarter of 1945 is even worse. The State Department of Public Safety reports 281 deaths in traffic from January 1 to March 31, compared with 252 in the same period of 1944, an increase of 12 per cent.

VERSE FOR TODAY

by Ann Campbell

BEDTIME FOR JOYCE ELAINE.

When Joyce Elaine goes up to bed,
She puts her bunny at her head.
Her Teddy Bear sleeps at her right.
Her woolly dog guards her all night.
Her dolly in her arms she keeps.
Ringed by her toys, our baby sleeps.

Surrounded by our loving care,
Our little girl is dreaming there.
An angel stands by her white nest
With shining wings. Our child is blessed
By earthly love, and Heaven, too,
Watches above her all night through.