

J A Y H A W K   R E B O U N D S

April 7, 1944

No. 8

Dear Fellow Jayhawkers:

On March 30th at 9:30 p.m. over Station KFKU I dedicated my broadcast to our men on the fighting fronts overseas. I am quoting that broadcast as a part of my letter to you.

"Someone has said, 'Only those are fit to live who are not afraid to die.'" This statement brings a graphic picture of the activities of Maj. Fenlon A. Durand, U. S. Marine Corps (H-S Co. 2nd Amph. Tr. Bn., 2nd Mar. Div., c/o Fleet Postoffice, San Francisco) a K man in varsity basketball and track, whose home is in Junction City, Kansas. Major Fen was awarded the Silver Star medal for gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy in battle fighting at Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands. The award was presented him by Admiral Nimitz at an undisclosed point in the Pacific on March first. The citation accompanying the award stated: 'For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity during action against enemy Japanese forces in Tarawa, Gilbert Islands, November 20, 1943, while serving with the Second Amphibian Tractor Battalion, Second Marine Division. While leading his company of amphibian tractors during the initial assault on this island, Major Durand's command tractor was unmobilized and set afire one hundred yards from the beach by enemy shell fire. Taking command of the infantry troops in his tractors, he caused them to abandon the tractor and disperse in the shallow water shortly before two more enemy shells completely demolished the tractor. In the water he found his crew chief who had been blown out of the tractor and was suffering from numerous shrapnel wounds and the loss of both legs. Although subjected to concentrated enemy sniper and machine gun fire, Major Durand improvised tourniquets and rendered first aid to his crew chief. Then, with utter disregard for his own personal safety, he supported the wounded marine in the water and swam with him for more than an hour in an effort to save his crew chief's life. His gallant courage and heroic conduct were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Marine Corps.'

"A miraculous incident happened during this time. While towing his chief, a shell struck the raft, completely obliterating from sight the chief and the raft, yet Fen Durand escaped uninjured.

"On our home front, blood plasma is the most precious contribution that we can make to our fighting men. In the closing days of the Red Cross War Fund drive it is fitting that we should call to the attention of our friends that we cannot give too much to our men who are fighting and bleeding on the many fronts. Our blood - a pint scientifically drawn while we comfortably lie on a nurse's cot - costs us little. Afterwards we are even served bouillon, pineapple ice and wafers, and we are led by a nurse's aide from the cot to a comfortable resting place to recuperate. Our boys at the battle fronts, whose blood is savagely spilt, costs them much, or perhaps all.

"Cassino, Anzio, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Tarawa -- all of these and