

# DOMESTIC AFTERMATH OF WAR

## American Chaplain In Auckland Handles Knotty Problems

NEW ZEALAND wives, widows, and fiancées of American servicemen are making life in Auckland extremely busy for Lieut. Charles I. Stephenson, Chaplain, United States Naval Reserve, Representative of the Commander of the South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force and Executive Vice-President of the Auckland Branch of the Navy Relief Society. To Chaplain Stephenson all these young women may—and do—apply for help and advice, for it is one of his particular duties in this area to give “assistance, advice or counsel to members of the military personnel of the United States, and their dependants.”

When we interviewed Chaplain Stephenson in Auckland the other day to find out what such “assistance, advice or counsel” involves we first discovered that he was sent here at the instigation of American officials here, Admiral Calhoun and the Navy Department in Washington. He showed us the schedule of duties officially assigned to him and we found this schedule pretty considerable, even apart from the work involved in interviewing the dependants of United States servicemen. For instance, he is to conduct divine services aboard ships in port whenever needed and he is to maintain contacts with local clergy and other educational and cultural leaders.

### “The Wonderful Part”

“Now that’s the wonderful part, that ‘maintain contacts’ with the clergy here,” said Chaplain Stephenson with enthusiasm as he pointed out the sentence. “That led me where I wanted to go; if it hadn’t been for that I wouldn’t have gone to the ecumenical conference just recently in Christchurch—now that conference was really a wonderful experience for me.”

After he arrived in New Zealand early in August Chaplain Stephenson went to Wellington for a week, then to Christchurch to the conference, and then back to Auckland, where he will be

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I bought a camera and took them myself. Then I went on taking them because it was one way of making money.”

“Do you suppose some people may listen to your talks in the hope of hearing some tips on practical photography?” we asked.

“I can show anyone all there is to know about taking a photograph in twenty minutes,” Mr. Firth said. “But do you think he’ll be a good photographer after that? If that’s all there is to it all the professional photographers would be taking good photographs instead of bad ones. Oh, they can listen if they like to hear tips, anyone can get all the information, but information isn’t what makes good photographs.”

“You would say an artist makes good photographs?”

“Yes, an artist—but only an artist whose right medium happens to be photography.”



Alan Blakey photograph  
CHAPLAIN STEPHENSON  
“Look at the stupidity of it!”

stationed at U.S. Navy Headquarters for the rest of his stay.

One of the first duties Chaplain Stephenson has in New Zealand is the investigation of cases of hardship. He is empowered to give financial help in the case, for instance, of illness. Also he interviews any widows of U.S. servicemen and helps them with their papers claiming benefits. Every member of the U.S. Forces may secure up to 10,000 dollars worth of Government insurance which is payable to the beneficiary over a 20-year period or for life. In case of delay between the cessation of pay after the death of a serviceman and the receipt of the first benefit, Chaplain Stephenson has power to give temporary monetary help.

### “You’d be Amazed”

“I have been surprised to find only two cases needing financial assistance since I arrived,” he said. “Perhaps I should add that financial help cannot be given for a pleasure trip across the Pacific.”

“And what other kinds of help have you had to give?” we asked.

“Oh, you’d be amazed at the different troubles that find their way into a Chaplain’s office. You just wouldn’t believe it if you didn’t see it. Take the visit I had from two girls yesterday. They breezed into my office and said they wanted marriage papers. ‘Why?’ I asked. ‘Oh, their ship’s coming in soon and we want to be ready.’ ‘And how long have you known these boys?’ I wanted to know. They had been writing to them for several weeks. ‘Writing to them! But how long did you know them before that?’ ‘Oh, we didn’t know them. We got their names from two other sailors and just started to write.’ So then I gave them a list of requirements laid down by the military authorities before a marriage is approved. And finally I told them that the applications would have to come from the men and not from them. Oh, well, I told you you wouldn’t believe it if you didn’t see it for yourself.”

We didn’t ask, but we suspect that the U.S. authorities wouldn’t even make an exception in leap year.

The following is the list of requirements referred to by the Chaplain:—

Acquaintance of at least six months.

Consent of bride’s parents.

Blood tests of the contracting parties to show freedom from venereal and other contagious and infectious diseases.

Acknowledgment by the contracting parties of the Immigration Laws of the United States.

Proof of the ability of the groom to support a wife.

### Grief and Stupidity

Explaining these requirements the Chaplain said: “In the early days of the war the tendency of the military authorities was to approve marriages only in cases of necessity—that is, where pregnancy was involved. This policy no longer obtains. The present policy is not the prohibition of overseas marriages, nor is it designed to lend encouragement to them. We don’t oppose marriages; we only oppose hasty marriages. For instance, we are making an effort to encourage prospective brides to conduct a thorough investigation of the home life, ancestry, social background, reputation, etc., of the grooms before marriage. And I must say that prospective brides resent my suggestions that they should make such investigations. I get several a week walking out in a huff when I ask them ‘Just what do you know about him?’ Which usually goes to show that they know all too little. You’ll have to believe me—it’s true—when I tell you that yesterday a young person came in and said she wanted my advice: did I think she should go ahead and marry this young man? She had met him just once.”

“Well, that would be one easy answer, at least.”

“Oh, yes, yes, the answer was easy. But what about the situation? Look at the stupidity of it! She had met him once and she actually contemplated marrying him. About half the grief I have to contend with is caused by stupidity, just silly stupidity.”

### The Unmarried Mother

“Now, apart from the difficulties of these marriages and your good but unpalatable advice to prospective brides, what is happening about that much more difficult problem—the unmarried mother?”

“Problem, yes; problem in capital letters. The situation is this: if a mother shows a birth certificate of a child, and a man in the United States Forces admits parental responsibility for that child, then an allowance is made for it as long as the father continues in the services. As soon as he is released, of course, he becomes a civilian and the child is his responsibility. Whether or not he accepts that responsibility is another matter.”

“But suppose that man is killed?”

“The tragedy is heightened. Unless, of course, he likes to take the responsibility wholly and nominate the child as the beneficiary of his insurance.”

“And that’s that?”

“Yes, I’m afraid that’s that. We do what we can but there’s not much we

## The Detective Novel

THE people have travelled by hard and perilous ways, And now rejoice in a noble summit attained, In a goal won, cloud-swept pinnacles gained; Behind and below the forward stragglers and strays.

BLUNDER in water-logged valleys and noisome quags, Wander in twilight thickets and forests haunted, Painfully errant, and oft by spectres daunted, Or crushed by boulders fallen from cliffs and crags;

THESE are the headstrong recalcitrants, foolish, and blind To the gleam that lures their resolute fellow-men on, Deaf to the stirring call, the imperious tone, Of clear voices announcing the triumph of mind;

SPIRITLESS clods, we say, to fates disastrous born, But what of the faithless who have achieved the height, And yet, having drunk of its airs and seen its light, Lust after savage and childish joys and turn

BACK to the valleys and swamps and the haunted hills, To the feverish dances and bloody orgies of old, To the lawless life and the fabled Age of Gold, To the magical rites and the sharp unholy thrills?

HERE is shadowed forth the figure of our own time, When men, born to a glorious heritage, Sit with their eyes glued to the spurious page

That does but unravel a web of imagined crime;

LATE, in the soul, lingers the dark spot, The ignoble stain that threatens to flood the whole Crystal globe of the spirit with poisons foul, When all her hard-won glories shall be forgot.

—ARNOLD WALL

can do. The problem is one of the inevitable and sorry problems arising out of a war. It occurs in all wars and in all countries affected by all wars. And again it is largely a matter of stupidity. People will not think. These girls know, if they will only look at facts, take a realistic view of things, what they are facing.”

CHAPLAIN STEPHENSON receives cables from Washington instructing him to do all kinds of work from bearing the news of bereavement to members of the U.S. Forces stationed in this area to finding a wife who has changed her address. His visitors are on one another’s heels outside his office—to ask advice about a fiancé who has stopped writing daily letters, to ask about a fiancée who went to three dances with another guy, to ask about a possible reduction in the six months’ acquaintanceship regulation (“never, never, never!”), to ask about christening a child, to ask about a husband’s home in Chicago, to ask about the colour bar, to ask about the prospects of a clerk in Pittsburg—to ask about anything and everything under the sun that may occur to a young man in the United States Forces in Auckland or to a young woman who is engaged or married to such a young man.

But Chaplain Stephenson welcomes all these questions; he finds them a healthy sign that the questioners are not going into their future lives blindly.