

OUR CENTURY

1947

AT A GLANCE

Crashes everywhere during National Races

The Plain Dealer called it "the wildest, fastest 30 minutes of air racing in history." When it was over, four planes had crashed, one pilot was dead and two others, plus a woman watching from her yard in Brook Park, were injured. A number of other spectators had close calls.

The Thompson Trophy race of the 1947 National Races drew a crowd of 75,000 inside Municipal Airport and at least as many along the 100-mile route. The race was barely under way when the motor of Jack Hardwick's P-51 Mustang conked out. He headed for a field off Riverside Dr. in Brook Park. As spectators there ran for cover, he belly-slammed along the ground, tearing off a wing and the tail of the plane.

Spectators helped pull him from the burning plane, after which he pronounced himself in good shape. "That's not the worst one I've walked away from," he said.

Anthony Janazzo, a Clevelander, wasn't so fortunate. He was killed instantly when he plunged into a field on Royalton Rd. near Marks Rd. in Strongsville on the seventh lap. There was a terrific explosion, his decapitated body was thrown clear and the engine of his Navy surplus Corsair rolled 600 feet along the ground, narrowly missing an auto containing two couples.

On the 11th lap, the engine of Woody Edmondson's P-51 exploded. Rather than bail out, he headed for a field near Albion and Webster roads in Strongsville. The plane bounced and rolled 130 feet in a grove of trees, then caught fire. Edmondson suffered head and back injuries.

A mystery pilot was the 13th entry in the race. His identity was learned when the engine of his P-40 quit and he parachuted from his plane in full view of the grandstand, landing north of Brookpark Rd. It was J.L. "Skip" Ziegler, who had failed to qualify but took off anyway.

His plane, meanwhile, tore the top off a boxcar on a New York Central siding, hit the ground and exploded, ripping up several tracks. Mrs. Melvin Patrick of W. 148th St. in Brook Park was sitting in her yard when she was struck by the plane's Plexiglas canopy. Both were hospitalized, Ziegler with a broken leg and Patrick with shock.

Flying above the wreckage, Cook Cleland finished the race first with an average speed of 396.311 mph, becoming the first Clevelander to win the Thompson Trophy. Despite the risk to spectators and nearby residents, officials announced that the race would be held in Cleveland again the following year.



Larry Doby takes a swing in 1947.

In his first full season as owner, Bill Veeck shook up the Indians. He also had a brain-storm: a Stadium fence, that could be moved in and out depending on the opponent. Second baseman Joe Gordon, obtained from the Yankees, hit 29 homers. Bob Feller again led the league with 20 wins and 196 strikeouts. Even though Don Black pitched a no-hitter, the Indians had little pitching behind Feller. They finished fourth, but Veeck's promotions brought 1,521,978 fans to the Stadium.

In July, Veeck called in reporters to announce, "We've signed a new player. . . . He's a Negro." The Browns had broken the color line in pro football in 1946 and Jackie Robinson had moved up to the Dodgers at the beginning of 1947, but Larry Doby was the first black American Leaguer. He didn't look like a future Hall of Famer, as he hit .156 in 29 games.

The Browns had another black player, Horace Gillom, who boomed long punts and stepped in at end when Dante Lavelli broke his leg. They lost two of their first three games, but battled back. The most memorable game was a 28-28 tie in which they had trailed the New York Yankees 28-0 shortly before the half.

The Browns clinched the division title with a 37-14 win over the San Francisco 49ers before 76,504 at the Stadium. In the title game, Marion Motley ran 51 yards with a lateral to set up a 1-yard touchdown by Otto Graham. Edgar "Special Delivery" Jones went four yards for the score that gave the Browns a 14-3 victory.

Republicans were desperate for a candidate to challenge Mayor Thomas Burke. Eliot Ness, putting his business career on hold, gave it a try. Ten years earlier, he might have won, but voters had forgotten his glory years. Burke broke his own record with an 82,000-vote margin of victory.

The ordinance banning discrimination in amusement park admissions finally came to a vote in February. After a bitter debate, it passed, 23-8. It was an empty victory, though: Euclid Beach formed a private club, which was exempt from the ordinance, to operate its dance hall and skating rink.

Veterans flood college campuses

Cramped quarters can't dull men's diligence, thirst for knowledge

By Fred McGunagle

Young men back from the service were pouring into Cleveland — and its work force — at the rate of 3,000 a month. In a city that already had a severe housing shortage and many laid-off war workers who had not yet found peacetime jobs, it was a dangerous situation.

Across the country, Collier's Magazine found "bitter disillusionment among millions of veterans" in which lay "the seeds of violence." In Cleveland, veterans and their families doubled up with in-laws, lived over garages and overflowed "temporary" projects like Berea Homes, Seville Homes and Navy Park. A surprising number, though, did something else. They headed off to college.

Their decision was made much easier by a law many were unaware had been passed — the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the G.I. Bill of Rights. According to Milton Greenberg's "The G.I. Bill: The Law that Changed America," the educational provisions of the act had drawn little attention in Congress; the argument was whether the country could afford the "readjustment allowance" unemployed veterans could draw — \$20 a week for up to 52 weeks.

There were objections to the college aid, though — from presidents of prestigious universities. Greenberg reports: "James B. Conant of Harvard feared that unqualified people would flood the campuses. Robert M. Hutchins of [the University of] Chicago, in a widely noted article in Collier's, labeled the bill an unworkable threat to education, and warned that the lure of money would turn colleges into 'educational hobo jungles.'"

Congress included the provisions anyway, allowing students to draw up to \$500 a year for tuition, books and fees and \$50 a month support for single veterans, \$75 for married men (but not women) and an extra \$15 for children.

After all, only 150,000 a year were expected to take advantage — perhaps 600,000 or 700,000 by the time the act expired in 1956.

The first surprise was how many there were — about half the students in Ohio colleges by early 1947. The second surprise was how well they did. At Ohio State University, where 14,000 of 24,000 students were veterans, amazed officials reported the veterans were doing significantly better than the other students.

It was the same all over the state. At Bowling Green State University (1,813 of 3,949), 33 percent of veterans made the dean's list, compared with 15 percent of nonveterans. The president of John Carroll University, the Rev. Frederick E. Welfle S.J., said the veterans were "attentive in class,



The Rev. Frederick E. Welfle S.J.

assiduous in preparation and jealous of their grades. My impression is that the seriousness of the veteran has the effect of making the nonveterans more serious."

By fall, 1,164,000 veterans were in U.S. colleges — seven times the 1944 estimate — and

even Conant had to admit they were "the most mature and most promising students Harvard has ever had." Their classrooms were crowded, and their dormitories were Quonset huts, converted gyms or — for married veterans — trailers. At Marietta College, some lived on a surplus Coast Guard boat in the Muskingum River. But they were getting an education — 2.2 million of them by 1956, including at least 10 future Nobel Prize winners.

Half were the first in their families to go to college. Another 3.5 million veterans went back to high school or to trade schools, and 690,000 took farm training. Decades later, a study indicated that for every dollar the government had spent for educational aid, it later received at least \$8 in income taxes. Beyond that, the G.I. Bill had changed college forever from the preserve of a privileged few into a goal for all Americans.

The government could afford it because the readjustment allowance cost less than 20 percent of what had been predicted. Few veterans joined the "52-20 club" for the full year; only 9 million of 16 million drew any benefits, and they averaged only 17 weeks.

By the end of 1947, the Veterans Administration also had made 1.1 million home loans, 100,000 business loans and 40,000 farm loans under the G.I. Bill. From Euclid to Brook Park, vacant land turned into rows of tract housing, which critics called "ticky-tacky," but buyers called "the American dream."

Not that the return to civilian life was all study and work. In September, more than 58,000 members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars swarmed into Cleveland for their national encampment. The convention passed resolutions calling for bonuses for World War II veterans, pensions for their World War I members and outlawing of the Communist Party. But they also had fun.

The Plain Dealer reported that 10,000 members of the Military Order of the Cootie paraded down Euclid Ave., adding "high jinks" by "such pleasant diversions as snarling traffic, squirting gals with water pistols, shooting miniature cannon, peeling potatoes in the center of the streetcar tracks, dusting off the windshields of passing automobiles with a broom, passing out tissue and other ingenious forms of amusement."

After the parade, many of the celebrators still thronged downtown streets, blocking traffic, rocking trolley buses and jeering police who tried to move them on. "We've had five or six bands march through the lobby so far tonight," said one hotel manager, adding, "but, anyhow, they are entertaining."

The city was more solemn a month later. Flags flew at half-staff to mark the arrival in Oakland, Calif., of the first of the funeral ships bringing caskets back from the Pacific. "These were the first of tens of thousands which will stream continuously through this once-bustling port of embarkation in the months to come," The Plain Dealer reported.

The city prepared to honor 26 local men whose bodies were en route from Oakland — some of the 4,000 Cleveland servicemen who never would go to college, buy a home or take part in Euclid Ave. "high jinks."

McGunagle is a Cleveland freelance writer.



PLAIN DEALER FILE

A story that went with this photo of Ted Baskin and Elizabeth Klein read: "Walking along the quiet pathways of Kent, one can pick out the 'rehabilitation' students. They look a little tired. A few wear Army shirts. They are more intent about exams. This educational opportunity has to pay off for them in future dollars and cents. It is more than a lark."



PLAIN DEALER FILE

A line of veterans waiting to convert terminal leave bonds for cash at Cleveland Trust Co. Bank at E. 9th St. and Euclid Ave. in 1947.



PLAIN DEALER FILE

Men claiming to be war veterans protest at the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus for additional housing on university campuses for them, not for women.

LOOKING AT A YEAR

Feb. 3: Bernard Baruch, chief of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission, tells members of Congress that the Soviet Union has tapped into American secrets on how to build an atomic bomb.

March 25: John D. Rockefeller donates land on the East River in New York for construction of the United Nations building.

May 29: In the worst disaster in the history of commercial aviation, a United Airlines plane leaving New York for Cleveland crashes on take-off, killing 40 of the 44 aboard.

June 5: Secretary of State George Marshall unveils a plan to rebuild Europe, which later becomes known as the Marshall Plan.

July 13: Remains of the first dinosaurs to inhabit America, 200 million

years earlier, are unearthed in New Mexico.

Oct. 14: Pilot Chuck Yeager becomes the first person to fly a plane faster than the speed of sound.

Nov. 20: Princess Elizabeth marries Prince Philip in Westminster Abbey.

Nov. 25: In an unprecedented act of self-censorship, the motion picture industry announces 10 lifetime bans

for industry "communists."

Born: Hillary Rodham Clinton, Dan Quayle, Salman Rushdie, Robert Mapplethorpe, Stephen King, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (Lew Alcindor).

Died: Henry Ford, Al Capone, Negro League baseball star Josh Gibson, former New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, German physicist Max Planck.