



When Life Gets Dull, Take A Course—

By Margaret Koch

When life gets dull
When time hangs heavily
Don't just sit there and wonder
what to do about it. Take a
course!

This suggestion comes from Harry La Guardia of Seacliff, cousin of the "Little Flower," late mayor Fiorello La Guardia of New York.

Harry, who with his wife came here two years ago, has taken seven courses up to now, including law school in Louisiana where he was born.

He has had as many — or more — vocations, including one as the oldest RAF fighter pilot in 1940, when he was in his own '40s. He's retired today and is a reserve captain in the U.S. Air Force.

But if there's "ever a third world war, I'll probably be in it," he says.

Flying was really the first course he took, and it's a familiar-sounding story: the 17-year-old boy earning short hops in an old Curtiss 1912 wing-seat model by doing odd jobs for the pilot (the word "pilot" being spelled "HERO" in the boy's dictionary.)

La Guardia had a few months in Mexico with General Pershing's 7th cavalry. Then when World War I came along, he joined what was called the aviation section of the signal corps. He spent four months flying over France in a Hispano Suiza ("wood and fabric held together by a bunch of wires"). It was "the last word" in those days — it actually would do 150 miles per hour.

Two Lewis machine guns were mounted on the plane's hood. They were synchronized to fire through the propeller, and they carried 90 rounds of ammunition.

When the war ended, La Guardia opened his own commercial airline company at Alhambra airport near Los Angeles. He also appeared (briefly) in the movies, working at the old Goldwyn studio where he got to know Rudolph Valentino and Richard Dix. Then he took a course in finger-printing and became a Pinkerton detective.

You name it, he's done it—or just about.

And detective work, next to flying, was his favorite vocation. He acted then too, but sometimes it was a matter of life or death. His parts in real-life detective cases ranged from pretending to be a bank executive to working in a cannery.

Once in San Francisco on a case where he pretended to be a hood fresh from Chicago, his gangster host was gunned down right beside him.

"They played rough," he commented.

Bank robberies in Oakland

and Milwaukee were his biggest assignments, but he traveled all over the world for the Pinkerton National Detective agency.

In 1933 the world situation was coming to a slow boil again and Harry left for China to teach advanced combat flying.

When World War II really erupted, he joined the RAF — against the advice of a doctor who told him he was too old. He was 45 then, and he flew 41 missions, seven of them "victories" as he terms it.

Other courses he has taken include wireless operation, real estate, journalism and clock making.

Every time he was in New York he visited the late mayor—they were good friends as well as fifth or sixth cousins. The family, originally from Almeria, Spain, was scattered when three brothers left the home country. One (Fiorello's great-grandfather) went to Italy, one to Costa Rica, and Harry's great-grandfather came to New Orleans. The name originally was de La Guardia, and the family home still stands at Almeria.

La Guardia's newest toy is a cabin cruiser which he is busy

remodeling. He has an extensive tool collection and also likes to work with clocks and lamps. He has remodeled one antique clock to run on a 6-volt storage battery. (It lasts about a year).

Whatever La Guardia's future holds, it won't be dull. If it is, he can follow his own advice and

Take a course!



Harry La Guardia of 503 Pine street, Seacliff, cousin of the late mayor of New York and ex-flyer, ex-detective and ex-many-other-vocations, holds a silver mug and flask presented to him by the RAF division he flew with in England.

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