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Drunken Driving Is on the Increase Despite All the Laws Forbidding It

By Dr. Milton D. Kramer
Assistant Director, Center for
Safety Education, New York
University

(This is the fifth of a series of 10 articles which will be published in this column by nationally recognized accident prevention specialists and publicists, in cooperation with the Bureau of Motor Vehicle Safety, in the interests of greater traffic safety.)

Operating a motor vehicle upon streets and highways while intoxicated is universally forbidden by law, yet accidents from this cause are on the increase. A driver who has been drinking is found to be involved in one out of every five fatal traffic accidents in the United States. Pedestrians, too, have contributed to this bad record. One out of every four adult pedestrians killed last year had been drinking.

That intoxication is now one of the leading causes of death and injury on the highway is unquestioned.

Problem Complicated
Control of the drinking driver problem has been complicated by a number of factors. First of all, enforcement is hampered because it is difficult to identify drivers who are under the influence of alcohol until some error in driving has been committed or an accident occurs.

Then, too, lack of public consciousness of the seriousness of the problem has delayed the establishment of effective countermeasures. Law enforcement which does not have substantial public backing has always failed in this country.

The fact that only a very small percentage of the population, in all probability, is fully aware of the gravity of the intoxication problem in its relation to motor vehicle accidents has had a pronounced retarding effect upon the legislator, police officer, prosecutor, judge and jury.

Destroys Morale
Coupled with these basic problems are others of exceptional importance. The absence of legislation narrows the field of police investigation and necessarily limits the horizon of judicial decision. Again, loopholes in existing legislation permit the guilty to escape and, all too frequently, the innocent to suffer. Such a situation destroys police morale and nurtures antagonism between the police, the prosecution and the courts. This, in turn, engenders an unfavorable public attitude.

Many drivers still believe that the term "drunken driver" applies only to a person who is dead drunk or almost hopelessly disabled. Such is not the case, since persons who are very drunk are seldom able to drive at all.

Investigations of accidents involving drinking drivers reveal

that the greater menace is the individual who has drunk enough to have a false feeling of confidence. In reality, even a little alcohol slows down physical re-



DANGEROUS
Even one drop of your drink slows down your reactions.



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Even one drop of your drink slows down your reactions.

actions to the extent of making a driver unsafe.

Recent Study Made
For example, a recent study revealed: first, that nearly half of the drivers involved in personal injury accidents had been drinking to some degree; and, second, that the chances of such persons being involved in accidents increased so rapidly that the driver with an alcohol concentration of 15 per cent or more in his blood was 55 times more likely to become involved in a personal accident than the non-drinking driver.

Correction of this situation rests with public acceptance of the principle that alcohol and gasoline do not mix. Competent scientific research has shown that human coordination (ability to carry on several activities at once) and ability to judge distances are affected by the amount of alcohol consumed.

Every driver owes it to himself, to his family, to the occupants of his car and to the other users of the highway to refrain from driving after drinking.

BIRMINGHAM VETERANEWS

Compiled from
Various State and National
Veterans Information
Centers

Veterans who become permanently and totally disabled, even though their disability has no connection with war service, may be entitled to a minimum pension of \$60 monthly, officials of the Veterans Administration Branch Office in Columbus have emphasized.

The pension is payable to eligible veterans whose annual income is less than \$1,000 if they have no dependents, or \$2,500 if they have dependents. The pension is automatically increased to \$72 after a veteran has received it for 10 years or has reached the age of 65.

To qualify for this type of pension, the applicant must show that his disability is not due to his own misconduct. The veteran must have served at least 90 days, unless discharged for line-of-duty misconduct. The pension applies only to veterans whose disabilities are non-service connected.

Veterans and their families now make up one-third of the population of the nation: one out of

every 10 persons in the U.S. is a veteran of W. W. II; 2 men out of every 6, more than twenty years of age, are veterans of some year; roughly, 2 men out of every 3 between the ages of 20 and 35 are W. W. II veterans.

The number of World War II veterans enrolled in educational institutions in Ohio, Michigan and Kentucky has decreased 11 per cent in the past year. Veterans Administration tri-state branch office in Columbus, O. reports.

The total attending schools and colleges under the G.I. Bill and Public Law 16 in the three states on May 1, was 157,669, compared with 221,904 at the same time last year.

The May 1 enrollment this year and the numerical decrease during the past year by states were: Ohio, 98,965, 10,265; Michigan, 78,289, 5,612; Kentucky, 20,974, 8,457.

World War II veterans in Ohio, Michigan and Kentucky have net borrowed \$50,814 home, farm and business loans totalling \$855,265, 576 under the loan guaranty provisions of the G.I. Bill.

The total includes: Ohio, 78,631 loans for \$467,953,569; Michigan, 57,556 loans for \$316,476,664; Kentucky, 14,627 loans totalling \$71,715,543.

Home loans have accounted for 93 per cent of the total, VA said. The actual loans are made by lending institutions and not by VA. The VA, however, will guarantee up to \$4,000 on real estate loans or up to \$2,000 on non-

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From where I sit... by Joe Marsh
It's Leap Year, Girls!
First girl in our town to "get her man" on Leap Year was the Cuppers' daughter, Jane, who wed Bill Webster's boy last Saturday.
When I asked Bill Jr. if it was true that Janey really did the proposing, Bill said: No, but she made it plain she'd make an ideal wife. Instead of looking for diversion or excitement every evening, she was content to chat beside the fire.
"I could plainly see," says Bill, "that we'd really have a happy home life—which is just exactly what I want from marriage."
I know it's usual for older folks to shake their heads over the younger generation. (It's gone on for hundreds of years, now.)
But from where I sit, young people of marrying age today are every bit as commendable as their elders were—in their temperance (a glass of beer for instance), tolerance, and common sense. So to Jane and Bill—the best of luck!
Joe Marsh

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Oakland County RED CROSS NEWS

Marshall Smith, chairman of the Oakland County Chapter American Red Cross, announces that Mrs. Anne Foster has recently been employed as director of Junior Red Cross. Mrs. Foster brings to the chapter a background of experience and education which will be of great benefit to the chapter.

She has been an assistant in the psychology department at Ohio Wesleyan University. She is also a Red Cross water safety instructor and will assist with the summer program.

Junior Red Cross is the division of the American National Red Cross which consists of school age children. This program functions in the schools of the county of which there are 123 units in all with the local chapter. Junior members participate in service to Veterans Hospitals, to children in foreign countries and to their local communities.

Mrs. Sarah Parker, nutrition consultant, who has been on leave of absence from her Red Cross duties has returned to her work at Oakdale Gardens. Mrs. Parker will include in her program two days a week at the Crystal Beach Federal Housing Authority, Pontiac. Mrs. L. L. Northrup, chapter nutrition chairman, states that Mrs. Parker will resume her former activities and will add new ones as needs present themselves.

Marshall Smith, chairman of the Oakland County Chapter American Red Cross announces that Mrs. Ferd Brook of Bloomfield Hills and Mrs. T. W. Eastis of Birmingham have recently participated in special conferences with staff members of the American National Red Cross.

Mrs. Brook spent three days in Chicago in the interest of Volunteer Services and Mrs. Eastis accompanied by Mrs. Beatrice Warriner attended a three-day conference at St. Louis.

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