

1945 December 3-9

A Veteran's Perspective on Civilian Life

THE TRIBUNE, SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 9, 1945



La Crosse, Wis.

December 9, 1945.

Hi Fella!

You're getting the story from a little different angle today. A few weeks ago I was unceremoniously



FOSDICK

ously dumped into the tangle of affairs that's called civilian life, just as most of you will soon be, and I'll try to give you some idea of the situation. I'll start with clothes because like everyone else I wanted to get out of my uniform as soon as possible. I'm still in it and here's why:

After I had been home for approximately 10 minutes I tried my old suit on, or rather as far as I could get it on. The trousers were a good three inches too short and by letting out all my breath I could just barely get the coat buttoned. "That's all right," said my mother. "You can get a new one tomorrow."

Next morning I strode confidently into the clothing store and said to the clerk, "I want to see some suits."

"We have some nice socks," he replied.

"I'm not interested in socks. I want to see some suits."

"We have some beautiful California styled sport shirts."

"What about suits?"

"Oh, I'm sorry but I'm afraid we don't have a thing to fit you. Maybe next year."

"All right. Give me some socks."

It was the same story all over—no suits, no overcoats, no trousers, no dress shirts. The only things that seem plentiful are sport shirts, socks and ties. If you hope to wear a suit when you get out, you'd better shake either the moth balls or the young brother from your old one because unless you're extremely lucky you won't even get a chance to try a new one on. Not even in the big cities is it possible to get anything.

I wanted a car, so I went in search of one. The used car situation is so bad that after I had finished my search I had to stand in front of Doerflinger's window and watch Santa Claus laugh to put myself in a good mood again.

There are a few new cars on the road and it probably won't be too long before things will be much better. This is different than the clothing shortage which hasn't hit its peak yet.

For those of you who intend to go to college, there is one other serious shortage. Many colleges and universities are becoming filled to overflowing and it's getting increasingly difficult to find a place to live, especially for those who are married. It would be a good idea to get your application for admission and a place to live in as soon as possible.

It's not all shortages, though. There's no shortage of Christmas decorations on the downtown streets, there'll be no shortage of grunts and groans when Bronko Nagurski wrestles Emir Badui at the Avalon tomorrow night, and there was no shortage of baskets the other night when the Aquinas basketball team broke its scoring record. Although the number of deer shot this season wasn't phenomenal, there was no shortage of venison in the state.

Music had a big week in La Crosse, with Rubinoff appearing at the Rivoli and giving performances at all three high schools. Logan's annual instrumental concert on Monday and Central's orchestra and choir concert Tuesday brought plaudits from large audiences.

Robert Cerny, Central high school graduate, now associate professor of architecture at the University of Minnesota, drew a large crowd of wishful thinkers Monday night for his talk on home planning. On Friday the civic forum presented Robert St. John, radio speaker and author of "What of Europe's Powder Keg?"

Friday night La Crosse college and high school basketball teams broke even in their scheduled games. Logan won over Sparta at Sparta by 39 to 25, while Eau Claire trounced Central by 34 to 25 on the local court. Aquinas won from St. Patrick's at Eau Claire by 41 to 24, while St. Mary's college defeated the local collegians 49 to 38 at Winona.

WARREN FOSDICK.

Note: I thought you'd like to read some impressions of home by a returned serviceman for a change. Warren was a second lieutenant in the AAF before his recent discharge.

Vee

(La Crosse Tribune, 1945 December 9, page 9)

Warren Fosdick, recently discharged from the Army Air Force, wrote this week's "A Letter From Home," and it gives some insight on what returning veterans faced in the La Crosse area at the end of 1945. He

mentions a shortage of civilian clothing and automobiles, both of which were in short supply all during the war as production emphasized military equipment and goods. He also writes of the glut of applicants for spots in higher education institutions as returning veterans seek to resume or start their college educations, perhaps with help from the [G. I. Bill](#).

Warren E. Fosdick was born in La Crosse on October 26, 1924, to Mr. and Mrs. Leslie M. Fosdick.¹ His mother's name was Alice, and the family lived at 2139 Charles Street. Warren was their only child.²

Fosdick graduated from Logan High School in 1943.³ He participated in several sports while in high school. Fosdick was the intermediate boys' champion in the January 1941 Police Novice Skate Meet at the [Pettibone] Lagoon rink.⁴ He was a 184-pound running back on the football team.⁵ Fosdick was also a shot-putter for the track team.⁶

Soon after his high school graduation, Fosdick volunteered for the Army Air Force. He left La Crosse on August 6, 1945, for induction at Milwaukee and then was transported the same day to [Camp Grant](#) at Rockford, Illinois, for processing.⁷

Fosdick received extensive training in the United States at several Army Air Force installations. He was at Nashville, Tennessee, in February 1944.⁸ A few months later, he was selected for navigator training.⁹ Fosdick became an aviation cadet in the pre-flight school at [Maxwell Field](#) in Alabama.¹⁰ On November 23, 1944, Fosdick was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. in the Army Air Force after completing training as a bombardier and a navigator for medium bomber aircraft.¹¹



(La Crosse Tribune, 1944 December 6, page 2)

That was followed by more training in aerial navigation that he completed on July 14, 1945. After a 15-day leave home, Fosdick reported to [Selman Field](#), Louisiana, for reassignment.¹²

The war ended before Fosdick could be sent overseas, so he joined the legions of men and women discharged in the last quarter of 1945.

Fosdick's guest turn writing for the *La Crosse Tribune* on December 9, 1945, seen above, turned into a career. He graduated from the University of Minnesota School of Journalism in December 1948, and then he became a reporter for the *La Crosse Tribune*.¹³

On May 10, 1952, Warren Fosdick married Jean Marie Ahrens of La Crosse at the Cargill Parish House.¹⁴ Fosdick was a city hall reporter for the *La Crosse Tribune* for five years, and Jean's father, Henry Ahrens, was the mayor of La Crosse.¹⁵ Jean, a 1943 graduate of La Crosse Central High School, and a graduate of [Carroll College](#) in Waukesha, Wisconsin, worked in the La Crosse City Clerk's office from 1948 to 1953.¹⁶

Fosdick left the *La Crosse Tribune* in November 1953 to join the staff of the Memphis (Tennessee) *Commercial-Appeal*.¹⁷

After just two years in Memphis, Warren and Jean Fosdick moved to Sarasota, Florida, in 1955.¹⁸ Warren was a staff writer for the *St. Petersburg Times*, and Jean worked as a teller for First Federal Savings & Loan before being promoted to assistant treasurer.¹⁹ She continued to work in the banking field until her retirement in 1986.²⁰



(Sarasota [Florida] *Herald-Tribune*, 1961 January 1, page 15)

Warren and Jean Fosdick were divorced in June 1962 in Sarasota, Florida.²¹

Jean married Carl Worth Hughes of Sarasota in 1967.²²

On December 22, 1972, Warren Fosdick, Army Air Force veteran and newspaper reporter, died tragically in a drowning accident at Miami Beach, Florida, when he was 48 years old. He was buried with military honors in the [Paradise Memorial Park Cemetery](#) in Hialeah, Florida.²³

Carl and Jean Hughes retired to Homosassa Springs, Florida, in 1990. Carl died on April 1, 1994, and Jean died just 12 days later, on April 13, 1994, in a nursing home in Crystal River, Florida.²⁴

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Sources & Notes:

¹ "Warren E. Fosdick," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1972 December 27, page 3.

² "Leslie M. Fosdick," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1951 January 22, page 10.

³ *La Crosse Tribune*, 1972 December 27.

⁴ "Logan Edges Out Central For Ice Tournament Title," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1941 January 20, page 8.

⁵ "Now At Tackle, Quarterback On Nibbe's Eleven," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1941 September 12, page 12.

⁶ "Dubuque Defends 'A' Title In Meet At College Field," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1941 April 25, page 20.

⁷ "County's Next Group Of Selectees Leaves For Camp Grant On Aug. 6," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1943 July 20, page 3.

⁸ "Our Men in Service," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1944 February 28, page 3.

⁹ "Our Men in Service," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1944 April 1, page 7.

¹⁰ "Our Men in Service," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1944 April 19, page 4.

¹¹ "Our Men in Service," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1944 December 6, page 2.

¹² *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1945 July 31, page 10.

¹³ "Tribune Reporter Wins Scholarship," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1949 August 5, page 13.

¹⁴ "Cargill Home Bridal Pair," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1952 May 11, page 11.

¹⁵ "Report From Around Town," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1954 May 23, page 4.

¹⁶ "Jean (Ahrens) Hughes," *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1994 April 15, page A9.

¹⁷ *La Crosse Tribune*, 1972 December 27.

¹⁸ *La Crosse Tribune*, 1994 April 15.

¹⁹ Harry L. Dean, "Sounding Board," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, Sarasota, Florida, 1961 January 1, page 15.

²⁰ *La Crosse Tribune*. 1994 April 15.

²¹ "Florida Divorce Index, 1927-2001," database with images, *Ancestry.com*

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²² *La Crosse Tribune*, 1994 April 15.

²³ *La Crosse Tribune*, 1972 December 27.

²⁴ *La Crosse Tribune*, 1994 April 15.