

February 5, 1944

THE WATCO NEWS

## Tool Employee, 25 Years In Vaudeville, Says Show Business Is Not All Glamor

"Something new and different all the time — that's show business!" exclaims Samuel Baroff of the Tool Crib. "It's not all bright lights and glamor, like so many think. It's hard work. But you sure can have a lot of fun!"

And no one should know better than Sammy for he is a veteran of vaudeville, having toured the country with his act for 25 years.

### Started With Circus

He began his career as a member of an acrobatic act in Ringling Brothers-Barnum and Bailey circus at the



Sam Baroff

ripe old age of 15. Sammy was the top man . . . "always being thrown around, you know," he explains. He liked the circus, but felt that comedy was his strong point and so, after two seasons, left to work with the Marvel Mells for six months, and then set out for himself in a comedy talking, dancing, singing act.

Thereafter, it was as a comedian that he won the applause of theatergoers from coast to coast. He toured on all circuits including Loew's, RKO, Keith's, and the west coast Pantages. Sammy wrote all his own dialogue and songs, and often wrote numbers for other acts as well. Incidentally, he is still doing a good job of song writing and has had several published recently, including one which, he says, has been played at dances around Waterbury lately, "Let's Go Up And At 'Em Boys!"

### He Knew Them When—

During his show days, Sammy made friends with a number of people who have since become stars in the movies and radio. The Ritz brothers, Eddie Cantor, Phil Baker, Sophie Tucker, Pearl White, Jack Pearl, and Joe Cook were all his acquaintances—to say nothing of a little Cockney stooge named Charlie Chaplin. He remembers Chaplin well, for when the unknown English comedian's act broke up, the rest of the troupe left for England leaving Chaplin stranded

over here. Sammy and his friends helped him out. "We staked him until he got a booking," Sammy recalls. "But later when he became famous, we couldn't even get near enough to his place to sit on the Welcome mat!"

### Did Chaplin Imitation

Indirectly, though, Chaplin was responsible for one of Sammy's best acts — and also for one of his most embarrassing experiences. After Chaplin had made a name for himself, Sammy decided to do an imitation of him. In order to perfect the act, he had to study Chaplin's mannerisms and live in Chaplin's character.

"And that caused the most embarrassing moments of my life," he exclaims. "You see, I would be thinking of the act, working out a new twist or something, while walking down the street or riding in a bus, and would unconsciously begin the pantomime. Suddenly, I would realize that everyone was staring at me! I guess they thought I had St. Vitus' dance! I would be so embarrassed, I'd get out of sight as quickly as possible. Then I'd forget myself again and it would happen all over some place else." As long as three years after he had retired from the stage, he would find himself walking down the street like Chaplin!

### On The Road Until '32

Sammy played in vaudeville with his wife as the comedy team of Jean and Valjean until 1932 when all vaudeville began to go out. They had received good notices wherever they played and were sorry to leave the road.

"It was a good life," he says. "And we were always going to different places, meeting prominent people, and having a lot of fun."

Sammy's wife and partner died about five years ago and he is now playing the big role of father-mother and chief entertainer for his three children. Marilyn and Celine, his two young daughters, live at home, while his son, Harrison, is a flight engineer in the Air corps.

### Here Six Months

The Tool Crib attendant has been at Waterbury Tool for six months and likes it very much although the life is much different from that of stage comedian. Sammy doesn't think his children will ever go "on the road" for he feels they should have the security of a permanent home—the one thing that was missing in show business.

### SOLDIER GRADUATES

Pfc Harrison Baroff, 41 Millard St., has been graduated as an aircraft mechanic from the army air technical school at Seymour Johnson Field, N. C.