theater:

Pilgrims Company

By David J. Maniello

The trial of war; the courage of men.

These are the last statements made by writer Robert Guinter in his Postmark: Stalingrad, which is being premiered by the Pilgrims Company through November 23 at the Old South Church, 44 Tremont Street.

Historically Stalingrad marks the great victory of Hitler's famed Sixth Army. Ordered deep into enemy territory to liquidate a British pocket, encircled by Russian troops and then abandoned by the Nazi high command, the Army slowly died to death. Postmark: Stalingrad is a dramatic account of the soldiers' last letter to their loved ones, letters that were never delivered and are now anonymous. The presentation contains all the dignity that man is heir to--the poignancy, quiet heroism, and bravery of silent spirits.

film:

Christmas Tree

By Emanuel Goldman

Somewhere inside The Christmas Tree, a good film is trying to come out. The basic plot has the potential of dealing with the meaning of life and of death, and of the insouciance of nuclear weapons. Regrettably, none of that potential is realized.

When a plane carrying a nuclear bomb crashes, a rich young woman who was at the scene is stricken with leukemia, with six months to live. Her father and father's fiance decide to try to give the boy the best six months possible. But what does that consist of? What, else, but a chateau in the French countryside, a full-scale tractor for a toy, and a pair of wolves as companions. The boy receives a series of material objects, culminating in a horde of Christmas presents; but there is no development of the boy's personality or of his relationship with the people. The presentation contains all we look for, but is rich is not in itself a weak-

away, and give the enemy leukemia! The film fails to come to grips with the real issue, which is: What does the fact that nuclear weapons exist altogether. It's as if it were made with an eye on the hawks, so as not to offend them. Is there a fact a hard to see connection here that spills itself out in some very overworked and ho-hum sentences? Like, why don't we look for God in the good times, before it's too late? Why won't man make his destiny his own, not subject to the will of others? If every man were to look out for the welfare of all others as though it were his own, the world would be at peace.

The Pilgrims Company production is simple but effective. Actors Edward Fenniger, John Kern, and Charles Schormann appear in black against the projected image of the Stalingrad Postmark, flanked by two large posters of combat men. The staging, by Robert Guinter, consists of different levels from which the actors read, giving flow and variation. It is all very simple and unpretentious, thereby enhancing the thrust of the contents of the letters--if one is willing to listen.