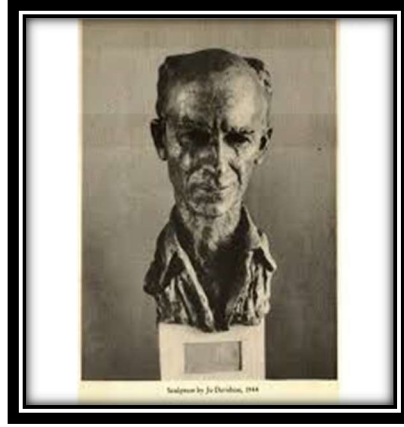


ERNIE PYLE: WAR CORRESPONDENT AND A GI'S BEST FRIEND

ERNEST TAYLOR PYLE WAS A PULITZER PRIZE WINNING JOURNALIST AND WAR CORRESPONDENT WHO IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS STORIES ABOUT ORDINARY AMERICAN SOLDIERS DURING WW2

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(August 3, 1900 – April 18, 1945)

Ernie Pyle was considered the foremost war correspondent in America during the Second World War. His distinctive writing style and relationships with those on the front provided him with a unique perspective on the war effort. This not only earned him national recognition, but the respect of the troops he wrote about.



JULY 20, 2021

YEARNING FOR ADVENTURE

Ernie Pyle was born in Indiana in 1900. A shy and intelligent boy, he yearned for adventure and wanted to see the world. He thought he saw an opportunity arise during World War I. In October 1918, Pyle enlisted with the U.S. Naval Reserve. However, the war ended before he could complete his training and thus he never got to go overseas.



Ernie Pyle statue in front of Franklin Hall, home of the Indiana Daily Student at Indiana University

Pyle enrolled at Indiana University in 1919, where he majored in economics and took a number of journalism courses. He eventually became the editor of the school's newspaper, the *Indiana Daily Student*, where he developed his distinctive writing style.

THE BEGINNINGS OF A SUCCESSFUL CAREER

One semester shy of graduating, Pyle left school and became a reporter for the *LaPorte Herald-Argus*. From there, he held a host of journalism positions, including *The Washington Daily News*, *The Evening World*, and *The Evening Post*. He eventually returned to *The Washington Daily News*, where his career experienced its jumpstart.

Pyle convinced his editor to allow him to write an aviation column, called *D.C. Airports Day by Day*. It was a hit with pilots and readers alike and saw nationwide syndication. His hard work earned him a promotion to managing editor in 1932.



In need of an escape, Pyle convinced his bosses he would be best positioned as a roving reporter. Starting in 1935 and lasting six years, he traveled the world, covering 200,000 miles over five continents.

HEADING INTO EUROPE

Within the first year of World War II, Pyle was allowed to cover the goings-on in England. He set sail in December 1940, and within his first few days of arriving in London, he experienced his first air raid.

He called the bombings savage and praised those who raced to put out the flames. His columns from London were met with critical acclaim, so much so that a publisher approached him about printing them in a book, titled *Ernie Pyle in England*. It was published in late 1941.



Pyle with members of the 181st Tank Division, Fifth Army, 1944

Pyle eventually returned to the U.S. to care for his wife, who was in the midst of depression. He couldn't stay idle for long, however, and planned a trip to Asia.

Unfortunately, it was delayed at the last minute by the State Department, and just a few weeks later the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

Pyle immediately traveled to California, where the country's war anxiety was at its peak. He grew bored after a month and tried to enlist in the Navy but was denied because of his small stature.

THE INVASION OF NORTH AFRICA

With the U.S. officially in the war, Pyle returned to England to write pieces about American soldiers and their relationships with the British. He traveled with them south for the Invasion of North Africa in November 1942, where he further fostered his relationships with those on the front.

Pyle churned out pieces about quartermasters, military police, and airmen, but he had a special place for infantrymen, whom he believed were "the underdogs" of the Army. He preferred to write about the men, rather than the battles they fought in, and the G.I.s appreciated his ability to put into words what they wanted to say but couldn't.



Pyle with Marines in Okinawa, 1945.

His articles maintained an equal balance of covering the facts of the war while also discussing the Allies' resolve when it came to battling the Nazis. He didn't want readers to feel despair over what was happening overseas, but he also refused to gloss over the realities of combat.

At the conclusion of the campaign in North Africa, Pyle followed the Americans as they invaded Sicily in July 1943. By the end of the operation, he was suffering from exhaustion and what he dubbed "a state of mental dullness." He decided to return home, where he found himself a national celebrity.

THE NORMANDY LANDINGS

Feeling a sense of responsibility to continue doing his part, Pyle returned to Europe in December 1943. Over the following three months, he produced some of his most moving and poignant pieces. This included a piece on the death of Captain Henry T. Waskow.

Pyle narrowly escaped a bombing raid during the Battle of Anzio and followed the Allies' slow advance through the Italian peninsula. While in Italy, he wrote a column that argued G.I.s should get "fight pay," in the same way airmen got "flight pay." When Congress passed a bill enacting this, it was nicknamed the Ernie Pyle Bill.

He stayed in Italy until February 1944, when he traveled to England to await the upcoming Allied invasion of France. It was during this time that he learned he'd been awarded the Pulitzer Prize "for distinguished war correspondence during the year 1943."

The Allied landings in Normandy occurred on June 6, 1944. Pyle had planned to wait a few weeks before traveling to the area but **was invited by General Omar Bradley to watch from the bridge of his flagship, Augusta. When walking Omaha Beach the next day, he witnessed the wreckage of what had occurred.**



Pyle signing an autograph for a Marine, 1945.

Pyle remained in France for two more months, during which he witnessed the liberation of Paris in August 1944. **He eventually reached his breaking point, the stress of living near the front and watching soldiers die having taken its toll.**

THE PACIFIC THEATER

In the fall of 1944, Pyle returned home, without plans to return to the fighting. He only lasted a few months before feeling compelled to return to the front. Instead of traveling back to Europe, he decided it was time he covered the action happening between America and the Japanese in the Pacific.



Pyle speaking with combat photographers in Guam, 1945

In January 1945, Pyle departed from California and embarked on a journey that took him to Guam, Hawaii, and Saipan. While aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Cabot*, he wrote about the B-29 crews bombing Japan.

His coverage during this time was criticized by fellow journalists, as he had somewhat negative feelings about those serving in the U.S. Navy. He felt the sailors had an easier time than the infantrymen in Europe. **and he wrote several unflattering portrayals of the Marines.**

DEATH IN OKINAWA

In March 1945, Pyle joined the Allied fleet bound for Okinawa. They arrived on April 17, 1945, and secured the airfield on the island of Ie Shima. Despite being in Allied hands, they hadn't yet cleared it of enemy soldiers.

The next day, Pyle was riding in a Jeep with an army officer (Lieut. Col. Joseph B. Coolidge of Helena, Ark., commanding officer of the regiment) when they came under fire from a hidden Japanese machine gunner. The pair dove for cover, but Pyle was shot in the head after briefly raising his head. The injury was fatal.

He was killed on April 18, 1945, by Japanese sniper fire on the island of Ie Shima. Soldiers and citizens on the home front mourned the loss of Ernie Pyle because of his ability to put a human face on a dehumanizing war.



Memorial in Ie Shima.

Pyle's death was a blow to Americans, who were still reeling over the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Speaking about the journalist, newly appointed president Harry S. Truman said, "No man in this war has so well told the story of the American fighting man as American fight men wanted it told. He deserves the gratitude of all his countrymen."



Dead at 44

Ernie Pyle was initially buried in Okinawa with the rest of the fallen. His body was later exhumed and reinterred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Oahu. On Ie Shima, a monument marks the site of his death. A picture of this monument is shown on the last page of this article.

A LITTLE MORE ABOUT HIS LIFE

Ernie Pyle was haunted all his life by an obsession. He said over and over again, "I suffer agony in anticipation of meeting people for fear they won't like me."

No man could have been less justified in such a fear. Word of Pyle's death started tears in the eyes of millions, from the White House to the poorest dwellings in the country.

President Truman and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt followed his writings as avidly as any farmer's wife or city tenement mother with sons in service.



His father dedicates a B-29 named after his son.

Mrs. Roosevelt once wrote in her column "I have read everything he has sent from overseas," and recommended his writings to all Americans.

For three years these writings had entered some 14,000,000 homes almost as personal letters from the front. Soldiers' kin prayed for Ernie Pyle as they prayed for their own sons.

It was rather curious that a nation should have worked up such affection for a timid little man whose greatest fear was "Maybe they won't like me."

Yet this fear had started in childhood. Ernie Pyle was born on Aug. 3, 1900, in a little white farmhouse near Dana, Ind., the only child of William and Maria Taylor Pyle.

They were simple people, content to spend their lives in the little white house on the dusty Indiana country road, as William Pyle's parents had spent their lives.

Ernest--they always called him that, and never "Ernie"--seemed destined to plod along in much the same way, except that he was restless, and his thoughts strayed from the family acres to far horizons.

He was shy in the country schoolhouse, apt to sit apart from classmates during games, and later, in high school and in Indiana University, went off for lonely walks.

If any one thing inspired him, during this period, it was Kirke Simpson's news story on the burial of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery. Simpson was an Associated Press reporter.

"I cried over that," Pyle told friends later, "and I can quote the lead or almost any part of the piece."

He had frequent premonitions of death. He said: "You begin to feel that you can't go on forever without being hit. I feel that I've used up all my chances, and I hate it. I don't want to be killed."

I was completely amazed to find that I'm as well-known out here as I was in the European Theatre. The men are depending on me, so I'll have to try and stick it out for a long time.

"I expect to be out a year on this trip, if I don't bog down inside again, and if I don't get sick or hurt.

If I could be fortunate enough to hang on until the spring of 1946, I think I'll come home for the last time. ***I don't believe I have the strength ever to leave home and go back to war again.***"

In one of his first columns from Africa he had told how he'd sought shelter in a ditch with a frightened Yank when a Stuka dived and strafed, and how he tapped the soldier's shoulder when the Stuka had gone and said, "Whew, that was close, eh?" and the soldier did not answer. He was dead.

But yesterday Ernie Pyle came to the end of the road on tiny Ie, some 10,000 miles from his own white cottage at the age of 44.

WASHINGTON, April 18 (AP) Ernie Pyle's death was announced by Navy Secretary James V. Forrestal, and President Truman issued a statement of condolence.

Mr. Forrestal's statement:

"With deep regret, the Navy announces the death on Ie Shima (Island) of Ernie Pyle, whose reporting of this war endeared him to the men of the armed forces throughout the world and to their families at home. "He was killed instantly by Japanese machine-gun fire while standing beside the regimental commanding officer of Headquarters Troop, Seventy-seventh Division, United States Army. At the time of his death he was with the foot soldiers, the men for whom he had the greatest admiration. "Mr. Pyle will live in the hearts of all service men who revered him as a comrade and spokesman. More than anyone else, he helped America to understand the heroism and sacrifices of her fighting men. For that achievement, the nation owes him its unending gratitude."

President Truman's first statement:

"The nation is quickly saddened again, by the death of Ernie Pyle," Mr. Truman said. "No man in this war has so well told the story of the American fighting man."

President Truman's second statement:

In his tribute to the 44-year-old reporter *for Scripps-Howard newspapers*, who covered the war in Europe before going to the Pacific early this year, President Truman said:

"More than any other man, he became the spokesman of the ordinary American in arms doing so many extraordinary things. It was his genius that the mass and power of our military and naval forces never obscured the men who made them."

"He wrote about a people in arms as people still, but a people moving in a determination which did not need pretensions as a part of power."

"Nobody knows how many individuals in our forces and at home he helped with his writings. But all Americans understand now how wisely, how warm heartedly, how honestly he served his country and his profession. He deserves the gratitude of all his countrymen."

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson:

Today our soldiers have "lost a champion" in the death of Mr. Pyle. "The understanding of Americans in battle which ran through all of Ernie Pyle's dispatches was drawn from hours spent with them under fire, sharing dangers they endure," Mr. Stimson said.

Gen. George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff:

Ernie Pyle belonged to the millions of soldiers he had made his friends. His dispatches reached down into the ranks to draw out the stories of individual soldiers. He did not glorify war, but he did glorify the nobility, the simplicity and heroism of the American fighting man. The Army deeply mourns his death.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower:

"The GIs in Europe--and that means all of us here--have lost one of our best and most understanding friends."

New York Gov. Thomas E. Dewey :

Governor Thomas E. Dewey said today that the death of Mr. Pyle "is a great personal loss to this country and to American journalism."

"Ernie Pyle was a great reporter," Mr. Dewey said. "His warm, human stories of our fighting men--Ernie's beloved GI's--had become an integral part of our American life. Everyday millions of American newspaper readers eagerly read his column, which was a daily link between us here on the home front and our men fighting on the battlefronts of the world."

General Mark Clark

"A great soldier correspondent is dead, perhaps the greatest of this war. I refer to Ernie Pyle, who marched with my troops through Italy, took their part and championed their cause both here and at home.

"His reporting was always constructive. He was "Ernie" to privates and generals alike. He spoke the GI's language and made it a part of the everlasting lore of our country. He was a humble man and in his humility lay his greatness.

"He will be missed by all of us fighting with the Fifteenth Army Group. There could have been only one Ernie Pyle. May God bless his memory. He helped our soldiers to victory.

QUOTES ATTRIBUTED TO ERNIE PYLE

There are no atheists in the foxhole.

Somebody said that carrier pilots were the best in the world, and they must be or there wouldn't be any of them left alive.

Our artillery ... The Germans feared it almost more than anything we had.

I've been immersed in it too long. My spirit is wobbly, and my mind is confused. The hurt has become too great.

If you go long enough without a bath, even the fleas will leave you alone.

War makes strange giant creatures out of us little routine men who inhabit the earth.

I try not to take any foolish chances, but there's just no way to play it completely safe and still do your job.

At last, we are in it up to our necks, and everything is changed, even your outlook on life.



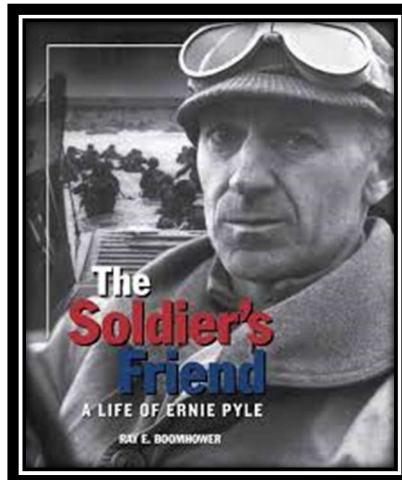
IEJIMA, OKINAWA, JAPAN – APRIL 14, 2013, AT THE EXACT SPOT WHERE ERNIE PYLE WAS KILLED ON APRIL 18, 1945

ERNIE PYLE'S BIRTHPLACE RECENTLY ADDED THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



A QUICK VIDEO OF THE HOME CAN BE SEEN BY COPYING AND PASTING THE BELOW LINK INTO YOUR BROWSER (TURN ON SOUND)

<https://www.mywabashvalley.com/news/local-news/ernie-pyles-birthplace-receives-recognition-for-historical-significance-from-the-state/>



The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has informed the Friends of Ernie Pyle that the Dana, Indiana, birthplace of the World War II correspondent has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The U.S. Department of the Interior added the Elder-Pyle House on the National Register on Aug. 25, according to a news release from the Friends group.

The Indiana DNR told the group the official State and National Register certificates will be presented during a special ceremony at the Indiana State Fair in August 2022 in Indianapolis.

"We are ecstatic over this level of recognition for the historical and cultural significance bestowed on Ernie Pyle's birthplace," said Steve Key, president of the Friends of Ernie Pyle.

“We hope this national designation will allow us to tap into resources that will help us preserve the legacy of our nation’s best-known war correspondent.

“It’s important that Hoosiers and Americans understand the hardships and accomplishments of the generation that survived the Great Depression and then were asked to fight a war to preserve our democratic freedoms.”

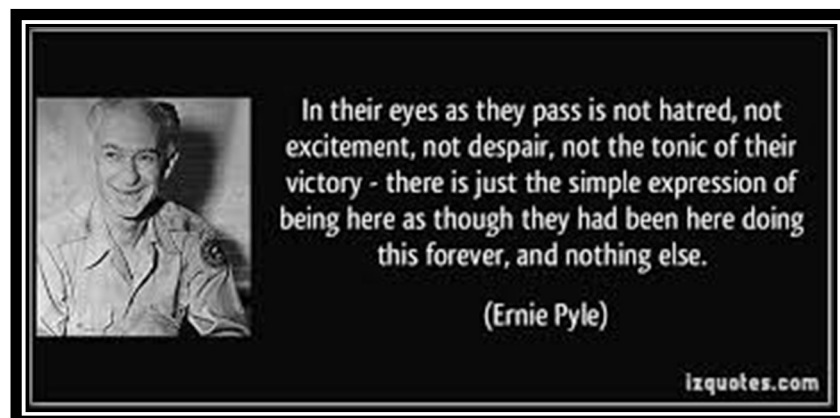
Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register of Historic Places is the official inventory of sites with national, state, or local significance in the development of our nation’s cultural heritage. ***Listing on the National Register is an official recognition of the significance of the farmhouse and provides a measure of protection for the property.***

In Indiana, the National Register is administered by the Department of Natural Resources. In addition to a degree of environmental protection, owners of listed properties may be eligible to apply for matching federal grants for restoration or preservation work if funds are available.

The Friends of Ernie Pyle hope the new recognition will bring extra points to its current effort to receive funding from the state’s Historic Renovation Grant Program to restore the clapboard siding of the farmhouse built in 1851 by the Elder family. Pyle was born in the white, two-story farmhouse with Greek Revival features on Aug. 3, 1900.

The Friends of Ernie Pyle have been saving contributions for years to afford the much-needed repair work. They were greatly helped with a \$39,000-plus donation from the Indiana Department of the American Legion, when then-State Commander Rodney Strong made the museum his personal project in office.

The Friends of Ernie Pyle is a non-profit entity that took over the operation in 2010 of the then state historical site, which is now open as the Ernie Pyle World War II Museum. This summer, the museum is offering free admission to all visitors through a contract with the Helt Township Trustee’s office. The museum is currently open on Saturdays and Sundays.



PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT EVEN THOUGH THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM WEBSITES & OTHER SOURCES THAT APPEAR TO BE AUTHENTIC, I CAN NOT GUARANTEE THAT ALL THE DATA IN THIS ARTICLE IS ACCURATE AND CORRECT.