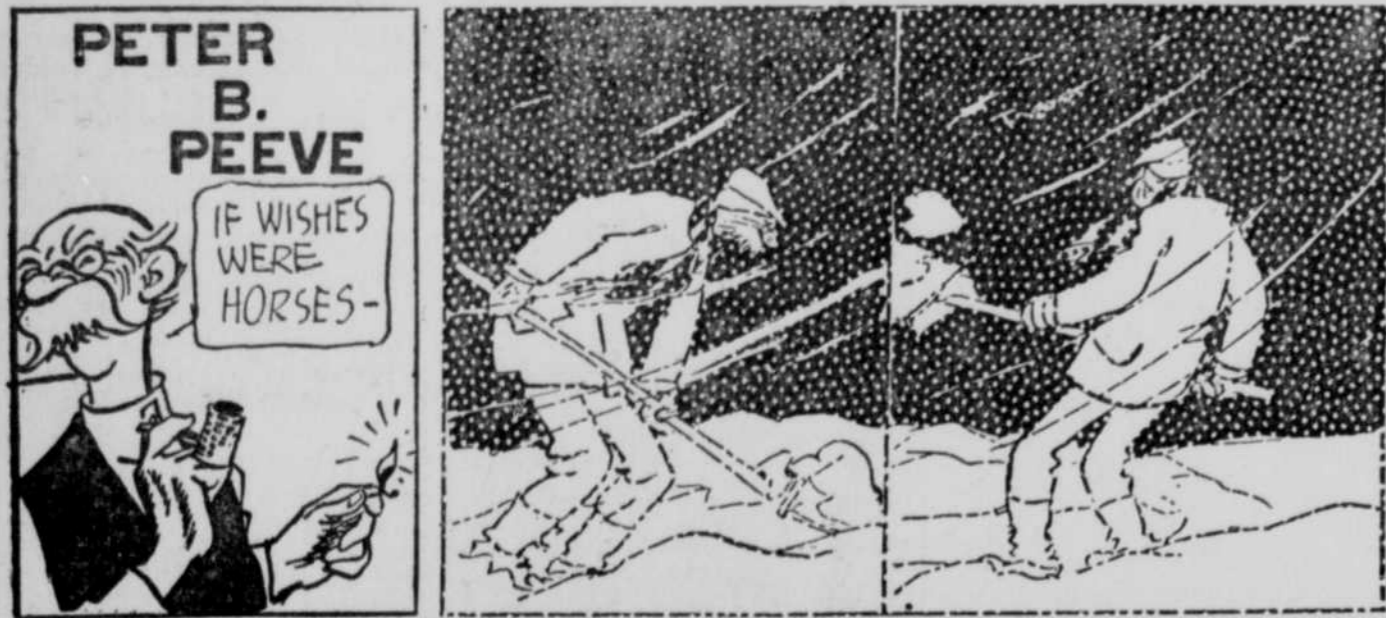


OUR COMIC SECTION



Ernie Pyle's Slant on the War:

Taken to War Like Galley Slaves, GIs Stage Gala Show

American Soldiers Were Quick To Adjust Themselves to Algeria

By Ernie Pyle

(Editor's Note): This dispatch was written and first published when Pyle was with the GIs during the landing at Algeria. He is now on his way to cover the Pacific war zones.

IN ALGERIA.—I came to Africa by troop transport, in convoy. Our convoy carried an enormous number of troops, and we had a heavy escort, although no matter how much escort you have it never seems enough to please you.

It was a miserable English day when we sailed—cold, with a driving rain. Most of us just lay in our bunks, indifferent even to the traditional last glance at land. The ship seemed terribly crowded, and some complained bitterly of the food, and didn't eat for days. The worst trouble was a lack of hot water. British standards of sanitation are so different from ours that the contrast is sometimes shocking. The water for washing dishes was only tepid, and there was no soap. As a result the dishes got greasy. In our cabin we had water only twice a day—7 to 9 in the morning, and 5:30 to 6:30 in the evening. It was unheated, so we shaved in cold water.

We correspondents knew where we were going. Some of the officers knew, and the rest could guess. But some of the soldiers thought we were going to Russia over the Murmansk route, and some thought it was Norway, and some Iceland. A few sincerely believed we were returning to America. It wasn't until the fifth day out, when the army distributed booklets on how to conduct ourselves in North Africa, that everybody knew where we were going.

The troops were warned about smoking or using flashlights on deck at night, and against throwing cigarettes or orange peels overboard. It seems a sub commander can spot a convoy, hours after it has passed, by such floating debris. One night a nurse came on deck with a brilliant flashlight guiding her. An officer screamed at her—so loudly and viciously that I thought at first he was doing it in fun. He belted: "Put out that light, you blankety-blank! Haven't you got any sense at all?"

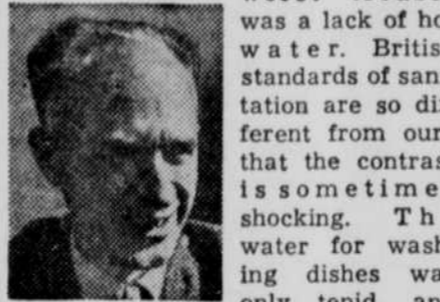
Then I realized he meant every word of it. One little light might have killed us all. I was sorry he didn't kick her pants for good measure. Smoking was prohibited in the dining room. There was a bar with soft drinks, but no liquor was sold. As someone wisecracked, "We catch it both ways. We can't smoke because it's a British ship, and we can't buy liquor because it's an American troopship."

The trip no sooner started than rehearsals for an enlisted men's variety show began. They dug up an accordionist, a saxophonist, a trumpeter, a violinist, two banjo players, a dancer, a tenor, a cowboy singer and several pianists. They rehearsed every afternoon. The big night came a couple of nights before we got to Gibraltar. They put on two shows that night, for the enlisted men only. Word got around, and the officers and nurses wanted to see the show, so the night we were approaching Gibraltar they put it on again. The show went over terrifically. There was genuine talent in it, and serious music as well as the whizz-bang stuff. But the hero of the evening was a hairy corporal—Joe Comita of Brooklyn—who did a strip-tease burlesque of Gypsy Rose Lee.

His movements were pure genius. Gypsy herself couldn't have been more sensuous. Joe twirled and stripped, twirled and stripped. And then when he was down to his long, heavy GI underwear he swung to the front of the stage, lifted his veil, and kissed a front-row colonel on top of his bald head. The whole show was marvelously good. But there was something more to it than just that: There was the knowledge, deep in everybody's mind, that this was our night of danger. The radio had just brought word that Germany's entire U-boat pack was concentrated in the approaches to Gibraltar. More than 50 subs were said to be waiting for us. I doubt that there was a soul on board who expected the night to pass without an attack. And in that environment the boys from down below went through their performances buoyantly. We sat with life preservers on and water canteens at our belts. We laughed and cheered against a background of semi-conscious listening for other sounds. As the show ended a major said to me: "That's wonderful, those boys doing this when they're being taken to war like galley slaves down there in the hold. When you think of people at home squawking their heads off because they can only have 20 gallons of gasoline it makes your blood boil."

At Last—Fighting. From now onward, stretching for months and months into the future, life is completely changed for thousands of American boys on this side of the earth. For at last they are in there fighting. The jump from camp life into front-line living is just as great as the original jump from civilian life into army. Only those who served in the last war can conceive of the makeshift, deadly urgent, always-moving-onward complexion of front-line existence. And existence is exactly the word; it is nothing more. The last of the comforts are gone. From now on you sleep in bedrolls under little tents. You wash whenever and wherever you can. You carry your food on your back when you are fighting. You dig ditches for protection from bullets and from the chill north wind off the Mediterranean. There are no more hot-water taps. There are no post exchanges where you can buy cigarettes. There are no movies. When you speak to a civilian you have to wrestle with a foreign language. You carry just enough clothing to cover you and no more. You don't lug any knickknacks at all. When our troops made their first landings in North Africa they went four days without even blankets, just catching a few hours' sleep on the ground. Everybody either lost or chucked aside some of his equipment. Like most troops going into battle for the first time, they all carried too much at first. Gradually they shed it. The boys tossed out personal gear from their musette bags and filled them with ammunition. The countryside for 20 miles around Oran was strewn with overcoats, field jackets and mess kits as the soldiers moved on the city. Arabs will be going around for a whole generation clad in odd pieces of American army uniforms.

At the moment our troops are bivouacked for miles around each of three large centers of occupation—Casablanca, Oran and Algiers. They are consolidating, fitting in replacements, making repairs—spending a few days taking a deep breath before moving on to other theaters of action. They are camped in every conceivable way. In the city of Oran some are billeted in office buildings, hotels and garages. Some are camping in parks and big, vacant lots on the edge of town. Some are miles away, out in the country, living on treeless stretches of prairie. The American soldier is quick in adapting himself to a new mode of living. Outfits which have been here only three days have dug vast networks of ditches three feet deep in the bare brown earth. They have rigged up a light here and there with a storage battery. They have gathered boards and made floors and sideboards for their tents to keep out the wind and sand. They have hung out their washing, and painted their names over the tent flaps. You even see a soldier sitting on his "front step" of an evening playing a violin.



Ernie Pyle

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D. Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Released by Western Newspaper Union.

Lesson for January 7

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THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

LESSON TEXT—Matthew 2:13-23. GOLDEN TEXT—Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest.—Genesis 22:15.

Matthew is the Gospel of the King and His kingdom. It stresses the fulfillment of prophecy in the coming of Christ, the King. After His rejection, it tells us of the Church, "the kingdom in mystery," and of the death of Christ for our sins, His resurrection for our justification, and His glorious coming again.

This then is an important book which we study for the next three months. Teacher and student alike should be enthusiastic and expectant.

The genealogy of the King, and the story of His coming to earth as the babe of Bethlehem (both important matters), are covered in chapter 1. In our lesson we find Him as a little child. Observe how man received Him, and how God cared for Him. Without assigning definite verses to our points we note that:

I. Men Received or Rejected Jesus. It has always been so. Men, then as now, were either for Him or against Him. The world or today is far different from that of the first century, but the difference is all on the outside. Almost breath-taking have been the developments of modern science, but these have not changed the heart of man. He still fears and hates and fights and sins.

His attitude toward Christ is unchanged. There are still only two classes of people in the world—those who have received Christ and are saved, and those who have rejected Him and are lost. 1. Men Are Against Christ. How do men show their rejection of God's Son? Just as they did at His birth, by: a. Fear. Herod was afraid lest the coming of this One should result in the loss of his ill-gotten gains. His anger and fear made all Jerusalem afraid.

b. Indifference. When the Wise Men asked where Christ was to be born, the priests and scribes knew exactly where to find the facts in the Holy Scriptures, but having done so, they relapsed into utter indifference. They had no interest in the fulfillment of the prophecy. c. Hatred. Herod poured out the violence of his heart by killing the first-born. He was the first of many who have raged against the Christ in futile anger.

d. Sorrow. The tears of the mothers of Jerusalem but foreshadowed the weeping and wailing which characterizes Christ-rejection both in time and eternity. 2. Men Are For Christ. Thanks be to God, there were those in that day who were for Christ and, like those who follow Him today, they showed:

a. Spirituality. Men have marveled that the Magi knew of the birth of Christ. They must have studied the prophecies of the Word and been responsive to the teaching and moving of the Holy Spirit. Can we say as much for ourselves? b. Interest. Not content to know and to marvel, they shamed the priests of Israel by their persistent interest in this great thing which had come to pass. c. Love. They brought themselves in worship and they brought rich gifts from their treasures. You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving. d. Action. They came. They persisted until they found the Christ. Then they listened to God and protected His Son by not returning to Herod.

II. God Protected and Prepared Jesus. The ruin which sin had brought into the world could only be met by redemption which Christ had come to bring. Some men had already shown their hatred for Jesus and their rejection of Him. But God still ruled, and for the sake of those who received Him (and would receive Him in all the centuries since), He kept the Child Jesus from harm. We find Him: 1. Protecting Jesus. Men may hate and seek to destroy God's Son. Satan may inspire them with ingenuity and cunning. But see how the Eternal One spoke to Joseph in dreams, how He prepared a place of refuge in Egypt and ultimately in Nazareth, where the boy Jesus might increase in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. 2. Preparing Jesus. God knew of the days of public ministry which were ahead, and above all, of that day when on Golgotha's hill Christ was, in His own body, to prepare salvation for you and for me. God is never taken by surprise. He moves forward to the completion of His plan with the stately tread of eternity. He took Jesus to Egypt. He brought Him again to Nazareth. In it all He was preparing His Son for the days of ministry which were ahead. All this was in fulfillment of prophecy (see vv. 15, 17). God's Word is always sure.



Yamashita and the Snore Threat

("General Yamashita, new commander-in-chief of the Japs against General MacArthur, often closes his eyes and snores, even in the midst of important business. This gives the impression that he is not alert and fools people.")—Japanese radio.)

This introduces another new weapon into the global war. A snorer can be quite a threat, and Yamashita is no ordinary, low gauge, one-tube snorer. He gets volume and power, not to mention distance. It may herald the launching of an all-out Japanese snore attack.

The Yamashita "horror weapon" may be the robot-grunt or even the jet-propelled snore. We may have to combat a nasal blitz any moment, now!

America does not include snoring among its major weapons. It is not a nation of top snorers. It has never gone in for snoring as an instrument of aggression, nor even of defense. But that may be because it has never been challenged in this respect by any world conquering snorers.

Washington seems undisturbed. Secretary Stimson expressed the opinion that while we are not much as a snoring nation today, we led the world at it between 1919 and 1941. "And that was unintentional snoring," he said. "Once we set our minds to snoring aggressively, the results will be amazing."

General Marshall spoke with similar confidence. "Let Yamashita bring on his Burping battalions, his grunting Grenadiers," he said calmly. "I understand Yamashita snores from the toes up, the effect being heightened by a bad case of halitosis. But we will take him on, grunt for grunt."

General MacArthur was equally passive. "I will spot the general two deep inhalations and make him cry for help. We can lick him at anything, including any noises he cares to make," he declared. "He is very deceptive," warned MacArthur. "He can snore while awake." "That makes him an ideal foe," was the reply. "He sometimes does his deepest planning between grunts," we pointed out. "We will keep him grunting," smiled MacArthur. "Is he a straight-front snorer or a side-wheeler? Anyhow we will look for an all-around snorer. Do you know if he snores with his mouth open?" "Our scouts so report," we said. "That kind are a dime a dozen, even when made in Japan," said MacArthur. "It is the man who snores with his mouth closed who is really dangerous."

MacArthur went on to say that, anyhow, America had been experimenting with a new snore of greater range and velocity, a snore that would go anywhere. "We fear no enemy snorers," he added. "Kaiser Bill was a better than fair hostile snorer and look at his finish! Hindenburg was tops."

General Eisenhower admitted one fear from the snore technique. "If Hitler, Goering, Himmler and Goebbels should all snore at once, that would be a disturbance!" he admitted.

Justice on the Home Front "Coincident with the distribution to all private lending institutions of new regulations covering housing loans for war veterans, the Federal Housing Administration today urged the setting up of full safeguards against veterans being victimized through the purchase of jerrybuilt houses."—News item.

One of our yens is to see a tough, seasoned veteran return from the wars, get one of those modern houses with walls that wobble in the breeze, and chase the realtor across country with a bayonet. Getting, of course, his money back.

Portrait of a Self-Confident Man. (Our Fuehrer stands like a rock amid the surging tide, holding fast to his conviction Germany will win this war.)—Herr Goebbels.)

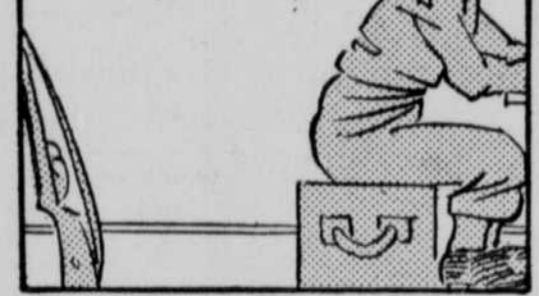
There stands Adolf Like a rock While the breakers Roughly sock He's not worried, He's not wet; He's not shaken. . . . Wanna bet?

Secretary Ickes was aboard a train derailed at 60 miles an hour. Unhurt, he says he didn't even know about it. And it will do no good to show him the reports because he says he doesn't believe what the newspaper says.

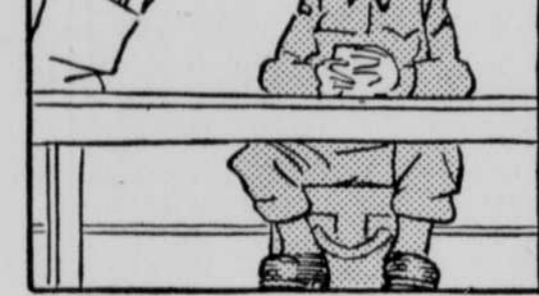
"I am not fond of dancing on a narrow stage," says General Yamashita, Japanese commander-in-chief. After a time you will find it amazing, Yammie old thing, how easily you can do it to the tune of the "Stars and Stripes Forever."

POP

A GERMAN SCIENTIST CLAIMS TO HAVE DISCOVERED A NEW SPECIES OF MOSQUITO



I BET IT DISCOVERED HIM FIRST



SOMEBODY'S STENOGR

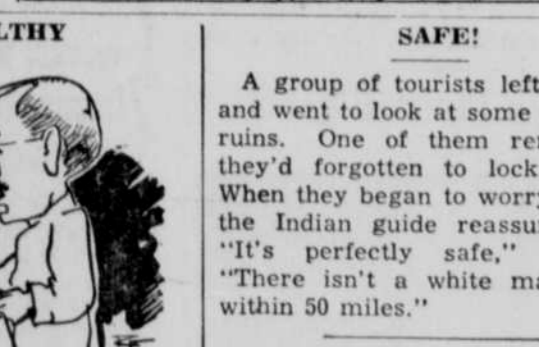
I GUESS THIS WEEK-END FISHING TRIP IS FUN FOR THE BOSS AND HIS HOST MR. BIGLITTLE—BUT I'M LONESOME ON THIS SEA WITH UP THAR—(SIGH)



OOO!—LOOK, A LINER! IT'S HEADING FOR US!



IT'LL HIT US SURE!



THAT'S FATE FOR YA—A SEA RESCUE BY SOME HANDSOME SAILOR, AND THE DARN THING HAD TO GO AND MISS US!!!



TOO HEALTHY

Doc—The best way to enjoy perfect health is to get up every morning at five and take a cold shower. Patient—What's the next best way? Taking Ways! Joe—Why are you washing your spoon in your finger bowl? Bill—So I won't get egg all over my pocket! Skip the Tip Diner—A glass of water, please. Waiter—To drink, sir? Diner—No, to wash my feet! Puns and Apples Nit—What kind of apples are those? Wit—Summer Delicious. Nit—And what are the others?

SAFE!

A group of tourists left their car and went to look at some old Indian ruins. One of them remembered they'd forgotten to lock the car. When they began to worry about it, the Indian guide reassured them. "It's perfectly safe," he said. "There isn't a white man around within 50 miles." Feminine Touch Joe—I've got a new job. I'm a manicurist in a bakery. Bill—A manicurist in a bakery? Joe—Yes, I have charge of the lady fingers. Some Joke Joe—You've got ambitious hair. Harry—What do you mean? Joe—It's sure to come out on top! Girl Shy Bill—Do you like stuffed dates? Joe—Not when I have to pay for stuffing them. Same Difference She—You used to catch me in your arms every night, dear. He—Yeah. And now I catch you in my pockets every morning.

PERMANENT LOAN

Jones—I've had this umbrella for five years. Blue—Don't you think it's about time you returned it? A.W.O.L. General—What do you know about tactics? You're no general! Private—No, but I'm a better judge of ham than any pig! Popular Gal Harry—Why do you call your girl "Appendix"? Jerry—It seems to be fashionable for everybody to take her out! Common Sense Fan—What's horse sense? Jockey—It's what keeps a horse from betting on people!

Men Anxious to Move Forward

Now that the first phase is over, a new jubilation has come over the troops. There is a confidence and enthusiasm among them that didn't exist in England, even though morale was high there. They were impatient to get started and get it over, and now that they've started and feel sort of like veterans, they are eager to sweep on through. That first night of landing, when they came ashore in big steel motorized invasion barges, many funny things happened. One famous officer intended to drive right ashore in a jeep, but they let the folding end of the barge down too soon and the jeep drove off into eight feet of water. Other barges ramméd ashore so hard the men jumped off without even getting their feet wet and were soon at their posts.