Film Review
Four World War II Films: *Guadalcanal Diary, A Walk in the Sun, Gung Ho!* and *Story of G.I. Joe*

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Early in 1944 Bosley Crowther, chief film critic of the *New York Times,* indicated his professional criteria for an excellent war movie. Such a film would possess "elements of suspense, of sudden and concentrated action, and of heroic accomplishment against odds," with fighting that is "hot and lurid." In a word, it would be "sizzling."[1] Tastes change. For today's critics, that would be a very bad war movie.

But so emotionally empty and untrue to life were Hollywood war movies of the 1940s that by the end of 1944 *The Los Angeles Times* noted it was hard for American soldiers to sit through one "without laughing in derision."[2] That was just how novelist James Jones recalled reacting when, back from Guadalcanal where he'd been wounded a year earlier, he went to see the critically acclaimed, melodramatic *Bataan* (1943): he soon walked out of the theater.[3]

Hollywood war films between Pearl Harbor and VJ Day characteristically featured air and sea action, British forces, resistance fighters, and spies. As with the last stand of a ragtag squad in the Philippines in Tay Garnett's *Bataan,* melodrama was the usual idiom, though it was less extravagant than in the films of 1917-18, where every Yank was a Boy Scout and every "Hun" a demon. Of roughly fifteen hundred features released by Hollywood between 1942 and 1945, only four (perhaps surprisingly) focused on more or less typical US infantry actions: *Guadalcanal Diary, Gung Ho!, Story of G.I. Joe,* and *A Walk in the Sun*. Only the first two, however, saw wide release before the war ended.[4]

Guadalcanal Diary and *Gung Ho!* were produced in 1943, before the tide of war had

definitively turned in favor of the Allies. They were designed to entertain (and make money) as well as to boost morale and aid recruiting. Both movies portrayed Marines in the Pacific, and both depicted Americans in battle through a now unfashionable and off-putting amalgam of milk-and-water realism and dashes of comedy. Neither *A Walk in the Sun* nor *G.I. Joe* dispensed entirely with comedy, but, made in the last year of the war, both were conspicuously more sober than their predecessors. Less unreal than the earlier films, and downplaying battle action, both *A Walk in the Sun* and *G.I. Joe* were warm tributes to the American soldier. Both too were sentimental and high-minded: the former eulogized, the latter elegized. But while the rightness of the fight against the Axis was in every case a given, none of these four unevenly realistic movies can fairly be said to "glorify" or "extol" war itself as a desirable activity – something Hollywood is often accused of doing.

20th Century Fox's ad campaign for *Guadalcanal Diary* was, however, a different story. One poster showed a bare-chested Marine holding a squirming, kicking Japanese officer high over his head (for some reason) while his gyrene buddies come charging through dense jungle behind him. Portraits of stars Preston Foster, Lloyd Nolan, William Bendix, Anthony Quinn, and Richard Jaeckel show two of them alert, two smiling confidently, and one laughing loudly. The illustration promises escape into a world where battle is brawny, with just a hint of danger: not like what was in the newspapers or in journalist Richard Tregaskis's unflinching source bestseller.[5] Fortunately, whatever its sins against reality, the movie doesn't live up to the poster, and no Japanese are heaved around like sofa cushions.

Premiering in November 1943, director Lewis Seiler's *Guadalcanal Diary* was the first feature treatment of the American invasion of an Axis stronghold. The amphibious assault on Japanese-held Guadalcanal in the Solomons on August 7, 1942, began a six-month air, land, and

sea campaign that marked the turning point of the war in the Pacific; defeat at Guadalcanal made Japan cede the initiative to the United States. The movie re-enacts three or four highlights of the campaign, like the capture of the half-finished Japanese airfield and the raising of a wounded officer's miniature American flag over it, but the focus is on fiction, not history. Though Lloyd Nolan reads aloud an ominous paragraph in General Order No. 3, "Graves will be suitably marked. All bodies will wear identification tag," the movie develops a regrettably blithe view of fighting one of the pivotal battles of the century, one that finally cost the United States 29 ships, 615 aircraft, and nearly 6,000 killed, wounded, and missing. The movie is oblivious to this cost, as it is to the several Marines who told Tregaskis they couldn't wait to "kill a Jap" or collect Japanese gold teeth and ears.[6]

The movie follows five fictional characters loosely inspired by people in Tregaskis's book but not representing real individuals. *Guadalcanal Diary* is especially episodic, with every episode of equal emotional weight. William Bendix's comedic pre-invasion hula dance, for example, is as prominent as most of the battle action and probably more so than the later voiceover description of the battle-weary Marines after three months of hard fighting. There's one exception: the virtual annihilation of Captain Cross's (Roy Roberts) patrol stands out as emotionally significant, with the sole survivor (Quinn) swimming for his life, and a long line of American corpses being swamped by the surf.[7]

Most of the establishing dialogue on shipboard is lifelike: that is, insipid and unrevealing. Colorful war-movie "types" are on hand: a Catholic chaplain (Foster) who was twice an All-American fullback, a tough but big-hearted sergeant (Nolan), a kid (seventeen-year-old Jaeckel), a jovial Mexican-American (Quinn), a smart company commander (Richard Conte), and two court jesters (William Bendix and Lionel Stander). There's a token Jewish Marine (Bob Rose),

who's as diminutive and unwarlike as Marcel Dalio in *The Grand Illusion* (1937), and even a Black cook (Navy Cook Third Class Berry James Jordan, like Rose uncredited), who speaks one ridiculous malaprop line before vanishing.[8] Like cardboard itself, none of these characters says much of wit or interest, though it's a nice touch when Jaeckel pretends that letters he's writing to his mother are really to a nonexistent girlfriend.

Despite third billing, Bendix has the most prominent role. He'd established a persona as a comical Brooklyn cabbie in B pictures,[9] and in 1942's *Wake Island* he became with little change of character USMC Private "Aloysius 'Smacksie' Randall." As an ex-cabdriver in *Guadalcanal Diary*, he reminds us again and again that he's from Brooklyn – the butt of Hollywood jokes throughout the 1940s. Bendix in a long career excelled at playing lovable, blue-collar clowns, but *Guadalcanal Diary* would be a better picture without "Corporal Aloysius T. Potts" laying on comic relief every few minutes.[10]

Yet, crouched in a sandbagged slit trench under prolonged naval gunfire – among the most excruciating of human experiences – the comical Potts is suddenly the voice of the supposedly average Marine, solemnly and awkwardly soliloquizing on God and duty in words imagined by screenwriter Lamar Trotti:

> I'm no hero. I'm just a guy. I come out here because somebody had to. I don't want no medals. I just want to get this thing over with. ... What I mean is I, I guess it's up to God. If we get it—and it sure looks that way now—I hope He figures we did the best we could and lets it go at that.

As Gunnery Sergeant "Hook" Malone (Nolan) says, proverbially, "Anybody who says he ain't scared is a fool or a liar." (It's hard to believe, however, that anyone might do more than shrink, tremble, and pray - let alone converse audibly - in an open trench beneath the thunder of

14-inch shells.)

Reed Hadley in a minor role as a Tregaskis stand-in eventually delivers solemn lines that nevertheless can't undo the subadult version of Guadalcanal that's preceded them. Hadley's voiceover after the Second Battle of the Matanikau (October 6-9, 1942) comes closer to reality than most of the movie, even if it neglects the mud, cruel heat, monsoon rains, jungle glooms, sickening sights and smells, short rations, thirst, lack of sleep, exhaustion, jungle rot, trench foot, leeches, intestinal parasites, mosquitos, and malaria, none of which have a role in the film:

> The first emotion, elation, is gone. Veterans now, blooded bush-fighting specialists, their bravado gone, or at least subdued, with a new respect for the Japs. Weary, silent, stunned. Men with glazed eyes holding their sides. Limping along, shock-blast victims, staggering, sometimes falling. the only sound an occasional groan. Moving like drunken men or men in a dream. Heads, legs bandaged, clothes torn. Unlit cigarettes dangling from their lips. Old before their times. Boys with the memory of death in their eyes. Staring, remembering friends they've left back there.

Not much like the poster (or the trailer, for that matter: "A song in their hearts! Laughter on their lips! Courage in their souls!"[11] As in most war movies, the only foe in *Guadalcanal Diary* is the human enemy. A human foe allows for cinematic heroism. Mud, hunger, and malaria don't.[12]

When fresh troops of the US Army arrive in November, narrator Hadley calls them "kids full of big talk, itching for a fight. Just like us a few months ago." After ninety days of jungle fighting, there's no more "big talk" or "itching for a fight" for the marines – not that the film ever sells short their pugnacity. Nor does *Guadalcanal Diary* downplay the tenacity of the Japanese: on this island are none of the grinning, bespectacled caricatures beloved by propagandists. But racism there is: Potts thinks most Japanese have "buck teeth," and according to Malone,

"Japs…ain't people" (another line not in the book); the script goes out of its way to call the Japanese *Japs*, *skibbies*, *monkeys*, *apes*, *squint-eyes*, and *gooks*.[13]

Toward the end of the film, Jaeckel, whose unaffected performance makes his character the only one you might care about, plays dead as the Japanese prod Marine corpses with their bayonets. When they turn away, he pops up and shoots them in the back: "That's one *you* taught me, Tojo!" (Anthony Quinn's Alvarez had been killed by the Japanese in much the same way.) The incident gives notice that contact with the enemy teaches even the typical American boy the folly of fair play and the life-saving value of cunning and treachery: a savage lesson of the so-called "field of honor" and one of the most distasteful to learn. From now on, the episode implies, the Marines fight fire with fire. It was clearly an applause line, telling audiences we'd neutralized the only advantage – treachery – the Japanese supposedly had. The real Tregaskis recounts a complementary lesson: "Our Marines…learned to take no chances. The dead were shot again, with rifles and pistols, to make sure."[14]

The significance of *Guadalcanal Diary* in the story of American war films is manifold. It adapted for the first time a bestselling factual account of conflict in the Pacific and, despite excessive comedy, told a basically realistic story. It dropped the plot contrivances of earlier, more frankly escapist war films. It shared with the slightly earlier *Bataan* a focus divided among "representative" American characters; it soon became a cliché but was unusual in 1943. It benefited more than any other wartime film from the assistance of the Marine Corps: 5,000 Marine extras from Camp Pendleton and several airplanes, most of which were photographed on amphibious maneuvers to create the movie's spectacular landing scene. Besides being the first entertainment film to suggest, however discreetly, conditions of organized jungle warfare against the Japanese, it was also the first in theaters to depict a decisive American victory over

any Axis nation. But for all the effort, energy, and cash that went into the filming, what never comes across is the bitterness behind Tregaskis's own reference to Guadalcanal in the final phrase of his book, in startling defiance of 1940s decorum, as "this f------ [sic] island."[15]

II

The subtitle describes *Gung Ho!,* released six weeks after *Guadalcanal Diary*, as "The Factual Record of the Second Marine Raider Battalion." It boasted the input of three Marine Corps technical advisors, including Lieutenant Colonel Evans F. Carlson (1896-1947), formerly U.S. military observer in China with both Nationalist and Communist forces. Carlson popularized the phrase *gung ho* in English as the battle cry of the Second Marine Raider Battalion, the early US special-ops unit he had helped organize and was named to command in February, 1942.

Ray Enright's film fictionalizes the Second's briefly celebrated raid on Makin Island in the Gilberts (August 17-18, 1942). To fill out the cast, Enright borrowed a number of Raiders from the Fourth Raider Battalion, in training at Camp Pendleton. Like Lamar Trotti's take on Guadalcanal, the script by Lucien Hubbard (producer of *Wings* in 1927) strongly dilutes recent events, and the characters are even more explicitly diverse than the Marines in *Guadalcanal Diary*. "Only those men who are prepared to kill or be killed should apply," announces the Greek immigrant Lieutenant Cristoforos (J. Carrol Naish) in the opening scene. (A condition that theoretically applied to every member of the all-volunteer Marine Corps.)[16]

There's predictable hokum like a pair of half-brothers battling over the same girl, and there's some flamboyant leatherneck heroism. As in so many war movies before the 1970s, the flat characters are chiefly defined either by their eccentricities or by their pat life stories. Half the film shows the selection and training of the Raiders and their submarine voyage to Makin Island, with

stock footage that barely suggests the physical, emotional, and attitudinal rigors of Marine Corps commando training. But *Gung Ho!* is less genteel than *Guadalcanal Diary*. The first question the first Raider applicant is asked is “Why do you want to kill Japs?” Privates chat about the best way to kill a man silently with a knife, and a navy doctor offers genial advice. Randolph Scott – square-jawed, tough-willed, yet analytical and paternal – stars as the Carlson character, Colonel “Thorwald,” a name that smacks more than even the Swedish “Carlson” of indomitable Viking ancestry.[17]

The staged fighting on Makin Island could be mistaken for that in *Guadalcanal Diary* and many later films: taxing and deadly but also exciting and just shocking enough to fascinate without being revolting. There’s much hand-to-hand, enemy snipers are blown from trees, and there’s even a little blood (unusual for the 1940s). At one point a knot of Japanese feign surrender in order to kill Marines, something not unheard of.[18] Possibly the most unlikely-seeming plot point occurs soon after. Enemy planes arrive to strafe the Marines while the Japanese are in headlong retreat, and a Japanese fighter pilot laughs hysterically as a he guns down scores or hundreds. His targets turn out to be Japanese. Laughter aside, in a friendly fire incident on the afternoon of the 17th, Japanese aircraft had strafed and bombed their own troops, who had just moved into the Marines’ former positions. There seem to have been few casualties, but the movie sensationally shows fleeing, vanquished Japanese being virtually wiped out by their own planes – lured there by an American flag painted on a roof by the Marines, a total cinematic fiction.[19]

Back on the sub for the final scene, Thorwald, in extreme closeup, delivers a liberal-minded, Lincoln-like address to the Marines and especially to the theater audience:

> Raiders, you have shown the way! Whatever anyone may do in the days ahead, this was the first offensive action to be carried out. Our victory, however, has not been without the loss of men who were like brothers to us. But what of the future for those of us who remain? Our course is clear. It is for us at this moment, with the memory of the sacrifice of our brothers still fresh, to dedicate our hearts, our minds, and our bodies to the great task that lies ahead. We must go further and dedicate ourselves to the monumental task of assuring the peace which follows this holocaust will be a just, equitable, and conclusive peace. And beyond that lies the mission of making certain that the social order which we bequeath to our sons and daughters is truly based on freedom, for which these men died.

Thorwald's hopeful idealism isn't much different from Chaplin's at the end of *The Great Dictator* (1940) and considerably less strident even in wartime than Joel McCrea's better known climactic plea for American preparedness in Hitchcock's *Foreign Correspondent*, also made in 1940.

In forty hours, be it said, the 220 Raiders – average age twenty-two – eliminated the outnumbered Japanese garrison on Makin – average age about twenty – while destroying some thousand barrels of aviation fuel, the main radio station, seaplanes, and other stores and facilities. Carlson, who at one point had thought the fight hopeless, described the Japanese as "darn good boys."[20] (The movie's Thorwald expresses no opinion.)

III

Few combat movies have been accorded such respect and disdain as Lewis Milestone's *A Walk in the Sun* (1945), respect due mostly to the nuanced characterizations and greater seriousness than the earlier films. It is a spare, eloquent, and psychologically astute film. More

than *Guadalcanal Diary* and *Gung Ho!,* it rings true for grownup civilian audiences. But for the sadly experienced, the story and the details, the entire *ambiance*, too often fall short. Future director Samuel Fuller in 1946 and HBO producer Thomas Bird in 1990, veterans respectively of combat in Europe and Vietnam, have registered their disdain: neither Fuller nor Bird was impressed with the movie's take on the milieu of combat and the psychology of footslogging GIs. But aside from that, film historian Bernard F. Dick finds it a "gritty tone poem" and military historian Roger J. Spiller regards it as the first "hardheaded" war film with no "irrelevancies," "patriotic diction," or "improbable heroics."[21] It is one of the most artful of Hollywood films produced during the war, an aesthetic and poetic assessment of Americans in battle. Its picture of the combat zone, like that of the simultaneously produced but less modernist *Story of G.I. Joe*, is still sanitized, though hardly glamorized. Its seeming "authenticity" comes chiefly from the directorial art of Milestone, the performance art of the actors, the expressive cinematography of Russell Harlan (in his first A picture after shooting fifty B westerns in eight years), and the work of veteran editor Duncan Mansfield (of *The Front Page*).[22]

Milestone's film, his sixth about war, adapts Harry Brown's short archetypal 1944 novel. It has a rifle platoon hitting an Italian beach before dawn and heading inland to secure a farmhouse that may or may not be occupied by the Germans.[23] Ernie Pyle called Brown's narrative "wonderful," and the *New York Times* praised the book for the skill with which it conveyed the "psychological atmosphere … and the emotional tension of war"[24] Attempting to suggest the essence of the foot soldier's experience by enhancing simple realism, Milestone's adaptation, with a script by Robert Rossen, arguably does the same.

Beyond that, the movie celebrates the capacity of disparate Americans soldiers to cohere in a crisis – much as an idealized America cohered under the threats and imperatives of World

War II. Its theme – the necessity of character and teamwork in battle – is now a cliché. Yet before *Bataan*, in which a thrown-together squad strives vainly to delay the Japanese, it was a major social theme that Hollywood – and modern literature as well – had hardly explored. Even the victorious Marines in *Gung Ho!* and *Guadalcanal Diary* succeed less as part of a coordinated team than as an association of dedicated individuals. And there's not much explicit teamwork in, for example, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), *The Big Parade* (1925), or *What Price Glory* (1926). In John Farrow's *Wake Island* (1942), the primary focus is on the command responsibilities of one man, Major Caton (Brian Donlevy).

A Walk in the Sun profits from apt players in Dana Andrews, Richard Conte, and Norman Lloyd, who put a solid integrity into their roles. The characters seem believable because the actors imbue them with notable personalities and personal styles (Conte – the company commander in *Guadalcanal Diary* but later often cast as a criminal – makes machine-gunner Rivera an amiable, drily cynical absurdist.) The outstanding character actor Burgess Meredith, uncredited, makes for an expressive narrator for the first third of the picture. Also uncredited is the African-American baritone Kenneth Spencer, who sings a theme artificially (or, if you will, artistically) imparting an epic character to the proceedings that irks the movie's critics. Milestone follows Brown in telling a story with a simple, taut, carefully rationed plot. Like the novel, the movie attempts to capture the feel of front-line existence in the Second World War, while implicitly championing virtues thought typical of Americans in general.

The hard-pressed platoon completes its mission through values present in other combat movies but highlighted in *A Walk in the Sun:* collective courage, humor, initiative, flexibility, comradeship, and essential humanity. In telling of a minor operation where, one after another, things go believably wrong, only the triumphant finale is predictable; yet there are no

melodramatic moves. The film imparts the sardonicism of the disgruntled dogface, who despite being scared goes into battle on strained reserves of resilience, plus the knowledge that everyone he can see is in the same boat. While implicitly positing a collective American character, Milestone and Rossen infuse the film with broad liberal ideals that give it social as well as dramatic weight.

A Walk in the Sun opens distinctively with an image of upper-middle-class leisure as a man's hand chooses a copy of Brown's novel from a line-up of books on a well-appointed desk. Other book adaptations had displayed the credits through the turning pages of a screen-sized "book," and the turning-page credits of *Guadalcanal Diary* had featured, unusually, pencil sketches of the main characters. The first page of this book, though, bears a photo of a man on the march (Dana Andrews starring as Sergeant Tyne), and Meredith's voiceover is warm and avuncular:

> This book tells a story that happened long ago, way back in nineteen hundred…and forty-three, when the lead platoon of the Texas Division hit the beach at Salerno in sunny Italy.

Time has added resonance to the hyperbolic "long ago." The Thirty-Sixth ("Texas") Division and the Salerno landing add detail not found in the novel. The Thirty-Sixth Division, made up principally from the Texas National Guard, was well-known for its role in the Italian campaign. And Texas, besides being the home, in 1940s comedy, of colorful braggarts, was a quintessentially American place suggesting the freedom of the open plains and images of heroic cinema cowboys. There were also the Texas defenders of the Alamo, American volunteers who'd died fighting a European-style dictator for their independence. Texas was thus a viable movie

symbol of America. Yet the novel never mentions the Texas Division or Salerno, and the landing in the book is fictional. Making the Texas Division a symbol of America was the brainchild of scenarist Robert Rossen: Harry Brown never identifies his fictitious unit.

As Meredith speaks, Sergeant Tyne's image comes to life as a moving picture on the surface of the page. As each page turns with its own portrait in motion, Meredith personalizes the soldiers one by one, connecting each man with a hometown, summing him up in a few words. The unusual introductory sequence, with its library motif, storyteller, and sense of long ago, raises modern American soldiers to a place in the pages of romance. Meredith says off-handedly, "Here's a song about them. Listen."

The powerful baritone of Kenneth Spencer takes over with a striking, bluesy ode to the common man, sung in the manner of "Ol' Man River," whose first stanza appears "printed" on the next "page."[25]

The mere presence of Spencer's voice makes a subtle but daring cultural statement for a nationally distributed entertainment film of 1944-45: it acknowledges an African-American culture that goes beyond spirituals and jazz and is inseparable from the nation's presumed melting-pot. *This* "invisible man" is an American bard, maybe *the* American bard, a guarantor of history and legend. It's more than liberal tokenism. It's an exemplary augmentation of the substance of previous war films, whose African-American characters were (with the exception of Spencer himself in Tay Garnett's *Bataan*) virtually nonexistent. Meredith's meditative narration, moreover, and Spencer's powerful vocals give an imprimatur of authority, and the relatively unsensational events of the story help create the illusion that we're seeing American soldiers as they really are.

The sonorous "folk ballad"[26] backs more credits, then fades out. Soldiers crouch in the dark

in a strangely roomy landing craft. The pre-dawn dialogue is tough enough for *noir*: "What's so funny about Messina?" a soldier asks after somebody's wisecrack. "We lost a lot of good joes there." "What do you want us to do?" says Tyne. "Cry about it?" Bitter mention is made of a soldier in Sicily who "got a Purple Heart in the head."

Shrapnel kills the platoon's green lieutenant in a manner too gruesome to be shown on a 1940s screen. As the platoon goes ashore in the dark, the song returns – with a note of bad times ahead:

> … They are moving into hell and high water,
> A Texan from Jersey and one from Dakota,
> A Texan from out near Duluth, Minnesota,
> Kansas, Maine, and Tennessee, Lord God,
> They're all in the Texas infantry.

One might think, perhaps, of the catalogue of ships and warriors on the Trojan beachhead in the *Iliad*. But while Homer's Akhaians came to Troy from a hundred and fifty places to fight for plunder and glory, it eventually becomes clear that Milestone's GIs are fighting for something else: a democracy of decency that harmonizes with ideals of freedom everywhere, even if they don't seem to realize it. (The ironists Friedman and Rivera: "You're selling democracy to the natives." "Where'd you get that malarkey?" "I read it in a book.") Their chief concern about the war–-as in real life–-is when it will end.

Some say it's self-important schmaltz masquerading as "art." Yet *A Walk in the Sun* puts across its message of international democracy more effectively than Zoltan Korda's acclaimed propaganda fantasy *Sahara* (1943), another microcosm, in which a dozen Allied soldiers with a tank contrive to bring to their knees five hundred sneering Nazis. And what Milestone shows us

is a bunch of working- and middle-class civilians who carry lightly their new knowledge of how to kill with rifles, bazookas, and machine guns. They wonder caustically about a future "Battle of Tibet." Indeed, *A Walk in the Sun* conveys a sometimes jocular, all-encompassing cynicism that, mild as it is, was essentially unknown in Hollywood war films of the period.

Milestone's platoon gets ashore mysteriously unopposed, and serious shooting breaks out on the beach only when they're off it. Then Meredith says, fantastically but to emphasize the menacing uncertainty that suffuses the film, "Things on that beach got dead quiet, and the silence was bad, very bad. Was the enemy fifty miles away, or was he just behind the beachhead waiting, waiting?" This sudden silence is hard to accept. (After the greatest amphibious assault in history before D-Day in Normandy, the Salerno beach wasn't fully secured for eight days: but history isn't what the movie is about.)

Basics rarely addressed in combat films pop up in throwaway lines. "Seems like this war is nothing but waiting," Meredith says, as the camera lingers on the pensive face of a pipe-smoking Lloyd Bridges. "Waiting for your chow, waiting for your pay, waiting for a letter from home." And "That's the whole trouble with war," says McWilliams (Sterling Holloway), "You never get to see nothin'. You fight 'em by ear." (Documentary footage by U.S. combat photographers of Axis soldiers in action are extremely rare; infantry hides and artillery and landmines are faceless.)[27]

Though the diction is colloquial, the dialogue is at times artificial; the cadenced alternation of dialogue and action managed by Mansfield, enhances the film's dexterity. There's a beautifully composed sequence, for example, emphasizing the mix of anxiety and excruciating boredom while waiting for something – anything – to happen. The awkward first-aid man reports the platoon sergeant killed and is soon killed himself while foolishly trying to get a good look at the

fighting on the beach. A strafing attack by a German plane is followed by a temporary sense of thank-God-it's-over. Acting platoon sergeant Porter (Herbert Rudley) shows signs of breaking under the strain, and Tyne progressively takes charge. There's much artificial but drily amusing *repartée* on the march, mostly between Privates Friedman (the coincidentally named George Tyne) and Rivera ("You're a jukebox, Rivera. Somebody keeps putting nickels into you.") (There's too much talk, witty as it often is: too many of these guys are foolishly relaxed and inattentive as they saunter through enemy territory.) The platoon meets two enthusiastic Italian deserters who, after a long discussion, can't tell them anything of importance. Even though overplayed, the bilingual episode between Private Tranella (Richard Benedict) and one of the Italians (John Laurenz) is amusing and almost believable. Porter, however, soon breaks down completely, throwing himself to the ground sobbing. The platoon finds the farmhouse occupied by the Germans, and takes shelter behind a stone wall. Sergeant Tyne, now in command, has to improvise: two squads will quietly flank the house by way of the river and blow up the wooden bridge. Supported by Rivera's machine gun, Tyne leads a frontal attack. The farmhouse is secured, and the movie ends in a hard-won victory. Just before Spencer's concluding lyrics, Tyne adds one more notch to the dozen carved in the stock of a tommy gun he's retrieved from the fallen Private Rankin; not for men killed but for fights survived, and space on the stock looks to be running out. (Possibly the film's worst gaffe in terms of the real world is the failure of anybody to take notice of those wounded in the assault.)

On two different occasions, Sergeants Porter and Tyne each have to rally the assembled platoon by shouting, "It's a stinking situation, right?" eliciting the emphatic collective reply, "Right!" More than once Rivera quips, "Nobody dies!" as if it were true.

Of Porter, Burgess Meredith has reflected that "[h]e … well, he has a lot on his mind. A lot

on his mind." Porter finally cracks not because he's "weak" (as some might claim), but because he's reached his breaking point of uncertainty, anxiety, and responsibility: "combat exhaustion" in the phraseology of the day. ("You don't have to be bleeding to be wounded," says John Ireland as the introspective Pfc. Craven.) *A Walk in the Sun* thus contains Hollywood's first portrayal of the complete breakdown of an American soldier from combat stress.[28] The platoon's acceptance of Porter's collapse as psychic exhaustion rather than cowardice contrasts dramatically, for example, with the enraged General Patton's striking of two enlisted men already taken out of the line in Sicily with battle fatigue.[29]

There are believable portrayals of fear: everybody in the landing boat "has the jitters," and the quietly competent natural leader Tyne, alone after McWilliams's death, mutters "Gee, I'm scared." He lights a cigarette and walks a little stiff-legged. On the brink of the farmhouse assault, Archimbeau (Norman Lloyd) says ruefully, "Sometimes I think we'll never get out of the army. Honest, that's what I think." When Tyne replies that his stomach is "screwed up in a tight knot" and he feels "a little sick and dizzy," Archimbeau asks, "Who doesn't?" Similar acknowledgments of the ubiquity of fear were unknown in 1940s screen GIs. Archimbeau is a pessimist and a grouser, and one or two of the minor characters are dimwits, but if there are any genuine screwups or goldbricks in the outfit, they're not in this movie. Heroism in *A Walk in the Sun* is realistically minor-key. Scared, confused, or otherwise, the platoon manages to adapt, improvise, and overcome.

Harry Brown's tale ends at last in an ambiguous, unresolved, and dreamlike conclusion that Milestone and Rossen reject because it leaves Tyne in kinetic and psychological limbo in the first moments of the charge on the farmhouse: his thoughts ("It was so easy!") end essentially in midair, perhaps permanently. In the film, Tyne looks up to see the relentless sun of the title

clouded over, looks across the field to see the target farmhouse whirling in front of his eyes as his fear increases. Everything freezes back to normality when Rivera opens up with his machine gun. Then Tyne orders the successful but costly charge over the stone wall.

Spencer's concluding stanza enlarges the American platoon's road toward and beyond a minor enemy position into an epic internationalist statement:

> It's the road that leads down through a Philippine town,
> And hits Highway 7 north of Rome;
> It's the same road they had coming out of Stalingrad,
> It's the old Lincoln Highway back home.
> It's wherever men fight to be free!

The GIs' connection with heroic legend and an ideal American spirit tough enough to defy tyrants and big enough to unify white and black, east and west, America and Asia, Lincoln and Marx, is made explicit and complete. *A Walk in the Sun* is sometimes accused of nationalist flag-waving – due mostly to snatches of "The Battle Cry of Freedom" and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" played for a few seconds on the soundtrack. But the bigger flag waved unapologetically by Milestone and Rossen is that of an optimistic, international liberalism.

So it's not surprising that *A Walk in the Sun* was named one of the ten Best Films of the Year 1946 by the critics of the National Board of Review in New York City. For filmgoers sworn to extreme verisimilitude as a criterion of art, *Walk in the Sun's* greatest success is, however, its worst shortcoming: the aestheticization of experiences that had no pleasing or aesthetic quality whatever.[30] Milestone's modernism conforms a small-unit action to that ill-defined but fundamental concept, "artistic truth." *A Walk in the Sun* may fairly be described as the industry's first "art film" about twentieth-century combat. There have been few since.[31]

IV

For people born after 1960, the name "G.I. Joe" chiefly designates an action figure by Hasbro, but during World War II the term meant the typical enlisted man of the US Army. William A. Wellman's *Story of G.I. Joe* (1945), honoring the wartime journalism of Ernie Pyle, was the first Hollywood film whose theme was the hard realities of the front line – at least those that could be recreated in a profitable (and distributable) motion picture. Social and commercial necessity required papering over the worst and even most of the pretty damned bad, but *G.I. Joe* has more of the bite of reality than any other war film of its time. After a sneak preview, General Eisenhower called it "the greatest war picture I've ever seen." The *Washington Post* called it "Monumental." And James Agee, the finicky critic of *The Nation*, gushed in praise: "I cannot suggest my regard for it without using such words as veneration and love. Many things in the film itself move me to tears. … It seems to me a tragic and eternal work of art."[32]

The movie's full screen title is *Ernie Pyle's "Story of G.I. Joe."* Pyle's reporting for the Scripps-Howard newspapers – the inspiration of the film – told millions of readers about the American serviceman's life overseas. Pyle was an unlikely figure: slight of build, gray, balding, a gentle man in his forties and an outsider who willingly shared hardships, wrote sympathetically and evocatively, and had none of the stereotypical reporter's cockiness and arrogance. He immersed himself in the soldiers' existence. His reporting may sometimes feel old-fashioned in its tone and folksy human-interest topics, but its deep humanity revealed some of the stark truths of war to millions either taught otherwise by romantic tradition or self-deceived by wishful thinking.

Perhaps no journalist had keener insight into the psychology of the American soldier, and none, certainly, had greater rapport with the men they wrote about. Pyle remains, eighty years

after his death from a Japanese sniper's bullet on the island of Ie Shima in 1945, one of the legendary figures of American journalism. He told nearly as much about war as could be printed in "family newspapers" in the 1940s, and in terms of "family cinema" Wellman's movie goes nearly as far.

G.I. Joe claims extraordinary authenticity, and by the prevailing, sentimental movie standards of the day it delivers. No less than nine American combat correspondents are credited as technical advisors and six army officers, with their units specified, "courtesy of Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair." That could be a record number of credited advisors for any movie. Also appearing "As Themselves" were "Combat Veterans of the Campaigns in Africa, Sicily, and Italy" – a feature that was both tribute and gimmick, since few of the 150 extras have any lines. These extras are said by historians to have been in line for deployment to Okinawa.

Like *A Walk in the Sun*, much of the film's critical success arose from the casting. Not long before recording his voiceover for that movie, Burgess Meredith came on loan to *G.I. Joe's* producer Lester Cowan from service in the Office of War Information. He plays Pyle brilliantly. Robert Mitchum in his first leading role is equally convincing. While Meredith's Pyle is a modest, sensitive observer of events, Mitchum's Lieutenant Walker is a weary, stoical giant half Pyle's age who finds few occasions to smile. And of the two most dynamic roles – Mitchum and ex-prizefighter Freddie Steele as Sergeant Warnicki – one is killed and the other goes crazy. There are more haggard and unshaven faces here, Mitchum's and Steele's in particular, than in any American war movie before or since.

As Pyle remarks sadly in *G.I. Joe*, the combat soldier "lives so miserably and dies so miserably" in "a world the other world never knows," that "other world" being anywhere else, even a half mile behind the front line; and Pyle characterized all combat soldiers in one sad and

angry phrase, worthy of Shakespeare: "a ghastly brotherhood."[33] Of the American dead in North Africa, he wrote chillingly while the war ground on: "I don't know whether it was their good fortune or misfortune to get out of it so early in the game." And humbly, movingly, in the same paragraph: "[T]here is nothing we can do for the ones beneath the crosses, except perhaps to pause and murmur, 'Thanks, pal.'"[34] These words also conclude the film.

In advertising the picture, however, United Artists accentuated the positive and the plain silly. The pitch to the possibly action-averse female audience is an embarrassment. The ad in *Motion Picture Herald*, headed "… the true story of every woman's fighting man," promised "Now on the screen you re-live the fun, the weariness, the gripes and the glorie [sic] of *your* G.I." Added were cartoons of soldiers drinking and romancing. A second ad included dubiously authentic headlines like "Pin-Up Girl on Tummy is Soldier's Favorite Pin-Up," "Ex-Auto Salesman Becomes Hero," and "Soldiers Are Made Out Of the Strangest People." A Tennessee newspaper showed a soldier laughing heartily and an alluring woman wearing a steel helmet at a jaunty angle; the tagline: "Sometimes tender … often funny…every woman's fighting man!"[35]

Like the *Guadalcanal Diary* poster of the marine tossing the Japanese, this lowbrow strategy, emphasizing the "fun" and "glory" of combat had little to do with the movie it promoted. *G.I. Joe* begins in the Tunisian desert in 1943. It ends south of Rome the following year. The Italian campaign, beginning with the landing near Salerno and followed by another at Anzio in January 1944, is now largely forgotten in American pop culture, yet it was one of the hardest fought campaigns in American (and British) military history, marked by mountainous terrain, bad winters, and terrible and protracted combat that, some said, "could turn your hair white."

Like *Guadalcanal Diary* highly episodic, *G.I. Joe* opens in the Tunisian desert in 1943 as Pyle meets Lieutenant Walker and the untried C Company, Eighteenth Infantry. One evening the

sultry Nazi radio propagandist Axis Sally makes them long for home with nostalgic and erotic blandishments to surrender until they explode in frustration. Next day a strafing airplane kills one man and the green troops silently stare, visibly shocked and abashed. Out of the desert, they're drenched by rain, lashed by wind, bogged by mud more than any previous movie infantry, while overage Ernie, who as a reporter could have stayed in the rear, struggles uncomplainingly to keep up. Brief but effective images of a night assault under fire lead to the battle of Kasserine Pass, where the Germans have "more and better guns, tanks, planes." Squad leader Warnicki breaks down in tears after German tanks overrun his position, and the company joins in a humiliating general retreat as documents are burned and the battalion phone operator transmits officially to all companies, "Scram, scram, over and out." "American boys, beaten badly," says Pyle, something once unthinkable in a fiction film. (The defeats in *Wake Island* and *Bataan* never show Americans turning tail: they fight to the death.)

Most thus far is based on Pyle's columns. Three of the most memorable subsequent sequences, however, appear to have been concocted by scenarists Leopold Atlas, Guy Endore, and Philip Stevenson for the sake of box office: a comic private from Brooklyn makes time with a sexy Italian girl while his squad is under fire; another private weds his hometown fiancée, now a nurse lieutenant stationed nearby, and they enjoy a chaste wedding night in the back of an ambulance before he is killed; and Warnicki has a final breakdown when he hears his child's first words on a home-made disk – after a long, somewhat humorous search for a phonograph.[36]

Stronger than any of these episodes, however, is the depiction of street fighting in an Italian town. This has much of the look of reality. (Or super-reality: There's a balletic quality to the sight of a gun crew of extras smoothly and perfectly deploying a 57 mm gun.) Even more real is the sight of Walker and Warnicki navigating the piled-high rubble of the town square to neutralize

German snipers in the starkly photographed ruins of a now roofless church. The stalking of the snipers, however, is weakened by Warnicki's sudden decision to kneel and pray in full sight (in expiation of killing in a church), allowing a sniper to harmlessly shoot his helmet off. Otherwise, the entire episode, down to the emergence of dazed civilians after the fight, could hardly have been done better. (Thanks in part to Russell Metty's cinematography and art direction by David S. Hall.)

"Killing is a rough business," says Pyle. "Men live rough and talk rough." But there seems to be less talking and more heavy silences as the film goes on. At Christmas, 1943, Walker can secure the army's advertised but undelivered turkey dinners for his men only by pointing his tommy gun at a neatly dressed and groomed headquarters clerk. Later that evening, struggling to stay awake, he has to write condolences to next of kin. "The new kids," he tells Pyle, "… they don't know what it's all about. I know it ain't my fault they get killed. But I get so I feel like murderer. … I hate to look at the new kids."

Unlike any other combat film of the 1940s – including *Wake Island* and *Bataan* – *Story of G.I. Joe* winds to its conclusion on notes of blunder, futility, and deep tragedy, all mitigated by a resolute hope.[37] Early in 1944 Allied troops are being pounded relentlessly by artillery apparently directed by a German observation post in the tenth-century Benedictine abbey on Monte Cassino. As a religious shrine, however, the Allied command has declared the abbey off limits to attack. Those on the receiving end of the shellfire, however, demand its destruction. "I got a wife and kid," says a soldier. "Think I want to die for a piece of stone? I'm a Catholic, and I say bomb it to hell!"

On February 15, more than 200 American bombers pulverized the abbey. Pyle's GIs cheer wildly at the sight. But as Pyle reports in voiceover, "Here was one of the grim ironies of

war. The very rubble of the monastery became a fortress for the Nazis, and they stopped us cold. We were right back where we started from." (It was not publicly known in 1945 that the Germans, incredibly, had not occupied the monastery after all – knowledge that makes for an even grimmer irony now.)

Subsequent fighting is represented by about a minute of re-enacted combat footage from John Ford's semi-documentary *San Pietro*. Near the end of the film, too much war has hollowed their eyes until Walker and Warnicki look like death warmed over. A few minutes of screen time later, Warnicki is dragged to the medics in a sudden psychotic rage against the enemy that's cut him off from his family.

Weeks or months later, Pyle returns to C Company as mules, filmed in dramatic silhouette above a ridgeline, bring bodies of dead GIs down from a mountain. Walker's body is among them. Not much is said as the men of his company file mournfully past as he lies on the ground. As Pyle watches, the last man, fighting tears, bends over to straighten Walker's blouse; then he and Pyle hurry to catch up with the marching column. Set later in time but based closely on Ernie Pyle's column on the death of twenty-five-year-old Captain Henry Waskow, of Belton Texas, it remains a powerful, unexpected scene.[38]

Yet the contrasting, liberal optimism of Pyle's final voiceover isn't very different from Thorwald's in *Gung Ho!*:

> We will win. I hope we can rejoice with victory, but humbly. And all together we will try, try out of the memory of our anguish, to reassemble our broken world into a pattern so firm and so fair that another great war can never again be possible.

The narrative styles of *Guadalcanal Diary* and *Gung Ho!* are comparably superficial, but *Story of*

G.I. Joe and *A Walk in the Sun* began to guide the war movie toward more serious terrain. Both are more visceral and made with greater attention to psychological and emotional realism. Though *G.I. Joe* skirts the question of fear in battle, both films spotlight the tedium and frustration that plague the combat soldier. The weight and hardness of reality is unattainable on film, but these two movies present reality – not fully, perfectly, or unflinchingly – but to the best of the filmmakers' abilities. Both are emotionally honest and artistically accomplished, and both have been added to the National Film Registry of the National Preservation Board of the Library of Congress as "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" – *Story of G.I. Joe* in 2009 and *A Walk in the Sun* in 2016.

G.I. Joe's hallmark is the undertone of sadness about the necessity of it all. (Walker muses to Pyle, "If only we could create something good out of all this energy, all these men.") The movie wants more than anything else to suggest what it's like to be in a war. And according to the *New York Times*, "When the men of the Fifth Army … saw 'Story of G.I. Joe' in Italy, their verdict was 'This is it.'"

Or as close to "it" as 1940s Hollywood ever got.

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Notes

[1] "The Screen: 'Gung Ho!', a Lurid Action Film" (NYT, Jan. 26, 1944, 23).

[2] Milton Merlin, "Film Book Portrays G.I. Joe" (Dec. 24, 1944, B4). It was a common reaction: William Friedman Fagleson, "Fighting Films," *Cinema Journal* 40 (Spring 2001), 94-112.

[3] James Jones, "Phony War Films," *Saturday Evening Post* (Mar. 30, 1963) 64.

[4] Lewis Jacobs estimates "more than seventeen hundred features" between 1942 and 1946: "World War II and the American Film," *Cinema Journal* VII (Winter, 1967-1968), 21. Of the handful of other notable wartime films about organized ground combat, *Wake Island* is about withstanding Japanese air and sea attacks; *Sahara* concerns a lone battle tank; *Objective Burma!* is about paratroop commandos; and despite some fighting, *Marine Raiders* is chiefly about a romance.

[5] *Guadalcanal Diary,* IMDb: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0035957/mediaviewer/rm1805596416/?ref_=tt_ov_i (accessed Jan. 12, 2024); Richard Tregaskis, *Guadalcanal Diary* (New York: Random House,1943).

[6] Tregaskis, 15-16, 29; Japanese casualties were even more horrendous: some 15,000 soldiers, sailors, and marines were killed in action and another 9,000 died of disease and starvation. Twenty-four ships and more than six hundred planes were lost.

[7] The episode is based on the fate of the Goettge patrol near Point Cruz on August 13: Tregaskis, 95-96.

[8] Jordan was a veteran of the campaign: "Sailor in 20th Century Movie," *The Call* (San Francisco), Oct. 1, 1943, 24.

[9] *Brooklyn Orchid* (1942), reprising the identical role in two sequels, *The McGuerins from Brooklyn* (1942) and *Taxi, Mister* (1943).

[10] The full-page ad in *Variety* (Nov. 10, 1943), 13, consists mostly of a goggle-eyed, grinning Bendix (not the solid Richard Conte or the hardboiled Lloyd Nolan) aiming a .45 at nothing, so as to show "They could laugh with the odds against them…and turn the tide toward Victory!"

[11] IMDb: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0035957/ (accessed January 12, 2024).

[12] By the end of 1942, the 1st Marine Division alone had reported 8,580 cases of malaria in a division of some 19,000 troops: John L. Zimmermann, *The Guadalcanal Campaign* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1949), 179.

[13] Belief in treachery supposedly inborn in the Japanese was established long before Pearl Harbor: "The Japs…are a crafty and deceitful people" (Cleveland *Plain Dealer* [Feb. 9, 1896], 120); "Honolulu, Hawaii…Japanese immigrants who have been pouring into these islands under the guise of students are in reality trained soldiers" (*Evening Press* [Grand Rapids, Mich.] [Apr. 18, 1897], 1; "Now, the Jap is a wily an' crafty individual – more so than the Chink….They have no morals final." (*Detroit Times*, [May 7, 1913], 8).

[14] Tregaskis, 146.

[15] Closer to the truth is the nineteen-minute, official Marine Corps documentary *With the Marines at Tarawa* (1944); among its overpowering sights are piles of Japanese dead and American corpses bobbing in the water. *Guadalcanal Diary*, a paradigmatic film, has received little scrutiny; a detailed discussion, however, is in Kathryn Rose Kane's doctoral dissertation, "A Critical Analysis of the World War II Combat Film," University of Iowa (1976), 213-234.

[16] The real Raiders had a far harder time than the film suggests: Carlson at one point attempted to surrender, a fact not revealed until 1992. Though the raid was in the end a tactical success, it accomplished little of "significance."): Duane Schultz, *Evans Carlson, Marine Raider* (Yardley, Pa.: Westholme, 2017), 112-122, 219.

[17] The movie doesn't mention that Major James Roosevelt, son of the president, was Carlson's executive officer on the raid.

[18] John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy* (N.Y.: Pantheon, 1993), 64. The film's false claim, however, that some Japanese were chained to their machine guns, had been circulated (just as falsely) about the Germans in World War I.

[19] "Marines in Makin Raid," *Detroit Evening Times*, (Aug. 28, 1942), 8; Capt. Walter Karis, "The Makin Island Raid," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (Oct., 1946), 1277-1284; Schultz, 96, 221. Most of the Raiders, Schultz writes, "hated" the movie "for its gross inaccuracies."

[20] "Marines in Makin Raid," 8; "Grip on Solomons Being Tightened," *Nashville Tennessean* (Aug. 23, 1942), 1; Karis, 1277-1284.

[21] Bernard F. Dick*, The Star-Spangled Screen* (Lexington: U. Press of Kentucky, 1985), 140; Roger J. Spiller," War in the Dark," *American Heritage* (Feb.-Mar. 1999): https://www.americanheritage.com/war-dark (accessed Feb. 29, 2024).

[22] Thomas Bird. "Man and Boy Confront the Images of War," *N. Y. Times* (May 27, 1990): H11+. Fuller even wrote to Lewis Milestone to express his profound disappointment and promised one day to tell it like it was: see Nicholas J. Cull, "Samuel Fuller on Lewis Milestone's *A Walk in the Sun* (1946)," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 20 (March 2000), 79-87. The professional *Infantry Journal* lamented with "disgust" Brown's poor grasp of operational procedures in a rifle platoon: G.V., "Imaginary Platoon" (Sept. 1944), 64.

[23] After stints at *Time* and the *New Yorker*, Harry Brown was a rewrite editor and columnist on the London staff of *Yank – The Army Weekly*, in which he chronicled the fictional observations of the comically grotesque Pfc. Artie Greengroin (of Brooklyn, N.Y.). Private Brown, a Yale man who never saw combat or achieved his goal of becoming a battlefield reporter, wrote his bestseller in just two weeks. After the war, Brown wrote a G.I. stage drama, "Eight Iron Men," and later became a Hollywood script writer: Stephen Jay Rubin, *Combat Films* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2011), 9.

[24] "Writes of His Vacation from the Horrors of War," *Atlanta Constitution* (Feb. 12, 1945), 7; Orville Prescott, "Books of the Times" (June 28, 1944), 21.

[25] It was undoubtedly the first Hollywood film to include a theme song, a tactic repeated in Fred Zinnemann's western *High Noon* (1952), Norman Foster's *Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier* (1955), and many others since.

[26] By Earl Robinson and Millard Lampell; both – like Rossen and actor Lloyd Bridges – were later blacklisted.

[27] Spiller 1999.

[28] Warnicki's crack-up in *G.I. Joe* (filmed about the same time) takes the form of psychotic rage, not emotional collapse.

[29] Alexander G. Lovelace, "The Slap Heard Around the World: George Patton and Shell Shock," *U.S. Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* (Autumn 2019), 79-91.

[30] Cf. *Alexander Nevsky's* version of war in the Middle Ages.

[31] Candidates that spring to mind – and very different they are – are the French-Italian *King of Hearts*, the British *How I Won the War* and *Oh! What a Lovely War*, and the American remake of *The Thin Red Line*.

[32] *Boston Globe* (July 2, 1945) 9; Eisenhower's previous favorite was Raoul Walsh's *What Price Glory* (1926)." Nelson Bell, "A Monumental Motion Picture Has Emerged from the Writings of the Late Ernie Pyle," July 8, 1945, S6; James Agee, "A Great Film," *The Nation* (Sept. 15, 1945), 264-266.

[33] "The Roving Reporter," *New Orleans Item* (Feb. 22, 1944), 10.

[34] Ernie Pyle, *Here Is Your War* (Cleveland: World, 1943), 246.

[35] *Motion Picture Herald* (July 14, 1945), 44; *Knoxville News-Sentinel* (Sept. 2, 1945), C-6.

[36] A search of Pyle's columns digitized by Newspapers.com and GenealogyBank.com and both *Here Is Your War* and *Brave Men* failed to discover any relevant mention of the words *bride*, *wedding*, *ceremony*, *fiancée*, *girl-friend*, *baby, phonograph*, *recording*, or *record-player*.

[37] The early *Wake Island* and *Bataan* ended on violent notes of defiance.

[38] "Soldiers Mourn Gallant Captain Killed in Action," *Boston Globe* (Jan. 10, 1944), 6. This is the column that most influenced the Pulitzer committee.

[39] Thomas M. Pryor, "'Story of G.I. Joe,' a Great War Drama, Arrives at Globe and Gotham," *New York Times* (Oct. 6, 1945), 5, 19. The opening, intentionally heart-warming incident of a cute little pup who must be left behind in the Tunisian desert was bitterly parodied by Carl Foreman in his highly pessimistic *The Victors* (1963): in *G.I. Joe*, Robert Mitchum relents and saves the dog, but in *The Victors,* Mitchum's son Jim shoots it.