

Ernie Pyle With the Navy:

Little Islands in Pacific Prove to Be Pretty Big

Yanks Rarely Make the Rounds; Recreation Relieves Monotony

By Ernie Pyle

IN THE MARIANAS ISLANDS.—One thing that might help you visualize what life is like out here is to realize that even a little island is lots bigger than you think.

There are many, many thousands of Americans scattered in camps and at airfields and in training centers and harbors over the three islands which we occupy here.

Rarely does a man know many people outside his own special unit. Even though the islands are small by our standards, they're big enough that the individual doesn't encompass them by any means. It would be as impossible for one man to see or know everybody on one of these islands as it would be to know everybody in Indianapolis.



Ernie Pyle

You could live and work in your section, and never visit another section for weeks or months at a time. And that's exactly what does happen.

For one thing, transportation is short. We are still building furiously here, such fast and fantastic building as you never dreamed of. Everything that runs is being used, and there's little left over just to run around in for fun.

And anyhow, there's no place to go. What towns there were have been destroyed. There is nothing even resembling a town or city on these islands now. The natives have been set up in improvised camps, but they offer no "city life" attractions.

As we drove around one of the islands on my first day here, we went through one of the Marianas towns that had been destroyed by bombing and shelling. It had been a good-sized place, quite modern too in a tropical way. It had a city plaza and municipal buildings and paved streets, and many of the buildings were of stone or mortar.

In destruction, it looked exactly as destroyed cities all over Europe look. The same jagged half-standing walls, the stacks of rubble, the empty houses you could see through the roofless homes, the deep craters in the gardens.

There was just one difference. Out here tropical vegetation is lush. And nature thrusts up her greenery so swiftly through rubble and destruction that the ruins now are festooned with vines and green leaves, and it gives them a look of being very old and time-worn ruins, instead of fresh modern ones, which they are.

Finds Marianas Abound With Movies

An American soldier in Europe, even though the towns may be "off limits" to him or destroyed completely, still has a sense of being near a civilization that is like his own.

But out here there is nothing like that. You are on an island, the natives are strange people, there's no city and no place to go. If you had a three-day pass you'd probably spend it lying on your cot. Eventually, boredom and the "island complex" starts to take hold.

For that reason the diversions supplied by the army are even more important out here than in Europe. Before I left America I heard that one island out here had more than 200 outdoor movies on it. I thought whoever told that must be crazy, for in Europe the average soldier didn't get a chance to see a movie very often.

But the guy wasn't crazy. These three Marianas islands have a total of 233 outdoor movies on them. And they show every night. Even if it isn't a good movie, it kills the time between supper and bedtime.

The theaters are usually on the slope of a hill, forming a natural amphitheater. The men sit on the ground, or bring their own boxes, or in some of the ends of metal bomb crates are used for chairs.

You can drive along and sometimes you'll pass three movies not more than 300 yards apart. That's mainly because there is not enough transportation to haul the men any distance, so the movie has to come to them.

There is lots of other stuff provided besides movies, too. On one island there are 65 theater stages, where soldiers themselves put on "live" shows, or where USO troupes can perform. Forty pianos have

been scattered around at these places.

In Europe it was a lucky bunch of soldiers who got their hands on a radio. Over here in these small islands, the army has distributed 3,500 radios, and they have a regular station broadcasting all the time, with music, news, shows and everything.

The sports program is big. On one island there are 95 softball diamonds, 35 regular diamonds, 225 volleyball courts and 30 basketball courts. Also there are 35 boxing arenas. Boxing is very popular. They've had as high as 18,000 men watching a boxing match.

Talkative Barber Tells of Woe

On one of these islands the other day, I finally got around to getting a month-overdue haircut.

My barber was a soldier, barbering in a tent, and I sat in an old-fashioned black leather Japanese barber chair he had dug up on the island.

He had been trained in the conversational school of barbering, and as the snipped gray locks fell about my shoulders, there came forth from him such a tale of woe and unkind fate as I have never heard in this world.

This barber was Pfc. Eades Thomas from Richmond, Ky., near Lexington in the horse country. In fact Thomas was a horse-trainer before the war, and was never a barber at all. He just picked that up on the run somewhere.

Well, Thomas has been in the Pacific 33 months. It began to look as though he might as well count on settling down for life, so some months ago he married a Scottish girl in Honolulu. Shortly after that he was shipped on out here, and he hasn't seen her since.

The morning of the day that I sat in Thomas' barber chair, the army was sending a few Japanese prisoners back to Hawaii by airplane. They had to have guards for them. So one of Thomas' officers told him he would put him down for the trip and thus he could get a couple of days in Hawaii to see his wife.

The officer meant to keep his word, but he had a bad memory for names. So when he went to write down Thomas' name for the trip, he actually wrote another guy's name, thinking it was Thomas. By the time Thomas found it out, it was too late.

"I could have cried," he said. "And I could have too. I felt so terrible about it I couldn't get it off my mind, and was telling it to an officer that evening."

"Oh," he said. "I happen to know about that. I'll go and tell Thomas right away and he won't feel so bad. We got orders not to send the prisoners after all, so the whole thing was called off. Nobody went."

Which is the kind of joy you get when you stop hitting yourself on the head with the hammer.

On that same island I ran onto a couple of old Hoosier boys, who had followed in my inglorious footsteps at Indiana university.

One was Lt. Ed Rose, who was editor of "The Daily Student" in 1938, just as I was for a while in 1922. Apparently it doesn't make any difference what year you were editor of "The Student," you still wind up in the Marianas islands.

The other was Lt. Bill Morris from Anderson, Ind., who graduated from our illustrious alma mater in 1942. Both the boys are mail censors out here. Life is kind enough to them, and they haven't much to kick about.

Just as I was leaving, they came and thrust a package into my hands, and said would I accept a little gift from the two of them? It was a dark poisonous liquid with which you're probably not familiar, but one which is much sought after out here.

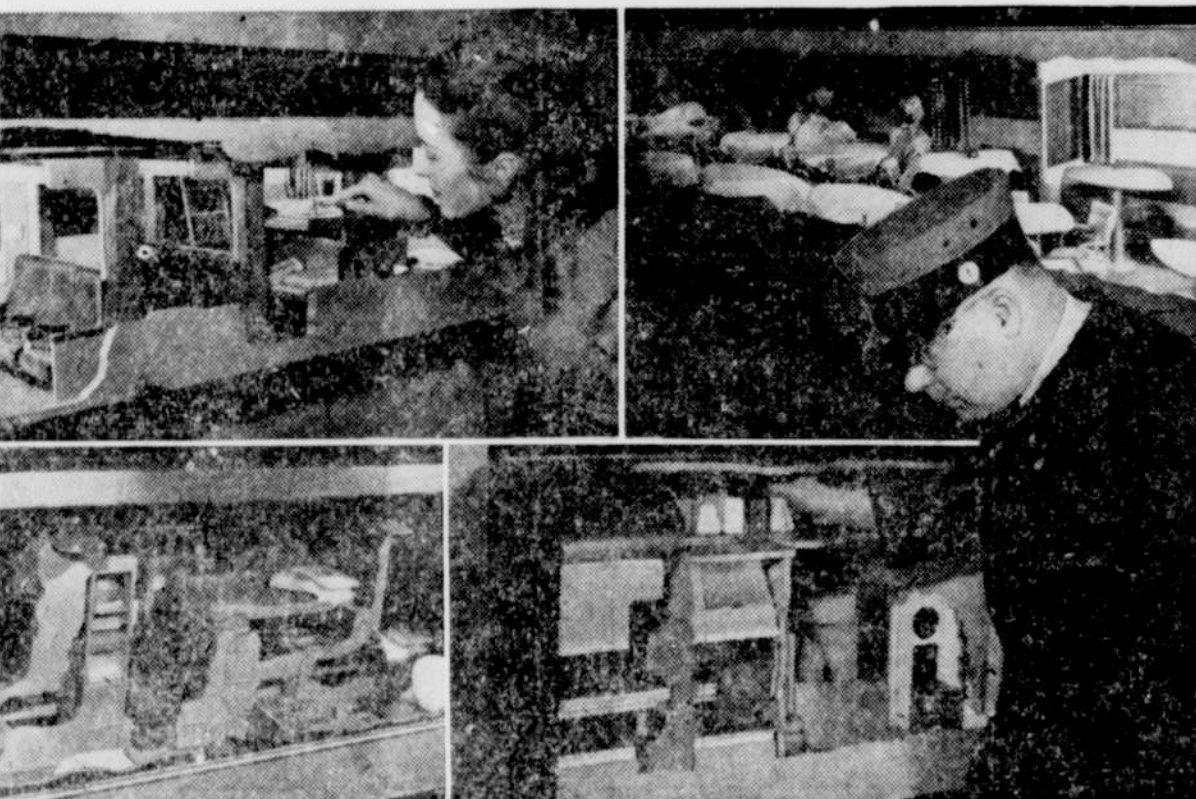
A fellow does feel like a neel accepting bountiful gifts from strangers. But I figure I've been a heel for a long time and it's too late to reform now, so I grabbed the gift and fled before they could change their minds. Thanks again, boys.

Manila Wracked, Guttled by Spiteful Demolitions



Once-proud Manila joins the cities of the dead, wracked and gutted by battle and the spiteful demolitions of the Japs. The stately buildings which formerly housed government and industry are now largely hollow shells. The marts of trade echo only to the crash of falling timbers. Reins of the civil government return to the Philippine commonwealth, and the battered capital binds its wounds and looks forward to a rebirth.

Postwar Sleeping Cars to Show Radical Changes



The new Pullman three-tier sleeper, to be used in postwar period, is shown in upper left. Lower left, the duplex-roomette railroad car is one of several new designs being presented to railroad officials by the Pullman company. Upper right, the traditional rectangular table arrangements give way to a modernized scheme in the new diner. Lower right, a redcap captain examines revolutionary method of handling luggage on the new coach model.

American Farmer in Germany



Even in conquered German territory, Pvt. Harold W. Barnes of Centerburg, Ohio, finds time to put into practice the knowledge acquired on a farm at Centerburg. He was right at home when he found the new litter of pigs at a farmhouse near Sindorf, Germany, and helped to pull them through their first days under American occupational rule.

G.I.s Nearer Japan



American navy, marines and infantry, supported by tank corps, continue to advance island by island toward Tokyo. Map shows how new landing gives the American forces control of the entire Philippines.

Nazi Type Air Raid Shelter



German air raid shelters have been working overtime thanks to the American air forces. Photo shows Pfc. Archie Bakay, Akron, Ohio, left; and Pfc. Charles Smart, Franklin, N. C., with guns alert as they inspect one of the typical shelters in Duren, Germany. They are infantrymen of the 104th division of the U. S. 1st army.

New Big Ten Chief



Photo shows Kenneth "Tug" Wilson, former athletic director at Northwestern university, who has just been appointed commissioner of the Big Ten conference. He has resigned from Northwestern.

Fliers in Need of Rest Goal

One of the things most needed for morale among fliers over here is the setting up of some kind of goal for them. The setting of a definite number of combat missions to be flown, whereupon they would automatically go back to a rest camp.

The way it is now, they are just flying in the dark, so to speak. They're just going on and on until Fate overtakes them, with nothing

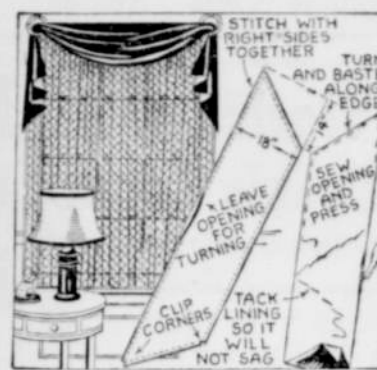
else to shoot for. Of course it's probably too early yet, and the war on both sides of the world too desperate, to set up a final mission total whereupon a B-29 flier goes home for good.

They're going to have to go to rest camps and then come back for more missions a couple of times before they finally go home. But no rest-camp goal has yet been set.

Plain Draped Valance With Sheer Curtains

EVEN the plainest of straight net or scrim curtains will take on an air of elegance without being too formal if you add a simple draped valance.

Festoon rings at the upper corners of the window frame are all that you need in the way of dra-



pery fixtures. The diagrams show how to cut and line the valance which is pulled through these rings. You can avoid piecings by using 36-inch-wide material cut lengthwise. A half width makes the depth of the valance.

NOTE—This curtain idea is from the 32-page booklet MAKE YOUR OWN CURTAINS by Ruth Wyeth Spears. This booklet shows you the newest and most appropriate curtain and drapery styles for all types of windows with cutting and making methods fully illustrated. To get a copy enclose 15 cents with name and address direct to:

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