

## Hoosier Vagabond

By Ernie Pyle

WITH THE ALLIED BEACHHEAD FORCES IN ITALY, March 29 (By Wireless).—Anzio and Nettuno run together along the coast of our beachhead, forming practically one city. There is really only one main street, which runs along the low blocks just back of the first row of waterfront buildings.

The two cities stretch for about three miles, but extend only a few blocks back from the waterfront. A low hill covered thick with tall cedar trees rises just back of them, and along some of the streets there are palm trees.

I had supposed these two places were just ancient little fishing villages. Well, they are old, but not in their present form.

Anzio is where Nero is supposed to have fiddled while Rome burned, but in more recent years he would doubtless have been sprawling in a deck chair in the patio of his seaside villa, drinking cognac.

For these two towns are now (or rather, were until recently) high-class seaside resorts. They've been built up in the modern manner within the last 20 years. They are much bigger and much more modern than I had supposed.

When you look at them from a certain place, they extend two hundred yards from the water's edge, forming a solid flank of fine stone buildings four and five stories high. Most of these are apartment houses, business buildings, and rich people's villas.

Today there is no civilian life in Anzio-Nettuno. The Germans had evacuated everybody before we came, and we found the place deserted.

## Germans Changed That

IN THE PATH of warfare over here, "business as usual" seems to have been the motto of the natives. Adult civilians have stayed in some places despite the fall of heaven and earth upon them. They'd stay and deal with the Germans while we were blasting their towns to bits, and those who survived would stay and deal with us when the town changed hands and the Germans began showering the same death and destruction back upon us. The ties of a man's

## Inside Indianapolis By Lowell Nussbaum

AN OLD DESK that had been gathering dust for years in Ayres' warehouse was dug out yesterday and a carpenter went to work fixing it so it could be placed in service. He noticed what appeared to be a secret compartment, nailed shut, and, being of a curious turn of mind, opened it. Inside were half a dozen old ledgers dating back many decades. One, the record of a Mr. Scott, buyer of ready-to-wear for the store, covered records of stock for the years 1873 to 1879. Store officials had a field day digging through the ancient store records.

The Indianapolis Symphony, in practice session, played a C-Major chord this week, following a time-honored custom of heralding the birth of an heir to a member of the orchestra. This one was in honor of a 74-pound son born to Sgt. and Mrs. A. G. Luboff. He formerly played bass, now is stationed at Durham, N. C. . . Lt. (j.g.) Vincent Fowler, of the light company's advertising department, was in town for a few hours over the week-end. Vince has been aboard a troop and cargo transport shuttling between North Africa and Italy. As souvenirs, he gave several of his friends here recordings of some Arabian music. It sounds, we're told, like half a dozen Shrine parades going on at the same time. . . If you haven't registered to vote in the primary, better get busy. Only four more days. You can't vote if you're not registered, and if you don't vote, you have no right to squawk about the way things are run.

## Have You Heard the One—

SPEAKERS AT dinners and other meetings normally attended only by males are going to have to learn some new stories—ones that will pass muster in mixed crowds—as a result of the current manpower shortage. They never know when a gal reporter is going to drop in to report their doings. For instance, take the meeting of the C. C. C. safety council with traffic policemen Monday. A dignified civic leader was speaking and, thinking there were no women present, he told a somewhat risqué story. When he finished, no one laughed. He didn't understand why all the pained silence until he looked

home are sinewy and strong, and something that even was can hardly break.

But in Anzio and Nettuno the expensive villas are deserted—the swanky furniture wrapped in burlap and stored all in one room or two. The little hotels are empty also, and so are the stores. Scarcely a door or a window with whole shutters remains. There is no such thing as a store or shop in business today in these two towns.

When our troops first came they found things intact and undamaged, but the Germans changed that. Little by little, day by day, these cities have become eroded and torn from the shells and bombs of war.

It has happened slowly. The Germans shell spasmodically. Hours will go by without a single shell coming in, and then all of a sudden a couple of shells will smash the water just offshore.

## Rubble Is Everywhere

TODAY YOU can't walk half a block without finding a building half crumpled to the ground between breakfast and lunch the building next to the mess where we eat was demolished. One man was killed, and our cook got a broken arm.

The sidewalks have shell holes in them. Engineers repair new holes in the streets. Military police who direct auto traffic occasionally are killed at their posts.

Broken steel girders lie across the sidewalks. Marble statues fall in littered patios. Trees are uprooted, and the splattered mud upon them dries and turns to gray. Wreckage is washed up on shore. Everywhere there is rubble and mud and broken wire.

Yet this German shelling and bombing has had only the tiniest percentage of effect on our movement of supplies and troops into the beachhead. One day of bad weather actually harms us more than a month of German shelling.

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