

## Hoosier Vagabond

By Ernie Pyle

Editor's Note: This is No. 15 in a series of past Ernie Pyle's columns that we are reprinting while Ernie is on leave.

ANOTHER FORWARD AIRDROME IN FRENCH NORTH AFRICA, January, 1943.—It happens that my best flying friends in this war have been bomber men, but I wish somebody would sing a song, and a glorious one, for our fighter pilots. They are the forgotten men of our aerial war.

Not until I came up close to the African front did I realize what our fighter pilots have been through and what they are doing. Somehow or other you don't hear much about them but they are the sponge that is absorbing the fury of the Luftwaffe over here. They are taking it and taking it and taking it. An everlasting credit should be theirs.

In England, the fighters of the R. A. F. got the glory because of the great Battle of Britain in 1940. But in America our attention has been centered on the bombers. The spectacular success of the Flying Fortresses when they went into action made the public more bomber-conscious.

## Still Some Rivalry

THERE IS STILL rivalry between the fighters and the bombers, as there always has been. That in itself is probably a good thing. But of late it has sort of slipped out of the category of rivalry—it has developed into a feeling on the part of the fighter pilots that they are neglected and unappreciated and taking a little more than their share on the nose. Their ratio of losses is higher than that of the bombers, and their ratio of credit is lower.

There have been exaggerations in the claims that the Fortresses can take care of themselves without fighter escort. Almost any bomber pilot will tell you that he is deeply grateful for the fighter cover he has in Africa, and that if he had to go without it he would feel like a very naked man on his way to work.

Our heavy bombers now are always escorted by

the people still go grumble now at Washington puts on unsparsingly. To America. There and they gossip or days, or the after slab of cake from the garden, as we saw so hospitable, so pioneer fashion, in the East who able to say his in the realization

back, the stout, auxiliary at Des handful of Civil aviation; the train road car on the there watching and for water; the who by stood by at Belen, N. four little Negro hand in hand, York Governor to her home town

street and shout Roosevelt" and along, would be com-

children are, and lights when they others were we free.

AMONG THE guests introduced at a recent meeting of the C. of C. industrial safety committee was Ed Ax, whose job it is to interview job applicants at U. S. Rubber. Commented Wayne Whiffing, committee chairman: "A man with that name ought to be at the other end of the line—working as an exit supervisor." Two grade school girls on the Broad Ripple bus were discussing their hobbies. Said one: "I counted up my Frank Sinatra pictures and found I have 315." And here we thought the girls had quit swooning over Frank. . . . A soldier got on a bus headed for the veterans hospital and started to hand the operator his fare. "Put your money away; you don't need it when you ride with me," said the operator. The soldier looked startled.

*At Wrong End*

GEORGE B. LOVELESS, 414 N. Bradley, relays the story of a grocer at S. Meridian and McCarty who was asked by a housewife: "How many points on butter today?" "None," he replied. "Good, I'll take a pound," she said. Came the reply: "Sorry, lady; the reason there are no points on butter here today is that I don't have any." The old meanie. . . . Another reader who read the recent item about the appropriateness of the name of Dr. Charles Cure, of Martinsville, writes in to comment that Dr. Cure's father is a mortician. . . . Were still getting notes about the sign on a store window at New York and Capitol reading: "Kill 'em: Bed bugs, waterbugs, roaches, ants." M. C. Stafford of the Wadley Co. wants to know: "Why discriminate against uncles?" Kathryn Williams, of Pittsboro, is curious about it, too. . . . We've found another series of eagles—four of 'em in one family. They're the sons of Philip G. King, 3031 Guilford ave. They're members of Troop 2. Malcolm, the oldest, is a corporal in finance at a Pacific coast port of embarkation. Robert, a gunner on a B-17, is overseas. Donald, a marine second leet, is finishing a course at Quantico, Va., while Gregor, the 18-year-old, has passed his physical and reports for induction Oct. 7.

*No Points and No Butter*

WE STOOD in darkness the other night on the edge of a deserted field in North Carolina. There was a 120 square mile blackout. Even the seasonal half moon had dropped behind a cloud. It was the first night "attack" in several days of combined troop carrier-airborne command's night exercises. The objective was to ascertain how well some 10,000 husky American boys had responded to months of intensive troop carrier and airborne training.

Troop carrier planes were drumming overhead. Parachutes, some carrying paratroopers and some heavy equipment, "popped" loudly as they opened. Bailing out at 300 feet, these boys did not know what they would strike when they landed. Suddenly a string of what appeared to be small flares just getting started plunged down from the sky, twisting and turning. It looked as though the lights were strung together on a long board. They struck the ground and burst into a wall of fire, 50 feet high.

One of the big C-45 troop carrier planes had spun into the ground with crew and paratroopers. Flames enveloped the plane.

It was impossible for rescue crews to do anything. Anyway it was too late, even as the first spurt of fire lighted up the darkness.

As we stood there watching, our minds switched back to a scene at Camp Mackall, some miles away, several hours before.

Four young well-trained and husky paratroopers were talking. They were proud youngsters, proud of their outfit, proud to be in it.

NEW YORK, Sept. 30.—Gen. Lewis H. Brereton, commanding general of the U. S. air force, has been going, for more years domestic flying, to the prewar fleet of 166 in the U. S. air force, to 200 last year. Commercial planes now in the air force have been able to mail and express mail as today's air force of 600 planes, the same on a constant more planes. They have been forced

to fly in the air force, to the one of the best successful psych-

ical experts began as the army would be a

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