JOURNALISM FOR WOMEN
A PRACTICAL GUIDE

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CHAPTER II

IMPERFECTIONS OF THE EXISTING WOMAN-JOURNALIST.

Despite a current impression to the contrary, implicit in nearly every printed utterance on the subject, there should not be any essential functional disparity between the journalist male and the journalist female. A woman doctor (to instance another open calling) is rightly regarded as a doctor who happens to be a woman, not as a woman who happens to be a doctor. She undergoes the same training, and submits to the same tests, as the young men who find their distraction in the music-halls and flirt with nurses. Her sex is properly sunk, except where it may prove an advantage, and certainly it is never allowed to pose as an excuse for limitations, a palliative for shortcomings. Least of all is she credited (or debited) with any abnormality on account of it. But towards the woman jour-

nalist our attitude, and her own, is mysteriously different. Though perhaps we do not say so, we leave it to be inferred that of the dwellers in Fleet Street there are, not two sexes, but two species—journalists and women-journalists—and that the one is about as far removed organically from the other as a dog from a cat. And we treat these two species differently. They are not expected to suffer the same discipline, nor are they judged by the same standards. In Fleet Street femininity is an absolution, not an accident. The statement may be denied, but it is broadly true, and can easily be demonstrated.

Such a condition of affairs is mischievous. It works injustice to both parties, but more particularly to the woman, since it sets an arbitrary limit to healthy competition, while putting a premium on mediocrity. Is there any sexual reason why a woman should be a less accomplished journalist than a man? I can find none. Admitted that in certain fields—say politics—he will surpass her, are there not other fields in which she is pre-eminent, fields of which the man will not so much as climb the gate? And even in politics women have excelled. There
There are at least three women-journalists in Europe to-day whose influence is felt in Cabinets and places where they govern (proving that sex is not a bar to the proper understanding of la haute politique); whereas the man who dares to write on fashions does not exist.

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That women-journalists as a body have faults, none knows better than myself. But I deny that these faults are natural, or necessary, or incurable, or meet to be condoned. They are due, not to sex, but to the subtle, far-reaching effects of early training; and the general remedies, therefore, as I shall endeavour to indicate in subsequent chapters, lie to hand. They seem to me to be traceable either to an imperfect development of the sense of order, or to a certain lack of self-control. I should enumerate them thus:

First, a failure to appreciate the importance of the maxim: Business is business. The history of most civil undertakings comprises, not one Trafalgar, but many; and in journalism especially the signal Business is business—commercial equivalent of England expects—must always be flying at the mast-head. On ne batine pas avec l'Amour—much less with a newspaper.

Consider the effects of any lapse from the spirit of that signal in a profession where time is observed more strictly than in pugilism, where whatever one does one does in the white light of self-appointed publicity, where a single error or dereliction may ruin the prestige of years! Consider also the rank turpitude of such a lapse! Alas, women frequently do not consider these things. Some of them seem to have a superstition that a newspaper is an automaton and has a will-to-live of its own; that somehow (they know not how) it will appear, and appear fitly, with or without man's aid. They cannot imagine the possibility of mere carelessness or omission interfering with the superhuman regularity and integrity of its existence. The simple fact of course is that in journalism, as probably in no other profession, success depends wholly upon the loyal co-operation, the perfect reliability, of a number of people—some great, some small, but none irresponsible.

Stated plainly, my first charge amounts to this: women-journalists are unreliable as a class. They are unreliable, not by sexual imperfection, or from any defect of loyalty or good faith, but because they have not yet understood the codes of conduct prevailing in the temples so recently opened to them. On the hearth, their respect for the exigencies of that mysterious business is unimpeachable; somehow, admission to the shrine engenders a certain forgetfulness. Or perhaps it would be kinder and truer to say that the influences of domesticity are too strong to be lightly thrown off. For commercial or professional purposes these influences, in many cases, could not well be worse than they are. Regard, for a moment, the average household in the light of a business organisation for lodging and feeding a group of individuals; contrast its lapses, makeshifts, delays, irregularities, continual excuses, with the awful precisions of a city office. Is it a matter for surprise that the young woman who is accustomed gaily to remark, "Only five minutes late this morning, father," or "I quite forgot to order the coal, dear," confident that a frown or a hard word will end the affair, should carry into business (be it never so grave) the laxities so long permitted her in the home?
I would not charge the professional woman, as I know her, with any consistent lack of seriousness. On the contrary, she is in the main exquisitely serious. No one will deny that the average girl, when she adopts a profession, exhibits a seriousness, an energy, and a perseverance, of which the average man is apparently incapable. (It is strange that the less her aptitude, the more dogged her industry.) The seriousness of some women in Fleet Street and at the Slade School must be reckoned among the sights of London. It seems almost impossible that this priceless intensity of purpose should co-exist in the same individual with that annoying irresponsibility which I have endeavoured to account for. Yet such is the fact. Scores of instances of it might be furnished; let one, however, suffice. Once there was a woman-journalist in the North of England who wrote to a London paper for permission to act as its special correspondent during the visit of some royal personages to her town. The editor of the paper, knowing her for an industrious and conscientious worker and a good descriptive writer, gave the necessary authority, with explicit information as to the last moment for receiving copy. The moment came, but not the copy; and the editor, for the time being a raging misogynist (for he had in the meanwhile publicly announced his intention to print a special report), went to press without it. The next day, no explanation having arrived, he dispatched to his special correspondent a particularly scathing and scornful letter. Then came the excuse. It was long, but the root of it amounted to exactly this: “I was so knocked up and had such a headache after the ceremonies were over, that I really did not feel equal to the exertion of writing. I thought it would not matter.” Comment would be inartistic. The curious thing is that the special correspondent was an editor’s wife.

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Secondly, inattention to detail. Though this shortcoming discloses itself in many and various ways, it is to be observed chiefly in the matter of literary style. Women enjoy a reputation for slipshod style. They have earned it. A long and intimate familiarity with the manuscript of hundreds of women writers, renowned and other-wise, has convinced me that not ten per cent. of them can be relied upon to satisfy even the most ordinary tests in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. I do not hesitate to say that if twenty of the most honoured and popular women-writers were asked to sit for an examination in these simple branches of learning, the general result (granted that a few might emerge with credit) would not only startle themselves but would provide innocent amusement for the rest of mankind. Of course I make no reference here to the elegances and refinements of written language. My charge is that not the mere rudiments are understood. Even a lexicographer may nod, but it surely requires no intellectual power surpassing the achievement of women to refrain from regularly mis-spelling some of the commonest English words. The fact that there are niceties of syntax which have proved too much for great literary artists, does not make less culpable a wilful ignorance of the leading grammatical rules; yet the average woman will not undergo the brief drudgery of learning them. As for punctuation, though each man probably employs his own private
system, women are for the most part content with one—the system of dispensing with a system.

These accusations, I am aware, have no novelty. They are time-worn. They have been insisted upon again and again; but never sufficiently. And now the accusing sub-editors and proof-readers seem to have grown weary of protest. They suffer in silence, correcting as little as they dare, while all around are appearing women's articles, which, had their authors been men, would either have met with curt refusal or been returned for thorough revision.

The root of the evil lies, as I think, in training. The female sex is prone to be inaccurate and careless of apparently trivial detail, because that is the general tendency of mankind. In men destined for a business or a profession, the proclivity is harshly discouraged at an early stage. In women, who usually are not destined for anything whatever, it enjoys a merry life, and often refuses to be improved out of existence when the sudden need arises. No one by taking thought, can deracinate the mental habits of, say, twenty years.

But some women are as accurate and as attentive to detail as the most impeccable man, while some men (such as have suffered in training present in these respects all the characteristics usually termed feminine. Which shows that this question at any rate is not one to be airily dismissed with that over-worked quotation: “Male and female created he them.”

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Thirdly, a lack of restraint. This, again, touches the matter of literary style. Many women-writers, though by no means all, have been cured of the habit of italicising, which was the outcome of a natural desire to atone for weakness by stridency. (Every writer, of whatever sex, must carry on a guerilla against this desire.) It is useless, however, to discipline a vicious instinct in one direction, if one panders to it in another. Women have given up italics; but they have set no watch against over-emphasis in more insidious forms. And so their writing is commonly marred by an undue insistence, a shrillness, a certain quality of multiloquence. With a few exceptions, the chief of whom are Jane Austen and Alice Meynell, the greatest of them suffer from this garrulous, gesticulating inefficacy. It runs abroad in Wuthering Heights and Aurora Leigh and Sonnets from the Portuguese. And George Eliot, for all her spurious masculinity, is as the rest. You may trace the disease in her most admired passages. For example:

“It was to Adam the time that a man can least forget in after life—the time when he believes that the first woman he has ever loved betrays by a slight something—a word, a tone, a glance, the quivering of a lip or an eyelid—that she is at least beginning to love him in return. The sign is so slight, it is scarcely perceptible to the ear or eye—he could describe it to no one—it is a mere feather-touch, yet it seems to have changed his whole being, to have merged an uneasy yearning into a delicious consciousness of everything but the present moment.”  

(Adam Bede, p. 187.)

Observe here the eager iteration of the woman, making haste to say what she means, and, conscious of failure, falling back on insistence and loquacity. Exactly the same vehement spirit of pseudo-forcefulness characterises women’s journalism to-day. And the worst is that these tactics inevitably induce formlessness and exag-
CHAPTER III

THE ROADS TOWARDS JOURNALISM

More women long and strive to be journalists than by natural gifts are fitted for the profession. By itself, the wish is no evidence of latent capacity. Such desire may be induced by the need to earn a livelihood; or by the peremptory impulse to do something which drives forward so many women to-day; or perhaps through conversing with an enthusiastic journalist; or by printed statements as to the incomes and influence of certain famous members of the craft; or by the mere glamour which surrounds the newspaper life; or in forty other ways. The practice of journalism does not demand intellectual power beyond the endowment of the average clever brain. It is less difficult, I should say, to succeed moderately in journalism than to succeed moderately in dressmaking.

Any woman of understanding and education, provided she has good health and the necessary iron determination, can become a competent journalist of sorts if she chooses to put herself into hard training for a year or two—and this irrespective of natural bent. Yet even so, I would recommend you, unless you are assured of a genuine predisposition towards it, to find another and less exhausting, less disappointing occupation than journalism. For it will surely prove both exhausting and disappointing to those whose hearts are not set fast upon it.

But how are you, the woman who desires to be a journalist, to ascertain whether you have that genuine predisposition, those natural gifts which will renew your strength and take away the bitterness of disappointments? You may come some way towards deciding the point by answering these three questions:

1. Are you seriously addicted to reading newspapers and periodicals?

2. Does the thought regularly occur to you, apropos of fact or incident personally observed: "Here is 'copy' for a paper"?
3. Have you the reputation among your friends of being a good letter-writer?

If you cannot reply in the affirmative to two of these queries, then take up pokerwork, or oratory, or fiction, or nursing, but leave journalism alone. If by good fortune you are able to say “Yes” to all three of them, you may go forward rejoicing, for only perseverance will be necessary to your success; you are indeed “called.”

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There are several ways of entering upon journalism. One is at once to found or purchase a paper, and thus achieve the editorial chair at a single step. This course is often adopted in novels, sometimes with the happiest results; and much less often in real life, where the end is invariably and inevitably painful.

Another way is to buy the sub-editorship of a third-rate paper, by subscribing towards its capital. By such a transaction one gains experience, but the cost is commonly too dear.

Another way is to possess friends of high influence in the world of journalism, who will find for one a seat in a respectable office; an office where one will be in a position to learn everything without pecuniary risk, and where one can look forward to earning a salary within a reasonable time. The sole objection to this method is that it is usually quite impracticable.

Another way is to learn shorthand and the use of the typewriter, and so obtain an editorial secretaryship. An editor’s secretary has every opportunity of conjecting the secrets of the profession, and it is her own fault if she is not soon herself a journalist.

But the time-honoured, the only proper way of entering upon journalism is to become what is called an “outside contributor.” The outside contributor sends unsolicited paragraphs and articles to papers, on the chance of acceptance. By dint of a thousand refusals, she learns to gauge the public, which is the editorial, taste, and at length, fortified by many printed specimens of her work and a list as long as your arm of the various publications for which she writes, she is able to demand with dignity a position (in the office or out of it, as her tastes lie) on the staff of some paper of renown. Some journalists are so successful as outside contributors—writing when, how, and for whom they choose—that they would scorn the offer of any regular appointment; but such are rare.
CHAPTER IV
THE ASPIRANT

When you have decided to become an outside contributor you are entitled to call yourself by the proud title of "journalistic aspirant."

The procedure of the aspirant is usually this:—
She casts about for a subject on which to write, and according to her temperament and circumstances she will certainly choose one of six things:—"A Spring Reverie" (or it may be "An Autumn Reverie," as the time of year suits); or "Elsie, a character sketch" (describing one of those insufferably angelic women whom happily God never made); or "Hints on Economy in Dress"; or "My First Bicycle Ride"; or an exposure of the New Woman; or, lastly, a short story, probably styled "An Incident," and beginning: "Enid Anstruther had come to the end of her resources. As she sat by the fire that winter afternoon, the glow of the red coal
THEY CALLED IT

"PURPLE HEART VALLEY"

A Combat Chronicle of the War in Ital

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE

SIMON AND SCHUSTER • NEW YORK • 19

Over the Lines

"This strip is really a nerve jerker," Lieutenant Mike Strok called to me over his shoulder.

We were circling above the tiniest airfield I had ever seen. The landing strip was so pocked with shell craters that I did not see how my Grasshopper pilot was going to slip in among them. It was nothing more than the beaten edge of a plowed field, but for the Air OP's, the "Eyes of the Artillery" as they are called in heavy-gun circles, this strip was their most forward operating base.

Lieutenant Strok had to divide his attention between the shell pits below and the sky above. This was because we were landing in the region airmen called Messerschmitt Alley. If an unarmed, unarmored observation plane such as our Cub is attacked, the pilot’s means of escape is to outmaneuver the enemy.

"Good idea to make sure there's no Jerry fighter hanging about," said Lieutenant Strok. "If you can see him first, then he doesn't get the chance to blast the daylights out of you."

A final inspection confirmed that the sky was clear, and he brought our tiny Cub to a standstill on a piece of earth as big as a back yard in Brooklyn.

The commanding officer of the field and his ground crew of one ran up to greet us.

The ground crew spoke first. "If that ain't an American girl, then I'm seeing things!" he exclaimed.

The young officer laughed. "Sorry we're out of red carpet," he said. "We live like gypsies up here."

The CO of the Grasshoppers was twenty-six-year-old Captain Jack Marinelli of Ottumwa, Iowa. He was chief pilot and supervisor for a group of artillery liaison pilots who hedgehopped along the front lines in their Cubs, acting as flying observation posts to spot enemy targets
ad adjust fire for Fifth Army artillery. I had seldom seen a flier who were less resemblance to Hollywood’s idea of a pilot than Captain Marielli. He looked more like the tractor and hay-machine demonstrator which I learned he had been in Iowa before the war. He was lump, pleasant, and easygoing. This last characteristic, I was to find, stood as soon as the enemy was in sight. He had the reputation of being the coolest and most resourceful artillery pilot on the Fifth Army front.

Mike Strok explained that I wanted to take airplane pictures of the tent, and Captain Marinelli said, “Well, I’ve just had a call to go out on a mission. There’s a Nebelwerfer holding up an infantry division and they asked me to go out and try to spot it. She can come along if she wants to.”

“Jeez, you don’t want to take a girl on a mission,” said the ground crew of one.

“She’ll go if you’ll take her,” stated Lieutenant Strok.

“What’s a Nebelwerfer?” I inquired.

“You’ve heard of a screaming meenie, haven’t you? Wicked weapon! It’s a multiple mortar: eight-barreled rocket gun.”

By the time the screaming meenie was explained to me, I had been rapped into the observer’s seat, and the ground crew was adjusting parachute to my back and shoulders.

Knowing that one of the functions of observer is to watch all quadrants of the sky for enemy planes, I said to the Captain, “I’m not going to make a very good observer for you. Most of the time I’ll have my nose buried in my camera, and even when I haven’t, I’m not sure I’ll see the difference between an enemy fighter and one of ours.”

“Don’t worry about that,” Captain Marinelli said. “If you see anything that looks like an airplane, you tell me and I’ll decide whether it’s bandit or an angel.”

I placed my airplane camera on my knees and arranged additional equipment and a couple of spare cameras, telephoto lenses, and some aerial filters on the low shelf behind my shoulders. The space was so cramped, and any extra movement so pinned, with the parachute crowded on my back, that I wanted to be sure I had everything near at hand where I could reach it in a hurry. There was no room in the Cab to ear helmets, as our heads touched the roof. Someone had lent me one of the fur caps used by our Alaska troops, and I tucked my hair back under it and tied it firmly around my chin. When you lean out into the slipstream with an airplane camera, any escaping strand of hair will lash into your eyes and sometimes blind you during just that vital second when you are trying to catch a picture. The Captain lowered the whole right side of the airplane, folding it completely out of the way so I would have an unobstructed area in which to lean out and work. Then he spoke into his microphone, “Mike-Uncle-Charlie! This is Mike-Uncle-Charlie five-zero. I’m taking off on a mission. Stand by!”

“Where is Mike-Uncle-Charlie?” I asked.

“That’s our brigade HQ’s code word today,” replied the Captain. “Just our phonetic alphabet for MUC—today’s call letters. When I find something that radio guy will be sitting up there with his earphones on, listening.”

The ground crew spun the props. “We’ll be back in time for lunch,” shouted Captain Marinelli to Lieutenant Strok as we started to taxi between the shell craters. I glanced at my watch, which registered quarter after eleven, and couldn’t help wondering if we really would be back for lunch. I was trying hard not to wonder whether we would be back at all.

As we headed toward the front I was impressed with how regular the pattern of war, seemingly so chaotic from the ground, appears from the air. The tracks of pattern bombing on an airfield were as regular as though drawn with ruler and compass. In some olive groves the traffic patterns made by trucks and jeeps which had parked there looked as if a school child had drawn circles in a penmanship exercise, his pen filled not with ink but with a silvery mud-and-water mixture which held the light of the sun. Each bridge had been demolished with a Teutonic precision. The delicate arches of the small bridges were broken through the crest; larger bridges were buckled like giant accordions. Paralleling these were bypasses and emergency bridges which our engineers had thrown up. Most regular of all was German railroad demolition. Between the rails an endless succession of V’s marched into the distance, an aspect produced by the giant plow which the retreating Germans had dragged from their last railroad train, cracking each tie in two so neatly that it seemed as if someone had unraveled a narrow length of English twine, flinging this herringbone strip over the hills and valleys of Italy.

The irregularities were furnished by the smashed towns, so wrecked that seldom did two walls stand together, and never was a roof intact.
Flying low, sometimes we could see Italian civilians picking through the sickening rubble that once had been their homes.

As we flew over the ghastly wreckage of Mignano and headed toward the still more thoroughly wrecked town of San Pietro, suddenly our plane was jarred so violently that it bounced over on its side, and we heard what sounded like a thunderclap just below.

“That’s a shell leaving one of our big hows,” Marinelli said as he righted the plane.

“Sounded close,” I said.

“I’d hate to tell you how close,” Captain Marinelli replied.

“How are you going to know when you get to the front?” I asked.

“Oh, that’s easy,” he explained. “When you stop seeing stars on things you know you’ve left your own side behind.”

I looked down and saw our jeeps, trucks, and half-tracks crawling along Highway Six below us, each plainly marked with its white star.

“But the best way to tell is by the bridges,” he continued. “As long as you see trestle bridges below you know we’re over friendly territory, because those are bridges our engineers have built. When you begin spotting blown-out bridges you know we’re approaching no man’s land. The last thing the Germans do when they pull out is to blow up their bridges, and if they haven’t been repaired it’s because it’s been too hot for our men to get in and mend them.

“When you see a stretch of road with no traffic at all, that’s no man’s land. And when you see the first bridge intact on the other side, you know you’re crossing into Jerry territory.”

We were flying over the crest of hills which surrounded Cassino valley like the rim of a cup. Highway Six wound between bald, rocky mountains here, and we almost scraped their razorback edges as we flew over. I could look down and see entrenchments and gun emplacements set in layers of rock. Then the land dropped away sharply, and all at once we were high over Cassino corridor.

As I looked down, the earth seemed to be covered with glistening polka dots—almost as though someone had taken a bolt of gray coin-spotted satin and unrolled it over the landscape. I knew these were shell holes, thousands of them, and made by the guns of both sides, first when we shelled the Germans here, and now by their guns shelling us. As we rose higher I could look down and see hundreds of thousands of these holes filled with rain and glistening in the sun.

“We’re tossing around violently now, and dark whorls and spirals of greasy smoke were blanketing the ground beneath.

“We’ve got infantry troops down there,” the Captain said. The realization was almost more than I could bear—that our own boys were trying to slog through that fatal square of earth being chewed up by high-explosive shells.
An instant later we were flying over a desolate stretch of road with no traffic at all. This, then, was no man's land. At the farther end we saw a beautifully arched ancient bridge, its masonry quite intact.

"Jerry territory," said the Captain, and took the plane sharply upward.

Over our own side the Cabs make a practice of flying low, because this makes an attack by enemy fighters more difficult, as they cannot come in aer; but when the observation planes cross the lines, they must increase altitude, for without armor they are very vulnerable to small-arms fire.

In search of the German rocket gun, we flew four miles over enemy territory and Captain Marinelli began hunting for the Nebelwerfer in the region of San Angelo.

"That's the 'Gargling River,'" he pointed out. "GI for Garigliano, and there's the Rapido." The road to Rome stretched forward into the distance, with a railroad running parallel some distance to the left. A airship branched upward toward the Benedictine monastery, at last time still intact. The ruins of Cassino lay in white smudges at the spot of snowcapped Mt. Cairo.

Cassino corridor presented an extraordinary appearance, with white columns rising up at intervals from the valley floor. These were phosphorus shells from our own Long Toms, falling on the enemy. Whenever one landed close below us we could see it opening out into a pointed splash of fire, which quickly became transformed into a rising chunk of noise.

Suddenly I spotted a tiny silhouette in the sky, behind us. "There's a lane," I yelled.

"Just another Cub out on a mission," said Marinelli. "But you did the right thing. Tell me anything you see."

Just then he picked up the flash of the German Nebelwerfer—too quick for my untrained eye—and caught sight of the shrubbery blowing back on the ground from the gun blast.

"Mike-Uncle-Charlie," he spoke into his microphone. "This is Mike-Uncle-Charlie five-zero. Enemy gun battery located at co-ordinate 86-6-2. I can observe. Over."

Then to me, over his shoulder, "It's going to take them a little time, because they've got to compute their data and consult their fire-direction chart to see which guns can reach the target. They'll let me..."
know when they've assigned a battery. We'll be hanging right around here, so speak up if you want to be put into position for anything special."

There were many things that I wanted to be put into position for. Below us it looked as though someone were shaking an enormous popcorn shaker with white grains of popcorn bursting all over the valley floor. These were thickest in front of Cassino. The Captain maneuvered the plane so that I was practically lying on my side over the valley, and: strapped in safely—I could get an unobstructed view of the battleground below.

In a few minutes a message came through that X-ray-King-Item would fire. While I took pictures of the popcorn-sprinkled valley, Marinelli carried on his radio conversation with X-ray-Item, the battery assigned to knock out the Nebelwerfer.

I was overwhelmed to learn that it would be my pilot, up in our little Cub, who would actually give the command to fire. The next message he received was, "Mike-Uncle-Charlie five-zero, this is X-ray-Item. Will fire on your command. Over."

"Fire," said Marinelli, and the reply came back, "Seventy-two seconds. On the way."

It seemed amazing that the shell traveling from the Long Tom battery several miles back of us would take almost a minute and a quarter to reach the enemy gun target below. The Captain was checking with his watch, "Don't want to sense the wrong round," he explained.

He had to make this precise time check because with other guns peppering the valley it was easy to make an error, and it would have caused great confusion had he started correcting the aim of some other gun.

On the seventy-second second, a white geyser began rising toward us from below, and we knew that this was X-ray-Item's smoke shell. Marinelli spoke into his microphone: "X-ray-Item; this is Mike-Uncle-Charlie five-zero; five hundred yards right, one hundred yards short. Over."

Then he explained, "We've got to give them a little time again to make their correction. They're laying number-one gun on it now. When they get it adjusted they'll tie in the whole battery."

Soon another message came from X-ray-Item: seventy-two seconds on the way. Again at the end of seventy-two seconds a feather of
smoke rose from below. The aim was closer now: “Five-zero right; seven-zero short,” Captain Marinelli radioed.

I realized that the Captain was handling a great many tasks at once. Not only was he checking his watch during each seventy-two-second interval, radioing his sensings in terms of deflection and elevation data, but he was keeping an eye on the sky for enemy planes. And taking care of me, too! Every time I saw a fresh shell burst I would yell to be put in position, and he would maneuver the Cub so that I could photograph while he observed.

Suddenly he exclaimed, “We’re being shot at.” We could hear faint sounds as though twigs were snapping against the plane—a little like hot grease spitting in a frying pan just beyond us. “It’s a Spandau,” said Marinelli, and he knew exactly what to do. Since the Spandau, a German machine gun, has an effective range up to 2400 feet, he simply circled up to 3200 feet, where he went on making his observations and I went on taking photographs.

“Hands cold?” he called.

They were almost numb. At our higher altitude the air was colder and I had been leaning out into the windstream with the camera. The Captain, more protected by the nose of the Cub, stripped off his gloves and gave them to me.

The whole process of adjusting fire had gone on for about fourteen minutes when Captain Marinelli finally radioed, “Deflection correct, range correct. Fire for effect.”

“They’re bringing in several batteries this time,” said the Captain. “And this time it will be HE shells.”

At the end of seventy-two seconds we could see that whole area being blanketed, not with white smoke bursts as before, but with the deadlier high-explosive shells. Curls and twists of black smoke spatured over the ground and billowed upward, and we knew that the Nebelwerfer was being chewed to bits.

“This is Mike-Uncle-Charlie five-zero,” called Captain Marinelli. “Target area completely covered. Fire effective. Enemy battery neutralized.”

Less than a minute later he exclaimed, “I see a fighter.” Then, “I see two fighters.”

Coming around Mt. Cevaro I could see them too: a black speck growing larger and behind it another smaller speck. In less time than it takes to tell, they had taken on the size and shape of airplanes.

We were in such a steep dive by that time that I was practically standing on my head, when I heard Marinelli say, “I see four fighters.”

Sure enough, there were four shapes coming toward us, looking unmistakably like Focke-Wulf 190’s.

This was the steepest dive I had ever been in in my life. I tried to take a picture, a plan I very quickly had to abandon because, with the whole side of the plane completely open, and the shelf behind me full of cameras and lenses, it was all I could do to hold back my equipment with my elbows and shoulders, to keep it from sailing into space.

I was bracing myself with the back of my neck when Captain Marinelli exclaimed, “I’ve lost my mike. Can you find my mike for me?” I knew he needed his microphone so he could report the fighters as a warning to all the other Cubs in the air. Gropping with my left hand, and holding back my cameras with my right elbow, I retrieved his mike and handed it to him. We were still gliding down at a terrific angle when he reported, “Four enemy fighters sighted.”

We were within fifteen feet of the ground when he pulled out of that dive. I have never seen such flying. He ducked into a gully and began snaking along a stream bed. Soon we were behind a small hill and over our own territory, where the fighters could not follow us in so low. In another instant we were behind a mountain and blocked from sight of the enemy planes.

We flew back to our field in time for mess, and when we rolled into the tiny landing strip, the ground crew came running up, bursting with news. To Captain Marinelli this news was much more exciting than being chased by four Focke-Wulfs: there was steak for lunch.
ERNEST’s WAR
The Best of Ernie Pyle’s
World War II Dispatches
Edited with a biographical essay
by David Nichols
Foreword by Studs Terkel
some wrecked scout cars and Italian trucks lying in roadside ditches, and that is all. Nothing is left behind that is repairable. Wrecked cars are stripped of their tires, instruments and lights. They leave no tin cans, boxes or other junk as we do. . . .

An Inconceivable Life
at the Front Lines in Tunisia, May 4, 1943—When our infantry goes into a big push in northern Tunisia each man is issued three bars of D-ration chocolate, enough to last one day. He takes no other food.

He carries two canteens of water instead of the usual one. He carries no blankets. He leaves behind all extra clothes except his raincoat. In his pockets he may have a few toilet articles. Some men carry their money. Others give it to friends to keep.

In the days that follow they live in a way that is inconceivable to us at home. They walk and fight all night without sleep. Next day they lie flat in foxholes, or hide in fields of freshly green, knee-high wheat.

If they're in the fields they dare not even move enough to dig foxholes, for that would bring the German artillery. They can't rise even for nature's calls. The German feels for them continually with his artillery.

The slow drag of these motionless daylight hours is nearly unendurable. Lt. Mickey Miller of Morgantown, Indiana, says this lifeline waiting in a wheatfield is almost the worst part of the whole battle.

The second evening after the attack begins, C-rations and five-gallon cans of water are brought up across country in jeeps, after dark. You eat in the dark, and you can't see the can you are eating from. You just eat by feel. You make cold coffee from cold water.

One night a German shell landed close and fragments punctured fifteen cans of water.

Each night enough canned rations for three meals are brought up, but when the men move on after supper most of them either lose or leave behind the next day's rations, because they're too heavy to carry. But, as they say, when you're in battle and excited you sort of go on your nerve. You don't think much about being hungry.

The men fight at night and lie low by day, when the artillery takes over its blasting job. Weariness gradually creeps over them. What sleeping they do is in daytime. But, as they say, at night it's too cold and in daytime it's too hot. Also the fury of the artillery makes daytime sleeping next to impossible. So does the heat of the sun. Some men have passed out from heat prostration. Many of them get upset stomachs from the heat.

But as the third and fourth days roll on weariness overcomes all obstacles to sleep. Men who sit down for a moment's rest fall asleep in the grass. There are even men who say they can march while asleep.

Lt. Col. Charlie Stone of New Brunswick, New Jersey, actually went to sleep while standing up talking on a field telephone—not while listening, but in the middle of a spoken sentence.

When sometimes they do lie down at night the men have only their raincoats to lie on. It is cold, and the dew makes the grass as wet as rain. They don't dare start a fire to heat their food, even in daytime, for the smoke would attract enemy fire. At night they can't even light cigarettes in the open, so after digging their foxholes they get down and make hoods over their heads with their raincoats, and light up under the coats.

They have plenty of cigarettes. Those who run out during battle are supplied by others. Every night new supplies of water and C-rations are brought up in jeeps.

You can't conceive how hard it is to move and fight at night. The country is rugged, the ground rough. Everything is new and strange. The nights are pitch black. You grope with your feet. You step into holes, and fall sprawling in little gullies and crevices. You trudge over plowed ground and push through waist-high shrubs. You go as a man blindfolded, feeling unsure and off balance, but you keep on going.

Through it all there is the fear of mines. The Germans have mined the country behind them beyond anything ever known before. We simply can't take time to go over each inch of ground with mine detectors, so we have to discover the mine fields by stumbling into them or driving over them. Naturally there are casualties, but they are smaller than you might think—just a few men each day.

The greatest damage is psychological—the intense watchfulness our troops must maintain.

The Germans have been utterly profligate with their mines. We dug out four hundred from one field. We've found so many fields and so many isolated mines that we have run out of white tape to mark them with. But still we go on.
The last two sections of the following column are Pyle's most eloquent celebration of the infantry. They have been widely reprinted.

THE GOD-DAMNED INFANTRY
IN THE FRONT LINES BEFORE MAESTRO, NORTHERN TUNISIA, MAY 2, 1943
—We're now with an infantry outfit that has battled ceaselessly for four days and nights.

This northern warfare has been in the mountains. You don't ride much anymore. It is walking and climbing and crawling country. The mountains aren't big, but they are constant. They are largely treeless. They are easy to defend and bitter to take. But we are taking them.

The Germans lie on the back slope of every ridge, deeply dug into foxholes. In front of them the fields and pastures are hideous with thousands of hidden mines. The forward slopes are left open, untenanted, and if the Americans tried to scale these slopes they would be murdered wholesale in an inferno of machine-gun crossfire plus mortars and grenades.

Consequently we don't do it that way. We have fallen back to the old warfare of first pulverizing the enemy with artillery, then sweeping around the ends of the hill with infantry and taking them from the sides and behind.

I've written before how the big guns crack and roar almost constantly throughout the day and night. They lay a screen ahead of our troops. By magnificent shooting they drop shells on the back slopes. By means of shells timed to burst in the air a few feet from the ground, they get the Germans even in their foxholes. Our troops have found that the Germans dig foxholes down and then under, trying to get cover from the shell bursts that shower death from above.

Our artillery has really been sensational. For once we have enough of something and at the right time. Officers tell me they actually have more guns than they know what to do with.

All the guns in any one sector can be centered to shoot at one spot. And when we lay the whole business on a German hill the whole slope seems to erupt. It becomes an unbelievable cauldron of fire and smoke and dirt. Veteran German soldiers say they have never been through anything like it.

Now to the infantry—the God-damned infantry, as they like to call themselves.

I love the infantry because they are the underdogs. They are the mud-rain-frost-and-wind boys. They have no comforts, and they even learn to live without the necessities. And in the end they are the guys that wars can't be won without.

I wish you could see just one of the ineradicable pictures I have in my mind today. In this particular picture I am sitting among clumps of sword-grass on a steep and rocky hillside that we have just taken. We are looking out over a vast rolling country to the rear.

A narrow path comes like a ribbon over a hill miles away, down a long slope, across a creek, up a slope and over another hill.

All along the length of this ribbon there is now a thin line of men. For four days and nights they have fought hard, eaten little, washed none, and slept hardly at all. Their nights have been violent with attack, fright, butchery, and their days sleepless and miserable with the crash of artillery.

The men are walking. They are fifty feet apart, for dispersal. Their walk is slow, for they are dead weary, as you can tell even when looking at them from behind. Every line and sag of their bodies speaks their inhuman exhaustion.

On their shoulders and backs they carry heavy steel tripods, machine-gun barrels, leaden boxes of ammunition. Their feet seem to sink into the ground from the overload they are bearing.

They don't stanch. It is the terrible deliberation of each step that spells out their appalling tiredness. Their faces are black and unshaven. They are young men, but the grime and whiskers and exhaustion make them look middle-aged.

In their eyes as they pass is not hatred, not excitement, not despair, not the tonic of their victory—there is just the simple expression of being here as though they had been here doing this forever, and nothing else.

The line moves on, but it never ends. All afternoon men keep coming round the hill and vanishing eventually over the horizon. It is one long tired line of antlike men.

There is an agony in your heart and you almost feel ashamed to look at them. They are just guys from Broadway and Main Street, but you wouldn't remember them. They are too far away now. They are too tired. Their world can never be known to you, but if you could see them just once, just for an instant, you would know that no matter how hard people work back home they are not keeping pace with these infantrymen in Tunisia.
ERNEST MCUGEE

This is Not
HONOLULU, February 16, 1945—Covering this Pacific war is, for me, going to be like learning to live in a new city.

The methods of war, the attitude toward it, the homesickness, the distances, the climate—everything is different from what we have known in the European war.

Here in the beginning, I can’t seem to get my mind around it, or get my fingers on it. I suspect it will take months to get adjusted and get the “feel” of this war.

Distance is the main thing. I don’t mean distance from America so much, for our war in Europe is a long way from home too. I mean distances after you get right on the battlefield.

For the whole Western Pacific is our battlefield now, and whereas distances in Europe are hundreds of miles at most, out there they are thousands. And there’s nothing in between but water.

You can be on an island battlefield, and the next thing behind you is a thousand miles away. One soldier told me the worst sinking feeling he ever had was when they had landed on an island and were fighting, and on the morning of D-day plus three he looked out to sea and it was completely empty. Our entire convoy had unloaded and left for more, and, boy, did it leave you with a lonesome and deserted feeling.

As one admiral said, directing this war is like watching a slow-motion picture. You plan something for months, and then finally the great day comes when you launch your plans, and then it is days or weeks before the attack happens, because it takes that long to get there.

As an example of how they feel, the Navy gives you a slick sheet of paper as you go through here, entitled “Airline Distances in the Pacific.” And at the bottom of it is printed “Our Enemy, Geography.” Logistics out here is more than a word; it’s a nightmare.

Here’s another example of their attitude toward distances in the Pacific:

At Anzio in Italy just a year ago, the 3rd Division set up a rest camp for its exhausted infantrymen. The rest camp was less than five miles from the front line, within constant enemy artillery range.

But in the Pacific, they bring men clear back from the western islands to Pearl Harbor to rest camps—the equivalent of bringing an Anzio beachhead fighter all the way back to Kansas City for his two-weeks’ rest.

It’s thirty-five hundred miles from Pearl Harbor to the Marianas, all over water, yet hundreds of people travel it daily by air as casually as you’d go to work in the morning.

And there is another enemy out here that we did not know so well in Europe—and that is monotony. Oh sure, war everywhere is monotonous in its dreadfulness. But out here even the niceness of life gets monotonous.

The days are warm and on our established island bases the food is good and the mail service is fast and there’s little danger from the enemy and the days go by in endless sameness and they drive you nuts. They sometimes call it going “pineapple crazy.”

Our high rate of returning mental cases is discussed frankly in the island and service newspapers. A man doesn’t have to be under fire in the front lines finally to have more than he can take without breaking.

He can, when isolated and homesick, have more than he can take of nothing but warmth and sunshine and good food and safety—when there’s nothing else to go with it, and no prospect of anything else.

And another adjustment I’ll have to make is the attitude toward the enemy. In Europe we felt our enemies, horrible and deadly as they were, were still people.

But out here I’ve already gathered the feeling that the Japanese are looked upon as something inhuman and squirmish—like some people feel about cockroaches or mice.

I’ve seen one group of Japanese prisoners in a wire-fenced courtyard, and they were wrestling and laughing and talking just as humanly as anybody. And yet they gave me a creepy feeling and I felt in need of a mental bath after looking at them.

I’ve not yet got to the front, or anywhere near it, to find out how the average soldier or sailor or Marine feels about the thing he’s fighting. But I’ll bet he doesn’t feel the same way our men in Europe feel.
For a moment, I thought I heard the sound of a distant siren. I reached for the radio, but there was no signal. I turned to the window, but the view was obscured by the thick fog.

The town was quiet, almost eerie. The fog seemed to engulf everything, making it difficult to see more than a few feet ahead. I moved cautiously, trying to make sense of the situation.

As I walked, I noticed a faint glow in the distance, perhaps a fire or some other source of light. I decided to investigate, hoping it might lead me to a clearer path.

The fog grew thicker, making it difficult to see. I stumbled over a small obstacle, losing my balance for a moment. But I regained my footing and continued on.

The fog eventually lifted, revealing a clearing ahead. I approached with caution, not wanting to be caught off guard. As I drew closer, I saw a faint figure in the distance, also making their way through the fog.

We approached each other, our paths converging. It was a strange, surreal moment, a bond formed in the midst of chaos.

After a while, we reached a clearing, where the fog had thinned significantly. We sat down, our voices low, sharing our stories and our fears.

It was a night I would never forget, a moment of connection in the midst of uncertainty and danger.

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This experience was both terrifying and empowering. I realized that sometimes, it's the moments of uncertainty that bring us together, that make us stronger as a community.

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(The rest of the text continues...)
The country over which my regiment passed during the first two days was cultivated. It rose gradually from the sea and was all formed into small fields.

It didn't look at all unlike Indians in late summer when things have started to turn dry and brown, except that the fields were much smaller.

The wheat, which looks just like ours, is dead ripe in the fields now. The Marines are cutting it with little sickles. In other fields are cane and sweet potatoes.

Each field has a ditch around its edge, and dividing the fields are little ridges about two feet wide. On top of the ridges are paths where the people walk. All through the country are narrow dirt lanes and now and then a fairly decent gravel road.

As you get inland, the country becomes rougher. In the hills there is less cultivation and more trees. It is really a pretty country. We had read about what a worthless place Okinawa was, but I think most of us have been surprised about how pretty it is.

Okinawan civilians we bring in are pitiful. The only ones left seem to be real old or real young. And they all are very, very poor. They're not very clean. And their homes are utterly filthy. Over and over you hear Marines say, "This could be a nice country if the people weren't so dirty."

Obviously their living standard is low. Yet I've never understood why poverty and filth need to be synonymous. A person doesn't have to be well-off to get clean. But apparently he has to be well-off to want to keep clean. We've found it that way clear around the world.

The people here dress as we see Japanese dressed in pictures: women in kimonos and old men in skin-tight pants. Some wear a loose, knee-length garment that shows their skinny legs.

The kids are cute as kids are all over the world. I've noticed Marines reaching out and tousling their hair as they marched past them. We're rounding up all the civilians and putting them in camps. They are puzzled by it all.

Most of the farm families must have got out when our heavy bombardments started. Lots of farmhouses have either been demolished or burned to the ground before we came. Often, in passing a wrecked farmhouse, you smell the sickening odor of death inside.

But there are always people who won't leave no matter what. We couldn't help feeling sorry for the Okinawans we picked up in the first few days. We found two who spoke a little English. They had once lived in Hawaii. One was an old man who had a son (Hawaiian-Japanese) somewhere in the American Army!

They were all shocked from the bombardment and yet I think rather stupid too, so that when they talked they didn't make much sense.

I don't believe they had any idea of what it was all about. As one Marine officer said, "The poor devils. I'll bet they think this is the end of the world."

They were obviously scared to death. On Love Day the Marines found many of them hiding from us in caves. They found two old women, seventy-five years old or more, in a cave caring for a paralyzed girl. She wasn't wounded, just paralyzed from natural causes. One of the old ladies had a small dirty sack with some money in it. When the Marines found her she cried and tried to give them the money—hoping I suppose that she could buy herself off from being executed.

After all the propaganda they've been fed about our tortures, it's going to be a befuddled bunch of Okinawans when they discover we brought right along with us, as part of the intricate invasion plan, enough supplies to feed them, too!

War Sounds

Okinawa, April 12, 1945—Our first night on Okinawa was uncanny and full of old familiar sounds—the exciting, sad, weary little sounds of war.

It had been six months since I'd slept on the ground, or heard a rifle shot. With the Marines it was about the same.

I was tagging along with a headquarters company of a regiment. We were on a pretty, grassy slope out in the country. The front lines were about a thousand yards ahead. Other troops were bivouacked all around us.

There were still a few snipers hiding around. An officer was brought in just before dark, shot through the arm. So we were on our toes.

Just at dusk three planes flew slowly overhead in the direction of the beach. We paid no attention, for we thought they were ours. But they weren't.

In a moment all hell cut loose from the beach. Our entire fleet and the guns ashore started throwing stuff into the sky. I've never seen a thicker batch of ack-ack.
As one of the Marines said, there were more bullets than there was sky. Those Jap pilots must have thought the world was coming to an end to fly into a lead storm like that only ten hours after we had landed on Okinawa. All three were shot down.

As deep darkness came on we got into foxholes and settled down for the night. The countryside became as silent as a graveyard—silent, that is, between shots. The only sounds were war sounds. There were no country sounds at all. The sky was a riot of stars.

Capt. Tom Brown was in the foxhole next to me. As we lay there on our backs, looking up into the starry sky, he said: “There’s the Big Dipper. That’s the first time I’ve seen that since I’ve been in the Pacific.” For, you see, Marines of this division have done all their fighting under the Southern Cross, where our Big Dipper doesn’t show.

As full darkness came, flares began lighting the country ahead of us over the front lines. They were shot in shells from our battleships, timed to burst above our lines, and float down on parachutes. That was to keep the country lighted up so we could see the Japs if they tried to infiltrate, which is one of their favorite tricks.

The flares were shot up several per minute from dusk until the moon came out full. It was very bright after that and the flares were not needed.

But all night long two or three ships kept up a slow shelling of the far hills where the Japs were supposed to be. It wasn’t a bombardment, just two or three shells per minute. They passed right over us and I found that passing shells have the same ghostly “window-shade rustle” on this side of the world as on the other.

My foxhole was only about twenty feet from where two field telephones and two field radios were lying on the ground. All night, officers sat on the ground at these and directed our troops.

As I lay there listening in the dark, the conversation was startlingly familiar—the words and the thoughts and actions exactly as I’d known them for so long in the infantry.

All night I could hear these low voices over the phones—voices in the darkness, voices of men running the war at the front.

Not long after dark the rifle shots started. There would be a little flurry far ahead, maybe a dozen shots. Then silence for many minutes.

Then there would be another flurry, way to the left. Then silence.

Then the blurt of a machine gun closer, and a few scattered single shots sort of framing it. Then a long silence. Spooky.

All night it went like that. Flares in the sky ahead, the crack of big guns behind us, then of passing shells, a few dark figures coming and going in the night, muted voices at the telephones, the rifle shots, the mosquitoes, the stars, the feel of the damp night air under the wide sky—back again at the kind of life I had known so long.

The old familiar pattern, unchanged by distance or time from war on the other side of the world. A pattern so imbedded in my soul that, coming back into it again, it seemed to me as I lay there that I’d never known anything else in my life. And there are millions of us.

April 16, 1945—We camped one night on a little hillside that led up to a bluff overlooking a small river. The bluff dropped straight down for a long way. Up there on top of the bluff it was just like a little park.

The bluff was terraced, although it wasn’t farmed. The grass on it was soft and green. And those small, straight-limbed pine trees were dotted all over it.

Looking down from the bluff, the river made a turn and across it was an old stone bridge. At the end of the bridge was a village—or what had been a village.

It was now just a jumble of ashes and sagging thatched roofs from our bombardment. In every direction little valleys led away from the turn in the river.

It was as pretty and gentle a sight as you ever saw. It had the softness of antiquity about it and the miniature charm and quaintness that we see in Japanese prints. And the sad, uncanny silence that follows the bedlam of war.

A bright sun made the morning hot and a refreshing little breeze sang through the pine trees. There wasn’t a shot nor a warlike sound within hearing. I sat on the bluff for a long time, just looking. It all seemed so quiet and peaceful. I noticed a lot of the Marines sitting and just looking too. . . .

These and subsequent columns were released for publication after Pyle's death (April 18th) on Ie Shima, a small island west of Okinawa. An editor's note supplied by United Feature said: "We believe he would have wanted us to. As a great reporter, a great newspaperman and a great person, he would have wanted his stories to go through, despite his tragic death."
the same morning. I promised Fred I would call his wife and tell her he would be home within a week.

When I got to New York I called the Painton home at Westport, Connecticut. Fred answered the phone himself. He had beat me home by three days on his measly little priority! He never got over kidding me about that.

As the war years rolled by we have become so inured to sudden and artificially imposed death that natural death in a combat zone seems incongruous, and almost as though the one who died had been cheated.

Fred had been through the mill. His ship was torpedoed out from under him in the Mediterranean. Anti-aircraft fire killed a man beside him in a plane over Morocco.

He had gone on many invasions. He was in Cassino. He was ashore at Iwo Jima. He was certainly living on borrowed time. To many it seems unfair for him to die protractedly. And yet . . .

The wear and the weariness of war is cumulative. To many a man in the line today fear is not so much of death itself, but fear of the terror and anguish and utter horror that precedes death in battle.

I have no idea how Fred Painton would have liked to die. But somehow I’m glad he didn’t have to go through the unnatural terror of dying on the battlefield. For he was one of my dear friends and I know that he, like myself, had come to feel that terror.

The following is a rough draft of a column Pyle had been preparing for release upon the end of the war in Europe. It was found on his body the day he was killed on Ie Shima, twenty days before the Germans surrendered.

ON VICTORY IN EUROPE
And so it is over. The catastrophe on one side of the world has run its course. The day that it had so long seemed would never come has come at last.

I suppose emotions here in the Pacific are the same as they were among the Allies all over the world. First a shouting of the good news with such joyous surprise that you would think the shouter himself had brought it about.

And then an unspoken sense of gigantic relief—and then a hope that the collapse in Europe would hasten the end in the Pacific.

It has been seven months since I heard my last shot in the European war. Now I am as far away from it as it is possible to get on this globe.

This is written on a little ship lying off the coast of the Island of Okinawa, just south of Japan, on the other side of the world from Ardennes.

But my heart is still in Europe, and that’s why I am writing this column.

It is to the boys who were my friends for so long. My one regret of the war is that I was not with them when it ended.

For the companionship of two and a half years of death and misery is a spouse that tolerates no divorce. Such companionship finally becomes a part of one’s soul, and it cannot be obliterated.

True, I am with American boys in the other war not yet ended, but I am old-fashioned and my sentiment runs to old things.

To me the European war is old, and the Pacific war is new.

Last summer I wrote that I hoped the end of the war could be a gigantic relief, but not an elation. In the joyousness of high spirits it is easy for us to forget the dead. Those who are gone would not wish themselves to be a millstone of gloom around our necks.

But there are many of the living who have had burned into their brains forever the unnatural sight of cold dead men scattered over the hillsides and in the ditches along the high rows of hedge throughout the world.

Dead men by mass production—in one country after another—month after month and year after year. Dead men in winter and dead men in summer.

Dead men in such familiar promiscuity that they become monotonous.

Dead men in such monstrous infinity that you come almost to hate them.

These are the things that you at home need not even try to understand. To you at home they are columns of figures, or he is a near one who went away and just didn’t come back. You didn’t see him lying so grotesque and pasty beside the gravel road in France.

We saw him, saw him by the multiple thousands. That’s the difference. . . .
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S

My Day

Her acclaimed columns 1936-1945

EDITED BY ROCHELLE CHADAKOFF
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY MARTHA GELLHORN

PHAROS BOOKS
A SCRIPPS HOWARD COMPANY
NEW YORK
My Day

more men on crutches hurried in and seats were found for them. Mur-
murs of conversation began and one man whistled, but none seemed to
sense tension. I wondered if they all felt as I did, that this was just a kind of
routine and had very little to do with my real life, which was going on
very calmly in my mind.

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Eleanor Roosevelt felt that her duty to the servicemen did not end when
her plane landed in America. She began contacting the mothers and girl-
friends, although she often had to convince the women that she was in-
deed Mrs. Roosevelt. She also had a message for civilians: Our boys need
encouraging news from home; they want to know that their loved ones are
okay and that the government is planning for postwar jobs.

Mrs. Roosevelt worried about this generation, whose life would be de-

defined by the Depression and the war, but she made a discovery during her
Pacific trip: "We have heard that its members were soft. Golly, if that
generation is soft, I don’t know what is going to be when it gets tough.”

HYDE PARK, SEPTEMBER 30—I want to tell you about the day when we
landed about noon on a small island. It has a very large lagoon in the cen-
ter, and a narrow belt of land. In all, I suppose the area of land is not
much over three square miles, but going around the lagoon would be,
perhaps, a 30-mile drive. There is a native village and some of the natives
wanted to know if I was General MacArthur’s “woman.” They are very
gerocious people and had gifts of shell necklaces and grass skirts for me
and for those with me.

On this island, the resident manager said something which made me
realize again how small the world is. I asked what the natives did to earn a
living, and his reply was “When you ladies gave up wearing pearl but-
tons, you took away what was their traditional way of life.” Fortunately
for them, they need little and the islands produce most of their food.
Now, in some places, they work for the Americans but in others they do
no work except what is essential to their daily living.

On every island, our men have built an airport, defenses, storage areas,
and living quarters have gradually been improved. The adaptability and
ingenuity of the men is astounding. Native houses are built on posts high
off the ground because of the rains. Our men had to live in tents, and one
boy told me the rain washed their barrack bags out into a stream and they
had to run after them. Nevertheless, the work was done and now mail
comes every ten days; at first six weeks was the minimum. Life is fairly
comfortable on a camping out scale.

One evening we landed at an airfield just at sunset. To my surprise,
there was no twilight in this part of the world. The moon and the stars
shone and it was night, and then, before you realize it, full daylight. We
spent two nights on this island, and I began my day early by breakfast at
7:00, with some of the men.

They started an interesting talk, because one of them had heard a
broadcast from home in which he said the speaker claimed, that if all the
women and older men now at work were dismissed and returning soldiers
got their jobs there would still be 500,000 soldiers without work. How
anyone arrived at these figures I don’t know, but such things are on the
men’s minds. They want to know what we at home are planning for the
future.

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While she toured the Pacific Islands, Eleanor Roosevelt was keenly aware
that it would have been helpful to have more women working with the
armed services. Not only could they handle the noncombat tasks but their
presence would also make a more natural environment for the men.

Years after she left the White House she would remark that “Women
have always come to the fore in wartime, but I think that during World
War II they took responsibility in more fields than ever before. In fac-
tories, on the farms, in business, and in the military services. They were
an indispensable part of the life of the country.”

WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 15—The film which we saw last night was
the story of the British Women’s Military Auxiliary Services, and it was
one of the most thrilling stories I have seen on the screen.

By and large, I am not sure the men of the United States are encourag-
ing their wives and daughters to go into our auxiliary military services. I
am not even sure our women are convinced they are needed in these ser-
vices. They may wonder whether they really would free a man to do a job
which they cannot do.

I realize, of course, that our WACs, WAVES, Marines and Spars are
not being trained for as great a variety of activities as the British women
are. That makes the service less interesting. In addition, they probably re-
sent the restrictions put upon them as to the places where they are to be
allowed to work.