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Ernie Pyle By: Jenny Trembath March 20, 2000 Ernie Pyle When a machine-gun bullet ended the life of Ernie Pyle in the final days of World War II, Americans spoke of him in the same breath as they had Franklin Roosevelt. To millions, the loss of him was as great as the loss of the wartime president.

Since WWII correspondent Ernie Pyle was so famous, his death on the battlefield came as a shock to people around the world. Ernest Taylor Pyle was born August 3, 1900 to Will and Marie Pyle. He was born an only child on the Same Elder farm just southwest of Dana, Indiana. His father, Will Pyle, was a tenant farmer because he couldn't make a steady living from being a carpenter, which is what he really liked to do. Pyle described his father, He never said a great deal to me all his life, and yet I feel we have been very good friends, he never gave me much advice or told me to do this or that, or not to. Marie Pyle filled the role of family leader. She enjoyed tasks at hand: raising chickens and produce, caring for her family and serving the neighbors.

Pyle describes her, She thrived on action, she would rather milk than sew; rather plow than bake (Tobin 6). Through school Pyle loved to write. During high school he was reporter, then editor, then editor in chief for his high school newspaper.

When he graduated high school, he too was caught up in the patriotic fever of the nation upon America's entry into WWI (Whitman 2). He enlisted in the Naval Reserve but before he could finish his training an armistice was declared in Europe. After that he attended the University of Indiana to study journalism, but left before he graduated.

Ernie Pyle pursued his love for writing, and became a cub reporter for LaPorte Herald. For months later he was offered a \$2.50-per-week raise to work for the Washington Daily News. He wrote the country's first daily aviation column for four years before becoming the paper's managing editor. Pyle was a reporter, copy editor, and aviation editor until 1932, when he accepted a job for the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain. Pyle loved to travel and persuaded Scripps-Howard executives to allow him to be a roving reporter. Ernie Pyle was very excited to be a roving reporter: It's better than a million dollars. It's a new job, the best job in the world.

Just think! No more sitting behind a desk! No more sticking to the same old office! No more writing headlines or editing other people's stories (Wilson 66). The six years he was a roving reporter for Scripps-Howard he crossed the continent some 35 times. He wrote about all kinds of things: mountain climbing, making soap, digging for gold, zippers that stuck, and his folks back home. Whenever he found a good story, he stopped for a day or two. He would talk to all kinds of people.

Then he would write his story in a hotel room that night. People that read his column described it as just like receiving a letter (Wilson 65). In 1940 Ernie Pyle went to England to report on the Battle of Britain.

In 1941 he began covering America's involvement in WWII, reporting on Allied operations in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and France. Pyle's column during WWII reported on the life and sometimes death of the average soldier to the millions of the American home front. He had a simple, warm, human writing

style. He was widely popular, especially during WWII. Pyles columns covered almost every branch of the service from quarter-master troops to pilots.

He saved his highest praise for the common foot soldier, 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 necessities. And in the end they are the guys that wars can't be won without (Wilson 66). His columns which eventually appeared in 200 newspapers did more than just inform.

In 1944 Pyle proposed that combat soldiers be given fight pay similar to an airman's flight pay. In May of that year Congress acted on Pyle's suggestion and gave soldiers 50% extra pay for combat service. Also in 1944 Pyle was awarded Pulitzer Prize in reporting for his distinguished reports from the European battlefield.

Ernie Pyle showed his bravery through doing the job he did even though he hated war. After he died a column he wrote about his hatred for war was found in his pocket: The unnatural sight of cold dead men scattered