

*At Home with Ernie Pyle*

Edited by Owen V. Johnson

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. Pp. ix, 408. Appendix, notes, select bibliography, index. \$30.00.)

Accounts abound in print and in film about those famed “30 seconds over Tokyo,” the daring World War II raid by US bombers flown from an aircraft carrier to retaliate for the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. But there is only one account about Hoosier fried chicken over Tokyo. The story of the chicken, eaten for lunch over Tokyo during a bombing raid toward the end of the war, appeared in a column written by Ernie Pyle, the legendary war correspondent who was born on a farm in Indiana near the tiny town of Dana.

As Pyle traveled all over the nation and around the world, writing columns in a folksy way about common people as well as the prominent, he never forgot his Indiana roots. Time and again he tracked down fellow Hoosiers like Jack Bales—“another farm boy from down the road near Dana”—a bomber radio operator to whom Pyle gave a jar of Indiana fried chicken sent from back home by his Aunt Mary. In his typical way of telling a story, Pyle wrote: “Jack took some of his fried chicken in his lunch over Tokyo one day. We Hoosiers sure do get around, even the chickens” (pp. 342, 344).

That story and others about Indiana and its people written in columns by Pyle are presented in *At Home with Ernie Pyle*, edited by Owen V. Johnson. Johnson includes

more than just famous columns by Pyle. He includes all columns Pyle wrote in Indiana, going back long before he was a war correspondent, before he was acclaimed nationally and a Pulitzer-Prize winner. There are columns about growing up on the farm, about Indiana events and cities and Hoosier ways, about his mother and father and Aunt Mary. Pyle joked about Aunt Mary daring to venture to the 1939 World’s Fair in San Francisco. He told readers: “Traveler’s Aid wrote me and said they’d be pleased to help her in any way they could. I wrote back and thanked them, and said Aunt Mary wouldn’t need any help, but in case Traveler’s Aid got lost or something, Aunt Mary would be glad to help THEM” (p. 74).

Johnson also includes excerpts of columns written elsewhere that tell about the state and its people, about Hoosiers he found all around the country before the war and later on the battlefields, right up until his death from Japanese gunfire as the war was drawing to a close. Finally, Johnson adds interesting information about what happened later—even decades later—to some of the people about whom Pyle wrote, such as the Hoosier in combat who poured out his love for a girl back home in Indiana. They did marry, according to Johnson’s research; others, he found, never made it back home.

The stories in this book will be of particular interest to anybody who is—or would like to become—familiar with the work of the legendary Ernie Pyle.

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## *Evansville in World War II*

By James Lachlan MacLeod

(Charleston, S. C.: The History Press, 2015. Pp. 144. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Paperbound, \$21.99.)

In the modern collective memory of Evansville, the World War II years figure as the city's greatest era. Programs, exhibits, and most of all books continue to appear on the subject. James Lachlan MacLeod's *Evansville in World War II* is the most recent addition to the collection of histories on that era. After many recent pictorial and reminiscence-style publications, MacLeod's book stands out as the first scholarly work on the subject in some time. The author, unlike many predecessors, goes into the background of events, and throughout the book supplies appropriate illustrations to convey his story.

In his introduction, MacLeod acknowledges that he does not intend his book as the last word on the subject, but instead as an examination of stories which have been glossed over or ignored by others. He begins with the question: "Why did all this industrial activity happen in Evansville?" (p.17). MacLeod looks at the city's entry into World War II, as Evansville sought to save its economic future while con-

tributing significantly to the American war effort. In his first few chapters, he examines the work of several select industries but avoids delving into an overview of all of the city's war work and turning the book into a compilation of how many bullets and planes were manufactured and who made them.

The author's final chapters explore neglected topics such as changing gender roles, race, war fundraising, and even prostitution. The rapid expansion of Evansville's industry led to severe housing shortages, and the author looks at the associated problems and attempts that were made to cope with the problems.

Finally, MacLeod considers the cost of the war in military as well as home front losses, specifically casualties among the students and alumni of what was then Evansville College. Through a series of poignant short stories, the author conveys the effect of such wartime losses on both the city and the college.

Some minor errors crop up in the text, including MacLeod's reference