

Collection #  
SC 3275

**GEORGE C. BALES'  
ERNIE PYLE RESEARCH PAPERS, CA. 1940S–2000S**

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Processed by

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript folder, 1 color photo folder

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1940s–2000s

PROVENANCE: Dr. George C. Bales, Mountain Brook, AL; May 2004

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Ernie Pyle Letter SC 0974; Ernie Pyle Materials SC 2869; Ernie Pyle Eye Witness Death Account Letter SC 2989; Ernie Pyle Postmortem and Interment Photographs P 0272

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2004.0361

NOTES:

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ernest "Ernie" Taylor Pyle, the son of William C. and Maria (Taylor) Pyle, was born on a farm near Dana, Vermillion County, Indiana on 3 August 1900. He studied journalism at Indiana University in Bloomington for 3 ½ years, but quit in 1923 without graduating. Pyle's career in the newspaper business began at the *LaPorte Herald*, where he was a cub reporter. He moved to Washington, D.C. and worked as a reporter and desk man at the *Washington Daily News* from 1923 to 1926. He married Geraldine Siebold in 1925. After Pyle left the *Daily News*, he and his wife drove around the rim of the United States. Their trip ended in New York, where Pyle became a desk man at the *New York Evening World* and the *New York Evening Post*. He returned to the *Daily News* as telegraph editor, and was made managing editor in 1932.

The editor-in-chief of Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance, the company that owned the *Daily News*, gave Pyle a position as roving correspondent. His first column appeared on 8 August 1935. Pyle's columns were about the people, places and events he encountered while traveling with his wife. The Pyles' travels covered the United States and Canada and took them to Europe, Mexico, Central America, and South America. The articles ran regularly in the *Daily News*, and were picked up by other Scripps-Howard papers. The United Feature Syndicate syndicated Pyle's columns in other papers, as well.

In the 1939 bombing of Britain, Ernie took his roving reporter skills to Europe to write about the disaster. After the beginning of American involvement in the war, Ernie went back into the action, and served as a war correspondent. His stories of average American GI's in Europe, Africa and the Pacific became a hit across the nation. Published in 400 daily and 300 weekly newspapers, Ernie's reports gave the American people a unique perspective on the war. Pyle returned to the U.S. for a short time in 1944, but departed for the Pacific in early 1945.

On 17 April 1945 Pyle went to Ie Shima in the Ryukyu Islands of Japan. En route to the frontlines, he was caught in a machine gun ambush and killed instantly in a ditch where he was taking cover. Pyle was first buried on Ie Shima. His body was eventually moved to Okinawa and then formally interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Punchbowl Crater, Oahu, Hawaii. A monument to his person was erected on Ie Shima.

Pyle was awarded the 1944 Pulitzer Prize for distinguished correspondence. His dispatches were gathered in book form under the titles *Ernie Pyle in England* (1941), *Here Is Your War* (1943), and *Brave Men* (1944).

Sources:

Dillard, Irving. "Pyle, Ernest Taylor." *Dictionary of American Biography: Supplement Three, 1941-1945*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973, pages 612-613.

*Indiana Biography Series*. Vol. 28, p. 40-41; Vol. 29, p. 44-46.

James Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War: America's Eyewitness to World War II*, New York: The Free Press, 1997.

Miller, Lee G. *The Story of Ernie Pyle*. New York: The Viking Press, 1950.

Ray E. Boomhower, *The Soldier's Friend: a Life of Ernie Pyle*, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2006.

*Who Was Who in America*. Vol. 2, p. 435.

### **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection contains the research papers of Dr. George C. Bales on Ernie Pyle. Many of the papers pertain to the controversy over the location of Pyle's birthplace. The collection includes Bales' personal correspondence regarding his research and book, a statement of Bales' case for the birth place of Ernie Pyle, and a notebook of correspondence and other research on Ernie Pyle's birthplace. Also in the collection are assorted articles on Pyle, Pyle's birthplace, and Bales, photocopies of service photos, a Pyle history postcard, a printout of a search for literature on Pyle, and a paper titled "Shellmen of New Guinea" by Bob Bales. Finally, the collection contains assorted photos of Pyle, Bales, and Bales' life.

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George C. Bales' Ernie Pyle research papers, ca.  
1940s–2000s

Miscellaneous photos, ca. 1940s–2000s

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Folder 1