1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Ernie Pyle House

Other Name/Site Number: Ernie Pyle Library

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 900 Girard Blvd. S.E. Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Albuquerque Vicinity N/A

State: New Mexico County: Bernalillo Code: 001 Zip Code: 87106

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	___	Building(s):	X
Public-Local:	X	District:	__
Public-State:	___	Site:	__
Public-Federal:	__	Structure:	__
		Object:	__

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	2	objects
3	2	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 2

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Domestic	Sub:	Single Dwelling Secondary Structure
Current:	Education	Sub:	Library

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Modern Movement (Ranch Style)

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	Concrete
Walls:	Wood (clapboard)
Roof:	Wood (shake)
Other:	Metal (windows and porch trim)

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Summary Description

The Ernie Pyle House, built in 1940, is a small, unpretentious, one-story, frame building located on a double lot at the southeast corner of Girard Boulevard and Santa Monica Avenue in a subdivision of similar houses in the Southeast Heights area of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The asymmetrical one-story form, the low pitched roof, the orientation of the long side of the house to the street, the separation of public and private rooms, and what was originally an attached garage, all help define it as an early Ranch Style house.[1] A comparison between current and historic photographs shows that the exterior of the house is virtually unchanged from the time it was occupied by Ernie Pyle and his wife Jerry. Changes to the interior are limited to the partial removal of one wall and the installation of bookcases on virtually every available wall surface when the house was converted to library use in 1947. The house originally had a spectacular view to the west, across the Rio Grande valley to Mount Taylor 65 miles away. Around 1948 (according to Sanborn maps) the area across Girard Boulevard was developed, obscuring the views that Pyle loved.

The Pyle House is sheathed with white-painted wood siding with narrow corner boards. It sits on a concrete foundation, which, due to the slope of the lot, is less visible on the south side than on the north. The low-pitched hipped roof has only a narrow overhang. The wood shakes covering it are somewhat heavier than the original wood shingles, but the difference is not conspicuous because of the extremely shallow pitch of the roof. They are stained green, as were the shingles. The original small chimney survives. A large air-conditioning unit was installed on the roof in 2004, but is largely screened from view by trees. The windows are original; all but one of them are metal-framed casements painted green.

The front elevation, facing west on Girard Boulevard, consists of five irregular bays. The northernmost bay contains a single, large, 16 pane, metal framed casement window. The three center bays contain from north to south: the entrance door, a large, metal-framed picture window flanked by casements, and a single, small, wood fixed window. A non-historic book drop is located beneath the small window. These three bays are deeply recessed under the primary roof slope and open onto an original concrete porch, reached from the approach walk by concrete steps. The porch roof is supported by pairs of wood piers topped by simple, paired, horizontal decorative beams. The wrought iron balustrade and the iron scrollwork between the support piers are original. A non-original handrail of similar design lines the sidewalk leading to the entrance from the street. The southernmost bay contains a single, 12 pane, steel framed casement window installed by Pyle in 1941 to replace an original garage door. This bay is also recessed under the main roofline, but not as deeply as the three center bays. The original concrete driveway leads up to the clapboard covering the garage door opening. The window at the north end of this elevation and the porch are now protected by green cloth awnings installed when the house was converted to a library.

The north elevation contains two 16-pane, metal framed casement windows. The back of the house is divided into six irregular bays. Beginning with the northernmost bay these feature one large 12-pane metal framed window, one small six-pane window set high in the wall, a larger, narrow 12-pane window, and a wide nine-pane window—all metal-framed casements. The southernmost two bays, containing a flush wooden door and a small, three-pane metal-framed window, are located in the former garage, which is set back from the remainder of this elevation. The south elevation of the house contains only a single door, protected by what may be an original pent roof covered with wood shingles. The door opens onto a small brick patio dating from the years

[1] Virginia and Lee McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 479-480.

when Pyle owned the house.

Behind the house is a small, historic outbuilding that generally matches the style of the house (see Site Plan). It has a gabled roof with green-stained wood shingles, drop wood siding, and steel casement windows. Pyle used this as a storage room and a workshop for making furniture. Next to the outbuilding is a small headstone marking the grave of "Cheetah," Pyle's beloved Shetland sheepdog.

The west and north sides of the double lot on which the house is located are defined by a low concrete retaining wall. The house is shaded by mature trees donated to the library in Pyle's memory. The southern half of the double lot is enclosed on three sides by a picket fence built by Pyle and shown in historic photographs.[2] The fence next to the driveway is lined with flowers, but most of the area within the fence consists of an open lawn. In the far southeast corner of the lot is a memorial for Pyle, created in 1984 by Albuquerque artist and World War II veteran Willard Schroder. The large white sculptured panel shows a mourning soldier and is inscribed with lines from Pyle's column, "The Death of Captain Henry Waskow." Next to the memorial is a bench.[3]

The interior of the house, containing only 1,130 square feet, was historically divided into three sections. The central section included a living room at the front of the house, with a dining alcove at the back that opens into the kitchen. Two bedrooms, a small linen closet, and a bath on the north side of the house were separated from the living room by a small hallway. The south part of the house consisted originally of an attached single-car garage. In 1941, Pyle converted the garage into another bedroom, accessible from the kitchen by way of a small hall. The bedroom also included a tiny bathroom on the east, and a large storage closet opening off the north wall.

When the house was made into a library, part of the wall separating the front bedroom from the living room was removed in order to improve circulation, and bookshelves were built against every possible wall space (see Ernie Pyle House/Library floor plan). The book shelves make the rooms look considerably smaller than they actually are, but otherwise the historic spatial relationships have been maintained. Historically, bookshelves surrounded the living room fireplace; the fireplace itself is still extant. Historic photographs show that the northeast bedroom, which Pyle used as his den, was already lined with bookshelves and the knotty pine paneling survives. The dining alcove, where Jerry Pyle kept her beloved piano, now contains the circulation desk. The kitchen and the guest bedroom appear to be virtually unchanged.

After Pyle died in 1945 various memorials were planned, most of which Jerry Pyle scotched. She approved of a library in Pyle's birthplace in Dana, Indiana, however, she most certainly would have approved of this one. In 1947 the Albuquerque City Council accepted the house to be maintained in perpetuity as both a memorial to Pyle and as the city's first branch library.[4] Today the library houses a small adult collection and a larger children's collection, in addition to Pyle memorabilia and archives. It is a cozy, if somewhat crowded, little library. Pyle would probably love the sheer number of books in the house, over 10,000 volumes—on all the walls, piled on desks, and in closets, even a periodicals section in the bathroom. It is extremely popular with neighborhood residents, and receives many visits from those who remember, and love, Ernie Pyle.

[2] The fence is classified as a contributing structure.
[3] The memorial and the bench are classified as non-contributing objects.
[4] "Pyle House Accepted as City Commission Holds Hot Session," *Albuquerque Journal*, May 6, 1947.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: _ Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A X B X C _ D
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	A _ B _ C _ D _ E _ F _ G
NHL Criteria:	1 and 2
NHL Theme(s):	III. Expressing Cultural Values 3. Literature 4. Mass Media
Areas of Significance:	Communications Literature
Period(s) of Significance:	1940-1945
Significant Dates:	1940; 1945
Significant Person(s):	Ernest Taylor (Ernie) Pyle
Cultural Affiliation:	N/A
Architect/Builder:	Mount and McCollum
Historic Contexts:	World War II and the American Home Front Theme Study XIX. Literature D. Journalism: Opinion and Criticism E. Newswriting and Reporting XV. Communication A. Written Word (Newspapers and Periodicals)

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary Statement of Significance

> There are really two wars and they haven't much to do with each other. There is the war of maps and logistics, of campaigns, of ballistics, armies, divisions, and regiments—that is General Marshall's war. Then there is the war of the homesick, weary, funny, violent, common men who wash their socks in their helmets, complain about the food, whistle at Arab girls, or any girls for that matter, and lug themselves through as dirty a business as the world has ever seen and do it with a humor and dignity and courage—and that is Ernie Pyle's war. He knows it better than anyone and writes about it better than anyone.[5]

The Ernie Pyle House is the property most closely associated with the wartime career of Ernie Pyle. Built in 1940, it was his home until his death in 1945. Probably more people read Pyle's work than many of the other correspondents who covered World War II, and Pyle was certainly the best loved. Writing a column six days a week for the Scripps-Howard chain of newspapers, he was read by an estimated 40 million people, most of whom considered him a personal friend. Uninterested in the "Big Picture" of politics and strategy, he preferred to spend his time reporting on the day-to-day lives of the ordinary soldiers. His goal was always "making people at home see what I see." Biographer James Tobin calls him "the interpreter, the medium, and teacher who taught Americans what to think and how to feel about their boys overseas."[6]

In 1944, Pyle received the Pulitzer Prize for his war reporting during the previous year. Although he set the standard for correspondents through the Korean War, his kind of reporting fell out of favor after Vietnam. Pyle has been criticized for his unwillingness to question the conduct of the war or to reveal all the horror of combat, but even his critics concede that he was "the most important interpreter of the war to the American public." Pyle's depiction of the front-line infantryman—more concerned about loyalty to his colleagues than with high moral purpose, afraid of death but persevering in spite of it, warriors but still taming baby goats as pets—helped people on the unbombed, peaceful home front maintain their connection with the war and with their sons, brothers, husbands, and boyfriends in the service. As Tobin says, "His published version of World War II had become the nation's version. And if Ernie Pyle himself had not won the war, America's mental picture of the soldiers who *had* won it was largely Pyle's creation. He and his grimy G.I.s, frightened but enduring, had become the heroic symbols of what the soldiers and their children would remember as 'the Good War'."[7]

Ernie Pyle

Ernest Taylor Pyle was born near Dana, Indiana, on August 3, 1900. Although he came from a family of farmers, he found rural life boring. He wanted to enlist in World War I, but his parents insisted that he finish high school. By the time he graduated the war was over. In 1919, he entered Indiana University. In 1923, one semester shy of getting his degree in journalism, Pyle left school to take a reporting job at *The LaPorte (Indiana) Herald*. After only a few months he became a reporter with the Scripps-Howard newspaper in Washington, DC, the *Washington Daily News*. He would stay with Scripps-Howard for the rest of his life.

[5] John Steinbeck, quoted in "Ernie Comes Back Home," *Indiana University News-letter*, November 1941.

[6] Pyle to Lee Miller, December 28, 1940, quoted in James Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War: America's Eyewitness to World War II* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 54, 118.

[7] Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 138; Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 4.

In Washington he met a bright and attractive woman named Geraldine Siebolds, known to everybody as "Jerry." They were married by a justice of the peace on July 7, 1925. In 1926, both quit their jobs to drive around the country. They fancied themselves bohemians, but as one biographer wrote, "It was one thing to live a pared-down existence, mock middle-class aspirations, drink bootleg liquor, and listen to Jerry read poetry aloud, but it was quite another to be unemployed, and Pyle feared being out of work."[8] After driving 9,000 miles in ten months, Pyle took a job at the New York *Evening World.*

Pyle returned to the *Washington Daily News* in December 1927, to write what was probably the nation's first daily aviation column. He began his column less than a year after Charles Lindbergh's transatlantic flight, at a time when the public considered aviators great heroes. Pyle spent his days roaming Washington's airports, talking to pilots and mechanics. He began to develop his characteristic personal, descriptive style, adored by some and disliked by others. His column was well-received and he was soon named aviation editor for the whole Scripps-Howard chain.

In 1932, Pyle resigned as aviation columnist, much to the disappointment of aviators across the country, to become managing editor of the *Daily News*, a job he did not enjoy. Two years later, Pyle's doctor advised him to travel to a warmer climate to recover from a lingering case of influenza. He and Jerry drove to Los Angeles, then took a freighter back east to Philadelphia, a 6,000-mile trip. When he returned to Washington, Pyle wrote a series of stories about the trip for the *News* that proved to be very popular. This led to a new assignment as a roving reporter. His job was "to drive wherever he liked and write six columns a week about anything that interested him."[9] He crossed the continent 35 times and reported on places from South America to Alaska. He wrote about the people he met, how they lived, and the stories they had to share. For six years, he traveled almost continuously - usually with Jerry, but sometimes alone. Starting in the late 1930s Jerry suffered from mental illness.

Pyle's columns were popular. In 1938 they went into syndication, and by early 1939 were being published in a number of large papers. Nevertheless, Pyle agonized over his work and often complained. In September 1939, as World War II broke out in Europe, he itched to cover it: "Personally, I'm just about to bust I want to get over there as a war correspondent or something so bad. . . . Pacifism is fine as long as there ain't no war around. But when they start shooting I want to get close enough just a couple of times to get good and scared. For the last two weeks I've been so goddam bored writing silly dull columns about Mt. Hood and hop ranches that I think I'm going nuts."[10]

In late 1940, Americans were becoming more and more concerned about the apparently unstoppable advance of the German armies, and Edward R. Murrow was making a name for himself with his radio broadcasts covering the bombing of London. Pyle persuaded his editors to let him cover the "Blitz." As always, he was looking for the personal experience of war: "to put the whole picture into columns—not at all for propaganda or because I think a [message] needs to be got over, but because of the same old basis the column has always been written on, of making people at home see what I see."[11]

He left for England in December 1940. Shortly after he arrived he described the intense fire bomb assault of December 29:

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[8] David Nichols, biographical essay, in Ernie Pyle, *Ernie's War: The Best of Ernie Pyle's World War II Dispatches*, David Nichols, ed. (New York: Random House, 1986), 29.

[9] Lee G. Miller, *The Story of Ernie Pyle* (New York: Viking, 1950), 53.

[10] Pyle to Paige Cavanaugh, September 11, 1939, quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 47, and Nichols, 10.

[11] Pyle to Lee Miller, December 28, 1940, quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 54.

> I shall always remember above all the other things in my life the monstrous loveliness of that one single view of London on a holiday night—London stabbed with great fires, shaken by explosions, its dark regions along the Thames sparkling with pinpoints of white hot bombs, all of it roofed with a ceiling of pink that held bursting shells, balloons, flares and the grinds of vicious engines. . . . These things all went together to make the most hateful, most beautiful single scene I have ever known.[12]

Pyle's columns were well received in the United States where the isolationist movement was already weakening. His descriptions of the British responding bravely and heroically to the German attacks helped change popular attitudes towards both the war and England, which now began to seem more worthy of direct American support.

After Pyle returned from England in early 1941, Jerry's emotional health deteriorated seriously. In August he took a three month leave of absence to help her recover from the effects of her alcoholism, which she did much faster than doctors had anticipated. By year's end, however, she was drinking heavily again. On December 7, 1941, Pyle was sitting in the house in Albuquerque when he heard the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Frustrated in his marriage and career, Pyle himself sank into a deep depression.

Ernie Pyle divorced his wife in April 1942, with the concurrence of her doctors and family. They all hoped to shock her back into sanity, but she grew steadily worse. In June she entered a sanitarium at the insistence of her sister. Two weeks later Pyle left for what was planned as a six-month tour of the war zones, beginning with visits to U.S. encampments in Great Britain.

On November 8, 1942, American forces landed in North Africa; two days later Pyle followed, arriving in Algeria on November 22. He would stay in Africa until June 1943. He marched with the First Infantry Division through Algeria and Tunisia and on to the Mediterranean. He witnessed both the American route at the Kasserine Pass in February and the successful advance to Bizerte in May, often at or near the front. He throve on the "magnificent simplicity" of the front and the feeling that he was "in the heart of everything, . . . a part of it—no mere onlooker, but a member of the team." Pyle got on well with the officers, and with the military censors, but he identified most strongly with the front-line infantrymen. He reported on their transformation from "just guys from Broadway and Main Street" into soldiers:

> All the rest of us—you and me and even the thousands of soldiers behind the lines in Africa—we want terribly yet only academically for the war to get over. The front-line soldier wants it to be got over by the physical process of his destroying enough Germans to end it. He is truly at war. The rest of us, no matter how hard we work, are not.[13]

Shortly after Pyle landed in Algeria, he asked Jerry to remarry him by proxy. In March, 1943 he learned that she had and wrote to tell her how "relieved and glad" he was. "I know it means you are well and your old self again, and for me it fills up again the mere shell that living had become."[14] In the same month, Jerry wrote to Pyle that she had taken a job and had moved out of the sanitarium and back into the house.

In June 1943, Pyle accompanied the American invasion of Sicily. He seemed to feel a moral obligation to stay with the troops, perhaps because he had finally found an activity that did not bore him, perhaps because he felt he was truly representing an unheard American voice, that of the common soldier. The brutal campaign in

[12] Pyle, column of December 30, 1940.
[13] Pyle, columns of April 8, April 19, and May 1, 1943, quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's* War, 77-95.
[14] Pyle to Geraldine Pyle, March 13, 1943, quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 86.

Sicily exhausted him, and he returned to the U.S. for a break in September 1943.

He got little rest. After a short, hectic stay in Washington, during which he accepted a movie producer's offer to make a movie about his life, Pyle traveled to Indiana to visit his father. Then he flew to Albuquerque, where Jerry met him at the airport and took him to the little house. The four weeks he spent at home were frenzied. Friends from across the country flew in to visit, the Hollywood movie producer came to discuss the film in more detail, bags of mail came in daily, and people drove by the house at all hours, hoping to catch a glimpse of the now famous war correspondent. Jerry had another nervous breakdown shortly before Pyle departed again for the war, and he had to hospitalize her. He left her in Albuquerque and went to Washington to finalize the plans for the film, to sign copies of his popular new book, *Here is Your War: The Story of GI Joe*, and to meet with Eleanor Roosevelt, one of his most famous fans. They compared notes on the difficulties of writing daily newspaper columns.

Ernie Pyle's column was becoming increasingly popular. In November 1942 when he arrived in North Africa, the column was being published in 42 newspapers (22 of them members of the Scripps-Howard group); by April 1943, that number had risen to 122, with a combined circulation of 9 million. In May, *Time* magazine called him "America's most widely read war correspondent." By September, *Look* magazine could report that Pyle's column was appearing in "149 newspapers (at last count) and [was], to anyone who wants to be informed about the war, a 'must'."[15]

Pyle returned to Italy in the winter of 1943-1944, one of the coldest and snowiest on record. Beside the miserable weather, the terrain was difficult and German resistance was fierce. At the battles of Monte Cassino and Anzio, Pyle again spent as much time as possible with the front-line troops. In March, he narrowly escaped death when a German shell hit the building housing the press corps in Anzio. In December, he wrote his most famous column about the death of Captain Henry Waskow. The story describes how Waskow's comrades reacted to his body, which had been carried down the mountain by mule and laid in the shadow of a stone wall next to the path:

> One soldier came and looked down and he said out loud, "God damn it." That's all he said, and then he walked away. Another one came, and he said, "God damn it to hell anyway." He looked down for a few last moments and then turned and left.
> Another man came; I think he was an officer. It was hard to tell officers from men in the half light, for all were bearded and grimy dirty. The man looked down into the dead captain's face and then spoke directly to him, as though he were alive: "I'm sorry, old man."
> Then a soldier came and stood beside the officer, and bent over, and he too spoke to his dead captain, not in a whisper but awfully tenderly, and he said:
> "I sure am sorry, sir."
> Then the first man squatted down, and he reached down and took the captain's hand, and he sat there for a full five minutes holding the dead hand in his own and looking intently into the dead face. And he never uttered a sound all the time he sat there.
> Finally he put the hand down. He reached up and gently straightened the points of the captain's shirt collar, and then he sort of rearranged the tattered edges of his uniform around the wound, and then he got up and walked away down the road in the moonlight, all alone.[16]

In April 1944, Pyle won the Pulitzer Prize for distinguished war correspondence. It was awarded for his entire body of work in 1943, but many people assumed that it rested solely on the merits of the "Death of Captain

[15] "Man About the World," *Time*, May 1, 1943, quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War* 87-88, 97; "Ernie Pyle, America's Favorite War Correspondent," *Look*, September 7, 1943, quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 116

[16] Pyle, column of January 10, 1944, quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 135-137.

Henry Waskow."

After a brief visit to England, where he was so besieged by visitors and correspondence that he had little time to work on his column, Pyle landed in Normandy on June 7, 1944, one day after the Allied invasion. He walked the beach for a few hours, watching men pass, looking out to sea at the flotilla of landing ships, seeing what lay on the sand. Based on what he saw, he wrote three columns that were front page news in newspapers across the United States—the "first substantive account to reach American readers from any correspondent on the beachhead."[17] The war in France was brutal, and Pyle suffered many close calls. In July, he was present in the front lines during the major offensive near the village of Saint-Lô, recording both the spectacular Allied bombardment of the German lines and the misdirected bombs that killed 110 American soldiers and wounded another 500. In the same month, his face was on the cover of *Time* magazine.

On August 25, 1944, Pyle entered Paris with the Allies as they liberated the city. He was caught up in the excitement, but also deeply exhausted. He wrote to his readers saying that he couldn't take any more:

> I've been immersed in it too long. My spirit is wobbly and my mind is confused. The hurt has finally become too great. All of a sudden it seemed to me if I heard one more shot or saw one more dead man, I would go off my nut. . . . It may be that a few months of peace will restore some vim to my spirit, and I can go warhorsing off to the Pacific. We'll see what a little New Mexico sunshine does along that line.[18]

Peace was not to be found stateside. He spent several days in New York, then to Indiana, and finally home to Albuquerque. Everyone wanted to see him. As David Nichols wrote:

> *Editor and Publisher*, wanted an interview. People on the street wanted his autograph. Helen Keller wanted to run her hands over his face; John Steinbeck wanted to talk. The mayor of Albuquerque wanted to throw a welcome home dinner with five hundred guests. Wives and mothers wanted information on their husbands and sons. Lester Cowan wanted to confer about his problems with his movie, *The Story of GI Joe.* Photographers wanted to take his picture. Scripps-Howard competitors wanted him to work for them.[19]

His problems in the little white house were increasing. Jerry had a private nurse living with her, but eventually she had to be institutionalized again. Even as Pyle was receiving honorary PhDs from the University of New Mexico and Indiana University, Jerry was undergoing electric shock treatment in an Albuquerque hospital. Pyle felt he had to cover the Pacific Theater, but promised that he would return to Albuquerque for good after this last trip.

Pyle wasn't comfortable covering the war in the Pacific which was very different from the kind of war he knew in Europe. He thought the Navy had it easy, complaining more and doing less than the Army. His columns reflected his attitude, which concerned Navy brass and angered the enlisted men. However, Pyle found the drama was starting to increase, particularly when he accompanied the Marines on the invasion of Okinawa in April 1945. As they moved from Ulithi, near Guam, to Okinawa, the fear that he would not survive, a fear that he had often felt, grew. The initial landing on April 1 was unopposed, and after a few days Pyle returned to the command ship, the *Panamint*.

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[17] Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 174.
[18] Pyle, column of September 7, 1944, quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 200-201.
[19] David Nichols, biographical sketch, 27.

On April 16, 1945, the Army's 77th Division landed on Ie Shima, a small island west of Okinawa. Pyle joined them the next day and on the 18th "Ernie Pyle died . . . on Ie Island, just west of Okinawa, like so many of the doughboys he had written about."[20] He was riding in a jeep with some of the infantrymen when they were fired upon by a Japanese sniper. They took cover in a ditch but Pyle made a fatal mistake; he stuck his head up and was shot in the left temple, just below his helmet. He was buried on Ie Shima in a crude coffin with a grave marker that said, "At This Spot, The 77th Infantry Division Lost a Buddy, Ernie Pyle, 18 April 1945."[21] His body was later moved to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, in Hawaii.

His death was front page news across the country. President Harry Truman, in office since President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death only six days earlier, issued a statement of condolence: "The nation is quickly saddened again, by the death of Ernie Pyle. . . . No man in this war has so well told the story of the American fighting man as American fighting men wanted it told. . . . He deserved the gratitude of all his countrymen." Army Chief of Staff Marshall said that "Ernie Pyle belonged to the millions of soldiers he had made his friends. His dispatches reached down into the ranks to draw out the stories of individual soldiers. He did not glorify war, but he did glorify the nobility, the simplicity and heroism of the American fighting man." Bill Mauldin, the soldier cartoonist wrote: "The only difference between Ernie's death and that of any other good guy is that the other guy is mourned by his company, Ernie is mourned by the Army." Ordinary people all over America called newspaper offices to confirm that he was really dead.[22]

After her husband's death, Jerry Pyle accepted various medals for him, including a posthumous Medal for Merit from the Army and Navy, went to the opening of *The Story of GI Joe*, with Burgess Meredith playing Pyle, and commented on plans for various memorials. But her health continued to decline and she died on November 23, 1945, six months after Pyle.

"Ernie Pyle" and "The Good War"

Ernie Pyle was an experienced, hard-drinking, professional newspaperman, a hypochondriac troubled by self-doubt, and a man dealing with overwhelming problems in his marriage. "Ernie Pyle," the "I" of his columns was very different. According to James Tobin, "Ernie Pyle" was created during Pyle's years as a roving reporter:

> A figure of warmth and reassurance, a sensitive self-deprecating, self-revealing, compassionate friend who shared his sadnesses and exhilarations, his daydreams and funny stories, his ornery moods and nonsensical musings, his settled prejudices and deepest meditations. . . . an American Everyman.[23]

During the war, the sense of personal connection between the "Ernie Pyle" of the columns and his readers grew, even as his audience expanded to as many as 40 million people. Shortly after Pyle's death, the poet Randall Jarrell testified to people's almost universal "illusion that he was a personal friend of theirs." With their traditional fondness for the underdog, Americans identified with this "scrawny little chap with an enchantingly homely mug" who was more interested in the common infantryman than in the generals. As one woman wrote: "The nice thing about you is you talk of the plain soldiers and that makes you one of us." Another correspondent asked, "Please Mr. Pyle keep writing about the boys as you have been doing. Your words bring happiness to thousands just like me." Shortly after the Normandy invasion, his friend and long-time editor Lee Miller wrote, "I think it is literally true that millions in this country were more concerned about what happened

[20] "Ernie Pyle Is Killed on Ie Island; Foe Fired when All Seemed Safe," *The New York Times*, April 19, 1945.
[21] Miller, *The Story of Ernie Pyle*, 426.
[22] *The New York Times*, April 19, 1944, 1, 14; Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 2.
[23] Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 27.

to Ernie Pyle than about what happened to our invading armies."[24]

Pyle's readers did not question the truthfulness of his accounts: "Somehow when I read [the column] I feel as if I can almost see the war."[25] They also shared what James Tobin calls Pyle's "interior vision . . . a dense packet of feelings for the soldiers—pity, compassion, empathy, pride, tragedy, all suffused with a will to keep a stiff upper lip." Pyle's image of the front line infantryman, "the long-suffering G.I. who triumphed over death through dogged perseverance," played a major role in creating the popular image of World War II as "The Good War."[26]

Attitudes towards Pyle's kind of reporting changed dramatically after the Vietnam War when some correspondents began to take a more adversarial approach that could be critical of wartime policies and conduct. For these men and women, Pyle's war was sugar-coated and unrealistic. Historian David Kennedy criticized the:

> dispatches of war correspondents like Ernie Pyle, John Steinbeck, or John Hersey about young men who were wholesome, all-American boys, soft-hearted suckers for needy kids, summer soldiers who wanted nothing more than to come home, as one of them famously told Hersey, "for a piece of blueberry pie."[27]

It is true that Pyle's columns did not criticize generals or dwell upon the horrors of the battlefield. When the U.S. Army Air Forces bombed their own lines at Saint-Lô, Pyle glossed over the blunder—"Anybody makes mistakes. The enemy made them just the same as we did."[28] He said nothing about officers of whom he disapproved but was willing to write "worshipful" columns praising those he liked.[29] Like almost all WWII correspondents Pyle supported the war and shared the military's interest in maintaining morale and continued commitment on a home front where the war was more a nuisance than a day-to-day reality.

Death was a constant presence in the columns, however, and Pyle refused to engage in the flag-waving that colored much other war reporting. In the fall of 1943, he explained to his readers why he had to go home: "I couldn't find the Four Freedoms among the dead men." Earlier in the year he had written, in the epilogue to his first collection of war dispatches:

> I haven't written anything about the "Big Picture," because I don't know anything about it. I only know what we see from our worm's eye view, and our segment of the picture consists only of tired and dirty soldiers who are alive and don't want to die; of long darkened convoys in the middle of the night; of shocked silent men wandering back down the hill from battle; of chow lines and atabrine tablets and foxholes and burning tanks and Arabs holding up eggs and the rustles of high-flown shells; of jeeps and petrol dumps and smelly bedding rolls and C rations and cactus patches and blown bridges and dead mules and hospital tents and shirt collars greasy-black from months of wearing; and laughter too, and anger and wine and lovely flowers and constant cussing. All these it is composed of; and of graves and graves and graves.[30]

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[24] Randall Jarrell, "Ernie Pyle," *The Nation*, May 18, 1945; Robert St. John, NBC radio script, December 10, 1943; Marty Hankins to Pyle, April 1, 1943; Mary Hankinson to Pyle, April 1, 1943; Miller letter to William Sloan, June 20, 1944, all quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 203-205.

[25] Unidentified correspondent quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 203.

[26] Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 204, 143

[27] David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 794.

[28] Ernie Pyle, *Brave Men* (New York: Holt, 1944), 439, quoted in Fussell, *Wartime*, 19.

[29] Tobin, *Ernie Pyle' War*, 110-111; Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 697.

[30] Pyle, column of September 11, 1943, quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 113; Ernie Pyle, *Here Is Your War* (New York:

According to James Tobin, Pyle "departed for good from the patriotic school of war correspondents" in his column written in July 1943, as the Allied invasion fleet approached Sicily:

> Not a pinpoint of light showed from those hundreds of ships as they surged on through the night toward their destiny, carrying across this ageless and indifferent sea tens of thousands of young men of new professions, fighting for . . . for . . . well, at least for each other.[31]

The men actually fighting the war liked his reporting. World War II G.I.s heartily distrusted most war correspondents. A writer in *Stars and Stripes* reported that their "jubilant interpretations and hopped-up style tended to widen the breach between civilians and soldiers and to destroy the latter's confidence in the press." They made an exception for Ernie Pyle, "a guy who knows how it is."[32]

Pyle made a conscious decision not to emphasize war's gruesome details. According to a young Arthur Miller, hired to work on the script for *The Story of G. I. Joe*, Pyle "had told as much of what he saw as people could read without vomiting. It was the part that would make them vomit that bothered him."[33] In assessing Pyle's war reporting, James Tobin concluded:

> Pyle and the other [reporters] gave Americans about all the realism they wanted. To tell much more was to risk shock, anger, rejections, not to mention censorship. To weave a myth of sacrificial suffering instead was to do one's bit for the war. Pyle's G.I. myth—not an untruth, but a way of bending reality into a sensible and bearable shape—helped Americans through history's most grotesque and deadly ordeal. . . . This left truths untold, but perhaps Arthur Miller was right when he said Pyle "told as much of what he saw as people could read without vomiting."[34]

The Ernie Pyle House

Ernie Pyle decided that he and his wife needed a permanent home in the late 1930s. They had lived in a number of places in Washington D.C., but they traveled so much that they spent little time there. As Pyle wrote, "When people from all over this country ask where we are from, we say Washington D.C. We carry District of Columbia tags on our car. We put down Washington on hotel registers. Yet we really have no home at all."[35] He spent three weeks in 1938 driving around New Mexico writing stories for Scripps-Howard. In these articles, his love of New Mexico is clear. In 1939, Pyle and Jerry looked at houses in Santa Fe, but found them too expensive. They did, however, buy two or three acres of land. Sometime at the beginning of 1940, Pyle visited Albuquerque and in a letter to Jerry, wrote about a plot he had seen in a development being built on what was then the outskirts of the city:

> The statistics were that the two lots would be $760, and the house around $3,000, but having heard so much about extras, I thought up every possibility of expense I could think of. . . . And the result was that our $3,000 home, plus lot, extras on house, various assessments, grading, shrubbery, paving, furnishing, etc., would cost us close to $6,000 and would probably run us $300-$400 a year

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Henry Holt, 1943), Epilogue.

[31] Pyle, column of July 22, 1943, quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 105.

[32] "Army Writer Hits 'Hopped-Up' Italy War News," *Editor and Publisher*, October 28, 1944; Sgt. Mack Morriss, "Friend of the GIs," *New York World-Telegram*, October 30, 1944 [reprinted from *Yank*], both quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 181.

[33] Arthur Miller, *Situation Normal* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1944), 164-65, quoted in Tobin, *Ernie Pyle's War*, 122.

[34] Tobin, *Ernie's War*, 242-243.

[35] Miller, *The Story of Ernie Pyle*, 100.

> to keep up! So I guess we have exhausted New Mexico for home possibilities. However, I did get kind of house-building crazy during my studies, so to give us a chance to talk it over I deposited $25 to hold the two lots for forty-five days. . . . Somehow, I'm more set than ever on the necessity of us getting some place—and the fun of it too.[36]

Several months later, Pyle's plans had changed:

> Well sir, we're gonna do it. And apparently right away. In Santa Fe. We just decided all of a sudden, and sort of simultaneously. I really think it is the thing to do. . . . When we started this boat trip, [Jerry] said that when she went out to see that spot in Santa Fe the last time, she felt that if she could just be there with her books and piano and cigarettes and cold coffee, she would never want to leave it again. I am terribly afraid of our future as we're going now; if the business in New Mexico can offer her a minute of contentment, I'll *jump* at it.[37]

Plans soon changed again. Pyle flew to New Mexico alone, while Jerry stayed behind in a hotel room in Cincinnati. Pyle contracted for a house to be built on the double lot in Albuquerque by developers Mount and McCollum. Although almost all the other houses in the Monterey Hills subdivision were finished with stucco in the Santa Fe style, Pyle selected clapboard for his new home, possibly reflecting his Midwestern origin. He wired Jerry: "Have just ordered built magnificent baronial castle on Crackerbox Row of three infinitesimal rooms to be ready December 1st. . . . I am leaving at three o'clock before changing my mind."[38]

The small size and the simplicity of the house probably can be attributed to Pyle's uneasiness with spending money. He was not yet famous in 1940, and while his income was probably higher than the $9,000 that he was paid in 1939, it was undoubtedly far below the $69,000 that he earned in 1943. Unwilling to incur any debt, he paid $4,000 cash for the little white house on its double lot. As usual, he worried: "Have they started the house yet? I suppose there'll be six complications per day, and queer things like amortizations and debentures, and I'll bet sure as hell I wind up in jail and lose every cent we put into it."[39]

Although Pyle's work required him to be away from home for long periods of time, he returned to Albuquerque when he could, often using the time to catch up on a backlog of articles in his knotty-pine paneled den. He enjoyed working on the house and much of his handiwork survives in the Ernie Pyle Library and on its grounds. Finally, Pyle found a way to put words to the special relationship that soldiers have to "Home." Pyle wrote so often about his longing to be back at his "little white cottage in Albuquerque" that it became almost a trademark phrase. Sightseers drove past the house when he was there, hoping for a glimpse of him. The constant stream of visitors created problems:

> If this isn't irony—here we spend a lot of money building a refuge and then damned if I don't finally have to come down to a hotel and hide in order to get my work finished. . . That's a hell of a price to pay for a decent wage. I've practically become a goldfish. If I weren't afraid of the future, I would quit this job and raise cactus for a living.[40]

Pyle was also excited about having a house to call his own. He wrote, "I just itch to be out there and putter around with it, and wish Jerry were as eager." Jerry was initially unhappy with the house, but soon became very attached to it. Shortly after it was completed Pyle wrote to a friend: "The little house is wonderful. It's

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[36] Ibid., 127.
[37] Ibid., 132.
[38] Ibid, 133.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., 133 (first 2 quotes), 161.

no bigger than your thumb, but Jerry has certainly made a little gem out of it. She says she is never going to leave it, and I think she's a little more than half serious."

Pyle could be cynical in private correspondence, making snide reference's to his wife's health problems and dismissing his house as a regular little boxed-up mass production shack in a cheap new suburb. But in his columns he wrote warmly about both: "That Girl has been burdened by recurring illnesses, and has had to revolve between home and hospital. But she has succeeded in keeping the little white house just as it always was, which she knew is what I would want."[41]

The house on Girard Boulevard was Ernie Pyle's home from 1940, when he had it built on Albuquerque's East Mesa, to his death in 1945. In 1940, Pyle was still working as a roving journalist and travel writer for Scripps-Howard. By 1945, he was nationally known for his coverage of World War II. No other property is more closely associated with Ernie Pyle's life and work. The house on the farm in Indiana where he was born has been restored and is now part of the Ernie Pyle State Historic Site but it lost its historic setting when it was relocated from the farm into the town of Dana. Pyle and his wife moved often during the years he worked in Washington and apparently had no permanent base during his years as a roving correspondent. Although he himself thought his pre-war travel columns contained some of his best writing, his national significance rests on the wartime dispatches he wrote when the Albuquerque house was his home.

[41] Pyle, unidentified column, quoted in Nichols, biographical sketch, 9.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ Previously Listed in the National Register (9/22/1997).
__ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
__ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
__ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
__ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

__ State Historic Preservation Office
__ Other State Agency
__ Federal Agency
_X_ Local Government
__ University
_X_ Other (Specify Repository): City of Albuquerque, Planning Department

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 0.191 acres

UTM References:

Zone	Easting	Northing
13	352965	3881815

Verbal Boundary Description:
Within the city limits of Albuquerque, located at Lot 10, Block 22, Monterey Hills Addition.

Boundary Justification:
The boundary contains all of the resources historically associated with the Ernie Pyle House that maintains historic integrity.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
September 20, 2006