Pyle presentation was ‘Live from the Front’

by George B. “Sonny” and Jinanne Carey

Ernie Pyle, famous WWII correspondent from Dana “returned home” Saturday through the one-man drama presentation of Dr. Rick Plummer entitled “Live from the Front: Byline Ernie Pyle.”

For an hour and a half, Plummer held the nearly 100 guests spellbound with his rendition of the trials and tribulations of Ernie Pyle as Pyle suffered them in combat situations.

With the small exceptions of reading portions of two of Pyle’s writings, Dr. Plummer presented the entire show from memory. He didn’t even stop for a drink of water, and there was no Teleprompter to assist him.

Ernie Pyle’s writings were syndicated in over 200 daily and weekly newspapers. Pyle wrote for Scripps-Howard newspapers. His writings earned him a Pulitzer Prize for serving as a link between men on the front lines of combat and their loved ones back home.

Plummer expressed Pyle’s torments by the horrors of war. Pyle did not glorify war. He focused on the unrecognized heroism of the American GIs who fought for freedom as well as preparing to make the ultimate sacrifice. Pyle’s writing style captured the strength and courage of the soldiers he loved and admired — more so than any other writer of his times or since.

At times, Plummer shocked the audience with the “salty” language of “a soldier in times of extreme anguish.”

Plummer touched on the songs of the 40s, the work Pyle did on a small typewriter, his smoking and general behavior. Portions of the most well-known columns written by Pyle were read, and feelings of several soldiers who were on the island of Ie Shima were given. Ie Shima is close to the western coast of Okinawa.

Plummer portrayed Ernie Pyle to the end. As Plummer was typing on a typewriter similar to the one Pyle used, a shot rang out and he fell forward onto his table.

Pyle was riding in a Jeep on April 10, 1945, when a Japanese machine gun sprayed the area. Pyle and those in the Jeep jumped into ditches along the side of the roadway.

When the shooting stopped, Pyle raised his head to ask if those on the other side of the road were OK. A Japanese sniper shot Pyle in the head and he dropped back into the ditch.

Several days after Pyle was killed, servicemen on the island created a sign which read: “On this Spot the 77th Infantry Division lost a Buddy — Ernie Pyle — 18, April, 1945.” A stone monument erected later replaced the original sign but bore the same engraved message.

The site is owned by the American Legion Post 28 and is maintained by a small Marine detachment assigned to Ie Shima.

Dr. Plummer is a retired professor from the West Shore Community College in Scottville, Michigan. Plummer spent a career of 40 years teaching and is a retired professor from the West Shore Community College in Scottville, Michigan. Plummer spent a career of 40 years teaching and is a retired professor from the West Shore Community College in Scottville, Michigan. Plummer spent a career of 40 years teaching and is a retired professor from the West Shore Community College in Scottville, Michigan. Plummer spent a career of 40 years teaching and is a retired professor from the West Shore Community College in Scottville, Michigan. Plummer spent a career of 40 years teaching and is a retired professor from the West Shore Community College in Scottville, Michigan.
years in higher education and has been acting and directing for over 50 years. His wife, Christine, is a drama teacher at Lundington High School after being a radio host. They have three sons and two daughters.

Master of Ceremonies Saturday was Charlie Jones, a member of the Friends of Ernie Pyle Board of Directors.

The Chubb Sisters — Halea, Rachel and Ashlea — provided music from the era to the crowd's delight. Halea is a music education major at DePauw University, while her two sisters are seniors at South Vermillion High School.

A presentation was made to the Friends of Ernie Pyle in the amount of $39,312. In the past year under the guidance of Rodney Strong, State Commander for 2018-2019, all the American Legion Posts in Indiana conducted fundraisers for the extensive repair of the Ernie Pyle home located in Dana. The Legion Posts collected the funds and presented them to the Friends of Ernie Pyle organization Saturday evening.

Dinner for the event was provided and donated by Vermillion County Jr. Leaders.
Legion Posts donate $39,312

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Chubb sisters entertain

Popular songs from the 1940s were presented by the Chubb sisters during the presentation of the tribute to Ernie Pyle show Saturday evening. From the left are Rachel, Halea and Ashlea Chubb. Halea is a music education major at DePauw University in Greencastle, and Ashlea and Rachel are both seniors at South Vermillion High School. See story on page 1. (Photo by G.B. "Sonny" Carey)
Plummer congratulated by Key

Dr. Rick Plummer, left, who portrayed Ernie Pyle in the first person Saturday evening, talked with Steve Key while seated on an old Army cot. Key is president of the Friends of Ernie Pyle group of Vermillion County, and also the legal counsel for the Hoosier State Publishers Association based in Indianapolis. See story on page 1. (Photo by G.B. “Sonny” Carey)