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New WFIU and WTIU Programs Explore Life and Legacy of Ernie Pyle

WFIU Podcast 'The Ernie Pyle Experiment' and WTIU Documentary 'Ernie Pyle: Life in the Trenches' to Premiere in March 2020

Bloomington, Ind., October 23, 2019—Nearly 75 years after his death, famed World War II correspondent Ernie Pyle remains one of the most accomplished and beloved journalists in American history. The Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist is the subject of a new podcast from WFIU Public Radio and a new documentary from WTIU Public Television, both premiering in March 2020.

WFIU’s The Ernie Pyle Experiment podcast is a 13-episode radio-play that features fictionalized selected columns of Ernie Pyle. Set in the 1930s, the podcast is based on the early life of Pyle and his wife Jerry, as they travel the back roads of America in pursuit of interesting stories for Pyle’s syndicated newspaper column “The Hoosier Vagabond.” From 1935 to 1942, Pyle wrote five columns a week for the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain. His output during this time amounts to the writing of more than 20 novels, all from the road. The Ernie Pyle Experiment showcases this seminal collection of Pyle’s pre-World War II work.

Notable cast members of The Ernie Pyle Experiment include actors Michael Brainard (All My Children, Santa Barbara, Invincible, American Heiress), Greta Lind (All My Children, Rudy, Missing Persons), Leraldo Anzaldua (Gatchaman The Movie, Children Who Chase Lost Voices), and Grammy Award-winning singer and WFIU classical music host Sylvia McNair.

The Ernie Pyle Experiment will be available through the WFIU website (wfiu.org) and other major podcast providers (release date in March 2020 to come). In addition, all 13 episodes will be broadcast consecutively on WFIU2 (available at 101.9 FM in Bloomington, 100.1 FM in Seymour, and through online streaming at wfiu.org) starting at 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 7, 2020.

WTIU’s documentary Ernie Pyle: Life in the Trenches will premiere on the same day as WFIU’s podcast becomes available (air date and time in March 2020 to come). This program examines the external and internal battles of Pyle’s life, from his coverage of soldiers fighting on the European and Pacific fronts of World War II to his struggles with alcoholism, depression, and a troubled marriage. The film also reveals that through some of the darkest chapters in America’s history, the voice of Ernie Pyle became the voice of the American people—a voice of promise, grit, and determination.

Ernie Pyle: Life in the Trenches includes interviews with the late Walter Cronkite and Andy Rooney, as well as a number of World War II veterans, contemporary journalists, and historians. The documentary also presents rarely seen photographs, film, and correspondence between Pyle and his colleagues.

Watch a trailer and learn more about the program at wtiu.org/erniepyle. For one month following the March premiere on WTIU and Facebook Live (facebook.com/WTIUPublicity), Ernie Pyle: Life in the Trenches will be available to watch on WTIU’s Facebook page and companion website (wfiu.org/erniepyle). In addition, DVD and BluRay copies of the program will be available for the public to purchase starting in September 2020 from shopwtiu.org.

Ernie Pyle: Life in the Trenches is made possible with support from the IU Office of the Bicentennial and the Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation, and additional support from James Hodge, Jane McLeod, the Ernie Pyle Legacy Foundation, Glenda Murray, Ken McNamara, James H. Madison, Stephen Key, David H. Weaver, Don and Kay Weaver, Jenny Stephens, Richard Paige, Susan McCammon, Michael Molenda, Martin Ronan, Charles Scudder, and Robert Ford.

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