

The American Soldier Is the Spirit

FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 1942.

of Our Nation

By Priscilla Wayne.

HAVE before me a letter berating Hollywood and the patriotism of the glistening cinema stars, and all because of whom, do you suppose? Lew Ayres.

There have been Lew Ayres types throughout all of history. They count for very little in the big scheme of things after all, because, you see, there are also other types. There are the Jimmy Stewart types, God bless 'em.

Jimmy Stewart, the tall, lanky, lovable chap who "went to Washington" and later, because he loved his country so much, left a film career at its height to enter Uncle Sam's army and serve as a plain private as obscure as all the rest of them! Remember that the Jimmy Stewarts are in the majority in Hollywood! The Lew Ayres in the vast minority!

Which reminds me that this country owes a very great deal to the fine Americanism of Hollywood stars, producers and manufacturers, from the highest down to the very humblest.

The other day at a local theater it was my privilege to hear Spencer Tracy narrating a deathless bit of truth called, "I Am The American Soldier." I learned, to my delight, that the intensely moving picture "Ring of Steel," from which the I Am The American Soldier is used as the narration is a patriotic gift of Hollywood.

Twenty-five of these brief films are being made. The War Activities Committee sponsors these 10 minute subjects. They are made without charge by actors and operators and producers. Also they are distributed without charge to all theaters willing to play them.

That you may keep it in your scrapbook as a prized possession I am printing the following manuscript, "I Am The American Soldier," as narrated by Spencer Tracy in "Ring of Steel."

... FOR the American people, my family, my fellows, my sons to come—I carry arms . . . Remember how I began! . . . Born of explorers, colonists, hunters in deer-skins; schooled in the wilderness; fighting for a continent . . . Remember Concord Bridge, 1775! . . . Here it was, here at this bridge, I fired the shot heard 'round the world. . . .

Then I was an embattled farmer, the Son of Liberty, raw militiaman, hardy Continental. . . . I was the hope of freedom on the frontier; I carried arms for the Rights of Man! . . .

Remember Valley Forge! . . . I was the winter-soldier, starving, marching, freezing, fighting, and praying at night—alone in the snow. . . . I planted the flag of 13 stars at the Mississippi, at the Great Lakes. . . . On these, our hard-won shores, our flag still flies! . . .

And again, here at Yorktown, I was in the splendid ranks when we won our freedom, and our continent. . . . I fought the Revolution. . . . I won this liberty! . . . Look at my battlefields!—Bunker Hill, Ticonderoga, Niagara, Lake Champlain, Manhattan, Trenton and Monmouth, King's Mountain and Cowpens, Yorktown! . . .

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... MARCHING, I made America great,—North to the Parallel Forty-Nine; South to the Rio Grande; West to the mountains. . . . Marching, I made America free! . . . Working at peace, I built America; explored with Lewis and Clarke; with Zebulon Pike;

with Kit Carson and Davy Crockett! . . . 1860, 1865, I was the Blue; I was the Grey!

Marching, I made America free; marching, I gave America peace; marching, I found the American spirit! . . . I led the way—I called to America: "Follow me! Follow the American soldier! Follow the trail I blaze!" . . . I convoyed the wagon trains moving West; fought the tribes with Custer; rode the Oregon trail; patrolled the wild American continent. . . .

My lonely outposts grew; my camps became crossroads; my frontier forts took root—rose from the prairies into cities. . . . My infantry marching made paths; my cavalry riding made trails; where cities rise, I made the hikes to lay the ties and drive the spikes—uniting my country with rails! . . . Give me the hardest job! . . .

Remember?—I brought America to the Pacific; punched the railroad tunnels through the Rockies; I licked the Mississippi floods; conquered the Yellow Jack in Cuba; joined the oceans at Panama; held, like a rock, on the Marne! . . .

I AM the American soldier, —Pioneer, Samaritan. Vanguard. . . . Wherever I was needed, whenever I was called, I stood and delivered! . . . I came through! . . . I was America on the march, and now today, here I come again, marching again at the same old job,—same old, brand-new job, marching again with all free men! . . .

I am the ring of steel around Democracy; I'm the ramparts that you sing about; I'm the

citizen soldier, the nation in arms! . . . I'm snap and precision,—West Point pride; I'm the Regular,—strictly G. I.; I'm the rookie, made-soldier; I'm up from the ranks, hell for leather, right on the line, straight from the eye. . . .

I'm the Rifleman, Cannoneer, Trooper, Skier, Engineer, Gunner, Scout, Marksman, Driver, Signalman, Sentry, Mechanic, Flyer! . . . I'm the eyes of the cannon; the marching refrain; the brains of the tank; the nerves of the plane; I'm the heart of the shell; the courage of truth; I'm the Liberty Bell; I'm the song of our youth! . . . I'm the fighting men at every outpost, from Alaska to Hawaii, to the Philippines, and beyond; from Panama to Porto Rico, to Iceland and beyond! . . .

Remember my yesterday, with Washington, winning this liberty? . . . Once I was only a thousand; today I am 1,800,000 out of 130,000,000 Americans. . . . Figure that out, America! —I'm about one in a hundred; one in a hundred Americans!

TOMORROW I'LL BE TWO IN A HUNDRED, OR THREE IN A HUNDRED,—WHAT-EVER THE NEED FOR THE SPIRIT WE'RE LIVING, FOR THE FUTURE WE'RE MAKING,—I, THE AMERICAN SOLDIER, AM THE SHIELD!