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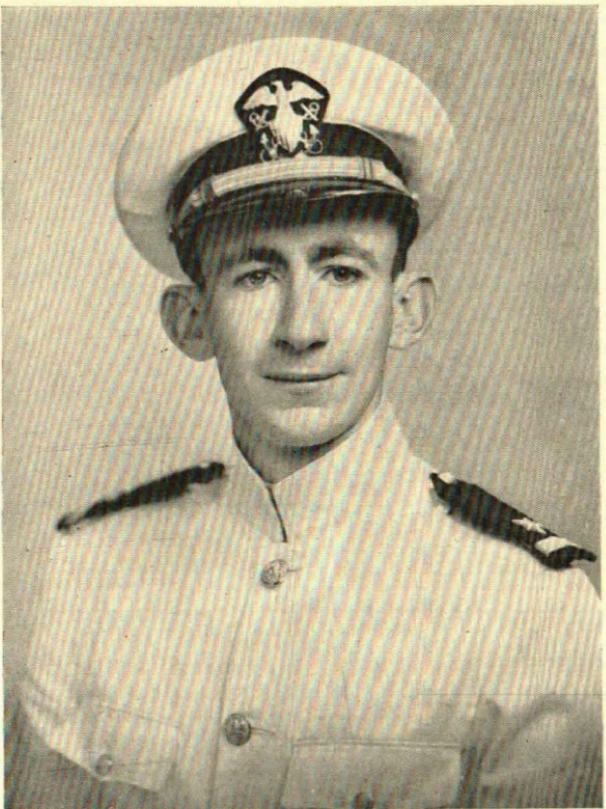
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Article Summary: This is the first of several articles recognizing the bravery of Nebraskans in World War II.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Ensign John J Parle, Dixie Kiefer, Robert Kinnie, Mark T Martin Jr, Donald Owen Smith, Captain Watkins, Emil F Vanek, John F Urwiller, Marvin F Sanford, Paul B Clemens, Edward Pierce Andrews, Joe Foss, Merritt C Walton, Robert E Booker, Billie D Lincoln, Margaret J Milton, Charles A Howery, Herbert H Witte, Emil Hanson, Charles R Patton Jr, Robert I Schultz, Frank Atwater, Allen E Montgomery, Lumir Novotny, William Heavican, Charles P Arnot, Robert L Avery, F E Uhl, Early E W Duncan, Guy N Henninger, C G Carle, Robert T Thayer, Harry M Tully, George R Stallings, Richard C Hazard, Ben Kuroki, Fred Kuroki, Henry Kuroki, Ralph Egle, Henry Egle, Harry C Krause, Jimmie Doolittle, Carl S Hill, Robert C Smith, William Fisher, John Erbes, H W Bauer, P J Fontana, Edward L Daft, Herbert Hawley Jr, Gordon Bruce, Forrest E Dillman, Albert C Boren, Jack F Hoagland, Reuben E Almquist, Verl Athey, Clifton Groelz

Photographs / Images: Ensign John J Parle; Parle as a child with a model airplane; Lt Robert Kinnie with his plane; Dental Office at Bougainville, Lieutenant Hawley standing



ENSIGN JOHN J. PARLE

Nebraska's Heroes

Their Deeds of Valor

ENSIGN JOHN J. PARLE, Omaha boy who died to guard the Sicilian invasion from disclosure, in December received the Congressional Medal of Honor, highest award a nation in danger can give to her defenders, and the first ever given to a Nebraskan. Edward Morrow wrote the story which is here reprinted at some length because of its outstanding interest:

"If the people who knew Johnny Parle when he was a little boy ever gave it a thought, they probably would not have thought that he would grow up to be a hero, that he would some day join the company of those whose deeds will live forever.

"Johnny Parle was a little boy—little for his age, that is. He was spindle-legged, jug-eared. With strangers he was inclined to be solemn and shy. He was not the swashbuckling type, definitely.

"But Tuesday in Washington the Navy Department announced that the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for bravery," had been bestowed upon little Johnny Parle, aged twenty-three. "Thus he joined the select company of Sergeant Yorke and Butch O'Hare.

"The Medal of Honor is not easy to win. So great a distinction is it that the holder of it, if he is alive (and few are), is entitled to be saluted first by anybody, even a four-star general or admiral. In World War I only about thirty men won the Medal, and only seventy-one so far in this war. . . .

"The people who knew Johnny Parle when he was a small boy could look back Wednesday and discern qualities that won him the medal. For Johnny was a good boy: he did what he was supposed to do.

"Off the coast of Sicily last July 10, John Parle again did what he was supposed to do—and thereby perhaps saved the invasion from disaster.

"It was 1:45 a.m., and black as pitch. The big landing ships were hove to off the coast and LST 365, on which John Parle

was an ensign, had swung the smaller landing boats out on the davits, ready to lower them into the water.

"Boat No. 5, near the bridge, was loaded with explosives. A smoke pot in No. 5 became ignited, accidentally. Nobody was



in the boat, but Ensign Parle was near. He jumped into it, put out the fuse. But the pot itself was still spouting flame, and at any moment it might set off the explosives. Had the explosives gone off the whole LST, jammed with men, would have gone up like a rocket. And—even worse—the enemy on shore would have had two hours' warning that the invasion was coming.

"Ensign Parle wrestled with the smoke pot, finally hoisted it over the rail into the water. The ship was saved, and so was the invasion.

"A week later Ensign Parle died in a hospital in Bizerte."

In his story Edward Morrow tells much about the home life of the Parles which readers not already familiar with it will like to know. It may be found in the *Omaha World-Herald*, issue of December 22, 1943.

The same paper, three days later, carries a first-page account of services conducted at solemn high mass, St. John's Catholic Church, on the campus of Creighton University. There, for the first time in history, a Medal of Honor was presented during a church ceremony. Presented to Ensign John Joseph Parle of the United States Naval Reserve, by Captain Dixie Kiefer, much-decorated executive officer of the lost carrier Yorktown, in the name of the President.

"Undaunted by fire and blinding smoke," reads the citation, Ensign Parle "entered the craft, quickly snuffed out a burning fuse, and after failing in his desperate efforts to extinguish the fire-pot, finally seized it with both hands and threw it over the side. Although he succumbed a week later from smoke and fumes inhaled, his heroic self-sacrifice prevented grave danger to the ship and personnel and insured the security of a vital

mission. He gallantly gave his life in the service of his country."

A recent letter from Hiltrude Parle brings news of another honor to her son:

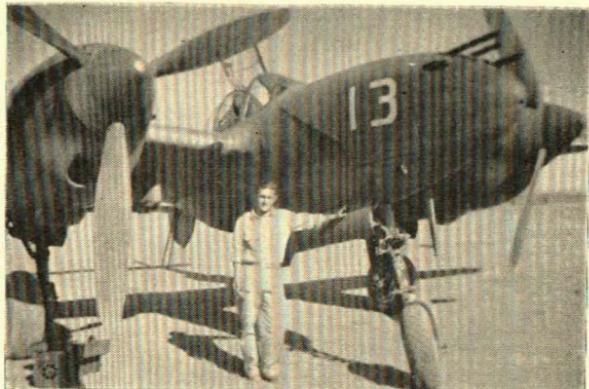
"The U. S. S. *Parle*, Destroyer-Escort No. 708, was launched at the De Foe shipyards in Bay City, Michigan, on March 25th. A letter from the Secretary of Navy notifying us of this great event asked me to act as sponsor at the launching. Mr. Parle and two of our sons, Richard and Jerry, accompanied me on that never-to-be-forgotten trip. Everyone was so very kind to us—the Navy men, the De Foe officials, and all whom we met."

LT. ROBERT KINNIE of Lincoln has performed no one feat, alone and single-handed, that equals in far-reaching military value the instant and decisive action of Ensign Parle of Omaha. Therefore Kinnie and others like him do not wear the Congressional Medal. But where will one look for more amazing courage, more incredible daring, more true American heroism, than set out in the interview which follows?

"Home for a twenty-day leave after nine hectic months in the skies over Europe, during which he won many honors and much newspaper mention, Kinnie says the experience was something he could have got along without. And yet, he has asked to get back in combat. 'The war isn't over,' he explains.

"He returns with a Distinguished Flying Cross, an Air Medal and eleven oak-leaf clusters, and a long, detailed and highly complimentary commendation describing his fifty mission which won the DFC.

"He has been escorting bombers, sea-sweeping, strafing and



dive-bombing. He prefers strafing and dive-bombing 'because you get down low and can see things blowing up and burning up.' Hardened? Not particularly, he thinks. One just gets into the spirit of the thing.

"They're a hell of a bunch of guys," he comments on the Americans who wage fights from the air over Germany and Italy. "More nerve than . . ." But similes failed him.

"Rather reticent over his own part in the conflict, he does consent to having the comment of Major General Twining (who made the DFC award) scanned. It reads, ". . . for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P-38 type aircraft."

"On January 14, 1944, Lieutenant Kinnie led a flight as escort and top cover for B-24s on an important mission over . . . Jugoslavia. Fighting his way through a veritable curtain of flak, Lieutenant Kinnie took his flight right over the target, thus affording maximum protection to bombers against fifteen enemy fighters which he saw waiting high above.

"A desperate attack followed as the enemy fighters tried to break through to get at the bombers below. Despite their numerical superiority, each attempt was broken up by Lieutenant Kinnie and his comrades, and the bombers were thus enabled to make their run without interruption and turn safely home.

"During a running battle, Lieutenant Kinnie noticed an enemy fighter below. In spite of depleted ammunition and disregarding a hail of anti-aircraft fire from the now thoroughly alerted enemy, he pursued the enemy plane right into . . . air-drome, where he blew it up fifty feet above its own runway. He then led his flight safely out, strafing hangars, installations and gun positions.

"This inspirational and courageous leadership displayed by Lieutenant Kinnie on his fiftieth combat mission helped to make possible the successful completion of a bombing mission of great importance and caused heavy damage to enemy equipment and personnel.

"Through his exceptional ability, professional skill and high standards of leadership, Lieutenant Kinnie has achieved his extraordinary combat record and has reflected great credit upon himself and the armed forces of the United States."

"Recalling a couple of bad moments out of a nine-months series of fairly exciting ones, Lieutenant Kinnie mentions August 28, 1943, when 'two of us got caught alone with fifteen enemy fighters along the coast above Cancello after a fight in which other planes had gotten away.

"'We would have sold out pretty cheap for a little while,' he said, 'and were wondering how the water below us was going to feel when we struck.' Both used all their ammunition, both downed an enemy plane, and both got back to the base with tanks just about dry.

"Another thrill came when two flights ran across a German Heinkel 111 bomber with glider containing a large number of men. Lieutenant Kinnie's flight got the bomber, the major's flight got the glider, and the whole incident was soon closed." — *Lincoln Evening Journal*, 2/26/44.

MAJOR MARK T. MARTIN JR., of Hoe Hill near Elkhorn, was one of nineteen officers decorated by King George VI of Great Britain at Algiers. He received the British Military Cross for gallantry in action. He had coolly organized a rear-guard unit which beat off heavy German tank attacks, allowing the main body of Commandos to escape, and was the last man to leave. — *Waterloo Gazette*, 1/14/44.

Both the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and *Globe-Democrat* through AP (1/11, 1/14/44), as well as *The Des Moines Register*, named eighteen generals (including George S. Patton, Mark W. Clark and Omar N. Bradley) and one graduate of St. Louis University who on January 11th last received decorations by order of King George for "meritorious action in the Mediterranean." The "graduate" was Captain Martin, who was awarded the Military Cross; later he attained the rank of Major. He was well known in St. Louis as a newspaper man and also as winner of the Missouri Valley Tennis championship. [Martin was copyreader on *The Register* of Des Moines when he joined the Iowa National Guard in 1940. "His job was editing news stories and writing headlines—not exactly the type of work that trains a man for hand-to-hand combat," wrote a United Press reporter.]

But before that, in June 1943, Captain Martin had re-

ceived the Silver Star in the North African Theater of Operations. This citation sets out more clearly the fact that in that action at Bizerte ending on December 4, 1942, "the British Commando unit, with which Captain Martin (then First Lieutenant*) was serving in a surprise assault against enemy lines of communication, was attacked by superior enemy forces consisting of tanks and armored cars. Acting immediately, with great courage and without regard for his own safety, he organized a covering force, and engaged the enemy so effectively with only small-arms fire that the safe withdrawal of the main body was made possible. Then, coolly and with flawless leadership, he effected the withdrawal of the covering force without a casualty and was the last man to seek safety. . . ." "Copyreaders are like that," comments an editorial writer in *The New York Times Magazine* of January 23, 1944.

DONALD OWEN SMITH, Electrician's Mate of the U.S.S. *Wahoo*, missing in action, has been awarded the Submarine Combat Pin and various special citations, including one from the President, for his conduct on successful patrols. Captain Watkins of the U.S. Navy, in a letter to his mother at Humboldt dated December 5, 1943, expressed "heartfelt sympathy" and added:

"Your son was a member of a submarine crew which has distinguished itself with courageous, determined and relentless attacks against the enemy since the early days of the war. He was proud to be a member of such a crew and we are proud to have him in our organization. On his last patrol, his ship carried the fight to the very door of the enemy's empire. . . ."

The citation, signed by the Commander of the Submarine Force of the Pacific Fleet, states that "On a war patrol, conducted by the U.S.S. *Wahoo* in confined and heavily patrolled enemy waters, that vessel is known to have delivered a successful attack against an important enemy vessel. Other successful attacks on this patrol are unknown, since the *Wahoo* failed to return, and it is presumed that the officers and her crew gave their lives in the service of their country. . . ." — *Humboldt Standard*, 12/30/43.

* The photograph shown in this issue was evidently taken while he and other officers were receiving their first decoration for their action in this theater. — Editor.

S. SGT. EMIL F. VANEK, whose home was near Dorchester, is one of the eleven members of a Liberator bomber crew to be awarded the Silver Star by the Commander of Allied Air Forces in the Southwest Pacific. This is the story as told in the citation:

"Within five minutes of their target, the bombers were intercepted by ten to twelve Zeros. In the attack one of the engines of the bomber was hit, causing it to burst into flames. Enemy fighters then concentrated their attacks on this plane, but it held to its course with guns blazing at the enemy fighters.

"Over the target intense anti-aircraft fire was experienced. Although losing speed and altitude as a result of the damaged engine, and despite repeated attacks from enemy planes and ground batteries, the plane was observed making a bombing run as ordered, dropping its bombs on the assigned target.

"The Liberator then was observed heading toward the sea, losing speed and altitude rapidly and being closely pursued by two Zeros. It finally made a good water landing, but at that moment an enemy fighter made a pass which probably caused the explosion that followed, destroying the bomber." — *Crete News*, 12/2/43.

SGT. JOHN F. URWILLER of Grand Island, at a recent ceremony in Washington, D. C., received three of the highest citations that can be bestowed by the Army Air Force — the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Silver Star and the Air Medal, for his meritorious achievements in the Guadalcanal campaign last winter. . . Sergeant Urwiller had shot down nine Japanese planes during his 600 combat flying hours over enemy territory in the South Pacific and China. His outstanding record speaks for itself. At present he is assigned to a heavy bombardment group at Langley Field, Virginia, but is anxious to get back where he can take "another crack at the enemy." — *Ravenna News*. 12/18/43.

PVT. MARVIN F. SANFORD of Hastings won the Silver Star by his heroic death on a battlefield in North Africa last April. His widowed mother received the award from Brig. Gen. Paul B. Clemens of the Seventh Service Command.

This infantryman, despite the ferocity of the attacking force,

with his automatic weapon covered the withdrawal of his comrades until he was struck by a German bullet. In saving their lives, he lost his own. "Greater love hath no man than this." — *Hastings Tribune*, 12/4/43.

LT. EDWARD PIERCE ANDREWS, USMCR, whose home was at Liberty, has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross "for heroism and extraordinary achievement . . . as pilot of a Hellcat fighter plane . . . in combat against Japanese surface forces at Guadalcanal on October 14, 1942. Intercepting an enemy force of six transports and six destroyers, Lieutenant Andrews, with outstanding skill and daring, strafed the last transport in the column and then, despite extremely heavy anti-aircraft fire, continued to strafe each of the transports in turn.

"By his dogged determination and effective execution of these tactics, he was an inspiration to the other members of his squadron and contributed materially to dispersing the Jap forces."

Two days later, at the age of twenty-one, Lieutenant Andrews was killed in action. — *Beatrice Sun*, 1/23/44.

From another clipping just received (not yet identified), we gather further facts in this thrilling story.

"Lieutenant Andrews was a member of the famed First Marine Division fighting squadron led by Major Joe Foss, whose twenty-six aircraft equalled the First War record of Captain Eddie Rickenbacker and made Foss the foremost ace of this war.

"In writing his own story of the fighting, Foss described Andrews' action several times, and referred to him as 'Andy — a small, happy-go-lucky chap with immense nerve and a willingness to do anything once.'

"In his diary for October 14, 1942, Foss wrote: "Lt. Andrews went back alone and strafed all six transports again, one by one. He went straight down the line, raked the deck of one ship, dropped over the stern, flying between that ship and the next so the two would not dare fire at him for fear of hitting each other, then raised up and dropped down on the next. He did this on all six. The convoy warships on each side did not dare shoot for fear of hitting their own transports. What a kid!"

Two days later Andrews was killed in a hurried takeoff, and Foss wrote: 'Bitter tragedy today. As we went up on an inter-

ception Andrews, the little powerhouse from Nebraska, lost control of his plane, crashed into a parked plane, and was killed. I don't need to say how we felt at a time like that. Maybe it was a good thing we had to keep right on going to attack. . . . That flight cost us dear. Andrews was a real flier.'

"Lieutenant Andrews was a star athlete at Liberty in 1939 and later attended Doane College."

SGT. MERRITT C. WALTON of the Marines, from Sutton, has been awarded the Navy Cross with a Presidential Citation stating that during the first Guadalcanal offensive he "voluntarily proceeded to reconnoiter the position of a hostile machine gun which threatened the platoon's right flank,

"After skillfully spotting its location, he courageously participated in a daring attack and realized success in silencing this deadly menace before he died of fatal wounds." — *Hastings Tribune*, 1/20/44.

PVT. ROBERT E. BOOKER, from Callaway, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his extraordinary heroism in Tunisia. The citation reads:

"While engaged in action against the enemy, Private Booker carried a light machine gun and a box of ammunition over two hundred yards of open ground, and continued to advance despite the fact that two enemy machine guns and several mortars were using him as an individual target. Upon reaching his objective he commenced firing; after being wounded he silenced one enemy machine gun and had begun to fire on the other when he received a second and mortal wound. With his last remaining strength, he encouraged the members of his squad and directed their fire. . . ."

This medal, with two others, was presented at Kearney Air Base in an impressive ceremony. Brigadier General Clemens represented the Seventh Corps Area and the Government; the State was represented by its Lieutenant Governor; the Kearney Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations participated. A broadcast of the program was given by the Kearney radio station.

The second award, an Air Medal, was presented to the

mother of S/Sgt. BILLIE D. LINCOLN "for exceptionally meritorious achievement while participating in five separate bomber combat missions over continental Europe." The sergeant is now a prisoner of war in that area and has been reported wounded in action.

Another Air Medal and the Purple Heart were given to Lieut. Margaret J. Milton, Army Nurse at the Air Base, in recognition of bravery shown by her brother who was killed in action. — *The Loup Valley Queen*, 1/20/44.

Sgt. CHARLES A. HOWERY of Fremont has been given the Silver Star for gallantry in the Tunisian campaign a year ago. In an attack his tank was shelled and set afire. With complete disregard for his own safety, he went down through the bottom of the turret into the driver's blazing compartment and rescued a soldier so severely burned as to be unable to open the driver's port. In so doing, Sgt. Howery also was burned severely. — *Fremont Tribune*, 10/22/43.

Pfc. HERBERT H. WITTE of Cambridge was recently presented the Distinguished Service Cross for "extraordinary heroism" at Guadalcanal. As a member of a patrol, Private Witte had worked his way about a hundred yards into enemy territory, which was interspersed with steep coral ridges and dense jungle growth, when the group became ambushed and were ordered to separate and return to the lines. Yet, with total disregard for his own safety, Private Witte remained under fire to assist a wounded soldier back to safety until he himself collapsed from exhaustion. — *Cambridge Clarion*, 10/21/43.

Lt. EMIL HANSON of Fremont has received from Admiral Nimitz the Air Medal of the Navy for his work in Kiska harbors before leaving the Aleutians. "In the face of attack by six enemy fighter planes he courageously and skillfully piloted his plane toward the targets and released his bombs at an altitude below one thousand feet, thereby heavily damaging two enemy ships."

Lt. Hanson was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross last March. — *Fremont Tribune*, 9/15/43.

LT. CHARLES R. PATTON, JR., whose home is in Lincoln, immediately upon graduation from the Aeronautical Institute and completion of the navigator's training in 1942 was sent to Egypt and assigned to a B-25 light bomber which served as a support arm for the British Eighth Army in Africa. His plane followed the army from Egypt to Tunisia during the campaigns in North Africa and the Near East.

In addition to receiving his wings as navigator-bombardier, Lieutenant Patton won the following citations: Air Medal with three clusters (which is the Junior Distinguished Flying Cross); Silver Star; Purple Heart, with cluster; Distinguished Flying Cross; The Flying Boot. This latter is the badge of the "Late Arrivals Club"—in this case signifying a plane shot down in Africa.

Lieutenant Patton was wounded by ack-ack twice in April 1942, and on the 20th his plane was disabled and landed in the desert. They spent five days getting back to the airport, thence were returned by plane to headquarters. He has completed forty-four missions, the maximum number permitted under army regulations, and was returned to this country with nearly three hundred hours of combat service to his credit.—Courtesy *Lincoln Aeronautical Institute*, 2/14/44.

ROBERT I. SCHULTZ, Central City, has been awarded the Air Medal for his bravery in the Aleutians campaign, and previously had received other medals and commendations for "excellent judgment, initiative and zeal in caring for his plane under extremely adverse conditions." In the Navy, he is aviation chief machinist's mate, operating on a patrol plane. The citation states:

"Although he had been on duty almost constantly for more than 48 hours, he unhesitatingly volunteered to assist in the search for a plane lost 250 miles at sea. When the craft was located, his own plane was relieved by a standby while he flew back to his base, refueled, and returned to remain overnight with the lost plane under extremely hazardous weather conditions. As a result, he was in the air 24½ hours out of 25, and by his sturdy endurance and courageous determination contributed materially to the rescue of the patrol plane and its crew."—*Central City Republican-Record*, 4/15/43.

CPL. FRANK ATWATER of Greeley, together with his Connecticut captain, has been honored by inclusion in a radio program (WDRC) titled "Today's American Hero." We quote from the broadcast:

"Cold courage and daring made this captain and his corporal the heroes of the day. But if you ask them, they were just doing their job.

"The Japanese were holding a strong point atop a small plateau just outside Munda. The Americans hadn't been able to advance beyond this point for two days. A company had stormed the bastion three days before, but the Japs just sat up there and waited for them. Their snipers in the trees raised Cain at every movement.

"Captain Rankin kept thinking if he could just get a few well-placed mortar shells in the middle of those Japs it would be a different story. . . . He looked around. He needed another man to go with him. Someone who wouldn't crack—because they were going to crawl within twenty yards of the enemy lines. That's about half of a city block.

"There'd be a lot of fireworks, too, for the Japs had at least a full company entrenched up there. And they had some eight machine guns, about sixty rifles, and a couple of knee mortars. . . . The captain called Atwater over and told him the plan.

"You bet!" said the corporal. "I'm in."

"Up the side of the hill the two inched their way. It was slow, hard work. Those shells came too close for comfort, and the machine guns kicked up dust near by. But on they went. About half-way up they dug in to make target corrections. Then they quickly laid down eighteen mortar shots from a position just twenty yards from the enemy. Ninety yards is the minimum safe distance. They heard the Japs scream and knew they had their range.

"Atwater was in a bad spot. As the captain said later: 'He knew he was in an exposed position. But he did a beautiful job.'

They held their position all night. And as dawn stretched across the eastern sky, the order was passed to storm the plateau. But it wasn't necessary. The captain and the corporal had done their job well. The Japs had left in a hurry. And we are one step farther on the road to Tokyo.—*Greeley Citizen*, 9/2/43.

ALLEN E. MONTGOMERY of Denby, after serving one year on the gallant cruiser, *Pensacola*, participated in every major action of the first year of war in the West and was one of the heroes cited for valor at Pearl Harbor by Admiral Calhoun. The *Pensacola* made a valiant attempt to save the *Yorktown*. She did not retire until her entire mainmast was a mass of flames, one engine room flooded, and the ammunition exploding. It took thirty hours to put out the fires, but the ship lived to fight again. Wendell Webb, who sailed as a correspondent, had this to say of her men:

"But there can't be built into a ship the elements that made up the *Pensacola*. Officers and crew like that are born. I've seen some of them reading Bibles in the shade of eight-inch guns in the hell-hot tropics; others knocking down flying fish with frying pans, for extra food; still others writing, drawing, painting and arguing in the precious off-watch hours—and then break into thunderous cheers when the call to action sent them pellmell to their posts of battle. To an officer and a man they rate the tops in the Navy at sea." — *Gordon Journal*, 2/25/43

LUMIR NOVOTNY and WILLIAM HEAVICAN, two Schuyler boys, escaped with their lives but lost all their possessions when the aircraft carrier *Hornet* was sunk in the battle of Santa Cruz October 26. Official announcement of the loss of the carrier, seven destroyers and three cruisers was made by the Navy Department Monday. . . .

Novotny, a torpedoman, was in the water struggling to support a companion with a broken arm for nearly two hours before he was picked up by a rescue boat. He stopped here for a short visit while on his way to the East coast to report on another assignment.

A third man with Schuyler connections was also in the battle. He is Charles P. Arnot,* crack United Press correspondent, who wrote the story of the battle but was not allowed to release it until Tuesday. — *Schuyler Sun*, 1/14/43.

PFC. ROBERT L. AVERY, a boy of twenty-one, will live in history as the first from Lancaster County to fall at Pearl Harbor.

* Mr. Arnot's account appears on another page herein.

Not because he fell there, but because of the gallantry, resourcefulness and quick thinking with which he and his comrades—forty of them in all—dashed from their barracks at the first alarm, assembled machine-gun equipment on a baseball diamond and sent one plane in the first wave of Japanese bombers crashing in ruins. Retaliation was swift. Six bombs were loosed upon that diamond, and when the smoke and dust cleared away it was found that only six of the valiant forty were left.

For this courageous action and on his behalf the boy's parents, Mr. and Mrs. William E. Avery, were summoned to the office of Governor Griswold to receive the Silver Star from Major General F. E. Uhl, Commander of the Seventh Corps Area. Col. Early E. W. Duncan, Commander of the Lincoln Air Base; Brig. Gen. Guy N. Henninger, Director of Selective Service for this state; and Col. C. G. Carle, Adjutant General of the Seventh Corps Area, who took part in the simple ceremony, all stood to pay tribute to this private in the ranks.

And in further tribute a hospital plane now bears his name—the plane bought through sale of war bonds during the Fourth Drive. Avery, by the way, was radio technician at Hickham Field when the Japs struck. He had enlisted in the Army on July 29, 1939. Credit for selection of his name for the ship belongs to the women's division of the Chamber of Commerce.—(Data from *Lincoln Evening Journal*, June 1942.)

"LINCOLN PILOT IS DECORATED BY CHINESE." This bold headline in a paper of pre-Pearl Harbor date brings Robert T. Smith (probably of Thayer) into this Magazine.

"Resigning a commission with the Army Air Corps last summer to join a group of American fliers with the Chinese army, young Smith was credited with shooting down four Japanese warplanes in a Christmas Day battle over Rangoon. . . . A radio broadcast from Chungking stated that he had received a decoration from the Chinese government for heroism."

Born in York County, Smith had attended the University of Nebraska, worked as proofreader on the *Journal*, and joined the Army Air Corps in September of 1939.—*Lincoln Evening Journal*, 4/8/42.

Lt. HARRY M. TULLY of Hastings distinguished himself and the U. S. Marine Corps by his valorous action during the

invasion of the Solomons in August 1942, and died of the wounds there sustained. For his conspicuous gallantry in action he was awarded the Silver Star, the citation commanding him for "outstanding courage and initiative in moving about the island alone, picking off enemy snipers," and "during daylight exposing himself to draw enemy fire. . . . He fought a long mission for two days and nights against hidden Japanese, whose dangerously accurate fire menaced the Marines and retarded the thorough occupation of the island."

Capt. George R. Stallings, in his report, explained that several of Sergeant Tully's best friends were killed or wounded in the landing operations. "Instead of becoming unnerved, Tully got into a cold rage. For two days and nights he hunted enemy troops, killing Jap after Jap. . . . His patience was the greatest I have ever seen. The Japs had a habit of trying to land by night on Gavatu from other islands, shoving logs ahead of them in the water. Tully sat for hours on the beach waiting for them. One came within six feet of his position and went to earth. For eighteen minutes neither moved. Then the Jap raised his head and Tully shot him. His only comment was: 'Eighteen minutes, captain.'"

Commissioned last year, Lieutenant Tully had once before turned down a commission, and was "rather surprised" when awarded the Silver Star. Starting his eighth year and third enlistment with the Marines in February 1943, Tully wrote his parents, "I can truthfully say I never regret one day of service I've given to this outfit." His valorous actions were dramatized in books, magazines, and a nationwide radio broadcast. The last time he was home was more than four years ago. He was an only child.—*Hastings Tribune*, 1/15/44.

RICHARD C. HAZARD was a farm boy living near Alliance when he joined the Navy in 1941. He has now received two citations by the President. The first was an Air Medal given "for meritorious achievement in aerial flight during action against Japanese enemy forces in the Aleutians under the most severe weather conditions of high winds, snow, rain and fog; and in the face of persistent anti-aircraft fire from enemy ships and shore batteries, Hazard carried out his tasks with fine courage throughout."

In the second citation his conduct of extreme gallantry and intrepid courage was on the occasion of a plane crash. Though severely wounded, he voluntarily remained in the burning plane, extricating survivors and removing gear and materials necessary for safety and rescue. For two days he helped the more seriously wounded down the icy, precipitous and foggy mountain, and when the rescue party arrived insisted on leading them to the plane to rescue one member whose injuries required the use of a stretcher. His heroic and courageous efforts, maintained at great risk of his own life beyond the call of duty, brought forth the Navy and Marine Corps Medal and promotion to the rank of aviation machinist's mate first class.—*Alliance Times-Herald*, 1/11/44.

S. SGT. BEN KUROKI, whose home is near Hershey, has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. A Japanese-American, he enlisted in the Army in January 1942 and was sent overseas in August of that year. He is a tail gunner on a Liberator bomber, and his award was one of twenty-four made to Nebraskans who participated in the low-level bombardment attack on the Ploesti oil refineries which destroyed 42 per cent of total Rumanian refining capacity in a devastating blow at vital Axis war economy.

Two brothers of Sergeant Kuroki, Corporal Fred and Master Sergeant Henry, are also in the Army, and a younger brother is awaiting call.—*North Platte Telegram*, 11/10/43.

The Lincoln Evening Journal of February 5th adds to above story another with a strong appeal for tolerance written between the lines. This boy of twenty-five, gunner on thirty bombing missions over Europe and Africa, wearing the Air Medal as well as the Distinguished Flying Cross "for extraordinary heroism or distinguished service," doesn't "know for sure if it's safe to walk the streets of my own country." Two years ago, he said, he and his brother Fred were "the loneliest boys in the Army," and he would "rather go through all those bombing missions again" than to re-live his training days.

The enlistment of both boys had been delayed by suspicion. Ben was sent to Denver and given clerical instruction. With tears in his eyes he begged to be allowed to leave for the front with the outfit to which he was first assigned—and finally won.

Even though at first "only one boy was kind to me," and pilots refused to take him in their crews, he begged to go. "I understand how they felt," he said, and told of ultimately getting into "a great bunch" and being sent to England, Africa, and the Middle East. He won the respect of his companions and (more important) of his pilots.

"Fifteen months in combat teaches you what brotherhood, tolerance and equality really are," he said.

The sergeant has asked for an assignment in the Pacific theater, and drew an ovation with the words, "When I visit Tokyo it will be in a Liberator bomber. I didn't join the army with the intention of fighting in Europe. I joined to avenge Pearl Harbor," he added.

His greatest mission was that at Ploesti. "Flying 2,400 miles at low level, sweeping in over the target area at 50 to 100 feet altitude with hell breaking loose all around, is no pleasure jaunt. We lost heavily, but our ship got home without a single bullet in it. That was a miracle."

Kuroki is a Nisei. He was born in America, but his parents are Japanese.—*Journal, 12/21/43.*

L.T. RALPH EGLE of Palisade lost his life in that famous low-level bomb raid on the Ploesti oil fields. In tribute, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the medal of the Purple Heart were presented to his father by officers of the McCook Army Air Base. Though the War Department had instructed that this presentation be made in the traditional manner, the father, Henry Egle, requested that all formalities be waived. In a quiet corner of the Keystone lobby he awaited the officers and stood to hear the reading of the citations.

Tech. Sgt. HARRY C. KRAUSE of Scottsbluff, hero of fifty-odd flying missions and 330 combat hours in the Mediterranean theater, received from the hand of General "Jimmie" Doolittle the Distinguished Flying Cross for his participation in the raid on the Ploesti oil field in Rumania. He was engineer and gunner on a Liberator which went over the target with the first squadron, and said his crew returned to its North African base "without a wing and on a prayer."

Answering inquiries, Krause said he had also been on missions over Italy, Sicily, Austria, Rumania, Rhodes, Crete, and the Dodecanese Islands. It was at Catania that his ship met Goering's outfit.

"Man, those babies are tough! They're really crack pilots. They're getting new planes as fast as they are shot down—and they come at you from all sides. When you see the ships with a yellow ring painted around the nose, you know you're in for something." His narrowest escape was when an ack-ack shell ripped off a pants leg.

Landing on the African gold coast, Krause was first sent to Dakar; later was on bombing raids over Tunis and Bizerte. "The tops of all those mountains are fortified," he said. "The area is full of booby traps—and bodies. Natives in the mountain areas are getting blown up all the time. I suppose some of those traps will be there for years—no one wants to mess around with them. . . . I've seen over half the world. I don't particularly want to see the rest of it." — *Scottsbluff Star-Herald*, 12/8/43.

It may be well to add here that this bombardment of the Ploesti refineries was one of the most dangerous of the war. *The Ravenna News* of November 11, 1943, reporting the award to Sergeant Krause, stated that "the enemy defended this important point with everything they had, but the mission was declared a complete success." — *Editor*.

CARL S. HILL of Unadilla, Seaman First Class, was commended by the Chief of Naval Personnel "for intrepid devotion to duty and aggressive fighting spirit displayed while a member of the Armed Guard Unit aboard an American merchantman."

The citation continues: "A report of the experience reveals that the vessel and the areas about her were subjected to vicious, repeated attacks from an extraordinary number of Heinkels, Junkers, Stuka dive bombers, Italian torpedo planes, 'E' boats, and submarines. Yet in the midst of torpedoes, aerial mines, burning ships, and accurate bombs which often literally straddled their vessel, the men of the Navy gun crew met the enemy with such tremendous barrages of accurate, deadly fire that they not only drove the raiders off but also damaged at least one German plane and sent two others into brilliant crashes in the sea. You remained unflinchingly at your post until the ship exploded, and

she sank shortly after all hands had abandoned her to the flaming, oil-covered water, from which the crew was eventually rescued.

"Your courageous endurance and skill on above occasion were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service."
— *Syracuse Journal-Democrat*, 11/12/43.

LIEUT. ROBERT C. SMITH of Franklin, pilot of the Fortress *Liberty Belle*, together with his crew, won much distinction on the Schweinfurt bombing mission over Germany. A German fighter set the rear end of the Fortress afire and Tail Gunner Sergeant Lonsway beat it out with his bare hands, then went back to his gun position, severely burned, to ward off swarms of Nazis on the return trip.

The ship took a terrific knocking around by cannon, machine gun and anti-aircraft fire, and looked like a sieve when it reached its base. With one engine gone, Lieutenant Smith expertly piloted the big ship safely home. The navigator changed the familiar practice of kissing the ground on a safe return; instead, he kissed the pilot. The crewmen, veterans of many missions, agreed that the raid was one of the toughest ever experienced.— *Franklin Sentinel*, 10/24/43.

CPL. WILLIAM FISHER, whose home is near Sumner, was one of a group cited for "highest praise" for skill and daring in the Tunisian campaign. One of the battery's half-track vehicles which was loaded with ammunition was set afire by heavy counter fire from the enemy. Seeing this, the men not only extinguished the fire but helped to remove the ammunition which was also burning. Their courage and heroism saved the vehicle from complete destruction and prevented the fatalities that must have resulted.— *Lexington Herald*, 10/14/43.

CAPT. JOHN ERBES of Bayard, with the armored forces in Tunisia under command of General Patton, has been awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action. Three others were similarly honored, but he was the only member of the Medical Corps. "With tenacity, courage and coolness," runs the citation, "he moved through fire from small arms and anti-tank artillery, treating and evacuating the wounded of the regiment." And Captain Erbes tells a story on himself:

"When General Patton pinned the medal on my chest he said, 'I always knew that you were a very good doctor [I took care of him once when he was sick], and now you have proved that you are a very fine soldier too. I guess I won't need to be too careful, because you know what to do if I stick you.' And sure enough he did stick me right in the chest, but I couldn't flinch because too many people were watching." — *Bayard Transcript*, 4/1/43.

LT. COL. H. W. BAUER of North Platte, chief of marine fighter plane operations on Guadalcanal, is "missing in action" — but his comrades are convinced he will turn up again.

Colonel Bauer disappeared November 14 in the midst of the great American air-sea victory over a Japanese invasion force. He and Marine Captain Foss were chasing the battered remnants of the enemy fleet and were about to return when two Zeros got on the tail of Bauer's Grumman Wildcat. Bauer knocked off one of them, but the other damaged his controls and forced him down at sea.

Foss saw Bauer start to swim for a nearby island. He sped to Henderson Field and a float-type plane was dispatched immediately, but there was no trace of "Joe." Nothing has been heard of him since.

Major P. J. Fontana recalled Bauer's advice to young pilots. "He'd get them together and say: 'Don't be afraid of getting shot down. You hardly get your feet wet before you're in a rubber boat. When you reach shore the natives will take care of you, and then in a couple of days you'll be back here.'"

Bauer was as colorful in directing fighter operations here as he was when quarterbacking the navy football team a decade ago. . . . He was credited with bagging ten enemy planes — four of them dive bombers — in a single engagement October 16. — Dispatch by Charles Arnot from Guadalcanal December 5, 1942; in *Omaha World-Herald* (Evening) January 7, 1943.

SGT. EDWARD L. DAFT of Lincoln, back with his folks after 1199 days, talked freely to a reporter with the usual result: a story that begs to be reprinted in full. He was with the first troops to Casablanca, to Sicily, to Salerno, Cassino and Anzio, backing up four major campaigns with first aid and hospitaliza-

tion, and estimated that 7,000 men passed through the hands of his company.

"Working as long as seventy-two hours at a stretch without rest, they dispatched litter bearers and ambulances to the front lines, going themselves when there were no aides, . . . and more than ninety per cent were saved.

"With a gay, red-headed grin which his mother says hasn't changed a bit, he tells of jokes which the American soldiers have among themselves, of the invariable backbone with which they carry on with a smile the grim business of winning a war. Probably no better cross-section of American youth could be found than that which Sergeant Daft has contacted — men who are suffering and may die the next day, men who are maimed and can still grin, men who have seen such horror that they cry like children under the emotional shock. . . .

There is nothing passive about his fighting spirit. 'We give them back everything they give us—with interest,' he laughs with a glint in his eye. But on the whole the Germans and Americans are pretty well matched—given the same advantages and the same manpower, the two just about stalemate, which is his interpretation of what has happened at Cassino. . . . They talk of the second front daily and say that, if well planned and well supplied, it will end the war within six months or a year. That's the opinion of the men in the trenches, as brought home by a guy who knew the innermost thoughts of those who are the tools of Victory.

"The sergeant wouldn't say so, but just listening to him talk, one can see that a man of the medical detachment must have courage and compassion, tenderness and fighting spirit, and plenty of just plain guts. Sometimes they spent as much as twenty-four hours searching for one man known to be lying wounded up in the hills.

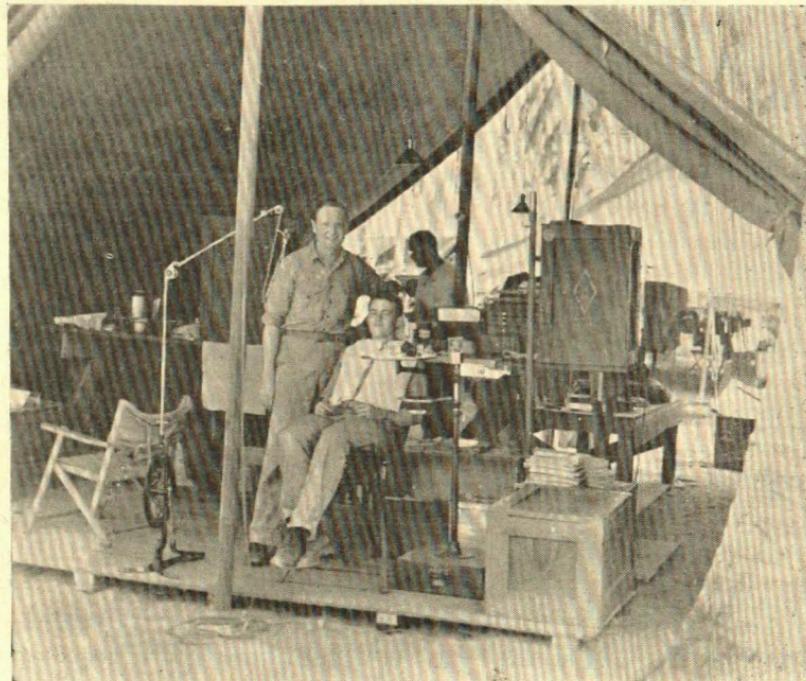
"Germans are much like Americans, Daft explains. He has nursed many of them along with his fellow countrymen, and says they too love their homes and families and are tired of war. 'More tired than the Americans, really,' because they were fighting in Russia before they met the fresh Allied troops who have pushed them back through Africa, Sicily and Italy. Some are fanatically enthusiastic Nazis, but most of them are fair shooters,

and make no attempt to kill the medical corpsmen on their missions of mercy. Once, Daft says, Germans were strafing the country-side but stopped when they came to the litter bearers, then continued their grim work on the other side of the group.

"Seeing men die was part of his job, but saving their lives thrilled the sergeant. 'When we lost one, it was like losing an arm or a leg,' he admits. But somehow Edward Daft seems to feel that those interminable months of filth and horror were a privilege, because now some men will walk and talk and live at home because of him." — *Lincoln Evening Journal*, 4/18/44.

LT. HERBERT HAWLEY JR., of Blue Hill, won signal praise for his bravery at Bougainville. In a dispatch from that point Lt. Commander Gordon Bruce of the Navy, in charge of a medical unit, related:

"We set up our tents near the beach on the left flank. At noon casualties began coming in. At one o'clock we had thirty-



DENTAL OFFICE AT BOUGAINVILLE
Lieutenant Hawley standing

two patients. My surgeons were operating on a marine when shots ripped through the tent. I ran to the beach with a couple of corpsmen and unscrewed three machine guns from Higgins boats which were smashed in the original landing.

"We brought the guns back to the hospital and I drafted a few marines to operate them. A sniper's bullet went into the lung of a pharmacist's mate. It began to rain, and water filled our foxhole operating room. My surgeons continued operating until nine o'clock. Only then did we evacuate the patients, then numbering fifty. Not one died. Our operations were performed under small battery-powered lights. I can't pay enough tribute to my men. Lieutenant Hawley, dentist attached to our unit, is the most completely fearless individual I ever knew."—*Hastings Tribune*, 1/14/44.

Sgt. FORREST E. DILLMAN of McCook, together with six fliers from other states, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by General Douglas MacArthur for a volunteer photographic action over Bougainville Island last June. The men fought off twenty enemy fighters which attacked their bomber and secured photographs "which were of great value in subsequent operations." Five of the men (including the pilot, whose name was not given) were wounded seriously during the 45-minute running battle with the Japanese Zero fighters, but five of the enemy planes were downed and two others were damaged.

Dillman, the citation said, "fired so expertly and aggressively that he repeatedly broke up enemy attacks and accounted for one Japanese plane."

Vaughn, the radio operator, manned his guns despite a bullet in the neck, and continued to fire until the enemy was driven off. Then he aided the navigator on the return to base.

Johnston, a navigator, despite several wounds about the head, extinguished a fire which broke out.

Pugh, the tailgunner, kept in action throughout the battle, cared for the wounded on the return flight, and observed landmarks for the half-blinded Johnston.

Able was shot through both legs, but continued to man his guns and, without mentioning his wounds, took over the plane's controls during part of the homeward trip so the co-pilot could administer first aid.

Britton aided the wounded pilot and administered first aid to other crew members during the 600-mile return flight.

Kendrick, the photographer, gunner and assistant engineer, kept his camera operating during the photographic run, shot one Zero, and gave first aid on the return flight.

With the brakes and flap controls shot away, the pilot ground-looped the plane so expertly that further discomfort to the injured was avoided. — *McCook Gazette*, 11/4/43.

LT. ALBERT C. BOREN of Hastings fainted when he brought his bullet-riddled Hellcat back from covering a torpedo and dive-bombing attack on shipping at Kavieng, New Ireland. Zeros turned on the fighters after an unsuccessful attempt to disrupt the attack.

That a man who has displayed supreme courage should faint when the terrific strain ended, is wholly understandable when one considers these facts:

"They shot up my stabilizer and they shot out my hydraulic system. My radio transmitter went dead. My rudder control cable was holding by a single strand.

"Two 7.7 mm bullets grazed the top of my head, and a shell fragment struck me in the ankle. I went dizzy, so I put on my oxygen mask.

"My compass was gone and my gas gauge showed empty, but I kept running on it anyway. . . ."

If Ensign Jack F. Hoagland, from Indianapolis, had known all that, he might not have chosen Boren's ship as a guide to the way home. But Hoagland, whose Hellcat lost its entire tail, did follow Boren and also got back. — *Nebraska State Journal*, 2/1/44.

CAPT. REUBEN E. ALMQVIST of the Medical Corps, whose home is at Loomis, was awarded the medal of the Legion of Merit for outstanding services in the Solomon Islands when he commanded a medical battalion's collection company and was frequently the only officer present to direct the care of casualties. When the Japanese bombed Rendova Island, his was the only organized medical installation, and he calmly and skillfully treated the wounded while bombers were overhead. On Arundel Island,

he organized and efficiently operated a fifty-bed hospital under most difficult conditions. — *Holdrege Citizen*, 1/25/44.

Lt. VERL ATHEY of Wauneta is an airplane pilot who received the Distinguished Flying Cross from the hands of Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, for his resourceful daring while piloting a pursuit plane in China and a transport from there to India. — *Imperial Republican*, 10/28/43.

S. SGT. CLIFTON GROELZ of Aurora has been cited for outstanding service the second time within the past six months. The Purple Heart “for service under fire while wounded” was awarded last fall. Now comes the news release that he is one of twenty-three officers and men to receive the Air Medal for their part in more than one hundred hours of operational flights within ten months. These flights included long-range bombing missions “somewhere in Australia.” — *Aurora News*, 2/26/43.

Editor's Note: From a few among the many large groups of clippings on file in the Historical Society library, above selections were made. Other such groups remain untouched because of space limits. Hence it will be seen that in no sense do these pages present a roster of Nebraska's heroes: they present only typical instances of outstanding courage and skill on the field of battle, graphically told. Many volumes could be printed and yet fail in due recognition of the magnificent service rendered by our boys, and still being rendered through every hour of the day. That is a thing to remember, to shape the standards of those of us safe at home.

Ensign Parle of Omaha is the only soldier from this state, thus far, to win that rare treasure among the tributes of a grateful nation—the Congressional Medal of Honor. Unquestionably his unhesitating, heroic act would be matched by thousands of our boys from every state, serving in every land, if faced by an equal emergency. Unquestionably Ensign Parle himself, where he stands today, knows that, and would gladly enfold all his brave comrades with the mantle of glory. So believing, we add to his record the unwritten record of other Nebraskans who cannot be named here; and, so believing, we ask “Johnny” himself to stand as the symbol of their sacrifice, their high devotion, as they leap into incredible dangers to answer The Call.