



# ALL EARS!!

*The Litchfield Fund  
Weekly Newsletter*

"We just don't hear it on the street, we have our ears spread across all the fields!!!!!"



**Litchfield**

**The war movie! Of course, during WWII**, the movies were patriotic & inspiring, such as *Back to Bataan* & *Wake Island*! Post-war & into the 1950s, movies followed the trend for darker, more psychological stories like *Crossfire* & *The Young Lions*. The 1960s brought big budget wide-screen spectaculars (*The Longest Day*, *The Great Escape*) & irreverent comedies (*What Did You Do in the War, Daddy*). Dark comedies (*M\*A\*S\*H*) & blood & violence (*The Deer Hunter*) were on the screen in the 1970s. Many *movie heroes* from the 1940s, along with unknowns who later rose to stardom, heroically served for our country during WWII!

*(In our All Ears!! tradition, we will forego this week's headlines to honor those who have served to protect our freedom.)*

**Heroes:** During WWII close to 15 million men & women were either drafted or they enlisted into the Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard or Merchant Marine. More than 70% of the male population aged 18 to 44 served! Today, we will share that era's movie stars & some future stars' real-life war experiences! Needless to say, these were some *really tough guys!*

Good-natured, Oscar-nominated *Eddie Albert*, who portrayed the always frustrated Oliver Wendell Jones in TV's *Green Acres*, was already a star when he enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1942. He transferred to the U.S. Navy & piloted a landing craft at the invasion of Tarawa. After getting the men on his craft to shore, he stayed under deadly fire to rescue 47 Marines stranded in the water & then supervise the rescue of 30 more Marines. Mr. Albert was quite a patriot & risk-taker. Before the war, as the man on the flying trapeze with a traveling circus in Mexico, he spied on Nazi submarine bases for Army intelligence! *Douglas Fairbanks Jr.* was a swashbuckling star in the 1930s! Not just an adventurer in the movies, Mr. Fairbanks enlisted in the U.S. Navy & worked with the British Commandos! *Sterling Hayden* was a breakout star in 1941 with his first two movies & at 6'5", was labeled a blonde Viking god! He left Hollywood & joined the Marines. He was in Wild Bill Donovan's Office of Strategic Services & used the name John Hamilton to assure he received no special treatment. Lt. Hamilton piloted boats with supplies & arms to Yugoslavian rebels & even parachuted in fascist Croatia! He organized & led air crew rescue teams into occupied territories! (Among those in the OSS was a lady too tall for the WACS & WAVES, future chef *Julia Child!*) Comedian *Mel Brooks* was still a freshman in college when he was drafted. His role as a U.S. Army corporal? Defusing land mines! *Now that requires a sense of humor!* Future steel-jawed tough guy *Lee Marvin* enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps at 18 & was wounded during an assault at Saipan, spending a year in the hospital recovering from his wounds. Another tough guy, *Richard Boone*, joined the U.S. Navy in 1941. He fought in the Pacific as tail gunner of a Grumman TBF Avenger torpedo bomber! Funny man & Oscar-winner *Art Carney* walked with a limp the rest of his life from shrapnel wounds at Normandy. *Jack Warden* spent 3 years with the U.S. Navy during the late '30s then joined one of the toughest make or

break outfits of WWII, the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne! In a training jump just before D-Day, he shattered his leg, missing the invasion. Child-star *Jackie Coogan* flew gliders for the U.S. Army in India, landing British commandos at night in the jungles of Japanese held Burma. Future heart-throb *Tony Curtis*, inspired by *Cary Grant* in *Destination Tokyo* & *Tyrone Power* in *Crash Dive*, joined the Submarine Corps. As for Mr. Power, he was a pilot flying wounded off of Iwo Jima & Okinawa.

Some studios of course tried to protect their stars, working to get them assigned to entertain troops (*Mickey Rooney*), make training films (*Ronald Reagan*, who had hearing loss in one ear) or intelligence roles. But some of the biggest stars fought for combat roles. Popular cowboy singer *Gene Autry* flew 'The Hump', the treacherous route over the Himalayas to bring supplies from India to Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese troops. *Clark Gable*, The King of Hollywood, enlisted after his wife, actress Carole Lombard was killed in a plane crash on a bond selling tour. Mr. Gable was assigned to make recruiting movies! But soon, Capt. Gable became responsible for the 351<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group's aerial observation & filming, flying combat missions in a B-17! Likeable, *aw, shucks Jimmy Stewart* (whose 1940 Oscar for *The Philadelphia Story* was displayed proudly with a Service Star in the window of his Father's hardware store in my parent's hometown of Indiana, Pennsylvania) was drafted in 1940, before the war, but at 6'3" & less than 140 lbs., he did not meet the weight requirements! He enlisted again, this time in the Army Air Corps & was passed through in March of 1941, 9 months *before* Pearl Harbor! Mr. Stewart became the first big Hollywood star in the service! Mr. Stewart, already an avid flyer, flew a B-24 Liberator over Europe on the 20 required bombing missions before being moved to an executive role. Mr. Stewart stayed in the Air Force Reserve, flew on a bombing mission over Vietnam\* & retired as a Brigadier General, the highest-ranking movie star ever!

There were many, many more actors who served during WWII. Those who didn't, *Hope, Crosby, Jolson, Benny* & others, entertained troops close to the battlefield. *John Garfield & Bette Davis* established the Hollywood Canteen to entertain servicemen before heading overseas. *Edward G. Robinson* would anonymously send his chauffeur to pick up GIs, providing them good night's sleep in his mansion & a hearty breakfast, the GIs never meeting their humble host!

Any person who has served in the uniform of the United States is a hero! We sit here today writing this newsletter, living where we want, worshipping as we believe, working in the profession we chose because of – *and only because of* - every single individual who has worn the uniform, putting themselves at risk to preserve this *precious, fragile, sacred freedom!* Each is *our hero* & we owe them a debt of gratitude that no words or actions can ever truly repay!

***Seeds, Sprouts, Grow***, Harvest!

The Litchfield Fund

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*\*Mr. Stewart lost his son Rodney, in Vietnam.*