

# THIS DAMN TREE LEAKS

by  
**BILL MAULDIN**

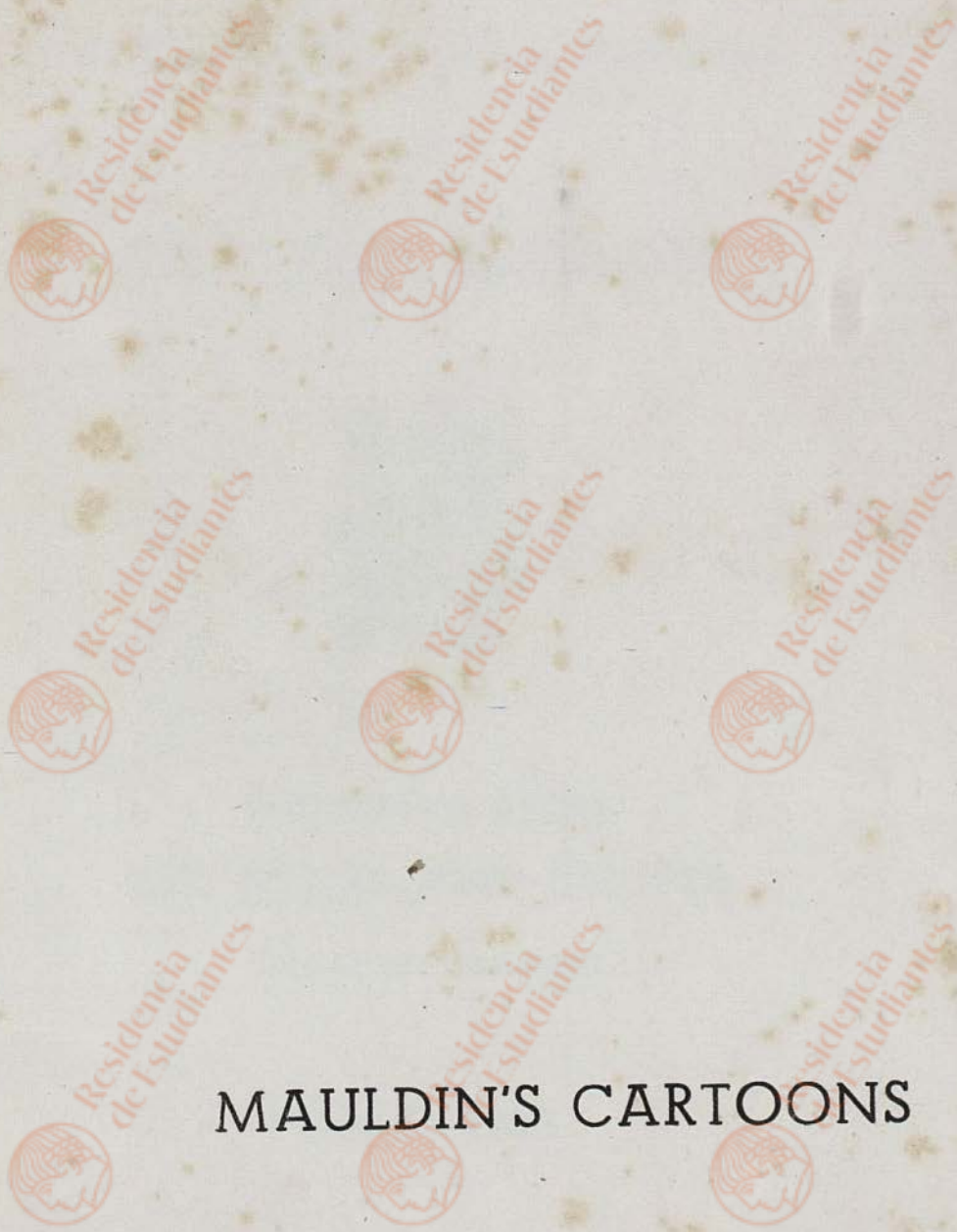


**STARS AND STRIPES**  
MEDITERRANEAN





93p  
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MAULDIN'S CARTOONS



Residencia  
de Estudiantes



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# **This Damn Tree Leaks**

**A Collection of War Cartoons**

**by**

**SGT. BILL MAULDIN**



**Reprinted From**  
**THE STARS AND STRIPES**  
**Mediterranean**

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# Foreword

The outstanding wartime cartoonists have emerged from the Mediterranean campaign. So great is their popularity that long after time has dimmed the faces of more important war leaders it's an odds-on bet that veterans of Italy will remember Willie and Joe, drawn by S-Sgt. Bill Mauldin of The Stars and Stripes; Herbie and Beanie, drawn by Sgt. William Garnet "Bing" Coughlin of the Canadian Maple Leaf, and the Two Types of Union Jack's Capt. W. J. "Jon" Jones.

Soldier humor inevitably accompanies every war and World War II has been no exception. When America's citizen soldiers were first inducted, editors began to fill magazine pages with Army cartoons. Drawn by civilians, they pictured an unreal world of first sergeants, KP and colonels' daughters. Looking back, the gags and cartoons seemed pretty funny, even though many were only variations of World War I laugh-getters. Army life was unreal, too, in that era of "goodbye, dear, I'll be back in a year."

But, as the men came to see the contradictions of Army ways, cartoons by soldier artists made their appearance. Some won real popularity, among them "Sad Sack" by S-Sgt. George Baker; "Private Breger," by Lt. Dave Breger, and "The Wolf" by Sgt. Leonard Sansone.

"The Wolf" and "Private Breger" were gay panels, tailored to the familiar civilian style, but soldiers liked them because the artists were ingenious and showed familiarity with Army life. "The Sad Sack" was something more. Baker placed a familiar figure — the perennial underdog — in situations within the experience of every soldier. He made everyday annoyances ridiculous and was acclaimed the successor to Capt. Bruce Bairnsfather, who drew the widely popular "Old Bill" and "Alf" of the last war.

When the citizen Army went into combat, however, with training days in the forgotten past, the riflemen who chortled over "The Wolf" at Fort Benning found it flat and unreal amidst the dust of Tunisia or the mountains of Sicily. Life was unhappy, ugly and dangerous. Strange things seemed funny now.

It followed that from the ranks of combat men themselves, the great cartoonists appeared, with a full understanding of the men in the foxholes

mirrored in their work. The first was Bill Mauldin, who was to be called "the outstanding cartoonist of World War II."

Mauldin's characters were usually infantrymen, sometimes combat medics, occasionally artillerymen. But always they were haggard, unshaven and full of the line soldiers' bitter pragmatism.

"We better stop fillin' in our foxholes when we move up," Joe remarks to Willie. "Regimental headquarters has been raisin' the devil."

"How ya gonna find out if they're fresh troops if ya don't wake 'em up an' ask?" a lieutenant queries as two doggies doze on their feet.

Perhaps the whole flavor of Mauldin was best illustrated in one famous drawing. A cluster of doughboys seek shelter from the cold Italian rain within a dugout. A shivering dog watches them with pathetic eyes. "Let him come in," one doughboy says. "I wanna see a critter I kin feel sorry for."

Mauldin was the first authentic voice in World War II cartooning to gain recognition. It was not coincidence. When National Guardsmen of the 45th Division were called from their Oklahoma and Colorado homes in September, 1940, 18-year-old Bill Mauldin was among them. For a year he was a rifleman in Co. K, 180th Infantry.

Contrary to popular belief, Mauldin never fought as a line soldier. When the 45th Division entered combat in Sicily he already was on the staff of the 45th Division News and attached to division headquarters. He joined the staff of The Stars and Stripes, Mediterranean, in December, 1943, in Naples. But whether with the division weekly or the theater daily, Mauldin continued to spend much of his time with line companies. At Venafro a mortar shell burst beside the machine gun position he was visiting, killing one man and slightly wounding the machine gunner and Mauldin.

His visits to the front were reflected in the validity of his cartoons. The anger and bitterness which every infantryman feels when the group he trained with is whittled down to a handful of survivors showed up, too.

The emergence of Mauldin was not sudden. His garrison cartoons were like many others, as he can be seen in "Star Spangled Banter," the first collection of his works. But Mauldin was matured by war in the grimmest of all theaters—Italy. A 1945 captionless drawing—the torn combat medic's helmet lying mutely upon the earth where it fell—exemplifies his complete break with garrison days. While some characters like Willie and Joe were to be seen in his 45th Division days, it was not until he began to draw his usual two-column cartoon for The Stars and Stripes that Joe and Willie were actually born.

Mauldin is a frank champion of the common soldier, the enlisted man, and without a doubt therein lies the secret of much of his popularity among GIs and junior line officers, who frequently identify themselves more closely



with the enlisted men beside whom they fight and die than with other officers.

"Beautiful view. Is there one for the enlisted men?" Mauldin has a lieutenant say as the sun rises over a mountain scene.

"Dammit, ya promised to bring rations this trip," Joe barks when Willie's mule arrives laden with a replacement lieutenant fresh from Fort Benning.

There was also another Mauldin cartoon in which one major general leaned over in the moment of a tongue lashing from a lieutenant general, to murmur to another two-star: "Hope I meet that guy in civilian life."

Mauldin has, indeed done many cartoons lampooning officers. They have appeared with regularity in *The Stars and Stripes*, and the editors can vouch that rarely, if ever, has there come a suggestion from on high that he cease doing such cartoons. As a matter of fact, most officers seemed to like them just as much as the enlisted men.

Many soldiers and civilians have asked on and off just how much Army censorship there has been on Mauldin's cartoons. Be it said to the credit of the High Command in the Mediterranean that there has been very little—in fact, practically none. Some of the cartoons have, indeed, hit at fairly high places and several of them have probably been unfair in their criticisms. General Patton once suggested rather strongly that Mauldin shave his characters—a suggestion which was not followed. One cartoon, which can be seen on Page 9, criticizes very strongly an MP policy that prevailed for a short period in the city of Naples. It drew the ire of a commanding general there. Only twice during 18 months of running Mauldin has the Officer-in-charge of *The Stars and Stripes* been put on the carpet for passing a Mauldin cartoon, and then he was put there not by the High Command but by an intermediate command.

The editors of *The Stars and Stripes* have themselves felt that some of the cartoons were perhaps slanted a bit out of perspective. In those instances they have generally taken up the matter with the cartoonist himself, who has invariably been amenable to criticism from his colleagues.

A very enthusiastic group of Mauldin fans can be found in the higher echelons of commands. They have sometimes tended to spoil him—by letting him have jeeps and by inviting him to their messes. Around *The Stars and Stripes* however, Mauldin got out of nothing. He took his turn at charge of quarters like any other staff member.

"Bill Mauldin is the greatest single morale factor in Italy and France next to food and clothing," a general officer once remarked. Another general in a high command said that he considered Mauldin and Ernie Pyle the two greatest reporters of this war. Wise field commanders such as General Mark W. Clark and Lt. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott Jr., have long regarded

him as a shelf for soldier gripes, and Mauldin has been a frank admirer of both men and their understanding of soldiers.

Mauldin has received wide recognition both at home and in other war theaters. His cartoons are now reprinted in more than a hundred U. S. newspapers, after they have appeared in the Mediterranean edition of The Stars and Stripes. The soldiers have first seen the cartoons and after that the civilians have had a chance at them. The civilian sale of the cartoons has been purely a by-product of his Stars and Stripes work.

More recently, Sgt. Mauldin won the Pulitzer prize. The cartoon on which he won the prize frankly surprised both himself and the editors of The Stars and Stripes. It was not his favorite cartoon, nor was it that of the editors.

The job of making our fighting men forget the danger and misery of combat life for a few moments and of relieving the boredom of existence for base section troops has been the mission of Mauldin. It is a great tribute to his honesty and greatness that he has fulfilled that mission.

—THE EDITORS



# Italy





*"I wanna long rest after th' war. Mebbe I'll do a  
hitch in the reg'lars."*





*"You're lucky. You're learnin' a trade."*



*"This must look funny as hell."*





*"It will comfort my ol' woman to know I have given up  
rye whiskey an' ten cent seegars."*



*"Let B Company go in. They ain't been kissed yet."*





*"Tell him to look at the bright side o' things, Willie. His  
trees is pruned, his ground is plowed up an'  
his house is air-conditioned."*



*"Don't mention it, Lieutenant. They might have replaced  
ya with one of them salutin' demons."*





*"That button wuz shot off when I took this town."*



*"I think he should at least try to lie at attention."*





*"K Company artillery commander speakin'."*



*"Straighten those shoulders! How long have  
you been in the Army?"*







*"You'd hurry home too if  
you lived in a ration dump."*



*"Gimme my canteen back,  
Willie. I see ya soakin' yer  
beard full."*





*"I'm depending on you old men to be a steady  
influence for the replacements."*



*"Sure I got seniority. I got busted a week before you did."*





"Must be a tough objective. Th' ol' man says we're gonna have th' honor of liberatin' it."



*"Go ahead, Willie. If ya don't bust it ya'll worry  
about it all night!"*





*"I'll let ya know if I find th' one wot invented the 88."*



***"Bloody immoral army. They get that red ribbon if they  
stay out of trouble for a bloody year."***





*"I'll be damned. Did ya know this can opener fits  
on the end of a rifle?"*



*The Prince and the Pauper.*





*"Didn't we meet at th' cooks an' bakers school in '41?"*



*"Know any good Moslem prayers? I don't wanna miss any bets."*





*"We gotta blast 'em out. They found out we  
feed prisoners C-rations."*



*"I see you still got energy.  
You catch guard tonight."*

*"He's already gittin' drunk  
wit' power."*







"Ya wouldn't git so tired if ya didn't carry extra stuff.  
Throw th' joker outta yer deck o' cards."



*"Don't hurry for me son. I like to see young men  
take an interest in their work."*





*"No thanks, Willie. I'll go look for some mud  
wot ain't been used."*



"We better scam. Willie--th' army's comin' in."





"I tried one o' them labor-management arguments  
wit' Lootenant Atkins."



*"You blokes leave an awfully messy battlefield."*







"Oh, I likes officers. They make me wanta stay  
alive till th' war's over."





"Hullo, glamorous."

"Howdy, blitzkreig."



*"Wish to hell I wuzn't housebroke."*





"Geez, Gertie, th' front! Wait'll we tell th'  
magazines what it's like."



*"Maybe Joe needs a rest. He's talkin' in his sleep."*





*"Migawd! There we wuz and here they wuz."*



*"Quit beefin', or I'll send ya back to th' infantry."*





*"... forever, Amen. Hit the dirt."*



"... Helluva way to waste time. Does it work?"



REDRAWN BY REQUEST



The artist's favorite cartoon



*"Wisht I could stand up an' git some sleep."*



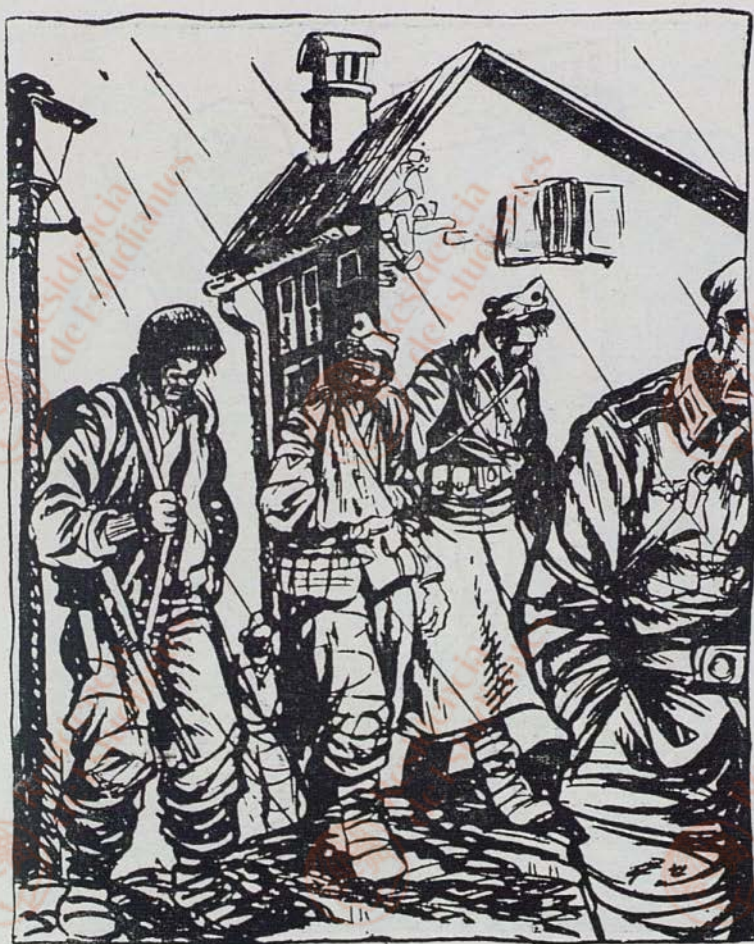


"Ordnance? Ah'm havin' trouble with mah  
shootin' ar'n."



*"He's right, Joe. When we ain't fightin' we  
should ack like sojers."*





*Fresh, spirited American troops, flushed with victory,  
are bringing in thousands of hungry, ragged,  
battle-weary prisoners. (News item)*

The Pulitzer Prize committee's favorite cartoon. It won Mauldin the 1944 award as the work which best exemplified his "distinguished service."



*"Let's grab dis one, Willie. He's packed wit' vitamins."*





*"Let's paint th' town red."*



*"We sure got th' goods on this guy, Captain. Civilians  
was supposed to turn in their weapons."*





*"... so Archibald kissed her agin' an' gently put her head on th' pillow. She gazed at him wit' half shut eyes--tremblin' hard--continued next week."*



*"Nice goin' Joe. You can take a rest while I  
finish diggin' my hole."*





*"My son. Five days old. Good lookin' kid, ain't he?"*



"Drop them cans in th' coffee water gentle, Joe--  
We got a chicken stewin in th' bottom."



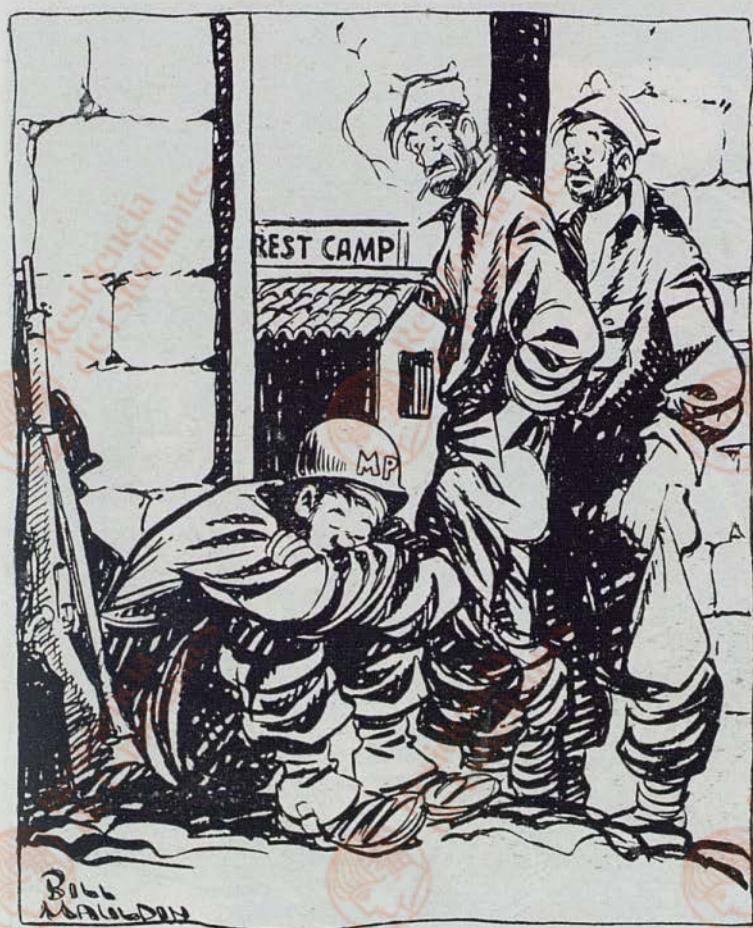


*"Honest, ol' pal, they done it while I wuz unconshus."*



*"I beg yer pardon. I didn't know ya wuz a captain  
at Culver."*





"This must be th' joint."



*"Didn't we meet at Cassino?"*





"One of 'em ain't been in long enuff. Th' other one has  
been in too damn long . . ."



*"Ya dern tootin' my sniffles is serious. I been  
drawin' mortar fire."*





*"I hate to run on a flat. It  
tears hell outta th' tires"*

*'Let's go to Naples. I know  
a corporal with a nice  
apartment.'*





*"That's right. We're 50 percent casualty. Joe got nicked."*





*"Remember that warm, soft mud last summer?"*



*"Ya might hafta catch a boat. One of them kids you  
chased off th' field was th' pilot."*





*"Geez. I didn't realize how rough you dogfaces live."*



*"How's things back in the States?"*





*"Did you volunteer for this or git caught  
in the Black Market?"*



*"I wuz beginnin' to think nobody wuz home."*





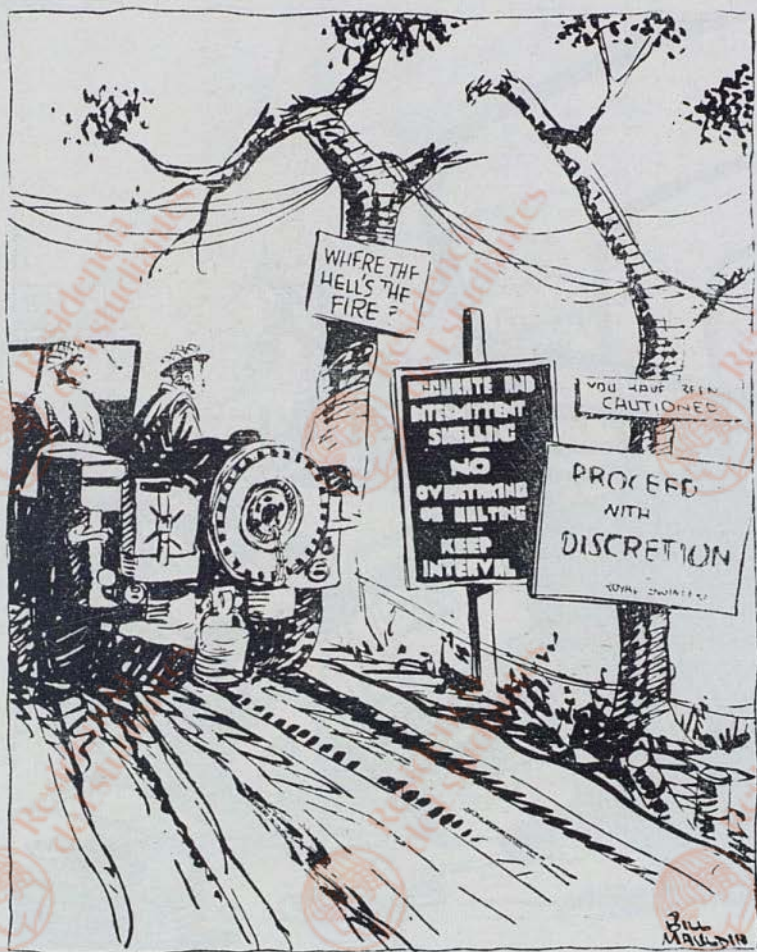
"Armchair strategist!"



*"The Doc says it's nothin' serious-- just  
hardened arteries."*

This appeared on the day that the 34th Infantry Division marked its 500th day of combat, the oldest overseas fighting unit in any theater of war.





"We've come to American territory, old man."



*"I'll be derved. Here's one wot wuz wrecked in combat."*





***"Dammit, Willie--it wasn't yer turn!"***

"What's so funny?" asked a couple of Signal Corps men in a letter to the editor.  
"We have to replace 'em."



*"Take off yer hat when ya mention sex in here  
It's a reverint subject."*





*"Yer wild, happy, free life is over. Tomorrer ya  
start luggin' ammo again."*



*"... them wuz his exact words--'I envy th' way you dog-faces git first pick of women an' likker in towns'."*





*"Tell them prisoners to act sloppier in front of th'  
lootenant. He might start gittin' ideas."*



*"By gad, this puts a new outlook on things."*

This was the artist's impression of visiting politicians.





*"Th' boys are beginnin' to think of you as a quack."*



*"If you'll turn my weapons platoon loose, I'll give ya my cooks for security. I'm goin' on th' line tonight."*





*"I'm a talent scout fer K Comp'ny. Ya lookin' fer work?"*



*"Your citation went through, Joe."*





"I got a hangover. Does it show?"



*"Don't startle him, Joe--it's almost full."*





**"The hell this ain't the most important hole in  
th' world. I'm in it."**



"I'm naked!"

This was the only time Willie shaved during the fighting in Italy, although he did remove his beard when the shooting stopped in May, 1945.





"Saddle sores."



**"Tell th' ol man I'm sittin' up wit two  
sick friends."**





"Expectin' rain?"



**"Congratulations. You're the 100th soldier who has  
posed with that bottle of Icy Cola. You  
may drink it."**





"Sure they's a revolution in Germany. Git down  
so they wont hit ya wit' a wild shot."



*"I'd ruther dig. A movin' foxhole attracts th' eye."*





*"Hey Fritz, how far are the Russians from Berlin?"*



Drawn at the front and flown back to home by courier plane, this cartoon appeared the day after War Correspondent Ernie Pyle was killed on Ie Jima. It bore the title "Brave Man," taken from Pyle's last book, "Brave Men."



# Invasion





*"You fellers oughta carry a little dirt t'dig holes in."*





*"He's gittin' th' fever, Joe. Now let 'im edge in."*



*"Hope it ain't a rocky beach. Me feet's tender,  
since they got webbed."*





*"When you hit th' water swish yer feet around.  
They kin use it."*



*"I'm the most important guy in the second wave. Everybody gave me their cigarettes to carry in me shirt pockets."*





*"I'm lookin' fer turtle eggs, Junior."*



*"I lose fifty bucks, I got here safe."*



# France And Germany









*"They oughta hire a homme to clean up after them chevaux."*



*"We calls 'em garritroopers. They're too far forward  
t' wear ties an' too far back t' git shot."*





"Are you seeking a company of infantry,  
mon Capitaine?"



*The Perfect Gentleman*





*"Nein, nein--go ahead! I would not think of interfering."*



*"You leave Weelie alone, or I'll never speak  
to you again."*





*"I am waiting to see what hatches."*

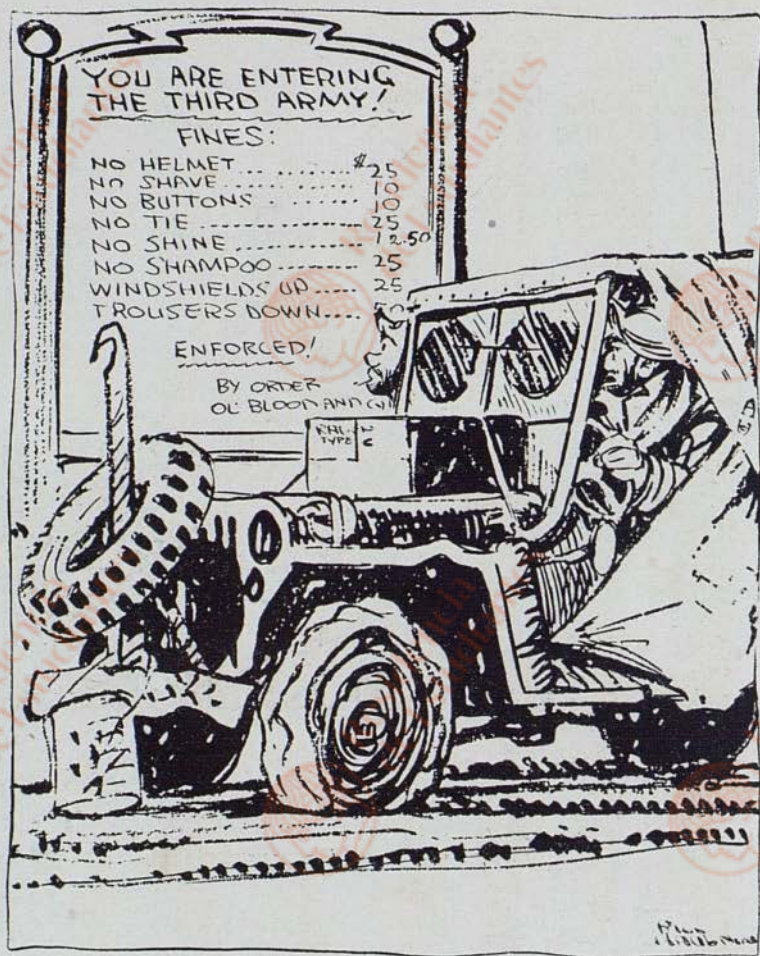


*"You Americans have everything."*





"We come up from Italy to get some publicity."



**"Radio the ol' man we'll be late on account  
of a thousand mile detour."**

This barb brought the artist face to face with General George S. Patton, commander of the 3rd Army. Mauldin jeeped for hundreds of miles to keep an appointment with General Patton. He emerged from the conference grinning, pointing out that he had escaped with his skin. Willie and Joe did not shave.





**"Careful. Th' toilet seat's booby trapped."**



*"Must belong to a politician."*





*"Let's step it up, Sergeant--we want to get  
there in time for a long rest."*







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