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Queen of the State Guard

1942

WHEN THE JAPANESE HIT Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, it was like 1898 all over again for Hearst—as though the battleship *Maine* had just exploded in Havana harbor and the freedom of Cuba was more at stake than ever before. Only now, nearly forty-four years later, it was the freedom of the entire United States that concerned him.

Hearst switched from peacetime to wartime in a flash on that historic Sunday morning. He was at Wyntoon, where he'd been living for the past several months; he didn't waste a step in having to move or relocate there, as most have mistakenly thought for too long (Marion's faulty recollection that she and Hearst were told to vacate San Simeon has greatly magnified the error). Except for their quick trips to San Francisco in May and to Los Angeles in November, the two had been safely tucked away in that forested setting along the McCloud River since late April. Hearst had his established mouthpiece through "In the News," one that he could use now for the nation's benefit in rallying his millions of readers to the noble cause of defeating all comers, all opponents of the superior American way. Concurrently, Marion had her Children's Clinic in West Los Angeles, soon to become her War Work Hospital in a generous, pragmatic gesture.

And yet, and yet, and yet . . . Marion's account of what happened late in 1941 must surely be aired here in full, for she did more than merely fib, as her father might have done in his day. No, she came forth with a king-sized whopper, as tall a tale as any to be found in her

memoir of 1951/1975. It provides the opener in Chapter 12 of *The Times We Had*.

“We hadn’t been to Wyntoon for a long time,” she began, “until the war started,” meaning the American involvement as of December 8, the day after Pearl Harbor was bombed. As for her and Hearst’s use of Wyntoon, 1941 marked the fifth consecutive year that their stays there had been protracted, measurable in months-long periods on and off since 1937. Marion’s highly fictive account continued:

San Simeon [the hilltop compound] looked like a birthday cake, and it was a target. I didn’t want to go and W. R. didn’t want to go, but somebody, the federal government or the state, told us to get out. W. R. said, “If they blow it up, I want to stay with it.”

“But I don’t,” I said. “I don’t want to be blown up just for a castle.”

W. R. said, “We can go down in the cellar and hide.”

“No thanks. Close it all up and let’s get to Wyntoon.”

W. R. said, “Well, I’m not evading the war.”

I said, “I don’t want to be shot for no reason. It would have been perfectly okay if I’d had a gun and could fight somebody—which I couldn’t, because I’d wiggle [be cowardly]. But I didn’t see why we should stay right in the line of fire. They could see us from miles away, and W. R. had been the one who first started to write about the yellow peril.

I said, “If they’re after anybody, they’re after you. They’re going to look for San Simeon, and we’ll all go up in a blow of smoke.” Then we went to Wyntoon.

It makes for a plausible story, one told and retold on Hearst Castle tours thousands of times since 1975. What, we have to ask ourselves, was Marion’s motive in spinning such a yarn? What if anything did she feel needed hiding or whitewashing? The alleged incident took place a mere ten years before she reminisced in 1951; her memory should have been sharp on such a vital point. Just as everyone of sufficient age nowadays can recall where they were when John F.

Kennedy was shot in 1963, people of earlier generations can distinctly recall their whereabouts, their circumstances on December 7, 1941. What an odd thing to lie about. There's little more that any of us can say before giving the matter a shrug and moving on. We should at least be grateful that *The Times We Had* contains few other anecdotes as contrived as this one. Almost childlike tract that much of the book is, we nonetheless yearn for its credibility, yearn for it to make enough sense to warrant our perusing it, as we endlessly read between its innocent, meandering lines. As with the Hayes Perkins diary, there's often little else to go on, little else to turn to besides Marion's recollections, no matter their integrity or, sadly at times, their lack of it.

JANUARY 1, 1942, may have been a holiday for most people, but for Hearst it was yet another day of writing in the wee hours, in the cold, snowbound hours at wintry Wyntoon. He went after a man who'd become a nemesis of his in recent years:

Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of England, made a magnificent speech before the United States Congress [on December 26].

He extolled the United States for sending its war equipment to England.

He besought the continued protection of England.

He gloried in the conquest of the Libyan sand hills by England and exulted in the restoration of the Abyssinian Haile Selassie to his ancestral throne by England. . . .

However, it might interest Mr. Churchill to know that the average American does not care one tinker's dam[n] about Haile Selassie and his Abyssinian throne, and does not think that it makes a lot of difference in the eventual issue of this war who owns the sand dunes of the Libyan desert.

Hearst was in his element. The war would be good for him, good for business, good for plying his rapier-wit trade. He didn't forget,

though, to be civil toward those he knew and loved, one of them being Louis B. Mayer, whom he wired at 625 Ocean Front in Santa Monica on that New Year's Day:

Dear Louis: Marion and I wish you many joys and many great achievements during the coming year.

And we wish you perfect health along with perfect happiness.

We feel you can accomplish all the fine things you wish to do without working yourself to death.

So we include in our wishes a little bit of advice not [to] work too hard.

We want you to live long and be our good and valued friend for many years.

On Marion's birthday in 1942—Saturday, January 3; she was now forty-five—Ray Van Ettisch notified all the Hearst Sunday editors as follows:

By direction of the Chief, *Los Angeles Examiner* is preparing and will send you for publication in *Pictorial Review* section of Sunday, Jan. 11 mats [printing matrices] for a double truck [two-page spread] on Marion Davies War Hospital and Marion Davies War Committee.

Larry Mitchell, the Hearst-Davies attorney in Los Angeles, wired Joe Willicombe along those lines on Sunday the 4th:

Please tell Mr. Hearst following have accepted membership on Marion Davies' War Work Committee:

Mrs. Jack Warner

Mrs. Darryl Zanuck

Mrs. Samuel Goldwyn

Mrs. Frank Barham

Mrs. R. A. Carrington Jr.

Countess Barbara Hutton Reventlow

Miss Claudette Colbert

Miss Louella O. Parsons

Mrs. Ernest Glendenning

Miss Ella Williams

Mrs. Clarence Moore
Mrs. Louis B. Mayer
Princess [Conchita] Pignatelli
Miss Carole Lombard
Mrs. Fletcher Bowron

Balance of committee out of town but will contact [them] when they return tomorrow. Best regards.

Pearl Harbor had been bombed four weeks earlier to the day. Obviously, Hearst and Marion had been busy since then, hadn't skipped a beat in adapting to wartime mode. Preparedness was a big part of it. As Bill Hunter in Los Angeles told Willicombe on January 5 concerning a close friend of Marion's in the Inglewood area:

Sister Ernesta asked me to inform the Chief that she has arranged to evacuate the sisters [the nuns in her charge] to Madera [near Fresno] if the necessity arises.

Why was it usually *Hearst* who got informed of such matters? He must have been regarded as Marion's protector, even as her spokesman in those male-dominated times. He was indeed that in addition to the man who wrote "In the News" for the Hearst papers; this for his column of Tuesday, January 6:

Gentlemen of the Congress, stop explaining and apologizing and get to work on a comprehensive program for United States defense.

Senator Tom Connolly of Texas says:

"We are a peaceful people. We were not expecting war and we were not prepared for war."

To be sure Mr. Connolly. "We ARE a peaceful people" and we do not want war.

But we are also an intelligent people and it is inaccurate to say that we have not been expecting war.

We have been expecting it for a long time.

We have been warned of war with the Japanese.

Our governors and our generals in the Philippines have continually warned us of the menace of Japan.

The greatest of those generals was Douglas MacArthur, whom Hearst was supporting vociferously.

Hearst and Marion would be making no fewer than three trips to Los Angeles in the first part of 1942, starting with the one Marion mentioned to her nephew Charlie Lederer on January 7:

Did not want to telephone as I know you are busy [at MGM]. Arriving LA Sunday night [the 11th] for few days & will telephone.

Willicombe brought Bill Hunter up to speed the next day, Thursday, January 8:

Chief is going down to Los Angeles Saturday night [the 10th] on the same train he took last time [in November 1941], and will be at [the] Beach House the same time Sunday night.

Will you kindly take care of him Sunday night the same time as before—at Beach House—getting there around 7 p.m.

Also will you get to Beach House at 11 Monday morning [the 12th] to hold the fort until I get there about noon. Thanks.

Willicombe made the usual arrangements beforehand, as in these words for the *San Francisco Examiner* on Thursday the 8th:

Chief going to Los Angeles Saturday night for about [a] week. Meantime, send Sunday papers and succeeding dailies until further notice to Chief at Santa Monica as usual.

Ella Williams got a more detailed briefing at her home address in Westwood—from Willicombe:

Chief and Marion are going down Saturday night arriving at Beach House Sunday night shortly after seven o'clock. They expect to be down about a week.

Please have three Tanner cars meet train [at] Glendale seven-twenty Sunday night.

And please notify Connie [Constantine Fox]. They will want dinner of course Sunday night as on last trip.

Rose [Davies], Mr. [Victor] Erwin and Kay English in party.

Also will you kindly arrange for opening of the switchboard. Mrs. [Estelle] Forsythe and Mrs. [Hazel] Woodland are coming down to operate it.

And will you kindly arrange for them to stay at Beach House. The room that [the Al] Bergers had near telephone room would be fine. Al not coming.

Mrs. Forsythe and Mrs. Woodland will come down on train with us and one of them will go direct to Beach House to take care of Sunday night service, then they will divide the days, beginning Monday, as before.

Hunter will be on job Sunday night. I will be there Monday.

By the way, we are sending check tonight for that old telephone bill, so that company will have no kick. Thanks.

Hearst and Marion heard from Carole Lombard in Van Nuys on Friday the 9th, right before they left Wynton to head south:

Dear Marion and W. R.: Regret terribly cannot appear at Hospital this time as I am leaving for Indiana on government defense rally. Please call on me anytime as I should love to serve.

That same day, January 9, Ray Van Ettisch of the *Examiner* had for Willicombe a "copy of [the] letter Gov. [Culbert] Olson sent yesterday to Miss Davies":

"I have just been advised by Brigadier General Joseph O. Donovan, the Adjutant General of the State of California, that you have turned over the Marion Davies' Foundation Hospital in Southern California to the First Medical Battalion, California State Guard.

"I understand that you have also made available all of the facilities and equipment so that we can use these facilities as a State Guard war base hospital.

"As Governor of the State of California and on behalf of the people, I want to thank you for this splendid contribution in making this hospital available to the Guardsmen whose sole goal and main objective is to aid and protect life and property during our present war emergency."

On January 9 as well, an editorial by Jose Rodriguez in Los Angeles touched on what was afoot with the State Guard campaign that Hearst and Marion were promoting:

The California legislature faces the urgent obligation of decisive promptness in making up its mind in one way or another to support the California State Guard.

The Japs themselves will not hesitate at all about THEIR decision to bomb coast cities, coast industrial plants and coast objectives generally. . . .

We do not want to have to add to our "Remember Pearl Harbor" slogan another about "Remember Los Angeles," or any one whatever, based on the destruction of life and property on our coast, destruction which might have been largely prevented if California had been PROPERLY PREPARED.

Certainly, protection of the Pacific Coast is not going to receive any very great attention from the East.

The hasty, and more or less futile trip of Mayor [Fiorello] La Guardia to California and back to New York, is an indication of what we may expect in the way of aid and comfort from the Atlantic Coast. . . .

The California State Guard should be manned, equipped and officered to perform its function immediately.

Hearst's own words shed light on what his and Marion's imminent trip was all about—this from him to John Boettiger, publisher of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, the sole Hearst paper in the Pacific Northwest:

We are compelled to go to Los Angeles for a ceremony but will be back here Thursday [the 15th].

More preparations were made that same Friday, January 9, before Hearst and Marion's departure; Willicombe to Hunter in Los Angeles:

Please tell whoever handles the matter to send Chief's [news]papers to [the] Beach House beginning with the Sunday paper [of the 11th] and continue until further notice.

Still more helpful on January 9 is this letter from Marion to the actress Seena Owen in Westwood that day:

I feel wonderful. So does W. R. We will be in L.A. soon for war work. I shall call you.

A bit of strategic news came along on January 15, with Marion's new role in mind; Hunter to Willicombe:

Please tell Chief that Major Nolan [of the State Guard] approved the designs and the materials for the two uniforms and the coat [cape] for Miss Davies.

In turn, Hunter had this question for Willicombe the next day, Friday the 16th:

Do you know where the Chief and Miss Davies want the two uniforms and the cape made?

A Saturday Symposium letter that Hearst published on January 17 captured the volatile passions of the day; its writer, named John Howard, was an Angeleno:

You have no doubt read the dispatches where the Japs intend to intern all white people in Manila. . . .

Ironically, it is strange to note that within a stone's throw of every airplane plant [in the Los Angeles area], there are acres of land under cultivation by Japanese, who are permitted to work days, nights and Sundays. Any one of them could toss a hand grenade far enough to hit one of these plants. Now isn't that just ducky?

The Mexican government has taken the necessary precautions to move the Japs away from the coast. What are we going to do about it? Ever since I was a boy, I have read in your columns of the "yellow peril" and your prediction has come to pass. Now is the time to put on the real pressure in your column. The leading papers carry the caption

“Remember Pearl Harbor.” The next [caption] will be “Forget Los Angeles—It Was Our Fault.”

Someone should sound a warning through the press and over the radio so that the local and federal authorities will do something about it before it is too late.

Hearst, of course, was the perfect man for the job in California. Other powerful publishers, such as Col. Robert McCormick in Chicago, could sound the alarm elsewhere in the country.

An undated item from January 1942 pertains to the few days at mid-month that W. R. and Marion spent in Santa Monica; she wired Constantine Fox upon their return to Wynton:

I left my hair band at the Beach House either in Mr. Hearst's room or mine. Would you please find it and send it up immediately.

“CHIEF INSTRUCTS ALL PAPERS to continue whatever is printable in pictures and text about Carole Lombard” (Willicombe to all editors on Sunday, January 18, 1942). Miss Lombard and her mother were among twenty-two people on a DC-3 that crashed near Las Vegas, Nevada, early on Friday the 16th; everyone on board had perished:

“Do not drop it at all [Chief further says]. She is not only immensely popular moving picture idol but she is popular heroine now, pronounced by the government as the first woman casualty in the war.”

The tragedy prompted a note of condolence from “Marion & W. R.,” a message sent over the teleprinter to Clark Gable in Encino:

Dearest Clark: I don't know what to say. I wish we could be of some help to you. Please try to bear up over this horrible tragedy. You have all our love & sympathy.

Bureaucracy and the need for a strong California State Guard mixed about as well as oil and water, as far as Hearst was concerned.

Charlie Ryckman weighed in editorially from San Francisco on Monday, January 19:

The deplorable stalemate in the State legislature over the California State Guard Bill should be dissolved by enactment of the measure designated as Senate Bill Number Two.

This measure was passed by the Senate nearly two weeks ago.

It would provide ten million dollars for the immediate support of the State Guard. . . .

The Assembly should refrain from further political machinations, and follow the simple, practical and patriotic example of the Senate by approving the measure.

That same day, January 19, Ray Van Ettisch expressed professional concern on behalf of the *Los Angeles Examiner*; this to Joe Willicombe at Wynton:

Chief said yesterday he thought some "outside papers" had made bigger and better play on Carole Lombard story than us. Would appreciate knowing which papers he meant, as we walloped all opposition here and in San Francisco pictorially and textually, with full pages of pictures every night and two pages of pictures-plus today. Sunday [the 18th] alone we devoted 21 columns to the story with a full page of pages-plus.

Van Ettisch was right. Willicombe got back to him the same day with a quick explanation:

Replying your message regarding play on Carole Lombard story, Chief says:

"O.K. Guess I was mistaken. The handling of story in coast papers has been great."

When Hearst and Marion were in Los Angeles a week earlier, she'd visited Charlie Lederer's set at MGM. *Fingers At the Window* was his directorial debut at age thirty, after ten years of screenwriting; *Fingers* was a mystery starring Lew Ayres, Laraine Day, and Basil Rathbone. Hearst knew that some photographs had been taken of Marion while she was on Charlie's set. He therefore asked Ray Van

Ettisch at the *Examiner*, "Can you print the best one in the *Pictorial Review* some Sunday?" Van Ettisch said he would. Hearst's promotion of Marion continued, even in wartime.

Bill Hunter had a follow-up question for Willicombe on Tuesday, January 20; old business now from the week before:

Am I supposed to do anything about the two uniforms and cape for Miss Davies? Am still holding the sketches.

It was Hearst himself who answered Hunter's query, likewise on the 20th:

Miss Davies wants her uniform and cape made. Possibly at [J. W.] Robinson's. Consult Miss [Marie] Pepi there. Size 20.

If Robinson's do not do uniforms Miss Pepi will recommend someone.

With regard to young Lederer's progress at MGM, Hearst sent Van Ettisch a detailed message at this juncture—the date was still Tuesday, January 20:

Pictures taken on Charlie Lederer's set received.

Kindly select photograph with all five [people] included.

Build story on Charlie Lederer.

This is his first job as director.

He has written wonderful scenarios for many successful pictures.

His dialogue is sure to be the finest and the studio is confident that his direction will be equally good.

He is the youthful nephew of Marion Davies, and she is immensely proud of him.

She visited his set recently and beamed upon him.

She informed Miss Laraine Day and Mr. Lew Ayres that she considered Charlie a positive genius.

The lovely little lady on the left of the photograph smiling so gaily is Miss Day.

The genial gentleman to the right is Mr. Ayres, who has done so much to make the Dr. Kildare series of pictures famous.

The young lady looking forward from this photograph is Pat Van Cleve, married to Arthur Lake, who renders Dagwood on the screen.

“Pat” is Marion’s niece.

“Charlie” is making a futile effort to repress Marion.

It can’t be done, Charles.

One of Marion’s best friends—if not her very best friend—was Carmen Considine Pantages of the old vaudeville family of theater owners (she’d married the son of her father’s main rival). From Beverly Hills, Carmen wired Marion at Wynton on January 21:

Marion darling, would have left tonight but developed a bad head cold. If it is better will leave Friday morning or evening [the 23rd] if the doctor gives his OK and there is no danger of giving it to anyone else. What luck when I am dying to get there. Love to you, Lorraine [Walsh] and Mr. Hearst.

Marion heard from another resident of Beverly Hills on Wednesday the 21st, namely, Gloria Vanderbilt:

I am going to ask a favor of you. Will you lend your name as patroness to Society of Motion Picture Artists and Illustrators who are presenting the first Hollywood Beaux-Arts Ball at Earl Carroll’s on Friday the 13th no less of February? All profits going to the American Red Cross. I and all our friends have accepted and we would be very proud to have you among us.

Marion soon said she’d be “very happy to accept.” A story slated for the *Examiner* that Van Ettisch ran by Willicombe for approval gives more insight into Marion’s resilience and charm at age forty-five. “Is this story by Bill Wickersham for Sunday Smart Set Hollywood page OK?” Van Ettisch asked:

“That’s easy,” grinned Joel McCrea when, on Paramount’s set for *The Palm Beach Story* [released November 1942], we questioned him anent [about] his most memorable Hollywood party. “It was one of Marion Davies’ parties and I shall never forget it as long as I live.

“At the time I was still in college and working as a lowly extra in Marion’s hit picture, *The Fair Co-Ed* [released October 1927]. I had heard of the party but, as a mere extra, never dreamed I’d be invited. However, I figured without Marion’s gracious compassion and democratic spirit.

“Always marvelous to everyone, she saw that I received an invitation. Needless to say, I was practically speechless. Immediately, however, a very serious problem arose. For I neither owned a suit nor had I ever worn one. I was about to rent one when, magnanimously enough, Charlie Farrell offered to loan me his.

“As an extra, I had seen a few film stars, but never so many at one time. In that most unforgettable party were Charles Chaplin, Marilyn Miller, Mary Pickford, William S. Hart and a hundred other top-notch stars. And reigning, like such a little queen, was Marion herself.”

Most likely the party McCrea recalled was at 1700 Lexington Road in Beverly Hills. The Beach House, despite what Louella Parsons said about it in September 1926 (see Chapter 2), wasn’t far enough along in 1927 to host such a function, even in the improvised way that Hearst was famous for. As to the clearance Van Ettisch sought (out of long habit in such matters), Hearst gave his permission the same day as the query, January 21, 1942.

As to Carmen Considine’s concern about less-than-shining health at the moment, Marion had a welcome reply for her, this on the 21st as well:

Just got your wire. Come on up as we all have colds. Would love to have you up as soon as possible.

Thursday, January 22, brought the question of Marion’s uniform for the California State Guard back to the forefront; Hunter to Willicombe:

Just a thought—does Miss Davies want Orry-Kelly [of Warner Bros.] to design the cape or let the man at Robinson’s do it?

2. Robinson's say measurements for uniforms are not taken the same as for an ordinary lady's suit, but are taken the same as for a man's uniform. Therefore they hesitate to make uniforms in size twenty and submitted two uniforms which they would like her to try for size. Am sending these with the pictures [the films for Wyntoon] to her at Dunsmuir tonight.

Hearst has been called a micro-manager. He surely was that where the sanctity of Marion's image and her welfare went; for Larry Mitchell, the Los Angeles attorney who'd been the paramour of Ethel Davies before she died suddenly in 1940, Willicombe had the following on Thursday, January 22, 1942:

Chief says remarks of announcer about Marion and Clinic [in Sawtelle, West Los Angeles] over KFI Friday evening [slated for the 23rd], received in your letter of 20th, are OK.

The Children's Clinic had already been converted to the Marion Davies War Work Hospital, less than two months after Pearl Harbor. Willicombe gave Ella Williams an update on that score the same day as his message to Larry Mitchell, January 22:

Our truck taking down to hospital tomorrow from San Simeon Friday 20 tents, 40 cots, 20 tables, 20 chairs and 40 pillows. Chief understands you have enough blankets. Truck should arrive about 5 o'clock.

Have told driver to see Lieutenant Brown.

Marion fibbed lightly on the 22nd in wiring Clark Gable in Encino when she encouraged him to go up to Wyntoon, saying, "There is no one here but W. R. and myself." For in wiring the minor actress Kay English at 321 Ocean Front that same afternoon, she had these words to say:

I am so happy that Rose [Davies] is pleased with the house. Nothing new [going on] except that Anna Boettiger and her husband [John] is here and Lorraine [Walsh], Pat & Arthur [Lake]. We miss you and Rose very much. Tried to get you on the phone but apparently you were not in.

Ray Van Ettisch at the *Examiner* provided more details on the 23rd about the radio broadcast that Larry Mitchell had written about earlier in the week; Van Ettisch told Willicombe:

Station KFI has a regular program nightly called "Nothing But Praise." Some person or institution worthy of a bow for humanitarian or other notable work is singled out and mentioned. Tonight Miss Davies and her Clinic are to be mentioned. It is KFI, 10:53 p.m., in case Chief or Miss Davies wish to tune in.

It developed on the 23rd also that Marion would, in fact, like to have Orry-Kelly design the cape that would accentuate her State Guard uniform. She wired the renowned designer that evening in Hollywood:

I want to thank you for the lovely sketches. Do you want them back? [Of] course I want to have some photographs made. Thank you very much. Lots of love.

The Friday night radio program on KFI led Van Ettisch to ask Willicombe about its suitability: "Please wire if this story for Sunday [the 25th] about Miss Davies' Clinic is OK to print and if we shall send to other papers":

Singled out for noteworthy recognition of her clinic for needy children, Marion Davies, film star, was honored Friday night on the "Nothing But Praise" program heard by the radio audience of K.F.I.

The tribute, given by the program's announcer David Starling, was the outgrowth of a study that had been made by Peter de Lima, the program's writer, of the Marion Davies Foundation Clinic at 11672 Mississippi Avenue, West Los Angeles.

Starling told his listeners at the outset—

"We spend these nights talking about people who are helping to make the Southland a better place in which to live—people and institutions doing things of which we can all be proud—which make us want to throw our hats up in the air with enthusiasm—which give us a little lump in the throat to think about."

He explained that it was just one of the many activities of Miss Davies that had drawn his attention, an activity that has resulted in her Foundation Clinic becoming recognized as “one of the country’s truly great clinics for children.”

His audience was told how Miss Davies started the Clinic 14 years ago [1928] to provide medical attention for the children of war veterans who otherwise could not get the care they needed, and how through the years more than 100,000 children have received treatment in a beautifully equipped building housing the finest laboratory and technical equipment that money can buy.

Starling continued:

“In 1940 alone, twelve thousand five hundred and eighty-six [12,586] children, from homes whose parents could not afford to pay for treatment elsewhere, received much-needed medical, surgical and dental care. These children, up to sixteen years of age, came from West Los Angeles, Palms, Santa Monica and areas in that vicinity.

“Here, at the Marion Davies Foundation Clinic, they received skilled, sympathetic attention from a staff of specialists—each one of whom volunteers a great deal of his time to this fine humanitarian organization. The Clinic’s chief of staff is the newly appointed Dr. Ned Miller, long associated with the work of the Clinic. Dr. Miller is one of those doctors whose competence and knowledge stands out all over him—one of those doctors it makes you feel better merely to look at, when you’re sick.

“And the men of his staff are all like that—all intensely interested in the work of the clinic, all whole-heartedly in accord with the aims and ideals of Marion Davies, who, after fourteen years of thoroughly unselfish and enthusiastic leadership and support, still actively participates in all that the clinic does.

“These are the doctors who take care of nutritional disorders among many of the underprivileged, provide general medical care for hundreds of others, special orthopedic treatments for those requiring them, who maintain the eye, ear, nose and throat and the x-ray departments—and the all-important cooperative home visits.”

Describing the success of the Clinic in saving children's lives Starling described one letter a grateful mother wrote Dr. Miller, and said:

"She wrote pages to show she realized there was nothing she could say—until finally it was plain to anyone who could read that she was not saying thanks with words but with tears of gratitude. . . .

"I can't think of a finer service to one's fellow men than the service that the Marion Davies Foundation Clinic has been rendering to children throughout these years. And so, tonight, I'd like to present one of this program's biggest and rarest bouquets, made up of the flowers of appreciation and praise, to Marion Davies, with a special salute to her for many fine and generous deeds."

JOSE RODRIGUEZ AND CHARLIE RYCKMAN kept editorializing about the matter of "the greatest urgency" that the California State Guard amounted to. Hearst himself aimed higher with the proselytizing he did through his daily column, "In the News." He was now publishing the column in the Sunday papers as well as the regular Monday through Saturday editions. For Sunday, January 24, he led off with "The War in the Pacific is not only the most serious situation that confronts the Allies, but it is the only phase of the war which is now vital":

Hong Kong of course has fallen to the Japanese.

Singapore is being more menaced every day.

The Malayan Peninsula is being absorbed by the constant advance of the Japanese armies, even as the prey of an anaconda is steadily drawn into the python's distended jaws. . . .

The Japanese flood has reached the very doors of Australia.

The Japanese advance toward the complete conquest of the Pacific is proceeding not only on schedule, but ahead of schedule. . . .

Hidiki Tojo, Premier of Japan, lately addressing the Japanese Diet, declared that Japan intends to fight until the United States and the British Empire are "brought to their knees."

Perhaps, friends and fellow citizens, we would better prevent that happening by realizing the importance of the Pacific situation before it is too late.

The Hearst attorney Henry S. MacKay Jr.—known as Heinie MacKay—wired Joe Willicombe on January 26:

Please tell Chief [that] at his request place of meeting has been changed from San Francisco to Los Angeles for February twenty-fifth Board [of Directors] meeting, at same hours. New notices being air mailed by [Larry] Mitchell.

Evidently Hearst and Marion were killing two birds with one stone: they had more “war work” to do in Los Angeles, and thus they’d be staying briefly at the Beach House again for the second time in the winter of 1942. Before they left for the long trip south, Marion heard from Louella Parsons, who wrote on Tuesday, January 27:

Marion darling:

I am enclosing a letter from Tom Geraghty [the screenwriter]. It is such a sweet note that I am passing it on to you. I would have sent it a long time ago but getting out a column and reviewing pictures has been just about all I can do. I am feeling wonderful again. I am as good as new—I hope.

I have thought of you many times and hope to see you very, very soon. I am going to call you up one of these evenings and have a talk.

I don’t know any news. We are all just jogging along trying to do our part.

Love to you and W. R.

Marion scrawled a heartfelt reply at the bottom of Louella’s letter: “I adore Tom Geraghty,” she said. “Give him my best love when you write to him. Please come up soon. We miss you.”

Geraghty’s letter to Miss Parsons was merely dated “Sunday”:

Obviously, this is not for publication or repetition:

Last night I saw for the first time *Citizen Kane*. Frankly, the entire conceit was like a nasty little urchin enviously throwing wet snowballs

at an illustrious philanthropist in top hat . . . technically, it was loud, screaming radio stuff.

But today [Sunday, January 25?] I read that lovely story of Marion Davies . . . another unselfish, magnanimous contribution to humanity . . . so typical of her.

And today I received a cheerful, thrilling night wire from *one* Lieut. [Douglas] Fairbanks [Jr.], who gave up an enviable career and brand new family . . . without being drafted.

And tonight, I was wondering to what army or naval station I could address a letter to 26 year-old Orson Wells [Welles], to pass him a left-handed compliment and wish him well.

That's how I feel at the moment.

All the best, always, to you and your favorite "Doc" [Louella's husband, Dr. Harry Martin].

A year after the *Citizen Kane* affair had boiled over in Hearstdom, the matter was still touchy when it came up, however rarely that may have been. Ella Williams queried Willicombe at Wyntoon on Thursday, January 29:

The *March of Time* feature [Time Inc. newsreel] is released through R.K.O. Is it okay to ask them for it, and if so, may I also ask them for features [movies]?

No, the ban still applied; and you'd have to think that Willicombe was surprised that Bill Williams had raised the question at all; he let her down gently:

Thanks for message regarding feature [the newsreel]. Never mind it. Do not see how we can ask anything from that outfit. Kindly forget it.

Hearst's column for Sunday, February 1, was dedicated to the late screen star who'd been killed two weeks earlier:

The death of Carole Lombard was not the only great loss that the country sustained when the T.W.A. plane crashed into Double Up Mountain on the 16th of January.

There were fifteen capable and highly skilled transport pilots of the ferry command on board the ill-fated—or the ill-managed—plane, in addition to the plane pilot and his co-pilot. . . .

There are some half dozen committees investigating the causes of the accident—although the immediate causes of the accident can in the nature of things never be definitely known, and the general and actual cause of all the accidents, since the government took over the management of the air lines, will not be investigated and will not even be mentioned in whispers at any meeting of any investigating committee.

Why?

Of course, folks, you do not have to be told.

Because the politicians are doing the investigating, and the politicians are not going to besmirch THEMSELVES.

Did you ever hear of a verdict rendered by politicians AGAINST politicians? . . .

So, folks, we must not look for any report from any political committee in regard to the T.W.A. airplane disaster which blames the politicians.

Probably the pilots will be blamed.

They make good scapegoats—and besides that, they are not here to defend themselves. . . .

No, there will be nothing that reflects on the politicians in the report of the investigating committees.

There will be a scapegoat found, and it will probably be the pilot in charge of the plane, who had only had some 13,000 hours of faultless flying to his credit—probably the longest and best record of any flyer in the airline service of the nation.

It is safe to blacken his name now.

He is dead.

Hearst appended a long letter from David L. Behncke, president of the Air Line Pilots Association, with whom he'd corresponded periodically for several years. Behncke's assessment was similar to Hearst's:

So far as the cause of the accident on January sixteenth is concerned, it will in all probability never be known, for the only people who actually know what happened are the pilots of the ill-fated craft, and they are dead and all their aboard-plane records are destroyed. . . .

Merely blaming the pilot will not solve air line accidents nor increase air safety. Thorough and scientific independent studies of accidents, free from all influence whatsoever, by a strictly independent air safety board might not solve them all, but it will solve all which are humanly possible to solve.

Behncke's wire also said, "The pilots would certainly be in a bad spot when the going really gets tough without a friend like you." He added:

You have stood in there and battled with us for years, taking the good with the bad, the happiness with the disappointments, and you are still in there pitching without a letup.

Behncke concluded by saying, "My only hope is that when the war ends, if not sooner, it will be possible to re-establish the Air Safety Board."

The subject was a sensitive one for Hearst and especially for Marion. They'd done a lot of private flying in previous years; Hearst's oldest son, George, was still a pilot; and the Lord and Lady Plunket tragedy at San Simeon had occurred just four years earlier, almost to the month.

THE TURNAROUND—the resurrection, really—that the Hearst empire experienced during the war years came earlier than later. Stability (measured by the number of papers the company owned and maintained) had been achieved by the end of 1939. Nineteen forty was a good year; so was 1941; the current year would be even better; and so the trend would continue: upward, with increased financial soundness.

Hearst's message of February 4, 1942, to Gorty (J. D. Gortatowsky), his head of operations in New York, bespeaks wartime privation and rationing but also the prospect of success and prosperity:

We should not sell the Chicago-Pittsburgh color press [which served both cities], or any color press or any possible usable equipment, because our papers are growing and need always more equipment and some of this can certainly be utilized. Especially when no other equipment is obtainable. Moreover the use of color is growing and the use of color inserts is growing. We may need some sort of Sunday booklet at any time. Let us exercise our mind[s] in employing all equipment, not in disposing of it.

Meanwhile, the California State Guard crisis remained unresolved, as a Rodriquez editorial pointed out on February 8:

The most fantastic satire of comic opera cannot match the incredible jumble in[to] which the California Legislature has thrown the entire problem of managing the State's internal defense. . . .

California is a theater of war, officially so designated. Industrially and economically, and geographically, it is a front trench in the Pacific war.

California cannot depend on the parliamentary debate in the Legislature for protection.

California needs an adequately trained, fully equipped, properly commanded, mobile, ever-present and hard-hitting State Guard.

Marion heard from Gloria Vanderbilt's sister on February 9—from a woman named Thelma Furness (who'd once been the mistress of the Duke of Windsor):

Dear Marion: You are an angel to be a patroness for the Beaux-Art ball at Earl Carroll's on Friday the thirteenth for the American Red Cross. So disappointed you are not in town to attend. It's our loss but you can help us this way. Would you be guest hostess for a group of U.S. privates? Do you prefer soldiers, gobs [sailors] or marines? The tickets are \$10.94 each.

Jose Rodriguez editorialized about the State Guard yet again, this time on February 11, a submission that won Hearst's large-scrawled "OK" in the upper right corner of the cover page and that was meant for both *Examiners*, Los Angeles and San Francisco:

California is the advanced base of democracy on the Pacific.

California is highly vulnerable to espionage and sabotage of all kinds. Its internal defenses are slight, inadequately trained or equipped.

California's State Guard, properly organized and armed and in sufficient numbers, would guarantee the peace and safety of industry and civilian life.

Give us this Guard, you debaters in Sacramento, if only to safeguard and prolong your leisurely enjoyment of parliamentary polemics while this country fights for its life.

Hearst kept abreast of the film industry at the same time that he produced his daily column, maintained his editor-in-chief role, and attended to numerous other responsibilities. The teenaged actress Susanna Foster, who'd gone to Wynton in 1940 to sing for Hearst and Marion, had starred opposite Jackie Cooper in a Paramount production late in 1941; she earned kudos from the Chief on February 13 after he and Marion saw her latest effort:

Your picture, *Glamour Boy*, is delightful and you are wonderful in it.

The whole cast is excellent and the direction admirable. A director [Ralph Murphy] with a fine sense of comedy is rare.

The picture is a perfect example of wholesome, cheerful entertainment, especially valuable in these troublous times.

Hearst wired Ray Van Ettisch at the *Examiner* the same day, February 13, about the new film he'd seen:

Can we give Paramount *Glamour Boy* a color page? It is good and wholesome.

It has Susanna Foster and Jackie Cooper in it, also a clever boy actor, and some good comedy.

Van Ettisch's reply on February 14 showed what a well-oiled machine the Wyntoon-Los Angeles connection could be, all for the perpetuation of the morning *Examiner* as the leading daily in Southern California in a year like 1942:

Preparing color page on Paramount's *Glamour Boy* for your approval as directed.

Two days later—on Monday, February 16—Hearst went after Winston Churchill again; this in his "In the News" column for Tuesday the 17th:

Mr. Winston Churchill has made his speech to the [House of] Commons [on February 2].

He has talked himself into power, but he cannot talk himself into victory.

Mr. Churchill's whole record is one of retreat—and defeat.

The defeat at Gallipoli [Turkey] is his outstanding achievement in the last war [in 1915–16], and his retreats and defeats in this war are too numerous and too well known to need enumeration. . . .

Mr. Churchill is being retained in power by the English, notwithstanding his incompetence, because he has succeeded in dragging the United States into England's European entanglements and in making the United States the buffer, the "solid foundation," in a world conflict, and the victim of England's and Mr. Churchill's individual "mistakes" and "misfortunes."

Hearst's fearlessness and brazen outspokenness was not only habitual and ingrained, it stemmed also from his financial success, which was gaining steam from the minute the forties decade dawned. He heard rousingly from Bill Baskervill of the Hearst Baltimore papers on February 17:

Your *Baltimore Sunday American* [is] first newspaper in [the] South to achieve quarter million of circulation.

Net sale Sunday [the 15th] was two hundred fifty thousand one hundred twenty-six [250,126].

When Hearst replied, he said challengingly and encouragingly to Baskervill: “Quarter of a million circulation Sunday is fine but it is nothing to what you are going to get with such a fine paper.” The Monday through Saturday version of the Baltimore paper was called the *News-Post*, one that Hearst was focusing on with the “Buy a Bomber” campaign he’d started soon after Pearl Harbor. Even in 1942 dollars, the figures he was aiming at were blinding, as conveyed by Willicombe on February 17:

Supplementing earlier message today to publishers and editors, Chief instructs:

“I wish the following five papers would set their goals in the ‘Buy a Bomber’ campaigns each one at \$20,000,000, and thereby make certain our raising the grand total of at least \$100,000,000 for bombers, namely, *New York Journal-American*, *Chicago Herald-American*, *Baltimore News-Post*, *Los Angeles Examiner* and *San Francisco Examiner*.”

Hearst was paying equal attention, as always, to the film industry, making it a daily part of his newspapers’ style and format; thus the following message from Ray Van Ettisch at the *L.A. Examiner* to Willicombe on Wednesday, February 18:

We have already made but unused these cinema color pages approved by the Chief:

The Jungle Book—a Korda production.

Reap the Wild Wind—a Cecil B. De Mille production.

Because the *Pictorial Review* color Sunday, March 8, will be on California defense, a special for San Francisco and Los Angeles, will the Chief indicate which of the above cinema pages we should send to Sunday papers outside of California for March 8?

We have in hand but not yet made these cinema color pages:

Twin Beds—an Edward Small production.

Brooklyn Orchid—a Hal Roach production.

Dudes are Pretty People—a Hal Roach production.

Willicombe got back to Van Ettisch in Los Angeles the same day, February 18:

Replying to your message about cinema color pages Chief says you may send either *The Jungle Book* or *Reap the Wild Wind* to papers outside California for March 8th—whichever one you choose.

He further instructs to use *Brooklyn Orchid* as soon as possible.

Chief says further:

“We are not going to use as many cinema color pages hereafter. We find that big pictorial pictures like [Douglas] MacArthur are more promotable and beneficial—whenever we can get them.”

MacArthur was indeed high on Hearst’s list as 1942 got fully under way. William Wren of the *San Francisco Examiner* wired Willicombe on Thursday the 19th about that very subject:

INS [Hearst’s International News Service] offers what it describes as excellent biography of General MacArthur by Bob Considine. This runs about twenty installments. *Los Angeles Examiner* plans to use it and so do we if Chief approves.

The Chief approved right away, as Willicombe told the troops across the country that same day, February 19:

Chief says biography of General MacArthur entitled “MacArthur the Magnificent” released by INS in 20 installments is OK for any paper that wants it.

The recent mention of MacArthur must have influenced the “In the News” column filed by Hearst on the 19th for Friday morning the 20th:

Why in the name of Valhalla, the heaven of heroes, do we Americans NOT support General MacArthur?

Why do we not reinforce him with ships and planes and men?

Surely, not all of our Navy was destroyed at Pearl Harbor.

One battered cruiser—survivor of the Pearl Harbor wreck—has straggled into San Francisco.

Send that, if nothing better, to the aid of MacArthur [in the Philippines].

And so on through a full-length piece devoted to the general that Hearst saw fit to deify, as many did in 1942. He concluded with “We have not a George Washington to bring us through our modern experiences of Valley Forge—but we have a Douglas MacArthur.”

HEARST’S SATURDAY SYMPOSIUM for February 21 included a letter addressed to him at San Simeon, an assumption of his whereabouts still seen after Pearl Harbor, not just before that event; the writer’s error aside, his letter made its point succinctly:

Ever since I was a little boy, I have read editorials in your papers warning the United States of the “yellow peril.” I learned to read about 1898 and if memory serves me correctly, you have been warning the people of America that some day the “Japs” were going to cause us trouble. They have done it.

If you were to adopt the tactics of some of your columnists, it would be only human for you to say: “I told you so.”

War was good for business; a fact of newspaper life. Hearst had known as much since at least 1898. Willicombe to the *New York Journal-American* on February 19:

Chief has noted contents of both your day letters [telegrams] this date regarding Pearl Harbor feature, and says:

“I think the full feature should be run and fully promoted. These features, if properly promoted, make circulation.”

Circulation, in turn, made revenue through increased advertising rates; another fact of newspaper life, a crucial one, a vital one.

The next day, February 20, Hearst’s sporadic role as a Hollywood impresario was at the forefront again. John Considine Jr., a producer at MGM, wired the Chief from Beverly Hills:

Dear W. R.: Deeply appreciate your consideration. Believe Clark Gable ideal man for role we discussed. Would appreciate your opinion. Informed my cousin Bob [Considine] of your compliments [about "MacArthur the Magnificent"]. Naturally he was delighted. Carmen joins me in love to Marion and yourself.

Clark Gable's only role during the early wartime years was the Jonny Davis he played to Lana Turner's Paula Lane in the drama *Somewhere I'll Find You*, released in September 1942, a month after Gable enlisted in the Army.

The names MacArthur and Considine came up again that day, February 20, when Joe Willicombe wired Joe Connolly at King Features Syndicate in New York:

Chief asks if you can get permission through War Department to make moving picture of life of General MacArthur, stated portion of proceeds to go to MacArthur family or to anything he desires, scenario to follow [Bob] Considine's story very largely. Chief, of course, has no financial interest.

Hearst and Marion would soon be making their second trip in as many months to the Beach House; Willicombe to Bill Hunter in Los Angeles on the 20th:

We are leaving Sunday night [the 22nd] for Santa Monica. Will you kindly be there when Chief arrives early Monday night same time as before [in January] with any accumulated editorials, telegrams, etc.

Also, please be there at eleven Tuesday morning [the 24th] until I arrive. We will work on same basis as before as much as possible.

We will be there only four days, Chief says.

2. Please remind Bill Williams [Ella Williams] last picture show here will be Saturday night [the 21st], also to have picture and operator at Beach Monday night, etc.

3. Tell Connie [Constantine Fox] Mr. [Henry S.] MacKay and Mr. [Martin] Huberth will be there at seven-thirty Monday night by appointment and probably for dinner.

The striking thing about such messages—of which the annals contain many—is the orderly, methodical way in which these short trips were planned, at least from Willicombe’s standpoint. The degree to which Hearst made such movements spontaneously or off the cuff seems limited; again, on Willicombe’s part it was all done like clockwork, with a crisp and precise air about it, almost as if he were making good on being the Colonel (an honorary title only).

Another noteworthy point: the speed with which the party could move from Glendale, through the low divide at Los Feliz, and out to the shoreline at Santa Monica—it could be done in a matter of minutes in those days of minimal traffic; Willicombe to Hunter once more on February 20:

Better have couple of Tanner cars meet party at Glendale seven-twenty Monday night. Check with [Ella] Williams to be sure not to duplicate order.

The ease of someone’s getting across town in 1942 is more apparent in Willicombe’s message to Heinie MacKay in Los Angeles, likewise on the 20th:

Train is scheduled to arrive Glendale seven-twenty Monday night so that party should reach Beach House if we are on time shortly before eight.

That kind of timing would be hard to match today, except in the utmost dead of night.

Willicombe’s arrangements are always fascinating to track; they make it distinctly possible to visualize the Hearst party in motion and Hearst himself at work; Willicombe to the *San Francisco Examiner*:

We leave for Santa Monica Sunday night February 22. Please switch papers and everything there beginning with issue of Monday the 23rd. Sunday papers should come here [to Wyntoon]. Will let you know when we return.

A similar message went to Ray Van Ettisch at the *Los Angeles Examiner*. Further insight into Hearst's working style and methods can be gained from yet another message of Willicombe's dated February 20, this one to the attorney and trustee Clarence J. Shearn in New York:

Chief says he will see you and Martin [Huberth] Tuesday in Los Angeles [at the Beach House]. He had planned to leave here Monday but has changed it to Sunday night so that he will be able to meet you Tuesday, and is sorry he cannot get away earlier.

Still more arrangements and details: Hunter reminded Willicombe on Saturday, February 21, that since Monday was a holiday (Washington's birthday, observed on the 23rd in 1942), "the picture [movie] operator will cost \$22.20 for that night." Hunter added, "You will recall when Chief was down here last [in January] he said, 'We would better omit Sundays and holidays.'"

Willicombe wired his agreement to Hunter that same day, the 21st, "to omit the moving picture Monday night." He also wired Martin Huberth, who was westbound on the Santa Fe *Superchief* from Chicago, that "Marion and Chief would like you and anyone with you to stay at Beach House" while Huberth was on the coast.

The latest Rodriguez editorial on the California State Guard (intended only for the *Examiners* in Los Angeles and San Francisco) didn't have far to go for approval; Ray Van Ettisch produced a print-out that could literally be walked to Willicombe's desk in the L.A. Railway Building, catty corner to the Examiner Building at 11th and South Broadway; the date was Tuesday, February 24:

The latest move to rescue the California State Guard from the fumbling and paralyzing clutch of the Legislature's politicians will take the form of an initiative measure. . . .

If all goes well, and the required 212,000 signatures [are] collected, the issue will be placed before the voters at the Aug. 25 primary.

That much downtime invited a good dose of Hearstian sarcasm, which Rodriguez knew how to deliver:

It is fervently to be hoped that enemy agents, spies and saboteurs will be sporting enough to dissolve their own organizations and cancel their plans until Aug. 25, when the new State Guard may be authorized by the people. . . .

The obvious benefits of the proposed State Guard measure are, nevertheless, considerable.

Paranoia and near-hysteria were standard then. A typical headline, this one dated February 21, announced “State Must Expect Jap Invasion Try, Olson Says.” The Governor (a Democrat) was quoted as saying:

Any one who believes that the Japanese will not attempt to seize, or destroy, or at least cripple our coastal cities and defense industry areas is totally blind to realities.

Lying close ahead was the federal order to remove all persons of Japanese ancestry from the western parts of California, Oregon, and Washington.

By the sheerest coincidence, the wee hours of Wednesday, February 25, while Hearst and Marion were in Santa Monica for the second time in 1942, found the couple experiencing the so-called Battle of Los Angeles, which no one, layman or historian, has adequately explained to this day. Marion’s animated recollection of the event in 1951/1975 can scarcely be missed: her words serve as a chapter opener near the end of *The Times We Had*:

I was at the beach house when we had the raid. We thought it was the Japanese, and the guns were going like mad. I was having a dinner party. All the lights in the house went out, and I jumped under the table. I crawled on all fours and tried to turn on the lights, and my own watchman rushed in and said, “Turn out those lights!” He brutalized me. “There’s a raid going on—the Japanese are attacking us.”

W. R. was up on the upper top balcony of the beach house watching the raid. Bullets were going over his head, shells were flashing like mad, and you never heard so many guns in your life. It lasted for half an hour. People were fainting.

There was firing all up and down the whole coast. I heard that two Japanese planes were shot down.

Well, it was terrible.

Marion's paragraphs partly explain the erroneous belief that she and Hearst were in Santa Monica or at San Simeon when Pearl Harbor was attacked, eleven weeks earlier. A related belief has it that they quit the Beach House in February 1942 in favor of San Simeon briefly and then went from there to Wyntoon.

The couple did nothing of the sort, of course, as we've seen from recent chapters.

There'd be no such beliefs if not for the Battle of Los Angeles; moreover, there'd be no such beliefs if not for Swanberg and of course Marion herself having placed the couple at San Simeon on December 7, 1941. It gets confusing, even baffling. Several well-meaning people, armed especially with *The Times We Had* and its histrionics of February 25, have inferred that Santa Monica-San Simeon-Wyntoon was the sequence of the couple's movements at this point. Or that San Simeon-Santa Monica-San Simeon-Wyntoon was the sequence. Either way, though, not so, unquestionably not so; the sequences from late in 1941 through this first part of 1942 were simply Wyntoon-Santa Monica-Wyntoon, on a total of three occasions thus far. A fourth instance lay a few weeks ahead, in mid-April.

HEARST AND MARION stopped at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco on their latest return to Wyntoon, bypassing San Simeon of course in the process. War was very much the subject of the moment when Hearst received the latest word at the Fairmont from the *New York*

Journal-American, pertaining to Douglas MacArthur; the date by now was nearly a week after the Battle of Los Angeles—Tuesday, March 3:

Have the complete testimony of General MacArthur before the House and Senate Committee while he was Chief of Staff [1930–1937]. It contains material which I think you would want us to develop especially if General MacArthur is made Commander in Chief of Pacific as it gives his idea of how the nation should have been prepared and how war should be fought.

Hearst devoted some of his front-page columns to Japanese history and similar subjects during these early months of 1942. His audience followed suit, as in this wire from a man in West Hollywood on March 6:

Dear Mr. Hearst: As an interested reader of your “In the News” may I urge you to recommend that the federal government along with the State of California employ the Japanese evacuees in raising guayule rubber substitute on our arid lands in California and in [the] Antelope Valley? Japanese are skilled agriculturalists and could raise rubber on a quota basis with penalties provided for falling under quota. Let them supply what they have taken away from us.

Douglas MacArthur became more and more of concern to Hearst as March unfolded; Willicombe to all publishers and editors on Friday the 6th:

Chief requests that you make a strong, sustained crusade Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, March 9–10–11, to have help sent to General MacArthur [in the Philippines].

It sounded like a replay of the Spanish-American War as Willicombe elaborated upon Hearst’s ideas:

He asks that you use color on the first and the last pages of the first section, varying it each day—maybe flags the first day, eagles the next, and so on.

Further details were set forth, all of them aimed at comprising “sufficient variation to make the display effective.”

On its own militant note, the Hearst papers’ “Buy a Bomber” campaign was making tremendous headway. Hearst told Tom White, one of his top lieutenants, that he did “not want to give up getting money for the Treasury Department,” and he did “not see why they [the Treasury] should want to give up getting the money”:

We get nothing out of it except the consciousness of being of real help.

Nothing has awakened so much enthusiasm as the idea that the people are contributing their money for the purpose of building bombers.

I think if we are given further encouragement by the Department, we can raise in this way at least half a billion dollars, maybe a billion dollars.

That ought to be worth while, and we would like to do it.

If any contrary words or thoughts intervened in that first week of March, they were dispelled by the emphatic statement Willicombe made for Warden Woolard at the *Los Angeles Examiner* on the 6th, the same day that he provided all the other papers with “general instructions” in the MacArthur situation:

Under all the circumstances, Chief has decided to run the MacArthur crusade Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

But as Alice Head once recounted so tellingly of Hearst’s way with travel, we have to be ready for last-minute changes on the journalistic front too; Willicombe on March 7, a message sent to the editors of all the Hearst papers (mostly mornings) that were poised to launch the MacArthur crusade on Monday, March 9:

Chief is postponing for day or so the aid to MacArthur crusade which was instructed to start Monday. Hold for release.

Willicombe got everyone attuned on Sunday, March 8, to the latest strategy:

It has been decided to confine the aid MacArthur feature to one issue instead of three issues as originally planned in message of the sixth.

Therefore Chief instructs to print in issue of Tuesday, March tenth, on back page of first section, the following editorial under the headline "Aid for MacArthur," and with red-white-and-blue patriotic decoration, consisting of eagle spread across top of the page and American flags on cross standards draped on both sides of page.

The unsigned editorial, either written by Hearst or at least bearing his trademark revisions, began with "Send ships to MacArthur now" and continued with dozens of short, punchy paragraphs written in the English pep style that Hearst had adopted in the early thirties, a style ranging from the platitudinous to the profound, depending on the sentence (most pep paragraphs were single sentences, although some were surprisingly long). "Write, telegraph, go to Washington," the editorial concluded:

The soul of Valley Forge, the soul of Gettysburg call to all American from the fox-holes of Bataan—and that call is:
"Send ships to aid MacArthur now."

COULD HEARST REALLY have been building in 1942, even on a tightly reduced scale? He may have been—tinkering, at any rate—although Mac McClure would be spending the summer as an F. C. Stolte Co. draftsman on a job near Susanville, California, leaving Hearst in the lurch so far as new ideas and plans went. There were plenty of existing sketches and drawings to go on, though; and having an old-time woodcarver like Romolo Rizzio of San Francisco on the job no doubt helped to keep Hearst, soon to be seventy-nine, feeling engaged, vital, creative, productive. On March 9, he heard from Charlie Rounds of the Bronx warehouse:

Replying telegram am sending all available photographs of mantels and other item[s] [of] similar nature in storage in 1938 or subsequently

shipped to Wyntoon as I have no information covering recent installations.

“Recent” could be as recent as 1941; and on a minor scale, some other work along these lines would soon be as recent as 1942, although a clear picture of what Hearst was currently up to—and of how much he was able to accomplish without Mac McClure at his beck and call—is hard to come by for this first part of the wartime years at Wyntoon. In contrast, in 1943, with the return of McClure and based on some input of Julia Morgan’s that carried over from the later part of 1942, a better glimpse of Hearst the incessant builder is possible.

In Beverly Hills, the Benedict Cañon house (around the corner from the larger house at 1700 Lexington Road), remodeled in 1939 by Morgan and Frank Hellenthal, was now part of the Hearst-Davies toehold in greater Los Angeles.

(It was also the house where Ethel Davies had died in 1940.) The Benedict place was modest in the extreme, seemingly unfit for either king or queen, yet its place in the pantheon was secure. In 1942 there may already have been an idea at work that would reach fruition early in 1943: that of using 910 Benedict as a more manageable, more affordable alternative to the cavernous Beach House, much as Wyntoon offered similar advantages when compared with San Simeon. No residence, not even a temporary one, could fill the bill for Hearst and Marion without a provision for showing movies; and thus Ella Williams to Joe Willicombe on March 10, 1942:

The Breck people advise [that] the machines at 910 Benedict Canyon are in pretty bad shape. Will cost roughly about \$80 each to put them in first-class condition.

They need new gears, some case parts, all the sprockets and movement parts and lens holders.

They are not the latest type machines. However all the equipment that has been added to this type of machine since it was made can be put on these machines for about \$175 each.

Breck advises that with the \$80 overhaul job on each machine they should run two or three years without further repair, but to make the latest type machine out of them would cost an additional \$175 each.

The Benedict Cañon house was the one that, during the remodel of 1939, had absorbed parts of the Cosmopolitan Bungalow after its removal from Warner Bros. in Burbank and its return through Cahuenga Pass to the Westside, this time coming to roost on the Fox Hills lot at Twentieth Century-Fox, two miles south of 910 Benedict. Morgan and Hellenthal had added a screening room to the Bungalow in 1934, right before it was uprooted from MGM in Culver City; the old projection equipment that Bill Williams was describing may have come from that room.

That's an easy assumption to make. It's a good deal harder to decipher a message from Hearst to Charlie Rounds in New York during this period in 1942; it reads as follows:

Very anxious to conclude exchange of furniture with Miss Davies. Everything was selected to make an equal exchange and I would like the transaction completed promptly. Please answer.

2. Another matter I would like completed is the exchange of Oriental material and such from the ranch for mantels which we need at Wynton. This was all settled in detail but the mantels have never arrived. Kindly speed this up.

The "Oriental material" equates with the Oriental Collection in Julia Morgan's Pacific Coast Register, an unitemized group of Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian works that Hearst's mother had owned. The significance here is that Hearst foresaw exchanging the Oriental Collection at its appraised value for that of antique mantelpieces—an exchange made possible through the mantels' classification as W. R.

Hearst Personal versus, say, American Newspapers Inc. Beyond that, the details defy unraveling in the absence of further records.

It's easier to tangle with something like the following instead. Hearst's Pittsburgh paper, the *Sun-Telegraph*, reported back to Willicombe regarding the current MacArthur campaign; it did so on Thursday, March 12:

[The rival] *Pittsburgh Press* carrying today front-page, two-column measure editorial answering Chief's editorial "Aid for MacArthur." It has earmarks of being Scripps-Howard national release but am informed by New York it's not in early editions of *World Telegraph* [the evening *New York World-Telegram*]. Therefore it may be local to Pittsburgh. Do you wish me to air mail it [to Wyntoon] or put it on telegraph [teleprinter] wire? Makes about eight hundred words.

With his hackles well raised, Hearst shot back an impassioned reply, later on March 12:

No, I do not want [*Pittsburgh*] *Press* editorial. *Press* is not mad about our helping MacArthur. It is mad about our general progress. Please make it madder.

Hearst and Marion weren't alone in cultivating a martial spirit at this juncture in 1942; from Beverly Hills, Lorraine Walsh wired her good friend on March 14:

Dearest Marion: Am taking first aid and have three more lessons before my examination. Then I'll come up and cure all ails. Also have lost ten pounds so I can regain it at Wyntoon. It is certainly dull here and [I] will come up soon. Love to you and Mr. Hearst.

It's by fragments and snippets like the foregoing that a sense of the period and the people within it can be gained; Ella Williams in Los Angeles to Joe Willicombe at Wyntoon on March 16:

This is just to remind you that there is no one cleaning the Beach House.

Fair enough. What next? Warden Woolard, second in command in Los Angeles, alerted all Hearst editors on Tuesday, March 17, as follows—a good example of the *Examiner's* expediting role for the seventeen newspapers around the country:

Mr. Hearst instructs editors to play up the MacArthur story in all its phases, also making the biggest possible pictorial spread.

He wants the papers to go overboard on the story even if it takes three or four extra pages.

He says he doesn't care what the editors do so long as they make a big display of the story and pictures.

Half a notch higher than Woolard at the *Examiner* in Los Angeles was Ray Van Ettisch, whom Hearst had word for on the 17th as well, addressing what by now was a familiar subject:

Illustrated State Guard features should run in the news pages [toward the front of the paper] and they need not be full pages but just strong features.

Hearst killed two birds with one stone in his column for Thursday, March 19—he used the Pacific Theater as his backdrop and, along with that, provided words to the greater benefit of Douglas MacArthur:

The transfer of General MacArthur to Australia is the most intelligent and the most universally satisfactory thing that the Federal Administration has done in the whole course of the war. . . .

The transfer of General MacArthur from the Philippines was made in response to insistent popular demand and the enthusiastic reception of the General's promotion to a more important, although not more patriotic, duty.

It must reveal to Mr. Roosevelt the advisability of heeding the public judgment rather than that of Secretaries [Frank] Knox and [Henry] Stimson, or the other courtiers of his cabinet.

Acting on his own judgment, Mr. Roosevelt promoted Admiral [Husband] Kimmel to Hawaii over the heads of 40 other officers

superior in rank and service—and the result was the Pearl Harbor disaster.

Hearst lightened up in other work he did that same day, March 18; this to Abe Merritt at *The American Weekly*, the equivalent in 1942 of today's *Parade* magazine in our Sunday papers, yet often with a risqué kick to it:

Juliette Compton is well known screen actress, began as [Ziegfeld] Follies girl, and has had quite [a] career on stage.

Her divorce case is very interesting and amusing—now being conducted in Los Angeles.

Her husband, James Bartram, wealthy Englishman, is eccentric to say the least.

He has passion for appearing in women's clothes, and some of the photographs in evidence are amusing. . . .

I think the case would make [a] good feature.

Was there a difference between the Hearst of the 1940s and that of the 1880s or 1890s? No, just the passage of fifty or more years, that's all; same man, same sentiments, repeatedly, predictably—and often effectively.

Louella Parsons wired Marion from Beverly Hills on Thursday, March 19:

I will be at meeting next Tuesday [the 24th] with my hair in a braid and do all I can to help. Just tell me General Davies what you want me to do and I will carry out your orders to the letter. I am yours to command.

Am taking a table at [the California State Guard] Military Ball [in Hollywood] April 15. Love to you and W. R.

Below her friend's signature, Marion scrawled a reply for the telegrapher to send:

Dearest Louella: You are a peach. I'll try to make the meeting if I am better. I have been ill with [an] infected tooth & the other old trouble. Lots of love.

Hearst heard back from Abe Merritt at *The American Weekly* the same day as the Parsons-Davies exchange, March 19:

[Juliette] Compton case funniest I have seen for years. Been working on it with eye to double page.

THE STATE GUARD retained its place in Hearst's editorial pages as March progressed. Jose Rodriguez in Los Angeles addressed the subject for his home-base *Examiner* and its counterpart in San Francisco:

The frivolous and purblind attitude of the California Legislature toward the State Guard is producing the inevitable reaction.

At first it was adverse opinion and well-founded criticism that condemned a deliberate diminution and dilution of the State's internal defense.

Now it is FACTS and EVENTS that reveal and emphasize the Legislature's capricious toying with a vital matter.

The facts are exceedingly simple and beyond question:

California is a theater of war, in an advanced and exposed position. . . .

This points to the immediate and pressing necessity to resurrect our abused State Guard, give it the arms and the training and the mobility to look out for California, while the Army and Navy take care of the enemy and the police departments take care of crime.

Then, and only then, can California look forward to events with a reasonable degree of confidence and security.

That same day—Friday, March 20—Marion wired Florence Carrington, whose husband, Dick, was the publisher of the *Los Angeles Examiner*:

My dear Florence:

Will you be so kind as to preside as vice-chairman for me at the Executive Committee meeting at the State Guard Hospital Tuesday?

I am in the hands of the doctors.

Indeed, if I could get to Los Angeles and could come to the Guard Hospital [the former Marion Davies Children's Clinic in Sawtelle], it would probably be as an inmate.

I have an infection of the jaw which is distressingly inconvenient and incapacitating, and which seriously interferes with my usual volubility [ease of speech].

I would not be able to address the meeting nor verbally to thank the Committee for its interest and attendance.

Will you kindly, therefore, do this in my behalf?

And I know you will do it better than I could.

Please ask them to inspect the added facilities we have provided for the Hospital, and kindly beseech them to exert their utmost efforts to make the Military Ball of the First Medical Corps of the California National Guard a great success [on April 15], as the useful work of the Hospital is increasing every day and further facilities are urgently needed.

Florence Carrington replied to Marion the next day, Saturday, March 21:

Dearest Marion: So sorry to hear that you have an infected jaw and hope that you are feeling much better by now. I will be very happy to preside for you as vice-chairman at the meeting on Tuesday, although it is impossible for any one to take your place. I know all the Committee members will be extremely sorry that you cannot be with us.

In accordance with your wire we will inspect the added facilities that have been provided for the Hospital and I will be most happy to tell the Committee of your great desire that everything possible be done toward making the Military Ball a huge success.

Robinson's have promised to have my uniform ready for Tuesday and I will be very proud to wear it. Love and best wishes for your speedy recovery.

Hearst's other publisher in Los Angeles was Dr. Frank Barham, who had charge to the evening paper, the mostly blue-collar yet highly lucrative *Herald-Express*; Barham's wife, Arline, wired Hearst directly on March 22, expressing sentiments that were widely held at the time:

Dear W. R.: Do you like this Japanese situation? Do you see why they should not be in [a] concentration camp? Why let them run loose? Can't you do something about this? Kindest regards.

With regard to California matters, Hearst kept his main focus on the State Guard; on March 23 he prepared an outline for yet another editorial, sending it to Ray Van Ettisch in Los Angeles and to Van Ettisch's counterpart, Bill Wren, in San Francisco:

I think this State Guard matter ought to be straightened out and can be.

At present each party is using it politically, and probably both the Legislature and the Governor think they are getting some benefit out of the situation; but the State is getting no benefit. . . .

The war situation has developed to a point where the need for a State Guard, and a competent State Guard, is very obvious. . . .

The situation is simple.

All that is needed for its solution is sincerity.

Following the meeting in Sawtelle on March 24 that Marion couldn't attend, she heard from some of those on the Executive Committee; Conchita Pignatelli was among them:

We all missed you very much at the meeting today. It went off beautifully. Distressed to her about your illness. Take care of yourself. Let me know how you are getting along. . . . Remember me to W. R.

Both Jose Rodriguez and Charlie Ryckman took a crack at an editorial Hearst outlined on the 24th; Rodriguez's submission was quickly approved and ordered to the first page, possibly for the next morning's editions:

The State does need a proper Guard.

The State can get it, if the Governor and the Legislature will only get together on a basis of right and reason.

It seems totally unnecessary to point out that patriotic considerations ought to be predominant at this time.

If the Governor sincerely wants an efficient State Guard, and does not merely want to play politics in regard to it, he should at once call the Legislature into session and clearly state his position.

Marion's condition during late March resulted in several get-well messages from friends in Los Angeles; Ann Sullivan in Beverly Hills was one of them; she wired Wyntoon on Wednesday the 25th:

Dear Marion: So disappointed not seeing you [at the War Work Executive Committee meeting]. Get rid of the bug and come down for the good of the Army and your pals who love you. Regards to W. R.

Lorraine Walsh also wired on March 25:

Dear Marion: The meeting went off grand. Everyone missed you. Am selling tickets for the benefit [the Military Ball on April 15]. Will you be here for it? Hope you are feeling well by now. Love.

Marion thanked Mrs. Walsh on the 26th for her "lovely wire" and assured her, "I certainly will be at the benefit even if I am on crutches."

The next day, March 27, Bill Hunter sent word to Wyntoon about Hearst and Marion's preferred dentist:

Dr. Brownson leaves Los Angeles 7:00 o'clock Saturday morning [the 28th] by plane arriving Medford [Oregon] 12:18 noon.

He asks that you arrange for Miss Davies to meet him in McCloud on his way to Wyntoon; also that he may want to use the gas machine at the hospital and suggests that you have the doctor at the hospital there Saturday afternoon. He will not know until he gets there whether or not he will give her gas.

More about Douglas MacArthur on the 27th; this from the *New York Journal-American* to Hearst:

George Rothwell Brown [in Washington, D.C.] is working to make MacArthur Day a national holiday. He suggests June thirteenth which is forty-third anniversary of MacArthur's appointment to West Point from Wisconsin. Also that we start national holiday campaign with editorial

in *Milwaukee Sentinel* pointing to MacArthur as a native son and asking recognition of heroism by Wisconsin Congressmen.

The prospect of a film about MacArthur had come up earlier in the year, on February 20; now it was back on Hearst's radar, with Willicombe mentioning the subject anew to Joe Connolly of King Features Syndicate in New York; this on Sunday, March 29:

Chief asks would it be OK to submit MGM propositions to make General MacArthur's life in picture? No action required from him [the General] except permission to proceed, \$250,000 to go to his family or to any purpose he desires. Chief has no financial interest or personal interest.

MacArthur's name came up in another capacity the next day, March 30, in a message from Van Ettisch of the *L.A. Examiner* to Willicombe:

When date is decided for national MacArthur Day our plan is to have Westlake Park renamed MacArthur Park by [the Los Angeles] City Council. Originally there were Eastlake Park and Westlake Park. Eastlake was renamed Lincoln Park and now Westlake can and should be renamed for an American hero, as there is no longer a Westlake district—it's now Wilshire—and the name Westlake means nothing.

Since the prospect of the MacArthur movie had already come up, Joe Connolly at King Features sought clarification, which Willicombe provided on the 30th:

Replying your day letter [telegram] this date, Chief says:

"This is the same picture [as first mentioned on February 20]. The payment to MacArthur would be \$250,000. That should be stated [in any dealings with him], don't you think?"

The whole episode recalls what happened in the wake of Charles Lindbergh's historic flight in 1927. Hearst, backed in part by MGM, made a generous offer to the young aviator—a film contract worth half a million dollars. Lindbergh politely yet firmly rejected the offer.

Would MacArthur do the same, fifteen years later? That was a question of the moment, one left dangling for us by the archives containing these fragments and clues.

A long message from Wyntoon to the attorney Larry Mitchell is dated March 30, 1942, and is signed (in teleprinter text) "Marion Davies"; the wording and phraseology is Hearst's, however; very likely, he composed the message and sent it to Mitchell on her behalf:

The two hundred young people whom you have selected will be fine as a "Cooperative Committee."

They should have a chairman and two vice-chairmen and a secretary and a treasurer and a board of directors, the board composed of not more than twelve.

The two hundred should be divided up into companies of about twenty-five, and each company allowed to select an officer who would rank as a lieutenant.

These selections must be more or less permanent, as the girls should not be called upon to get uniforms for purely temporary positions.

The Cooperative Committee of two hundred will of course be permanent and should be very valuable.

I do not think specific tasks should be assigned to each company, because sometimes the whole Cooperative Committee will want to be working on some specific thing like the ball [the Military Ball of April 15], or the securing of ambulances, or the providing of hospital equipment or hospital supplies, according to situations that may develop.

There may, however, be occasions when one company will be assigned to one task and another company to another.

Meetings can be held at the Hospital, I suppose.

If not, facilities will be provided.

Larry Mitchell had a related matter to run by Hearst the next day, Tuesday, March 31:

Mrs. [Florence] Carrington said that Mrs. Lawrence Tibbetts was at the Hospital today and evinced considerable interest. Would Miss Davies

consider her as a member of the Executive Committee? Mrs. Carrington says she thinks she would be a good worker.

The annals contain no answer—a common situation in this historical realm of bits and pieces and fragments. Still, a few words can often say much, as these do from Hearst to Louella Parsons on March 31:

Please help us get stars at the State Guard Ball [on April 15], and please give Marion's efforts some help in your column.

Other institutions seem to get help, and we feel neglected.

Miss Parsons answered Hearst the next day, April 1:

Please don't feel neglected. We are all working hard. Mrs. Darryl Zanuck is bringing a list of stars [that] I am publishing tomorrow. Thought it better not to mention stars all at once. I have bought a table [at the Ball] and if necessary will take another one. Have been on the telephone all morning. Harry Crocker, Harrison Carroll, Lynn Spencer and I are trying to get Glenn Miller's band and if we do the \$1.00 tickets, which are harder to sell than the more expensive ones [for \$3.00], will go like hot cakes.

A related message from Parsons went to Marion at Wynton the next day, April 2, a Thursday:

Marion dear: Talked to Mrs. [Louis B.] Mayer and she is inviting Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland and Lana Turner. Will break [the news] Tuesday morning [the 7th] at her request. Think it would be nice if you would wire Virginia Zanuck 546 Ocean Front and Mrs. Mayer 625 Ocean Front. They have both been so wonderful about getting stars for us. Love.

With Easter Sunday approaching (April 5 in 1942), Parsons had another message for Marion on Good Friday, the 3rd:

Happy Easter darling. Will you and W. R. be our guests April 15 [at our table at the Military Ball]? We have asked about 15 movie stars. Sorry I cannot send you an Easter lily but you are too far away. Much love.

Parsons had more to tell on April 7 about the Military Ball, which was now just eight days away:

Dear Marion: Claudette Colbert, Sonjia Heinie [Sonja Henie], Dan Topping [and] Judy Canova lined up for your table. I [also] have Hedy Lamarr, George Montgomery, the Robert Youngs, Gracie Allen, George Burns, Sally Eilers, Cesar Romero and possibly the Jack Bennys, Dorothy Lamour and Randolph Scott. Better let me know just how many other people you have so that we will have room.

Altogether you and I have 40 places. Will put most important stars with you. Have asked our guests to come to 619 North Maple Drive [the Parsons home in Beverly Hills] first. It is nearer Hollywood Pal[l]adium. Love.

Marion herself was getting out the word on April 7 about the big event of the coming week; she wired John and Anna Boettiger in Seattle that day:

Dear John and Anna—We are having a big Military Ball in Los Angeles on April fifteenth. Your presence would give distinction and grace to the occasion. Will you attend as our guests? I am going to make a speech. That alone should be worth the long trip.

Marion also wired Dick Carrington and his wife in Los Angeles:

I would greatly like to have you both as my guests at my table at the State Guard Ball. You know, Florence, we have to carry the colors over the ramparts together. We better be giving each other courage.

In addition, she wired Cary Grant at 1018 Ocean Front in Santa Monica:

May I invite you to be my guest at my table at the Military Ball at the [Hollywood] Palladium the evening [of] April fifteenth? I have asked Barbara [Hutton] and hope you will bring her.

For Joe Willicombe, April 7, 1942, found him getting the word out about Hearst and Marion's fourth trip to Los Angeles since the fall of 1941; these lines went to Bill Hunter:

Chief and party leaving Saturday night [the 11th] same train [as in January and February] arriving Glendale Sunday night seven-forty.

Please have same number Tanner cars meet them.

And will you take care of Chief at Beach House Sunday night. . . .

Have asked Miss [Ella] Williams notify Connie [Constantine Fox] and arrange Beach House staff, etcetera. Please check with her.

Willicombe checked with Miss Williams himself on the 7th, wiring details to her about the pending arrival:

Chief and M.D. party same as last time leaving Saturday night same train, arriving Glendale Sunday night seven-forty. Have asked Hunter for cars at station. Please notify Connie they will arrive Beach House shortly after eight o'clock, and arrange cook, maid, etcetera. Will let you know if Mrs. [Estelle] Forsythe or any other telephone operator going down.

Willicombe had more for Bill Hunter about Santa Monica, whose film-screening capacities were evidently as deficient as those at 910 Benedict Cañon in Beverly Hills:

Replying to your message about movie projection equipment etc at Beach House Chief said tonight—

“Let us get along with the equipment we have—repaired and renovated.”

This means the \$80 and \$50 in original message and eliminates the modernization idea for \$225—that is out definitely. Total cost now \$130.

In the meantime, pending Hearst's departure, more on the State Guard through Jose Rodriguez, editorializing on April 7 both for the *Los Angeles Examiner* and its sister paper in San Francisco:

The now familiar but yet unheeded cry for an adequate State Guard in California is being taken up by American Legion Posts with every indication that the Legion as a whole will soon swing its weight into the movement.

Los Angeles Post No. 8 has resolved, and the County Council approved, that the Governor and Legislature take immediate action to set up a proper Guard "without delay or bickering," and has petitioned the California Department of the Legion "strongly to reaffirm its stand for an adequate Guard."

Hunter had a question for Willicombe on April 8, sent from Los Angeles to Wynton:

The last time the Chief came in [February] we had three cars at the train, one for the Chief, one for the bags and the rest of the folks came down [to Santa Monica] in the third car.

Is this arrangement O.K. for Sunday night [the 12th]?

Willicombe's take on things was as follows—a reply he sent Hunter that same day, April 8:

I should think one car for Chief and Miss Davies and Miss [Mame] Edwards—and one car for valet, maid and secretary with bags should be sufficient. They could hire taxi additional if necessary for extra baggage.

Louis B. Mayer's sister, Ida Mayer Cummings, wired Marion at Wynton, likewise on the 8th:

Learned that you will be in Los Angeles April 15 for the Military Ball, we hope you will honor us by appearing if only for a few minutes, at an important meeting of our auxil[i]ary which takes place that same afternoon.

On April 9, Cary Grant got back to Marion about the Ball the following week:

Dear Marion: Thanks so much for your kind invitation for the fifteenth but I expect to be out of town on a similar benefit that night and though I know Barbara would have loved to come her little boy returns home that very evening after a three months' absence. We both regret we cannot join you but it was very kind of you Marion and we do hope to see you soon, with love to you and good wishes to Mr. Hearst.

With Hearst and Marion's departure drawing near, Willicombe took care of the usual details a day or two in advance; this to the *San Francisco Examiner* on April 9:

Chief going to Los Angeles Saturday night [the 11th], planning to return next Thursday night [the 16th]. Please divert papers to Los Angeles.

Will not require the papers at Wynton from Sunday to Thursday inclusive; but they should be resumed Thursday night [for delivery on Friday].

Marion also had a message to get out on April 9; this to Larry Mitchell in Los Angeles:

Please appoint Mrs. David Hearst to head of the Hospitalization Committee made vacant by resignation of Mrs. Doctor [Clarence] Moore.

Ida Mayer Cummings had further word for Marion on April 10; the two had obviously communicated over the past couple of days:

Regret so much unable to change date of luncheon meeting for Wednesday, April 15th. It is regular luncheon meeting. Expect 500 persons. Bulletins and publicity already out. Meeting begins at 1:30, closes at 3:30. Can you not come early enough to make appearance if only for five minutes? You will make us all so happy.

Hearst filed his "In the News" column for Monday, April 13, on the 11th, before he and Marion left Wynton:

The cold, hard logic of events is beginning to bring home to even the most unimaginative mind the plain fact that the vital issues of this war are going to be fought out and decided on the seas and shores of the Pacific Ocean. . . .

The onslaught of the Japanese upon Occidental civilization will not wait.

It must be met and stopped in the Pacific.

It must be met and stopped now.

At this juncture, some further words from Marion's memoir can be cited, although she took liberties with the timeline in saying that what follows occurred during "the last part of the war," what with "In the News" not extending past the middle of 1942:

I started staying up most of the nights, and sleeping most of the days. W. R. was working on his column, and practically the whole night long he'd be up in his rooms [in the Brown Bear house at Wyntoon], writing.

It would be broad daylight when he finished working, and we'd go look at the [McCloud] river. It was a beautiful place.

We didn't talk about his column. I never knew what he was writing from one minute to another. I don't think he knew either until he got himself closeted up.

No less when Hearst was in Los Angeles in mid-April than when he'd been at Wyntoon, the issue of the State Guard was put before him; another editorial by Jose Rodriguez began as follows on April 14, the day before the Military Ball at the Hollywood Palladium:

The powerful voice of California's American Legion has been added to the popular demand that Governor Olson call a special session of the Legislature to settle once and for all the dangerous and now disgraceful controversy over the State Guard.

"The American Legion's demand is just and proper," Rodriguez concluded. "It is not based on political influence of any kind":

In fact, it is an eloquent plea to adjourn petty politics, to get down to cases, to do away with petty quibbling and meet the emergency with selfless, constructive energy.

AFTER THE HEARST PARTY returned to Wyntoon, Ella Williams wired Marion there on Monday, April 20, with news of the previous week's success:

I thought you might like to get the gross and net figures on the Military Ball.

The gross to date is \$11,968.29. Out of this they have paid the Palladium \$3,194.70, leaving a net gross of \$8,773.59. Still about \$400 to come in.

That's not all that was still to come in. Rita Hayworth, photographed with Hearst at the Military Ball in what's believed to have been the Chief's last public appearance, had got raked over the coals in *The American Weekly*. Miss Hayworth endeavored to play nice in confronting the matter directly on April 20:

Dear Mr. Hearst—I wish Adela Rogers St. Johns had talked with me before she wrote the story. Louella Parsons knows the truth. Unfortunately my case has yet to come up. Kindest regards to Miss Davies.

Miss Parsons had strong feelings in the matter. She spoke her mind to Marion the same day—at virtually the same hour—as Rita Hayworth's message to Hearst:

The story about Rita is entirely untrue, believe me. I will tell her what you said. She is not to blame in any of her matrimonial troubles. I know both sides. It is too bad that that and other things have appeared in *The American Weekly* about our friends. Love.

Parsons was sticking her neck out. *The American Weekly* was dear to Hearst editorially and financially, a pet property of his and a strong performer on the corporate P & L sheets. But what to do about its scurrilous tendencies, its trend toward *National Enquirer* bodice-ripping, long before such publications proliferated? Hearst, ever the optimist (and perennially wide-eyed in such matters, not remembering that mortals rather than geniuses worked for him), had addressed the matter in general with Abe Merritt, editor of *The American Weekly* on April 19, the day before Miss Hayworth's gentle protest came in. Hearst had told Merritt:

After talking to Mr. [Mortimer] Berkowitz believe we can print interesting articles on Hollywood leading figures in *American Weekly*

which will be agreeable and in no way offensive. This plan should help circulation and also advertising.

While if we print scandals merely we must arouse considerable antagonism. Am going to try to offer you some pages [ideas] that have high order of interest and story value without any disagreeable reaction.

The machinery was in motion promptly. The next day, April 20 (coinciding with the Hayworth and Parsons messages), Ray Van Ettisch was on the alert at the *Examiner* in Los Angeles; he told Willicombe then:

American Weekly magazine has scheduled for Sunday, May 3, a page feature on divorce troubles of Errol Flynn and Lili Damita. In view of Chief's phone call to Woolard last night with new instructions regarding such Hollywood features, Chief may wish to have [Abe] Merritt sub[stitute] page if possible.

Hearst had to eat crow in replying to Rita Hayworth on the 20th; his chivalrous streak made him truly regret having offended her:

Am distressed to have anything printed which is displeasing to you. I did not see the page before publication but the best preventive is to ban all such articles, which I will try to do.

On the prospect of the Flynn-Damita page coming up in *The American Weekly*, Hearst opted for the substitute page that Van Ettisch suggested. Hearst elaborated on the situation on April 21 for Abe Merritt in New York:

We are killing Errol Flynn page in Los Angeles. You can run it elsewhere if necessary. We have to live with these people in Los Angeles and it is difficult to do so if displeasing features are run. They handicap us, not only personally and individually, but in access to studio news and in studio friendliness, which sometimes means advertising.

I realize that pleasing features or at least inoffensive features are more difficult to secure, and depend more on the ability of the writer than [the] faculty of human understanding, but I think that the lives and deeds of Hollywood people are so interesting to the public, and

their personalities so glamorous that stories about them of an agreeable character can be obtained which will be not sloppily interesting but vitally interesting.

It made a good mission statement, surely. Now, if only Hearst could straighten out Governor Olson on the State Guard and, while he was at it, FDR on General MacArthur's progress in the Pacific Theater—that plus a hundred other things he could think of accomplishing before sunrise.