

September 3, 1945: p. 30

A GI Is a GI Is a . . .

To most Americans, the books of Gertrude Stein are simply a series of typographical errors written in Paris by an "arty" woman who should have come home long ago. Last week, Miss Stein, who has weathered two wars in France without nostalgia for her native land, was in the process of becoming a sort of Left Bank Ernie Pyle. She confided to C. L. Sulzberger of The New York Times that she had begun a new novel titled "Brewsie and Willie" and that it was about GI's and what GI's are thinking.

"I am completely drowned in the American Army," the 71-year-old novelist told Sulzberger. "I eat, think, and sleep GI so my French friends are disgusted with me. I am almost the only American woman in civilian clothes these boys see and I am an older woman and many of them talk to me as if I were their mother."



Stein: GI's are "terribly conservative"

'I Get Pretty Angry': Then she offered a thumbnail estimation of the GI frame of mind: "The GI's are worried. Their minds are being deadened. They lack spiritual courage. They lack interest in home politics, except locally. They don't believe anything is true . . . They haven't religion any more. You don't see any **Bibles** around like you did after the last war. They worship efficiency and only efficiency . . ."

"I was on a plane with some soldiers. I asked them if they had any Bibles with them. One soldier said: 'Why do we need Bibles? If you have a good ground crew your plane stays up.' They know all the percentages of error and they figure: 'What has God got to do with it?'"

"At the same time when all Europe is going left, our boys are terribly conservative. They're more conservative than anyone on earth. That's one thing that makes them nervous. They dimly realize that the Germans were all these things. I get pretty angry with it all . . ."

LETTERS

Our Bible-Reading Army



U. S. Marine Corps

Marines crowd around for Bibles

In your issue of Sept. 3 there appeared a paragraph in National Affairs in which Miss Gertrude Stein, in discussing her new novel about GI's and what GI's are thinking, is quoted as follows: "You don't see any Bibles around like you did after the last war," and more to the effect that soldiers have no interest in the Bible.

Miss Stein's point of view is erroneous and misleading, and we would like to protest against the dissemination of her statement. In an Army as large as ours, it is undoubtedly true that there are soldiers who have little interest in religion but to base conclusions on an interview with a few such, assuming they speak for the whole Army in the matter of the soldier's relation to the Bible, is unjustified.

The American Bible Society has already distributed, at the explicit request of the chaplains and the men in service themselves, 8,000,000 copies of the Scriptures—Bibles, Testaments and portions. The society instructs the chaplains not to request Scriptures unless they are called for by the men. We have testimony from these soldiers that they are reading these Bibles.

We feel sure that a large percentage of your readers would be grateful if you could counteract Miss Stein's misinformation by giving a true picture of our armed forces.

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Secretary

American Bible Society
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