

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

FOR RELEASE  
FRIDAY AFTERNOON PAPERS  
JUNE 18, 1943

War Art, an exhibition of 125 paintings made in the United States battle zones by nine leading American artists, will open at the National Gallery of Art in Washington on June 20th, it was announced today by David Finley, Director. All the paintings were commissioned by LIFE Magazine, and, upon completion of a nationwide tour, will be given to the Government as a permanent eye-witness record of the war. The collection is the only known continuous record in art of the war to date. The artists represented are Henry Billings, Aaron Bohrod, Floyd Davis, Peter Hurd, Edward Laning, Tom Lea, Fletcher Martin, Barse Miller and Paul Sample. The exhibition will continue until August 1st.

In stressing the importance and timeliness of this exhibition, Mr. Finley said: "These pictures, commissioned by LIFE with the cooperation of the War Department, and painted by some of America's foremost artists, present a graphic record of the war and later, when given to the Government, will become a valuable addition to the nation's art treasures. I am glad that these paintings will have their initial showing at the National Gallery, where they can be seen by so many members of the armed forces, government officials and others in Washington to whom, I feel sure, they will be of absorbing interest."

Among the paintings shown will be: "Sinking of The Wasp," by Tom Lea; "Fighter Disaster," by Paul Sample; Henry Billings' "U. S. S. North Carolina," the only known painting of this modern, all-welded super battleship; "Idle Hour Park," by Aaron Bohrod, showing soldiers cavorting in an amusement park; "Rescue Off Bermuda," by Floyd Davis; "Return from Rouen," by Peter Hurd; the sombre "Off To Unknown Ports", by Barse Miller; Edward Laning's crowded canvas "Santa Fe Yard at Belen, N. Mex."; the lively "Service Men's Club," by Fletcher Martin, and more than 100 other on-the-spot paintings.

"There is in war a certain desperate beauty", says Director Francis Henry Taylor of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in his foreword to the 36-page catalogue of the exhibit, "--- a beauty that is inextricably bound up with the acts

of courage and heroism and sacrifice which war so terribly brings forth.

"These artists have gone out to risk and suffer in much the same degree as the men behind the bayonets and the destroyer's breech blocks and the airplanes' motors have also risked and suffered. What they have set down they have set down for the benefit of us civilians, to whom their works will probably provide the closest contact with reality we are likely to experience. It is from them that we can and have the duty to gain truest appreciation of what the soldier, the technical sergeant, the pilot, the PT boat commander, and the engineer behind the lines did to preserve us in the days of our country's struggle with the blackest forces of evil that it has ever faced."