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Author(s)	Eileen Creelman
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'Pride of the Marines,' Tender Drama Based on Al Schmid's Real Story

By EILEEN CREELMAN.

"Pride of the Marines," in spite of its title, is a timely drama. It is also a good one. This picture at the Strand is based on a true story, on the life of Al Schmid, now 23, of Philadelphia. It is also the story of Ruth Hartley, the girl who wouldn't let Al go. Ruth found that she, as well as Al, had a battle to fight. Al realized that he needed more than physical heroism. He needed a steady courage to face tragedy. Thanks to Ruth, he found it.

There is a ring of truth to this film that is not usual in film biographies. The story is one to pull you to pieces, as their crisis almost pulled Ruth and Al. The story is also one to send you out of the theater head high and curiously happy. "Pride of the Ma-

rines" is no tragedy. It is far from depressing. Because the Schmid's faced and accepted their situation, their story is inspiring and deeply, solidly happy.

Delmer Daves, who directed, has caught the spirit of these young people. I've met the

Schmid's in their Philadelphia house, the one where Ruth used to live with her family, the house presented by the city to this first of its world war II heroes. John Garfield, although he must be ten years older than Al, seems surprisingly like him in "Pride of the Marines." He has the same tough, cocky, touchy, likable personality. He plays with a force and liveliness that makes this Mr. Garfield's best screen performance. It's a fine role, and a fine performance.

Then there is Eleanor Parker, older, more mature than little Ruth Schmid but giving the same impression of steadfastness and good sense mixed with a lively humor. Miss Parker has not appeared often on the screen. Her quiet sincerity was one of the outstanding qualities of "The Very Thought of You." Here, as the girl who would not let Al's blindness come between him and a full life, Miss Parker proves herself a young actress of considerable power.

The Schmid's' story, much written about in the early days of the war, is a story of readjustment. Al was, and is now, a fellow with great gusto and love of fun. He thought he was a tough guy. And so he was when he mowed down 200 Japanese on Guadalcanal. But he was not so tough when he realized, in a Los Angeles hospital, that his blindness was not temporary. It was then that he tried to break with Ruth. It was then that Ruth, who knew how to battle too, fought her own fight and won. "Pride of the Marines" is one of Warners' best war dramas, one still to be enjoyed in this post-war era. It has warmth, excitement, laughter and tears. I wish the last scene had not falsely hinted at Al's regaining his eyesight. I wish that the story had gone further, that it had shown Al, still blind, still a happy, confident man with a well-earned place in life, and with a young son as well as a wife who still adores him. Even without that, "Pride of the Marines" is well worth seeing.

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