

Completes Training

Army Pvt. Carl Paulson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lester Paulson of Whay lane, Birmingham, recently completed eight weeks of advanced artillery training at Fort Chaffee, Ark.

Kiefer Graduates

Sp. 4 LeRoy E. Kiefer, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Leroy E. Kiefer of Willow Lane, Birmingham, was graduated from the Czech Language department of the US Army language school in Monterey, Calif.

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BOOKS and REVIEWS

Child of Our Time

By Michel del Castillo. 281 pp. New York. Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.75.

Reviewed by **SALLY PARSONS**

While Americans perfect their luxury homes, frivolous clothing and high-protein diets, they tend to become oblivious to barbarities that exist elsewhere.

But exist they do, as 25-year-old Michel del Castillo so graphically relates in his first novel. It is an autobiographical work of heroic proportions told in terse, heart-breaking manner. Often depressing beyond belief, it is indeed a shocking expose of the brutalities man is capable of inflicting on his fellow man.

TANGUY, the author's "Child of Our Time," epitomizes bewildered children everywhere who are helpless victims of terrible adult forces beyond their comprehension and control. Like the author, Tanguy is half Spanish, half French.

His wanderings begin at the age of five, when he and his mother are forced to flee Spain because of her political work on behalf of the anti-Franco Loyalists. In France they are reunited with Tanguy's father, a social-climbing, Frenchman who earlier separated from his family because of his wife's political affiliations.

For the only time in what is to be a cheerless life, Tanguy is completely happy with a mother, father, dog, friends, and a house.

HOWEVER, another quarrel takes place; mother and son leave and shortly find themselves interned in a concentration camp—betrayed by Tanguy's father!

At the end of 18 months they escape, only to be separated while trying to get back to Spain. Tanguy is captured by the Nazis and landed in a sealed cattle car with a group of Jewish children bound for a German concentration camp. Here, in an abyss of living corpses, Tanguy learned to regard every moment wrested from death as a tremendous victory. The one object was survival!

In such an atmosphere normal men quickly became thieves, stealing blankets and eating utensils from fellow prisoners. When Tanguy's barrack selfishly refused a new load of Jews shelter for the night, the boy emerged in the morning to find 30 corpses "some still clutching the window ledges to which they had desperately clung the night before (when) the bitter cold had caught and frozen them in a final gesture of self-preservation."

POLITICAL peace only brings more anguish to Tanguy. Unable to find any trace of his family, he is sent to an orphan's and delinquents' home in Barcelona, run by a group of sadistically inclined lay brothers.

For this 14-year-old boy the beatings and injustices suffered here were even harder to bear than those of the concentration camp. The camps "were a product of wartime conditions. When the Germans murdered their prisoners they were at least faithful to their own terrible principles." But the hypocritical brothers went to Mass every morning and spent the

rest of the day thrashing and terrorizing the boys.

TANGUY eventually escapes to a Jesuit school where he is given special, kindly attention by the institution's founder, Father Prado. This learned man provides Tanguy with the father-image he so desperately needs.

Still, Tanguy feels he has not found any real meaning in life and cherishes the hope that a reunion with his parents will fill this void. After more wanderings and frustrations he finds his father who has married again, and later encounters his mother. Both meetings, however, are disappointing. He feels no affection for either one; their varied experiences have thrown them worlds apart.

We leave Tanguy in Paris as author del Castillo voices the faint hope that "Perhaps he will even come to find life the wonder and delight it should be; who knows?"

Islandia

By Austin Tappan Wright. 1018 pp. New York. Rinehart & Company Inc., \$5.95.

Reviewed by **TOM PHILLIPS**

All men have dreamed at one time or another of a perfect world. The concept of Utopia has flourished in the literature of the world since earliest times.

Many writers—Plato, Sir Thomas More and Edward Bellamy are among the best known—have written and left us their personal vision of Utopia, but only a handful have managed successfully to capture the imagination of others with their own romantic imaginings.

WHEN Austin Tappan Wright wrote "Islandia" he became one of the successful handful.

"Islandia" is not a new book. First published in 1942, it enjoyed good reviews and sales before passing from sight. It was not forgotten, however. After numerous requests from readers in whose minds the fascinating book had become imbedded, the publishers reissued it this year.

THIS was a good decision. It not only allowed those who had read it the first time to return to the fascinating land of Islandia, but it brought that wonderful country to a whole new generation of readers.

Islandia is a country on a mythical continent in the Southern Hemisphere. Because of its isolation from the rest of the world it has been relatively untouched by other civilizations. Its people are farmers for the most part and live a simple, peaceful existence which Wright succeeded in making extremely desirable.

In the early part of this century, the major powers in the world realize that Islandia has vast economic promise. Wanting to take advantage of that promise, they try to move in, despite the wish of most Islandians to remain isolated.

Mental Patients Need Vacant TB San, City Told

JOHN LANG is sent to Islandia by the United States. Young Lang, who became friendly with the son of one of Islandia's most powerful families while at Harvard, ostensibly goes in a diplomatic capacity only. Actually he is sent to try to persuade the Islandian government to open the country to commerce. Once in Islandia, Lang quickly finds that the Islandian world is a far better one than the one he came from. He also falls in love with an Islandian woman. Becoming involved in the struggle to end Islandia's isolation, Lang finds he must decide between his heritage and the peaceful promise of Islandia. He picks Islandia.

Before endorsing a move to have Oakland county's vacant tuberculosis sanatorium made available for short-term diagnostic care and treatment for mentally-disturbed persons, Birmingham city commissioners want more background data.

Mayor Carl F. Ingraham said he "has heard other Detroit area communities are spending considerable money in transporting disturbed persons to Ann Arbor, Flint or Grosse Pointe Shores because no nearer facilities are available."

HE SAID he wants more information before he could support a resolution offered by the Oakland county chapter of the Michigan mental health society. Other commissioners agreed.

The Oakland sanitarium can be converted into a 70-bed mental hospital, according to the Oakland health chapter, and reduce the list of people waiting for mental care.

Wright's Book

WRIGHT'S book is well-written, perfectly thought out and projects the author's personal vision of the "good life" so powerfully and convincingly that the reader is completely captured.

Despite the book's great bulk, which makes it impossible to finish at one sitting, the reader will be glad to tear himself away. Once away, he longs to return.

Capell Out West

Marine Pfc. James W. Capell of Cole street, serving with the First Marine division at Camp Pendleton, Calif., recently completed three weeks training at the Marine Corps Cold Weather Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif.

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