

"MAC ARTHUR" IN LOS ANGELES

SCRIP is privileged this week to reproduce a portrait of the first great hero of World War II, painted just after he had become a hero of World War I. As General MacArthur has occupied pages and pages of the public prints, our story is about the artist who has recorded him for posterity.

Joseph Cummings Chase is without doubt one of the world's greatest portrait painters, and as luck would have it, he was in Paris when World War I began, at which time the Government commissioned him to paint the Distinguished Service Cross men, both enlisted and officers, wherever he could catch up with them; some in dugouts, some in trenches, and some behind the lines. Many were done by candlelight. He ranked as a colonel but never used the insignia. Psychology, he states, was the reason for not having used it. He traveled through the lines on a War Department pass. One hundred and forty-two official portraits was his record in paint of the leading figures of that historic moment, not only the Americans but French as well.

As a member of the Players Club in New York, Joe Chase has also celebrated in paint the greatest figures of the American stage. The Government long ago recognized the genius of this artist and with great foresight grabbed off some fifty of his canvases which now repose in the National Gallery at Washington, D. C.

As dramatic interest is now divided between Manhattan and Movieland, what could be snappier than shooting an exhibition of Joe's canvases of Famous Men and, if possible, bringing Joe out here to preside in person and allowing Southern Californians to get an eyeful of his stuff?

And that's exactly what is being planned. The show will be held at the J. W. Robinson store in Los Angeles from April 20 to May 2, proceeds to go to the Red Cross. Joe will be present to receive his friends on dates to be announced later. Incidentally, the show and Joe's presence are due to the extraordinary influence of Charles Coburn and William W. Kirk and, as you may guess, it took influence to get the National Gallery and certain private owners to loosen up. The insurance on those fifty canvases is a nifty item.

Now perhaps you are wondering how SCRIPT is able to scoop the country on the MacArthur portrait on the cover. The following letter explains. It also contains some lively notes regarding its painting.

Dear Rob Wagner:

Here's a print of the MacArthur, painted by candlelight at the tag end of the war when he had his hands full looking after the welfare of his famous 42nd Division, called the "Rainbow Division." They'd seen more than their share of fighting, as it was one of the four fightingest bunches of our 39 combat divisions, and MacArthur was prouder of his wound stripes on his right sleeve than he was of the stars on his shoulder-straps. He got censured, scolded, damned, and threatened by G.H.Q. because he persisted in staying with his troops while the fighting was going on. The only commander jumped from Captain to General, I understand. His staff officers were proud of him no-end, and worked like hell, just as he did.

This is a portrait of the *young* General; the characteristics of his face have intensified till now the arched nostril is more arched, like a race horse; the side of the jaw incision has deepened way down into his neck, the tip of his nose has sharpened. But he is still jaunty in appearance, yet not at all the smart-aleck. Alert is the word for him. When I painted him he was very tired. The painting was accomplished in about two hours, like the rest of the 142 done over-seas.

The headquarters—near the famous Caesar bridge—were in a stone house that had been more or less restored since Charlemagne occupied it. The owner of the old place was a veteran German artillery officer of earlier wars. Instead of driving him out, MacArthur made him comfortable in an upstairs part, with the gentlemanly consideration of a he-man general of the U.S.A.

There will be fifty oil paintings in the exhibition, including about twenty A.E.F. portraits, mostly doughboys picked as the outstanding heroes. And there will be nearly a hundred drawings.

Fundamentally the exhibition is, of course, PORTRAITS OF PERSONAGES OF THE STAGE OF TODAY AND YESTERDAY, and PORTRAITS OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS, two of Pershing (during Argonne and after Armistice), MacArthur, York, Woodfill (who, the regulars thought, topped York), and so on. Yes, and I'm including Foch.

Luck, feller, and I'll be seein' yer!

JOE CHASE

P.S. Not having enough to do, this painter of American personages is at present head of the Art Department of Hunter College in New York—the largest women's college in the world—27,000 students!