

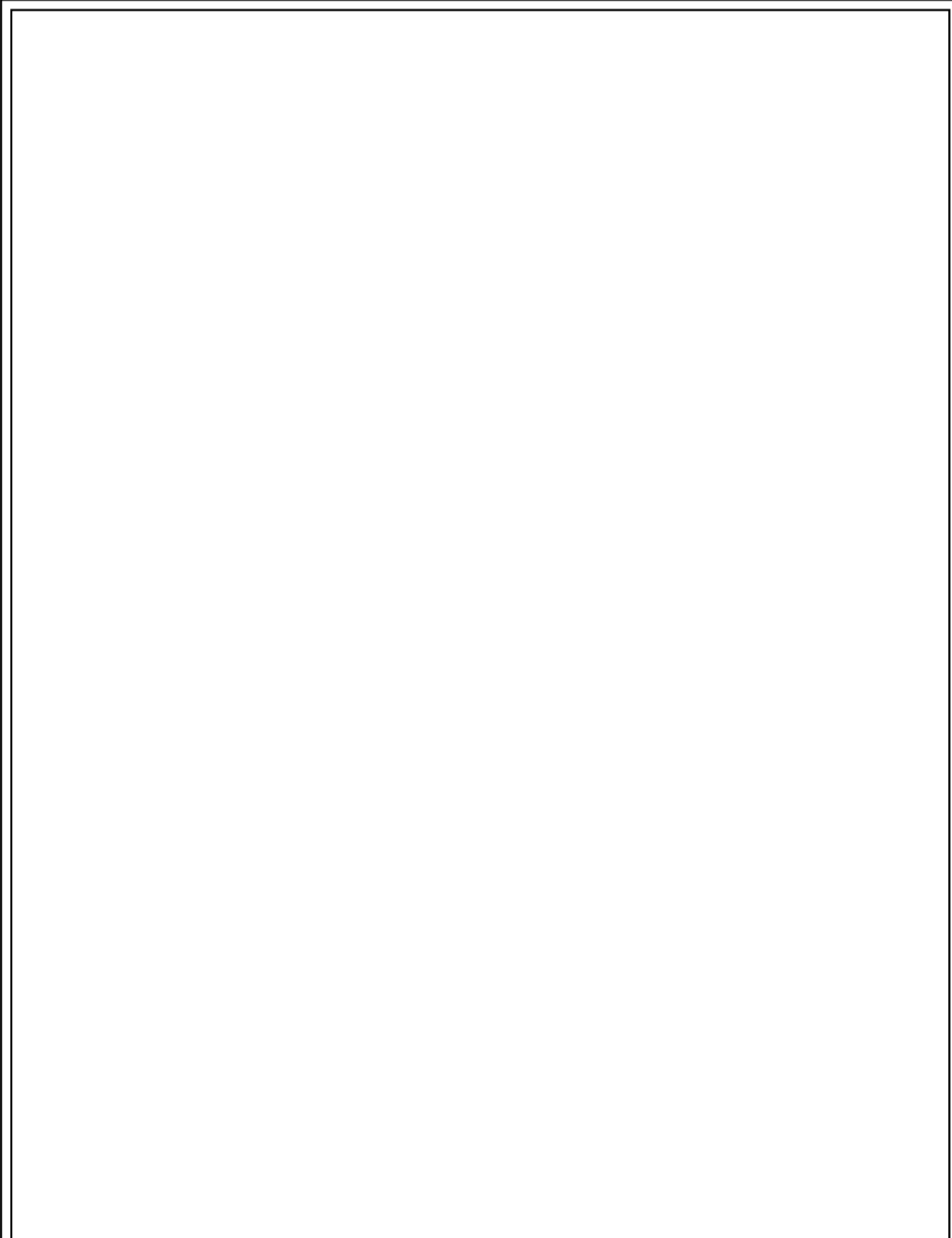
Film News: 'Marty' Oscar Winner Ernest Borgnine Dies at 95

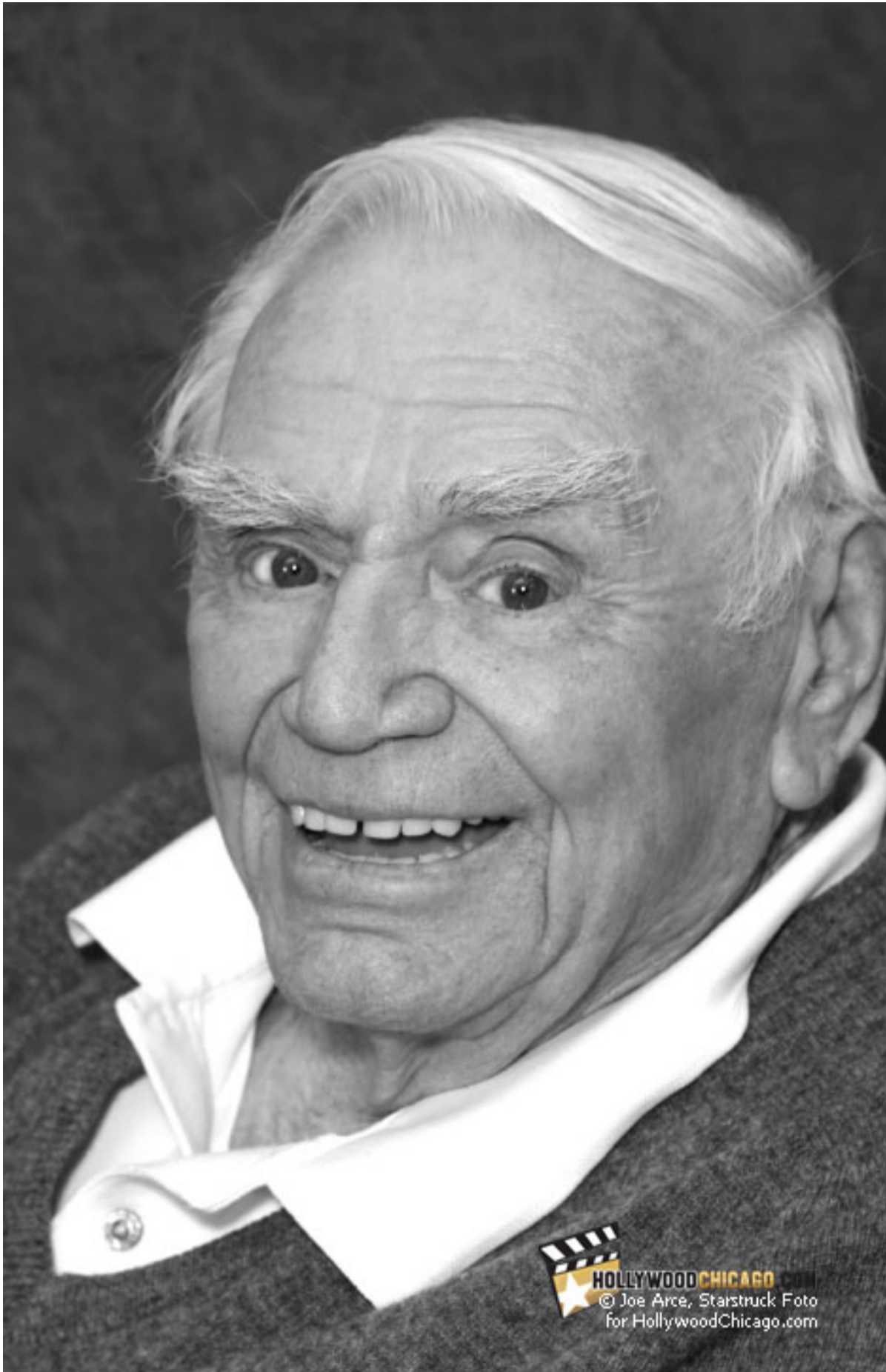
Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 8, 2012 - 11:51pm

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LOS ANGELES – Ernest Borgnine was the movie star who was America's "every man," with roles like his Best Actor Oscar winning "Marty" (1955), Quinton McHale in TV's "McHale's Navy" (1962), tough guy Fatso Judson in the classic film "From Here to Eternity" (1953) and even as a cartoon voice (Mermaid Man) on "Spongebob Squarepants." Borgnine died Sunday in Los Angeles at the age of 95.

I interviewed Ernest Borgnine twice for HollywoodChicago.com, and his wit, passion and voice was as strong in his 90s as it was sixty years earlier. He told me stories from the sets of "Marty," "Emperor of the North" (1973) and "September 11" (2002), as if they had happened yesterday, with the same emphasis on the love of life that sustained him in his long career in show business, appearing in unforgettable film and TV roles.





Ernest Borgnine in Chicago, March 26th, 2011
Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

He was born Ermes Efron Borgnino on January 24th, 1917, American born – in Hamden, Connecticut – of Italian immigrant parents. After graduating high school in 1935, he joined the Navy, and stayed in through World War II for ten years. It was his mother that encouraged him to be an actor afterward, observing that “you like to make a fool of yourself in front of other people.” The renamed Ernest Borgnine enrolled in the Randall School of Drama in Hartford, Connecticut, and soon starred on Broadway in the play “Harvey.”

He had small roles on television, and was mentored by the director Delbert Mann, who sustained the actor in his early career. Borgnine’s big break came after he moved to Los Angeles, when he was cast alongside Frank Sinatra, Deborah Kerr, Montgomery Cliff and Burt Lancaster in “From Here to Eternity.” He won a Best Actor Oscar two years later in his signature role “Marty,” playing a love starved butcher in the Bronx who finally finds his connection (directed by Delbert Mann). This was followed up by high level parts in films as diverse as a “A Catered Affair” (1956), “The Vikings” (1958) and “Barabbas” (1961).



Ernest Borgnine in his Oscar Winning 'Marty'
Photo credit: MGM Home Entertainment

In 1962 Borgnine turned to television and his second most memorable role, that of Quinton McHale, the leader of the wacky "McHale's Navy." After that show left the air in 1966, Borgnine returned to the screen in a string of characters in classic films such as "The Dirty Dozen" (1967), "The Wild Bunch" (1969), "The Poseidon Adventure" (1972) and "Escape From New York" (1981).

His later career was characterized by a couple of other regular parts in television – "Airwolf" in 1984 and "The Single Guy" in 1995, plus voiceover work in "All Dogs Go to Heaven II" (1996), "Small Soldiers" (1998) and "Spongebob Squarepants." He was memorably directed by Sean Penn in "September 11," a little seen memorial film to that event, as an old man who lost his wife before that fateful day, but sees hope after the towers fall. And he won an Emmy at the age of 92, during an appearance on the last season of TV's "ER." Working to the end, he will appear in "The Man Who Shook the Hand of Vicente Fernandez," to be released this year.

Borgnine was married five times in his long life, most famously to Ethel Merman in 1964, with the marriage lasting only one month. He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Tova, and four children. He died Sunday at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles of renal failure.

At our last interview in 2011, I asked Ernest Borgnine what he looked forward to as he started each of his days. He answered, "There are always things to do, and I try to get a smile on my face. If things go right, then everything is good." Everything was good for the every man, who preferred that folks remembered him simply as "Ernie."

Source material for this article came from imdb.com. For the HollywoodChicago.com interviews of Ernest Borgnine, [click here](#) [18] and [here](#). [19] Ernest Borgnine, 1917-2012.



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By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [21]
Senior Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [20]

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