

Photolithographic propaganda and educational poster printed in red and black, with additional maps and photographs to verso, with four punch holes to margins, old folds.

DR SEUSS'S MALARIA MAP

THIS IS ANN.....she drinks blood! [and] Newsmap / Monday, November 8, 1943

Author
[SEUSS, Theodor Geisel and Munro LEAF]

Publication date
1943.

Publisher
War Dept.,

Publication place
Washington D.C.,

Physical description
Photolithographic propaganda and educational poster printed in red and black, with additional maps and photographs to verso, with four punch holes to margins, old folds.

Dimensions
870 by 1190mm (34.25 by 46.75 inches).

Notes
During the Second World War, the U.S. War Department published a series of weekly thematic maps from April 1942 to March 1946. These Newsmaps, produced exclusively for troops and civilian groups working to support the war effort, typically displayed the theatres of conflict and included

narratives of various events in the war. The earliest examples were single-sided, but a second side was soon added to provide space for more information. Most of the Newsmaps featured a poster-like design on the recto, with more detailed written strategies, articles or descriptions to the verso. As the war came to a close, the second side increasingly focused on preparations for the soldiers' return to civilian life.

One of the many artists behind the WWII Newsmaps was none other than Theodor Seuss Geisel, who would later become known as Dr Seuss. Captain Geisel had joined the US Army in 1943 as part of Hollywood's First Motion Picture Unit, charged with creating propaganda and training films. As part of this role, Geisel also created a booklet entitled 'This is Ann: She's dying to meet you', which addressed the severe malaria problem US troops were facing.

In 1942, the Allied supply of quinine had been cut off by the Japanese conquest of Indonesia and the Philippines, with disastrous results. Without this effective drug, US soldiers stationed in certain areas were more likely to suffer from malaria than from any battle-related injury. In Sicily, for example, there were more soldiers were hospitalised for malaria than there were casualties of war. As a result, the US War Department launched an aggressive anti-malaria campaign focused on the education of the front-line troops most at risk of contracting the disease. Among the education material produced as part of this campaign was Geisel's pamphlet.

'This is Ann' consisted of pages headed 'what to do about Ann', each containing different pieces of advice about dealing with mosquitoes and the threat of malaria. 'Ann' is a play on the Latin word used to delineate the marsh mosquito: anopheles. While Geisel was responsible for the whimsical illustrations, the text was written by his colleague, Murdo Leaf. The simplistic nature of the booklet can be attributed to the young age and lack of education among front-line US troops, many of whom had left school to join the war effort or due to the Great Depression of the previous decade. 'This is Ann' was therefore targeted at a far lower literacy level than pamphlets provided to modern military personnel.

Geisel also created a malaria map, which was published separately to his booklet but shared the same name. The map occupies the lower half of the sheet, and shows the world coloured in gradation according to the prevalence of mosquitoes in certain regions. Africa, South-East Asia, South and Central America, the South Pacific and parts of the Mediterranean are all shaded dark red to indicate 'high' risk areas. Prevalence is shown to be 'moderate' in parts of South America and Central Asia, while most of Europe, North America and southern Australia appear to have 'low' or no risk of mosquitoes. Only the continents and a few countries, namely Panama, India, China, Japan and Australia, are labelled.

Above the map is text, presumably written by Leaf, warning the reader that the mosquito is "can knock you flat so you're no good to your country, your outfit or yourself". Troops are reassured that "You've got the dope, the nets and stuff to lick her if you will USE IT. Use a little horse sense and you can lick Ann" but warned that "Get sloppy and careless about her and she'll bat you down just as surely as a bomb, a bullet or a shell". To the right of the text is a portrait of Ann herself, raising a goblet of blood.

Printed on the verso of the poster is the Newsmap for Monday, November 8, 1943, which centres on a large and interesting depiction of Europe, viewed as on a globe from an unspecified point above the Atlantic Ocean. Accompanying this are numerous inset maps, photographs and text summarising the latest news from the five American war fronts of Russia, Italy, "air offensive", southwest Pacific and Burma.

As the US War Department printed its Newsmaps for the exclusive use of military personnel, and not

for general circulation, the present map is rare, with just nine examples held in institutions, all of which appear to be located in America.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £2000

Inventory reference: 17518

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