

Hollywood to New Guinea



WAKDE ISLAND, NETHERLANDS NEW GUINEA—It's a long way from "All Quiet on the Western Front," the anti-war film of the 1930s, to the tropical jungles and red dust of Netherlands New Guinea. But that's where Lew Ayres, star of the movie classic and a celebrated conscientious objector only two years ago, can be found today.

"I'm still a conscientious objector to war," Ayres says. He went to a camp for conchies at Wyeth, Oreg., early in 1942 but volunteered a short time later for medical service. After training as a hospital ward attendant and then becoming an instructor at Camp Barkeley, Tex., the ex-movie actor shipped overseas as a staff sergeant.

He took a bust to pfc. to become a chaplain's assistant, and that's what he's doing now in the huge tent evacuation hospital here, reasonably close to our front lines.

Ayres sports a mustache that he never had as the Dr. Kildare of the movies, and his hair is turning gray. His face is lined and yellowed from atabrine.

His job here is to talk with soldiers as they are brought to the hospital, sick or wounded, and ease their problems. "I never intend to go back to pictures," Ayres says. "I want to continue this work, God willing. It's taken war to give me understanding of men and to find myself."

The only condition under which he'd go back to Hollywood, he says, would be to make a religious picture after the world gets back to normal.

—Sgt. DICK HANLEY
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