

Washington Parade

Government movies are now having their greatest boom in history. The boom is tied to the war, but many capital observers believe that it will continue into the post war era and that the large-scale production of films by the Government telling the people what's what and how to do it is here to stay.

Uncle Sam has been turning out movies since about 1908. The first World War gave this business a big spurt, but it took World War II to bring it into full bloom. The entire motion picture industry today is using, roughly, 2 billion feet of raw film stock a year—and Uncle Sam's military establishment and agencies in war-related work are using considerably more than half of the total output.



COL. CAPRA. *His latest: Tunisian victory.*

The exact percentages allotted to Government uses are guarded as confidential information by WPB's film division. It is known, however, that virtually all 16 mm. stock has gone to war, and that a substantial part of the 35 mm. output is being used directly or indirectly in the war.

This is an indication of the tremendous extent to which Government film business has grown. Its movies, including those produced by the motion picture industry as a contribution to the war effort, have actually outstripped entertainment pictures in total consumption of film stock. Its products are in every commercial theater in the country. From a humble beginning, when movies were a novelty and government films were held to simple educational subjects such as wild life in the national parks and how to kill cattle ticks, Uncle Sam has developed into the Nation's number one film producer and distributor. Movies are now, by far, the Government's biggest and most potent propaganda medium.

At present, of course, the Army and Navy are the leading film makers for the Government. Both are shooting tremendous footages in all the action areas of the war as historical records and for educational and training purposes. Not all of this is going into cans for future reference. Some has been cut into noteworthy theatrical productions, under such ace Hollywood directors as Commander John Ford and Col. Frank Capra. "Battle of

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ACE DIRECTOR: *Navy Commander John Ford.*

Midway," "Tarawa," and "Desert Victory" are examples of these. Another is the current feature, "Memphis Belle," filmed by Maj. Clark Gable and crew, covering the exploits of a bomber. War and Navy Departments also have made a great number of instructional films solely for the purpose of training personnel.

So successful has this phase of military training become, it is generally understood that future training programs of the Army and Navy will be built around the use of motion pictures.

Chief among the old-line departments Such proposals as those calling for a central production and distribution agency and the establishment of a depository to sell prints of all government films, in the same way that the Government Printing Office sells publications, will figure in film legislation plans.

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The motion picture industry has made another big contribution to the war job in the field of morale. Through the War Activities Committee, it handed over to the armed services last year, around 10,000 motion picture programs on 16 mm. film for shipment to soldiers, sailors and marines overseas. More than 8,000 of these were brand new shows, the rest were outstanding films of former years. Many of the new shows reached far-away outposts on fighting fronts before they were shown in the servicemen's home towns.

General Joseph W. Byron, director of Army's Special Service Division, says 19 film exchanges take care of combat areas mainly by air transport. Movies from home are "Contributing largely to the excellent morale of our troops," according to Byron.

Pathfinder