

This Was War in Europe: The Combat Camera Story

On the battlefield men's nerves are raw. So is their language. Last week, when Londoners saw the Anglo-American documentary film, "The True Glory," they heard how men on fighting fronts talk: with understated emotion, bitterness, and humor; with "hells" and "damns" and "bloodies."

British censors had objected to some of the words, then yielded to the plea that they should be permitted in the interest of honest reporting. In the United States there was talk that the Hays office was holding up release of the film. Following an official Hays denial of any censorship, it was announced "The True Glory" will be shown in this country about Oct. 1, "after some minor editing."

In the following report, Mary Palmer, acting chief of NEWSWEEK's London bureau, tells what British audiences saw and what Americans may still hope to see and hear:

Officially presented by the British and American Governments, directed by Carol Reed of Britain and Garson Kanin of the United States, "The True Glory" was taken in Europe by 1,400 Allied combat cameramen. Thirty-two of these cameramen were killed, sixteen were reported missing, and 101 were wounded. Absolutely authentic, "The True Glory" gives amazing shots of the campaign from D Day on. Among its dramatic moments is a scene from a British invasion barge when a door swings open revealing the Normandy coast. After that most of the pictures are right up at the front.

This is the sort of film the Germans would never have made—because it shows our victories without gloating and admits setbacks like the Ardennes breakthrough; because it's peppered with humor, and because, at the end, it warns against repetition of such a war.

The weakest spots in the movie are blank-verse passages read singsong by an anonymous commentator. Fortunately, most of the commentary is made by soldiers themselves—those General of the Army Eisenhower in a foreword describes as "the really important men in this campaign." Their remarks are taken from actual battlefield conversations and given with proper American, British, and French accents.

Here are some quotes:

☛ A GI on D Day: "They called our beach Omaha. Don't ask me why. I've never been in Omaha—the one in Nebraska, I mean. But if it's anything like Omaha, France, you can have it."

☛ An ATS girl in Brussels during the winter: "There was no heating in our Brussels office. I put on so much under my uniform they called me the bundle from Britain."

☛ An American tank man after seeing the tired, diseased refugees inside Germany: "It's like the fella says, there is a lot more than towns gonna have to be reconstructed."