

# Sight & Sound

By Ernest Kreiling

**HOLLYWOOD**—As the American infantry patrol with hand grenades ready crawled toward a German machine gun emplacement, one of the riflemen shattered the silence, "Hold it! There's a carpenter without a gun."

The vagrant carpenter had interrupted the filming of a scene in ABC's new Combat series that would have been stopped anyway. An American Army major in a neat tan uni-

form who was watching the scene had heard the jingle of dog tags, a sound that could reveal the patrol's position to the enemy.

The officer was Major Homer H. Jones, who was aboard ship in the Atlantic in May when a wire arrived from Washington ordering him to proceed to Hollywood immediately to serve as technical adviser for the new weekly series about the Infantry in

France during World War II.

"I THOUGHT I would have a vacation in Hollywood," Major Jones told me. "No one back at Fort Bragg will ever believe I work 12 to 16 hours a day."

As an officer in the 82nd Airborne Division who jumped into Normandy on D Day, Major Jones was an appropriate choice to serve as technical adviser for the TV series that is emphasizing reality in story and action.

"My mission of the Army is to help ABC present a realistic picture of the Army in action and to avoid reflection of dis-

credit on the Army and its soldiers."

**AFTER QUIETING** the dog tags with adhesive tape, Major Jones turned his attention to the placement of the German machine gun that was to be used in the next scene. He discussed the weapon's use in a tactical situation with the "German soldiers" and taught them how to use it.

While he is on the Combat set at MGM every morning the actors frequently ask him questions about their roles. "How would I say this Major?" or "Would I say this in this situation?" These discussions often result in script changes

that make the dialogue more natural.

**THE MAJOR'S** afternoons are spent in his comfortable MGM office reading scripts of upcoming programs. He studies them carefully to find action and dialogue that don't suit the dramatic and military situations being portrayed, and he participates in production and story conferences at every stage to help insure accuracy and realism.

"Some compromises are necessary, of course," he noted.

"The night patrol attacking the machine gun was clearly too bunched up. But the limitations of the camera, and especially the small TV screen, have to be the controlling factor in some cases."

I asked how he felt about the programs after observing them from script to screen. "They really come to life on the screen, some of them with a documentary flavor that is

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startling real—and without sacrificing the dramatic qualities."

**THIS QUIET** and genial military man with a waist line to shame most of us WWII veterans has become a key figure in the production of ABC's Combat, which premieres on Oct. 2.

Although the hours are longer than he expected, Ma-

major Jones clearly enjoys re-fighting the big war in Hollywood. I occasionally suggest that I expect him to sweep onto the Combat sound stage some day wearing puttees and a beret and carrying a riding crop. Although he hasn't "gone Hollywood" yet, I recently caught him furtively reading Daily Variety and Hollywood Reporter, or the "trades" as he now calls them.

RED RYDER

By Fred Harman



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