

CAMERAMAN AT WAR

(continued from previous page)

danger that Jerry might send one over just for fun if he saw us. Anyway, everyone had been warned that a cameraman was coming, and in due course out came the chaps in their snow suits, but my God, one of them was wearing a black bowler hat! That's just how they react to the whole idea. If there's a camera around, they think it's worth the risk to act the goat like that. And it's hard to make audiences at home, who are used to Hollywood battles, realise that this is what real war is like. The nearer you get to the front line the less there is to show.

"That was one thing I noticed in Italy—the Kiwis had an amazing fondness for any sort of headgear but the authorised one. I once saw a convoy coming along the road and there were fellows in it wearing straw hats, bowlers, borsolinos (things with feathers in them), berets, and even one top hat. In the end, as a matter of fact, the General had to object.

The Making of a Film

"There was one interesting film I made which had quite a story behind it. I wanted to get a tie-up with Australian and New Zealand co-operation, and show the Australians doing close support bombing for the Kiwis. The Air Operations Officer gave me a map of our positions, and showed me where there was a house in our hands that would give me a good view of an enemy-held house that they could bomb for me. So I set up my gear in this house, and had a sort of porthole place to work through. I waited two days for the weather, then we arranged by 'phone for the planes from the 'cab-rank' to come over and strafe the house. It was about lunchtime, and 12 planes came over and gave it hell. I'm afraid some poor Jerry had his lunch spoiled, but it looked great on the screen. They offered to put 112 planes in the air for me, but I said I wasn't trying to outdo *Hell's Angels*. Then I got shots on the airstrip showing the bombers taking off, and spent hours getting shots of men, a duck, and a dog, looking upwards, to make a sequence that would indicate the flight of the planes from the airstrip to the enemy lines. Then I went up in a bomber and gave my own instructions for what the rest of the formation was to do. On the way back I got shots of bombs being dropped from the other planes. They let go 24 five-hundred-pounders into the sea for one shot from my camera! They told me afterwards the bombs were worth about £ for 1b. and not to tell the Quartermaster!

"One interesting thing about films of this kind—the sound is all put in here, and I've been amazed to discover how well it was done. I wanted the sound of a flame-throwing tank, and I suggested a sort of low hissing sound. I found when I got back that they'd got exactly the sound of a flame-throwing tank, and all with ersatz studio technique."

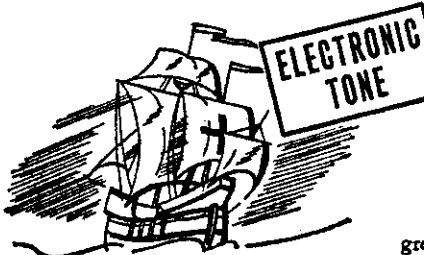
Film Publicity for New Zealand

One last thing Roger Mirams was particularly anxious to say—about the need for publicity films of New Zealand for exhibition in other countries.

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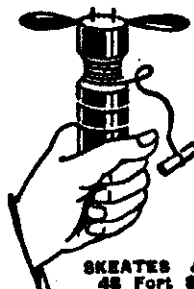
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