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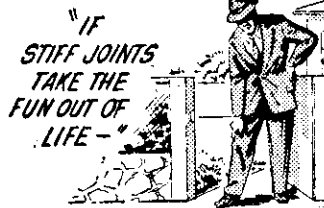
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FILM REVIEWS, BY JNO.

General Deeds Goes to Town

ONE MAN MUTINY

(Warner Bros.)

G Cert.

MOST fighting services assiduously collect, collate and graph their casualties (so many dead and wounded from rifle and machine-gun fire, from aerial and artillery bombardment, from bayonet wounds, from disease), but I'd be surprised if returns had ever been kept of those who broke their heads against brick walls. It would not be a large statistic, but it would probably be a significant one, militarily speaking.

Brigadier General Billy Mitchell, of the United States Army Air Service, whose turbulent career this movie celebrates, was one of those casualties. A little tougher than most, he charged the brick wall twice. The first time he bounced back to the rank of Colonel and a desk job in Fort Sam Houston, Texas; the second time they gave him the U.S. equivalent of a bowler hat to hide his scars.

Mitchell first bucked higher authority when he and his bomber boys sank the old German battleship Ostfriesland ("The British say she's unsinkable") by using 2000 lb. bombs from 2500 feet, instead of 1000 lb. bombs from 5000 feet as ordered. This not only alienated his Army superiors, who were pink with embarrassment, but completely spoiled the picnic for the younger Navy commanders (who hoped to sink the target ship themselves) and for the top Navy brass, who feared a consequential cut in their establishment. So, according to the Hollywood story (and I see no reason to doubt its general accuracy) the whole affair was officially hushed up and Billy was rusticated to Texas, where there were no planes and no battleships.

So far, so good, and one up to General Yesterday. But at this point the film—which has up to now had a reasonable quota of incident and one or two exciting airborne moments—slows down and loses a good deal of emotional attitude. Mitchell, I suppose, didn't quite know what to do next, and Gary Cooper has little difficulty getting the mood across. Even the next climax in the tale—the deliberately irregular press-conference some years later at which Mitchell invited court-martial by accusing the defence chiefs of incompetence and near-treason—is played without fire, and the build-up to the court-martial itself is so slow as to be almost lethargic.

Eventually General Deeds goes to Washington (emotive shots of Capitol Hill, etc.), and has his day in Court. And even at this remove, when time and hindsight and Gary Cooper have taken some of the sting from his words, one can't help sensing how they must have rocked the diplomatic and military worlds. He flatly named Japan as the enemy, foretold Pearl Harbour (about all he omitted was the date) and proved that the U.S. had only nine front-line planes. Eddie Rickenbacker, Hap Arnold and Tooeey Spaatz give evidence for Mitchell. General MacArthur (third from the left, with the high forehead and the broad swatch of ribbons) sits among the judges and seems impressed. But the brick wall stands firm. With Rod Steiger (who squeezed more into a small part than the principals did into theirs) as triggerman, the brasshats shoot Billy down. And he died before he could have the last laugh.

An interesting picture, but not over-impressive (considering that Otto Pre-

BAROMETER

FAIR: "I'll Cry Tomorrow."
MAINLY FAIR: "One Man Mutiny."
OVERCAST: "Slander."

mingher directed)—I now await the low-down on the great inter-continental ballistic missile squabble.

I'LL CRY TOMORROW

(M.G.M.)

A Cert.

THIS is the story of Lillian Roth, an alcoholic who did not desire to remain anonymous. It is, you will therefore understand, not carefree and relaxing entertainment. If, at the same time, it did not quite purge my soul with the pity which I have once or twice felt for fictional victims of addiction, it proved a more determined attempt at drama and character-analysis than the case-history of Billy Mitchell. More was required of the cast; and on the whole more was given.

Susan Hayward played the rising young music-hall star with something better than competence, and brought conviction to the earlier emotional scenes where frustration in love brings her into conflict with her managing and ambitious mother (Jo van Fleet). But the portrayal of an alcoholic lies just far enough outside the compass of her talent to rob the later passages of the film of complete credibility—Ray Milland and James Cagney have played alcoholics only too well to make comparisons comfortable. In this view, apparently, I am at odds with some of the experts. My vote would go rather to Jo van Fleet for a performance as impressive as it was unexpected. As the "stage mother" whose relentless ambition blights her child's life (the delinquent-parent image again!) she is the most convincing figure in a depressing milieu. Daniel Mann directed. (Like some other films I've seen recently, this one is too long at 10,940 feet.)

SLANDER

(M.G.M.)

A Cert.

HOLLYWOOD fights back at the scandal magazines—and calls in television to help! I can't say that I found this a particularly impressive piece of pleading—specialised and all as the pleading is, it doesn't (in my opinion) paint the scandal-sheets as black as they really are, and to import the suggestion that the editor of *Real Truth* is some sort of psychopath with a grudge against the world simply blurs the issue. Van Johnson and Ann Blyth are the pair whose lives are mashed in the printing-presses. Inevitably, they looked sorry for themselves. I felt sorry for them, too.



JO VAN FLEET

N.Z. LISTENER, JUNE 28, 1957.