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"Objective, Burma!"

Screen play by Ranauld MacDougall and Lester Cole, original story by Alvah Bessie, directed by Raoul Walsh, produced by Jerry Wald, photographed by James Wong Howe, presented by Warner Brothers Pictures.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
January 26, 1945

Put 'Objective Burma' Down As One of Ten Best in 1945

By ALTON COOK

YOU can start your 1945 list of 10 best pictures right now with "Objective Burma." There is a name not likely to be erased from the select list, and it should have a prosperous stay at the Strand. This is one of the great war stories Hollywood has turned out.

The story is a simple one of the heroism and fortitude with which a set of American soldiers faced the incredible difficulties of one small raid in jungle warfare. It is a harsh picture, a harrowing experience to sit through. Also, it is full of excitement at a pitch the screen cannot often achieve.

The raid was to be carried out by a company of paratroops, dropped near a Japanese radar station in the jungle. The first part of it met with perfect luck. The Japs were surprised, destroyed and the station was demolished in quick time.

Things didn't begin to go wrong until the men got to an abandoned air strip where planes were to pick them up. There they ran into an ambush and had to warn the rescuing planes away.

Has Air of Reality

From then on it was day after day of hiking through the jungle, with Japs hunting them relentlessly. Planes occasionally spotted them and dropped supplies, but the parachuting crates of food and ammunition also served to guide the Japs to the dwindling party. They fought skirmishes, pitched battles, shot their way out of new ambushes, each one taking its toll in the slender ranks. The story is based entirely on its authors' imaginations, but every single episode of it has an air of reality. Perhaps none of these things have happened, but all of them could have.

The picture has been written and acted in the rugged spirit of real army men. When things look worst, there are times when mutiny wavers over the group. These are valiant youngsters, but the pictures doesn't gloss over weaknesses that might crop up in the best of men.

Hollywood Hates Hard

Errol Flynn in "Objective Burma" is the good actor he can be when script and director are right. Raoul Walsh, the director, has curbed all of Flynn's flamboyant habits, and he makes this captain of paratroops an earnest, hard-thinking young warrior, a sentimentalist toward his men and full of ruthless hatred toward the enemy. The fervor of hatred expressed in this picture is stronger, by the way,

Running time: 2 hours, 22 minutes

THE CAST

Capt. Nelson	Errol Flynn
Lieutenant Jacobs	William Prince
Sergeant Treacy	James Brown
Gabby Gordon	George Tobias
Mark Williams	Henry Hull
Colonel Carter	Warner Anderson
Hogan	John Alvin
Lieutenant Barker	Stephen Richards
Nebraska	Dick Erdman
Miggiori	Tony Caruso
Captain Hennessy	Hugh Beaumont
Negulesco	John Whitney
Brophy	Joel Allen
Soapy Higgins	Buddy Yarus
Captain Li	Frank Tang
Fred Hollis	William Hudson
Sergeant Chettu	Rodric Red Wing
Gurkha	Asit Kumar
Co-pilot	John Sheridan
Major Fitzpatrick	Lester Matthews

than Hollywood ever dared to go in earlier productions.

The other roles are all comparatively small. Standing out among them is Henry Hull as a grizzled old war correspondent, George Tobias with his salty humor and Dick Erdman, a frightened, bewildered, tousle-headed stripling. Every detail of the acting is able all through the cast. As for feminine faces, there are only a few fleeting glimpses of native women.

This is not a picture for weaklings. But if your emotional stamina can stand up under the impacts, "Objective Burma" has a memorable and rewarding experience awaiting you.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE

January 27, 1945

"Objective, Burma"

By OTIS L. GUERNSEY, JR.

WARNER BROTHERS have brought another magnificent war film to town. "Objective, Burma" is to the paratroops as "Air Force" was to the flyers and "Destination Tokyo" to the undersea fleet; and it

is worthy of inclusion in their illustrious company. "Objective, Burma" spreads a drama of grim jungle fighting across the screen until the action and suspense reach teeth-chattering proportions.

The screen play by Ranauld MacDougall and Lester Cole has two squads of paratroopers taking off from a Burma base to perform a raid on a Japanese Radar post, then to be whisked back to safety by two transports on an abandoned air strip. The secret of the film's success is its use of pure motion picture terminology to tell its story. Under Raoul Walsh's direction, pictures worth ten thousand words take the place of dialogue in most of the scenes. The war that is spread through "Objective, Burma" is narrative action at its best.

For instance, no dialogue is needed to describe the emotions written on the faces of the men as they are about to jump from the plane. No words could describe their tense readiness as they creep through the jungle, obeying the silent commands given by Errol Flynn as their captain, William Prince as their lieutenant or James Brown as a sergeant. Their knifing of the sentries and attack on the Japanese post is self-explanatory; and even when the director wishes to describe their plan of attack, he carries through with his visual story-telling by having an outline drawn in the dirt with a stick.

The real horror begins when the transports cannot land because of enemy action, and the squads find they must walk back to their base through 200 miles of jungle. Suspense begins to rise like a thunderhead as they fight their way forward losing man after man in skirmishes or under Japanese torture; and still it is the camera that unfolds this drama as they cut through the jungle and slog through the mud. The last scene, in which eleven exhausted survivors entrenched on a hilltop fight off a whole enemy company at night with both trickery and firepower, is one of the best-staged, most hair-raising battle scenes that have come out of Hollywood.

Each actor in this all-male cast builds sympathy around himself until one hopes desperately that he will get out alive. Errol Flynn gives a characterization that leads one of his men to remark "I'd follow him down the barrel of a cannon." William Prince and James Brown are likeable young Americans, and Henry Hull is a war correspondent who learns what the boys are fighting for. George Tobias supplies most of the comedy relief. The others may be too numerous to mention, but each makes an important contribution to the film. "Objective, Burma" is distinguished by their performances and by Walsh's use of perfect motion picture technique. Its understated dialogue combined with eloquent and widespread picturization make a taunt, thrilling blockbuster of a war melodrama at the Strand.

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM

January 28, 1945

The CBI Boys Tackle Burma



By JOHN T. McMANUS

IN return, you might say, for the roasting Hollywood took late last year from that distant and lonesome corner of the war, the CBI theater, Warner Bros. in *Objective Burma* seem to have traveled half-way around the world to turn the other cheek.

From the viewpoint of us civilians, sitting in movie houses here at home straining for a glimpse of what it must be like in the tangled, trackless world of the Asiatic front, *Objective Burma* is one whale of a movie!

The soldiers may, of course, avail themselves of that inalienable fighters' privilege and gripe to high heaven over it, but for my dough here at home, the CBI theater can have all the Betty Grable pictures and welcome. Back home, we need fighting films with as much sincerity, action, booming excitement, appalling suspense, rousing success and brass tacks value; and with as little solo heroes and scrambled-egg rank as *Objective Burma*.

The film's original objective is an enemy radar station, tucked somewhere in the Jap-infested Burma forests. Two C-47s loaded with paratroopers set out to find it and blow it up after air bombing has sought it out in vain.

Just for an added touch of flavor—and undoubtedly because a one-time newspaperman, Alvah Bessie (Brooklyn Eagle), wrote the original story—an aging war correspondent, Henry Hull, goes along. The return rendezvous, after the mission has been accomplished, is an unused airstrip in the jungle, built by the British before the Japs overran Burma.

The correspondent, a spare, pipe-smoking editor in peacetime, asks one question about his parachute: "Suppose this thing don't open?"

"In that case," the captain (Errol Flynn) replies, "you'll be the first to reach the ground."

The parachute descent is a beauty, fitted into the film straight out of the Army's best documentary footage, and the Radar station is found, with the help of a Chinese captain and a Burmese guide, and disposed of with almost miraculous dispatch and without a scratch for our side.

But then things start to happen. Ambush after ambush strikes as the group seeks out its rendezvous. A new, distant meeting place is arranged by walkie-talkie communication with the hovering transport planes. The group divides in two, so that there may be a chance for survival for one if not the other. Days later, one of the groups finds the other, butchered in a Jap-held native village.

In the stealthy, steady jungle fighting, the last walkie-talkie is destroyed. From now on they do it with mirrors, hopefully flashing signals from tiny clearings toward faraway planes searching for them.

They finally make contact; supplies are dropped by parachute to the bushed fighters and the last remnant pushes on to the ordered rendezvous, on a high hill in the north, in the opposite direction from their base. In the last haul the ageing correspondent gives in. And when the survivors finally reach the appointed hill, it is a peak overlooking nowhere and ringed with Jap patrols to boot.

But then, after an endless night of fighting off Jap assaults, a new day dawns and with it a magnificent, overhead pay-off—the full-scale invasion of Burma, with planes filling the sky "like Broadway and 42d Street," a beautiful blizzard of parachutes, gliders riding in like floating freight cars, disgorging men, jeeps, bulldozers, cannons. It is a rescue and an ending with a vengeance, in spades!

I am no expert in Army ways, but *Objective Burma* has that unmistakable air of infinite care and attention to detail, and saying the right thing in the right place. As for faces, the few you recognize—like Flynn, George Tobias, Henry Hull and Dick Erdman—are fitted as neatly as the Army film footage into the completed whole. Along with *Air Force*, *Wake Island* and *Destination Tokyo*, *Objective Burma* is another magnificent dramatization of the war.

NEW YORK POST

January 27, 1945

'Objective Burma', Mission Accomplished

POST MOVIE METER

POOR • FAIR • GOOD • EXCELLENT

By ARCHER WINSTEN

THE best thing that could ever have happened to the adventure film in which Warner Bros. used to specialize takes place in "Objective Burma," the factual thriller at

the Strand Theatre. It has been given a structure of actual events and treatment of the documentary type. From "Air Force" to "Destination Tokyo" this method was in the process of development with excellent results. In "Objective Burma" it culminates with a picture which is an almost perfect thing of its kind.

If you want to gain an idea of how perfect it is, please consider the fact that Errol Flynn himself does not protrude from the utterly convincing exploits of these paratroopers raiding Burma. He is there, as captain and leader, but you have to look twice to convince yourself it's the same old Errol without the polish on his actor's brass.

The picture starts with General Stilwell's famous statement, "I claim we got a beating. It is humiliating as hell. Etc." Now the re-invasion is being set in motion with a preliminary paratrooper raid on a Jap radar station. Quite simply this is the story of getting there, doing a job and getting out.

The picture's action is so brilliantly caught by the camera that it becomes a masterpiece of suspense and thrills. Actual films of battle might be less convincing, just as they would necessarily be less explicit. The sense of technical accuracy is constant.

The moment of hysteria when Japanese torture handiwork comes to light is sufficiently brief not to cause more than a passing recollection of inferior films. Whether or not you like that kind of thing in a film, the fact is that, although the spectacle of men cracking emotionally never finds its way into documentary films, it does happen.

From beginning to end "Objective Burma" keeps its eye on the subject with military concentration. You will be greatly and pleasantly surprised to find how absorbing the experience can be. And when they tell you afterwards that you have been sitting quietly biting your nails with excitement for two hours and twenty-two minutes you're apt to consider someone a liar. It proves again that a long picture doesn't need to seem long.

Familiars among the soldiers are George Tobias, James Brown, Dick Erdman and Errol Flynn. Henry Hull upholds the right of the press to be everywhere, see everything, and have some of it happen to them. In default of evidence to the contrary praise goes to director Raoul Walsh for making "Objective Burma" seem exceedingly real. If these aren't actually Merrill's Marauders, they'll do for all screen purposes.

NEW YORK TIMES

January 27, 1945

'Objective, Burma', a Realistic and Excitingly Told War Film Starring Errol Flynn, Opens at the Strand Theatre Here

THE Warners have achieved a startling degree of realism in "Objective, Burma," which opened yesterday at the Strand. This is without question one of the best war films yet made in Hollywood. There are no phony heroics by Errol Flynn or any of the other members of a uniformly excellent cast. These boys conduct themselves like real soldiers and even the newspaper correspondent is a credit to the craft. The Warners have erred only in the film's excessive length. It runs approximately two hours and twenty minutes, or roughly thirty minutes more than appears to be absolutely necessary.

"Objective, Burma" is the hard-bitten story of a group of tough, tight-lipped paratroopers who are dropped deep in the Burmese jungles to wipe out a troublesome Jap radar station. Many of the scenes are the real thing, and the shots of the boys jumping out of the planes look as though they were borrowed from the Army's film archives. In fact, the whole picture has a strong documentary quality, even in the writing. There is surprisingly little dialogue and what is said is spoken tersely, or with a touch of earthy humor.

These troopers appear to be a composite of the famous groups known as Merrill's Marauders and Wingate's Raiders, for this account deals mostly with a harrowing trek across Burma's difficult terrain. After destroying the enemy radar unit without a casualty, the raiders are ambushed by a Jap patrol as they await their sky taxis in a jungle clearing. Cut off, they set out for another airstrip, according to prearranged plans, but they are doggedly pursued by the Japs all the way and eventually are left with no other choice than to walk their way out fighting.

It is a heroic campaign, indeed. Pitched battles with vastly superior Japanese search patrols are frequent, and are explosively depicted. Yet, at no time does any of the action smack of improbability. The hostility of the jungle leaps out overpoweringly from the screen. The night scenes are especially ef-

fective in their eeriness, the stillness of the sound track being broken only by the weird cries of the birds and animals. And there is a tremendously exciting sequence when the Japs attempt to storm the American position in the dark.

Errol Flynn has never had a better role than that of Captain Nelson and he has never imbued a portrayal with so much realism. As a middle-aged reporter, who expires near the end of the grueling march, Henry Hull is excellent. The only reason we singled those two out from George Tobias and all the others is that they have the strongest roles.

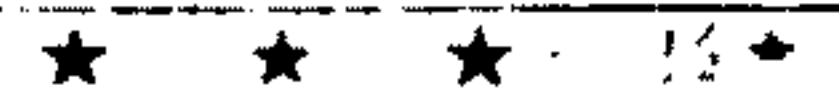
"Objective, Burma," directed exceedingly well by Raoul Walsh from a first-class script by Ronald MacDougall and Lester Cole, is a stirring tribute to the sterling fighting men who helped to reopen Burma after the initial Japanese onslaught in the Pacific.

T. M. P.

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

January 27, 1945

'Objective, Burma' Is A Thrilling War Film



By KATE CAMERON

WARNER BROTHERS have added another fine and thrilling war picture to their list of recent screen achievements. In "Objective, Burma," which came into the Strand Theatre yesterday, they come close to equaling in suspense and thrills their production of "Destination Tokyo," which was one of the best war films made in Hollywood during 1944.

Errol Flynn is listed as the star of the picture, but neither he nor any other member of the cast can take a special bow, since they all work together like a well-trained team, to bring to the people of the United States this particular bit of the war in as realistic a manner as possible.

Under Raoul Walsh's astute direction, all phony war heroics are eschewed in favor of realism. There is a minimum of dialogue as a group of paratroopers go about accomplishing a mission that immediately precedes the recent re-entry of Burma by Gen. Stilwell's army.

In a foreword to the picture, the general is quoted as saying that his retreat from Burma after the first campaign was a humiliating experience and he is determined to redeem himself and his men by going back into Burma with a rehabilitated force and clean out the Japs from that particular portion of Asia.

Trip Into Jungle

The camera follows the boys who are sent into the jungle to demolish a radio and radar station before the main operation begins. Under the command of Capt. Nelson, and accompanied by a newspaper correspondent, the soldiers are briefed, take off in a transport plane, are dropped near their objective and accomplish their mission without a single loss of life. They are returning to a designated spot to be picked up by plane, when a Japanese patrol spots them and prevents them from making contact with the rescue party.

From then on, the group is beset by a series of mishaps and Japanese soldiers, as they try to make their way back to the base on foot. It's an agonizing trek, filled with suspense, as they creep through the quiet jungle.

The picture is long, it runs two hours and twenty-two minutes, but it is completely fascinating for every one of those minutes.

Henry Hull, James Brown, William Prince, Dick Erdman and George Tobias constitute Flynn's chief support, but every man in the cast deserves credit for giving us so absorbing and prideful a glimpse of the accomplishments of our soldiers in the jungle.

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN

January 27, 1945

'Objective Burma' Shown At Strand Theatre

By ROSE PELSWICK

IN "Objective Burma," at the Strand Theatre, Warner Bros., present a remarkably vivid picture of men under fire. There is no conventional movie plot as such; there is, instead, terrific drama in an almost documentary-like account of American soldiers fighting their way through Jap-infested jungles.

Unfolded with a grimness of detail that is at times almost unbearable, the film depicts a group of paratroopers who are assigned to demolish a Japanese radar station somewhere in Burma. Veterans of the New Guinea campaign, the men make the jump and accomplish their mission without incident or casualty.

"Objective, Burma!"—continued

Then they make their way to the air strip where planes are to pick them up, but by this time they've been spotted by the enemy and have to try to get back through the jungle instead.

Saga of Courage

And the narrative that follows is a saga of dogged persistence and high courage in the face of heartbreaking obstacles. Literally crawling through the dense foliage to the shrill and eerie pipings of jungle wild life, the exhausted men see their number lessen as the Jap ambushes become more frequent.

In a Burmese village they come across comrades who have been tortured and mutilated by the enemy. When supply planes do drop sorely needed food and ammunition, the falling parachutes only attract more Jap snipers.

When their walkie-talkie is smashed, they lose their last contact with the home base. But somehow they keep going through the perilous days and nights.

The picture is told with a minimum of dialogue, and the actors, headed by Errol Flynn as the paratroop captain, Henry Hull as a newspaper correspondent, Dick Erdman, George Tobias, James Brown and William Prince among others, are excellent in their roles.

To Raoul Walsh goes credit for the taut direction and Alvah Bessie, Ransald MacDougall and Lester Cole are responsible for the gripping story and screenplay. The picture isn't pretty, but it's tremendously effective.

NEW YORK SUN

January 27, 1945

'Objective, Burma', Melodrama Of a Paratrooper Raid in the Jungle

By EILEEN CREELMAN

THE latest war picture, "Objective, Burma," opened at the Strand; and it seems as long as the war itself. This is high-tension melodrama, for an hour and a half as exciting as any of the battle tales. No picture can keep up that pace for nearly two and a half hours without battering its audience into weariness. At least one spectator suffered a slight case of battle fatigue after 142 minutes of the Burma jungles.

The Warners time their openings shrewdly. Now, with Burma once more on the front pages, the Strand picture is timely. The opening was held up for just the right moment. "Objective, Burma" describes the adventures of a group of American paratroopers dropped

180 miles behind the Japanese lines. They are to destroy a radar station. They do so, taking the Japanese post by surprise and mowing down, with machine-guns, each enemy soldier as he leaves the mess hall.

Japanese vengeance was to be expected, with at least sixty Japanese soldiers slaughtered. The Americans almost escape scot-free. At the last moment they realize enemy troops have caught up with them at the airfield. Capt. Nelson orders away the American planes and arranges a rendezvous two days hence at another place. The next two hours are concerned with the paratroopers' struggles with the jungles, their skirmishes with the Japanese, their final desperate fight. Only a handful of the original group escapes. The mission at least had been accomplished.

The film is told tensely, with only a few Warner editorializing speeches. Had it been thirty minutes shorter the picture would have been twice as good. It is hard, after two hours, to feel the same keen interest in the paratroopers' fate. The length causes repetition, although much of the picture is astonishingly fresh in its use of war material. Henry Hull plays the middle-aged, plucky war correspondent, Errol Flynn the steady-nerved captain, William Prince one of the veteran officers. "Objective, Burma" is an excellent battle thriller, made tedious by lack of editing.