

Document Citation

Title	New talent
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Saturday Review</i>
Date	1957 Feb 16
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Men in war, Mann, Anthony, 1957

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The Korean War continues to get its coverage in "Men in War" and "Battle Hymn," and if one were to look at these two movies in succession one might think they were about two different wars. "Men in War" was made from Van Van Praag's novel, "Day Without End," and chronicles one day's events for a platoon cut off and surrounded by the enemy and attempting to make it back to its own

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lines. Robert Ryan is the platoon leader—and it should be noted what an unusually good film actor he is when he gets his chances—and Aldo Ray a sergeant with killer instincts who joins the platoon on its eerie march. For the first half the film is superb. There is remarkable camera work, magnificent realistic studies of men faced with an all but hopeless situation, and some stunning, quite harrowing suspense as one gets the idea that the platoon is surrounded by a quiet, remorseless enemy.

The second half is not quite so good, as the heroics get thicker, so to speak, finally culminating with Ryan and Ray storming and knocking out an enemy position. At that point it's standard war stuff. What puts the movie distinctly out of the ordinary is the direction, the believable way in which the men behave, the images, effective sheerly as images, and a notable music score by Elmer Bernstein. There are many first-rate acting jobs, including those by Robert Ryan and Aldo Ray, and also by Robert Keith, Phil Pine, and Vic Morrow. Philip Yordan wrote the screenplay, and Anthony Mann directed, both obviously very good men.