

Bull's-Eye for the Snipers

So You'd Like to Be a Combat Photographer? Read This Story Of a 'Riot Rembrandt' and You May Quickly Change Your Mind

By William F. French

INLISTED for combat photography," explained Corporal "X," "because they said I'd get more chances to shoot sizzling action than I ever got chasing national calamities for the newsreels.

"When they gave me a husky combat movie camera, a couple of months of tough physical training and a trip to Africa, I figured I was on my way to a scoop of hot shots.

"But I just tailed our advance units in Tunisia, making close-ups of shot-down planes and captured enemy equipment. The brass hats in Washington wanted to see if the Germans had anything we didn't. So I had to shoot all the junk lying along the way—from belt buckles to heavy tanks.

"I was near nuts when I got an order that looked like a life-saver. Information came through that we had been losing too high a percentage of our men in advances because they weren't wise to foxholes. So I was to shoot engagements between our mopping up details and the Nazis who bobbed up out of their foxholes and knocked them over after they had passed—and to get shots of Nazi snipers in trees and rock nests.

"That looked like hot stuff. Like the movies of jungle fighting the Army had shown us, this would be full of angles of how to look out for yourself.

"I'd have to watch my step. It had been pounded into me that the Jerries, like the Japs, will pass up an officer to knock off a cameraman, any time. They think the staff gets too many ideas from seeing our film—so the guy with the camera is bull's-eye for snipers.

"But shooting this stuff was worth the risk. The pictures would be shown to all our men, and maybe save a lot of lives. So I was steamed up to be a hero, and raring to go.

"**T**HEN I discovered I was to film mock clashes between our soldiers and stooges playing at being Nazis. And the whole business was rehearsed and directed by a couple of looles who had been inside the German lines, and had seen the Nazis slide back the brush-covered lids of their foxholes and pot our boys from behind.

"Photographing that stuff reminded me of a couple of sickening months I'd spent with a quickie producer in Hollywood—except, of course, that I didn't have any lights or reflectors for this Army epic. And I couldn't wait for the sun. Rain or shine, they had to have that film.

"Speed is the keynote for an Army combat photographer. Speed and more speed.

"What I shot was rushed back to the Signal Corps' field laboratory for developing, and about 20 prints made. One print was flown to England. There it was combined with similar stuff a couple of other cameramen had shot and made into a short. Another print was sent to Wash-

ington as basic material for training film. Production units in Long Island are constantly bringing training film up to date in every theater of the war.

"The other 18 prints of my take were sent up and down the line, to be shown our men a couple of hundred at a time.

"Then I went back as producer-director-cameraman of the junk pile.

"But my next assignment was the real McCoy. The captain ordered me to report to the first loolie in charge of springing the booby-traps in the town we were moving up to occupy. He told me to take enough film to make a complete photographic record of these traps and how they worked.

"When I reported to Lieutenant Hanson, he put it on the line: 'The colonel says too many of our men are learning about booby-traps the hard way,' he explained. 'Our dressing stations and field hospitals are jammed with casualties who got blown up moving harmless-looking obstacles, picking up abandoned arms or collecting souvenirs.'

"The Germans plant bombs under or near these that explode when weight is removed, a trigger released or a string pulled. They never abandon a town without setting booby-traps to go off when water is drawn, doors or windows opened or closed or innocent-looking objects moved.

"**O**UR men barge in recklessly. So booby-traps are killing too many. The Germans are proud of their ingenuity in devising these, and don't mind if they bag more women and children than soldiers.

"At daybreak I'm taking in a detail to cover the experts from the engineers who'll remove or explode these traps. You are to photograph them—how they are set, how they look and how they explode. Movies of these must be shown our men to cut down casualties.

"When we move up, don't touch anything yourself. Let the experts set it up for you. And keep out of sight. There'll be snipers left behind—and they don't like cameramen. But we'll send your film back as fast as you expose it, so it won't be lost if anything happens to you."

"On that detail I learned the difference between keeping clear of falling walls, broken power lines, rising flood waters or stray bricks in a riot (things I used to think were tops in danger) and diving headfirst into the muck of crumbling dove walls to duck bullets intended for me, personally.

"And I still claim it's one thing to come romping along with a gun in your hands hunting for somebody to blast, and another thing to try to keep the trunk of a palm tree between you and a loose sniper while you

grind film at guys exploding booby-traps.

"A few minutes of hide and seek with a fellow who's shooting at you may be a thrill, but hours of it give you the heebie-jeebies. And there wasn't any time off. As soon as our men smoked out one guy who was sniping at me, I'd have to move for another shot, and get into the range of another sniper. Well, it's one way to keep from growing old . . .

"I got a bullet burn on the shoulder and another on the leg that day. Neither was more than a scratch; but they scared me enough to make me wish I'd run out of film, or a bullet would smash my camera.

"When it was all over I got that hero feeling. I patted myself on the back for all the lives I must be saving. And I put on such a good act about danger meaning nothing to the old 'Riot Rembrandt' that I was given another chance to get hot film, right away.

"It was important to know what troops and equipment Rommel had moved into a deep wadi leading into Faid Pass—and especially if they had tanks in there, and what kind. Because of strong anti-aircraft concentration, camouflage and natural obstructions, our flying photographers couldn't get much there. And, of course, ordinary observation wouldn't do.

"The human eye sees so little; and soldiers who're fighting their way along or dodging bursts of machine gun bullets can't remember so many details. That's why guys with cameras go along on infantry charges and grind away in tanks. They can't see a tenth of what they photograph—but the staff sees plenty when the film goes under a magnifying glass.

"Anyhow, our major had the bright idea that if he sent several skirmishing parties, each with a photographer, into the rocks on a hillside overlooking the canyon, we could get plenty with our telescopic lenses.

"A few men could slip up there because the Germans weren't holding it with a heavy force, but by artillery fire that would make scrap iron out of any mechanized units that tried to crawl up its steep sides.

"**W**E went up in good old-fashioned American Indian style without a bullet nipping at us until we got within easy machine gun range of the crest. Then about 20 nests opened up on us, and we dived for the rocks. In about 10 minutes the one I was trying to burrow under looked like someone had been working on it with a pneumatic rock drill.

"The bullets would hit it, splatter rock splinters and dust, and then ricochet with an ugly whistling shriek. The fellows hit by them got nasty wounds.

"As I was only drawing one



COMBAT PHOTOGRAPHER (top photo) risks his life to provide these men with films that will teach them how to cope with deadly Nazi tricks.

man's share of the, I figured they hadn't spotted my camera. So I hid it under me. We huddled in those rocks till dark because anything that stuck out got shot off. The only thing I saw to shoot was the side of my rock and the sky overhead. I sneaked back into camp that night, scratched, cut and sunburned to a blister, without a foot of exposed film.

"And I had been afraid Army photography would be too soft for a thrill-chaser like me!"

Thousands of others have found war photography far from what they expected, and many a lad who joined up with the idea of making publicity photographs for the newspapers or propaganda film for the movies in comfort and safety has found himself right up there with the boys who're fighting the Japs and the Huns.

Reconnaissance photography in the air and combat photography on the ground are recognized as two of the most hazardous assignments in modern war. The very finest flyers are selected to become photographic reconnaissance pilots, because both the enemy fighter planes and anti-aircraft batteries will abandon other targets to pick on them. They must be able to outfly and outguess enemy fighters, because they have no guns with which to fight back. And they must be cool enough under fire to come down into the heaviest flack to photograph enemy installations and activities.

On the ground the man with the camera must be in the front line of advance to photograph hand-to-hand conflict, and must share dangerous scouting missions to get film showing enemy equipment, troop disposition and other vital information.

Because of the intelligence value of the film he shoots, he rates so high as a target for enemy snipers that the Army has developed a combat movie camera that looks like a sub-machine gun—so the cameraman can't be distinguished so readily from other soldiers.

Exposed combat film is sent to base headquarters by the fastest possible means. The officer in charge there assembles it, and anything of immediate and vital tactical value is shown

the staff. Our methods of fighting are constantly being revised from information interpreted from motion pictures. No important moves are decided until every phase of enemy maneuver, installation and equipment has been adequately photographed.

LATER all film is shipped to Washington—50,000 feet of combat film alone arriving there weekly from the various theaters of war—where it is shown to a board of review composed of representatives from 22 branches of the Army. There the surgeon general picks out any shots showing the handling of wounded on the field, unusual methods of transporting casualties through the jungle, temporary sanitary arrangements in desert camps, or anything of that nature. Prints of these are made and shown his department.

Prints of pictures of enemy equipment or the damage done by artillery fire are made for ordnance; shots of road conditions, bridges constructed and enemy installations are copied for the engineering corps; duplicates are made of frames showing our tanks in action, destroyed mobile equipment and armored cars in action for the armored service—and so on.

Every branch of service orders special shots to be made by cameramen in the field, and from the film that comes back each plans new types of equipment and new means of fighting.

Besides the human cameramen, our Army and Navy have automatic picture makers that are doing a terrific job. Automatic cameras that operate when bombs are dropped and get pictures of the actual explosions; horizon to horizon cameras on reconnaissance planes that photograph everything in the sky while the pilot cameraman is making special shots; 16-mm. movie cameras in the wings of our fighter planes that are synchronized to point and fire with machine guns, making a pictorial record of every combat.

All this is the job of the eyes of our fighters, and without combat and reconnaissance cameramen our Army and Navy would be blind.

These Wartime Pupils Earn as They Learn

By Lois Wohlgenuth

BILL SMITH is a high school graduate who is learning while earning on a 40-hour week basis. This arrangement is being repeated at thousands of plants all over the United States.

The apprentice system under which Bill Smith is working lasts for one or two years. Four of Joe's 40 hours each week are spent learning applied mathematics and science, physics, blueprint reading, and mechanical drawing, and 36



WINNER of science talent search, 18-year-old Marina Prajmovsky is both student and worker.

hours earning while working on machines in a special section set aside for apprentices.

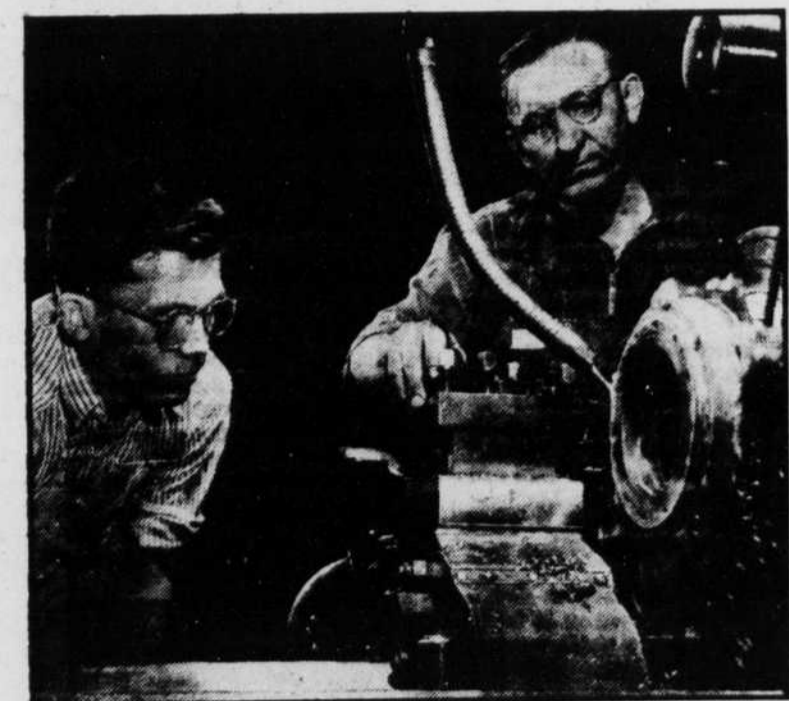
This method is bringing heartwarming results. At one plant, more than 50 per cent of the supervisors have risen from the ranks of apprentices.

High school students, old men, and ambitious girls fill the classrooms at night to study engineering, accounting, typing, or "just to keep up with the times."

Girls are replacing men in the classroom and then on the production line. There is a 36 week electrical engineering course, which leads to a wartime engineering job. The company pays the cost of tuition, laboratory fees, books, board, room, and railroad fare, and, in addition, will pay the women \$50 for each

was in them—a trying task. Paul Craneheld of Lake Mills, Wis., who thought he didn't want to attend college, but was persuaded to do so by the science talent search judges, won a signal honor at the University of Wisconsin; he is the only undergraduate permitted to work in the university's chemistry laboratory where highly confidential research is being conducted. He has been assigned to a chemical research project that will help increase our munitions supply.

Uncle Sam's fighting men are going back to school, too, right in the production aisles. These men, battle-tested veterans of the Navy's submarine fleet, are learning how to operate and maintain newly designed elec-



TRAINING PROGRAM enables this youth to work in a war plant and still attend high school.

four-week period during the training program.

A SCIENCE talent search conducted by Westinghouse has helped high school boys and girls make science their career by awarding \$5600 annually in scholarships.

Already these winners have started to produce. Pretty, brunette, 19-year-old Marina Prajmovsky was assigned during the recent summer vacation period to the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D. C. Winner of first place among the girls who competed in the first science talent search, Marina worked at the laboratory as an analytical chemist. Her job was to take samples of various war materials and with no knowledge of their composition find out what

trical equipment being built for the Navy.

After completion of the course, the men report for duty on submarines equipped with the new apparatus they have studied. This training enables them to go out on patrol with confidence, because they know how to handle the equipment on which their lives and the lives of their shipmates depend.

Post-war plans for industrial training can be classed under four general aims: to give college men expert guidance so that industry can make them fine engineers; to offer training at all levels; to have closer cooperation among industry and high schools and colleges; to give a man college training that will be fundamental and varied enough to make him adaptable.