The Camera Marches To War

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"Since the United States is engaged in a deadly struggle for its very existence, every industry and every man, woman, and child must alter their peace-time operations so as to fit into the war program," declared Paul V. McNutt, Federal man-power commissioner, in a recent speech. Nowhere is the will for readjustments to fit the war program any greater than in industry. The photographic profession has especially made a large contribution to the geared-up production, and the results of these changes may bring about new types of endeavor for the profession.

Before the outbreak of World War II, the photographic profession was just beginning to extend its efforts into many varied fields. In pre-war days the camera was used primarily as a means of artistic expression. An expert could photograph a scene with his camera that would include more detail than any artist could possibly paint with oils. And at the same time he could also exercise almost as much volition in the composing of his photograph as could the artist.1 Newspapers and magazines, realizing that a good photograph was worth a thousand words, made the photographer an important member of their staff.

The photographer also found a place in the recreational world. The production of movies for the theatrical entertainment became an industry in itself. Many thousands of people also seized photography as a hobby for recreational purposes. According to Popular Photography Magazine, five out of every ten Americans owned a camera of some description. Scientists were finding

1(Stephen Deutch, F. R. P. S. The Photographer is an Artist)

that the camera was also a useful tool in their work. The astronomer used the camera because of its ability to make a permanent image. The photographs he made then provided him with a permanent record of the movements of the stars that he could study minutely. The doctor employed the camera to teach new techniques of surgery while both the still and motion picture camera were employed by educators to illustrate lectures on their various subjects.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor also blew up most of the normal operations of the photographic industry. Today most of the photographers are turning their lenses upon war-time subjects. This is partially due to the cut in the amount of film available, for film contains nitrocellulose, a basic element of gunpowder. The government employs famous photographers, such as Mrs. Bourke White, to photograph the war-effort on the home front and on the battle front. These photographs are used to educate the people as to what is actually going on here and abroad. Motion pictures are needed for the newsreels to combat enemy propaganda and to encourage enlistments. Photographers are also needed to take the identification portraits necessary for government records and for the badges worn by defense workers. Newspapers clamor for photographs to illustrate their war stories.

Expert photographers have places awaiting them in the armed services. Since the airplane is playing such a vital part in the war, aerial photography is becoming indispensable. In observation work and in planning attacks the camera is proving more valuable than another set of eyes, for it provides a permanent record. In planning an attack, the area to be the target is care-
fully mapped out by aerial photographers, who with their huge multi-lens cameras can photograph an area 100 miles square in a matter of minutes. These photographs are then enlarged and studied. The officer examining the photograph can estimate the depth of rivers, the height of mountains, uncover camouflage work, and determine troop movements by close examination of the photograph. The aerial gunner and the bombardier are taught accuracy in their work by the use of the camera. The camera records their hits, and the photographs are studied to discover what caused any errors. The intelligence corps has a huge file of photographs taken in foreign countries by tourists which can also be used in planning attacks. So it is easy to see that the camera is a good soldier.

Besides being a soldier, the camera is also a morale builder. Motion pictures are being used to entertain both the soldier and civilian to build up morale. Movie attendance in the United States is now 85 million people weekly which is 25 million more than three years ago. The use of Disney cartoons to educate the public as to their part in the war is becoming increasingly important. Soldiers and civilians alike are still using photographs of loved ones to lift up their chins.

Doctors are also using the camera to take care of that chin, for if anyone had a broken jaw-bone, the surgeon would immediately use the X-ray camera to aid in the operation. Scientists have also adapted the X-ray camera to examine metals for flaws. They also use slow motion pictures to detect fluttering in airplane propellers. Science has developed micro-film which is the newest occupation of the camera. Letters that are being sent to soldiers are photographed and reduced to a picture about one inch square which can be read upon receiving by enlarging the image. This is an important factor in saving that much-needed transportation space.

As a result of the new uses found for the camera during the war, the photographer will probably be able to extend his operations in many ways after the war. New and faster films are being developed for aerial photography which will enable the post-war photographer to explore new fields with his camera. The color film, that has been developed to aid in disclosing camouflages by detecting color differences, will enable the photographer to take more natural photographs. The search for substitutes during the present war has resulted in cheaper plastic lenses which will make the camera more adaptable to the purses of more hobbyists.

Another change in the field of recreation besides cheaper lenses for amateurs will be the change in movie programs. There will be the usual dramatic feature plus an information film on national issues, a short musical film on the order of Fantasia, and Disney comedy cartoons.

Educators will also use the Disney cartoons to better illustrate their lectures. Sciences will give the aviator an infra-red camera to enable him to see through fog. The aviator will take a picture through the fog which can be developed immediately in the plane to enable the pilot to see what lies below him. Books and all types of records will be reduced to micro-film to save space. All rare and important documents will be permanently recorded on micro-film. Micro-film will also make possible the distribution of rare books and works of art without harming the originals. So perhaps this war may bring some good results along with the bad; at least it seems so in the field of photography.
November With The World At War

MARY MARGRETTE SCHORTEMIEER

November with the world at war
Is a strange sight
And a frightening thing.

When the leaves die and the headlines scream
Of more important deaths it is so evident
What death is.

And when the darkness hours are almost twice
The light, it is far too easy to guess how it would be
With the dead.

And when a lame bird is all that is left
Of the summer singers it is plain what the world would be
After all the deaths.

And the cold wind and the first snow
Chill the soul like the final kiss on the lips
Of the dead.

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Is a strange sight
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