

Does the phrase "Produced by the Army Pictorial Center" have a familiar ring? It should! It has been seen by every soldier in the United States Army, from enlisted men to general officers and by millions of civilians on television screens, in auditoriums and meeting halls.

In motion picture terminology, it's called a "credit"—or in more familiar terms, a label or brand name. But this particular name is non-commercial; it appears only at the tail end of the product—even after "The End."

What has gone before? The possibilities are many and varied.

It could have been a motion picture offering, basic instruction in the field stripping of a rifle, or detailing the complexity of a microwave oscillator, or a black-and-white film illustrating the desired traits of the noncommissioned officer, or a color film punctuating the story of the Army's communication networks in Vietnam with vivid aerial views of remote installations.

Perhaps it was a documentary film showing past achievements of the Army, using footage from movies made on the scene long ago. It might also have been a training film using newsreel-fresh footage of actual combat in Vietnam to make valid, emphatic teaching points. It could have been a look into the future, such as an R&D Film Report showing newly developed devices taking their first clumsy steps before camera lenses.

While possibilities are endless, all films bearing the label have in common a practical purpose. Each must pay dividends in the form of soldiers trained, educated, motivated, indoctrinated, oriented and informed.

Making a motion picture is a complicated melding of creative energy and imagination, technical skills and craftsmanship, administrative foresight and planning and, finally, a lot of hard work to fuse the elements plus a bit of luck with the uncontrollable aspects. Add to this difficult parlay the Army's demand for films which meet a pre-stated objective and you have a real challenge.

The Army Pictorial Center, which is the Army's main facility for the production of audio-visuals, has been meeting this challenge successfully for a quarter of a century. It's been doing business at Long Island City, New York, since March 1942, when the Army bought Paramount Pictures' East Coast studio, christened it the Signal Corps Photographic Center, and gave it the mission of serving the audio-visual needs of the United States Army.

That Army, a bare three months into World War II, was predominantly an army of civilian amateurs. The Center was staffed with a mixture of professional soldiers, Hollywood artists and craftsmen drafted into uniform, plus other motion picture people of varied experience. They had no choice but to pioneer. Certainly many of its staff had motion picture production know-how in the theatrical field but the films designed

## Army films have a practical purpose—to produce trained, educated, motivated soldiers.



Production crew works on sequence from "History of the Cavalry," which portrays the dramatic story of the arm of speed and violence from earliest days.



Training film "Aero Medical Evacuation" has been used with great success in explaining principles and practices of the system.

PAUL CASTER is staff writer for Army Pictorial Center, Long Island City, N. Y.