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.

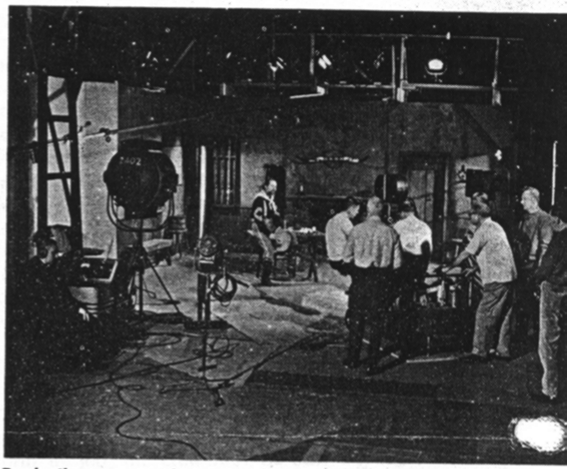
Making a motion picture is a complicated melding of creative energy and imagination, technical skills and craftsmanship, administrative foresight and planning and, finally, a lot of hard work to fuze the elements plus a bit of luck with the uncontrollable aspects. Add to this difficult parlay the Army's 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

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

**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.

to motivate, to teach and orient and inform—these were all new fields.

In the evolution which followed, the Center became the largest, most experienced organization in the world devoted exclusively to the production of such audio-visuals.

The Center, as a sub-command of the Army Materiel Command, is a veteran organization, having weathered the challenges of World War II, Korea and currently Vietnam. The name has changed but the mission remains the same—serving the audio-visual needs of the Army.

In the cluster of buildings that comprise the Center, the major structure occupies a full city block. Within its walls are sound stages, recording studios, carpenter shop, projection rooms, editing rooms, art department and personnel—including producers, writers, directors, editors, cameramen, soundmen, artists, animators and electricians—essential to any self-contained production unit.

Other buildings house the laboratory, which processes many millions of feet of film annually; the Distribution Branch, which feeds film subjects to Audio Visual Support Centers world wide; and the Army Motion Picture Depository, which catalogues and maintains a library of stock film footage utilized wherever possible to reduce production costs. Frequently, entire films are made of stock footage alone.

Each production office handles specific types of films for specific agencies. For example, a training film dealing with electronics would be assigned to one of the producers in Services Films. Arms Films producers handle, among other projects, films for the Infantry School at Fort Benning. Special Films output includes motion pictures for the WAC, and the Office of Civil Defense. AMC Films producers are responsible for film requirements of Army Materiel Command. Information Films producers are proud of "The Big Picture," the Command Information series that has had a 16 year continuous run on television, and is now done in full color.

The producer is the key man in any production. He stays with his assigned projects from start to finish, maintaining quality control and keeping budgets within bounds. Productions usually begin with a script, often requiring a research trip by the writer—a trip which may take him to Germany or Saigon. More typically, he will visit installations in the U.S.—it may be a training center or the Pentagon, Rock Island Arsenal or Aberdeen or Redstone. His objective always is to accumulate enough knowledge about the subject, about the audience for which the film is intended, and the job the requesting agency wants to do so that he can write a script that will be a suitable blueprint for a motion picture.

The script goes to the producer, who gives it eagle-eye appraisal. Does it do the job? Is it clear, concise, to the point? Can it be made within the budget? Can it be improved without increasing its cost, or, if not, would the improvement be worth the added expense?

Before it is stamped "Approved for Production," a script goes under still other magnifying glasses. The technical advisor, provided by the requesting agency, must approve it. An in-house Script Review Board subjects it to clinical analysis, criticism or suggestions. Production budget experts deliver a detailed estimate of just what it will cost to transmute the typed manuscript into a finished celluloid product, ready for screening.

When the finally approved script is put into production, it precipitates waves of action and activity. A director is assigned, and he is second in importance only to the producer until all photography has been completed. He schedules the shooting, supervises the production crew, directs the actors, tells the cameraman what he wants to see on the screen and how he wants it shown, and he dictates the pacing of the action within a given scene.

While the director does not assemble the hundreds of individual shots into the finished film—that's the job of the film editor—he is responsible for producing individual scenes that can be put together successfully by the editor, with a smooth visual continuity. The technical advisor is almost always present, riding herd on technical detail, making sure that doctrine is valid and accurate.

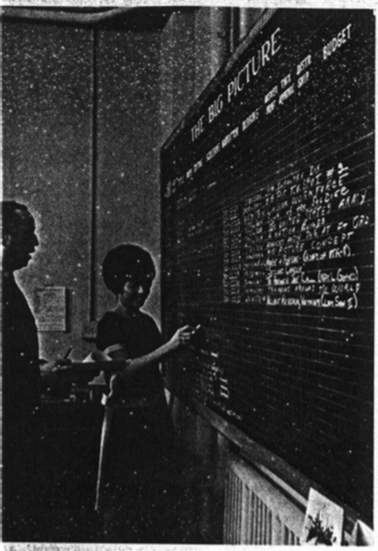
The director's crew may consist of one cameraman for simple exterior sequences, or a fairly large team of technicians, including a cameraman and his assistant, one or two grips, electricians, prop men, a sound crew and perhaps others for complex productions. To perform its job, the crew may be sent anywhere in the world.

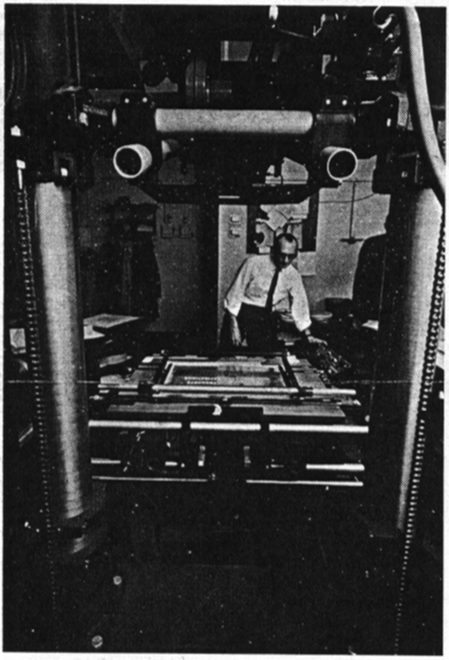
Other support may be provided by the Prop Department, Art and Scenic when interior sets must be designed and constructed, Casting when professional actors are needed plus Wardrobe and Make-up.

Camera coverage of living people and actions is often supplemented with animation which is artwork in motion, illustrating the otherwise invisible. Special effects techniques are used to highlight maps, charts, and stock shots from the Film Library. Eventually, all the scenes are transformed into strips of film, each numbered in accord with the script's scene numbers.

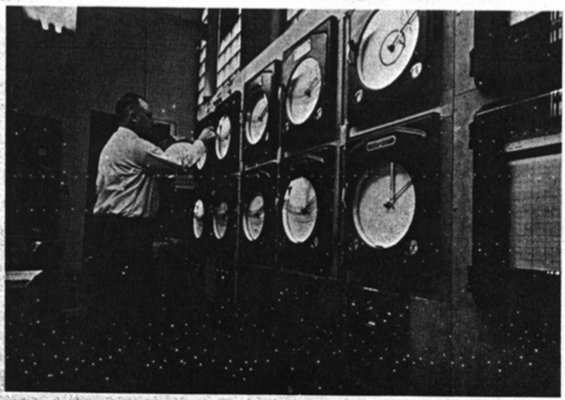
This collection of individual shots or scenes will not be a finished motion picture until it has been assembled by the film editor into a smooth-running, comprehensive, effective whole. In the Center's Editorial Branch, technicians know how short to cut a sequence so that it has life and fluidity, how long to let it run so that a teaching point has time to register with the viewers.

When the editor has completed a first rough cut, he screens it for the Chief of the Production Division, the Executive for Operations, and at times, the Commanding Officer of the Center. After a final polishing to satisfy all three men, the film is scheduled for screening. These screenings keep them up-to-date on the Center's product, and on performance of their personnel. Perhaps more important, it subjects each production to intensive scrutiny so that any film not up



**MAJ Jason B. Goldman, chief of Information Films Branch, and Joyce Weiss update status board for "The Big Picture." Right, Paul Caster, staff writer, confers with Norton S. Parker, chief of writer's branch, and far right top, artist Robert R. Von Achen touches up art material with air brush. At right center, animation cameraman Michael Cambella manipulates camera control, and to right of him, Roy Russell checks a film development machine. Below left, Lawrence Morales operates quality control board. Below right, film searcher Theodore Shane uses microfilm data retrieval system to search for stock scenes.**



to top professional standards may be kicked back into the editing room for further polishing.

When approved for release, the film receives the final, finishing touches. Sound effects and music are added where needed, and a professional narration is recorded, multiple soundtracks are blended into one, the original negative is cut to match the editor's work print, optical effects such as dissolves, fade-ins and fade-outs, are added, and release printing begins. In some cases, as few as a dozen prints suffice; in others, several hundred are required.

And so, on screens all over the world, the words "Produced by the Army Pictorial Center" appear, just before the final fade out. How frequently? In 1966, the phrase was seen two million times. Total attendance at screenings of Army Pictorial Center productions that year was 132,700,000—and these figures do not include "The Big Picture".

The Center's mission has been growing in complexity ever since it was born 25 years ago. Teaching and training films required increasing sophistication to keep pace with military technology. Orientation and motivation films have seen wider and deeper application. The Cold War era that has been labelled as a battle for the mind of man has vastly increased their significance. The use of audio-visuals has expanded rapidly and techniques and methods have changed and improved. The Center has kept pace with these changes, and on more than one occasion has taken the lead toward new, lighter equipment, and faster, more economical methods of production.

With 25 years of experience, the Army Pictorial Center may now qualify as a grey-haired veteran, but its step is as springy as ever.

**How the Product is Used**

# Films on Parade

**Will Green**

A COLUMN of exhausted fighting men plods wearily along a jungle trail. The camouflage of their uniforms blends with the foliage that grows green and dense on all sides. As the soldiers stop at a rippling stream to refresh themselves, sudden furious rifle fire from a hidden enemy cuts them down. Their blood tinges the stream with red.

The scene is chilling enough to keep even the most lackadaisical motion picture viewer on the edge of his seat. The young recruit nudges the man next to him in the darkened classroom and whispers, "Wow! Sarge, this flick is cool—starts off a lot like one I saw in town the other night."

As an old hand, the sergeant can tell the young trooper that this was just one more example of the current brand of training films being shown Army-wide—films that skillfully use the latest professional techniques to put the facts across in a manner stimulating, lively and dramatic.

Employing color to heighten effectiveness; opening with hard-hitting action even before the title appears—these are among ways in which Army film makers are now getting important training messages to soldier-students.

The Army Pictorial Center-produced film subjects range from "Adjutant General" to "Women's Army Corps." It issues films to audio-visual support centers in the United States and worldwide.

The individual Audio-Visual Centers, in turn, furnish films, film strips, slides, tapes, transparencies and phonograph records, to units on Army posts and to Reserve, ROTC and National Guard served by them. Films that are cleared for public exhibition are also issued to civilian organizations.

Getting the films when and where they are needed is of paramount importance. They are dispatched to users by every means from ordinary mail to airplane to dog sled—as happened in Alaska following the earthquake there. Troopships to Vietnam are equipped with projectors and supplied with films for in-transit training.

The Audio-Visual Support Center at Fort Lee, Virginia, is typical of many of the centers. It stocks 2,160 subject titles and 3,352 prints, plus some 1,200 pieces of equipment. During six months the center provided 9,859 motion picture screenings to a total audience of 462,408. On a busy day, the center issues more than 100 films and up to 35 movie projectors, screens, slide projectors, reproducers and other items.

The U.S. Army Quartermaster School at Fort Lee is the biggest user of its films. Many of these are projected over the school's closed-circuit television network— some 700 showings in the past three months. Since each showing reaches as many as 10 and 12 classrooms simultaneously, the impact is considerable.

Fort Lee's 4th Logistical Command, whose mission includes command and preparation of specified attached units for deployment to overseas areas, finds films essential to its training program. Major Robert E. Guyton, in charge of 4th Log individual and unit training, says "I have found that if the instructor previews the film, prepares his audience by using a strong introduction, and follows the showing with prepared discussion, questions and practical exercises, the student will gain the maximum benefit. We have also found that with a little imagination and effort, training films can be effectively used at any time and any place."

**WILL GREEN is assigned to the Information Office, U.S. Army Quartermaster Center and Fort Lee, Virginia.**