

Remembering World War II: Rare Film Shorts

During World War II, motion pictures were used to educate both soldiers and civilians about what was happening around the world. Most of these short films were discarded after release and never seen again. Film historian Eric Grayson has worked for years with collectors (and even fished some films out of trash bins!) to preserve as much of this first-hand history as possible. He currently has over nine hours of original material. All are original films projected with real film equipment, *not DVD or video*. Showings can be indoors or outdoors.



A sampling of popular programs:

WW II CARTOONS. Two different one-hour programs: First, war-themed cartoons aimed at civilians and troops, including *Hell-Bent for Election* (1944), a campaign cartoon for Franklin Roosevelt, and two wartime Daffy Duck cartoons. The second reel features several *Private Snafu* cartoons, which educated troops about various topics. Many of these were written by Ted "Dr. Seuss" Geisel, who added humor to the information.

WHY WE FIGHT. The US Government was concerned that it needed to educate the public on the reasons we were going to war, especially on the European front. They hired filmmaker Frank Capra, best remembered *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), to make a series of documentaries on why we were fighting. There are several installments, each between an hour and 80 minutes, that explain various aspects of the war. These include *Prelude to War*, *War Comes to America*, *The Nazis Strike*, and *The Battle of Russia*. Narrated by Walter Huston, and full of propaganda, the films are seldom seen today.

WW II FOR THE HOME CROWD. During the war, film distributors made highlight reels of battles and important events for use as brief news reports to schools, churches, and other local institutions. See rare footage of the devastation after Pearl Harbor and reports from the fronts.

WW II GI FILMS A selection of short films from the *Army/Navy Screen Magazine* intended to educate troops on events at home and in the war.

WW II GI TRAINING FILMS. Veterans remember the infamous training films covering mundane topics like cooking and wood chopping. They were nearly always accompanied by flat, condescending narration reminding everyone of the obvious. Training sometimes included post-war adjustments, so included is *Diary of a Sergeant* (1945) with Harold Russell, a rare instructional film that explores how a wounded soldier will need to cope with civilian life. Russell went on to win an acting Oscar in 1946 for his role in *The Best Years of Our Lives*.

- Film equipment provided • Historic discussion included • NO COPYRIGHT ISSUES •

For booking information, please contact
Eric Grayson at filmeric@earthlink.net or 317-635-5021.

Many other shows available! Please inquire!