

Movie Review

12-29-2014 by Harry Zirkelbach

From a youth of Double Features, then as Doorman for a theater, I have a fleeting memory of many movies, excellent to lousy stories, from a black and white world.

Later saw a scattering of movies as a student at the University of Detroit, school and employment all year, few moments for the silver screen.

That was followed by a year' schooling in the United States Navy in the eastern cities of New York, Boston, Williamsburg, Washington; training films shown related to military topics in Explosives, land, sea and underwater.

Once the war ended, our Navy Mine & Bomb Explosive Investigative Unit of the Pacific received orders to lead in disposal of all Japanese explosives on those Islands. That Office was established in Kyoto, Honshu, Japan. This was usually a twelve hour day, Sunday's free. Oversea Operations, at sea and on land, during the war, had been continuous, no holidays, week-end freedom.

Besides, at sea in particular, where could you go?

In Kyoto Japan, following peace, our Command, First Corps of the Eighth Army, began offering a different movie every night. Because the release of new films hadn't reached the pre-war pace, the best offerings became the best of 1920/30 movies. I did not see many, but this brought the great comedies and dramas of the silent era and early talkies. What a treat these were.

Released from Active Duty, I join a small group that planning to be involved in communications. We spend more than a year in Washington D.C. That city had begun to import the great movies of Europe; shown with sub-titles, they remained in the tongue of origin. It will always recall hearing an actor say a dozen lines, then have the sub-title read "Yes".

You learn to read more than between the lines.

Considering that I would tell others of a movie enjoyed, I did review many a movie for friends. Those re-tellings were of the story, never a criticism of the the movie, its writer, actors, story intended.

Which brings me to the past week. Relatives insist all go see a few movies. That we do. One indirectly related to my year in Japan in 1946, where on several occasions I worked alone in western Honshu.> This was the very area where “The Bird” had bedeviled his prisoner Louis Zamperini that year before, the final chapters to the story Unbroken.

The book, Unbroken, was a Christmas gift from a daughter in 2012. I liked the book. I’m familiar with the air war against Japan; knew a few Japanese military, and was aware of the Japanese suffering after we burned every major city beginning in 1945. So I had looked forward to Hollywood’s recounting of the Zamperini’s military years, as written by Laura Hillenbrand.

The New Yorker a week earlier panned Unbroken and Director Angelina Jolie. Yes, everyone attending any movie is a qualified Critic.

From the book I met an extraordinary man, who happened to be involved in the early days of WWII as a B-24 Navigator, was shot down, drifted in the Pacific a2,000 miles, was captured, imprisoned more than a year, tortured repeatedly, survived, then spent a lifetime forgiving.

I thoroughly enjoyed the movie which stayed with the war years.

I’m inspired to have read, now see, what that human achieved.