COME ON MARINES (Paramount, 1934) Directed by Henry Hathaway; screenplay by Byron Morgan and Joel Sayre from a story by Philip Wylie; Camera, Ben Reynolds; Music, Ralph Rainger and Leo Robbin; 70 mins. With: Richard Arlen, Ida Lupino, Roscoe Karnes, Monte Blue, Grace Bradley, Ann Sheridan, Toby Wing, Lena Andre, Gwili lamill, Virginia Hammond, Fuzzy Knight, Pat Flaherty, Leo Shalai, Julian Madison, Edmund Breese, Jean Chatburn, Yancy Lane, Colby Tapley, Key McCoy, Eldred Tidbury, Harry Blackwood, Emilie Chauvard, Brooks Benedict, Harry Strong, Kit Guard, Jack Pennick, Boyd Irwin, Lee Phelps.

Tonight's 42nd Street-type double bill of two breezy early 30's service action comedies is quite deliberate. Each inconsequential film on its own, opposite a more serious film, might have flailed its arms and yelled wrong audience. For filmgoers together will hopefully attract a felicitous audience. An interim film, "Come On Marines" was both director Hathaway's first non-western, and one of his only two small programmers for Paramount (the other: "The Witching Hour"). Philip Wylie obviously didn't strain himself over the story, which is merely designed to fill in 70 minutes pleasantly, effortlessly, and economically. It moves, uses good locations (Catalina some of the time) and has plenty of comedy and harmless sex. Grace Bradley's torn-out black leather number will delight all our Jewish members of the audience, while simpler tastes will revel in all those lovely stars-to-be still in their teens, and largely in their lingerie, prancing about the unnamed jungles. It's all very trivial and foolish, but a most enjoyable and undemanding diversion. With this under his belt, Henry Hathaway moved on to "Now and Forever", "Peter Ibbetson", "Lives of a Bengal Lancer", "Souls at Sea" and ultimately "True Grit".

** Ten Minute Intermission **

SKY DEVILS (United Artists-The Caddo Corporation, 1931; rel: 1932) Directed by Edward Sutherland; produced by Howard Hughes; Story and screenplay by Joseph Moncure March and Edward Sutherland, with additional dialogue by Robert Benchley; Camera, Tony Gaudio; Musical Direction, Alphonse船舶 (Boucher); adapted by John F. De Cuir; Director, Edward Sutherland; (premiere: Rivoli Theatre)


In our Bulletin copy we remarked that this comic companion to "Hell's Angels", out of circulation for at least 35 years, had not been turned into a classic by the passage of time. That seemed a fairly safe assumption, based on memories of last seeing the film in 1940. On the other hand, an extremely high rental rate ruling out the possibility of pre-screening it, it seemed well worth taking a chance on. Well, as we see this evening, in many ways it remained the same. But it had grown on us, and only a small audience knew it and it's doubtful that it ever seemed more entertaining than it does today. In 1932, with memories of "Hell's Angels" still so fresh, it did seem rather like a patchwork quilt, as indistinguishable a follow-up to a mighty ancestor as "Son of Kong" was to prove. And of course it even lacked the star value of Spencer Tracy, still very much of a newcomer. When it was revived later in the 30's, it disappointed the Tracy fans, since it seemed a waste of time and money after the powerhouse drama of "Hell's Angels". Youngsters were irate to find that co-star William Boyd was not the Hopalong Cassidy Boyd. And loosely constructed seemingly off-the-cuff and occasionally crude films such as this never seemed more old-fashioned and dated than in the late 30's, when placed side by side with films reeking with polish, technical wizardry and overall expertise. Its reputation, if anything, lessened - though since it was usually double-billed with "Scarface", audiences didn't have too much to complain about.

In 1930 however, it seems to have come into its own as a delightful, breezy, totally unpretentious piece of work. True, it might have had more bite if directed by Raoul Walsh -- but then what film wouldn't? Its relaxed demeanor may be partially the result of Hughes' own very well-crafted production numbers, but one has to give a lot of credit to writers, directors and players too. It's no easy task to write and deliver dialogue as though it is totally spontaneous and ad-lib - and yet via timing and wit show that it is not. Even the rough production edges give it a kind of realism that enhances the fun. As always with Hughes, there's a certain amount of roughhouse vulgarity and sex, and Ann Dvorak's raunchy dance (which had not stayed with me over 40 years) will certainly wake up any members who might have been snoozing since Grace Bradley's exit in the companion feature "True Grit". The whole idea of the film from "Hell's Angels" - the ammunition dump goes up once again, and the dog-fight is back (old friends now, since we saw them just last week) - but (a) it's fine footage, and (b) there's a great deal of new aerial stunt material as well. It's by no means a cheater in terms of cost, though it's a pity that such great pictorial material is at the mercy of today's labs, unwilling to take the little extra trouble that old material calls for. The print is quite acceptable, though I'm sure a little reflection reflects the outstanding pictorial values of the original release. But all in all, it's a most welcome surprise, and makes one anxious to see "Cock of the Air" - always a lesser production than this, but it too may seem quite revitalised today. And not the least of "Sky Devils" is the chance to see William Boyd, former star of the stage "What Price Glory?", in good form still, before alcoholism ruined his career and killed him in 1935.

- W.R.P.