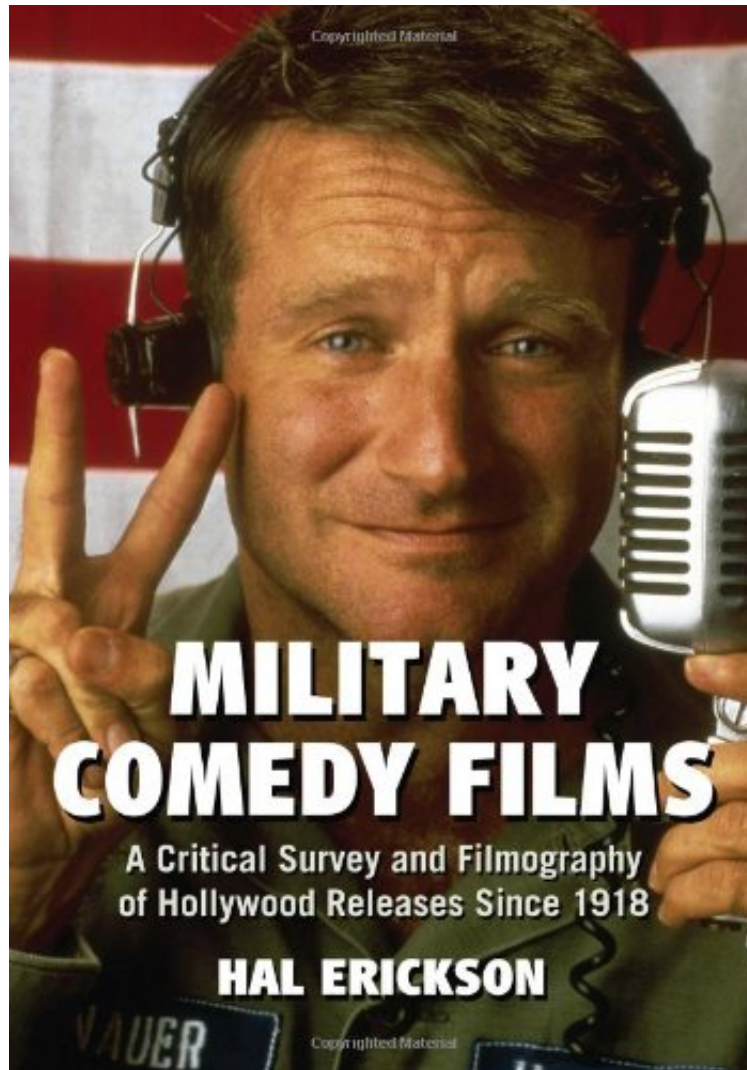


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Military Comedy Films: A Critical Survey and Filmography of Hollywood Releases Since 1918

Hal Erickson

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Erickson, author of *Television Cartoon Shows: An Illustrated Encyclopedia, 1949 Through 2003* (2 Volume Set), *Encyclopedia of Television Law Shows: Factual and Fictional Series About Judges, Lawyers and the Courtroom, 1948-2008*, and similar works, opens by discussing what constitutes a service comedy, noting that serious war pictures, such as "Stalag 17" or "The Story of GI Joe," often have humorous moments, but can hardly be called "comedies." He follows this with a look at Charlie Chaplain's pioneering 1918 *Shoulder Arms*, which in many ways set the basic structure of service comedies. Then come twenty chapters, covering everything from silent era films to Abbott and Costello spoofs and imitations thereof, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force pictures, women in uniform, joining the service, "Wheeler Dealer" films, and much, much more, including anti-war and anti-military pictures, a look at television, and even cartoons. In each chapter, Erickson focuses on one or two films, such as "See Here, Private Hargrove" or "Biloxi Blues," for pictures about coming to grips with military life, and shows how they exemplify the genre. This, plus many humorous insights, anecdotes and trivia, make *Military Comedy Films* an essential work for those interested in film, and an amusing read for anyone else. For the full review, see StrategyPage.Com

Beginning with Charlie Chaplin's *Shoulder Arms*, released in America near the end of World War I, the military comedy film has been one of Hollywood's most durable genres. This generously illustrated history examines over 225 Army, Navy and Marine-related comedies produced between 1918 and 2009, including the abundance of laughspinners released during World War II in the wake of Abbott and Costello's phenomenally successful *Buck Privates* (1941), and the many lighthearted service films of the immediate postwar era, among them *Mister Roberts* (1955) and *No Time for Sergeants* (1958). Also included are discussions of such subgenres as silent films (*The General*), military-academy farces (*Brother Rat*), women in uniform (*Private Benjamin*), misfits making good (*Stripes*), anti-war comedies (*MASH*), and fact-based films (*The Men Who Stare at Goats*). A closing filmography is included in this richly detailed volume.

"fascinating...attention to detail is impressive. Recommended"--Choice; "essential"--The NYMAS ; "the author discusses the inspiration for many films and the political and social climate the movie was created in"--ARBA. About the Author Hal Erickson has written several media-related books for McFarland, and was for many years a primary editor of the All-Movie Guide website. He lives and works in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.