

Desert drama just plods along

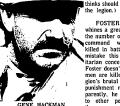
Long before the title phrase "March or Die" (PG) is spoken in the movie. it's meaning becomes clear. Either one is
an actor monotonously marching along or one is a spectator
dying of boredom.

The publicity releases ballyhoo "March or Die." as an
epic, romantic action-adventure film. It is none of these, except a film. Flaccid directing by Dick Richards and uninspired film editing by John Howard and Stanford Allen have
resulted in a French Foreign Legion film that plods along, at
a camel's paceuse as Simone, a young widow, gives a
stole, expressionless performance. There are figures in wax
nuseums more animated than Deneuve. Gene Hackman's acting as Major William Foster tensists.

Major Foster is an insufferable officer who keeps assuming a morally superior stance to civilians. Civilians 'use' the
legion should be used.

(It isn't clear what he
the legion should be done with
the legion.





FOSTER ALSO whines a great deal about the number of men in his command who ve been killed in battle. Lest one mistake this for human-tartian concert, note that Foster deesn't mind if his men are killed by the legion's brutal training and punishment methods. Apparently, he just objects to other people killing them.

GENE HACKMAN

Foster and Simone are drawn together by their mutual apathy and fey dispositions. These two unattractive qualities do nothing to enhance the action or provide entertainment. "Failure" as the subject of drama requires an expert hand, a Beckett if not a Shakesprare. No such master dramatist guides this desert drudgery.

Nevertheless, Max won Sydow and Terence Hill give competent performances. However, Hill's role as Marco, a catburglar turned legionnaire, is ridiculous, and von Sydow's role as the Louvre archaeologist is too limited.

Briefly, the story is about legion tropos dispatched to Morocco in 1918 to accompany and protect a French archaeological expedition. Major Foster (Hackman) is the commander. Having been booted out of the American army, he's a reject, like almost everyone else in his command.

The local Araba aren't thrilled about contributing to French culture. They wiped out the previous expedition and have designs on this one. Actually, the historically imbled script gives the post World War I Araba a post World War II outlook.

A SERIES OF obligatory scenes and motifs follow. There are the obligatory training scenes where boys are molded into men, men into monsters, etc.

Simone provides the obligatory female interest. She loves Marco if Terence Hilli, but she doesn't want Marco to love her; therefore, she gives herself to Poster. Well, they deserve each of the provides the obligatory that the provides of the provides

Climpses

NEW RELEASES

BLACK AND WHITE IN COLOR (PG). Wryly humorous film about French colonials waging mini-war in Africa in 1915. English subtitles. Wen 1976 Academy Award for best foreign language film.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR (PG). Crisp World War II drama chronteling major but ill-fated Allied campaign in Holland. Bounty of stars make brief but effective appearances. BREAKING TRAINING (PG). The Bad News Bears may win the game. but it's a poor showing. Without Walter Matthau the game and game

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

G General audiences admitted.
PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.
X No one under 18 admitted.



Pantless in the park

While the audience huddled in coats and blankets, outdoors in Birmingham's Shain Park, John Unruh was caught with his pants off appearing with Debbie Diehl in the one-act play "Rise and Shine." In the play, Unruh is back from the grave and has returned pantless, he speculates, because he was buried that way. The start of the play was delayed briefly because Unrah misplaced his coatwhich was not in the script. When the coat went on, so did the show. Barbara Underwood directed "Rise and Shine." for the Birmingham Village Players presentation at the City of Birmingham-sponsored In the Park program Thursday. Also performing for the good-sized crowd, which brought its own chairs, were a group of players from the First Theater Guild of the First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham. Stan Fiol directed an abridged version of "The Importance of Being Earnest" by Oscar Wilde. Coming Thursday at In the Park will be The Executives, with music of the big bands. (Staff photos by Dick Kelly) will be The Exe by Dick Kelly)



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