

Sgt. Bilko - The Phil Silvers Show

- September 1955-October 1955 – Tuesdays at 8:30-9:00 pm on CBS
 - November 1955-January 1958 – Tuesdays at 8:00-8:30 pm on CBS
 - February 1958-September 1959 – Fridays at 9:00-9:30 pm on CBS
- 143 Episodes

Created by **Nat Hiken** who insisted on filming the series in New York City, believing it to be more conducive to comedic creativity and the show's humor. Early episodes were filmed at Dumont's television center in New York City – now home to WNYW-TV.

Later episodes were shot at the CBS "Hi Brown" Studios in Chelsea, Manhattan. The building was originally an armory which was home to the Ninth Mounted Cavalry, which moved to 14th Street in 1914. Adolph Zukor turned it into a studio for the Famous Players Film Company. Among the films produced there were *An American Citizen* and *That Man from Mexico* starring John Barrymore. In the 1950s, Himan Brown bought the studio and gutted it to create two sound stages known as Production Center Studios. In the 1960's and 1970's, Brown leased the facility to CBS for soap opera productions. As of February 2019, it is owned by All Mobile Video.

Episode For Class:

Hillbilly Whiz - aired October 1, 1957

Phil Silvers (Master Sgt. Ernest G. Bilko)- was best known for his starring role as Master Sergeant Ernest "Ernie" Bilko in the sitcom *The Phil Silvers Show*. He had roles in the comedy films *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* and *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*.

He started his career as an entertainer in 1922, at the age of 11. A frequent accident at New York City's movie theaters was for their film projector to break down. Someone had to keep the audience entertained during repairs, so Silvers was hired to sing to them. Part of his reward was to attend the movie theater free of charge.

During the 1930's, Silvers started appearing in Vitaphone short films. He made his feature film debut in *Hit Parade Of 1941*. He did not become a household name until his starring role in *The Phil Silvers Show*. The show lasted for 4 seasons and 143 episodes. Silvers made his last television appearance in an 1983 episode of the crime drama *CHiPs*. He then went into retirement.

Dick Van Dyke (Pvt. Hank Lumpkin) - Van Dyke's first network television appearance was with Dennis James on James' *Chance Of A Lifetime* in 1954. He later appeared in two episodes of *The Phil Silvers Show* during its 1957–1958 season.

His career was launched to stardom in the musical *Bye-Bye Birdie* for which he won a Tony Award. He also starred in the film version of this show.

He beat out Johnny Carson for the role of Rob Petrie on what became *The Dick Van Dyke Show*.

His comic inspiration was Stan Laurel. He says he was able to find Stan by looking up his name in the phone book in Santa Monica, California where Laurel resided. He then called and Laurel invited him over. The two became good friends. When Laurel passed away, Van Dyke delivered his eulogy at the funeral.

He also starred in the features *Mary Poppins* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. By the late 1980s, it looked like Van Dyke's career was over. However, as a result of his performance as the District Attorney in *Dick Tracy*, this led to *Diagnosis Murder*, which proved to be a big television comeback for him. This series ran from 1993 to 2001.

Allan Melvin (Cpl. Steve Henshaw) - would usually played bullies in various roles on television. Later in his career, he did voices for gentle, simple-minded cartoon characters. His best known roles were in four recurring roles: Cpl. Henshaw in *The Phil Silvers Show*, Sgt. Charlie Hacker on *Gomer Pyle: USMC*, Alice's boyfriend Sam on *The Brady Bunch* and Archie Bunker's best friend Barney Hefner on *All In The Family*.

Harvey Lembeck (Cpl. Rocco Barbella) - From 1948 to 1951, Lembeck performed at the hit Broadway play *Mister Roberts* by Joshua Logan. On Broadway, Lembeck had more success with the hit play *Stalag 17*. In 1953, Lembeck was hired to reprise his role for the film version.

Lembeck was one of the main supporting players in *The Phil Silvers Show*. From 1964 to 1966, Lembeck was Eric Von Zipper in five sequels of the *Beach Party* film series.

Maurice Gosfield (Pvt. Duane Doberman) - From 1955 to 1959, Gosfield played Pvt. Duane Doberman in *The Phil Silvers Show*

In 1959, Gosfield was nominated for a Primetime Emmy for Best Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series. He was also the voice of Benny the Ball in the animated cartoon series *Top Cat*, which was partially based on the *Sergeant Bilko* series.

He unsuccessfully tested for the role of Uncle Fester in the TV series *The Addams Family*.

Billy Sands (Pvt. Dino Papparelli) - began his professional acting career in 1946 when he appeared on Broadway with Spencer Tracy in *Rugged Path*. He eventually became a television character actor who appeared regularly as Pvt. Dino Papparelli on *The Phil Silvers Show* in 138 episodes and as Seaman Harrison "Tinker" Bell on *McHale's Navy*, also in 138 episodes.

Joe E. Ross (Master Sgt. Rupert Ritzik) - who was born Joseph Roszawikz, usually played good-natured and loveable buffoons while his "ooh, ooh!" character sounds became a catchphrase over time on television and the night club stage.

His characters received strong notice playing third banana to Phil Silvers on *The Phil Silvers Show*. He then moved on to co-star on *Car 54, Where Are You?* as dimwit police officer Gunther Toody, opposite Fred Gwynne as Officer Francis Muldoon.

Notorious for forgetting his lines, Ross's "ooh, ooh" was nervously developed as a way of giving him time to remember his next line. This catchphrase would follow him for the rest of his career.

In 1968, Ross briefly teamed on the standup comedy stage with singing straight man Steve Rossi ("Rossi & Ross") after Rossi broke up with his partner Marty Allen. The team only lasted for a few months.

In the end, Ross and his wife were living in a housing complex in Los Angeles when he was hired to do a stand-up act for the residents for \$100. In the middle of the show he felt ill and almost immediately he keeled over and died, apparently from a heart attack. When his wife later went to the management to collect the \$100 he was supposed to be paid, they only gave her \$50, saying, "He didn't finish the show".

Jimmy Little (Master Sgt. Francis Grover) - was a frequent stage partner with comedian Joe Besser in short films such as *Hey, Rookie*, *Eadie Was A Lady* and *Talk About A Lady*. Little also appeared in 60 episodes of *The Phil Silvers Show*. He also played the Desk Sergeant on both *Naked City* and *Car 54, Where Are You?*.

Frank Campanella (Yankee Scout) - Originally, he started out to be a concert pianist and played in orchestras backing up such performers as Jimmy Durante, Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor.

While growing up in New York, he learned to speak Italian before he learned English. He coached Robert De Niro to Academy Award winning success with his Sicilian dialog in *The Godfather Part II*.

He is also the older brother of actor Joseph Campanella.

A few of his more memorable roles were features such as *Pretty Woman* and *Overboard*.

Frank Milan (Dan Topping) - was an actor whose career beginnings included film roles in *Hollywood Cowboy*, *Roll Along Cowboy* and *The Gold Racket* all three in 1937. He also acted in the western *Pals Of The Saddle* in 1938 with John Wayne.

On Broadway, he performed in *Brigadoon*, *The Petrified Forest* and *Who Was That Lady I Saw You With?*

Joyce Gladman (Lulubelle) - This appears to be her one and only appearance in a television program and/or motion picture.

Some of the scenes were filmed at Yankee Stadium. The original stadium was built during the years 1922 to 1923. It opened in 1923. The stadium's nickname, "The House That Ruth Built" is from Babe Ruth.

The condition of the stadium deteriorated and worsened in the 1960's and 1970's, prompting its closure for renovation from October 1973 through 1975. The renovation significantly altered the appearance of the stadium and reduced the distance of the outfield fences. Yankee Stadium closed following the 2008 season and the new Yankee Stadium opened in 2009. The original Yankee Stadium was demolished in 2010 and the 8-acre site was converted into a public park called Heritage Field.

Whitey Ford - was a left-handed pitcher for the New York Yankees in 1950 and again from 1953 to 1967. He won 236 games plus 10 in World Series play. Ford served in the United States Army in 1951 and 1952 for the Korean War. His uniform number 16 was retired by the New York Yankees. Ford was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1974.

Phil Rizutto - was the New York Yankees star shortstop for 13 seasons between 1941 and 1956. Rizutto was the 1950 American League Most Valuable Player. As a Yankees broadcaster for 40 years, he would exclaim "Holy cow!" when describing a great play. He was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1994.

Gil McDougald - played second base, third base and shortstop for the New York Yankees from 1951 to 1960. He was selected as the American League's Rookie of the Year in 1951 and was a five-time All-Star.

Yogi (Lawrence Peter) Berra - played for the New York Yankees from 1946 to 1963 and the New York Mets in 1965. He appeared in a record number of 14 World Series. Berra was also voted three American League Most Valuable Player awards. His number 8 was retired by the Yankees in 1972. He was elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame that same year.

Yogi Berra sued Hanna-Barbera for defamation for use of the name Yogi Bear. The HB management claimed the similarity was just a coincidence. Berra eventually withdrew his suit. When Yogi Bear first hit TV screens, Yogi Berra was a household name. Journalist Walter Brasch once wrote that "whether coincidence or not, it is difficult to find anyone else in the industry who believes it was a coincidence."

Red (Walter Lanier) Barber - He was a baseball announcer for 33 years with the Cincinnati Reds (1934-1938), Brooklyn Dodgers (1939-1953) and New York Yankees (1954-1966).

He was the first recipient (with Mel Allen) of the Baseball Hall Of Fame's Ford C. Frick Award (presented to a broadcaster for major contributions to baseball) in 1978.

Red Barber was inducted posthumously into the National Radio Hall of Fame in 1995.

REFERENCES

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Hennesey

Episodes for class:

Pilot Episode Aired September 28, 1959
Series aired on CBS from September 28, 1959 to May 7, 1962
96 Episodes

Exteriors were for the show were filmed at the Balboa Naval Hospital and 32nd St. Naval Station.

Jackie Cooper (Lt. Charles "Chick" Hennesey, MD) - While under contract to Hal Roach Studios, in 1931 Cooper was loaned to Paramount to star in *Skippy*, directed by his uncle, Norman Taurog. At age 9, Cooper was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actor, the youngest actor to be nominated for an Oscar in that category. Although Paramount paid Roach \$25,000 for Cooper's services, Roach paid Cooper a standard salary of \$50 per week.

Cooper was in the same graduating class from Beverly Hills High, Summer of 1940, as Bill McEdward, who later became known as Blake Edwards. Cooper was the star in three television series: *The Peoples Choice*, *Hennesey* and *Mobile One*. He also served as director on numerous episodes of several television series.

In 1961, as his weekly TV series *Hennesey* was enhancing naval recruiting efforts, he accepted a commission as a line officer in the Naval Reserve with duties in recruitment, training films and public relations. As a holder of a multi-engine pilot license, he later co-piloted jet planes for the Navy, which made him an Honorary Aviator authorized to wear wings of gold. At that time, he was only the third so honored in naval aviation history.

Roscoe Karns (Captain Walter Shafer) - was on stage since the age of 15. Roscoe Karns parlayed his street-wise demeanor into character roles in dozens of films from the 1920's up to the 1960's. His best period was in the 1930's, where he often played a wisecracking cab driver or a brash newspaper reporter or the friend of the hero who helps him solve the plot of the film.

He appeared in two Best Picture Academy Award winning films: *Wings* from 1927 and *It Happened One Night* from 1934.

Abby Dalton (Lt. Martha Hale, RN) - was born Gladys Marlene Wasden on August 15, 1932 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Before *Hennesey*, she appeared on western television shows such as *Have Gun - Will Travel*, *Rawhide*, *Maverick*, *The Rifleman* and *Sugarfoot*.

In addition to her many other television roles, she also played Ellie Barnes for four seasons on *The Joey Bishop Show*. Dalton appeared regularly on the game show circuit as a mainstay, alongside Cliff Arquette, Wally Cox and Rose Marie, on *The Hollywood Squares (Daytime)*. Her final regular series performance was on *Falcon Crest* from 1981 to 1986 in the role of Julia Cumson.

Henry Kulky (Chief Max Bronsky) - was once known as "Bomber Kulkavich" during his previous incarnation as a wrestler. He was also a one-time judo champion of South America. Fellow wrestler Mike Mazurki got him into the acting business, where he carved a niche as good-hearted, but dense, sergeants or small-time hoods.

Kulky was also a talented piano player at one of the local nightspots in San Clemente, California.

From 1953 to 1958, he played Otto Schmidlap in the television series *The Life of Riley*. Kulky's last role was as Chief Curley Jones in the television series *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea*. Overall, Kulky had more than 120 film and television credits.

Bert Convy - The Philadelphia Phillies offered him a contract when he was just 17 and he played two years of Minor League Baseball in 1951 and 1952.

He appeared in 10 Broadway shows, including starring as Perchik in the original cast of *Fiddler On The Roof* and creating the role of Cliff Bradshaw in *Cabaret*.

In the 1960s and 1970s, he was a semi-regular panelist on several game shows, including *What's My Line?*, *To Tell The Truth* and *Match Game*. Convy and Burt Reynolds formed their own production company, Burt and Bert Productions, during the 1980s. Their first production was a game show titled *Win, Lose or Draw*.

He guest-starred on Pat O'Brien's short-lived sitcom *Harrigan and Son* as well as *77 Sunset Strip*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *The New Phil Silvers Show*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and in two episodes of *Hawaii Five-O*. Convy also starred in several movies, perhaps most memorably *Semi-Tough* and *The Cannonball Run*.

Norman Alden - His acting career began in 1957 and lasted nearly 50 years. He appeared in dozens of television series such as *Mr. Adams and Eve*, *The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin*, *Hennesey*, *The Lawless Years*, *Bronco*, *Lawman*, *Pete and Gladys* and *Adam-12*.

In motion pictures, Alden appeared in *Back To The Future*, Tim Burton's *Ed Wood* and *Kansas City Bomber* with Raquel Welch.

Frank Gorshin - is best remembered for his many guest appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and *Tonight with Steve Allen* and as the Riddler on *Batman*. He was nominated for an Emmy Award for that performance. He played the Riddler in ten episodes of the series as well as the theatrical movie.

In 1959, he was cast in three episodes as Seaman Pulaski on *Hennesey*. Gorshin went on to play dramatic roles in *The Untouchables*, *The Defenders* and *Combat!*

Gorshin was a popular act at nightclubs, especially in Las Vegas, where he was the first impressionist to headline the main showrooms.

In motion pictures, he was seen in *Bells Are Ringing*, *Where The Boys Are*, *That Darn Cat!* and *Skidoo*. During the 1970's, he appeared on Broadway in *Jimmy* and *Guys and Dolls*. Gorshin's last television appearance was in *Grave Danger*, an episode of the CBS series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*.

Eleanor Audley - played Oliver Douglas's mother, Eunice Douglas, on *Green Acres* and provided Disney animated features with the voices of the two villain characters, Lady Tremaine, Cinderella's evil stepmother in *Cinderella* and Maleficent in *Sleeping Beauty*. She was most active in radio programs such as *My Favorite Husband* and *Father Knows Best*. Audley's television appearances include those in *I Love Lucy*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Mister Ed* and *My Three Sons*.

Ed Nelson - is best known for his role as Dr. Michael Rossi in the television series *Peyton Place*. He appeared in episodes of many television programs, over 50 movies and hundreds of stage productions.

Very early in his career, Nelson did stunt work for B-movie producer Roger Corman on the films such as *Swamp Women*, *Attack Of The Crab Monsters* and *Rock All Night*.

He was cast in several episodes of popular westerns including *Maverick*, *Wagon Train*, *Have Gun-Will Travel*, *The Rebel*, *Gunsmoke*, *Rawhide*, *Bat Masterson* and *Bonanza*.

After *Peyton Place*, Nelson worked in many more productions of all varieties. He had guest-starring roles on many of the popular dramas of the 1970s and 1980s, including *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, *Night Gallery*, *Mod Squad*, *Mission: Impossible*, *The F.B.I.*, *Adam-12*, *Ironside*, *Dallas*, *The Rockford Files*, *Lou Grant*, *Quincy M.E.* and *Murder, She Wrote*.

He also continued appearing in theatrical films, such as *Airport 1975*, *Midway*, *For The Love Of Benji* and *Police Academy 3: Back In Training*.

In 1999, Nelson returned to Tulane University to finish credits toward his undergraduate degree, which he completed the following year at age 71. Until 2005, he had been teaching acting and screenwriting in New Orleans at two local universities.

Hy Averback - (Hyman Jack) Averback was an American radio, television and film actor who eventually became a producer and director.

His big break came when he was hired to announce the Jack Paar radio show, which replaced Jack Benny for the summer of 1947. He then became the announcer for Bob Hope on NBC in September 1948 and announced for other NBC radio shows. He was also an actor, appearing a number of times on the Jack Benny radio show.

He was a series regular on Eve Arden's *Our Miss Brooks*, appeared on *I Love Lucy* and other many 1950's comedies. Next, he moved into directing on programs such as *The Real McCoys* with Richard Crenna who had been a cast member with Averback on *Our Miss Brooks*.

Averback also directed for *The Dick Powell Show*, *Burke's Law*, *The Flying Nun*, *Columbo*, *McCloud*, *M*A*S*H*, *Matt Houston*, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* and *The Four Seasons*.

REFERENCES

Internet Movie Data Base
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Gomer Pyle U.S.M.C.

Aired beginning on September 25, 1964 to May 2, 1969
150 Episodes in this series.

Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C. was also a major ratings hit, never placing lower than tenth in the Nielsen ratings. It ended its run as the second-highest-rated series in the United States.

The episodes for the show were filmed at Camp Pendleton, Desilu-Cahuenga Studios and RKO Forty Acres backlot. More filming was done at the U.S. Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) in San Diego, California.

Episode for class: Car For Sale aired on CBS, Friday evening, at 8:30PM on September 27, 1968.

Jim Nabors - was discovered by Bill Dana of Jose Jimenez fame when he caught Jim's nightclub act. He invited him to audition for Steve Allen's TV variety show. He appeared on that program many times. George Lindsey was originally cast to play the role of Gomer. Before the final decision was made, Griffith suggested Nabors for the role. Nabors was seen with his on-screen cousin (Goober) George Lindsey three times: *The Andy Griffith Show: Fun Girls* (1964), *Gomer Pyle: USMC: A Visit from Cousin Goober* (1965) and *Return to Mayberry* (1986).

He sang *Back Home Again in Indiana* for 42 years during opening ceremonies of the Indianapolis 500, located in Speedway, Indiana, from 1972 until May 25th, 2014. His good friend, Burt Reynolds, was responsible for his theater debut as Harold Hill in *The Music Man* at the Burt Reynolds Dinner Theatre with Florence Henderson as Marian the Librarian. Jim also appeared

as comic support for Reynolds in *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (1982) and *Stroker Ace* (1983).

Frank Sutton - Ironically, he could not pass the United States Marine Corps physical during World War II. Instead, he served in the United States Army. During his service he took part in 14 assault landings at including Leyte, Luzon, Bataan and Corregidor. Sutton was also a Black Belt in Judo. During the 1950's, Sutton appeared on popular children's adventure series such as *Captain Video and His Video Rangers* and *Tom Corbett, Space Cadet*. While in New York, Sutton also found work on the soap operas *The Edge of Night* and *The Secret Storm*. He also had numerous roles on other television programs such as *Naked City*, *The Untouchables* and *Love, American Style*.

A statue of Frank Sutton as Sergeant Carter was dedicated on May 3, 2017 in Sutton's home town of Clarksville, Tennessee. The statue was sculpted by local artist and firefighter Scott Wise. It is located on the north side of Franklin Street, just east of its intersection with North 1st Street.

Allan Melvin - is best known for recurring roles as Corporal Henshaw in *The Phil Silvers Show*, Sgt. Charlie Hacker on *Gomer Pyle: USMC*, Alice's boyfriend Sam on *The Brady Bunch* and Archie Bunker's best friend Barney Hefner on *All in the Family*. Melvin was in only one feature film in his 35 year career when he had a small part as a desk sergeant in *With Six You Get Eggroll* in 1968 starring Doris Day.

Victor Brandt - has over 100 credits in films and television to his name dating as recently as 2019. His work for nearly the last twenty years has been in voiceovers in such animated versions of programs such as *Zorro* and *Superman*.

The car pushing sequence was filmed near the Culver Hotel, in Culver City which is about 1/2 mile from the 40 Acres back lot where this series was filmed. The Culver Hotel was built by Harry Culver, the founder of Culver City, and opened on September 4, 1924. Over the years this hotel has been owned by Charlie Chaplin and John Wayne. The Culver Hotel can be seen in numerous motion pictures and television programs. It was especially popular with Hal Roach Studios comedies of Laurel & Hardy, Our Gang, Charley Chase and many others. This hotel still stands today.

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