

Please don't mention the

PLAYING the professional Nazi is wearing a bit thin for German actor Erich Redman

... even if it is for Steven Spielberg.

Mr Redman, who lives in Quex Road, West Hampstead, is one of the German actors in the director's World War II epic *Saving Private Ryan*.

Since its release it has been hailed as one of the greatest war films ever made and is already tipped to sweep next year's Oscars.

All of this has pleased Mr Redman immensely, but after a string of acting roles as a Nazi, including playing Joseph Goebbels in the series *Mosley*, he is longing to play a romantic hero. "I would much

Denise Winterman talks to *Saving Private Ryan* actor



● Erich Redman.

rather whisper sweet nothings into the ear of a beautiful

actress," he said. "It can get a bit unexciting shouting abuse and saluting my allegiance to Hitler."

Saving Private Ryan follows an eight-man US military team sent behind enemy lines to retrieve a young man who is the sole survivor of four brothers.

The realism of the film has been described as horrific by critics and Mr Redman, who spent three weeks last year on the huge set in Hatfield, Hertfordshire, said Spielberg's attention to detail even made the scenes hard to act.

"He wanted things to be so close to reality that he even had extras who were war veterans and had limbs missing," he

said. "Every morning they would go to make-up and have blood and fake flesh put over their stumps.

"It was incredibly realistic and often quite gruesome. We were told to shout and cry, even if we were out of shot, the noise was incredible. In one shot we were made to scream for our mothers in German, it was pretty emotional."

Mr Redman was selected by Spielberg after acting out combat scenes that were videoed and sent to the director in Hollywood.

"It was an amazing experience because the film was so big. Steven Spielberg was always at the monitors and so would be far away from the action and would communicate by walkie-talkie.

"A lot of preparation went into everything and scenes were very choreographed because many of them were quite dangerous. It was fast and exciting."

But Mr Redman felt the serious subject matter had an effect on the crew.

"All the leading actors were down-to-earth and friendly but often things were subdued.

war

Erich Redman

"This wasn't a funny film to make so I suppose a lot of the messing around that goes on off set in other films was missing."

Spending most of his meal times with Oscar-winning screenwriter and actor Matt Damon, he was unaware of who the rising star was.

"Saving Private Ryan was filmed well before this year's Oscars ceremony so I was not aware of who Matt was," he said.

"He was very humble and when we asked about making it in America he gave us good advice. It was only during the build-up to the Oscars that I realised what a big star he is going to be. He was a nice bloke and deserves it."

It is not the first Spielberg film he has worked on, having a small part in *Schindler's List* playing – you guessed it – a Nazi.

"I do get typecast because of my accent," he said. "I must be the only actor not to have starred in *The Bill*. You don't seem to get too many Germans at Sun Hill police station."

Mr Redman has been in Britain since 1991 and moved to London to get involved in



● Erich Redman (left) as he appears in Steven Spielberg's blockbuster *Saving Private Ryan*.

international films. His next television appearance will be in the new series of the *Professionals*, where he stars alongside Edward Woodward in the first episode as his evil sidekick.

"The *Professionals* was huge

in Germany, as well as Britain, so it was exciting to get a part in the new series," he said.

But his career looks set to take a slight change of direction with the British movie *Mystery Play*.

In it Mr Redman has been cast as an East End villain.

"It's still a baddie but at least it's an English one," he said.

"But I'm still hanging out for that romantic lead."