

Screen veteran gets submerged with stars

By PETER KENNEDY

DON'T mention the war – unless of course you're going to follow it up with a lucrative job offer in an exotic location.

Erich Redman is a Russian-German actor living in West Hampstead who quit his boring nine to five job and chased his dream of movie stardom which led to roles in some classic war films of recent years.

Erich can currently be seen in cinemas across the country as a German bosun, sharing the screen with Hollywood stars Matthew McConaughey and Harvey Keitel in the latest subaquarian Second World War blockbuster *U-571*.

Mind-blowing

Though he didn't just stroll onto the set with the big names, it took eight years of hard work edging his way into the industry.

He said: "I worked in an office for ten years and the drudgery was starting to get to me. A friend got me into amateur dramatics and my first lesson was mind-blowing.

"I left my job and started drama training. It really took off, and makes for a much more interesting life than office work."

It's no surprise, as a Russian/German, that Erich has specialised in war movies, but what is remarkable is that he has been lucky



enough to be part of some classic movies – *Saving Private Ryan* and *Schindler's List* – and rub shoulders with megastars.

"I was lucky enough to work with

"Tom Hanks is a really nice guy, very considerate and approachable and just one of the lads when his wife and kids aren't around."

Tom Hanks in *Saving Private Ryan*. He's a really nice guy, very considerate and approachable, and just one of the lads when his wife and kids aren't around.

"Some actors can be really selfish, and just want to be the centre of attraction all the time. Matthew McConaughey was very much like his characters – the strong, silent type, concentrating on the job.

"Matt Damon was another nice bloke, very down to earth. He helped me out with some contacts for agents

in Los Angeles."

Although Erich has relatively minor parts in these movies, he still receives the five star treatment when shooting on locations around the world.

"I've worked in Poland, Luxembourg, and for *U-571* we were shooting on the east coast of Malta. It was brilliant. I was there for three weeks and it was like a long party.

"We stayed in a top hotel and were driven to work each day in a limo. I'd really love to do some movies in the States next."

Bullock

He's collected some magic moments since embarking on an acting career, but there is still one highlight which stands out from the rest.

While shooting a little known movie *Love and War* he had the honour of picking up tips from Sandra Bullock – on his German.

"I was translating the script into German and Sandra Bullock was giving me advice on how to interpret the script. I thought who is she to tell me how to speak my own language – she's American.

"When I got talking to her she spoke perfect, accent free German. I found out she was half German and lived there for ten years when she was growing up.

"She was a lovely person, very warm and helpful and I immediately took her advice of everything from acting to how to speak German."

Molotov cocktail: (clockwise) Russian-German actor Erich Redman background is diverse as his acting career; with Matthew McConaughey in *U-571* and with Rob Lowe.

