

'M-A-S-H' films final scene, says goodbye after 11 years

LOS ANGELES - (AP) Following a day of tension and tears, autographs and hugs, "Hawkeye" and "Hot Lips" left the "M-A-S-H" set for the last time after filming the final scene of the popular TV series.

"Print it! That's a wrap," called producer-director Burt Metcalfe at 6:05 p.m. Friday after actor Alan Alda, who played the surgeon nicknamed Hawkeye, uttered the show's last words to Loretta Swit, who played Maj. Margaret "Hot Lips" Houlihan.

The scene had the medical staff of the 4077th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital burying a footlocker of mementos from its service in the Korean War.

"WELL, I figured since we're burying everything else, why not the hatchet?" said Hawkeye, referring to his longstanding feud with the volatile Hot Lips.

Last year the cast members agreed to do one more season. They said that after 11 years they had exhausted the story possibilities and wanted to quit while the show was still popular.

A somber mood prevailed Friday on 20th Century-Fox Studios' Stage 9 during the final filming for the offbeat, 11-year-old, anti-war series that drew honors and high ratings.

The cast and crew traded autographs and hugs, and during rehearsal, Swit broke into tears and was comforted by Metcalfe and actor Harry Morgan, who played Col. Sherman Potter.

"THE TENSION was so high for all of us on the set," said Alda at a press conference after completion of filming. "M-A-S-H" changed my life. It gave me the opportunity to develop as a director and a writer. It has allowed me to grow. How much will I miss it? How much would you miss your arm?"

Morgan broke down at the press conference and cried.

"I'm feeling very sad and sentimental," he said. "I don't know if 'M-A-S-H' made me a better actor, but I know it made me a better human being."

Swit, wiping tears from her eyes, said, "We loved being with each other ... I think I'm going to need a mourning period after this."

"TODAY IT'S really hitting me," said Metcalfe. "I thought post-production would keep my mind off of it. But I was wrong."

"It's difficult bringing it to an end. What we're doing is experiencing some very intense and very personal things," said Mike Farrell, who played B.J.

William Christopher, who played Father John Mulcahy, said of the publicity about the show's end, "We begin to feel we are making history. But we don't want to get carried away. 'M-A-S-H' is only a television show."

While the scene shot Friday concludes the final episode, the ultimate finale will come in a two-hour movie, airing Feb. 28. It is expected to earn CBS \$10 million. Each 30-second advertising spot is selling for \$450,000, more than even the Super Bowl commands.

THE SERIES will go into reruns for the rest of the season. Both CBS and Fox are considering a post-Korea civilian "M-A-S-H" show with some of the same cast. Alda would not be involved because he is busy adapting his movie, "The Four Seasons," into a TV series.

"M-A-S-H" spun off from the Robert Altman film of the same name, which was based on the book by Richard Hooker, pseudonym for a former M.A.S.H. doctor. The series debuted Sept. 17, 1972.

For the first three years, Hawkeye's buddy was Trapper John, played by Wayne Rogers. Lt. Col. Henry Blake (McLean Stevenson) was in charge and Radar O'Reilly (Gary Burghoff) was his shadow as company clerk. The comic heavies were Maj. Frank Burns (Larry Linville) and Hot Lips (Swit).

Rogers and Stevenson left the show in 1975; Farrell, as B.J., became Hawkeye's pal, and Morgan became the new commanding officer as Col. Potter. Linville left in 1977 and David Ogden Stiers, as Maj. Charles Emerson Winchester, became the comic heavy.

Burghoff quit in 1979 and Jamie Farr's Cpl. Max Klinger shed his dresses and his desire for a psychiatric discharge and became the company clerk. Father Mulcahy, played by Christopher, also emerged as a major character.



Farewell

The "M-A-S-H" cast poses for a final publicity shot, as the popular TV series' 11th season comes to a close. From left to right: William Christopher as Father Mulcahy, David Ogden Stiers as Maj. Winchester, Alan Alda as Hawkeye, Harry Morgan as Col. Potter, Loretta Swit as Maj. Houlihan, Mike Farrell as B.J., and Jamie Farr as Cpl. Klinger.



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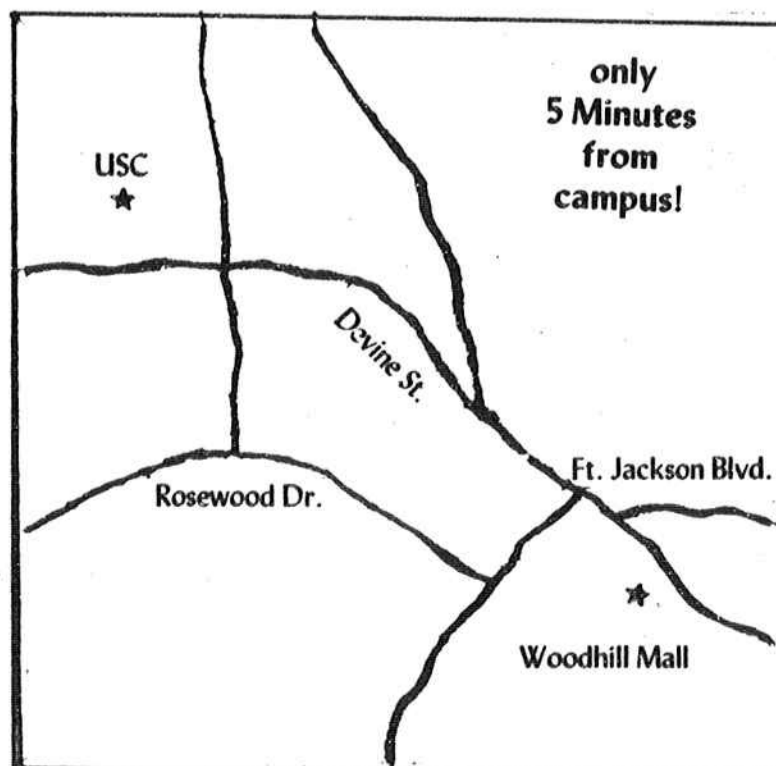
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