BUSTER BROWN — With his famous dog, Jerry posed for this shot of Buster Brown, the second man in history to do so.

by John Ringo Graham

SOUTHERN BELLE — With his partner, Jeanette Fern, Jerry Maren danced his way through the last years of Vaudeville and into the hearts of millions as the “Lolly Pop Boy” in “The Wizard of Oz.”

BUSTER BROWN STILL GOING!

Probably because he has the biggest little heart in show biz, Jerry Maren is a friend of kings and celebrities throughout the world. On his tip toes, Jerry could top 50 inches tall, but being small doesn’t worry him in the least. He had made a career in motion pictures and television that would make many lesser actors envious.

Born in Boston, Jerry set out on the vaudeville circuit when he was 17 as a song and dance partner for Jeanette Fern also his same size. His tour proved that he was a great talent for these arts and a talent scout for MGM spotted them while doing the last split week of Vaudeville in Los Angeles between the Million Dollar Theatre and the old Hippodrome.

He was immediately cast as the “Lolly Pop Boy” in the “Wizard of Oz” with Judy Garland. When the picture wrapped up, he was assigned to the “Our Gang Comedy” talent list and made the last two episodes. This was followed by “The Marx Brothers at the Circus,” and a few scattered roles in other productions.

With the outbreak of WW II, Jerry plunged into work for the USO. He traveled throughout the nation visiting every veterans hospital in existence. His small size was a great advantage during those years since he could do a complicated routine in a small ward or by a bed if he had to.

After the war, work picked up and his natural athletic ability (he was a top swimmer in high school) helped him enter the often rough and tumble world of the stuntman. He doubled children in dangerous shots of runaway horses, speeding cars and attempted murders. With the advent of the “Daniel Boone” TV series, he found a steady berth as the double for Darby Hinton.

This lasted several years until Darby outgrew Jerry. In the big Fox musical, “Hello, Dolly!” the little star had a chance to play a Keystone Kop with a number of other Little People who make a living as actors.

He still keeps up his sports activities and was crowned the World’s Champion Golfer by the Little People of America, an organization he belongs to. His handicap is 18 to 22 and he shoots in the low 90’s. Arnold Palmer congratulated Jerry during an exhibition for his swing and accuracy with a golf ball.

Jerry stands ready to challenge anyone to take the title away from him — as long as they are his size! Because he is so active, Maren is usually the first guy casting directors call when they need a difficult bit of acting done that calls for a small size.

So far he has been a double for a wrestling chimp, a driver in a run-away speed boat, and crashed a few cars. Another time he was a mini spaceman, and narrowly missed being a gorilla in “Planet of the Apes.” A hot dog company hired him to do public relations.
FAMOUS GOLFERS —

Trying out his swing with Arnold Palmer, Jerry went on to become “World Champion Golfer of Little People.”

for them as “Little Oscar” a chef who drove around in a car that looked like a giant hot dog.

Early in his career he posed for the now famous Buster Brown trade mark of a kid with a page boy hair cut and a big dog. He was the second model for the famed Buster Brown, and people sometimes confuse him with the older ad campaign of the early 1900’s. People marvel that he is so young until they find out there were two Busters.

Jerry starred in Robert Mitchum’s first movie, “Johnny Doesn’t Live Here Anymore” and helped Dorothy Lamour out in her famous spoof, “Beyond the Blue Horizon.” In “The Great John L.,” Jerry played Admiral Dot, a real character of the time, and followed this with a stint as a duck. Later he became a rabbit, but wishes it had been the famed Playbooy type.

This month, audiences will see him on the Andy William’s Show as a tiny German General. The act is one of his favorite roles and has been a big hit with audiences.

When it is released, he will appear in “The Christian Licorice Store,” for Cinema Center Films. Is life dull? Hardly. There aren’t very many people who can say they have been a duck, a general, a Zeppelin pilot, a tank driver, a monster, Buster Brown, and a world’s champion golfer.

As a living trade-mark, Maren has had one of the most unusual careers in Hollywood, and that is the way he likes it. Because he is an unusual man, and a good actor who made it big as a little guy.