

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: "NOTHING STRONGER THAN THE HEART OF A VOLUNTEER": PORTRAYALS OF MASCULINITY AND IDEAL CITIZENSHIP IN WORLD WAR II COMBAT FILMS, 1989-2001

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2013

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Traditional platoons of World War II combat films were visualizations of an America that could be, rather than a reflection of the America that was. One might assume that, had the trend toward inclusive representation continued, the World War II combat platoons of the films of the 1990s might have included women or homosexuals, since the military of the 1990s was fully integrated on a racial front. Instead platoons' compositions remained unchanged. And in this new context, rather than acting out of a desire to expand the terms of citizenship, these movies represent a closing off of the terms of citizenship. In the face of demands for a change in the terms of civic participation from women, from homosexuals, from disabled citizens, these movies represent a vision of a shared past that is easier than the one currently inhabited by viewers. What does it mean that this period, out of all the periods in the history of the United States is the one that is deemed most worthy of celebration?

“NOTHING STRONGER THAN THE HEART OF A VOLUNTEER”:
PORTRAYALS OF MASCULINITY AND IDEAL CITIZENSHIP IN WORLD
WAR II COMBAT FILMS, 1989-2001

By

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in History
2013

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Acknowledgements

First, I'd like to thank my parents, Dennis and Judy Cerullo, for being the best support structure a child could ask for and for slogging through multiple drafts of this thesis to help me make it more understandable to a non-academic audience. There are really not enough words to express how lucky I am to have them both in my life. My sisters, both by blood and by friendship, Stephanie Cerullo and Carrie Hartmann, for providing hugs, cupcakes, wacky e-mails and countless hours of destressing during visits back to Ohio. Carol Hartmann, for copy-editing every inch of my tortured prose and to her and her husband Jerry for being my second set of parents. Really, everyone should be as lucky as I am to be a part of the Cerullo-Hartmann clan, because we're all pretty fantastic. <3

A big virtual hug of love and Paul Gross arms goes out to all of the bits of my family of choice scattered around the globe for all of your constructive and supportive tweets, e-mails, blog comments, and Facebook messages. I couldn't begin to thank each of you individually, but Laura Loeb, Sabine Hunsicker and Olivia Hassall in particular provided valuable feedback and editing suggestions. Your empathy humbles me and your brains delight me. I just only hope that I am living up to your support. I'd especially like to thank/blame Elizabeth Breier-Sharlow for sitting me down at a bus stop in Virginia in winter of 2009 to tell me about this HBO mini-series that she was certain I would love. Luckily for me, she was also willing to bounce ideas, offer advice and look at endless drafts of the various projects that would eventually become this thesis. She also put up with countless panicked late-night e-mails, afternoon coffee bitching sessions and acting as my sounding board. That this

project ever moved past the hypothetical stages is entirely due to her ideas and enthusiasm.

And finally, I'd like to dedicate this project to my grandparents, Harry and Ann Haubner and Amedeo and Georgette Cerullo. My grandmothers taught me the values of feminism, despite the fact that neither of them would have called it that and my grandfathers taught me the importance of how military service changes you. We might not always see eye to eye, but they have shaped my thinking in countless ways and I only hope to make them as proud of me as I am of them.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“I was a boy in 1942 when these guys were thrown together and I thought then and ever since that these volunteers for the airborne were what combat soldiers should be. I still think so.”¹ So Stephen Ambrose reflected upon his decision to memorialize the men of Company E, Battalion Two of the 506th Paratroop Infantry Regiment in his book *Band of Brothers*. Tom Brokaw had parallel things to say about his decision to write the book that would coin the phrase “The Greatest Generation” to describe the generation that came of age during the Great Depression and fought in World War II, writing that these were “ordinary people whose lives are laced with the markings of greatness.”² Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks had similar aspirations of celebration of the “ordinary soldier” who served in World War II with *Saving Private Ryan*, building upon the long history of World War II combat films to create a movie that became just as much of a cultural touchstone of remembering World War II as *The Greatest Generation* did.

In his landmark study of the mythology of World War II, published the year after Ambrose’s *Band of Brothers* shot to the top of the New York Times best seller list, Michael Adams noted that “the era has become a benchmark of excellence.”³

¹ Stephen Ambrose, *Comrades: Brothers, Fathers, Heroes, Sons, Pals*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 110. Punctuation original to quote.

² Tom Brokaw. *The Greatest Generation*. (New York: Random House, 1998), XXVII-XXIX. Brokaw and many of the people employing the phrase had a decided lack of irony surrounding their usage. Much of the time, the reader was left with the conclusion that the writer really did mean to imply that this generation was the platonic ideal of heroism which the rest may strive to emulate, but with the knowledge that true heroism was impossible.

³ Michael C. C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 4.

Along with that benchmark came a specific story about the so-called “Good War”⁴ and the soldiers who fought in it. This story usually began with the assumption that the Good War was a war which needed to be fought, a war to defeat evil. This war (which Adams sardonically claimed as “The Best War Ever”) was fought and won by a team of soldiers, a Band of Brothers. The soldier was a volunteer; sometimes on the day that Pearl Harbor was attacked, other times as soon as he looked old enough to lie about his age to join up, but the war is where the “important” part of the story commences. He (and it was always he) fought in the infantry, followed orders, served honorably, did his duty to his country, for his country. This narrative, retold in endless variations in households across the United States, is that of the ideal citizen-soldier, the one boys are told they should aspire to become and girls are told that, with luck, they might marry.

World War II’s place of honor in the culture of the United States in the 1990s was simple enough to understand. This war was revered as a time when the US knew exactly what cause it was fighting for, a cause that came with clarity of vision and righteousness that had faded during the Cold War years, and had all but disappeared by the 1990s.⁵ And even the idea that World War II was a better war than most was not entirely unfounded. Of the major participants, the United States garnered the most positive material results; the US had significantly fewer casualties, was never invaded or even bombed after Pearl Harbor and managed to secure primacy in the world

⁴ Coined from Studs Terkel's classic oral history of World War II *The Good War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). Terkel used the phrase with considerably more irony than many in the 1990s would.

⁵ While not usually recognized as a singular event, the collective smaller traumas of the Cold War work together to form a compounded state of trauma that encompasses the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the extensive smaller traumas that made up every-day life in the United States during that time period, from bomb drills to espionage suspicions. Had the Vietnam War not taken place during the greater context of the Cold War, it would not have had the same impact on the culture of the United States.

political order.⁶ And the most visible figure of the material and ideological successes of World War II was the citizen-soldier.

World War II movies from all eras, including the 1990s, showed a remarkable attention to the citizen aspect of the citizen-soldier. However, the 1990s represent a turning point in US history, one which not only showed the tenuous hold that the United States held on the title as the world's only remaining superpower, but also shifted conversations about citizenship. During the Cold War, those persons whose citizenship was contested were challenged on exclusionary grounds, under accusations of being un-American. Without the Soviet Union to act as an obvious contrast, the US was forced to attempt to define citizenship through positive attributes.⁷ Rather than demonstrating what the enemy looked like, during the 1990s models of citizenship were expressed through a focus on model citizens, one of which was the citizen-soldier. It is this focus on the citizen-soldier which downplayed the political forces and historical realities that led to World War II, allowing the benefits of war to shine through while casting the costs of war to the side.

This thesis seeks to explore the figure of the World War II citizen-soldier in the context of World War II combat films produced in the United States after the fall of the Berlin Wall during November of 1989 and before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.⁸ Gary Gerstle notes that “in the character of the citizen-soldier,

⁶ Michael C. C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 5-6.

⁷ This is not the first time that the United States defined citizenship through positive attributes, but it was the first time since the start of the Cold War that citizens had done so.

⁸ I will be using the phrase 'the 1990s' to refer to this time period, despite the fact that it extends nearly two years into the next millennium, because culturally, the United States of 2000/2001 had much more in common with the 1990s than the rest of that decade. Also it is considerably less clunky than continually evoking the twinning specters of the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the World Trade Center

[liberal filmmakers of the 1990s] crafted an emblematic American who fought not out of hate or an urge to dominate but out of patriotic duty and a commitment to republican values. A tolerant and decent nationalism, they seemed to argue, could be achieved through wars fought for just goals and by altruistic warriors.”⁹ This is a very perceptive point and crucial to understanding the intentions behind the production of many of the films produced in the 1990s. However, it is not enough to simply examine these films by way of their creators' intentions. Careful attention must also be paid to the assumptions embedded in those intentions, as well as the ways that those films could be interpreted by viewers. Liberal filmmakers may have intended to reconstitute patriotism through a valorization of war as a liberal effort. However, their focus upon soldiers as the heroes of World War II contributed to norms of citizenship in addition to creating a place to reexamine war as a part of the liberal agenda. The ideal citizen becomes a straight, able-bodied, white man in uniform through the use of the citizen-soldier motif, even as a closer reading shows the limits and complexities of the utility of using the citizen-soldier as an ideal of civic participation.¹⁰ Ultimately, *Nothing Stronger Than the Heart of a Volunteer* seeks to demonstrate and critique what using the World War II combat soldier as an ideal of civic participation shows about those ideals.

Methodology

⁹ Gary Gerstle, “In the Shadow of Vietnam,” in *Americanism: New Perspectives on the History of an Ideal*, ed. Michael Kazin and Joseph A. McCartin (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 130.

¹⁰ Obviously the WWII citizen-soldier was only one of many competing ideals of citizenship. While this idea begins to be addressed by the increasing literature on the culture wars of the 1990s, further research on notions of citizenship during this time period seem fruitful.

My decision to focus exclusively on combat films was two-fold. Firstly, I wanted to focus on the figure of the citizen soldier, and soldiers are most often to be found in combat films. But more importantly, I wanted to explore the narratives of the popular history of World War II. *Memphis Bell*, *Upon a Midnight Clear*, *The Tuskegee Airmen*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Thin Red Line*, *When Trumpets Fade*, *Pearl Harbor*, and *Band of Brothers* are all histories told in narrative form, narratives which impacted the popular culture understandings of World War II. But in impacting popular understandings of World War II, these films necessarily influenced narratives about citizenship and the place of the US in the world, as my exploration of the figure of the World War II citizen-soldier will show.

While there are many different ways I could have structured my source selection, I decided to focus nearly exclusively on movies and television because of the sheer numbers of people who had seen them and the wide demographic swath that audience cut. I began with a crowd-source generated list of every major motion picture and made-for-television movie/mini-series that dealt with World World War II in any way, shape, or form.¹¹ From there, I narrowed the list to those sources which were primarily produced in the United States for US audiences as I wanted to examine how the US portrayed itself to itself. From this subset, I used the criteria proposed by Jeanine Basinger in her book *The World War II Combat Film*¹² to determine which of those films were properly combat films. Using academic sources,

¹¹ Wikipedia Contributors, "List of World War II films," Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_World_War_II_films (accessed August 23, 2011). For the purposes of this thesis, I am using the term film to describe both major motion pictures and made for television movies and mini-series, and I deal with television and big screen sources interchangeably. The enduring popularity of *Band of Brothers* especially proves that television productions can influence terms of conversation as much as any big screen production.

¹² See Jeanine Basinger, *The World War II Combat Film: Anatomy of Genre* (Wesleyan University Press: Middletown, 2003) for a full list of genre conventions that guided my selection process.

I verified that this list included all major World War II combat films produced during my time period. After this winnowing process, I was left with the seven movies and one mini-series which are the subject of this thesis. In some cases I discuss material that influenced the films or their reception, such as Stephen Ambrose's *Band of Brothers*, veteran memoirs, or Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation*, but in each of these cases that material is being used to further my analysis of the films or to explicate social mores of the 1990s.

Benedict Anderson notes that the imagined community of a nation is necessarily limited, because “even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations.”¹³ As such, the process by which one learns what citizenship entails and who is and is not a citizen becomes paramount. Ann Swindler explains in her seminal work on culture and self-identity that “people use culture to learn how to be, or become, particular kinds of persons. Such self-forming utilizes symbolic resources provided by the wider culture. Through experience with symbols, people learn desires, moods, habits of thought and feelings that no one person could invent on her own ... Culture equips persons for action by both shaping their internal capacities and by helping them to bring those capacities to bear in particular situations.”¹⁴ Note that Swindler does not describe this as an inevitable process of imprinting upon culture consumed in the same way that a duckling imprints on its mother. Instead, culture becomes one of any number of important factors in determining the imaginative

¹³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 7.

¹⁴ Ann Swindler, *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 71-2.

possibilities of self. It is simply that “stories allow us to deal with forces over which we have no control. They give our desires meaning and make beliefs comprehensible and communicable.”¹⁵

Cultural productions circulate through the public sphere, a notion I employ cautiously throughout this thesis. Jürgen Habermas described his notion of the public sphere in many different works during the 1960s, noting that “by 'the public sphere' we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens.”¹⁶ As Craig Calhoun notes, Habermas is concerned with examining what circumstances could arise to allow “for a rational-critical debate about public issues conducted by private persons willing to let argument and not statuses determine decisions.”¹⁷ Habermas's notion of the public sphere examines what factors outside of the formal structures of democratic government lead to, reinforce, and change ideas about democracy. As Nancy Fraser and many others have noted, the notion of the success of the public sphere as outlined by Habermas greatly depends upon ideal conditions for democracy, in which every participant is equally able to participate and every voice and idea is heard without prejudice, ideal circumstances which have never existed at any point in the history of the earth.¹⁸

Rather than replicating other, more extensive, studies of why the idea of the public sphere is inherently flawed, this thesis takes those critiques as a theoretical

¹⁵ E. Francis White, *Dark Continent of Our Bodies: Black Feminism and the Politics of Respectability* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 4.

¹⁶ Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” in *New German Critique* 3 (Autumn, 1974): 49.

¹⁷ Craig Calhoun, “Introduction,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 1.

¹⁸ Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” in *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 67.

basis, despite not discussing the public sphere per say. Habermas did unearth an important concept about how democracy was formed and how it evolved. Ideas of citizenship and democracy continue to be formed by a public sphere even to this day. However, access is not guaranteed to all citizens, and opportunity for influence is not equally handed out. As a result of this imbalance, some citizens are permitted to have more influence over conversations about citizenship through their cultural productions. It is essential to critically examine those productions. The narratives that the World War II combat films added to the public sphere in the 1990s continue to influence conversations about citizenship to this day.

Martial Citizenship and Reflexivity

The age of democratic revolutions may have introduced ideas of universal citizenship, but they were only implemented in governmental practices after wars, creating an inextricable link between citizenship rights and military service in many countries. The United States was no exception. Since the Revolutionary War, there has been a connection between being a full citizen of the US and being a soldier. The Revolutionary War helped to “create a notion of citizenship linked with military service.”¹⁹ Soldiers during this period constructed a “politicized masculinity linked to race through their legal obligation to their state, their claims to greater political rights by virtue of their service and a pervasive coupling of European ethnicity to ‘whiteness’ in contrast to African and American Indians.”²⁰ Those who fought in that

¹⁹ Anna Clark, “The Rhetoric of Masculine Citizenship,” in *Representing Masculinity: Male Citizenship in Modern Western Culture*, ed. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and Anna Clark (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 11.

²⁰ Gregory T. Knouff, “White Men in Arms, Representing Masculinity,” in *Representing*

war were granted plots of land, which in turn granted them the right to vote, since voting was restricted to white male property owners, establishing a material link between military service, gender, whiteness, and citizenship rights.

As time passed, voting restrictions changed but the idea of earning one's citizenship rights by serving in the military, and the coupling of that military service with politicized virtue, never entirely faded. In 1940, the institution of the first peacetime draft only served to strengthen that connection between the privileges of adult citizenship and military service – registering to vote also registered males with the Selective Service Board. Elena Lamberti noted that “reflecting on American narrative in the aftermath of the First and Second World Wars cannot be disassociated from a reflection on the American nation and its collective image of the war myth as the founding myth of the United States”²¹ The United States has prided itself on being a country founded in war and rebellion – even during the times when we distanced ourselves from contemporary military projects. The 1990s were no exception.

What sets the popular conceptions in the memorialization of the citizen-soldiers of World War II in the 1990s, however, is the way that they are all portrayed as volunteers. “Over 10,000,000 young men were inducted [by draft] during World War II, out of a total military force of 16,354,000.” There were so many young men drafted into military service that for the first time in US history, divisions comprised

Masculinity: Male Citizenship in Modern Western Culture, ed. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and Anna Clark (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 38.

²¹ Elena Lamberti, “The Experience of War and the Search for Identity,” in *Memories and Representations of War: The Case of World War I and World War II*, ed. Elena Lamberti and Vita Fortunati (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 121.

entirely of draftees were formed.²² But by the 1990s, any mention of the draft was papered over with the virtues of volunteerism. The action-blockbuster *Pearl Harbor*, completed in honor of the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, produced a telling scene about the values that the volunteer citizen-soldier added to the notion of citizenship. Commander Doolittle, played by Alex Baldwin, stands aloft on the deck of an aircraft carrier, talking to one of his subordinates. “You know Jack, we may lose this battle, but we’re going to win this war. You know how I know?” At this point Doolittle pauses and the camera pans over to the fictional characters of Danny and Rafe, played by Josh Hartnett and Ben Affleck. “Them. Because they’re rare. And at times like this you see them stepping forward. There’s nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer.” This sentiment is not simply found in *Pearl Harbor* – it is expressed in some form in most of the World War II combat films of the 1990s. Any mention of being drafted into service is carefully elided in favor of banal proclamations about the worthiness of the cause of The Good War. It is a compelling rhetorical trick, because the connection to a worthy cause tricks readers and viewers into thinking that all soldiers who fought in World War II not only signed up enthusiastically to vanquish a known threat from the face of the Earth, but that they also all understood this as the reason for why they were fighting. After all, Congressman James Wolcott Wadsworth noted of the draft midway through the war “I think it well to dispel the idea that we are proceeding solely in the voluntary spirit.

²² George Q. Flynn, *Conscription and Democracy: The Draft in France, Great Britain, and the United States* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 60.

I can mention some other orders because the element of compulsion, the implied threat, the indirect pressure, is back of nearly all of them.”²³

The memoirs of soldiers who fought with Easy Company, the unit portrayed in the 2001 HBO mini-series *Band of Brothers*, demonstrate that the veterans also participated in the perception that this was a group of men who considered this expectation of voluntary military service as an ideal of citizenship to be obvious. Paul C. Rogers, who fought with Easy until the unit was disbanded in November 1945, said in a 2004 interview that the citizens of the United States kept “telling us that we are the greatest generation, and we are not. If this country were attacked in the same situation, you and everyone would react in the same way because you are Americans ... I am proud of what I have done, and I couldn’t have lived with myself if I hadn’t gone. I wouldn’t have missed it. We were just a bunch of ordinary Americans, damn good Americans.”²⁴ Forrest Guth, who fought in the same unit, expressed similar sentiments when he claimed that all the men of Easy were “just ordinary men, and we went when our country asked. All of us in the company had great feelings of camaraderie and patriotism.”²⁵ These men showed that the distinct connection between an ideal of military service to one’s country and citizenship was not simply produced by Hollywood.

However, these movies do not expound only the virtues of volunteerism – they also feature (nearly exclusively) elite units while using the volunteer motif to

²³ James Wolcott Wadsworth, “We Must Suspend Many Rights and Privileges,” speech before Congress on April 27, 1943, reprinted in Herbert L Marx, *Universal Conscription for Essential Service* (New York: W.H. Wilson Publishing, 1951), 111.

²⁴ “World War II 60th Anniversary Limited Edition Commemorative Special Issues” from the Editors of *World War II Magazine: The Band of Brothers Special Collector's Edition*, 4/27/04, 89.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

downplay the extraordinary nature of the units. *Saving Private Ryan* and *Band of Brothers*, in their focus on Army Rangers and paratroopers, highlighted men who completed highly competitive training that was not available to most of the Army. Most of those who volunteered for that training washed out of it and training for special Army Corps lasted three to ten times longer than basic training for a typical draftee. *Memphis Belle* revolves around the first bomber crew to successfully complete 25 missions. The African-American pilots featured in *Tuskegee Airmen* had to be many times better and train harder than their white counterparts. The list of extraordinary deeds that these films celebrate by the “everyman” soldier goes on and on.

Rather than comment on the extraordinary nature of their subjects, the authors and producers of popular World War II histories of the 1990s emphasized that these elite units were volunteer units. This had the dual effect of playing up the patriotism of the men while downplaying the elite nature of these units. In his critique of the first draft of the *Band of Brothers* book, Richard Winters wrote to Steven Ambrose, saying that, “forty-nine years later, this group is still different. However, today, not one man walks around wearing his wings or medals on his chest to be different. What each man does carry in his chest is what makes him different. It is that confidence, pride, and character that make him stand out in any crowd.”²⁶ Any man could be like these heroes, these narratives suggested, if he wanted it enough. This sentiment was echoed in *Tuskegee Airmen* in Walter Peoples's inspirational speech to a pilot who wanted to quit the training program. Peoples says to the discouraged young man, “The question

²⁶ Letter from Richard Winters to Steven Ambrose, critique of draft 1, August 8, 1991, The papers of Major Richard Winters. U.S. Army Military History Institute. Carlisle, PA.

is, are you going to make it? Because if you don't believe it, then you won't.” A failure to live up to these ideals was a personal failing, not an institutional one.

Margaret Sommers noted in *Genealogies of Citizenship* that the social sciences have “come increasingly to recognize that the categories and concepts we use to explain the social world can themselves be fruitfully made the objects of analysis [...] the work of reflexivity is above all historical: it challenges us to explore the historicity of our theoretical semantics as well as our epistemological foundations.”²⁷ Reflexivity helps to “contribute to the overcoming of a systematic bias or distortion that has repressed or otherwise marginalized the perspective of a particular group.”²⁸ Gender studies, disability studies, critical race theory, and sexuality studies all fall under the umbrella of reflexivity. By applying reflexive lenses to the history of the category of citizen, we can begin to understand the ways in which our conceptualizations of citizenship impact the real lives of those classified as citizens. People are adaptive and categories have real meanings. Being classified as a citizen or being told that there are certain ways that a person has to live in order to be considered a citizen has an effect in a way that classifying a rock as magnetic does not. World War II combat films are but one of a myriad of ways that culture of the 1990s influenced ideas of citizenship. However, by the end of this thesis, I intend to make the case that these films were an important facet of the formation of ideals of citizenship.

²⁷ Margaret Sommers, *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness, and the Right to Have Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 172-3.

²⁸ Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations* (New York, Routledge, 2010), 179.

In Chapter 2: Heroic Manhood and Normative Constructions of Gender, I examine the ways that, even as the ideals of citizenship as embodied by the World War II citizen-soldier were shown to be relevant to the 1990s, one thing remained consistent – this form of civic participation was reserved for men and men alone. While the women portrayed in the World War II combat films of the 1990s were crucial to the support of the citizen-soldier, they were not permitted to be soldiers themselves, thus cutting women out of this revitalization of an ideal of civic participation.

Chapter 3: HBO, Race and Double Standards of African-American Citizenship examines the ways that the HBO film *The Tuskegee Airmen* attempted to show that African-American soldiers must work twice as hard to be accepted. However, in the context of the later HBO mini-series *Band of Brothers* and the conventions of the World War II combat film genre, the film about the Airmen actually equated the higher standards that the African-American pilots were held to as being comparable to what other training regiments looked like and effaced other experiences of racism that the Tuskegee Airmen faced.

Chapter 4: Disability and National Trauma is an exploration of disabilities in two parts. The first half of this chapter explores the ways in which the rare portrayals of disabilities aligned with enforcement of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. The second shows the way embracing this view of disability allowed for the turn toward mourning and the healing of the wounded body politic the World War II combat films later took. This turn sacrificed incorporating disability into ideal of citizenship to heal the wounds of the nation, allowing for a glorification of war while

eliding the consequences of war. During the 1990s, there were two wounded bodies in need of healing – the literal physical body of the soldier and the metaphorical political body of the nation. Filmmakers chose to focus upon healing the wounded body politic over integrating disabled bodies into new definitions of citizenship to bolster their idealization of the citizen-soldier as an exemplar of civic duty.

Chapter 5: Sex, Sexuality and Violence explores the ways in which the visibility of non-heterosexual lifestyles of the 1990s impacted ideals of citizenship. As Lauren Berlant notes, the flip side of the non-heterosexual “revolution” of the 1990s was that heterosexuality “had to become newly explicit.”²⁹ For many years an unmarked category of assumed normativity, the 1990s marked a transition to a marked norm for heterosexuality and a change in the portrayals of allowable sexuality. Notions of ideal citizenship as portrayed in World War II combat films, read in conjunction with the passage of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, clearly demonstrate that the ideal citizen remained heterosexual, both implicitly and explicitly, and so by extension the ideal citizen-soldier was heterosexual as well. However, as the decade went on, the ideal citizen-soldier was also assumed to be one who would willingly sacrifice, including the sacrifice of his freedom of sexual expression for the greater good. The range of acceptable relationships for a soldier became even more limited, as a focus on battle efficiency above all else destroyed even heterosexual relationships. In short, while heterosexuality was still an assumed aspect of the ideal citizen-soldier, by 2001 any romantic relationship was regarded as suspect because that relationship took attention away from the more important task of war.

²⁹ Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 17.

Chapter 6: Conclusion will show that even when the terms of martial citizenship are expanded, valorization of the citizen-soldier which simply changes the demographics of the military isn't enough to change the structural problems with martial citizenship. Through an examination of two films about the military produced in the 1990s, we can begin to note the structural limitations on conceptualizations of citizenship. The problems with the nation cannot be challenged by a few principled men leading the charge as *A Few Good Men* and World War II combat films of the 1990s claim. As *Courage Under Fire* demonstrates, the problems are structural. Liberalism embraced a vision of the future that was narrower than the reality of the United States. In order to properly inspire the nation to effect change, we need to “tell the truth” about who we are as a people. But moreover, we need to accurately assess the structures of inequity that frame discussions of citizenship.

Chapter 2: Heroic Manhood and Normative Constructions of Gender

Throughout the beginning of the 1990s, the 50th anniversaries of World War II decorated the first half of the decade in way that made the United States' triumph in the Cold War seem almost inevitable and united the nation under the banner of victory. And the figure most celebrated in these commemorations was that of the World War II citizen-soldier, valorized as a volunteer in an unspoken contrast to the Vietnam era draftee. With the victory of the First Gulf War fresh in the memories of many citizens and the draft a thing of the past, filmmakers in the second half of the 1990s turned to the figure of the World War II citizen-soldier as one way to regain national pride and give the US a new direction. Veterans' voices were employed in these projects as sources of historical authority, uncritically folded into an ever-growing narrative of The Good War. However, even as the ideals of citizenship as embodied by the World War II citizen-soldier were shown to be relevant to the 1990s, one thing remained consistent – this form of civic participation was reserved for men, and men alone were to be the exemplar of civic duty and patriotism.

War and Masculinity

Terrence Malick directed and edited *The Thin Red Line* in 1998. Malick, who was famous for his art house films *Badlands* and *Days of Heaven* prior to his twenty year break from film production before *Thin Red Line*, brought his philosophical

interpretation of war to his adaptation of James Jones's novel. Lloyd Michaels notes that Malick's film "generally adheres to the plot, but violates the prevailing spirit of Jones's work," a novel which is generally considered to be an authentic portrayal of the nature of war.³⁰ However, even given Malick's general disinterest in the traditional experiences of war, the perceived value of battle for the maturation of boys cannot be overstated. Edward Train begins the film shaking and afraid of death. As the warship that transports Company C cruises ever closer to Guadalcanal, Train tells First Sergeant Welsh, "I just can't help how damn scared I am, Sarge, all right? I can't help it. I got... My step daddy took a block and beat me when I was real little." As *Thin Red Line* progresses, Train is shown in the background of many different fight scenes, growing more confident every time. By the end, he is calm and assertive and tells his buddy, "You know, I may be young, but I've lived plenty of life. I'm ready to start living it good. My daddy always told me it's gonna get a whole lot worse before it gets better, you know, 'cause life ain't supposed to be that hard when you're young. Well I figure after this the worst is gonna be gone. It's time for things to get better. That's what I want. That's what's gonna happen." War has symbolically healed him of the abuse at the hands of his stepfather, putting him back in touch with the wisdom of his birth father. And it is clear that having survived this ordeal of war, he is confident he can now take anything.

The Thin Red Line also shows the way that war can help a man attain spiritual maturity. Private Witt, played by Jim Caviezel, spends the entire movie musing on the nature of God and death. Witt dies at the end of the movie, sacrificing himself on

³⁰ Lloyd Michaels, *Terrence Malick*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 66.

behalf of a wounded comrade, recognizing that war has been an important part of his spiritual journey and has helped him prepare for death. Witt, speaking from beyond the grave, concludes *Thin Red Line* with a voiceover, saying, “Where is it that we were together? Who were you that I lived with? The brother. The friend. Darkness, light. Strife and love. Are they the workings of one mind? The features of the same face? Oh, my soul. Let me be in you now. Look out through my eyes. Look out at the things you made. All things shining.” Witt's final words indicate the place that a man can see God working in a war is through the actions of his brothers in arms. Nothing else may be as He intended, as we are reminded through the loving shots of the natives and nature just before the credits roll, but if God is anywhere to be found, it is in the actions of the men standing together. And war apparently can bring a soldier to God, given that war causes Witt's death and that death has apparently brought him right to God, who allows Witt to speak from beyond the grave about his experiences.

The 2001 Michael Bay epic *Pearl Harbor* demonstrates the ways in which war, adulthood, and a man's nature are interdependent. War does not simply provide a path to adulthood, it helps to reveal the inner character of the citizen-soldier, key themes in many of Bay's team-ups with Jerry Bruckheimer. (The two collaborated on the *Bad Boys* franchise and *Armageddon*, to name a few of their popcorn hits. But even with the popcorn nature of their collaborations, their interest in the ways that a boy can become a man through the experience of battle can not be overstated.) The plot of *Pearl Harbor* follows Danny and Rafe, best friends who enlisted in the Army Air Corps in the days before the US enters World War II. Upon learning that Rafe volunteered to join the British Royal Air Force in 1940, Danny angrily tells Rafe, “It's

not training over there, it's war, where losers die and there aren't any winners, just guys who turn into broken down wrecks like my father [...] Don't preach to me about duty, damn it – I wear the same uniform you do. Now if trouble wants me, I'm ready for it. But why go looking for it?" Despite being a man enlisted in his own country's military, Danny doesn't yet embrace the ideals of a citizen-soldier.

But by the end of *Pearl Harbor*, Danny has learned the virtues and values of being a volunteer through Rafe's triumphant "return from the dead" and subsequent leadership during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, using leadership skills earned through his service with the RAF. When Colonel Doolittle shows up to recruit Danny and Rafe for a bomber mission to Japan, Danny says yes, both as a way to prove that he is worthy of love-interest Evelyn's affection and to live up to the heroic ideal that Rafe represents. But for his earlier doubts about his service and his lack of desire to volunteer, Danny is doomed. He dies in a heroic fashion, redeeming himself for those earlier doubts, while Rafe is allowed to live to the happily ever after ending of *Pearl Harbor*, demonstrating in a logic of secular predestination: while a heroic death can be earned, true heroism comes from within and cannot be emulated. Danny may demonstrate the experience of the audience, but all men and women who view the film are meant to aspire to be Rafe.

The Thin Red Line and *Pearl Harbor* disagree on many of their thematic issues. The vision of World War II in *Thin Red Line*, unlike *Pearl Harbor*, is not one where the leaders are good and men are brave. And yet, both films show a war where enemy leadership is ruthlessly evil and should be shown no mercy, a place where a man can learn who he is and can make a difference. The men in these films have

different motivations in their random acts of heroism, but all are loyal to their men over all else and sacrifice themselves for that vision of loyalty. The US might not be the unquestionable good guys, but even *Thin Red Line* embraces this vision of masculinity that requires subsuming self on behalf of a band of brothers as the ultimate marker of adulthood.

It wasn't only the filmmakers that emphasized this connection between the battlefield, volunteerism, and adulthood – World War II veterans played up this connection as well. Babe Heffron, one of the men of Easy Company portrayed in the HBO mini-series *Band of Brothers*, recalled that the first moment of battle was “when boys became men.”³¹ A more concrete example can be found in the comparison that Richard Winters, Easy Company’s first battlefield commander, made between the paratroopers and the GIs as Easy marched into Bastogne in December of 1944. Winters recalled that “hundreds of GIs, many without equipment, overcoats or weapons, shuffled along the road, heading away from the fighting. Some wore dazed expressions. Others seemed to evoke terror, telling the incoming paratroopers to run, that the Germans ... ‘will kill you. They’ll murder you. Get out while you can.’” Easy and the rest of the 101st Airborne Division would spend the next month in the woods around Bastogne, holding the line without adequate ammunition or proper winter clothing. Rather than using this moment to telegraph the horrors that would await them in Bastogne, with 102 men from the 506th dead and over 600 wounded, Winters simply recalled that the men ignored the fleeing GIs and said that he “was proud of them. We gave them no recognition. We just went about doing what we’d been sent

³¹ William Guarnere and Edward Heffron with Robyn Post, *Brothers in Battle, Best of Friends: Two World War II Paratroopers from the Original Band of Brothers Tell Their Story* (New York: Berkley Caliber, 2007), 70.

to do.”³² The comparison between the paratroopers and the GIs could not have been clearer – disciplined troops marching calmly into the worst defensive position they would hold for the entire war and panicked GIs running away from their duty.

Easy was marching into the woods surrounding the crossroads town of Bastogne, where Eisenhower elected to hold the line against the German troops who were mounting their last desperate stand that began the Battle of the Bulge. When asked how he reacted to the men fleeing the woods around Bastogne, Paul C. Rogers, another man from Heffron's unit, responded, “I wasn’t too worried. They were new to the front. A lot of them had just come over, and I could understand why they were panicked. We had been in combat before and had already made two parachute jumps. We were experienced.”³³ Rogers’s critique of the GIs was tempered by his recognition of their lack of battle experience. And yet an implicit critique remained in his words; he cannot allow for any possibility that the experienced citizen-soldier would become panicked or overwhelmed by a situation after he had been tested and tried in battle. Without the experience of battle, a boy would run from a fight. With it, a man would react calmly and responsibly to any challenge he might face.

Portrayals of Women

As Jeanine Basigner notes in *The World War II Combat Film*, the World War II combat film in its “pure form usually has no women, or presents them as

³² Larry Alexander, *Biggest Brother: The Life of Major D. Winters, The Man Who Led the Band of Brothers* (New York: NAL Caliber, 2005), 136.

³³ “World War II 60th Anniversary Limited Edition Commemorative Special Issues” from the Editors of *World War II Magazine*: The Band of Brothers Special Collector's Edition, 4/27/04, 88.

'memories' in a flashback form.”³⁴ That this can come to define an entire genre is telling not simply for what it reveals about the genre itself, but also what it can reveal about how this genre came to represent one ideal for the reinvention of the United States in a post-Cold War world. Even Tom Brokaw's follow-up books to *The Greatest Generation*, a work which featured a number of women in combat positions and as persons with valued contributions to the war effort, backed off from featuring women.³⁵ *The Greatest Generation Speaks* and *An Album of Memories* noticeably included women in sections such as “The Homefront,” “Peacetime,” “Mourning,” “Children,” and “Love Stories.” It is not that the support positions of child rearing and growing victory gardens are less important to a war effort than those soldiers who fight on the front lines. It is that those roles are valued less in the stories that are told about those heroic wars, so that it is only the citizen-soldier who is honored as an ideal citizen. Those men who did not serve in combat situations and those women who were not permitted to do so are all but forgotten in the history-tinged visions of the future of the United States produced by the World War II combat films of the 1990s. There is no place for non-combatants to be heroic, or even perceived as equal to the heroes.

In *The Thin Red Line*, Pvt. Bell quit the Army Corps of Engineers to be back with his wife Marty, despite being told that he would be drafted to the infantry in retribution for cutting his commitment short. Bell discounted the threat, because he had never been separated from Marty, but less than three months later he is serving as

³⁴ Basinger, *World War II Combat Film*, 83.

³⁵ Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation Speaks: Letters and Reflections* (New York: Random House, 2002) and *An Album of Memories: Personal Histories from The Greatest Generation* (New York: Random House, 2005).

a GI in Company C. His flashbacks of Marty (played by Miranda Otto) are wistful, colored with the knowledge that Bell's separation from her has been lengthened by his own actions. However, these flashbacks are simultaneously tinged with the feeling of voyeurism, of intimacies that the audience shouldn't be witnessing, which combine with the wistfulness to create an overall impression of objectification. Marty is usually shot in fragments so that we rarely see all of her at once. It is never made clear what Marty actually felt about Bell quitting the Corps, because she rarely speaks in the flashbacks. When she does it is unclear if the words are part of an actual memory, and thus her own, or if they are inspirational words from Bell's subconscious and thus a part of his idealization of her. As a result, "the audience does not come to know Marty herself so much as the idealized memory of a woman Bell fashions through his own subjectivity in order to endure battle."³⁶ The last the audience knows of Marty's life is when Bell receives a Dear John letter informing him that she is leaving him for another man. Marty's life becomes a metaphor for war destroying intimacy, the audience's understanding of her choices subsumed in service of Bell's character arc.

Director Steven Spielberg and historian Stephen Ambrose's first collaboration of *Saving Private Ryan* hit the big screens in 1998. Audiences responded to *Saving Private Ryan* on a visceral level, praising its honesty and historical accuracy.³⁷ Given the popularity with men and women alike, it seems crucial to note that none of the women in *Saving Private Ryan* are permitted speak – all of the men's voices (presumably the commanders who dictated the letters) voiceover the steno-clerks

³⁶ Steven Rybin, *Terrence Malick and the Thought of Film* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), 107.

³⁷ IMDB Users, "Reviews & Ratings for *Saving Private Ryan*," Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120815/reviews> (Accessed January 23, 2012).

typing out letters informing families of their sons' deaths, and Mrs. Ryan never speaks a word in the five minutes of the movie that feature her. Even the female clerk who discovers that three out of the four Ryan boys are dead is shown speaking through glass as the music plays over any words that the audience might be able to overhear. Clearly what she is saying isn't important. After all, the point is to valorize the actions of the volunteer army, rather than those of its support staff. As Robin Andersen notes, "to reinvent military legitimacy and American triumphalism in the late 1990s, the war movie needed to be recast in a mold where military authority was legitimate and commanding officers were once again noble. By setting the film on the Normandy battlefields and the European theater, the audiences could identify with the unquestioned bravery of uncompromised heroes under one of the most vicious attacks by easily recognized enemies."³⁸ Our Heroic Leader will fill the viewer in on the important news, because narratively it is much more important to show The Good War as a time when leaders cared about their soldiers than to demonstrate any agency on the part of the women who served in the steno-pool.

After calling in three other generals to tell them about his decision to send a unit to retrieve the remaining Ryan son, Commander Marshall reads aloud a letter that Abraham Lincoln sent to a woman by the name of Mrs. Bixby. She had given birth to five sons, all of whom fought for the Union during the Civil War, and all of whom perished while fighting for the cause. The letter concludes with the words, "I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be

³⁸ Robin Andersen, *A Century of Media, A Century of War* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006) 194.

yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom. Yours, very sincerely and respectfully, A. Lincoln”

Simply from this letter, Marshall and the other generals assembled decide that James Ryan needs to go home. There is no mention during this scene of any legislation surrounding the policy to send home the last surviving son, no acknowledgement of the oddity of making such a policy when none exists for parents with only one son. This gap is filled with the knowledge that Mrs. Ryan's sons died in service for their country isn't good enough for a delicate woman to console herself in a time of grief. Steven Spielberg could have used this letter to demonstrate that Mrs. Bixby is actually performing a valuable service to her country by being willing to let all of her sons join the army and sacrifice themselves. However, the text of *Saving Private Ryan* interprets Lincoln's words in the most paternalistic way possible, because these kind Generals know better than Mrs. Ryan what she would want for her life and her son.

Mrs. Ryan herself is shown to be a model of Middle American domesticity. The Ryan household is a modest farm house with the sort of furnishings and decorations that indicate the Ryan family cares deeply about taking care of what they have and keeping it looking nice, but nothing is too expensive. Mrs. Ryan slowly, modestly, sits down on the porch to indicate her grief to the audience. We are not permitted to witness her tears, but we are also not permitted to hear her voice. There is no indication that Mrs. Ryan, or Mr. Ryan, for that matter, was asked if she wanted her son evacuated from a war zone. It is simply assumed on the part of the narrative and the audience that we know what Mrs. Ryan would wish, that she needs to have

her son returned to her in this time of family crisis instead of having the courage and fortitude that her son would demonstrate by staying with his new brothers in arms.

The voiceover of Marshall writing a letter to Mrs. Ryan at the end of the movie is read as we view the reaction of the squad to Miller's death indicates to the viewer that, "nothing, not even the safe return of a beloved son, can compensate you, or the thousands of other American families, who have suffered great loss in this tragic war," and the voiceover goes on to read the rest of the letter from President Lincoln to Mrs. Bixby. According to *Saving Private Ryan*, Marshall kept a copy of the Bixby letter in his office at all times. He is shown to be so inspired by those words as to never let them out of his presence while acting as Supreme Commander of the US Forces. However, only two out of the five Bixby boys were actually killed during the Civil War. In the omission of this historical detail from the film narrative, the audience is allowed to perceive Marshall as having bested one America's most beloved leaders. The mirroring of this letter with Lincoln's letter to Mrs. Bixby not only symbolically links Marshall to Lincoln, it actually elevates Marshall above Lincoln, because he succeeded where Lincoln failed – Marshall was able to return one of Mrs. Ryan's sons home to her.

In the 1990s, women in the 1940s were portrayed as a group against which male servicemen could draw comparisons between themselves as actively contributing citizens of the country and the women as symbols of solace. Bill Guarnere, who was portrayed in the HBO mini-series *Band of Brothers* in 2001, recounted in 2002 that "in Holland, guys got more sentimental because we didn't expect what the Germans were throwing at us, and who knew if you'd be going

home. That's when I thought of Frannie a lot. I carried her picture with me all through the war ... I knew she was there with me, that's all."³⁹ His girlfriend became a symbol of all that awaited him back at home, rather than as an active contributing member of the country that he was fighting for. Guarnere could have chosen any number of letters or pictures from home as his inspiration for fighting. But it was Frannie in her hula skirt, smiling serenely at the camera, which Guarnere chose to carry with him as his major source of comfort.

When writing to his female pen pal DeEtta, Richard Winters recalled that he wrote to her, saying, "Every night at taps, I'll meet you at the North Star. The old North Star is a soldier's guiding light when he's lost, alone, and feeling mighty funny in the pit of his stomach. That's when he feels good, when he can look up and know that there is somebody else looking up there also."⁴⁰ DeEtta was a member of the Women's Army Corps, a volunteer-driven organization whose activities tended toward those non-combat positions and freed the men up to fight. Despite her important roll, Winters noted in 2001 that he took comfort in the fact that DeEtta was looking at the same star as he, and not the fact that she was repairing machine guns or servicing tanks. For both Guarnere and Winters, Frannie and DeEtta's femaleness trumped their status as fellow Americans in service of the country. Even *Pearl Harbor*, which is noteworthy for being one of the only films produced in the 1990s that showed women making an active contribution to the war effort, Evelyn remains a symbol of hope and civilization for Rafe and Danny while they fight. Evelyn willingly makes herself into a symbol, unlike in the memoirs of the Easy Company

³⁹ Guarnere et. al, *Brothers in Battle*, 129.

⁴⁰ Alexander, *Biggest Brother*, 80.

men. However, this is undercut by the end of the film where, instead of finding a domestic hospital for her nursing skills to be put to use, she waits nervously around for Danny and Rafe to come home again.

These films valorized male soldiers at the expense of female non-combatants. This thinking marks women as a group against which men could identify non-heroic traits instead of as heroes in their own right. And through this false dichotomy, many men too are excluded from the terms of ideal civic participation, both through an association with femininity and from a lack of affinity with the terms of martial citizenship. If valorization of combat is a major way of identifying how an ideal citizen should serve his country, where does that leave citizens during a time of peace? And how do those citizens who have non-combatant skills serve their nation?

Chapter 3: HBO, Race and Double Standards of African-American Citizenship

To most white citizens of the United States, any discussion of race or racial discrimination in the 1990s was a controversial difference of opinion, one that ought to be avoided in polite company.⁴¹ As such, World War II combat films of the 1990s, produced and directed exclusively by white men, mostly dealt with race by avoiding any portrayals of racial minorities, as though presenting an entirely white military was a neutral choice. HBO produced *The Tuskegee Airmen* in 1995 and *Band of Brothers* in 2001, contributing fascinating assumptions about race to the cultural discussion about citizenship. Reporter Ta-Nehisi Coates noted that in the United States, acceptance for racial minorities, especially African-Americans, “depends not just on being twice as good but on being half as black.”⁴² The story of *The Tuskegee Airmen* seems to prove exactly that same point. However, when read in the context of *Band of Brothers* and the conventions of other World War II combat films, the struggle to be twice as good is made invisible through the rhetoric of heroism, leaving nothing but an effacement of the legacy of institutional racism in its place.

Training Montages and the “Everyman” Soldier

⁴¹ See George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006) for a fuller exploration of the history of the intersections of white privilege and denials of systematic racial biases.

⁴² Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Fear of a Black President,” in *The Atlantic* (September 2012) www.theatlantic.com/magazine/print/2012/09/fear-of-a-black-president/309064/ (Accessed November 2012).

In 1995, HBO produced *The Tuskegee Airmen*, based on the lives of the first black fighter pilots permitted to serve in combat. Robert Williams, one of the original Tuskegee airmen and the man most responsible for advocating for the movie's production, said, "This is a story that has all kinds of wonderful facets to it. But you can't find it in a history text. That's criminal. If you don't have a history, you don't have a future. It robs a segment of your population of their history. You're destroying them, in a sense."⁴³ By not replicating exactly the men who served in the Tuskegee units, the production team allowed young African-American viewers to envision that story as part of their individual family histories. Rather than seeming ahistorical, making each of the characters into an everyman has the opposite effect – any audience member could see his or her own grandfather on the screen, regardless of whether or not the man had been permitted to serve. Williams clarified throughout interviews that he wanted to restore a sense of history and pride to young black audiences that might see *Tuskegee Airmen*.

Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks adapted Stephen Ambrose's book *Band of Brothers* to a mini-series on HBO in 2001. Hanks noted that he and Spielberg were of the same mind in their adaptation, saying that they shared "the hope that the viewer will have an emotional and human experience that will allow them to appreciate the sacrifice that the men who fought in the Second World War gave."⁴⁴ Ambrose too hoped that the viewer would come away from the mini-series with "a commitment to democracy. An understanding that freedom doesn't come for free. And if it has to be

⁴³ Janet Weeks, "Tuskegee Airmen gets pilots' history off the ground, in the air," *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 11, 1995.

⁴⁴ "We Stand Alone Together" documentary, special feature, *Band of Brothers*. prod. Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg. DVD. HBO Home Video, 2002.

fought for, then it has to be fought for, and introduce the soldiers of democracy that will get it done.”⁴⁵

United under a banner of restoring pride and a sense of history to their viewers, the production staffs of *Band of Brothers* and *Tuskegee Airmen* set about crafting their films about experimental units; in the 1940s the idea of a paratroop infantry unit was nearly as experimental as the idea of using African-American soldiers to fly fighter planes. The role of race in each of the films is clear – the two programs featured similar rates of washouts and failures in these films, yet it was only the airmen who had their program threatened with shutdown. However, the similarities between how the training of the two units was portrayed in their respective films ameliorated any real emphasis on the way that the African-American soldiers were held to a higher standard. Jeanine Basinger notes in *The World War II Combat Film* that training sequences, especially those where recruits are set up against a difficult training commander, serves to teach the audience that the unit in question is “a tough group who stand for no nonsense, no breaking of the rules.”⁴⁶ The training sequence prepares the men for the greater hardships that they will face in combat.

Both of these films feature an abusive training commander – Lt. Sobel in *Band of Brothers* and Major Joy in *The Tuskegee Airmen*. Lt. Sobel orders the men of Easy Company to hike for 12 miles in the dark with no permission to drink the water they had to carry, through obstacle courses covered in pig guts, and to run up and down their steep training mountain, Curahee (3 miles up and 3 miles down) after

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Basinger, *World War II Combat Film*, 83.

eating a full meal of spaghetti and meat sauce, men vomiting all the way. And through every step of the training he verbally abuses the men and revokes their leave passes without the slightest provocation. Major Joy forces the Airmen to retake their entrance exams, attempts to make a few of the men pass out on their first day in an airplane by doing trick flying and generally undermines their skills throughout the entire training process. At one point, Major Joy asks Hannibal Lee why he joined the Air Corps. Lee responds, "This country has enemies and there are people who need protecting from them [...] To my knowledge the Germans aren't sparing the coloreds." And Joy tells Lee, "to my knowledge, the colored aren't up to fightin' the Germans, let alone, beatin' 'em."

Sobel and Joy are shown to have differing motivations. Sobel comes from a place of wanting the men to perform as well as they can so that he can look better for a possible promotion and Joy's motivation is to cause all of the pilots to quit that he could spend his time training white recruits, but their end results are the same. Hannibal Lee tells his fellow recruits when they are thinking of quitting the program to, "Tuck your tail between your legs and run back to Harlem. Make Major Joy happy. Me too, for that matter! I'd sooner be here by my lonesome than to play with a pair of jokers who can't figure out the game. Don't you see that's what he wants? He wants us to quit, he wants us all to wash out. I'm not gonna give him the satisfaction." And in *Band of Brothers*, Lewis Nixon grudgingly praises Lt. Sobel, saying that he was "a genius ... do you know a man in this company who wouldn't double-time Currahee with a full pack, just to piss in that guy's morning coffee?" The irrationality

of the instructional staff is shown to be a tool to make the men into the ideal soldiers that they always knew they could be.

The training sequences in these films worked to emphasize the dedication that each man brought to the unit that he would serve with, but downplayed the hardships accrued by training. Any man who washed out of training was told that he simply did not try hard enough. Hannibal Lee continued on in his inspirational speech to his training friends, saying, "I know I'm gonna make it, Leroy. That's all that matters. What about you? You gonna make it?" Cappy tells Lee and their friend Walter Peoples that he doesn't know if he can do it. Peoples responds to Cappy, "What do you mean you don't know? ... It's not okay. It's the wrong damn answer. Now, the question is: 'Are you gonna make it?' 'Cause if you don't think you will, you won't. And then you will have failed. You will have failed your family, you will have failed your friends, and most importantly, you will have failed yourself. Can you live with that?" Much like training montages in inspirational team sports movies from the same decade, the trials of training were simply to prepare them for the challenges faced in war, rather than demonstrating the ways that the African-American soldiers were held to a higher standard. And when read in connection with other films of the genre, the training sequence of *Band of Brothers* confirms to the viewer that the racism faced by the Tuskegee Airmen wasn't *really* that bad. The Airmen were just given an extra obstacle on their way to demonstrate their patriotism and pride in their unit, the racism relegated to being equated with the men of Easy Company being ordered to perform obstacle courses through pig guts.

The Changing Composition of the World War II Combat Platoon

In his seminal essay “Unit Pride” on the composition of the platoons featured in World War II combat films, Richard Slotkin notes that “the emergence of the World War II combat film as a genre marks the shift from the myth of America as essentially a white man’s country, to that of a multiethnic, multiracial democracy.”⁴⁷ The traditional platoon of the World War II combat film was a veritable melting pot of ethnicities and backgrounds, a visualization of the America that could be, rather than a reflection of the America that was. Even in the shift from a focus on ethnicity to racial identities that followed the Vietnam era, the World War II platoon was a place where any man could come to prove his worth.⁴⁸ Liberal filmmakers focused on the imaginative possibilities of the expansion of the terms of citizenship, rather than the harsher realities of history.

But by the 1990s, the expansive citizenship of the composition of the World War II combat platoon had changed drastically. One might assume that, had the trend toward inclusivity continued, the combat platoons might have included women or homosexuals, since the military of the 1990s was fully integrated on a racial front and the ethnicities that were considered non-white in the 1940s were fully understood to be white.⁴⁹ Instead, the platoons of the 1990s were composed nearly entirely of the same ethnicities of the 1940s, where the hallmark diversity of the World War II combat movie meant something else. In the 1940s, American whiteness was a melting pot that was “often presented in contrast to fascist ideologies and Nazi rhetoric about

⁴⁷ Richard Slotkin, “Unit Pride: Ethnic Platoons and the Myths of American Nationality,” *American Literary History* 13.3 (2001): 470.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 490-2.

⁴⁹ For a fuller history of the changing terms of ethnicity in the twentieth century, see Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

a ‘master’ race, creating the image that America was a nation unified by the ideals of democracy and multiculturalism.”⁵⁰ When each Hollywood platoon was carefully constructed with a token Jewish boy and a brash young Italian man, it was with the knowledge that those servicemen were not *really* white in the same way that the WASPs at the top of the socio-economic hierarchy were. Citizens of the 1940s America would have agreed that the Jews, Italians and, Slavs of these platoons had “no racial aptitude for democracy, and their admission as political citizens will endanger American society.”⁵¹ By including those racial/ethnic minorities in their platoons, the filmmakers of the 1940s imagined a space where ethnic minorities could be considered full citizens of the United States, instead of merely threats.

In contrast, by the time that *Saving Private Ryan* or *Band of Brothers* were produced, traditional prejudices may have lingered in the hearts of many audience members, but there was no doubt that all of the boys on that screen were white, in marked contrast to those Black, Hispanic or Asian persons who weren’t really full citizens in the same way that the heroes on the big screen were.⁵² The Cold War dispelled any perceptions that the US military could be “a proud representative of the American nation or function as a crucible in which groups of diverse origins were melded together in a single, patriotic mold.”⁵³ The World War II combat films of the 1990s reflected that new cynicism about racial relations. The military might be a place where young white men could go and learn the virtues of civic participation, but

⁵⁰ Christina S. Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II* (DeKalb: University of Northern Illinois Press, 2004), 123.

⁵¹ Slotkin, “Unit Pride,” 475.

⁵² Diversity in the World War II combat films of the 1990s was provided by a wide range of class backgrounds, an area ripe for study.

⁵³ Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 327.

popular culture held that military service did not hold the same value for non-white citizens.

And popular culture was in marked contrast to the historical realities of the composition of the US military during the 1990s. By the late 1990s, over 35% of the military was comprised of non-white individuals.⁵⁴ The United States military has maintained a strong commitment to fully representing the racial composition of the nation since abolishing the draft in 1973 and few decades were more successful with those recruitment efforts than between 1989 – 2001.⁵⁵ The ideal of the majority of the branches of the US military was to be a meritocracy that accurately reflected the general population between the ages of 18 – 35. While the composition of the military did not reflect the general gender breakdown of the populace (and Don't Ask, Don't Tell disallowed accurate measurements on any reflection of the sexual orientations of the general population) in many way, the historical reality of the military of the United States in the 1990s was closer to its ideal of representation than it ever had been in the history of the United States. And in this new context, rather than acting out of a desire to expand the terms of citizenship, or indeed, out of a desire to recount the 'truth' of the past, the traditional composition of the World War II combat platoon employed in every movie from the 1990s except *Tuskegee Airmen* represents a closing off of the terms of citizenship.

⁵⁴ Department of Defense Personnel and Readiness, "Population Representation In the Military Services," Department of Defense.
<http://prhome.defense.gov/rfm/MPP/ACCESSION%20POLICY/poprep.aspx> (Accessed September 23, 2012).

⁵⁵ See David J. Armor and Curtis L. Gilroy, "Changing Minority Representation in the U.S. Military," *Armed Forces & Society* 36 (2010) for a fuller examination of trends in non-white enlistment.

Masking Racism

It is standard practice for military branches to have veto power over portions of the script if the filmmakers required use of military equipment or video footage. This is nothing sinister, simply a way for the military to control its public image and ensure that it always has its best foot forward if it is going to provide materials or support for a film.⁵⁶ However, this also means that films which critique the military are forced to tone down their critiques or do without the equipment or footage required for authenticity. Director Robert Markowitz and producer Bill Carraro capitulated multiple times to requests from the Army to tone down the portrayals of racism in the film. Specifically the Army representatives objected to the “black versus white” tone of the movie on multiple occasions. Numerous drafts were produced before the final version was approved.⁵⁷

Some of the actual Tuskegee airmen believed the movie glossed over the racism that they experienced at the time.⁵⁸ Black troops were usually restricted to support positions that would free white soldiers to fight on the front lines, such as those in the engineering or technical corps. Despite the military importance of these positions, the black soldiers filling them were only perceived second-rate to white soldiers because they were not allowed to engage in the important task of fighting for

⁵⁶ Four of the eight films I examine in this thesis (Tuskegee Airmen, Saving Private Ryan, Band of Brothers and Pearl Harbor) received military assistance in exchange for a script review. Memphis Belle, A Midnight Clear and Thin Red Line applied and were rejected and the production crews were unwilling to make the edits requested. I have no information to if When Trumpets Fade was rejected or if the production staff simply never applied for military assistance because of prior experiences with the production of Hamburger Hill.

⁵⁷ David L. Robb, *Operation Hollywood: How the Pentagon Shapes and Censors the Movies* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2004), 105-108.

⁵⁸ Cindy Leise, “HBO movie well done, say black ex-pilots,” *Cleveland Chronicle-Telegraph*, August 28, 1995.

their country.⁵⁹ When black soldiers were permitted to engage in fighting operations, they were strategically deployed as part of “mop-up” forces to eliminate lingering resistance in an area after the white soldiers had eliminated the bulk of the enemy forces, so that the black troops could not be credited with responsibility for a victory. It was very apparent to Bruce Lee, who served in the Air Corps during World War II as an Intelligence Clerk, that he was “in the colored army. We knew we were there because of the law, we were not allowed to serve our country as equals. And the laws of the country were against you.”⁶⁰ Lee recognized how different his experiences as a black serviceman were from the white servicemen – and exactly what that meant for his status as a citizen.

However, instead of grappling with the complicated history of African-American troops during World War II, the narrative of *Tuskegee Airmen* shows a linear progression of improvement in the racist conditions. When Lee, Peoples and, Train were on their way to Tuskegee for training, they were forced to give up their seats on the train for a group of German POWs, because the Germans were white. And throughout the ending sequences of the film, white pilots doubt their skills because of their skin color. However, in both of these instances, later conversations about lynching force the viewer to reevaluate the racism faced by these pilots. When mocking Major Joy's comments about how the Airmen aren't really American, one trainee says that, “Uppity niggers turn into strange fruit where I come from ... Nigger hangin' from a tree.” And later when Train and Lee were complaining about the white pilots who refused to believe that African-American soldiers flew the planes that

⁵⁹ Christina S. Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II* (DeKalb: University of Northern Illinois Press, 2004), 152.

⁶⁰ *Coming Out Under Fire*. prod. Arthur Dong. DVD. New Video Group, 1994.

saved their lives, another unnamed pilot says, “My father had a friend, he fought in the First World War. He was one of the first colored soldiers in France. This man had so many medals he came home decorated like a Christmas tree. He disappeared one night. They found him in Georgia, lynched in his uniform.” None of the characters in *Tuskegee Airmen* are permitted to have experienced lynching or violent racism like that first hand, despite the fact that it was still occurring in the 1940s. It is shown as horrible stories from fathers or great-grandfathers, things that happened in the past, which recontextualizes the forced train disembarkation and the lack of respect for their skills as pilots as improvements in societal conditions. Racism is introduced so that it can be contained and ultimately dismissed.

There was only one obviously racist instructor at Tuskegee. The rest of the instructors were filled with confidence and inspiration for the men. The real enemy during training is the danger of training – compared to the risk of dying while making a mistake in flight, the racial slurs are secondary, as is proven when one of the trainees makes a mistake and crashes his plane, killing himself and his instructor. And later on, the lack of respect for the piloting skills of the Airmen is dismissed under concerns of hubris. Lee asks his commanding officer, “The white units have already rotated out to France. Why haven't we?” Major Davis tells him that if he's “not in a hurry to die, you must have something to prove ... Don't you dream of jeopardizing this mission with your glory seeking!” And then Cappy dies on that mission when he breaks out of formation to engage German fighters without permission, saying, “Here's our chance for some kills!” proving that hubris, not racism, is the real enemy of the black fighter pilot.

When Major Davis addresses the Congressional Committee which is threatening to recall the African-American pilot unit, he tells them “I was brought up to believe that beneath it all Americans are a decent people with an abiding sense of integrity and fair play. The cheers I heard across this country when Joe Louis and Jesse Owens humiliated Hitler's ‘Master Race’ didn't just come from proud colored folks. They came from everyone. How are we to interpret that? As a United States Army Officer who gladly puts his life on the line everyday there's no greater conflict within me. How do I feel about my country? And how does my country feel about me? Are we only to be Americans when the mood suits you?” For a brief shining moment it seems that the movie might have something insightful to say about the double standards faced by African-American soldiers. However, the triumphant ending of the movie revolves around the white pilots who had previously dismissed the skills of the Tuskegee Airmen specifically requesting them to fly escort for a difficult mission to bomb Germany. The skills of the Airmen are noted in a final title card for how many white lives they saved by being good at their jobs. One reviewer noted that the film “salutes the courage and determination of young black men demanding to fly during World War II ... In 1995, the idea of a segregated flying group may seem outlandish, but in 1942 it was a fact.”⁶¹ Racism was relegated to the past for the viewers of *The Tuskegee Airmen*, vanquished by the strength of will of a few good black men, never to return to disgrace the good name of the USA.

⁶¹ Tony Scott, “The Tuskegee Airmen,” *Variety Magazine*, August 20, 1995, <http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117910076?refcatid=32> (Accessed January 18, 2012).

Chapter 4: Disability and National Trauma

The portrayals of physical and mental disabilities in the World War II combat films from the 1990s demonstrate that although a volunteer citizen-soldier is one ideal of civic participation, and disabilities are a major outcome of modern warfare, this brings no associated place for a disabled soldier in civic life. Despite the challenge to the status quo of how disabilities were perceived in society, the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (hereafter referred to as the ADA) was largely enforced with the idea of disability as a flaw that must be fixed instead of a part of identity that could be managed if society made reasonable accommodations for people with different needs. Those men who had received disabling war-injuries were forced to downplay them or risk being viewed as a problem which needed to be fixed. Only able-bodied and able-minded persons were viewed as ideal citizens, a fact which is brought into sharp relief when portrayals of disabled soldiers are closely examined.

The first half of this chapter explores the ways in which the rare portrayals of disabilities aligned with enforcement of the ADA. The second shows the way embracing this view of disability allowed for the turn toward mourning and the healing of the wounded body politic that the World War II combat films later took. This turn sacrificed incorporating disability into ideal of citizenship to heal the wounds of the nation, allowing for a glorification of war while eliding war's consequences. The disabled soldier in the 1990s was a figure who was mostly dismissed for not contributing to society. He was usually shown to be a homeless Vietnam veteran who made too much of his injuries, physical or mental, and needed to get over it in order to become a productive member of society. However, it was not

simply the association with Vietnam that inspired feelings of contempt. The disabled soldier was a figure that represented a failing on a national level and so filmmakers avoided most portrayals of disability, despite the large population of wounded veterans in the nation. During the 1990s, there were two wounded bodies in need of healing – the literal physical body of the soldier and the metaphorical political body of the nation. Filmmakers chose to focus upon healing the wounded body politic over integrating disabled bodies into new definitions of citizenship to bolster their idealization of the citizen-soldier as an exemplar of civic duty.

Physical Disabilities and the Worthy Disabled

Disabilities played an important role in post-World War II America, reminding civilians of past patriotic duty, regardless of whether those civilians wanted the reminder.⁶² The corresponding half of this logic was the expectation that the soldier ought to be willing to sacrifice anything for his country, including his bodily integrity. Bill Guarnere seemed to agree with this logic of sacrifice, telling his family when he returned back home, “I’ll be fine, I’ll be okay, they’ll give me a wooden leg, I’ll be fine.”⁶³ Given that the loss of a limb is a grand sacrifice that proves the soldier’s fidelity to the ideals of the citizen-soldier, one would assume that this loss would be celebrated, or at least acknowledged. David Webster captured the problems involved in celebrating these wounds when he wrote home to his parents in August of 1944. “And those wounded men who will never walk or never see again,

⁶² Sonya Michel, “Danger on the Home Front: Motherhood, Sexuality, and Disabled Veterans in American Postwar Films,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3 (1992): 110.

⁶³ Guarnere et. al., *Brothers in Battle, Best of Friends*, 218.

will they be remembered? Will the public, so used to optimistic headlines, be able to face these lads and help them? I wonder.”⁶⁴

The loss of a limb might be a sign of ultimate sacrifice, but it is also a sign that a soldier was put in a situation that forced him to make that sacrifice. This sign contradicted media portrayals of war, both during World War II and the First Gulf War. These media portrayals showed fearless citizen-soldiers, always in control of events and ready to take whatever the enemy could throw at them. This is why conversations about wartime disabilities were implicitly framed by a comparison between the worthy and unworthy disabled. With that framing, disability becomes a personal issue, one that just happens to people, instead of being a logical extension of the act of warfare and thus a responsibility for the nation to help with.

The *Band of Brothers* miniseries, produced by Tom Hanks & Steven Spielberg, is the only film produced during the 1990s to effectively demonstrate the connections between volunteering and the risks and costs of war. The anti-war films *When Trumpets Fade*⁶⁵ and *A Midnight Clear* make effective critiques about the costs of warfare using groups of characters who never volunteer precisely because of those potential costs, and the rest of the World War II combat films produced in the 1990s feature deaths from heroic acts, but *Band of Brothers* makes explicit the cost of heroism on a personal level. Joe Toye returned from the Aid Station, against regulations, before he was healed, to volunteer to hold the line with his unit. And that very first day back on the line he and Bill Guarnere, with whom Toye was sharing a foxhole, both lost legs to German shelling. The value of being a volunteer is high,

⁶⁴ David Kenyon Webster, *Parachute Infantry: An American Paratrooper's Memoir of D-Day and the Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Random House, 2004), 353.

⁶⁵ See Chapter 5 for an extended discussion of *When Trumpets Fade*'s critique of war.

because true heroes are volunteers. But the flip side of that coin is that volunteering for dangerous things also puts a soldier in greater danger. However, the consequences for volunteerism are only explored *Band of Brothers*. In the rest of the World War II combat films produced during the 1990s, a soldier who volunteers dies in battle or survives the fighting with minor injuries. No question of disabilities arises in those films; any person who might have become disabled dies, establishing the less-than-human citizenship potential of those with disabilities.

The social expectation to see the citizen-soldier as always healthy and whole acted as a convenient excuse to avoid portrayals of physical disabilities. In Stephen Ambrose's book *Band of Brothers*, after the war, Guarnere is described as getting "married, had a kid, and went to work as a printer, salesman, VA clerk and carpenter, all with an artificial leg ... In 1967, he threw away his artificial leg and for the past twenty-four years he has moved on crutches. He moves faster than most younger men with two legs."⁶⁶ In the mini-series, the medical squad drags him bleeding off screen and uncertain if his badly mangled leg could be salvaged. The next time Guarnere is shown, he is filmed mostly from the waist up. The one shot of him that shows his missing leg is a group shot, where his disability can be easily overlooked. Guarnere's memoirs gloss over most of the hardships associated with the loss of a limb and it is nearly impossible to find any reference to his disability in the multitude of other stories and interviews of the men of Company E. In the "We Stand Alone Together" documentary, produced in conjunction with the *Band of Brothers* miniseries's DVD release, Guarnere's leg is only shown during a visit to the location where he lost his

⁶⁶ Stephen Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne: From Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 304.

leg, a scene that juxtaposes the description of, in Guarnere's words, the "unmerciful" German shelling to counteract the image of the wound. Being there brought back "memories of the men ... good, bad – a lot of memories," rather than any sort of meditation upon the terms of his own sacrifice for the war effort.⁶⁷

Tom Brokaw's section of *The Greatest Generation* on the lives of those who received Congressional medals of Honor further demonstrates the ways that portraying the disabled soldier as whole and healthy makes disability into a personal issue. After Bob Bush was honorably discharged from the army following the loss of his eye, he enrolled in a few college classes, bought a lumber yard with a fellow veteran, and "since they had learned in their military training they could go without sleep and still function," spent the next seven years building that lumber yard into a successful business.⁶⁸ Though the loss of Bush's eye is mentioned, it is implicitly and immediately downplayed by the compensation that Bush received after the war through the GI Bill. Through Brokaw's reminder that "the kids were the beneficiaries of Bush's wartime heroics," there is an understood connection between the GI Bill benefits and Bush's wartime service. However, the reader mostly receives confirmation that not only was it Bush's hard work that allowed that company to flourish, it was all selfless work on behalf of the future generation as well, simultaneously eliding the importance of the GI Bill in Bush's life and celebrating the ways in which Bush lived up to the family ideal that veterans were expected to uphold.⁶⁹ The loss of Bush's eye is entirely inconsequential to the story of his post-

⁶⁷ "We Stand Alone Together" documentary, special feature, *Band of Brothers*. prod. Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg. DVD. HBO Home Video, 2002.

⁶⁸ Tom Brokaw. *The Greatest Generation* (New York: Random House, 1998), 110.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 111.

war life, relegated to the status of anecdote about war and object-lesson about the personal value of sacrifice.

The ADA's passage marked an important step in challenging the idea of disabilities as pathology. Such an explanation “individualizes and privatizes the causes of alleged social incapacity. It largely precludes recognition of cultural, social, and political factors in the construction of 'disability' experiences.”⁷⁰ The representation of disability in World War II combat films from the 1990s underscored an individual's responsibility for his or her disability without ever taking societal factors and responsibility into account. President George Bush, Sr. positioned the passage of the ADA as an act that would make “United States the international leader on this human rights issue,”⁷¹ and a general sense of optimism followed the bill's passage into law. However, years of treating disabilities as pathology to be overcome via individual efforts could not be defeated simply by the passage of a bill and disability continued to be a factor that the ideal citizen-soldier could never possess.

While the physical disabilities portrayed in *Band of Brothers* establish that war is unpredictable and no one is at fault for becoming injured or killed, it also establishes Toye and Guarnere as belonging to the league of the worthy disabled people, the ones that deserving of accommodations because it was understood they would never ask for *unreasonable* accommodations. President George Bush, Sr. gave indications when signing the ADA into law that it would, or possibly could, never

⁷⁰ Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky, “Introduction,” *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, ed. Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 8.

⁷¹ George Herbert Walker Bush, “Remarks of President George Bush at the Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act,” United States Equal Employment Commission, http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/videos/ada_signing_text.html (Accessed January 22, 2013).

truly be enforced by noting, “I know there have been concerns that the ADA may be vague or costly, or may lead endlessly to litigation. But I want to reassure you right now that my administration and the United States Congress have carefully crafted this Act. We've all been determined to ensure that it gives flexibility, particularly in terms of the timetable of implementation, and we've been committed to containing the costs that may be incurred.”⁷² And indeed, the flexibility promised by President Bush, Sr. was usually interpreted by the courts in favor of the business being sued instead of the disabled plaintiff. And despite understanding that reasonable accommodations is a loaded term, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals decided that “reasonableness was based on common sense. And what constituted common sense? Cost and proportionality [...] while rights are magically left out of the equation.”⁷³

The ADA may have changed the material circumstances of many disabled soldiers, with wheelchair ramps, braille signs, and elevators becoming ever more prevalent, but the social conditions faced by physically disabled soldiers had not changed considerably, as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 proved. The act required professional reevaluation every three years to determine if the person receiving public assistance remained disabled enough to qualify as to weed out people who were faking disabilities to avoid work. President Bill Clinton stated that the act “gives us a chance we haven't had before to break the cycle of dependency that has existed for millions and millions of our fellow citizens, exiling them from the world of work. It gives structure, meaning and dignity

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Lennard J. Davis, “Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Narcissism, and the Law,” in *Backlash Against the ADA: Reinterpreting Disability Rights*, ed. Linda Hamilton Krieger (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 109.

to most of our lives.”⁷⁴ Instead of acknowledging governmental responsibility to help those citizens who were already disadvantaged by social conditions, the welfare reform legislation embedded social mores of disdain and suspicion toward disabled citizens into the formal law of the United States.

A Turn Toward Mourning

As Ann Cvetkovich notes in *An Archive of Feelings*, “events are claimed as national trauma only through cultural and political work.”⁷⁵ While not usually recognized as a singular event of national trauma, the collective smaller traumas of the Cold War work together to form a compounded state of trauma. This state encompasses the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and all of the extensive smaller traumas, from bomb drills to espionage suspicions, which made up everyday life during that time period. And when the Cold War ended with a whimper, instead of a bang, that state of trauma did not dissipate overnight. The fall of the Berlin Wall, however monumental, was insufficient catharsis to expel 45 years of collective tensions.

Working out the tensions left over from the Cold War became one focal point for popular culture in the decade between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the terrorist actions of September 11, 2001. Those tensions manifested in any number of ways, of

⁷⁴ Carolyn Skorneck, "Clinton Says He Will Sign Welfare Overhaul; House Passes It," *Chicago Sun-Times*, July 31, 1996. And the bulk of the terms of the Welfare Reform Act weren't even aimed toward disabled persons – it was mostly directed at lower class, single, black mothers, who were painted by the media as “welfare queens” out to cheat the system.

⁷⁵ Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 37. Note that a national trauma does not imply that nothing positive happened during that time period, or even that the effects were cumulative negative. Rather, I use this idea of national trauma to describe a state of heightened anxiety, which necessarily left a mark on the culture of the United States.

which the World War II combat film represents a small fraction. The broad appeal of World War II as a focal point for repressing that national trauma is obvious, due to the popular perception of that being the last time in US history to demonstrate a clear-cut enemy along with a corresponding clear-cut victory. However, the portrayals of World War II during the 1990s are not simply repudiation of all that was traumatic about the Cold War via a populist sentimentality. This collection of films represents a complex balancing of catharsis regarding the trauma of the Cold War and a negotiation of the physical realities of war with the new-found ideation of the citizen-soldier.

The release of the feature film *Memphis Belle* in 1990 showed that any hope for simple celebration of military service was in vain in the post-Cold War environment. Producer Catharine Wyler created *Memphis Belle* to honor her father William Wyler, who had directed the 1944 documentary *The Memphis Belle: A Story of a Flying Fortress*, and the veterans who had served as the crew of the documentary's namesake. Owen Gleiberman of *Entertainment Weekly* claimed that “swollen with virtue and glossy production values, *Memphis Belle* offers both a celebration and a reassurance of American military fortitude. It says, 'We did it once, and we can do it again!'”⁷⁶ However, despite the historical authenticity attached to the project and the theoretically broad appeal of a movie released during the First Gulf War that espoused the values of United States, the perceived youth of the actors seemed to take away from the gravitas of the film.⁷⁷ Desson Howe, reviewing for the

⁷⁶ Owen Gleiberman, “Memphis Belle,” *Entertainment Weekly*, Oct 26, 1990.

⁷⁷ Interestingly, the age span of the actors in *Memphis Belle* was not notably different than any of the rest of the World War II combat films produced in this decade, but the perception of youth seemed to work against the filmmakers regardless of facts.

Washington Post, noted of the performance of Matthew Modine that he led “a crew of male models through a dangerous bombing mission over Germany and that takes guts” and earlier had mocked the cast of *Memphis Belle* as nothing more than a group of “hunkalescents.”⁷⁸

Audiences seemed largely apathetic toward *Memphis Belle* – the movie barely skated into the top 25% of best grossing movies of 1990,⁷⁹ nearly failing to break even on production costs,⁸⁰ and became the least successful commercial release of any World War II combat film produced that decade.⁸¹ Gleiberman hit upon an important aspect of how audiences were perceiving the film by noting that *Memphis Belle* was “an exploitation movie. It's exploiting the dregs of Reaganism, the audience that grew up during the kick-ass '80s cheering every righteous 'patriotic' spectacle that came its way. It's impossible to shake the knowledge that what you're watching – a show-biz glorification of war — is less appropriate than ever.”⁸² Even the favorable reviews seem to struggle to find relevancy in *Memphis Belle* and stories of World War II. “It is a film with an old-fashioned style which some find comforting and others unbearably corny; it's about an old-fashioned ideal, heroism during an unambiguous war and it's shaped by old-fashioned details.”⁸³ The audience had to do too much work to understand the gravitas of the general situation of a war, so the movie did not

⁷⁸ Desson Howe, “*Memphis Belle*,” *Washington Post*, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/movies/videos/memphisbellegp13howe_a0b2a7.htm (Accessed January 18, 2012).

⁷⁹ “1990 Domestic Grosses,” Box Office Mojo, <http://boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=1990&p=.htm> (Accessed January 18, 2012).

⁸⁰ “Box office / business for *Memphis Belle*,” Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0100133/business> (Accessed January 18, 2012).

⁸¹ “War – World War 2, 1980 to present,” Box Office Mojo, <http://boxofficemojo.com/genres/chart/?id=worldwar2.htm> (Accessed January 18, 2012).

⁸² Gleiberman, “*Memphis Belle*.”

⁸³ Shelia Benson, “*Memphis Belle*— A Departure of Sorts,” *Los Angeles Times*, reprinted in *The Winchester Star*, October 13, 1990.

act as a decent catharsis for viewers – not a single major character died throughout the film and the situations where the crew were endangered felt cartoonish. However, it also was not a good escapist movie, because that lack of gravitas with regards to war strained the credulousity of an audience raised on footage from Vietnam and other Cold War conflicts.

In 1992, the anti-war drama *A Midnight Clear*, directed by Keith Gordon in a faithful adaptation of the William Wharton novel by the same name, opened in limited release to nearly universal critical praise. Hal Hinson of the *Washington Post* declared *A Midnight Clear*, “a war film completely unlike any other, a compelling accomplishment that's more soul than blood and bullets.”⁸⁴ Dann Gire of Chicago's *Daily Herald* claimed *Midnight Clear* was directed by Gordon with “an inspirational maturity and moral sense.”⁸⁵ Yet despite the critical acclaim, *A Midnight Clear* was even less of a financial success than *Memphis Belle*, not even recuperating its production costs and never making it to a wider release.⁸⁶ *A Midnight Clear* did demonstrate through the character of Mother the ways that war could take its toll mentally, as the plot of the movie revolved around various schemes to send Mother home so that he wouldn't have to suffer any longer. However, those schemes were hatched entirely to allow Mother to avoid the shame of a discharge due to mental unfitness, fact which, however historically accurate, only served to reinforce

⁸⁴ Hal Hinson “A Midnight Clear,” *Washington Post*, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/movies/videos/amidnightclearrhinson_a0a76a.htm (Accessed January 18, 2012).

⁸⁵ Dann Gire, “Ironie 'Midnight dear' delivers anti-war message,” *Daily Herald*, May 1, 1992.

⁸⁶ It seems clear that the production company continually scaled back their expectations for *A Midnight Clear*. They obtained the rights to film in 1982 and lost financial backing 4 different times before this version was finally completed in late 1991, and while A&M may never have been aiming for the sort of commercial success that *Memphis Belle* was obviously shooting for, the original vision did not seem to be the art house film that it ended up becoming.

associations of shame and mental weakness with PTSD in the minds of modern viewers.

In *Saving Private Ryan*, Commander Miller also suffered from combat-stress throughout the entire movie, indicated to the audience through his shaking hands. On the one hand, he was able to set it aside to get the job done, a recognizably heroic thing to do. On the other, it is also represented as the only heroic option, meaning that if a soldier was unable to push his fears and shaking hands out of his mind to get the job done, he was less of a hero. Miller is an ordinary hero the audience can look up to because he is able to set aside his shaky hands and tired eyes and do his job. Worthy disabled people can set aside their disabilities and do their jobs. However, in the post-Cold War era, it was not simply soldiers who had to heal their wounds. The disabled body of the nation must be healed even if the veterans are deemed unworthy of support. In order to make the World War II experience newly fresh and relevant to movie-goers of the 1990s, filmmakers had to balance the somber realism of Vietnam era war footage with a reminder of the days of honor and service that World War II was supposed to represent and the 1990s theoretically lacked. The second half of the 1990s would see three feature films and a mini-series tackle that balance in the name of healing the body politic wounded by the Cold War, none more successfully than *Saving Private Ryan*.

Mourning, National and Personal

Stephen Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*, released in 1998, was the most influential and popular World War II combat film of the 1990s because it managed to

walk the fine line between escapism via victory and catharsis of the national trauma of the Cold War. From the beginning of the movie, the audience is reminded of how important it is to retrieve a single man to send home to his family after his three brothers die in combat. In *Saving Private Ryan*, the US military cares as much about the fate of one man as they did about the invasion of Normandy. This reconceptualization simultaneously allows viewers wish-fulfillment through a world where a military commander would sacrifice the needs of the many for the needs of the few, while also allowing the audience to redefine military victories on a scale that more relatable. That neither of those two attitudes would allow the United States to win a war is beside the point – it was a seductive storyline for a culture that spent 45 years viewing the results of the reality of warfare.

Bill Guarnere reflected on his duties as squadron leader, recalling that there were, “times after a day or week of combat when I thought about the guys killed and said to myself, *You crazy bastard, look what you done*. I called the shots for my men, I felt responsible. But you can’t second-guess ... You didn’t have time to cry. You couldn’t let yourself get soft.”⁸⁷ Don Malarkey, another former paratrooper whose combat service was portrayed in *Band of Brothers*, reflected on the attention that he and the men he served with received after the release of the miniseries, saying that, “the series has brought up a lot of memories in me that I had buried pretty deep. You know, in combat it is very hard when you see your friends go down, and you have to suck in your gut and keep going.”⁸⁸ Malarkey and Guarnere both acknowledge guilt for having survived when other soldiers did not. However, in the usual script for

⁸⁷ William Guarnere et. al., *Brothers in Battle, Best of Friends*, 81. (italics original)

⁸⁸ “World War II 60th Anniversary Limited Edition Commemorative Special Issues” from the Editors of *World War II Magazine*: The Band of Brothers Special Collector's Edition, 4/27/04, 78.

soldiers, as with the usual script for the nation, there is not any for feelings of survival guilt. Soldiers were forced to bury those feelings, which is what makes movies like *Saving Private Ryan* so important. Those movies provide catharsis for the trauma that veterans of World War II were unable to receive at the end of the war as well as catharsis for the trauma of the Cold War, faced by the nation.

The emotional climax of *Saving Private Ryan* comes in two parts. The first comes when Miller has just sacrificed his life to ensure that the German troops the platoon is fighting do not take the bridge. Miller lies dying in Ryan's arms and looks up at Ryan as he dies, telling him to "Earn this." The unspecific "this" is presumably the fact that Miller and three other men have died to ensure that Ryan will make it home to his family. The second climax comes when Ryan addresses Miller's grave in 1994 and tells him, "My family is with me today. They wanted to come with me. To be honest with you, I wasn't sure how I'd feel coming back here. Every day I think about what you said to me that day on the bridge. I tried to live my life the best that I could. I hope that was enough. I hope that, at least in your eyes, I've earned what all of you have done for me." Ryan then looks to his wife, whose name is not given⁸⁹, and asks her plaintively to, "tell me I have led a good life. Tell me I'm a good man." Ryan, like the audience, wonders if the "right man" lived, a question which gets at the heart of survival guilt.

As Antonio Gibelli noted in his discussion about why many veterans didn't discuss their war experiences, "the trauma suffered by soldiers was generally lacerating and caused a conflict in which the need to forget was equal to and

⁸⁹ Mrs. Ryan never does respond to his question, continuing on with *Saving Private Ryan*'s insistence upon silent women validating the more important roles of the men in their lives. See Chapter 2 for an extended discussion.

sometimes stronger than the desire to remember and share their experiences, which also seemed in some ways unspeakable.”⁹⁰ This is why *Saving Private Ryan* was so popular – it gave voice to the experience of survivor’s guilt in a way that was comprehensible both to those who had served and those who had not. The vague command to “earn this,” was one of the most brilliant moves of the entire script. Not only did it resonate with anyone who had ever felt guilt over the death of another, but it was vague enough that any interpretation could be imposed upon it and thus acted as a catharsis for viewers of all backgrounds. Whatever the trauma felt by the viewer, he or she could feel validated in his or her pain and set it free.

Gary Gerstle makes the argument about *Saving Private Ryan* that “a movie about World War II does little to help us understand what happened in Vietnam,”⁹¹ a claim which sells the emotional connection of Spielberg's film short. The movie has nothing to do with *understanding* the national scars caused by the Cold War, and everything to do with healing them. That moment of connection with Ryan's fear that he wasn't worthy of Miller's sacrifice makes it that much easier for viewers to relate to war veterans. Even as Miller's heroism makes that same experience of war that much more unknowable for a noncombatant, the humanizing moment of seeing a man (Ryan) who is clearly portrayed as a hero doubting his heroism allows survivor’s guilt to become comprehensible. Death comes as the final act of service to one's ideals, because if a character couldn't live to the end of the war, *Saving Private Ryan*

⁹⁰ Antonio Gibelli, “Memory and Repression,” in *Memories and Representations of War: The Case of World War I and World War II*, ed. Elena Lamberti and Vita Fortunati (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 64.

⁹¹ Gerstle, “In the Shadow of Vietnam,” 136. Gerstle's claim that one could, and probably should, be troubled by avoiding the hard questions about the use of the military in US foreign policy through sentimentality is well taken. It's just that is beside the point of what *Saving Private Ryan* was attempting to accomplish.

demonstrates the ways in which death can change the life of the viewer and make that death matter. It is this level of emotional honesty, and on some level, emotional manipulation, that made many critics declare *Saving Private Ryan* to be the most “realistic” war film ever produced. Ann Cvetkovich notes that, “Hollywood film fills in for historical gaps, substituting for the losses of cultural dislocation and secrecy.”⁹² In a culture where mourning and trauma are sublimated in a return to normalcy, Hollywood can sometimes be the only outlet for such feelings.

World War II combat films of the 1990s allowed veterans and non-combatants alike a space to release their tensions and fears about mourning, guilt, and a myriad of other emotions. However, it largely did so by eliding disabilities as a natural outcome of warfare, avoiding any portrayals of disabilities after the war was over and minimizing or avoiding entirely portrayals of disabilities during the war itself. The catharsis granted by these films was largely achieved at the expense of integrating portrayals of disabilities into the narrative of the heroic citizen-soldier. An ideal citizen was either alive and whole in body and mind, or dead. There was no space for a disabled citizen.

⁹² Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 261

Chapter 5: Sex, Sexuality, and Violence

In the 1990s, non-heterosexual sexualities became the attention of mainstream media in a shockingly quick period of time. From the heated debates surrounding Don't Ask, Don't Tell, to sitcom star Ellen DeGeneres's headline in the *New York Times*, “Yep, I'm Gay” and the tragic deaths of Matthew Sheppard and Brandon Teena, from the controversy surrounding actress Anne Heche's declaration of bisexuality to Family Values demonstrations at Pride Parades, it seemed like non-heterosexuality was everywhere, as far as the eye could see. And as Lauren Berlant noted, the flip side of this non-heterosexual “revolution” was that heterosexuality “had to become newly explicit.”⁹³ For many years an unmarked category of assumed normativity, the 1990s marked a transition to a marked norm for heterosexuality.

This development brought a change in the portrayals of allowable sexuality. Notions of ideal citizenship as portrayed in World War II combat films, when read in conjunction with the passage of the policy known as Don't Ask, Don't Tell, clearly demonstrate that the ideal citizen remained heterosexual, both implicitly and explicitly. By extension, the ideal citizen-soldier was assumed to be heterosexual as well. However, as the decade progressed, the ideal citizen-soldier was also assumed to be one who would willingly sacrifice anything for the United States, including the sacrifice of his freedom of sexual expression. The range of acceptable relationships for a soldier became limited, as a focus on battle efficiency above all else destroyed even heterosexual relationships. In short, while heterosexuality was still an assumed aspect of the ideal citizen-soldier, by 2001 any romantic relationship was regarded as

⁹³ Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 17.

suspect because that relationship took attention away from the more important task of war.

Passage of Don't Ask, Don't Tell

United States Federal Law Pub.L. 103-160, more commonly referred to as Don't Ask, Don't Tell (herein after referred to as DADT) takes its basis that “the presence in the armed forces of persons who demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion which are the essence of military capability.”⁹⁴ The way that “demonstrating a propensity of intent to engage in homosexual acts” was determined was through an admission of homosexuality. Prior to World War II, the United States military had policies in place to deal only with homosexual acts, such as sodomy prohibitions, and not homosexual persons. However, with new screening policies that placed homosexuality on equal grounds with mental illnesses as grounds for rejection from a military draft, the US military began to lay the groundwork deeming homosexual persons as unacceptable, and not simply their homosexual acts. This trend continued as the military began to dishonorably discharge servicemen and women for being non-heterosexual throughout World War II, culminating in a codification of the ban on non-heterosexual servicemen with the passage of the Uniform Code of Military Justice in 1950.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ David F. Burrelli and Jody Feder, *Homosexuals and the U.S. Military: Current Issues* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2008), 2.

⁹⁵ See Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Men and Women in World War II* (New York: Plume, 1990) and Leisa D. Meier, *Creating G.I. Jane: Sexuality and Power in the Women's*

As Margot Canaday noted in *The Straight State*, this was an important step in making straightness an integral criterion for US citizenship.⁹⁶ The history of the United States is filled with countless examples of people who were granted citizenship by serving in the military and even more of liminal citizens proving their loyalty to the country through military service. By making heterosexuality a requirement of military service, an explicit connection between second class citizenship and non-heterosexuality was created. If a homosexual person was not permitted to serve in the military, what else might he or she be incapable of doing? And so, non-heterosexual individuals quickly learned that if they wanted to be treated as full citizens, their sexuality needed to be hidden far from view.

However, the terms of DADT and the circumstances of its passage reveal that the truth is more complex than simply defining citizenship as requiring heterosexuality. As a 2010 RAND report notes, “the history of DADT is a story of two conflicting visions of how gay men and lesbians might be allowed to serve in the military. One vision was captured in President Clinton’s January 29, 1993 memorandum asking for a draft executive order ending discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The other vision reflected the view that gay or lesbian sexual orientation is incompatible with military service.”⁹⁷ President Bill Clinton was elected having pledged to remove homosexuality as a bar to serving in the military. However, he immediately back-peddled instead of wasting his political capital on a difficult

Army Corps during World War II (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) for a fuller exploration of this history.

⁹⁶ Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009): 138-9. Canaday also explores the history of welfare and immigration as other ways in which the state implicitly made straightness a citizenship requirement.

⁹⁷ RAND Institute, *Sexual Orientation and US Military Policy: An Update of RAND's 1993 Study* (Washington DC: National Defense Research Institute, 2010), 39.

cause; not only did many major military leaders oppose the repeal of the ban on LGB persons serving openly in the military, so did a sizable minority of US citizens.⁹⁸

Don't Ask, Don't Tell is a policy that only makes sense as a reaction not to gay rights, but to uncertainties about marked heterosexuality. While DADT was not an exception to the various bans on gays and lesbians in the military going back to the 1940s, the complicated mental gymnastics required to make DADT seem to be an actual compromise, a step forward for LGBT activists, only make sense in light of the fact that the 1990s were a time when heterosexuality was no longer the automatic, unmarked norm. If no one was talking about being non-heterosexual, then the military could continue the façade that all soldiers were heterosexual and all would remain as it ever was. The passage of DADT revealed a higher standard for non-heterosexual soldiers than heterosexual soldiers, but in theory the ideal of sacrificing everything for the nation, including the expression of one's sexuality, was an ideal for which all soldiers, regardless of sexuality, were to strive.

As originally conceived, the compromise policy of DADT was actually a three-part policy of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, Don’t Pursue.” As originally proposed, DADT would have ended the practice of directly questioning recruits about their sexual orientation (“Don’t Ask”), required gay and lesbian personnel to not publicly disclose their sexual orientation (“Don’t Tell”), and, in theory, prevented arbitrary investigations (“Don’t Pursue”).⁹⁹ The first two aspects were eventually adopted into the final policy, but Don't Pursue was dropped as part of the compromise between

⁹⁸ RAND Institute, *Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Personnel Policy: Options and Assessment* (Washington DC: National Defense Research Institute, 1993), 436-462.

⁹⁹ US Department of Defense, *Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 22.

President Clinton and the Department of Defense. “The federal government never defined homosexual statutes in the abstract, but always as a part of defining citizenship” and indeed, specifically with regards to those who were in the position of representing the nation.¹⁰⁰ Those dismissed from military service because of DADT and its preceding policies were given a clear message. A soldier was expected to be straight – or at least act that way – while representing the country and the government was allowed to use any means necessary to police non-heterosexuality.

However, DADT was described as a compromise measure, even by those who saw it as the old policy dressed up in new language.¹⁰¹ And the way that this measure could be viewed as a compromise even by those who most vehemently protested its passage is by examining popular culture ideals of how a soldier was expected to present himself in public. The more visible non-heterosexual sexualities became as the decade passed, the more soldiers' sexuality was pressured to become private business in popular culture representations. While it was clear that heterosexuality was still the assumed norm, no one was allowed to express his sexuality during a time of war, especially in World War II combat films. Expressions of one's sexuality during a time of war made one a less valuable citizen, because anything that was not heroic was considered less valuable. All soldiers were expected to shed their sexuality for the nation, following a similar logic to DADT.

¹⁰⁰ Canaday, *The Straight State*, 7. This is not to say that that these policies affected all of those who experienced same-sex or non-binary sexual desires equally. Indeed, when Don't Ask, Don't Tell was repealed in 2011, there were many in the gay and lesbian community who mourned the loss of an automatic exemption from a hypothetical future draft, seeing Don't Ask, Don't Tell and other exclusions on the part of the military as a benefit, rather than a discriminatory practice.

¹⁰¹ See Britton and Williams, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 1995 and Yount, *Journal of Contemporary Health, Law and Policy*, 1995 for examples

Evolution of Consequences for Sexual Intimacy

The decade began with the dividing line between the public and private nature of a soldier's sexuality in flux. *Memphis Belle* and *A Midnight Clear* both featured scenes where young soldiers lost their virginity to women, with the loss of that virginity acting as a kind of barrier between boy and man.¹⁰² In *A Midnight Clear*, Will Nott notes that, “the thing that bothered us most was that we were eleven virgins,” out of the twelve men that were in his squad. And so he and three of the other boys in his squad decided to fix the matter by finding “a nice complacent whore who could put us out of our misery.” The girl that they found, Janice, does not offer to have sex with these boys for money, but out of mourning for her fiancé, who has died in Sicily. She came to retrieve his possessions and kill herself, but can't go through with her suicide attempt, and all she had left in the world was a bus ticket back to Pittsburgh. After hearing their quest, Janice agreed to go back to the hotel with the two boys who had gone out seeking the woman who was to “relieve them of their virginity.” The four of them cannot go through with their plan after hearing her story, so they all fall asleep in a platonic pile on one bed.

But in the next scene, Nott's voiceover notes that, “just before the dawn, Janice comes quietly, privately to each of us.” The darkly lit room clearly shows Janice making love to each of the boys in the bed, presumably while the rest listen and watch, with only the vaguest illusions of privacy. “We passed through the mythical barrier, between boys and men, men and death. Janice takes us with her” Nott concludes. At this point in the decade, as Robert Eberwein notes, the men and

¹⁰² This was a similar logic to the value of battle, as I examined in chapter 2. However, the value of battle in enabling maturity would increase over the course of the decade as the value of heterosexual intimacy decreased.

Janice “are mutual participants in a secular ritual in which a woman brings them all to a new level of ... maturity.”¹⁰³ Eberwein specifically notes it as sexual maturity, but it is apparent, especially when read in conjunction with the scene of virginity loss in *Memphis Belle*, that these more experienced women are conferring a broader sense of maturity to boys who lack it.

In *Memphis Belle*, Virgil has already fought honorably in the war for at least twenty-four missions before losing his virginity, which doesn't seem to impact his fighting abilities. However, he is clearly shown to be the least mature of the men on his crew. And the timing of Virgil's loss of virginity is significant as well – he and the unnamed woman have sex in the cockpit of the *Memphis Belle* the night before the movie's major confrontation, the last mission that the crew are to complete before being sent home as heroes.

Virgil, as well as the group from *A Midnight Clear*, required heterosexual initiation to properly experience war. However, the impact of the scenes of virginity loss in *Memphis Belle* and *A Midnight Clear* seem to confer heroism onto men that are not natural heroes. That heroic status is conferred via heterosexual sex, but none of the true heroes need to have their heroic nature conferred by any external source. None of the rest of the crew of the *Memphis Belle* required heroic initiation via heterosexual sex, and the movie *Tuskegee Army*, which also came out in the early 1990s, doesn't require the presence of any demonstrations of sexuality to mark soldiers who are heroic. Only those soldiers who require extra help activating their heroism are permitted to engage in sexual relationships. The rest of the men have

¹⁰³ Robert Eberwein, *Armed Forces: Masculinity and Sexuality in the American War Film* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 40.

their sexuality confined to jokes and innuendo and revere sexual intimacy as a reward that comes with peacetime.

As the decade would continue, any expressions of sexuality became something to be avoided for the heroic citizen-soldier, as *Pearl Harbor* demonstrates. The emphasis on heterosexual sex hasn't left, only now it is something that cannot confer heroism in the same fashion. Any expression of sexuality can distract a soldier from the mission at hand. If the idea is to become an ideal citizen through the experiences of war, then taking the time for personal concerns is selfish, as Danny and Evelyn's experiences prove. Danny and Rafe were the best of friends and enlisted in the military together. When Rafe is reported to be killed in action, Danny and Evelyn, who was dating Rafe, begin a sexual relationship.

The thematic consequences of Evelyn and Danny's relationship show that failing to keep the greater cause in mind at all times requires a price to be paid. Evelyn becomes pregnant and must resign from active military nursing duty instead of continuing to serve her country as she did during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Danny, who had always doubted the virtues of volunteerism and military service (see chapter 2), sacrifices his life in the final moments of the film, both for failing to be as intrinsically heroic as Rafe and in atonement for allowing himself to be distracted from his duty with sex. Evelyn and Danny's frantic coupling in the parachute hanger is thematically contrasted with Rafe and Evelyn's decision to wait for sex, making Rafe the clearly superior choice, both in heroism and as a romantic partner. Rafe is shown to be an authentic example of what all citizen-soldiers should try to be, which is why Danny must die at the end.

The love triangle serves the same purpose as the other filmed losses of virginity from earlier in the decade, despite having a much less explicit focus on sexual experience - highlighting the innocence of youth against the cruelties of war. Only now there are consequences for indulging in one's sexuality during the time of war. The *Band of Brothers* episode "The Replacements" further demonstrated the ways that ideal soldiers were to keep their head focused on their duty at all times and not become distracted by sex. Upon entering Eindhoven and being greeted by a throng of adoring Dutch people, many of the more experienced soldiers shrugged off the kisses and hugs from women in the adoring crowd. It was only the replacements, who had never experience the hardships of combat, and those soldiers who were to be viewed as youthful and immature that were unable to keep their minds on their task while walking through the crowd. These men haven't yet gotten the message that they aren't allowed to indulge in sexual impulses – they are supposed to crave violence. If that message wasn't clear enough, the celebration is sidetracked by a group of Dutch men shaving the heads of female collaborators and implied prostitutes. Instead of an interesting investigation into collaboration and the radically gendered nature of suffering during military occupations, the scene becomes a double warning to the soldiers of Easy not to become distracted by sex.

Glorification of Violence and Devaluing of Intimacy

Even within the logistics of carrying out a war, those men whose primary job was not killing was devalued. In *Band of Brothers*, immediately following the failed D-Day jump, Richard Winters, played by Damian Lewis, comes across a man not

from his company in the woods while they are both attempting to find the rendezvous point. Winters strikes up a conversation with the man, asking "So, you're a radioman?" The private responds in the affirmative, adding, "well I was until I lost my radio on the jump. I'm sure I'll get chewed out for that." Winters tells him, "If you were in my platoon, I'd tell you you were a rifleman first, radioman second." This could be construed as a simple battlefield inspirational speech, except that it echoes an exchange from *Saving Private Ryan*. Captain Miller, upon seeing a medical battalion, asks, "What you got?" One soldier responds that they are the 104th Medical Battalion, to which Miller says, "Get rid of that crap. Steal some weapons. Follow me." The message of these two scenes is that unless your mission is that of a combat soldier, you are not participating in the war in a worthy way.

Intimacy between individuals instead of in service to the war, and by extension the country, becomes something to be mocked. In *Saving Private Ryan*, Private Reiben asks Miller what he would say about their mission to save Ryan at the possible expense of the other men in his unit if he weren't a Captain. Miller responds by telling Reiben that he would say to anyone who asked that, "this is an excellent mission, sir, with an extremely valuable objective, sir, worthy of my best efforts, sir. Moreover I feel heartfelt sorrow for the mother of Private James Ryan and am willing to lay down my life and the lives of my men - especially you, Reiben - to ease her suffering." After Caparzo says "I love him" in a conversation where he and Mellish admire Miller's ability to bullshit, the two of them make mocking kissing-faces at each other. It is not just Caparzo and Reiben's facial expressions that signify this as a joke about intimacy. Miller's tone while delivering his speech clearly indicated his

skepticism over the worth of the mission and his squad's reaction confirms their agreement. They are mocking the entire concept of saving one man at the expense of many as an over-emotional, sentimentalized thing that only someone who wasn't really hardened enough to be a hero could feel. And while the ending of *Saving Private Ryan* clearly demonstrates that saving one man at the expense of many has some value, the only way that this value could be achieved is by turning off emotional expression and attachments and concentrating solely on the job that needed to be done.

Saving Private Ryan also demonstrates the ways that romance and sexual expression and violence became wrapped up in each other. Upham translates a romantic song that is playing in Italian on a victrola for the men, saying, "as you speak softly in my ear, and you say things that make my eyes close. And I find that marvelous." Mellish breaks the seriousness of the moment, joking, "Upham, to be honest with you, I find myself curiously aroused by you." Reiben, viewing the exchange, defuses the homosexual overtones by saying, "You know what that song reminds me of? It reminds me of Mrs. Rachel Troubowitz and what she said to me the day I left for basic." Reiben, as he tells the story, apparently worked in his family's general store. Mrs. Troubowitz came in for a bra, and he convinces her to try on an obviously too small one for the express purpose of ogling her breasts. "And she sees me and she can tell I got a hard on the size of the Statue of Liberty, all right? And she says to me, 'Richard, calm down.' And she says, 'now when you're over there, if you see anything that upsets you, if you're ever scared, I want you to close your eyes and think of these. You understand?'"

Robert Eberwein ties this exchange between Reiben and Upham to an exchange between Miller and Ryan about Ryan accidentally interrupting his brother's attempt at having sex with a pretty girl in their barn, and both of those exchanges to the stabbing of Melish. Eberwein makes the claim that the proximity of those two conversations to the sensuality of Melish's death in the following scene frames the stabbing as rape-like, adding to the sensualized violence.¹⁰⁴ While those conversations do act as frame for violent death, highlighting the sensual nature of a death by stabbing, this analysis fails to take into account the causal relationship between those conversations and Melish's death. The German soldier's sexualized glee in stabbing Melish is a direct extension of the dehumanizing logic of turning emotions and intimacy into a joke, trivialities which must be discarded for the sake of the nation. Killing is not only part of the job description, but also an outlet for expression, the only acceptable bastion of intimacy left.

Replacing Intimacy with Violence

The contemporary responses to portrayals of heroic warriors who crave violence over intimacy indicate the cultural weight of the narrative. Two of the three World War II combat films from 1998 provided critiques of this trope. In *Thin Red Line*, an unnamed soldier says after a major battle, "I killed a man. Worst thing you can do. Worse than rape. I killed a man. Nobody can touch me for it." This immediate comparison with rape is significant, not because the man actually sees rape as the second-worst sin a person could commit, but because of the inherent sexualization of killing in these films. That war is an opportunity for killing with impunity is meant as

¹⁰⁴ Eberwein, *Armed Forces*, 132-4.

a general critique of war and as a particular condemnation of the logic of shedding intimacy and sexuality in service of the nation. Pvt. Bell's plot arc in *The Thin Red Line*, too, demonstrates the critique of the scorn for intimacy in many of these films. It is when Bell first puts himself in front of the line of fire that he first flashes back to making love to his wife. And after that mission, he again flashes back to making love to his wife. It seems that the way that Bell is able to keep himself apart from the horrors of war is by actually hanging on to his sexuality with his wife rather than allowing the love of war to take over, even if Malick does portray this relationship in the one of the most objectifying ways possible.¹⁰⁵

The most scathing critique of the consequences of replacing intimacy with violence came from British director John Irvin, whose 1987 film *Hamburger Hill* explored similar themes in the context of the Vietnam War. Irvin's *When Trumpets Fade* provides a scathing indictment of any indication that war is a place where citizens can learn to become heroes by carrying the logic of the dehumanization that warfare requires to its terrifying conclusion. *When Trumpets Fades* opens with the protagonist, David Manning, attempting to carry the other remaining survivor of his platoon to a medic. Manning shoots his platoon-mate before he can accomplish getting him to a medic because the man is in too much pain to continue. When Manning returns to the rest of his squadron, he is promoted to Sergeant because he was the only survivor. Upon protesting that he isn't sure if he is capable of doing the job, Manning is informed, "you've managed to stay alive for a week: that's something the rest of your platoon couldn't do. Call me crazy, but from where I'm standing, that qualifies you for the job!"

¹⁰⁵ See Chapter Two for an extended discussion of the portrayals of Pvt. Bell and his wife.

Manning spends the rest of the movie slowly descending into war madness as many of the men he serves with are killed or driven insane with combat stress due to irresponsible decisions of the command staff. The turning point comes when Manning agrees to lead a possible suicide mission in exchange for a Section Eight discharge. Manning has stopped valuing the lives of anyone other than himself and this act seemingly shows that he is willing to put others in harm's way in order to save his own life, a point which is driven home when Manning's platoon hesitates to follow orders and storm the 88s. Manning yells at them and when the two with the flame throwers don't immediately step forward, Manning shoots Private Baxter's gasoline tank with his hand pistol, causing Baxter to be burned alive. This encourages the rest of the platoon to throw themselves into their assault for fear that what Manning may do to them could be worse than the German gunfire.

Manning and his platoon return to camp to find that the Captain who promised Manning his discharge has been removed from command and Manning is again promoted for battlefield efficiency. As part of his promotion, Manning is informed that he is to help lead the charge to recapture a bridge from German command, despite the fact that tanks that had slaughtered troops who attempted that mission earlier have not been neutralized by the Air Force. Manning gathers a small group of men to go behind German lines and disarm the tanks with grenades before the dawn attack.

At this point *When Trumpets Fade* threatens to dissolve into incoherency, because the success of the tank destroying mission could have undercut any kind of critique and allowed the audience the complacency that expected order had triumphed

again and that all of the suffering of the first hour had a purpose. Instead, the opening scene of the movie is mirrored when Manning is shot and Sanderson, a replacement who is the only other survivor from the assault, carries Manning back to the medics. Manning tells Sanderson, “I’m not gonna make it. I’m losing too much blood” as Sanderson insists that, “it’s less than a mile, less than a mile.” Manning, recognizing that he has now switched places with the soldier whom he euthanized at the start of the film, laughs bitterly. Manning appears to lose consciousness as Sanderson repeats, “You’re going home.” The credits roll, but the audience can recognize that the cycle is starting over again, that Sanderson will make the same choice that Manning made at the beginning of the movie and war will claim another victim against humanity.

Manning’s actions are re-contextualized in this moment as snow begins to fall harder and the ironic song choice of “White Christmas” begins to play. Manning’s decision to shoot Baxter’s tank could be viewed as a selfish moment in which Manning proved that he was willing to do anything, even commit murder, for the chance to go home. However, the ending makes it clear Manning simply recognized that war brings death by stripping one’s humanity or through physical death, and it might be preferable to die physically before humanity dies. *When Trumpets Fade* provides an indictment of the mechanisms through which contemporary ideals of soldiering emphasize stripping oneself of human contact. The movie ideal of the “band of brothers” formed by war is revealed to be a falsehood. Every man needs to look out for himself because the purpose of war is death, which includes the death of self in service to one’s country, the inevitable atrocities of wartime.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Liberal filmmakers in the 1990s may have intended to reconstitute patriotism through a valorization of war as a liberal effort. However, their focus upon soldiers as the heroes of World War II contributed to norms of citizenship in addition to creating a place to reexamine war as a part of the liberal agenda. The ideal citizen becomes a straight, able-bodied, white man in uniform through the use of the citizen-soldier motif. However, even when the terms of martial citizenship are expanded, valorization of the citizen-soldier that simply changes the demographics of the military isn't enough to change the structural problems with martial citizenship. Through an examination of two films about the military produced in the 1990s, we can begin to note the structural limitations on conceptualizations of citizenship.¹⁰⁶ The problems with the nation cannot be challenged by a few principled men leading the charge as *A Few Good Men* and World War II combat films of the 1990s claim. As *Courage Under Fire* demonstrates, the problems are structural. Liberalism in the 1990s embraced a vision of the future that was narrower than the reality of the nation and the past that it claimed to honor. In order to properly inspire the nation to effect change, we need to “tell the truth” about who we are as a people. But moreover, we need to accurately assess the structures of inequity that frame discussions of citizenship.

Both *Courage Under Fire* and *A Few Good Men* demonstrate that one of the major problems with martial citizenship (and by extension the military) is that of

¹⁰⁶ My discussions of *Courage Under Fire* and *A Few Good Men* are simply meant to be suggestive of future venues for citizenship research, rather than forming conclusive research.

immoral leadership. *A Few Good Men*, produced in 1992, marks writer Aaron Sorkin and director Rob Reiner's first collaboration. (The two would later team up on *The American President*, which is praised mostly for beginning to explore the liberal themes that Sorkin would later develop on *The West Wing*.) The film opens with two young Marines, Lance Corporal Dawson and PFC Downey, on trial for the death of their squad-mate PFC Santiago. Dawson and Downey contend that they were simply acting on orders and that the death was an accident. (The two men had shoved a rag down Santiago's throat to shave his head.) Lt. Daniel Kaffee is a lackadaisical JAG lawyer assigned to their case, infamous for plea bargaining instead of allowing his cases to go to trial. Colonel Nathan Jessep, the man who is eventually shown to be responsible for the order that resulted in Santiago's accidental death, is introduced as a sign of all that's wrong with the current military. Jessep spends most of the movie smirking and flouting his power. He tells Kaffee after he realizes that Lt. JoAnne Galloway, Kaffee's assistant lawyer to represent Dawson and Downey, outranks Kaffee that, "there is nothing on this earth sexier, believe me, gentlemen, than a woman you have to salute in the morning. Promote 'em all, I say, 'cause this is true: if you haven't gotten a blowjob from a superior officer, well, you're just letting the best in life pass you by." And before Jessep proudly proclaims that Kaffee was "Goddamned right!" that Jessep had given an order that accidentally resulted in a man's death, he contemptuously tells Kaffee that, "I have neither the time nor the inclination to explain myself to a man who rises and sleeps under the blanket of the very freedom that I provide, and then questions the manner in which I provide it."

Jessep considers himself above the law and Sorkin's script does not hesitate to show that he abuses that power in every way he can.

The climax comes when Daniel Kaffee stands up and makes an argument. He brought down one corrupt leader and that is all that matters. The fact that a black man (Dawson) and a mentally handicapped man (Downey) lost their jobs in a dishonorable discharge doesn't factor into the heroism of the ending. The narrative expects women and people of color to subsume themselves into a voyage of self-discovery for the main white male character. Galloway tells Kaffee when he is thinking of quitting the case that he needs to “stand up and make an argument.” After they argue, she contemptuously informs him, “you're nothing – live with that,” and the camera flashes on to the Lincoln Memorial – arguably one of the most revered lawyers in the history of the United States, who in this interpretation stood up and made an argument. Galloway demands that Kaffee stand up and make an argument instead of standing up and making it herself. After refusing to salute Kaffee throughout the entire movie, Dawson confers his honor onto Kaffee at the end of the film after having his own stripped with the dishonorable discharge. Kaffee says to Dawson after the dishonorable discharge conviction comes through. “Harold, you don't need to wear a patch on your arm to have honor.” Dawson stands up at attention, pulls a perfect regulation salute and Kaffee, meeting him in the eye for almost the first time since they met and declares, “there's an officer on deck.” This confers a triumphant ending to the audience. There is no indication that any steps have been taken to prevent another Jessep from abusing power. Two good men are no longer in the military and a good woman is likely not going to be recognized for her valuable

contributions to the court victory. But all of that is irrelevant, because Daniel Kaffee made an argument. And scene.

Courage Under Fire, produced in 1996 and directed by Edward Zwick, denotes similar problems with the military command structure. Zwick was responsible for a number of other films critiquing power and corruption, most notably 2006's *Blood Diamond*, but also *Legends of the Fall* (1994) and *Glory* (1989). *Courage Under Fire* begins during the 1990 Gulf War, with an incident where our main character, Lt. Colonel Nathaniel Serling, accidentally orders his tank to fire on a friendly tank, killing American soldiers. Serling isn't brought up on charges because the incident is deemed an accident, but he is placed on desk duty and ordered to lead the investigation into awarding the Medal of Honor to the first woman in history as penance. The film continually notes the ways that Serling's superiors continually ordered him to overlook any complications in awarding Captain Karen Walen the Medal of Honor and the ways that intersected with helping him evade consequences for accidentally allowing the bombing of a fellow American tank. Serling's refrain throughout the movie is that of demanding that someone be held accountable, that the military tell the truth about what happened, and fellow officers, both above and below him in rank, do all that they can to obfuscate that truth.

However, where *A Few Good Men* showed a simple concrete solution, *Courage Under Fire* begins to suggest that the problem is structural and far less easy to fix with a pseudo-inspirational ending. The military needs a permanent revolution if the promise of martial citizenship can be extended to every person. General Hershberg praises Serling at the end of the film for saving lives after the friendly fire

accident, saying that, “at the critical moment, in spite of terrible losses, Colonel Sterling didn't hesitate to act. Ordering those tanks to turn on their lights saved the lives of God knows how many of our men. Heroic acts arise out of desperate circumstances.” Hershberg turns to a reporter to tell him that Serling is heading up the investigation into giving Captain Walden the Medal of Honor and Serling tells them both, “I think in order to honor a soldier like Karen Walden, we have to tell the truth, General, about what happened over there. The whole, hard, cold truth. And until we do that we dishonor her and every soldier who died, who gave their life for their country.” Karen Walden does receive the Medal of Honor, but Serling also goes to tell the parents of his good friend that was in the tank he ordered to be fired upon. Serling offers himself up to be held accountable for the friendly fire accident.

The difference between the plot arcs of Daniel Kaffee and Nathaniel Sterling isn't just that Denzel Washington is black and Tom Cruise is white; it is that having learned about the circumstances surrounding Karen Walden's death doesn't enable Sterling find his inner hero on a journey of self-discovery. Sterling wants to tell the truth to celebrate Walden's heroism as well as to face the consequences for his actions. Sterling recognizes that not only does true change need to come from within, it requires those who believe in their principles to uphold them. The United States was founded on a radical idea that power could be handed over peacefully and the only reason that idea worked was because the people who created the system did not hold themselves above it. It doesn't matter if you're claiming that your ideals and convictions come from within or if you're learning them from the rest of the people – it is a problem to have your character set him or herself apart in order to lead through

platonic ideals. Women and minorities are not simply an object lesson in heroism and they are not invisible. They have valuable things to teach the country as *Courage Under Fire* suggests. There are many problems inherent with the trope of martial citizenship, with the minimization of the death and destruction caused by wars simply the beginning. However, if there is something salvable about the terms of participation offered by martial citizenship, we must acknowledge the flaws in the system first. Otherwise simply replacing corrupt leaders with principled people will be pointless, no matter what minority experience they bring to the table.

In his seminal essay “Unit Pride” on the composition of the platoons featured in World War II combat films, Richard Slotkin notes that, “the emergence of the World War II combat film as a genre marks the shift from the myth of America as essentially a white man’s country, to that of a multiethnic, multiracial democracy.”¹⁰⁷ The traditional platoon of the World War II combat film was a veritable melting pot of ethnicities and backgrounds, a visualization of the America that could be, rather than a reflection of the America that was. Even in the shift from a focus on ethnicity to racial identities that followed the Vietnam era, the World War II platoon was a place where any man could come to prove his worth.¹⁰⁸ Liberal filmmakers focused on the imaginative possibilities of the expansion of the terms of citizenship, rather than the harsher realities of history.

But by the 1990s, the composition of the military of the United States had changed drastically. One might assume that, had the trend toward inclusive citizenship continued, the combat platoons featured in World War II combat films

¹⁰⁷ Slotkin, “Unit Pride,” 470

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 490-2.

might have included women or homosexuals, since the military of the 1990s was fully integrated on a racial front and the ethnicities that were considered non-white in the 1940s were fully understood to be white. Instead the platoons of the films of the 1990s were composed nearly entirely of the same ethnicities as the platoons of the 1940s. And in this new context, rather than acting out of a desire to expand the terms of citizenship, or indeed, out of a desire to recount the “truth” of the past, these movies represent a closing off of the terms of citizenship. In the face of demands for a change in the terms of civic participation from women, from homosexuals, from immigrants, these movies represent a vision of a shared past that is “easier” or “more correct” than the one that viewers may currently be inhabiting. What began as a simple exercise in celebrating one's fathers becomes instead fraught with interpretive questions. What does it mean that this period, out of all the periods in the history of the United States is the one that is deemed most worthy of celebration? The World War II combat films of the 1990s tap into a desire for a national unity, for a purpose and driving force to energize and revitalize the populace.

And so in response to the chaos that comes from lacking a national unity in either the domestic or the international realm, filmmakers in the later part of the 1990s turned toward making movies which glorified the so-called “Greatest Generation” in an attempt to recreate civic unity through pride in the past. However, the United States citizen soldier of World War II was created from a specific racial and gender mold, one that was more about U.S. national identity than it was about creating an efficient army, and one that was only available to a select few. Starting from the beginning of the Cold War, the United States presented itself as a truth-

telling nation. The other side had propaganda – the US simply spoke in facts.¹⁰⁹ The impact of this presentation of the US into its culture cannot be overstated. Not only did this legacy leave a cultural critical void, history itself became an unexamined vehicle for “truths” to be uncritically presented. Sara Pesce notes of *Saving Private Ryan*, “Spielberg shoots the film as if it was the real war, as he himself claims. His film builds up an illusion of a situation of the past. In Spielberg's hands, cinema gains the power of giving life to history and becomes therefore an artificial source of memory.”¹¹⁰ The works of Steven Spielberg and other filmmakers became an artificial source of memory which overlapped with conventions about citizenship in the public sphere to reinforce exclusionary standards of citizenship.

In *Economy of the Unlost*, Anne Carson explained that negation required simultaneously bringing to mind that which is “present and actual” and that which is “absent and fictitious ... one is measured against the other and found to discrepant; the discrepant datum is annihilated by a word meaning ‘no.’”¹¹¹ It is through this concept of negation that the positive qualities of the ideal of the citizen soldier became worth anything. The citizen soldier was not only brave; he was not cowardly as well. And so the ideal of the citizen soldier was not only white and male, he was simultaneously not-black and not-female. He was not only straight and able-bodied, he was also not-gay and not-disabled. It was not only that these qualities of being white, able-bodied, heterosexual, and male were prized above their opposing

¹⁰⁹ Suzanne Clark, *Cold Warriors: Manliness on Trial in the Rhetoric of the West* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 6.

¹¹⁰ Sara Pesce, “Film and War Imagery,” in *Memories and Representations of War: The Case of World War I and World War II*, ed. Elena Lamberti and Vita Fortunati (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 233.

¹¹¹ Anne Carson, *Economy of the Unlost: Reading Simonides of Keos with Paul Celan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 102.

qualities, it was also that being black or female or homosexual or disabled was considered inferior to the ideal qualities. And in choosing this period as a rallying point for civic pride, popularized histories of World War II entirely depend upon those “negative” qualities being pushed to the side to attempt to create a unifying notion of citizenship, leaving unacceptably large swaths of the country out of this new vision of the ideal citizen.

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