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Red Soil and the Silver Screen: The Evolution of Realism in American World War Two Films

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RED SOIL AND THE SILVER SCREEN

THE EVOLUTION OF REALISM IN AMERICAN WORLD WAR TWO

FILMS

BY

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to determine if there has been any change in the incorporation of realism in World War II films since the end of the war. A content analysis was preformed on eight films that cover a range of years, to monitor the change in certain key aspects of realism. The films spanned 1955 to 2007. The key factors revolved around the plot, characters and depiction of combat. This thesis then offers an analysis of the changes and what effect those changes have had on World War II combat films.

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The Birth of Film to the Second World War

Many scholars debate exactly when the concept of film first appeared. However, most will agree that film, as we know it, was born when the Lumière brothers first debuted their new camera in Paris. Others during this time period also worked at created inventions that could capture moving scenes. Thomas Edison, an American from New Jersey, developed several technologies used during the period and helped found the American film industry.

These early films consisted of simple stories. Often times, short films simply depicted a common scene from every day life. Some films, however, would come out in episodes and used drama to unite the fragmented stories. These kept crowds in suspense, as it would often be months in-between episodes. Additionally, these films did not have sound. This eliminated language barriers and made them very accessible across America and Europe. This allowed the early film trade to be a very international industry.

Around 1910 and continuing during that, decade powerful companies started to emerge in the American film industry. These companies quickly bought, or merged, with all the services associated with making films right down to the theaters that showed the movies. This new total-entertainment franchise allowed one company to oversee a movie from it's inception, through it's filming, right up to it being shown in the theaters. This system would be labeled the studio system. According to Borden, Duijsens, Gilber, and Smith (2008) this system was created "to extend their control from film production to film screening, they merged their production companies with distributors and theater chains, creating a vertically integrated system that bolstered the cinematic supremacy of the United States" (p.19) . It did just that and America

emerged during this decade as the film production capital of the civilize world.

This was helped by the tragedy that unfolded in Europe during World War I. Most of the major European filmmakers, namely France and Germany, had their economies, manpower, and global prestige severely damaged during, and immediately after, the war. America's neutrality until the last year of the war kept the American Film industry out of harms way.

Following the Great War, film saw a decade of growth. Film was seen as a new great art form. As such, new styles emerged with titles similar to other forms of art. America developed its own styles during this period, the most famous being the comedy. American comedic films are probably some of the most well known from the period. These new film styles were all made possible by rapid advances in film technology, as well as the introduction of sound. These styles and advances carried film to popularity during this decade.

From 1930 onward, film did not change much. Technological advances continued, but film saw no significant changes. New genres of film emerged during this period, though. America's studio system developed new genres based on uniquely American history and experiences. Western films and their stories about America's expansion into great plains became popular. Gangster movies that echoed the struggle between organized crime and the law during prohibition also became popular. Early horror movies too became popular as improved visual effects allowed directors to tell scary tales of monsters and villains. Film was also being used as propaganda. The fascist states of Germany and Italy, as well as the communist state of Russian, came to power and used film as a tool to reach mass audiences about their ideals. The storm of another World War was brewing and American film, after forty years of dominance, would have a front row seat to this new conflict.

Film during the War

When the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, America was ill prepared for war. Likewise, Hollywood was unprepared to release films about a war that had only just begun. They did not have films already filmed and waiting just in case America got involved in the war. It was already December of 1941, and it would be many months before films about the war would be made. So, the earliest films that include the war as a subject were not released until later in 1942. These early films were crude in their portrayal of the war as the studios did not have proper costumes and many of them did not have experience in telling stories that heavily involved war. These early films borrowed heavily from other genres and told stories similar to other films of the era, but using the war as a setting. They contained, as many of the war time films did, large amounts of propaganda about why Americans needed to aid the war effort by fighting or in other ways. These films also contained racial stereotyping in order to dehumanize and demonize America's enemies. As the war continued, however, Hollywood found a rhythm to put the movies to and, by the end of the war, new films were being mass produced and sent out to theaters across America.

The Post War Years

World War II as a film subject enjoyed great popularity after the war ended. While this did not occur immediately after the war, the popularity of the subject in the decades that followed is evident in the sheer number of films released. Immediately after the war, the American populace was tired of the war as a subject and between the end of the war in 1945 and 1950 very few films were released on the subject.

America entered a new war during the following decade. The Korean War was similar to

World War II and was fought against a new enemy that was just as evil as the Nazis. The war in Korea fueled the World War II film franchise and numerous films appeared during this time period. However, as time wore on, the World War II film faded. Fewer and fewer films were being made. As America became involved in Vietnam, a venture that fared poorly right from the beginning, America became disinterested in seeing war on film. In fact, no major amount of World War II films ever surfaced since the post war period.

However, in 1998 two films were released that reinvented the public love affair with World War II. Saving Private Ryan and The Thin Red Line were both major films released during a short span that caught the publics' attention. Saving Private Ryan did much better at the box office than The Thin Red Line, but both movies sparked the interest of the public. Since their release, the popularity of World War II as a film subject has only risen. From 1998 onwards, there have been almost as many films released about World War II as there was from 1970 to 1998.

Concept of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze if and how World War II films have changed since they were released in the post-war years. What do these changes, if present, say about how America views the war? If there are changes to the films, how do these changes reflect the culture of the time period in which the films were released. This study is an opportunity to look at the evolution of this specific set of American movies. The facts of the Second World War have not changed. If an analysis of the films shows that there have been thematic changes in the portrayal of the war, the cause of these changes will be evaluated by this study. The war film is often overlooked as a statement of cultural values, but several films released in the late 1990's

made broad strides in changing this perception. The films released during this period have given us a new in-depth look at this specific time period. They revealed themselves to be a unique chance to capture the experiences of American citizens at a cross roads of American and World history.

The Thesis Question

In what ways have World War II films changed? Are the characters different in nature? How has the filmography changed around the film? How is the enemy portrayed? These factors and others are going to be discussed as these films are analyzed.

Subsidiary Questions

Besides the main determination of how, if at all, World War II movies have changed, there are several subsidiary questions that can be posed as corollaries of the main question. The first question is what do these changes say about the society that made them. If a relationship can be established, it can answer a lot of questions about the films. For example, why where these changes made? Does it appear that changes to culture affect the movies those cultures produce? Can a relationship between society and the changes in the movie be shown? Linking the cultural changes to the movies will reveal a lot about the movies, the people that made them and the expectations that the society that received them had.

Secondly, what are the results of these changes? How have these films been made different as a result of the outside factors? Some of these factors include the passage of time. As the decades since the war have passed, is a film about soldiers and the war different than a similar movie was that was produced before it? While the events of World War II have not changed, time has revealed that the actual events may have occurred differently then was first thought. Also, access to the Axis nation's veterans has given the American film industry and historians

new insights into the events of the war. Finally, do changes in cultural values result in differences in the films? This relationship is a vital part of what this thesis intends to analyze.

The last subsidiary question is how all of these perceived changes affected the nature of the genre. What about the World War II combat film has changed? Do war films focused on World War II contain a different perspective than they had in the films of previous generations? Do these films portray the same events or people differently from generation to generation.

Limitations

The parameters that this thesis will work within are as follows. The thesis will cover American-made films only. While the study of foreign-made films about World War II is a very interesting subject, this would entail too broad of a selection of film. It also adds many different cultural differences to account for.

The thesis will cover only films that are considered combat films. The combat film will be defined in the next section. The reason for this selection is that many films take place during the World War II time frame. The combat film is a sub-section of those films and studying this particular subset of films allows for a controlled set of films that contain a similar set of circumstances. Films that take place during World War II that are not combat-related can be about many different subjects and it is difficult to compare them when they do not share common themes. By limiting the films to the combat genre, the films are guaranteed to have shared themes and experiences that make it possible to measure them against each other. This becomes the ultimate control of the analysis.

These combat films will not include factual representations of World War II. This limitation mostly covers documentaries and news reels. These films fall outside of this thesis for

two reasons. The first is they were mostly produced during the war. This thesis is looking at how the films themselves have changed since the end of the war. News reels were made during the war and therefore fall outside the time parameters set for this thesis.

Documentaries are being excluded because while they are often created after the fact. Most documentaries started to come about as early as the 1950s and 1960s. They include actual footage of the war as a primary source of film. So, much like the news reel, the documentary falls outside the time frame that this thesis wishes to look at. Also, since the documentary is primarily a statement of fact, it lacks the artistic statement that this thesis wishes to study. While a fictional film may be based in fact, a lot more decisions have to be made about how historically accurate the film should be. Other decisions that have to be made are clothing, settings, characters and the actors that play them. Decisions have to be made about plot and mood. These decisions are what this thesis wish to look at.

The last limitation is the extent to which the thesis will analyze and criticize the filmography of the movies. The technology with which the film was produced was usually not a decision made by the producers and was instead dictated by the available technology at the time of production. This thesis will not hold any resulting inadequacies against them. The thesis will criticize the costumes, character depictions and other factors that the filmmakers had the ability to control. These decisions reflect conscious efforts to recreate the film with a specific vision

These limitations will help guide this thesis into a narrow category of film and allow the thesis to analyze very specific decisions made in regards to the film. They also provide a scope for what movies to be viewed. There is a large genre of movies that take place during the war's time frame, but by limiting those movies we put in place a control from which to form a base for comparison.

Definitions of Key Terms

World War II Film: A film whose subject takes place between the years 1939 and 1945.

Combat Film: A film whose plot has significant inclusion of military combat. The film's content need not be limited entirely to combat, but it must be a significant presence. The film's plot will usually be moved forward by elements of the combat. Films that have fighting in them, or are about soldiers during war, may not fit in this definition as they may include these things but not actually be about combat.

Documentary: A film whose content is about a given subject and attempts to present the subject material through first hand data. These films typically utilize footage filmed during the actual events as well as interviews with participants and expert opinion to form a presentation of factual information.

Mini Series: A televised story, filmed in multiple parts. It is a hybrid of movie film and television, produced in several parts, but containing a definite ending point. These works are considered films made for TV.

News Reel: A historical way of disseminating news, film reels were short movies made up of clips of events happening around the nation or around the world with narration of the event describing the event and its significance. This was the primary visual news media used from the creation of film.

Realism: The attempt by a piece of work to capture the factual and actual experience of the person or people the work is portraying.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

War films existed before World War II as entertainment. The first World War and even film makers independently had created films whose topic included the military. These early films were important because they would set the standard for films that would follow. In essence, these early films are the grand-parents of what we might consider the modern war film. These films often base basic plot devices off of the ideas presented in the early stages of war on film. From the out break of World War I through the surrender of the Japan at the end of World War II, established the time frame in which the basics of these films were created. Understanding what this period did for the shaping of the post World War II combat film is vital to understanding the overall development of World War II combat film.

World War I coincided with the early birth of film. These films were of actual combat, not produced in a studio for entertainment. It was the first war to have footage from battles captured, or reenacted and brought to audiences back home. This was in large part of the film industries contribution to the war effort. Creating these films which were often more propaganda than true war films, or by creating public service commercials as part of the film presentation they bolstered the war effort by making it easier for the government to disseminate it's messages of supporting the war effort by buying bonds, conserving supplies, or even by enlisting in the military. Doherty (1993) confirmed the same belief about a film's purpose during the war when he writes "The first was manifest: to be inspirational, to deploy the movies to rally the faithful and embolden the fearful" (p. 85). The film industry saw this as a two fold opportunity the first of which was to help the war effort while keeping the loyalty of audiences as to have continued

business. Debauche (2006) explains, "The actions of the film industry, nearly from the moment war broke out in Europe followed the precept of practical patriotism: it was appropriate and reasonable to combine allegiance to country and to business" (p. 109). Films provided a new medium for the government to use the industry: films informed the public with the information they wanted them to see as well as keeping soldiers entertained over seas. This made the film industry and it's initial link to war useful and relevant. This was important to the film industry as while America was not involved in the war for a long period of time, at the onset the government entered full war time production, which included the film industry. The money being spent on films could be spent on other things considered more necessary for the war effort such as equipment and recruiting. Debauch (2006) goes on to say:

> The war posed a direct challenge to the conduct of business as usual: the industry might have been deemed 'nonessential' and shut down for the course of the war... The movies might have been decried as a frivolity not fitting to a nation at war (p. 109).

This was avoided by providing the necessary services to the government by cooperating in the production of war time media that was guided by the wishes of the government. The war ended and life returned to a pre-war state the movies became popular as ever. Thanks in part to the war time contributions. They too soared to the top of the world wide industry as many of the other countries economies and film industries were directly in the line of fire during the war, the most notable of these was the French film industry. Paris was directly impacted by the war as the central European forces under the German command almost captured the city, which endured shelling and bombing through out the war. This only ensured the success of the American film domestically and internationally as it had little competition left.

The decades between the first and second World Wars, know as the inter war period, served as a time of explosion for the American film industry. New technologies and genres of film were developing and several new genres emerged. The most important of which was the

war film it self. Most of which were about World War I. Debauche (2006) commented that:

> Through out the 1920's, and up until World War Two, the Great War was used as narrative fodder. We can also see the foundations of the combat film genre established in a set of films about World War One made in the middle years of the decade... (p.118).

The movies about World War I were most popular as that subject was fresh in the minds of the people. In fact movies were being made about many time periods during this era. These films would contribute to the development of the combat film. Basinger (2003) observed:

> Obviously, films depicting internally declared or recognized *war*, specifically combat on the ground, at sea, and in the air, existed before Pearl Harbor. War has been depicted in all its variety. Films have presented wars among cave tribes and in the times of ancient Greece and Rome. Audiences have been treated to spectacles of medieval crusades, the Napoleonic Wars, and the Boer Wars. The U.S. Revolutionary War, Civil War, and Spanish-American War have all been re-created, as such conflicts as the Indian wars and the Mexican wars, an so, of course, has World War I (p.78).

Beyond the films focusing on war as we know it, other genres have cross pollinated between combat films and non-combat films. It is because these films contain conflict, often violent conflict, making them similar to war films. Other traits besides the violence it self is the trait of group versus group conflict. This group conflict brings out similar traits that we see in ourselves during war. It is war in a sociological or psychological sense, not in a political sense. Basinger (2003) established this when she says:

> There is no doubt that the same story can be told against a changing background. Stories about groups of men who undertake difficult objectives, led by a hero, existed before World War II. It is possible to say that the Western Calvary Troop became the World War II fighting unit, and then returned to their Western format after the war. Or stories about gangsters, pirates, and revolutionaries underwent the same redressing (p. 79).

This thesis and Basinger are not alone in the belief that many genres were developed in relation to each other. They share similar representations of human sociological behavior. Films like breeds of creatures can share genetic plot ancestry. Doherty (1993) acknowledged this:

> Genre is the movie we've already seen. In the age of the image, the visual landscapes, narrative conventions and thematic concerns that comprise westerns, gangster films, screwball comedies, and familial melodramas make up generic clusters of a nearly genetic

immediacy.... The meaning of any genre – the clash of savagery and civilization in the western, the repulsion and attraction of the brutal gangster, the erotic lure and deadly consequences of the film noir femme fatal – is a study in contradictions (p. 86).

Leading into the war there was a strong foundation of films and film tradition for the World War II combat film to be built on. The key ingredient is missing from the mix: until this point World War II had not yet happened.

World War II: The Formative Years

World War II was the grounds on which the modern combat film, or at least the combat film as we know it was built. When America was thrust into war by the attack perpetrated by Japan, the film industry responded as it did during World War I, by starting to produce films about the war in order to raise morale and inspire people to support the war effort. In Chapter I, it is explained that the industry was not able to produce these films over night. Nor were they completely able to establish the way in which the genre should be approached.

The earliest films, as noted earlier, often drew on pre-war themes and devices to fill in the gaps. This new war meant a new chance to create war films and with the new technology in filming there was a chance to create something that had not existed before. It was familiar to the studios and to the audiences as well, but at the same time it was not. This indescribable deja vú was transition. War films were changing. Basinger (2003) observed this change as she analyzes an early war film titled *Wake Island*:

> Still despite its changing "old" to "new" before our eyes, *Wake Island* is not really the typical combat film of World War II. In it, we observe the process of change, not the new product. The language of the combat genre are not yet spoken here, although its words are known (p. 30).

It would not be until half-way through the war that the American film industry would develop the consistency required to define a genre. This of course is the most important

development when trying to analyze the subject of World War II combat films. This issue is what exactly is a World War II combat film? Most critics and film academics do not debate this issue, the genre like others is just known. Does that mean that genres do not have definition? Certainly not, by definition a genre is a story that has repeating plot elements, but few take the time to define this specific genre.

Foremost Basinger (2003) defined this genre, as her work on the subject is very heavily involved with defining the genre during different periods of time. This thesis is looking at tracking reality and historical correctness so our paths parallel but never intersect. However, her definition of what makes a film a World War II combat film is invaluable. She describes the plot of a World War II combat film as having several key elements. In her studies of the films, certain things have been true from the first film to present films. She herself (Basinger,2003) acknowledged this lack of change between eras of film when she wrote "obviously the purpose of combat film will not be the same in 1998 as it was in 1944. Although the basic story format is always kept intact (this is the definition of genre)..." (p. 261). The first of these plot elements is some sort of dedication, in the older movies these followed the opening credits of the movie. In newer movies which have little to no opening credits a dedication usually follows the movie but before the final credits roll. This dedication can be a thank you, a tribute, offer facts regarding the extraordinary circumstances depicted in the movie, or be a quote from a famous statesmen or figure. The next plot element is about casting, the group of soldiers is usually diverse, representing America as a whole. There is usually an ethnic mix of northern European white, Italian, Jewish, Hispanic, and sometimes even African American. The men might be of different religions or creeds, and usually hail from different parts of the country. This helps the audience connect to the cast as being a true representation of themselves and the whole country.

Attached to the group dynamic of the plot there is usually a hero who is the leader, or is

forced to be a leader. This character is usually the main star of the movie. He is usually

charismatic and will guide the group through it's second plot attachment. This attachment is a

shared dangerous mission. The mission is usually of military significance and has a clear

understandable objective. Such as holding a village from the enemy or making a last stand. What

attaches this plot element to the group is that it is shared by the group, the mission is not one

man's. It is the responsibility of the whole group.

Further along these key plot elements the audience is taught about military ritual and

iconography. Mail call, cleaning weapons, digging fox holes, getting to know your fellow

soldiers, all things men who served in the military did but are not the types of things civilians

would be familiar with.

Next is the paramount of a combat film. Which is combat. The group will usually make

contact with the enemy and a battle ensues. Men in the group, as well as some considered the

enemy die, introducing death to the group and to the audience. Usually this plot element is used

to develop characters. Once the characters have been fully developed the story is then usually

resolved. The men accomplish their objective, fail or die in the case of a last stand but otherwise

the story can end. War films tend not to leave the audience with a sense of continuation.

The last plot element which is a secondary aspect of telling the story is the audience is

suppose to take away a deeper knowledge and connection to the soldiers. Their lives during war

and a greater understanding of what it means to have the duties of a soldier. (Basinger, 2003, pp.

67-70).

These elements of a dedication, a group, a mission or objective, combat, and resolution

ending with the audience having a greater understanding of military existence is what Basinger

defines as the basic reoccurring plots of all World War II combat films.

Understanding these elements of the combat film genre as it relates to World War II is

vital in understanding the post war development of film that this thesis aims to explore. Approaching this with out a solid foundation of knowledge of what came before World War II film and what has contributed to it is vital to understanding later developments.

Post War Through 1960

The immediate post war period had very little in the way of development in World War II film. The genre remained relatively unchanged. In fact during this time period very few films were actually produced. This is in part due to the formation of the House Un-American Activities Committee. This committee was charged with finding members of American society who were supported, sympathized with or were out right members of the communist movement. This was bad for Hollywood. Doherty (1993) acknowledged this ill omen for Hollywood when he wrote "official confirmation of Washington's matriculation arrived punctually. In May 1947 a subcommittee of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) descended on Hollywood for preliminary hearings into alleged communist infiltration of the motion picture industry" (p. 266). Some of Hollywood's prominent members turned out to be communists and their support for the movement lead to Congress being suspicious of their activities. This too was bad because some of the films they had produced under the direction of the government about the Russian allies were now being called seditious and un-American. This left Hollywood stunned as everything they had done had lead to a good relationship with the government during the war. Doherty (1993) cited the shock to which Hollywood's leading members now sat persecuted by the people who directed them to commit the alleged crimes. "The motion picture industry executives called to testify and explain themselves before a hostile committee were understandably befuddled by the turnabout in studio-government relations, the abrupt ground rules, and the retroactive application of same" (p. 268). This left Hollywood silent for most of the

remainder of the decade. However many members of the film industry who had enlisted in the military for purposes of making film for the government or had served in combat units had returned. These military veteran crews now had first hand experience in capturing war on film with knowledge of how to best film and create the war both behind and in front of the camera.

The drought of war films broke for the film industry in 1949. Several new films came out that marked the beginning of a decade filled with World War II film. Doherty (1993) commented that 1949 was "the pivotal year for postwar combat film... distant enough to forge the bad, close enough to recall the buzz" (p. 272). World War II had become a popular film subject. Especially during the war. Now Hollywood was not so sure about how the public would continue to receive the subject. The answer to this was that they would received them well. The public loved to see these films, in essence they were a victory lap for America. They had been triumphant in the war and now these movies recalled this great feat that had been accomplished. Doherty (1993) pointed out this relation between the war and the post war:

> ...the most significant continuity between war time cinema and post war cinema might be to obvious to notice: the face that Hollywood never stopped making movies about the Second World War.... More then any other war– more then any other twentieth-century experience – it was motion picture friendly (p 271).

Films of this decade played an important role. They had to unite the now divided audience. The audience of this decade was divided into two categories. Those who had served in the war and knew what being a soldier was about. They had experienced the war first hand and often times had a firm grasp on what to expect a war film to be about. The second group with in the audience were the civilians who did not serve. They were too young, physically unfit, unable to serve directly (women), or just chose not to get involved. They needed to be united with the veterans in the audience. They do not have the prior knowledge about the imagery of war. They do not know the customs and traditions of the military and may be unfamiliar with specific

events as they only saw selected news during the war. The war movies of the immediate post war

had to merge these two aspects so that both sides of the audience could relate and in that

connection reconnect with each other. Basinger (2003) pointed this out clearly when she writes:

> After the war, the films the presented the war faced and audience of those who saw
> reality. As well as those who saw war films and accepted them as reality. (That is not to
> deny that soldiers overseas also saw war films.) This decade of film had to unite the
> two halves of the audience. Those who fought overseas had to re-fight it through war
> films in order to share their experience of the home front. These films united the
> experience of war for those who fought and those who did not. From this point
> onward, both groups would share the same combat experience – that of the World War
> II combat film (p 141).

The film that came out during this period that stands out above the rest is *Sand of Iwo

Jima,* a combat film par none for it's time. This film sticks out because of its gritty reality.

Though the period was known for inaccuracies and plot devices that seemed inaccurate, even to

untrained civilians, who never experienced war. Those traits will be covered later. *Sands* in the

mean time goes beyond these stereotypes of the period. It delivered a side of war not yet seen by

the combat films already viewed by the public. This side was of the unlikable hero and tragedy.

John Wayne plays Sargent Stryker a man who is unlike most of the characters of his period is

flawed. He has mental and social problems, these problems follow him and from him almost as

an aura of tragedy. Karma catches up to him when he is unexpectedly killed at the last moment

of battle. This was a shock to audiences not only because John Wayne gets killed but because

films of this nature had always shown combat to be brutal but fair. This was the first time non

veteran audiences were being shown the arbitrary and cruel side that war could have. Even in the

moment of triumph and victory the hero was just as vulnerable to death as he was in the midst of

combat. Basinger (2003) confirmed this difference from earlier films and *Sands* peer films:

> The death of John Wayne helps to mark the film's departure from the earlier wave of
> combat films. Obviously, Robert Taylor (and everyone else) died at the end of *Bataan,* as
> did Robert Mitchum at the end of *Story of G.I. Joe.* The death and sacrifice of the leader is
> integral to the genre, but the death of John Wayne at the moment of climatic victory is

quite a different matter and quite a different statement (p. 152).

Perhaps the reason for the stark difference in film message is what the film is trying to say. Basinger (2003) went on to explain that "in a sense, we must have a film in which we kill John Wayne, and *Sands of Iwo Jima* is that film. By killing him, we rid ourselves of the war and wartime attitudes..." (p.153). It would seem a big part of what sets this movie apart from it's peers is that the message is remarkably different. In an age of celebration of military might and industrial military complexes a film that shows war as a live by the sword die by the sword mentality, is a rare thing.

Most of the academic sources agree that movies like *Sands of Iwo Jima* are not typical to the period. What then typified this decades movies? The answer to that is a mix of reality with produced images of war. This hearkens back to the concept of uniting audiences. The veterans wanted to see films that reminded them of their struggles in war. Both parties wanted to see films that reminded of their struggle leading to victory. This often lead to films that had mostly believable content sans a few common plot regulars that would appear.

The most important of which was the triumphant hero who was unbeatable. This was the stereotypical John Wayne character that people remember when they think of films of this decade. A John Wayne that is tough, gets the job done and can not be defeated. He was the spitting image of America as a bold, morally correct and capable entity. Basinger (2003) demonstrated this when she says "John Wayne's persona was already established by the time *Sands of Iwo Jima*, and it very clearly was a persona that did not get shot at the moment of triumph. In fact, John Wayne's persona is clearly that of ' John Wayne never dies' "(p. 152). This did not just apply to John Wayne, much like the country with it's records of coming in on the winning side of two world wars Americans in war movies were not only almost always triumphant in combat but seemingly invincible. There are other plot devices as well. So what the

audiences wound up receiving on the screen was a mix of half truth with half reality. This

stretched reality did not discredit the movies as being untrue but it certainly opened up the period

to criticism that the war was not being portrayed as close to how it actually happened as it could

be. A great example of this meshing and distorted reality is Auddie Murphy playing himself in

To Hell and Back. Basinger (2003) told us:

> *To Hell and Back* is an excellent example of the third wave's mixture of reality and
> filmed   reality. As its plot unfolds, presumably telling us the story of real life hero
> Murphy's World War II combat experience (and undeniably doing so), the film   passes
> through other films... The incorporation of events from such films does not invalidate the
> film's accuracy in and of itself. The original films definitely were created out of real
> events. But bringing a true-life hero back from the war, making a movie actor out of him,
> and casting him as himself in his own story is a significant meshing for 'those who fought'
> and 'those who watched the fight on film' as a narrative event (p. 158).

Doherty (1993) has a more light hearted view of this mesh when he proclaimed that " If

Murphy's private war was hell, the wide screen version held all the attractions of a holiday spot "

(p. 279). Doherty (1993) further criticized the feel of post war films for often disregarding "the

sacrificial and mortal consequences of combat..." (p. 274).

It is of some note to mention that during this period of film the Korean war took place.

However this thesis not covering that period of film because it has little to contribute to the

discussion of World War II and film. It would seem that instead of the Korean conflict bringing a

new perspective to World War II films, it was World War II combat films that shaped films

about Korea. Due to it's proximity to World War II and it's military similarities between the wars

Korean films were stamped out in the same press as their World War II brethren. Basinger

(2003) dismissed any notable differences between the two. "In many ways, the Korean combat

film is the World War II combat film set in Korea. These two wars were compatible, unlike

World War I and World War II, and they have a mutual effect on one another" (p.160). As such

there are no great developments or stylistic changes worth noting. However that will change in

the next period of World War II combat film.

Vietnam and War film: The quelling of a genre

Since the actual invention of World War II combat film no other period has lead to such

great changes in the way the public viewed combat on the big screen. The Vietnam war was an

age of discovery and change for America. The discovery was that America is not as invulnerable

as they originally thought. The change was social. America was becoming a different place.

There was a struggle for civil rights and liberties. Engelhardt (1995) told us of the rise of African

Americans and America as a whole to fight for social change:

> By the end of the 1950's, blacks were organizing not just to challenge white supremacy in
> the South but to demand that the United States live up to its "promises" nationally. The
> developing crisis over segregation and the growth of a civil rights movement ready to
> "fight" for freedom brought from the shadows the group that had always fit least
> comfortably the story's boundaries (p.166).

All of those against a back drop of a war that America was losing. A war against a

faceless enemy who represented a people whose lack of technological advancement should have

made them an easy enemy. Engelhardt (1995) conveyed America's sense of disbelief at the

struggle in Vietnam:

> To believe it possible to lose in Vietnam, when any measure of success – from dead
> enemy and captured weapons to cleared roads and pacified villages – pointed towards
> victory, seemed mad. Yet to accept figures pouring in daily from soldiers, advisers, and
> bureaucrats was to defy the logic of one's senses. To make the endlessly unraveling
> situation madder yet, the impending defeat did not seem to be a military one; for those who
> directed the war regularly claimed that not a single significant battle had been lost to the
> Vietnamese enemy (p. 204-205).

America began to question it's superiority and role in the world. This became evident in

the combat films of the period.

During most of the new decade, 1960 and beyond, war became epic. The films were not

concerned with the struggles of a small group of men. They were concerned with large scale

warfare. Basinger (2003) described these years as being when "...a period of large-scale epic combat films emerged. These films depicted in detail the battles of World War II" (p. 170). How did generals, presidents, and dictators alike see the war? We had won two wars against two different enemies that needed to be defeated: the fascists of World War II and the Communists of Korea. Now the question remained why did we have to defeat them? Hollywood thought it best to show the war as more philosophical: not as a man's struggle to survive on the small scale but to zoom back to the theater of war level and become less tactile. What forces were at work during the war? How did leadership and right cause and effect the man in the fox hole? They answered these larger more open ended questions by showing the war not as a single linear objective but as an on going epic. Films spanned years of time following generals from the beginning of the war to the end. Whole battles were shown, not just one platoons battle. Basinger (2003) continued "This finally makes the war a legendary story – suitable to be one of our national stories – fully distanced and mythic – suitable to be one of our national stories of all time" (p. 170). However this grandiose display of justification would not last long, the war in Vietnam had started and from this start Americans were not preforming well.

Vietnam was not only a disaster when we talk about human toll, political embarrassment, or military defeat: it was a force of change on our culture. The utter distrust it generated between government, government institutions and the people was considerable. This became evident in the later films that take place after the ground war in Vietnam in 1965. Things started to go wrong in Vietnam and in war films stories became inverses and reversals. Engelhardt (1995) confirmed this:

> Hollywood experienced many reversals in those years, but none more symbolic than the arrival in 1964 of of a new director – the Italian Sergio Leone – with his first "spaghetti western"... Here before General Westmoreland even raised the possibility that the army might become a "meat grinder," everyone in sight, including the stranger, was ground into visual meat (p.236).

We were no longer the invulnerable good guy. Some films even had casts of unlikable

characters, or criminals as the heroes. Engelhardt (1995) continued:

> In the years that followed, like the western, the war movie crept closer to horror. In a film
> like *The Dirty Dozen* (1967), the Americans, not the Nazis, were the rapists, maniacs, and
> cold-blooded killers, men with names like A. J. Maggot who claimed they would rather
> "trust Hitler" then the U. S. Army (p 236).

America had lost it's positive self-image and the war film became unpopular. Especially

in the format of the crusading do-righter or the epic we must fight evil forces. These movies

quickly became a faux pas as they represented a generation of government that had betrayed the

people. Engelhardt (1995) mentioned this relative faux pas of combat films when he noted that

"Meanwhile the war story was in ruins. All those years in which the enemy could not appear on

screen had taken a strange toll" (p. 240). The time of the Combat film had passed, for now, into

obscurity.

From this point onward, from 1975, until almost 2000, around a quarter of a century of

relative silence on the World War II combat film front. Films came out domestically and

internationally to various levels of success; but until almost the dawn of the 21st century war

films would remain as they were left at the end of the Vietnam era.

1998: War Film Renaissance

In 1998 two films were dropped with such force that they awoke a slumbering genre of

film that had all but faded away from popular culture. These films were *Saving Private Ryan*

(1998) and *The Thin Red Line* (1998). They did not stray from their earlier relatives as far as

structure was concerned. In many ways these two films were just as much World War II combat

films as any who had come before. But at the same time they clearly break from previous films

in many different ways. Since their release World War II combat films have enjoyed a new

popular success and have once again became an important part of film culture.

Saving Private Ryan was the first of the two films released that would change the nature of the World War II combat film. It is partly the old and well known war film, but at the same time it is also new and is there fore a hybrid. Basinger (2003) tried to grasp this mix of old and new:

> The main issue of interest about *Saving Private Ryan* for this book is not its combat accuracy...but rather how and where it fits into the well-established definition of the World War II combat genre. Although modern critics defined it as groundbreaking and anti-generic...it does not, in fact, break with the basic genre definitions. (p. 254)

So Basinger establishes that her peers call the film one that is different and ground breaking but she herself believes that the film is the same structurally as those that proceeded.

This final evolution combined many of the traits of older films with the new style. The result was a film both epic and personal. The film was personal, it was about a small group of Army Rangers who landed on Omaha beach on D-Day and their struggle to recover a lost member of the 101st Airborne. This is part of Basinger's early wartime definition of the World War II combat film containing a group on a mission. However it was also epic. The battle for Omaha was not just that of the group, but of all American soldiers who landed there. The visual narration takes us from person to person, nameless characters whose triumphs and failures we see beyond just the small group. Doherty (1995) explained the relationship between the large and small scales in the movie by saying that, "if the cannon fodder on Omaha Beach presents a blur of bodies and nameless faces, the combat squad personalizes the cost of war..." (p. 307). Everything that is happening happens to explain war, whether big or small.

Once Omaha has been taken we can see the price we paid for it in the red sand and water of the shore line, the floating dead bodies in the water. From their the plot advances containing many of Basinger's definitions of the war film. We have already seen her concept of group. The

group, like in Basinger's definition has a leader and a mission, though not as militarily important

as they are usually. They enact rituals like teaching the new soldier military lingo, and how to

hold his weapon. They face death, and in the end the leader sacrifices himself. Doherty explained

the eventuality of death of of the leaders sacrifice:

> In the tension between the aesthetic of realism and the satisfaction of genre, Tom Hanks
> is the man on the tight rope... the certainty that Hanks will die not in the first but in the last
> reel works against the chaos theory of war. (Of course he will be killed in action: the way
> to tell a serious war film from a juvenile war film is that in a serious war film the most
> likable   character dies.) (p. 308).

While being very much linked to the previous generations of war films it to has stark

differences from it's predecessors. Basinger already has explained how she believes that *Saving*

Private Ryan is similar to previous films. She admits that it has some differences, as well. The

first is the level of combat realism in the film. There is no doubt between those who see the film

as a new old-style film, or a new type of film in the genre that the film captures the realism and

gory violence of actual combat. Basinger (2003) conveyed Spielberg's directing prowess when

she wrote that "Spielberg's mastery of sound, editing, camera movement, visual storytelling,

narrative flow, performance, and color combine to assault a view, to place each and every

member of the audience directly into the combat experience" (p.254). This visual depiction was

the first time the horror of combat had been accurately depicted on screen. Secondly, the men

show an uncharacteristic mix of pre and post Vietnam mentality. They do not question if

America is right, or that the Nazis need to be defeated, or even that Private Ryan deserves to go

home... but they do question their role in this mission and what it is that they do as infantry

(Basinger, 2003, pp.258-261).

This leads lastly to the admittance from all parties that indeed *Saving Private Ryan* is a

hybrid of the old and new formats of war film. Basinger (2003) accepted this and said that "What

Saving Private Ryan accomplishes is the modernization of the genre, in that Spielberg

unexpectedly put the old elements together for a truly new purpose" (p. 261).

The movie served a more social purpose as well. Since the end of Vietnam no combat film had sought to reunite audiences with each other. The Vietnam veteran was not the veteran of World War II, nor Korea. But neither was he the civilian and indeed none of the these groups could relate to each other. *Saving Private Ryan* attempts to accomplish what the post war films of the Korean era did: reunite the audiences into a shared experience. It accomplishes this by addressing all three audiences, and giving them a shared experience. To the veterans of the war itself, it was a tribute. Doherty (1993) explained this aspect of the film:

> In the cluster of caretaker films that arrived punctually on the even of the millennium, Steven Spielberg's Saving Private Ryan (1998) attained instant preeminence. A popular and critical success of epic proportions, it was not just a motion picture event but a cultural milestone, an occasion for another solemn encounter with the meaning of World War II and perhaps the last chance for a face-to-face salute to the surviving warriors (p.301).

To those that had fought in Vietnam and in the Gulf War of 1991 it pardoned them for doing their duty, despite that their was no dishonor in serving their country. The unpopularity of the war in Vietnam and the brevity of the Gulf War little allowed the veterans to feel appreciated. This did not allow the mental, nor the physical wounds to fade. Young (2006) addressed these veterans:

> The camera always faces out against the enemy, or inward at the grievous wounds enemy fire causes. The individual soldier fighting for his life becomes the victim of war; those he kills, since they are so evidently bent on his destruction, the perpetrators of violence. His innocence is ours. Spielberg's achievement went beyond nostalgia. By enabling identification with the individual combat soldier, his World War II epic extended a pardon to soldiers everywhere (p. 316).

Lastly there are those of us who are too young to be veterans, or just unable to serve our country. Since we cannot know the sacrifices were that every soldier makes or has made, we must learn to appreciate our opportunities. The opportunities which were provided for us by those sacrifices soldiers had made. Basinger (2003) acknowledged this part of the films unifying

message:

> This issue – has Private Ryan (the representative American) lived a life worth of those who died in World War II – directly challenged the "me" generation sitting in the audience. (Are *you* doing anything worth while? People *died* for this country.) (p. 262).

In addressing these three audiences, Spielberg unifies Americans once more through the war depicted in this film.

The Thin Red Line was also an important film to the revival of World War II combat films. Where *Saving Private Ryan* can be considered a hybrid, *The Thin Red Line* is more of a fusion. It is a combination of the older styles of movies which came before it, not particular to one decade of film. It, too, has the definitions of the basic combat war film that Basinger describes. The movie focuses on a small group. They have a leader, and objective, they experience the normal military environment of a highly traditionalized life style, they experience the enemy and struggle that results in death. King (2006) also expounded upon this close relationship to the war epic and previous movies:

> This is also a feature of *The Thin Red Line* (1998), a close contemporary of *Saving Private Ryan* and another striking example of the 'artistic' war epic. *The Thin Red Line* offers a bruising spectacle of warfare, sold partly in terms of the 'realism' of its battle sequences. Warfare is rendered harsh and brutal, but the movement of the troops up a deadly hillside under the eyes of machine guns is also given seductive qualities... the film sets out to establish 'artistic' credentials, through a complex, multi-character structure of focus and a series of allusive voice-overs and flashbacks giving access to the interior states manifested often in highly 'literary' form (p. 295).

Though the film adheres to the definition set out during the original wave of combat films from the war time onwards. It also fuses in the traits of the Vietnam era film. The characters of the film distrust their leadership. A story line typical of Vietnam films, they distrust their officers and their government as misleading or evil. Doherty (1995) agreed with this assessment, saying that "in ideology no less than topography, *The Thin Red Line* evokes the Vietnam combat genre, where the worst enemy of the American soldier is his commanding

officer" (p. 314). Combined with the faceless enemy of the Japanese it is the resurrection of the Vietnam film.

Even the pacific theater setting is reminiscent of Vietnam. A film like *Saving Private Ryan* is visually stunning, because Spielberg choose to show the visual brilliance in action, using violence as his main medium, while a film like *The Thin Red Line* uses setting. The foreign jungles of the pacific create a hostile but wonderful landscape for which the narrative of combat stress and the foreign mindset the military has is a perfect match. Doherty (1995) added that "finally, though, the true bloodlines of *The Thin Red Line* are not cinematic but botanical and zoological" (p.314). In creating this environment of fear, alien landscape, and combat stress. *The Thin Red Line* fuses the World War II film comfortably with the Vietnam film, and makes the traits of the Vietnam film acceptable and modern and not longer representative of the faux pas of previous generations combat films.

These two films re-revolutionized the World War II combat film genre. They gave it new birth and allowed it to make a cultural come back. Since their release there have been a plethora of new combat films, many involving World War II. They are proof that in the right hands the films will remain and important part of our film culture and heritage.

Conclusion

To understand the World War II combat film you must allow your self to be taken through each generation of film by the literature. More so than other film subjects, genres are not stand alone features. It has taken the World War II combat films over 60 years to mature into the films we know today. To understand this evolution we must trace the films through the literature from the beginning to their current state. Then, we can understand how each new decade brought a new evolution that added to the next decades traits. The literature reflects this in that it's own

chronological following of the movies seems to be the most logical and important way to understand the films.

Chapter III: Methodology

The primary goal of this thesis is to analyze the changes in World War Two films since the end of the war. To achieve this goal, this thesis relies on the content analyses of films that have been released during the post World War II era. The focus will be on eight films that have been released over the span of half a century, between 1957 and 2007. Reviews of these movies will be distilled onto coding sheets which allow key data to be further analyzed. A spreadsheet will then be employed to analyze trends and plot how and when changes have occurred in this genre.

The films that will be analyzed are the following:

1.   Letters from Iwo Jima (2007)

2.   The Thin Red Line (1998)

3.   Saving Private Ryan (1998)

4.   The Big Red One (1980)

5.   Too Late the Hero (1970)

6.   The Longest Day (1962)

7.   Bitter Victory (1957)

8.   To Hell and Back (1955)

These films all meet the qualifications set forth in the "Limitations" section of Chapter 1. Additionally, they represent films from several different time periods since the end of the war. The various release dates that have been selected will affect aspects of how the story is told. To

achieve this, each film will be subjected to a content analysis. (The form used is available in "Appendix A".)

The analysis will look at several different factors that will help determine if the World War II combat film has changed between the 1950s and today. The content analysis of each film was generated to study aspects of story telling as well as historical facts. Plotting these aspects will illustrate changes that have occurred in the story telling of this conflict over the course of the selected time line.

The first frame is going to focus on the main character or characters. It is going to look at their personalities and see how they are portrayed. Character flaws and the perception of good and evil will factor heavily here. The second frame is going to look at the portrayal of combat. The film maker's depiction of the rigors of war and the different cinematic methods used to recreate violence will be analyzed in this frame. Particularly noted, will be if the scenes and plots in each film match what we know to be historical events and battles? The final frame is going to look at the whole film and assess whether films content has changed in comparison to the others. Themes will be rated based on accuracy and compared to the real struggles that any in a film about war tries to convey.

The Main Character Frame

The purpose of this frame is to assess whether the main cast of the movie accurately represents the range of human characteristics that would have existed in a combat unit during World War II. This is widely considered to be a large factor in the realism of movies. The believability of a main character's personality relies on that personality being correct for the time period. This frame's purpose is to monitor a character's realism on a macro level. The morality

and values of the lead character, as well as the main cast members, will provide a key element in the assessment of these films. The "realism factors" cover several different aspects of the cast's approach and behavior that can be incongruous with a film's otherwise accurate portrayal of events.

The first of these factors is morality. War is a gray event in human history. Wars can be fought for just and unjust reasons alike. However, during the course of a war the soldiers who will fight it are often, inevitably, forced to make hard moral decisions. This frame tracks the presence of those situations in film, and how the characters resolve them. The presences of moral flaws in the characters are detailed in this frame. After all, not every character acts perfectly in all situations, nor are there many people that do not have at least one skeleton in their closet. War tends to bring out these traits and force soldiers to confront their personal issues. Also tracked in this frame, is the varying level of patriotism. This thesis attempts to monitor whether a film displays an appropriate and realistic portrayal of soldiers in regards to love for their country. These films can run the gamut, from every soldier in the film fight fanatically and unquestioningly for their country, to hating their country and not wanting to be in the army at all. This frame also looks at the film's patriotic views as it is reflected by the mindset of the average soldier.

This frame also looks at how ethnic diversity has changed throughout these films. Americans of all backgrounds served during World War II. Although, most served in the same units, there were some deep racial divides. Racial minorities did not fight in the same units as "white" soldiers. However within the same units there would have been some noticeable religious and ethnic diversity. Analysis of how well the film represents diversity and treats the subject of racial and ethnic divides can reflect the time period in which the film was released.

The Combat Attribute Frame

This frame is significantly shorter then the other two but its content is, nevertheless, revelatory, as it tracks the realism of the combat, itself. The combat frame is a key aspect of any war film. The realism of these shots is an especially vital tool in tracing the differences in the selected films. The frame analyzes three aspects of the combat scene. When these parts are combined, the sense of realism added to the combat films can be measured and tacked most accurately.

The first of these three factors is how death or injury of the main cast is handled in each film. Combat is a hazardous and often deadly activity. Graphic portrayals of death and dismemberment can speak volumes about a film's scope and audience. A film maker's view of combat can often be judged by the portrayals of its aftermath.

The second factor rates the look and feel of combat. Visual, audio, and plot presentation of the combat in the movie should not just show explosions and people dying as a proper representation of combat. Those factors are important to realism, but truly depicted combat should make the audience feel the sense of danger that is inherent in a battle.

The last factor the combat frame is tracking is several markers that are going to be used to compare the films together. As to not discriminate against older film's lack of technology and restrictions on content, these markers, which this thesis refers to as combat reality indicators, are four general representations that are not reliant on the technology used in a film. These indicators are: the visual presence of the enemy, visual and audio presence of danger, visual presence of casualties, and the presence of combat stress. These four factors can substantially affect film's realism and do not require a lot of high tech film making technique. Thus, creating a technology

independent judging platform allows for an impartial range of combat realism in each film. By judging films based on these general criteria, this thesis hopes to capture a fair and balanced assessment of the film's efforts to depict realistic combat.

Story Reality Frame

The last frame used by this content analysis is specifically trying to track changes in story plot that pertain to realism. Whether the story is believable, when compared to the real tales from the war, or seems like total fiction is tracked in this frame. A few general realism indicators are included as well. While this frame is a lot more general then the other two, a movie's overall feel can affect its ability to connect with audiences.

The first factor this frame tracks is the inclusion of racially derogatory depictions or language in the film. It is historically accurate to include racist language, because, during the war years, most countries around the world had yet to advance the civil rights of all minorities. These countries often saw their enemy nations as a race as much as a country. While there are many derogatory depictions that would not be historically accurate, an assumed imitation of the behaviors of foreign soldiers or cultures would be appropriate for the time.

Next, this frame deals with costuming. This, like the combat reality indicators, is not reliant on technology to be done well. After the war, a surplus of equipment from the millions of people who served in the conflict was discarded. Many nations seemed to think that they would not be needed anytime in the near future. Hollywood purchased and use as much of it as they could. Realism was maximized by having the actors use the actual equipment the soldiers did. So, this particular aspect deals with how well the costuming department dressed the movies cast.

The next factor is the movies overall plot and theme rating. Too much deviance from the

actual combat threatens to make a movie seem as though it is not a combat film at all. A film that depicts soldiers scratching out an existence amid the rubble of Normandy's once quaint villages while constantly under threat of an enemy attack has a very different feel than if those soldiers were depicted as constantly on leave and partying at the bar with the local female population. These general plot lines are central to a realistic movie. By rating these general thematic elements, we will show how accurately the movie was written.

The last set of factors deal with the movies motives of the enemies. Conceptually, films can present the enemy's point of view in several different ways. Sometimes, the caricatures of villains undermine the realism of the film if the villain's point of view is portrayed at all. Often, a movie ignores what the soldiers though about their foes and how that played into their treatment of the enemy. Over all, this last aspect of the third frame attempts to track how the film handles the enemy and the opinions about them.

The three frames that make up this content analysis all attempt to track and judge realism in the combat films. By tracking the scores over the course of the release dates of these movies, this thesis is will be able to discover if there has been any change in the World War II combat film's realism. The different aspects covered in these frames of are all main contributors to a film's realism. Monitoring their progression is central to the research goal of this thesis.

Chapter IV: Research Results

This chapter is going to present the findings of the research detailed in Chapter 3. The content analysis has been performed in accordance with the limitations in Chapter 1 and the methodology described in Chapter 3. Each movie was rated by DVD chapter, on a number of reality markers, and outlined by the frames which where presented in Chapter 3. The coding sheet, and explanation of that sheet, can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B. These findings have been coded into a spreadsheet and the resulting findings and statistics are presented here.

The results of each movie are going to be presented here, in chronological order, beginning with *To Hell and Back* (1955) and ending with the final movie *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2007). The review of each movie is going to cover a basic synopsis of the film, including the year of release, plot, the producing company and producer, the director, and screenwriter(s). The review will then discuss the findings for the film. Finally, each film will have some general commentary about it. This will be commentary about specific characters, events, scenes and other notable features of the film that warrant specific discussion about their relation to the film's overall sense of realism.

Lastly the chapter will conclude by comparing the results of the content analysis from all the movies. It will discuss the trends that emerge from the earliest of the films to the latest films. It will discuss what values have changed to make movies more realistic, less realistic, if the values of realism have changed at all. This section of the chapter will discuss those observations.

Before this thesis continues and delves into what it uncovered while watching the films, I should first lay out how a standard movie rates. This hypothetical rating represents the collective average of movies during the time period which this thesis covers. These numbers will be broken

down by the frames and questions laid out in Chapter 3 and Appendix A.

The first frame is the character(s) attribute frame. This covers the main character's side and how the film portrays the main character and other characters friendly to him. As far as the questions about character morality are concerned, there is no definite number to give a movie and say that is exactly how many times a character should face a moral dilemma or show a moral flaw. That is unique to each story and the decisions of the writers, directors and other creative inputs. However, the standard by which the movies were judged in this thesis is that in every movie there should be at least one moral incident. Whether that is a dilemma or the display of a moral flaw is up to the story.

The next character trait standard is patriotic values. This falls in line with morality. A movie should display an appropriate level of patriotic sentiment. However, showing too much (above an average rating of a three for the movie) starts to lean towards the propagandistic. Conversely, a rating that strays too far below a three starts to border on the seditious. While individuals might at times show both qualities, constant repetition of these extreme values do not represent the common soldier's point of view.

Lastly this frame covers group diversity. This is the most straight forward standard. The acceptable range of values is one to a two. Some diversity can and should be present, but this would be ethnic diversity. As is pointed out in the explanation of this coding sheet, World War II combat units were not mixed racially. So a unit could have ethnic diversity, but not racial, which limits the value of this attribute.

The next frame is about reality in the depiction of the combat scenes. The three questions can be summed up by their numerical values. The first value is regarding how accurate the combat looks on film. The average rating on this should be at least a three or higher. Combat should appear hazardous. As you go above a three, the combat is more realistic. Below a three

indicates poorly depicted combat or a non-combat scene. The last value is the presence of four factors of realism. These factors will appear in the presentation of combat in the film. At least three of the four should be present in every combat scene. The combat frame is short, but deals only with very specific parts of the movie.

The last frame deals with reality in the story. The first set of questions deal with racial content. World War II, and the decades that immediately followed, were a time of racial turbulence in America and around the world. Many minority communities struggled for equal civil rights. Films produced during these periods still sometimes reflected this racism. The standard for this category is a one for the depiction of stereotypical portrayals of a race or gender. However, the racial language category has a higher tolerance, situated around a two because some racially-charged language would have been heard among the ranks of any nation in the war. It was part of the culture from which they came.

The next question deals with the accuracy of the costumes. The default value here is again three. As you go above a three, the more attention to detail. Both sides are costumed equally as well. As you go below a three, there is poor attention to detail or even disregard for the correct appearance of soldiers of a given nation during World War II.

Following the cast costuming question is another large question. This one deals with the overall themes in the movie. Are they appropriate to a war and combat setting? The default value is once again a three. Numbers above that show a strong plot that concerns itself with combat-centered themes that are accurate to the time period and the specific battle(s). Numbers below that indicate themes that don't belong in a combat setting.

The last questions of the final frame are about the enemies' point of view. It's not essential that the enemies' point of view is presented. But, when it is, is it correct? So the questions ask if the point of view is presented. If it is, then it's rated, with a three being the

standard value. Numbers above this indicate a very historically accurate point of view, while numbers below this represent either inaccurate points of view, or views that are extreme and represent persistently presented propaganda from the other side(s) in the movie. This set of standards is how this thesis rates the movies it reviewed. It is the difference in these numbers that will guide the discussion of each film and the rest of this chapter.

To Hell and Back

To Hell and Back was released in August of 1955. It is the movie adaptation of Audie Murphy's autobiography and he plays himself in the lead role. The movie covers the pre-war events leading up to his enlistment in the military. The movie goes on to cover his combat experiences from North Africa, Italy, France and Belgium. The movie concludes with the ceremony in which he was presented the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Battle of the Bulge. The screenplay was written by Gil Doud. It was produced by Arron Rosenburg and directed by Jesse Hibbs. The film was released by Universal Studios.

In the analysis of this film a few of the numbers match up to the standards. Most fell outside of the standard negatively. However, the film was on-mark when it shows instances of moral dilemmas. It should be noted that none of these instances came during combat, but in Audie's personal life before the war. The movie does not present the enemies point of view, but does not include any story elements or dialogue that portray the enemies point of view incorrectly, which gives it a point of view rating of a 3, which is the standard. Other places where the movie was on the mark was in it's combat scenes. The chapters containing combat action totalled 7, which, out of a 17 chapter movie, make up 47% of the movie. This is a mere three percent lower then the standard. This is close enough to the mark to be considered acceptable. The accompanying realism indicators matched up correctly. The indicators of visual

presence of the enemy, visual and audio presence of danger, and visual presence of causalities numbered 47%, 53%, and 47% respectively. The fourth indicator will be addressed later because it did not fall near the average mark. The movie was also on track in its rating for stereotypical depiction of the enemy. It had a rating of 1, which is the standard. The film never depicted the enemy in a stereotypical way. The movie did contain a lot of numbers that are considered off the standard negatively.

The first set of numbers to be off this mark in a negative way is the plot element of the moral flaw. While it was stated in the description of the rating standards that moral dilemmas and flaws are not to be rated numerically, only by their presence, it was observed that not even once did any character display a moral flaw. All the characters acted morally at all times. This is unrealistic to the often moral ambiguity that is forced upon a soldier during war. Accompanying this value is moral resolution to the moral dilemmas discussed above. The rating for the resolution of these dilemmas was an average of a 4 and this is one whole point above the standard. This indicates that the characters always resolved their problems in the moral or right way.

Another value that was off the standard negatively levels were the film's use of derogatory language. There was never once a mention of any word that could be considered derogatory towards the enemy. This is highly unlikely, as it was common among soldiers during the period to refer to the enemy in a negative manner. The diversity rating for the group was also off in this film. The film represents a high ethnic diversity in the platoon. There seemed to be a perfect mix of Native American, Hispanic, and white ethnicities. While all of the ethnicities portrayed served in the army during the war, it is again highly unlikely that they served together in a perfectly mixed platoon. This seemed to be a norm of films during the war and immediately after. Casts of characters represented a miniature America that was meant to be more of a

collection of American diversity than actually existed.

The next group of values began with the film's more thematic elements. The rating for the film's patriotic display of values was a 3.65, over half a point higher then average. Mr. Houston, who is a character from Audie's childhood, makes several speeches about how he wishes he had stayed in the army and that being in the army was the best possible career he could have had. The display of values like this in scenes through out the film played out more like a recruiting video then a autobiographical film. The costuming of the cast also rated low. The average rating for the film for the cast"s costumes was a 2.47. This is over half a point lower then the 3 average. On the whole, the costuming was okay. The movie was not long removed from the war, so the quality of the costuming was not poor. There were a few scenes when poor attention to even general details lowered the score over the course of the coding of this movie. In the scene where Audie enlists in the military, every background extra is dressed almost exactly the same. Later on in the movie, Audie has been fighting in Italy and while, on combat patrol for several days, he is costumed with dirt on his face and skin and on his jacket. However, his pants are perfectly clean and are even creased. He is also wearing post-war style combat boots. These are just a few examples of costuming that lowered the film's sense of realism.

The last group of values that were off negatively and perhaps the most important core of a combat film was its combat theme ratings. The first of these ratings was the overall themes of the movie. This number represents the appropriateness of the themes to a combat film. *To Hell and Back* scored a 2.71 and, while not horrendously lower then the 3 average, it had scenes that lowered the score enough to group this statistic in with the negative scores. The film included an awfully large amount of scenes with the presence of women and even a pseudo-love story. These themes go against the definition of a traditional combat film as a lack of a female presence in the combat setting is more appropriate. In another scene there is a staged fight in a bar that comes off

as too dramatic and theatrical. Finally, the combat realism ratings for the movie also scored low.

The reality rating for the whole film was a meager 1.59 and the rating for scenes that only

contained combat did not do much better at a 2.29. These are both well below the standard. Near

the end of the film, Murphy jumps atop a Sherman tank which is ablaze and repels a whole

Wehrmacht battalion attack with just the machine gun on top of the burning tank. Earlier in the

film, Murphy captures a German machine gun and runs nest to nest killing whole machine gun

crews with short bursts of the gun. All in all the combat depictions in this film were very poor.

The film did not have high ratings for realism. This was surprising, as Murphy served

during the war and one would expect more attention to detail in the story since these were his

experiences. The coder noted that the film was entertaining however it was not found to be a

realistic portrayal of World War II combat.

Bitter Victory

Bitter Victory was released in March, 1958 by Columbia Pictures and Transcontinental

Films. Bitter Victory is the tale of a love triangle between two British officers and a woman they

both know. The men are consequently transferred into the commando service and assigned to co-

lead an important raid into the Nazi Africa Corp's headquarters. A fierce rivalry develops

between the two during the course of the mission and the long hard journey back to friendly

lines. This leads both officers to make decisions that affect both their men and the woman they

both love. The film was produced by Paul Graetez, directed by Nicholas Ray, and co-written by

R. Hardy, N. Ray and G Lambert.

This film was on standard for its ratings in almost all the categories. The cast was

costumed at a rating of 3, which is exactly average. They displayed patriotic values of a 3.08,

again ever so slightly above average. The film only displays one point of view and its rating for

the depiction of the enemies' point of view is a 3. There are no depictions of the enemy that portray them in a derogatory manner, so that gives the film a rating of a 1 in that category, which is also average. The rating for the movies themes are appropriate to a combat setting. They scored a 3.08 which was around average. The other statistics for this movie fell into the other categories.

The only groups of stats which fell short in this way are almost most all related to the movie's morality ratings. The movie had an average moral resolution rating of a 1.8, which is a whole 1.2 lower then the standard rating of 3. The film also had 67% of its chapters contain instances of moral flaws, and 42% of its chapters contained moral dilemmas. While these numbers are clearly off, their purpose is easily explainable. The two main characters, as explained in the synopsis, are mutually in love with the same woman. She had dated Captain Leith, the lead main character, but was now married to Major Brand, the other main character. When Brand starts to suspect that the two had been romantically involved, he starts to become insecure and jealous of the captain. He unleashes this jealously on the captain throughout the mission by making decisions that put the captain's life in jeopardy in order to let the war do the dirty work of eliminating his romantic rival. This kind of theme certainly makes for a good story, but faired poorly for the movies morality ratings and kept the movies combat themes from being above average. Also, the combat chapter rating is a bit low. It came in at only a 2.5 in a category in which 3 is the standard. It should be noted that this is because there were only 2 combat chapters in the whole movie to influence this score. The only other rating which was low was the language rating which was only a 1.08. The movie did contain one outburst of derogatory language. The remaining statistics are considered outliers in the positive category.

The combat statistics for this movie would score negatively because they are considered below the average though, in this case, they are actually considered a positive for this movie. The

fact that this movies main subject is a "Dessert Rat" commando raid allows for some of the stats to be lower then would normally be expected. The film only contained 2 chapters of combat which also gave the movie a total rating of combat reality of a 1.25. This is actually very accurate. British commando raids were often very quick and deadly, so extended combat scenes would actually bring down the reality of the movie. The numbers for presence of danger and enemy matched, being present in the two chapters that contained actual combat. The number of scenes that contained the presence of causalities was higher than average at 58% of the chapters. This is explainable by the story, in which the commando troop suffers unexplained off-camera casualties due to a number of unseen enemies. These included the dessert itself, Nazi patrols and local unfriendly Arab tribesmen. Another above average positive value was the movie's diversity. This rated a 1.67, while not being overly diverse the group did contain troop members from several different nations with in the British Empire and their guide was an Arab. This diversity, while higher then average, is accurate for the British policy of including soldiers from their many territories and member nations.

The movie is, all and all, rated as average. Though the movie's themes are accurate for the type of combat it is depicting, the inclusion of the love triangle storyline provides a very interesting plot, however it interferes with the combat film aspect of the movie. With that in mind, the only other glitch was that the short combat scenes could have been done a little bit more realistically. Very little detail was paid to the weapons being carried by the Germans and in many instances the Germans are carrying Lee-Enfields and US M1A1 Thompsons which are the same exact weapons being carried by the British characters. This movie still remained a good film and only had a few issues that would have kept it from being a great film.

The Longest Day

The Longest Day was released in October of 1962 by Twentieth Century Fox Studios. The film follows a wide cast of characters, from Generals and other high officers, down to several enlisted men on their collective journeys leading up to the D-Day invasion. The movie follows them from around a week before the invasion through the movie's namesake, the longest day, the D-Day invasion. It shows combat on all fronts and on both sides. This includes the US infantry that landed on Omaha,Utah, and Point Du Hoc, to British soldiers who landed on Sword, Juno, and Gold beaches. The movie also depicts the German defenders, showing several units who had to defend the beaches during the invasion. This movie was the longest this thesis reviewed and generated some interesting statistics.

There are many values rated for this film that fall in line with the standards set for the average realistic movie. Among those are the ratings for moral resolution in the movie. For the chapters that included moral dilemmas, the average rating was a 3.33 which is a bit above the norm but not enough to make it stand out. Similarly, the patriotic values in this movie is on par with the standard rating a 3.05. The diversity of this film was right on mark too, coming in at a 1 one the nose. The film also made no derogatory depictions of the enemy which gave it a rating of 1 in that category as well. They also present the enemies point of view in an average nature, the movie scored a 3.03 for that. There were values that scored negatively for the movie as well.

The overall number of moral situations that occurred in the movie was a bit low. There were only 3 moral dilemmas in the whole film, accounting for only 8% of the movie's chapters. While this is low, it was not as bad as the moral flaws for which there were none in the entire

movie. The characters always displayed perfect moral sensibility even in the face of the danger of combat. Another mark that fell short was the derogatory language in the movie. This rated only a 1, meaning that there was no discernible use of derogatory language towards the enemy.

The last set of numbers that were off the mark negatively was the combat ratings for the movie. There were only 14 chapters of a 40 chapter movie, or 35%, that contained combat action. This is pretty low for a movie that covers the days leading up to, and the day of, D-Day. The matching combat reality markers stayed low as well. The overall combat rating for the movie was a 1.88. This was because a lot of the film depicted the time leading up to D-Day. These were dialogue scenes and not combat action scenes. The rating for the scenes that just contained combat action was indeed higher at a 3.43 and this is only 0.57 lower then the standard and the highest mark thus far though it is still below the average. The numbers of chapters with the presence of the enemy was 30%, the number of chapters with containing danger at 45% and finally the number of chapters with the presence of casualties was 33%. *The Longest Day* is the first film reviewed by this thesis to contain any depictions of combat psychology though, it only happened once, giving the film a 3% rating for that category. It is still important to note that even with only one chapter present, there still is combat psychology contained in the movie. The remaining values all deviated from the standard, but positively.

Though the film is a black and white picture, the costuming was well done. The visual presentation of the uniforms and of the makeup of the cast was good enough to give the film a rating of a 3.95, almost a whole point above average. Also above average was the theme rating for the whole movie. This weighed in at a 3.68, which is over half a point higher then average. The themes in the movie were well done. They all pertained to D-Day and military matters that affected the D-Day campaign. While not all of them were specific to combat, they were all military in nature. Unlike the two previous films, which contained several non military

themes. *The Longest Day* stuck to its military nature. Another interesting statistic about this film

is that it is the only movie reviewed so far that presents the enemies' point of view and not just an

explanation or a stated "this is what they believe", but both sides of the battle were represented

by main characters that represented the three major nations engaged in the battle. These few

stats were the only ones that were marked as above average statistics.

The film was really a delight. The costuming and combat scenes were very well done.

Despite the fact that it was the longest movie reviewed, the actual coding flew by as the cast and

story really drew you in to the anticipation and grandness of Operation Overlord.

Too Late The Hero

Too Late the Hero was released in May 1970 by ABC Pictures. The movie is about a

lieutenant who is assigned from American Pacific headquarters to a British combat unit to be an

interpreter on a dangerous commando raid. The raid quickly goes wrong and becomes a struggle

for the squad to make it back to base after haphazardly completing their mission. The movie was

directed, produced, and primarily written by Robert Aldrich. He was assisted in writing by Lukas

Heller.

This film was above all average. Almost all of the movie's generated statistics fell in line

with the averages. The film contained an average number of moral dilemmas at 4 for the movie,

or 25% of the 16 chapter movie. The resolution to these dilemmas was average at a 3.25

resolution rating. There was not any diversity in the film either. The rating of a 1 is average. The

costuming for this film was rated a 3.06. At no point was the costuming ever bad or inaccurate,

but neither was it above average or good. The film also drew average for its point-of-view

ratings. It only contained one point of view and the depiction of the enemies' point of view was standard at a 3. There was a single depiction of the enemy in a way the coder felt derogatory, however it was only one incident and it was limited, so the movie did not persistently contain these types of depiction to warrant a rating of below standard. The resulting rating for derogatory depictions of the enemy as a 1.06.

The combat ratings for this movie were also on par with the standards. The number of combat scenes for this movie was exactly half, 8 of the 16 chapters. The combat danger indicators similarly matched at 56% for presence of enemy, 50% for combat danger, and 56% for presence of casualties. While most of the movie was average, the remaining combat stats and a few others ranked negatively.

The remaining combat statistic is the combat reality rating, which was low for the movie at a 1.81. It was also low for just the scenes that contained combat at a 2.5. This is the second movie to contain depictions of combat psychology, but like its predecessor *Too Late the Hero* only contained one scene with combat stress in it. While this is an improvement over the first two films, it's still below matching the other combat reality indicators.

The main set of negative statistics comes from the themes of the movie that reflect the decade's tendency to have the main character(s) be the anti-hero. The movie only rated a 2.25 for display of patriotic values and contained 6 instances of moral flaws, or 38% of the movie. The patriotic values and the moral flaws resulted from the characters not wanting to fight for their country, despite being in the military. So much so that they turn against their fellow soldiers in order to save themselves. The characters are very selfish, even Lt. Lawson the main character. They all have their own reasons for being in the military, but they all seem as though they just want the perks that come with being in the military and none of the duty or responsibility. The movie also contained an anachronistic outburst of social critique, as the British captain addresses

the personal quality of the men as a bunch of "conscientious long haired objectors" a reference

well out of place for World War II and more appropriate to when the film was being made,

during the height of Vietnam. Elsewhere the movie scored a 1.31 for derogatory language. This

is a departure from previous films that had little in the way of foul language of any type, let alone

racially derogatory language. These few negative ratings really affected the whole of the movie.

The movie has a captivating story. Despite its interesting story, its poorly motivated and

self-centered cast of characters makes you question how anyone, let alone a whole squad of poor

quality soldiers, ever wound up in the military in the first place. The resulting fiasco, and the

failure of their mission because of their flaws, leaves the movie lacking reality to military life

and is more in line with a film about prison.

The Big Red One

The Big Red One was released in July 1984 by United Artists. It is the tale of a grizzled

veteran Sargent, played by Lee Marvin, who survived World War I only to return to war in

World War II. He is now leading a new squad of fresh, out of basic, privates. He leads them

through the 1st Infantry Division's tour of battle in World War II, fighting in Northern Africa,

Sicily and Italy, France and finally Belgium and into Germany. The movie attempts to bring out

the oddities of war and how war is the ultimate expression of human madness.

There were many numbers in this movies' coding that hit the standard marks. The first of

these is that there were just enough moral flaws to be present and realistic, yet not enough to

make characters feel too flawed. These flaws were present in 14% of the movies chapters. The

patriotic values displayed in this film were right in line with the 3 average. The diversity among

the characters was also around the standard of a 1, at a 1.03. The movie contained no derogatory

depictions except one which rated the film's derogatory depictions at a 1.03. Along with these depictions, this film is one of the few films to show the enemies' point of view. One of the characters followed by the movie is a Nazi soldier. During one of his conversations with a wealthy German noble, she explains why she sided with the Nazis during the war. This was the only movie reviewed that attempts to explain why the enemy fought. The depiction in that scene is accurate though in other scenes the German characters behaviors and actions are not as accurate as they could be, but are only marginally off from the standard at a 2.95, .05 lower then the standard rating of a 3. The film's costuming was done well, though not above standard. At no point did the reviewer feel that the production crews costumed the cast improperly. So, the film had a costuming rating of a 3.16. The only other statistic to meet the standard was the percentage of chapters that contained the presence of the enemy. This ranked an average 51%. All the other statistics were positively or negatively away from the standards.

The first statistic that was negatively away from the standards was the film's moral dilemmas. For a film that claimed to be showing the madness of war, the characters are only faced with 2 moral dilemmas. This only accounts for 5% of the movie. Attached to this statistic is the 4 rating for those resolutions and this is a point higher then average. This indicates that the characters resolved the dilemmas in a above average moral manner. The language used in this film was a bit out of line with the average. Scoring a 1.16, this was a little bit lower then average. There was a definite presence of language and even derogatory language, but not enough to be with in the standard. The themes for this movie scored a bit low as well, but not by much with a mean score of a 2.84. This is not horribly down from the 3 average, but it was enough to score this as below average. The film's attempt to capture the insanity of war was fairly accurate, though its insistence on also capturing the oddities of war, when combined with the theme of insanity often made scenes that did not connect well. Matching the low scores for themes, the

combat reality rating was a 1.97, down a half a point from the average of 2.5. Off too was the rating for reality of just the combat scenes which ranked only a 2.59. The combat stress indicators were also not up to average making up only 11% of the movies' chapters. There were many combat scenes through out the movie. They just did not have the look and feel of combat that was dangerous. The other few stats were positively away from the averages.

The first of these three statistics is the overall number of combat chapters in the movie. The movie was composed of 59% or an incredible 22 chapters of combat. This is quite a lot. Once the squad landed, the movie followed their combat actions almost non-stop until they left that front. Matching this outstanding statistic was the presence of combat danger and of casualties, which mirrored the high rate of combat in the movie. The presence of combat danger was contained in 65% of the film. Chapters with combat causalities was at 57%. These stats mirrored the dangerous and highly fatal consequences of combat and war.

The Big Red One was an interesting film. This was the first film chronologically reviewed in this thesis that really tries to tackle combat psychology and how the experience of the combat infantryman can be a far cry different then what we on the home front are told, though the honesty of Sam Fuller's work did not translate as well to the movies as many of his contemporaries would have liked. Sam Fuller the writer and director of the film was a World War II veteran himself. As was the lead role played by Lee Marvin. Despite this the film's attempts at depicting insanity and oddity, often times these themes played out as inaccurate to the period.

In a scene a German male orderly attempts to grope and seduce Lee Marvin's character. While it is totally plausible that there were service men and women in the German army who were gay, their sexual orientation would have been kept to themselves. As by the American inclusion in the North African campaign in which the scene takes place, the Nazi party had

dissolved its tolerance of homosexuality and that soldier would have discharged and arrested for

such behavior. So, to have the character prancing around the hospital with an unbuttoned shirt

and a mural scribbled on his chest of a Grecco-Roman nude male figure, would have not

generally been tolerated in the German army.

There were many positive scenes as well, such as the struggles from hill to hill in Italy,

the heart wrenching feeling of the American soldiers coming across "Volkssturm" or people's

armies, which were composed of the weak, old and sick and the abandoned concentration camps

littered with bodies and handfuls of survivors.

Sam Fuller's vision for translating the experience of war was noble. However, his movie

was meant to be a tribute to the experiences of a combat soldier. The movie lacked the

fundamental ability to connect its two audiences or those who have been in combat and those

who have not.

The Thin Red Line

The Thin Red Line was released in December 1998, by Fox 2000 Studios. It is the tale of

a company of men who fight with the army during the battle for Guadalcanal. It is also the tale of

an enlisted man's struggle to find sanity, meaning, and peace during war. Private Tella is an

unusual soldier, he fights for his country, but is looking to escape the war because he finds war to

be a crime against nature. He, like the rest of his company, gets trapped in the most brutal

fighting on Guadalcanal and is forced to face the savagery of warfare while coming to terms with

death as another part of nature. The film was directed and written by Terrence Malik and

produced by R. M. Geisler, J. Roberdau, and Grant Hill.

Among the ratings for the film, the ones that rated average are as follows. Despite the

movies' strong philosophical message about war and peace and the nature of humanity, the movie rated average in the morality category. There were 4 flaws which apprised 13% of the movie. There were also 6 moral dilemmas, which made up 20% of the movie. The average moral resolution to those dilemmas was a 3.17 just above average. The men of the cast are slightly more diverse then normal, but given that the film follows a whole company of soldiers a 1.77 rating is not that far above what is expected. These men show appropriate patriotic values, scoring a 3 exactly. The film only ever showed the battle from the point of view of the American army and did nothing to enhance or degrade the enemies' points of view. The film had a standard rating of a 3 for this category. The film also made no derogatory depictions of any enemies, which too is standard. The only set of ratings that fell into the negative category is the film's combat ratings.

These ratings may not be average, or better then average, but in most cases as we will see they are not far off. The number of combat chapters in this film was 12, which is 40% of the movie. That score is below the 50% standard but by only another 10%, or 3 chapters. The only percentage of combat indicators that matched the percentage of combat was the chapters that contained the combat danger reality indicator. This too numbered 40% of the chapters. The others came in a little less. The chapters with visual presence of casualties was a bit lower at 33%. The visual presence of the enemy was still even lower at 27%. Finally the combat realism indicator that came in lowest was the combat psychology indicator which accounted for 23% of the chapters. Though this is almost a quarter of the movie and 58% of the combat scenes is still a significant amount compared to many of its predecessor movies in this thesis. The movie had an overall combat reality rating of a 2.2, which is just short of the average. Its realism rating for scenes containing only combat was a 3.33. This was still below average but not an awful score. The movie did however have two values that were on the positive side of the ratings.

The film's costuming scored very high. It had an aggregate value of 4.03, over a whole point above average, and indeed the cast was costumed really well. The battle fatigue presence was not just in their faces, or makeup, but in how dirty and worn their clothing and equipment got as the film progressed. The accuracy of the equipment was very high as well. The second positive score was the film's overall theme rating. This came in at a 3.63 over half a point above average. This is because of the outstanding dialogue about the nature of war and of human nature and how it goes against so many of our natural instincts to engage in the behaviors war requires.

The Thin Red Line was an amazing look at the nature of warfare and how one man's crusade to end his exposure to that savagery ultimately forces him to embrace and it consumes him and his very life. The movie has very realistic visual elements and the cast was well costumed, the only short fall was the lack of combat scenes which gave way to an epic dialogue about how one deals with the state of conflict.

Saving Private Ryan

Saving Private Ryan was released in July 1998 by Dreamworks Pictures and Amblin Entertainment. This film is the story of a Ranger team who landed on D-Day, survived the horrors of Omaha beach and were reassigned the task of retrieving a lost American paratrooper. This paratrooper's brothers were killed in action and the army wants to send him home. Now, in the great undertaking of D-Day, a small squad of elite US soldiers battle their way across no man's land to save one soldier. Loosely based on an actual rescue mission that took place during the opening of the Overlord campaign, it featured many big name actors and soon to be big name actors, both in main character roles and in cameo support roles. *Saving Private Ryan* was the first war film to receive a lot of Oscar nominations as well as wining a slew of other awards for its

technical and story aspects. The film was directed and produced by Steven Spielberg. It was written by Robert Rodat.

The statistics for this film were well above average with many of the stats falling in line with the standard the rest were above. As for the statistics that meet the standards for the movie they were the following. The moral ratings for this film are all spot on standard. There were 4 displays of moral flaws in the whole movie, which comprised 21 % of the movie. There were 5 moral dilemmas as well, comprising 26% of the movies chapters. The resolution of those dilemmas was a standard 3.2. The film presents a good average resolution for the morality of war. They present moral standards that are expected for a war film.

The patriotic values for the movie are also up to the standard. The rating for the film was a 3.11, which is only .11 above the standard. Along with the characters' patriotic sense, the movie did not present the enemies point of view, nor did it present the enemies' point of view out of context resulting in a rating of 3 for the movie. Likewise, there was no derogatory depiction of the enemy, which gave the film a score of a 1 for that category. The film only presented one negatively scoring statistic.

The only statistic that rated negatively was the movies derogatory language. For which there was none. The film did contain offensive language, however none of it was used in a derogatory manner. All the other statistics for this movie were well positive of the standards.

The costuming for this movie was fantastic. This movie captures the look of the fighting soldier in Normandy. From the special equipment they carried onto the beaches to the types of uniforms and gear they would have worn day to day, the film does a marvelous job of representing what real combat soldiers in WWII looked like. The soldiers carried things in this movie that other movies tend to forget about, including shovels, blankets, food bags and other essential equipment that a soldier needs just as much as a gun and ammunition if he wants to

fight the enemy. In *Saving Private Ryan* they carry it. The costuming team also did a great job costuming the civilians and the Germans. The look of the uniforms for the Germans was highly accurate to the period and to the D-Day campaign. The film did a good job with other aspects too.

The film had a high combat theme rating, rating a 4.16, over a point higher then the standard. The film did an excellent job capturing the concerns of the every day soldier: the griping, the uncomfortable lifestyle that living on the field of battle provides. The movie also touches on much of how the soldiers dealt with the stress of combat. How they justified what it is that they did and how that affected who they were before the war and what they wanted to be after the war.

The films combat depiction scores were also positive. The film presented 11 chapters of combat, just over half the movie at 58%. What is important is that all four combat realism indicators were present in all 58% of the combat scenes. There was a slight increase in casualty depictions as a few scenes show American wounded, so that number came in slightly higher at 68%. This indicates that Spielberg made a conscious effort in every combat scene to include as much realism into the combat as possible. The film on the whole represented combat very well. Its overall average rating for combat reality is a 2.95 with a 4.36 for the chapters with only combat in them. The film made a very conscious effort again as a combat film to include a lot of combat.

Spielberg's vision of D-Day and of the story of the soldiers that embark on this mission was a stunningly real break from many movies that came before it. While it certainly did not change the World War II combat film, it set a new standard for how they would be made. The level of details and realism would forever become a gold standard for World War II films and combat films in general. Companies who approach the subject of war must now look to films

like this to guide their own efforts. This is in part because the mission of the movie was about presenting the most realistic depiction of combat not for combat, or violence's sake, but because Spielberg wanted to honor the memories of combat veterans. By making a very realistic film non-combatants could for once share in the brutality of war to understand what their peers went through.

No movie is perfect, though.. Even a movie that scored as highly as this one had inaccuracies and scenes that were filmed for dramatic effect instead of realism. For instance, the final set of combat sequences is fought against elements of the German army identified as the 2nd SS "Das Reich". However, this combat happens only a few days after the D-Day landing. That division of soldiers did not join the battle until the very end of June and almost into July. So, it would have been highly unlikely that they fought so early against Captain Miller's Rangers. With those flaws acknowledged, because no film will ever be perfect, Spielberg's vision of World War II combat film as a chance to realistically depict combat in order to honor the experiences of those soldiers forever changed the expectations of the public towards how a combat film is made.

Letters From Iwo Jima

Letters From Iwo Jima was released in January of 2007 by Amblin Entertainment, Warner Brothers and Dreamworks Studios. This movie is the story of the siege of Iwo Jima as told by several Japanese soldiers of varying ranks who put up the long and grueling defense of the caves, pillboxes, and emplacements that took the U.S. months to fully clear out. The movie attempts to reconstruct the mindset of the average Japanese soldier who took part in the defense of the island and attempts to bridge those men together with their modern civilian counter part.

The film was meant to be a starting point for the modern generations of Japan to discuss the sacrifices made by the Imperial Japanese army and allow the culture to embrace those soldiers as heroes despite their ultimate loss and at times even shameful conduct.

Letters hit the standard mark in many categories. The morality of the movie was up to standards. There were 2 instances of moral flaws, which meets the standards requirement. The resolution for the moral dilemmas in the movie was a 3.33. This too is around average, though slightly above. The characters in the movie from time to time go above the standard for patriotic displays. There are instances where the character Siago questions the values of his country and of the army. However, in the end the patriotic values for the movie even out. The movie earned an overall rating of a 3.09. As the movie depicts a late war battle in the pacific, the Japanese only used mainland Japanese to recruit their formations, so there would have been no ethnic or racial diversity, reflected in the coding by a score of a 1 for the movie. The movie, like most of the others, only contained one point of view and that is of the main character's side. The movie showed the enemies point of view in an average and fair way making the rating a 3. The movie makes no derogatory depictions of the enemy so it has a 1 for that rating. The only other statistic that fell with in standards was the number of chapters with the presence of danger reality indicators in it. The number of those chapters was 17, or 52% of the movie. This is in line with the standard and very realistic to the battle since the American forces kept a constant bombardment of the island during the offensive. This is the end of the statistics that fall with in normal limits for the movie. The next group fell outside the standards negatively.

The first of the statistics that fell out of standard negatively was the movie's moral dilemmas. There were 3 in the film and while their presence was good, there could have been a few more. This is especially true since the film wanted to show the moral ambiguity in the way the Japanese army conducted itself. Though the moral dilemmas that were present were grave

and disturbing in the face of the situation the defenders of Iwo were in, there was almost no derogatory language in the movie. There was some, but not enough to raise the rating for that category above a 1.06.

Also, the combat ratings for the movie fell slightly off on the negative side for the movie. The number of combat scenes for the movie was a bit low at only 14, or 42% of the movie. Though this is not terribly off, only 8%, the combat reality rating for the whole movie was a bit low at a 1.91 but the rating for the combat scenes that just contained combat as much closer to standard at a 3.14. As for the combat reality indicators, they were not far off mark either. The number of chapters that contained their presence was at 39%, chapters with causalities was at 36% and finally chapters with combat psychology was at 30%. These combat statistics fell a bit short and were negative values for the movie, but there were some really high scoring positives for the movie as well.

The first of the really high scoring positive statistics was the costuming. As far as movies go that depict the Imperial Japanese Army, this was the closest to perfect that can be seen. The uniforms were to a detail almost perfect. The weapons and equipment carried by the soldiers were very well done as well. The movie wound up scoring a 5 for costuming, which is 2 points above average and as highly rated as a movie can be using this thesis's coding sheet. The amount of detail that was displayed in the movie was very impressive, especially because though it is about the Japanese perspective during the battle it was an American-made movie.

The second statistic that was highly positive was the combat themes rating. It averaged out to a 3.88, and this is almost a whole point higher then the standard. The movie did a very good job of tackling some of the harder issues that faced the Japanese army during this period, including the continued incorporation of the Bushido code as a guiding principle to the conduct of warfare. The movie also showed the senselessness of the Bushido mindset of fighting to the

death and how it wound up doing little to win the battle. Probably the hardest war scene the

coder had to watch for the entire thesis was the decision of the main character's (Siago's) platoon

to commit suicide by grenade. It was very saddening and visually disturbing. The movie

portrayed the harshness of life and discipline in the Imperial Japanese Army and the problems

the army had with supplies and finding usable resources, especially potable water.

Letters From Iwo Jima was an outstanding movie. Its reality in dress, equipment and the

combat struggles of the Japanese army to defend the first island considered part of their native

home land was intense and revealing. Well done too was the films incorporation of cultural

understand in an effort to link the modern audience with the mindset and behaviors of their

World War II counter part.

Analysis

Now that we have looked at each film individually, we can look at all the films together

and take from them the trends produced as a result of the content analysis. These films have

produced a snapshot picture of trends and occurrences that, like each individual film, varies.

Some aspects of the movies have stayed the same even after all these years. Others have

changed, which brings us back to this thesis's original research question: In regards to realism

how have World War II film changed over the years? Hopefully the numbers generated by the

movies will shed some light on this.

For the amount of numbers that have have changed, there are many that have stayed the

same. In terms of morality, films have not really gotten more or less moral. In fact, they have

stayed relatively the same. Numbers for each film rose and fell in the morality category, but no

real trend has emerged. The numbers of moral flaws, moral dilemmas and the resolution of those

situations varied greatly by movie. Some of the earlier movies like *Bitter Victory* had a lot of

morality, as the story had a love triangle whose participants were constantly forced to make moral decisions that would affect the other two. Some of the earlier films contained almost no moral trappings whatsoever. Later movies would also follow this up-down pattern. *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Thin Red Line* contained almost a quarter of each movie's chapters that have either moral dilemmas, moral flaws or both, while *Letters from Iwo Jima* and *The Big Red One* contain barley enough to break double digits when you combine both moral indicators together. Not so surprisingly, then, the average moral character of each of the eight movies and the moral resolution to the dilemmas presented in the movie remained average. Certain movies like *Bitter Victory* had lower ratings, in fact really low ratings, though it was stated already that the movie's love story caused most of those poor decisions. The rest of the movies hovered around 3 for the sum of their morality ratings. Two movies rated a 4 for resolution of the problems but their overall ratings were right around a 3 which did not throw the numbers off. It would seem that the trend here is that there is no trend. The writers, producers and directors choose to have morality be a part of the creative story of the movie. In many movies the morality is accurate but with no clear pattern the choice of how much to include of it was all part of the drama Hollywood looks to add to a story.

Little too has diversity changed over the course of time. The values were a bit high in *To Hell and Back* and *Bitter Victory* but they leveled out again until *The Thin Red Line*, though at no point was the diversity of the group ever out of hand. No movie violated any historical models of racial segregation or any other army policy that would have allowed for inaccurate mixes of soldiers. The above mentioned three movies did have a little too perfect of a mix of soldiers, but in the case of *The Thin Red Line* this is because the movie takes place at the company and battalion level where you would expect that diversity as these formations in the military have hundreds of soldiers in them. Again, as with morality, diversity seems to be a story element left

to the whims of the writers and casting department. Some movies were better cast then others, but in the whole of the movies reviewed no clear change has emerged.

Continuing with diversity, derogatory language and depiction never really became a trend. Only two movies made any sort of derogatory depiction, which were *Too Late the Hero* and *The Big Red One*. In both movies this happens only once. Almost all the films had some derogatory language though no movie more then a few chapters in which a few were hurled at the enemy. The decision to include that kind of content is up to the writers and even over time and as realistic as derogatory language was for the period the decision to include it as a mainstay of a characters vocabulary was never made.

A group of statistics that really did not change at all was the point-of-view factors. Very few movies made an attempt to depict the other side and only one attempted to make any explanation about why that side thought the enemies side fought. With an average rating for accuracy of the enemies point of view the lowest rated film was a 2.95 for *The Big Red One*, whose at time odd depiction of the enemies behavior explain that rating, while the highest was only a 3.03 for *The Longest Day*. This category really flat lined through this whole survey of movies. Nothing really contributed to any form of trend what so ever. Perhaps the writers and production staff thought it was too hard to try to equally tell the story of two sides and instead would focus on one side of a battle or the other.

The largest set of factors to not have any sort of comprehensible change to them were the combat realism indicators. There were four indicators used to judge weather a combat scene was accurate. These indicators were designed to be general enough as to not discriminate in anyway against a movie's ability to include a specific factor. Films may have been limited by the technology available or by production codes which prohibited the display of certain types of violence or themes. The best way to understand these factors at once is to look at them all side by

side, which is displayed here in Figure 1.

### Realism Indicators By Movie
Figure 1
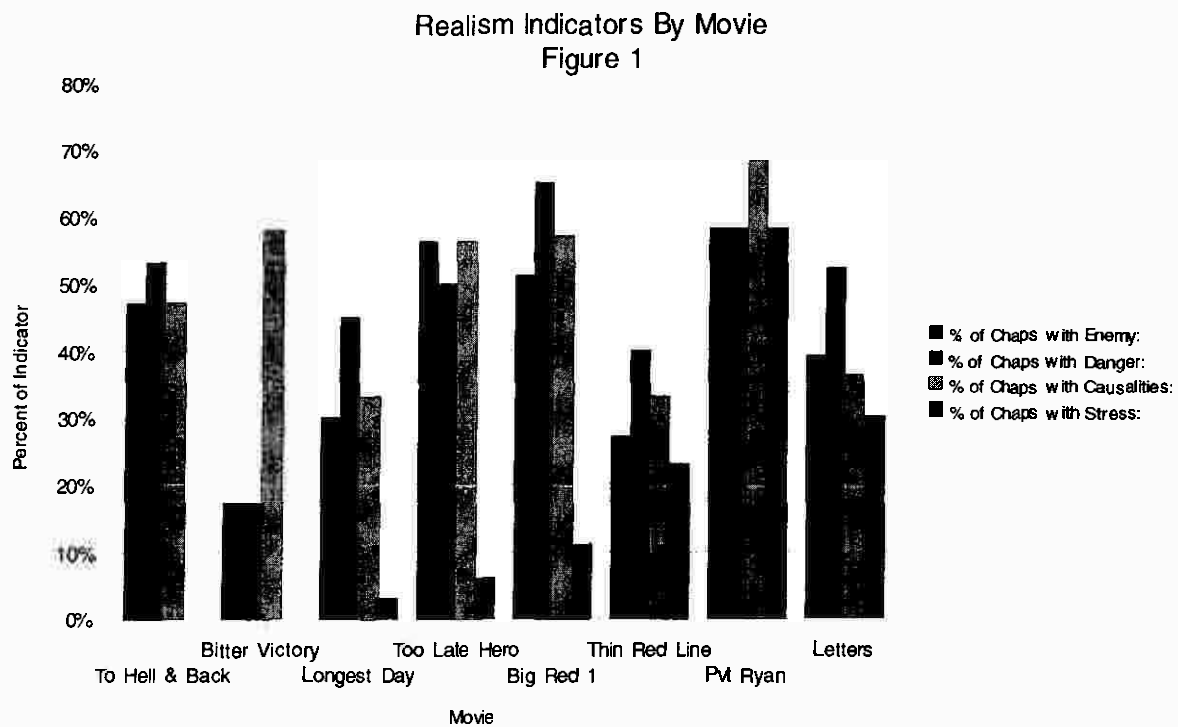
If you look at these side-by-side, you will see that there is no discernible pattern. Films

values rise and fall from movie to movie. Almost all of the movies have a value at or above 40%,

many of them have at least one value over 50%. Even when you look at these factors in a linear

form the pattern becomes no less discernible. The above figure, Figure 1 has been modified to be

the same graph but with connected linear marks instead of in bar graph form. This figure, Figure

1-A, is the attempt to show any patterns that might emerge from the combat realism indicators.

Realism Indicators By Movie
Figure 1-A
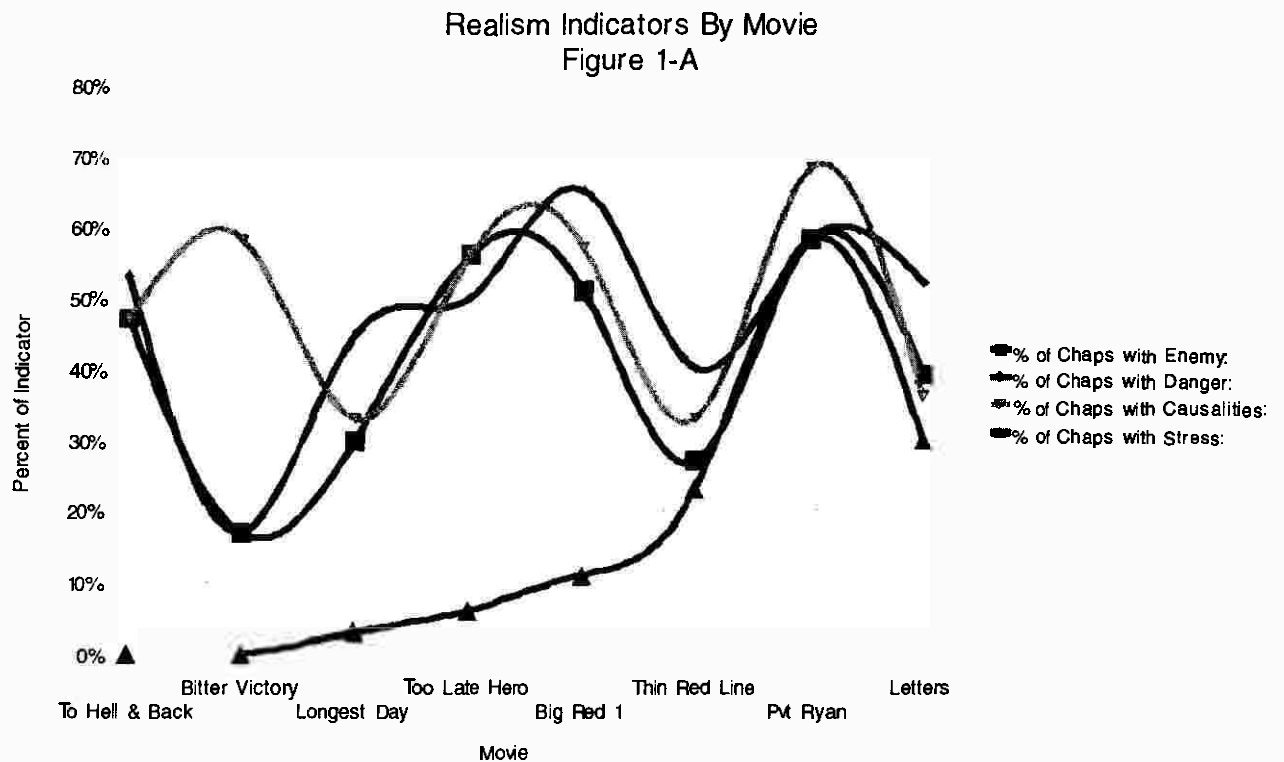
Most of the indicators bounce up and down similar to the graphed depiction of a sound wave. It seems as though the indicators mirrored the amount of combat in each movie which also bounced up and down depending on the movie. What is noticeable though is starting from *The Thin Red Line* and continuing on from that movie is that the realism indicators are much closer together then in earlier films. In some of those earlier films the different indicators are very spread out. As stated though they start to bunch closer as the films goes on. This could have depended on the budget available to the production staff, the choices of the director or the experience of the writers to include these factors into the combat scenes. From film to film the values change in no clear pattern as time progresses. However, starting from the bottom of the chart, one value does start to progress almost constantly upwards. This is the first trend to emerge. We will look at this and the other positive trends that did emerge from these movies.

Combat psychology is the only indicator to have any real change over time. From the beginning of the movies, which include no presence of this indicator to the later films which

include increasing amounts of it. It seems that over the course of the movies, which are listed in

chronological order, this is the only combat realism indicator to steadily rise. This trend is

depicted in Figure 2, which is a graph displaying the combat psychology trait by its self.

Change in Percent of Combat Psychology
Figure 2
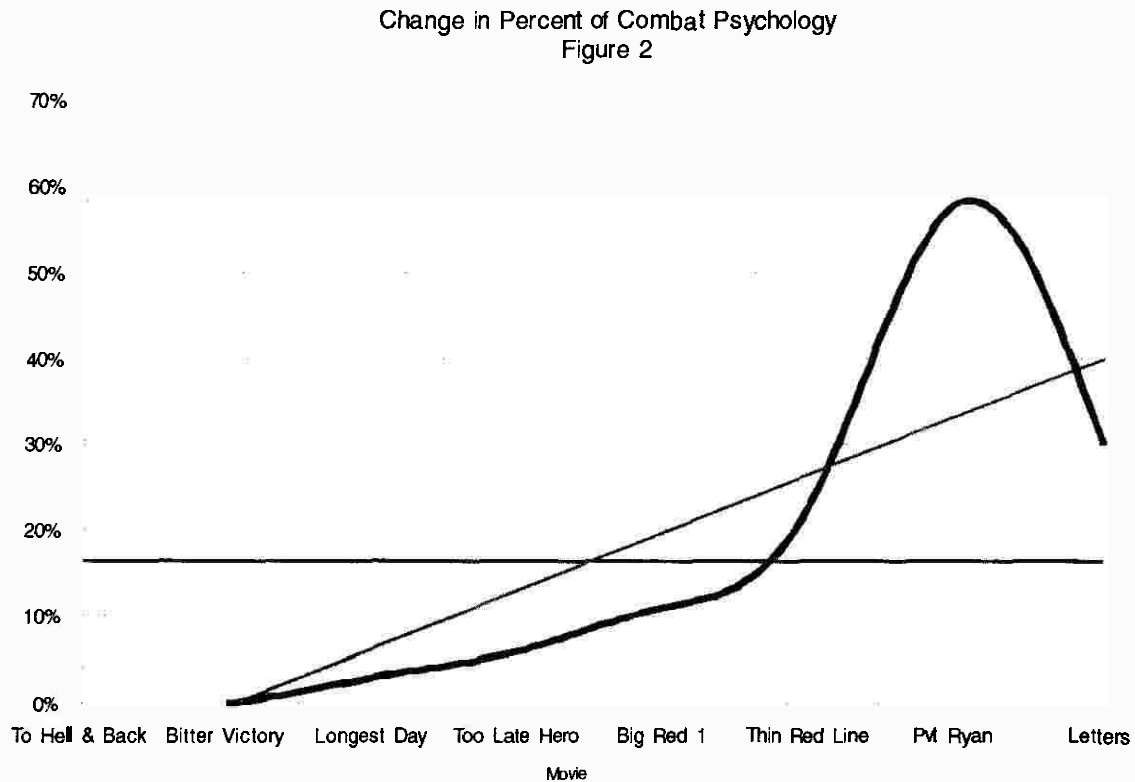
Here we see that there has been a dramatic increase in the portrayal of combat

psychology from the first films. In fact, the first two films rated 0% or no depictions of this

indicator. It slowly appears in the 1962 film *The Longest Day* and does not break the double

percentage digits until *The Big Red One* the 1980 film, scored an 11%. Starting from the two

1998 films there is a dramatic increase in this number. Finally in *Letters from Iwo Jima* the

number comes back down a bit but is still well above the projected average line shown here in

red. The green line projected on this graph is the calculated trend line. It is pretty steep and

defines the dramatic increase in this indicator from its first appearance in 1962 to its much larger

role in the films that came after.

A much more surprising trend in these films is that the further away from the actual event

of World War II you remove a film, the better its costuming became. This is surprising since

after the war there were warehouses of surplus equipment, much of it never to be used again. It is

shocking that both cast and crew that experienced the war would not have taken advantage of

this bounty of real authentic equipment and uniforms to use in their films. Below is the graph

showing the trend of costuming in the reviewed films, called Figure 3.

Costume Rating
Figure 3
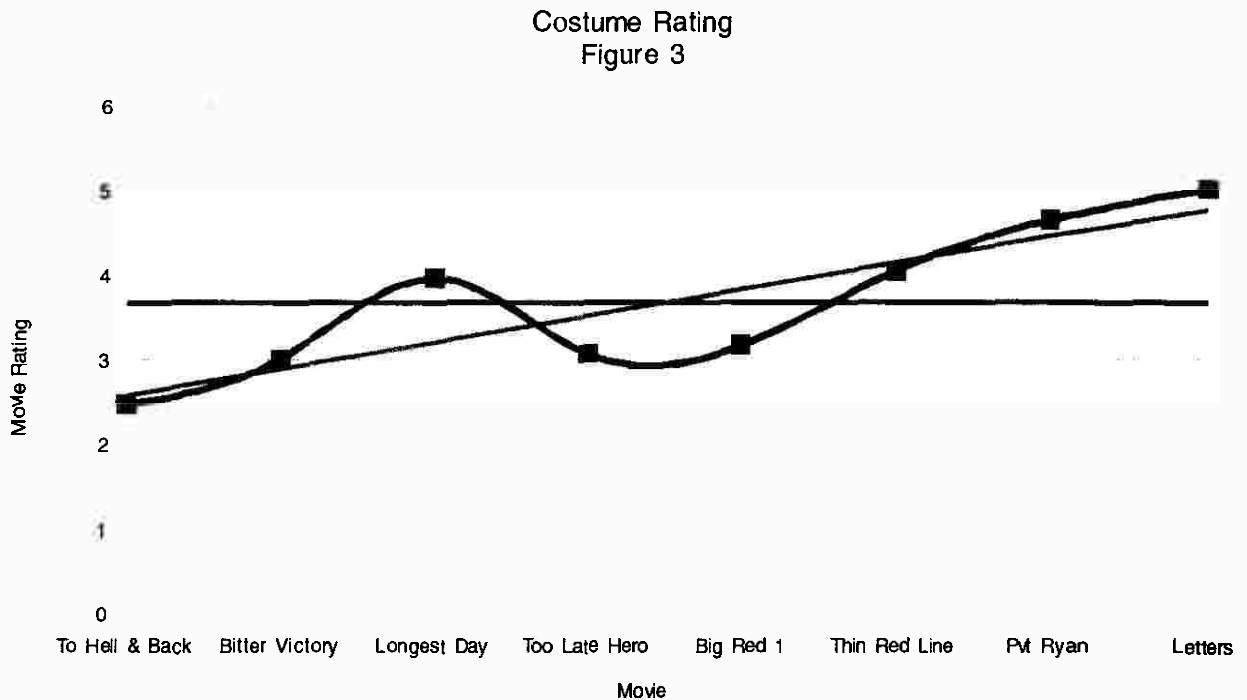
With the exception of the spike in ratings for *The Longest Day*, the movies progressively

start a steady upward trend climaxing at *Letters from Iwo Jima* in which the film rated a perfect 5

being extremely accurate in its costuming of the Japanese soldiers in defense of the island. This

trend may exist for many reasons. Perhaps the military would not allow the sale of the equipment

to the studios. Perhaps the producers felt that a totally accurate depiction of the uniforms and

equipment of the combat soldier was not necessary to the telling and enjoyment of the film. That

being said, the later movies seemed to want to include the authentic look of a combat soldier not

just in what color their uniform was or what patches they would have had on it, but in other more

general and important things. Things like a shovel which almost every GI carried, sleeping

equipment, food bags and a canteen as well as other items that are reflected in many historical

photographs taken during actual combat. Also more accurate as time went on were the depictions

of firearms used in the war. Many early films do not show correct mixes of non-rifle, or non-

submachine guns in the squads. Many other weapons were in service during the war that were

not depicted. More accurate too are the enemies' equipment. In *Bitter Victory*, while storming

the German HQ, one German soldier is seen rushing down the stairs carrying an American made

Thompson SMG. This would not have been carried by any German personnel, especially not in

the African campaign. So, as surprising as this trend is, the costuming of the cast slowly

increased over the time period these movies covered.

Increasing too is the depiction of combat. Over time, the average rating for the percentage

of combat chapters of the movies has gone up. While this statistic could reflect changes in

technology it too reflects the inclusion of the above mentioned combat realism indicators and

increased costuming and makeup as well as plot flow that mirrors the real life models of the

battles they are depicting. Figure 4 shows this increasing trend over the course of the films.

Average Combat Chapter Reality Rate
For Only Combat Chapters
FIGURE 4
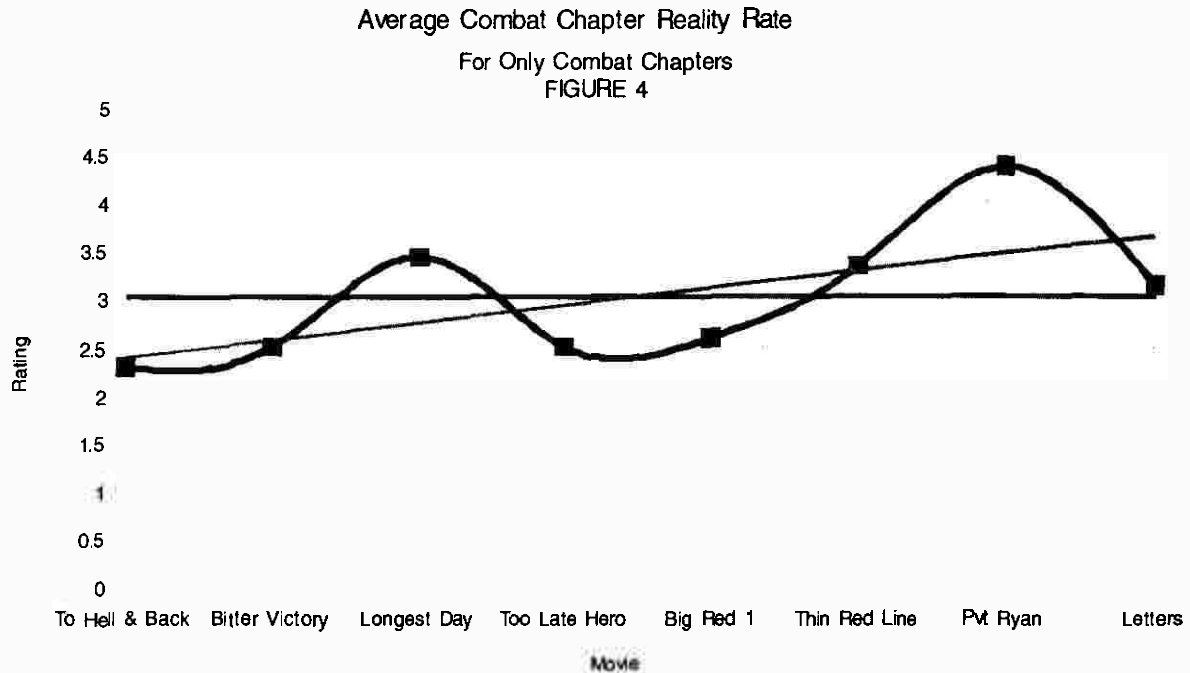
Much like the costuming, the reality rate in combat spikes up in *The Longest Day* and

down again in *Too Late the Hero*. The scenes got better not because they showed more blood,

but because of the attention to realistic details portrayed in the film. It takes several men to man a

MG42, but Audie Murphy runs with one in *To Hell and Back* operating it by himself while

standing. It is these types of depictions that rated the earlier films lower then the later. Combined

with the aspects of poor equipping and bad weapon mixes, as well as other factors, many of the

depicted battle scenes in the movies come from historical battles that had high casualty ratings

for both sides though in many of the scenes from the movies very few soldiers get killed. The

poorly rated movies do not accurately reflect the danger faced by the common infantryman

depicted in many of the films. However, as the chronology progresses the films show increased

instances of causalities reflected in the historical statistics for those battles as well as showing the

increased presence of danger. This factor was another trend that increased along side the

costuming.

The last trend that shows an increase in realism is the movies ratings for combat film

related themes. This section reflected whether or not the general plot themes and story

development reflect the types of story elements that are common to World War II combat films.

This particular attribute is very important because it is not dependent of budget, or availability of

technology and resources. This solely fell on to the writers and directors to include these

elements into the script and illicit them from the cast. Figure 5 depicts the visual model for the

change in this attribute.

Change h Combat Theme
Figure 5
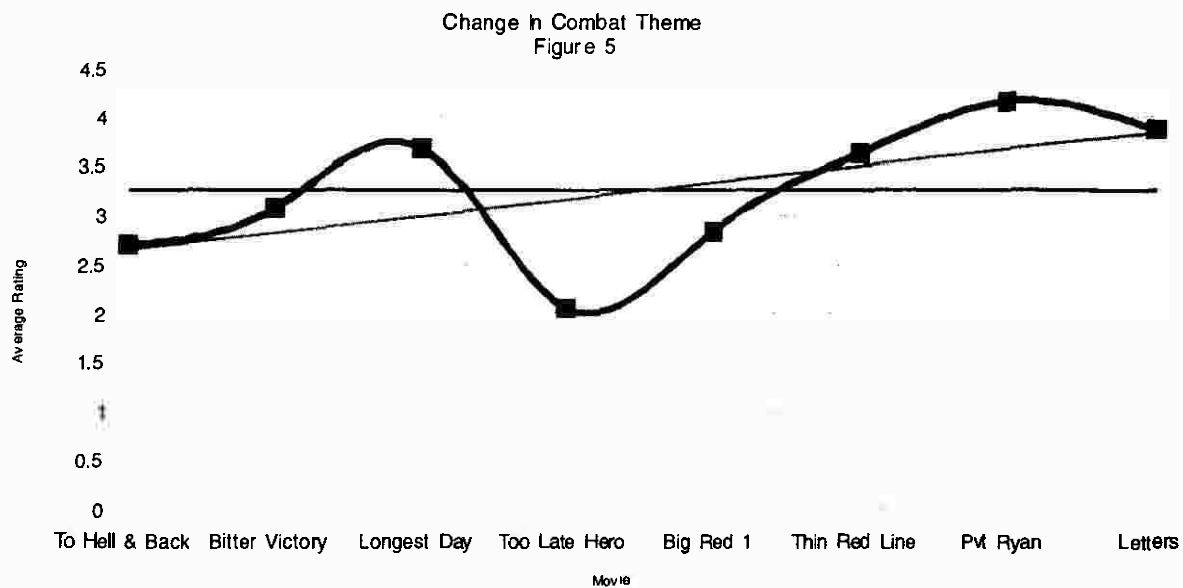
As we can see over time the ratings have slowly increased. With the exception of the dip

in ratings for *Too Late the Hero*, the trend does slope up from *To Hell and Back*. This change in

themes was quiet evident in the movie. The fist two movies, *To Hell and Back* and *Bitter Victory*,

contained a lot of themes and plot elements that are not necessarily non-combat film themes but

when you combine many of them it does start to skirt the line. This was particularly true of *To*

Hell and Back. The film is portraying the combat biography of the Second World War's most

decorated American soldier. For a movie that has that objective, the main character of Audie

Murphy, played by himself, certainly spends a lot of time on leave from the front and has time

for several romantic scenes through the movie. This goes against the norm of having very little

presence of women in the movie. It was almost a wonder how he could have won so many awards while spending so much time with civilians on leave.

However, as the movies went on the themes of survival, danger, the madness and randomness of war all start to take a much more central role. In both *The Big Red One* and *The Thin Red Line* these kinds of plot elements are the central building block of the stories. By the time this thesis reached *Saving Private Ryan* and *Letters From Iwo Jima*, the themes of the movie almost entirely revolve around themes that relate solely to war. Though in both movies the presence of love is included, in both instances it returned to the more classic definition of love in passing remembrance rather then in an active plot element. *The Longest Day* also did a very good job of adhering to a more traditional definition of the combat film and its key plot elements. So the story created by a film will always be the creative endeavor of the writers, directors and producers. Much like the costuming and decisions to include combat psychology as key elements of the movie, the decision to include more relevant combat film related themes has also become a mainstay. These increasing trends have shown World War II combat films to be actively trying to become more accurate. This is also proven true by the findings that there were no real drops in statistics that would reflect a negative trend in combat realism.

While there were no active trends that declined over the course of the films, one set of compared statistics did create an interesting general trend in the movies. Starting from the earliest movies as displaying of patriotic values has declined and then leveled out there was a simultaneous increase in combat psychology. This relationship is shown in Figure 6.

Patriotic Values vs Comabt Stress
Figure 6
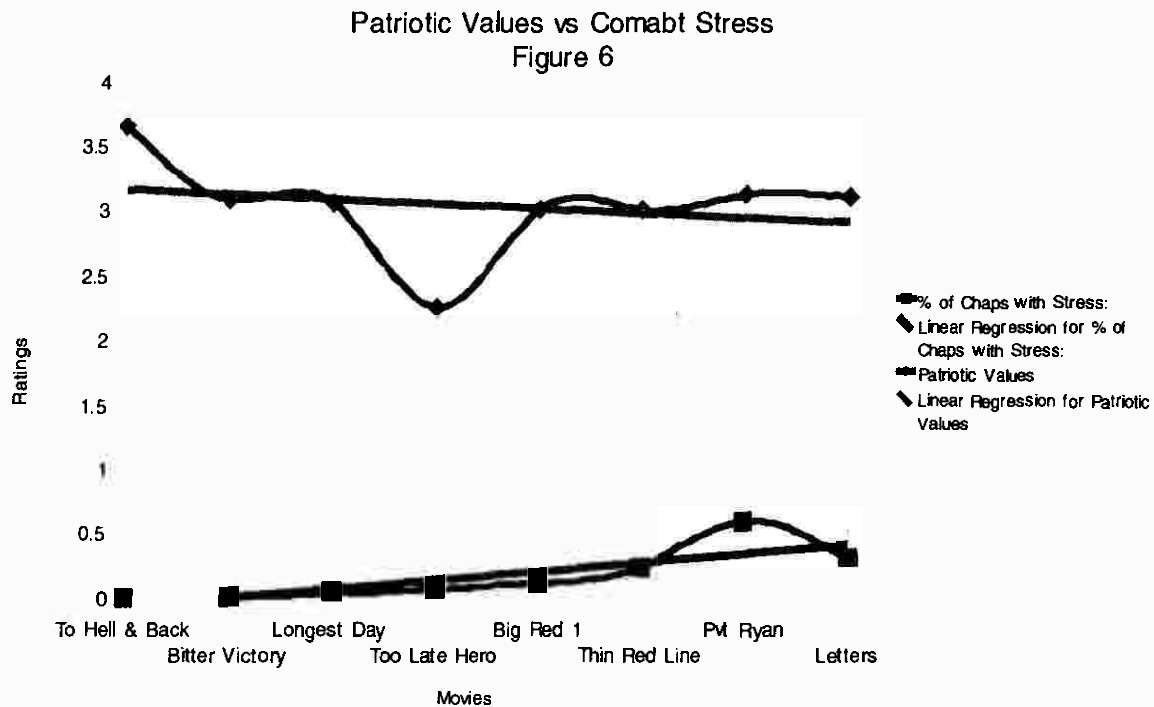
We can see that, as the trend of patriotic values have slowly declined and then stabilized around *The Big Red One*, around the same time combat psychology starts to play a greater role in the films ratings. The above figure show the combat psychology in decimal form converted from the percentage versus the rating for the films patriotic values. The larger graph of those values is displayed above in Figure 2. This trend seemed to appear, as mentioned, between *Too Late the Hero*'s drop in patriotic values and the entrance into double digit chapters that depict combat psychology in *The Big Red One*. This relationship is interesting because it shows that as films start to portray their characters countries values less prominently they start to depict the mental flaws of the individual characters. This trend is the chink in the armor depiction. As the countries patriotic fervor starts to wane, there is an increased recognition of the flaws of the individuals that make up the countries fighting force. This was the only general trend to emerge that had a direct relationship.

Though much of what makes up the World War II combat movie has changed little over time, there has been a fundamental change in nature of war films. Not only has the accuracy of

combat depictions increased over time, along with the costuming and other visual cues. More importantly, what has increased is the feel of combat. The films reviewed show a marked increase in non-visual themes that relate to how soldiers feel and experience war, as well as the effects this has on their psyche. With a steep increase of combat psychology and of the over all combat themes presented in the reviewed movie, we see that the greatest change can come in something non-visual in an otherwise visual medium. This focus on the psychology and experiences of the soldiers who fought allows the films to pay tribute to the hardships and anguish war inflicts on its participants. Overall the visual elements have greatly changed and World War II combat films have definitely improved both the look and feel of combat.

Chapter V: Conclusion

After completing the full content analysis of the eight films selected to be reviewed and after reviewing the many scholars who have written on this subject, this thesis now has a better understanding about how realism has come to affect the nature of World War II combat films. Has this aspect of the films changed over time? If so, in what ways? Are combat films fundamentally different now as a result of this added step during production? This thesis attempted to answer these questions as it has progressed. By reviewing this thesis's methods and the findings it has generated, we can finally attempt to grasp answers for these questions.

Summary of Study and Findings

This thesis utilized the content analysis as its primary means of monitoring change in the levels of realism in the movies that were reviewed. These movies were of U.S. origin only and covered the time period from the end of the war until 2009, the beginning of the writing of this

thesis. The movies wind up covering the period of 1955 to 2007, with at least every decade during that period represented. These films were combat films only. The rest of the limitations are available in Chapter One.

The films were analyzed in regards to several frames outlined in Chapter Three. These frames monitored how the film portrayed the main character(s) and the co-cast as well as how the film depicted the combat scenes. Lastly, it followed the general plot elements of the movie. Monitoring several key elements that pertain to realistic depictions of combat, this thesis was able to monitor if there was any actual changes to World War II combat films since the end of the war.

This thesis found that in many categories of realism the films showed no real pattern of increase or decrease. Instead, many of the categories changed up and down from movie to movie. However, there was a noticeable increase in the costuming of the films' casts for both sides of the film. There was also a less noticeable but increased value for the depiction of combat. More than the visual representation of the films' cast and combat on the screen is the films' increased use of combat psychology in the films' plot, which also matched an increase in combat themes. This increase in theme signaled a general change in realism over time.

No particular aspect of realism decreased over time though it was noticed that as the patriotic values displayed by the characters slowly decreased over time and leveled out around the same time the increased display of combat psychology began. Those were the only trends discovered once the films had been reviewed and analyzed.

Conclusions and Implications

It would appear that, indeed, several different realism aspects of World War II combat films have increased over time. Coupled with almost no decreases, it can be concluded that over

time the combat film set during World War II has gotten more realistic. While certainly the ability of the modern film industry to visualize combat has improved, with other technologies this only explains a small portion of it. Many of the increased categories were in movie elements that are not reliant on visual effects but on written or directed elements. So these changes have come from places other than just the editing room. Hollywood's focus on the World War II combat film has shifted from the entertaining to the realistic. This would imply that Hollywood has a better understanding now of the war then it initially had despite the film industry having access to many acting talents that participated in the war.

Personal Opinions

It is the opinion of the author that, indeed, World War II combat films have gotten more realistic. This is in the author's opinion a result of increased access to personal accounts of the war by veterans who have waited till their elder years to open up and share their experiences. More accessible too is information about the war. Many more documents, sources and general information has been researched and made available to the public. This is, in the author's opinion, important not only because there are more sources to reference in regards to the experiences of the soldiers, but of the experiences of our enemies as well. We understand their motivations, their backgrounds, and how they experienced the war. We know now how they were equipped and how to visually reproduce the look of those who fought on both sides.

It is the author's opinion of the films he reviewed that every film was entertaining and valuable in its own way. While several of the films did not wind up rating high in the realism aspect of this thesis, the author enjoyed all of the films for what cultural and historical values they had. Both in their depiction of the war and in their general reflection on the same historical events from different generations' points of view.

The author also believes that the motivation of the films have changed. The earlier films were meant to entertain the audiences, while being sensitive to the veterans who served. As time has gone on, it seems that with each new generation of filmmakers approached the subject with more reverence. With each decade, a new effort was made to share the experiences of the common soldier accurately. This is an active effort to pay tribute to the generation that fought World War II and all the wars that have come since.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is the opinion of this thesis that there are many similar and simultaneous fields of study associated with the work that this thesis has done. Another thesis could look at the development of realism in a specific section of war, or possibly a specific theater or more ideally a specific battle or campaign. Another thesis could also look at films that were not made in the U.S. either focusing on the development of World War II in the film industries of other nations. The thesis could focus on one nation's films, a regional group of films. The thesis could examine a region's take on one battle from several different nations' perspectives.

Alternatively a thesis could look at realism in a different time period, or a different war. Films about war cover a large span of time. There are many periods that do not have much written on them, such as The American Civil War, The First World War, Vietnam and even the Modern conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Any of these would have a lot to offer in terms of studying the development in realism and combat themes.

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Appendix A

Coding Sheet

Name of Coder:

First:_____

Middle Initial:_____

Last:_____

Date of Coding:

Month: _____

Day: _____

Year: _____

Movie Information

Movie Title:_____

Month Released: _____

Year Released: _____

Director:_____

Producer: _____

Screen Writer:_____

Studio: _____

Run Time: _____

Scene/Movie Chapter: _____

What Country/ Side does the main character represent:

Allied:

      [ ] United State of America

      [ ] British Common Wealth

      [ ] Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

      [ ] Other: _____

Axis:

    [ ] National Socialist Germany "Nazis"

    [ ] The Japanese Empire

    [ ] Other: _____

What Country/ Side is considered the enemy:

Allied:

    [ ] United State of America

    [ ] British Common Wealth

    [ ] Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

    [ ] Other: _____

Axis:

    [ ] National Socialist Germany "Nazis"

    [ ] The Japanese Empire

    [ ] Other:_____

Framing Questions

Character(s) Attribute Frame

2)   Do the main character(s) ever display a moral flaw?

    [ ] Yes

    [ ] No

2)   Do the main character(s) ever face a moral dilemma?

    [ ] Yes

    [ ] No

3)   On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Not at All" □and 5 being "Definitely" do(es) the character(s) solve the problem in a morale way?

        1   2   3   4   5

4)   On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Not at All" ☐☐and 5 being "Definitely" do(es) the character(s) display personality traits that typify values possessed by their home country?

                    1   2   3   4   5

5)   On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Not at All" ☐☐and 5 being "Very" how diverse would you say the make up of character(s) are?

                    1   2   3   4   5

6)   Does this diversity reflect an accurate historical model

            [ ] Yes

            [ ] No

Combat Attribute Frame

1)   Do any of the main characters get injured/die?

            [ ]Yes

            [ ] No

2)   On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Not Accurate at All" and 5 "Being Very Accurate" how well does the movie portray the look, feel, and danger of combat?

                    1   2   3   4   5

3)   Do the combat scenes contain the following?

        [ ] Visual presence of the enemy?

        [ ] Visual and audio presence of danger (gun fire, explosions)?

        [ ] Visual presence of injured or killed (either side)?

        [ ] Present indicators of combat stress (yelling, panic, hysteria)?

Story Reality Frame

1)   One a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "Never" and 5 being "All the time", how often are the enemy refereed to in a derogatory or using a racially degrading way?

    1   2   3   4   5

2)   One a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "Never" and 5 being "All the time", is the enemy portrayed visually in any way that is stereotypical or racially derogatory?

    1   2   3   4   5

3)   On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Not Accurate at All" and 5 "Being Very Accurate" how well are the cast costumed? Do they resemble accurately soldiers of the period?

    1   2   3   4   5

4)   On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Not Accurate at All" and 5 "Being Very Accurate"are the themes presented in the movie realistic to the time period and to a combat setting?

    1   2   3   4   5

5)   Is the main character(s) side of the war the only side whose views are presented in the movie?

    [ ] Yes

    [ ] No

6)   Is the enemy's point of view ever presented, in terms of why they fight?

    [ ] Yes

    [ ] No

7)   On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Not Accurate at All" and 5 "Being Very Accurate" how accurate is the enemies point of view compared to history?

    1   2   3   4   5

Appendix B

Qualifications of Appendix A

This appendix will qualify the ratings given to the factual and historical based ratings in the coding sheet used during the content analysis. This sheet is available in Appendix A. These qualifications come from academic sources referenced during the coding process to ensure that the coder's knowledge of the question's subject was thorough enough to provide a sound assessment of a movies content.

The first qualification that needs to be made is the last question of the first frame. This question asks if the diversity displayed in the movie is in line with the historical model. The sources used by this thesis for this question were:

1) *The Japanese Army 1931-1945*, 2 Volumes (Jowett, 2002)
2) *World War II Stats and Facts* (Darman, 2009)
3) *The Third Reich at War* (Evans, 2008)

These three sources provide enough detail on the orders of battle and special units that were formed around racial and ethnic groups with in the Allied and Axis forces. These books confirm that there was little diversity in the racial composition of the fighting units. In most cases racial or ethnic minorities were placed in their own special units. This was the only question that needed qualification in the first frame.

In the second frame there is also only one question that needs qualification. The second question in this frame asks on a Likert scale with 1 being "Not Accurate at All" and a 5 being "Very Accurate" for the coder to rate the realness of the combat in that chapter. This question's qualification comes from many sources. These sources were used to generate the experience of combat at that particular battle based on narrations of the battle and the statistics for casualties,

number of participants and types of units involved. As well as the establishing the time line and

geography of that battle. The books used in this question's qualification are as follows:

1) *The Japanese Army 1931-1945*, 2 Volumes (Jowett, 2002)
2) *World War II Stats and Facts* (Darman, 2009)
3) *The Third Reich at War* (Evans, 2008)
4) *Great Battles of World War II* (1995)
5) *Iwo Jima: Legay of Valor* (Ross, 1986)
6) *The Normandy Campaign 1944: Sixty Years On* (Buckley, 2006)
7) *Illustrated World War II Encyclopedia*, 24 Volumes (Bauer, 1978)
8) *Airborne: World War II Paratroopers in Combat* (Gaurd, 2007)

These books collectively provide detailed descriptions of all the battles and campaigns

that the movies reviewed take place during. From these books descriptions this thesis was able to

judge the accuracy of the combat scenes in the movies. This was the only question from the

second frame that needed qualifying. There are several in the third frame.

The first of these questions in the third frame that need qualification is question 1. This

question is the first of two that identifies racially charged material in the movie. The first

question is specific to language. While it is clear to the author what is racially inappropriate

language, for words that may not be so obvious the books *War Slang (Dickson, 1994)* and

FUBAR: Soldier Slang of World War II (Rottman, 2009) were used as a guide to military

terminology that may not have had obvious meanings. These two books cover the major slang

used by all the major participants of the war. Including the US, British Empire, Nazi Germany,

The Japanese Empire and communist Russia. These two sources provide ideal coverage of

military language, especially during World War II.

The next qualified question is question 3. This question asks the coder to rate the

historical accuracy of the costumes. For this this thesis used:

1) *World War II Stats and Facts* (Darman, 2009)
2) *The Japanese Army 1931-1945*, 2 Volumes (Jowett, 2002)
3) *The Third Reich at War* (Evans, 2008)
4) *Uniforms of the German Soldier* (De Quesada, 2006)

As a supplementary source, this thesis used primary photographs taken in combat that are a part of several books' visual illustrations. Those photographs came from the following:

1) *Great Battles of World War II* (1995)
2) *Illustrated World War II Encyclopedia*, 24 Volumes (Bauer, 1978)
3) *Iwo Jima: Legay of Valor* (Ross, 1986)
4) *Airborne: World War II Paratroopers in Combat* (Gaurd, 2007)

Between these several sources this thesis was able to determine the look of the actual World War II combat soldier from all sides. These several sources list the equipment and give numerous examples of pictures of that equipment in a combat setting. The photographs also capture the look of the fighting soldier in World War II.

The next question, question 4 asks about the accuracy of the plot. For this, this thesis relied on Basinger's definition in *The World War II Combat Film: Anatomy of a Genre* (2003). Basinger's primary focus of the book is defining and tracking the plot elements of a World War II combat film and proving how little it has changed since the inception of World War II film during the war.

The last question that needs qualifying is question 7 in the third frame. This question is centered around the realism in the film's portrayal of the enemies point of view. As reference to what each countries point of view would have been this thesis used:

1) *The Japanese Army 1931-1945*, 2 Volumes (Jowett, 2002)
2) *The Third Reich at War* (Evans, 2008)

For the Axis powers, for the allied powers their views were assembled from the following:

1) *Illustrated World War II Encyclopedia*, 24 Volumes (Bauer, 1978)
2) *Iwo Jima: Legay of Valor* (Ross, 1986)
3) *The Normandy Campaign 1944: Sixty Years On* (Buckley, 2006)
4) *The End of Victory Culture (Englehardt, 1995)*

5) *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II*
(Doherty, 1993)

By using these comprehensive works this thesis was able to determine the appropriate

information to be throughly versed in all the subjects required to make judgments on the

historical accuracy in the reviewed films.