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**At the movies**

**Eastwood defends macho image in new film 'Heartbreak Ridge'**

Clint Eastwood's films of the last decade have alternately built and sustained his screen image and played off that same image. "Heartbreak Ridge" is a sustainer.

Eastwood plays hard drinkin', hard fightin', foul-mouthed, Gunnery Sergeant Tom Highway, a professional soldier lost without a war — a field man in a clerical position who wants nothing more than to get back doing what he does best.

**Review by Sean Axmaker**

Highway is an anachronism. The film opens in a jail cell, where he recounts war stories to a wide-eyed youth and then "defends his honor" by beating the hell out of a fellow cellmate, a huge brawler who takes the first punch when Highway's insults top his own.

Highway was sent to his clerical purgatory for insubordination and things don't seem to have changed much. The drunken antics that landed him in the brig are not something new. Is there a place in this man's army for the likes of Highway?

Damn straight, Jack. Like a gift from above, Highway is sent back to a field unit, where he is placed in charge of a motley crew of disrespectful, undisciplined soldiers making up the reconnaissance platoon of an unprepared base.

The CO, one Major Powers (Everett McGill) up from supply, takes an immediate dislike to field veteran Highway, who's been fighting since Korea. Discipline and anonymity are the keys to surviving in this outfit. No one bucks authority.

Guess again, Major.

The story is familiar. A hardened veteran takes a sloppy bunch of misfits and turns them into a lean, mean, fighting machine. He earns the respect and admiration of his men and gives his uptight CO heartburn by giving the traditionally passive recon unit the capabilities, and the drive, to show up the "number one" unit on base.

In the meantime, Highway spends his off hours attempting to court his ex-wife (Marsha Mason), who works as a cocktail waitress in a local club. To these ends Highway pours through women's magazines trying to find where the marriage went wrong ("Did we mutually nurture each other?" he asks her).

In a time when tough guy films are defined by the vehicles for Stallone and Norris, Eastwood's pictures are a welcome commodity. His direction is taut and effective, his acting is getting better and his stories are, at the very least, entertaining without being demeaning.

A gentle sense of humor keeps the film from knuckling under the macho values of Highway, and well-directed action keeps the film moving at a good, if not terribly fast, pace (at two hours, twenty minutes, the film surprisingly doesn't get tired).

All those cliches we expect from films like these are present: the obligatory fight with a subordinate in the outfit, the obligatory fight with his CO, the endless training exercises where Highway teaches his men to "improvise," the eventual admiration of his men, the slowly-developed camaraderie paralleling their transformation into an effective fighting unit

and, finally, the field test. The climax is, of all things, the invasion of Grenada.

As is appropriate for the film, the politics of the maneuver is never addressed. The logistics and the battles are all that matter to the field soldiers.

Yet even here there are moments where the audience has to stop and think. Not much, of course, and not so we don't enjoy the professionalism of the final assault and the exhilaration of victory, but something to show the edges that define Highway.

"Heartbreak Ridge" isn't a political film. It's a tough-guy war film starring Clint Eastwood and a good (not great) film as they go.

And I suppose it's about time. Now that we no longer have the likes of Don Seigel and Robert Aldrich making films like these, it's nice to see that someone still knows how to make macho-driven-male-action pictures that aren't filled with racism, sexism and sadistic violence.

It's machismo and Hemingway-esque values that define the characteristics of the genre, of course.

Professionalism, duty and honor are key attributes and success is the measure of one's value. The ultimate moment is the professional deployment as an elite fighting force.

If mythically-proportioned macho crap like this turns your stomach, then this isn't the film for you.

If, however, you do find enjoyment in this mythical world, then "Heartbreak Ridge" is the best of it's kind in quite a while.

Sure, Clint takes it all seriously, but if every film were "Tightrope" or "Bronco Billy," then what would he have to play off?

**Research**

**Continued from Page 1**  
 streets, and sewers for the project, he said; the David Carley Capital Group, the developer of the park, will finance the buildings in the initial stages.

Moseley also reported on the Advanced Science and Technology Institute, a joint institute with Oregon State University to promote local economic development and research. Robert McQuate has greatly increased industry's interest in ASTI since becoming director in May.

In other business, the Senate passed a resolution supporting the sending of two student representatives to El Salvador.

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