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'Private Ryan' shows realities of war

Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg have created a graphic, yet moving portrayal of World War II

By Michael Hines
Editor in Chief

It seems like either Steven Spielberg or Tom Hanks has been behind every great drama in the last five years. From "Philadelphia" to "Schindler's List," these two have mastered the tear-jerker movie.

Now they've teamed up and produced a film that is truly amazing — "Saving Private Ryan."

Following an emotional introduction, the movie flashes back to June 6, 1944, better known as D-Day. Soldiers vomit and shiver with fear as they approach the deadly shores of France, which is occupied by the Nazis.

Just a warning — when Spielberg said "Private Ryan" was going to portray the true horrors of World War II, he was not kidding.

As the first boats open their doors for the waves of soldiers to take the beach, German machine gunners mow down virtually everyone. To get out of the boat, some soldiers jump over the sides because the front is clogged with the dead. Once in the water, many drown, and many more are shot.

Making his way out of the bloody Atlantic Ocean and winding his way through the mass of mangled bodies strung along the shoreline is Captain John Miller, played by Hanks.

Overwhelmed by the carnage and emotion of it all, Miller lapses in and out of consciousness and participation with his surround-

ings. Miller and Sergeant Horvath, played by Tom Sizemore, lead what is left of their group of men directly into German gunfire.

After this gut-wrenching battle, the movie switches scenes to a warehouse of women writing letters to the families of deceased soldiers. It is here that the military realizes three brothers died in combat in different parts of the world, and their mother is due to be informed of all three deaths on the same day.

The woman has one son left

SUMMER MOVIES

'Saving Private Ryan'

Historical Drama

Directed by:

Steven Spielberg

■ STARRING: Tom Hanks, Matt Damon, Tom Sizemore

■ RATED: R

■ SCORE: ★★★★★

alive, Private James Ryan (Matt Damon), and the government issues orders to find him and bring him back to the United States.

After succeeding in the suicidal mission up the French shores, Captain Miller is given orders to take his men and find Private Ryan.

Miller's men are a scrappy bunch of survivors. Privates Reiben (Edward Burns), Caparzo (Vin Diesel), Mellish (Adam Goldberg) and Jackson (Barry Pepper) join Miller, Horvath and Medic Wade (Giovanni Ribisi) on the trip into Nazi-occupied Germany.

Miller finds Corporal Upham (Jeremy Davies), a writer and a soldier who hasn't fired a gun since basic training, to tag along with the group as a French and German interpreter.

The mission becomes complicated because the military doesn't know where Private Ryan is. It doesn't even know if he's alive. He was taken in by airplane a couple days before D-Day and parachuted onto the mainland. Inaccurate drops of soldiers and supplies is a constant problem, so there is no reliable way for Miller and his men to find Ryan except by asking everyone they meet.

Much like his role in "Going All the Way," Davies masterfully plays an awkward soldier who is a little disturbed and a little poetic. Pepper plays one of the most moving parts as a strong-willed Jewish soldier who revels in teasing German prisoners of war and is occasionally overwhelmed by the emotion of what is happening to the Jews.

Ultimately, the story is about Miller's group of men questioning why they are to save just one man. Hanks' character has to be the glue that keeps his men together while battling his own personal demons.

At one point, Miller jokes that if Private Ryan is special enough to rescue, he better "invent the longer-lasting light bulb." But for Miller, the smiles are only a facade, and he hides to weep in desperation after a short gun battle with a small group of Germans.

Spielberg provided the stunning backdrop and Hanks the electricity to move the story along, and the two can be proud of this somber creation.



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