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Diversity and Democracy at War: Analyzing Race and Ethnicity in Squad Films from 1940-1960

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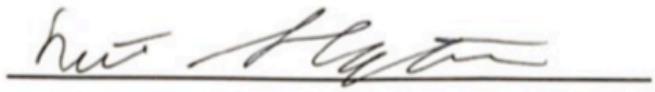

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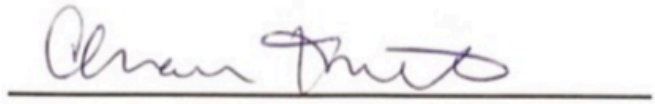

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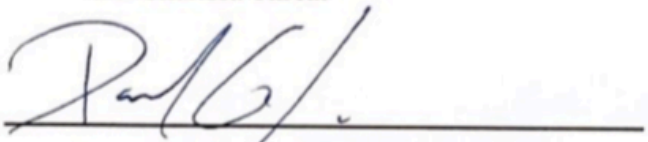

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ABSTRACT

Diversity and Democracy at War: Analyzing Race and Ethnicity in Squad Films from 1940-1960
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Both the Second World War and the Korean War presented Hollywood with the opportunity to produce combat films that roused patriotic spirit amongst the American people. The obvious choice was to continue making the popular squad films that portrayed a group of soldiers working together to overcome a common challenge posed by the war. However, in the wake of various racial and ethnic tensions consistently unfolding in the United States from 1940 to 1960, it became apparent to Hollywood that the nation needed pictures of unity more than ever, especially if America was going to win its wars. Using combat as the backdrop, squad films consisting of men from all different backgrounds were created in order to demonstrate to its audiences how vital group cohesion was for the survival of the nation, both at home and abroad. This thesis explores how Hollywood's war films incorporated racial and ethnic minorities into their classic American squads while also instilling the country's inherent values of democracy.

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ABBREVIATIONS

MOI	Ministry of Information
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
OWI	Office of War Information
POW	Prisoner of war
WASP	White Anglo-Saxon Protestant

Introduction

(*Sahara*, 1943)

Captain Halliday: "It seems to me like the four of us holding off several hundred of them [Germans] is nothing short of a miracle. You know why we are able to do it? Because we're stronger than they are."
Sergeant Joe Gunn: "What do you mean stronger?"
Halliday: "Well I don't mean in numbers. I mean something else. See those men out there have never known the dignity of freedom."
Gunn: "Dignity? Huh that's a funny way to put it. Maybe you got something there, Doc."
Halliday: "We've all got something."

This exchange between Captain Halliday and Sergeant Gunn is one of the final scenes in the film *Sahara*; the Allies have their backs to the wall and are gravely outnumbered by the Germans in the deserts of Libya. Yet, even in this dire situation, the American protagonist, Gunn and, the British medic, Halliday, take a moment to reflect on their cause. Amongst all the death and destruction that war brings, the Allies will emerge victorious because they know the true meaning of freedom. Furthermore, the multiethnic, multiracial, and multinational group of men that made up Gunn's squad in *Sahara*, proved that they will win the battle because their strength as a democracy stems from their diversity, something the enemy knows nothing about.

At the onset of America's involvement in the Second World War, Hollywood took it upon itself to do its part for the war effort. While entertainment was still at the forefront of Hollywood's pictures, these war films began engraining core American values of democracy into their pictures. Rallying the troops while generating support from the home front became imperative to winning the war against the Axis. Since movies were the predominant source of entertainment in America at the time, it was the obvious and effectual choice for Hollywood to pursue the "Double Victory" campaign and produce these patriotic movies that also highlighted unity and cohesion amongst a

diverse group of men.[1] However, while the United States was battling for democracy abroad, the home front's unrest regarding race and ethnicity contradicted the very basis of the war in which their soldiers were dying for.

Once the war ended in 1945 and the United States emerged victorious in both the Pacific and Europe, Hollywood was looked to the future. Not only were films created by Hollywood to defend America's decision to go war, but the pictures were meticulously composed to display to audiences their effort on the home front as well. The intent was to catalyze social progress in the nation by tackling diversity on the silver screen. The production of World War II movies did not stop in 1945; instead pictures were made long after V-J Day and became intermixed with the creation of Korean War films. By analyzing films from 1940 to 1960 that primarily centered on the "Good War Narrative" but then shifted to the Korean and Cold War, it became clear how war was used as a vehicle to showcase and discuss diversity as well as embody America's democratic values.[2]

In this thesis, democracy will be used in ways that stretch beyond the straightforward implication that defines it as an electoral government based on the people's votes. Instead, American democracy was used to signify much more. It represented equality, freedom, and opportunity. Democracy was an ideal, a goal, and a

[1] The Double Victory or Double V campaign was an African American movement during World War II and after to fight for their rights as equal citizens while coping with the "duality of American democracy." For more information, see: Earnest L. Perry Jr.,"It's Time to Force a Change: The African-American Press' Campaign for a True Democracy during World War II," *Journalism History*, no. 2 (2002): 85.
[2] The Good War Narrative, as best stated by Michael C. C. Adams in "The `Good War' Myth and the Cult of Nostalgia," *Midwest Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (September 1998): 61., it "simplifies the complexity of the war, robbing it of historical context and continuity with subsequent events." The narrative has been a perpetuated myth that depicts the Second World War as a pure and just fight, especially for the U.S. America was fighting Nazi Germany while protecting the nation from Japan and emerged from the war victorious. While the reasons for going to war may have been moral, the severe ramifications of war are often overlooked.

symbol of America in itself; a land that promoted the idea that the same chances were available to all no matter one's color or background. It was interpreted as the hope for socio-economical mobility, often defined as the "American Dream." But democracy was also rooted in American culture; at times it meant striving to meet the all-American standards, implying one was pious, humble, hardworking, and dedicated to their family and country. The fundamental rights the nation so highly valued were also indicators of democracy; often in these films, the luxuries of freedom of speech and religion are emphasized as principles to indorse, fight for, and spread to other countries. America set the global standard as to how democracy was interpreted even if the nation often failed to uphold their own prestigious values. Specific to the films analyzed in this thesis, democracy continually signified differences and unity; no matter where the soldiers originated from, they frequently were able to overcome any obstacles and unite as a squad. Democracy was a set of values brought to life by Hollywood, ones that were frequently overdramatized and unrealistic representations of the true American society it sought to portray; nonetheless, these ideals meant to communicate progress and solidarity, something everyone in the United States could hope to achieve in war and peacetime.

Hollywood's squad films produced between 1940 to 1960 took on the moral task of addressing racial and ethnic tensions through war pictures. While some movies were more progressive than others in their attempts to portray diversity and unity, these films demonstrated for audiences the kind of American democracy needed, not only to win the wars abroad but on the home front as well.

Commonly known today as “buddy films”, this label is used to categorize movies that typically star two male opposites, differing drastically from their skin color to background to age, who come together to overcome a common challenge. However, combat films produced during the war typically focused on a group of men rather than one or two individuals, therefore it would be much more appropriate to expand the term “buddy” to “squad.” In this paper, squads consist of anywhere from five to roughly a dozen men who are grouped together, typically from the beginning of the film to the end. As a unit, they endure the consequences of war; however, this looks different for each film. Many of the movies are classic war pictures where a handful of men fight the enemy alongside each other and undergo various battle sequences. But some of the films were composed a bit differently and by including them on this list, as a result, readers are given a broader array of war pictures from the time. Although there were countless movies that could have qualified as “squad” films given my definition, in order to be eligible, there had to be some sort of diversity present in the group, whether that be racial or ethnic. This then greatly limited the pool of pictures. By changing “buddy films” to “squad films” I am not only contributing to an already well-known preexisting topic but adding significant amounts of analysis to the genre of combat films that has only recently been explored.[3]

[3] Both Kathryn Kane in *Visions of War: Hollywood Combat Films of World War II* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1976) and Jeanine Basinger’s chapter, “The World War II Combat Film: Definition,” in *The War Film*, ed. Robert Eberwein (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 30-52 have defined what the combat film consisted of in World War II. However, my work varies slightly as I give the name “squad” to emphasize my focus on the characters rather than the overall traits of the movie.

Historiography

While diversity in war films is a relatively unexplored topic, there is little literature that has analyzed assorted squads as a means to reflect American society. Most studies have looked at various aspects of war films; they consider historical accuracy, such as in Steven Jay Rubin's work, individual characters, which Thomas Doherty discusses frequently, or how the enemy of another race was or was not portrayed in Hollywood films as seen in Hye Seung Chung's work in his studies of Korean War pictures. But few others have taken on as many films as I have, and they also have not assessed the films as thoroughly either. Another popular theme when studying war films is analyzing how movies exhibited morale and worked as propaganda for American audiences and soldiers in order to keep spirits high during these various wars. However, the purpose behind these movies were attempting to accomplish much more. My priority is examining how exactly democracy is (or isn't) portrayed in a diverse group of soldiers. Besides turning a profit and entertaining the American people, the objective of the war and Hollywood according to Fleegler was to "create a more tolerant society without racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination."[4] He goes on to say, "Tolerance and 'teamwork' were essential not only to victory in World War II, but also to the successful conversion to a peacetime economy and to fighting the Cold War." These pictures served

[4] Steven Jay Rubin, *Combat Films: America Realism: 1945-1970* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1981), 1; Robert Fleegler, "'Forget All Differences until the Forces of Freedom Are Triumphant': The World War II-Era Quest for Ethnic and Religious Tolerance," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, no. 2 (2008): 62; Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II: Film and Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Hye Seung Chung, "Hollywood Goes to Korea: Biopic Politics and Douglas Sirk's Battle Hymn (1957)," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television* 25, no. 1 (March 2005): 52.

a purpose that often expanded beyond the importance of the box office; films sent a message and set the standard for their expectations of Americans.

The staple books of World War II film literature cannot be overlooked before diving into the new "squad film" genre that has emerged from these classics. Thomas Doherty's *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture and World War II*; contributes valuable perception on the role of African Americans in war movies. Although the majority of the book is not dedicated to analyzing African American roles, Doherty makes the point to single out their history in films. He connects American society at the time with what transcribed on the screen. Doherty investigates the NAACP and their request for more representation of African Americans in films as equal figures and not just used for their stereotypes. But his analysis lacks in its ability to consider other races and ethnicities, and furthermore fails to show how these squads worked together to overcome their differences in war.

Another crucial book is *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* by Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory Black. In their work, the authors provide a counterargument to what I argue, "The demands of profit and propaganda made it all but impossible to deal forthrightly with race on screen."[5] Money did take priority in the film industry, the numerous films analyzed in this thesis exemplify Hollywood's ability to simultaneously turn a profit while displaying racial tensions in America up on the silver screen. However, the authors do shed light on

[5] Clayton Koppes and Gregory Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 146.

the different ways Hollywood incorporated war in their pictures and how democratic ideals made their way to screen, but not always in the most profound ways.

Kathryn Kane, the author of *Visions of War: Hollywood Combat Films of World War II*, offers an analysis that parallels closely with my own work. While her insight of characters is top notch and lays a significant foundation for my study, she considers other factors such as thematic paradigms, setting, and the plot. Kane particularly emphasized the idea that "differences are raised only to be ultimately minimized, though such reduction as is used will take its toll in underlying conflicts (e.g., elitism/democracy) and in prohibiting adequate consideration of some issues (e.g., the purpose of the war)."[6] Diversity is highlighted only to be conquered in order to show the men that they are not so different after all. Despite the racial and ethical unrest taking place in the United States during these two wars, glorifying America and the war effort was still the ultimate priority in Hollywood. If films were going to be made about acknowledging and distinguishing social tensions, it would have to take place in a war film. Kane does acknowledge what diversity means for the country on the screen as it displays a unified nation with a common goal to win the war. But Kane does not relate it back to the home front and how it applied to present day America both during and after the war. In order to understand the reasoning behind Hollywood's methods of employing diversity, it is essential to acknowledge America's social climate.

Lastly, an article by Richard Slotkin proposes another study that strongly rivals my own. His article, "Unit Pride: Ethnic Platoons and the Myths of American Nationality" speaks to the "myth of American nationality that remains vital in our

[6] Kathryn Kane, *Visions of War: Hollywood Combat Films of World War II* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1976), 90.

political and cultural life: the idealized self-image of a multiethnic, multiracial democracy, hospitable to different but untied by a common sense of national belonging."[7] My work builds upon his by using a similar lens, but instead looking at a much larger range of movies. He, like the previous scholars mentioned, take into consideration several aspects of the movie that go beyond the platoon. Slotkin cites other, more recent films, dating all the way up to *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), but the most significant difference between our two studies is my use of categorization. The diverse squad may have been a popular technique for Hollywood during the war years, but not every military picture was structured the same. There are varying dynamics and inequalities portrayed in these squads, platoons, units, outfits, etc. that demonstrate contrasting messages to its audiences. Many times, despite the group being diverse, they still are not able to succeed, let alone unite in the way America would expect them to. Although it may not be the happy ending viewers hoped for, this outcome deserves to be explored as well. Much like the America they tried to display, these films are a diverse lot with subtle, critical differences.

Across the Pond: British Cinema During World War II

On an international level, films proved to be just as vital for morale to the British as they were to their American ally during World War II. Described by Aldgate and Richards in *Britain Can Take It: The British Cinema in the Second World War*, cinemagoing was viewed as an "essential social habit" that only continued to grow as the

[7] Richard Slotkin, "Unit Pride: Ethnic Platoons and the Myths of American Nationality," *American Literary History* 13, no. 3 (2001): 469.

war wagged on.[8] Although both nations prioritized films in their social culture, Britain had to face the challenge of turning out films while enduring disruptions consequent to its proximity to the fighting taking place on their home front. In a sense, pictures played a much larger role for the British compared to Americans; it was their way to escape the horrors and destruction of war that took place in their very own backyard. For this reason, the Ministry of Information (MoI), like the United States' Office of War Information (OWI), a government department, was responsible for distributing and monitoring propaganda during the war. However, the MoI had a heavier hand than the OWI; they not only created their own propaganda pictures but worked closely with producers to ensure that these films "followed precisely the line that the Ministry wished it to follow in mobilizing support for the war effort and in constructing the essential wartime ideology of popular national unity." The MoI played a large role in the film industry and more so than the OWI not only because Britain entered the war earlier than the United States, but because they experienced the war in ways their American ally did not. Thus, there was an enormous pressure put on the industry to carefully craft pictures expressing what exactly they were fighting for.

Although the British film industry and Hollywood both used movies as a way to communicate to their audiences messages of patriotism, democracy, and most importantly unity, each country focused on very different characteristics of their societies. While both often employed the narrative tactic of bringing a group of men together from various backgrounds in order to overcome a common cause, the types of men in these squads differed for each country. Whereas America explored variances in

[8] Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, *Britain Can Take It: The British Cinema in the Second World War* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 3; *ibid*., 10.

race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, hometown, etc., Britain primarily focused on class disparity in many of its wartime films, such as in *49th Parallel* (1941), *The New Lot* (1943). For the British, this war was the people's war and in order for that to be true, both commercial and documentary films were made to mitigate the effect of large discrepancies amongst classes. As the war went on, James Chapman explains in *The British at War: Cinema, State and Propaganda 1939-1945*, that "class differences [in films] have all but disappeared and have been replaced instead by a democratic sense of community and comradeship."[9] Class tensions were Britain's domestic battle and like America, both countries projected and resolved their nation's tensions on the silver screen for the sake of the war effort. For the United States, class was also a social issue, but it was one of many. Race riots, segregation, and legal discrimination of minorities were just a few of the undercurrents that defined the country in the 1940's. For this reason, Hollywood's pictures were often more diverse, progressive, and ultimately, better quality. In *Britain and the Cinema in the Second World War*, edited by Philip M. Taylor, the book states, "What was in fact missing was a social cinema, a cinema that went beneath melodramatic surfaces." While there is no doubt that the quality of British film improved during the war years, overall, Hollywood was more successful at influencing their audiences by using pictures that portrayed realism and depth; exactly like the kind of movies that will be discussed in this thesis.

[9] James Chapman*, British at War: Cinema, State and Propaganda 1939-1945* (London: L.B. Tauris Publishers, 1998), 161; Peter Stead, "The People as Stars: Feature Films as National Expression," in *Britain and the Cinema in the Second World War*, ed. Philip M. Taylor (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 80.

Methodology

The numerous films analyzed help my work to stand out from that of other scholars. Twelve war films made from 1940 to 1960 that center on either World War II or the Korean War have been selected for analysis based on their ability (and at times, inability) to display America's democratic values by utilizing diversity as their vehicle. Many of the squad films chosen were not always award-winning box-office hits; their ratings ranged from extremely popular to average to mediocre at best. But this then points to the reasoning behind why there is a lack of literature covering certain pictures such as *Red Ball Express* and *Battle Hymn*. Instead, popular films like *Bataan* and *Sahara* are studied repeatedly while overlooking other movies that told an equally important story. As I consider some classics, I also recognize films that have not been given the attention they deserve.

Yet upon viewing these twelve pictures (and many more), it became obvious that while there were strong similarities amongst the films, their differences were just as significant. The common denominator that strings all of these movies together is the fact that they are composed of a diverse squad of military men. Sometimes the minorities' roles were stifled and used solely for the purpose of adding color to the cast and sometimes they were highlighted in order to bring attention to the non-white man who was equally doing his part for the country. Hollywood used racial and ethnic diversity in different ways to communicate the message of democracy to its audiences and for that reason, these twelve films have been broken down into five subcategories: The Token Soldier, The Lead Minority Role, The "Diverse" Intra-American White Outfit, A Representative Squad, and White Man Saves the Day. The purpose behind breaking up

these movies into different subcategories is to acknowledge that there was no one way that Hollywood expressed diversity. Portraying diversity was only half the battle in a time when segregation and discrimination chipped away at America's united front day by day. While some films stopped at representation, others gave minorities a platform to express their frustrations with the very country they were fighting for. Democracy and diversity were illustrated in various ways; some pictures were liberating and some were confining and even contradictive, showing just how complex these movies were and reiterating the need to further unpack the idea of the American "squad" film.

In addition to watching these films, other primary sources have been considered as well. The Margaret Herrick Academy Library in Beverly Hills, California, contains countless documents, primary sources, and artifacts on thousands of films. Using its resources, I was able to pull documents on the public's response, movie reviews, magazine articles, production codes, and censorship records all relating to the twelve films in this thesis. These sources were used to better understand not only the process of diversifying and democratizing the screen but how viewers reacted to these progressive images that doubled as entertainment. By relying on sources other than the films, this paper goes beyond the work of previous scholars by creating a more rounded analysis of the movies and their impact extending far past what was portrayed in theaters. While the movie reviews measured public response, the films illustrated present-day progress but also future hopes of equality for the historically oppressed and discriminated; if the United States wanted to live up to its reputation as a free country, what Hollywood put up on the screen was just as important as what the American people made of it.

This thesis does not intend to be all inclusive nor all encompassing. The twelve films selected are a significant sample size of the numerous other squad pictures that focus on World War II and the Korean war, made from 1940-1960. The hope is that the large spectrum of films analyzed here will spark the interest and desire of readers to further analyze the non-mainstream war pictures in addition to exploring the fact that squad movies do not fit into the one size fits all category. Their differences are stark and therefore must be distributed into multiple subcategories.

Additionally, it must be noted that although this thesis is centered on films, this is not an attempt at a film studies thesis. I am not concerned with the mise en scène, the various camera angles, framing techniques, or the countless other cinematic aspects that those who study film are well versed in. As an historian, I have devoted my studies to analyzing how American democracy and diversity are interwoven on the silver screen. I will instead judge the dialogue, characters' body language, and narrative strategies of the film in order to gauge how persuasive the films' messages were at promoting unity while mitigating tensions. The motion picture is simply the medium in which this analysis takes place.

America's Social Climate

The idea that squads were triumphant when they were diverse was a popular theme in Hollywood when creating pictures about war. But diversity had many different definitions and interpretations when translated to the big screen. Diversity could mean geographical variety, signifying a group of men that are typically all white but come from different parts of the United States; a common casting technique for Hollywood up until the combat films of World War II. But as ethnic and racial minorities began to integrate

themselves into American society, characters from many different backgrounds began to appear in Hollywood films. Despite the thriving success of cinema during the Golden Age and especially during the war years, racial and ethnic tensions on the home front created a literal divide in American society.

The enforcement of Jim Crow in America along with the cultural ghettoization of communities and neighborhoods ensured that those who were not White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) were confined to separate social spheres, typically resulting in low income and disadvantaged minority populations. Long before the start of World War II, African Americans were barred from accessing the same and equal facilities, restaurants, pools, theaters and countless other social environments that white people monopolized.[10] Prejudice ran deep in America and segregation was not restricted to the deep south; it occurred nationally, there was not a state in the country where people of color were not affected by racism and discrimination.[11]

Black men were particularly hesitant to go to war for they recognized that even their heightened status as a soldier would not dissolve others' view of them as second-class citizens, although that was the hope.[12] When the World War II draft was implemented and African Americans were called upon to join the military or work in the

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[10] Quincy Lehr, "'We Are Determined to Struggle for Justice and Equality': The Civil Rights Era in African American History," *History Ireland* 15, no. 1 (2007): 45. http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.chapman.edu/stable/27725568.

[11] The following books: Beth Bailey and David Farber, *The First Strange Place: Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008); Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008); Peter S Kindsvatter, *American Soldiers: Ground Combat in the World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003) all detail racial and ethnic tensions that took place in America and abroad at war. These books will be further discussed when I outline America's social climate in this section.

[12] Earnest L. Perry Jr., "It's Time to Force a Change: The African-American Press' Campaign for a True Democracy during World War II," *Journalism History*, no. 2 (2002): 86.

war industry, patriotism was scarce and moral was low; why would they dedicate themselves to a country that would not even fight for their own democracy? On the other hand, many African American's optimistically enlisted so that they could prove their dedication to the country; regardless of their reasons for fighting, their treatment was still second-class. Many black units were not even used for combat, instead they did the trivial jobs that required almost no skill. However, when African Americans were sent to the front lines, in World War II, it was always in segregated squads; while they fought for the white man, they could not die beside him. One African American soldier for example, recalled the discouraging feeling knowing that German POWs were treated better than they were; he had to enter a Texas restaurant through the back door while the enemy and his guards ate inside.[13] Even German prisoners were allowed certain amenities that black Americans were denied. Executive Order 9981 signed by President Truman in 1948 abolished discrimination based on race in the military. This allowed desegregation to slowly take effect, but it did not come without backlash. Korea may have been the first "integrated" war, but racial strains arguably became more inflamed due to the expectations of trust and brotherhood between men who now had to rely on each other for survival.

The marginalization of African Americans and other minorities such as Mexican and Asian Americans pushed them to the periphery of society.[14] However, one way these racial and ethnic groups found a way to regain autonomy was by using their bodies, culture, and sense of fashion not only to stand out but as a way to visually symbolize their

[13] Kindsvatter, *American Soldiers,* 270.
[14] Although this type of categorization has been contested, for the sake of this paper, soldiers of Mexican, Hispanic, and/or Latino descent will be viewed as an ethnic and not racial group.

efforts to challenge the norm. From Los Angeles to New York, zoot suits were worn by multiple races and ethnicities as a way of forming their own individual culture in a country that constantly tried to stifle outsiders. The suits were oversized, often colorful, and physically dominated the space they occupied. Their choice to stand out from typical American society along with other brewing frictions resulted in the Zoot Suit Riots of 1943 that began in Los Angeles, California, and spread to various other cities in the nation. Servicemen and white civilians attacked the youthful minorities wearing zoot suits primarily because these outfits and the men themselves were viewed as anti-American symbols who were taking their women, avoiding military service, and challenging the standards of masculinity.[15] For some white Americans, the fight against the enemy did not just take place overseas.

With the attack from Japan on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Asian Americans and particularly Japanese Americans experienced an entirely new kind of suffering on the home front, one endorsed by their own government. Executive Order 9066 signed by President Roosevelt legally permitted Japanese Americans to be taken from their homes and moved to concentration camps where they could be monitored and accounted for as they were no longer trusted to participate in society due to their national association with the enemy despite their American allegiance. As described by John Howard, "The U.S. entry into World War II did not spark anti-Japanese American sentiment or set if off; it rekindled and fanned it."[16] Segregation was not a new method exploited by the United States, but the blatant effort to separate Americans from each other based on their race

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[15] Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 159.
[16] John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 62; *ibid*., 66.

and ethnicity was as prevalent as ever during World War II. The Issei and Nisei generations were relocated to various camps primarily on the West Coast where they had to adapt their cultural practices and lifestyle to conform to the needs of the prison. The camps were segregated by sex so reproduction would be limited and women like men were put to work, thus allowing the war machine to never slow down. Although many Japanese Americans approached their internment with hopeful attitudes in an effort to demonstrate their dedication to the United States, ultimately families were torn apart, lives were interrupted, and American citizens were unfairly segregated solely based on their shared ethnicity with the enemy.

As World War II came to an end in 1945, the start of the Korean War was not far behind. Beginning in 1950, the battle in East Asia kicked off the Cold War as communism quickly became a growing threat to those in the West.[17] In the name of democracy, America's intervention was a stand against communism as they fought to protect South Korea from the "Red" Korean forces in the North. While this new war involving the United States waged on, the Civil Rights Movement back home began to generate momentum as well. Predominantly centered on African Americans, it was the fight to hold the government accountable to the constitution as black men, women, and children protested, rallied, and fought for their lives. As the military was being integrated, African Americans and other minorities were simultaneously inserting themselves into historically white social spheres they had long been excluded from.[18]

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[17] Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction*. Very Short Introductions. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 50.
[18] Neil A. Wynn, *The African American Experience During World War II* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 63.

Although World War II ended in 1945 and the Korean war in 1953, the timeline for the films included in this analysis is extended to 1960. Post-1960's, the idea of the diverse squad reached a new height of popularity and was no longer a novelty in American cinema like it had been in the years prior. Additionally, it is important to note that before Executive Order 9981, films still chose to show racially integrated squads even though in World War II, this was prohibited. As previously noted, Slotkin expands on this idea of the "American myth" in combat films, the concept that "the Hollywood platoon was more than a representation of an idealized America; it was a utopian projection of the kind of nation that Hollywood, acting as custodian of public myth, thought we should and could become through the testing and transformation of the war."[19] While this type of mixed squad was unrealistic in the Second World War, sometimes accuracy was not the purpose of these movies. In fact, producers, directors, and writers at times sidestepped historical precision to achieve a greater cause, the goal of encouraging American unity. For this reason, films from both the Second World War and the Korean War are deserving sources to consider when examining the greater societal aims to promote unity across different races and ethnicities.

These diverse groups of men may have been fictional and out of place for the era, but those behind the pictures wanted to portray squads that were representative of America, no matter how inaccurate it may have been at the time; at times, it was an ideal, not reality, that they sought. The twelve motion pictures analyzed in the following pages challenged America's social climate and the deep-rooted inequalities perpetuated in society by showing people from various origins come together and unite for a common

[19] Richard Slotkin, "Unit Pride: Ethnic Platoons and the Myths of American Nationality," *American Literary History* 13, no. 3 (2001): 486.

cause. Winning the war was always the goal in these movies but putting aside differences was often the only way to emerge triumphant. This sent a message to audiences that America will only win when both soldiers and civilians work together. Yet, democracy on the silver screen was not always about displaying the highpoints of ethnic and racial integration. At times, it was about showing the tough moments, when soldiers did not see eye-to-eye, when internal controversy in the squad took precedence over the war effort. Even when the white protagonist notably overshadows the minority characters, there is still underlying democratic motives. While the methods in which democracy was shown in squad films largely varied, the intent behind these pictures served as the common denominator. No matter how it was done, Hollywood recognized that America was not only stronger but victorious when its diverse groups could be brought together. During World War II and the Korean War, unity on both fronts was as important as ever, not only for the present but the future success of the nation as well.

The Token Soldier

In many Hollywood films, it was typical to find at least one minority character in the cast. Add in the fact that the nation was at war and the effort to promote unity in America became a priority, and this possibility was even more common. "The Token Soldier" is a war film subcategory that deserves analysis because this was one of the most basic and simplistic ways Hollywood attempted to be inclusive. Although "The Token Soldier" is not the most progressive sub-category of squad films, it was a popular way that diversity was portrayed on the silver screen. The focus of this section will be on the film *Lifeboat* (1944), in which Canada Lee plays the one person of color in a squad of all white characters.

Other pictures like *Guadalcanal Diary* (1943) and *Men in War* (1957) also contained token soldiers in their cast. Yet in both films, "Soose" (Anthony Quinn), the Hispanic soldier in *Guadalcanal Diary* and Sergeant Killian (James Edwards), an African American mechanic in *Men in War*, acted as nothing but symbols of their stereotypes. Kathryn Kane in her book, *Visions of War* described Soose's ethnic character as a soldier who displayed "a harmless innocence that somehow has existed into manhood."[20] This characterization is shown most profoundly when he is killed by a Japanese bullet while laughing in the midst of an attack. Killian dies in a similar manner: the soldier is picking flowers while on watch duty but is stabbed in the back by a North Korean soldier. Both scenes paint the men as naïve and unaware, stereotypes that were easily pushed upon minority characters within all white units. In contrast, Canada Lee's character in *Lifeboat* was granted slightly more agency. He was given more lines and a larger role in the film compared to the other two. All three films included diversity as well as moments of democracy. Despite the fact that the token soldier is often underutilized within the squad, *Lifeboat* demonstrated the various ways in which the minority character was both liberated and limited through his role in the film.

Lifeboat

A product of the powerhouse combination of Alfred Hitchcock and John Steinbeck, *Lifeboat* (1944) takes place entirely on a shipwrecked lifeboat comprised of nine strangers trying to work together to survive. With the help of Jo Swerling who wrote the screenplay, Hitchcock embodied democracy at its finest by putting together an assortment of Americans, British, and one German who are forced to collectively make

[20] Kane, *Visions of War: Hollywood Combat Films of World War II*, 71.

tough decisions in order to live. The headliner of *Lifeboat* is Tallulah Bankhead, a star actress at the time; but for the purpose of the thesis, women will not be considered a part of the squad due to the parameters outlined previously, their roles will not go unmentioned either. The squad is six men, consisting of two Brits, one German, and three Americans; one of whom is African American. The close quarters of the lifeboat and their desperate condition created tense situations amongst the men and women where their values of democracy clash directly with their need to survive. The film stretched the classic definition of an American squad primarily because of the unique environment the men have to endure. Furthermore, *Lifeboat* qualifies within the category of "The Token Soldier" primarily for its inclusion of Joe, an African American steward, but at moments Willi, the German survivor also sticks out. While the former is downplayed, the latter is highlighted, demonstrating a stark imbalance within the squad that was supposed to promote the Allied cause.

The plot of the film is relatively straightforward given the squad's confinement to the boat, but it is the various characters and the elements of the sea that cause turmoil. An American vessel has just been torpedoed by a German submarine and the first one onto the lifeboat is Connie Porter (Tallulah Bankhead), a sharp-witted journalist who revels in material items. John Kovac (John Hodiak) is a crew member from the engine room who later demonstrates confidence and the ability to lead. Stanley Garret (Hume Cronyn) and Charles "Ritt" Rittenhouse (Henry Hull) join, the former a British radio operator and the latter a British millionaire in the shipbuilding industry. Alice Mackenzie (Mary Anderson), a young and gentle American Army nurse and Gus Smith (William Bendix), a hearty sailor from Brooklyn who has an injured leg, are picked up as well. Next Joe

(Canada Lee), an African American steward with a passive attitude is rescued with Mrs. Higgins (Heather Angel), a British woman who quickly kills herself in the beginning of the film when she realizes her baby died in the attack. Lastly, a German survivor Willi (Walter Slezak) is saved. He ironically turns out to be the captain of the Uboat that sunk the American vessel.

The immediate and most pressing issue the squad faces is if they can trust the German who they agreed to keep on the lifeboat. They have no compass and no idea which direction to steer the lifeboat, while the German is knowledgeable about the mid-Atlantic waters, the others are not confident in the enemy's loyalty to the group. As the film goes on, the squad loses a few players and the rest of the survivors cannot decide on what's best for the group and end up floating in the middle of the ocean, waiting to be rescued. The last scene is the lifeboat drifting towards a German ship who they believe will take them in just like they took in Willi. Suddenly, American forces start bombing the German ship and there is the feeling of déjà vu from the opening scene. Another German survivor climbs aboard the lifeboat but points a gun at his saviors, however the squad has learned their lesson this time. The movie ends with an open-ended question from Kovac, "What are you gonna do with people like that?"[21] Hinting at the larger question of the Second World War: how is the world going to combat those who exploit and take advantage of the people who believe in morality and human rights?

Although not combat centered war film, the values expressed in *Lifeboat* are just as strong as any other war movies. The continued need to vote and have a leader along with the depiction of the German as inhumane and unworthy of trust emphasizes

[21] All quotes from this section are from *Lifeboat,* 1944.

American values and the nation's sentiment during World War II. The various characters included in the film gave complexity to the idea of American democracy, that it not only encompasses white men, but their British Allies, people of color, and sometimes even the enemy. However, while the white characters engaged in dialogue, Joe often fades into the background, only to speak when spoken to. His role as the token minority figure displays diversity in the film, but the crew only views him as someone to do the janitorial tasks around the lifeboat. He is, however, given the chance to vote. While democracy and acts of humanity are shown in the film, the squad displays its weaknesses as a cohesive unit, only being able to unite through their hatred of the enemy.

When discussing whether or not they should throw Willi off the boat, the squad voices many different opinions. On one hand there is Kovac, who is working class and strongly anti-German, he refuses to allow Willi use of their minimal resources. Then there is the sympathetic side, which believes in the rights of a POW, shown through Ritt and the women. These various opinions touch on the popular debate of humanity's place in war. When Kovac states, "The boat's too small for me and this German," Ritt replies, "Me, I'm perfectly willing to abide by the decision of the majority. That's the American way. If we harm this man, we are guilty of the same tactics you hate him for. On the other hand, if we treat him with kindness and consideration, we might be able to convert him to our way of thinking. That's the Christian way." Gus chimes in, "Me, too. Just for the record, I'm an American, myself. I'm in a kind of a spot. My name is Schmidt, but I changed it to Smith. That's what I got against these guys more than anything else. They make me ashamed of the name I was born with. […] I say throw him to the sharks." But Stanley reminds the lot that they haven't got the right to turn away the German, "Well,

he's a prisoner of war. Got to be treated as such. The way it's done is to hang on to him till we're picked up then turn him over to proper authorities. Till such time, we represent the authorities. That's clear, isn't it?" Kovac asks what Joe thinks of the situation, he replies "Do I get to vote too?" Confused, Ritt answers, "Why- why certainly!" Joe's reply is rather telling as he says, "Guess I'd rather stay out of this."

While everyone is chiming in with their opinions (the women too), they weigh their heritage and their beliefs in the process of making this moral decision. When they vote to keep Willi aboard, the outcome confirms not only the importance of the laws of armed conflict, but the idea of many people coming together from various backgrounds to agree on what's best for the majority. What is surprising is Joe's decision to remove himself from the voting process as if the result did not directly affect his well-being too. Joe's response touches on the African American's experience in the United States, in which their opinions were neither valued or ever considered. In 1944, African Americans could vote, but the various obstructions put in place never made it easy to.[22] However, when it was time to vote again on the lifeboat, this time for who should be skipper, Joe joins in and Kovac is unanimously elected. Showing a black man voting on the big screen in 1944 was a momentous decision by the filmmakers and the writers for it directly advocated for equal rights. Whether it was a life or death decision, as it was in the film or basic political participation, the message was clear; African Americans should have an equal say too.

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[22] Quincy Lehr, "'We Are Determined to Struggle for Justice and Equality': The Civil Rights Era in African American History," *History Ireland* 15, no. 1 (2007): 44. Lehr's article provides a brief survey of the African American experience from Reconstruction to the Civil Rights Movement. Poll taxes and literacy tests were the primary methods used to suppress African Americans from voting. While these impediments also effected poor whites, the main purpose was to deny African Americans any rights they had acquired from the Reconstruction period and further marginalize them from society.

The German continues to test the unity of the group when the squad has to decide whether or not he was telling the truth about the direction the boat is heading in. While Ritt believes Willi ought to be woken up and questioned, Kovac counters, “What for? We’ll get nothing but lies. That’s what he was brought up on.” But Ritt reminds the Americans of a fundamental facet of their law, “And I was brought up under the idea that a man is innocent until he’s proved guilty.” As a result, Kovac calls on Joe to “operate” commanding that he uses his past skills of thievery to swipe Willie’s pocket watch believed to be a compass. While this stereotype is downplayed in the scene, the connection between the African American man and being a criminal is clearly expressed. However, Joe is hesitant and refuses until Kovac demands that he do it. This passive attitude from Joe continues throughout the film, shown most explicitly when every person on the boat goes to beat Willi for what he had done to Gus. As the mass charges forward, Joe stays back, watching. In a way, Joe both portrays and contradicts many stereotypes often associated with people of color such as violence and having a temperament. Although Joe did have a lawless past, he is shown as a steward who is peaceful, religious, and levelheaded. While his peers give in to their anger and collectively rob the German of his rights as a prisoner, Joe does not. In *Lifeboat*, Joe’s actions are often more telling than his words for he is given very few lines; but he continually reminds audiences of his morality, especially when the film is concluding and Ritt is taken aback by the fact that Joe is married, he replies, “Those things happen to everybody, you know.”

The reviews raved about Hitchcock’s *Lifeboat* and the various messages that it relayed to audiences. Described by *Hollywood Reporter* as “one of the most pertinent and

disturbing war pictures that has come out of Hollywood," *Variety* also praised the movie for being one of the "first films to deal with the problem of the peoples of Germany." *Motion Picture Daily* sent the very stark message that the "callous few who still may be harboring the delusion that underneath the Nazi uniform there beats the simple, human heart of a barbarian who may someday be reclaimed by civilization, there is a message of disillusion and hopelessness in 'Lifeboat.'"[23] The intended message was well received by those who watched it, raising awareness on Germans' deceitful tactics, and letting the public know to never trust the enemy. Like various other war films, the enemy token soldier is utilized to further divide the globe as well as to continue propelling the war machine forward.

Whereas other war pictures use combat and actions to depict American ideals, the squad in *Lifeboat* portrays democracy primarily through their discussions. The decision to practice their right to vote also relates to their privilege to decide their own fate and when called upon to respect the rules of war: the squad did as they were expected to as members of the Allied countries. While the enemy was highlighted, their own minority peer was not; one review of the picture did take note of Canada Lee's character, he wrote "impresses soundly as Joe, the Negro mess-steward. He performs with magnificent dignity an assignment that is truly eloquent for its repressions. It is only strange that he was not given more to do."[24] Ultimately, the focus on the film was hardly on the squad itself but on the enemy. The men and women on the lifeboat banded together only to take

[23] Irving Hoffman, "Few Faults Found by N.Y. Reviewers," *Hollywood Reporter*, January 17, 1944; Mori, "Film Review," *Variety*, January 12, 1944; Sherwin Kane, "Lifeboat," *Motion Picture Daily*, January 12, 1944, all from the Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.
[24] "'Lifeboat' Hitchcock Smash; Great Dramatic Triumph," Hollywood Reporter, January 12, 1944, Production Code Files, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

down Willi; while they were eventually successful at defeating the German, the film sends the message that the world was still at war and some people do not deserve to be protected by democracy.

The Lead Minority Role

In Hollywood war films from the 1940's-1960's, it was not unusual to see a picture with a diverse cast; in fact, many reporters often tired of this "melting pot" cinema tactic and viewed it as cliché. What was uncommon in the industry was awarding the leading role to a minority, and in this case, two African American actors well known in the business each got the chance to be at the forefront of their films. Although they may not be credited first or described as the lead actor, both James Edwards and Sidney Poitier in the movies, *Home of the Brave* (1949) and *All the Young Men* (1960) were the main focus of their pictures. The plot depended on them and the story revolved around the two more than anyone else in their squad, giving them both a rare spotlight that most minorities in film never achieved at the time. Regardless of their leading roles, both Edwards and Poitier are very much still a part of a squad in the movies, where race is consistently debated due to the prominence of their characters. Where other squad films fall short, *Home of the Brave* and *All the Young Men* succeed by not only starring someone who is not white, but allowing democratic dialogue to take place that reflected the then current controversies over race and color.

Home of the Brave

Directed by Mark Robson, produced by Stanley Kramer, and released by United Artists, *Home of the Brave* (1949) was a ground-breaking film for its time. Described by

multiple reports as the "[…] first picture dealing with anti-Negro prejudice," the World War II movie paved the way for the various other pictures that would also center on the life of an African American man.[25] Based on a play that originally cast the protagonist as a Jew, the picture was adapted in an effort to confront the pressing issues of racism in the United States. In addition to creating a film centered on an African American soldier who directly talks about racism in a time when Jim Crow laws were strictly enforced in the United States, what was equally impressive was the massive media response as well as the overwhelmingly favorable reactions, even in the deep south. As a result, compared to other squad films that show diversity and may even discuss the character's differences, the movie reviews interpreted *Home of the Brave* as an opportunity to elaborate on the day's social tensions. The picture did more than represent America's democratic aspirations while showing the controversial side too, it provided citizens the chance to start having conversations that were long overdue. The issue of race was now on the silver screen fully and completely.

Given the obvious intent of the movie, the plot is not overly complex. Private Peter Moss, played by James Edwards, joins an all white squad as a surveyor, but the men are extremely doubtful of their new African American peer, except for Finch (Lloyd Bridges), an old high school buddy, who is white. Major Robinson (Douglas Dick) assembles the squad and gives them their mission but is not a part of the core group and initially tries to reject Moss because of his skin color. The rest of the squad reacts in a similar way; Sergeant Mingo (Frank Lovejoy) and T.J. Everett (Steve Brodie) both

[25] "Home of the Brave: Superb Lesson in Tolerance," *Motion Picture Herald*, April 29, 1949, Production Code Files, Microfiche, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

represent the average white American who are diverse only in the way they interact with Moss. Whereas T.J.'s prejudice is constant throughout the movie, Mingo is hesitant of Moss in the beginning but throughout the course of war, realizes he is much more than his stereotypes.

As the group embarks on their mission together on a Japanese island during World War II, T.J.'s racist views are continually articulated, never trying to hide his bias while Mingo and Finch become increasingly aware of just how hurtful these words are, and as a result often defend Moss. When the squad comes under attack by the Japanese, Finch is shot and captured while the others were able to get away. However, once Moss realizes his best friend had been taken, he discovers that he cannot move his legs due to shock. The men are forced to evacuate without Finch. Once safe, Moss is evaluated by the army doctor who pushes him to reflect on what really caused his paralyzed legs. Eventually the Doctor pulls it out of him; living a life full of oppression and hurt amounted to his breaking point when he lost his only friend in the squad that saw him as an equal. In the end, Moss is "cured" and leaves the army as a new man. This is a story of a black man in America who enlists for his country in World War II despite the racism he had faced and walks away from his service now knowing his worth as a man because of his experiences in war.

T.J.'s role as the antagonist created the most controversy in the movie, fueling Moss's anger while also allowing the other men to bond together in opposition to his racist comments. Moments after Moss had joined the squad, T.J. says to Mingo, "We got our out. Sure, right there it is, big and black. You know when you volunteer to go on a mission, Mingo, you pick your own company, I don't know about you, but I'm not going

on a job like this with some boogie."[26] He goes on to state, " […] why do you think the army kept them out of the lines?" American democracy does not always represent the success of the country but it admits the faults as well. The country's long history of racism was still very much present in 1949, and by allowing this kind of rhetoric to be presented on the silver screen, the film sent the message that bigoted individuals like T.J. exist. Brodie's character's perspective on African Americans in the armed services was not unusual nor uncommon, he symbolized real thoughts and attitudes of soldiers who did not want to serve alongside men of color and also did not care to hide these concerns.[27] Any war film that displays a diverse squad but does not support it with interactive dialogue falls short of its goal. Without these tough conversations, like the ones between Moss and the white men, the result would be a diverse picture, but one with a simplistic portrayal of race realities in the United States.

T.J.'s racist comments do not subside no matter how many dirty looks or responses he gets from his squad. In another scene, T.J. commands Moss to deliver a compass to the major, despite T.J. having a lower rank than Moss. Finch intervenes, "Listen here Theo, if my major sent you for the compass then you get it. He stood guard two nights out of three while you snored your fat face off. The major told him to take it easy today and you know it so leave him alone." In response, T.J. spits back at Finch, "Listen to the nigger lover, I thought you'd get around to that." The stereotyping and vulgar name calling by T.J. is difficult to watch for he is entirely unapologetic for his words, nor does he see anything wrong with what says. Little to no character

[26] All quotes from this section are from *Home of the Brave*, 1949.
[27] Thomas A Bruscino, *A Nation Forged in War : How World War II Taught Americans to Get Along* (Knoxville: Univ Tennessee Press, 2010), 96.

development takes place within T.J. and by the end of the movie, his insensitive remarks persist, sending the message to audiences how ingrained and normal these racist views were for some people, both in World War II and long after.

Even Major Robinson, the man who creates the squad shows signs of prejudice throughout the film, although his views are much more reserved. When Moss was assigned to the group, Robinson immediately phoned his corporal and asked why they sent him a colored surveyor. The corporal, outraged by this complaint in a time of war, responded, "I wouldn't care if he was purple all over and had green stripes down his back." In another scene, Robinson admitted to Mingo, "It's funny, ever since we got on this island, I never think of him as being black." Mingo replies, "Yeah it is funny. I never think of you as being white." Embarrassed Robinson, says, "I guess I said the wrong thing." Moss's color is at the forefront of the film and a large aspect of the picture is how each character accepts his presence in the squad, including Moss himself. At one end of the spectrum is Finch who wants Moss to be there and sees him as fellow soldier; on the other end is T.J. In the middle resides Robinson, Mingo, and even Moss, who is constantly confused as to what his role is, both in the unit and in society.

Audiences witness Moss's internal strife; he goes from defending himself against T.J.'s comments, to breaking down and calling himself a "nigger." He confesses to his squad, "I'm busy trying to understand all this stuff about negros. […] You're alone, you're strange. You're something different. You make us different! What do you want us to do! What do you want us to be!" Here, viewers witness the struggle a black man in America has with his identity, especially when called to serve "his" country. Moss becomes even more distraught in a moment of high stress when Finch proves he is just

like the rest of the men in the squad and begins to call Moss a "nigger" but stops himself before he can finish the word. Seconds later, Finch is shot and while lying in the arms of Moss, he rapidly apologizes for what he had almost called his friend. Moss runs to get help, but it's too late and Finch has been taken; this is when Moss's legs become paralyzed and has to be carried out by Mingo and T.J.

When Moss and the doctor are rehashing this experience, it becomes evident that the reason Moss could not walk goes beyond the shock of losing his friend. Their conversation quickly focuses on Moss's race as the root of his problems. Doc replies:

> "There, that sensitivity, that's the disease you got. It was there before anything happened on that island. It started way back. It's not your fault, you didn't ask for it. It's a legacy. One-hundred and fifty years of slavery, of second-class citizenship, of being different. You have that feeling of difference pounded into you when you were a child and being a child, you turned it into a feeling of guilt. You always had that guilt inside you. That's why it was so easy for you to feel guilty about Finch. You understand?"

This scene between Moss and the Doctor is where the film becomes controversial. The white doctor constantly reassures Moss that he is the same as everybody else, calling his built-up frustration a "disease" and telling him that he needs to be "cured"; this implies that Moss is the problem rather than the society who had consistently oppressed him and every other person of color. It's understood that the Doctor is trying to be sympathetic as well as progressive, but the dialogue is off; Moss is the victim but somehow also the perpetrator? In an attempt to get Moss to get out of bed, the doctor angers him, he yells, "You dirty nigger get up and walk!" As a result, Moss pushes himself off the bed and staggers over to Doc, only to fall into his arms. Ironically, the exact language that caused Moss so much distress and trauma had also "cured" him. An unrealistic scenario, but the intent of demonstrating racial equality is there.

The exchange between Moss, the black soldier and the white doctor attempts to dispel racism by phrasing it as a medical disease, promoting the idea that prejudice and deep-rooted oppression can eventually go away or be "cured." While this notion is idealistic and sends a hopeful message to its viewers about the future for African Americans in the United States, racism and the pain that it has caused cannot be healed through one conversation, and especially not when it's being preached by a white man. Nonetheless, *Home of the Brave* inspired its audiences to view race not as an inherent sign of superiority or inferiority. This concept is reemphasized in one of the last scenes when Moss rejoins Mingo who had lost an arm in the attack. The two discuss opening up a bar together, the same one that Moss and Finch had originally talked about. Despite Moss claiming that, "It just wouldn't work," Mingo reassures that the two are more alike than they are different. Once angered and frustrated by the white man, Moss leaves now seeing them as his allies. Moss's democratic story comes full circle, beginning as a distressed man who faces hardship and ends with the help of the doctor and his squad, as a man who has overcome his history of prejudice through his experience in the military.

The reviews for *Home of the Brave* were not only unanimously positive but insightful as to what this picture meant for the African American community and for the country as a whole. Regardless of the moments that missed the mark at the end of the film, many of the reviewers appreciated the picture for the message it sent. The *Hollywood Reporter* commended the movie on its transparency, "Yet its message is not offered as a sanctimonious sermon of brotherhood. It does not say, 'We must be kind to a Negro because he is a Negro.' Rather it emphasizes and affirms the idea that we must endeavor to understand a man whose skin is black because he is a man." In *Home of the*

Brave, there is no choice but to analyze the "race question." The *New York Times* observed, "So one is provoked to question, in view of this normal response, why the subject of Negro-white relations has been taboo in our films for so long. Why, since a decent discussion of racism makes a powerful film, should our Hollywood people have eschewed it- or side-stepped it- for so many years. And why, now that this film projects it in an honest and stimulating way, should there be some reported reluctance by some theatre men to give it time?" The *Life* review blamed the South as to why films featuring black and white tensions have been taboo for so long, implying that this trend should be reversed.[28]

However, there were some minor criticism of the film. *Time* called it "propaganda" for its use of actors to articulate a specific message and the *New Yorker* was also not impressed with the end of the movie.[29] The reviews were concerned about the realism, "I doubt that the scars of race prejudice can be healed as neatly and briskly as 'Home of the Brave' would have us believe." This is one of the few reviews that saw past the surface level idea of "curing" Moss. Albeit *Home of the Brave* was no quick fix to racism, it did give a significant platform to an African American who in turn, brought attention to the plethora of issues black people faced in the United States.

Surprisingly, the picture was booked in theaters in the South and the responses were overwhelmingly positive. *LA Daily News* and another *Times* article wrote about

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[28] "Home of the Brave," *Hollywood Reporter*, April 29, 1949. Production Code Files. Microfiche; Bosley Crowther, "Tackling a Problem: The Question of Showing 'Home of the Brave,'" *New York Times*, May 22, 1949, Production Code Files, Microfiche; "Home of the Brave: An outspoken film is first to break Hollywood's taboo against treating the Negro problem in America," *Life*, May 23, 1949, Production Code Files, Microfiche, all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

[29] "The New Pictures- Home of the Brave," *Time*, May 9, 1949. Production Code Files, Microfiche; "The Current Cinema- The Color Line," *New Yorker*, May 21, 1949, Production Code Files. Microfiche, all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

how the public in Texas reacted to the film. A young boy said, "'I sure felt sorry for that Negro,'" another older kid stated that, "'He was a real guy,'" the tone was overall sympathetic from these white viewers.[30] The article even included a quote from a Mexican couple, who declared, "This is just as much against other discrimination." Even a traffic cop admitted that he did "'not care for colored in pictures but this was a good one.'" Overall, the film was well received, and not just by Americans, but Americans from the deep south. *Times* noted that two days after the opening in Texas, there had been no reports of incidents or customer complaints, implying the direct effect the movie had on its viewers. Extra accommodations were made for African Americans trying to see the film, including opening an extra balcony in a segregated theatre and despite some theatres only allowing them in after midnight, a black elevator operator reported that, "99% of the people say it's educational, the other 1% say it's good."

In an interview with James Edwards, the actor who played Private Moss had a few words to say about the film. He believed, "'It stimulates thoughts,' […] 'That's the best we can do.'"[31] An upper-class resident from Los Angeles wrote a card to Edwards, saying, "You have made me feel ashamed,'" his response was simple, "'That's the best a film like this can accomplish- to get people to think about a problem.'" *Home of the Brave* may have not handled race and diversity in the utmost realistic way, but it was the first of war films to spotlight a man of color and all the problems that came with being black in America. It did not solve racism, but it did create a conversation and resonated

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[30] Darr Smith, "Home of the Brave," *L.A. Daily News*, August 11, 1949, Production Code Files, Microfiche; "Texas Plunge," *Time*, July 18, 1949. Production Code Files, Microfiche, all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

[31] "Actor Sees Trend Towards Realism," *Motion Picture Herald*, June 11, 1949, Production Code Files, Microfiche, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

with those who saw it, especially the white population. It made people reflect on a problem that had never been hidden in the United States but had been separated from the cinema; the very place people went to enjoy films was beginning to project America's less admirable aspects of society.

All the Young Men

Made ten years after the start of the Korean War, *All the Young Men* (1960) was another one of the very few films that awarded a minority with the leading role. Written, directed, and produced by Hall Bartlett, the picture stars Sidney Poitier as the protagonist, Sergeant Eddie Towler. Although it may have been unusual for people of color to be the main character in pictures between 1940-1960, it was even more unusual for non-white men to have the main role in a war movie. This is largely due to the fact that it was not typical of men of color to lead integrated squads in World War II, however this norm changed in the Korean War. As seen in *Home of the Brave*, it was also rare to have a film focus on the one minority character in a group consisting mostly of white men. But Truman's Executive Order No. 9981 of 1948, allowed for racial integration of the armed forces, which then gave the film *All the Young Men* a valid platform to portray minorities in powerful, leading ranks. The film is transparent in the sense that it does not glorify America's democratic ideals and culture, instead it shows the country's deep-rooted prejudices and flaws as well. When Sergeant Towler, an African American soldier, is instructed by the dying lieutenant to lead the squad over Kincaid, a man with many more years of experience, several men doubt Towler's qualifications while some are outright hostile towards him based on race. Despite the men's continuous dissent, hope and perseverance are also themes of the film. Like every other movie in this paper, it is the

classic scenario of the mixed squad overcoming a problem together, however, this time, a colored man spearheads the mission.

The plot of the movie focuses more on the twelve men traveling and then eventually fighting together, allowing many moments throughout the picture where audiences get to know each of the characters individually. The film opens up with the group trekking through the snowy mountains in North Korea when they are attacked and Lieutenant Toland dies, thus passing command to Sergeant Towler. Now Towler, a black man, leads a squad of eleven men, consisting of an ex-sergeant (Kincaid), a Swedish immigrant (Torgil), a Navajo (Hunter), a racist Southerner (Bracken), a wholesome, lighthearted youngster (Cotton), the medic (Wade), a humorous comic (Crane), a cowboy from New Mexico (Casey), a quiet man from Indiana (Lazitch), and lastly, two other American boys (Jackson and Dean). Some roles are more important than others but unlike many other war films, Hall Bartlett does a good job at giving most of the members of the group some memorable qualities to help distinguish them amongst their peers.

The goal of the squad is to find and hold a Korean farm house at the strategic pass north of Majon-ni in order to allow future battalions to pass safely. When they finally make it to the farm house, they set up camp, but are fully aware of how vulnerable their position is for there are North Korean soldiers everywhere. Many of the squad members are picked off by the enemy but in the end, American reinforcements arrive just in time to save the few remaining men.

Racial prejudice is quickly introduced when Towler inherits the squad in the beginning of the film. Many of the men believed that Private Kincaid should have been given command of the group because he is more experienced; even Towler admits it. But

he does not let his skin color allow the other soldiers to defy his rank. When Kincaid asks who is going to take the lead in the upcoming field scattered with explosive mines, Towler sarcastically responds, "You'll be able to see me real good up there against the snow."[32] Towler is neither naïve nor blind as to why some men in the squad do not trust him, however that does not stop him from leading with authority. Despite his confidence, Towler does not develop a significant friendship with any of the other men. He is an outsider, just like in society, but this does not deter him from commanding the squad, for he has a mission to complete. Towler makes a definitive statement after being questioned by Kincaid, "I'm gonna run this outfit the way I see it, and the only person who's got to like it is me." While the other men develop relationships amongst themselves, Towler has to lead and make unpopular decisions, and even though the men may disagree, they always follow.

Aside from Towler serving as the Lead Minority Role, there are other races and ethnicities present that help reinforce the diverse and thus democratic nature of the squad. There is Torgil the Swede, who sings in his native tongue while reminiscing of his mother country and the Navajo Indian, Hunter who brings up his heritage multiple times. The rest are classic American men who each have their own supporting personalities to add depth to the film. Torgil shows his loyalty to the United States in a conversation with Kincaid when he shares his reasoning for serving in a war for a country that was not yet his, "I'd like to live in America and bring my family over. Serve in the war, citizen in one year, simple." Hunter, the Navajo Indian has a minor role in the picture but every time he speaks, he talks of his culture. When Towler allowed him to patrol the perimeter of the

[32] All quotes from this section are from *All the Young Men,* 1960.

farm house, they set up a secret word, “yatahey” a greeting used to say hello to an old friend one has not seen in a while. When he departs, he says to the Sergeant, “See you on the reservation.” Both soldiers add depth to the squad by demonstrating the varying definitions of what it means to be American. There is the immigrant and the Native Indian, both part of minority groups that have experienced discrimination in American history, but this fact is never brought up. The two are serving to prove their loyalty to the nation while only exuding traits of hope and positivity; the discussion of race is saved for Towler.

Bracken serves as the insubordinate private in the group who regularly uses offensive language towards Towler and frequently indulges in liquor at the farm. When asked by Towler to dig a grave for one of their soldiers, he refuses and says, “Now, where I come from, Towler, the black man does the digging.” He goes on to dehumanize the African American community as a whole by stating, “He’s never commanded anything in his whole life. See they’re just not able to do it. They’re not born to do it.” In an apparent effort to villainize Bracken even more, he is shown drunkenly entering a room where he finds Maya, a young Korean/European woman who lived in the barn. He tries to force himself on her but Towler walks in, the Sergeant is furious over what he is seeing. Bracken pushes back, calling him a “nigger” and begins to yell, “Starting to sweat, black boy? […] Remember what you say, boy? You remember how to say, ‘excuse me’? ‘Excuse me, sir,’ huh? Now let me hear it boy, I want to hear ‘sir’ I want to hear those words.” In a controlled but dangerous tone, Towler responds, “Excuse me, sir. The next time you come in here without a direct order from me, I’m gonna take you out and shoot you. Now get out.”

In these various moments of the film, common stereotypes and prejudices arise from Bracken, a symbol of the deep American South who still holds onto slave culture, almost a hundred years later. Towler also defies the stereotype that has often been tied to blacks in America, the perception that they are rapists and savages. Instead, in *All the Young Men* it is Bracken, the white man, who displays these characteristics. And when he asks Towler if he's sweating, the irony in the scene is that it is actually Bracken who is perspiring nervously. Towler throws him out and threatens to shoot him if he disobeys orders, thus putting an end to Bracken's monstrous behavior in the film. The decision to take familiar stereotypes typically associated with African Americans and ingrain them in Bracken's character demonstrated Hall Bartlett's and more broadly, Hollywood's, intention to disprove these inaccurate stereotypes. Throughout the whole picture, Towler acts with nothing but dignity and bravery, never allowing any words from his inferiors to break him.

Similar to Towler's relationship with Bracken, he and Kincaid also share tense moments in the movie, but the significant difference between the two dynamics is that Kincaid and Towler come to form a mutual respect for each other. Early on in the film when the men openly challenged Towler and his decisions, Kincaid calls him out for trying to prove his worth by risking the lives of his men. Kincaid claims, "Nine marines and one black man with an ax to grind. We'll pull out, and you'll be a hero. You might even get the Navy Cross. And when all your people hear what you've done, they'll build a statue for you in the cotton fields." These types of remarks derived from slave culture show viewers just how imbedded racism was in all kinds of Americans and it comes in varying levels. Kincaid was a respected and experienced soldier who was supposed to be

next in command, yet even he was prejudiced. However, Kincaid is not the same person as Bracken; his personal growth throughout the film symbolizes social progress in the United States.

After Kincaid's leg gets run over by a tank, he is in desperate need for a blood transfusion, and Sergeants Towler is the only other O blood type in the squad. All the men are hesitant at first but come to realize Kincaid's life is more important than their biased suspicions. The transfusion is a success, but the farm house suddenly is attacked by the North Koreans and Towler is responsible for Kincaid. He cries to Kincaid, "I'm not leaving you here, tiger. I've got an investment in you. Some of my best blood is running through your veins." Because even blood in the Red Cross was segregated depending on race, the very idea of Towler's African American blood being transfused into Kincaid's white bloodstream was a bold and radical statement for the time.[33] In a democratic manner, the institutional barriers placed on blood distribution are dissolved and the skin color of the donor is no longer a valid excuse to refuse aid. Towler's personal sacrifice to this racist man and Kincaid's acceptance of a black man's blood demonstrates courage from both soldiers. Audiences are left on a hopeful note as they witness Towler's undying dedication to his men as well as Kincaid's evolution from a racist individual to an indebted and now transformed squad member. American reinforcements arrive at the last minute and rescue the remaining men. Towler and Kincaid wish each other a Merry Christmas and their differences are finally put to rest. The dramatic decision to use a blood transfusion as a way to represent equality and

[33] Doherty, *Projections of War*, 206.

discredit racism presented to viewers what dialogue could not; Towler was now a part of Kincaid and any prejudice beliefs were no longer valid.

In addition to *Home of the Brave*, the reviews for *All the Young Men* did not miss the racial tensions that drove the picture. *Motion Picture Daily* called it a "timely thesis on the need for racial tolerance, with highly controversial, dramatic situations employed to convey the message."[34] The *Hollywood Reporter* claimed, "In 'All the Young Men,' Hall Bartlett opens the door on some pressing contemporary problems as well as some ageless ones […] The film has two basic fields of action, to achieve its military goals as a unit, and to solve its personal and racial enmities as individuals." However, some reviews criticized the film's authenticity. *Variety* expressed skepticism, doubting that racial prejudice would be "so strong and open a factor in a bitter battlefield struggle for survival." This questioning of how skin color would clout the soldiers' ability to work together comes across as naïve today, but this perspective showed how detached some Americans were with the realities of their country's social climate. Regardless of the attempt by the press to downplay these tensions, racial prejudice was a real barrier African Americans had to endure, even in war.

While the reality of the film was questioned, the minority roles were praised. Ingemar Johansson who played the "noble Swede," was a favorite for journalists to write about due to his professional boxing career and the fact that he was not an actor at all,

[34] Samuel D. Berns, "All the Young Men," *Motion Picture Daily*, August 3, 1950, Special Collections, Motion Picture Association of America, Production Code Administration records; James Powers, "Hall Bartlett Film Should Show Profit," *Hollywood Reporter*, August 3, 1960, Production Code Files for *All the Young Men*; Tube, "All The Young Men," *Variety*, August 4, 1960, Production Code Files, all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

thus drawing some outside interest and star power to the picture.[35] Mario Alcalde who played Hunter was rarely mentioned for his role, but was called out in *Mirror Newspaper* as "a well-used minority type who sympathizes with the sergeant because he is a member of a maligned race." As for the lead, a review from the *LA Times* wrote, "Poitier's performance is best of the lot, despite the fact that we are told nothing of his background except that he is black and brave." Most reviews praised Poitier's and the other actors' roles, going as far as to ask more from the movie and its character development.

All the Young Men gave a platform to an African American man to heroically lead his squad despite the racial backlash he faced from his inferiors. In the midst of the Civil Rights Movement, this film presented a realistic look at what it meant to have a person of color take charge of an outfit made up of mostly white men. The squad's journey was filled with tension, dialogue, and sacrifice; allowing various soldiers in the squad to unite and bury their prejudices as they come to respect their fearless leader. The motley crew of men who were generally not fond of Sergeant Towler depicted a very accurate story to audiences in 1960; that African American men in the military often had to work twice as hard just to give themselves the chance to be viewed as an equal to their peers, even if they outranked the white men.

[35] *Saturday Review*, August 20, 1960. Production Code Files for *All the Young Men*; Margaret Harford, "All the Young Men," *Mirror Newspaper*, September 8, 1960. Production Code Files; John L. Scott, "Bigotry Under Fire Theme of War Movie," *LA Times*, September 8, 1960, Production Code Files for *All the Young Men*, All from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

The "Diverse" Intra-American White Outfit

The "'Diverse' Intra-American White Outfit" is equivalent to the classic squad film America was accustomed to seeing in theaters. No racial minorities, no people of color, and men from different parts of the country was as diverse as it got. Because these films were so popular, they deserve to be included in this thesis for this category was yet another way in which Hollywood attempted to present diversity even if in reality the squad members did not differ drastically from each other. Regardless, in *The Sullivans* (1944) and *Battle Cry* (1955), there are aspects of race, ethnicity, and even other traits nonconforming to the classic WASP soldier that alludes to the effort to make these pictures diverse. While both films have their own take on demonstrating democracy, they both use primarily white men to exhibit these American values. The "'Diverse' Intra-American White Outfit" subcategory represents the abundance of other white squad films made during both wars; these two pictures employ diversity in subtle, yet significant ways that help expand the definition of the average white soldier.[36]

The Sullivans

The inspiration behind one of the most acclaimed American war films (that also features a diverse squad), *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), is the picture, *The Sullivans* (1944), also known as *The Fighting Sullivans* (1944). Directed by Lloyd Bacon and written by Edward Doherty, Mary C. McCall Jr., and Jules Schermer, the heartwarming picture tells the true story of an Irish-American family living in Iowa during the Great Depression who gave all five of their sons to the war effort. The term "squad" takes on a

[36] *Wake Island* (1942), *Objective, Burma!* (1945), and *Retreat, Hell!* (1952) are just a few examples of the countless other films that could fit into this subcategory.

different form in *The Sullivans* for it also doubles as family, referring to the five boys audiences watch grow up together, enlist together, and ultimately die together. The story of the Sullivan family became the reason that the military decided subsequent brothers could no longer serve alongside each other in war and thus the motivation for *Saving Private Ryan*'s plot.[37]

It is difficult to categorize *The Sullivans* as a war film for combat only takes place in the last ten minutes of the movie, but there is no doubt that the group qualifies as a squad. The Sullivans were an immigrant family, who encompassed every quality of the average hardworking American family. They were a true symbol of the American dream and exemplified the sacrifices immigrants were willing to make for their adopted home country. From the beginning of the movie to the end, there is never a question of the family's dedication or contribution to America during the Second World War, for they paid the ultimate sacrifice with their five sons.

Most of the film is dedicated to their adolescence and young adulthood; beginning when the boys plus their sister, Genevieve, were all around the ages of 5-10, Al being the youngest followed by Matt, Joe, Frank, and George the oldest. The squad was inseparable; from boys to men, they stick up for each other and display unwavering loyalty to their family. The film is set during the Great Depression so money is scarce for the Sullivans but each kid contributes and completes their daily chores up until they are all old enough to have their own jobs. When they are all grown, the family hears about the bombing of Pearl Harbor on the radio, the boys waste no time discussing which service to enlist in; all agree on the Navy. However, Al has married a young woman who

[37] Doug Donovan, "Saving the Sullivans," *Forbes* 162, no. 6 (September 21, 1998): 289.

he has with a small baby boy with and is hesitant to leave his family but the other four are definite in their decision. At the last moment, Al joins his squad, but they face a challenge when the Navy doesn't want to keep the brothers together. The Sullivans don't take no for an answer and are allowed to serve on the same ship. The ship goes down in the Pacific, and in an effort to save their injured brother below deck, all four go and try to retrieve George before they abandon ship, but it is too late. In the last scene, Ma, Pop, and their family are honored at a ceremony by having a ship named after them, the USS The Sullivans. Ma and Pop participate in the ritual of christening the boat by breaking a bottle of champagne on the bow for good luck. The crowd cheers and with faint smiles, Ma says, "Our boys are afloat again."[38]

Audiences are given a picture that encapsulates the typical American family and the example they set for those watching. Their humble lives and wholesome characters display the kind of idealistic attitude that is expected of American families during tough times, such as the Great Depression and war. The Sullivans had very little money and many mouths to feed, forcing the kids to learn at a young age the values of hard work and to appreciate what they did have. Further, the fact that the Ma and Pop Sullivan are ethnically Irish and raise their kids in a devotedly Catholic family highlights another layer of the "American Dream"; that the country's principles of democracy and opportunity in the United States are accessible to everyone. Their Irish ethnicity, Catholic religion, underprivileged upbringing, and patriotic attitudes come war is a formulaic combination that shows diversity in refined but important ways. Diversity does not always signify race, and ethnicity includes those who are white as well. In *The Sullivans*,

[38] All quotes from this section are from *The Sullivans, 1*948.

ethnicity along with other traits of the family creates a touching film that showcases diversity in an often overlooked way.

The Sullivan's Irish heritage is mentioned a few times in the picture, conveying that their ethnicity is a trait of their family but does not dominate their life style, attitude, and language. However, what ethnic characteristics they may lack is made up for with their Catholic religion. The very first scene of the movie takes place in a Catholic church where each boy is getting baptized when they were babies. Religion played such a large role in the film that in a memo regarding the film, it was stated that "It will be quite essential in a story of this sort, to obtain competent technical advice regarding matters that touch upon Catholic ceremonies."[39] This strong religious theme continues throughout the film and is displayed by all of the children in addition to their parents. The family's devotion to religion did not diminish across generations but instead is instilled in Ma and Pop's children. Al has his first communion as a child but when he realizes his brothers are in a brawl with another group of boys, he quickly rushes out, but not before using Holy Water to bless himself, getting down on a knee with his hands in a prayer like fashion. Family comes first for the Sullivans, but the importance of their faith is consistently stressed. For their punishment, Ma tells them to go to the church and ask for forgiveness from Father Francis; the boys are committed to their religion, yet they are a loyal crew who are proud of their ability to put up a good fight.

Another instance when their religion is prioritized, is when George has to apologize to his father for hitting him, and as his mother explains, hitting is a sin. The

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[39] Memo to Colonel Jason S. Joy of 20th Century Fox, July 29, 1943. Special Collections. Motion Picture Association of America, Production Code Administration records, THE SULLIVANS, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

father and son apologize and Pop responds, “Every Irish man sees red once in awhile.” Like their heritage, their religion was known but never over emphasized or overdone. It was simply a core trait that helped paint them as a devout and moral family. Additionally, with Pop being the sole provider for the family, the boys and their sister always helped out their mother around the house and completed their chores. Once it was time to enlist, the five men had to check with Pa to make sure the family would be financially set without their collective income. The Depression may have greatly impacted the Sullivans like every other family in America, but it did not diminish their strong bonds and their devotion to the country. The Sullivans set the standard as to what could be expected of Americans and American immigrants during the war; to strive to be a nuclear, religious family that was just as committed to each other as they were to their country. In addition, their loyalty and love that the family shares with each other is undeniable, especially when the boys were children, but as they grew up, a strong patriotic quality also developed.

When all the Sullivan boys heard about Pearl Harbor on the radio, they quickly demonstrated their dedication to the United States. Outraged by the attack, they all chime in, “Those Japs will be sorry they were born,” “We will wipe them off the map in a couple of weeks,” “They can’t fight. They close their eyes when they fire off a gun,” and “We’ll lick them. But it will take plenty of time.” Without skipping a beat, the brothers are all in agreement to enlist in the Navy, except for Al. However, when they tell their parents about their decision, Ma says she needs to go to the church to light a couple of candles, and Pop, says before they can even get the words out, “Yeah, I know. Well, which will it be?” Unlike Ma, Pop has a smile on his face, obviously proud and excited

for his boys; when they tell him they will enlist in the Navy, he replies "Yup. That would be for me if I were younger." With the approval from their Pa and the hesitant acceptance from their Ma, the five Sullivan men were off to serve their country. They had done everything together growing up and going to war would be no different.

Many of the reviews found the film uplifting and inspirational. While *The Sullivans* was not an outright war picture, critics viewed it as a movie for everyone; *Hollywood Reporter* explained, "Rather is it a tremendously warm and human document, a glorious comedy of family life that conclusively reflects the ideals for which millions of our young men are fighting." *The Motion Picture Herald* claimed, "It is above all a picture of family life, of clean-cut American boys whose home was richer in spiritual values and a bit poorer in material things than most, and of fullness of the life they had before death came."[40] The journalists and critics were pleased with how different and personal this picture was compared to many other films made about the war. The Sullivans were a type of family worth fighting for. Their pious devotion, immigrant roots, and loyalty to each other and the nation made for a diverse squad that embodied democratic values not always articulated in other war films.

An advertisement from *Variety* expressed that even though the film did not deliver its democratic message through war and combat, it was still demonstrated, just in an entirely different way. The advertisement declared, "More Than Just a Family… THE SULLIVANS are America."[41] *Variety* went on to state, "Their hopes, their dreams, their

[40] "The Sullivans," *Hollywood Reporter*, February 3, 1944, Production Code Files; "The Sullivans," *Motion Picture Herald*, February 5, 1944, Production Code Files, all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.
[41] "The Sullivans," *Variety*, October 29, 1943, Production Code Files, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

happy home life, exciting boyhood, their first dates; these are the things men fight for." *The Sullivans* proved yet another way in which Hollywood conveyed democracy, this time using war as a backdrop rather than the forefront of the film. Instead it went family, then war. They celebrated democracy through their well-rounded and fulfilling lives; for the Sullivan boys, they were fighting for the perfect lives they had back home.

Battle Cry

Based on the novel by Leon Uris, *Battle Cry* (1955) is the next World War II film in the "'Diverse' intra-American White Squad" film subcategory. Produced and directed by Raoul Walsh with help from Uris on the screenplay, the movie epitomizes the definition of geographical diversity, as the squad is a compilation of men from all over the United States. In theory, the picture is set up to be not only representative of America but also to showcase the ability of people from all different backgrounds to come together in war. *Battle Cry*'s promising cast consisted of a Mexican-American man and Native Americans in addition to the men from a variety of states; but in the two-and-a-half-hour film, the picture quickly shifts from "melting pot" squad to the white men's love interest intermixed with a handful of battle scenes. The movie belongs to the "'Diverse' Intra-American White Outfit" film group simply because the minority characters' roles are almost non-existent and have no great impact on the plot. Instead, the men that shine are the white ones who form strong relationships with each other as well as with various women throughout the movie, an opportunity never presented to the racial minorities. Despite the film having men of color, their extremely minor roles are easily forgotten, this allowed audiences to give their full attention to the "diverse" squad of white men who display their democratic values by being the all-American outfit.

The plot is scattered and hard to follow at times, but the players are immediately outlined at the beginning of the film, making it much easier to fixate onto their personal lives rather than the greater mission. The narrator states, "This bunch looks like pretty much any other group we are getting these days."[42] There is the "Texan with the guitar" whose name is "Speedy" (Fess Parker); the classic young, good looking American boy, Danny (Tab Hunter); "the pride of the Navajos," Lighttower (Jonas Applegarth); a white "slum kid" from Philadelphia, Ski (William Campbell); "the bookworm," Marion/Sister Mary (John Lupton); "the lumberjack," Andy (Aldo Ray); the loudmouth, L.Q. Jones who plays himself; and lastly the troublemaker, Spanish Joe (Perry Lopez). Except for Lighttower, who is Native American, all of the men are white, including their leaders, Major Huxley (Van Heflin) and Sergeant Mac (James Whitmore). However, the other men are from all over the United States; Danny is from Baltimore, Ski is from Philadelphia, Andy is from Washington but prides himself on his Swedish heritage, and LQ. is from Arkansas.

The squad of men travel by train and arrive in San Diego where they complete their training together as Marines and prepare to move on to radio school. There they are assigned their leader, Major Huxley, who is tough on them. But he pushes them because Huxley sees potential in the men. The final sendoff of the film is when Huxley fights to have his squad included in the last Tarawa mission when they were originally left behind. The General allows it and the squad of men are off; ultimately Huxley is killed, and a few others are injured. From San Diego to New Zealand to Hawaii, the squad travels all over the world while a handful fall in love and have their own subplots at the same time.

[42] All quotes from this section are from *Battle Cry* (1955).

Towards the end of the movie, viewers watch the men's relationships with their love interests either flourish or falter and the less important characters, such as Spanish Joe and Lighttower are forgotten.

Compared to other squad films in this thesis, the camaraderie amongst the men is lacking, for they are more concerned with their female counterparts. However, if there is one lasting friendship in the group: it is between Spanish Joe and Sister Mary. The two start off on the wrong foot; Sister Mary sees Spanish Joe steal a possession of his and punches him for it, but as a result, Joe respects him for standing up for himself, observing, "Hey kid you got guts. You and me is going to be buddy-buddy." From then on, the duo is often seen right beside each other, even during their radio tests when Spanish Joe tries to steal a look at Marion's answers, but the book worm won't allow it. Yet these interactions are often cut short, even the most touching scene that truly shows the depth of their relationship lasts only a couple of seconds. Marion had been killed in action and as the company marches away from battle carrying him on a stretcher, the audience sees Spanish Joe holding hands with his buddy, tears running down his face. The connection between these two men is not thoroughly shown on screen, but based on Joe's reaction to Marion's death, one can assume that the opposites formed an unlikely bond. Joe and Marion's relationship helps make up for the lack of squad unity. This showed viewers that there were strong brotherhood connections in the group and interethnic ones at that. Additionally, Joe and Marion's relationship did not only exceed ethnic restraints, but socio-economic ones too. Joe was the uneducated, boisterous Mexican immigrant and Marion was the white bookworm who carried himself in a polite manner. Despite their differences, audiences see two people from very opposite ends of

the American social spectrum come together. This is the only real friendship alluded to in the squad, yet even this connection is downplayed despite the symbolic and democratic message it embraces.

While Spanish Joe may have had a few shining moments with Marion, he is also continually reduced to his stereotypes. When the commentator introduced the men in the beginning of the film, he labels Joe as the troublemaker of the squad. He has a tendency to lie, pull pranks, pick fights, and steal what isn't his; Joe is seen as little more than the man in the group who causes problems, and who also happens to be Hispanic. Additionally, there is the factor that he is uneducated. In his first altercation with Sister Mary, Joe asks him what he is reading. Marion replies, "Plato," dumbfounded, Joe responds, "You mean they wrote a whole big book about Mickey Mouse's dog?" Even when Marion goes on to call him obnoxious, Joe has to ask, "What's that obnoxious?" Later on in the movie, after the soldiers have just came back from their battle at Tarawa, a couple of soldiers are missing their personal items and as expected, Joe's bad habits have not changed. While diversity is shown in *Battle Cry*, almost every character is rooted in their stereotypes, leaving little room for growth within the squad. Although Spanish Joe's role is minor, his presence is still felt in the squad; however, the same cannot be said about Private Lighttower and Private Crazy Horse, another Navajo Indian who is often seen in the background.

Ironically, the impact of the Navajo Indians is minimal in the movie, considering the enormous influence they had in the Pacific theater of war. The first time Lighttower is depicted on screen, he is shown running up and down in one of the railroad cars all the men are in, whooping and hollering because Spanish Joe had stuck a match in his shoe.

The first time he talks, it's when the squad is complaining about the movie being shown that night. Lighttower says, "I thought it was going to be cowboys and Indians picture," while throwing his hands up in a robotic fashion. Another significant moment in the film when he touches on his racial heritage is when the men are discussing how hard Sergeant Mac and Major Huxley have been on them. Lighttower suggests that he should teach Mac how to use smoke signals, again throwing up his arms in the same manner and then Crazy Horse chimes in saying he wants to go back to the reservation. The scope of their dialogue or actions does not extend past these few moments. Despite the Navajo Indians' historic impact in the Pacific Theatre by being able to communicate over radios without the Japanese decoding their native language, this fact is never emphasized. When the squad is in the Pacific and Lighttower and Crazy Horse are speaking Navajo to each other via the radios, the credit goes to the Major when Private L.Q. says, "Huxley's a smart boy. He's gonna foul up the Japs so they can't intercept our messages. He read they used Sioux talkers in the First World War." While minorities are present in the film, and significant ones at that, the Indians are not given the same prominent roles as the white men. Rather than praise the Navajos for their impressive use of language to transmit vital messages in the Pacific, they are pressed to the background while also never allotting the men any real moments of conversation that go beyond their stereotypical characteristics. Though the squad is diverse and that in itself is a sign of democracy, some portrayals are obviously stronger than others, weakening the overall idea of a cohesive squad.

The reviews for *Battle Cry* were mixed; while some appreciated the assortment of plots, others found issues with the lack of battle scenes as well as the one-dimensional characterizations. The *Los Angeles Examiner* wrote, "Battle Cry has something for

everyone. It is a passionate, beautiful picture." The critic was so impressed by the movie that she went on to say, "it still remains that when players come so much alive that you feel you know every one of them, it means they have great characters to portray." The men she claimed she came to know so well referred to the white men exclusively. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* was not so taken with the film, "you are left with the definite impression of having seen it all before […] it's just that the stereotypes here are too b l a t a n t [*sic*] and too flimsily sketched." On the other hand, *Cue* magazine embraced the predictable roles, "If 'Battle Cry' contains the usual movie stereotypes, it is only because the American Army is a democratic army and is accordingly filled with stereotypes- the farm boy, clerk, mechanic, rich boy, poor boy, bully and thief, right down (or up) to the hard-boiled sergeant with a kind heart and the tough commander who wants his boy [*sic*] to learn to fight, to survive."[43] For some Americans, stereotypes equaled democracy and saw no issue with a film that did not push beyond these common portrayals. Due to the fact that most of these men were white and only differed slightly from each other, it is unsurprising that topics of America's social tensions were never discussed. Instead, viewers get a feel-good film that side stepped any potential racially or ethnicity driven dialogue in the squad by allowing the minority's mere presence to do all the speaking for them. For the writers, producers, and directors, this, along with the geographical diversity of the squad was their vision of democracy.

Rather than viewing *Battle Cry* as a weak approach to demonstrating both diversity and democracy in a squad film, it can be seen as one of the many products of its time.

[43] Ruth Waterbury, "'Battle Cry' Among Best in War Stories," *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 3, 1955, Production Code Files; Harold V. Cohen, "The New Films: 'Battle Cry' Comes to the Stanley; Fuiton Gets 'White Feather,'" *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 26, 1955, https://www.newspapers.com; "Battle Cry," *Cue*, February 5, 1955. Production Code Files, all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

Including men of various races and ethnicities was not always the priority to studios in Hollywood and when it was, there was no guarantee that the minorities would be portrayed fairly. As a "'Diverse' Intra-American White Outfit" the picture works. Audiences see a large group of men from all over the country create meaningful relationships with one another as they experience war. This subcategory in itself indicates Hollywood's tendency to leave the minority characters in the background while only focusing on the white men. While *Battle Cry* starts off as a diverse group of men with potential to all band together to dramatize democratic ideals, it quickly shifts to the white men's love interests. Even when squads were presented as representative of the nation, there was no promise that the minorities would have the same onscreen opportunities as the white men.

White Man Saves the Day

One of the most obvious and popular subcategories of the American squad film through the 1940's-1960's as well as long before and long after, is the classic tale of how the white man saves the day. The squad may be diverse, but the storyline of the movie falls into the much utilized and predictable practice of portraying the white lead as the one and only hero. He has help from the supporting actors and maybe even some competition from rival minority leads, but in the end, it is the white man that comes out on top. This is the case with both the *Red Ball Express* (1952) and *Battle Hymn* (1957). The opportunity to highlight the minorities was not in short supply in these movies for each of these pictures consisted of largely diverse casts that become overshadowed by their white male leader. The man is given more screen time, more lines, and more chances to prove himself as the savior while the secondary cast members fall to the back.

However, while the white man did lead the squad, this does not negate the fact that egalitarianism is exposed through him and the rest of the soldiers. Regardless of who was highlighted in the movie, the American war themes of bravery, patriotism, and dedication to the mission were exemplified by the men in each of these pictures. The squad dynamic may function in a disproportionate way compared to other pictures during the time, but the intent behind the film is unwavering: the opportunity to show American democracy through leadership and diversity, but in that order.

The Red Ball Express

To those who have seen the *Red Ball Express* (1952), it may come as a surprise that it has been placed in this category. Directed by Budd Boetticher, produced by Aaron Rosenberg, and story by Marcy Klauber and William Grady Jr., the picture deserves its place in the "white man saves the day" grouping because of the power structure of the movie. The Red Ball Express was essentially a suicide transportation system in World War II that was primarily made up of African Americans.[44] The film does highlight three African Americans and includes men of color in the background of different scenes, but audiences do not get the impression that this dangerous line of work was primarily a black dominated field, segregated from the line of fire.[45] Instead, African Americans are outnumbered by white soldiers and the lead role went to Jeff Chandler who plays Lieutenant Chick Campbell, the soldier in charge of the whole mission. The true heroes are overshadowed and downplayed in comparison to their actual historical role; however, *Red Ball Express* does a better job at displaying tensions and disagreements that occurred

[44] Edna Greene Medford and Michael Frazier, "'Keep 'em rolling': African American participation in the Red Ball Express," *Negro History Bulletin* 51, no. 1-12 (1993): 57.
[45] *Ibid*., 57.

due to a multi-race in environment. The African-American actors get a significant amount of screen time where they are able to develop as characters but also have the opportunity to be their own persons away from the white men. Overall, the squad falls into the typical plot of overcoming adversity together in the process of carrying out their mission, but due to historical misrepresentation, it is the white men who wrongly receive much of the credit for the success of the Red Ball Express.

The film takes place in France, 1944, at the moment when U.S. military commanders realize the urgent need to transport fuel to their troops. General Patton's Third Army had traveled so far from the beach head that they could not effectively continue without supplies, so it is up to the military truck route, called the Red Ball Express. The squad is made up of roughly eight men. The white leader is Lieutenant Campbell, then there is: Sergeant Kallek (Alex Nicol), Corporal Robertson (Sidney Poitier), Private Partridge (Charles Drake), Private Taffy Smith (Bubber Johnson), Private Dave McCord (Davis Roberts), Private Wilson (Hugh O'Brian), and Private Higgins (Frank Chase). Sergeant Kallek is tough but is friendly with all of his peers; Private Wilson does not hide his discontent with the African American soldiers, making racial comments and eventually starting a fight with Robertson; and Private Higgins is the over-enthusiastic soldier whose goofy nature leads him to never knowing when to be quiet. Then there is Corporal Robertson, Private Taffy, and Private McCord, who are the men of color in the group, all African Americans with distinct personalities that handle the prejudice they face in various ways. Corporal Robertson is more reserved and cautious of the white squad members while Taffy has an optimistic personality, always seeing the best in the men. Private McCord lands somewhere in the middle, upbeat and

friendly, but not blind to the color of his skin and the hate that it causes. The various personas of these three men and how they interact with the other soldiers will be the focus of the analysis on the *Red Ball Express*, because it is important to note the tensions that arise as well as how democratic values are shown to mitigate these strains, resulting in a cohesive squad. Additionally, it will be vital to take a look at how exactly a historic event such as the Red Ball Express, an event closely linked with African American soldiers in World War II, was manipulated into a picture about the white man.

Once Campbell introduces himself as their lieutenant, the men are off in their trucks, many of the African Americans pairing up with one or two of the white men; while some interactions are light hearted and friendly between the races, the coupling of Campbell and Robertson gets off to a rocky start, hinting at future tensions between the two. Another soldier Campbell has a problem with is Sergeant Red Kallek, a white man who is second in command. The two have a past that goes back to civilian life where Kallek blames Campbell for the death of his brother. Despite these minor skirmishes, the trucks push on, running into minor detours, women, and the enemy along the way. Campbell gets the reputation of being hard-headed amongst his men when he does not let them stop for coffee and donuts offered by the white female Red Cross workers. The final scene amounts to the men driving their trucks carrying gallons of gasoline through a town that has caught on fire. Campbell has to go back to get Sergeant Kallek who had crashed his truck, saving his life and therefore eliminating any bad blood between them. As the movie progress, Campbell becomes increasingly more human; allowing him and his squad to respectfully honor those who have been killed and even a moment to enjoy some donuts. Additionally, we see many of the other men grow and develop too, especially

Robertson who sticks it out despite the racial prejudice he faces. Throughout the film, the audiences get to know the individual men within the squad through their various positive and negative interactions with each other. What starts off as a disconnected group ends as a unified one.

The first time racial tensions are presented is when all the men are being transported together in the back of a truck. The men talk about what kind of mission they think they are about to embark on. In response to Private Partridge, who is talking about working on a book about his experiences, Wilson says, "If you write anything about this lot, leave me out of it yeah? I'm beginning to feel like an end man in a minstrel show."[46] The camera shot then pans to the three African American soldiers sitting together, no longer smiling in response to that comment.[47] Stone faced, Robertson stares down Wilson, and asks, "Then why don't you tell a joke?" Taffy lightheartedly breaks the tension by saying, "Oh come on, he was only kidding," all while McCord makes no comment. The differences in the three men's reactions both establish and foreshadow what can be expected from their varying levels of tolerance in the scenes to come.

Taffy's bubbly and personable character makes him easily liked by the other soldiers. He is paired up with Private Partridge in the trucks and the two become fast friends but his most notable trait is his singing. From the early scenes, Taffy is shown humming and singing by himself, "Lift and load. One for Hitler and one for the road." He sings this repeatedly as the soldiers in their assembly lines pack the trucks with the

[46] All quotes from this section are from the film *Red Ball Express* (1952).
[47] Minstrel shows consisted of comedic skits, acts, music, and dancing put on by people in blackface for the purpose of entertainment. These performances often mocked African Americans by stereotypically depicting them as unintelligent, animalistic, and overly happy. For more on minstrel shows, see Thomas Recchio's article, "The Serious Play of Gender: Blackface Minstrel Shows by Mary Barnard Horne, 1892-1897."

supplies. But as they make another stop to give their gas to an outfit of tanks, one man from the other group starts to question the Red Ball Express, calling them "jokers" who have "a soft touch." Recognizing the situation, Taffy belts out, "lift and load!" This time the squad responds unanimously, participating in a type of call and response. The man provoking them calls them a "minstrel show", and as a result, the two outfits get into a brawl. As the fight concludes, Private Higgins teasingly asks the man from the other group, "How do you like the minstrel show, eh?" A phrase that initially offended the African American men in the beginning of the movie as well as in this scene was used once again, but this time to signify camaraderie. For the first time, audiences see a true sense of unity in the group displayed by the men's willingness to stand up for another as well as the ability to learn from their mistakes.

While Corporal Robertson gets off on the wrong foot with Lieutenant Campbell, Private McCord does not. When the trucks make their first stop to eat and rest, the two strike up a friendly conversation, McCord says, "Gee that Patton, he's really making a war out of this. You know, we must be a pretty important outfit to be picked to supply the hottest general in the army." Smiling, Campbell replies, "McCord, I have a feeling that before we are through, this is going to be one of the biggest things the army's ever done." This lighthearted and prideful exchange is strikingly different than the ones Campbell had with Robertson, indicating that the Lieutenant is not prejudiced against African Americans but that for some reason, there is a tension between the two men that will later be explored. McCord's optimistic thoughts on war prove to be his downfall later on in the film when he takes it upon himself to singlehandedly drive across a field known to have explosives buried in it. He gets across, jumps out of the truck and waves to the others

only to be blown up seconds later. McCord's role in the film is not as significant as the other two African American's due to his short time on screen, but he provides the film with an alternative viewpoint on race relations in war. Whereas other films typically had none, Red Ball Express had three black men be a part of their squad.

While Taffy exudes friendliness and McCord was hopeful, Robertson runs into the most trouble in the group. During another truck stop, the men rush over to get donuts from some Red Cross women operating a clubmobile.[48] Robertson pushes his way through and amongst the bustle of all the other men he asks one of the female workers, "[…] how about giving me a couple of those donuts over there, huh?" Private Wilson, a member of the extended outfit retorts, "Black boy you give orders to nobody you take them." A fight then breaks out between the two men, ending when Campbell comes over to break it up. Instead of hearing both of the soldiers out, he tells them to "get out of here," but is primarily starring at Robertson. Even when one of the Red Cross women stands up for him, Campbell shuts her down. The next scene, Robertson seeks Campbell out to request for a transfer. The lieutenant questions, "Cause I had to bark at ya? Well that's my job, whenever you or anyone else gets out of line. Would you rather have thrown a few more punches?" Robertson replies, "Punches I can handle, sir." Campbell further explains:

> "Look Robertson, I am not educated at all or subtle to these race relationships, but it was never my intention to treat you any differently from anyone else in this company, and to the best of my knowledge I haven't. Transfer or not but there aren't any to be had. I don't think any of us wanted to be in this outfit. But that didn't make a bit of difference to the army, and it makes even less difference that any of us wants to get out."

[48] Clubmobiles were an extension of the American Red Cross during World War II in which the women working would "reach troops in the battlefields, the airfields and encampments providing the servicemen with food, entertainment, and a connection to home." See Claudia Hagen, *American Women During World War II* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015), 208.

The men salute each other, and the conversation is over. In a small but important moment, Campbell addresses the unfair treatment Robertson was receiving from him but argues that it was not because of his race. The lieutenant claims he is not informed about racial tensions in America and for that reason is not prejudiced. Although this speech from Campbell was not the most direct effort at confronting inequalities, it indicated that he was on Robertson's side, that they were allies, not foes.

In need of comforting, Robertson confides in Taffy and McCord (before McCord's death) his desire to transfer. McCord questions, "Why do you wanna do a thing like that?" Robertson answers, "Because I don't like the way I've being treated, especially by him. […] What can I do about it? Nothing. He outranks us the way we've been outranked all our lives." Then Taffy makes a peculiar proposition, "You ever think you could be wrong?" Robertson, defensively says, "Look, you don't ride with him all day, you don't know him." But Taffy continues with his theory, "Robby, I've been all over the world, seen all kinds of people. But this is the greatest bunch of fellas I've ever worked with, even if half of them are white." Robertson replies, "All I hear them do is argue and complain, feel sorry for themselves, try to take their misery out on somebody else." Taffy persists, "Arguing and complaining ain't bad. That shows they got spirit. All we got to do is get that spirit moving in the same direction. And when they do, boy you're gonna see an outfit grow right up in front of you. One you'll be proud of." This conversation gives Robertson much to think about but it is quite clear the vastly different outlooks these two African American men have on not only their service but race as well. Whereas Robertson is pessimistic and carries the prejudice he has faced with him, Taffy tries to see the best in his peers, arguably even an overly optimistic approach, considering

the racial climate in America during World War II. But these conversation amongst men of different backgrounds shown in the *Red Ball Express* is valuable dialogue that is largely missing in most films that portray diversity. Usually it is the white man doing the talking and the minorities listening, or the conversation never dives as deep as to address real racial and ethnic controversy. Through these scenes, the film gives audiences various perceptions as to how African American soldiers dealt with prejudice in the military.

Several scenes later, after the squad has experienced death (McCord), bonded over the loading and unloading of the trucks, and getting into a brawl with the other outfit, the crew is noticeably closer. With all the men listening in the background, Campbell approaches Robertson and informs him that he is given permission to transfer. Robertson replies, "Lieutenant, I'd hope you'd forgotten that. I don't want to transfer." They salute each other but this time with faint smiles on their faces. In this moment, any bigotry Robertson felt from his peers was now gone. Compared to other films considered in this thesis, such as *Home of the Brave*, Campbell did not try to "fix" or "cure" Robertson by trying to dispel racism, instead it was discussed and left up to the rest of the squad to prove that skin color did not dictate the strength of their brotherhood. This method of confronting tension may not be the perfect solution, but it allowed change to come naturally for there is no immediate remedy to racism.

While the reviews for *Red Ball Express* were mixed, the active role of African Americans in the film forced critics and journalists to recognize these characters in their work. *L.A. Times* stated, "There is no question of over-all courage involved and Negros as well as white soldiers acquit themselves in individuals acts of heroism." *Time* magazine called the film a "tardy tribute to the U.S. Army transportation crews," but does

not specifically give that credit to African American who were the ones who made up the majority of that assignment. Additionally, one review from the *L.A. Examiner* found the picture less desirable because it addressed social tensions, "Less acceptable to me than the formula aspects of the plot was author John Michael Hayes' contrived injection of a race prejudice problem into his story. I thought it equally unnecessary and unfair to both races." However, this certain journalist still found the racial angle "easy to by-pass." Not everyone in America felt that racial controversy deserved its time on the silver screen, instead, as the case with this last review, some believed that discussions concerning prejudice impeded movies rather than strengthening them. *Hollywood Reporter* praised the director for confronting race but appreciated the fact that it "never becomes a soapbox operation," as if the topic was unworthy of such a platform.[49] While some reviewers could appreciate the progressive stance, the message was never overbearing because by the end of the film, the story was much less about the squad than Lieutenant Campbell saving the day.

Motion pictures were often used as a vehicle to confront tough, real life situations in American society. Whereas some citizens just wanted to be entertained, others accepted and praised the work of the African American characters and their role in the movie. Regardless of how it was received, *Red Ball Express* contained shining moments where war temporarily took the backseat and allowed the topic of race to be foregrounded. However, based on how the film was constructed, mostly white men with

[49] Philip K. Scheuer, "'Red Ball Express' Vivid War Exploit," *LA Times*, May 26, 1952. Production Code Files; "The New Pictures," *Time*, July 16, 1952, Production Code Files for *Red Ball Express*; Kay Proctor, "Unsung Heroes in War Film," *L.A. Examiner*, May 26, 1952, Production Code Files; "Army Supply Corps Film Packs Thrills: Red Ball Express," *Hollywood Reporter*, April 30, 1952, Production Code Files, all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

only a couple of black soldiers, it was historically inaccurate, and misrepresents the fact that most of the men driving the trucks in France during World War II were African Americans. Campbell is also the biggest hero of the squad as well, risking his life to go back into the town on fire to rescue a man who did not like him. This showed that the most memorable interpersonal challenge that is overcome is between Campbell and Kallek, not the African American men and the white men. Although the picture included many scenes presenting democratic values, the movie was ultimately about Campbell and how he led his squad to success. Because of this, the film still comes off as a "White Man Saves the Day" story. While black soldiers were represented and played a large part in the plot, historical truth was smothered in an attempt to create a popular wartime picture.

Battle Hymn

The next squad film in this category truly lives up to the title, "White Man Saves the Day," but in this case, the lead actor is deserving of the star role. *Battle Hymn* (1957) stars Rock Hudson as colonel Dean Hess, a real soldier who served in both World War II and the Korean War and is remembered for rescuing almost a thousand Korean orphans. Described by Chung as the "best-known Hollywood Korean War film," the picture was directed by Douglas Sirk, produced by Ross Hunter, and written by Vincent Evans and Charles Grayson.[50] The picture is based on Hess' autobiography but focuses mostly on his time in Korea. Although Hess's angelic-like character makes it difficult to criticize the movie based on its lopsided use of the leading white male, it deserved to be analyzed based on the way the other races in the film are portrayed. American democracy is

[50] Chung, "Hollywood Goes to War," 52.

depicted, but primarily through Hess, whose perfect moral values always lead him to make the right decision. While Korean civilians play a large role in the film, their presence is downplayed and fairly one dimensional, leaving plenty of room for Hess to shine as the hero. Additionally, his squad provides a variety of contrast, but it is still Hess who steals the spotlight and maybe rightfully so. The film is based on a true story and the production of the movie further points to the valor of Hess long after his service was completed. The picture will still be analyzed with a critical eye, but Hess's achievements will not go unnoted either. Like the other film in this section, *Battle Hymn* is the epitome of "White Man Saves the Day," but in this case, the white man saves much more than just that.

The plot is a heartfelt story that highlights the interactions between civilians and soldiers not typically shown in war films. Hess' devotion to Christianity and love for children made him an American hero despite the dark mistake he made as a combat pilot in World War II, when he accidentally dropped a bomb on a German orphanage. In an effort to lessen this guilt, Hess dedicated himself to becoming a minister but never thought he was good at it. When the Korean War erupted, he decided to join the war effort again, but this time only as an instructor for the Air Force; he did not want to have to engage in combat. He leaves his wife behind and enlists, joining a squad composed of an old friend, Captain Skidmore (Don DeFore), the boisterous Sergeant Herman (Dan Duryea) who is his right-hand man, and the other soldiers such as Major Moore (Jock Mahoney) and Lieutenant Maples (James Edwards) have minor roles but enough lines and screen time to be acknowledged. Maples is African American, but race is never mentioned in the movie, not even when all of the Korean characters are introduced.

Hess and his squad have to clean up and prepare the runway at their base in Korea before they can start training South Korean pilots for combat. Hess and Herman head into town to see if they can find any supplies and find a young woman, Miss Yang (Anna Kashfi) who informs them about some equipment nearby. Major Chung of the South Korean Air Force and his men join the squad and the two racial groups come together. However, there are never any meaningful scenes between the Koreans and the Americans, only shots of them eating together and a moment when they all are playing cards. Hess and his men come across some Korean orphans at the base and decides to take them in. With the help of Miss Yang and Lun-Wa (Philip Ahn), an elderly Christian man the squad picks up, they are able to look after the growing number of orphans. But the war rages on and the kids must be transported. American reinforcements, who named themselves "Operation Kiddie Car", arrive and are able to fly all the children to an orphanage on the island of Cheju Do. Hess dedicated himself to saving them as a symbolic effort to make up for his mistakes in the previous war. He is the obvious leader of the mission, giving orders while making it his and the squad's new goal to save these orphans rather than focus on the war. Throughout the film, audiences see Miss Yang grow found of Colonel Hess, but he never reciprocates the feeling; instead his religious devotion, pure heart, and dedication to the children outshines any other sentiment in the film.

While the movie takes place in Korea and much of it revolves around the Korean children, there is an obvious gap of middle ground between the Americans and their ally. When the South Korean air force first arrives at the U.S. base, Colonel Hess asks Major Chung if they had brought their flag with them, Chung replies, "Yes, sir," Hess says,

"Good, fly it with ours."[51] The next shot is the American flag and the South Korean flag flying in the wind at equal heights, a small but significant symbol of equality and the allegiance between the two nations. In contrast, the very next scene, Captain Skidmore and another soldier are playing cards with the Korean pilots, but they have lost every hand so far. The American soldier mocks Skidmore, "Got a couple of Korean pidgins you say, don't speak English, we'll teach them rummy and clean them out." Then the Korean soldier goes on to speak clearly, "English bad, rummy good, old Korean game." Whereas the last scene shows the two nations on equal levels, the preceding one displays the Americans trying to con the Koreans out of their money by taking advantage of their incomplete knowledge of the English language. Although it was only a card game, it paints the Americans as schemers who stereotypically underestimate their opponent. The two back to back scenes are an odd juxtaposition that if anything, reiterate Hess's pure nature and democratic outlook while showing his squad has considerably different intentions.

Battle Hymn does touch on a topic that very few other war films take, the idea of humanitarian rights in war. Although this terminology is not explicitly used, Hess's pious attitude and his grave mistake from World War II lead him to consider more humane matters such as civilian rights. In fact, the whole film revolves around Hess trying to save all of these children's lives for he sees the importance of caring for those who cannot defend themselves. When the orphans are found at the camp, he orders that they are fed, hinting at the universal claim outlined by the Declaration of Human Rights that states

[51] All film quotes from this section are from *Battle Hymn*, (1957).

everyone has a right to food, clothing, housing, etc.[52] Additionally, when Skidmore takes the squadron up into the air, he orders Lieutenant Maples to fire on a caravan on the ground. But that caravan was carrying civilians and not enemy soldiers. While the Colonel was shocked by the news, Skidmore brushed off the matter saying, "It was an accident, wars are full of accidents […] Once I thought you knew what war was about but not anymore […] All that counts is who wins, not how nice a guy you are." Without directly saying it, Skidmore takes the "any means necessary" approach towards war when in 1950, two years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was established, this was no longer a valid outlook. There were rules to war as to who is protected and who is not; as a result, Hess declared that Skidmore would be grounded until further notice. When the squad found out that Hess was a former reverend, they all questioned his ability to fight, and when the Colonel was up in the air with the rest of his men battling the enemy, there was a moment when he needed to gun down the opposing aircraft. His slight hesitation kept him from firing right away but he ultimately shot down the enemy. Hess may have been a faithful Christian who valued human lives in war, but when it was necessary to kill, he did, demonstrating the values of an ideal soldier, one who shoots only when he has to and never relishes in the death he causes.

The obvious theme of the film that is woven into almost every scene is Colonel's pious language and references to the Bible. But it is not just Hess who displays his Christian faith: Maples alludes to it, Skidmore asks for a prayer on his death bed, and even Lun-Wa declares he, too, is a follower. When Lieutenant Maples accidently shoots the Korean civilians, he approaches Hess after and refers to the Bible, saying "He must

[52] UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III), available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html.

have given his nod to what happened out there today too, he must have, he is the almighty, isn't he? We have to trust him sir." Religion was often a way in which soldiers coped with war, but in *Battle Hymn*, religion is used as a vehicle for Hess to assert his pious influence over others. He uses his Christian values to guide his decisions while also projecting his beliefs onto his squad members. Hess is not only their military leader but their spiritual one as well. The white man is saving the day not through sheer power and prestige but through the Christian religion.

However, the spiritual rhetoric also gives the illusion that if one prays, then one's sins will be forgiven; this may be the case in the Christian faith, but ultimately death in war is not made up for by prayers. After saying a sermon for Skidmore when he is dying, Hess writes to his wife back home, "Through the agony of war, I have done what I was never able to do. In reaching beyond myself, I have found myself." In this moment, Hess realizes his potential not only as a soldier but as a reverend too and finally recognizes his worth as a leader in the Christian community. In the film, religion is used as a tool not only to bring together various characters, but to attach Christian values to morality in war, demonstrating that if one is a believer then they must equate to being a good soldier too. Hess exemplifies this idea along with various other members in the squad; even Skidmore who had a pessimistic view of war asked for a prayer when he was dying. Even if the men make mistakes, Hess reminds them they can always pray to God and he will forgive their sins. These religious overtones connect directly with America's long Christian history, using faith to help expand the definition of democracy. Additionally, there is a scene when Lun-Wa shows Maples and Hess a makeshift cross he put together, explaining, "Well many of the children are Christian so I thought they should have their

own symbol too." The squad is not only fighting for the orphans, but they are fighting for the South Koreans, so they too can have the freedom to practice religion. Hess very plainly fulfills his role as the white man saving the day, but he does it in a Christian and therefore American and democratic way. He not only is the savior of hundreds of children but in a sense, he saves his colleagues too by uniting with them in this spiritual manner to help them ease the pain of war.

While the reviews did not unanimously favor the picture, many newspapers were convinced, especially when hearing the back story to the film. The Korean children in the movie were flown in from the very orphanage that Dean Hess helped create. In fact, Hess wasn't sold on the idea of making his book into a motion picture until he found out that the orphanage roof at Cheju Do had been damaged and needed to be repaired. The renovation costs totaled $60,000, so when Hess contacted the screen writer, Charles Grayson to make the movie, that was the exact amount he asked for. In order to ensure that the film portrayed him accurately, Hess sat in on the writing and doubled as a technical director.[53]

Besides the various reviews that attributed the victory of the picture to the children, many other critiques had problems with the faith-based film. *The New Yorker* described Hess as "a man of almost excruciating nobility of character," even critiquing Lun-Wa's role as supplying many "aphorisms in the Chinese-cookie vein," which is not far off. The writer also noted that "the most interesting aspect of the film is the crowd of charming youngsters […] who just go about being themselves." A review from *Time* magazine felt the film's stars fell flat, "Hudson spends most of his time exercising the

[53] Douglas Robinson, "From Cehju Island to California," *New York Times*, May 6, 1956, Production Code Files for *Battle Hymn*.

vocabulary of uplift […] with the local Confucius (Philip Ahn)." Interestingly enough, one article felt that the Rock Hudson's role was the weakest in the film, but valued the other actors, "Surprisingly, several supporting performances stand up much better […] James Edwards and Alan Hale also convincing. Philip Ahn is colorful and authentic as an old Korean who helps the orphans," and "Anna Kashfi […] she, alone, seems to emotionally feel the story." This report from the *L.A. Mirror News* was particularly frustrated by the lack of screen time for the children, claiming, "There are a few closeups of chubby-faced, appealing Jung' Kyoo Pyo and that is all. The rest are group shots in which the fearful problems of these tormented children are never brought forcefully to life." Hess may have saved the day in real life and in the film, but not all audiences were convinced; they wanted to see more of the children and easily recognized how stereotypical Lun-Wa's character was. Like *Red Ball Express*, using stereotypes to portray typical characters, especially racial and ethnic ones, was an outdated and tiresome approach while the same old story of the white man prevailing quickly becomes old too.[54]

Battle Hymn is a film based on a true story of a man who made a terrible mistake during World War II but dedicated himself to his religion and saving others in an attempt to right his wrongs. As previously stated, it is difficult to criticize a movie centered on a man who was a national hero and who saved roughly a thousand Korea orphans while also aiding them long after the end of the war. However, as a squad film, the movie funnels all of its efforts into only Hess, showcasing him as the true savior while rarely allowing room for any other character to take center stage, including the children. The

[54] John McCarten, *New Yorker*, February 23, 1957, Production Code Files for *Battle Hymn*; "The New Pictures," *Time*, March 11, 1957, Production Code Files for Battle Hymn; Dick Williams, "'Battle Hymn' Wastes Story," *L.A. Mirror News*, February 22, 1957, Production Clippings for *Battle Hymn*, all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

film cultivated so much attention that it allowed the orphanage to be rebuilt and multiple kids to be adopted. While much good came from the movie, ultimately, all the focus was dedicated to Hess while the minorities and the rest of squad were pushed to the background. The real-life story of Dean Hess may have resulted in a happy ending in various ways, regardless, *Battle Hymn* easily falls into this subcategory for it allows American democracy to be conveyed, but only through the white leading male.

A Representative Squad

The gold standard category of squad films in this study belongs to the "Representative Squad." The outfits presented in these various pictures contained the most racially and ethnically diverse squads out of the list of the twelve other movies. However, going beyond the mere presence of diversity, these films also made the conscious effort to discuss their soldiers' differences, resulting in a stronger squad because of it. Thus, in these five films, the correlation between diversity and democracy was more convincing than ever. While there was no perfect film from 1940 to 1960 that flawlessly included various minorities in the squad while taking the time to explore the oppression faced by these groups in America, these pictures came close. At the forefront of each of these films is the war, but here battle and conflict abroad were used as an opportunity to talk about conflict on the home front as well. This category represents the highest standard for American audiences as to what social progress should look like.

Bataan

The film *Bataan* (1943) is a World War II picture directed by Tay Garnett, written by Robert D. Andrews, and distributed by Metro Goldwyn Mayer. The movie focuses on

a group of thirteen soldiers who are retreating after the Japanese invasion in the Philippines. The squad consists of an assortment of men who had all been separated from their previous outfits. Robert Taylor who plays the lead, Sergeant Bill Dane, is quick to point this out in first few scenes of the movie, calling the bunch "a mixed crew," who are "all experts in their own line," despite the men having never served together.[55] On the war front, it is apparent that inexperience will not be the downfall of this squad, instead, it is the lack of men and resources on the island that will defeat the company, just like in the real Battle of Bataan.

The group of men is a disorganized bunch at the start of the movie. They are slow to warm to their new leader, Sergeant Dane, especially Corporal Todd who can barely rise out his hammock to meet him, but as they fall into line, audiences are introduced to the players. There is Corporal Feingold (Thomas Mitchell), who is Jewish yet one would not know if it were not for his last name; Purckett (Robert Walker), a white All-American lad who is all too eager to be in war and serves as a musician; Private Salazar (Alex Havier), a Philippine Scout who was a boxer prior to the war; Private Ramirez (Desi Arnaz), whose accent is so distinguishable from the others when he talks about life in California that it is easy to recognize the soldier's Spanish heritage; Private Eeps (Kenneth Lee Spencer) is next in line; his impressive stature speaks for itself as he is easily the tallest in the group with a low baritone voice and a naked upper torso. He is the only African American in the film. Lastly there is the cook, Malloy (Tom Dugan), a man of Irish descent and Private Matowski (Barry Nelson), a Pole, but like Feingold, the men's last names are the only real indication of their origin. Additionally, there is

[55] All quotes from this section are from *Bataan*, 1943.

Sergeant Dane of course, Lieutenant Bentley (George Murphy), Corporal Todd (Lloyd Nolan), and Captain Henry Lassiter (Lee Bowman) who all have major roles, but can be collectively categorized as WASPs; Corporal Katigbak (Roque Espiritu), a soldier from the Philippine Army Air Corps is also a part of the thirteen but his role is minimal. Furthermore, another soldier, Corporal Edward Evening Star, "a burly Indian who is put in charge of the pack-burros," was originally written into the film, yet this character was not included in the final cut, another example where the movie could have been more representative of America.[56]

While there is no question that the squad is a diverse one, and a strong one at that based on the multiple races, ethnicities, and nationalities that come together, but the minorities in the film are often restrained and overshadowed. The effort to include so many different faces reflects Hollywood's attempts to diversify the screen. Granted, it would have been a disservice not to include Filipino scouts as a part of the film. Writer Robert Andrews went beyond normative Hollywood culture by incorporating roles for African American, Mexican American, Jewish, Polish and Irish soldiers, which is more than many other war pictures accomplished. Although it is admirable to see an assorted cast, for it shows audiences that it was not just the average WASP who gave his life to the war effort, roles like these are easily dismissed unless there is purpose behind them. The minorities in this outfit are often demeaned to their stereotypes and there is little to no dialogue addressing societal inequalities amongst the group. There is Salazar who is the over enthusiastic messenger who speaks broken English and is not at all intimidated by the Japanese, but instead overly confident in his knowledge of the island. Eeps's

[56] Robert D. Andrews, "Bataan Patrol," Special Collections, Turner/MGM Scripts, Folder B-458, July 13, 1942, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

soulful humming and pious words play him up as the peaceful and reserved black man, not a common stereotype for the African American men in the 1940's, but these characteristics also make his role forgetful. Ramirez's thick accent and outgoing character paints him as the boisterous Mexican American who becomes much more reserved when he confesses his sins in Spanish and Latin on his death bed. Although the clichés hinder the potential complexity of the diverse soldiers, these men are not just background characters, and they prove their dedication to the United States the same as the rest of the squad. The minority soldiers' commitment to the war effort and their squad displays that their limited roles did not hinder them from still being good soldiers, therefore demonstrating the main purpose of these various characters; to represent diversity while also sacrificing just as much as the white man.

A popular theme amongst war films and one highlighted in *Bataan* is the act of soldiers bonding over their hatred of a common enemy. Typically, this scenario occurs between two men who come from very different backgrounds whether that be race, ethnicity, class, age, nationality, religion, etc. This type of bond usually happens unconsciously, when the two men are so caught up in war that all they can focus on is killing the enemy. In an early scene when Purckett and Salazar are staking out by the machine gun looking for Japanese in the jungle, the young musician says to the Filipino, "All I want to do is get me a Jap. Just one Jap. I wish something would move. […] If you see any Japs save one for baby, yeah?" Salazar replies, "Japs we got plenty of." The Japanese were just as much America's enemy as they were the Philippines'. This dialogue, in addition to other derogatory references to the Japanese in the film such as calling them "monkeys", resulted in Joseph I. Breen, a well-known censor for the Motion

Picture Production Code, to request to eliminate the offensive rhetoric geared towards the enemy as the movie prepared for international distribution. Even though the censor did attempt to prevent this insulting name-calling, Hollywood had its own agenda at times. The scene remained and so did the demeaning names, sending the message that America's democratic values did not apply to the enemy for they were at war. While the enemy was dehumanized, the film made a conscious effort to recognize its Filipino allies in the war by branding them as an extension of the U.S. cause. In one version of the script written by Andrews in 1942, the opening scene of the film showed an evacuating village in which it was insisted that "Filipinos as much as Americans" would be featured.[57]

Along with hating the Japanese, many squad members took pride in their dedication to the United States. When the group had a moment of rest, Ramirez turns on the radio to find some music to liven everyone's spirits; Sergeant Dane comes over and says, "Don't tell me that's Jap jive." Ramirez replies enthusiastically, "No Sarge, no! That's good ol'America, that's U.S.A!" The soldier goes on listening to the radio, smiling and yelling as he enjoys the song. In another scene, Dane begins to doubt the ability of his outfit to succeed in the war, Feingold reassures him by saying, "Those kids signed up for this just like you and me. They'll get tired, sure, things will get tough, but I don't think they'll put their tails between their legs any more than you would." And when the men are conversing about their helpless situation, Eeps chimes in, "I reckon the U.S. is sending help as best they can, as fast as they can," only for Todd to pessimistically chime in, "Oh sure sure, help that don't exist is on the way." In this scene, it is Todd, the white soldier, who distrusts his nation while Eeps, the black soldier, has definite faith in

[57] Robert D Andrews. "Bataan Patrol," August 13, 1942, Special Collections, Turner/MGM Scripts, Folder B-458, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

America. These moments directly countered typical stereotypes associated with minorities in the United States, for it was they who were proving their loyalty to the country while the opposing white soldiers expressed uncertainty. Minor interactions like these may have been subtle but contained strong underlying themes of American democracy, especially when conveyed through multiple races and ethnicities. Many of the characters may have lacked depth but this was made up for with their passion, trust, and belief in America, a message all audiences watching could relate to. In fact, no one showed serious signs of cynicism or abandonment towards the mission except for Todd, who had a relentlessly negative attitude. And yet, Todd's role was originally written to be much more controversial than what was portrayed on screen.

Instead of solely focusing on the Japanese as the enemy, Todd was intended to be an antagonist as well, and a racist one at that. Included in one of the early drafts of the script written on July 13, 1942, there were multiple encounters where Todd blatantly expressed his prejudice towards his fellow squad members, specifically Private Eeps and Private Katigbak. In a later edited out scene, Todd attempts to take an extra drink of the little water the outfit has left. Eeps, the man in charge of the rear guard intervenes and as a result Todd lashes out, "'Keep your hand off of me […] No black boy pushes me around.'" Robert Andrews, the film's writer, added in, "Momentarily, there's the feeling of an ugly situation. Then Todd grins thinly at the Sergeant, and moves up to the head of the patrol- ostentatiously taking his time. […] The patrol moves on." Further description by Andrews makes it clear that Todd had little respect for the Filipino soldiers as well, clarifying that, "Todd looks down on the Filipino exactly as he looks down on Wesley Eeps. But the Filipino has a dignity, and indicates a kind of grim amusement, that Todd

can't quite cope with." Not only would this deleted scene increase the complexity of the characters and add depth to the movie, but it would address prejudices that were a fact in everyday life in America. Instead the pessimistic, mysterious, and relatively mild role of Corporal Todd made it on to the big screen. It is unclear why these moments were edited out; as a result of the omission, the film does not confront racism in its final form. In order to keep some sort of dramatic element within the squad, Todd is alternatively resentful towards Sergeant Dane and him only.

Despite the fact that the minority characters were ultimately underutilized in the film, their presence did not go unnoticed by film critics and newspaper reviews. *Variety* stated that, "The hand picked cast shines individually and collectively under the forceful direction of Tay Garnett." In another review from *Hollywood Reporter*, Kenneth Lee Spencer, who played Private Eeps is mentioned as "the one Negro role included in the group is performed with distinction […] a n d [*sic*] the note he sounds is an effective tribute to his race. Not overlooked are native soldiers who lent brave aid in Bataan." An alternative *Hollywood Reporter* article described Thomas Mitchell (Feingold) as "effective enough, but considering his brogue, somewhat miscast as a Jewish soldier." To *Variety*, Desi Arnaz (Ramirez) was the "fast-talking private" while Tom Dugan, the Irish Cook added "a needed light touch."[58]

Despite the small, but noteworthy attention many of the minority men received from the critics, when it came to advertising for the movie, they were nowhere to be

[58] "Trade Showing," *Variety*, May 26, 1943. Production Code Files for Bataan (1943 "Taylor At Best, Walker Sure Bet," *Hollywood Reporter*, May 26, 1943, Production Code Files for Bataan; Irving Hoffman, "Critics Go To Town For MGM Picture," *Hollywood Reporter*, June 7, 1943, Production Code Files for Bataan; "Trade Showing," *Variety*, May 26, 1943; "Bataan Patrol," MGM Production Bulletin, 1943. Production Code Files for Bataan, all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

found. Out of the various posters released for the film, none show Spencer, Arnaz, or Havier; all men of color who had significant roles. Showing diversity on the big screen may send a message to audiences about democracy through inclusion, but picking and choosing who gets to be the face of the film to bring in cinemagoers, was also revealing of Hollywood in the 1940's. White Americans did not come to the theatre to learn about people from different backgrounds; they came to see rousing war pictures. Propagandists in Hollywood knew what drove people in and what appealed to all audiences. In segregated America, it was not always diversity that drove profits.

Although its approach at highlighting minorities is nominal compared to other movies in this section, *Bataan* still fits in the category of a "Representative Squad" section. Their personas were stereotypical at times and ultimately no one survived except for Sergeant Dane, but the directors, writers, and producers of *Bataan* composed a picture that factually wasn't even plausible for World War II. The military was segregated so the fact that this sort of picture existed attests to Hollywood's drive to forego reality in order to show social cohesion amongst soldiers from all different backgrounds. The squad was a racially, ethnically, and nationally integrated group of men that may have not been the most united bunch, but they all died heroically for their nation. As each of the thirteen men get picked off, Salazar tortured by the Japanese, Katigbak stabbed in the back with a samurai sword, Ramirez attempting to fight off malaria as long as possible, in addition to the cook, Malloy, running out to an uncovered part of the jungle to successfully shoot down the enemy in the sky only to die moments later, and Eeps being beheaded; everyone in the squad proves their worth. No soldier shies away from his duty no matter their background, each man carries his own weight. While not the most progressive

World War II movie in terms of addressing societal tensions in America, the decision to include a diverse cast is an important move in itself: this war was everyone's and even if in reality units were segregated, everyone still sacrificed equally.

Sahara

Released by Columbia Pictures in 1943, *Sahara* was arguably one of the most iconic squad films of World War II, as its portrayal of democracy runs through almost every scene. Directed by Zoltan Korda, the movie stars Humphrey Bogart, who plays Sergeant Joe Gunn, the leader of the mixed group of Allied and Axis soldiers. The squad is not only representative of America, but it goes beyond the borders of the United States and includes men from Britain, France, Sudan, and even an Italian prisoner of war who turns on his own country. *Sahara* demonstrated democratic principles not only through diverse representation, but the film contains dialogue that highlights core American values. As a result, allied audiences were given a picture that reassured them that they were on the winning side of the war; the side that would triumph because of their democratic principles.

The movie is set in 1942 in the North African desert where three surviving American soldiers and their tank come across an assorted group of men fighting for the allies. As the squad treks on with their new addition of five British soldiers and one French corporal, the tank picks up more stragglers; a Sudanese soldier and two prisoners of war, one Italian and one German. In a desperate search to find water in the desert, the wise Sudanese leads them to various wells only to find that they have dried out. Eventually they reach Bir Acroma, where they are able to take advantage of a quickly depleting well. However, the Germans are also in need of water and are on their way to

that exact location. As the enemies eventually clash, neither side is willing to negotiate for the water, so the battle continues. One by one, members of Gunn's group are picked off, leaving only him and one of the British soldiers (Ozzie) left to face the dozens of Germans. Knowing that the well's water is limited and their chances of survival is narrow, Gunn makes a heroic last stand only to have the German's drop their guns in surrender as they are too thirsty to keep fighting. Like clockwork, the wells open up, water floods in, and British reinforcements arrive to help round up all of the Germans. The last scene is Gunn reciting all the names of the soldiers that died, "Halliday, Doyle, Tambul, Williams, Stegman, Frenchie, Clarkson," and as says, "We stopped them at El Alamein," a wind blows and the various hats representing the variety of men that wore them, rustled in the wind as they balanced on the rifles stuck in the sand, as if the soldiers themselves were tipping their caps.[59]

Audiences witness a democratic joining right away as the original all-American group is quickly joined by nine other soldiers who are all from different regions. Whereas most films in this study capitalize on race, director Zoltan Korda emphasized ethnicity and nationality as well. There is a soldier from South Africa (Peter), from France (Jean "Frenchie" Leroux), one from Ireland (Halliday), another from Sudan (Tambul), and the others are from various cities such as Sussex (Ozzie) and London (Williams). Even within the initial American squad, there is a soldier from Texas ("Waco"), one from Brooklyn (Doyle), and when Gunn is asked where he is from, he replies, "No place. Just the Army."[60] This international approach tackles what other films do not by showing how

[59] All quotes from this section are from *Sahara*, 1943.
[60] Credited cast: Guy Kingsford (Peter), Louis Mercier (Frenchie), Richard Nugent (Halliday), Rex Ingram (Tambul), Patrick O'Moore (Ozzie), Carl Harbord (Williams), Bruce Bennet (Waco), and Dan Duryrea (Doyle).

this war against the Axis is not just about America, but it requires the unity of their allies in order to defeat the enemy. But as the group continues to grow, and it's time to decide the fate of the Italian POW, Gunn has his own idea of who should survive and who should not. It took Captain Halliday, the previous leader of the British caravan to remind Sergeant Gunn of his democratic obligations, stating, "This man is a prisoner of war, and as such he's entitled to certain rights. […] We can't leave him here to die. If we asked the men, I'm sure they'd agree." Gunn makes his decision and the squad moves on without the Italian. In this moment, audiences see a weakness in the American Sergeant's integrity, but they are also reminded that their allies hold democratic morals too. However, the tank only makes it a couple hundred feet until it halts. With the permission of Sergeant Gunn, the prisoner is allowed to come aboard.

As the film continues, Gunn's character develops into a fair but stern leader, who shows sympathy for his prisoners of war, but does not forget their allegiance. When the squad picks up the German after shooting his plane down, Gunn asks Tambul, the Sudanese soldier, to search him. As Tambul steps forward, the German POW steps back, Halliday translates for the others, relaying in English, "He doesn't want to be touched by an inferior race." Despite Germany's primary effort to eliminate Jews in Europe and beyond, this scene reminds audiences that they were also prejudiced against those who were categorized as non-Aryan. Gunn is not rattled in the slightest at this comment, and sarcastically negates the German's irrational fear, "Oh tell him not to worry about his being black, it won't come off on his pretty uniform. Go ahead and search him." When Frenchie suggests taking the German over the hill and not coming back with him, Gunn

smirks but rejects this idea. It is now the American showing mercy for his enemies, although in some of his squad members' eyes, they do not deserve it.

The German continues to showcase his bigotry when he mocks the squad based on its diversity. Once the German joins the squad, he condescendingly smirks at the men. Halliday translates the German's words, saying, "He thinks it's funny that we should want to go on fighting with this curious detachment." The German then speaks for himself, "Americana, England, Frances, … Nigger." As if the squad's diversity hurts their ability to persevere and fight, when in the end, it is their differences that allows them to prevail. Gunn immediately responds, "Wipe that smile off your puss or I'll knock your teeth through your head. *Verstehen*?" Their company is no laughing matter and Gunn shows how there is no room for racism. Regardless of the German's offensive manner and the Italian also being the enemy, when the group is able to salvage enough water from the well, Gunn demands that everyone gets three swallows, even the POWs. This sent the clear message that the Allies were good and just to their enemies, even if this was not entirely true throughout the course of World War II. However, in *Sahara*, no matter where the men in this squad came from, they were all seen as equal, including the Italian and the German.

With ethnic and racial diversity in a squad often comes religious diversity, as portrayed in the scene between Tambul, who is Muslim, and the American soldier, "Waco," who is presumably Christian. Because Tambul, the Sudanese soldier, knew the wells in the desert better than anyone else, he is the one to go down into the well and collect water for the other soldiers. Waco decides to join him to keep him company and the two start conversing about their lives back home. Waco inquires with Tambul, "But I

guess you fellas feel differently about marrying. The boys up top were telling me that you Mohammedans have as many as 300 wives." Tambul appears happy to openly talk about his religion and personal life, correcting Waco by telling him that the Prophet only tells men that four wives is "sufficient for a true believer." The American then asks if the Sudanese soldier has four wives, Tambul says no, asking Waco, "Well if you had this law in your Texas, would you have four wives?" Waco agrees, he too would not take up four wives if given the opportunity, Tambul continues, "It is the same with me. My wife, she would not like it." Content with their conversation, Waco replies, "You sure learn things in the Army," smiling, Tambul responds, "Yes, we both have much to learn from each other." Through this exchange, Waco and audiences are exposed (potentially for the first time) to the details of marriage within the Islamic religion, a faith that was rarely ever included in war films during this time. It is a peaceful discussion between the two allies from significantly different countries for they are able to spend a moment during war to get to know each other. Not only is religion tackled in this scene but race as well, Tambul may have not been from America but his skin color is not a novelty to audiences watching. He represents the country of Sudan, but he also represents those who share the color of his skin, sending the message to both American and international viewers that everyone has "much to learn from each other," and often times, people are more alike than they are different.

In the final scenes of the movie, the squad has to come together for the common cause as they face attacks from the Germans. Each man dies heroically while demonstrating the virtue of the Allies by uniting with each other. Even the Italian is killed trying to help Gunn and the other men, after he tells off the German exclaiming, "I'd

rather spend my whole life living in this dirty hole than escape to fight again for things I do not believe against, people I do not hate. And for your Hitler it's because of a man like him that God, my God, created hell." The Italian prisoner is stabbed by the German but he musters the strength to alert the company that the German had escaped; it is Tambul who runs after him. He suffocates the German in the sand but before he is able to rejoin his own group, Tambul is killed by gunfire from the enemy. He dies, giving a thumbs up to his squad, letting them know he completed his mission. Frenchie is shot in the back after attempting to negotiate peace terms with the Germans and every other man in the outfit but Gunn and Ozzie dies trying to defend Bir Acroma.

Before Captain Halliday is also killed, he and Sergeant Gunn have one of the most meaningful conversations in the film. Halliday states, "It seems to me like the four of us holding off several hundred of them is nothing short of a miracle. You know why we are able to do it? Because we're stronger than they are." Puzzled, Gunn asks, "What do you mean stronger?" Halliday clarifies, "Well I don't mean in numbers. I mean something else. See those men out there have never known the dignity of freedom." Gunn agrees, "Dignity? Huh that's a funny way to put it. Maybe you got something there, Doc." Once again, it is Halliday, the Irish soldier, reminding Gunn, the American, of the freedoms that they are fighting for. *Sahara* was not just a film made to stress American values, but it was created to emphasize the Allies' values, and that they are one in the same.

Despite the picture being controversial internationally, on the home front it resonated well with audiences. In July of 1946, the movie was rejected from being released in Italy by Joseph Breen because it was "susceptible to disturb public opinion."

Although the Italian soldier was portrayed as brave for his words and actions, the Second World War had just concluded and public sentiment was in a sensitive state in the former Axis countries. In the United States, the reviews could not and did not ignore the mixed ensemble of soldiers, praising each man individually for his performance as well as noting his ethnic or racial origins. In a review from *Variety*, every main character of the movie is listed and praised; no race or ethnicity is snubbed as many often were in publications reporting on other squad films that highlight diversity.[61] Due to the layout of the picture, each individual had their own specific identity and role that contributed to the plot, making it easy for reviews, such as *Variety*'s to credit every character. The *LA Times* also discussed how, "Out of it all you get a pretty heartening picture of democracy in action."[62] Whereas in some squad films from the 1940s-1960s, democracy is hidden and one has to search for it, there is no mistaking the message in *Sahara*. Here is a representative squad that provides a blatant example to global audiences as to what democracy should look like, not only between allies, but between enemies as well.

The Steel Helmet

Written, produced, and directed by Samuel Fuller, *The Steel Helmet* is a 1951 film about the Korean War that starred an all-male cast lead by Sergeant Zack (Gene Evans). The players are diverse, and worthy of the title of a "Representative Squad" for not only are various races and ethnicities showcased but age and religion are utilized strategically as well. Although the whole squad is not as tight-knit and unified in comparison to other war films; the picture succeeds as a vision for democracy despite harsh backlash for one

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[62] "Sahara," *Variety*, September 29, 1943, Production Code Files; Philip K. Scheuer, "'Sahara' Realistic Film Story of Desert Warfare," *LA Times*, December 9, 1943. Production Code Files, all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

particular scene causing some reviews to call it pro-communist propaganda. Regardless, certain characters and moments justify the film's democratic message, providing audiences with an inside look to the various and diverse group of American soldiers who were currently serving in the Korean War at the time the picture was released.

While the plot of the movie is generally straightforward, it's the characters who create emotion and interest. The film opens up with Sergeant Zack, abandoned, wounded, and momentarily alone until a young South Korean boy who Zack names as Short Round, tries to mend his injuries. Hesitant to let Short Round tag along, Zack eventually allows the young boy to join him. As the pair trek along, they run into an African American medic by the name of Corporal Thompson (James Edwards) who was the only one to survive from his previous unit. Soon, the three come across another outfit who are familiar with Sergeant Zack, adding on to the trio is Lieutenant Driscoll (Steve Brodie), Tanaka (Richard Loo), Joe (Sid Melton), Baldy (Richard Monahan), Bronte (Robert Hutton), and a few other GIs make up the rest. Together, the new squad stations itself in a Buddhist temple, where they are ordered to find a prisoner of war for interrogation. It quickly becomes apparent they are not alone in their new base. As many war films go, one by one they are picked off, whether in secret somewhere in the temple or in the final battle scene where the North Koreans are attacking. In the end, Sergeant Tanaka, Corporal Thompson, Private Baldy, and Sergeant Zack are the only ones left, only to be relieved by a new outfit right after the battle concludes. As the wounded men limp away in the final scene to their next mission, the film closes with a banner stating, "There is no

end to this story."[63] A frank message to viewers that the Korean War is still being fought and continues to demand support from the American people.

Besides the presence of an assorted squad, one of the strongest aspects of *The Steel Helmet* is Sergeant Zack's and Short Round's relationship within the group. Zack is a World War II veteran who has been hardened by combat and Short Round is just a young, naïve boy stuck in a country who is fighting itself; the two are polar opposites. But as Sergeant Zack continues to take care of and look out for Short Round, the two form a close relationship. Inversely, as Short Round tries to prove his bravery to Zack, Zack also becomes more sympathetic during their time together. Upon their first encounter, Zack by habit calls the kid a "gook," Short Round's smile quickly disappears and replies sternly, "I am no gook, I am Korean." Zack agrees and for the rest of the film, he no longer uses that word when describing any of the Koreans, north or south. As the squad continues to endure combat, Zack as well as Corporal Thompson were protective of Short Round, making sure that he was properly covered or always had someone with him. When they finally arrived at the temple, there is a scene of Zack creating a dog tag for Short Round since he had asked for one. In this moment you see a softer side of the Sergeant as he smiles at his makeshift tag, knowing how happy it would make his little friend.

However, right before Zack and Short Round are about to depart with the prisoner of war known as "The Red" (Harold Fong) to headquarters, the boy is shot by the North Koreans. On him was a piece of paper that read, "To Buddha, please let Sergeant Zack like me." As the prisoner of war reads the note aloud, he laughs, calling it stupid. The

[63] All quotes from this section are from *The Steel Helmet*, 1951.

screen pans over to Zack who is visibly distraught and holding back tears, in retaliation, he kills The Red. Regardless of their age, race, and nationality, Sergeant Zack and Short Round had a strong mutual relationship where they both learned from each other. Short Round's culture and youth taught Zack respect and compassion whereas Zack's hard exterior and tough attitude taught Short Round how to become a soldier. Despite their distinct differences, the pair's bond only became stronger because of it.

In addition to Short Round being the young, innocent boy, his presence in the film served as a tactic to inform audiences who Americans were fighting for. His youth, graciousness, and curiosity made him an easy character to sympathize with while his eager personality to join the Americans helps viewers to see the South Koreans as their devoted allies. As the squad makes it into the temple, Short Round immediately takes off his equipment and shoes. He approaches the large Buddha statue, bows, and then lights candles for they are now in a sacred place of worship. The rest of the squad follows, taking off their helmets and looking up in awe at the large statue; lieutenant Driscoll then commands, "I don't want any of you to disfigure these walls, touch the gods or break anything. I want you to leave this temple exactly as you found it." In a later scene, Bronte is playing "Auld Lang Syne" on his mobile piano and Short Round stands up and starts singing the Korean National anthem to the tune of the song. When Short Round finishes, he tells Bronte, "you play it good, very good," unaware that the soldier was just playing a traditional folk song and not the Korean National anthem. In the film, Short Round is by far the most sympathetic character, but it is in these moments that he not only captivates audiences' and their emotions but reminds them that this war is a just one, to protect innocent lives like his.

Other minority characters such as Corporal Thompson and Sergeant Tanaka are highlighted various times as well during the film, but the starkest moments where American democracy appears is when they both have conversations with the North Korean prisoner of war. After the squad captures the The Red in the temple, Corporal Thompson sits down with him to attend to his wounds. The Red says to Thompson, "I just don't understand you, you can't eat with them unless there is a war. You pay for a ticket, but you even have to sit in the back of a public bus, is that so?" Thompson calmly replies, "That's right, a hundred years ago I couldn't even ride a bus. At least now I can sit in the back. Maybe in fifty years I'll sit in the middle, maybe someday the front. Some things you just can't rush, buster." Displeased with this response, the North Korean calls Thompson "stupid." Thompson's optimistic yet unrealistic reply is not at all reflective of the hundreds of years of hate and discrimination African American's had endured in the United States. His response may be democratic in America's eye's in 1951, but it is not representative or all-encompassing of how all black people felt in the United States about their progress in society. Instead, this passive reply from Thompson sends the message to African Americans and everyone else watching, that this is the type of perspective black people should have on racial equality; that they need to wait their turn in order to earn their rights.

The Red's conversation with Tanaka, a Nisei soldier, proves to be equally as provocative on the side of the communist as well as equally restrained on the Americans. As the North Korean points out to Tanaka that they have the same kind of eyes, he says, "Doesn't it make you feel like a traitor? […] They threw Japanese Americans in the prison camps in the last war, didn't they? Perhaps even your parents? Perhaps even you?"

He continues to antagonize him, "Were you one of those idiots that fought in Europe for *your* country?" Tanaka allows the Korean to provoke him for a minute until he shuts him down for good, stating, "I got some hot infantry news for you. I'm not a Jap rat. I'm an American. Any who we push around back home, well that's our business. But we don't like when we get pushed around by -ahh knock off, before I forget the articles of war and slap those rabbit teeth of yours out one at a time." Here, Tanaka who is a Japanese-American, ironically uses a racial slur against the North Korean that was commonly used in World War II propaganda when depicting the Japanese. But in this context, this was Tanaka's way of distinguishing his Asian national origin from that of the new Asian enemy. In this scene, audiences see the kind of perspective the United States would want from a Japanese-American: to put aside the past and fight for the country anyway, exactly as Tanaka did. Similar to Thompson, this reaction is hardly characteristic of how Japanese-Americans really felt after World War II, but juxtaposed with a communist's perspective, Tanaka's and Thompson's responses reflected American ideals, which was ultimately what the film was promoting even if it wasn't entirely accurate.

Despite *The Steel Helmet*'s efforts to display democracy on the silver screen, significant controversy ensued when a reporter challenged Samuel Fuller by claiming he was fueling communism with his picture. In multiple articles written by Victor Riesel in January of 1951, he called out Fuller, stating, "This film vividly shows an American sergeant brutally killing a North Korean prisoner. To make the crime even more heinous, the kid from America murders the Korean in a Buddhist temple." In a following review, Riesel quotes an Army officer who commented on the film, saying "'…The communist is firm and decisive and has the answers while the GI is weak and fumbling and doesn't

know what to answer.'" As a result of these comments, many other reporters came to the defense of Fuller such as Dick Williams from the *Los Angeles Mirror*, who responded, "I found 'The Steel Helmet' good entertainment and definitely anti-Communist in tone. So did such publications as the Catholic weekly *Tidings*, which is as sensitive to Red propaganda as a barometer in a Florida hurricane." Another review from *Citizen News Hollywood*, praised the movie by arguing, "the GI's behave like true Americans, refusing to be swayed by the shopworn communist propaganda. They realize that American democracy has not yet achieved perfection but that it has brought them more equality and justice than they could achieve under a communist dictatorship." Even Samuel Fuller was up in arms about this comment, writing a letter to a Mr. Vogel about all of his war accomplishments throughout the Second World War, even going as far as to say he would sue him.[64]

Riesel's remarks may have been far-fetched but the basis of them caused some issues with the censors of the Motion Picture Association. With the majority of the picture taking place in a Buddhist temple, much of the violent content and dialogue was frowned upon by producers and censors. Joseph Breen requested to have the words, "gooks" and "buddha-head" taken out as they were offensive to both Koreans and their religion, yet these terms remained in the film. He also warned that "Practically all the violent action takes place in a Buddhist temple and involves such excessive destruction of

[64] Victor Riesel, "Plenty of Civil Liberties Here," *Hollywood Citizen News*, January 15, 1951. Special Collections, Box 13, Folder 476. Marty Weiser papers**;** Victor Riesel, *Los Angeles Daily News*, January 17, 1951. Special Collections, Box 13, Folder 476, Marty Weiser papers**;** Dick Williams, *Los Angeles Mirror*, January 19, 1951. Special Collections, Box 13, Folder 476, Marty Weiser papers; "Looking at a Picture," *Citizens-News Hollywood*, January 17, 1951. Motion Picture Association of America. Production Code Administration records, Samuel Fuller; 1951 (Lippert Pictures, 1951); Telegram from Samuel Fuller to Mr. Vogel, Special Collections, January 1951. Box 13, Folder 476. Marty Weiser papers**,** all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

the articles of worship, sacred to those of the Buddhist belief, that we feel that you should make every effort to confine this action to some ante-room or to some other part of the temple not so intimately connected with religious worship."[65] These various scenes also stayed in the movie regardless of Breen's warnings.

In another censorship report to Robert Lippert, who helped Fuller produce the film, there was cause for concern about the picture because of its portrayal of a war being currently fought. The report stated, "[…] in view of the critical war situation in the Far East, the Production Code Administration wished to go on record as saying that this story, even in those parts which do not specifically violate the Code, could cause serious damage to the international relations of the United States, as well as serious embarrassment to the motion picture industry […] none of us could say what might be the desired relation between our government and the people of North Korea. Some of the material in THE STEEL HELMET might cause serious embarrassment to our State Department at a later date."[66] The film was even reprimanded by Lippert's studio for showing violations of the Geneva Convention when Zack killed the North Korean prisoner of war.[67] Despite the war unfolding at this time, there was still a limit as to what should be shown to domestic and international audiences; even if the attempt was to paint the enemy as the bad guy while reinforcing the American spirit.

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[65] Censorship Report from Joseph Breen to Robert Lippert, October 16, 1950. Special Collections Motion Picture Association of America. Production Code Administration records, Samuel Fuller; 1951 (Lippert Pictures, 1951). Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.
[66] Memo from M.M. to Robert Lippert, October 17, 1950. Motion Picture Association of America. Production Code Administration records, Samuel Fuller; 1951 (Lippert Pictures, 1951). Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.
[67] *Ibid*.

Despite the controversy surrounding the film, *Steel Helmet*, the players of the squad were a diverse bunch who were all given moments to prove their democratic worth throughout the movie. One review in particular recognized the diverse cast for their work, singling out each individual actor, "Also a brave Negro medic (James Edwards); a sincere conscientious objector in the last war who is willing to fight and die in this one (Robert Hutton); a Japanese GI who goes on proving that the Nisei are loyal Americans (Richard Loo); and a gentle south Korean orphan boy who attaches himself to the group (William Chun)."[68] Like the other films in this category of a "Representative Squad", the different people who make up the assorted outfit are highlighted and not diminished in comparison to the white characters. Often, their presence makes for a much more interesting picture when it is representative of the people watching it. Additionally, without the roles of Short Round, Corporal Thomas, and Sergeant Tanaka, it may not have been as easy for Fuller to dispute the charges that his work was pro-Communist, for diversity is one of the most notable traits of democracy.

To Hell and Back

In the 1955 technicolor film, *To Hell and Back*, the most decorated soldier to emerge from the Second World War was presented the opportunity to play himself. Audie Murphy who had "received every decoration for valor that his country could award," totaling twenty-four awards from the Army.[69] Directed by Jesse Hibbs, written by Gil Doud, and based on Murphy's autobiography of the same title, this picture celebrated the accomplished soldier by depicting just a fraction of his time in the Army.

[68] Ezra Goodman, "The Steel Helmet," Los Angeles Daily News, January 12, 1951. Box 13, Folder 476. Marty Weiser papers**.** Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.
[69] All quote from this section are from *To Hell and Back*, 1955.

Based on the layout of the movie, it would seem that *To Hell and Back* should belong to the "White Man Saves the Day" category in this paper; however, Murphy's extremely humble and selfless nature as a person translated seamlessly to the film. The picture gave viewers a story not only about the most decorated war hero, but also about the America soldiers around Murphy that made him so distinguished. Murphy's squad was a multiracial, multiethnic, multinational bunch of men who all reflected the democratic values of loyalty, sacrifice, and brotherhood. Although Murphy was at the center of the film, the manner in which he and his squad are portrayed demonstrated that their victories in Europe were anything but an individual effort.

Besides originating from different parts of the United States (and outside of it), the men in the squad each contribute their own personality to the group. Audie is the quiet but brave white leader. He was raised by his mother in Texas, having to become the man of the household at the age of twelve because his family suffered from poverty. Private Valentino (Paul Picerni) is an Italian-American who takes great pride in his ethnic roots. Private Kovak (Richard Castel) is a Polish immigrant who is especially invested in the war but also displays unwavering commitment to the United States. There is Private Swope or the Chief (Felix Noriego), a Cherokee Indian who is always smoking a cigar but never speaks a word in the film even though he endures the hardships of war just like the rest of his peers. Next is Private Johnson (Marshall Thompson), a white man who brags about his frequent relations with multiple women when in reality, he only has love for his girl back home. Then there is Private Kerrigan (Jack Kelly), a white American who is the jokester of the bunch and lastly, Private Brandon (Charles Drake), a white

Kentuckian who walked out on his wife and daughter. Together, the bunch creates a motley crew who all have a different story to tell.

The film begins with Audie's childhood, showing his meager upbringing and then his eventual decision to enlist at the age of nineteen once World War II began. When Murphy goes to enlist, he is rejected by the Marines, Navy, and paratroops because of his underwhelming and boyish stature, along with minor health problems. However, the Army admits him and Murphy is able to prove his worth, eventually leading to him being put in charge of Baker Company 3rd Platoon where he meets his squad. The unit heads out to Sicily, they undergo attacks by the Germans and the survivors are sent off to Naples for liberty before they are shipped out to France. The final combat scene in the film recreates the battle in Southern France where Murphy earns the Medal of Honor. With the Germans closing in on the Americans, Murphy takes over an abandoned tank that has caught fire and he starts shooting at the enemy. He kills dozens of Germans singlehandedly and is able to do so much damage that they start to retreat. Through battles and leisure time, the men forge strong bonds with each other but no matter how mighty the victory, like every war film, the squad experiences death as well. In the end, Kovak, Johnson, and Brandon all die in battle. In addition to displaying the bravery of Murphy and his men, the minorities in the film, specifically Kovak, the Chief, and Valentino are all given moments to talk about and prove their democratic loyalty to their squad and to their nation. Through Murphy, these three men, and the others, the audiences see a connected unit of men who make it a priority to fight for not only their country, but each other as well.

Due to Murphy's significant accomplishments in war, he makes for a worthy protagonist in the film. Additionally, his humble upbringing, modest attitude, and principled persona made for a refreshing war picture that was not all about the overly confident white man. In fact, Murphy provides a different definition of democracy. Although his Texan roots, lack of money, and strong family ties make him the all-American boy, he differs from many other military leaders or soldiers in general through his reserved demeanor. In the film, Murphy never drinks, smokes, or regularly seeks out women. Instead, he is typically in the background, looking on at the rest of his squad who are the ones indulging. Additionally, once he begins to prove his heroism on the battlefield, he quickly earns multiple promotions. Murphy's noble attitude throughout the film helped redirect the spotlight away from himself and onto his soldiers. When given the title of Corporal, Murphy replies, "Hey I don't want any stripes," he turns to his unit and expresses, "Why'd he pick on me? You guys ought to get the promotions. You've been in this outfit longer than I have." Valentino (Val) responds, "Don't feel bad about it Murph, we recommended you," sarcastically adding, "So you could lead us on to victory," the squad laughs in unison. When asked to take a new commission, he declines, not wanting to leave his men that he has grown so close to. As Murphy continues to be promoted, he regularly thanks the soldiers around him, always selflessly putting the men before himself. As inspiring as Murphy's lead role is, the minority characters prove to be equally intriguing. Although their lives do not get as much attention as Murphy's, the scenes audiences do see of Kovak, Chief, and Val offer alternative democratic approaches of illustrating their loyalty to the war effort.

The first scene of the squad together focuses on the three minority men huddled around the fire at the campsite with Murphy listening close by; they have yet to depart for Italy and are enjoying their last night in Allied territory. The shot pans to Kovak with his right hand up, reciting the United States preamble: he is practicing for his citizenship exam. With a big smile on his face, Kovak relays, "… promote the general welfare and secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our poster-ity-." Val corrects him, "Posterity." He then goes on to ask the Pole, "Now, what date was it adopted?" Unsure, Kovak replies, "Uh, 1774. Oh, six six!" In the background Murphy smiles, pleased with his effort. Val corrects Kovak, "No, no, no. What was signed in 1776?" Kovak, "Oh, the Declaration of Independence […] that other was 1774." Val refutes, "No, it wasn't. Chief, he doesn't want to be an American citizen. He isn't even trying." Kovak tries to correct his answer, "Uh, 1780…" he looks at Chief for the answer, the Native American holds up seven fingers and Kovak replies, such of himself, "1787." Smiling, Val says, "That's right. But don't just guess. Memorize it." Kovak responds, "Yeah, I do that."

In this short but significant scene, audiences see the three minorities in the group interact with each other in one of the most democratic ways possible. An immigrant is studying for his citizenship test, and instead of another white American helping, it is an Italian-American and a Native American aiding him. Not only do they know the answers to the questions, but Val makes a point to tell Kovak that he needs to know the material rather than guessing. This is all while Kovak has on a big smile, as though nothing pleases him more than reciting his knowledge of America while working towards his goal of becoming a citizen. Although Murphy is somewhat involved in the scene, this moment

is about the different races and ethnicities of the squad who all exemplify the ideal American standard for minorities in the United States.

Kovak's character is especially passionate in the film. When the men arrive in Italy, they walk through a town filled with civilians. The soldiers are giving chocolate to orphan children when Kovak bursts out, "By George, they no start Hitler's war. Look! Look what it does to them!" While the dirty and malnourished children dig into their candy as the soldiers look on, Kovak continues, "I don't want see this no more. When I do it makes me think of Poland. I go back camp." As he storms off, Chief follows him close behind, hinting at the strong bond between the two that becomes more apparent in the film.

Many scenes later, the squad is defending a farmhouse when Kovak is shot by the Germans. Once Chief sees that Kovak has been killed he immediately tries to run out but Murphy and the other men hold him back. After the battle is over, the men reflect on their fallen peer, Johnson says, "Kovak was sure a good soldier, you'd have thought he was fightin' a holy war." Kerrigan replies, "Maybe he was." Val chimes in, "Are you nuts? What did he have to save? Not even a citizen. His whole family liquidated in Poland." Brandon adds, "Then maybe he didn't mind dying. Maybe that's what fightin' for a cause means. Something none of us really understand." Chief remains silent, staring at the ground, stone faced. In this scene, audiences witness soldiers discussing the motivations for war. While Johnson admired Kovak's spirit, Kerrigan sees the Pole's inspiration as something that runs deeper than American patriotism. Yet, Val has a more pessimistic view, thinking because Kovak was not a citizen and had lost his family, he didn't know what he was fighting for. Brandon contributes his own idea, that America had not truly

experienced loss and death like their Allies had and for this reason, Kovak had more to fight and die for.

This conversation gets interrupted by a perky and excited soldier from another squad (oblivious to the loss the men had just suffered) who exclaims he found a stove to make coffee with. However, this stove was Kovak's, striking a sensitive nerve in the Chief causing him to wrestle it out of the soldier's hand to then storm outside to bury it, tears running down his cheeks while taps plays in the background. Kovak's status as an immigrant, fighting for a country he was not yet a citizen of forced his peers to think deeper about what their own service meant. This exchange in dialogue showed that there was no one reason to fight, thus highlighting the beauty of democracy; the free will to choose one's motives. Additionally, the strength of Kovak's and the Chief's friendship led to even the most mysterious and reserved man in the group to show emotion; war is hell and even the toughest men break.

Valentino, the boisterous Italian-American who frequently reminded the men of his heritage upon arriving in Italy, was the most prominent minority in the squad. When the men had first arrived in Europe, Valentino gleefully shouts, "Hey you guys, welcome to sunny Italy, the beautiful home of my ancestors!" Val also frequently promises the men a big spaghetti dinner from his extended family with his own "Valentino sauce." The frequent mention of his Italian roots when the men reach the country illustrates the pride Val still has for his nation despite their allegiance to the Axis. This enthusiasm for Italy was never portrayed negatively because while he did have ties to the enemy, Val was ultimately an American who was fighting on the right side. Furthermore, Val was so dedicated to the United States, that when Murphy gets promoted to Second Lieutenant at

the end of the film, he then promotes Valentino to Corporal, thus reassuring any skeptical audiences that Val, despite his origins, was a loyal squad member who was worthy of promotion.

Race and ethnicity was not a suppressed topic in *To Hell and Back*; the men may not have delved into the tensions back home concerning immigrants and the treatment of Native Americans, but the three men's presence in the movie, their active roles, and the camaraderie they share with the other soldiers suggests democratic values in a whole new way. The men's ethnic background was utilized frequently to define the soldiers, but only in an uplifting manner and never as an impediment. In the end of the film, new ethnic identities are briefly mentioned. When Murphy is hurt in the final combat scene after manning the tank, Val rushes over to help him; Murphy says, "I'm alright Val, get moving." Val protests, "You crazy Irishman, you ought to be dead!" Even in the next scene when Murphy is in a hospital, Kerrigan smooth talks his way past the nurses so he can see his lieutenant. Murphy replies lightheartedly, "You shanty Irishman." In the final scene of the film, after the narrator reads off all of the medals Murphy have been awarded, the shot pans over the squad standing side by side, a final symbol of their brotherhood. Instead of ending with the "hero" of the film, the last thing audiences see is the faces of Kovak, Valentino, Chief, Kerrigan, Johnson, and Brandon; indicating that their contribution to the war was just as vital while reinforcing the democratic message that all efforts are recognized, not just the ones with the most decorations.

Based on the material written about the book and the film, the strong brotherhood bonds the men formed in real life was authentic and true to the story. As humble as Murphy was in the movie, his book (which was ghost written) was yet another piece of

evidence proving his good nature. On one of the opening pages, it stated, "*If there be any glory in war, let it rest on men like these*."[70] The admiration he had for the men in his book is seemingly translated to the silver screen. Murphy talked about Kovak, stating, "We all like him. He is a top-notch soldier, seldom complaining and fearing little." He went on to describe the Chief as, "Swope, a Cherokee Indian, volunteers for the first watch. He has nerves of iron, a fine eye for targets, and a weakness for automatic weapons," Brandon is "The tall, quiet man from the hills of Kentucky" who "is as solid as the earth, a sticker. If the gates of hell burst open, Brandon would stick to his position." On the other hand, the manner in which Murphy was depicted in the film appeared to be a much purer version of himself. Whereas in the picture he was only interested in one woman for a short time, in the book he is much more forthright with his thoughts, "The idea of an actual girl sets my brain afire." While the squad's relationships and the loyalty of the men remained consistent from book to film, Murphy's character, although still humble, was shaped by the writers to make him into the utmost, respectable and ideal American soldier.

In a written synopsis by the production company, printed before the movie was released, the admirable bonds are distinctly outlined so that there is no mistaking that this is no ordinary squad. The synopsis stated, "The dogfaces develop a deep unspoken love for each other as they fight through Salerno and across the ruggedly defended Volturno River. Audie discovers the dominant qualities of his buddies. He comes to respect the quiet courage of Swope. He studies the brooding of the patriotic Kovak who is not a citizen. He smiles at the exaggerated self-told tales of Johnson's prowess with the female.

[70] Audie Murphy, *To Hell and Back* (New York: Henly Holt and Company, 1949), frontmatter; Murphy, *To Hell and Back*, 19; Murphy, *To Hell and Back,* 23; Murphy, *To Hell and Back*, 29.

He develops a protectiveness for Brandon who takes too many chances under fire."[71] A characteristic that makes Murphy stand out compared to leaders portrayed in other films, was his admiration and "love" he had for his men. As he rose through the ranks, he made sure he brought his men with him, he regularly put other soldiers before himself, and always remained modest. Through his and the other soldiers' personas, audiences watch a different kind of democracy portrayed, not the obvious type, but the idea that love and friendships with men different from themselves sometime was the best parts of war, not just medals and valor.

In the various reviews of the film, *To Hell and Back*, the message relayed through the screen is hardly missed; Murphy was a decorated soldier, but he was no better than the men around him. *Variety* wrote, "The film makes plain that if Murphy was a hero he was a scared one, as were the battle veterans he served with. The script paints an accurate picture of the types with whom Murphy grew close in the fighting and, like Murphy's self-depiction, these GI's are played with a human quality that makes them very real. Fighting or funning, they are believable." In another review, the *Hollywood Reporter* outlined, "As a newspaperman I've met many heroes of both world wars. Most of them wanted to be modest and tried to be modest. But Audie Murphy's the only one I've met who actually is modest- so modest that to meet him is to confront a mystery. He's so casual about himself, so unassuming, that it's almost impossible while talking to him to

[71] "Analysis of Film Content," Synopsis of *To Hell and Back*, 1955, Special Collections, Motion Picture Association of America, Production Code Administration records, Jess Hibbs; 1955 (Universal-International Pictures). Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

remember the physical accomplishments, under harrowing conditions, that stand to his credit."[72]

Both on and off screen, Murphy was the epitome of the American soldier; dedicated to his men, brave, authoritative but never arrogant, and a heroic leader. All of these factors made for the perfect American film, but one that went beyond the leading white man to focus on the equally as courageous soldiers behind him. Murphy's squad was strong because they were diverse. The multiracial, multiethnic, and multinational group of men were always proud of their differences and never tried to stifle their identity. Although, the film's overall optimistic nature left little room for discussion about the racial and ethnic inequalities the rest of America was experiencing back home, *To Hell and Back* was still a picture that made a conscious effort to diversify and therefore democratize the classic all white outfit. Just like Murphy, each man had his own story and reason for fighting in America's war. Murphy may have been the lieutenant of the squad, but the film made absolutely clear that he was not the only hero.

Pork Chop Hill

Six years after the Korean War armistice came, *Pork Chop Hill* (1959), directed by Lewis Milestone famously known for his other pictures, *A Walk in the Sun* and *All Quiet on the Western Front,* starred Gregory Peck (who also helped create the film). The film was based on the book by Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall, a notable historian who served in both World War II and the Korean War. Like many other war movies, it was important to Peck and Milestone that the film was authentic; in the opening credits, it

[72] Brog, "To Hell and Back," *Variety*, July 19, 1955, Production Code Files. Jack Moffitt, "To Hell and Back," Hollywood Reporter, July 19, 1955, all from Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

states, “In most cases not even the names of the people have been changed.”[73] Rather than fighting the North Koreans, the battle of Pork Chop Hill in 1953 was between the Communist Chinese volunteer army and the Americans over territory that was ultimately not essential for either side, it was a fight for power and pride. The peace process in Panmunjom, Korea, was unfolding just 70 miles away where diplomats from both sides were ready to call off the war at any moment. Despite this, lieutenant Joe Clemons (Gregory Peck) and his squad (King Company) are still expected to take the hill from the Chinese. Barbed wire and misdirected searchlights impede their fight for the hill and soon the beaten company of just 25 men are in a small bunker surrounded by the Chinese, trapped by the enemy’s flame thrower just outside the door. At the last second, American reinforcements arrive to save King Company and they take the hill. The battle of Pork Chop Hill is a heroic one, but often forgotten in history.

A main theme in the film was to show that the Cold War resistance to communism had to be resolute, even when the reasons or even the enemy was unclear. The war demanded these efforts from all Americans of every background. The Korean War, like the Second World War, was a fight against ideologies and even more so, it was a fight to protect and spread democracy making it a fundamentally American battle. Whereas the Chinese were completely villainized based on their torturous broadcasts and mercilessness, the American squad, consisting of various races, was shown as valiant and brave. With the Cold War as the backdrop *Pork Chop Hill* uses the threat of communism as another way to reinforce America’s vision of democracy at home and all around the world. The film indirectly addresses the racial struggle for African Americas in the

[73] All quotes from this section are from *Pork Chop Hill*, 1959.

United States while also portraying a Japanese-American in a leading military position, alluding to two of the main minority groups who had faced and were still facing significant oppression.

Despite the large cast, the film follows an intimate group of soldiers who are each given a substantial amount of screen time so audiences are able to watch them grow as men. There is of course, Lieutenant Joe Clemons, a real-life individual who participated in the actual battle of Pork Chop Hill, Lieutenant Tsugi Ohashi (George Shibata), a Nisei Japanese who also was present in the battle; Lieutenant Russel (Rip Torn), a classic WASP; Private Franklen (Woody Strode) and Corporal Jurgens (James Edwards), two African American men who play prominent characters in the film, along with various other white soldiers such as Forstman, Fedderson, Coleman and Velie. *Pork Chop Hill* not only shows diversity within its cast but regularly displays unity within the group while also taking moments to acknowledge social tensions. These instances are not at the forefront of the film, but they are weaved within the plot, forcing these societal tensions to be acknowledged by different members of the platoon. Even with the squad's strong diversity, the cast in general is an assorted bunch. Because the storyline switches between the Americans to the Chinese soldiers on the other side of the hill to the peace conference room where multiple nations are negotiating, audiences saw a wide array of races and ethnicities.

Due to the film being released many years after "The Forgotten War," the manner in which the enemies are represented point to the purpose of the movie; it was not to anger audiences or rouse patriotism like many pictures attempted to do during war, but it was to strengthen the resolve against communism. Milestone wished to portray the

"dramatic truth and [the] dramatic truth alone." The producers of *Pork Chop Hill* believed the movie they made was an accurate tribute to the men who fought in Korea. In an interview with Bartlett and Peck, the two explained, "'There have been too many cheap, sleazy films made on the Korea War […] As a correspondent who saw Pork Chop Hill at the time of some of the battles there, I can say this is it.'"[74] Factual representation and dramatic truth may have been the goal, but racial diversity was also an unsung success of the picture.

As the movie gets going, dozens of characters are presented simultaneously; although there are no formal introductions, the audience gets to know many of the men through their narratives and actions. None are thrilled to take a hill when the war could be over at any moment and little time goes by until they begin to aggressively mobilize, causing the Chinese to respond. This also happens as a Chinese broadcaster intermittently broadcasts, continually telling the men to turn back and lay down their weapons. Although tormented by the booming voice of the communist enemy, the men of King Company do not stop. However, doubtful of his survival, Private Franklen falls while they are taking the hill and claims that he has hurt his ankle and cannot go on. While Private Velie stays behind to check on him, Franklen tells him off only to have lieutenant Clemons come over and tell him to "Get up and stay close to me." It becomes apparent that Franklen is one to be wary of in the squad, but his lieutenant and his fellow soldiers never leave him behind.

[74] Lewis Milestone, "How I make Movies. Director of War Films Seeks 'Dramatic Truth,'" August 26, 1958, Special Collections, Lewis Milestone papers, Folder F.83, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

Another powerful scene involves Private Franklen and Corporal Jurgens, two of the three African American soldiers featured in the picture. Jurgens is ordered by Clemons to keep an eye on Franklen as he continues to show signs of desertion. As the two jump into one of the hill's trenches, Franklen asks Jurgens, "Who are you staring at?" Jurgens responds, "I'm staring at you. Who do you think I'm staring at?" At that moment Franken grabs Jurgens' wrist and says, "What for?" The two stare each other in the eye and then they both look down at Franklen's fist, tightly grabbing Jurgens'. Although the film is in black and white, it is easy to recognize that their embrace is not all that they are examining; they are looking at the color of their skin. It is as if Franklen is insulted that another black man would cross him, that Jurgens should be on his side and not the lieutenant's. But Jurgen states, "Cause I got a special interest in everything you do," and the moment is over.

Towards the end of the film, Franklen displays his boldest act of defiance yet, he points a gun at Lieutenant Clemons when they are alone in a bunker. Franklen acted as if he did not recognize his leader and demanded that he tell him the countersign, knowing very well there was none. Clemons tells him to come off this act so they can get back to the rest of the squad but Franklen has no intention of risking his life anymore, he replies, "And serve ten years? You think I'm stupid, but I ain't that stupid. Not when I can kill you right now, and nobody can call it murder." Franklen's plan was to stay in the bunker alone rather than Clemons dragging him out and having him court martialed for avoiding battle and disobeying orders. Franklen continues, "Ten years you say, Real quick-like you say it. Ten years for what, cause I don't want to die for Korea? What do I care about this stinkin' hill? You ought to see where I live back home. I sure ain't sure I'd die for

that. It's a cinch I ain't gonna die for Korea, serve ten years for it neither." Without directly acknowledging social inequality based on race, the conversation points to it when Franklen mentions his living conditions back in the United States. Although film reviews would later critique the movie for making a black man an antagonist, Private Woody Franklen represents the significant number of African Americans who believed these wars that America was getting involved in were not theirs to fight.[75] His cautious attitude may have been seen as defiant, but it was not an inaccurate representation of minorities drafted into the war.

In keeping with the nature of a majority of war films, inequality may be addressed but it is hardly ever prolonged. Clemons' response to Franklen is thoughtful but not entirely direct. He says, "Chances are you're gonna die whether you like it or not. So am I, whether you shoot me or not. At least we've got a chance to do it in pretty good company. A lot of men came up here last night. They don't care anymore about Korea than you do. A lot of 'em had it just as rough at home as you did. But they came up and fought. There's about 25 of them left. That's a pretty exclusive club, but you can still join up, if you want to. I'm gonna move, Franklen. Make up your mind." The idea that many soldiers had it "just as rough at home" as Franklen did, not only down plays the hate and prejudice African Americans experienced during this time and well before, but hints at the idea that everyone is equal in the army, another extreme exaggeration given that Jim Crow laws were still very much enforced in the United States during the Korean War. Regardless, Clemons' words proved successful; it is the chance of survival and the idea of rejoining his fellow soldiers whose odds are just as discouraging that coaxes Franklen

[75] Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008) 35.

out of the bunker, still suspicious but ready to return to King Company. Although misleading, the scene shows audiences how even outcasts, and in this case, an African American was able to put his personal vendettas aside to help fight for his country.

Private Franklen may have been the most obvious aspect of *Pork Chop Hill* that addressed social tensions, but the film had an abundance of different moments where democracy was highlighted. George Shibata as Lt. Tsugi Ohashi, a Nisei officer, who was Clemons' second in command, was favorably shown as a strong and dedicated leader that all the men respected. In reality, Shibata was the first Japanese-American to graduate from West Point and had a renowned career as a jet flyer in the Air Force as well as having an impressive record in Korea. It was chance that landed Shibata the role when Joe Clemons mistakenly took his old West Point peer for the real Ohashi when they met outside a movie house in Hollywood.[76] Although Shibata's character does not highlight his Japanese ancestry in the film, there is one scene where Clemons and Ohashi are talking about their next strategic move, Ohashi makes a slight reference to his race, saying, "You know, my ancestors are pretty good at this banzai business." Both alluding to and making light of America's last war against people that shared his same ancestry. A small, but symbolic moment that demonstrated how Japanese-Americans viewed their place in society post-World War II.

In addition to complementing the film on its documentary-like style of the battle of Pork Chop Hill, newspapers and magazines gave high praise to the minorities in the squad for their performances. *Hollywood Reporter* calls Shibata's performance "a long

[76] "Production Notes on 'PORK CHOP HILL,'" Special Collections, Motion Picture Association of America, Production Code Administration records, Gregory Peck Papers; 1959, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

overdue tribute to America's loyal Japanese." The article goes on to point out the two other prominent African American actors, "Woody Strode [Franklen] gives an extremely strong characterization as a guy who keeps trying to get out of the action because he sees no sense in it, and James Edwards is vivid as a soldier who forces him to his duty."[77] Despite being minorities, many reviews acknowledged and raved about Shibata, Strode, and Edwards; not only because of their diverse presence but because of their large impact on the film's storyline. Many other white men were featured in *Pork Chop Hill*, but none paralleled the interest and complexity of the minority characters.

However, as mentioned previously, an article from *Variety* was shocked by the casting, stating, "It's amazing that Webb should have chosen a Negro to be featured in this incident. It could have been a white man, and the effect would have been the same. The producers of the picture surely are aware that the tendency to generalize where a Negro is involved is far greater, and more harmful."[78] Although there is merit to this statement, that stereotypes can often prove to be damaging to the communities they represent, it is an incomplete analysis. The producers of *Pork Chop Hill* not only included two other African Americans that proved just as dedicated to the war as any other soldier but they demonstrated how Strode's character developed and ultimately rejoined the company. In fact, when it came to stereotypical characteristics in war films, this picture defies many.

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[77] Jack Moffitt, "Bartlett-Milestone Prod'n Glorifies U.S. Infantry Valor- Pork Chop Hill," May 5, 1959, Production Code Files for Pork Chop Hill, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.
[78] Powr, "Pork Chop Hill," *Variety*, May 5, 1959. Production Code Files for Pork Chop Hill, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

Multiple times during the picture, the portrayal of minorities in the squad and even the enemy is a tribute to America's democratic values. Explicit conversation on race may have not occurred, but one's skin color was also never held against the characters either. Instead, the African American characters are consistently shown as leaders and equals, never as inferiors to the other soldiers. When King Company is united with the other company on the hill, a white soldier embraces Corporal Jurgens and exclaims, "Oh Brother am I glad to see you!" Another scene where Jurgens shines is when his squad is in an uproar because they believe their own side tried to bomb them. Jurgens steps right in the middle of the crowd and says, "Alright, alright! Now let's get with it! There may be some men in the C.P. Let's get back there and dig them out. That goes for you too, Bowen. Let's go." In a moment when the white "all Americans" of the group lacked loyalty to the mission, Jurgens, the African American, did not. Another significant characteristic of the film is the fact that derogatory terms are rarely used. However, the men do refer to the Chinese communists as "chinks" twice but compared to most war movies that choose to degrade the enemy every chance they can get, this can be seen as a modest approach.

In 1959, United States was in the midst of a cold war against communists and examples of American democracy were as vital as ever. *Pork Chop Hill* had the chance to exploit and demonize the enemy as most war films historically did. Instead, the focus of the picture was on the soldiers, their actions, and the bravery it took to fight for a hill while men in a room 70 miles away gambled their lives. Democracy was shown through representation; while Ohashi and Jurgens lead, Franklen proved loyal, and the company prevailed together, presenting to American audiences what equality meant to this squad.

Conclusion

Squad films have played an integral part in Hollywood's cinematic history at the time when America needed them the most. War left the United States vulnerable; tensions amongst the public were high because of battles ensuing on both fronts during the Second World War in addition to the quick transition into America's next war in Korea. Due to this increased pressure on society, racial and ethnic conflicts were becoming more prominent than ever. Jim Crow, Japanese Internment, the Zoot Suit riots were all notable events that erupted as a consequence of the direct oppression being imposed on minorities in the nation, the very same minorities who were also enlisting and being drafted into war. Add in the Civil Rights Movement beginning in the 1950's and the time frame in which this thesis has been limited to encompasses some of the most critical years in the United States pertaining to equal rights in multi-ethnic and multi-racial American. As a way to mitigate and attempt to resolve the legalized inequality imbedded in society, Hollywood took it upon itself to use pictures in order to demonstrate democracy through diversity and to rally the country in times of war.

However, just because diversity was shown in films, this did not automatically result in praise for including men that weren't the typical white American soldier. Based on the five categories in which the twelve films have been broken down into, both diversity and democracy came in many forms. The Token Soldier, The Lead Minority Role, The "Diverse" Intra-American White Outfit, White Man Saves the Day, and lastly, A Representative Squad all display the fact that diverse squads can be classified in various ways. Some films on this list not only included multiethnic and multiracial men in their outfit but were bold enough to discuss societal inequalities on the silver screen;

typically, these films would then fit into the Representative Squad subcategory. On the other end of the spectrum were movies that belonged to the Token Soldier group or the White Man Saves the Day, casting minority characters for no purpose at all but to fill stereotypical roles in the hope that it would depict a true democratic squad. Hollywood was not perfect in their attempts to portray American democracy through diversity. Although their priority was profits, the opportunity to produce films that promoted patriotic duty in addition to taking a progressive approach towards current day injustices appears to be a risk many studios and directors were willing to take for the sake of their nation.

Hollywood's squad films produced between 1940 to 1960 took on the moral task of addressing racial and ethnic tensions through war pictures. While some films were evidently more transparent than others in their attempt to promote democracy, Hollywood took it upon itself to inject themes of morality into their movies; granted, it would have been naïve not to consider America's social climate at the time. The racist and oppressive attitudes of Americans were felt by minorities every day and the battle front of war was no exception. For this reason, it was important to link democracy, a vital American value, with diversity, an idea many citizens were still becoming accustomed to. But at the basis of every film in this collection was the idea of men coming together to unite and defeat the enemy whether it was during the Second World War or the Korean action. No matter how aggressive the approach, Hollywood deployed many of its wartime pictures in the service of a larger moral cause.

Democracy did not mean only showing the positive aspects of America; it meant showing the good, the bad, and the horrible; meaning at times demonstrating the nation's

less respectable attitude towards minorities. Instead of viewing this as a negative trait in Hollywood's pictures, this can be seen as transparent and representative of societies real prejudices. Fictional situations were not going to mend social tensions, depicting reality was. Regardless of how well some of these pictures succeeded at this task, attaching democracy to diversity was an obvious and effective tactic used by Hollywood to show Americans exactly the kind of unity the country needed. Ultimately, the most important wars were the ones taking place right in their own nation; as Michael Rogin so aptly points out, "How can America be the home of the brave, if it is not the land of the free?[79]

[79] Michael Rogin, "Home of the Brave," in *The War Film*, ed. Robert Eberwein (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 82-89.

Appendices

Films watched:

Bataan (1943)
Sahara (1943)
Guadalcanal Diary (1943)
*Lifeboa*t (1944)
The Sullivans (1944)
Back to Bataan (1945)
Home of the Brave (1949)
The Steel Helmet (1951)
Red Ball Express (1952)
Battle Cry (1955)
To Hell and Back (1955)
Battle Hymn (1957)
Men in War (1957)
Pork Chop Hill (1959)
All the Young Men (1960)
Hell to Eternity (1960)
The Outsider (1961)

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