

Saving private ryan – historical film by spielberg



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Saving Private Ryan was created in 1998 and won five Academy Awards including “ Best Director” for Steven Spielberg. Saving Private Ryan is a WWII drama; it stars Tom Hanks as Captain John Miller, Edward Burns and Tom Sizemore to name but a few. Saving Private Ryan also won Golden Globes for “ Best Picture” and “ Best Director”. The ten or so minutes that I have selected happen in the very beginning of the movie. The story line is when a squad of American soldiers invade Normandy, known as the D-Day landing. They then move beyond the beaches of Normandy to embark on a treacherous mission to save Private Ryan whose brothers have been killed in combat.

I have selected this particular film because I believe that it is an important part of history and that everyone should have the opportunity to learn about it. The film starts with a medium shot of an American flag waving in the wind, which creates a sense of patriotism. You can hear the mellow sound of brass instruments, which makes the audience think of the military or the army or some other type of organisation of that sort. As the music continues the camera cuts to a medium shot of someone’s feet that is walking with a slight limp and is also moving very carefully, we can automatically tell that this person is elderly. As the camera pans upwards on this man you can see that he is dressed in modern day clothes. This would be a surprise to the audience, as they know that they are watching a WWII film and they expect to see a battle or something like that during this period.

As the brass music continues violins come in as soon as we realise that this man has entered a veteran’s cemetery. While the man enters the cemetery, the camera pans upwards and is now a high angle shot. Since the camera is

elevated you can now see row upon row of white crucifix gravestones. The pitch of the shot shows the sheer scale of this cemetery. As the man's emotions overcome him, he falls to the ground and the group, which have been accompanying him, rush to his assistance.

Without any such dialogue the camera zooms in quite slowly into the man's face, firstly a close up then a big close up, this shows intense sentiment. You can now hear that the music has faded out and the sound of waves crashing against a beach. The scene now cuts to a flash back. You know this because a caption comes up saying: June 6 1944 Dog Green Sector Omaha Beach The lighting from the previous scene is much brighter compared to what you can see now. This gives a sinister atmosphere and a feeling that this isn't the place that you want to be. In the distance you can hear the sound of engines approaching the coast and then the camera cuts to a fleet of landing craft using a medium shot so you can see the other landing craft as well.

There continues to be no apparent dialogue, only the occasional shouted order. The camera cuts to a particular landing craft and then pans down the centre showing the seated soldiers on either side. Due to the high winds the landing craft is very unstable, the camera shows this by moving with the boat as well. This make the audience feel like they are actually there. Whilst this is happening some soldiers are throwing-up, which tells the viewer how severe and choppy the trip is. The camera then cuts to a soldier who has shaking hands; he grabs a flask of water and the camera pans up with the flask as he takes a drink from it.

The man we see is the actor Tom Hanks who plays Capt. John Miller. A medium shot shows another soldier who is kissing a metal crucifix, which is around his neck, showing that all the soldiers are nervous and really do not know what they expect to happen. Along with many others, the landing craft lands and the bow opens up. Straight away the soldiers that are towards the front are machine-gunned down, not giving them any chance whatsoever. Again a Steadicam shot is used to give the audience the feeling that they're part of the action and also would give them the feeling that they were being shot at too.

This creates a truly chaotic mood. A POV shot is used to show the enemy firing against the American soldiers. This creates balance as you see what is happening from both sides. Another medium shot is used to show the unloading of more soldiers onto the shore. As the soldiers are jumping out of their landing craft, the camera follows them as they fall below the water line. As it does so a sense of tranquillity is acquired and underwater seems to be a place of refuge.

Although, while the camera is underwater shots are still being fired and soldiers are still being shot dead. To the audience there seems to be no place where anyone can take cover. The camera still rises and sinks below the water line, the sound distorting as this happens. A medium shot is used as the camera pans slowly inland towards the shore.

Continuous shots are whistling through the air and special sound effects are used to create the noise of bullets entering the bodies of the soldiers. We continue to see the point of view of the enemy soldiers as they shoot at the

American soldiers down below on the beach. More sound effects are used to emphasise the use of bullets and shells. A medium, panning shot is used to show the American soldiers moving inland. By using a medium shot you can still pick up certain details but still be able to show how large these groups are. A group of soldiers are wading through bloody water, this shows the audience the severity of what is happening.

We then see the Captain again, but this time the audio sounds “foggy” and distorted and all the action happening in slow motion. This seems to create a whimsical atmosphere and gives the audience the feeling that what is happening might not actually be true. The sounds of gunfire and explosions seem to be tolerable and somehow things happening and this precise point appear to be somewhat peaceful. Another soldier approaches the Captain and shouts something at him; we cannot pick this up because of the muted audio, then the sound is restored to normal. The soldier repeats what he just said and now the Captain can hear him correctly. The camera then pans inland as more American soldiers run in.

During all this time, practically every shot has been at ground level, apart from one, which is a high angle, showing large groups of soldiers being fired at and moving inland. The high angle shot makes the soldiers look vulnerable and susceptible to the enemy. There then is a low angle panning shot of the shore with the dead and injured soldiers drifting in and out with the tide, this shows the horrors of what has just happened. Another low angle shot is used to show a wounded soldier lying in pain on the beach and medics come to help him.

Again the sound becomes distorted, giving the audience a sense that what is happening might not be real. Another high angle shot is used to show the defencelessness of the American soldiers and how little they seem. While shots are being fired and soldiers are helping the wounded, “ blood” is visible on the camera lens. This is very interesting and unique as hardly any films use this effect at all.

The blood on the camera makes the audience feel part of the action and that they’re standing right there. We then cut to a low angle shot of a group of American soldiers lying on a sand bank on the beach. They are discussing tactics. Their voices seem sincere and they appear to be trying to block out the shock of what has just happened. A low angle panning shot is used to show a soldier who is running along the sand bank.

The low angled shot makes the soldier appear big, giving us the feeling that they are making a comeback. We then return to the soldiers continuing to discuss tactics while lying on the sand bank. The low angle shot while this is happening gives us, the audience, a feeling that we are also there discussing tactics with them; this also gains more interest with the audience. One of their tactics involves a close up shot of a mirror so that they can see the enemy soldiers around the corner of a wall so they do not get shot at.

In this close up shot you can see the enemy soldiers up on a cliff. The size of the mirror is small, thus making the enemies reflections small, making them look very exposed. The screen then shows a medium shot of a group of soldiers, including “ the Captain”, firing at some enemy soldiers up on the cliff in their sandbag bunker. A soldier then runs away from the group, the

camera doesn't zoom in with him as he runs neither does it pan. It seems to the audience that he is running away from a kind of "safety".

It becomes apparent that he is going to shoot at the exposed enemy bunker. A close up shot shows his emotions as he tightens his finger on the trigger and then shoots dead an enemy soldier. The camera then cuts back to the group of soldiers lying on the sand bank, and then another close up shot of the soldier who has just fired against the enemy. Again he shoots at the enemy and then the bunker collapses.

As enemy soldiers fall from the bunker the group lying on the sand bank shoot them dead. As this area is clear the group of soldiers move more inland, the camera pans along with them as they do so. We continue to see at a high angle even more American soldiers moving inland. The group of soldiers have found the building where the enemy soldiers are shooting. The group huddle together as one of the soldiers throws a grenade near the building.

The group brace themselves for the explosion and they duck behind a wall, the camera goes down with them too, as if you're a part of the action as well. The group then wait for any enemy soldiers who escape the building, creating suspense as this happens, even though there is no music playing to establish it. The group fire a flammable gas into the building and then one of the soldiers fires a flamethrower into it and the building explodes killing all the enemy soldiers within it.