

# Main points of the thin red line movie

Literature, Russian Literature



The Thin Red Line depicts the American offense in Japan's farthest point of advance, the island of Guadalcanal, focusing on a group of soldiers from the Army Rifle C-Company. Sent in as relief for the weary Marine units, the group includes a tough, cynical top Sergeant; an ambitious, older Lieutenant Colonel, and a thrice-AWOL Private. Despite their diverse backgrounds, the soldiers form a tight-knit group as they face the war horrors on the island.

The movie is a fictional depiction of the Battle of Mount Austen, part of a string of battles fought on the South Pacific island of Guadalcanal. Starting from the first landing, there are several inaccuracies. In the film, the brigade land on a beach and immediately trek into the jungle; in real life, they were sent to the Henderson Field, a formerly Japanese airbase that had been under construction when American Marines seized the base. Additionally, while the worn-out marines are briefly mentioned, the period of relief is drastically reduced. In the actual campaign, Allied forces primarily from the American 1st Marine Division landed on August 7th, 1942, with reinforcement landing in December, whereas in the movie the army the company is shown landing in August. Unlike in the movie, where the Americans are attempting to take-over the island and defeat the Japanese offense, the Guadalcanal battles were defensive for the Allies, where they attempted to defend the captured airfield from banzai-like Axis attacks.

While the movie includes some personal flashbacks of life at home, the story is mainly told via the American soldiers. Said flashbacks are speechless, with fleeting film techniques, leaving the viewer to question what exactly is happening during the short scenes. In terms of the different ranks of the

soldiers, it shows how a mere private may view the war differently than his sergeant, and how not all of them have a desire to fight.

The movie, while relatively believable, doesn't go into the truly gruesome details of the war. It shows the horrors of battle and the injuries the soldiers sustained, but doesn't show the true details of the medic tents, or how nearly every soldier (from either side) succumbed to some form of disease or infection during the campaign. However, the emotional intimacy brought on by the physical closeness of the troops is believable; for example, their willingness to fall for one another, and to fight for each other's survival.

One of Malick's key tributes to the movie was his miniscule amount of dialogue. Instead, he focused on poetic narration from different characters in almost every scene. The sub-plot of Pvt. Bell's wife, shown through various flashbacks, ends with her cheating on him, soon after he comments to another soldier that he "[hasn't] touched another woman". The central character, Pvt. Witt's, death occurs after he volunteers to scout ahead during the final battle, wherein he's ambushed by a large Japanese force. Previously a deserter with no desire to fight, he dies heroically, taking a fall for his unit. These two clichés, along with the overhead prose, gives the movie a very obvious "Hollywood" feel.

Although it's not hard to believe a man being thoroughly changed by war, from his pacifistic ways or not, it's hard to believe that he would stand still while surrounded by his enemies, without even a disposition to fight back.

However, the makeshift burial for Witt at the end of movie again echoes the idea of the soldiers close relationships while at war. The focus on Sgt. Welsh, who was spiteful towards Pvt. Witt in the beginning of the film, acts as a positive closure for the story.

While I feel that the movie had its strong points, I feel that it dragged on quite a bit. Its near 3-hour length made it a pain to watch, and the lack of engaging dialogue made it even more boring. I felt that Jim Caviezel's character was interesting, and I really enjoyed the director's desire to show the campaign from a variety of character's eyes, not just the central soldier's. I liked how the men weren't limited to cliché deaths. The randomness of the soldiers hit by enemy fire, and accidents such as Sgt. Keck's mortal grenade slip-up, proved the unpredictability of war. The look at how men were positioned in medic tents (Witt's position in the beginning of the battle), and the complex hierarchy of the soldiers were incredibly eye opening. My one suggestion for improvement would be to either add more diverse dialogue, or have one sole narrator, poetic or not, to make the storyline less confusing. With their similar-sounding voices and the background noise of the different scenes, figuring out which character was narrating could prove difficult. As an amateur critic, I would score the movie 6/10. Conclusively, I enjoyed the overall plot, but it was slow several times too many, causing me to become disinterested, therefore relying on the heavier action scenes to keep me entertained.

## Works Cited

1. “ Battle of Mount Austen, the Galloping Horse, and the Sea Horse – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.” Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. N. p., n. d. Web. 14 May 2012. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Mount\\_Austen,\\_the\\_Galloping\\_Horse,\\_and\\_the\\_Sea\\_Horse#First\\_Battle\\_of\\_Mount\\_Austen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Mount_Austen,_the_Galloping_Horse,_and_the_Sea_Horse#First_Battle_of_Mount_Austen)>. “ Guadalcanal – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.” Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. N. p., n. d. Web. 14 May 2012. . “ Henderson Field (Guadalcanal) – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.” Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. N. p., n. d. Web. 14 May 2012.
2. . McDonald, Jason. “ The Thin Red Line (1998): Page 10 | The World War II Multimedia Database.” The World War II Multimedia Database | For The 72 Million. N. p., 8 Aug. 2011. Web. 14 May 2012. . “ The Thin Red Line (1998 film) – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.” Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. N. p., n. d. Web. 14 May 2012. . “ The Thin Red Line (1998) – IMDb.” The Internet Movie Database (IMDb). N. p., n. d. Web. 14 May 2012. .