

In Flags Of Our Fathers

In *Flags Of Our Fathers*, Clint Eastwood shows a film that is faithful to the reality of a historical battle, a moving film. Released in 2006 and produced by Clint Eastwood, this film includes in its cast Ryan Phillippe, Adam Beach, Neal McDonough, among others. *Flags Of Our Fathers* is a war and a historical film, which tells the story of the battle of Iwo Jima, a Japanese island, which occurred in 1945, from the point of view of the American troops. The American army won the battle and some soldiers hoisted a US flag to show their conquest of the island: the United States Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima Memorial) is located in Virginia, USA, and there is a statue of the soldier hoisting the flag. This statue is based on the well known photograph. Then, why can we say that this film has something new compared to other war films and is innovative?



During WW2, the battle of Iwo Jima, a Japanese island located in the Pacific became famous thanks to the photograph of American soldiers hoisting the American flag to show their conquest of the island and their victory against the Japanese imperial army. John Bradley, nurse in the American army, is one of the soldiers who hoist the flag. The photograph is used in the USA as a model, and the living soldiers who hoisted the flag are brought back to assemble funds in order to finance the war effort. This film tells at the same time the story of the battle of Iwo Jima and the propaganda used by the USA to unify its population in this long war.

Several elements in the film make this film, I think, an original and innovative. What comes to my mind first is the beginning of the film. The first scene is an old man who wakes up at night because of a nightmare he has in which he is nurse at war: this man is John Bradley, the nurse in the US army who was a part of the hoisting of the flag on Iwo Jima. In this nightmare, he is on the Japanese island. He hears other soldiers calling him but he is lost and scared in the middle of a battlefield. Here, I think that the play of the actor and the camera shots reveal quite well the thoughts and feelings the soldiers must have had during the war: fear, a feeling of being lost without knowing what to do.

Here comes the role of the camera shots. The camera is used in different ways to give the viewers a message, a feeling. as an example, before the soldiers disembark, there is a long scene in which nothing happens: the soldiers are quiet, calm, lost in their thoughts, thinking about what is waiting for them on the island, on the battlefield; death for most of them. To show the fact that on the battlefield the soldiers do not have any time to be standing still, the camera does not stop moving like a soldier does not stop moving at war.

The narration is also an important element of realism: the narration is made, through a voice-over, by this US army nurse who tells us his experience of war. His first words are something along the lines of: "Every jackass thinks he knows what war is, especially those

who have never been at one”. These are almost the very first sounds we hear, and they have a particular effect: we want to know what war is; we want the character to tell us what he has been through.

Flags Of Our Fathers moves its viewers in the action and even, with its mental aspects, inside the mind of a soldier. To me, this is what makes this film one of the best war films that have been made on WW2. On a scale of 5, I'll give it a 5. So don't miss it!

