

Leadership in Cinema



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

BAND OF BROTHERS PART ONE: CURRAHEE

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Studio: HBO Pictures..... Released: 2001

Genre: War/DramaAudience Rating: R

Runtime: 00:78 minutes

Materials

VCR or DVD (preferred) television or projection system, Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles handouts (single-sided), notepads, writing utensils.

Intent of Leadership in Cinema

The Leadership in Cinema program is intended to provide a selection of films that will support continuing education efforts within the wildland fire service. Films not only entertain but also provide a medium to teach leadership at all levels in the leadership development process—self or team development. The program is tailored after Reel Leadership: Hollywood Takes the Leadership Challenge. Teaching ideas are presented that work with “students of leadership in any setting.” Using the template provided by Graham, Sincoff, Baker, and Ackerman, facilitators can adapt lesson plans to correlate with the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles. Other references are provided which can be used to supplement the authors’ template. (Taken from the [Leadership in Cinema website](#).)

Lesson Plan Objective

Students will identify Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles illustrated within Band of Brothers and discuss leadership lessons learned with group members or mentors.

Basic Movie Plot

Starting with their rigorous boot camp training in Georgia in 1942, the miniseries recounts the remarkable achievements of this volunteer rifle company, which parachuted into France early on D-Day morning 1944; spearheaded the Market-Garden and Rhine offensives; engaged the Nazis in Bastogne and the Bulge; and captured Hitler's "impenetrable" Eagle's Nest at Berchtesgaden in 1945. (Taken from the [HBO official website](#))

Summary for Band of Brothers - Part One: Currahee

(Taken from [Internet Movie Database](#))

The first episode of the series opens at Upottery Airfield near Aldbourne, England, on June 5, 1944. Easy ("E") Company of the 506th Airborne regiment of the United States Army prepare for Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944. The men receive word that weather conditions aren't favorable so the initial air drop is postponed.

The story then flashes back two years to Easy's training at Camp Toccoa, Georgia. The men are trained by Lt. Herbert Sobel, whose methods and punishments are harsh and unfair. No mistake seems to escape Sobel, who cancels weekend passes for the entire company for the slightest infraction by one man. Several of Easy's members are summarily dismissed. Part of Sobel's training regimen involves the running of a steep road winding up a nearby mountain named Currahee. The men are charged to run the three mile road in 25 minutes or less, often heavily equipped or immediately following meals. The men officially become "paratroopers" when they've made their training jumps from C-47 planes, the same they will fly in on missions, and have earned their "jump wings."

Easy is transferred to North Carolina for combat training. While there, Sobel shows incompetence of strategic command during combat exercises. After several months, the men are sent by train to Brooklyn, NY, where they board a ship to England. Further training follows in England, as they wait for the authorization of Operation Overlord. Sobel attempts to have Winters court-martialed for failing to follow orders that Winters never received; punishment would prevent Winters from leading Easy in the invasion. Several sergeants of Easy protest collectively and are harshly punished by their regimental CO, Colonel Sink. However, Sink takes their reasoning seriously and decides to transfer Sobel to a training unit.

The story jumps ahead to late May, 1944. Easy is joined by Lt. Virgil "Buck" Compton. While preparing for the invasion, Sgt. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere mixes his coat up with Sgt. John Martin's and discovers a letter Martin received from his wife in the pocket. Martin's wife has mentioned that Guarnere's brother has been killed in battle at Monte Cassino in Italy and that Bill doesn't know yet. Rather than tell Guarnere and having it affect his performance during combat, Martin hides the fact from him. Guarnere later confronts Martin and tells him he found the note.

The episode ends with Easy and the rest of the invasion force boarding their planes and flying out to their drop zone in Normandy.

Cast of Main Characters

Capt. Winters/Richard D. Winters.....	Damian Lewis
1st Sgt. Lipton/Carwood Lipton.....	Donnie Wahlberg
Lt. Nixon/Lewis Nixon	Ron Livingston
Pvt. Alley/James “Mo” Alley, Jr.	George Calil
Lt. Sobel/Herbert Sobel	David Schwimmer
Pvt. Malarkey/Donald G. Malarkey	Scott Grimes
1st Lt. Compton/Lynn “Buck” Compton	Neal McDonough
Cpl. Liebgott/Joseph D. Liebgott.....	Ross McCall
Lt. Heyliger/Frederick T. “Moose” Heyliger	Stephen McCole
Pvt. Webster/David Kenyon Webster	Eion Bailey
SSgt William “Wild Bill” J Guarnere	Frank John Hughes

(Photographs of main characters at the end of the list)

Facilitation Options

Band of Brothers is an excellent leadership film addressing multiple facets of the wildland fire leadership values and principles. Various avenues can be pursued depending upon the facilitator’s intent. At a minimum, students can identify the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles that are illustrated in the film. Students should be less concerned with how many principles they view within the film and more concerned with how the principles they do recognize can be used in their self-development as a leader. The film can be viewed in its entirety or by clip selection depending on facilitator intent and time schedules. Another method is to have the students view the film, and then hold the discussion session with the entire group.

Full-film Facilitation Suggestion

When opting for the full-film method, the facilitator should follow the outline below:

- Facilitator will go over a basic plot of the movie and cover the objective.
- Review the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles with students (Hand out sheets)
- Advise students to document instances within the film that illustrate/violate the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles on the handout provided.
- Show students Band of Brothers – Part One: Currahee.
- Break. After showing the movie, provide at least 15 minutes for a break, and also give time for the students to discuss their finding and reflect on how this movie applies to their jobs and private lives.

- Have students discuss their findings and how they will apply leadership lessons learned to their leadership role in wildland fire suppression. The facilitator can reference the specific clips (see clip facilitation section) to encourage further discussion or help clarify points of interest.
- Wrap up the session and encourage students to apply leadership lessons learned in their personal and work lives, as well as take the opportunity to initiate or update their leadership self-development plan. Also, consider mentioning to the students about acquiring a mentor and relate this to the self-development plan.

Clip Facilitation Suggestion

When opting for the clip method, the facilitator should follow the outline below:

- Break into smaller groups. (Optional) But consider breaking up into three groups, one for each of the values (example).
- Review the Wildland Fire Leadership Value or Principle(s) targeted for discussion. Hand out the sheets, and briefly go over each one, duty, respect and integrity.
- Facilitator will go over a basic plot of the movie and cover the objective.
- Facilitator will briefly describe the clip and guide the discussion of the clip to the specific principle that is discussed. Make sure to get plenty of feedback from the students before revealing the answer. (Spend approximately 5 minutes per clip).
- Have students discuss their findings and how they will apply leadership lessons learned to their leadership role in wildland fire suppression. The facilitator can reference the specific clips (see clip facilitation section) to encourage further discussion or help clarify points of interest.
- Wrap up the session and encourage students to apply leadership lessons learned in their personal and work lives, as well as take the opportunity to initiate or update their leadership self-development plan. Also, consider mentioning to the students about acquiring a mentor and relate this to the self-development plan.

Specific Clip Usage for Band of Brothers - Part One: Currahee:

Facilitator Hint: Ensure familiarity with each individual clip in order to guide the groups.

- The following clips may assist facilitators with leadership discussions. All times are approximate. (Start time/Stop time.)

Duty

Discussion Point One (45:50): Non-commissioned officers all band together and write letters to Col. Sink to be reassigned. They refuse to go to battle under Cpt. Sobel for fear he would get them all killed.

Discussion Point Two (11:20): Pvt. White refuses to run Currahee.

Discussion Point Three (28:10): Sobel not proficient at job with map reading skills and not making sound decisions. Winters shows proficiency by letting Sobel know they are in textbook position.

Discussion Point Four (40:15): Winters takes his squad and continues training mission after Sobel does not show up at rally point. (41:50) Praises men when mission is complete.

Respect

Discussion Point One (12:04): Sobel did build a team through hatred “do not help that man”. Nixon sums up the strength of company.

Discussion Point Two (60:04): As everyone is loading the plane, Lt. Winters helps everyone up individually telling them “good luck, God bless you” and looks them in the eye as they load into the plane.

Discussion Point Three (18:27): Fellow soldiers share the hardships when one officer has to run Currahee, some of the squad joins him.

Integrity

Discussion Point One (30:50): Winters tells Lieutenants that Sobel’s deficiencies will only be discussed among themselves (Welsh, Nixon and Winters).

Discussion Point Two (50:00): Col. Sink gives Sobel credit for building a strong Company, but realizes his strengths and weaknesses and sends Sobel to lead jump school instead of sending him with Easy Company as their combat Captain.

Discussion Point Three (43:45): Lack of integrity by Sobel by not knowing his weaknesses and seeking to improve them, instead tries to court-martial Lieutenant Winters.

Discussion Point Four (11:20): Pvt. White refuses to dress out in PT clothes and run Currahee after weekend passes have been cancelled.

Film/Book Discussion

Consider having a few students read Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest* (New York, 1992). Lead a discussion between students who have read the book and those who watched the film. Compare and contrast the book and the movie.

References

- [Band of Brothers website](#)
- The Avalon Project: [World War II documents](#)
- National Archives: [Powers of Persuasion – Poster Art of World War II](#)

Resources – Books

- Ambrose, Stephen E. *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest*. New York. 1992.
- Kennedy, David. *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945*. 1999.

Hyperlinks have been included to facilitate the use of the [Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website](#). Encourage students of leadership to visit the [website](#).

Band of Brothers – Part One: Currahee

Facilitator Reference

Below is a short list of examples from the movie that coincide with the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles. Discuss leadership lessons learned from the film with the class and have the class discuss these within their groups. Have the group document film clips illustrating the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles.

Duty

1. Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.
2. Make sound and timely decisions.
3. Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished.
4. Develop your subordinates for the future.
 - Winters is very proficient in his job. (Specifically, how did Winters show that he was proficient in his job?)
 - The example of Winters recognizing their position was compromised--he made a timely decision. (Specifically, how did Winters provide an example of making a timely decision?)
 - Briefings given by Winters are examples of good briefings for the situation. (Specifically, how did the briefings appeal to you as a recipient?)
 - Cpt. Sobel is not proficient in his job. (Specifically, how did he show that he was not?)

Respect

1. Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being.
2. Keep your subordinates informed.
3. Build the team.
4. Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.
 - Winters knows all the men under his command by name. (Why is this important?)

- Lt. Sobel does not keep the subordinates under his command informed, by tricking them with rewarding meal then making them run Curahee. (How does this reflect Sobel's lack of respect to his subordinates?)
- Lt. Sobel inadvertently builds a team with his lack of respect for them. (How does this come true?)
- When Lt. Sobel wants the names of certain men and their infractions, Winters selects individuals for punishment because it is their turn. (How does this fall under the "respect" principle?)

Integrity

1. Know yourself and seek improvement.
2. Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.
3. Set the example.
 - Winters knew his capabilities and that of his men. (By his actions, could you assume that he embodied the "know yourself" principle?)
 - Winters was the first man to reach the rock in the run up Curahee. (How does Winters set the example to the rest of EZ company?)
 - Winters shares in the hardships of his subordinates. (What sorts of examples can you give of him sharing in the hardships of his subordinates?)

Questions To Generate Further Discussion

Excerpt from: "Leaders We Would Like to Meet" Interviews

1. What makes you want to follow someone?
2. What kind of leader do you think you are? What do you think others would say?
3. If you were to pick three of the most important character traits for an effective leader, what would those be?
4. Are leaders born or made?
5. Who are some of the individuals that had a significant influence on your life? Currently, who do you think is leadership role model and why?
6. If you are not currently in fire, how do you think this movie could be applied to your job?
7. What are some of the toughest decisions or dilemmas you have faced? What helped to guide you through those situations?
8. Why do you think people follow you?
9. How do some of the events in Band of Brothers apply specifically to your job, to your personal life?
10. Which character in Band of Brothers do you think is most like you?
11. How do you go about initiating a new idea in order to put it into practice?

12. Regarding leadership, what quotes come to mind?

- “Before honor comes humility.” Proverbs
- “Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way.” General George Patton
- “Leadership is not only doing the right thing, but it is doing the right thing at the right time.” Life Application Bible
- “Leaders are not born, they are made. They are made by hard effort, which is a price all of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile.” Vince Lombardi
- “Only one man in a thousand is a leader of men, the other 999 follow women.” Groucho Marx

Band of Brothers – Part One: Currahee

Document film clips illustrating the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles and discuss leadership lessons learned from the film with the class.

Duty

1. Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.
2. Make sound and timely decisions.
3. Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished.
4. Develop your subordinates for the future.

Respect

1. Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being.
2. Keep your subordinates informed.
3. Build the team.
4. Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

Integrity

1. Know yourself and seek improvement.
2. Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.
3. Set the example.

Be proficient in your job, both technically & as a leader.

- Take charge when in charge.
- Adhere to professional standard operating procedures.
- Develop a plan to accomplish given objectives.

Make sound & timely decisions.

- Maintain situation awareness in order to anticipate needed actions.
- Develop contingencies & consider consequences.
- Improvise within the commander's intent to handle a rapidly changing environment.

Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, accomplished.

- Issue clear instructions.
- Observe & assess actions in progress without micro-managing.
- Use positive feedback to modify duties, tasks & assignments when appropriate.

Develop your subordinates for the future.

- Clearly state expectations.
- Delegate tasks that you are not required to do personally.
- Consider individual skill levels & developmental needs when assigning tasks.

Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being.

- Put the safety of your subordinates above all other objectives.
- Take care of your subordinate's needs.
- Resolve conflicts between individuals on the team.

Keep your subordinates informed.

- Provide accurate & timely briefings.
- Give the reason (intent) for assignments & tasks.
- Make yourself available to answer questions at appropriate times.

Build the team.

- Conduct frequent debriefings with the team to identify lessons learned.
- Recognize accomplishments & reward them appropriately.
- Apply disciplinary measures equally.

Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

- Observe human behavior as well as fire behavior.
- Provide early warning to subordinates of tasks they will be responsible for.
- Consider team experience, fatigue & physical limitations when accepting assignments.

Know yourself and seek improvement.

- Know the strengths/weaknesses in your character & skill level.
- Ask questions of peers & supervisors.
- Actively listen to feedback from subordinates.

Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.

- Accept full responsibility for & correct poor team performance.
- Credit subordinates for good performance.
- Keep your superiors informed of your actions.

Set the example.

- Share the hazards & hardships with your subordinates.
- Don't show discouragement when facing setbacks.
- Choose the difficult right over the easy wrong.

DUTY

RESPECT

INTEGRITY



Leadership Self Development Plan

For Wildland Firefighters...a Lifetime of Learning

Next level of leadership:

Directed reading (Professional Reading Program) and other self-study:

Training (Next wildland fire L- and S-courses):

Details (Temporary assignments with new or increased responsibility):

Mentor (Identifying and asking a role model to provide guidance):

Outside Activities (Associations, volunteer programs, higher education, etc.)

Employee: _____ **Date:** _____

Supervisor: _____ **Date:** _____

Main Character List

Band of Brothers – Part One: Currahee



Sergeant Lipton: Refuses to go into battle with Sobel and is reprimanded.



Lt. Nixon: Platoon commander in EZ Company.



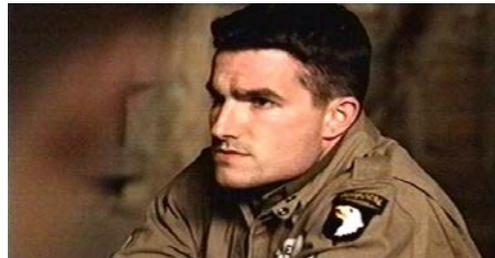
Lt. Compton: Platoon commander that joins EZ Company late in this episode. Gets in trouble for gambling with subordinates.



Lt. Sobel: In this episode, Lt. Sobel is the leader of EZ Company throughout their training prior to combat. Sobel is promoted to Captain.



Lt. Winters: Leads EZ Company in PT and is promoted to Company Executive Officer during training.



Sergeant Guarnere: Finds out his brother died in battle just prior to loading the plane to go to battle



Pvt. Mularkey: Company comedian.



Colonel Sink: Regiment commander



Sgt. Luz: Impersonates Lt. Sobel and Col. Sink.



Lt. Heyliger: Platoon leader that joins EZ Company at the end of training