

## Band of Brothers: Background Information

*From this day to the ending of the world,  
But we in it shall be remembered—  
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;  
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother*

- Henry V, William Shakespeare, Act IV Scene III

Based on Stephen E. Ambrose's acclaimed book of the same name and drawn from interviews with survivors of Easy Company (part of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division), as well as their journals and letters, HBO's miniseries *Band of Brothers* chronicles the experiences of these men from paratrooper training in Georgia through the end of the war. As an elite rifle company parachuting into Normandy early on D-Day morning, participants in the Battle of the Bulge, and witness to the horrors of war, the men of Easy knew extraordinary bravery and extraordinary fear - and became the stuff of legend.

In Toccoa, Georgia, 1942, a disparate group of young men begins voluntary training to become members of one of America's newest military regiments - the paratroopers. Under the harsh leadership of Lt. Sobel (David Schwimmer<sup>1</sup>), members of the newly formed Easy Company go from green, untrained civilians to some of the Army's most elite soldiers. As training progresses, a rivalry flares between Sobel, whom the men despise, and Lt. Winters (Damian Lewis), a junior officer who's earned the respect and admiration of the company. The men travel to England to train and prepare for an invasion of the Continent where they receive words of encouragement from General Dwight D. Eisenhower

Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Forces:

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely. But this is the year 1944. Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man.

Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned. The free men of the world are marching together to victory.

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty, and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory. Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.



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<sup>1</sup> Aka Ross from Friends!

On June 6, 1944, D-Day, planes with thousands of paratroopers cross the English Channel to France, where they come under heavy fire. None of the men land where they expected to, and many lose their weapons and supplies in the drop. Winters links up with solitary soldiers, and they set off to find their respective units. Winters is later chosen to lead an attack on a fortified German artillery position; the mission is successful, but Winters, now acting company commander, loses his first man.



Lt. Dick Winters



Captain Lewis Nixon



Sergeant Donald Malarkey



Lt. Lynn "Buck" Compton



Staff Sgt. Bill Guarnere



Technician Joe Liebgett



Staff Sgt. Joe Toye



Staff Sgt. Darrell "Shifty" Powers



Technician Frank Perconte



Captain Ronald Speirs



Private Hall (Able Company)



2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Carwood Lipton