

## **Band of Brothers Leadership Seminars**

The following lesson plans were submitted by MSgtAzreal M. Kelly, the 19<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Career Assistance Advisor at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas.

The lessons and all resources used are sited at the end of the plan. The courses are offered locally through the 19<sup>th</sup> AW Leadership Pathways and each Main Point is a standalone 2-hr lunch and learn.

The website(s) referenced for each Main Point are free to the public and not copyrighted.

The only cost associated with this course is that of the actual Band of Brother series, which on average is \$25 for the DVD box set. The individual episodes can also be purchased on sites such as iTunes for about \$6. Of course if the local library has the set to check out or if instructors can work with their library to order it, then that portion can be made free as well.

If you have any questions or concerns about how to execute these seminars. Please feel free to contact me at the following:

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Commercial: 501-987-5905 (DSN 731)

**LESSON PLAN**

**PART I**  
**COVER SHEET**

**LESSON TITLE: Band of Brothers Leadership Seminar**

**TIME:** 20 Hours

**METHOD:** Guided Group Discussion

**REFERENCES:** AFI 36-2624, *The Career Assistance Advisor, First Term Airmen Center and Enlisted Professional Enhancement Programs*

**AUDIO/VISUAL INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS:** *Band of Brothers* (HBO) Mini-Series

**PART IA**

**COGNITIVE OBJECTIVE:** The objective of the lesson is for each student to gain insight on leadership techniques used throughout the diverse backgrounds of Little Rock Air Force Base members; supplemented by dramatic reenactments of military leadership challenges faced in the past as demonstrated in the *Band of Brothers* mini-series.

**ACTIVITY STATEMENT:** Participate in a guided group discussion of the challenges portrayed in the *Band of Brothers* mini-series and apply insight gained to leadership skillset.

**PART IB**

**ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN:** Topical

**STRATEGY:** This lesson introduces several scenarios based on the testimony of military personnel from World War II. These scenarios are dramatically reenacted via the *Band of Brothers* mini-series and show insight to how military members, both leaders and followers, lived through varying situations unique to military culture. This lesson will introduce several key critical thinking exercises to help participants open their minds to new and dynamic leadership and problem solving skills. The intent is to not simply answer the questions presented in each lesson, but to use critical thinking skills and apply the subject material of each question to respective work areas as well as personal and professional experiences in the United States Air Force.

The lesson consists of ten main points. Each main point is designed to view an episode of *Band of Brothers*, promote a guided group discussion about the respective episode of the mini-series, and stimulate critical thinking.

**SCHEDULING NOTE:** None

**INSTRUCTOR PREPARATION:** Thoroughly familiarize yourself with the lesson plan strategy, content, and review the Band of Brothers mini-series.

**LESSON OUTLINE:**

<b>MP 1</b>	
a. Introduction	5 mins
b. Pre-Viewing Activities	10 mins
c. Viewing of <i>Episode 1: Currahee</i>	50 mins
d. Guided Group Discussion	45 mins
e. Summary	10 mins
TOTAL	120 mins
<b>MP 2</b>	
a. Introduction	5 mins
b. Pre-Viewing Activities	10 mins
c. Viewing of <i>Episode 2: Day of Days</i>	50 mins
d. Guided Group Discussion	45 mins
e. Summary	10 mins
TOTAL	120 mins
<b>MP 3</b>	
a. Introduction	5 mins
b. Pre-Viewing Activities	10 mins
c. Viewing of <i>Episode 3: Carentan</i>	50 mins
d. Guided Group Discussion	45 mins
e. Summary	10 mins
TOTAL	120 mins
<b>MP 4</b>	
a. Introduction	5 mins
b. Pre-Viewing Activities	10 mins
c. Viewing of <i>Episode 4: Replacements</i>	50 mins
d. Guided Group Discussion	45 mins
e. Summary	10 mins
TOTAL	120 mins

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**  
**Air Mobility Command (AMC)**  
**Enlisted Professional Enhancement Programs**  
**Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas**

**01 Oct 2014**

<b>MP 5</b>	
a. Introduction	5 mins
b. Pre-Viewing Activities	10 mins
c. Viewing of <i>Episode 5: Crossroads</i>	50 mins
d. Guided Group Discussion	45 mins
e. Summary	10 mins
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120 mins</b>
<b>MP 6</b>	
a. Introduction	5 mins
b. Pre-Viewing Activities	10 mins
c. Viewing of <i>Episode 6: Bastogne</i>	50 mins
d. Guided Group Discussion	45 mins
e. Summary	10 mins
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120 mins</b>
<b>MP 7</b>	
a. Introduction	5 mins
b. Pre-Viewing Activities	10 mins
c. Viewing of <i>Episode 7: The Breaking Point</i>	50 mins
d. Guided Group Discussion	45 mins
e. Summary	10 mins
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120 mins</b>
<b>MP 8</b>	
a. Introduction	5 mins
b. Pre-Viewing Activities	10 mins
c. Viewing of <i>Episode 8: The Lost Patrol</i>	50 mins
d. Guided Group Discussion	45 mins
e. Summary	10 mins
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120 mins</b>
<b>MP 9</b>	
a. Introduction	5 mins
b. Pre-Viewing Activities	10 mins

c. Viewing of <i>Episode 9: Why We Fight</i>	50 mins
d. Guided Group Discussion	45 mins
e. Summary	10 mins
TOTAL	120 mins
<b>MP 10</b>	
a. Introduction	5 mins
b. Pre-Viewing Activities	10 mins
c. Viewing of <i>Episode 10: Points</i>	50 mins
d. Guided Group Discussion	45 mins
e. Summary	10 mins
TOTAL	120 mins
COURSE TOTAL	1200 mins

## PART II

### MP 1. Episode 1: Currahee

**Introduction:** *Band of Brothers* is a ten-part video series dramatizing the history of one company of American paratroopers in World War Two—E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne, known as “Easy Company.” Although the company’s first experience in real combat did not come until June 1944 (D-Day), this exemplary group fought in some of the war’s most harrowing battles. *Band of Brothers* depicts not only the heroism of their exploits but also the extraordinary bond among men formed in the crucible of war.

The first episode begins with the company in England in June 1944, preparing for the Allied forces’ assault on Normandy. Most of the episode consists of a flashback that traces the history of Easy Company up to that point: its training at Camp Toccoa in Georgia, at Camp Mackale in North Carolina, and at Aldbourne in England. The story focuses on the intense demands of the company’s training and the soldiers’ ambivalence about their commanding officer, Lt. Herbert Sobel. Lt. Richard Winters emerges as leader within the company. Despite what you may be thinking, the purpose of meeting a board is not punishment...it is actually a reward. To reach this level of completion you have to be one of the best. programs

**Pre-viewing Activities:** *Band of Brothers* is a compelling story which reveals a great deal about World War Two. However, as it is the story of one U.S. Army company, it reflects only a few of the war’s many facets. Topics such as the war’s origins, the prosecution of the war up to 1943, the Pacific Theater, the Final Solution are beyond its scope. To put *Band of Brothers* in historical context, review a timeline of the entire war. Students should be able to answer questions such as: When did the war begin? When did the United States enter the conflict? What were the war’s major causes and what major events led up to the start of

military hostilities? Who were the belligerents and what were they fighting for (or against)? What was the Holocaust and how was it part of the war as a whole? What was D-Day and what was its significance in the war's progression? How and when did the war end in Europe and in Asia?

***Cue Episode 1: Currahee***

**Guided Group Discussion:** Guide the group in post-viewing discussion. Use the following questions as examples of where to take the discussion:

1. What kind of training did Easy Company experience under Lt. Sobel? What were the pros and cons of his strict, unrelenting command? Do you get the sense that it prepared them well for battle? Why or why not?
2. How would you characterize the backgrounds of the men of Easy Company? Was it a homogenous group or a diverse one? What did the men have in common? What incidents revealed divisions or differences among the men? What evidence is there of class differences among the men?
3. One soldier calls Lt. Sobel a "genius," while others clearly dislike him and come to distrust him. What options were open to the Easy Company soldiers for dealing with this?
4. Why do you think Sobel tried to censure Winters? Why did Winters insist on a court martial? What did this incident reveal about Winters' standing among the men of the company?
5. The title of this episode is "Currahee," a Cherokee word meaning "stands alone" and a word that became the cry of the 506th Paratroopers Regiment (which included Easy Company). One reason this became a rallying cry for the paratroopers was that they trained at Currahee Mountain when they were at Camp Toccoa. Beyond that, why might they have chosen a motto of "We stand alone, together." What do you think this meant to the men?
6. *Band of Brothers* adapts a book by the historian Stephen Ambrose, based on interviews and scholarly research. How does it affect our understanding of the past to experience it through a dramatic reenactment? Does it matter that the words spoken by the actors were written as dramatic dialogue and do not come from the historical record? What's the difference between something that is *historical* and a *work of history*? In what ways are the goals and needs of filmmakers different from those of people who write history books?
7. There are almost no women in *Band of Brothers*. Women, however, were affected by World War Two as much as men were. American women worked in the war industries in

the United States and hundreds of thousands served in the women's divisions of the U.S. armed forces. What is the effect of focusing on the war as essentially a contest fought by male military combatants? What aspects of the war does this leave out?

8. Why do World War Two stories enjoy such widespread popularity—in books, movies, public commemorations? What does this tell us about the war, and what does it tell us about our own times?

9. *Band of Brothers* is not a documentary. It was made as a work of dramatic entertainment. The story—and it *is* a story—depicts handsome, earnest young men who face daunting challenges and bravely achieve great victories. Does *Band of Brothers* romanticize the story of Easy Company? Does it romanticize World War Two, or war in general? Is it significant that The History Channel's on-air broadcast of *Band of Brothers* was sponsored by the U.S. Army?

## Summary

**Closure:** Please remember what you have learned today. Take it back with you and share with your supervisors, peers, and subordinates. Work with your team to apply principles, lessons learned, and skillsets that you have learned in the classroom today.

## MP 2. Episode 2: Day of Days

**Introduction:** The second episode focuses on the Normandy invasion and Easy Company's assignment to take out a German artillery installation. On June 6, 1944, thousands of Allied paratroopers dropped from the sky to begin one of the most audacious military campaigns of the war—and one of the most crucial. However, careful planning notwithstanding, most of the members of Easy Company miss their designated drop zones and had to begin the invasion by dealing with their extreme disorientation (heightened for many by the anti-nausea medication the soldiers were instructed to take). With Richard Winters as the company's commanding officer, Easy Company successfully executes its first assignment in the field, destroying a German artillery installation firing on Allied infantry trying to come ashore.

**Pre-viewing Activities:** *Band of Brothers* is a compelling story which reveals a great deal about World War Two. However, as it is the story of one U.S. Army company, it reflects only a few of the war's many facets. Topics such as the war's origins, the prosecution of the war up to 1943, the Pacific Theater, the Final Solution are beyond its scope. To put *Band of Brothers* in historical context, review a timeline of the entire war. Students should be able to answer questions such as: When did the war begin? When did the United States enter the conflict? What were the war's major causes and what major events led up to the start of military hostilities? Who were the belligerents and what were they fighting for (or against)? What was the Holocaust and how was it part of the war as a whole? What was D-Day and what was its significance in the war's progression? How and when did the war end in Europe and in Asia?

**Cue Episode 2: Day of Days**

**Guided Group Discussion:** Guide the group in post-viewing discussion. Use the following questions as examples of where to take the discussion:

1. What challenges did the paratroops face in the Normandy invasion? How did they deal with those challenges?
2. When soldiers lost weapons and/or supplies during the air drop, how did they respond?
3. When Lieutenant Spiers offers cigarettes to German prisoners and then shoots them, why didn't any of the G.I.'s say anything?
4. Why didn't Winters show much enthusiasm when he learned that the map he had found contained important information about the location of German gun placement throughout Normandy?
5. What were the main themes of this episode?
6. One of the biggest challenges soldiers faced was planning and decision-making in the moment of battle. Why was this so difficult? What could soldiers do to make the most effective plans and decisions possible?
7. *Band of Brothers* adapts a book by the historian Stephen Ambrose, based on interviews and scholarly research. How does it affect our understanding of the past to experience it through a dramatic reenactment? Does it matter that the words spoken by the actors were written as dramatic dialogue and do not come from the historical record? What's the difference between something that is *historical* and a *work of history*? In what ways are the goals and needs of filmmakers different from those of people who write history books?
8. There are almost no women in *Band of Brothers*. Women, however, were affected by World War Two as much as men were. American women worked in the war industries in the United States and hundreds of thousands served in the women's divisions of the U.S. armed forces. What is the effect of focusing on the war as essentially a contest fought by male military combatants? What aspects of the war does this leave out?
9. Why do World War Two stories enjoy such widespread popularity—in books, movies, public commemorations? What does this tell us about the war, and what does it tell us about our own times?

10. *Band of Brothers* is not a documentary. It was made as a work of dramatic entertainment. The story—and it *is* a story—depicts handsome, earnest young men who face daunting challenges and bravely achieve great victories. Does *Band of Brothers* romanticize the story of Easy Company? Does it romanticize World War Two, or war in general? Is it significant that The History Channel’s on-air broadcast of *Band of Brothers* was sponsored by the U.S. Army?

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### MP 3. Episode 3: Carentan

**Introduction:** The third episode begins two days after D-Day, with Easy Company sent to take the French town of Carentan. One soldier in particular, Pvt. Albert Blithe, struggles to adjust to the violence, carnage, and disorientation of combat and so great is his shock that for a time he suffers a loss of vision. Blithe’s struggle to adjust—to become a soldier—is one of the main themes running through this episode. Eventually, after thirty-six days in Normandy, Easy Company is sent back to England, but in short stead they are ordered to move out again.

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### Cue Episode 3: Carentan

**Guided Group Discussion:** Guide the group in post-viewing discussion. Use the following questions as examples of where to take the discussion:

1. What was Carentan and why was it important?
2. When Blithe confesses that he hid on D-Day rather than fight, Lt. Speirs says the following to him: “We’re all scared. You hid in that ditch because you think there’s still hope. The only hope you have is to accept the fact that you’re already dead. And the sooner you accept that, the sooner you’ll be able to function as a soldier’s

supposed to function: without mercy, without compassion, without remorse. All war depends upon it.” How would you describe Lt. Speirs? Do you agree with his statement? Do you think others in the company would have?

3. After Blithe shoots the German soldier, he inspects the corpse and takes something from it. What is it? Why does he take this?

4. Describe what you think Blithe was thinking and feeling when he was in the hospital. What did you think the expression on his face indicated?

5. Towards the end of the episode, what was the significance of the commanding officer telling the men they should make sure they have a will?

6. What were the main themes of this episode?

7. Do you think there was a correspondence between being a good soldier and surviving (or being a bad soldier and getting killed)? Why or why not?

8. Many people who watch *Band of Brothers* find it difficult to keep all of the characters straight (at least in the beginning). What effect does this have on the narrative? What does this imply about the relationship between the individual and the group?

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### MP 4. Episode 4: Replacements

**Introduction:** The fourth episode sees Easy Company head into German-occupied Holland for Operation Market-Garden, part of a strategy for the Allies to end the war by entering Germany through the Netherlands. Despite some early victories for the Allies, fierce German resistance demonstrates that this plan will not work. The title of this episode, *Replacements*, refers to the tension between the replacements who arrive to replenish Easy Company's strength and the seasoned, tired soldiers who resent the new arrivals' innocence and eagerness for battle experience.

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### Cue Episode 4: Replacements

**Guided Group Discussion:** Guide the group in post-viewing discussion. Use the following questions as examples of where to take the discussion:

1. What Operation Market-Garden? Did it succeed?
2. Describe the relationship between the older members of Easy Company and the newer replacements. What advice did the older members give? Why were some of them ambivalent about the new arrivals?

3. How did the Dutch residents of Eindhoven deal with men and women who collaborated with the Germans? Why did they do this? Do you think this was justified?
4. What were the main themes of this episode?
5. Do you think there was a correspondence between being a good soldier and surviving (or being a bad soldier and getting killed)? Why or why not?
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**Introduction:** In the fifth episode, the Easy Company’s commanding officer, Richard Winters, is haunted by his memory of shooting a German soldier at close range on a risky—but successful—mission over a Dutch dike. A weekend’s leave in Paris gives a good sense of the importance of leave for G.I.’s and for the way they experienced Paris. Toward the end of the episode, Easy Company, which is now stationed in Mourmelon, France, is ordered out to defend the Allied line against a German counterattack in Belgium’s Ardennes Forest. This contest, popularly known as the Battle of the Bulge, sees the Allies head into the bitter winter with inadequate supplies of ammunition and medical goods and generally ill- equipped for the long, entrenched battle ahead. The Axis counterattack is ultimately rebuffed, but not without the Allies suffering some 77,000 casualties.

**Pre-viewing Activities:** *Band of Brothers* is a compelling story which reveals a great deal about World War Two. However, as it is the story of one U.S. Army company, it reflects only a few of the war’s many facets. Topics such as the war’s origins, the prosecution of the war up to 1943, the Pacific Theater, the Final Solution are beyond its scope. To put *Band of Brothers* in historical context, review a timeline of the entire war. Students should be able to answer questions such as: When did the war begin? When did the United States enter the conflict? What were the war’s major causes and what major events led up to the start of military hostilities? Who were the belligerents and what were they fighting for (or against)? What was the Holocaust and how was it part of the war as a whole? What was D-Day and what was its significance in the war’s progression? How and when did the war end in Europe and in Asia?

### **Cue Episode 5: Crossroads**

**Guided Group Discussion:** Guide the group in post-viewing discussion. Use the following questions as examples of where to take the discussion:

1. Why does Winters spend so much time preparing his report?
2. How do you think Winters felt about his promotion to Executive Officer? How do you think he felt about turning Easy Company over to his subordinate, “Moose” Heyliger?
3. What was life like for the soldiers when they weren’t in combat?
4. What problems did Easy Company have to cope with as they went to Bastogne? How did the weather affect their situation?
5. What kind of leadership qualities does Winters demonstrate? What makes a good leader?
6. What are the main themes of this episode?

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## **MP 6. Episode 6: Bastogne**

**Introduction:** In the sixth episode, Easy Company is in the Ardennes Forest, outside of Bastogne, Belgium, trying to defend the Allied line against a German counterattack in December 1944. This contest, popularly known as the Battle of the Bulge, sees the Allies face a bitter winter with inadequate supplies of ammunition, food, and medical goods for the long, entrenched battle. The Axis counterattack was ultimately rebuffed, but not without the Allies suffering some 77,000 casualties. This episode is particularly effective in depicting the harsh physical conditions of the war (and might be compared to the German's struggle to take Stalingrad, in which the losses were much higher). Fighting frostbite and hunger in the

foxholes, Easy Company's trials demonstrate the experience of isolation and boredom of battle. The importance of medical treatment and supplies is also a prominent theme of this episode.

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### **Cue Episode 6: Bastogne**

**Guided Group Discussion:** Guide the group in post-viewing discussion. Use the following questions as examples of where to take the discussion:

1. What was the Allies' goal during their stance in the Ardennes Forest? What did it have to do with the overall war effort?
2. How did the weather affect Easy Company's assignment?
3. What difficulties did Easy Company face in executing their mission? How did they deal with these challenges?
4. What do you think the medic Eugene Roe is thinking and feeling over the course of the episode?
5. War is not just a contest between guns. What other factors were important to how Easy Company dealt with the carnage and hardship of combat?
6. What things were most important to the soldiers when they were stuck in their foxholes?
7. What were the main themes of this episode?
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## **MP 7. Episode 7: The Breaking Point**

**Introduction:** As the title of this episode suggests, the seventh episode sees Easy Company pushed to “the breaking point” after more and more unrelenting combat. After successfully thwarting the German counterattack in the Ardennes, Easy Company is sent to take the Belgian town of Foy. The company suffers, however, from more casualties, sinking morale, and lapses in leadership. This episode, more than any other perhaps, depicts the great emotional and psychological strain that soldiers endured in battle.

**Pre-viewing Activities:** *Band of Brothers* is a compelling story which reveals a great deal about World War Two. However, as it is the story of one U.S. Army company, it reflects only a few of the war's many facets. Topics such as the war's origins, the prosecution of the war up to 1943, the Pacific Theater, the Final Solution are beyond its scope. To put *Band of Brothers* in historical context, review a timeline of the entire war. Students should be able to answer questions such as: When did the war begin? When did the United States enter the

conflict? What were the war's major causes and what major events led up to the start of military hostilities? Who were the belligerents and what were they fighting for (or against)? What was the Holocaust and how was it part of the war as a whole? What was D-Day and what was its significance in the war's progression? How and when did the war end in Europe and in Asia?

**Cue Episode 7: *The Breaking Point***

**Guided Group Discussion:** Guide the group in post-viewing discussion. Use the following questions as examples of where to take the discussion:

1. What were the greatest challenges Easy Company faced in trying to take the town of Foy?
2. How important is morale in wartime? Why?
3. Why didn't the men of Easy Company have confidence in the leadership of Lt. Dike?
4. What do you think Winters, the battalion commander, thought of Dike?
5. Why did Lewis Nixon decline a furlough back to the United States to raise money for war bonds?
6. How would you describe the psychological state of Easy Company at the end of the episode?
7. What were the major themes of this episode?
8. *Band of Brothers* adapts a book by the historian Stephen Ambrose, based on interviews and scholarly research. How does it affect our understanding of the past to experience it through a dramatic reenactment? Does it matter that the words spoken by the actors were written as dramatic dialogue and do not come from the historical record? What's the difference between something that is *historical* and a *work of history*? In what ways are the goals and needs of filmmakers different from those of people who write history books?
9. There are almost no women in *Band of Brothers*. Women, however, were affected by World War Two as much as men were. American women worked in the war industries in the United States and hundreds of thousands served in the women's divisions of the U.S. armed forces. What is the effect of focusing on the war as essentially a contest fought by male military combatants? What aspects of the war does this leave out?

10. Why do World War Two stories enjoy such widespread popularity—in books, movies, public commemorations? What does this tell us about the war, and what does it tell us about our own times?

11. *Band of Brothers* is not a documentary. It was made as a work of dramatic entertainment. The story—and it *is* a story—depicts handsome, earnest young men who face daunting challenges and bravely achieve great victories. Does *Band of Brothers* romanticize the story of Easy Company? Does it romanticize World War Two, or war in general? Is it significant that The History Channel’s on-air broadcast of *Band of Brothers* was sponsored by the U.S. Army?

### **Summary**

**Closure:** Please remember what you have learned today. Take it back with you and share with your supervisors, peers, and subordinates. Work with your team to apply principles, lessons learned, and skillsets that you have learned in the classroom today.

### **MP 8. Episode 8: The Last Patrol**

**Introduction:** The eighth episode highlights the tension between the weary, haggard veterans of the Battle of the Bulge and other soldiers who haven’t suffered what they have. The episode is narrated by Pvt. David Webster, an Easy Company veteran who missed the battle at Bastogne because he had been hospitalized with a relatively minor wound. Webster finds that other members of the company have some difficulty embracing him because he has not gone through their trials. Likewise, some members of the company are wary or resentful of a newly arrived West Point graduate eager for combat experience. With the war apparently winding down, the company is relocated to an Alsatian town in January 1945, where the men are visibly frustrated at having to face more dangerous patrols for negligible gains. The episode reminds us of the pain and sadness brought on by each individual casualty or fatality from the company.

**Pre-viewing Activities:** *Band of Brothers* is a compelling story which reveals a great deal about World War Two. However, as it is the story of one U.S. Army company, it reflects only a few of the war’s many facets. Topics such as the war’s origins, the prosecution of the war up to 1943, the Pacific Theater, the Final Solution are beyond its scope. To put *Band of Brothers* in historical context, review a timeline of the entire war. Students should be able to answer questions such as: When did the war begin? When did the United States enter the conflict? What were the war’s major causes and what major events led up to the start of military hostilities? Who were the belligerents and what were they fighting for (or against)? What was the Holocaust and how was it part of the war as a whole? What was D-Day and what was its significance in the war’s progression? How and when did the war end in Europe and in Asia?

### **Cue Episode 8: *The Last Patrol***

**Guided Group Discussion:** Guide the group in post-viewing discussion. Use the following questions as examples of where to take the discussion:

1. What was the reaction of the narrator, Pvt. David Webster, upon his return from the hospital to the condition of Easy Company?
2. Why did he have a different perspective from that of most of the other members of the company? What did *they* think of *him*?
3. Why did the company resent the newly arrived platoon leader, Lt. Hank Jones? Whom do you think they had a harder time accepting, Jones or Webster? Why?
4. What was the goal of the night patrol?
5. Why did Winters decide not to send out the second night patrol?
6. By the time the company left Hagenau, at what stage was the war?
7. What were the major themes of this episode?
8. *Band of Brothers* adapts a book by the historian Stephen Ambrose, based on interviews and scholarly research. How does it affect our understanding of the past to experience it through a dramatic reenactment? Does it matter that the words spoken by the actors were written as dramatic dialogue and do not come from the historical record? What's the difference between something that is *historical* and a *work of history*? In what ways are the goals and needs of filmmakers different from those of people who write history books?
9. There are almost no women in *Band of Brothers*. Women, however, were affected by World War Two as much as men were. American women worked in the war industries in the United States and hundreds of thousands served in the women's divisions of the U.S. armed forces. What is the effect of focusing on the war as essentially a contest fought by male military combatants? What aspects of the war does this leave out?
10. Why do World War Two stories enjoy such widespread popularity—in books, movies, public commemorations? What does this tell us about the war, and what does it tell us about our own times?
11. *Band of Brothers* is not a documentary. It was made as a work of dramatic entertainment. The story—and it *is* a story—depicts handsome, earnest young men who face daunting challenges and bravely achieve great victories. Does *Band of Brothers* romanticize the story of Easy Company? Does it romanticize World War

Two, or war in general? Is it significant that The History Channel's on-air broadcast of *Band of Brothers* was sponsored by the U.S. Army?

### **Summary**

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### **MP 9. Episode 9: Why We Fight**

**Introduction:** In the ninth episode, Easy Company finally enters Germany in April 1945, finding very little resistance as they proceed. There they are impressed by the industriousness of the defeated locals and gain respect for their humanity. But the G.I.s are then confronted with the horror of an abandoned Nazi concentration camp in the woods, which the locals claim not to have known anything about. Here the story of Easy Company is connected with the broader narrative of the war—the ideology of the Third Reich and Hitler's plan to exterminate the Jews.

**Pre-viewing Activities:** *Band of Brothers* is a compelling story which reveals a great deal about World War Two. However, as it is the story of one U.S. Army company, it reflects only a few of the war's many facets. Topics such as the war's origins, the prosecution of the war up to 1943, the Pacific Theater, the Final Solution are beyond its scope. To put *Band of Brothers* in historical context, review a timeline of the entire war. Students should be able to answer questions such as: When did the war begin? When did the United States enter the conflict? What were the war's major causes and what major events led up to the start of military hostilities? Who were the belligerents and what were they fighting for (or against)? What was the Holocaust and how was it part of the war as a whole? What was D-Day and what was its significance in the war's progression? How and when did the war end in Europe and in Asia?

### **Cue Episode 9: Why We Fight**

**Guided Group Discussion:** Guide the group in post-viewing discussion. Use the following questions as examples of where to take the discussion:

1. What was the significance of the string quartet playing Beethoven at the beginning and end of the episode?
2. What is the significance of Capt. Nixon's statement that he never fired a gun in combat? Why does he get demoted?

3. What ideas do the men have about their life when they get back home? How are those ideas shaped by their experience in the war?
4. What is the significance of the framed portrait that Nixon sees when he goes into the German house?
5. Why were the G.I.'s so surprised when they found the concentration camp?
6. At the end of the episode, Nixon walks through the concentration camp and sees the wife of the SS officer whose house he had walked through, and she is now burying corpses. She and Nixon exchange long glances. What do you think each one was thinking?
7. At the end of the episode what did the musician's violin and violin case symbolize?
8. What were the major themes of this episode?
9. The on-screen text at the close of the episode mentions the "Final Solution" and the "German Question." What were these?
10. At the end of the episode, what did the G.I.'s think about the Germans? How did they perceive the difference between the Nazis and the German people, or didn't they?
11. *Band of Brothers* adapts a book by the historian Stephen Ambrose, based on interviews and scholarly research. How does it affect our understanding of the past to experience it through a dramatic reenactment? Does it matter that the words spoken by the actors were written as dramatic dialogue and do not come from the historical record? What's the difference between something that is *historical* and a *work of history*? In what ways are the goals and needs of filmmakers different from those of people who write history books?
12. Why do World War Two stories enjoy such widespread popularity—in books, movies, public commemorations? What does this tell us about the war, and what does it tell us about our own times?
13. *Band of Brothers* is not a documentary. It was made as a work of dramatic entertainment. The story—and it *is* a story—depicts handsome, earnest young men who face daunting challenges and bravely achieve great victories. Does *Band of Brothers* romanticize the story of Easy Company? Does it romanticize World War Two, or war in general? Is it significant that The History Channel's on-air broadcast of *Band of Brothers* was sponsored by the U.S. Army?
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### **MP 10. Episode 10: Points**

**Introduction:** In this final episode, Easy Company enters the abandoned Bavarian town of Berchtesgaden, formerly the home of the top officers of the Third Reich, and then takes Hitler's mountaintop fortress, known as "Eagle's Nest." The balance of the episode turns to what happened after that, as the soldier's awaited the war's end. Amid much talk about returning to the United States, the company receives word it is soon to be redeployed in the Pacific. Many men compare the "points" they have accumulated in battle to see who has enough to go home, but the Japanese surrender ends up terminating the war before the company is shipped out. A final vignette summarizes what happened to the men after the war.

**Pre-viewing Activities:** *Band of Brothers* is a compelling story which reveals a great deal about World War Two. However, as it is the story of one U.S. Army company, it reflects only a few of the war's many facets. Topics such as the war's origins, the prosecution of the war up to 1943, the Pacific Theater, the Final Solution are beyond its scope. To put *Band of Brothers* in historical context, review a timeline of the entire war. Students should be able to answer questions such as: When did the war begin? When did the United States enter the conflict? What were the war's major causes and what major events led up to the start of military hostilities? Who were the belligerents and what were they fighting for (or against)? What was the Holocaust and how was it part of the war as a whole? What was D-Day and what was its significance in the war's progression? How and when did the war end in Europe and in Asia?

### **Cue Episode 10: Points**

**Guided Group Discussion:** Guide the group in post-viewing discussion. Use the following questions as examples of where to take the discussion:

1. What was the meaning of the title of this final episode, Points?
2. In the scene where the SS officer surrenders to Maj. Winters, he says, "I wonder what will happen to men like you and me when there are no more wars." What do you think he is imagining?

3. Why does Maj. Winters allow the German colonel to keep his weapon?
4. When Darrell “Shifty” Powers goes to say goodbye to Maj. Winters, he says, “Back home in Virginia, I don’t rightly know how I’m going to explain all this.” What is he referring to? Why is it a problem for him?
5. The pent- up frustration of the war leads the soldiers into some reckless and, in some cases, extralegal behavior. Which of the men appear to deal well with the situation and which appear not to? Why is their situation so difficult at that point, especially given vastly improved conditions they are in?
6. What is the significance of the formal speech that the German officer makes to his soldiers? How is meant to reflect on the war as a whole?
7. Why does Maj. Winters request an immediate transfer to the Pacific? Why is his request denied?
8. What are the major themes of this final episode? What messages or conclusions does this episode end with?
9. *Band of Brothers* adapts a book by the historian Stephen Ambrose, based on interviews and scholarly research. How does it affect our understanding of the past to experience it through a dramatic reenactment? Does it matter that the words spoken by the actors were written as dramatic dialogue and do not come from the historical record? What’s the difference between something that is *historical* and a *work of history*? In what ways are the goals and needs of filmmakers different from those of people who write history books?
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## **PART III**

### **RESOURCES**

#### **WEBSITES:**

<http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/BandofBrothers.1.pdf> - History Channel's Band of Brothers Study Guide

<http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/BandofBrothers.2.pdf> - History Channel's Band of Brothers Study Guide

<http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/BandofBrothers.3.pdf> - History Channel's Band of Brothers Study Guide

<http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/BandofBrothers.4.pdf> - History Channel's Band of Brothers Study Guide

<http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/BandofBrothers.5.pdf> - History Channel's Band of Brothers Study Guide

<http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/BandofBrothers.6.pdf> - History Channel's Band of Brothers Study Guide

<http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/BandofBrothers.7.pdf> - History Channel's Band of Brothers Study Guide

<http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/BandofBrothers.8.pdf> - History Channel's Band of Brothers Study Guide

<http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/BandofBrothers.9.pdf> - History Channel's Band of Brothers Study Guide

<http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/BandofBrothers.10.pdf> - History Channel's Band of Brothers Study Guide

<http://www.hbo.com/band/landing/currahee.html> - HBO.com's Band of Brothers website

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/wwii.htm> - World War Two Documents: The Avalon Project of the Yale Law School

[http://www.archives.gov/digital\\_classroom/lessons/powers\\_of\\_persuasion/powers\\_of\\_persuasion.html](http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/powers_of_persuasion/powers_of_persuasion.html) - Powers of Persuasion: Poster Art of World War II – On-line Educational Program of the National Archives

#### **BOOKS:**

Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York, 1992)

David Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (1999)

John Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy: From D-Day to the Liberation of Paris, June 6-August 25, 1944* (1982)