

## World War II Drama ‘Fury’ Fires on All Cylinders

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 17, 2014 - 7:02pm

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Rating: **4.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Fury” just might be Brad Pitt’s “Saving Private Ryan.” At its heart it’s a crowd pleaser, but it never shies away from the sheer brutality of war. While it doesn’t have anything quite so devastating as “Saving Private Ryan’s” D-Day sequence, it depicts the everyday horrors of killing the enemy and the men who must force themselves to make their peace with the casualties that pile up in the muck. “Fury” is equally successful in its battle sequences and in its smaller moments among its crew inside the tank. Most surprisingly of all it coaxes a decent, dare I say good, performance out of none other than Shia LaBeouf – wonders never cease.

Pitt stars as Sergeant Don “Wardaddy” Collier, and leads his band of soldiers in an old warhorse tank named “Fury” as it plows through Germany in the waning days of World War II. Writer/director David Ayer gets good performances all around including LaBeouf as an evangelical bible thumping good ol’ boy gunner, Chicago’s own Michael Pena as a Mexican tank driver, Jon Bernthal of “The Walking Dead” as a foul mouthed redneck tank mechanic, and former “Percy Jackson” star Logan Lerman as the new recruit thrust into the front lines. Each and every actor finds kernels of humanity in the parts they are given to play.



The Warriors of “Fury”

*Photo credit: Columbia Pictures*

A World War II film in 2014 isn’t exactly original, but Ayers knows exactly what kind of movie he’s making, and he has a real ear for dialogue

so he knows how to create real conversations. By keeping the focus small-largely on the one American tank and the men inside of it- he gets to have his cake and eat it too. He's created a Hollywood blockbuster that also feels personal and moving, instead of a product by committee.

Pitt's performance is remarkably free of movie star vanity. He still commands the screen, but he's not afraid to get in the muck with everyone else. He's a man with a job to do, and killin' Nazis is just all in a days work. There are shades of his "Inglorious Basterds" role here, but Pitt adds dramatic complications without having to spell them out for you. It's a performance where weary glances, and a brief twitch of the mouth, say all you need to know and hint at the unspeakable horrors the warrior has seen day in and day out.

But the real revelation is LaBeouf. After years of prostituting himself to Michael Bay, and ruining the "Indiana Jones" franchise, I'd almost forgotten that he actually can act when he actually applies himself. He hides behind a big mustache and spends a good part of the film with his eye pressed against a viewfinder blasting away at the enemy, but he commits to the part wholeheartedly. So even when he prays with a dying German on the battlefield and asks him if he's saved, it felt right, at least to me.



Logan Lerman and Brad Pitt in "Fury"

Photo credit: Columbia Pictures

Occasionally director Ayers and star Pitt succumb to scenes of Hollywood hokeyness, such as a scene where Pitt leads Lerman into an apartment of a young german woman. Pitt encourages a young romance then has her make the troops breakfast after a hard afternoon on the front. Thankfully those moments are few and far between.

Ayers' film is probably about 20 minutes too long, and could have used a little more judicious hand in the editing room, but those are the kind of minor inconveniences I can forgive when a movie is firing on all cylinders like this one. "Fury" is a perfect example of the best of fall season at the movies – Oscar bait that's actually entertaining too.

*"Fury" opens everywhere October 17th. Featuring Brad Pitt, Shia LaBeouf, Logan Lerman, David Ayer, Michael Pena, Jon Bernthal, Jim Parrack, Brad Henke and Kevin Vance. Written and directed by David Ayer. Rated "R"*



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