CFP: Defending the Homeland: War and Nationalism on Screen

An area of multiple panels for the 2017 Film & History Conference: Representing “Home”: The Real and Imagined Spaces of Belonging
November 1-November 5, 2017
The Hilton Milwaukee City Center
Milwaukee, WI (USA)

EXTENDED DEADLINE for abstracts: August 1, 2017

Wars are fought for myriad reasons, but seldom more ferociously than when the integrity of one side’s homeland—extant or aspirational—is at stake. “We shall fight on the beaches,” Winston Churchill told the House of Commons in June 1940, steeling the British public for a Nazi invasion that then seemed imminent, “we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.” Time and again, the commanders of invading armies have discovered, to their dismay, that combatants fighting in defense their homes, families, neighbors and way of life can bring larger, better-equipped forces to stalemate or even outright defeat.

The drama inherent in such confrontations, and the speed with which they pass from history into legend, make them irresistible subjects for screens large and small. What does the history of such dramatizations reveal about the changing nature of war, and nationalism? What does “homeland defense” mean in an era of irregular warfare and covert operatives? How do film and television shape the memory of “lost causes” and failed defenses? This area seeks to explore, in all their complexity, film and television representations of “homeland defense” by force of arms.

Papers might explore topics including but not limited to:

- Homeland defense as film epic (El Cid, The Battle of Britain, Braveheart)
- Homeland defense stories as wartime propaganda (39th Parallel, Saboteur)
- “Why We Fight:” Defining the homeland in wartime film
- Complicating the legend (Little Big Man, Piece of Cake, Letters from Iwo Jima)
- “Extremism in the defense of liberty” (Dr. Strangelove, Seven Days in May, The Siege)
- Fantasies of invasion and resistance (Red Dawn, Invasion USA, Jericho)
- Civil defense as homeland defense (Panic in the Year Zero, Twilight Zone: “The Shelter”)
- The enemy next door (Telefon, The Fourth Protocol, Homeland, The Americans)
- Failed defenses and lost homelands (For Whom the Bell Tolls, Firefly)
- Home, but not homeland: Embattled outposts on screen (Zulu, The Road Warrior)
- Other voices, other wars (Don’t Cry, Nanking; Kippur; Stalingrad [2013])

Proposals for complete panels (three related presentations) are also welcome, but they must include an abstract and contact information, including an e-mail address, for each presenter. For updates and registration information about the upcoming meeting, see the Film & History website (www.filmandhistory.org).

Please e-mail your 200-word proposal to the area chair: