



## BIG SCREEN CLASSICS

# From Here to Eternity

### From Here to Eternity

Directed by: Fred Zinnemann

©: Columbia Pictures Corporation

Presented by: Columbia Pictures Corporation

Produced by: Buddy Adler

Assistant Director: Earl Bellamy

Screen Play by: Daniel Taradash

Based upon the novel by: James Jones

Director of Photography: Burnett Guffey

Editor: William Lyon

Art Director: Cary Odell

Set Decorator: Frank Tuttle

Gowns by: Jean Louis

Make-up by: Clay Campbell

Hair Styles by: Helen Hunt

Background Music by: George Duning

Musical Director: Morris Stoloff

Orchestrations by: Arthur Morton

Sound Engineer: Lodge Cunningham

Technical Adviser:

Brig Gen Kendall J. Fielder Us Army (Ret)

#### uncredited

Dialogue Director: Justus Addiss

2nd Unit Director of Photography: Floyd Crosby

Recording Supervisor: John Livadary

#### Cast:

Burt Lancaster (*Sergeant Milton 'Milt' Warden*)

Montgomery Clift (*Robert E. Lee Prewitt*)

Deborah Kerr (*Karen Holmes*)

Donna Reed (*Alma 'Lorene' Burke*)

Frank Sinatra (*Angelo Maggio*)

Philip Ober (*Captain Dana Holmes*)

Mickey Shaughnessy (*Sergeant Leva*)

Harry Bellaver (*Mazzioli*)

Ernest Borgnine (*Sergeant 'Fatso' Judson*)

Jack Warden (*Corporal Buckley*)

John Dennis (*Sergeant Ike Galovitch*)

Merle Travis (*Sal Anderson*)

Tim Ryan (*Sergeant Pete Karsen*)

Arthur Keegan (*Treadwell*)

Barbara Morrison (*Mrs Kipfer*)

#### uncredited

Jean Willes (*Annette*)

Claude Akins (*Sergeant Baldy Dhom*)

Robert Kames (*Sergeant Turp Thornhill*)

Robert J. Wilke (*Sergeant Henderson*)

Douglas Henderson (*Corporal Champ Wilson*)

George Reeves (*Sergeant Maylon Stark*)

Don Dubbins (*Friday Clark*)

John Cason (*Corporal Paluso*)

Kristine Miller (*Georgette*)

John Bryant (*Captain Ross*)

Joan Shawlee (*Sandra*)

Angela Stevens (*Jean*)

Willis Bouchee (*lieutenant-colonel*)

Tyler McVey (*Major Stern*)

Mary Carver (*Nancy*)

Vicki Bakken (*Suzanne*)

Margaret Barstow (*Roxanne*)

Delia Salvi (*Billie*)

Alvin Sargent (*Nair*)

William Lundmark (*Bill*)

Weaver Levy (*bartender*)

Carleton Young (*officer*)

Brick Sullivan (*military guard*)

Fay Roope (*General Slater*)

Moana Gleason (*Rose*)

Freeman Lusk (*Colonel Wood*)

Robert Pike (*Major Bonds*)

Pat Miller, Robert Healy, Norman Wayne, Joseph

Sargent, Mack Chandler, Eddie Laguna, John

Veitch, John Davis, Carey Leverette (*soldiers*)

It took James Jones 858 pages to tell *From Here to Eternity's* story of the US army in the last months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but the film is as lean and powerful as its star Burt Lancaster's body. Columbia Pictures studio head Harry Cohn wanted the adaptation of the cumbersome bestselling novel to run under two hours, and it does so with almost military precision. From the first shot, soldiers move into line, forming their companies while George Duning's musical score covers the opening titles. These are men who fit into the spaces of their platoons and companies as neatly as any wartime combat film fit the Hollywood studio production line. But though any individuality or differences among the men disappear as they begin to drill in the neat courtyards of Schofield Barracks, Hollywood had never produced a film like *From Here to Eternity*. It was and is a standalone original, much like its two protagonists, First Sergeant Milton Warden (Burt Lancaster) and Private Robert E. Lee Prewitt (Montgomery Clift).

Part war picture, part romantic melodrama, part historical period piece, part social realist film, *From Here to Eternity* fit into no neat genre. Made at the end of the studio system in the chaotic media age of television, 3D, CinemaScope and stereophonic sound, it nonetheless was shot in spare black-and-white and in the standard aspect ratio and, as critic Archer Winsten first argued, 'does not need' the 'enhancements' of new cinematic technology. It became one of the biggest box-office hits of the decade, pulling in \$30 million in rentals (\$270 million in today's currency). Adapted by a small-time screenwriter, a foreign-born, art-house director, and a little-known producer, *From Here to Eternity* would go on to define the careers of Daniel Taradash, Fred Zinnemann and Buddy Adler, earning 13 Academy Award nominations and winning eight Oscars, a feat only equalled by *Gone with the Wind* (1939).

Often characterised as a star-studded production, the film featured a washed-up radio heartthrob, a British-born 'lady' imported from MGM and a New York method actor who made his name as an unrepentant outsider and a barely concealed bisexual. Even today, the film careers of Frank Sinatra, Deborah Kerr and Montgomery Clift are defined in great part by their roles in *From Here to Eternity*. At the time of its release in August 1953, the only obvious star in the cast was Burt Lancaster. Lancaster and Kerr's horizontal kiss in the surf at Halona Cove Beach worried Hollywood censors at the Production Code Administration (PCA), and was the focus of several racy photographic spreads in *Picturegoer* and *Look* before it went on to become 'one of the classic moments in film history', but it was a relatively minor issue for the US government and armed forces. More troublesome was *From Here to Eternity's* portrait of the US army, which pulled no punches in its revelations of nepotism, bureaucratic corruption, sadism, fascism, prostitution, class prejudice, adultery and homosexuality. The film was also made at the height of Hollywood's anti-communist 'red scare' by filmmakers who had already felt the political heat for their nonconformist views. As Zinnemann recalled, 'McCarthyism was still very much alive, and filming a book so openly scathing about the peacetime army ... was regarded by many as foolhardy if not downright subversive.'

Though contemporary audiences and critics praised the film's controversial narrative and professional style, more recent appraisals by a number of

Louise Saraydar  
Joe Roach  
Allen Pinson  
USA 1953©  
118 mins  
Digital 4K (restoration)

Restored in 4K by Sony Pictures Entertainment at Cineric laboratory, from the original 1954 35mm fine grain master and one reel from the 35mm original negative. Restoration supervised by Grover Crisp

## BIG SCREEN CLASSICS

### Rio Bravo

Wed 1 Jan 12:20; Thu 9 Jan 20:20;  
Mon 27 Jan 14:30

### New Jack City

Thu 2 Jan 18:00; Sat 25 Jan 20:30

### Moonlight

Thu 2 Jan 20:30; Wed 8 Jan 18:00 + intro;  
Fri 17 Jan 20:35

### The Wizard of Oz

Fri 3 Jan 12:15; Sat 18 Jan 12:30;  
Wed 22 Jan 18:00 + intro

### The Way We Were

Fri 3 Jan 18:15; Mon 13 Jan 20:35;  
Thu 23 Jan 12:30; Wed 29 Jan 18:00 + intro

### 8 Mile

Fri 3 Jan 20:45; Fri 24 Jan 17:25

### Jailhouse Rock

Sat 4 Jan 12:10; Mon 20 Jan 20:30 + intro by  
Adrian Wootton, Chief Executive, Film London and  
British Film Commission

### The Man Who Fell to Earth

Sat 4 Jan 17:50; Sun 12 Jan 12:20; Fri 31 Jan 20:20

### Boyz n the Hood

Sat 4 Jan 20:40; Tue 21 Jan 17:55;  
Tue 28 Jan 20:50

### The Blues Brothers

Sun 5 Jan 15:30; Tue 7 Jan 20:20;  
Sun 26 Jan 15:15

### Desperately Seeking Susan

Sun 5 Jan 18:20; Fri 10 Jan 20:30

### Videodrome

Mon 6 Jan 18:10; Sat 11 Jan 21:10;  
Thu 16 Jan 21:00

### From Here to Eternity

Wed 8 Jan 20:35; Wed 15 Jan 18:00 + intro;  
Sun 19 Jan 11:45; Thu 30 Jan 20:40

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**SIGHT AND SOUND**

historians and critics have tended to view the film as both a popular endorsement of hegemonic masculinity and a classic example of 1950s Hollywood compromise, in which Jones' profane original text was censored by the PCA and the US military establishment. As Steven J. Whitfield has commented: 'If it had been critical of the military, a movie version would have been not only intolerable, but, in the 1950s, also inconceivable.' But these appraisals of *From Here to Eternity's* 'conformism' are based on very marginal knowledge of the film's production history. Rather than promoting Cold War images of the unassailable American male, *From Here to Eternity's* filmmakers looked back at a more complicated prewar era and kept working-class nobodies, ethnic minorities and women in the frame, articulating a voice of anti-consensus on the margins of American empire.

Extracted from *From Here to Eternity* by J.E. Smyth (BFI Film Classics, 2015)

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The Pacific swells into crests of white foam, its waves crashing on the sand. Two lovers, Sergeant Milton Warden (Burt Lancaster) and army wife Karen Holmes (Deborah Kerr), lie entangled in the wash, oblivious to the surge of the tide over their adulterous embrace. She's in a halterneck swimsuit; he in black trunks – both gleam with wet in the black and white photography as, breaking apart, they run up the beach to a drier spot. Karen lies down on her towel. Milton drops to his knees, kissing her. 'I never knew it could be like this,' she gasps. 'No one ever kissed me the way you do.'

Described in words, the famous beach scene in *From Here to Eternity* is torrid stuff, without even mentioning the soaring strings of George Duning's Oscar-nominated score. Of course, as cinema, it's magic – one of the Golden Age's most memorably erotic encounters.

The scene was considerably toned down from James Jones' source novel, about the lives and loves of American soldiers stationed in Hawaii in the leadup to Pearl Harbor. On screen, Milton and Karen aren't exactly having sex, as they do in the book, but for 1950s cinemagoers they might as well have been. The orgiastic music, the thunder of the waves, trembling bodies, the looks of intent in their eyes – this was strong stuff for films of the time.

Fred Zinnemann's film premiered in New York on 5 August 1953, and would go on to receive 13 Oscar nominations, winning a total of eight including best picture, best director, best screenplay, best cinematography and best supporting actor for Frank Sinatra.

Nothing, sadly, for Lancaster or Kerr, though both were nominated. But it's these two, and their amorous clinch in the waves at Halcona Cove, on the island of Oahu, that are the most fondly remembered elements of the film. History records that it was Lancaster's idea to do the scene lying down in the surf; the script had maintained propriety by having the lovers kissing standing up. With this flash of censor-baiting inspiration, a classic sequence was born that's lost little of its power. From here to eternity...

Sam Wigley, [bfi.org.uk](http://bfi.org.uk), 5 August 2013