

THE ART OF WAR

THE SCARECROW ARMY

A “Kelly’s Hero’s” type comedy/adventure, set in Paris in the 1940s, focused around a group of oddball artists trying to save the day (loosely based on the “ghost army”).

In the mid 1940s, three brothers, brawny and athletic twins Lloyd and Curtis (20), and their younger and much smaller brother Nash (just 18) head out to do their part in the second world war. Three months into their tour, Nash now stationed in Paris, gets word that his brother Curtis (while carrying important top secret documents) is caught behind enemy lines. With Lloyd (and his unit) too far away to help. Nash knows Curtis’s life (and maybe winning the war?) lies squarely on his shoulders. But what can an artist and daydreamer do to help? Well, Nash thinks he has a plan, an ingenious idea to save the life of his brother and pull off one of the most inventive scams in the history of the armed forces. The predicament lay in the fact that Nash and his unconventional band of artistic compatriots possessed no conventional arsenal. Armed only with their creative ingenuity, they are confronted with the formidable task of rescuing Curtis, all within the narrow confines of three fleeting days. Their quest holds not only the promise of sibling salvation but the prospect of tipping the scales toward victory in the world’s war.

“Before the war, this place was all I knew. I could never bring myself to venture outside of it. I guess before the world called, everything I needed was right here. I spent a great part of those days in the fields helping my father and (like a child) trying not to be underfoot . . . And the rest, locked deep in my imagination, my father called it “woolgathering”, dreaming and drawing a place where my brothers didn’t have to watch over me, and inventing a means to liberate my parents from the worry that I would never find my way.

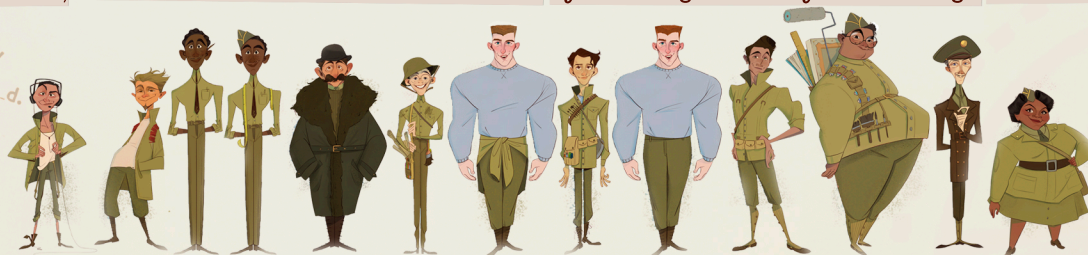
I was sure there was a place, far beyond the north fence and the Crawfordville county line, where I could free the thoughts and images from my head and paint them across the landscape.”

We open on the room of a young, scrawny, 18 year old artist and inventor lost deep in his head, his imagination spilling out on to the page. A kind and motherly voice calls him down stairs to join the family. NASH MCCLOUD, and his older twin brothers are saying good bye to their parents. They’re off to basic training, and then to the war in Europe. Nash has hopes that basic training will make him a real soldier, ready to face the enemy and prove to his father that he’s worthy. In basic training the twins are easily the best in the field, in every category. Nash on the other hand, fails at every turn, yet somehow, he and his (new found) friends, find their way through basic. Nash is disappointed to find that he is not being shipped to fight in the war, but rather to a newly liberated Paris, to work as an artist, in the information and propaganda office. Nash’s world begins to unravel as he is told that his brother’s squadron of paratroopers has been lost behind enemy lines, and there can be no rescue. Knowing that time is running out, Nash and his team of artists and misfits work to creatively “commandeer” trucks, uniforms, radios, and art supplies from Uncle Sam and when air-raid sirens go off in Paris one night, the team knows it’s time to exit into the dark countryside and find Nash’s brother.

Though Nash and his pals barely know which end of a rifle to hold, or how to throw a grenade, they have a plan, and skills, that just may be enough to rescue a downed squadron, and trick the enemy as well. But wait! Just who’s fooling whom?

It’s mostly a jumble of faded pictures in my head, more like daydreams. Memories of 11 new-found brothers and sisters, who risked their lives to save complete strangers. Vague images of the magic and trickery, of making a handful of men look like hundreds, and the illusion of tanks and airplanes made from rubber and paint. But clear in my mind is the memory that, at the height of the great World War, in the midst of battle and chaos, a handful of artists, actors, and designers didn’t fire on the enemy or capture the beach, but saved the lives of their fellow soldiers by deceiving the enemy and winning... at the Art of War.

- Nash McCloud



“A scrawny daydreamer must rally his ragtag team of artists, and slip covertly behind enemy lines to save his brother’s downed squadron, using only their artistic skills and supplies, against the encroaching enemy.”

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