

The Vine This Month

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Brother Martin Writes

In the fictional movie Saving Private Ryan, six men out of a platoon of 8, died trying to save Private Ryan. Near the end of the movie, the dying Captain Miller weakly mutters something.

Private Ryan: [leans in closer] What, sir?

Captain Miller: James, earn this... earn it.

In other words, Miller asked that Ryan continue to be a good man and worthy of all the men who had lost their lives to save his. Captain Miller had earlier in the movie said, half jokingly: He better be worth it. He better go home and cure a disease, or invent a longer-lasting light bulb.

Back in the present, the elderly veteran is revealed to be Ryan at Miller's grave. He asks his wife to confirm that he has led a good life and that he is a "good man," and thus worthy of the sacrifice of

Miller and the others. He then salutes Miller's grave as the camera pans down the gravestones to a placid American flag and fades out as it shows the number of men who died during fighting in Normandy.

In another story, a true one, Thai boys rescued from deep inside a flooded cave in a dramatic mission had their heads shaved for a Buddhist ordination ceremony in honour of a diver who died during the operation.

The saga of the "Wild Boars" football team transfixed the world as divers worked to get them out of the Tham Luang cave where they spent up to 18 days.

Now eleven of the footballers are preparing to live as novice monks and stay in monasteries for nine days to "make merit" for former Thai Navy SEAL diver Saman Kunan, who died while installing oxygen tanks along the rescue route.

While Christians are not saved by good works, do we at least try to live a Christ-like life for his glory?



Martin Cheah