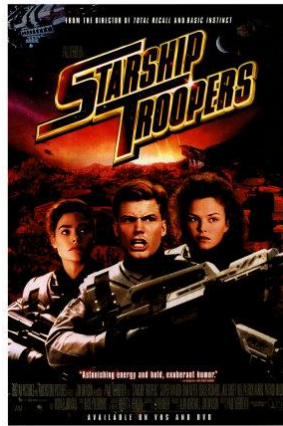


An Official 'Bad-Bug-Movie' Review
ENT 812, Insects in the Cinema
Michigan State University

“The Only Good Bug is a Dead Bug!”
Starship Troopers
A review by Sarah Smith



Plot synopsis

Quite appropriately, *Starship Troopers* opens with a military oriented propaganda film reel encouraging people to join the Mobile Infantry (MI). The film promotes joining the MI to guarantee citizenship, boasts of improvements to Terran planetary defenses and introduces the viewer to the enemy of Terra, the ‘Bugs.’ The ‘Bugs’ home planet, Klendathu, is highlighted and their unlimited supply of meteorites from a nearby asteroid belt is shown. The narration emphasizes that the ‘Bugs’ must be eliminated to ensure the safety of the solar system. This propaganda reel sets the satiric, militaristic and fascist tone for the remainder of the film. The reel ends abruptly and live coverage of the battle on Klendathu or ‘Big K’ flashes on screen. The audience watches as the Terran Forces and the field reporter succumb to heavy and relentless attack by the warrior bugs. We even see the protagonist, Johnny Rico, appear to be killed on live television.

Suddenly, the propaganda film ends and takes the viewer to one year earlier. The audience is introduced to the protagonist Johnny Rico and his friends Dizzy Flores, Carmen Ibanez and Carl Jenkins. They are shown in their Buenos Aires high school history and moral philosophy class taught by Mr. Raszak. Johnny and Carmen are dating but it is apparent that Dizzy is also in love with Johnny. During this class, the viewer learns about the fascist society that has dominated world politics. In this tightly controlled society, force and violence are used to solve all problems. “Force, my friends is violence - the supreme authority for which all other authority is derived.” Earth has none of the current political boundaries and is united as a single country known as the ‘Federation.’ After their history and moral philosophy class ends, the students move to their next class, biology. In biology class they dissect Arkellian sand beetles under the instruction of a blind biology teacher. Like all adults who are citizens, this teacher bears battle scars (blindness) from her term of Federal Service. During this class we learn more

details about the bugs. Such as how they are able to colonize other planets 'by hurling their spore into space' instead of having to use spaceships for colonization like people. After school, Johnny participates in a Federal study administered by Carl to determine if he is psychic. Carl Jenkins is Johnny's best friend. Carl is highly intelligent and has psychic abilities. He conducts federal studies to detect this sensitivity in others. Carl demonstrates his psychic ability by sending his pet ferret on a quest to find a grub that is crawling up his mother's leg. Carl's testing determines that Johnny is not psychic. Later that evening, Johnny participates in the football game against Zander Barcalow. Carmen Ibanez is Johnny's high school sweetheart. Johnny is crazy about Carmen and loves her deeply, but Carmen likes to keep her options open as far as men are concerned. Carmen is a flirt and she expresses her romantic interest in Zander during the football game.

The next evening is the senior prom. As Johnny is preparing to leave, he is confronted by his father who has learned that Johnny is considering Federal Service. His father is strongly opposed to this. Johnny's parents are wealthy so they do not feel the need to serve to obtain citizens rights. Their wealth enables them to simply buy whatever they need, such as attending college or obtaining licenses to have children. His parents believe (quite rightly) that Johnny is only joining to impress Carmen.

At the dance, Dizzy waits until Johnny is alone to tell him that she loves him. Johnny tells her that he only wants to be friends. Later, Johnny finds Carmen once again flirting with Zander and becomes very jealous. Like Carmen, Zander aspires to be a pilot and is already at the fleet academy. Johnny, desperate to impress Carmen, tells her that he is going to enlist for a term of Federal Service. Carmen is very happy with his decision and shares the fact that "my father's not home tonight."

The next day Johnny, Carmen and Carl enlist for Federal Service. Johnny is placed in the MI, Carmen is placed in the pilot training program and Carl is assigned to games and theory (military intelligence). Johnny returns home to tell his parents the news and his father immediately disowns him. Johnny reports to the Federal transportation hub to wish Carmen farewell and he heads off to boot camp at Camp Currie.

The story of these new recruits is interrupted by another propaganda film reel in which we learn more about how this society works; a murderer was captured in the morning, tried in the afternoon and executed on live television in the evening. Then the voice-over reminds the audience once again of the bug threat. On screen we see how dangerous a bug warrior is as we watch it kill a dairy cow. The narrator then directs our attention to a colony of Mormon extremists that established an outpost, Port Joe Smith, on the planet Dantana, deep within the Arachnid quarantine zone. The entire Mormon colony was slaughtered by the bugs for violating the peace treaty by establishing an outpost in their territory.

Johnny is now at Camp Currie with Dizzy and Ace Levy under the supervision of Drill Sergeant Zim. Dizzy specifically transferred from Fort Cronkite to Camp Currie so that she could be in the same unit as Johnny. Dizzy tries to eat lunch with Johnny after her arrival; he expresses his displeasure that she is in his unit, and asks her if she joined because of him. She refuses to answer.

Johnny 'writes' (essentially video mail) to Carmen. The next scene shows Carmen watching the video at the fleet academy on the moon. Carmen is excelling at her training and is going to be the trainee pilot on the spaceship Rodger Young with Zander. Zander arranged to have her be his trainee so that they could 'run into each other.'

The story returns to Johnny at boot camp running combat training exercises. With assistance from Dizzy, Johnny impresses Sergeant Zim and is made squad commander. He tells Dizzy that he is not upset with her for joining his unit and expresses his desire to be her friend again. Carmen 'writes' Johnny and breaks-up with him because she wants to go career and command her own ship. Johnny is heartbroken and admits to Ace that he only joined up because of Carmen. In a live fire exercise the next day, one of the troopers under Johnny's command is killed because Johnny instructed him to remove his helmet. Johnny is relieved of squad command and is subjected to administrative punishment; ten lashes. Ace replaces Johnny as squad commander.

Carmen and Zander are on third watch alone on the bridge of the Rodger Young. Carmen had just replotted their course to make the route more efficient when suddenly a large asteroid appears, heading out of the arachnid quarantine zone. The asteroid strikes their ship and their external communications system is severed; they are unable to warn the fleet of the asteroid heading directly for Earth.

Johnny decides to leave the MI after receiving his corporal punishment. He calls his parents in Buenos Aires to tell them of his decision. The video call is terminated due to 'atmospheric interference.' Johnny starts to leave camp, when his attention is directed to a news bulletin explaining that the same asteroid encountered by the Rodger Young destroyed Buenos Aires. The asteroid was sent from Klendathu. Johnny asks to stay in the Federal Service and Sgt. Zim grants his request. The Federation declares war against the arachnids and formulates a plan to invade Klendathu.

The fleet has now moved to Fort Ticonderoga in the arachnid quarantine zone. Johnny, Ace and Dizzy are walking around the decks when they run into Carmen and Zander. It becomes apparent that Zander was the real reason that Carmen dumped him, so Johnny picks a fight with Zander. The fight ends in a draw and their respective friends separate them from each other.

The next day, the soldiers are dropped onto Klendathu. The battle begins as plasma bugs shoot plasma into space, destroying many of the fleet's spaceships. The battle on the planet surface is fierce with the Terran forces significantly outnumbered by warrior bugs. Ace fails to order a single command against the onslaught of bugs. Johnny assumes Ace's position and takes over leadership of the squad. Realizing how unprepared their soldiers were for the mission, the senior command orders a general retreat. The film returns to the opening battle scene where Johnny appears to be killed on live television.

The story is interrupted by another propaganda reel, this time shot in black and white to symbolize the planet in mourning. The narrator states that 100,000 soldiers were killed in a single hour of combat. Due to the failure of the Klendathu mission, the Sky Marshall has stepped down. A new female Sky Marshall assumes command. In her acceptance speech, she outlines a new strategy to combat the bugs. She wants to understand the bugs in an effort to learn how to kill them. Scientists debate the seemingly intelligent behavior of the bugs and one of them suggests that there may be an intellectual caste in their society, a brain caste.

Meanwhile, aboard the Rodger Young, Carmen searches the list of the dead and wounded and finds Johnny's name listed as "Killed in Action (KIA)". However, the report is incorrect. Johnny was seriously injured, but not killed and was placed in a special chamber to regrow his the tissues in his wounded leg. Johnny leaves the chamber after three days and he, Dizzy and Ace are transferred to a new unit - the Roughnecks. The leader of the Roughnecks is none other than Johnny and Dizzy's former history and moral philosophy instructor, Mr. Rasczak, now Lt. Rasczak.

As part of the new Sky Marshall's plan to eradicate the bugs from the systems surrounding Klendathu, the Roughnecks are sent to planet Tango Urilla. On this planet, Johnny heroically jumps onto the back of a tanker bug, blasts a hole in its elytra, and deposits a grenade. It explodes and the entire unit is saved. He is promoted to corporal and appoints Dizzy as squad leader. In the evening, Lt. Rasczak provides beer and entertainment to his unit. Johnny and Dizzy dance to the Ace's violin and later retreat to Johnny's tent. Dizzy finally gets her wish and 'got to have' Johnny. They are interrupted by Lt. Rasczak, who decides to give them an extra ten minutes to get their things packed before the unit leaves to investigate a distress call on planet P.

On planet P, the unit investigates the Whiskey Outpost and Johnny is promoted to Sergeant. As they examine the outpost, they discover that the bugs tunneled under the outpost walls and entered into the mess hall. Everyone was killed except for General Owen, who hid in a cabinet. General Owen explains that he had to hide to protect his tactical knowledge of the fleet's plans because the bugs on this planet 'get into your mind.' As evidence, he points to the outpost's radio operator found with a hole in his head and all of his brain missing. The general explains that the bugs made the radio operator send a fake distress call to lure the Roughnecks into a trap planned by the bugs. Suddenly, the outpost is under siege by thousands of bugs. Dizzy radios for an emergency evacuation and the Roughnecks are forced to fall back into the outpost as the arrival of the evacuation ship becomes imminent. The ship (flown by Carmen and Zander) lands as a tanker bug emerges from an underground tunnel and bursts into the center of the outpost and killing Lt. Rasczak. Dizzy uses her quarterback skills to throw a grenade into its mouth, killing it. She runs toward the ship and turns around when she hears Johnny's warning of something coming behind her. She is rapidly stabbed four times by the forelegs of a warrior and carried onto the ship by Johnny and Ace. Once onboard, Dizzy tells Johnny she always loved him before dying in his arms. Johnny goes to the front of the ship to request bombardment of planet P. His request is denied. Learning that Johnny is alive, Carmen realizes that she still harbors feelings for Johnny.

At Dizzy's funeral, Carl tells Johnny he is sorry that it had to be his unit on planet P. The 'mission had a low survival probability' but it allowed military intelligence to learn that there was a brain bug on the planet. Carl appoints Johnny as the new lieutenant of the Roughnecks and tells him the fleet is headed back to planet P to capture this brain bug.

Back on planet P, Johnny informs his unit of their mission to capture the brain bug. Meanwhile, the Rodger Young is destroyed by bug plasma. Luckily, Carmen and Zander are saved by fleeing in a small escape ship. They crash through a mountain on the planet and break into a large chamber in one of the bug tunnels. Ace hears reports of the destruction of the Rodger Young and tells Johnny. When Johnny hears Carmen's distress call, he disobeys his orders to find and rescue her. Somehow he knows not only that she survived the attack, but also exactly where to find her in the bug tunnels.

After their escape ship lands, Carmen and Zander encounter several warriors in the tunnel. Instead of killing them, the bugs wound them. Zander is stabbed in the leg and pinned down and Carmen is stabbed in the shoulder and pinned down. The warriors vocalize and chariot bugs arrive to investigate them. The chariot bugs retreat and the brain bug is brought to them, carried by the chariot bugs. The brain bug extends a proboscis and sucks Zander's brain. Carmen uses a knife to cut off the proboscis just as her skull is about to be punctured. Immediately, Johnny enters the chamber holding a nuclear bomb. The brain bug calls off the warriors and flees the chamber. Once the brain bug is gone, the warriors attack. Carmen, Johnny, Ace and Sugar Watkins fight but Sugar is fatally wounded. Sugar tells the others to flee and he will detonate the

bomb. Once they reach the surface, they see soldiers rejoicing. They run with them to the entrance of a bug hole where the brain bug is being dragged out. Carl touches the brain bug and using his psychic abilities, determines that the brain bug is afraid. Carl hints that he used his psychic ability to locate Carmen and he gave this information to Johnny.

The film concludes with one final propaganda reel showing censored probing of the brain bug's orifices. New weapons, ships and some of the best people in the federal service are highlighted. Viewers are reminded that 'service guarantees citizenship!'

Characters and Cast

Johnny Rico: Casper Van Dien

Johnny Rico is the protagonist of *Starship Troopers*. Johnny is a star football player from a wealthy family and is by no means an intellectual. In high school, he is madly in love with Carmen Ibanez. To impress Carmen, Johnny decides to join the Federal Service for a tour of duty to become a citizen. By doing so, Johnny is disowned by his parents, who because they are wealthy, disregard the importance of citizenship. Johnny is placed in the Mobile Infantry and at boot camp; he becomes noted for his leadership capabilities. He quickly becomes a squad commander. Over the course of the film he moves through the ranks to become a lieutenant. After being rejected by Carmen, Johnny develops a close relationship with Dizzy, who has been madly in love with him for years.

Casper Van Dien has appeared in more than 65 films and television series since 1990. He has few large roles to his credit, but had notable appearances in "Tarzan and the Lost City" and the *Starship Troopers* sequels, "Hero of the Federation" and "Marauder." In real life he is married to a princess. His wife, Catherine Oxenberg is the daughter of Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia and her grandfather was Prince Paul, the former Regent of Yugoslavia (1).

Dizzy Flores: Dina Meyer

Dizzy Flores is a star football quarterback on Johnny's team. She has been madly in love with Johnny for years and is constantly trying to impress him both on and off the field. Just as Johnny joined the Mobile Infantry to impress Carmen, Dizzy joins to impress Johnny and to keep him close. Once Carmen dumps Johnny, Dizzy makes her move to get the man of her dreams. Unlike Carmen, Dizzy is a strong and fearless heroine who was able to advance to squad leader before her death on planet P.

Dina Meyer's first big screen role was starring opposite Keanu Reeves in 1995's "Johnny Mnemonic," she has also appeared as a Romulan commander in "Star Trek Nemesis," as Kerry in four "Saw" films, and numerous TV shows (2).

Carmen Ibanez: Denise Richards

Carmen Ibanez is first introduced to us as Johnny's high school sweetheart. Johnny is crazy about Carmen and loves her deeply, but Carmen likes to keep her options open as far as men are concerned. Carmen is a flirt; she expresses her romantic interest in Zander Barcalow at the football game and then later as a pilot aboard the *Rodger Young*. As in Heinlein's novel, Carmen is an intelligent, highly skilled pilot. Carmen becomes physically tougher as the movie progresses, she transforms from a young woman who never played sports and who was so revolted during an insect dissection that she vomited, to a strong woman who relentlessly battles

the brain bugs. At one point, she courageously fires her rifle despite having a giant gaping hole in her shoulder.

Denise Richards has appeared in numerous movies and television episodes. Her big breakout role was in her follow-up performance to *Starship Troopers*, this led to her role as Kelly Van Ryan in 1998's "Wild Things." She was a Bond girl in 1999's "The World is Not Enough." She appeared in "Drop Dead Gorgeous," "Love Actually" and was the star of her own reality series, "Denise Richards-Its Complicated." However, she is probably best known as Charlie Sheen's ex-wife (3).

Ace Levy: Jake Busey

Ace Levy is Johnny's best friend in the MI. Ace's ambition is "going career, officers training, all the way." However, when his leadership skills are tested as a squad leader on Klendathu, he fails to order a single command against the onslaught of bugs. Johnny assumes Ace's position and takes over leadership of the squad. After the battle, Ace is demoted to the rank of private. Later, he refuses a second chance as squad leader when asked by Johnny.

Jake Busey is the son of actor Gary Busey. He has starred in several films including "War of the Worlds," "Home Fries," and "Christmas with the Kranks" (4). His role as the homicidal ghost of serial killer Johnny Bartlett in Peter Jackson's 1996 comedy horror "The Frighteners" was particularly memorable (5).

Carl Jenkins: Neil Patrick Harris

Carl Jenkins is Johnny Rico's best friend. Carl is highly intelligent and has psychic abilities. He helps to conduct federal studies designed to detect this 'sensitivity' in others. Carl is portrayed as a fascist youth and has behaviors similar to the SS in Nazi Germany (9). In the beginning of the film, he displays Johnny's abysmal math final grade to the entire school in order to humiliate him. In an attempt to control the behavior of others, he censors a kiss between Carmen and Johnny at the high school dance. Later, Carl becomes more involved in the fascist government, which is reflected in his behavior and he begins to use soldiers as pawns in his quest to find a brain bug. Carl also develops the ability to control human thought with his psychic ability, which he uses to draw Johnny to the location of both Carmen and the brain bug.

Neil Patrick Harris began his acting career as a teen prodigy doctor on "Doogie Hauser, M.D." After the series ended, Neil starred on stage and in made-for-television movies for nine years. *Starship Troopers* his first feature film since the cancellation of "Doogie Hauser, M.D." He has had starring roles in "Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle" and as Dr. Horrible in "Dr. Horrible's Sing Along Blog." Presently, he plays the lead character Barney Stinson in the CBS hit sitcom, "How I Met your Mother" (6).

Lt. Jean Raszak: Michael Ironside

Lt. Raszak plays two roles in the film. He is first introduced as the History and Moral Philosophy teacher at Johnny Rico's high school in Buenos Aires and he is later the lieutenant in charge of Raszak's Roughnecks. In Heinlein's novel, these two characters were portrayed by two different characters: Mr. Jean Dubois as the high school teacher and Lt. Raszak as the lieutenant of the Roughnecks.

Michael Ironside is a character actor. During his long career he has had roles in a number of blockbuster films, notably "Total Recall," "Highlander," "Top Gun," "Free Willy" and "Terminator Salvation." He has appeared in over 190 movies and television series (7).

Zander Barcalow: Patrick Muldoon

Zander Barcalow is the first pilot of the Rodger Young; he competes with Johnny for Carmen's affections. After meeting Carmen at the football game he is smitten. When he learns at the high school dance that she is going to be a pilot, he arranges for her to be the number two pilot aboard the Rodger Young. He wants to keep her close to impress her.

Patrick Muldoon has been acting for more than 20 years, but he has not appeared in very many productions. He is most well known for this role and for his character Richard Hart on the hit television series "Melrose Place" (8).

Biology teacher: Rue McClanahan

The biology teacher instructs her students through their Arkellian Sand Beetle dissection. Like many of the adults in this society who have earned their citizenship by serving in the Terran Forces, she is scarred by battle. In her case, she is blind (9).

Rue McClanahan has appeared in more than 115 films and several television shows. She is most recognized for her role as Blanche Devereaux on the hit sitcom "Golden Girls" from 1985 until 1992 (10).

Crew

Director: Paul Verhoeven

Paul Verhoeven was born in 1938 in Netherlands and grew up during WWII. His childhood experience with Nazi Germany dominates the film, for example, the fascist overtones, the human beings' confidence in their own superiority over another race, the bugs, and the military styled uniforms. Verhoeven admitted never finishing the novel and claimed that he read the first few chapters and became both bored and depressed (11).

He has directed many Dutch and in English films including "Flesh + Blood," "RoboCop," "Total Recall," "Basic Instinct," "Showgirls." His most recent film was 2000's "Hollow Man" (11).

Author: Robert A. Heinlein

Robert Heinlein (1907-1988) was a prolific author of science fiction. He served in the Navy for five years and his military experience is particularly noticeable in Starship Troopers. Heinlein is rumored to have said to L. Ron Hubbard that "You can't do anything right - probably not even such a simple thing as starting a new religion" (12). Hubbard later founded the church of Scientology. His other novels include "Stranger in a Strange Land" and Red Planet" (12).

Screenwriter: Edward Neumeier

Neumeier previously wrote the screenplay for Verhoeven's Robocop and also for the sequels to Starship Troopers "Starship Troopers 2: Hero of the Federation" and Starship Troopers: Marauder," and "Anacondas: the Hunt for the Blood Orchid." He appears in the Starship Troopers as the murderer who was tried, convicted and executed in a single day on television (13).

Production Notes

Released by: TriStar Pictures, Inc. and Touchstone Pictures

Release Date: November 7, 1997

Budget: ~\$105 million
Gross: \$121 million (14)

Warrior



Tanker



Brain



The 'Bugs'

The 'bugs' are the opponents of the Terran Forces in the 'bug war' in which the both sides are vying for domination of the galaxy. In Heinlein's novel, the bugs have allied their forces with another alien race, the 'Skinnies,' which were excluded from the film. The 'bugs' are commonly referred to as 'arachnids' despite the fact that their leg number varies, ranging from three pairs of legs in warriors to more than six pairs in tankers. The bugs are part of a complex social society composed of at least six castes. These castes include warriors, tankers, plasma, hopper, brain and chariot bugs. All the bugs live in underground tunnels similar in construction to those used by social insects such as ants and termites.

Warrior bugs

Warrior bugs do not resemble any insect family. The warrior bugs are excellent soldiers and are 'combat effective' even when they have been severely injured by Terran bullets.

Tankers bugs

Tanker bugs have six pairs of legs, are heavily sclerotized and can spray fire. Tankers superficially resemble carabid beetles and are reminiscent of *Calosoma* species. They may have served as an inspiration for the production crew because the common name 'ground beetle' implies that the beetles live in the ground. Tankers are often seen emerging from underground tunnels and slowly moving into strategic positions.

Plasma bugs

Plasma bugs have four pairs of legs and superficially resemble Tenebrionid beetles, specifically an *Eleodes* species. *Eleodes* species live in arid conditions similar to those of Klendathu and planet P. When disturbed, *Eleodes* sp. point their abdomen in the air and release noxious benzoquinones and hydrocarbons. Many extrude defensive compounds upon their cuticle and other species have been known to shoot these compounds at predators at distances up to two feet (A.D Smith, per. comm.). Plasma bugs also shoot plasma from their abdomens into space; in this capacity they serve the role of anti-aircraft missiles and destroy Terran spaceships.

Hopper bugs

Hopper bugs are avid flyers and have four pairs of legs, and two pairs of wings composed of one membranous and one heavily sclerotized pair resembling an elytra. Hoppers also have a

stinger. They superficially resemble, and have similar behavior to, speckled wasps. Like hoppers, these wasps are solitary and sting their prey to death.

Brain bugs

Brain bugs are excessively large, weakly sclerotized and lack strong legs. They are larviform in appearance and have four pairs of eyes and piercing-sucking mouthparts, two pairs of true legs and three pairs of prolegs. There is a single brain bug per planet. Brain bugs have the ability to control the behaviors of the five other castes. Brain bugs gain military intelligence by using their piercing-sucking mouthparts to pierce the skull and suck the brain of their opponents. The brain bug retrieves the memories stored in the opponent's brain, and uses the information against its opponents by orchestrating ambushes and other military stratagems. The brain bug in the movie was captured on planet P.

Chariot bugs

Chariot bugs are the 'chariots' to the brain bugs. Because brain bugs are excessively large, weakly sclerotized and lack strong legs, they need assistance to move. Chariot bugs have four pairs of legs, are short and have a physical appearance similar to an immature cockroach, but lack a tegmen. Several chariot bugs move in front of a brain bug to survey the path for safety threats.

Other castes

Heinlein's novel lists additional castes including royals and workers. The royal caste included kings and queens and were the only individuals in the colony that could reproduce. Workers are almost entirely morphologically identical to warriors and could only be differentiated by their placid behavior.

The role of women in the military and society

Racial and/or gender inequality does not exist in the futuristic society in which *Starship Troopers* is set. Women are allowed to compete on men's sports teams and they can serve as the Sky Marshall (president of the planet). Women hold posts alongside men in the military. Gender equality is most evident in the military where men and women share housing, shower at the same time rather than in shifts and fight directly alongside each other. In the film, women are never portrayed as the stereotypical 'damsel in distress,' they are strong and independent. Clearly, women are held to the same standards as men.

Coincidentally, 1997 marked the release of another film featuring women in combat, Ridley Scott's "G.I. Jane" starring Demi Moore as a woman who joins the Navy SEALs. In the film, Jordan (Demi Moore) refuses to be treated any differently than her male counterparts and frequently outperformed them in training exercises.

Legacy of the novel

Starship Troopers was first published as an abridged edition in the serial publication *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* in 1959, later that year it was published in its entirety and won the Hugo Award for best novel in 1960 (15).

The novel may have served as James Cameron's inspiration for his 1986 blockbuster hit "Aliens" and in 2009 for "Avatar." Before principal photography began on "Aliens" Cameron reportedly had the entire cast read *Starship Troopers* (15). There are many references to the book

in the film, for example, the term “bug hunt,” is used and one of the subplots deals with sending the military into space to exterminate an insect-like threat to humanity (the aliens or Xenomorphs). Additionally, the power suits worn by all members of the Mobile Infantry (which made them the ‘mobile’ infantry instead of the ‘infantry’) likely served as inspiration for the memorable cargo loader battle scene in “Aliens” where Ripley confronts the alien queen while operating a cargo loader, which she wore like a suit during the fight.

In Cameron’s 2009 smash hit “Avatar,” he once again sent the military into space to a planet far from earth, although the military did not battle an insect-like opponent, he equipped the infantry with amp suits for combat. These suits closely resemble Heinlein’s power suit description both in terms of functionality and size.

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