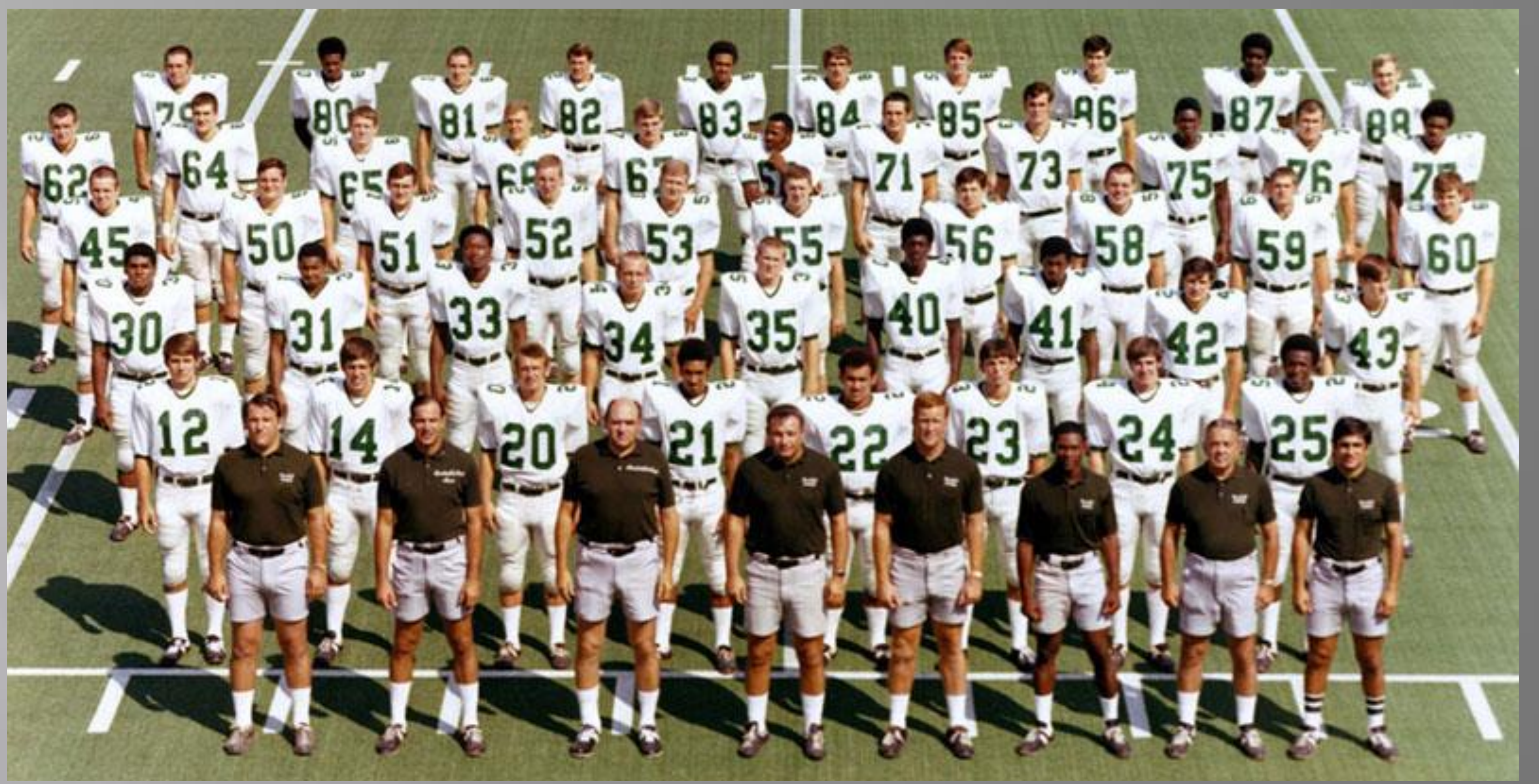


MARSHALL UNIVERSITY PLANE CRASH

November 14, 1970



1970 Marshall Thundering Herd football team. Courtesy of Marshall.edu

Overview of Crash

Early evening on November 14, 1970, the Marshall University football team was coming back from a close 17-14 loss to East Carolina University. The Southern Airlines DC-9 aircraft carrying 37 football players, the coach, team doctor, athletic director, and 25 football boosters crashed only a mile from the Tri-State Airport in Kenova, WV. In all, 75 people were killed. On descent back to West Virginia, the weather was poor with mist, fog, and broken clouds below 500 ft. The plane dropped below minimum descent altitude (MDA). The NTSB came up with two probable causes for the crash. "The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of this accident was the descent below Minimum Descent Altitude during a non-precision approach under adverse operating conditions, without visual contact with the runway environment. The Board has been unable to determine the reason for this descent, although the two most likely explanations are (a) improper use of cockpit instrumentation data, or (b) an altimetry system error."



This was the front page of the Herald-Advisor the day following the crash. Image from the Herald-Dispatch.com of Huntington WV.

Weather Conditions

At the time of the crash, a low pressure system was centered over southwest WV causing cloudiness and precipitation. Flight precautions were advised for the area due to lowering cloud ceilings.

"Visibility was remarkably good when I took my local (the 1945 observation), but about 10 or 15 minutes after that the fog formed very rapidly, and that's when the visibility came down...it was right over the field."

- NWS specialist, Huntington WV.

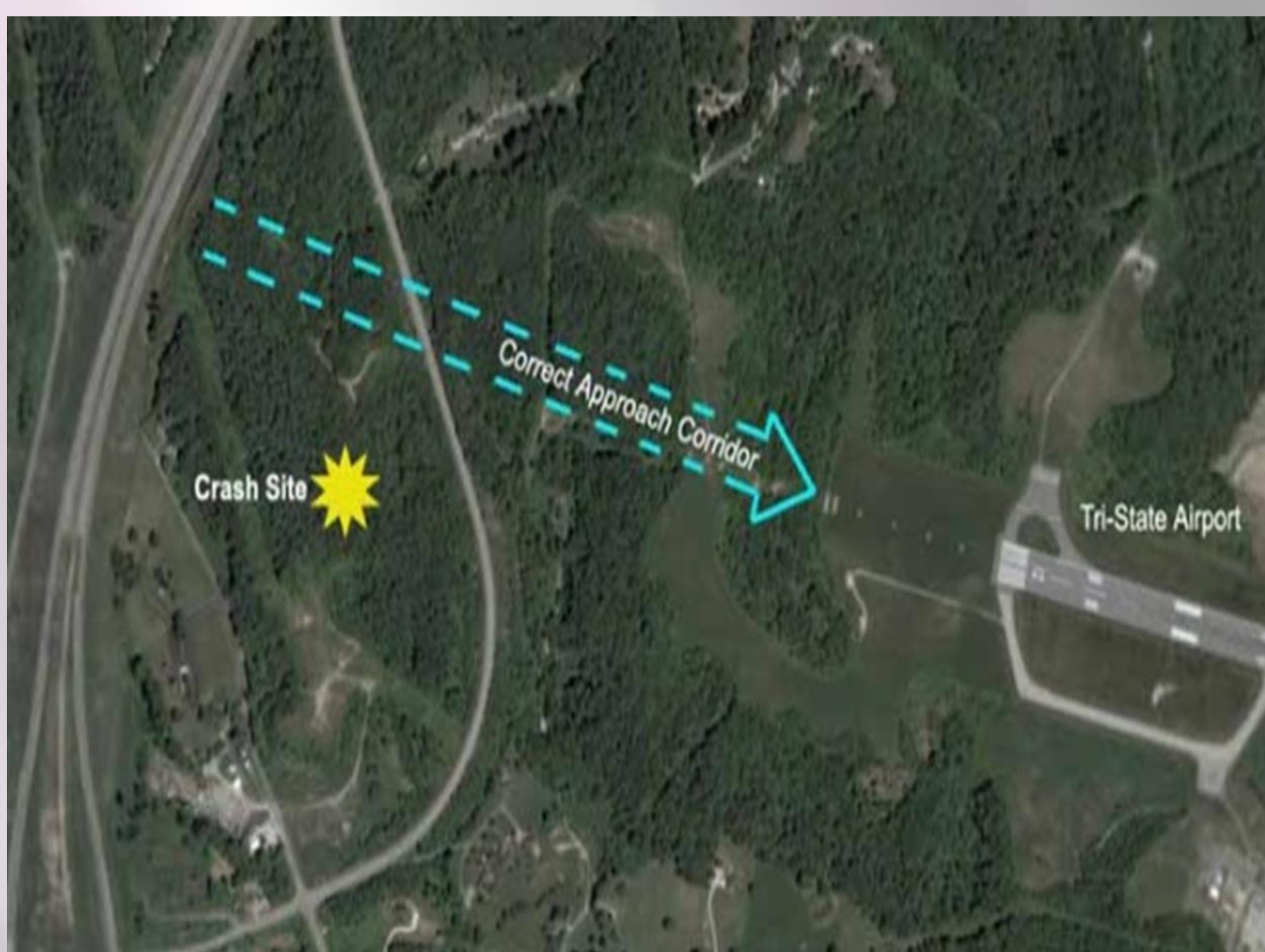


Image of the Tri-State Airport runway along with the ideal landing path (blue). The crash site is marked in yellow. Courtesy of six-check.com

Tribute to the 1970 Team

- As a tribute to the 1970 team, the university erected this fountain.
- The 2006 film We Are Marshall tells the story of the entire crash and aftermath.
- The 1971 season was a time to get back to some normalcy. The team went 2-8 under first year coach Jack Lengyel.
- Each year on November 12, the university holds a memorial service.

Impact of Crash

- Killed 71 players, coaches, officials, and administrators, plus the 4 crewmen on board
- Marshall cancelled the last game of the 1970 season
- "The whole fabric, the whole heart of the town was aboard." Huntington, WV citizen

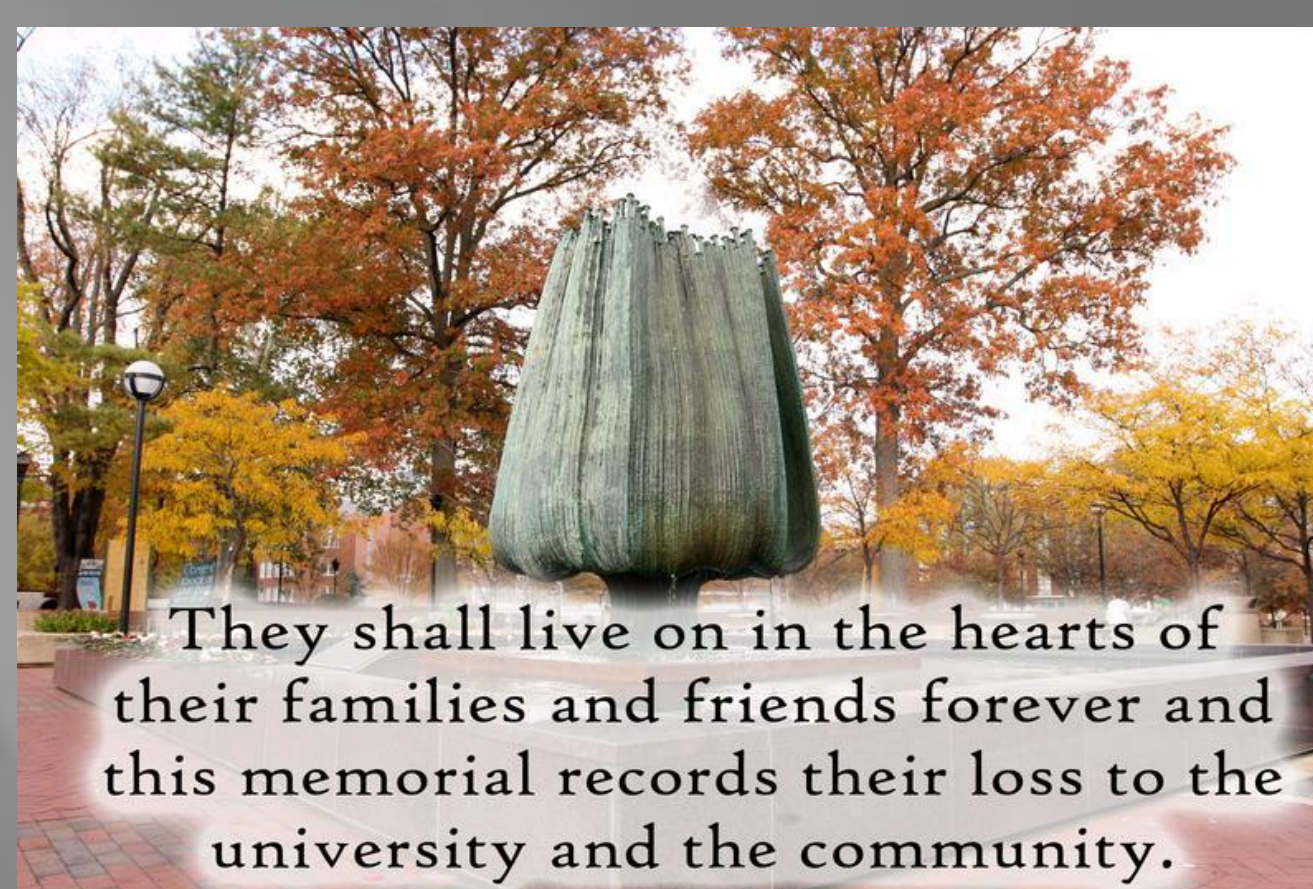


Image courtesy of Marshall.edu

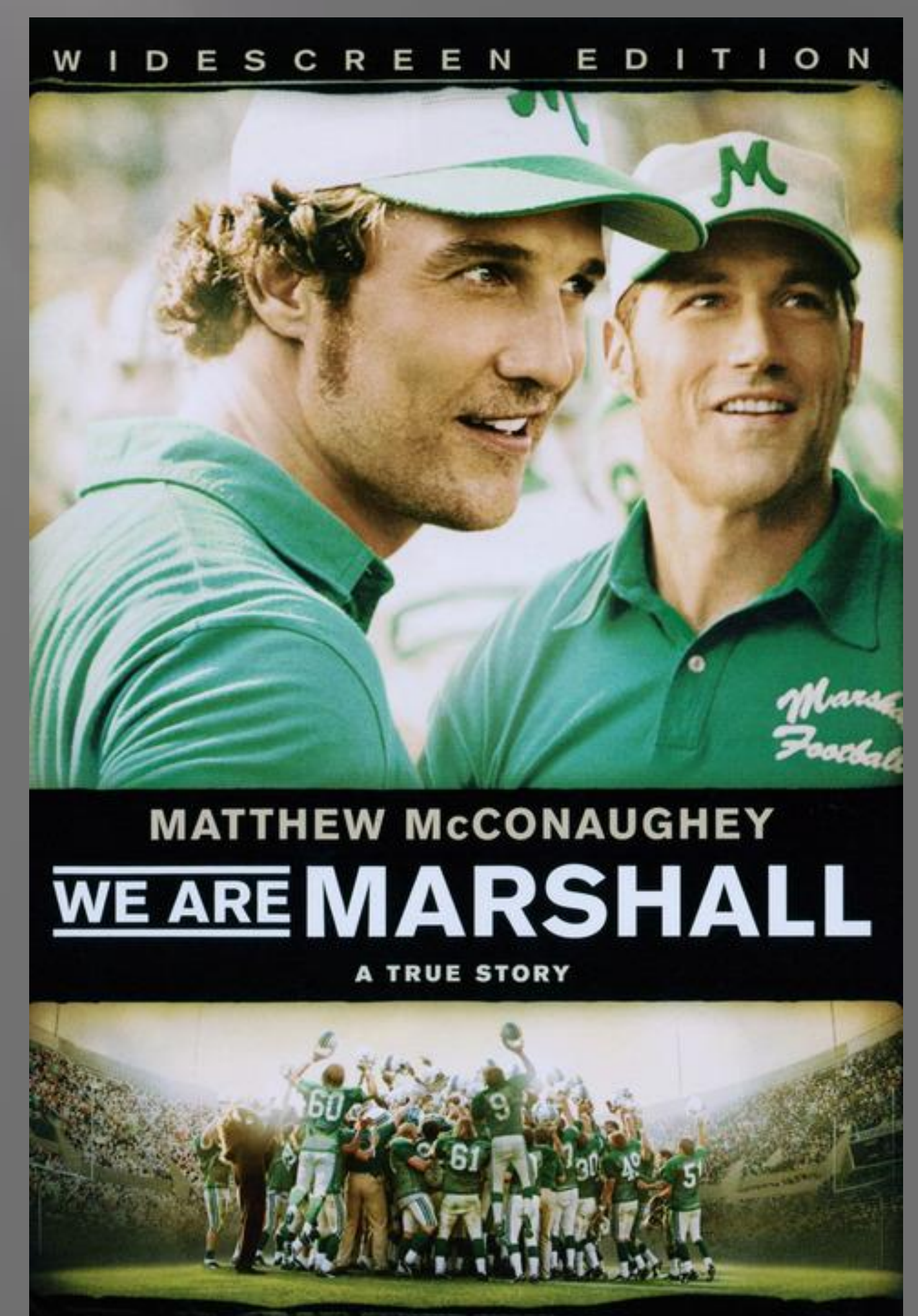


Image courtesy of Warner Brothers