



‘HACKSAW RIDGE’: SHOWING ANOTHER SIDE OF WAR

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Every once in a while, a certain film will hit the big screen that gives audiences a better history lesson than any textbook ever could. That was the case with director Mel Gibson’s latest film *Hacksaw Ridge*, which released into theaters earlier this month. Based on a true story, *Hacksaw Ridge* paints not only a fresh and new picture of what it means to be brave and courageous, but illustrates another side of war that viewers have

never seen before. War is war, it's ugly and brutal. But Gibson adds another depth, showing that while war is war, human lives are human lives, and each one is precious. In this film, while the world was pulling itself apart, one courageous individual took it upon himself to try and put a little of it back together.

Hacksaw Ridge tells the heart-gripping story of Pfc. Desmond T. Doss (Andrew Garfield), a young man from Lynchburg, Virginia who decides to join the army during World War II as a medic. Because of his Christian beliefs, Doss also joins the military as a conscientious cooperator, refusing to ever fire or even hold a weapon. Upon his arrival into boot camp, Doss is treated like a coward and a burden to his unit, being ostracized and harassed at every turn. However, in the Battle of Okinawa, Doss risks his life to save 75 men and succeeds without firing a single shot, winning him the Congressional Medal of Honor and the devout respect of his fellow servicemen.

Famous for his movies *The Passion of the Christ* and *Braveheart*, Gibson gives audiences another beautifully heartbreaking story of a sacrificial soul that lays down his life for his brothers. *Hacksaw Ridge* shows audiences another definition of bravery and courage. While countless war movies have been made showing men that courageously take up arms to protect and save what they value, *Hacksaw Ridge* shows a young man who put down arms and clung instead to the pages of his faith while laying down his life to save the many. This film shows that courage does not only come in the form of a strong man and a weapon but also in the form of a young man, with a lanky physique, and a tattered Bible. True courage, in *Hacksaw Ridge*, means laying down your life to save another's, and Desmond Doss had courage pouring in abundance from his wounds.

Gibson's movie also hones in on the value of human life, turning the cameras to a different side of war and giving viewers a very real perspective of WWII. Doss was labeled a conscientious objector, someone who does not believe in the violence of war. However, Doss referred to himself as a conscientious cooperator, someone who believes in war but also believes in the value of human life. Gibson does a magnificent job at showing there are always two sides to war, that even the enemy is a human being and that peace can indeed be found in even the most trying of times.

Garfield as Doss gives a truly beautiful performance with both sweet humor and touching devotion. Garfield pulls audiences into the story with profound emotion and, like Doss' unwavering faith, a strong and steady performance. While Vince Vaughn is more widely known for his hilarious romantic comedies, the successful actor gave character Sergeant Howell all the seriousness and humor of a real life military sergeant. Taking great entertainment in his recruits humiliation while still playing the both harsh and caring father role on the battlefield, Vaughn was the perfect match for his character. Likewise,

Teresa Palmer, Luke Bracey and Hugo Weaving all gave praise worthy performances as characters Dorothy Schutte, Smitty and Tom Doss.

With stunning visuals, a moving soundtrack and riveting battle scenes that are off the charts, *Hacksaw Ridge* brings to the silver screen a film packed with beauty, gore and, above all else, faith. Mel Gibson, after nearly a decade of absence from the industry, shines again in the world of film with his movie *Hacksaw Ridge*, possibly the *Saving Private Ryan* of this generation.

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