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Hacksaw Ridge

Hacksaw Ridge is a movie about the decorated history of Desmond Thomas Doss (1919 - 2006), an American army medic during World War II. Desmond Doss was the first conscientious objector to have been awarded the Medal of Honor for his exemplary performance, bravery, and sacrifice in saving many lives during his tenure as an army medic (Miller 1). In the film, an American army veteran mourns by the graves of his fallen compatriots who were killed during World War I (Putlocker 1). He is a father of two sons, Desmond and Hal, whom he brings up in a religious setting and teaches them to avoid weapons in their lives. One day, the sons engage in a naughty fight in which Desmond almost kills his brother.

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Consequently, following his belief as a devout Seventh-day Adventist and in the Biblical teachings “Thou shall not kill,” he resolves in his mind never to harm any human in his life. While this movie is a reflection of the actual life of Private Desmond, there are interesting instances of its accuracy that will be highlighted in this paper; however, despite the few inconsistencies, the film highlights the critical issues in Private Desmond’s life.

In Desmond’s rescue mission of an injured man, he encounters Dorothy Schutte, a nurse whom he falls in love with. Against the wish of their father, the two sons enlist in the army as the U.S. entered the Second World War. Desmond’s failure to take up firearms training causes him trouble with his seniors as the rigorous army training required a recruit to clear firearm training. It costs his father’s intervention to save him from getting court-martialed and his intake as an army medic. He then joins the 77th infantry division that is posted to Hacksaw Ridge at the Battle of Okinawa. Private Desmond saves 75 soldiers in one night without carrying or firing a gun in one of the bloodiest battles of World War II in the “Hacksaw Ridge” (Miller 1). This is a moving, heroic story because of his love for humanity as he rescues the people who at one point persecuted him for his strong character and personality that causes his refusal to carry or use a gun.

One of the most interesting scenes in this movie that informs the genesis of Desmond’s personality involves the point when his dad, out of drunkenness and life’s frustration, almost killed Desmond’s mother. This is proven when Desmond opens up to one of his colleagues that his resolution of never to touch a gun is informed not only by his religious beliefs but also by the fact that his father almost killed his mother with one. However, this film creation is not accurate as the reality, based on an interview with Desmond Doss himself, is that it was his father and uncle who were involved in a fight (MedalOfHonorBook). It so happened that the dad pulled a

gun on the uncle and the mother intervened and called the police. She then asked Desmond to conceal the firearm so that the police may not find it. It is, therefore, not true that Desmond's dad tried to kill his mother as the movie shows.

In another scene whose integrity is of concern, Desmond's meeting with Dorothy takes place when he delivers an injured man to a hospital. The movie shows Dorothy working as a nurse at the hospital. However, in reality, Dorothy came to acquire her nursing degree years later after the Second World War so as to support her family ("Hacksaw Ridge Vs the True Story of Desmond Doss, Medal of Honor"). In addition, it was in a Seventh-day Adventist church in Lynchburg where Desmond met Dorothy leading to their marriage in August 1942. While it is true that Desmond was detained as he waited for his trial, the film lacks accuracy by positing that his incarceration pending investigations on his unwillingness to use a gun led him to miss his wedding with Dorothy. The truth is that he never missed their wedding despite his detention.

In another memorable scene, Desmond Doss declines to plead guilty to charges against his refusal to carry a firearm, and as a result, he's in a tight fix in a court-martial awaiting his sentencing. It is at this point that his father comes to his rescue by contacting his former boss commander for a hand in getting his son out (Miller 1). The movie illustrates that Desmond's freedom was as a result of his father's connection with his former commanding officer who cited an Act of Congress that protected Desmond's pacifism. Whereas this is partly incorrect, in reality, Desmond's dad made contacts with the chairman of the church's War Service Commission in Washington who aided in the release of Desmond ("Hacksaw Ridge Vs the True Story of Desmond Doss, Medal of Honor"). Therefore, while it is true that his dad rescued him from getting court-martialed, it was not as a result of his father's connection with a former commanding officer that led to the dropping of Desmond's charges in a court-martial.

Moreover, the movie features another exciting scene whereby Desmond Doss's heroic acts are anchored in saving not only his comrades but also enemy casualties in the Hacksaw Ridge battlefield. While the movie suggests that he helped 75 fallen comrades to safety, in his interview, Desmond mentions that he helped to rescue about 50 of them while his infantry division said the number of rescued soldiers was about 100 ("Hacksaw Ridge Vs the True Story of Desmond Doss, Medal of Honor"). This difference led to an agreed average number of 75 soldiers who got saved by Desmond. Equally, Desmond highlights in an interview that while he tried helping wounded Japanese soldiers, the enemy soldiers remained defiant and swore to kill him thus prompting his leave for safety ("Hacksaw Ridge Vs the True Story of Desmond Doss, Medal of Honor"). However, some of Desmond's fellow soldiers recall finding many Japanese soldiers with wrapped with American bandages. Despite all these claims, there is no substantial evidence that Desmond did help enemy fighters.

Finally, the Hacksaw Ridge film has an exceptional accuracy level in its consistency with the principle of the story due to Desmond's specification that it conforms to the truth about his life, religious beliefs, and wartime experiences. The few inaccuracies were allowed by the filmmakers for narrative reasons. For instance, at the end of the movie, Desmond is set on a stretcher while in reality, he had another wounded fellow take to the stretcher in his place. While attending to the soldier, Desmond had a sniper shot that fractured his arm causing him to be alone for 5 hours and to crawl over 300 yards ("Hacksaw Ridge Vs the True Story of Desmond Doss, Medal of Honor"). The filmmakers left out this incident since they thought it would be unbelievable t their audience. Moreover, the film omitted Desmond's warfare service in the Battle of Leyte and Battle of Guam only to create an impression that his actions at the Hacksaw

Ridge lasted a few days whereas his Medal of Honor cites about three weeks of action at Okinawa.

The film illustrates Desmond Doss' life and story in a big way, particularly during his combat service at Okinawa. For the lovers of history, this film is a rich source of an inspiring and heart-wrenching historical story that is strongly recommended. For his brave and selfless service both to government and for his soul, Desmond Doss truly deserved the Medal of Honor, and his story shall forever remain an inspiration to not only the American generations but to all people of good will worldwide.

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