

Movie

Born on the Fourth of July (1989)



Overview

The movie is about Ron Kovic played by Tom Cruise that enlists in the Vietnam War as a Marine after he graduates from high school. The movie covers some 20 years of this life giving the viewers a first-hand account of his harrowing experiences coming back disabled after the Vietnam War. He becomes an activist to let people know what is really going on with the returning Vietnam Veterans and the war. Add in Hollywood magic and you have a intense movie covering a controversial war and intense social change.

Historical Accuracy of the Plot

I believe it is mostly historically accurate considering the help Mr. Kovic gave by giving his first-hand accounting of his life and the book he wrote explaining what really happened to him. Mr. Kovic was so touched by the performance Tom Cruise gave that he gifted him his bronze medal.

Historical Accuracy of a small town in the 1950s and 1960s

To see how the townspeople dress is a stark contrast to today's casualness. There are no cell phones, virtually no tattoos on civilians and children are mostly of normal weight. The glow of WW2 is present and used when a U.S. Marine recruiter comes to the high school, the boys listen, some looking interested, considering some of their dads served themselves. Black and white TVs are in some living rooms bringing in the news of the day, and there are parades where the community gather to support each other. The graffiti-free town is clean and feels safe. It is idyllic and represents the middle-class prosperity of some after WW2. The movie is accurate.



Miss America 1958.



Parade 1950s

Historical Accuracy of the Veterans Administration and returning Veterans experiences

Generally, Vietnam Veterans returned home and were spurned. The hostility and lack of funds for medical care created a tormenting time for those that served their country by either voluntarily enlisting or being drafted. Who wants to support those that lost the war? Underpaid and overworked employees were tasked to care for Veterans was draining. Even more humiliating was when some people flipped the bird when seeing the returning service people. There was minimal support beyond loved ones making the heartache almost too hard to endure. They deserved a homecoming but mostly got rejected—there were no thank you for your service utterances. The movie is accurate.



1968



1970

Rating

R

Links

Amazon

Miss America 1958

Mr. Kovic biography

Bronze medal

Parade

End the war at church

Student Strike War