

## Blu-Ray Review: Commemorative Editions of ‘Gettysburg,’ ‘Gods and Generals’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 25, 2011 - 5:32pm

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CHICAGO – “Gettysburg” and “Gods and Generals” have legions of hardcore fans who adored them when they first played in theaters and will love the new Blu-ray editions that feel like hardcover books more than your standard disc release. One has to admire the marketing machine at Warner Bros. who can tie these titles in to the 150th Commemoration of the Civil War and make them perfect Father’s Day gifts at the same time.



“Gettysburg” and its prequel “Gods and Generals” barely made a dent at the box office (as epic period pieces rarely do) but I’ve always gotten the impression that they have very loyal audiences, the kind of old-fashioned men who would sit down and watch these two Blu-rays back-to-back and lose a whole day in their Civil War recreation.

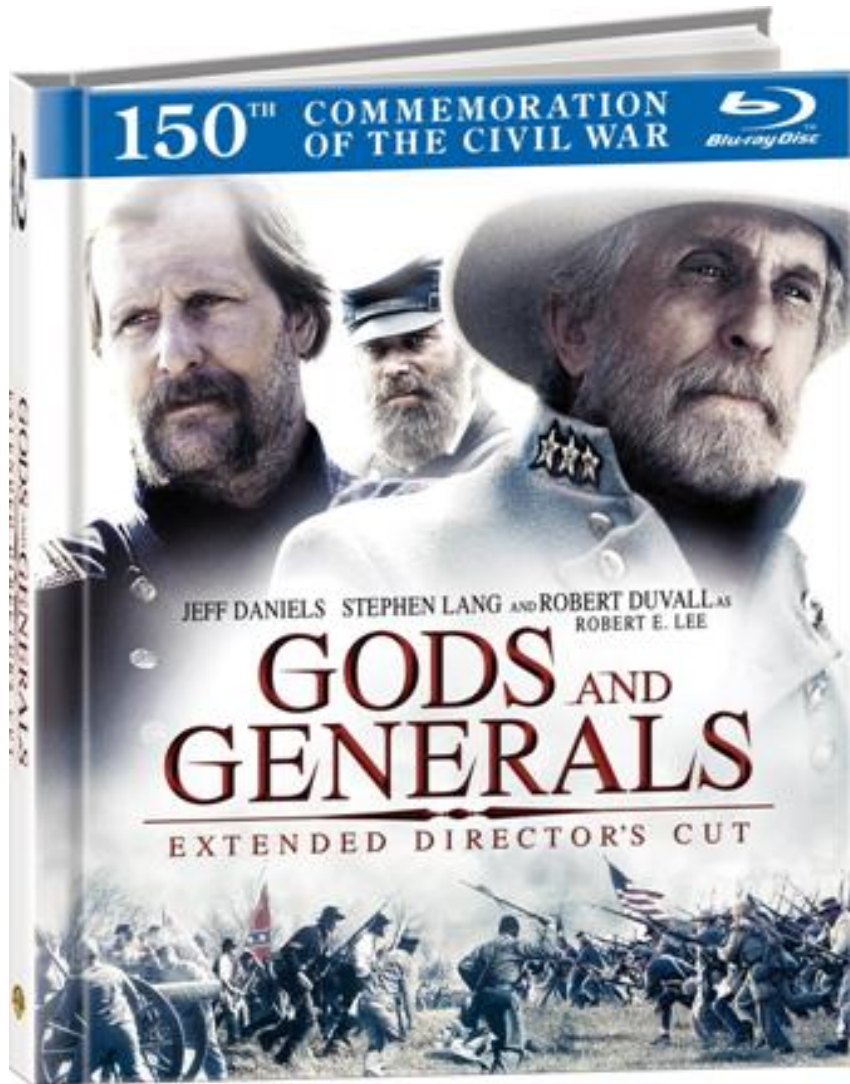
As for the rest of you, the films are good but not great. They both have very strong casts including legends like Robert DuVall and Martin Sheen along with underrated actors like Tom Berenger, Jeff Daniels, and Stephen Lang. And one has to admire the commitment inherent in both projects. These are epic films not just in length but in scope and effort as well.



Gettysburg and Gods and Generals were released on Blu-ray on May 24th, 2011  
*Photo credit: Warner Bros.*

1993’s “Gettysburg” had an interesting trajectory. It was originally conceived and pitched as a broadcast TV miniseries and it definitely feels like those classic epics that we saw on the tube in the ’70s and ’80s. Ted Turner took up the discarded project and really got behind it, loving it so much that he decided to release it theatrically. It got a limited release and couldn’t break \$11 million, but it subsequently aired on TNT and became nearly iconic on VHS and DVD, where it always sold well.





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*Photo credit: Warner Bros.*

In 2003, a prequel based on the novel "Gods and Generals" was released after Turner himself fronted the \$55 million-plus budget. It made a similar amount in theaters (closer to \$13 million this time) but also became iconic in homes around the country.

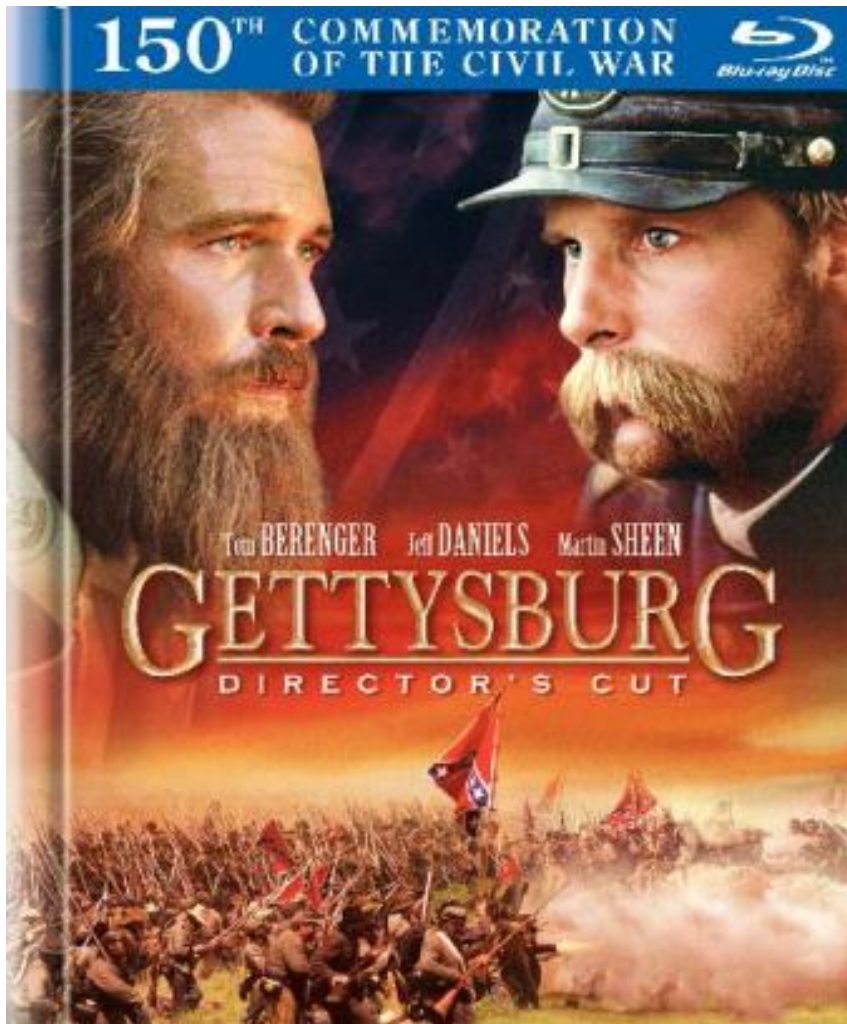
Now fans can own both films in lavish, thick packages that look more like novels than films. We say this a lot, but these really are great gifts for Father's Day if the patriarch in your clan likes period action/drama. They are very well-transferred (WB films almost always are) and loaded with supplemental material. They're not personal favorites, but I can step back and realize that they do work perfectly for fans of both films.

If you or a love one are one of the millions who turned these films into massive hits on the home market, I recommend the upgrade for their anniversary editions.

#### Synopsis:

Marking the 150th-anniversary commemoration of the Civil War, Ronald F. Maxwell's acclaimed film now arrives in a Director's Cut featuring 17 minutes of compelling additional footage. Filmed at actual battle locations and full of authentic details, this rousing and soulful movie plunges you into the heat of the bloodiest battle fought on American soil. History comes alive with intense and spirited battles as well as the dilemmas, motivations and fears of the leaders. Tom Berenger, Jeff Daniels, Martin Sheen and Stephen Lang star in this magnificent epic based on Michael Shaara's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Killer Angels*. Reedited from beginning to end with amplified scenes and an added subplot, this all-new 2-Disc Extended Director's Cut of Ronald F. Maxwell's *Gettysburg* prequel restores his original vision of the fierce allegiances and combat of the early American Civil War. From Jeffrey M. Shaara's bestseller, this commemorative release coinciding with the 150th anniversary of the North/South conflict incorporates an hour of footage never seen before. The story of actor and future Presidential assassin John Wilkes Booth (Chris Conner) is newly integrated throughout the narrative alongside the legendary heroism of Joshua Chamberlain (Jeff Daniels), "Stonewall" Jackson (Stephen Lang) and Robert E. Lee (Robert Duvall). And the battle of Antietam is now included along with the fateful clashes at Manassas, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville.





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Photo credit: Warner Bros.

“Gettysburg” Special Features:

- o Commentary by Ronald F. Maxwell, Kees Van Oostrum, James M. McPherson, and Craig Symonds
- o The Making of Gettysburg, Narrated by Martin Sheen
- o The Battle of Gettysburg, Narrated by Leslie Nielson
- o On Location
- o Maps of the Battlefield
- o Ron Maxwell’s Invitation to Take the Journey Through Hallowed Ground (NEW)

“Gods and Generals” Special Features:

- o Commentary with Ron Maxwell, Keith Gibson and Professor James Robertson
- o Extended Cut Commentary with Maxwell, Gibson and Robertson (NEW)
- o Introduction by Ted Turner and Ron Maxwell (NEW)
- o Gods & Generals: Journey to the Past
- o The Life of Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson
- o The Authenticities of the Film
- o Cross the Green Mountain - Music Video by Bob Dylan
- o Ron Maxwell’s Invitation to Take the Journey Through Hallowed Ground (NEW)

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By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [10]  
Content Director  
HollywoodChicago.com  
[brian@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com) [9]

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[9] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>  
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