

Elsevier Editorial System(tm) for The
Journal of Emergency Medicine

Manuscript Draft

Manuscript Number: JEM-D-18-00281R1

Title: Revisiting Desmond Doss (1919-2006): Merging Combat Medicine and
Benevolence on the Battlefield

Article Type: Medical Classics

Keywords: Combat Medicine; World War II; Desmond Doss; Conscientious
Objector

Corresponding Author: Dr. Basil H. Aboul-Enein, MSc., MPH., MA., EdD.,
FRSPH

Corresponding Author's Institution: London School of Hygiene & Tropical
Medicine

First Author: William C Puddy, MSc, MA

Order of Authors: William C Puddy, MSc, MA; Lisa A Blankinship, PhD;
Joshua Bernstein, PhD; Basil H. Aboul-Enein, MSc., MPH., MA., EdD., FRSPH

Detailed Response to Reviewers

Editors' comments:

Please note the suggestions of the reviewer, below. Could you briefly describe Mr. Doss's training as a combat medic.

Authors response: Revised. See lines 114-122.

Reviewer #2: The authors present a fascinating, well-written narrative on the career of Desmond Doss, a medic during World War II. He was the first non-combatant conscientious objector to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. His story is valuable, and this narrative is thought-inspiring. The discussion is rather brief, but perhaps long enough. I would have appreciated more effort to explain the timing of this submission - why this story of Doss now? Perhaps it is the link to the recent movie, "Hacksaw Ridge"? Perhaps this is a response to current policy or practice? Greater clarity on what inspired the author to submit this biography now, rather than just a vague discussion on preserving Constitutional rights, would be appreciated. What is new about that? Help the audience understand why your message is important now? I sense there is more to the story, and the audience will also be left wondering. Be careful to avoid overly focusing on the religious aspect of his life.

Authors response: Revised. See edits made in the introduction section. Lines 33-40.

That will marginalize some readers, which is not needed. Attempt to expand on the good start towards this universalization that you began in the discussion, regarding Constitutional rights. At present, this manuscript is enjoyable reading without a clear sense of urgency or immediacy. I agree with the bland comments about the Constitutional rights of all soldiers, but it is not clear to me why our readers need to receive this message this month, this year, or even this century. These are not new, timely, or controversial topics as they are described in this manuscript. Fix that, and you will have a great article.

Authors response: Revised. See lines 252-264.

Please remove figure legend from the figure file and enter it into the manuscript file after the references.

Authors response: Revised. Figure inserted after the references section.

September 20, 2018

Dear Editor:

Please find enclosed a copy of the revised manuscript titled "*Revisiting Desmond Doss (1919-2006): Merging Combat Medicine and Benevolence on the Battlefield*". This manuscript has not been published elsewhere and is not under review at another journal. There is no conflict of interest pertaining to this manuscript. The authors' responses to reviewer comments are indicated below. Thank you for the opportunity to revise this manuscript.

Sincerely,
Basil H. Aboul-Enein, MSc., MPH., MA., EdD., FRSPH
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Department of Global Health & Development
15-17 Tavistock Place
London
WC1H 9SH
United Kingdom
E-mail: Basil.Aboul-Enein@lshtm.ac.uk

Author responses

1.) Please note the suggestions of the reviewer, below. Could you briefly describe Mr. Doss's training as a combat medic.

Authors response: Revised. See lines 114-122.

2.) Reviewer #2: The authors present a fascinating, well-written narrative on the career of Desmond Doss, a medic during World War II. He was the first non-combatant conscientious objector to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. His story is valuable, and this narrative is thought-inspiring. The discussion is rather brief, but perhaps long enough. I would have appreciated more effort to explain the timing of this submission - why this story of Doss now? Perhaps it is the link to the recent movie, "Hacksaw Ridge"? Perhaps this is a response to current policy or practice? Greater clarity on what inspired the author to submit this biography now, rather than just a vague discussion on preserving Constitutional rights, would be appreciated. What is new about that? Help the audience understand why your message is important now? I sense there is more to the story, and the audience will also be left wondering. Be careful to avoid overly focusing on the religious aspect of his life.

Authors response: Revised. See edits made in the introduction section. Lines 33-40.

3.) That will marginalize some readers, which is not needed. Attempt to expand on the good start towards this universalization that you began in the discussion, regarding Constitutional

rights. At present, this manuscript is enjoyable reading without a clear sense of urgency or immediacy. I agree with the bland comments about the Constitutional rights of all soldiers, but it is not clear to me why our readers need to receive this message this month, this year, or even this century. These are not new, timely, or controversial topics as they are described in this manuscript. Fix that, and you will have a great article.

Authors response: Revised. See lines 252-264.

4.) Please remove figure legend from the figure file and enter it into the manuscript file after the references.

Authors response: Revised. Figure inserted after the references section.

Revisiting Desmond Doss (1919-2006): Merging Combat Medicine and Benevolence on the Battlefield

Authorship and Affiliation

William C. Puddy ^a; Lisa A. Blankinship ^b; Joshua Bernstein ^c; Basil H. Aboul-Enein ^d

^a United States Army, Col (RET)
Frostburg, MD, USA
Email: bill.puddy@hotmail.com

^b University of North Alabama
Department of Biology
1 Harrison Plaza
Florence, AL, USA
Email: lblankinship@una.edu

^c A.T. Still University of Health Sciences
College of Graduate Health Studies
800 W. Jefferson St.
Kirksville, MO, USA
E-Mail: jbernstein@atsu.edu

^d London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Department of Global Health & Development
15-17 Tavistock Place
London
WC1H 9SH
United Kingdom
Email: Basil.Aboul-Enein@lshtm.ac.uk

Address correspondence and reprint requests to:

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Department of Global Health & Development
15-17 Tavistock Place
London
WC1H 9SH
United Kingdom
Email: Basil.Aboul-Enein@lshtm.ac.uk

1 **Revisiting Desmond Doss (1919-2006): Merging Combat Medicine and Benevolence on the**
2 **Battlefield**

3
4 **Introduction**

5
6 Conscientious objectors to war have been part of the fabric of American Society since its
7 foundation. Men who refused military service or served yet refused to take a life based on
8 religious or ethical reasons have often been stigmatized by society, imprisoned, or were forced
9 into civilian or military service (1-5). Beginning with World War II, new military programs such
10 as the American Medical Cadet Corps offered training to young men who came from religious
11 backgrounds that forbade them from taking up arms. With these changes in place, young men
12 could now actively contribute to wartime efforts without having to handle weapons or kill others
13 thus the young men became “conscientious cooperators” rather than “conscientious objectors”
14 (6-8). Corporal Desmond Doss (see Figure 1) was the first conscientious cooperator to receive
15 the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery in practicing his faith and risking his life time
16 and again to save wounded soldiers during his service as a medic for the 307th Infantry Regiment
17 (9-11).

18 Corporal Desmond Doss, United States Army Medical Corps during World War II, was
19 an anomaly and in the view of many today an anachronism. The anomaly is twofold: Doss was a
20 man of deep religious conviction who refused to consider harming another human being due to
21 the commandment not to kill (Exodus 20: 13) yet was willing to endure combat to save lives.
22 Doss’s foundation was his religion and had a desire to serve others. Desmond Doss’ ability to
23 think through these differences and develop a consistent worldview that allowed him to live
24 honorably in both halves of that anomaly is most remarkable and admirable. Certainly, the
25 Seventh Day Adventist Church, of which he was a lifelong member, considers him a hero of the
26 faith. The United States Army and all the soldiers Doss saved on the battlefield knew he was a

27 hero. All Americans ought to consider his heroism: A citizen soldier who put aside civilian
28 comforts to serve his fellow man, his comrades, and the nation in time of war. A major motion
29 picture such as *Hacksaw Ridge* and the requisite book can sometimes light a fire of interest in
30 American heroes. Doss was and remains a hero in a long and proud line of American heroes, a
31 personage worthy of esteem and emulation. This paper offers a concise narrative review of Doss’
32 life including his personal and spiritual development, his service during World War II, and his
33 legacy as a conscientious objector and combat medic. **This paper necessarily follows *Hacksaw***
34 ***Ridge* to provide a thorough and in-depth look into Doss, his military career, the values that lead**
35 **to his character development before and during the war, and the legacy that endured. Medical**
36 **professionals could benefit from the cultural and spiritual reflections and the compassion that can**
37 **result from understanding aspects of medical humanities. These virtues are not often overtly**
38 **present in medical provider curricula, training, and practice yet do surface in works of fiction and**
39 **non-fiction. This paper represents a brief attempt to fill these gaps by presenting Desmond Doss**
40 **and his story in this professional journal.**

41

42 **Desmond Doss – His Early Life**

43 Desmond Doss was born February 7, 1919, in rural Lynchburg, Virginia. He was the
44 second son of William Thomas Doss and Bertha Edward Oliver Doss. Theirs was a simple
45 working-class family – his father a carpenter and his mother a shoemaker. The single most
46 important factor influencing Doss during his formative years was upbringing as a strict Seventh
47 Day Adventist (10). His parents immersed him in a devout faith-based environment, emphasizing
48 honest and selfless living, which became the focus of his altruistic worldview. Doss grew up
49 wanting to be either a doctor or a missionary. Academically this did not work out for him as he

50 only completed one year of high school before getting a job as a ship joiner in Newport News,
51 Virginia (12).

52 As a young boy Doss developed a deep reverence for the Ten Commandants but most
53 especially the Sixth Commandment: “Thou shall not kill.” Stories conflict as to whether the
54 lithograph poster, vividly depicting an angry Cain standing over his slain brother Abel, was in
55 the family home or a gift from his father hanging in Doss’s room. Either way, that image made a
56 profound impression on Doss and he swore that he would never, under any circumstances, take
57 another man’s life (3). This was a vow that Doss would keep despite ridicule, harassment,
58 conflict, and extreme danger to himself. Growing up surrounded by like-minded people, Doss
59 was free to practice his religion, be active in his church community, and ultimately become a
60 deacon at age 21 (10).

61 Eventually, war came to America and Doss found himself in a job that was vital to the
62 defense of the nation and critical to America’s efforts to exact revenge upon Japan: Ship
63 building. He easily could have avoided military service through deferment because of his trade
64 but that was not consistent with Doss’s values. Doss was a patriot who wanted to serve his
65 country and not shirk his duty. However, he wanted to serve his country and his fellow man in a
66 way consistent with his religious beliefs. He desired to serve as a non-combatant in the medical
67 field, helping to preserve life and ease suffering caused by the war. When Doss became a ship
68 joiner in 1941 he was required to register for the draft and despite some misgivings, he chose to
69 file as a conscientious objector, called 1 AO status by the Army. Telzrow (10) explains Doss’
70 concern that such a label placed him in the company of men he believed were shirkers,
71 seditionists, and unpatriotic. In the end he registered anyway, preferring to call himself a
72 “conscientious cooperator,” and specifically requested duty in the medical corps. This he

73 eventually received but it would take much pain, hard work, and convincing others of his worth
74 before Doss could do what he felt called to do in service of his country. In 1942 he was called up
75 and shipped off for initial training but not before marrying Dorothy Pauline Schutte, who would
76 follow him around the country during training before he finally shipped overseas (13).

77

78 **Military Training**

79 From almost his first day in the Army Desmond Doss was misunderstood, ridiculed,
80 harassed, intimidated, and almost thrown out of the service because of his religious beliefs and
81 practices. The social upheaval in America caused by World War II was profound. Citizens from
82 all parts of the country and extremely varied backgrounds were thrown together and forged
83 through a crucible of hard training and discipline to mold them into fighting units. Doss stood
84 out against his secular fellow soldiers who did not understand his strict religious convictions
85 against drinking, smoking, gambling, swearing, or fornicating. They did not partake in his habits
86 of regular Bible reading and church attendance. In fact, most of these things made the other
87 soldiers ridicule him and label him as *soft*. Doss's repeated requests for passes to attend church
88 on Saturday, the Sabbath observed by the Seventh Day Adventist Church, caused much friction
89 among his platoon mates as well as his chain of command. In the Army, other soldiers trained
90 and received guard duty on Saturday and they were not pleased to see Doss get a pass. These
91 soldiers did not know Doss had convinced his leaders that he would gladly work or pull guard
92 duty on Sunday, when the other soldiers were away on pass, and only knew they did not see him
93 working on Saturday. Further, his commanders were frustrated with having to deal with this
94 issue every weekend and were very resentful whenever Doss went "over their heads" to higher
95 commanders to get a pass when they refused to grant one. Added to this, Doss refused to train

96 with weapons or even touch a firearm. Doss would receive various work details around the rifle
97 range but never touch a weapon. This further separated him from his fellow soldiers and
98 aggravated his standing with his superiors (13, 14).

99 Eventually Doss was brought before a board of officers to consider discharging him from
100 service on psychological reasons, essentially because he did not “fit in”. It is interesting to note
101 that even Doss knew the questionable character and poor service performance of other
102 conscientious objectors which worked against him, yet Doss eschewed such behavior. He had
103 been a model soldier in all respects save for not touching a weapon. He was a hard worker,
104 learned his medical trade, was alert in class, offered assistance to others, and kept his personal
105 appearance, area, and equipment in fine shape. He willingly requested extra duty on Sundays and
106 obeyed orders. In his own defense Doss fought against separation and convinced the commander
107 to admit that his overall performance was exemplary. In the end Doss argued the only apparent
108 reason he was being separated was his religious beliefs that were guaranteed by the same
109 Constitution that he swore an oath to defend that made the difference. Taking those two points
110 into consideration plus Doss’ determination to succeed against opposition and willingness to
111 serve in combat, the military board relented and dropped all charges. Still, the medical officers
112 had seen enough of Doss and had him transferred to the 307th Infantry Regiment of the 77th
113 Infantry Division where he served the remainder of his service time as a medic (12-14).

114 His medical training can be best described as advanced first aid as it applies to the
115 battlefield. He received this training as part of the medical detachment of the 77th Infantry
116 Division, at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Each medic was issued two canvas first aid bags and
117 learned how to use the contents of each bag. Topics include battlefield dressings, sulfanilamide
118 powder, and morphine syrettes. Other training included making field expedient splints (using

119 rifle stocks and branches), administering plasma, and knowing when to allow patients to drink
120 water. While compared to modern military medical training, what Doss received seems
121 rudimentary, he did make expedient use of everything he learned during his brief medical
122 training on the battlefield (13, 14).

123 Upon arriving to the new unit, one of three medics so assigned, Desmond Doss soon
124 made his mark and gained the lasting admiration of the infantrymen. Right after arrival, his unit
125 went on a 25-mile forced march – 25 miles in 8 hours with full gear – an exhausting exercise for
126 any experienced infantryman. Doss also carried his medical bag knowing it would be needed.
127 During the entire march Doss was busy caring for the feet of his soldiers (as he considered these
128 men to be). During halts or whenever a soldier fell out of the formation, Doss was there
129 checking, lancing, bandaging, and pushing them to catch up. Doss completed the march with the
130 unit and without any physical problems of his own and that night rechecked his platoon's
131 condition (13, 14). This deep abiding concern for his fellow soldiers and selfless service helped
132 his platoon mates see Doss in a new light and accept him as one of their own.

133

134 **Military Service and Combat**

135 The 307th Infantry Regiments' accomplishments and the horrors of war they experienced
136 across many Pacific island battlefields are truly astounding. Woven into that record are the many,
137 almost unbelievably heroic actions of Desmond Doss. In the 2016 movie *Hacksaw Ridge* the
138 emphasis was on the fight for the Maeda Escarpment on Okinawa but the foundations for Doss'
139 actions there were laid long before. First, Doss often volunteered to stand watch and to go on
140 dangerous patrols while himself unarmed. Here Doss disregarded the edict to observe the
141 Sabbath only by church attendance, convinced that since Jesus healed on the Sabbath, that he

142 could do the same for his men (10). But still he would not touch a weapon or take a life. In one
143 instance at an outpost near a spider hole Doss heard Japanese soldiers tunneling beneath. Doss
144 had hand grenades nearby but could not bring himself to use them. Attempting unsuccessfully to
145 wake a fellow soldier, Doss chose to wait until the voices passed by. No one can know for sure
146 what would have happened if the enemy attacked out of that hole.

147 Eventually Doss experienced serious combat. His unit fought to regain Guam from 21
148 July to 10 August 1944. He went forward with various units in the intense heat and repeatedly
149 removed wounded soldiers from the battlefield, often while under fire. At Leyte in December of
150 that year Doss crossed an open field under intense fire to retrieve two wounded soldiers. One
151 was dead, so Doss evacuated the remaining wounded man, constructing a stretcher out of
152 bamboo. Doss later received the Bronze star medal with oak leaf cluster in acknowledgement of
153 these two actions. Years later Doss would say, “I knew these men; they were my buddies, some
154 had wives and children. If they were hurt, I wanted to be there to take care of them” (10 p.36).
155 This attitude and the decisive actions that accompanied them earned Doss the admiration and
156 eternal gratitude of his fellow soldiers. Every infantryman learns to love and protect his platoon
157 medic because they know he will risk everything to save lives; an illustration of medical
158 mutualistic care.

159 In late April 1945 the 307th landed on Okinawa to participate in the last major
160 amphibious operation of the war and certainly one of the costliest. On 29 April, they fought their
161 way to the top of Maeda Escarpment, a steep 400-yard-high hill only 75-100 yards wide at the
162 top and sloping sharply down the backside. The last 35 yards on the front slope was a sheer cliff
163 with a five-yard overhang. On the night of 30 April, on the order of his platoon leader, Doss and
164 several other men rigged from the hilltop a cargo net, such as those used to climb on and off

165 ships, to allow the soldiers to climb straight up (15). The Japanese were dug into the mountain on
166 the reverse slope and fought hard to retain it, just as they had done throughout the war. From the
167 1st until the 4th of May the 307th repeatedly climbed the escarpment to capture the entire
168 mountain and Desmond Doss was a busy man throughout this battle. On the 2nd he exposed
169 himself to heavy rifle and mortar fire to rescue a soldier laying 200 yards in front of friendly
170 lines. On the 4th he crawled perilously close to an enemy fighting position and, disregarding hand
171 grenades thrown at him, treated and recovered four wounded men, one at a time in separate trips
172 (16). Later that day came the event that defined Doss' valor on the battlefield and earned him the
173 Congressional Medal of Honor. Men of the 1st battalion attacked and destroyed an enemy bunker
174 complex, but a furious Japanese barrage and counterattack drove this unit back over the
175 escarpment with heavy losses. For the next five hours, Doss remained forward of the lines to
176 locate, care for, and individually evacuate 75 wounded Americans. Using available ropes and a
177 litter technique that he had devised back in training, Doss fashioned a sling that secured each
178 man's legs through loops and doubled around the chest. This worked perfectly and ensured that
179 lowering the wounded over the jagged cliff would not result in any additional injuries (10).
180 Throughout this ordeal Doss repeatedly exposed himself to heavy enemy fire and sometimes hid
181 himself from Japanese soldiers sent to kill the wounded. The next day, Doss braved enemy
182 artillery fire to aid an American artillery officer who had been wounded; and even later crawled
183 to within 25 yards of an enemy cave to treat and recover a wounded soldier, pulling him back
184 100 yards to safety despite continuous enemy fire (16).

185 The magnitude of Doss' accomplishments during this five-day period is staggering from
186 a military point of view and incomprehensible to those who have never seen combat. Doss was
187 not finished until two weeks later when luck finally ran out for one who had taken so many risks.

188 On the 21st of May he was seriously wounded in the legs and left by his comrades in enemy
189 territory during an attack near the town of Shuri. Rather than risk being misidentified as a
190 Japanese infiltrator if he attempted withdrawal, and not wanting to risk another medic's life to
191 rescue him, Doss treated his own wounds and waited. About five hours later a litter team came to
192 evacuate him, however, upon seeing another soldier wounded more seriously Doss got off the
193 litter and told the other medics to treat that man instead. Again, awaiting evacuation, Doss was
194 wounded in the arm by a sniper. Fashioning the broken stock of a rifle into a splint, Doss then
195 crawled 300 yards to an aid station (16). He later recalled that that was the first and only time he
196 had ever touched a rifle. World War II had finally come to an end for Desmond Doss and he was
197 flown back to the United States for medical treatment. This would not be the end of Doss'
198 medical problems as his wounds were serious enough to prevent him from regular employment.
199 In addition to his wounds he had contracted tuberculosis and would spend the next five years
200 recuperating under a doctor's care (17).

201

202 **Desmond Doss – The Post War and His Legacy**

203 Desmond Doss became the first non-combatant conscientious objector to receive the
204 Congressional Medal of Honor in a White House ceremony on October 12, 1945. President
205 Harry Truman took special note of this young man who upheld his personal religious beliefs
206 while living up to his patriotic values in service to his country and fellow man. As Senator Max
207 Cleland recalls, in addition to Doss' Congressional medal of honor, he also received two Bronze
208 Star medals, 3 Purple Hearts, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign ribbon with 3 stars and one
209 beachhead arrow head (for landing ashore under fire), and the Presidential Unit Citation (as a
210 member of the 1/307 Inf (77ID) during the battle for Maeda Escarpment) (15). By any standard

211 that is a significant collection even without the Congressional Medal of Honor. Statistically, 6%
212 of all valor awards in the Army and the Navy went to medical department personnel. Nine of the
213 Congressional Medals of Honor awarded during the World War II went to medics and corpsmen
214 (18). Not mentioned in Krieghbaum's book was Dr. Benjamin Lewis Salomon (1914-1944), an
215 Army dentist who posthumously received the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2002 for his
216 actions in Saipan in 1944. Salomon was not a conscientious objector and he did not hesitate to
217 take up arms and die covering the evacuation of his patients, allowing all to escape safely from a
218 forward aid station. His contributions makes ten Congressional Medals of Honor awarded to
219 medical personnel in World War II.

220 Desmond Doss continued to serve his fellow man and to practice his faith until March 23,
221 2006, the day he died. He served in his church and organized a youth group to develop young
222 boys into men of character. Whenever he would display his military medals he would say that he
223 had received from his service something far more important than a medal. He would tell them
224 that when your fellow soldier says they owe their life to you, what better reward is there (17).
225 Boys from the youth organization Doss founded walked in his funeral procession wearing their
226 uniforms. Many others have been inspired by the life of Desmond Doss. He is repeatedly held up
227 by the Seventh Day Adventist Church as a hero to the church as well as to America (19). Three
228 years before the 2016 release of the movie *Hacksaw Ridge*, the Desmond Doss Council
229 undertook a project to update and republish his original authoritative biography. Among the
230 editors was Kareis Darling Wagner who energetically came out of retirement to work on this
231 project. The result became the foundation for the highly successful movie for all to see and an in-
232 print book for a new generation of admirers to read, continuing the legacy of Desmond Doss (14,
233 19).

234

235 **Conclusions**

236 The history of the combat medic dates back over 2000 years to Roman's use of the
237 *Capsarii*, or bandagers, who experienced war alongside their armed countrymen (20). The story
238 of Desmond Doss is inspiring, uplifting, entertaining, and endures as a living history of courage
239 and faith. We are reminded that heroes are not born, they are made through hard work, sacrifice,
240 and adversity. Many perceive adversity as physical or mental or emotional and while Doss
241 experienced all of these before and during the war, his most and least difficult obstacles were
242 spiritual. Doss's story contains lessons for everyone across all walks of life. The military can see
243 the result of acceptance and understanding, the medical profession should honor bravery and
244 courage, and the citizen must recognize that extraordinary heroism can be found in the most
245 unlikely places. Doss's experiences, and the stories told about him by those he served, and most
246 importantly the experiences lived by those he saved on the battlefield, should be remembered,
247 revered, taught, and shared as an example of how principles of faith and duty can and should co-
248 exist.

249 Marginalization of the individual based on constitutionally protected choices, such as
250 conscientious objectors, can and should be discussed at the policy level within our armed forces.
251 The story of Desmond Doss is just one example of why regular re-evaluation of military
252 screening processes, enlistment procedures, and field training require periodic re-evaluation. **The**
253 **criteria for enlistment in the military often includes vague and potentially exclusionary language**
254 **such as *unfitness, unsuitability, and misconduct*. One potential avenue to address these**
255 **ambiguously defined clauses would be a renewed focus on merit and a reduced focus on**
256 **potentially unconstitutional disqualifiers similar to the rationale used with Doss.** What was once

257 stigmatized and marginalized as cowardice should serve as a model for institutionalized
258 misunderstanding built into our code of conduct. While the current literature supports broad use
259 of and support for the profession of combat medic (21, 22), the person who aspires to become
260 that medic can still face unwritten obstacles **and disqualifiers** similar to Desmond Doss. Should
261 constitutionally-protected choices such as religious affiliation, gender identity, sexual
262 orientation, or pacifism adversely affect a person's desire and passion to serve their country?
263 **Should disqualifying language in our military enlistment code overshadow or supplant**
264 **meritorious inclusion?** These are questions Doss might ask us to consider if he were asked today.

265 Governing bodies for medical fields and each branch of the military must recognize the
266 ethical precedent set by Desmond Doss before and during his World War II campaign. His
267 principled opposition to violence, previously considered an act of self-preservation, cowardice, or
268 attempted desertion, has and must continue to be a standard and a baseline for current and future
269 generations of American's willing to serve in the military. A person's faith should not be used as
270 a predictor of their character, their courage, their sense of honor and duty, or their value. Doss
271 was initially judged as a man using only his spiritual convictions and had to fight to remain in
272 service to a military and a country that sought to remove him.

273

274

275

276

277 **References**

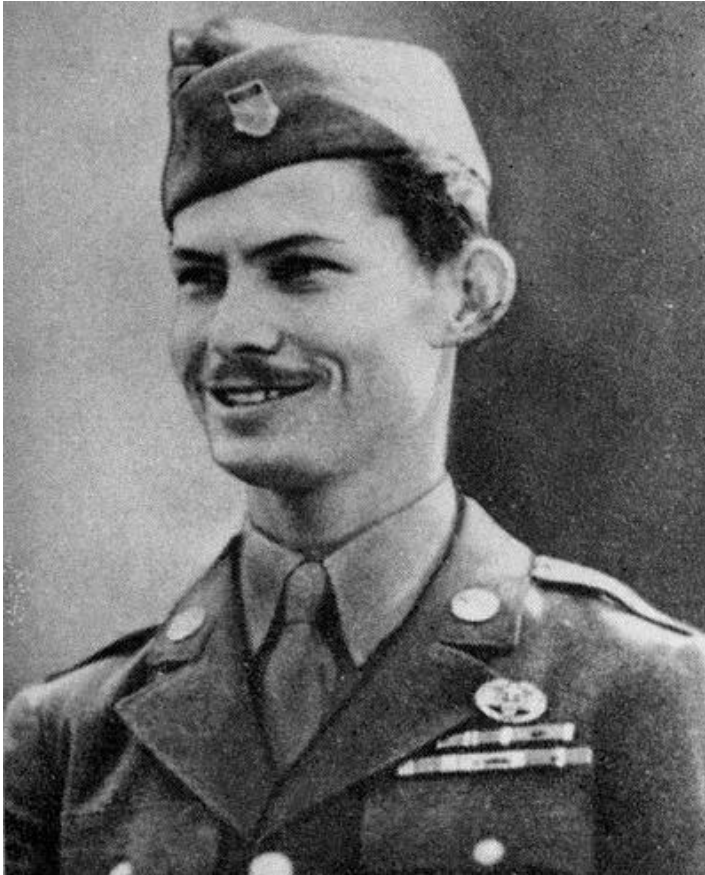
- 278 [1] Hirsch CB. Conscientious objectors in Indiana during world war II. *Indiana Law J.*
279 1950;46:61-72.
- 280 [2] Sciarrino AJ, Deutsch KL. Conscientious objection to war: Heroes to human shields. *BYU J*
281 *Pub L.* 2003;18:59-106.
- 282 [3] Wester FE. The extinction of conscientious objectors in the armed forces? *J Mil Ethics.*
283 2015;14:107-12.
- 284 [4] Brock P. 'Excellent in battle': British conscientious objectors as medical paratroopers, 1943–
285 1946. *War Soc.* 2004;22:41-57.
- 286 [5] Sibley MQ, Jacob PE. *Conscription of conscience: The American state and the conscientious*
287 *objector, 1940-1947.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; 1952.
- 288 [6] Lawson R. Onward Christian soldiers? Seventh-Day Adventists and the issue of military
289 service. *Rev Religious Res.* 1996;37:193-218.
- 290 [7] Lawson R. Church and state at home and abroad: The evolution of Seventh-Day Adventist
291 relations with governments. *J Am Acad Religion.* 1996;64:279-311.
- 292 [8] Randol S. The conscientious objectors in Iraq: Placing them in an historical context. *Nebula.*
293 2009;6:51-65.
- 294 [9] Cheng R, Abbey KR. Conscientious objection. In: Jericho BG, editor. *Ethical issues in*
295 *anesthesiology and surgery.* Cham: Springer International Publishing; 2015. p. 93-104.
- 296 [10] Telzrow ME. Desmond Doss: His only weapon was his conscience. *New Am.* 2016;32:34-
297 8.
- 298 [11] Arment JF. *The Elements of peace: How nonviolence works.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland &
299 *Company;* 2012.
- 300 [12] Leepson M. Wonder Man of Okinawa. *Mil Hist.* 2008;25:21.
- 301 [13] Herndon B. *The unlikeliest hero: The story of Desmond T. Doss conscientious objector who*
302 *won his nation's highest military honor.* Boise, ID: Pacific Press; 1967.
- 303 [14] Herndon B. *Redemption at hacksaw ridge.* Coldwater, MI: Remnants Publications; 2016.
- 304 [15] Littleton MR, Wright C. *Doc: Heroic stories of medics, corpsmen, and surgeons in combat.*
305 *St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press;* 2005.
- 306 [16] Anonymous. Above the beyond: the war hero who wouldn't carry a gun. *Parabola.*
307 2016;41:86.
- 308 [17] Collier P. *Choosing courage: Inspiring true stories of what it means to be a hero.* New York,
309 *NY: Artisan;* 2015.
- 310 [18] Kriegbaum H. Medical heroes. *Sci News Lett.* 1946;49:74-6.
- 311 [19] Knott E. *The "Hero" motif within the Adventist narrative.* Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews
312 *University;* 2013.
- 313 [20] Griffin K. The evolution and roles changes of the Australian military medic: A review of the
314 literature. *J Mil Veterans Health.* 2014;22:50-4.
- 315 [21] Schauer SG, Mabry R, Varney SM, Howard JT. Emergency department patients support the
316 use of combat medics in their clinical care. *J Spec Oper Med.* 2015;15:74-8.
- 317 [22] Eldred MS. Lessons learned: Employment and tactical use of the combat medic during
318 stability support operations. *US Army Med Dep J.* 2016:195-8.
- 319

321

322

323

Figure 1. United States Army Combat Medic - Desmond Doss (1945)



324

325

Source: U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History

326