

EXAMPLE LONG NONFICTION STORY BASED ON RESEARCH

Prompt: Write a biographic story about a real person who became an unlikely hero. Show the challenges that this person faced and how those challenges were resolved. Make sure that the story contains at least eight paragraphs and all the elements of a story. Provide at least three references in a reference list and in-text citations where needed. Use the APA style.

TITLE OF THE STORY: A Soldier with No Weapons

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A Soldier with No Weapons

Desmond T. Doss earned the Medal of Honor, one of the most prestigious awards for a soldier in the United States, without firing a single bullet. How did he do that? Well, his story involves several twists and turns. To begin, he was born in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1919 (“Desmond Doss,” 2018). His father was a carpenter, and his mother worked in a shoe factory. He had a sister and a brother. Importantly, the children were raised as a Seventh-day Adventists. As a Seventh-day Adventist, Desmond held several strong beliefs. One belief was that the seventh day of the week, Saturday, is special. People should not work on that day. He also believed in nonviolence. He thought that people should not fight, harm others, or use weapons in any way. Additionally, he was a vegetarian. He believed that people should not kill animals or eat them.

With regard to schooling, Desmond went to school through the eighth grade. However, his schooling was interrupted because of the Depression. During the Depression, people lost their jobs, wages were cut in half, and people had no money. Desmond was strong, so he was able get a job to earn money for his family instead of attending ninth grade. He worked for a lumber company, and he worked in a shipyard. Then his schooling was permanently interrupted by the beginning of World War II. When Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese, his friends and his brother volunteered to serve in the armed forces.

As a result, Desmond had a dilemma. As a worker in a shipyard, he would be able to stay home and build ships for the war. However, he wanted to join his friends and his brother in serving his country and fighting for freedom. He wanted the U.S. to win the war, and he wanted to help win the war. Nevertheless, he also believed firmly in nonviolence. He

knew that soldiers had to carry guns and shoot the enemy. He did not want to shoot other people, even if they were the enemy. After thinking a while, he came up with an idea: he would become a medic in the Army so that he could help wounded soldiers. To put his plan in motion, he went to the Army recruiting office and told the officers his idea. The recruitment officers told him that he could become a medic and that he would not have to use a weapon. Basically, the recruiters needed men for the Army, so they did not tell him the truth. He did not learn the truth that he would have to use a weapon until after he enlisted and went to boot camp.

At boot camp, Desmond and the other recruits were trained to be soldiers. When the time came for weapons training, Desmond refused to handle a gun. He did not want to learn about cleaning guns, loading ammunition, and shooting them. He told his sergeant the promises the recruiting officers had made to him. The sergeant told Desmond that the recruiters had lied to him and explained that no men would want him in their unit if Desmond were not willing to save their lives by killing the enemy. His sergeant became angry with him and insisted that Desmond take part in the weapons training activities. Desmond refused. Then the sergeant punished all the soldiers in his training group for Desmond's refusal. They all had to run extra miles and do extra chores. Still Desmond refused to do the weapons training. One night, the other soldiers in Desmond's training group attacked him and beat him up. They hoped that he would drop out of boot camp. Despite his injuries, Desmond stayed in boot camp and did not identify his attackers. He worked hard and did everything correctly except participating in weapons training and taking the weapons tests. He also refused to train on Saturdays. He asked for a weekly pass so that he could go to church on Saturdays. His commanding officers continued to punish

him, and his fellow trainees continued to bully and harass him. Still, he continued to train, and he continued to refuse weapons training.

When Desmond's unit finished basic training, the men were allowed to go on leave. However, Desmond was arrested and charged with "insubordination," or not following the commands of his commanding officer. At this point, he faced two options. He was told that if he pled "guilty," he would be released from the Army and would not have to serve a sentence in jail. He was also told that if he pled "not guilty," and was found guilty, he would have to spend many years in jail. Desmond did not want to spend many years in jail. He also did not want to plead "guilty" for following his religious beliefs. Finally, faced with this no-win situation, Desmond made the decision to plead "not guilty" and face the judge in a military trial. Fortunately, when he faced the judge and told his story, the judge dropped the charges and sent Desmond to medic training.

Not surprisingly, Desmond was very pleased to fulfill his dream of becoming a medic so that he could serve his country. He passed all of his requirements as a medic with flying colors. After completing his training program, he was sent back to his original unit to join the officers and soldiers who treated him so badly. At first, they were not happy that he had joined them in the Pacific region. He continued to refuse to carry a weapon or kill an enemy soldier as they went into battle. Nevertheless, as Desmond participated in several battles, including the Battle of Guam and the Battle of Leyte, he began to earn their respect. In fact, he earned the Bronze Star Medal for extraordinary bravery in both battles by saving the lives of many men.

However, the battle that won Desmond the Medal of Honor was the Battle of Okinawa, often known as the "Battle of Hacksaw Ridge." Hacksaw Ridge was the name of a

very steep 400-foot cliff that U.S. soldiers had to climb to meet the enemy in battle.

Desmond and his fellow soldiers first scaled the cliff on April 29, 1945 (Miller, 2016). They were immediately met by the enemy and were driven back. Most of the men retreated down the cliff, but Desmond knew that many men were wounded and unable to climb down the ridge, so he stayed at the top to help the them. Over the next few weeks, he continued to treat the wounded, carry them one-by-one to cliff edge, and lower them down using ropes. He even saved the life of his original commanding officer who had once said that he did not want to go into battle with Desmond. Each time he saved another soldier, he prayed to God to help him save one more. The stories told by the men who he saved described Desmond as a selfless and courageous hero who put their health and safety before his own. In fact, when he was wounded himself, he told his fellow soldiers how to help others. He instructed them to lower others down the cliff before they lowered him out of danger.

Fortunately, Desmond was basically able to recover from his wounds. He had wounds on his legs from a grenade and a broken arm, but they mostly healed. Unfortunately, while serving in the Army in the Philippines, he caught tuberculosis, a serious life-threatening disease. He lost one lung and five ribs during treatment of the disease. He also lost his hearing after he received an overdose of antibiotics. Happily, though, a cochlear implant restored his hearing. Although he could not work as a carpenter because his arm was not perfect, he was healthy enough to raise a family on a farm in Georgia and to live a long life until he died at age 87 ("Desmond Doss," 2018). To conclude, Desmond Doss is the perfect example of a person who was unfairly judged by others before

they knew him. When they saw his extraordinary courage under fire, they started to respect him and to demand that he would be with them as they began the next battle.

References

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