

Dear Friends,

My name is Mark Beisner, and I recently turned 18. Like most men my age in the United States, I registered with the Selective Service, as required by law. However, I am opposed to war in all forms, and I believe that it is never right to take the life of another human being. I believe that all wars are fundamentally caused by human greed and hatred, and I refuse to be used as a pawn of the United States government to further an immoral conquest of innocent lands and people.

In the television show M*A*S*H, Hawkeye Pierce states his beliefs on war: "War isn't Hell. War is war, and Hell is Hell. And of the two, war is a lot worse." When asked for his reasoning behind that statement, Hawkeye responds: "There are no innocent bystanders in Hell. War is chock full of them - little kids, cripples, old ladies. In fact, except for some of the brass, almost everybody involved is an innocent bystander." This quote perfectly encapsulates my beliefs about war. War is wrong because innocent people are hurt and killed, and for the most part, only innocent people are hurt and killed. The brass are safe in their command bunkers, while they send innocent young men out to kill other innocent young men, and "little kids, cripples, and old ladies" die in the process.

Wars simply perpetuate the cycle of violence and do not make things better for anyone. More people are still being added to the World War I casualty figures every year, 100 years later, because of the unexploded ordinance and toxic chemicals that still litter its battlefields. WWI led directly to World War II, which some use as an example of a "just war". However, ending the Holocaust was merely an afterthought as far as the causes of World War II are concerned. While America tries to claim the moral high ground, in 1939 we forced the SS St. Louis, a ship full of Jewish refugees, to return to Europe into the waiting arms of the Nazis. Another example of our failure is that whenever we criticized the Soviet Union on human rights abuses, they responded with "And you are lynching Negroes". The only reason we could claim the moral high ground during World War II was because our enemies committed the most brutal crimes against humanity in history.

I love and support the United States, my country, and its citizens. However, I could never serve in a combat role in any military organization. A non-combatant humanitarian role would be the only way I could serve in good conscience. Because of these beliefs, I consider myself a Conscientious Objector.

Sincerely,

Mark Beisner

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