

# CHALLENGES OF TODAY'S SOCIETY

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## WISH FOR PEACE FROM “HACKSAW RIDGE”

### Story of Hacksaw Ridge

We will present what we learned from the movie Hacksaw Ridge. We have two main topics. The first is the story of the movie, Hacksaw Ridge. What is Hacksaw Ridge? And who is Doss Desmond? And why is Doss the main character in this movie? In second part, we will talk about what we interpreted from the movie. From our perspective, telling history to the next generation and the world and learning from it presents us with the chance to learn from the past.

The movie, Hacksaw Ridge, is about the Pacific War where Japan fought against the US and allied countries seventy years ago. Doss Desmond was born in 1919 in Lynchburg, Virginia and died in 2006. He was 87 years old. His family are devoted Christians and he attended the Church School until 7th grade.

As portrayed in the movie, Doss is a Seventh-day Adventist who wouldn't touch a weapon or work on the Sabbath. His lifestyle was based on the observance of the Sabbath, non-violence, and vegetarianism. He served as a combat medic with an infantry company in WWII. His parents raised him and his brother in a pious setting and told them to shun weapons as they believed “all violence is considered an offence against God and against humanity.” However, Doss believed in the cause of WWII and decided to serve even though his parents did not want him to join the war. Another reason why Doss decided to serve is that his brother and friends also served in the army.

There was a dilemma between the cause of the war and no violence. That is why he served as a combat medic. He served without firing a shot. But he earned respect and adoration of his comrades for his bravery, selflessness and compassion. It is said that he saved 75 men in the battle of Okinawa including Japanese soldiers. After WWII, Doss became the first man in American history to receive the Medal of Honor without firing a shot.

### What We Want to Say about Hacksaw Ridge

Our second topic is what we took away from this movie. We have two points we would like to highlight. The first one is that it is important to tell history to the rest of the world and the following generations. It is true that there are some advantages and disadvantages with telling a historical story to those who didn't experience it. We can tell history to anybody, and they will get new knowledge and perspective about what happened. We can say this is an advantage of telling history. On the other hand, when we watch a movie like Hacksaw

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Ridge, some people might think, “This is the true story about the war,” even though it is just a small part of war. Also, it can hurt people’s feelings, especially of those who experienced the incidents that the movie shows. These might be disadvantages of telling and representing history.

Based on what we have described above, we have a question for you. After the war in Ukraine ends, what kind of legacy would you like to leave for next generation? Also, how do you think you would feel if such a work from “the other side’s point of view” were to remain? In your case, that would be movies or stories made from the Russian perspective. We know it is a difficult thing to think about in this current situation, but please try.

Let me tell you what I felt through this movie. The first time I saw this, I had very mixed feelings. Because I am from Okinawa where the Japanese and US military had fierce battles and a lot of citizens were killed. At first, I thought, “The US used the war in which many of our ancestors were killed and the islands were devastated for making a beautiful story about one man.” I had a complicated feeling because my grandmother was almost killed in the war although the movie is beautiful and moving. After a while, I realized it is difficult to make a movie about a war with completely equal perspectives. But in retrospect, “to tell the history” is the most important thing. The movie creates an opportunity for us to think and learn about the war even if the story is not good for the people who experienced it. The worst thing is not to tell the history. And it is not only about war, it is important to watch incidents from multifaceted perspectives. As for me, the movie made it possible to see the war in Okinawa from a “second-person angle” and multifaceted perspectives for the first time. Young people in Okinawa were always told about war as “victims” including me. I think it is important to see the history with multifaceted perspectives.

The second point of this topic is that “acceptance of difference” is important, too. In this movie, Doss was very different from the others in the army. During the war, the first objective is to kill as many of the enemy as possible. But Doss does the exact opposite action to save as many lives as he can. As a result, the army accepted it because there were lives which were saved by him.

That is our presentation. We hope the war in Ukraine will be over as soon as possible and the world becomes peaceful and lovely from bottom of our heart. Please stay safe and healthy. Thank you for this opportunity. And we hope no war will occur in the future.

### References

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