

Dissenters, Deserters, and Objectors: A History of Resistance to American Wars

The United States has a long and bloody history of warfare. From the Revolutionary War to the present day, Americans have fought and died in countless conflicts around the world. But not everyone has been willing to participate in these wars. Throughout history, there have been many dissenters, deserters, and objectors who have refused to fight for their country.



I Ain't Marching Anymore: Dissenters, Deserters, and Objectors to America's Wars by Chris Lombardi

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The motivations for dissent, desertion, and objection are complex and varied. Some people refuse to fight because they believe that war is immoral or unjust. Others object to the specific policies of the government or the military. Still others are simply unable to bring themselves to kill or be killed.

Whatever their reasons, dissenters, deserters, and objectors have faced significant challenges. They have been ostracized, threatened, and even imprisoned. But they have also inspired others to question the wisdom of war and to demand a more just and peaceful world.

The Revolutionary War

The Revolutionary War was the first major conflict in which Americans refused to fight for their country. Some colonists objected to the war on religious grounds, while others believed that it was unjust to break away from Great Britain. Still others were simply afraid of the dangers of war.

The Continental Army faced a constant shortage of troops, and desertion was a major problem. In fact, it is estimated that as many as one-fourth of all Continental soldiers deserted during the war.

The most famous deserter from the Continental Army was Benedict Arnold. Arnold was a brilliant military commander, but he was also a ruthless and ambitious man. In 1780, he conspired to surrender the American fort at West Point to the British. Arnold's plot was discovered, and he fled to British lines.

The Civil War

The Civil War was another major conflict in which Americans refused to fight for their country. Many Northerners objected to the war on moral grounds, while many Southerners believed that it was a fight for their independence.

Desertion was a major problem for both the Union and Confederate armies. In fact, it is estimated that as many as one-third of all Union soldiers and

one-half of all Confederate soldiers deserted during the war.

The most famous deserter from the Union Army was Ambrose Bierce. Bierce was a brilliant writer and journalist, but he was also a deeply cynical man. He saw the Civil War as a senseless slaughter, and he refused to participate in it.

World War I

World War I was the first major conflict in which Americans were drafted to fight. This led to a wave of dissent and objection. Many young men refused to register for the draft, and some even fled to Canada to avoid being conscripted.

The most famous objector to World War I was Eugene Debs. Debs was a socialist and labor leader who had been a vocal opponent of the war. In 1918, he was sentenced to ten years in prison for his anti-war activities.

World War II

World War II was the most destructive conflict in American history. The war led to the deaths of over 400,000 Americans. However, there were also many Americans who refused to fight in the war.

The most famous objector to World War II was Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau was a naturalist and philosopher who had written a book called "Civil Disobedience" in which he argued that individuals have a moral duty to disobey unjust laws. Thoreau refused to pay his poll tax as a protest against the war, and he was briefly jailed for his actions.

The Vietnam War

The Vietnam War was one of the most controversial conflicts in American history. The war led to the deaths of over 58,000 Americans. However, there were also many Americans who refused to fight in the war.

The most famous objector to the Vietnam War was Muhammad Ali. Ali was a world heavyweight boxing champion who refused to be drafted into the military. He was stripped of his title and banned from boxing for three years.

The Iraq War

The Iraq War was another controversial conflict in American history. The war led to the deaths of over 4,500 Americans. However, there were also many Americans who refused to fight in the war.

The most famous objector to the Iraq War was Cindy Sheehan. Sheehan's son was killed in Iraq in 2004. She became a vocal critic of the war and camped outside of President George W. Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas, for over a month.

The Afghanistan War

The Afghanistan War is the longest war in American history. The war has led to the deaths of over 2,400 Americans. However, there have also been many Americans who have refused to fight in the war.

The most famous objector to the Afghanistan War is Chelsea Manning. Manning was a US Army soldier who leaked classified information to WikiLeaks. She was sentenced to 35 years in prison, but her sentence was later commuted by President Barack Obama.

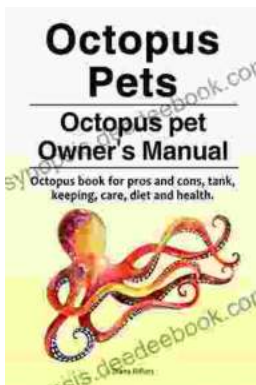
Throughout history, there have been many Americans who have refused to fight in their country's wars. The motivations for dissent, desertion, and objection are complex and varied. But one thing is clear: these individuals have played a vital role in shaping American history. They have challenged the wisdom of war and demanded a more just and peaceful world.



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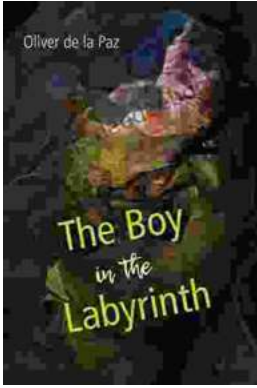
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