

Lost Lake Folk Art

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Sixty-one, by longtime Golden Valley, Minnesota, storyteller and peace activist, emerged from the author's experience as a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War era. Drafted to serve as an unarmed Army medic, Specialist Johnson was stationed in Germany. These sixty-one short essays span Larry's boyhood 50-mile hike, answering JFK's call for physical fitness in 1961; a 61-mile hike decades later when he turned 61-years old; and a 70-mile hike in 2016 known as the BEATING WEAPONS INTO WINDMILLS WALK. Together, the essays are a mantra for peace: less war, fewer veterans and an end to equivocation about veteran care, especially in areas of mental health and exposure to chemical toxins.

Publication of **Sixty-one** coincides with the recent release of Mel Gibson's new film, *Hacksaw Ridge*, the story of a World War II conscientious objector and Army medic, Desmond Doss. Larry Johnson saw the movie and responded, "My own experience being a C.O. medic was benign, totally contrary to the heroism of Doss, who risked his life to save many of his comrades, even those who beat him up verbally and physically for being a coward, a soldier unwilling to kill the enemy. Though I had not heard the Doss story before *Hacksaw Ridge*, my military experience led to a lifetime of changing the stories we live by, and sent me on a search for those deliberately left out of the narrative by a world bent on war. Who knew that the early Christians refused to kill in warfare? Who knew that the "Just War Theory", intended to replace that belief, stated that war is "Just" if no civilians are harmed? When the Olympic torch is lit, do you automatically remember that the ancient Greek Olympics were revived in 1896 with the intention of replacing war with international athletic competition? People who quote free enterprise godfather, Adam Smith, conveniently forget that Smith advocated a war tax if armed conflict was pending. Why a war tax?

Because, according to Adam Smith, 'If they know they have to pay, they won't get involved unnecessarily, or carry it on indefinitely.' Further, I know the majority have never heard of the DEAD SEYMOUR SCROLLS, buried for posterity by a wise gopher, after almost destroying the neighborhood accidentally. It is definitely time to reveal the reluctant secret that the OGP (Old Gardening Party) was started in the late 70s to keep the world safe for children, gardening, and storytelling?

Print copies of **Sixty-one** are available at www.shipwrecktbooks.com.

