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Quotes about War

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O can't you see, brother -- Death's a congested road for fighters now, and here a cheap label.

- Andrews, C. D.

The chief reason warfare is still with us is neither a secret death-wish of the human species, nor an irrepressible instinct of aggression, nor, finally and more plausibly, the serious economic and social dangers inherent in disarmament, but the simple fact that no substitute for this final arbiter in international affairs has yet appeared on the political scene.

- Arendt, Hannah

From the happy expression on their faces you might have supposed that they welcomed the war. I have met with men who loved stamps, and stones, and snakes, but I could not imagine any man loving war.

- Asquith, Margot

War both needs and generates certain virtues; not the highest, but what may be called the preliminary virtues, as valor, veracity, the spirit of obedience, the habit of discipline. Any of these, and of others like them, when possessed by a nation, and no matter how generated, will give them a military advantage, and make them more likely to stay in the race of nations.

- Bagehot, Walter

The cannon thunders... limbs fly in all directions... one can hear the groans of victims and the howling of those performing the sacrifice... it's Humanity in search of happiness.

- Baudelaire, Charles

It takes twenty years or more of peace to make a man; it takes only twenty seconds of war to destroy him.

- Baudouin I

If we justify war, it is because all peoples always justify the traits of which they find themselves possessed, not because war will bear an objective examination of its merits.

- Benedict, Ruth

All war represents a failure of diplomacy.

- Benn, Tony

The inevitableness, the idealism, and the blessing of war, as an indispensable and stimulating law of development, must be repeatedly emphasized.

- Bernhardi, Friedrich Von

If we fight a war and win it with H-bombs, what history will remember is not the ideals we were fighting for but the methods we used to accomplish them. These methods will be

compared to the warfare of Genghis Khan who ruthlessly killed every last inhabitant of Persia.

- Bethe, Hans A.

Anyone who has ever looked into the glazed eyes of a soldier dying on the battlefield will think hard before starting a war.

- Bismarck, Otto Von

Hell and damnation, life is such fun with a ragged greatcoat and a Jerry gun!

- Blok, Alexander

War is like love, it always finds a way.

- Brecht, Bertolt

War is a game that is played with a smile. If you can't smile, grin. If you can't grin, keep out of the way till you can.

- Churchill, Winston

The sinews of war, a limitless supply of money.

- Cicero, Marcus T.

War is regarded as nothing but the continuation of politics by other means.

- Clausewitz, Karl Von

A just war is hospitable to every self-deception on the part of those waging it, none more than the certainty of virtue, under whose shelter every abomination can be committed with a clear conscience.

- Cockburn, Alexander

That strange feeling we had in the war. Have you found anything in your lives since to equal it in strength? A sort of splendid carelessness it was, holding us together.

- Coward, Noel

Our young people have come to look upon war as a kind of beneficent deity, which not only adds to the national honor but uplifts a nation and develops patriotism and courage. That is all true. But it is only fair, too, to let them know that the garments of the deity are filthy and that some of her influences debase and befoul a people.

- Davis, Rebecca Harding

War is the trade of Kings.

- Dryden, John

War, he sung, is toil and trouble; Honor but an empty bubble.

- Dryden, John

America is addicted to wars of distraction.

- Ehrenreich, Barbara

The pioneers of a warless world are the young men and women who refuse military service.

- Einstein, Albert

I do not know with what weapons World War 3 will be fought, but World War 4 will be fought with sticks and stones.

- Einstein, Albert

The most terrible job in warfare is to be a second lieutenant leading a platoon when you are on the battlefield.

- Eisenhower, Dwight D.

The problem in defense is how far you can go without destroying from within what you are trying to defend from without.

- Eisenhower, Dwight D.

I hate war as only a soldier who has lived it can, only as one who has seen its brutality, its futility, its stupidity.

- Eisenhower, Dwight D.

Every gun that is fired, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies, in the final

sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. The world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.

- Eisenhower, Dwight D.

War is not a life: it is a situation, one which may neither be ignored nor accepted.

- Eliot, T. S.

War is delightful to those who have had no experience of it.

- Erasmus, Desiderius

Those who actually set out to see the fall of a city or those who choose to go to a front line, are obviously asking themselves to what extent they are cowards. But the tests they set themselves -- there is a dead body, can you bear to look at it? -- are nothing in comparison with the tests that are sprung on them. It is not the obvious tests that matter (do you go to pieces in a mortar attack?) but the unexpected ones (here is a man on the run, seeking your help -- can you face him honestly?).

- Fenton, James

I don't believe that the big men, the politicians and the capitalists alone are guilty of the war. Oh, no, the little man is just as keen, otherwise the people of the world would have risen in revolt long ago! There is an urge and rage in people to destroy, to kill, to murder, and until all mankind, without exception, undergoes a great change, wars will be waged, everything that has been built up, cultivated and grown, will be destroyed and disfigured,

after which mankind will have to begin all over again.

- Frank, Anne

What vast additions to the conveniences and comforts of living might mankind have acquired, if the money spent in wars had been employed in works of public utility; what an extension of agriculture even to the tops of our mountains; what rivers rendered navigable, or joined by canals; what bridges, aqueducts, new roads, and other public works, edifices, and improvements might not have been obtained by spending those millions in doing good, which in the last war have been spent in doing mischief.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Morality is contraband in war.

- Gandhi, Mahatma

Unless they are immediate victims, the majority of mankind behaves as if war was an act of God which could not be prevented; or they behave as if war elsewhere was none of their business. It would be a bitter cosmic joke if we destroy ourselves due to atrophy of the imagination.

- Gellhorn, Martha

I feel sure that coups d'état would go much better if there were seats, boxes, and stalls so that one could see what was happening and not miss anything.

- Goncourt, Edmond and Jules De

War is the great scavenger of thought. It is the sovereign disinfectant, and its red stream of blood is the Condy's Fluid that cleans out the stagnant pools and clotted channels of the intellect. We have awakened from an opium-dream of comfort, of ease, of that miserable poltroonery of the sheltered life. Our wish for indulgence of every sort, our laxity of manners, our wretched sensitiveness to personal inconvenience, these are suddenly lifted before us in their true guise as the specters of national decay; and we have risen from the lethargy of our dilettantism to lay them, before it is too late, by the flashing of the unsheathed sword.

- Gosse, Sir Edmund

Those who are at war with others are not at peace with themselves.

- Hazlitt, William

Frankly, I'd like to see the government get out of war altogether and leave the whole field to private industry.

- Heller, Joseph

I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it.

- Hemingway, Ernest

Force, and fraud, are in war the two cardinal virtues.

- Hobbes, Thomas

War has been the most convenient pseudo-solution for the problems of twentieth-century capitalism. It provides the incentives to modernization and technological revolution which the market and the pursuit of profit do only fitfully and by accident, it makes the unthinkable (such as votes for women and the abolition of unemployment) not merely thinkable but practicable. What is equally important, it can re-create communities of men and give a temporary sense to their lives by uniting them against foreigners and outsiders. This is an achievement beyond the power of the private enterprise economy when left to itself.

- Hobsbawm, E. J.

I believe in compulsory cannibalism. If people were forced to eat what they killed, there would be no more wars.

- Hoffman, Abbie

Older men declare war. But it is youth that must fight and die.

- Hoover, Herbert Clark

Here dead lie we because we did not choose to live and shame the land from which we sprung. Life, to be sure, is nothing much to lose; but young men think it is, and we were young.

- Housman, A. E.

War seems to be one of the most salutary phenomena for the culture of human nature; and it is not without regret that I see it disappearing more and more from the scene.

- Humboldt, Karl Wilhelm Von

A democracy which makes or even effectively prepares for modern, scientific war must necessarily cease to be democratic. No country can be really well prepared for modern war unless it is governed by a tyrant, at the head of a highly trained and perfectly obedient bureaucracy.

- Huxley, Aldous

The natural principle of war is to do the most harm to our enemy with the least harm to ourselves; and this of course is to be effected by stratagem.

- Irving, Washington

What we believe is more important than our material existence, therefore warfare is a legitimate extension of values.

- Johnson, Edward

Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind. War will exist until that distant day when the conscientious objector enjoys the same reputation and prestige that the warrior does today.

- Kennedy, John F.

Oh, the brave Music of a distant drum!

- Khayyam, Omar

War is a poor chisel to carve out tomorrow.

- King Jr. Martin Luther

If any question why we died, tell them, because our fathers lied.

- Kipling, Rudyard

The most persistent sound which reverberates through man's history is the beating of war drums.

- Koestler, Arthur

Where do all the women who have watched so carefully over the lives of their beloved ones get the heroism to send them to face the cannon?

- Kollwitz, KaThe

How is the world ruled and led to war? Diplomats lie to journalists and believe these lies when they see them in print.

- Kraus, Karl

War: first, one hopes to win; then one expects the enemy to lose; then, one is satisfied

that he too is suffering; in the end, one is surprised that everyone has lost.

- Kraus, Karl

Those who have been immersed in the tragedy of massive death during wartime, and who have faced it squarely, never allowing their senses and feelings to become numbed and indifferent, have emerged from their experiences with growth and humanness greater than that achieved through almost any other means.

- KuBler-Ross, Elisabeth

The more prosperous and settled a nation, the more readily it tends to think of war as a regrettable accident; to nations less fortunate the chance of war presents itself as a possible bountiful friend.

- Lapham, Lewis H.

The war is dreadful. It is the business of the artist to follow it home to the heart of the individual fighters -- not to talk in armies and nations and numbers -- but to track it home.

- Lawrence, D. H.

Of course in war all madresses come out in a man, that is the fault of war not of a man or a nation.

- Lawrence, Frieda

I see that old flagpole still stands. Have your troops hoist the colors to its peak, and let no enemy ever haul them down.

- Macarthur, Douglas

In war there is no substitute for victory.

- Macarthur, Douglas

I have known war as few men now living know it. It's very destructiveness on both friend and foe has rendered it useless as a means of settling international disputes.

- Macarthur, Douglas

There is no avoiding war; it can only be postponed to the advantage of others.

- Machiavelli, Niccolo

War is thus divine in itself, since it is a law of the world. War is divine through its consequences of a supernatural nature which are as much general as particular. War is divine in the mysterious glory that surrounds it and in the no less inexplicable attraction that draws us to it. War is divine by the manner in which it breaks out.

- Maistre, Joseph De

Wars are carried out by large organizations; Peace is brought one by one.

- Manor, Rachel

Blunders are an inescapable feature of war, because choice in military affairs lies generally between the bad and the worse.

- Massie, Allan

Men are at war with each other because each man is at war with himself.

- Meehan, Francis

War will never cease until babies begin to come into the world with larger cerebrums and smaller adrenal glands.

- Mencken, H. L.

War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things: the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks nothing worth a war, is worse. A war to protect other human beings against tyrannical injustice; a war to give victory to their own ideas of right and good, and which is their own war, carried on for an honest purpose by their own free choice -- is often the means of their regeneration.

- Mill, John Stuart

I regard almost all quarrels of princes on the same footing, and I see nothing that marks man's unreason so positively as war. Indeed, what folly to kill one another for interests often imaginary, and always for the pleasure of persons who do not think themselves even obliged to those who sacrifice themselves for them!

- Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley

War is the supreme drama of a completely mechanized society.

- Mumford, Lewis

War alone brings up to their highest tension all human energies and imposes the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have the courage to make it.

- Mussolini, Benito

In war, there are no unwounded soldiers.

- Narosky, Jose

War has always been the grand sagacity of every spirit which has grown too inward and too profound; its curative power lies even in the wounds one receives.

- Nietzsche, Friedrich

What the horrors of war are, no one can imagine. They are not wounds and blood and fever, spotted and low, or dysentery, chronic and acute, cold and heat and famine. They are intoxication, drunken brutality, demoralization and disorder on the part of the inferior... jealousies, meanness, indifference, selfish brutality on the part of the superior.

- Nightingale, Florence

The quickest way of ending a war is to lose it.

- Orwell, George

There is hardly such a thing as a war in which it makes no difference who wins. Nearly always one side stands more or less for progress, the other side more or less for reaction.

- Orwell, George

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle? Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

- Owen, Wilfred

To establish any mode to abolish war, however advantageous it might be to Nations, would be to take from such Government the most lucrative of its branches.

- Paine, Thomas

The more we sweat in peace the less we bleed in war.

- Pandit, Vijaya Lakshmi

Suppose they gave a war, and no one came?

- Parrish-Bach, Leslie

The real trouble with war (modern war) is that it gives no one a chance to kill the right people.

- Pound, Ezra

Wars are made to make debt.

- Pound, Ezra

To call war the soil of courage and virtue is like calling debauchery the soil of love.

- Proverb, German

War begets quiet, quiet idleness, idleness disorder, disorder ruin; likewise ruin order, order virtue, virtue glory, and good fortune.

- Raleigh, Sir Walter

You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake.

- Rankin, Jeannette

Of the four wars in my lifetime, none came about because the U.S. was too strong.

- Reagan, Ronald

More than an end to war, we want an end to the beginnings of all wars.

- Roosevelt, Franklin D.

War is a contagion.

- Roosevelt, Franklin D.

Those who dare to interpret God's will must never claim Him as an asset for one nation or group rather than another. War springs from the love and loyalty which should be offered to God being applied to some God substitute, one of the most dangerous being nationalism.

- Runcie, Robert

I had supposed until that time that it was quite common for parents to love their children, but the war persuaded me that it is a rare exception. I had supposed that most people liked money better than almost anything else, but I discovered that they liked destruction even better. I had supposed that intellectuals frequently loved truth, but I found here again that not ten per cent of them prefer truth to popularity.

- Russell, Bertrand

Are wars... anything but the means whereby a nation's problems are set, where creation is stimulated -- there you have adventure. But there is no adventure in heads-or-tails, in betting that the toss will come out of life or death. War is not an adventure. It is a disease. It is like typhus.

- Saint-Exupery, Antoine De

To delight in war is a merit in the soldier, a dangerous quality in the captain, and a positive crime in the statesman.

- Santayana, George

If it were not for the war, this war would suit me down to the ground.

- Sayers, Dorothy L.

We go to gain a little patch of ground that hath in it no profit but the name.

- Shakespeare, William

Cry havoc! and let loose the dogs of war, that this foul deed shall smell above the earth
with carrion men, groaning for burial.

- Shakespeare, William

In the arts of life man invents nothing; but in the arts of death he outdoes Nature herself,
and produces by chemistry and machinery all the slaughter of plague, pestilence, and
famine.

- Shaw, George Bernard

War is the statesman's game, the priest's delight, The lawyer's jest, the hired assassin's
trade.

- Shelley, Percy Bysshe

War-making is one of the few activities that people are not supposed to view realistically;
that is, with an eye to expense and practical outcome. In all-out war, expenditure is all-out,
unprudent -- war being defined as an emergency in which no sacrifice is excessive.

- Sontag, Susan

Hence that general is skilful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and
he is skilful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack.

- Sun Tzu

The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.

- Sun Tzu

The savage in man is never quite eradicated.

- Thoreau, Henry David

I have a deep sympathy with war, it so apes the gait and bearing of the soul.

- Thoreau, Henry David

There are two things which will always be very difficult for a democratic nation: to start a war and to end it.

- Tocqueville, Alexis De

O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief... for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts.

Amen.

- Twain, Mark

War -- what a waist of time. It's all about great achievements for the very few but hideous losses for the very many.

- Unknown, Source

To say that war is madness is like saying that sex is madness: true enough, from the standpoint of a stateless eunuch, but merely a provocative epigram for those who must make their arrangements in the world as given.

- Updike, John

What war has always been is a puberty ceremony. It's a very rough one, but you went away a boy and came back a man, maybe with an eye missing or whatever but goddammit you were a man and people had to call you a man thereafter.

- Vonnegut Jr., Kurt

So you think you can tell heaven from hell blue skies from pain. Can you tell a green field from a cold steel rail, a smile from a veil? Do you think you can tell? Did they get you to trade your heroes for ghosts hot ashes for trees, hot air for a cool breeze, cold comfort for change? Did you exchange a walk on part in a war for a lead role in a cage?

- Waters, R.

A self-respecting nation is ready for anything, including war, except for a renunciation of its option to make war.

- Weil, Simone

What a country calls its vital economic interests are not the things which enable its citizens to live, but the things which enable it to make war. Petrol is more likely than wheat to be a cause of international conflict.

- Weil, Simone

As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular.

- Wilde, Oscar

If you insist upon fighting to protect me, or our country, let it be understood soberly and rationally between us that you are fighting to gratify a sex instinct which I cannot share; to procure benefits which I have not shared and probably will not share.

- Woolf, Virginia

I think it better that in times like these a poet's mouth be silent, for in truth we have no gift to set a statesman right.

- Yeats, William Butler

War is the father of all things. But who is the mother?

- Kocher, Gerhard

We don't invade countries for the reasons we're told or we would've done a lot of things

about a lot of things. They tell you things like they hate freedom so you're okay with them attacking but it's for other reasons.

- Dye, James

It is fortunate that war is so terrible, lest we become too fond of it.

- Lee, Robert E.

The purpose of fighting is to win. There is no possible victory in defense. The sword is more important than the shield and skill is more important than either. The final weapon is the brain. All else is supplemental.

- Steinbeck, John

If you kill enough of them, they stop fighting.

- LeMay, Curtis



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