

# Truth of War

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Violence is everywhere, with all the movies, books, video games, and magazines. Often society views violence as bad thing. But why is it that we get so stoked when we see super intense “violent” movies? Everyone likes seeing a hero beat up the bad guys. Playing a video game that doesn’t involve any sort of killing is plainly described as “boring.” Even with young kids, you see this trend of violence. I remember when I was younger; guns were the “big thing.” Playing airsoft wars with your friends, playing cowboys and Indians, having magnificent Lego wars, pretending to be a glorious war hero slaying numerous bad guys with foam swords, and drawing stick men blowing each other’s heads off with bazookas and laughing at it. Why is everyone so interested in death and killing? “Teaching our Kids to Kill” by Debrah Prathrow-Smith is a book about the aspects of society that makes people attracted by violence says, “In all these movies, by standards, subway riders, ordinary people get caught in shootouts, crossfires, explosions, and other violent incidents. We’re not supposed to even think about the dead and dying left behind.” From the quote it is saying that in violent movies, video games, or even books often people don’t notice the details. They are focused on the protagonist, not all the other people getting blown up or shot. This is why we get this false view on violence and war. Society makes us attracted to it by revealing a false image. And that image is over glorified and attractive.

Playing innocently as a kid, we don't seem to realize the horrors we are treating as "awesome." Society is caught up in a sickly obsession of violence. The article, "Teaching our Kids to Kill" goes on to say, "Why not, indeed when only bad guys, never heroes get hurt. You won't see Bruce Willis or Arnold Schwarzenegger shot through the spine, a quadriplegic, a paraplegic, a young man with a permanent breathing tube who can only whisper his words from a hospital bed where he will pass the rest of his life. Who, then, if not the mass media, will tell our young that these are the true consequences of violence?" From what the media shows us, it could be that society gives us a false sense of being "bad ass." Over confidence can be very destructive. As the quote expressed, we don't realize the full consequences of violence. Families are torn apart as they receive a letter announcing that their son or daughter is dead. When we don't see how real war and violence really are, we may have false desires and necessities. Perhaps this unjustified glorification of violence leads people to want to join the military. Being a soldier is way to for them to fulfill their dreams created by society, to be that hero that never dies, or get the feeling of being powerful. It's an illusion of confidence. But is that true for every soldier you see?

The basis why soldiers are soldiers is not always reflected off of society. My older brother, Kendall, describes his drive to want to join the military as a unique profession and to have a job that not everyone could do. He feels that it's his duty to make the world a better place as a soldier. Eric Greitens, originally a humanitarian for helping poverty stricken countries, has a very unique reason for joining the

military. He wanted to make a difference, so he traveled to troubled areas throughout the world at refugee camps. Yet when these innocent people were threatened with harm, there was nothing he could do. So he realized a truth: when corrupt armies invade, the weak need protection. One elderly refugee man states that the food and supplies that other countries give to refugee camps is very much needed, but what we really need is protection before thousands of our people are killed and countless of our daughter and wives raped. This response convinced Eric to enlist as a Navy Seal. My Grandpa a veteran of the Vietnam War, was drafted into the military when he was only 19. His first impression was to serve two years, get out as quickly as possible then live the rest of his life while he was still young. After serving twenty-one years he was a changed man. Going through Vietnam made him appreciate life a lot more and made him realize how lucky he was and many others to be able to live in the United States. He is extremely proud to be a soldier, because of the good he provided in throughout the world. Whether it was protecting his country or protecting the citizens of other countries, that was the duty of a true soldier. But to do that soldiers have to do terrible things to protect. Soldiers must kill other human beings in order to do their job. The actions of those who have experienced or know the truth of war, you don't see that false attraction to violence and war given by society.

In war it said to be very hard for soldiers to actually kill. On Killing by Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman is a book about the psychological cost of learning to kill in war says, "There are few people that actually want to cut people open, but most

people in conflicts are more interested in status, profit, and limiting damage to themselves... In the Civil War companies would yell to make themselves seem bigger than they actually were. Sometimes yelling was enough to scare away the people they were going to fight! This is a good example of successful posturing.” Grossman has a theory on what soldiers do when in the situation of combat; in combat you can either fight, flight, posture, or flee. Few people actually choose to fight in combat unless they undergo a lot of training. The first decision most people make in combat, is to flee (retreat) or submit (surrender). Grossman says, when animals fight, they don’t immediately attack. Instead they go through a series of threatening positions that are supposed to scare the other animal without hurting really it. If these threats fail then the options come in. Fight, flight, submission, or flee. This process of threats, non-deadly fighting, and giving in is very important in keeping the species alive. It makes sure that enough of the animals survive to keep breeding.” But killing someone is a very hard thing to do. Mentally it’s a huge burden. That’s why we choose the other options to flight, submit, or posture. Killing is against our self-ego. And through society that fact is very much hidden.

Killing is hard for soldiers because when you kill it’s hard to forget. In the bombing of Dresden on the nights of February 13<sup>th</sup> over a thousand bombers of the USAF and the RAF bombed Dresden with incendiary bombs. As a result of the bombing it was impossible to count the number of casualties. Recent research says that 35,000 were killed but some German sources have said that it was over 100,000. A firsthand account of the bombing by a RAF bombardier says, “It struck me at the time, the

thought of those women and children down there. We seemed to fly for hours over a sheet of fire-a terrific red glow with thin haze over it. I found myself making comments to the crew: 'Oh God, those poor people.' You can't justify it." From this it shows the effects on soldiers conducting massive killing. Its devastating, the mental burden of giving death and suffering to others. The bomb crews say Dresden was a huge fireball below them. The heat literally melted people to the streets.

Through the media's attraction to violence, and societies teachings to the youth of the world, war is overlooked. The basis of why soldiers are soldiers show us the horrors they yet to face. From the accounts of real life veterans and current soldiers can we conclude that war in our society is often taken for granted and over glorified. The hardship of killing a human being and justifying it could never lead our memories. The flash backs of the booming chaos that only leaves us with our instinct to survive. These are the things that show us the truth of war. As you wake up and live everyday you get a constant reminder of what you went through. Kids excitedly playing: killing one another with no true understanding of the real costs. The media showing us these false depictions of war. No one can truly understand you. This is the life of a soldier. This is the truth of war.

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