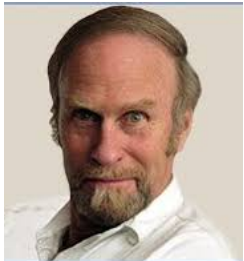


War: Death, Destruction, And Human Misery On The Little Guy



By Frosty Wooldridge

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You remember the names of the Big Men in World War II: Hitler, Mussolini, Goebbels, Stalin, Rommel, Hirohito, Eisenhower, Patton, Montgomery, Churchill, Doolittle, Nimitz, and more as the military leaders of their respective countries.

Yes, they grabbed the headlines, they were showered with medals, as well as prominent titles in the history books. Isn't it ironic that none of them fought or died on the fields of the Battle of the Bulge, Midway, Iwo Jima, Corregidor, Normandy and every nameless town in Europe?

Yes, you saw Tom Hanks save "Private Ryan", and you got a taste of ugly hand to hand combat in that movie. A particular goring moment is when the U.S. Army coward sat on the stairs while the German soldier shoved a knife into the chest of coward's platoon mate. That's what war is all about: one man killing another man from a different country.

When you look at Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, you might recall General Westmoreland, but you won't be able to remember a single kid who died on those distant battlefields, unless, of course, your child or husband died or a close family member.

Do you know the names of the millions of innocent civilians along with 18-, 19-, and 20-year kids forced into uniform, forced into combat and forced to die miserable deaths?

Every veteran reading this column knows that there are no heroes in wars. If you lucked out, a bullet didn't have your name on it. For every guy on the Vietnam Memorial Wall, a bullet, bomb, napalm or shrapnel carried that kid's name on it. If that bullet missed you, you've enjoyed a long and hopefully, fulfilling life.

One of my best friends in high school joined the Navy Seals during Vietnam. He wished he would have fled to Canada. He said, "It's a banker's war not to be won or lost...just keep making money for the banksters." One of his buddies got blasted right next to him during a firefight and pieces of his body fell all over my friend's shoulder and face. After three divorces, and a lifetime of his brain being destroyed by Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder, he lives with his two dogs. He said to me, "My mind is not right, and it never will be."

Ukraine Being Invaded by Russia

Yes, Putin is the new Hitler, and Zelensky the new champion for Ukraine, and he may well be assassinated by Russian snipers, but in the end, it's all those young Russian soldiers who will kill and be killed. It's all those 17,18-, 19-, 20- and 30-year-old men who will die for Ukraine. It's all those forgotten civilians fleeing with their children, over 1.5 million thus far, have fled into Poland. Millions more could die from starvation and bitter cold.

For me, it's particularly painful because I lost friends in the Vietnam War. I saw kids my age with missing arms, legs, eyes, hands and skin burned away by napalm. When I walk up to the Vietnam War Memorial Wall, I put my hand on their names, and I weep uncontrollably. Yes, it's personal.

I hope that Lyndon Baines Johnson, Richard Nixon and General

Westmoreland, and that pack of jackals in the Military Industrial Complex all share a jail cell in hell. To join them, Dick Cheney, Rumsfeld and the rest of those liars.

One of the most poignant things to happen to me occurred while I bicycled from Nord Kapp, Norway to Athens, Greece in 2005. My friend Gary Hall and I stopped south of the Poe River in Italy to walk among the dead of an American and British graveyard with 500 kids. Their names and ages were engraved on the gravestones. Most all of them were 18,19, 20, 21 and more. Just kids! They pushed the Germans out of Italy. They got snipped, bombed, burned and blasted by artillery. Still, they faced the Germans with iron resolve.

That night, we camped above the cemetery on a ridge. In the morning, Gary packed up and hit the road before me. Being more emotional, I read the pages of the dead soldiers on a podium. Their names, where they were from, and their ages. Something came over me to invite each one of their spirits to climb out of their graves, mount their bicycles, and ride with me through that valley leading south.

“Okay you boys,” I said. “Let’s share some pedal time together. Let’s ride together. Each of you deserves to ride this road in peace, in the sheer joy and freedom of pedaling a bicycle.”

Sure enough, all 500 of them jumped out of their graves, hopped on their bicycles, and they rode with me for an hour. I heard them “bullsh*tting” to their friends as they rode along. Some of them cheered and raised their hands to the sky. That’s what I do when I’m enjoying a bicycle ride anywhere in the world. What they did allowed me to do what I do when I’m riding my bicycle: to enjoy the sheer pleasure of a simple bicycle ride.

After an hour, I stopped, looked back, and waved to them. “I know you boys have got to return to your resting places...it was

an honor to ride with your spirits. I bid you adieu and God bless you.”

In that moment, all 500 of them waved, turned around, and pedaled back to their final resting place.

Later, Gary and I rode into an old Italian village to see a bunch of Italians eating pizzas in front of a café. Coming up the street, an 80 year old man hobbled toward us. When he reached us, he said, “Are you American veterans?” “Army and Navy,” we replied.

He walked up to us and embraced us with one of the most emotional hugs I have ever encountered. He said, “Thank you for saving my family in the big war.” And with that, he hobbled down the street. But his memory remains with me until my last breath.

And so, to each Russian kid who dies in Ukraine, and to each Ukraine kid who dies defending his country, my heart goes out to the little guy that doesn't get to grow up, get married, go to work, have a family, ride a bike, play sports, and kiss his sweetheart.

To all the rest of us, I hope each human around the world condemns this insane war, and I hope you are doing everything you can to bring peace to Ukraine. We need more people to demonstrate against Putin. We need the people of Russia to demonstrate 24/7 around the clock against the war. We need more people in the UN to bring sanctions. We need more people in the streets of every country in Europe, Canada, America, Australia and beyond to march for peace. We need every country in the world to condemn the conflict. We need all of us to move toward peace.

God help us and God bless us one and all.

An interview with Andrew Carrying Hitchcock with Frosty Wooldridge, [“On War and the Little Guy”](#), London, England:

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