# Why I Believe War Is Not the Answer
## By Sydney Williams
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A tragic news story on December 30, 2016, showed 4-year-old Ryan Lemm saluting the body of his father, Sergeant Joseph Lemm who had been killed in Afghanistan and was brought home for burial. Years before, December 24, 2003, at the start of America's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, an army major from Southwest Wisconsin was also returned for burial. He is survived by his wife and two children. By June, 2012, six-thousand four-hundred and forty (6,440) American service people had been killed and 32, 223 wounded in Afghanistan and Iraq. Tragically, over 7,000 Americans ended their lives by suicide after their return to the U.S. Another report states that between 151,000 to over one million Iraqis have been killed. What these casualty statistics do not account for are the associated grieving families. I am sure families would do anything to have their family members home. War isn't solving world problems!

So much historical evidence exists proving that all-out war has bee unsuccessful. The war to end all wars was World War I, which led to World War II, which killed more than 50 million people and destroyed the happiness of millions of families. The Korean "War" lasted from 1950-1953 and resulted in 33,360 American deaths. Korea is still divided with both North and South ready to fight again. Possibly the most painful war in American history was the Vietnam War from 1965 through 1975. Casualties included 58,256 American deaths, over 500,000 wounded, and it cost more than $500 billion. However, not since the Civil War (1861-1865) was pro-war versus anti-war tension in the U.S. greater. As a nation we hoped the memories of Vietnam would disappear; however, they have not and "not another Vietnam" is still voiced when discussing something that should not happen.

Since 1950, American wars have resulted in failed missions with very little to show except more Americans dead. For other countries, war has been far more devastating. World War II ended for Germany in May 1945. By 1948, 2.25 million German civilians had died a violent death due to starvation, cold winter exposure (1946-1947), or mistreatment. Even today, about 71 years later, thousands of tons of unexploded munitions, mostly 1,000- and 5,000-pound time bombs lie deep underground, ready to explode. Wars destroy all the people that have worked hard to build cities, roads, farms, and families.

So who benefits from war? Definitely not the civilians of either side. One side suffers due to the damages of war, the other side with payments and retributions. Not the military, as they suffer the loss of lives and equipment. The people who benefit are the large corporations who supply the war, the wealthy who get wealthier because of the situation. Wars create a larger gap between the rich and the poor which creates further instability and more wars. So how are wars the answer?