

War Is Not the Answer
By Nichole Erdman
Dodgeville High School Class of 2018
Veterans for Peace Scholarship Recipient

I believe that war is not the answer because it is impossible to end violence with more violence. In today's society, violence in general is seen as the most effective way to stop a disturbance. However, this is not the case. The misconception can sadly be observed between people young enough to be in grade school.

Children learn through the adults in their lives that if they were to hit a classmate who is disrupting them, the classmate will stop. However, it is not a cure all, for most of the time the classmate will retaliate. If the classmate does not retaliate, the violent child may continue to be physical with others because they have a misconceived sense of power. This can cause different conflicts with other students. Had the child who chose to hit their classmate instead talked to the classmate about the issue, the two children could have come to a peaceful resolution or compromise.

It is true that a mediator could be needed to reach a solution, but the results of this conclusion will be long lasting. It is less likely now, after this specific interaction, that the children will relapse.

This juvenile scenario directly correlates to not only adult life, but also to politics. Many times, in order to draw attention to an issue, grown adults choose to resort to violence in order to shed light on a topic. If the opposing side does not react to the retaliation, then the attacker will continue rampaging until either they are in complete control or until they get the desired reaction. If the opposing side instead chooses to follow the saying "an eye for an eye," they will respond with more violence. This will only amplify the assaults taking place. This leads to a vicious cycle which does nothing but leave a trail of death and sorrow in its wake.

My father was an active duty member of the military, specifically the Army. He was a combat soldier and after he was deployed to Afghanistan, he was never the same. Although he had been altered by the military through basic training, once he was exposed to the violence and hardship of fighting in a war, coming back home was a difficult task.

I learned that for him, the transition back to everyday life was more difficult than the cruelty he faced across the sea. He had trouble dealing with the mundane conflicts of living at home. My father had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and that forever shaped not only my childhood, but over 10 years of how my father lived his life.

The war my father fought in took not only his freedom, but his daughters away from him. The war he served in only caused more conflict and tension to arise. A fight or battle never ends after an outbreak of violence. It continues. War ends with a treaty. It ends when weapons are set aside. It ends when people communicate with each other. It ends when everyone treats each other as human beings.