

The Pictures of War Big and Small

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Do we ever think how much our lives would change if any of this happened to us? When most people hear the word “war” they think of a bunch of noise, bombs, men screaming, bullets flying ahead, and destruction. In Scott Simon’s “what gets lost in the ‘Big Picture’” (2023) he goes on to talk about Martha Gellhorn and how she was in the Great War (WWI) as a correspondent. She uses words and experiences to explain how the big picture is always known of the war, but the world does not know the smaller picture. Men, women, and children who are completely innocent trying to survive. He also wrote several other quotes from other people that have been shared with the world. “You can hear a common language, regardless of their different uniforms” was one that was said and tries to bring out the humanity of the fact of war. Finally, Simon ends it off with power and the councils of power. These two entities sit high and away from combat making decisions for the people actually at stake. So, it is true that war is constant shooting and men yelling, but that is just the first layer that you see. War has so many other factors that affect everyone within it. These include all the sanctions on the country, the destruction of homes and cities, but most importantly the lives involved. It is mostly younger men that are being controlled by way higher ups and older people to go and get killed. Civilians are even more at the mercy of the forces because they have nothing to defend themselves with, they must rely on support from other countries to escape and bring sustenance for them to survive. A very unfortunate and sad reality that most of us are not affected by it. Simply because it is not our country or homeland.

“Not a window remained. The air was full of tiny cinders that were grit in your eyes and bitter on your tongue” - William Walton. This is what he observed and wrote during WWII entering a Germany. Civilians have such a tough time trying to live in their home country if it is being invaded. Invasion is what my family went through which is why I see it as worse than invading someone else. War is bad everywhere you are if you are within the country being invaded. Before I was born and when my parents were young living in Bosnia and Herzegovina, their country was invaded by Serbians and there were battles in the front lines but also battles they had to go through of trying to live without food and not get captured.

Their homes were destroyed or captured, my mom stuck with her mom and her dad got taken to a concentration camp. My dad was old enough to be able to go to one and he stuck with his mom and had several close calls. They both had to sell most of their belongings in their homes if they could and eventually everything, they had to be able to buy food. They were constantly on the move while villages that they were staying in were being captured. All this while the military is still fighting back, holding other towns, and providing aid. The big picture was that Serbs have invaded and have committed genocides against civilians, but the soldiers are also having a hard time running into a bunch of landmines and getting slaughtered. They kept showing troops mobilizing and Serbs invading but never how hard of a time the soldiers had tried to fight back and protect civilians but simply could not because they had no support and just simply had less than the Serbs did.

War is also terrible for any man fighting in the front lines in the thick of it and civilians trying to live in their home country. And unfortunately, all this is being controlled like puppets by the people in power. Anyone in their home country with their family has terribly rough times during war because their family members can be used for leverage, but the most common issue was the separation of the families. My dad was apart from his mother at times while his dad was on the other side of the country in a concentration camp. He had to hide under a bed with his cousin when he was thirteen when Serbs came into his home and his family was not home. My mom also was not with her dad because he was in another concentration camp with my mom's mother's brother. Hardly any of them were together in large amounts.

My mom's and dad's family being spread out like this made it hard for everyone to be able to have a high morale or even think they will be able to make it out of this war. Everyone is worried about everyone else's safety if they are not with them, and it was not rare to finally get to your family and hear that a person you knew very well died right after you saw them last even when you thought they were alive a week prior. It was a harsh reality to say the least, and this was during a time when not everyone had a phone when they were 15 so it was very hard to communicate or find each other during this time, especially for the kids who my parents were. Once the war was finally over it was a miracle for mostly everyone that was able to get back together or escape to other places and find the rest of their family that was still alive. Now all of

them are spread out, and few stayed in their villages besides the elderly, as most moved for a better life during or after the war.

War is hell for anyone living in it, fighting in it, surviving in it. There is a big picture that most people see and then a smaller one that is barely covered in the media and makes you feel hopeless if you are in it. It is a lot of young people being controlled by older greedy people to die for what they think is a noble cause but really is not worth it. You see it all the time and it is simply unfortunate because most of these fighters involved in war have family back home that they will not ever hear or see again. They have young families that they need to be there for and all of it goes to waste when they are needed to go fight for some minor benefit. Some things that I have learned while writing this essay is that you can never truly know what anyone has gone through. The older I get the more stories I hear from my parents of just awful things that they have had to go through and if you ever met any of them and did not know any of their background, I would never guess that they went through what they did. You cannot see it in their face besides a scar, but you would not even assume anything close to that. It is just an example for me to keep in mind to always assume that anyone I meet has gone through something or is going through something currently and to just always be weary and smart with what I say and if I can help in any way. This always ensures I stay positive throughout my days to others. But one thing I have always known and despised is war because it is a child's game that comes from

greed that some old pencil pushers indulge in to send other people's sons and daughters to die for their benefit and wealth.

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