

Dear Family, Front Porch folk, Teachers, — “Veterans” (Armistice) Day, 2023

As it was, this was too long for Front Porch Forum, so I sent it to our children and some friends on this “Armistice Day,” 2023, as well as a few school teachers who may have shown interest, and an exciting group of veterans who have “known better” for a number of score years.

Veterans day. We now celebrate and honor military veterans, trained fighters, for protecting us when someone or some thing threatens our lives. Body guards, city and town guards. Veterans have been trained to identify what or who is threatening us. During the Korean War, in addition to training us to follow orders and to fire weapons accurately and operate machinery and organize people and supplies, we were trained to shout, as we used lethal equipment, "Kill the Gooks!"

Some of you folks may be thinking, "Isn't there a better way to protect whomever or whatever?" There is and there are, but this is what our leaders were taught, and that is what they trained us to do. Our leaders were in turn taught to obey orders by their leaders, without question and without complaint or suggestion. I was fortunate to have leaders, from my parents and older family members who had been in WWI and II and before, and survived, to be able to evaluate what my leaders were telling me to do, while following orders. A second fortunate happening for me was that I was able to enter military training after I had completed higher education. In higher education one is also helped to learn to question and evaluate and respond to the contrary if necessary. Even so, when we were being trained to shout "Kill the Gooks" as we fired weapons or used bayonets, I did not raise any questions or objections. Better warriors than I, did.

When President Eisenhower left office, in his famous "Farewell Address," "IKE" cautioned us to be wary of the "military industrial (congressional) complex," who were active not only in supplying weapons and war supplies ("jobs"), but also as a force that created and sustained fighting and wars, which in turn, kept their workers happy, ad infinitum.

Meanwhile, since the 19th century, and before that through the earlier times of humans being on the earth, people had discovered that there were better ways to meet persons who were acting dangerously than to chain them to a wall or otherwise, put them in a cell, or kill them. Yet, most of us humans continue to prefer chaining, caging, and killing, as we do animals.

There have been times, in many different countries and areas, when humans show how they are able to “talk-it-out” rather than grab and fight, as well as struggling to make sense of themselves and be heard in unfavorable circumstances. There have been many leaders throughout our time who have shown us ways to settle a problem without fighting. One of those leaders was Julia Ward Howe a song and hymn writer, who, in addition to many other talents, first suggested “Mothers’ Day” as a day when all the women of the world might meet to determine what they might do to create a more peaceful world in the coming year. Her successors gave voice to that possibility, and we have suffered from the subsequent emphasis on money ever since,-some folk not.

In a similar vein, “Veterans Day” began as “Armistice Day,” a day of battle cessation in World War I when the German soldiers began to sing Christmas carols, with the opponents joining, which led to games and exchange and sharing of gifts, quite a different emphasis from today’s on making and spending money, which in itself has led to the emphasis on money as the deciding power in all things.

Mom Louise and I urge you, this day, to, yes, maybe gain less, but restrain the military industrial congressional complexes, as you have begun to do far better than your DadDave or MomLouise; learn and implement better ways to welcome healing, as each of you is already doing in your selves, families and vocations; participate in groups of your day for engaging in life that moves toward the better choice of and development of peace.

Dave Ransom, Waterville, Vermont, Veterans Day, 2023