

THE WARRIORS



For Hannah

with great appreciation

Glenn Kay

December 1961

1 1/16" head

THE WARRIORS

Reflections on Men in Battle by J. Glenn Gray

100

1 1/16" for
perfect
body

III

13/16" ft

THE WARRIORS

Perhaps even you cannot participate enough in this life over here to understand. You would have to see a fine, fine family broken, people you had learned to love, destroyed because of petty personal grudges. You would have to see people slapped and beaten because they might possibly be telling a lie or because certain sadistic impulses need to be satisfied. You would have to see old men and women on the roads with a few pitiful belongings in a driving rain, going they know not where, trying to find shelter and a little food in a scorched-earth area. Oh, you would have to see many things, Fred, to know why I should come to realize such a primitive truth as that I have only one alternative to death and that is to love, to care for people whom I, as a natural man, want to strike down.

The time may not be far off, if it is not already here, when millions of people will not want to live. It has been prophesied and the prophecy is a true one. Today I talked with a young attractive woman with three children who told me she did not care what happened to her. She wanted to die. There was no theatricality about her at all. She was not suffering from any physical illness and she was not hungry. Separation from her husband, bombing, living in cellars, no future—all of it had become too much for her. Always the same picture—immer das gleiche Bild.

But I find courage and strength from somewhere. I shall go on. Plato wrote of the wise man caught in an evil time who refuses to take part in the crimes of his fellow citizens and takes refuge behind a wall until the storm is past. Plato understood. But I am too deeply involved. Such a course is not possible for me any longer. So I am driven to the Christian way out. It is hard, yet there is great comfort in finding it. I sleep better now, and because I give love I find it oftener. You will not like such writing as this, yet I cannot write anything else at the moment. It is late and I am tired. . . .

December 9, 1944

After fourteen years it is a disquieting experience to read my war journals and letters like this one. Sad and laughable and

Churchill as "the fiery rake," except that this was a crueler climate and the rain that beat upon the refugees seemed more pitiless than in the south. There was another difference. Here we frequently met huge covered wagons drawn by steers or oxen and piled high with farm implements and cooking pots. On top of the gear under the canvas tops perched women and children while the men goaded the beasts in front and boys led the cows at the rear. Somehow these peasants had persuaded the Germans to let them salvage a portion of their possessions.

Inevitably, these conveyances reminded me of our American pioneers in the nineteenth century. Nothing else was similar, for, unlike pioneers, they had no destination. Their goal was behind them and there was no light in their faces. With an aching heart I reflected on this regression from pioneers to refugees and wondered if some future historian might not find these terms most characteristic of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There was something patently symbolical about the contrast, which I have not since been able to put from mind.

The enemy was cruel, it was clear, yet this did not trouble me as deeply as did our own cruelty. Indeed, their brutality made fighting the Germans much easier, whereas ours weakened the will and confused the intellect. Though the scales were not at all equal in this contest, I felt responsibility for ours much more than for theirs. And the effect was cumulative. It had begun before my division had even reached the front in Italy at the beginning of 1944. Bivouacked some thirty miles to the rear, I had watched hungry Italian women and children standing in February rains, holding crude cans with wire handles to collect leftover food from our mess. The American soldiers were generous, and it was easy to notice that more food than usual was left in the mess kits, to find its

way into the eagerly extended cans of the thin and shivering civilians. Rarely did they eat it on the spot, however tempted; their dependents in the village nearby were evidently uppermost in their thoughts. Inexperienced and fearful in a strange land, higher headquarters soon put out stern orders that all garbage was to be buried forthwith. Then began the hideous spectacle of unwilling soldiers forced to push back the women and children while garbage cans of food were dumped in freshly dug pits. Other soldiers hastily shoveled the wet dirt over the meat, bread, and vegetables. To prevent scavenging at night, it became necessary to fetch dry earth and tramp the surface of the "sump" until it was packed. More than once we saw the despairing children and women break through the lines and scabble in the rain and mud to rescue dirty pieces of food before the soldiers could seize them and push them away. "And though it wrenches my heart to see them," I wrote in my journal, "I soon grow accustomed to the sight and eat my fill. How hard is the heart of man!"

Could it have been I who witnessed this scene and wrote these words in this journal? My memory does not deceive me, and, if it did, the pages are before me. It is true that most of us did not want to behave in this way; in fact, the faces of these green troops registered utter disgust with such senseless orders. But we did not protest; we steeled ourselves, thinking, no doubt, that much worse sights were in store.

It would be superfluous, as well as too painful, to recall many of those worse sights. Because of its peculiar character, however, one other episode haunts my mind and may be briefly set down. It happened in southern France shortly after our invasion. One day an attractive French girl appeared at our temporary headquarters and confessed that she had worked for a time with the local Gestapo and now feared the revenge

Remembering War and Forgetfulness

qualities in the Fascist and Nazi politicians and police with whom it was my fate to deal.

After months of this sort of experience, I began to detect with a kind of horror that I was becoming inured to cruelty and not above practicing it myself on occasion. In the spring of 1945 I find entries like the following in my journal:

. . . And as Spring comes and the days lengthen, and sunshine and warmth penetrate, one becomes aware what toll the winter has taken. Last Spring I saw in Italy the lush red fields of poppies, the death flower, and knew that mines lay beneath them. This Spring there are only the mines. So it is with our lives. The camouflage, beautiful if treacherous, is falling away and we are left with the ugly deadly surface. I grow bitter and sarcastic. Today I yelled at a character who had lied to me and took a certain pleasure in seeing the perspiration come to his face and his hands tremble. He knew the power I had over him. So do one's values become corrupted and conscience coarsened by this ordeal. But enough of this . . .

And a few months later, in a letter to my friend, I wrote:

One becomes incredibly hardened. Now I often despair of myself. I interrogate these "bastards," as we call them, sneeringly, insultingly, and sometimes take cold delight in their cringing. I have declared that if ever I find one who will say: "I am, I was, and will remain a National Socialist and you can like it or not," I will clasp his hand and cry: "At last I have found a brave and honest, if an evil, man. We don't want to arrest such a one as you." But I think I shall not find such a man. They are all as disgusting as the Fascists in Italy—all arrant cowards who say they were forced to do what they did, even if it was to enter the Party in 1928. From high to low—and I have had some big shots—the story is the same. I am tempted to think that the key to the whole rotten mess is lack of courage and fear. Cowards best understand the psychology of fear. That sentence explains much to me. Few

THE WARRIORS

of them have the courage to take their own lives, though the fellows in the Detachment accuse me of losing my cases or solving them by this route. I do not like such jokes, but on the other hand I have not had a bad conscience about those who have "cheated" me by that route. Oh, it is all a dirty, lousy business and I sometimes ask God why I have to be chosen for this particular work.

Now I realize how tenuous were the links to my friends and to my journal, which kept me integral and not too deeply stained by the monstrous cruelty of war. Becoming a functionary is not entirely foreign to the nature of the majority of us.

However overwhelmed by brutality and suffering I became at times, they represent, after all, only one aspect of war. It would be false to dwell solely on them and ignore other features of war experience that are equally important. There was also the intense nervous excitement of great moments, in which even the dullest of us were conscious of participating in historical events of overawing importance. Thousands of veterans must remember our entry into Rome in June 1944, after the dreary, lethal, and endless winter on the Anzio beachhead or the Cassino front. Suddenly and as if by magic we were in a beautiful city, full of sunshine and of excited people intent on showering us with favors. In place of the sad and dumpy creatures we had supposed all Italians were, here were fresh-faced, bare-legged, wonderful girls, hungry for men, who seemed to regard us when we first entered the city as akin to demigods. There was something primitive and archaic about the emotions that swept over all of us on that first glorious day in Rome. The Eternal City was welcoming another conqueror, and, as we were hugged and embraced for hours by the ex-

Remembering War and Forgetfulness

uberant populace, I felt like one of the soldiers who took the city thousands of years before.

And the capture of Rome was nothing more than the most massive of these welcomings. In France it happened in many a town and city that we felt like conquering heroes, that delicious, boyish sense of triumph and elation, ridiculous but irresistible. In my journal I find a brief account of one such occasion, which could stand for many.

My heart is full tonight. We are at Vienne, near Lyons, and were the first Americans in the town. Our reception was unequaled, even by Rome. Everybody was out on the streets, even though it was raining, and we were kissed and showered with flowers for hours. We took the flowers to the grave of the unknown soldier after awhile and then we were really mobbed. Surely no emperor has ever received more sincere and enthusiastic welcome than we. They took us to the famous Point restaurant, and we ate as I have never eaten before in Europe or elsewhere. Then to hotel rooms where each has a room to himself and wonderful beds. Tonight the others have gone on, and I got the owner of the hotel to show me the churches and the town. My first pure Gothic cathedral, 11th century, a refreshment to the spirit like nothing else; then a view of the town from the heights, beautiful under the evening sky, with its red roofs, its Roman remains on adjacent hills. Then later I arranged a coffee-drinking party with the lady in charge of the hotel—an Italian by birth. We had fifteen or twenty men and women there and how they enjoyed the coffee and cigarettes! We are almost like gods to these people. I laugh at myself but I get excited too.

How characteristic that last line is of many moods in those days. One laughed joyously and felt a bit sheepish at the same time. At some level we knew that we were far from being what these people thought us, but it was unbelievably pleasant, nevertheless. It was compensation for the opposite situation

THE WARRIORS

and mood, which were our usual lot, for everyone knows that war can be the most excruciatingly boring of all human activities. The alternation of dullness and excitement in their extreme degrees separates war from peace sharply and promotes the discontinuity in our memories. War compresses the greatest opposites into the smallest space and the shortest time.

Not only do boredom and throbbing excitement succeed each other rapidly, but other emotions as well. In a town near Vienne the people divided their attention between cheering us and persecuting collaborators who were being rounded up by the Resistance youth. In the delirium of liberation, many individuals were constantly going from a group that was hugging and kissing returned FFI comrades to join another that was torturing isolated collaborators. We could observe love and hatred, tenderness and brutality, succeed each other in many a person within moments. Excitement was at fever pitch. German soldiers with hands high in the air were being marched to a prisoner collection point by triumphant boys. With a sense of horror, a comrade and I walking the streets watched a group beating a girl whose hair had been crudely sheared off and her face bloodied and bruised. She was crying bitterly as her tormentors kicked her along, taunting and jeering and hooting; evidently she had been the mistress of some German and possibly had spied on the local Resistance. A little further on we saw a man, with his face cut, running like a hurt and frightened beast before men who were doing worse things to him than were happening to the girl. It was clear that he had no chance of remaining alive if and when his pursuers cornered him.

Suddenly from a group perhaps twenty yards ahead of us a girl detached herself and ran directly toward me. Slim and fleet as a deer, she was in my startled arms before I knew

Nevertheless, the sight of him gradually calmed me, so that when our craft reached the shore I was able to get into my jeep and drive it hurriedly through the surf and up onto dry land.

In a grove a few hundred yards inland, we had to stop and peel the protective putty from our motors, which had kept them from drowning out in the shallow water. Again the shells began to discover our location and to get close. Finally one plopped among us, and as I threw myself down I waited for the fragments to dig into my flesh. All that hit me was dirt and little stones thrown up by the shell. But it scared me unreasonably; the next one, I was sure, would be the end for me. I had no cover, so I got up and ran for the nearest protection I could find, which was very inadequate. There I discovered other soldiers as near to Mother Nature as they could get. I followed their example and began digging a slit trench among the rocks with my fingernails. The next explosion was farther off, and we began to breathe easier. After a while we went back, and discovered that the jeep next to mine had huge holes through the engine. Other nearby vehicles were in similar condition.

Such external descriptions give little idea of the racing excitement that underlies the occasion. And landings are only an outstanding instance. Anyone who has lived through an air raid of any magnitude at all knew a quality of excitement scarcely experienced before or since. Fear may have been the dominant feature of such excitement; rarely was it the only ingredient. In such an emotional situation there is often a surge of vitality and a glimpse of potentialities, of what we really are or have been or might become, as fleeting as it is genuine. In these situations some are able to serve others in simple yet fundamental ways. Inhuman cruelty can give way to super-

human kindness. Inhibitions vanish, and people are reduced to their essence. If afterward they seem quickly to forget, perhaps the memory is not wholly lost. Again and again in moments of this kind I was as much inspired by the nobility of some of my fellows as appalled by the animality of others, or, more exactly, by both qualities in the same person. The average degree, which we commonly know in peacetime, conceals as much as it reveals about the human creature.

Then there was the strange. I think every soldier must have felt at times that this or that happening fitted into nothing that had gone before; it was incomprehensible, either absurd or mysterious or both. If many events of this sort came to us, we began to feel foreign to our own skins, intruders in the world. More often than at home, we would wake up in the night and wonder where we were. And, our senses fully recovered in a few seconds, we might begin to ponder what it meant to be where we were. I suppose this feeling of strangeness came over us so often because of our comrades. Since they were not chosen and usually had no prewar connection with each other or each other's home towns, however dear they had become in military life, they represented discontinuity with all but the present and the immediate past.

I confess that a large number of Americans I met in the Army amazed me by their differentness. I had not known their like before, nor have I met them since. Nothing else could have made me realize how narrow the circle in which we move in peacetime is. Most of us hardly get an inkling of how ninety per cent of our fellows live or think. Naïvely we assume that they must be like us or not very different.

Whatever the cause, I was surely not alone in being under the spell of the strange. Sometimes I moved through days and

at the thought of those who had lost their lives in the last few days of fighting. How could I ever make sense of the tragedy of those, in concentration camp and front line, who had longed for this day through the years only to perish a few hours or days before its dawn? Why had I been spared? To these questions no answer came.

The next months were a severe struggle with restlessness, a nearly universal disease of that period and not at all confined to veteran soldiers. At times I wanted to transfer to UNRRA and help rebuild the shattered countries I had done my bit to tear down. At other times I wanted to escape the charnel house of Europe and seek to find myself in the profession I had prepared for in years that now appeared incredibly remote. When a job offer unexpectedly came from an American college president, I did not know whether I was glad or sorry. It set me dreaming of teaching sober, interested students, working out with them some of the tormenting problems of life and thought. But could I endure big, blustering, unrepentant America? I speculated in my journal on what I would answer if the college president were to ask me what my philosophic position was, and decided I would answer that I was a broken-hearted idealist, realizing that, while such an answer would not stand for much in formal philosophy, it had a significance for me that he could scarcely fathom.

However, the passage of time puts a new face on everything. I soon got out of the Army and gradually I got used to peacetime ways again. It seems scarcely credible to me now that for a period I felt curiously undressed without a pistol on my hip, and I trod softly for a while on all loose sod, unconsciously fearing booby traps, those devilish antipersonnel mines designed to kill or castrate the unwary soldier who stepped on one. When a new generation of college students replaced the

veterans with whom I could philosophize meaningfully without mentioning our common past, the war receded even faster than before. Now it is almost as though it never took place.

Yet something is wrong, dreadfully wrong. When I consider how easily we forget the millions who suffered unbearably, either permanently maimed in body or mind, or who gave up their lives before they had realized their purposes, I rebel at the whole insane spectacle of human existence. Had I been one of them, how little difference it would make to anyone today. Are we, the survivors, changed at all in significant ways as a consequence of World War II? Am I? And if so, how?

Answering for myself only, I must say: Not nearly enough. Despite the mood of my letter from Alsace, I have not adopted the Christian injunction or heeded Auden's warning. Instead, I have yielded to an old temptation. So often in the war I felt an utter dissociation from what had gone before in my life; since then I have experienced an absence of continuity between those years and what I have become. As a teacher of philosophy and would-be philosopher, I strive to see at least my own life as a whole and to discover some purpose and direction in at least the major parts. Yet the effort to assimilate those intense war memories to the rest of my experience is difficult and even frightening. Why attempt it? Why not continue to forget?

It is a real temptation, urged upon us by many. There is a popular belief that the men who knew war at firsthand talk little or not at all about it. Those who do are suspected of wanting to magnify their little egos, of being professional legionnaires. Besides, people are tired of war; one can hear the refrain in a thousand living rooms. They want to read about it as fiction, and so transmute war into art, or have it as

history, in memoirs of generals and statesmen. These, admirable as the good ones are, do not make heavy demands on us to assimilate, to bridge the abyss between peace and war. They rarely ask why and to what purpose, and are strangely incurious concerning the psychological and moral interrelations of man as warrior and as civilian.

I am afraid to forget. I fear that we human creatures do not forget cleanly, as the animals presumably do. What protrudes and does not fit in our pasts rises to haunt us and make us spiritually unwell in the present. The discontinuities in contemporary life are cutting us off from our roots and threatening us with the dread evil of nihilism in the twentieth century. We may become refugees in an inner sense unless we remember to some purpose. Surely the menace of new and more frightful wars is not entirely unrelated to our failure to understand those recently fought. If we could gain only a modicum of greater wisdom concerning what manner of men we are, what effect might it not have on future events?

It is exceedingly unlikely that I shall ever be able to understand the why and wherefore of war. But sufficient reflection through the mirror of memory may enable me to make sense of my own small career. The deepest fear of my war years, one still with me, is that these happenings had no real purpose. Just as chance often appeared to rule my course then, so the more ordered paths of peace might well signify nothing or nothing much. This conclusion I am unwilling to accept without a struggle; indeed, I cannot accept it at all except as a counsel of despair. How often I wrote in my war journals that unless that day had some positive significance for my future life, it could not possibly be worth the pain it cost.



THE
ENDURING
APPEALS
OF BATTLE

I feel cheerful and am well-pleased. . . . What is ahead may be grim and dreadful but I shall be spiritually more at rest in the heart of the carnage than somewhere in the rear. Since I have lent myself to the war, I want to pay the price and know it at its worst. (War journal, January 31, 1944)

My friend wrote once late in the war that he often thought of me as *the soldier*. To him I had come to stand for the qualities that he associated with universal man at war. The idea, I recall, both flattered and insulted me a little at first but ended by impressing me with its truth, though I should never have conceived it on my own. I wrote in my journal: "Perhaps the worst that can be said is that I am *becoming* a soldier. To be a soldier! That is at best to be something less

than a man. To say nothing of being a philosopher." Since then I have frequently wondered what it meant to be a "soldier" and why I regarded myself then, insofar as I was a soldier, as less than a man.

At the time I wrote these lines I faced the grim realization of how narrowed all our desires had become. The night before, one of the women in the town where we were staying had declared: "*Das Essen ist die Hauptsache.*" Food is the main thing. And the words had burned into my brain with the force of a proverb. The majority of my fellows seemed content with the satisfaction of their natural urges—eating, drinking, and lusting for women. Interests and refinements that transcended these primitive needs, and that I had built up over the years, were rapidly falling away, and I felt that I was becoming simply one of the others.

In a German newspaper, taken from a prisoner, I read a letter from a soldier long years on the Russian front, who lamented that the war had robbed him of any sense of self-identity and that he no longer possessed an ego and a personal fate. I realize now, much better than I did then, that there was another force much more determining than simple need and desire. It was the emotional environment of warfare, more specifically, the atmosphere of violence. The threat to life and safety that the presence of the opponent, "the enemy," represented created this climate of feeling. Near the front it was impossible to ignore, consciously or unconsciously, the stark fact that out there were men who would gladly kill you, if and when they got the chance. As a consequence, an individual was dependent on others, on people who could not formerly have entered the periphery of his consciousness. For them in turn, he was of interest only as a center of force, a wielder of

weapons, a means of security and survival. This confraternity of danger and exposure is unequalled in forging links among people of unlike desire and temperament, links that are utilitarian and narrow but no less passionate because of their accidental and general character.

In such a climate men may hold fast in memory to their civilian existence of yesterday and stubbornly resist, as I tried to do, the encroachments of the violent and the irrational. They may write home to their parents and sweethearts that they are unchanged, and they may even be convinced of it. But the soldier who has yielded himself to the fortunes of war, has sought to kill and to escape being killed, or who has even lived long enough in the disordered landscape of battle, is no longer what he was. He becomes in some sense a fighter, whether he wills it or not—at least most men do. His moods and disposition are affected by the presence of others and the encompassing environment of threat and fear. He must surrender in a measure to the will of others and to superior force. In a real sense he becomes a fighting man, a *Homo furens*.

This is surely part of what it means to be a soldier, and what it has always meant. *Homo furens* is, so to speak, a subspecies of the genus *Homo sapiens*. Obviously, man is more than a fighter and other than a fighter, in our age and formerly. In some generations—alas! too few as yet—organized war has been little more than an episode. Even those generations who have had to spend much time in combat considered themselves farmers, teachers, factory workers, and so on, as well as fighters. Man as warrior is only partly a man, yet, fatefully enough, this aspect of him is capable of transforming the whole. When given free play, it is able to subordinate other aspects of the personality, repress civilian

habits of mind, and make the soldier as fighter a different kind of creature from the former worker, farmer, or clerk.

Millions of men in our day—like millions before us—have learned to live in war's strange element and have discovered in it a powerful fascination. The emotional environment of warfare has always been compelling; it has drawn most men under its spell. Reflection and calm reasoning are alien to it. I wrote in my war journal that I was obsessed with "the tyranny of the present"; the past and the future did not concern me. It was hard for me to think, to be alone. When the signs of peace were visible, I wrote, in some regret: "The purgative force of danger which makes men coarser but perhaps more human will soon be lost and the first months of peace will make some of us yearn for the old days of conflict."

Beyond doubt there are many who simply endure war, hating every moment. Though they may enjoy garrison life or military maneuvers, they experience nothing but distaste and horror for combat itself. Still, those who complain the most may not be immune from war's appeals. Soldiers complain as an inherited right and traditional duty, and few wish to admit to a taste for war. **Yet many men both hate and love combat.** They know why they hate it; it is harder to know and to be articulate about why they love it. The novice may be eager at times to describe his emotions in combat, but it is the battle-hardened veterans to whom battle has offered the deeper appeals. For some of them the war years are what Dixon Wecter has well called "the one great lyric passage in their lives."

What are these secret attractions of war, the ones that have persisted in the West despite revolutionary changes in the methods of warfare? I believe that they are: the delight in

seeing, the delight in comradeship, the delight in destruction. Some fighters know one appeal and not the others, some experience all three, and some may, of course, feel other appeals that I do not know. These three had reality for me, and I have found them also throughout the literature of war.

War as a spectacle, as something to see, ought never to be underestimated. There is in all of us what the Bible calls "the lust of the eye," a phrase at once precise and of the widest connotation. It is precise because human beings possess as a primitive urge this love of watching. We fear we will miss something worth seeing. This passion to see surely precedes in most of us the urge to participate in or to aid. Anyone who has watched people crowding around the scene of an accident on the highway realizes that the lust of the eye is real. Anyone who has watched the faces of people at a fire knows it is real. Seeing sometimes absorbs us utterly; it is as though the human being became one great eye. The eye is lustful because it requires the novel, the unusual, the spectacular. It cannot satiate itself on the familiar, the routine, the everyday.

This lust may stoop to mindless curiosity, a primordial impulse. Its typical response is an open-minded gaping at a parade or at the explosion of a hydrogen bomb. How many men in each generation have been drawn into the twilight of confused and murderous battle "to see what it is like"? This appeal of war is usually described as the desire to escape the monotony of civilian life and the cramping restrictions of an unadventurous existence. People are often bored with a day that does not offer variety, distraction, threat, and insecurity. They crave the satisfaction of the astonishing. Although war notoriously offers monotony and boredom enough, it also offers the outlandish, the exotic, and the strange. It offers the opportunity of gaping at other lands and other peoples, at

The Enduring Appeals of Battle

every artist knows. And furthermore, beauty in various guises is hardly foreign to scenes of battle. While it is undeniable that the disorder and distortion and the violation of nature that conflict brings are ugly beyond compare, there are also color and movement, variety, panoramic sweep, and sometimes even momentary proportion and harmony. If we think of beauty and ugliness without their usual moral overtones, there is often a weird but genuine beauty in the sight of massed men and weapons in combat. Reputedly, it was the sight of advancing columns of men under fire that impelled General Robert E. Lee to remark to one of his staff: "It is well that war is so terrible—we would grow too fond of it."

Of course, it is said that modern battles lack all the color and magnificence of spectacle common to earlier wars. John Neff, in his valuable study entitled *War and Human Progress*, makes much of the decline in our century of the power and authority of what he calls "the claims of delight." In earlier times men at war, he points out, were much more dominated by artistic considerations in the construction of their weapons. They insisted on the decorative and beautiful in cannons, ships, and small arms, even at the obvious expense of the practical and militarily effective. Then, artists of great skill and fame worked on weapons of war, and gunsmiths took great pride in the beauty of their products. The claims of beauty, Neff believes, have had to give way more and more to materialistic and pragmatic aims in this century of total warfare. When I remember some of the hideous implements of battle in World War II, it is hard indeed not to agree with him. Standardization and automatization of weapons have frequently stripped them of any pretense to beauty.

This, though, is only one aspect of battle and of modern war. What has been lost in one realm is compensated for in

The Enduring Appeals of Battle

When I could forget the havoc and terror that was being created by those shells and bombs among the half-awake inhabitants of the villages, the scene was beyond all question magnificent. I found it easily possible, indeed a temptation hard to resist, to gaze upon the scene spellbound, completely absorbed, indifferent to what the immediate future might bring. Others appeared to manifest a similar intense concentration on the spectacle. Many former soldiers must be able to recall some similar experience. However incomprehensible such scenes may be, and however little anyone would want to see them enacted a second time, few of us can deny, if we are honest, a satisfaction in having seen them. As far as I am concerned, at least part of that satisfaction can be ascribed to delight in aesthetic contemplation.

As I reflect further, it becomes clear, however, that the term "beauty," used in any ordinary sense, is not the major appeal in such spectacles. Instead, it is the fascination that manifestations of power and magnitude hold for the human spirit. Some scenes of battle, much like storms over the ocean or sunsets on the desert or the night sky seen through a telescope, are able to overawe the single individual and hold him in a spell. He is lost in their majesty. His ego temporarily deserts him, and he is absorbed into what he sees. An awareness of power that far surpasses his limited imagination transports him into a state of mind unknown in his everyday experiences. Fleeting as these rapt moments may be, they are, for the majority of men, an escape from themselves that is very different from the escapes induced by sexual love or alcohol. This raptness is a joining and not a losing, a deprivation of self in exchange for a union with objects that were hitherto foreign. Yes, the chief aesthetic appeal of war surely lies in this feeling of the sublime, to which we, children of nature,

The Enduring Appeals of Battle

land. As it grew dark, huge signs of fire appeared on the mountain. It was mysterious, but we had no doubt that it had to do with death and destruction.

The feeling of momentary depression, as Kant puts it, which we initially succumb to when looking through a telescope at the vastness of the heavens and the insignificance of ourselves in comparison is soon supplanted by the consciousness that we are the astronomers. It is we who know that the heavens are empty and vast, and the heavens presumably know nothing of us. The human spirit triumphs over these blind forces and lifeless powers of nature. Such scenes as I described above could be explained, by this view, as the exultation of the spectators that they were not actors or sufferers, for the sublime mood derives from a separation of the spectator from the spectacle, and its pleasantness consists in the superiority the ego feels.

But such a view is wrong, or, at the very least, one-sided. It is the viewpoint of an egoistic, atomistic psychology rather than the product of close observation. The awe that steals over us at such times is not essentially a feeling of triumph, but, on the contrary, a recognition of power and grandeur to which we are subject. There is not so much a separation of the self from the world as a subordination of the self to it. We are able to disregard personal danger at such moments by transcending the self, by forgetting our separateness.

Last evening I sat on a rock outside the town and watched a modern battle, an artillery duel . . . the panorama was so far-reaching that I could see both the explosion of the guns and where their speedy messengers struck. . . . Several shells of replying batteries landed fairly close and made my perch not the safest of vantage points. But it was an interesting, stirring sight. After a while the firing died down and evening shadows came over the

valley. A townsman carrying a pail of swill for his hogs came by, fell into conversation, and then asked me to await his return, when he would take me to his home for a glass of wine.

Perhaps the majority of men cannot become so absorbed in a spectacle that they overcome fear of pain and death. Still, it is a common-enough phenomenon on the battlefield that men expose themselves quite recklessly for the sake of seeing. If ever the world is blown to bits by some superbomb, there will be those who will watch the spectacle to the last minute, without fear, disinterestedly and with detachment. I do not mean that there is lack of interest in this disinterestedness or lack of emotion in this detachment. Quite the contrary. But the self is no longer important to the observer; it is absorbed into the objects with which it is concerned.

I think the distinctive thing about the feeling of the sublime is its ecstatic character, ecstatic in the original meaning of the term, namely, a state of being outside the self. Even in the common experience of mindless curiosity there is a momentary suppression of the ego, a slight breaking down of the barriers of the self, though insignificant in comparison with the rarer moods when we are filled with awe. This ecstasy satisfies because we are conscious of a power outside us with which we can merge in the relation of parts to whole. Feelings neither of triumph nor of depression predominate. The pervasive sense of wonder satisfies us because we are assured that we are part of this circling world, not divorced from it, or shut up within the walls of the self and delivered over to the insufficiency of the ego. Certain psychologists would call this just another escape from the unpleasant facts of the self's situation. If so, it is an escape of a very different sort from the usual. We feel rescued from the emptiness within us. In losing ourselves we gain a relationship to something greater

than the self, and the foreign character of the surrounding world is drastically reduced.

A good example of what I am saying can be found in a little book entitled *Letzte Briefe aus Stalingrad* (Last Letters from Stalingrad). In 1943 the German high command, anxious to assess the morale of the encircled soldiers at Stalingrad, sent word that mail would be forwarded to their homes by plane. Since the situation had become desperate, most of the men understood that this would probably be their last communication with home. After the letters were written, they were requisitioned by German security officers and never delivered to the addressees. At the end of the war, the packets of letters were discovered in police buildings, and a selection from them, without the names of the men who wrote them, was published in Germany. These letters, intended only for the eyes of loved ones by men who were experiencing the bitter shock of military defeat after spectacular victories, have a stark quality seldom found in war literature. The following translation is from the first one in the little volume, and is obviously from the hand of a military meteorologist:

My life has not changed at all. Just as it was ten years ago, my life is blessed by the stars and shunned by man. I had even then no friends and you know why they avoided me. My happiness was to sit in front of the telescope and peer at the sky and the world of the stars, pleased as a child who is allowed to play with the stars.

You were my best friend, Monika. No, you read it aright; you were my best friend. The time is too serious for joking. This letter will need fourteen days to reach you. By that time you will have read in the papers what has happened here. Don't think too much about it. The facts will be quite different from what you read, but let other people worry about setting them straight. I have always thought in light-years and felt in seconds. Here too

The Enduring Appeals of Battle

sure, he is doubtless an exception. He tells us himself that he was accustomed to being alone with his thoughts a great deal, and he is an astronomer. Perhaps most soldiers are incapable of carrying absorption so far. Yet many have felt similar urgings toward the infinite in moments of extremity, and, though they cannot be articulate about such experiences, they are rarely quite the same afterward.

If the delight in seeing, especially in its higher reaches, appears to be a noble quality in men, we should not forget one salient fact: It nearly always involves a neglect of moral ideals and an absence of concern for the practical. That is why the lust of the eye is roundly condemned in Biblical context. Morality involves action, while seeing, in all of its meanings, is a fugitive from action. Morality is based on the social; the ecstatic, on the other hand, is transsocial. The fulfillment of the aesthetic is in contemplation, and it shuns the patience and the hard work that genuine morality demands. The deterioration of moral fervor, which is a consequence of every war, may not be entirely due to the reversal of values that fighting and killing occasion. May it not be also a consequence of aesthetic ecstasy, which is always pressing us beyond the border of the morally permissible? The experience in memory may be uncanny and leave no desire for repetition. Yet we find it difficult after the war to regain the full conviction of previous moral goals.

Another appeal of war, the communal experience we call comradeship, is thought, on the other hand, to be especially moral and the one genuine advantage of battle that peace can seldom offer. Whether this is true or not deserves to be investigated. The term "comradeship" covers a large number of relationships, from the most personal to the anonymous and

THE WARRIORS

most soldiers there is the hovering inescapable sense of irreversibility. "This is for keeps," as soldier slang is likely to put it. This profound earnestness is by no means devoid of lightheartedness, as seen in teasing and horseplay, but men are conscious that they are on a one-way street, so to speak, and what they do or fail to do can be of great consequence. Those who enter into battle, as distinguished from those who only hover on its fringes, do not fight as duelists fight. Almost automatically, they fight as a unit, a group. Training can help a great deal in bringing this about more quickly and easily in an early stage. But training can only help to make actual what is inherent. As any commander knows, an hour or two of combat can do more to weld a unit together than can months of intensive training.

Many veterans who are honest with themselves will admit, I believe, that the experience of communal effort in battle, even under the altered conditions of modern war, has been a high point in their lives. Despite the horror, the weariness, the grime, and the hatred, participation with others in the chances of battle had its unforgettable side, which they would not want to have missed. For anyone who has not experienced it himself, the feeling is hard to comprehend, and, for the participant, hard to explain to anyone else. Probably the feeling of liberation is nearly basic. It is this feeling that explains the curious combination of earnestness and lightheartedness so often noted in men in battle.

Many of us can experience freedom as a thrilling reality, something both serious and joyous, only when we are acting in unison with others for a concrete goal that costs something absolute for its attainment. Individual freedom to do what we will with our lives and our talents, the freedom of self-determination, appears to us most of the time as frivolous or

of communal joy in its forbidden depths. Comradeship reaches its peak in battle.

The secret of comradeship has not been exhausted, however, in the feeling of freedom and power instilled in us by communal effort in combat. There is something more and equally important. The sense of power and liberation that comes over men at such moments stems from a source beyond the union of men. I believe it is nothing less than the assurance of immortality that makes self-sacrifice at these moments so relatively easy. Men are true comrades only when each is ready to give up his life for the other, without reflection and without thought of personal loss. Who can doubt that every war, the two world wars no less than former ones, has produced true comradeship like this?

Such sacrifice seems hard and heroic to those who have never felt communal ecstasy. In fact, it is not nearly so difficult as many less absolute acts in peacetime and in civilian life, for death becomes in a measure unreal and unbelievable to one who is sharing his life with his companions. Immortality is not something remote and otherworldly, possibly or probably true and real; on the contrary, it becomes a present and self-evident fact.

Nothing is further from the truth than the insistence of certain existentialist philosophers that each person must die his own death and experience it unsharably. If that were so, how many lives would have been spared on the battlefield! But in fact, death for men united with each other can be shared as few other of life's great moments can be. To be sure, it is not death as we know it usually in civilian life. In the German language men never die in battle. They *fall*. The term is exact for the expression of self-sacrifice when it is motivated by the feeling of comradeship. I may fall, but I do not die,

for that which is real in me goes forward and lives on in the comrades for whom I gave up my physical life.

Let me not be misunderstood. It is unquestionably true that thousands of soldiers die in battle, miserable, alone, and embittered, without any conviction of self-sacrifice and without any other satisfactions. I suspect the percentage of such soldiers has increased markedly in recent wars. But for those who in every battle are seized by the passion for self-sacrifice, dying has lost its terrors because its reality has vanished.

There must be a similarity between this willingness of soldier-comrades for self-sacrifice and the willingness of saints and martyrs to die for their religious faith. It is probably no accident that the religions of the West have not cast away their military terminology or even their militant character—"Onward, Christian soldiers! Marching as to war . . ." nor that our wars are defended in terms of devotion and salvation. The true believer must be ready to give up his life for the faith. And if he is a genuine saint he will regard this sacrifice as no loss, for the self has become indestructible in being united with a supreme reality. There are, of course, important differences. The reality for which the martyr sacrifices himself is not visible and intimate like the soldier's. The martyr usually dies alone, scorned by the multitude. In this sense his lot is infinitely harder. It is hardly surprising that few men are capable of dying joyfully as martyrs whereas thousands are capable of self-sacrifice in wartime. Nevertheless, a basic point of resemblance remains, namely, that death has lost not only its sting but its reality, too, for the self that dies is little in comparison with that which survives and triumphs.

This is the mystical element of war that has been mentioned by nearly all serious writers on the subject. William James spoke of it as a sacrament, and once remarked that "society

The Enduring Appeals of Battle

different destiny than is granted to other animals. Though we often sink below them, we can at moments rise above them, too.

If the lust of the eye and the yearning for communion with our fellows were the only appeals of combat, we might be confident that they would be ultimately capable of satisfaction in other ways. But my own observation and the history of warfare both convince me that there is a third impulse to battle much more sinister than these. Anyone who has watched men on the battlefield at work with artillery, or looked into the eyes of veteran killers fresh from slaughter, or studied the descriptions of bombardiers' feelings while smashing their targets, finds hard to escape the conclusion that there is a **delight in destruction**. A walk across any battlefield shortly after the guns have fallen silent is convincing enough. A sensitive person is sure to be oppressed by a spirit of evil there, a radical evil which suddenly makes the medieval images of hell and the thousand devils of that imagination believable. This evil appears to surpass mere human malice and to demand explanation in cosmological and religious terms.

Men who have lived in the zone of combat long enough to be veterans are sometimes possessed by a fury that makes them capable of anything. Blinded by the rage to destroy and supremely careless of consequences, they storm against the enemy until they are either victorious, dead, or utterly exhausted. **It is as if they are seized by a demon** and are no longer in control of themselves. From the Homeric account of the sacking of Troy to the conquest of Dienbienphu, Western literature is filled with descriptions of soldiers as berserkers and mad destroyers.

Perhaps the following account from the diary of Ernst

THE WARRIORS

in the end isolated and alone. Destruction is an artistry directed not toward perfection and fulfillment, but toward chaos and moral anarchy. Its delights may be deep and within the reach of more men than are the joys of creation, but their capacity to reproduce and to endure is very limited. Just as creation raises us above the level of the animal, destruction forces us below it by eliminating communication. As creativity can unite us with our natural and human environment, destruction isolates us from both. That is why destruction in retrospect usually appears so repellent in its inmost nature.

If we ask what the points of similarity are between the appeal of destruction and the two appeals of war I have already examined, I think it is not difficult to recognize that the delight in destroying has, like the others, an ecstatic character. But in one sense only. Men feel overpowered by it, seized from without, and relatively helpless to change or control it. Nevertheless, it is an ecstasy without a union, for comradeship among killers is terribly difficult, and the kinship with nature that aesthetic vision often affords is closed to them. Nor is the breaking down of the barriers of self a quality of the appeal of destroying. On the contrary, I think that destruction is ultimately an individual matter, a function of the person and not the group. This is not to deny, of course, that men go berserk in groups and kill more easily together than when alone. Yet the satisfaction it brings appears to lie, not in losing themselves and their egos, but precisely in greater consciousness of themselves. If they hold together as partners in destruction, it is not so much from a feeling of belonging as from fear of retaliation when alone.

The willingness to sacrifice self for comrades is no longer characteristic of soldiers who have become killers for pleasure. War henceforth becomes for them increasingly what the phi-

THE WARRIORS

enemy. I can only conclude that for the sensualist, as for his coarser brother, love signifies a devouring of the object and not a union with the subject. The beauty of loving is for him an outer cloak only; inwardly he is either empty or rapacious. Moreover, he is essentially uncontrollable by reason; his nature is in the service of passion exclusively.

The deities of love and war have never given birth to more dangerous offspring than these complete sensualists. Mythologically, they are the children of Anteros (Passion), who was also a son of the union of Ares and Aphrodite. These soldiers make war with the same participation of their whole being as they make love. The absence of external coarseness and obscenity in them is a poor compensation for the increased possibilities of degradation and genuine wickedness they display. Sensualists usually have complex natures, and frequently intelligent ones as well. Since they are given over to passions of love and violence, they live in war's element more internally secure than anyone else. It is as though they find in the union of love and war the only fulfillment of which they are capable. Unlike the simpler soldier already described, whose sexual needs appear relatively external and separable from the rest of him, the sensualists are integral; they are whole men in the expression of their passions. Hence they can more easily step over the line to become killers and to delight in destruction for its own sake than any other kind of soldier. Fewer inhibitions restrain them and their interests are usually narrow, being concentrated on conquest, erotic or martial.

But, a skeptical reader may ask, are there such soldiers in reality or is this not an abstraction you are depicting? I confess that I have never known a complete sensualist before or since my army days and so can understand a reader's doubts. Perhaps it is because I have moved in more restricted circles,

THE WARRIORS

being beyond the physiological and psychological, that it is indeed a **cosmic force**. When we see lovers assert the unity of their being in the face of desolation and destruction, a being in the midst of, but also above, conflict, we are forced to acknowledge the transcendent character of love. The lovers exemplify it, they do not create it; **they are caught up in it rather than possess it**. Love's very nature is to be ecstatic, to draw single units out of themselves and into a higher unity. Its roots are in the widest reaches of being itself, uniting the human entity to the rest of creation. When we confront a love of this tragic kind, we are nearly forced to say, foolishly wise: This is the way the world is. Though we may forget tomorrow what it teaches us today, we are dimly aware that other dimensions of reality exist than are disclosed to everyday moods.

That such love is inexorably wedded to war, we may justly doubt, but that war has often enabled lovers to understand the true fount and origin of their love is also beyond dispute. It is, of all the forms of erotic love, the least wedded to violence. Clearly, the reason is that it is the most integral, uniting, as it does, not only two individuals to each other, but two individuals to the wider realms of being. That even this does not always bring them peace is an indication that the world substance itself, whatever it may be, is not harmonious, complete, or single. True lovers hate war with all their heart, since it demonstrates too well that others have not found the secret of life that they know. But perhaps even they may sometimes admit that they learned the secret only when suspended over the abyss of death. We human beings are not very creative, otherwise we should have discovered other extreme situations that could serve better than war to teach us what we need to know, and without war's loss and unintelligibility.

It is my belief that there is no higher form of love than this

peace again. Then we are dependent upon this desire, which has long been subordinated in us by war, to cultivate and reconstruct. Were this impulse not pervasive and dependable, the race of man would hardly have survived and grown so powerful on this planet, surrounded as we are by manifold dangers of nature and torn by murderous lusts within our own species.

I think it is concerned love that, more than anything else, helps us find our way back to peace again and heals the hatred of belligerents for each other. When soldiers lose this need to preserve and become impersonal killers, they are truly figures of terror. Fortunately, few men ever obliterate this kind of love altogether, though they may well become indifferent to their own fate and full of hatred for a large segment of mankind. Few of us reflect enough on the good fortune that attends us as human beings in being pervaded by preservative love. If our wars were to make killers of all combat soldiers, rather than men who have killed, civilian life would be endangered for generations or, in fact, made impossible.

Concern in its farther reaches is directed beyond human life to the works of man and to the things of nature. It is present in the builder of dwellings and the tiller of the soil as well as in the thousand modifications of these basic occupations. We see it, if we have thoughtful eyes, at work everywhere, and the slightest incident in war can teach us more about it than the longest campaign. I remember riding through Germany in the last days of World War II, in pursuit of the disorganized enemy. Outside a battered city somewhere in Württemberg there was a lovely terraced plot of ground on which a house had stood. It had been razed by bombs and fire, and even the fence around it had been destroyed. Only the front gate remained, though it was awry on its hinges and partly

smashed. As my jeep passed, I caught a glimpse of the owner carefully working to repair the gate. The sight struck me at first as absurd and comical in the extreme, for the gate opened on nothing any longer. But the recollection was deeply cheering, and much later I realized why. The repair of the gate symbolized perfectly the civilizing impulse in human creatures, our urge to preserve and conserve, to take care and to cultivate.

Today many are astonished by the way Germans, for example, rebuild their shattered cities with houses meant to last for a century, when they can hardly be sure that the uneasy peace will endure for five years. Such observers may conclude that Germans are incurably optimistic. In fact, of course, they are not. They themselves scarcely know why they work so hard and build so permanently when they lie under the shadow of the iron curtain. Realistically seen, they are probably foolish. But, after a period of destructive lust, such permanent building satisfies a deep impulse in this people to give full play to conservative and constructive powers. One might think that after three decades or more of extreme disorder and conflict, these powers would be paralyzed, or at least lamed. Yet whatever else has been lost in the German nation, and much has been lost, resistance to destruction and to chaos is still strong. No modern war has until now lasted long enough to contract this preservative love to mere survival of the individual naked life or to make men in large numbers unregenerate killers. Such wars are possible in the future. But the civilizing impulse is strong indeed, and frequently carries us along after reason and will have been temporarily overpowered.

Pervasive as this love is, and connected with the very structure of civilization, its appeal is always greatest when destruction is close at hand and threatening to overwhelm us. I cannot believe that wars are necessary for the fulfillment of this

Love: War's Ally and Foe

way. It is the love we call friendship. Now friendship has often enough been defined in our tradition as that relationship between human beings in which each dispassionately seeks the welfare of the other. Friendship is thus thought to be the most unselfish form of love, since in the pure state it devotes itself without reserve to the interests of the other. Accordingly, many societies have exalted friendship as the noblest of all relationships, and even the founder of Christianity, to whom another form of love took precedence, is declared to have said: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

What meaning has friendship for warriors? How can a young man endure battle when the fear of death is doubled, when not only his own life but that of his friend is at stake? Is the quality of this relationship heightened or reduced by the dread strain of war? Before trying to answer these questions, I must first attempt to make clear a basic difference between friends and comrades. Only those men or women can be friends, I believe, who possess an intellectual and emotional affinity for each other. They must be predetermined for each other, as it were, and then must discover each other, something that happens rarely enough in peace or war.

Though many men never have a friend, and even the most fortunate of us can have few, comradeship is fortunately within reach of the vast majority. Suffering and danger cannot create friendship, but they make all the difference in comradeship. Men who have lived through hard and dangerous experiences together are frequently deceived about their relationship. Comrades love one another like brothers, and under the influence of shared experience commonly vow to remain true friends for the rest of their lives. But when other experiences intervene and common memories dim, they gradually become

strangers. At veterans' conventions they can usually regain the old feelings only with the aid of alcoholic stimulation. The false heartiness and sentimentality of such encounters are oppressive and pathetic. Men who once knew genuine closeness to each other through hazardous experience have lost one another forever. And since most men rarely attain anything closer to friendship than this, the loss of comradeship cannot be taken lightly. When veterans try to feel for their old buddies what they felt in battle and fail, they frequently cherish somewhere in their secret memories the un sentimental original passion.

The essential difference between comradeship and friendship consists, it seems to me, in a heightened awareness of the self in friendship and in the suppression of self-awareness in comradeship. Friends do not seek to lose their identity, as comrades and erotic lovers do. On the contrary, friends find themselves in each other and thereby gain greater self-knowledge and self-possession. They discover in their own breasts, as a consequence of their friendship, hitherto unknown potentialities for joy and understanding. This fact does not make friendship a higher form of selfishness, as some misguided people have thought, for we do not seek such advantages in friendship for ourselves. Our concern, insofar as we are genuine friends, is for the friend. That we ourselves also benefit so greatly reveals one of the hidden laws of human affinity. While comradeship wants to break down the walls of self, friendship seeks to expand these walls and keep them intact. The one relationship is ecstatic, the other is wholly individual. Most of us are not capable of meeting the demands on self that friendship brings, whereas comradeship is in most respects an easing of these demands. Comrades are content to be what they are and to rest in their emotional bliss. Friends

must always explore and probe each other, in the attempt to make each one complete through drawing out the secrets of another's being. Yet each recognizes that the inner fountain of the other is inexhaustible. Friends are not satiable, as comrades so often are when danger is past.

"That a man lay down his life for his friends" is indeed a hard saying and testifies to a supreme act of fortitude. Friends live for each other and possess no desire whatsoever for self-sacrifice. When a man dies for his friend, he does it deliberately and not in an ecstasy of emotion. Dying for one's comrades, on the other hand, is a phenomenon occurring in every war, which can hardly be thought of as an act of superhuman courage. The impulse to self-sacrifice is an intrinsic element in the association of organized men in pursuit of a dangerous and difficult goal.

For friends, however, dying is terribly hard, even for each other; both have so much to lose. The natural fear of dying is not so hard for them to overcome. What is hard is the loss or diminution of companionship through death. Friends know—I am tempted to say, only friends know—what they are giving up through self-sacrifice. It is said, to be sure, that they can communicate with one another even beyond death, but the loss is nevertheless cruel and final. Too often at moments of greatest need, when one's friend is dead, communication is broken off and one's dialogue becomes monologue. Friends can hardly escape the recognition of death as unmitigated evil and the most formidable opponent of their highest value.

War and battle create for this love both a peculiar kind of security and a kind of exposure, which other forms of love seldom know. The security arises from the insulation that friendship affords against the hatreds and the hopelessness that combat often brings. Even though one friend may be in

Love: War's Ally and Foe

inexhaustible wealth. They can thus endure much of war's horror without losing the zest for life. More than that, they can discover meaning in experiences of the most gruesome sort which others do not see. Friendship opens up the world to us by insulating us against passions that narrow our sympathies. It gives us an assurance that we belong in the world and helps to prevent the sense of strangeness and lostness that afflicts sensitive people in an atmosphere of hatred and destruction. When we have a friend, we do not feel so much accidents of creation, impotent and foredoomed. The assurance of friendship has been enough to help soldiers over many dreadful things without harm to their integrity.

But friendship makes life doubly dear, and war is always a harvest of death. Hence friends are exposed to an anxiety even greater than that of other lovers. There is no destructive dynamic in friendship, no love of death or sacrifice. Because friends supplement each other, they cannot face the prospect of the other's death without shuddering. Comforts can be easily abjured, dangers easily borne, if death is not the issue. The unendurable fear that grips friends on the battlefield is at the farthest remove from the recklessness of the soldier-killer. Among friends war's ultimate horror is experienced without much counterbalancing compensation. Like love as concern, it is directed toward preservation of being.

In every slain man on the battlefield, one can recognize a possible friend of someone. His fate makes all too clear the horrible arbitrariness of the violence to which my friend is exposed. Therefore, in love as friendship we have the most dependable enemy of war. The possible peaks of intensity and earlier maturity which war may bring to friendship are as nothing compared with the threats of loss it holds. The feelings and the affinities that are the core of friendship are the true

Love: War's Ally and Foe

What has become clear to me, however, as I have meditated on love and war, is that battle offers a very different exercise field for these different forms of love. Insofar as Eros is physical passion and sensual impulsion, war has been from of old its true mate and bedfellow, as the ancient myth makes clear. And erotic love of the fuller sort can find a dwelling place in the violence of war that forever astounds us and remains inexplicable. Here Ares and Aphrodite meet as opposites who have a powerful attraction for each other. Love as concern can achieve at times its greatest satisfaction and triumph in struggling to preserve what Ares is intent on destroying. Though deeply opposed to conflict, this love is not as exposed or helpless as is friendship. In the exercise of its ancient rights, preservative love sanctifies even the battlefield by its presence and holds men back from being delivered over wholly to the lustful powers of destruction. But love as friendship, despite its insulation, must subsist haphazardly and as best it may in the midst of war. Its true domain is peace, only peace.

THE WARRIORS

rarely get killed. Little do they have to recommend them as friends or comrades. As a rule, they are vain and empty, contemptuous of all who are not like themselves. Battle appears to be their very element, and in that element men will not hesitate to pay them homage. Nevertheless, it is not courage they display, not the human will triumphing over fate. If their vitality and their will are admirable in themselves, there is little that is specifically human about their whole mentality. They hardly recognize other men as such and are capable of walking over bodies, living or dead, without a qualm. In their secret hearts they despise friend and foe equally, these supreme egoists. If nature brought many such forth, the world would be more of a shambles after warfare than it customarily is.

For those who have never shared this illusion that death is something that happens only to others, it is probably foolhardy to try to formulate the relation to death this type of soldier sustains. At all events it is a relation, something that can hardly be said of the earlier-mentioned and much more common type. For this soldier, death is envisioned as an external power which subjects others to its realm and makes them fearful. The naïve egoist has thus no wish to banish this power. From his fearlessness before it, he gains his distinctiveness. He can control it and deal it out, but into its mysteries he has no wish to penetrate. Perhaps he sometimes wonders why others appear to know more about death than he, though he is normally incurious. His vitality and egoism are in an utterly separate sphere from death, and they, too, are equally taken for granted. There can be no intimacy between these spheres; at most, an empirical recognition on the part of the living that death is real, for it has swallowed up some of "the others." This soldier's mind is clear enough when he thinks of death and his eye is undazed when he views

THE WARRIORS

of the fighting man? I think so, but to characterize it is not easy. This attitude is more concrete and objective, as a rule, less conventional and perhaps less emotional than the ones I have been concerned with thus far. First let me attempt a general statement of this relation to death and then turn to examples, which are in effect subspecies, or different varieties, of the type.

As a consequence of temperament and experience, some soldiers can learn to regard death as an anticipated experience among other experiences, something they plan to accept when the time comes for what it is. They take death into life, as it were, and seek to make it a part of experience, sometimes winning thereby an intimate relationship. Because they respect death as a power and do not fear it as a blind fate, they are able to reckon their chances in warfare with greater calmness than other soldiers. For them, death is as much a self-evident fact as birth, and they regard as foolish the man who refuses to accept the one as the other. Since moral or religious considerations hardly occupy first rank with such soldiers, they are unlikely to choose death as a means or an end to self-improvement or atonement. However, the more imaginative and thoughtful of this type do regard death as that absolute in human existence which gives life its poignancy and intensity. They do not desire to live forever, for they feel that this would be a sacrifice of quality to gain quantity. In philosophical terms, such soldiers are affirming human finiteness and limitation as a morally desirable fact. Just as the bliss of erotic love is conditioned by its transiency, so life is sweet because of the threats of death that envelop it and in the end swallow it up. Men of this sort are usually in love with life and avid for experience of every sort.

Indeed, experience is the word that best stamps a kind of

THE WARRIORS

To the otherworldly soldier, a man like this is incomprehensible, explainable only as an unawakened one; to the coward, he is an utter fool; to the soldier who can face mortal danger only in a daze, he is a subject for admiration and puzzlement. It does not occur to many of them that this carelessness about his life stems from overabundance of it. Consequently, he values other things more highly than life, above all, adventure and full experience. If he were careful and circumspect with his life, most of the joy in living would be gone, for guarding the flame is a way of keeping it from full brilliance. When such a soldier acquires a family and civilian responsibilities, he usually loses some of his gaiety and recklessness. Yet death can never be to him what it is to most other soldiers, for without much reflection he has made it a part of life, and his response to it will be of a piece with his other responses. His is an affirmation of death but without the pathos of the average man or soldier. War is a game for him, exciting and dangerous because a man may strike out or foul out at any time. Such possibilities make both life and war worth the effort expended.

It is tempting and easy to make such a soldier appear more complicated than he is. Much of what I have already made explicit is with him simply implicit and impulse. He does not consciously know why he is careless and lighthearted about his life nor why he sets such value upon new experience. He is what he is for no reason, self-analysis and reflection being among the things he prizes least. Yet his very simplicity is hard to understand. The absence of love as concern for preserving his own and other life makes him seem slightly inhuman. And his innocence of any conventional moral inhibitions, his lack of any real stake in the conservation of existing goods, reinforces this impression.

THE WARRIORS

greatest detestation. Always, the definite article is used with the noun, not *an* enemy or *our* enemy. The implication easily drawn is that the opponent is mankind's enemy as well as ours, and also that this enemy is a specific, though undifferentiated group, an implication that is only pseudo-concrete. That is, by reference to *the* enemy we seem to mean a unified, concrete universal, whereas in fact the enemy is probably not more unified than is our side and possesses many other characteristics than those that are hostile to us. By designating him with the definite article, it is made to appear that he is single and his reality consists in hostility to us. Thus do the moral absolutisms of warfare develop through the medium of language, and, all unconsciously, we surrender reason to the emotional contagion of the communal.

The abstractness of the term promotes in this emotion-drenched atmosphere of war the growth of abstract hatred. I think it is abstract hatred and not the greater savagery of contemporary man that is responsible for much of the blood lust and cruelty of recent wars. This word "abstract" signifies in origin to "draw out from," to take from any larger whole one particular feature or aspect. The opposite of "abstract" is, of course, "concrete," which in its fullest sense still means to examine anything in its entirety, together with its relations to other things. Hence, abstract hatred arises from concentrating on one trait of a person or group while disregarding other features, not to speak of the larger context in which all the traits coexist and modify each other. The simplification of abstract thinking is strictly comparable to the inhumanity of abstract emotions, particularly abstract hatred.

Intellectually, all of us can grant that the reality and truth of a human being can only be found in his total environment, including his past and his inner motives. It is possible to know

THE WARRIORS

. . . Coming up this morning we saw an Italian youth lying in a field close by the road, crumpled up in death. Further on, a German soldier with face black and distended sprawled in death behind a straw stack; farther on still, was a horribly mangled soldier on the road with our vehicles passing over him. There was some artillery fire, and shells landed not far away, but I was not much frightened. Slowly I am becoming insensitive to everything.

Understandable as this hatred is, it would nonetheless be false to think of it as concrete because motivated by personal grievance. Such a soldier's hatred would be concrete only if it were directed toward the immediately guilty party, or group, who was conscious of and responsible for his evil deed. For example, a Jewish soldier might cherish a concrete hatred for the Nazi police charged with persecuting his family and perhaps could concretely hate the convinced members of the whole Nazi party. But the soldier burning with vengeance feelings has commonly made a vast extension of his personal hatred to all who speak the language and wear the uniform of the enemy. To him, they become all alike and to kill one is as good as to kill any other. Hence, he is not fighting men but embodiments of undifferentiated evil. The change in him is not so much a result of a new relationship toward the enemy as it is an emotional response to loss and exposure. He has not really broken through the barrier of the abstract. All that he has done is to give his enmity for the antagonists a new spring from which to drink. Instead of *the* enemy, they have become *my* enemies.

No one should underestimate the cruelty and the delight in cruelty when a soldier—or a civilian—is impelled by such personal, abstract hatred. For this reason, civil wars are usually replete with refinements of personal torture and are commonly more terrible than international wars. Yet, paradoxical

annihilating than for a great number of those he is risking his life to protect. This commonly recognized fact should surprise nobody, for the military profession, like few others, is a way of life that forms its subjects in relative isolation from modern sentiments and political metamorphoses.

When we ask why this image of the enemy grows increasingly unpopular in our day, honest answers are hardly flattering to the antimilitarists. To be sure, the professional's predilection for regarding war as a game is out of contact with present realities. It violates our moral sense to consider the slaughter and misery of modern wars as anything less than the catastrophe they are. Since they are no longer fought with the weapons of chivalry, and since drafted soldiers are not warriors in the medieval sense, chivalric behavior to the foe appears grotesquely inappropriate. Even if democratic countries find it necessary to use men as means in the wars they fight, it seems degrading to regard them as such, and we therefore resent the military propensity for looking at men as so much material potentiality. In short, the lack of regard for the individual as individual, which is part and parcel of pragmatic military calculation, irritates our modern mentality deeply.

But there is clearly another and more important source for our dislike of this professional image of the enemy. Because our wars are becoming ever more totalitarian in character, this professional attitude is suspect. Increasingly, we cannot fight without an image of the enemy as totally evil, for whom any mercy or sympathy is incongruous, if not traitorous. Our wars are tending to become religious crusades once more, and the crusader's image of the enemy is in sharp opposition to the militarist's.

Curiously enough, General Eisenhower, a professional military man who is very untypical, provides a good example of

be devilish or if they are regarded as merely possessed. In the former case, there is nothing to do but annihilate them. Killing them becomes a kind of sacrament; after enough of it, the killers come to feel like high priests. Where the enemy is thought to be possessed only, it is permitted to make him prisoner, so that he can be confronted with the truth, before which even devils sometimes yield. Though this latter interpretation moderates one's hatred of the enemy to some extent, it does not change greatly its fanatical, abstract character. In combat the foe possessed of the devil is as wholly treacherous as the foe who is a devil. Both are unworthy to continue in existence when they make war against soldiers who are fighting for truth and right.

Let us look at this totalitarian image of the antagonist in war more closely, for it is fateful in the wars of our day and, alas, does not belong only to states and governments that are dictatorships. The image is abstract to a degree hardly equaled in other images because it refuses to see any quality of the foe except his ideology. It has no interest whatsoever in the concrete differences that may be found in his ranks, nor does it care to seek out causes for demon possession or to understand why creatures who are capable of being men have chosen to be devils. Indeed, the most characteristic aspect of this image is its utter disregard for the individuality of the foe. If this refusal to individualize the enemy is characteristic of all hostile attitudes, only in this totalitarian one is it made into a principle. The fanaticism of the totalitarian soldier lies in his terrible pure-mindedness, in which none of the complicated mixtures of motives that characterize ordinary human life and action are allowed to intrude. His image of the enemy is a logical consequence of his own dogmatic certainty about being in the right. He is insulated against other truth in a way that

stupidity or ignorance could never insulate because his reason has been made captive and all experience is made to conform to the revelation that pervades his emotional and intellectual life. Experience is confirmatory and no longer exploratory. Only that part of it is digested which accords with the soldier's grasp of reality.

When the enemy devils do not behave in the fashion conceived to be their true nature, the totalitarian soldier is not tempted to revise his dogmas. On the contrary, he is simply driven to discover motives for their behavior other than the apparent ones. Like all devils, the enemy is deceiving and deceitful. He can feign mercy or fairness in order to catch the foolish and innocent off guard. Since his actions are never to be taken at face value, trust cannot be accorded him. Only eternal suspicion and vigilance are pathways to safety.

All this is heightened when the totalitarian fighter, as commonly happens, conceives that the enemy is not responsible for his devilish nature. For the rational mind, the absence of freedom in the forming of the individual predisposes to mildness and tolerance in his punishment. But something like the reverse is true for the totalitarian fanatic. If the enemy soldiers are driven forward by a power outside themselves to war against God's truth, there is no need to feel sorry for them or to spare them. Since they are determined by this evil principle and are not free agents, they cannot be happy or content in their present state. In theological terms, devils are all creatures of God and cannot complain when He sends his angels to eradicate them in His own good time. Is He not permitted to do what He likes with His own?

The abstractness involved in this image is a double one, as I have tried to point out. The enemy is not regarded as an individual, but a representative of a principle of evil, and he

THE WARRIORS

is only an embodiment of this principle. His image is generalized and terribly simplified, resulting in enmity in battle that is probably unsurpassed. One cannot hate subhuman creatures, however vile, so cordially as one hates the violator of a religious image. An extreme in human separation is here reached which shakes the foundation of the personality. When two totalitarian powers make war on each other, the anger and hatred that arise can be appeased only by the death of one or the other. More than this, such killing is profoundly satisfying. Anger and hatred are "fulfilled" in destruction insofar as such emotions know satiety. The more lives the soldier succeeds in accounting for, the prouder he is likely to feel. To his people he is a genuine hero and to himself as well. For him, war is in no sense a game or a dirty mess. It is a mission, a holy cause, his chance to prove himself and gain a supreme purpose in living. His hatred of the enemy makes this soldier feel supremely real, and in combat his hatred finds its only appropriate appeasement.

A skeptic may doubt whether many men are really capable of clinging to such an image of the enemy. Are we not here dealing with an insignificant number of soldiers in any war? I do not think so. Western history has seen many armies in which this image of the foe was widespread, from the days of the Old Testament, where, indeed, the opponent was nearly always regarded as an enemy of Jehovah, to the contemporary Communists. Many believe that the Age of Enlightenment put an end to religious wars in the West, but they have reappeared in political form with a vengeance in the twentieth century. When voluntary German SS troopers engaged fanatic Communists in Russia in World War II, a climax in enmity and hatred was reached in which all traces of chivalry vanished and all moderation was utterly abandoned. Even to read about

Images of the Enemy

some of those battles with an attempt at imaginative understanding is sufficient to shake anyone to the depths. In peacetime surroundings, such murderous hatred is hardly convincing, and fact melts into fable in our endeavor to make the past believable in the present. Yet even in these battles, the ultimate was not reached because the majority of soldiers on both sides were unconvinced of their official faiths; emotionally, they were far from fanatic Nazis and Communists.

It is probably true that most men are incapable of supporting over a long period the devil image of the enemy. It requires an imperviousness to common sense and daily experience, which many are fortunately unable to gain. The dark vision of Armageddon, which has been an ultimate possibility for many centuries and which is essentially a religious war with the devil image of the foe, may hopefully remain a vision merely. With present technological advances, such a war could only result in the virtual extinction of life on our planet and possibly the destruction of the planet itself.

There is, however, no cause for satisfaction in the fact, if, indeed, it is a fact, that most men are incapable of holding the devil theory of the enemy for an extended time. The United States and Russia have come dangerously close in recent years to that extreme of estrangement where each regards the other as the enemy of the divine. In the United States, a generation is growing up without personal contact with anyone of Communist faith. How abstract their image of the Communist is, only those of us can guess who broach the subject in our classrooms. It would come as a profound surprise to these young Americans if they could see an educated Communist discussing his faith in a conventional classroom or lecture hall. What he said would be less important than a view of him. In Russia, the image of the American capitalist exploiter is even

THE WARRIORS

more distorted and unreal. If a world war were really to come at this stage, it would be fatally easy to propagate religious fury among masses of men who are already half persuaded. At the moment this is written there is hope that the two systems will come to tolerate more concrete knowledge of each other and thus abate the intolerable danger of a religious war.

The worst effect of absorbing this image is probably not the contraction of personality and outlook which its unreality entails, bad as that is. Those who hold this image of the enemy attest the fact that it is not wholly abstract and unreal. Men *are* capable of being possessed by an evil spirit, or a devil, if one likes to use a metaphor, and, though it is not their whole nature, an impartial judgment must concede that this possession requires fierce resistance if it is to be overcome. The worst effect is that it usually instills in the soldier a conception of himself as avenging angel. The self-satisfaction of such a soldier, his impenetrable conceit, makes him essentially incapable of growth. He is caught in a vise of sterile self-admiration. His ego expands in direct proportion as his bigotry increases. Insulated against experience and free reflection, he is more or less an automaton without ever suspecting it. Neither his hatred of the enemy nor his satisfaction with himself is organic and natural; on the contrary, both are mechanical and pathological. Only a profound shock can convert him from the idea of himself that his image of the enemy has done so much to implant.

The image of the enemy which appeals most to reasonable men after a war is past can be cultivated while war is in progress only by the minority of combat soldiers who are at the same time reflective and relatively independent in their judgment. I refer to the image of the opposing enemy as an

Images of the Enemy

is on the borders of his own country, fighting against an invading enemy, can more easily find the will to oppose the intruders, but in modern wars it more often happens that he is asked to enter combat on faraway shores and in unfamiliar lands.

Professional officers readily perceive the military disadvantages of this view of the foe and oppose it, as a rule, with passion. If victory is to be achieved, the enemy must be hated by the soldiery to the utmost limit. Hence his character is painted as black as possible and his reputed mercilessness exaggerated on all sides. Professional officers consider part of the psychological training of their troops to be training in hatred, and this becomes more systematized and subtler as the war goes on. The identification between leaders and followers in the enemy ranks soon becomes a dominant theme of the propaganda on both sides. In World War II, for example, all Germans became Nazis, all Japanese fanatic Shintoists, for the Germans all Russians became Communists and all Americans, for their enemies, were bloated imperialists or dupes of satanic Jews. War has its own logic, as I have already emphasized, and such a transformation doubtless requires little conscious directing. The humane image of the enemy is increasingly combated in our century by field commanders of both democratic and totalitarian lands. Perhaps the professionals themselves are more torn than we know by the double image of the enemy as devil on the one hand and a comrade in arms on the other. But their long training enables them to suppress on order all sympathy for their opponents and destroy them without mercy at the proper time.

There is an instructive passage in Tolstói's *War and Peace* where Kutusov, the Russian general who defeated Napoleon, speaks to a segment of his troops who are relentlessly pursuing

Images of the Enemy

the mass media, and easily persuade ourselves that we are our own men. Many of us are, indeed, impervious to the worst aspects of mass hysteria; we cannot readily be won by the insistent voices of radio, newspaper, and television screen, though hitherto we have always been swept along with the others. Historically, our record for stemming the tide has not been good, and to me, at least, this is a sobering thought. Do we not have a penchant for overestimating our strength in times of crisis, we moderates?

Perhaps even worse, few of us ever know how far fear and violence can transform us into creatures at bay, ready with tooth and claw. If the war taught me anything at all, it convinced me that people are not what they seem or even think themselves to be. Nothing is more tempting than to yield oneself, when fear comes, to the dominance of necessity and to act irresponsibly at the behest of another. Freedom and responsibility we speak of easily, nearly always without recognition of the iron courage required to make them effective in our lives.

THE WARRIORS

doers and are from every human perspective unavenged. If we were not accustomed to evasions of responsibility in ourselves, such behavior would force us into cynicism of the most nihilistic sort or, at the best, to complete bewilderment about human nature. Yet a voice within each of us echoes the sentiments of Hamlet: "Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?"

The fighting man is disinclined to repent his deeds of violence. Men who in private life are scrupulous about conventional justice and right are able to destroy the lives and happiness of others in war without compunction. At least to other eyes they seem to have no regrets. It is understandable, of course, why soldiers in combat would not suffer pangs of conscience when they battle for their lives against others who are trying to kill them. And if the enemy is regarded as a beast or a devil, guilt feelings are not likely to arise if he is slain by your hand. But modern wars are notorious for the destruction of nonparticipants and the razing of properties in lands that are accidentally in the path of combat armies and air forces. In World War II the number of civilians who lost their lives exceeded the number of soldiers killed in combat. At all events, the possibilities of the individual involving himself in guilt are immeasurably wider than specific deeds that he might commit against the armed foe. In the thousand chances of warfare, nearly every combat soldier has failed to support his comrades at a critical moment; through sins of omission or commission, he has been responsible for the death of those he did not intend to kill. Through folly or fear, nearly every officer has exposed his own men to needless destruction at one time or another. Add to this the unnumbered acts of injustice so omnipresent in war, which may not result in death but inevitably bring pain and grief, and the impartial observer may

The Ache of Guilt

wonder how the participants in such deeds could ever smile again and be free of care.

The sober fact appears to be that the great majority of veterans, not to speak of those who helped to put the weapons and ammunitions in their hands, are able to free themselves of responsibility with ease after the event, and frequently while they are performing it. Many a pilot or artilleryman who has destroyed untold numbers of terrified noncombatants has never felt any need for repentance or regret. Many a general who has won his laurels at a terrible cost in human life and suffering among friend and foe can endure the review of his career with great inner satisfaction. So are we made, we human creatures! Frequently, we are shocked to discover how little our former enemies regret their deeds and repent their errors. Americans in Germany after World War II, for instance, feel aggrieved that the German populace does not feel more responsibility for having visited Hitler upon the world. The Germans, for their part, resent the fact that few Americans appear to regret the bombing of German cities into rubble and the burning and crushing of helpless women and children. It appears to be symptomatic of a certain modern mentality to marvel at the absence of guilt consciousness in others while accepting its own innocence as a matter of course.

No doubt there are compelling historical reasons why soldiers in earlier times have felt comparatively little regret for their deeds and why modern soldiers in particular are able to evade responsibility so easily. It is wise to assume, I believe, that the soldiers who fight twentieth-century wars are morally little better or worse than their grandfathers or great-grandfathers in previous wars. Nevertheless, there are some novel factors in our time that, taken together with the traditional ways of escape, make it easier for the majority of soldiers to

carry the guilt for the destruction of the innocent in contemporary conflicts. These novel factors lie both in our contemporary interpretation of guilt and in the nature of recent combat.

Our age seems peculiarly confused about the meaning of guilt, as well as its value. With the rise of modern psychology and the predominance of naturalistic philosophers, guilt has come to be understood exclusively in a moral sense. Its older religious and metaphysical dimensions have been increasingly forgotten. Moreover, these naturalistic psychologists have tended to view guilt feelings as a hindrance to the free development of personality and the achievement of a life-affirming outlook. They like to trace guilt to the darker, subconscious levels of the soul and emphasize its backward-looking character as opposed to the future-directed impulses of the natural man. Hence guilt, when reduced to moral terms, has more and more been branded as immoral. To some, it is associated with a species of illness, which must be cured by psychiatric treatment. Though these modern doctors of the soul realize that the uninhibited man is not an attainable ideal, they still strive for the goal of acceptance of oneself and one's nature for what they are. The individual is released as far as possible from regret for past deeds and from the hard duty to improve his character.

Even if these doctrines get modified in actual practice and are seldom read in their deeper meanings, the basic ideas filter into the broadest strata of our population and help to form the dominant mood of our day. Even the simplest soldier suspects that it is unpopular today to be burdened with guilt. Everyone from his pastor to his doctor is likely, if he brings up feelings that oppress him, to urge him to "forget it." Precisely this is what he often longs to hear, and, so, forgetting becomes such a disquieting phenomenon of the modern mind.

God forgive us. We have done no one any harm.] The incident affected me strongly and still does. I was directly or indirectly the cause of their death. . . . I hope it will not rest too hard on my conscience, and yet if it does not I shall be disturbed also.

Since conscience normally awakens in guilt in the sense that a troubled conscience is usually our first indication of its existence, it is clear that an important function of guiltiness is to make us aware of our selves. Whatever his response, the person who hears the call of conscience is aware of freedom in the form of a choice. He could have performed differently than he did; an act of his might have been different. The whole realm of the potential in human action is opened to him and with it the fateful recognition that he is in charge of his own course. Conscience is thus in the first instance a form of self-consciousness. It is that form that gives to us an unmistakable sense of free individuality and separates for us the domains of the actual and the ideal. Therewith the life of reflection begins, and the inner history of the individual no longer corresponds to his outer fate.

But the individual need not waken, and, indeed, everything in warfare conspires against such response to the call of freedom. Enemy and ally enclose his little life, and there is little privacy or escape from their presence. Loyalty to his unit is instilled by conscious and unconscious means; the enemy is seeking to destroy that unity and must be prevented from doing so at all costs. He is one with the others in a fraternity of exposure and danger. His consciousness of the others may be vague but is an omnipresent reality; it has much similarity to dream awareness. Directly, he is aware of his pals, the half-dozen or more men he knows relatively well, with a few dozen more who are on the periphery of his consciousness. Beyond them there are thousands who encircle him, whose presence he

senses. There is a vast assemblage of unknown "friends" confronting an equally vast mass of unknown "enemies," and he is in the midst of all of them. Their presence makes his situation endurable, for they help to conquer the loneliness that oppresses him in the face of death, actual or possible. Something within him responds powerfully to the appeal of the communal. The orders that he receives from those in charge of his fate hold him where he is in the midst of disorder. He is compelled and controlled as though by invisible threads through the unseen presence of the others, friend and foe.

In an exposed position on the battlefield during action, his consciousness of being a part of an organism is likely to plunge him into contradictory feelings of power and impotence which succeed one another rapidly. "If I don't hit that guy out there or man this machine gun to the last, my buddies will be killed and I'll be the cause of their death. Everything depends on me." A few minutes later he is likely to ask himself what one rifle or machine gun on one tiny portion of the field can possibly matter to the final outcome. His place in the whole complex is lost to sight, and he is in danger of feeling how absolute is his dependence. All the time, he acts as he feels he must, swept by moods of exultation, despair, loyalty, hate, and many others. Much of the time he is out of himself, acting simply as a representative of the others, as part of a super-personal entity, on orders from elsewhere. He kills or fails to kill, fights courageously or runs away in the service of this unit and unity. Afterward, he hears no voice calling him to account for his actions, or, if he does hear a voice, feels no need to respond.

In less sophisticated natures, this presence of the others is projected also into the weapons and instruments of war. They become personalized, and the soldier becomes attached to them

The Ache of Guilt

there only for the others. He makes everything into an instrument, himself included. He is a trigger finger, a tank driver, a bombardier, a scout, and he can take delight in being an instrument. So everything conspires to prevent his coming to himself, and, as often as not, the soldier is a semiconscious accomplice in it as well. Why should he undergo the pain of reflection, the dangerous isolation acute self-awareness can bring with it?

In highly mechanized armies, many a soldier gains a certain fulfillment in serving the machine with which he is entrusted. The automatism of military life has been immeasurably increased by the perfection and intricacy of instruments and weapons, and it is certain that the human beings who serve them are actually influenced by their automatic character. Combat soldiers must adjust themselves to the laws of these mechanisms, and their habits become of necessity more and more mechanized. Individuality is inevitably suppressed when a group of soldiers have to co-ordinate their movements and all their daily activities in the proper functioning of an instrument of war. But the significant thing is that so many take pleasure in it. There is, I suppose, a perverse kind of freedom here, the freedom from reacting in novel and unpredictable ways. Whatever the source, love for the machine—and the more complicated and exacting, often the greater the love—is an important element in modern combat. The hardened German tanker cited earlier who broke down and cried at the loss of his tank is far from an isolated instance. Those thinkers who believe that a new type of man is bound to emerge as a product of our technological development might well study in detail over the last century the varying relation of men to their weapons of war.

In totalitarian countries, this willingness to become a func-

tionary is much further developed because it is consciously pursued by the dictator at the summit. Self-awareness is fought as an enemy of communal enthusiasms. In 1944 and 1945 I had to listen to Fascist and Nazi police and party functionaries exclaim with nauseating regularity when they were captured: "My conscience is clear!" It made no difference how heinous the deeds were in which they had taken part, always the refrain was the same: "I have done nothing wrong. My conscience is clear." Despite early suspicions that these protestations masked real guilt feelings, I became convinced in the end that most of these men knew no genuine regrets for what they had done. As functionaries, guilt was for them, in any case, an empty word. If their consciences had ever awakened, the lack of response had long since silenced the call. The inhumanity that so appalled me about them was more often than not a kind of absence of feeling rather than sadistic perversion. Machines cannot respond; they can only perform, being at the service of something or someone else.

It was peculiarly abhorrent to me that these people expected the same treatment at my hands that they had meted out to their victims. One particularly repulsive officer of the Security Service, nicknamed "Genickschuss" from his reputation for shooting Polish underground fighters and hapless Jews in the back of the neck, hastily wrote a farewell note to his wife and children after I had interrogated him and consigned him to a jail cell. The jailer brought me his letter within the hour, asking me what to do with it. When I had read it, I was puzzled by the references to his imminent death.

"Does he mean to commit suicide?" I asked the German jailer.

He looked incredulous and answered simply, "Not a chance. He expects you to treat him as he treated his prisoners."

In a kind of baffled rage at the thought of his fearful crimes, I cried out, "And if I did what was right, that is just exactly what I should do."

I shall never forget the jailer's quiet reply. "Sir, it is necessary," he said.

For many soldiers, however, a much more conscious escape from responding to conscience is the fact that they are acting "under orders." Their superiors who issue the orders must take the blame and bear the consequences. When one asked, as I did, which superiors would bear responsibility, the answer was usually vague. Pressed far enough, it usually turned out to be the commander in chief who was to carry all the weight of guilt for deeds that, if committed in peacetime, would have brought heavy penalties.

I was amazed how many American civilian soldiers appeared to put great weight on taking the oath of the soldier. Frequently, I heard the remark: "When I raised my right hand and took that oath, I freed myself of the consequences for what I do. I'll do what they tell me and nobody can blame me." Of course, in a legal sense it is and has been customary in military organizations to hold the highest ranking officer responsible for deeds of his men committed under orders. But Anglo-Saxon lands have long since learned to distinguish between legal and moral responsibility, at least in peacetime. It was clear, however, that most of the soldiers who cited the oath felt that the moral responsibility was being shifted as well. The satisfaction in thus sloughing off responsibility was often plainly visible. Becoming a soldier was like escaping from one's own shadow. To commit deeds of violence without the usual consequences that society visits upon the violent seemed at first a bit unnatural but for many not unpleasant. All too quickly it could become a habit.

THE WARRIORS

In a more legalistic nation like Germany, where the distinction between law and right or between state justice and private morality has never been sharply drawn, the abrogation of personal responsibility for one's deeds is even less complicated. It is hard for civilian America to comprehend the mental and moral conversion involved for a professional German soldier to oppose in full consciousness a military command. To most of us, it sounded like an easy excuse when Hitler's officers protested at Nuremberg and elsewhere that they were "carrying out orders" when they committed atrocities. To most of them, however, this was a sufficient explanation and excuse for their deeds. I suspect that the majority of Germans remain unconvinced that any soldier should be legally punished for "doing his duty," regardless of its inhumane character. I hardly need to add that many Americans, both professional military men and others, are also unpersuaded.

To be sure, since the Nuremberg trials, Western nations have officially denied the soldier's right to obey orders that involve him in crimes. He must distinguish between illegitimate orders and those that are in line with his duty as a soldier. Presumably, the distinction is always clear according to official pronouncements, but in reality under the conditions of total war few things are more difficult to distinguish. Our age is caught in a painful contradiction for which there is no resolution other than the renunciation of wars or at least of the way we have been waging them in this generation. On the other hand, we have come to believe in total victory over the foe, with the use of every means thinkable to effect this goal. Since the opponent's residual strength rests in his industrial potential and civilian labor force, we have found it necessary to disregard the age-old distinction between combatant and non-

THE WARRIORS

present to the conscience of the minority. There are degrees and kinds of guilt, and not merely a formal declaration of simple guilt or innocence by the inner tribunal. Those soldiers who do respond to the call of conscience find themselves involved in the most baffling situations, in which any action they could take is inappropriate. They learn soon that nearly any of the individual's relations to the world about him can involve him in guilt of some kind, particularly in warfare. It is as pervasive in life and reflection as is human freedom itself. Awakened to his personal responsibility in one aspect of combat action, the soldier is not necessarily awakened to finer nuances of guilt. Yet it sometimes happens that the awakening is thorough and absolute in character, demanding of the subject an entirely different set of relations to friend and enemy.

It is a crucial moment in a soldier's life when he is ordered to perform a deed that he finds completely at variance with his own notions of right and good. Probably for the first time, he discovers that an act someone else thinks to be necessary is for him criminal. His whole being rouses itself in protest, and he may well be forced to choose in this moment of awareness of his freedom an act involving his own life or death. He feels himself caught in a situation that he is powerless to change yet cannot himself be part of. The past cannot be undone and the present is inescapable. His only choice is to alter himself, since all external features are unchangeable.

What this means in the midst of battle can only inadequately be imagined by those who have not experienced it themselves. It means to set oneself against others and with one stroke lose their comforting presence. It means to cut oneself free of doing what one's superiors approve, free of being an integral part of the military organism with the expansion of the ego that such belonging brings. Suddenly the soldier feels

Sicily as well as in Italy and France. If his concern with the injustice of the order was not as great as mine, his resoluteness was greater, and fortified me. I had visions of the forbidding disciplinary barracks we had glimpsed in North Africa, of a dishonorable discharge and the disgrace it would bring on my aged father, who would not be able to understand why I had to disobey. Still, I knew that if I did not draw the line here I would be unable to draw it anywhere. If I did not refuse to become a party to the arrest of innocent, wronged men, I could not refuse to do anything that this or any other colonel ordered. I felt myself to be at the end of a tether. This was to be a showdown, and I had little doubt as to the winner. The loneliness and isolation of spirit that swept over me served to teach me how much I had hitherto been sustained by the silent approval of "the others." Even my partner in disobedience could not lift from me the heavy spiritual burden, for he was bitter and cynical about the whole affair.

Fortunately, things turned out in very different fashion from the expected. The colonel decided to call up army headquarters and report our insubordination before taking further action. He chanced to reach an intelligent officer who knew us both slightly, and this officer wanted to know why we persisted in disobeying orders. This the colonel had never stopped to determine, but when he did communicate the cause, Army Intelligence found our reasons good and within a day or two sent through an order that all Alsatian deserters were to be left with their families and in no case to be transported anywhere with German prisoners of war.

We had unexpectedly won the day and drew comfort afterward from the report that where our division had gone through Alsace the population was distinctly more pro-American than in other parts of Alsace-Lorraine. In areas where the deserters

had been arrested, they had been forced to undergo manifold hardships and humiliations in prisoner-of-war camps, ironically enough because they were not in uniform, and were treated by our troops as cowardly and unworthy the respect accorded regular prisoners.

This was only an incident of war, not objectively important except as it influenced sectors of a population for or against the Allied cause. But subjectively it was for me a kind of turning point. As a result of it, I gained no great confidence in my ability to withstand extreme pressures from official authority, yet I had determined that a line could be drawn between personal rights and military demands. Though I knew that sheer good fortune had prevented the normal consequences of disobedience from falling upon me, I felt, nevertheless, immensely strengthened for a possible second refusal. More important, the incident cleared my mind on the vexed question of the relation of the individual to his state. Hard as they were to assert, I now felt convinced that the individual had his absolute rights even in the desperate struggle for survival that is modern war. And survival without integrity of conscience is worse than perishing outright, or so it seemed to me. Nothing had furthered my self-knowledge so much since my encounter with the old man of the mountain in Italy the year before.

I have no doubt that many others have found themselves in much more crucial difficulties in warfare than this example illustrates. Yet, curiously enough, most contemporary war novels deal with nearly every agony of combat except this one. Where matters of conscience are taken up, as in the immensely popular *Caine Mutiny*, there is frequently an ambivalence in the attitude of the author toward the rights of conscience against military organization. In Wouk's novel, for

The Ache of Guilt

Individual is sacrificed for real or alleged national advantages. It will despise the fanaticism with which this state makes morally dubious and historically relative ends into absolutes, its perversity in maintaining pride at whatever price in human misery.

At the same time, justice will force this soldier to admit that these are his people, driven by fear and hatred, who are directing this vast mechanism. If he is honest with himself he will admit that he, too, is a violent man on occasion and capable of enjoying the fruits of violence. Legally, and more than legally, he belongs to the community of soldiers and to the state. At some level of his being he can understand why they perform as they do and can find it in his heart to feel sorry for some of the politicians and higher officers. In their place he wonders if he would do any better than they. He is bound to reflect that his nation has given him refuge and sustenance, provided him whatever education and property he calls his own. He belongs and will always belong to it in some sense, no matter where he goes or how hard he seeks to alter his inheritance. The crimes, therefore, that his nation or one of its units commits cannot be indifferent to him. He shares the guilt as he shares the satisfaction in the generous deeds and worthy products of nation or army. Even if he did not consciously will them and was unable to prevent them, he cannot wholly escape responsibility for collective deeds.

He belongs and yet he does not belong. "I did not ask to be born," he is likely to tell himself while struggling with his responsibility for collective deeds, "and I did not choose my nation. Had I been given a choice of places to grow up at various stages in my education I might have chosen other than the nation in which I was accidentally born. I am, of course, a citizen of this nation and am willing to expose my life in its

The Ache of Guilt

*ich kannte früh des Jammers ganze Bahn—
ich hab gewarnt—nicht hart genug und klar!
Und heute weiss ich, was ich schuldig war . . .*

Yet I am guilty otherwise than you think.
I should have known my duty earlier
And called evil by its name more sharply—
My judgment I kept flexible too long . . .

In my heart I accuse myself of this:
I deceived my conscience long
I lied to myself and others—

Early I knew the whole course of this misery—
I warned—but not hard enough or clearly!
Today I know of what I am guilty . . .

Thus the conscientious German soldier may well feel greater political guilt than a conscientious Allied soldier, depending on the measure of assent he had given to the National Socialist regime and the freedom of action he possessed. But the quality of his political guilt will hardly be different, for the warfare was not carried on by angels against devils, but by soldiers in a relatively just cause fighting soldiers in a relatively unjust cause. If the character of Hitler and his paladins gave to the Allied side a moral justification unusual in warfare, the Western nations have no reason to forget their share of responsibility for Hitler's coming to power or their dubious common cause with the Russian dictator. The reflective soldier on both sides of the conflict will see no escape from political guilt as long as he remains a member of a state. If, in his disillusionment, he is tempted to renounce his nation and pledge his allegiance to the human race alone, this, too, will prove illusory, for mankind collectively is doubtless as predisposed to injustice as nations are.

...

have nothing at all happen day after day. You know that I do not love war or want it to return. But at least it made me feel alive, as I have not felt alive before or since."

And a few days later I listened to a strikingly similar report from a German friend. Overweight, and with an expensive cigar in his mouth, he spoke of our earlier days together at the close of the war, when he was shivering and hungry and harried with anxieties about keeping his wife and children from too great want. "Sometimes I think that those were happier times for us than these," he concluded, and there was something like despair in his eyes. Neither one of these people was accustomed to such a confession; it came from both spontaneously and because I had known them in distress and in prosperity. They were not longing for the old days in sentimental nostalgia; they were confessing their disillusionment with a sterile present. Peace exposed a void in them that war's excitement had enabled them to keep covered up.

Violence has been, I think, a perennial refuge from this painful malady. It is hard to overestimate the extent to which millions in our day feed upon violence and the threat of violence for their emotional nourishment. Magazines, newspapers, movies, and television afford a kind of vicarious satisfaction of this appetite. And potential violence is apparent everywhere, in relations of parents and children, of workers and their employers, of racial minorities and majorities within society, and many others. Though organized state violence, which is the definition of war, is different from these, they are hardly separable, for without the secret love of violence and the accustoming of the psyche to it, which daily experience provides, effective fighting in war would be unthinkable.

Sometimes it takes penetrating eyes to notice the violent undercurrents of daily life in our Western society, so common-

place do they seem and so adept are public officials in keeping the more overt out of sight. One can live in Germany, for example, and be impressed with the harmlessness of social life. Underneath the surface, however, slumber volcanic forces no less restless than in previous decades of this century. Violence remains, in the most subtle recesses of the cultural life of this people, a dominant principle. The situation in other countries of Europe, old and tradition-dominated as they are, is only better in degree, if at all. Nor is it at all different in our own land. Given the unfavorable circumstances to which most of these countries have been subjected, we would be appalled at the sinister and brutal forces our country could spawn overnight. What happened under the Nazis in Germany might well serve as an object lesson to all of us for a century to come. Every nation, I believe, conceals in itself violent criminal forces, waiting only for an opportunity to appear in daylight.

Most sobering of all to me is the realization my experience has forced upon me that suffering has very limited power to purge and purify; with the vast majority it is as likely to deteriorate the character and will, or, at best, to leave no lasting mark for good or ill. A theoretical observer might have believed that the anguish of two world wars in a half-century would have guaranteed a mood of repentance and reform, freeing the next decades at least from the pride and arrogance of nations. It has not worked out that way. Suffering appears to improve characters already strong and sensitizes consciences already awake; with others it produces most often the opposite effect.

In Württemberg near the close of the war our division overran a concentration camp which had been recently emptied of inmates and guards. It turned out that the prisoners had been hastily pushed into a string of freight cars and carried as far

into the interior of Germany as possible before the guards abandoned them. Our troops came upon them, opened the doors of the freight cars, and allowed the starving band to straggle into the nearest town, where the shocked citizenry took up the task of nursing and caring for them. I spent one long day in their midst and learned a few lessons about human nature in extreme situations I shall not soon forget.

In their condition, glances were more eloquent than words, and an extra pound of flesh on the bones, slightly more color in the cheeks, told more plainly than denunciations could who the oppressors within the camp had been. Like all the concentration camps, this one contained men of a dozen nationalities and social strata, imprisoned anti-Nazis, Jews, captured soldiers, and, as always, a few professional criminals, transferred from penitentiaries to prey upon the others and thus make the guards' task an easier one. The only ones of the group physically strong, these criminals were looked upon by the liberated men with unutterable hatred. Only their emaciation and weakness prevented the inmates from tearing to pieces the oppressors, who had been, by unanimous testimony, worse than the Nazi guards. Never have I seen more evil eyes than these I looked into during questioning. Though these eyes burned with rage and contempt, there was fear, too, and I had the impression that most of the criminals were probably relieved to be made prisoners by us and quickly separated from the rest.

I noticed at once that all the others rallied around one man, who was praised extravagantly as one who had held them together against guards and internal traitors, had preserved their courage and dignity, and become a natural leader over the long months and years. When Frenchmen, of whom there were many of education and position in the camp, lauded this man,

The Future of War

If optimism and pessimism have become increasingly irrelevant in our terrible dilemma, there is great reason nonetheless to practice the ancient virtue of hope. Though generally neglected in recent centuries, when optimism about progress was the rule, hope is that quality of character and virtue of mind which is directed toward the future in trust rather than in confidence. Its trust is that human beings will ultimately prove capable, to the extent granted to mortals, of controlling their own destinies through reason and wisdom. Poor as the present outlook for peace is, we can take hope in the realization, coming more and more to be accepted, that nothing except ourselves prevents us from consigning wars to the unhappy past. They correspond neither to God's will nor to the dictates of necessity.

It was one of the most discouraged thinkers who wrote the most hopeful of all paragraphs about a future warless world. His prophecy ought to be regarded as recognition of man's power to alter the course of events by undergoing an inner change. I refer, curiously enough, to Friedrich Nietzsche and to the following paragraph from *The Wanderer and His Shadow*:

And perhaps the great day will come when a people, distinguished by wars and victories and by the highest development of a military order and intelligence, and accustomed to make the heaviest sacrifice for these things, will exclaim of its own free will, "we break the sword," and will smash its military establishment down to its lowest foundations. *Rendering oneself unarmed when one has been the best armed*, out of a height of feeling—that is the means to real peace, which must always rest on a peace of mind; whereas the so-called armed peace, as it now exists in all countries, is the absence of peace of mind. One trusts neither oneself nor one's neighbor and, half from hatred, half from fear, does not lay down arms. Rather perish than hate and fear, and

twice rather perish than make oneself hated and feared—this must someday become the highest maxim for every single commonwealth too.

This is surely one of the most remarkable prophecies in Western literature. Nietzsche rightly sees that war-making must be overcome through strength and voluntary decision of a strong nation or group of nations; peace will never occur as a consequence of weakness, exhaustion, or fear. Just as the destructive lusts within us require superior power for their containment, so does an institution as deeply rooted in our society as is war require strength for its eradication. A peace of the peoples is hardly something that will steal over us unawares. Prepared for by a gradual change in the disposition of dominant groups, the final stroke will come in consequence of a daring, voluntary, and decisive act of breaking the sword. That can happen only when strength of mind and resolution of will no longer feel the need of external supports like prestige and protocol. It can happen even then only when a nation “out of a height of feeling” takes the decision to risk everything for a supreme good.

This is the second point of importance that Nietzsche makes. In addition to moral strength, courage will be needed, and that of the rarest kind, if war is to be extirpated from our race. The strong are, unfortunately, not always the brave, particularly not when they must expose themselves to the threat of the less strong. How exceedingly unlikely that any of the world’s stronger nations today would have the courage to disarm before their enemies! Only a few pacifists have the temerity to suggest such a thing. Who among our political leaders is strong enough to take the responsibility for an act like this? Many might say: “If I had myself alone to answer for, it would be worth the risk. But what right have I to jeopardize

future generations of my people by so irrevocable an act as this? Individuals can afford to take their lives in their hands; rulers must tread the cautious path of security. As the people’s representative, my duty is to guarantee their safety as best I can for the short time they are under my care. Dreamers and utopians are fit for writing books; they have no function in responsible political office.”

This is the wisdom of the world today, and woe betide the ruler who does not follow it. The vast majority of our people want our “armed peace” no less than their representatives, or, more correctly, they see no alternative to a peace of armed might. The other path is too beset with risks, and the implicit rule appears to be: Better to perish through caution than through folly. Nevertheless, there have been, in rare moments of world history, intellectual and political leaders who have persuaded their people to take risks nearly as momentous as this would be. They have been all too few, of course, and of these few most have failed. Yet nearly all that is best in our cultural heritage is traceable to their courage and resolution.

One day in the ripeness of time new leaders may appear who will induce their peoples to take the irrevocable step, an act so bold it will be greatly contagious and compel imitation. Obviously such a deed will not be wholly the work of one man or a small group. The people as a whole must be ready to support the act. But even when large numbers have undergone that inner change of mind and heart described in earlier chapters, it will still require the most courageous of leaders to break the sword in their name and thus assume responsibility for possible failure. A man will be needed of great simplicity and profound conviction.

The most important point of all in Nietzsche’s prophecy is a necessary motivation for breaking the sword. If permanent

peace is ever to come over the world, it will be made possible only by motives that are hardly yet operative in political life. "Rather perish than hate and fear, and twice rather perish than make oneself hated and feared." If the rank and file of a great nation could accept a statement of this kind, our future might be assured. Most of us do not enjoy hating and fearing political enemies, but we prefer it infinitely to perishing. We prefer it even when we realize that, indulged in to an extreme degree, hating and fearing destroy our humanity and make us little better than beasts.

If so many of us did not prefer life on almost any terms, we should recognize how intolerable are the burdens of fear and hate which oppress us in our time. They induce us to spend the greater part of our national substance on arms and armor, thereby depriving our people of much-needed schools, hospitals, libraries, and a thousand other benefits of organized political life. Hate and fear impel us to propagandize our youth, to twist and torment the truth into national and provincial molds instead of allowing it the universal frame it requires. Hate and fear narrow our sympathies, choke back our generous impulses, make us caricatures of our possible selves. When one considers these things and many more that might be mentioned in any just indictment of hate and fear, there need be no surprise that any free spirit would prefer perishing to life under their dominion.

However, the more important reason for breaking the sword, says Nietzsche—and he is surely right—is that men ought to choose death twice in preference to being feared and hated. Until this becomes the highest maxim for a commonwealth, as it is now for exceptional individuals, we shall not have reached our goal. Such an impractical motive may on first hearing astonish us, so contrary to our natural impulses

is it, and may occasion a contemptuous smile on the faces of so-called realistic men of the world. Why should a nation resolve to be no longer feared and hated and be willing to pay any price for such a resolution?

The answer is terribly hard to give to worldly minds who like to calculate advantages and measure motives as they measure materials. They will hardly comprehend a decision made by Socrates many hundred years ago to suffer injustice in preference to committing it because the former did less harm to the soul. The reason a nation that seeks to be just must abhor being hated and feared is not very different. To hate and fear are evil and damaging to our inner life, but being hated and feared are still more destructive of our higher impulses and potentialities. Nothing corrupts our soul more surely and more subtly than the consciousness of others who fear and hate us. Such is our human nature that we cannot possess power that others dread without becoming like the image of their fear and hate. To possess dread power does not corrupt us overnight; our features may remain benign for years. But inevitably the awareness that others tremble or grow enraged at sight of us poisons the mind and makes us, individuals or nations, in the end into aggressive pariahs, distrustful, capricious, and empty.

If nations ever reach the moral heights attained by exceptional individuals, they will shudder at the images of themselves their neighbors harbor. And they will do everything thinkable to change these images. The image of itself that a strong and gentle nation will one day find most intolerable is of a colossus, jealous of its prestige and alert to pounce upon any who challenge the established order. Conscious of its own intentions and motives, such a nation will not rest until others are aware of those intentions too. This can be accomplished

The Future of War

sudden end of war by an act of national will a foolish and dangerous dream.

To be sure, it would be an irresponsible man who would suggest that we give up the hard work of our international agencies in order to wait for something so uncertain and unreliable as a popular response of the sort Nietzsche suggests. What we need to do without fail is to redouble our efforts in international affairs, seeking the development of retarded areas, searching for legal justice in international disputes, and placating national resentments through resort to conferences and all the arts of compromise. If through these means we can extend one by one the years of our present uneasy peace, wars can be made to seem more outmoded sociologically, economically, and politically than they already do. Even if much of the effort of our international agencies does not directly promote the cause of world peace, it is desirable in its own right and must be done. Peace is, after all, not the only end that men legitimately pursue, and no one really knows in many instances what does contribute to peace in the long run.

Granting all this, I am nonetheless convinced that a transformation of a deep-going inner sort will have to come over men before war can be vanquished. All the machinery of international diplomacy and the highest standard of living for retarded peoples cannot bring about this change. It may be poetic exaggeration to assert that this conversion will happen suddenly; what is meant is that it will be a decisive change. In earlier chapters I have described it as an awakening, a coming to oneself, a discovery of friendship, a falling in love. Human nature, the ultimate source of all hostility, must be converted from its present state of hatred and fear in order to liberate powers within us the existence of which is suspected only by the tiny minority. Neither governments nor other in-

stitutions are able to combat at present the destructive forces latent within most of us. The leaders we need are not likely to spring from the earth; they, too, require for success a change in the populace of a fundamental kind.

How must we change, if there is ever to be opportunity to break the sword once and for all? The question is as difficult as it is suggestive and seductive. The temptation to forsake the bounds of the probable is great, but all of us are weary of socialist utopias which describe men who have unlearned customary pleasures, needs, and desires. Realistically, we should not expect men to alter their outer manner of life at all drastically, for changes can be thorough and revolutionary with comparatively little external reformation. The deepest changes of all are indeed likely to return us to the workaday world outwardly little affected, though our actions now proceed from a different motivation and eventually reshape the human environment.

The ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus once wrote that "men are estranged from what is most familiar and they must seek out what is in itself evident." The sentence illuminates, as few others have done, much of my own war experience. The atmosphere of violence draws a veil over our eyes, preventing us from seeing the plainest facts of our daily existence. To an awakened conscience, everything about human actions becomes then strange and nearly inexplicable. Why men fight without anger and kill without compunction is understandable at all only to a certain point. A slight alteration in consciousness would be sufficient to put their deeds in a true light and turn them forever from destruction. It would require only a coming to themselves to transform killers into friends and lovers, for, paradoxical as it may seem, the impulses that make

killers are not so different in kind from those that make lovers. I know no other explanation for the notorious linkage in war between the noblest and the basest deeds, the most execrable vices and the sublimest virtues.

The feeling of being at home in the world is likewise not much removed from the feeling of being exposed and hopelessly lost to all succor. And the sense of being thrown into being that existentialist thinkers describe is removed only by a line from the experience of man created in God's image that was painted by Michelangelo in the wonderful fresco "The Creation of Man." The change in us from the one state of being to the other is, of course, profound, but the psychological distance to traverse is slight. Most of us have known both extremes, often in an incredibly short span of time. It is as though a thin but impenetrable wall separated the two states. If at moments the wall seems easily torn away, usually it proves to be more durable than our lives.

Hence the search for that most familiar and evident of all truths, the belonging together of the human species, in religious terms, the brotherhood of man, is rarely attended with success. In World War II, I found myself separating those soldiers who were awakened and aware of their situation from those who were lost in it. The former were those I could communicate with and understand; the others were simply "the others," beyond my sympathy and concern. Yet in moments of clarity nothing is more apparent than the fact that the best and the worst of men are different in degree only, not in kind. The soldier who is moved by sentiments of friendship and preservative love can reject the soldier-killer, for example, but he cannot in justice deny common humanity with him. Nor should the soldier of conscience who acknowledges his guilt at every level fail to recognize the potentiality of similar

awakening in the most reckless and ruthless of his comrades as well as in the enemy. There is too much evidence of such transformations for any of us to doubt.

The case is hardly otherwise in our present uneasy state of peace. To overcome this alienation from the evident and the familiar we need, above all, a genuine closeness to each other in contrast to the separation and isolation that now prevails so widely. It is evident that the overcoming of physical space is not bringing this nearness. As our planet becomes more and more overcrowded and problems of living space and food grow more pressing, the chances for conflict indeed become greater. Evidently there is little or no relationship between physical and psychical nearness, for it is possible to be alienated from one's own roommate and be near to someone a thousand miles removed in space.

So long as we are far from ourselves, it is impossible to be near to others. Well-meaning people often assume that what is required of us today is a wider set of relationships than is possible within the simple and natural unities of family, town, and province. The typical citizens of Kansas, Brittany, and Formosa can hardly become close to each other in any sense demanding intimate acquaintance with one another. What all of us need to gain is a closer relationship to those immediately about us. He who knows what genuine friendship is or the fullest type of erotic love cannot be as estranged from self or others as they are who have never experienced these things.

This nearness to each other, even if it be with one other human being, promotes greatly the development of reflection and self-awareness. Persons who know intimacy are driven to put the important questions: Who am I? Why am I? What is to be my function in life? The kind of knowledge they seek is not of a subtle kind, commonly miscalled philosophical, which

an untutored man could not be expected to have. On the contrary, it is this knowledge that people of little formal learning are frequently pursuing more avidly than the falsely sophisticated. Because they are concerned with the important questions, they sometimes achieve the important gift of simplicity. I know of no better way to reach the familiar and the evident than by stripping away superfluities in our emotional, reflective, and social selves, and in our external environment as well. **Simplicity** manifests itself in directness of approach to other human beings, in the absence of dissembling and guile. Knowing himself, the simple man is conscious that the man he is addressing is, in essentials, not different from himself, and it is the human being in the other that he insists on speaking to.

A condition of this intimacy, all too rarely recognized by most of us, is a different attitude toward the objects of nature around us. A habit of intimacy with the things of nature can fan the creative sparks within us and strengthen the concern for preserving ourselves and others. It is not a misty sentimental feeling for nature writ large that we require; but, rather, a recognition of our dependence on the most humble objects of everyday use and of their importance and place in existence. Until we learn to experience more simply and directly our gardens and trees, the skies above us, and all the objects amid which we move and work, we will find it difficult to achieve closeness to neighbors and even to ourselves.

I have become convinced that the familiar and the evident are so remote because we moderns have increasingly separated ourselves from nature by replacing a primary artistic response to things with a technological mentality. Contrary to the will of many scientists, our science has become much too often an

instrument for the exploitation of things and people. We have become so preoccupied with power and control over nature that we have lost an important dimension of our being, the disposition of thankfulness, of commemoration, of perceiving and enjoying something for its own sake. Instead of viewing these immediate objects of our environment in terms of their own being, we have come to regard them solely in terms of what they are for us. And to such an exploitative mentality, nature's voice becomes mute. Approached as material merely, to be worked up and pressed into the service of a self-styled lord of creation, she contains no revelation and no blessing.

To the man who is not interested in what a thing is in itself and for itself, no intimate relations are possible. Nature can be infinitely abused by such a one, but by no means understood. Only the cherishing, object-centered eye of the artist latent in all of us can make and keep us aware that nature does not exist only for us, but in her own right as well. The artistic gaze alone can discern those qualities in nature that are able to heal our restlessness and overcome our boredom, by enhancing the value of the commonplace. Art can reconcile us to our individual and collective fates as nothing else can, except perhaps religion. But art (I do not speak of the fine arts) has declined in our society as the narrow utilitarian ideal has grown, and the results are lamentable.

The effect on our religious traditions of this appropriative, ego-centered disposition of mind has been hardly less disastrous. Religion, like art, points to something greater and more worthy than the self and impels us to pay it homage. Religion relates man to his origins, aiding him thus in the search for a reason for existence. Modern man finds it hard indeed to discover anything in the universe worthy of worship. More often than not he conceives himself to be at the top of an un-

ordered creation, able to survey the whole and to do with it what he will. But few are ready to worship him; he has demonstrated often enough that he is lacking in divine serenity and endurance.

Moreover, he himself knows full well that he can be no proper god, for he is filled with a longing for something or someone to whom to belong. In the face of an overpowering universe, he realizes, consciously or not, that his freedom and independence are relative and puny. What is missing so often in modern men is a basic piety, the recognition of dependence on the natural realm. And they feel the need of this piety without possessing it. There is no dearth of religions in our time, and they fulfill certain needs, but there is a general absence of religious passion for belonging to an order infinitely transcending the human. Separated from close association with nature and intimacy with her ways, we find it difficult to do homage to nature's god.

This separation of man from nature as a consequence of our too-exclusive interest in power is in part responsible for the total wars of our century. More than we ever realize, we have transferred our exploitative attitudes from nature to man. In total war, men become so much material, and civilian populations, like soldiers, have to be ravaged and subdued. Distinctions between innocent and guilty, the permissible and the prohibited, become extinguished. Men and machines approach each other more nearly. The most painful impressions of World War II for me, as I have said, were the ruthless trampling down of the works of nature and the innocent products of human art. Try as I might, I cannot but recoil, even in memory, from the destructive fury of a modern army directed upon the things of nature and her creatures, all untainted by any partisanship. The butchering of each other was almost

easier to endure than the violation of animals, crops, farms, homes, bridges, and all the other things that bind man to his natural environment and help to provide him with a spiritual home.

Since that war, there has been no convincing evidence of change in this exploitative mentality. The fashioning of the atom bomb seems to me too dangerously typical of the modern mind, and the recent experiments with the hydrogen bomb an unrecognized blasphemy. Hardly anyone considers it possible that the poisoning of fish in the ocean by these experiments might be worthy of condemnation. Man can sin only against man, it seems, or possibly against God, not against nature. That the ocean should be violated, a region hitherto relatively immune from destructive lusts, seems to most, apparently, nothing else than a triumph of natural science.

In the desperate state of human relations in our day, one can understand the argument for testing weapons in order to keep national defenses strong. But I am objecting to the spirit in which it is done, involving, as it does, indifference to all that is not of human origin or use. This lack of concern stands, I believe, as a great barrier to the elimination of war. Before expecting man to spare his brother, we must persuade him to spare those things around him that contribute to his life as greatly as his brothers do. The growth of that preservative love and care which is in strongest opposition to destructive lusts involves an intimacy with things of which too many of us have as yet hardly an inkling.

The gift of nearness to the familiar and evident is happiness. Whatever else is true, we in the West will not learn to break the sword until we have happier populations. If there are any laws of psychology in this area at all, one must be that a happy people is a peaceful people. The capacity for

happiness which most of us possess receives too rarely the sustenance it needs to become more than a capacity; more often it shrinks as we grow older. The longing for a paradise, which our hearts believe to be possible but which we cannot find, robs us of serenity; the large expectations of our youth remain unfulfilled. Though the components of happiness are no doubt many and not the same for all, emotional and intellectual intimacy with others is surely the one component essential to nearly all of us. For the few, association with the things of nature can of itself produce a happiness that suffices to fulfill the more solitary members of our species. But, for the majority, nearness to the things of daily existence can be a means for entering into closeness with other human beings, whether it be the comradeship of labor, the partnership of marriage, the friendship of kindred minds, or other associations.

More than anything else, happiness can provide a secure bottom to the world, sufficient to persuade us that we are no accidents on this planet. Happiness alone can transform the dull and colorless daily scene into an order pregnant with meaning and delight. When a person finds a friend to whom he can open his heart, when a woman finds a man she can love and to whom she can bear children, when any of us find a community we can love and serve, our little lives take on a significance we had not dreamed of. Far from being the restless ones who welcome war as a possible path to forbidden experience, we experience the threat of war as completely intolerable. Those who have a stake in peace realize too well that war can occasion the loss of all.

Nations containing genuinely happy citizens would shrink from exposing their great fortunes to the cruel chances of combat far more than wealthy nations now shun war from fear

of loss. More than this, a nation with happy citizens would encounter greater difficulty in maintaining a hostile disposition in themselves or others, since happiness always presses toward universality. The people who one day break with their military past and declare that they no longer can endure to be hated and feared will not only be a happy people; their deed will be largely a result of their happiness. Having experienced closeness to each other, they will be eager to extend the experience to others. And for this they may be willing to take the greatest risks, more trustful and of larger faith than we.

I have often meditated on my chance meeting with the old hermit in Italy, and have tried to puzzle out why he impressed me so much. Perhaps it was not only his ignorance of the war and my inability to explain why we were fighting, but also certain qualities I sensed in him which were in starkest contrast with my own state. What these qualities were it is still not easy for me to name exactly. Born on a farm and brought up with country people, as I have been, I am wary of sentimentalizing the old man of the mountain. I have no doubt he possessed the ordinary human quota of meanness, dishonesty, and avarice. He and his hermit kind can obviously do little for the peace of the world now or in any conceivable future. But there was about him a rare peaceableness and sanity that I have slowly come to associate with a better, peaceful world.

Though he had probably never seen an American in his life, he welcomed me beside him on the grass, and I have never felt less like an intruder in my life. Despite the handicap of language, we began to talk at once of important things as naturally as if we knew one another well. There was no strangeness about our meeting, our talk, or our parting, though

the experience as a whole was the strangest one of the war for me.

I felt in him the strength of his close association with the things of nature. The serenity in his eyes, voice, and movements was not the dullness of the lout or vacant-minded. Even if he had lived through none of the storms more sensitive and gifted people experience, he seemed to possess a constancy, patience, and endurance not often known to them. I could not guess and did not ask what his history had been and why he had chosen this life, but it was clear that he had gained a kind of wisdom from solitude which enabled him to live simply and happily. In fact, he appeared to be singularly at home in the world, as though he had sprung from nature herself and thought of himself as her authentic child. Harmless and wise and innocent, he dwelt here in the mountains, ready to chat with all who chanced by and to ask them anew about those strange and infernal noises in the valley which he would never understand. When a large number of people become, like him, truly unable to understand why nations war with one another, the human species will no longer be in mortal danger of extinction.

Possibly his gentleness and simplicity had taught him, too, not to exaggerate the significance of the human story in relation to the rest of nature's household. At least watching the stars at night, as soldiers often have to do on lonely guard duty or in their foxholes, can rob one of the arrogance that makes men believe their history is the beginning and end of the things that are. After my visit with the old man, I drew comfort from the words of Plato: "Think you . . . that the little affairs of men here below are of great interest to the God who reigns over all."

Far from making a man sad and defeatist, this perspective

THE WARRIORS

can instil a kind of serenity. The larger purposes of the universe, though far transcending our weak powers of comprehension, may, after all, not be dependent on the history of man. If we are not the chief end of creation, as assuredly we are not, the whole in which we are included as a small sum may have meaning and purpose. Though man's wars may be too small from a cosmic vista for any pattern to be descried, they may, nevertheless, be purposeful enough if one could see events with less myopic vision than we possess. In any case, it is time that we human beings abandoned the overweening faith that only through us can the objectives of creation be realized. That faith needs to be replaced by the confidence that, even if we vanish from the earth sooner or later as a consequence of our failures, that, too, will be within the compass of a Being incomparably greater and more enduring than the race of man.

About this last there is for me an impenetrable mystery, as there is about the nature of man himself. War reveals dimensions of human nature both above and below the acceptable standards for humanity. In the end, any study of war must strive to deal with gods and devils in the form of man. It is recorded in the holy scriptures that there was once war in heaven, and the nether regions are still supposed to be the scene of incessant strife. Interpreted symbolically, this must mean that the final secrets of why men fight must be sought beyond the human, in the nature of being itself.