

# Casualties of War Serve a Disturbing Wake-up Call

By Kenneth McCaleb

I had one friend whom I knew died Oct. 14, 1943, on the mission to Schweinfurt. Bill Bisson, a B-17 first pilot, slept on a bunk across from me in the barracks.

We rode our bicycles around the English countryside. I learned a couple of years ago that the German civilians beheaded Bill when he hit the ground.

Bisson's bombardier, Joe Lukens, was strafed and killed in his parachute by a Luftwaffe pilot. And on Saturday, Oct. 8, 1943, on a mission to Bremen, the 367th squadron on the 306th group lost two planes over Bremen.

I learned a week later that the first pilot, Kooima; the navigator, Berkey, who slept in the adjacent bunk; and the other two officers in the crew were hanged in Bremen. I remember at the time thinking that could happen because not all of our bombs hit military targets.

I have read that 50-60 million people died in WWII. The American Civil War was so deadly because of the repeating rifle. However, disease killed more soldiers than did bullets. In WWI the world had machine guns and poisonous gas. And finally, WWII produced the atomic bomb.

And now, I read about biological weapons. So society must find a way to prevent war.

It would seem that any differences in societies produces the possibility of conflict.

There are differences of nationality, race, religion, and economics. Sadly, human beings have difficulty in forgiving and forgetting.

Thus, one conflict serves as a cause for another conflict. But, it has been said that economics is the greatest cause of war.

One of the greatest concerns of mankind is the increasing population of the world and the demand for material things. Joplin, Mo., is an example of the depletion of natural resources — the lead and zinc that made the area famous is gone. Pollution of our water and air is a major problem.

It is probable in past history that disease has killed more people than has war.

One final thought: the world might be different if all husbands and wives loved each other and enjoyed their children.

I have been writing this for several days and it is disorganized. It is just some of the thoughts of an old man and an old soldier.