

I'm not a soldier, but I am in a war

by Alex Tse - Friday, November 09, 2012

<http://politicsrespun.org/2012/11/im-not-a-soldier-but-i-am-in-a-war/>

I'm always amazed by how heartfelt Remembrance day presentations are from secondary school students who have never personally experienced war. They feel more honest somehow, even though they are just as routine as the municipal ceremonies.

But Remembrance Day ceremonies are too much about soldiers' deaths and individual veterans. There is no question that we must honour their sacrifice, but wars involve more than just soldiers. They involve politics and corruption, and the misunderstandings that cause people to die. Why are we so fixated on those who died that we never look at how and why? How does our reliance on oil affect the international warscape? How many universities have official military ties? How many assassinations have been paid for by Goldcorp? Remembrance ceremonies in their current format *externalize* war - as if war belonged only to soldiers and to the past - when in reality, war belongs to all of us in the here and now.

I already know they gave their lives for me. They gave their lives so that I could have healthy food, freedom of speech, clean air and democracy. But everything about the American Dream is being threatened once more, and if those valiant souls were here now they would rally us to fight for our lives. Instead we are content simply to reminisce - as if war were a thing of the past. It's not.

How can we stand to simply remember the dead when more still are falling? How can I appreciate the life they fought for me to have when every moment it is slipping through our fingers? We are never so emotionally united as we are on Remembrance day, making it our biggest hope for education and action. They died for us. Don't let it be for nothing.

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw*

