



WAR
or



HEALTH?

Why diplomacy is better
than warfare



Medical Association for Prevention of War
www.mapw.org.au

**War is out of date . . . Every
weapon is met with the invention
of a still more deadly weapon.**

Vida Goldstein, Melbourne 1917

**I am one who has long believed that
war has outlived its usefulness.**

Tim Costello, Melbourne 2013

The time for guns is over.

Solomon Islands schoolgirls 2003



"Taem fo gun hem finis nao" (The time for guns is over now.)

What is war?

“ **A conflict carried on by force of arms, as between nations or states . . .** *Macquarie dictionary.*

Warring nations try to win by killing or wounding their opponents, destroying their property and damaging their environment.

History shows that most wars could have been avoided by discussions to reach agreement, using diplomacy and negotiations. This would have saved many lives.

What is health?

“ The World Health Organisation says that health is **physical, mental and social well-being.**

In war, we attack the health of our opponents, and place at risk the wellbeing of our own community.

Wars kill and harm more civilians than soldiers, and damage infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools, water and power supplies.

What war costs

War is very expensive.

Billions of dollars are spent each year on war (2012 world military spending: \$1.75 trillion).

- + In 2012, Australia's military expenditure was \$24.2 billion (almost four times Indonesia's spending).
- + We are one of the biggest military spenders in the Asia-Pacific region (5th in 2012).
- + Australia is the world's ninth biggest importer of military equipment (\$889 million in 2012).
- + Although diplomacy is cheaper than war, Australia spends far less on diplomacy, and has broken a promise to meet international targets for overseas aid.

Defence budget 2013-14: \$25.3 billion

Foreign affairs & trade budget 2013-14: \$1.5 billion

1,000,000: a million

1,000,000,000: a billion

1,000,000,000,000: a trillion

What health costs

Less than a third of the world's military spending would eradicate extreme hunger and poverty, and send all children to school.

**World military expenditure for one year:
\$1.7 trillion in 2012**

**\$5 billion: extra yearly spending needed
to control malaria around the world**

**\$135 billion: global foreign aid yearly
spending needed to eliminate poverty**

\$332 billion: spending needed 2010–2015 to meet UN goals for sanitation, as a billion people around the world don't even have access to a toilet.

Australia's Joint Strike Fighter aircraft will cost \$130 million each.

\$90 million would eliminate trachoma (a serious eye disease) in Indigenous Australian children by 2015.



Killing tools

Nobody talks about their effects

Humans have made weapons increasingly deadly over the last 3000 years.

- + Stones, which damage flesh and break bones, can be thrown faster and further with a slingshot.
- + Arrows have sharp tips which cut into bodies and can fly accurately over long distances.
- + Gunpowder was invented over a thousand years ago. Exploding gunpowder is used to propel metal bullets at higher speeds, causing more damage to bodies. It is also used for bombs and mines, which make large explosions, killing and damaging humans and property; and in cannons, firstly to propel a metal ball, and then to explode it, causing injury or death both by the blast, and by flying splinters of metal.
- + Warfare has developed from short-term hand-to hand fighting, to long-term conflicts by large military forces with costly equipment.
- + Nuclear weapons have flattened cities, killing hundreds of thousands and leaving a deadly legacy of cancer.



Burundi: UN picture

New killing tools

- + Pilotless drones can fly over enemy territory, and kill without risking the lives of an aircrew.
- + Cyber warfare could cut off water and electricity by attacking the computers that control supply.

In the 20th century there were over 100 million war-related deaths.

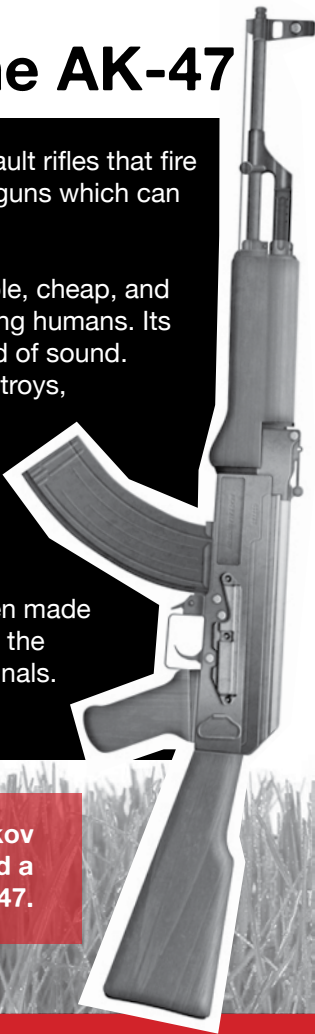
'Small' arms: the AK-47

The term *small arms* includes assault rifles that fire high-speed bullets; and machine guns which can fire thousands of bullets a minute.

Most famous is the AK-47, a simple, cheap, and reliable tool for killing and wounding humans. Its bullets travel faster than the speed of sound. When the bullet hits a body, it destroys, disintegrates and crushes tissues, and causes dangerous bleeding. A large temporary cavity expands and contracts several times after the bullet has passed through.

Over 100 million AK-47s have been made since 1949. They are used around the world by armies, militias and criminals.

Russian inventor Mikhael Kalashnikov now says he wishes he'd invented a lawnmower instead of the AK-47.



Catastrophic harm: nuclear weapons

There are 17,300 nuclear weapons in the world.

Nine countries have nuclear weapons. Others are developing nuclear technology.

A nuclear bomb will kill tens or hundreds of thousands of people and destroy buildings for several kilometres. In addition to injuries, many survivors will be made sick and die from radiation poisoning, and future generations may suffer from genetic damage.

A “small” nuclear war would cause a “nuclear winter”, and a billion people could die from famine.



War spreads disease

War can destroy health services, so that diseases and injuries go untreated.

But this is not the major cause of war-time disease. Armed conflicts create conditions where epidemics can spread rapidly.

- + Disease resulted in more deaths than battle, in all conflicts until the 1930s.
- + Infectious diseases spread more easily when conflict results in poor food, dirty water and living conditions, and people moving from place to place.
- + People in refugee camps are more likely to suffer from major epidemics.
- + War disrupts the fight to get rid of diseases by stopping programs like immunisation.



By 1915, ten per cent of Australian soldiers in World War I had contracted venereal disease (syphilis or gonorrhoea).

War makes you crazy

Going to war can have long-lasting effects on your mental health.

In World War I, this was called “shell shock”: 80,000 British troops were recorded as having shell shock. (Some were executed as punishment for deserting their post).

After World War II, it was called “anxiety neurosis”.

Today we recognise that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can affect **all** war survivors.

Long-term symptoms include avoiding reminders of the event, and distressing unwanted memories or nightmares. Sufferers’ symptoms include sleeplessness, anxiety, irritability, depression and mood swings. Often they turn to alcohol to try to deal with their symptoms.

Australia’s Vietnam veterans have a rate of mental health issues 5 to 10 times that of other Australians.

War destroys homes

War and conflict cause people to leave their homes, because they fear for the safety of their families, or because their homes and livelihoods are destroyed.

- + At least 3.5 million Iraqis have fled their homes and not returned since the 2003 invasion. Almost half are still in Iraq, and the remaining 1.8 million have left Iraq.
- + Recent conflict in the east and north-east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has resulted in the displacement of over 2.2 million people inside the country. Almost 70,000 people have crossed the border to Rwanda and Uganda.
- + Jordan hosts over 700,000 refugees escaping conflicts in neighbouring countries like Iraq and Syria.
- + Environmental damage ranging from toxic chemicals to millions of landmines displaces people, and ruins farmland.

Nearly 700,000 people have arrived in Australia since 1945 as displaced persons or refugees.



Refugees, Darfur. UN picture



Korean war orphans: UN picture

Children, the elderly, the disabled, and the poor are especially at risk during wars. And many recent armed conflicts have been in underdeveloped countries.

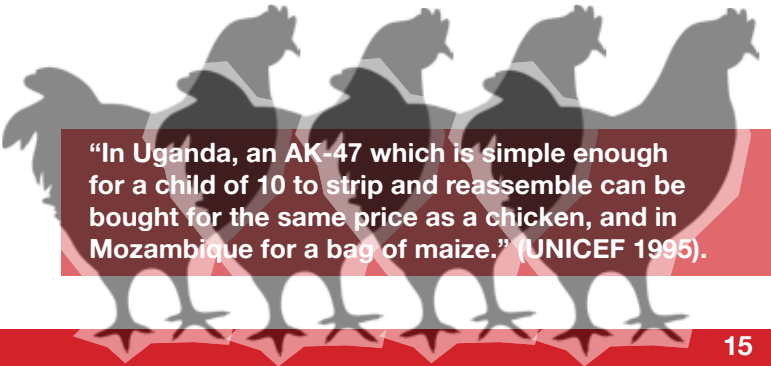
War hurts the vulnerable

Children and war

Over two million children have died in armed conflicts in the past decade and at least six million seriously injured or disabled (UNICEF).

Conflict increases children's risk of being exposed to abuse, violence and exploitation. Sexual violence against women and children is often used as a weapon of war. Disruption of local water and electricity supplies increases the spread of disease. Armed conflict has a psychological impact on children as well.

In the past 10 years, around 20 million children have been forced to flee their homes because of conflict. Over a million children have been orphaned or separated from their families during this time.



“In Uganda, an AK-47 which is simple enough for a child of 10 to strip and reassemble can be bought for the same price as a chicken, and in Mozambique for a bag of maize.” (UNICEF 1995).

Terrible weapons

The lives of millions of people have been devastated by weapons like landmines after the war is over.

Countries around the world have agreed to ban weapons which cause unnecessary suffering, or which kill indiscriminately.



British victims of mustard gas, World War I

Banned weapons include

- + Killing by spreading diseases, like anthrax
- + Killing with chemicals, like mustard gas or sarin nerve gas
- + “Dum dum” bullets, which explode inside the victim
- + Carpet bombing: bombing a whole city rather than specific targets
- + Landmines, which kill civilians and have made vast areas uninhabitable
- + Cluster bombs, which spread tiny bomblets over a wide area, killing civilians and often children

Mr Sumiteru Taniguchi was 16 years old when an atomic bomb exploded at Nagasaki.

The majority of nations (but not yet Australia) want nuclear weapons banned.

Photo: Yuriko Nakao



Australia's Vietnam hangover

60,000 Australian troops went to Vietnam.

500 Australians were killed, and 3129 were severely injured in battle.

75% of veterans are recognised as suffering from some kind of health impact.

- + In addition to the long-term effects of injuries there are higher rates of many cancers, and diseases such as malaria.
- + Nearly 30% of all those who served – 17,454 people – have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- + 12% of Vietnam veterans' partners suffer from severe, recurrent depression: far higher than the general population.
- + Children of veterans suffer higher rates of a variety of congenital birth conditions and health problems including cancers. Grandchildren's health may also have been affected.

Iraq War: 174,000+ dead

Hundreds of thousands of people have died in Iraq since the United States, supported by Australia and other nations, invaded the country in March 2003.

The Iraq Body Count lists Iraqi civilian deaths as 120,000; and total violent deaths as 174,000 (at March 2013). (Only documented cases are counted, so actual deaths were far higher.)

In May 2012 the Iraqi Human Rights Ministry reported 250,000 injured “by attacks” since 2003.

At least 800,000 Iraqi children have lost one or both of their parents (UNICEF survey, 2012).



Deaths of foreign military forces in Iraq include over 3500 from the USA.

Face the facts



Advertisements for kitchen equipment show you how exactly they work.

US military called the WWII battle for Iwo Jima island (where 27,000 people died) “the meatgrinder”.

But it is not easy to find clear information on the ways that weapons damage human bodies.

? *Ask exactly what a weapon does to the human body. Ask how much it costs.*

Australia’s government provides materials to schools which teach that our national identity was built through joining foreign wars. Was it?

Anzac commemoration has become an emotional issue. Some people say it is disrespectful to debate the facts of our military history. But glossing over the real health effects of war is deceptive.

? *Ask why Australia got involved in a war, and whether this purpose was achieved.*

Talk is cheapest

Most wars end with diplomacy and negotiation. It saves many lives to do this from the start.

Diplomacy is the most effective way to influence the behaviour of other nations, Australia's Lowy Institute found in a 2009 study.

A 2013 study by the Rand Corporation found that 16 out of 20 major peace-keeping interventions had brought peace.

A 2005 Rand report noted that the UN was spending less money running 17 peace operations around the world than the US was then spending in Iraq in a month.

2011: Leaders of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville mark the anniversary of the peace agreement which ended a long and damaging conflict (encouraged and armed by Australia).



What you can do

Ask questions about weapons made in Australia, and who buys them.

On Anzac Day, ask how war affects people, and their families.

Talk Talk Talk with friends, work-mates and family about these issues!

Spread information. We can give you booklets, stickers and bookmarks to take to your school, club or library – or ask us to send a speaker.

Write a letter or even better VISIT to your local Member of Parliament, encouraging more funding for diplomatic services and overseas aid, and less on military spending. And no wars.

Join ICAN activities to support a ban on nuclear weapons: www.icanw.org



Ivory Coast: UN photo



UN disarmament process, Burundi: UN photo

Get informed!

SIPRI (The Stockholm International Research Institute) gathers information and publishes detailed information on world military expenditure and arms trading. www.sipri.org

MAPW's website has reports, fact sheets and links to more information: www.mapw.org.au

See UNICEF www.unicef.org for information on war and children

War or Health? A Reader This 2002 collection of essays by IPPNW Finland is still a key text

About MAPW

The Medical Association for Prevention of War (MAPW) is a national organisation of health care professionals with branches in every state.

We are the Australian affiliate of IPPNW, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985.

Our core aim is **to prevent the death and suffering, and relieve the suffering, which arise from war and preparations for war**, through research, education and advocacy.

JOIN THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION FOR PREVENTION OF WAR (MAPW) We have medical memberships for health workers, and associate memberships for everyone else. Get involved! **www.mapw.org.au**



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