

# War ? what is it good for?

by BRIAN LOCKHART

It was a couple of shots from a pistol that are blamed for starting the First World War.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated along with his wife while in a motorcade in the streets of Sarajevo in 1914.

That action by a group of conspirators set into motion a whole series of events that led pretty much all of Europe into turmoil.

While the assassination is blamed for starting the war, in truth, tensions had been boiling over in Europe for years with countries forming alliances and blaming the other side for everything they didn't like.

The assassination was just an excuse.

In the centuries-old European tradition, when you've got a beef with your neighbors, you put an army together and cross the border to kill people and destroy property.

However, this was the turn of a new century, and times had changed.

This wasn't going to be siege warfare with arrows fired over castle battlements and defenders pouring boiling oil on the attackers below.

The days of Napoleon and armies marching in formation were gone, although some commanders at the beginning of hostilities still hadn't figured that out.

Technology had produced many new weapons ? notably the machine gun and artillery that could lob exploding shells for miles to produce a nice air burst that would kill troops on the ground en masse.

After four years of stalemate, massive casualties, and much of Europe in ruins, they signed an armistice, and called it quits.

It was called ?the war to end all wars? when they realized the massive amount of destruction that was done and the fact that 15 million lost their lives.

However, no one really learned a lesson. The armistice that was signed caused a lot of resentment, and the conclusion was another war, 21 years later that was even more destructive.

So, here we are again and another war in Europe is raging on.

This is the 21st century. There should be no reason for any country on the planet to have an army. We as a society should be past the dark ages mentality of killing your neighbour over a disagreement.

There is a diplomatic corps for a reason. You can settle disagreements with words ? not bombs.

There is talk of ?war crimes? carried out by the Russians.

That's a phrase I have always found to be ridiculous based on the very nature of saying there are ?crimes? that are committed during war.

It is considered a war crime if soldiers drag unarmed civilians out of their homes and shoot them dead on the street.

However, it is justifiable if you kill the same family by hitting their home with artillery fire from 20 miles away and call it 'collateral damage'.

It is against the rules of international warfare to use hollow point bullets - formerly called dum-dum bullets - because they are considered 'inhumane' because of the damage they cause.

However, it is considered quite right, to kill a person by shooting them ten times in the chest with an automatic rifle. Who cares what type of bullet you use? They're still dead.

It's all a crime, and sending an army to invade another country in a hostile action should be considered a crime just as much as having a dispute with a neighbour on your street and going next door to kill them to settle the argument.

On top of all that, the cost of buying and maintaining the weapons of war is astronomical. There's plenty of other more important things nations should be spending money on.

We as Canadians are a peaceful people. We are not imperialistic, we have never invaded anyone, and luckily we only have one border, so it's not like we are surrounded by hostiles.

And yet we still must maintain an armed force because other nations can't live peacefully.

The Russian arm has been exposed as a paper tiger. They can't manage supply lines, have low morale, and outdated equipment.

Their kleptocracy style of government has bought corrupt leaders mansions and yachts while their soldiers on the front line can't even get food or supplies.

Their soldiers are dying in large numbers, and according to international reports, families are not informed their sons are dead. They are simply reported as missing - and that's it. That takes the heat off the government and families are not compensated for family members whose whereabouts are 'not known'.

In the end, what will happen?

I'm betting one day Putin will go into work, and be informed in the Russian/Soviet tradition, that he is being replaced.

The Russians will have no choice but to withdraw, but leave behind thousands of innocent dead and cities that will take years to rebuild.

War - what is it good for? Absolutely nothing.