

SILENCE 1. There is a movie, SILENCE, about two 17th century Jesuit priests, who travel to Japan to locate their missing mentor. **A**long the way they face hardship. They begin to question their faith. Yet, when they ask for a sign from God, they are met with silence. **We** ask in vain for a sign from God ... that God does not exist.

see also the footnote to FAITH with the story about Desmond Doss as well as blog 926 and its corresponding page in the appendix

SILENCE 2. The world around us is noisy. Some people are used to noise to the point they are addicted to it, they are uncomfortable or fearful in silence. They turn on the tv, just to escape silence. **I**n silence one is confronted with one's self, but not everyone is able to bear this confrontation. A woman who had tried to kill herself, said, "when listening to music, I'm alive; but all by myself, it's not enough". **I**t has been said silence is the voice of God. Anyway, in silence I am able to hear myself think, while I practice contemplation; and in silent meditation, I merge with the universal consciousness.

SOLDIERS. As his patriotism is called upon, the soldier draws the short straw. He is lured by promises of mateship and adventure, or at least good pay and a decent professional education. **B**ut first the soldier must be trained to kill. This training is merciless. **N**ext our soldier has to pay for his education. He has to endure - and inflict - unspeakable horrors. Then the soldier is returned to society. But the horrors of war are burnt into his mind. **W**ill he cope?

A soldier, who served for only six weeks, had witnessed an atrocity involving a civilian victim and had to listen to the sounds of a man slowly dying, after he shot him.

When he returned from his tour of duty he became a drunk and suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and severe depression. After a few months he suicided.

Horrors of war too much for soldier, SMH, 1 Nov 2007

see also WAR

A devastating book: WAR is a FORCE THAT GIVES US MEANING by war correspondent Chris Hedges, is "bitterly poetic, powerful and ruthlessly philosophical," LAT. I find it as shocking as Spielberg's Schindler's List:

"The discarded war veterans are never a pretty sight. They are troubled and some of them are physically maimed. They often feel betrayed, misunderstood and alone.

"It is hard for them to integrate again into peacetime society. Many are shunted aside, left to nurture their pain alone. They may turn the violence they inflicted against themselves."

The book offers an unvarnished account of what it feels like to kill humans. William Manchester in Goodbye Darkness: "It is never clean, easy or neat; killing is a dirty business.

"Nothing is more sickening than watching a human life snuffed out, nothing haunts more. A dark feeling of disgust and self hatred clotted my throat, gagging me in my stupor."

The accounts from war zones are horrifyingly graphic; they describe how soldiers become de-humanized and that war forms its own culture. The rush of battle is a potent, lethal drug as soldiers decide who lives or dies.