

Portfolio 1 final draft

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New York Times online published an article called “A fearful price” by Bob Herbert. In the article Herbert talks about American’s free and easy attitude towards waging war. He goes on to explain that only 1% of Americans are truly affected by war: the children of soldiers and the soldiers themselves. Herbert talks about the emotional struggles of the children, and the physical and psychological struggles of the soldiers; these struggles are the results of war. Herbert then argues that every American should be required to share in shouldering the burden of war. He does not believe that a mere 1% of this country’s people should shoulder it alone, and he implies that if it continues the consequences will be costly.

In the article “A Fearful Price” Bob Herbert says he feels only a small percentage of the American population is shouldering the burden of war. Many Americans are unaware of the price those that are affected pay, particularly children. I agree with Herbert that war has a negative effect on the **children of the deployed** and the **soldiers themselves**; however, I would add to Herbert’s argument that **war also affects the spouse.**

When a soldier goes to war their deployment greatly impacts their **children**. My father’s deployments had a large impact on me and my brothers. In 1998 my father’s deployment impacted my younger brother P.J. the most. P.J. was only 3 and too young to understand what was going on. He stopped speaking the day my dad left and maintained his silence in till my dad returned 9 months later. Before my dad left he recorded a video for us to watch. P.J., being so young, believed my dad was trapped in the television and would sleep in the entertainment center as a way to be close to him. My

mom was unable to make him understand my dad's absence. In 2005 when my dad deployed again this time to Iraq, it affected all of us. We were older and capable of understanding my dad's absence. Understanding did not make things easier though, if anything it made them harder. We knew our dad was in danger and our imaginations ran wild. I had nightmares most nights of my dad getting hurt or dying. It was easier not to sleep than to deal with the nightmares so I developed insomnia. My dad was the disciplinary, so with him away I acted out and got in trouble quite often. I was caught for shoplifting and smoked pot. The oldest of my brothers Christopher refused to talk to anyone about what he was feeling and became very angry; P.J. also became very angry. The youngest of my brothers Steven was only 6; he didn't fully understand what was going on he just knew our dad would be away for a long time. He became very emotional and cried a lot. My family is not the only to experience such difficulties; the impact of war on a soldier's children is tremendous

War leaves many **soldiers** with both physical and psychological wounds such as post-traumatic stress disorder (P.T.S.D.) and depression. My father is one of those soldiers. He has P.T.S.D. because of his experience in Iraq. He also sustained physical injuries during his deployments; he spends most days in tremendous pain and takes multiple pills to manage both his pain and depression. He was injured during an attack on his guard tower by Al Qaeda. Due to his injuries he was forced to be medically retired from the army. Because of his inability to continue serving his country he struggles with the feeling his body has failed him along with survivor's guilt for being alive when many others aren't so lucky. The price my father paid for war extends beyond time sacrificed to service. In many cases the physical and psychological impact of war is lifelong.

Although Herbert doesn't mention **military spouses**, war impacts them as well. The spouse is expected to maintain the home front when their soldier is away: paying bills, maintaining the home, and keeping a brave face for the children. This is not an easy task when dealing with the emotions and fears

associated with their loved one being deployed to a war zone. My mom had an especially difficult time with my dad's second deployment; Iraq was far more dangerous than his first deployment. Bosnia was a repair mission. He was deployed with an engineer unit, their mission to rebuild the area; they were in no real danger. Iraq was a different situation. My dad was stationed in what is known as a red zone (a highly dangerous area). My parents were high school sweethearts; my mom had never really loved anyone else. She spent his entire deployment in constant fear that she would lose her best friend, her lover, and the father of her four children. Whenever there was an unexpected visitor at the door I watched my mom hold her breath as she answered the door expecting to see a chaplain on the other side with heartbreaking news. My mom fell into a deep depression during this deployment; I often found her lying in bed crying because she missed him so badly. The effect his deployment had on my mom didn't end when he returned home. Though she no longer had to fear for his safety, her emotions turned to anger and resentment towards him for re-enlisting without asking her opinion and leaving her with so much responsibility when he deployed. Many spouses experience the same difficulties when dealing with the deployment of their loved ones.

Most Americans have a carefree attitude towards waging war because they are not directly affected by it. It is the soldier and their family who carries the burden that comes with war. Freedom is a right that every person deserves, but it comes at a cost. It is the soldier and their family who pay the price of freedom and many of them continue paying for life. The next time we are faced with the option of war, we must ask ourselves: is it truly worth the price?