

A Child Not Killed in War

During WW II, on February 14, 1945, I walked with my childhood friend from our school in Prague and he invited me to go to his house to play. For some reason, I decided rather to go home. When I came to the door of our apartment, suddenly an explosion occurred on the street I was walking on just one or two minutes ago. Had I been slightly delayed, an air bomb would have killed me. The following day I learned that another bomb had killed my friend on his way home. That day I escaped death twice.

As a Quaker and as a rather normal human being, I prefer peace and strongly oppose war. Millions of children have been killed in wars since WWII. Through my life I have frequently been thinking about some aspects of me not being killed during the war. This question also applies to the lives of all children in our world that could be saved by lasting peace, without any wars.

Because I was not killed in WWII ...

My parents did not lose their son. My grandparents did not lose their grandson. My sister had her brother. I have been happily married for 46 years; have two children and four grandchildren. My wife, son-in-law and daughter-in-law have had their loving families. Many people I have met during my life have had an additional friend.

Our life consists of three main periods - learning, working, and sharing our experience.

I studied at the University of Agriculture in Prague. After immigrating to the United States, I completed two graduate degrees at the University of California in Davis.

I worked as a Research Scientist in agricultural engineering in Prague. I was involved in designing and testing farm equipment. I was involved in coordinating agricultural engineering research with scientists in Poland, Hungary and East Germany. I participated in the selection of tractors and equipment to be exported to Ghana.

I worked in Ghana for six years, was involved in training tractor operators and opening new land for crop production. At the University of Ghana, I lectured about tropical farm mechanization, trained technicians working in a newly established workshop, and developed a tractor-mounted grater to help farmers in cassava processing.

After my graduation from the University of California, I worked in state government for over thirty years managing research projects. My work included usage and development of energy on farms, testing of agricultural products, evaluation of agricultural developments, and other projects. In response to environmental challenges caused by drainage water in the San Joaquin Valley, together with three employees of the USDA- Soil Conservation Service, we have developed an environmentally sound method for the management of saline drainage water. This method was called Integrated On Farm Drainage Management (IFDM). Tree planting was an essential component of this system; we planted over 600,000

trees on farms. A farmer in the Bakersfield area forced by regulations to go out of business, decided to implement the IFDM system to continue successful farming. Various programs provided research data for 14 University of California students to complete their graduate studies.

My family owns a small farm near Davis. We partially converted an original pasture into a forestland, planting several thousands of trees. We installed solar energy on our farm to generate electricity needed for irrigation. We also installed solar panels on our house in Davis. Solar electricity and harvested firewood from our farm make our family more energy self-sufficient. The trees planted are also improving air quality.

Through the years of my life, I have noticed that many people are unhappy with themselves. This observation lead me to publishing a book "Questions we have forgotten to ask". Various questions are encouraging people to think positively about themselves, their family, friends, and about life. Beautiful pictures of Joshua trees are further enhancing the quality of this book.

This essay describes the life of a child that was not killed during WWII. However, it is dedicated to millions of children who were killed during the last world war and in many other military conflicts since 1945.

Planning and conducting a war, to kill children and their families, should be considered as the most extreme criminal activity in the world.

Vashek Cervinka

August 25, 2017

Member of the Davis Friends Meeting

vac@dcn.org