

Letter to the Salisbury Journal – about National Armed Forces Day

No war, since the dawn of time, has ever been inevitable. Wars happen because of injustice, oppression, inequality and the failure of politics.

Salisbury Quakers believe that our government and others should be working towards reducing these triggers of war. Greater emphasis and resources put into improving communication between states, more support for and resources given to the United Nations, a greater emphasis on diplomacy and much greater use of targeted educational, trade and aid programmes, could provide a more secure future and less need for military action.

As citizens of Salisbury, we are very grateful to our Armed Forces who, together with the police, ambulance services, Salisbury District Hospital and experts at Porton Down, helped our city through the crisis last year. However, we are puzzled as to how this gratitude squares with the Armed Forces Days from 28 - 30 June.

We are uneasy about children being exposed to military hardware with little understanding of the death and destruction they can cause. War is not a family activity and should not be trivialized. Impressionable youngsters could get the idea that only people with guns can solve big world problems. We must try to foster creative responses to world problems and recognize the common humanity in every individual.

The costs of staging this event must be considerable. Would not that money have been better spent helping homeless veterans in Salisbury and those suffering from PTSD in our psychiatric hospital?

If you would like an alternative to the events on Saturday afternoon, 29 June, the Quaker Meeting House at 51 Wilton Road will be open from 1pm until 4pm for tea, cake and the opportunity for quiet reflection and discussion of these issues.

As a poster outside the Meeting House says, “Keep calm, come inside.”

Salisbury Quakers