Warzone mercy – sparing culturally constructed enemies – is a fundamentally political act that has contributed to shared expressive gestures across cultural boundaries and to international rules of law. Moreover, mercy is a sublimely human act that demands an acknowledgment that there may be freedom within constraint, overdetermined motivation arising from the nexus of genes, biography, society, culture, and history. I offer evidence to support an argument for warzone mercy as a uniquely human act that requires cross-cultural understandings. Then I elucidate Kenyan Samburu pastoralist attitudes towards mercy, cultural norms governing mercy shared by several “enemy” communities, and systematic data on individual acts of warzone mercy enacted by the current generation of warriors. Humans may be trained or culturally conditioned to kill, and yet the historical and cultural ubiquity of warzone mercy underscore the ways in which empathy reveals and pervades the human.