

Editorials

We Are Still at War/Conflict

By Heather Ochse, editor-in-chief

Whether we like it or not a war or more accurately a conflict in the Middle East is still ongoing. Not many people seem to talk about this or if they do they seem to quickly move on towards a new subject rather than discuss more in depth the dilemma our allies and we, as Americans seem to be facing.

The problem many Americans have is the apparent apathy being displayed by many regarding the number of innocent men and women that are dying for our country each day. Maybe it is because they refuse to turn on the news knowing what they will see is unpleasant. It is not pleasant to a lot of people but the fact remains, it is still out there.

War and conflicts are an act of rage and they have been in existence since the beginning of time. It does not mean we have to like it, because like many others I am against human suffering and death as a result of these acts. Growing up in a military family, I reserve the right to say this. We all do. I think it is a good idea to talk about what bothers us in the world we live in today.

Do we have a say in who goes to war or a conflict? The answer is no, but here is some information that may make you realize what you should be paying attention to:

According to the USA Today in 2003, "As of March 19, 433 U.S. service members have died: 298 from hostile fire and 135 from accidents and non-combat-related incidents". The numbers are still rising.

This may not seem huge to some, but to me, my friends are out there dying from the current conflict in the Middle East... the Afghanistan, and Iraq conflicts to be exact. Most of these service members are young, 18 to 25, that have not even begun to live life because their lives were taken away too early.

In order to boost and to enhance the low morale of our servicemen in the Middle East, some of the troops are being sent home for rest and relaxation and to see their families. These brief visits referred to as "leave" in the military are often over in as little as two weeks time. In areas of the United States like Camp Lejeune, NC, troops come home and leave every so quickly back to the hostilities on the Middle East. In the case of some who recently came back just weeks prior to the Thanksgiving holiday some had to depart back to their combat units before Thanksgiving officially came. The normal tour of duty or rotation for many of our servicemen has been six months for those involved in the Middle East war/conflict. A six month deployment may not be ideal for many families of these servicemen but it will seem like a good deal compared to the newly released policy of a one year tour of duty that many will soon face. Not only was Thanksgiving a difficult holiday to face, but so will Christmas, New Years, Valentine's Day and even birthdays to come for our service personnel and their families.

A surprise visit by President George Bush was made Thanksgiving Day. Bush surprised the troops in Baghdad with lots of food, including the turkey. As Bush secretly left his home state of Texas without word of leaving.

The United States and the United Nations are working together to provide better future elections in Iraq, now that Saddam Hussein is no longer in power.

According to the CNN Washington Bureau, "Thousands of Shiites have marched to demand direct elections, putting pressure on the United States to find a compromise... The United States maintains that it is too difficult to organize direct elections before the July 1 deadline, but has asked the United Nations to gauge the possibility of direct elections within the timetable."

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