

# Gulf war's legacy still up in the air

At this time last year, America was at war. As a nation, we were glued to the television watching CNN reports. Previous unknowns, such as Wolf Blitzer and Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, became household names, their exploits and attributes dissected over countless dinner tables.

There began a massive public relations game. Saddam Hussein was called "another Hitler." Detailed accounts of Iraqi atrocities greeted TV viewers every night. Iraqi chemical weapons and possible nukes worried analysts: No one knew what would happen, but for morale and preparation's sake, they expected the worst.

We needed a war. Wars are a great way for the public to forget problems on the home front, and we surely had enough of those.

America warmed up to a fever pitch, expecting "the mother of all battles," as Saddam so eloquently predicted. Casualty estimates for the allies went into the thousands. Everybody prepared for a long war. The U.S. was prepared — at all costs — to avoid another Vietnam.

The air war began; war-watching went high-tech. America oohed and aahed over grainy movies of laser-guided bombs striking with amazing accuracy. Tales of fleeing Iraqi planes, photographs of badly bruised American POWs, and televised-live Scud missile attacks turned the gulf war into one fought on the airwaves as much as it was on the ground.

The protesters were drowned out in the American euphoria of going to war. A fledgling recession, domestic problems and other like issues went on hold — the war captured the attention of the media and its watchers.

When the troops finally moved, it was unbelievably easy. The allies freed Kuwait, sweeping the battered Iraqi army away like toy soldiers. As the ground war triumphed in 100 hours, Americans saw new pictures: The broken toys of war. Blistered tanks, burned-out trucks, oil wells in conflagration and bodies — everywhere, bodies.

The country went on a high not seen since VJ Day. Ticker-tape parades and highly watched press conferences, the thrill of the moment reached new peaks until finally, palpably, it began to sicken.

And now, it's been a year. Time to get an accounting of what America and its allies accomplished.

Saddam Hussein out of power? Nope, still there, the perpetual thorn in the side.

Destruction of Iraqi chemical weapons and nuclear production capabilities? Uncertain, but best guess, no.

The beginning of democracy in Kuwait? Wrong again, the monarchy still remains.

What was accomplished was death. There were few American casualties for an international war of that size, unless you are one of the dead or a member of the family, and then it was one too many.

On the Iraqi side, the number is still unclear. Estimates range from 10,000 to 100,000. No one is sure.

The war has faded from the American scene. It's an election year, and the recession — now going strong — is the main topic. The fear of Democrats who voted against the war getting swamped in post-war euphoria has not materialized.

The legacy of the gulf war will be debated by historians from here on out. But to those of us who have to live in the present, it really doesn't amount to much.

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## LETTERS

### Steps

What steps are being taken for security within University dorms? (Regarding ex-convict's rape of 18-year-old freshman, R.G. Jan. 12-13, etc.)

The problem, I am told, is that state institutions are not allowed to screen applicants' backgrounds for past activities; that anyone who has "paid his debt to society" will be accepted for housing.

Dorm contracts say only a few words about security, which emphasizes possible threats from outside the dorms (guest access, etc.).

What is University residential housing's responsibility that our children will be safe while living within Hamilton Complex and other residences? Unless and until administrative simplistic thinking changes to real common sense cause-and-effect, a "change of outside locks" may only make it easier for the fox in the chicken coop.

Use my name please or call me Concerned Grandma of another 18-year-old freshman.

Mary Eva Culver  
Eugene

### Censorship?

What does everyone mean by censorship? Is ABC's decision to edit out a very violent scene from a movie aired during prime time fall under your definition of censorship? If it does, is it necessarily bad and wrong?

If a magazine chooses not to print an ad that negatively stereotypes African-Americans, is this censorship? If Blockbuster Video decides not to carry pornography videos, is this censorship?

All sorts of people make decisions based on all sorts of criteria about what to air, print, sell. Is this necessarily all bad and wrong? The bookstore also makes these types of decisions. What's the difference between socially responsible decision-making and censorship?

Josephine Trigilio  
Women's Center

### Both sides

I can't remember a time when I was as angry as I was after reading the one-sided article on Michael Patrick Ryan (ODE, Jan. 22).

The tragedy that took place

in the Hamilton basement was not a melodrama as seen on television. The ugly truth can't be tuned out and forgotten when the television is turned off.

Contrary to Gabriel Johnson's view, who spoke in Ryan's defense, it was known to many students that Ryan gave free pot to people as friendship. Other students feared Ryan, for they said he watched them through his dorm window. Others claimed they received obscene phone calls from Ryan at inappropriate hours.

Try taking a look at both sides of the issue. To say Ryan was a "generous man who cared for the safety of women" is ridiculous. Ryan created fear among all dorm residents for everyone was raped of the faith they placed in this institution's security practices.

The public doesn't need to know the sick details of the crime. It's not only humiliating to the victim but also it takes attention away from the real issue. Students can no longer be apathetic. It's time to open our eyes and work together for the safety of all students.

Alexa Harris  
Student

### Oppose

I am very much in agreement that pornography should not be sold at the University of Oregon bookstore.

Heidi Bowman  
Student

# Oregon Daily Emerald

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