

Soldier tells other side of Iraq war

A sergeant relates his experiences in the Persian Gulf

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THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

According to one U.S. soldier, it is time America stopped focusing on the terrible events in Iraq depicted by the media and talk to those who have been there about the good they see taking place in the war-torn country.

Christopher Kjos, a sergeant in the United States Army, just returned from Iraq. He was sent to Iraq April 2, 2003 and stationed in Baghdad at the CPA headquarters.

"Bush is a good man," said Kjos. "I like to see a president that won't sit back and take B.S."

Kjos said that although some Bush critics say the war in Iraq is just G.W.'s way of finishing his father's job, he believes that in reality they are two very different wars. The war that we are dealing with now is a war on terror, he said; a war that hopes to rebuild Iraq, reinstate an Iraqi government and give power back to the people that Saddam mistreated for so long.

Most of all, Kjos believes the war is to protect America.

"There will always be more terrorists," said Kjos. "It's better to weed them out than to let them attack us."

According to Kjos, the conditions in Iraq before the U.S. troops arrived were terrible.

Saddam lived in stylish palaces while his people suffered. Few Iraqi people had electricity and running water. What the troops are doing in Iraq is helping out the Iraqi people.

"Most of the Iraqi people live in homes that are built out of sand and clay," said Kjos.

According to Kjos, the current sewage system in Iraq runs down the sides of the street. In fact, one of the tasks troops are accomplishing for the Iraqi people is the implementation of a new sewage system and creating electricity within homes. Another is to redirect the oil profits, which used to go strictly to Saddam, but will now go to the people.

"I think that the media will say what the people want to hear; they are a business," said Kjos. "If you want the real truth, talk to someone that has been in Iraq for two years."

Kjos said it is frustrating for him to watch the news because he has been in Iraq and he knows exactly what is going on. He feels the media likes to portray only the worst events that occur, rather than focusing on the good the troops are doing.

"On the news, you don't see the kids hugging the soldiers or the grown Iraqi men crying and coming up to the soldiers, kissing them on the cheek," said Kjos. "One of the kids came up to me and the only English words he knew were 'America good, Bush good, Saddam donkey.'"

Kjos estimates that by July 1, 2004, Iraq should have estab-

lished its own government. It is hard to say how long the war in Iraq will last, but he believes the war on terror overall will be a long one.

"We've lost an estimated 600 of our soldiers in a year. People who criticize the war forget about how many people died on Sept. 11," said Kjos. "You can't blame the deaths of the soldiers on the President. It takes 10 lives to save a thousand."



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The front of a military vehicle sits in a sewage ditch which Iraqis looted. Part of the reconstruction efforts include modernizing the sewage system.



KJOS

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