

25 Lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan

“War is cruel and you cannot refine it.”

General William Tecumseh Sherman, US Civil War, 1864

Like most, I have watched world events since 9-11, knowing that my own life changed that Tuesday morning. Since then, I have been horrified, encouraged, disappointed, enraged, saddened, humbled and humored. I have become resolved in my belief that our cause is just, that our military is made up of the best citizens that America has to offer and that the world needs America's leadership and example.

These “lessons” are old ones reinforced and new ones realized. I am both offended by the realities of war and encouraged by our nation's courage and resolve.

These lessons are provided without apology. But, be forewarned, war and the accompanying language is not pretty (“...you cannot refine it”), nor are the following pictures and words. These lessons are purely my own, finding fault with them will be a simple task.

It is my hope that America stays the course and faithfully stands by our noble men and women in uniform – our only real insurance policy for continued freedom. My own ‘hope’ was more eloquently phrased by General George Washington when he stated, “Remember, officers and Soldiers, that you are fighting for the blessings of liberty.” In the end, all of America is fighting for the blessings of liberty.

Bill Coffey
Citizen, Soldier

“To contemplate war is to think about the most horrible of human experiences. On this February day, as this nation stands at the brink of battle, every American on some level must be contemplating the horrors of war.”

U.S. Senator Robert Byrd (D-West Virginia) made this statement on the floor of the Senate on Wednesday, February 12, 2003

Lesson #1 : Their Actions, When They Kill One of Us

Iraqis chant anti-American slogans on a bridge over the Euphrates River where charred bodies are hanging in Fallujah, west of Baghdad, Wednesday March 31, 2004. Enraged Iraqis killed four foreigners Wednesday, including at least one U.S. national, took the charred bodies from a burning SUV, dragged them through the streets, and hung them from the bridge spanning the Euphrates River.

Iraqis mutilate a burnt body of a dead US citizen who was inside a car attacked in Fallujah. Furious Iraqis hacked up the charred bodies of two Americans, and hung the remains from a bridge after their car was ambushed, saying this rebellious Iraqi town would be the 'cemetery' of US-led occupation forces.

