

War is dangerous business; there is no 'safe' way to do it

War, said Gen. W.T. Sherman, that favorite of southerners, is hell.

Why we thought it would be otherwise is a puzzle.

As the casualties mounted into the dozens Sunday, overwrought television reporters began questioning the allied drive to Baghdad.

The CNN web site trumpeted the war's "bloodiest day." American generals came under sharp questioning. American troops continued their drive.

The hand wringing was almost laughable. Almost.

The skirmishes the coalition encountered on the road to Baghdad so far could not be compared to the slaughter at Omaha Beach or Gettysburg or Pork Chop Hill.

This is a war, and war is hell. But so far, our feet are just a little warm.

The American columns advanced more than halfway to their target before they encountered any significant opposition.

More allied fighters were being lost to accidents — helicopter crashes, stray missiles, auto crashes — than to the enemy.

The Iraqi regular army's main role seemed to be to surrender to the Americans and British.

Bunker buster "smart bombs" followed one another down to the basement level of Saddam's palaces, and an easy triumph appeared to be within reach.

But there is no free pass in war, no "get-out-of-jail-free" card.

Did it surprise anyone that Saddam's henchmen would mistreat and abuse the few American prisoners they have taken, a mere five compared to the thousands of Iraqis in our hands?

Did it surprise us that his militias would appear out of uniform, waving a white flag, to trick Marines into an ambush?

(This move serves a dual purpose, to kill a few Americans and to make it much harder for Iraqi troops to give up. Cruel, but effective.)

This is a regime that uses rape and torture as tools to interrogate and punish its own people. A regime that gassed whole villages of its countrymen. A regime that tortures not just someone who speaks against it, but their entire family.

As the American columns near the target, resistance is likely to get more intense. We will lose more soldiers. There will be more accidents.

But make no mistake. The administration and the military intend to win. They will not rest until Saddam is gone.

It's a war that no one wanted — not the world, not America, certainly not President Bush.

It's a war that will be more difficult to win than the first few days revealed. But we expect to win it. The American command says our advance is "unstoppable."

They expected difficulty along the way.

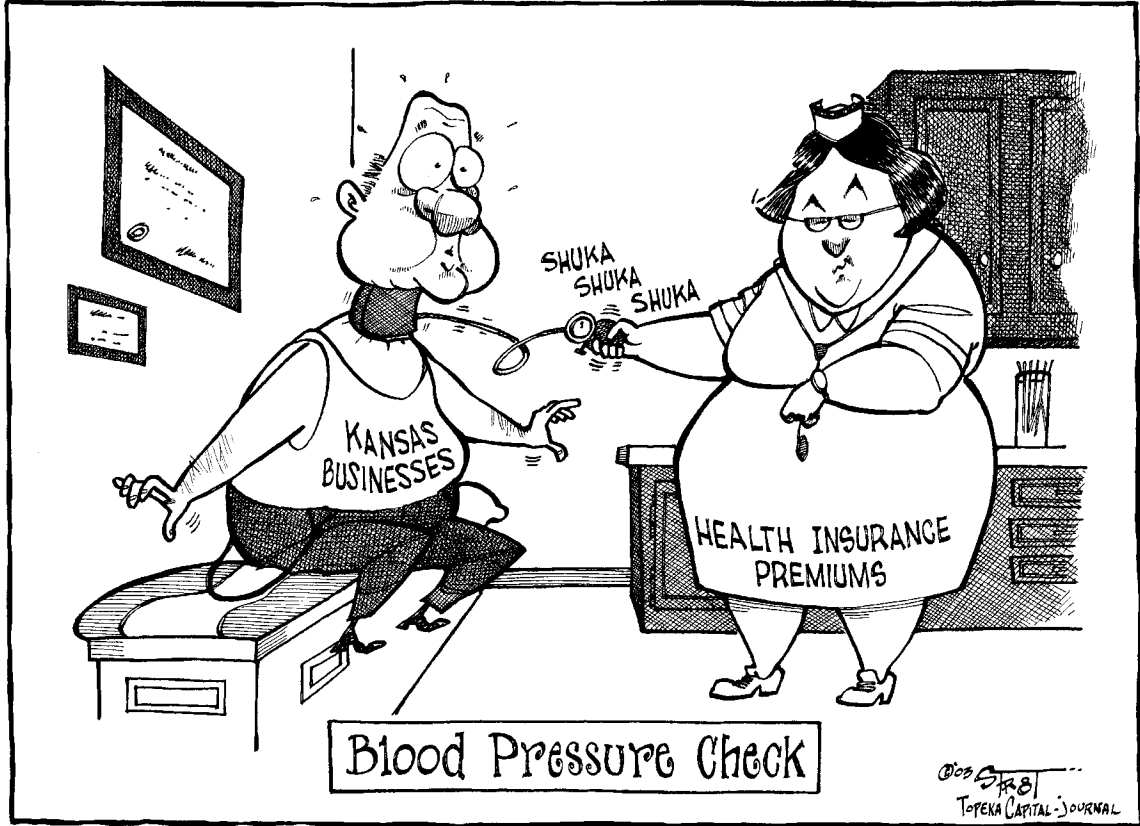
At a briefing Sunday, a British reporter asked the American general in charge if the problems of the weekend had made them realize the war would be more difficult than the commanders had thought.

"No," he said with a glare of contempt, turning to take the next question.

The high command, knowing Saddam Hussein and knowing war is hell, knew what to expect all along.

Hard times, and victory. We pray for them.

— Steve Haynes



The price of war must be paid

Washington may be the city of government, but it is also the city of monuments.

The Department of Agriculture, for instance, begins as a tidy and not overly large marble edifice on The Mall. Behind the venerable structure, though, the faceless brick warren of the bureaucracy sprawls for three blocks in each direction.

Along The Mall, all the way from the Capitol to Arlington across the river, there is a stretch of green broken only by monuments, large and small. We did not have time to see them all.

Thursday brought record-breaking rains, and Friday dawned gray and humid, perfect weather for reflecting on war and memorials.

Time was, great monuments were erected to great leaders who won great wars. So it happens that the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial face each other across the Reflecting Pool, flanked by the memorials to Korean and Vietnam veterans, and to the heroes of World Wars I and II.

Around the town are scattered memorials and equestrian statues dedicated to other victorious heroes, from Stephen Decatur to Franklin D. Roosevelt to John F. Kennedy and the Unknown Soldier.

As a nation, our attitude toward war has changed. We often are reluctant to fight, but a century or so ago, when Teddy Roosevelt was leading Rough Riders up San Juan Hill, and young men stood eagerly in line to join the battle in Europe, war was seen as romantic.

Today, we are in danger of viewing war as just one more video game, where buttons are pushed and rockets launched and bombs dropped, and somewhere far away, things go boom.

Our armed forces are the most capable in the history of the globe, without peer in the modern world.

But war is not a video game. In the first Gulf War, only 135 or so allied troops died, many of them in accidents. This time, so far, the statistics are similar.

But we forget that 150,000 to 200,000 Iraqi troops lost their lives in that battle. And we sent the survivors back to spend another decade with Saddam Hussein.

Such sacrifice it not to be taken lightly.

We are not so far removed from Vietnam to have forgotten the horrors of war. Thursday, I was trying to take a picture of tourists lined up along the Vietnam Wall, some just gawking, some running fingers down the list of names.



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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A WOMAN KNELT Thursday at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington. — Herald staff photo by Steve Haynes

We had come in behind a platoon of AmVets from Eliyra, who marched up and presented the colors at Vietnam, then marched over to Korea and did the same. Tourists were chatting and pointing. Then the ones I was photographing moved on, leaving a solitary woman in her 50s, well dressed and well beyond the raucous days of the '60s.

She knelt on the cold, damp granite and bowed her head in prayer before a name. There was no way to tell, but it seemed she had been there many times before.

I turned to ask, but she was gone. A brother? A husband? A lover? A friend? After all these years, she remembered. She knew the cost of war. War may be necessary. War may be just. War may be right. But, on a damp and gloomy day in Washington, you knew what mothers and wives and sweethearts have always known. War is never cheap.

Diabetics need to be vigilant

To the Editor:
March is Diabetes Alert Month. Founded in 1940, the American Diabetes Association is the nation's leading voluntary health organization, supporting diabetes research, information and advocacy.

Diabetes Under Control, along with the American Diabetes Alert, wants you to know that diabetes is a silent killer. It can slowly catch up with you, and you may not have any symptoms until it is too late — complications may have already set in.

There is a link between diabetes, obesity, age, inactivity and a family history of diabetes. If you are 20 percent or more overweight, you are more likely to be a victim of diabetes. If you have a history of the disease and any symptoms, it would be wise to check with your doctor or health provider.

The number of people at risk continues to climb as the population over 50, and the number of people who are overweight, increases. Half of diabetes occurs in people over 55 years of age, and it affects over 18 percent of those past 65.

Many people do not experience symptoms but can still be diabetic. Some of the symptoms are extreme thirst, hunger, frequent urination, unusual tiredness, unexpected weight loss and blurry vision. Since these symptoms are similar to other diseases, it is especially important to alert people because diabetes can be

Letters to the Editor

a silent killer — gradually causing your blood vessels and nerves to deteriorate with no warning.

The good news about diabetes is, the more you know about it, the more likely you are to avoid complications such as vision loss, kidney disease, amputations, heart disease, and stroke, according to Diabetes Under Control. Modest changes in your diet and exercise habits can

help prevent or delay this disease.

If you watch your weight, have your blood sugar checked regularly, remain active and control your diet, you can be a relatively healthy person. In fact, if you're careful, you may be healthier than your neighbor who is not diabetic. It depends how you take care of yourself.

Elsie Wolters, coordinator
Diabetes Under Control, Oberlin

Herald gets old newspaper

To the Editor:
Enclosed is the 1939 Anniversary issue of *The Oberlin Herald*, plus another issue of *The Herald*.

My great-grandfather was Van B. Wiggins, a longtime resident of Decatur County. My grandmother was his youngest daughter, Fanny.

I am glad that *The Herald* will have this copy of the paper. It is not

in the best condition, but I really enjoyed reading many of the articles. It gave me an insight into the early life of the area.

Joan Kempf
13 Lakeyns Drive
Arkansas City, Kan. 67005

Editor's Note: Ms. Kempf also mailed us a copy of the July 6, 1939, paper.

Students make us proud

To the Editor:
On March 17, the Oberlin 4th, 5th and 6th grades, about 100 students, came to the Price farm at Clayton to visit. They were a well-behaved, mannerly group of young people that their school, parents and com-

munity should be proud of. We welcome them to come back.

This world can't be all bad with this kind of young people.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Price
Clayton

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War news filters into Mexico

We were still across the border in Mexico when news reached us that the U.S. and coalition forces had, indeed, begun the bombing of Iraq with the invasion soon to follow.

Radio contact with the ministry group we're associated with informed us to be prepared for anything at the border crossing, that traffic was really "weird." The usual heavy local traffic leaving Juarez for the American side was extremely light.

The youth and adult advisors traveling with our group were given the standard border crossing advice: remove hats and caps, take off sunglasses, no joking, one spokesperson per vehicle and be polite. Each vehicle was stopped and given the "once over." But all-in-all, it was the easiest and quickest border crossing we have ever made. All nine vehicles in our convoy cleared the checkpoints in less than 30 minutes.

It was later we learned that suspected terrorists, possibly with biochemical weapons, were feared to be trying to gain entry to the United States through Mexico.

Like everyone else in the country, we have been glued to one news



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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source or another: listening to radio in the car, watching television at home, reading papers containing world news.

No one wants war, least of all the men and women in the armed forces who have to fight it. But, for the life of me, I can't understand these so-called peace protesters who are so willing to forcibly resist police in New York or Los Angeles, but won't fight FOR their country.

There's an e-mail circulating about a peace rally where a flag burning is about to take place. An old soldier pushes his way through and tells the crowd about his father who died for that flag in World War I, about his brother who died at Iwo Jima trying to raise that flag, and about how he was injured in combat

defending the flag. He told the crowd that he was willing to die for what he believed in and that he had only one bullet left in his old gun. He asked which one of them was willing to die for what they believed, which one would die trying to burn that flag? They all turned and walked away.

A little harsh? Perhaps. But like that country song says, "You've got to stand for something, or you'll fall for anything."

Let's stand up for America!

From the Bible

Pray without ceasing.
— I Thessalonians 5:17