

The Big Job

Some things I've read often, in quotes from American soldiers, have been that they want "to get the job done & go home"...and that "it's just like a movie". And too, "we're really doing some good things here...but the bad guys keep blasting away at us"...

What is the job, guys? Well, they say what the party tells them is the line: *To take out Saddam and his weapons, & then to bring freedom & democracy to the Iraqi people.* The US armed forces are "volunteer" now, so these are people who either signed up as if they had applied for a job...or they're from Reserve & National Guard units where they in fact have real jobs but signed up as moonlighters in the military. Most of them really didn't expect to be in a war.

So we have several hundred thousand young people who are trained to kill & maneuver with high-tech weaponry to destroy other nation's armies. Some of them are mechanics or drivers and have every right to think of their 'work' as a normal job. When they got deep into Iraq and began to see death in combat & to kill civilians, they began to say "I just want to get the job over with & go home". It became like pulling a night shift after a day shift and just having to hunker in & try to survive it.

We're doing the Good Work and the Bad Guys are trying to wreck it. It sounds very like the feeling of a Christian missionary in some 'backward' region after some nuns are roughed up or a new church burned down. It reveals a thread that goes right back up to the White House. Bush's language patterns that are all derived from his Born-Again congregations. *Evildoers* is the most extreme. I believe there are operatives within the Bush cabal who make up a sort of press kit for the armed forces. They came up with this formula and ordered its promulgation all throughout the occupation force. *We are here to do good works. We destroyed their little Satan, now we are trying to fix things and show these tribes how democracy works. But it's hard because there are still some Bad People out there and they hate Freedom.*

Missionaries went pretty far on that formula, endured much hardship and humiliation. But how well is it working with American soldiers? What about Sgt Graner who said of his torture sessions in Abu Ghraib "I know as a Christian it isn't right..but as a corrections officer I love to make a grown man piss his pants." These fellas aren't missionaries, they're heavily armed assassins.

When they say "it's like a movie" I think they are trying to brush away the terrible surrealistic shock. In a movie you have seen fireballs and tanks crushing cars and people shooting each other. You've seen deserts and Arabs in long robes under date palms. Now

it's the Real Thing. What is the Real Thing? What exactly IS an Arab? Why do they not run that other part of the movie where people throw flowers at our feet? The dangerous part of this mindset is that these young soldiers never will break through the scrim of movies and TV that have been their only education. That enough of them will see themselves as Vin Diesel or Wesley Snipes, firing thousands of rounds of 50-millimeter shells into vehicles without a single thought of the headless corpses burning inside. In the movies there is no smell, no burial of body parts, no fury in the brothers and grandfathers.

It's not *like a movie*, people. The ending isn't figured out & your best friend isn't going to dive safely away from that grenade. You're going to have to pick up his goddamned arm and throw it on the tarp. That's your job.