

STAR TRIBUNE
S&K



Iraq: How We've Changed

BY KELLY HERTZ

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Ten years ago next week, we changed. Actually, it was the start of an incremental process that unfolded across nine long years. It was a price we dearly paid for the Iraq War, which began March 19, 2003 (local time), and cost thousands of lives and hundreds of billions of dollars, and was, in the scheme of our 9/11 war response mentality, beside the point.

I could use this space to resurrect the zombie arguments about the wisdom, or the lack thereof, in invading Iraq. But that, too, may seem beside the point — except for the nagging aspects of historical perspective and future guidance.

Instead, let's consider what that war did to us — that is, to so many places like Yankton and to people like you and me.

The Iraq War started here on a quiet Wednesday night. I sat in this office, waiting for it. The chess match of ultimatums between Washington and Baghdad had played out to the bitter end, and at any moment that night, U.S.-led forces figured to strike at the Iraqi capital and we would again be warring in the Persian Gulf, just as we had 12 years before. But unlike the nerve-wracking start of that brief 1991 conflict, I didn't feel nearly as invested emotionally in the new campaign, a state of mind that I would pay for mightily in the years to come. Finally, when President George W. Bush told the nation that night of the new war at hand, it seemed oddly anticlimactic. "I'm not really sure what I expected," I told someone later just before I left for home, far sooner than I had imagined and seemingly unaffected by it all.

But we started changing that night. A few weeks later, I was part of a media junket flying on a military transport plane down to Fort Sill, Okla., where Charlie Battery (as it was called then) had gone to train after receiving activation orders. I recall how strange it was to see these "regular" people I had known now clad in military gear as they trained on that dusty military reservation for a real war on the other side of the planet. As it turned out, they didn't go that time; after Saddam Hussein's quick ouster, the Guardsmen were ordered to stand down. I stupidly imagined that all this might be just a fleeting venture, like 1991, as had been promised by the war architects in Washington.

But the promises wilted and the years dragged on. The worst memory of all was delivered on a cold Sunday night in December 2005, when this newspaper was tipped off that there had been local casualties in a roadside bombing in Baghdad. This was just a few days after a massive blizzard had plowed through our area, and the world already felt frozen and harsh. Then came this terrible news. I recall floating through the darkness of the



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office that night, waiting for the official word and what would come next.

There were the subsequent funerals. I vividly recall the Westboro Baptist Church protesters and that defiant line of counter-protesters who stood between the Westboroers and the funeral procession at the Summit Center. This was one of Yankton's finest hours ever.

I remember when Charlie Battery came home in 2006. An estimated 30,000 people lined the streets to greet them, and yellow ribbons were tied to virtually everything. It was joyous but incomplete and mournful — one of the most bittersweet days I've ever experienced.

I was there when they came home from another tour, to Kuwait, in 2010. It was a happy time but it somehow felt too familiar.

And I recall, barely, when this war technically ended in 2011. I was watching television as the last trucks rolled out of Iraq, with announcers trying to stitch any thread of drama they could to the moment. But something was missing. The war had been too long and the reasons too convoluted for the end to feel otherwise, I suppose.

I think back now on what Yankton was on that quiet March night in 2003. We were nervous, prayerful and maybe hopeful. But in fact, we were also clueless. We had not yet buried our fallen or tended to our wounded. We had not yet seen what war would do to our soldiers and their families. We had no idea of the darkness that loomed ahead.

Now, we know. We own, I think, a deeper empathy that's been earned by grim, intimate experience. This town has given much of itself to the business of war, in Iraq and elsewhere. In some ways, we are far removed now from what we were a decade ago, when the memories of previous wars had faded with the passing generations — and we didn't know.

We are arguably better for the experience. And we are emptier because of it. We are casualties. We are survivors. I often wish to God we could go back 10 years and alter the path that took us from there to here, undo the damage, unearth the ghosts, dry the tears and see what alternate reality might spring from it. How different would our world be? How different would Yankton be? And what would we be?

We'll never, ever know, of course. Ten years on, we can only dream of that universe and hopelessly wish it were so. But in war, dreams and wishes are also beside the point. We are left only with what was and what is, not to mention the hard knowledge of how much life can change in the long lifetime of a mere decade.

You can follow Kelly Hertz on Twitter at twitter.com/kelly_hertz

A Catholic Pope, Revisited

BY MICHAEL REAGAN

CagleCartoons.com

By the time you read this, the world's billion-plus Roman Catholics may have a new pope. And when the black smoke of Tuesday's indecisive first vote has turned to the white smoke of final decision, don't be surprised if the cardinals have chosen... a Catholic pope.

After the election of Benedict XVI in 2005, I wrote that the cardinals had correctly ignored the desires of some people to install a wimpish equivocator willing bend with the winds of compromise. I believe the cardinals will show the same wisdom in 2013.

In other words, the cardinals will choose someone who can remain faithful to his creed and his office, a true Catholic in all respects.

Some dissidents think the Church needs to become relevant by embracing all modern codes of conduct, but the Church will remain relevant where it really counts only if it retains its core principles. When the world is in adrift in turmoil, the answer is not more turmoil.

For example, abortion is no less evil today than it was in 2005; the need to protect life is no less compelling. The world will always need a place for rock-solid affirmation that life matters.

For those Catholics who don't like the idea of a Catholic pope, there is an answer. It's called the Episcopal Church, and every Catholic Church in the United States should have a map showing the location of the nearest one.

There, dissident Catholics will find homosexual bishops, lesbian priests, sanction for abortion, the unfettered right to divorce, and all those other practices the Catholic Church forbids under pain of mortal sin. It is the church



Michael
REAGAN

that can't say no. Dissidents will be very comfortable there. Does the Catholic Church have problems to solve? Yes, it does.

The child-abuse scandal must be dealt with unequivocally. The next pope will also have to quell dysfunction within the Vatican's central bureaucracy, the Curia. Some cardinals are thought to be frontrunners for the papacy based on their management skills, though I believe the Church needs more than a manager — it needs a leader.

There is also the matter of re-energizing the faithful. I won't deny that a higher level of energy would be a good thing; after all, Pope Benedict did retire because he realized he could no longer serve due to "lack of strength of mind and body."

I believe the Church will find a pope who can manage its bureaucracy and provide the energy to excel as a transformational world leader, as did John Paul II.

The new pope need not be transformational in the sense that doctrine should change, but transformational in finding new ways to make the wisdom and relevance of Church doctrine understood by all, and attractive to those who have not yet found a home for their innate faith.

Update: Let's pray that Pope Francis is that leader.

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it shows. Today, each American farmer feeds more than 144 people. And the need for food produced in the United States is dramatic. Agriculture is this nation's No. 1 export and vitally important in sustaining a healthy economy. Ag is the No. 1 industry in South Dakota and in Yankton. We know its impact first-hand.

And it's not just the farmer who makes our food possible. The entire agriculture industry, all the way to the grocery store, are vital links in a chain that brings food to every citizen — and millions of people abroad.

Frankly, it's easy to take agriculture for granted in America. Our food is readily accessible and safe. For this, we're unbelievably fortunate ... but that doesn't mean we don't have an obligation to recognize how it's made possible.

March 17-23, 2013 is National Ag Week. March 19, 2013, is National Ag Day. National Ag Week is a good time to reflect — and be grateful for — American agriculture!

THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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OPINION | WE SAY

Quite A Crowd



THUMBS UP to the attendance records that not only fell but were obliterated during the Summit League basketball tournament in Sioux Falls. With an overall mark of 44,868 fans for the combined men's and women's sessions, the 2013 tourney broke the previous record from last season by more than 4,000 fans. The men's tournament drew 23,710 and topped the previous standard set in 1987. The women's tournament total of 21,158 fans shattered last season's record by over 3,300 fans. And the tourney also set four single-session attendance records. The numbers can grow even larger with the addition of the University of Denver next year. More than 2,500 all-session tickets have been sold for the 2014 tourney in just the first five days since going on sale. South Dakota State University already packs the house, and we look for the University of South Dakota and North Dakota State University to bring more fans in coming years — especially with the opening of the new 12,000-seat events center for the 2015 tournament.

Your SERV



THUMBS UP to Yankton County's move forward in joining the Statewide Emergency Registry of Volunteers in South Dakota (SERV SD). The system operates under the state Department of Health and reaches out to anyone willing to volunteer in the event of an emergency. Yankton County emergency manager Paul Scherschligt noted the pre-registration of individuals will provide an instant data base of possible volunteers during the crucial moments following disasters such as tornadoes or ongoing problems such as flooding. The volunteers can be contacted instantly when a need arises, and groups can be formed applicable for meeting a particular need. Scherschligt has indicated a multitude of possibilities with SERVE SD.

Holy Smokes!



THUMBS UP to the election of Pope Francis I as the new pontiff for the Roman Catholic Church. Local residents are learning more about the new leader as the first pope from Latin America, home to nearly 40 percent of the world's Catholics, and the first pope to be a Jesuit and to take the name of St. Francis. Skeptics have already raised concerns, and it's unlikely the new pontiff will make major changes in church doctrine on several issues. But Pope Francis has shown he will blaze a new path, as he has lived in an apartment and made his own meals, along with taking the bus to work and interacting with the people along the way. He has spoke out for greater spirituality, care for the poor and dignity for each person. Those are issues that resonate with both Catholics and non-Catholics.

Do The Doo!



THUMBS DOWN to those pet owners who let their dogs "do their business" in other people's yards and don't clean it up. We've run into a few complaints of this type from Yankton residents recently, and you have to appreciate just how frustrating it is for those yard owners who 1) don't enjoy the free fertilizer, and 2) have to clean it up. This is not really unlike the complaints we heard last year of individuals walking their dogs across Meridian Bridge without cleaning up after their dogs when the situation demanded it. So, we beseech dog owners to be mindful of your pets and the deposits they are leaving on yards, walkways and elsewhere. It's a matter of courtesy.

ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the *Press & Dakotan's* Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Should Daylight Saving Time be scrapped?	
Yes	.62%
No	.36%
Not sure	.2%
TOTAL VOTES CAST	649

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Do you believe going to war in Iraq was a mistake?

To vote in the *Press & Dakotan's* Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, March 15, the 74th day of 2013. There are 291 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On March 15, 1913, President Woodrow Wilson met with about 100 reporters for the first formal presidential press conference.

On this date: In 44 B.C., Roman dictator Julius Caesar was assassinated by a group of nobles that included Brutus and Cassius.

In 1493, Christopher Columbus returned to Spain, concluding his first voyage to the Western Hemisphere.

In 1767, the seventh president of the United States, Andrew Jackson, was born in Waxhaw, S.C.

In 1820, Maine became the 23rd state. In 1919, members of the American Expeditionary Force from World War I convened in Paris for a three-day meeting to found the American Legion.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied bombers again raided German-held Monte Cassino.

In 1956, the Lerner and Loewe musical play "My Fair Lady," based on Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion," opened on Broadway.

In 1962, a chartered Flying Tiger Line airplane carrying 107 people, most of them U.S. Army personnel, disappeared while en route from Guam to the Philippines. "No Strings," Richard Rodgers' first musical following the death of longtime collaborator Oscar Hammerstein II, opened on Broadway.

In 1964, actress Elizabeth Taylor married actor Richard Burton in Montreal; it was her fifth marriage, his second.

In 1970, Expo '70, promoting "Progress and Harmony for Mankind," opened in Osaka, Japan.

In 1972, "The Godfather," Francis Ford Coppola's epic gangster movie based on the Mario Puzo novel and starring Marlon Brando and Al Pacino, premiered in New York.

In 1985, the first Internet domain name, symbolics.com, was registered by the Symbolics Computer Corp. of Massachusetts.

Ten years ago: Hu Jintao was chosen to replace Jiang Zemin as the president of China. Protesters in Washington, D.C., and around the world demonstrated against an anticipated war with Iraq.

Five years ago: A construction crane toppled in New York City, killing seven people. China's legislature re-appointed Hu Jintao as president.

One year ago: Convicted former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich walked into a federal prison in Colorado, where the 55-year-old Democrat began serving a 14-year sentence for corruption. The American campaign in Afghanistan suffered a double blow as the Taliban broke off talks with the U.S., and President Hamid Karzai said NATO should pull out of rural areas and speed up the transfer of security responsibilities to Afghan forces nationwide.

Today's Birthdays: Musician DJ Fontana is 82. Former astronaut Alan L. Bean is 81. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is 80. Actor Judd Hirsch is 78. Rock musician Phil Lesh is 73. Singer Mike Love (The Beach Boys) is 72. Rock singer-musician Sly Stone is 70. Rock singer-musician Howard Scott (War; Lowrider Band) is 67. Rock singer Ry Cooder is 66. Actor Craig Wasson is 59. Rock singer Dee Snider (Twisted Sister) is 58. Actress Park Overall is 56. Movie director Renny Harlin is 54. Model Fabio is 52. Singer Terence Trent D'Arby (AKA Sananda Maitreya) is 51. Rock singer Bret Michaels (Poison) is 50. Rhythm-and-blues singer Rockwell is 49. Rock singer Mark McGrath (Sugar Ray) is 45. Actress Kim Raver is 44. Rock musician Mark Hoppus is 41. Actress Eva Longoria is 38. Rapper-musician will.i.am (Black Eyed Peas) is 38. Rock DJ Joseph Hahn (Linkin Park) is 36. Rapper Young Buck is 32. Actor Sean Biggersstaff is 30. Rock musician Ethan Mentzer is 30. Actress Caitlin Wachs is 24.

Thought for Today: "We're all in this together — by ourselves." — Lily Tomlin, American comedian.

FROM THE BIBLE

The last will be the first, and the first last. Matthew 20:16. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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