

A Day In Iraq

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A FORMER SOLDIER'S DAILY EXPERIENCES WHILE LIVING AND FIGHTING IN IRAQ.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2006

The Crew of Alpha 3/2

On Oct. 15 of last year five men from our company were killed by an IED. This Veteran's Day weekend I thought of them as well as the other two men from Able Company killed last year.

The following words were spoken by our Battalion Commander, Col. Roggeman, at a memorial service honoring their lives.

Combat Outpost, Ramadi Iraq

"Today we mourn the loss of five of our own, SSG Summers, Spc. Byrd, Spc. Hardy, Spc. Corban, and Spc. Watkins, heroes, one and all. They were killed on 15 October fighting for freedom, here around a city called Ramadi. They died patrolling the streets on Iraq's historic election day, allowing the citizens to vote for peace. They died so others could live free and today we collectively mourn their loss. We lost some of our nation's greatest resources, young men who had the courage to serve their country, young men who answered our nation's call to duty. Yes, today we mourn the loss of some of our nation's greatest resources, young infantrymen, the crew of Alpha 3/2.

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers, for he today who sheds



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9/11

The Blog in General

- blog is hosted by Blogspot (Google)
- no specific design => standard template
- only his first name, Michael, is given
- he was stationed and fighting in Iraq => subtitle
- was written from November '04 to November '06
- his profile does not give a lot of information
- he lists his favorite films and book (standard profile)
- star-spangled banner is the only “eye-catcher”

Analysis of the literary devices used by Michael

➤ military lingo:

RPG (rocket-propelled grenade)

FOB(Forward Operating Base)

SOP's (Standard Operating Procedure)

ROE (Rules of Engagement)

NCO (Non-Commissioned Officer)

PX (Post Exchange)

military time specifications (2000, 0030)

➤ onomapoetia:

“KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK! Why do people feel as though they have to knock so loud?” *(March 26, 2005)*

➤ sarcasm / irony:

“We stopped by the PX after having to qualify at the range on paper targets. Qualifying in a combat zone, God help us. Could we possibly do any more admin crap while we’re in a supposed combat zone.” *(April 24, 2005)*

➤ (Rhetorical) questions:

“Meester, you have Wata,” they ask for the thousandth time? Are you kidding me? How can they show up for a 24-hour shift with no water? *(April 16, 2005)*

➤ Biblical rhetorics:

The wives and children of those soldiers killed will suffer the eternal agony of losing someone they love. The boy, and those that he served, will forever suffer the tortuous wrath of a hell with unmatched fury, a hell that holds no sanctuary for their desperate pleas of relief. *(March 18, 2005)*

➤ Popcultural references:

-We could have a *Cannonball Run*, with people racing up the Iraqi highways.[...]

-I'd personally like to see a celebrity race, with everyone from that fat chick from the Dixie Dicks, to that fat man Michael Moore.[...]

- I swear you can buy movies over here on the street before they have even begun filming back in the States. I think I saw the seventh installment of Star Wars for sale the other day. In it Luke Skywalker finally admits his sexuality and marries the Wookiee.

➤ Swear words:

Surf right on over to YouTube and view a nice video of a U.S. Tank being hit by an IED while a Muhammad worshipping, jihadist, goat loving, asshole chants "Allah Akbar" as he pushes the send button on the cell phone that detonates the bomb.

How is the medium being used?

- A DAY IN IRAQ is mostly used as a personal diary (“This Past Week at the Bridge”)
- Pictures (of Iraqi children) can be found – just like in a diary
- “And the disabled boy who made me hurt and smile at the same time.”
- Michael describes personal experience in Iraq
- No news (however, in the sidebar are numerous links to news sites)
- However, the blog is also shaped akin to a modern war film (*Jarhead*, *Home of the Brave*) => there is a focus on the psychological, not on the battlefield

- “I was expecting a long four hours of intense boredom.” => Jarhead
- There is no hypertext – except for the pictures => could also be used offline
- Compared to the other blogs A DAY IN IRAQ focuses more on the war experience “in general”, not so much on the “war action”
- Here, the medium blog is used as a diary of an insider => in the comments people appreciate the photos and his reports
- “Michael - thank you for your posts - I have been reading them for a few weeks now. My son is over there with 3ID also and it helps me feel a little closer to him when I am reading your posts - take care and keep your head down and know that we are here saying prayers that you all come home soon.”

How is war represented in the blog?



- Narrator shares personal experience
- showing the "other side" of war
=> concentrating on the human side of everyday life
- pictures of Iraqi children:
 - visualizes what the troops are fighting for
 - illustration of poor living conditions
- effects on the reader:
 - supporting the troops
 - fighting for a just and noble cause
 - feeling compassion for Iraqi children
 - authenticity

Comments



“Oh those kids!!
Some of my favorite pictures of Iraq and Afghanistan are the ones of the children. So much hope and happiness in their faces now! THEY are what you are fighting for, Michael. Thanks so much!!!”

“Good soldier, I thank you for showing the many sides of humanity, the dark sides and the bright side.

The brightness of a child’s smile. This is what your fighting for.”

“It’s almost like some of them just refuse to acknowledge our presence in their land, and I can’t really blame them. I don’t think they hate us, they probably just want to see us gone. It’s fun to try to wave to them anyway, especially the kids. A lot of cars will pass by us that are packed full of kids and adults. I always wave to the kids. They usually wave back, even when it looks like the adults are telling them not to.”

April 16, 2005

- humanization of soldiers & war:
- He knows that he cannot blame innocent Iraqi civilians for the war
- => Main purpose for the troops: provide security & support

Other examples:

“I have a big bottle sitting next to me, but it’s for me, for us, for our platoon. I felt like an uncaring ruler sitting upon my tank throne as they walk away dejectedly.”

*“**My conscience won’t let me be.** I must at least try to get them some water.”*

*“[...]Lt. himself walks out with three empty water bottles. He fills them with the water from the buffalo[...]He then carries them over to the wall and passes them over to the soldiers. Mission complete, **my mind rests a little easier.**”*

- He shares his thought process for adding personality and credibility
- direct & emotionally expressive display of his feelings