

The Untold Story

There's a story that is being ignored in Iraq, and it is one that reveals the true character of American men and women serving in the military there. The public is battered by a relentless barrage of news accounts about a single episode -- the nonsensical abuse of a few Iraqi terrorist suspects by a handful (seven) of U.S. enlisted personnel. Granted, such shocking behavior is considered news, and it never should have happened.

But even after an intensive investigation resulted in charges being filed against the seven non-combat misfits allegedly involved in the deeds at Abu Ghraib prison, the media blitz continues to rage. What particularly troubles me -- and I am a former member of the newspaper profession -- is that the wonderful work of the overwhelming majority of our troops doesn't get the exposure it deserves.

William B. Breuer of Cleveland, author of 36 books, many focusing on secret missions, deceptions and military actions in World War II and Korea, has a similar conclusion. Writing a column in the Cleveland Daily Banner, he said: "At the same time that the Abu Ghraib antics are gaining tons of media ink and countless hours of broadcast time, America's elite, the young warriors fighting a desperate battle against a vicious and brutal enemy in Iraq, are being almost totally ignored. Also virtually disregarded are scenes of coalition troops digging up scores of mass graves containing the remains of an estimated 275,000 Iraqi children, women and men who Saddam Hussein had ordered to be murdered."

Breuer said an e-mail recently received by Mary Smith of the Bradley County region from a U.S. soldier, who prefers to remain anonymous, provided a partial list of what is really happening in Iraq:

- More than 4.5 million people there have clean drinking water for the first time ever.
- More than 400,000 Iraqi kids have up-to-date immunizations.
- More than 1,500 schools have been renovated and ridded of the weapons that the terrorists had stored there.
- School attendance is up 80 percent from levels before the war.
- Iraq now receives twice the electrical power it did under the Saddam regime.
- A full 100 percent of Iraq's hospitals are open and fully staffed compared to 35 percent under Saddam.
- Sewer and water lines have been established in every major city.
- More than 100,000 Iraqi civil defense police are helping to secure the country.
- More than 400,000 people have telephones for the first time ever.
- Girls are allowed to attend school for the first time.

That's what is really happening in Iraq. We can be proud of our men and women in uniform for what they are accomplishing, despite the fact that you may not read -- or hear -- about it in the media.

--Beecher Hunter