

JOHN MCCAIN AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF?
Anthony Joseph Sacco, Sr. Copyright April 2008
Reprinted from TRIOND online e-magazine, at

<http://newsflavor.com/Opinions/John-McCain-as-Commander-in-Chief.114134>

PINE BLUFFS – Those who follow these things know that the University of Kansas defeated Memphis in San Antonio, and was crowned the 2008 NCAA college basketball champion. Now, we can all once again turn our attention to . . . the election of a president in November.

Did we miss anything during “March Madness?” Well, yes and no, depending on how you look at it. While our attention was focused on the large round ball being fed through a hoop by large angular college kids, Republican presidential candidate John McCain (R-AZ), who strongly backs the current U.S. war strategy in Iraq, attempted to assure American voters that “I detest war.” He’s hoping Reagan Democrats and those pesky “undecided voters” will not get the impression that his views are otherwise on the subject.

Did anyone believe that Mr. McCain actually likes war? A career navy pilot, his jet fighter was shot down over North Vietnam during the Vietnam war, and he was captured and interred in a Viet Cong prison camp for several years. He is, therefore, well aware of the evils of war, and not eager to get us involved in conflicts if elected president at the end of 2008.

However, to his credit, almost from 9/11/, he has recognized, as most statesmen have, that we are at war with Islamic fundamentalists; extremists who hate the West, especially the United States, and seek to destroy us. This is in strong contrast to many liberal Democrats, who refuse to believe that anyone could be serious about that sort of thing, and continue to bleat that if we withdraw our troops from Iraq and just “make nice” with the Arab world, all will be well.

In a recent televised debate, one Democrat presidential contender, Barack Hussein Obama, stated his position; if elected he would immediately withdraw our troops from Iraq even if he were strongly advised against this by our nation’s top military commanders. He also said he would hold direct talks with Iran, a regime which refuses to recognize Israel, which is the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world, and has called for Israel to be “wiped off the face of the earth.”

Obama justifies his calls for troop withdrawal by claiming that the war is lost, our strategy is a failure, and the cost to us in loss of life is simply not worth it. Almost every evening, NBC, ABC, CNN and other major news outlets, parade the casualty figures before the Nation, with stories about grieving families of soldiers

killed by enemy fire. This is a tactic calculated to sap the will of Americans to do what is so obviously seen as the right thing by most of us. The Media wants us to believe that the casualty figures are extremely high.

Well, of course, the death of even one American soldier is a terribly sad event. But given the type and intensity of this war, is the annual casualty rate really that high? What is it in comparison to prior years? Let's examine some figures, going back to 1992, and the beginning of Mr. Clinton's presidency:

Year: Number of Deaths:

1992	1,293
1993	1,213
1994	1,075
1995	2,465
1996	2,318
1997	817
1998	2,252
1999	1,984

Thus we can see that during the eight years a Democrat was in the White House, 13,417 soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen were killed, either in battle or in accidents. Those figures include Bosnia and Somalia, both minor in scope compared to Afghanistan and Iraq. During those years, no major war was in progress.

So how many American troops have been killed, either in combat operations or otherwise during the years Mr. Bush has been in office? The answer will surprise you - 9,453. Here's the breakdown:

Year: Number of Deaths:

2000	1,983
2001	980
2002	1,007
2003	1,410
2004	1,187
2005	919
2006	920
2007	901
2008 to date...	146 (Including April)

Did you know that? Rather eye-opening, wouldn't you say? Now I understand that these figures, taken from a Congressional Research Service (CRS) report,

may not be totally accurate. But they are certainly close to accurate, and they tend to show that our major Media and liberal politicians are very selective in what they present to the public. In fact, since the so-called surge, American military deaths have actually decreased on a monthly basis. Okay, so even this lower figure is tragic. No one denies that the sacrifice has been enormous. But putting it in perspective, Afghanistan and Iraq have been serious and central battles in the War on Terror. Our engagement in Afghanistan has resulted in removal of the Taliban from power and depriving Al Qaeda of bases from which to launch terrorist operations. Likewise, Iraq has taken center stage, and our effort there has toppled a brutal dictator, freed his people from tyranny, and begun the slow, tedious task of building a Democracy in that nation of 50 million people.

But for Democrats, eager to take the White House after 8 years, this is not good enough. They continue to promise a way out of Iraq: withdraw our troops and bring them home. Talk about "peace with [dis]honor."

However, now that the troop increase sought by President Bush and Mr. McCain – the so-called surge - has produced favorable results, reducing the number of enemy attacks and resultant casualties, the Republican presidential nominee told reporters on his campaign bus recently, "A significant number of Americans believe we should come home with honor, not with disgrace and genocide. We must stay in Iraq [and finish the job we started] to help Democracy take hold in the Middle East."

I agree.

Anthony Joseph Sacco, a writer, licensed private investigator, author of two novels; [The China Connection](#), and [Little Sister Lost](#), and a biography, [Echoes in the Wind](#), holds degrees from Loyola College of Maryland and the University of Maryland Law School. His articles have appeared in the [Washington Times](#), [Baltimore Sun](#), [Voices for the Unborn](#), [the Catholic Review](#), [WREN Magazine](#) and the [Wyoming Catholic Register](#). E-mail him at anthonyjsacco@hotmail.com and visit his website at www.saccoservices.com
