

years since end of World War II

Long-time Nimbin identity, Arthur Pike, is to be guest speaker at the Lismore Returned Servicemen's League Commemoration Lunch to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Arthur Pike saw active service on the Kokoda Trail and in the Battle of Buna. as a gunner and Forward Observation Officer's Assistant with Australian and American infantry in 1942;

and later as a coastwatcher in M Special Unit behind the Japanese lines in New Britain.

A sixth generation Australian, he was a second generation member of the AIF – giving a total of eight years AIF service – the father with three and a half years in World War I and the son with four and a half years in World War II.

Last year Arthur Pike was one of 2000 men and women involved in wars or conflicts

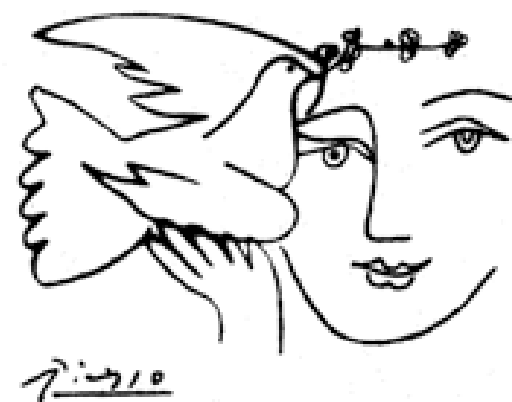
since WW1 interviewed for The Australians at War Film Archive. This project was funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Australian War Memorial.

The five hours twenty minutes video, recording the interview about his origins and his war experiences and attitudes to war, has been transcribed and is now on the internet. It is 47,000 words, but with some editing, an introduction and his active

service photos, he hopes to publish this colourful historic narrative.

He lives in the rainforest at Mt Nardi, on a multiple-occupancy site which he shares with his extended family. He is a writer and poet and currently he is promoting the second edition of his Eureka Songs – freedom, struggle, protest and peace.

Lismore RSL Secretary Wilson McClelland invites Nimbin GoodTimes



readers to participate in the commemorative War Memorial service in Molesworth Street at 11am

Monday 15th August, and afterwards at the Workers Club Lunch (Bookings: 9 to 11am week days, 66 21-3851).

Truth struggling

By John Pilger

In all the coverage of the bombing of London, a truth has struggled to be heard. With honourable exceptions, it has been said guardedly, apologetically. Occasionally, a member of the public has broken the silence, as an East Londoner did when he walked in front of a CNN camera crew and reporter in mid-platitude. "Iraq!" he said. "We invaded Iraq and what did we expect? Go on say it."

The bombs of 7 July were Blair's bombs.

Blair brought home to this country his and Bush's illegal, unprovoked and blood-soaked adventure in the Middle East. Were it not for his epic irresponsibility, the Londoners who died in the Tube and on the No 30 bus almost certainly would be alive today. To paraphrase perhaps the only challenging question put to Blair on the eve of the invasion, it is now surely beyond all doubt that the man is unfit to be prime minister.

How much more evidence is needed? Before the invasion, Blair was warned by the Joint Intelligence Committee that "by far the greatest terrorist threat" to this country would be "heightened by military action against Iraq". He was warned by 79 per cent of Londoners who, according to a YouGov survey in February

2003, believed that a British attack on Iraq "would make a terrorist attack on London more likely". A month ago, a leaked, classified CIA report revealed that the invasion had turned Iraq into a focal point of terrorism. Before the invasion, said the CIA, Iraq "exported no terrorist threat to its neighbours" because Saddam Hussein was "implacably hostile to al-Qaeda".

Blair's bunker-mantra is that there was terrorism long before the invasion, notably 11 September. Anyone with an understanding of the painful history of the Middle East would not have been surprised by 11 September or by the bombing of Madrid and London, only that they had not happened earlier.

The gravity of the bombing of London, said a BBC commentator, "can be measured by the fact that it marks Britain's first suicide bombing". What about Iraq? There were no suicide bombers in Iraq until Blair and Bush invaded. In the 1991 Gulf "war", American and British forces left more than 200,000 Iraqis dead and injured and the infrastructure of their country in "an apocalyptic state", according to the United Nations.

The subsequent embargo, designed and promoted by zealots in Washington and Whitehall, was not unlike a medieval siege.

Howard heckled

Former Lismore woman Louise Barry was aboard the No 30 bus when it exploded and she received extensive injuries including a broken neck, and components of the explosive device were removed from her leg.

Visited in hospital by PM John Howard and the media, she boldly enquired whether he thought the suicide bombings may have been brought about in retaliation over military involvement in Iraq.

Howard followed Blair's line of denial and implied that Australia had been the target of terrorism before our commitment to the 'coalition of the willing' in Iraq, citing the Bali bombings as justification.

Rubbish. Go get 'em Lou!

Denis Halliday, the United Nations official assigned to administer the near-starvation food allowance, called it "genocidal".

I witnessed its consequences: tracts of southern Iraq contaminated with depleted uranium and cluster bomblets waiting to explode. I watched dying children, some of the half a million infants whose deaths Unicef attributed to the embargo - deaths which US Secretary of State Madeline Albright said were "worth it". In the west, this was hardly reported. Throughout the Muslim world, the bitterness was like a presence, its contagion reaching many young British-born Muslims.

In 2001, in revenge for the killing of 3,000 people in the Twin Towers, more than 20,000 Muslims died in the Anglo-American invasion of Afghanistan. This was revealed by Jonathan Steele in the London Guardian

and was never news, to my knowledge. The attack on Iraq was the Rubicon, making the reprisal against Madrid and the bombing of London entirely predictable: the latter "in response to the massacres carried out by Britain in Iraq and Afghanistan ...", claimed a group called the Organisation for El Qaeda in Europe. Whether or not the claim was genuine, the reason was. Bush and Blair wanted a "war on terror" and they got it. Omitted from public discussion is that their state terror makes al-Qaeda's appear miniscule by comparison. More than 100,000 Iraqi men, woman and children have been killed, not by suicide bombers, but by the Anglo-American "coalition", says a peer-reviewed study published in the Lancet, and largely ignored. In his poem "From Iraq", Michael Rosen wrote: We are the unfound We are uncounted You don't

see the homes we made We're not even the small print or the bit in brackets . . . because we lived far from you, because you have cameras that point the other way . . .

Imagine, for a moment, you are in the Iraqi city of Fallujah. It is an American police state, like a vast penned ghetto. Since April last year, the hospitals there have been subjected to an American policy of collective punishment. Staff have been attacked by US marines, doctors have been shot, emergency medicines blocked. Children have been murdered in front of their families. Now imagine the same state of affairs imposed on the London hospitals that received the victims of the bombing. When will someone draw this parallel at one of Blair's staged "press conferences", at which he is allowed to emote for the cameras about "our values outlast [ing] theirs"? Silence is not journalism. In Fallujah, they know "our values" only too well. And when will someone invite the obsequious Bob Geldof to explain why Blair's smoke-and-mirrors "debt cancellation" amounts to less than the money the Blair government spends in a week, brutalising Iraq?

The hand-wringing over "whither Islam's soul" is another distraction. Christianity leaves Islam for dead as an industrial killer. The cause of the current terrorism is neither religion nor hatred for "our way of life". It is political, requiring a political solution. It

is injustice and double standards, which plant the deepest grievances. That, and the culpability of our leaders, and the "cameras that point the other way", are the core of it.

On 19 July, while the BBC governors were holding their annual general meeting at Television Centre, an inspired group of British documentary filmmakers met outside the main gates and conducted a series of news reports of the kind you do not see on television. Actors played famous reporters doing their "camera pieces". The "stories" they reported included the targeting of the civilian population of Iraq, the application of the Nuremberg Principles to Iraq, America's illegal rewriting of the laws of Iraq and theft of its resources through privatisation, the everyday torture and humiliation of ordinary people and the failure to protect Iraqis archaeological and cultural heritage.

Blair is using the London bombing to further deplete our rights and those of others, as Bush has done in America. Their goal is not security, but greater control. The memory of their victims in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and elsewhere demands the renewal of our anger. The troops must come home. Nothing less is owed to those who died and suffered in London on 7 July, unnecessarily, and nothing less is owed to those whose lives are marked if this travesty endures.

July 21, 2005

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