

Students deal with reality of war for first time

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — On the evening of Wednesday, Jan. 16, the meaning of war leapt from the pages of history books onto television screens across the country for teenagers too young to recall any of the United States' earlier major conflicts.

They, along with many other Americans, watched as the crisis in the Persian Gulf escalated into Operation Desert Storm.

"Peace protests won't do much good - they just get soldiers' morale down."

**Paul Burkat, senior
Bishop Kearney**

Although a few high school students interviewed by the *Catholic Courier* said that U.S.-led allied troops should not have initiated an attack on Iraq, an overwhelming number of students expressed support for President Bush's decision to use force.

Many of the students who supported the allied attack against Iraq were males who were already or soon will be 18-years-old. Nearly all the young men said they would be ready to fight for their country.

Aquinas senior Kevin Smith said he was anxiously awaiting Feb. 18 — his 18th birthday — so he can fill out his Selective Service Registration Card. Smith said that if he were called up for service, he would "go in a second."

Although Smith said he believed that the reason for the conflict was to restore freedom to the people of Kuwait, he added that the United States had to take some action because of the nation's dependency on oil from the gulf region.

Smith said he found it exciting to watch the military power of the United States in action, noting that he was sickened by protesters, whom he said still seem to be living in the Vietnam era.

"Peace has been given a chance — now we are left with no other choice," said Smith, who suggested that people put their

time and energy into supporting our servicemen and women in the gulf.

Bishop Kearney seniors Tom O'Brien and Dan Finnegan both said they supported the president 100 percent because they believed that the United States would only have to deal with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein further down the road. Both youths, who know Kearney graduates currently serving in the gulf region, said they

"The best thing to do is to go on with our lives. The world has to keep going on."

**Kris Petty, senior
Aquinas**

would be willing to fight if they were called to duty.

"If we get drafted, it's something we are going to have to live with," Finnegan said.

Although most students interviewed supported the president, a few students were finding it hard to rally around the flag because of a belief that the United States doesn't belong in the war.

Rick Staropoli, a McQuaid senior, said

he had been tormented at school because he was a "loud minority." Staropoli, who participated in an anti-war demonstration at the Federal Building on Jan. 11 and wears a black armband at school, said he cannot be silent.

"I am not protesting," said the 17-year-old student, who added that he participates in peace vigils whenever possible. "I'm just remembering the dead."

Staropoli added that if he were drafted he would apply for conscientious-objector status. If that attempt failed, he said he would choose between going to jail and fleeing to Canada.

Kearney sophomore Tim Byrnes agreed with Staropoli's claims that the United States should not be fighting in the war.

"It's only over oil," he said. "If it was an African nation fighting another African nation, we wouldn't intervene because no important resources are involved."

Principle, not oil, is at issue in the gulf war, stated Kearney senior Janet Roy, who said the president took every possible peaceful avenue to prevent a war.

"Bush is setting an example. We have to stand behind him whether we believe in war or not," Roy said. "The United States can't succeed without our support."

Roy's classmate Eileen Jensen agreed. Although she said too many people are trying to link this war with the one in Viet-

"Before last night it wasn't a reality. Now it is real."

**Mark Petzing, senior
Bishop Kearney**

nam, Jensen said no connection exists.

Jennifer Holden — a 17-year-old senior at Aquinas — said the U.S.-led allied forces had to use might because sanctions and diplomacy were not working.

"It's something we had to do," explained Holden. "It scares me, though, because we only heard about the other wars. We have to live through this one."

"It's frightening that we are experiencing this," added classmate Tammy Raab.

Many students said they were optimistic that the allied forces will prevail. Aquinas junior Jason White said he didn't think the war will come down to the engagement of ground troops.

"There is no way we can lose this war," White said. "It's just a matter of how many lives will be lost."

Kris Petty said he didn't think the war would last long enough for a draft to be necessary. "We are definitely going to win," said the Aquinas senior.

Regardless of where they stood on the issue, most students said they were amazed at how quickly events were breaking. All agreed that tuning into news broadcasts as often as possible has become a daily routine.

McQuaid junior Eric Briggs said he never appreciated how swiftly action unfolded in an actual war. His only point of reference, he said, had been studying wars in history classes over a period of months.

Briggs said he believed the allied troops would win the war decisively in no more than two months.

Classmate Todd Howe said he never watched so much news in his life.

"It's a long time coming. We are doing the right thing."

**Todd Howe, senior
McQuaid**

"Everyone goes home from school and turns on the TV," said the McQuaid senior, who also noted that the topic of war is dominating conversations among his friends.

The students who are most affected by the outbreak of war are those with family members serving in the gulf.

Bishop Kearney senior Mandy Darlak has a brother stationed on the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt. Although she said she didn't necessarily agree with the concept of war, the 18-year-old Darlak said stopping Saddam was something that had to be done. Darlak went so far in her support of the United States as to say that women should be drafted as well as men.

"If we want equal rights, we should be drafted. I would definitely go," said Darlak.

Kearney sophomore Chris Schultheis said his father will be leaving for Saudia Arabia on Jan. 28. Although he said he wished the war could have been avoided, he said the United States and its allied forces have to defend the world from dictators like Saddam.

Whatever their opinions, students are constantly thinking about the war, and schools are trying to support the youths with counselors and services.

In addition to a prayer service on Jan. 15, Bishop Kearney High School has broadcast daily news reports into its classrooms. McQuaid Jesuit High School celebrated a Mass for Peace on the day of the United Nations' deadline. School officials at McQuaid are announcing developments in the war over the school's intercom system as they happen.

Our Lady of Mercy High School's chapel is open to students who want to light candles or say prayers during the day, and Nazareth Academy is selling buttons for peace and conducting prayer services.

School officials also said they are encouraging students to approach counselors and faculty members to voice any concerns they have over the war.

WIN A FREE ALBUM OR TAPE
THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:
Who is the lead singer in the band, Rush?

ANSWER: _____
Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
School: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____

WORLD'S LARGEST MUSIC STORE
Over 4 million tapes, CDs and albums.
Try them for that song you can't find.
Most New Album and Tape Releases Just \$6.98
LARGEST SELECTIONS OF CD's From \$3.98 to \$11.98
645 TITUS AVE.

MUSIC TRIVIA
Rules: Each week, one correct entry will be selected at random to receive a gift certificate for a free album or tape of the recipient's choice from the House of Guitars.
6 FLOORS OF NEW AND USED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
WINNER: Tom Tehan of St. Rita's School in Webster correctly identified The Beatles as having recorded the #1 song, Come Together.

Mail Entries to:
Catholic Courier
Music Trivia
1150 Buffalo Rd.
Rochester, NY
14624

Ca
THANK
rece
THANK
rece
SEPAR
New
Part
chic
716-
BEGIN
Divc
from
ing
enc
An
JOURN
arst
qua
stud
con
Ass
(NY:
EI
H
Supr
Rome
Roch
dents
Respo
tion a
munity
educat
and p
tions
eligibi
tion, e
admin
1991 /
Super
Rc
INTERI
insu
trea
797
BE YO
mar
son
juice
nes
over
sect
\$55.
This
den
call
1744
UTILIT
\$7.8
Wor
nec
1-94
8pn
E
C
WOLFI
cial
Lar
Mor
\$18
cat
(NY
A
ANTIQ
Tat
bo
Pie
Thui