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EDITORS' BLOG

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Iraq reporter unlawfully killed

An ITN journalist was unlawfully killed by American soldiers in southern Iraq, an inquest has found.



Terry Lloyd was not "embedded" with the military

The troops shot 50-year-old Terry Lloyd in the head while he was in a makeshift ambulance, having already been hurt in crossfire, the coroner said.

Mr Lloyd's interpreter was also killed and his cameraman is missing believed dead following the incident, which took place near Basra in March 2003.

The coroner is to ask the attorney general to consider pressing charges.

Oxfordshire Assistant Deputy Coroner Andrew Walker said he would also be writing to the director of public prosecutions asking for him to investigate the possibility of bringing charges.

'War crime'

Mr Lloyd's Lebanese interpreter, Hussein Osman, was also killed and French cameraman Fred Nerac is still officially classed as missing, presumed dead. Belgian cameraman Daniel Demoustier was the ITN crew's only survivor.

The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) said Mr Lloyd's killing was a "war crime" and this was echoed by Mr Lloyd's widow, Lyn.

In a statement she said: "This was a very serious war crime, how else can firing on a vehicle in these circumstances be interpreted?"

"This was not a friendly fire incident or a crossfire incident, it was a despicable, deliberate, vengeful act, particularly as it came many minutes after the initial exchange.

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Terry Lloyd, reporter - killed
Hussein Osman, interpreter - killed
Fred Nerac, cameraman -

"US forces appear to have allowed their soldiers to behave like trigger happy cowboys in an area where civilians were moving around."

missing, presumed killed
Daniel Demoustier, cameraman
- survived

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Mr Lloyd's daughter Chelsey said: "The killing of my father would seem to amount to murder, which is deeply shocking."

A spokesman for the US Department of Defense said an investigation in May 2003 had found that US forces followed the rules of engagement.

"The Department of Defense has never deliberately targeted non-combatants, including journalists," he said.

"We have always gone to extreme measures to avoid civilian casualties and collateral damage.

"It has been an unfortunate reality that journalists have died in Iraq. Combat operations are inherently dangerous."

ITN praised

Mr Lloyd, who was originally from Derby, was covering the British and American invasion of Iraq as a "unilateral" journalist, rather than those "embedded" with UK or US forces, who were subject to military censorship.

He and his three colleagues were caught up in a firefight between US and Iraqi forces near the Shatt Al Basra Bridge on 22 March 2003.



The ITN crew's vehicle was burnt out in the incident

After an eight-day inquest Mr Walker cleared ITN of any blame for Mr Lloyd's death and praised him and his team for their "professionalism and dedication".

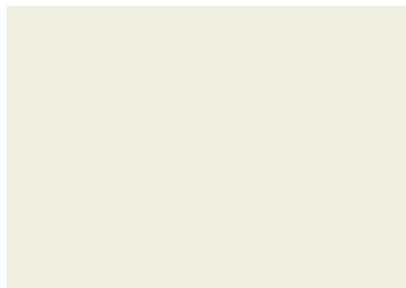
He said it was his view the American tanks had been first to open fire on the ITN crew's two vehicles.

He added Mr Lloyd would probably have survived the first bullet wound he received, but was killed as he travelled away in a makeshift ambulance.

Mr Walker said it "presented no threat to American forces" since it was a civilian minibus and was facing away from the US tanks.

"I have no doubt it was the fact that the vehicle stopped to pick up survivors that prompted the Americans to fire on that vehicle," he said.

ITN's editor in chief David Mannion said: "I would also



like to say something that I know Terry would have wished me to say.

"Independent, unilateral reporting, free from official strictures, is crucial; not simply to us as journalists but to the role we play in a free and democratic society."

Mr Nerac's widow Fabienne said she would continue her "lonely vigil" to find out what happened to her husband.



“ The killing of my father would seem to amount to murder, which is deeply shocking ”

Chelsey Lloyd

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