

After all, our soldiers should be trained with these protectors, keep them on their rifles, and have spares among their personal effects.

In any case, it does illustrate a difference. What do you think is the possibility that our hard-won rifle bags would be "lost?" We even sent them to Saudi Arabia by four different routes so that part would get through regardless of unexpected delays.

Of course, we didn't have \$374,000 to spend and a horde of highly paid bureaucrats to help us. We had no salaries and almost no money, but we had numerous patriotic American "wildcards" who each did what they could to help.

Although the rifle and magazine bags have not yet been much needed in a life-saving role, they are proving to be a convenience to American soldiers who must keep their rifles clean regardless of use. Since the fighting has been done mostly with bombs, cannons, and airplanes, few Americans have needed to depend upon their rifles.

We hope President Bush gets every one of them out of the Middle East before they do.

OFFENSE AND DEFENSE

Americans have just witnessed a spectacular display of the effects of several trillion dollars worth of military weapons under the control of American politicians and their supporters. According to public opinion polls, the American people are very pleased with this display.

The politicians identified a country which they say was a threat to the safety of the American people. (Iraq also had the important characteristic that it was small enough to defeat.) They went to war, fought the war entirely away from American soil, and obtained a victory.

This was a World War II type victory. It is the sort of war that most Americans understand and many have experienced. Had the enemy possessed deliverable nuclear weapons, a credible airforce, and the ability to destroy American satellites and airborne battle management airplanes, this television extravaganza would have been entirely different. This particular enemy had none of those things.

The Soviet Union and Communist China are not Iraq.

I do not say this to belittle the accomplishments of American servicemen and servicewomen who performed very well in the Middle East. Some of them took substantial risks and a few even died in this effort.

To those soldiers who fought actual encounters with the Iraqi military, the lopsided nature of the larger effort made little difference at the time. We were fortunate, through the rifle bag project, to have an opportunity to work toward providing a small amount of help to American soldiers. We are certainly happy that, so far, they have been successful.

Governments in various countries give different emphasis to offense and defense in their military planning.