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## Media show war dead after 18-year ban

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## THE ARTICLE

US President Barack Obama has changed many things since he took office. The latest is the end of an 18-year ban on media coverage of returning American war dead. Since 1991, no American news network has been allowed to televise coffins of US military personnel returning from foreign wars. George Bush senior imposed the ban in 1991 during the first Gulf War. He said he wanted to protect families from the grief of seeing their loved ones return in coffins. Neither President Bill Clinton nor President George W. Bush ever changed the policy. President Obama made it an election promise to overturn the ban. He said it was for families to choose whether or not to allow the media to film the return of their fallen heroes.

News cameras were present at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Sunday April 5th for the arrival of the remains of Phillip Myers. The 30-year-old airman was killed in Afghanistan on Saturday by a roadside bomb. Eight colleagues carried the flag-draped coffin past seven of Mr. Myers' family. Nearly 40 members of the press were present at the ceremony. Their cameras remained silent as prayers were said and there was no flash photography. The Pentagon says that 4,262 members of America's military have died in Iraq since the invasion in March 2003. Another 673 have been killed in Afghanistan. Vice President Joe Biden said the ban had allowed coffins to be "snuck back into the country" to hide the cost of the war on terror.

# WARM-UPS

**1. THE MEDIA:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about the media. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*President Obama / war dead / foreign wars / grief / loved ones / election promises / news cameras / flash photography / invasions / America's military / hiding the truth*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. NEWS:** What should and shouldn't be allowed on the news? Complete the table. Talk about what you wrote with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you found out.

News	Allowed or not?	Why?
Dead bodies		
Killing		
Nudity		
Air crashes		
Faces of criminals		
Starving children		

**4. MEDIA COVERAGE:** Students A **strongly** believe there should be no limits to what is shown on TV news; Students B **strongly** believe there should be censorship of TV news. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. OBAMA CHANGES:** Rank these things according to which is most vital to change. Share your ranking with your partner(s).

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| _____ Climate change                    | _____ Guantanamo Bay |
| _____ US relations with other countries | _____ Gun control    |
| _____ The war in Afghanistan            | _____ Immigration    |
| _____ Nuclear Weapons                   | _____ Healthcare     |

**6. MILITARY:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'military'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. Barack Obama took many things to his office.                           | T / F |
| b. TV cameras have not filmed America's returning war dead since 1991.    | T / F |
| c. Bill Clinton changed the ban that George W. Bush put in place.         | T / F |
| d. Families can now decide to allow cameras to film returning coffins.    | T / F |
| e. Cameras were present for the return of 30 airmen killed in action.     | T / F |
| f. Almost 40 journalists attended the return of a fallen American hero.   | T / F |
| g. The media took no photos of Phillip Myers' coffin.                     | T / F |
| h. Joe Biden said the ban was to hide the truth about America's war dead. | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. latest   | a. reverse       |
| 2. coverage | b. attack        |
| 3. imposed  | c. in attendance |
| 4. grief    | d. sorrow        |
| 5. overturn | e. reporting     |
| 6. present  | f. dead body     |
| 7. remains  | g. most recent   |
| 8. remained | h. conceal       |
| 9. invasion | i. introduced    |
| 10. hide    | j. stayed        |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. changed many things since he took    | a. foreign wars         |
| 2. US military personnel returning from | b. were present         |
| 3. the grief of seeing their loved ones | c. heroes               |
| 4. Obama made it an election promise    | d. the invasion         |
| 5. the return of their fallen           | e. return in coffins    |
| 6. News cameras                         | f. of the war on terror |
| 7. killed in Afghanistan on Saturday    | g. prayers were said    |
| 8. Their cameras remained silent as     | h. office               |
| 9. died in Iraq since                   | i. to overturn the ban  |
| 10. hide the cost                       | j. by a roadside bomb   |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

US President Barack Obama has changed many things since he \_\_\_\_\_ office. The latest is the end of an 18-year ban on media \_\_\_\_\_ of returning American war dead. Since 1991, no American news network has been allowed to \_\_\_\_\_ coffins of US military personnel returning from foreign wars. George Bush senior imposed the ban in 1991 \_\_\_\_\_ the first Gulf War. He said he wanted to protect families from the grief of \_\_\_\_\_ their loved ones return in coffins. Neither President Bill Clinton nor President George W. Bush ever changed the \_\_\_\_\_. President Obama made it an election promise to overturn the ban. He said it was for families to choose \_\_\_\_\_ or not to allow the media to film the return of their fallen \_\_\_\_\_.

News cameras were \_\_\_\_\_ at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Sunday April 5th for the arrival of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Phillip Myers. The 30-year-old airman was killed in Afghanistan on Saturday by a roadside \_\_\_\_\_. Eight colleagues carried the flag-draped coffin past seven of Mr. Myers' family. Nearly 40 members of the \_\_\_\_\_ were present at the ceremony. Their cameras remained silent as prayers were said and there was no \_\_\_\_\_ photography. The Pentagon says that 4,262 members of America's military have died in Iraq since the \_\_\_\_\_ in March 2003. Another 673 have been killed in Afghanistan. Vice President Joe Biden said the ban had allowed \_\_\_\_\_ to be "snuck back into the country" to \_\_\_\_\_ the cost of the war on terror.

*seeing*  
*whether*  
*coverage*  
*during*  
*heroes*  
*took*  
*policy*  
*televise*

*invasion*  
*bomb*  
*flash*  
*present*  
*hide*  
*remains*  
*coffins*  
*press*

## **LISTENING:** Listen and fill in the spaces.

US President Barack Obama has changed many things \_\_\_\_\_ office. The latest \_\_\_\_\_ an 18-year ban on media coverage of returning American war dead. Since 1991, no American news network has been allowed to televise coffins of US military personnel returning from foreign wars. George Bush senior \_\_\_\_\_ in 1991 during the first Gulf War. He said he wanted to protect families from the grief of seeing \_\_\_\_\_ return in coffins. Neither President Bill Clinton nor President George W. Bush ever changed the policy. President Obama made it an election promise \_\_\_\_\_ ban. He said it was for families to choose whether or not to allow the media to film the return of \_\_\_\_\_.

News cameras \_\_\_\_\_ Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Sunday April 5th for the arrival of the remains of Phillip Myers. The 30-year-old airman was killed in Afghanistan on Saturday \_\_\_\_\_ bomb. Eight colleagues carried the flag-draped coffin past seven of Mr. Myers' family. Nearly 40 members \_\_\_\_\_ present at the ceremony. Their cameras remained silent as prayers were said and there was no flash photography. The Pentagon says that 4,262 members of America's military have died in Iraq \_\_\_\_\_ in March 2003. Another 673 have been killed in Afghanistan. Vice President Joe Biden said the ban had allowed coffins \_\_\_\_\_ back into the country" to \_\_\_\_\_ the war on terror.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'news' and 'network'.

<b>news</b>	<b>network</b>
-------------	----------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• office</li><li>• televise</li><li>• imposed</li><li>• grief</li><li>• promise</li><li>• heroes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• arrival</li><li>• colleagues</li><li>• ceremony</li><li>• flash</li><li>• members</li><li>• hide</li></ul>
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# STUDENT MEDIA SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about the media in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

## **MEDIA DISCUSSION**

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'media'?
- c) What do you think of U.S. President Obama?
- d) What do you think of the changes President Obama has made?
- e) Do you agree with the ending of the media ban in the article?
- f) What impact does it have on people when they see their soldiers returning from wars in coffins?
- g) Do you think there should be special ceremonies to receive fallen heroes?
- h) Are military personnel in your country thought of as heroes?

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## **MEDIA DISCUSSION**

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think people have a right to see coffins returning from wars?
- c) Do you think televising returning coffins will make people anti-war?
- d) Should there be special rules that control how the media film events?
- e) What do you think of the war in Afghanistan?
- f) Do you agree with what Joe Biden said in the article?
- g) What is the cost of the war on terror?
- h) What questions would you ask Barack Obama?

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# LANGUAGE

US President Barack Obama has (1) \_\_\_\_ many things since he took office. The latest is the end of an 18-year ban on media (2) \_\_\_\_ of returning American war dead. Since 1991, no American news network has been allowed to televise coffins of US military (3) \_\_\_\_ returning from foreign wars. George Bush senior imposed the ban in 1991 during the first Gulf War. He said he wanted to protect families from the grief (4) \_\_\_\_ seeing their loved ones return in coffins. Neither President Bill Clinton nor President George W. Bush ever changed the policy. President Obama made (5) \_\_\_\_ an election promise to overturn the ban. He said it was for families to choose whether or not to allow the media to film the return of their (6) \_\_\_\_ heroes.

News cameras were present at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Sunday April 5th for the (7) \_\_\_\_ of the remains of Phillip Myers. The 30-year-old airman was killed in Afghanistan on Saturday (8) \_\_\_\_ a roadside bomb. Eight colleagues carried the flag-draped coffin (9) \_\_\_\_ seven of Mr. Myers' family. Nearly 40 members of the press were present at the ceremony. Their cameras remained silent as prayers were (10) \_\_\_\_ and there was no flash photography. The Pentagon says that 4,262 members of America's military have died in Iraq since (11) \_\_\_\_ invasion in March 2003. Another 673 have been killed in Afghanistan. Vice President Joe Biden said the ban had allowed coffins to be "snuck back into the country" to (12) \_\_\_\_ the cost of the war on terror.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |               |              |                 |              |
|-----|---------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1.  | (a) changing  | (b) changes  | (c) change      | (d) changed  |
| 2.  | (a) covers    | (b) coverage | (c) covered     | (d) covering |
| 3.  | (a) personnel | (b) person   | (c) personality | (d) personal |
| 4.  | (a) to        | (b) at       | (c) of          | (d) for      |
| 5.  | (a) them      | (b) him      | (c) it          | (d) we       |
| 6.  | (a) fell      | (b) fallen   | (c) falling     | (d) fall     |
| 7.  | (a) arrival   | (b) arrived  | (c) arrive      | (d) arrives  |
| 8.  | (a) at        | (b) to       | (c) of          | (d) by       |
| 9.  | (a) parsed    | (b) past     | (c) passed      | (d) psst     |
| 10. | (a) told      | (b) spoke    | (c) voiced      | (d) said     |
| 11. | (a) a         | (b) one      | (c) the         | (d) this     |
| 12. | (a) hide      | (b) hid      | (c) hidden      | (d) hides    |



# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about Barack Obama's changes. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. MEDIA:** Make a poster about different news channels. How are they similar and different? Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. OBAMA:** Write a magazine article about Barack Obama. Include imaginary interviews with him, and someone who disagrees with his policies.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to a news network chief. Ask him/her three questions about his/her news network. Give him/her three ideas on what he/she could do to bring us better news. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. T      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. T

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. latest   | a. most recent   |
| 2. coverage | b. reporting     |
| 3. imposed  | c. introduced    |
| 4. grief    | d. sorrow        |
| 5. overturn | e. reverse       |
| 6. present  | f. in attendance |
| 7. remains  | g. dead body     |
| 8. remained | h. stayed        |
| 9. invasion | i. attack        |
| 10. hide    | j. conceal       |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. changed many things since he took    | a. office               |
| 2. US military personnel returning from | b. foreign wars         |
| 3. the grief of seeing their loved ones | c. return in coffins    |
| 4. Obama made it an election promise    | d. to overturn the ban  |
| 5. the return of their fallen           | e. heroes               |
| 6. News cameras                         | f. were present         |
| 7. killed in Afghanistan on Saturday    | g. by a roadside bomb   |
| 8. Their cameras remained silent as     | h. prayers were said    |
| 9. died in Iraq since                   | i. the invasion         |
| 10. hide the cost                       | j. of the war on terror |

## GAP FILL:

### Media show war dead after 18-year ban

US President Barack Obama has changed many things since he **took** office. The latest is the end of an 18-year ban on media **coverage** of returning American war dead. Since 1991, no American news network has been allowed to **televis**e coffins of US military personnel returning from foreign wars. George Bush senior imposed the ban in 1991 **during** the first Gulf War. He said he wanted to protect families from the grief of **seeing** their loved ones return in coffins. Neither President Bill Clinton nor President George W. Bush ever changed the **policy**. President Obama made it an election promise to overturn the ban. He said it was for families to choose **whether** or not to allow the media to film the return of their fallen **heroes**.

News cameras were **present** at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Sunday April 5th for the arrival of the **remains** of Phillip Myers. The 30-year-old airman was killed in Afghanistan on Saturday by a roadside **bomb**. Eight colleagues carried the flag-draped coffin past seven of Mr. Myers' family. Nearly 40 members of the **press** were present at the ceremony. Their cameras remained silent as prayers were said and there was no **flash** photography. The Pentagon says that 4,262 members of America's military have died in Iraq since the **invasion** in March 2003. Another 673 have been killed in Afghanistan. Vice President Joe Biden said the ban had allowed **coffins** to be "snuck back into the country" to **hide** the cost of the war on terror.

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d    2 - b    3 - a    4 - c    5 - c    6 - b    7 - a    8 - d    9 - b    10 - d    11 - c    12 - a