



■ A WOMAN prays at the Cornerstone of Peace war memorial on the Japanese island of Okinawa today. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe joined thousands marking the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Okinawa, one of the bloodiest of the Second World War. The memorial is engraved with the names of the dead: more than 100,000 civilians, about 80,000 Japanese soldiers, and 14,000 US and allied soldiers were killed over 82 days.

US mass killers tell same story of anger, isolation and broken families

AS South Carolina's governor calls for the removal of a Confederate flag from the state's capitol, Daniel Bates looks at whether racism was the only reason behind last week's massacre at a black church in Charleston.

Daniel Bates

LETTER FROM...



CHARLESTON

SITTING in the squalid trailer park home in rural South Carolina where Dylann Roof spent his last months before carrying out the Charleston church massacre, a familiar picture begins to emerge.

The 21-year-old had been sleeping on a makeshift bed of cushions with four friends aged between 15 and 20, and their three dogs. The group reportedly spent their days playing video games, doing drugs and drinking, with no job, no school and no prospects.

Against this background it didn't seem too weird when Roof asked his friends to photograph him burning the American flag. It didn't seem too unusual that he was virulently racist and they did not call police when he said he wanted to carry out a massacre.

Roof, who was raised a Lutheran, had stopped going to school regularly at 14. He split his time between the trailer park, his mother's house and his father's house. Nobody seems to have taken responsibility for his young life.

I've been a foreign correspondent in

America for five years and it feels as if I could be back writing about Adam Lanza, who killed 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012. Or James Holmes, who opened fire in a cinema in the Denver suburbs the same year at the premiere of a Batman film, killing 12 and wounding 70.

It's the same narrative every time involving isolation, anger, family breakdown and young men who just "slipped through the cracks."

I've come to hate that phrase because it suggests that there was nothing anyone could do. To use an Americanism, it is what it is.

But that's not good enough. And it won't stop it happening again.

The reality is that the first step to preventing another mass shooting involves doing something that is not popular or palatable.

It was touched on in the film *Bowling for Columbine* in an interview with Marilyn Manson, whose lyrics had been blamed for inspiring students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, who carried out the 1999 high school massacre.

Asked by director Michael Moore what he would say to the killers given the chance, Manson said: "I wouldn't say a single word to them. I would listen to what they have to say, and that's what no one did."

WORLD IN BRIEF

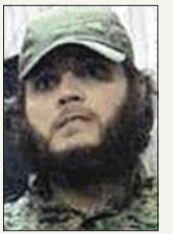
Terrorist whose son held severed head dies in Iraq

AN Australian terrorist who made his seven-year-old son pose for a photograph holding a severed head is reported to have been killed fighting for Islamic State in Iraq.

Australian intelligence agencies are attempting to verify claims that Khaled Sharrouf and his fellow countryman, Mohamed Elomar, died in a drone strike in the IS-held city of Mosul in the past week.

Sharrouf, a Lebanese national born in Sydney, has a young family in Syria. US Secretary of State John Kerry called the picture of his son, posted online last year, "one of the most disturbing, stomach-turning, grotesque photographs ever".

■ Ali Awni al-Harzi, an IS militant linked to the 2012 attack on the US consulate in Benghazi, Libya, was killed in a drone strike in Mosul on June 15, the Pentagon said today.



Drone strike: Khaled Sharrouf, top, and Mohamed Elomar

1,000 migrants saved in 24 hours

SHIPS from Norway and Denmark have rescued nearly 1,000 migrants from small boats off Libya in the past 24 hours. The Norwegian *Siem Pilot* vessel picked up 671 from two wooden boats

north of the Libyan capital, Tripoli. It was then asked to take 99 more rescued by a Russian tanker. Denmark's *Torm Arawa* today rescued two boats in distress and picked up 222 people before taking them to a port in Italy's Calabria region.

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