

## **GI SPECIAL 2B#1**



# **“I Refuse To Let My Son Die Quietly For An Unjust War”**

by Paul Rockwell Oakland, California, Posted 3 Jun 2004 Military Families Speak Out

Interview with Bill Mitchell

Give sorrow words:  
the grief that does not speak  
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart,  
and bids it break.  
-- William Shakespeare

Father's Day is not a happy time for Bill Mitchell.

**On March 20th, the first anniversary of the Iraqi war, Bill Mitchell, a devoted father, joined the worldwide protest in San Luis Obispo, California. He carried a big photo of his son that read "Bring my son home now." All tragedies are unique.**

**A week later, his son Sergeant Michael Mitchell was killed attempting to rescue a platoon of U.S. in Sadr City -- killed in an occupation his father tried to end.**

Last week I reached Bill Mitchell in Atascadero. We talked about his grief, his son's courage in battle, the fire in his soul and his campaign to halt the U.S. occupation of Iraq. **Bill Mitchell is a new member of Military Families Speak Out -- over 1500 soldiers, veterans, and relatives opposed to war in Iraq.**

Paul Rockwell: Tell us about your son, Michael. What was he like?

Bill Mitchell: Mike was one of those 90s, sensitive kind of guys. Mostly he liked to spend time with his fiancée. He was engaged to be married in August. He was an athlete, excelled in high school track and field, cross country and wrestling. When Mike was a kid, I single-parented him for five years. In the 80s you didn't hear about single Dads. Every night I sat with Mike on the couch. He was an avid reader, and he would make me read "The Little Engine that Could" ten times a night. Let me tell you that if I tried to skip a page, he would catch me every time. "Oh, no, Dad, you missed it." I used to read to that boy.

Paul Rockwell: How did Mike die in Iraq?

Bill Mitchell: **He was killed in combat in Sadr City, a suburb of Baghdad. It was April 4th during the first day of the Shiite riots. My son was only days from coming home.** He was a tank mechanic. Someone came up and said, "There's a platoon of soldiers from Fort Hood caught in an ambush in Sadr City." My son raised a hand. One of his buddies said, "Why don't you stay here." Mike said, "If my buddies are going, I'm going with them." My son was too damn cocky. He thought he was a superman. Mike was one of eight men killed that day. He was shot through the right eye and died instantly.

Paul Rockwell: **How do you and your family cope with the tragedy?**

**Bill Mitchell: Man, I need to ponder that one. I can tell you that the days are not getting easier. It's not like I am OK with his loss. I look at a picture, or just have a thought. Those people closest to Mike are not getting over this. I remember the days before he died. Anytime the phone rang, I feared for my son's life. But nothing prepared me to know the real devastation that event has brought me. My life is so much worse than I could ever have imagined. Everything I do, 98 percent involves Michael. Everything I do involves my son's death. I'm not getting over it.**

We sat with Mike right before he was cremated. Next morning I woke up and subconsciously I knew Mike was dead. Each day brings revelations anew and new anger. I wish I could be OK with it, but I am not happy, and not happy with Bush.

Paul Rockwell: Recently I have seen a number of funerals on TV. When a soldier dies, it is typical for a parent to say, "My son died for his country. We support the occupation and should finish the job." It's as if the funeral sanctifies the war that claimed a youth's life. Your response seems quite different. You are turning grief into protest.

Bill Mitchell: **I refuse to let my son die quietly for an unjust war.** I was against the war before it began. I was semi-politically active. Now Mike's memory pushes me. I have raised the level of my activism.

**Now that my son will never come home, I am more firmly against the war than ever. A fire has been lit within me and unfortunately, the path of my life has been altered. I feel that I must put myself out there and do whatever I can to see that no other parent learns of the pain that comes with losing a child to war. I want to go to Washington, I want to stand on people's desks, if that's what it takes.**

You saw that guy Berg, whose son was beheaded? He blames Bush and Rumsfeld. I want to meet him. I want to stop this insanity.

Paul Rockwell: Around the week your son was killed, newspapers finally published a photo of flag-draped coffins. How did you respond?

Bill Mitchell: I actually wrote a letter to the Seattle Times praising the editors for publishing the photos. **I am quite sure my son was in one of the coffins in the picture. Hiding the death and destruction of this war does not make it easier for anyone except those who want to keep the truth away from the people.** I know the current government policy has the bodies being flown in under the cloak of darkness. I would be willing to help that poor woman in Kuwait who lost her job over the picture which she felt needed to be seen. The other parents who lost children on the same day as my son would also feel that she did a service for us.

Paul Rockwell: Your son was awarded a Bronze Star for attempting to rescue 20 soldiers trapped in Sadr City.

Bill Mitchell: He volunteered for a dangerous mission, risked his life to save his buddies. I believe that the actions on the day he died make him a hero. But in the broader scheme of things, I do not think the war is a war of self-defense. **I am having a major problem with being OK with his death under the circumstances. And I don't really believe that Iraq, or the world or the lives of his family and friends, are better due to his death.**

Paul Rockwell: An heroic soldier in an unheroic war.

Bill Mitchell: Yes. Mike was killed by the very people he liberated. That's insane. My son wrote me letters and told me about the Iraqi kids. I got pictures of Mike playing soccer with the Iraqi kids, shaking hands after the game, just like in America. But a couple of days after they played soccer together, the same kids were throwing rocks at the GIs.

**I'm a Vietnam-era veteran, and there's a parallel to Vietnam. You don't know who the enemy is.**

**Mike never pointed his gun at Saddam's henchmen. His regiment was not fighting the Republican Guard or the Fedayeen. Mike was sent in to fight the Shiite militia in Sadr City.**

**The Shiites were oppressed by Saddam. [Muqtada al-] Sadr is the cleric. His father was killed by Saddam. Now we are fighting Saddam's enemies. Something**

**has gone astray, and no one is asking, 'What is our nation doing?'** We just continue to fight anyone who gets in the way. The editor of Editor and Publisher Magazine compares what is taking place in Iraq to the Tet Offensive.

When my son died, I couldn't keep my face out of the TV. **The very night I found out about Michael's death, I couldn't sleep. I was flipping to CNN. There was a speech of Bush saying, "The enemy is trying to challenge our will." Our will. I wrote that down, and I'm thinking, What about their will? Their will may be as strong as ours.**

**I'm sure that the person who killed my son believed he was right. We were inside his country. I think oil is one reason we are there. If the major export from Iraq were broccoli, would we be there?**

Paul Rockwell: Your concern is not only that you son was killed, but that he was killed by some one he wanted to help.

Bill Mitchell: We are fighting a different people than when the war started, and the government does not even acknowledge the fact that the enemy has shifted. There was no insurgency a year ago. It's Orwellian.

Paul Rockwell: Explain what you mean by Orwellian.

Bill Mitchell: You remember Winston (the protagonist in 1984). He works on a newspaper, and his job is to rewrite the archives. In the middle of some war, the enemy changes. So Winston has to go back and re-write history. First there's enemy one. Then there's enemy two. So he re-writes the story. That's what it is like in Iraq. Now al-Sadr is the enemy.

**And we have created enemies because of our actions. Iraqis are responding to what the U.S. has done. Fifteen months ago we fought Saddam; there was no insurgency. And now we are gunning for Shiites as we put some of Saddam's generals back in power. That's Orwellian.**

Paul Rockwell: Do you think the President fabricated the case for war?

**Bill Mitchell: It's probably not a popular opinion, but honestly I do. My son died with dignity in an undignified war. I spoke out against the war when my son was alive. I'm not going to roll over now. I only wish I would have done more. But now I'm more committed.**

**Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly.** Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and in Iraq, and information about other social protest movements here in the USA. **Send requests to address up top. For copies on web site see:** <http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>

## IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

# Brig. Gen Kimmitt Says Nothing Changes June 30: War Will Go On And On And On

6/12/2004 By TODD PITMAN The Associated Press

**Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, deputy operations chief, said the Americans had no intention of withdrawing quickly from Baghdad and other cities despite the sovereignty transfer.** He said U.S. and other multinational forces would remain a visible force until Iraqis were ready to ensure their own security.

*"I don't think you're going to see much difference on July 15 than you saw on January 15," Kimmitt said. "We will not be pulling out of the cities. We will not be relocating."*

During a press conference Saturday, Kimmitt acknowledged that Americans had not achieved their goals in Fallujah despite relative calm in the city.

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## One U.S. Soldier Killed, Two Wounded Near Taji

Jun 13, 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters)

One U.S. soldier was killed and two others wounded in Iraq on Sunday when insurgents attacked their unit with a car bomb and small arms fire, a U.S. military spokeswoman said.

She said the soldiers returned fire when they came under attack at a spot outside Taji, a town just north of the Iraqi capital, wounding one of the attackers.

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## Resistance Fire Hits Green Zone Occupation Headquarters

June 13, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP)

Explosions reverberated Sunday from inside the heavily fortified Green Zone headquarters of the American-run occupation authority.

**White smoke rose from above one of Saddam Hussein's former palaces and a person inside the zone who spoke on condition of anonymity said the structure had been hit.**

The blast sent workers in the palace to the building's basement shelter.

“It sounded like I needed to take shelter,” said Air Force Lt. Col. Sam Hudspath.

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## **Helicopter Down, Two U.S. Soldiers Hurt**

Jun 12, 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters) & 06-13 AP

A U.S. Army OH-58 helicopter crashed north of Baghdad on Saturday and two American soldiers were hurt, the U.S. military said.

"Two U.S. soldiers were slightly wounded when their helicopter was forced to make a landing," a military spokesman said. "The helicopter rolled over and caught fire."

**He said it was not clear if what he called enemy fire had caused the crash that occurred between Baghdad and the Taji air base about 12 miles north of Baghdad.**

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## **US Soldier Wounded In Convoy Attack Near Baquba; Roadside Bomb Targets US Convoy Outside Fallujah**

2004-06-11 Middle East Online.com, BAQUBA, Iraq

**One US soldier was slightly hurt when a bomb blast and gun fire targeted a US military supply convoy near a US army base in the town of Baquba north of Baghdad Friday, an AFP correspondent said.**

The explosion blew out the rear tyre of a truck and shattered the cabin windows causing minor lacerations to the soldier's face, the correspondent, who was on the scene, reported.

**The roadside bomb, which went off shortly after 9:00 am as the 10-vehicle convoy passed by, was followed by gun fire from up the road.**

The unknown assailants are thought to have escaped along a dirt track, the correspondent said, adding that a quick reaction force and two helicopters arrived at the scene about an hour after the blast.



The AFP correspondent was travelling with a US crew sweeping for explosives nearby, which then made the area safe.

Lieutenant Donovan Blazek of the explosive crew said the remote controlled device, which left a crater more than half a metre (two feet) deep, was hidden beneath the curb of the road.

The injured soldier received treatment at the scene.

**The attack came an hour after a witness saw a bomb explode after a US military convoy passed outside the restive city of Fallujah west of Baghdad.**

"Around 8:10 am (0410 GMT), a bomb exploded on the highway after a three- or four-vehicle US convoy passed. Only a civilian car was lightly damaged and there were no victims," said Marwan Ali, who owns a kiosk on the road.

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## **Two More U.S. Soldiers Wounded In Baquba**

12 June 2004 AlJazeera.net

In the restive city of Baquba, two bombs exploded, wounding two occupation soldiers and two Iraqi policemen.

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## **Three Wounded By Baghdad IED;**

# Another Soldier Dies Of Thursday Wounds



U.S. Army troops pull one of four comrades away from a Humvee vehicle after an attack in Baghdad (Ceerwan Aziz/Reuters)

11 June 2004 (AFP)

**Three US soldiers were wounded in a car bomb attack on a military convoy in southern Baghdad at 12:20 pm (0820 GMT) Friday.**

“Right now we have got three wounded, no deaths. Two of the wounded returned to duty,” a military spokesman said.

The convoy was travelling down a road in the Saydiya district in the south of the capital. It passed a stationary car, which exploded, the spokesman said, adding that the device was probably detonated remotely.

**Overnight, the military announced a US soldier died of his wounds Thursday following a coordinated attack on coalition troops in eastern Baghdad the previous day. Four other soldiers were wounded in the attack.**

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## Car Bomb Explodes Near U.S. Camp Curvo; Cops Killed

June 13, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq, AP



The military says 12 people are dead and 13 are wounded after an attacker detonated a car bomb near an American military camp in Baghdad.

The explosion took place just after Iraqi police stopped the bomber, who was driving in the wrong direction in front of Camp Curvo.

A spokesman for the First Cavalry Division said there are no U.S. casualties.

**An Iraqi police captain said the dead include four policemen and the bomber.**

Police have sealed off the area, but two charred bodies of policemen covered by blankets could be seen in one of the police cars. The police captain said eight civilian cars are damaged as well.

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### **Got Gas?**



A gas tanker blazes along a highway after a roadside attack on the southern edge of Baghdad June 11, 2004. (AP Photo/Hussein Malla)

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## **Food Poisoning Gets 50-60 Japanese Troops**

13/06/2004 Yemen News Agency Sabah

TOKYO, June 12 (Saba) - Fifty to 60 Ground Self-Defense Force troops deployed in the southeastern Iraqi city of Samawah are suffering from food poisoning, officials said on Friday.

According to reports to the Defense Agency on Friday, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party said more than 30 to 60 GSDF members have developed symptoms such as fever, vomiting and dehydration in the last few days.

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U.S. soldiers sit on top of an armored vehicle as a gas tanker blazes after a roadside attack on the southern edge of Baghdad, June 11, 2004. (AP Photo/Hussein Malla)

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## Madhi Army Repels U.S. Patrol

12 June 2004 AlJazeera.net

In southern Iraq, a fragile truce between occupation troops and fighters loyal to Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr was interrupted as skirmishes erupted on Saturday.

Gun shots and mortar rounds rattled the restive holy city of Najaf as armed militiamen gathered near a shrine while US forces deployed around a vast Shia cemetery near the city centre.

**A spokesperson for al-Sadr's al-Mahdi Army confirmed that three Humvees entered the cemetery this morning. They were apparently blocked by the fighters and forced to withdraw.**

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## Iraq Senior Commanders Enjoy Palace Luxury With Extra-Cold Air Conditioning

6.12.04 By THOM SHANKER, New York Times

BAGHDAD, Iraq — At a desert retreat where Saddam Hussein's cronies hunted gazelles and entertained mistresses, the American military is building one of its largest overseas bases since the Vietnam War, a rambling, dusty mix of tents, trailers and villas where sandbags rival chandeliers as the second-most notable architectural feature.

That is because at the renamed Camp Victory, the signature design element is the marble column, many with a swirling stone pattern in sandy hues nearly matching those of desert combat fatigues.

**The largest palace, called Qasr al Fao, sits in the middle of a manmade lake stocked with carp and catfish, and is the new headquarters for senior military commanders in Iraq.**

A third-story palace wall was hit by an American JDAM (Joint Direct Attack Munition) bomb in the war, **but the damaged section has been rebuilt to hold a classified planning room that is so overly air-conditioned that it is known as the Meat Locker.**

Twenty-four hours a day, officers and staff members climb and descend spiral staircases that recall headquarters from past wars, a simpler era when logistics were more important than information operations. Eisenhower or Patton can be imagined striding these polished floors, but they would hardly recognize the technology that has been injected throughout the palace.

A Joint Operations Center was imported and fills a wing of the grand palace, as advanced as anything at the Pentagon. More than 150 computers linked to outposts across Iraq feed three theater-size screens with details of combat actions, convoy movements and the weather. The screens can suck down satellite news channels or real-time video feeds from Predator surveillance drones.

"Everybody you need is in one room — all the players," said Brig. Gen. William J. Troy, chief of staff for the new corps headquarters that manages day-to-day military operations in Iraq. "And they can all see the same picture of the battlefield."

**Camp Victory, just beyond the Baghdad airport, already holds more than 14,000 troops and is home to the two headquarters responsible for strategic planning and daily military operations here in the Iraqi capital,** as well as to the First Cavalry Division, charged with security here.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# **Wounded Soldiers' Dad Condemns Army For Neglecting Troop Protection**

**(Not more than a week ago, the lying assholes in charge at the Pentagon told Congress the troops in Iraq all had body armor, making a big media production out of it. Now read this. Each and every one of the liars involved in pretending the troops are protected richly merits an unpleasant experience with associated loss of equivalent body parts. And eye for an eye, so to speak.)**

**"I want to know what's going on," Jon Berman said. "I want to know why our people aren't protected. They don't even have their full body armor yet."**

6.11.04 By Patricia Henley Assistant News Editor, Sonomanews.com

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jed Berman gave a weak, one-fingered salute to someone who angered him Wednesday, and that small gesture by this former Sonoma Valley resident buoyed the hopes of his family and friends.

**Said his father, Jon Berman, who is among those by Jed Berman's side in an intensive-care ward at Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C. "Despite his extensive injuries - he has shrapnel in two parts of his brain - the doctors seem to be positive about his outcome."**

On Saturday, May 29, Jed Berman was in command of a lightly armored vehicle in northern Iraq. He was riding in the turret when he was hit by an explosive device, possibly a rocket-propelled grenade. The blast hit the right side of Berman's face, his left arm and his back.

**He was taken to Baghdad, where doctors removed his right eye and replaced it with a prosthetic device. They shipped him to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, where he underwent an operation to remove many of the large pieces of shrapnel embedded in his body.**

When he was stable, he was flown to Walter Reed in Washington, D.C. There, doctors have been keeping Jed sedated until the swelling subsides in his brain. They can't perform reconstructive surgery on his face until he's taken off the sedatives and the breathing tube can be removed. Jed's body is also battling a persistent bacterial infection.

The Bermans moved to the Sonoma Valley when Jed was a young boy. He attended El Verano Elementary and Altimira Intermediate schools before graduating from Sonoma Valley High School in 1992 and joining the U.S. Army.

The day Jed Berman was injured - May 29 - he was scheduled to go on leave. Among his plans, his father said, was a trip to Sonoma to visit his friends.

When she didn't hear from Jed after May 29, Ford contacted her father, who reached Jon Berman at his home in Switzerland. Jon had just gotten the news about Jed's injuries, and was heading off to Germany to see Jed in the hospital there. Jed's mother, Lindarose Bruce, and her sister had flown from the United States to be with Jed in Germany.

When Jed was transferred to Washington, D.C., his family members followed on a commercial airline flight. Now they are keeping watch over Jed as he battles his way back to health. In the meantime, Jon Berman is trying to schedule appointments with Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

**Jon wants to know why so much more attention is being put on the dead in Iraq than on the thousands who are horribly wounded. He wants to know why the lightly armored Stryker vehicle that Jed was riding in is being used in Iraq instead of the more heavily armored vehicles that the Army has available.**

**"I want to know what's going on," Jon Berman said. "I want to know why our people aren't protected. They don't even have their full body armor yet."**

Jed's progress is a matter of baby steps, Jon said. With his remaining eye, Jed has been able to signal "yes" or "no." On Tuesday Jed started slightly shaking his head "yes" or "no." And Wednesday morning he gripped hard with his left hand - the one that is controlled by the injured right side of his brain.

Wednesday afternoon the doctors took out Jed's chest tube. They tried cutting back on the sedation and removing his breathing tube as well, but as consciousness returned, Jed became agitated and combative. So he was sedated once again as his doctors, family and friends waited for Jed's injuries to heal.

Although his family is pleased with the small progress he has shown, Jed Berman remains in intensive care, in critical condition.

### **GET SOME TRUTH: CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

**Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>**

# **The Casualties Of War; “They Just Keep Coming. It Never Stops”**

June 13, 2004 DAILY NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF

LANDSTUHL, Germany - **For every flag-draped coffin the American people aren't allowed to see coming home from Iraq, there are at least four other casualties of war like Spec. Roy Harper they don't hear about, either.**

**Only last January, the 29-year-old National Guardsman was stocking shelves at the Target store in upstate Saratoga Springs, anxiously awaiting the birth of his second child.**

**Last week, after miraculously surviving a piece of shrapnel that ripped open his aorta and nearly killed him,** Harper was the first of 43 G.I.s admitted one morning to the Pentagon's Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. **The wounded arrive here with grim regularity from "Downrange"** the hospital staff's euphemism for the Iraq and Afghan conflicts.

Dazed and bewildered, Harper was the first of three critically ill patients loaded off the rear of a blue hospital bus from nearby Ramstein Air Base after an eight-hour flight from the combat zone. He was on a respirator, portable devices monitored his vital signs, and a CCAT (critical care air-transportable team) in rubber gloves anxiously hovered around him. An Army chaplain delivered a benediction as Harper was loaded onto a gurney and wheeled into the intensive care unit.

Amazingly, five hours later the soft-spoken citizen soldier was telling the Daily News how what the military calls an improvised explosive device ripped apart his Humvee, killing his sergeant and leaving Harper dying from massive blood loss.

His Vermont National Guard field artillery unit was riding shotgun for a convoy when the bomb exploded Monday, rolling the thinly armored vehicle over three times and sending a jagged sliver of steel into Harper's throat, millimeters above where his body armor would have stopped its deadly impact.

Only a swift medical evacuation and emergency open-heart surgery by Army field combat doctors saved Harper, according to his doctors and nurses.

Despite his harrowing ordeal, the young soldier was more eager to talk about seeing his 6-week-old daughter Sarah than second-guessing the war.

**More than 15,000 war zone patients have already cycled through Landstuhl, nearly 13,000 from Iraq. An estimated 4,000 are classified as battle casualties; the rest have been treated for bunions and backaches, asthma and appendicitis, testicular cancer and a recent rash of viral pneumonia cases.**

The staff of 1,853 has tended to patients from 33 countries, including the victims of the April terror bombing of the UN mission in Baghdad, and a young Polish soldier admitted last week with burns over 80% of his body.

**"They just keep coming," says one staffer, who has gotten used to the double shifts and 60-hour weeks. "It never stops."**

Several hundred soldiers have suffered life-altering traumatic wounds: irreversible brain damage, facial mutilation, ruptured eardrums. A handful have been permanently blinded

or will never walk again. Lt. Col. Ronald Place, the chief surgeon, says about 150 soldiers have lost limbs.

Invariably, the troops worry about their comrades first. "The first thing they always ask is, 'Where's my buddy, is he okay?'" said Maj. Cathy Martin, the no-nonsense chief nurse of Landstuhl's intensive care unit. "It's very moving."

Despite the horrendous injuries some soldiers suffer, protective vests have saved countless lives. "If we didn't have such great body armor," she said, "many of our patients would be KIAs [killed in action], not amputees."

**That's cold comfort to young lives changed forever. "Learning to live with it goes on for the rest of your life," said chief of chaplains Col. Eric Holmstrom, a reservist from Exton, Pa. "They don't need magic answers because there aren't any."**

For some questions, however, not even the most rigorous professional training can provide an answer like the one from a young soldier engaged to be married.

**"Where do I put my wedding ring?" he plaintively asked, looking at the place where his hands used to be.**

**"You just try to comfort them as best you can," one anguished staffer said, "and then you go somewhere and cry your heart out."**

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## **Wounded N.J. Guardsman Faces Future And Hopes Bush Isn't In It**

June 13, 2004 Thomas DeFrank, DAILY NEWS

LANDSTUHL, Germany: In every war, as Spec. Timothy Brosnan can attest, the difference between life and death is often a matter of luck and inches.

A 33-year-old National Guardsman from East Brunswick, N.J., Brosnan is alive today because he was facing slightly away from a makeshift bomb when it detonated June 4. An officer from an Oregon Guard unit standing next to Brosnan wasn't so lucky.

"The lieutenant didn't make it," Brosnan recalled from his eighth-floor hospital bed. "He was facing the blast."

Two of Brosnan's buddies from the 3rd Battalion, 112th Field Artillery Regiment, also died in the attack. A third was seriously wounded but will survive.

Recuperating from 10 shrapnel wounds and a broken leg, Brosnan exhibited classic symptoms of survivor guilt.

**"I feel bad for leaving everybody behind," he said, suddenly fighting back tears. "We lost two more Saturday."**

A gutter installer in civilian life, Brosnan was in the last Humvee in an Army convoy heading toward an Iraqi police station in the Sadr City section of Baghdad when the lead vehicle was struck by the bomb. Brosnan ran forward, called for medical attention and helped the wounded as an infantry unit from the Oregon National Guard arrived to assist.

That's when the second blast struck, killing the lieutenant and blowing Brosnan face first to the ground. He lay bleeding profusely from multiple shrapnel wounds.

**Aside from feeling guilty that he has abandoned his comrades to a nasty mission, Brosnan didn't exhibit any desire to return to Iraq.**

**Asked whether he planned to vote for President Bush in November, he sarcastically replied, "Yeah, right."**

## The Haircut

Jun. 12, 2004 BY ADAM SMELTZ, The Wichita Eagle

**Waking up, Army Sgt. Chris Schneider said, seemed an unlikely option back in January.**

**Schneider, 27, lay badly wounded, his right leg crushed beyond hope in a military-vehicle wreck about 60 miles north of Baghdad.**

His mother, back in Wichita, had vowed to let her hair grow until he returned.

Today, she has short hair. At her request, Schneider made the first snip Thursday evening at Sami Halaseh Salon.

**Schneider, who lives with his wife and two children in Parsons, recovered from his injuries and is learning how to use his prosthetic leg.**

"Everything I used to take for granted... means so much more to me now," he said.

After undergoing surgeries in Iraq and then traveling to Germany, Schneider arrived in Washington, D.C., in late January.

A reservist, he had been in the Independence-based 1,011th Quartermaster Company, which went to Iraq in May 2003. It was his first deployment, a time of unyielding worry for Savage, who has another son in the military.

"When you get a phone call that says your child has been injured and may not survive," she said, "the world screeches to a halt."



Schneider, one of five siblings, made his first return trip to Kansas in April -- a surprise visit -- and is wrapping up another 17-day visit before he goes back to Washington for more treatment.

**Doctors told him that could last through November, when he could try to re-enter the service.**

**But Schneider, who graduated from Towanda's Circle High in 1994, said he is finished with active duty in the Army. He is weighing options that range from higher education to a job in veterans' affairs.**

Meanwhile, his unlikely medical rebound has "made the small things in life that much more memorable," Schneider said.

"It made everything much more colorful," he said, "with much more flavor to it."

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## **Five Soldiers Objected Last Fall To Abu Ghraib Torture**

Jun. 11, 2004 MATT KELLEY, Associated Press

**WASHINGTON** - At least five soldiers objected last fall to abuses they saw at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad. One demanded to be reassigned, saying the behavior he witnessed there "made me sick to my stomach."

**Up the chain of command, the noncommissioned officers who heard such complaints did little to stop the mistreatment, according to Army records obtained by The Associated Press.**

**One of those same NCOs, Staff Sgt. Ivan L. "Chip" Frederick, is accused of stomping on prisoners' toes and punching another prisoner so hard in the chest that he remarked, "I think I might have put him in cardiac arrest."**

**A diminutive platoon leader, Sgt. 1st Class Shannon Snider, once barked so loudly at soldiers stomping on prisoners' toes that one witness later told investigators, "I never thought that that voice could come out of somebody so little. "** Then Snider left the room and the abuse continued, the records say.

**"It's telling that another person ... did complain to their superior officer and was told, 'There's nothing wrong. You have to go forward'," said Mary Rose Zapor, a lawyer for Pfc. Lynndie England, one of the accused soldiers.**

One of the soldiers who complained most vigorously was Spc. Matthew C. Wisdom, a fellow military police soldier assigned to the Abu Ghraib cellblock where most of the worst abuses happened. No one answered the telephone at Wisdom's home in Richmond, Va., this week.

Wisdom told investigators he witnessed some of the abuses of Nov. 8, the night prisoners were forced to masturbate and were stacked, naked, into a human pyramid.

**Wisdom complained to at least three sergeants in his chain of command, who agreed to remove him from the cellblock.**

**"It made me sick to my stomach, sir, disgusted," Wisdom told a judge last month during a hearing to take the guilty plea of Spec. Jeremy Sivits, of Hyndman, Pa.**

One of Wisdom's commanders, Sgt. Robert F. Jones, took the complaint to a higher-ranking noncommissioned officer - Frederick. "Frederick assured me that everything would be taken care of," Jones told Army investigators.

**Another soldier who complained was Sgt. Stephen C. Hubbard, who happened to see some of the abuse pictures on another soldier's computer. Hubbard complained to Staff Sgt. Robert J. Elliott, who demanded proof, according to statements to Army investigators.**

**"I threatened to go to (the) commander with info," Hubbard told investigators, saying he was upset that former Pennsylvania prison guard Spc. Charles Graner Jr. had been returned to the cellblock despite complaints about him.**

Hubbard also said he complained to Snider, who was accused by Wisdom of tossing one prisoner into a pile of bodies. **The investigators' records obtained by The AP do not say what, if anything, happened after Hubbard's complaints.**

Staff Sgt. Reuben Layton, a medic at the prison, told investigators he saw Graner hit a wounded detainee. Layton said he ordered Graner to remove handcuffs from the prisoner but did not report the incident.

**Taguba cites two others who did not go along with abuses. The report says 1st Lt. David O. Sutton stopped an abusive act and reported it to his chain of command.**

**Taguba also hailed Master at Arms 1st Class William J. Kimbro, a Navy dog handler, for refusing to participate in abuses despite "significant pressure....."**

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## **Shitbag Sanchez Approved Prisoner Torment**

June 12, 2004 By R. Jeffrey Smith and Josh White, Washington Post Staff Writers

**Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, the senior U.S. military officer in Iraq, borrowed heavily from a list of high-pressure interrogation tactics used at the U.S. detention center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and approved letting senior officials at a Baghdad jail use military dogs, temperature extremes, reversed sleep patterns,**

**sensory deprivation, and diets of bread and water on detainees whenever they wished, according to newly obtained documents.**

The U.S. policy, details of which have not been previously disclosed, was approved in early September.

**The documents obtained by The Washington Post spell out in greater detail than previously known the interrogation tactics Sanchez authorized, and make clear for the first time that, before last October, they could be imposed without first seeking the approval of anyone outside the prison.** That gave officers at Abu Ghraib wide latitude in handling detainees.

One of the documents, an Oct. 9 memorandum on "Interrogation Rules of Engagement," which each military intelligence officer at Abu Ghraib was asked to sign, sets out in detail the wide range of pressure tactics approved in September and available before the rules were changed on Oct. 12.

**They included methods that were close to some of the behavior criticized this March by the Army's own investigator, who said he found evidence of "sadistic, blatant and wanton criminal abuse" at the prison.**

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## **Generals Get Tops In Free Luxury; Raped & Pregnant Soldiers Get Shit- On & Must Pay Own Travel**

Chalmers Johnson 11 June 2004, Nation Institute / TomDispatch

The military prefers bases that resemble small fundamentalist towns in the Bible Belt rather than neighborhoods in the big population centers of the United States. For example, even though more than 100,000 women live on our overseas bases - including women in the services, spouses, and relatives of military personnel - obtaining an abortion at a local military hospital is prohibited.

**Since there are some 14,000 sexual assaults or attempted sexual assaults each year in the military, women who become pregnant overseas and want an abortion *have no choice but to come home at their own expense or try the local economy*, which cannot be either easy or pleasant in Baghdad or other parts of our empire these days.**

**For generals and admirals, the military provides seventy-one Learjets, thirteen Gulfstream IIIs, and seventeen Cessna Citation luxury jets to fly them to such spots as the armed forces' ski and vacation center at Garmisch in the Bavarian Alps or to any of the 234 military golf courses the Pentagon operates worldwide. Defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld flies around in his own personal Boeing 757, called a C-32A in the Air Force.**

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

# **Iraqis Put Contempt For Troops On Display; Hate U.S. And Promise War On UN Occupation**

June 12, 2004 By Edward Cody, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, June 11 -- A pair of AH-64 Apache helicopter gunships thumped back and forth overhead, scouring residential streets for insurgents. Dun-colored Bradley Fighting Vehicles snorted and wheeled around, their tracks gouging holes in the tarmac. A dozen Humvees stood sentry, closing off the four-lane avenue to Iraqi cars, while nervous American soldiers with M-16 automatic rifles forbade local residents from approaching.

"Look at this," said Ghassan Abu Ahmed, raising his hand in a sweeping gesture toward the tableau of military might. "This is freedom? It is crazy."

**Since U.S. forces drove to Baghdad and overthrew President Saddam Hussein in April 2003, the 138,000 American soldiers stationed here have lost their status as liberators in the eyes of most Iraqis. Polling by the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority has chronicled a steady souring of opinion, with the most recent surveys showing about 80 percent of Iraqis with an unfavorable opinion of U.S. troops.**

**They have been encouraged in their views by Muslim preachers, who, judging by their sermons, have concluded that the U.S. occupation should end immediately if peace is to be restored to Iraq. To buttress their arguments, they repeatedly have cited the abuse of Iraqi captives at Abu Ghraib prison, which has helped crystallize opinion against the presence of U.S. soldiers.**

"It was discovered that the freedom in this land is not ours. It is the freedom of the occupying soldiers in doing what they like, such as arresting, carrying out raids, killing at random or stealing money," Sheik Mohammed Bashir declared in his sermon Friday at Um al-Oura, a Sunni Muslim mosque in the middle-class Ghazaliya neighborhood.

"No one can ask them what they are doing, because they are protected by their freedom," he continued. "No one can punish them, whether in our country or their country. The worst thing is what was discovered in the course of time: abusing women, children, men, and the old men and women whom they arrested randomly and without

any guilt. They expressed the freedom of rape, the freedom of nudity and the freedom of humiliation."

**Sheik Bagir Saad at the Hikma Mosque in Sadr City, a stronghold of Shiite Muslim militiamen who have confronted the occupation militarily, denounced U.S. and U.N. plans that he said call for increased involvement by the international body and an increased emphasis on military forces from a variety of countries.**

**"The new U.N. resolution calls for multinational forces, but we want to inform all the countries that we don't want their armies, whether Arab, Islamic or foreign armies, because we will look at any army coming to Iraq as an occupation, and they should not send their children into this trap," he said.**

The Baghdad residents who lined up to watch as U.S. soldiers clustered around their wrecked Humvees on Friday were clearly among the majority who have heeded the call of their sheiks. **No one was heard expressing concern for the soldiers who were bombed. Judging by their comments, the neighbors of Sayediyeh's middle-class apartments looked at the avenue and saw enemies in desert camouflage.**

Mohammed Ali Ahmed, 24, a worker who lives nearby, complained that the wounded U.S. soldiers were picked up and driven away for medical care by an Iraqi civilian ambulance that happened by. Iraqi ambulances are not for occupying troops, he declared.

**"They shouldn't have taken them in the ambulance. They should have left them there, left them to die," Ahmed said to a neighbor.**

**"That's not right," objected Aqil Kitab, 28, another worker who was standing next to him. "Have you ever been in the army? Even your enemy, when he is wounded, you have to treat him. Then you can interrogate him or put him in a prisoner-of-war camp. The ambulance driver did his job. It was the right thing to do."**

Ahmed conceded Kitab was probably right. But he predicted that such attacks would continue as long as U.S. forces remained in Iraq.

Ali Samir Salman, 18, who works in the Baghdad University student cafeteria, said U.S. troops frequently have come under attack while driving down the broad avenue.

**He said he has seen insurgents -- whom he called *fedayeen*, or those who give themselves for a cause -- gathering by the roadside with rocket-propelled grenades and AK-47 automatic rifles to launch such attacks.**

**Neither he nor others have denounced the attackers to Iraqi police or U.S. troops.** To the contrary, residents resent the U.S. convoys, he said, because the soldiers frequently shine brilliant lights into windows as they drive by and scan the roadsides for danger.

**The attack Friday was carried out by a car rigged with a bomb that swerved sideways and stopped as a convoy of five Humvees drove by, he said. The driver bolted and ran to a waiting car, in which he fled with three other men, Salman**

**said. The fourth U.S. vehicle to pass took the blast directly, he said, and a soldier manning a machine gun mounted on the roof was propelled high into the air.**

After crashing to the roadbed, the soldier pushed himself up and tried to stand leaning on his gun, then collapsed again, he said. After that, Salman recounted, the soldier lay still until the Iraqi ambulance crew took charge of him and drove away. Before long, he said, the Bradleys, the Humvees and the helicopters showed up, and other soldiers spilled out to line the roadside.

**"Look at that soldier. He is shaking," a boy shouted, pointing at a young U.S. soldier wearing yellow-tinted goggles.**

**"That's because he was with them in the convoy when the bomb went off," another boy said. "He was frightened. Let's talk to him, cool him down, so he can forget."**

The boys joked and tried to attract the soldier's attention with an attempt at English phrases. The soldier smiled faintly and talked back, correcting their pronunciation.

"Stay away from him, and don't point at the Humvees," an adult scolded. "I'm afraid they will not understand and they will think you are talking bad about them and they will get angry. Stop it."

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></b></p>
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## **Preachers Demand Military Join The Resistance**

6.12.04 By Edward Wong, New York Times

**Imams at several Sunni mosques in Baghdad delivered sermons beseeching former officers of the Iraqi Army to join the insurgency and drive out the American-led occupation forces.**

One such sermon took place at Abu Hanifa mosque in the Sunni-dominated neighborhood of Adhamiya, according to Agence France-Presse.

"Where is the military?" said Sheik Ahmed Hassan ai-Taha al-Samarrai. "They have indisputable experience, and their silence means they keep their knowledge to themselves"

**"The absence of combat experts from the battlefield is treason in all senses of the word," he added. "It's treason against God, the prophet and the nation the experts belong to."**

A resident of the Zaiyuna neighborhood in Baghdad, where many former officers live, reported hearing a similar sermon being broadcast from a Sunni mosque there.

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An Iraqi policeman walks through a police station which was destroyed in an explosion in Yusufiyah, Iraq June 11, 2004. **Resistance soldiers stormed the police station south of Baghdad, drove off the poorly armed police and blasted the station in the fourth such attack against Iraqi security installations over the last week, officials and witnesses said. The police called American forces for help, but soldiers did not show up until five hours later, Lt. Satpar Abdul-Reta told the Associated Press.** (AP Photo/Mohammed Uraibi)

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## 2nd Collaborator Official Killed In 2 Days

June 13, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq, AP

Another Iraqi official was assassinated in Baghdad. The resistance Sunday killed Kamal al-Jarah, the Education Ministry's cultural affairs officer. Authorities say the attackers ambushed the victim outside his home as he was leaving for the office.

The assassination is the second of an Iraqi collaborator official in as many days.

**Al-Jarah was primarily responsible for dealing with exchange programs and relations with foreign countries and UNESCO.**

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## US-Backed TV Employees Killed

June 14, 2004 Reuters

A driver and a technician from the Iraqi public television channel, Al-Iraqiya, have been shot dead near the border with Syria. An official at the station, who asked not to be named, says the pair disappeared on Friday as they prepared to return to Baghdad.

"The driver, Jawad Kassem Hamadi, and technician Abdel Karim Jassem went to Al-Qaim to install a relay station," he said. The official says a hospital in the area, which is 400 kilometres west of Baghdad, told the station it has received the men's bodies.

**The station is financed by the US-led coalition occupying Iraq.**

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

# **47% Of Students Feel Elections Useless In Changing Society**

12 June 2004 Charles Babington, Washington Post

"There is a downward trend in the perception that voting is a way to change society," the Hart analysis says.

"In March 2001, almost half [47 percent] of students felt that voting in elections for president was a way to bring about a lot of change in society." Only 35 percent now feel that way.

**(They have it right. Movements change things, not elections. Always have, always will. Elections reflect change, they don't bring it.)**

**What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to the E-mail address up top. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.**

## **Gen. Joseph Hoar On Iraq**

**Gen. Joseph Hoar, a former head of the Marine Corps, has remarked, "I believe we are absolutely on the brink of failure. We are looking into the abyss." Quoted by Chalmers Johnson 11 June 2004, Nation Institute / TomDispatch**

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