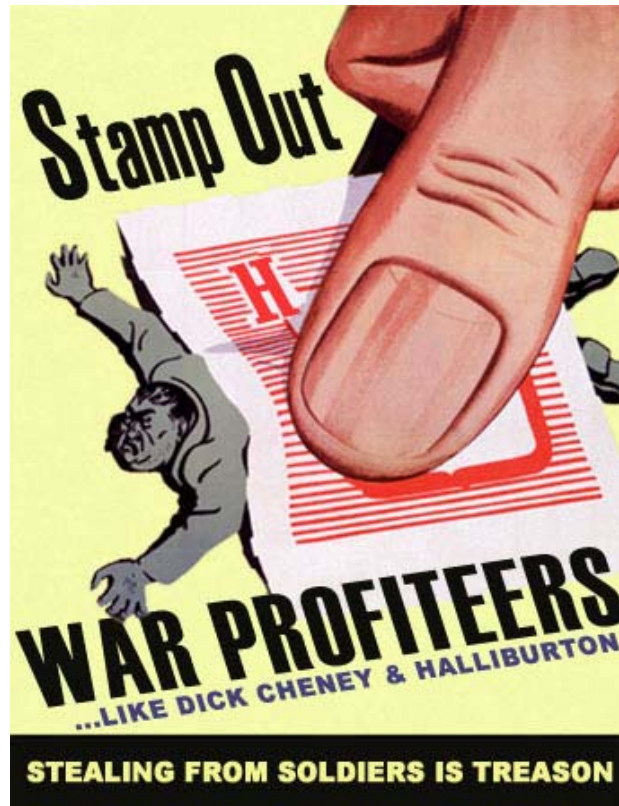


GI SPECIAL 2#B11



<http://homepage.mac.com/leperous/PhotoAlbum1.html>

BLAIR UNWILLING: REFUSES BUSH DEMAND FOR MORE IRAQ TROOPS; ANTI-WAR PRESSURE WINS

7.3.04 The New Zealand Herald

Tony Blair [known to the British as “Bush’s Poodle”] has shelved plans to send more than 3,000 British troops to Iraq to deal with the expected upsurge in violence after the hand-over of power to the interim Iraq authority.

The Government has delayed a response to a fresh US request for Britain to send more troops to fill gaps left by the withdrawal of soldiers by Spain.

British commanders are extremely reluctant to send British troops to more dangerous areas, such as Najaf, occupied by the Spanish forces. **(Unlike the brain-dead in U.S. command positions. The British officer corps, having been colonial occupiers for 400 years, know a lost Imperial war when they see one. They got an early lesson in 1776.**

U.S. commanders can't even remember the lessons of Vietnam. Where they live, the sky is a different color.)

Ministers are delaying a decision until a comprehensive plan for the withdrawal of coalition forces next year is produced at the end of this month.

Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, said: "Let's keep our fingers crossed that the new Iraqi Government is able to establish its moral, political and security authority more quickly than all of us might have anticipated. In which case fewer troops will be needed for less time."

One of the main reasons behind the change in policy is the acceptance that sending large scale reinforcements to Iraq would be highly unpopular in Britain.

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/>

Comment: Fucked-Up Letter Received:

TO: GI Special
From M

Screw the "flak jackets"! Bring the troops home! If they weren't over in someone else's country, murdering and torturing.....they wouldn't need any damned flak jackets!

REPLY:

That makes about as much sense as saying that if somebody has a job in a factory that makes tanks, they deserve to work 100 hours a week, get \$1 an hour, and get shot for not getting to work on time, because they're making nasty weapons of war.

Just so much of the fancy moralistic bullshit "intellectuals" love so well.

First, the idea that some 130,000 troops are up to their ass “murdering and torturing” is a lie. Sure, there are a few psychopaths who get off on killing civilians and torturing prisoners, but 99% of the troops are more outraged by that kind of behavior than civilians sitting safely on their butts at home writing stupid letters like this.

1st Lt. Justine Englehardt, commenting on the torture of Iraqi prisoners by military intel and MPs put it this way: **“A lot of Marines may get killed because of these idiots.”** (Quoted in **Traveling Soldier**: check it out at <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>)

Second, GI Special has indeed been hammering Bush, Rumsfeld and the rest of the soldier-killers in charge of this war for Empire for sending troops to their death without armor vests because it shows how the corporate elite who run the government in Washington don't really give a shit about the troops. If they did, it would never have happened.

People don't join the armed forces because they want some corrupt political scum in Washington to lie to them and send them off to die invading and occupying somebody else's country on behalf of the rich elite back home who buy and sell politicians like sacks of popcorn.

People join the armed forces because they are desperate for a career--the “poverty draft”--or because they really, truly want to do some good in the world, or some combination of both.

Democrats and Republicans politicians alike betrayed the troops in Iraq by passing out tons of bullshit about weapons of mass destruction that didn't exist, when everybody knows it's really about grabbing Iraq's oil and stuffing certain well-placed pockets with the loot while troops die.

As for the “democracy” crap, if there were any truth to that, all U.S. troops would have been gone from Iraq a long time ago. Polls done by Bush's own people show over and over that the overwhelming majority of Iraqis want U.S. troops out **now**. **They want their country back.**

Since the government in Washington won't let them have their country back, like any reasonable human beings would do, they have taken up arms and are fighting against a foreign occupation to get their country back. They are right to do so.

As a Marine said on the Fallujah resistance, “I don't begrudge them. We'd do the same thing if some foreign dudes rolled into San Diego and set up shop.”
(<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>)

As for the writers comment on Bringing The Troops Home, yes to that. Not another dollar, not another day, not another life. Immediately and unconditionally, all troops out of Iraq right now and back home.

Every politician opposing bringing the troops home now is the enemy of everyone serving in Iraq. Supporting any politician who wants you dead or maimed is lunacy.

Something else the writer has no clue about is that the most powerful force that can stop this war are the very troops this writer lies about and condemns. In Vietnam, the armed forces rebelled and that stopped the war. That's how they got to come home.

Iraqis and U.S. troops have a common enemy: the people who own and operate the U.S. government for their own private profit, regardless of how high the heaps of dead U.S. troops and Iraqis stack up.

Getting rid of them is the only war worth fighting.

T



Vietnam: They Stopped An Imperial War
(From <http://members.cox.net/gifightback/>)

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Total Heartbreaker:

Stop-Lossed Mandeville Soldier, 24, Killed On Way Home For His Birthday

July 02, 2004 By Paul Rioux. Staff writer, The Times-Picayune

A soldier on his way home to Mandeville from Iraq was killed Wednesday night when the truck he was in crashed north of the Iraq-Kuwait border.

Robert duSang, 24, a 1998 graduate of Mandeville High School, was expected home before his 25th birthday on July 22, relatives said.

"He was so excited; he couldn't wait to see his baby girl and hold his wife again," said duSang's sister, Jessie Lager, of Mandeville.

DuSang was a specialist in the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, stationed at Fort Polk. **He was in a convoy on his way home when the right front tire blew out and caused the 5-ton truck to flip over,** family members said they were told. He died at the scene. The accident injured four other soldiers, one critically, according to a press release from U.S. Central Command and family.

"When he enlisted, before he signed the papers, he said, 'I want to shoot big guns and blow things up,'" John Waters, one of duSang's cousins, said. "So they gave him a Howitzer and he liked it so much that he passed up promotions so he could keep shooting it."

When he enlisted, he signed up for a six-year commitment and had planned to re-enlist this year, relatives said.

He was deployed to Iraq in May 2003. He never said much about what he was doing in Iraq. **They knew he had been a guard at a checkpoint at one time. In e-mails and phone calls, he wanted to hear about his family. He said it was an escape from the war,** Lager said. **He was slated to return last May, but his tour was extended, family said.**

A year before he went to Iraq, he married his sweetheart, Brandy, in 2002.

On Thursday evening, relatives gathered at his mother's home near Mandeville, where a yellow ribbon was tied around the mailbox.

Relatives tried to comfort the widow, who was alone at duSang's mother's house Thursday morning when uniformed Army officers arrived to tell her the news. Brandy duSang was so devastated she couldn't speak when she called relatives to tell them what had happened, Lager said. No one has had the strength yet to tell the couple's 4-year-old daughter, Kimberly, who asks almost every day for her daddy.

She asks all the time, 'When's Daddy coming home? When's Daddy coming home?'" Lager said. "We haven't told her what happened yet. Not until her mom is strong enough to be mom again."

DuSang was the second local soldier to be killed in Iraq this week.

Army Spc. Jeremy Heines, 25, of New Orleans, died in a firefight June 25 in Iraq. He was killed when a rocket-propelled grenade punched through the windshield of his military vehicle.

MARINE DIES OF WOUNDS IN AL ANBAR PROVINCE

July 2, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release
Number: 04-07-03C

FALLUJAH, Iraq - A Marine assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force died of wounds received in action July 1 in the Al Anbar Province.

**WORST IMAGINABLE PLACE TO BE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



Fallujah. One US marine was killed in action and a second marine died from wounds received the previous day near Fallujah, the US military said.(AFP/USMC-HO/File)

MARINE KILLED IN AL ANBAR PROVINCE

July 2, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release
Number: 04-07-04C

FALLUJAH, Iraq - A Marine assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action today in the Al Anbar Province while conducting security and stability operations.

Orlando Marine Killed

July 1, 2004 Internet Broadcasting Systems

A 22-year-old Marine from Orlando, Fla., was killed in Iraq, according to Local 6 News.

Officials said the parents of Sgt. Kenneth Conde Jr. found out Thursday that their son had been killed in action.

Conde's platoon was based near **Fallujah**, where Marines have been involved in a deadly standoff with insurgents for months.

Conde's platoon, which is part of Mobile Assault Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, is scheduled to return home in September.

Memphis Marine Dead

7.2.04 MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)

A young Memphis Marine killed in Iraq is remembered as "the kind of guy you want your daughter to marry," said Rusty Wheelington, a minister speaking on behalf of the Creager family.

Lance Cpl. Tim Creager's family was told of his death Thursday.

Creager, a 2001 graduate of Craigmont High School, had been in Iraq since December. He attended The Citadel before enlisting with the Marines, Wheelington said. No details were given on how he died.

Wheelington said he visited with Creager shortly before he left for Iraq. "He was so excited about being part of the military - and if that's where they sent him, then that was fine," Wheelington said.

Creager is the fourth member of the military from Shelby County to die in Iraq. Army Spec. Ervin Caradine Jr., 33, was killed May 1. Marine Capt. Brent Morel, 27, was killed in April. Army Staff Sgt. Morgan D. Kennon, 23, died in November.

Local Soldier Killed; Made Bad Choice

July 2, 2004 WESH TV

A local soldier who was injured in Iraq and decided to continue fighting was killed in action Thursday.

WESH NewsChannel 2 profiled Sgt. Kenneth Conde Jr., 22, of Orlando back in April after he was shot in the shoulder during a gunbattle with insurgents.

Despite his wound, he chose to stay in Iraq and keep fighting. He was awarded a Purple Heart and interviewed by Oliver North on a cable news program.

Three Separate Rocket Attacks In Baghdad Hit Occupation Hotels



An Iraqi policeman inspects a rocket launcher placed in the trunk of a burnt van following an attack against the Sheraton Hotel in Baghdad.(AFP/Karim Sahib)

(Baghdad, Iraq-AP, July 2, 2004) & Al Bawaba

Several rockets were fired at a Baghdad hotel complex two hotel compounds used by Westerners, housing foreign reporters and businessmen, scoring a direct hit on the Sheraton Hotel and injuring up to four Iraqis, a US soldier and witnesses said.

One rocket fired from a van hit the Sheraton Hotel, but caused only minor damage. A second veered off and exploded in the parking lot of the Baghdad Hotel.

The U-S military says a third strike hit the front gate of a fundamentalist political party's headquarters in western Baghdad, blowing out windows and wounding a guard.

A minivan containing nine improvised rocket-launchers exploded midway through the attack, destroying the van, US troops said, according to *AFP*.

"The vehicle pulled up in range of the Sheraton Hotel and fired a series of rockets toward it," said a US army captain who would only give his name as Mayo.

"At some point during the attack evidently the ordnance on the vehicle exploded."



Two soldiers at burnt van following a rocket attack against the Sheraton Hotel in Baghdad.(AFP/Karim Sahib)

GJ Soldier Injured In Baquba

July 02, 2004 By DANIE HARRELSON. The Daily Sentinel

A 2002 Central High School graduate was wounded earlier this week in Iraq.

Pfc. Trevor McAninch, a member of the Army's 1st Infantry Division, 3rd Battalion, 263rd Brigade, suffered serious head and neck injuries when the Humvee he was riding in rolled near a U.S. Army base in the town of Baquba north of Baghdad.

His father, Randy McAninch of Grand Junction, received word of his son's injuries Tuesday night.

Randy McAninch said his son could move his fingers and toes but swelling around his neck was causing some pain.

Trevor McAninch arrived at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center early Thursday morning for further tests to determine the extent of his injuries. Randy McAninch said he would know more about his son's condition today.

Tuesday's phone conversation marked the first time in several weeks Randy McAninch heard his son's voice. The 20-year-old tried to assure his father he was OK.

"He said, 'Hi, Dad. It's me. I've been hurt, but I think I'm going to be all right,'" Randy McAninch said. "He didn't want me to worry."

Any other response would have been out of character. Trevor McAninch learned how to be mentally and physically tough long before boot camp. He learned it on the football field at Central High.

"He's very gifted athletically," Randy McAninch said. "He loves football."

The young man loved the game so much that he was supposed to play football for the University of Northern Colorado. He postponed his dream of playing college football to join the Army.

Trevor McAninch arrived in Iraq in February. His father, who last saw his son at Christmas, said his son took the news of his deployment in stride.

"He knew he had a job to do," Randy McAninch said. "He had trained for it and was ready to go."

The accident, Randy McAninch said, occurred when the driver of the Humvee apparently lost control of the vehicle as it turned a corner. The vehicle, which was moving through an area prone to ambushes, rolled 1½ times.

Trevor McAninch was a newspaper carrier for The Daily Sentinel for several years and won a trip to Ireland through a contest sponsored by Parade Magazine and The Daily Sentinel.

That was the beginning of the young man's trek around the world. He traveled to Australia as part of an all-star high school football team from Colorado.

He was stationed in Germany after boot camp. His father intended to visit him when he returned from Iraq.

Now it looks as if he may leave earlier than planned.

"This isn't the way I wanted to go over," Randy McAninch said. "We'll just have to see how he's doing."

Randy McAninch doesn't know what lies ahead for his son, but he is sure of one thing. "He's always finished what he's started," he said.

Talk Show Host Mildly Scratched; Gets Medal And Lots Of Publicity

July 2, 2004 BY KOMO Staff & News Services

SEATTLE - KVI radio talk show host Bryan Suits was wounded in Iraq while serving with his National Guard unit.

The second lieutenant with the Washington-based 81st Brigade called the Seattle station Friday and described how a mortar round landed close to him.

"Right as I turned around, an 81mm mortar hit 10 feet in front of me," Suits told KVI-AM. "I think I'm OK, but people are telling me I'm forgetting things that happened 5 minutes ago -- but I've been told that's normal."

He was knocked out by the explosion Thursday **and has gravel in his arm, a mild concussion, mild hearing loss and a Purple Heart medal. A major also was injured by shrapnel in the attack.**

He has kept in touch with the station with live updates. KOMO 1000 News' Carleen Johnson says colleagues **were extremely concerned when they heard he had been wounded. (Anybody else wounded can go fuck off.)**

British Mercenary Killed In Iraq; Formerly Part Of Northern Ireland Occupation Force

7.2.04 Halifax Today (UK)

A FORMER SAS reservist killed while working in Iraq had been due to return to his family in Halifax this weekend.

Julian Davies died when the unmarked four-wheel drive he was travelling in was ambushed by rebel gunmen in the northern city of Mosul.

The 39-year-old, who lived in Halifax with his wife, Joanne, and their six-year-old son, Matthew, was working as a security consultant when he was fatally wounded last Thursday.

The security consultant had been working for private regeneration company Global Risk Strategies since 2003, initially based in Afghanistan before moving to the Gulf. In Iraq, he helped in the collection of old banknotes and the distribution of fresh currency.

After leaving school in Wales, he gained a green beret with the Royal Marines Reservists while doing a four-year apprenticeship.

He joined the 2nd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment and met his wife, also a Para, while they were in Northern Ireland. He won the coveted maroon beret, before service in Belize.

The couple were married at Christ Church, Mount Pellon, in 1993. Mr Davies eventually joined the SAS reservists and rose to sergeant.

A spokeswoman for Global Risk Strategies, said: "He was held in high esteem by all his colleagues." **(And like all those sent to occupy somebody else's country, cordially loathed by the people of Northern Ireland, still occupied by the British. The Paras, a special unit involved in routine torture of Irish Catholics, are hated most of all. There will be parties when this news reaches them.)**

Ukrainian Sgt. Committed Suicide In Iraq

07/02/2004 PRAVDA.Ru

22-year-old Ukrainian sergeant Roman Genzersky shot himself in the head from the machine-gun at the base of Ukrainian forces in Al-Kut airport.

According to ICTV quoting Ukrainian Defense Minister Vyachesla Bolotnyuk, the sergeant signed the contract for serving in Iraq in January, 2002.

During the service in Iraq, Roman Genzersky did assignments in the base of the Ukrainian forces, and did not patrol or guard important objects.

He previously submitted a letter to his superiors that he wanted to stay in Iraq for the second term with the Ukrainian unit in Iraq.

(There's more to this one---wonder what?)

TROOP NEWS

Murderous Clowns In Command Don't Get It; What Drives Troops Insane Is The Not-Knowing

(Comment: In the last Imperial war of occupation, Vietnam, you served in-country exactly one year, and not one day more.

You knew and counted the days, and lots of troops who were short could hide out the last week or two. Everybody helped out; nobody wanted to see somebody short not make it out, unless it was the case of a total asshole.

In this war, these deadly fucks in command set down no markers at all. As far as they're concerned, troops can stay fucking forever. 10 months? A year? 14 months? Sixteen months? Who the fuck knows? The only thing you know for sure is you get to come home if you're dead, or maimed for life.

That's impossible to deal with. Try keeping sane against that horseshit. No wonder some troops cut off their trigger fingers. Command is begging for general rebellion, like happened in Vietnam. If it comes, and their dead bodies start

stacking up like so many sacks of shit, they will only have gotten what they deserve, and they will be 100% responsible for driving the troops beyond the point that any human being can take.

It has to stop. Now. T)

Jul. 01, 2004 By Lisa M. Krieger and Esther Landhuis, Mercury News & By Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service & By ANAHAD O'CONNOR, NY Times

As soldiers come home from Iraq and Afghanistan, many carry with them deep but invisible wounds -- the psychological injuries of war -- that they are reluctant to reveal to comrades, commanders or medical staff, according to the military's first comprehensive assessment of the mental health of combatants.

The growing uncertainty of how long soldiers will be in Iraq adds to the problem.

Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. (Dr.) James Peake noted to reporters high quality training, Peake noted, can help prepare service members for the realities of combat.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker, Peake pointed out, is a special operations combat veteran who's focused on "the issue of tough, realistic training" across the force. To illustrate, Peake described his recent visit to a medical training site in San Antonio.

"We're putting in a live-fire range for convoys," Peake explained, "so that the medics and the combat service supporters" get a more realistic feel for wartime operations.

"There is a major concern about how Guard and Reserve troops are going to fare, particularly now that their tours are being extended."

Wounded Soldier Home From Iraq

July 01, 2004 By Alaia Gooden, Galveston County Daily News

TEXAS CITY — Holding his 7-week-old daughter, Faith, and playing with his 5-year-old daughter, Lauren, 1st Lt. Christopher Ayres looked more like a proud father than an injured Marine.

But then the scars from the skin grafts become more visible, as do the arm crutches resting against the sofa and the dressing that covers up a massive leg wound.

Ayres is a 1989 Dickinson High School graduate. He returned to Texas City on Tuesday after spending 74 days in the hospital and undergoing more than 20 surgeries.

"A month ago, I was still bed-ridden and in a wheelchair, but then I moved to a walker, and now I have walking crutches," said Ayres.

While looking for insurgents in Fallujah, Iraq, Iraqi soldiers against the occupation attacked Ayres' unit. A blast from a rocket-propelled grenade nearly blew his leg off, while his arms, legs and back were severely burned.

Ayres said that after he was hit, he worried that his wife and family would have to see the injuries played over again on television.

Two things kept Ayres going as he slipped in and out of consciousness. "I just kept praying and asking God to please let me go back to see my wife and my daughter," he said.

Whether others would openly admit it, Ayres, a Marine since 1989, said lying injured in Fallujah, he was afraid.

"Hell yeah, I was scared," he said. "I was scared for my Marines and scared that they would die because we were overtaken."

But never did the idea that he wouldn't survive enter his mind, said Ayres.

"I kept thinking about what we could do to get out of there," he said.

Meanwhile, Renee Ayres was back in Texas pregnant with her second child. Her heart stopped April 13 when she got a call from DADD — Dependent Assistance During Deployment, a support network within the Marines.

"I just starting crying and asking them what happened to him (Chris)," she said. "I kept having dreams that something happened to him. It was scary. He's my best friend."

From DADD's description, Renee Ayres said her husband's injuries didn't sound that bad. But when she got the call from the hospital in Germany, she said she knew that the injuries were more severe than she had originally thought.

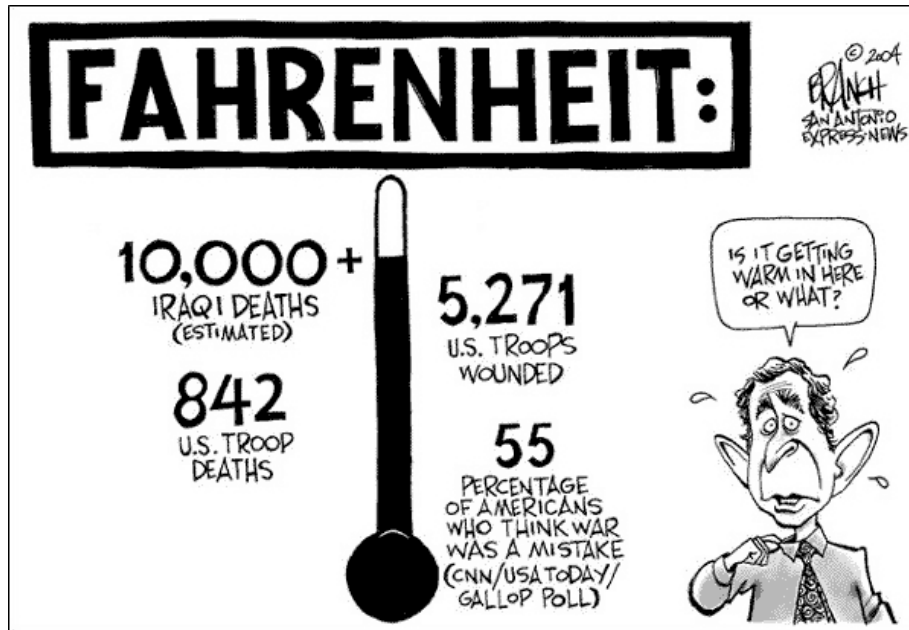
Once Ayres arrived at the Brooks Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Renee spent nights by her husband's bedside. Worried about his safety, she gave birth prematurely to their daughter, Faith, almost a month after he came back to this country.

Now the family of four is back together and looking forward to the future, but not without strong feelings about the war and people's reaction.

"It's easy to do the bad things in life. Bitchin' is fine, but come up with a solution. Bush didn't have a manual to run the wasp's nest he stepped into."

Ayres will remain in Texas City until the end of next month. He not only will be a part of the city's Fourth of July parade, but was featured on ABC's "Nightline."

"I feel that I'm just blessed that I got to come home," said Ayres. "Some never got the chance to see their families at all."



De Pere Sergeant Earns Purple Heart

July 02, 2004 By Nathan Phelps, Green Bay Press Gazette

Sgt. Michael Libby didn't hear the 60 mm mortar shell on its way in.

It was Memorial Day when shrapnel, rocks and debris from the exploding round hit the De Pere resident in the back as he was getting into a Humvee.

"You could feel the air sucked away from you and everything hitting my back," he said Thursday. "There was a grayish-brown cloud of smoke and then I could feel the pain."

The round hit about 10 feet behind him. He was later told you can't hear that type of mortar on its way in.

After being hit, Libby said he picked himself up and made a dash for a cement structure. "My injuries went from my ankles up to the back of my head," he said.

Several shells fell on the base in the same attack, Libby was struck by the first.

Libby, a 33-year-old Army reservist serving with the 330th Military Police Detachment in Mosul, Iraq, was awarded the Purple Heart on June 12. His unit has been in Iraq since March.

Doctors told him some of the shrapnel and debris was left in and would eventually work its way out of his body. A piece of metal came out of his earlobe Wednesday.

"It finally just popped out on its own," he said. "I was very fortunate, I have some of the chunks of shrapnel that hit elsewhere ... and some of those things are larger than a quarter and jagged. If they'd hit me, I wouldn't even be here."

"If you have a mother and all she see is bad on the news, she's worried to death," the Maine native said. "But that's not the whole story."

Libby says he hopes in the wake of the handover of sovereignty Monday that Iraq will be a different place.

Before heading back to Iraq, Libby paid his respects to one of his friends from the unit.

Sgt. Charles Kiser of Cleveland who was killed near Mosul last week.

His memorial service was Thursday in Sheboygan.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Madhi Resistance Army Still Rules In Najaf; Sadr "More Popular Than Ever"

01 July 2004 By Edward Wong New York Times

In the southern holy city of Najaf, militiamen loyal to the firebrand cleric Moktada al-Sadr agreed on Wednesday to trade 16 police officers they had captured this week for two insurgents imprisoned by the government, the police chief, Brig. Gen. Ghalib al-Jazaeri, said.

Nine police officers still remain in the hands of the militia, the Mahdi Army. General Jazaeri said some of the officers had been seized from their homes and some captured while on duty.

Mr. Sadr's forces clearly remain defiant of both the Iraqi government and the American military, despite recent gestures made by Mr. Sadr that he wants to get involved in mainstream politics. American commanders have dropped the promise they made in April to kill or capture the cleric.

Mr. Sadr is more popular than ever, having emerged as a folk hero during the revolt he led against the occupation.

The Mahdi Army also returned a police car that it had seized with police officers.

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

OCCUPATION REPORT

Malice In Blunderland

June 29, 2004 By Robert Fisk, The Star, Beirut

So, in the end, America's enemies set the date.

The handover of "full sovereignty" was secretly brought forward so that the ex-CIA intelligence officer who is now premier of Iraq could avoid another bloody offensive by America's enemies.

What was supposed to be the most important date in Iraq's modern history was changed - like a birthday party, because it might rain on Wednesday.

Pitiful is the word that comes to mind.

Here we were, handing "full sovereignty" to the people of Iraq - "full", of course, providing we forget the 160 000 foreign soldiers whom Prime Minister Iyad Allawi has apparently asked to stay on in Iraq, "full" providing we forget the 3 000 US diplomats in Baghdad who will constitute the largest US embassy in the world.

And we never even told the Iraqi people we had changed the date.

Few, save of course for the Iraqis, understood the cruellest paradox of the event.

For it was the new Iraqi Foreign Minister - should we not put his title, too, into quotation marks? - who chose to leak "bringing forward" of "sovereignty in Iraq" at the Nato summit in Turkey.

Thus was this date in modern Iraqi history announced not in Baghdad but in the capital of the former Ottoman empire which once ruled Iraq.

Alice in Wonderland could not have improved on this. The looking glass reflects all the way from Baghdad to Washington.

Power was ritually handed over in legal documents. The new government was sworn in on the Qur'an. US pro-consul Paul Bremer formally shook hands with the ex CIA man who is now prime minister and boarded his C130 home.

It had already been made clear that Allawi was pondering martial law, the sine qua non of every Arab dictatorship - this time to be imposed on an Arab state, heaven spare us, by a Western army led by an avowedly Christian government.

Who was the last man to impose martial law on Iraqis? Wasn't it Saddam?

GET SOME TRUTH: CHECK OUT THE NEW 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/>

Corporation Holding Workers Prisoner In Iraq; They Quit But Can't Leave

June 30 By V P RAGHU, News Today, Chennai

With the images of Abu Ghraib prison abuse by American soldiers in Iraq fresh in the minds of people, another kind of abuse of power against Indians by a Jordan-based defence catering group working in a refugee camp in Fallujah in Iraq has come to light.

The refugee camp near Baghdad shot into focus when families of employees detained there started knocking at every possible door including that of India's President Abdul Kalam to seek help for their release.

At least 18 Indians, including two Tamilians - one from Chennai and one from Trichy, are now kept in Fallujah camp from where they are not being allowed to come out by their employer Daoud & Partners Catering company, which oversees all the catering and allied services for the military and Ministry of Health in Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

'My brother was recruited for a job in Jordan by an agency in Mumbai and finally it seems he ended up cooking for American soldiers in Fallujah camp. My brother, Antonio Maximilian, joined the firm on 29 March this year and resigned on 23 April. He was working as a pastry chef in the company,' says Princy Fernando, sister of Antonio, who has been running from pillar to post to get her brother 'released' from the war-devastated country.

'There are 18 Indian workers, including my brother, who resigned from the job months ago. They are not allowed to leave the country and are kept in the camp without job and salary. Of the 18, one seems to have managed to get help from somebody in the camp and has been sending e-mails to various embassies seeking help. But nobody has been willing to come forward for the last two months,' she says.

Another man from Tamilnadu is V Remesh Kumar, who joined the company in October last year and resigned in April this year.

Remesh Kumar, son of an advocate, is from Trichy. Other Indians now stranded in Fallujah camp are Rupesh B Salgaonker, AR Sultan, Mohammed Jaleel, A Kader Budan, Abdul Jaleel, Nazeer Hussain, Vincent Gomes, Jaimon R Pillai, Asif A Qureshi, Javed U Qureshi, Micheal Gomes, AM Asif, Patrick D'Souza, Miresch Vaingankar, Rajesh G Fadte and Malick S Kumar.

'All these men are held in the camp against their wish and are undergoing enormous mental torture,' says Princy Fernando. Apparently, all of them were taken from Jordan to Iraq on transit visa by the company, she added.

The Daoud & Partners, which is now holding the documents of Indian workers and refusing to let them go out of the camp, is a company in the Gulf that has strong links with American defence system, particularly with the American Corp of Engineers involved in road construction in US army bases in the Gulf.

MORE:

DMK Chief Writes To MEA On Indians Stranded In Iraq

JULY 02, 2004 Times Internet Limited

CHENNAI: DMK President M Karunanidhi on Friday sought the immediate intervention of the External affairs Minister Natwar Singh, to ensure the safe return of 18 Indians including three from Tamil Nadu, who have been stranded now in Fallujah in Iraq.

In a letter to Singh, the DMK chief said all these people were originally promised employment in Jordan with their passports stamped "for employment in Jordan."

"But having been taken to Jordan, they were not permitted to work there and were transported to Iraq."

"Now all the 18 Indians are jobless, and are suffering from want of basic requirements like food," Karunanidhi said.

(Bush currently is holding +130,000 more prisoners in Iraq who can't leave. Take a look in the mirror.)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Iowa Soldier Wounded

July 02, 2004 The Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier, Waterloo & Cedar Falls, Iowa

DUBUQUE (AP) One Iowa soldier has been injured in Afghanistan.

Pfc. Jeremy Kretz, 20, of Dubuque, was injured by an explosion early Sunday.

Kretz, a member of the Iowa Army National Guard's Task Force 168, suffered face lacerations, an injured eardrum and a concussion while on a "mission," according to his mother, Jamie Kretz.

Kretz was taken to a Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, hospital.

She said she was notified of Jeremy's wounds by an officer late Sunday night.

"I was in disbelief and shock," she said. "I thought it was a prank."

Several days later, she received another phone call, at 2:30 a.m., this time from Jeremy. "He called me to reassure me that he was all right," she said. "I was glad to hear from him. We're very thankful that he is OK. He is a very focused person, so he is doing fine."

Jeremy Kretz is one of about 30 members of the 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry, which joined the 1/168th Infantry when it was activated earlier this year. About 700 soldiers are serving with the unit, which is called Task Force 168.

Jamie Kretz said Jeremy couldn't tell her much about the deployment. "He said it was confidential and I respect that," she said.

After training in Fort Hood, the unit arrived in Afghanistan in late May. A 2002 graduate of Dubuque Senior High School, Kretz completed basic training and advanced infantry training last summer.

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