

GI SPECIAL 2#B13

July 4 Fireworks



Tanker blaze after an American-escorted convoy was attacked by insurgents on the highway west of Baghdad July 4. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

MY BOY WAS A PIECE OF MEAT Dead Soldier's Mom Hits Out

Jun 30 2004 By Laurie Hanna, Telegraph, United Kingdom

THE mum of a young soldier killed in Iraq said yesterday he was treated as "just a bit of meat".

Rose Gentle said Gordon, 19, died in a "war over oil".

Gordon, who joined the Royal Highland Fusiliers three weeks ago, was killed on Monday by a terrorist bomb.

Rose, 40, of Glasgow, said: "Why don't Tony Blair and (Defence Secretary) Geoff Hoon send their own families to Iraq? "My son was just a bit of meat to them, just a number.

"They don't care about him - all they are worried about is the next election. This isn't our war. My son has died in their war over oil and they haven't even taken the trouble of picking up the phone and saying they're sorry."

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/qi-special/>

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Wisconsin Army Reservist Dies

07/03/2004 AP

Rhineland, Wis. -- A Rhineland Army reservist has died from wounds suffered in Iraq in an attack that killed another Wisconsin reservist, police said.

Staff Sgt. Stephen G. Martin, 39, died Friday at Walter Reed Army Medical Center after life supports were discontinued, according to a press release from the Rhineland Police Department. He had been flown to Washington, D.C., Wednesday from a medical facility in Germany.

Martin, a member of the Sheboygan-based Army Reserve 330th Military Police Detachment, suffered severe head and abdominal injuries when a truck bomb exploded June 24 near his checkpoint outside a U.S. military compound at Mosul.

West Point Tourist Wounded; Three Washington Soldiers Hit

Jul 04, 2004 By Associated Press

Three soldiers from Eastern Washington were wounded in separate attacks this past week.

One was injured while accompanying a major from the West Point Military Academy who was touring Iraq to gather information to help train new lieutenants in the United States. The two men had just returned to the base and were heading inside for lunch when the mortar exploded.

The major was injured by shrapnel to his hip, chest, neck and face, Box said.

Earlier this week in Central Iraq, two soldiers from the Army Reserves 737th Transportation Company were wounded when their convoy struck a string of roadside explosives.

Staff Sgt. Richard David Peters of Yakima and Spc. Joseph Ballard of Pasco were injured while traveling in a convoy in central Iraq between two camps about 235 miles apart.

Bittner said the convoy hit a "daisy chain" of so-called improvised explosive devices, each one triggering the next. He praised several soldiers for their quick action, noting that one man tore the roof off a damaged truck to get to the civilian driver.

Both men were flown by helicopter to the local combat support hospital.

Ballard, a 1997 graduate of East Valley High School, is a truck driver with the 737th and is expected to return to his unit as soon as he can be picked up, Bittner said.

Peters, taken to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, was scheduled to undergo surgery to repair damage to the sinuses in his forehead. He's expected to return to Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma in a few weeks to complete his recovery.

Peters, a father of two, is a 17-year Army veteran. He's spent eight years in active service and the rest in the Reserves.

Soldier On Way Home Seriously Injured; Parents Flying To Germany

Jul 4, 2004 Joan Ransberry, Staff Writer, York Region Newspaper Group

A Stouffville resident serving with the United States military has been injured in Iraq. Private Adam Smith, 20, is in serious condition in hospital in Germany, after the artillery truck in which he was riding rolled over Thursday.

Pte. Smith's parents, Glen and Judy Smith, are making arrangements to fly to Germany to be with their only child.

Pte. Smith sustained a broken pelvis, femur and ankle.

Pte. Smith was one of was one of three soldiers riding in the back of a military vehicle at the time of the accident. It was part of a convoy making its way to Kuwait.

"He was heading home," Mrs. Smith said.

"They were leaving Iraq. The truck blew a front tire and rolled. While the four-ton truck was rolling, a large artillery gun, which was being towed by the truck, struck him," Mrs. Smith said.

Pte. Smith was transported to a hospital in Kuwait for emergency surgery Thursday evening and then transferred to a military hospital in Germany for more surgery. A plan is in the works to airlift the soldier to a hospital in Washington.

The 20-year old was serving in Al Kut, southeast of Baghdad on the Tigris River. He graduated from Stouffville District Secondary School in 2003 and left Stouffville last September to take basic military training at Fort Sil in Oklahoma.



A U.S. Army 1st Cavalry soldier, left, watches Iraqi National Guard soldiers conduct a weapons raid on a home in Baghdad July 3, 2004. **Note the Iraqi who hides his face with a scarf and then covers it with his hand. Could it be these new occupation collaborators fear the resistance?. Duh.** (AP Photo/Jim MacMillan)

Company Boss Says Troop Dispatch Killed Beheaded Korean

July 1 Agence France-Presse

The employer of a South Korean hostage beheaded in Iraq said that Kim Sun-II's captors would have freed him but changed their minds when Seoul announced it was sending more troops to the country.

Kim Chun-Ho, president of Cana General Trading Co., a Jordan-based South Korean supplier for the US military, said Thursday he was negotiating with the kidnappers through third parties including a lawyer until June 18, the day South Korea said it was sending 3,000 additional troops to Iraq.

"Then things went wrong all of a sudden. I was told by the Iraqi lawyer that things were getting worse, and that it appeared to be related to the troops dispatch," he said.

Two days later, on June 20, Islamic militants said they would kill the 33-year-old interpreter unless Seoul reversed the decision to send troops. Kim Sun-Il's body was found dumped on a road outside Baghdad on June 22 after Seoul rejected the ultimatum.

TROOP NEWS

Sanchez Withdrawing From Iraq

July 02, 2004 By Patrick O'Driscoll, USA Today

Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez stepped down as the top US commander in Iraq to be replaced by a four-star general as he returns to his old job as a US commander in Germany.

Sanchez will remain in Iraq for another week to ensure a smooth transfer of authority, said US Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, deputy director for the multinational contingent, who attended the event.

"I depart with great optimism," he told an audience that included Iraq's Defence Minister Hazem al-Shaalan and Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari.

Eternal War; New Order Of Battle

July 05, 2004 By Jim Tice, Army Times staff writer & By Matthew Cox and Vince Crawley, Army Times staff writers.

Don't count on a reduction in the U.S. troop commitment to Operation Iraqi Freedom anytime soon.

Army leaders responsible for strategic planning and the redesign of combat formations operate on the assumption that troop levels will be maintained until at least 2006 and the OIF IV force rotation.

A June 20 accounting of deployed forces worldwide shows 141,000 soldiers serve in the Iraqi war theater, and another 13,500 in Afghanistan.

In all, 311,000 of nearly 1.1 million active Army, National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers serve overseas, including 165,000 on unaccompanied tours.

Those numbers could grow. Gen. George Casey, soon to leave his post as vice chief of staff to assume command of post-occupation forces in Iraq, told Congress on June 24 that **Central Command is making contingency plans to send up to five additional brigades to the Iraqi war theater.**

The Reserve commitment also is substantial, with 25 of the National Guard's 46 enhanced battalions (55 percent) serving overseas.

The plan is to retain 12-month tours in Iraq and Afghanistan until at least 2006, with this tentative deployment lineup:

- 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division from Fort Lewis, Wash., the second of a planned six Stryker Brigade Combat Teams, is slated to deploy in October. The unit's 4,000 soldiers will replace the first SBCT, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, which arrived in theater last fall.
- 39th Infantry Brigade, Arkansas National Guard, currently is deployed to Iraq.
- 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division from Korea, is to replace the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division in Iraq in the September/October timeframe.

An obvious candidate for this spring rotation is the 3rd Infantry Division and its four brigade combat teams reorganized as units of action.

Guard units slated for service in OIF III include the 256th Infantry Brigade from Louisiana, the 116th Cavalry Brigade from Idaho, the 278th Cavalry Regiment from Tennessee and the 42nd Infantry Division headquarters from New York.

The Marine Corps force of 25,000 troops in Iraq is slated to rotate home this fall after seven months in country, when it will be replaced for the second half of OIF II by a force of about the same size, also likely for a seven-month tour.

Rotations in Afghanistan operate on a different schedule and involve far fewer troops and units than are in Iraq.

Transition from OEF V to OEF VI will occur next spring for most forces. Units for OEF VI have not been identified, but officials expect they will include a division headquarters and three infantry brigades.

The likely moves until that transition:

- The 25th Infantry Division headquarters and its 3rd Brigade will rotate in April.
- The 45th Infantry Brigade, Oklahoma National Guard, is slated to end its tour in a few weeks.
- The 76th Infantry Brigade, Indiana National Guard, will replace the 45th Infantry.

Right now the most prepared units that could be tapped are the 3rd Infantry Division and the 82nd Airborne Division, the planner said.

3rd ID Less Than Thrilled To Go Back To The Slaughterhouse

July 02, 2004 By Robert Burns, Associated Press

Part or all of every Army division has done duty in Iraq. But the 3rd Infantry will be the first to do an encore.

The soldiers of Wood's 2-7th Infantry face the added stress of knowing they soon will be back in an Iraq where soldiers are killed and wounded virtually every day in a brutal insurgency.

"I knew we would go back, but I didn't think so soon," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Lee Davis, a medic.

"I think it's going to be more stressful this time," than the eight months the 3rd Infantry spent in Iraq from the outset of the war in March 2003 to August 2003, said 1st Lt. Matt Temple, the 2-7 Infantry's chaplain.

The war has put such a strain on the Army that it had to break a promise to some units this spring that they would return home after one year in Iraq.

Says Capt. Diego Tavares, the 2-7th Infantry's intelligence officer: "That's going through a lot of guys' heads."

Former Basketball Star Faces Life After Losing Hand

7/3/2004 WASHINGTON (AP)

Danielle Green was a slasher, the kind of player who would blow by opponents with a quick first step and a few hard dribbles with her dominant left hand. "She'd kind of glide on the court," remembers Julie Henderson, a teammate at Notre Dame.

But when her college basketball career ended, she tried out for the WNBA's Detroit Shock and didn't make the final cut. So she joined the Army, and the Army sent her to Iraq.

On May 25, Danielle Green was sitting behind a stack of sandbags in Baghdad when a rocket-propelled grenade round whooshed past her head. Green grabbed her M-16, whirled around to return fire and was knocked off her feet by another round exploding nearby.

As she lay twisted behind the sandbag wall, she could see blood flowing from her leg. She couldn't feel her left arm. She thought she might be dying. "I said, 'Oh God, I'm only 27 years old. I haven't done enough in life yet,'" she recalled.

Four fellow soldiers lifted her from the roof. It wasn't until a few hours later that she allowed herself to cry. But she quickly composed herself, determined to stay calm.

She called Willie Byrd, her husband of barely a month, in Chicago.

"I want you to be strong," she said. "I'm alive, but I've lost my left hand."

Today, Green sits in front of a computer screen at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, two thin wires hooked near the smooth stump below her elbow, where her left arm now ends. She flexes her remaining muscles, practicing motions that will help her use her new prosthetic hand and wrist.

She practices everyday tasks like writing with her right hand during therapy and learns how to use what remains of her left arm. She wears her wedding and engagement rings, recovered by fellow soldiers from her severed hand, on her right ring finger.

"I used to dribble only a little bit with my right hand," she says. "I called my coach recently and said, 'All those years you told me to use my right, well, now I have to.'"

That she should have a basketball player's mentality in dealing with her injury is not surprising.

For her, basketball has always been more than a game. It was a way to escape a tough childhood on Chicago's South Side.

Green realized early that a basketball scholarship was a way out. By the time she was a Roosevelt High School senior, the 5-foot-7 Green averaged 27 points per game and was named to the high school All-America team.

She played on teams that went to the round of 16 in the NCAA tournament three times. At guard and small forward, she averaged 9.5 points and 4.5 rebounds per game in 2000, her last year. Her teammates called her "D. Smooth." All told, she scored more than 1,000 points.

Coaching, though, was not enough for Green. "I always had a soft spot in my heart for the Army," she says, and had served in the junior ROTC while in high school, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel. In October 2002, she enlisted.

In Iraq, she served with the 571st Military Police Company. **Her service, she says, was somewhat disillusioning. Much of the military police work she did, like escorting high-ranking officers, wasn't exciting.**

Baghdad was brutally hot, and many of the residents were hostile. "I was just waiting around for someone to attack me," she said. "I couldn't stand it."

In April, while home on leave, she married Byrd in Las Vegas. Then she returned to Baghdad, where her unit was assigned to protect police stations, favorite targets of insurgent fighters, after an outbreak of heavy fighting in the spring in Fallujah.

She was sitting on the roof of a police station on May 25 when the rocket fire began.

Doctors have performed six surgeries on her arm, shaving down the bone and grafting skin to form the stump. A long scar creeps across her thigh where shrapnel raked across her skin. A small wound on her cheek is healing.

She'll likely be at Walter Reed for several more weeks as she learns how to use her prosthetic hand. Using electric nodes attached to her arm, the hand will allow her to grasp objects and perform other basic tasks. Green has been granted a medical retirement and plans to return with Byrd to Chicago. She hopes to go to graduate school to earn a degree in school counseling.

Green and Byrd don't expect her injury will dramatically change their everyday lives. With her prosthetic, she will be able to pick up objects, move her wrist, and even drive a car. She'll stay active, learn to play other sports, like tennis and golf, without that left hand that handled the basketball so well.

She does wonder how people will react when they see the stump where her hand once was.

"You want things to be the same," she said, "but you don't know if people will look at you differently."

Survey Reveals Guard Members' Fear Of Reporting Sexual Abuse

July 02, 2004 By Nicole Gaudiano, Army Times staff writer

About 20 percent of respondents to a survey of Minnesota National Guard members say they fear retaliation for reporting sexual harassment or discrimination.

Maj. Gen. Larry W. Shellito, the adjutant general, ordered the survey after a state investigative report released in May accused his predecessor, retired Maj. Gen. Eugene Andreotti, of giving unwanted backrubs, invading women's personal space, making sexual overtures and telling off-color jokes.

Of the results shown, the "fear of retaliation" responses were of "special concern," the report said.

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Brass Panicked By Talking Coke Cans

July 02, 2004 By Ellen Simon, Associated Press

NEW YORK — There's a new security threat at some of the nation's military bases — and it looks uncannily like a can of Coke.

Specially rigged Coke cans, part of a summer promotion, contain cell phones and global positioning chips. That has officials at some installations worried the cans could be used to eavesdrop, and they are instituting protective measures.

Coca-Cola Co. says such concerns are nothing but fizz.

Winners activate it by pushing the button, which can only call Coke's prize center, he said. Data from the GPS device can only be received by Coke's prize center. Prizes include cash, a home entertainment center and an SUV.

"It cannot be an eavesdropping device," said Mart Martin, a Coca-Cola spokesman.

Nonetheless, military bases, including the U.S. Army Armor Center at Fort Knox, Ky., are asking soldiers to examine their Coke cans before bringing them in to classified meetings.

"We're asking people to open the cans and not bring it in if there's a GPS in it," said Master Sgt. Jerry Meredith, a Fort Knox spokesman. "It's not like we're examining cans at the store. It's a pretty commonsense thing."

Paul Saffo, research director at The Institute for the Future, a technology research firm, compared the concern about the Coke cans to when the Central Intelligence Agency banned Furbies, the stuffed toys that could repeat phrases.

"There's things generals should stay up late at night worrying about," he said. "A talking Coke can isn't one of them."

Asked if Coke would curtail the promotional campaign because of the security issues raised, Martin said, "No. There's no reason to."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

No Oil For Blood: Resistance Cuts Strategic Oil Pipeline

Jul 4, 2004 FALLUJA, Iraq (Reuters)

Saboteurs attacked the oil pipeline linking Iraq's northern and southern oil fields on Sunday, witnesses and police said.

Columns of smoke were rising hundreds of meters from a section of the strategic pipeline near the Hawijat al-Fallujah area, around 80 km southwest of Baghdad.

PISSING IN THE WIND



An Iraqi fireman tries in vain to put out a tanker blaze after an American-escorted convoy was attacked on the highway west of Baghdad July 4, (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

OCCUPATION REPORT

“Shoot-Me Cars”

July 2, 2004 by Sheila Provencher, Christian Peacemaker Team

Security contractors drive around in armored SUV's that Iraqis jokingly call "shoot-me-cars" because they actually increase one's chance of getting attacked.

Slaves For US Contractors: "We Bought You," Boss Says; Foreign Laborers Treated Like Shit While Bush Buddies Get Billions

July 1, 2004 By Ariana Eunjung Cha, Washington Post Staff Writer

KOLLAM, India -- The war in Iraq has been a windfall for Kellogg Brown & Root Inc., the company that has a multibillion-dollar contract to provide support services for U.S. troops. Its profits have come thanks to the hard work of people like Dharmapalan Ajayakumar, who until last month served as a kitchen helper at a military base.

But Ajayakumar, 29, a former carpenter's assistant from this coastal town, was not there by choice.

He said he was tricked into going to Iraq by a recruiting agent who told him the job was in Kuwait. Moreover, he said, the company skimmed on expenses by not providing him and other workers with adequate drinking water, food, health care or security for part of their time in the war zone.

"I cursed my fate -- not having a feeling my life was secure, knowing could not go back, and being treated like a kind of animal," said Ajayakumar, who worked for less than \$7 a day.

Working alongside Americans trying to rebuild Iraq are an estimated tens of thousands of foreign workers without whom the reconstruction could not function. Many toil for wages that are one-tenth -- or less -- of what U.S. workers might demand, saving millions of taxpayer dollars.

India is conducting an investigation into the dining service workers' allegations. The State Department said it received a request from India for assistance and has passed it along to the Defense Department. **A spokeswoman for the Army, which manages the KBR contract, said the responsibility for the investigation rests with the company. (Passing the buck, as usual. What the fuck does "managing the contract" mean if the Army has nothing to do with managing the contract?)**

The vast difference in the recruiting, compensation, accommodations and protection of some foreigners versus their American counterparts is raising **uncomfortable questions about how companies calculate the value of a life in Iraq.**

South Korean engineers working on Iraq's power grid have complained they did not get the flak jackets and helmets issued to U.S. co-workers. Some Filipino cleaners and other support workers have said they were given others' spoiled food to eat. And some of the Indian workers said they were brought in on buses with only gauze curtains to hide them from insurgents while many other contractors come into the country on chartered planes or in convoys with military escorts.

"They were working under threat and fear of death," said S. Sreejith, superintendent of police for Kollam, where the workers' complaints were first filed. **American companies "are making money off of cheating our people."**

The Indian state of Kerala where Ajayakumar grew up is most famous for being the center of the international spice trade in the 16th century. Today, it's known for its export of another important commodity: manpower.

Ajayakumar was thrilled when a recruiting agent came to him in June 2003 and offered to "sell" him a two-year work visa **in Kuwait** for a catering company job that would pay \$200 a month -- five times what he was making at the carpenter's shop. **He gladly paid the agent's \$1,800 fee, borrowing from local loan sharks, calculating that he would still make out with significant profits.**

In late July, Ajayakumar boarded a train for Mumbai along with several dozen other Indian workers who were recruited for contract work: Abdul Jaleel Shani, 24, who had worked at a wedding store; brothers Abdul Aziz Hamid, 30, and Abdul Aziz Shahjahan, 28, who were butchers; and Manzoor Haneefa Kunju, 29, and Aliyaru Kunju Faisil, 34, who had worked at local hotels.

There, at an employment agency called Subhash Vijay Associates, they signed some papers and were handed tickets to Kuwait.

In Kuwait City, the workers were put on a bus and told they were going to "the border."

It didn't stop until they arrived at Q-West, a camp occupied by the 101st Airborne Division near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. There, the men became part of the largest civilian workforce supporting the U.S. military in history. Subhash Vijay had hired them to work for Gulf Catering Co. of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, which was subcontracted to Alargan Group of Kuwait City, which was subcontracted to the Event Source of Salt Lake City, which in turn was subcontracted to KBR of Houston.

They were issued ID cards that said "Brown & Root."

At Q-West, Ajayakumar and Shani worked the day shift scrubbing the floors, carrying boxes and doing other odd jobs for the dining facility. Hamid and Shahjahan worked nights chopping food and helping the cooks. They said they were terrified by the frequent gunfire and mortar and rocket attacks, but what really upset them was the way they were treated by others on the base.

"The attitude of the people was not friendly at all. We were doing a service for these people but they shouted at us and talked down to us," Hamid said.

While their Western managers slept in air-conditioned trailers, they were crammed into tents in 100-degree-plus temperatures. The cooks set aside some rice and curry for them but it was not enough and they had to supplement their food with whatever was left over from the soldiers' meals -- which was often nothing. They were told they could not take the filtered bottled water but instead must drink the Iraqi tap water that was poured into aluminum buckets with tablets of chlorine and

chunks of ice. The workers would pick through the soldiers' trash and retrieve the empty water bottles that they would use as cups.

Ajayakumar said he threw up for weeks from the contaminated water. He was allowed to see an Iraqi doctor who gave him one pill – without explaining what it was for and which did nothing to alleviate his symptoms.

His co-workers had other complaints: that they were assigned to do construction work they weren't hired for, that they weren't adequately compensated for their 12- to 16-hour days, that Hindus were served beef, that Muslims were instructed to handle pork.

The workers said they felt trapped. They didn't want to be in Iraq, but returning home meant no more jobs, paying their own travel expenses and forfeiting the agent's fees. **Plus, their bosses were holding their passports.**

Three months into the men's stay in Iraq, there were explosions near the base and people ran out of the tents. While other contractors came out in full protective gear and jumped into their cars, the kitchen workers were told to stand outside near a tent in their pajamas.

"At that moment we realized that they are privileged people and we are nothing," Shani said.

One evening soon afterward, when they were handed a dinner of beef curry that hadn't been fully cooked, several dozen of them went to their manager, who worked for Gulf Catering, to complain. According to the workers, the man told them they would not get any more food. "We bought you," he reportedly said.

Some Indian workers were so furious they packed their bags and began walking to the gates of the base. Another manager, who worked for the Event Source, raced over to them and urged them to stay, promising changes.

In May when they were offered a bus ride out of Iraq, nearly everyone accepted.

Meanwhile, Ajayakumar and the others are trying to bail themselves out of debt. While they were paid their promised base salaries – how much overtime they deserved and got is a matter of dispute -- it was not enough to make up for the agent's fee and the interest payments many had racked up. They had assumed they would be working for two years, not nine months.

Ajayakumar has no job and no job prospects. **The only thing he has from his time in Iraq is a certificate of appreciation from KBR. It thanks him for his help in the success of the "dinning [sic] facility" at the camp. Thank you, the tribute on standard 8 ½-by-11-inch paper reads, "for your tireless effort."**

“Sovereignty” Follies Roll On: No Iraqi Press Allowed At Saddam Trial

July 1, 2004 By HAMZA HENDAWI, The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq - A defiant Saddam Hussein rejected accusations of war crimes and genocide in court Thursday.

The only journalist working for an Iraqi publication, Sadiq Rahman of the newspaper Azzaman, was ordered out of the courtroom by the judge 10 minutes before the hearing began.

"Unfortunately, they are already being unfair to Iraqi journalists," Rahman said afterward, noting that some U.S. television reporters were allowed inside in addition to the pool.

In Fallujah, an insurgent stronghold west of Baghdad, resident Ammar Mohammed said the Americans should be put on trial first because they "killed thousands of Iraqis in one year of occupation."

<p style="text-align: center;">OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

“Sovereignty” Follies Roll On: US Will Override Baghdad In War; General Admits Resistance Not “Foreign”

July 1, 2004, Rory McCarthy in Baghdad, The Guardian

American commanders will risk launching high-profile military actions at targets in Iraq even if they go directly against the wishes of the new Iraqi government, a senior US general said yesterday.

Lieutenant General Thomas Metz, the second most senior American officer in Iraq and the force's tactical operations commander, said the US military was prepared to risk provoking "friction" with the new government in strikes against "professional terrorists".

The general admitted that foreign fighters, who are routinely blamed by US political leaders for most of the attacks, in fact represented less than a quarter of the insurgents.

The Boys In The Bubble;

The Last Days Of Bremer's Bullshit

July 2004 Harper's Magazine,

{From a memo sent in March by a Pentagon adviser posted in Iraq. The names of the memo's author and recipient were redacted, along with those of other officials, but the author is widely believed to be Michael Rubin, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

Rubin recently returned from a nine-month tour as a political officer at the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), the United States' occupational government in Iraq led by Paul Bremer. The Iraqi Governing Council was appointed by the CPA in July 2003. The memo was obtained by Jason Vest a journalist for the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies.}

The CPA is driving the weapons market: **Iraqi police sell their U.S.-supplied weapons on the black market, and they are promptly re-supplied.** Interior-ministry weapons buybacks keep the price of arms high.

Streetlights function irregularly and traffic lights not at all. Electricity in Baghdad is on and off in three-or four-hour rotations. There is no consistency. **Despite assurances to the contrary, neither the CPA nor the Ministry of Electricity publishes a schedule of power cuts and rotations.**

Throughout Iraq, we are handicapped by our security bubble. Few at the CPA get out of the Green Zone anymore. Most drivers work during the day, but not in the evening hours when Baghdad is most alive. As an aside, most Iraqi politicking occurs between 9 P.M. and 3 A.M., so the CPA is missing a great deal. **The U.S. government has spent millions importing sport-utility vehicles, which are used exclusively to drive the kilometer and a half between the Convention Center and the Palace.** We would have been much better off with a small fleet of used cars and a bicycle for every Green Zone resident.

In the view of most Regional Security Officers, the best assurance of safety is to not leave the Green Zone. The irony is that the Green Zone is hardly secure; large concentrations of Americans and Brits make tempting artillery targets.

The isolation is two-sided: Iraqis realize that the entrances to the Green Zone are under surveillance by bad guys. No one prevents people from entering the parking lot outside the checkpoint to note the license-plate numbers of "collaborators." The net effect is that a segment of Iraqi society avoids meeting Americans because they fear the Green Zone.

Even those Iraqis willing to talk to Americans think twice, since American officials create a spectacle of themselves, with convoys, flak jackets, and fancy SUVs. Few in Hula, Nasiriya, or Basra are willing to complain to Americans because they feel that Americans' inability to be inconspicuous may bring them personal harm.

To balance out the need for security with the need to get an accurate on-the-ground report, we need to send out people who approach the streets with a fresh outlook. Allowing political officers to roam would not compromise security, nor would it create any

more administrative chaos than already exists. One CPA official drew an apt metaphor: Watching the CPA handle an issue is like watching six-year-olds play soccer. Someone kicks the ball, and one hundred people chase after it without a care as to what else happens on the field.

Bremer hesitates to make tough but necessary decisions, instead hoping to foist them onto his successor or international organizations. We need to use our prerogative as occupying power to signal that corruption will not be tolerated. To take action against men like [name redacted] would win us applause on the street. **The alleged kickbacks that [name redacted] is accepting should be especially serious for us, since he was one of two ministers who met the President and had his picture taken with him.**

We share culpability in the eyes of ordinary Iraqis. After all, we appointed the Governing Council members. Their corruption is our corruption. Iraqis were assured that their exclusion from the Governing Council did not mean an exclusion from the process. As it turned out, we lied.

In allowing the Governing Council to hand- pick twenty-five ministers, not only did we endorse nepotism, with men choosing their sons or brothers-in-law; we also failed to use our prerogative to shape a system that would work.

It is true that several Governing Council members have real constituencies, but these constituencies are based not on ideology but on the muscle of their respective personal militias and the patronage which we allow them to bestow. We have bestowed approximately \$600 million upon the Kurdish leadership, in addition to the salaries we pay, the USAID projects, and the taxes we have allowed them to collect illegally.

Our failure to promote accountability has hurt us. The interim constitution is just an exercise in CPA masturbation if it is not enforced.

Lastly, before I sign off, our diplomats fear using leverage.

It is much nicer to sleep at the resort [name redacted] appropriated for his own personal use when you don't have to listen to him harp and complain. Likewise, it is better to keep [name redacted] a happy drunk rather than an angry drunk.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

YANKEES FANS ROUGH UP CHENEY

June 30, 2004 By GEORGE KING ny post.com

Looking to atone for being swept by the Red Sox in late April, the Yankees delivered a very crisp performance - aided by three Red Sox errors and a double play that wasn't turned - in an 11-3 spanking in front of 55,231 delighted Stadium customers.

Vice President Dick Cheney, a Red Sox fan, was among the large gathering. He watched the early innings from George Steinbrenner's box and later sat in the first row next to the Yankees' dugout. Cheney was booed when his picture appeared on the screen during the singing of "God Bless America."

John Kerry: A Tragic Mistake

By John Moore, CovertAction Quarterly, Spring 2004 (www.covertactionquarterly.org: Check it out.)

(The author holds membership card No. 25319 in Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and has also been a member of Vietnam Veterans of America. [Note 1])

Before we go streaming to the polls to vote for John Kerry in November, we need to understand more clearly who he is and what he stands for. Up to now, Kerry himself has not been very helpful. As a candidate, he has tended to avoid talking about his political connections and his past voting record, and has instead tried to charm us with anecdotes about Vietnam and his military service. But still, these anecdotes provide a good enough place to start.

Kerry was in Vietnam in the late 1960s. During those years American corporations were buying up French rubber plantations, while American entrepreneurs were prospecting for offshore oil and scouting around Saigon for opportunities to sell automobiles, soft drinks and whatever else they thought the citizens of a "developing" country might like to buy when the war was won.

Apparently Kerry missed all of this. — Maybe he was on his U.S. Navy river boat all the time. He also failed to notice that all of America's supporters were on the U. S. payroll. The war ended in 1975, and a year later it was as hard to find a former American partisan in Saigon as to find a former Nazi in Germany. But by that time John Kerry was far away, back in Massachusetts after an unsuccessful run for Congress.

I first heard and saw John Kerry in 1971 when he delivered the most articulate speech of the day, on the steps of the U.S. Capitol when we all tossed back our medals and decorations, by way of apology for participating in that racist and terrible war.

At that time there were two different sentiments underlying political positions among the various groups of war protesters. There were those who condemned the war as a cold and rational though misguided plan for the expansion of "capitalist democracy" in Asia — among whom I was numbered. And there were those who condemned the war as a tragic mistake," during which well-meaning though naive political leaders, such as would-you-believe Robert McNamara and Henry Kissinger, were trying to save the Vietnamese people from the invading Communists. (2)

The latter group felt that if the American people and its leaders just heard the truth from their soldiers, they would soon experience some kind of moral revelation and stop the

war. **John Kerry was of the “tragic mistake” school of thought**, as per his celebrated comment to a congressional committee in April of 1971, “How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?” (3)

But Kerry allegedly gave an anti-war speech before he enlisted. So if he knew the war was wrong, why did he go? Vietnam veteran and activist Brian Willson, who knew Kerry well in this period, has suggested that Kerry even then had political ambitions, and was trying to create a political persona that was, as we now say, “electable.” (4)

Having excused the elite and their corporations from any blame for starting an aggressive, imperialist war in Southeast Asia, Kerry went on to convince them that he was not only an honest, courageous and outspoken person, but one they could trust, and one they could support for political office. Even during the congressional hearing, Sen. Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island thanked Kerry for his testimony and remarked that he hoped Kerry “might one day be a colleague of ours in this body.” (5)

Kerry has continued to provide additional assurances to the ruling elite along these lines. One example is in his official autobiography, where he says that if the Vietnam War was some kind of aggressive, imperialist expansion, it was an exception. not...a ruling example, of the U.S. military engagements of the twentieth century.” So what about Grenada, Cuba, Nicaragua, Lebanon, Panama, Somalia -- just name your favorite military intervention. It looks like there are more exceptions than there are examples that fit the rule, and maybe, dare I suggest, there could be a pattern of foreign involvement.

As a freshman senator in 1984, John Kerry did not disappoint the power elite, and he was soon on the pads of many corporations, especially those in the health care industry and law firms representing the communications industry. (6) A lower-ranked Boston Brahmin himself, he quickly and literally jumped into bed with other members of the ruling class, first marrying socialite Julia Thorne of Philadelphia and then H. J. Heinz Ketchup heiress Teresa Heinz. (7)

Along the way, he somehow avoided the threats and harassment directed against many other anti-war veterans who were not so well connected. (8) Kerry soon scrapped his participation in Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) in favor of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), where the emphasis was more on getting veterans’ benefits than protesting U.S. policy, once again enhancing his ‘electability.’”

After twenty years and three re-elections to the Senate, Kerry has approached issues raised by the Iraq War with two disabilities that are perhaps service-connected—amnesia and myopia. He has forgotten the lessons of Vietnam, if he ever understood them, and he was very fuzzy about what was going on in Iraq. In short, he had the perfect mentality for a Senator in the pocket of the ruling elite.

He was a willing and enthusiastic coconspirator in his vote of support for the war in Iraq in October 2002, stating his belief that Iraq had a large stockpile of the Weapons of Mass Destruction. (9) Even more importantly, from the standpoint of his corporate keepers, in September of 2003 he supported Order 39, which offered an open door to American companies who wanted to buy, lease or run Iraqi companies and take profits from them. (10) His campaign remains quiet on this

issue. (11) But will Kerry say something later? Will he perhaps soon decry the Iraqi invasion as another “tragic mistake,” thereby excusing Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Halliburton and the oil industry from all their current shenanigans?

As Kerry moves closer to winning the Democratic nomination, other troublesome aspects of his politics and character continue to emerge. It turns out he voted for the Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction scam, begun in 1985, which through the 1990s devastated the welfare system, and especially the hopes and dreams of working women and disabled people. (12)

Also, at the first opportunity, he jumped on board the 9/11 express, trouncing civil rights by supporting such legislation as the USA Patriot Act and the Counter-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. The North America Free Trade Area [NAFTA] program for American economic and political hegemony in the Americas, implemented in 1994, also finds him safely on board.

Looking at Kerry’s voting record, we cannot help but note that his brand of neo-liberalism is not sharply divergent from Bush’s compassionate conservatism. In sum, by its control of the nomination process, the ruling elite has managed to offer us, in lieu of real choices, a Republican incumbent who started the Iraq War and favors similar pre-emptive strikes elsewhere, has cut education and welfare funds, and has taken large steps toward the suppression of civil liberties. **As an alternative, it offers a Democratic challenger who has already demonstrated that he will do what he’s told, and is somewhat taller.**

Dennis Kucinich, a Democratic candidate who has been labeled “unelectable” and therefore is free to speak the truth, puts it this way: **“Senator Kerry voted for the war. Senator Kerry supports the occupation. Senator Kerry supports sending another 40,000 troops to Iraq... I’m wondering if the people of this country are ready to trade a Republican war for a Democratic war, because that’s exactly where we’re headed right now:”** (13)

NOTES

2. The shoulder patch issued to U.S. soldiers for Vietnam service is a representation of a section of the Great Wall of China with a breach in the center. Sticking through the breach from the bottom is a gold-hafted sword. During the author’s orientation lecture for the U.S. Infantry in 1963, it was explained that the sword represented the U.S. Army defending Vietnam against the invading Chinese Communists.

3. Kerry’s tragic mistake” theme is expanded in his official autobiography. *A Call to Service* [Penguin, 2003], pp. 41-3.

4. See w.brianwillson.com/awolkerry.html.

5. For this remark and a fuller biography, see www.johnkerry.com/about/.

6. Charles Lewis, *The Buying of the President* [Perennial 2004], pp. 364-400. Also see Dana Wilkie and Joe Cantlupe, “Kerry Among Top Recipients in Congress from Special Interests,” *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Jan. 30, 2004.

7. Julia Thorne has written a memoir, *A Change of Heart* [New York: Harper Perennial, 1996]. Teresa Heinz is a proud Republican.

8. **Like many other activists in this period, the author was visited and harassed at home, on the job, at his Army Reserve meetings and in the classroom by the Department of Defense, FBI and local police. See front page, *The Sunday Ramparts*, San Francisco, Feb. 12, 1967.**

9. See article by Scott Ritter, former U.N. Chief Inspector in Iraq, www.notinourname.net/gi-special/.

Also see "Kerry's Deceptions on Iraq Threaten His Presidential Hopes," by Stephen Zunes, published Aug. 26, 2003, CommonDreams.org.

10. See two articles by Naomi Klein, "Iraq Is Not America's to Sell." in the Nov. 7, 2003, *Guardian* (London), and "Hold Bush to His Lie," in Feb. 5, 2004, *The Nation*.

11. As of Feb. 10, 2004, Kerry's "Tough Questions" to George W. Bush about Iraq, listed on Kerry's campaign web site, do not mention Order 39.

12. See Gwendolyn Mink, *We/fare's End* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell Univ. Press) 1998.

13. See Kucinich statement on www.notinourname.net/gi-special/.

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.

Bush Buddy Halliburton Looted Money: Former Company Auditor Says "That Money Could Have Been Used To Take Care Of Soldiers"

July 01, 2004 By Lisa Myers, Senior investigative correspondent, NBC News

The Pentagon has already awarded Halliburton Co., the controversial military contractor, deals worth up to \$18 billion for its work in Iraq. But now former Halliburton insiders have come forward with new allegations of massive waste of taxpayer money.

Marie deYoung, a former Army chaplain who worked for Halliburton, was so upset by attacks on the company she e-mailed the CEO in December with a strategy on how to fight the "political slurs." But today, after five months inside Halliburton's operation in Kuwait, deYoung has radically changed her opinion. "It's just a gravy train," she said.

DeYoung audited accounts for Halliburton's subsidiary KBR. She claims there was no effort to hold down costs because all costs were passed on directly to taxpayers. **She repeatedly complained to superiors of waste and fraud. The company's response, according to deYoung was: "We can be as dumb and stupid as we want in the first year of a war, nobody's going to care."**

DeYoung produced documents detailing alleged waste even on routine services: \$50,000 a month for soda, at \$45 a case; \$1 million a month to clean clothes — or \$100 for each 15-pound bag of laundry.

"That money could have been used to take care of soldiers," she said.

DeYoung also claims people were paid to do nothing.

Mike West says he was one of them. Paid \$82,000 a year to be a labor foreman in Iraq, West claims he never had any laborers to supervise. "They said just log 12 hours a day and walk around and look busy," he said. "OK, so we did."

Some examples:

Purchase of hundreds of high-end SUVs and pickups, loaded with options like CD players, which "most KBR employees do not need."

"Duplication ... and gold-plating" in purchases of computers and high-tech equipment.

Halliburton employees living in 5-star hotels.

Whistleblower deYoung thinks the problem is obvious. "They're using the war as an excuse, but it's not the war," she said. "It was very bad management."

Pentagon auditors apparently agree. They're withholding \$186 million from the company and threatening to hold back even more unless Halliburton corrects the problems.

Some Gitmo Detainees May Be Released

July 02, 2004 By Robert Burns, Associated Press

The Pentagon might release some detainees from Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Cuba, deemed not to pose a security threat without first giving them access to civilian courts, a spokesman said Thursday.

A group of human rights lawyers sent Rumsfeld a letter asking for access to 53 prisoners at Guantanamo Bay.

Most of the 595 detainees at Guantanamo were captured in the U.S. war in Afghanistan in 2001 and most have been held without access to lawyers for more than two years. Human rights groups have complained the prisoners are in a legal limbo with little chance to gain their release.

MORE:

The Sound Of Silence

Marjorie Cohn, CovertAction Quarterly, Spring 2004 (www.coveractionquarterly.org: Check it out.)

In its January 2002 statement, **the Cuban government did not oppose housing the U.S. prisoners at Guantanamo.**

"Although the transfer of foreign war prisoners by the United States government to one of its military facilities — located in a portion of our land over which we have no jurisdiction, as we have been deprived of it — does not abide by the provisions that

regulated its inception, we shall not set any obstacles to the development of the operation.” (1.11.02, Statement of the Government Of Cuba)

President Castro likely knew that protest would be futile, and he is eager to normalize relations between the United States and Cuba.

ASHCROFT: TERRORISTS PLANNING 'SPECTACULAR' GAY WEDDINGS

July 1, 2004 The Borowitz Report

Attorney General John Ashcroft today revealed that the Justice Department has collected “credible evidence” that terrorists may be planning “spectacular” gay weddings to coincide with the 4th of July holiday weekend.

“There is little doubt that these evildoers intend to hit us hard, the best way they know how – with spectacular, flamboyantly gay weddings,” Mr. Ashcroft said.

Mr. Ashcroft hastened to add that the Department of Justice did not know where or when the weddings might take place, adding, “When terrorists are planning gay weddings, they don’t send you an engraved invitation.”

But the Attorney General said that, according to chatter intercepted by Justice Department agents, “There can be no doubt that these gay weddings will be the gayest ever.”

Just minutes after Mr. Ashcroft concluded his remarks, however, Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge made a statement that seemed, on the surface at least, to contradict the Attorney General’s: “While there has been some increase in terrorist chatter, the chatter itself has been no gayer than usual.”

Mr. Ridge conceded that the intercepted terrorist chatter contained “some gay content,” such as effusive remarks about the actor Brad Pitt, but that Americans “should go about their 4th of July activities without worrying that a spectacular series of gay weddings is about to occur.”

CLASS WAR NEWS

**Billions For Iraq War While Americans
Forced To Choose Between Eating And
Medicine**

6.30.04 By Mary Kissel, Wall St. Journal

WASHINGTON-One in seven American families has problems paying medical bills, forcing trade-offs between medical, food and housing expenses, according to a new study.

The report by the Center for Studying Health System Change, a Washington think tank, said that though uninsured families have the biggest problems affording health care, **insured families have difficulty paying their medical bills, especially since rapidly rising health-insurance costs are often shifted to consumers in the form of higher deductibles, co-payments and co-insurance.**

According to the study, 68% of families with medical-bill problems have insurance. "Being insured isn't a guarantee of success," said Bob Crittenden, chairman of the Working for Health Coalition, based in Seattle.

Rising out-of-pocket costs were positively correlated with inability to pay, with 35% of families reporting problems paying \$2,000 or more in annual medical bills. But even modest out-of-pocket medical expenses can hit low-income families hard, warned Peter Cunningham, one of the report's authors. **About 20% of low income families reported difficulties paying medical bills**, compared with 7.4% of families with incomes fivefold higher than the Poverty level.

About 18% of surveyed families that had one or more members with chronic diseases had trouble paying their medical bills. Chronic conditions, which include diabetes cardiac disease and respiratory illnesses, make up a major portion of spending on health care. Roger Whelan a resident scholar at the American Bankruptcy Institute in Alexandria, Va., said medical bills are a leading driver of personal bankruptcies

But big medical bills don't only inflict a financial burden -- they affect patient behavior; too. According to the report, about a quarter of families with big medical tabs shied away from seeking care last year, and nearly a third shunned prescription drugs.

That is troubling, said Michele Heisler, a researcher at the Veterans Affairs Ann Arbor Healthcare System in Ann Arbor, Mich., and author of a recent National Institute of Health study that examined how **medication cutbacks for patients with chronic illnesses can inflict severe health damage.**

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