

GI SPECIAL 2#B 18



NO GOOD NEWS IN SIGHT; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW

Kerry Promises To Keep US Troops Dying In Iraq: Democrat Promotes Bloody Imperial Agenda; Skull And Bones Man Wants More Skulls And Bones

Jonathan Steele Friday July 09 2004 The Guardian

Here's a dinner-party talking point that can run and run, certainly until November and, if the Democrats win the US presidency, for several months beyond. Would John Kerry, far from quickly bringing US troops home, keep them in Iraq even longer than George Bush?

My answer, regrettably, is yes - which means that the Democratic convention in Boston later this month will be a sad affair for the people of Iraq, where polls consistently show a majority in favour of early withdrawal.

Kerry looks increasingly like the candidate with the long-term imperial agenda. It would not be as raw as the one pushed by Bush's neoconservative apostles of privatisation, but it would be imperial none the less, dressed in the classic garb of Democratic party multilateral interventionism.

In speech after speech Kerry has laid the ground work for expanding and prolonging the US presence in Iraq. It starts with macho bluster. "Extremists appear to be gaining confidence and have vowed to drive our troops from the country. We cannot - and will not - let that happen," he thundered in a radio address on April 17. Then comes the mission statement: "It would be unthinkable for us to retreat in disarray and leave behind a society deep in strife and dominated by radicals" (from the same broadcast). What happens if Iraqis elect radicals in January? Will they not be allowed to take power?

At Fulton in Missouri, the site of Churchill's Iron Curtain speech, Kerry laid out his vision for extra troops. "If our commanders believe they need more American troops, they should say so and they should get them ... But more and more American soldiers cannot be the only solution ... The coalition should organise an expanded international security forces, preferably with Nato, but clearly under US command," he said on April 30.

In a Washington Post article on Sunday, he attacked Bush for not having "a realistic plan to win the peace and bring our troops home". Did he produce one of his own? **No, he made it clear the expanded foreign force would stay for years. "Our goal should be an alliance commitment to deploy a major portion of the peacekeeping force that will be needed in Iraq for a long time to come," he said.**

Nato could be mobilised to help stabilise Iraq "and the region", he went on. Does he have his eye on Iran and Syria too? The price of inaction would be heavy, he warned at Fulton. Trying to frighten his allies, he raised the stakes higher than Bush has, saying: "For the Europeans, Iraq's failure could endanger the security of their oil supplies, further radicalise their large Muslim populations, threaten destabilising refugee flows, and seed a huge new source of terrorism."

The notion of Bush as an ideologue and Kerry as a realist is too simple. Each has elements of both, and it may well be that a second-term Bush would recognise the cost of his first term's mistakes. Flushed by victory, Kerry might be less clear-sighted.

Most advisers now gathering round Kerry are missionaries who believe not so much in a war on terror as in a war on state failure. Failed states produce terrorism, they argue, so you have to go to the source.

The notion is more dangerous, since the number of target-countries for uninvited nation-building is bigger. The issue is not whether military intervention is unilateral, as with Bush, or multilateral, as with Kerry, but why neither sees that it nearly always makes things worse.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Resistance Army Takes Central Samarra; U.S. Forces Evacuated By Helicopter, Withdraw To "Periphery"

July 9 2004 By Nicolas Pelham in Baghdad.FT.com & Jul 8th 2004 The Economist

The US military insisted that it remained in control of the Iraqi city of Samarra yesterday, in spite of a massive attack by insurgents on the last remaining US compound there that left five US soldiers and two Iraqi national guardsmen dead.

US troops insisted that US and Iraqi government forces remained in control of the city. **"1st ID have secured the perimeter of the city** and are taking appropriate steps to round up any continuing pockets of insurgents in the area," said Sgt Powell.

The casualties had been caused by a car-bomb attack, followed by a salvo of 38 mortar rounds, which caused the complex to collapse.

Witnesses said insurgents wearing the uniforms of the old Iraqi army and the red boots worn by Mr Hussein's Republican Guard saluted their superiors before firing rocket launchers in the city's industrial zone.

Witnesses said they saw insurgents and looters overrun the base, which the US had recently turned over to the Iraqi National Guard.

Aqeel Hussein, a reporter for the UK-based organisation Institute for War and Peace Reporting, said he saw helicopters evacuating troops, as looters and rebels overran the last base.

"People were crying 'Americans have left the base', and I saw looters pouring out with satellite receivers, televisions and DVD recorders," he said.

Reports from Samarra this week suggested that hundreds of armed rebels had swept through the city after US troops evacuated a civil military operations centre used to train local police on the outskirts of the town.

Wafiq al-Samarrai, a former chief of military intelligence under Mr Hussein, said 200 of the 1,000 local security forces remained in service, leaving them unable to secure the city.

Sgt Powell said the centre had been handed over to the Samarra city council, but could not say whether it was still in its control.

"There are some other bases within our area of operation that we have turned over to the Iraqi National Guard," said Sgt Powell.

"Samarra has been a very hot place for American troops.

It would be the second town to fall to insurgents. (Excluding Najaf, Kut, Karbala, Sadr City, Ramadi, Qaim, etc. etc. of course.) In April US commanders signed a truce with city notables in Falluja, leaving officers from the former Republican Guard in control.

Insurgents claimed *to hold another town*, Qaim, on the Syrian border.

Lost In A World Of Hurt, Iraqi Collaborator Troops Vanish, U.S. Troops Fight Alone

July 09, 2004 Ian Fisher, NYT

On paper, the change seemed straightforward enough.

After the transfer of sovereignty to Iraqis last week, the American military would slowly recede to the background, to be called on as needed as Iraqi soldiers performed more patrols.

But here is what it looked like on the ground on Wednesday: Sergeant Trozy Darlin lay on the concrete floor of a power substation here, exhausted by the heat of 125 Fahrenheit He was wet and red and cursing loudly.

On the roof, Specialist Luis Ortiz, guarding what had become the company's makeshift base, aimed at a man a few rooftops away. "If you pull out a weapon, you are going down," he muttered into his rifle's scope. "I don't care who you are."

Company C of the 1 st Battalion, 9th Cavalry, unimaginably hot and short of water, took over the substation on its way to evacuate as many as 25 Iraqi civil defense soldiers, reported trapped for several hours by insurgent gunfire off the treacherous alleyways of old Baghdad.

Earlier in the day, Iraqi soldiers had been fired on, American soldiers came to their aid, and a full-bore firefight erupted. **Throughout the day, gunfire echoed all around Company C and two soldiers struggled to do their jobs while throwing up from the heat.**

For all the risk and struggle, though, this hazardous exercise in dual force cooperation was for naught- by the time Company C arrived, the Iraqi soldiers were gone, but nobody had bothered to tell the Americans. "We don't have good comms with them;" said Lieutenant Fred Saxton.

While saying that the mission was necessary, he did not hide his anger at the risk to his men or his exasperation at the difficulties in Iraq. "We train as hard as we can," said Saxton, whose driver was killed last week when their Humvee was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. "But there is no way they can prep you for this kind of complexity."

While American helicopters swooped over the firefight less than a kilometer, or about half a mile, away, Iraqi officials released the details of the now security law allowing the prime minister's office to declare emergency rule anywhere in Iraq and exercise wide martial powers to quell any armed struggle.

As of Wednesday evening, **the American-led military command released only a brief statement concerning the firefight that brought Company C into action. It said that one Iraqi soldier had been killed, and nine wounded. The statement said that U.S. soldiers had killed one insurgent carrying a rocket-propelled grenade launcher.**

The firefight - one of the biggest in Baghdad since the American invasion in 2003 - erupted at about 10 a.m., when, witnesses and the police said, a patrol of Iraqi soldiers came under fire. Muhammad Tariq, 36, a grocery owner, said he saw a Humvee on fire, and at least one dead soldier lying nearby.

American forces responded with Apache attack helicopters and Bradley fighting vehicles, as shops shuttered closed and streets emptied, with the two sides trading rounds of shots. Several residents said American soldiers should be off the streets, with the Iraqi government taking power.

Raining Rocks

July 9, 2004 By Scott Wilson, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, July 8 - Preparing for a morning patrol, Sgt. Adam Brantley surveyed his perch in the gunner's nest of an armored Humvee. In front of him was a machine gun mounted on a swivel. His M-4 rifle lay on the roof next to it.

Brantley stepped down and stooped in the dust, searching for rocks the size of baseballs. He collected a few handfuls and piled them next to his rifle. His convoy pulled into the smoky streets of Sadr City.

"I don't throw unless thrown upon," said Brantley, 24, who would have cause to do so in the next few hours as rocks thrown from side streets banged against the Humvee.

The daily rock fights between U.S. soldiers and ordinary Iraqis, many of them children, highlight the mutual antipathy that has built up since the handover of political power to an Iraqi government.

Although often-intense fighting continues in some regions, the U.S. military occupation of Sadr City, as observed in four days on patrol with a U.S. Army unit, has evolved into a grinding daily confrontation between frustrated American soldiers and a desperate population.

After 15 months of halting progress on U.S.-funded reconstruction projects, many Iraqis who once supported the U.S. invasion are resisting the military occupation, a fight that features gangs of impoverished children as an angry, exasperating vanguard. The strain of the hostility on U.S. soldiers is palpable.

Candy, once gleefully accepted in this part of Baghdad, is now thrown back at the soldiers dispensing it.

The military partnership with new Iraqi security forces appears to be foundering on a mutual lack of respect. The Iraqi police occasionally ignore U.S. orders, described as recommendations by U.S. commanders in the days since the handover, to conduct night patrols in troublesome districts and prohibit Sadrs militants from manning traffic checkpoints. **The Iraqi National Guard has refused dangerous assignments, even when accompanied by U.S. troops.**

Lt. Col. Gary Volesky, commander of the division's 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Brigade in Sadr City, said there was much to be done to demonstrate to the Iraqi people that the Army has come to help them. "We've been here a year and they haven't seen much progress," he said. "That's our challenge."

Volesky was making a keep-your-chin-up visit, and the Iraqi police officers appeared surprised to see him.

As soon as Volesky left the ruined station, he was confronted by crowds of children and a few men working in a strip of auto repair shops next door. They wanted to know why their electricity was off more often than on, something U.S. soldiers struggle to determine on a daily basis. Electricity in Baghdad's summer heat means air conditioning, and a cooler population is a happier one.

"We've started fixing your sewers," said Volesky, who had just passed a pipeline project that will pump some of the green sludge from the streets. "Soon you'll see it coming this way."

The children gathered in a rowdy scrum around the soldiers. A chubby kid poked at them, then opened his mouth to wiggle a very loose tooth in their faces. A gunshot popped in the near distance, putting the soldiers on alert. A thin, dark child dressed in filthy clothes began to chant, "Moqtada, Moqtada, let's go, let's go, Moqtada." Others joined in, shuffling their feet in a two-step dance.

As the soldiers packed into Humvees and pulled away, stones clattered against the armor.

"That's all you got, just those little pebbles," said a soldier driving one of the Humvees.

Sgt. Timothy Kathol, 24, of Amarillo, Tex., handed a bag of lollipops up to the gunner as the stones continued to rain down. "They throw rocks, we throw candy - really hard candy," Kathol said. "With sticks in it."

When U.S. troops toppled Hussein last year, the neighborhood celebrated.

"I love the smell of sewage in the morning," Kathol said as his Humvee left Camp Eagle, the Army post on Sadr City's northern edge, and was engulfed by the slum's signature stench.

"Smells like victory," replied Pfc. Joseph Crosier, 23, of Syracuse, N.Y., continuing the reference to a speech in the movie "Apocalypse Now."

On a recent morning, Lt. Raymie Walters headed out with Alpha Company's 3rd Platoon to take some popular soundings. The soldiers and the military intelligence officers back at the post use a variety of unscientific methods to measure the sentiments and general health of the community. Security, quite literally, has to do with the price of eggs.

Walters, 26, of Longview, Wash., took a column of Humvees to a market to check on food prices, which often fluctuate with insurgent activity. The convoy pulled up to a stall and the soldiers got out. But they had no interpreter. After a few minutes of holding up Iraqi dinars, pointing to produce and flapping like a chicken, Walters had his price list.

The children emerged from nowhere. "Moqtada, Moqtada," they began taunting.

Staff Sgt. Matthew Mercado, 27, of Jonesboro, Ark., shook his head as the Humvees pulled away. "You see what happens when we just ask for the price of a banana?" he said.

The convoy sped down a wide avenue. Down small alleys, scurrying kids came into view with rocks in their hands. A stone bounced short of the Humvee, leaping up to peg the door. Walters told Mercado to radio the rest of the convoy with a warning for the gunners to keep low.

That evening, U.S. commanders drew up plans for a foot patrol, matching a platoon of U.S. soldiers with two squads of Iraqi National Guard troops. The mission entailed setting up ambush positions along the road leading from camp into the center of Sadr City, a route where roadside bombers frequently operate. There they would wait for the men planting the explosives or flush them out by using illumination rounds to draw fire. **But the mission was delayed an hour, then canceled. U.S. commanders said the Iraqi troops refused to participate.**

They don't want to work," said Lt. Derek Johnson, 25, of Driggs, Idaho. "But they still want our money." **(They don't want to die is more like it. Do likewise.)**

Johnson, commander of Alpha Company's 1st Platoon, had a long morning ahead of him the next day policing the police. As Bradley Fighting Vehicles and Humvees idled, he and his men waited for 15 Iraqi soldiers to join the patrol, then waited even longer for a "psy ops" team with anti-Sadr pamphlets to hand out.

The Iraqi soldiers piled into two Bradleys, carrying AK-47 assault rifles and wearing new body-armor vests. They took turns tapping each other on the chest plates as they waited to leave.

Johnson's task was to make sure the Iraqi police had set up checkpoints in designated spots and were manning them without help from Sadr's Mahdi Army militia or any other civilians. The first intersection was empty of police, and the second was being worked by a group of men wearing matching blue-and-white soccer jerseys. They had whistles. The drivers obeyed them. But they were not the police - who sat inside their station a block away - and were likely Sadr militants.

"We're from the neighborhood," said one sweaty man in a Tommy Gear cap.

"According to their interim government, it's not allowed for any uniformed personnel other than Iraqi police to man these checkpoints," Johnson warned through an interpreter. "I'll be coming back here, and • don't want to see them."

Johnson did return a few hours later. The men had not left (Time to go home.)

Explosions Targets Marines, Seabees; A Bad Feeling About Wednesday

Jul. 08, 2004 By PATRICK PETERSON, Biloxi (Miss.) Sun Herald

A1 AMERIYAH, Iraq - An improvised explosive device struck a convoy of Marines and Seabee engineers on Wednesday, within 100 yards of a new Iraqi Army checkpoint in this riverside town about 22 kilometers from Fallujah.

"They knew we were there," said Seabee Lt. Cmdr. Bill Klepac of Pensacola, Fla. The explosion left a four-foot hole in the four-foot highway median at the entrance to the city. **One Marine suffered minor facial injuries, because the IED did not explode directly beside his Humvee.**

"It detonated on the last vehicle," Klepac said. **"Their timing must have been off."** Additionally, **two mortar attacks at Camp Fallujah, six miles outside the city, left several Marines wounded on Wednesday.**

Troops in the Al Anbar province northeast of Baghdad endure attacks nearly every day, either from mortars, IEDs or snipers.

Wednesday's convoy ventured out to check progress on repairs to a pontoon bridge over the Euphrates River. Seabee engineers had contracted with an Iraqi builder for \$55,000 in repairs to a pontoon bridge over the river.

Marines in the convoy had just dropped off a bundle of toys for local children at the local police station when the IED detonated, creating a large cloud of black smoke and dust.

"It almost didn't seem real," Klepac said.

The IED left three holes, consistent with the insurgent practice of wiring several artillery shells together and detonating them with a cellular phone or wire doorbell ringer.

After the explosion, Iraqi women and children ran, **but the Iraqi soldiers did nothing until their commander arrived** and brought them to assist the Marines and Seabees in the convoy who had taken defensive positions along the road.

The attack came on a blistering hot day with 120-degree temperatures made worse by 20 mph winds blowing dust. The vehicle driven by Seabee Chief Keith Oney, a reservist from Alaska, was nearly wrecked when two Iraqi vehicles had a head-on collision in front of him.

This is the second Seabee engineer convoy that has been attacked while surveying a building project. Oney was in the first attack.

"Somehow, I had a bad feeling about today," Oney said. "What bothered me more than anything was that there was no ice."

Using his helmet as a scoop, Oney acquired two helmet loads of ice from the chow hall to cool the party's drinks.

Klepac also said he had a premonition of trouble about the trip.

"I guess you just don't know what to expect," Klepac said. "This morning I said, 'Say an extra prayer for us. I've just got a bad feeling about going out there today.'"

Seabee Lt. Cmdr Bill Klepac, Pensacola, Fla.



An Iraqi national guardsman stands by a bridge that Seabee engineers have contracted an Iraqi company to repair. **The convoy heading out to repair the bridge was attacked by an IED about 100 yards from an Iraqi National Guard checkpoint which had a clear view of the spot where the LED was planted.** Photo courtesy of LT.CMDR BILL KLEPAC

Tri-State Soldier Hurt

July 9, 2004 Ohio News Network

The Special Programs Director for the Cincinnati Recreation Commission suffered extremely serious injuries in Tikrit, Iraq Wednesday. **Staff Sergeant Paul Brondhaver of Anderson Township was hit by a rocket propelled grenade and was immediately flown to Germany for surgery.**

Brondhaver is a member of the same Glen Este church that Army Specialist Matt Maupin attended as a child. Brondhaver's wife and three children are planning to see him in person at Walter Reed Hospital back here in the States possibly as early as this weekend.

Manatee County Marine Dies

July 8, 2004 By ROBERT PATRICK, Sarasota Herald-Tribune

MANATEE COUNTY - **After losing two of his friends during his first tour of duty in Iraq, Marine Lance Cpl. Scott E. Dougherty was scared to go back.**

But he did go back, in February, and vowed that "if they ask me to go again, I'll go again" for a third tour, his uncle, Cyril "Skeeter" Dougherty 11 said.

Tuesday, Dougherty's family members found out that the boyish Marine, who just turned 20 last month, was killed when his light armored vehicle hit an anti-tank mine and flipped. Three other Marines were killed and three wounded, his grandfather, Cyril Dougherty, said.

Thursday morning, Dougherty's father Keith walked down Cyril Dougherty's driveway, discussing details and arrangements for his son's funeral with two Marines.

Dougherty was a 2002 Bayshore High School graduate and ROTC platoon leader who had always planned to join the Marines, his grandfather said.

"I guess he liked the regimentation and order and discipline," he said.

Dougherty loved fishing, scuba diving and snorkeling, and earned the name "Hottie Scotty" in high school because he was such a ladies' man, Skeeter Dougherty said.

His second tour started in February, and was scheduled to end before Halloween.

Family members said he looked forward to playing pool at his aunt's house and had plans to go camping, fishing and to Howl-O-Scream at Busch Gardens when he returned.

Now his father and uncles say they will go to all those places, to honor his wish and show respect for his sacrifice.

"They're going to do this stuff because it was what he wanted;" Cyril Dougherty said.

Local Soldier Drops Dead In Iraq

July 10, 2004 By Brian C. Riftmeyer, TRIBUNE-REVIEW

A Beaver County soldier died Thursday in Iraq from cardiac arrest, an Army spokesman said Friday.

Spc. Shawn Davies, 22, of Hopewell, stood up suddenly while at a recreation facility at Camp Black Jack near Baghdad, fell to the ground and stopped breathing, said Maj. Greg Yesko, a public affairs officer for the 99th Regional Readiness Command in Moon.

Davies was a member of an air defense artillery regiment under the 1st Cavalry Division based at Fort Hood, Texas.

Yesko could not say what Davies was doing when he collapsed. The cause of his death remains under investigation, Yesko said.

Arrangements will be handled by the Tatalovich Funeral Home in Aliquippa.

TROOP NEWS

Philippines Troops Getting Out And Going Home

July 10, 2004 The Associated Press

Manilla, Philippines-AP- **The Philippines says it will withdraw its 51-member armed force from Iraq in August**, even as Arab television airs a videotape of a filipino hostage appealing to Manila to pull out.

Before the kidnapping, the government had discussed extending the troops' mandate beyond the August 20th deadline but didn't discuss the issue today.

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/>**

Oklahoma City Soldier Killed

July 10, 2004 ASSOCIATED PRESS

Family members and friends of an Oklahoma City soldier who was killed in Iraq this week remember him as a happy, giving young man.

Specialist Sonny Gene Sampler was one of five US soldiers who died Thursday at a military headquarters in Sammarra, Iraq, when insurgents detonated a car bomb and fired mortars at the building.

Sampler's brother Rellon said his kid brother would do anything for anyone and always had a smile on his face.

Sampler grew up in Altus and moved to Oklahoma City with his family. He attended John Marshall High School before getting his General Equivalency Diploma.

Friend Dylan Toombs says Sonny Sampler joined the Army as a way to better himself.

Local Man Resuming Tour Of Duty; "Being In Iraq Sucks"

Jul. 10, 2004 By Dan Cortez of The News-Sentinel, Indiana

It was Dec. 8 and Army Pfc. Derrick Crumpaker, a Fort Wayne native, was rolling toward Ad Duluiyah, Iraq, in a Stryker combat vehicle with 10 other members of the 3rd Brigade, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment based in Fort Lewis, Wash.

It was to be the first mission for the unit.. Crumpaker suddenly heard the team leader shouting to the driver. "Go right, go right, go right!"

It was too late. The Stryker and another one behind it flipped over the left side of the road, where there was a canal filled with water.

Sitting inside his vehicle, the 26-year-old Crumpaker didn't know where he was. Suddenly, water was slapping him in the face. "Where the hell did this water come from?"

Vehicle alarms were blaring. The other soldiers were screaming, scrambling to find air. Then everything went black, and Crumpaker had a moment of clarity. "So, this is how I'm going to die."

Three soldiers died that day, but Crumpaker, survived. Seven months later, after spending two weeks home with family, including his wife, Amy, Crumpaker, will return to Iraq and all the dangers of a war zone. He leaves Monday. A little more than three months remain before his tour is complete.

Derrick, who spent a year at South Side High School before transferring to Columbia City, is the oldest of Don Crumpaker's 16 grandchildren. The senior Crumpaker, spent 30 months in Germany in the 1950s and retired from the Army Reserves in 1983. Derrick was at the retirement ceremony.

The strain on the family is persistent. Amy got news of the wreck when her cell phone rang in the middle of the night in Fairmount, where the couple now lives with Amy's two sons. The phone's ID feature listed a 1-800 number.

"I didn't know if it was going to be him on the phone or. . . somebody else," she said. Her worst thought was that it would be someone calling to give her the news that her husband had been killed.

In a one-minute conversation, Crumpaker, said he was OK and she would be hearing about an accident. "That was all he was allowed to say," Amy said.

Late Friday was spent up at Big Long Lake near Kendallville. A cookout was scheduled for Saturday. And Sunday is to be spent getting ready to head back to the Middle East. On Monday, Crumpaker, will be at Fort Wayne International Airport for a 6:05 a.m. flight to Atlanta. Then it's on to Germany, and then Kuwait. Finally, a plane will take Crumpaker back into Iraq, his trip a total of 16 hours from one world to another.

It will be back to seeking out trouble, raiding homes and searching for terrorists. Back to living in a minitrailer with a roommate. There are amenities - most importantly air conditioning, decent food, a television and DVD players, not to mention free postage for mail that weighs less than 50 pounds.

But all that hardly makes up for stepping back into a volatile country run by a fledgling government.

"Being in Iraq sucks;" Crumpacker said as he puffed on a Marlboro. "Let me rephrase that. Being over there is emotionally straining on you, and you are missing your family."

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/>

Hawai'i National Guard Slaughterhouse Bound

July 9, 2004 Advertiser Military Writer, The Honolulu Advertiser

Nearly 2,000 Hawai'i Army National Guard soldiers are deploying to Iraq in February to replace the 81st Brigade based in Balad, a city north of Baghdad.

Although the 29th Separate Infantry Brigade has been only alerted of a call-up, the need to conduct several months of full-time pre-deployment training means the soldiers could be mobilized as early as September for a year of duty in Iraq.

You've got that butterflies in your stomach; you've got that anticipation. Other than that, it's like, yeah, OK," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Yoshimura, 45, of Kapahulu, who works full time for the Guard.

Yoshimura said his thoughts are: "Do we have enough equipment? Do we have enough Interceptor (body armor) vests?"

In addition to the Hawai'i troops, about 650 soldiers from the Mainland and 500 from Guam, Saipan and American Samoa are part of the 29th alert.

The 29th units alerted are the brigade's Headquarters Company; 2nd Battalion, 299th Infantry; 29th Support Battalion; 1st Battalion, 487th Field Artillery; 227th Engineer Company; 229th Military Intelligence Company; F Troop, 82nd Cavalry (Oregon); 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry (California); and 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry.

Two National Guard soldiers attached to the 81st Brigade were killed June 22 in an ambush near the base, which comes under periodic mortar and rocket attack,

"It's just some of the guys who have mortgages or really good-paying jobs. They are having some problems," Staff Sgt. Rodney Bihag Jr., said.

No Good Deed Goes Unpunished; Troops Who Played Role Of Iraqi Insurgents Sent To Iraq

July 6, 2004 ABCNews.com

They've been called the most-hated unit in the Army - the 1st Battalion of the 509th Infantry - known as the Geronimoes.

The Geronimoes are tasked with playing the "enemy" at the Army's Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, La., putting visiting infantry and special operations troops through their paces.

Recently, that has meant playing Iraqi insurgents and terrorists - an enemy whose rocket attacks and suicide bombings are killing U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians almost daily. **To play the part, the men of the 509th were allowed to grow full beards and wear Iraqi civvies in place of their uniform.**

The bad guys now have to switch sides. With the Army pressed to rotate more soldiers into Iraq, they have now turned to the 509th, which hasn't been deployed in 60 years. Two of the battalion's four companies, Alpha and Bravo, have been called up for duty in Iraq.

So the notorious "bad guys" have had to shave their beards, put on an Army uniform, and become regular soldiers again. For the last few weeks, they've trained almost night and day with little sleep - learning to be U.S. soldiers, not foreign terrorists.

The Geronimoes are one of the best-trained units in the military, but they were focused primarily on being the best antagonists. That meant working independently with few restrictions. Now they must learn to act as a centralized unit dependent on one another for survival. (Actually, their chances of survival just took a major hit. All the formal by-the-book bullshit they have to follow now is one reason guerrillas win guerrilla wars, and are winning the war in Iraq.)

Sgt. Jason Buda says it's different being on the other side.

"Because you have certain rules to follow. You have to basically interact with the people to try to do your combat mission as well as a humanitarian mission. The enemy doesn't have rules to follow." (And that says it all.)

Pvt. James Jennings used to launch rockets at the visiting soldiers. Now as he heads to Iraq, he believes he's more prepared than most. "We're a lot more aggressive. We used to go in chasing after people, getting it done real quick, so we move a lot quicker normally than we would before."

The soldiers will be gone at least a year and no one feels that harder than their families. Tisdale's wife Kim is the volunteer leader of the family readiness group. She remembers getting the bad news in a double surprise: "He came home and he said two companies had been alerted, Alpha and Bravo. And I said, Well, good, you're not going to go. And he said, Well, Bravo company commander broke his leg that same day, so he's going to take over Bravo and go. So it was a big shock."

None of the families have had much time to prepare - the orders came so fast.

The surprise deployment has meant an early marriage for Erin and Issac Bamhart who were high school sweethearts. **Erin says: "It makes me real emotional to think about the possibility of him dying, and the intense stuff that they do every single day. They're out there in direct contact, and it's really hard to understand the fact that he could be gone."**

Moore's 'Fahrenheit 9/11' Urges Viewers To Question War 3 stars

July 12, 2004 By Chuck Vinch, [Army Times](#) staff writer

(Thanks to L for reporting it's available on CD from your favorite shaky dealer in the Green Zone, Baghdad. \$3. Pay no more.)

"Fahrenheit 9/11," Michael Moore's rocket-propelled grenade aimed squarely at George W. Bush, probably won't convert anyone; those who lean left will love it, those who lean right will hate it.

But this searing denunciation of all things Dubya is a finely honed piece of agitprop that will provide plentiful food for thought for anyone who's still undecided about the upcoming election.

The film opens with a prologue revisiting the 2000 Florida election mess, followed by a review of Bush's first eight months in office. Many people forget how rough the early days were for him. But that changed Sept. 11, 2001, which Moore revisits in a memorable way.

We see Bush getting the news while at an elementary school photo op - and sitting immobile for seven minutes pretending to read "My Pet Goat." **His supporters say he simply was trying to maintain an air of calm to avoid upsetting the kids, but the look in his eyes over those long minutes can easily be taken for something far different.**

Moore then maps out the longstanding ties between the Bush crowd - to include George H.W. - and the Saudi elite, to include the powerful bin Laden clan, which has long had large investments in Texas. Enough substantive dots are connected to make this a discomfiting sequence for anyone with even a hint of an open mind.

This leads up to the Iraq war, the focus of Act 11. Moore contends the Bush crowd used Iraq and the war on terrorism to stoke fear in order to obscure the efforts of their corporate patrons to line their already bulging pockets. One fat cat gleefully talks of how the Iraq war will translate into "a lot of money, a lot of money."

"Good for business, bad for the people," another one says.

Moore being Moore, he can't help going way over the line on occasion, as he does with the film's most egregious moment - footage of smiling, happy Iraqis just before the start of the war, as if no one lay battered and broken in Saddam's prisons.

This is followed by riveting war-zone footage. Fired-up U.S. troops eager to roar into Iraq and "get some" slide into weary disillusionment as their swift combat victory morphs into the intractable insurgency that continues to claim American lives almost daily.

The final act is the most compelling. It traces the emotional journey of Lila Lipscomb, mother of Army Sgt. Michael Pedersen, who died April 2, 2003, when his helicopter was shot down in Iraq. Lipscomb was an ardent supporter of Bush and the war, but did a complete about-face after her son was killed. She can't contain her anguish as she reads his last letter home, then wails, "I want him to be alive. ... I can't make him be alive." It's a powerful moment.

Did Moore leave out footage that didn't support his point of view? Sure, but he never makes any claim to being unbiased. However you feel about his politics, Moore also uses his film to make a plea for people to think for themselves, to avoid being like bubble-headed Britney Spears, who pops up in one clip to babble idiotically about how we should just do whatever our leaders say without question.

Republicans may demur, but Moore's brazen film is really as American as apple pie. After all, a rabble-rousing spasm of political dissent gave birth to our nation 228 years ago. And ever since, it has been the cherished right of all American citizens to freely and openly question their leaders.

True postscript: After I viewed the movie, who should be standing six feet outside the theater doors but a pistol-packing Virginia state trooper, arms folded across his chest, head cocked back, coolly eyeballing the departing crowd.

I'm still trying to decide how I feel about that.

MORE:

Marine Vet Praises F 9/11

7/1/2004 By DEEPTI HAJELA, Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK -- President Bush and everyone in Washington should screen Michael Moore's controversial anti-Bush film Fahrenheit 9/11, a group of military and 9/11 families said Wednesday.

"What we're trying to do here is to tell the administration ... not only see it but then come out ... and explain why this happened, why we went to Iraq and why 9/11 happened," said Ivan Medina, a former Marine from Middletown, N.Y., who served in Iraq and whose twin brother Irving was killed there.

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

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

"High Ranking Officer" Says Bush Full Of Shit; Saddam Had Nothing To Do With Zarqawi

10 July 2004 Aljazeera.Net

Elusive Jordanian activist Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi has been attracting sympathetic Iraqis and his ranks have swelled in recent months, **a high-ranking US military officer has said.**

In reviewing the multiple strains of anti-US violence in Iraq, the **officer was adamant that Zarqawi most likely never had any ties to the former president of Iraq, either before the US-led invasion in March 2003 or after.**

"Saddam didn't have any love for foreigners and... thought they had to be very closely watched. We have not found any evidence he cooperated with Zarqawi himself... In any case, I think he would be very wary of that kind of cooperation with Zarqawi."

White House officials have repeatedly cited Zarqawi as A missing link between Saddam Hussein and the al-Qaeda network in the buildup to the 2003 war.

Change Of Pace; This Time Natural Gas Pipeline Blown Up

7/10/2004 KIRKUK, Iraq (AP)

Saboteurs on Saturday attacked a natural gas pipeline that feeds into a northern power station, an official with the North Oil Company said.

Attackers planted a bomb near the gas pipeline in the Safra area, about 55 miles west of Kirkuk. The pipeline runs from the oil-rich northern city of Kirkuk to a power station in Beiji, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The attack is likely to affect power supplies in the northern region of Iraq, but it was not immediately clear by how much.

Clerics Not Fooled By Fake New Government

July 9 yahoo.com

Muslim leaders at Friday prayers accused Prime Minister Iyad Allawi of collaborating with the US-led forces.

"Either they should be totally sovereign or resign collectively," said one sheikh at a Baghdad mosque, referring to the interim cabinet, which officially took office following the termination of the US-led coalition on June 28.

Random arrests and attacks in the Sunni Muslim bastions of Fallujah and Samarra, west and north of Baghdad, carried out in the name of the government must stop, said Sheikh Ahmed Abdel Ghafour Samarrai in his weekly sermon.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Did It Before. Do It Again

"Well folks, that just about wraps up Vietnam. So let's all have a party and get outta here..."

(Admiral of the US command fleet on the USS Blue Ridge, to evacuated US military and Embassy staff and Vietnamese dependents, May 1 1975)

OCCUPATION REPORT

Destroy Falluja In Order To Save It?

New York Times (7.8.04)

Mohammed Abdullah Shahwani, Iraq's director of national intelligence, said that the Americans and the Iraqis could defeat the insurgents in Falluja but that the cost would be great indeed.

"We could take the city," he said, "but we would have to kill everyone in it."

Two Thirds Of New Puppet Government Are American And British Citizens!

June 29th, 2004 by Thalif Deen, Inter-Press Service/Common Dreams

Dilip Hiro, a longstanding Middle East expert based in London, says the interim government is no better than the U.S.-appointed former Iraqi Governing Council (IGC).

"In the final analysis, they are all beholden to the United States. **And as was true of the IGC, two-thirds of the 36-member interim government carry foreign passports, chiefly British and American,**" Hiro told IPS.

"**Remarkably, most of the former exiles of the IGC didn't even bring their families back to Iraq,**" said Hiro, author of 'Iraq: In the Eye of the Storm.'

"Now, the former exiles on the interim government are following the same IGC example and keeping their families abroad. This shows just how skin deep their attachment to Iraq is, and how little faith they have in its future as a U.S.-dominated `stable, democratic state'."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

The Lies The Left Tells Itself About The Democrats

July 06, 2004 By Stephen Gowans, From Vetpax

A bevy of US Leftists, including Noam Chomsky, Angela Davis, Michael Parenti and Pete Seeger, have called on "peace and social justice activists" to dump Bush in November in a "Letter to the Left", **citing the need to stop Bush's drive to war, as if somehow, the drive to war belongs to Bush alone, and isn't indelibly etched on the country's foreign policy.**

That's also Howard Zinn's view. Politicians, says the historian, respond to their constituencies, so if Kerry is pressured he just might back away from pro-war policies.

Convincing? I don't think so. Why should Kerry be any more susceptible to pressure from the Left than Bush? Because Kerry needs the Left to win, and Bush doesn't?

That might be so were it not for the reality that there's a far more powerful constituency the Democrats, as much as the Republicans, are inextricably and powerfully bound up with: the business community. And the business community has a vital interest in US empire building.

The Left, greatly impoverished, is no match. The Iraqi insurgency, however, might be, as a North Korean nuclear weapons program might be against US designs on the Korean peninsula. **Which is to say,**

what's going to stop US empire building is the only thing that's ever stopped it: the recalcitrance of the natives and the rivalry of competing powers.

What's more, most Left voters are going to vote for Kerry anyway, so Kerry doesn't need to do anything to accommodate them.

He doesn't even need to pander to the Left during an election, even if he intends to ignore it afterward, what established parties usually do when they need to appeal to left-leaning voters. Thank the dump-Bush-equals-vote-for-Kerry movement for that

To put it another way, the difference to be achieved in voting for Kerry vs. not voting at all is tantamount to the difference between buying a lottery ticket and saving your money. Except the price of a lottery ticket is nothing against the opportunity cost of squandering time and energy on the Democrats, when it could be spent building genuine anti-war, anti-imperialist, pro-egalitarian movements and parties committed to radical change.

Bush And Blair Peddling "The Old Colonialist Myth"

July 3, 2004 Sami Ramadani, The Guardian

Sami Ramadani is a senior lecturer in sociology at London Metropolitan University *and was a political exile from Saddam's regime.*

They get their dead in neat caskets draped with a flag; we have to gather and scrape our dead off of the floors and hope the American shrapnel and bullets left enough to make a definite identification." So wrote the author of the weblog Baghdad Burning, as she tried to draw attention to the tragic reality of life in occupied Baghdad.

It is this bereavement and anger among Iraqis - some of it expressed in mortars and homemade bombs - that has forced Bush and Blair to abandon any fanfare and hand over "sovereignty" in a secret bunker guarded by tanks. Not one signal of popular joy greeted the historic event.

In a parallel but equally deceptive move, the US handed over Saddam's legal file but the tyrant is still in US custody. Saddam's defiance in court largely stems from the fact that many of his accusers - including Prime Minister Allawi, a former cadre of Saddam's Ba'ath party, and some of the non-Ba'athist forces represented in the transitional government - were allies of his regime.

Many Iraqis feel that the US-appointed transitional government has no moral authority over the man in the dock, both because of their past association with his regime and because they came, in the words of a now common Iraqi saying, "on the backs of American tanks". As one Iraqi observed: "If they give Saddam a fair trial, they will all end up with him in the dock - Kissinger, Reagan, Thatcher, Blair, the two Bushes and Allawi."

The seeds of the Vietnam war were sown by the US installing a client regime in Saigon. And unless Bush and Blair are stopped by the American and British peoples, a similar

catastrophe is in the making in Iraq and the wider Middle East. But it will not be a war of Arabs against Kurds, Sunnis against Shia or Muslims against Christians, but an equally devastating war between a US-backed minority (of all religions, sects and nationalities) against a similarly composed overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people.

Just like Iraq today, South Vietnam was seen by Washington as the line that must be held at all costs. But as the Vietnamese people's rejection of the client regime grew stronger, the US bunkered behind its creation in Saigon, and one million Vietnamese troops backed by half a million US soldiers. Hundreds of thousands of people were arrested and tortured; the total Vietnamese death toll topped 3 million, and 55,000 US soldiers were killed in action.

The US terror tactics in Vietnam (and more recently in Nicaragua and Honduras) are being gradually introduced into Iraq. US assassination squads and Mossad, for example, must be already active in Iraq, following the training of special US forces teams of "hitmen", with the help of Israeli experts, at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and Israel several months ago - as reported by the distinguished American journalist Seymour Hersh, a story which the Pentagon did not deny.

The occupation has blocked the democratic gains that Iraqis might have enjoyed after the collapse of Saddam's regime. For the US has long realised that the Iraqi people, if given the choice, would elect forces hostile to US policies.

Elections for deans in Iraq's universities were won by anti-occupation candidates, prompting the US to scrap elections for city mayors and oppose calls for early nationwide elections.

With the exception of limited free speech, which excludes "incitement" against occupation, there is nothing to show for so much death and destruction.

It has become fashionable to criticise the US for "having no plans" for Iraq after the fall of Saddam. The truth is that tens of policy committees drafted numerous plans. I know many Iraqi exiles who were well-paid to join these committees, which worked in the US before the invasion.

All these plans crashed after colliding with the rock of the Iraqi people's opposition. Had most of the people been even mildly supportive of the invasion, these plans would have been implemented, and Bush and Blair might now be holding regular press conferences in downtown Baghdad. **The Iraqi people's resistance has, for a period at least, thwarted US plans to attack Iran, Syria, Hizbullah in Lebanon, and North Korea.**

Though varied in political and social outlook, the opposition to the US-led presence, and the armed resistance (as distinct from terrorism), have been supported by most Iraqis and by the mosques.

Short of banning prayer itself, the mosque was one institution that Saddam couldn't crush, which explains their central role in opposing both Saddam's tyranny and the occupation. But the role of religion in Iraq is politically and socially contradictory. While the anti-occupation secular forces are concerned about the influence of Iraq's religious leaders, the latter are not all cut from the same cloth. Many are supportive of working with secular forces, holding democratic elections and protecting women's rights and those of the Kurdish people.

Some Shia and Sunni religious leaders formed an anti-sectarian front, the Muslim Scholars Committee. The MSC has organised demonstrations in Baghdad and other cities encouraging Muslims to unite and pray at each others' mosques, where secular people are also welcome. The committee invited over 30 secular and Christian organisations to attend the First Founding Iraqi

Conference Against the US Occupation. **This significant development attracted little media coverage, as it contradicts the notion that Iraqis are incapable of working collectively.**

The western media predicted that civil war was imminent after explosions at Shia mosques killed hundreds of people in March. But instead, these explosions generated a massive show of unity across Iraq. People blamed the US (and Israel) for planning the atrocities or turning a blind eye to the perpetrators.

Bush and Blair continue to peddle the myth, beloved of old colonialists, that Iraqis will start a civil war if the "benevolent" presence of the occupation forces is removed. But there is nothing benevolent about their troops or their stooges.

Allawi is not only a former Saddam operative and CIA "asset", but also the leader of the Iraqi National Accord, an organisation composed of former Saddamist officers. His appointment, and the torture at Abu Ghraib, are part of a systematic US policy of building new Saddamist-style state structures.

It is the US-led presence itself which is dividing Iraqis now. The US is deepening a split between a minority for and an overwhelming majority against the US-led forces.

The immediate withdrawal of the US-led forces from Iraq is the only way to stop the impending "civil" war, in which the US will back a "sovereign" Iraqi government to crush the people and their aspirations for liberation and democracy.

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

CLASS WAR NEWS

Death On The March; Bush Regime Wants Fewer To Get AIDS Drugs

7.1.04 & 7.6 Wall St. Journal

Four years ago, the United Nations, governments of wealthy countries and major foundations committed for the first time to bring drugs to the millions of AIDS sufferers in poor countries. No longer, it was declared, would the life-saving medications proven effective in the mid-1990s be restricted to rich nations that could afford to spend thousands of dollars a year per person.

Today, however, the major global programs are falling short-either in getting funding, reaching treatment targets, or both. **According to the World Health Organization, more than 93% of the six million AIDS patients in the developing world who urgently need drugs aren't getting them.**

As many as 40 million more people worldwide have the virus that causes AIDS, a number that rose by an estimated five million last year.

The Bush administration is blocking access to cheaper versions of AIDS drugs and insisting on rules that favor big pharmaceutical companies.

The U.S. isn't the only target of criticism. Many European governments are giving less to the AIDS cause than the U.S. relative to the size of their economies. **Amid the fight against terrorism, AIDS has lost the status it held four years ago as the compelling global issue of the day.**

As public-health groups urge wider use of generic drugs to lower the cost of treating AIDS and other diseases in developing countries, U.S. trade negotiators-prodded by the drug industry-are taking the opposite stance in new trade pacts, seeking to strengthen protections for costlier brand-name drugs.

"Medicines are treated like a commodity, the same as Barbie Dolls or computer software;" says Rachel Cohen of Doctors Without Borders, a nonprofit emergency relief organization. Essential medicines, she says, should not be treated simply as products needing protection or else "poor people pay the price."

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