

GI SPECIAL 2#B24

EXTREMELY UNHEALTHY ENVIRONMENT



BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!

Fierce Fighting Sweeps Country: Madhi Resistance Army Downs Copter; Many U.S. Troops Killed, Wounded;

(PBS Newshour reported 8.5.04 that 15 U.S. troops were wounded.)

Aug 5, 2004 By Khaled Farhan, NAJAF, Iraq (Reuters) & American Forces Press Service & 8.6.04 AFP & August 5, 2004 By Jamie Tarabay, ASSOCIATED PRESS & The Scotsman 8.6.04 & Indolink 8.5.04 & Mideast Online 8.5.04 & By ABDUL HUSSEIN AL-OBEIDI, Associated Press Writer

Followers of rebel cleric Moqtada al-Sadr shot down a U.S. helicopter on Thursday in the Iraqi city of Najaf and two were killed by British troops in Basra in clashes that threatened to reignite a Shi'ite uprising.

During the fighting in Najaf, a U.S. UH-1 helicopter was hit by gunfire and crashed, injuring the crew.

Shiite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr today called for a national uprising against the U.S. and allied military forces through a statement issued in Najaf, his stronghold, the New York Times reported on its Web site.

"The cease-fire is over because of the actions of the occupation forces, and the situation has started to deteriorate," warned Sheik Abdul Hadi al-Daraji, a spokesman for al-Sadr in Baghdad. **Sheikh Mahmoud al-Sudani, a spokesman for Sadr, said U.S. forces and Iraqi police had attacked first.**

A US military spokesman in Baghdad said "A UH-1 marine helicopter attached to the 11th Marine Expeditionary unit was shot down at about 11:45 am (0745 GMT)." "Both crew are alive and have been recovered. The extent of their injuries are unknown."

The U.S. military said the crew of the downed helicopter in Najaf were wounded and evacuated. Sadr's aides said the cleric's Mehdi Army militia had shot down the aircraft.

The helicopter had been carrying away a US marine injured in the fighting when it came under small arms fire.

The fighting in Najaf was the heaviest in the city since a rebellion by Sadr's followers in April and May.

Busloads of Mahdi Army militants were seen entering the city, residents said.

Later, the sound of heavy gunfire boomed out from around the cemetery.

Sadr aides accused US troops of damaging a minaret of the city's holiest shrine, the mausoleum of Imam Ali, which has remained a Sadr stronghold since his militia waged an uprising against US forces in the spring.

"Once again, the blasphemous Americans have attacked the Imam Ali shrine, so Muslims take up arms to defend your holy places against the occupiers," his fighters shouted over loudspeakers in the afternoon.

Sadr spokesman Sheikh Ahmed al-Shaibani told AFP later that the militia was "ready to confront (US forces) and use whatever means possible" to boot them out of the holy city.

In the neighboring city of Kufa, the Mahdi Army briefly took over a police station before being forced out by Iraqi police and national guardsmen, the U.S. military said.

In what could be a sign of a fresh coordinated onslaught against foreign troops, Sadr's representative in Iraq's second city of Basra declared holy war against British forces after four militiamen were arrested.

In Basra, Sadr's supporters took to the streets to demand the release of comrades they said were detained by British forces.

An al-Sadr spokesman, Sheikh Assad al-Basri, said the militant group "prepared 1,000 fighters in Basra to confront the British forces who failed to respond to our demands."

"We will wage jihad (holy war) and war against the foreign troops," Basri vowed earlier. If Iraqi security forces fought alongside multinational forces "we will strike them harshly," he threatened.

A British Army spokesman, Major Ian Clooney, dismissed the threat as "only rhetoric" and said the four men had been held for questioning.

But fighting broke out after a British patrol was ambushed and returned fire in a running battle lasting 15 minutes. (As British troops moved towards Lexington and Concord to disarm the American militia, a British Army spokesman dismissed the threat of the Americans to fight back as "only rhetoric.")

"Coalition forces were attacked with small arms fire and returned fire, killing two enemy fighters," a British military spokeswoman said, adding that no British soldiers were wounded.

The Mahdi Army earlier had said it was taking up positions close to where British troops normally patrol after a noon deadline passed in its demand for the release of four al-Sadr supporters detained two days earlier.

By dusk, a British spokesman described Basra as "quiet but tense" and said military commanders were negotiating with local leaders in a bid to calm the situation.

Clashes also broke out in impoverished Shi'ite areas of Baghdad. A spokesman for Sadr in Baghdad said one militiaman was killed in the clashes with U.S. troops.



Madhi Army soldiers fight with U.S. troops in the Baghdad neighbourhood of Sadr City, Aug. 5. (AP Photo/Mohammed Uraibi)

In Baghdad's Sadr City neighborhood, Madhi Army insurgents fired on a U.S. patrol, triggering gunbattles, said Maj. Philip Smith, a spokesman for the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division. *Seven U.S. soldiers were wounded in at least two firefights, Smith said.*

Al-Daraji, al-Sadr's spokesman, said the fighting broke out in Baghdad because of the violence in Najaf and escalating tensions between U.S. forces and al-Sadr's loyalists throughout the country.

By early evening, US jets began shelling militia positions in the holy city of Najaf and planes could be heard roaring over the capital.

The U.S. military said the fighting began at about 3 a.m. (2300 GMT Wednesday) when "a significant number of aggressors" believed to be Mehdi Army militia attacked a Najaf police station with machineguns, rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms, a "large-scale" and "repeated" attack on the main police station in Najaf.

In the mixed Sunni and Shi'ite town of Mahawil south of Baghdad, guerrillas detonated a car bomb and sprayed gunfire at a police station. At least nine were killed and more than 20 wounded when resistance fighters dressed in police uniforms opened fire and a bomber blew up a minibus outside an Iraqi police station, police and an interior ministry spokesman said.

Interior ministry spokesman Sabah Kadhim said three masked resistance fighters opened fire on the police station in the town, about 75 km (40 miles) south of Baghdad, and fled. A bomb in a minibus then exploded outside the building. The two attackers escaped.

The blast damaged the gate of the station and a dozen nearby cars and left a 15-foot-wide crater.

Kadhim said two senior police officers were also shot dead on Thursday in the town of Musayyib, near Mahawil.

In the southern city of Nasiriyah, an AFP correspondent said militiamen armed with rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and Kalashnikovs were out in force on the streets.

In Amarah, an appeal for Mahdi Army members to mobilize rang out from mosque loudspeakers and militants took to the streets, shooting at government buildings blocking roads, and launching mortars at British troops and a British base, said Maj. Ian Clooney, a British military spokesman. Four people were also wounded when a British position came under mortar fire, medics said.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Two Marines Killed Near Qaim

Aug. 05, 2004 By Sabrina Tavernise, NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

Two Marines were killed and four wounded in attacks near Qaim in western Iraq near the border with Syria Wednesday.

Soldier Killed In Najaf Convoy Attack, 5 Wounded

Aug 5, 2004 By Khaled Farhan, NAJAF, Iraq (Reuters) & American Forces Press Service

Guerrillas attacked a U.S. convoy near Najaf with a rocket-propelled grenade and small arms fire, killing one American soldier and wounding five, the U.S. military said.

A soldier assigned to the 13th Corps Support Command was killed today when a U.S. convoy came under small-arms fire near Najaf, the military reported. Three other soldiers were wounded in the attack and were taken to a military medical facility. Two others were treated at the site.

IED Wounds 4 Near Dujayl

8.5.04 American Forces Press Service

Four Task Force Danger soldiers were reported to be in stable condition at a military medical facility after being wounded by an improvised explosive device that damaged their vehicle near Dujayl around 6 p.m. Aug. 4. One soldier was treated and returned to duty.

Mortar Blasts Hit Central Baghdad

Aug 5, 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters) & By ABDUL HUSSEIN AL-OBEIDI, Associated Press Writer

In central Baghdad, insurgents fired three rockets late Thursday, one of them hitting a hotel compound where foreign journalists and foreign contractors stay. The rocket hit outside a restaurant at the Palestine Hotel, leaving a small crater and shattering windows but causing no serious damage and no injuries.

A plume of smoke rose close to the Sheraton and Palestine hotels.

Reuters correspondents based close to the compound heard at least three explosions, followed by automatic gunfire, at about 11:15 p.m.

Journalists inside the compound said by telephone that at least two mortar rounds landed nearby but **they had no immediate word on damage or casualties as they were continuing to take cover for fear of further attack.**

British Soldier Dead In Accident

8.5.05 The Ministry of Defence

A British soldier was killed in an accident at Al Amarah on 4 August 2004.

It is with deep regret that the Ministry of Defence has to confirm that Private Christopher Gordon Rayment died in a tragic accident at Al Amarah on 4 August 2004. Aged 22, single and from London, he was serving with the 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment.

Small Wooden Boat Rams U.S. Aircraft Carrier, Two Jets Damaged

Aug. 05, 2004 JOHN J. LUMPKIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The Navy is investigating how a small wooden boat was able to approach and ram into an aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf last month, military officials said.

On the night of July 22, a dhow smashed into the starboard hull of the USS John F. Kennedy and sank. No survivors from the traditional Arab sailing boat were found. The dhow's origin, cargo and destination are unknown.

Dhows are commonly used as both transports and fishing boats. But a dhow also was used in a fatal attack in the Gulf in April.

Rear Adm. Evan M. Chanik, director of the programming division for the chief of naval operations, will investigate what went wrong as the dhow closed on the Kennedy, officials said.

The Kennedy itself was unscathed, but **two jet fighters on the deck were damaged when one slid into the other as the carrier made a hard turn to avoid the dhow,** several Navy officials said.

Said Cmdr. Jamie Graybeal, a spokesman for the 5th Fleet in Bahrain, "That it occurred is obviously not normal."

Several Navy officials, some speaking on the condition of anonymity because the investigation is under way, described some of the chain of events that led to the collision:

The Kennedy was steaming in international waters. A fighter was approaching to land. At some point, the dhow was detected. But the Kennedy's commander decided to maintain the ship's course while it finished the delicate operation of receiving a plane.

After the plane landed, the Kennedy began a hard turn to avoid the dhow. It was too late; the boat struck the Kennedy's hull and sank. The deck of the Kennedy pitched sideways with the turn and the just-landed plane slid into a second fighter parked nearby. No one was hurt. Damage to the planes, an F-14 and an F-18, can be repaired.

No one has contacted the Navy about a missing boat or mariners, Graybeal said.

The officials could not describe how far away the dhow was detected or what steps the Kennedy took to signal the boat away.

Carriers usually travel with several escorts, including destroyers and cruisers capable of intercepting missile attacks, surface ships and submarines. Officials could not say if any escorts detected or attempted to intercept the dhow as it approached.

Graybeal said he did not know whether Capt. Stephen B. Squires, the Kennedy's commanding officer, was on the bridge directing operations at the time of the collision.

GET SOME TRUTH: CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

TROOP NEWS

No Help Is On The Way: No Country Offers Troops

8/6/2004 UNITED NATIONS, AUG 5 (AP)

The United Nations will have to rely on the US-led multinational force in Iraq for security for its new envoy in Baghdad **because no country has offered troops for a separate UN protection force**, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Wednesday.

A Sudden Change Of Plans: “As the Days Wind Down, I Get More Nervous”



Paul A. Weishaupt, with his girlfriend, Sara Aderman, checks out an Army mailgram calling him back to active duty. "As the days wind down, I get more nervous," he said. (Ronald J. Colleran/Buffalo News)

8/5/2004 By LOU MICHEL, Buffalo News Staff Reporter

Paul A. Weishaupt left the Army two years ago with an honorable discharge, thinking his days of military service were over for good.

The 24-year-old Lockport resident said he enjoyed his four-year hitch in the military but realized it was time to return to civilian life and begin anew. He has been making a comfortable living as a bill collector at a Lancaster law office.

A few weeks ago, his life was turned upside down when Uncle Sam sent him a notice ordering him to return to the Army next month and prepare for combat duty in Iraq.

"As the days wind down, I get more nervous, and it is hard to sleep at night," he said. "The thing I'm most afraid of is the first day when I step off the C-130 airplane and put my foot on Iraqi soil."

The recall of former troops classified as Individual Ready Reservists is the first major activation of this group since the 1991 Gulf War and involves soldiers who completed the active-duty portion of their enlistment contracts but still owe time to the military reserve.

According to Army officials, the rare recall has upset a number of former soldiers who are being recalled from civilian life to fight in the war. (No shit?)

Weishaupt, who is being forced to leave his \$45,000-a-year job to return to the Army.

He says he was only vaguely aware of the full implications of his Individual Ready Reserve status and never imagined he would end up fighting in Iraq.

At the time he enlisted in 1998, Weishaupt said, his recruiter breezed over the reservist requirement, which made him eligible for recall for several years after completing his active duty.

To say the news of his call-up hit him like a bombshell is an understatement.

He had arrived at his mother's West Seneca home for Sunday dinner last month and found the notice waiting for him. The Army had sent it there because it was the last civilian address it had for him.

"I opened up the letter and read it, and for a few minutes, I didn't have a thought in the world. I went blank. Then I kept it to myself and acted like nothing was wrong," said Weishaupt, who at 6 feet tall has the look of a warrior with his bulging muscles from years of weightlifting.

He had joined the Army fresh from graduating from John F. Kennedy High School in Sloan. He sought adventure and found it serving as an infantryman, with stints at the World Trade Center site after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and as a peacekeeper in Bosnia.

And while the chance to fight in a war might have meant the ultimate adventure to a younger Weishaupt, it now represented the ultimate disruption to his civilian life.

But as he stared at the notification, he realized there was no getting around it.

The Army was ordering him to report to Fort Jackson, S.C., on Sept. 13 to prepare for service in "Operation Iraqi Freedom." He could expect to serve a minimum of 545 days "unless extended or terminated earlier."

If he failed to show up, he would face military law penalties - translation: deserter charges, which, Weishaupt says, are not an option to him.

After several days, he broke the news to his loved ones and friends that he would be inside Iraq within a few months. No one was happy. **His girlfriend, Sara Aderman of North Tonawanda, was so distressed and filled with mixed emotions she could not bring herself to speak publicly about it.**

But his fellow worker, Jennifer Mahl, had plenty to say.

"I'm totally against this call-up. I feel these men and women did their time and duty for our country, and they are trying to get their lives together," Mahl said. "Now they have to start all over again. It's a shame."

Weishaupt says he wishes that the military had sent him to Afghanistan or another front on the war against terrorism before his active duty ended in December 2002, rather than now, long after his discharge.

"I just wish they used me sooner," he said.

Survivor Recalls Fatal Attack On Reservists

Aug 5, 2004 UPPER DARBY, PA (AP)

The Marine manning the radio in the back of the lead Humvee never saw a watermelon stand that concealed deadly explosives from the advancing convoy.

"Shrapnel hit the side of my face and hit my eyes and I remember putting my hand up and trying to block it as my head was going down," said Sgt. Matthew Crawford, back home in Delaware County, recalling the attack that killed three reservists from the Sixth Engineer Support Battalion in Folsom.

Cpl. John Todd III, 25, of Bridgeport, Pa.; Sgt. Alan D. Sherman, 36, of Wanamassa, N.J., and Lance Cpl. Patrick Adle, 21, of Bel Air, Md., died in the June 29 blast, the first U.S. casualties after the transfer of power in Iraq a day earlier.

The day went badly from the start, Crawford, 25, told The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Bridge Company B, which rebuilds damaged and destroyed bridges, was on its second tour of duty in Iraq. The unit escaped casualties on its first tour, which started in March 2003, and had gone back in January.

"The second time, it was kind of like tempting fate," Crawford said. Conditions were punishing, with temperatures often hovering between 115 and 120, sand that stuck in their eyelids, noses and ears, and ditches instead of toilets.

Crawford waited with his friend Cpl. Matheusz Erszkowicz, who goes by the nickname "Easy," as the convoy prepared to leave. Construction gear and bridge materials on one of the trucks came loose and troops had to secure it again.

"We were just standing around, and someone came out and said, " 'Man, I just have a bad feeling about this,' " Crawford said. "I looked at Easy and said, 'I got the same feeling.' "But there's nothing you can do. When you've got a mission, you've got to go."

Moving through the outskirts of Baghdad, the trucks passed stands every few minutes where merchants peddled fruit, tobacco, swords and "anything else they could sell," he said.

Crawford recalled a foreboding as the unit turned onto a less-traveled desert road.

"I just got this weird feeling. I never had it like that before. It just came over me, and I couldn't stop thinking about it," he said. "I just thought to myself, 'This is it.'"

A mile or two later the explosion tore through the truck. Blood and dust filled his eyes. Metal shards flew through the air and hit him in the jaw, temple and cheek. He heard Easy screaming, then yelling, "Are you all right? Is everyone all right?"

"I'm fine. Check on everybody else," Crawford shouted back. The other three in the vehicle were dead. "Every one of them; they were dead on impact," he said.

Five weeks after the attack, the cuts on Crawford's face were healing. He may need hand surgery to repair nerve damage. He will probably have permanent blurriness in his left eye. Crawford said he will not be sent back to Iraq.

His fiancé, Lisa Byrne, said she rarely asks him about the war, but thinks it is never far from his thoughts.

"I think he thinks about what happened every single day," Byrne said. "He will probably think about it every single day for the rest of his life."

Schofield Soldier Gets 3 Years For Killing Iraqi Citizen

August 5, 2004 Gregg Kakesako, Honolulu Star-Bulletin

A Schofield Barracks soldier was sentenced today to three years in prison and given a dishonorable discharge for shooting to death an unarmed Iraqi cowherder who was handcuffed.

A panel of five officers and five enlisted soldiers in Tikrit, Iraq, found Pfc. Edward Richmond, 20, guilty of voluntary manslaughter for shooting Muhamad Husain Kadir in the back of his head on Feb. 28 near Taal Al Jai, the Army said in a statement.

Deluded Florida Man Goes Back To Iraq As Mercenary Supervisor, Babbles About How Wonderful It All Is; Blown Up, Dead In 60 Days

August 05, 2004 By John Murawski, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

After spending most of last year in Iraq doing house-to-house searches and manning roadblocks, Robert Wagner decided there was more he could do for the mission he fervently believed in.

The West Palm Beach native gave up his comfortable job this year as an airport security screener in Virginia and returned to the war zone for a voluntary tour of duty, this time working for a private security contractor. (Translation: mercenary.)

On Sunday, Wagner, 29, died when a bomb blew up a convoy he led that was transporting materials for the reconstruction of Iraq, **just two months into his one-year contract with the private firm, CusterBattles. (Who, in their right mind, would sign on with an outfit named after *Custer*? Isn't that some kind of a clue?)**

"He was used to danger and he knew what was involved and he still wanted to go back," said his stepmother, Vicki Wagner of West Palm Beach.

The Forest Hill High School graduate's mission as a CusterBattles supervisor was to provide security for other private contractors against being kidnapped or killed by insurgents. (Well, that didn't work out very well, did it?)

Among Wagner's survivors are his 5-year-old son, Ty, and wife Kristie, in Gloucester, Va.; his father, Bruce Wagner, in West Palm Beach; and mother, June Wagner, who moved to Jacksonville this year from West Palm Beach.

Wagner's body is expected to arrive at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware today. CusterBattles, based in Newport, R.I., is releasing few details about the location or circumstances of Wagner's death. **Two Iraqis were also killed, and two American contractors were injured, Wagner's stepmother said.**

Wagner spent his adulthood in uniform: Eight years in the U.S. Marines, **where he received anti-terrorism training and worked as an aircraft safety mechanic** before reenlisting in the Army Reserves in 2001. He was on the inactive reserve list and living in Newport News, Va., when he left for Iraq June 5 as a private contractor.

"My spirits are high and I'm having a good time," he wrote July 16.

A month earlier, he had written: "I really don't need anything. I have just about anything I need over here."



Family photograph

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

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Cuts Off Supply Of Saudi Refined Petroleum For Iraq

RIYADH, Aug 5 (KUNA)

Saudi local authorities on Thursday suspended trucks working from heading to Iraq via Jdaida Ara'ar due to the deteriorating security conditions in Iraq which is threatening the safety of truck drivers.

Director of one of the Saudi companies working in Iraq Hazam Al-Jeri told the Al-Eqtisadya daily published today that there are 221 Saudi trucks waiting on the borders with Iraq and waiting for a permit to enter Iraq.

He added that his company is supervising the transport of 3.2 million liters of refined petroleum products for the Iraqi National institute. He noted that 50 Saudi companies transport the same cargo to Iraq on daily basis.

Al-Jeri added that Saudi companies have halted their trucks from going to Iraq last month until protection is provided. This came after robbing and vandalizing fifty Saudi trucks within Iraqi territories.

Moqtada Sadr Declares War On British Troops

August 06, 2004 Friday Jamadi-ul-Saani 19,1425 A.H. BASRA, IRAQ:



Al-Madhi Resistance Militia loyal to Moqtada Sadr

Shiite Muslim leader Moqtada Sadr on Thursday declared holy war against British forces based in Iraq's main southern city of Basra after four of their comrades were arrested.

"We will wage jihad (holy war) and war against the foreign troops, not against police and Iraqi forces," said Sheikh Saad al-Basri, Sadr's representative in the overwhelmingly Shiite city.

"However, if they (the Iraqi personnel) fight on the side of the occupiers, we will strike them harshly."

Basri accused British forces of arresting four Sadr supporters in order to "create in Basra, the state of crisis that exists in Najaf".

A British military spokeswoman in Basra said four militia members had been arrested on Wednesday as part of a "routine security check and are being held to assist with inquiries," but had no information about the holy war threat.

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

**Convoy Driver Killed After Delivery To
U.S. Forces**

Aug 5, 2004 By Khaled Farhan, NAJAF, Iraq (Reuters)

Iraqi militants killed a Turkish truck driver and two more are missing, Turkey's Foreign Ministry said. A ministry official told Reuters Osman Alisan's body had been identified in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

Earlier, NTV television reported that **Alisan had been shot dead** on Monday in Filfayl, about 70 km (40 miles) from the Turkish border, **after delivering fuel oil to U.S. forces.**

Madhi Resistance Troops In Action



“Tell Bush I will consider it my holy mission to rip your fucking lips off, punch your heart out, then kick your worthless ass right off the planet.” (Madhi Army boot camp?) (Reuters 8.5.04)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Iraqi Delegates Insulted And Robbed—In Memphis

8/4/2004 Eyewitness News Memphis

Two of the Iraqi delegates were robbed at gunpoint last night on Main Street in Downtown Memphis. The thieves got away with some cash, travelers checks and a camera. No one was hurt.

The robbery comes one day after City Council Chairman Joe Brown slammed the door in the delegates' faces at city hall. *The group was here to learn about democracy, freedom and civil rights in America.* (They did.)

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/>**

CLASS WAR NEWS



Transportation workers surround the legislative palace with their trucks in Montevideo, Uruguay, Aug. 5. The workers are protesting the high price of fuel. (AP Photo/Marcelo Hernandez)

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