

GI SPECIAL 2#B28



8.10.04 Mahdi Resistance Army soldier holds grenade launcher with picture of Moqtada Sadr on it in Baghdad's Sadr City. Fighting raged on in the Shia neighborhood for a fifth straight day.(AFP/Karim Sahib)

BOOM!

TO: GI SPECIAL

FROM: h, Baquba, Iraq

8.9.04

Mothers claim that when their child hurts, even from a great distance away, they know about it. They can feel it throughout their whole body. Their mind races in a torment that only a mother can describe. A sixth sense, a gut feeling.

Comic heroes have it too. Some of these fictional characters have instincts that surpass that of normal human beings. With action packed suspense, the hero of the story will know when impending doom lurks around that unsuspecting corner. Spider-Man calls it his Spider Senses. Mothers call it their maternal instincts.

Soldiers have it, too. We call it our "soldier's intuition", a strange instinct of survival that warns you before all hell breaks loose. Some of us know when chaos will explode unexpectedly, sometimes hours before it happens, sometimes seconds. We can literally feel it, the static in the air, the suffocating sensation, the butterflies in the stomach. We'll tell each other before a mission, "Be careful, some shit's definitely going down today."

This feeling, much like a mother's or a comic hero's, seems impossible to explain. You have to be there, in a combat zone, to know it. You have to pull twenty missions a week, roll down the same dilapidated streets, see the same menacing faces, and ward off countless ambushes before you develop this psychic awareness. Soldier's intuition: a sick and disgusting feeling that at any minute, something will go horribly wrong...

BOOM!

Our three truck convoy was returning to our forward operating base after a rather normal day of combat patrols. In the course of six hours, we didn't encounter anything that looked out of place, nothing suspicious, nor did we have to blast away with our truck-mounted machine guns.

This really is how a normal day goes. You drive down a highway, you pass timid motorists, you get ugly looks from pedestrians, children throw rocks at your truck or curse you with incoherent tongues. You'll be out all day, sweating away in the blistering 131 degree afternoon temperatures. Putrid smells of raw sewage and burning garbage become acceptable after being exposed to these foul scents for a long enough time. This is all part of a good day if, when you are done, you never once had to fire your weapon.

However, our day wasn't quite finished. We were still about six miles away from the gate, still on a bad stretch of road that was once named RPG Alley. As we approached an Iraqi National Guard checkpoint, I noticed that teenagers were running away from the general area.

This sort of behavior happens regularly, but you never get used to it. There is just something that feels wrong about people running as we approach. I always have to remind myself that, no matter how friendly I am to these people, they will never trust me while I hold a 50caliber machine gun at the ready.

Never the less, it was at this point that I felt that "panic" creep over me. That gut feeling. It's never once lied to me when it kicked this hard. "goddamn...", I said to myself, "here we go again."

But nothing! The teenagers continued to run down the street to chase a buddy on a moped. I checked behind me to reassure myself that our convoy was ok, that it was just a false alarm. How funny. How embarrassing! If anyone knew about my white-knuckled fear they'd mock me for days...

BOOM!

As I was focusing on our following two vehicles, a hellish boom rocked the whole truck I was sitting in. Enormous clouds of jet black smoke and hellish fires erupted a hundred feet in all directions. A flaming piece of hood and other random vehicle parts hurled themselves through the air. An entire engine block rolled and tumbled at least 50 yards before it came to a complete stop. The thunderous percussions of the mighty explosion snatched the breath from my lungs and replaced it with dry, stale fear. I could see the shockwaves of terror in microsecond intervals as it hit my eyes and rattled my brain.

I found myself, under great strain, screaming, "Oh fuck! We've been hit! The bastards blew up our rear truck!"

The driver and front passenger inside my truck were equally shook, cursing and screaming. Our front passenger was already on the radio, calling for a situation report. The driver was turning the truck around. I tried aiming my machine gun at any obvious signs of threat, but could not keep my eyes off the raging ball of fire.

To all of our relief, we saw our rear truck emerge from the explosion, much like you would see in a Hollywood blockbuster.

As our last vehicle sped through the madness, he sent a transmission through the radio that he and his entire crew were fine. Apparently, a mysterious white pick-up truck had managed to pull off a tributary road and onto the main highway. The unknown driver pulled right behind our rear vehicle and, before the gunner could back him off, detonated his own pick-up. A suicide bomber, driving an unstoppable killing machine, must have decided to kill two birds with one stone by triggering the explosives at the exact time our last truck passed the Iraqi check point.

After a hasty assessment of the situation, we turned back to see if any of the several Iraqi guardsmen were still alive.

The explosion took everyone by complete surprise. As we approached the crater where the driver detonated, we could plainly see the carnage left by the rigged pick-up truck. The first thing that attracted our attention was the burning guard tower. It was engulfed in flames caused by the burning gasoline from the pick-up. There was no longer a guard in the tower, but his machine gun was still mounted inside. The searing flames were cooking the rounds inside the gun. Shots were being fired from the tower in every direction as we approached the grisly scene.

Upon reaching this dangerous area, we placed our vehicles in a triangle pattern, to establish a secured location.

We left one soldier with each truck, manning the crew-served machine guns to provide security. The rest of us advanced on the guard tower where the cooked rounds were being expelled from their smoldering casings. Keeping your cool in a situation like this is difficult, but after a few times of dealing with life and death situations you learn to turn off emotion and deal with the problem at hand. Sometimes during these gruesome ordeals, one has the tendency to let his thoughts drift into sorrow and pity. However, reality quickly sinks in as you realize that seconds wasted cost lives.

Three of us knelt down, adjacent to the concrete guard tower, to pull two of the wounded Iraqi soldiers to safety. However, at this particular time, no one was safe from the burning bullets blasting away over our heads. A sergeant on our team reached up into the gunner's nest and quickly yanked a long stream of bullets away from the gun. Seconds later, the runaway gun halted, as the fire burned away the remaining rounds. Everything felt much safer after the arbitrary shooting had stopped, and we were then able to perform immediate first aid on the wounded guardsmen.

The Iraqi soldiers were severely injured by the blast. Each of them were missing arms and legs. One was slowly dying as his intestines were falling out of his abdomen. The man seemed to be losing consciousness as he went from pleading for help to slowly muttering a prayer to "Allah". The other was barely hanging on to life as his brain matter

was seeping from the back of his skull. He was silent and motionless, except for his quivering eyes and a painful facial expression of defeat.

As I ran back to our truck to get excess medical supplies, I ran through what looked like a ram sacked mannequin warehouse. Pieces of burning flesh, body parts, and articles of clothing were strewn everywhere. An arm here, a leg there. A torso, a boot, a piece of head. Fingers, toes, a jaw, a busted watermelon. In the heat of the moment, you don't think about body parts as being real. They seem artificial. Completely lifeless. Plastic mannequin pieces. However, it's the smell that reminds you of the reality at hand. The burning hair, the melted skin and charred bone. The stench of death. Mortality at its most obvious.

Within minutes, coalition forces arrived with local authorities and paramedics. US coalition provided investigation teams and more troops for added security. Local police officers and detectives searched the surrounding neighborhood. One officer found the license plate of the vaporized pick-up truck. Another was scraping resin off the engine block, to find some sort of identifying numbers. The fire department showed up and extinguished the flaming guard tower, while a paramedic team gathered the cluttered body parts. The two wounded Iraqi guardsmen were loaded into an ambulance and rushed to a hospital. They would later be confirmed dead on arrival.

As I look back at this horrible experience of carnage and bloodshed, I remain more confused than ever.

Even as I type this harrowing tale of another day in a combat zone, I am still unable to find the ends that justify the means. I can replay the events over and over in my head, and all I'm left with is jumbled images of the explosion and maimed human beings. What if that car-bomb would have hit my comrades in the rear truck? Would my feelings be any different? Five Iraqi soldiers were blown to bits, but does that make any difference?

I think about all the action movies and violent video games that people subject themselves to; for entertainment, for viewing pleasure.

Nothing you see on a television screen could ever come close to displaying the humanity involved in killing, or the lack of.

Violent death still does not register clearly in my conscious, yet I deal with it every day.

After the events that took place on that "typical" afternoon, after seeing an extremist suicide bomber kill his own countrymen in an act of warfare, I realize that this mission, Operation Iraqi Freedom, will bring forth no easy solutions, and has no answers for a peaceful conclusion.

The war was supposed to be justified.

We were supposed to find the weapons of mass destruction that were never here.

We were supposed to be the harbingers of freedom and democracy for the oppressed people of Iraq.

All we've done is instill fear into the entire populace.

US occupation has opened up a can of worms for the political juggernauts from afar, while everyone here is at grave risk of losing it all.

The future looks more ominous with every new casualty, and holds nothing more than a foreboding promise of lasting violence to come.

Knowing that a US military presence is only part of the problem, I wonder everyday if peace will be achieved, with or without our nuisance.

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:

Fighting For 6th Day In Central Iraq



8.10.04 Militiamen take position during clashes between al-Mahdi Army and US-backed Iraqi forces in the holy city of Najaf. (AFP/Ahmad Al-Rubaye)

8.10.04 United Press International & NAJAF, Iraq & (IslamOnline.net & News Agencies)

Fighting raged for the sixth straight day in central Iraq Tuesday between forces loyal to radical Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr and U.S.-backed Iraqi troops.

A thick column of black smoke also rose from near the Imam Ali Shrine, and Iraqi police in trucks were seen heading for the area while two US helicopters flew overhead.

The clashes concentrated in the old part of the holy city of Najaf, which harbors the mausoleum of Imam Ali, the Shiites' holiest shrine.

Knowing how thorny and sensitive it is to launch any massive attacks against Imam Ali Shrine and the old cemetery in Najaf, US military officials declared late Monday that the US-appointed governor of Najaf has given their troops permission "to enter the Ali shrine" to attack what he called "militants".

Witnesses said at least 10 U.S. tanks advanced Tuesday towards al-Thawra Square near the holy shrine in the old part of the city where Sadr's al-Mehdi Army followers are positioned.

US troops in Humvees drove through the center of the Shiite city, using loudspeakers to call on civilians to evacuate the zone immediately and on Mehdi Army fighters to leave, reported Agence France (AFP).

An Iraqi National Guard officer on patrol was shot dead in the flashpoint city of Fallujah by gunmen, said police and a doctor.

A roadside bomb exploded as a Ukrainian convoy passed through Numaniyah, said police local chief Colonel Ali Jabbar Kadhim.

HOLY CITY BURNING



Smoke rises over the Holy Iraqi city of Najaf as battles rage between Shi'ite resistance militiaman and their U.S. Marine and Iraqi security forces foes August 6. (Akram Saleh/Reuters)

Government Buildings Mortared In Baghdad: U.S. Soldiers Wounded;

Resistance Ignores Silly “Curfew”

8.10.04 United Press International & 10 August, 2004 By Khaled Fahran, (Reuters)

A roadside bomb aimed at a U.S. military convoy exploded near hotels used by foreigners in Baghdad early on Tuesday, wounding two soldiers, a military spokesman said.

The Shi'ite uprising across central and southern Iraq, the second in four months, has virtually shut down several cities

Insurgents have stepped up mortar and rocket attacks in Baghdad since the Shi'ite uprising erupted,

Clashes erupted in a poor Shi'ite Baghdad suburb called Sadr City as fighters ignored a curfew order from Iraq's interim government. Insurgents also fired mortars around midday at the Interior Ministry and Water Resources Ministry, witnesses said.

Fighting lasted for three and a half hours early Tuesday when a US patrol came under repeated attacks, according to AFP, as it drove through the center of the sprawling slum.

Sporadic gunfire and mortar rounds continued to explode in Sadr City later in the morning. Shops remained boarded up and the main road closed to traffic as armed militiamen roamed the streets, said an AFP correspondent.

During the night, insurgents fired a dozen mortars or rockets in central Baghdad, mostly aimed at the Green Zone compound housing the Iraqi government and the U.S. embassy.

An explosive charge blew up Tuesday in central Baghdad next to several hotels hosting foreign businessmen and journalists, but no casualties were reported.

British Soldier Dead, Others Wounded In Basra

August 10, 2004 (CNN)

Private Lee Martin O'Callaghan, 20, was killed during an attack by insurgents Monday, Britain's Ministry of Defence said on its Web site.

Several other British soldiers were also injured in fights that broke out in the area Monday, but the ministry said there were conflicting numbers on the wounded.

Squadron leader Spike Wilson says their troops continue to "maintain a low profile."



The Mahdi Army in Basra 8.9.04. Photo by The Associated Press

Pipeline Attacked Near Basra; Oil Ministry Mortared In Baghdad

10 August, 2004 By Khaled Fahran, (Reuters) & Larry Elliott, The Guardian

Near Basra, a large export pipeline was shut on Monday after it was attacked, but the damage was minor and the pipeline should be able to operate normally on Wednesday along with a smaller pipeline, the official told Reuters.

News that insurgents had fired mortar rounds at the oil ministry compound in Baghdad prompted speculation that the cost of US crude would soon be testing the \$50-a-barrel level.

The Unreported War: US Document Reveals Scale Of Conflict

29 July 2004 By Robert Fisk in Baghdad, The Independent (Great Britain)

Iraq, we are told by Mr Blair, is safer. It is not.

US military reports clearly show much of the violence in Iraq is not revealed to journalists, and thus goes largely unreported. This account of the insurgency across Iraq over three days last week provides astonishing proof that Iraq under its new, American-appointed Prime Minister, has grown more dangerous and violent.

But even this is only a partial record of events. US casualties and dozens of Iraqi civilian deaths each day are not included in the reports. **But here are the events, as recorded by the United States military on 20, 22 and 23 July. Few were publicly disclosed.**

20 July Baghdad

A US aircraft was attacked by a surface-to-air missile over Baghdad airport. An improvised explosive device detonated under a bridge near al-Bayieh fire station. A second bomb exploded when the "Facility Protection Service" arrived. In other areas, there were four bombings, three RPG assaults and six gun attacks, almost all on US forces.

North of Baghdad

A civilian supply convoy was attacked at Samarra. A bomb exploded on a bus in Baquba, killing six. A mine went off in Balad. A US convoy was attacked with RPGs and gunfire at Salman Pak. There were roadside bombings of US forces at Mandali, Samarra, Baquba, Duluyia and Muqdadiyah, and three grenade attacks (at Tikrit, Samarra and Kirkuk), with shootings at Muqdadiyah, Balad, Hawija, Samarra, Tikrit and Khalis.

West of Baghdad

An American foot patrol set off a landmine at Khalidiya. A civilian tractor hit a mine at Hit. There was an RPG attack on a school in Karmah. Roadside and other bombs also detonated in Fallujah, Hit, Ramadi and Qaim. There were also attacks on US troops at Hit, Karmah, Saqlawiyeh and Ramadi.

South of Baghdad

International troops discovered two 107mm rockets aimed at the house of the governor of Diwakineh, and a roadside bomb detonated near Iskanderiyeh. In Basra, the city council co-ordinator and his three bodyguards were killed near a police checkpoint by three men in police uniform.

22 July Baghdad

Two roadside bombs exploded next to a van and a Mercedes in separate areas of Baghdad, killing four civilians. A gunman in a Toyota opened fire on a police checkpoint and escaped. Police wounded three gunmen at a checkpoint and arrested four men suspected of attempted murder. Seven more roadside bombs exploded in Baghdad and gunmen twice attacked US troops.

North of Baghdad

Police dismantled a car bomb in Mosul and gunmen attacked the Western driver of a gravel truck at Tell Afar. There were three roadside bombings and a rocket attack on US troops in Mosul and another gun attack on US forces near Tell Afar. At Taji, a civilian vehicle collided with a US military vehicle, killing six civilians and injuring seven others. At Bayji, a US vehicle hit a landmine. The Americans said gunmen murdered a dentist in at the Ad Dwar hospital. There were 17 roadside bomb explosions against US forces in Taji, Baquba, Baqua, Jalula, Tikrit, Paliwoda, Balad, Samarra and Duluiyeh, with attacks by gunmen on US troops in Tikrit and Balad. A headless body in an orange jump-suit was found in the Tigris; believed to be Bulgarian hostage, Ivalyo Kepov. Kirkuk air base, used by US forces, attacked.

West of Baghdad

Five roadside bombs on US forces in Rutbah, Kalso and Ramadi. Gunmen attacked Americans in Fallujah and Ramadi.

South of Baghdad

The police chief of Najaf was abducted. Two civilian contractors were attacked by gunmen at Haswah. A roadside bomb exploded near Kerbala and Hillah. International forces were attacked by gunmen at Al Qurnah.

23 July Baghdad

A US military convoy was mortared and a grenade thrown. There were seven roadside bomb attacks and five gun attacks on US forces.

North of Baghdad

A man threw a grenade at a US convoy at Tell Afar. Two gunmen killed an officer in the new Iraqi Army in Mosul. American troops also came under RPG fire in Mosul. Gunmen attacked a convoy of western mercenaries south of Samarra, a civilian convoy was attacked at Baquba. A former Iraqi army officer, former Major-General Salim Blaish died in a drive-by shooting in Mosul. Americans detained two men who had fired a rocket from a truck in Balad. There were three roadside bomb attacks on Americans in Baquba, Balad and an RPG attack at Kirkuk.

West of Baghdad

A roadside bomb against US forces at Rutbah. Gunmen also attacked the Americans in Khalidiyeh and Fallujah.

South of Baghdad

The Mussayib power station was mortared and roadside bombs exploded at Iskanderiyeh and Mussayib.

MORE:

The Unreported War: Resistance Point Of View

Resistance Claims US General Captured; Fighting Rages In ar-Ramadi.

Iraqi Resistance Report for events of Monday, 2 August 2004 through Wednesday, 4 August 2004 Translated and/or compiled by Muhammad Abu Nasr, member editorial board The Free Arab Voice

Tuesday, 3 August 2004.

In a dispatch posted at 4:40pm Tuesday, Mecca time, the correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam in ar-Ramadi reported that fierce fighting had been raging in the area of the city since 9:30am **and that in some places it had grown into direct and bloody battles at such close quarters that US Apache helicopters are unable to take part for fear of hitting their own troops.**

The correspondent wrote that the fighting was under way in the area of the sports playing field, al-Fajjariyah, and near the Agricultural College, and it was also raging around the Maternity Hospital.

US troops closed off all roads leading to the city of ar-Ramadi and the correspondent has no information on the extent of casualties as a result of the violent fighting under way because of the danger of approaching the front lines.

The correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam wrote, however, that Resistance forces launched a painful attack at the US aggressor troops in which they captured an American General on Tuesday morning. The General was accompanying a US column heading from a US outpost to the command headquarters, set up by the Americans in the Republican Palace in ar-Ramadi.

The capture of the American general sparked the fighting, as US forces moved to close all roads to and from ar-Ramadi to prevent his being taken outside the city area. US forces are insisting that they will not open the roads until the Resistance hands the general back to them.

One large column of US forces attempted to get to ar-Ramadi along the expressway north of al-Fallujah, but Resistance fighters from that city confronted the advancing Americans, unleashing a hail of rockets and mortars upon them, splitting the column in two. The rear half of the column fled back to Baghdad, the front part attempted to make for ar-Ramadi, but, failing that, made their way to the US occupation base at al-Habbaniyah instead.

The residents of northern districts of al-Fallujah could see the flames and smoke rising into the sky from fires burning in wrecked US military vehicles.

Resistance destroys US tank, Humvee southwest of al-Fallujah Tuesday evening.

Iraqi Resistance forces destroyed an American tank and a Humvee in the village of ash-Shamiyah, south west of al-Fallujah a few minutes before 9:00pm Mecca time, according to the local correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam. The correspondent, who was 250 meters away when the attack occurred, reported that the ambush was laid near the village mosque. The reporter was unable to ascertain the extent of US losses, however,

because the American aggressor troops immediately closed off the scene of the attack and would not allow anyone to approach.

US forces frequently seal off areas in which Resistance attacks take place enabling themselves to evacuate dead and wounded, to haul off the wreckage of vehicles and to clean up the area before the press is allowed back in. Such actions enable the Americans to hide the extent of their losses in men and materiel.

Resistance pummels American base in at-Taji; US airlift of casualties lasts over five hours.

Iraqi Resistance fighters at 7:45am on Tuesday morning fired six massive Grad rockets at the US aggressor base in at-Taji, northwest of Baghdad. The rockets slammed into the camp, and one of them scored a direct hit on the main ammunition storehouse, setting off a series of massive and continuous explosions.

With the road cut by Resistance activity, the Americans used huge Chinook helicopters to evacuate the dead and wounded after the explosions died down at 8:30am. The movement of the huge helicopters evacuating casualties continued until 2:00pm in the afternoon, according to the local correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam.

Bomb destroys US Humvee east of al-Fallujah.

An Iraqi Resistance roadside bomb exploded on the highway east of al-Fallujah at 3:30pm Tuesday afternoon. According to the local correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam, the blast set one American Humvee on fire. Afterward, US troops closed the highway to traffic and it remained closed when the correspondent posted his report at 6:20pm Mecca Time, Tuesday.

Resistance frees Iraqi woman from US clutches, then attacks US column in al-Karmah.

At 7:50pm Mecca Time, the correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam filed a report on an incident that took place in al-Karmah earlier in the day.

Early on Tuesday 24 US aggressor troops stormed into the home of an Iraqi woman in search of her husband, who, the Americans think, is an active member of the local Resistance.

When the troops failed to find the husband, they took the wife captive instead, putting her in a vehicle in their column of five Humvees. The captive woman cried out to the people in the area, however, calling for help, and imploring them not to allow what had been done to the prisoners of Abu Ghurayb to be done to her.

In a few moments a crowd of more than fifty men of the Resistance rushed to crowd around the Humvee carrying the woman. They confronted the Americans and demanded the woman's release. When the US troops refused, arguments and fist fights

broke out between the two sides, as the Resistance was determined to avoid using weapons where the captive woman might be hurt.

A short consultation then between the two sides by way of the Iraqi translator accompanying the American invaders resulted in an agreement whereby the Americans would release the woman on condition that the crowd of Resistance fighters step away from the American column and allow it to get away.

The Americans then were compelled to release the woman. When she had been taken to a safe place, the leader of the Resistance fighters called on his men to attack the Americans in defense of the woman's honor. The collaborator translator intervened saying that they couldn't attack the Americans because they had an agreement with them. To that the Resistance leader responded, "what kind of agreement, what kind of commitment do we have with them, when they violate the honor of our women and abuse them? There is no agreement with such people, no truce!"

The fighters began to lay into the collaborator translator to kill him for his treason and then the Resistance opened fire with rocket-propelled grenades and C5Ks on the Humvees, destroying them and killing all aboard, before reinforcements could come. The large number of fighters gathered in the area enabled them to have done with the US aggressor troops quickly.

The mother was then moved out of al-Karmah along with her children, lest the Americans return to exact some kind of revenge on the family. Afterwards, the Americans in fact encircled and imposed a blockade on al-Karmah, and the town remained sealed off when the Mafkarat al-Islam correspondent posted his report at 7:50pm Tuesday, Mecca time.

Sudden nighttime attack on US camp near Samarra' leaves 16 Americans dead.

Early Tuesday morning Iraqi Resistance forces from Samarra' attacked a US command point in the rural village of ar-Rawashid in the al-Ishaqi district near Samarra'. The Samarra' correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam arrived on the scene eight hours after the fighting and local residents told him that the Resistance stunned the sleeping American camp at 4:00am Tuesday when they attacked with rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), C5Ks, and machine guns. The soldiers at the command post who manned an armored personnel carrier and two Humvees-16 men in all-were killed.

Local residents used their own weapons to shoot into the air in celebration of the Resistance victory. **Later US aggressor troops moved in to storm houses in search of the Resistance fighters, who, as usual, remained out of sight.** The American troops surrounded the village for two hours during their search operation, but then departed.

Bomb kills puppet police chief.

An Iraqi Resistance roadside bomb Tuesday killed a local puppet police chief in Baghdad, according to the American Associated Press (AP). The Resistance car bomb in Baghdad's upscale al-Mansur district killed the head of a local puppet police station

and wounded two of his bodyguards, the puppet police said. The bomb exploded as Colonel Mu'ayyad Mahmud Bashshar ash-Shamari, chief of the al-Ma'mun puppet police station, was driving past.

Iraqi Dr. Zayid Muhammad was quoted by the Mafkarat al-Islam as saying that the explosion took place in al-Washshash district, west of Baghdad and killed the puppet police chief of al-Ma'mun as well as another officer in the puppet police. He said that a third puppet policeman was wounded and taken to al-Yarmuk Hospital.

An AP TV film showed the wreckage of a small white truck belonging to the puppet police around which could be seen pools of blood.

In a dispatch posted at 6:45pm Mecca time, the correspondent for Mafkarat al-Islam reported that the blast which killed Puppet police Colonel Bashshar took place in the al-Mansur district of central western Baghdad near the large mosque there.

The correspondent added that the blast also killed two "multinational" occupation troops and wounded two more in addition to killing another officer in the Iraqi puppet police. The US military had acknowledged earlier on Tuesday that two "foreign" occupation troops were killed and two more wounded in a separate statement, but omitted any indication of the fact that they were stricken in the same Resistance attack that killed the puppet police chief.

Wednesday 4 August

Eyewitnesses reported that the Resistance attacked an American column with rockets and light arms on the expressway leading to the al-Adl neighborhood in al-Amiriyah. That incident occurred at 10:05 Tuesday night, local time. The witnesses say the attack resulted in no casualties.

Stryker Brigade Slammed By Insurgents; Dozen Wounded, Dozen Strykers Damaged

August 10, 2004 By MICHAEL GILBERT, Tacoma News Tribune

It didn't get much media coverage, but troops from the Stryker brigade say fighting last Wednesday in Mosul was the heaviest and most sustained combat they've seen in their nine months in Iraq.

Insurgents with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, AK-47s and improvised bombs fought a series of coordinated, running attacks against Stryker and Iraqi troops. One estimate put the number of attackers at 30 to 40, another at more than 100.

About a dozen Stryker troops were wounded; all but two returned to duty, said Lt. Col. Kevin Hyneman, the brigade's deputy commander.

The two more seriously wounded include Lt. Damon Armeni, 25, of Tacoma, Wash., who is reported in critical condition and is awaiting surgery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for shrapnel wounds, his family said Monday.

A soldier in Armeni's company - Blackhawk Company of the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment - said the lieutenant was injured by a rocket-propelled grenade blast after maneuvering his Stryker in to protect five infantrymen under fire.

In an interview Monday, Hyneman said the fighting took place on the east and west sides of the Tigris River, which bisects the city, and at a hotel near the northernmost of the city's five major bridges. **The insurgents also attacked a hospital and a power plant, and ambushed Stryker convoys as they rolled past multistory buildings on the way to the fight, according to other sources.**

Hyneman and the task force spokesman, Lt. Col. Paul Hastings, said the fighting drew in virtually all the troops in the brigade's two infantry battalions in Mosul, as well as elements from other brigade units in the city.

One soldier described what it was like on his Web log on the Internet. The soldier, who identifies himself as CBFTW, is attracting readers with his absorbing, personal account of Army life in Mosul.

"We were driving there on that main street, when all of the sudden all hell came down all around on us, all these guys wearing all black ... a couple dozen on each side of the street, on rooftops, alleys, edge of buildings, out of windows, everywhere just came out of ... nowhere and started firing RPGs and AK-47s at us," he wrote.

CBFTW described how a bullet passed in one side of his buddy's helmet and out the other without hitting his buddy - he just suffered a concussion.

"Bullets were pinging off our armor all over our vehicle, and you could hear multiple RPGs being fired and flying through the air and impacting all around us. All sorts of crazy insane Hollywood explosions ... going on all around us," he wrote. "I've never felt fear like this. I was like, this is it, I'm going to die. ...We shot our way out of it and drove right through the ambush."

Hyneman said about a dozen Strykers were damaged, mostly the tires and slat armor that protects the vehicles from RPGs. All were repaired and returned to service within two days, he said.

Crystal Lake Marine Killed: "I Begged Him Not To Go"

8/10/2004 By Christine Byers Daily Herald Staff Writer, Paddock Publications, Inc.

Lance Cpl. Jonathan W. Collins' parents were just beginning to feel comfortable about discussing plans for a homecoming celebration in Crystal Lake for their son.

"He told us to stop sending packages and letters because he was going to cycle out in September," said Jack Collins, Jonathan's father.

Sunday afternoon, Jack and his wife, Angel, learned their 19-year-old son, who was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force, died as a result of small arms fire during combat patrol in Ar Ramadi in the Al Anbar Province, Iraq. He told his family he'd be back at Camp Pendleton, Calif., sometime mid-September.

Collins is the 932nd member of the U.S. armed forces to die supporting U.S.-led operations in Iraq. **He is the 35th from Illinois.**

On Monday, family members and friends gathered at Collins' Crystal Lake home to remember the 2003 Crystal Lake South High School graduate, who was inspired to join the military after watching the movie "Top Gun" as a boy.

"When we were younger, we'd watch Top Gun two times a day for three years," said Collins' 21-year-old brother, Brandon. "We loved the facemasks, the helmets, the planes. We could recite every line."

The brothers also loved to play games outside like capture the flag, and spray each other with water guns in order to steal each other's flags.

"I always knew he'd join," Brandon said of his brother, who played soccer and swam during high school. "He loved smearing mud on his face."

"When he babysat us, he'd put on puppet shows with our stuffed animals and make us chocolate shakes," Lauren said, as she began to cry.

For Jonathan's high school graduation party, his parents also considered it a going-away party as well. They had the party on a Saturday, and the next day he left for boot camp. He arrived in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, in March.

Jonathan's grandmother, Alice Collins of Oak Lawn, wasn't too happy to hear that her grandson chose to join the armed forces. Her only brother, Bill Halpin, died during the Vietnam War.

"I begged him not to go," said Alice Collins, whose column in a South Side-based newspaper that asked for donations of Kleenex, suntan lotion and other items to be sent overseas resulted in more than 4,000 pounds of gifts being shipped overseas to soldiers. "But he said, 'Gram, I know it's what I want,' and nobody could convince him otherwise."

Monday night, dozens were expected to turn out during a candlelight vigil to remember Jonathan at Crystal Lake South High School. His body will be returned to the United States this week, and a funeral Mass also will take place this week at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church.

"They'll prepare his body this week," Jack said, standing in front of the family's home where, inside, a candle burned next to his son's military portrait. "And then he'll come home."

Houston Soldier Dies From Shrapnel Wounds

8.10.04 Associated Press

HOUSTON A 25-year-old soldier from Houston has died from shrapnel wounds a month after he was injured during a patrol in Iraq.

The Houston Chronicle reports Lieutenant Andrew R. Houghton died at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington yesterday.

At least 80 Texas service members have died in fighting in Iraq.

His family says he was on early morning patrol near Samarra when his Bradley fighting vehicle came under rocket-propelled grenade fire. He suffered major head wounds from shrapnel.

Fort Eustis Soldier Killed

August 10, 2004 By Stephanie Heinz, Daily Press

One Fort Eustis-based soldier was killed and four were injured in Iraq last Thursday when their convoy was attacked by insurgents, military officials confirmed Monday.

Army Pfc. Raymond Faulstich Jr. was the first member of the 7th Transportation Group to die in the war. He was killed in Najaf when the convoy he was traveling with was attacked by small arms fire and grenades.

Army officials didn't release the names of the injured soldiers Monday, but Donna Williams of Newport News, mother of Spc. Christopher Williams, confirmed that Christopher was one of the four.

Faulstich and Williams deployed with the 89th Transportation Company, 6th Transportation Battalion on June 15. It was Faulstich's first deployment. Williams had been in Iraq with the unit on a previous deployment.

Faulstich's father attended the group's deployment ceremony in June.

"That was the last time I saw him," the elder Faulstich said Monday in a telephone interview from his home in Maryland. "That was rough. It was gut wrenching. We must have said good-bye to him four different times before he got on that bus."

Faulstich spent Monday afternoon searching for old pictures of Raymond Jr. and could only find one - the shot he took as Raymond Jr. boarded the bus.

"I don't think reality has hit yet," Faulstich said. "We haven't seen a casket or a body. Right now we are still holding out the hope that someone is going to knock on the door and say, 'Oops, wrong guy.'"

The group unloads supplies in Kuwaiti ports and trucks them into Iraq.

Donna Williams said Monday that she learned about her son being wounded after he called his wife by cell phone.

"It's been really rough," she said. "All I know is that the bullet entered his right leg and traveled to his left leg. He said he kept on driving until he got out of the gunfire."

"He said the insurgents were lying in wait for them," Donna said. "The soldier who died was in the front of the convoy and my son was toward the back."

Raymond, Jr., Faulstich said, was friendly with just about everybody. "He was a big-hearted kid and would do anything for anybody," Faulstich said.

There will be a memorial for Faulstich at 2 p.m. Wednesday at the Fort Eustis Regimental Chapel.

TROOP NEWS

PTSD Hits Bragg Troops

[Fayetteville Observer, August 10, 2004]

Fort Bragg paratroopers who served in Iraq for a year suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder at almost the same rate as soldiers did in Vietnam.

Stressed Israeli Soldiers To Be Treated With Marijuana

Aug 04, 2004 JERUSALEM (AFP)

Israeli soldiers suffering from combat stress after tours of duty in the Palestinian territories could soon be treated with cannabis to relieve their symptoms, the Maariv daily reported Wednesday.

The mental health department of the Medical Corps is set to begin tests in the next few days on volunteers who are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder after reserve duty, the paper said.

A scientist who will help conduct the experiment heads a research team which discovered that cannabis helped mice which had suffered physical stress and even reduced the risk of stroke.

Thai Troops Begin Early Withdrawal From Iraq

[Wall Street Journal, wsj.com, August 10, 2004]

Thailand has begun withdrawing its troops from Iraq just short of its one-year commitment. **The last of the 443 Thai soldiers, originally scheduled to leave Iraq by Sept. 20, will be out of the country by the end of August.**

(SHOULD HAVE JOINED THAI ARMY)



A U.S. Army 1st Cavalry soldier patrols in Baghdad Aug. 9. Mahdi Army troops are in the area. (AP Photo/Jim MacMillan)

**Officer Who Spoke Out Tormented By Brass:
Forced To Cancel Leave And Wedding;**

His Sgt. Defends Him & Condemns “Weak And Mediocre” Officers

August 05, 2004 By Joseph R. Chenelly, Army Times staff writer

A civil affairs officer in Iraq who wrote a critical opinion article in The Washington Post will not pursue a congressional inquiry into the Army's reaction to his actions.

“I think that the ‘silent draft’ (stop-loss) is wrong and that the leadership in [the Department of Defense] and the Army needs to be checked, in this case by the representatives of the people,” Estrada had said.

Capt. Oscar R. Estrada has asked Rep. Steve Israel, D-N.Y., for a letter supporting his request to resign his commission. A spokesman for Israel said his office has sent paperwork to Estrada to get the captain's permission to speak to the Army about his status.

He said it was a difficult decision, but the events following the publication of his writing reinforced his desire to resign.

“The hate mails and reaction from senior officers have convinced me that I am not welcome in the Army,” he said, “and that I can no longer function effectively in it.”

No charges were filed, but he ordered Estrada's transfer to the remote eastern Diyala province along the Iraq-Iran border.

Two days after Estrada's article was published June 6, his team was taken from him and he was transferred to a new area of operations, which, in turn, stripped him of a scheduled turn in the Army's Rest and Recuperation program. His planned wedding had to be postponed.

Col. Dana Pittard, commander of the 1st Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team, was responsible for the unit Estrada belonged to when the piece was published. Pittard said the writing “aided the enemy” because it was counterproductive to continuous information operations in Baqubah, Iraq. (Nonsense. Col. Dana Pittard is the enemy, and obviously the Washington Post item didn't aid him at all.)

Estrada's current team leader is disappointed *with the captain's plan to resign.* (Lie. Read the next lines. The Sgt. Is disgusted that Estrada is being forced out by assholes like Pittard. The Sgt. Is right.)

“It is a shame that the good officers, like him, feel they must leave the military *[while] the weak and mediocre stay around, get promoted and have a ... negative impact on the mission,*” said Reserve Sgt. 1st Class Dale R. Kramer.

Miracle In Iraq!

Scum In Command Abuse, Kill Their Own Troops And They're Still Alive!

July 29, 2004 Col. David H. Hackworth (USA Ret.), Eilhys England contributed to this column.

As in the past, the platoons in Iraq are fighting upfront where it's close, personal and always nasty.

But if you get beyond a platoon command post -- say, to company, battalion, brigade, division or all the way back to Gen. John Abizaid's air-conditioned, cappuccino-serviced, computer-filled headquarters -- you are in tall cotton. And the further back you go, the more luxe the living conditions. Sure, most of the folks who bring up the rear are vital to modern warfare -- but when the sirens sound, they're tucked into a maximum-security posture: in deep bunkers behind high berms, barbed wire and dense security pickets.

My guess is that less than a third of the 141,000 American troops in Iraq are grunts doing death-duty drill on that devastated country's killing fields.

About 40 percent of these brave souls are part-time soldiers recently impressed into service because of the Pentagon's negligent planning. And, unfortunately, many of these fine citizen soldiers are suffering needlessly because of poor leadership from platoon to brigade.

Five soldiers from Company A, 579th Engineer Battalion, out of the California National Guard -- all of whom have asked for anonymity for "protection from people in our unit" -- report as follows:

"We've already lost two soldiers because of bad leadership," says Soldier No. 1.

"Our leaders, mainly the officers, seem only concerned with making themselves look good. They do this by walking all over enlisted men. They're quick to say 'It was me' when something goes right. However, they're quick to blame others when something they did goes wrong."

"Our company XO accidentally fired two grenades from a Mark 19 right in the middle of a town filled with civilians," adds Soldier No. 2. "What the lieutenant was doing manning that weapon is beyond me. It's normally a job for a grunt. **The incident was covered up. No investigation. Nothing. Had a soldier done this he'd be in jail.**"

"The company has a satellite phone, and each soldier is suppose to get 10 minutes per month to call home," says Soldier No. 3. "But it sits there in the first sergeant's office, and he and the company commander are the only ones who get

to use it. The same is true with the company TV that's set up in the supply sergeant's living area for his personal use. He won't let anyone else watch it."

"Our leaders ask us to tell them what our problems are, and when we do, they get mad at us," says Soldier No. 4. "They also repeatedly say they're working on getting things fixed, but nothing happens.

They also need to stop sugarcoating what they tell our families back home. **The CO and first sergeant e-mail letters to the family support coordinator saying how great things are here. Why should they con our families? Our folks know everything's not wonderful here even though they're not told about the incoming shells and the many nights we get no more than three hours of sleep. And how we patrol and operate 18 hours a day and sometimes get only one meal a day."**

"Frequently we get patrol overlays from brigade," says Soldier No. 5. "Most of the roads they want us to go down aren't there or are impassable. Don't our leaders go out and check them for accuracy? Like do reconnaissance like the good book says before sending us on foolish missions that can get people killed the way Lt. Tyson and Specialist McCaffrey were on 22 June when they were sent on such a fool mission?"

"McCaffrey always said that it was going to take someone getting hurt or killed before our leaders wake up and not run us into the ground," says Soldier No. 5. "Now that he and the lieutenant got killed, I still see no upward learning curve from our officers."

(In Vietnam, these "leaders" would have been shipped home in body bags a long long time ago.)

These warriors are members of the 81st National Guard Infantry Brigade. During their predeployment training at Forts Lewis and Irwin, I continually warned that they weren't ready to meet the elephant, **mainly because their officer leadership from platoon to brigade was incompetent.**

But SecDef Donald Rumsfeld and a placid army senior leadership have been into quantity, not quality, to fill the holes in Iraq. And as usual the kids -- like the boys in Company A -- are paying the hard price.

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.

**Marine Who Actually Won Hearts And
Minds Catches Hell;**

Stupid Asshole Lt. Col. Tells Him To “Control” His Wife

8/2/2004 Mark Mazzetti, Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — For most of the central figures in the documentary film "Control Room," the grisly images that emerged from last year's U.S. invasion of Iraq were no cause for a change of opinion.

Over the length of the film, director Jehane Noujaim's inside look at the war through the eyes and lenses of Al Jazeera's journalists based at U.S. Central Command headquarters in Doha, Qatar, the chasm only widens between the U.S. military officials who speak about the "liberation" of Iraq and the Al Jazeera reporters skeptical of the invasion.

The exception is a young Marine lieutenant named Josh Rushing.

Rushing, a Central Command spokesman assigned to escort the documentary makers during their time in Qatar, is among the film's most sympathetic characters, portrayed as a thoughtful young man moved over time by the grim reality of war.

At no point is he shown doubting the justness of the U.S. effort in Iraq, yet the film documents a budding friendship between Rushing and Al Jazeera reporter Hassan Ibrahim, and moments on camera when Rushing is wrestling with the film's central themes: war, bias and the Arab world's most powerful media outlet.

The Marine's role in the film turned him into a minor celebrity among the art-house-cinema crowd. **But the candid comments he made in the documentary and in interviews after its release ran afoul of his superiors in the Marine Corps, which he now plans to leave.**

Rushing, now a captain assigned to the Marine Corps Motion Picture and Television Liaison office in Los Angeles, has been prohibited from giving any more interviews about his part in the film.

Marine officials at the Pentagon have even asked Rushing to keep his wife, Paige, from giving interviews after she made comments critical of how the military handled her husband's situation. Because of this, several of Rushing's friends say the 31-year-old Marine plans to leave the military in October.

Rushing declined to be interviewed for this article. His situation has angered many in the military public affairs community who say Rushing has been a passionate spokesman for the U.S. armed forces and is being punished for appearing in a film that portrays Al Jazeera — a bete noire of the Bush administration since the Sept. 11 attacks — in a positive light.

"Here's a guy who represents the very best of public affairs in the Marines," says a senior military official who worked with Rushing at Central Command, speaking

on condition of anonymity. "For whatever reason, it didn't play well with some of the senior brass in the Marine Corps at Pentagon. They're losing one of their finest."

A 14-year veteran, Rushing enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1990. After serving nine years, he entered the University of Texas on an ROTC scholarship and earned a dual degree in classics and ancient history. This background, Rushing's friends said, gave him a more nuanced view of the Arab world and its attitudes about the West.

For their part, Marine officials said their problem was not with what Rushing said in the film, but with comments he made after the film was released and received international attention. Some suggested he did not understand his role as an officer.

"He did a few interviews that indicated he might not know what his lane is," said Lt. Col. Stephen Kay, deputy director of Marine Corps public affairs at the Pentagon. "He was way too far in the opinion realm."

One of the articles Kay cited appeared in the Village Voice in May. "People don't understand what a complex organization Al Jazeera is," the article quotes Rushing as saying. "They say it's all Islamists, or Baathists, or Arab nationalists. You have all that, but you have really progressive voices too. Al Jazeera shows it all. It turns your stomach, and you remember there's something wrong with war."

This is a far different picture of Al Jazeera from the one normally described by top U.S. officials. Since the Sept. 11 attacks, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has denounced the network from the Pentagon podium, calling it a mouthpiece for Al Qaeda and a vehicle of anti-American propaganda.

Kay confirmed, however, that he recently sent an e-mail to Rushing asking the Marine to talk to his wife about not giving interviews.

"I did tell him that he could control that if he wanted to. I asked him to consider it," Kay said.

As for Rushing, friends and associates say the Marine has yet to figure out his plans for life after the military.

"I think it's too bad for the Marines he's moving on," Noujaim said. "He convinced a lot of skeptical people in the Arab press that there are those in the U.S. military coming from the right place."

Adm. Giambastiani Slams Defense Industry War Profiteers

(Defense Today, August 5, 2004, Pg. 1

The defense industry is ripping off the Pentagon by producing systems that are not interoperable with existing military gear, and then offering to fix the problem

they cause—for a price, according to Adm. Edmund Giambastiani, chief of the Joint Forces Command. He also criticized mid-level uniformed program executive officers and other procurement managers who resist joint approaches to acquisitions, running their own fiefdoms and focusing mainly on executing whatever individual weapons purchase is at hand.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



Mahdi militiaman mans checkpoint in Baghdad suburb of Al Sadr city August 7. (Ali Jasim/Reuters)

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

General Vows Gentler Afghan Tactics

[Philadelphia Inquirer, August 10, 2004]

Gen. David Barno, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, promised President Hamid Karzai that he will tone down aggressive tactics in sweeps for Taliban-led insurgents and make sure American troops are more sensitive to Afghans' conservative ways.

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