

GI SPECIAL 2#B35

MY BRILLIANT BIG BROTHER

Get The Rest Of Our Boys Out Of Iraq, Says Family



Lee died in a firefight

(Thanks to *artisan* who sent this story. He writes: "Please note that the article points out that the dead 20 yr old soldier's family live 'on a council estate in South East London'. ie a working class block of flats in a poor, high unemployment neighbourhood in London.")

Aug 11 2004 By Alexandra Williams, Mirror.co.uk

"It was a senseless war. We had no right to be there. What have we gained? My message to Tony Blair is, 'Get the rest of the kids out'."

THE heartbroken brother of the British soldier shot dead in Iraq just days before he was due to fly home told yesterday how he had lost a hero.

Grieving Danny O'Callaghan, 16, revealed that 20-year-old Lee was his role model - and he had planned to follow him into the Army.

He said yesterday: "Lee was Army mad. He wanted to travel the world. He was ambitious. **And he was really kind - a brilliant big brother.**"

But cadet Danny admitted he has changed his mind about Army life since Private Lee was gunned down during a firefight with rebels in Basra on Monday.

He said: "There's no way I want to enlist any more.

"Lee should never have been in Iraq in the first place. The only consolation is that he died doing what he wanted to do."

In his last phone call, Lee told their mum Shirley of his relief that he would soon be leaving the lawless country. **And he described his fear that things "seemed to be out of control".**

Breaking down in tears, Lee's aunt Margaret Evans, 51, said: "He called his mother on Sunday night. "He was so excited and relieved to be coming home. **He was frightened. He said things seemed to be out of control. He told her, 'It's getting scary'.**"

Lee, the eldest of four children and a keen Millwall football supporter, arrived in Iraq at the end of April and **was due home a week today.**

Last night his family bitterly criticised the Government for sending troops to Iraq.

Margaret, sister of Lee's dad Eugene, said: "One minute Lee was training and the next thing we know he's being sent to a war zone. We thought it was ridiculous.

"He was just a kid - a brand new recruit. I think anger is a good word to describe how we feel.

"It was a senseless war. We had no right to be there. What have we gained? My message to Tony Blair is, 'Get the rest of the kids out'."

Pte O'Callaghan was serving with the 1st Battalion, the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, based in Tidworth on the Wilts-Hants border. He joined his unit last December after enlisting in May last year.

He was shot in the chest as heavily-armed rebels thought to be loyal to the radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, launched a wave of attacks in an attempt to gain control of the southern Iraqi city.

Pte O'Callaghan was the 62nd British serviceman to die since the start of the invasion last year.

His family live on a council estate in South East London. The house is adorned with pictures of his passing-out parade last November - attended by his proud parents Shirley and Eugene, brother Danny and his two sisters Gemma, 13, and 11-year-old Kerry.

Shortly before his posting to Iraq, the close-knit family enjoyed a holiday in Malta. **They were planning a big family get-together on his return and this week Danny had started decorating the bedroom they shared.**

He said: "We got new furniture and I was making it look good with new posters to do with the Army, which he absolutely loved.

"His favourite films were Saving Private Ryan, Platoon, that sort of thing. And all his computer games were Army-related."

Lee's best mate Liam Bleach, 17, blamed the Government for the tragedy. Sitting on the wall outside the family home, he hit out angrily at the "waste of life - all for oil". He said he had been horrified when Lee told him he was going to Iraq.

Liam added: "He was sent to his death by Tony Blair. I have lost the person I grew up with. He was my best friend. And his family have lost an amazing brother and son."

The Ministry of Defence broke the tragic news to Lee's family at 9pm on Monday night. His parents were said to be devastated at their home yesterday, while their other children were being comforted by friends.

A spokeswoman for the MoD said: "It is obviously an awful time for the family. "It is devastating that this poor young chap has died, but we have work to do in Iraq." ("We" have work to do? Send the asshole over by the next flight!)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

ONE TASK FORCE BAGHDAD SOLDIER KILLED TODAY

August 18, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release Number: 04-08-21C

BAGHDAD - A Task Force Baghdad Soldier was killed today when a patrolling unit came under attack around 3 p.m. in eastern Baghdad.

The Soldier suffered a gunshot wound and was evacuated to a military hospital. The Soldier was pronounced dead at the hospital.

Marine Killed In Al Anbar Province

8.18.04 Combined Joint Task Force Release #040818a

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



8.18 This picture released by the US army shows soldiers from Alpha and Bravo Company, 2-12 assigned to 1-5 CAV, patrolling the Najaf cemetery.(AFP/US ARMY/Ashley Brokop)

Borah Grad Killed

08-18-2004 By Tim Woodward, The Idaho Statesman

A young Boisean who worked as a volunteer football coach for his high school and extended his Army enlistment to go to Iraq died Tuesday while on patrol in Baghdad.

Brandon Titus, 20, triggered an "improvised explosive device" at 8:50 a.m. Baghdad time while at a military checkpoint. He died 10 minutes later.

"He wanted to go to Iraq," his father, Boisean Tom Titus, said. "I razed him because he extended his enlistment by something like six to eight months to go to Iraq and then got in the 10th Mountain Division and would have gone anyway. I told him the last thing I wanted him to do was join the military because of what happened to me, but he'd made up his mind."

Tom Titus was an Army Ranger who served most of two enlistments in Vietnam. His home is decorated with military medals, commendations, photographs and flags. He lost his sight in one eye in Vietnam, has shrapnel in his head and still suffers from exposure to Agent Orange.

Brandon Titus grew up in Boise and graduated in 2002 from Borah High School, where he played football. He left for active duty that October. After the service, his father said, he hoped to attend college and teach at Borah.

Kathryn Southern, a friend since the ninth grade, called him "one of the best people I've ever known. He was always there for his friends and anybody else who needed him. I met him just after I moved here from Alaska, and there was never a time when he wasn't there for me. He liked to help me with my math. He was so smart. He could have done anything."

Lawrence Lumley, a next door neighbor, remembers Titus as "a super nice kid. He was well-mannered, which is something you don't see a lot in kids these days. His friends were the same way. They were good kids who were respectful of other people. You couldn't help but be impressed by Brandon."

Tom Titus is a divorced single parent who raised his son from the time he was small.

"He wasn't one of those squeaky clean kids who do a lot of projects, but he was a good kid," Titus said. "I'd be going somewhere with him and he'd see a senior citizen and open the door for them.

"... He'd have been 21 in December. He knows I don't drink that much, but I told him that when he got home I was going to take him out. I was looking forward to taking him around to some places."

An Army officer and Air Force chaplain came to Titus' home Tuesday to tell him his son had been killed.

"I'd slept late because I didn't get to sleep until three in the morning," he said. "I had trouble falling asleep because I knew something was wrong with Brandon. I didn't know what it was, but I just had this feeling that something was wrong. When I saw them coming up my sidewalk, I knew."

Titus asked the governor to attend his son's service if he could. He also told him he wanted him to be buried in Idaho's new veterans cemetery. The governor told him the cemetery hasn't officially opened, however, and details of the service and burial arrangements are yet to be determined.

"I don't have anywhere else to bury him," Titus said. "And he deserves it."



Vietnam Vet Tom Titus wipes away tears Tuesday at his Boise home as he talks about his son, Brandon. (Gerry Melendez / The Idaho Statesman)

Utahn Killed

Aug. 18, 2004 SALT LAKE CITY (AP)

A Utah man working for a U-S transport company is dead after an explosion in Iraq.

Kevin Rader was part of a convoy that delivered supplies and equipment to U-S troops, He was killed in an explosion on August eleventh.

The 34-year-old worked for Kellog Brown and Root, the same company that former hostage Thomas Hamill worked for when he was captured by insurgents but later escaped.

Seven Wounded By Mortar Attack On Polish Base At Hillah; Polis Pres Says Soldiers Coming Home “Next Year”

8.18.04 WARSAW (AFP) & ABDUL HUSSEIN AL-OBEIDI, Associated Press & FOCUS News Agency

Seven people were wounded during a mortar attack on Poland’s main military base about 60 miles south of Baghdad, a Polish army spokesman said.

Camp Babylon is located not far from the volatile town of Hilla – where insurgents have repeatedly battled U.S. troops and pro-Washington Iraqi forces in past days.

“Nobody was killed. Seven people in all were slightly injured, according to the last tally. They were three Poles – one civilian and two soldiers, one of whom was hit in the arm and the other in the leg – as well as one American, one Indian and two Iraqis,” he said.

The commander of the Polish-led force in Iraq, Polish General Andrzej Ekiert, said the mortars were fired from a road two or three \square tabilizat (miles) away.

“The shells were fired at speed. We know the line of fire. The only thing that surprises me is the time of the attack because up to then the base was only attacked at night,” he was quoted as saying by the PAP news agency.

Polish news channel TVN24 showed footage of one soldier, his leg covered in blood, being evacuated by ambulance.

TVN24 said it was the biggest mortar attack to date on the Polish base at Babylon, with 10 to 12 mortars being fired in a 10-minute period.

Poland's army said from Warsaw that the attack took place at 1030 GMT. **TVN24 said the raid lasted around 10 minutes, forcing soldiers and other base personnel into bunkers.**

The attack came as Poland prepared to move its base from Babylon to somewhere more secure, as announced last week by the army's chief of staff, General Czeslaw Piatas.

The number of attacks on Polish forces have increased over the past few days.

"Our position is clear. We want to reduce considerably our contingent as from next year, while at the same time being careful that the process of stabilization (in Iraq) does not suffer," **President Aleksander Krasniewski said** on Sunday in a speech marking Army Day.

<p>According to a recent poll, 73 percent of Poles oppose the participation of their country's troops in the US-led international force, against 67 percent in June.</p>

HELP IS NOT ON THE WAY



US soldier in Najaf.(AFP/Saeed Khan)

Area Soldier Hurt By Bomb

August 18, 2004 By Rick Fahr, Russellville Newspapers, Inc.

A roadside bomb in Baghdad severely injured an Arkansas River Valley man last week.

The attack came as U.S. troops traveled in convoy through the Iraqi capital. In the last armored vehicle was PFC Timothy Adam Smith, 19, of Plainview.

Smith was facing the rear of the vehicle as it passed by a buried mortar shell. According to Smith's aunt, Gala Leach of Plainview, the mortar exploded, set off

by remote control. Shrapnel hit Smith behind his ear, exiting through his mouth.

Leach was uncertain about injuries suffered by other troops in the vehicle, although she said that the vehicle's driver reportedly died in the incident.

He just remembers the blast and something hitting him. Then he went numb," Leach said Tuesday.

Medical personnel transported Smith first to Germany and then to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where he remains today.

"His mom and dad got there Monday morning. ... He's is doing good since they got there. He was needing to see them," she reported. "All in all, we're lucky to have him."

Christine Leach, Smith's grandmother, said Tuesday afternoon that the soldier had been in Iraq only a short time, leaving to go overseas from Fort Hood, Texas, on his birthday, June 20.

Christine Leach added that emotional support for the family has been bountiful.

"Everybody has come together around here. This community has really pulled together. We have some great people in Yell County," she said.

Smith, a graduate of Plainview-Rover High School, is a member of C Battery, 1-206th Field Artillery, headquartered in Russellville.

Classmates have planned a benefit luncheon and pie auction for Sunday. The event will begin at 11:30 a.m. at the Plainview gymnasium. For more information, contact Anna Mullins, (479) 272-4091.

While his condition is improving, Smith faces an uphill battle, Gala Leach said.

"All the prayers are appreciated."

Dutch Military Limits Patrols After Resistance Attacks

18 August 2004 Expatica Communications BV

AMSTERDAM — The commander of Dutch forces in Iraq has limited the number of patrols his soldiers carry out, it was announced Wednesday. The move comes after a Dutch military policeman was killed in an ambush at the weekend. **(How about limiting to zero? That would be good, and very life-prolonging.)**

Only essential movement of troops will be permitted until there was "clarity" about the security situation in light of events in recent days, a spokesman for the Dutch army said.

On Monday night another patrol was attacked. It returned fire but no one was injured.

TROOP NEWS

Top Says Marines Want More Fighting; Troops Say No; Guess Who's Lying

8.14.04 By Alex Berenson and John F. Burns, New York Times

Troops at the main American base in Najaf, four miles north of the Old City, had mixed reactions.

Command Sgt. Maj. Steve Frenier, one of the cavalry division's top noncommissioned officers, said the soldiers were disappointed that the battle had been called off with Mr. Sadr still in control of the Old City and the southern part of the cemetery, abutting the mosque. "They're frustrated," he said.

While American officers claimed that more than 360 of Mr. Sadr's fighters had been killed in the fighting, they said American losses, up to the postponement of the major assault on Wednesday night, had been five marines and soldiers killed.

But Marines who fought in the cemetery, taking four of those losses, said they were glad to avoid more close-quarters combat. The cemetery fighting was intense, with the Marines and Mr. Sadr's militiamen sometimes separated by only a few feet.

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/>

Wounded Soldier Used, Abused And Thrown Away;

Vet Brother Says "I Think It Sucks"

August 9th, 2004 BY MICHAEL KERR, Special to The Packet

BEAUFORT -- Gabe Black still wears his Army T-shirt with pride.

But more than two years after bullets and mortar shrapnel tore through his right leg as he fought in the mountains of Afghanistan, Black is trying to understand why the government he proudly served isn't taking care of him the way he thought it would.

Medically discharged, the 24-year-old former infantry soldier is working 70-hour weeks at Steadfast Marine Services on St. Helena Island as **he struggles to cope with a benefits package nowhere near what he said he was promised.**

"They told me, 'You don't have anything to worry about. You're going to be taken care of for life,' " Black said of the Army officials and doctors who set up camp beside his Walter Reed Army Medical Center bed in Washington upon his return to the United States in early 2002. **"They said you'll get at least 80 percent (disability)."**

Black originally was given a 40 percent rating, which would have meant a \$454 check every month, according to a Department of Veterans Affairs' Web site. ***But he appealed the decision only to find out six months later his rating had been reduced to 20 percent.***

"I didn't know what to do," Black said last week, shaking his head as he sat on the couch of the Beaufort home he shares with his brother.

Black said he was told he was better off just accepting the military's decision and getting out of the Army. His service already had been extended more than a year beyond the normal four-year term as he underwent physical therapy and waited on an answer to the first appeal.

"You spend five years in the Army doing what you're told to do," Black said. "Maybe I should have just stayed (in the hospital) for years and not gotten out. Maybe they would have gotten sick of me and said, 'We'll give you some damn benefits.' "

But the real shock came just a few weeks ago when he received a bill in the mail from the Army telling him he'd been overpaid when he received his \$15,000 severance check, and that he owed the government \$6,500.

Black said he's tried to find out why he owes the money but hasn't received an answer. **"That's pretty much not gonna get paid," he said, shaking his head and looking down at the bill on his coffee table. "That right there was just a slap in the face."**

On March 2, 2002, Army Sgt. Gabe Black and 42 other soldiers crowded in to a Chinook helicopter and landed in the Shahi Khot region of eastern Afghanistan as part of Operation Anaconda -- at the time, the largest offensive of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Anticipating minimal resistance, the U.S. forces found themselves bombarded by heavy mortar, rocket-propelled grenade and machine-gun fire. At first the unit's soldiers thought they were in an especially hot landing zone, Black said, but it soon became clear they were heavily outnumbered by Taliban and al-Qaida forces.

"There were more than 1,000 of them and 40 of us," he said. "There wasn't a whole lot you could do. They had the high ground. ... They had us surrounded."

An enemy mortar took out three of Black's fellow soldiers as rounds flew just above their heads and the "fire fight went on and on," he said.

"I ended up taking a couple of stray bullets," Black said. "Their mortars were just dead on. We were basically just in a defensive position, trying to hold our ground and calling in airstrikes."

Marine Corps fighter jets eventually would come in to slow the enemy forces, but not before a mortar exploded a few feet from Black, spitting out shrapnel that ripped through him and several other soldiers.

"I took the majority of it because I was the closest to it," Black said.

His belt tied around his thigh as a makeshift tourniquet, the wounded soldier tried to crawl toward safety when another bullet struck his right thigh, severing his femoral artery.

"When the bullet hit, I just went into shock," he said. "I passed out after that."

Black woke up just once for a few seconds on the medical helicopter and lost consciousness again until he found himself in a hospital in Germany.

He received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star for his actions that day and would spend almost all of the next 18 months in Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

When Gabe first returned from war, he received the hero's treatment, said Trey Black, Gabe's older brother.

Gabe had lunch with President Bush, spent time with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and threw out the first pitch at a Baltimore Orioles baseball game.

His face was all over CNN and he shared his physical therapist with former U.S. senator and fellow war veteran Bob Dole, who, Gabe said, often brought him candy.

"Then nobody knew who I was," he said. "CNN wasn't there with a camera no more, so they didn't care."

Looking out for his little brother and angered by treatment he calls at least "morally wrong," Trey Black did the only thing he could think of; he's told Gabe's story, hoping someone would hear it and lend a hand.

"It's about the only thing I can do," he said. "(Gabe) hates to call and ask for anybody to help him. I'm a combat veteran myself. You hate to ask for help."

Trey, a 27-year-old Kosovo veteran with three combat tours under his belt, works with his brother at Steadfast Marine Services.

Although doctors saved Gabe's leg, they removed about **two-thirds of his calf muscle, which had been damaged beyond repair. He suffers from chronic pain, has to wear a compression stocking and boots whenever he leaves the house, and can only move his three biggest toes.**

At least once an hour Gabe is forced to elevate his right leg as it swells with blood. A stubbed toe could quickly turn into a trip to the hospital for Gabe as his leg is likely to fill with blood.

Trey said his brother still may end up losing his leg later in life.

Gabe's future, right now, is up in the air. He'd like to go to college, but he didn't sign up for the GI Bill upon enlistment because he had planned on making a career out of the military.

Trey admits he's not especially well-versed in Army regulations, but said he can't believe this is how a war veteran is supposed to be treated.

"If it is," he said, "I still want to say I think it sucks."

Reservists On Active Duty Up 9,438 In One Week!

August 18, 2004 United States Department of Defense News Release No. 789-04

This week, the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps announced an increase in the number of reservists on active duty in support of the partial mobilization, while the Coast Guard total remains unchanged. **The net collective result is 9,438 more reservists on active duty than last week.**

Total number currently on active duty in support of the partial mobilization for the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 131,630; Naval Reserve 3,605; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 11,610; Marine Corps Reserve, 11,311; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 1,546. **This brings the total National Guard and Reserve on active duty to 159,702 including both units and individual augmentees.**

A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve who are currently on active duty can be found at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Aug2004/d20040818ngr.pdf>.

“Glad He Won’t Be Going Back To Iraq”

August 18, 2004 BY HENRY J. CORDES, WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

LINCOLN - He limped in on crutches, his foot pocked by shrapnel and leg scarred where doctors inserted the metal rod that holds it together.

But Michael Stineman knows he was the lucky one.

When the awful blast from a roadside bomb ripped through his Humvee in Iraq, he crawled from the wreckage, bloodied, burned, but alive. Jeremy Fischer and Linda Tarango-Griess, like a brother and sister to him in the close-knit Nebraska Army National Guard unit, didn't make it.

"It's just how it happened," Stineman said as he arrived back in Nebraska on Tuesday. "I'm glad that I made it out alive, and I wish Sergeant T. and Sergeant Fischer would have made it out, too."

It was a happy but bittersweet homecoming for Spc. Stineman, back in Nebraska for the first time since the deadly July 11 blast in Iraq.

Dozens of family members, friends, other Guard members and relatives of comrades back in Iraq were on hand to greet the 21-year-old Utica, Neb., native when he his plane landed in Lincoln.

"He needs to know we support him," said Ann Reicks of Lincoln, who until Tuesday had not met the soldier who served in Iraq with her husband. "It's been a real tough deployment for this unit."

Stineman, a Centennial High School graduate, said he remembers everything about the insurgents' attack.

He had just been back home in Utica for two weeks of R & R and was returning to his unit.

Fischer, whom Stineman knew from previous Guard recruiting duties, and Tarango-Griess, whose husband had previously trained with Stineman, were at the airport near Baghdad to give him a lift to their home base.

As their convoy passed near the city of Samarra, the bomb exploded.

When Stineman recovered from his shock and daze, he saw that his two comrades in the front seat weren't moving. With the vehicle in flames, he opened a rear door, fell to the ground and started crawling.

Other soldiers quickly came to his aid. Stineman had suffered a broken leg, shrapnel wounds to the leg, foot and neck, and burns to his hand.

It was days later, while recuperating from surgery in Germany, that he was told about his fellow soldiers' deaths - the first for Nebraska Guardsmen in combat since World War II.

He said that it remains difficult to talk about what happened.

He's glad he won't be going back to Iraq and its dangers, particularly the bombs that are ever more cleverly planted along the roads, exploding without warning.

"I wish I could still be with my friends," he said. "But I'm glad to be home."

He plans to resume school soon at Southeast Community College in Lincoln.

He looks forward to when he can again go wakeboarding on Johnson Lake, but knows with his leg that won't be soon. Doctors tell him he still faces a one-year recovery, but he's determined it won't take that long.

The determination showed Tuesday. Stineman had insisted on using the crutches, refusing offers of a wheelchair when he left the plane.

Sgt. 1st Class Belinda Harris, dressed in her Guard fatigues to greet her fellow citizen-soldier, said she was impressed by his spirit and inspired just to see him.

"Out of that tragedy," she said, "we are really, really lucky to have one come back."

Hang The Soldiers, Let The Criminals In Command Go Free?

Intelligence troops faulted in new report on abuses, none above prison colonel; More-horrific incidents alleged. [Baltimore Sun, August 12, 2004] An army report on the role of military intelligence at scandal-plagued Abu Ghraib prison will recommend that more than a dozen soldiers be disciplined but would spare anybody above the colonel who commanded them at the prison.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Rocket Nails Foreign Ministry

8.18.04 BY JAMIE TARABAY, Associated Press Writer

A mortar round hit the roof of Iraq's Foreign Ministry building Wednesday afternoon, causing no damage or injuries, Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari told The Associated Press.

The blast shook the convention center where the National Conference was being held inside the heavily fortified Green Zone enclave, which is home to Iraqi government offices and the U.S. Embassy. Zebari said he believed the Green Zone was the target.

Singing The Resistance

August 17, 2004 By Annia Ciezadlo, Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

BAGHDAD – In Iraq, there is a saying that beside every palm tree, you will find a poet. To give you some idea of how many poets that is, there are 25 million people in Iraq, and 38 million palm trees.

Iraqi poets have a new injustice to protest: the US military presence.

"Don't trouble yourself with the dirty Americans, and don't trouble yourself with her dirty servants," chants a heavyset man, stepping into the middle of an admiring circle of men.

In a poem addressed to the renegade Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, he compares Paul Bremer to the founder of the Baath Party, Michel Aflaq: "Why does the family of al-Sadr threaten America?" he sings, as the men around him clap rhythmically. "People were loyal to Aflaq, and now they have become loyal to Bremer / But we will always be ready to fight with you whenever you want."

Picking up the theme, another poet tries to outdo his rivals. "Look, people, the eagle of Kufa came home to his city," he cries. "Moqtada, the Eagle of Kufa, to whose will both America and the Governing Council submitted! / He has at his command al-Mahdi soldiers who are ready to sacrifice their souls."

Cheering, the men begin to jump up and down, waving daggers and Kalashnikovs in the air.

You won't find these verses in any anthologies or literary magazines. These anonymous poets star on a compact disc, a low-quality digital video of a tribal gathering that you can buy in Sadr City's Mraid market for a couple of dollars. Intoning their poems in low, dramatic voices, the poets are singing a traditional form of Iraqi oral poetry called *darmee*, with a complex and untranslatable rhyme scheme and a rollicking, irresistible rhythm.

In Iraq, poetry and politics have always intertwined. In 1917, as revolt brewed in Iraq against British rule, the Iraqi poet Saad Salih sent a letter to another poet, asking him to spread rebellion and enclosing a poem: "Oh, Ahmed, stand and call

the brave free men of Iraq," he wrote. "Perhaps blood, pouring over the earth, will utterly cleanse our disgrace."

The image - of blood rinsing away national shame - lives on to this day in a poem called "A Page of Miracles" that is dedicated "To Fallujah: the City of endurance and Jihad." Dated May 10, 2004, for the day American troops left Fallujah, the poem honors the Fallujan fighters.

"The precious blood of your people has washed away / The disgrace of their submission to the enemy, of those who accepted humiliation and lick the boots of those who invaded our country," writes poet Muhammad Said al-Jumeily. "The blood which watered our fields / Will remind us forever that we should take revenge."

In stirring language, Mr. Jumeily likens Fallujah to a banner, a sword, a moon, a light, and a castle: "You are a castle, in which young men became old / When they fought the marines."

Naming specific neighborhoods in Fallujah, he celebrates their ouster of American troops: "Ask people in al-Sinaa about the American herds which / Lick their wounds after being defeated. / Remember al-Nazzal and remember how the American armor melted / And how it proved to the world that the mythical glory of America is false after their defeat."

The irony is that Jumeily used to write poetry denouncing the Baath regime. "He never hesitated to state - even in front of the governor - his revulsion and abhorrence publicly," says Mr. Turki, who knows Jumeily. "I saw the bitterness in his eyes against the ex-regime."

A grave and bespectacled young poet who loves Jonathan Swift and George Bernard Shaw, Turki makes photocopies of "A Page of Miracles" for all of his friends. He's not anti-American, he just wants people to see the battle of Falluja through Fallujan eyes.

"It is a celebration of the die-hards," explains Turki, who teaches English literature at Anbar University in Ramadi, close to Fallujah. "They are celebrating their heroic actions and the Iraqi exploits. They believe that they won, because they prevented the American troops from reentering the city."

During the Fallujah uprising in April and May against the US occupation, Turki's classes stopped. When he came back to the English literature department, he found the black banners that commemorate the dead. Many of his students, most of whom were from Fallujah, had been killed in the fighting.

Ramadi Officials Want U.S. Occupation Force To Go Away

8.16.04 By Greg Jaffe, In Ramadi, Iraq

In Ramadi, the capital of al Anbar province, which also encompasses Fallujah, **local officials are urging Marines to stop patrolling the city center, where they seem to get into almost daily fire-fights with insurgents.** Marine officials say local guerrillas and foreign fighters from Fallujah appear to be pushing west into Ramadi, which has greater symbolic importance than Fallujah.

In al Anbar province, which is the heart of the Sunni insurgency, the Marines are under pressure to take a lower profile. Last week about 60 sheiks from the province met with senior Marine officials and demanded that the U.S. pull out of the provincial capital. "A lot of hard words were exchanged," said one senior Marine official.

U.S. officials in Ramadi say turning any more power over to the Iraqi police and Iraqi National Guard forces is a recipe for disaster.

Earlier this month, insurgents kidnapped the governor of al Anbar province's sons from his house, which was being guarded by Iraqi police who didn't fire a shot. In exchange for the return of his sons the governor resigned. **"It's bad right now. You've got an Iraqi National Guard that is afraid to ride around with us in public,"** said Marine Col. Jerry Durrant, the director of Iraqi Security Forces for al Anbar province.

Cleric Accepts Najaf Peace Plan

Aug. 18, 2004 ABDUL HUSSEIN AL-OBEIDI, Associated Press

NAJAF, Iraq - Radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr accepted a peace plan Wednesday that would disarm his militia and remove them from their hideout in a revered shrine, raising hopes of resolving a crisis that has angered many of Iraq's majority Shiites and threatened to undermine the fledgling interim government.

Turkish Firm Quits Iraq After Employee Captured

17 August 2004 By Firas Al-Atraqchi, Al Jazeera

Turkish services company Bilintur, which has an employee held captive in Iraq, has confirmed in a statement its complete withdrawal of all staff and services from the country.

The statement - in English, Arabic, and Kurdish -said: "In trying to secure the safety of our employee Ayat Allah Gezman, whom we believe to have been kidnapped, and in accordance with a decision previously made, we are declaring that we pulled all our staff from Iraq as of 15 August".

According to Zafer Ergun, Bilintur's overseas coordinator, a purported Iraqi group has threatened to execute Gezman by Wednesday morning.

He explained the services company withdrew its 130-strong staff from Iraq, a decision he fears the captors may not yet be aware of.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

A Debate About The Election

Veterans For Peace Discussion Group, 8.18.04 between V and W.

(V is replying to Kerry supporter W. Her replies are in boldface.)

All "pat" and tired answers.

Then you should be able to easily refute them but you don't and you can't.

We have a system. The system requires the citizens to be involved.

Merely voting a couple of times a year, at most, does not count as much involvement in my book.

If you don't vote, you are part of the problem.

Says you. I know this is an article of your quasi-religious political faith, W, but it's just an assertion backed up by nothing.

How is not voting going to help anything?

If voting could change anything then it would be illegal and if not voting could change anything it would be illegal, too. I never claimed not voting was the magic bullet--I don't believe it is and I don't believe in magic bullets. You're the one with the faith in voting.

Waiting for that magic candidate that represents exactly how you feel is going to be a long wait.

I'm not waiting for anything, W, and especially not for a "magic candidate."

Silence IS approval.

Voting can be approval--of a candidate and of a system. Not voting IS NOT silence per se; abstention IS NOT approval per se.

While you sit back and do nothing, innocents are being slaughtered.

While you gear up to vote and support Kerry, innocents are being slaughtered. During the roughly ten years of Vietnam, Americans voted at higher rates than they do now and still the slaughter went on. Nixon--the Quaker--ran as a peace candidate ala Kerry and he upped the death rate and expanded the war.

The biggest factor in ending that war was the unfailing resistance of the Vietnamese and resistance by GIs--here and in VN--and by Americans in the streets at home. Voting had little to do with it. You have no idea what I'm doing so don't be so quick to assume I'm doing nothing.

We, as a nation, just invaded the Middle East, and are on the verge of a "holy war".

Sorry, Ward, the government is not the people or the nation. Foreigners have the good sense to recognize that, you should, too. "We" did not invade the Middle East, etc.

The neocons dream. This is a veterans-for-peace discussion, so I assume you are veteran.

Yes, I am a veteran.

Therefore, you should know that John Kerry IS NOT George Bush,. You are obviously prejudiced against Kerry, and have decided to judge him before he is even elected. Prejudice is not normally a "progressive" value.

Once again you presume too much. My assessment of Kerry is not based upon prejudice but upon his own words and his record.

Kerrey was an anti-war activist with my other group, VVAW, and he could have gotten out of the war just like Bush did. He was awarded medals for bravery under fire. The men who served under him stand by his side. As a former infantryman, I can promise you that I would not stand by an officer that sucked, or put his men at risk. The same holds true for his men.

Physical courage is admirable but moral courage and values are more important. I recall a certain German corporal wounded and highly decorated for bravery in battle in WWI, his name was Hitler. Kerry's moral courage seems to have largely dissipated over the years.

Kerry's environmental vote throughout his career is very good.

Only by the debased standards of American politics.

He has publicly stated troops will start coming home within 6 months of his being elected.

Show me.

Bush wants never-ending WW III. Victory against "terror" is an unattainable goal, because "terror" is a method, not a cause.

You're preaching to the choir, W. I read the NSS right after it was published. The Democrats, I would remind you, have enabled Bush to do everything that he has done so far.

Bush is a war criminal that represents YOU.

Maybe he represents YOU but he doesn't represent me, W. I acknowledge that he is the head of state of the nation-state that I was born, and currently live, in but that is the extent of my recognition of Bush.

The only positive that can come from this election is removing the racist war criminal in order to apologize to the world.

You want to make amends to the world, W? You can start by not financing the US war machine anymore. If you pay federal taxes then you can stop. Scared? Here are some training wheels: <http://hanquponwar.org/> I'm on the list. Are you?

If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. --Henry David Thoreau, "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience"

(Comment: Tax refusal never ended a war either: it's an isolated, individual act, rather than a mobilization of mass resistance on the ground.

Vs' first answer was the truth: "The biggest factor in ending that war was the unflinching resistance of the Vietnamese and resistance by GIs--here and in VN--and by Americans in the streets at home. Voting had little to do with it."

Bush, Kerry and Nader all have one thing they agree on perfectly: they all refuse to demand that *all* the troops be brought home *right now*.

It would be wonderful to introduce Bush, Kerry and Nader to Falluja, up close and personal. It might give them a whole fresh new perspective on whether or not to demand immediate withdrawal. You can bet your ass they wouldn't hesitate for one second to demand their own immediate withdrawal.

Since that fantasy is unlikely, our job is doing exactly what the writer here says: building a movement at home and in the armed services that can bring all these politicians to their knees. T)

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

More Prisoners Killed At Abu Ghraib

Aug. 18, 2004 ABDUL HUSSEIN AL-OBEIDI, Associated Press & By Todd Pitman

At the Abu Ghraib prison, which was the center of a scandal over allegations that American prison guards abused Iraqi detainees, U.S. military police shot and killed two prisoners and wounded five others, the military said.

Detainees hurled rocks at U.S. soldiers, ignoring "verbal warnings" and then a volley of rubber bullets from U.S. military police, Johnson said.

Occupation Politicians Engineer One Of History's Biggest Heists, But The Grunts Are Always Dealt The Losers Hand

David Hackworth , Military columnist, August 9

In Iraq, \$8.8 billion is MIA. Serious dough even for the big spenders in Washington, DC. A pal in Iraq slipped me a draft Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Inspector General (IG) report dated July 12, 2004, that blisters the CPA for giving the missing billions to Iraqi ministries without appropriate controls.

The IG report concludes: "The CPA did not provide adequate stewardship of over \$8.8 billion in DFI (Development Fund for Iraq) funds provided to Iraqi Ministries through the national budget process. Specifically, the CPA did not establish and implement adequate managerial, financial, and contractual controls over the funds to ensure they were used in a transparent manner."

Offshore bankers must be burning the midnight oil these days with all the new secret accounts pouring out of Baghdad!

The CPA paid 74,000 guards even though the actual number of guards couldn't be validated.

On one site alone, 8,206 guards were on the payroll, but only 603 warm bodies could be counted. Elsewhere, more than \$17 million was allocated to guards and the Iraqi army without one piece of backup paper. Pals in Iraq say this has been standard drill since the birth of "a very dysfunctional" CPA.

The report cites, "An improper \$120 million disbursement was made in May 2004 because of miscommunication between CPA/OMB and Comptroller's office." **In other words, \$120 million went south but was blithely rationalized as some clerks getting their wires crossed!**

Meanwhile, the armed forces' PX system (AAFES) is into charging our GIs in Iraq \$9 for a 12-inch pizza. A similar pizza is \$8.99 at a pizzeria near Greenwich, CT, where prices compete with Beverly Hills. The manager told me that about half of this price was gross profit. Lt. Col. Debra Pressley of the AAFES insists the \$9 price is "fair and competitive with commercial outlets, including locations in Greenwich."

And so it seems to be. But why? Don't our soldiers deserve a better deal? Or is our government reduced to trying to make up the AWOL bucks on our soldiers' backs?

The powers that be sure planned to make a profit by charging \$3 per head for watching movies in Iraq - at least until we blew the whistle.

But once we broke the story, I got e-mails and phone calls from generals and colonels denying that the \$3 charge had been scheduled, even though on July 3, 2004, the deputy commander in Balad, Iraq, put out this communication: "CG (Commanding General) has directed that we begin charging movie fees beginning on 7 July 2004 in the amount of \$3.00 per show."

The local general now says it wasn't ever going to happen. Ditto the AAFES general and her spinner minions. **Like the 9/11 report and the missing money in Iraq, no one will ever be held responsible.**

Welcome to America 2004, where the buck is always passed and the grunts are always dealt the losers' hand.

Reporter Changes Mind: Iraq Worse Than Ever

August 12, 2004 Eric Boehlert Guardian Unlimited

Ken Dilanian, a staff writer for the Philadelphia Inquirer, has spent several months reporting from Iraq in the past year.

"Iraqis are so embittered and [have] completely lost any faith in us, even the most pro-American Iraqis," says the Philadelphia Inquirer's Dilanian, who says he has had a profound change of heart on the topic.

Last April, fresh from reporting in Iraq, an optimistic Dilanian wrote that the press was ignoring improvements in Iraq and underplaying the chance for a real turnaround. In late June he returned to Baghdad to cover the sovereignty handover.

Summing up his new grim impressions in an August 1 article, Dilanian admitted his earlier prediction was wrong and wrote, "The situation in Iraq right now is not as bad as the news media are portraying it to be. It's worse. Most Iraqis aren't seeing the improvements they had hoped for, and they're not blaming the guerrillas - they're blaming the Americans. Sovereignty seems to have had zero effect on this equation."

That's the key story many American news outlets have missed since June 28.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

AL-QAEDA PLANS TO DISRUPT FALL ELECTION

August 16, 2004 The Borowitz Report

Troubling new intelligence information indicates that the al-Qaeda terror network may be planning to disrupt the fall presidential election by installing thousands of malfunctioning electronic voting machines throughout the country, focusing their efforts on the state of Florida.

The latest information, culled by intelligence sources in recent weeks, suggests that al-Qaeda operatives may already be in the country installing the confusing, wildly inaccurate touch-screen voting machines throughout the state in an effort to undermine the fall vote.

Officials first got wind of the al-Qaeda plot weeks ago, when they attempted to use the touch-screen machines and found that the onscreen instructions were far too confusing to allow an average voter to register his or her vote properly.

"It was very clear that whoever wrote the instructions was not from this country," one official said.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge called the latest information "sobering" and said the only way to counteract the al-Qaeda plot would be by postponing the fall elections "indefinitely."

Mr. Ridge said that postponing elections in the U.S. would set a positive example for both Iraq and Afghanistan by demonstrating that in a democracy, elections can be successfully postponed.

The only possible alternative to such a postponement, Mr. Ridge said, would be for voters on Election Day to wrap themselves in duct tape and plastic sheeting until any al-Qaeda threat had passed.

He added that he was not playing politics with his latest pronouncements, telling reporters, "We don't do politics at the Department of Homeland Security - that's the Supreme Court's job."

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/>**

Capitalism At Work: Bush War-Profiteer Buddies Will Get Their Billions After All

Story #1:

Halliburton Is Faulted By Pentagon On Accounts

[New York Times, August 12, 2004] An internal Pentagon audit concludes that Halliburton Co. failed to adequately account for some \$4.2 billion it has received thus far for providing logistical support to troops in Iraq and Kuwait.

STORY #2:

August 18, 2004 By REUTERS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 17 (Reuters) - **The Army reversed a decision late Tuesday to withhold payment on 15 percent of future payments to the Halliburton Company** on its contracts in Iraq and Kuwait, giving the company more time to resolve a billing dispute.

The Army had said earlier Tuesday that it had decided that starting Wednesday it would withhold 15 percent of payments on future bills from the Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg Brown & Root because it had not issued paperwork justifying its costs. But the Army later indicated it would continue to reimburse the company in full.

Government contractors normally cannot be paid more than 85 percent of their invoices until they fully account for their costs. (Unless you're thieving friends of

the Commander And Thief that is.) *Twice this year, the Army set this rule aside for Halliburton* as the company cataloged its costs and explained how it was billing the government. The most recent reprieve expired Sunday.

The waivers granted to Halliburton have annoyed several members of Congress, who say the company has had undue privileges because of its former ties to Vice President Dick Cheney. Mr. Cheney led the company from 1995 until he became the Republican vice presidential candidate in 2000.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

U.S. Army Training To Fight Israeli Government

[Jerusalem Post, August 18, 2004]

U.S. Army units are **undergoing training in Israel to learn more *about how to deal with terrorists.***

(To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, go to: www.rafahtoday.org. The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.)

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