

GI SPECIAL 2#B4

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME



Bodies of U.S. soldiers in the town of Ramadi, west of Baghdad June 21, 2004. Four U.S. soldiers were found after an attack by Iraqi insurgents. (Reuters TV/Reuters)

Soldiers Say “I’m Not Going Back”

“It’s absolutely immoral,” Romo told the World. During the Vietnam War, people served their one year and it was over, he said. “Now, they’re facing never-ending war.”

06/17/04 Author: Susan Webb, People's Weekly World Newspaper

These days, GI rights counseling coordinator Bill Galvin is getting at least four or five calls a day from soldiers saying, “I’ve gotten orders to go to Iraq and I don’t want to go.”

In the last few weeks, Galvin has seen a marked increase in the calls to his section of the GI Rights Hotline, at the Center for Conscience and War in Washington, D.C. Many are from people who have already served in Iraq and Afghanistan. “The things they have witnessed and experienced – they don’t want to do it again,” and many question the entire war policy, he told the World in a recent phone interview. **People who are being sent back are saying, “Uh-uh, I’m not going.”**

Nationally, the hotline has been getting an average of 3,000 calls a month so far this year, up from a 2,400 monthly average last year, according to GI Rights Program Coordinator Teresa Panepinto, at the Central Committee of Conscientious Objectors, based in the Bay Area.

Lenore Yarger, a GI rights counselor at Quaker House in Fayetteville, N.C. [where Ft. Bragg is located], says this January her office had the largest call volume since the hotline started in 1995 – 220 calls in which counselors actually talked to people. The numbers have continued high since then, ranging from 150 to over 200 a month that “we actually talk to,” she told the World. **“The highest levels are becoming more and more normal.” The callers want to know how they can get discharged from the military. Increasingly they are asking about medical and psychiatric discharges, she said.**

Redeployment orders are taking a tremendous toll on people, Yarger said. They may have already served in Afghanistan, then been sent to Iraq, then are being sent back again, with four months or less between. “These are people returning from combat, not liking what they’ve seen, and not wanting to go back,” she said. “What we see increasingly is, they don’t like what they’ve been asked to do and don’t want to continue.”

“It’s not just Abu Ghraib,” she added. “They’re seeing civilians and children killed. It really bothers them.” Post-traumatic stress syndrome is a growing issue, she said.

Vietnam veteran Barry Romo says his organization, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, is getting “numerous” calls and e-mails from troops asking about everything from conscientious objector status to medical discharges. A major refrain, he says, is “I don’t want to go back on a second tour.”

Army units that completed a year in combat are now being sent back for more. One Pennsylvania unit that had its Iraq deployment renewed has now served there more than 500 days straight, Romo noted.

Another unit served a year in Afghanistan, came home, then 90 days later was sent to Iraq. Earlier this month the Pentagon ordered that soldiers whose service is about to end cannot leave if their units are ordered to go to Iraq or Afghanistan. Under this “stop loss” order, these soldiers will have to remain through the deployment, which could be another year or more, and up to three months after they return. An earlier “stop loss” order issued last fall applied to troops already serving in Iraq.

“It’s absolutely immoral,” Romo told the World. During the Vietnam War, people served their one year and it was over, he said. “Now, they’re facing never-ending war.”

The latest stop loss order affects 40,000 people who should be able to retire or be released, he said. Instead, they are being held against their will.

Addressing President Bush, Romo asked angrily, "You keep talking about how patriotic the troops are. Why aren't you saying there will be no back-to-back tours, no extended tours, no second tours?"

Even 30-year-plus Army "lifers" are complaining, Romo said. The e-mails he is seeing are upset about "everything from 'war is wrong,' to 'I don't want to kill people,' to 'I spent my time over there and I don't want to go back.'"

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

TWO SOLDIERS KILLED, SEVEN WOUNDED IN BAQUBAH

June 24, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release
Number: 04-06-22C & June 24, By Alistair Lyon, BAGHDAD (Reuters)

TIKRIT, Iraq - Two Coalition Soldiers were killed and seven wounded when their patrol was ambushed in Baqubah around 5:30 a.m. June 24.

Insurgents attacked the Coalition Forces with small arms, improvised explosive devices, and rocket-propelled grenades.

Wounded Coalition soldiers were taken to a military medical facility for treatment.

Black-clad gunmen attacked a police station in Baquba, 60 km (40 miles) northwest of Baghdad.

Nine policemen and four civilians were killed and 22 people were wounded, hospital officials said.

Witnesses said scores of gunmen took control of the town's main intersection after the dawn assault on the police station, attacking any Iraqi police or U.S. troops they encountered.

U.S. forces had responded with air strikes after gunmen captured the civic centre and attacked another government building. Two insurgents were killed.

Many of the fighters wore yellow headbands bearing the name of a Muslim militant group "Saraya al-Tawhid and Jihad" (Battalions of Unification and Holy War). **They handed out leaflets warning Iraqis not to "collaborate" with Americans.**

"The flesh of collaborators is tastier than that of Americans," the leaflets said.

U.S. forces had used laser-guided weapons against three houses in Baquba to silence small-arms fire.

Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, deputy director of operations for the U.S. army in Iraq said "With the exception of what we are seeing in Baquba, **most [cities] seem** to be under control **right now**," he told reporters. **(There's a ringing proclamation of victory!)**

Insurgents fired mortars at two police stations and the house of a security official in Ramadi, 110 kilometres west of Baghdad, killing at least three police, witnesses said. A fourth person was killed in clashes with US troops.

Resistance Offensive Hits Mosul Hard; US Troops Dead



June 24: Cops look at crater from car bomb explosion at a former police station in Mosul. REUTERS/Namir Noor-Eldeen

June 24, By Alistair Lyon, BAGHDAD (Reuters)

Rebels have wreaked havoc in five Iraqi cities with coordinated car bombings and assaults on local security forces in which at least 67 people, including three U.S. soldiers, have been killed. **The violence in Baquba, Fallujah, Ramadi, Mosul and Baghdad intensified a bloody campaign by Iraqi insurgents.**

In Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, multiple car bombings of police buildings killed at least 40 people and wounded 60, police said. Bodies were still being collected.

At least seven large explosions shook Mosul and local television ordered residents to stay at home. Police blocked off all major roads, and announced a dusk-to-dawn curfew.

The U.S. military said an American soldier had been killed and three wounded in the blasts. It said a security guard was killed when gunmen attacked a private security company.

Gunfire rattled across Mosul as insurgents fought running battles with U.S. troops and Iraqi police.

Baghdad Car Bomb Kills Collaborator Troops

June 24, Kuwait News Agency

Five people were killed, including four Iraqi policemen, and seven others were injured when a booby-trapped exploded in the Dura area, southern Baghdad, Iraqi police sources said Thursday.

Captain Hasan Abdul-Kareem of the Iraqi police said that a pick-up truck was stopped at a police check-point, where its driver used a hand-gun to fire at explosives carried in the trunk as soon as they were seen by the police.

TOO LATE FOR AAA



June 24 U.S. Army soldiers lift a destroyed car after an explosion in Baghdad
REUTERS/Ali Jasim

Four U.S. Soldiers Killed In Ramadi Attack

Jun 21 RAMADI, Iraq (Reuters) & New York Daily News, June 23, 2004

Four U.S. soldiers were killed in an attack in the western Iraqi city of Ramadi on Monday, the U.S. military said.

Insurgents took witnesses to the scene of the attack, a building site in Ramadi, west of Baghdad. The bloodied bodies of the four soldiers were sprawled on the ground, surrounded by scattered equipment and belongings.

It was unclear when they had died. They were not wearing the helmets or body armor routinely worn by U.S. troops on alert.

The four Marines killed in Ramadi were snipers sent on a dangerous mission to pick off terrorists.

Copter Down In Falluja

June 24, By Alistair Lyon, BAGHDAD (Reuters) & IRIB News

A U.S. Cobra helicopter was shot down during Falluja fighting but the crew walked away unhurt, Marines said.

A marine officer said "The helicopter was shot down by fire from the city," where fighting had erupted earlier in the morning.

Marines were able to rescue the two pilots, who survived the crash on the perimeter of Fallujah, the officer said.

Fierce fighting broke out between U.S. Marines and rebels in Falluja. Clashes raged for two hours and U.S. planes dropped 500-pound bombs on guerrilla positions, a Reuters photographer with the Marines near Falluja said. There was no word on casualties.

2 U.S. Soldiers Killed In Balad Ambush

June 24, 2004 By GUY KOVNER, THE PRESS DEMOCRAT & 6.23 AP

Two soldiers with a Petaluma-based California National Guard unit were killed Tuesday in an ambush in Iraq, National Guard officials said Wednesday.

They were the first combat casualties in the 58-year history of the guard's 579th Engineer Battalion, headquartered in Santa Rosa with companies based in Petaluma, Eureka and Lakeport.

"It's pretty somber here," said Capt. Zac Delwiche, officer in charge of the battalion, at the Santa Rosa Armory.

Killed while on patrol near Balad, about 50 miles north of Baghdad, were 2nd Lt. Andre D. Tyson, 33, of Long Beach and Cpl. Patrick R. McCaffrey, 34, of Tracy.

A third soldier, a National Guardsman from Trenton, Texas, was wounded in the ambush. The soldier's name was not released Wednesday. He was not seriously injured, said 1st Lt. Jonathan Shiroma at California guard headquarters in Sacramento.

Tyson, a member of the 578th Engineer Battalion in Southern California, was reassigned to A Company of the 579th Battalion when it left for Iraq in March.

McCaffrey, who joined the National Guard at age 33, had been drilling with A Company in Petaluma for about a year, Delwiche said.

The California National Guard has more than 1,800 members deployed overseas, most of them in Iraq and Afghanistan, Shiroma said.

Tyson and McCaffrey were among about 90 members of A Company sent to Iraq in the first wartime assignment for the 579th, designated in August 1946.

The company is based at Camp Anaconda, a sprawling U.S. military base about 50 miles north of Baghdad. In 120-degree desert heat, the soldiers are on daily patrols, looking for insurgents and maintaining order, Delwiche said.

"They're having a difficult time over there," he said.

Camp Anaconda is near Balad in an area north and west of Baghdad considered Iraq's most volatile region.

The citizen-soldiers from A Company, pulled from civilian life for a yearlong deployment, were trained as infantry for 50 days at Fort Lewis in Washington and Fort Irwin in the Mojave Desert prior to going to Iraq.

The soldiers belonged to Task Force Danger. (Better than the usual bullshit names, but take the logical next step. With 50 days infantry training, plus given the impossibility of winning against a national liberation movement, how about Task Force Suicide Mission?)

Fort Carson Soldier Dies After Falling Ill In Iraq; Busted To Corporal “After Speaking His Mind Too Many Times”

June 23, 2004 COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP)

An Army corporal who contracted encephalitis while in Iraq has died.

Adam White, 24, is the 46th Fort Carson soldier whose death is attributed to service in Iraq. He died Saturday after spending half a year unable to speak or move.

“He was just a lovely person,” said his wife, Dorit, of Colorado Springs.

White had been in Iraq eight months when he woke up Dec. 7 unable to control the left side of his body. It was just before White had planned a surprise visit to see his wife for Christmas.

Doctors found swelling in White's brain, and he left Iraq paralyzed.

Doctors do not know how White got sick, but possibilities include insect-borne diseases and an adverse reaction to a flu shot.

White was able to improve enough to order Valentine's Day flowers for his wife, whom he met at a country-music night club more than a year ago, but worsened again after a couple of weeks.

His family remembered him as a tender husband and fun-loving cowboy with a big smile and quick wit.

His mother said the 6-foot-4-inch man who grew up in a Marine Corps family was a mischievous child who found a way to get a party for his 5th birthday on the Fourth of July.

“We had told him that we couldn't afford a big party,” Vicki White said. “Just a couple of presents and cake, that's it. So he went around and invited everyone he knew in the neighborhood.”

Adam White attended an alternative high school in San Diego and graduated as valedictorian after three years. A few days before graduation, he headed for basic training.

White, a gunner in air-defense artillery, became a sergeant while helping defend a base in Tikrit, Iraq, but went back to corporal after speaking his mind too many times, his wife said.

The couple had wed a few weeks before he was deployed. They postponed a honeymoon and children for later.

“He wanted a baby,” Dorit White said through tears.

“He always said he'd come back,” she said.

White also is survived by his wife's daughter, Callista.

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Va. Native Killed, Says His Family, In Baghdad Mortar Attack

June 23, 2004 BY RAIN SMITH, MEDIA GENERAL NEWS SERVICE, Washington County News

ABINGDON - A Washington County native was killed in Baghdad on Monday, according to family members.

Staff Sgt. Greg Pennington, 37, had been living with his Army unit in one of Saddam Hussein's daughter's castles, said his father, Aulbin Pennington of Konnarock.

The elder Pennington had received a Father's Day call from his son on Sunday morning.

"He was Special Forces and he wasn't allowed to talk [about what he was doing], you know how they are," he said. "But he did tell me mortars were going off constantly and stuff."

Monday morning, his daughter-in-law, Janet, called from Fort Hood, Texas, and told him Greg had been killed in action.

The Associated Press reported yesterday that an Army soldier was killed and seven others were wounded during a mortar attack in north-central Baghdad.

Pennington was stationed at Fort Hood. His father said his son and Janet had been married for five years and had no children. He had been in the Army 12 years and in Iraq for more than three months.

"His captain said he died a hero," Aulbin Pennington said. **The elder Pennington said his son's unit came under fire in Baghdad and that he had gotten all of his men out of the barracks. He was the last one out, he said, and died on the way to the hospital.**

Magnolia Soldiers Hit Hard

June 23, 2004 newschannel6TV, Louisiana.

Four members of a Magnolia-based national guard company have been injured while serving in Iraq.

It happened during a mortar attack earlier in Baghdad earlier this week.

They were members of the delta company, third battalion, 153rd infantry.

Staff sergeant Art Stokenbury, staff sergeant Thomas Labit, specialist Pete Hildreth and specialist Ash Ritchie suffered non-life threatening wounds.

The 153rd infantry unit out of Magnolia has been hit hard since they deployed in March. An April 24th, Captain Bo Felder from Lewisville was killed in a rocket attack.

POINTLESS WASTE OF TIME; BRING THEM HOME NOW



A U.S. soldier demands a photographer to stop filming after a bomb attack in the capital Baghdad June 22, 2004. A car bomb exploded in a Baghdad street Tuesday as a convoy of U.S. troops and Iraqi police drove past. (Ali Jasim/Reuters)

One Wounded In Qayara

June 24, 2004 AFP

A US soldier has been wounded and a US vehicle destroyed in a bombing in Qayara, 50 kilometres south-east of Mosul.

TROOP NEWS

The new issue of Traveling Soldier is out! This issue features:

1. "I am back in this s--t hole" - Traveling Soldier reprints an email from a tank gunner whose deployment was extended by the Iraqi uprising, as well as an email from his father who is active in Military Families Speak Out.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.04.syverson.php>

2. Army vet and former prison guard Lou Plummer says that instead of trying to get to the bottom of the torture scandal, Bush should get to the top - he can start by looking in the mirror.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.04.plummer.php>

3. Traveling Soldier analyzes whether it was a "few bad apples" that were responsible for the torture at Abu Ghraib or the nature of the war itself.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.04.rotten.php>

4. Mike Hoffman, a marine who participated in the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, calls on his fellow troops to speak out against the war and for recent Iraq vets like himself to join the anti-war movement.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.04.hoffman.php>

5. On June 30, the Bush administration says it's going to give sovereignty back to an Iraqi government. Yeah, and Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.04.june30.php>

6. Hate the war in Iraq? Try voting against it when both the Democratic and Republican candidates want to get control of Iraq's oil and set up military bases in the heart of the Middle East.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.04.election.php>

7. Wolfowitz forgets how many soldiers he's killed in Iraq.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.04.wolf.php>

8. An update on the first soldier to quit Iraq war, Camilo Mejia.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.04.mejia.php>

9. Words from the front-lines, a compilation of what soldiers are saying about the war in Iraq.

10. Download the new Traveling Soldier to pass it out at your school or workplace.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/TS6.pdf>

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/>

Despicable Lies About Armor Exposed By Severely Wounded Soldiers' Father; He Demands Action

6.22.04 By Patricia Henley Assistant News Editor, Sonoma, California News

Army Staff Sgt. Jed Berman, a former Sonoma Valley resident who was seriously wounded in Mosul, Iraq, on May 29, has been moved out of intensive care and into a standard ward at Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

"He is out of the woods and now begins the long road to recovery," said his father, Jon Berman.

Jed suffered severe damage to his face, arm and back, and has pieces of shrapnel in two parts of the right side of his brain. He underwent the first of a series of face reconstructive surgeries last week and is doing well, Jon Berman said. Jed is speaking more clearly than before, Jon said, is recalling events from his memory and is slowly regaining use of his left hand, which is controlled by the right side of his brain.

Lt. Col. Joseph Piek, the public affairs officer for Task Force Olympus and 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) in Mosul wrote that all military personnel have full body armor, *but Jon said he continues to hear reports that soldiers have inadequate equipment.*

Concerned, Jon has met with Congressmen Mike Thompson, D-St. Helena, and Ken Calvert, R-Calif., and Sen. Barbara Boxer. Jon Berman is in touch with Sen. Dianne Feinstein's office and has requested meetings with Sens. Kerry and Kennedy.

"I encourage everyone to mail, call and e-mail their congresspeople and senators, to express their outrage at the situation," Jon Berman said.

Originally Jon was told through indirect sources that his son had been injured while riding in the turret of a lightly armored Stryker vehicle. After those details were published, this newspaper received an e-mail from Piek.

Piek reported that Berman was actually riding in the open hatch of a six-wheeled Fox vehicle when a nearby "vehicle that contained numerous explosives was detonated."

"Five other soldiers who were either inside the Fox vehicle or who were inside an up-armored LMTV (truck) were injured," Piek wrote. "They were all returned to duty shortly after the incident." Jon Berman said it was good to find out exactly how his son was injured.

"I have been trying to find out from day one what happened and was told it was classified," Jon Berman said.

GIs Marching Away From Re-Enlistment; Fort Carson Troops Leaving The Ranks

By Dick Foster, Rocky Mountain News June 14, 2004

COLORADO SPRINGS - Army re-enlistments have dropped suddenly and dramatically at Fort Carson and several other posts where combat units have recently returned from Iraq.

The surprising decline within the past 21/2 months has jolted recruiters and military analysts and provoked questions about the war's effect on the Army's recruiting ability.

Since Fort Carson units began coming home in April, post recruiters have met only 57 percent of their quota for re-enlisting first-term soldiers for a second hitch, according to an Army report.

More disturbing, recruiters say, is they're re-enlisting only 46 percent of the quota for "mid-career" noncommissioned officers. These are the young sergeants with four to 10 years of experience who are the backbone of the Army - its skilled soldiers, mentors and future senior NCOs.

"That's a lot lower than where we want to be, especially on mid-careers," said Master Sgt. Scott Leeling, a Fort Carson recruiter.

Fort Carson is just about meeting quotas for re-enlistments of smaller numbers of older career soldiers - those serving 10 or more years.

Iraq may be exposing some vulnerabilities of an undersized, overstretched Army.

"It sounds to me like the Army is voting with its feet," said John Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.org, an Alexandria, Va., think tank.

Married soldiers, who now make up half of the Army, are growing weary of repeated, yearlong deployments away from their families, Pike and others believe.

"We've gone from an unmarried Army to a married Army. These guys have come back from Iraq now, but you tell them they're going back within a year, and the wives are raising hell," said Dennis McCormack, a retired helicopter pilot who served in Vietnam and Desert Storm.

Fort Carson isn't alone with sharp re-enlistment drops during the past 90 days. According to Army figures:

At Fort Bragg, N.C., home of the 82nd Airborne Division, recruiters have met 65 percent of their goal of first-termers and 80 percent of the goal for mid-career soldiers.

At Fort Riley, Kan., whose 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division remains deployed in Iraq, re-enlistments are off sharply. Recruiters have signed only 50 percent of its quota for first-term re-enlistees, and 57 percent for mid-career soldiers.

Across the Army's massive III Corps, which includes Fort Hood's 4th Infantry and 1st Cavalry divisions as well as Fort Carson's combat units, only 51 percent of first-termers and 54 percent of the mid-career soldiers are signing up.

At Fort Stewart, Ga., where the 3rd Infantry Division returned from Iraq, the Army used cash bonus incentives to re-enlist 95 percent of its first-term quota and reach 100 percent of its mid-career goal.

No cash incentives have been authorized at Fort Carson or other posts, Leeling said. And there's no guarantee the money would lure everyone.

"I've been away more than I've been home. I want to live my life with my kids and my family," said Jimmy Ray Sandoval, who has been to Korea, Bosnia and Iraq.

After missing his son's birth and his daughter's birthday in Iraq, Sandoval came home last Christmas and left the Army with the rank of corporal.

McCormack has heard it from other soldiers. "These guys have come home and had some time to be with their families. Then the rumors start flying that they're going back within a year," he said.

"They've asked themselves, 'Do I really want to do that again?' You're making \$20,000 or \$25,000 a year and liable to get killed. They lost a lot of guys," he said.

The recent declines at Fort Carson and elsewhere are the first weakness in enlistments since the war began. ***Pike believes the Army "is in a race" against time to reduce Iraq troop commitments before larger numbers of soldiers begin leaving.***

Orange County Marine Dies In Base Bunker From Single Shot In Head

Jun. 23, 2004 Associated Press

IRVINE, Calif. - A Marine from Orange County who was nearly a week from his 20th birthday has died in a non-combat incident in Iraq.

Pfc. Sean Horn died Saturday while serving at Camp Taqaddum, Iraq. The military said he died in a "non-hostile incident" but did not provide details. He would have turned 20 on Sunday.

Horn's sister Melissa, 21, told the Orange County Register that he was found dead on Saturday from a single shot in the head in a bunker at the camp, about 150 miles northwest of Baghdad.

"It's the worst thing in the world that could possibly happen to a family," she said Tuesday.

She said Horn did not return for a 4 p.m. roll call at the base, and his body was found a short time later.

During a final phone conversation with her brother in May, she repeatedly told her brother how much she loved him, to which an embarrassed Horn replied: "Come on, Mel, the fellas are behind me listening. I understand you love me."

"We're still trying to figure out what happened and it's just too soon for me to talk about it," his father, Steven, said at the family home in Irvine.

Horn was born in the Los Angeles suburb of Lakewood and grew up in Irvine. He joined the Marines in June 2003. "He loved the Marines. He had a great career ahead of him," the father said.

Horn was an engineer equipment operator for the Combat Service Support Group I Marine Expeditionary Force based at Camp Pendleton.

Horn's family had recently sent him a package with birthday gifts, including candy, coveralls and a silver cross. The family was planning to move to Oceanside to be nearer to Horn when he returned from active duty.

Horn was scheduled to be buried at Forest Lawn in Cypress next to his grandfather, also a Marine. A date for a funeral service had not been set.

Wolfowitz Says Soldiers Will Stay In Iraq "For Years"

[New York Times, June 23, 2004]

Paul Wolfowitz said the Pentagon underestimated the violent tenacity of the Iraqi insurgency that erupted after Baghdad fell, **and agreed that the U.S. might have to keep a substantial number of troops in Iraq for several years. (This is the asshole who couldn't remember how many troops have died in Iraq when testifying to Congress. He could have just said "More coffins on the way.")**

Mercenaries Running Away

[Washington Times, June 23, 2004, Pg. 14]

Many private contractors, anticipating an increase in insurgents' attacks in the countdown to June 30, are planning to leave Iraq before the power transfer and haven't set a date for their return.

Pentagon Lets Air Force General Get Away From Sex Abuse Charges After Congress Investigation Said He Was Guilty

[Colorado Springs Gazette, June 22, 2004, Pg. 1]

Pentagon investigators have cleared Brig. Gen. David Wagie, the Air Force Academy's dean of faculty, in the school's sexual assault scandal. **That finding contradicts a congressional panel's conclusion that blamed Wagie and others for the scandal in which women alleged that the academy ignored sexual assault reports and punished women for reporting them.**

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Iraqi Occupation Soldier Killed, Four Wounded As Effort To Defuse Mosul Bomb Unsuccessful

June 24, 2004 AFP

An Iraqi National Guardsman has been killed and four others wounded while trying to defuse a bomb in the northern city of Mosul, an Iraqi officer and the US military say.

"A guard was killed and two others wounded in trying to defuse a bomb in the Dawassa district in Mosul," National Guard Captain Ibrahim said.

The US military later put the number of wounded at four.

A doctor from the local hospital says two of the wounded are seriously hurt.

Police Captain Ahmad Uday Khairi says that in Mosul on Wednesday night, a policeman had been killed and another wounded in a shoot out around 8:30pm (local time) in the same Dawassa district in the city centre.

Attack Kills Two Occupation Cops

6.24.04

Baghdad, Iraq-AP -- A drive-by shooting in an insurgent stronghold in Iraq has left two policemen dead and another wounded.

The attack happened in the town of Ramadi, 60 miles west of Baghdad.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

"This Is Imperial Arrogance" An Interview With Two Antiwar Veterans

June 11, 2004 *Socialist Worker* Pages 6 and 7

THE BUSH administration is still spouting the same old lies about its invasion and occupation of Iraq. But every few days brings new evidence of the complete disarray of Washington's occupation--and exposes the war makers claims about "liberation" and "democracy." Here, DAVE CLINE and LOU PLUMMER talked to *Socialist Worker's* Eric Ruder about developments in Iraq.

DAVE CLINE is a disabled Vietnam veteran and national president of Veterans for Peace. He is also active in Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

LOU PLUMMER lives in Fayetteville, N.C., which is home to Fort Bragg, one of the biggest Army bases in the country, with many of its soldiers on active duty in Iraq. Lou is also an Army veteran and worked for several years as a prison guard in North Carolina. He has a son currently on duty in Iraq and is active in Military Families Speak Out.

The Interview:

ONE YEAR ago, George Bush was swaggering after the quick military victory in Iraq. Today, his approval rates have dropped off a cliff. What happened?

Lou: The biggest thing is the continuing upward climb of the U.S. body count--and as time goes by, the lies that Bush told become more apparent. Plus, Bush has no ability to admit any fault, which is ticking people off.

I don't think it has anything to do with what's coming out of the Democratic Party, because unfortunately, Kerry is doing pretty much the same chest pounding as Bush. I think Bush has been his own worst enemy.

Dave: When they first invaded Iraq in March of last year and then Bush declared "mission accomplished" on May 1, that was the simple part. It was always known that the Iraqi army couldn't withstand an assault from the U.S. military. The army wasn't really enthusiastic about fighting, and they were up against a force that was overwhelming in terms of conventional warfare.

Similar to the dynamic that took place after the 1991 war on Iraq, there was a bunch of triumphalism in the U.S., and people thought that Bush had it together and knew what he was doing. But the reality is that the Bush administration made no plans of any real significance for what they would do after the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime.

There were reports that a lot of Iraqis initially welcomed the U.S. after the invasion because they wanted Saddam out, but that turned pretty quickly. Now, the Iraqi economy is a mess, there has been no real reconstruction, and there has been the growth of an armed resistance--and beyond the armed resistance a popular discontent and opposition to the continued occupation.

I've always said that the real objective of the Bush administration was to gain control of the natural resources and to gain regional military dominance. So their real objectives never had anything to do with their claimed objectives of freedom and democracy. This is all continuing to collapse--and the body bags keep coming home.

In the Vietnam War, they sold a lot of the lies by building a whole construct. It was only in 1970 when the Pentagon Papers came out that people actually saw that these were government lies--that took from 1963 to 1970. In Iraq, it took from March 2003 to January 2004 for these lies to be exposed.

So it's natural--people wanted to believe, and as the thing falls apart piece by piece, people become disgusted. The other side of the coin is that they keep saying the economy is getting better, but people on the street are saying, "I don't see the jobs, or they're low-wage jobs."

WHAT DO you think the attitude toward Bush and the war is among rank-and-file soldiers?

Dave: The military is being run into the ground today, but it's not easy for soldiers to speak out when they're in a war zone. Usually, some guys in a unit are for it, and some are against--and that can be life-threatening. I haven't heard of any killings for speaking out, but I think that the possibility has a chilling effect.

Also, I think that the military has certainly tightened its grip. Donald Rumsfeld just decreed that soldiers can't have digital cameras or camera phones because they don't want pictures getting out. They're trying to control the news a lot more.

At the beginning of the war, the media was in lockstep with the administration. Now, reporters of integrity--not the corporate owners of the media, of course--are trying to dig up some of these issues, and the military is trying to respond to that. They thought they

had the media in their pocket--"embedded." **And the Department of Defense is saying that we've got to sit on this--we can't have this look like a revolt.**

Lou: The Pentagon did a study of mental health among troops in Iraq, and I'm surprised that it didn't get more play in the media. It's shocking what came out of that. Over half the troops describe their own morale as low, and 75 percent describe their unit morale as low. And there were stories told by army mental health professionals treating things like combat stress and so on, who said there was a lack of medication to treat anxiety and depression.

I think morale is plummeting. The soldiers at Fort Bragg just found out that they're going to have to send 4,000 troops back to Iraq within the next year. And they just started coming home in February and March!

Some of these guys have been to Afghanistan and Iraq. Not only is this hurting the morale of the troops, but also their families and the community. There's a real weariness setting in on the part of the military.

And this week, the army announced the largest expansion of the "stop-loss" policy to date. Anyone in a unit set to deploy in the next 90 days can't be discharged. In the past, if you had already deployed to Iraq and your discharge date came, you had to stay until your unit came home. Now, even if you haven't gone yet, you can be extended. It's just awful.

Dave: A small number of those who have returned have begun speaking out, but I think many people are still trying to make sense of it. Very few people come back from a war and go right from being a soldier to being an anti-warrior. They're trying to figure it out and put their heads back together.

The discontent is still there, and there's some support for antiwar activities. And a lot of people are waiting for the November elections and plan to vote against Bush. At the same time, we've seen growth in Military Families Speak Out--up to about 1,500 families now. And you have to look at the families as the voice of the soldiers, rather than soldiers speaking in their own voice at this point.

We're trying to encourage some of the returning soldiers to band together, and some have joined Veterans for Peace. We're trying to get them to speak out because we think that will be a very potent voice--and that will draw other soldiers out of their let-me-come-home-and-try-to-forget-it lethargy.

There have been a lot more high-ranking officers voicing complaints. A captain just had an article in the *Los Angeles Times*, I think, attacking the whole stop-loss program. And [retired Lt. Gen. William] Odom is on TV, saying the only solution is to withdraw. When you start to see people like that speaking out, you figure your voice doesn't have the amplification that theirs do.

WHAT DO you think the torture revelations at Abu Ghraib say about the troops in Iraq and the overall war project?

Lou: First, I'll say something about being a prison guard. Nobody when they're a little kid wants to grow up and be a prison guard. It's not a job that anyone aspires to do. In

some ways, it's like joining the military--it's a job many people take out of economic necessity.

In my own case, when I got out of the military and had no college education, the prisons were looking for people who had military experience, because prisons are run along paramilitary lines--they have ranks, and, of course, there are weapons involved and so on. I started in 1986, and it paid \$15,000 a year, but it had vacation, sick leave and insurance for my kids, and that's why I took the job.

Stateside, prisons are a real bureaucracy, and all bureaucracies are self-perpetuating. It's a big "cover your ass" kind of job, and the worst sin is to embarrass somebody. It was worse to embarrass your boss than it was to abuse an inmate. Those guards who had a tendency to be abusive had to be covert about it, and the system--at least where I worked--frowned on abuse not for humanitarian reasons, but because they didn't want the bad publicity that could result.

On a staff, you always have a small minority who just groove on being a prison guard--they get off on screwing with inmates. They fail to consider them human beings. When I worked there, I wasn't Mother Theresa, but I did consider the inmates people.

Two of the seven people charged at Abu Ghraib are prison guards back home. In the prisons back in the states, where there's some degree of control, their innate sadism is frustrated. But when they get to Iraq, and the military says you can do whatever you want, these guys took their experience in the prisons and let their fantasies run wild.

The Taguba report points to the reasons why--there was no supervision and the whole chain of command in that MP brigade didn't function. It's also part of the innate racism of war. Prison guards in the states can forget that they're dealing with human beings. And because it's so pervasive in the military, American soldiers abroad can forget that people who aren't wearing American uniforms are human beings.

Dave: When Rumsfeld expressed disdain for the Geneva Conventions months ago with respect to detainees at Guantánamo Bay, we came out against that. We have a new statement online at veteransforpeace.org titled, "We've been there before."

Because in wars when you find yourself fighting a resistance that has the active or even the passive support of the population, you can't distinguish who's a combatant and who isn't. It eventually leads you to consider *everyone* to be your enemy--and you use more and more brutality and racism. In Vietnam, the term was "gooks"; in Iraq, the term is "Haji"--which comes from Haj, the pilgrimage to Mecca that Muslims take.

The military is made to fight a military force. They aren't set up to do occupation or police work. And they use overwhelming force. That's what they were planning to do in Falluja, and that's what they were trying to do with the supporters of Moktada al-Sadr. And may still be trying to do, by what I can tell--some of the reports after the "truce" indicate that there's more fighting going on.

Most of the people in that cell block were common criminals, and a lot of people have speculated that the real intention was to humiliate these people so that they had something over them--so they could send them back into the community as spies and collaborators to report on resistance activities. The U.S. doesn't have an infrastructure

of spies, like the Israelis have in Palestine--and the U.S. is trying to do a knock-off of what the Israelis are doing in the Occupied Territories.

Lou: The troops were being told that they are there temporarily to help establish sovereignty, blah, blah, blah. But they're building permanent barracks for U.S. soldiers. This raises a question--why are we building permanent base camps if we're just going to be here temporarily?

There's a woman here in Military Families Speak Out whose husband served as an engineer in Iraq. Initially, the mission of this guy's unit was building stuff, but as the resistance in Iraq grew, instead of rebuilding or anything else mission-oriented, all they did was protect themselves.

In essence, the only reason they're in Iraq is to keep from getting killed by Iraqis. This is just so illogical. If they weren't there, they wouldn't have that mission, thus saving money and lives and not creating so much hatred.

This guy also told me an incredible story about the availability of combat stress counseling. He said that it was available in the area where they were stationed--but it was five miles away every other Friday.

If you were feeling stress or anxiety, you could go to combat stress counseling, but it would take a three-vehicle convoy with nine riflemen to escort you through this area with lots of improvised explosive devices in order to get stress counseling. Kafka couldn't have written something so twisted.

Dave: You've got to understand that the troops were told they would be welcomed as liberators. But with the resistance, troops start to think that these people are "ungrateful." This is arrogance--imperial arrogance--and the military is not based on being humble. They rev up the troops.

A lot of people are joining the resistance because they experienced a death in their family or community. The Bush administration is hoping they can divide the resistance up and get those people who are just patriots with guns to stop--so they can isolate whatever Islamist elements there are. The problem for Bush is that the initial reports are that the new government they're putting in on June 30 doesn't have much support on the ground--and that's because the U.S. troops are still there.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

(So Much For That “Sovereignty” Bullshit) Take Your Pick:

THIS:

White House To Take Low-Key Role In Hand-Over

[Los Angeles Times, June 23, 2004]

The Bush administration will assume a low profile when the hand-over of control to the Iraqi interim government occurs on June 30.

OR THIS:

Iraq Ministers Told Only U.S. Can Impose Martial Law

[London Financial Times, June 23, 2004]

Iraq’s interim government has been advised by the coalition authority that only the U.S.-led coalition can declare martial Iraq, **and that rule will apply even after power is handed over to the Iraqis on June 30.**

<p>OCCUPATION ISN’T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

Occupation Authority Fucking Up Oil Industry

[Los Angeles Times, June 23, 2004]

The International Advisory and Monitoring Board said the U.S.-led occupation in Iraq is managing billions of dollars from Iraq’s oil sales in a sloppy manner, while moving at a glacial pace to prevent corruption.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

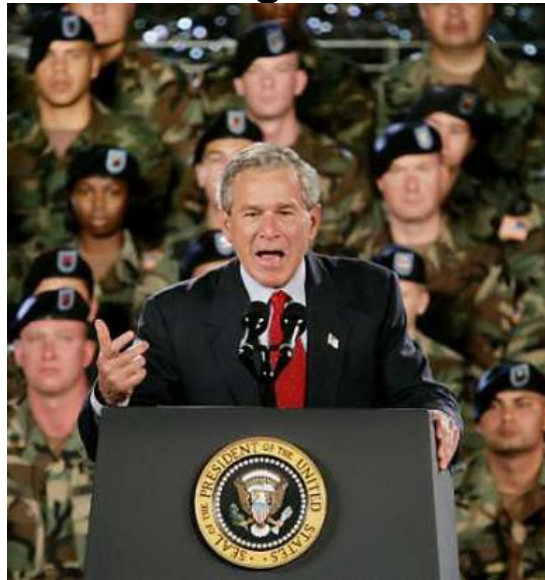
Beheadings Cool If Bush Buddies Do It

[New York Times, June 23, 2004]

Afghan troops beheaded four Taliban fighters to avenge the Taliban beheading of an Afghan soldier and an Afghan interpreter for U.S.-led forces.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Now this piece of shit uses troops as stage props for his re-election campaign. But he won't meet any of the bodies coming back to Dover from Iraq.



Bush speaks at Hanger 3025 while visiting Ft. Lewis, Washington, June 18. (Larry Downing/Reuters)

Received:

From: (Australia)

To: GI Special

Sent: June 18, 2004 **Subject:** Re: GI Special 2#94: Rockets Trash US Base

Thanks for the GI Specials. We love the news, especially of the mothers and how the scales are falling from eyes everywhere and here also.

fraternal greetings. M

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