

## GI SPECIAL 2#B47



# SPREAD THE WORD: Idaho Guards Troops Refuse To Go To Iraq: Waiver Refusal Saves Them

August 30, 2004 newsday.com

At least 13 members of the Idaho National Guard currently training in Texas have invoked a two-year limit on their active duty service and will not be deployed to Iraq this fall.

Army officials said five more are still deciding whether to waive that limitation.

Col. Barry Nightingale, chief of staff of the 5th Army Tactical Command at Fort Bliss, said the personnel were among 232 of the more than 4,000 members of the 116th Brigade Combat Team to come under the limitation.

First Sgt. Michael Kish from northern Idaho was among those waiving the restriction. He told The Idaho Spokesman-Review he had no ill will toward those who decided to go home.

"It's unfortunate to see them go. They are like brothers," Kish said. "It comes down to priorities. Look, the military is going to be here forever. With your family, you only have a certain amount of time. Kids grow up so fast."

**Nightingale said 61, including the 13 from Idaho, will be demobilized and released to their home armories while 22, including the five from Idaho, were still contemplating their options.**

Those covered by the statutory limit had been on other active duty assignments prior to being assigned to training this summer in Texas. A unit from northern Idaho, for instance, had been detailed to perform security duty at Mountain Home Air Force Base last summer and moved from there to Fort Bliss.

***Authorities say the 116th Brigade could be in Iraq for as long as 18 months.***

Nightingale said the military was aware of the limitation when the force was mobilized this spring and just intended to return guardsmen home as they hit the two-year limit.

**"There has been a recent policy change that now requires soldiers to complete the tour with their unit," Nightingale said. "That is what has generated the requirement for volunteer statements." (In plain English, they need more meat for Bush's Iraq slaughterhouse, and desperately hope these troops don't know they have the right to refuse to go. Spread the word to the Guard far and wide.)**

**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.**

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS:**

### **Soldier Killed By Mosul IED, Two Wounded**

30/08/2004 Ireland.online

**A roadside bomb exploded as a US military convoy passed by on a road in northern Iraq, killing one American soldier and wounding two others, the Army said today.**

The bomb exploded just south of Mosul, 225 miles northwest of the capital, on Sunday the military said in a statement.

“The injured soldiers were evacuated to the US Army combat support hospital in Mosul where one was released and the other is in stable condition,” the statement said.

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## **British Troops Under Heavy Attack From Mahdi Militia**

(London Times, August 30, 2004)

Just weeks ago, Basra was being held up as a role model for security operations in Iraq, proof that the softly-softly approach of British troops was the way forward. **Now, those troops are largely confined to their bases, sheltering under a barrage of mortar and gunfire. More than 500 attacks by hostile forces were reported last month.**

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## **Baquba Base Hit Hard**

30 August 2004 Aljazeera.Net

**Monday, the headquarters of the US troops in Baquba came under mortar attack. More than 20 explosions were heard inside the US base, and heavy smoke was seen rising in the area.**

Also, a US patrol came under mortar attack in Dhuliyiyia area, north of Baghdad. The US troops retaliated by opening fire on the attacker's position, injuring a passerby and setting ablaze a farm in the area.

The eastern entrance of Falluja city was the scene of intermittent clashes between US troops and armed resistance fighters, just prior to a raid by a US warplane on a house in the al-Askary neighbourhood of the city.

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## **Iowa Soldier Killed In Najaf; “They Don’t Want Us There”**

8.30.04 DES MOINES (AP)

An Iowa Marine was killed by gunfire in the Iraqi city of Najaf, his mother said Sunday night.

Nick Skinner, 20, of Davenport, was shot in the neck Thursday and died a short time later on an operating table, his mother, Laura Hamann of Park View, said in a telephone interview.

"He was a very strong young man," Hamann said. She said that after he was wounded, Skinner crawled back to his camp under his own power but died because of blood loss.

Skinner enlisted in the Marines in 2003 shortly after graduating from North Scott High School.

A private first class, Skinner was a member of the First Battalion, Fourth Marine Unit Platoon 1023 out of Camp Pendleton, Calif. He completed basic training last October and headed to Iraq in May, Hamann said.

**Skinner's father, Randy Skinner, got a telephone call Sunday morning from the father of Skinner's best friend, who was also stationed in Najaf. The man had just received an e-mail message from his son informing him of Skinner's death.**

"I asked him 'What are you talking about?'" Randy Skinner told the Quad-City Times for a story in Monday's edition.

**Both Randy Skinner and Hamann said they are upset with the Marines for taking so long to pass along word of their son's death.**

Skinner is the 15th Iowa serviceman killed since July 2003 while serving in Iraq.

Hamann said her son was well-liked and that he liked to tease people. He was a fisherman and went hunting every year with his father and grandfather, she said.

"His grandpa died a few months ago and Nick couldn't make it back," Hamann said. "Now I know they're together."

**Hamann said she would like to see American troops pulled out of Iraq because "they don't want us there."**

**"I don't support the war but I support the troops," she said.**

## **Most Attacks Against US Forces Go Unreported**

August 30 By Mazen Ghazi, Samir Haddad IOL Correspondents (IslamOnline.net)

**Pastry seller, Al-Khodeir says at least four resistance operations occur at the same place every week.**

**"Those American soldiers must be dumb. They never learn the lesson. Everyday at the same time, the same place they tread in," he said laughingly.**



**Another eyewitness, who identified himself only as Abu Aziz, has similar breathtaking incidents that often go unreported by western media.**

"A week ago, I heard a shuddering explosion at mid night as a US military convoy was traveling along the Al-Khadraa street, west of Baghdad. The blast was so powerful that it lit up the night sky," he told IOL.

**"As dawn broke, I only saw at the site of the attack twisted metal of a US military vehicle with its unmistakable color. As for casualties, the US evacuation unit was busy airlifting them."**

**Another attack left several US soldiers burnt beyond recognition and their two Humvees completely damaged, according to the eyewitness.**

The resistance fighters creatively trapped a perished dog with explosives and detonated it via a remote control, according to eyewitnesses.

The residents of Al-Adel district in Baghdad were dying to know about a predawn heavy shooting.

Some locals spent a sleepless night to figure out. They say they saw masked men pouring large quantities of solar and kerosene on the highway, just minutes before a scheduled US patrol.

No sooner had the patrol stepped in that the fighters came from nowhere and started shooting at the military vehicles, setting ablaze two cars, four tanks, a personnel carrier and a Humvee. **"It was like a massacre for the American soldiers," one eyewitness told IOL.**

**But such incidents do not find a place among a torrent of breaking news and features carried by satellite channels and news agencies.**

**"The interim Iraqi government and the US occupation authorities adopt a zero tolerance with media outlets seeking either to expose their deadly raids into Iraqi towns or revealing such resistance attacks and the real number of US casualties," Munzir Al-Rawi, a political analyst, explained to IOL.**

A case in point, he added, is the closure of all-news Al-Jazeera satellite channel by Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi.

Reporting such incidents with its high death toll, according to eyewitnesses counts, would not for sure help US President George W. Bush in his re-election campaign, already under huge strains over Iraq war and the war on terror policies.

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## Occupation Workers Shot

BAGHDAD, Iraq Aug. 30, 2004 The Associated Press

North of the capital, unidentified gunmen shot and seriously wounded a woman working as a translator for the U.S. military in the city, her husband, Amer Abdul-Karim said.

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## TROOP NEWS

### BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE



A group carrying what was described as 1,000 coffins representing U.S. dead in Iraq marches past Madison Square Garden during the anti-Bush march New York August 29, on the eve of the Republican National Convention. (AP Photo/Ted Warren)

**Sue Niederer, 55, wore the floppy desert camouflage Army hat her son wore before he was killed in Iraq six months ago.**

**She rode from Pennington, N.J., because *she says she cannot shake the sound of her 24-year-old son's voice urging her every day to do something to stop the war in Iraq and bounce Bush out of the White House.***

***"Do what you gotta do, Ma," Niederer said Lt. Seth Dvorin tells her. "Stand against the war and bring these kids home."***

8.29.04 By Dan Frosch, AlterNet & By Jay Shaft- Coalition For Free Thought In Media & August 30th, 2004, BY NANCY DILLON, RALPH R. ORTEGA and DAVE GOLDINER, DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

"Vietnam, Gulf War and Iraqi War Veterans' groups were gathered at the front as were labor unions like Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and PSC-CUNY (City University of New York's Teachers' Union)."

**Tim Goodrich, who served in the Air Force in Afghanistan, called the march the ultimate vote of support for the troops. "I'm not anti-military by any means," said Goodrich, 24, of San Diego. "But I don't want my brothers and sisters to die needlessly."**

"Meanwhile, as police helicopters pounded overhead and a corner of Madison Square Garden's coliseum appeared in the distance, **80-year-old Phillip Miller trudged along slowly and deliberately in his full U.S. Army First Cavalry regiment uniform. "Well, I'm here to protest the war," he said. "The same unit I fought with in World War II is fighting in Iraq. If this thing isn't stopped, it's going to be never-ending."**

Austin, Texas native, Rebecca Webber (25) marched nearby." **"My brother's in Iraq. I want him to come home. He wants to come home. And that's why I'm here."**



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**She rode from Pennington, N.J., because *she says she cannot shake the sound of her 24-year-old son's voice urging her every day to do something to stop the war in Iraq and bounce Bush out of the White House.***

***"Do what you gotta do, Ma," Niederer said Lt. Seth Dvorin tells her. "Stand against the war and bring these kids home."***

"With the way the government and media have portrayed the anti war protestors, many families might want to speak out, but are afraid.

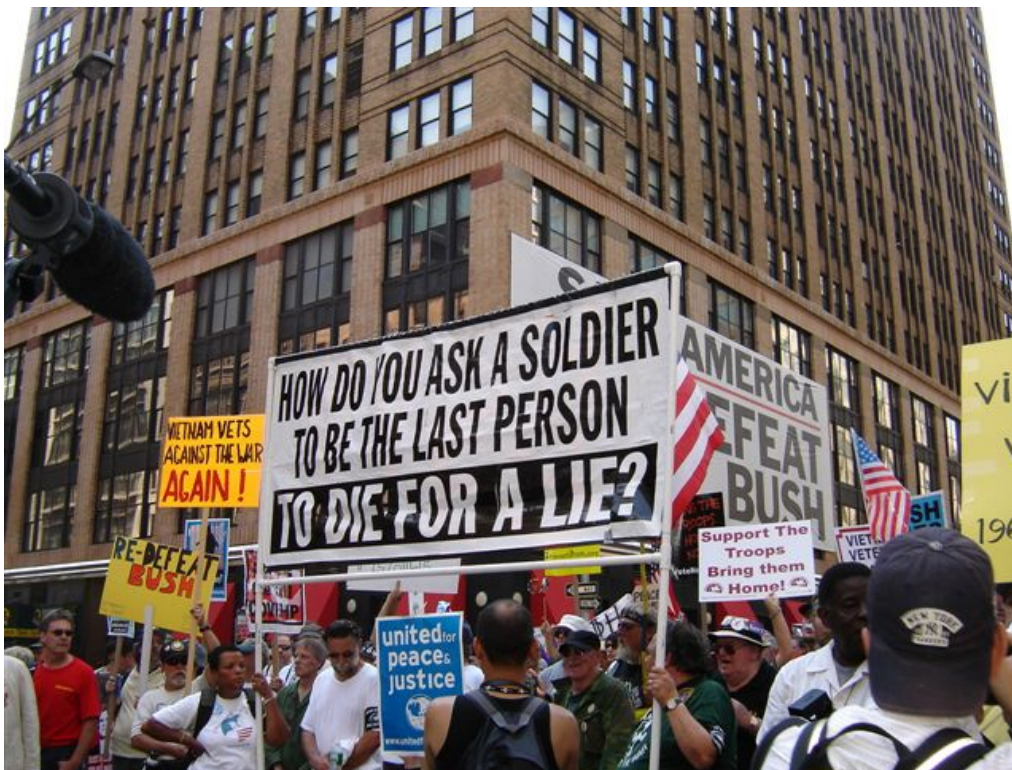
"They have every right to speak out, they have the right to question their own government. There is nothing wrong with that, it is not unpatriotic, and anyone who says that is sick! Just sick and evil! This war is wrong, and many of us have lost loved ones.

"How dare Bush and the government deny us our right to mourn! It is not wrong, we are all here to support and help the families go through the grieving process. Believe me it's not easy for many of the people I talk to come to this point, but here we all are, thousands of families and going strong.

**"America, it's up to us. We have to stop this killing now!"**

**"NO MORE! NOT ANOTHER DAY!"**

**"The cost of losing even one more life is just too high a price to pay. We have to stop this greed and sickness, it's costing us our future, and we have to keep living with the loss of our loved ones every day!"**



**Comment:**

**(If you want to know how you ask a soldier to die for a lie, start by asking George Bush, John Kerry, or Ralph Nader. Take your pick. All three are flatly, publicly, unequivocally opposed the Bringing The Troops Home Now. All three want more**



dead American soldiers. All three want more Iraqis killed by the Occupation. The obscenity is that all three pretend to care about the troops serving in Iraq, while none want them to get them home now.

Sue Niederer says: “We have to stop this killing now!” “NO MORE! NOT ANOTHER DAY!”

Bush, Kerry, and Nader all say, “NO, don’t stop this killing now. MORE. YES, MANY MORE DAYS.”

This is the scum of the earth being offered up election day.

The good news is that ordinary people, including people in the armed services, stop wars. The movements we built stopped Vietnam, not the political hacks and stooges for the Empire. Did it before, we can do it again.

The problem is too many people get blinded by election season bullshit, get suckered into to wasting their time into campaigning for one of these three contemptible frauds, and turn their backs on the troops and on building the movements on the ground that can stop the killing. T)

**What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org). Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.**



David Cline, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, left, and Brandon Bryce, second from left, a member of Military Families Speak Out, in anti-Bush march in New York Aug. 29. (AP Photo/Jennifer Szymaszek)

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## Mom At Soldier's Side In Germany

08/30/2004 BRENDAN McGARRY , For The Saratogian

LANDSTUHL, Germany -- Pausing to gaze out the window, Bonnie Horrocks said she didn't mind the drizzling gray clouds hanging low on the mountainside. The weather and landscape reminded her of home.

'It's so beautiful over here. It rains every day,' she said. 'This is just like the Adirondacks up in Lake George. It's so serene.'

Horrocks planned to spend the rest of Saturday and every day, as long as it takes, by the hospital bed of her son, Spc. Kenneth F. Comstock, a 23-year-old Army National Guardsman from Ballston Spa who was critically injured in Iraq Aug. 20 when a roadside bomb struck the Humvee he was commanding from the front passenger seat.

**'I told Kenny -- I know he could hear me -- I'm not going home until you're with me,' she said. 'I keep telling him that every day, so he better wake up soon.'**

Comstock has been in a medically-induced coma in the intensive care unit since he arrived at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, a U.S. military hospital located in western Germany.

**Comstock requires longer than the average patient turnaround of four days. The explosion fractured his forehead and skull into hundreds of pieces, causing severe brain trauma. He has undergone multiple surgeries, and on Friday, a tracheotomy removed a breathing tube that was inserted through his mouth.**

He is listed in serious condition. His mother said he has improved since arriving at the hospital. After the attack, he spent about 24 hours in Baghdad, Iraq, where medics removed shrapnel and stabilized him for the six-hour flight to Landstuhl.

'He deteriorated quite a bit from Baghdad to here. He's definitely improving now. His vitals are now good,' Horrocks said. 'It's a long, long way to go still.'

'He's still unconscious,' she said. 'We don't know Kenny's prognosis; even the doctors don't. He might fully recover, and he might not.'

Their immediate goal is to wean him off anesthesia to a point where he can communicate, via blinking or squeezing hands, so doctors can begin to measure brain activity, she said. But when they've tried, he gets agitated, thrashes around his bed and needs to be sedated again, she said.

'They need to know how much activity he does have and basically where he stands,' Horrocks said.

His injuries are concentrated on the right side of his forehead and face, and he received shrapnel cuts on his arms above the elbow, Horrocks said. He receives eye drop medication for the shards of glass still embedded in his right eye, she said.

'He's beaten all the odds,' she said. 'If he's made it this far, he's a fighter and he's determined, and he's going to make it.'

Comstock was serving in the 2nd Battalion of Company C, 108th Infantry based in Glens Falls, which is attached to the 1st Infantry Division in Iraq. He was injured returning from a combat mission to Samarra, where many of the Glens Falls soldiers are serving.

Two other soldiers with Comstock suffered minor injuries from the attack and have since returned to duty, according to earlier reports.

**Comstock was close friends with Pfc. Nathan P. Brown, 21, of South Glens Falls, Horrocks said. Brown was killed Easter Sunday in Samarra when a rocket-propelled grenade hit his Humvee. She said her son held Brown's hand until he died.**

**'That was close enough,' Horrocks said. 'That was as close as I wanted him to get.'**

'I'm where I'm supposed to be right now, right here with my son,' she said. 'If he can hear me, he's definitely happy that I'm here.' Comstock is a 1999 graduate of Ballston Spa High School. **He was engaged on Valentine's Day this year a week before he left for Iraq, Horrocks said.** She declined to name his fiancée.

She said that his father, David Comstock of Glens Falls, calls to talk to him every morning. She said that the family, including his brother, Ryan, 18, and sister, Ashley, 15, along with other relatives, are anxious to meet them at Walter Reed.

**Horrocks said she receives more than two dozen emails every day from friends, family and others back home inquiring about her son's condition. She said it's tough to tell them not much has changed.**

**'He's still here with us, and he's still fighting,' she said. 'That's a good day.'**

The family has established the Spc. Ken Comstock Fund at Adirondack Trust Co., 473 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

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## Yeah

8/30/2004 jointogether.org

Health officials are concerned that the smoking rate among the more than 140,000 U.S. troops in Iraq is skyrocketing, as more soldiers use cigarettes to combat stress, boredom, and loneliness, the [San Diego Union-Tribune](#) reported Aug. 29.

<b>Health officials said informing soldiers that their increased smoking could lead to serious health problems later in life is a tough sell, because the reality is that combat troops are more worried about making it alive to tomorrow.</b>
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## Capitalism At Work:

# While Caring For Wounded In Iraq, They Try To Take Her Home Away

August 30, 2004 COLUMBUS (AP)

**An Army reservist who tends to critically wounded soldiers in Iraq is desperately trying to keep a mortgage company from taking her house away while she's gone.**

Sgt. Yvette Nicole Curry was working with the 629th Forward Surgical Team last spring when she began receiving worrisome reports from friends.

**When she returned home on 10-day emergency leave in May, she found a life in disarray -- her husband had left her, family members were taking care of her four children, ages 10-16, and a mortgage company was foreclosing on her home.**

During leave, Curry filed for divorce, called the mortgage company and made arrangements for her kids. **Then she traveled back to her station 30 miles north of Baghdad, where her unit tries to keep wounded soldiers alive long enough to get them to a hospital.**

**But Curry is now back on another emergency leave, after the mortgage company, ABN Amro Mortgage Group, continued its foreclosure proceedings.**

"I have to fight for this house," she said sitting in the two-story house in west Columbus. "It's the only stability that my kids have."

**Lt. Col. Dale Vitale, an Army Reserve lawyer helping Curry, said she's making an honest effort to pay her debt.**

**"She's not a deadbeat who didn't pay. It was impossible for her to pay," he said.**

**A spokeswoman for ABN Amro told The Columbus Dispatch that the company wouldn't comment on pending legal matters.**

Curry, who worked for Mount Carmel Health Systems before deploying, was married on Jan. 31, 2003 and activated less than a month later.

Curry was at Fort Stewart, Ga., when the house she wanted became available, so she gave her husband power of attorney to sign her name to a \$127,000 loan from ABN AMRO Mortgage Group.

Soon after her husband closed on the house in April 2003, the military began transferring her. She says the paperwork couldn't keep up with the four transfers and that she didn't receive pay for three months.

Vitale said Curry has been able to verify that version of events to him.

Curry sent ABN AMRO copies of her orders after missing two payments, but left her husband to deal with the company because she was about to head overseas.

"I didn't follow up," Curry said. "I should have."

Last November, the mortgage company filed a foreclosure complaint in Franklin County Common Pleas Court.

Meanwhile, communication broke down with her husband, who had told her he didn't know if their marriage would survive her deployment, she said. Eventually she lost contact with him.

Curry learned from a neighbor that notices were tacked to her door, and strangers were coming and going, taking pictures.

"I was helpless. I was crying," she said. "The commander said, 'Let's get you on emergency leave to straighten this out.'"

**Curry called state Sen. Ray Miller, of Columbus, for help, and the lawmaker discussed her case with the mortgage company.**

**"I told them they should be ashamed of themselves," Miller said. "It was the typical bureaucratic response: 'We have the right to do what we want to do.'"**

**Curry was granted another emergency leave recently after hearing from friends and neighbors that the lock on her house had been changed.**

She arrived home Aug. 14 and found a letter from the mortgage company that said the foreclosure would stop if she continued her mortgage payments and paid the company's \$3,256 in legal fees.

"I told them I would not accept this agreement," she said, and she requested the Army Reserve's help.

Lt. Col. Duncan Auckland of the Ohio National Guard's joint staff judge advocate office said it sounds like ABN AMRO has the right to do everything it has done.

"It doesn't seem unfair for the lender to seek the remedy it lawfully can seek," Auckland said.

But, he added: "You can be acting within your rights, but not doing the right thing."  
**(That's why people use revolutions to get their own.)**

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## **Brain-Dead Fool Presides At Guantanamo Hearing; Col. "Befuddled"**

August 27, 2004 By Toni Locy, USA Today

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVAL STATION, Cuba — The U.S. government's first military tribunal since World War II lapsed into chaos Thursday when a Yemeni accused of war crimes admitted that he is a member of al-Qaida and asked to act as his own lawyer.

During his first appearance before the five-member tribunal, Ali Hamza Ahmad Sulayman Al Bahlul, 36, exposed weaknesses in a justice system that President Bush ordered the Pentagon to create for foreign terrorism suspects.

**Pressing his case Thursday, Al Bahlul promised to behave if he were allowed to act as his own attorney.**

Al Bahlul's request to represent himself should not have been a surprise. In April, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Philip Sundel and Army Maj. Mark Bridges — the military lawyers appointed to represent Al Bahlul — informed the appointing authority that Al Bahlul did not want them as his attorneys.

**But in court, Army Col. Peter Brownback appeared befuddled by Al Bahlul's request, rubbing his eyes with his fists and leaning back in his chair to stare at the ceiling.**

He told Al Bahlul that the tribunal's rules say that defendants "must be represented at all relevant times" by appointed military lawyers.

**"So, the answer is no," Brownback said. "You are not allowed to represent yourself."**

Unruffled, Al Bahlul then asked if a Yemeni attorney could represent him. As he was doing so, the defense team's interpreter realized that the government's translator incorrectly had told the tribunal that Al Bahlul had said that he "has an idea about the practice of law in Yemen."

Instead, Al Bahlul had said that he "knows some people who are involved in the practice of law in Yemen."

An exasperated Brownback asked Bahlul, "What do you want?"

**"I asked if I could represent myself, and you said no," Al Bahlul replied.**

**"I don't recall directly or indirectly stating that you are not allowed to represent yourself," Brownback said, *apparently not recalling what he had said minutes earlier.***

## Paralyzed For Life

8/2/2004 Stacy St. Clair, Daily Herald (Suburban Chicago)

Sgt. Joel Gomez awakes. He is lying on his back in an unfamiliar bed. Through a haze, he sees his parents standing to his left. His girlfriend stands on the right. Why would they be there?

He remembers kissing them goodbye weeks ago when his unit, the 1-18th Infantry, was deployed to northern Iraq.

He wracks his brain for an explanation, but a clouded memory fails him. The last thing he can recall is watching an Adam Sandler movie with some Army buddies. When was that?

He slips back into a drug-induced sleep and doesn't regain consciousness until days later, after he leaves a German hospital and arrives at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C.

**His parents are still with him. He wants to ask where he is, but a breathing tube in his throat makes it impossible to talk. He tries to reach for his parents, but he can't move his arms and legs.**

**Cruel reality creeps over him.**

**"I kept trying, but I couldn't move them," he later would say. "After about 10 minutes, I figured out I was paralyzed."**

He lies there frozen on his bed as his parents and doctors explain why he has been in the hospital for the past three weeks. The information comes quickly, and parts of it confuse him after a long coma.

There had been an accident in Iraq. His tank rolled into a river near Bayji, and he had been under water for 10 minutes. His spine is broken in two places, and some internal organs have been severely damaged.

He will not walk again. If he gains enough arm mobility to brush his teeth, it will be a major accomplishment.

**In the ensuing weeks, Joel Gomez will become a nameless number in military records and media reports. History will now refer to him as one of the 308 U.S. soldiers injured in Iraq during the month of March.**

The 23-year-old Wheaton native is classified as wounded, the same designation a soldier with a broken arm receives. The U.S. military doesn't have a special category for an injury so devastating it leaves a former high school wrestler unable to walk or feed himself.

Gomez, the youngest of three children born to immigrant parents, blinks his eyes once to indicate he understands the situation. Then he lets his parents and girlfriend cry tears he will never shed for himself.

"I never felt sorry for myself, and I never will," he says. "I knew the risks."

Joel Gomez ended up in Iraq by his own design.

At age 11, he asked his mother if he could join the Army. She told him he had to wait until he graduated from high school.

For the next six years, Joel satisfied his military hunger with toy soldiers and war documentaries on the History Channel. When he rented a movie, it almost always had something to do with the armed forces.

"I thought he would forget about it when he got older," said his mother, Emilia Gomez. He didn't.

**During his senior year at Wheaton-Warrenville South High School, Joel asked her to sign his enlistment papers. His mother wanted him to go to college, but he had other plans.**

**"I signed them," Emilia said. "It was a mistake."**

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## **The War Comes Home Now: "It's All A Game Over There. It's All About Politics, Oil"**

August 27, 2004 By M.L. LYKE, SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER REPORTER

**"We never really knew what was going on. We were told, 'We're here to do good, to help Iraqis, they want us here.' And we know that's just pep talk from politicians -- a bunch of professional liars," said an Army infantryman recently home on leave from Iraq and counting the days till he leaves the service.**

The soldier's eyes dart from ceiling to floor, window to door. The rough hands -- hands that poked dead animals and probed human body bags in search of enemy explosives -- wrap around a cup of high-octane buzz he doesn't need. He's wired, wound tight -- a buff, tough sergeant ready to explode inside a strip-mall Starbucks.

"I knew I had a problem in Iraq when I wanted to start machine-gunning whole towns," says the National Guardsman, who returned to Fort Lewis from active duty in late March after an extended deployment.

He landed at McChord Air Force Base, got off the plane and flamed. "I wanted to start tearing people's heads off."

Neighbors in his Bellingham block may remember the soldier. He's the one who was outside shouting "You missed me again, - - - - - !" on the Fourth of July.

He's the one who screamed at the television when an Arabic speaker came on.



He's the one who still jumps out of his skin when someone drops a pan in the kitchen. "My heart rate goes up to 220."

He is one of a growing number of local soldiers returning from Iraq with PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder. It's a condition that has wreaked havoc on warriors' nervous systems since the first shell-shocked Johnny came marching home with a thousand-yard stare and a million-dollar question:

Will anything ever be the same?

"Those guys on the side of the road with the cardboard signs. I can see how they get there. ... I'm afraid of losing everything I came home to," said the 35-year-old Guardsman, who bitterly calls himself a poster child for PTSD.

"I've got some serious issues."

"We hear about the thousands of injuries -- brain injuries, leg injuries, arm injuries -- but rarely do we hear about the psychological casualties in war," said PTSD expert Dr. Evan Kanter, a neuroscientist and staff psychiatrist at the Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System in Seattle

"There will be tens of thousands of these, and the cost of that will be tremendous."

The National Guardsman with "issues" locked all his weapons away after he got home. He has learned to trust no one. Including himself.

"I don't need to carry guns," said the sergeant, now in treatment. "I've pointed so many at so many people for so long that it's too easy to put one in someone's face and not think a thing about it."

**There's a war going on inside him. He wonders why, and for what.**

**"It's all a game over there. It's all about politics, oil -- who the heck knows? I'm livid."**

Soldiers in Iraq, like those in Vietnam, face danger 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from a 360-degree sweep around them. **The study in the New England Journal of Medicine indicates 95 percent of Marines and Army soldiers in Iraq have been shot at, 56.5 percent have killed an enemy combatant and 94.5 percent have seen bodies or human remains.**

Ambushes, sneak attacks, random mortar fire and roadside bombings are standard enemy operations. But fighting can get up close and personal in patrols and raids. "Everyone is vulnerable most all of the time," said Steve Hunt, director of the deployment health clinic at the VA Medical Center in Seattle.

As in Vietnam, some soldiers in Iraq find the mission confusing.

Are they putting their lives on the line for a war, an occupation, a liberation?

**"We never really knew what was going on. We were told, 'We're here to do good, to help Iraqis, they want us here.' And we know that's just pep talk from politicians -- a bunch of professional liars," said an Army infantryman recently home on leave from Iraq and counting the days till he leaves the service.**

Like other soldiers, the 21-year-old Army specialist came home still seething. **"Everything in Iraq pissed me off," said the infantryman. That included his extended deployment,** the smell of raw sewage dumped outside doors, friends' endless "Dear John" letters, unpalatable rations, orders to dry shave for lack of water, body armor that weighed 70 pounds in 130-degree heat, **orders to kick in doors of Iraqi families based on suspect "intelligence."**

**"You never knew if the guy in there was innocent or not, and half the time he was,"** said the soldier, interviewed at a mall coffee shop in Bellevue. His voice rose as he talked. It was loud, too loud, his sentences laced with expletives.

**People moved away as he talked about "stupid" people at home asking him if he'd killed anyone in Iraq.**

**"I just told them to shut up or I'd kill them!"**

Yeah, he said, he was counseled about combat stress overseas.

Almost everyone is.

"There's a strange pressure on these soldiers not to have any problems with what they are doing. It's that old idea that a real man and a true warrior will stand strong," said Issaquah psychologist Michael Phillips, a trauma specialist who works with vets under a joint contract with King County's veterans program and the state VA's PTSD program.

**"The basic thought in our unit was, 'If you say yes to any questions, you will be held back from going on leave,' " said the Army infantryman.**

Over there, he said, soldiers joked that they'd all go nuts. Now it's not so funny.

The lance corporal, who signed up with the reserves out of high school to pay for college, has had several breakdowns, struggled with sleep, lost his temper, lost his appetite, turned to booze, started fights in bars. "My friends had to pull me off, calm me down."

Nothing's the same now. Especially him.

**"I just don't want all of it to be for nothing," says the Marine reservist. "This took a big chunk of my life away -- and I want it to count for something."**

**His head falls into his hands. When he looks up, there are tears welling in his eyes.**

**"Sorry," he says softly. "I'm sorry."**

No one understands. And he can't translate.

(And count on the VA to fuck you up even further. In New York City, vets are being given thiorazine, used in the 1980's to keep people quiet in mental hospitals *and which causes impotence*, along with benzos (Valium, Librium, Xanax, etc.), a class of drugs 100 times more addictive than crack cocaine. That's the VA idea of treatment for PTSD. You'd be better off asking Chemical Ali for help.

(Vietnam Veterans who used their rage to oppose the war tended to have less PTSD disability. They figured out who the real enemy was: their own government, the "professional liars" the soldier above talks about. Organizing to stop the war was a useful, constructive outlet for the anger. Give it a try. Check out: Iraq Veterans Against The War, <http://www.ivaw.net/> )

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## IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

# Insurgent Attacks Successful; Iraqi Oil Exports Cease

BAGHDAD, Iraq Aug. 30, 2004 By ABBAS FAYADH (AP)

**Iraqi oil exports ceased Monday after a rash of insurgent attacks** on the country's petroleum infrastructure clamped off the flow of crude, the country's main source of income, senior oil company officials said.

Basra Gov. Hassan al-Rashid confirmed that oil exports in the south were halted completely Monday. "Yes, they are stopped," he told The Associated Press.

Opposition fighters have been attacking oil pipelines in both the north and the south of the country for months and late Sunday, **all oil ceased flowing from southern pipelines which account for 90 percent of Iraq's exports.**

**Two senior officials of the South Oil Co., speaking Monday on condition of anonymity, said the lines were not likely to resume operations for at least a week.**

**Iraq's other export avenue, a northern pipeline to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, also carried no oil Monday, according to an oil official in Ceyhan.**

<p><b>The latest strikes against five pipelines linked to the southern Rumeila oil fields immediately shut down the Zubayr 1 pumping station, forcing officials to use reserves from storage tanks to keep exports flowing for several hours. The reserves ran out late Sunday, the South Oil Co. official said.</b></p>
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# Standoff Bolstered Sadr's Support; Moderates Supporting Anti-US Campaign

August 30, 2004 Scott Baldauf, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

**All sides are claiming victory in Najaf - the Americans say they expelled Sadr's forces, the Sadrists say they forced the Americans to withdraw from Najaf - but the momentum may be with Sadr.**

**Interviews with Iraqis since the siege in Najaf ended indicate some of the moderates becoming radical, the radicals becoming suicidally committed, and the average Iraqi Shiite - while discontented with Sadr's methods - showing no sign of uniting in a backlash against him.**

"The spread of the Sadr movement has been an ongoing phenomenon, but has picked up strength from the Najaf episode," says Juan Cole, a history professor and expert on Shiite Islam at the University of Michigan. **"And, Moqtada's central message, of 'American troops out now!' has almost certainly moved from the fringes in May of 2003 to the political center among Iraqis in August 2004."**

***The question among Shiite leaders, says Mr. Cole, is: "When to make the big push to get the Americans out?"***

"Moqtada thinks it should be now, and ongoing. The four grand ayatollahs in Najaf met on Saturday and issued their opinion that now is not the time for violent anti-American action. They want the Americans out, as well, but after the January elections," he says.

In Sadr City, a congested Baghdad neighborhood of 2.5 million Shiites, armed Mahdi Army fighters, once seen directing traffic or manning checkpoints, have returned to their homes. But they are far from disarmed. They are just obeying orders, the fighters say, avoiding any provocation and honoring the terms of Friday's cease-fire.

"We have been told not to attack the Americans, even if they attempt to enter the city," says Sheikh Ammar al-Saadi, a Mahdi Army local commander and Shiite cleric. "Only if the Americans bust into our houses and try to capture us are we allowed to fight."

**But not all Mahdi Army commanders are happy with this truce, and some say they will fight the Americans, even without permission of Sadr.**

**"Now we don't listen to Moqtada al-Sadr for our orders," says Sheikh Sattar al-Kaabi, a top lieutenant of Sadr. "Even if Sayid Moqtada came to ask us personally to give up our weapons, we would refuse."**

**MORE:**

# Clueless General Thinks It Was A Win

August 30, 2004 By Matthew Cox, Army Times staff writer

**(While the whole rest of the world figures it was a big win for Sadr [see article above], this silly fool goes boasting about “a strategic victory.” He should have been a general for Saddam Hussein.**

**(When the enemy commander and his whole army keep all their weapons, having never been overrun, and walk off the field intact, to fight again another day, and your puppet government looks completely idiotic because it promised to “crush” the Mahdi Army and disarm them, how the fuck do you get off bragging about a “strategic victory?” Strategic ass-whipping is more like it. But this is a general talking, so no intelligence, strategic vision, or common sense is required. Just a handy reporter to catch your immortal words and help you up that old career ladder.)**

**“This is a big step for Iraq,” Gen. George W. Casey, commander of multinational forces here, told soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, and Iraqi commandos after flying into the small camp outside the city. (Actually, he’s right. A big step for the resistance, and Iraqis winning back their national independence.)**

As units from the 1st Cavalry Division began pulling out of this holy city Sunday, the top U.S. commander in Iraq showed up to congratulate soldiers who fought in the fierce, 15-day battle.

Casey, and other U.S. commanders, credited the 1st Cavalry soldiers, Marines and Iraqi security forces **for handing the interim Iraqi government its “first strategic victory.”**

“We fought through a 100,000 [inhabitant] urban area, 2½ kilometers by 3 kilometers, against a pretty committed enemy,” Rainey said during an Aug. 29 interview inside an Iraqi police station here. “It was a little surprising that they continued to attack as long as they did, **with absolutely zero success.** They continued to send guys out with [rocket-propelled grenades] and AK47s to attack.” **(A few more “zero successes” like that and they’ll be lifting the general off the Embassy roof in a copter. Everybody but this idiot agrees Sadr is much stronger now, and the puppet government much weaker.)**

<p><b>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></b></p>
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**FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

# Your Call

August 30, 2004 by Charles Sheehan-Miles, CommonDreams.org

I vividly recall the day I rode my tank into the Rumayla Oil Field in March of 1991, machine gun at the ready, as we moved to wipe out retreating Iraqi forces who made the mistake of moving too closely to Barry McCaffrey's 24th Infantry Division.

I saw a young man, about my age, crawling toward the road, begging for help. His legs had been blown off, and blood soaked the ground around him. Like the good, terrified soldier I was, I pointed my machine gun at him and screamed, "Don't move, motherfucker!" I wasn't even human anymore.

War is an atrocity, no matter how you slice it.

**When you see (and commit) atrocities in war - and let's remember that all war is an atrocity - there's only a couple ways to go and stay sane. you can wrap yourself in the flag, and convince yourself that you were doing the right thing, that the war was right, and anything that happened had to happen in order to support the mission of the war.**

**Or, alternatively, you can get angry. You can condemn the war and those who made it.**

## **For “Stay The Course” Assholes: Made Sense In 1917: Makes Sense Now**

**(THANKS TO D WHO E-MAILED THIS IN)**

**Moscow. Citizen Soldier Newspaper, 25 May 1917**

'Until the end', croaks the crow, picking the human bones on the battlefield. What does he care about the old mother who awaits the return of her son or the octogenarian who with trembling hand leads the plow?

'War to the end', cries the student to thousands of people on the public square and assures them that our hardships are due to the Germans. During this time, his father, who has sold oats at sixteen rubles, sits in a noisy cabaret where he maintains the same ideas.

'To the end', clamour the agents of the allied government while touring the battlefields strewn with the bodies of the proletarians. Can the soldier in the trenches cry 'War to the end'? No. He says something else:

Until the end of the war, we'll be without food.

Until the end of the war, Russia won't be free.

**Comrades, let him who cries 'War to the end' be sent to the front lines. Then we'll see what he says.**

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

# **Kerry's Platform Promises Endless Bloody War And Death In Iraq & Targets Iran**

By Stephen Zunes | August 5, 2004 Foreign Policy In Focus

Not only have Senators John Kerry and John Edwards continued to defend their support of the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq, the 2004 Democratic platform complains that the administration "did not send sufficient forces to accomplish the mission." The most direct challenge to Bush administration policies in Iraq contained in the platform is its alleged failures to adequately equip American forces.

The only thing the 2004 Democratic Party platform could offer opponents of the war is a sentence which acknowledges "People of good will disagree about whether America should have gone to war in Iraq." As the Los Angeles Times editorialized, "Indeed they do. That is why we have elections, and it would have been nice if the opposition party had the guts to actually oppose it."

**The platform justifies the ongoing U.S. military occupation of Iraq by claiming "having gone to war, we cannot afford to fail at peace. We cannot allow a failed state in Iraq that inevitably would become a haven for terrorists and a destabilizing force in the Middle East." This ignores the fact that Iraq's instability and the influx of foreign terrorists is a direct consequence of the U.S. invasion and occupation authorized and supported by the Democratic Party's presidential and vice presidential nominees.**

**One possible target for American forces under a Kerry administration is Iran.** The platform implies an American right to such military intervention by stating that "a nuclear-armed Iran is an unacceptable risk to us and our allies." No concern is expressed, however, about the already-existing nuclear arsenals of Iran's neighbor Pakistan or of nearby Israel.

Furthermore, like the neo-cons in the Bush administration, the Democrats appear to have rejected the longstanding doctrine of nuclear deterrence in favor of policy based upon risky, destabilizing, and illegal unilateral pre-emptive military strikes.

The Democratic Platform insists that the U.S. military “must be stronger, faster, and better armed.”

**Ironically, the first reason mentioned in the platform as to why, despite pressing needs at home, “we must strengthen our military” is the “asymmetrical threats we now face in Iraq”--threats that were non-existent until the U.S. invaded that country, a decision authorized and supported by Kerry, Edwards and the Democratic leadership of both houses in Congress.**

This does not mean that a majority of Democrats support such right-wing foreign policies. For example, a poll just prior to the convention showed that 95% of the delegates oppose the decision to invade Iraq, something that both their presidential and their vice presidential nominees have steadfastly refused to do.

That the delegates were prevented from even challenging the platform or voting to include an anti-war plank is a demonstration of how undemocratic the “Democratic” Party has become.

### **GET SOME TRUTH: CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

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

### **Web Copies**

For back issues 5.3.03 to 2#B42 (8.27.04) see: GI Special web site at

<http://www.militaryproject.org/>

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/> ; [www.qifightback.org](http://www.qifightback.org) ;

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>



## ENEMY COMBATANT



(AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

## HUMAN SLUDGE



Bill Harris, CEO of the 2004 Republican National Convention and Cheney Aug. 29, at the Madison Square Garden in New York on the eve of the convention. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

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