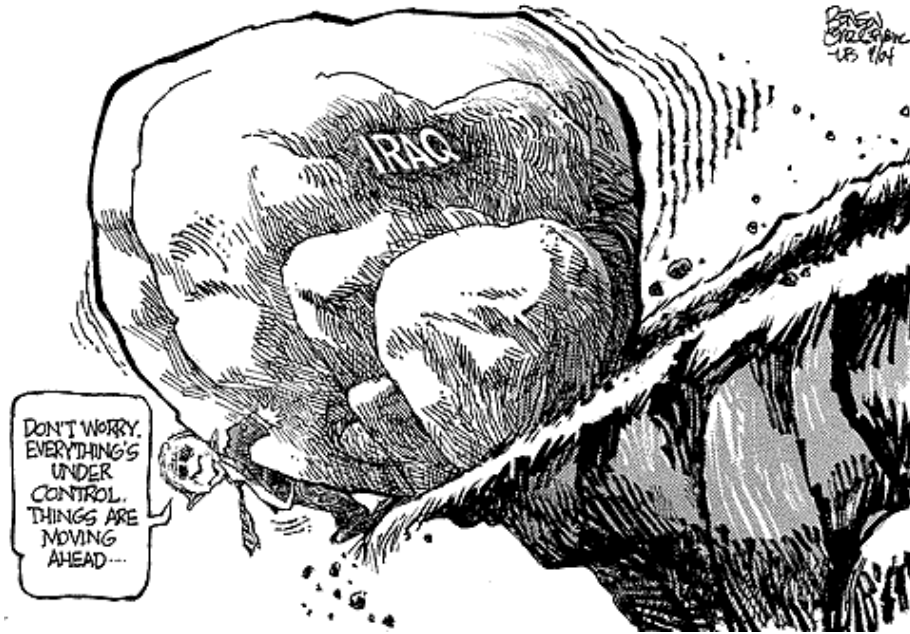


GI SPECIAL 2#B5



“Has Everyone Gone Mad?”

To: GI Special
6.16.04

(The writer is an army veteran, six years, and married to an active duty soldier. ID removed for security.)

Hello there my friend!

I read an article printed in today's edition of the military publication, "Stars and *Lies*"...on page 3 that reminded me of the May 28th issue of "GI Special", in regards to the National Guard making do with less.

The article is titled, "Senate votes to repay troops who bought war gear", written by Sandra Jontz. Basically it tells of how, "Troops and their families, particularly those of National Guard and Reserve units, reportedly paid between \$300 and \$1,100 for flak vests." **!!!! Their own flak vests!**

This essential equipment was not even provided to them by the very Army that was sending them to such a hostile environment to confront life threatening and

volatile situations daily! "On Monday, the Senate passed by a 90-0 vote an amendment to its defense bill that would reimburse those who bought equipment such as flak vests that the Army, in particular did not issue before deployment.", the article states.

So let me get this straight...the Army sends soldiers to Iraq (to their death) and not only does it not adequately equip them but now there is a probability that those troops will not even be reimbursed for their own expenses that they were forced to make!

The article goes on to report, "But the Pentagon opposes such a measure, mainly because it leaves the Defense Department unable to control what equipment troops might buy..."

A spokeswoman is quoted as saying, "...this sets an unmanageable precedent that will saddle the DOD with an open-ended financial burden...[t]his amendment will encourage service members and their loved ones to purchase equipment on their own outside this accountability with the expectation of receiving future reimbursement."

What kind of logic is that? Has everyone gone mad? Since when did soldiers have to start paying out of their own pocket for their own military equipment?

Peeved,
S

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and in Iraq, and information about other social protest movements here in the USA. **Send requests to address up top. For copies on web site see:**<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

**Resistance General Offensive In
Second Day;
Whips Collaborator Troops;
U.S. Soldiers Killed And Wounded;**

Explosions Rock Baghdad

THEN IT WAS STONES. NOW IT'S LETHAL FORCE. TIME TO GO HOME.
IMMEDIATELY



Shiite Muslims throw stones towards an approaching U.S. Army tank outside Baghdad's palace in this **Oct 8, 2003** file photo. (AP Photo/FILE/Anja Niedringhaus, File)

6.24.04 By HAMZA HENDAWI, Associated Press Writer & By Selim Saheb Etaba, Mid East Online & Thomas Crosby Media, 6.25 & Syria Times 6.25 & June 25 (Xinhuanet) & By ROBERT H. REID, The Associated Press

“In Baghdad, U.S. officials projected calm.”

BAQOUBA, Iraq - Insurgents launched coordinated attacks Thursday against police and government buildings across Sunni Muslim areas of Iraq. **The strikes killed 89 people, including three American soldiers, and wounded 318 people, Iraqi and U.S. officials said.**

Twelve American soldiers were wounded.

Most of the deaths were in Mosul. Clashes also occurred in Baqouba, Ramadi, Baghdad and other areas.

The extent of the attacks was a clear sign of just how powerful the insurgency remains.

Iraqi police, who have been entrusted to take a larger role in security after the handover, appeared outgunned and unable to hold positions in most of the cities under fire. American troops raced to offer support, using aircraft, tanks

President Bush, who is appealing to NATO to help quell the escalating violence, updated members of Congress about the situation in Iraq during an hour-long meeting at the White House.

The heaviest fighting raged in Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, where two American soldiers were killed and seven were wounded, the U.S. 1st Infantry Division said.

Insurgents roamed the city with rocket launchers and automatic weapons, seized two police stations, and destroyed the home of the police chief of surrounding Diyala province.

US officers paid reluctant tribute to the sophistication of the dawn attack. "It's the first time that they've had this level of coordination," said Major Brian Paxton.

"They've been planning to disturb the transition of power and they finally got the players."

In other attacks, a man dressed as an Iraqi policeman detonated a car bomb near a checkpoint manned by Iraqi and American soldiers in the southern Baghdad district of Dora, killing four Iraqi soldiers. Three U.S. soldiers tended a wounded American soldier as he lay on the road, his helmet nearby. Black smoke and flames rose from a burning pickup truck.

In Baquaba on Friday three Iraqi policemen were killed and one was injured in a rocket attack on a police station near Baquba, Qatar-based al-Jazeera satellite channel reported Friday.

Gunmen fired rocket-propelled grenades at the police station overnight near the flashpoint city of Baquba, some 60 km northeast of Baghdad, the channel said.

"Three policemen were killed, including an officer, and another officer was injured in a rocket-propelled grenade attack at Hebheb," a police source was quoted as saying.

Also in Baghdad, insurgents attacked four Iraqi police stations using mortars, hand grenades and AK-47s on Wednesday and Thursday. **On Friday, a roadside bomb exploded in the Amiriyah residential neighbourhood in Baghdad, killing one Iraqi policeman and wounding another, police said.**

At Baqouba's main hospital, doctors standing in pools of blood struggled to deal with a steady stream of wounded. Civilian cars, including pickup trucks, raced to the emergency ward, bringing people with gunshot and shrapnel wounds.

"May God destroy America and all those who cooperate with it!" screamed one man in the corridor.

There was no sign of police on the streets, but targets attacked by the rebels in the early morning hours — including the governor's office, police headquarters and the coalition's local offices — were heavily guarded by police.

The city, which has a mix of Sunni and Shiite Muslims, was almost deserted by late morning. U.S. gunships flew low over the city, some swooping down on suspected rebel hideouts in palm groves. Some motorists flew white flags from atop their cars to ensure

their safety. U.S. tanks, some firing their machine-guns, moved into the city center by the afternoon.

Guerrillas also targeted security forces in the northern city of Mosul, where car bombs rocked the Iraqi Police Academy, four police stations and the al-Jumhuri hospital. Security forces lost control of the Sheikh Fatih police station following a car bombing, but U.S. forces recaptured the station after subduing insurgents firing from a nearby mosque.

Insurgents launched five separate car bomb attacks against police stations in little more than an hour, before engaging in fierce streetbattles with US troops, backed by helicopters.

A private security contractor was also killed in an ambush while insurgents traded fire with security forces in the streets. a US military statement said. "At 10:10 am (0610 GMT), a private security company came under small arms fire in west Mosul. One security guard was killed and another was injured. The injured guard is at the army Hospital in Mosul."

"The fighting broke out around noon (0800 GMT) in the al-Salah neighborhood in the centre of the city between US forces and insurgents, and was still going on," said police Captain Wadi Mohammed Abdullah. "Helicopters fired on insurgents who were shooting rocket-propelled grenades and Kalashnikovs," he added.

Police Major Mahmud Abdul Kader al-Juburi said: "There is intense combat between the insurgents and the US forces in the neighborhood of Yarmuk."

One American soldier died in Mosul, U.S. officials said, and three Soldiers were injured. Five Iraqi police officers were wounded. Mosul's governor imposed a 9 p.m-6 a.m. curfew, and the city television station urged people to stay home for the "general good."

Explosions and gunfire rocked the turbulent city of Fallujah for a second day on Friday. US tanks and armoured vehicles manoeuvred on the highway near the edges of Fallujah, firing in all directions, while armed men in an eastern suburb returned fire, witnesses said.

Al-Jazeera television, in a report from Fallujah, said U.S. missiles struck a vacant house but the blast injured four people next door. The report could not be independently confirmed.

New U.S. military checkpoints have been set up around the city of 5 million people, and large numbers of Iraqi National Guard troops in combat fatigues and body armor were deployed into the streets and main squares Friday.

Several strong explosions were heard early Saturday in central Baghdad but the origin was unclear. Friday night, six mortar shells exploded near the Green Zone headquarters district of the U.S. occupation, the U.S. military reported. There were no reports of casualties. A bomb also went off outside the home of an Iraqi deputy defense minister, though the official and his family were unhurt, the military said.

In Baghdad, U.S. officials projected calm. (!)

First Dead Hungarian

June 17th, 2004 by Aljazeera + Agencies

The Hungarian contingent in Iraq lost its first soldier in an explosion on Thursday morning in al-Suwayrah, southeast of Baghdad, Defence Minister Ferenc Juhasz said in Budapest.

"Today a 47-member convoy departed from the Hungarian base of Hilla towards a Ukrainian base when it came under attack," Juhasz said. A 27-year-old soldier died in the attack.

"An explosive device went off just next to the Hungarian convoy," he added.

Santa Clara Native Killed In Ambush

June 24, 2004 Internet Broadcasting System, Inc.

A Tracy father of two who joined the National Guard the day after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks was killed this week in Iraq.

Patrick McCaffrey, 34, died in an ambush Tuesday.

McCaffrey was born in Santa Clara and worked in Palo Alto. He married five years ago and leaves behind a 9-year-old son and a 2-year-old daughter.

Three Oregon Guard Troopers Injured

June 25, 2004 ALICE TALLMADGE, The Oregonian

Three Oregon National Guard soldiers on patrol in Baghdad on Wednesday were injured -- two seriously -- when a bomb blew up near the left side of their Humvee and rolled it over.

Injured in the blast were Pvt. 2nd Class Max Elias Corrigan, 23, from Canyonville; Cpl. William Lee Congleton, 25, from Sutherlin; and Staff Sgt. Travis James Sigfridson, 27, from Monmouth.

All three were taken to Landstuhl Army Hospital in Germany on Thursday for treatment, said Capt. Mike Braibish of the Oregon National Guard in Salem.

The soldiers are assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry, which has headquarters in Cottage Grove. In Iraq, the unit supports the 1st Cavalry Division based at Fort Hood, Texas.

Corrigan, the gunner, and Congleton, the driver, were the most seriously injured, Braibish said.

Corrigan received injuries to his face, spine, left arm and leg. Congleton had both legs broken, a cut foot, a spinal injury and shrapnel wounds.

Sigfridson, the troop commander, was hit by shrapnel in the back and received facial injuries and teeth damage.

Although Sigfridson's injuries were classified as less severe, the term is misleading, Braibish said.

"When a blast is enough to roll a Humvee, you can guarantee they have all been banged up pretty well," he said.

All three soldiers have spoken with at least one family member since they were injured.

The soldiers, who are stationed at Camp Cooke in northwest Baghdad, were on patrol when insurgents detonated the explosive device near their Humvee, Braibish said.

Four Oregon National Guard soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry, have been killed during June, the worst loss for the Guard since World War II.

Currently, about 700 troops from Oregon are deployed in Iraq. About 1,300 additional troops are scheduled to be deployed later this year.

Riverside Man Dies In Ambush

June 25th, 2004 The Desert Sun

Riverside resident Andre D. Tyson, a second lieutenant with the Army National Guard, was killed Tuesday in Balad, Iraq. He was 34.

Tyson was part of the 579th Engineer Battalion of Petaluma. The battalion was ambushed by enemy forces, according to the Department of Defense. Fellow guardsman Spc. Patrick McCaffrey also died in the attack.

Tyson had been patrolling and gathering intelligence on insurgents in the farmlands outside Balad, which is about 85 miles north of Baghdad.

"He loved the military," said his cousin, Sigmund Crews. **"All of his e-mails spoke positively about his experiences in Iraq."**

Tyson was an assistant manager at a Glendale Costco store before he was called up for active duty last fall.

Two National Guardsmen Killed, One Wounded

June 25, 2004 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TACOMA, Wash. -- Two 81st Brigade combat soldiers were killed and another injured when their unit was ambushed in Iraq, brigade officials said.

1st Lt. Andre Tyson of Long Beach, Calif., and Sgt. Patrick McCaffrey of Tracy, Calif., were members of a California National Guard unit attached to the 81st Brigade, headquartered at Camp Murray near Tacoma.

Both were promoted posthumously, Tech. Sgt. Andrew Hughan of the California National Guard said Friday.

Tyson, 33, and McCaffrey, 34, were members of Alpha Company, 579th Engineering Battalion, a California National Guard unit based in Petaluma, Calif.

The attack happened Tuesday while the soldiers were searching a complex of three buildings near Logistical Support Area Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, about 85 miles north of Baghdad.

The soldiers apparently walked into an ambush and were hit by automatic weapon fire, said Maj. Edward Ekstrom of brigade headquarters.

The wounded man returned fire, was later flown to Germany for treatment and is expected to recover, Ekstrom said.

Tyson and McCaffrey were the third and fourth members of the brigade to die in combat since it deployed to the Middle East this past spring.

The 81st Bridged is serving a yearlong deployment in the Middle East. It includes nearly 3,400 members of the Washington National Guard, and several hundred soldiers from California and Minnesota.

Captain Killed

(This is a rare example of rank getting killed. No Generals yet, of course.)

6/25/2004 By Associated Press

GREENVILLE, N.C. (AP) A 36-year-old Winterville man with ties to Maine who was killed in Iraq on Thursday was a man fueled by a passion for running and for helping others, friends say.

Capt. Chris Cash, an officer with the 30th Brigade, 120th Infantry in the Army National Guard, leaves behind a wife and two sons.

Cash, a fitness trainer at a wellness center, had been called to active duty and sent to Iraq in February.

Karen Scott recalled how Chris had talked with his wife via cell phone just a day earlier. "It seemed so unreal that it could happen," Scott said. "She just talked to him (Wednesday) night."

He was with the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division for four years before joining the National Guard 14 years ago.

Visalia Soldier Seriously Wounded; Vietnam Vet Brother Questions What For

6.25.04 Visalia Times-Delta

An Army staff sergeant from Visalia is believed to have been seriously injured last week in Iraq.

According to family members, Staff Sgt. Nerbie Luis Lara and three other soldiers were injured on Friday after a rocket struck the Humvee they were riding in.

De Ochoa said Lara's sister, Sabrina Murillo, flew to Germany on Thursday to be with her brother. Lara's ex-wife and their two children also flew to Germany this week.

"It's not good," De Ochoa said. "They want to do surgery, but he's got a fever, so they can't do anything."

De Ochoa said Lara was born in Los Angeles but went to school in Tulare County.

Lara's older brother, Felix Pallanes, said he believes it's a miracle his brother survived the attack. Pallanes also said his brother has been in the Army for eight years.

Pallanes, who said he was a Vietnam-era veteran, said he's upset over the attack.

"He's my younger brother, and, to me, he's a good guy," Pallanes said. "The explanation for this is that he's a soldier, and he knew the possibility. It just leads me to just start questioning why we are out there and why doesn't it seem that somebody is doing anything."

Plymouth Sergeant Injured

June 25, 2004 AP

PLYMOUTH, N.H. -- The parents of a New Hampshire soldier injured in Iraq said Friday that their son has undergone surgery and is being evacuated to Germany. ‘

Sgt. Don Smialek, 39, of Campton, N.H., was wounded by a rocket-propelled grenade during a gun battle Thursday. ‘

He spoke to his wife and parents, telling them that he was OK except for some shrapnel wounds. **(You don't get evacuated to Germany for minor injuries.)**

Smialek is a full-time training officer with the Second Battalion of the 197th Field Artillery. He has been in Iraq since January.

N.H. Guardsman Evacuated To Walter Reed

June 25, 2004 Seacoast Newspapers

On June 16, Pfc. Mark R. Davis, 22, of Concord, suffered shrapnel wounds to his back, arm and chest, after mortar rounds struck Camp Anaconda, located near Balad, a city located 50 miles north of Baghdad.

A member of Company C, 3rd of the 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain), Davis is currently in stable condition at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

His recovery has been aided by fellow Company C soldier, Staff Sgt. Mark LeBlanc of Amesbury, Mass., who immediately treated Davis' wounds; and others who donated blood to him at a field hospital for his surgery, according to information from Company Commander Capt. Ray Valas of Goffstown.

Fallujah Residents Protest Deadly Weekend Attack By U.S. Military; Senior Police Official Says U.S. Command Lying (Again)

Jun 22 The New Standard & June 20th Associated Press

Hundreds of angry residents took to the streets of Fallujah on Monday to protest a US airstrike that killed at least 17 people last Saturday. US officials say they acted on "significant intelligence" and delivered a precision attack on a "terrorist safehouse" connected to infamous terrorist leader Abu Musab Zarqawi. **Outraged neighbors and**

Iraqi officials, however, said the target was a family home and that those killed were civilians.

Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt said at a press briefing. "I will say more accurately that these were key personnel in the Zarqawi network," he told reporters.

Evidence gathered from Fallujah residents suggests otherwise.

Outraged residents gathered around the site after the explosions damaged eight homes in a poor neighborhood. The Health Ministry said at least 16 people were killed, and witnesses put the number of dead at least 20, including women and children.

"It was obvious that the victims were merely Iraqi family members. We saw women and children. There was no justification for this surprising attack, for there wasn't a single person related to Zarqawi," Gen Mohammed Abid Dulaimi of the Fallujah Brigade told the *LA Times*.

American F16 fighter pilots reportedly fired a missile into the Jubail district of Fallujah around 9:30 am Saturday, destroying at least one house completely, and damaging several others.

Locals accused the US of inflicting maximum damage by firing a second missile minutes after the first. "The number of casualties is so high because after the first missile we jumped to rescue the victims," Wissam Ali Hamad told Aljazeera. "The second missile killed those trying to carry out the rescue."

Dr Fadhil Al-Badrani told *The Observer* that the entire family of Mohammed Hamadi, a 65-year-old farmer, died in the attack. "The whole family is gone," said Al-Badrani. "The blast was so powerful it blew them to pieces. We could only recognise the women by their long hair."

"We inspected the damage, we looked through the bodies of the women and children and elderly. **This was a family,**" **Nouri Aboud, a senior police official, told Reuters.**

"They want to provoke the people of Fallujah," Ahmed Sabah told the *New York Times*. "This is a very bad violation. **It's not only Fallujah people who will stand up to them, it's all of Iraq.**"

The apparent unilateral manner in which the operation was planned and conducted has also come under fire from Fallujah security forces. "We were supposed to be consulted so as to be able to do our duty," General Dulaimi told the *LA Times*.

GET SOME TRUTH: CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read,

we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND



An Iraqi man comforts his 4-year-old son at a regroupment center for POWs of the 101st Airborne Division near an Najaf, Iraq March 31, 2003. (AP Photo/FILE/Jean-Marc Bouju)

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

TROOP NEWS

Central Command Wants 25,000 More Troops For Iraq

June 23, 2004 The Seattle Times Company

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Central Command has informally asked Army planners for as many as five additional brigades — some 25,000 troops — to augment the American force of 138,000 soldiers and Marines now in Iraq, military officers and Pentagon officials said.

Even with another 22,000 troops from other nations, primarily Britain, joining the American force, **the U.S.-led coalition does not control the nation's borders, has taken substantial casualties along roads and highways and avoids key cities such as Fallujah, the former stronghold of ousted dictator Saddam Hussein.**

Until now, Pentagon planners expected to maintain the current level of 138,000 American troops through 2005 and an overall force of 160,000, including the troops deployed by coalition partners. Adding five brigades would increase the coalition force to 185,000, far more than originally envisioned.

Pentagon planners had once hoped to reduce the number of U.S. troops in Iraq to 105,000 by this summer.

Comment:

Pentagon planners thought the Iraqis were a bunch of whipped dogs who wouldn't fight for their national independence. Pentagon planners are looking bad. Pentagon planners need to cover their ass, no matter how many dead troops in takes to make them look good. Pentagon planners have betrayed every member of the armed forces. Pentagon planners obey the politicians who started this war for oil and empire. Pentagon planners agree with Kerry just as much as Bush: more war, more dead troops, and all for nothing but corporate greed. Pentagon planners are the deadly enemy of every troop in Iraq.

After police in New York City attacked and beat woman and children in Brooklyn after the June Puerto Rican Day Parade for doing nothing more than hanging out talking on the sidewalks, a soldier just back from Iraq combat who saw it all said, "It looks like I've been fighting the wrong people."

Exactly right.

The enemy is here at home. T

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

Where They Are:

If you have a friend or relative serving in Iraq, the following web site may be of interest about what's where: <http://globalsecurity.org/military/facility/iraq.htm>

Looney Soldier-Killer Col. Pappas Tied To Death Coverup

(This is the same asshole that ordered his men to question prisoners in an unprotected tent at exactly the hours of the night the resistance regularly mortared the prison complex. Of course, they did, and at least one soldier died. Unfortunately, Col. Pappas lives on. His soldiers also reported he would climb

guard towers late at night looking around for suicide trucks that he thought were coming after him. In Vietnam, he would have come back in a body bag after the first time he killed his own troops.)

June 25, 2004 By Mike Leary, Sun National Staff

Col. Thomas M. Pappas, the commander of military intelligence at Abu Ghraib prison, exclaimed, "I'm not going down alone for this," then participated in a cover-up after a prisoner died from a blow to the head during interrogation last December, according to vivid and dramatic testimony yesterday before an Army court in Baghdad.

After a discussion between Pappas and several other officers and "OGA guys," a cover-up was hatched to spirit the corpse out of the sprawling prison complex and dump it "in Baghdad somewhere," said Capt. Donald Reese, the commander of the 372nd Military Police Company from Cresaptown, Md. OGA is a euphemism the military commonly applies to CIA agents.

Subject: Soldiers For Hire Hardly Tire Or Even Perspire...

From: David W. Staub
To: GI Special
June 24, 2004

Soldiers for hire hardly tire or even perspire, yet make more money than kids on fire.

Congratulations on the new, sophisticated, reader-friendly Online issue of Traveling Soldier. Considering the low morale of our armed forces fighting for the liberation and democracy of the Iraqi people, I thought you might be interested in the following from an article in the current (June)issue of Monthly Review, entitled "Soldiers for Hire". I can't guarantee, however, that it would help boost the morale of our valiant GIs if you send it along to them.

"According to figures current during the active war a year ago, the base salary of a soldier in the lowest rank who has one year's service was \$15,480 a year --only a thousand dollars more than the average pay for an usher in a movie theatre in the United States. The base pay for an experienced corporal of three years of service was \$19,980 a year.

"For this, U.S. soldiers are on the front lines in Iraq, risking their lives, with over 700 dead, and many more returning home amputees and permanently impaired, they have much at risk, yet their nation recompenses them with minimal pay.

Meanwhile, the government pays private firms between \$500 and \$1500 day for the experienced military personnel they supply in Iraq. In stark terms, a mercenary works in a less risky position, providing support to fighting men or guarding oil wells instead of going on patrols in hostile territory under enemy fire and assault -

-and makes 10 to 20 times as much money as a soldier who serves his country instead of a corporation.

There are a sizable number of mercenaries making more than Tommy Franks, who commanded the U.S. armed forces in last year's war in Iraq. With more than 36 years of service, Franks' annual base pay was \$153,948.

"Is it possible to sustain an army when mercenaries for private contractors take fewer risks and earn 10 times as much as soldiers ? Is it possible to delude Iraqis and Americans alike that reconstruction budget is for reconstruction, when a quarter of it pays for private military forces ? Is it possible successfully to change the color of the corpses in Iraq ? Is this sort of warfare sustainable, and more tellingly, is it by any measure ethical ? Time will tell."

I recall during Vietnam comedian Dick Gregory saying parents who send their kids off to war would fight to keep their pet dogs from going. Yet some are still saluting the flag and singing the anthem with nationalistic fervor even when informed of an offspring's death.

In solid, tragic, anti-hilarity solidarity,

IRR Soldiers Watch Out: You're Next For Bush's Slaughterhouse

June 24, 2004 From CNN Pentagon Producer Mike Mount

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- A group of Army Reserve soldiers rarely tapped for duty could soon be heading to Iraq, Pentagon officials said Wednesday.

The troops, part of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), could be called to fill holes in units deploying to Iraq as part of the upcoming rotation of troops later this year.

As many as 6,500 IRR troops could be called and would be chosen because of critical skills needed in Iraq, such as Military Police, infantry or engineers, Pentagon officials said.

A decision by the Pentagon to call up these troops is expected within the next week, according to officials.

The Pentagon has a pool of about 118,000 Army IRR troops, consisting of people with past military service who have a remaining mandatory service obligation. The category is distinct from regular Reserve troops because they do not perform any military service during the year, yet are still eligible to be called to service.

The move reflects the continued shortage of troops available to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to fight the ongoing war.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Pipeline Destruction By Resistance “An Inside Job” By Oil Workers; Repairs A Total Goatfuck

ZUBAYR, Iraq, June 19 — The gash in a critical pipeline that saboteurs struck four days ago remained submerged in a vast lake of crude oil on Saturday, defying attempts at repairs that would get the oil moving again to tankers in the Persian Gulf.

In southern summer heat of at least 120 degrees, with great plumes of flames and smoke at refineries dotting the horizon of a parched and desolate plain, workers at times moved so slowly that they seemed to be mirages. The pace frustrated American military and private engineers who were there to drain the lake so that repairs could proceed.

"It's just really a logistical nightmare to work here," said Michael Doherty of the Army Corps of Engineers, a resident engineer on an oil infrastructure restoration in the south, who had led a convoy of pumps, lights and cranes across nearly impassable roads. "You don't have it, you can't go back for it."

At the same time, suspicions grew here that the attack on this pipeline last Tuesday, and on another large pipeline the day before, were in effect inside jobs, explosions so carefully placed in the barely comprehensible web of Iraqi pipelines that only someone with expert knowledge could have directed the work. The attacks shut down exports from Iraq's southern oil fields, which are by far its most productive.

"They must have had help from someone who knew very well where the pipelines were, said a civil engineer with the Southern Oil Company who would not give his name. Asked whether the help would have had to come from someone now active in the company, the engineer said, "Perhaps."

The daylong ordeal produced little more than plans to begin pumping the lakes the next day, and it underscored the dilapidated state of Iraq's oil infrastructure. **One reason the strikes were able to shut down the system is that valves in the pipelines, meant to isolate breaches, are broken down, ineffective or missing.**

"I think it's probably normal in Iraq because the designed systems weren't very good," said Lyle Nelson, a Halliburton engineer who arrived late in the day to lend advice on the pumping project.

The delays and technical problems near Zubayr, the air filled with the sickly sweet smell of evaporating crude, also revealed some of the other challenges Iraq faces in preserving its oil infrastructure against determined and sophisticated saboteurs.

Rare equipment for stopping oil leaks did not arrive. Convoys with both equipment and technical experts took hours to organize as security consultants scurried about in the heat. At least one vehicle got stuck on the ravaged Iraqi roads. The Americans once threatened to drive off if Iraqis who were smoking and using spark-prone pumps near the sea of oil did not pull their equipment back.

The oil continued to bubble and ripple above the submerged breach in the pipeline, creating a deep canal of oil perhaps a quarter of a mile long and dozens of strangely shaped lakes — some vaguely in the shape of sand traps at golf courses — that seemed to go on forever.

The black pools alternately evoked Armageddon and Jed Clampett, the poor mountaineer in the television situation comedy who discovered oil bubbling up on his land while hunting, became rich and moved his family to Beverly Hills.

No security was obvious in the desolate emptiness, except for Ghurkas, working for a private security company, who were there to protect the Army Corps of Engineers and its contractors, Halliburton and Kellogg, Brown & Root.

"We are trying studying security plans now," said Sheik Jabbar Ali al-Luabi, director general of the Southern Oil Company, which is responsible for the main repairs. "After we finish them, we will announce them."

Mr. Nelson said that, partly because it was so hard to isolate breached sections, the immediately affected part of the pipeline was 30 miles long. That length of the pipeline, which is 48 inches in diameter, would contain about 370,000 barrels oil if it were full, he said. Unless the pipeline could be plugged, it would all have to spill out before repairs could start.

The day began at an Army Corps base near the Basra Airport — the large city of Basra is less than 10 miles away — where there are loads of equipment for the operation and sport utility vehicles with engineers and managers.

The convoy took until just after noon to get started, and then it encountered the jouncing, potholed back roads leading to the breach. The convoy crept by a smoldering junkyard being picked over by Iraqis. A donkey hitched to a cart waited patiently for its master.

Around 1:15 the convoy arrived at the breach. About 35 Iraqi workers were laboring slowly in the heat, many wearing blue jumpers with SOC in white on the back — for Southern Oil Company.

By 2 p.m., an earth mover had begun pushing dirt across the canal of oil to form a dam. The idea was to isolate the breach, then plug the pipeline with inflatable balloons called

stopples. But word soon came over a radio that no stopples for pipelines this large could be found in Iraq or in the region on short notice.

The dam took about an hour to finish, and Iraqi workers gradually sucked oil from one pit that looked like a swimming hole. The pipeline — but not the broken section — was exposed below, as oil seeped out of the surrounding soil and again accumulated in the bottom of the pit.

As the work slowed even further, two SOC workers debated whether this pipeline had been sabotaged or simply ruptured because it was so old and corroded. One of the workers, named Adnan, appeared to win the debate by pointing out that a motorcycle battery used to set off the charge had been found nearby.

A local engineer said that the saboteurs had dug a hole and set the charges — the pipeline is buried about six feet below the surface.

"And we find pieces of clay and mud as if thrown out," Adnan said, explaining one result of the blast.

The Iraqi and Army Corps engineers were awaiting the arrival of the experts from Halliburton when the radio cracked. "We're not good shape here," someone said on the other end. "We're stuck."

A KBR engineer, standing in the dizzying fumes generated by evaporation of the oil, swore. The Halliburton engineers finally arrived, but then the dispute over safety broke out. A spark, the American engineers said, could create a huge fireball.

As the Iraqis sullenly pulled their equipment back after 6 p.m., the workday ended. It was not safe to drive in this area in the dark, Mr. Doherty said, so it was time to go.

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. Force “Becomes U.N. Mandated One”

By Warren Hoge, New York Times, 23 June 2004

Next Wednesday, the predominantly American force there becomes a United Nations-mandated one.

(Now what do you suppose people who thought the way to stop the war was to demand the UN get involved will have to say about *that?*)

Memoirs Of A Dying Occupation; “Long Live The Resistance”

June 20th, 2004 by Rajiv Chandrasekaran, The Washington Post

BAGHDAD -- The American occupation of Iraq will formally end this month having failed to fulfill many of its goals and stated promises intended to transform the country into a stable democracy, according to a detailed examination drawing upon interviews with senior U.S. and Iraqi officials and internal documents of the occupation authority.

The ambitious, 15-month undertaking stumbled because of a series of mistakes that began with an inadequate commitment of resources and was aggravated by a misunderstanding of Iraqi politics, religion and society in occupied Iraq, these participants said.

"We blatantly failed to get it right," said Larry Diamond, a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution who served as an adviser to the occupation authority.

Viewed from Baghdad since April 2003, the occupation has evolved from an optimistic partnership between Americans and Iraqis into a relationship riven by frustration and resentment. U.S. reconstruction specialists commonly complain of ungrateful Iraqis. Residents of a tough Baghdad neighborhood who welcomed U.S. forces with cold cans of orange soda last spring now jeer as military vehicles roll past. A few weeks ago, young men from the area danced atop a Humvee disabled by a roadside bomb, eventually torching it.

American officials who once roamed the country to share their sense of mission with Iraqis now face such mortal danger that they are largely confined to compounds surrounded by concrete walls topped with razor wire. Iraqis who come to meet them must show two forms of identification and be searched three times.

The Daura Power Plant in southern Baghdad was supposed to be a model of the U.S. effort to rebuild Iraq. Bombed in the 1991 Persian Gulf War and neglected by Hussein's government, the station could operate at no more than a quarter of its rated capacity, leading to prolonged blackouts in the capital.

After CPA specialists toured the decrepit facility last summer, they vowed to bring it back to life. German and Russian firms were hired to make repairs, and it was placed atop a list of priority projects intended to achieve a 6,000-megawatt goal for national electricity production. More power, Bremer hoped, would improve the economy and daily life enough to reduce violence and stabilize Iraq.

Today, the Daura plant is indeed a model -- of how the U.S. reconstruction effort has failed to meet its goals.

The German contractors fled for their safety in April. The Russians departed in late May, after two of their colleagues were shot to death by insurgents as they approached the plant in a minivan.

Inside the facility, parts are strewn on the floor, awaiting installation. Iraqi technicians in blue coveralls lounge around, smoking cigarettes and waiting for guidance. In the turbine room, graffiti on the wall reads: "Long Live the Resistance."

When anti-occupation militiamen converged on the Rafidain police station on April 4, officers inside the blue-walled building sprang into action.

They grabbed their possessions and ran home.

The militiamen were members of the Mahdi Army, an untrained but well-armed force inspired by Moqtada Sadr, a firebrand Shiite Muslim cleric deemed an outlaw by the U.S. military. Incensed that U.S. troops had shut down his newspaper and arrested one of his top deputies the day before, Sadr's followers seized government buildings in Shiite holy cities south of Baghdad and in Sadr City, a Shiite slum in the capital.

The militiamen met surprisingly little resistance. Rafidain, in central Sadr City, was no exception.

"To shoot those people would have been wrong," said Sgt. Falah Hassan, a lanky veteran whose uniform consists of rolled-up jeans and a rumpled blue shirt. "If a man comes with principles and I believe in those principles, I will not shoot him."

The sympathy for Sadr today at the Rafidain station -- on Fridays, officers pin his picture to their uniforms before going to the mosque -- suggests that the odds of getting the police to resist the cleric's militia have not improved.

By April, with the CPA's internal polling showing 80 percent of Iraqis holding positive views of Sadr, the CPA should have sought a political solution, the officials contend. At the very least, they argue, CPA strategists and military commanders should have realized that many Iraqi security officers would side with the cleric.

"The Americans misunderstood us," Kadhim said. "We will fight for Iraq. We will not fight for them."

Life inside the high-security Green Zone -- what some CPA staffers jokingly call the Emerald City -- bears little resemblance to that in the rest of Baghdad. The power is always on. Shiny shuttle buses zip passengers around. Outdoor cafes stay open late into the night.

There is little effort to comply with Islamic traditions. Beer flows freely at restaurants. Women walk around in shorts. Bacon cheeseburgers are on the CPA's lunch menu.

"It's like a different planet," said an Iraqi American who has a senior position in the CPA and lives in the Green Zone but regularly ventures out to see relatives. "It's cut off from the real Iraq."

Because the earth-toned GMC Suburbans used by CPA personnel and foreign contractors have become a favored target of insurgents, **traveling outside the Green**

Zone -- into the Red Zone that defines the rest of Iraq -- requires armored vehicles and armed escorts, which are limited to senior officials. Lower-ranking employees must either remain within the compound or sneak out without a security detail.

Although the CPA has tried to bring Iraqis into the CPA headquarters for meetings and other events -- there has even been an "Iraqi Culture Night" in the Green Zone -- the inability to mingle with Iraqis has isolated the Americans. **"We don't know the outside," the senior adviser to Bremer said. "How many of us have gone out to buy a bottle of milk or a pair of socks?"**

Instead of building contacts at social events in the city, CIA operatives in Baghdad drink in their own rattan-furnished bar in the Green Zone. Instead of prowling local markets, CPA employees go to the Green Zone Shopping Bazaar, where the most popular items are Saddam Hussein memorabilia.

Limited contact with Iraqis outside the Green Zone has made CPA officials reliant on the views of those chosen by Bremer to serve on the Governing Council. When Brahimi, the U.N. envoy, asked the CPA for details about several Iraqis he was considering for positions in the interim government, he told associates he was "shocked to find how little information they really had," according to an official who was present.

In the final days of the CPA, many officials have succumbed to bitterness. Some blame military commanders for not asking for more troops to stabilize the country. "They had enough soldiers to ensure that Saddam's men didn't come back to power, but there were nowhere near enough to make the country safe enough for us to do our work," a CPA reconstruction specialist said.

Military officials say CPA personnel spend too much time in the 258-room headquarters. "Nobody has any idea what they do back in that palace," a senior Marine commander in Fallujah said recently. "We certainly don't see any results."

Several veterans of other reconstruction operations characterized civilian-military relations in Iraq as the worst they have encountered. "It has been poisonous," the reconstruction specialist said.

The other major conflict within the occupation bureaucracy has set the legions of young staff members chosen for their loyalty to the Bush administration against older, more liberal diplomats from the State Department and the British Foreign Office. Several of the diplomats said they regarded the young staffers as inexperienced and eager to pad their résumés during three-month tours.

These diplomats singled out the Office of Strategic Communications as unsuccessful in its efforts to disseminate information to Iraqis. Instead of creating an all-news television station that would compete with other Arab broadcasters that the CPA deemed anti-occupation, the communications office, with several employees straight from Republican staff jobs on Capitol Hill, set up a channel that aired children's programs and Egyptian cooking shows.

"It didn't put any effort into communicating with the Iraqi people," a British CPA official said. "Stratcom viewed its job as helping Bush to win his next election."

Even within the communications office, there is a sense that the occupation has not gone as well as everyone hoped. "It's a time of introspection," one press officer said.

Elsewhere in the palace, the sense of regret is far more pronounced. The senior adviser to Bremer said he felt "a sense of opportunity that slipped away."

"The ambition for us was a grand one. We had great things in mind for them. We believed we could do it," he said. "But we didn't keep our promises."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Nader Promises To Help Elect Kerry; Says "We Agree On The Issues"

Ted Barrett, CNN Washington Bureau, June 22, 2004

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- A meeting between independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader and members of the Congressional Black Caucus turned into a shouting match Tuesday, after Nader made it clear that he would not drop out of the race.

Nader emerged from the confrontation appearing calm but slightly shaken. He described the meeting as "a robust exchange."

He told reporters that he tried to explain to caucus members that he will help elect presumptive Democratic nominee John Kerry in November by splitting the conservative vote and siphoning support from President Bush.

"We agree on the issues," he said. "But we have differing strategies to defeat George W. Bush." (Kerry wants 40,000 more U.S. soldiers to go to Iraq. How nice to know he and Nader "agree on the issues.")

Nader Endorses Edwards For Vice President

June 22, 2004

John Kerry

John Kerry for President, Inc.

901 15th Street, NW, Suite 700

Washington, DC 20005

Dear Senator Kerry:

I want to urge you to select Senator John Edwards as your vice presidential candidate. He has already gone through a primary campaign and has his rhythm and oratory (the two Americas speech) all well honed. After a slow start, Senator Edwards closed fast and has won praise from the media. As you know, Presidential candidates reach a tiny fraction of voters directly. The vast majority of voters can only be reached by the mass media.

There is another reason for choosing Senator Edwards. One of the pillars (the other two being civil rights and civil liberties) of our democracy – the civil justice system – is under severe attack by the corporate supremacists who wish to deny wrongfully injured or defrauded people from having their full day in court or even a partial day in court. Senator Edwards can stand up for the millions of Americans who suffer these harms and costs every year.

Sincerely,
Ralph Nader

(There is another reason for choosing Senator Edwards. He agrees with Nader that U.S. forces should not be withdrawn from Iraq now, but should keep on killing and dying, and he agrees with Nader that the Iraqi resistance should be wiped out. But hey, what are more dead U.S. troops and dead Iraqis when you're an "important" pro-war scumbag politician? They make their livings betraying. Nader has actually fooled some people into the silly notion that he is "anti-war.")

Public Opposition To Iraq War Continues Increasing

June 23, 2004 Edward Epstein, San Francisco Chronicle

Public opposition to the war continues to increase. A Washington Post/ABC News poll reported on Tuesday that 52 percent of those surveyed said the war is "not worth fighting." Seventy percent said the level of casualties is "unacceptable."

Support for the president's handling of Iraq policy dropped to 44 percent of those surveyed in the new poll, compared with 55 percent who disapproved.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two U.S. Marines Killed, One Wounded In Ambush

25 Jun 2004 ASADABAD, Afghanistan, June 25 (Reuters)

Two U.S. Marines were killed and one wounded when their patrol was ambushed during an operation against Islamic militants in eastern Afghanistan, military officials said on Friday.

The Marines were killed in Kunar province, which borders Pakistan, on Thursday evening, said military spokeswoman Master Sergeant Cindy Beam.

She said the wounded Marine was hurt by gunfire, but she said she did not know how the two were killed.

The attack happened in a mountainous district called Naray close to the border with Pakistan, residents there said. **They said they saw the bodies of the two Marines and they appeared to have been shot with AK-47 assault rifles.**

Mohammad Zaman Malang, a top military commander in Kunar's capital Asadabad, said the Marines came under fire as they were moving through a valley.

"They were going up on foot and were fired on with heavy and light machineguns," he said.

Malang said the U.S. patrol called in air support and U.S. aircraft dropped bombs, but it was not clear if any attackers were hit. He said the planes were again circling on Friday.

The deaths took to 59 the number of U.S. personnel killed in combat in Afghanistan since U.S.-led forces overthrew the Taliban.

The Taliban and their allies have declared a holy war against U.S.-led forces and clashes have mounted as September elections, which the militants have vowed to disrupt, approach. Militant attacks have continued, raising concern as to whether the polls can be held on time.

News of the latest U.S. deaths came as NATO's military chief General James Jones was visiting Kabul and heard pleas for the alliance to make good its pledge to send more troops to protect the elections.

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