

GI SPECIAL 2#B50

THE HEAVY BATTALION ENTERS THE FIGHT



Iraq veterans Rob Sarra, left, of Chicago, and Mike Hoffman, director of Iraq Veterans Against War, embrace Sept. 2 at Union Square Park in New York. Hoffman and Sarra condemned the war, and demanded the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq. (AP Photo/Jennifer Szymaszek)

"These Guys Just Want To Come Home"

Iraq War Vets Join Forces To Condemn U.S. Invasion, Bring Troops Home Now

02 September 2004 By Marcella Bombardieri, The Boston Globe

The massive protest in Manhattan on Sunday marked one of the first public appearances of a new group called Iraq Veterans Against the War. Though it is still small, numbering about 40, its members are taking tips from more established

veterans groups, and because of their war experience, they seem likely to take a prominent role in debate about the Iraq war.

A year and a half ago, Robert Sarra was a Marine sergeant in Iraq, where, he says, he once fired his M-16 at a black-cloaked old woman who failed to stop when she was told. Instead of a suicide bomb, the bundle she carried to her death held only bread, tea, and a white flag.

From that day in a tiny town called Ash Shatra, Sarra says, he journeyed through dark territory - heavy drinking, violent outbursts, therapy - and finally from his temporary job in Chicago to the Republican National Convention this week.

It is in New York that he embraced his new role - peace activist. "I became opposed to the war when I saw we had no point in what was going on over there," said Sarra, 32, who spent nine years in the Marines and left in April. "We are all trying to make sure that the next time the US goes to war, it's for a good reason."

The massive protest in Manhattan on Sunday marked one of the first public appearances of a new group called Iraq Veterans Against the War. Though it is still small, numbering about 40, its members are taking tips from more established veterans groups, and because of their war experience, they seem likely to take a prominent role in debate about the Iraq war.

Almost unheard of before they caught the cameras' gaze Sunday, the Iraq veterans are now juggling interview requests from Fox News and MSNBC and GQ and Maxim magazines.

"We have a currency no one else has," said Mike Hoffman, 25, of Trenton, N.J., a Marine veteran who is the national coordinator of the group. "We've been there, we've seen stuff out there that no one else has, and nobody can argue with that."

One by one, the founders met one another at antiwar rallies or got in touch through groups such as Veterans for Peace and Vietnam Veterans against the War - the group to which John F. Kerry belonged and which these Iraq veterans consider their model.

In March, Hoffman met Tim Goodrich, a 24-year-old Air Force veteran who has served in the Middle East. They talked about the idea of a peace group for recent veterans and gathered six other founding members. They announced their group at the Veterans for Peace national convention in Boston, which overlapped the Democratic National Convention.

Their ranks have grown. They had a dozen or so members in the antiwar march, and about five they had not known found them in the crowd.

They see themselves as the "little brothers" of the Vietnam veterans who protested that war.

One of their mentors is David Cline, president of Veterans for Peace and a national coordinator for Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Cline said the participation in the

peace movement of men and women who served in Iraq "makes it much harder for those who attack us to discredit us."

Cline added that he believes there were about 1,000 veterans of various wars and family members of military personnel marching together Sunday.

Goodrich, who says he scrawled obscenities on bombs that were dropped on Afghanistan, starting reading peace materials on the Web when he was posted in Saudi Arabia in 2002. It gave him something to do while he waited for jets to return from patrolling Iraq's "no-fly" zones.

Even before he was deployed to Iraq, Hoffman stumbled across a Noam Chomsky book that altered his views on US foreign policy. He still went to Iraq, he says, because it was his duty.

Hoffman has been a full-time activist since the fall, when his job managing a Halloween store ended. Goodrich, who lives in San Diego, sells gym memberships. Sarra has been taking temporary jobs and teaching at a summer camp. All contend that activism has become their driving force.

They know they will attract the suspicion of other veterans and those serving in Iraq. Sarra already has.

Shaken by the death of the old woman, shot by several Marines, in March 2003, he says he refused to go back to the same town days later to look for a missing Marine. "I said, 'Look, we shot up a bunch of civilians. I don't want to put my life and my Marines' lives in jeopardy for a guy who's probably dead,'" Sarra recounted.

Sarra was cited for displaying a lack of courage. Later, after refusing to return for a second tour in Iraq, he received an honorable discharge but was made ineligible for reenlistment, he said.

Back home, Sarra fought an internal battle. Fourth of July fireworks sent him diving for the ground and crawling indoors, he said. Once, in a drunken rage, he told a foreign cabdriver: "I wiped out your entire family over there, and I'll get you, too."

Other returning veterans will need a support network and someone advocating for their rights, Sarra said. He said he got only perfunctory help from the military for his post-traumatic stress disorder.

"I support the troops 110 percent," he said. **"These guys just want to come home."**

The IVAW Mission

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) is a group of veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. We are committed to saving lives and ending the violence in Iraq by an immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces. We also believe that the governments that sponsored these wars are indebted to the men and women that were

forced to fight them and must give their Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen the benefits that are owed to them upon their return home.

We welcome all active duty, reservist, and recent veterans into our ranks. To join the IVAW please send email to join@ivaw.net



U.S. Army Spc. Ivan Medina, left, Iraq Veterans Against The War, who lost his twin brother in Iraq, salutes during a rally condemning George W. Bush and the war Sept. 2 at Union Square Park in New York. David Cline, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, is at right. Medina and Cline demanded all U.S. troops in Iraq be brought home now. (AP Photo/Jennifer Szymaszek)

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:

Alaska Airman Wounded; Got "Several Weeks" Of Combat Training

September 2, 2004 By TATABOLINE BRANT, Anchorage Daily News

Melissa Helmick was steam cleaning the carpets at her home on Elmendorf Air Force Base over the weekend, getting ready for out-of-town relatives, when she got the call: Something had happened to her husband in Iraq.

Helmick, 28, wasn't told in that conversation what that something was. She was only told that several military officials, including Col. Mark Douglas, commander of one of the four main units that make up Elmendorf's 3rd Wing, were on their way over to talk to her about the man she'd been married to for nine years and known since she was 16.

"It was 3:18 in the afternoon on Sunday," Helmick recalled in a short but emotional interview Wednesday at an office on base. "I thought the worst."

At her home, Douglas immediately let Helmick know that her husband, Staff Sgt. Michael Helmick, 28, had not been killed but was seriously injured and in surgery after being airlifted to Germany.

According to officials, Michael was riding in a truck near Mosul on Sunday with two other Elmendorf airmen when a roadside bomb destroyed their vehicle. The truck was the first in a convoy along a planned route, said Col. Michael Snodgrass, commander of the 3rd Wing, who was also present at the interview Wednesday.

Melissa said her husband was a gunner on a U.S. Army convoy.

Airman 1st Class Carl L. Anderson, 21, from Georgetown, S.C., the driver of the truck, was killed in the explosion. Airman 1st Class Jacob Sutton suffered minor injuries and later returned to work.

Michael, from Morgantown, W. Va., suffered a fractured arm, shrapnel wounds on all of his limbs and an abrasion to his eye, officials said Tuesday.

Melissa said she talked to her husband by telephone after his surgery Sunday. He was highly sedated, she said. "He knew it was me," she said, fighting back tears. "I let him know I'd be seeing him soon."

Anderson was the first member of the military based in Alaska to die in Iraq or Afghanistan since the U.S.-led invasions of those countries, officials said.

Unlike most people Elmendorf has sent to Iraq, Michael, Sutton, Anderson and about 15 others from their squadron did not go to there to help with Air Force operations. They went to fill positions in their field on which the Army was short.

"It is not at all uncommon for us to support each other," said Tech. Sgt. Theo McNamara, an Elmendorf spokesman. ***The airmen got several weeks of training by the Army in Texas before heading to Iraq, he said.***

The couple talked about the dangers of the job, but still they seemed remote, Melissa said. "I didn't think it was going to happen to us," she said. Many people on base have called or dropped by since Sunday, Melissa said. "Everyone has been there for me."

Melissa said she didn't talk to her husband about Anderson's death but said she knows he learned about it when he got out of surgery. The two men had worked different shifts at Elmendorf but became close while serving together in Iraq, she said.

War Reports: Resistance Point Of View

Monday, 30 August 2004.

Early Tuesday, US forces pull back tactically from al-Fallujah after a day of fighting.

In a report posted at 12:32am Tuesday morning the al-Fallujah correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* reported that US troops had withdrawn from the environs of the city after their attacks during the day met, as usual, with fierce resistance by the city's defenders who inflicted significant losses on the US aggressors. After their pullback, all entrances and exits to the city are again open.

Fighting erupts between US and Resistance at al-`Askari neighborhood of al-Fallujah Monday night.

In a dispatch posted at 7:30pm Mecca time (8:30pm Baghdad time) the al-Fallujah correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* reported that violent battles had broken out and were still raging in the al-`Askari neighborhood between the Resistance and US aggressor troops. The fighting erupted at 8:10pm local time and US troops were using tanks to shell the area as Resistance forces were responding with mortar fire and BKC's.

Seven American troops killed in Resistance attack in as-Sawlawiyah.

Fierce fighting erupted between the local Iraqi Resistance and US occupation troops east of as-Saqlawiyah in the al-Fallujah area according to the local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam*. The correspondent wrote that the violent fighting broke out at about 4:42 local time after a US Humvee and an army truck were destroyed by an Iraqi Resistance bomb in the area. Seven US troops were killed in the explosion – five aboard the Humvee and two in the truck. Eye witnesses reported that a battle erupted after the bombing and then the US troops closed off the area.

At least five US troops killed in Resistance ambush of supply convoy near ar-Ramadi late Monday morning.

Iraqi Resistance forces attacked a US supply convoy in the ar-Rabtah area on the highway northwest of ar-Ramadi on Monday. According to the local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* in the area, the attack occurred at 11:30am Monday morning and destroyed two fuel tank trucks and killed the drivers of both vehicles.

A Bradley armored vehicle was also totally destroyed, apparently with an SBJ9 rocket – a development of the rocket-propelled grenade. At least three US troops were killed when that armored vehicle exploded – the driver, the one manning the BKC, and the one who prepares munitions. But it is likely that more US troops were aboard the Bradley because it was serving as protection for the fuel convoy and the US troops use such vehicles to transport troops in relatively secure conditions when they are escorting US supply and fuel convoys.

Four US troops killed in Resistance bombing of Humvee south of al-Fallujah.

An Iraqi Resistance bomb exploded in the ad-Duwayliyah area of southern al-Fallujah destroying a US Humvee at 8:30 local time Monday morning, according to the al-Fallujah

correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam*. Four US troops who were aboard the vehicle were killed.

US shells industrial zone of al-Fallujah Monday afternoon.

US aggressor forces used mortars and tank cannon to shell the southern part of the industrial zone of the city of al-Fallujah 5:40pm Monday afternoon, Baghdad time, according to the local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam*. The Resistance managed to totally destroy the US tank 15 minutes after the Americans had begun their barrage. Inside the Abrams tank were at least five US troops – the driver, the gunner, one person to man the smaller arms, and two to prepare for fire.

After the destruction of the US tank, a US reconnaissance plane circled over al-Fallujah.

Resistance bomb destroys US Humvee in al-Qa'im, killing four American troops.

Iraqi Resistance fighters in al-Qa'im destroyed a Humvee on Monday afternoon near the eastern approaches to the city, which lies on the border with Syria. The local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* wrote that four US troops who were aboard the vehicle were killed when the Resistance destroyed the Humvee. Two charred bodies could be seen in the burning wreckage, while the force of the blast that struck the vehicle sent the two other Americans flying to their deaths, one of them the man who fired the BKC.

The man who fires the BKC seldom survives Resistance attacks on Humvees, the local correspondent writes, because in his position he is always exposed to direct hits. The US military installed shields on the Humvee to protect that position, but in fact all they are able to do is to provide protection against sniper bullets; they are ineffective against Resistance bombs or rocket-propelled grenades.

Resistance destroys Humvee south of al-Qa'im as sunset Monday.

Iraqi Resistance forces in al-Qa'im on Monday totally destroyed a US Humvee at sunset on Monday, according to the local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam*. The attack took place in the al-Mashru'at ("the Projects") area to the south of the city on the border with Syria, where the battle against the US invaders has recently seen enhanced activity.

Two Resistance bombs exploded as a US patrol was passing through the district south of al-Qa'im on its way to round up and arrest more Iraqis. Twelve Iraqi civilians were hauled away by the US forces earlier in the day (see report above) for no apparent reason.

The number of Americans killed in the latest Resistance bombing is unknown, but usually at least three would be killed in such a direct hit on a Humvee, since three is the minimum number of soldiers who usually ride in such vehicles.

The bombs frequently used by the Resistance are locally called "Austrian explosive," of which there are two types: one small, and the other large. The radius of the explosion of the large explosive package is 1,000 meters, while that of the smaller charge is 500 meters. Both are highly destructive, able to destroy an Abrams tank, the smallest of the US tanks. When such explosives are used it

is rare that anyone riding in a fiberglass Humvee would survive a blast that strikes his or her vehicle directly, since even steel tanks are torn apart by them.

The Army of the Republic of Iraq left behind millions of explosives of the "Austrian" type, which were originally artillery shells of Austrian manufacture, but the Resistance has been able to take them and develop them into powerful and deadly bombs.

Fierce noon-time fighting near Samarrà Monday.

Fierce fighting broke out between Iraqi Resistance forces and the US aggressors in the al-Ishaqi area north of Balad and south of Samarrà on Monday at around 12:00 noon local time and lasted for about 45 minutes. The local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* reported that there appear to have been US casualties because the road to the area was sealed off by US forces for some six hours after the fighting and Apache helicopters crisscrossed the skies overhead.

Resistance cripples tank, destroys Humvee on road to Abu Ghurayb Monday night.

A correspondent for *Mafkarat al-Islam* in Baghdad reported in a dispatch posted at 12:08am Mecca time Tuesday morning, that Iraqi Resistance forces ambushed US aggressor troops, knocking one Abrams tank out of commission and destroying a Humvee. The attack, which took place at 9:00 Mecca time, happened on the International Baghdad highway on the way to Abu Ghurayb.

US forces battle Resistance in several Baghdad neighborhoods Monday.

Battles erupted between the Iraqi Resistance and the US occupation forces in the al-`Amil neighborhood to the south of the occupied city of Baghdad. The local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* in the district reported that the attack took place at 10:00pm Mecca time and that the Resistance used light and medium weight weaponry, including automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades.

Resistance disables US armored vehicle on Hayfa Street in Baghdad.

Iraqi Resistance forces knocked an American armored vehicle out of action on Hayfa Street in Baghdad Monday, according to the correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* in the area. No further details were available at the time the report was posted, 11:45pm Mecca time Monday night.

Resistance strikes US base near al-Yusufiyah with rockets.

Iraqi Resistance forces fired two rockets at the US base, known as as-Suqur ["the Hawks"] Base, that lies between al-Yusufiyah and Baghdad at 8:15pm Monday evening according to the local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam*. Although the precise type of rocket used in the attack is no known, eyewitnesses reported that the flash of the two rockets was very strong when seen from afar.

Anticipating political proposal by Muqtada as-Sadr, Jaysh al-Mahdi proclaims cease fire throughout Iraq Monday evening.

A top spokesman for Shi`i religious leader Muqtada as-Sadr called on the Jaysh al-Mahdi to cease fire throughout Iraq late Monday, saying it was part of as-Sadr's plan for

the country.. Sumaysim called on the Jaysh al-Mahdi to cease fire, "except in self-defense" and called on the puppet regime to do likewise.

Tuesday, 31 August 2004.

Night-time assault on northern al-Fallujah thrown back.

American aggressor forces launched an assault in an attempt to storm the al-Jurayfi neighborhood on the north side of the city of al-Fallujah at 2:00am Tuesday morning (Baghdad time), as American attacks on the defiant city continued.

The local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* reported that Resistance fighters in al-Jurayfi repulsed the US attack, however, again frustrating the American desire to break into al-Fallujah.

After assuring themselves that the US assault had been repulsed, the al-Jurayfi Resistance fighters knocked one American tank out of commission and destroyed an armored vehicle, killing and wounding an unknown number of US troops.

Resistance destroys US tank on al-Khalidiyah bridge Tuesday morning.

A US command post on the al-Khalidiyah bridge west of Baghdad came under Resistance attack on Tuesday according to the local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam*. One US tank was destroyed killing at least five Americans aboard.

Resistance fighter used SBJ9s in the attack, which took place at 10:15am. Resistance fighters have dubbed the SBJ9 the "Tank Killer" ("Qahir ad-Dabbabat").

Resistance shoots down US Apache helicopter over al-Khalidiyah, killing two Americans.

Iraqi Resistance forces shot down an American Apache helicopter west of Baghdad Tuesday morning according to a report by the correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* in al-Khalidiyah. The correspondent reported that at 10:00am the Resistance fired anti-aircraft weapons at the helicopter in the course of a battle that broke out between the Resistance and the US aggressors in al-Khalidiyah. At least two Americans aboard the helicopter were killed when it crashed to earth.

Resistance bomb kills two Americans on road to al-Qa'im after sunset Tuesday evening.

At least two American troops were killed and two Humvees knocked out of commission after sunset on Tuesday when Resistance roadside bombs exploded under a passing US military column on the road to ar-Rabtah in the direction of the city of al-Qa'im, which lies on the Iraqi-Syrian border. The local correspondent for *Mafkarat al-Islam* reported the attack.

Resistance battles US troops on Hayfa Street before dawn Tuesday morning. Two US troops killed.

Two US troops were killed and five others wounded in battles with Iraqi snipers and other Resistance forces in Baghdad early Tuesday morning.

The local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* reported that at 3:00am, American invader troops launched a wave of house raids, searches, and arrests in the "Dutch compound" on Hayfa Street in the city. In the course of their rampage, the Americans broke car windshields and windows. At 4:15am Iraqi sharpshooters and other Resistance fighters went into action with grenades. The sharpshooters opened fire on the Americans, killing two and wounding five others.

The clashes continued for about 45 minutes, the correspondent reports, and then at about 5:00am, the Americans retreated from the area.

Resistance strikes US camps with rockets and mortars Tuesday night.

Iraqi Resistance forces carried out wide ranging attacks on US headquarters at the airports in Diyala and al-Muthanna in Baghdad Tuesday evening.

The local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* reported that the Diyala airport camp was struck by six Resistance rockets – some Katyushas and some of the powerful Grad type. At the same time, the US camp set up in what had been the headquarters of Saddam's Fedayeen came under Resistance bombardment with 120mm mortars.

At 11:00pm Tuesday night (Baghdad time) the Resistance launched its attack on al-Muthanna airport in Baghdad, hitting the American compound with eight to 10 mortar rounds, according to the *Mafkarat al-Islam* correspondent.

Resistance fires powerful Grad rockets into "green zone."

Early Tuesday morning, Iraqi Resistance forces fired three powerful Grad rockets at the US occupation headquarters in Baghdad – the occupied Republican Palace, which the Americans have nicknamed "the green zone."

The Baghdad correspondent for *Mafkarat al-Islam* reported that the sound of the blasts could be heard clearly and that the sky lit up from the intensity of the explosions. Tongues of flame and plumes of black smoke rose into the sky over the highly guarded US compound.

In a dispatch posted at 10:20am Mecca time Tuesday, the correspondent wrote that the Resistance carried out another rocket attack on the same "green zone" target, not long before he filed his report. In that attack, a number of Grad rockets were again shot into the "green zone" and black smoke was seen rising over the area – an indication that some of the missiles scored direct hits on flammable equipment or vehicles. Other clouds of white smoke indicated that buildings had been set ablaze.

Five Americans killed, four wounded in Resistance assault south of Baghdad.

Iraqi Resistance forces attacked a US convoy in the `ArabJabbur area near ad-Durah, south of Baghdad on Tuesday. According to the correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam*, the Resistance destroyed one US Humvee, killing four American troops. In addition they knocked another Humvee out of action and killed one American aboard it. **A source in the ad-Durah puppet security forces** informed the correspondent that the attack also wounded at least four American troops.

Resistance destroys six fuel tank trucks, kills at least six drivers in ambush.

Iraqi Resistance forces attacked a US fuel convoy at 6:00am Baghdad time on the International Baghdad highway on Tuesday morning. Six fuel tank trucks were destroyed and at least six American drivers were killed in the ambush, according to the local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam*.

The correspondent wrote that as soon as the attack commenced, the Humvees escorting the convoy fled, leaving the lumbering tankers easy targets for the Resistance. **This has become a frequent occurrence, the correspondent notes – that the Humvee escort vehicles speed away as soon as the first rocket-propelled grenade is fired.** Rocket-propelled grenades can easily take out Humvees and their armament – a fact that limits their usefulness in combat with the Iraqi Resistance.

In its virtually daily attacks on US fuel convoys, the Resistance is seeking to cut off the supply of the "life blood" to the occupation forces – their fuel.

Resistance fires rockets, mortars at US base in Balad.

Iraqi Resistance forces fired Katyusha rockets and mortars at the US base in the town of Balad, north of Baghdad on Tuesday, according to the local correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam*. The US base in Balad is one of the main American occupation facilities in Iraq.

In a report posted at 3:10pm Mecca time (4:10pm local time) the correspondent wrote that the Resistance began an intermittent barrage on the base at 6:00am and that mortars and rockets were still being fired at the base from all directions now and again up until the time he filed his report.

Sources report Resistance launched chemical attack on US troops in Balad.

The correspondent of *Mafkarat al-Islam* reported Tuesday evening that exclusive sources had reported details regarding chemical attacks on the US base in the town of Balad that inflicted heavy losses in men and materiel in the American camp there.

According to the correspondent the sources reported that tactical chemical rockets struck the US camp in such large numbers that two large Black Hawk helicopters made five trips each to transport the dead and wounded to hospital. Each helicopter reportedly has a capacity of eight to 10 wounded at one time. The dead could be loaded in larger quantities, of course. US troops prevented Iraqi employees from gaining access to the camp after the attack.

The correspondent wrote that the Resistance employs tactical chemical weapons in specific circumstances – when the air is stagnant, or when the wind is blowing away from population centers. US troops often locate their bases to the north of cities to prevent chemical weapons from being used against them, lest the prevailing northerly winds carry the toxins to the populated areas.

Nevertheless tactical chemical weapons have been used on several US bases – including the base in the heights north of al-Khalidiyah, the US base north of ar-Ramadi, and the US base in Mosul.

The correspondent also reported that a bomb exploded by the side of a road southwest of the city on the way to the Imam `Ali base without causing any damage.

TROOP NEWS

Local Soldier Wounded: “I Only Got Seven Days Left, Seven Days.”

September 2, 2004 By Tonya Shipley, Staff Writer, Times Recorder (Ohio)

CROOKSVILLE -- A local soldier came back to the United States early this week after being injured by a sniper in Iraq.

Pfc. Mike Kennedy, 20, a member of the Third Battalion, 7th Marines, weapons platoon, based out of California, was injured July 24. His mother, Anita Rodgers, said Kennedy called her the next day to inform her he was shot in the right arm.

"He was like, 'Hey mom, how are you?' Then he tells me, 'They're shipping me out to Germany tomorrow,' and I knew he had been injured," Rodgers said.

Kennedy, a 2003 graduate of Crooksville High School, has served in Iraq since February. **He was shot through the forearm by a sniper in the town of Husaba, near the Syrian border. The bullet left a 2-inch diameter exit wound and crushed the bone in his forearm in three places.**

Rodgers needed help so she and Kennedy's father, Wade, could get out to San Diego. A co-worker suggested she call Sherrie Johnson, whose son, Justin, was injured while serving in the military.

Johnson said when Rodgers called her Wednesday morning she began contacting everyone she knew about how to get Rodgers out to San Diego. By the end of the day, several people had offered money or plane tickets.

In the end a group called the Fisher House Foundation gave them two planes tickets and offered to put them up. The foundation is a private-public partnership that supports American military families in times of need. The program has a house in San Diego, and if it is full Rodgers said the foundation will put them up in a hotel.

Kennedy, who played defensive end for the Ceramics' football team, **joined the Marines along with classmate Clint Crooks as a way of serving his country and getting money to go to college.** Rodgers said he was supposed to get a promotion to lance corporal sometime this month and was due home on leave in October.

He had only seven days left to go in Iraq.

"He said, 'I heard this pop and my fingers went numb. Then I saw the blood.' He went straight to his knees and he kept thinking, 'I only got seven days left, seven days.'"

Ukraine Cutting Iraq Forces

9.2.04 Focus I News, Bulgaria

Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovic, who arrived in Iraq today, said that the number of the Ukrainian contingent would be reduced.

Brass Fucking With Soldiers' Iraq Blogs

Aug. 24, 2004 NPR

Military officials are cracking down on blogs written by soldiers and Marines in Iraq, saying some of them reveal sensitive information. Critics say it's an attempt to suppress unflattering truths about the U.S. occupation. NPR's [Eric Niiler](#) reports.

A blogger with the pen name CBFTW, stationed near Mosul with the First Battalion, 23rd Regiment, says he began his *My War Web* log to help combat boredom. "I'm just writing about my experiences," the soldier says. "I'm pretty much putting my diary on the Internet -- that's all it is."

CBFTW says he has avoided describing sensitive information, such as U.S. weapons capabilities, weaknesses and scheduling. But earlier this month, CBFTW was lectured by commanders about violating operational security. Two other popular blogs run by soldiers have been shut down recently.

Critics worry that military officials are trying to muffle dissent from troops in the field. "I really think it has much less to do with operational security and classified secrets and more to do with American politics and how the war is seen by a public that is getting increasingly shaky about the overall venture," says Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

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/>

Scum In Command: Colonel Gets Whole 90 Days In Jail For Sex Crimes Against Subordinates

Army Times August 30, 2004

A senior officer serving with Arkansas National Guard troops in Iraq is serving a 90-day sentence in Kuwait after pleading guilty to using his rank to coerce sex from subordinates. Lt. Col. Fred Raymond "Ray" Sampson, the 39th Infantry Brigade's operations officer, cried openly during a court-martial Aug. 14, according to the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

He was removed from duty in May and was charged in July with 24 violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. He pleaded guilty to 10 counts of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. He also pleaded guilty to fraternization with enlisted soldiers, adultery, having sexual relations with a subordinate **and one count of disobeying an order from a superior officer. (Since the army isn't famous for going after rapists in command, it must have been that last one that did him in.)**

Sampson is a married father of four. His wife is expecting their fifth child.

REMF Officers Hog Best Awards For Themselves

8.30.04 Army Times
Letters To The Editor

I'm writing concerning the manner in which awards and decorations are being issued based on rank.

For example, a specialist who went out on patrol, pulled duty on an observation point or was assigned to escort a convoy, used his weapon many times for self-defense or offensively as directed, receives an Army Commendation Medal.

Meanwhile, an officer who never left the forward operating base, never fired his weapon, wasn't responsible for soldiers and worked a 12-hour shift in an air-conditioned office receives a Bronze Star and an Army Commendation Medal with Valor.

There are many other examples of this practice. I'm not saying some of these awards were not earned. I know from personal experience that many were. **(CYA)**

But when I asked the question, I was told that sergeants first class and above receive a Bronze Star regardless, and the Army Commendation Medal with V device was given out on a quota basis, with priority going to the officer and senior enlisted ranks.

What kind of message does that send to soldiers? **(Actually it sends the correct message: "fuck the ranks, we'll get ours" is the time-honored motto of the officer corps, and not just about awards. That's why soldiers throughout history have rebelled. Don't think so? Check out: "Mutiny: Disaffection and Unrest in the Armed Forces," Porcupine Press, ISBN 1 89943 8394. Covers the ground from 1848 to World War 2, including reports by organizers.)**

Staff Sgt. Phillip Allen
Fort Hood, Texas

End Widows' Tax Now, Not When They're All Dead

8.30.04 Army Times
Letters To The Editor

Congress has been playing games with retired members of the armed forces for more than 30 years and still it persists in punishing widows with the shameful Survivors Benefit Plan reduction by some 35 percent when the widow reaches the age of 62, a time when she needs it the most.

Why are the armed forces the only members of the American working community subjected to this humiliation?

Police, firemen, civil servants and members of Congress aren't punished by this widows' tax, so why should we suffer? Many of us have been writing Congress for relief, but that's like sending an e-mail to outer space — it just keeps traveling.

Congress now says it may phase out this cut over a 10-year period. That way, most of those affected will be dead.
--

It should be retroactive for 10 years. It's time we spoke out and got this problem solved. ***After all, if it wasn't for us, Congress members wouldn't have their plush jobs.***

Retired Marine Capt. Richard T. Bellis
Mission Viejo, Calif.

The Ultimate In Home Protection

Army Times August 30, 2004

A 48-year-old Savannah, Ga., man and his 19-year-old son are in big trouble for keeping a cache of high-powered weaponry in their home, including an anti-tank missile that may have been stolen from an Army gunnery range.

The Associated Press reports the father and his son were arrested in July for illegal possession of automatic weapons and for harassing an endangered tortoise with their Rottweiler.

Federal agents are combing through the rest of the family's weapons stockpile to determine where it might have come from.

Kennedy Captain Relieved After Ship, Boat Collide In Gulf

(Florida Times-Union, August 27, 2004)

The skipper of the aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy, Capt. Steve Squires, is being relieved of command because of a collision last month that sank a wooden boat in the Persian Gulf. The key question for investigators has been how the boat was able to get so close to an aircraft carrier that was supposed to be on high alert, with radars running, sailors standing watch and other ships in its strike group looking out for unknown vessels.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Northern Iraq Pipeline Destroyed; Fires Can't Be Controlled; Exports Stop

KIRKUK, Iraq, Sept 2 (AFP)

Iraq's northern oil exports were completely halted until further notice Thursday following an attack on a vital pipeline between the city of Kirkuk and Turkey, an oil official told AFP.

"The pipeline with Turkey was shut down," said Ahmed Hassan Ghafif, head of security for gas and oil pipelines in northern Iraq.

"The Iraq-Turkey oil pipeline targeted this afternoon is about 40-inches wide and today's attack can be considered the biggest since sabotages started a year and a half ago," he added.

"The explosion cannot be controlled because the pipeline was working at full power and there are large quantities of oil in it," he added.

Mahdi Army Keeps Weapons: The Americans "Have Already Betrayed Us Once"

BAGHDAD, Sept 2 (AFP) by Jean-Marc Mojon

"There is not enough trust for the fighters to hand in their weapons," said Ali Hamid, a resident of Sadr City.

"I'm sure some heavy weaponry will be exchanged in order to be seen as complying with the agreement. But they will also keep a lot of them, and more importantly, everybody will keep their rifles with them. So the Mehdi Army is not disbanding any time soon," he said.

"When the Americans arrived in Iraq, we believed in them. They have already betrayed us once. We will not be tricked again by their lackey, Allawi. I am sure he will try something to prevent Sadr from running for the elections. We have to be ready to defend ourselves," he added.

US troops conducted raids in Sadr City overnight and arrested several militiamen.

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

Occupation Cops Attacked

Sep 2, 2004 (AP)

Iraqi national guards killed seven militants south of Baghdad on Thursday in clashes that also left nine guardsmen injured, an Interior Ministry official said.

Resistance fighters shot dead a police major in the southern city of Basra as he walked through a market in the city center, officials said.

In downtown Baghdad, an insurgent threw a hand grenade at a passing police vehicle, injuring one officer and setting the car ablaze. U.S. troops quickly arrived to put out the fire and secure the area.

Resistance Fires On Czech Envoy's Limo

2 September 2004 (Reuters)

PRAGUE - Unknown attackers fired at the armoured car of the Czech ambassador to Iraq, but no one was hurt in the shooting, the Czech Foreign Ministry said on Thursday.

A spokesman said the ministry was cooperating with Iraqi police to determine if Wednesday's attack, near the ambassador's Baghdad residence, was directly aimed at the Czech representative.

At least 30 bullets hit the car.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Resistance

August 27, 2004 Hassan Nafaa, Al-Ahram Weekly

I was always confident in the ability of the Iraqi people to mount a resistance against the US occupation. Nevertheless, I had never imagined that their movement would build up momentum and gather strength at the pace we have seen. Within a very short space of time, the Iraqi resistance has been able to expose the ugly face of America. It has proven to the world that the US came to Iraq not as a liberator but as an invader, not as a provider but as an avaricious taker. **Contrary to its claim, it is now abundantly clear that the US came to Iraq to stay, and to exert its control directly over the affairs of that country, or through its handpicked agents.**

I am thoroughly aware of the magnitude of the chaos in Iraq, just as I am aware of the fact that not all the violence is part of the resistance, as there are definitely parties at work that have agendas of their own, whether these include settling old scores or even blackening the name of the resistance itself.

However, none of this refutes the legitimacy of the resistance in Iraq and the fact that it, like its counterpart in Palestine, is motivated by the cause of national liberty and dignity. And, just as with the resistance in Palestine, the Iraqi resistance realises that its back is up against the wall and that it has nothing to depend on but its own resources.

Nevertheless, it is the front line of defence against the American project of global hegemony and the Israeli project of regional hegemony, a fact realised not only by the

people of this region but by people throughout the free world. Perhaps it would be vain to hope that the Iraqi and Palestinian resistance would score a definitive victory over the US and Israel, **but by holding out they will have thwarted US-Israeli designs for hegemony. Indeed, this role of the resistance is already being etched into the annals of history.**

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Judge Kills Bush's Guantanamo-On-The-Hudson; Orders Prisoners Freed Immediately; Condemns Police State Tactics

9.2.04 By SARA KUGLER, Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK - A judge ordered the immediate release of nearly 500 protesters and then fined the city for refusing to comply with his order.

State Supreme Court Justice John Cataldo fined the city \$1,000 for every protester held past a 5 p.m. deadline that he had set for their release. It was unclear how many detainees were still in custody, but Cataldo had ordered the release of 470 people.

"These people have already been the victims of a process," Cataldo told the city's top lawyer. "I can no longer accept your statement that you are trying to comply."

There were accusations that the city was deliberately holding the protesters longer so they would not be in the streets during President Bush's speech Thursday evening.

"The evidence shows that the city told defendants that they would not be released until George Bush went home," said Dan Alterman of the National Lawyers Guild.

The judge's decision was hailed by attorneys for the demonstrators.

"They have to release them right now," said veteran civil rights attorney Norman Siegel. "The judge, to his credit, said, 'Enough.'"

About 50 of the detainees had launched a hunger strike Thursday to protest their extended time behind bars while awaiting arraignment. They were turning down the sandwiches and milk served three times a day until everyone was freed.

**Used The Armed Forces For Private Profit:
Liar
Traitor
Soldier-Killer
Unfit For Command**



Bush at Republican National Convention Sept.2. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

Bush's Idea Of Progress

August 27, 2004 Tribune comment

“We’re making progress on the ground”, George Bush said this week, talking about Iraq.

The United States Army has been chased out of Ramadi, has given up on Falluja and is battling to control Mosul.

The present leadership, the interim Government led by Ayad Allawi has, it is understood, roughly the same degree of minimal influence that the leader of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, wields.

The Government appears to have little legitimacy and in a recent poll to gauge popularity, Ayad Allawi gained just 0.2 per cent.

Into the breach have stepped the insurgents, at least 100,000 of them, many of whom are extremely well armed.

They are fighting against poverty, the Americans, the Sunnis, the Shiites, against ministers in the new interim Government and any Iraqis who work for them.

Anywhere else on the planet, this would be called a civil war.

In Iraq, President Bush calls it “progress”.

The non-homogeneous insurgents have enough weaponry to continue their fight against the coalition forces for the next five years.

The coalition forces have enough weaponry to last until they are forced to quit.

Elsewhere, this would constitute a lost war, but in Iraq it is progress.

Some \$1.8 billion of these funds was meant to have been spent on training an indigenous security force of 25,000 soldiers and a paramilitary guard of 51,000 – one fifth the size of Saddam’s army.

Yet, by April, this army was made up of just two battalions – with many new recruits leaving, complaining of low pay, poor conditions and a strong desire not to kill other Iraqis.

In January, Iraq will hold elections and will become a “democracy”.

The soldiers won’t be going home though, the insurgents won’t stop and the body counts will continue to rise.

That’s progress for you.

Kerry Rally: Peace Not Welcome Here

From: "Michelle K." Aug 9, 2004

To: Veterans For Peace

By MIKE FERNER BOWLING GREEN, OH. **Mike Ferner is a recidivist First Amendment practitioner and a member of Veterans for Peace.**

Remember “The Truman Show,” starring Jim Carrey? Trapped from birth in a huge, corporate-controlled movie set that doubled as a fake small town, Carrey played an unwitting salesman, perpetually on-camera. In one scene, a man tries to warn Carrey, parachuting onto the set with a sign that says, “You’re On TV!” He’s immediately hustled off-camera.

There's a smaller, mobile version of The Truman Show's set traveling westward across the country that you should go see if you get the chance. The admission ticket to the John Kerry "From Sea to Shining Sea Believe in America Tour" warned "No Signs."

An event for the newly minted Democratic presidential candidate and his veep, John Edwards, to which the public is invited, held outdoors on a public street, in downtown Bowling Green, Ohio...but no signs are allowed. No doubt, the Republicans have their own Truman Show, probably dubbed the "Give 'Em Hell, Dubya Tour." But for some reason, foolish me, I expected better from the Dems.

A check with the local ACLU confirmed that the organizers of the event were within legal limits. If I wanted to express an opinion, I'd have to become a free speech criminal and secret a sign into the tightly-controlled movie set that passed for a political rally on Main Street in this small town, 30 miles south of the heavily Democratic city of Toledo. Welcome to the Brave New World of Fortress America.

The first step was getting through the metal detectors and security guards that allowed one person at a time through the checkpoints. My criminal accomplice and fellow Veterans for Peace member, Erhard Kock, is an experienced world traveler. Upon seeing the crush of people who had waited over two hours in 90-degree heat to file through the sensors, he said, "in France or Germany, people would never stand for this. They would rush through the checkpoints and tell the guards where to go."

Guards barked, "back up, back up!" with little effect, but the basic procedure remained intact. We were instructed to remove all metal items—including Kerry campaign buttons, watches, coins, keys, pens, lighters, in case anyone wanted to self-immolate; turn on all electronic devices and then slowly pass through the detector. **The final order I received as I hurriedly picked up my approved metal belongings, was, no kidding, "...and take a drink out of your bottle."**

For a second this command didn't register. But a look at the checkpoints on either side of us confirmed that people were dutifully swallowing mouthfuls of suspicious-looking clear liquids from plastic bottles. Looking at the Rent-a-Homeland-Security guard, I said incredulously, "you gotta be kidding!" His angry visage and the increased volume with which he repeated, "TAKE A DRINK OUT OF YOUR BOTTLE," prompted me to reply, "keep your goddamn bottle," and walk away.

We entered the corral-stockade-movie set, unarmed, sans signs, tightly packed and ready to hold up whatever placards the Kerry campaign distributed.

Erhard and I donned our VFP caps and I pulled the criminal "TROOPS OUT OF IRAQ NOW: Veterans for Peace" banner out of my pants. We held it up as high as we could without the aid of any deadly sticks, hoping our message would get out through the media, indicating that someone, somewhere in this bright land had something on their mind other than "Kerry/Edwards 2004," or "A Stronger America," just what the world needs these days.

If Erhard and I were lucky and our sign caught the eye of a photog, maybe...just maybe, the fact that people are dying and suffering by the hundreds every day in Iraq might intrude on an otherwise sterile, vapid, choreographed election campaign.

More likely, though, you've not seen an image of a piece of white fabric, with broad, red homemade letters, held barely over the heads of hundreds of movie extras, that demands "TROOPS OUT OF IRAQ NOW. Veterans for Peace." Kerry's choreographers most likely succeeded in insuring that never was heard a discouraging word.

Peace, after all, is "off message" this year.

Pigs At The Trough Buy The Government Of The United States

By URI AVNERY August 3, 2004 Counter Punch. Uri Avnery is an Israeli writer and peace activist with Gush Shalom.

In the present election campaign, the candidates collect hundreds of millions of dollars.

George W. Bush and John Kerry both brag about their talent for raising enormous sums of money. From whom? From pensioners? From the mythical "old lady in tennis shoes"? Of course not, but from the cabals of billionaires, the giant corporations and powerful lobbies--arms dealers, Jewish organizations, doctors, lawyers and such. Many of them give money to both candidates--just to be on the safe side.

All of these expect, of course, to receive a generous bonus when their candidate is elected. "There is no such thing as a free lunch", as the right-wing economist Milton Friedman wrote. As in Russia, every dollar, or ruble, invested wisely in an election will yield a ten- or hundred-fold return.

The problem is rooted in the fact that presidential candidates, and all other candidates for political office, need ever increasing amounts of money. Elections are mainly fought out on TV and cost huge sums.

It is not a coincidence that all the present candidates in the US are multi-millionaires. The Bush family has amassed a fortune from the oil business, helped by its political connections, of course. Kerry is married to one of the richest women in America, who was once the wife of the ketchup king, Henry John Heinz. Dick Cheney was the chief of a huge corporation that has garnered contracts worth billions in Iraq. John Edwards, candidate for Vice President, has made a fortune as a trial lawyer.

<p>From time to time there is talk in America about reforming election finances, but nothing worthwhile ever comes of it. None of the oligarchs has any interest in changing a system that enables them to buy the government of the United States.</p>
--

CLASS WAR NEWS

Poverty Spreading In The Bankrupt Empire

August 27, 2004 Paul van Eeden

According to the Census Bureau the number of Americans living in poverty increased by 1.3 million last year and the number of Americans without health insurance increased by 1.4 million. It was the third annual increase for both categories. There are now 35.8 million people living under the poverty line (12.5% of the population) and 45 million people without health insurance (15.6%).

If the percentage of people living in poverty increases, the number of consumers who can spend us out of a recession diminishes. And ditto for those without health insurance. Do you really think that a family without health insurance is going to buy a new SUV every couple of years?

Consider, however, that the US government currently has \$4.3 trillion in debt that is held by the public, including foreign governments. **That means the current government deficit of roughly four hundred billion will add nine percent to the outstanding debt this year and because of the War on Terrorism the deficit is likely to grow, and it has to be financed by selling more debt.**

The trade deficit requires almost seven hundred billion dollars of foreign investment in the US each year. These investments are mainly the purchase of government debt by the Japanese, Chinese and British governments. But they are not the only ones buying US debt: private foreign investors are also contributing and price is set on the margin. **That means that when the US economy is no longer attractive to those private investors the US dollar can decline even if there is no decline in the purchases of US treasuries from the governments that are supporting the dollar.**

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.

Web Copies

For back issues 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.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>