

GI SPECIAL 2#B55

1,000 GONE. PAYBACK IS OVERDUE



Army Sgt. Silvia Torres-Timoteo holds her three-year-old son at the burial for her husband, New Jersey National Guardsman Sgt. Humberto Timoteo in North Arlington, New Jersey June 12, 2004. Timoteo was a member of the 3rd Battalion of the 112th Field Artillery. REUTERS/Chip East

Where Have All The Soldiers Gone?

From: Stan Goff

Date: September 7, 2004 5:28:23 PM EDT

To: Counterpunch@counterpunch.org

Subject: Body Count

By Stan Goff, Master Sergeant, U.S. Army Special Forces (Retired)

These milestones come along, reminding us... and the wrath struggles to break free again. The anger is never really absent, just dormant like a sleeping volcano.

Back when the pack of professional liars in Washington DC and their slavish corporate press still had Americans brainwashed that Iraq was a threat to the United States, General Tommy Franks – then the chief military planner of the catastrophe in Iraq – said, “We don’t do body counts.”

He didn’t want anyone to know what might be behind the numbers.

I could say the same thing now, as we arrive almost simultaneously at 1,000 US military fatalities in Iraq and the third anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001.

So I’m saying it. This is not a body count. This is not about the number of dead GIs. This is not about almost 7,000 wounded. It’s not about 14,000 dead Iraqis, or any of the considerable inventory of macabre enumerations we might clinically extract from the orgy of cruelty that is now Iraq.

We won’t do body counts. War is more than a number. This war is an expanding ocean of unanswered pain, and it cannot be reduced to a number.

One thousand times now, people have arrived home or looked out the front door only to see a military sedan, with two troops in their dress uniforms.

This was my nightmare while my own son was there. An army sedan.

When people see it, they know in that terrible instant that someone they pushed out of their own body, someone they saw take a first step and speak a first word, or with whom they made love, or the anchor in the stormy world that is a parent, someone called brother or sister or grandchild...that sedan with the survival officer and the chaplain signifies that this someone...has been erased and is no longer in the world with us, that something shocking has happened to the living body we once held close and will never hold again.

One thousand times now, as George W. Bush and his entourage smirked and plotted and slapped each other on the back, those left to live have been flayed with grief then set adrift in the void of their own loss to seek some trifling scrap of consolation. Why?

It’s so the oxygen thieves who run the US Empire can chase after their grandiose delusions in drawing rooms, surrounded by an army of servants attending to their every whim, and so the class they represent can continue to accumulate money. That’s why a thousand ripped up bodies have been shipped home – boxed and draped in bright new flags to sanitize the obscenity.

These pampered fucking sociopaths have no conception of the anguish of ordinary people, of how inconsolable is this loss.

When we reflect on the personal enormity and breathless depth of the sorrow of ordinary people that we know, then maybe we can begin to understand how that pain is mirrored in the ordinary Iraqi people who have been occupied – where their children have been bombed, homes destroyed, husbands and fathers and wives and mothers and best-

friends and sons and daughters and grandchildren and neighbors and schoolmates killed and maimed, whole communities reduced to rubble, dignity daily kicked face first into the mud, humiliation their daily bread and fear their meat, the very soil transformed into a radioactive toxin that leaves women giving birth to pitiable monsters and people rotting in their own bodies from inexplicable malignancies.

This is what we can appreciate about others when we begin with the loss of those we think of as our own. This is what we can comprehend about who is the real enemy here; when we begin to really see the kind of personal devastation that is the price of this war. And a price paid for what?

The same Tommy Franks who didn't do body counts once, in his soldierly way, called Douglas Feith, one of the intellectual architects of this enterprise of grief, "one of the dumbest motherfuckers on the planet."

Yet Franks – ever the obedient servant – has now climbed up on a political cross to sop up the guilt for the "Mission Accomplished" fiasco organized by Karl Rove's reptile myth-makers. Franks now enthusiastically campaigns for the election of George W. Bush, a de facto chief executive whose cognitive capacities make Feith look like Robert Oppenheimer.

Franks is teaching us something right now far more significant than how to count or not to count corpses. He is teaching us with his example where our own culpability lies. Obedience.

It would seem that Pete Seeger's lyrics from the last great American antiwar movement still apply:

Where have all the soldiers gone, long time passing?

Where have all the soldiers gone, long time ago?

Where have all the soldiers gone?

Gone to graveyards, everyone. Oh, when will they ever learn?

Oh, when will WE ever learn?

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:

Rumsfeld “Plays Down” 1,000th U.S. Troop Death



A military honor guard carries the casket of Army Special Forces Major Paul Syverson III during a funeral at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C., July 13. (Mannie Garcia/Reuters)

Sep 7 By HAMZA HENDAWI, Associated Press Writer

Tuesday, during a news conference at the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld sought to play down the impact of the milestone, saying the "civilized world" had long passed the 1,000th death at the hands of terrorists.

HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WAR?



U.S. soldiers collect the bodies of their colleagues, following an attack near the town of Falluja, September 6, 2004. Photo by Mohammed Khodor/Reuters

Marines Had More Deaths Than Army in August; Total U.S. Killed Up Third Month In A Row

Sep. 07, 2004 ROBERT BURNS, Associated Press

The Marines suffered more deaths in Iraq last month than the Army, even though the Army had at least three times as many troops there, Pentagon casualty records show.

August was the only month, aside from March 2003 when the U.S. invasion was launched, in which Marine deaths in Iraq exceeded those of the Army.

It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for the unusually high death toll for the Marines because they limit details on the circumstances of battle deaths to either "enemy action" or "non-combat related." The Army specifies the type of weapon that caused the death as well as the city where it happened. (As if this bullshit "secrecy" will fool anybody about anything.)

The vast majority of Marine deaths in August - 24 of the 33 total - were in the western province of Anbar, which includes the restive cities of Fallujah and Ramadi as well as dangerous areas on the Syrian border

Forty-two U.S. troops died in Iraq in June, 54 in July and at least 64 in August. And the number of troops wounded in Iraq is approaching 7,000.

Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, acknowledged to reporters at the Pentagon on Tuesday that there has been a recent increase in U.S. and Iraqi casualties. **"The enemy is becoming more sophisticated in its efforts to destabilize the country," Myers said. (Bush and his little ass-kissing hand-puppet Myers are the ones "destabilizing" Iraq with their bullshit invasion and the lies why it happened. And no, they are not getting "more sophisticated." The whole thing has turned to shit.)**

The 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment of the 1st Marine Division which is returning home after seven months in Iraq, lost two more Sept. 3. **They have had 18 killed since they arrived in Iraq, compared with just one lost during the battalion's first deployment to Iraq in 2003.**

7 U.S. Soldiers Dead As

Attacks On Baghdad Mahdi Army Launched In Sadr City; Many Wounded



A U.S. army truck lies burning on the motorway west Baghdad September 7. Photo by Namir Noor-Eldeen/Reuters

9/7/2004 By Hamza Hendawi, Associated Press & HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release Number: 04-09-03C & Release Number: 04-09-09C & 04-09-08C & 04-09-05C & 04-09-04C

U.S. forces battled Mahdi Army insurgents loyal to Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in the Baghdad slum of Sadr City on Tuesday in clashes that killed at least 36 people, **including one American soldier**, and wounded 203, U.S. and Iraqi authorities said.

Multiple engagements between Multi-National Forces and Iraqi insurgents took place today in the Al Thawra district of Eastern Baghdad.

Five other American soldiers were killed in separate attacks in and around Baghdad on Monday and Tuesday.

An American soldier was killed in a rocket-propelled grenade strike during the fighting, the military said.

Besides the American killed in the Sadr City fighting, the five other U.S. deaths since midday Monday reported by the military included:

A soldier from the Army's 13th Corps Support Command was killed in a roadside bomb attack near Qayarah, just north of Baghdad, at noon Monday.

One 13th COSCOM soldier is dead and one is injured as the result of an improvised explosive device attack on a convoy near Baghdad at around 11:45 p.m. September 6. The injured soldier was evacuated to the 31st Combat Support Hospital.

One Task Force Baghdad Soldier was wounded in an attack in Baghdad at about 2:30 p.m. Sept. 6. The Soldier was evacuated to a medical facility and died from wounds at about 3 p.m. the same day.

One Task Force Baghdad Soldier was wounded in an improvised explosive device attack in Baghdad that took place at about 11 p.m. Sept. 6. The Soldier was evacuated to a medical facility and later died of his wounds about 2 a.m. Sept. 7.

One U.S. Soldier was killed in action at 12:19 p.m. today, when a Multi-National Division - Baghdad patrol was attacked by small arms fire in the western part of the city. The Soldier was assigned to the 89th Military Police Brigade.

At about 9:30 a.m., Soldiers came under attack while waiting for an explosive ordnance disposal team at the site of a possible IED. One Soldier was killed and two Soldiers were injured in the attack.

At about 1:30 a.m. a Task Force Baghdad Soldier was injured in an RPG attack.

At about 2:30 a.m. a Task Force Baghdad Soldier was injured in an RPG attack.

At about 10 a.m., five IEDs detonated in an attack that resulted in no injuries. A vehicle was damaged in the attack.

At about 11:30 a.m. a Task Force Baghdad Soldier was injured when an IED was detonated.

At about 12 p.m., an IED detonated in an attack that resulted in no injuries. A vehicle was damaged in the attack.

The fighting in Sadr City was a resurgence of violence with followers of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. U.S. tanks moved into Sadr City and armored personnel carriers and Bradley fighting vehicles were deployed at key intersections. Ambulances with sirens wailing rushed the wounded to hospitals as plumes of black smoke rose over the mainly Shiite neighborhood.

Warplanes flew over the sprawling neighborhood of more than 2 million, firing flares to avoid being hit by anti-aircraft missiles.

U.S. forces appeared to be carrying out most if not all of the fighting. *No Iraqi security forces were seen during the clashes, though U.S. spokesmen talked of "multinational forces" involved in the operations. (Got to keep the silly pretense going.)*

An al-Sadr spokesman in Baghdad, Sheik Raed al-Kadhimi, blamed what he called intrusive American incursions into Sadr City and attempts to arrest the cleric's followers.

"Our fighters have no choice but to return fire and to face the U.S. forces and helicopters pounding our houses," al-Kadhimi said in a statement.

In the slum's roadways, small groups of Sadr's Mahdi militia fighters used hammers to dig up the asphalt to plant explosives. (SEE PHOTO BELOW) Bands of fighters in civilian clothes mostly in their teens and early 20s wielded rocket-propelled grenades and trotted toward the clashes, children running in their wake.

HOLDING THEIR GROUND: Mahdi Army Goes Tank Hunting In Sadr City



A Mahdi Army militiaman softens tar on the road to lay down cables for an improvised explosive device in Sadr City Sept. 6. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

07 September 2004 Ammar Karim, Baghdad, Iraq, Mail & Guardian & (AFP)

Angry foot soldiers of radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr cursed the Iraqi government and United States "occupiers" after deadly fighting erupted overnight.

The clashes between the Mehdi Army militiamen and US forces that shattered a week-old truce were some of the bloodiest seen in the sprawling slum since al-Sadr's April revolt against the US-led coalition, with the highest estimates reporting more than 40 killed.

"I'm planting a roadside bomb. Nine out of 10 traps here are fake bombs with wires to confuse the American soldiers. But this one is real and it's big," said Hazem (25).

"It's very well hidden. Look here, you can't guess there is something under the road. Hopefully, a tank will stop right on top of it and then, boom!, we can set it off," he said.

The Mehdi Army's guns and mortars were still hot from the fighting around Najaf's Imam Ali Shrine when the militia deployed again in its impoverished stronghold and engaged US troops.

"They started raiding houses again and arresting people. At first, we did not respond because there was a truce. Now we are rising up because there have been too many violations," said Ali-Husseini, who led a small group of fighters on Al-Falah Street where some of the worst clashes occurred overnight.

"If they want a truce, we are ready. But if they want to escalate the fight, we will respond tit for tat."

Sadr aide Sheikh Naim al-Qaabi said 15 Mehdi Army fighters were killed and 62 wounded.

"Last night was the most intense shelling of Sadr City since the Americans arrived in Iraq," he said, adding that heavy aircraft fire lasted from 11:00 pm (1900 GMT) to 4:00 am.

According to residents and fighters, four US tanks and eight personnel carriers thrust into Sadr City late on Monday.

"They turned into Al-Falah Street and we think they were heading to the Martyrs hospital to arrest some al-Sadr supporters. So we detonated three bombs we had planted on the street," said Said Najem, another local militia commander.

"One of the armoured vehicles was hit. It took them two hours to evacuate it and during that time there were intense clashes."

US armour was deployed in several areas of the sprawling slum's 79 sectors on Tuesday afternoon, as armed militiamen darted through the streets.

Two burnt-out cars lay alongside a gaping 3m-wide crater caused by a US missile.

"We were lucky," said Ali Thamer Karim. "The rocket fired by the US Apache landed in the living room and nobody was sleeping there. What am I supposed to do now?"

Cursing the US is a knee-jerk reaction for all residents, but many al-Sadr supporters have even more hatred for Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, whom they consider a US stooge, a secular Shi'ite betraying his country.

Hussein Mohammed, whose son was struck down in the fighting, complained bitterly: "All of these problems are because of Iyad Allawi," whom al-Sadr's lieutenants accuse of trying to break the back of their popular movement.

None of the fighters have turned in their weaponry and the entire area is a ticking bomb. As traffic resumed later on Tuesday, thousands of cars were blissfully tripping the hundreds of detonation wires that criss-crossed the streets.



Mahdi Resistance Army soldier checks RPG before patrol of their territory in Sadr City, Sept. 6, 2004. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)



Mahdi Army soldier patrols in the center of Baghdad's district of Sadr city, following clashes with the U.S. army September 7. (Ali Jasim/Reuters)

Soldier Killed In Khalidiya Attack On Tank

September 7, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 862-04

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier.

Staff Sgt. Gary A. Vaillant, 41, of Trujillo, Puerto Rico, died Sept. 5 in Khalidiya, Iraq, when his tank ran over an improvised explosive device. Vaillant was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 72nd Armor, Camp Casey, Korea.

Young Weslaco Guardsman Killed



SEPTEMBER 7, 2004 Reported by Ray Pedraza, KGBT

The death of a young Valley guardsman is the first in the Texas Army National Guard since World War II, but that matters little to his family in Weslaco.

Texas Army National Guardsman Tomas Garces was killed over the weekend during an ambush in Iraq.

The 19-year-old graduated last year from Weslaco High School, where he excelled as a wrestler.

"They were saying that he was in a convoy and they got attacked and they shot them with a bomb. That's all I know," said Maricruz Garces, the guardsman's 15-year-old sister.

Already he'd been recommended for the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for his actions during an ambush in July.

Two weeks ago, Tomas came home on leave. The family went to San Antonio, and the band played at a celebration for Garces' 6-month-old godson.

"We were happy, but we didn't talk anything about this," said his father Rafael Garces.

The elder Garces said he had no idea his son would be involved in the war on terror when he signed up with the National Guard.

He says he thought since his son was in the reserves he would help in situations like the hurricane that just struck Florida.

His brother Rafael Garces, Jr., says Tomas was an avid wrestler.

"He liked to wrestle a lot. He was pretty good. I wrestled with him several times and he beat me. He would beat me, because he was pretty good. He liked sports. He would always be at the field house here in Weslaco," his brother said.

"He was in wrestling; he was in cross-country," said Maricruz. "He wanted to be a coach." His wrestling coach at Weslaco High School, John Glapa, says he just had lunch with Garces a few days ago.

Glapa says his former student brought him a special gift - a t-shirt from the Iraqi Freedom wrestling team. The coach says Garces was the perfect image of a wrestler.

"When he was on the mat, you had six minutes of grabbing a rattlesnake by the tail. He was gonna fight you for six full minutes," said Glapa. "He was in tremendous physical condition, tremendous strength. (He was) very determined in what he did and how he did it."

Coach Glapa says off the mat, Tommy was a jokester, a good student and an all around good kid.

Best friend Joe Mendoza says Garces was hyped up about being sent to Iraq. "He told me we're going to show them (Iraq) what we've got," said a teary eyed Mendoza.

On Tuesday morning the Weslaco mayor and city manager visited the Garces family to pay their respects.

Mayor Joe Sanchez says once funeral arrangements are made, the city will honor Garces in some way. The Weslaco school superintendent has asked that flags fly at half mast at all 19 Weslaco campuses.

Garces is the tenth Valley serviceman to die in the line of duty and the 78th from the state of Texas.

A fence around the Garces' family home was decorated with red, white, and blue ribbon bows.

Visitors streamed into the yard, including members of the church where family members played in a Christian band. Maricruz was the lead vocalist and Garces played bass. Other family members also played in the band.

Maricruz was dressed in a T-shirt with a photo of her brother and the words, "my brother, my hero".

Garces joined the National Guard when he was 17, shortly after graduating from Weslaco High School in 2003.

"He had said that if my mom didn't let him, he was going to get in anyway as soon as he turned 18," Maricruz said.

Garces started his military career at Fort Jackson, S.C., and was most recently stationed out of Fort Bliss.

"He called a lot," Maricruz said. "Everyday he would talk to my mom."

Garces was ordered to active duty in December as part of the 1836th Transportation Company, based in El Paso.

Lafayette Soldier Killed

9/6/2004 The Associated Press

LAFAYETTE, La. (AP) — A Lafayette soldier was one of seven Marines killed outside of Fallujah when a suicide bomber sped up to a U.S. convoy and detonated his vehicle.

The family of 19-year-old David Paul Burridge said they were notified of his death Monday afternoon.

Burridge graduated from Lafayette High School in 2003 and joined the Marines in January. He had been in Iraq since April.

Burridge's aunt said the military hasn't released the exact cause of death.

To Whom It May Concern

03 September 2004 By Brooke M. Campbell, t r u t h o u t | Letter

To Whom it May Concern,

I found out that my brother, Sergeant Ryan M. Campbell, was dead during a graduate seminar at Emory University on April 29, 2004.

Immediately after a uniformed officer knocked at my mother's door to deliver the message that broke her heart, she called me on my cell phone. She could say nothing but "He's gone. " I could say nothing but "No." Over and over again we chanted this refrain to each other over the phone as I made my way across the country to hold her as she wept.

I had made the very same trip in February, cutting classes to spend my brother's two weeks' leave from Baghdad with him. Little did I know then that the next time I saw him would be at Arlington National Cemetery.

During those days in February, my brother shared with me his fear, his disillusionment, and his anger. "We had all been led to believe that Iraq posed a serious threat to America as well as its surrounding nations," he said. "We invaded expecting to find weapons of mass destruction and a much more prepared and well-trained Republican Guard waiting for us. It is now a year later, and alas, no weapons of mass destruction or any other real threat, for that matter."

Ryan was scheduled to complete his one-year assignment to Iraq on April 25. But on April 11, he emailed me to let me know not to expect him in Atlanta for a May visit, because his tour of duty had been involuntarily extended. "Just do me one big favor, ok?" he wrote. "Don't vote for Bush. No. Just don't do it. I would not be happy with you."

Last night, I listened to George W. Bush's live, televised speech at the Republican National Convention. He spoke to me and my family when he announced, "I have met with parents and wives and husbands who have received a folded flag, and said a final goodbye to a soldier they loved.

I am awed that so many have used those meetings to say that I am in their prayers and to offer encouragement to me. Where does strength like that come from? How can people so burdened with sorrow also feel such pride? It is because they know their loved one was last seen doing good. Because they know that liberty was precious to the one they lost. And in those military families, I have seen the character of a great nation: decent, and idealistic, and strong."

This is my reply: Mr. President, I know that you probably still "don't do body counts," so you may not know that almost one thousand U.S. troops have died doing what you told them they had to do to protect America. Ryan was Number 832.

Liberty was, indeed, precious to the one I lost-- so precious that he would rather have gone to prison than back to Iraq in February. Like you, I don't know where the strength for "such pride" on the part of people "so burdened with sorrow" comes from; maybe I spent it all holding my mother as she wept. I last saw my loved one at the Kansas City airport, staring after me as I walked away.

I could see April 29 written on his sad, sand-chapped and sunburned face. I could see that he desperately wanted to believe that if he died, it would be while "doing good," as you put it.

He wanted us to be able to be proud of him. Mr. President, you gave me and my mother a folded flag instead of the beautiful boy who called us "Moms" and "Brookster."

But worse than that, you sold my little brother a bill of goods. Not only did you cheat him of a long meaningful life, but you cheated him of a meaningful death. You are in my prayers, Mr. President, because I think that you need them more than anyone on the face of the planet. But you will never get my vote.

So to whom it may concern: Don't vote for Bush. No. Just don't do it. I would not be happy with you.

Sincerely,
Brooke M. Campbell
Atlanta, GA



Campbell, Ryan Montgomery
SGT US Army

Veteran Service Dates: February 2002 - April 2004

Date of Birth: 11/07/1978

Date of Death: 04/29/2004

Date of Internment: 05/11/2004

Buried at: Section 60 Site 7979

[Arlington National Cemetery](#)

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.

**On Occasion Of The 1,000th U.S. Troop
Death In Iraq, Military Families Say:
Not One More Death In A War Based On Lies:
Bring the Troops Home NOW!**

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7 /U.S. Newswire/ --In September, 2004 a tragic milestone will be reached: 1,000 U.S. troops will have been killed in a war that should not have happened.

The two primary justifications used by the Bush Administration to take this nation into war -- weapons of mass destruction and a link between Al Qaida and Saddam Hussein have proven to be false. Each, day, week and month that this reckless military misadventure continues, the death toll goes higher.

As the day of the 1,000th troop death is reached, Military Families Speak Out honors all who have fallen. We remember all the U.S. service men and women who have died as a result of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq; the many thousands of Iraqi men, women and children who have died as a result of this war in Iraq; and the fact that these deaths have occurred in a war that is unjust and unjustifiable.

Military Families Speak Out -- an organization of well over 1,600 families with loved ones in the military, including those who have been killed in Iraq, who are currently serving in Iraq, or who are about to deploy to Iraq -- calls on the Bush Administration and on the United States Congress to BRING OUR TROOPS HOME NOW!

Our loved ones signed up to protect and defend Country and Constitution not to be put in harm's way for oil markets and dreams of empire.

As we honor the fallen, we call on the Administration to stop betraying our troops, their families and this nation! Not one more death in a war based on lies.

[Military Families are Available for Interview:](#)

Military Families who have lost loved ones in Iraq, whose loved ones are currently deployed to Iraq or are deploying to Iraq; and the co-founders of Military Families Speak Out are available for interview. This list is in formation, for a list of those available for interview, contact Ryan Fletcher at 202-641- 0277 or Nancy Lessin at 617-320-5301.

South African Mercenary Dead; Other Mercenaries Left Him Behind And Ran Away

07/09/2004 Rusana Philander and Ziegfried Ekron, Die Burger

Cape Town - Three weeks of tense uncertainty ended for a mother from George and her two daughters on Monday when they received official news that their husband and father, who has been missing in Iraq for the past three weeks, was dead.

Pretorius, who worked for the American company Dyncorp as a bodyguard, went missing on August 16 when Iraqi rebels ambushed and attacked a convoy in which he was driving one of the vehicles.

He was injured in a landmine explosion that initially forced the convoy to stop. His colleagues had to retreat after a shootout with the attackers and they left the heavily wounded Pretorius behind.

An Iraqi reaction force later saw the attackers drag Pretorius from the damaged vehicle and take him away.

TROOP NEWS

Ukraine Pulling Out 200 Troops Now; Others Retreat From “The Most Difficult” Areas

RBC, 07.09.2004, Kiev

The Ukrainian peacekeeping contingent deployed to Iraq will be cut by 200 servicemen, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma told journalists.

Ukrainian peacekeepers have already left the Iraqi regions, where the situation is the most difficult currently, namely Iraqi-Syrian borders, Kuchma said. Ukrainian troops have been withdrawn from Baghdad suburbs and it will be easier to enhance our security, the President added. Ukrainians are not going to "flee from Iraq," he emphasized. (Oh fuck no, just vanish a few hundred at a time after moving to less exposed areas, as if there are any in Iraq.)

Ukrainian peacekeeping forces are to be "calmly" withdrawn from Iraq as soon as the situation becomes stable, he added. **(Since things will never be “stable” either he means the rest, or he means while pretending to stay, they bail out a couple hundred every now and then? Truth is, the Ukrainian people are sick of the war, and putting pressure on this politician to get their soldiers home. So he’s giving in, a little at a time. Lesson learned.)**

The Hidden Tragedies: Families Of Wounded Struggle With Long Road

<p>Nearly 7,000 men and women have been injured since fighting broke out in Iraq in 2003, more than half wounded badly enough that they could not return to duty.</p>

September 07, 2004 By Stephen Manning, Associated Press

Heather Pepper pulls a cigarette out of her husband's pack, lights it and takes a drag to get it burning.

"Here, honey," she says, holding it in front of Staff Sgt. Jason Pepper, 27, and moving an ashtray to a spot near him on the table. His face and his blank eyes turn toward her, following her voice, his hand groping the air to find hers.

Blinded four months ago by a roadside explosion in Iraq, Pepper is almost completely dependent on his wife. She helps him bathe, dress and eat. When he walks, he throws his hands over her shoulders, shuffling along behind her. She has become his eyes.

"It has been a huge challenge for us," says Heather Pepper, 26, sitting on the patio of a Fisher House group home at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. "I had to do everything as if he was a brand-new child, except bigger."

Most families at Fisher House have similar stories. A mother who showed her brain-damaged son photos of his family to revive his blurred memory. A Colorado man who kept a vigil by his son's hospital bed during the 19-year-old Marine's three-month coma.

Nearly 7,000 men and women have been injured since fighting broke out in Iraq in 2003, more than half wounded badly enough that they could not return to duty.

It is a stressful time for the soldiers, who struggle to recover from their injuries, come to grips with the changes to their bodies and often worry about uncertain futures. It can be equally hard on their relatives, most of whom put their lives on hold to spend seemingly endless months at the hospital.

Many came to Walter Reed on just a few days' notice and have been there since. Some have quit jobs, left children behind with relatives and even risked losing a home to be there. Suddenly, they are thrust into the demanding role of caretaker.

"It's not just the soldier, it's also the family that is absolutely in shock and has no idea how to deal with this," said Vivian Wilson, manager of the three Fisher House group homes on the post.

Relatives can go to the hospital for counseling. But most choose not to, Wilson said. Instead, they seek each other out for an informal sort of group therapy. They gather on the spacious patio of Fisher House III when the weather is good, over morning coffee or in the evenings. They talk about how physical therapy is going, trade stories, and sometimes, share their pain. Some have formed close friendships with other soldiers and families.

"You'd think you would be 100 percent engulfed in your own grief," said Michael Carroll of Idaho Springs, Colo., who is at Fisher House with his son, Lance Cpl. Sean Carroll. "But people go outside their own tragedies to connect with each other."

Sean Carroll, 19, lost a leg, several fingers and was riddled with shrapnel in March when his unit was attacked. Doctors gave him just a 50 percent chance of surviving a flight from a hospital in Germany to the United States. He spent 58 days in a coma and now moves around in a wheelchair.

When his grandmother, Phyllis Schmidt, learned he was hurt, she immediately went into her the bedroom of her home in Payson, Ariz., to pack. The retired nurse has spent most of the past five months with her grandson, her sole focus helping him recover.

"I was with him when he took his first steps as a baby," she said. "And I was with him when he took his first step with his prosthetic leg. It was wonderful to see that."

Lee Pingleton of Sacramento, Calif., said she wept almost every day when her son, Charles, first arrived in December at Walter Reed. A suicide bombing blew a door into his head, damaging his brain. When his mother first saw him, he couldn't remember anyone in his family. She showed him pictures for weeks to remind him who he was.

Charles Pingleton's memory is coming back, slowly. But his mother is anxious that he may never fully recover. She frets when he is out of her sight.

"Every time he goes someplace and doesn't come back on time, I worry," she said. "I don't sleep through the night anymore."

The long stay at Walter Reed has been a culture shock for Sgt. William Kyle Colvin, 26, and his family. His wife is German and had spent only a few weeks in the United States before her husband injured his leg in a truck accident.

"To go from living in a whole different culture to the U.S. is such a big change. I can only imagine how hard it is on her," he said.

The Peppers have also seen the future they had plotted out disappear. He planned to serve 20 years in the Army before retiring with a full pension. Now, totally blind, Pepper will be forced to leave the military with a medical retirement.

The couple isn't sure what they'll do when they leave Walter Reed. Heather quit her job to take care of her husband, and left their young daughter behind in Germany, where Sgt. Pepper was posted, with her parents.

Pepper is gradually learning to do small things for himself, like make his breakfast and shower by himself. Doctors have given him a prosthetic eye and he is awaiting a second. But Heather still has to be with him at almost all times.

It doesn't bother either of them, though. The time they spend together, the reliance they have built on each other has brought them closer than they have ever been in their six-year marriage.

"If she wasn't here to support me, I'd probably still be in the hospital," said Pepper, between puffs on his cigarette. "She's my everything right now."

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/>

4,000 Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse For Rolling Coffin Duty

September 7, 2004 By [KOMO Staff & News Services](#)

FORT LEWIS - With a departure ceremony today, Fort Lewis starts sending another 4,000 soldiers to Iraq for a year's deployment.

The second Stryker Brigade developed at Fort Lewis will take over for the brigade that was deployed last November. Those soldiers will be coming home, turning over the vehicles for the fresh troops.

The brigade is built around about 300 eight-wheeled Stryker armored vehicles. They can carry as many as eleven soldiers and travel faster than 60 miles per hour. **(Or could before they got so loaded down with not very effective patched-on armor they can barely move, and have a pronounced tendency to fall off cliffs or into rivers, as the roads crumble underneath these worthless, soldier-killing pieces of shit.)**

The Army recently announced plans to move about 3,900 troops from Louisiana to Fort Lewis to create still another Stryker brigade. **(The Army command just can't let go of a total catastrophe: never mind, drive on. Hey, we got plenty of body bags. And we can't piss off the war-profiteers who got the contracts to build the infamous Strykers. After all, who do you think we're going to go work for when we retire from our distinguished careers posturing as important officers in the Pentagon?)**

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Hits Occupation Officials; Baghdad Governor Escapes Attack

07 September 2004 Aljazeera.Net

Baghdad's governor has survived an attack on his convoy while the son of another governor in a northern Iraqi province has been killed in a separate attack.

Ali al-Haidri escaped unhurt when an explosion rocked his convoy as he was travelling through the capital.

The blast killed at least one bystander and three of al-Haidri's bodyguards were hurt in the attack in the al-Adl neighbourhood.

Armed assailants opened fire on the convoy seconds before the explosion, sources told Aljazeera.

Meanwhile, the son of a governor for the northern Iraqi province of Niniveh was killed on Tuesday in the city of Mosul, police and medical sources said.

Leith Duraid Kashmula, 19, was shot several times in the chest by unknown attackers as he was alone in his car in western Mosul, said media adviser for the governorate Hazim Gallawi.

Elsewhere, two Iraqi explosive experts were wounded as they tried to defuse a roadside bomb in Baquba, north-east of Baghdad, said national guardsman Umar Thair.

Occupation Cops Killed In Latifiyah

9/7/2004 By Hamza Hendawi, Associated Press

Two Iraqi policemen were killed and two others injured in a drive-by shooting in Latifiyah, 25 miles south of Baghdad late Monday, police said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Truth

"It just rubbed salt in the wound to hear them talk about, well maybe they didn't have all the information, maybe the intelligence was faulty," says Oliva Smith, whose 41-year-old husband, Bruce, was among 16 U.S. soldiers killed when a surface-

to-air missile downed their helicopter. September 7, 2004 SHARON COHEN and PAULINE ARRILLAGA, AP National Writers

More Truth

9.7.07 Tom Condit

Characterization of Kerry's politics as "spineless" is typical of the delusions of the soft left in North America. Kerry is a fearless defender of imperialism and corporate rule. Where he sounds confused is in his attempts to sell this garbage to the average voter.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Democracy, Bush Style: Occupation Scum Raid Al Jazeera Office; Threaten To Arrest Guardian Press Photographer

September 06, 2004 By: [Luke Harding](#), Guardian Newspapers Limited

Iraqi security officers stormed al-Jazeera's Baghdad offices and sealed the newsroom with red wax at the weekend after the US-backed interim government banned the Arabic television station from broadcasting in the country.

Several armed police officers were posted outside and in the lobby of Baghdad's Swan Lake Hotel, where al-Jazeera has its offices, yesterday.

"We have been told not to let anyone in; we are just following orders," Captain Abu Jibal told the Guardian. "If you take any photos we'll arrest you," he said.

Robert Menard of Reporters Without Borders said the ban contradicted "Iraqi officials' statements on democracy". Other media groups, including the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, have criticised the earlier ban.

**WAR CRIMINALS ADMIT WAR CRIME:
U.S. COMMAND ADMITS FALLUJA BOMBINGS ARE
'REPRISALS'**

“The U.S. military has retaliated by launching several precision airstrikes on insurgent safe houses in the city.” September 6, AP *The US military said the bombardment was in reprisal for insurgents firing on marine positions outside the city.* (9.7 AFP) (Reprisal bombings of civilians are war crimes. In the past, they have sometimes been punished by the death penalty. Hopefully, they will be again.)

“Iraqis survey a crater left after a US air strike in Fallujah. Angry demonstrators protested the latest US air raid on the town. (AFP/Fares Dlimi)



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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**Bush Regime Lied To New Yorkers
About Dangers Of 9/11 Toxic Gas;
Death Toll Unknown**

8.27.04 by Mark Daily, The Chief

If a terrorist attack on the scale of the World Trade Center disaster happens again, Federal emergency management officials are going to repeat mistakes they made the first time, a prominent environmental group charged Aug. 18.

In a blistering new report on the long-term health risks of the Trade Center collapse, the Sierra Club concludes that **the Environmental Protection Agency and other regulatory agencies provided false assurances of safety to residents of lower Manhattan and failed to protect the health of city workers and volunteers who toiled at Ground Zero.**

The Sierra Club gives greater credit to the workers themselves, particularly the operating engineers who ran the heavy equipment and the volunteer construction workers who instructed their NYPD and FDNY co-workers on safe work habits.

Among the other findings in the Sierra Club's report:

An early warning to workers was suppressed. On Sept. 14, the **EPA prepared a draft news release on asbestos found in air samples** which stated that "The concern raised by these samples would be for the workers at the cleanup site and for those workers who might be returning to their offices", on Wall Street. **The White House Council on Environmental Quality deleted the sentence.**

The final release read: "Our tests show that it is safe for New Yorkers to go back to work in New York's financial district."

OSHA noted more than 1,000 violations of health and safety laws at the site between Sept. 21 and Oct. 14, 2001, and more than 40 violations daily during the cleanup, but **said it could not enforce its rules during a "search and rescue" operation, even when months had passed since the recovery of the last survivors.**

OSHA deferred to the city on enforcing the rules, even though the Health Department and Department of Environmental Protection lacked the expertise and staffing to get the job done.

OSHA has a safety standard in place for emergency workers in hazardous waste operations, and EPA knew from responding to earthquakes and hurricanes that crumbling buildings could release asbestos, but neither agency applied its expertise at Ground Zero.

A health and safety plan for Ground Zero wasn't completed until about two months after the attack. The original contractor for the plan, the Bechtel Corporation, was forced off the site before finishing its work. By the time a new company completed the plan, the most dangerous parts of the recovery work had already been carried out.

Safety awareness training for workers at the site didn't begin until Nov. 29, 2001, more than 21/2 months after the attack.

Other, smaller sites did a better job of protecting workers' health. At the Fresh Kills Landfill operation, Detectives and other police officers assigned to sift through debris achieved a 90-percent compliance rate in wearing respirators. They reportedly were told that failure to wear protective equipment would result in disciplinary action.

At the Pentagon, volunteers without sufficient respiratory protection were thrown off the site.

Some sanitation workers who dumped, spread and raked debris at Fresh Kills may not have received respirators for more than a month after work began, even though police and Federal officials had respirators within two days after the attack.

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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>