

GI SPECIAL 2#B59



Alex Ryabov, Iraq Veterans Against The War

Portrait by Jeff Paterson, Not In Our Name, (jeff@paterson.net 212-760-1722) Saturday, Sep. 04, 2004 at 6:35 PM

“An Open Letter To America”

**Army Brass Thought It Could Jerk
Around Wife Of Medically Disabled
Soldier Sent To Iraq;
Their Biggest Mistake: She's A Marine**

“They think they are talking to just another spouse, but guess what, I am not just another spouse, I am a former Marine, and people know, that you don't mess with a Marine, especially this one. I was not called Cpl. Chucky for nothing back in my service.

I am a fighter for rights, and my husband deserves his right to be medical boarded out of service NOW.

Send my husband and the other medically unfit Soldiers home, they deserve their rights that they fight for, that they have earned.

Don't crap on them like you did in the past with our Vietnam Vets.

Bring them home, bring them all home.”

Sept. 8, 2004

Mr. President, Mr. Vice President,
Senators, Congressmen, Colonel Short,
America,

It has now been just over 1 month since my husband was forced back into Iraq and I am still going strong. Especially since I have been challenged by an officer, by lies that the Army has told me and the nerve of a Commander telling me that my husband seems to be getting better.

The support that I get from so many, and the look in my children's eyes that wonder where the daddy is, also keeps me going strong. Here is a complete update of my husband as of Sept. 8, 2004.

I wrote a letter to my husband's Commander, Colonel Short, and told him that I did not think that what was said in the Congressional sent to Senator Hutchison was right, and that I was not going to stop fighting for my husband's return. In the letter that he sent me dated on Aug. 16, mailed Aug. 21, and after taking 7 days for delivery, it was delivered Aug. 28th. Anyway, in the letter it says:

Dear Mrs. Lampin,

Thank you so much for your letter. Your husband is doing an outstanding job for us. He is the best mechanic that we have. According to CSM Perez, he is extremely motivated and seems to enjoy our mission and his part in its success. Even his physical problems seem to be improving. We are taking good care of him like I promised. He is a fine soldier. We are proud to have him as I am sure you are and the nation is lucky to have him as a soldier.

Thanks again for your support and concern.

*Sincerely,
Col. Short*

I am guessing that the Colonel never read my letter, and just had his secretary type something up, that sounded good. Does Short think that I would believe him and not my husband on how his physical problems are? I got news for him, how does he expect me to believe him if he has lied to my husband himself. If he seems to be getting better, then why is he still going to sick call for pain?

After a phone call from Tony on Aug. 28th, before the arrival of the letter, Tony informed me that the command is well aware of my actions, and was confronted by his Lieutenant, Lt. Stovall, asking him if he knew what I was doing. My husband told him yes, that he is

aware of my actions. Lt. Stovall then told my husband that I could do anything that I could, and that it wouldn't matter because he would not have Tony sent back. This made me very angry, and I took it as a challenge and in my opinion, the Lt. challenged the government into making him have Tony sent back. All I can say is "Lt. Stovall, BRING IT ON."

I just recently got back from a trip to my family back in Texas on Sept. 6th. In the mail, was a letter from the Adjutant General (AG), Mr. Dane Goodwin, telling me the biggest load of crap that the Army could ever tell me.

The Army is responding to my correspondence to the local media in La., about my husband's medical issues and his recent deployment to Iraq. It says that Fort Polk officials are pleased to provide information regarding my husband's deployment and to address my concerns about his safety and present medical condition.

In the letter, it is written:

The Battalion Commander, at that time, Colonel Richards, spoke directly with the orthopedic surgeon who was treating Sgt. Lampin. The orthopedic surgeon concluded that, medically, Sgt. Lampin was capable of performing his duties and any additional procedures and/or medical boards could be postponed until the unit returns to Fort Polk.

In addition, Colonel Short, Commander, 115th Field Hospital, who took command one week prior to deployment, was in frequent communication with Colonel Richards regarding Sgt. Lampin's medical condition and deployability. Colonel Short did not speak with the orthopedic surgeon prior to deploying; rather he chose to support Colonel Richard's decision unless there was a significant change in Sgt. Lampin's condition in the week prior to deploying.

It goes on saying that my husbands condition has not prevented him from performing his duties, about the combat gear he is wearing is within his profile restrictions, not to lift or carry 30 lbs, and that he is not having to wear it but for approximately one and a half hours.

What I didn't want to hear is this:

The combat uniform and force protection policy is designed to increase the survivability of the soldiers in the event of a mortar attack and is considered protective equipment.

All soldiers leaving in the immediate Life and Support Area (LSA) who move around the Forward Operating Base are required to wear their combat gear and carry their weapon.

However, Sgt. Lampin lives and works inside the LSA and is not required to wear his combat gear during the time he is at work or off duty. On a normal duty, he is required to wear the combat gear approximately one and a half hours. The time is obviously increased when Sgt. Lampin is required to conduct convoy operations, which is very infrequent.

This is what scared me.

Are they saying that inside the LSA is safe? If so how can they say that, because there is no such place in Iraq. What if an attack was to occur, and my husband doesn't have his gear on? What then?

Is this how the Commander is saying that he is taking care of my husband? Again, I am being lied to so as the command can cover their ASS.

What about the part about the doctor saying that my husband can perform his duties?

I don't believe this because I talked to my husband's doctor in person, and according to him, and I have it on recording, he told Colonel Richards that he DID NOT advise my husband to be deployed to Iraq, and that he never did speak with Colonel Short to advise him the same thing.

If he said what is in the letter, then why did he write NON-DEPLOYABLE on my husband's medical profile?

What about Short telling my husband that if he was told by his doctor that he would only get worse Short would not take him?

Again, LIES.

About the part that my husband has been able to perform his duties---Then why did my husband inform me on the 28th of Aug. that he hasn't been able to do anything but sit around and staying off his knee?

I think you can guess that on your own. The part about his protective gear weighing within the limits of his profile, that too is a LIE.

According to the company that makes the vest, a large vest weights 10 lbs, and the inserts, that the Army uses, weights 9.5 lbs each.

That is a total of 29 lbs. Now if you add the weight of the extra gear needed including his weapon, the total weight that he is carrying weights well over 30 lbs.

Another part of the letter reads this:

An orthopedic surgeon evaluated Sgt. Lampin on Aug. 19th, for pain he was experiencing in his left knee. The surgeon reported that after evaluating the knee and the existing medical records, he concurred with the treatment plan and medical work-up Sgt. Lampin has received to date, and he does not recommend redeployment. The surgeon offered Sgt. Lampin pain control by steroid injections; however, at this time he rejected this method of treatment.

According to my husband, the surgeon there didn't want to go into his case, and that it was more administrative than medical. About the injections, my husband hates needles, and was told that the steroid injections would only control the pain a certain amount of time, and that there is a series of 5 to 6 shots, **and I was warned, by a private doctor, that the steroid itself would only cause more damage in the long run by deteriorating the knee.**

I ask this, what would you do? It is obvious that my husband is in pain, if he is going in to see a doctor. It is obvious that his knee is getting worse.

Another written passage:

Colonel Short, as the commander, has the authority to deploy a soldier depending on the needs of the unit and the US Army. By Army policy, a doctor provides recommendations to the soldier's commander based on his physical restrictions. In the case of Sgt. Lampin, as with all soldiers, the doctor's recommendations are strongly considered. Colonel Richards' decision to deploy Sgt. Lampin was made in conjunction with the doctor's assurance that Sgt. Lampin's medical condition would not limit his deployability.

Again, Tony's doctor said that he advised Richards that Tony should not be deployed, not what the AG said in the letter.

I ask this, " Why does a soldier bother going to a doctor for his/her medical needs when a commander has the right to override their needs and send them into war.

This needs to be changed. A doctor's recommendation should be taken seriously, and accepted so that no future injury will occur causing more pain to the soldier who has to live with it for the rest of their life.

They are the ones with the pain, not their commander.

On any other given military day before this war, a Soldier that is to be medical boarded out of service, would be told thank you for your service, and good luck in the civilian world. Instead, my husband is told "Oh well, we don't care, your going to war." Also, Colonel Richards at the time he was in command had changed his mind to not have Tony sent to Iraq, 1 week before turning over his command.

The constant excuse that Colonel Short and Lt. Stovall keeps saying "BECAUSE WE NEED HIM," is not an excuse.

They say my husband is their best mechanic. So are they saying that they can't rely on the other mechanics who are there?

Also, if he is needed so badly, then why back in Feb. of this year, before my husband's 2ND surgery, was he being assigned to a quartermaster unit?

It's because the company did not rate more than one NCO, and that the company already has a Motor Sgt. and Tony being a Sgt./NCO, did not have a specific duty in the company.

Knowing this, and the fact that they knew he was eventually going to be medical boarded out they thought that they would just hand him to another company.

My husband, having a profile for well over 2 years, also participate in only two of the training exercises that pertained to this deployment. In the last one on the last weekend of June, they practiced convoy attack maneuvers to be better prepared which included practicing 3 - 5 second rushes, this was a live fire exercise.

Was my husband able to do this? NO, he wasn't. All he could do is put the vehicle he was driving in a combat position.

When confronted by his Sgt. Maj., he was told to just lay down on the ground.

Not saying that my husband did not know how to do rushes, but this was a refresher course, and laying on the ground is not training.

Being told to lay on the ground is saying, hey you have a profile that says you can't do this, so, and this is my opinion, pretend you are dead.

If during training they can accept his profile, then why can't they accept it now and let him have his medical board?

I have also found out that my husband was not supposed to be extended an extra 28 days on his EAS by the Stop/Loss program. According to the rules, paragraph 6 section B it states that Soldiers eligible for disability retirement, separation for physical disability, or other physical conditions. This includes Soldiers who have a permanent 3 or 4 profile (which is what my husband has), the Stop/Lose does not take effect.

With every letter that is written to me by Colonel Short, or the Army itself telling me a load of crap, only makes me fight harder.

I know that what I am doing is drawing concern with them, because they are trying to assure me that Tony is safe and not in any pain, and I guess they think that the letters will stop me from my mission.

Well, they can think again.

They know that what they did was wrong, and they are trying to cover it up by telling me lies that I can see a mile away.

They think they are talking to just another spouse, but guess what, I am not just another spouse, I am a former Marine, and people know, that you don't mess with a Marine, especially this one.

I was not called Cpl. Chucky for nothing back in my service.

I am a fighter for rights, and my husband deserves his right to be medical boarded out of service NOW.

Send my husband and the other medically unfit Soldiers home, they deserve their rights that they fight for, that they have earned.

Don't crap on them like you did in the past with our Vietnam Vets.

Bring them home, bring them all home.

Brandie Lampin (USMC ret'd)
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Leesville, La. 71446
BLampin4036@aol.com



The Army is lying to my brother and I. Colonel Short is not keeping his promises, and our Dadda, still in pain, still goes to sick call where for some reason the doctors won't do the right thing and tell the truth as well. Mr. President, please let our Dadda come home!!

UPDATE:

From: BLampin4036@aol.com
To: GI Special
Sent: Thursday, September 09, 2004 9:17 PM

Sept.9, 2004

Here is a little more info. to go along with my letter.

My husband called me today giving me a chance to inform him of what all has happened involving me fighting for his return.

I told him about the AG letter that I received and read him parts of it that I mentioned in my update letter.

According to him, the only thing true about the AG letter was about how long and when and where he has to wear his protective gear.

I asked him if he had to wear it at work, and he said "no not all the time, and that in fact no one has to." I replied NOBODY, and he said yes.

So if a mortar attack or any attack was to occur, I am afraid to think how many would lose their lives. Again, there is no such place in Iraq that is safe. But this command seems to think different because they are trying to cover up a mistake that they made by making it look good if my husband wasn't wearing his gear all the time. Either way, he still has to wear it from time to time, and that is still going against his medical profile.

About the medical issues, according to my husband, the orthopedic surgeon there never examined him, only that he read his medical paper work there.

That, and he too knows what his doctor here said, and that a Maj. and a physical therapist there that he has seen just recently, agrees that Tony should not have been sent to Iraq, and that the Maj. that saw him would have him sent home, but that it wasn't up to him. We then talked about the letter that Colonel Short wrote me, because I sent him a copy of it to see what he thought, and he said "the letter was a bunch of BS"

I asked him how his knee was, and he said that it still the same, that it hurts, and that it swells from time to time and that they have been giving him ice packs to control the swelling. Then I asked him if he has been taken the shots, and he said "NO," and I told him good, that not to take them because of what they might do.

He also informed me that he has written a letter to Congressman Gonzalez a Texas rep. and that it was getting typed up so that he can mail it off. Congressman Gonzalez wanted a statement from him so to pursue action to Congress. The only sucky thing about mailing a letter is that it takes 8 days for it to be delivered.

So it is obvious that Colonel Short and Lt. Stovall are trying to cover their ass, but they have no idea that it is not working.

From what it sounds with the letters that I receive and what my husband tells me, it sounds like they are intimidating some of the medical personal there so as to make them look good.

It is obvious that they know they were in the wrong about my husband, and they are to stupid to admit it.

I keep hearing "accomplish the mission," but how can you accomplish a mission by using medical unfit soldiers? What about the saying "he signed the dotted line," well I did to, and if I am not mistaken, we signed that dotted line as a physically fit soldier/marine.

My husband is no longer medically fit for service, and his doctor is the one who signed the paper saying that he should be medical boarded out of service and that he is non-deployable.

My husband tells me to keep fighting, because I am getting heard, and the letters that I write are being read there at the Abu Ghraib.

So just a word to you Colonel Short and Lt. Stovall, you are digging a hole that you no longer can get out of, so if you want to keep digging just go ahead, because that would just mean more dirt for me to use to cover it up with you in it.

I would just like to thank all of the supports that have contacted me. The encouraging words keeps me fighting, and I will keep fighting for as long as it takes and more.

Thank you all so much God Bless you, our troops, and God Bless America.

Brandie Lampin
BLampin4036@aol.com

Permission Granted:

From: BLampin4036@aol.com
To: GI Special
Sent: Thursday, September 09, 2004 9:21 PM
Subject: you have my permission

I am just letting you know that you now can go ahead and publish what I have written. If there is anything else that you need, just let me know.

I would just like to thank you personally for your help and for publishing my letters, because according to my husband, soldiers who gain access to the internet there at the Abu Ghraib Prison are reading your articles.

So keep up the good work.

FOR MORE ON THIS CASE CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER
GO TO BOTTOM OF PAGE: <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/8.04.mailbag.php>
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.

And Another Case Breaks Open: Davis Smacks Down Army For Sending Sick GI To Iraq; Army Lied To Congressman About Deployment

(Thanks to Brandie Lampin for sending in this article. "I got a hold of his mother, and talked to her. She is a very nice lady, and like me is battling for a soldiers rights.")

September 8, 2004 Chicago Tribune, By Hal Dardick, Tribune staff reporter

U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-III.) on Tuesday alleged that the Army sent a 19-year-old soldier from his congressional district to Iraq without fully assessing his medical condition.

Davis requested the assessment after Pfc. Keaton Wade, of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Division of Charlie Company, told his family that he had repeatedly passed out during field maneuvers.

And Wade's mother said the Army gave her son only allergy medicine after determining he might have asthma, a condition he had appeared to grow out of as a child.

Rose Marie Wade of Chicago's Austin neighborhood released to the media her son's medical records from a test taken in July while her son was serving in Korea, where he began experiencing again what he believed to be symptoms of asthma. The records show a positive result on a "methacholine challenge test," a possible indication of asthma.

Maj. Elizabeth Robbins of Army public affairs said, "a medical evaluation took place." She would not elaborate. "The soldier hasn't authorized the Army to discuss his medical history ... but he was thoroughly evaluated."

Still, "the Army is reviewing the matter ... to see that the appropriate decision-making took place," she said.

Davis maintains that the medical evaluation that was done failed to consider the methacholine test result, which Keaton Wade had obtained for the congressman's office. Davis' office sent the results to the Army.

Davis said he first asked the Army office of chief legislative liaison on June 28 to review Wade's medical condition. "Normally, it takes only 10 days to get a response to a congressional inquiry," Davis said.

On Aug. 4, Capt. Victor Pirak, Wade's commander, sent Davis a letter telling him Wade would be deployed to Iraq "without a full review of his medical status, based on an interim medical statement ... without waiting for pending test results," Davis said. "We think there may have been attempts to suppress the results."

When Wade was deployed to Kuwait, where all soldiers go before being sent to Iraq, Davis requested a complete review of Wade's health, Davis said.

The liaison's office told him Wade "would be in a holding pattern and would not be deployed to Iraq" until a complete review of his medical records was done, Davis said.

"Unfortunately, this commitment was violated, and Pfc. Wade was deployed to Iraq on Aug. 28 before the chief medical officer completed his review," Davis said.

Davis said he wants Wade out of combat until a full review of his health status can be done.

Wade's mother said her son "is in fear for his life, because he's the weak link" in the unit due to his medical condition, making him a danger to himself and others in combat.

Rose Marie Wade said she wants her son, who joined the Army in late July 2003, brought home for further medical tests or be assigned to non-combat duty, at least until his medical situation is fully evaluated.

"This is not an attempt in any way for him to get out of his duties as a soldier," she said. "He volunteered to be a soldier, to be an infantryman, and he's proud of what he does, but he does have a physical ailment."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

So Much For The Bullshit About Retaking Samarra; Blowhard Batiste Makes A Very Quick Retreat; Resistance Keeps Control

(Yesterday the news was full of boasting by General Batiste about how he would come into Samarra with fire and sword, killing all the insurgents and liberating the city. What a gasbag. And now, for the real story....)

10 September 2004 By Dexter Filkins, The New York Times

Baghdad - American forces entered the city of Samarra for the first time in months on Thursday, taking what appeared to be a small but significant step in their effort to regain control of contested Sunni areas north and west of the capital. **(And then taking a big, significant step right out of town, double time.)**

American commanders said their forces, accompanied by members of the Iraqi police and by national guard soldiers, drove into the city Thursday morning after gaining assurances from local Iraqi leaders that they would not be fired on. The local leaders

said they sensed divisions within the insurgents' ranks between those who favored some accommodation with the Americans and those who rejected it, and felt secure enough to issue the temporary guarantee.

American soldiers and the Iraqi police then convened a meeting of the American-backed council, which chose a new mayor and police chief. *After a few uneventful hours, the American soldiers and the Iraqi police left the way they came.*

Once the Americans left, witnesses said, the insurgents reappeared, conducting their own patrols on Samarra's streets. There were no immediate reports of reprisals against the newly installed officials.

On Wednesday, in an interview with The Associated Press, Maj. Gen. John R. S. Batiste, the commander of the First Infantry Division, said his men were planning to go into Samarra whether they had a deal or not.

"It'll be a quick fight and the enemy is going to die fast," General Batiste said from his headquarters in Tikrit. "The message for the people of Samarra is: peacefully or not, this is going to be solved." (Give the man credit, for "a few hours" he actually went downtown. Most high school kids can go downtown for longer than that, but who's counting? Well, maybe the resistance is counting. Could it be?)

Still, despite the tough talk, the agreement allows the insurgents to keep their guns and, possibly, fight another day. (And keep control of the city.)

Sheik Ghafour said it would be difficult for them to ensure that that the Americans would not be attacked in the coming days.

Sheik Ghafour said that while most of the people of Samarra supported the insurgency, many people were angry at the guerrillas for using civilian areas to hide from American fire. American retaliatory fire often killed civilians, he said, making both the Americans and the insurgents unpopular.

"The people of Samarra unanimously agree on the holy war," he said. "But they would like the fighting to go on outside the city."

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.

Stupid Liars In Baghdad Command Caught In Another Stupid Lie

10 September 2004 By Erik Eckholm, The New York Times

Several civilians were also killed Thursday in an American bombing raid on what was described as a terrorist location in the rebel stronghold of Falluja. ***An initial military report said no civilians had been at the site but that account was changed following later news reports and photographs.***

On Thursday, citing what it said was compelling evidence from multiple sources, **the American military announced that at 2:21 a.m. it had conducted "a precision strike on a confirmed Abu Musab al-Zarqawi operating location in northern Falluja."** Three associates of Mr. Zarqawi, a Jordanian Islamic militant with ties to Al Qaeda, "were reported to be in the area," **the statement said, and "no other individuals were present at the time of the strike."**

As the day progressed, news accounts and photographs of dead women and children along with credible witness reports, told a different story.

At least eight people died, including four children and two women, a local doctor told The Associated Press, and another 16 people including 8 children were wounded. In the rubble of a demolished house, workers found only one survivor, a 10-month-old infant, said Ahmad Jabir, a member of the rescue team.

On Thursday evening, an American spokesman, Maj. Jay Antonelli, revised the earlier description of events in Falluja. "In spite of the great care taken to spare the lives of noncombatants, an unknown number of Iraqi civilians were unfortunately among those killed and wounded in the strike," Major Antonelli said in an e-mail statement.

Al-Sadr Forces March In Baghdad; "It Will Be Rivers Of Blood" Resistance Attack Makes Reporter Run Away "As Quickly As We Could"

September 10, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN)

About 3,000 to 4,000 marched in the northern neighborhood of Khadmiye against what they called acts of aggression by occupation forces in Sadr City.

The rally for al-Sadr called on the interim government and the Marjiya, the Shiite religious authority, to support the peace agreement between al-Sadr and Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani that halted three weeks of fighting in Najaf last month.

People chanted "Long live Sadr. Allawi and Yawar are infidels," referring to interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and interim President Ghazi al-Yawar.

They also chanted, "Oh Allawi, you coward. You are a spy of the Americans." Men and women beat their chests.

Children danced and chanted "America is scared of this," with their fingers up to their faces, mimicking the pose al-Sadr takes in one of his posters.



(AP)

Sheikh Ra'id al-Kadhimi, an al-Sadr spokesman, said, "We say this to the occupation forces: We are good-willed. You must cease firing. Do not force us once again to open the vials of blood. This time it will not be mere vials. It will be rivers of blood."

Fighting flared in the vast Shiite slum of Sadr City, where battles have been ever-present in recent days.

CNN correspondent Diane Muriel, reporting from a 1st Cavalry forward operating base, heard mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire.

"While we were there, one of these sewage treatment plants came under attack from assault rifles -- two vehicles coming into the area about two blocks away from where we were, firing on the Humvees that we were based in, firing on the buildings that we were based in.

"We had to run for it into the vehicles and leave the area as quickly as we could," Muriel said, reporting that groups of fighters are roving around the densely populated neighborhood attacking U.S. forces.

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

BRITISH SOLDIER KILLED IN WRECK

September 11, 2004 sky.com

A British soldier serving with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers has been killed in a road traffic accident in Iraq. The Ministry of Defence named the soldier as Fusilier Stephen Jones, 22, from Denbigh, Clwyd.

The accident happened on Friday, 10 miles south of Al Amarah.

Fusilier Jones, a married man, was serving with A Company of the 1st Battalion.

TROOP NEWS

Last Soldier From Thailand Leaves Iraq

09-11-041009ET Dow Jones Newswires

WARSAW (AP)--Thailand's last troops have left Iraq.

The last group of 100 Thais left Iraq late Friday, Lt. Col Artur Domanski said from the force's Camp Babylon headquarters.

Burned Soldier Fights Personal Battle At BAMC

9/11/2004 Posted By Carly Miller, WOAI, San Antonio

Dozens of soldiers wounded in Iraq are recovering in San Antonio. But they're still hundreds, maybe thousands of miles from home.

One of those soldiers is now fighting his own personal battle at BAMC.

Burns covered more than half of 20-year-old Gabriel Garriga's body. His internal organs were so swollen doctors cut off ten feet of his intestines.

"They told my family when they were first here that I wasn't gonna make it at all," said Garriga.

When 2 Humvees in Garriga's military convoy collided in Iraq the crash catapulted him right into the ensuing explosion. Troops rushed Garriga to safety.

That was 14 months ago.

"So I just made up my mind. I said I'm not gonna leave him. I'm staying here," said Gisele Garriga. Hundreds of miles from the Garriga's home in Aurora, Illinois, Gabriel's mother hasn't left his side. He's seen him through 27 surgeries so far.

Celebrating birthdays and Christmas in a hospital bed, while members of his company returned home two months ago.

"My unit came back home and they're de-activated. They have to keep me on active duty status while I'm still here, so it's every 6 months I keep getting reactivated until I'm done," said Garriga.

That could take another year, but Garriga says he's happy to serve.

There are more than 100 soldiers at BAMC recovering from injuries they suffered in Iraq.

Five more Marines arrived Friday afternoon.

Pay Problems Torment Reservists

September 06, 2004 By Sean D. Naylor and Vince Crawley, Army Times staff writers

The way the Army pays its mobilized reservists is so flawed that the service cannot guarantee timely and accurate payments. And that's a failing so severe that it threatens the Army Reserve's ability to retain troops, according to the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress.

In a report released Aug. 23, GAO documented a slew of systemic problems in the way the Army provides active-duty pay to mobilized Army Reserve members. In eight Army Reserve units selected as case studies, **95 percent of the troops experienced at least one problem with their active-duty compensation.**

Particularly noteworthy were problems concerning hardship duty pay and the tax benefits to which troops deployed to combat theaters are entitled. "These pay issues may adversely impact Army Reserve soldiers' morale and, ultimately, may adversely affect the Army's ability to retain these important soldiers," GAO said.

Most of the mistakes uncovered by GAO involved overpayment to soldiers. **These soldiers "may be subject to criminal prosecution," GAO said.**

However, soldiers who brought mistakes in their pay to the attention of their chain of command encountered bureaucratic obstacles to getting their cases resolved. "A number of soldiers and their families told us they spent considerable time and effort on these pay issues, sometimes while soldiers were deployed in remote, hostile environments overseas," GAO said.

In a July 20 congressional hearing, leading up to the report, *reservists described how they or their units endured chronic pay errors and delays that undermined morale and have in many cases persisted more than a year after coming home.*

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Pipeline Wrecked, Occupation Oil Guards Shot

KIRKUK, Iraq, Sept 11 (AFP)

A pipeline linking an oilfield in this northern Iraqi city with the Havana refinery was sabotaged by gunmen on Saturday, an executive of the North Oil Co. said.

"The 35.5 centimetre (14-inch) pipeline was sabotaged at 3:15 pm (1115 GMT) by unknown **attackers who opened fire with automatic weapons, causing an important breach,**" said the executive, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Havana refinery is located 60 kilometres (37 miles) from Kirkuk.

Separately, three NOC security guards were wounded, one of them seriously, when attackers opened fire on them near the village of Hatim, 30 kilometres north of Kirkuk at 3:30 am (2330 GMT Friday), a police officer said.

Iraqi Occupation Officer Killed

Sep. 11, 2004 Associated Press

In Khalis, insurgents killed a national guard officer, his son and their driver in a drive-by shooting on Saturday, Khalid said. The men were traveling to Baghdad when the attack occurred.

U.S. & Collaborator Officers Admit Resistance Has "Deeply Infiltrated" U.S. Trained Local Forces

September 10, 2004 Associated Press

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Sinclair, commander of a 1st Infantry Division battalion, pointed to the police in Salahuddin province as particularly lacking in morale.

When a sniper fired at a recent street gathering of U.S. soldiers and Iraqi police, many of the Iraqi police dove to the ground instead of trying to triangulate the sniper's location, Sinclair said. But some of the men did not take cover, and dutifully tried to point out the sniper, Sinclair said.

"In April, they all would've gotten down," he said. (Wow! What progress!)

The Iraqi national guard and police forces have also been deeply infiltrated by insurgents, U.S. and Iraqi military officials said. "If we knew who they were, we would capture them," Capt. Qays Abdul-Khader said. "But we don't know them. We need more time."

"The police and military forces all have insurgents in them," Sinclair said. "You don't have a pure force."

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

(This letter and the two magnificent photo pages that follow are the work of Mike Hastie. He has more. Contact him at: hastiemike@earthlink.net)

THE UNTOUCHABLE TRUTH BEHIND THE VIETNAM WAR

"I'm against sending American G.I.'s into the mud and muck of Indochina on a bloodletting spree to perpetuate colonialism and white man's exploitation of Asia."

*Senator Edward Johnson
Senate Floor April 18, 1954*

I believe one of the deepest wounds inflicted during the Vietnam War, was America's betrayal of its own military troops. It is the wound that is talked about the least, because of the enormous denial obliterating the truth of that insidious insanity. It undermines every layer of the veteran's psyche, and can only be described as a hemorrhage of the human soul.

As a Vietnam veteran, I felt a sense of violation and woundedness that went to the very core of my existence. My trust in the United States Government was dismantled, along with childhood patriotic values. When I unraveled the rage and grief around Vietnam, I felt like I walked into an ambush. It was like having a lifelong mentor turn on me, and become my worst enemy.

From a long historical perspective, the United States simply became another in a long list of foreign governments that violently exploited the Vietnamese people to

fuel their own economy. America preaches democracy with the right hand, but practices imperialism with the left hand. As of this writing, the U.S. Government has military troops deployed in over a hundred countries around the world protecting American corporate interests.

The United States had no more right to be in Vietnam, than the Vietnamese had a right to be in our own Civil War.

I did not serve in Vietnam for the cause of freedom, I served Big Business in America for the cause of profit. This avalanche of lies eventually put me in a padded cell of a psychiatric hospital. Gone were my marriages, children, buddies, and dreams. The magnitude of my “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder,” was equal to the depth of my silence. I was trapped on a death row of secrecy that robbed me of any joy in life. Out of this isolation and profound loneliness, I faced what I had denied for so long, that I felt raped by a father figure called America. Grief is the purest form of self-honesty, and it finally opened the door to my wounded soul. Whenever the truth threatens one’s belief system, there is a strong tendency to deny its reality.

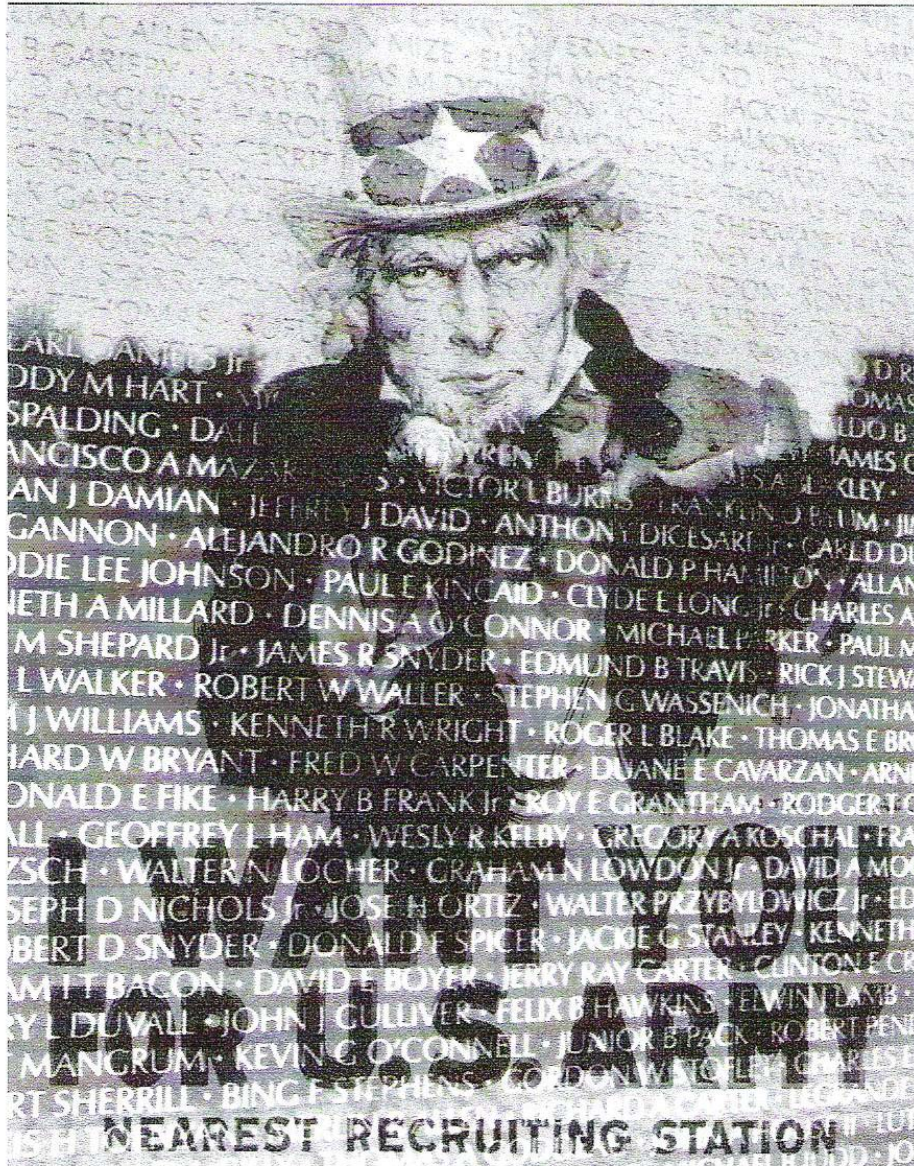
When the survivor returns from the shallow grave to finally take the witness stand, he or she often speaks with the artless skill of a severely abused child who has just blurted out some blatant fact of honesty. It is the kind of honesty that catches other people off guard, leaving them speechless. What they have to say will shock the most vulnerable—the naive. The survivor exposes the truth with such simplistic detail, that it becomes an indictment against all those who had knowledge of its criminal existence. The survivor’s testimony can be so compelling, that it reveals the ultimate evidence that lying is the most powerful weapon in war.

I was so filled with rage after returning from Vietnam, that for years I wanted to take every political hawk in America and rub their faces in the reality of the Vietnam War, just like someone would rub a puppy’s nose in the carpet after it wet on the floor.

The only difference is, the wet area on the carpet would be the blood of teenage boys. I was a pawn in a deadly chess game, so America would continue to have a high standard of living. I would be brutally betrayed in Vietnam, and later returned to an unfamiliar home in a coffin draped with deceit, so the elite corporate Godfathers of our country could fill their greedy coffers with enormous war profits.

Once I understood this untouchable truth, I understood the lies behind the Vietnam War. Thirty years ago, if someone had told me what I have written in a few simple paragraphs, I would have told them they were a damn liar. That was thirty years ago, long before I ever unzipped the truth, or a body bag.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71
I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire)**



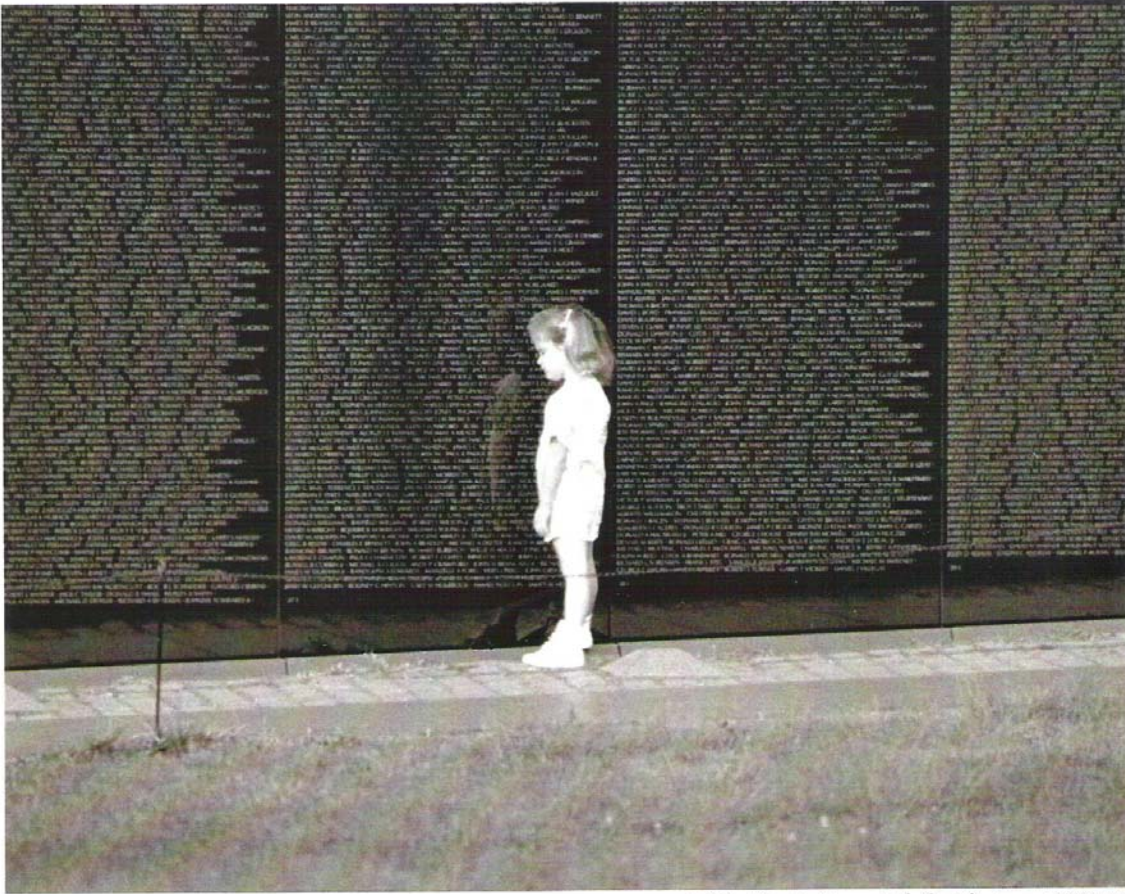
I

R emember

A nother

Q uagmire

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran



Mike Hastie Army Medic Vietnam 1970-71

*"As God walks atop this wall and weeps,
I hear him say, "These were my sons."
The sound of his tears fall silenced,
As hands are washed in the Potomac,
And it runs red with waste!
The Pontius Pilates of the new Rome,
Repeat history on full automatic."*

*Nicholas James Weber
Poet Warrior
Vietnam 1968-69*

Time To Consider Iraq Withdrawal

(Thanks to PG who sent this in. PG writes: Even the pro-business Financial Times admits that the US occupation is a disaster.)

September 10 2004 Financial Times

The nervous US-dominated occupation authority has insisted on hand-picking various permutations of interim Iraqi governors, mostly exiles or expatriates with no standing among their people. **Whatever Iraqis thought about the Americans on their way in - and it was never what these émigré politicians told Washington they would be thinking - an overwhelming majority now views US forces as occupiers rather than liberators and wants them out.**

Take security. Iraqi forces are being rebuilt to take over front-line tasks. This is slow work, but **that is not the real problem. It is that those forces already trained cannot stand alongside a US military that daily rains thousands of tons of projectiles and high explosives on their compatriots. Each time there is a siege of Fallujah or Najaf, with the US using firepower that kills civilians by the hundred, these Iraqi forces melt away.**

The time has therefore come to consider whether a structured withdrawal of US and remaining allied troops, in tandem with a workable handover of security to Iraqi forces and a legitimate and inclusive political process, can chart a path out of the current chaos.

None of this will be less than messy. But whether Mr Bush or John Kerry wins the upcoming election, the US will eventually have to do something like this.

Chaos is a great risk, and occupiers through the ages have pointed to that risk as their reason for staying put. But chaos is already here, and the power that is in large part responsible for it must start preparing now to step aside and let the Iraqis try to emerge from it.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

The Super Rich Like Bush...And Kerry!

Emad Mekay WASHINGTON, Sep 7 (IPS) & September 8, 2004 By Jeffrey H. Birnbaum, Washington Post Staff Writer

Four of the 10 most lavish contributors to the George Bush and John Kerry presidential campaigns are the same financial services corporations, says a new analysis of campaign fundraising released today.

According to the Washington-based Centre for Public Integrity, a non-partisan think tank, Pres. Bush and his Democratic challenger now share nearly half of their biggest donors, suggesting that the companies are hoping to cement a friendly relationship with whoever wins the White House in November.

(Why not? They both love the Empire and have nothing but contempt for ordinary people who fall for their bullshit. Either way the rich win, and we lose. Duh.)

In bolstering his inner circle of advisers with veterans from previous Democratic campaigns, Sen. John F. Kerry (Mass.) has also chosen to hire lobbyists with close ties to a wide array of businesses, including drug companies and Microsoft Corp.

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



Cheney September 1, 2004. (Robert Galbraith/Reuters)

The Empty Suit

9.11.04 ALEXANDER COCKBURN <http://www.counterpunch.org/>

What have Kerry supporters and prospective supporters got to hang their hat on?

Not much, which is why most of the ones I meet seem wan and out of sorts, reduced to mutterings about fascism's march. It may indeed be on the march but there are no spirited vows from Kerry that he'll stand in its path. Just the other day, in a debate on NPR one of his "strategists" boasted he'd drafted some of the Patriot Act's language.

Once there was a vibrant antiwar movement, outside the Democratic Party, and therefore with some purchase on the candidates. Howard Dean took care of that, and the Democratic National Committee took care of Dean.

Now there's pro-war Kerry, with no aggressive antiwar movement to push him to the left. All's quiet on the western front. The left is in a funk, spouting nonsensical scenarios about 9/11, abandoning all long-term issues.

Meanwhile the Empire is out of money, the housing bubble due to burst in the not too distant future. Why talk about that? In this election reality is off the table. As someone said, back in 1995, "Political campaigns are the graveyard of real ideas and the birthplace of empty promises." Who said that? Teresa Heinz in the Utne Reader, just before she married Kerry.

OCCUPATION REPORT

**HAVE YOU NOTICED...
HOW THE LEADERS OF THE PUPPET GOVERNMENT ARE THIS
COLLECTION OF DISGUSTING SLIMY SLUGS?**



Iraqi interim Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari speaks at a press conference in Amman. (AFP/Khalil Mazraawi)

Received: Heartbreaker

From: C

To: GI Special
Sent: Thursday, September 09, 2004 3:47 PM
Subject: hey

**when is the troops coming home
we wuld like them to come home.
from fortfare field, maine**

REPLY:

Thanks for your message. They will come home when enough people organize enough protests to make it happen. This is how people got their loved ones back from the Vietnam War. They made the government bring them home. How are things where you are?

Respect,
T

REPLY:

i would like to talk to someone from there do you know someone named Christopher Burnett if so can you tell him email his cousin (cara, tammie, emily, and monica) please if you know him tell him that we all love him very much and miss him a lot too.

REPLY:

I'll print your letter in GI Special. Maybe he'll see it or a friend will tell him about it. **If so, they can email me and I'll pass on your address.** I won't print your address so you won't be annoyed by any of the nasty freaks out there who like tormenting people who have relatives in the service.

Respect
T

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>