

GI SPECIAL 2#B69



Sex Assault In The Shadows: Military Male Rape Victims Cite Devastating Impact

September 12, 2004 By Sally Jacobs, Boston Globe Staff

EVANSVILLE, Ind. -- The call came shortly after dinner on a raw night this winter.

Mark Partridge sprang to the phone, eager to talk to his 20-year-old son, Brian, who had been based for more than a year on the USS Ardent, a minesweeper patrolling the Persian Gulf. Fulfilling a childhood dream to follow his father into service, it had been a moment of triumph when Brian landed a berth on the sleek gray ship.

But what his father now heard on the other end of the line was anything but triumphant. His only child was nearly hysterical, on the brink of tears.

"Dad, I've been raped," the young man shouted, as both men recall it. "There's blood all over the place."

"Who did this?" demanded his father. "Where is he?"

"I don't know," said Partridge, standing in the apartment of the man he says assaulted him. "I beat him up bad."

"Go to the base security," his father commanded. "Right *now*."

Partridge did just that. And then, **almost immediately, he found himself caught in a legal labyrinth: Partridge's account met mounting skepticism from military investigators, and he soon faced charges himself -- a familiar pattern, according to other servicemen who have alleged abuse and some counselors who treat them.**

In the end, humiliated and terrified of what might await him in the brig, Partridge agreed to an other-than-honorable discharge, abandoning his military career.

His case is unusual only in that he is talking about it. At a time when sexual assaults on women in uniform -- from the Air Force Academy to Iraq -- have scandalized the public and put the Pentagon on the defensive, **the troubling incidence of sex crimes against men in the service has languished in the shadows, comparatively unremarked.**

It is well-populated shade. **A Pentagon study of sexual assault in the military released in May found that 9 percent of the 2,012 reported victims of sexual assault in the armed forces in 2002 and 2003 were men. Most said they were assaulted by fellow servicemen. Those figures include 118 service members, some of them men, who say they were sexually assaulted during the current conflict.**

In addition, the US Department of Veterans Affairs has found more men than women reporting that they experienced unwanted sexual attention during their service years -- from rape to verbal harassment.

In fiscal year 2003, for example, 10,693 male veterans told the VA they had experienced such treatment, compared with 9,348 women.

The gender gap between those totals isn't surprising; far more men than women are served by the VA. **Still, the sheer number of men who raise this issue with the VA screeners hints at the magnitude of the issue the military confronts.**

"This is a subject that has been vastly overlooked," said US Representative Louise M. Slaughter, Democrat of New York, and a strong advocate for sexual assault victims in the armed services. **"I don't think any of us think of men as being rape victims, and certainly the military does not. I suspect men are quiet about it, because they want to preserve their career in the military."**

"We recognize that sexual assaults are seriously underreported," said Charles S. Abell, principal deputy under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, in a statement, "and we have no reason to doubt that it is even more so in the case of male victims."

The Globe interviewed eight men who said they were victims of sexual assault while in the military. While four of them said they never reported the offenses during their time in service, *the other four said they did and wound up facing penalties themselves.*

One, a former US Marine who said he was beaten and sexually assaulted in 1975 while in basic training, said he was dubbed a "training failure" after he complained and was required to leave the service.

Another, a Boston man who said he was raped while in basic training in the Army in 1978, was fined for an offense he says his commander never specified.

Partridge was apparently the only one of the eight whose alleged assailant faced charges.

All of the men were reluctant to be named, in part out of fear that going public could jeopardize their VA benefits, in part out of embarrassment or shame. For if male rape is a topic that causes squeamishness in civilian society, it is, the men say, nearly taboo in the overwhelmingly male and hierarchical culture of the military, where two men having sex remains a crime. In the end, only four of the eight would consent to be quoted by name.

Met with disbelief: Petty Officer 3d Class Brian Partridge says he did precisely what a rape victim in the military is supposed to do.

After hanging up with his father, he called his superior officer and remained in the apartment until two officers from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service arrived. He told them that after a night of drinking with other sailors at several local bars, he returned to the apartment of one of them for the night because the base curfew had passed.

Shortly after he went to sleep in the guest bed, he woke up to find his friend sexually assaulting him. Partridge, a slender man with trim blond hair, said he threw off his assailant and, enraged, beat him until the other man fled.

The following day, Partridge was questioned again at length. But this time, he said, the investigating officers did not seem to believe him.

"They were making sly comments. They asked me three or four times if I was sure I wasn't gay, which I most definitely am not," Partridge said. "They were just not listening to me."

Several weeks later, Partridge said, his story had been "completely turned around" by investigators, and he was given a choice: admit to participating in consensual sodomy and to beating up the other man, or face court-martial on both counts. If convicted, he would probably have received a prison sentence and dishonorably discharged.

Partridge decided to accept what he and his father concluded was "the lesser of two evils." In March, he admitted to the charges and received an other-than-honorable discharge. Now living with his parents, he recently started work on a construction site.

Lieutenant Christopher Servello, a spokesman for the US Navy, said the other sailor was charged with an offense in lieu of a court-martial and discharged. Servello would not say what the charge was or what kind of discharge the sailor received. The sailor could not be reached by the Globe. **Although Partridge authorized the release of his military records, the Navy declined to provide them to the Globe. Servello said that Partridge's naval attorney and his sexual assault counselor were unwilling to be interviewed.**

But one naval official, in a letter to US Representative John N. Hostettler of Indiana, who looked into the matter at Partridge's request, said that service investigators "determined that the alleged sexual assault was actually a case of consensual sodomy."

For Mark Partridge, a Navy veteran himself, the outcome has been shattering. Devastated by the emotional storm that engulfed their only child, he and his wife separated for four months before reuniting in July. But he wonders whether his son will ever recover.

"They ruined him for life, you know," declared the elder Partridge. "What happens to you when they throw you out and make you look like the dirty guy? How do you explain any of this to an employer? How do you explain any of it at all?"

And then he cried.

Culture of aggression: Male victims in the service tend to be young, often newcomers to the deck or the field. Some have experienced personal misfortune, such as a previous incidence of abuse or the breakup of their family, and may project vulnerability, according to therapists who work with them. But because so few cases are reported, little more is known about why some men in uniform become victims of sexual assault.

Like rape of any kind, male-on-male assault is viewed by specialists as, in most cases, an act of power, not sexuality. Only about 2 to 5 percent of the men assaulted in the military are believed to be homosexual, according to estimates by some therapists.

The therapists know less about the perpetrators; they rarely have clinical contact with them. But some believe that aspects of military culture may abet sexual abuses.

"Sexual assault in the military goes back to the beginning of time and mostly of men," said John Carracher, a clinical psychologist with the VA Medical Center in West Palm Beach, Fla., who works with men who have been sexually assaulted. "The culture itself contributes to all forms of aggression, and that includes rape."

Still, there is little, if any, evidence that male-on-male rape is more common in the armed services than in civilian society. The finding of the 2004 Pentagon Task Force Report on Care For Victims of Sexual Assault -- that 9 percent of those alleging sexual assault are men -- falls in the midrange of similar surveys outside the military.

The Pentagon's report cites several reasons that service men and women are often unwilling to report sexual assault, including fear of reprisals by the offender and concern that, "the chain of command . . . would not believe them and would ignore the complaint

altogether." Also, the report found "a general perception that reporting a male-against-male sexual assault might cause people to question the victim's sexual orientation."

Carlos Guice had little doubt about that conclusion. And so he kept quiet for years.

"Why would I ever bring it up to anyone?" said Guice, 43, of Tampa, Fla., who said he was raped in 1983 by a superior officer while stationed at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. "People would think I was gay. You would be ostracized."

And so, Guice, then 21, did what therapists say many victims do: He blamed himself. The victim of physical and sexual abuse as a child, he knew the risks of speaking up. Besides, he said his alleged assailant, an officer, had warned him that no one would take the word of an enlisted man.

In despair, Guice twice tried to commit suicide while still in the Air Force, swallowing fistfuls of Valium. Sent to a psychologist, he was eventually given an administrative discharge. Guice ultimately wound up at the VA hospital in Bay Pines, Fla., which has a residential program for men who have been sexually assaulted during military service.

'A Walk in Hell' Greg Helle didn't tell for 31 years. He was 18 when he arrived in Vietnam in the spring of 1969, a scrubbed-face Iowa boy with coke-bottle eyeglasses. What he says happened to him in his first few months there would alter his life forever. On a hot night in June, shortly after Helle fell into a drunken sleep in his bunk, another soldier slid in behind him. Helle, now 53, wrote of what happened next in his book, "A Walk in Hell," which was published two years ago.

"I remember my legs being forced apart," Helle wrote. "I remember trying to turn over, but being forced back down. I will always remember his face."

Helle didn't speak up for several reasons. Ashamed that he had not been able to stop the attack, he knew that if anyone found out he would not be able to face them. There was also his assailant to consider, a large man who eyed him angrily from across the barracks.

Helle went on to live an outwardly conventional life. He married, had two children, and settled in a comfortable suburb near Des Moines. If his family wondered why he always kept a pair of 4-inch knives strapped to his body, and a 6-inch hunting blade in his bedstand, as he still does, they did not ask.

Like many male rape victims, Helle struggled with a need to constantly reassert his manhood. In 2001, he was arrested in a prostitution sting. ("The more women I had," he recalled, "the more manly I was.") His daughter, an officer with the Des Moines Police Department, was on patrol that day. Afterward, Helle told his wife, Alice, what had really happened to him in Vietnam.

"He had told me years back this guy had tried to attack him and that he had leveled him," recalled Alice, breaking into tears. "I think he told me the version he wished had happened."

And so the facade of normalcy began to crumble. Shortly after her husband's arrest, Alice Helle returned home from work to find him sitting in the garage smoking a cigarette and slashing his arms with a knife.

"He looked like he'd been in a fight with a cat," said Alice Helle.

In 2001, Helle attempted suicide at least four times, according to his VA record, and was hospitalized repeatedly, ultimately landing at the Bay Pines program. Two years ago, Helle was diagnosed as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, and he now receives monthly VA benefits of \$2,318. In deciding to award him benefits, the VA concluded that Helle's disorder was related to both his combat experience and "to the claimed sexual assault which were reasonably verified."

Helle feels better now, thanks in part to an array of medications and to a support group for veterans called the PTSD Alliance which he started two years ago. But he remains consumed by what happened to him. **He spends many afternoons in his basement office, a dim cubicle that he calls his "bunker," searching websites for his assailant. He has tried unsuccessfully over the years to find him, unsure, at some level, if he really wants to.**

"If I found him, I would have to kill him," Helle said, fingering one of the three knives he keeps lined neatly near his computer. "When he breathes his last breath I want him to be looking at me."

Specific services: If Helle had sought help back in 1969, there would not have been much available to him. But much has changed in recent years. The growing ranks of women in uniform -- now 15 percent of all service personnel -- has, by many accounts, made the US military more responsive to issues of gender and sexuality.

"Women really dragged the men along on this one," said Lisa Fisher, clinical director at the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder at the VA Boston Healthcare System.

"These are people whose lives changed trajectory," said Dr. Terence Keane, director of the National Center for PTSD in Boston. "It is incredibly complicated for a young man. Your whole sense of self is altered. It is shattering on many levels."

What happens to men who do report sexual crimes while still in uniform is difficult to quantify. **Pentagon investigators puzzled in their report over "why many initial reports of sexual assault do not result in criminal convictions"** but said incomplete data made the question impossible to answer.

The report found that, in the last two calendar years, courts-martial were started in 26 percent of the cases involving military offenders in the various services, the army excepted. Military justice action was taken in more than 39 percent of the cases. **But among the veterans interviewed by the Globe there was a clear sense that, as in the case with Brian Partridge, reporting an offense led to trouble not so much for their assailants as for them.**

"Brian has repeated almost verbatim what has happened to many men I have seen," said Roger J. Girard, a former VA therapist who started a men's group at the VA hospital

at Bay Pines in the mid-1990s. **"The victim is portrayed as the perpetrator, especially with men, to save face."**

Partridge's case is also similar to others in that it is hard to discern exactly what happened. As with many rapes, there were only two people present during the incident and their stories apparently differ.

As the Pentagon report points out, often in such cases the only indisputable fact is that sex occurred. Partridge believes military investigators decided that he had consented to have sex with his assailant and then changed his mind after it was over in order to save face.

But if that were so, as Partridge points out, would he not have kept quiet about the matter? Why would he have gone to authorities and drawn public attention to this case? Shortly after he was discharged, Partridge contacted the offices of Senator Richard Lugar and Hostettler, both Indiana Republicans.

Looking back, Partridge wonders if he made the right choice in signing papers that say he did something he insists he did not do.

"It killed me to sign this thing, just killed me," said Partridge, clenching a copy of the agreement in his fist.

The other-than-honorable discharge that Partridge received still burns like shrapnel. It means that he is unlikely to receive any federal benefits for his two years of Navy service.

It means he will have to find something else to do with his life. And it means that when he passes the living room shelves heavy with his ROTC awards and photographs of him in the service he can no longer bring himself to look.

"When I was a little kid, all I wanted to do was go into the military, you know, like a little Rambo," said Partridge, stubbing out his cigarette. "But it's not like they show in the posters. It's not like that at all." ■

NEED 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/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

2 Marines Killed In Separate Attacks

Sep. 21, 2004 Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Two U.S. Marines were killed in separate attacks west of Baghdad, the U.S. military said Tuesday.

One of the Marines was killed in action Monday, while the other died of injuries sustained in an earlier attack, the military said in a statement.

The two belonged to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, which is based outside the rebel-held city of Fallujah.

Ex-Worthington Man Dies From Wounds Received In Iraq In February

September 21, 2004 By Patrick Shuster, LEADER TIMES

A former Worthington man died Sunday from combat injuries he received while serving in the Army in Fallujah, Iraq.

Family members said Sgt. Brandon Adams of Hollidaysburg, Blair County, died Sunday after being injured on Feb. 16. He died at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Adams, a 2000 graduate of Altoona High School, enlisted in the Army after graduation and served for more than 2 years at Ft. Wainwright in Fairbanks, Alaska. He then transferred to the 10th Mountain Division, Ft. Drum, NY and was assigned to duty in Iraq in October 2003.

Adams' grandmother, Melda Bricker of Cabot, said Brandon and his family are originally from the Worthington area and had moved to the Altoona area about 12 years ago.

"He still has a lot of family members around this area and I know he will be sadly missed by all," she said while preparing to travel to Altoona to attend funeral services later this week.

An obituary will appear in tomorrow's Leader Times

Hope Soldier Casualty Of War

9.21.04 By KEN McLEMORE and FRANK ROTH, Hope Star Writers

A local family has been formally notified by the U. S. Department of Defense of the death of a Hope soldier in Iraq.

The family of U. S. Army Sergeant Thomas Chad Rosenbaum, of Hope, confirmed the report Monday through a local funeral home.

Sgt. Rosenbaum, 25, was the son of Jackie and Donna Rosenbaum of Hope, and was assigned to the 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, on active duty in Iraq.

Rosenbaum was born May 12, 1979, and had enlisted in the U.S. Army after graduation from Hope High School in 1997. A family spokesman said he had intended to join the military after high school, that he had attained the rank of E-5, and he had recently been home on leave from Iraq.

He is survived by his parents; by one son, Ty Rosenbaum of Texarkana; a brother, Zane Rosenbaum and wife, Lindsey, of Hope; paternal grandfather, R. J. Rosenbaum of Fulton; and maternal grandmother, Lola Elledge, of Hope.

Herndon Funeral Home of Hope will be in charge of arrangements, which are currently pending.

The family was notified of Rosenbaum's death Saturday by the U. S. Department of Defense, but had not been given any additional information at press time Monday, according to a family spokesman.

A center and defensive end for the Hope High School Bobcats for three years, Rosenbaum was remembered by former Bobcat head coach Joe Kell as a hard worker with a sense of humor.

"When I heard the news last night, it kind of washed all over me," Kell said. "He always had a smile on his face, always having fun. Chad was one of those kids that worked his tail off, and found a way to contribute; that's the kind of player who can make or break your team."

Kell recalled Rosenbaum as the ringleader of a legendary practical joke at the start of the 1996 school year.

"If you remember the practical joke about the big 'for sale' sign that was put out front of the high school; he was one of those in that," Kell said. "He loved to laugh; and, that was something that didn't hurt anybody, but it was a great practical joke."

Harvest Foods Store Director Winston Davidson remembered Rosenbaum as an outstanding after school and summer employee.

"He was a great guy; he was hardworking and honest," Davidson said. "Anything you wanted him to do, he was willing to do."

Davidson also recalled Rosenbaum's desire to serve in the military.

"He joined the paratroopers, but I don't know whether he wanted to make a career of that," he said. "He was an excellent employee; the cream of the crop."

U.S. Military Vehicle Burning After Car Bomb Attack: 4 Wounded



A U.S. soldier stands guard near the site of a car bomb explosion that damaged two U.S. Humvees in Baghdad on Tuesday. AP Photo/Hadi Mizban

Sept. 21, 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters) & By ALEXANDRA ZAVIS, Associated Press
Writer

A car bomb wounded four U.S. soldiers on the road to Baghdad's airport. The car bomb destroyed an armored Humvee.

A police official at the scene said the car detonated near a bridge over the highway leading to Baghdad's airport. He said he saw at least one U.S. military vehicle on fire and several casualties lying on the road.

Ambulances were at the scene and treating the wounded.

Air Attack Hits Baghdad Shiite Neighborhood:

Helicopter And Tank Taken Out By Resistance; Sadr Spokesman Warns Of “Revolution”

21sep04 From correspondents in Baghdad Queensland Newspapers & AP

US warplanes launched missiles early today to destroy roadside bombs and mines strewn across the east Baghdad slum of Sadr City, the US military said.

Sadr aide Naim al-Kaabi accused American forces of destroying the homes of innocent civilians.

"We are being killed and slaughtered daily by the Americans in front of everyone and the Iraqi Government cannot defend us," al-Kaabi said.

Residents said loud explosions could be heard for hours. **A U.S. helicopter was hit and brought down, and a tank knocked out of action.**

On Tuesday, Iraqi national guardsmen and police forces surrounded Sadr's office in Najaf and refused to let anybody enter, witnesses said. It was the second time in less than a week that security forces have laid a cordon around the building.

In Najaf, U.S. troops raided the offices of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and detained 12 people, the city's police chief said Tuesday.

Al-Sadr lieutenants immediately warned of a "revolution" in Iraq unless the raids are stopped.

Basra: “Walking On The Crust Of A Volcano”

STILL A BIT OF TIME LEFT. BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



British Troops In Basra Saturday (AP)

21 September, 2004 By Paul Wood BBC Middle East correspondent, Basra

"There are lots of moderates here who support you. But if the shrines are touched, I'll kill you myself."

That was the warning given to a British brigadier by a leading Shia figure in Basra, during the long hot month of August, when the UK-led multi-national forces in southern Iraq found themselves under constant attack.

British officers characterise the August fighting as merely a "spike" in the violence. Some spike. Last month, British troops fired 100,000 rounds of ammunition in southern Iraq.

The base in Amara sustained more than 400 direct mortar hits.

The British battalion there counted some 853 separate attacks of different kinds: mortars, roadside bombs, rockets and machine-gun fire.

They say that no British regiment has had such intense "contact" since Korea.

"Sometimes, in order to keep the peace, you have to find it first," said the commander in Amara, Lt Col Matt Maer, of the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment. **[The Brit Lt. Col's appear to be just as mentally vacant as the U.S. ones. Try looking up your ass, right next to your head.]**

In an area which is 99% Shia, the great danger for the British is of a general Shia uprising.

It sometimes seems as if the troops are gingerly walking on the thin crust of a volcano, wondering how much pressure is building below.

Last month, five cleaning ladies at a British base were murdered on their way to work. Two local translators for the army disappeared. Their severed heads were found outside the front gate.

But perhaps the most worrying development of the August fighting was that none of Basra's 25,000 police officers came to the aid of the British soldiers. Some even helped the gunmen.

The local police chief had told his men not to help the British.

Everyone knows the fighting is not over in Basra.

"We're in a fragile period," one British army captain said. "We're just waiting for it to break down."

British casualties have been mercifully low. So British commanders, as they come to the end of each six month tour, tend to sound optimistic.

I met, though, one of the senior civilian political advisers to the military command, an astute and experienced Whitehall figure.

Every time he came to Basra things seemed a "step change worse" he said.

Elections do form part of the exit strategy, but not in this way. The hope is that the national poll in January will produce a government with the authority and the legitimacy to face down the gunmen on its own.

But in local elections in the British sector this week, turnout was just 15 per cent.

A year ago, the British Army were still congratulating themselves on running one of the more peaceful parts of Iraq. Now, whatever happens, they no longer have any illusions that their backyard will be immune from the violence.

Two Local Soldiers Injured

9/20/2004 Capital News 9 web staff

Two local soldiers have been injured in a roadside bombing in Iraq.

Private First Class Chad Byrne of Fort Edward was injured Sunday when a roadside bomb exploded outside of Samarra.

Several American and Iraqi soldiers were injured in the explosion. Byrne reportedly fractured his leg in two spots, has shrapnel in his knee and other cuts and bruises.

Sgt. Patrick Abrams of Troy was also severely injured in the bombing. He was with Byrne during the explosion.

Abrams suffered a broken pelvis, broken ribs and shrapnel to both legs. He underwent surgery Sunday and is waiting to be taken to a German medical center.

Abrams is the husband of Brunswick Councilwoman Carolyn Abrams.

Marines "In No Hurry" To Attack Fallujah Waiting Until Puppet Iraqi Army Fit to Retake City

[Washington Post, September 21, 2004, Pg. 1]

A mix of anti-American forces have gotten stronger in Fallujah since U.S. Marines withdrew from positions in the city last April. **The American military command is in no hurry to order the Marines back into the city, preferring to wait until Iraq's new**

army is large enough, and trained enough, to assume a leading role in retaking the city. [On the 12th of never.]

TROOP NEWS

Marietta Man Burned In Iraq

September 20, 2004 By Tom Hrach, The Marietta Times

A Marietta man serving in Iraq was severely burned when his convoy was attacked near Baghdad, and he is now reportedly recovering in a hospital in Germany.

Allen Nolan, 38, of 130 Kern Drive, Marietta, was serving in Iraq with the Army National Guard's 660th Transport Company from Zanesville. His wife, Gail Nolan, said she was informed Sunday morning that he had been injured and received second and third degree burns on his face, arms and legs.

"We think that he will be OK. We are praying that he will be OK. We just want everyone to pray for us and pray for his recovery," Gail Nolan said.

Allen Nolan was called into active duty late last year when he left his employment at Broughton Foods Co. in Marietta. **He was sent to Iraq in March, and he has been working as a fuel tank driver.**

His wife plans to fly to Germany with their oldest son in a few days. Gail Nolan said she hopes that he will be able to come back to the United States for treatment at a hospital in Texas that specializes in treatment from burns for service members.

The couple have five children ranging in age from 3 to 11.

Allen Nolan's parents are Robert and Mary Nolan, who also live on Kern Drive, which is near Marietta's Harmar Hill neighborhood.

"I hope he gets home all right," Mary Nolan said. "We all hope he gets well."

More Burned Soldiers Survive: "Trade Off" Is Horrible Wounds

Sep. 18, 2004 STEPHEN FRANKLIN, DARNELL LITTLE and JAMES JANEGA, Knight Ridder Tribune News Service

DES MOINES, Iowa - Before the flash, and burst of heat spiraling up toward him, Robert "B.J." Jackson was behind the wheel of a Humvee on a boiling hot day last August in Baghdad. He screamed for his wife and kids, grabbed for his legs and then all went blank.

One-and-a-half months later he woke up in a bed in a U.S. Army hospital in San Antonio, Texas. Below his knees, his legs were gone. His face, scalp, back and arms were burned. He could barely see, hear or talk. His memory was shattered, his thinking hazy. He ached everywhere.

But that was a year ago, and today he has a life to get on with - a life that medics at first didn't think the young Iowa National Guardsman would ever see again.

Like Jackson, many of the more than 7,000 soldiers wounded in Iraq are alive despite major injuries from a guerrilla war marked by rocket-propelled grenade attacks and remote-controlled mines on roads and in trees, by mines stuffed with glass, nails and dirt and bombs that mangle, blind, burn and leave behind a deafening shock.

"This 7-to-1 ratio of wounded to killed has to be an all-time record," said Michael O'Hanlon, a scholar at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. For many of the nation's wars in the last century, the ratio was 3-to-1, he added.

Indeed, the first burn patient Maj. Louis Stout dealt with from Iraq stunned him.

"He should have been dead. You could see how badly his arms and head were burnt," said Stout, head nurse for the Intensive Care Unit at the Army Burn Center at Brooke Army Medical Hospital in San Antonio.

Because the soldier had on his armor, however, his body had few burns, and he therefore survived, said Stout, who works at the military's only burn center in the U.S.

Yet these life-saving successes have a trade-off.

Many soldiers suffer amputations, extensive surgery and brain trauma from horrific wounds. That creates challenges for those who struggle to heal them as well as for the men and women who must learn to live with damaged bodies.

Despite all of her son's suffering, Giselle Garriga of Rochelle, Ill., says she is deeply thankful that Gabe, 20, a member of the Illinois National Guard's 333rd Military Police unit, is alive. To help him, **she has lived for the last year on the grounds of Brooke Army Medical Center in a home for families of seriously ill soldiers.**

Badly burned by gasoline in a military accident last year on an Iraqi highway, Gabe Garriga was given less than a 1 percent chance of survival by physicians at one point. Now he has markedly improved, but he faces another year of care at the hospital.

"He wasn't supposed to make it, so I see this as a miracle," said his mother, thumbing through a photo album of her son's medical progress with him sitting at her side **"Without the care of the people here, all of the technology wouldn't have meant anything."**

The fighting in Iraq has also taken a brutal turn in the last six months and that may change the medical results says Col. John Holcomb, who directs the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research in San Antonio.

Fewer Soldiers Want To Stay In Uniform, Survey Says

September 20, 2004 By Vince Crawley, Army Times staff writer

Army soldiers, bearing the brunt of the Iraq campaign, showed declining desire to remain in uniform compared with a July 2002 survey, taken during the lull between the Afghanistan and Iraq invasions.

An increasing number of troops — 35 percent — also said their spouses or “significant others” want them to leave active duty.

US Soldiers Battle Their Consciences

16 September 2004 By Roshan Muhammed Salih, Aljazeera

When Sergeant Abd Allah Webster was ordered to pack his bags and deploy to Iraq this February, he refused with a heavy heart. He knew the decision would put him at odds with his superiors and potentially cost him his liberty.

But despite the consequences, he took a stand because he believed his faith precluded him from killing fellow Muslims.

The veteran soldier claimed the Iraq war was illegal because America's main justification for invading the country - to destroy alleged weapons stockpiles - had been discredited.

Webster, who is currently incarcerated in an American base in Germany after his conscientious objector (CO) application was turned down, now faces a further year in jail.

The former sergeant, who has since been stripped of his rank, is one of an increasing number of American soldiers who have applied for conscientious objector status since the start of the Iraq war.

According to the US army, since 2003 it has received 96 applications, 48 of which have been approved.

This is more than four and a half times as many as the army received in 2001 and in 2002.

But JE McNeil, executive director of the Washington-based Centre for Conscience and War, says **the military vastly underestimates the true number of applications.**

"Nobody knows the true figures but it is definitely in the hundreds," she told Aljazeera.net.

"The military doesn't count the number of CO applicants who are in the middle of the process which can take up to two years.

"And many CO applicants are subsequently discharged from the army for other reasons, so they don't appear on the statistics.

"Before September 11 our organisation would only get one or two calls a month from soldiers wanting help filling out CO forms.

"But after 9/11 we were getting one call a week, and **since the start of the Iraq war we have been getting at least one or two calls a day," she said.**

She added: **"There are definitely soldiers out there who specifically object to the war in Iraq, although they would be willing to participate in other wars. They think that it is immoral and wrong."**

Majority of Brits Now Want Iraq Pullout

LONDON, September 21, 2004 (Reuters)

Most voters want Prime Minister Tony Blair to set a date for the withdrawal of British troops from Iraq, according to a poll for the Guardian.

Seven out of 10 of those polled by ICM said Blair should set a deadline for a pullout of the 8,500 British soldiers in Iraq.

By contrast, an ICM-Guardian poll in May found 45 percent of voters believed British troops should remain in Iraq "for as long as necessary".

The Vietnam Syndrome Alive And Well

21st September 2004 PATRICK COCKBURN, Bellacio

The US Air Force has stepped up its policy of trying to assault insurgents from the air while the army avoids ground attacks that could lead to heavy US casualties.

500 Kansas National Guard Engineers Headed For The Imperial Slaughterhouse

Sep. 21, 2004 Associated Press

IOLA, Kan. - About 500 engineers for the Kansas Army National Guard began mobilizing Tuesday for deployment in support of the Iraq war.

The soldiers from the guard's 891st Engineer Battalion include 230 individuals from its headquarters here, who reported to their armory Tuesday. The remainder - about 270 guard members from Company A in Pittsburg and Company B in Coffeyville - must mobilize next week.

The engineers will bring the total number of deployed Kansas guard members to about 1,400.

Portland VA Budget Crunch Cancels Surgeries

September 7, 2004 By Larry Scott, Military Advantage

In the last few weeks the Portland, Oregon VA hospital has been sending a letter to veterans informing them that their non-"life-or-limb" surgery has been cancelled or postponed.

It all boils down to dollars, or lack of them. The Portland VA, like every VA facility, is caught in a funding crisis with no end in sight.

Dollars have not kept up with the number of veterans seeking health care. While VA funding has increased about 50 percent in the last eight years, the number of veterans applying for benefits has increased nearly 150 percent in the same time frame.

Who are these veterans? There are two major groups.

The first is veterans who, because of a sagging economy, are now unemployed or under-employed, have no health care benefits, have never used the VA system before, and are now applying for VA benefits for the first time.

The second is veterans on Medicare who have never used the VA for health care, but find the savings offered by the VA system necessary to maintain a decent standard of living. Simple math shows that the \$7 VA co-pay for prescriptions can be a great savings compared to Medicare prescription costs. One veteran

interviewed for this article stated he is saving over \$400 a month because he no longer uses Medicare for his prescriptions.

Patricia Forsyth, Public Affairs Officer for the Portland, Oregon VA hospital, cites "a dramatic increase in the number of veterans" who now seek health care as the reason surgeries are being cancelled or postponed. **"Some examples of surgeries that might be postponed are arthroscopies (diagnostic or treatment), total joint replacements and hernia repairs,"** she said.

Ms. Forsyth cannot anticipate when the cancelled or postponed surgeries might be rescheduled other than to say it would be as soon as possible. When asked for an estimate as to what time that would be, Ms. Forsyth said, "I would guess until spring [2005]." It is a difficult situation, as 2004 monies have thinned to the point where the Portland VA cannot keep its operating rooms up and running.

Currently there is no 2005 budget and everyone is holding their breath, hoping for the best. A document leaked from the White House indicated a \$910 million cut in the 2006 VA budget (although the administration has backed off on this number).

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Occupation Cops Injured In Baqouba Attack

21-09-2004 Al Bawaba

An Iraqi police vehicle on Tuesday hit a roadside bomb in the city of Baqouba, located north of Baghdad. Two policemen were also lightly injured.

Turkish Construction Company Halts Work

Sep 21 By SELCAN HACA OGLU, Associated Press Writer

ANKARA, Turkey-- A Turkish construction company announced Tuesday that it was halting operations in neighboring Iraq in a bid to save the lives of 10 employees captured by militants.

The Ankara-based VINSAN construction company said in a statement it was freezing operations.

In a video broadcast Saturday by Al-Jazeera television, a previously unknown militant group calling itself the "Salafist Brigades of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq" said it would kill the 10 hostages if the company did not pull out of Iraq within three days.

Most of the 10 hostages were truck drivers, according to the company.

VINSAN was one of 21 international companies taking part in a \$160 million road contract in Iraq.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Dying For A Lie

Richard Cohen

[Washington Post, September 21, 2004, Pg. 21]

Someone has to ask that question of the Bush administration. President Bush ought to come clean about his plans for Iraq. It's terrible to die for a mistake--- even worse to die for a lie.

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.

Foreigners? So What?

September 20, 2004 Full article at: www.dissidentvoice.org

Criticism of the nationality of the fighters in Iraq is also hypocritical. During WWII the Americans, Canadians, and others fighting in battlefields outside their borders were foreigners as well. **Astoundingly absurd is a foreign occupier lambasting the presence of foreigners in the resistance. At least the foreigners in the resistance can claim ethnic affiliation, since Arab nationalism likeliest has only been suppressed by western imperialism, which carved up the Arab world so as best to exploit the resources.**

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Iraqis Warn U.S. Plan To Divert Billions To War Could Cut Off Crucial Services

[New York Times, September 21, 2004]

Iraqi officials concerned about their country's dilapidated infrastructure warn that Bush administration plans to divert \$3.46 billion from water, sewage, electricity and other reconstructions projects to security could leave many people without the crucial services.

Prison Shadows



The shadows of Iraqi detainees cast on the ground as they watch the release of prisoners leaving the Abu Ghraib jail on the outskirts of Baghdad. (AFP/Jewel Samad)

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**British Envoy To Italy Smacks Down
Bush**

Sep 20 ROME (Reuters)

Britain's ambassador to Italy has called President Bush "the best recruiting sergeant" for al Qaeda, Italian media reported Monday.

Roberts was quoted as telling an annual Anglo-Italian gathering in Tuscany: "If anyone is ready to celebrate the eventual re-election of Bush, it's al Qaeda."

GOD NEUTRAL IN ELECTION? BUSH SOURCES DENY REPORTS



(AFP/File/Paul J. Richards 9.18.04)

President George W. Bush receiving Holy Message from God Almighty. Bush told reporters that God speaks to him when he places his right finger near his right eye, making "The Rapturous Connection."

Bush said God expressed his thanks for sending the souls of over 1,000 U.S. troops killed in Iraq to him. The President responded with a promise of more. "That's just for openers," he said.

Bush advisors denied rumors that God had failed to guarantee Bush re-election in November, and instead had told Bush that whether he or John Kerry win, the harvesting of souls in Iraq was sure to continue.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Was Afghan Duty Soldier Murdered By Drug Gang? “The Enemy Was On The Inside” Father Says

September 19-25, 2004 edition La Raza, Chicago, By Jorge Mederos

(THANKS TO LANCE S WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: HE WRITES: Here's a story that's making its way around the Spanish language press in Chicago. This is typed from the translation provided in the English-language section of La Raza, the main Spanish-language weekly in the Chicago area.)

According to the Army, the 25 year old soldier of Argentine origin committed suicide with his standard issue rifle.

The alleged suicide would have taken place in one of the bathrooms at the Bagram base in Afghanistan on the 10th of this past June at five in the morning. Torres was said to have left a letter explaining his decision to end his life; other versions have it that he killed himself because his fiancé had left him.

However, there is testimony from other soldiers who saw Torres enter the showers covered with only a towel. He was unarmed, in no way carrying a standard issue rifle that according to the official version he used to shoot himself in the mouth.

These same witnesses had seen a sergeant, whose name has been withheld by military investigators, entering the same enclosure earlier, armed with a standard issue 9 millimeter pistol. Of the two people in that shower room, one (Torres) was dead on the floor, killed by a shot at point-blank range in an autopsy carried out at the family's request.

And there is another significant detail: somebody ordered the scene of the alleged suicide to be cleaned immediately, leaving no traces for a subsequent investigation.

"My son was a soldier for almost eight years. He fought in Kosovo when he was only 17 years old, and he then served in Afghanistan. I can now see that the enemy was on the inside," the Argentine immigrant Jose Torres told La Raza.

Money and drugs

From recently returned members of the unit Juan Manuel had served in, Torres has been able to reconstruct his son's last moments. Their testimonies could lead to the clarification of the crime.

Some soldiers told him of "large amounts of cash" that were handled by others; of problems of heroine usage on the base; and even of suspicions that some members of the transport unit that Juan Manuel inspected might have been shipping the drug to the U.S.

Some of the soldiers have promised to provide declarations in writing to the Torres family.

"We don't want the investigation to be limited to the military. We want the federal government to be involved," Torres said.

In a letter to Congressman Rahm Emanuel of Illinois, who interceded with the Pentagon for the matter to be investigated, Verónica Santiago **(the late soldier's sister) expressed her amazement at the behavior of the Army, which her brother had served with such dedication.**

She said that a Hispanic sergeant at the base, whose name is being withheld pending legal advice, ordered Juan Manuel's personal belongings to be burned. The order was not carried out and another Latino soldier sent them to the base in Texas.

Likewise, the trunk was delivered unlocked to the family. Someone had erased much of the memory in Juan Manuel's personal computer, while other files cannot be accessed because of a password that restricts access to "secret government material."

"One of the soldiers that served with Juan assured me that there was no secret information on that laptop. He and others used the computer and knew the password," she affirmed.

Verónica also relates how, when the family received the remains, they were advised that it was not recommended that they look at the face. However, the corpse had been embalmed and the face had been reconstructed.

To identify him, they had to look at the tattoos and a scar he had on one hand.

"We are very grateful for this cooperation with our efforts to discover the truth about the death of my brother. This has been a very painful and confused part of our lives," she added.

CLASS WAR NEWS

Corporations Making Workers Pay More For Health Care As Ranks Of Poor Grow; Profits For Bosses Come First

8.27.04 By Vanessa Fuhrmans, Sarah Lueck And John McKinnon, Wall St. Journal

Employers believe they can slow the rate of increase of their soaring health care costs to just under 10% in 2005, but only after shifting even more of the expense to employees, a new nationwide survey said.

What's more, many employers will manage to whittle their health-care spending only after raising workers' deductibles and copayments, cutting back some health benefits and limiting the number of plans they offer, said Blaine Bos, a senior health-care consultant at Mercer and the survey's chief analyst.

"The difference between employers' cost projections before and after making changes to their benefit programs suggests we're going to see some considerable cost shifting to employees next year, especially among smaller employers," Mr. Bos said.

The changes that many employees will encounter during open enrollment in health-care plans this fall comes after two years of companies cutting back on such benefits.

Health-care policy analysts say they worry that the steady paring of benefits and the rising share of costs being shifted to employees —particularly for workers' family members—is contributing to the growing number of uninsured people.

Annual family income has fallen \$1,511 in the past three years he said, citing Census Bureau data, and 4.3 million people have fallen into poverty.

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>

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