

GI SPECIAL 2#B81



Vigil for the Fallen 10.2.04, Washington D.C.

Iraq Veterans Against The War organizers **Mike Hoffman** and **Rob Sarra**

Check them out at www.ivaw.net

Majority Of Military Families Now Oppose War

11 October 2004 By Peter Beinart, The New Republic

When Quinnipiac University polled Pennsylvanians in mid-August about their views on Iraq, it found that families that included someone on active military duty, in the Reserves, or a veteran, were significantly less likely than other voters to support the Iraq war. Overall, **they opposed it 54 to 41 percent.**

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing

resistance to the war, at home and in Iraq, and information about other social protest movements here in the USA. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Mosul Car Bomb Wounds Two U.S. Soldiers



U.S. Army Stryker armored vehicles arrive at the site of a roadside bomb attack in Mosul October 2, 2004. (Namir Noor-Eldeen/Reuters)

02 October 2004 By Zidan Khalaf, Associated Press

Another car bomb Saturday exploded near a U.S. convoy outside the northern city of Mosul, wounding two American soldiers, the military said.

Samarra: Oops!

[Yesterday, occupation command claimed 100% control of Samarra, and that resistance to the U.S. attack had stopped. A day later:]

October 4, 2004 Reuters

About 70 per cent of the city was under US-Iraqi control, but operations were still going on, said a spokesman for the US 1st Infantry Division.

Baghdad IED Wounds Two

02 October 2004 By Zidan Khalaf, Associated Press

U.S. forces also clashed Saturday with Shiite Muslim insurgents in Baghdad's Sadr City, police and witnesses said. **Two U.S. soldiers were wounded when a roadside bomb hit their armored personnel carrier, the military said.**

Sadr City: Resistance Wins Soldiers Respect

“Yeah, we call them cowards, but we don’t like to admit that they are a lot smarter than we think,” said Sgt. Jose Flores, an M240B machine-gunner with 2-8’s Cobra Company.

“They can’t fight us one-on-one, so they have to think of ways to sucker-punch us,” he said. “And they are good at it.”

October 04, 2004 By Matthew Cox, Army Times staff writer

BAGHDAD — The dry heat inside a Bradley fighting vehicle feels more like an oven than a troop compartment.

At 11:45 p.m. on Sept. 21, Sgt. Eric Bourquin of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment listens over a radio handset.

“Tanks are pulling out [to refuel]; we are going to find a dismount stronghold,” the Austin, Texas, native shouts to the others. There are sighs of relief.

But as adept as 1st Cav units here have become at urban fighting, soldiers and leaders admit that enemy forces, while small, continue to be very clever and highly resilient adversaries.

“They are clever. They are the best do-it-yourselfers,” said

Maj. Bill Williams, executive officer for 2-8....who is from Mortzon, Texas said “They have become very good at adapting things to other things — they go the junkyard, and they make a rocket launcher.”

While head-on insurgent attacks continue to be ineffective, it appears to many soldiers that insurgents are learning to avoid direct fights with U.S. forces because they sustain too much damage.

“Yeah, we call them cowards, but we don’t like to admit that they are a lot smarter than we think,” said Sgt. Jose Flores, an M240B machine-gunner with 2-8’s Cobra Company.

“They can’t fight us one-on-one, so they have to think of ways to sucker-punch us,” he said. “And they are good at it.”

Soldier Who Survived Spring Explosion Killed By Sniper

Oct. 03, 2004 Associated Press, LOS ANGELES

An Army sergeant who was lucky to escape alive after his Humvee rolled over an explosive device last spring saw his luck run out when he was struck by a sniper's bullet in Balad, Iraq, last week.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Joselito O. Villanueva was killed Monday during an ambush, U.S. military officials said.

The former Los Angeles resident had narrowly avoided death during another ambush last spring when the Humvee he was riding in ran over the explosive. The blast that followed sent a piece of shrapnel the size of a half dollar through his neck.

"He's lucky it didn't kill him," recalled 1st Sgt. David L. Morgan.

Villanueva, who was single, was to be buried in Southern California, where his parents, Edito and Paklarita Villanueva, live.

The Bitter Face Of Death; Sadr City In A Pickup Truck

Sep 28 By Steve Fainaru, Washington Post Staff Writer

BAGHDAD, Sept. 27 -- The convoy stopped in a single-file line: a half-dozen U.S. armored military vehicles and one gray Nissan pickup truck, all of them idling in a dirt lot in the insurgent-controlled slum called Sadr City.

In the pickup were five members of the Iraqi National Guard, resting up after patrolling with U.S. troops. The men sipped water in the hot midday sun. They wore bulletproof vests but no helmets as they sat in their unarmored truck.

Without warning, an orange fireball engulfed the area, followed by a deafening explosion and then gray smoke that blotted out the sun. When it cleared, the Nissan and the Iraqis inside it were riddled with marble-size ball bearings that had sprayed from a roadside bomb.

"They're dead! All of them are dead!" shouted an American soldier who had rushed to the vehicle.

"Make sure!" shouted another. "See if any of them are moving."

"They're done," said the first, turning away. "They're all done."

Three Americans -- all gunners whose job requires them to stand partially exposed in the rear hatches of the bulletproof Humvees -- sustained wounds, though none that were life-threatening. Dozens of other U.S. troops on the scene escaped unharmed, thanks largely to their vehicles' armor.

The blast, witnessed by a Washington Post reporter riding in an armored Humvee directly behind the Nissan on Monday afternoon, demonstrated the uneven vulnerability of U.S. forces, who are equipped with the most sophisticated weaponry and armor, and their Iraqi allies, who fight the same battles using vastly inferior equipment.

Among the Iraqis, there are frequent complaints that they don't have the tools for the job.

Asked if a Nissan pickup afforded sufficient protection in Sadr City, where more than 100 roadside bombs exploded last month, Capt. Haider Yehya, the commander of the Iraqi guardsmen, responded: "No. Those vehicles, those are civilian vehicles. They're not right for the army."

The day began at around 11:30 a.m., when the 2nd platoon of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, made its way up Baghdad's Canal Road to patrol **Sadr City, which remains largely under the control of insurgents** loyal to Moqtada Sadr, the rebellious Shiite cleric.

In this tense environment, children walked along streets, watching the patrol. Some waved at the soldiers and smiled; when the convoy briefly stopped, they surrounded the Iraqi guardsmen and talked with them. **Then, as the convoy drove away, the mood changed. Some children threw rocks at the vehicles.**

Around 2:45 p.m., the convoy made its way back to a large vacant lot near the southern edge of Sadr City, where it was joined by vehicles from other units patrolling the area. Two M1-A2 Abrams tanks were pointed at the neighborhood.

Behind the Nissan, Sgt. Anthony Stewart, 31, of Sumter, S.C., sat in his Humvee, watching the Iraqi guardsmen. Two were sitting in the rear bed of the pickup; one was swigging water spiked with rehydration powder that the U.S. soldiers had given him. But he was spitting the water into the dirt.

"Look at those guys, they don't know how to drink it," said Stewart. He said later that he thought about getting out of the Humvee and walking over to explain that they needed to swallow the powdered water for it to be effective.

Before he could do that, the air filled with an orange fireball that seemed to erupt about 10 feet to the right of the Nissan.

The smoke from the explosion cleared after about 30 seconds, revealing the carnage. "We have ING wounded!" Stewart shouted into the radio. "ING are down!"

The truck had offered no protection. The man who had been swigging the water was slumped against the rear of the cab, his eyes open, his body bloodied and motionless. The man next to him also appeared to have been killed instantly; his body lay against the left side of the truck, his right hand spread across his lap. Blood and parts of his brain and skull trickled down the left rear panel.

Inside the cab, two others were dead; a man in the passenger seat had two ball bearings lodged in his forehead.

Khaleb, the driver, managed to open his door and take a few steps toward the company medic, Spec. Justin "Doc" Martin, who was riding in the Humvee in front of the Nissan. But then Khaleb collapsed in the dirt and crawled until the medic reached him.

Martin cut off the man's bloodied clothing and began to treat him for arterial bleeding.

Another soldier shouted that the gunner in Martin's Humvee was also down. The man, who was unconscious, had been blown back into the gunner's hatch.

"We got him woken up," Martin said later. "He didn't know where he was. He didn't know who I was."

Martin turned to another gunner who had been two Humvees behind the Nissan. He cut away the man's shirt, revealing his punctured right shoulder.

"My shoulder, Doc," he said. "I can't feel my shoulder."

In the meantime, two American soldiers got Khaleb onto a stretcher and placed him in a Humvee.

U.S. commanders quickly began to clear the area, fearing another attack. The truck was abandoned. The Humvees raced out of the southeast side of the lot, a cloud of dust rising in their wake. The two that had led and followed the Nissan headed back down Canal Road in the same order, now minus the pickup.

Within a half mile of the lot, the shrapnel-pierced right rear tire of the front vehicle began to disintegrate. Black smoke and the smell of the burning tire trailed behind it, filling the air. Outside Sadr City, in a more secure area of Baghdad, the two vehicles pulled over to the side of the road. An hour passed as the soldiers struggled to jack up the heavy vehicle and replace the oversize tire.

The skin on the right side of both vehicles was gouged with holes the size of marbles. The right rear windows were also punctured, but shrapnel did not appear to have penetrated either vehicle.

Pfc. Dion Butler, 20, was riding in a rear passenger seat in the Humvee in front of the Nissan. He said he had opened the door slightly before the blast to test it because it had been sticking.

A piece of shrapnel appeared to have entered through the slight opening. It narrowly missed the head of Sgt. Jason Pries, 28, of Rochester, N.Y., who was seated in the front

passenger seat. The ball bearing hit the front window, gouging the glass and spreading a web of cracks from the point of impact.

"You almost got me killed, man," Pries joked in relief when Butler said he had left the door open.

Sgt. Nick Varney, of Lancaster, Calif., was driving the Humvee behind the Nissan. **He called Sadr City "an IED planet," using the shorthand for the military term improvised explosive device, and said an attack in the lot had been likely because U.S. tanks frequently park there. "It was only a matter of time before the Mahdi militia was going to try to stage an ambush," he said.**

The vehicles made it back to Camp Cuervo, a forward operating base about six miles southeast of Sadr City, at 5:30 p.m.

"I've never needed a cigarette more in my life," said one of the soldiers.

"I've never needed to drop acid more in my life," said another.

Before the June 28 transfer of political authority to an interim Iraqi government, the Iraqis accompanied the American soldiers on patrols, often taking vacant seats in their Humvees. They now ride in their own vehicles -- not just used pickups but civilian transport trucks and minivans provided by the interim government's Defense Ministry. They use old AK-47s and RPK light machine guns.

"They're still using those old World War II-style helmets," said Carter. "Truth be told, they're better off without them, because they don't provide the ballistic protection that our equipment provides."

As Carter spoke, Maj. Hugh McGloin, his operations chief, walked into his office. Earlier in the day, McGloin had been wounded by a separate roadside bomb. Shrapnel hit him in the back of his helmeted head. As he bent over, he said, his blast-resistant glasses fell off, then began to pool with blood.

McGloin's head was bandaged. Carter handed him a cell phone to call his family, then examined the injured soldier's helmet.

"That saved your life, bro," said Carter.

TROOP NEWS

Wife Of Slain Iraq Hostage Urges Bush To Bring Soldiers Home

September 27, 2004 Associated Press

ATLANTA - The wife of a Marietta man who was killed in Iraq by Islamic militants thanked the public for the outpouring of sympathy shown to her family, while expressing anger toward the Bush administration for its policies in the war on terrorism Monday.

"I really feel it's time for America to start taking care of Americans, and for us to stop being world peacemakers. We have a lot of issues that need to be resolved here," she said on NBC's "Today" show Monday. "We need to bring those people home and stay home."

Hensley appeared on the show before traveling to Dover Air Force Base, Del., where she planned to claim her husband's body Monday.

She said she initially was hesitant to make the trip but realized that she needed to do it for her husband. "I've been with this man for 23 years, and this is now not the time for me to let somebody else take care of him. I'm going to go take care of him."

Badly Wounded Soldiers' Dad His Constant Companion; Then Army Moves Him, Don't Tell Family Where He Is

October 03, 2004 By Kayley Mendenhall Chronicle Staff Writer

Just last week, Lenny was moved to another hospital, but Len and Cat don't know where. As of Friday, they had no way to get in touch with him and were waiting on information from his mom.

"I know that he should not be moved so much, but what can we do?" Cat said. "It is military, you know."

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS -- Cat Watson couldn't sleep. A sudden panic attack gripped her chest, waking her with a start around midnight on Aug. 25.

"I walked and I cried, and I walked and I cried," she said. "I thought, 'I don't know what's going on, but I know something is going on.'"

Finally, in the early hours of the morning, she settled on a couch in her brightly painted home office. Her husband, Lenard Watson Sr. had gone to work at the Mountain View Nursing Home, where he is a nurse, and Cat thought she might get some rest.

Then the front door opened and her husband appeared.

"Len said, 'Lenny's been wounded,'" she recalled. "I couldn't say anything. I didn't know what to say."

That moment more than a month ago sent Len and Cat Watson on what Cat calls, "a wild ride."

Lenny was severely injured in a fire fight between Iraqi militants and U.S. forces on Aug. 25 in the city of Najaf. He was standing less than three feet from a rocket-propelled grenade when it exploded, embedding shrapnel in his legs and his head, destroying the left side of his jaw. Corpsmen in the field immediately gave Lenny a tracheotomy to help him breathe.

While his son was in Germany, Len was able to talk to him. But because of the extensive damage to his mouth, including burns over most of his tongue, Lenny couldn't talk back. He would tap once on the phone for "yes," and twice for "no."

He wrote a note for the medical staff to read to his dad. It said, "I'm fine. I'm looking forward to seeing you." "That helped me," Len said. "We knew that no matter what we saw, we have to be strong in the room."

Len took the U.S. Marine Corps up on its offer to fly him to Bethesda.

As Len Sr. prepared to make the trip, he started paying closer attention to the news from Iraq. CNN reported that about 40 Marines had been injured in the Najaf attack.

"It never hit us how many were getting hurt," Len said. "They tell you how many are killed, but they don't tell you how many injured it took to get that one death."

According to icasualties.org, a Web site compiling numbers from several government sources, about 7,500 U.S. soldiers have been wounded in Iraq so far.

From talking with other parents of soldiers, Len said, he believes the number of wounded is between 7,000 and 10,000, some minor and some severe.

When he arrived in Bethesda, Len saw first hand the devastating extent of the soldiers' injuries -- bad burns, missing limbs, eyes and noses.

Those soldiers are, Len said, some of the bravest people he has ever met.

Lenny will be hospitalized for 12 to 15 months. He won't be able to eat solid food for at least a year, and will undergo several surgeries to replace his shattered jaw with prosthetic parts. He has a broken leg, a broken toe, shrapnel wounds up and down his left side and a fractured skull.

For two weeks in Bethesda, Len nursed his son teaching him to change his bandages and watching him walk his first few agonizing steps.

Len recalled his fear the first time Lenny grabbed a mirror to investigate his wounds, and then his pride at how well his son handled the sight of his own battered body.

Dealing with war injuries is as difficult, in many ways, for the parents as it is for their children.

"You would look down the hall and see these parents coming out and they would just fall on the floor," Len said. "They didn't want to cry in front of their loved ones."

Len worked to make sure the doctors and celebrities who visited directed their conversations at Lenny, who was fitted with an electronic device allowing him to speak through his tracheotomy tube. His son, he said, deserved the attention and deserved to know the plan for his medical care.

"It was an honor being there to serve him," Len said.

After arriving in Bethesda, the U.S. military had given Lenny an option: Stay in Maryland or move to Balboa Park in San Diego, closer to his friends at Camp Pendleton and his mom and grandparents in Visalia, Calif.

He chose California.

Once they began the journey, the military plane stopped almost every two hours picking up more wounded passengers along the way.

It took 48 hours to make it from Bethesda to Sacramento, he said, and once there mechanical problems delayed the last leg of the trip several times.

In all, it took six days to complete what should have been a 13-hour trip. Lenny was in a lot of pain and Len was thankful the Bethesda hospital had given him three bags of medical supplies and food.

"The big issue with all the guys that were hurt is the pain," Len said. "Morphine didn't help the pain in his mouth, because all those nerve endings are exposed."

Just last week, Lenny was moved to another hospital, but Len and Cat don't know where. As of Friday, they had no way to get in touch with him and were waiting on information from his mom.

"I know that he should not be moved so much, but what can we do?" Cat said. "It is military, you know."

Friends, too, are working to help Len and Cat with the financial burdens they've been dealt.

"We've been real close over the years," said Laura Ellington, the Watsons' neighbor. "I spent summers around that boy. It's a hard one to know what to do for them."

She set up a savings account for the family at the Bank of the Rockies in White Sulphur Springs. The money raised will help Len buy airplane tickets to fly back to California after each of Lenny's surgeries.

"When he comes out of recovery, he'll know somebody's there," Len said. "There was a lot of them that didn't have anybody there. The ones with family support do a little bit better."

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)

Dead Marine's Family Condemns Bush & War; "It's Just Wrong"

September 30, 2004 Bob von Sternberg and Larry Oakes, Minneapolis Star Tribune

Relatives of a Minnesota Marine who was killed in Iraq lashed out Wednesday against the war and the Bush administration's conduct in waging it.

Across the street from the Lake Elmo restaurant where Vice President Dick Cheney had finished speaking an hour earlier, the grandmother of Levi Angell spoke of "my precious grandson I lost to this useless, needless fix we're in."

Lila Angell said the war "is crazy. It's just wrong."

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.

Wounded & Desperate Iraq Vet Must Beg For Charity:

Government Wants To Cut People Who Process Vets Disability Paper; VA Asshole Says "I Think We're Doing OK Now."

Oct. 03, 2004 By Josh White, WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON - Thousands of U.S. troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with physical injuries and mental health problems are encountering an overburdened benefits system, and officials and veterans' groups worry that the challenge could grow as the nation remains at war.

The disability benefits and health care systems that provide services for about 5 million American veterans have been overloaded for decades, with a current backlog of more than 300,000 claims.

And as of Aug. 1, nearly 150,000 National Guard and reservist veterans became eligible for health care and benefits because they were mobilized to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan.

That number is rising.

President Bush's budget for 2005 calls for cutting the Department of Veterans Affairs staff that handles benefits claims, and some veterans report long waits for benefits and confusing claims decisions.

"I love the military; that was my life. But I don't believe they're taking care of me now," said Staff Sgt. Gene Westbrook, 35, of Lawton, Okla.

Paralyzed in a mortar attack near Baghdad in April, he has received no disability benefits because his paperwork is missing.

He is supporting his wife and three children on his regular military pay of \$2,800 a month as he awaits a ruling on whether he will receive \$6,500 a month from the VA for his disability.

Through the end of April, the most recent accounting the VA could provide, a total of 166,334 veterans of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan had separated from military service, and 26,633 -- 16 percent -- had filed benefits claims with the VA for service-connected disabilities.

Less than two-thirds of those claims had been processed, leaving more than 9,750 recent veterans waiting. Officials expect those numbers to increase as the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan continues.

"I think we're doing OK now, but I am worried," VA Secretary Anthony Principi said in a recent interview. [He thinks "we're" doing OK? Fine, let this overpaid lying political hack bureaucrat live on the \$2800 a month the Sgt. gets and see how "OK" he thinks that is. So he loses his fine housing and his charge accounts and all the privileges people like him lap up. Let him get a little reminder of what the Sgt. is going through, up close and personal. How "OK" will that be?]

Westbrook was deployed to Iraq in January as a drill sergeant, sent to train Iraqi army recruits.

While on duty April 28 south of Sadr City in Baghdad, he was hit by a mortar shell, and the shrapnel severed his spine.

He is now paralyzed from the chest down, has limited movement in his right arm, and battles constant infections.

His wife takes care of him full-time.

Though Westbrook praises the way the Army has treated him since his injury, including providing excellent medical care, he has struggled to make it on his regular pay since he returned July 14.

"They're supposed to expedite the process, and they have not done that," he said, adding that officers in his Army unit have been trying in vain to help.

Charities have been set up in his honor to help defray costs.

"It's very draining, because I don't know what to do and my family is asking when we'll get the money," he said.

"It's the hardest part about this whole thing."

Currently, the VA takes about 160 days per claim, and 60,000 to 70,000 new claims come in each month. [That's + 5 months per claim.]

"The system is already strained, and it's going to get strained even worse," said David Autry, a spokesman for Disabled American Veterans.

"It's not a rosy picture at all, and they can't possibly hope to say they're going to provide timely benefits to the new folks if they can't provide timely care to the people already in the system."

For veterans, the VA's system for evaluating disability claims can be the most frustrating element.

Through the end of August, the agency had about 330,000 cases waiting to get a "rating," or a percentage figure approved by an evaluation board that decides how much a disabled veteran will receive monthly from the VA.

The ratings system uses a complex guide to calculate, for example, how disabling it is to lose a foot or to be blinded in one eye. Soldiers are rated from zero percent to 100 percent disabled, and compensation varies from nothing to thousands of dollars each month.

Board decisions can take months as they weigh the severity of injuries and make sure they were suffered while the veteran was in the service.

Appeals of such decisions can take years, and board decisions can be re-evaluated.

Rep. Lane Evans, D-Ill., ranking member of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, said the VA is woefully underfunded and unprepared.

The current budget for fiscal 2005, still pending in Congress even though the fiscal year ended Thursday, calls for cutting more than 500 claims processors.

"The VA is not ready for an influx of new veterans from the ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq," Evans said.

Letter Condemns Pentagon For Saying Reservists Shouldn't Get Good Civilian Jobs

10.4.04 Army Times
Letters To The Editor

I found the Fast Track section of the Aug. 30 issue a little disturbing.

The item titled "Civil-military spat hits the heartland" was very alarming, particularly the response that the police chief, William McCarthy, received from defense officials saying if localities can't handle reservists called away from police and fire departments, reservists shouldn't hold those jobs in the first place.

It was less than comforting for a guardsman called up for active duty.

The response made it sound as if defense officials were essentially saying, don't give guardsmen certain positions if you can't cover them if they are called up.

This essentially sounds like discrimination based upon reserve or guard service. Is that what the Defense Department is saying to employers?

It is hard enough having to leave a job — or worse, your own business — and families. But you then add to that the possibility that you may not get a certain position if you are in the reserve or guard.

Is this what I am to expect as a member of the reserve or guard if I am called to active duty?

1st Lt. Jason W. Cowin, USAF
Springfield, Ill.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

STILL STANDING



Mahdi Army soldier stands near a damaged mural of the late religious leader Mohammed Sadiq al Sadr, father of radical Iraqi cleric Moqtada al Sadr, in the Baghdad suburb of Al Sadr city, October 2, 2004. The mural was damaged in a firefight between members of the Mehdi army militia and U.S. forces. (Ali Jasim/Reuters)

An Election “Paved By Blood” And “Built On Skulls”

BAGHDAD, Oct 3 (AFP)

A grouping of senior Iraqi Sunni Muslim clerics stepped up their criticism Sunday of the deadly US-Iraqi offensive in Samarra and of US air strikes on Fallujah calling them "massacres".

They warned that bloodshed could not pave to democratic elections and threatened a possible call for jihad, or holy war, if such a "terrorist" strategy was not reversed.

"My brothers, we are facing a new massacre in Samarra," Sheikh Mohammed Bashar al-Faidi, spokesman for the respected Committee of Muslim Scholars, told reporters at Baghdad's Umm al-Qura mosque.

"It is the latest in a series of many criminal ones perpetrated by the greatest terrorist nation on the face of the earth: the United States," he said.

"Who is going to respect elections paved by the blood of Iraqis and built on their skulls?" asked the white-turbaned sheikh. "The government is solving our problems the American way."

The Empire's Worst Nightmare Coming True: U.S. Trained Occupation Cops Think Killing American Troops Good Idea

October 03, 2004 By Edward Wong, The New York Times

A chief sergeant, 32, who declined to give his name made a distinction between killing policemen and killing Americans. "I like the mujahedeen," he said, "because they fight the Americans."

Senior American commanders here all say the outcome of this increasingly grim war — and the ability of Americans to leave eventually — depends on standing up Iraqi security forces that can take over many of the policing duties now handled with questionable effectiveness by the 140,000 American soldiers here. **[So much for that silly notion.]**

But these days, the Iraqi police spend as much time protecting themselves as guarding the public. The police are key targets in the insurgents' campaign to cripple the interim Iraqi government, and hospital wards are filling with dazed men lying in blood-drenched blue uniforms.

To listen to Iraq's new police officers is to hear the voices of under-equipped and under-trained men, often unnerved by the danger but determined to work. They hope that if they can feed their families and calm their country, their lives may get better.

They say they are committed to building a new Iraq, but many are skeptical about the Americans who insist they were sent here to do the same thing.

Some even say they are willing to turn their guns on the soldiers. [Need a road map and a flashlight to figure out what that means? Clue: For every one willing to say it to an American New York Times reporter, there are 199 more who will do it.]

In the southern city of Basra, some policemen have begun wearing black ski masks to hide their identities, giving them more than a passing resemblance to the shadowy jihadists they are supposed to be fighting.

But like Capt. Fouad Hadi, many police officers and potential recruits say the violence does not shake their resolve to serve. **For sure, it does not shake their need to bring home a paycheck. Iraq's unemployment rate is 50 percent, and police officers earn a relatively high average salary, equivalent to \$228 a month. So the number of people applying for jobs has not dropped,** Col. Adnan Abdul-Rahman, an Interior Ministry spokesman, said.

Ayad Hussein, 24, a recruit recovering in Karama Hospital from shrapnel wounds suffered in a car bombing, said he was not deterred. **"There are no other jobs, no opportunities offered," he said.**

But some officers complain that they have yet to see promised raises.

"They said there would be a bonus last month for fighting the Mahdi Army," said Sgt. Rafid Rashid, 34, referring to the Shiite militia that rose in rebellion in August. "But we got nothing." [Now there's a brilliant way to hold their loyalty.]

Many officers also express frustration that they are issued assault rifles and pistols, while insurgents often have rocket-propelled grenades and mortars. Many also complain of a shortage of good body armor.

The elaborate defenses surrounding stationhouses are testaments to the hazards. At the headquarters of the Organized Crime Unit in western Baghdad, where Hadi's men were spooked by the parked car, a labyrinth of sand-filled barriers and metal-spiked speed bumps lies between the parking lot and the front door. Insurgents have attacked the building using mortars and cars packed with explosives. Black funeral banners proclaiming the martyrdom of comrades drape barriers.

The force has 39,000 trained officers, and the U.S. military hopes to have more than 60,000 on hand for the elections, said Capt. Steven Alvarez, a U.S. military spokesman.

But Reuters recently cited Pentagon documents saying that only 8,169 have had the full eight-week academy training.

Even if one takes the military's numbers at face value, there is no way to measure the loyalty and morale of the officers.

Earlier that morning, at dawn, a half-dozen policemen were sitting around at a cafe in the same neighborhood eating eggs and bread. They smoked and drank tea and read in a newspaper of how three policemen had been killed by a suicide car bomb in the capital the previous day.

A chief sergeant, 32, who declined to give his name made a distinction between killing policemen and killing Americans.

"The mujahedeen," he said, referring to Iraqi Islamist fighters, "are my brothers, but when policemen are killed, it is not the mujahedeen; those people are Wahhabis and terrorists like Zarqawi and Osama." Now he was referring to the branch of fundamentalist Islam associated with Saudi Arabia and followed by Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian.

"I like the mujahedeen," he said, "because they fight the Americans." [Definitely time to get the fuck out and come home now, alive.)

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

Jordanian Corporation Quits Iraq; General Warning To Lebanese Firms Issued

03 October 2004 Aljazeera

A Jordanian company has ceased its operations in Iraq as a purported Iraqi group warns the Lebanese Government to stop sending nationals to the war-torn country.

The Jordanian haulage firm said it made the decision to pull out after abductors paraded an employee in video footage aired on Arab television on Saturday.

"I am halting all my business in Iraq to protect the lives of my staff," Starline director general Muhammad Samah al-Ajluni said.

Meanwhile, an internet statement in the name of another group holding two Lebanese contractors gave Beirut an ultimatum to disallow its nationals from working for the US-led military in Iraq.

"The Lebanese government cannot be unaware that its nationals - interpreters, contractors and others - are oppressing, torturing and harming the Iraqi people in general and the mujahidin in particular," said the statement in name of the Islamic Army in Iraq.

"We demand that the Lebanese government withdraw all nationals working for the occupier in Iraq and warn them that they must bear the responsibility for the outcome if they refuse."

Resistance Attacks Cutting Supplies From Turkey

(Los Angeles Times, September 30, 2004)

Growing violence has set back the lucrative trade between Ankara and Baghdad as fewer drivers are willing to make the risky run. **Armed escorts for the Turkish truck convoys have failed to stop attacks, truckers say.**

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Clueless In Baghdad

"The sad thing is that US combat intelligence in Iraq does not seem to know who the insurgents are, where they are, how many they are, or what they plan to do. This in spite of all the happy campaign talk about how well things are going."

Retired Army Special Forces Col. W. Patrick Lang, former Defense Intelligence Officer for the Middle East and a member of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity.

“Nobody Wins In A Shitstorm”

22 Sep 04 by Karen Kwiatkowski, Lt. Col. USAF (ret.), Military Week

An absence of leadership qualities in our military leaders gives rise to terms like "Seagull" Colonels and Generals, a species known to swoop in, make a lot of noise, crap all over everything, and then fly away.

But our seagulls had an advantage over Bush and Cheney. Regardless of the mistakes made and not remedied, regardless of the illogic, stupidity and sheer idiocy of our present unit's existence under a seagull commander, at least we could be 100% sure they wouldn't be around for long.

High level incompetence seems to be the natural sea-state of our militarized foreign policy, launching forth with the "proud" Guardsman George W. Bush at the helm and Dick "Other Priorities" Cheney as navigator.

What about active duty soldiers and Marines, who have recently seen both ugly ends of the Bush-Cheney foreign policy baby?

On the truth about Iraq, Bush and Cheney have told us it's going just fine, we are killing the appointed number of "terrorists" and "evil doers." We are winning, they say. From the key top officers, whether General Casey, General Abizaid, General Meyers or any of the lesser flag officers on active duty today, we hear only a ricochet of the President's fantasies, or else deafening silence.

But from lower ranking soldiers and marines, we hear plenty. One former marine refers to Iraq as "Bush's Magical Middle Eastern Mystery Tour." He explains why we will leave Iraq, eventually, with nothing.

It is one of the rules that should have been learned early on by all leaders, even mediocre ones. Apparently Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld missed the lecture called "Nobody wins a shitstorm."

OCCUPATION REPORT

Stunning Success In Ramadi: Neighborhood Of 6,500 In City Of 500,000 Friendly To U.S.

September 28, 2004 By Alissa J. Rubin, L.A. Times Staff Writer

"A lot of these guys have read history," said [Col.] Durrant, recounting a recent meeting with Ramadi tribal sheiks, educators and businessmen. "They said to me the government in Baghdad is like the Vichy government in France during World War II, and I got called a Nazi several times." [Imagine that!]

The Vichy government was set up by the German Nazi occupation forces and ran a large area of France.

Insurgents are killing and kidnapping government officials, police and Iraqi national guard members....notwithstanding the presence just outside the city of thousands of U.S. Marines and Army soldiers who back the government's authority.

The deputy governor was kidnapped and killed, his body found this month. The president of the regional university and the provincial directors of the national sewage and communications ministries have also been kidnapped, and 10 contractors working for the United States have been assassinated.

Then there are the ominous posters that appeared on the walls of mosques a couple of weeks ago. Directed at Iraqi police and national guardsmen, they read, "Quit or we'll kill you."

Ramadi, the capital of Sunni Muslim-dominated Al Anbar province, and Fallouja represent 70% of Al Anbar's population, according to U.S. estimates.

The erosion of order in Ramadi illustrates the success of the insurgents' methods and the serious problems facing the interim government and its U.S. backers

Said Col. Jerry L. Durrant of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, who oversees the coordination of the U.S. military with Iraqi security forces, **"The government in Baghdad is not recognized by anyone in Al Anbar."**

Some victims have disappeared without a word; others have been assassinated, their bodies left on the roads. Still others have fled their jobs, afraid of suffering a fate similar to that of their co-workers.

Durrant said leaders of the Iraqi national guard do not want to meet him in public or travel in military vehicles. Many no longer wear their uniforms for fear of being identified with the interim government's security forces.

The Marines, aware of what is at stake, are trying to back up the local government. But they are hamstrung, because taking too visible a role could endanger the lives of Iraqi officials. Working with the Army, Marines are also trying to undertake small reconstruction projects they can complete quickly — an approach they hope will make a difference in neighborhoods still open to the American presence.

The U.S. military's grip seems tenuous, the insurgency is persistent, and it appears that the troops face an uphill battle to maintain the bonds they have forged with the community.

As a provincial capital with a university, Ramadi has developed an insurgency of a much different character than that of Fallouja, where there appear to be many more Islamic extremists, including Wahhabis and Salafists. But Ramadi is strongly influenced by the tribes, who seem to think they have little to gain by working with the Marines.

"A lot of these guys have read history," said Durrant, recounting a recent meeting with Ramadi tribal sheiks, educators and businessmen. "They said to me the government in Baghdad is like the Vichy government in France during World War II, and I got called a Nazi several times."

The Vichy government was set up by the German Nazi occupation forces and ran a large area of France.

The attacks have discouraged law enforcement efforts by the Iraqi police and national guard, Marine intelligence officers say. "In many cases, intimidation and pressure prompts a bias toward non-action. **Maybe you're just not there when you hear something might happen in a place,**" said Lt. Col. George Bristol, a senior intelligence officer for the 1st Marine Division.

Rank-and-file officers, who were trimming the dried bushes outside the police headquarters one day recently, said they were intimidated regularly but were not allowed to talk to the media.

At the police station, which the U.S. military supplied with 15 vehicles, the commander, who identified himself only as **Chief Saleh complained that U.S. troops had detained some of his men when they were assigned outside the Tamim neighborhood and had taken their weapons.** "If you hurt a man's dignity, that's very sensitive," Saleh said.

In the small neighborhood known as Tamim, or Five Kilo, on Ramadi's western edge, residents seem pleased by U.S. efforts to refurbish schools, build a soccer field and two clinics, expand the police station and restore a badly damaged mosque.

But with an estimated 6,500 people in the Tamim neighborhood — in a city of about 400,000 — it is also a measure of how much effort may be needed in every hamlet, every quarter of the Sunni Triangle....

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Debate This

October 1, 2004 By MICKEY Z.

"We're all gonna rock to the rules that I make.
I wanna be elected."
--Alice Cooper, "Elected"

Last night was the opening of the presidential debate season...or as it's known at Ralph Nader's house: Passover.

We got Coke vs. Pepsi. McDonald's vs. Burger King. MasterCard vs. Visa. General Electric vs. Westinghouse. Yale-educated millionaire war criminal vs. Yale-educated millionaire war criminal.

The debate pitted an alleged liberal (who supports the Iraq war, the Patriot Act, NAFTA, WTO, welfare repeal, the war on drugs, appointing anti-abortion judges, etc.) against an un-elected president who is somehow seeking re-election.

The next time someone tells you America has a two-party system...I suggest you demand a recount.

Media-hyped millionaires are sold to the public like any other commodity. Ideologies are neatly packaged and marketed with the same intensity and deception as a cell phone or SUV.

... if voting ever looked like it might change anything, it might be made illegal...

Zach de la Rocha, formerly of Rage Against the Machine, wrote: "The structure is set; you'll never change it with a ballot pull." We will change it when Americans embrace the subversive pleasure of thinking for themselves and challenge that structure.

With the point of no return fading in the rearview mirror (or at least obscured by an SUV), the time is long overdue for all of us to recognize that the primary

difference between Republicans and Democrats is that they tell different lies to get elected...

The Great Debate

“Bring the troops home *now*? Kiss my ass!”



September 27, 2004. (Kevin Lamarque/Reuters)

“Bring the troops home *now*? Kiss my ass!”



September 27, 2004. (Brian Snyder/Reuters)

“Bring the troops home *now*? Kiss my ass!”



[Wrongly excluded from debate] 9.17.04 (Molly Riley/Reuters)

Partners In Crime: China Helps U.S. Empire Occupy Haiti: Sending Armed Riot Force

(Washington Post, September 30, 2004, Pg. 21)

Chinese riot police wearing plastic helmets and Terminator-style body armor slashed the air with batons and parried imaginary blows with plexiglass shields as Beijing put a Haiti-bound contingent of specially trained People's Armed Police on display. The demonstration underlined what officials described as Beijing's willingness to play an increasing role in U.N. peacekeeping [!] operations around the world after years of reluctance to get involved. **[So much for all that empty horseshit about "socialist" China. If you're interested in real socialists, check out: www.isreview.org]**

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Send More Body Bags

02 October 2004 By Nicholas D. Kristof, The New York Times

Kabul - My quest to help President Bush find Osama bin Laden has taken me into Afghanistan, where I've offended the locals by scrutinizing every unusually tall woman in a burka. But so far, no sign of Osama.

What I do see, though, is an Afghanistan that shows real promise in the north - but is falling apart in the rural areas of the south.

The result is more terrorism and narcotics, and more Americans coming home in body bags.

Right after the war, an American could travel virtually everywhere in Afghanistan. These days, much of the south is a killing ground.

Before Mr. Bush claims again that Afghanistan is a shining success, he should talk to Nyamatullah, a 33-year-old tribal leader from Zabul, one of the most dangerous provinces.

"At first, people were very hopeful, and they thought America would help us," said Mr. Nyamatullah, who initially was an enthusiastic supporter of the American invasion. "The [new Afghan] government promised us new schools, district offices, clinics, water pumps, but it has done nothing at all. People are so disappointed.... **At least the**

Taliban would grade roads, build madrassas, while this government has done nothing."

Mr. Nyamatullah still hates the Taliban, but he added, "If the situation continues and America does the same things, I definitely will pick up a gun and fight the Americans."

A government official from Uruzgan put it bluntly: "The Taliban is much stronger than before. The American and Afghan governments were saying that things would get better, and they didn't. So people turned to the Taliban."

Resistance Attacks Government Offices In Capital

(Dallas Morning News, September 30, 2004)

Taliban militants crept up to an Afghan government office in Kabul under the cover of darkness and launched a gun battle that left four attackers and three Afghan troops dead, police said.

MORE:

Rockets Hit NATO Base

(USA Today, September 30, 2004, Pg. 12)

Two rockets fired by Islamic militants slammed into a NATO military camp in northern Afghanistan, injuring four soldiers gearing up to protect the country's landmark elections from threats by Islamic militants.

MORE:

U.S. Vows Security For Afghan Vote

(New York Daily News, September 30, 2004)

U.S. forces in Afghanistan pledged to bolster security in the volatile south and southeast ahead of a landmark election. **[And they can't protect the capital or their own bases!. Empty bullshit!]**

Received:

Using GI Special

From: PG
To: GI Special
Sent: Sunday, October 03, 2004
Subject: Re: GI Special #2B80: Wounded Get Pay Cut

I read your updates and send them all over the place.

There's an ex-Navy guy who was thinking of re-joining, but now I think he wont. Your work is important. I am glad you got passed your [computer] crisis; if I had money I would have sent you some.

Revolution Peace Love Light,

REPLY: Forget the money thing, you're using GI Special as it's meant to be used, getting it to a Vet, and other are passing along to people in service. That's far far more important. That's what it's all about. And that is the most important work of all. Check out our sister publication Traveling Soldier too. At:

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> 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.