

GI SPECIAL 2#B83

LET'S ALL GO HOME



Casualties Of Bush's War:

1. Iraq War Veteran Commits Suicide:

October 1, 2004 By MARK CLINTON and TONY UDELL, Socialist Worker,
http://www.socialistworker.org/2004-2/514/514_02_VetSuicide.shtml

JEFFREY LUCEY is not a name that will not soon be forgotten by the more than 100 people who attended a memorial service for him at Holyoke Community College (HCC) in Western Massachusetts. Lucey, a Marine veteran of the Iraq war and a student at the college, committed suicide on June 22. He was 23.

As his father Kevin said at the memorial, Jeff's death, while not officially listed as such, is another casualty showing the human costs of the war. Lucey joined the Marine Reserves at 18 because, as his parents told Amy Goodman of the left-wing radio program *Democracy Now!* he wanted to get the training and earn money for college.

He was called to active duty with the 6th Motor Transport Battalion in early 2003. By February, he was in Kuwait. One day after he celebrated his 22nd birthday, the invasion of Iraq began. Trained as a clerical specialist, he was reassigned to serve as a driver.

On April 18, 2003, Jeff wrote to Julianne Proulx, his girlfriend since 1997, that he had done "immoral things." On his return to his parents' home in July, however, he had seemed normal, and everyone was too happy to see him to suspect that something was terribly wrong. With those who knew him less intimately, Jeff maintained the façade of the good Marine until the very end.

Things really began to fall apart on Christmas Eve. While drunk, Lucey took two handmade Iraqi dog tags from around his neck, threw them at his younger sister, and told her that he felt like a murderer.

He never did tell his family the whole story of his experience in Iraq, only bits and pieces. It was horrific enough. He spoke of elderly people killed as they tried to run from Marines rolling into Nasariya.

He spoke of a small Iraqi boy, bloody and prone in the dusty street, shot in the head and the chest and still holding a small, bloodstained American flag in his hands. He spoke of his horror as an American tank lumbered down the street, how he had bolted from his own vehicle and, as gunfire rippled the sand around him, moved the tiny corpse to the sad sanctuary of a nearby alley.

He spoke of how he had been ordered to shoot two Iraqi prisoners. He remembered how he had looked into their eyes and hesitated, watching as they shook in terror, and thinking of their families. He remembered that an officer had shouted, "Pull the fucking trigger, Lucey!" He remembered shooting the soldiers and watching them die. He told his father that there were "other things" he did not want the family to know about.

For its part, the Marines dismissed Lucey's allegation that he had been ordered to shoot Iraqi prisoners as "without merit"--but didn't offer an explanation of how that conclusion was reached. Marine spokesperson Capt. Pat Kerr, however, has confirmed that Lucey's battalion was engaged in transporting prisoners of war, according to one press report.

As Jeff spiraled toward self-destruction, he began to drink more and more. In early June, his desperate parents were able to arrange an involuntary commitment to a local veterans' hospital, where Lucey complained that he was treated like "a prisoner."

He was diagnosed as suffering from depression with secondary alcohol dependency--and was released after four days because, the hospital said, he was not a danger to himself or others. On the ride home, he told his parents that he had met with

psychiatrists twice, both times briefly, and on the second occasion, the psychiatrist had seem preoccupied with other matters.

In many respects, Jeff's fate followed a trajectory that is becoming all too familiar. As Nancy Lessin of Military Families Speak Out told Amy Goodman, "We have heard so much about what this military has learned in Vietnam [about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder], and how they're doing it differently now. And we don't see that at all. We see the same mistakes happening--mistakes that are, in fact, not mistakes at all. It's really a way of denying this issue so they can keep as many warm bodies deployed and re-deployed."

After Jeff's death, his parents learned from the medical records kept during his involuntary confinement that he had told nurses of three different plans to kill himself--a drug overdose, suffocation or hanging. On June 22, he chose the last of these three methods, hanging himself with a hose in the basement of his parents' home.

His father found the body of his only son when he got home from work shortly before 7 p.m. In one of the notes Jeff left behind, he begged his parents not to blame themselves "because I lived a happy childhood and a great life thanks to you. Unfortunately, I am weak and cannot deal with the pain. It feels as if I lost the most important part of my life that will ever exist."

While the memorial service was not intended as a political event, virtually none of the speakers were able to ignore the implications of the war in Iraq, which is leaving behind the equivalent of human cluster bomblets who will be imploding and exploding for years and decades to come.

Perhaps no one addressed the political context of Jeff Lucey's death as eloquently as Sean Lamory, Jeff's friend for the last 14 years, an Air Force veteran, an HCC student and one of the main organizers of the campus memorial service.

Noting that the burdens of the war in Iraq are falling more than ever before on reservists and National Guard members, Lamory observed that such soldiers "are stereotypically young men and women who join the military for free college and benefits.

"I see it right here at HCC, a school where a lot of students struggle financially and come out of class to see a fancy Hummer, surrounded by Marines in full-dress uniforms making all sorts of promises." Lamory also quoted a *New Yorker* article noting that the suicide rate "among soldiers in Iraq is one-third higher than the Army's historical average."

Perhaps, he speculated, the rate is so high because "there's somewhere around 15,000 Iraqi civilians dead, and our troops are having trouble finding the justice in that."

2. Mother And Dead Soldier Son To Be Buried Together

October 5, 2004 The Associated Press

Robert Unruh will be buried Friday at the Southern Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery. His mother's body will accompany her son's in the procession to the cemetery.

TUCSON, Ariz. - **A 45-year-old woman collapsed and died days after learning her son had been killed in Iraq, and just hours after seeing his body.** Results of an autopsy were not immediately released, but **friends of Karen Unruh-Wahrer said she couldn't stop crying over losing her 25-year-old son, Army Spc. Robert Oliver Unruh, who was killed by enemy fire near Baghdad on Sept. 25.**

"Her grief was so intense - it seemed it could have harmed her, could have caused a heart attack. Her husband described it as a broken heart," said Cheryl Hamilton, manager of respiratory care services at University Medical Center, where Unruh-Wahrer worked as a respiratory therapist.

Unruh, a combat engineer, had been in Iraq less than a month when he was shot during an attack on his unit.

Several days after learning of his death, his mother had gone to the hospital complaining of chest pains, Hamilton said. She was feeling better the next day but saw her son's body Saturday morning and collapsed that night in her kitchen.

Her husband, Dennis Wahrer - also a respiratory therapist - and other family members performed CPR but Unruh-Wahrer was pronounced dead that night.

Robert Unruh will be buried Friday at the Southern Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery. His mother's body will accompany her son's in the procession to the cemetery.

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:

13th COSCOM Soldier Killed 2 Wounded

10/05/04 mnf-iraq Release #041005a

LSA Anaconda, Balad, Iraq – One 13th COSCOM soldier is dead and two are injured as the result of an improvised explosive device attack on their convoy near Baghdad around 11:30 p.m. October 4. The injured soldiers were taken to the 31st Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad.

Convoy Ambushed In Ramadi; At Least One U.S. Soldier Wounded

05-10-2004 By ALEXANDRA ZAVIS, Associated Press Writer

In Ramadi, about 70 miles west of Baghdad, American troops and insurgents exchanged gunfire after a car bomb exploded, police Capt. Nassir Hassan said. The U.S. military had no report of the incident, but an Associated Press photographer saw two dead Iraqis and four wounded at the scene.

Later, a roadside bomb detonated as a U.S. military convoy was passing near the Grand Mosque in the eastern section of Ramadi, wounding one soldier, said Marine spokesman 1st Lt. Lyle Gilbert. He said seven Iraqis were wounded.

Mosul Car Bomb Would 4 U.S. Troops

(10.05.04) MOSUL, Iraq (AP)

Four U-S soldiers riding in a convoy have been wounded in a midday car bomb explosion in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. Three Iraqis died in the ensuing gunfire, but the circumstances are not clear. A hospital worker suggests the Americans opened fire on civilians.

The Iraqis were in a passing vehicle.

Bye Bye Samarra: U.S. Withdrawing Troops; Turning Over Control To Local Occupation Cops, Guards



U.S. Army soldiers patrol in Samarra Oct. 4, 2004 (AP Photo/Jim MacMillan)

10.5.04 A report on the PBS Newshour tonight from Baghdad quoted U.S. command as saying that U.S. forces will withdraw from Samarra and turn over local control to Iraqi "Government" forces. The report added that in the past, this has meant a return of resistance forces, who are able to infiltrate the local forces, and turn them against the occupation.

"Shit, I thought Saddam's cops were gone"



A suspect is guarded by Iraqi police commandos before being detained during a raid looking for insurgents at a neighborhood in Samarra. (AFP/Jewel Samad)

OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION

BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

Sadr City, Prowling The Danger Zone

October 3, 2004 By Steve Fainaru, Washington Post Staff Writer

Today, he is married with four children. Ten years and several postings later, he said he still views his dangerous assignment as no more than a job.

"To me, that's all it is," he said. "I got kids to feed."

BAGHDAD, Oct. 2 -- The column of armored trucks jumped the curb, cut across a dirt-and-gravel soccer field and made its way north into the maze of narrow streets.

A full moon cast shadows across Sadr City, the insurgent-controlled Baghdad slum. Headlights turned off for stealth, the vehicles crossed into a pitch-dark lot surrounded by abandoned buildings. The lot was filled with reeking garbage and clusters of glaring men.

"Man, I don't like driving across this field," muttered Anthony Stewart, 31, a platoon sergeant from Sumter, S.C., speaking softly, glancing uneasily from side to side. "Yeah," replied the driver, Sgt. Nick Varney, 23, of Ridgecrest, Calif. "It's an easy place to get ambushed."

This Humvee crew -- Stewart, Varney and Salakchay Monivong, 21, a Laotian immigrant to the States who mans a .50-caliber machine gun -- is at the core of the U.S. military's strategy to take back Sadr City, street by fetid street.

Three times a day, four days a week, the men join a four-truck platoon that pushes into this ghetto of 2 million in search of insurgents loyal to a rebellious Shiite cleric, Moqtada Sadr. When the soldiers find the insurgents -- or the insurgents find them -- the soldiers' task is to kill them.

The mission, as viewed by a Washington Post reporter who rode along on four Humvee patrols this week, is at once monotonous, exhausting and, in moments, terrifying.

The soldiers ride for hours to the almost-continuous thump of mortar rounds being fired in the distance, but sometimes go days without seeing the enemy. Between patrols, they return to a spartan base near a blue, onion-shaped monument to the Iran-Iraq war to catch a few hours' sleep. Many doze on the hoods of their Humvees. **The soldiers are so accustomed to the sound of mortars that they frequently sleep through them.**

As of this week, platoons from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division had conducted nearly 3,000 patrols into Sadr City since April, according to the battalion command. [And the Mahdi Resistance army still rules Sadr City 3,000 patrols later. Time to go home, alive.]

"It's kind of ironic, when you think that the Garden of Eden was supposedly somewhere between the Tigris and the Euphrates," said Varney, steering his Humvee up a Baghdad road the military calls Route Pluto.

At the thud of another mortar launch, Varney turned toward Monivong, whose head and upper torso stuck out of the gunner's hatch.

"Hey, Moni, look for mortar signals, like smoke, okay?" said Varney.

"Awright," said Monivong.

"You got a grenade, don't you?" said Varney.

"What?" said Monivong, unable to hear above the drone of the engine.

"Never mind," said Varney. "I got one."

After getting out of high school, Stewart worked at a Sumter furniture plant for \$6 an hour. One afternoon in 1994, he recalled, he argued with his girlfriend, got in his car and drove aimlessly around the city until, finally, he arrived at a shopping mall.

Across the street was an Army recruiting center. In high school, when Stewart had been approached by a recruiter, he responded, "Get serious." But now, unhappy and struggling to pay his rent, he signed up on the spot.

"The rest is military history," he said.

Today, he is married with four children. Ten years and several postings later, he said he still views his dangerous assignment as no more than a job.

"To me, that's all it is," he said. "I got kids to feed."

Varney grew up in Ridgecrest, a small town in the Mojave Desert. Upon graduating from high school, he worked at a golf course for the summer and snowboarded during the winter. Feeling aimless, he decided to attend a community college in Powell, Wyo., where he could snowboard and study communications. He lasted less than a semester.

"School was always pretty easy to me," said Varney, "but I spent most of my time on girls and partying."

After dropping out, he moved to Laramie to live with his sister Melissa. **He had already accepted a job as a night janitor** when he was watching television on his sister's couch one night and saw footage from the bombing of the USS Cole.

Varney went to talk with a recruiter. "I felt like I needed to contribute something," he said. "You go through life, taking all the time, and you don't really give back." He signed up.

Monivong immigrated to St. Angelo, Tex., with his family when he was 9. Approached by a recruiter, he was impressed by one essential fact. The Army would give him \$50,000 toward his college tuition if he would sign a contract to serve four years.

He has completed three. He is about to send \$5,000 to Texas to help his parents buy a house. A cartoonist who draws the company's bulldog mascot, he plans to enroll at University of Texas-Arlington to study computer science and animation. This week, Varney helped him fill out his application online.

The three are part of the 16-man 2nd Platoon of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. The battalion is based in Fort Hood, Tex., but operates in Iraq out of Camp Cuervo, about six miles southeast of Sadr City. Half the platoon is married; just three are nonsmokers.

Not even Camp Cuervo is totally safe for them; mortar shells land frequently inside the compound. On Wednesday, soldiers heard a loud thump, followed seconds later by a screaming whistle and then an explosion just outside the camp hospital. The blast, which was believed to be caused by a rocket, shattered the windows of rooms housing the battalion physicians, but caused no injuries.

"Jesus, I was just standing there two minutes ago," an American contractor told a reporter as they ducked behind a wall. About 100 yards away, a plume of smoke and dust rose from a courtyard in front of the hospital.

That same afternoon, a mortar shell landed near a huge white tent that serves as the base dining hall. The men of the 2nd Platoon, on break from patrolling, never moved. "We're used to it," said Sgt. Ben Brown, 27, of Tomball, Tex.

The platoon's operations begin with businesslike efficiency. The men don bulletproof vests and helmets and load up the four Humvees parked outside their barracks with coolers containing water, Gatorade and Red Bull.

At exactly 3 p.m. one day, the platoon leader, Lt. Tye Graham, 23, a West Point graduate from Pecos, Tex., yells, "mount up." The soldiers snub out their cigarettes and climb inside the vehicles.

"I never used to be super-punctual," says Varney, steering and loading a 9mm pistol and a black M-16 assault rifle. "Now even as a civilian I am."

Varney, an amateur guitar player, is white and thin, his manner quiet and laconic. His military fatigues cover a lavish tattoo of dice and guitars and webs that snakes up his right arm. Stewart, who is African American, normally rides in a different Humvee, but on this day has filled the spot of another soldier who is on leave. Stewart seems like a more serious older brother to Varney and Monivong, whose smiling, easygoing manner seems incongruous as he stands behind the huge .50-caliber machine gun.

The vehicles move up and down the maze of Sadr City streets, nearly indistinguishable to an outsider, turning back at a busy intersection that the military calls Route Gold. The area to the south represents about 20 percent of Sadr City and is relatively peaceful. **The area to the north of Route Gold is increasingly hostile -- crossing into it in Humvees will almost certainly draw fire.**

The convoy takes a wrong turn, and Varney, trying to turn around, backs the Humvee into a concrete wall.

"Can we go a day without hitting something?" says Stewart, exasperated.

Children run toward the convoy; most wave, flash a thumbs up and jump up and down with excitement. **Some gather rocks to hurl at the Americans. As the Humvees move up and down the streets, their radio antennas and guns brush against thousands of sagging power lines that are used to pirate electricity into the concrete homes. The antennas cause the lines to jump and occasionally sever them.**

Every 25 minutes or so, the vehicles stop inside a courtyard. They park in a loose circle and point their guns at the neighborhood while the soldiers dismount to smoke, chat and regroup.

The conversation turns to the day before, when the roadside bomb exploded next to the convoy. Two of the platoon's four gunners, exposed in their hatches, were injured by the blast: Spec. Clarence Maxwell, who took a piece of shrapnel in his right shoulder, separating it, and Spec. Gregory King, who suffered a concussion.

Without the armored vehicles, **many of which** have been refitted for more protection, the soldiers agree, casualties in Iraq would be far greater.

On Wednesday morning, the third day of the mission, the soldiers were told to prepare for an operation that was likely to draw contact with the insurgents. A surge of adrenaline swept through the platoon. At 1:30 p.m., after a shower break, the Humvees traveled from Camp Cuervo to the staging base near the onion-shaped monument.

The wait began. The soldiers milled about in a courtyard, playing chess, smoking and heaping good-natured abuse on each other. Many wore brown T-shirts with their blood types stenciled on the front. Brown said people are always giving him grief because it is written so large. "They're like, 'Hey, O-positive.' You know what? Everybody knows I'm O-positive.' "

Two soldiers began to wrestle and Graham, the platoon leader, said sternly: "After the mission!" When the horseplay continued, several voices rang out: "Knock it off!"

Nearby, an M1-A2 Abrams tank backed into a parking space. The exhaust from the massive vehicle lit a small tree on fire. The platoon erupted with laughter, then booed when a soldier doused the flames.

Varney took apart his assault rifle, cleaned it, then reassembled it on the hood of his Humvee.

Around 9 p.m., Graham announced that the platoon would have not one but two missions: the dangerous assault, followed a few hours later by a raid on suspected members of the Mahdi Army, Sadr's militia.

Groans followed. It was clear that no one would sleep.

"We're robots; put that down," a soldier said to a reporter. "We're frigging robots."

Two hours later, the dangerous mission was cancelled. There would be only the raid.

The next morning, the Humvees rumbled back into Sadr City. They blocked off a street and soldiers from several platoons, including the 2nd from Bravo Company, burst into the houses.

In one, soldiers found an AK-47 assault rifle, ammunition and a notebook containing documents that indicated an insurgent had trained in Jordan with the new U.S.-sponsored Iraqi police. They handcuffed, blindfolded and detained a man with a prosthetic left leg. [Wow, another crushing blow against the resistance.]

In another, **soldiers detained a half-dozen men who they said *appeared in photographs with Mahdi Army* insurgents. [There is absolutely no point whatever to this silly bullshit. There is absolutely no point whatever to being there.]**

The men were brought back to Camp Cuervo and left bound and blindfolded at the entrance to the battalion command post.

The soldiers processed the prisoners, then went off for lunch.

US Base Worker Killed

Oct 5, 2004 (Reuters)

Taha Abdullah, who worked at a U.S. barracks near Baiji was beheaded and his body was found on Monday night.

More On Baghdad Car Bomb Attack; Convoy Casualties Not Reported

[This is more on the car bomb attack yesterday that was poorly reported then. It still has no solid information about who was in the convoy that was attacked, not even mentioned in most reports yesterday, or what casualties resulted. Obviously it wasn't tourists going shopping. Mercenaries? CIA? Why the secrecy?]

October 4, 2004 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Saurabh Das/Associated Press

A car bomb exploded at 9:45 a.m. (0645 GMT), near a number of major hotels. **American and Iraqi forces opened fire after the blast, but it was not immediately clear what they were shooting at, witnesses said.**

Speaking at the scene, al-Freiji said a pickup truck loaded with dates plowed into a convoy of three four-wheel-drive vehicles as they emerged from a parking area behind the hotels and exploded. Two escaped but one was destroyed in the blast.

Minutes later, unidentified gunmen began shooting from the rooftops and police returned fire, said Tahsin al-Kaabi, another FPS member.

The pickup truck carrying the explosives was ripped in half with one part left dangling from a shop sign on the opposite side of the street.

At least five other cars were charred, including one of the targeted four-wheel-drive vehicles which had a burned body left sitting in the front passenger seat. Another man was thrown against a garage wall, his body crumpled in the street. A head and other body parts were strewn in the road amid shards of glass.

Some of the injured, including a man with bloodied bandages wrapped around his head, were helped into nearby hotels. Others were rushed to surrounding hospitals.

The hotels accommodate a large number of foreigners.

U.S. Opts For Risky Tactic As Airstrikes Grow, Who Will Win Hearts And Minds?

(Dallas Morning News, October 5, 2004)

U.S. forces battling insurgents and foreign terrorists in Fallujah, Samarra and Baghdad have increased their use of airstrikes over the last month--a dicey tactic in such a war. **"It's risky because it doesn't look good, because it looks like we're making war on the Iraqi people,"** says John Pike of GlobalSecurity.org, a nonpartisan defense policy Web site. **[How could anybody possibly think that? Fact is, the Iraqi people are making war on a hated foreign invasion and occupation of their nation by George Bush, and they are right to do so.]**

7-Hour Iraq Trip Turns Into 12 As Convoy Hits Delays

October 5, 2004 By Stephanie Heintz, Daily Press

[Unintentionally, this story illustrates the hopeless supply situation for the occupation army. Everything for it must be trucked into the country from outside.]

MAIN SUPPLY ROUTE TAMPA, IRAQ -- Early Monday afternoon, for the third time that day, Spc. Steven Webb climbed out from behind the wheel of his Humvee to stand guard over a convoy of dozens of trucks that had come to a stop.

A flatbed truck driven by a contracted civilian driver was getting ready to lose its load. The convoy had just passed through a 20-mile stretch of unpaved, bumpy highway - pure desert driving, Webb called it - and it almost bounced a pallet over the side. The convoy had to wait until everything was secured.

That morning, Webb and more than a dozen other soldiers from the Fort Eustis-based 7th Transportation Group left Navistar, a military base in Kuwait that serves as the border crossing and staging area for convoys headed to Iraq. Webb's convoy was bound for Camp Anaconda, a supply distribution hub north of Baghdad.

"This stuff makes you feel like you are really in the Army," Capt. Thomas Crane had said at Navistar as he pored over last-minute reports of roadside bombs and ambushes happening along the way. Crane is one of the group's intelligence officers along for the ride to get a feel for the dangers on the roads.

"It's what we train for. Not that I joined the Army for this stuff, but it's better than sitting back at Camp Arifjan in a cubicle."

The soldiers travel in gun truck Humvees outfitted with armor and a .50-caliber machine gun to protect the Iraqi Express convoy. **The Army dubbed it the express because it runs up and down Iraq, delivering supplies to troops stationed in the heart of the country. The express doesn't haul tanks or fighting materials. Monday it was hauling everything from water to bubble wrap.**

The desert turns a bit greener as you travel north into Iraq. Southern Iraq is dusty and barren other than the occasional shepherd and flocks of sheep, camels and goats. But once you get past Camp Cedar, the first truck stop for convoys near Nasiriya, you see palm trees, bright green bushes, larger flocks of farm animals and fewer children begging for water.

On the surface it seemed almost silly for Webb and other soldiers to pace back and forth with loaded automatic weapons. Then suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, dozens of Iraqis appeared on the side of the road.

Webb looked one way, then another, looking for one of the hundreds of mud huts or tattered tents he passed up to this point. But there was nothing.

"I was just wondering that myself," Col. Jeff Miser, the group's commanding officer, said to Webb. "Where in the world did they come from?"

Men walked up wearing red and white checkered head scarves, full length white gowns and tattered sandals. Women approached almost completely covered, showing only portions of their blank dusty faces. Children, running hand in hand, wore little more than a smile as they greeted the soldiers with peace signs.

The only things that kept them from making good time on their 300-or-so-mile first leg were issues within their convoy and convoys ahead of them.

First, one of the group's Humvees had to be sent back down to Kuwait after they reached Cedar. The batteries weren't keeping a charge, and the truck was losing communications.

It took an hour to regroup the soldiers and assign new trucks.

That pallet that Webb helped guard as it was pushed back onto the flatbed nearly fell off three times. Each time, the entire convoy had to stop and the tow truck in the group had to hook a chain to the pallet and pull it back into place.

Then, less than 15 minutes after the third time the load was secured, two trucks driven by civilians in one of the convoys ahead were involved in a head-on collision.

A Black Hawk helicopter was called in to evacuate the injured. The group silently watched the helicopter blades kick up dust, pick up the drivers and then fly away.

"Makes you realize that there are other dangers out here," Webb said as he drove past the crumpled trucks.

Shortly after 6 p.m., having been on the road for nearly 12 hours on what should have been a seven-hour drive, the group pulled into Scania.

They refueled, set up cots next to their Humvees determined to sleep under the stars, grabbed a quick bite to eat and settled in for a short rest.

This morning they begin the next leg of the trip, the one that runs through Baghdad. Even if no maintenance issues come up, Webb said, it's bound to be exciting.

TROOP NEWS

Chris Burnett Out There?

From: Cara
Sent: Oct. 5, 2004, 9:52 AM
To: GI Special
Subject: Hey

anyone coming home yet

whens the maine coming home

can you see if chris burnett can email me?

Cara

REPLY: If anybody knows soldier Chris Burnett from Maine, Cara would like to hear from him. Send message c/o GI Special, address up top, and it will be forwarded to her.

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.

Italian Government Shocks Bush Regime; Says Withdrawing From Iraq Would Be A Good Thing

["The Coalition Of The Cutting And Running" -- Thanks to P. Binh for that one]

WARSAW, October 5 (IslamOnline.net)

The US received a further blow with Italian Defense Minister Antonio Martino disagreeing with Washington that an Iraq pullout would not help democracy.

“Both Prime Minister Iyad Allawi and his Deputy Defense Minister Al Jabati, whom I recently met, have outlined to us how much the withdrawal of coalition forces would help Baghdad,” Martino told the newspaper *La Stampa*.

“It would strengthen the government and democratization.”

On Monday, October 5, Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini suggested the possibility of the 3,000-strong Italian contingent being withdrawn from Iraq, without giving any deadline.

1,600 N.J. Guard Troops Headed For Bush’s Imperial Slaughterhouse

10/4/2004 By Associated Press

FORT DIX, N.J. More than 1,600 New Jersey Army National Guard soldiers are completing training for a yearlong tour of duty in Iraq, the largest single deployment of troops from New Jersey since World War II.

The citizen-soldiers have been training for five months and expect to deploy to Iraq between December and February. Their preparation has included getting used to walking with 30 pounds of body armor and soaking their camouflage uniforms in insecticide to get used to the bugs.

The soldiers come from all backgrounds and include veterans of the Persian Gulf War as well as college students who joined the Guard for tuition assistance and professionals making six-figure salaries. Among them are a 46-year-old Catholic priest from Perth Amboy and at least one young man who will turn 21 while in Iraq.

"I thought the GWB would be as far as it gets for me," Pfc. Jeffrey Martinez, a 21-year-old newlywed and new father from Union City, told The Star-Ledger of Newark. "I guess I was wrong."

Training for the New Jersey troops has taken place mostly at Fort Dix and at Fort Drum, N.Y.

Lt. Col. Roch Switlik, commander of the 50th Main Support Battalion, headquartered in Teaneck, said he has tried to instill cultural sensitivity in the reservists. He's made the soldiers aware, for example, that actions Westerners would consider rude at worst such as insulting the man of the house or inappropriately touching a woman are grounds for "blood retribution" in some sectors of Iraqi society. [Invading and occupying somebody else's country and

slaughtering its civilian population is also considered pretty “culturally insensitive” and might also lead to “blood retribution.” Duh.]

"It's a guerrilla war," said Switlik. "A single soldier can influence the war by doing the right thing or the wrong thing."

U.S. Need For More Armored Humvees In Iraq Surges, Army Says

(Bloomberg.com, October 4, 2004)

The U.S. Central Command's need for heavily armored Humvee transport vehicles in Iraq has surged 84 percent in the past four months amid a rise in violence and training of Iraqi forces, according to new Army figures. As many as 8,105 armored Humvees are required, up from 4,400 in June, the Army said. **[Maybe someday the Army will tell us how many have been destroyed by the resistance. That would make interesting reading.]**

4500 US Troops Shifted To Afghanistan From Iraq

October 06 GEO

KABUL: At least 4500 US troops have been shifted from Iraq to Afghanistan as Afghanistan elections are nearing, sources learnt.

4500 American troops will join already present 18500 US troops in Afghanistan.

Wrightsville Marine Recuperates From Injuries: "I Am So Glad He Is Out Of There"

October 4, 2004 By CARYL CLARKE, Daily Record/Sunday News

Daniel Kling Jr. woke to a car bomb blast that sent wind up the back of his neck at the police compound in the western Iraqi town of Hadithah.

It was 9 a.m. July 15. The 20-year-old U.S. Marine private first class from Wrightsville had been in Iraq about a month.

"It was the loudest thing ever," Kling said Friday at the table in his parents' home. "It blew out our windows. Dust was everywhere. Everybody was yelling."

The explosion of a second car bomb pushed Kling back down on his cot.

"I was dazed," he said. "All I could think was get dressed. I put on my boots without any socks. Glass was in my boots. It was crazy."

The car bomb at the gate to the compound left a hole in the street. It sent pieces of the cars onto roof tops and severed electric lines, Kling said. Within a week, the typically unreliable power returned.

Kling's grandfather learned of the attack on television before the Marine could call home.

The presence of snipers popping off at random and the reality of being in a war zone kept the platoon ever watchful. They never became complacent, Kling said.

Kling had been trained in the Marine infantry school to launch mortars. He learned to set up a bipod with a canister on top and drop in a mortar round with charges at the base. A pin at the bottom of the canister sets off the charges and the round arcs high to drop down on a target.

The occasion for firing a mortar never came. Instead, Kling and three other men in his platoon became victims of a mortar attack.

His shift patrolling the rooftop, looking for danger below, ended at midnight Aug. 8. As Kling headed for his water container, he and the three fellow Marines on the roof heard a mortar round land next to their building. A second round damaged an old school about 100 yards away.

He fell, reached down and felt a hole in his pants over his left thigh. "I couldn't believe I had gotten hit," he said. "It didn't start hurting until the staff sergeant helped me downstairs."

"I guess because we were Marines," he said. "It would just make the situation worse, so I acted normal."

One of the Navy medics attached to his platoon dressed the wounds and determined the injuries required intensive treatment.

Kling's father, Daniel Kling Sr., said he received the weirdest phone call of his life at 3 a.m. He heard his son say he was OK, not to worry, somebody would be calling.

The unit captain called the next evening to inform the Klings their son had been wounded in combat and was OK.

A helicopter carried the four injured men to two military bases in Iraq. They were then sent to Germany.

"We were all homesick, but we didn't want to leave at all," Kling said. "We didn't think we were hurt that bad. We all wished we had stayed with the platoon."

A plane filled with wounded members of the armed forces carried Kling to Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. His parents picked up their hobbling son and brought him home, Kling Sr. said.

"I am so glad he is out of there," he said. "There were a lot of tears."

Surgeons decided not to remove the shrapnel embedded deep into Kling's upper left thigh. It's too close to arteries and nerves, Kling said. Scar tissue will encapsulate it and prevent pain and further injury.

A physician extracted a piece of shrapnel 2 inches in diameter from above his knee before he left Iraq. The area requires frequent cleansing and bandaging, Kling said. It still bleeds. Once it heals, he will begin rehabilitation to regain his muscles.

He receives treatment at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina during the week and returns home for the weekends.

Soldiers Ordered To Attend Bush Rally; Base Employees Too, In Violation Of Hatch Act Law

(Washington Post, October 5, 2004, Pg. 23)

Military and civilian employees at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, N.M., received instructions in August telling them to attend a local campaign rally for President Bush. "They basically rounded up the people and told the military, 'Don't wear your uniforms and get over to the convention center and root for the president,'" said John Gage, president of the American Federation of Government Employees. The "party, the administration, whoever, just seems to be using our military and our civil service as a prop for campaign events," he said.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

The Most Complex Guerrilla War In U.S. History; "We Want Every U.S. Dog To Leave The Country."

October 5, 2004 By JIM KRANE, Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- The U.S. military is fighting the most complex guerrilla war in its history, **with 140,000 American soldiers trained for conventional warfare against insurgent groups.**

U.S. troops can't settle on a single approach to fight groups whose goals and operations vary. And it's hard to sort combatants from civilians in a chaotic land where large parts of some communities support the insurgents and others are too afraid to risk their lives to help foreigners.

"It's more complex and challenging than any other insurgency the United States has fought," said Bruce Hoffman, a Rand Corp. counterinsurgency expert who served as an adviser to the U.S.-led occupation administration.

"We want every U.S. dog to leave the country," said an insurgent leader in Fallujah who identified himself as Abu Thar, a 45-year-old former colonel in the Iraqi army.

Public opinion is the war's central front and it is tilting against the Americans, said James Dobbins, a former Bush administration envoy to Afghanistan and now a military analyst for Rand Corp.

Independent analysts say 16 months of escalating warfare by U.S. troops with little practical experience in fighting insurgents have made clear the difficulty of defeating militants who mount attacks while hiding and moving among civilians.

"The United States can buy the Iraqi government time to get organized, but the U.S. has become too unpopular and lost too much support among the population to be able to itself win a counterinsurgency campaign," Dobbins said.

If the insurgents are unorganized and unfocused, their tactics are classic. Guerrilla wars often feature car bombings, assassinations and abductions in the early stages, said Richard K. Betts, director of the Institute for War and Peace Studies at Columbia University.

As the militants gain strength, they progress to fielding combat troops, Betts said. In Iraq, large formations of Iraqi insurgents have met with mixed success. **U.S. commanders claim their troops killed more than 4,000 al-Sadr fighters in April and August. But Sunni fighters in Fallujah and other cities have mounted daring attacks and melted away with few killed.**

Baqouba Police Commander Killed; Municipal Building Mortared

October 4, 2004 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In Baqouba, a police commander was assassinated in an early morning drive-by shooting by unknown gunmen, police said. Insurgents also fired mortar rounds at

Baqouba's municipal building, killing one person and wounding seven in the city 57 kilometers (35 miles) northeast of Baghdad.

Ten Occupation Cops Killed Near Baghdad: One Million \$ Gone Missing

10.5.04 Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq Violence in Iraq has claimed the lives of more police officers. Authorities say ten policemen were killed in two separate attacks south of Baghdad yesterday.

Among those killed in one attack about 20 miles south of the capital were a lieutenant colonel and a major. Three other officers were shot dead when rebels opened fired at a gas station in the town of Latifiyah.

A survivor of that attack told police the gunmen took one million dollars from the officers' vehicle. No word on why the victims were carrying so much money.

Nine Occupation Guards Wounded In Youssifiyah

05-10-2004 By ALEXANDRA ZAVIS, Associated Press Writer

A car bomb exploded as the Iraqi National Guard was conducting raids in Youssifiyah, 12 miles south of the capital, said police Lt. Abbas Shechati. One Iraqi civilian was killed and 13 Iraqis were wounded, nine of them National Guardsmen, he said.

Oil Ministry, Occupation Area Shelled In Baghdad

05-10-2004 (Albawaba.com)

Loud blasts echoed through the Iraqi capital as a number of mortar rounds landed near government offices, the Interior Ministry and witnesses said. There were no reports on casualties.

At least one round landed near the Oil Ministry, Interior Ministry spokesman Col. Adnan Abdul-Rahman said.

Witnesses told AP Television News that another round landed near the main passport office. The blast left a small crater in the road and there were bloodstains nearby. U.S. troops cordoned off the scene.

More Attacks On Oil Pipelines: Northern Lines Still Closed Down

Oct. 05, 2004 Associated Press

On Sunday and Monday, insurgent attacks and the fires they started stopped the flow in all the pipelines from Iraq's southern oil fields. The southern ports account for 90 percent of Iraq's exports.

Insurgents have been attacking oil pipelines in north and south Iraq for months. But the last time saboteurs brought southern exports to a halt was in June.

The northern pipelines, which run to the southern Turkish port of Ceyhan, had no flow on Monday, according to an oil official in Ceyhan.

Officials have made a priority of securing the pipelines and oil infrastructure. **But with about 4,350 miles of pipeline crisscrossing the country, they concede there are many places for saboteurs to strike.**

"Those pipelines are very long and very vulnerable," a U.S. diplomat in Baghdad said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Iraq resumed exports of oil from its southern terminal on Tuesday.

The resumption came sooner than expected, just a day after two officials at the South Oil Co. said the pipelines to the port of Basra were not likely to be operating for at least a week.

"Exports resumed and the pumping is up to its normal level," South Oil's chief of public relations, Samir Jassim, told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Muslim Cleric Warns Of Jihad If Killings Of Civilians Continue

10.5.04 Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq

The specter of a nationwide holy war has been added to the continued fighting in the Iraqi city of Samarra.

A Sunni Muslim group called the Association of Muslim Scholars warns of a jihad unless U-S and Iraqi troops stop killing what the group calls innocent civilians.

The association condemned weekend raids that included the deaths of at least 23 children and 18 women in the Sunni Triangle.

Iraq's defense minister admitted in a television interview that insurgents escaped as coalition forces arrived.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

An Armed People

Comment:

One of the more severe miscalculations of Rumsfeld and the other genius leaders that bow before him was a complete failure to appreciate that the Iraqis were a heavily armed people. The Hussein dictatorship never tried to take their guns away, although it used force to kill off oppositions that tried to organize.

One giveaway the Bush crowd were too stupid to pay attention to were a number TV news reports showing Iraqis flooding the weapons shops in the days before the invasion. No problem, just walk in, plunk down your cash, and your Kalashnikov or whatever could be wrapped, or carried out as is. The buyers may have had self protection in the midst of chaos as much in mind as resistance, but the clue was there.

All these idiots did was disband Hussein's repressive apparatus, leaving millions of people capable of resisting, possessing the weapons to do so and, like reasonable people everywhere, also possessed of a profound dislike of a foreign army showing up and taking over their country.

This would seem to be an argument in favor of the right of citizens to possess arms. T

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Nashville Bush-Cheney Office Hit By Gunshots

10.5.04

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (Reuters)

[Saddam Hussein remnants and “foreign fighters” in Tennessee?]

A Bush-Cheney campaign office in Knoxville, Tennessee was hit by at least two gunshots apparently fired from a passing vehicle on Tuesday but no one was hurt, police said.

The shots were fired before the office opened for the day and shattered two glass doors.

Darrell DeBusk, a spokesman for the police department in Knoxville, said the motive for the incident was not known and no one working in the Bush-Cheney campaign office or any of the nearby businesses had reported any threats.

"You'd like to think it was just random," he said. **[Dream on.]**

The campaign office, which also houses the Knox County Republican Party headquarters, was clearly marked with a banner promoting the re-election of President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney.

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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