

GI SPECIAL 2#B85

**HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WAR?
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. Army soldiers during memorial service for Sgt. Michael A. Uvanni of Charlie Co., 2-108 Infantry, New York Army National Guard, at Forward Operating Base Brassfield Mora near Samarra, Iraq Oct. 7, 2004. Uvanni died while directing fire during a battle in Samarra last week. (AP Photo/Jim MacMillan)

**"We Don't Belong There"
"Whatever You See On TV, It's
Much Worse" Severely Wounded
Seabee Says;
Family Broke, Phone Cut Off**

Oct 6 BY R. NORMAN MOODY, FLORIDA TODAY

Displaying a "Navy Seabee -- Can Do" sticker and wearing a blue muscle shirt with "Navy" printed in bright yellow across the front, Peter Reid looks the part of a proud Seabee.

The sticker is on a motorized wheelchair he is learning to use.

Reid, a Petty Officer 1st Class, was critically injured May 2 in an attack on his Navy unit in a military compound in Iraq. Five of his fellow Seabees died.

A mortar shattered his right leg and shrapnel riddled his body, ripping into his head and destroying his left eye. With paralysis on his left side, shrapnel still in his head and his right leg a long way from healing, Reid struggles.

Now, he and his family also must contend with the aftermath of Hurricane Jeanne.

Electrical power was restored to his rented home in Palm Bay and neighbors tacked up plastic sheeting on the roof, but the stains on the ceiling are evidence of the leaks that came when the hurricane blew off some roof shingles.

"It's just one calamity after another," Reid said before lowering his head. "Please God, quit testing us."

Reid and his wife, Michele, must vacate their home to allow the repairs, but haven't been able to find a temporary rental.

A television, a computer and a plastic box sat in the middle of the floor away from the leaks. The Reids wait and hope.

He slowly tilts his battery-operated wheelchair back to about a 45-degree angle to shift his weight in the chair and relieve the pain in his legs. A few minutes later, he returns it to the normal position.

Reid asks for help from his wife, but he doesn't complain.

After more than four months in hospitals, the former heavy-equipment operator struggles to lift his coffee cup and occasionally stumbles as he tries to form sentences.

"I'm very lucky both with what happened to me and the support I have," Reid said. "I would not be here today if not for my wife and my son."

His wife, Michele, gave up her job in a real estate office to care for him. Her son, 14-year-old T.C. Cavanagh, helps.

"It's tiring and stressful but its worth it," Michele Reid said. "I'm just glad he's alive. He's tough. I'm optimistic. I know he's going to walk again."

After 17 years in the Navy, four on active duty and 13 as a reservist, 49-year-old Reid arrived in Iraq in April with the Jacksonville-based Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 14.

Reid, part of a tactical movement team that escorted convoys and dignitaries, had just provided security for Navy Rear Admiral Charles Kubic. Seabees and other troops were gathered inside the military compound in Al-Andar province when enemy mortar came streaking in. There were soldiers, Marines and Seabees. Reid recalls some of what happened.

"It was a motor pool yard," he said. "We had just picked up Admiral Kubic. It was mass hysteria, well, controlled you know."

A mortar hit the ground, but didn't explode. It bounced, then hit his leg, he said. He doubled over holding onto his leg and trying to protect himself by staying low to the ground.

"It was about the size of a pineapple," Reid said of the mortar. "I grabbed it and rolled it off into a hole nearby."

There were more mortars coming in, so Reid did not know if the first one eventually exploded. Other mortars landed nearby. Reid awoke in the hospital.

"It was horrific, horrific stuff," he said. "Just not being able to help my buddies. That was the worst. They helped me."

Up to 38 were injured, two still remain hospitalized in Tampa.

Reid had volunteered to help with the escorts. **Though his battalion's primary duty is construction, Reid said he saw few Seabees doing construction other than working on improving their own base.**

Instead, Seabees went on missions that had nothing to do with construction, he said.

"Every time we decided to go to Fallujah it was rough," he said. "Men, women and children, they all have weapons. You could tell, they wanted to kill you."

Reid went on 28 missions. Before each one he wrote a good-bye letter to his wife he never sent. They went in his diary. She discovered them after he returned.

The situation in Iraq is much worse than the public sees, he said.

"We don't belong there," Reid said. "Whatever you see on TV, it's much worse."

On May 5, days after the attack, Michele Reid received a letter from her husband. By then she was hearing of the attack on the Seabees, but had not gotten word about her husband.

"The Navy never notified me that my husband was injured," Michele Reid said. "I knew something was wrong. ***I called up the chain of command and no one knew where he was.***"

As Michele desperately tried to get word about her husband, he was already in a military hospital in Germany. **Through her persistence and telephone calls**, she found out he was being sent to National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. She was waiting there when he arrived after a week hospitalized in Germany.

"The doctors told me that Pete wasn't going to make it," Michele said in a quivering voice. "He didn't have any brain activity."

She saw the wounds when he was flown to Washington.

"I dropped to my knees," she said. "I lost it. He had holes in his chest, holes in his stomach and 30 percent of his tibia was blown away. I cried, screamed and prayed."

Reid spent the next six weeks in intensive care. There were two months in Bethesda and two months at James Haley VA Medical Center in Tampa.

He was discharged Aug. 31. They returned to their Palm Bay home just days before Frances hit Brevard County, and evacuated to Tampa. Then Jeanne came, causing more hardships.

"He still has shrapnel in his head," Michele Reid said. "They can't remove it."

Muscle from his abdomen was used to help rebuild his right leg. More surgery will be needed later. Metal pins bolted to rods around the leg hold the shattered bones in place.

"Impress me, show me what you've got going," occupational therapist Adrian Cahill said, standing beside Reid's wheelchair.

Reid grimaced, angling his left shoulder upward, holding his breath, as he tried to lift his half-closed left hand up to his chest, the tremor in his arm visible.

"That's all I've got," Reid said, exhaling forcefully.

"There's no real magic here," Cahill said. "It's like having a trainer."

Reid's artificial eye sometimes bothers him. Michele Reid has to help her husband remove it. She washes it and, after a while, puts it back in and gives him his eyeglasses.

A big-screen television that was a gift from his mother-in-law makes it a little easier to watch TV, providing him with a little distraction.

"Before the injury he didn't like sports," Michele Reid said. "Now he loves sports."

As he struggles to regain use of his arm and leg, bills have mounted. There's the \$1,300 cell phone bill from his time in the hospital. That led the phone company to cut off the service.

Other expenses that weren't covered by the military included rental cars to get Michele Reid around while he was in the hospital.

Reid is eager to get outside, but they don't have the proper vehicle. They have a van but don't yet have a lift for his wheelchair.

"It's frustrating," Michele Reid said. "He just wants to go out to the grocery store with me."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Baji IED Kills U.S. Soldier

10.7.04 Aljazeera.Net

A US soldier was killed when Iraqi fighters attacked a patrol north of Baghdad. The US military said a roadside bomb, which also injured an Iraqi translator, exploded at around midnight near Baiji, 180km north of the capital, on Wednesday.

US Soldier Killed Near Fallujah, Two Wounded

October 7, 2004 AFP & HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
Release Number: 04-10-05C

One US soldier was killed and two others wounded in an overnight attack on their convoy near Fallujah, west of Baghdad, the US military said in a statement.

An "unknown type of explosive device" hit the convoy at about 9:45 pm (1845 GMT) on Wednesday, it said in a statement.

Three wounded soldiers were initially taken to the 31st Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad where one later died of his wounds at approximately 11 p.m. The other two soldiers remain at the 31st CSH.

Of the surviving casualties, one was said to be in a serious condition and the other stable.

Marine Injured During Hot Extraction

October 07, 2004 By David Stout, Jonesboro Sun

WYNNE -- A Wynne native serving in the Marine Corps in Iraq is hospitalized in Germany after being injured in a military operation last week.

Sgt. Brent Slaughter, leader of a special forces team, was injured when the humvee in which he was riding struck a crater created by a roadside bomb detonated by insurgents **as the team was conducting what was termed a "hot extraction" at an undisclosed location in Iraq**, Gary Slaughter, Brent Slaughter's father, told The Sun Wednesday.

The team was leaving the operation and the humvee was traveling approximately 50 mph when the bomb was detonated, creating a crater which the humvee struck, the elder Slaughter said. All six of the team members riding in the vehicle were injured, with Brent Slaughter suffering back and hip injuries which have resulted in numbness in his legs.

Four Marines Wounded In Haswah Battle

10.7.04 By Robert H. Reid, Associated Press

The U.S. command said 17 suspected insurgents were captured Wednesday in two joint raids by U.S. and Iraqi troops around Haswah and Iskandariyah, both about 30 miles south of Baghdad.

Since the operation began Tuesday, four Marines, three Iraqi National Guard members and three civilians have been wounded, U.S. officials said.

Local Soldier Wounded

(October 6, 2004) WorldNow and WIVB

A soldier from Niagara County is among the latest battle casualties wounded in Iraq.

1994 North Tonawanda High School graduate David Cooney suffered a serious eye injury while battling insurgents in Samarra last Friday.

That same battle killed one soldier and left four others wounded, including Specialist Cooney's partner.

Cooney pulled him to safety.

Dutch Soldier Wounded In Convoy Attack At Ar Rumaythah

7 October 2004 Expatica Communications BV

AMSTERDAM — A Dutch soldier was injured by a bomb attack on a convoy in southern Iraq on Thursday.

The injured soldier was treated at the mobile hospital at the main Dutch base at As Samawah. His condition was described as good given the circumstances.

His convoy of eight vehicles was hit by the bomb on the edge of the Iraqi city Ar Rumaythah, where 204 Dutch soldiers are based.

Apache attack helicopters and the specialist Quick Reaction Force was scrambled to bring him to safety.

Resistance Rockets Hit Baghdad Sheraton

October 7, 2004 (Reuters) & By ROBERT H. REID, ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER. Associated Press writer Omar Sinan contributed to this story.

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- Two rockets hit a downtown Baghdad hotel housing foreigners [try mercenaries] and journalists Thursday, and gunfire erupted in the neighborhood across the Tigris River from the U.S. Embassy compound.

Security guards at the Palestine hotel said two rockets fired from the back of a pickup struck the nearby Sheraton hotel, shattering windows and filling the main lobby of the hotel with smoke and debris.

A resident of the hotel said one rocket had hit a first-floor room and a second exploded moments later.

A source at Iraq's Interior Ministry said three Russian-made Katyusha rockets were used in the attack.

Several shaken Westerners emerged from the hotel, some covering their mouths with cloths, as workers swept up shards from shattered plate-glass doors in the Sheraton lobby. **A huge crack appeared in the lobby wall.**

Outside, bursts of automatic gunfire were heard in the street between the Sheraton and nearby Palestine hotel, which also is a base for foreigners. The gunfire lasted for about 10 minutes after the explosions.

The blaze was believed caused by several rockets that landed in the compound, which is surrounded by a concrete wall. A palm tree was set on fire and tracer bullets streaked across the nighttime sky.

A bride and groom rushed out of the smoke-filled Sheraton minutes after arriving for their wedding night.

"I made a mistake by booking at the Sheraton. I knew something like this would happen. But I just did a foolish thing," said Hayder Abdul Zahra, holding his shivering bride in his arms.

One barefoot man was carried over the broken glass by rescuers. Western foreign contractors [**try mercenaries**], some appearing stunned, were escorted from the hotel by their armed security guards.

Sheraton security guards said two rockets were fired from a pickup truck at the square, where Saddam Hussein's statue was pulled down last year in what became the defining image of his regime's collapse.

The pickup and another car were destroyed in the gun battle, the guards said. The truck contained more missiles, one security guard said.

Shortly after the gunfire subsided, a new explosion was heard, but it sounded further away - likely across the Tigris River. Warning signs blared across the river from the area of the Green Zone.

Bomb Discovered At Green Zone Restaurant

Oct. 7, Aljazeera.Net

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- An improvised bomb was found in a restaurant in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, home of the U.S. Embassy and key government offices, American officials said Thursday.

The Green Zone, a sprawling compound on the west bank of the Tigris river, has been a frequent target for insurgents using car bombs, rockets and mortars to attack US forces and Iraq's US-backed interim government.

The device was found around midday Tuesday at the Green Zone Cafe, a popular hangout for Westerners living and working in the compound. A U.S. military ordnance detachment safely disarmed it, U.S. officials said.

American citizens were "strongly advised" to avoid the cafe and other restaurants in the Green Zone, according to an advisory issued by the U.S. Embassy, **which is supposed to be one of the safest areas of Baghdad..**

"It was an improvised explosive device," said Lieutenant Colonel Steve Boylan, using the military's term for a bomb.

It was believed to be the first time that an explosive device was planted inside the Green Zone.

There have been occasional bomb scares inside the area, which is almost entirely enclosed within four-metre-high concrete blast walls, but which is home to many Iraqi families as well as US, British and Iraqi officials.

Panic Time At U.S. Command: Occupation Has To Use Air Attacks Against Baghdad IED's

Oct 7, 2004 By ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq - **U.S. warplanes struck Baghdad's Sadr City district overnight to neutralize roadside bombs** that regularly explode as American patrols drive through the area, the military said Thursday.

AC-130 gunships fired into the district's narrow and densely populated streets, which are littered with improvised bombs, said Capt. Brian O'Malley of the 1st Cavalry Division.

Residents held a funeral Thursday for a man they said was killed in the strikes, Associated Press Television News footage showed.

US Unmanned Plane Shot Down

Oct 6: AFP

BAGHDAD, Oct 6: **The US military said on Wednesday it had lost track of a small, unmanned surveillance plane over Baghdad as militant Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi's group claimed it shot down two such drones.**

"One of our UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles), we have lost contact with it," said Major Philip Smith, a spokesman for the army in the Iraqi capital. The path of the small model-plane-sized Raven was last recorded at about 3:00 pm (1200 GMT). It had been flying over the Haifa Street area, a Sunni stronghold.

"Who knows what happened to it," said Smith.

1200 U.S. Soldiers Will Remain In Samarra Indefinitely;

General "Not Sure" Insurgents Gone

10.6.04 Patrick Kerkstra, Knight Ridder Newspapers

TIKRIT, Iraq, October 6, 2004 - **As many as 1,200 American troops will have to stay in the former insurgent stronghold of Samarra indefinitely to prevent the city from slipping back under insurgent control, Iraqi officials and American military commanders said Wednesday.**

It is even unclear how clean Samarra is of insurgents. Maj. Gen. John Batiste, commander of the Army division that led the assault, said "we're not quite sure yet" how many militants remain in the city.

Iraqi Puppet Troops Mysteriously Missing In Action

(New York Times, October 7, 2004, Pg. 1)

About 2,500 Marines and soldiers set up camps and conducted night raids on Tuesday and Wednesday over a wide swath of territory roughly 30 miles south of Baghdad, rolling over desert terrain in armored vehicles, taking gunfire from insurgents and uncovering at least two large caches of weaponry. ***The U.S. military said the operation also included Iraqi commandos and national guardsmen, although none were evident during operations west of the Euphrates River,*** which runs through the area of the raids, northern Babil Province.

TROOP NEWS

Update On The Lampin Case; Command Mysteriously "Losing" Paperwork On Injured Soldier

From: BLampin4036@aol.com

To: GI Special

Sent: Thursday, October 07, 2004 4:22 PM

Subject: Update on my husband Sgt. Tony Lampin; permission granted to publish.

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

Oct. 7, 2004

Today, Tony called me letting me know some interesting things that have recently come up on his medical.

He told me that the doctors there all agree that he should be sent home because his knee is not getting better, that in fact it is getting worse. It still swells, and now that he can only take one of his pain prescriptions, Percocet, because the other, Ultracet, is making him sick, his knee is really giving him more problems.

His last doctors visit a few days ago was when he was told that the doctors told the command that he should be sent home, but the commander of the 115th Field Hospital, Colonel Short will not let him go. Now, he has lied once again not only to my husband and his family, but to the State Senators and Congressmen that have addressed the situation. In the last letter that I received from the AG, it states:

You may be assured your husband is doing well since deploying. He has been evaluated by an orthopedic surgeon and offered alternative therapies. In the event his condition deteriorates, the orthopedic surgeon and Colonel Short will come to a decision, if and when it becomes appropriate, to redeploy Sgt. Lampin for health reasons.

I find it funny that now the doctors are saying that he should be sent home, but Short still will not send him back.

If the doctors feel this way, wouldn't that mean that they are agreeing that Tony is getting worse? So why want Short keep up to his promise that he would send him back if he does get worse?

Also, my last update I said that his medical work-up there has disappeared. Well, guess what, and no they didn't find them. For some reason the new paper work has disappeared as well.

Where is his paper work? Why is the new stuff disappearing? There are only two people that can answer that, and that is Colonel Short and the clerk that was or has been intimidated, but he will never admit to it.

Tony also said that his last doctor is writing an inquiry about him because of what the commander is doing. I can only hope that someone of the higher rank will read it, and wish so badly that I had a copy of it.

In case you are wondering, yes, Tony has been making copies of his paper work now. At least one of them.

COLONEL SHORT, COMMANDER OF THE 115TH FIELD HOSPITAL, WHAT ARE YOU SO AFRAID OF IF YOU SEND HIM HOME?

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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)

50% Of Vets Now Say Iraq War Wrong

Oct. 6 (Bloomberg)

The number of Americans who say the U.S.-led war in Iraq was a mistake has increased to almost half, according to a Gallup poll conducted after the first of three debates between President George W. Bush and Democratic challenger John Kerry.

Among subgroups in the latest poll, veterans showed the biggest increase in the percentage who say the war was a mistake. Fifty percent of veterans say the war was a mistake, up from 35 percent polled a week earlier.

The results show a shift away from support for the war since early September, when a survey conducted after the Republican National Convention indicated 38 percent of Americans saw the war as a mistake and 57 percent didn't, the Gallup Organization said today on its Web site.

The Oct. 1-3 nationwide telephone survey of 1,016 adults shows 48 percent view the war as a mistake, up 6 percentage points since a Sept. 24-26 poll, Gallup said. Fifty-one percent said the war wasn't a mistake, down 4 points from the previous survey.

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.

Breaking Their Silence; Military Families Organize To Stop War

Families of U.S. troops have long adhered to a clan code that prohibits speaking out against a war. Now some are going public over Iraq.

October 6, 2004 By Elizabeth Mehren, Times Staff Writer

PHILADELPHIA — In Love Plaza, about 75 people mingled in bright sunshine, chatting noisily while one speaker after another droned on at a campaign rally. Vendors hawked T-shirts, and children frolicked in a fountain opposite ornate City Hall.

Then Celeste Zappala stepped onstage. Standing between columns of red, white and blue balloons, she held up the Purple Heart awarded posthumously to her oldest son. The plaza fell silent.

In calm, measured tones, Zappala talked about her opposition to the war in Iraq. She spoke with pride and tenderness about her son, Sherwood Baker, who was killed in April in Baghdad.

"Sherwood was a patriot," Zappala said. "He was brave and faithful and loyal. He believed in America, and he believed in democracy. And I made an oath to him not to be quiet, not to be cynical in my grief."

Before her son left for Iraq early this year, Zappala, 57, joined a group of military families who support the troops but oppose the war. **Today, Military Families Speak Out has more than 1,700 member families across the country who participate in protests, appear on radio and television and confront public officials.** By telling stories about their loved ones, they hope to sway hearts and minds and help bring an end to the war.

At Love Plaza, after Zappala finished a 15-minute speech that left much of the audience wiping its eyes, an Army veteran from the Vietnam era approached her.

"For those of us who have been in the service, I wish more parents would speak out," said Steve McCarter of Glenside, Pa. "This shows that not everyone connected to the military is united behind this war."

For centuries, soldiers have been trained to think as a group. With its uniforms and strict regulations, military culture fostered an us-versus-them mentality. The powerful sense of solidarity applied by extension to close family members. **In military households, it was understood that speaking out violated the code of the clan and carried consequences.**

Though numerous groups of military personnel and their families support the Iraq war, MFSO is the only organization formed by military families who are against it.

The organized expression of dissent is "a new and significant development," said Jeremi Suri, a University of Wisconsin history professor who is an expert on antiwar movements.

It is a big change from the 1960s and '70s, when opposition to the Vietnam War was lumped in with contempt for the military establishment. "In the past, groups related to soldiers have felt uncomfortable" criticizing a war, Suri said.

But many parents of today's young troops were raised in an era of protest, "and no matter how quiescent they may have been later on, this has revived it," said Roland L. Guyotte, another authority on antiwar movements and a history professor at the University of Minnesota.

Military Families Speak Out took root almost two years ago, before the U.S. invaded Iraq. Two Boston labor organizers, Charley Richardson and his wife, Nancy Lessin, grew concerned about what they saw as the real motivation for the war. And they wanted to put a face to the troops who would be risking their lives.

So they made a poster with a picture of their son, a Marine who had served in Kosovo and Afghanistan. The caption read: "This is our son Joe. Please don't send him to war for oil." When Richardson and Lessin took the poster to antiwar rallies and other political events, it caught the attention of military families troubled by the war.

Last fall, Lessin, 55, and Richardson, 51, launched MFSO, contacting everyone on their burgeoning e-mail list. Within 24 hours, about 200 military spouses, parents, siblings and grandparents had signed up for an organization with no dues, no bylaws, no board of directors and a headquarters at the founders' kitchen table.

As the organization has grown, Lessin and Richardson have hired a part-time media consultant in Washington to help coordinate requests for appearances by members. The group relies on donations for its operating expenses.

MFSO also mobilizes protests, such as one by parents who went to the White House in April to deliver a package of letters to President Bush. **Most had lost children in Iraq. A White House guard would not accept the letters.**

Members find the organization through chat rooms and Internet searches, word of mouth and by hearing MFSO speakers at public gatherings. New York lawyer Madelaine Strauss, 51, said she was referred to MFSO when she contacted a Vietnam-era antiwar group.

While her nephew was serving with the Marines in Ramadi, in Iraq's Sunni Triangle region, **Strauss said: "I wanted to reach out to someone who understood what my family and I were going through. But I was also looking for a way to voice my opposition to this war, which I am ashamed to say I was initially in favor of."**

Strauss said she changed her mind "once I realized we were operating under false assumptions, and that the intelligence was bad." Her 19-year-old nephew came home last weekend.

No one at the Pentagon would comment about MFSO. **Spokeswoman Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke said she was "unaware of its activities." [At least try a smart lie]**

The same weekend that Zappala captivated the audience at Love Plaza, three MFSO mothers waited to speak to two dozen antiwar activists at a potluck supper in a Lutheran church on the other side of Philadelphia. One has a son fighting in Iraq; one, a son who returned; and one, a son who was killed.

They believe U.S. soldiers were sent to Iraq to fight for a political agenda, not to defend America. The three, from suburban New Jersey, also maintain that troops have not been properly equipped for their mission, right down to a lack of toiletries.

One of the mothers, Mildred McHugh, said she felt the war was wrong when its stated purpose — to stop Saddam Hussein from using weapons of mass destruction — was later shown to be false because no such weapons were found. **But with a son in the Army, she kept her feelings to herself, fearing she might cause trouble.**

When her son Steve was sent to Iraq six months ago, McHugh found her voice: "I was just furious about him going to a war based on lies. I thought, how much worse could it be for him?"

Besides, she said, "if anything should happen to my son, I will know I did everything I possibly could to protect him. And if I do not save my own son, maybe I can bring someone else's son home."

She typed the phrase "military families" into a Web search, and with no background in social activism, the 44-year-old pharmaceutical researcher joined MFSO. She wrote letters, appeared on radio call-in shows and pestered senators into seeing her. McHugh said military families carried credibility that public officials found hard to ignore.

She said her son — a 22-year-old Army infantry private in Samarra, north of Baghdad — told her he was proud of the stand she had taken. But, McHugh said, "he is glad I use my maiden name."

Patt Gunn, 50, is a Navy veteran. She worked as a military recruiter and volunteers at the local USO office. Gunn said one of her biggest concerns was that the troops were not well trained for their jobs in Iraq, and that many lacked safety equipment. Although she comes from a military family — her father was also in the Navy — Gunn does not regard joining MFSO as crossing some invisible line of loyalty.

"My fight is with the current administration," she said. "I am always very careful. I never say anything against a soldier. The military is doing their job. **They took an oath, just like I did, and they are absolutely following orders. It's just the wrong orders.**"

Gunn's 25-year-old triplet sons all joined the armed forces, but only one was sent to Iraq. Last November, Jason Gunn was badly injured in a car bombing in Baghdad. He was sent home to recover, then sent back to Iraq. The Army reassigned him to Germany last month.

As she rose to speak to the activists, the third mother, Sue Niederer, 55, pulled out a photograph of her son Seth Dvorin. The 24-year-old Army lieutenant died Feb. 3 in a bombing south of Baghdad.

"My son is home now," Niederer said. "Six feet under."

The audience gasped.

Across the country, in Escondido, Fernando Suarez del Solar also buried his son. Lance Cpl. Jesus Alberto Suarez del Solar Navarro was 20 years old when he stepped on an American cluster bomb near Baghdad on March 27, 2003.

Struggling to make sense of his son's death, Suarez del Solar quit his jobs delivering newspapers and working at a 7-Eleven and started an antiwar group for young Latinos.

Suarez del Solar, who spoke almost no English, called his organization Guerrero Azteca. He later merged the group with MFSO, bringing dozens of Latino families into the organization. He said he had no income, scraping by on donations.

He taught himself English and began making speeches to encourage young people to stay in school rather than join the military. At dozens of conferences and visits to more than 200 high schools, Suarez del Solar has described how his son joined the Marines because he thought it would help him get a job fighting illegal drug traffickers when he got out.

"I speak against the system," said Suarez del Solar, 48, who served in the Mexican army. "But I support the troops. I support the boys and the girls inside the military. Nobody touches me, nobody questions me because I tell the real story, my son's story."

Although their son ended up going to Iraq, Charley Richardson and Nancy Lessin were more fortunate. Joe Richardson, 26, returned safely after six months.

The founders acknowledge there is no way to measure MFSO's effectiveness. But Richardson said the organization had a "huge influence" because it separated the question of support for the troops from support for the war.

In addition, he said, "we have reached people who have never spoken out before."

"For them, it is a big change. I also think we have given some space for politicians to speak out — praising the work of the soldiers, but criticizing the war."

The couple's efforts have been criticized and they have received death threats. They have been labeled unpatriotic, a charge other MFSO members say they have heard as well.

"I think our definition of patriotic is what are you doing to make your country a better country," Lessin said. "We think we are doing the most patriotic thing we could do in a situation where our leadership has taken us into a war that should never have happened."

Back at Love Plaza, Celeste Zappala told the crowd about the boy she adopted when he was 13 months old. Sherwood Baker grew up to become a part-time disc jockey and a caseworker for mentally retarded adults. He joined the National Guard in 1997 after watching troops do flood-control work.

Zappala, director of the Philadelphia Council on Aging, said her son saw the Guard as "another way of helping out" his community. He assured her that Guardsmen did not go to war.

Baker, 30, was killed in a munitions explosion in Baghdad while providing security for an Army unit seeking weapons of mass destruction. He became the first wartime fatality in the Pennsylvania National Guard since 1945. His father, Alfred Zappala, 64, who served in the Reserves and for 32 years worked for the Defense Department, is also active in MFSO. Alfred Zappala traveled to a National Guard convention in Las Vegas last month to rebut remarks about the war delivered there by Bush.

After the Philadelphia rally, Celeste Zappala brushed a strand of gray-blond hair from her face and fingered an album of family photographs that she often brings with her.

"I think that bearing witness is possibly the most important way you can move people's hearts," she said. "People pay attention to me when I tell Sherwood's story. How can they turn away?"

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.

Marine Corps Poisoned It's Own; Knew About Contamination At Base & Did Nothing

(Washington Post, October 7, 2004, Pg. 37)

The Marine Corps failed to evaluate health risks after discovering toxic chemicals in the drinking water at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in the early 1980s and did not provide enough detailed information about the contamination to residents of base housing, according to a report issued by an investigatory panel.

Deaths In Iraq By Race And Class: Researchers Find Surprises In Figures

September 28, 2004 By RINKER BUCK, Courant Staff Writer

WEST POINT, N.Y. -- It's a bright, crisp fall afternoon at the United States Military Academy, with cadets in their gray uniforms filing out of classes through stately stone courtyards, and rifle drill teams practicing on green fields. All around, the Hudson Highlands glow pastel under the falling sun.

Day by day, as new casualties from the Iraq war mount and are posted on a Pentagon website, civilian Professor Morten Ender and Army instructors Maj. Todd Woodruff and Maj. Remi Hajjar enter the grim statistics into the database for a study titled "Is Iraq A Class War?"

Using sophisticated software and models that allow them to parse endlessly the demographics of war casualties, the West Point team will address the riddles of race, class and military specialty that will allow the next generation of Pentagon planners to assess the composition of the armed forces and understand who dies where in battle.

"There's a preponderance of what we might call upper-working-class or lower-middle-class servicemen," Segal says. "The numbers represent economically distressed America, small-town kids with ambition but no jobs who are using the Army as a way to get out and progress."

One study of American deaths in the Iraq war has already yielded significant findings about race. Brian Gifford is a researcher with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation at the University of California, Berkeley. His study "Combat Casualties and Race: What can we learn from the 2003-2004 Iraq Conflict?" will be published this winter in the journal *Armed Forces & Society*.

"Hispanic deaths were way over-represented in the opening war phase in Iraq, comprising about 16 percent of all deaths," Gifford said. "But they represent just 11 percent of Army and Marine combat personnel and less than 9 percent of all active-duty personnel."

Other studies show that in some Marine units involved in the heaviest fighting before the occupation, Hispanic casualties were as high as 19 percent of all deaths.

Hispanic casualty rates dramatically declined, however, as soon as the occupation began and there were less-frequent, less-intensive battle conditions. For this period, Hispanic deaths represented less than 12 percent of all deaths, roughly proportional to the group's numbers within the active military.

Most experts agree on the explanation for these unexpectedly high Hispanic casualty rates. The majority of Hispanic recruits are either first- or second-generation Americans with relatively low rates of educational achievement. Their test scores simply don't justify placing them in relatively select - and safer - occupations behind the front lines.

"Because they're torn between two cultures, Hispanic language skills are more Spanish than English and they're relatively educationally disadvantaged," Enders says. "They go into the Marines because infantry is the big stress there."

Gifford found that blacks, who make up about 20 percent of all active-duty personnel, represented 16.7 percent of all casualties during the war phase and 12.2 percent of deaths after the occupation phase began.

Gifford and others agree that a black death rate lower than their proportional representation in the military is relatively easy to explain. African Americans have historically regarded the military as an economic steppingstone and picked relatively safe "support" occupations - medical units, computers, air traffic control - that translate well in the civilian economy.

"All the studies show that the military was the first to integrate and is regarded by African Americans as the most fair institution in the country," says Woodruff, the West Point researcher. "So African Americans are very savvy about using the military for advancement."

Whites represent about 65 percent of all active duty personnel, and were underrepresented in deaths during the initial war phase of the conflict, with 60.9 percent of deaths. This probably reflects the fact that whites serve in greater numbers in the relatively protected officer corps, and also heavily populate the more selective "support" functions far from the scene of battle.

But this apparent privilege of race dramatically reversed itself during the occupation, and now death rates for whites make up 70.6 percent of the total.

This suggests that the randomness of the violence since President Bush declared "Mission Accomplished" - the ambushes of military convoys, mortar attacks on rear command positions, urban conflicts with civilian militias - provides little safety for soldiers in elite specialties or rear positions.

But Gifford suggests that the dramatic break in casualty rates for whites between the war and occupation phases may be explained by other factors that should be carefully studied.

National Guard and reserve units now represent about a third of the 140,000 U.S. military personnel in Iraq. The Pentagon's heavy reliance on National Guard and reserve units has clearly affected another vital Iraq War demographic: the rising age of those killed in action.

According to Enders, the mean age of soldiers killed in Vietnam was 22.6 years old. But the mean age for soldiers killed in Iraq is 26.3, with significant numbers of soldiers killed

in their 30s. To some degree this reflects the demographics of the all-volunteer Army, which tends to retain soldiers longer than a drafted force.

But part-time reservists and National Guard members frequently remain in their units until retirement in their 50s, and these aging weekend warriors are clearly having an effect on the death statistics. Enders found, for instance, that the mean age for active-duty personnel killed in Iraq is 25.4 years old. But for the Reserve and National Guard dead, the mean age is 30.6.

An additional and salient conclusion can be drawn from the casualty statistics from Iraq. The introduction of the all-volunteer military in 1973 led to fears, often expressed by anti-war activists, that economic factors would force America to rely too heavily on minorities, who would then become "cannon fodder" during a war.

In fact, minorities now make up about 31 percent of the U.S. population, and are slightly over-represented in the military, with a 35 percent participation among all active duty military personnel. But minorities represent 31.7 percent of all military deaths in Iraq - well below their numbers in the military. Whites, meanwhile, represent 65 percent of all active duty military personnel, but they constitute 69 percent of deaths in Iraq.

"You periodically hear these arguments since Vietnam that minority Americans - blacks in particular - are used as cannon fodder in America's wars," Gifford says. "What you find from this data is that this myth is not true."

The Casualty Notification Officer

October 07, 2004 By Chuck Oxley, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — **Mike Schumacher is a nice guy. His quick smile and chuckling gray eyes might even remind you of your favorite uncle.**

But if you have a loved one fighting in the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan, he's the last person you want to see coming up your driveway.

Lt. Col. Michael Schumacher is the chief of the personnel unit at the Idaho Army National Guard based at Gowen Field. He has the responsibility of notifying families when their military fathers and sons, mothers and daughters are killed in service to their country.

"When we put on the Class A uniform, which is the dress uniform, and we're walking up to the door and they see us, they know why we're there," he said.

Schumacher ensures that he and any other officer who notifies a military family of a soldier's death follows strict protocols established by the Department of Defense.

The casualty notification officer — the soldier who actually knocks on the door — must hold the rank of captain or, in the case of a noncommissioned officer, sergeant 1st class.

The notification must also take place within four hours after the officer is assigned to a family unless that occurs between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began, Schumacher has personally served as the casualty notification officer for two Idaho soldiers — Army Pfc. Jerrick Petty, 25, of Idaho Falls, and just two weeks ago Army Capt. Eric L. Allton, 34, of Boise.

“That was one of the toughest things about this last one, Mrs. Allton, was that she just crumpled immediately. She didn’t want to let me in. She said I was lying about it. ... These are just normal human reactions to such horrible, horrible news.

“She crumpled on the floor, and I kind of crumpled with her and sat with her,” Schumacher continued. “The tough thing about being a stranger is, you can’t give any physical comfort, in fact, we’re told not to. We can’t hold them.”

Once inside, the officer is limited in what he or she can do or say. The Department of Defense provides a basic script, which is memorized along with facts of the death — when and how it happened.

“They’re not really hearing a lot of the words. All they’re hearing is, ‘My son or my husband is dead.’ You say it in the most humane and compassionate way you can.”

It also gets complicated when the wife or parent is not at home when the officer rings the doorbell. There’s always a chance that neighbors will see the officer and surmise what happened.

That’s a problem, Schumacher said, because not every notification is a death. The Department of Defense also notifies families when soldiers are critically wounded. And sometimes, those casualties pull through.

Schumacher has to take care of his own emotions too, but that often doesn’t come until after he leaves the family.

“The most difficult part of the task is when you’ve finished. You just deal with the reality of what you just had to do,” he said. “If it gets to be too much, I’ll just have to start ‘sharing the wealth.’”

So far, all but one of the National Guard’s notifications in Idaho have been done for regular soldiers or Marines. But 1,600 Idaho National Guard soldiers, now training in Texas and Louisiana, are scheduled to arrive in Iraq sometime before Christmas. The unit will stay on the ground for at least a year.

Idaho Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Tim Marsano said no military units serving in Iraq have totally escaped casualties.

“We certainly hope we’re the first,” Marsano said.

Defense Corruption Scandal Knocks Down Air Force General

(Honolulu Advertiser, October 7, 2004)

The president's pick to lead U.S. Pacific Command, Air Force Gen. Gregory Martin, asked that his name be withdrawn after being fiercely questioned about his role in a crooked Boeing contract. A hearing earlier in the day before the Senate Armed Services Committee was dominated by questions by Sen. John McCain about what Martin knew about the Boeing contract and whether he was stonewalling a Senate investigation.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Militants Report Capture Of Occupation Translator & Killing Of Cop Chief

DUBAI, Oct 7 (AFP)

An internet statement in the name of Iraq's Ansar al-Sunna group says it captured a Kurdish "spy" working for the United States and killed a police chief.

The statement said the militants had seized "Kurdish spy, Lokman Hussein Mohammed, from Dohuk, a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, led by the apostate Massud Barzani" on Tuesday.

The statement added that "the spy, **who worked as an interpreter for the American army, admitted to accompanying American forces during searches of Muslim households in Ramadi,**" a town west of Baghdad.

The statement did not say what the captive's fate was, but **Ramadi police said Wednesday that they had found the bullet-riddled body of an Iraqi interpreter with the American army just outside the city.**

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Day Of The Living Iraqis

September 23 -29, 2004 By SUSIE DAY, Gay City News

On September 8, the number of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq topped 1,000. That same day, several residents of the Washington, D.C. area inexplicably reported seeing what they described as recently killed Iraqis, walking around the nation's capital, window shopping, lined up at the Department of Motor Vehicles and registering to vote.

In the Dupont Circle area, a young man, appearing to be of Middle Eastern decent, approached Troy Burns, a 39-year-old Washingtonian. "He had on this long, dirty tunic-thing, and there were five or six small black holes in his chest," remembered Burns. "I write for 'Six Feet Under,' so I immediately guessed what was up." The youth, whom Burns called "dazed, yet determined," asked Burns politely for directions to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. "I was getting creeped out," said Burns, "so I went home. I knew the answer had to be on TV."

Upon returning to his apartment, Burns switched on his television and saw, live on C-SPAN, an older Middle Eastern gentleman, addressing an audience of reporters at a National Press Club luncheon. "You say 1,000 of your soldiers have died," proclaimed the man, whom the TV caption described as an unidentified Arab who had suddenly materialized at the podium. "We are sorry you have lost children. Please know, however, that for every American soldier dead in battle, your country has killed, at minimum, ten of our civilians. These people are among you today to claim the freedom and democracy your president promised us."

The man was later identified as Faisal Ahmed, a 66-year-old Iraqi grandfather of eight, who died in Najaf of an apparent heart attack when American troops put a bag over his head to detain him. According to pamphlets found scattered around the Beltway and major Washington tourist sites, Ahmed is a spokesperson for the New Operation Of Iraqi Liberation (NO-OIL), an organization formed to demand human rights for the several thousand civilians killed in Iraq by American forces and its allies over the past 18 months.

Although there are no reliable figures, the Associated Press reports that various authorities estimate anywhere from 10,000 to 30,000 Iraqis have been killed since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Amnesty International, for instance, calculates that over 10,000 Iraqi civilians died in the first year of conflict, alone.

But for at least one day, death did not appear to stop these Iraqis from being seen—and heard—by some in the area.

"This typical Muslim woman in a head scarf comes in looking for her daughter," said Alice Johnson, who works at the Department of Missing Persons for D.C.'s Third District. "I ask the usual, 'Age? Distinguishing characteristics?' She says, 'Iraqi, black hair, brown eyes. My daughter was almost four years old when I died.'

"I freeze—I mean, I have a son stationed over there. She goes on: 'I saw my daughter in the lap of an American soldier right before your bomb went off. You find her for me. My daughter's going to be five soon. You people promised us a new life.' Ever since, I've been sitting here, just staring out this window."

Not every encounter with the Iraqi dead has been without incident, however. “These camel jockeys just barge into my house and start carting everything out,” gasped Norman Phelps, ex-marine and homeowner in the exclusive neighborhood of Chevy Chase. “They dump my stuff on the lawn and announce they’re moving in. They were talking about ‘reparations.’ Said we invaded their country, now we’re going to see how it feels.”

Such militant tactics, say NO-OIL pamphlets, belong to the extremist fringe, and do not represent the organization as a whole. The Iraqi literature also explains that most NO-OIL members were killed accidentally, and seek now, through non-violent means, to return to their families and live in peace.

Anonymous sources, however, have indicated that the group has targeted for “liberation” several jails and detention centers that for months have held Middle Eastern immigrants on minor immigration violations. But when reporters tried to verify these rumors, Mr. Ahmed could not be found for comment.

Nor could any of the other Iraqi deceased. **Indeed, it appears that suddenly, after only some 24 hours, the Iraqis have quietly vanished. “They were never here to begin with,” stated Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, one of several Bush administration higher-ups who continue to disavow the existence of the Iraqi dead. “Or they were faking it. In either case, this is further proof that we should stay in Iraq and finish the job. In the name of peace, we may have to kill some of these people twice.”**

Following this line of thought, Pres. George W. Bush has ordered Homeland Security to develop a new surveillance system that can detect the dead.

Democratic presidential hopeful John Kerry, whose support for a U.S. military presence in Iraq is comparable to that of Bush’s, has called Americans claiming to have seen Iraqi dead “sensitive girlie-men,” adding that, even if recently deceased Iraqis were proven to exist, they could not be granted protection under the Constitution.

Television writer Troy Burns, on the other hand, declares he is proud to be a girlie-man. “Queer people complain about being invisible—at least we’re alive,” Burns said. “I hope the Iraqis come back. I need help with my treatment for an HBO pilot—‘Six Thousand Feet Under.’ It’s about typical Iraqis and how they might have lived out their lives if we hadn’t killed them. You think anybody will watch it?”

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

Sadr Aide Set Free; US Military Releases 230 Prisoners From Abu G & Bucca

BAGHDAD, Oct 7 (AFP) & Aljazeera.Net

The US military said it released some 230 detainees on Thursday from Baghdad's notorious Abu Ghraib prison and the coalition's other major detention facility of Camp Bucca in the southern town of Umm Qasr.

They were bused out of the infamous prison under US military escort and dropped off at an Iraqi national guard base in the Amiriyah neighbourhood on the western outskirts of the capital, he said.

Among those freed from Camp Bucca after almost a year of detention was Sheikh Moayad al-Khazraji, an aide to Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr, according to one of his friends. **Al-Khazraji was detained nearly a year ago along with seven other clerics close to al-Sadr who were charged with engaging in anti-US activities.**

The arrests triggered widespread protests. The others have been freed.

Al-Khazraji's release could help in negotiations to try to draw up a truce between US forces and al-Sadr's fighters in the Sadr City district of Baghdad. "It would appear to be a softening in the Americans' position," Shaikh Mahmud Sudani said of his fellow cleric's release.

Dozens of Sadr's partisans have been detained by US forces, including his spokesman Sheikh Ahmed al-Shaibani who was nabbed along with 40 others in a US raid on the cleric's office in the holy city of Najaf.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Karzai Running Mate Targeted In Bombing

(Washington Post, October 7, 2004, Pg. 22)

A roadside bomb exploded under a convoy carrying one of interim Afghan President Hamid Karzai's two running mates in the upcoming presidential election. The attack, in remote Badakshan province, killed one man and injured five others.

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