

## GI SPECIAL 2#B9



# Officer Threatens Army Wife: She Complained About Bad Housing That Made Kids Sick

June 28, 2004 By Karen Jowers, Army Times staff writer

Military families at Fort Lewis, Wash., are suing the developer of their privatized housing alleging discrimination against disabled on-post residents.

"We're not doing this to make trouble," said Summer Krook, director of Parents Against Disability Discrimination. **"We've tried to find a solution for two years."**

Krook's daughter is bipolar and has an anxiety disorder, also displaying obsessive-compulsive traits. Her son is epileptic and is prone to seizures, she says.

Krook and her husband, Kenneth, an Army sergeant, and six other Army families have filed suit against Equity/Fort Lewis Communities, LLC, a company contracted to develop, build, renovate, maintain and operate Fort Lewis housing. The suit was filed May 10 in U.S. District Court in Tacoma, Wash.

The families allege Equity made unlawful inquiries about individuals' disability status and failed to provide reasonable accommodations and modifications, even when doctors documented the need. **They said the company threatened them with eviction, refused to rent to some families and retaliated against others.**

**"Recently, Equity has been conducting surprise 'sanitation inspections' of residents' homes, threatening them with eviction, and calling upon the Army chain of command to help enforce its demands," the complaint states. "Families are afraid to call Equity with a routine maintenance request for fear that they will be subjected to an inspection or worse."**

The potential for such problems exists everywhere the services privatize housing, said Joyce Raezer, director of government relations for the National Military Family Association. **"The command still has responsibility for the well-being of families even though the service no longer owns the houses," she said. "The Army has the responsibility to provide oversight to the contractor."**

Fort Lewis officials declined to comment. "We're not involved in the suit, we're not named in the suit, and therefore, we have no comment," said Fort Lewis spokesman Joe Hitt.

"It's not that we don't care about the families," said Joe Sikes, director of the Defense Department's Housing and Competitive Sourcing Office. **(Right, this piece of shit cares a lot: dare to complain and we'll try to fuck you over.)**

Families complain that bus stops are not accessible to the disabled in some areas because sidewalks do not have curb cutouts, Krook said. Playgrounds and parks also lack an accessible path for those with disabilities.

**Krysten Spire says an Army superior threatened her husband with eviction if she continued to request action because of mold in their home.**

She and her son, Devin, are in the Exceptional Family Member Program and are disabled within the meaning of the federal Fair Housing Act. ***Krysten has severe allergic rhinitis and has been diagnosed with salivary gland cancer. After repeated illnesses, Devin was diagnosed with primary immune deficiency.***

**Some surfaces in their house, including windows and walls, were covered with black mildew or mold, which Spire said she tried unsuccessfully to clean with bleach. She had pneumonia more than once, she said.**

**She asked Equity to clean up the mold and replace the windows or move her family. Her doctor at Madigan Army Medical Center wrote an explanation of the disabilities of her and her son and the reasons for moving them to quarters without mold problems.**

According to the suit, Equity accused Spire of harassment. "They told my husband I was never to call them again or they would evict us," she said. "They said they weren't going to move us or make accommodations."

*The Spires eventually moved to an off-post apartment and their illnesses faded,* Krysten said.

"I want to protect future families from having to deal with a situation like this," she said.

**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. For copies on web site see:**<http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS:**

### **IED Kills 3 U.S. Marines in Baghdad**

29 June By Alistair Lyon BAGHDAD (Reuters)

A roadside bomb blast has killed three U.S. marines in Baghdad in the first reported fatal attack on U.S. forces in Iraq since the formal handover of sovereignty to an interim government.

A U.S. military spokesman said two marines were also wounded in the explosion that wrecked a Humvee vehicle escorting a convoy carrying engineering equipment.

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### **Goshen Soldier Loses Part Of Arm; Man Suffers Major Internal Injuries**

June 29 Visalia Times-Delta

The Goshen soldier wounded in Iraq when a rocket struck the Humvee he was riding in June 18 is doing slightly better, family said.

Army Staff Sgt. Herberto Luis Lara, 31, is still in intensive care at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Landstuhl, Germany. He was taken there after initial treatment in Iraq.

According to his aunt, Marcelina Avila, Lara lost his right arm below the elbow and suffered major internal injuries, including a lacerated liver, a collapsed lung and damage to the second lung.

"Doctors are saying he has a 40-60 percent chance of survival," said Avila, who on Monday spoke with one of the family members who flew to Germany on Friday.

The man's younger sister, Sabrina Murillo, called her aunt with an update. She, her husband, Vincent, Lara's two young children, daughter, Mia Lara, 9, and son, Ebram, 13, his ex-wife, Danel, and her mother, Renee Rutledge, all flew to Germany after the family was notified of his injuries early on June 19.

*"The Army paid for two of the air fares, but Renee Rutledge paid for the rest," Avila said.*

Lara, graduated from Mt. Whitney High School and had been in the Army for eight years. He is with the 293rd Military Police Company assigned to the 3ID Infantry Division at Fort Stewart Georgia, reported Lt. Col. Cliff Kent of Fort Stewart.

Avila said her nephew has undergone several surgeries, and more are planned, but doctors have told his sister that he is doing better.

"That's very good news. We keep praying and hoping for a miracle," Avila said. Lara's mother died last August.

**He was allowed to come home for several weeks at that time. That is the last time the family got to see him.**

Besides his sister, he has two brothers, Felix Pallanes and Enrique Gomez.

### **GET 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/>

**BRAVE, SKILLED, WELL MATCHED PAIR:  
KILLING EACH OTHER FOR NO REASON  
WHATEVER BUT U.S. CORPORATE PROFITS  
AND IMPERIAL GREED**



Lance Cpl. Marcos Ramirez with the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Marine Division at a traffic control post in Falluja, June 25. **The traffic checkpoint has been the scene of heavy fighting between Marines and insurgents for the past two days.** (Bob Strong/Reuters)



A masked Iraqi insurgent, aims his machine gun during clashes with U.S. forces in the restive town of Falluja June 25, 2004. (Mohammed Khodor/Reuters)

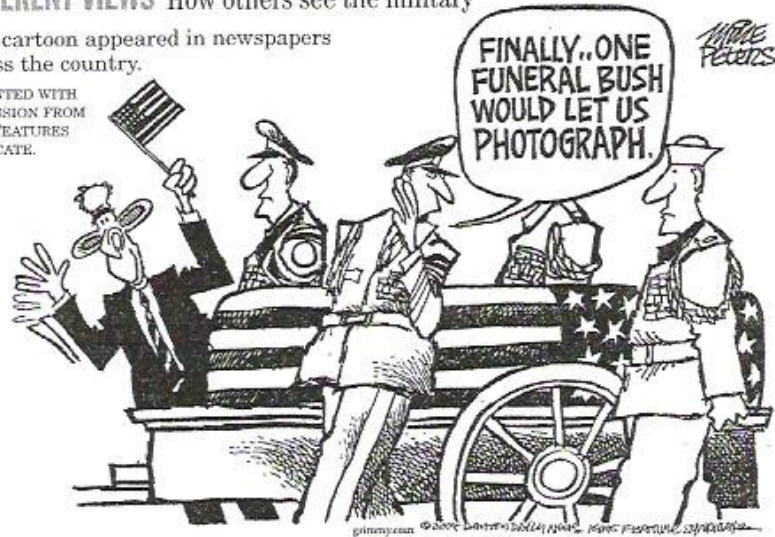
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## TROOP NEWS

### DIFFERENT VIEWS How others see the military

This cartoon appeared in newspapers across the country.

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Army Times 6.28.04

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## 'Fahrenheit 9/11' Wins Hearts And Minds In Fayetteville

(THANKS TO LOU PLUMMER WHO E-MAILED THIS IN)

Published on: 2004-06-29 By Matt Leclercq Staff writer, Fayetteville Online

"Fahrenheit 9/11," a left-sided documentary that bashes the Bush administration's war on terrorism, wouldn't find much of an audience in a military town.

Or so they thought.

"**This has broken all of our past records,**" said Nasim Kuenzel, an owner of the Cameo Art House Theatre. "The movie that I thought would make us hardly any money - I never thought it would break all the records."

Both showings sold out Friday at the Cameo, the only theater in Fayetteville to carry the Michael Moore film . A midnight showing added at the last minute Friday brought in 60 more people.

Saturday and Sunday were just as busy, Kuenzel said, with nearly 1,000 tickets sold over the weekend. **As many as 75 percent of moviegoers were soldiers or military families, Kuenzel said.**

**Many were like Natalie Sorton. She is 25 and married to an infantryman who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.**

"I want to see what my husband is fighting for," Sorton said Monday before going into the theater with a friend, Kathy Norris.

Another military spouse had recommended the movie. While Sorton described herself as a moderate Republican, she said she gained respect for Moore after seeing his last documentary, "Bowling for Columbine."

**Sorton said she wanted to see Moore be equally pestering to politicians who make decisions about war.**

"I'm going because from what I heard about ('Fahrenheit 9/11'), it fills in a lot of blanks, a lot of questions we've had about the Bush administration," Sorton said.

The documentary assails President Bush's decisions surrounding the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Moore attempts to link the Bush family with Saudi Arabia and blame business interests as the reason for invading Iraq. "Fahrenheit 9/11" **includes frank comments from soldiers in Iraq** and emotional interviews with families who lost children in the fighting.

**Almost all the crowds at the Cameo have applauded the film at the end, with some people giving standing ovations, Kuenzel said. Many have tears in their eyes as they leave the theater.**

"I think it's going to open my eyes a little, and that worries me," Sorton said before taking her seat.

Lea Barnes, a Republican, seemed giddy as she and a friend bought tickets Monday. "I'm not pleased at all about the way things are going" with the war, Barnes said. "I trust Michael Moore. He can be out there a bit, but he's for the common man."

**After Monday's showing, Sorton emerged with a grim face. She said she plans to buy the film on DVD and give it to everyone she knows.**

"I'm disgusted," she said. "Disgusted."

**The film changed her opinions on the war in Iraq by convincing her that oil and corporate interests were behind decision-making, she said.**

**Worries over whether Moore would vilify soldiers were unfounded.**

"I don't think they portrayed them as bad," she said. "I don't think it portrayed them as not doing their jobs. It showed them doing what they're told."

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# Family Condemns Army After Scot Is Killed

6.29.04 Evening Times

**THE family of a Glasgow soldier killed in Iraq has hit out at the Army, claiming the teenager did not have adequate training to be sent to the war-torn country.**

Gordon Gentle, 19, from Pollok, was killed when a home-made bomb hit a British military convoy on patrol in the southern city of Basra.

His mother Rose, 40, father George, 45, and sisters Pamela, 21, and Maxine, 14, have been left devastated by his death yesterday.

And today his grandparents were due to fly home from a holiday to be told the grim news that Gordon had been killed.

Pamela, who last spoke to her brother on Wednesday, said: "The Army was too quick in sending him to Iraq.

"He didn't have enough training to be sent out there, and he was shot at the other week."

Pamela added: "We're all devastated. It just doesn't feel real. It feels as though somebody is going to tell us there has been a mistake."

She said the family were also angered they had been given less than 24 hours to grieve before news of her brother's death was made public.

The fence outside their home has been adorned with flowers and Celtic football shirts, in tribute to the teenager nicknamed Soft, who was an avid fan of the club.

Gordon, who served with the 1st Battalion Royal Highland Fusiliers, had his passing-out ceremony in April. He had only just completed his training and was due to return to the UK in two weeks.

**Friends visiting the family also blamed the MoD for his death, saying Iraq was no place for a young, recently-qualified soldier.**

**One neighbour said: "We feel he didn't have the training. He should not have been there.**

**"He was only fully trained six weeks ago. He'd been in Cyprus and was then sent out to Iraq. How can you train for a fortnight to dodge bullets and mines?"**

Friends and neighbours rallied round the Gentle family and paid tribute to "the nicest big boy you could ever meet".

A close family friend, Paul Montague, said Gordon was "brilliant" and had given him his first Celtic football top.



A group of tearful female family friends also paid tribute to Gordon.

One said: "All the kids loved him in the street. He was a handsome boy, a great boy."

The tributes outside the family home spoke of a soldier who would be sadly missed.

One read: "Gordon, you will be remembered, big yin.

Another one said: "You will always stay in my heart."

**Among the other tributes were teddies, a heart-shaped soft toy with the words "I love you", pinned on the fence by Gordon's three-year-old next door neighbour.**

His sister Maxine placed a snowman there because her brother's birthday was at Christmas.

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## The Daily Grind

**(Written by a 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. who seems to think he's in an old-time Kipling novel, stiff upper lip and all that, this account nonetheless gives some insights into the daily routine for those at home.)**

A friend of mine has an officer relative serving in Iraq and I thought I would share his e-mails to home. Sounds to me like the classic Viet Nam problems are back! This is number one L. Tampa Florida

**#1**

June 08, 2004

I just wanted to take the time to give you a little update on some of the happenings here in Iraq.

When you have some time, read on. There is no test at the end. May this find you all well and safe

My platoon and I have finally had a change of mission, which for the time being has put us back on the day shift (for the most part) and periodically sends us scattering in multiple directions and great distances during the day.

Some of my men are assigned Quick Reaction Force (QRF) detail, which is a 24 hour, 7 day a week job. They are the response force for any situations that arise in the vicinity of our base.

I have not heard any complaints despite the frequency with which they are called to respond (at least three times a day or more), but I suspect it's because they are getting some rest between calls and are exempt from all other duties.

I went out with them on the first day to break the seal on all that training they are getting to put into action. Once they see that they usually don't want me around anymore.

The sergeants and soldiers are very capable of doing their mission without me watching them, so I give them plenty of room. Other members of my platoon have been tasked with a very special project. The army has fielded a new weapon system over here known as the CROW.

It's a remotely operated machine gun mounted to the roof of a HUMMVE, so the gunner controls the weapon from the back seat and does not expose himself to hostile fire.

I cut loose one of my teams to go train on the weapon system, and the trainer found them to be very skilled. It's no surprise to us cavalymen because the weapon system is like a miniature version of a fire control system in a tank. Additionally it offers thermal sight capabilities we have sorely missed since we dismounted our vehicles back in Waco.

This team completed the training in under a week and was immediately pressed into service in the hottest neighborhood in Baghdad.

I have heard good reports about their actions in some very intense fighting down there, and am proud that my platoon represented the Division in some of the first close combat action the 49th has seen since the second world war.

I can't stress enough that there continues to be some very intense, full-blown combat operations occurring throughout Iraq, particularly in Baghdad and Faluja.

Large-scale force-on-force combat is done, but the messy, casualty producing street fighting is far from over.

I'll get details from the CROW team when they return later today.

**Of the many unorthodox tactics we employ here, one of the more exciting is a driving technique referred to as contraflow.**

**This is, in a basic sense, driving on the wrong side of the road into oncoming traffic.**

In normal situations this action would certainly stand out as an unnecessarily hazardous activity for everyone on the road. But this is post-war Iraq, and in the lawless confusion of the Baghdad slums it offers us the best chance at making it home by the end of the day.

Contraflow is one of many driving skills our drivers have learned via OJT, since it has proven to be entirely effective yet cannot be taught in any driving school.

There is reason for it, however, and that deserves an explanation. Convoy escort operations continue to be a vital brand of mission for the military here.

**It is a simple fact that the military cannot 'own' the road throughout this country so we invest heavily in assembling armored escorts to move cargo, equipment, and personnel between the various bases and FOBs spread out across the countryside.**

Iraq's aging and deteriorating infrastructure certainly is no help.

Look at any map of Iraq and you will notice but a few highways crossing the desert. Bisecting the country from north to south is a vital artery called Route 2. A constant stream of passenger cars, rigs, work trucks and tractors travels this roadway.

The road surface is a shoulderless, two-lane blacktop completely unadorned with the painted lines and markers customary to the most rural Texas farm roads. It is scared from neglect and the actions of war. The edges are often tattered and missing chunks of asphalt.

**There are occasional trenches from pipeline repairs and all to frequent bomb craters left unfilled. Over the last year, military commanders in Iraq have learned that convoys that stop are easy targets for roving insurgents to attack.**

**Roadside maintenance or rest breaks had to be abandoned in order to keep the convoy moving.**

Insurgents learned from this and began to set ambushes that attempted to stop the convoys using remotely detonated roadside bombs. While this continues to be a favored method of attack, it can be counter acted with the application of speed.

**The logical development is now the technique nearly all convoys now employ, which is fast travel from point A to point B with no stops in between: not for intersections, traffic lights, ambushes, roadblocks, or even pedestrians in the roadway.** On rural highways, contraflow driving gives you the center of the roadway, which is normally the safest place to be, at maximum distance from either edge of the road and the ubiquitous roadside bomb.

It also has the added benefit of preventing potential car bombers from drawing up along side you and detonating their goods (which is a practice gaining popularity over the last month).

On the flip side contraflow driving forces traffic off the road in both directions, often at high speed, motorcycles and 18-wheelers alike.

Iraqis seem unfazed by this technique for the most part, and react to it with far less offense than would someone from back home.

**In the city contraflow driving has a different purpose and application. Traffic circles and intersections are choke points and good places for ambushes. You cannot avoid them, but you can speed through them and offer as small an opportunity for ambush as possible.**

Everything is fair game to urban contraflow driving to include sidewalks, traffic islands and medians. The lead vehicle aggressively seeks the path of least resistance and

weaves through traffic until he reaches a bottleneck at an intersection. The driver then hops the curb and drives into oncoming traffic to get out of the intersection.

On a recent run through Baghdad I had the privilege of detouring through one of the larger East Side slums. It's a hair-raising run, scanning all the alleys, rooftops, and doorways as you race down the streets.

It was amusing to see all the cars and pedestrians that narrowly averted being run down, but at the time it was a tense situation. Your machine gunner is supposed to engage RPG gunners and riflemen before they can get a shot off.

**The vehicles have armored doors with bulletproof windows to protect you from small arms fire, but they won't stop an RPG. The doors are retrofit on the older vehicles and are not equipped with locks.**

Myself and another Lieutenant sat in back, turned to face outward toward the door.

Through town I sat ready, with one hand on the door and the other pressing my 9mm against the latch whenever we slowed down.

**Several months ago a team made the mistake of stopping in heavy traffic in a crowded street. The soldiers were dragged from their vehicle, stabbed, and stoned.**

We learn from those mistakes. Well, I really went on a roll.

Sometimes I get to typing and don't know when to quit.

But so goes this amazing tour of Middle Eastern society. Its been long periods of tedious boredom punctuated with madness and I feel compelled to write about them.

Overall my men and I are doing well here. While all these other units continue to point at and deride the Cav for being National Guard, we seem to plug through the same missions with fewer incidents.

I don't think that's coincidence.

**This is e-mail number two.**

I removed his last name at the bottom. L, Tampa, Florida. Sent: June 08, May 4, 2004

**I'll tell you something, the convoy security missions are enough to turn your hair gray overnight. I mentioned them before as being one of the more difficult and treacherous missions here and they live up to that.**

Recently I went on a few to get familiar with the operation. My platoon and I still don't pick it up as our own task yet, but I needed to check out how they are run so that I can make some intelligent decisions about the way we will operate. For background I can tell you that there are certain places we regularly conduct convoy missions between. Our base is a comparatively small one, but it depends on re-supply from other bases and facilities.

Also there are personnel and materials that have to go to other locations for various reasons, and our soldiers provide the secure escort for some of these as well. In the morning we lined up our vehicles within the compound and the crews began their pre-combat preparations. This entails checking over the vehicles condition, mounting and loading weapon systems, checking loads, verifying rosters, and all that.

The previous evening I was told there were a few unfilled crew positions for this convoy so, seeing an opportunity present itself, I decided I would volunteer to ride along and observe the operation from the vantagepoint of a hired gun. Well, I got what I came for.

Turns out that riflemen and machine gunners more capable than I am already spoke for all of the good positions (those within the relative safety of some armor plating). With a thoughtless stroke of a pen, the Staff Sergeant in charge of the convoy relegated me to the back of an aging two-and-a-half ton truck. So much for privileges of rank,

I won't be traveling with the security element, just another Joe in the convoy. There were about five others who were spare wheels like me, so we all climbed into the back and prepared for the trip. One of them turned out to be a cop from back home.

I'd never spoken with him before, but knew him by reputation as being a good soldier.

Military trucks of all type are normally equipped with simple, folding bench seats running the length of either side of the bed. This truck was no exception. However, to use this bench puts your back to anyone on the side of the road who wishes to greet you. None of us wanted to be rude guests in this land, so we folded up the bench and took a seat atop a row of broken air conditioners that acted as payload.

By coincidence this adjustment allows you to orient your rifle outboard and thus prevent the inadvertent discharge of you weapon into the face of the soldier sitting opposite of you (an act most of us consider rude).

Officers are always to be the last in any action but the attack. No officer worth his bar would take the lead of a chow line, be the first to steal away with his mail, or run to the showers ahead of his men. So was my reasoning in letting the other five board ahead of me. This left me in the blast seat, which is the seat on any vehicle that is the least comfortable and usually the most difficult to remain in when the road gets rough. I was in the back, with my foot on the tailgate and my non-firing hand wrapped in a cargo strap in the fashion of pro bull riders I've seen on TV. It's a good thing I paid attention to such details, because that strap was about all that kept me in the truck on a few of those bumps.

The security team conducted its convoy brief and we rolled out the gate. Speed has proven to be one of the best ways to keep an insurgent from drawing a bead on you, so in no time the driver of that rolling antiquity had the needle buried. On windy days sand and dust is kicked up in great lingering clouds, and the fine particles hang in the air resembling fog on an English moor.

Through this you can see to about the limit of your ability to shoot, so it was not a bad thing. Ambushes like to be able to see you from a distance to make their preparations, so I figured the dust may help us as much as hinder us.

In this way we rolled across the countryside on a well-established route through villages and across the numerous irrigation trenches. From the back of the truck you see all manner of things. Your straining search for the out-of-place or suspicious exposes you to a constant stream of vignettes that describe the daily life of less militant Iraqis (I've met enough of them now to believe all Iraqis are born with some capacity to be mujahadeen).

There are women swinging hoes in the fields draped in colorful, flowing burkas. Children line the side of the roads, barefoot and dirty, with their hands outstretched anticipating the candy GIs are known to toss as they pass.

Men have the curious habit of spending pensive moments on rooftops, a practice I find particularly disquieting in urban areas. There is a teenage boy peddling his bicycle fast along side our truck as we pass through town, and he tries to toss some type of small fruit to us in trade for candy.

Snaking the convoy through town, we cross a small bridge and see a shepherd washing an obstinate sheep in the aqueduct.

At one point I stand up to look over a wall as we pass and I notice there are people crouched low in the ditch immediately beside the road. It's a farmer and a handful of children. Resting? I don't know. These images play out like the sinuous narrative of a bad novel. They can lull you into thinking everything is safe and normal.

Periodically you are reminded that you are in a combat zone. Crossing the Tigris River along our route is done by way of a military pontoon bridge, the type I've seen in countless war films growing up. Nobody told me they sway with the current and dip and moan under the weight of the truck.

There are the overwhelmed stares of soldiers from the Iraqi security force on patrol. They don't exude the confidence you would expect from a military about to assume a nation's security responsibilities. Occasionally you catch a glimpse of someone running away into the palm grove. What was it that he was carrying? A small, gasoline powered well pump backfires in rapid succession as we pass.

I dismount at one point to handle a snarl of traffic ensuing as two military convoys' mix with a line of civilian cars all fighting for the same stretch of winding road. We're careful to peer into each car as we walk past, make eye contact with the drivers, and avoid eye contact with anything behind a veil.

As I'm talking with a soldier, a young man appears behind me with a machete in his hand. He's trying to sell his blades to GIs. I think he ought to reconsider approaching soldiers with a long bladed weapon like that. All these things bring you to alert, but they don't develop into anything but a mental note, posted for the next time you are in the area.

This particular convoy passes without incident. We arrive at our destination; a large air base hosting fresh troops arriving in theater as well as eager troops preparing for their final flight home. Our security element (the one I came to monitor) departs to conduct a few other missions and link back up with us at the end of the day.

We spend most of the afternoon lumbering around from one place to another there, collecting supplies, handling pay problems, visiting the post exchange, and using the phones. By late afternoon we reconvene near the main gate of the base for our journey back.

There are delays and our escort has not arrived. No convoy rolls at night anymore, mainly because it is too difficult to detect roadside bombs. We have been sitting, stacked up at the front gate for about two hours.

I knew that if the security detail didn't arrive in the next twenty minutes, we would be staying the night there.

What I did not know is that somewhere in the tree line along the river, an insurgent has left a mortar on a time delay fuse. Two loud pops in the distance catch the attention of my friend the cop and myself. We look at each other, and then toward a cement plant a short distance across the road. Nothing.

No sooner do I lean back against a convenient rock pile when we hear the low blast of the mortar rounds impacting near the road by the front gate. Wow. I've fired them. I've seen them impact down range, and I've heard them in coming during our brief stay at Mosul.

But to hear the same rounds launch and hear them impact is a rare treat. We figured our antagonists may still be close by, so the cop and I sprinted up into an unoccupied guard tower nearby.

Looking out with the binoculars nothing seems to have changed. There is a farmer washing his turban in the irrigation trench. In the distance a hand full of men are carrying large bundles of wheat on their backs. On the road, pick-up trucks too full of people roll uninterrupted toward the towns. Did they even notice what happened?

Nobody was hurt by the blast. Most such attacks are little more than inaccurate harassing fire.

Sometimes they get lucky and drop the rounds within the tent clusters. This particular base receives these attacks regularly and has taken casualties on occasion. Ironically, because of the mortar fire, we immediately turn the vehicles around and head for the tent clusters to find a place to bed down for the night.

If you can't find safety, at least seek comfort, I say. Helicopter gunships appear and fan out across the river valley looking for the guilty party. They won't find them. This is gonna take some getting used to.

1LT E  
/124 Cav  
Central Iraq

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# Guardsman Home To Recover From Gunshot Wound

6.29.04 Union Leader Correspondent

WEARE — A member of the New Hampshire National Guard is home with his family while recovering from a gunshot wound he suffered earlier this month in Iraq.

“It’s great,” Capen said. “I wish I could stay, but . . .”

Sgt. Rich Capen, a member of the 744th Transportation Company based in Hillsborough, took a bullet in his right shin while riding in a truck in a convoy from Balad to Baghdad on June 7. Sniper fire came through the driver’s door, missed the driver, and hit Capen, who was in the passenger seat.

Capen said the bullet was lodged on top of the shinbone and did not pass through his leg. He was taken to a medical facility in Baghdad.

“They took the bullet out there and threw me back in the truck and we went back to Balad,” Capen recounted yesterday, standing in his driveway on Pine Hill Road with his wife, Marina, and his nearly 2-year-old daughter, Madison.

**“And on the way back, we got hit with a bomb,” Capen said. “It was a bad day for me.” Fortunately, no one was injured when the truck was hit by the explosive device, commonly triggered by remote by an insurgent with a cell phone.**

With yesterday’s official handover of power to the Iraqis, Capen said the threat level for U.S. troops is expected to rise.

**He will also return to the hottest time of year in Iraq, July and August. He said it was 125 degrees when he left Iraq for Germany recently.**

**“The tents have AC,” Capen said, but not the trucks. “It’s about 150 degrees in the truck,” he said.**

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## IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

### **Fresh Attacks Kill Occucops; Senior Kurd Wounded**

6.29.04 Baghdad, Iraq-AP

**The handover of power in Iraq hasn’t stopped the violence. (Probably because “power” wasn’t “handed over.”)**



Early today, gunmen attacked a police station in Mahmudiyah, 20 miles south of Baghdad. Police say one officer and one civilian were killed.

Some eyewitnesses say the gunmen recited verses from the Koran before peppering the police station with bullets and rocket-propelled grenade-fire.

In Kirkuk, a roadside bomb exploded as a senior Kurdish police official was heading to work, wounding him and killing one of his guards.

Maj. Ahmed al-Hamawandi, the head of police in the Kurdish district of Azadi in Kirkuk, suffered minor injuries in the attack that occurred at around 8:50 a.m., said police Col. Sarhat Qader.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

# **RAGE IN THE DARKNESS**

**(THANKS TO JOE U, VIETNAM VETERAN, WHO E-MAILED THIS IN)**

Carroll Ray Thomas, 1/21st Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division Airmobile, Vietnam '67-'68

I raged against you in the darkness.  
I cursed you every day.  
Did you not know what you subjected us to  
When you sent us on our way?  
When you sent us off to fight.  
When you sent us off to die.  
When you sent us off to that Asian War  
Not really knowing why.

Did you not know at all  
When we all knew too well?  
You sent us off on a noble mission -- did you?  
You sent us off to hell!  
But there was no communicating –  
Don't confuse you with the facts.  
There was no communicating –  
A good soldier only reacts.

Yes, there was no communicating –  
Don't confuse you with the facts.  
There was no communicating –  
And then falls the ax.

And, hello there, Mr. Vice President.

You seemed like such a fine, fine man.  
The hell of it was,  
You did not understand.  
Yes, you seemed like such a very good man,  
Stood for what you believed.  
The hell of it was,  
You were so self-deceived.

And when you finally discovered  
That your "facts" were not at all true,  
It was far too late  
For anything that you could do.  
But if you had only been there  
You wouldn't have had to be all too smart  
To see what was really happening there  
Right from the very start.

And Mr. Military Man, Mr. Business Man,  
And Mr. Politician,  
Could you not see at all  
That that war would not be won?  
For they were clearly playing  
By a very different set of rules  
While we played your silly war games  
And acted your stupid fools.

Or was it that you had no regard  
For the common man,  
And you knew what you were doing  
When you sent us off to that land?  
So, were your medals and your money  
And your status for your wives  
More important to you all  
Than our suffering or our lives?

Were we not expendable  
For that supposed righteous cause?  
You sent us off to slaughter -- didn't you?  
Now, where's all the applause?  
And of our pain and anguish  
God only knows well.  
We know too little of your heaven.  
We know too much of your hell.

**But we are not your fools now,  
And we are not your slaves.  
We're going to face one another, brother,  
One of these fateful days.**  
No, we are not at all stupid,  
Though we were all so young –  
We won't stop our raging

Till our songs are all sung.

**Until we finally know  
That we have been listened to,  
And nothing like this ever happens to us again –  
Unless it also happens to you.**

Yes, I raged against you in the darkness.  
I cursed you every day.  
Did you not know what you subjected us to  
When you sent us on your way?  
Or was it that you had no regard  
For the common man,  
And you knew what you were doing  
When you sent us off to that land?

And you knew what you were doing  
When you sent us off to that land?

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## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

# **Baghdad Awash With Tales Of Corruption And Cronyism**

30 June 2004 By Patrick Cockburn in Baghdad, The Independent UK

**Soon after the fall of Baghdad last year, an Iraqi working for a US organisation found that the private American security company under contract to the Pentagon to protect him showed decreasing interest in his safety. He discovered the reason was that his guards had become arms dealers.**

The Iraqi, a returned exile, was living in a house in the Green Zone, the heavily fortified US headquarters in the centre of Baghdad. It was formerly Saddam Hussein's headquarters. The security company guards had discovered caches of valuable high-quality weapons abandoned by his presidential guard. "They were taking the weapons and storing them in our house before selling them," complained the returned exile. "There were so many explosives there that I did not even dare smoke in the house and I am a chain smoker." **He and a companion took photographs of the heaps of weaponry and later showed them to officials in the Pentagon but they were not interested.**

**Baghdad is awash with stories of the corruption, cronyism and incompetence of the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority, which was dissolved this week.**

**Many of its officials were in Iraq because they were ideological neo-conservatives or were simply well connected to the Republican Party or the White House.**

Some were paid astonishing salaries. Ahmed al-Rikaby, in charge of re-establishing Iraqi television, discovered that he was to be assisted by three Iraqi-American media advisers paid **\$21,000 a month**. He recalls: **"They had no expertise and never helped me or anybody else."** **They got the jobs because they had influential friends in the Pentagon.**

Iraqis often say they were astonished by the level of cronyism in Washington's appointments. Privatisation was a high priority for the US administrator, Paul Bremer. **But his chief aide in developing the private sector was a Republican businessman from Connecticut called Thomas Foley who was an assiduous fund-raiser for his party but otherwise had little experience useful in Iraq.**

**Many CPA officials spent short but remunerative tours in Iraq. Others, surprisingly, have returned, evidently smelling money still to be made. Mr Kubba says: "They think they can use the connections they built up before and the fact that they are Americans."**

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

### **Terrorists Plotting Against Summer Beach Trips, FBI Warns**

6.28.04 <http://kurtnimmo.com/blog/index.php?p=211>

Don't go in the water. Stay on the beach. Or better yet stay at home with the curtains pulled tight and plenty of duct tape and plastic sheeting at the ready. **Terrorists are here and they are determined to wreck your summer vacation.**

**The FBI issued a warning last week for state and local authorities to be on the lookout for booby-trapped floating material in and around the nations marinas, warning they could contain explosives, reports CNN. The bulletin says plastic-foam containers, inner tubes and even buoys could be rigged to blow up on contact.**

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## **CLASS WAR NEWS**

# Rich Get A Lot Richer; But We Hugely Outnumber Them

6.15.04 By Robert Frank, Wall St. Journal

The 2604 World Wealth Report, compiled by brokerage firm Merrill Lynch & Co. and consultancy Capgemini Group, paints a picture of financial resurgence among the world's wealthy. **The number of millionaires in the U.S. was up 14%**, and the U.S. and Canada together added more new millionaires last year than Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, combined.

**Most striking: the study found that in the U.S. and Canada, the number of ultra-rich— those with investment assets of more than \$30 million— has reached 30,000**, about the same number of people as live in Juneau, Alaska's capital.

Wealthy individuals in most of the world enjoyed a strong 2003, ending two years in the doldrums. In the U.S., rising stock markets **and wealth-friendly tax cuts combined to create strong returns for the wealthy.**

**Underscoring the concentration of wealth among the very rich, a study last fall by Arthur Kennjckell of the Federal Reserve Board shows the nation's wealthiest 1% owned about \$2.3 trillion in stocks, or about 53% of all individually or family held shares.**

**The wealthiest 1% owned 64% of bonds held by families or individuals, and 31% of total financial assets held by families or individuals which includes everything from stocks to bonds to cash.**

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## **Received:**

From: <x>  
To: GI Special  
June 29, 2004 Subject: Newsletter

To Whom It May Concern,

**I recently came into possession of a newsletter put out by you, I was wondering if I could get on the mailing list to receive more of the same newsletters, I am a soldier in Iraq and do not agree about why we are over here, and daily see waste of money everywhere. Thanks.**

SGT

**REPLY: Honored to do so. And you are not alone.**

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TO GI Special:

6.29.04

I love that poster "Fight to the Last Man" Brilliant!

Have you seen Fahrenheit 9/11? Well worth the overpriced ticket.

Mick Meenan, Deputy Editor  
Gay City News  
646-452-2471

**REPLY: Agreed on the movie. And an apology for failing to print the credit for the poster you refer to. So, here it is again, *with the credit*.**



<http://homepage.mac.com/leperous/PhotoAlbum1.html>

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