

GI SPECIAL 2#B97



Pat McCook, left, talks with Jackie Butler Oct. 20, 2004 in Jackson, Miss. **McCook and Butler, the wives of two of the soldiers, said ``The military has already started to work on the vehicles and admitted, yes, the vehicles didn't have armor," said McCook. ``It's a partial victory."** (AP Photo/Rogelio Solis)

"Somebody Has To Speak For Those Soldiers."

Relatives of reservists who refused to deliver fuel in Iraq last week are hitting airwaves, presenting a challenge for the U.S. military.

10/19/2004 Rennie Sloan and Ellen Barry, Los Angeles Times

Hill said she was certain that the publicity has helped her daughter. "As soon as [Clarion-Ledger reporter] Jeremy Hudson broke the story, they were released miraculously," she said. Hill also believes that the effort has smoothed the way for soldiers to resist orders in the future.

"More soldiers are going to be standing up and saying: 'Look, this is a dangerous mission. It's going to put others in harm's way,' "said Hill, 42.

QUINTON, Ala. --

All day Monday from inside his mobile home, Ricky Shealey made the case for his son, Spec. Scott Shealey.

The 15-year veteran of the Army outlined the evidence to one television crew after another.

By afternoon, when a satellite truck pulled up for a link to CNN's Deborah Norville, Shealey sank into a plush recliner, exhausted.

He wasn't alone.

Theresa Hill, a long-haul truck driver from Dothan, Ala., was in New York to explain her daughter's perspective to NBC's Katie Couric and Matt Lauer. In San Antonio, 21-year-old Amanda Gordon defended her younger brother on local radio shows, swallowing her hurt when a caller said that he deserved the death penalty.

By now, much of America has heard about the standoff that took place within the 343rd Army Reserve Quartermaster Company in Iraq last week, when some platoon members refused to go on a fuel delivery mission. Since then, the soldiers' families have appealed directly to the American people in defense of the unit's actions.

The families are presenting a new challenge to the military -- an advocacy campaign propelled by factors such as quick communications via e-mail and cellphone, dissent over the U.S. role in Iraq and the massive mobilization of military reservists.

Unless soldiers' access to their families is severely restricted, experts say, authorities are likely to see this scenario repeated. "I think this is definitely going to pose itself as a new problem for the military from here on out," said Charles Moskos, a military sociologist at Northwestern University. "People will circumvent the chain of command by going directly to political leaders or the media."

Eighteen members of the fuel platoon failed to appear at a scheduled 7 a.m. formation Wednesday in Tallil, a U.S. military base in Iraq. Relatives have said that the soldiers were ordered to transport contaminated fuel through a dangerous area without proper equipment or armor. When they refused, the family members have said, the soldiers were arrested and placed in disciplinary lockdown.

As military authorities began their investigations, the soldiers found ways to let their families know about it.

Patricia McCook of Jackson, Miss., scribbled notes during a panicky, early-morning phone call from her husband, Sgt. Larry McCook, 41. Hill got a recorded

message from her daughter, Pvt. Amber McClenny, 21, asking her to "raise pure hell."

Hill started calling the families of the detained soldiers one by one.

"We did it on our own initiative," Hill said. "I just called 'em up and said: 'This is what has happened to your soldier, and they are begging for media attention.' They want this to go as big as it can go."

Hill's first efforts fell flat -- a local television station in south Alabama told her that the unit's refusal was a matter of military discipline and therefore not newsworthy.

Shealey, 51, turned to his congressman, but was told the Red Cross was the officially recognized advocate for families.

But McCook managed to interest a reporter at the Jackson, Miss., Clarion-Ledger, which printed a story Friday.

Since then, the most vocal families have been making television appearances and granting interviews.

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Ricky Shealey said he felt no elation at what he's accomplished over the last week. He was depressed, worried that his son would lose his rank and benefits. Scott Shealey, 29, was two weeks short of his commitment to the Army Reserves when he volunteered to ship out.

"He said, 'Dad, when I [saw those] young kids going, I had to go,' " Shealey said. "That's the type of soldier he is."

After getting up at 5 a.m. for two straight days of interviews, Shealey is still not entirely sure if talking to the media is the right thing to do. But he couldn't keep quiet, either.

"I'm doing this for my son," he said. "Somebody has to speak for those soldiers."

I remember someone describing Iraq as Vietnam on crack. Well - it took years before this sort of thing begin happening in Vietnam.

Nothing interferes more with plans for global conquest then mutiny in the ranks.

Dwayne, Vietnam Veterans Against The War

MORE:

Revolt In The Ranks

The inside story of the Army platoon that refused to carry out a "death sentence" mission.

Oct. 16, 2004 By Mary Jacoby, salon.com

The e-mail arrived Tuesday evening. But Kathy Harris didn't see the urgent plea from her son, Spc. Aaron Gordon, 20, until she arrived at work Wednesday morning. **By then, Gordon and 16 other members of his Army Reserve platoon were corralled in a tent in Tallil, Iraq, under armed guard**, for refusing to drive a fuel supply convoy in what another of the detained soldiers would later describe as a "death sentence."

"At that point (when her son e-mailed) they hadn't been arrested yet. He was asking my advice about what could happen if they refused an order," Harris told me on Friday by telephone from Mississippi. "He said they had been ordered to take a contaminated load of fuel into a high-danger area. He said that they had already taken this load to one location, and it had been refused, and that they had, in his exact words, a '75 percent chance of being hit' on this new mission. **He asked what the potential reprimands were if he disobeyed his commanding officer and, if it came to that point, what would happen to him if he had to get physical.**"

Harris quickly phoned a friend who is a judge advocate general (JAG) officer and e-mailed her son back. "I told him if he struck an officer he faced potential three years imprisonment and a dishonorable discharge. I said, 'Do not do that.' I told him to talk to his first sergeant and see if he could help. But I doubt he ever got my reply."

Indeed, by the time Kathy Harris replied to her son's e-mail, several other military families had received desperate phone calls from their loved ones in Iraq. There had been some sort of mutiny, it was clear. The details were sketchy, but it appeared that the platoon had refused to deliver a load of fuel to Taji, Iraq, because the soldiers believed their lives were at serious and unnecessary risk.

According to the family members' accounts, they were detained at gunpoint by soldiers for more than a day.

But the military denies that the reservists were detained at all. Lt. Col. Dave Rodgers, a spokesman for the 81st Regional Support Readiness Command of the U.S. Army Reserves in Birmingham, Ala., said in an interview Friday that while an investigation into the matter is ongoing, "No soldier has been arrested, charged, confined or detained as a result of this incident." **[Below, another officer says, yes, they were detained.]**

That would be news to many family members, who say their loved ones told them that they'd been confined in a tent at gunpoint and refused permission to use the bathroom without armed escort.

Spc. Amber McClenny, 21, managed to sneak away Wednesday as the detained soldiers were being taken to the mess hall. She phoned her mother in Dothan, Ala. Her daughter's steady but urgent voice on the answering machine jolted Teresa Hill from sleep. Hill saved the message and played it for me Friday afternoon over the telephone.

"Hey, Mom. This is Amber. Real, real big emergency," McClenny said in the recorded message. "I need you to contact someone. I mean, raise pure hell. We had broken down trucks. No armored vehicles. Get somebody on this. I need you now, Mom. I need you so bad. Just please, please help me. It's urgent. They are holding us against our will. We are now prisoners."

At 5:12 a.m. Wednesday, Patricia McCook, also of Jackson, Miss., was awakened by a "very frantic" phone call from her husband, Sgt. Larry McCook. "He was saying, 'Wake up! Please listen to me! I sneaked out of the back [mess] hall to tell you something. Something's going on. The military wants to sweep it under the rug, but it needs to be out. Get a paper and pen and write this down.'"

The mother of two teenagers jerked out of bed and began scribbling. Her notes read "disobeying a lawful order," "17 of us," "all of us agreed not to go." Her husband, she said, "was just trying to get out as much information as possible. I had to slow him down to get the names of some of the other people." She managed to get three names before he hung up on her.

Beverly Dobbs of Vandiver, Ala., also received an anguished phone call Wednesday from her son, Spc. Joseph Dobbs. "Momma, we're in a lot of trouble," he said, according to Dobbs. "We had some contaminated fuel. We went out on this mission, and they turned us back, and our captain got mad and was gonna send us out on another mission. We refused to go because our vehicles were in awful shape. The place they wanted to send us was dangerous. We had to go without guns. All of us refused to go. We're not risking our lives like that."

Before he hung up, Joseph Dobbs told his mother: **"They had us in this tent, and they had guns pointed all around us, and the guns were loaded. We're not allowed to go nowhere." The M-16 rifles the guards carried were locked and loaded, another detained soldier told his family, and their bathroom trips were made under armed escort.**

Joseph Dobbs is 19 years old. Beverly Dobbs told me: "You see why I'm freaking out? My baby is only 19!"

"When Amber first told me she was doing convoys, she said they would have two or three gun trucks with them, and she was either driving the tanker or driving a gun truck. And they always had air support. But this time, they were ordered to go without," her mother, Teresa Hill, said.

Hill heard nothing more from or about her daughter until Thursday morning. A specialist who was not part of the detained group had managed to squirrel out phone numbers of soldiers' family members back home who needed to be contacted, Hill said. The specialist phoned Hill, and Hill began alerting the other family members.

By Friday morning in the United States -- Friday afternoon in Iraq -- the families began receiving phone calls from their loved ones saying that they had been released. Spc. Desmond Jones, 33, called his wife, Angela, in Charlotte, N.C. "He said that they weren't directly arrested. He said they [the guards] did have guns. But we didn't really get to talk about it, because he said there were others standing in line behind him to use the phone," Angela Jones said. The Joneses have two children.

Pam Sullivan, also of Charlotte, said her husband, Spc. Peter Sullivan, 35, also called Friday morning. **"He said they are out of jail. She added that her husband had told her his request to see a lawyer had been denied.** The Sullivans have three daughters. In civilian life, her husband works for an air conditioning company.

When I told Lt. Col Rodgers that there appears to be a wide gulf between the families' perceptions that their loved ones had been arrested and the Army's categorical denial that anyone had been detained, he said: "That is true.

" When pressed to explain, he said, "Well, I don't know where the families got that information from." When told they got it from their detained sons, daughters and husbands, Rodgers said: **"I have been in touch with the coalition press information center in Baghdad. I was told the soldiers are not under arrest *and they have not been detained.*" [And now, in the next paragraph, one Maj. Spiegel calls Lt. Col. Rodgers a shit-eating double-gaited liar. Maybe they'll have a duel and kill each other off, for the good of the service.]**

Responding by e-mail from Iraq to an inquiry from Salon, Maj. Richard Spiegel, a spokesman for the 13th Corps Support Command, said: "The confusion might be because but **they were required to remain in the unit area [at gunpoint, which is what "detained" means] until they provided an initial statement** -- this was required from anyone that was involved, witnessed or had knowledge of the situation and is a prudent practice to insure the investigating officer gathers all the facts in a timely manner. **Soldiers' rights were insured at all times during this process." [Who writes the scripts for this particular asshole?]**

Spiegel also said no soldiers had been denied requests for lawyers. **[He just couldn't resist adding one more lie, and that brings all his blathering bullshit crashing to the ground. What a lame crew of total incompetents. They can't even get their lies straight.]**

But as of Friday afternoon, it appeared that no military authority had contacted any family member in the United States to offer official notification of the investigation. "If Amber hadn't of snuck out (to make the furtive call home), I wouldn't have known," Teresa Hill said. "They are threatening her with court martial. They were saying eight years in prison."

Amber had once wanted to make her career in the military, her mother said. But after Iraq, Hill doesn't know what her daughter will do. **"She was already scared to death of everyone else over there (in Iraq). And now, she's scared of her own people."**

(About the writer: Mary Jacoby is Salon's Washington correspondent.)

MORE:

The Cowardly Commander Declined A Ride In The Antique Trucks

October 20, 2004 By Jim Michaels USA Today

They urged their commander to ride on the new mission through hostile territory to see how faulty the trucks were. The officer refused.

“That’s when they banded together,” John Coates said. “They were wore out.”

The Iraqi tanker trucks used by the platoon appeared to date from the mid-1960s “because of the condition and the way it looked,” John Coates was told by his son. **The trucks regularly overheated and couldn’t reach a top speed much beyond 35 mph, John Coates said.**

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans’ benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it’s in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Senior Officer Killed

10/20/2004 By Dan Russo , STAFF WRITER, News Of Delaware County

UPPER DARBY - A funeral mass to commemorate an Upper Darby High School graduate killed in Iraq Oct. 13 is scheduled for Friday.

U.S. Army Reserve Lt. Col. Mark Phelan, 44, a member of the class of 1979 and former Drexel Hill resident, died after a convoy he was in was bombed coming out of Mosul, according to Upper Darby Principal Geoff Kramer.

Phelan was a reservist with the U.S. Army's Norristown based 416th Civil Affairs Battalion.

Number Of Wounded Tops 8,000

October 20, 2004 Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The number of U.S. troops wounded in Iraq since military operations began in March 2003 has topped the 8,000 mark, according to figures released by the Pentagon on Tuesday.

The total of 8,016 is more than double what it was six months ago when the insurgency suddenly accelerated. On April 5 the number wounded in action stood at 2,988; by April 26 it had grown to 3,864.

The U.S. military death toll almost doubled in that same period, standing at 1,102 as of Tuesday, by the Pentagon's count. On April 2 it stood at 598.

The wounded toll has grown by several hundred a month since April. It surpassed the 5,000 mark in early June and crossed the 7,000 mark in early September.

Attacks Wound 11 U.S. Troops In “Pacified” Samarra

October 20, 2004 (CNN) & (Reuters)

In Samarra, blasts killed a child and wounded 11 U.S. soldiers and a civilian interpreter, the U.S. military said.

The military said "a pair of vehicle-concealed improvised explosive devices exploded near the city center in Samarra" on Wednesday. The soldiers -- members of the 1st Infantry Division -- were in stable condition.

Police commander Salah Hussein said it had been a car bomb attack, **adding that one of the US Army vehicles in the convoy had been damaged.**

Samarra is a northern Iraqi town the U.S. military said it had pacified following an offensive earlier this month.

Residents said U.S. troops in vehicles with loudspeakers told Samarra residents to stay off the streets between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Witnesses said clashes that began in the afternoon were continuing at night on the edges of the city and the nearby town of Duluiya.

MORE:

300 Iraqi Soldiers Refuse To Fight In Samarra

October 20, 2004 USA TODAY

BAGHDAD, Iraq - At least 300 Iraqi soldiers abandoned their 750-man unit after they were deployed to Samarra earlier this month as part of a U.S.-Iraqi operation to retake the militant-controlled city.

The Oct. 1-2 offensive in Samarra was the first major test of newly trained and equipped Iraqi security forces since April, when several battalions of national guard and army troops refused to fight in Fallujah and Baghdad's Sadr City after revolts. **[Grade on test: F]**

British Army Brig. Nigel Aylwin-Foster, deputy commander of the coalition office for training and organizing Iraq's armed forces said the deserters were spooked by an attack on Sept. 19, about a week after they had been deployed from Baghdad. A car bombing at a checkpoint killed one of the battalion's officers and injured eight soldiers, Aylwin-Foster said. About 100 deserted afterward.

By Sept. 24, even before the offensive kicked off in Samarra, 300 had left. Senior Iraqi officers were sent there in an effort to rally the battalion's remaining soldiers.

Iraqi national security adviser Kassim Daoud said yesterday he was not aware of the incident involving the 7th Battalion. [Which means he's terminally stupid, or a liar, and if a liar, a terminally stupid liar.]

Baghdad Airport Road Car Bomb Wounds 2 Soldiers And Occupation Cops

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - An explosion along the main highway to Baghdad's airport has injured two Iraqi police officers and two U-S soldiers. An Army captain on the scene says a vehicle packed with explosives pulled up next to a U-S patrol before detonating, killing the suicide bomber.

The blast left a huge crater in the ground and car parts strewn in the area. The State Department has described the airport road as among Iraq's most dangerous.

Baghdad Haifa St. Car Bomb Hits Tank Column

10.20.04 AFP/Reuters

A car packed with explosives detonated alongside a convoy of US tanks on the western edge of Haifa Street, a known trouble spot in the capital, sending black smoke billowing into the sky.

The burnt wreckage of the car lay in the street and a giant hole was punched in the concrete.

There were apparently no civilian casualties, but there has been no comment from the US Army.

The explosion was followed by an exchange of fire and red tracers could be seen lighting up the Baghdad skyline.

U.S. Commands' New Plan To Recruit For Resistance: Military Destroys Mosque

[Christian Science Monitor, October 20, 2004] U.S. aircraft destroyed a mosque near Ramadi because American troops encountered intense gunfire coming from the Islamic holy site. **There is a danger that increased military effort by the Americans could alienate the Iraqi population. [Duh!]**

No More Peace In The "Peaceful South"-- Deadlier Every Day; British Retreat To Bases Outside Cities

October 18, 2004 Audrey Gillan, The Guardian

In the past three months, British forces in Iraq have been attacked more often than at any time since the invasion. It is a largely untold story, however, since few British journalists have been able to get on the ground to report the situation for fear of kidnap, and it can be difficult to get access to the military.

Last month, I spent 12 days working between the British stronghold in Basra and the more northerly town of Amara, dubbed the "wild west".

Embedded with the Territorial Army, but seeing the work of regular soldiers as well, I discovered that in these areas, and on the roads in-between, troops are being shot at with small arms, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades every single day. Six have been killed in the past two months, and one described to me how he lost his kidney on a run-of-the-mill job to pick up mail and a broken television.

Soldiers told me the reason there had not been more casualties was poor shooting, but they didn't expect such incompetence to last.

Amara has been under almost non-stop attack since late summer when the rebel Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr declared holy war on British forces. The leadership of the town - tribal and divided in its nature - has pledged allegiance to Sadr.

The number of attacks has meant that troops are often unable to leave camp to work on the decrepit infrastructure. Nor do they take their "soft hats to win hearts and minds", an approach seen after the fall of Saddam. Soldiers must wear helmets and body armour outside their heavily fortified camps.

In a briefing, Captain Donald Francis, a spokesman for the Multinational Division (South-East), said that the British had 90% consent in the area, but it didn't seem like that on the ground.

He admitted that there was evidence that the British had become a problem in the eyes of the local people, and that they were trying to fix that by moving bases from populated areas and agreeing with Basra council not to turn the city into a battlefield.

Every time we kill an Iraqi we will create a nationalist, and we are not in the position to wipe him off the face of the earth. We haven't got enough guns or soldiers."

So the mission was not to kill, but to neutralise "anti-Iraqi forces" - a term coined by the coalition to describe the people shooting at them, even though most armed militants are Iraqis.

Almost 65% of the population of Basra does not have a tap supplying drinking water, sewage runs in thick green channels along the sides of roads, 60% of the fuel is still smuggled out of the country while Iraqis wait in line for overpriced petrol and still the power works on a "three hours on, three hours off" basis - as it did under Saddam.

As many soldiers were keen to point out: "Whatever happens in Baghdad and Najaf trickles down to here." Any redeployment of British troops to the north will intensify this danger - dramatically so, if they are put under US military control - but it will not have created it.

Iraqi Partisan Forces Advance Down Euphrates Towards Baghdad Along The Line Falluja-Ramadi-Hit-Rawah-'Anah-al-Qaim.

October 17, 2004 IraqWar



Partisan Forces Assemble. (IraqWar)

According to the Iraq resistance report of October 13-15, the resistance is pounding the US and puppet occupation forces on a 350-km front along the Euphrates, stretching west from Baghdad to Syria through the towns of Falluja, Ramadi, Hit, Rawah, 'Anah, and al-Qaim. The Iraqi partisans appear to be operating in military formations complete with rocket artillery and short-range anti-aircraft batteries.

At al-Qaim, near the Syrian border, a US base was destroyed by heavy mortar and rocket fire on October 5-6 and partisans overran the "Iraqi National Guard" base on Monday, October 11.

Partisans infiltrated the base with the help of the so-called "National Guard," even driving in with some of the puppet forces' own Humvees to machine-gun the enemy. The town was essentially cleared of US and puppet occupation forces early Wednesday. Iraqi partisan units at al-Qaim then began moving east towards Rawah and 'Anah, aiming eventually to link up with those further west at Hit. This suggests that partisan units will advance along the Euphrates cleaning up occupation forces and finally march on Baghdad.

The Mafkarat al-Islam correspondent reported that the partisan force at Hit also controlled Rawah and 'Anah, where the detachment from al-Qaim was expected.

At Ramadi, between Hit and Falluja, partisans weren't as successful as elsewhere, according to the islammemo.cc reports. 4 Marines were captured on October 5, the Marine HQ was attacked with 82mm mortars on the 8th and an urban battle erupted on Saturday the 12th, but the Marines responded swiftly, brutally, and with precision, taking a heavy toll both on resistance forces and on civilians.

Marine and supply convoys on the road along the Euphrates linking these towns were regularly attacked and destroyed. **US logistics were once again exposed to withering attacks that must be depriving front-line units of supplies, fuel, and ammunition (although no first-hand reports are available).**

The Falluja Marines were practically cut off from Baghdad by intense resistance activity in al-Yusufiyah and al-Latifiyah, where US units attempting to link up with Falluja continue to suffer heavy losses in countless engagements.

<p>Recent announcements from both US and Baathist sources indicate that this front of the Iraqi theater is under the control of Baath commanders, the chief of staff being Mohammed Younis al-Ahmed, and the GHQ being in Syria:</p>

Save Time And Effort! Use The All-New Reuters Blank Falluja War News Form

[THANKS TO SHAILMANMAN, WHO E-MAILED THIS:]

FALLUJA, Iraq (Reuters) - Rescuers dug the bodies of ___ members of one family out of the rubble of an Iraqi house bombed by U.S. warplanes on _____, witnesses said.

In another district ___ houses were reported destroyed in the restive insurgent-held town of Falluja, 50 km (32 miles) west of Baghdad.

U.S. forces say their precision strikes are carefully targeted against fighters loyal to Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who the U.S. says is hiding in the town.

But Falluja residents say they know nothing about Zarqawi -- some even doubt his existence -- and that the air raids regularly kill civilians and destroy homes.

TROOP NEWS

U.S. Government's Complete Lunacy: Occupying Iraq With 23,000 Combat Infantry: "The Sharp End Of The Spear Is Pretty Thin."

October 19 2004 IAN BRUCE, Defence Correspondent, Newsquest (Herald & Times) Limited

Only one soldier in six of the 138,000 US troops in Iraq – about 23,000 in total – are combat infantrymen trained for the street fighting about to take place in the insurgent stronghold cities of Falluja and Ramadi.

The request for British reinforcements in the Iskandariya sector, 30 miles south of Baghdad, is designed to free up more than 2000 American marine riflemen from the 24th Expeditionary Unit.

The vast majority of US troops belong to supply units, field hospitals, engineer, military police, maintenance battalions, artillery batteries, and tank formations, and would play little more than a supporting role in the planned assaults.

A Pentagon spokesman admitted yesterday that the rule of thumb used in operational planning was that, for every US soldier scouring buildings with rifle and bayonet for enemy militia, there are about 13 keeping the troop supplied with ammunition, water, food, and fuel and repairing his vehicles and equipment.

The 1.4 million-strong US armed forces have just 100,000 infantry belonging to the army and Marine Corps, he said.

"The sharp end of the military spear is pretty thin," he said. "People think everyone in the army is a frontline grunt – the US nickname for overloaded infantry – but it takes a remarkable effort to sustain the efforts of the spearpoint.

"The guys going up close and personal against an enemy need intelligence reports, ammunition, on-call artillery, tanks, strike aircraft, and helicopter gunship support as well as all the basics to keep them in action.

"It doesn't materialise out of thin air," the spokesman continued. "It has to be trucked forward to the combat zone.

"Those convoys have to be protected. And everything moving on wheels, tracks, rotor blades, or jet engines needs maintenance and repair."

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.

Military Intelligence? Soldier Reports General Sanchez Found Gravely Deficient In Common Sense

[THANKS TO Mike Hoffman, Co-Founder Iraq Veterans Against The War <http://www.ivaw.net/>, Veteran OIF, USMC, WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: MIKE WRITES: "This must be read."]

From: "Dave Collins" October 20, 2004 6:11

Folks,

The note, below, is from an Iraq War veteran, Jason Thelen. Jason was a Civil Affairs officer in Sadr City. In civilian life he is an attorney in the north Texas.

I sent him the news item most of you will have seen regarding the Pentagon's desire to promote Lt. Gen. Sanchez to Four Stars - but after the election of course. This is Jason's reaction to that bit of news.

One bit of background for the many of you who have never had the joy of a combat zone; you DO NOT act in a way that signals rank or authority when it is possible that these who wish to kill US troops can see you - officers draw fire and senior officers are a huge prize.

I don't know about Iraq, but in Viet Nam you did not wear visible insignia of rank in the field, well not unless you have a death wish or are an idiot; which I think might possibly be Jason's point. Can't say for sure of course.

Dave

From Jason Thelen:

He [Sanchez] became obsessed with seatbelt use while we were there.

One day, on a combat patrol, we were actually pulled over by one of Sanchez's staff colonels in an SUV. He lined us up on the side of the road and demanded to know why we were not wearing seatbelts, because Sanchez had decreed that everyone wears seatbelts. No exceptions.

We pointed out that we had no doors or armor on the vehicles, and that if you wanted to sit facing out to be able to return fire (or bail out when a grenade is tossed into the truck) you couldn't wear the seatbelt.

The reply was: no exceptions. Not even for the SAW/.50 gunner, who Sanchez ordered to wear a seatbelt and man the weapon at the same time.

The colonel said that SEVEN troops had died from not wearing seatbelts. Wow. Hadji had killed 500 at that point. But, **if the enemy kills a man, it doesn't go on an evaluation report. A traffic accident looks bad for a general.**

Oh, and Sanchez insisted that I salute him, out in the open, in Sadr City, in full view of rooftops that the Mehdi Army liked to camp out on with sniper rifles.

He showed up for a photo-op at the municipal building there **(wearing his pistol under his body armor, so he'd have to take his armor off to draw his weapon).**

I stuck out my hand to greet him, and he got all offended and made me salute him.

That's cool, it's your brain-pan catching the AK round.

General Says "U.S. Authorities" Shit-Eating Liars

Oct 19 By Luke Baker, BAGHDAD (Reuters)

The U.S. general in charge of Baghdad said Tuesday it would be at least another eight months before the Iraqi capital had enough police, contradicting previous U.S. claims that numbers were sufficient.

Maj. Gen. Pete Chiarelli, whose 1st Cavalry Division is responsible for security in Baghdad and its suburbs -- an area of about six million people -- said there were currently about 15,000 people working for the capital's force.

"We're about 10,000 short of what we need," he told reporters.

The huge shortfall of police in Baghdad is particularly remarkable because U.S. authorities repeatedly claimed ahead of the handover of power in June that numbers were sufficient.

In January, the chief spokesman for the U.S. administration in Iraq said that there were already 150,000 people working for the country's security forces and that 220,000 would be on the job by the June handover to the Iraqi government.

But more than three months after the handover, there are still about 150,000 people working in security, including 90,000 police nationwide, according to the Interior Ministry.

There were more members of the force, but of those recruited many turned out to be criminals or corrupt -- collecting a salary but not turning up to work, the Interior Ministry said. **Others resigned, were killed or went into retirement.**

Fresh Meat For Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse Tucson-Based Artillery Unit Training As Iraq Cops & Infantry

October 15, 2004 The Associated Press

The Arizona National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 180th Field Artillery has been ordered to active duty. The deployment marks the 26th Arizona Army National Guard unit to be deployed.

The order involves more than 180 soldiers from the Phoenix- and Tucson-based artillery battalion. The unit is scheduled to leave tomorrow morning. It will first head to Fort Dix, N.J., for training until the unit is certified.

The battalion has been training in military police procedures, infantry tactics and support and stability operations.

MORE:

Alabama Guard Troops Leave On Monday

October 15 Alabama Associated Press

Four Alabama Army National Guard units are preparing to deploy overseas for new duty assignments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Guard spokesman, Sgt. Martin Dyson, said departure ceremonies are planned Saturday and Sunday for the 250 soldiers. 140 members of the 440th Chemical Company, will hold separate departure ceremonies Saturday at armories in Vincent and Clanton. The Vincent ceremony is scheduled to start at 9 a-m.

The Clanton ceremony is planned for 11 a-m at Fort Ivan F. Smith armory. Sunday morning at 8 a-m -- 60 personnel from the 278th Chemical Battalion will be given a send-off at the Oneonta National Guard armory. Major General Mark Bowen, Alabama's Adjutant General, will attend and will address the troops.

A third ceremony will be held at 2 p-m on Sunday. 50 soldiers from the 1993rd Personnel Service Detachment will be recognized at Fort Rufus W. Shepherd armory near Dannelly Field.

MORE:

844th Army Reserve Battalion Leaves Knoxville For Iraq

October 20, 2004 By Amelia Graham, 6 News Reporter

KNOXVILLE (WATE) -- Over 200 soldiers in the Army Reserve's 844th Engineer Combat Battalion left Knoxville Wednesday for an 18-month stint in Iraq.

At the Knoxville Convention Center, 225 soldiers, surrounded by their loved ones, listened as their commanders gave them their charge. **They'll do construction work in Iraq for the next year and a half.**

Many of the soldiers are leaving behind their wives, husbands, children or parents.

Army Stretched To The Breaking Point

October 20, 2004 United Press International

WASHINGTON - More than 27 percent of the military's active duty troops are overseas, and more than half of them are in combat zones, numbers not seen since the Vietnam War, a new study shows.

"We haven't seen a split like that since Vietnam," said Carl Conetta, co-director of the Project on Defense Alternatives.

A much greater percentage of the force is deployed overseas than it was for the last decade, from 1992 to 2002, the study shows. It also questions whether adequate preparations were made to support such a deployment.

"The fact that we are doing it doesn't mean we can do it," Conetta said. "What was the preparation that allows for this? There hasn't been the preparation. *It doesn't mean people are revolting in the field.* You're not going to see a problem right

away. ... My concern is that it might be soon." [Got that dead wrong. The "revolting in the field" started last week.]

The study points to other indicators of possible trouble to come in the Army, which it argues is going to be stretched to the breaking point by an extended Iraq deployment.

More than 20 percent of the Army has already been deployed more than 120 days so far this year. In 2003, the total was 25 percent, according to estimates from the Project on Defense Alternatives.

Those numbers represent half of all deployable forces. It is a stark increase over the number of soldiers who were deployed more than 120 days a year for the previous eight years, according to Defense Department statistics cited by the study. Between 1994 and 2002, less than 5 percent of the Army was deployed for more than 120 days in any one year.

Reservists who were activated face the possibility of even more time in Iraq. Because they are pulled onto the active force for two years at a time, reservists with special skills who are individually activated are spending the better part of that time deployed, according to military officials. **One Army colonel, who is a civil affairs specialist, deployed in Fallujah told United Press International he would spend 21 of 24 months in Iraq.**

Army's Recruiters Miss Target For Enlistees

Reserves Fall 45% Short Of Goal, While Gap Is 30% In Regular Force Sign-Ups

10.20.04 By CHRISTOPHER COOPER and GREG JAFFE Staff Reporters, The Wall Street Journal

For the second straight year, U.S. Army recruiters fell short of their goal for signing up enlistees in the first month of a new recruiting cycle.

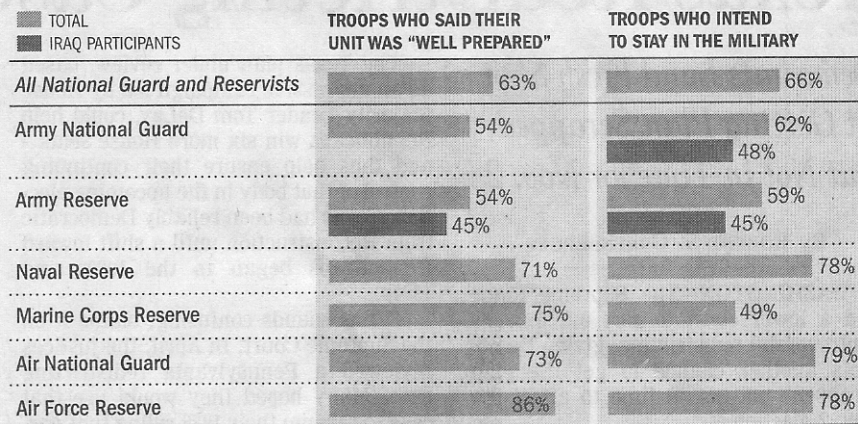
For the first 30-day period in its new recruiting year, the Army was 30% shy of its goal of signing up 7,274 recruits. The Army had a particularly hard time recruiting for the Army Reserve, on which the Pentagon has relied heavily in Iraq and Afghanistan. Enlistments for the reserves were 45% below the target.

In the same period last year, the Army came up 25% short in its goal in the first month for enlisting 6,220 regular recruits and 40% short of its reserve enlistment goal.

Some senior Pentagon officials say the wars are almost certain to hurt recruiting efforts, especially for reserves, who have been called up for active duty in large numbers. [Good Lord, who could have imagined such a thing?]

Reservists' Reservations

The Pentagon's Web-based survey was sent to 55,794 National Guard and Reserves troops, with 39% responding:



Source: Department of Defense

Wall St. Journal 10.19.04

No Help On The Way: Muslim Force Nixed By Bush

[Long Island Newsday, October 18, 2004]

President Bush killed a plan last month to send a Muslim force to Iraq because the force would not have been under U.S. command, New York daily Newsday reported Monday.

Saudi Arabia announced it hoped to organize such a force last July during a visit by Secretary of State Colin Powell but several Muslim countries, including Indonesia, Egypt and Pakistan also were cool to the idea because they would serve under U.S. command, and because of the increasing violence in Iraq.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Falluja: Two Views

10.20.04 Reuters

"It's a belligerent, bellicose city," says Lt. Col. George Bristol, intelligence officer for the 1st Marine Division, headquartered outside Ramadi. "It revels in its own victimhood."

“If Americans approach the city, all of western Iraq from Fallujah to the Jordanian border will turn into a combat zone,” says Astil Mahmud, 26, a Fallujah resident who drives a minibus between Fallujah and Baghdad.

“All our people are in the resistance. The more people die, the more people volunteer.”

[It’s a belligerent, bellicose city,” says Lt. Col. Eric Von Hauser, intelligence officer for the 1st Panzer Division, headquartered outside Warsaw. **“It revels in its own victimhood.”]**

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

A War Without Reason

10/18/2004 BOB HERBERT , New York Times

Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof, the smoking gun that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud."

- President Bush, Oct. 7, 2002

There should no longer be any doubt that the war in Iraq is an exercise in lunacy. It was launched with a spurious rationale, the weapons of mass destruction, which turned out to be a fantasy relentlessly stoked by obsessively hawkish middle-aged men who ran and hid when they were of fighting age and the nation was at war.

Now we find that we can't win this war we started. Soldiers and civilians alike are trapped in the proverbial briar patch, unable to move around safely in a country that the warmongers thought would be easy to conquer and then rebuild.

There is no way to overstate how profoundly wrong they were.

Our troops continue to die but we can't even identify the enemy, which is why so many innocent Iraqi civilians - including women and children - are being blown away. The civilians are being killed by the thousands, even as the dreaded Saddam Hussein is receiving first-class health care (most recently a successful hernia operation) from his captors.

Last week, in a story that read like a chapter from an antiwar novel, we learned that members of an Army Reserve platoon were taken into custody and held for two days after they refused to deliver a shipment of fuel to Taji, a town 15 miles

north of Baghdad. They complained that the trip was too dangerous to make without an escort of armored vehicles. Several of the reservists described the trip as a "suicide mission."

The military said that was an isolated incident, but there is evidence of growing dissatisfaction among the troops, many of whom feel they are targets surrounded by hostile Iraqis -insurgents and ordinary civilians alike - in a war that lacks a clearly defined mission.

As the pointlessness of this war grows ever clearer, the president's grand alliance, like some of the soldiers on the ground, is losing its resolve. When John Kerry, in the first presidential debate, mentioned only Britain and Australia as he mocked Mr. Bush's "coalition" in Iraq, the president famously replied, "You forgot Poland."

Poland has 2,400 troops in Iraq. But on Friday the prime minister, Marek Belka, announced that he will cut that number early next year, and then "will engage in talks on a further reduction."

Mr. Belka has a political problem. He can't explain the war to his constituents. And that's because there is no rational explanation.

As for the rebuilding of Iraq, forget about it. Hundreds of schools were damaged by U.S. bombing and thousands were looted by Iraqis. **It's hard to believe that an administration that won't rebuild schools here in America will really go to bat for schoolkids in Iraq.** Millions of Iraqi kids now attend schools that are decrepit and, in many cases, all but falling down-lacking such essentials as desks, chairs and even toilets, according to the United Nations Children's Fund.

The president and his apologists never understood what they were getting into in Iraq. What is unmistakable now is that Americans will never be willing to commit the overwhelming numbers of troops and spend the hundreds of billions of additional dollars necessary to have even a hope of bringing long-term stability to Iraq.

This is a war that never made sense and now we are seeing - from the troops on the ground, from our allies overseas and increasingly from the population here at home - the inevitable reluctance to forge ahead with the madness.

The president likes to say he made exactly the right decision on Iraq.

Each new death of a soldier or a civilian, each child who loses a parent to the carnage, each healthy body that is broken or burned in this war that didn't have to happen, is a reminder of how horribly wrong he was.

How To Stop The War? Piven Says Elections Won't Do It:

Takes Movements Fucking Up The Government; “Things May Have To Get Ugly”

October 15, 2004 From article by Ricky BaldwinCommonDreams.org
<http://www.commondreams.org/views04/1015-29.htm>

“I think a successful antiwar movement has to act in ways that throw sand in the gears of the war machine. Resistance has to be more serious.”

Millions of Americans and others demonstrated against the invasion of Iraq in the last months before it occurred, 10 million around the world on one particular day, in what dissident intellectual Noam Chomsky described as the most significant showing of opposition to war at such an early stage in living memory.

Yet all that failed to stop the war or even produce a bona fide antiwar candidate for president, at least not a major party nominee. This has discouraged many protestors, particularly among the impressive proportions of first-timers. When, they ask, will we ever have a better chance to win? **If we couldn't stop this one, what's the use of even trying?**

But award-winning sociologist and activist Francis Fox Piven says the antiwar movement may have expected too much for too little.

“War-making is never determined by anything like a democratic process,” she says. “War is something that governing elites undertake, and they don't undertake it in response to popular opinion. If that were the case, we would probably never go to war, because ordinary people pay for war with blood and with their wealth.”

“One kind of evidence for that is that candidates never campaign as war candidates. Lyndon Baynes Johnson, who kept us in Vietnam, promised not to go to war in Vietnam. You can see that again and again. Candidates always campaign as peace candidates.

“Another kind of evidence is that antiwar movements -- popular opinion against wars expressed in marches and demonstrations -- has rarely succeeded at the outset. **It's as the war grinds on and people become more and more angry and disillusioned with the war that popular opinion, popular resistance to the war begins to take its toll on the capacity of government to make war. So in a way the antiwar movement is being too impatient. They expect to win too easily.**”

So do we just keep doing what we are doing and look forward with bated breath for that fateful day? Hardly. What the current antiwar movement has done so far, she says, is express opinion. “They marched in large numbers, they rallied, and it was a kind of voting, voting in the streets.

"I think a successful antiwar movement has to act in ways that throw sand in the gears of the war machine. Resistance has to be more serious."

What Piven means by "more serious" we can see in some of her published research with political scientist Richard A. Cloward, especially [The Politics of Turmoil](#) and [Poor People's Movements](#), with its subtitle "How They Succeed, Why They Fail."

"There are always lessons for movements in the history of movements," says Piven. "And the most important lessons have to do with the conditions under which movements exert leverage, exert power. This is not a question that is directly asked in most of the literature on movements." but Piven and Cloward do address it.

In every case they examine, movements found their concerns fell on deaf ears until they directly disrupted 'business as usual' either in government or business operations, and then they made significant gains.

When unemployed workers sat in at relief offices, for example, local officials somehow found the money to pay them benefits. Also when participants created chaos on the local level, officials noticed at the state and federal levels and began to make concessions and even to advocate for the protestors' causes.

Furthermore, and contrary to conventional wisdom, these efforts lost ground quickly as soon as they changed their methods to more acceptable means to achieve their ends: negotiating through representatives, working with candidates, helping them get elected, lobbying and so on.

The first signs of popular discontent had been seen at the polls, Piven and Cloward point out, but the candidates elected as a result only paid lip service to movement sympathies. Once in office, their actions fell well short of needed reforms. This was true both before and after disobedient groups created crises in which they would be heard.

It remains to be seen what effect popular dissatisfaction with the war will have at the polls, but it should be abundantly clear by now that the work of the antiwar movement will not be over with this election, no matter who wins. And if history is any guide, it seems, things may have to get ugly.

"There are numerous ways in which popular resistance could express itself," Piven says. "You know, all the war material has to be shipped overseas. And it's working people everywhere who have to do the shipping, who have to do the hauling." Such methods involve great personal and political risk, as Piven acknowledges, but a "serious" antiwar movement must look at what works and what doesn't work.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

Marine Battalions Accused Of Trying To “Disrupt” U.S. Occupation

10.15.04 By TINI TRAN, Associated Press Writer

In Friday's operations at Fallujah, **two Marine battalions were trying to ``disrupt the capabilities of the anti-Iraqi forces,**" said Maj. Francis Piccoli, spokesman for the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Jenna & Barbara Bush Welcome You to SPRING BREAK FALLUJAH 2005!



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Girls Gone Wild

True to their family tradition of personal sacrifice, Jenna and Barbara Bush are the first to sign up for Spring Break Fallujah 2005. "Isn't that an MTV thing?" asked party girl Jenna, "because I'm totally there." How cute! It's armed conflict in the Middle East, spring break style. And the twins will have plenty of company - all guys and girls from the age of 18-34, and medical personnel up to the age of 44! Awesome!

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<input type="button" value="Book Now !"/>				

Kerry Says: Let's Have More Dead Troops!



<http://www.enjoythedraft.com/>

“The United States must fight and win two wars, the war in Iraq and the war on terror.” John Kerry, Campaign speech shown on PBS 10.20.04

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<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/> ; www.gifightback.org ;

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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