

GI SPECIAL 2#11



TROUBLE ON ALL SIDES

U.S. soldiers from the 1st Armored Division (AP Photo/Victor R. Caivano)

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!

Bulgarian Soldiers Stop Fighting

Wall St. Journal 1.16.04

"A Bulgarian unit suspended peacekeeping operations in Karbala. Officers said December car-bomb killings left soldiers angry and demoralized."

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/gi-special/>

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Three GIs Killed By IED, Pushing Iraq Toll to 500

By PAUL GARWOOD, Associated Press Writer & by C. Bryson Hull, Reuters
1.17.03

TIKRIT, Iraq - The number of American service members who have died in the Iraq conflict since war started last March reached 500 Saturday after a roadside bomb exploded near Baghdad, killing three U.S. soldiers and two Iraqi civil defense troopers.

Two Americans also were wounded when a Bradley Fighting Vehicle hit the explosive device and caught fire on a road near Taji, about 20 miles north of the Iraq capital, said Lt. Col. Bill MacDonald, a spokesman for the 4th Infantry Division.

The roadside bomb north of Baghdad appeared to be one of the most powerful used against U.S. occupation forces to date -- killing the five inside a Bradley armored vehicle, which resembles a small tank. Previous attacks on U.S. convoys have tended to cause casualties aboard lighter vehicles such as trucks.

Those killed and wounded had been part of a joint U.S.-Iraqi patrol looking for roadside bombs, a frequent attack method by insurgents targeting the U.S.-led occupation, MacDonald said. Three men fleeing in a white truck were detained, and soldiers found bomb-making material in the vehicle, he added.



The destroyed turret of a US Bradley fighting vehicle is taken away on the back of a truck after a roadside bomb blew apart their armored vehicle.(AFP/Mauricio Lima)

MacDonald said the remote-controlled bomb, planted on an access road, was made up of two 155 mm artillery rounds and other explosives. The attack occurred near the Sunni Muslim village of Awad just west of Taji. **Residents said American soldiers rounded up an undetermined number of young men after the blast in addition to the three in the truck.**

Abed Ali, who lives nearby, told AP that he rushed to the scene after hearing the loud explosion and saw the Bradley burning. The explosion left a large crater. Young Iraqi men could be seen picking through the wreckage of the destroyed vehicle.



Iraqis view a bomb crater on a rural road near the town of Taji, after a fatal blast destroyed a U.S. Army Bradley fighting vehicle, January 17, 2004. Photo by Ali Jasim/Reuters

SOLDIER DIES FROM NON-HOSTILE GUNSHOT WOUND

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND

January 17, 2004 Release Number: 04-01-15C

BAGHDAD, Iraq – A Combined Joint Task Force-Seven soldier died from a non-hostile gunshot wound at approximately 6 p.m. Jan. 16 near Ad Diwaniyah. The soldier was evacuated to the Spanish Hospital but was pronounced dead on arrival.

Georgian Defense Minister Shot At

16 January, 2004 BBC News

Georgia's Defence Minister David Tevzadze has escaped unharmed from an attack on his plane as it left Baghdad.

Coalition helicopters were despatched and returned fire. No-one was injured.

"I was sleeping at the time and was told only later about the incident," Mr Tevzadze said on his return to the Georgian capital Tbilisi on Friday.

He was visiting the 70 elite troops, doctors and mine clearing experts that Georgia sent to Iraq last August as part of the US-led force there.

They are due to be replaced by 200 troops in February - while another 300 soldiers will be sent in the spring.

“No To America, No To Saddam, No To Bush”

AFP Jan. 16. 2004

BAGHDAD : A teenager was killed and five people injured when a bomb exploded on a busy Baghdad street as US troops and Iraqis were trying to defuse it, police said.

"People stayed near the bomb, people wouldn't leave. The Americans put something on the bomb to cover it. When the soldiers backed off from the bomb, someone detonated it by remote control," Naimi said.

Haidar Khodayr, 15, had been playing football in an abandoned lot with friends when people spotted a bomb hidden in a garbage bag on the city's Haifa street, said Sergeant Mohi Naimi.

At Al-Karkh hospital, family members claimed Khodayr's body and fastened his wooden coffin to the top of a beaten-up car.

"No to America, No to Saddam, No to Bush," Khodayr's distraught older brother shouted, his arms trembling, before his family drove away.

In Hawijah, north of Baghdad, seven people were injured, including four Iraqi Civil Defence Corps personnel, when two attacker threw grenades at a government building Wednesday during a meeting attended by US troops, the US military said.

In a separate attack on the same day, gunmen fired on a convoy traveling near the northern town of Samarra. US troops returned fire destroying the attackers' vehicle but it was not known if they inflicted any casualties.

TROOP NEWS

Capitalism At Work:
Food Inspector Threatened For
Complaining Soldiers Getting
Shitty, Unsafe Food;
Fired By Bush Buddies At Halliburton
Who Get Army Food Service Profits;
The Story Of “Ray”, The Soldier-Poisoner



“I’ll take another helping of that infected shit please. Food poisoning is so cool!”

by JIM HIGHT, North Coast Journal Weekly Jan. 8, 2004
<http://www.northcoastjournal.com/010804/cover0108.html>

ON JULY 17, 2003, HEATHER YARBROUGH flew to Kuwait to start a new job: monitoring the quality and safety of food served to soldiers on U.S. military bases in Iraq. Her employer was the Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR) Government Services division of Halliburton, the Texas-based oil company formerly run by Vice President Dick Cheney that has contracts with the U.S. government to support military personnel in the field and to help with Iraq reconstruction.

Yarbrough, 33, felt upbeat and excited. She had trained hard for a position like this, one that required expertise in food and science. She was banking on the high salary -- \$1,500 a week -- to pay off her student loans. **And unlike many of her fellow students at Humboldt State University, she supported the Bush Administration and its war.**

Yarbrough never dreamed she'd be fired a month later for what in her view was simply an effort to implement the Army's own safety and sanitation standards. Nor did she imagine that she'd be telling congressional staffers about potentially dangerous food being served to U.S. soldiers by ESS Support Services, a food-service subcontractor to Halliburton.

While Yarbrough did not see any soldiers fall sick from food served by ESS, she did witness something else that disturbed her: the labor system that feeds and supports U.S. troops in Iraq and Kuwait. It's a system in which highly paid Americans oversee a huge corps of Indians, Pakistanis and other so-called "third-country nationals" working in sweatshop conditions for as little as \$3 a day.

Yarbrough is not alone in pointing to problems in Halliburton's military contracts. Congressional watchdogs criticized excessive costs charged by Kellogg, Brown & Root (now a subsidiary of Halliburton) in the late 1990s at Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo.

Early in the Iraq war, the head of Army logistics complained that Halliburton and its subcontractors were deploying too slowly to forward areas, forcing soldiers to go longer than necessary without fresh food, showers and other amenities, according to the *Houston Chronicle*.

And last month a flurry of media coverage ensued after it was revealed that the Pentagon is investigating whether **Halliburton and its subcontractors overcharged the United States as much as \$61 million for fuel and inflated cost estimates by \$67 million in a proposal for dining facility services.**

It was to one of these dining facilities that Yarbrough was assigned soon after arriving in Kuwait. After working in a temporary post at Truckville, a part of Camp Arifjan in Kuwait, she traveled north through Iraq in a four-day convoy to what was supposed to be a yearlong assignment at Camp Iron Horse in Tikrit, field headquarters of the Army's 4th Infantry Division.

It was Aug. 6, opening day for the camp's dining facility. "Two thousand five hundred anxious soldiers, many waiting to eat their first cooked meal in months, stood around us [at a ribbon-cutting ceremony]," she wrote later in her Web log (www.humboldt.edu/~hdy1). "Dinner was served on time, and it appeared to be a smooth operation."

But the next evening, when Yarbrough started her first 12-hour overnight shift, she was shocked at conditions in the kitchen. Freezers and refrigerators weren't working. Food was spoiling. The kitchen workers were exhausted, and some of them weren't following basic sanitation practices. "It became apparent to me that much of the food served at the banquet the night before was ... possibly dangerous," she wrote.

At 2 a.m. Yarbrough saw a lone kitchen worker spreading mayonnaise onto several thousand slices of bread for the next day's sandwiches. He was halfway through the job, and the mayonnaise had sat in open bowls for hours.

The kitchen's air conditioner had moderated the desert heat somewhat, but it had also spewed dust over the worker, the mayonnaise and the bread. Yarbrough conferred with a kitchen supervisor, and they agreed that the mayonnaise and partially made sandwiches should be thrown away.

Yarbrough logged the incident in the journal that she kept for her Halliburton KBR supervisor, and **the next day the supervisor applauded her decision to discard the suspect food.**

On her second night on duty, Yarbrough met with kitchen staff -- all third-country nationals working for ESS -- and wrote down a list of supplies needed for sanitary purposes: thermometers to check the heat in steam trays, test strips to measure chlorine in sanitizing water, rubber gloves and other items.

She noted that the day shift had left the dining facility a mess: dirty tables, overflowing trash, no sodas stocked. And she took some feedback from a sergeant who represented Halliburton's client, the Army. "The cream[ed] beef was greasy. Dessert table is messy with crumbs. Stock juices earlier in the morning because they want the products to be cold," she wrote in her journal.

About midnight, **an American who managed the dining facility for ESS came into the kitchen.** Yarbrough read him the list of sanitary items needed, described the problems in the dining room and relayed the Army sergeant's requests.

But before she finished, the man she knew only as "Ray" erupted in anger. "He told me that I was not aware of my position or duties," she wrote later that morning in her journal. "He told me not to attempt to address [kitchen workers, only the] night manager."

To underscore the point, Ray stepped menacingly close to Yarbrough. "With riveted eye contact [he] reminded me of his instruction." Then he left.

This wasn't entirely surprising to Yarbrough. She'd done quality control and quality-assurance work before, and she'd expected some tension with kitchen managers.

But she'd read her job description carefully and knew that she was responsible for the quality and safety of food served on her shift. She was also certified in safety and sanitation by the National Restaurant Association, and was constantly referencing the Army's food-safety manual, known as TB Med 530.

There were 160 employees in the massive kitchen, and **when she saw workers returning from breaks without washing their hands or using spoiled BBQ sauce, she was going to continue speaking to them directly instead of wasting time searching for the night manager.**

Over the next few days, Yarbrough trained kitchen workers in sanitation methods and taught seminars on botulism, E. coli and other dangerous bacteria. The kitchen crews seemed to be paying more attention to safety. "Overall, this is much better," she wrote Aug. 10 in her journal.

But while conditions in the kitchen were improving, Yarbrough's position in the dining facility's power structure was deteriorating. She'd learned from co-workers that Ray was tight with her supervisor. Even more ominous, the Army officer in charge of food services at Camp Iron Horse was also a friend of Ray's.

On Aug. 11, that officer called Yarbrough angrily to an impromptu meeting. When she began to take notes, he stopped abruptly and walked away.

The next day, Yarbrough recorded another confrontation with Ray, but she went on with her job. "I gave a short brief on salmonella, likely sources, mode of contamination, toxicity and symptoms of infection," she wrote. "Cooks seem pleased with this nightly entertainment."

She planned to give the same talk to day cooks, but she was suspended the next day, relieved of duty and told to pack up and be ready to take the next convoy back to Kuwait.

Yarbrough's supervisor told her she was being fired for wearing a dirty shirt, leaving work early once and other infractions. **But Yarbrough felt certain these were bogus charges. The supervisor seemed "eaten up with guilt," she recalled in an interview. "He wouldn't look me in the eye."**

While waiting for the convoy, Yarbrough appealed to a Halliburton district manager. She told him Ray was compromising food safety, and she believed he'd used his influence to get her fired.

"He told me that I was a danger to myself if I remained at Tikrit," said Yarbrough. "He wouldn't tell me why, but I thought it was that somebody would have been sent to do me harm."

Yarbrough still felt confident that when she talked to senior managers back at Camp Arifjan, they would put Ray in his place -- he worked for a Halliburton subcontractor after all -- and send her back to work making food safer for soldiers in the 4th ID.

But Yarbrough says these managers refused to listen to her. Instead, they polished up their own version of events to match that of Ray and his friends. They told her that they had lost confidence in her, and that the military had asked them to remove her from Camp Iron Horse. **(Do you suppose Ray can figure out what f-r-a-g-g-i-n-g means? One way or another ray definitely has got to go.)**

Back in the United States, she appealed to Halliburton's employee relations office. "I thought I'd be sent back to work in Iraq, if not Tikrit," she said. "I liked my job, and I wanted it back." After more than a month, she was informed that her termination was final.

As for the cronyism Yarbrough describes, the spokeswoman wrote: "Company policies are designed specifically to prohibit these types of activities and/or relationships."

But a government official familiar with the dining facility at Camp Iron Horse confirmed this aspect of Yarbrough's story. "The three people she's talking about

had all worked together in the past," said the official, who would speak only on condition of anonymity. "Two [civilian contract employees] were former military, and one guy was still on active duty.

"I think it was someone in the Army who requested she be removed," he explained. "That's not within their jurisdiction. We have no authority to tell a contractor to hire or fire somebody."

Yarbrough fears that what she saw at Camp Iron Horse is being repeated at other bases. "I am concerned that the quality of work under these contracts is compromised by the friendships between contractors and military personnel," she said.

She also suspects that risks are being taken with food-safety and other issues so that Halliburton and ESS can meet deadlines and qualify for millions of dollars in performance bonuses.

"I first thought that my situation was just an unfortunate set of relationships at one location," she said. But during her trip from Camp Iron Horse back to Kuwait, she met Halliburton staffers moving between bases, and they all seemed to know Ray. "Every Halliburton employee I met in Iraq and Kuwait was ex-military," she said, adding that she wonders how many of them had friends on active duty and were using their influence as she believes Ray did.

Yarbrough also has concerns about the working and living conditions of the third-country nationals who serve in dining facilities and other capacities at bases throughout Iraq and Kuwait. "Third-country nationals have no rights, no papers and no access to medical care," said Yarbrough.

"They are allowed no communication with their families and cannot leave the gravel surrounding the dining facilities where they work," she said.

"I am amazed that Americans don't know anything about the TCNs [third-country nationals] doing all the work over there," she said. "CNN is in Tikrit right now, eating at that dining facility. Why haven't TCNs been interviewed? Indians speak English."

She also has a binder full of documents, including two that seem to validate most strongly what she says about being fired for doing her job and a cover-up within Halliburton: the job description she was given when she started work in July and a Sept. 29 e-mail message from an employee relations manager citing the official reasons for her termination.

"Interfering with [dining facility] operations," states the e-mail message from Halliburton employee relations. "Interfering with management of subcontractors; [and] discarding food without consulting the client or management."

Dated June 20, 2003, her job description says she and other Halliburton staff are "responsible for the overall sanitation and food safety of the operation."

"Ensure that our clients are receiving the best in customer service while monitoring the subcontractor," states the document. "Be ready to jump in and help when needed. Do not convince yourself that you are an inspector and your sole purpose is to observe and take notes.

"Stop all unsafe and unsanitary acts immediately," it reads.

"I want my job back," she said.

But wanting her job back hasn't stopped Yarbrough from trying to blow the whistle on what she perceives as unsafe and corrupt practices by the company's staff.

She was interviewed by telephone in November by an aide for the House of Representatives Government Reform Committee, and a source with the committee's staff told the *Journal* that Yarbrough's information might figure in future investigations. **(Don't hold your breath waiting for Congress to go after the Bush Buddies. Most of them get their regular bribes to shut up and do what they're told, oops sorry, not bribes, "campaign contributions." Yeah, the Democrats too.)**

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/>

BE ADVISED

Activated Guard, Reserve Members Hit With "Mistaken" Prescription Charges; Privatization Strikes Again

January 19, 2004 By Deborah Funk, Army Times staff writer

Some service members had to pay for prescription drugs because of an error in the new software controlling the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System.

It is unknown how many people were affected.

Some may have been assessed a copayment when they should not have been.

Active-duty service members, including mobilized reservists, pay nothing for health care, including prescription drugs, in the military health system.

“Some active-duty service members were being charged a co-pay amount when filling prescriptions,” Tricare officials said in a statement. **“This was only happening to activated National Guard/Reservists and applies to areas where PGBA [Palmetto Government Benefits Administrators] is the claims processor.”**

This includes all Tricare regions with the exception of regions six and 11. **PGBA is a subsidiary of Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina.**

PGBA will reimburse those who were erroneously charged copayments, according to Tricare. **It appears the reimbursement will be automatic** and will not require any action on the part of the service member, Tricare said. **(Don’t hold your breath.)**

The Reserve Officers Association e-mailed its members that they may be charged for drugs when they get their prescriptions filled, and that **they should save their receipts if that happens.**

Portability sometimes has been a problem in the past for military beneficiaries when they tried to use their health-care benefits outside the Tricare region in which they lived.

Genius General Sanchez Says It’s OK For Most Of Iraqi Resistance To Keep On Fighting The Occupation

January 16, 2004 By Nadia Abou El Magd, Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — **The top U.S. commander in Iraq on Friday urged Saddam Hussein’s loyalists to lay down arms** and “embrace the future,” of a sovereign Iraq, saying they will otherwise end up either dead or in custody. **(Well, assuming that the 14 “Saddam Hussein loyalists” left do lay down their arms, that only leaves about 8 million Iraqis who hate both Hussein and the Occupation to keep on fighting. Being a drooling fool must be how you get to be the in-country commander.)**

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Silly Iraqis Fear Bush Will Manipulate Their Elections!

By PAUL GARWOOD, Associated Press Writer 1.17.03

On the political front, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani, the country's most influential Shiite Muslim leader, demanded that members of a new provisional legislature be chosen by voters. The Americans want them selected by regional caucuses.

Many Shiites suspect the Americans simply want to manipulate the caucuses to make sure favored Iraqis win seats. **(What? Manipulate elections? Use fraud? US politicians do something like that? Why those Iraqis really are backward people, aren't they? How childlike and unreasonable of them to even suspect the Occupation and the Bush Regime of deceit and trickery, especially where an election is concerned!)**

Doubts over the American plan for transferring power to Iraqi hands by July 1 have loomed over the U.S.-led occupation this week, with the Americans pointing to sporadic violence as evidence the country is not ready for direct elections.

(Speaking for His Majesty's Government, British Officials said that Americans are not yet ready to choose their own government, pointing to sporadic violence as evidence the country is not ready for direct elections. London Times, January 17, 1777.)



Iraqi demonstrators chant and hold up placards and pictures of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani, at a University in Baghdad Jan. 17 calling to support al-Sistani's demands for an interim legislature to be elected directly, not chosen in provincial caucuses as called for under political agreement signed between L. Paul Bremer, America's top civilian official in Iraq, and the Iraqi Governing Council. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

Bremer Leaves Iraq for Transfer Talks

(THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES:

Shiites forced Bremer to do what he said he'd never do: cut and run. Let the pants shitting begin!)

By BARRY SCHWEID, AP Diplomatic Writer Jan. 15, 2004

WASHINGTON - Trying to salvage a timetable for Iraqi self-rule, the chief U.S. administrator in Iraq, L. Paul Bremer III, is returning from Baghdad for U.N. and White House consultations, U.S. officials said Thursday.

More than 20,000 people demonstrated in Basra, Iraq's second largest city, on Thursday. The protesters chanted, "No, no to America, yes, yes to al-Sistani." That was a reference to the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani's demands that transition to Iraqi rule and the presence of American peacekeeping troops be submitted to the voters.

The U.S. plan for transition to Iraqi rule by July 1, with American troops remaining in the country, is under review in light of the Shiite leader's demands. He has a reputation of being a moderate, but his tough stance has cast doubt whether the administration's plan will have to be revised.



THE HEAVY BATTALIONS MOVE INTO POSITION

Iraqis protest in the streets of the southern city of Basra carrying posters of Shiite leaders including Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani, far right, the top cleric of Iraq's Shiite majority Jan. 15, 2004. **Thousands demonstrated in Basra to support al-Sistani's demands for an interim legislature to be elected directly, not chosen in provincial caucuses as called for under political agreement signed between L. Paul Bremer, America's top civilian official in Iraq, and the Iraqi Governing Council.** (AP Photo/Nabeel al-Jurani)

Baghdad University Staff & Students Pissed Off By Occupation Guns & West Point

Professors' Invasion Of Their Campus; "We Don't' Want Them Inside Our University Or Our Country;" West Point Dean Has To Stand Next to Banner Demanding End Of Occupation!

January 16, 2004 By Jim Krane, Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — **To the Army, flying eight West Point professors to lecture at Baghdad University was a chance to showcase the military's scholarly and humanitarian credentials.**

For the Iraqi students and professors in attendance, the lectures smacked of education at the wrong end of an M-16.

"We don't want them inside our university or inside our country," said Fuad Hamdan, 24, a political science student, watching as U.S. troops frisked those entering the lecture hall.

This week's series of guest lectures from the U.S. Military Academy turned out to be another example of what the Army considers its good works being misunderstood by those living under its occupation. **(If true, rather than reporter bullshit, "the Army" Officers who "think" this must have a collective IQ of 14.)**

Although the lecturers were unarmed, their American security escorts carried M-16s into the classroom. Students and professors complained to a reporter afterward about the presence of armed occupation troops on the grounds of a center of learning.

"I can't stand it when they put their guns in my face," said a woman professor who asked that her name not be used. "This is a university, not a battlefield."

The woman professor sat through a lecture Wednesday on recent trends in political science from Col. Robert Gordon, who directs West Point's American Politics department. **The Iraqi professor said she found Gordon's material divorced from Iraq's reality.**

More relevant, she said, would have been an academic discussion on Americans' views of Arabs, a popular topic on this campus of 40,000 that sprawls across a thumb of land bordered by the Tigris River.

"It's nothing new. American college kids don't like soldiers on their campuses either," said Army Brig. Gen. Dan Kaufman, West Point's silver-haired academic dean, wearing desert camouflage fatigues **as he stood near a hand-painted banner**

demanding an “end to the occupation.” (Nicely done. Where are the photos? Could it be the suck-up reporters didn't take any?)

(And what is this asshole Kaufman raving about? Kent State, when students protesting the Vietnam War non-violently were shot and killed by the Ohio National Guard?

(He can't be talking about the real world in 2004 because today's anti-war movement is reaching out to soldiers with arguments against the war. Today's anti-war students understand very well that the enlisted ranks can be and have to be won to our side against the real enemy, the Imperial politicians in Washington, Democrat and Republican alike.)

“Intellectual freedom means you get what you get. We regard that as a victory,” he said. “They're free to criticize.” **(Lie, stupid lie at that. Everybody knows that Bremer issued a regulation providing for the arrest of anybody attacking the occupation, verbally or physically.)**

The Army also acknowledged that firebrand college students are among their most virulent potential enemies.

Bringing them face to face with some of the U.S. military's top professors, the Army hopes, will temper the influence of the inevitable campus radicals. Brig. Gen. Mark Hertling, a deputy commander of the Army's 1st Armored Division, said the lectures were born in a division brainstorming session on winning the minds of potential recruits for the guerrilla cells currently mounting attacks in Baghdad. **(Incredible. Pathetic. Going down for the third time.)**

Former members of Saddam Hussein's Baath party are thought to make up most of those cells. **(Only by complete idiots.)**

But the rebuilding successes relentlessly touted by Americans were spurned by Iraqis bitter about the state of postwar Baghdad, where phones don't work, daily blackouts darken swaths of the city and garbage-choked streets have been carved up by blast barriers and razor wire.

“The Americans haven't changed anything since they arrived in the country, so how are a few lectures going to help?” asked Enaas Jihad, 25. **“You Americans managed to bring your tanks here by airplane very quickly. Can't you do anything about the electricity?”**

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Army's Best At Counterinsurgency Proves An Arrogant, Ignorant Racist Asshole; (Refers To Iraqis As "Clowns") Interviewed By Equally Racist Pro-War Reporter (Iraqis Are "Dinosaurs" To Be Taught How To "Dance")

Part One: Conclusion In Next GI Special

(Note: Much garbage has been cut that would tend to produce vomiting, such as assertions by the reporter the resistance is made up of foreign terrorists and Saddam Hussein remnants, how wonderful the invasion is for the Iraqis, blah blah blah. Despite the silly propaganda, the truth keeps leaking through.)

By Peter Maass, NY Times 1.11.04

Maj. John Nagl approaches war pragmatically and philosophically, as a soldier and a scholar. He graduated close to the top of his West Point class in 1988 and was selected as a Rhodes scholar. He studied international relations at Oxford for two years, then returned to military duty just in time to take command of a tank platoon during the 1991 Persian Gulf war. After the war, he went back to England and earned his Ph.D. from St. Antony's College, the leading school of foreign affairs at Oxford. While many military scholars were focusing on peacekeeping or the impact of high-tech weaponry, **Nagl was drawn to a topic much less discussed in the 1990's: counterinsurgency.**

At Oxford, he immersed himself in the classic texts of guerrilla warfare. Nagl read "Small Wars Manual," published in 1940 by the United States Marine Corps, which cautions: **"Every detachment representing a tempting target will be harassed or attacked. The population will be honeycombed with hostile sympathizers."**

The more Nagl read, the more he understood the historical challenge of insurgency. In the early 1800's, Carl von Clausewitz wrote of "people's wars" in which "the element of resistance will exist everywhere and nowhere." The book that most forcefully captured Nagl's imagination was written by T.E. Lawrence, popularly known as Lawrence of Arabia, the British officer who, during World War I, led Arab fighters against the Turkish rulers in the Middle East and described the campaign (taking liberties with the facts) in his counterinsurgency classic, "Seven Pillars of Wisdom."

Lawrence's is one of the few books in the canon written from the point of view of the insurgent. In a near-hallucinatory state, suffering from dysentery and lying in a tent, **Lawrence realized the key to defeating the Turkish Army. "Armies were like plants, immobile, firm-rooted, nourished through long stems to the head," he wrote. Lawrence's guerrillas, by contrast, "might be a vapour." For the Turks, he**

concluded, "war upon rebellion was messy and slow, like eating soup with a knife."

When Nagl's doctoral thesis, "Counterinsurgency Lessons From Malaya and Vietnam," was published in 2002, it carried the subtitle "Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife."

Nagl's scholarship helped earn him a post as a professor at West Point. But when I met him last month, he was testing his theories far from the classroom. Nagl is now the third in command of a tank battalion in the heart of the so-called Sunni Triangle, which extends north and west of Baghdad. The counterinsurgency expert is, for the first time in his life, practicing counterinsurgency.

Over the course of two weeks I accompanied Nagl. I described him as an expert in counterinsurgency, and this made him laugh.

"The 'expert' thing just kills me," he said. "I thought I understood something about counterinsurgency, until I started doing it."

Nagl is the operations officer of Task Force 1/34 Armor, an 800-soldier battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Jeff Swisher, that is part of the First Infantry Division. The battalion is stationed a 90-minute drive west of Baghdad, at an Iraqi air base, not far from the city of Falluja, that is now known as Camp Manhattan. The main town in the battalion's area of operations is Khaldiya, a few miles from the base. Like Falluja and Ramadi and other former Baath Party citadels, Khaldiya is a staging ground for anti-American attacks, and five of the battalion's soldiers have been killed and more than 40 wounded. Local allies of the Americans, or people seen as collaborators, live dangerously, too; in September, assailants killed Khaldiya's police chief, firing 25 bullets into his body.

Despite that attack, Nagl knows that effective counterinsurgency can't work without the formation of local security forces. Foreign troops don't know the terrain and its people as well as locals, **and besides, foreign forces cannot remain forever.** And so, soon after arriving in Iraq in September, Nagl and his battalion set out to retrain Khaldiya's corrupt and hesitant police.

When the first detachment of American soldiers went to the Khaldiya police station in an effort to form a joint patrol, the policemen on duty at the station, seeing the Humvees rolling up, scrambled out the back windows, Nagl told me. They were frightened at the prospect of walking the streets with the occupiers. The next day, when Nagl went to the station, the same thing happened. He and a few of his men walked across the street to the police force's administrative office and collared two of the officers there, informing them that they would have the honor of patrolling with the Americans. He put AK-47's into their hands and said it was time to move out. The conversation, as Nagl remembers it, went like this:

"You're going to walk with us," Nagl said.

"No, we're not," one of the officers responded.

"Yes, you are."

"No."

"Yes."

"No."

"Yes."

"No."

"You're going, buddy."

Nagl laughed as he told me the story.

"I understood intellectually that counterinsurgency is an intel-driven event," he began. "You have to have the local nationals tell you who the bad guys are, and then you act on that information. But the steps between there were not clear to me."

What did he mean?

He offered an example: **"The local comes in and says, 'There's a bad guy in my neighborhood who is planting I.E.D.'s'" -- improvised explosive devices -- "'and is an arms dealer and fires mortars at you.' Wow, that's great intel. 'So tell me where he lives.'"**

He paused for effect.

"There aren't any addresses in this country. The streets don't have names, there are no street signs, there aren't numbers on houses; all the houses look the same."

Nagl said he would next offer a map or satellite image to the local and ask him to point out the house. The Iraqi, in most cases, would scratch his head.

"These clowns don't know how to read maps," he continued.

"So how exactly do I find out which house the bad guy lives in? I've got to get the Iraqi in a Humvee and drive past the house and get him to point out the house -- but he doesn't want his friends to see him in a Humvee. I can put him in a Mercedes and put myself in local garb, but if I do that the Geneva Conventions say I lose my rights and protections. Conventional soldiers don't usually do that sort of stuff."

(It is the sort of thing the Special Forces are doing. I was told -- though not by Nagl -- that S.F. operators occasionally visit his base, wearing local clothes or outdoor gear that regular soldiers are not permitted to wear.)

Much of Nagl's time in Iraq is taken up with conundrums like this. His days start before dawn, and by the time he goes to sleep, he can hardly remember everything that happened since he opened his eyes. For a student of guerrilla warfare, he knows, this is the opportunity of a lifetime.

He is like a paleontologist given the chance to go back in time and walk with the dinosaurs. But Nagl can't simply stand around and take notes. He is responsible, with the rest of his battalion, for taming an insurgency, which is as difficult as teaching dinosaurs to dance. (Now the reporter joins the racist party. Iraqis are "dinosaurs" who will learn to "dance" to the U.S. tune, or else.)

As the Iraq situation shows all too grimly, counterinsurgency is war, and there is nothing low-intensity about it.

Nagl understands this intellectually and intuitively. The portions of his book that focus on Vietnam stress the erroneous and muddled thinking of American military and political elites, especially Gen. William Westmoreland, who (as the historian Max Boot recounts), when asked his solution to the Vietcong, replied with one word: "firepower." As a counterpoint in his study, Nagl quotes Marine Gen. Victor (Brute) Krulak, who concluded: "You cannot win militarily. You have to win totally, or you are not winning at all."

For Nagl, Vietnam stands as an encyclopedia of what shouldn't be done. Foremost in the do-not-repeat category are the indiscriminate use of firepower, the resort to conventional tactics to fight an unconventional threat and the failure to implement an effective "hearts and minds" campaign. The preferred strategy has been referred to as "total war," though the phrase is often misunderstood as referring to a scorched-earth strategy. John Waghelstein, a retired Special Forces colonel who led the team of American advisers in El Salvador in the 1980's, is regarded as an astute though controversial practitioner of counterinsurgency; he promotes the "total war" strategy but does not define it as the vicious practices used by some of his pupils in the Salvadoran Army.

"Total war means you use all the elements of national power," he told me recently. "It's at the grass-roots level that you're trying to win. You can kill enemy soldiers -- that's not the only issue. You also need to dry up their support. You can't just use the military. It's got to be a constant din of propaganda; it's got to be economic support; it's got to be elections. As long as you only go after the guy with the weapon, you're missing the most important part."

Ignoring the civic side of counterinsurgency has been likened to playing chess while your enemy is playing poker. Though this truism is now well known in the military, Nagl acknowledges that it is not being applied in Iraq as well as it could be.

The civic chores are supposed to be shouldered by the American-dominated Coalition Provisional Authority, led by L. Paul Bremer III, but the C.P.A. remains isolated and rather inept at implementation. Its presence is minimal outside Baghdad, and even in the capital the C.P.A.'s thousands-strong staff spends much of its time in the so-called Green Zone, in and around Saddam Hussein's Republican Palace, behind elaborate rings of security and far removed from Iraqi civilian life. Some of the staff are on 90-day tours: they arrive; they learn a little; they leave. On the few occasions when C.P.A. officials venture outside the compound, they are usually escorted by G.I.'s or private guards.

One morning, during breakfast at the battalion canteen, I asked Nagl about the Coalition Provisional Authority. He has yet to see a C.P.A. official at the base, he said. He pointed to an empty plastic chair at the table and asked: "Where's the guy from C.P.A.? He should be sitting right there."

Given the weakness of the C.P.A., Nagl and other soldiers are effectively in charge not only of the military aspects of the counterinsurgency but also of reconstruction work and political development.

Comment:

(Cutting thru the smokescreen of nicely turned phrases, we have just read that the strategy that is supposed to win is a complete failure. The military is forced to do both the killing and play at "civic chores" because the Occupation Headquarters is completely isolated and ineffective. This is impossible for the military to do, which is why the U.S. has lost the war.)

(Near the end of this article, in the next issue of GI Special, the pro-Occupation reporter writes about an attack on Nagl's base. In response, Nagl throws all his pretty theory about winning "hearts and minds" out the window, and uses the same tactics that he has been telling the reporter lost the war in Vietnam: treating all Iraqis as the enemy. Since most hate the occupation, he has no choice. Since he has no choice, he alienates more of the population and helps the resistance gain more armed recruits and more sympathy. Checkmate. Game over. War lost. Go home.)

OCCUPATION REPORT



U.S. soldiers hand out flyers to show Iraqis how to recognize improvised explosive devices on a street in Baghdad Jan. 16. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

(Check out the guy with the big smile. He knows what the idiot officer who thought this one up doesn't seem to have a grip on. Iraqis don't need a flyer to recognize an IED. *They build them.*)

Criminal Fraud Halliburton & Army Corps Of Engineers Caught Lying

January 16, 2004 By Matt Kelley, Associated Press

Halliburton chose a high-priced Kuwaiti supplier for gasoline in Iraq in just one day after considering bids from only three companies, an Army document says.

The Army Corps of Engineers document, obtained Thursday by The Associated Press, raises new questions about Vice President Dick Cheney's former company two days after Pentagon auditors requested an investigation of possible criminal wrongdoing.

Halliburton has denied doing anything wrong and called criticism of its actions unfair and politically motivated.

The Army Corps of Engineers, which oversees the contract, has backed Halliburton. Corps officials last month ruled that Halliburton subsidiary KBR didn't have to justify the price it was paying Altanmia for fuel.

Halliburton charged the Army more than double the cost for fuel it trucked into Iraq from Kuwait than for fuel it bought in Turkey.

THE LIE

Halliburton has claimed that Altanmia was the only company approved by the Kuwaiti government to sell fuel in Iraq.

But the Corps of Engineers document doesn't say that. It says Altanmia had to get Kuwaiti government approval for its sales to Halliburton because it had never sold fuel before. The Army document does not mention any demand by Kuwait that only Altanmia could be used as a supplier.

Rep. Henry Waxman, the top Democrat on the House Government Reform Committee, said Thursday that another Pentagon agency and an Iraqi oil company pay less than half of Altanmia's price for fuel trucked into Iraq from Kuwait.

Waxman and other Democrats have called for further investigations of the matter and criticized the Halliburton contract as evidence of the Bush administration's rewarding its corporate friends. Cheney ran Halliburton from 1995 until he quit in 2000 to become Bush's running mate, and the company's executives donated thousands of dollars to the Bush campaign.

More Fraud: Informers Be Advised; Bush Cheats You Too

January 16, 2004 By Jim Krane, Associated Press

RAMADI, Iraq — A tip led the Army to capture the flinty guerrilla leader directing attacks in one of Iraq's most dangerous regions, a U.S. military commander told The Associated Press in an interview Thursday.

Now, the tipster who turned in Khamis Sirhan al-Muhammad stands to reap **a reward of up to \$1 million.**

Lt. Col. Tom Ayers, the division's judge advocate, said U.S. officials were analyzing the man's contribution to the arrest.

"It's very likely that he won't get the full million," Ayers said.

(Right. It's like those TV offers. Hey, turn in somebody and get "up to" a million. Hey, buy our worthless shit and lose "up to" 50 pounds of fat. Only lost half a pound? Tough shit, that's what "up to" means.)

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