

GI SPECIAL 2:3



A U.S. military vehicle burns after being attacked on a Baghdad road. (Rosie Garthwaite, Baghdad Bulletin/Reuters)

Facts

Average number of U.S. soldiers wounded in Iraq daily since the invasion began: **9.2**

Average number killed: **1.6**

Percentage change since 1999 in the number of desertions from the U.S. Army: **+36**

Percentage change between 2001 and 2002 in GI Joe Sales: **+46**

U.S. Soldier Killed In Balad Mortar Attack

3 January, 2004 TIKRIT, Iraq (Reuters) & By MATTHEW ROSENBERG, Associated Press Writer

One U.S. soldier has been killed and two injured in a mortar attack on a U.S. Army base near the town of Balad, northwest of Baghdad, a military spokesman says.

"A soldier was killed yesterday just after 5:00 p.m. (2 p.m. British time) at a forward operating base near Balad," Sergeant Robert Cargie, a spokesman for the 4th Infantry Division, said.

One of the shells exploded near a trailer used as a bedroom by troops, and a soldier standing in its doorway was killed. Two other soldiers were struck by shrapnel and taken to a combat support hospital, where they were in stable condition, Cargie said.

The U.S. 4th Infantry is using Balad, site of a military airport complex built during Saddam Hussein's rule, as a base of operations. It lies about 80 km (50 miles) outside Baghdad.

Roadside Bomb Attack Kills Two US Troops

BBC News, Jan 3, 2003

Two US soldiers were on patrol south of Baghdad when an apparently home-made bomb exploded as they were passing. Both were killed.

US military spokesman **Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt** said they were getting more sophisticated. **"We are seeing a small uptick in the capability of the enemy. They are getting a little more complex,"** he said.

"For what reason, we don't know, but they are getting a little more sophisticated of late." (Dealing with a bubblehead like Kimmitt would make anybody look sophisticated.)

U.S. Soldier Shot During Foot Patrol

ED JOHNSON, Associated Press Writer (01-04) BASRA, Iraq

In Tikrit on Sunday, an American soldier was shot and wounded during a foot patrol, said Maj. Josslyn Aberle, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division. He was in stable condition, she added.

Fiendish Resistance Fighters Cleverly Disguised As Reporters Were----- Reporters!

By MATTHEW ROSENBERG, Associated Press Writer Jan. 3, 2003

Soon after the helicopter crashed on Friday, the military said attackers posing as journalists fired assault weapons and rocket-propelled grenades at U.S. paratroopers guarding the burning aircraft.

But there was confusion since Reuters news agency reported that its team at the scene was fired at by U.S. troops and three were later detained by the military.

"Our guys are still in detention and we still haven't been informed of any specific accusations against them," said Andrew Marshall, Reuters bureau chief in Baghdad.

As paratroopers from the 82nd surrounded the crash site, five men "wearing black press jackets with 'press' clearly written in English" fired on them, General Halfwit Kimmitt said. He said it was the first time he had heard of assailants in Iraq posing as journalists.

The Reuters team was led by Iraqi cameraman Salem Uraiby, who was filming from a checkpoint using a camera on a tripod and was wearing a flak jacket clearly marked "press," the agency said

"We were fired on and we drove away at high speed," driver Alaa Noury said. He said a second car driven by another Iraqi journalist had been fired upon in the same incident. One of the cars remained in Fallujah, Reuters said.

Brain Dead Kimmitt said attackers in two cars fled the scene and that soldiers doing a sweep through the town, with helicopters circling overhead, tracked down one of the cars and arrested four "enemy personnel."

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TROOP NEWS

Army Admits It Deliberately Shortchanged Guard On Helicopter Protection Gear; Guard Leaders Knew Chinooks Were Defenseless; “Abort Mission” Policy Ignored, 16 Soldiers Died

By PHILIP DINE, St. Louis Post-Dispatch 12/27/2003

WASHINGTON - The deployment to Iraq of a combined Illinois-Iowa National Guard Chinook unit without required anti-missile defenses did not reflect an oversight or lack of coordination between the Guard and the Army.

Rather, it was the consequence of decisions made years ago by the Army to buy only a portion of the Guard's air defense equipment, senior Guard leaders say.

To save money, and assuming that Guard units were unlikely to be deployed in great numbers or face hostile action, **Army officials ordered just 50 percent of the ALQ-156 flare-launching systems actually needed for the Guard's fleet of Chinooks.**

"A conscious decision was made not to buy as many as we need," said Lt. Gen. Roger C. Schultz, director of the Army National Guard. "It's a decision that has some level of risk with it." (16 dead Guardsman because of this criminal negligence, and he talks about "some level of risk." It is profoundly regretted that Lt. Gen. Roger S. Schultz was not one of the 16.)

Concerns about the equipping of Guard units have been heightened since one of the Illinois-Iowa unit's helicopters was shot down Nov. 2, killing 16 soldiers. That helicopter did not have newer defensive equipment effective against the shoulder-fired missiles believed to have brought the aircraft down.

In separate interviews, Army officials acknowledged the Guard's assertions.

The Army had no choice but to deliberately "only field so much" for the Guard in past years, given competing demands by active-duty forces, an Army official at the Pentagon, **speaking on condition of anonymity**, said late last week.

"That decision has to be made, because there is only so much stuff to go around," the Army official said.

The fact that the Illinois-Iowa unit was mobilized with just two of its 14 Chinook helicopters fully outfitted with aircraft survivability equipment didn't surprise the Guard leadership, said Maj. Gen. Walter Pudlowski, acting deputy director of the Army National Guard.

There are shortages. We flat know that," Pudlowski said. "Somebody, someday, someplace said: 'We're going to accept some risk. We'll authorize the planes but not the equipment.'"

Monthly status reports from Guard units before the war with Iraq made it clear that some lacked Chinook defensive gear or other essential equipment, Schultz said.

Bob Godwin, deputy director of aviation for the Army National Guard, said the Illinois-Iowa unit's hasty mobilization, done in a couple of days, led to a frenetic search for the anti-missile systems up to the time of deployment. "All of our units are short the gear," he said.

"Resources aren't infinite," the Army official said. "Based on looking into the crystal ball, that's what you have to do." **(So, "what you have to do" is kill your troops.)**

Since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the tempo, duration and dangers of deployment, first in Afghanistan then in Iraq, have sharply risen -outpacing the military's ability to adjust the equipping of the Guard.

"We tipped the world upside down," Schultz said. "The system has not caught up with reality. **We're a little out of sequence. We called some units on very short notice, packed them out for the ports in a couple of days.**"

The result: Soldiers with the Illinois-Iowa unit being pressed into service for months without gear so vital that Army policy---though not always practice---rates its absence an "automatic mission-abort criteria." More broadly, a growing chorus of complaints has arisen about inadequate - and unequal - Guard equipment, whether body armor or night vision goggles.

The combination of rapid deployments and equipment shortfalls means that some Guard units arriving in a war zone have had to try to wrangle equipment from departing units - as happened with the Illinois-Iowa Chinook unit, which got several anti-missile systems from a California helicopter unit leaving Iraq. But that doesn't always produce the best fit of equipment.

In addition, not only can't the homebound unit properly train for the next mission, key equipment is degraded faster by being used around the clock and improperly maintained.

The issue of equipping the National Guard is likely to intensify. Guard members will, by spring, assume a larger share of the U.S. presence in Iraq under Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's troop rotation plan. And the war on terrorism has no end in sight.

"This is a major problem," said Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond, R-Mo., a senior defense appropriator and co-chairman of the Senate National Guard and Reserve Caucus. "It goes not only to the safety of our soldiers in theater now, but also to their retention rate. If you can't support our troops when they're in combat, they're not going to want to re-enlist when it comes time. I don't care too much whose fault it is. We need to solve it darn fast."

Tom Donnelly, military expert at the American Enterprise Institute and former policy director for the House Armed Services Committee, said: "This is a budget-driven deal. These guys are farther down the food chain."



BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW

How U.S. Politicians And Generals Kill Their Own Soldiers, Case #2: Government Won't Provide Protective Armor; Pisses On Reservists Who Get Their Own: "The Stupidest Things I Ever Heard Of"

By David A. Lieb, Associated Press, December 26, 2003

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. -- Fearing roadside bombs and sniper bullets, members of the U.S. Army Reserve's 428th Transportation Company turned to a local steel fabricator to fashion extra armor for their five-ton trucks and Humvees before beginning their journey to Iraq earlier this month. **But their armor might not make it into the war, because the soldiers did not obtain Pentagon approval for their homemade protection.**

The Army, which is still developing its own add-on armor kits for vehicles, does not typically allow any equipment that is not tested and approved by the Army, Maj. Gary Tallman, a Pentagon spokesman for Army weapons and technology issues, said last week.

"It's important that other units out there that are getting ready to mobilize understand that we are doing things" to protect them, **Tallman said, "but there's policy you have to consider before you go out on your own and try to do something."**

The possibility that soldiers could be denied extra protection because of an Army policy has outraged some of the friends and neighbors who helped the Jefferson City-based unit.

"I think it's the stupidest thing I ever heard of," said Virgil Kirkweg, owner of a Jefferson City steel company, which rushed to meet the reserve unit's armor request. "I just hope the government is not dumb enough to make them go out there without something that's going to protect them somewhat." **(It's not a matter of "dumb." It's about making sure defense contractors get their war-profiteering income. Who cares how many soldiers die? They don't. It's about the money, always about the money.)**

The 72 vehicles operated by the 428th are not designed for battle. They have thin metal floorboards and, in some cases, a canvas covering for doors. Iraqi guerrilla groups have been targeting all types of military vehicles with homemade bombs and small-caliber weapons.

E-mails from soldiers already deployed in Iraq urged the Missouri reservists to get extra armor if possible, said 1st Sgt. Tim Beydler, a member of the 428th.

The soldiers persuaded a local funeral home director who is active in community affairs to pay the \$4,000 tab for 13,000 pounds of quarter-inch steel. Industrial Enterprises Inc. donated the fabricating work, also valued at about \$4,000, so the steel could be fitted under vehicle floorboards and on the inside of doors.

The soldiers drove off Dec. 12 for Fort Riley, Kan., planning to fasten the specially made steel to their vehicles when they arrived in Iraq.

"We're doing what we can to protect our soldiers. That's the bottom line," Beydler said last week as news of the donated steel was being praised locally as an example of grass-roots support for the troops. "It not only boosts morale of the soldiers, but also of the soldiers' family members, who know their soldiers will be afforded some extra protection."

Fort Riley spokeswoman Deb Skidmore said the reserve unit will be allowed to take the steel to Iraq, but U.S. Central Command will decide later whether the troops will be permitted to use it. (If the decision is no, it is devoutly to be hoped that the officer who makes it is returned to the USA in a "transfer tube".)

Tallman and spokesmen at several Army bases said they were unaware of any other units trying to craft their own armor before leaving for Iraq. But Tallman said the Army had discouraged several families of individual soldiers from trying to obtain their own bulletproof vests.

Kirkweg said the Missouri soldiers did not have time to wait weeks, months or years for the Army to test and approve a steel-plating project that he could complete in three days.

"We thought, this is a very important project here -- we're talking about the possibility of saving people's lives," he said. "So without hesitation we went ahead and proceeded with the thing."

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

So the Pentagon refuses to give troops adequate gear for combat that may save their lives. Troops "suck it up" the way they are told, and improvise. Then the Pentagon bans improvisation and doesn't immediately hand over the armor/ceramic plates/whatever is necessary to protect life and limb!! This is why imperialist wars turn into civil wars.)

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/>

Soldiers Friendly To Peace Group

Philadelphia Inquirer Jan. 02, 2004

John Grant lives and writes in Plymouth Meeting

Getting to Baghdad is not easy. After 24 hours of flying and wandering in airports, we had a 12-hour drive across the desert from Amman, Jordan, in two Chevy Suburbans, often at more than 100 miles an hour. All you see in the midst of this vast emptiness are Bedouin sheep herders and their flocks.

We told U.S. soldiers we were a peace group interested in "bringing you home." In every case, the response was a smile and often a thumbs up. "Good luck!" several soldiers said.

We met with the December president of the Governing Council, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, a Shiite leader who is interestingly out of step with the CPA plan for an Iraqi government, which would be selected by a caucus. Hakim and other Shiites would like a general election.

He also said occupation troops should leave. "When?" we asked. "How about tomorrow?" he answered.

The question on my mind as I toured the CPA was: Which city was this giant brain center plugged into: Baghdad or Washington? As a 19-year-old, I had witnessed MACV headquarters in Saigon, and this felt like *d  j  -vu*. As in Vietnam, the CPA plan to orchestrate a government under military occupation seems more about control and disenfranchising selected sectors than it does about listening and real democracy.

(How To Defeat The Block: See Below) **US Military Personnel Blocked From Accessing Electronic Iraq**

Jo Wilding, is based in Baghdad and wrote for Electronic Iraq during the war.
Electronic Iraq, 1 January 2004

Web administrators in one of the military bases in Baghdad have blocked access to the Electronic Iraq website. They do this for sites deemed "unnecessary", including those of "advocacy groups", which they've decided that e-Iraq is.

Any soldiers reading may be interested to know that, unless they've also blocked Google, you can still get access to blocked sites by clicking on the cached version of the site, essentially a giant mirror of the Internet. This was a trick we learnt just before the war, shortly before the Iraqi government discovered it too and firewalled Google as well.

If they do block Google then you'll have to do what the Iraqis did and develop some hacking skills, unless of course you accept that there are certain things which, for the good of your country, you simply can't know or think about.

(THANKS TO WILLIAM BOWLES WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: Check out his web site at <http://www.williambowles.info>)

Bulgarian Soldiers Refuse to Go to Iraq;

Those Going Demand Right To Leave At Any Time

By AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE January 3, 2004

SOFIA, Bulgaria, Jan. 2 — **More than two dozen Bulgarian soldiers have refused to join a 500-member contingent heading for Iraq after attacks there in which five Bulgarian soldiers died, the chief of staff of the Bulgarian Army said Friday.**

"Between 25 and 30 soldiers have declined duty, probably as a result of pressure from their families," Gen. Nikola Kolev told Bulgarian radio.

The five Bulgarian soldiers who died were among 19 people killed in multiple car-bomb attacks in Karbala, about 70 miles southwest of Baghdad, on Dec. 27. They were the first casualties suffered by Bulgaria in Iraq, and the country observed a national day of mourning in their honor on Tuesday.

Members of the replacement battalion demanded on Friday that a clause be written into their contracts stipulating that they could pull out of the mission at any time and return home, the radio reported.

General Kolev said that the soldiers preparing for duty in Iraq had committed themselves "on a voluntary basis" but added that those who wished to withdraw would have to "reimburse expenses for their training for the mission and for their medical exams."



POINTLESS, USELESS WASTE OF TIME: Iraqi Civil Defense Corps and a U.S. soldier man a check point in Baghdad, Saturday, Jan. 3, 2004. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!

Reading Between The Lines: **Soldier Says “I Don’t Think We’re Doing Any Good”**

(Removing the happy talk, customary Bush regime spin and lies, and comments from Generals about how wonderful it is to be helping the Iraqis from this article, we are left with very different undertones, including at least one soldier saying straight out “I don’t think we’re doing any good.”

(Somehow the truth just has this way of popping up, however deeply the effort is made to bury it in a blizzard of shit.)

From article by ERIC SCHMITT January 4, 2004 nytimes.com

As one sergeant in the First Armored Division in Baghdad said recently, between drags on a cigarette, "Time flies when you think you're going to die."

"They're glad Saddam is gone, but they're not sure they want us to stay either," said Cpl. Chris Ellis, 33, of Hopewell, Ala., who drives a Stryker combat vehicle. "But we're going to have to stick it out. If we don't, it'll be worse than it was before."

"I'm not trying to win their hearts and minds," said Brig. Gen. Mark Hertling, an assistant commander of the First Armored Division in Baghdad. **"We're in a race against time to win the trust and confidence of the people."**

(Let’s try to follow this line of “reasoning.” Never mind winning their hearts and minds. They can loath us in their hearts and plan fighting us for their independence in their minds. “Our” job is to “win their trust and confidence.”

(This is probably one of the most meaningless series of words to come from the vacant mind and open mouth of a General in the history of warfare.)

As insurgents increasingly use roadside bombs as a weapon, often killing more Iraqis than Americans, ordinary citizens are accusing soldiers of bringing this new plague upon them.

Morale also shifts with the casualty toll. Casualties waned in early December, but after the capture of Mr. Hussein on Dec. 13, **attacks spiked again over the holidays,** killing more than 14 American soldiers and wounding more than 110.

"Are they going to tell you they're glad to be here? No," said Maj. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, commander of the Fourth Infantry Division. "I'd rather be home with my family, too. But I think they're getting some satisfaction in what they're doing."

But soldiers expressed a variety of views. "Everyone's afraid of dying," said Sgt. Latonya Williams, 27, with the 64th Forward Supply Battalion of Fort Carson, Colo., a

single mother from Houston with a 2-year-old son at home with her mother. "We're not God. But we signed up for this."

Sgt. Mercury Goodman, 27, of San Luis Obispo, Calif., a Fourth Division infantryman, disagreed: "I think we're just targets. I don't think we're doing any good."

Few soldiers know Arabic or have much direct contact with Iraqi civilians, whom many soldiers derisively call "hajjis." **Many soldiers have a sense that even their Iraqi allies cannot be completely trusted. "We watch what we say around our translators and the Iraqi police," said Capt. Tim Zamora, 34, a company commander in the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment.**

"Sometimes I don't know what to think," said Staff Sgt. William Persuhn, a platoon sergeant in the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment. "Now they have a little bit of democracy, they're learning how to use it. But it doesn't seem like they want to help themselves."

Perhaps the most difficult task for the American troops is not to alienate civilians with their tactics. One night recently, First Lt. Leonardo Flor's platoon from the new Stryker Brigade conducted a raid against a group suspected of recruiting insurgents. At the suspects' house, soldiers wearing night-vision goggles first tried to batter down the front door and, when that failed, blew it open with eight shotgun blasts. Soldiers poured in, rifles at the ready, streaming into bedrooms.

More than 20 women and children were herded into one room, under guard. Half a dozen men were put in another. In the end, the raid turned up only a couple of World War II-era rifles and some sheaves of papers.

Lieutenant Flor, 23, a West Point graduate, ordered his men to tidy up. He reviewed the damage - a broken television and doors broken by the shotgun blasts - pulled a wad of bills from his pocket, peeled off \$120, and handed it to one of the Iraqi men. The dazed man signed a receipt for the reparations, and the soldiers trooped out into the dark, cold morning.

The platoon's soldiers voiced disappointment at what they felt was becoming a series of dry holes. Lieutenant Flor gave a pep talk, praising their execution of the mission, even if the intelligence was wrong.

Since May, the military has paid out more than \$2 million in damage and injury claims from Iraqis.

Later, Lieutenant Flor expressed a concern echoed by many commanders. "There are only so many missions when you bust into people's homes and separate families," he said, "before you start causing problems that didn't exist."

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

Financial Predators Target Armed-Forces Families

CONSUMER REPORTS FEBRUARY 2004

U.S. troops are not only under attack in Iraq and Afghanistan; they're being ambushed at home by predatory lenders in communities near army air force, and naval bases, according to a recent study

"There's an interesting divergence between the glowing pro-military rhetoric we hear about service to our country and the way our military men and women are being treated at home by these abusing businesses," says Steve Tripoli, co-author of the National Consumer Law Center report on businesses that victimize members of the armed forces and veterans.

Military men and women are plagued by fast-cash lenders who advance small sums until payday and levy exorbitant fees and interest rates as high as 900 percent per year; used-car dealers who sell and finance overpriced junkers; and "title pawn" lenders who use a borrower's car title as collateral for high-priced short-term loans.

Some lenders require borrowers to postdate their checks, and if a check bounces, a lender may keep redepositing it electronically piling on insufficient-funds fees which could boost the cost of a loan by hundreds of dollars, says Capt. Dave Faraldo, director of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society serving the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Fla.

Yet another scam lures former military people into selling their veteran's benefits. One vet received \$80,000 in exchange for 10 years of his benefits, worth \$300,000, according to the law center study.

An NCLC analysis requested by Congress concluded that such deals are illegal under federal law

Shady lenders prey on low-income consumers in general, but military personnel are prized targets. They're generally young, are often unsophisticated about money matters, and are paid without fail by U.S. government check, Tripoli says. **Faraldo notes that they're also often strapped for cash: New recruits earn a base pay of only \$12,700 per year.**

It's easy for a borrower to fall behind. When that happens, the lender approves a new loan to pay off the old one—adding still more fees and interest.

Because commanders routinely warn of such rip-offs, victims tend to remain quiet, so their exact numbers are unknown. But the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society headquarters says it bailed out some 300 people last year to the tune of \$275,000.

“That’s just the tip of the iceberg.” says retired Adm. Jerry Johnson, former president of the society

Low-income consumers who need a loan should apply at legitimate banks and credit unions. Small, short-term signature loans (available in many states) and even pawnshops have much lower rates than payday loans, according to surveys by Consumers Union. For military personnel and retirees, relief societies will provide interest-free loans and grants in emergencies.

Banks and states have had limited success in controlling payday lenders. **Congress seems unwilling to address the problem.**

For more information, visit www.consumersunion.org/Financial_Services/Pay_Day_Loans/index.html.

RIDICULOUS RATE When Staff Sgt. Kevin White and his wife, Linda, of Murrieta, Calif., bought a used Ford Taurus in 1999, a dealer near Camp Pendleton told them that the best loan he could offer had a 23 percent annual percentage rate. “I said, ‘You’re joking, right?’” Linda recalled. The Whites had already arranged financing from their military credit union— with a 6.9 percent APR.

MORE BLINDING FLASHES OF THE OBVIOUS

Funny Times Jan. 2004

The following is advice from various U.S. Army journals and instruction manuals:

When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is *not* our friend.

Five-second fuses only last three seconds.

A slipping gear could let your M203 grenade launcher fire when you least expect it. That would make you quite unpopular in what’s left of your unit.

Any ship can be a minesweeper...once.

“Aim towards the Enemy” (printed on a rocket launcher).

Cluster bombing from B52s is very, very accurate. The bombs are guaranteed to always hit the ground.

It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed.

If your attack is going too well, you’re probably walking into an ambush.

If the enemy is in range, so are you.

Tracers work both ways.

And lastly ... "If you see a bomb technician running, try to keep up with him."

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and in Iraq, and information about other social protest movements here in the USA. **Send requests to address up top. For copies on web site see:** <http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>

Seaswap Unwelcoming Party AUSTRALIANS SLAP PARKING FINE ON USS FLETCHER

by byebyefletcher 12 December 2003

<http://perth.indymedia.org/index.php?action=newswire&parentview=1938>

Members of the Fremantle Anti Nuclear Group (FANG) will be paying a special waterborne visit to the USS Fletcher and its support boat on Sunday morning, 14th December, to issue a parking infringement from concerned residents in Fremantle. The Fletcher is in Fremantle as an extension of the US Navy's 'Sea Swap' programme.

The Sea Swap trial has been condemned by FANG for the impact it will have on Fremantle in the extension of US visiting time, the proposed expansion of basing capabilities at Cockburn Sound, **and the practice bombing being endured by the residents of Lancelin.**

"Not only are we being subjected to extra visits from the US navy at a time when they are being universally condemned across the world for the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq, but our Federal government is quietly allowing an increased use of our port to facilitate this US aggression, said spokesperson, Nicola Paris.

"The hundreds of people of Fremantle who have signed this parking ticket and petitions against the Sea Swap program do not want any further extension of visits of US ships to our waters. FANG is also vehemently opposed to the ongoing war in Iraq which seems to be completely spiraling out of control, with tens of thousands of casualties and no end in sight, in contrast to what the US and Australian governments would have us believe."

FANG members will be heading out on the water with their super-sized parking ticket, hoping to present the infringement banning the USS Fletcher from parking in our port, with a support group on shore mid Sunday morning.

“We hope to present the parking infringement directly to the Captain of the USS Fletcher as an indication of the strong feeling in Fremantle against the Sea Swap trials and the ongoing illegal occupation of Iraq which is being facilitated by our government,” concluded Ms Paris.

For media enquiries, contact: Nicola Paris - 0422 99 0040 Scott Ludlam - 0417 123 774

FANG Fremantle Anti-Nuclear Group
PO Box 326 Fremantle WA 6959, Australia

PARKING VIOLATION

THIS VESSEL MUST BE REMOVED IMMEDIATELY. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN ITS BEING TOWED AWAY, DISARMED AND PAINTED PINK AS A WARNING TO OTHER WARSHIPS.

(See Code for Offence Description)

<small>VESSEL MAKE</small>	<small>NUMBER</small>
<small>VESSEL NAME</small>	
<small>LOCATION</small>	
<small>MONTH</small>	<small>DAY</small>
<small>YEAR</small>	<small>TIME</small>
<small>JOB</small>	<small>JOB</small>

PINK US\$2.7 TRILLION

(proposed US military budget allocation for the next ten years)

*See Code for Offence Description

*DO NOT WRITE THIS VIOLATION ON YOURS CONTACT THE WORLD COURT IN THE NEAR FUTURE THIRTY DAYS TO ARRANGE FOR A COURT DATE

*FAILURE TO PAY THIS CLAMP ON MAY RESULT IN THE PEOPLE OF IRAN AND YEMEN SUPPORTING YOUR HOME TO BECOME THE HEADQUARTERS FOR THE ARAB BOYCOTTERS IN YOUR HOUSES AND HOMELANDS FOR THEY WOULD LOVE TO LIVE WITH A NUCLEAR BOMB AS A GUARANTEE

*DO NOT IGNORE THIS CLAMP. NO. IRAN AND YEMEN ARE NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN AND UNFORGOTTEN, AND THE OTHER 10% OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLE DON'T WANT YOUR MONEY

*PROCEEDS FROM PINK FINE WILL BE GIVEN TO A PROVERBIAL CAUSE WHICH IS A SAFE CHOICE WHICH ARE A VERY GOOD IDEAS FOR CHILDREN, ORphans

ISSUED BY
THE CITIZENS OF:

OFFENCE/S (TICK APPLICABLE)

<input type="checkbox"/> Loading other countries over and over again	<input type="checkbox"/> Taking out of the Photo Protocol
<input type="checkbox"/> Doing an egg beat	<input type="checkbox"/> Putting the citizenship in charge of your country
<input type="checkbox"/> Talking around the planet (including to drop bombs on people)	<input type="checkbox"/> (possibly) using the influence of Country & Western music
<input type="checkbox"/> Inventing nuclear weapons and then using them	<input type="checkbox"/> Inventing a nuclear trigger mine that you failed it
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking notes from a speech prepared from into contribute to his own intellect.	<input type="checkbox"/> Making John Howard to his own plans
<input type="checkbox"/> Inventing the trigger protocols in secrecy and then opening them	<input type="checkbox"/> Losing a mass of depleted uranium where you go. Seriously, that will be bad for you.

Signed:

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Some Media Truth At Last

Comment:

This Newsweek Article below points out a few truths GI Special, Traveling Soldier Bring Them Home Now, Military Families Speak Out, Vets For Peace, and many others the anti-war movement has been arguing for months:

1. The resistance is nationalist, not followers of Saddam Hussein, etc. etc. blah blah blah.

2. Bremer, Sanchez and Abziad lied about the resistance waging a war, until the pile of dead U.S. soldiers got too high.
3. None of the invaders is safe, including Bremer and David Kay: both were attacked.
4. Foreign troops can't stop the resistance. You can win all the battles. You will lose the war.
5. **The U.S. Occupation Army controls only the ground they stand on at any given movement. The resistance controls everything else.** See the section below on the color coded maps.
6. **The U.S. Army is in retreat. See the sections about pulling into defense bases and cutting patrols by two-thirds.**
7. **Soldiers understand the whole thing is going terribly wrong. See the last paragraph.)**

By Evan Thomas, Rod Nordland and Christian Caryl, Newsweek Dec. 29/Jan. 5

Iraq is now a test of counterinsurgency, where you can win battles but still lose the war:

Like all American soldiers in Iraq, the men and women of the Third Squad, First Platoon, B Company, 1/124 Infantry of the Florida National Guard were elated over the capture of Saddam Hussein. "It felt like complete victory," wrote one squaddie, Sgt. Richard Schevis, to his friends and family back home. "It felt like a connection with our grandfathers arriving in Berlin after fighting the Germans and finally the Reich falling." Schevis and his mates were especially happy when the city of Ar Ramadi, a Baathist stronghold, erupted in what sounded like celebratory gunfire.

But then Schevis learned that the Iraqis were not firing their AK-47s skyward to celebrate Saddam's seizure. Rather, the men of Ar Ramadi had gone mad with joy over a report, aired on the Arabic television station Al-Jazeera, that the Americans had seized the wrong man, that Saddam was still free. Schevis felt crestfallen. "I was devastated and filled with rage towards the Iraqis," he wrote home.

On Dec. 15, in Tikrit, Saddam's hometown, about 700 people demonstrated against the strongman's capture, chanting, "Saddam is in our hearts, Saddam is in our blood." American soldiers and Iraqi policemen shouted back, "Saddam is in our jail." **But the clever taunts could not erase a basic truth of counterinsurgency warfare: it is possible to win all the battles and still lose the war.**

It took months for the top brass to even admit that America faced a true insurgency in Iraq.

Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, the commander of U.S. forces, initially described the bombings and rocket attacks as "pinpricks." Proconsul Paul Bremer likened them to gnat bites on the hide of an elephant. Repeatedly, Rumsfeld and CENTCOM

commander Gen. John Abizaid dismissed the uprising as "of no strategic importance."

A more accurate measure of reality in Iraq is the color-coded road system. Roads and highways in Iraq are classified by the U.S. military as green (safe), yellow (dangerous; no travel at night) and red (closed to military traffic). There are no green routes left except in the far north; all other routes are usually yellow and occasionally red. Route 1, the road north out of Baghdad, is routinely red.

(Latest joke: What does the front desk ask you when you check into the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad? Which side of the hotel do you want: the bullet side or the rocket side?)

No one is safe. American officials belatedly admitted last week that a convoy carrying Ambassador Bremer had been attacked on Dec. 6 by a roadside explosive and small-arms fire. The attack was said to be random and no one was hurt, but American officials are worried that the insurgents are getting tip-offs on the movement of American officials. **NEWSWEEK has learned that gunfire raked a convoy escorting arms inspector David Kay (who, frustrated in his search for WMD, has served notice that he is quitting next month).**

Heavy mechanized forces like the First Armored and Third and Fourth Infantry Divisions, which have handled most of the hard duty in the Sunni Triangle, had essentially no training in counterinsurgency. These warriors practiced battles in the desert at Fort Irwin, Calif., smashing Soviet-style armored units. **Forced into the unfamiliar role of patrolling the streets of Iraqi cities, they, too, often ended up screaming at the locals, "Don't you understand English, you f—king idiot!"**

U.S. forces around Baghdad and north toward Tikrit used a very heavy hand in November. In operations with code names like Iron Hammer, bulldozers crashed through groves and F-16s bombed farmhouses identified as insurgent strongholds. A few mortar rounds launched by guerrillas would be answered by an artillery barrage. It was not always apparent that they struck the right targets. **The heavy doses of firepower seemed to echo the sweep-and-destroy tactics used with notable lack of success in Vietnam.**

Meanwhile, the Army pulled back into an armored shell. At bases like Camp Warhorse at Baqubah, an old military airstrip now surrounded by earthen berms and barbed wire, soldiers wear their body armor and helmets from dusk to dawn. American bases are growing ever more elaborate, with Pizza Huts and Burger Kings, and so large that one, called Anaconda, has nine bus routes to move the troops around inside the wire. **It might be called the Da Nang of Iraq, though the military prefers to speak of "the maturing of the battlefield."**

When the soldiers do venture out, they move at speeds of more than 60mph, usually right down the middle of the road, forcing away oncoming traffic. Bulldozers have increasingly swept the roadsides clear of any trees or plants that might disguise a bomb. The road to Baghdad airport, once prettily lined with palm and date trees, is now a barren racetrack. **Still, soldiers climbing aboard Army transports flip coins to see who sits on the curb-side seats.**

The soldiers are not exactly out there winning hearts and minds. "The Americans just care about protecting themselves" has become a common Iraqi complaint.

The number of U.S. patrols has dropped from 1,500 a day in November to about 500 a day in December. The Army has taken to using local street sweepers to look for roadside bombs. (And the insurgents use local shepherds to plant them.)

In the north, **General Petraeus of the 101st Airborne ordered big signs posted asking WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO WIN IRAQI HEARTS AND MINDS TODAY?**

Not enough, judging from the bloody month of November, when the 101st Airborne lost some 30 soldiers to ambushes, bombs and helicopter attacks.

Insurgencies fight for an idea—Islam, Marxism, freedom, nationalism. To fight back, "you need a better idea," says General Gen. Charles C. Krulak (ret'd). "Bullets help sanitize an operational area," he says, a bit coldly. "They don't win a war."

In Iraq, the insurgents' idea is clear enough, says Krulak: "Get rid of the foreign invaders. We need to confront that with a better idea."
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Getting rid of Saddam is not enough. **Indeed, Saddam's capture allows the insurgents to go on fighting as nationalists and patriots and not as stooges of the old regime.**

Last week a member of the resistance told NEWSWEEK that many of his fellow insurgents had resented Saddam and were glad to be free of his taint. "The Americans say there are 23 resistance groups," said the resistance spokesman, identified only as Abdullah, operating in the Fallujah region. "Only one of them is made up of Saddam's supporters. I have not met a single member of the resistance who received money from Saddam. We get our money from wealthy Iraqis and our weapons from the former Iraqi Army."

Right now the Iraqis feel humiliated. They need some reason to feel they can rebuild their own country.

Writing home from Ramadi in late December, Sergeant Schevis got over his bitterness and disgust at the Iraqis for wildly celebrating the bogus report that Saddam was still free. "I realize that as different as these people are, with all the peculiarities of the Arabic culture, they are in so many ways very similar to us. I realized that the elation I felt over the capture of Saddam was felt as a final defeat by the Iraqi people ... I don't believe the citizens of Ar Ramadi 'love' Saddam, but if he evaded U.S. capture, that was a moment of pride for them ... I can only hope that the major players in Washington realize this and somehow find a way to incorporate into the rebuilding of Iraq not just food and materials and a trained police force, but a sense of pride, because right now these people need something to have pride in." From a young soldier, wise words.

—With Babak Dehghanpisheh in Iraq and John Barry and Mark Hosenball in Washington

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to the E-mail address up top. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Lie Lie Lie Deny Deny Deny

BBC News, Jan 3, 2003

The Iraqi police chief in Tikrit - home town of ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein - told the AFP news agency that **a vehicle had been hit by a hail of US shots and careered off the road.**

"The car, a grey Chevrolet Caprice, was hit by 27 shots and skidded, **resulting in the death of four people, including a woman and a nine-year-old child,**" said Colonel Osama Adham Abdel Ghaffer.

US Lieutenant Colonel Steve Russell, head of the 4th Infantry Division battalion that patrols the area, said he aware of "an engagement of some kind and a civilian car was hit", *but his troops were not involved.*

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

GEORGE BUSH: POLITICAL GENIUS The Commander-in-Chief Speaks

"The vast majority of Iraqis want to live in a peaceful, free world. And we will find these people and we will bring them to justice." G.W Bush, October 27 2003 For Immediate Release Office of the Press Secretary October 27, 2003

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Busy Backshooters

(In the American old west, a “backshooter” was considered about on a par with a child-raper. But if you work for a terrorist government occupying somebody else’s land, it’s an honored profession.)

Two men and a boy were killed by Israeli military fire since this morning. The first, Amjad Bilal Masri is a 15 year old boy who was shot while standing in front of his house. **The sniper bullet hit Amjad in the back.** He died on his way to the hospital. The second is Amer Kathym Arafat who was **also shot in the back by a sniper bullet.** The third is Rouhi Hazem Shouman, 25, **who was also shot in the back by a sniper.** Ms. Majida Masri, spokeswoman for the Coordinating Committee of Palestinian Political Faction, called a couple of minutes ago on all Nablus who are able to get to Rafidiya Hospital to defy the curfew and join the families of the martyrs in a collective funeral for the three. **"They were all shot in the back by cowardly snipers. Their only crime was to refuse to succumb to Israeli occupation designs to empty Palestine from its people."**

In solidarity,
Rabab Abdulhadi
Nablus, Palestine

(To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, go to: www.rafah.vze.com. The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.)

CLASS WAR NEWS

The Education-For-Prison System

Preparing To Spend Time In Prison Can’t Begin Too Early.

(Those who are responsible for this are to be commended for seeing what the future holds for their students: police and prisons. But they have left out the obvious next step: requiring teachers to wear uniforms and equipping them with batons, pepper spray and tasers. No doubt the twisted minds that support this way of organizing the schools could also be convinced to campaign for funds to build cells right in the schools, saving the cost of transportation to courts, hearings, and the rest of it.)

SARA RIMER, The New York Times, TOLEDO, Ohio (Jan. 3)

The 14-year-old girl arrived at school here on Oct. 17 wearing a low-cut midriff top under an unbuttoned sweater. It was a clear violation of the dress code, and school officials gave her a bowling shirt to put on. She refused. Her mother came to the school with an oversize T-shirt. She refused to wear that, too. "It was real ugly," said the girl, whose mother did not want her to be identified.

It was a standoff. So the city police officer assigned to the school handcuffed the girl, put her in a police car and took her to the detention center at the Lucas County juvenile courthouse. She was booked on a misdemeanor charge and placed in a holding cell for several hours, until her mother, a 34-year-old vending machine technician, got off work and picked her up.

She was one of more than two dozen students in Toledo who were arrested in school in October for **offenses like being loud and disruptive, cursing at school officials, shouting at classmates and violating the dress code.** They had all violated the city's safe school ordinance.

In cities and suburbs around the country, schools are increasingly sending students into the juvenile justice system for the sort of adolescent misbehavior that used to be handled by school administrators. In Toledo and many other places, the juvenile detention center has become an extension of the principal's office.

Dollar Finishes Dreadful Year; U.S. Current-Account Deficit And Low Interest Rates Present Continuing Threats to Currency

Wall St. Journal, JANUARY 2, 2004 By Craig Karmmin, Aaroa Lucchetti and Peter A. McKay

THE DOLLAR LIMPED to the finish line Wednesday, ending a brutal year in which it weakened to a record low against the euro.

Despite clear signs of a rebounding U.S. economy, many observers expect 2004 to bring more challenges for the U.S. currency. Rather than focusing on the economy, currency traders fret about the deficit in the U.S. current account, a broad measure of trade, and short-term U.S. interest rates that are well below similar rates in Europe and many other parts of the world.

"We're going to see a continuation of the weak dollar trend in 2004," says John Taylor, chief investment officer for FX Concepts, a New York hedge fund.

The dollar's weakness is contributing to rising oil and gold prices and has started to raise concerns for nascent growth in countries that use the euro.

In the worst year for the dollar since 1987, the euro gained 20% on the U.S. currency in 2003. The yen ended the year nearly 10% higher against the dollar despite repeated efforts by the Japanese central bank to weaken its currency. The Australian dollar,

meanwhile, jumped 34% against its U.S. counterpart, on rising global demand for gold, iron ore and other commodities that are plentiful in Australia.

The dollar's decline, while relatively orderly, has persisted for more than two years.

"It doesn't shock me," says David Wyss, chief economist at Standard & Poor's. "The dollar has been overvalued for the last five years, and according to Newton's laws of currencies, we have to have an equal and opposite undervaluation."

(For a brilliantly written, clear look at a very high risk economy, see the article "A New Boom?" by Joel Geier at www.isreview.org.)

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