

GI SPECIAL 2#34

“DON’T USE MY SON AS A HUMAN SHIELD FOR YOUR WRONGDOINGS!”



“BRING OUR SOLDIERS HOME NOW’

U.S. soldiers in front of bombed police station in the town of Iskandariya, some 30 kms south of Baghdad, February 10, 2004. REUTERS/Peter Andrews

More Home Truth: “Don’t Use My Son As A Human Shield For Your Asinine Wrongdoings In Iraq”

From: P*****
February 22, 2004
To: GI Special

Do what you need to. I just don't want my son to have any repercussion from it, I know you understand.

What I wrote is the gospel truth & nothing else. Those words were not just opinions but everyday TRUTH of living my life. I know my sons life in Iraq is worst & that is what kills me..

Had I known that this war was going to change my son's Adult life so dramatically & not excluding his personal & everyday life, mentally, physically & emotionally I being his parent would have, with all power that God has given me WOULD HAVE DONE WHAT IT TOOK TO KEEP HIM OUT OF HARMS WAY, Meaning joining the service & going to War.

As a parent's responsibility to our children when they are little & by the Law, we have to protect them from harms way but what happens when our Adult children are the responsibility of our President & all his men. They should as "Elected Official's" should have "weighed & measured" Everything before putting them in harms way. Meaning, not going to war on some hunch that some idiot "Who could not find his ass in the dark with both hands" tells the President his findings on why we should go to war!!!!!!!!!!!!

I am not saying he is the only bad President we as Americans have ever elected in History, but for Christ sake know when to admit you were wrong & what ever he does "DON'T USE MY SON AS A HUMAN SHIELD for your asinine wrong doing's in Iraq!!!!

I as a parent am NOT going to sit here & insult my son's intelligence!!! I can almost bet my life on it that had he been told the real reason of going to war was to protect the "OIL RIGHTS" & not we the People of the "USA or 911" he sure as hell would not have gone to Iraq.

But Hey!!! How else are you going to get that many service men & women put their lives in the line of fire????? Tell them we the GOOD OLD USA WAS THREATENED with WMD.... Why did we wait a whole year..... Don't you think if they really had WMD that they would have used it???????

COME ON!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

My son can damn well can think intelligently if told the truth & I bet my life on it that if he KNEW for a fact that he would not get "PUNISHED" by speaking out about what is really going on in Iraq he DAMN WELL WOULD!!!!

As the saying goes hind sight is 20/20.

PLEASE MR. PRESIDENT, ON BEHALF OF ALL SOLDIERS PARENTS, WIVES & HUSBANDS & CHILDREN BRING OUR SOLDIERS HOME NOW & PLEASE DON'T BRING THEM HOME IN A BODY BAG!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Just another day in the life of a Mom of a Soldier from 1st Armored Division.....

What military families can do the help stop the war;

**FT. BRAGG NORTH CAROLINA
ANTI-WAR EVENTS PLANNED
FOR GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION,
MARCH 20**

On March 20 thousands of demonstrators will gather in Fayetteville, NC for a march and rally to mark the first anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. **Fayetteville is home to Ft. Bragg, one of the largest military bases in the U.S., and is adjacent to Pope Air Force Base.**

The march will begin at 11:00 am at the Amtrak Station on Hay Street and proceed along Hay Street to Rowan Street Park for a 1:00 pm rally that will include speakers, music, poetry and song. The event, which will include marchers from throughout the Southeast, is expected to draw as many as 5,000 people. **The March 20 event will be the largest anti-war demonstration held in Fayetteville since the Vietnam war.**

"There are a lot of vets and military family members who think this war is wrong," said Lou Plummer of Fayetteville Peace with Justice and Military Families Speak Out, two of the event's sponsors. We called Saddam evil for killing Iraqis, yet we are responsible for 8-10,000 deaths ourselves, many of them innocent civilians. **The 500+ US soldiers who have been killed and the thousands of wounded and disabled service members are victims of a government that does not care about them.** We're holding the march here in Fayetteville to show the world that there are military families and vets in solidarity with the millions of others who are negatively affected by war and occupation in Iraq, and by its consequences at home."

The Fayetteville march and rally is part of an international Global Day of Action Against War and Occupation that will be marked by demonstrations worldwide. Last year's February 15 Global Day of Action brought out some 15 million demonstrators on all nine continents, including Antarctica.

Other organizations building for this year's event include the World Social Forum, United for Peace and Justice, Military Families Speak Out, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Black Solidarity Against War, U.S. Labor Against the War, N.C. Council of Churches, Veterans for Peace, Bring Them Home Now coalition, American Friends Service Committee, September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, People of Color Against the War, and the International Socialist Organization.

WE DEMAND REAL SUPPORT FOR THE TROOPS: BRING THEM HOME NOW!

MONEY FOR JOBS AND EDUCATION, NOT WAR AND OCCUPATIONS.

THE WORLD STILL SAYS NO TO WAR!

For more information: www.ncpeacehub.org

In Fayetteville:

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Chuck Fager, Quaker House CHUCKFAGER@aol.com Phone 910/ 323-3912

Liz Seymour, March 20 media coordinator, hobblidhoy@aol.com Phone 336/274-1814

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:



An Iraqi walks past a burning Police car just after a bomb exploded in front of a cops hangout in Baquba, 60 kms northeast of Baghdad. (AFP/Ali Yussef)

Five U.S. Soldiers Wounded In Tikrit

UTUSAN MELAYU 2.29.04 AFP

Three soldiers were wounded south of Tikrit when a grenade was fired at their vehicle. The three are in a stable condition, a military spokesman said.

Two soldiers were also lightly wounded in a bomb blast in Tikrit Friday morning, the military said.

Range Of Weapons Used In Multiple Attacks On Occupation

February 27, 2004 By Robert H. Reid, Associated Press

A roadside bomb struck a U.S. convoy north of the capital. The roadside bomb went off Friday morning in Khalis, 50 miles north of Baghdad. A civilian SUV was damaged and three passengers may have been injured, witnesses said.

An Army spokesman also said a mortar was fired Thursday night at the Forward Operating Base St. Mare in Fallujah, but it caused no casualties or damage to the post. Witnesses, however, said they heard multiple explosions.

In nearby Ramadi, witnesses said a pair of Army Humvees were attacked with RPGs as they tried to visit a police station. Hatif Mahmoud, who saw the attack, said there didn't appear to be any casualties, but a window on one of the Humvees was broken.

A call by the Associated Press to the 82nd Airborne, which oversees the area, rang unanswered.

Three rocket-propelled grenades were fired Thursday night at an office of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, a leading Kurdish party, in the northern city of Kirkuk, killing one person, security chief Gen. Sherko Shaker said. One person was killed.

TROOP NEWS

Military Families Have Had Enough Of War

Letters To The Editor, Army Times, 3.1.04

1

My husband, Sgt. Shawn D. Kirk, has been stationed in Iraq since March 21.

We recently were informed that our husbands will not be home in March. They have been extended past their 365 days.

We were assured that no one would go over a year's deployment.

I have not seen many stories regarding the extension of certain troops.

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| <p>When they ask, "How is morale?" the person reporting always states that it is good. I can tell you it most certainly is not. With every passing day, morale seems to get worse because redeployment dates are being postponed.</p> |
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I understand this is the military way, but I don't think we should have to be without our husbands and fathers for more than a year when it really isn't necessary.

I know V Corps always has to have the glory, but we want our families back together.

Everyone has their own story. My husband and I changed duty stations to Aviano, Italy, and three weeks after I got here, he was gone.

I finally was able to sign up for government housing and will be moving into a new house that my husband has never seen. He is missing watching his little boy grow up. Why is this extension needed?

Kendra Kirk
Aviano, Italy

#2

Not long ago, the 82nd Airborne Division announced that the division would return to Fort Bragg, N.C., by March 2004, making it the first time in two years the entire division would be home.

I later was reassured of this statement in an e-mail from a lieutenant colonel expressing a return date of no later than March 17.

Imagine my surprise, my awe, my absolute disgust to receive yet another e-mail the week before a lonely Christmas announcing an extension in the deployment by 30-45 days, making a return date of April or May.

As if this e-mail from division command were not bad enough, arriving six days before Christmas, **the smooth-talking attempt to soften the bad news was little more than an insult to my intelligence.**

A history of the division, **a brief notation of the pride we should feel for being elected to stay in Iraq longer** and a mention of the wonderful support spouses provide did little to mask the bombshell dropped on families of deployed loved ones.

The result of the Army's decision to announce a promise it was unable to keep: broken spirits of our men and women serving in Iraq and broken hearts of those left behind.

Grace Smith
Fort Bragg, N.C.

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.

“The Missing Wounded”: Pentagon, Army Numbers Differ “Wildly”

By Jonathan Miller, Channel 4 News UK

10 February 2004

The true extent of US casualties in Iraq are still unknown. This has fuelled suspicion that the administration may be hiding the true human cost of the war and its aftermath.

More than 11,000 medical evacuees have come through Andrews Air Force base on the outskirts of Washington DC in the past nine months, the Air Force says.

Most, we suspect, from Iraq. But that's 8,000 more than the Pentagon says have been wounded there.

When it comes to the wounded, an astonishing situation has arisen: the Pentagon's figures clash wildly with those of the US Army.

The Pentagon lists 2,604 wounded in action and just 408 "non-hostile wounded".

But the Army says many thousands more have been medically evacuated from the conflict zone.

Why the discrepancy? Well, the Pentagon doesn't count as victims soldiers who come back with brain injuries or psychiatric disorders, those hit by friendly fire or those who've crashed in their military vehicles.

You could call them "the missing wounded" of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Steve Robinson is no anti-war liberal. A former Special Forces soldier with 20 years' service, he now briefs Presidents. He believes we're not being told the full story.

"People don't want bad news stories coming out from this war and at every level where I need information, every time I need information from the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans' Affairs, about the injuries of this war, I run into obstacles. None of this is national security. None of this will cause the collapse of the coalition. It's just information that we need to understand what's happening."

Heath Calhoun, 24, wasn't able to walk off the plane with his brothers from the 101st Airborne. This was how he broke the news from his hospital bed in Mosul to his 21-year-

old wife Tiffany: "I called her and I told her she could have the good news or the bad news. I said I've got my legs blown off, but the good news is I'm coming home."

Heath's Humvee crew was hit by a rocket propelled grenade.

"I didn't know what had happened. It hit and I saw a big burst of white powder and than I saw white and went flying into the air. I could see my legs were mucked up and blood coming out of them and I screamed.

He still wears the ID tag of his friend Morgan, who was blown to pieces.

Was it all worthwhile?

"I can't answer that question yet. If Iraq becomes and democracy, yes, but if it all falls apart, I think it will be in vain. We'll have to work that out."

If the US government was to admit to the true human cost of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the wounded as well as the dead, then how many Americans would support George Bush and his war?

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/>

Welcome Home Soldier, Now Get Your Ass Back To Iraq

February 27, 2004 By Dan D'Aambrosio, Associated Press

DENVER — Nearly 400 soldiers returned to Fort Carson, Colo., from Iraq Thursday, welcomed home by one of the largest crowds yet to gather at the Special Events Center on the post.

The morning ceremony for returning soldiers drew a huge crowd, Fort Carson spokesman Lt. Col. Tom Budzyna said of the 10 a.m. ceremony.

Fort Carson has sent 12,000 soldiers to Iraq, its biggest deployment since World War II. Since the war began, 41 Fort Carson soldiers and two reservists have died in Iraq.

“By the end of the this weekend, we’ll be well under the mark of ten thousand soldiers to go,” Budzyna said.

Most of the Fort Carson soldiers should be back by the end of April, and most of the units will be on leave during May, Budzyna said.

“Ultimately June 12th will mark a transition from redeploying home to training in preparation for future operations wherever the war on terrorism demands,” Budzyna said. “

“Right now speculation is that they’ll go back to Iraq.”

Threats To Taste Of Home; Halliburton Trying To Kill Competition To Slop They Serve In Iraq

March 01, 2004 Army Times Editorial

Roadsides are littered with improvised explosive devices, and rooftops hide enemies with rocket-propelled grenades. Mail from home is slow and sometimes never arrives at all. Paychecks get screwed up. Summer is broiling hot; winter is damp and cold.

In this bleak environment, one true joy has been visiting one of the handful of Burger Kings and Taco Bells run by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service. If you don’t think that little taste of home has been important, you must have missed the news about the Burger King at Baghdad International Airport: It’s serving more Whoppers than any other BK on the planet.

But Kellogg Brown & Root, which has an exclusive contract to run military chow halls in Iraq, apparently doesn’t like the fact that troops might spurn its food in favor of a burger or taco.

At a Feb. 12 congressional hearing, Rep. David Hobson, R-Ohio, claimed KBR — owned by Halliburton, the company formerly run by Vice President Dick Cheney — is pressuring the military to limit or reduce the number of commercial fast-food outlets in Iraq.

This is the same KBR that recently reimbursed the government \$27 million for potential overcharges on meals served at five military chow halls in Iraq and Kuwait — and is being audited for charges at 53 other dining facilities there. A KBR spokeswoman says the company has “absolutely no responsibility for or authority over” Burger King or Taco Bell operations in Iraq. **But that’s not a denial of Hobson’s claim that KBR is trying to use its clout to clamp down on fast-food joints.**

KBR's contracts to provide goods and services to the U.S. military in the Middle East are worth \$9 billion. For that kind of money, surely KBR can afford to let troops enjoy the small luxury of a Whopper or chalupa.

Smallpox Vaccine Causing Heart Trouble

Army Times 3.1.04

WHAT'S UP: Fearing an enemy will use outlawed biological weapons on U.S. troops, the military vaccinates service members going to high-threat areas against anthrax and smallpox. **But officials were somewhat surprised last year when they started seeing inflammation of the heart muscle and surrounding sac in some service members following smallpox vaccinations.**

WHAT'S NEXT: **The number of cases of myopericarditis has risen since U.S. military officials discovered the bad reaction.** Military officials confirmed three cases of myopericarditis, and 68 probable cases, in U.S. service members. A study in Europe also showed myopericarditis among some people inoculated there with a different smallpox vaccine than the one used in the United States.

“Veterans Must Wage War”

Letter To The Editor, Army Times 3.1.04

With young American soldiers being killed and injured almost every day in Iraq, another battle rages here at home — veterans from this war and wars past, trying to get the health care they have earned and deserve from the Veterans Affairs Department.

Demand on the VA health-care system never has been greater. **Congressional leaders talk of solving the problem with additional funding. But there is a huge credibility gap growing between what many of them say they will do and what they actually intend to deliver.**

Nearly 6 million veterans have enrolled to get the quality health care VA provides. Approximately 130,000 veterans are waiting six months or longer just to see a doctor.

Both the House and Senate earlier this year proposed a \$1.8 billion increase in VA health-care funding over an inadequate budget request from the administration. In July, having touted the major increase with veterans groups, the House leadership then pulled the old bait and switch. **They dropped the increase from the appropriation and blocked all attempts to restore it. Veterans across the country were outraged.**

Now the task will fall on the Senate to keep its commitment and restore the \$1.8 billion to the bill. The job for every veteran, and every American for that matter, is to make certain that their senators keep that promise. Sick and disabled veterans are counting on their support.

Frank Plescia
Palm Beach, Fla.

No Bad Deed Goes Unpunished; Role Players Helping Army Arrested

Army Times 3.1.04

Seven foreign nationals, including five Iraqis, were arrested at a Louisiana Army base after officials found they had criminal convictions, including child molestation.

The individuals were employees of a government contractor hired by the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, according to a statement from the U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement.

The workers, including one Syrian and one Somalian, served as “role players” in training exercises for soldiers preparing for Iraq, the statement said.

There was no indication that any of the seven were involved in terrorist activities.

Authorities believed the workers were in the country legally, but the discovery of their criminal pasts makes them eligible for deportation.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

“This Is The Fate Of All Informers”

Feb. 27, 2004, BY LEE KEATH, Associated Press

Militants plastered a mosque in the city of Ramadi, west of the capital, with leaflets claiming responsibility for the killing of seven Iraqis suspected of giving information to U.S. troops, warning, "This is the fate of all informers."

Fierce Resistance Ends City's Occupation;

“Welcome To Fallujah, Burial Ground Of The Americans”

Rohan Pearce & Doug Lorimer *Green Left Weekly*, February 25, 2004.

Resistance fighters have forced US troops to abandon their occupation of the Iraqi city of Fallujah, at least temporarily.

According to the February 8 *Washington Post*, US troops abandoned fixed positions in the city, which the paper described as “one of the most dangerous cities for US troops in Iraq”. The city is located 56 kilometres west of Baghdad.

“Roadside bombs and ambushes around Fallujah have killed dozens of US troops and wounded scores more”, the *Post* reported. Last year, residents drove out a mayor installed by the US.

BBC television journalist Tara Sutton reported on February 4 that one of the first signs seen as you enter the city reads: “Welcome to Fallujah — burial ground of the Americans.”

The *Post* reported that “it is hard to know who really is in charge” in Fallujah: “US forces are seen less often than before in the muddy streets. The US-sanctioned local government operates behind barricades, and police hunker down in fortress-like compounds. Iraqi resistance groups move in and out of the city with ease.”

After the US withdrawal, a major daylight attack was launched on February 14. Rebels assaulted a police station, staffed by Iraqi forces under the control of the US. More than 20 people were killed and, according to Associated Press, 87 prisoners were freed.

When Fallujah was occupied, following the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003, US troops were not greeted as liberators but as unwelcome occupiers. Serious armed operations against the US forces in the area only began, however, after soldiers killed between 15 and 17 Iraqis at two separate protests against the occupation of a school by US forces in late April.

Human Rights Watch's Hanny Megally explained: “The US military presence in Fallujah began with these tragic events in late April.”

Since that time, the city and its surrounds have been the site of fierce armed resistance.

Few in Fallujah have any illusions about the “transfer of power” to a “sovereign” Iraqi government being proposed by Washington. **Marwan al Qubeisi, a mechanic in Fallujah, explained to the *Post*: “There are people who think the next government will just be American agents in disguise. They hate the Americans and they hate the government being planned by the Americans.”**

The Army of Mohammed, a coalition of a dozen guerrilla groups, issued a leaflet in Fallujah on the weekend of February 7-8 declaring that the group will assume control of the city and organise elections once the US forces completely withdraw

The resistance operations in Fallujah are not isolated. London's *Financial Times* reported on February 12 that it had obtained a secret report circulated by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) that contradicts the rosy picture of the occupation forces' "progress" being painted by Washington.

"January had the highest rate of violence since September 2003. The violence continues despite the expansion of the Iraqi security services and increased arrests by coalition forces in December and January", the report revealed.

According to the *Financial Times*, the report revealed that in January:

- **resistance operations targeting NGOs increased from 19 to 26;**
- **"high-intensity attacks involving mortars and explosives" grew by 103%, from 316 in December to 642;**
- **attacks classified as "non-life threatening", for example, drive-by shootings and rock throwing, increased by 182% from December to January; and**
- **attacks on occupation forces in Baghdad increased to an average of eight per day, up from four per day in September.**

Despite the widespread perception created by the corporate press that resistance attacks are shifting to "civilian" targets, the USAID report revealed that the number of attacks on military targets increased faster than those on civilian targets.

The Fallujah pullout erodes further the credibility of the Pentagon's claim that the Iraqi insurgency is being conducted by an insignificant, isolated group of hard-core supporters of Hussein and members of Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda network.

In June, commander of the US Army's 4th Infantry Division Major General Ray Odierno assured reporters that the resistance was "militarily insignificant". "They are very small, they are very random, they are very ineffective", he insisted.

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

Shiites In Fallujah Takes To The Streets; Protest Raid On Sunni Mosque

(Note well, AP reporting *Shiites* are in the streets protesting a raid on a *Sunni* mosque. Another piece of Bush bullshit collapses. According to the Occupation Bosses, they're supposed to be just waiting to kill each other, another silly lie used to justify the Occupation.)



(AP) Iraqi **Shiites** wave copies of the Quran, during protest in Falluja Feb. 27, 2004. The protesters are condemning the US troops for the raid conducted **at the main Sunni Mosque** last Wednesday and the destruction of some copies of the Quran. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

How Soon They Forget

By DALE EISMAN, The Virginian-Pilot, February 26, 2004

Adm. Mike Mullen, the Navy's vice chief of operations, told senators "Command and authority is at the heart of who we are and what we do." **(One of baseballs most famous pitchers, Satchel Paige, once said, "Don't look back, something may be gaining on you." In Vietnam days, what was at the heart of who the brass were and what they did was "running and hiding," from their own troops, who had had enough of Imperial war and assholes who got off on "command" and "authority" and busily reduced their numbers by whatever weapon came to hand. And these idiots think it can't happen again.)**

Time To Take Down The Real Criminals

"It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native American criminal class except Congress." Mark Twain

Vietnam Vet: An Open Letter To Sen. John Kerry On Iraq: “We Shall Work Hard For Your Defeat”

By Brian Wilson
CounterPunch, October 15, 2002
Reprinted: Veterans For Peace Newsletter Winter 2004

John,

It has been a long time since we have had contact. As you might remember our very first meeting was at VVAWs Dewey Canyon III, “A Limited Incursion Into the Country of Congress,” April 19-23, 1971, in Washington, D.C. I’m sure you remember asking the Senate that week in an impassioned speech, “How do you ask a man to die for a mistake?” You also stressed the importance of being “totally nonviolent”

Our second and many subsequent meetings occurred in Massachusetts after you were elected Lt Governor, 1982-84, while I was active in veteran’s issues in Western MA. As director of a veterans outreach center in Greenfield, and the Western Massachusetts Agent Orange Information Project, I served on the Massachusetts Agent Orange Task Force under Governor Dukakis’ veterans commissioner and your office as Lt Governor. I subsequently also served on Dukakis’ homeless veterans task force.

When you decided to run for the Senate in 1984 against Ray Shamie, a wealthy businessman, remember that I loyally supported your campaign as one of the dozen or so Vietnam veterans the press called Kerry’s Commandos, you called “Doghunters.”

We accompanied you throughout the state, and fended off right wing criticism from folks such as General George Patton III, who accused you of “giving aid and comfort to the enemy” for your earlier VVAW activities. I’m sure you remember with fondness that critical time that launched you into national office. **Your lawyer brother, Cameron, concluded that it was the veterans’ support that pulled your first campaign out of a nose dive and created the necessary “galvanizing energy.”**

Your critics had suspected that your activities, both in the war and in years following, were prompted, at least in part, by an intense political ambition, even as you addressed your Yale law school graduating class with an anti-Vietnam War speech shortly prior to enlisting in the U.S. Navy. Your career in the Senate has revealed your all consuming ambition, but that is quite typical of politicians.

War Medals

The first hint of a bit of disconnect in your style was when during your first Senate campaign you denied returning your war medals, with a thousand other veterans, in protest of the war during Dewey Canyon III. That was a bit of a shock, since for most veterans who returned their medals in that emotional ceremony on Friday, April 23, 1971, it was a very proud and healing moment

Your 1984 campaign response: You had returned the medals of a WWII acquaintance at his direction. All those 13 years everyone thought you had had the courage and leadership to return medals that to veterans who returned them represented medals of dishonor drenched in the blood of innocent Vietnamese who did not deserve to die for a lie, any more than our fellow US Americans. I guess you knew then that you were to be running for office.

The second hint occurred at the celebration party you organized for us “doghunters” at your friend John Martilla’s Beacon Hill house in Boston in late June 1985, 6 months into your term as a junior Senator. In the wee hours of the morning, you made two comments that troubled me: (1) you stressed your initials as “JFK” that would help you one day in your quest for the White House, and (2) that after War Department briefings (and perhaps CIA as well) about the need for funding and training contra terrorists in Afghanistan and Nicaragua you had a new appreciation for their importance in furthering U.S. policies.

That did not mean that you necessarily voted for Contra aid but that once in power, information becomes part of an elite circle preempting genuine democracy. I had driven in from Greenfield for that celebration party, and after those remarks I immediately left the party and drove the two hours home. I never forgot it, obviously.

In late September 1986, you, along with some other Senators and Representatives, reluctantly supported the four veterans (myself being one of them) participating in the open-ended Veterans Fast For Life (VFFL) on the east steps of the Capitol building, protesting aid to the Contras.

During that fast one of your fellow Senators, Warren Rudman (R-NH), stated in October 1986 that our actions are hardly different than those of the terrorists who are holding our hostages in Beirut.” Shortly thereafter, both our VFFL offices and separate housing accommodations were broken into with many files of our activities and addresses of supporters taken. The FBI initiated a “domestic terrorist” investigation of the members of the VFFL which was revealed later when an FBI agent refused to comply and was fired after nearly 22 years service in the agency.

In September 1987, as you remember, I was severely assaulted by a US weapons train in Concord, CA. during a peaceful protest of a Pentagon munitions train moving lethal weapons to Central America, suffering permanent injuries. Later it was revealed that they suspected me of planning to “hijack” the train, and had accelerated the train 12 miles above the legal speed limit of 5 mph rather than stopping and awaiting police arrest.

Terrorists - US Freedom Fighters

Such is life. Contra “terrorists” in Nicaragua called freedom fighters by US presidents, while nonviolent protestors of terrorist policies are labeled the “terrorists” to be investigated. Then look what happened with our terrorists, the Mujahideen in Afghanistan. Now the Congress is giving the resident of the White House virtual carte blanche authority to launch pre-emptive strikes against more evil lurking beyond our borders. It is a no-brainer to many outside the beltway that we are really experts at knowing how to create rage, then revenge, with our policies of aggression and arrogance.

In the life of being a Senator, John, I’m afraid that your career again proves that power corrupts (and blinds), and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Of course you have many friends in the same camp. With your vote for essentially agreeing with the selected resident of the White House’s request for incredible authority in advance to wage wars against whomever he wants, you have contributed to finalizing the last of the world’s empires, and the likely consequent doom of international law, peaceful existence, and hope for the future possibilities of Homo sapiens.

Of course, it also means that searching for the motivations of other people’s rage and desperate acts of revenge will be overlooked, dooming us to far more threats and instability than if we had seriously pursued a single-standard in the application of international law equally with all nations in the first place. We are too much of a bully to do that, and have stated over and over again that the American Way Of Life is not negotiable. Can you understand that this means species suicide?

I’m sorry and terribly fearful for this state we are in. Your vote is terribly misguided, John. Now that veterans have reorganized throughout the nation as once again an important part of the growing movement, know that we shall work hard for your defeat, whether as a Presidential candidate or for another Senate term.

Sincerely,
S. Brian Wilson, Arcata, California
Veterans For Peace
Email:bw@brianwillson.com

MORE:

“A Lot Of Resentment Against John”

February 28, 2004 By TODD S. PURDUM, New York Times

Mr. Kerry was so concerned that the April 1971 protest in Washington be nonviolent and legal that he faced criticism from fellow members of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, who were growing more radical. **He opposed the group's plan to sue President Richard M. Nixon to end the war, and in November 1971, he left it, citing "personality conflicts and differences in political philosophy."**

In January 1972, after the group's protesters took over the Statue of Liberty, Mr. Kerry said in an interview with The New York Times that he had left to work on "electoral

politics" and that the departure of moderates like himself had contributed to the organization's shift toward militancy. **While the organization claimed 20,000 members, he said, it actually had fewer than 1,000 active participants.**

Later in 1972, when protesters from the group including Ron Kovic, the disabled veteran later played by Tom Cruise in "Born on the Fourth of July," disrupted the Republican Convention, Mr. Kerry watched them on television.

"There was a lot of resentment against John because he wasn't more radical," recalled Bobby Muller, a friend from those days who now heads the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, recalled.

Mr. Muller, a paraplegic from a bullet wound that severed his spinal cord, added: **"Most of the guys in V.V.A.W., quite frankly, were former enlisted guys, and represented, visually, a counterculture presentation. Kerry would wear a coat and tie."**

Fine Words Soon Forgotten

"What would it be like to be occupied by foreign troops, to have to bend to the desires of a people who could not be sensitive to the things that really count in one's own country?"

John Kerry, Vietnam War days.

OCCUPATION REPORT

South African Ex-Apartheid Regime Murderers Guard Iraq For The U.S.

(THANKS TO MAX W WHO E-MAILED THIS IN:)

By Marc Perelman,
Reprinted From Forward Weekly by Green Left Weekly, February 25, 2004.

In its effort to relieve overstretched U.S. troops in Iraq, the Bush administration has hired a private security company staffed with former henchmen of South Africa's apartheid regime.

The reliance on apartheid enforcers was highlighted by an attack in Iraq last month that killed one South African security officer and wounded another who worked for the subsidiary of a firm called Erinys International. Both men once

served in South African paramilitary units dedicated to the violent repression of apartheid opponents.

François Strydom, who was killed in the January 28 bombing of a hotel in Baghdad, was a former member of the Koevoet, a notoriously brutal counterinsurgency arm of the South African military that operated in Namibia during the neighboring state's fight for independence in the 1980s. His colleague Deon Gouws, who was injured in the attack, is a former officer of the Vlakplaas, a secret police unit in South Africa.

“It is just a horrible thought that such people are working for the Americans in Iraq,” said Richard Goldstone, a recently retired justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa and former chief prosecutor of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

The Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq and the Pentagon did not return requests for comment.

In Iraq, the U.S. government has tapped into the ever-growing pool of private security companies to provide a variety of defense services, including protecting oil sites and training Iraqi forces.

Erinys Iraq, the subsidiary of the largely unknown security company called Erinys International, was awarded a two-year contract worth \$80 million last August to protect 140 Iraqi oil installations and train some 6,500 Iraqi guards.

Private security companies, including Erinys International, have served as a magnet for poorly paid and highly skilled South African security officers, according to a recent United Nations report and articles in the South African press. Headquartered in London with offices in Johannesburg and Dubai, Erinys International reportedly was established in the summer of 2002 by former British and South African security officials. Its Erinys Iraq subsidiary reportedly was set up last May in the wake of the U.S.-led invasion, when the oil infrastructure had become a prime target for looters.

Gouws, a former Pretoria police officer who then worked for the notorious Vlakplaas unit, was declared medically unfit and discharged from the police in December 1996 after a decade of service. That year, Gouws submitted an amnesty application to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a body set up after the apartheid to investigate past atrocities. **According to records of the commission, Gouws and a colleague were granted amnesty in May 1999 for admitting their involvement in the 1986 murder of regional minister and opposition leader Piet Ntuli.**

Strydom belonged to the Kovoet unit, which had brutally suppressed the Namibian opposition. As Namibia edged toward its independence in the late 1980s, Koevoet was folded into the Vlakpaas unit.

According to Goldstone — who chaired South Africa's Standing Commission of Inquiry Regarding Public Violence and Intimidation in the early 1990s — **elements of those government-sponsored hit squads continued to foment trouble even after Nelson**

Mandela was freed from prison and South Africa embarked on the road towards full-fledged democracy.

South African security companies working outside the country are required by law to register with the National Conventional Arms Control Committee. According to South African lawmaker Raenette Taljaard, however, the committee did not receive an authorization application from Erinys International. "A lot of the South Africans doing mercenary work or working for private military companies were involved in Apartheid-era repression," she said. "This is a big concern and it is just bad for South Africa's reputation."

The chairman of the committee said in a statement after the January 28 incident that any violation of the law would be referred to prosecutors for further investigation.

“American Commanders” Admit Iraqi Collaborator Government Can’t Survive Without U.S. Army

February 23, 2004. By DEXTER FILKINS, NY Times

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Feb. 22 - Iraq's interim leaders said Sunday that they could not negotiate a formal agreement with the American military on maintaining troops in Iraq, and that the task must await the next sovereign Iraqi government.

The delay could put the Americans in the position of negotiating an agreement with leaders they did not appoint on such sensitive issues as when the use of force would be allowed.

Gen. John P. Abizaid, the commander of American forces in the region, recently suggested that the military agreement would not occur according to the original timetable, but he expressed confidence that whatever the new conditions might be, the American military would be treated hospitably.

Simply put, no Iraqi government could survive without the American forces, according to American commanders. (How about a resistance government?)

It represents a blow to the accord struck in November between American and Iraqi leaders on the transfer of sovereignty. The pact called for a concord on American troops to be worked out by the end of March.

Anthony Cordesman, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said negotiations over the status of American troops could prove very delicate.

"You are opening Pandora's box," Mr. Cordesman said. "It is a deeply divided country where no one knows the rules."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

NOBODY HOME



2.27.04 (AFP/Getty Images/JOYCE NALTCHAYAN)

While GIs Die Contractors Cashing In On War

February 26, 2004 Progressive Community NewsWire

Lockheed Martin's Pentagon awards, at \$21.9 billion, are greater in value than the entire budget for the federal government's largest single welfare program – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) -- which is meant to keep several million single parents and dependent children out of poverty."

"The greatest beneficiary thus far from the Bush administration's 'war without end' approach to fighting terrorism has been Vice President Cheney's former company, Halliburton, notes, William D. Hartung, the co-author of a new book on war profiteering in the Bush era entitled *How Much Are You Making on the War, Daddy?: A Quick and Dirty Guide to War Profiteering in the Bush Administration* (Nation Books/Avalon Group, 2004). Halliburton's prime contracts with the Pentagon jumped from \$483 million in Fiscal Year 2002 to \$3.9 billion in Fiscal year 2003, and increase of almost 700%.

The \$3.9 billion the company earned in 2003 doesn't include billions in new contracts that have been issued since that time for rebuilding oil infrastructure in southern Iraq or for work in other parts of the world. Halliburton has also built bases in Uzbekistan and prison camps in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. "Anywhere you go where the U.S. Army has to deploy on short notice, Halliburton is there, working on a cost-plus contract," notes Frida Berrigan, Deputy Director of the Institute's Arms Project and a co-author of the new analysis. "The billions they have earned thus far are just the tip of the iceberg."

PRESIDENT TELLS CROWD WHERE HIS HEAD IS



(AP Photo/Chris O'Meara)

During a speech about economic growth at NuAir Manufacturing Monday morning Feb. 16, 2004, in Tampa, Fla. President Bush rubs his head, telling the crowd that critics who say his head is up his ass are trying to fool the American people and help international terrorism.

Bush cited intelligence reports which he said prove that at least four terrorist networks personally commanded by Satan have been working for months to establish where his head is located at any given time. In Washington, White House sources are reportedly taking the threat seriously since receiving information from attorney General Ashcroft that gay marriage ceremonies spreading over the country were organized by the terrorist networks to distract public attention from their search for the President's head.

Tensions were heightened when the Department Of Homeland Security advised the public to be on the lookout for suspicious persons carrying suitcases which emitted a

deep bluish glow, with radiation warning symbols pasted on the sides. Suspicious persons drinking fresh-squeezed orange juice publicly were also to be immediately reported to authorities, the Department advised, because "Middle Eastern terrorists drink only fresh-squeezed orange juice, one of their religious customs."

Received:

From: P*****

To: GI Special

Sent: Friday, February 27, 2004

Subject: JUST THOUGHT YOU WOULD LIKE THIS

THIS [story about how people united 9/11] WAS SENT TO ME FROM A CHILDHOOD/BEST FRIEND.

I DID NOT HAVE THE HEART TO TELL HER THAT YES WE AS AMERICANS DID DO THIS BUT BUSH TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OUR GENEROSITY & WEAKNESS IN A TIME OF NEED TO USE & SEND OUR BOYS OVERSEAS TO DONATE THEIR BLOOD ON FOREIGN SOIL THAT WAS FOR HIS BENEFIT NOT OURS!!!

BY THE WAY IT HAS BEEN A VERY GOOD & BLESSED DAY. I FINALLY HEARD FROM MY SON.

A Mom of a Soldier from 1st Armored Division

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