

## **GI SPECIAL 2#35**

### **HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WAR?**



Sgt. Sheila McLean, 230th Support Battalion, North Carolina Army National Guard, says goodbye to her nine year-old son Tyler before boarding a plane at Pope Air Force Base, in North Carolina, February 25, 2004. McLean and other members of the Brigade will spend the next 12 months in Kuwait and Iraq (Ellen Ozier/Reuters)

# **Bush Hides War Casualties**

March, 2004 By David Walsh, Coastal Post Online

**The Bush administration is deliberately concealing from the American people the number and condition of US military personnel who have been wounded in Iraq. The efforts by those few politicians and media figures who have pursued the issue make this clear.**

Estimates on the number of US soldiers, sailors and Marines medically evacuated from Iraq by the end of 2003 because of battlefield wounds, illness or other reasons range from 11,000 to 22,000, a staggering figure by any standard.

Daniel Zwerdling on National Public Radio set about finding the actual number by contacting the appropriate government and military offices. **A spokesman for Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told him to call US Central Command in Tampa, Florida. A spokesman there informed him that only Rumsfeld's office had such information. A spokesman for the Army provided with him the number of its personnel wounded seriously enough to be evacuated out of Iraq by the end of 2003-8,848-but he had no figures on Marines, Navy Seals or other forces. The United States Medical Command told Zwerdling they were still searching for the numbers.**

Zwerdling contacted Sen. Chuck Hagel (Republican-Nebraska), a Vietnam veteran and former deputy administrator of the Veterans Administration. Hagel explained that he had been trying to obtain certain information from Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, including the "total number of American battlefield casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq.

**The Nebraska senator also wanted an updated tally on the number of US military personnel who had received Purple Hearts and the dates they were awarded. Six weeks later, Hagel received the provocative reply: the Department of Defense did not have the requested information.**

Other commentators have noted the discrepancy between the number of wounded in combat listed by the military and the large number of service personnel medically evacuated from Iraq, an action, one would imagine, that the military does not encourage or take lightly. **In passing, for example, an article in the November 5 European edition of Stars and Stripes noted that the Landstuhl military hospital in Germany had "treated more than 7,000 injured and ill service members from Iraq." At that time, the military had recorded some 2,000 combat casualties.**

**The Landstuhl facility, located near the huge Ramstein US airbase, reported January 23 that the total of US medical evacuations from Iraq to Germany by the end of 2003 was 9,433. The number of hostile and "non-hostile" wounded by that point listed by the Army was approximately 2,750.**

Julian Borger in the Guardian last August noted the odd imbalance between combat and "non-combat" deaths and injuries. He cited the comments of Lieut. Col. Allen DeLane, in charge of airlifting the wounded into Andrews air force base near Washington, who had already seen thousands of wounded flown in and who told National Public Radio, according to Bolger, **"90 percent of injuries were directly war-related."**

The sharp increase in the number of US wounded in the autumn-the official number of combat wounded alone averaged nearly 100 a week between mid-September and mid-November (lunaville.org)-made the reluctance of the military to provide figures

increasingly problematic. Even the servile US media was beginning to request figures. Still the Pentagon officialdom put up as much resistance as it could.

**Sen. Bob Graham of Florida, one-time candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination and ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, declared around the same time that he wanted to know how many US soldiers had been wounded in Iraq, but had been unable to find out because the administration would not release the information.**

**An article in the October 13 New Republic by Lawrence F. Kaplan noted: "Pentagon officials have rebuked public affairs officers who release casualty figures, and, until recently, US Central Command did not regularly publicize the injured total either."**

The British Observer newspaper asserted September 14 that the "true scale of American casualties in Iraq is revealed today by new figures...which show that more than 6,000 American servicemen have been evacuated for medical reasons since the beginning of the war, including more than 1,500 American soldiers who have been wounded, many seriously. The figures will shock many Americans, who believe that casualties in the war in Iraq have been relatively light."

Mark Benjamin of United Press International (UPI) has been one of the more assiduous in pursuing an accurate total of the number medically evacuated from Iraq. **Benjamin cited the comments of Aseneth Blackwell, former president of the Gold Star Wives of America, a support group for people who lose a spouse in war, who said the country had not seen such a total since Vietnam. "It is staggering," she added.**

**MORE:**

**Vietnam was the first war ever fought without censorship. Without censorship, things can get terribly confused in the public mind. General William Westmoreland, loser, Vietnam.**

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS:**

### **Kirkuk Collaborator Cop Shot**

2004/02/28 [www.iribnews.com](http://www.iribnews.com)

Kirkuk, Iraq, Feb 28 - An Iraqi police officer was killed early Saturday in a shooting attack on a roadblock in the northern city of Kirkuk, the local police chief said.

"Unknown attackers in an opel vehicle opened fire on a police roadblock this morning at 8:30 (0500 GMT) at the eastern entry to the city and police officer Ali Hamada was killed," said police chief Turhan Yussef.

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## TROOP NEWS

# “Apparently, The Life Includes The Checkbook”; Soldier Has To Spend \$1200 To Equip Himself

(Two letters from: [www.bringthemhomenow.com/](http://www.bringthemhomenow.com/) Check it out.)

February 11, 2004

I'm sorry, but I thought Iraq was a place of war, not leisure.

*If it is a place of war, then will someone please explain why my fiancé had to purchase \$1200 dollars worth of equipment to go there? \$1200.*

To think that he will not be able to make our wedding, we cannot go on a honeymoon, we have been separated for two years, not to mention the fact that he is putting his life on the line, yet he had to PAY to do all of this, makes me really ill.

**Would anyone ever ask a Physician to purchase supplies to save their life? No, I believe that we would want them supplied to the Physician so that he or she may do what is necessary to save our life. Then why is it that we expect the American Soldier to do the very same thing? When signing up for the military, a soldier agrees to pay for freedom with his or her life; isn't that enough? Apparently, the life includes the checkbook.**

C

Ft. Bragg, North Carolina  
posted 22 feb 2004



From: <http://www.bringthemhomenow.com/>

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# “What’s The Cause? Oil Maybe.”

February 11, 2004

**Hi my name is Lisa and I checked out your website today and it was very moving. My fiancé Jimmy is in Kuwait now and is about to go to Iraq in a couple days. And I miss him dearly.**

It is his birthday today and he has to be there. I have never missed someone as much as I miss him. I keep thinking in my mind that there has to be something I can do to bring him home but my mom just tells me to vote for the RIGHT person. He has so much to live for and so much to lose.

**And he just signed up for the reserves to get some discipline and make a little extra money. I feel like the army is tricking these kids into believing that they are making a difference by fighting. But what's the cause??? Oil maybe...I don't know, but I do know that a lot of young men and women are dying and I don't want my fiancé to be one of them.**

If anyone reads this letter that can make a difference PLEASE help bring our husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, friends and fiancés back to us soon. I'm sure I can speak for all people with loved ones in the military when I say that we miss you so much and we love you. God Bless you.

Sincerely,  
Lisa  
posted 26 feb 2004

<p><b>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.</b></p>
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## **More Soldiers Off To The Bush Imperial Slaughterhouse**

Army Times 3.1.04

**Tour extended for S.C. Guardsmen**

***A National Guard unit based in Columbia, S.C., will be staying at Fort Stewart, Ga., six months longer than previously planned.***

The 751st Maintenance Battalion went to Fort Stewart last February on a one-year assignment to work on vehicles heading to Iraq. There are 44 soldiers from the unit on duty at Fort Stewart.

The 751st schedules the work, orders parts and handles the paperwork to get a National Guard or Reserve unit ready to head to Iraq. The guardsmen have inspected or repaired 23,000 vehicles in the past year. They have replaced more than 300,000 parts, mostly air or oil filters.

As of Feb. 18, the total number of Army Guard and Reserve soldiers on active duty in support of the partial mobilization was 155,838, according to a Defense Department news release.

This brings the total National Guard and Reserve on active duty to 184,132 for all the services, including units and individual augmentees.

### **Guard engineers head to Middle East**

**About 475 members of the North Dakota National Guard's 141st Engineer Combat Battalion have left for the Middle East.**

The troops left for Kuwait between Feb. 16 and 18 from Fort Carson, Colo., where they had been training since late December.

### **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION, FUTILE EXERCISE**



### **BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**

U.S. troops block the road in front of explosion at a police station in Iskandariyah, south of Baghdad, Feb. 10. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

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## **After A Year In Iraq On Convoy Duty**

# Returning Iowa Soldiers Face Dishonorable Discharge For Failing Drug Test Given Before They Went!

02/24/2004 By Bert Dalmer, DesMoins Register Staff Writer

**The Iowa National Guard will take disciplinary action against 21 soldiers who were sent to the Middle East despite positive drug tests that normally would have kept them home.**

More than a year after hundreds of Iowa's citizen soldiers were called to active duty, Guard leaders issued a memorandum last week notifying commanders that any unfavorable drug test results will be "held in suspense" until troops arrive home. ***Preliminary steps to discharge the soldiers "other than honorably" will be taken in every case, without exception, officials said.***

**"Regardless of whether they come back a war hero, served admirably or were a dirtball, they'll be processed for separation," said the Iowa National Guard's judge advocate general, Lt. Col. Michael Kuehn. (Who spent the war sitting on his fat, stupid, worthless ass back in Iowa.)**

Iowa's response to what has become a National Guard concern at bases across the country mimics the U.S. Army's "zero tolerance" drug policy, which calls for discharge proceedings to be initiated against every soldier who tests positive for drugs. **Under regular circumstances, offending soldiers who are deemed by their commanders to be too valuable to let go may qualify for probation, but must undergo professional treatment.**

**The Iowa troops in question were neither discharged nor put through a rehabilitation program, because quick deployment schedules didn't allow for it. By the time Iowa authorities learned of the test results, the Guardsmen had been activated as federal troops and were no longer under the state's control.**

**Recent reports to Congress have shown that active National Guard soldiers are missing out on pay and promotions, and are using inferior equipment when compared with their full-time counterparts. Guard soldiers at home, meanwhile, have sometimes languished at bases for months, awaiting evaluations and treatment for medical problems that prevent them from being activated.**

The General Accounting Office found late last year that Guard pay processes were "so complex and cumbersome . . . that few, if any, in the (DOD) fully understand their breadth, scope and inherent weaknesses."

Thirty-seven of the 2,158 Iowa Guardsmen called to duty through April 2003 tested positive for drugs, but few of the results were known before the soldiers' departure from the state. **The troops worked in units that provide medical treatment and supply convoys that have been the frequent target of insurgents' ambush attacks.**

**Maj. Gen. Ron Dardis, the Iowa Guard's adjutant general said he had no knowledge that any of the troops who tested positive for drugs had posed problems during operations in Iraq.**

**(It is devoutly to be wished the Iowa Guard will put its newly acquired combat skills to use in the immediate vicinity of one Lt. Col. Michael Kuehn, shit-eating rat of the month.)**

**(If dishonorable discharge for something they did before combat is the right penalty for soldiers who spend a year in combat and manage to survive it, what punishment is traditional and appropriate for looters? Three guesses. See next story.)**

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## **"A Form Of Looting"**

Info Clearing House 2.27.04

Der Spiegel, Interviews George A. Akerlof, co-winner of the Nobel Prize in economic sciences.

Akerlof: The government [Bush administration] is not really telling the truth to the American people. **Past administrations from the time of Alexander Hamilton have on the average run responsible budgetary policies. What we have here is a form of looting.**

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## **No Mail For You Today: Postal Service Investigates Soldiers' Mail Returned To Senders**

March 01, 2004 By Karen Jowers, Army Times staff writer

**Relatives of some troops in Iraq are asking why mail is coming back to them unopened and never delivered — months after their service members returned from the war zone.**

Military postal officials are investigating the reports, said Tesia Williams, a spokeswoman for the Military Postal Service Agency in Alexandria, Va. The investigation involves mail not only in Iraq but also other areas, including Qatar, Kuwait and Afghanistan, she said.

**The mother of a soldier who deployed to Iraq with the 3rd Infantry Division said she's had 13 letters returned, beginning Feb. 6. Her son returned from Iraq in late July.**

**The returned letters were postmarked between March and June. Her son's girlfriend also has received returned letters. She checked with other mothers of**



division soldiers and found eight who were getting returned letters, too, starting in February.

“Between all of us, I’ve counted 47 letters,” said the mother, who asked not to be identified.

**An Army wife whose husband is stationed at Fort Sill, Okla., said six out of 10 packages she sent her husband came back to her after her husband returned in June. The last package came back at the end of November.**

The Army mother said the letters were unopened, intact, with no markings or damage. Items she sent in the envelopes were still there. But one unusual thing about the letters was that “they all smelled like incense,” she said. “There’s nothing like that in my house.” She said she and her family members tried to limit the mail they sent to avoid burdening the postal system, often putting several letters in one envelope.

“I just wish they would stop coming!” she said after receiving a letter Feb. 17 that was postmarked May 17, 2003. **“This breaks my heart knowing some mother out there who lost her son is getting mail back that she poured her heart into, and to find out that her son never even got a chance to read them.**

“How could this happen?”

From: <http://www.bringthemhomenow.com/>



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## No Kids, But His Pay’s Short For Child Support

March 01, 2004 By Karen Jowers, Army Times staff writer

**A Navy officer who discovered the government was taking child support for nonexistent children out of his paycheck says his tale should serve as a reminder to service members to check their pay stubs carefully and often.**

Lt. j.g. Ken Bruce noticed his mid-November check was short \$300 but didn’t bother to scrutinize his leave and earnings statement.

"I didn't get overly worried about it because I figured it would work itself out," said Bruce, assigned to Marine Corps Base Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

Things got busy, and he didn't make inquiries until January. By that time, he was \$600 short.

"My lack of action was a big mistake," he said.

**"What if my marriage and financial status weren't secure?" he asked. "I've been in the military 17 years, and it's not like I was hurting for money. But what if this happened to a junior enlisted person? When I was an E-3, it would have killed me to have \$300 taken out of my paycheck.**

**"And what if someone were having marital problems, he gets deployed to Iraq, and his wife gets a leave and earnings statement listing child-support payments?"**

When Bruce realized Jan. 19 that something was wrong with his pay, he "spent an entire morning" trying to figure out what happened, he said.

When he reached the right person at DFAS, he was told the mistake was discovered days before, on Jan. 16, and was being corrected.

**The explanation he got from a DFAS employee was that someone used his pay account to test connectivity with an agency in San Antonio that handles child-support payments. He also was told he'd have to wait until the agency returned the \$600 to DFAS before he could get his money back.**

**"I am not at all happy with whoever used my account as a test bed for sending child-support payments to San Antonio," Bruce wrote in a Jan. 23 e-mail to DFAS.**

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

# **Shiite Leader Threatens Intifada If U.S. Troops Stay After June 30**

By Foreign News Services 21 February 2004

Iraqi Shiite Leader Seyyid Ali Al-Sistani yesterday warned that he would call for an intifada (uprising) if American soldiers stayed in Iraq after the handover of power on June 30, 2004. He also insisted that there should be a significant role for the Shiite in the future administration of the country, as they make up the majority of the population.

Sistani spoke to the German magazine Der Spiegel and said: "The U.S. presence in Iraq should not be prolonged. The Iraqi public knows how to act. If the U.S. presence is drawn out longer than necessary, I will call for an intifada." The necessary posters reportedly have already been printed and are awaiting distribution to every corner of the country.

Sistani's comments come in the wake of Commander of the Coalition Ground Forces in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez's statement on Wednesday that American troops might continue their deployment in Iraq for years to come and U.S.-Appointed Administrator to Iraq Paul Bremer's request yesterday that coalition members to maintain a presence in Iraq until the end of December 2005.

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

## **Right On Schedule: Explosion Damages Oil Pipeline Near Samarra**

28 Feb2004 SAMARRA, Iraq (AP)

An explosion damaged part of Iraq's oil pipeline system, witnesses said Saturday - the second time an oil facility near Samarra has been damaged.

"We were at home when we heard a massive noise, the noise of explosion," said Hamid Khuzair, who lives near the pipeline, which was attacked Friday. "We ran outside to see what was going on and saw a massive fire."

The blast happened Friday night near Samarra about 100 kilometers north of the capital, Baghdad.

There was no comment from the Oil Ministry.

**Sabotage has plagued efforts to restore oil output to prewar levels. (That's like saying the ocean is plagued by an abundance of water.)**

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## **Armed Cowards Terrorizing Basra**

(These cowardly dogs obviously lack the courage to fight back against the Occupation, so instead they sneak about killing shopkeepers and musicians! Every foreign occupation in history has brought out sewer filth like this, pretending to be more than what they really are: frightened deserters from the fight for liberation. To call them "militants" is an insult to the real resistance. If

**Basra oil industry workers decide to mount armed patrols of their neighborhoods or the city as a whole and execute them all, they would be fully justified.)**

2.28.04 By GEOFFREY YORK, Scripps Howard News Service

BASRA, Iraq -- Gangs of armed militants, operating with almost complete impunity, are terrorizing the streets of Iraq's second-largest city, assaulting and killing alcohol and video merchants in a campaign to impose their rules on what was once the most liberal city in the country.

British occupying troops have been powerless to prevent the wave of targeted attacks in Basra, and Iraq's new civilian police are unable or unwilling to arrest the gunmen, believed to be members of Islamic extremist organizations.

**In the latest attack, a 43-year-old woman was killed Monday night by four men who shot her six times with pistols at the entrance to her video shop in one of Basra's busiest shopping districts.**

On the same night, gunmen fired shots at Basra's last remaining alcohol vendors, who have already been forced to close their shops and sell their wares from hideouts on the street.

Last week, at least five people were shot dead by masked men who attacked a group of liquor vendors with pistols and Kalashnikov rifles. **Some of the gunmen were riding in Iraqi police vehicles, witnesses said.**

**Musicians have also been attacked.** "They are imposing their views with force," said a Basra shop owner who witnessed Monday night's attack and took the woman's body to hospital.

"It is happening step-by-step: first alcohol, then videos and music." **Perhaps most disturbing is the absence of any serious investigation by the Iraqi police, who are supposed to be replacing the U.S.-led military coalition as the main security force in Iraq.**

**Several witnesses said the police spent just 10 minutes at the scene, without taking any statements from them. "That's the way it works with the Iraqi police," said the shop owner. "Anyone who kills someone will get away with it."**

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## **Thousands Demonstrate Against Occupation Dictatorship**

February 25, 2004 Associated Press

**About 2,000 people demonstrated outside Hillah's city hall, protesting Wednesday's election of a new governor by a coalition-appointed provincial. The protesters demanded the new council be disbanded and the one it replaced be restored.**

A similar dispute has arisen in the nearby city of Karbala, where powerful Shiite clerics call the U.S.-picked administration illegitimate. Last month, some 10,000 Shiites protested in Nassiriyah demanding the removal of the governor installed by U.S. officials.

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## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

# “If Supporting Nader Amounts To Returning The Democrats To Their Mythical Days Of Liberal Glory, Then I'm Out”

Posted on CAN list

From: [o](#)

Date: Thu Feb 26, 2004

Subject: Is Nader for an alternative or an alteration?

**I've actually been leaning against Nader because I'm not sure his position on the war will appear much different to the general public than Kerry or Edwards' position.** I am gathering quotes from Nader, transcripts in particular, to get a feel for the purpose of his candidacy, and what I've found is full of advising the democrats on what they're doing wrong. What Nader has been saying so far is uninspiring to say the least...

### **NADER ON MEET THE PRESS**

Nader: "I urge the liberal establishment to relax and rejoice."

Nader: "This is a campaign that strives to displace the present corporate regime of the Bush administration. This is a campaign that will have many purposes and many functions in a political system that's rigged from beginning to end, from state-access barriers to exclusionary debates against third parties and independent candidates whose hopes and rights we hope to carry throughout these campaigns at the national state and local level. **This campaign can also be a trim tab factor turning the rudder of these giant political parties toward a more dedicated concern for government of, by and for the people.**

**IS THE CAMPAIGN ABOUT BUILDING AN ALTERNATIVE OR JUST TRYING TO ALTER THE TWO CORPORATE PARTIES?**

## THE CHOICE OF THE LEFT?

Nader: "**We hope to show that increasingly corporations are trampling conservative values**, as we notice increasing conservative fury with the Bush administration on matters such as massive, useless deficits due to wealthy tax cuts; on matters due to the big brother Patriot Act; corporate subsidies to major corporations paid for by taxpayers; on matters involving NAFTA and the WTO, **undermining our nation's sovereignty at all three levels of government**; on matters of promise by the Bush administration to do something regarding corporate pornography and violence beamed to children at a very impressionable age, **undermining parental authority.**"

## LIBERATE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY?

"We mean to initiate a liberation movement for the Democratic Party, whose liberals have allowed it to slip away, year after year, since about 1980, into the hands of corporate interests too often bought and sold dialing for dollars."

**Haven't the Democrats always been the party of big business. Didn't President Roosevelt call himself "the best friend the profit system ever had?"**

[http://www.isreview.org/issues/26/democrats\\_war.shtml](http://www.isreview.org/issues/26/democrats_war.shtml)

**Nader chooses to conclude his "why I'm Running" speech with a message to the Democrats. Is it "we know you're not the party of working people and you never were"? No. Nader's message, sent with love, is, "Finally, I'd like to make a personal statement to Terry McAuliffe, John Kerry, John Edwards, Al Sharpton and ex-governor Dean: Relax. Rejoice that you have another front carrying the ancient but unfulfilled pretensions and aspirations of the Democratic Party."**

## NADER ON THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ

(Iraq doesn't appear to be a central issue of Nader's campaign. When asked whether he would criticize Kerry and Edwards for their votes on the Iraq war and PATRIOT Act Nader said:)

"If the Democratic candidates persist in supporting the Patriot Act, which they're showing serious signs of not supporting the act that they voted for in the renewal battle next year, they will be -- they will be criticized.

"If they persist in supporting a further quagmire war in Iraq without end, an unconstitutional war that President Bush got us into based on a platoon of fabrications and misleading information, well documented now -- if they side with President Bush, they will be criticized, but I don't think they're going to. **I think they're going to realize that a major, well-funded U.N. peacekeeping troop replacement**, properly-supervised elections with a decent respect for the autonomy of Kurds, Shi'ites and Sunnis while they work toward a unified Iraq, and extended humanitarian assistance because we owe Iraqis a responsibility for all our years of supporting their brutal dictator from 1979 to 1991, all of these are a proper pathway for the Democrats in this coming campaign."

**Nader's response should have been a straightforward "yes", and Iraq should be one of his main issues and part of his major strategy PARTICULARLY AGAINST the Democrats. It seems he isn't running against the Democrats, but to get Bush out of office, to debate reforming the electoral system, and somehow turn "these giant political parties toward a more dedicated concern for government of, by and for the people."**

When asked what's the difference between Nader's campaign and the organization MoveOn Nader responded:

"One might assume modestly that the Democratic Party needs some help. They need additional strategies, additional issues, additional reports against the Bush regime that they're too cautious, they're too indentured to think of themselves. And if they want to appropriate what we do, fine. There's no intellectual property on the ways to take apart the Bush administration that comes from this candidacy."

FULL TRANSCRIPT: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4304155/>

**If supporting Nader amounts to returning the Democrats to their mythical days of liberal glory, then I'm out.**

Desmond  
GA State U

**(You got that right. T.)**

**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/>

## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

# **“Fucking Worthless” Night Terror: (Textbook Example: How The Occupation Recruits For The Resistance)**

February 20 / 22, 2004, By BEN GRANBY, Counterpunch

Mohammed offered me a cigarette. I wasn't about to refuse. I don't normally smoke, and I choked a little after inhaling. Then the nicotine seared through my veins. Relaxed. I was suited up to join Alpha 'Attack' company on a night time mission in a neighborhood just outside of Balad. And beyond. Ranger trained Cpt. Matthew Cunningham, 29, had insisted that I don camouflage grease paint so that I might join him and his squad in infiltrating a farm community from the rear. The Captain looked the part of a ranger: lean, stern determined and focused, yet I had found him to be quite congenial when things weren't so serious. The objective this night of February 11 was the capture of one man, Fawzi Youniy (nicknamed 'Fuzzy Anus' by the troops), deemed responsible for funding and/or directing mortar attacks on the 1-8th's TOC.

**Lt. Goldman led me in to the Bradley. He called out to the driver, "I only printed up three detainee forms, so if we get any others I guess we'll have to shoot them." He waited a bit and then remembered that I was standing behind him. "I was only joking, of course!"**

The Bradley's loading door sealed shut with myself, the Sergeant and Mohammed the translator in the rear. As we rumbled on, tossing us about inside, Lt. Goldman explained a few things. "These sorts of missions are always hard. Don't be surprised if the soldiers use no compassion at all," he explained. **"I've only been with the unit for a couple weeks, so its still hard on me to watch. Women and children will be crying, and hey, we are waking them up at midnight and taking their husbands and sons away. I don't even know how to explain it to my wife."**

Some thirty soldiers were to participate. I would hang by the commanding officer, Cpt. Cunningham with an infiltration squad. Another squad would circle around to the front of the homes as we would cut off any rear escape. The Bradley's would then circle around and position the front for a quick extraction. **The plan was to detain all males in an around the Younis home to find the suspect.**

We trudged for a good half-mile through twists and turns of bramble, trees and irrigation ditches. At times the Captain would pause to check his Global Positioning Satellite unit for a precise location fix. After an arduous journey, we finally settled into a ditch about 200m in front of the first target home amid a large orchard. Then it was a waiting game.

After almost 45 minutes of waiting in total silence, we finally heard loud bangs of metal. The Captain turned to me. "The first objective," he whispered. "They're breaching the first objective."

Soon enough the heavy roar of the Bradleys broke through the night as the vehicles moved into position outside the neighborhood's homes. Then we moved in. I wasn't sure what to expect when I began running through the field and towards the homes. I had seen recordings of raids done in urban areas and I didn't think I would ever have the heart to participate. But as the soldiers began entering the homes, I just followed, running behind. I let my camera do my thinking (which wasn't doing too much in the total darkness).



Bam! Bam! "Go, go, go!" We poured through a gate and ran across a short courtyard. Bam! The double metal doors of the house were smashed open.

Immediately women began crying. We passed a small foyer and found two elderly women and one old man startled as the lights were flicked on. The soldiers poured through the house, fanning out to all rooms and looking for other people. "Friendly going upstairs!" "Upstairs clear!" "Friendly coming out!" The old man was taken from his home as the women followed, crying out. The soldiers moved on. "What about the house across the street?" "Blue 6 has it." "We've still got this big one over here." "Let's go!"

Again I followed the unit, this time around a large brick wall and over to the front of the farmhouse. A few swift kicks to the gate. A dash to the front of the house. Splitting up to enter all visible doors simultaneously. Running into the home amid cries.

**As I entered a darkened hallway I came across seven young girls and boys. One young girl, no older than 10, with large glasses and a tan hejab kept her hands raised in the air. I had never before seen a child do such a thing. They all wore fear deep on their faces. The males, children and adults alike, were brought outside in a line up. The youngest two were released, but all others from about fourteen and up were cuffed and brought out to the Bradleys down the road.**

**Running out the back, the women tried to follow sobbing. I looked back briefly. I couldn't stare long. I began to well up myself, realizing that these people had no clue what was going on. Even if the men would likely be released in a matter of minutes, it was still a terror for the women and children to see their fathers, sons and husbands torn from them by a legion of masked men.**

Here, in front of a home, some twenty-five men, all bound by flex-cuffs, were lined up for identification as Mohammed took down their names. Once it was determined that Fawzi Younis was not among the detainees, the Captain ordered the restraints to be cut. He then addressed them, with Mohammed translating. The detainees voluntarily moved to their knees with their hands in their laps. They still looked bewildered and frightened.

**"Thank you for participating in tonight's roundup," he began.** "You know who we are looking for and we will not have to do this anymore if you help us. We know you know who is attacking Americans, and we need you to come forward." The fluorescent light glistened against the grease paint on his face.

**One man stood up and asked the Captain what the people of the village could do if they didn't know who was firing the mortars. Cpt. Cunningham was curt. "They are firing from your fields. You cannot sit inside and let it happen. I want you to be proactive. (OK, how about "proactive" with some IEDs?) I want you to go out and find out who these people are and come tell us. Otherwise we will continue to come at night and ask."** There was nothing more he could do here. "Ok. You are going to stay sitting here until we have left the area."

And with that, in a matter of seconds all thirty soldiers had boarded the APC's and we were off.

As our Bradley lurched forward and we headed back to the base, Lt. Goldman broke the silence. "Well, that was fucking worthless."

(For a proposal to stop this madness, see the article "Why We Say Out Now" at [www.isreview.org](http://www.isreview.org).)

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## Unready, Unwilling, Unable; Collaborator Troops Fail To Show Up

2.24.04 By Greg Jaffe, Wall St. Journal

RAMADI, Iraq—The Iraqi Civil Defense Corps is supposed to inherit the job of keeping order in Iraq. But before that can happen, the troops here will have to clear a lower hurdle: They have to start patrolling at night again.

Last month, about 20 civil-defense members were out at 3 a.m. guarding a police substation when they were attacked by guerrillas armed with rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns. One police officer was killed and one wounded. **Badly spooked, all but a dozen of the 140 Iraqis assigned to patrol the area stopped coming to work for three days.**

On their first morning back, Army Lt. Col. Thomas Hollis, the American commander here, held an emergency meeting with his Iraqi counterpart. Lt. Col. Adnan Alawi Abid agreed that his Iraqi troops needed to get back out on the streets. **But he insisted they would no longer patrol after dark, when they are more likely to be ambushed.**

"They have to perform night missions," Col. Hollis pressed back. "We haven't the necessary equipment or training," said Col. Adnan.

Col. Hollis suggested the Iraqi troops focus on a less-dangerous task, guarding a fuel-distribution site at night. But the Iraqi colonel again said no. After about 15 minutes, Col. Hollis gave in, agreeing that the Iraqis would stick to day patrols for the foreseeable future.

"There is a balance between pushing these guys too fast and not pushing them fast enough," he said after the meeting. "Right now we are struggling to figure out what it is."

U.S. troops in charge of training the civil-defense force here say their efforts are hobbled by a lack of basic equipment— including bulletproof vests, radios and machine guns— and a rushed training pace that pushes the Iraqis into the field before they're ready. **Meanwhile, many of the Iraqis in the corps remain deeply ambivalent about working so closely with u.s. forces, a task they say makes them even more of a target than American soldiers.**

Each morning the troops, who are noticeably smaller and skinnier than their u.s. counterparts, arrive with their new brown uniforms, black vinyl boots and caps

**stuffed in plastic bags. When traveling to and from work, they prefer not to wear their uniforms on the street.**

At first, the civil-defense troops rode to their patrols on heavily armed U.S. military 5-ton trucks. But after they were pelted with rocks, they decided they were safer on their own. **“We don’t like the American trucks because they shoot at Iraqis,” says the barrel-chested Sgt. Abbas. “The people don’t understand these weapons are for protection and they turn on us when we ride with the Americans. They say we are mercenaries, not keepers of the peace.”**

Col. Hollis and Col. Adnan agreed that the troops would set up a checkpoint on the road near the substation. The American colonel reasoned that this was a perfect job for the Iraqi troops who, with their language skills and hometown knowledge, are more capable of spotting suspicious looking travelers. **Col. Hollis also assigned a platoon of U.S. soldiers to go to the site to help the Iraqi troops run the checkpoint and give them some extra firepower.**

**But when the U.S. troops arrived at the substation, the civil-defense troops weren’t there. “Ever since this checkpoint was hit five days ago, the ICDC deserted and didn’t come back,” said one of two police officers at the station.**

**Civil defense troops here bristle at suggestions that they are fighting for the Americans—or for the new democratic Iraq.** Rather, they insist they are fighting to protect their homes from criminals and terrorists.

Around 4 p.m. Sgt. Abbas and his men knocked off work, without ever returning to the police substation. At about 8 p.m., someone bombed the substation--reducing the cinderblock building to a pile of rubble. It was empty at the time. That same night, three Iraq Police officers working in a different section of town were killed in a drive-by shooting.

Back at the U.S. base, Col. Hollis and his officers were growing increasingly concerned about the violence directed at Iraqi police and civil-defense corps members. **Using an explanation heard regularly in Washington and Baghdad, he said that these Iraqis are being targeted because they are a symbol of the success of the occupation.** “The ICDC and Iraqi police really threaten the enemy right now because they are their own people,” Col. Hollis said. “They are proof of why we are really here: to build a new Iraq.” **(Col. Hollis is full of shit right up to his hairline.)**

Maj. Ben Solum, Col. Horns’ lead planner, listed the past week’s events on a white board. Eight police officers had been gunned down in three separate incidents. The civil-defense troops had been ambushed and the police substation they were supposed to guard had been destroyed. **(How’s that for “success”?)** “What’s our response?” he asked.

The U.S. officials then sketched out a list of what the Iraqi security forces needed: better weapons to fend off attacks, communications gear to call for help, and some means of treating casualties at the scene. Finally, they needed the support of local citizens. To earn that, Col. Hollis concluded, the Iraqi troops should patrol around the destroyed police substation as quickly as possible to prove they’re unafraid.

Immediately Col. Adnan insisted the people who had blown up the station were not from Ramadi and hence not his responsibility. "It doesn't matter. You must stop this from happening," Col. Hollis said. "This is your responsibility"

Col. Hollis worked with Cal. Adnan to begin crafting a list of training and equipment needs for the next few months. Then, the Americans pressed the Iraqi leader to return his men to the checkpoint next to the substation.

"What kind of message are you sending to the people of Ramadi when you back down like that?" asked Maj. Solum.

**A few days after returning to the checkpoint, someone fired a rocket-propelled grenade at a platoon of the civil-defense troops. No one was hurt. But that night, one of the corps's members, Private Kamal Sarhan, was stabbed in his home, according to his fellow soldiers. Private Sarhan had complained previously that he was being harassed for working with the Americans, several members of his unit said.**

**U.S. officials on the scene took down Private Sarhan's name. Later they said they couldn't say with certainty who killed the private or why.**

### **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/>

## **The Bremer Follies Roll On: Iraqi Experts Tossed Out With The Water; Workers Ineligible To Fix Polluted System**

*[Washington Post, February 27, 2004, Pg. 1]*

Some of Iraq's top water experts, adept at keeping the country's systems up and running, are prohibited from aiding the reconstruction process. Iraqi ministries have adopted a process that often prevents skilled workers from resuming their old jobs---they were aligned too closely with Saddam Hussein's regime.

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## **FIRST JANET JACKSON JOKES ARRIVE IN IRAQ**

## Bremer Apologizes for Delay

February 28, 2004 The Borowitz Report

The first shipment of Janet Jackson jokes arrived in Iraq today, a full month after wisecracks about the singer's right breast dominated the American media.

L. Paul Bremer III, the top U.S. administrator in Iraq, apologized to the Iraqi people for the delay, citing "difficulties in translation."

The sarcastic remarks were airlifted into Iraq over the weekend and delivered to the Coalition Provisional Authority's three primary joke-distribution centers in Baghdad, the southern city of Basra and oil-rich Kirkuk.

**The Janet Jackson jokes were distributed throughout Iraq by the Halliburton Company at a cost of \$1.4 billion dollars, Mr. Bremer said.**

**While Halliburton had been contracted to distribute over 50,000 jokes, the company later acknowledged that the number of jokes actually distributed was closer to seven.**

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"LIBERATION" BUSH STYLE



Iraqi women hold up pictures of their missing relatives imprisoned by the Occupation during a rally in Baghdad, February 25, 2004. (Ammar Awad/Reuters)

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## Even Stooge Council Shy About Letting U.S. Troops Stay

The Economist Feb 26th 2004 |

In the November agreement, the CPA is due to sign a "status of forces" agreement next month with the Governing Council, to regulate the presence of foreign troops in Iraq. The Americans had hoped to find a home for the forces they withdrew from Saudi Arabia last year.

**But already the council is baulking at the Americans' insistence on signing a document that would allow for an unlimited number of American troops in Iraq for an unlimited period and subject to American, not local, law. Fearful of yet more squabbles with the council, Mr Bremer cites American lawyers who now say that only a sovereign government, after the handover at the end of June, has the legal authority to sign such an agreement. So another date looks like slipping.**

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

# **U.S. To Air Own War News; Silly Pentagon Thinks Somebody Will Buy Their Bullshit**

February 28, 2004 SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER NEWS SERVICES

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait -- The U.S. military will launch its own news service in Iraq and Afghanistan to send military video, text and photos directly to the Internet or news organizations.

The \$6.3 million project, which is expected to begin operating in April, is one of the largest military public affairs projects in recent memory, and **is intended to allow small media firms in the United States and elsewhere to bypass what the Pentagon views as an increasingly combative press corps.**

**U.S. officials have complained that Iraq-based media focus on catastrophic events such as car bombs and soldiers' deaths, while giving short shrift to U.S. rebuilding efforts.**

**The American public "currently gets a pretty slanted picture," said Army Capt. Randall Baucom, a spokesman for the Kuwait-based U.S.-led Coalition Land Forces Command.**

The project, called Digital Video and Imagery Distribution System, or DVIDS, **will also give the Pentagon more control of the coverage when calamities do happen.**

This is the kind of news that people get in countries where the government controls the media. Why would anybody here want to buy into it?" Mac McKerral, president of the Society of Professional Journalists, told The Associated Press.

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **After Rumsfeld Visit, Afghan Leader Asserts Resistance Is Beaten Fresh Resistance Attack Kills Five**

*[New York Times, February 27, 2004]*

Afghan President Karzai said the Taliban has been defeated in Afghanistan, despite a series of recent attacks, including one that killed five aid workers on Wednesday.

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#### **Received:**

##### **Request For Help**

Dear GI Special,

I just discovered your very excellent "GI Special" and thought you may be the right person to point me in the right direction.

I am presently conducting research for a non-profit international documentary on young or career soldiers or military personal who disobey direct orders out of a greater moral duty. I have already found cases in both Chile and Israel yet I am in search of potential subjects from the United States and was curious to whether or not someone may know of a lead that I may pursue for review. I would be interested in finding any past, current or forthcoming cases that you may be aware of.

I am looking for any examples that are not about conscious objection. Have you come across anything like this at?

Thank you for your time, patience, and consideration.  
Best regards from Canada and good luck on your project.

Korbett Matthews  
[kobefilm@hotmail.com](mailto:kobefilm@hotmail.com)

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