

GI SPECIAL 2#84

Honduras Quits War



**No More Iraq, Ever, For These Soldiers;
Get Ours Home, NOW!**

Following the lead given by Spain, Honduras has withdrawn all soldiers from Iraq. Soldiers' relatives welcome them upon the soldiers' return home from Iraq to Palmerola Air Base in Honduras May 21. (AP Photo/Ginnette Riquelme)

**“As In Vietnam” Soldiers
Want To “Get Out And
Forget They Were Ever
In Iraq:”**

**Officer Writes Senator:
Soldier-Killer Rumsfeld Blows It Off**

May 24, 2004 By Vince Crawley, Army Times staff writer

Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill., read aloud to Rumsfeld a letter from one of his constituents, a career officer serving in Iraq.

The public outcry over the Abu Ghraib prison scandal is “simply the beginning of the end,” the officer wrote. “Two-thirds of the Iraqis want us to leave as of yesterday. ... Every battlefield success seems to be another Pyrrhic victory.”

As in Vietnam, the officer wrote, more and more troops just want to “get out and forget they were ever in Iraq.”

Rumsfeld said it is “disturbing but not surprising that an individual feels that way.”

(The slimy shit heard the letter say “the troops” want to get out, and he comes back about how “an individual” feels that way. No asshole, “the troops” are not “an individual.” Hopefully, one day soon, they will teach you the difference, up close and personal, right where you sit in your Pentagon office on your fat worthless ass in your \$5000 Eames chair, sending others to their deaths with your Cross gold pen.)

“You don’t have security,” Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-S.C. told Rumsfeld. “In fact, we’re bogged down. We’re trying to win the hearts and minds as we’re killing and torturing. Sure, the troops are superb, but the question is, are we superb here in Washington?”

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/>

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Marine Dies In Vehicle Accident

05/21/04 Combined Joint Task Force Seven Press Release:

[A Marine assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force died May 20 in a vehicle accident in the western most region of the Al Anbar Province, while conducting security-and-stability operations.](#)

1 U.S. Soldier, 2 Iraqis Killed in IED Attack

5.21.04 Combined Joint Task Force Seven Release #040521b

BAGHDAD, Iraq - One U.S. Soldier and two Iraqi citizens died when an improvised explosive device detonated May 20 around 5:15 p.m.

Marine Falls In Canal, "Does Not Resurface"

May 21, 2004 United States Department of Defense News Release No. 488-04

Pfc. Michael M. Carey, 20, of Prince George, Va., died May 18 in Iraq. He apparently fell into a canal and did not resurface. His remains were recovered on May 18. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Oklahoma Soldier Hurt When Truck Rolls Over Explosive

5.21.04 McALESTER, Okla. (AP)

An Oklahoma soldier who is deployed in Iraq suffered second-degree burns after the vehicle in which he was riding rolled over a bomb and exploded, the man's mother said.

Pfc. David Willis couldn't hold the telephone but was able to talk to his mother a few hours after the incident, said Tammy Willis, his mother.

``But he's doing all right," she said.

David Willis, 20, is part of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Division.

He was riding in a gas truck that was part of a convoy that was delivering fuel and ammunition on Saturday when it approached the explosive device. The explosive was remotely detonated, Tammy Willis said.

``He got the worst of the burns; the driver was not hurt that bad," she said.

She said he joked with the doctors and nurses and is in good spirits.

"I told him he's a hero in everybody's eyes, to go through all of this at only 20 and survive it," Tammy Willis said.

If David Willis is moved to a burn unit in the United States, the family plans to go visit him, she said.

The Army will only pay for his family to visit him

U.S. Troops Retreat From Mosque After Repeated Attacks By Madhi Army In Karbala

5/21/2004 By Fisnik Abrashi, Associated Press

KARBALA, Iraq (AP) American AC-130 gunships and tanks pounded militia positions early Friday near two shrines in the center of the holy city of Karbala, and the U.S. military said it killed 18 fighters loyal to a rebel cleric.

Early Friday, U.S. troops pulled out of the Mukhayam mosque in Karbala, the scene of fierce fighting last week during which coalition forces ousted insurgents who were using it as a base of operations. Since then, American soldiers there have come under frequent attack.

The military said it planned to conduct regular patrols in Karbala despite the withdrawal from the mosque.

Officers said soldiers operating in Karbala's Old City in the past two weeks experienced intense urban combat similar to battles in Mogadishu, Somalia, more than a decade ago.

The mosque pullout happened hours after a major military operation into Karbala was postponed. The operation was postponed to allow discussion between Iraqi leaders and al-Sadr's militia on a possible negotiated end to the fighting, a senior military official said on condition of anonymity.

The fighting started after insurgents fired several rocket-propelled grenades at U.S. tanks that were patrolling on the outskirts of Karbala's so-called "Old City," a maze of alleyways and cluttered buildings, said U.S. Army Col. Pete Mansoor of the 1st Armored Division.

The tanks returned fire, and more than two hours of heavy fighting followed. Smoke billowed from burning buildings. Explosions lit up the night sky and reverberated throughout the city. Electric lights flickered on and off. By 3 a.m., the fighting had stopped.

Much of the fighting was near the city's Imam Hussein and Imam Abbas shrines, which U.S. forces allege are being used by militiamen as firing positions or protective cover.

The military says it is doing its best to avoid damage to the gold-domed shrines, which could infuriate Shiite Muslims who are not involved in the conflict. Cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who launched an uprising against the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq last month, has accused U.S. forces of desecrating holy sites.

Dr. Abbas Falih al-Hassani of Karbala's al-Hussein hospital said 12 people died, including two Iranian pilgrims. Thirteen were injured.

The dead included a driver for a camera crew of the Al-Jazeera television network, the station reported.

There was also overnight fighting between U.S. forces and al-Sadr loyalists in another holy city, Najaf. One civilian died and another was injured when their car was caught in the crossfire, hospital officials said.

In the northern city of Kirkuk, American troops detained a representative of al-Sadr, Sheik Anwar al-Jinani and 10 supporters at a mosque, Iraqi authorities said. The press office of the U.S.-led coalition in Baghdad said it had no information.

TROOP NEWS

No Mission No Hope No Win



BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW

Stop-Loss Cruelty:

Soldiers Treated “Like Indentured Servants, Slaves And Serfs”

Army Times 5.24.04 Letters To The Editor

Spc. Matthew Bowers' letter ["A prisoner of sorts," April 26 Army Times] gave me the courage to speak out. **It is a crime that soldiers have served their time proudly but are given no idea when they will be allowed to leave the service.**

We are treating them like indentured servants, slaves and serfs. It is brutal being over in Iraq or Afghanistan — brutal on the soldier, brutal on the family in his absence.

We owe them a date, an end to the madness.

I want my son home on time this year. I want all soldiers with stop-losses to come home on time. The Army owns my son for four years, then he's mine.

Good luck, Spc. Bowers. We're pulling for you at home.

Pamela Goodwill
Las Vegas

(Slaves and serfs both fought for and finally won their freedom, rebelling with arms in hand. Mere words didn't cut it.)

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.

Wounded From Iraq, In The Thousands Now, Who Arrive Quietly, One By One, With No Fanfare, No Waving Flags.

May 21, 2004 By Deborah Amos ABC News

Christie Chappell joined the military because she thought it would change her life — and it did.

She was seriously injured when a guard tower collapsed during a sandstorm in southern Iraq. "I have pain, I always have pain. It's in my lower back," Chappell said. "I have had it so long and it's so constant that you kind of get used to it. It's not important anymore. I know my limitations."

After months in a wheelchair, Chappell has had to learn to walk again in small, painful steps. She is part of the wave of wounded from Iraq, in the thousands now, who arrive quietly, one by one, with no fanfare, no waving flags.

When she left for Iraq, Chappell was front-page news — a star in her small hometown of Covington, Tenn., the only woman to go to the war in the county, and the first woman to fight from her family. **But it is easier to send these soldiers off to war than to face them when they come home.**

"As far as the town, I don't know if I have let them down. I don't know if I have changed the way they think about it. I am not sure," she said. "They want to know what is going on. They want to hear about the war and stuff. **I think they are scared to talk about my injuries ... [If] you don't talk about it, it didn't happen.**"

She is a patient at a military hospital at Fort Campbell, Ky., a place she didn't think she would get to in her darkest moments in Iraq. **"The funniest thing about thinking you're not going to make it, you regret things. And you don't regret the things you would think you would. I mean, the silliest things. I regretted not taking my kids to the ocean. And I regretted not building a patio off the back of my house."**

Her family is sure she is a hero, and they are thrilled to have her back early, even if it is at a military hospital 160 miles from home. But even before she checked in, she made good on a promise to herself in Iraq. She took her teenagers, Michael and Megan, to the ocean on her first day back.

"It was like, 'OK, don't you want to go home first?' " Megan recalled. "She's like, 'No.' So we had just come back from camp, so that was the only clothes we had with us was camp clothes, so I thought it was a little strange."

Her mother explained why they were making the visit. "She said she regretted it, and then she started crying and said she was sorry. And we just said, 'OK.' "

Chappell's husband, Alan, cared for the kids full time while she was gone. He was the first to get the call that his wife had been injured.

"As a man, and as a husband, my job is to protect my wife and family, you know, always. Like a guard dog," he said. "So it was difficult emotionally. I just couldn't be there for her. It was really hard on me, not being able to be there and help."

When she first crossed the border into Iraq, Chappell knew things had changed. "I think, 'What have I gotten myself into?'" she recalled. "I was terrified. I was absolutely terrified. And there were a lot of children. And I'm a mother, and my heart just kind of stopped. And then I just went into my soldier mode and pushed it away and carried on with my mission."

The mission is on her mind even today. "Sometimes I dream about it. In the beginning ... I couldn't sleep. The kids would sleep, and I would sit at the window and look out and make sure no one could get 'em. It's been a long process."

Physical healing is a long process, too. There is still joy in the small moments with her family — as when Megan read a poem she wrote about her mother's experiences from letters Chappell sent home. "It's so beautiful. It just chokes me up every time I hear it," Chappell said.

The news from Iraq makes her angry. She doesn't watch it anymore. (Too bad the reporter didn't ask the so obvious question: "Why?") For the first time, she's started a college course with her military benefits. It's not the life she'd planned, but one she can live with. And she doesn't regret serving.

"It was the hardest thing I have ever done, but the accomplishment that I have done and how I feel about myself for doing it and my country, it's worth it. Absolutely worth it."

Losing Hand, Skills, Control Hard For Michigan National Guard Member

May 14, 2004 BY KATHLEEN GRAY, FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER, Detroit Free Press

WASHINGTON -- Sgt. James McKelvey knew the risks when he went to Iraq to defuse bombs. He even planned for his death, knowing that soldiers who work over bombs rarely survive a blast.

He talked to his wife, Ruth, about his funeral, trust funds for his two kids and other financial details of their lives.

"People had always asked me how I could do this, and I told them that if something went wrong, I wouldn't be here to worry about it," McKelvey, 32, said last week.

The Shelby Township couple never talked about what would happen if he survived an explosion.

Now they're talking.

They are taking a break from James McKelvey's recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., to attend a service Saturday in Ft. Walton, Fla., for five soldiers killed while trying to disarm bombs in Iraq.

McKelvey, an Oakland County sheriff's deputy, wonders why he isn't one of them.

On Feb. 9, he survived the impacts of a land mine and two homemade bombs while trying to disarm one of the bombs along a road 30 miles north of Baghdad.

He lost his right hand; his left hand was mangled; his chest was burned, and his eardrums were perforated. Twice, his heart stopped at hospitals in Iraq.

McKelvey is among more than 100 amputees who have come to Walter Reed in the last 15 months and among the more than 4,100 U.S. soldiers injured since the war began.

McKelvey has no memory of the day he was injured, but has been able to piece it together from his medical records and accounts from other soldiers in Baqubah, the Iraq city where he was stationed.

It was cool -- about 40 degrees -- so McKelvey didn't mind wearing the 100-pound armored suit and helmet when he was called to check a roadside bomb that a U.S. convoy spotted.

McKelvey and other members of the Michigan National Guard's 745th Explosive Ordnance Detachment, based in Grayling, had arrived in Iraq in October. He estimated that he had worked on 80 bombs during the four months he was there.

McKelvey never knew what to expect: Bombs were primitive and sophisticated, duds and deadly. Some were packed in dead cows on roadsides.

"The first time, I was scared . . . but that was the only time," he said. "You've just got to walk up to it and take a deep breath."

Sometimes, he would send a robot to the bomb to get a better look. Other times, he would place a water bottle holding an explosive-filled straw next to the device and blow it up. **Speed was crucial because the enemy might be lurking nearby with a detonator.**

On Feb. 9, McKelvey stretched out on the ground to get a better look at a bomb. His body weight triggered a land mine in the sand. Moments later, the first homemade bomb exploded. The soldiers knew McKelvey was hurt.

They picked him up but couldn't get him in the back of their Humvee. At 6 feet 2 and 265 pounds, McKelvey was too big. So the soldiers placed him on the hood. One soldier stretched over him to make sure he didn't fall off.

"They tell me I was talking and saying I was OK," he said. "But they could also hear me gurgling."

As they began the 3-mile race to the base, a second bomb exploded. The soldier atop McKelvey took shrapnel in the back and leg. Shrapnel pierced McKelvey's helmet but didn't reach his head. Shrapnel severed the arm of the driver, who hit the brakes. McKelvey and the soldier on top of him went flying.

What happened next is unclear, but the convoy made it to the War Horse, a medevac helicopter that whisked McKelvey to Camp Anaconda, near Baghdad.

Twice before he reached the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, the main U.S. military hospital in Germany, his heart stopped. Doctors didn't work on his left hand because they thought he would die.

Ruth McKelvey, a cheerful 29-year-old freckled blonde, was doing laundry, thinking about going to see the Red Wings game the next night.

It was about 7 p.m. on Feb. 10 when she heard someone at the door. Seeing a woman in uniform, she guessed it was about a mixup in pay for her husband. **Maj. Laverne Santangelo told McKelvey that her husband was critically injured and likely to lose both hands and perhaps his sight.**

McKelvey called her mother.

"I'll never forget that scream on the phone," said her mother, Pat Lund.

Three days later, Ruth McKelvey was in Germany. She barely recognized the man she had met at a Roseville bar in 1996.

He was unconscious. His face was purple. His eyes were swollen shut. Both arms were bandaged, and seven tubes protruded from his chest, abdomen and throat. She tried to wipe what she thought was dirt from his cheek. It was shrapnel.

She couldn't see that the impact of the blast had compressed his organs to the back of his spine. His lungs were bruised and filled with fluid. His temperature was up to 104. The day after she arrived, surgeons popped a hernia in his stomach, releasing the pressure on his organs.

James McKelvey improved, but didn't fully awaken for six weeks.

"He was strapped onto this rotating bed that would pitch 45 degrees from side to side to keep the fluid in his lungs from settling in," said Ruth McKelvey.

After three weeks in Germany and many surgeries on his left hand, he was flown to Walter Reed. It would be another month before he would wake up.

His first memory after the blast was watching the show "Cops" with Leah, a nurse. It was 2 a.m. in mid-March.

"All of a sudden, I was really lucid," he said. "But one minute, I was running around in Iraq, and the next, I was in a bed in Washington. It kind of freaked me out." The surprises had just begun.

He couldn't talk because there was a tube in his throat, and he was too weak to walk. His left eye wandered, and his vision was blurred.

Clouded by drugs, James McKelvey didn't know until March 20 -- his fifth wedding anniversary -- that his hand was gone. He and his wife had just finished watching the movie "Tommy Boy," and she was drifting off to sleep in the chair next to his bed. He realized that one bandaged arm was bigger than the other.

"Where the hell is my hand?" he yelled.

"He kept thinking that they were getting ready to amputate his hand, not realizing that he had already lost it," Ruth McKelvey said. "I must have told him five times that he lost his hand . . . but he just didn't remember."

Doctors weren't even sure they would be able to save his left hand. Several surgeries were necessary to graft skin and put pins in his four fingers. The hand remains swollen -- his size 13 wedding ring won't fit on his pinky -- and speckled with shrapnel.

Recovery seems slow to James McKelvey. The doctors have said he's doing great.

On May 3, Maj. Janet Papazis, a physical therapist, greeted him with a smile and sent him to a treadmill. On this day, she worked on strengthening his legs and balance. He had lost more than 30 pounds and muscle tone in three months. Ear surgery next month should correct his balance.

Later that day, McKelvey started hours of therapy to keep his left hand supple and his right arm -- the residual limb, he said with a roll of his eyes -- prepared to work with a prosthetic hand.

"The doctors get mad when you call it a stump," he said. "I haven't figured out a nickname."

Three weeks ago, he slipped on his mechanical hand for the first time. It was one of four he'll eventually get. He immediately hated it. The Greifer is a bionic device attached to a plastic sleeve with a large hook on the end. It's uncomfortable and looks nothing like a hand. And it didn't quite fit.

"I began getting nauseous," he said. "I started tugging on it. It had to come off."

His therapist, Capt. Lisa Smurr, said he's progressed since then. Last week, he began to learn how to flex muscles in his forearm to make the Greifer open and close. The exercises, with cubes, were rudimentary. When he lost his grip and the cubes fell to the floor, he cursed, but refused help in picking them up.

He has asked his wife for help with putting on socks, unscrewing a bottle of pink lemonade, drying his back after a shower.

"I don't believe I'd be where I'm at if it wasn't for her," he said. "Still, it's Ruth. So she kicks me in the ass all the time," especially when he complains.

James McKelvey said he wants to know when he'll go home, what kind of job he can do, when the phantom pain in the missing hand will go away.

There are no easy answers.

He and his wife will come home in July for a visit, but will have to return to Walter Reed. Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard assured him a job would be waiting.

"But I don't want to put someone else in a position where they could get hurt because of my weaknesses," said McKelvey.

And the pain that feels like all the missing fingers are folded over will dissipate, said Smurr.

McKelvey said he keeps reminding himself -- often with humor -- that he was lucky.

"Hey, I was just doing my job and . . . it was my turn to get hurt," he said. "But where was my big white tunnel?"

Dunn Firefighter Hit By Explosion

WRAL News April 23, 2004

DUNN, N.C. A member of the Dunn Fire Department was recently injured while serving with the National Guard in Iraq.

Sgt. Mason Poe suffered broken legs and a head injury when his unit was hit by an explosion.

Doctors were waiting for the swelling on Poe's brain to go down before sending him to Germany.

Poe graduated from Triton High School in 1999.

100 Burned Soldiers

5/21/2004 By: Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO -- The Air Force and Army have brought more than 100 burn victims out of Iraq, through Germany to a San Antonio hospital.

Only two of the 100 soldiers brought to the burn unit of Brooke Army Medical Center have died. The *San Antonio Express-News* reported burns make up about 5 to 10 percent of all combat casualties.

The hospital at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio has the Defense Department's only burn center. The burn center opened three years after the end of World War II and has trained many doctors for some of the nation's 100 civilian burn units.

Several standard treatments for burns were pioneered there, including advances in the removal of burned skin, creams that prevent life-threatening infections and aerial transport of victims.

Kentucky Reservist Injured In Iraq Returns Home

5.19.04 WKYT

A Mt. Sterling reservist, injured in Iraq is back home Wednesday morning.

Navy Seabee Reservist Gregory Risner was hurt in two separate bombings between the end of April and beginning of this month.

He received injuries to his shoulder, leg and eye.

Risner arrived back in Kentucky Tuesday night on medical leave.

Doctors tell Risner it will take months of physical therapy for his injuries to heal. Risner doesn't think he will have to go back overseas.

“Veterans’ Affairs” Finally Coughs Up Disabled Vets’ Insurance After Long Fight By Widow

5.24.04 Army Times

It took two years and the intervention of a U.S. senator for a widow to collect government life insurance after the death of her husband, a disabled veteran, who missed an opportunity to convert his military life insurance to a veteran's policy.

Newsday reports Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., interceded to help Sharon Lien convince the Department of Veterans Affairs that **her late husband, James, who retired from the Air Force in 1999, would have converted his insurance if he had received notice from VA. She said his frequent shuttling between doctors and hospitals kept him from getting such notice.**

VA ended up paying the \$200,000 in life insurance after being contacted by Schumer. Officials said they believed James Lien, who was dying of service-connected leukemia, probably would have converted to Veterans' Group Life Insurance if given the chance. (No shit.) Schumer now is asking the services to appoint ombudsmen to help any other veterans or survivors who have similar problems.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Fallujah's Victory Parade Is Our Victory Parade; The Empire Has Lost The War

Comment:

Note well: Fallujah, one of the largest cities in Iraq, has now been free of Bush regime control, and in the hands of the resistance, for three and a half months. The attempt of the occupation army to retake it was defeated by Iraqi force of arms in April.

Aside from fortified bases, a few isolated enclaves, and areas of force concentration like Karbala and Najaf, the U.S. government has lost effective control of 90% of Iraq. In Baghdad, they control nothing outside the green zone occupation headquarters. This is the giant fact on the ground the Bush administration hopes nobody back in the USA will notice.

Who wants to be the last soldier to die for a defeated occupation? The only ground Bush and Bremer control is the ground U.S. soldiers stand on at any given moment. The Imperial war for oil is a failure of historic proportions. When that fact fully sinks in here at home, there will be a terrible reckoning. It won't matter whether Imperial Soldier-Killer Bush or Imperial Soldier-Killer Kerry infests the White House, the butchers' bill will come due and will have to be paid.

One thing for sure at this point: our soldiers will not open fire on Americans if enough of us decide the scum in control in Washington (Democrat and Republican alike) must go, and we act accordingly, exercising our right to revolution in the face of a government wholly controlled by our enemies.

That kind of mass movement is unlikely until the election is over, and the hopes of decent working class people and soldiers that politicians in Washington care about us is destroyed once again by their endless bi-partisan lust for power, wealth and more Imperial war.

The only effective chains they have left binding us are those within our own heads. When the illusion that the election of 2004 will change anything important is shattered, then we'll see. Revolutionary change in this society is not only necessary for our own liberation, it's entirely possible, and closer than anybody in power imagines, although farther off that we would wish.)

(For more on the fight for social revolution, see the article "No Country To Fight For," by Eugene V. Debs, centerfold at www.socialistworker.org.)

May 19, 2004. Doug Lorimer. Green Left Weekly

Ironically, the 82nd Airborne Division's brutal suppression in April last year of peaceful Iraqi protests in Fallujah, a city of 250,000 residents 45 kilometres west of Baghdad, sparked the beginning of a mass-based Iraqi armed resistance that has dealt the biggest blow to the US occupation force.

By early February this year, the armed resistance in Fallujah had become so well-organised and intense that US paratroopers were forced to withdraw to fortified positions on the city's outskirts.

At the end of March, the paratroopers were replaced by US marines. On April 5, the US marines set siege to the city and attacked it with warplanes, helicopter gunships, tanks and artillery. The resulting casualty toll led to a wave of angry protests in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq.

On April 9, the marine commanders declared a unilateral cease-fire, while continuing to launch sporadic attacks on the city.

According to the May 6 *Washington Post*, on April 19, "after a week of talks, a group of local civic leaders and a few Sunni politicians from Baghdad made a deal with marine commanders. In exchange for relaxing a nighttime curfew and allowing families to return to their homes, the leaders promised to collect heavy weapons from the insurgents and hand them over to the marines.

"That never happened. All the marines got was a pile of rusty, antiquated arms. Most of them didn't work.

"The next day, an interlocutor approached [US Marine General Jim] Conway with an enticing offer: A group of former Iraqi army generals were willing to assemble a force that would restore order in Fallujah."

On April 29, Conway "decided that two of the four marine battalions in the city would withdraw. In their place, 300 former Iraqi soldiers [recruited and led by Saleh] would assume control of checkpoints and perimeter positions on the city's southern border."

The next day, Saleh drove into Fallujah wearing his old olive-green Iraqi army uniform and was greeted by cheering crowds waving the old Iraqi flag, abolished by the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council.

Saleh was followed by 300 former Iraqi army soldiers, described by US officials in Baghdad as constituting the "1st battalion of the Fallujah Brigade", but which Latif and Saleh have called the Fallujah Protective Army. Upon their arrival in the city's centre, the FPA troops were greeted by hundreds of armed residents.

Throughout the three-week siege of the city, US officials had claimed that the core of the resistance forces in Fallujah were some 200 foreign Arab fighters linked with Saudi Arabian millionaire Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda terrorist network.

However, Saleh immediately dismissed such claims, telling Reuters on May 1 that "there are no foreign fighters in Fallujah". His comments were backed up by Latif the following day. By the next day, US marine commanders outside the city were singing the same tune.

The May 6 *Washington Post* reported that “Fallujah is now caught in a time warp. Iraqi soldiers wearing their crisp, olive-green army uniforms — a sight unseen since former president Saddam Hussein's government was toppled more than a year ago — now man checkpoints on roads leading into the city.”

“Many of the guys who were shooting at the marines have simply put on their old army uniforms and joined the Fallujah Brigade”, a US official told the *Post*. “As of Thursday, leaders of the brigade said they had assembled more than 1000 soldiers and would continue expanding the force.”

The May 5 *Los Angeles Times* reported that none of the volunteers for the FPA “said they had any interest in joining the US-backed Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) and even the newly reconstituted Iraqi army received only a lukewarm endorsement. Both are thought of as US stooges.”

While US officials have claimed the FPA will operate as a proxy force for the US marines, at a press conference in Fallujah on May 5, Latif refuted this. Referring to planned discussions between the FPA and US marine commanders, he said: “We are going to discuss the situation with the other side as if we are from Fallujah... If it fails, then we will die to protect Fallujah's children and elderly.”

Asked what he wanted the US troops to do, Latif said: “I want the American soldier to return to his camp. What I want more is that he returns to the United States.”

As a face-saving concession to US commanders, Latif allowed an ICDC-escorted convoy of 10 US military vehicles with 69 marines aboard to drive through Fallujah on May 10.

“Marine commanders fully expected to face ambushes during their swift, choreographed sprint to the mayor's office for a meeting with tribal and paramilitary leaders”, the May 10 *Chicago Tribune* reported. “The tense round trip, which lasted just over an hour and extended only a few miles into Fallujah, studiously avoided the Jolan area and other insurgent strongholds.”

Alla Hamdalide, a member of the ICDC, said. “They couldn't even come in here alone. The victory for Fallujah remains.”

Immediately following the marine convoy's departure, “spontaneous celebrations erupted as crowds of residents gathered in the street and began chanting and waving banners. Members of both the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Civil Defense Corps joined in the celebration, waving their guns in the air and flashing the two-fingered ‘Victory’ sign...”

Major General Charles Swannack, the commander of the US Army's 82nd Airborne Division, told the *Post* he believed the US occupation forces were capable of winning any specific battle with Iraqi resistance fighters. *But when asked whether he believed the US was losing the war, he responded: “I think strategically, we are.”* (May 9 *Washington Post*)

Resistance Kills Four Collaborators At Baquaba

May 21 Baquba, Reuters

Resistance soldiers opened fire on a checkpoint near the northern Iraqi city of Baquba on Friday, killing four members of Iraq's security forces, medics and witnesses said.

The assailants used light weapons and rockets in the attack on US-backed Iraqi Civil Defence Corps (ICDC) near Baquba, a town 65 km north of the capital, witnesses said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

No Shit?

Wall St. Journal 5.19.04

Despite the pressure for punishment, some observers wonder whether the military-justice system is capable of rooting out all those responsible for the prison abuse, no matter how high their ranks.

“In the military, my feeling is that very often the goal is to stop at a very low level, says Ronald Meister, a former U.S. Navy lieutenant in the Judge Advocate General's Corps.

“The person making the decisions as to who goes to trial might be reluctant to push the elevator button that stops at the top floor.”

Prisoner Torture Begins At Home

(THANKS TO LEE W. WHO E-MAILED THIS IN)

May 13, 2004 By Jean Maclean Snyder, Chicago Tribune

(Jean Maclean Snyder is an attorney with the MacArthur Justice Center at the University of Chicago Law School. She has represented inmates in lawsuits against Cook County Jail officials.)

Politicians who are expressing amazement at the mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers need a reality check.

In Chicago, we need look no further than our own Cook County Jail to see the ease with which guards and accountable officials escape punishment when the mistreatment is local.

In the spring of 2003, accounts of two egregious incidents made headlines in the Chicago Tribune when a jail investigator and two correctional officers came forward to corroborate the prisoners' accounts of the abuse.

In one incident, an elite squad of 40 guards took over a maximum-security division of the jail in 1999 for the sole purpose of beating and terrorizing the prisoners. A jail investigator determined that the guards' misconduct was covered up by Cook County medical personnel, who filed false reports and refused or delayed treatment to the prisoners, and by the Cook County inspector general, who refused to cooperate with the investigation. In the other incident, five inmates in a special incarceration unit of the jail alleged that they were beaten by 20 or more officers in 2000 as they lay cuffed and shackled on the floor.

When the story about Cook County Jail broke last spring, Cook County Sheriff Michael Sheahan, who presides over the jail, denied that abuse took place. Nevertheless, he took action that he claimed was "proactive." He announced he would appoint a three-member panel to study the allegations of abuse and issue a report in the next few months. He also announced that he was suspending Sgt. Richard Remus, the leader of the 40-man squad, and Lt. Edward Byrne, who had led the crew in the 2000 incident. The discipline was for "procedural" errors, though, not for their own actions (and in Byrne's case, he wasn't disciplined for the incident that had made headlines).

What has happened since these announcements? Nothing that anyone except a Cook County politician would call proactive. Lt. Byrne was not fired. Remus got mad and quit. The sheriff's blue-ribbon panel has not been heard from since the sheriff announced its formation. It did not hold public hearings, issue any public statement or deliver a public report.

The soldier who blew the whistle on misconduct in Iraq has been praised by his commanders, but that's not what happened in Cook County. The investigator who exposed the 1999 incident, Charles Holman, has been transferred from his job of investigating misconduct at the jail. Correctional officers Roger Fairley and Richard Gackowski have been forced to quit their jobs and have been unable to find new ones.

The second group of accountable officials is the Cook County Board of Commissioners. The board did not punish any of the medical personnel who the investigator had found to have falsified documents or then-Cook County Inspector General Timothy Flick, who had thumbed his nose at the jail investigation.

(Flick left Cook County last year to join the Office of Homeland Security in Texas, but his name should ring a bell with the county commissioners. In January a federal jury in Chicago awarded one of Flick's employees \$500,000 for the sexual harassment she had endured from Flick while he headed the inspector general's office; \$100,000 of that award must be paid by Cook County.)

Instead, like Sheahan, the County Board called for an investigation of the jail. Yet, a year later, the grand jury has produced neither indictments nor a report.

The third official who bears responsibility is Cook County State's Atty. Richard Devine. He could have prosecuted the guards when the beatings occurred in 1999 and 2000 but declined to do so at the time and again in 2003, when he cited problems of credibility and conflicting testimony.

Shortly thereafter, though, he announced that he would indict a Cook County Jail guard for brutality. Trouble is, the guard was charged with kicking his dog, not with beating an inmate. Evidently "Fido" was the perfect victim: nobody would contradict his last bark and he didn't have a rap sheet. While Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is being threatened with losing his job and soldiers in Iraq are facing courts-martial, the Cook County Jail guards and accountable officials who made headlines a year ago are sleeping easy.

The same cannot be said for the jail's prisoners.

Last month, I interviewed a prisoner who said he was beaten unconscious by guards who had wrapped handcuffs around their fists to make the beating worse. When I met with the prisoner several days later, the whites of his eyes were nearly obscured by the red from blood vessels that had ruptured during the beating, and deep lacerations were held together by staples that had been applied to his scalp.

Late last year I visited another prisoner who told of being dragged by several guards through a fire of burning paper and debris that had been raging in the cellblock. His account of this abuse was substantiated by blisters and deep burn marks on his leg.

Perhaps the mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners will make Americans take a second look at how we treat our own prisoners. When that happens, there is no place to start like our home in Cook County.

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/>

Lesson Unlearned

Thanks to the revisionist history our troops have been fed about Viet Nam, they forgot the crucial lesson of My Lai- "*If you're gonna do a war crime, lose the goddamn photographer!*"---A



An Iraqi prisoner at Abu Ghraib. The US Army has admitted the deaths of 37 detainees in US custody, including at Abu Ghraib.(AFP/File/Damir Sagolj)

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



US President George W. Bush listening intently to divine messages sent to him by God Almighty. Bush told the White House press corps that he no longer needs to pray to receive Holy messages because they now come to him from the eagles on the flags he uses for stage props everywhere he goes. Bush said the most recent message, "And Jebaz begat Mograel, and Mograel begat Nerf" means all his decisions are divinely inspired, and reporters who doubt it will either find their tongues cleaving to the roofs of

their mouths or be stripped and thrown in a heap with other reporters. (AFP/File/Tim Sloan)

REPUBLICANISM SHOWN TO BE GENETIC IN ORIGIN

(Thanks to MR, who sent this in:)

The discovery that affiliation with the Republican Party is genetically determined was announced by scientists in the current issue of the journal NURTURE, causing uproar among traditionalists who believe it is a chosen lifestyle. Reports of the gene coding for political conservatism, discovered after a decades-long study of quintuplets in Orange County, CA, has sent shock waves through the medical, political, and golfing communities.

Psychologists and psychoanalysts have long believed that Republicans' unnatural disregard for the poor and frequently unconstitutional tendencies resulted from dysfunctional family dynamics -- a remarkably high percentage of Republicans do have authoritarian domineering fathers and emotionally distant mothers who didn't teach them how to be kind and gentle. Biologists have long suspected that conservatism is inherited.

"After all," said one author of the NURTURE article, "It's quite common for a Republican to have a brother or sister who is a Republican."

The finding has been greeted with relief by Parents and Friends of Republicans (PFREP), who sometimes blame themselves for the political views of otherwise lovable children, family, and unindicted co-conspirators.

One mother, a longtime Democrat, wept and clapped her hands in ecstasy on hearing of the findings. "I just knew it was genetic," she said, seated with her two sons, both avowed Republicans. "My boys would never freely choose that lifestyle!" When asked what the Republican lifestyle was, she said, "You can just tell watching their conventions in Houston and San Diego on TV: the flaming xenophobia, flamboyant demagoguery, disdain for anyone not rich, you know."

Both sons had suspected their Republicanism from an early age but did not confirm it until they were in college, when they became convinced it wasn't just a phase they were going through.

The NURTURE article offered no response to the suggestion that the high incidence of Republicanism among siblings could result from their sharing not only genes but also psychological and emotional attitude as products of the same parents and family dynamics.

A remaining mystery is why many Democrats admit to having voted Republican at least once -- or often dream or fantasize about doing so. Polls show that three out of five adult Democrats have had a Republican experience, although most outgrow teenage experimentation with Republicanism.

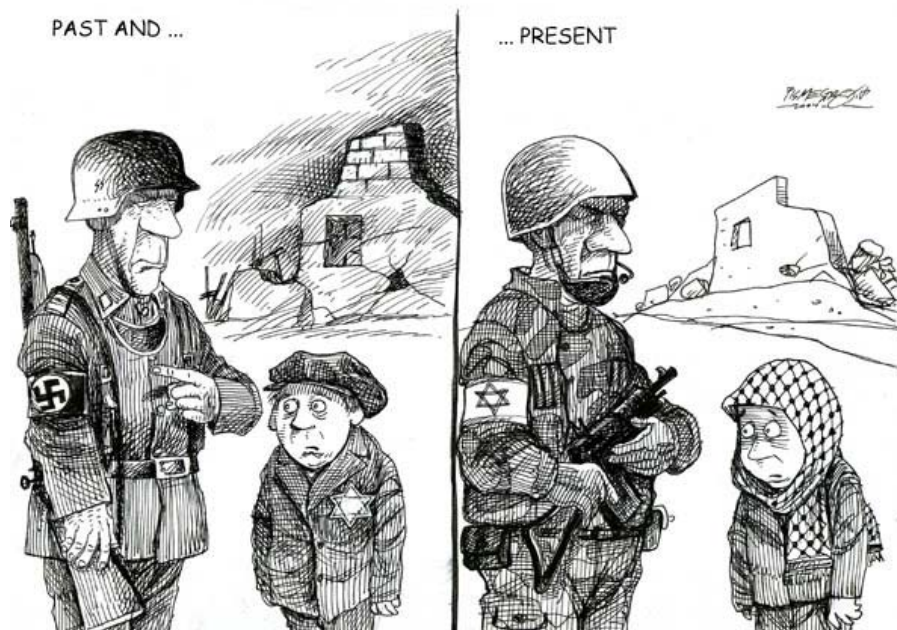
Some Republicans hail the findings as a step toward eliminating conservophobia. They argue that since Republicans didn't "choose" their lifestyle any more than someone "chooses" to have a ski-jump nose, they shouldn't be denied civil rights which other minorities enjoy.

If conservatism is not the result of stinginess or orneriness (typical stereotypes attributed to Republicans) but is something Republicans can't help, there's no reason why society shouldn't tolerate Republicans in the military or even high elected office -- provided they don't flaunt their political beliefs.

For many Americans, the discovery opens a window on a different future. In a few years, gene therapy might eradicate Republicanism altogether.

But should they be allowed to marry?

OCCUPATION PALESTINE



Kleine Zeitung, Austria

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

CLASS WAR NEWS

The Effective Way To Demonstrate: Bring Your Clubs



Unemployed people hold clubs as they protest to demand greater social benefits and lower gas prices in Buenos Aires, Argentina, May 20, 2004. Low levels of rainfall and a natural gas shortages have caused recent power shortages, and energy analysts fear they could worsen as the southern hemisphere winter approaches. Natural gas generates some 55 percent of Argentina's electricity. (AP Photo/Natacha Pisarenko)

Received:

A's reply to B

From: A
Sent: May 21, 2004
To: GI Special

My reply to B

You are right that continuing Bush's policies would be crazy, but unfortunately that is exactly what Kerry wants to do. Sending the UN into Iraq is also not uniquely his idea. Bush would do it, too, if he could, but having the people who die for Halliburton wear blue helmets instead of American flags will not make it any less tragic.

The UN, with its sanctions, has actually killed more Iraqis than both the Bushes together, and if it could actually be persuaded to take over the occupation, it would only withdraw when forced to do so by mutiny, the Iraqi resistance and worldwide opposition.

A

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