

## GI SPECIAL 2#87

“STILL HOLDING”



5.25.04 MiddleEast Online: "Mehdi Army still holding in the centre of Najaf."

# “Yes Master Sergeant!”

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by Stan Goff

It's getting close to grown-up time, and we're going to have to put aside our electoral cake and ice cream.

We need a good, in-your-face, knock-down, drag-out fight in this place.

In 1963, well before the American public generally understood where Vietnam was, a young Army captain led a South Vietnamese unit through the A Shau Valley to systematically burn villages to the ground. This was to deprive the so-called Vietcong of any base of support, and was called "draining the sea," a reference to Mao's dictum that the guerrilla is the fish and the population is the sea.

That captain would later write, "I recall a phrase we used in the field, MAM, for military-age male. If a helo spotted a peasant in black pajamas who looked remotely suspicious, a possible MAM, the pilot would circle and fire in front of him. If he moved, his movement was judged evidence of hostile intent, and the next burst was not in front, but at him. Brutal? Maybe so. But an able battalion commander with whom I had served... was killed by enemy sniper fire while observing MAMs from a helicopter. And Pritchard was only one of many. The kill-or-be-killed nature of combat tends to dull fine perceptions of right and wrong."

On March 16, 1968, the US Infantry of C Company, Task Force Barker, 11th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division went into a Vietnamese hamlet designated My Lai 4 and killed 347 unarmed men, women, and children, engaging in rape and torture along the way for four hours before a US helicopter pilot who observed the massacre ordered his door gunners to open fire on the grunts if they didn't desist. The chopper pilot, however, did not report the massacre.

**Six months later, a young enlisted man, Spec 4 Tom Glen, sent a letter to General Creighton Abrams, commander of US forces in Vietnam. Without specifically mentioning My Lai, Glen said that murder had become a routine part of Americal operations.** The letter was shunted over to Americal Division, and then to the office of the same officer who had been leading the South Vietnamese arson campaign five years earlier, since promoted to major. He was now the deputy assistant Chief of Staff of the division--a functionary who was directed to craft a response to this report of widespread atrocities against Vietnamese civilians.

**"In direct refutation of this portrayal," wrote the officer dismissively and with no investigation whatsoever, "is the fact that relations between Americal soldiers and the Vietnamese people are excellent." Perhaps he believed that those killed were MAMs, and therefore outside the protection of the Geneva Conventions and international law.**

**That officer is now the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, who is still dutifully spinning out prevarications and excuses for his massahs. Apparently his perceptions of right and wrong are still dulled by his brief experience of "combat," burning people's houses and barns and crops and ordering that young men who run from heliborne machine gun fire be killed because running away from machinegun fire is... "hostile."**

**Meanwhile, back in Iraq, the MAMs are back.**

<p><b>Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, the rat-faced boy of CENTCOM, with help from a Marine moron named Mattis, has resurrected the MAM to justify coordinated air-land attacks against weddings.</b></p>
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At 3 AM, on May 19th, 2004, the Rakat family of Makr al-Deeb--a village in western Iraq--were winding down after an all night party celebrating a double wedding, when American war planes suddenly screamed in from over the dark horizon and dumped a fiery axis of bombs across the village. In the wake of the bombing "prep," ground troops equipped with night vision equipment, explosives, and expensive aimpoint sights on their weapons, swept over the shattered ruins and through the terrified and fleeing wedding guests delivering a kind of close-up coup.

**Neil McKay writes a harrowing account in the Sunday Herald, in which witnesses describe the ground assault as little different than the My Lai incident, just shorter and on a smaller scale. Troops were razing buildings and killing people as they were encountered. People's children were killed in front of them.**

**There is an unofficial excuse making the rounds that this was a mistake, that war planes targeted the wedding because this "alien culture" fires weapons into the air during celebrations. This comports well with the notion that being sodomized and sexually humiliated and beaten to death are "particularly offensive to Arabs," as if Americans, for example, would equate this treatment to root canal work--unpleasant but tolerable.**

**If it were an error from the air, how in the hell did a ground force follow through for the air attack? I can tell you how. There was no error.** These planes were not randomly cruising the Iraqi skies at 3 AM, and suddenly responding to ground fire. And ground troops don't suddenly show up at the same place. Combined air-ground operations require detailed planning and coordination, which means this attack was planned in advance. I don't know what really happened that killed 45 people at Makr al-Deeb, but I can assure readers that this premeditation is part of it.

**The official line, adopted as the Abu Ghraib scandal metastasizes into a political crisis for the Bush administration, is that there was no error at all, and that there was no wedding. They were combatants, pure and simple, and goddamit we are not going to apologize to anyone for it. Foreign fighters every one of them, and that whole fucking village is just a pack of rag-headed liars.**

**"How many people go into the middle of the desert to hold a wedding eighty miles from the nearest civilization," scoffed Major General James Mattis of the 1st Marines. "There were more than two dozen MILITARY-AGED MALES."**

**Either Mattis is shameless or he is an idiot. We can't rule out either... or both. It's in the job description for senior officers right now--probably a line on their officer evaluation reports--if they want their careers to progress.**

Makr al-Deeb is a real village in a real civilization that is, oh by the way General, a hell of a lot older than the one you hail from.

**Kimmit apparently felt compelled to top Mattis for stupidity, when he blurted out last week that, "There may have been some kind of celebration. Bad people have celebrations, too."**

**The manufacture of evidence is now experiencing a speed-up, with Kimmitt telling a yet-again-obedient press corps that there were military items and even possibly cocaine (!) on the site (no fetishes for devil worship... yet) , and no evidence of a wedding. To bolster this preposterous case, they have provided snapshots of (gasp) binoculars, and virtually the entire US press corps has forgotten that Colin Powell presented doctored photos to the UN just last year.**

The press forgot, because they never reported it. Now they are submissively echoing the Kimmitt evidence photos and the cover story that goes with them. Kimmitt says there is categorically no evidence of a wedding at all, and he stubbornly denies that ANY children were killed, even though every Iraqi medical official says there were at least 15. Liars, according to Kimmitt.

"In direct refutation of this portrayal," Kimmitt might have said, "is the fact that relations between American soldiers and the Iraqi people are excellent."

Lo and behold, however, there is an independent press still surviving in the marginal niches of post-modern capitalism--where the image is all--and they are hauling facts out from time to time that smell up the area like a pile of decomposing bodies. **A video has surfaced of the site, and there is ample evidence of dead children, musical instruments, and all the paraphernalia of... a wedding. Oops.**

The footage was shown on Al-Arabiya television, whereupon the weasel Kimmitt and his dour gangsters demanded that Al-Arabiya give them the name of the cameraman who shot the video. Maybe they planned a Mazen Dana treatment for the offender--Dana being the Reuters journalist who was shot dead by US troops when his camera's eye had drifted to close to their actions.

We are reaching a point of polarization with respect to this war, where these oxygen thieves with suits and stars feel they can get away with the MAM argument, justifying the murder of anyone who is male, military-aged and brown. We have reached some kind of social baseline of racially-stupefied consensus, where all that PC posturing is no longer necessary, where another half-wit in Congress can say he is "outraged at the outrage," and there is 35% of the US population that will sit perfectly still for it, many even cheering it on.

**For that polarization to be complete, we need 35% of the population that sets aside their maddening liberal squeamishness and dithering and demands that these suits and stars be strung up by their testicles.**

**We need a good, in-your-face, knock-down, drag-out fight in this place.**

**Anyone who thinks, at this point, that the election of that hound-dog from Massachusetts--when he promises to send MORE troops to Iraq--is going to fundamentally change any of this is smoking angel dust.**

**It's getting close to grown-up time, and we're going to have to put aside our electoral cake and ice cream.**

**This place hasn't had a good old fashioned DEEP-DOWN change since Reconstruction. It's time.**

**(For more see excerpts from Stan Goff's outstanding new book, Full Spectrum Disorder, at [www.isreview.org](http://www.isreview.org).)**

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

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS:**

### **One Soldier Dies, Four Wounded in Rocket Attack**

Combined Joint Task Force Seven 5.5,04 Release #040525a

BAGHDAD, Iraq - One Task Force Baghdad Soldier was killed and four others wounded during a rocket attack on a Coalition base northwest of Baghdad at about 2:20 p.m. May 24.

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### **Soldier Killed In Dump Truck Ambush**

May 25, 2004 United States Department of Defense News Release No. 501-04

Spc. Jeremy L. Ridlen, 23, of Paris, Ill., died May 23 in East Fallujah, Iraq, from small arms fire after a dump truck on the side of the road was detonated while his military convoy passed by. Ridlen was assigned to the Army National Guard's 1544 Transportation Company, Paris, Ill.

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### **1 Marine, 1 Soldier Killed, Several Wounded By Falluja IED Attack**

5.24.04 Combined Joint Task Force Seven Release #040524b

**CAMP FULLUJAH, Iraq** - One U.S. Soldier and one U.S. Marine were killed and several other U.S. forces and one civilian contractor were wounded when attackers detonated an improvised explosive device, at about 4:50 p.m. May 23 northwest of Fallujah.

Reports indicate the device was placed in a parked vehicle and detonated as two U.S. convoys passed on the highway.

The wounded were evacuated by air to the 31st Combat Support Hospital.

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## **ONE 1<sup>st</sup> ID SOLDIER KILLED, TWO INJURED IN AD DWAR ACCIDENT**

May 25, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release Number: 04-05-42C

**TIKRIT, Iraq** - One 1st Infantry Division Soldier was killed and two were injured in a vehicle accident near Ad Dwar around 11:30 p.m. May 24. The Soldiers were transported to a military medical facility.

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## **Resistance Launches Attack In Center Of Baghdad; Soldier Wounded**

May 25, 2004 The Associated Press

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** - Insurgents fired rockets from an apartment house Tuesday toward a police station and other buildings in central Baghdad, triggering huge explosions and wounding at least one American soldier, witnesses and officials said.

The rockets missed the police station but hit another building and a parking lot. Hassan Joma, an Iraqi anti-terror official, said two U.S. soldiers on the roof of the building were wounded.

A U.S. helicopter landed in the square and American soldiers were seen rushing one wounded person in an Army uniform into the aircraft.

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## **Fierce Fighting In Najaf; Mortar Round Hits Imam Ali Shrine**



2004/05/25 IRIB News Computer Center & Associated Press

Najaf, Iraq, May 25

Parts of one of the most sacred shrines of Shia Islam suffered damage during clashes Tuesday between U.S. forces and Shiite militiamen.

A mortar round hit Shiite holiest shrine in the central city of Najaf Tuesday, wounding many people.

After the fighting in Najaf eased, people gathered at the Imam Ali shrine to look at the damage. The inner gate of the shrine, leading into the tomb of Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib, appeared to have been hit by a projectile. Bits of debris were scattered along the ground.

**Al-Jazeera television showed a torn veil covering the door to the inner shrine, and damage on the wall above it. It also showed several injured people lying on the floor of the mosque compound, and an angry crowd of more than 100 shouting and shaking their fists at the site.**

Imam Ali was the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law and he is the most revered saint among Shiite Muslims.

**Fighting in Najaf and other Shiite shrine cities south of Baghdad have raised alarm among Shiite Muslims throughout the world who fear damage to the sacred sites.**

According to reports from the scene, loud explosions were heard about one kilometer from the Imam Ali mausoleum and heavy black smoke was seen rising from the area.

**Residents described the fighting in Najaf as some of the fiercest since the eruption of fighting there last month. Witnesses reported explosions near the Imam Ali shrine.**

**Fighting raged after daybreak. Explosions and gunfire were heard around the city's Revolution of 1920 Square and the cemetery, a warren of paths and tombs**

**that offers numerous hiding places for rebels armed with assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades.**

Seven people were killed and five injured in Najaf on Tuesday, said Seyed Kifah Shemal, an official at Hakim General Hospital.

**Five Iraqi people were killed and 18 wounded in overnight fighting with occupiers in nearby Kufa, after 32 people died in clashes there early Sunday, 20 of them in a US raid on the town's main shrine.**

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## **Two British Mercenaries Killed**

24 May, 2004 LONDON (Reuters) & AP

Two Britons have been killed in a rocket-propelled grenade attack in central Baghdad, the Foreign Office says.

**Officials and soldiers said guerrillas fired a rocket-propelled grenade at foreign security guards in a civilian vehicle** in central Baghdad on Monday, setting the car ablaze.

**The four-wheel drive armoured car was attacked near an entrance to Baghdad's "Green Zone" compound where the U.S.-led coalition is based.**

**Security sources in the Iraqi capital said the car belonged to a private security company** and that it was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade.

The official said another foreigner was seriously wounded.

Soldiers said the blast flipped the car into the air. The busy road, which is lined with shops and leads to the Green Zone and the nearby Foreign Ministry, was sealed off.

American soldiers tried to pull the men from the shattered car, and quickly sealed off the area, said witness Kamel Raji. The blast occurred about 50 yards from the "Assassins Gate," one of the main entrances to the Green Zone.

**Mohammed Naem, a noncommissioned police officer who saw the car explode, said the vehicle was a bulletproof Toyota Land Cruiser that was on its way to the convention center in the Green Zone.**

Taxi driver Mohammed Saleh said he heard shooting after the explosion.

"I saw the roof of the car flying," he said. "My car was parked about 20 meters away when the explosion happened."

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# 9 Soldiers Wounded In Action Around Baghdad

5.24.04 Combined Joint Task Force Seven Release #040524a & AP

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Nine U.S. Soldiers were wounded in several incidents around Baghdad May 23.

**Four Soldiers were wounded in attacks that used improvised explosive devices. Four Soldiers were wounded by a mortar attack on a military facility on the eastside of Baghdad. One Soldier was wounded by small arms fire when resistance attacked an Iraqi police station in northeast Baghdad.**

The wounded were evacuated to medical treatment facilities. Two of the wounded were treated and returned to duty.

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## General Mattis Wanted For Murder, One Way Or Another

May 21, 2004 By Scheherezade Faramarzi, Associated Press & Rory McCarthy in Ramadi, The Guardian

**“For each one in those graves, we will get 10 Americans,” Ahmed Saleh warned.**

**(That amounts to about 450 dead American soldiers. And what does brave General Mattis have to say? Regrets? Any hint something might have gone wrong? No. In the quote that follows he manages to display world class situational ignorance and bloodthirsty arrogance that, in combination, are deadly for his troops.**

**(In Vietnam, officers like this went home in body bags. Soldiers simply couldn't afford to have them around. Their blind stupidity killed too many. Self defense is the first law of nature. It would be merely reasonable to turn over this piece of shit excuse for a human being to the relatives of the dead for trial. That might save some soldiers' lives.)**

**(Now let's see what the new Lawrence of Arabia has to say:)**

**“Ten miles from the Syrian border and 80 miles from the nearest city and a wedding party? Don't be naive,” Marine Maj. Gen. James N. Mattis told reporters in Fallujah. “Plus, they had 30 males of military age with them. How many people go to the middle of the desert to have a wedding party?”**

**But members of the Bou Fahad tribe say they consider the border area part of their territory and follow their goats, sheep and cattle there to graze. They leave spacious homes in Ramadi and roam the desert, as far as 250 miles to the west, in the springtime. Smuggling livestock into Syria is also part of a herdsman's life — although no one in the tribe admitted to that.**

The survivors insist the Americans were wrong to target them.

**"They're lying," Nawaf said. "They have to show us evidence that we fired a shot or were hiding foreign fighters. Where are the foreign fighters then? Why kill and dismember innocent children?"**

Nawaf and more than a dozen men from the Bou Fahad tribe transported the dead to Ramadi, capital of Anbar province, which includes Mogr el-Deeb. **Twenty-eight graves were dug in the tribe's cemetery outside Ramadi**, each containing one to three bodies. A wake was held Thursday at a home in Ramadi.

**Some of the men tried to approach the Americans but were driven back by gunshots, the survivors said. The troops took money and jewelry the dead women had brought for the party, survivors said.**

Mrs Shihab gestured with hands still daubed red-brown with the henna the women had used to decorate themselves for the wedding. Alongside her in the ward yesterday were three badly injured girls from the Rakat family: Khalood Mohammed, aged just a year and struggling for breath, Moaza Rakat, 12, and Iqbal Rakat, 15, whose right foot doctors had already amputated.

By the time the sun rose on Wednesday over the Rakat family house, the raid had claimed 42 lives, according to Hamdi Noor al-Alusi, manager of the al-Qaim general hospital, the nearest to the village.

**Among the dead were 27 members of the extended Rakat family, their wedding guests and even the band of musicians hired to play at the ceremony, among them Hussein al-Ali from Ramadi, one of the most popular singers in western Iraq.**

Dr Alusi said 11 of the dead were women and 14 were children. "I want to know why the Americans targeted this small village," he said by telephone. "These people are my patients. I know each one of them. What has caused this disaster?"

**The celebration at Mukaradeeb was to be one of the biggest events of the year for a small village of just 25 houses. Haji Rakat, the father, had finally arranged a long-negotiated tribal union that would bring together two halves of one large extended family, the Rakats and the Sabahs.**

**Haji Rakat's second son, Ashad, would marry Rutba, a cousin from the Sabahs. In a second ceremony one of Ashad's female cousins, Sharifa, would marry a young Sabah boy, Munawar.**

A large canvas awning had been set up in the garden of the Rakat villa to host the party. A band of musicians was called in, led by Hamid Abdullah, who runs the Music of Arts recording studio in Ramadi, the nearest major town.

He brought his friend Hussein al-Ali, a popular Iraqi singer who performs on Ramadi's own television channel. A handful of other musicians including the singer's brother Mohaned, played the drums and the keyboards.

The ceremonies began on Tuesday morning and stretched through until the late evening. "We were happy because of the wedding. People were dancing and making speeches," said Ma'athi Nawaf, 55, one of the neighbours.

At the cemetery outside Ramadi, Taleb Nawaf pointed to a fresh grave with a headstone marked "Amal Rikab and Kholood."

"This is my daughter," he said.

Mourners displayed photographs of six children and their parents, Mohammed and Morifa Rikad, saying all had died in the bombing.

### **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/>**

## **Blasts Near Foreign Ministry Flips Cars**

May 24, 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters) & AP

Two loud explosions sent clouds of smoke into the air on Monday near an entrance to the "Green Zone" compound in Baghdad where the U.S.-led administration is based, and soldiers at the scene said they suspected a car bomb.

**The blasts, close to Iraq's Foreign Ministry, flipped at least one car into the air, soldiers said. There was no word on any casualties.**

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# Wounded, Unfit-For-Duty Soldier Sent Back To Iraq; “I Live In Constant Pain

(THANKS TO S WHO E-MAILED THIS IN:)

Letter To Stars And Stripes  
Wednesday, May 19, 2004

I'm writing in regard to injured soldiers. I'm currently in...[Baghdad]. I first injured my knee in July. It took our medics quite a while to get things done. **I felt like I had to prove my knee was injured.**

I've had physical therapy and a steroid shot with no effects. If anything, it hurts more. I've had X-rays, but for this kind of injury I need an MRI or a scope. I settled into the pain with the mind-set that in May I'd be back in Germany and would be able to get my knee looked at. But then I was extended. I was disappointed. Who wouldn't be? I had knee pain and the knowledge that I'd now have to stay in Iraq longer than I was supposed to with a bad knee.

**I live in constant pain.** This has been non-stop since July. My knee is getting worse and worse. It's buckled on me four times. Last week I was [performing] maintenance on my Humvee. I was taking a tire off and I slipped. I bore all the weight on my bad knee. I felt terrible pain from my thigh to my foot. Ever since then it hurts badly. When I get off shift, it's swollen.

**I have gone from being an asset to being a liability.** What happens if my camp comes under mortar fire and I have to run to seek shelter? Say I make it without falling but my buddy gets hit. I have to run out to get him, but what can I do? If I pick him up and run for shelter, my knee is going to give out for sure. Now there are two soldiers out there instead of one providing medical care for the other.

I joined the Army of my own free will. **But had I known the Army would turn its back on me when I got hurt, I might have made a different choice.** Some of my greatest memories are from the military, but since Operation Iraqi Freedom they are some of my worst. The worst part of this whole situation is that I'm not the only injured soldier out there. There are more like me.

**We're all in the same boat in an Army in which numbers are the most important thing.** I'd think they'd care about the soldiers more than the mission. Without the soldiers, you have no mission.

Pvt. 2 Dugger Dean  
Baghdad

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# Depressed Florida Guardsman Just Home From Iraq Missing



May 24, 2004 News4Jax.com.

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla.** -- A National Guardsman who recently returned from Iraq is missing, and Jacksonville police say he may be in danger.

Jason Bonts (pictured, left), 25, has been missing for nearly a week. The National Guard specialist was last seen Tuesday leaving his home in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Police said Bonts is at risk because he has a health condition that requires medication, which he did not have with him when he left.

Bonts' family says he has been depressed since coming home from Iraq, and they are more worried about him now than when he was deployed.

"At least there, we knew how to contact him and knew where he was," Bonts' sister, Roslie Hoffman, said.

Fliers are going up throughout the Ponte Vedra neighborhood, where Bonts was last seen, and in Jacksonville's Westside, where he worked, and the southside, where he spent much of his time.

An organization that supports families of missing persons, Families In Need of Direction, is assisting in the search.

Anyone with information about Jason Bonts is asked to call police at (904) 630-0500.

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## Pain: "The Plane Flights Were Horrible"

Army Physicians Working Toward Bringing Wounded Troops Home Pain-Free

May 24, 2004 By Rudi Williams, American Forces Press Service

April 13 was an unlucky day for 24-year-old Army 1st Lt. Melissa J. Stockwell. That was the day she lost her left leg in Iraq.

Arriving in Iraq on March 9, Stockwell, then a platoon leader with the 1st Cavalry Division, 27th Main Support Battalion, was driving along in a Humvee without doors attached when an improvised explosive device exploded. The impact slammed the vehicle against a guardrail, crushing the young lieutenant's left leg.

"They amputated below the knee that same day, and amputated above the knee here on April 23," Stockwell said from her bed at Washington's Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Stockwell was racked with pain during medical evacuation flights from Iraq for treatment at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, and from there to Andrews Air Force Base, Md., en route to Walter Reed. Medical personnel tried to ease her pain with morphine and other pain management drugs, but the drugs didn't erase all of it.

She arrived at Walter Reed on the night of April 19, and doctors performed a regional anesthesia block the next morning to better manage her pain. Regional anesthesia allows doctors to block signals to the brain from the wound region.

The technique was a godsend for Stockwell. She said the procedure -- a continuous peripheral nerve block in medical parlance -- has greatly reduced her pain. "It would be horrible without it," she said. "It has helped me so much!"

**"It would have helped on the way back if she had had the regional anesthesia," said her husband, who also was serving with the 1st Cavalry Division in Iraq at the time. "Regional anesthesia is the best thing they've done for her in terms of mitigating the pain. When the first surgery happened in Baghdad, they offered this as a possible method to mitigate pain. But the way the anesthesiologist explained it, we got the impression it was experimental. He didn't explain it like it was this great, awesome thing. He said sometimes it doesn't work."**

Based on his wife's experience, Richard Stockwell said regional anesthesia should be given, not just offered, to people in similar circumstances. **"The plane flights were horrible," he noted. "If she could have had this on the plane, it would have been a lot better."**

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## Legless Soldier Receives Warm Welcome Home

May. 23, 2004 MILTON, Fla. - (AP)

A 28-year-old Army infantryman whose legs were amputated from injuries suffered in Iraq was honored Saturday with a procession, surrounded by family and well-wishers.

Staff Sgt. Dustin Tuller was injured in a shooting attack in Baghdad two days before Christmas. He spent time in a coma, and underwent operations and physical therapy.

While recovering at a Washington hospital, he defied doctors by telling them he would return home to this town near Pensacola by Father's Day.

Tuller, with wife Alisha and their children ranging in ages from 2 to 6, stood on prosthetic legs in front of those who lined the streets Saturday -- 29 days before Father's Day.

"Never tell an infantryman that something is impossible," Tuller told the gathering outside the Santa Rosa Administrative Center. ``When doctors told me I wasn't ready to stand up, I said, `Let's try it.'

"And I stood up. Of course I was 4 feet tall," joked Tuller. A motorcycle officer led the procession, followed by sheriff's cars and wailing fire engines. Tuller sat on the back seat of a convertible driven by U.S. Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Chumuckla -- smiling, waving and mouthing "thank you" at those who reached to shake his hand.

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## Edison Soldier Survives Convoy Attack

May 25, 2004 By ALBERTA STOJKOVIC For The Marion Star (Ohio)

EDISON -- Army National Guard Specialist Justin Miller of Edison is hesitant to talk about the details of the mission he was on when he was shot in Iraq in April.

He's glad to show the gunshot entry and exit wounds in his left arm that are healing well. He's also happy to give a good report on his Army National Guard buddies who were in the vehicle with him and were also injured.

"It's just that the attack happened so fast it was all a blur," said Miller, who is on medical leave through May and undergoing therapy three times a week. Then he'll return to Iraq to rejoin his troop and finish out his 18-month tour.

Miller has been in the Army National Guard since he graduated from Mount Gilead High School in 2002. He met his wife Monika Smith of Wooster in "pre-basic training" in Mansfield and they were married Dec. 30, 2003, before his unit went to Camp Atterbury in Indiana. He headed to Kuwait for further training before going to Iraq, and she finished her Advanced Individual Training in Texas.

**Miller said that the intelligence reports alerting his unit of potential dangerous situations were getting worse week by week from February to April. There were more reports of resistance activity every day.** The reports they received warned them of areas on their route to take special precaution.

**"We knew something was going to happen," said Miller. "You could feel that things were getting worse."**

He described how he kept watch constantly when they were on the road. They kept a constant lookout on bridges and overpasses for any dangers to the convoys. His unit had only been shot at once before and it seemed to be a random firing.

Then at dusk on April 8 they were ambushed and came under fire in the area around Baghdad. It was the first organized attack they had been in since they arrived.

**Miller doesn't remember much about the attackers except that they were dressed in black. His vehicle was in the middle of a long convoy of trucks. He remembers hearing gunfire and looking left and right before he opened fire.**

**He and two buddies in the vehicle - Specialist Tracy Dyer of Bucyrus and Specialist Bryan Coe of Shelby - were hit almost immediately. He recalls clouds of dust flying as the driver maneuvered the vehicle to a better position.**

They were able to drive to a base where they received treatment before going to Germany three days. Dyer had gunshot wounds in his right forearm and Coe a gunshot wound to his right hand. A bullet tore straight through Miller's left upper arm, but didn't hit bone or major nerves.

Miller recalls the comfortable feeling of flying back to the United States with other servicemen who had injuries and sharing experiences. "We could just talk and we could understand each other because we'd just been through the same stuff," Miller said.

"My unit is like a family over there," Miller said. "My family here doesn't want me to go back. I need to be there though. I want to be there to go through the bad times with everyone."

"They say Justin is a hero," Brenda said. "They say he told Coe and the others to get down in the vehicle while he stood and continued to fire. He didn't want his people to get hurt." "He didn't tell us that part," his step-dad John Matthews smiled "He just says he's doing his job."

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## Anti-War Soldier Gets Year In Prison

May. 21, 2004 BY PHIL LONG, The Miami Herald

**"A year in jail doesn't mean anything in comparison with a life of dealing with the guilt of being a participant of a criminal war."**

**FORT STEWART, Ga.** - Just after the last strains of a bugle call signaling the end of the day faded across this Army base, two burley MPs ushered a handcuffed Camilo Mejia out of the courthouse where he was convicted Friday of desertion and sentenced to a year in prison.

"Viva Camilo! Bravo Camilo," family and friends shouted as the MPs put him in the back seat of a patrol car, the first step on an immediate journey to a military detention facility - mostly likely in Jacksonville, Charleston S.C. or Fort Knox, Ky., where he'll spend the next year.

"I'm in pain for what just has happened but I am not surprised about it," Mejia's mother, Maritza Castillo said as she walked from the courtroom.



**"The Army gave my son the hardest punishment," she said later standing in a sweltering evening sun. "But my son is a free man. He follows the voice of his conscience. A year in jail doesn't mean anything in comparison with a life of dealing with the guilt of being a participant of a criminal war."**

Mejia took the stand in his sentencing hearing Friday and told the jury he felt no shame for what he had done.

"I sit here as a free man. I will sit behind bars as a free man. I strongly believed something had to be done. I followed my conscience and provided leadership." Mejia, 28, said in a calm voice, looking straight at the four officers and four enlisted soldiers on the jury.

**Mejia said the Army and the National Guard were also on trial, and he criticized both for poor leadership. He said he and his soldiers were put in danger needlessly by poor decision of his commanders who were overly interested in medals and promotions.**

When he finished, about 15 relatives and supporters broke into applause and shouts. Font said he will ask Amnesty International to declare him "a prisoner of conscience," and will ask the Costa Rican consul to lodge a protest that "the American military [is] holding my client against his will."

**MORE:**

## **Iraq War Vet Supports Anti-War Soldier On Trial; One Soldier Guilty Of Torturing Prisoners; Another Soldier On Trial For Refusing To Torture Prisoners**

May 20, 2004 Nate Reens, Savannah Morning News

**Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark finds a paradox in the simultaneous courts-martial of American soldiers in Iraq and Camilo Mejia at Fort Stewart.**

**In Iraq, six members of the military remain accused of breaching international law by sexually humiliating and torturing Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib prison.**

**At the home of the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division, Mejia faces a year in military confinement for refusing to take part in similar alleged atrocities at the al-Assad detention center where his Florida National Guard unit was stationed.**

***"What an incredible irony that we're prosecuting soldiers there (for violations of international law) and we're prosecuting here because he refused to do the same things,"*** said Clark, attorney general under President Lyndon Johnson and a member of Mejia's defense team.

**In his claim for conscientious objector status, first filed in March, Mejia detailed abuses at al-Assad, an airplane hangar converted to a prison, similar to those at Abu Ghraib. The abuse included extreme sleep deprivation and threats of assassination.**

**"(Mejia's) squad was ordered directly to violate the manual, which prohibits maltreatment of prisoners,"** Clark said. "It's in a time of crisis when you determine whether the law actually counts. The question is whether the United States will act within the laws."

After rulings potentially harmful to his defense, Mejia remains unswayed in his belief that he made the best move for him. In spite of receiving media attention as a deserter, Mejia also thinks he chose what is best for all soldiers.

"I have no regrets," he said. "I think I did the right thing.

"I don't consider myself a martyr. I just consider myself an ordinary person who decided to dissent."

**One former soldier who served in Iraq doesn't necessarily agree with the judge's decision.**

Ivan Medina said others shouldn't question Mejia's choice unless they've put their lives on the line and served in a war.

**Medina, who was discharged from the Army after his twin brother died in Iraq, was at Fort Stewart to support Mejia and his family.**

**"He'll always be a soldier no matter what," Medina said. "I think he had a right to decide what he thought was right. He came back and said this isn't right.**

**"We still support the troops, make no mistake about that. We all don't support what is happening there."**

## **Gen. Sanchez Staff OKd Trashing Geneva Convention!**

Wall St. Journal 4.25.04

**A letter written Dec. 24 by staff lawyers for Gen. Sanchez says the U.S. routinely denied Geneva Convention protections to Iraqi detainees both at Abu Ghraib and Camp Cropper, an installation for “high-value detainees.” That information contradicts administration claims that the Geneva Conventions applied to all detainees in Iraq. A copy of the letter, written to the International Red Cross Dec. 24, was reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.**

The letter says military commanders are allowed to deviate from the Geneva accords “as a temporary security precaution” if they determine that certain prisoners pose a risk. In Iraq, the letter says, such prisoners have been held in solitary confinement and are housed in cells without windows, which the Red Cross said violated the Geneva accords.

**The letter says a class of detainees called “security internees” aren’t subject to Geneva accords; and “such protections will be afforded as soon as the security situation in Iraq warrants it.” Such internees, it says, are people “who are definitely suspected of or engaged in activities hostile to the security of the state.”**

Yesterday, a Pentagon spokesman said policy dictates that all Iraqi prisoners be treated under Geneva Conventions strictures. The letter says the exceptions outlined are drawn in part from the fourth Geneva Convention.

Greg Jaffe in Washington contributed to this article.

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

## **Military Lawyers Had Objected To Abuse Of Gitmo Prisoners**

**The Pentagon has revealed that in the first year of interrogations at the U.S.-run Guantanamo Bay Naval Station prison for suspected terrorists, senior military lawyers in Washington raised objections to the use of techniques that were harsher than permitted under standard military doctrine.**

As their protests “became more apparent” in late 2002, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld ended the use of such tactics pending the outcome of a comprehensive review that stretched from mid-January 2003 to mid-April, a senior civilian Pentagon lawyer told reporters on Thursday.

**The lawyer, who discussed the matter on condition of anonymity because details are classified secret, said Rumsfeld in April 2003 approved new guidelines which won the military lawyers’ blessing.**

**Those guidelines are different — allowing harsher methods — than the approaches used in Iraq.**

**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.**

## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **One More Blinding Flash Of The Obvious**

May 21, 2004 By Katrina Kratovac Associated Press

When the Fallujah Brigade was established, the Americans demanded it hand over foreign fighters and the killers of the American contractors. No one has yet been arrested in their deaths.

**Some people, including Governing Council member Ahmad Chalabi, have complained that Fallujah has become a haven for [resistance soldiers] who are carrying out attacks in Baghdad and elsewhere. (Why not? They won.)**

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### **Resistance Attacks Iraq-Turkey Pipeline Umpteenth Time**

May 25, 2004 From correspondents in Kirkuk (Agence France-Presse)

SABOTEURS overnight bombed and damaged a pipeline that takes crude from the northern Kirkuk oilfields to Turkey, a security official of Iraq's Northern Oil Company said.

"At 7pm local time (1am AEST Tuesday), an explosive device detonated on a pipeline," Jumaa Ahmed said.

He said the attack was carried out on a pipeline linking the Kirkuk oilfields to the Dibis pumping installations, 50 km further north.

"Pumping had to be stopped in order to battle the fire," he said.

**Issam Mohammed, another security official for Northern Oil, said the fire was later put out but the damage would take 12 days to repair.**

**Northern Iraq's pipeline, which leads to Turkish's Mediterranean terminal of Ceyhan, has not been in regular use ever since August** because of a series of sabotage operations blamed on anti-US guerrillas.

# FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

## False Hopes

Excerpts from: May 22, 2004 Fred Feldman, Campus Antiwar Network

**Great hopes are placed by the US government on statements like those that follow (see below) by Shia leaders, but overall -- coupled with the military stalemate taking shape in Karbala and Najaf -- they are more signs of the isolation and weakening position of the occupiers. More and more sections of the bourgeoisie - - even including unprincipled characters who were carried into Iraq by the invading army -- feel that the only way forward for them in this situation is to oppose the occupation. This lineup shows every sign of continuing to get worse.**

It is quite clear that there are significant sections of the population of Najaf and Karbala - - sections of the bourgeoisie and middle class but I suspect broader strata as well -- that don't want al Sadr's forces to have exclusive possession of the streets. But the trend is toward broader opposition to the occupation, and the events in Karbala and Najaf have reinforced that.

The next round of the uprising will be broader in all classes than the last one. The occupation forces can be counted on to make sure of that.

Its useful to keep in mind the social alienation of the occupation from Iraq. The occupation was based on the assumption that Iraq was a broken and virtually nonexistent nation, incapable any longer of asserting or defending its independence and that it could be reconstructed according to the plans of the occupiers.

**In my opinion, the depth and scope of this misreading was symbolized the bombing of a village wedding--obviously not a gathering of the wretched of the earth --apparently because they were in what the occupiers consider the desert and had jewelry and cars. To the US occupation, this proved -- what? That they had forgotten their place in the scheme of things?**

Clerics Urge End to Clashes Between U.S. and Rebels

May 22, 2004 New York Times, By EDWARD WONG

KARBALA, Iraq, May 21 - Hundreds of worshipers poured into two holy Shiite shrines here on Friday to hear clerics demand an end to continuing clashes between American forces and insurgents loyal to the rebel cleric Moktada al-Sadr.

The clerics called for the withdrawal of fighters from both sides but carefully avoided singling out either the Americans or Mr. Sadr's militia, the Mahdi Army.

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# OCCUPATION REPORT

## Got That Right

May 18, the Washington Post

**A Senior Occupation Official was quoted: "It will take a lot of doing for this not to end in a debacle. There is no confidence in the coalition." (Why should there be? The resistance is winning.)**



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## Prominent Medical Experts Say Berg Beheading Film Faked

5.22.04 By Ritt Goldstein, Asia Times

American businessman Nicholas Berg's body was found on May 8 near a Baghdad overpass; a video of his supposed decapitation death by knife appeared on an alleged al-Qaeda-linked website ([www.al-ansar.biz](http://www.al-ansar.biz)) on May 11. **But according to what both a leading surgical authority and a noted forensic death expert separately told Asia Times Online, the video depicting the decapitation appears to have been staged.**

**"I certainly would need to be convinced it [the decapitation video] was authentic," Dr John Simpson, executive director for surgical affairs at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, said from New Zealand. Echoing Dr Simpson's criticism, when this journalist asked forensic death expert Jon Nordby, PhD and fellow of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators, whether he believed the Berg decapitation video had been "staged", Nordby replied: "Yes, I think that's the best explanation of it."**

While the circumstances surrounding both the video and Nick Berg's last days have been the source of substantive speculation, both Simpson and Nordby perceived it as highly probable that Berg had died some time prior to his decapitation. **A factor in this was an apparent lack of the "massive" arterial bleeding such an act initiates.**

**"I would have thought that all the people in the vicinity would have been covered in blood, in a matter of seconds ... if it was genuine," said Simpson. Notably, the act's perpetrators appeared far from so. And separately Nordby observed: "I think that by the time they're ... on his head, he's already dead."**

**Providing another basis for their findings, in the course of such an assault, an individual's autonomic nervous system would react, typically doing so strongly, with the body shaking and jerking accordingly. And while Nordby noted that "they rotated and moved the head", shifting vertebrae that should have initiated such actions, Simpson said he "certainly didn't perceive any movements at all" in response to such efforts.**

**During the period when Berg's captors filmed the decapitation sequence, circumstances indicate that he had already been dead "a quite uncertain length of time, but more than ... however long the beheading took."**

A particularly significant point in the video sequence occurred as Berg's captors attacked him, bringing the supposedly fatal knife to bear. Nordby said Berg does not "appear to register any sort of surprise or any change in his facial expression when he's grabbed and twisted over, and they start to bring this weapon into use".

**Nordby also emphasized that the video "raises more questions than it answers", with the most fundamental questions of "who are you, and how did you die", being impossible to answer from it. But broad speculation exists regarding a number of factors surrounding both Berg's death and the video, and its timing in regard to revelations of US prison atrocities.**

On May 13, the Associated Press (AP) reported that the US Central Intelligence Agency had determined that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was the individual who beheaded Berg.

**Since Secretary of State Colin Powell's United Nations presentation of February 5, 2003, al-Zarqawi has been portrayed as the single most dangerous element facing the Bush administration's "war on terror".**

**Speaking off the record, intelligence community sources have previously said they believe it "very likely" that al-Zarqawi is indeed long dead. Such a fact makes al-Zarqawi's alleged killing of Berg difficult to reconcile, and there has been broad speculation that blaming al-Zarqawi is an administration ploy.**

**Berg is seen on the beheading videotape in what appears to be US military prison-issue clothing, sitting in what appears to be a US military-type white chair, virtually identical to those photographed as used at Abu Ghraib prison.**

Again, Nordby emphasized that the video "raises more questions than it answers".

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# Australian Imprisoned In Iraq

25may04 By Mark Dunn, news.co.au

**A MELBOURNE man has been imprisoned by coalition and Kurdish authorities in Iraq for the past four months.**

***But the Australian Government, despite being a coalition partner and repeatedly seeking answers, is unaware of the nature of the allegations against the 26-year-old.***

The man is the subject of an International Committee of the Red Cross report and his welfare has been monitored by Australian consular officials since he was jailed in February. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade spokeswoman Lyndall Sachs said despite ICRC and Australian diplomatic visits, the reasons for his detention remained a mystery.

The Victorian is now in prison in the northern Iraqi city of Erbil, a large, predominantly Kurdish centre with a population of 486,000.

**He was detained by authorities representing the Kurdish Regional Government, Ms Sachs said.**

"We are not aware of the reasons for detention but we are pressing the regional authority and the CPA (Coalition Provisional Authority)," she said.

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

### **Bush In Toilet**

Two new polls released yesterday underscored why Mr. Bush felt compelled to make a rare nationally televised address.

A CBS News survey found just 34% of Americans support his handling of Iraq, while an ABC-Washington Post poll showed 40% backing it. **Both polls put his overall job approval at the lowest level of his presidency.**

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