

GI SPECIAL 2#C18

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:



Army Nurse Patrick McAndrew giving CPR at military hospital in Baghdad Nov. 9. The soldier was later pronounced dead. (AP Photo/John Moore)

Rumsfeld Admits Iraqis Favor The Resistance!

November 09, 2004 By Robert Burns, Associated Press

“I don’t know how many weeks or how many months” it will take to reach a point where the weight of public opinion favors the new Iraqi government instead of the insurgents, he said. “Nobody knows.” [Wrong. Everybody knows. Never happen.]

**EVEN RUMMY SAYS THEY DON'T WANT YOU HERE:
COME ON HOME, NOW!**



A US soldier near the Sunni Muslim Umm al-Qura mosque on the outskirts of Baghdad. **The US military blocked off all roads leading into the mosque where clerics and members of the Association of Muslim Scholars were meeting.** (AFP/Ahmad al-Rubaye)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

It's Official: U.S. Command Will Hide Falluja Casualty Count

November 10 2004 Independent News & Media

The US military has said "Due to operational security in order to prevent the anti-Iraqi forces and other terrorist elements from gaining useful battlefield intelligence, there could be delays in announcements of battlefield casualties."

NEED 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/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

The Death Of A Marine

November 8, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1113-04

Lance Cpl. Sean M. Langley, 20, of Lexington, Ky., died Nov. 7 from injuries received as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Langley was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

TWO TASK FORCE OLYMPIA MILITARY PERSONNEL DIE FOLLOWING MORTAR ATTACK ON MOSUL BASE

November 9, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
Release Number: 04-11-08C

MOSUL, Iraq – One Task Force Olympia Soldier was killed and a second service member later died of wounds following a mortar attack on a Multi-National Base in Mosul at approximately 10 a.m. today.

A civilian contractor also wounded in the attack was evacuated to the military hospital in Baghdad.

The Death Of Two Marines In Babil

November 9, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1117-04

The Department of Defense announced today the death of two Marines.

Cpl. Nathaniel T. Hammond, 24, of Tulsa, Okla.

Lance Cpl. Shane K. O'Donnell, 24, of DeForest, Wisc.

Both Marines died Nov. 8 as a result of enemy action in Babil Province, Iraq. They were assigned to the Marine Corps Reserve's 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Chicago, Ill.

The Death Of Two More Marines In Babil

November 9, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1119-04

The Department of Defense announced today the death of two Marines.

Lance Cpl. Branden P. Ramey, 22, of Boone, Ill., died Nov. 8 as a result of enemy action in Babil Province, Iraq. He was assigned to the Marine Corps Reserve's 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Chicago, Ill.

Staff Sgt. David G. Ries, 29, of Clark, Wash., died Nov. 8 as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. He was assigned to the Marine Corps Reserve's 6th Engineer Support Battalion, 4th Force Service Support Group, Portland, Ore.

Marine From Belvidere Killed

November 9, 2004 The Rockford Register Star

Belvidere Marine Branden Ramey was killed Monday in Iraq. He is the seventh soldier from the Rock River Valley to die there since the war started in March 2003.

Information about Ramey's death was sketchy late Monday night.

Ramey was a 2001 graduate of Belvidere High School. He played football and baseball in high school and was elected to the Homecoming Court in his senior year, according to the school yearbook. He later played semipro football for the Belvidere Rush before joining the Marines.

He was the son of Pamela Trevino of Belvidere and Randy Ramey of Madera, Calif.

16 U.S. Troops Killed In Past Two Days: Biggest One Day Toll In 6 Months

Nov. 9, 2004 The Associated Press

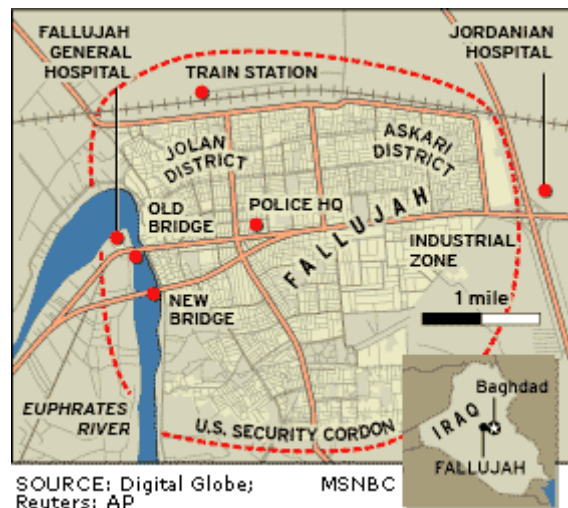
A surge in casualties has killed 16 U.S. troops in the past two days across Iraq. U.S. officials said that on Monday, they recorded 130 attacks.

Clashes erupted in the northern city of Mosul and near the Sunni bastion of Ramadi, explosions were reported in at least two cities, and masked militants brandished weapons and warned merchants to close their shops.

The latest U.S. deaths included three in Fallujah combat Tuesday, two killed by mortars near Mosul and 11 others who died Monday, most of them as guerrillas launched a wave of attacks in Baghdad and southwest of Fallujah.

The 11 deaths were the highest one-day U.S. toll in more than six months.

U.S. Forces Take 1/3rd Of Falluja: At Least 10 U.S. Troops Killed, 50 Wounded



November 9, 2004 FALLUJA, Iraq (CNN) & By Michael Georgy and Fadel al-Badrani, (Reuters) & By Robert Burns & Jim Krane, The Associated Press & Aljazeera & By Ibrahim Mohamad, Middle East Online

More than 24 hours after launching the main attack, U.S. soldiers and Marines had punched through insurgent strongholds in the north and east of Fallujah and reached the major east-west highway that bisects the city.

Elsewhere, witnesses reported seeing at least two American tanks engulfed in flames. A Kiowa helicopter flying over southeast Fallujah took groundfire, injuring the pilot, but he managed to return to the U.S. base.

The Pentagon reported 10 U.S. troops were killed.

Some U.S. military officers estimated that they controlled about a third of the city. Commanders said they had not fully secured the northern half of Fallujah but were well on their way as U.S. and Iraqi troops searched for insurgents.

Some U.S. units were reported advancing south of the main highway but not in strength.

Fighting is easing after U.S. forces consolidated positions near the city center less than a day after starting an offensive to tame Iraq's most rebellious city.

Residents said the sound of bombardment and explosions eased off around 4:15 p.m. on Tuesday (1:15 p.m. British time) after a night and day of intense fighting between U.S.-led forces and insurgents.

Army Lt. Gen. Thomas F. Metz refused Tuesday to say how many American troops have been killed in the operation

An American soldier wounded in Falluja said he had seen two of his colleagues killed.

"A buddy of mine and another soldier were killed and I have seen about 50 other wounded (U.S.) soldiers since the fighting began," he told Reuters while awaiting medical evacuation. He declined to give his name.

A Reuters reporter saw about five wounded soldiers being flown out by helicopter and a U.S. military ambulance driver also said he had witnessed many casualties.

There has also been no word on civilian casualties, though Falluja residents said a U.S. air strike hit a clinic in a central district, killing some medical staff and patients.

Gen. George W. Casey, the top American commander in Iraq told reporters Monday those who are fighting are armed with AK-47 guns, rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns, anti-aircraft guns, improvised explosive devices and car bombs.

A Marines tank company commander -- part of a U.S.-led force at least 10,000 strong -- said earlier guerrillas were battling hard in Falluja's northern Jolan district. "A man pulled out from behind a wall and fired an RPG at my tank. I have to get another tank to go back in there," he said without giving details.

"They are putting up a strong fight and I saw many of them on the street I was on," Captain Robert Bodisch told Reuters.

"Right now they are observing us as we get closer, they are fading back to secondary positions and adapting to our tactics," said Lieutenant Colin Browning, as his troops advanced cautiously through the northwest Jolan neighbourhood, the main centre of resistance here.

"As we get further in it's going to get worse," he said.

Michael Ware, Time magazine's Baghdad bureau chief embedded with Army Task Force 2-2, described the fighting as street-to-street battles. Most of the insurgents are in small groups, he said, with the most being 25 in one place.

Lurking in a shabby house, rebel fighters fire gunshots and rockets at invading US soldiers before rushing to another building to escape a punishing barrage of American artillery and missiles, AFP correspondents in the city said.

The militants, many with scarves covering their faces, have chosen mobility to counter the far superior US firepower

Unable forcefully to block the rumbling advance of US tanks and armoured vehicles through the network of winding streets that make up Fallujah, insurgents lurk in the side-allies, allowing convoys to pass, and then attacking.

Ducking and diving for cover when the shells thunder down, the fighters regroup and fire back when there is a minute's calm.

They have also posted snipers on the top of high buildings to hamper the progress of US ground troops, while taking shots at low flying combat helicopters, which drop bombs and flares on insurgent positions.

None of the fighters could take a moment's rest due to the relentless hail of gunfire. For food, they grabbed snacks brought by other insurgents holding up the rear.

Sami al-Jumaili, a doctor at the main Falluja hospital who escaped arrest when it was taken, said the city was running out of medical supplies and only a few clinics remained open.

"There is not a single surgeon in Falluja. We had one ambulance hit by U.S. fire and a doctor wounded. There are scores of injured civilians in their homes whom we can't move.

"A 13-year-old child just died in my hands," he said by telephone from a house where he had gone to help the wounded.

Overnight US bombardments hit a clinic inside the Sunni Muslim city, killing doctors, nurses and patients, residents said.

Despite its superior manpower, the US military is anxious to put an Iraqi face on the Fallujah assault for political reasons, and a smattering of specially trained Iraqi forces accompanied the marines.

400 Iraqi Troops Quit Fallujah Offensive So Far: “The Occupier Will Leave One Day, But The People Will Stay.”

November 9, 2004 By Hannah Allam and Tom Lasseter, Knight Ridder / Tribune news.

BAGHDAD -- U.S. military officials said Monday that at least 200 Iraqi troops had deserted their posts in the American-led offensive on Fallujah.

The U.S. military and Iraqi commanders estimated that up to 200 Iraqi troops had resigned, with another 200 "on leave."

"Some people were afraid because they received threats," said Sgt. Abdul Raheem, an Iraqi soldier. "They were afraid of death." **[That's a start.]**

Clerics in Fallujah blasted the Iraqi troops, saying in a statement that such troops were "the occupiers' lash on their fellow countrymen."

"We swear by God that we will stand against you in the streets, we will enter your houses and we will slaughter you just like sheep," the statement said.

The Association of Muslim Scholars, a Sunni umbrella group said to represent 3,000 mosques, issued a religious edict calling for all Iraqi soldiers, National Guardsmen and police officers to quit immediately or become legitimate targets for the rebels. The fatwa included a warning to the forces not to repeat the experience of Najaf, where Iraqis joined an American-led effort to crush Sadr's uprising in the southern Shiite holy city in August.

"Those who kill Iraqis are not Iraqis," said Sheik Mohammed Bashar al Faidhi of the scholars' association.

"We told them: You made a terrible mistake in Najaf. Be careful not to repeat this experience because the occupier will leave one day, but the people will stay."

Sunday night when Iraqi commandos took over Fallujah's main hospital with U.S. backing "They looted from us, they hurt us and they didn't respect the jobs we were trying to do," said Khaled Hindi, 38, an ambulance driver, who said Iraqi forces stole his cell phone and money. "There were fighters outside the hospital, but there were none inside."

An overzealous, thuggish band of Iraqi troops stormed a place where there were no rebels and terrified ill and injured patients.

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. Send requests to address up top.

U.S. Helicopter Shot Down

November 9 FALLUJA, Iraq (Reuters)

A U.S. helicopter has been shot down over Falluja as U.S.-led forces pressed home an offensive on the rebel-held city.

"I saw the helicopter collide with a rocket. It turned into a ball of fire and fell to the ground," said Reuters reporter Fadel al-Badrani. "There was smoke everywhere."

He said the helicopter crashed in the city's Jolan district. There was no immediate word on casualties.

Chairman Of U.S. Joint Chiefs Announces Slaughter Of Falluja Civilians "Likely"

November 09, 2004 By Robert Burns, Associated Press

Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, appeared with Rumsfeld and said it's likely the insurgents will try to use civilians as shields against attacking U.S. troops.

[Announcing beforehand that the opposing force plans to use civilians as "human shields" has been used by every Imperial power since Rome to justify the mass slaughter of civilians by armies of occupation. It's right up there with "winning hearts and minds" and "light at the end of the tunnel" in the stale lying bullshit category.]

BBC Reporter Describes Battle From Inside The City

9 November BBC

US and Iraqi forces are locked in desperate street battles against insurgents in the Iraqi city of Falluja. **The BBC News website spoke by phone to Fadhil Badrani, a journalist in Falluja who reports for the BBC World Service in Arabic.**

I am surrounded by thick black smoke and the smell of burning oil.

There was a big explosion a few minutes ago and now I can hear gunfire.

A US armoured vehicle has been parked on the street outside my house in the centre of the city.

From my window, I can see US soldiers moving around on foot near it.

They tried to go from house to house but they kept coming under fire.

Now they are firing back at the houses, at anything that moves. It is war on the streets.

The American troops look like they have given up trying to go into buildings for now and are just trying to control the main roads.

I am sitting here on my own, watching tragedy engulf my city.

I was with some of the Falluja fighters earlier. They looked tired - but their spirits were high and they were singing.

Recently, many Iraqis from other parts of the country have been joining the local men against the Americans.

No one has had much sleep in the past two days of heavy fighting and of course, it is still Ramadan, so no one eats during the day.

I cannot say how many people have been killed but after two days of bombing, this city looks like Kabul.

Large portions of it have been destroyed but it is so dangerous to leave the house that I have not been able to find out more about casualties.

A medical dispensary in the city centre was bombed earlier. I don't know what has happened to the doctors and patients who were there. It was last place you could get medical attention because the big hospital on the outskirts of Falluja was captured by the Americans on Monday.

A lot of the mosques have also been bombed.

For the first time in Falluja, a city of 150 mosques, I did not hear a single call to prayer this morning.

I broke my Ramadan fast yesterday with the last of our food - two potatoes and two tomatoes. The tomatoes were rotten because we have no electricity to run the fridge

My neighbours - a woman and her children - came to see me yesterday. They asked me to tell the world what is happening here.

I look at the devastation around me and ask - why?

MORE:

Kidnapping of Falluja

November 08 From Donna Mulhearn, a Human Shield from Australia

Dear friends,

I would like to share with a message I have received from Iraq this week from an Iraqi man, which came via a friend. He shares his thoughts on the battle in Fallujah:

Every Body, every thing is kidnapped in Falluja, Women, Children, families, history humanity and peace.

And the world is only watching, how the US army will kill civilian, and what military plane will be used. What weapons will be tested in Falluja. The world is become just dead body has no feelings, and no any reaction.

Do you know what Falluja mean, it mean every city in this world. It means Hiroshima, Kabul. Falluja means the black future of humanity and the killing by the name of democratic and peace.

Falluja isn't belonging to Falluja people only; it is the symbol for today's world. The big fish eat the small one.

Keep quiet and your city will be the next, and your history will be the next. Keep watching how the new technology can very easily kill the innocent kids and week people. Then the next will be you.

Every body with negative stance from today's crime, he will be partner in this crime, in front of history and humanity.

Nobody will excuse the cowards or the scared. It is as Shakespeare said "TO BE OR NOT TO BE"

OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION

BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

"Friendly casualties are light."



U.S. Marines Falluja, November 9, 2004. (Eliana Aponete/Reuters)

Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, in charge of day-to-day U.S.-led military operations in Iraq, **said "Friendly casualties are light."** Nov 09, 2004 Will Dunham, (Reuters)

Marine Dead In Vehicle "Incident"

November 8, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1118-04

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a Marine.

Lance Cpl. Jeffrey Lam, 22, of Queens, N.Y., died Nov. 8 as a result of a non-hostile vehicle incident in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. He was assigned to the Marine Corps Reserve's 6th Communications Battalion, 4th Force Service Support Group, Brooklyn, N.Y.

**Top U.S. Occupation Official
Attacked;
Two Mercenary Guards Dead**

Nov. 9, 2004 The Associated Press

A senior U.S. defense official told NBC News that two security personnel were killed Monday in a car bomb attack on the chief U.S. weapons inspector in Iraq, Charles Duelfer. Duelfer narrowly escaped the attack.

**A YEAR AND A HALF OF WAR, AND WHAT'S THE FUCKING
POINT?
TIME TO COME HOME.**



A US soldier sits in his armoured vehicle during the bombardment of Fallujah 11.9.04
(AFP/Patrick Baz)

Delusional Sgt. On The Loose Near Falluja

11.9.04 By Jim Krane, Associated Press

“We’ve been waiting to come here. I’m glad we’re taking the town now,” Marine Sgt. Mark Middleton said Tuesday as he looked down from a rail platform at U.S. tanks creeping along the city’s northern edge.

“**I’m surprised they’re even fighting us,**” he said of the insurgents as gunfire crashed nearby.

The 28-year-old from Lake Forest, Calif., believes the rebels' fighting spirit is "only temporary."

TROOP NEWS

The Chosen

From: Richard M. Hastie (Vietnam Veteran)
To: GI Special
Sent: Monday, November 08, 2004 4:57 AM
Subject: The Chosen

I hope I have a chance to meet this man when he gets back from Iraq. He is an inspiration to me and all of the Vietnam vets in my group, in Portland, Oregon.

Bless him and the computer he rode in on. He is our brother, and so is every American soldier in Iraq.

I just got through re-reading the piece you ran on Oct. 31, 2004, called, " Combat Ground Zero." [GI Special 2#C9, <http://www.militaryproject.org/>]

It was written by an American soldier in Baquba, Iraq.

I will try to be as honest as I can, and no doubt, it will go beyond that. Coming from a medic who was in Vietnam, this is the most powerful narrative I have yet to read from an active soldier in Iraq.

Nothing else I have read, comes close to it.

As far as I am concerned, it is a sculptured master piece of writing.

Great writers are born, when they are experiencing hell. I have often said, that the phrase, "War Is Hell, "is not really true. Hell is a romantic walk on a sunset beach, compared to war.

This soldier has hit a reality wall in this insane war. He has taken that one step beyond, that has allowed him to be objective in a situation that will be out of reach for most American soldiers in Iraq. In essence, he has seen the LIE.

He can align it, and define it. As far as I am concerned, this awareness is a gift. There is nothing more difficult, than to be politicized in a combat environment. It can be dangerous for the soldier, because it can be a serious distraction. **Once you know the truth, everything from that point on is filtered through that prism.** It is a powerful epiphany experience.

I know this is true, because Vietnam catapulted me into another dimension. The most difficult part is getting someone to validate you. **It is not easy being born again (pardon the expression), when you are getting every area of your anatomy shot at.** My full Monty didn't happen until I got back from Vietnam.

And for me, it took a few years just to get someone to validate me. I kept saying to myself, " that fucking war was sanctioned insanity." I did not serve in Vietnam for the cause of freedom, I served big business in America for the cause of profit.

When I got back, most people could care less if I had been to Vietnam, or Disneyland. They were too busy watching sports, shopping, going to parties, or trying to decide whether to have pizza, or spaghetti for dinner. **As far as I could tell, they were all fucking nuts. I just got back from having blood on my hands, and brains in my lap, and their fucking dog is pissing on my leg. Totally crazy!**

While everyone is enveloped in pop culture, I wanted to rip the heads off of every politician in America. An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behavior.

That's my biggest problem, how do I get rid of all this hatred? As Malcolm X once wrote, "The only thing worse than death is betrayal." As Vietnam veterans, we got no help from the WWII veterans. Our war was from outer space.

Our point of reference was not patriotism. I don't believe the WWII vets ever really understood us. We were outlaws, and they just could not relate. At least when all the Iraq vets get back, we can help them wade through all of the cultural illusions and lies. And, there are plenty.

George Bush is in a world that is incompatible with reality. What he knows about the military, you could stick in a thimble. He and the rest of his gangsters are playing spin the bottle with a gun. Only this gun is being pointed at American soldiers and innocent civilians in Iraq.

How many ways do you spell " Duped?" It took me awhile to get this, because whenever the truth threatens one's belief system, there is a strong tendency to deny its reality.

The soldier who wrote from his gut in Iraq, did so, because he has an overwhelming need to bear witness, to protect the lives of soldiers who have not gone to Iraq yet. He does this, because he cannot not do this. The survivor voice within him has an obsession to speak. He has simply tapped into a universal truth, that is beyond his intellect. His greatest fear is not to be able to speak. He must be guarded though, because the norms of society will try to silence him.

As always, there is a time and a place for everything. Our thinking can become distorted, as we try to force solutions. For me, it became a spiritual experience, because the survivor voice did not belong to me. **Eventually, I realized I had an awareness that could save other peoples' lives. I have experienced this on many occasions. I have especially seen this happen when I go into high schools and speak on the**

reality of war. When I get through talking to the boys, they have shit in their pants. The last thing they want to do is run out and join the military.

I have had countless boys come up to me and thank me for telling them the truth. Granted, this does not always work, but the truth has a way of changing their lives, in spite of the cultural indoctrination. **I guarantee, if this soldier in Iraq were speaking in a high school class today, it would be one of the most powerful events in the students lives. And that baby, is raw power.**

Lying is the most powerful weapon in war. And, this is what this vet could convince them of. There is no rest for the messenger, until the message has been delivered!

Whether this soldier believes it or not, he has been chosen to carry the message of truth. When I came back from Vietnam, my "patty cake" world was over. Once I got through the pain, I was a free man.

I hope I have a chance to meet this man when he gets back from Iraq. He is an inspiration to me and all of the Vietnam vets in my group, in Portland, Oregon.

Bless him and the computer he rode in on. He is our brother, and so is every American soldier in Iraq.

**MISSION: DIE FOR GEORGE W. BUSH AND THE EMPIRE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



Marines of the 1st Division: Fallujah Oct. 30, 2004. (AP Photo/Anja Niedringhaus)

More Troops Returning From Iraq With Brain Trauma

Oct. 6, 2004 By Judy Muller, ABC NEWS

War injuries in Iraq are usually obvious — from shrapnel wounds to lost limbs. But one type of wound is not so obvious. In fact, it often goes undetected.

Consider the case of Army Sgt. Alec Giess, now recovering at a Veterans Affairs hospital in Palo Alto, Calif.

Giess served in an engineering unit that built housing for Iraqis. He was riding in a truck when the driver swerved to miss an explosive device.

Giess was pinned underneath the vehicle. When they dug him out, he had lost consciousness, but not his cigar.

"The cigar was blown up in my face and I was gritting it between my teeth," he said.

Giess, 45, soon healed from his obvious injuries, including several cracked vertebrae and a broken collarbone. But when he went home to Oregon on leave, his wife noticed dramatic changes in his behavior. He would erupt in anger and fail to complete the simplest tasks.

"She couldn't understand, actually, what was going on," said Giess. "She was afraid of me. I thought I was all right, and my behavior was not all right. Not the way I was when I left."

Giess was finally diagnosed with TBI — traumatic brain injury. It is sometimes called "the invisible handicap." Symptoms include irritability, poor memory, lack of inhibition, anxiety, confusion, unusual fatigue and persistent headaches. These problems are often dismissed as postwar stress reactions.

While an estimated 20 percent of injured veterans in past wars suffered from TBI, doctors say more than 60 percent of injured troops returning from Iraq may be afflicted. The reason: Troops have new body armor that saves lives by protecting the torso, but not the brain.

Marine Lance Cpl. Raymond Warren took shrapnel to his legs, to his stomach, to his arms and to his head, which made the TBI diagnosis easy. He lost much of his memory, and must wear a protective helmet until his skull heals.

Warren could neither walk nor talk when he arrived at the Palo Alto facility in July. Now he can do both. But he has dreams of much more. "Get back to running, drive a car, stuff like that," he said. "Just the normal life of Raymond Warren."

But a "normal life" is a long way off — and may look very different than his "normal life" of the past.

Warren is one of more than 350 veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan now being treated for traumatic brain injury at a handful of VA facilities. But as wounded veterans return, the need for more beds is enormous.

"We're getting more and more every day, and it's very frustrating because we don't know when it will end," said Stephanie Alvarez, nurse manager at the Palo Alto VA hospital.

The rehabilitation requires months of work with a skilled team. It also requires a great deal of patience. Warren, for example, needed to relearn basic tasks, from brushing his teeth to shaving. A chart reminds him what to do and when to do it.

"The majority of them, they're incontinent, both bowel and bladder, so we have to retrain them when to use the toilet, how to use the toilet," said Alvarez.

In all TBI patients, the frontal lobe — an area of the brain that governs impulse control — is affected. These patients often have trouble focusing if there are any distractions in the room.

"I'm a little frustrated," said Warren. "Too much going on right now. [It] boggles my mind sometimes."

Each patient is given a "memory book," which outlines that day's schedule and other vital information. Warren's book even tells him how he got here.

"I had a head injury from an explosion in Iraq on June 14, 2004," he said, reading from the book. Warren adds that without his memory book, he would not know what happened to him.

In physical therapy, he exercises his muscles and brain at the same time. While cycling, Warren is asked to count by twos backward from 100.

He responds: "100, 99, 88, 84 ..."

In a kitchen specially built for TBI patients, he learns how to whip up a hamburger dish. But the real challenge is a scavenger hunt, aimed at reintegrating him into the community. Even the simplest task — such as finding an item on a list — is daunting to these patients.

"They may be able to focus on one task, but external stimuli or even internal stimuli can cause them to lose concentration and be easily distracted like something beeping in the background or somebody walking by," said Karen Parecki, an occupational therapist.

Warren finds the items on his scavenger hunt check list, but struggles at the checkout counter. He tries to calculate his change on a piece of paper. But he still gets it wrong.

This daily struggle to relearn the simplest things can be frustrating and exhausting, no matter how much encouragement he gets. No wonder Warren's favorite activity is sleeping. "No one bothers me," he said.

This is not just a psychological reaction. TBI patients are easily tired, and prone to mood swings. "If you have a domino effect of frustration, like I've had, it leads to a very bad day, and you just want to give up," said Giess.

This former building contractor knows something about starting from scratch. Some days are especially frustrating. Like the time he went home to attend his daughter's middle school graduation.

"I made sure I got there early, got everything ready, and then I forgot what time it was, what time the graduation was," said Giess.

He was late. And he was devastated. But his anger at himself never spills over into anger at the war. "No regrets. I'd go back over right now if I was able."

Warren is also proud of his service, proud of the Purple Heart he received. But he questions the war that did this to him.

"I had lot of pride for my country and they shipped me to Iraq. With me having no say-so. I mean, look at me now, missing the top part of my head," he said.

Both men struggle to accept the reality of their situation. As do the families of TBI patients.

"They have this expectation, 'Oh, they're in a rehab unit, they'll be perfectly fine, they'll be the same as before.' And there's no way they can ever be the same as before," said Alvarez.

For everyone involved, that's a tough prognosis.

When Warren went home to Los Angeles for a visit, the welcome from his family and girlfriend washed over him like a tonic.

"The doctors said it would be a good part of his rehab, you know, to help him in the recovery long term, and we definitely see that," said his mother, Cynthia Piccione.

Even Warren recognizes the change. Asked to name something he could now do that was impossible earlier, he said, "Have a normal conversation with somebody who's here."

At the same time, Warren knows he has a long way to go. Taking a shower by himself, for example, is difficult.

He still cannot be left alone. So his mother and girlfriend take turns staying home with him, even though they both have full-time jobs.

"He can concentrate on one thing at a time, he's easily distracted by the TV or other things," said his girlfriend, Vanessa Vargas. "Processing information, you know, he can tell he's a little slower."

On a recent visit, they manage to get to a swimming pool, where Warren swam a few laps. This is real progress for a young man who wasn't walking three months ago.

Even so, he still needs 24-hour supervision. In some ways, veterans with traumatic brain injury are like toddlers again, something of a sad irony.

"The majority of them join the military because they want to leave the parents or they want to leave home," said Alvarez. "And to be independent. And now they're back to square one and it's sad to see that."

Not all veterans with TBI have the kind of support Warren and Giess enjoy waiting at home. In fact, many veterans with this "invisible wound" are going undiagnosed, their families misunderstanding their behavior.

Warren, at least, has started on the road to recovery. "My hopes are very good, very good," he said.

But there are still times when he feels sorry for himself. How does he deal with that? "I just cry."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Guerrillas Overrun Baqouba: 45 Occupation Cops Killed

[In case you missed it, the 1st I.D. was pulled out of Baqouba to go fight in Falluja. Oops.]

November 09, 2004 AP & RTÉ & Reuters

MILITANTS using Kalashnikov rifles and rocket-propelled grenades stormed three police stations today near the central Iraqi town of Baqouba, police and hospital officials said.

"We have taken back the labor union building from the insurgents and **we are regaining control of the city**," police Major Mohammed Ghani told reporters.

Fuad said 25 policemen were killed when gunmen attacked the Tahrir and Mafrag police stations in Baquba. Another 20 bodies had come in after a similar attack on a police station in Buhriz, a village just south of Baquba, he said.

Resistance soldiers attacked a Diyala river bridge on a road linking Baquba with the northeastern towns of Miqdadiya and Khanaqin.

They distributed leaflets warning people in Baquba to stay away from government offices and schools.

General Walid al-Azzawi, head of the Diyala provincial police, said attacks erupted about 7am (1400 AEDT) at police stations in Buhriz and Mafrag.

Militants attacks and clashes killed 45 people in the Iraqi city of Baquba on Tuesday, a hospital morgue official said.

Guerrillas attacked three police stations and a river bridge in the city, 40 miles northeast of Baghdad, and fought gunbattles with Iraqi police and National Guards.

In Mafrag, Iraqi forces were searching the region in search of the attackers, police said.

Resistance Offensive In Ramadi: U.S. Troops Withdraw After 24 Hour Battle; Hit Also Overrun; Five U.S. Troops Wounded; Iraqis Dancing In The Streets

9 November, 2004 BBC & By Jim Krane, Associated Press & AFP

Rebel fighters massed in the centre of the restive Iraqi city of Ramadi after US military snipers withdrew from their positions following 24 hours of clashes, an AFP correspondent said.

US snipers left a hotel from where they were able to control most of Ramadi's main roads.

Other US soldiers left the city for their bases in the east and west of the city.

Banners proclaiming solidarity with insurgents in Fallujah, where US-led forces launched a massive offensive to retake the city on Monday, were hung in the streets.

"The residents of Ramadi condemn the attack against Fallujah and we appeal to the inhabitants of Ramadi to wage jihad against the American occupants who want to eradicate Islam," said one man who did not want to be named.

As the snipers departed, large crowds of armed rebels, their faces hidden by scarves, began dancing in the street and shooting in to the air, yelling "Allah Akbar" (God is great).

Five U.S. troops were wounded when Marines shot at and destroyed two suspected car bombs in the insurgent-heavy city of Ramadi.

The attack happened Monday.

Armed insurgents, some of them masked, also swarmed in the center of Hit.

Partisans Blow Up Baghdadi Police Station

November 09, 2004 Associated Press

Tuesday armed men stormed before dawn a police station in Baghdadi, a small town 60 miles northwest of Ramadi, rigged the building with explosives and blew it up, an eyewitness said. The building was empty at the time of the attack and there were no casualties.

Car Bomb Kills Occupation Base Workers Near Kirkuk

11.9.04 Reuters

A car bomb has exploded at an Iraqi National Guard base near the northern city of Kirkuk on Tuesday, killing three people and wounding two. **Major General Anwar Ibrahim, the Guard commander for Kirkuk province, says the casualties were workers who were arriving at the base, 15 kilometres north-west of Kirkuk.**

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Fallujah Won't Do It

November 9, 2004 By PATRICK COCKBURN

American voters last week never seemed to take on board the extent of the US military failure in Iraq. The rebel control of Fallujah, half an hour's drive from Baghdad, was the most evident symbol of this. It was as if a British government in London had been forced to watch as an enemy force occupied Reading for six months.

The US army ceded control of much of western Iraq during the Sunni uprising last April. Its failure to recover fully from this setback underlines the extent to which the US as a military power has proved itself much weaker than the rest of the world had assumed before the invasion of Iraq last year.

There is no doubt that the US can recapture Fallujah, if only by blowing most of it up.

But this is unlikely to have much of an effect on the guerrilla war in central and northern Iraq which continues to escalate.

The recapture of Fallujah is likely to be as disappointing in terms of ending the resistance as was the capture of Saddam Hussein last December or the hand-over of sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government at the end of June. Each event was billed as a success which would tip the balance towards the US. Instead the fighting got bloodier and more widespread.

There should be no mystery about why this is happening. All countries object to being occupied. Foreign invasions provoke nationalist resistance.

This has happened with extraordinary speed in Iraq because of the ineptitude of the US civil and military commanders, but in the long term it would have happened anyway.

The US in Iraq has always behaved as if the resistance was fomented by foreign powers or adherents of Saddam Hussein. A lesson of the ground war last year was that few Iraqis were prepared to get killed for their old leader. Earlier this year I asked American helicopter pilots operating from a base near Fallujah whom they thought they were fighting. They said firmly that they were at war with "FFs" and "FRLs". These turned out to be Foreign Fighters and Former Regime Loyalists. One of the pilots added nervously that there seemed to be a third somewhat shadowy group "who want us to go home".

The US and the British are trying to seize Fallujah and the central Euphrates cities . These may have been the original heartlands of the rebellion, but today there are guerrilla attacks in every Sunni region in Iraq. US and interim government control of Baghdad is limited.

One of the strangest justifications for the attack on Fallujah is that it will allow an election to take place.

This would only be true if the Sunni rebellion was a mirage and was entirely the work of FFs and FRLs oppressing a local population yearning to break free. A much more likely result of an increase in the fighting is a boycott of the election by the Sunnis. Even if they do vote then there is no reason to suppose that the guerrillas will stop fighting any more than the IRA laid down its arms despite numerous elections in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s.

The election will take place in January and voting will be heavy because Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the Shia religious leader, wants the Shia to show at the polls that they are 60 per cent of the population. The Kurds, who total another 20 per cent, will also take part. But Sistani has made clear ever since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein that he is against the occupation and has steadfastly refused to meet American officials. The Sunni,

another 20 per cent of the population, have shown that they are strong enough to destabilise Iraq just as long as they want to. (The Kurds, with a similar proportion of the population, were able to destabilise Iraq for almost half a century.)

It is worth remembering that the elections are taking place largely because of armed resistance. Until guerrilla war started in the summer of last year US officials in Baghdad were speaking airily of an American occupation going on for years.

It was only as the military situation deteriorated by the week that the US suddenly decided to appoint an interim government and hold elections. *Many Iraqis say quietly that the only way to get concessions from the Americans is to shoot at them.*

The French failed to hold Algeria against a nationalist revolt despite fielding an army of half a million. With similar numbers the US failed in Vietnam. With a much smaller army in Iraq, it will fail again. As in Algeria and Vietnam, the war in Iraq will only cease when an end to the occupation is in sight.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

OCCUPATION REPORT

“Major” Party Quits Occupation Government Over Falluja Attack

11.9.04 Reuters

The Iraqi Islamic Party wields significant influence over the country's Sunni community and its withdrawal from the government will likely be a blow to Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi. "We are protesting the attack on Fallujah and the injustice that is inflicted on the innocent people of the city," said Mohsen Abdel-Hamid, head of the Iraqi Islamic Party.

Abdel-Hamid told The Associated Press the party leaders convened Monday and decided that their one minister in the Cabinet - Minister of Industry, Hajim Al-Hassani - should quit.

"We cannot be part of this attack," he said.

TERRORIST ASSHOLE SPOTTED IN FALLUJA!



International terrorist chief Ayad Allawi was spotted by AP photographer on the outskirts of Fallujah Nov. 8, 2004. He leads a large, well-armed force and should be considered dangerous, as long as Bush protects his worthless ass. (AP Photo/Pool)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Vietnam Vet Wanted To Vote For “None Of The Above”

November 7, 2004 By COREY KILGANNON, New York Times

INSIDE the cavernous Borden Avenue Veterans Residence, run by the Salvation Army in Hunters Point, Queens, are beds and lockers for 410 homeless men. **The residents share a servicemen's camaraderie, and some still wear green army jackets stenciled with their last name.**

Just before the polls closed Tuesday night, a group of Vietnam-era veterans in their 50's gathered around a wall-mounted television set showing election results; most had voted earlier at a nearby polling site. Elsewhere in the lounge, younger men played pool, chess or spades.

Even before 9 p.m., the numbers were already with President Bush.

One veteran, who said he was a former shipping executive who had put two children through Ivy League schools, made the crack that Vietnam was helping Mr. Kerry as much as it had helped the men in the shelter.

Jimmy Harrington, 55, who served in the Army from 1968 until 1972, smoked a cigarette and leaned against a trash can. "If they held the election here, I think Kerry would have won, but not by much," he said in a soft croak. A chain smoker for 40 years, Mr.

Harrington survived throat cancer and now has lung cancer, but still smokes a pack a day. **Mr. Harrington said he voted for Bush because, "I don't trust Kerry."**

But, he emphasized: "I don't like Bush either. I wish they had 'None of the Above.'
"

Nearby, Vincent Hicks, a Brooklyn native, said he was an Army private for four years during Vietnam but managed to get stationed mostly in Germany.

"I don't care who's in the White House," remarked Mr. Hicks, who said he had been homeless since his wife died in 1990. "Very little of it pertains to me." Even in defeat, he added, Mr. Kerry would be better off than the men in the shelter.

"Nothing changes for us, though," he said. "We're still here."

Received:

From: "Brent Austin"
To: GI Special
Sent: Monday, November 08, 2004 1:21 AM
Subject: This is why I'm glad:

This is why I'm glad that there isn't and won't be a general draft. You bring out & expose that 10% that would ruin the whole system and get soldiers killed in battle.

From: Brandie Lampin
To: GI Special:
Sent: Monday, November 08, 2004 8:08 PM
Subject: OPERATION WAVE OF PRAYER AND SOUND II

MISSION NUMBER II

Operation Wave of Prayer and Sound II

by

Brandie Lampin

**Wife of medically unfit Soldier forced into Iraq
now home**

**On Nov. 11th, Veterans Day, when it gets to be 11:58 AM
wherever you are, lets start
OPERATION WAVE OF PRAYER AND SOUND II**

**If you support our veterans,
If you support our troops,
If you want all of our troops in Iraq brought home,
Stop what you are doing wherever you are.**

**Go outside with your family, friends or even your neighbor
and pray that this war will end.
Then at 12:00 PM,
Go to your vehicle if you have one
and honk the horn for 30 seconds.
Make it loud enough America!
Make it so that the wave of prayers and sound
reach our troops in Iraq and our veterans hear at home,
to show them that we love them and are very proud of them.**

This mission has been posted on the internet as a chain letter. I am trying to get all of America to make this happen. In order to make this a wave of prayer and sound, this must be followed by your own time/zone in your state. So the first states that will start this should be along the East Coast, then work its way west. So past it on to people you know and have them pass it to people they know and so on. Let us prove that this mission WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED LIKE THE BEFORE.

Web Copies

For back issues see: GI Special web site at <http://www.militaryproject.org/>

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/> ; www.qifightback.org ;

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>,

www.williambowles.info/qispecial

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