

GI SPECIAL 2#C23



Iraq Veterans Against The War, New York City, NY
Garrie Rouse 8/29/04

(Check it out: www.ivaw.net)

Defend The 343rd! Reserves In Supply Unit Threatened With Punishment For Combat Refusal

[Time to gear up for a coordinated defense effort to make the Army command back off. There is one clear message that makes sense: command can shove these charges up their ass. How about turning out to show the 343rd soldiers real support at any trial command is stupid enough to put on? How about petitions from soldiers all over the world to Congress demanding no trial at all even get started? That's even legal under the UCMJ.]

November 16, 2004 Associated Press

The Army is recommending punishment for about two dozen soldiers from an Army Reserve unit in Iraq that refused orders to drive a fuel convoy because they believed it was too dangerous, officials said Tuesday.

No final decisions have been made, and none of the soldiers has been charged with a crime, the officials said, but preliminary findings of an Army investigation faulted about 24 members of the 343rd Quartermaster Company, which is based at Rock Hill, S.C.

About 18 of the 24 were held for nearly two days after refusing orders to drive a fuel convoy from Tallil Air Base in southern Iraq to a base north of Baghdad. Another six also have been faulted.

Most of the accused face administrative actions such as fines or reduction in rank, although officials said it was possible that some could face courts-martial under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Their refusal to obey orders was deemed to be detrimental to good order and discipline.

Brig. Gen. James E. Chambers, commanding general of 13th Corps Support Command, which manages the provision of fuel, food and ammunition across Iraq, ordered two investigations. One examined the soldiers' refusal of their orders, **and the other focused on allegations that the unit's trucks were unfit for hazardous duty.**

U.S. officers say the refusal to carry out the mission on Oct. 13 was an isolated incident and not an indication of a broader breakdown in discipline. Still, it's no secret that convoy duty is one of the most perilous jobs in Iraq. [If "U.S. officers" want a real shitstorm coming down the road their way, punish these troops. Sooner than they think, they'll be kissing their precious "good order and discipline" good-bye. If troops are punished for refusing, in a reasonable and orderly way, to commit suicide, there are other ways to make the same point infinitely less pleasant for those in command. Can you spell V-I-E-T-N-A-M?]

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Omaha Marine Dies In Iraq On Same Day Son Is Born

November 16, 2004 ASSOCIATED PRESS AND WORLD-HERALD STAFF REPORTS

A 23-year-old Omaha Marine died while fighting in Iraq, the same day he became a father, family members said Tuesday.

Shane Kielion's son was born at about 10 a.m. Monday and Kielion died just hours later, said his aunt Karma Matthews.

Matthews said Kielion never found out he had become a dad.

Kielion, who was on his second tour in Iraq, graduated from Omaha South High School in 1999 and married his high school sweetheart, April, the mother of his new baby.

A standout athlete at South, he was named to the honorable mention World-Herald All-State team in 1999. He won an athletic scholarship to Peru State College.

His former teachers and coaches said he was the quarterback of the football team and a role model.

Football coach Jay Ball said when Kielion came to visit in August, he bragged about his soon-to-be family.

"He was excited about his baby on the way and he always told me how beautiful his wife was," Ball told Omaha TV station KMTV-Channel 3.

The family was not immediately giving interviews about Kielion's death.

Kielion is among four service members from Nebraska and Iowa who have died in Iraq or other conflicts in recent weeks:

November Already Second Deadliest Month For U.S. Troops

11/16/2004 By Robert Burns, WASHINGTON (AP)

U.S. deaths in Iraq this month are approaching 100, making it the second-deadliest month since American forces invaded the country in March 2003, Pentagon records show.

Most of the deaths this month have been in the Fallujah offensive that began Nov. 7. Many Marines and soldiers also have been killed in Ramadi and other cities in Anbar province west of Baghdad, as well as in Mosul in the north, Babil province south of Baghdad and in and around the Iraqi capital.

Support troops also have been killed along supply routes.

This month also is seeing one of the highest wounded totals. The number of wounded jumped by nearly 500 this week, according to Pentagon figures released Tuesday.

Since the start of the war, 8,956 U.S. service members have been wounded, of which nearly 5,000 were serious enough to prevent them from returning to duty. At the start of the month the total was 8,287.

Of the 91 or more U.S. deaths so far this month, it appears most were Marines. The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force led the charge into Fallujah and did much of the house-to-house fighting.

The Pentagon has not yet released names and service affiliation for all the casualties reported this month, so it is impossible to tally the exact number of Marines who've been killed.

Of the first 71 deaths for which identifications were announced, 48 were Marines. Twenty-one were with the Army, and the Navy and Air Force each had one fatality.

The 48 Marine deaths, halfway through November, are the most for any full month during the war except for last April when the corps lost 52 Marines. None of the 48 Marines was older than 29, and most were in their early 20s. Six of the Marines were 19 years old.

Falluja Car Bomb Kills Marine In “100% Secured” City “Not Entirely Under U.S. Control” (!)

16 November, 2004 By Seif Fouad and Andrew Marshall, BAGHDAD, Iraq (Reuters) & By Robert Burns, Associated Press

On Tuesday morning a Marine was killed in a suicide car bomb attack in the south of Falluja, a Marine officer told Reuters. At least 39 U.S. troops have been killed since the start of the Falluja offensive eight days ago.

Although the heaviest fighting in Fallujah is over, Col. Michael Regner, operations chief for the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force said some insurgents were still holding out.

Although 100 percent of the city has been “secured,” Regner said, it is not entirely under U.S. control. [Everybody got that?]

“This is no-kidding street fighting,” Regner said, and the opposing forces are tough.

“Very few are giving up,” he said of the insurgents who remain in the city. **“They’re in there fighting to the death, and they’re making it difficult on Marines and soldiers.”**

SOLDIER DIES AFTER Q WEST IED ATTACK

November 16, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
Release Number: 04-11-15C

LSA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq – A 13th COSCOM Soldier is dead and one is injured after an Improvised Explosive Device blew up on their convoy near Q West at about 10 a.m. Nov. 16.

The injured Soldier was evacuated to a military medical facility.

Soldier Dead In Balad Convoy Ambush

16 November, 2004 By Seif Fouad and Andrew Marshall, BAGHDAD, Iraq (Reuters)

Near Balad, north of Baghdad, a guerrilla attack on a convoy killed one U.S. soldier and wounded another, the military said.

Military Boat Attack In Nassaf Wounds Four

11.15.05 Aljazeera

Four US military boats were attacked and a number of soldiers aboard were wounded after an operation by armed men in the Nassaf district, west of Falluja city, Aljazeera has learned.

Fighting In Baiji

11.15.05 Aljazeera

US troops were engaging fighters on Tuesday in the northern oil refining town of Baiji, witnesses said. **They said fighters had taken to the streets and were waging gun battles with American and Iraqi forces.**

Texas War Dead Break 100;

Second State To Achieve Bad News Record

November 15 by Alma Walzer, Brownsville Herald, (Texas)

McALLEN, Texas — It's taken one year, seven months and 19 days of combat in Iraq for the Lone Star State to lose 100 of its own.

Texas is the second state, after California, to lose 100 service members, according to The Associated Press.

**MOSUL IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



11.16.04 Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion 21st regiment of the Stryker Brigade secure the east side of one of the five bridges across the Tigris River in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. (AFP/Tauseef Mustafa)

Wounded U.S. Troops Describe Massive Insurgent Firepower In Fallujah

Nov. 16, 2004 By Tony Czuczka, ASSOCIATED PRESS

LANDSTUHL, Germany – Fallujah's masked fighters have been fighting house to house, firing from rooftops and mosques with a seemingly unending supply of firepower, wounded U.S. servicemen said Monday, recounting tough urban combat in the Iraqi insurgent stronghold.

"They were ready to fight to the death," Lance Cpl. Travis Schafer, a rifleman with a Marine battalion, told a news conference at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, where

he was being treated for a shrapnel wound in his right hand. A rocket-propelled grenade had exploded 15 yards to his right in a deserted marketplace.

"It's house-to-house fighting," he said. "Rooftop-to-rooftop."

The troops said the insurgents appeared well-organized and heavily armed.

"They had their own little plan of what they were going to do, a pretty set idea of where they were going to fight," said U.S. Army Spc. Kris Clinkscales, 22, of San Antonio, Texas, his right arm in a sling with shrapnel wounds.

Schafer, of Puyallup, Wash., was surprised by the fighters' firepower.

"It seemed like they have a pretty unlimited amount of RPGs and mortars. They seemed to fling those about wildly," he said.

Schafer, with the 1st Marine Regiment, said his unit had only pushed 400 yards into the city before it took heavy fire from small arms, mortars and RPGs.

"They were locking on us with RPGs and mortars from buildings all around us," the 20-year-old said. "Even from mosques they were firing – from all over the place."

Lance Cpl. Ryan Chapman with the 1st Marine Regiment, had an ugly scar over his left eye – a reminder of his encounter with a sniper.

As his unit came under sustained fire, Chapman had been tracking a sniper with the telescopic sight of his wire-guided missile launcher. But he was hit first, with bullet striking his forehead just below the edge of his helmet.

NOT A GOOD DAY



Family members of Marine Lance Cpl. Travis Desiato, 19, from left, his step-mother Laurie Desiato, his half-sister Alli Desiato, his wife Tracey Desiato, his half-sister Nessa, and father Joseph Desiato, walk across the lawn of Joseph's Bedford, Mass. home toward reporters gathered for a news conference Nov. 16, 2004. Travis Desiato, a 19-year-old Marine from Bedford, was killed Monday during fighting in Fallujah. (AP Photo/Josh Reynolds)

Two British Mercenaries Killed

15 November, 2004 BBC News

A man from Hampshire has been killed in a bomb attack while working in Iraq.

Sean Husband died when a bomb went off just outside Basra. He was a former RAF policeman with a wife and two children.

Another unidentified British man died in the attack. Both were working as security consultants for Olive Security, which is based in London.

TROOP NEWS

"Our Mission In Iraq Is Over." Hungarian MPs Vote To Get Out

Nov 15, 2004 BUDAPEST (AFP)

The Hungarian parliament voted to withdraw the country's 300 troops from Iraq by the end of the year, **rejecting a government initiative that would have prolonged the deployment until March 2005.**

Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany earlier this month said the government planned to withdraw the soldiers from Iraq, but wanted to do so three months after their mandate expires, on March 31, in order to see through the Iraqi elections planned for January.

The Iraqi mission has been unpopular in Hungary and public opinion is also strongly in favour of a quick withdrawal. Some 54 percent of Hungarians want the soldiers to return home before year-end, while only 19 percent are in favour of them staying through the Iraqi elections, according to the results of a Median poll published in Nepszabadsag daily on Monday.

A deputy of the main conservative opposition Fidesz party, Istvan Simicsko, however argued that Hungary has already sacrificed enough in Iraq and expressed doubt that the elections would restore order there.

"Our mission in Iraq is over."

Netherlands Rejects Bush, Won't Stay On Either

Nov 15, 2004 BUDAPEST (AFP) & THE HAGUE/BUDAPEST, 16 November 2004
Associated Press, Arab News

Dutch Foreign Minister Ben Bot on Monday confirmed his country's decision to withdraw its troops from Iraq next March, despite a call by Washington for the troops to remain involved in the strife-torn country.

"We leave Iraq by the middle of March. That is the decision. That decision still stands" Bot told foreign correspondents.

On Friday, the US State Department urged the Netherlands to stay on.

The Netherlands has 1,300 soldiers serving under British command in southern Iraq.

"We will leave Iraq by mid-March .. By that time Iraqi security will have taken over," Bot told journalists in The Hague.

Resistance Grows: “Hell No, We Won’t Go” Ordered To War, Former Soldiers Fight Back

November 16, 2004 By MONICA DAVEY, New York Times

The Army has encountered resistance from more than 2,000 former soldiers it has ordered back to military work, complicating its efforts to fill gaps in the regular troops.

Many of these former soldiers - some of whom say they have not trained, held a gun, worn a uniform or even gone for a jog in years - object to being sent to Iraq and Afghanistan now, after they thought they were through with life on active duty.

They are seeking exemptions, filing court cases or simply failing to report for duty, moves that will be watched closely by approximately 110,000 other members of the Individual Ready Reserve, a corps of soldiers who are no longer on active duty but still are eligible for call-up.

In the last few months, the Army has sent notices to more than 4,000 former soldiers informing them that they must return to active duty, but more than 1,800 of them have already requested exemptions or delays, many of which are still being considered.

And, of about 2,500 who were due to arrive on military bases for refresher training by Nov. 7, 733 had not shown up.

Still, the resistance puts further strain on a military that has summoned reserve troops in numbers not seen since World War II and forced thousands of soldiers in Iraq to postpone their departures when their enlistment obligations ended.

Tensions are flaring between the Army and some of its veterans, who say they are surprised and confused about their obligations and unsure where to turn.

"I consider myself a civilian," said Rick Howell, a major from Tuscaloosa, Ala., who said he thought he had left the Army behind in 1997 after more than a decade flying helicopters. "I've done my time. I've got a brand new baby and a wife, and I haven't touched the controls of an aircraft in seven years. I'm 47 years old. How could they be calling me? How could they even want me?"

Some former soldiers acknowledge that the Army has every right to call them back, but argue that their personal circumstances - illness, single parenthood, financial woes - make going overseas impossible now.

Others say they do not believe they are eligible to be returned to active duty because, they contend, they already finished the obligations they signed up for when they joined the military. A handful of such former soldiers, scattered across the country, have filed lawsuits making that claim in federal courts.

These former soldiers are not among the part-time soldiers - reservists and National Guard members - who receive paychecks and train on weekends, and who have been called up in large numbers over the last three years.

Instead, these are members of the Individual Ready Reserve, a pool of former soldiers seldom ordered back to work. Ordinarily, these former soldiers do not get military pay, nor do they train. They receive points toward a military retirement and an address form to update once a year.

When soldiers enlist, they typically agree to an eight-year commitment to the Army but often are allowed to end active duty sooner. Some of them join the Reserves or National Guard to complete their commitment; others finish their time in the Individual Ready Reserve.

For officers, the commitment does not expire unless they formally resign their commissions in writing, a detail some insist they did not know and were not told when they signed their contracts, although Army officials strongly dispute that.

Of those seeking exemptions now only 3 percent of requests for exemptions have been turned down, while 45 percent have been approved.

As for the former soldiers who failed to appear at bases by their assigned dates, the Army is trying to reach them, one by one, to discuss their circumstances, Colonel Hart said. **In late September, some Army officials suggested that they would pursue harsher punishments - declaring people AWOL and possibly pursuing military charges - but the Army has since taken a quieter, more conciliatory approach.**

"These are challenging times in their lives," Colonel Hart said, adding that some former soldiers who failed to report might have moved and not received the Army's notice. "We're contacting them as best as possible."

For the rest, though, some questions linger over who really qualifies for the callback.

Colette Parrish said she burst into tears the evening that her husband, Todd, walked into their house in Cary, N.C., with a letter from the Army calling him back to service. "We had no idea this could happen," she said. "We hadn't been preparing for any of it because we thought it wasn't possible."

At first, Mr. Parrish, 31, said he was convinced that the letter was just an administrative error because he believed that his time in the Individual Ready Reserve had ended.

He had gone to college on an R.O.T.C. scholarship, then served four years as a field artillery officer. He said he resigned his commission after that, became an engineer, and still owed the Army four years in the Individual Ready Reserve to complete his total obligation.

To Mr. Parrish, who has filed a lawsuit against the Army in federal court in North Carolina, that obligation ended on Dec. 19, 2003. But the Army apparently does not agree, and says that it never accepted Mr. Parrish's resignation as an officer.

As the court fight has continued, Mr. Parrish's date to report to Fort Sill, Okla., has been pushed back, again and again, one month at a time. Instead of thinking about long-term plans, for his wife and their future family, he is living in 30-day increments.

He said he always looked back on his service years fondly, and with a deep sense of patriotism.

"I guess I feel disillusioned now," he said. "This isn't about being for or against the war. It's not about Democrats or Republicans. It's just a contract, and I don't think this is right. If they need more people, shouldn't they get them the right way? How many more like me are there?"

Mark Waple, Mr. Parrish's lawyer, said he had received calls from 30 other former soldiers in recent months, all of whom had heard of Mr. Parrish's case and had similar stories.

At least two other former soldiers have filed suit over the question.

Barry Slotnick, lawyer, said he wondered how many soldiers might be in similar positions, but without the money, the contacts or the certainty to sue.....

"We might as well add another phone bank," Mr. Slotnick said. "What I can see is that there are many, many cases of people being called up that shouldn't have been. This is a backdoor draft. I also have to wonder how many are already in Iraq who shouldn't be there, who just didn't think to question it."

The Army's current plan is to fill 4,400 jobs through March from among 5,600 former soldiers ordered to duty. **But an Army official said last month that more former soldiers, perhaps in similar numbers, might be called on later next year, as well.**

Months ago, the Army said some of the former soldiers would be needed to play the French horn, the clarinet, the euphonium, the saxophone and the electric bass as part of the military's bands, but the notion drew criticism from members of Congress who questioned the need to order people to give up their civilian lives to play instruments.

Colonel Hart said the Army has since filled the musician jobs with volunteers.

Before going to Iraq, former soldiers are receiving as many days of training as they need, an Army spokesman said. Some of the soldiers said they were worried, though, about the prospect and safety of trying to get up to speed in a few months.

"These guys like me are basically untrained civilians now," said Mr. Howell, the former helicopter test pilot. **Mr. Howell said he left the Army years ago with an injured back, knee and elbow, leaving him wondering about his own physical condition.**

"I don't even have a uniform anymore," he said. "But they don't have any more reserves left, so we're it. All they want is some bodies to go to Iraq, just someone to be there, to sit on the ground."

When he left the military in 1997 as part of a reduction in forces, Mr. Howell said, he saw a note in the "little print" in his annuity agreement about a future commitment. But he said he was told that his obligation to the Individual Ready Reserve would be brief and meant little anyway. "They said it was just a way of having me on the books," he said.

After that, Mr. Howell said, he jumped into the civilian world. He got married. He and his new wife began building a house. They struggled to have children.

In September, his first child, Clayton, was born. Just before that, his orders arrived.

"It does rip my heart out that these young men and women are over there, and there is part of me that wants to be with them," he said recently. "But I have responsibilities here now."

Mr. Howell said he had applied to the Army for an exemption but was recently turned down. If he loses his appeal, he will be given a new reporting date. His best hope, he said, is that his appeal is buried somewhere at the very bottom of a big stack of them.

Another Asshole In Action: Officer Says “The Army Does Not Make Mistakes” Vet Says “I Don’t Want To Get Arrested In Front Of My Kids”

November 14, 2004 By Dennis Roddy, PG Publishing Co., Inc.

"They basically told me that my Marine Corps time doesn't count as military service," Pistorius said.

GREENVILLE, Pa. -- Three years after he was honorably discharged from the Army, Frederick Pistorius was surprised to learn he was a deserter.

But there it was, on his doorstep: a letter from Barry W. Kimmons, Deputy Chief, Deserter Information Point Extension Office of the Army Reserve Personnel Command.

"On 12 July 2004 you were involuntarily mobilized to active duty in the United States Army," the letter says. "To date you have not reported to your mobilization station as required by your orders."

Possibly Pistorius had not responded for two reasons. The Pistorius family had moved from the address in Sharon, Pa., to which the Army had sent its first letter. **More saliently, having served honorably in not one but two branches of the U.S. military, with no additional obligation showing on his discharge papers, Pistorius would have had no reason to think he was subject to anything but his civilian job at a local steel plant.**

Wendy Pistorius opened the letter and immediately telephoned an official at the Army reserve command in St. Louis.

"I told him there must be a mistake, because my husband had fulfilled his obligation," she said. **"He basically told me that the Army does not make mistakes and that the orders were valid and if he did not show up as per the orders he would be prosecuted and taken to jail." [The Army “does not make mistakes?” How about following the orders of a despicable criminal and traitor, George W. Bush, to invade Iraq for no honorable reason at all, occupying the country and butchering its inhabitants for his Imperial dreams? That’s not a world class mistake?]**

So began a two-month journey through the Army of Franz Kafka.

The paper trail is fairly straightforward on this one.

Pistorius joined the Marine Corps in 1993. When he left the corps, he had a reserve obligation that expired June 25, 2000. The pool into which he would have gone is called the Individual Ready Reserve -- essentially former military available for service in times of emergency. After a few months of knocking around for work, Pistorius decided to go back into the military, get more training in his specialty -- cook -- and complete his reserve obligation with full-time duty. The Marines weren't taking back departed members who'd been out for a year, so, in 1998, he joined the Army, signing a three-year contract.

Pistorius was honorably discharged from the Army in July 20, 2001. His certificate of release attests to his accomplishments: Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Sharpshooter qualification. **The upper corner is the spot in which the military lists a departing member's reserve obligation, the amount of time discharged soldiers, sailors and Marines remain subject to recall. For Pistorius, the boxes contain a succession of zeroes.**

Because he was discharged well after his prior reserve obligation had passed, the Army laid no further claim to him, until someone in St. Louis ignored those zeroes and went hunting for a fresh body to fill a manpower shortage that grows more painful with every Iraqi sunset.

"They basically told me that my Marine Corps time doesn't count as military service," Pistorius said.

Faced with a threat of AWOL charges, and worried that a spotless military record was about to be stained, Pistorius headed last month to Camp McGrady in South Carolina.

"The first thing they did was thank us for showing up," Pistorius said. **"They had 150 that were supposed to show up and about 75 did. Of those 75 maybe only 40 or 50 are medically fit."**

Here, Pistorius's Army recruitment contract comes into play. It was the one document he says he had not kept, figuring his military days were over. The Army public affairs office did not return phone calls asking about the matter so we have only Pistorius' version. He said he asked for a copy, but was always told the thing was "in transit" from St. Louis. The contract would settle any questions about whether he might have, inadvertently, signed up for another round of reserve duty, but it seems implausible.

Equally implausible were the men who turned up at Camp McGrady last month.

When I first spoke to Pistorius, by telephone from the camp, he said nobody had been given a physical. He told his Army commanders that he had a permanent back injury from a car crash. They were unimpressed by a letter from his chiropractor. His pre-deployment health assessment lists him in this word: "Deployable."

Pistorius spoke with his captain.

"He said everybody here's going to Iraq," Pistorius said. "It's unbelievable some of the guys they're bringing down there."

One man arrived with a hospital identification band still on his wrist. He'd just had knee surgery. One 48-year-old from Alabama had a hip replacement and fused vertebrae in his back.

"He showed them the documents, but they still made him come down to be examined by their doctors," Pistorius said. Pistorius spoke of a man called back from upstate New York.

"He had no teeth and he had arthritis in his leg," he said.

Andrew Bacevich, a retired Army colonel and now a professor at Boston University, wasn't surprised at the report.

"The Individual Ready Reserve -- that title is a misnomer. They're not ready," Bacevich said. "It's the equivalent of me walking out here on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, and taking the first 5,000 people I meet and saying 'you're now in the military.'" [That's called "press ganging." It was one of the causes of the American Revolution in 1776, and still good cause for revolution in 2004.]

At Camp McGrady, Pistorius kept up his campaign to convince the Army they had essentially drafted a civilian. Back home, Wendy Pistorius assembled a list of numbers: St. Louis, her senator's office, the White House. One person would tell her that her husband shouldn't have been called up. Another would tell Frederick Pistorius that it was simply his turn.

He said at one point an Army lawyer in South Carolina held out the receiver so he could hear the person on the other end explain that his big problem was showing up. So many people had either moved or ignored their orders to report that the Army was loath to part with a reasonably healthy one that had.

Suddenly, on Nov. 5, Pistorius was ordered to pack up. He was driven to the airport and told he was going home. At the last minute, he was handed a letter declaring: "You are released from active duty, by reason of physical disability." He had already packed up the pre-deployment assessment that said precisely the opposite. **The letter also says he's subject to reserve obligation until Feb. 26, 2006.**

The Pistorius family, with its three children, ages 6, 5 and 2, is now trying to figure out what to do without a month's wages. "I just put everything off," Wendy Pistorius said. "I paid only the bills I absolutely had to."

The Army took back the family separation allowance he was given when called to Camp McGrady. Frederick Pistorius is working a swing shift at the local tube plant and trying to figure out if the Army still considers him a reservist and if he's going to get another letter from St. Louis.

"I don't want to get arrested in front of my kids," he said.

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)

Deserters Or Unsung Heroes? St. Patrick's Battalion

<http://www.hispanianews.com/archive/2000/March17/01.htm>

[As Abraham Lincoln and others pointed out at the time, the Mexican War of 1846 was begun by slaveholders, who controlled the U.S. government, to add more slaveholding territory to the United States. Many Americans opposed to slavery opposed the war, refused to vote money for it in Congress, and some called for the military defeat of the U.S. invasion of Mexico. This story is about a group of Americans who took up arms to fight for Mexico, and against the slaveholders' invasion and occupation.]

The St. Patrick Battalion (El Batallón de San Patricio) was a unique unit of the Mexican Army during the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848. Some say they were heroic men, some say they were just deserters.

What made this outfit exceptional was that it was composed almost entirely of deserters from the United States Army who, after defecting, fought on the Mexican side in five major battles.

In Occupied America, Rodolfo Acuña states that "there is ample evidence that the United States provoked the war...Zachary Taylor's (General of the US Army of Occupation) artillery leveled the Mexican city of Matamoros, killing hundreds of innocent civilians with la bomba (the bomb)...

The occupation that followed was even more terrorizing. Taylor's regular army was allegedly kept in control, but the volunteers (about 2,000 in Matamoros) presented another matter.

Taylor knew about the atrocities, but...little was done to restrain the men, of which Taylor himself admitted 'there is scarcely a form of crime that has not been reported to me as committed by them.'

"An interesting sidelight is that many Irish immigrants, as well as some other Anglos, deserted to the Mexican side, forming the San Patricio Corps (El Batallón de San Patricio)...due 'to the inborn distaste of the masses of war, to bad treatment, and to poor subsistence.' Many of the Irish were also Catholic, and they resented the treatment of Catholic priests and nuns by the invading Protestants.

According to Miller's book, Shamrock and Sword, renegades who crossed the Rio Grande formed the nucleus of the unique San Patricio unit of the Mexican Army. The Irish-born deserter, John Riley, later claimed credit for organizing the outfit. In a letter to the Mexican president he stated: 'Since April 1846 when I separated from the North American forces...I have served constantly under the Mexican flag. In Matamoros I formed a company of 48 Irishmen...' By July of 1847, the number of San Patricios had increased to more than 200.

During the two years of war, Mexicans called this unique outfit by various names; some designations were official, others coined by the people. Unofficially, the group was called the Irish Volunteers, or the Colorados - or Red Guards - so named because of the many redheaded and ruddy-complexioned men in it, or the San Patricio Guards. Officially, the unit began as the San Patricio Company, an artillery outfit that later expanded to two companies. In mid-1847, the Mexican war department reassigned the men as infantrymen and merged the San Patricio companies into the newly-created Foreign Legion (Legión Extranjera), which some Britons and Americans called the Legion of Strangers. In 1848, the Mexican president expanded the companies and formed the Saint Patrick's Battalion.

The San Patricios served under a distinctive military banner. John Riley said the emerald green ensign had an image of Saint Patrick emblazoned on one side, with a shamrock and the harp Erin outlined on the other. A Yankee soldier commented of the San Patricio's standard: "A beautiful green silk banner waved over their heads; on it glittered a silver cross and a golden harp, embroidered by the hands of the fair nuns of San Luis Potosí."

A wartime newspaper correspondent from New Orleans described the San Patricio flag captured at the battle of Churubusco: The banner is of green silk, and on one side is a harp, surmounted by the Mexican coat of arms, with a scroll on which is painted, 'Libertad para la República Mexicana.' Underneath the harp is the motto 'Erin go Bragh' (Ireland for Ever). On the other side is painting...made to represent St. Patrick, in his left hand a key and in his right a crook or staff resting upon a serpent. Underneath is painted San Patricio."

The San Patricios fought in five major battles with the Mexican Army: On May 3, 1846 in Matamoros; on September 21, 1846 in Monterrey; on February 22, 1847 at the Battle of Buena Vista (Angostura, for the Mexicans); on April 17, 1847 at Cerro Gordo, and August 20, 1847 at Churubusco.

Its name being derived from an Aztec word meaning 'place of the war god,' Churubusco became the site of one of the bloodiest battles of the Mexican war, an engagement that also marked the military zenith of the San Patricios and their last battle in the war as a unit.

For the Americans, their victory at Churubusco was a momentous and dramatic event. Besides its strategic and psychological importance, the battle yielded 1,259 prisoners, including 104 officers...Of special importance were the captured San Patricios, among them Brevet Major John Riley.

Although the San Patricios were defeated at Churubusco, their proficiency and bravery elicited praise from various Mexicans: Santa Anna said that if he had commanded a few hundred more men like them, he would have won the battle.

San Patricio casualties at Churubusco were devastating: when the battle began, the two companies were apparently at full strength of 102 men each. Three hours later 60 percent of the men were either dead or had been captured by the enemy; 85 were taken prisoner, 72 of whom were accused of deserting the US Army and the remaining up to 90 men had escaped.

In *Occupied America*, Acuña states that it is estimated that as many as 260 Anglo-Americans fought with the Mexicans at Churubusco in 1847. Some 80 appear to have been captured...A number were found not guilty of deserting and were released. About 15, who had deserted before the declaration of war, were merely branded with a "D," and 50 of those taken at Churubusco were executed.' Others received 200 lashes and were forced to dig graves for their executed comrades.

With the exception of two prisoners, Ellis and Pieper, the military courts at Tacubaya and San Angel found all (the San Patricios) guilty of desertion and they sentenced 68 men "to be hanged by the neck until dead."

While these sentences were being reviewed by the commander-in-chief, dozens of individuals begged American authorities to spare the lives of the San Patricios. In his General Orders 281 and 283, issued the second week of September of 1847, General Scott confirmed the capital punishment verdict for 50 San Patricios, but he pardoned five men and reduced the sentences of 15 others.

Instead of being hanged, John Riley and 14 others reprieved San Patricios were to be given 50 lashes, "well laid on their bare back," and to be hot-iron branded with a two-inch letter "D" for deserter; 12 were branded on the right cheek, the others of the right hip.

Still dressed in their Mexican uniforms, the Americans hanged 16 other San Patricio traitors, who had white caps drawn over their heads. Their bodies were buried nearby; ordered to do it, John Riley and the other branded prisoners dug graves directly under the gallows for nine of their companions. The other seven were interred by priests in the nearby cemetery of Tlaquepaque (Tlacopac).

The 16 San Patricios who were hanged in San Angel dangled from a wooden gallows erected for that purpose, but two American writers claimed that the culprits were hanged "from limbs of a large tree."

Two days after the San Angel hangings, Colonel William Selby Harney executed with unwarranted cruelty the remaining 30 convicted San Patricios.

With medals, memorial plaques, annual ceremonies and public schools honoring them, clearly the San Patricios are treated as heroes in Mexico.

North of the Rio Grande, by contrast, the story of the Saint Patrick's Battalion is hardly known. Occasionally, there is a passing reference, often erroneous, in United States history books. As for the individual San Patricios- at least those who deserted from the United States Army- they have always been regarded by North Americans as traitors. Yankee writers invariably have maintained that those defectors who were caught deserved their fate.

For most, the story of the San Patricios is a tragedy, as all war stories are.

(from Shamrock and Sword, Robert Miller and Occupied America, Rodolfo Acuña .
Special thanks to Prof. Roberto Treviño, UC-CS.)

Duh!

By Greg Mitchell NEW YORK (November 11, 2004) Editor and Publisher

Jackie Spinner, the Washington Post embed with the Marines in Fallujah, said in an online chat from the battleground (the mind boggles) on Thursday: **"No one I've talked to believes that solving the Fallujah problem will end the violence in Iraq. But, as one Marine officer told me, not solving the Fallujah problem will not end it either."**

Gen. Richard B. Myers Exposed As Lying Stack Of Shit: Few Foreigners Among Insurgents

November 16 2004 By John Hendren, L.A. Times Staff Writer

CAMP FALLOUJA, Iraq — The battle for the city of Fallouja is giving U.S. military commanders some insight into this country's insurgency, ***painting a portrait of a home-grown uprising dominated by Iraqis, not foreign fighters.***

Of the more than 1,000 men between the ages of 15 and 55 who were captured in intense fighting in the center of the insurgency over the last week, just 15 are confirmed foreign fighters, Gen. George W. Casey, the top U.S. ground commander in Iraq, said Monday.

But despite an intense focus on the network of Jordanian-born militant Abu Musab Zarqawi by U.S. and Iraqi officials, who have insisted that most Iraqis support the country's interim government, **American commanders said their best estimates of the proportion of foreigners among their enemies is about 5%.**

Before the battle, U.S. officials frequently stressed the role of foreign fighters in Fallouja. Last week, as the battle got underway, Gen. Richard B. Myers told reporters that the city was "a major safe haven for former regime elements and foreign fighters, in particular Zarqawi and his folks."



A child leaves art work at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, U.S. Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (Please contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) for more examples of his outstanding work. T)

Windsor Man Severely Hurt: Loses Foot In Roadside Bomb; "He Was Ready To Come Home"

November 16, 2004 By JEREMY HAY, THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

A Windsor man severely injured last week in a roadside bombing in Iraq that also killed a National Guard soldier from Sebastopol was flying back to the United States on Monday, family members said.

Daniel Nevins, 31, a sergeant with the Santa Rosa-based 579th Engineer Battalion of the California Army National Guard, lost his left foot in the explosion Wednesday and suffered extensive injuries to his left thigh and right ankle.

"He's thankful to be alive for sure," his wife, Nicole Nevins, said Monday afternoon as she waited nervously for Army officials to call with the news that her husband of 2½ years had arrived safely at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

"He knows it could have been a lot worse," she said.

Nevins was riding in the rear seat of an armored Humvee driven by Sgt. 1st Class Mike Ottolini, 45, of Sebastopol when one of the roadside bombs favored by Iraqi insurgents detonated not far outside Camp Anaconda, a 15-square-mile U.S. military base about 50 miles north of Baghdad where about 25,000 soldiers are based.

Ottolini was killed in the 4:15 a.m. explosion. He was the third Sonoma County resident to die since the U.S.-led invasion began in March 2003 and also the third combat death in the 579th's history.

Ottolini's squad was on its way to drop off Nevins and the six soldiers he commanded in the 1st Squad Assault and Obstacle, Nicole Nevins said.

Her phone rang at 7:20 a.m. Wednesday as she readied to go to work. The caller asked if she was sitting down, if she had a paper and pen ready.

"I was hysterical at that point," she recalled. "I said, 'I'm not answering any more questions until you tell me if he's dead.' "

Her husband, whom she calls Danny, wasn't. Nor was he missing in action, the other news she most dreaded.

Then her cell phone rang. It was Danny, who shipped out to Iraq in March 2004, calling from Camp Anaconda.

"Hello, baby," he said. He was sedated by painkillers; his voice was bleary.

Nevins, a 5-foot-10 Maryland native who joined the Army out of high school and enlisted in the Army Reserves soon after completing his four-year tour of duty, was flown Thursday to Germany's Landstuhl Regional Medical Center to be stabilized.

Nevins shared little of his recollections about what happened, his wife said. He saw his severed foot and his spouting blood, and he remembered having to apply pressure to his wound, she said.

He has spoken even less about the death of Ottolini, with whom he'd served since shipping out, she said.

"He's really grieving," she said. "Usually my husband will talk really openly about things, but he can't talk about it yet."

In Iraq, his missions included jobs she described as "favorable" - helping to build five schools and install water and electrical services in the rural region of Balad.

His work also included "less favorable jobs" she said: hunting for insurgents in dirt-floored huts occupied by frightened Iraqis.

A pharmaceutical sales representative for Pfizer Inc., Nevins was called to active duty in December 2003 and left for Iraq in March with the 579th's Petaluma-based A Company.

Nicole Nevins said her husband loves the Army and believes in the war effort. But during a leave home in September, he was tired, she said. "He was ready to come home."

The couple met in North Carolina and moved to Sonoma County in 1999. They have no children. His father and brother live in Maryland, and he has a 10-year-old daughter from a previous marriage.

Nicole Nevins plans to fly to Washington, where her husband will start a rehabilitation program that could take a year. They already have talked of changes that will need to be made: A bedroom downstairs, a ramp for a wheel chair.

"Who knows what would have happened if he'd stayed there longer," she said.

Big Spring Grad Wounded; "We Were Never Informed"



Yearbook Photo

November 16, 2004 By Linda Franz, The Sentinel, Carlisle, Pa

When Diane Brown attended a Veterans Day service in Newville Thursday to accept a state House of Representatives citation honoring her son, Marine Pfc. Matt Brown, for his service in Iraq, she had no idea he had been wounded the day before.

Scott Hoachlander, Matt's stepfather, says Brown was injured Nov. 10,

"They operated on him in the field in Fallujah," Hoachlander says. "From what I'm being told, the bullet went into his thigh near the groin" and tore up a vein. Medical personnel took other veins from his calf to repair his thigh injury.

The family found out their son was injured when authorities at Bethesda Naval Hospital called for authorization to do a second surgery.

"We were never notified," Hoachlander says. "They said it was just one of the glitches in the system."

Diane Brown left for Bethesda, where she remains, shortly after she learned her son was there. He is expected to make a complete recovery.

Hoachlander says the surgery in Bethesda included reopening his wound to make sure it was cleaned out and nothing missed in the field surgery.

Brown, 20, graduated from Big Spring High School in 2003. He had been in Iraq since June, Hoachlander says.

"He was never allowed to say where he was," Hoachlander says. But "the last phone call we got, we knew he was going in (to Fallujah). You could tell by the way he sounded."

Brown was a wrestler and band member while a student at Big Spring High School. Board members signed a get-well card for him at their meeting Monday night.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



Gas pipeline fire in the northern Riyadh region, some 38 miles southwest of Kirkuk, Nov. 16, 2004. Saboteurs triggered an explosion, setting off a fire which was still burning hours later. (AP Photo/Yahya Ahmed)



Iraqis view a burning oil pipe in the town of Fathat Baiji November 15, 2004. (Reuters)

WELCOME TO BAQUBA: YOUR IDEAL VACATION GETAWAY



11.16.04 Rebel fighters inspect burning vehicles close to the Iraqi city of Baquba. US-led forces in Baquba battled with up to 150 insurgents, killing at least 21 of them in fierce clashes.(AFP/Ali Youssef)

16 November 2004 By Alissa J. Rubin, The Los Angeles Times

Even before nightfall, Baqubah's streets were empty and shops were closed. **U.S. forces withdrew to their bases. Iraqi police and national guardsmen stayed close to their stations rather than patrol or set up checkpoints.**

War In Mosul

16 November 2004 Aljazeera & By Alissa J. Rubin, The Los Angeles Times & By Katarina Kratovac, Associated Press Writer & By YOCHI J. DREAZEN and GREG JAFFE Staff Reporters of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



An Iraqi insurgent points his rifle towards a blazing oil storage tank near the northern city of Mosul November 15, 2004. (Reuters)

Contrary to interim Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's statements that Mosul was under his government's control, several dozen fighters have dispersed about the city and taken up defensive positions. Nearly of the city's residents are staying indoors for fear of getting caught in the crossfire.

On Sunday insurgents snatched an injured policeman from his hospital bed, killed and mutilated the man and hung his corpse in a public area.

The crumbling of Iraqi security forces in Mosul is "not a good news story," said one military official in the Pentagon.

Witnesses said three police stations already under the control of insurgents were blown up this morning before the militants left.

The Zuhour police station, and a substation in northeastern Mosul were destroyed, along with Qahira police station in the northern part of the city.

"We are in the process of securing all of police stations and returning the police to these stations to put in place a strong police presence," said Capt. Angela Bowman, of the Task Force Olympia. [Hello? Earth to Capt. Bowman? Put "a strong police presence" *where*? Isn't anybody cluing you in to reality? Can you see this picture? Guess what it shows.]

FORMER POLICE STATION, MOSUL



Men walk on the rubble of a destroyed police station in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. (11.16.04 AFP/Mujahed Mohammed)

OCCUPATION REPORT

Isn't Sovereignty Wonderful? U.S. Command Arrests Senior Member Of Sunni Political Party

November 16, 2004 (AP) & Aljazeera

U.S. forces arrested a senior member of an influential Sunni political party Tuesday after a dawn raid on his Baghdad home, party officials said.

Naseer Ayaef, a high-ranking member of the Iraqi Islamic Party, was taken into custody in the northwestern Jamiah neighborhood **in retaliation for the party's opposition to the U.S.-led offensive on the rebel city of Fallujah, party official Ayad al-Samarrai told The Associated Press.**

"This action is a kind of punishment to the (Iraqi) Islamic Party because we object to what is happening in Iraq, especially Fallujah and to the security policies adopted by the Americans and the Iraqi government," al-Samarrai said.

Ayaef, a member of the interim Iraqi National Council, a government oversight body, was also part of the Fallujah delegation that tried and failed to negotiate peace talks with the central government.

Last week, the Iraqi Islamic Party, one of the strongest Sunni political parties in the country had withdrawn from the interim government to protest the U.S. assault, saying it "has led and will lead to more killings and genocide without mercy from the Americans." The Iraqi Islamic Party is the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, a moderate Sunni Islamic party well established in the Middle East.

Last week, the Iraqi Islamic Party, one of the strongest Sunni political parties in the country had withdrawn from the interim government to protest at the US assault in Falluja, saying it "has led and will lead to more killings and genocide without mercy from the Americans." **Al-Samarrai said the detained official "spent the past few weeks devoting all his efforts to offering humanitarian aid to the families fleeing Falluja".**

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

Received:

From: L Griswold
To: GI Special

Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2004 2:27 AM
Subject: Thanks for Your Review of "Touch A Name On The Wall" CD

Your review of the Annie & The Vets CD, "Touch A Name On The Wall," in the GI newsletter was forwarded to me. **I'm the sister of the helicopter combat pilot, Scott Craig Griswold, whose name and face appear on the CD jacket.**

Your review was eloquent and powerful. Thanks so much for your words and reflections, I hope a lot of folks read them.

Sincerely,
Maureen A. Griswold,
San Jose, CA
US Army Nurse Corps 1977-1980

Reply: Honored to be of service. If anybody missed the news of this terrific CD by Vets For Peace members, it's to be found at: <http://www.militaryproject.org/> between 2#C14 and 2#C15.

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/qi-special/> ; www.qifightback.org ;
<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/qi-special.htm>,
www.williambowles.info/qispecial

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