

GI SPECIAL 2#C20

NO MORE. BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



At the funeral of Nathan Wood, Marine LCpl age 19, in Kirkland, WA. Nathan was killed Aug 9 in Fallujah. His best friend, Garrett Ware, also a Marine fighting in Falluja, was injured and sent home with a purple heart. In this image Garrett hugs Nathan's father, Rex Wood.

aaronhuey.com

Broken Finger Pointers

Of course we aren't protecting America. That is the lie the public is fed so the masses don't get weighed down with guilt at the atrocities committed here in Iraq. Just like the fear of reds in from the 50's and 70's, we are battling the "terrorist threat".

The boys here can see plainly enough that these so called terrorists are simple farmers that can't find America on a map. But they are willing to die to live unoppressed. The only innocents are the Iraqi's in the way of the Imperialist goal.

From: G, Soldier, Iraq

To: GI Special

Sent: Tuesday, November 23, 2004 5:55 AM

Subject: Broken Finger Pointers

I wanted to respond to "Joy", who wrote a Dear US Soldier letter in GI Special 2#C28 "Let Us Be Your Voice". **[The letter is reproduced below.]**

A lot of my fellow soldiers know that we have been used by the government and are pawns in a war to make the rich man richer. But you know what? We are only products of our society.

To point at the service man and claim that this is our problem, and worst of all our fault, is too much. The American soldier is a representative of the American public. Our actions are a reflection of the will of our nation. That is how the military is perceived by the eyes of a foreigner.

Apathy is as much a crime as the ignorant soldier fighting to expand the Elitist Empire.

What is the bulk of Americans doing to stop the machine? Are you willing to throw your body into the gears as a sacrifice. **Any soldier that refuses his orders is doing just that.** We face imprisonment and a loss of all that we have worked hard for our entire service. My earlier work in the military as a peace keeper in Kosovo was something I am proud of.

To throw that all away is a sacrifice. Just as it would be for you to quit your job and risk imprisonment to take protest demonstration to the next level. We all have comfort zones and there is a limit we can convince the average person to go before they get cold feet.

That limit in the armed forces is very restrained. We are watched like hawks by our superiors for the slightest sign of subversion. It isn't like quitting your job at Wal-Mart, because you feel that they are a big business corrupting your small town. The Uniform Code Of Military Justice is unforgiving and certain rights that a civilian possesses is absent for the soldier.

Resistance begins at home. I want you to say NO. Don't pay your taxes. The tax money goes to the war. You are funding this war. Stopping driving your car. Stop using petroleum products. Say "No". The point is the fact that America is subdued into a life of middle class luxuries and will not rise up and resist as long as they are guaranteed their easy living.

To assume that we will all accept jobs fighting our own people is wicked. Who the hell do you think we are? We are the American people also.

Look around the streets, shopping centers and neighborhoods. You will see us there. We are any person of physical health. Just imagine the guy next to you on the bus in a uniform or the kid that holds the door open for you with an M16 in his nervous hands. We are no different than anyone else. Joined because the current environment in America makes it an easy option for collage money and an escape from our dead end lives in the ghettos and small no-where towns in the States.

Of course we aren't protecting America. That is the lie the public is fed so the masses don't get weighed down with guilt at the atrocities committed here in Iraq.

Just like the fear of reds in from the 50's and 70's, we are battling the "terrorist threat".

The boys here can see plainly enough that these so called terrorists are simple farmers that can't find America on a map. But they are willing to die to live un-oppressed. The only innocents are the Iraqi's in the way of the Imperialist goal.

You believe you are innocent? Every American has blood on his hands for allowing this to happen. Just because you aren't the person pulling the trigger doesn't make you free of blame.

I don't want a parade or a statue. Even the medals on my chest are meaningless. They won't bring back my friends or my soul. These things are handed out to encourage the soldiers pride in his evil assignment. I want the war to end more than you have the understanding for.

But, a memorial is in order.

Not for the patriotic sense. But America will need to remember the past. If we fill the nation with walls of names maybe finally we will realize the horrors of war. History will repeat itself without education of the past.

If I am spit on by anyone I will not feel anger or shame. I will feel pity for the person that did it. Because, they have no clue on the complexity of what it takes for a country to motivate and support a war like this. Their shallow understanding of the world is so narrow and for that I will be very sad. Because our nation is a failure in education and compassion. Are there still self righteous finger pointers out there? Just because they voted Green Party feel that they have completed all their responsibilities to their nation.

I think we have to learn to accept that we are all to blame before we can look each other in the eyes and cast blame. We have to deal with our own crimes before we can look ourselves in the mirror and be proud. Instead of looking for forgiveness, seek to repair the damage we have done to our country and all the ones we have destroyed with our tampering.

To ask me to turn my skills and my rifle on the American elite is just as wrong as an Iraq war. It will result in more violence as people choose sides. The Civil War was the bloodiest war for the American people. Imagine another with today's weapons. When I am out of the service I am going to bury my gun in the ground and pick up a pen, a degree, and a protest sign. Peaceful revolution is the only logical answer.

I go back to work here in Iraq. To finish my tour and take the situation I have placed my self in and do as much good as I can. I save lives every day, American soldiers and innocent Iraqis.

I also take lives of the insurgents and that is a demon I will swallow after great efforts of positive change and voicing my opinions on the war. I understand my place and know what I am guilty of. I believe every American citizen better realized their part in the war as well.

By dividing we only become more polarized and less effective. **We need to learn to unite and share the sins of the war in Iraq to become a stronger enemy of hate, greed and tyranny.**

"Imagine"-Lennon,

B. Iraq

[This is the original letter:]

Dear U.S. Soldier

From: "joy"

To: GI Special

Sent: Friday, November 12, 2004 2:18 AM

dear US soldier

GISpecial - breath of fresh air in this stale bullshit environment in the states.

democracy is a scam in america. by the time you return in a decade or so it will be just another totalitarian nightmare run by a corrupt ruling elite, just like the one you helping install in iraq.

I am sure you will find a lot jobs on your return, all that training will come in handy here as your government is slowly is turning on its own people. Perhaps, they will just redeploy you here on Operation: Freedom Over.

Can't thank you for the job you doing in iraq as I am opposed to war and pissed at the disgrace that you have brought on our country; following orders just doesn't cut it in the land of the free. Resistance is a two letter word: NO

You all know right from wrong and you know the system is so fucked up and you know the army is about as fucked up as you can get. But let me get to my point.

THE problem is not in iraq, it is in america, and it is with all these little fuckers with \$400 suits and plastic bibles who live inside the beltway and who are making a killing off your ass, the blood of your comrades and the innocent iraqis you brutalize and kill.

YOU are not protecting america and you are not doing your duty – you are doing a job for a corporation and getting paid shit for it.

It doesn't take a college degree to figure this out. Yeah, ass is in the wringer, between the rock and hard place but you are not the innocent victim but just another generation that got suckered into fighting a rich man's war.

Don't worry, they will throw a parade for you and you'll get to drink cheap beer at the legion, and every veteran's day they will pull off one of those sappy tearjerkers, build you

a cheap statue, the press will write stories about how great you are. Sounds really worth it.

But I am not going to spit on you when you return cause you going to be in your own world of hurt. Too many of my family are ex-service/ex-combat to be that disrespectful.

My little brother, exarmy, blew his brains out last year.

But I am gonna ask you all to think about taking all that good training and experience you got over there as well as and all that burning anger your going have when you get back and realize just how big that shit they're taking on you really is and putting it to use helping america clean some clocks.

Perhaps then, you can redeem yourself in the eyes of the world, in the eyes of your own people and in the eyes of god.

Perhaps, too, the iraq people might even forgive you.

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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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

**OOPS:
Command Admits Falluja Not Under
Control:**

Relief Convoy Told To Leave, City “Unsafe”

November 23, 2004 By Alexander G. Higgins, Associated Press

GENEVA — The first independent aid group to enter the Iraqi city of Fallujah after two weeks of fighting saw some civilians, but had to turn back before delivering any assistance because of security concerns, the international Red Cross said Tuesday.

Authorities had already told the Red Crescent it was unsafe for them to remain in Fallujah for more than a day, Ahmed Rawi, a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross, said.

U.S. officials have said they have **mostly** cleared out insurgents in the city west of Baghdad, **but have conceded a risk of attacks remains** as U.S.-led forces hunt down remnants.

U.S. Troops Wounded In Iraq Tops 9,000

Nov. 23, 2004 Associated Press, WASHINGTON

The number of U.S. troops wounded throughout Iraq since the Fallujah offensive began Nov. 7 has surpassed 850, and the wounded total for the entire war has topped 9,000, the Pentagon said Tuesday.

In its weekly report on casualties the Pentagon said 9,326 U.S. troops have been wounded since U.S. forces invaded Iraq in March 2003. That's an increase of 370 from the previous week, reflecting not only the battles in Fallujah but insurgent attacks in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities.

The wounded total has increased by 868 since the outset of the Fallujah offensive and by 1,039 since Nov. 1. The Pentagon has not given a comprehensive report on the number of American forces killed and wounded in Fallujah alone, but officials said last week that at least 51 had been killed and 425 wounded.

Roadside Bomb Hits US Convoy In Baghdad, Casualties Seen

BAGHDAD, Nov. 24 (Xinhuanet)

A roadside bomb hit a US military convoy Wednesday when it passed an intersection of Baghdad airport southwest the capital, destroying a Humvee and wounding all aboard, witnesses said.

The blast took place around noon on the intersection of the highway leading to Baghdad International Airport and the US troops cordoned off the area as helicopters flew overhead, the witnesses said.

The Humvee was set ablaze and all crew members wounded, the witnesses said, adding that it was not clear yet how bad they were wounded.

US troops searching the scene found a booby-trapped car left under a bridge, and US military experts managed to defuse the explosives, the witnesses said.



(Photo: Xinhua/AFP)

Casualties Near Samarra

24 November 2004 Aljazeera.Net

A number of soldiers were injured and their Hummer was destroyed when an explosive device detonated on the outskirts of Samarra.

The Death Of A Soldier

November 22, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1199-04

Sgt. Jack Bryant Jr., 23, of Dale City, Va., died Nov. 20 in Muqdadiyah, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his military convoy followed by an enemy

rocket-propelled grenade attack. Bryant was assigned to the 3rd Brigade Fire Support Team (1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Infantry Division), Vilseck, Germany.

Sniper Kills 1st Cav Soldier

Nov. 23, 2004 By Richard A. Opper Jr. and James Glanz, NEW YORK TIMES

A soldier from the 1st Cavalry Division, was shot in the head and killed by sniper fire Monday while his convoy was stopped on the airport road in Baghdad, military officials said.

U.S. Occupation Politician Killed

Nov 24, 2004 WASHINGTON (Reuters)

A U.S. civilian official was killed by gunfire near Baghdad's Green Zone government compound on Wednesday, a U.S. official said.

The official, who asked not to be named, identified the man as James Mollen and said **he was a State Department employee who was serving as an adviser to the Iraqi Education Ministry.**

Details were sketchy, but the U.S. official said **Mollen, a political appointee to the State Department rather than a regular diplomat,** was in a vehicle when he came under attack.

Pearland Marine Killed: The 24th Houston-Area Serviceman To Die In Iraq

[THANKS TO John Gingerich WHO E-MAILED THIS IN:]

Nov. 18, 2004 By PAIGE HEWITT and RICHARD STEWART, Houston Chronicle

PEARLAND - A Pearland man was killed in action in Al Anbar province, becoming the 24th Houston-area serviceman to have died in Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Marine Lance Cpl. Billy Miller, 22, died Monday. **Marine officials would not provide details of his death.**

In January he was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, based at Camp Lejeune, N.C. He went to Iraq on June 27, a Marine spokesman said.

His mother, Susie Miller, said he decided as a high school sophomore that he wanted to join the Marines. "He was proud of what the Marines stood for," Susie Miller said Wednesday night. "He thought freedom was something you had to fight for."

Miller's family last heard from him earlier this month in a letter.

Their last conversation was by phone in a conference call Oct. 6. Miller was in Iraq, his parents were in California, and his sister was at home in the Houston area.

"We talked for an hour," said his sister, Sabrina Blankenship. " ... We could tell he was kind of down."

Blankenship said that while her brother was still proud of fighting for freedom, he was tired and ready to come home. She said he was scheduled to leave Iraq in March and complete his military commitment in May.

He wanted to go to college to study psychology or psychiatry, she said, and "wear a suit and tie to work."

Miller's family said that beneath the proud Marine and spicy personality was a giver, a young man who wasn't afraid to show his love.

"He cared," Susie Miller said. "He always wanted to help people ... He was affectionate when he was a child. He would crawl right up into my lap and hug me and kiss me for no apparent reason."

Miller, who would have been 23 on Nov. 24, was named after an uncle, his mother's brother, who was also a Marine.

Miller will be buried in Arkansas next to his uncle, who died at 27.

"They never met," Susie Miller said, pausing. "Well, he's probably met him by now."

Blankenship said her brother was at times a "wild child" but was a "great uncle."

"He always wanted to spend time with my kids," she said. "He was always offering to watch them."

Students and faculty at Pearland High School were stunned Wednesday with the announcement that one of its former students was killed.

"We knew it would be a matter of time before it would happen to one of our former students," said teacher Robert Layne, who taught Miller world history during his sophomore year. "I just never thought it would be Billy Miller."

Layne remembered Miller as a "tall, lanky, blond kid who was always happy-go-lucky."

Miller joined the Marine Corps in June 2001, not long after he graduated. His first tour was in Spain, where he stayed for 21 months.

Oklahoma US Marine Injured

11/24/2004 KOTV

A US Marine from Tahlequah has been injured in Iraq, just two months after he got there.

Lance Corporal Jeffery Hudgens was wounded in combat last week. **The military says the 19 year old Marine suffered severe head trauma when shrapnel penetrated his helmet and fractured his skull.**

He is a US Marine assigned to the Broken Arrow TOW Company.

Notes From A Lost War:

First Hand Lessons In How To Build The Resistance So More U.S. Troops Will Die; Bush's Lackey Thinks He's Got The Answers

Nov 23, 2004 By Luke Baker, MOSUL, Iraq (Reuters)

It began with U.S. troops busting through the doors of the wrong house.

Dozens of soldiers rammed the white gates of a well-to-do home in central Mosul early on Tuesday, detaining three Iraqi men, only to discover their target was a house with black gates.

"Four houses down," said the elderly homeowner patiently, his hands bound behind his back by yellow plastic cuffs.

"You've got the wrong people," he told the officer leading the operation in good English, his wife, daughter and two pajama-clad grandchildren cowering alongside him, trying to avoid the glare from the spotlights on the soldiers' guns.

Iraqis say the targets are often wrong, and heavy-handed tactics have created resentment and alienated ordinary people. [Wow! Could it be? Don't they understand these foreigners kicking in their doors, tying them up and humiliating them in front of their families, and grabbing their money, are their friends and liberators? God, how dense these Iraqis are!]

"Squad Two, get to the house three doors down with the black gates," Captain Robert Lackey ordered over the radio. Several heavily armed men with night-vision scopes attached to their helmets trotted out into the rain.

At the wrong house, the search went on, with soldiers overturning every room for evidence to link the family to Iraq's insurgency.

They turned up at least one AK-47 assault rifle -- common to nearly all Iraqi homes and generally permitted by U.S. forces -- and around \$3,000, according to a U.S. investigator.

"That's a lot of money right there," he said, shaking his head, although wealthy Iraqis often keep sums of much more than \$3,000 at home because banks are not trusted. [Lackey's a Captain. Why should he be expected to have a single thought about reality in his head?]

Down the road, soldiers were ramming open the gates of an upscale house. They were about to burst through the door when it opened. Inside were seven young women and six dazed children.

The men of the house were in a village outside Mosul for a few days, one of the women said in fluent English. The soldiers were looking for her father, a Mosul university professor.

"Is he a member of the Baath party?" Lackey asked her. *"The Baath party that still exists?"* [What floor did they scrape this guy up from? No, obviously it's about the Baath Party that doesn't still exist.]

She replied that he wasn't any more, "that was ages ago." **She pointed out her father was detained by U.S. troops in a previous raid and held for five months without charge.**

At about 1 a.m. (2200 GMT) the phone rang in the kitchen. One of the women answered and quickly hung up. "Who was that? Was that your father?" asked a female soldier.

"No. It was the neighbors wondering what on earth is going on," said the woman, nodding toward the street, where several 20-tonne, eight-wheeled U.S. Stryker vehicles were positioned.

A search of the house turned up an AK-47 and a little money. **A fatigues-clad Iraqi translator for U.S. forces smoked several cigarettes *and put them out on the family's floor.***

"Can I please have a receipt for my things?" said the daughter of the house as the soldiers prepared to leave.

"Absolutely," said Lackey, whipping out his receipt book and apologizing for the inconvenience.

Back at base, the operation was declared a success. [Thereby proving conclusively he lives with his head up his ass.]

"I feel bad that we didn't get the guy we were looking for," Lackey said. **"But you know what, just his knowing that we've been by and that we're looking for him is likely to stop him getting up to his activities."** [What lame bullshit. Maybe somebody can find him a job driving a gasoline convoy truck.]

TROOP NEWS

The Deadliest Week Of The War For U.S. Troops

Army Times 11.29.04

From Nov. 9-15, at least 67 American service members died throughout Iraq, making that the deadliest seven-day period of the entire war, including the original invasion of March-April 2003.

Book Review: *Winter Soldiers:* GI Resistance In Vietnam

By Sgt. Martin Smith (USMC ret'd)

Richard Stacewicz's Winter Soldiers is a compilation of oral histories documenting Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and their experiences abroad and at home in opposition to the war and for social justice.¹

Stacewicz describes the process of radicalization from "citizen-soldier," a duty-bound patriotic public servant, to "winter soldier," the VVAW's name for the disillusioned veterans who returned from Vietnam to fight injustice.

The work is full of anecdotes of soldiers' many forms of informal and formal resistance to the war, erupting from both the soldier's experience in the military machine itself and with how the war was being fought. In addition, many soldiers were influenced by the anti-war movement, which began to infiltrate the military rank and file.

¹Richard Stacewicz, *Winter Soldiers* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997).

The work begins with the participants' stories of why they enlisted and what they had thought or heard about Vietnam and the Vietnamese prior to their service. He gathers a near unanimous response by those who enlisted before the draft—a sense of duty, proving one's manhood, and fighting communism.

Typical was the response by Bill Branson (Army, 1966-1969):

Well, you had the newsreels and you had the popular songs, you know, 'Green Berets.' I was anticommunist. I thought they were evil and whatnot. I loved it when our politicians gave it to them. I believed the domino theory. I believed we were going to free those people and we should. That was our role in the world. This was our generation's war—I didn't want to miss it. I went down and deliberately enlisted.²

Echoing the narratives of Wallace Terry's *Bloods*, most young men, black or white were influenced by the same dominant ideology—that the U.S. was the protector of democracy and John Wayne defined the quintessential American hero.³

Yet when the troops' experiences began to contradict the official justifications for their presence in Vietnam, many began to question what they were being told. Many soldiers had grown up in multiracial neighborhoods and identified with the civil rights movement.

These soldiers did not sympathize with the racism they were indoctrinated with during boot camp—in which all Asians were dehumanized as gooks or dinks. Others began to question who the enemy really was and why we were supposedly fighting communists that were, in fact, defenseless poor farmers. **Still many soldiers began to see the contradictions with how the war was being fought—troops would capture National Liberation Front (NLF) strongholds by day and then retreat at night only to have to recapture the same territory again, experiencing high casualties.**

Many become disillusioned by the corruption of both the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) and U.S. officers.

Jan Barry (Army, enlisted 1962), for example, expressed how his blinders were lifted off by people who had been in the field, as one Special Forces sergeant expressed to him, "When you go out there, these villagers' only protection is the NLF against this police state in Saigon. What we're here for is the palace guard of a police state."⁴

Many began to mistrust officers who served only six months while troops were forced to serve one year. Due to this high turnover, troops found themselves more seasoned than the officers who were supposed to lead.

As John Kniffin (USMC) described, "You realize they [officers] aren't Jesus Christ. They don't have the answers, and they need to listen to somebody who's been there longer than them. That's why some of us came out with real strong feelings

²Stacewicz, 49.

³Wallace Terry, *Bloods* (New York: Random House, 1984).

⁴Stacewicz, 90.

against officers.”⁵ All of these contradictions inherent within colonialism produced the beginning cracks in the ideology needed to enforce its rule.

As the U.S. sent more troops, a peak of 500,000 by the end of 1967, discontent was becoming more widespread.⁶ Already individual troops had begun to speak out against the war, such as Master Sergeant Donald Duncan, the first soldier to speak out against the war, and the “Foot Hood Three,” privates who refused to serve in an “immoral war.”⁷ **Yet the Tet offensive would prove the turning point for both the war and for soldiers’ disaffection with it.**

Individual resistance, such as challenging military hierarchy by growing one’s hair long, wearing peace beads, hanging antiwar posters in the barracks, or painting anti-war slogans on one’s helmet, grew to more desperate means at survival.⁸

“CYA” (cover your ass) meant soldiers purposely gave false reports and hid in safe territories rather than “humping the boonies” in search of the NLF. Desertions, strikes, and fraggings, became widespread, leading the famous report in 1971 by Colonel Robert Heinl that the armed forces were “in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and noncommissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near mutinous.”⁹

In addition, Stacewicz chronicles the impact that the anti-war movement had on the troops in Vietnam. GI coffee houses were set up outside bases in Honolulu, Ft. Hood (Oleo Street), Oakland (Pentagon), and others cities where soldiers could discuss conscientious objector status or just get a different perspective on the origins of the conflict. Antiwar and GI newspapers began to flourish. In fact, some papers were published by troops themselves.

Dave Cline (Army, 1967) discussed distribution of *Fatigue Press*:

“We were putting out literature against the war and against the military and for GI rights and against racism. The way we would distribute literature is: We’d go on hits through the base and go through the barracks late at night and put them on wall lockers, put the papers on bunks, and stuff like that...We handed them out at gates and in the town.”¹⁰”

While much attention today has focused on negative portrayals of the anti-war movement’s impact on troop morale, the movement was, for many, a haven or refuge where soldiers returning home could find an outlet for their frustrations.

⁵Stacewicz, 107.

⁶Stacewicz, 12.

⁷Stacewicz, 11, 443.

⁸Stacewicz, 148. “Vietnam for the Vietnamese,” “Get the GIs Out of Here,” and “Peace Now” were all popular slogans on helmets.

⁹Robert D. Heinl, Jr., “The Collapse of the Armed Forces,” *Armed Forces Journal*, June 7, 1991, 30. From Robert McMahon, *Major Problems in the history of the Vietnam War* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), 3rd ed., 244.

¹⁰Stacewicz, 223.

Stacewicz offers a broad picture of the process of change that affected many that served in Vietnam.

Told they were going abroad to fight for democracy, many came to realize that the greatest threat to their freedom was actually at home in Washington. For these "winter soldiers," life could never be the same.

Today, it is imperative that we rescue the history of the soldiers' revolt in Vietnam from the revision of the war. More known and popular are the images from Hollywood and Reagan that the war was a noble cause that was fought with a flawed strategy—the military had its hands tied and couldn't prosecute the war fully.

Yet the true history of Vietnam is more complex. Colonialism and the contradictions it produces brings resistance to its rule—from both its enemies and in Vietnam War, from its own troops.

Fallujah's Horrors Navy Corpsmen Treated Unusually Devastating Injuries At Field Hospital

November 24, 2004 By Jackie Spinner, Washington Post Staff Writer

FALLUJAH, Iraq -- The first time Jose Ramirez saw a human body ripped apart by a rocket, it took hours for him to regain his composure. Nothing in his training as a Navy medical corpsman had prepared him for the sight of the dead Marine brought in September to the military field hospital outside Fallujah.

"I walked around in shock," said Ramirez, 26, of San Antonio, a Navy petty officer third class attached to Bravo Surgical Company. "I've seen people die before on the emergency room table. But what I was trying not to do, what I was trained not to do, is look at the patient with tunnel vision. It reminded me that I had to get prepared."

Two months later, when the first wounded American and Iraqi troops arrived at the hospital after storming Fallujah, Ramirez had braced for the worst.

"It doesn't hit me when I'm working on a patient. But after we're cleaning up, and I see the blood on the floor or I see someone bagging a piece of arm or leg, I know it's going to be in my mind for the rest of my life," Ramirez said.

Medics at the Bravo Surgical Company's field hospital, where all the battlefield dead and wounded are brought, said the injuries that troops sustained in the Fallujah fight were unusually devastating, most of them the result of close-range explosions.

"They're just horrific injuries," said Chief Petty Officer Damon Sanders, head of the shock stabilization team. "We saw an increasing amount of shrapnel wounds.

Typically there are one or two people who take the brunt of the blast, and the rest of the guys take shrapnel."

Ramirez said the hospital prepared for large numbers of wounded troops before the battle began. But he and his colleagues did not prepare for what he called "the walking wounded." At the last minute, the corpsmen set up a tent to deal with patients who were not brought in on stretchers. Another tent was set up for Iraqi detainees. That freed up some space for the seriously injured, he said, but so many were carried in that a lounge had to be turned into a triage room.

"When they told us we'd go into Fallujah, many of us thought we'd see gunshot wounds, but not people with limbs already amputated due to the blast," Ramirez said.

Sanders said the hospital staff worked around the clock during the height of the battle, particularly as troops pushed into Fallujah's southern neighborhoods and confronted a hard core of better-trained insurgents.

There are days, Sanders said, that he and his crew will never forget.

"You're seeing your brothers come in, but you can't see them. You're almost like a machine," he said. "The history we've gone through here will forever make us family. If we see each other 10 years from now, not a word will have to be spoken."

"There's just one thing I want you to know," Ramirez said, before turning to walk away. "There is a corpsman in the memorial of Iwo Jima. He's a pharmacist mate, second class, John Bradley. He was there in the fight. Most people don't know that."

Louisiana National Guard Soldier Loses Leg

November 24, 2004 The Shreveport Times

Jeffrey Adams, a first lieutenant with the Louisiana Army National Guard's 256th Tiger Brigade injured Nov. 7 in Iraq, is now recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in the nation's capital, officials with the state military command report.

Adams, from the East Baton Rouge Parish town of Greenwell Springs, lost his left leg in Baghdad in the explosion of an improvised explosive device, or IED.

Adams was a platoon leader in Bravo Company, 1088th Engineer Battalion.

Our Vulnerable Troops

November 8, 2004 Toledo Blade Company, Editorial

The dirty little secret of the war in Iraq during its first 19 months is the degree to which American soldiers have been denied the proper equipment and weaponry necessary to do their job.

Rifles from the Vietnam War era, trucks and other vehicles that are particularly vulnerable to roadside bombs, a lack of radios for communication, and even a shortage of ammunition for training are problems that bedevil many of the 140,000 U.S. soldiers fighting in Iraq.

How this could happen when the Pentagon is spending some \$400 billion a year, and Congress has approved at least \$120 billion in supplementary funding for the war, is inexcusable - a scandal that should greatly concern the American public. It is also further evidence of the lack of planning that went into the war before the March, 2003 invasion.

The lack of equipment has been most pronounced among the National Guard and reserve units, which make up about 40 percent of the American force. **Members of some guard units have reported they still don't have proper body armor to ward off gunshots. Some have resorted to using walkie-talkies bought at home because military-issue portable radios are in short supply.**

Most distressing is the continued reliance on the use of Humvees built without side and bottom armor to protect troops from remotely detonated roadside bombs and rocket-propelled grenades. Such attacks have been responsible for nearly half of U.S. casualties - more than 1,100 killed and 8,000 injured.

CBS' 60 Minutes reported that frustrated GIs have taken to scavenging armor plating from junked Iraqi tanks and fastening it to the sides of Humvees. Others are using scrap metal and sandbags. The vehicles, which were built with what appear to be flimsy doors, leave the troops so dangerously exposed that soldiers call them "cardboard coffins."

Likewise, the Seattle Times reported that units of the Washington Army National Guard are concerned about being forced to use unarmored trucks to ship equipment and material in convoys. This same concern led members of the 343rd Quartermaster Company, a reserve unit, to refuse to travel into a combat area, claiming it would be "a suicide mission."

The Times reported that the military has moved - but only in recent months - to beef up its transportation fleet with armor, but only a small fraction of the work has been completed. And the retrofit kits don't protect the bottoms of the trucks, leaving their occupants vulnerable to buried explosives.

One reason for this lack of preparedness was that Pentagon planners actually believed their own propaganda - that invading Americans would be welcomed by a grateful Iraqi citizenry, and that no insurgency would develop against U.S. troops.

Such faulty assumptions have proven to be as mistaken as the decision to invade in the first place.

The fact remains that the war is a war of choice against an opponent that posed no direct threat to the United States or even its immediate neighbors, and there was no reason to hurry the invasion without stockpiling proper weapons, equipment, and supplies.

All the more amazing is that the war was rationalized and propelled forward by an administration that never tires of claiming it wants to give the military "everything they need" to do their job.

Even opponents of the war agree U.S. soldiers should be properly equipped. It's an issue that should haunt the Brass Hats in the White House and Pentagon.

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.

War Claims Green Bay Marine; West High School Grad 5th Casualty From Region

Nov. 24, 2004 Green Bay Gazette

As friends and family gathered Tuesday to bury a 20-year-old soldier killed in Iraq, word filtered home that another area man had died as a result of wounds suffered in combat last week.

Family members said U.S. Marine Sgt. Benjamin Edinger, 24, of Green Bay died Tuesday at National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. He was wounded Nov. 14 in Iraq and evacuated to Germany before being flown to the United States.

Edinger, a 1999 Green Bay West High School graduate, had been improving after being wounded by a makeshift bomb, said Gerald Downey, Edinger's maternal grandfather.

"He was taken off of life support the day before he died," Downey said. "His stepfather was seated next to him and suddenly he began to bleed (internally). Something broke open and he died.

"It was a great surprise to the medical people. He seemed to be doing so well."

Downey said this was Edinger's second tour in Iraq. Edinger was in Iraq for the initial invasion in March 2003 and returned to the United States before returning for a second stint with the Marines' 2nd Force Reconnaissance Company.

After high school, Edinger spent a year at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh before deciding to enlist. He had considered a career as a veterinarian after the Marine Corps.

Friends said Edinger wasn't always the leader in a group — some even said he was quiet — but his strengths shined on their own. "He's a good guy," said Nick Titel, 23, Edinger's stepcousin and high school pal. "We had a lot of fun times together.

"He was real witty. A lot of people underestimated him for how smart he really was." Titel said Edinger excelled in math. He was a computer specialist while serving in Okinawa.

Titel found out early Tuesday that Edinger had died. "I started crying," he said. "I knew that he was injured. He had shrapnel in his knee, his knee cap and a hole in his chest. I was told he had a fractured jaw, fractured arm and possibly a fractured leg."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Another Command Lie In The Toilet: Fallujah Leaders Were Local, Not Foreign

November 24, 2004 By HAMZA HENDAWI, Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- Before the assault on Fallujah, U.S. officials described the city as a den of foreign terrorists, but its top commanders were an electrician and a mosque preacher -- both natives of the community and now on the run from American forces.

Religious fervor and hatred of Americans brought Omar Hadid and Abdullah al-Janabi together in a partnership that played a major role in transforming Fallujah from a sleepy Euphrates River backwater into a potent symbol of Arab nationalism.

After U.S. Marines lifted the siege of Fallujah last April, central government control collapsed. **That enabled men like Hadid, an electrician who lived with his mother,**

and al-Janabi, a local imam and member of an important local clan, to emerge as powerbrokers until the Marines took the city back this month.

Of the two, Hadid, thought to be in his early 30s, appears to have been the more influential, even though al-Janabi, in his 50s, headed the Mujahedeen Shura Council, which set up Islamic courts that meted out Islamic punishments, executed suspected spies and enforced a strict Islamic lifestyle.

Fallujah residents and Iraqis with close family ties to the city said al-Janabi was more a spiritual leader -- deeply respected but without the leverage that Hadid enjoyed over the bands of fighters who patrolled the streets, directed traffic, attacked U.S. positions on the city's fringes and fought the Americans in April and again this month.

Hadid led one of the bigger and better armed factions in the city, residents say, but they also stress there were other groups of fighters and all largely operated independently of one another.

Those who knew him said Hadid came from a lower middle class Fallujah family. Since his father died a few years ago, Hadid had lived with his mother in the family home in the city's al-Moatasim area until the fighting in April. He's married but without children.

About two months ago, one of Hadid's brothers and a nephew were killed by a U.S. airstrike that also injured several other family members, the neighbor said. Hadid escaped with a minor injury, he said.

In 1998, al-Janabi, married with five children, was suspended by Saddam's government from delivering Friday sermons because of his public criticism of government policies. He returned to the pulpit of Fallujah's Saad Bin Abi Waqas mosque after Saddam's ouster, devoting most of his sermons to calling on Iraqis to join in a holy war against the Americans.

Fearing for his safety, he stopped giving Friday sermons after the April fighting.

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)

Two Killed In Attack On Deputy Governors Convoy;

Blue On Blue?

BAGHDAD, Nov. 24 (Xinhuanet)

A convoy of Nineveh province's deputy governor came under fire Wednesday in Iraq's northern city of Mosul, killing one of his bodyguards and a member of the Interior Ministry special forces, the deputy governor said.

Two other bodyguards were wounded, Khesro Gouran said, including his brother, who also works as a bodyguard, in the attack which took place at about 1:00 p.m.(1000 GMT) near the city administration building.

Authorities of the city are probing the incident for the possibility that the convoy was mistakenly fired upon by the Interior Ministry special forces in the area.

Occupation Allies Killed In Mosul

Nov 24 ARBIL, Iraq (Reuters)

Partisans ambushed a convoy of Kurdish militiamen as they traveled to the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Wednesday, killing three and wounding nine, hospital sources in the nearby town of Arbil said.

In Kirkuk, gunmen opened fire on National Guard soldiers late on Tuesday, killing one guardsman and a civilian, and wounding another Guard, the U.S. military said in a statement. The military said soldiers had stopped to help the civilian with his car when gunmen drove past and fired at them.

Mosul Occupation Guards Infiltrated

Nov. 23, 2004 By Richard A. Opperl Jr. and James Glanz, NEW YORK TIMES

Three national guardsmen in Mosul were detained this week on suspicion of collaborating with insurgents, **including one who was found helping insurgents who had set up an illegal checkpoint to identify other Iraqi troops**, according to an American military commander.

Sistani Condemns Occupation Mosque Raid

Nov. 23, 2004 By Richard A. Opperl Jr. and James Glanz, NEW YORK TIMES

A spokesman for Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the most powerful Shiite cleric in Iraq, condemned a raid by Iraqi and American forces on a prominent Sunni mosque in Baghdad on Friday that killed at least three Iraqis.

The raid, on the Abu Hanifa mosque, may have been an attempt to silence an imam who seemed to be calling for attacks on American and Iraqi security forces.

War Profiteer Contractor Who Works For US Captured

23 Nov 2004 KIRKUK, Iraq (AP)

An ethnic Turkish contractor who works with U.S. forces was taken from his family home Tuesday in the northern city of Kirkuk, police said.

The man, identified as Dhia al-Naftachi, holds contracts with U.S. forces at their central Iraqi bases in Tikrit and Balad, said Col. Anwar Hassan with the Kirkuk police.

Partisans entered al-Naftachi's family home and beat up the contractor and two of his relatives before dragging him off into a waiting car, Hassan said.

Bomb Found On Baghdad Plane

Nov. 23, 2004 By Richard A. Oppel Jr. and James Glanz, NEW YORK TIMES

An improvised bomb was found on a commercial flight within Iraq on Monday, the Associated Press reported, forcing new efforts to screen passengers and baggage at the Baghdad airport. **The U.S. Embassy released a statement cautioning travelers about traveling on commercial airlines in Iraq.**

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Take It To The Streets

November 18, 2004 By Chalmers Johnson, IN THESE TIMES

Neither the Congress, nor the courts, nor the federalist system of state governments is any longer able to balance the presidency and the forces of militarism. We now know that something more than the working of the political system will be required to save the American republic.

The catastrophe of November 2 may mobilize the people to act directly. In the coming months I expect to see an anti-war movement in the United States that will dwarf the demonstrations of the Vietnam era, and I expect to contribute to it in every way I can.

“We find if we don’t go there, they won’t shoot us.” Capt. Joe Jasper, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, Ramadi, Iraq

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

SATAN



A US commander, Gareth Brandl, was even more emphatic. "The enemy has got a face. He's called Satan." (Kevin Lamarque/Reuters)

[Good morning Vietnam. This song request comes from Fire Base Pace, and is dedicated to Satan.]

Masters of War

by Bob Dylan

Come you masters of war
You that build all the guns
You that build the death planes
You that build the big bombs
You that hide behind walls
You that hide behind desks
I just want you to know
I can see through your masks

You that never done nothin'
But build to destroy
You play with my world
Like it's your little toy
You put a gun in my hand
And you hide from my eyes
And you turn and run farther
When the fast bullets fly

Like Judas of old
You lie and deceive
A world war can be won
You want me to believe
But I see through your eyes
And I see through your brain
Like I see through the water
That runs down my drain

You fasten the triggers
For the others to fire
Then you set back and watch
When the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion
As young people's blood
Flows out of their bodies
And is buried in the mud

You've thrown the worst fear
That can ever be hurled
Fear to bring children
Into the world
For threatening my baby
Unborn and unnamed
You ain't worth the blood
That runs in your veins

How much do I know
To talk out of turn

You might say that I'm young
You might say I'm unlearned
But there's one thing I know
Though I'm younger than you
Even Jesus would never
Forgive what you do

Let me ask you one question
Is your money that good
Will it buy you forgiveness
Do you think that it could
I think you will find
When your death takes its toll
All the money you made
Will never buy back your soul

**And I hope that you die
And your death'll come soon
I will follow your casket
In the pale afternoon
And I'll watch while you're lowered
Down to your deathbed
And I'll stand o'er your grave
'Til I'm sure that you're dead**

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OCCUPATION REPORT

Life Under The Bush Dictatorship: Clerics Imprisoned For Words Criticizing Attack On Falluja

Nov 24 By TINI TRAN, Associated Press Writer

As part of the crackdown on insurgents, U.S. and Iraqi forces have been arresting Sunni and Shiite clerics who have spoken out against the Fallujah operation or who were suspected of links to the guerrillas.

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

Wrapped In The Bubble Of Delusion;

[THANKS TO D WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES: Allowing an ailing woman to get treatment is diplomacy?]

Nov 23 By EDWARD HARRIS, Associated Press Writer

FALLUJAH, Iraq - "Imagine it's your mother!" an Iraqi man shouts, demanding the Marine open a bridge north of Fallujah so an ailing woman can get medical treatment. Capt. Alex Henegar winces but handles the complaint, **using the type of on-the-fly diplomacy Marine officers believe can assuage angry Iraqis and draw them in to support the rebuilding of the city, devastated by the recent U.S. assault.**

At the scene at the bridge, Henegar promised the crowd that if it allowed the first post-assault humanitarian shipment to pass unimpeded, he would ask his superiors for permission to open the bridge permanently.

The Iraqi crowd nodded until an Army soldier angered by mortar fire coming from the ailing woman's village shouted at the interpreter: "Tell them as long as they're shooting at us, the bridge stays closed!" [So much for "diplomacy."]

"Whether they articulate it or not, everyone has a theory about what works" said Henegar, who was able to get the woman to medical care.

At least one military estimate says civilians won't return until February.

In the area near Fallujah, the entrenched leaders are often local sheiks, whose thicket of tribal and political affiliations aren't greatly understood by Marines.

Marine civil affairs leaders say they're hoping to skirt politics in the short term, turning instead to people with established skills in running a metropolitan area.

"I'm going to look for a technocratic leadership, to administer the city and keep it running. I want to take the politics out of it," says civil affairs Lt. Col. Leonard De Francisci.

De Francisci, 39, from Melbourne, Fla., says Fallujah may not immediately have a thriving American-style democracy.

"What you're going to see is not Jeffersonian democracy, but probably some religious-style democracy," he said. "Not like you'd see in America, more like early Roman democracy. It won't be one person, one vote — more caucuses." [They really could have used him in Vietnam, right after Tet. The specialty then was also complete loss of contact with the real world and the same silly notion that people fighting a U.S. occupation of their country just needed a "caucus" or two.]

Occupation Arresting Sadr Movement Members

11.23.04 Associated Press

A top aide to radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr accused the government of violating terms of the August agreement that ended an uprising by al-Sadr's followers in Najaf.

Ali Smeisim, al-Sadr's top political adviser, made no explicit threats as he leveled his allegations at a Baghdad news conference. But his remarks raised the possibility of a new confrontation between the government and al-Sadr's Mahdi Army militia, which rose up against the Americans and their Iraqi allies in April and August.

Smeisim said the government has broken a promise in the August agreement not to arrest members of al-Sadr's movement and to release most of them from detention.

"The government, however, started pursuing them and their numbers in prisons have doubled," Smeisim said. "Iraqi police arrested 160 al-Sadr loyalists in Najaf four days ago."

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