

GI SPECIAL 2#C4

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE.
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



US Army soldier, 2-17 Field Artillery Regiment in Ramadi. (AFP/Patrick Baz)

“Gone Too Long In Darkness” A US Soldier Tells Of Unit's Daily Perils

10/25/2004 Bill Johnson , Boston Globe

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- It is a new season here. We are halfway through our projected one-year deployment. The daytime temperature is down to about 100 degrees. **And as the Muslim holy month of Ramadan begins, insurgent attacks are growing more frequent, and more deadly.**

Attacks last week showed, as if we needed a reminder, that the Green Zone in central Baghdad has become more dangerous, our base on the southern edge of

the city has become more dangerous, and the roads we travel in between are more dangerous.

An early-morning rocket attack on our base killed two soldiers. We are hit practically every day now with mortar and rocket fire.

Suicide bombers breached the heavily fortified Green Zone for the first time. Back-to-back lunchtime attacks destroyed a restaurant and a bazaar, killing several people.

Rhode Island Guardsmen housed near the marketplace ran over when they heard the explosion, and had to help pick up body parts. I drove past the restaurant that afternoon to see a pile of debris and twisted girders.

Another day, our convoy barely escaped a bombing. One of the biggest risks US soldiers face are improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, the crude but cruelly effective roadside bombs that insurgents detonate as we pass.

Worse still are VBIEDs (vee-beds), or vehicle-born IEDs, or what the Army calls car bombs. An IED can kill you. A VBIED almost certainly will. Last week an IED went off when the rear vehicle in our convoy, in which I was riding, was about 50 yards past it. None of us was hurt.

Life for a soldier in Baghdad these days is permeated by peril. You stand guard at a checkpoint, looking for bombs. You walk to chow, aware you're still in the enemy's aim. You lie in bed listening to explosions outside your window. You survive the days with increased caution and even greater fatalism.

Today we drove past the site of the IED again. Traffic was normal; clusters of schoolgirls in blue jumpers and white headscarves were walking home. (When all is unusually quiet, we sense danger -- it could mean a bomb has been planted and the locals know to stay out of the way, but don't necessarily care to warn us.) We made it safely back to base.

Amid horrific scenes, Iraqis are trying to live life as normally as possible, and when we're off-duty, so do we. Some guys get up at 3 in the morning to watch the Red Sox on satellite TV. **Many keep in touch with their wives and kids via telephone, instant messaging, and Web cams -- but the "how-are-you?" and "I-love-you" messages often omit the shuddering truth.**

Last Sunday night, I was lying in bed at 9:30 reading a letter. Outside were explosions from another mortar attack. From the room next door came cheers during the Patriots-Seahawks game. It felt weird.

The explosions used to be a periodic annoyance, like being awakened by the garbage truck. **We gripe about the inconvenience of wearing our helmets and armored vests all the time now. What isn't heard amid the hail of mortar fire is growing anxiety and frustration. Some toss and turn at night; others are tormented by nightmares.**

Last month, which now seems like a long time ago, we had a blues concert on post. About 100 soldiers gathered around the basketball court, as others played volleyball or soccer, to check out the group that had come from Buffalo to entertain the troops. For one evening, against a red desert sunset, a soulful strain played, uninterrupted by explosions.

"You've been gone too long in darkness," the bluesman sang. "Now it's time you came back to me."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Kaneohe Marine Killed In Humvee Wreck "He Didn't Think He Was Going To Go To Iraq At All."

October 26, 2004 Gregg Kakesako, Honolulu Star-Bulletin

A Kaneohe Marine died in a Humvee accident in Iraq over the weekend. Lance Cpl. Richard P. Slocum, of Saugus, Calif., is the first Kaneohe Marine to die in Iraq since the U.S.-led invasion began 19 months ago.

His death Sunday brings the number of people with Hawaii ties killed in Iraq, Kuwait or Afghanistan since March 2003 to 25. One of them was a civilian.

The Los Angeles Daily News said today that **Slocum**, whose family lives in Valencia, Calif., **arrived in the Middle East two weeks ago.**

His uncle, Keith Lair, told the newspaper that Slocum's parents, Kay and Robert Slocum, were told by the Army that **their son died when his Humvee overturned while he was negotiating barricades at his Marine base near Abu Ghraib.**

Slocum, 19, graduated in 2003 from Saugus High School.

"He had a lot of friends; you wouldn't believe all the friends who have been here today," Lair said as friends gathered at his home yesterday. "He liked to have fun; he was really popular."

The blond, blue-eyed teen and a best friend, who was heading to the Army after high school, shaved their heads about six months before Slocum left for boot camp, Lair said. During training, Slocum broke his foot, delaying his Marine graduation a week.

"He wanted so desperately to graduate with his class, but they kept him another week," Lair said. While the class was deployed to Iraq, Slocum was sent to Hawaii, where his parents visited him before he was sent to the war zone.

"He didn't think he was going to go to Iraq at all."

Slocum is survived by his parents; sister, Kimberly; and brother, Robert Jr.

Sgt. Dies Of 10 Mile Road March In Kuwait (!?)

October 26, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1072-04

Sgt. Dennis J. Boles, 46, of Homosassa, Fla., died Oct. 24 in Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, when he was participating in a 10-mile road march and collapsed. Boles was assigned to the Army National Guard's 171st Aviation Battalion, Brooksville, Fla. [Kuwait? What the fuck is anybody marching around for 10 miles in Kuwait about? There's more here, like some asshole commander who thought it would be a really neat idea.]

No Fools, Polish Troops Hunker Down; "It's Very Dangerous Out There."

26 October 2004 Novinite Ltd

Many of the coalition partners hunker down in mud forts and expect insurgents to kick back.

A Bulgarian leader, who fed up with being mortared night after night, asked his Polish commander why his unit wasn't sending out patrols to kill the attackers. The Pole replied, "Well ... it's very dangerous out there."

Homemade Bombs Most Successful Resistance Weapon

Oct. 26, 2004 BY PATRICK KERKSTRA, Knight Ridder Newspapers

"It's a different kind of war. It's reactionary. You can't shoot until something explodes, and then what do you shoot at? They're already gone," said Sgt. Chris McGuire, of the 21st Field Artillery Regiment.

BAGHDAD, Iraq - The innards of the Iraqi insurgency are piling up at Baghdad's bomb-squad headquarters: a tangle of gaffer's tape and electrical wire, 9-volt batteries and assorted kitchen timers, even a pink plastic alarm clock adorned with daisies.

They're the building blocks of what the military calls improvised explosive devices, the weapon of choice for Iraq's militants. **The simple bombs have become the biggest killer of coalition soldiers and the unglamorous foundation of the insurgent effort to drive the U.S.-led coalition out of Iraq.**

As the coalition IED death toll has mounted to more than 300, according to icasualties.org, a Web site that tracks military casualties, soldiers have come to consider the homemade bombs an apt symbol for the larger war in Iraq: a sneaky, primitive weapon that's tailor-made for a murky, elusive enemy.

"It's a different kind of war. It's reactionary. You can't shoot until something explodes, and then what do you shoot at? They're already gone," said Sgt. Chris McGuire, of the 21st Field Artillery Regiment.

The ubiquitous IEDs led the military to add armor to thousands of soft-skinned vehicles. **They've forced units across the country to devote untold hours to IED patrols, searching for suspected bombs or parking along crucial routes in an attempt to stop them from being planted.**

It's dull and unrewarding work, and it diverts attention from vital community affairs and reconstruction missions, enlisted soldiers and officers at two Baghdad bases said.

For all the military's efforts to tame the threat, IEDs kill coalition soldiers at a steady clip, 10 in some months, 20 or more in others. The devices are too easy to build, and the explosives that power them too readily available, for them to go away anytime soon, said Brig. Abdul Kadir Moniem Said, the director of the Iraqi police unit that defuses and investigates IEDs.

American soldiers and Iraqi security personnel in Baghdad said they encountered at least a few each week, sometimes several in a day.

In hotspots such as the Baghdad slum of Sadr City - which has been more peaceful in recent weeks - drivers slalom through streets littered with IEDs. The bombs are marked with pylons and other warning signs when U.S. forces are out of the area; the signs are removed as patrols move in.

In the early days of the insurgency, roadside bombs were little more than a nuisance to American and Iraqi forces. They were wildly inaccurate, poorly disguised and often did little damage even when they found their targets.

Not anymore.

Now, IEDs are often ingeniously concealed. Insurgents encase them in concrete blocks that look like pieces of broken curb. They're packed in plastic bags, orange crates, rusted gasoline cans and countless other pieces of trash, making them virtually indistinguishable from other rubbish along Baghdad's dirty streets.

Newer bombs often are packed with ball bearings, bolts or other shrapnel. With enough explosives, they can tear through a Humvee's armor plating.

Remote detonators have become commonplace, allowing insurgents to stay far away from the blast site and making it difficult for U.S. forces to catch or kill the bombers.

"It began in a primitive way, but now they are quite professional," said Said, the police brigadier.

The insurgents have become more tactically sophisticated as well, daisy-chaining multiple bombs - 23 in one case near Ramadi - to create massive "kill zones" dozens of yards long. They've also used roadside bombs as opening shots in ambushes, firing automatic rifles and rocket-propelled grenades at soldiers as they spill out of disabled vehicles.

Increasingly, insurgents are turning to car bombs, which the military calls vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. **Often loaded with hundreds of pounds of explosives packed into every conceivable nook, car bombs are the most spectacular and devastating weapons in the militants' arsenal, capable of destroying tanks.**

Syria-Iraq Border: American Forces Battling Insurgents Every Day

New York Times, October 26, 2004, NEIL MacFARQUHAR

AL HIRI, Syria, Oct. 22 - Villagers in this tiny hamlet on the Syrian-Iraqi border no longer wait for the call to prayer to mark the end of the daily fast for Ramadan. Instead, sundown arrives in tandem with an eruption of mortar rounds and gunfire between Iraqi insurgents and the American forces stationed next door.

"Even before the muezzin cries out 'God is great!' we start hearing the bombs and shelling," said Fayad al-Hussein, the owner of a one-story house with an unexploded mortar round in his front yard and a view of the American flag flapping over a small base some two hundred yards away in the Iraqi town of Al Qaim.

"Now, just 10 minutes before the call to prayer, we gather all the children into the house, because we are pretty sure there will be a firefight just as soon as the iftar starts," he added, using the Arabic word for the sunset meal.

The only explanation for the week-old phenomenon is that the insurgents open fire when they are certain most Iraqi civilians are indoors eating and unlikely to get caught in the crossfire, said Lt. Col. Ali Ahmed al-Shammari, the officer in charge of the Abu Kamal border crossing.

Colonel Shammari said the Americans in Al Qaim sometimes closed the border crossing for days or even weeks at a time, and once for a month starting April 17 as they tried to stamp out the insurgency raging around the city. **It continues whether or not the border is open, he said, because it is the people from Al Qaim who are the resistance.**

Villagers here curse the day the Americans moved in next door, saying not a month goes by without somebody being wounded by bullets or shrapnel from stray mortars. A few months back, an 18-year-old man died from a gunshot in the head, and a customs inspector, also shot in the head, lies in a coma. The villagers are convinced that the fatal shot was fired by an American soldier, and his family is trying to file a lawsuit against the United States government.

Muhammad Rafa al-Obeid, 22, lay groaning on a bed in his family's living room, bandages wrapped around his torso where a piece of shrapnel had hit him just below the shoulder. "The whole village used to eat the iftar outside, but now from sunset to sunrise everyone is afraid to even walk outside," said his brother Ahmed, 21.

They yearn for the time before the war when the loudest noise in the village was the braying donkeys or crowing roosters that roam freely through its alleyways.

"This is Syria and that is Iraq," said their father, Rafa Awad al-Obeid, 45. "Sure we live near the border, but we never expected to be affected by what is happening over there."

**NO JOY HERE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



Burning U.S. Bradley Fighting Vehicle in Baghdad
HUSSEIN MALLA/AP

TROOP NEWS

IRR No-Shows Exceed 800

October 26, 2004 By Robert Burns, Associated Press

More than 800 former soldiers have failed to comply with Army orders to get back in uniform and report for duty in Iraq or Afghanistan, the Army said Friday. That is more than one-third of the total who were told to report to a mobilization station by Oct. 17.

Three weeks ago the number stood at 622.

Of those due to have reported by now, 1,445 have done so, but 843 have neither reported nor asked for a delay or exemption.

Pentagon Wants To Keep Soldiers In Iraq Even Longer!

[USA Today, October 26, 2004, Pg. 1]

Pentagon officials are considering boosting the current U.S. force in Iraq by delaying departures of some troops already in Iraq and accelerating the deployment of other scheduled to go there next year. The additional troops would be used to help provide security for Iraqi elections in January.

The Trials of Julian Goodrum

10/25/2004 Charles Sheehan-Miles , Veterans for Common Sense

An Army Reserve Lieutenant served in the Iraq War and filed complaints about safety violations in his unit. Now he's defending his freedom as the Army gears up a court-martial.

Lieutenant Julian Goodrum is the picture of an American soldier: a young man with quintessentially good looks and a friendly smile despite the hell he has been through for the last two years. Goodrum served honorably in the first Gulf War, and on his return joined the U.S. Army reserve. A thirteen year Army veteran, he received a very unusual

direct commission to Lieutenant, and in February of 2003 was called up to active duty and transferred from his military police unit to the 2/12 Transportation Company, where he took charge of a platoon preparing for war.

Today he faces charges of fraternization and being absent without leave. These charges could result in imprisonment or dishonorable discharge if the investigating officer recommends proceeding with a court martial.

The prosecution believes they have a clear case. According to the charges, Lieutenant Goodrum conducted an affair with his platoon sergeant in Iraq. Following his redeployment to the U.S. in June 2003, an investigating officer recommended that he received an Article 15 (nonjudicial punishment, which creates a black mark on a soldier's record but cannot result in jail time). The Army further accuses Goodrum of going AWOL from Fort Knox in November 2003, until he turned himself in at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in February of this year. The prosecutor, Captain Wright, summed it up in her closing statement this evening: an open and shut case, with serious charges -- AWOL, fraternization, and dereliction of duty.

As it turns out, nothing is so simple.

Described in his service records as a strong, outstanding leader, when Goodrum arrived at 2/12 Transportation he identified a number of serious problems and took steps to correct them, including complaining to his commanding officer, and when no action was taken, to the Inspector General.

What were the problems he pointed out? Serious ones.

The transportation unit deployed to Iraq ill equipped, and conducted long-range missions into Iraq, in some cases covering thousands of miles over several day missions. Though the unit had good maintenance crews and most of the trucks were running, they had no radios, no heavy weapons, no armor, no medics, and first aid bags missing much of them supplies they required.

According to testimony provided by one of the other platoon leaders, they were sent on these missions without any maps. They came under rocket attacks, routine roadside bombs, direct rifle fire and other attacks. Because they had no radios, they couldn't call for support or medivacs for injured soldiers. The platoon leaders made repeated requests for additional support, but no response was received. Eventually 22-year old Sergeant Kenneth Harris, one of Goodrum's soldiers, was crushed between two vehicles after a long convoy plagued by breakdowns.

Lieutenant Easley, the other platoon leader, testified their company commander Captain Fisher disliked Goodrum, and "was going to get him."

Captain Fisher did. According to the testimony, rumors of liaisons between the male and female soldiers in the unit were rife, including one that Goodrum and his platoon sergeant were conducting an affair. Captain Fisher opened an investigation, questioning soldiers within the platoon and taking sworn statements.

Ultimately, the fraternization charge rests on the statements of three soldiers. The first, that Goodrum and his platoon sergeant were "sitting close to each other," was directly contradicted by a statement taken from Sergeant Harris before his death.

The second two statements were taken from two soldiers accused of committing adultery with each other. **Worse, according to Lieutenant Easley, the company commander threatened one of those soldiers with court-martial if he didn't sign a statement implicating Goodrum. Easley later confronted his commander over the issue, and when he received no response, filed a complaint with the inspector general at Camp Doha.**

By that time, Goodrum was back in the U.S. pending surgery. Reassigned to a medical hold unit at Fort Knox, Kentucky, the key moment in the case happened on October 29, 2003, when he was quoted in a United Press International article regarding terrible health care conditions for soldiers at Fort Knox on Medical hold (<http://www.veteransforcommonsense.org/NewsArticle.cfm?ID=1583>). A few days later, on November 7, Goodrum saw the physician's assistant at Fort Knox and requested care, saying he was having a "breakdown."

He was turned away. A handwritten note in his medical record says, "Col Stevens do not want this patient on medical hold." Goodrum drove home to Knoxville and was hospitalized by a civilian doctor for PTSD and depression.

The Army claims that Goodrum's inpatient care constituted being absent without leave, and cut off his pay and benefits. However, Army regulations say when a soldier is treated by a civilian doctor, Army medical personnel are required to contact the civilian provider for medical consultations. Colonel Stevens and others testified today that no medical professional ever consulted with Goodrum's civilian doctor.

At the recommendation of his civilian doctor, Goodrum went to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in February. Walter Reed diagnosed him with severe depression and post traumatic stress disorder, and recommended he be medically retired from the military. Unfortunately, the medical board process has been halted until the court martial is resolved.

The case raises a number of key issues. First, why did the transportation unit deploy without the proper equipment in the first place? Why didn't they have maps, or body armor, or heavy weapons, or other necessary equipment? What happened to the numerous complaints filed with the Inspectors General by the junior officers in this company regarding severe problems within the unit?

The defense raised a sad point -- Goodrum's commander, Captain Fisher, produced a 65 page report on his investigation into allegations of improper conduct with a non-commissioned officer, but only a 2 page investigation into the death of Sergeant Harris.

At Fort Knox, why was Goodrum denied psychiatric care? According to testimony at today's hearing, the base only had two full-time psychiatrists and one part-time, with no inpatient psychiatric program. The care simply wasn't available, and procedures to manage civilian care in such cases were not followed.

Following the closing statements of the prosecutors and defense, the investigating officer indicated he would be in touch with both parties regarding his recommendations.

Once those are made, it will be up to the Commanding General at Walter Reed to make the final determination of Lieutenant Goodrum's fate.

If he chooses a general court-martial, this decorated veteran of two wars may face not only prison time and dishonorable discharge, but being cut off from the medical care for post-traumatic stress which he will likely need for the rest of his life.

Charles Sheehan-Miles, a 1991 Gulf War veteran, is executive director of Veterans for Common Sense (<http://www.veteransforcommonsense.org>)

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)

“Free My Husband”

October 26, 2004 Daniel McGrory, timesonline (uk)

WILLIAM WEBSTER, a US Army sergeant and Muslim convert, was just months from completing his 20-year military career when his unit was ordered to Iraq last autumn.

He immediately offered to leave early, saying that his religious beliefs prohibited him from fighting fellow Muslims in what he regarded as “an unjust war”. Senior officers persuaded him to stay on in a desk job in Germany until his service ended.

Two days before his unit left, the same officers ordered him to join the deployment. When he refused, he was brought before a court martial and jailed for 14 months. He was stripped of his rank, and lost his salary and pension.

Now, in a case that Amnesty International sees as an important test, his British wife, Sue, a teacher in Birmingham, is appealing for him to be recognised as a conscientious objector and freed from a prison in Washington State to join her and their two-year-old daughter, Hadiya, in Europe.

“He was betrayed by the same men who said they respected his stand and who now want to make him suffer as an example to others who have the courage of their convictions,” Mrs Webster said. “I’m appalled at the way the Defence Department has behaved after William was honest with them and offered to resign the life he loved rather than put his unit in any awkward position.”

“Mr Webster has been imprisoned merely for exercising his right to oppose a war on conscientious grounds,” Neil Durkin, of Amnesty, said. **“We consider him a prisoner of conscience who should be released immediately and unconditionally, with full restoration of his salary, pension and other entitlements.”**

Sergeant Webster, 38, was born in Florida, raised a Christian, and always wanted to join the army. **He fought with distinction in the Gulf War. He served as a peacekeeper in Bosnia and Kosovo, and supported the US action in Afghanistan even though he had converted to Islam in 1994.**

“His conversion was a private matter. He didn’t go around trying to convert his fellow soldiers, or asking for any special treatment,” Mrs Webster, who married him in 1998, said.

“He is no zealot. He is proud to be an American soldier and has never been in trouble in his life. William saw his best friend blown up alongside him in the first Gulf war. He is no coward. This isn’t an excuse to stay away from Iraq.

He applied in September last year to be recognised as a conscientious objector. He withdrew the application after senior officers told him that he would not succeed, and that they would ensure that he would not have to choose between following his President’s orders or his faith.

Instead he applied to be reassigned to non-combatant services.

Mrs Webster said: “One of his senior commanders told him, ‘Don’t resign as you are due to retire early 2005 and you will lose your 20-year pension’. Literally a couple of days before the unit set off his commanding officer said, ‘Pack your bags, you are coming with us to Iraq’.”

Even then he again offered to leave the army. He was refused, though he continued to carry out his duties in Germany when the unit left without him.

The last time that Mrs Webster saw her husband, in early August, armed US military police stood by as he was allowed a brief time holding their daughter before being led in handcuffs back to his cell at Mannheim in Germany.

His wife was not told when he was moved from Mannheim to Kansas and then last month to Tacoma in Washington State. “It’s so far away his family in Florida find it hard to visit, let alone his two teenage sons from his previous marriage who live in Germany,” she said. “On a teacher’s salary I can’t afford to get there regularly with our daughter, so what’s the army’s thinking in doing this to him?” **The Pentagon’s own rules state that while an appeal is pending a prisoner should not be transferred.**

He was uncomfortable at first about becoming a cause célèbre, but Mrs Webster said: "He feels humble that so many people are supporting him. All he wants is understanding that he is not a coward, or a troublemaker, but a man of principle. People will disagree with his stand, but I hope they appreciate that he is sincere."

At his court martial in June, his commander had recommended that Sergeant Webster receive the maximum 12-year sentence.

War Profiteers Get Half Billion \$ Tax Break

[New York Times, October 19, 2004] **General Dynamics and Northrop Grumman will get tax breaks totaling nearly \$500 million over the next 10 years because of a little noticed provision contained in a corporate tax bill passed by Congress last week.**

Fucked Over Vets Must Wait 5 Months For "Justice"

[Washington Post, October 19, 2004, Pg. 21] **The Office of Special Counsel took an average of five months to resolve claims by federal employees that their bosses denied them job rights related to their service in the National Guard and reserves, according to a report released by the Government Accountability Office.**

Crooked Air Force Acquisition Officer Steered Billions To War-Profitier

[USA Today, October 19, 2004, Pg. 7B] Boeing's effort to resume launching U.S. government satellites could be affected by **Darleen Druyun's admission that she improperly steered billions of dollars to the company while she served as the Air Force's number two acquisition officer.**

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Occupation Cops Killed

BAGHDAD, Oct 26 (KUNA)

An Iraqi National Guard officer was killed here Tuesday after unknown armed militias opened fire against his car, eyewitnesses told KUNA.

Another Iraqi police officer was killed in Al-Ghazaliya area west of here after an Iraqi police group was targeted by unknown gunfire **which also injured three other policemen who were rushed to the hospital.**

11 Occupation Guards Captured

10/26/2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP)

An Iraqi insurgent group said on its Web site Tuesday it had taken 11 Iraqi National Guard soldiers hostage and showed pictures of them in uniform.

The Ansar al-Sunnah Army said the troops were captured on the highway between Baghdad and Hillah but did not say when they were seized. The posting included the names of all 11.

Baqouba Govt Official Killed

26/10/2004 news24.com

Baqouba - A government official was gunned down on his way to work on Tuesday.

Ali Niema, a Diayala provincial official in charge of education, was killed in a morning drive-by shooting in the city, according to Najim Aboud, a deputy governor of Diyala province.

Niema's driver was also killed in the attack in Baqouba, 57km north-east of Baghdad, Aboud said.

Baquba Roadside Bombs Get Occupation Cop, Wound Seven; Police Hq Attacked

26 October 2004 (Reuters) & Aljazeera

BAQUBA - Two roadside bombs blew up near police patrols in Baquba, northeast of Baghdad, on Tuesday, killing one policeman and wounding seven, police said.

They said the blasts also wounded two civilians.

The first bomb exploded near a police patrol outside an educational college in Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) from Baghdad. The second was aimed at a patrol on a road between the college and the town's main hospital, said Lieutenant Ali Abdul-Razzak.

Clashes erupted early on Tuesday between US forces and armed men in the city after a joint headquarters of Iraqi police and US forces had been attacked.

Rebel-Held Falluja Emptied Of Women And Children; “Our Will Is Strong”

27 October 2004 Reuters

FALLUJA: If US-led forces carry out a threatened full-scale assault on the Iraqi city of Falluja, they will find the rebel stronghold virtually deserted.

Thousands of women and children have long since fled almost daily bombardment of the city by US warplanes.

"These months are the hardest we have faced. Our families have fled north and south," said Farhat Said, 37, who runs a car parts and accessories shop.

"But our will is strong and we will continue to resist the occupation and cleanse our city of occupiers," he said.

Many fathers and husbands are spending the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan alone in Falluja.

"My family is living in Basra now. I haven't seen my children for two months," Alwani said. "I miss them so much. They are always on my mind."

Latifiyah Insurgents Eager To Battle British

October 25, 2004 World News and Features. Paul Martin in London contributed to this report.

LATIFIYAH, Iraq — Anti-occupation forces in this city just south of Baghdad say they are preparing a grim welcome for Britain's Black Watch regiment when it moves north from Basra as early as this week.

Preparations to fight the British are at fever pitch, with the positioning of booby traps, roadside bombs and mortars.

Some of the British forces are expected to hunker down in the city's main police station, which is fortified with huge concrete slabs. But the extremists said they have infiltrated the Iraqi national guard, and that their spies within the police will provide them with precise information about British troop movements.

Mines also are hidden in tunnels and underpasses, while the area's orange groves and palm trees provide ideal cover for guerrilla fighting. The insurgents repeatedly have blown up the rail line that brings supplies from Baghdad. No trains are running now.

The extremists' main bases are an oil storage and processing depot on the outskirts of Latifiyah, and a mosque called Al-Masraa.

Residents say the police are unwilling to leave their heavily defended station to protect the citizenry.

Iraqi police and national guard units backed by U.S. troops raided the town Sept. 4 and said they had arrested nearly 500 people and seized large caches of weapons.

But 12 police officers were killed in the raid, and an insurgent calling himself Abu Tahrir said later that his men had targeted the government forces with a suicide car bomb before attacking with mortars and rocket-propelled grenades.

"The mujahideen holy warriors only lost eight martyrs," he said. "They arrested just 80 men, and most of them were just civilians."

Mahdi's Army Hands Over 18,000 Guns; Gets \$5 Million War Chest

26 October 2004 Focus 1 News & Doug Lorimer, Green Left Weekly, October 27, 2004.

Moqtada Sadr's Army of Mahdi has handed over 18,000 gun units in the Baghdad district of Sadr City, Al Sabbah newspaper reveals. **The edition claims that arms have been put down in return of cash amounting to \$5 million.**

[Nice fund raising operation, given that there is an endless supply of guns lying around all over Iraq. They could hand over 80,000 and still have plenty left to fight with. See below.]

KRN reported that "many residents expressed disdain for the plan and said they were participating only to earn fast cash.

A 35-year-old housewife, Samira Hussein, said she turned in a mortar round she found in a garbage heap. She had no plans to give up the better weapons her family keeps at home.

“I'll hand over the useless weapons and keep the machine gun to fight our enemies', she said. 'By enemies I mean the Americans and anyone else who is against our religion and our government'.”

On October 18 KRN reported that “the US military said that only about 25% of estimated weapons” in Sadr City had been handed over. The October 18 *New York Times* reported that “US military said that Sadr's militia had so far turned in about 700 rocket-propelled grenades and about 400 mortar shells, along with hundreds of other, lighter weapons.

SOMEBODY’S LOOKING OVER YOUR SHOULDER: TIME TO GO HOME



Sadr City. (AFP/Awad Awad)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Veteran Says Resisting U.S. Is Rational To Proud Iraqis: Americans Would Do The Same Thing

October 24, 2004 Cliff Volpe, The Register-Guard. Eugene native Cliff Volpe, a 1995 graduate of the Air Force Academy. He is working in the troubled region along the

border of Georgia, Chechnya and Dagestan as a border monitor for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

If we try to put ourselves in their shoes, the resistance movement in Iraq seems almost rational and justifiable. If Americans had their country invaded by a foreign government - if their houses were destroyed, their family members were killed and their streets were made less safe - wouldn't some Americans fight back, too?

From February to April of this year, I backpacked around Iraq - mingling with the locals, traveling by public transportation, and exploring the country by myself. I found that Iraqis of all ethnicities - Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen - routinely invited me to stay in their homes, fed me lavish meals, and went out of their way to show me around and make sure I stayed safe.

Without a doubt, Iraqis were the most hospitable, friendly people I have ever met.

Iraqis also have a tremendous amount of pride and honor. Like people of all nations, they want to live with their families in a safe environment and to have jobs in a stable society.

Bush claims he has liberated Iraq and given its people democracy.

It's true that Iraqis might embrace democracy if it came by their own choice, but as a matter of pride and national identity, they will reject any form of government that they feel is being forced upon them by a puppet government manipulated by foreign powers.

Iraqis have a great need for (and right to) self-determination, and their frustration with feeling controlled and occupied by outside forces has understandably reached a boiling point.

Based on my observations and suspicions, many Iraqi resistance fighters are average Iraqis who are infuriated by the woes that have befallen their country since the U.S.-led invasion last year.

If we try to put ourselves in their shoes, the resistance movement in Iraq seems almost rational and justifiable. If Americans had their country invaded by a foreign government - if their houses were destroyed, their family members were killed and their streets were made less safe - wouldn't some Americans fight back, too?

As if Iraqis haven't suffered enough, then let's not forget about the suffering of American soldiers.

They also are - quite needlessly, many would argue - dying for unjust causes.

Iraq is a Vietnam-like event of dismal and sweeping proportion, featuring questionable political agendas, a financial black hole and unwinnable guerrilla warfare.

Traveling overseas this past year has allowed me to see just how pervasive and visceral the reaction to American foreign policy has been.

I saw it with an Iraqi Arab Christian family I stayed with. They had hated Saddam's regime, but admitted preferring Saddam to the current American occupation.

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.

“This Reminds Me Of Vietnam”

Oct 25 JIM KRANE, Associated Press Writer

"This reminds me of Vietnam, where it was always known that there was infiltration of South Vietnam's army and security services by the Viet Cong," said Richard K. Betts, who heads Columbia University's Institute of War and Peace Studies.

"But how much turned out to be a surprise. After the fall of Saigon, substantial numbers of South Vietnamese government and military personnel turned out to be Viet Cong."

“Thou Art Wedded To Calamity”

October 26, 2004 By BRIAN CLOUGLEY, CounterPunch

George Bush, the Commander-in-Chief, tells lies.

Dick Cheney, the man who runs the Commander-in-Chief, tells lies.

Donald Rumsfeld, the man responsible for US defense except when things go wrong, tells lies.

So why should the US military do any different?

Here is a Reuters' report of 20 October :

"FALLUJA, Iraq (Reuters) US warplanes killed a family of six in raids against rebels led by Al-Qaeda ally Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi . . . A witness saw a man and a woman and four children, two boys and two girls, being pulled out of the rubble of a razed home in

the rebel-held city of Falluja. **The US military denied a family of six was killed, saying it launched four strikes against safehouses used by Zarqawi's fighters.**

"Intelligence sources indicate a known Zarqawi propagandist is passing false reports to the media," it said in a statement."

So the Reuters' witness and Reuters' television pictures and the dead kids are all part of a deep dark conspiracy to pass false reports to the world about US airstrikes in Iraq. The bodies of the kids don't exist and the pictures must have been faked, because the US military tells us so.

Dead boys and girls weren't pulled from the debris of a building flattened by US bombs, in spite of the evidence of a witness, because the US military tells us so. And they are honorable people. So we believe them, don't we?

The US military would do well to take heed of Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet', when Friar John adjures Romeo to :

*"come forth; come forth thou fearful man ;
Affliction is enamored of thy parts,
And thou art wedded to calamity."*

For the US military is now bound by fetters of misplaced loyalty to the blatant lies of squalid politicians and has indeed become "wedded to calamity".

Friendly Fire

[Thanks to EL, serving in Iraq, who sent this one in.]

George Bush visits a primary school classroom on an Army military base.

They are in the middle of a discussion related to words and their meanings.

The teacher asks Mr. Bush if he would like to lead the discussion on the word "tragedy."

After the President thanks the kids for being so understanding about their mothers and dads fighting in Iraq, the illustrious President asks the class for an example of a tragedy.

One little boy stands up and offers: "If my best friend, who lives on a farm, is playing in the field and a tractor runs him over and kills him that would be a 'tragedy'."

"No," says Bush, "that would be an accident".

A little girl raises her hand: "If a school bus carrying 50 children drove over a cliff, killing everyone inside, that would be a tragedy."

"I'm afraid not," explains Mr. Bush. "That's what we would call a 'great loss'."

The room goes silent. No other children volunteered.

Bush searches the room.

"Isn't there someone here who can give me an example of a 'tragedy'?"

Finally, at the back of the room a small boy raises his hand. In a quiet voice, he says: "If your campaign plane, carrying you, Mr. President, were struck by a 'friendly fire' missile and blown to smithereens that would be a 'tragedy'."

"Fantastic!" exclaims Bush. "That's right. And can you tell me why that would be a 'tragedy'?"

"Well," says the boy "because it certainly wouldn't be a 'great loss' and it probably wouldn't be an 'accident' either."

OCCUPATION REPORT

“That’s One Fight You Don’t Want To Take On”

October 26, 2004 Greg Palast, TomPaine.com

Pausing only to install himself in Saddam's old palace—and adding an extra ring of barbed wire—**"Jerry" Bremer cancelled Garner's scheduled meeting of Iraq's tribal leaders called to plan national elections. Instead, Bremer appointed the entire government himself. National elections, Bremer pronounced, would have to wait until 2005. The extended occupation would require our forces to linger.**

After General Garner was deposed, I met with him in Washington. He had little regard for the Economy Plan handed to him three months before the tanks rolled. He especially feared its designs on Iraq's oil assets and the delay in handing Iraq back to Iraqis. "That's one fight you don't want to take on," he told me.

But we have. After a month in Saddam's palace, Bremer cancelled municipal elections, including the crucial vote about to take place in Najaf. Denied the ballot, Najaf's Shi'ites voted with bullets. This April, insurgent leader Moqtada Al Sadr's militia killed 21 U.S. soldiers and, for a month, seized the holy city.

<p>"They shouldn't have to follow our plan," the general said. "It's their country, their oil." Maybe, but not according to the Plan. And until it does become their country, the 82nd Airborne will have to remain to keep it from them.</p>
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FBI Agents Think Rape And Torture OK

[New York Times, October 26, 2004]

FBI agents saw harsh treatment of Abu Ghraib prisoners in 2003, but did not consider what they saw abusive or worth reporting.

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

OCCUPATION HAITI

Bel-Air Assault; Occupation Cop Killed

October 26th, 2004 World Crisis Web

An alliance between the armed "police" of the interim government in Haiti and Brazilian troops representing the United Nations on Sunday over-ran a slum in the Haitian capital, sweeping aside barricades built, say the slum's inhabitants, to protect themselves from marauding supporters of the de facto government.

One Haitian "policeman" was shot and killed during resistance by locals in the district of Bel-Air, but the overwhelming firepower and numbers of those carrying out the assault soon overcame any violent opposition, which ended after scores of Brazilian troops moved in to support the assault, backed up by machine-gun mounted armored cars.

Touring the shantytown after the area was pacified, reporters saw a group of young locals jeering at their new "police officers". "All we want is to have President Aristide returned," said Aristide Carlo, a 20-year-old student. "The police accuse us of terrorism, but it is they who are the bandits."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Bush Wants \$70B More For War

October 26, 2004 By JONATHAN WEISMAN and THOMAS E. RICKS, Washington Post

WASHINGTON -- The Bush administration intends to seek about \$70 billion in emergency funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan early next year, pushing total war costs close to \$225 billion since the invasion of Iraq early last year, Pentagon and congressional officials said Monday.

Yale University economist William D. Nordhaus estimated that in inflation-adjusted terms, World War I cost just under \$200 billion for the United States. The Vietnam War cost about \$500 billion from 1964 to 1972, Nordhaus said. **The cost of the Iraq war could reach nearly half that number by next fall, 2 1/2 years after it began.**

MORE:

But The Empire Is Bankrupt: The Dollar Goes In The Toilet

By STEVEN VAMES, Dow Jones Newswires, 10.16.04

The dollar dropped to its lowest level against the euro in almost eight months, extending the selloff that began Friday and leading many traders to believe the dollar will fall even further.

As New York trading wound down, the euro was hovering just above the psychologically important \$1.25 mark, **suggesting to many that the euro has crossed a key technical barrier, which will prompt investors to pile onto the dollar-bearish bandwagon in the weeks to come.**

The Swiss franc rose against the dollar, largely in tandem with the euro.

The dollar's decline against the euro was triggered by the release of Treasury International Capital System flows data, which showed that net foreign purchases of U.S. securities in August were \$59 billion, lower than July's downwardly revised \$63.1 billion.

The data added to already deep concerns about the sustainability of the huge U.S. trade and current-account deficits. With foreigners buying fewer U.S. Treasuries, stocks and other dollar assets, the large trade deficits will place strong downward pressure on the dollar.

Andy Busch, global foreign-exchange strategist at Harris Nesbitt, said that even though the market was in the mood to seize on negative data and drive the dollar lower, the August TICS data was unquestionably bad for the U.S. economy.

"It's really come off the last couple of months. We're in dangerous territory. The U.S. has a big problem with its trade balances," he said. A weaker dollar "is the only way we can partially address the trade data."

Democrats Anonymous

October 26, 2004 WILLIAM BLUM, CounterPunch

Each month I think I'm going to stop beating up on Kerry and the Democrats because it makes me sad myself to think that there's no honorable and viable alternative to Emperor George or the Republicans.

Then I read about the Democrat's rising star, Barack Obama, Senate candidate and almost certain winner in Illinois, keynote speaker at the Democratic National Convention. He declared that he would favor the use of missile strikes against Iran if it failed to bow to Washington's demand that it cease its alleged nuclear weapons program.

Very nice, Barack. Just what this violence-plagued, tired old world needs, more death and destruction, more Iraqs and Afghanistans, more pre-emptive wars of aggression, more imperial arrogance.

Obama is clearly showing that he's presidential material by meeting the first requirement for that office: no inhibitions about killing large numbers of innocent and defenseless foreign people. Oh yes, he said the missile strikes against Iran would be "surgical". Even as I write this, the cemeteries of Fallujah are filling up with cases of surgical malpractice.

A reader, Barbara West, writes: "For years I have had the idea of outlining a 12-step program called Democrats Anonymous, for those who know they should abandon that dead-end, but just can't bring themselves to, even when their political lives have become unmanageable. The concept is yours if you can make something of it." I in turn make the same offer to any other reader.

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.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Spain Orders Troop Withdrawal

MADRID, Oct. 25 (Xinhuanet)

The Spanish government confirmed Monday it had ordered the withdrawal of 500 troops from its contingent collaborating with the International Security Forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

Joint Chief of Staff, general Felix Sanz Roldan, informed that the return of the paratroopers which since early-September are stationed in Mazar, north Afghanistan, will be completed within 20 days.

Received:

From: J
To: GI Special
Sent: October 25
Subject: Sadr Support for Mujahideens in Fallujah: (Comment)

Bush's great achievement in Iraq - he has succeeded in uniting all the warring factions except the Kurds. The Shi'ites persecuted, and the Sunni favoured, by Saddam are now united under the banner of a free Iraq.

I enjoy reading the GI Special. --- J.

Web Copies

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