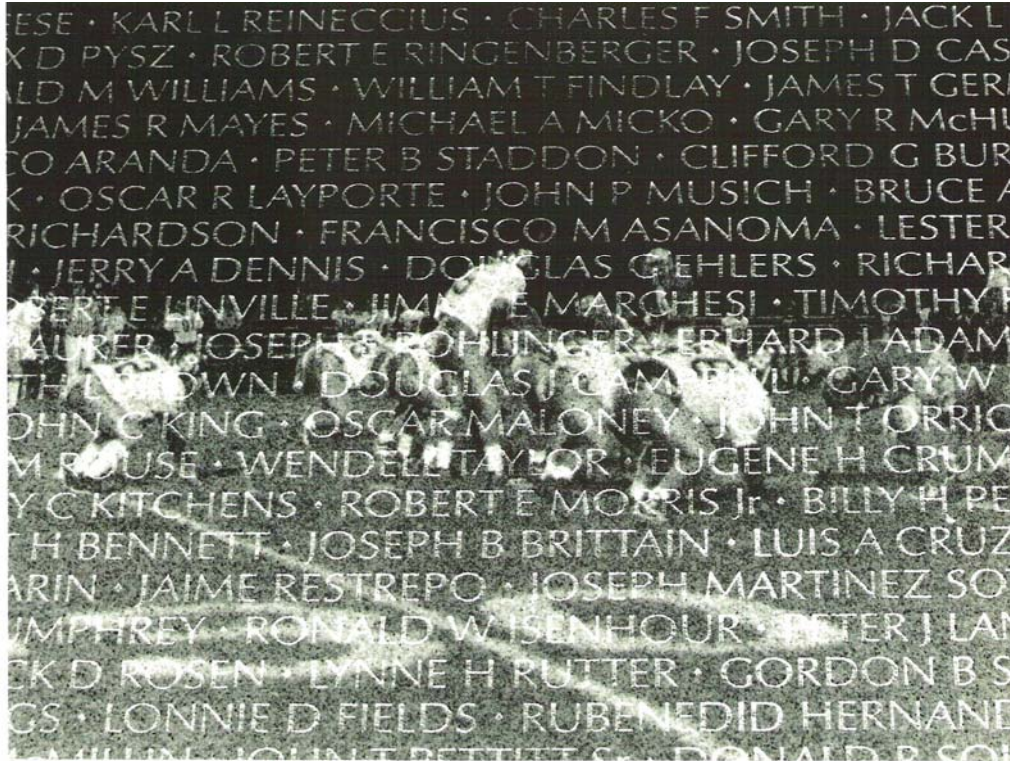


GI SPECIAL 2#C47



58,000 American soldiers died in the Vietnam War. The average age was 19 – from the senior prom to Vietnam.

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran

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

Growing Military Discontent Threatening War Politicians

10 December 2004 By Tom Raum, Washington, The Associated Press

Troops are being deployed in continuing combat under what are often high risk conditions for far longer periods than anyone had previously considered or planned for.

Soldiers always gripe. But confronting the defense secretary, filing a lawsuit over extended tours and refusing to go on a mission because it's too dangerous elevate complaining to a new level.

It also could mean a deeper problem for the Pentagon: a lessening of faith in the Iraq mission and in a volunteer army that soldiers can't leave.

It also highlighted growing morale and motivation problems in the 21-month-old war that even some administration supporters say must be addressed to get off a slippery slope that could eventually lead to breakdowns reminiscent of the Vietnam War.

For thousands of years, soldiers have grumbled about everything from their commanders to their equipment to shelter and food. But challenging a defense secretary to his face is rare. So is suing the military to keep from being sent back to a combat zone.

"We are seeing some unprecedented things. The real fear is that these could be tips of a larger iceberg," said P.J. Crowley, a retired colonel who served as a Pentagon spokesman in both Republican and Democratic administrations and was a White House national security aide in the Clinton administration.

"The real issue is not any one of these things individually. It's what the broader impact will be on our re-enlistment rates and our retention," Crowley said.

"Tensions obviously are rising," said Anthony Cordesman, a military analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a former adviser to Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.

Troops are being deployed in continuing combat under what are often high risk conditions for far longer periods than anyone had previously considered or planned for."

The growing restiveness of U.S. troops in the Middle East echoes a drop in optimism at home that a stable, democratic government can be established in Iraq. **A new poll for The Associated Press by Ipsos-Public Affairs shows that 47 percent of Americans now think it's likely Iraq can establish such a government, down from 55 percent in April.**

US Army Plagued By Desertion And Plunging Morale

December 10, 2004 From Elaine Monaghan in Washington

Few experts are surprised to hear that a recent army survey discovered that half the soldiers were not planning to re-enlist.

WHILE insurgents draw on deep wells of fury to expand their ranks in Iraq, the US military is fighting desertion, recruitment shortfalls and legal challenges from its own troops.

The irritation among the rank and file became all too clear this week when a soldier stood up in a televised session with Donald Rumsfeld, the US Defence Secretary, to ask why the world's richest army was having to hunt for scrap metal to protect its vehicles.

The same night, interviews with three soldiers who are seeking refugee status in Canada, where they have become minor celebrities, dominated prime time television. They are among more than 5,000 troops that CBS's *60 Minutes* reported on Wednesday had deserted since the war began.

Many experts say that America's 1.4 million active-duty troops and 865,000 part-timers are stretched to the point where President Bush may see other foreign policy goals blunted.

The bleed from the US military is heaviest among parttimers, who have been dragged en masse out of civilian life to serve their country with unprecedented sacrifice. For the first time in a decade, the Army National Guard missed its recruitment target this year. Instead of signing up 56,000 people, it found 51,000.

The crisis may be even deeper than the statistics suggest. Active-duty Army recruiters exceeded their target of 77,000 by 587 this year only by dipping into a pool of recruits who had not planned to report until next year, and by dropping educational standards

At 10 per cent, the death rate among war casualties is the lowest in history. But maimed men and women are flocking home with horror stories about the war, which is claiming more and more casualties.

Between June, when the Iraqi interim Government took over, and September, the average monthly casualty rate among US forces was 747 a month, compared with 482 during the invasion and 415 before the coalition government was disbanded. With elections looming next month, the toll is expected to mount.

Most soldiers keep their anger under wraps, partly out of patriotism but also out of loyalty to their units. "There's a thin green line that you don't cross," said a veteran with the 4th Infantry, who deployed to Iraq last year to help to plan counterinsurgency operations and train Iraqi forces.

But at his home base in Fort Carson, Colorado, he has resisted a \$10,000 re-enlistment incentive and plans to get out as soon as he can.

He illustrates the long-term problem the Army faces. He served for five years, first in Korea, then in Iraq, where he was a combat soldier for almost a year. The Americans received little training for the counterinsurgency they face. "Every day you wake up alive, is a gift from above," the soldier said.

Few experts are surprised to hear that a recent army survey discovered that half the soldiers were not planning to re-enlist.

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 inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME: BRING THE WAR HOME NOW



Jeanette Urbina, mother of Pfc. Wilfredo Urbina, at graveside service at Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale, N.Y. Dec. 7. Pfc. Urbina, 29, died Nov. 29 in Baghdad. He was assigned to the National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, New York. At left is Umberto Urbina, Wilfredo's father. (AP Photo/Ed Betz)

U.S. Marine Killed in Action

Dec 11, 2004 BAGHDAD (Reuters)

A U.S. Marine was killed in action on Saturday in al-Anbar province west of Baghdad, a military statement said.

Kirkuk IED Blast Wounds Two U.S.

12.11.04

A car bomb exploded in the center of the ethnically divided northern oil capital of Kirkuk, badly damaging a U.S. Humvee patrol vehicle and wounding two soldiers and an interpreter, the U.S. military said.

Small arms fire erupted after the blast. The soldiers and interpreter were evacuated and in stable condition.

U.S. troops and Iraqi police sealed off the area where the car bomb exploded. Master Sergeant Robert Powell, a spokesman for U.S. forces in the area, said it was believed to have been remotely detonated and not a suicide bomb attack.

Eight U.S. Soldiers Wounded In Mosul Attacks



An armed insurgent beside a burning police van in Mosul. Insurgents detonated a car bomb alongside a US military convoy. (AFP/Mujahed Mohammed)

11 December 2004 Focus News Agency & By Maher al-Thanoon, (Reuters)

Mosul. **Eight soldiers from the US coalition forces have been injured in clashes with insurgents in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul**, reported AFP citing US military forces. **The clashes started after an explosion of a car bomb on a road where a US military convoy passed.**

A U.S. aircraft dropped a half-ton(500 lb) bomb on the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Saturday after guerrillas attacked a U.S. patrol that was trying to capture an insurgent arms dump, a military spokesman said.

The powerful blast shook the west of the city. There was an "unknown number of enemy casualties" and eight soldiers were slightly wounded, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Hastings said.

Insurgents had set off a car bomb and then opened fire with rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars on the unit that moved on the arms cache. Troops later destroyed the weapons.

OOPS: US Resumes Air Attacks On Fallujah After Fierce Fighting

11 December 2004 Focus News Agency & Aljazeera

Fallujah. The US air forces have resumed their attacks on the Iraqi city of Fallujah, reported RIA Novosti citing an announcement of Al Jazeera TV. There are no reports of casualties and damages.

US warplanes raided different parts of Falluja including al-Askary, al-Sinai and al-Shuhada neighbourhoods. **The raid came following fierce clashes with fighters overnight.**

From: Kelebdooni December 11, 2004

Subject: Sporadic Air Raids On Falluja Today

News bulletin on Al-Jazeera channel at 14:00 GMT announced that sporadic air raids were carried out today on Al-Askari neighborhood of Falluja. Al-Askari lies within the north-eastern area of Falluja city. Witnesses outside Falluja reported a number of explosions in Falluja during the day in Sinaii, Nazzal, and Jolan districts, spanning over from the south east to the north west of Falluja.

End of Item.

Comment from Kelebdooni:

You remember Falluja? You surely remember Falluja? Yes, the place where that kebab restaurant was.

It's the city the marines were supposed to take in two days. After the first day passed with little resistance, the "taking" was revised to three days. Ours is not to question why. Afterwards, we needed ten days mopping up the tiny pockets. Another week to secure of course. **A month has passed now, AND we hear of air raids and explosions?**

I can propose two plausible explanations. One, the F-16's have got used to bombing Falluja, and it's difficult to break out of a habit. Two, someone is not happy with the reconstruction work allegedly started already. Anyone with a three?

Falluja: MORE:

December 10, 2004 by Joseph Nevins, CommonDreams

In breach of the Geneva Conventions, for example, U.S. troops refused to allow males of "military-age" (16 to 55)--defining them all as potential enemy combatants--to flee Falluja. Given the heavy American bombardment of the city, one wonders how many of these men are among the estimated 1,200 to 1,600 categorized by U.S. authorities as dead insurgents.

American military commanders first stated there was no evidence of civilian casualties in Falluja. Now, the Pentagon has accepted responsibility and offered compensation for the death of a family of seven, including a three-month-old baby. Yet it still only admits to having killed a few.

Press accounts, however, described Fallujas streets as littered with corpses. One high-level International Committee of the Red Cross official in Iraq estimated in mid-November that there were "at least 800 civilians" among the dead. More recently, the Iraqi Red Crescent estimated that more than 6,000 people may have died in the battle.

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)

General Flih Force Fights U.S.

11 Dec 2004 Roj TV

3 members of Iraqi National Forces were reported killed by Iraqi mutineers. The event happened in Yermuk District and 3 were recorded to have been beheaded. A note "this is the penalty of betrayers" found by the corpses. In addition, one more corpse the identity of which has not been fixed were found in Mousul's Misak District. The killed person had been shot at in its head and chest.

Armed forces depent upon General Reshit Flih clashed with the US troops in Faysaliye Distric, Mousul. While no information has been obtained about the number of the dead and wounded, it was reported that an other group depent on the same person has been keeping control over Dewasi District, Northern Mousul.

WAR WITHOUT END? BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



US Marine, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit near Yusufiyeh..(12.11.04 AFP/USMC)

Mac Family Loses Son In Iraq; 25 Dead In His Unit Since August

December 11, 2004 By DEE DUDERSTADT Of the News-Register

Army Spc. Edwin William Roodhouse, 36-year-old son of Alan and Donna Roodhouse of McMinnville, was killed Sunday in a roadside explosion between Fallujah and Ramadi.

Roodhouse, a computer networking engineer from Northern California's Silicon Valley in his private life, was driving a Humvee when what the Army calls an "improvised explosive device," or IED, was detonated remotely under his vehicle.

Also killed in the blast was Staff Sgt. Kyle Eggers, 27, of Yakima, Wash., who was riding with Roodhouse.

"His group has lost 25 young men since August," Alan Roodhouse said. "He and his buddy were driving on the main road in a Humvee, and hit a roadside mine, an IED, and they were killed."

TROOP NEWS

**REAL BAD PLACE TO BE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



US Marines with Fox company 2nd Battalion 24th MEU raid a house in the Sunni insurgent stronghold village of Jawan. (12.7.04 AFP/Odd Andersen)

NYC Vets Demand Active Duty Troops Have Right To Speak Out; Want All Troops Home Now

Sent: Saturday, December 11, 2004 11:48 PM

Subject: [VetPax] NYC VETS STATEMENT

Today a meeting of 350-400 veterans, military families and supporters took place in NYC. A report and photos will follow within the next several days. Below is the statement adopted by the meeting.

We are veterans, military families, and supporters who have assembled at a public meeting and speak out in New York City to express our opposition to the illegal and unjust occupation of Iraq.

We do not believe our servicemen and women should be sent overseas to kill and die or be maimed to protect politician's credibility. Real support for the troops means **insisting that they be brought home now** and that they, along with veterans of previous conflicts, receive the care and assistance they need and are entitled to, upon their return.

We also stand in defense of our civil rights and liberties, including the right of the troops themselves to speak out against mistreatment, incompetent leadership, corporate corruption, the "back-door draft" or illegal orders.

We know this is a long-term struggle and pledge to continue organizing against this folly and those who dragged our country into it.

We do this in solidarity with the men and women they have put in harm's way, and with the ordinary citizens of Iraq who are suffering under foreign occupation.

December 11, 2004

Used, Abused, And Thrown In The Trash: He Lost An Arm In Iraq & The Army Wants Money For Missing Equipment; Spc. Robert Loria Treated Like Shit

10 December 2004 Dianna Cahn , Times Herald-Record (Middletown, New York)

"I don't want this to happen to another family," Christine Loria said. "Him being blown up was supposed to be the worst thing, but it wasn't. That the military doesn't care was the worst."

"It's nerve-racking," Loria said. "After everything I have done, it's almost like I am being abandoned, like, you did your job for us and now you are no use. That's how it feels."

Middletown – He lost his arm serving his country in Iraq.

Now this wounded soldier is being discharged from his company in Fort Hood, Texas, without enough gas money to get home. In fact, the Army says 27-year-old Spc. Robert Loria owes it close to \$2,000, and confiscated his last paycheck.

"There's people in my unit right now – one of my team leaders [who was] over in Iraq with me, is doing everything he can to help me but it's looking bleak," Loria said by telephone from Fort Hood yesterday. **"It's coming up on Christmas and I have no way of getting home."**

Loria's expected discharge yesterday came a day after the public got a rare view of disgruntled soldiers in Kuwait peppering Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld with questions about their lack of adequate armor in Iraq.

Like many soldiers wounded in Iraq, Loria's injuries were caused by a roadside bombing. It happened in February when his team from the 588th Battalion's Bravo Company was going to help evacuate an area in Baqubah, a town 40 miles north of Baghdad. A bomb had just ripped off another soldier's arm. Loria's Humvee drove into an ambush.

When the second bomb exploded, it tore Loria's left hand and forearm off, split his femur in two and shot shrapnel through the left side of his body. Months later, he was still recuperating at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and just beginning to adjust to life without a hand, when he was released back to Fort Hood.

AFTER SEVERAL MORE MONTHS, the Army is releasing Loria. But "clearing Fort Hood," as the troops say, takes paperwork. Lots of it.

Loria thought he'd done it all, and was getting ready to collect \$4,486 in final Army pay.

Then he was hit with another bomb. The Army had another tally – of money it says Loria owed to his government.

A Separation Pay Worksheet given to Loria showed the numbers: \$2,408.33 for 10 months of family separation pay that the Army erroneously paid Loria after he'd returned stateside, as a patient at Walter Reed; **\$2,204.25 that Loria received for travel expenses from Fort Hood back to Walter Reed for a follow-up visit, after the travel paperwork submitted by Loria never reached the correct desk.** And \$310 for missing items on his returned equipment inventory list.

"There was stuff lost in transportation, others damaged in the accident," Loria said of the day he lost his hand. "When it went up the chain of command, the military denied coverage."

Including taxes, the amount Loria owed totaled \$6,255.50. The last line on the worksheet subtracted that total from his final Army payout and found \$1,768.81 "due us."

"It's nerve-racking," Loria said. "After everything I have done, it's almost like I am being abandoned, like, you did your job for us and now you are no use. That's how it feels."

AT HOME in Middletown, yesterday, Loria's wife, Christine, was beside herself. "They want us to sacrifice more," she said, her voice quavering. "My husband has already sacrificed more than he should have to."

For weeks now, Christine has been telling her 3-year-old son, Jonathan, that Robbie, who is not his birth father, will be coming home any day now.

But the Army has delayed Loria's release at least five times already, she said, leaving a little boy confused and angry.

"Rob was supposed to be here on Saturday," she said. "Now [Jonathan] is mad at me. How do you explain something you yourself don't understand?"

Christine said the Department of Veterans Affairs has been helpful in giving Loria guidance about how to get his life back on track, offering vocation rehabilitation to "teach them to go back out in the world with the limitations they have."

But the Army brass has been unreceptive, she said.

The Lorias also contacted the offices of U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., and Rep. Maurice Hinchey, D-Saugerties. Hinchey's office responded.

"There's enough to go on here to call the Army on it and see if it can get worked out," said Hinchey aide Dan Ahouse. "We are expressing to the Pentagon that based on what we see here, we don't see that Mr. Loria is being treated the way we think our veterans returning from Iraq should be treated."

"I don't want this to happen to another family," Christine Loria said. "Him being blown up was supposed to be the worst thing, but it wasn't. That the military doesn't care was the worst."

Christine Loria was at the end of her rope earlier this week when she called her wounded husband's commanders at Fort Hood, Texas, and gave them a piece of her mind.

The Army was discharging her husband, Robert, after he lost his arm and suffered other severe injuries in Iraq, without even gas money to drive his car home.

"I am up here and he's there. That's 1,800 miles away," she said. "I had to call his chain of command and scream at them."

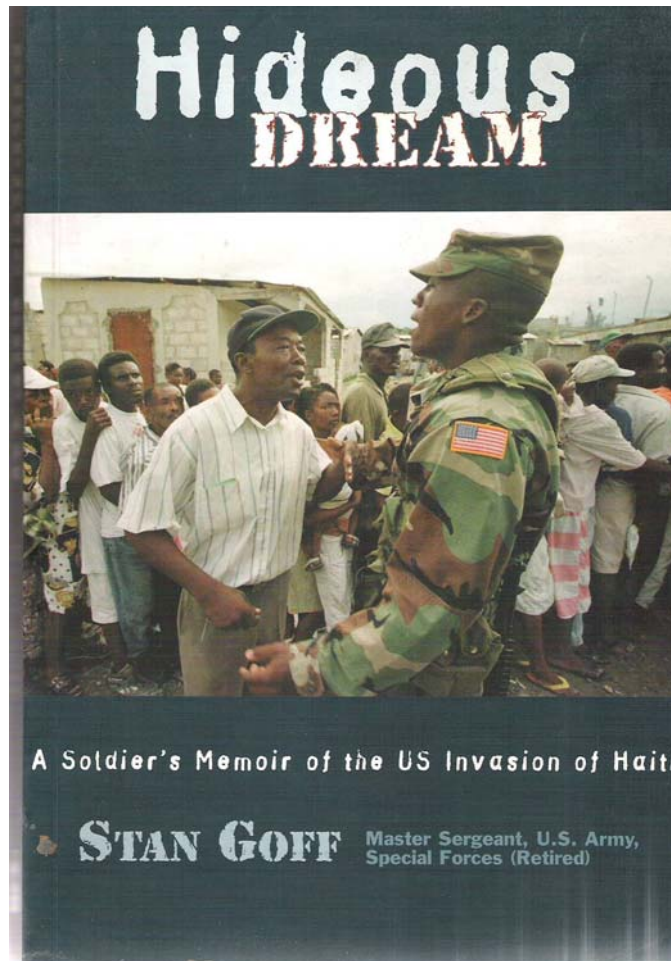
Their reaction she said, was "very mature."

"If he feels that way, why is his wife talking for him? Why doesn't he come talk to us himself?" she remembers them asking her.

"Because on some level, he still respects you," she answered. "I don't have that problem."

[How's this for an equitable resolution: He lost an arm. OK, hack off one of Rumsfelds' arms and raffle off the privilege of doing the job, thereby raising the money the army says he owes them. That should cover it about 100 times over, with lines forming at the right to get the shot at Scummy.]

“You want the truth? You can't handle the truth.”



Softskull Press 2000

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/1887128638/qid=1102829319/sr=1-2/ref=sr_1_2/102-0373291-0788142?v=glance&s=books --- where you can sample the content. The first couple pages should do it.

**Army Brass Gathers Lynch Mob
To Court Martial PTSD Soldier:**

Liars Caught, But That's Not Stopping Assholes In Command

December 10, 2004 By Lynne Duke, Washington Post Staff Writer

Goodrum denies the charges and claims the case against him is rooted in retaliation. He has filed numerous complaints up the chain of command over the lack of equipment for troops in Iraq, about a commander whose leadership he questioned and about poor treatment of soldiers awaiting medical care at Fort Knox.

An Army reservist who checked himself into a civilian psychiatric hospital after being turned away from a military clinic should be court-martialed for being absent without leave, according to an Army report.

First Lt. Jullian P. Goodrum, of Knoxville, Tenn., is a veteran of both U.S. wars in Iraq and is being treated for post-traumatic stress disorder at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. **Goodrum was also suffering from the disorder last fall, the time of his alleged infraction.**

"Lt. Goodrum has been diagnosed with PTSD, though this should not be reason to not pursue court martial action," states the report by Army Lt. Col. Michael L. Amaral, the investigating officer in the case.

Goodrum's legal team, which released the Amaral report to The Washington Post, intends to fight the recommendation.

"The diagnosis of PTSD is at the very heart of the case, and for that diagnosis to receive a single line in this investigating officer's report just goes to show how little attention has been given by the military to this case and the real issues in it," said Matthew J. MacLean, of the law firm Shaw Pittman.

Following an investigative hearing at Walter Reed on Oct. 25, **Amaral recommended in his Nov. 5 report that Goodrum be court-martialed for being AWOL while in the civilian psychiatric facility; for failing to obey an order that he return to Fort Knox or follow the necessary medical leave procedures; and for fraternizing with his sergeant, a woman, while in Iraq.** Goodrum faces up to six years in prison and the equivalent of a dishonorable discharge from the military.

He and his lawyers deny that he was ordered to return to Fort Knox, citing testimony from his senior officer, Capt. Debra G. Savage.

"I did not order First Lt. Goodrum to come back. I gave him two alternatives," the Amaral report quotes Savage as saying.

Goodrum, a decorated soldier with glowing military performance reviews, lashed out at the Amaral report.

"He never mentioned my outstanding service and he mentioned PTSD like it was a chewing gum wrapper," he said, calling himself "highly disgusted with the [Army] medical system."

Goodrum denies the charges and claims the case against him is rooted in retaliation. He has filed numerous complaints up the chain of command over the lack of equipment for troops in Iraq, about a commander whose leadership he questioned and about poor treatment of soldiers awaiting medical care at Fort Knox.

In the October hearing, a lieutenant testified that a captain who particularly disliked Goodrum had coerced two witnesses into writing statements saying they saw Goodrum fraternizing with his sergeant. (She, too, denies the charge, Goodrum's lawyers say.)

Also at the hearing, a lieutenant colonel at Fort Knox testified that he was angry about Goodrum's public statements criticizing the base's handling of sick soldiers. **Lt. Col. Ronald Stevens, then the deputy chief of clinical services at Fort Knox, confirmed that Goodrum had been "turned away" from a clinic during his breakdown,** but said it was because of a misunderstanding.

When contacted by Goodrum earlier this year, Tennessee Republican Sens. Bill Frist and Lamar Alexander asked the Army to investigate and report back on his case.

The senators specifically asked about allegations that Goodrum had been inappropriately locked down in the Walter Reed psychiatric ward. Goodrum's medical records suggest that he was locked down for administration or legal reasons rather than medical reasons, as is the norm. Army lawyers told the senators the Privacy Act prevented them from responding.

No Big Mystery: High Explosive Weapons Can Kill Leaving Bodies Completely Unmarked

December 11, 2004 By LISA GREENE, St. Petersburg Times Staff Writer

TAMPA - First comes the shock wave, which can bring immediate death.

Then it's the shrapnel tearing into skin, the crush of falling walls, the body landing hard after being hurled into the air.

All are part of why the injuries soldiers face from explosives are different, and often worse, than bullets.

Injuries from explosives have long been a part of war.

During the American Revolution, doctors wrote about the soldiers with no visible injuries being found dead on the battlefield - hit by the blast waves from cannon fire.

"They called them the winds of war," Scott said.

In major 20th century wars, blast injuries accounted for about 30 percent of the wounded.

But in Iraq and Afghanistan, doctors say, 60 percent to 80 percent of the injuries have come from blasts.

In World War II, about 30 percent of injured soldiers died, according to an article published this week in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. In Vietnam, that dropped to 24 percent. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the figure has dropped to 10 percent. But those injuries can be devastating.

First, there is the high-pressure blast wave.

"These blasts can go up to 700, 1,300 mph. That pressure hits them," Scott said.

Besides the danger of being hit by shrapnel or other debris, contaminated soil or other objects can pose a risk of infection.

Soldiers may have burns and may be at risk of bleeding to death, even from small wounds because there are so many of them, wrote Dr. Atul Gawande in the journal article.

Blasts mangle soldiers' limbs so badly that it is more difficult to decide whether and how to amputate. Traditional criteria for amputation decisions often don't seem to work, Gawande said, and some soldiers have faced blood loss and infections when surgeons have tried to save wounded limbs.

Head injuries from explosions are especially complex, said neurologist Dr. Warren Lux, deputy director of the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, a speaker at Sunday's conference.

Some soldiers get brain injuries from shrapnel tearing through their skulls. **Others have closed-head injuries, which may have no visible wound.** Often, the brain has been damaged by by slamming against the skull when the soldier hits his head.

Some injuries don't seem to fit traditional categories, Lux said. **Some soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan did not have open wounds and did not black out. But they still have difficulty with basic thinking functions - problems such as recognizing shapes or faces, adding, subtracting, recognizing words.**

Doctors are studying whether these soldiers' brains were hurt by the shock wave or the blast itself.

"Why are they different?" Lux said. "It's clear the blast has a direct impact on the lungs and the GI tract. Whether the skull protects the brain or not remains to be determined."

Doctors and others who tend to such injuries will discuss them at a conference Sunday at the Hyatt Regency Tampa, designed to help health care workers learn more.

The conference is sponsored by James A. Haley VA Hospital, the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center and the University of South Florida.

"A lot of these explosion injuries have multiple problems," said Dr. Steven Scott, Haley's chief of rehabilitation medicine. "Not just amputees, but other problems. How are we going to take somebody and return them to work or teach them to walk on an artificial leg when they can't think clearly?"

A Classic Example Of Psychiatric Idiocy: Wounded Soldier Told How He Should Feel

Dec. 11, 2004 HUEY FREEMAN, Associated Press, DECATUR, Ill.

The hardest part of Sgt. Joshua Forbess's recovery was coping with the deaths of the soldiers who died in the helicopter crash he survived. Four of the 17 soldiers killed in the crash were from the artillery section Forbess commanded, a small band with six or seven members.

"I was close with all of them," said Forbess, 27, a member of the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq.

Forbess was injured Nov. 15, 2003, when insurgents fired a rocket-propelled grenade at a Black Hawk helicopter. He has undergone nine operations to repair damage to his face and head from the burns he suffered. He is facing four or five more operations, to rebuild his nose and right ear and reshape his skull.

"I know I'm fortunate," Forbess said during a weekend visit to his mother's east side home. "I still have my fingers and toes. I can still walk. I can still talk. A lot of guys weren't as lucky."

"When I first woke up in the hospital, I had a psychiatrist tell me how I should feel about losing soldiers," Forbess recalled, adding the psychiatrist had never

experienced combat. "He never lost any soldiers. He tried to tell me how I should feel.

"I wasn't feeling exactly how he told me I should feel. I had to deal with it on my own. Nobody else down in that hospital had ever lost soldiers in a combat environment."

McKimson Returns Home To Recover From War Wounds

December 11, 2004 By FOSS FARRAR, Traveler Staff Writer, The Ark City Traveler

Roger McKimson can't remember many details of his experience of being shot in the chest while guarding a mosque in Iraq. But he clearly remembers how he felt after a sniper shot him.

"Fragile, vulnerable; I thought I was going to die," McKimson said Friday, sitting with his wife and three children in his cousin's rural Arkansas City home, which was decked for Christmas.

McKimson spoke in a loud whisper because one of his vocal chords apparently was injured in the shooting.

Doctors suspect nerve damage, which may take several months to heal.

The Drugs of War: Getting High in the Green Zone?

December 11 / 12, 2004 From An Article By RON JACOBS, Counterpunch

As some readers might know, I grew up as a military brat.

When I was a teenager in Frankfurt am Main, West Germany, I spent some time getting high on good hashish with friends of mine who happened to be in the service. On occasion, we would be getting high in the barracks when the word would come that agents from the Army's Criminal Intelligence Division (CID) were conducting a drug raid. **This word was usually spread by an observant GI who saw the jeeps drive up and would then go running down the halls shouting "Pigs in the lot."**

Since these raids were quite thorough and included searches of lockers, beds, and clothing, this alarm was usually followed by toilets flushing and lots of hash and other mood modifiers flying out the barracks windows.

The drug use was so rampant in the service at the time that Rhein Main airport-the departure point for millions of servicemen and their dependents-had trash cans in the bathrooms where one could anonymously get rid of any drugs they might have on them before they went through customs to board their plane "back to the world."

So, it was with those memories that I read a recent press release about increased drug testing of service men and women serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. According to the release, there are now even more random drug tests of soldiers stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The release mentions that since there has been an increase in opium production in Afghanistan, most of the drug testing would occur among GIs stationed there. According to Mary Beth Long, the Defense Department's (DoD) deputy assistant defense secretary for counternarcotics, "One of the lessons that we have learned from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (in the late 1970s through the late 1980s) is that those troops went back to Russia with a drug problem."

Long went on to say that "(US) forces are obviously very, very different. We certainly have no expectation that they would suffer the same kind of issues." **How US forces (or why) they are different, Long did not say.**

Nor did she acknowledge the history of drug use and abuse among service members in Vietnam during that conflict. Indeed, even since then the military has waged an ongoing battle against its members over non-approved drug use.

This battle, along with the nature of recruiting, has certainly diminished detectable drug use in the military dramatically, yet it is important to remember that, until the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, there have not been large numbers of regular soldiers serving in countries where drug cultivation and production is rampant. Now that the US military is in Afghanistan and Iraq, that is no longer the case.

Afghanistan is once again one of the world's largest producers of opium and will probably remain so for a while. This factor alone increases the likelihood of GI narcotics use.

Adding to the easy availability of opium products is the increased stress of combat and life in a foreign culture. This is a combination that causes humans to look for an escape.

Since there is no local alcohol (and troops are discouraged from drinking anyhow), the prospect of an opium high could start looking pretty good to those soldiers so inclined. In addition, Afghanistan produces some of the world's best hashish.

One can only wonder how long it will be before foreign soldiers discover this fact.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Guess Who's Back



Two members in the al-Mehdi Army, carry a portrait of their radical leader Muqtada al-Sadr in the eastern Baghdad suburb of al-Sadr city, December 10, 2004. (Reuters)

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

Insurgents Ambush Senior Cop Officers, Three Killed

December 12, 2004 (AEDT) & REUTERS

Insurgents killed three high-ranking Iraqi police officers in two separate attacks on Saturday.

In southern Baghdad, insurgents killed a police brigadier and a colonel, a police source said, while west of Kirkuk near the town of Ash Sharqat a police colonel was one of two officers killed in an ambush. A second colonel, who reported the incident, was among three policemen wounded in the attack.

At Ash Sharqat, Colonel Mohammed Abed said from his hospital bed that a fellow police colonel and another officer were killed in the ambush which left Abed and two others wounded. "They blocked our way, shot us and took our cars," he said.

A police source said the brigadier and colonel killed in Baghdad both worked at the Interior Ministry.

Four employees of the Ministry of Education were wounded when the bus taking them to work in Baghdad was raked by gunfire.

A woman who survived the attack on the Education Ministry bus said in hospital: "We were on our way to work. **We go the same way every day.**" Two men and two women were wounded.

The yellow, unmarked city bus was riddled with bullet holes.

Two Occupation Cops Killed In Beiji

December 11, 2004 The Associated Press

Two police officers have been killed. The two were ambushed in Beiji.

Oil Wells Still Burning

12-11-2004 BAGHDAD (AFP)

Six wells sabotaged last month in the Khabbaza oil field, 35 kilometers (21 miles) west of Kirkuk, were still on fire.

3 Occupation Cops Die In Attacks In Baghdad, Elsewhere

December 11, 2004 The Associated Press, BAGHDAD, Iraq

Three police officers have been killed in a string of violence across Iraq.

Police say two officers were killed in an ambush in Baghdad's northern suburbs. They say two others were injured in the attack. They say another officer was gunned down as he was on his way to work in the northern city of Beiji.

Collaborator Killed In Mahmudiayh

BAGHDAD, Dec 11 (AFP)

Masked gunmen killed seven civilians in a series of attacks in Iraq's "triangle of death", south of Baghdad, police and witnesses said Saturday.

Attackers jumped out of a car in the town of Mahmudiyah on Friday and opened up with automatic weapons on a man in the street whom they accused of "collaborating with the occupier", according to eye-witness Abdallah Abbas.

Fuel Crisis Deepening

11 December 2004 Reuters

Iraq used to export refined oil products before the war. Imports now cost the country \$200 million a month, with oil products coming by truck from Turkey, Iran, Jordan and Syria, and through the Khor al-Zubeir terminal on the Gulf.

Its demand amounts to about 20 million litres a day of petrol, half of which is imported.

Iraq also needs imports to cover domestic requirements for 20 million litres a day of gas-oil, most of it diesel, 8000 litres a day of kerosene and 5000 tonnes a day of liquefied petroleum gas.

Twenty litres of gasoline in Iraq now costs \$14 on the black market compared with the official rate of 20 cents at the pumps, where supply is meagre and queues stretch for kilometres.

Households also lack kerosene and gas-oil for heating.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“The United States Has Lost The War In Iraq, And That's A Good Thing”

08 December 2004 By Robert Jensen, The Fort Worth Star-Telegram

<p>But most Iraqis don't want to be subordinated, which is why the United States in some sense lost the war on the day it invaded. One lesson of contemporary history is that occupying armies generate resistance that, inevitably, prevails over imperial power.</p>

The United States has lost the war in Iraq, and that's a good thing.

I don't mean that the loss of American and Iraqi lives is to be celebrated. The death and destruction are numbingly tragic, and the suffering in Iraq is hard for most of us in the United States to comprehend.

The tragedy is compounded because these deaths haven't protected Americans or brought freedom to Iraqis. They have come in the quest to extend the American empire in this "new American century."

So, as a U.S. citizen, I welcome the U.S. defeat for a simple reason: It isn't the defeat of the United States - its people or their ideals - but of that empire. And it's essential that the American empire be defeated and dismantled.

The fact that the Bush administration says we are fighting for freedom and democracy (having long ago abandoned fictions about weapons of mass destruction and terrorist ties) does not make it so.

We must look at the reality, no matter how painful. The people of Iraq are better off without Saddam Hussein's despised regime, but that does not prove our benevolent intentions or guarantee that the United States will work to bring meaningful democracy to Iraq.

In Iraq, the Bush administration invaded not to liberate but to extend and deepen U.S. domination. When Bush said, "We have no territorial ambitions; we don't seek an empire," on Nov. 11, 2002, he told a half-truth.

The United States doesn't want to absorb Iraq or take direct possession of its oil. That's not the way of empire today; it's about control over the flow of oil and oil profits, not ownership.

In a world that runs on oil, the nation that controls the flow of oil has great strategic power. U.S. policy-makers want leverage over the economies of competitors - Western Europe, Japan and China - that are more dependent on Middle Eastern oil.

The Bush administration has invested money and lives in making Iraq a platform from which the United States can project power. That requires not the liberation of Iraq but its subordination.

But most Iraqis don't want to be subordinated, which is why the United States in some sense lost the war on the day it invaded. One lesson of contemporary history is that occupying armies generate resistance that, inevitably, prevails over imperial power.

When we admit defeat and pull out - not if, but when - the fate of Iraqis will depend in part on whether the United States makes good on legal and moral obligations to pay reparations and allows international institutions to aid in creating a truly sovereign Iraq.

We shouldn't expect politicians to do either without pressure. An anti-empire movement - the joining of anti-war forces with the movement to reject corporate globalization - must create that pressure.

We should all carry a profound sense of sadness at where decisions made by U.S. policy-makers - not just the gang in power today but a string of Republican and Democratic administrations - have left us and the Iraqis. **But that sadness should not**

keep us from pursuing the most courageous act of citizenship in the United States today: pledging to dismantle the American empire.

The planet's resources do not belong to the United States. The century is not America's. We own neither the world nor time. And if we don't give up the quest - if we don't find our place in the world instead of on top of the world - there is little hope for a safe, sane and sustainable future.

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.

CLASS WAR NEWS

As U.S. Poverty Grows, Millions Can't Pay Winter Heating Bills

12/9/2004 By Barbara Hagenbaugh, USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — **Demand for heating assistance from low-income households is expected to jump to the highest level in two decades** this winter, putting a significant strain on government and charitable groups, according to state energy directors.

The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) estimates the number of households receiving heating bill aid will rise 5.3% to 5.1 million this winter. That's up from a 4.7% gain last year and the highest level since the 1980s.

NEADA attributes the rise to higher bills and an increase in poverty.

The Census Bureau earlier this year said the number of Americans in poverty rose 1.3 million to 35.9 million in 2003.

Not everyone who needs assistance will be able to be served this year, NEADA Executive Director Mark Wolfe says. **He says energy costs have risen so quickly that many families who never had trouble in the past are struggling.**

"This is not just the poorest of the poor," he says.

Received:

Got That Right

From: D, Atlanta
To: GI Special
Sent: Saturday, December 11, 2004 4:44 AM
Subject: two-tier

"Some of those who questioned Rumsfeld suggested National Guard units were given hand-me-down equipment. But Lewis and others said active-duty units using similar equipment are facing the same problems throughout Iraq."

That's good to point out. There is a two-tier military, but it's between command and troops.

Received:

Got That Right #2

From: CAC
To: GI Special
Sent: December 11, 2004 4:16 AM
Subject: Re: GI Special 2#C46: The Troops v. Rumsfeld

One possible rebuttal of his arrogant statement that you go to war with the army that you have not the army that you wish... is this:

There was no war until you created one based on your "wish" and went to that war based on your "wish" not because of the Army's wish.

Received:

Got That Right #3

From: John Gingerich
To: GI Special
Sent: Saturday, December 11, 2004 10:38 AM
Subject: RE: GI Special 2#C46: The Troops v. Rumsfeld

We need to start calling rummy the Sec. of **Offense**. He personally is offensive, and the troops he sends into an offensive war.

Received:

A Corporate Annunciation

From: ZC
To: GI Special
Sent: December 11, 2004 7:23 PM

Thank you for the GI Special! It's indispensable reading for all of us, whether or not we're in the military. Keep up the immensely important work!
Cordially, Z

A Corporate Annunciation

You, the parents of uncounted children
Killed by bombs and missiles in Iraq,
May be feeling angry, even bitter,
Over the results of our attack.

We would like to hasten to assure you
That we understand why you're upset.
Even though your children died for freedom
Their deaths fill us, too, with deep regret.

What we have to say next will surprise you
Though you've heard of our world-famous knack
For performing miracles of know-how:
US high-tech might bring your children back!

Not only that, but your reborn children
Will be an improved model of the old:
Quieter, less cranky, more attractive,
Stronger, and immune to common cold.

The cost of resurrection will be modest
Payable in either oil or cash.
With production due to commence shortly
Your little tykes could be back in a flash!

To reunite with your loveable offspring
Shipped to you by air, virtually free,
Simply send a bit of bone or tissue
To our George Bush, White House, Washington DC.

Web Copies

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

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

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

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

www.williambowles.info/qispecial

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