

GI SPECIAL 2#C51



When I asked a crew member of this 8" artillery gun why the "f" in the word confusion was elevated, he told me to focus on the first three letters. Mike Hastie, Vietnam Veteran

Photo 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 Resistance From The Troops”

December 16, 2004 By Brad Knickerbocker, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

"When you are risking your life on the battlefield, the importance of knowing why you are doing so cannot be underestimated," says Ivan Eland, national security analyst at the Independent Institute in Oakland, Calif. "If soldiers don't know why

they are fighting there or believe they've been hoodwinked, we may see the same phenomenon happen in Iraq as occurred in Vietnam."

Gripping among the troops is as old as armed conflict, illustrated most memorably by cartoonist Bill Mauldin's "Willie and Joe" characters during World War II. **But something more than that is happening now in Iraq with what appears to be growing resistance from the troops.**

Evidence includes numbers of deserters (reportedly in the thousands), resignations of reserve officers, lawsuits by those whose duty period has been involuntarily extended, and a refusal to go on dangerous missions without proper equipment. **There's also been a willingness at grunt level to publicly challenge the Pentagon - as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld found out recently in a trip to the war zone, where he got an earful about unarmored Humvees.**

While some don't see much defiance - and, in fact, have been surprised by the depth of solidarity - **others see an unusual amount of tension surfacing for an all-volunteer military force.**

"What is driving the resistance is the same thing that drove it during Vietnam - a lack of trust in the civilian leadership and a sense that the uniformed leaders are not standing up for the forces," says retired Army Col. Dan Smith, a military analyst with the Friends Committee on National Legislation in Washington.

While the complaints and the resistance to following some military policies may pattern earlier conflicts, the fighting in Iraq has a unique context, experts say.

It's the first large-scale 21st-century conflict against an aggressive insurgency, causing thousands of US casualties; the first war in more than a generation in which homeland security and the threat of domestic terror attack seem so real; the first "semi-draft," with the Guard/reserve component approaching 50 percent of combat and combat support troops (and already taking more casualties than they did in Vietnam); **and it's the first time in many years that soldiers have been ordered to serve beyond their commitments.**

Legal challenges to military authority appear to be increasing as well, with more use of civilian attorneys than was seen in Vietnam. "It's very much in evidence," says Eugene Fidell, a former military lawyer who heads the National Institute of Military Justice. Mr. Fidell just finished teaching the first course on military issues at Harvard Law School since 1970.

All this is happening in an age when CNN brings live war coverage to the trenches and barracks, when troops are more aware of the successes and debacles on the battlefield than ever before.

At the same time, reporters embedded with combat units, as well as e-mail and Internet access, make it easier for families and others back home to be heard by the soldiers - and for the soldiers to complain to them. This is especially true, perhaps, of citizen-soldiers, who are not only older than the average GI but more used to speaking out.

At this point, much of the data is scattered and anecdotal, like the doubling of desertions at the Army's Fort Bragg in North Carolina last year to about 200. It may be too early to draw exact comparisons with earlier wars, experts agree.

But they also note a growing trend for GIs to speak out and to find leverage points to protect their interests - including personal safety.

"I am amazed that it is not greater," says retired Air Force Col. Sam Gardiner. "The war continues to go badly. Their equipment is in bad shape. Supply problems continue. Tours are extended. Many are on a second or third deployment to a combat zone. I would expect a louder voice."

"When you are risking your life on the battlefield, the importance of knowing why you are doing so cannot be underestimated," says Ivan Eland, national security analyst at the Independent Institute in Oakland, Calif. "If soldiers don't know why they are fighting there or believe they've been hoodwinked, we may see the same phenomenon happen in Iraq as occurred in Vietnam."

Mexican War		7%
Civil War	North 11%	South 10%
Spanish-American War		less than 2%
World War I		1%
World War II		6.3%
Korean War		2.2%
Vietnam War		7.4%

SOURCE: OXFORD COMPANION TO AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY; RICH CLABAUGH - STAFF

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:

MARINE KILLED IN AL ANBAR PROVINCE

December 15, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 04-12-19C

AL ANBAR PROVINCE, Iraq -- One Marine assigned to the I Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action on Dec. 14 while conducting security and stabilization operations in the Al Anbar Province.

SOLDIER DIES OF FATAL WOUNDS

December 15, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 04-12-18C

LSA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq – **One 1st COSCOM Soldier died as the result of a gunshot wound received during a convoy mission south of Baghdad near Forward Operation Base Kalsu at approximately 10:30 p.m. Dec. 14.**

Three Polish Soldiers Die In Helicopter Crash, 4 Injured

Dec 15 WARSAW (Reuters)

Three Polish soldiers were killed in a helicopter crash in Iraq, where the country runs a multi-national division, the army said Wednesday.

"Three soldiers died after engine failure forced a helicopter to make an emergency landing about 8 km (5 miles) from Kerbala," said Lieutenant-Colonel Artur Domanski, spokesman for the Polish-led multinational division in Iraq.

Four other soldiers were injured in the crash, Domanski said.

Bristol-Based Soldier Killed When Bombed Truck Rolled Over Him

12/15/2004 The Bristol Press

Spc. Robert Hoyt, a member of C Company, 102nd Infantry Battalion from Bristol, was killed when a truck rolled over him as the 21-year-old soldier from Ashford lay in the road after his armored vehicle struck a bomb in Baghdad, according to a reporter embedded with his unit.

The bomb, planted in the road south of Camp Taji, detonated beneath Hoyt's Humvee. The blast blew an armored door off and threw him to the road. Hoyt's platoon was escorting tractor trailer trucks loaded with confiscated Iraqi ammunition from Camp Taji to another base for destruction.

The truck driver following Hoyt's Humvee was hit by shrapnel from the blast. In the post-explosion confusion, the truck rolled over Hoyt as he lay in the road.

"He was talking when we put him on the helicopter," said Capt. Derald Neugebauer, Hoyt's troop commander.

Hoyt is the second oldest of four children. He graduated from E.O. Smith High School in Storrs and has family in the Ashford area. His younger sister attends E.O. Smith, school officials said.

Sgt. 1st Class Brian O'Toole of Plymouth, the original platoon sergeant for the Connecticut group, called Hoyt a perfect soldier.

"If there is anything positive that comes out of Hoyt's death," he said, "it's that it brings the reality of Iraq home to Connecticut, reminding people of the sacrifice and reality of war. As for the guys, they're going to be all right," he said. "I think it'll hit harder when we get back to the states. It will hit us when we sit back and think, What the hell happened?"

Lt. General Admits Resistance Forcing More Supply By Air; Roads Controlled By Insurgents

Dec 15 WASHINGTON (AFP) & By Charles Aldinger, WASHINGTON (Reuters)

Increasing use of roadside bombs by insurgents has slowed US military operations in Iraq, forcing changes in tactics and a greater reliance on aircraft to move supplies, a senior commander acknowledged.

Lieutenant General Lance Smith, deputy commander of the US Central Command, said "They cause us to reroute vehicles. **They cause us to have to employ tactics.**"

"So they had a growing understanding that where they can affect us is in the logistics part. And so they have learned, as we have, and they have moved the fight in many cases back to the rear areas," Smith said.

"There are areas where they can do that effectively, and there are areas where we find it difficult to maintain constant (control) -- like cities and the like," he said.

"They cause us to have to convoy where maybe otherwise we would prefer to move in smaller numbers," Smith said. "So it is having an impact."

He said several hundred truckloads of supplies are being moved by air and planners are rethinking the distribution system closer to their destination, shortening the distances trucks have to travel with supplies.

General John Jumper, the air force chief of staff, said Tuesday that 350 trucks worth of cargo a day are now moving by air in Iraq, and the goal is to increase that number to at least 1,500 truckloads a day.

The insurgency "is a very, very sophisticated enemy," said Army Maj. Gen. Stephen Speakes. "A year ago, the amount of explosive that was being used in an IED was much less than it is now."

Car Bomb Hits Mosul U.S. Convoy



People look over smoking debris after a car bomb exploded in Mosul, December 15, 2004. **The bomb detonated as a U.S. military convoy was driving past. There were no immediate reports about casualties.** (Reuters)

Falluja Resistance Commander Interviewed; Definitely Not "On The Run"

Dec. 13, 2004 By Tom Lasseter, Knight Ridder Newspapers

"We have the insurgents on the run," Lt. Col. Dan Wilson, deputy of operations for the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in Fallujah, wrote in an e-mail.

An insurgent commander who gave his name as Ismail al-Dulame sees things differently. The 47-year-old Iraqi, who met with a Knight Ridder correspondent in a house outside of Fallujah, commands 20 insurgents or, as he called them, "lions."

Wearing a dark blue dishdasha - the traditional Arab tunic - and speaking in a rough voice, **al-Dulame said that while insurgents took massive casualties in Fallujah, they are regrouping and continuing to fight.**

"We are the ones who choose the time, the field and the style of attacks," he said. When explosions boomed nearby, he said they were insurgent mortar rounds falling on U.S. forces.

"Believe me," al-Dulame said, "the fight is going to continue, and we will do whatever it takes. ... There is no one leader or one group. It is more than that. It is a fire that started in many places, and it is going to form a big fire that will isolate the invaders ... and burn them."

In Baghdad, Kifah Khudhair, a 41-year-old Iraqi woman, lay in a hospital bed after Monday's car bombing. She and her brother-in-law were driving to do some shopping when they were sideswiped by the blast. A dark gray blanket covered her legs.

"After the explosion happened I lost consciousness. When I woke up I found myself in the hospital with a bullet hole through both of my legs," she said. "There were no Americans there, so I assume the Iraqi police shot me when they began firing randomly."

Her 20-year-old son, Abbas Hussein, was standing at the side of Khudhair's bed. His eyes raced from the floor to his mother. Although Zarqawi took credit for the car bomb, Hussein's rage was directed at the Americans.

"What can we do? These things happen every day, like looting and murder," he said, his voice rising. "I am angry at the Americans because it is all their fault. This is all because of them."

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

TROOP NEWS

Shit-Mouth General Lies To Protect Rumsfeld

December 15, 2004 By Pauline Jelinek *Associated Press*

[This silly fuck is too stupid to live. He doesn't understand that the whole country knows by now that the people that make the up-armored Humvees said Rumsfeld never placed the orders for more of them, although they could have produced more. How many troops did that decision kill and maim, murdered by Rumsfeld

and the Pentagon? Now check his cute little remark, and the rest of the bullshit that dribbles out of his mouth:]

The Army says it will spend more than \$4 billion in the coming months to rush more armored vehicles to Iraq to protect troops against insurgents' bombs. Officials rejected criticism that shortages reflect poor war planning **and said they've been working as fast as possible to give troops what they need.**

"This is not Wal-Mart," said Brig. Gen. Jeffery Sorenson.

[Yes, the Army is Wal-Mart. Overpaid assholes like him on top with their snouts in the trough, while the underpaid, overworked employees, called soldiers, take the hits and get the worst of everything. Just like Wal-Mart, they labor so the people on top can rake in the profits from the U.S. Empire. That's all this war is about, dying for dollars.

[There is one huge difference though. Wall-Mart workers are unarmed. Soldiers are labor with arms. Push people too far and the General will find out what that means. Other generals before him have found out, in other countries, where the army got fed up and joined in popular revolutions to get rid of the garbage on top. As for stopping a war, another U.S. army in another Imperial war, Vietnam, did just that by rebelling against it wholesale. They wanted to come home alive, and decided enough was enough.]



Sign announces Wall-Mart low low wage for cashiers, Louisville, Ky. (Spoof: The Onion)

Silly General Nailed As Stupid Liar By Another General

Dec. 08, 2004 BY RICHARD WHITTLE The Dallas Morning News

The deputy commander of U.S. forces in Kuwait, Maj. Gen. Gary Speer, told reporters accompanying Rumsfeld he was unaware of soldiers combing through landfills for scrap metal and bulletproof glass to put on their vehicles.

But Maj. Gen. Gus L. Hargett, adjutant general of the Tennessee National Guard, later issued an unusually blunt statement from Nashville saying he was "surprised by Gen. Speer's statement."

"I know that members of his staff were aware and assisted the 278th in obtaining these materials," Hargett said.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

Got That Right

Part of the problem, said Daniel Goure, another former Pentagon official, is that Rumsfeld acts less like a head coach and more like the owner of the football team. "For this reason, he doesn't do well at 'win one for the Gipper'-type speeches," he said. December 9, 2004 By Thomas E. Ricks, Washington Post Staff Writer

Soldier Had To Pay For Own Equipment

12/10/2004 By NJ DeVico, from Vietnam Veterans Against The War

Mildred McHugh is another angry parent. Her 21-year-old son, Steven, is a soldier in the First Infantry, who, in fact, had to take a loan to pay for his own equipment. "The soldiers are risking their lives, but they have to pay for their own equipment." She has joined an organization of 1,600 families (Military families Speak Out) who support the troops but oppose the war. This war has turned her into an activist.

Minnesota Guardsmen's Families Protest Lack of Equipment; They Had Better In 1975



12/14/2004 By John Croman, KARE

Kumlin brought snapshots of her husband's armored personnel carrier as it was equipped and then the home-made gunner's shield fashioned from scrap metal.

She says many armies of the 1970's had better equipment, "This is a picture I found in my encyclopedia set from 1975. It's a South Vietnamese 113 with the proper shield on it."

Tuesday, family members and veterans, who served in past conflicts, gathered at the state capitol. They're demanding military leaders protect the soldiers who are protecting our way of life.

Former Marine Lieutenant Andrew Borene took part in the invasion of Iraq, and at the time just accepted the fact he didn't have armor plate inserts in his combat vest, and had no doors on his humvee.

He says that was nearly two years ago, "But 24 months later, we have had time to plan for this occupation. We have had time to anticipate these needs. And that's why we have to demand some accountability from our civilian leadership."

Karma Kumlin came to the capitol rotunda as part of Operation Truth, "My husband's platoon all bought hand-held radios with their own money so that they could communicate with one another while on patrols."

Kumlin's husband Brad is a member of the Minnesota National Guard who has been serving in Iraq for the past ten months

She says he was sent there with poor equipment, "When they got to Kuwait, they began up-arming their vehicles, and yes it was often with whatever scrap metal they could scrounge up."

Kumlin brought snapshots of her husband's armored personnel carrier as it was equipped and then the home-made gunner's shield fashioned from scrap metal.

She says many armies of the 1970's had better equipment, "This is a picture I found in my encyclopedia set from 1975. It's a South Vietnamese 113 with the proper shield on it."

San Francisco Labor Council Condemns War: Says Bring The Troops Home Now

The following resolution was adopted unanimously by the SF Labor Council regular delegates' meeting on December 13, 2004

WHEREAS, the Bush administration carried out an invasion of Iraq using the pretense that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, and therefore posed an immediate threat to the security of the United States. But no evidence has been found that Iraq possessed these weapons or the capability to deploy them, and

WHEREAS, the administration has embraced a new and dangerous path of preemptive war without an imminent threat to the United States that has made us less, not more secure, that has stoked rather than reduced the threat of terrorism and that has put Iraqis on a path to civil war and brought them no closer to a democratic society, and

WHEREAS, the war and military occupation of Iraq have cost the lives of over 1200 U.S. troops, the wounding and disabling of thousands more, the deaths of an estimated 100,000 Iraqi civilians, casualties among soldiers of other nations, and the devastation of the entire country, and

WHEREAS, we recognize the courage of U.S. military personnel, many of whom are members or family of members of our unions. They have faced extraordinary danger and have made huge sacrifices in this war; they now want to come home; and bringing them home is the best means of protecting them, and

WHEREAS, the Bush administration has used the Iraq war and national security hysteria as a pretext to create a climate of fear at home, to restrict civil liberties and to attack the rights of workers and unions, and

WHEREAS, the war and occupation have cost over two hundred billion dollars, leading directly to cuts in social and human services, education and even benefits for the very veterans of this and other conflicts, while war spending has lined the pockets of immensely wealthy anti-labor corporations, and

WHEREAS, the Bush administration has announced the wholesale privatization of Iraqi factories and workplaces, and kept in force a ban on unions in the public sector, to benefit corporate investors at the expense of Iraqi people, and

WHEREAS, the Bush administration has divided us here at home while inspiring fear and distrust among other nations of the world community, and has sacrificed the unity and friendship our country enjoyed in the days and months after September 11, and

WHEREAS, five national unions (SEIU, AFSCME, CWA, APWU, GCIU), and numerous state labor federations, central labor councils, local unions and other labor bodies representing millions of union members have passed resolutions calling for our troops to be brought home, and

WHEREAS, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney has asked the labor movement at every level to discuss important issues, challenges and problems we confront in preparation for the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in March and the national convention in July, and given that the issues of war and peace and destruction of the social safety net are paramount among them,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council calls on President Bush to bring our troops home from Iraq now and reject the philosophy of pre-emptive war without a clear imminent threat to the United States, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council calls on President Bush to provide adequate veterans' benefits and otherwise meet the needs of returning veterans, and our people in general, to jobs, education and healthcare, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council calls on the National AFL-CIO to demand an immediate end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the return of U.S. troops to their homes and families, and the reordering of national priorities toward peace and meeting human needs, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council submits this resolution to the California Federation of Labor for its concurrence and immediate action, and also calls on the California Federation of Labor to distribute this resolution to all its affiliates for their concurrence and immediate action.

SF Labor Council Reaffirms Stand on War

Interview With Navy Sailor Who Refused Iraq Deployment

December 10th, 2004 Democracy Now

Now, as far as being a robot and just, you know, do as I say and don't question it and things like that, I think that is very dangerous situation for a human being and

I don't think you stop being a human being because you become a Navy sailor or an Army soldier.

I don't think it is to that extent. In fact, even within the rules that are afforded to us we are told if at any time you find a order to be unlawful you have not only a right but a duty not to follow it. And I feel that way about any order that has to do with this war.

On Monday, Petty Officer 3rd Class Pablo Paredes refused to board his ship in San Diego as it prepared to ship out for the Persian Gulf. Remarkably, Paredes sat on the ship's pier as his fellow sailors boarded. For nearly two hours, he spoke to reporters explaining why he was refusing to board.

Paredes told the journalists he was young and naive when he joined the Navy and "never imagined, in a million years, we would go to war with somebody who had done nothing to us." He says he fully expected to be arrested that day on the pier. But the arrest never happened.

Pablo Paredes, interviewed shortly after he refused to board the ship. Courtesy of Jim Carter, [San Diego Military Counseling Project](#).

JIM CARTER: All right, and so now you've decided that you're not willing to stay in the military. Do you want to tell me a little bit about that?

PABLO PAREDES: That's correct. Well, first thing I want to say is that when I joined the military I didn't have any -- I was quite young. I think it's crazy that we join at 18. Nobody is ready to make that decision at 18. I joined at 17. We are not ready. We don't know what the world is about. We think we do, but we do not. So I didn't know anything about politics, about the world. I didn't care. I was a young kid. I wanted to play basketball and go out and have fun and get drunk and do crazy things.

And the next thing you know, it was on a whim. It was absolutely on a whim. I woke up one day and said I don't have many choices and this military guy keeps calling me. You know I'm going. Let's go. So I say I will leave this week and I just went, and it was a rash decision, six years of my life I signed away and little by little I discovered what kind of person I was.

I started studying, I started reading up on politics, on society and what's going on in the world. Being sent to Japan was huge because it took me out of the box. We all live in this sheltered kind of place where we don't understand what occurs in that world and we don't understand what occurs outside of it. We don't understand other kinds of thinking and other kinds of approaches and points of view.

But once I was shipped out and I just totally had to look in on that world instead of being inside of it, it gave me a new perspective and I realized what kind of person I really was. And I realized that war not something I'm about.

I realize that the military is something I'm completely against, especially the way this country uses it, at least throughout history, I mean. I see nothing but a system of muscle for an ideology that is not necessarily promoting peace or promoting positive things in all of history.

JIM CARTER: A lot of people would say, What about September 11?

PABLO PAREDES: Right. And I understand that the country has a military and has a job to do and I realize now I never wanted to be part of that and I don't know why I joined, like I said, it was a rash decision. But you know when you consider September 11, I would in no way want to be part of the reaction -- which is all you can call it -- to September 11. But I would understand as a voter and an individual and a civilian that the country would go to some kind of war, that there could be some kind of reaction that there would be some kind of retribution. So on that playing field, Afghanistan made some sense.

But after that, Iraq, so-called weapons of mass destruction, "Saddam Hussein is the devil" rhetoric, you know, I mean, I didn't follow any of it. I didn't understand it. And I'm a kid that if you sit me down and explain something to I do understand, it is real hard for me not to grasp something if you explain it to me carefully, and I heard just about everybody that believes in it explain it to me carefully, and I still don't understand it. I don't understand why we are in Iraq.

AMY GOODMAN: That is Pablo Paredes. He joins us live now on the phone in hiding.

PABLO PAREDES: Thank you for having me. Good morning.

AMY GOODMAN: It good to have you with us. Can you tell us your status right now, what your plans are?

PABLO PAREDES: Ok. **Before I do that can I clear a couple of things up?**

AMY GOODMAN: Yes.

PABLO PAREDES: **A lot of times I'm being called an officer and I'm not an officer.** There's a big difference. An enlisted person comes in the Navy on a contract with no college experience and the Navy is pretty much that where they are starting out in life.

An officer usually has a degree or some kind of extensive military schooling that leads to the title of officer and I'm not an officer. **An officer has the right to resign. An enlisted person does not. So that is why that is important.**

Separate from that, the word 'deserter' is being tossed around a lot, and that implies that you do not intend to return and that is not my stand at all. I do intend to return and I face the music, so I want to make sure that no one says that I'm a deserter.

AMY GOODMAN: So why are you in hiding then?

PABLO PAREDES: **Well, I'm not in hiding.** I haven't actually told -- I haven't actually, you know, like run or used a false name or changed my hair color. I'm not a fugitive either. I'm not staying at my place of a residence because there have been rocks thrown through the window so it's not the safest place.

I don't have a connected telephone but I did that before the six-month deployment.

So I haven't officially been contacted and no press release has been released by the military saying what my status is. I assume that my status as of now is U.A. which is unauthorized absence and it is not the most incredible charge. I mean many people get very minor offenses for U.A. I think the major thing is how public I have been with this and I don't think the Navy has decided how they will deal with me as far as that concerned.

JUAN GONZALEZ: Let me ask you, did you have any discussions with your fellow soldiers beforehand about the war, about your feelings, and get a sense of how others of them are regarding the situation?

PABLO PAREDES: **Ok. Well, I will answer what you are asking me, but first another couple of corrections. I'm not a soldier, I'm a sailor. I'm not in the Army, I'm in the Navy** and that is very important because if I were in the Army or Marines for that matter, then my job would be a lot more dangerous and I want it to be very understood that my job which is an electronics technician is a job that has never put me and would have not put me this harm's way on this deployment.

So I want people to carefully understand that this is not a decision based on personal fear for my own safety, because there's not really any fear.

My job is very safe. I can look forward to working in an air conditioned space and using the internet as I please. There is no danger really involved in my job. There's only pretty much benefits. There's extra pay for going to the Persian Gulf. There's the hero status that comes with coming back from there. And I just want people to understand that this was based on principles and not on fear, because there's really no danger to my job and there would have been a lot of danger to the marines that I would have dropped off and that would have eventually gone to Iraq and I can't be part of that.

Now as far as how I'm getting reactions within the Navy, as everyone probably understands the military is highly conservative institution. So, I have definitely gotten some very negative responses. I understand that and I expect that, and to some extent I would rather have the debates that I have been having where everyone who emails me with hate mail and be on the talk shows that really don't respect what I'm doing, because it is not about preaching to the choir.

I'm not going to change anything by preaching to a whole bunch of people who feel the same way as I do. What it's all about is shocking those that don't really understand what going on and maybe initially think that what I'm doing is unpatriotic, or maybe initially think that I'm a coward and maybe I'm afraid of war and when they really sit down and listen to me, if someone would want to do that, and realize that there's no danger to me and that I've just – to some people, I have thrown away my life for some sort of principle, that they question what the principle is, and maybe inform themselves on why I'm doing this. That is what I'm hoping.

JUAN GONZALEZ: Yes, I would like to ask you, on the day that you refused to board, as you were there at the pier with the group of reporters, was there -- what was the reaction from your fellow sailors? Did any of them try to dissuade you, come down and talk to you? Give us a sense of that day.

PABLO PAREDES: It was a very sensitive situation because I had obviously gone very public with what I intended to do. So I think many of the officers on the boat itself were very sensitive and careful about the way they were perceived by the media.

So I believe that most of the average sailors on the boat were instructed not to speak to me because they made it a point to just not even look in my direction.

Now, some of the Chief Petty Officers and a couple of the officers on the boat, mainly the Duty Section Officer, came down -- and this is the most important person on the boat at the time, the Duty Section Officer, is the highest ranking by way of his position at the moment he is the most important person on the boat -- and he came down and he tried to talk me out of what I was doing and told me the possible repercussions of it.

And more of a scare tactic, telling me it was a felony and this and that, and I explained to him that I was serious about what I was doing and I turned in my I.D. and told him that I was ready to face the repercussions. But in just about the sweetest the military has ever been to anybody I was given back my I.D. and I was told I was free to go those were his exact words, **"You are free to go. We are not going to arrest you. We are not going to detain you. There's nothing we can do right now."**

So was it kind of a weird situation. I fully expected to be detained and the process to begin. But I guess for fear of being caught on camera, you know, bringing down the hammer, they decided they would tell me I was free to go even though I mean every camera to the planet witnessed that I missed ship's movement which is one thing that is against the Navy regulations. And I refused to go on the boat. So, I didn't understand the logic there that we don't want to get caught on camera.

JUAN GONZALEZ: How do you answer those folks who say you enlisted in the military, it is your responsibility as a sailor to follow orders and if the country goes to war to prosecute that war? What is your response to that?

PABLO PAREDES: My response to that is that I definitely am not neglecting the fact that I signed on the line. If I were neglecting that I signed on the line I would be trying to get out of the punishment. So I definitely am about that commitment. I understand that I made a commitment.

Whether it was a mistake or not and whether it was right that I was sought out because I was in a situation where I wasn't in a financially stable situation and the military takes advantage of that as they always do, as they prey on those kinds of citizens. But I still understand that I signed the paper and there was a commitment and that's why I'm willing to face the punishment.

Now, as far as being a robot and just, you know, do as I say and don't question it and things like that, I think that is very dangerous situation for a human being and I don't think you stop being a human being because you become a Navy sailor or an Army soldier.

I don't think it is to that extent. In fact, even within the rules that are afforded to us we are told if at any time you find a order to be unlawful you have not only a right but a duty not to follow it. And I feel that way about any order that has to do with this war.

AMY GOODMAN: Well, Pablo Paredes, we want to thank you for being with us. We will at this point to cover what you do and what happens to you. Thank you.

MORE FROM PABLO PAREDES:

"I don't see what we're doing there. I don't believe for 1 minute that it's about spreading democracy. I don't believe for 1 minute that it was about weapons of mass destruction. Oil sounds like the number 1, you know.

"Unfortunately, our president continues to hide behind the bravery of the troops, and it disgusts me because it's possible to say, you know, 'these guys are great. They're doing their job.'

"But what you're sending them to do doesn't make sense. And it's a fundamental thing that has to happen in this country. Everyone's almost afraid to say something against the war because it's unpatriotic, and I don't understand why you have to trade humanity for patriotism.

I don't know when that happened."

MORE:

Saturday, December 18th 1pm
Rally in Support of Pablo Paredes!
GI Resister in San Diego
In front of Naval Headquarters
(corner of Broadway and Harbor blvd. Downtown SD)

On December 6th, 3rd class Petty Officer Pablo Paredes stood resolutely on the pier of the 32nd street naval base in San Diego, as his ship the USS Bonhomme Richard, left for Iraq without him. Sporting a simple black t-shirt with bold white letters stating: "Like a cabinet member, I resign." anti-war sailor Paredes sent shockwaves through the military chain of command by taking a solitary stand against the war in Iraq by refusing to board his ship.

"I don't want to be a part of a ship that's taking 3,000 Marines over there (to Iraq), knowing a hundred or more of them won't come back. I can't sleep at night knowing that's what I do for a living", he told the San Diego Union Tribune.

Since refusing to participate in this unjust and devastating war, Pablo will now have to face the uncertainty of military punishment for being a GI with a conscience that refuses to be silent. Show support for him by joining us in a rally on his behalf this Saturday.

To contribute to Pablo's support please go to www.sdmcp.org

For more info about Pablo Paredes check out:

<http://www.swiftsmartveterans.com/>

<http://www.gifightback.org/>

<http://www.michaelmoore.com/>

Support Committee for Pablo Paredes

solidaritywithpablo@yahoo.com

Which One Do You Believe?

#1

U.S. Force To Stay In Iraq Until “A Little Bit After Election”

[Washington Times, December 15, 2004, Pg. 11]

A homicide car bomber killed seven peoples at a green zone checkpoint in Baghdad. Meanwhile, **JCS Chairman Gen. Richard Myers** said the U.S. military will have a record-high 150,000 troops in Iraq through the Jan. 30 elections and “*a little bit after.*”

OR #2

Vote Seen Unlikely To Quell Violence In Iraq

[Baltimore Sun, December 15, 2004]

Iraq’s elections, scheduled for Jan. 30, will likely do little to end the violence that wracks sections of the country, and could embolden a stubborn insurgency to increase operations.

JCS Chief Pushed Aside; Troops In Iraq Prefer Tweeden

[Washington Post, December 15, 2004, Pg. 27]

GIs in Baghdad made up an audience welcoming **JCS Chairman Gen. Richard Myers**, but he had to stand aside as the troops wanted more of Leeann Tweeden, sportscaster and model who appeared at the same gathering.

Marines Hit With PTSD After Iraq

[Los Angeles Times, December 15, 2004]

Navy documents released Tuesday provide detailed accounts of Marines suffering from deep psychiatric problems after serving in Iraq.

“Precipitous Decline” In Reserve Recruits

[Dallas Morning News, December 14, 2004, Pg. 1]

Army Reserve Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly said there is a “precipitous decline” in reserve recruiting.

Skelton Urges Pentagon To Use APCs (Duh)

[National Journal's CongressDaily, December 14, 2004]

Rep. Ike Skelton wants the Pentagon to consider using existing M-113 armored personnel carriers to protect forces in Iraq while troops wait for armored Humvees to arrive.

Homeless Iraq Vets Showing Up At Shelters; “They Treated Us Like Cattle”

December 7th, 2004 by Mark Benjamin, (UPI)

"It was more of a rush. They put us in a warehouse for a while. They treated us like cattle," Arellano said about how the military treated him on his return to the United States.

U.S. veterans from the war in Iraq are beginning to show up at homeless shelters around the country, and advocates fear they are the leading edge of a new generation of homeless vets not seen since the Vietnam era.

"When we already have people from Iraq on the streets, my God," said Linda Boone, executive director of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. "I have talked to enough (shelters) to know we are getting them. It is happening and this nation is not prepared for that."

"I drove off in my truck. I packed my stuff. I lived out of my truck for a while," Seabees Petty Officer Luis Arellano, 34, said in a telephone interview from a homeless shelter

near March Air Force Base in California run by U.S. VETS, the largest organization in the country dedicated to helping homeless veterans.

Arellano said he lived out of his truck on and off for three months after returning from Iraq in September 2003. "One day you have a home and the next day you are on the streets," he said.

In Iraq, shrapnel nearly severed his left thumb. He still has trouble moving it and shrapnel "still comes out once in a while," Arellano said. He is left handed.

Arellano said he felt pushed out of the military too quickly after getting back from Iraq without medical attention he needed for his hand -- and as he would later learn, his mind.

"It was more of a rush. They put us in a warehouse for a while. They treated us like cattle," Arellano said about how the military treated him on his return to the United States.

"It is all about numbers. Instead of getting quality care, they were trying to get everybody demobilized during a certain time frame. If you had a problem, they said, 'Let the (Department of Veterans Affairs) take care of it.'"

A gunner's mate for 16 years, Arellano said he adjusted after serving in the first Gulf War. But after returning from Iraq, depression drove him to leave his job at the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. He got divorced.

He said that after being quickly pushed out of the military, he could not get help from the VA because of long delays.

"I felt, as well as others (that the military said) 'We can't take care of you on active duty.' We had to sign an agreement that we would follow up with the VA," said Arellano.

"When we got there, the VA was totally full. They said, 'We'll call you.' But I developed depression."

He left his job and wandered for three months, sometimes living in his truck.

Some homeless-veteran advocates fear that similar combat experiences in Vietnam and Iraq mean that these first few homeless veterans from Iraq are the crest of a wave.

"This is what happened with the Vietnam vets. I went to Vietnam," said John Keaveney, chief operating officer of New Directions, a shelter and drug-and-alcohol treatment program for veterans in Los Angeles. That city has an estimated 27,000 homeless veterans, the largest such population in the nation. "It is like watching history being repeated," Keaveney said.

Asked whether he might have PTSD, Arellano, the Seabees petty officer who lived out of his truck, said: "I think I do, because I get nightmares. I still remember one of the

guys who was killed." He said he gets \$100 a month from the government for the wound to his hand.

Advocates said seeing homeless veterans from Iraq should cause alarm. Around one-fourth of all homeless Americans are veterans, and more than 75 percent of them have some sort of mental or substance abuse problem, often PTSD, according to the Homeless Veterans coalition.

Roslyn Hannibal-Booker, director of development at the Maryland veterans center in Baltimore, said her organization has begun to get inquiries from veterans from Iraq and their worried families. "We are preparing for Iraq," Hannibal-Booker said.

Attitudes Toward Gays In The Military? A Striking Difference By Rank; More Bigots Up Top As Usual

December 10, 2004 montages.blogspot.com

Junior enlisted personnel (ranks E-4 and below) are far more pro-queer than commissioned and non-commissioned officers in the United States military:

The findings on gays in the military showed a striking difference by rank. Commissioned officers and their families opposed their inclusion by 53 to 39 percent. Non-commissioned officers and their families were also clearly opposed, by a 57 to 35 percent margin. **But 50 percent of junior enlisted personnel . . . said gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly, while 43 percent said they should not. Respondents were asked their reason for support or opposition.**

Among those who opposed inclusion of gays and lesbians, 20 percent said inclusion would be a distraction and cause problems, 13 percent said it would be bad for morale, and 12 percent said it would disrupt teamwork. Another 15 percent said that homosexuality was wrong, and 8 percent said they felt uncomfortable with homosexuals. Six percent said homosexuality was incompatible with military service and 5 percent cited close quarters as the reason for opposition.

Among supporters, 41 percent said homosexuals should have equal rights, 27 percent said sexual orientation had nothing to do with job performance, 10 percent said it did not bother them, and six percents said it was a free country. (Adam Clymer/Annenberg Public Policy Center, "Service Members, Families Say Pentagon Sent Too Few Troops to Iraq, Stressed National Guard and Reserves, Should Allow Photos of Coffins at Dover, Annenberg Data Show," October 16, 2004, p. 4)

Junior enlisted personnel are more working-class, so the striking difference by rank in attitudes toward gay men and lesbians in the military proves that the stereotype that the working class are more homophobic than the rich does not hold.

“Junk Boats” Killed Guardsman; Death In Iraq Investigated

December 15, 2004 Malia Rulon, Associated Press

Washington - The Army said Tuesday that it has begun an inquiry into the death of an Ohio National Guardsman who drowned in Iraq last year while trying to save another soldier.

U.S. Rep. Bob Ney, a St. Clairsville Republican, had requested an investigation into the death of Spc. Todd Bates of Bellaire, Ohio, because of news reports that said the boat Bates was patrolling in lacked proper safety equipment, such as life jackets, life preservers or rescue poles.

Todd Bates' grandmother, Shirley Bates of Bellaire, told The Plain Dealer that she welcomes a new inquiry.

"The only thing that I have to say is that the boats that they were on were junk boats," she said. "They didn't have the right equipment that they needed. They didn't have life jackets or anything."

William Lee, a retired Army lieutenant who served as Bates' platoon leader in Iraq, said the boats used by his soldiers were manned by Iraqis who didn't speak English, and didn't have life vests or other safety equipment.

"They had nothing," Lee said. "The Iraqi boats that the Americans purchased were cheap and always breaking down. We should have been in American combat boats that the Army provided."

In his Dec. 3 letter to the Army, Ney said Lt. Col. John Garrity told family members that life jackets were available for soldiers and he didn't understand why they weren't on the boats.

Ney wants the Army to investigate this discrepancy.

"If the deaths of these courageous men could have been prevented, their families deserve to know the truth," said Ney.

Soldier's Five Children Anxiously Await Mother's Release From Army Hospital



December 14, 2004 5ChannelOklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY -- The five children of an Oklahoma City soldier wounded in a mortar attack in Iraq were wondering Tuesday when their mother would return home after four months of recovery in a U.S. Army hospital.

Spc. Rosetta Floyd, a medic in the U.S. Army, was resting on the roof of her barracks near Sadr City in August when a mortar round exploded several feet away from her. Since then, she has spent most of her time recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Army officials say Floyd suffered some of the worst injuries among those who were hurt by shrapnel from the mortar attack, which killed several soldiers and wounded many others. **Her family members said they were told that Floyd's recovery could take months or even years.**

Meanwhile, Floyd's sister, Cecelia Rainge, is taking care of the soldier's five children, who range in age from 3 to 13 years old.

Rainge said her sister exhibited bravery after the attack by trying to save a friend and fellow soldier -- despite her own grave injuries. She said Floyd's friend did not survive.

"It destroyed the building they were in," Rainge said.

Now, the family's biggest fear is that Floyd will never be the same again.

According to Rainge, Floyd's injuries are serious and have required much rehabilitation. She said Floyd is suffering from medical issues that could require months -- if not years -- of recovery.

"She's got different holes and different stuff like that in her body," she said.
"She's got some brain damage (and) memory loss."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Takes Samarra Police Station;

No Shots Fired

Dec 15, 2004 (Reuters)

Resistance fighters overran a police station in the northern Iraqi city of Samarra on Wednesday and seized weapons and ammunition, witnesses said.

About 10 partisans surrounded the central Imam Hadi station, held up the officers and took their rifles, said a policeman who was among those robbed.

The resistance partisans left the scene without firing a shot, he said.

Who To Kill

[Philadelphia Inquirer, December 15, 2004, Pg. 1]

Hundreds of Iraqi's have their names and faces plastered on campaign poster across the countries as candidates for next month's elections. **The posters also give insurgents a better idea about who to kill.**

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

What The Resistance Is Fighting For

December 15, 2004 by Molly Bingham, The Boston Globe

They view themselves, and are viewed by others, as Iraqis and Muslims, declaring their fight to be for their homes, their nation, their honor, and their faith against the imposition of a political structure by a foreign nation. [They got that right. Tom Paine and Ben Franklin would understand perfectly.]

The original impetus for almost all of the individuals I spoke to was a nationalistic one -- the desire to defend their country from occupation, not to defend Saddam Hussein or his regime.

The composition of the Iraqi resistance is not what the US administration has been calling it, and the more it is oversimplified the harder it is to explain its complexity.

I spent from August 2003 until June this year in Baghdad researching the resistance. That's obviously not a comprehensive study, but it does provide a more complete picture of the resistance than the administration's. My objective is

not to romanticize the fighters or their fight, but merely to better understand what our realistic choices are in Iraq and the Middle East.

Here are some myths about the Iraqi resistance that need to be dispelled.

The resistance only began after months of America "botching" the occupation.

While three of the fighters I spoke to had waited several months to "join" the resistance, the bulk of those involved decided within days of the end of the "ground war" on April 9 that they would fight. Only three had done voluntary military service, and only one of them was still on active military duty.

Of the five fighters I spent the most time with, all of them had begun organizing resistance cells within a week of April 9. They started small with friends. One man, a teacher, had neither been a member of the Ba'ath party nor an admirer of Saddam. He started as a guide for foreign fighters and later looked for a group of like-minded men he could work with. With no military experience, he soon became a weapons procurer for an ever widening group of cells.

The resistance in Iraq is made up of Ba'athi dead enders, regime loyalists, common criminals, Islamic extremists, and driven by a vast number of foreigners with contacts to Al Qaeda.

While there are certainly those elements involved, it is misleading to describe the resistance in those terms. I met no one who had recently been released from prison or who knew of any connections with Al Qaeda, and I only met one foreign fighter. (I would not, however, be surprised if Al Qaeda or other militant Islamic movements have become active in Iraq since I left.) I met Shia and Sunnis fighting together, women and men, young and old. I met people from all economic, social, and educational backgrounds.

The original impetus for almost all of the individuals I spoke to was a nationalistic one -- the desire to defend their country from occupation, not to defend Saddam Hussein or his regime.

However, two things should be noted. First, after the capture of Saddam a year ago, I sensed the growing power of Islam within the fighters. Second, in the absence of a solid government or civil structure it is not surprising that a Muslim community would revert to Koranic law, even if only temporary.

The Iraqi resistance is a monolithic, tightly organized structure with a leadership that can be obliterated and a fixed number of fighters who can be eliminated.

The many levels of violence in Iraq after the US attack on Fallujah last month reveal the absurdity of this myth. Of the 15 resistance members who told me about their lives, most were from the same small neighborhood of Adhamiya in Baghdad, but were not necessarily in the same cell or command structure. By the end of 2003, these cells had grown while maintaining their independence.

They were no longer carrying out attacks in their own home turf but were traveling to other areas of the country. The rise in attacks over the past year has been attributed as reactions to the transfer of power to the Allawi government in July 2004, or to the elections in January. However, more likely, it is simply an indication of improved funding, coordination, and resources.

Attacking Fallujah neither decapitated the resistance nor eliminated its support. Rather it is a powerful recruiting poster for Iraqis not yet engaged in the struggle and for foreigners motivated to join what they view as a Jihad.

Nationwide elections will provide Iraq with a legitimate government, and the violence in the country will subside significantly.

The notion that after elections the resistance will have nothing left to fight against is untenable. There is no government that can emerge from the current process that will be viewed as legitimate in their eyes. The resistance will continue until American influence has disappeared from Iraq's political system.

The political dead end described above is the fate the resistance has chosen. **They view themselves, and are viewed by others, as Iraqis and Muslims, declaring their fight to be for their homes, their nation, their honor, and their faith against the imposition of a political structure by a foreign nation.** Their struggle against us is not much more complicated than that, and it seems to me that the violence will remain until we are gone.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

Southern Iraq's Oil Exports Down Almost A Third

BASRA, Iraq, Dec 15 (AFP)

Crude oil exports from southern Iraq have fallen by almost a third to around 1.3 million barrels per day (bpd) from the normal 1.8 million bpd because of a technical fault, an industry source said Wednesday.

"This is due to a technical breakdown on a turbine at a pumping station," said the official at a terminal in southern Iraq, asking not to be named.

Playing Catch Up Ball



Iraqi workers repair a pipeline **as smoke from another pipeline fire billows in the background.** (12.15.04 AFP/File/Marwan Ibrahim)

Received:

From: Zeljko C
To: GI Special
Sent: December 15, 2004
Subject: 1917 IWW poem

People knew the score even before the "war to end all war!"

I Love My Flag

World War I Anti-war poem, Author Unknown, Published in The Industrial Worker on April 14 1917

I love my flag, I do, I do,
Which floats upon the breeze.
I also love my arms and legs,
And neck and nose and knees.
One little shell might spoil them all
Or give them such a twist,
They would be of no use to me;
I guess I won't enlist.

I love my country, yes, I do,

I hope her folks do well.
Without our arms and legs and things,
I think we'd look like hell.
Young men with faces half shot off
Are unfit to be kissed,
I've read in books it spoils their looks;
I guess I won't enlist.

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