

GI SPECIAL 2#C54

We Will Reclaim Our Armed Forces!

“Those troops are OUR armed forces, and we have to reclaim them no matter the cost.”

We slept in the mud and did their dirty work, and we brought their wars back into our homes to be the burdens of our families. They made us soldiers, so that's how we are going to act. We are not afraid of poverty. We are not afraid of prison. We are not afraid of death. So now what are they gonna do? Without our fear, they have no power, and in movements, those who are not afraid will show those who are a little afraid the way.

We are not making a request. We are making a demand.

That demand is to let the Iraqis be the architects of their own future, and bring the troops home now. You want a compromise, turn on Judge Judy. You want a retreat, go book a cabana in Hawaii. You want a surrender, go visit Appomattox and read the plaques.

We ain't goin' nowhere.

Speech by Stan Goff, Master Sergeant, U.S. Army Special Forces (Retired) December 11 at the Public Meeting and Speak Out in New York City sponsored by Veterans and Military Families. [And the finest speech of this new century, so far. Check out Bring Them Home Now, <http://www.bringthemhomenow.com/> T.]

I want to thank the organizers for this very important defibrillation of the anti-war and anti-empire work that was put on hold by the recent elections. **I want to thank my fellow speakers and presenters, and I want to thank everyone who is here for your tireless and stubborn refusal to confuse setbacks with defeats.**

I tend to think of resistance politics these days as if they were a Charles Dickens novel. There is always a happy ending in the last chapter, but every chapter leading up to that ending... is sad.

I'm extremely honored to be here with Christian Parenti, whose book *Lockdown America* I consider canonical in many ways, and which should be required reading prior to entrance into any university. I quoted Mr. Parenti extensively in a long analytical piece I did in *From The Wilderness* that attempts to show how utterly connected the incarceration industry in the United States is with the entire system of late imperialism, and in particular why these most direct and brutal forms of social control - including prison rape and sexual humiliation, which are secretly sanctioned by the state - draw a straight line from a place like Pelican Bay maximum security to Abu Ghraib in Baghdad.

There is another book I want to recommend, while I'm at it, that is not about Kabul or Baghdad, but about Southern California. It is written by radical urban theorist Mike Davis, and it is entitled *Ecology of Fear*. In it, Davis describes, among many other things, how the development of high-end residential housing enclaves in the suburban foothills of LA spread into the habitats of mountain lions. Now, from time to time, explains Davis, a mountain lion - described as a rogue, of course - eats Fluffy the Cocker Spaniel, or encounters and attacks one of the yuppie joggers, demonstrating how the feline diet can be diversified to include spandex.

This is extremely interesting, because these encounters are referred to by the press and by members of these communities as... a mountain lion problem.

Obviously, the mountain lions are not getting equal time on the nightly news at these Young Republican settlements, or the mountain lions might explain that they were there first, and that from where they stand, there is a people problem.

But the mountain lions don't have equal time, and this phrase - mountain lion problem - this phrase and this concept stick, because it is repeated over and over again until it is incorporated effortlessly into casual conversation and folded into descriptive lists until it becomes a single signifier. There is no longer a problem between people and mountain lions. The mountain lions are the problem.

This is how the standpoint of selfish, clueless yuppies is enshrined as an axiomatic premise that is out of reach of any critique, because we simply breathe that premise like the air, and like the air, we take it for granted.

This is one reason we are important to the movement not just against the war, but the movement to overthrow a system that breeds war, why veterans and military families and dissident soldiers are so important in this crucial period.

In this period when the old tricks no longer work, and the depredations of this global system have once again consumed the very bases of that system - its subordinated people and its wrecked environment - the essence of that system, its true essence, the

gun and the bomb and the rape and the prison, are being unmasked by the necessity to use these colonizers' tools openly to preserve power.

George Bush didn't start this war. This war was waiting at the end of a road that we stepped onto decades ago, and by continuing to walk down that road we have inevitably encountered what is at its end. How many Iraqis did Bill Clinton kill? Why did we not want to hear during this last electoral folly that the anti-Bush candidate selected for us by Wall Street and the DLC did not promise to end the war, but to expand it?

The communities of the military are in a unique position - they have a special standpoint - to say we were there. We were not on CNN. We were not in the New York Times. We were there when you rained dioxin on us 35 years ago as you killed 3 million Southeast Asians, and we were there in our family hothouses when we carried the dioxin and the death back into our living rooms, into our relationships, in to our children who were the hostages of our pathologies.

We weren't in the swimming pool communities in the LA foothills. We are the mountain lions, and now you have a veteran problem. Now you have a military family problem. Now you have an I'm-awake-and-I'm pissed-off-soldier problem.

Only we are not mountain lions, consigned by our own natural limitations to helplessly watch our own destruction by this system.

We were there! We are there!

We have a special capacity and a special pedagogical responsibility to stop others from taking the air for granted, because that air is contaminated. It is poisoned by the criminality at the very genetic core of this whole system, that needs Agent Orange and Depleted Uranium to enforce its will on those it would dominate and those who refuse to surrender their own humanity to this criminality.

Who we call statesmen are often as not thieves. Who we call statesmen are often as not vandals. Who we call statesmen are often as not mass murderers, and who better to out them for what they are than those of us who have been held closest to their criminal hearts in their time of need.

Our demands have a special force, and so we have a special responsibility.

The movement demanded that we not invade Afghanistan to kill 4,000 civilians as vengeance for the 2,800 killed on September 11th. The movement demanded that we not invade Iraq - where our government had already overseen the destruction of over a million human beings, half of them not having reached the age of majority... and Iraq has never been any kind of threat to the United States.

Veterans for Peace and Military Families Speak Out held out in the face of feint-hearted anti-Bush resistance and never listened to the siren call of compromise and chauvinism that led many of our allies to tell us to drop the word NOW from our campaign to Bring Them Home NOW. We were clear about the system, and

we knew that the vandal that destroys your home is not the right person to decide who will rebuild it.

We stuck to our demand, and time is proving us grimly correct. We were correct to demand that this criminal class cease and desist. Now the elections that put a mask of legitimacy on this system are past, and we have to reiterate that demand.

Now we all know that demands are the glue that holds movements together, whether or not the powerful meet them. One of our pedagogical tasks in the next period, I think, is to educate the public about the difference between a demand and an assertive request.

I already have my post-election bumper stickers to impeach. But I also know that these little provocations, like that bumper sticker, which is intended to be provocative, are useful mostly to further polarize our society - which I think is a good thing, because as long as we stay polite we never seem get to the point. A Congress of the criminal class is not going to impeach a fellow criminal, unless a scandal is so out of control that it threatens the whole structure.

One thing I agree with Christian Parenti on is that I oppose the criminal justice system as it is, but I think we will need prisons for a long time.

I say that because while my bumper sticker says impeach, what I really want to see - for these people who are presiding over yet another generation of our kids being sent abroad to do their criminal wet work - what I really want to see is George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin and Condoleezza I-forgot-who-I-am, Paul Wolfowitz, and cabinet members old and new... slammed up against a wall, searched as roughly as an Iraqi detainee, put in handcuffs, and their sorry asses thrown into a cell at Guantanamo Bay... after we give it back to Cuba.

Our job is not to be conciliatory. We are not diplomats. Our job is not to comfort the comfortable by reinforcing their denial. Our job is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. Because we were there. We know what these people have sent our children to do, and what they have sent our children to become.

And I'm not whining about that. I'm not going to cry about what was done to me, because the upside to it is that I'm grateful to the dominant class for my military career. I'm grateful for my education. I'm grateful to be a soldier... I'm just not their soldier any more.

On my 19th birthday, I left McCord Air Force Base to begin my international studies program in northern Bin Dinh Province. My professors were a Black buck sergeant named Eaves, a professional con-man named Westmorland, and the courageous and patriotic soldiers of the NLF and NVA who taught me what it looks like to say NO.

I learned that a person can put one foot in front of the other for a long time. I learned that mosquito clouds and thirst and sleeping in the mud won't kill you. I learned to accept my own mortality. I learned that what most of suburban America thinks is extreme and exceptional hardship is the daily reality of most of the world... and I began

the process of learning that the comfort of those suburbs comes at a price often paid by those we never see and whose hardship we cannot comprehend.

What the Bushes and the Rumsfelds have failed to understand about soldiers, old soldiers and new soldiers, and the families of soldiers who learn these things from and with us, is that when we learn that there are different experiences in the world, and when we learn to keep putting one foot in front of the other, and when we learn that we can survive extreme hardship, and when we learn to accept our own mortality, and when we learn to recognize con-men, and when and if we finally learn that everything they say is a lie, and every mission is vandalism and murder, then what is left behind is still a soldier, but he or she is not THEIR soldier any more.

Those troops are OUR armed forces, and we have to reclaim them no matter the cost.

Movements start with those who are not afraid, and they grow with those who are only a little afraid.

The veteran just back from Iraq, and the veterans of past conflicts, who have snatched their humanity back from this system are not going to fall for every bullshit story. We are not going to fall for their appeals to criminality cloaked in patriotism. We are not going to be intimidated by their with-us-or-with-the-terrorists rhetoric.

I hope they are listening, and I expect they are.

George and Dick and Don, you are not going to shut up these veterans, and these families, and these soldiers by shaking your Patriot Act in our faces. Some of us worked pretty hard and risked everything to fight for lies. Don't you know that we will fight harder against you now that we know the truth?

Those troops are OUR armed forces, and we have to reclaim them no matter the cost.

Patriot Act! We are the ones who have the responsibility to teach the rest that the patriotism of someone defending their home is not the same as the patriotism deployed to take our children away from home. **The patriotism of the invader is not the same as the patriotism of the invaded.**

We can teach that, because we went then, and we are going to witness now.

Man, they hate witnesses, don't they? They hate witnesses the way all criminals do.

And I've got something to say to those soldiers and veterans who are not with us yet, but who are wandering in the wilderness of post-combat shock. Witnessing will heal you. PTSD is not the outcome of violence. PTSD is the recognition that you have been betrayed and that you were helpless when it happened, because you couldn't do any better or you didn't know any better.

Do people know what the single most common cause of PTSD in the United States is?

Rape.

Rape victims report that confronting their attackers - and not just in court where the system tries to rape women again - but confronting one's attacker with a support group and outing that attacker are highly therapeutic. It is a way to recapture that lost agency from a former state of helplessness and standing back up in the world.

For combat veterans, we have a group right here for you, and we will stand beside you when you out the authors of the crime by describing what it really looked like. We know that some cling to denial, that some are broken in body and spirit, that some rage, and that some turn their anger in on themselves and crawl into a needle or a bottle or the chamber of a pistol. But there's a way out of that wilderness, and it's the path of the witness.

Imperialism has staked a claim on our children in uniform, and that's why we will never relinquish our claim on them. We will never surrender in the struggle for the souls of this and future generations. Never.

Those troops are OUR armed forces, and we have to reclaim them no matter the cost.

I'm a grandfather now. Those of you who are grandparents know what I mean when I say, Dick Cheney don't put yourself between me and my grandbaby and expect me to retreat.

We're not only not going anywhere, we are coming after all of them.

The veterans of this war are already organizing against it. Troops in Iraq write to us. The whistleblowers are emerging from within the service.

The MFSO family list is growing. The number of conscientious objectors is growing. The mutinies have already begun. We are going to court with stop-loss suits, and to defend military refugees in Canada. Soldiers in theater are setting up blogs that bypass the Centcom censors. There is a Camilo Mejia or a Mike Hoffman or a Kelly Dougherty in every squad waiting for us to invite them into the light.

George Bush, we are going to fight you for every last one of them.

Those troops are OUR armed forces, and we have to reclaim them no matter the cost.

To those troops who are not yet ready, we'll be there when you are. We don't go away. We put one foot in front of the other. We will never stop. When you decide that its time to see what's on the other side of all those taboos, its us you'll find there. Veterans and military families.

I made that Dantean journey you are on for two decades, separated from the very people who most wanted to confirm my humanity when I thought I had abandoned it along the road through eight conflict areas as a servant of this Ivy League mafia.

But when I made the leap, they were there to catch me, and they catch me when I fall to this day. This movement is your family, and the door to that home will always be open.

If we're not home, look for us in the street.

That's where we're headed now. One foot in front of the other, until we get where we gotta go, because those troops are OUR armed forces, and we have to reclaim them no matter the cost. And those people in Iraq are not our enemies, and they have to reclaim their children no matter the cost, and we are reclaiming them from the same criminal clique.

Look for us in the street, and don't think we are making requests any more.

We are going to delegitimize this war and this system. And if that's not enough, we will disobey. And if disobedience is not enough, we will disrupt that system. We slept in the mud and did their dirty work, and we brought their wars back into our homes to be the burdens of our families.

They made us soldiers, so that's how we are going to act. We are not afraid of poverty. We are not afraid of prison. We are not afraid of death. So now what are they gonna do? Without our fear, they have no power, and in movements, those who are not afraid will show those who are a little afraid the way.

We are not making a request. We are making a demand.

That demand is to let the Iraqis be the architects of their own future, and bring the troops home now. You want a compromise, turn on Judge Judy. You want a retreat, go book a cabana in Hawaii. You want a surrender, go visit Appomattox and read the plaques.

We ain't goin' nowhere.

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Baghdad Airport Mortared

18 December 2004 Aljazeera.Net

Baghdad airport, in the west of the Iraqi capital, came under mortar attack, Aljazeera reported.

Heavy smoke was seen rising from inside the airport on Friday. No further details about damage were immediately available.

Falluja Unconquered; “We Clear, Back Clear And Clear Again” Lt. Col. Says

**WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND.
THIS IS NOT A GOOD IDEA.
IT PISSES PEOPLE OFF.
THEN THEY COME HUNTING.**



A U.S. Marine from Charlie Company with an Iraqi detainee, Falluja, November 18, 2004. **The Iraqi government and U.S. commanders declared their offensive on rebel-held Falluja a success on Thursday.** Photo by Thayer Al-Sudani/Reuters

Dec 18, 2004 By NICK WADHAMS, The Associated Press

FALLUJAH, Iraq - American troops face sporadic but cunning resistance from insurgents as they sweep the city of Fallujah more than a month after U.S. and Iraqi forces invaded the militants' stronghold, U.S. officials said Friday.

They characterized the insurgents who remain as less suicidal than those who fought the initial battle, using a newly discovered tunnel system or knocking holes in walls to move unseen and avoid American troops.

"Pretty much the ones who have wanted to be martyrs outright have been killed and the ones who remain are the smart ones, or the ones who have been able to avoid our clearing forces, **so we continue to clear, to back clear, and to clear again,**" said Lt. Col. Daniel Wilson, deputy for current operations for the 1st Marine Division.

"We know that they're slithering around in the tunnels from one place to another," Wilson said.

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



"A US soldier walks in front of a Bradley tank on the edge of Fallujah.".(12.18.04
AFP/Tauseef Mustafa)

Falluja Clashes Raging In Southern District

NEAR FALLUJAH, Iraq, Dec. 17 (Xinhuanet)

Four Iraqis were killed and five others wounded Friday when US warplanes struck the town of Ameriyat, near Fallujah. "The American airstrike killed four Iraqis, wounded five and burned six civilian cars," medical sources and witnesses told Xinhua at the scene.

US warplanes attacked the edges of the small town, some 7 km southwest of Fallujah, after fierce clashes erupted between insurgents and US troops in the area.

Inside Fallujah, clashes raged in the southern districts. The resistance forces accused in a statement that the US-Iraqi forces used internationally prohibited weapons in its last attack.

Iraqi “Government” Says Civilians Can Go Back To Falluja “Next Week” US Marines Say No; Now We’ll See Who’s “Sovereign”

Dec 18 NEAR FALLUJAH, Iraq (AFP)

The US military cannot recommend to the Iraqi interim government the return of residents to Fallujah, **where insurgents are still holed out in the battle-scarred city.**

"We foresaw that in this phase of the operation it could take weeks to clear out the remaining pockets (of insurgents). There is a lot of potential for danger in this town.

The Iraqi interim government said on Thursday that residents could begin returning to the city, west of Baghdad, as early as next week, saying that basic services and aid had been restored.

Officer Calls Six Marines Killed Friday In Falluja “A Small Confrontation”

[THANKS TO RicDani WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: RD WRITES: Just came across this, maybe you can use it. Note the remarks at the bottom of article from a couple of arrogant imbeciles. “West and Wilson insisted however that fighting that broke out Friday in Fallujah, which left six marines dead, was not example failure.”]

Dec 18 NEAR FALLUJAH, Iraq (AFP)

Lieutenant Colonel Dan Wilson, a deputy commander of the First Marine Expeditionary Force and Major Jim West of the First Marine Expeditionary Force, insisted however that fighting that broke out Friday in Fallujah, which left six marines dead, was not an example failure.

"We are not talking of a setback, but just about insurgents hiding in houses for a chance to kill a soldier," Wilson said. He also played down the impact of fighting in the city, describing it as "small confrontations".

Another Marine Dies In Falluja; "Huge Firefight"

"At first, he was all gung-ho, like everybody is," his father said. "He called after the first firefight he was in and said it was the greatest day of his life."

But his attitude changed quickly. He told his family that he was having nightmares and could not get the smell of flesh and blood out of his head.

December 18 By Dave Jones, Sacramento Bee Staff writer

A grieving father from Modesto learned the details Friday of his son's death in Iraq, **and found out that another Modestan retrieved the Marine corporal's body amid a "huge firefight."**

Capt. Andrew J. McNulty said "His squad made entry with the building fully isolated and entered from the top down. He proceeded down a stairway into a kitchen and turned to make entry when an RPK machine gun shot and killed him," McNulty wrote in an e-mail.

"Five insurgents were in the room. ... After an extensive firefight, the insurgents were killed and his body was removed from the house."

Two Marines notified Michael D. Anderson Sr. of his 21-year-old son's death later the same day, but said they had no details on how it happened. Anderson pushed to learn more.

"We requested it, I pressed hard to get it," Anderson said. "I needed to know."

He said Marine units such as his son's go on missions for 10 days at a time, return to base for two days, then go out again.

Cpl. Terrence vanDoorn's unit also returned to base Friday. The Modesto man called his wife, Stephanie, and told her details of the battle in which Anderson died. She then called Anderson's father and passed the word.

"Cpl. V ordered cover fire as he crawled in to recover Mike Jr.," the Marine's father wrote in an account of his conversation with Stephanie vanDoorn. "They moved Mike Jr. into a

bathroom shower stall, as that must have been the cleanest, safest and most secure spot in this house.

"Bullets were flying in every direction as this huge firefight ensued. A fire started in this room due to the tremendous amount of automatic weapons fire.

"Cpl. V then went back to the shower to get Mike out of the now-burning house, running backwards carrying Mike around his chest, under his armpits. He tripped and fell, with Mike Jr. landing on top of him.

"He was successful in removing Mike from the hostilities inside, and away from the intense firefight."

Anderson added this note: "Cpl. V had to finish the mission for two more hours with the blood of my son on his fatigues, knowing that he had just lost his best friend."

Cpl. Anderson's body arrived Friday morning at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, and the military could conduct an "analysis" of the remains as early as today, his father said. He did not know exactly when the body would arrive home.

"At first, he was all gung-ho, like everybody is," his father said. "He called after the first firefight he was in and said it was the greatest day of his life."

But his attitude changed quickly. He told his family that he was having nightmares and could not get the smell of flesh and blood out of his head.

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division enter a building in Fallujah Nov. 9. (AP Photo/Sgt. 1st Class Johancharles Van Boers/ U.S. Army/HO)

As Resistance Counterattacks Grow, Fallujah Exacting Heavy Toll On Mental Health Of Marines; Corps Offers Sleeping Pills And Bullshit For PTSD

The US-backed government put rebel losses at more than 2,000, although unit commanders later revealed their troops had orders to shoot all males of fighting age seen on the streets, armed or unarmed.

December 18,2004 NEAR FALLUJAH, Iraq (AFP)

Nearly six weeks after US marines stormed the rebel enclave of Fallujah, military psychologists are still seeing a steady stream of service personnel traumatised by the long days and nights of ferocious street fighting.

In the macho culture of the US Marine Corps, it is sometimes hard for its personnel, male or female, to admit they have a problem and some try to ride out the symptoms, only seeking help after weeks of suffering in silence.

They are coming to us predominantly for sleep-related problems, such as insomnia or nightmares, bad dreams," Lieutenant Thomas Fearing says.

"After the offensive began, we had a lot of patients, then there was this lull, and it has picked up again recently with people trying to sit on their symptoms."

The US-backed government put rebel losses at more than 2,000, although unit commanders later revealed their troops had orders to shoot all males of fighting age seen on the streets, armed or unarmed.

Fearing says most of those seeking help have been treated successfully through counselling, although one or two have needed more intensive therapy.

"All went back to duty, except for a few worst cases... we had a couple of them staying a few days with us," he says.

"One technique is the listening experience, where we try to make them realise what really happened, how it happened, and why they display symptoms of stress because of this.

"We also have relaxation strategies or we can use sleep medication."

Given the difficulties of getting marines to seek help in the first place, it is perhaps understandable that the corps's press officers refused AFP's requests to interview some of the servicemen and women who were receiving treatment.

The marines were the last of the services in the US military to acknowledge that the stresses of the combat could undermine its fighting capacity and to recruit psychologists to provide counselling and other therapies.

At the moment the unit is treating five or six patients a day. **Most return to active duty after a short series of 45-minute counselling sessions.**

"It's better if we can keep them with us, because we can provide support," she says.

"Maybe, it's better for them than to be sent back home, because, for some, their stronger family is here not there." [Translation: "We're so hard up for warm bodies we don't give a fuck if they're raving psychotics, we'll pat them on the head, give out a pill, and send them back for more death." You notice they're not given a choice of staying or going home. Why could that be?]

Mosul Unconquered; Occupation Having "Little Success"

December 18, 2004 By Slobodan Lekic, Associated Press & By PAUL GARWOOD, Associated Press Writer

Insurgent attacks in Mosul have increased dramatically since the U.S.-led operation last month to retake Fallujah from the guerrillas, and efforts by the multinational forces and the interim government's troops to pacify the city have met with little success.

Iraq's insurgency appears to be consolidating in northern Iraq following intensive U.S.-led military operations in central and western Iraq.

Four U.S. Mercenaries Wounded At Baiji

18 December 2004 Aljazeera.Net

US military hardware contractors working for a US security firm were wounded on Saturday by a car bomb in northern Iraq, a military spokeswoman said.

Sergeant Cynthia Weasner, of the Tikrit-based 1st Infantry Division, said the four men, employed by Florida-based Cochise Security Inc, were wounded at about 7am (0400 GMT) near Baiji, 180km northwest of Baghdad.

Two of the security employees suffered minor wounds while the other two were taken to a military medical facility, the military said.

TROOP NEWS

THE WAR CAME HOME: “It’s Simply A War For Oil”



Pfc. Luis Moreno

12.20.04 BY DENISE PENNY, New York Magazine

He thought it was necessary in the beginning, based on the alleged motives to go to war—that there were weapons of mass destruction threatening the wellbeing of the rest of the world. But we’ve been there for over a year, and we still haven’t found any WMD. That makes you think that it’s simply a war for oil. It makes me crazy when I think about that, and what happened to my brother.

ON JANUARY 29, Luis MORENO became the youngest New York soldier to die in Iraq (he was 19). Since the conflict began, 1,274 Americans, including 15 New Yorkers, have been killed in the war. New York spoke to Moreno’s older brother Manuel, at his parents’ home in the South Bronx.

What was your brother like growing up?

I’m not going to lie—none of us were very studious. He loved to play pelota—baseball. He loved music. We had a big stereo system, and we’d D.J. parties on weekends. And when he had a craving for Dominican dumplings, which was all the time, he hounded me to make them for him.

What did your parents think of his decision to enlist?

He wanted to join the Army and then come back to enroll in the Police Academy. My parents weren’t against it, because at that point we weren’t at war yet. We saw it as something positive for his future.

Did the Army change him?

He was a little plump— we called him Culón, “Big Butt.” But he lost weight and got really strong. He was thrilled.

You threw him a good-bye party when he heard he was going to Iraq.

We cranked up the Bachata, a slow-rhythm merengue. His favorite’s Anthony Santo. I got up to go to work at 6A.M., and the party was still going.

What did the two of you talk about while he was in Iraq?

He’d complain about the excess of work. Sometimes he’d work sixteen hours straight. He was always curious about a place called Palanque that we used to go to on Sundays, but I didn’t tell him too much about the parties I went to. I didn’t want him to be preoccupied with what he was missing out on.

Didn’t you worry about him?

He would tell me, “I have a mission on such-and-such day.” And I’d say, “Be careful.” Something that we say in the Dominican Republic is “Siempre de Moca, nunca de Banl.” In Spanish, to be mosca means to be like a fly: hard to catch, hard to kill. Moca is also a town in the D.R., and so is Bani. So Dominicans say “Always from Moca, and not from Banl.” It means be quick, be elusive, don’t get caught.

What were his impressions of Iraq?

He was shocked to see that it was a really poor country. Poorer than ours. That it was backwards, no cars, no buildings. That it was a wasteland.

What did he think of the American occupation?

He thought it was necessary in the beginning, based on the alleged motives to go to war—that there were weapons of mass destruction threatening the wellbeing of the rest of the world. But we’ve been there for over a year, and we still haven’t found any WMD. That makes you think that it’s simply a war for oil. It makes me crazy when I think about that, and what happened to my brother.

Luis was killed by a sniper.

The report says that he was guarding a gas station. One of his buddies told me that they were near a tank, and they were changing guards, and Luis was up next. When he stood up, they heard a shot, and when one of his buddies turned around he saw my brother jump. They wrapped his head. One of his buddies, a sergeant, gave him a statuette, something from the church, maybe it was a baby Jesus, and put it in his hand, and Luis looked at it and he closed his hand around it and squeezed.

How did you get news of his death?

They called my cell and said that he had been shot in the shoulder. Then they called me a second time, and said that no, it was two shots, one in the shoulder or the chest, the other one in the head. That was January 23.

That Sunday, they said they were going to transfer him to Kansas so that he could recover; later, they said, "Listen, I'm going to tell you the truth. Your brother's going to Kansas so that you can say goodbye to him." And I felt my heart falling. My heart and soul just fell out of me. They tried to bring him to Washington, but because of a blizzard they had to do an emergency landing in London. I couldn't get off work, so a cousin and my dad went. When my dad returned, the only thing he said to us was, "We lost him. We lost Culón," and the tears ran down his face.



Americans need to tie a "Yellow Ribbon" around their memories, when veterans are eventually dumped off at V.A. hospitals around the United States. As a medic in Vietnam, I made a difference in a lot of people's lives. When I was in uniform, I was needed and wanted. When I was discharged, I felt discarded like a paper cup after a movie. As I write these words on April 14, 2003, our government recently cut 28 billion dollars from the V.A. budget. "Step over a vet," is a common theme I have seen so many times since I got out of the military. I have met countless veterans with "post-traumatic stress," who were terrified of entering the V.A. system. Thousands died on the streets of America.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71

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 examples of his outstanding work. T)

Soldiers Promise, Army Doesn't; The "Contract" You Signed Means Absolutely Nothing

The excerpt is from Section C, Item 9c and is reworded in Items 10b and 10c.

This means every enlisted soldier is technically obligated to the Army until six months after the war on terrorism and the war in Iraq have ended. [The politicians say the war on terrorism will not be over "in our lifetime." Of course, they mean *your* lifetime.]

December 20, 2004 By Joseph R. Chenelly, Army Times staff writer

Every man and woman enlisting in the U.S. armed forces signs the DD4 before shipping off to basic training.

That doesn't necessarily mean that every enlistee actually read the contract or paid close attention. **And that's too bad, because the four-page enlistment/re-enlistment contract is the most important document of all the paperwork signed during the process of joining the Army.**

Here are six contract facts you need to know.

1. You promised, but the Army didn't

Although the contract clearly binds the enlistee to military service, it openly acknowledges that the contract pledges nothing. Section C, Item 9 begins by explaining the statements in the contract are not "promises or guarantees of any kind."

2. Not exactly written in stone

Although it would take an act of Congress, **the DD4 can be changed at any time without consulting the enlistee. And, such alterations automatically affect every enlisted service member.**

“Laws and regulations that govern military personnel may change without notice” to the enlistee, the contract states in Section C, Item 9b. These changes may affect pay, allowances, benefits and responsibilities for soldiers “regardless of the provisions” in the enlistment/re-enlistment document.

Although this appears to mean everything other than your signature might as well be printed in disappearing ink, the form has seen very little change over the past few decades.

3. Initial enlistments are for eight years

Section C, Item 10a states that all enlistees must initially serve a minimum total of eight years. Any part of that service not served on active duty must be served in a Reserve component unless the enlistee is sooner discharged. **In addition, the contract lists a few ways an enlistee may become obligated to serve longer.**

4. War plus 6 clause

The enlistment contract states three times that if a war or national emergency breaks out during an individual’s enlistment or is ongoing at the time of enlistment, the enlistee’s enlistment “continues until six months after the war ends, unless (the) enlistment is ended sooner by the President of the United States.”

The above excerpt is from Section C, Item 9c and is reworded in Items 10b and 10c.

This means every enlisted soldier is technically obligated to the Army until six months after the war on terrorism and the war in Iraq have ended. [The politicians say the war on terrorism will not be over “in our lifetime.” Of course, they mean *your* lifetime.]

However, it does not mean the Army has to hold each enlistee to this clause.

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.

**Army Says General Yves
Fontaine, Ft. Bragg, Is A Really
Stupid Shit-Eating Liar**

[Thanks to Lou P. who sent this one in:]

Dec 16, 2004 By Henry Cuninghame, Military editor, The Fayetteville (NC) Observer

Brig. Gen. Yves Fontaine of Fort Bragg says all U.S. military trucks that go on the road in Iraq are armored.

Fontaine, commander of the 1st Corps Support Command, is in charge of logistics for Iraq.

"About 68 percent of my vehicles have armor, which is OK," Fontaine said Wednesday. "That 68 percent is what is on the road in Iraq."

The threat of roadside bombs and ambushes has "significantly decreased in the last month or so, but it's still here and there once in a while," he said.

U.S. forces rely as much as they can on resupply by air to take troops and trucks off the road, he said. **[That's because the threat has "significantly decreased, right? What a lame idiot.]**

MORE:

Army Reports The Truth

December 20, 2004 By Jason Sherman, Army Times staff writer

It is the trucks that haul cargo up and down Iraqi and Afghan roads and through the cities that are most vulnerable. **Only 15 percent of the 4,314 heavy trucks in the combat theater have any armor, according to Army figures.**

None of the 3,073 5-ton and 2½-ton trucks are armored.

A Dec. 4 Army document provided to the House Armed Services Committee indicates that only 663 of 4,314 heavy trucks in Iraq are armored with a goal of protecting the balance of the fleet by July 2005.

None of the 3,073 5-ton or 2½-ton trucks is armored. The poor physical shape of the 2½-ton fleet is prompting Army leaders to propose forgoing bolt-on armor — which is difficult to install on rusted-out frames — and replacing them with 5-ton trucks.

The only midsize trucks in the Army inventory with armor today are FMTVs: 479 will be armored by January, leaving 1,262 to be hardened.

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)

Marine Survives Falluja Wounds; Wants His Friends Overseas To Come Home

Dec. 18, 2004 By Karen Shugart, Telegraph Staff Writer

The last time Sgt. Michael Newton was loading toys into trucks for needy children, he received some sobering news: He was to be sent to Iraq.

A year later, the Marine reservist is loading toys again as part of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Drive. This time he has a Purple Heart, as well as a heart heavy with thoughts of his buddies in the Middle East.

"Some of my closest friends are still overseas," said Newton, of Cochran. "This is the hardest month to be deployed. I just hope to get them home."

Newton, 24, had been in Iraq about four months when he suffered severe wounds in Fallujah.

Newton still is not fully healed. Two more surgeries are planned in January.

Soldiers Ordered To Eat Oranges To Help Politician Win Re-Election

Army Times 12.20.04

Taiwan's government has ordered the military to start eating as many oranges as possible over the next three months to help Prime Minister Yu Shyi-kun get re-elected.

Taiwanese farmers have a bumper crop of oranges this year and are worried about selling them all, so the government bought about half — some 30,000 tons. **Officials with Yu's Democratic Progressive Party believe that if soldiers help devour the crop, the farmers could be more likely to support the DPP. If the oranges are not eaten and end up rotting, the government worries that the farmers will side with the opposition.**

“To eat oranges now is to show you love Taiwan,” DPP spokesman Tsai Huang-liang told the China Post.

Not to be outdone, the rival People First Party has its own orange campaign, distributing free fruit to supporters in hopes of cornering the orange-grower vote.

[Could be worse. U.S. troops have to eat shit and die in Iraq to help U.S. politicians win re-election.]

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Sabotage Stops North Oil Exports; Beiji Line To Baghdad Blown Again

December 18 BAGHDAD (Reuters)

Saboteurs blew up Iraq's northern export pipeline for the second week in a row on Saturday, halting oil flows to Turkey's Ceyhan port, oil officials said.

A bomb that exploded overnight blew off a section of the twin pipeline near the oil center of Baiji, they said.

The pipeline runs from the Kirkuk oil fields to the IT-1A storage tanks near Baiji, where oil accumulates before it is pumped further north to Ceyhan.

Storage tanks at IT-1A were full before the attack, but technical problems have been hampering pumping to Ceyhan, one official said.

The northern pipeline, which can carry around 500,000 barrels per day (bpd), was also attacked on Dec. 10. Exports through Turkey have been volatile since, lowering the level of Iraqi crude oil stored at Ceyhan.

Sabotage against the northern pipeline network has been intense since U.S. forces attacked the Sunni Muslim city of Falluja near Baghdad last month.

Another domestic oil pipeline was hit near Baiji on Saturday, the latest in attacks that have crippled operations of refineries and helped to create severe shortages of fuels, especially in Baghdad.

Militants Pipeline Attack Moves Into Urban Area



Black smoke billows from an oil pipeline near the northern Iraqi city of Samarra. Insurgents sabotaged the pipeline that links the Baji Oil Refinery in northern Iraq with al-Dora Refinery in Baghdad. (AFP/Dia Hamid)

December 18, 2004 By Slobodan Lekic, Associated Press

Militants set ablaze a pipeline near the capital -- **a rare attack on oil infrastructure in a populated area.**

South of Baghdad, an explosion and fire on an oil pipeline near the capital's Dora refinery sent thick black billowing smoke pouring into the sky.

U.S. troops sealed off the area. **Insurgents regularly attack the country's oil infrastructure, but they usually pick remote desert locations.**

Power & Supplies To Baghdad Cut Off By Resistance Offensive; Occupation Electricity Minister Says “I Am Not Even An Electricity Minister”

Dec 18, 2004 By Lin Noueihed, BAGHDAD (Reuters)

As if the daily struggle to dodge bullets and bombings is not enough, many Iraqis now face a freezing winter shivering by candlelight as persistent attacks keep the power out for more than 12 hours a day.

"Saddam Hussein used to cut off the electricity for a couple of hours a day and we'd complain," said Fadia Karim, 33.

"Now there's no power for hours and hours every day. **There's no fuel for the generators, no kerosene for the heaters.** People are beyond complaining. Things are just getting worse."

Sabotage attacks on power plants, transmission lines and the oil pipelines and fuel trucks that feed them, mean Iraqis face a cold, dark winter queuing at petrol pumps for fuel to run their generators -- for those that have a generator.

Iraqi officials, wary of growing instability ahead of the Jan. 30 election, say shortages and outages have reached crisis proportions, especially in Baghdad, with no end in sight.

"I am a firefighter, I am not even an electricity minister," said Iraqi Electricity Minister Ayham Sameraei.

"They hit the fuel pipelines everywhere around the power plants, they hit the trucks and scare my guys from keeping this fuel moving. These days, it's getting worse."

Most Iraqis now get up to 12 hours of electricity daily. A few days ago, they were getting no more than eight.

Earlier this week, saboteurs hit a power plant in the northern oil city of Baiji, knocking 500 megawatts off the grid and plunging the entire country into darkness for 10 hours.

Sameraei hopes to get power supplies back up to 18 hours a day by Dec. 25 but, he admits, **it all depends on security. [Obviously the resistance is in charge of that part of the equation.]**

Twenty-one months after Washington launched its war with the promise of a brighter future, Iraq produces 4,100 megawatts of electricity, a little below prewar levels and about half the country's surging domestic demand.

Iraqis have long since given up relying on the state for round-the-clock electricity.

Those who can afford it have back-up generators at home. **But some of the worst fuel shortages since the war have put petrol and diesel prices beyond the reach of most.**

Without power, households increasingly rely on kerosene for heating and gas for cooking. Both are now scarce.

Entrepreneurs fill the shortfall, buying big generators and charging neighbors to plug in. But their prices have soared since Iraq's sweltering summer gave way to the winter chill. Baghdad temperatures drop to freezing at night.

"We pay 20,000 dinars (\$13) for five amps -- enough to power everything but the hot water boiler," said Karam Issam, a cleaner. "We shower in freezing water in the middle of winter."

His family started out paying 3,000 dinars per amp, but the price jumped when the crisis worsened. The man with the generator now says he is jacking up the price to 7,000 dinars. Customers have little choice but to pay.

"We are living by candlelight," said one young Iraqi. "It's been like this for three months. Before, we used to watch television at night. Now, we go to bed or out into the street."

Samaraei is praying for divine intervention to switch the lights back on before angry Iraqis turn on the government. [Bush says God talks to him. Tell him about it.]

"We are very close to doubling what we have now but God is not helping me," he said. "Maybe he will before the election."

Insurgents Attacks Kill, Wound Many Occupation Guards

Dec 18, 2004 By Sabah al-Bazee, SAMARRA, Iraq (Reuters)

Insurgents have launched attacks on election offices in northern Iraq, killing two people and wounding nine six weeks before Iraqis are due to go to the polls.

Police and hospital sources said on Saturday mortars landed on an election office in Dujail, one of many around the country registering and educating potential voters ahead of the Jan. 30 election.

Among the wounded were six Iraqi National Guards, who were guarding the office against attack in the Sunni Muslim town, 30 miles north of the capital.

A mortar also landed on an election office in the oil city of Kirkuk, where ethnic tensions are running high ahead of a poll many want delayed there.

The office was closed when the mortar hit on Friday night, **but a guard was seriously wounded, police said.**

At Dakkuk, near Kirkuk, one National Guard was killed and three wounded when gunmen fired on their checkpoint early on Saturday.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION

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