

## GI SPECIAL 2#C57



"TROOP STRENGTH is WORSE than WE THOUGHT....  
JENKINS THERE WAS CALLED into ACTIVE DUTY from the SALVATION ARMY."

The Augusta Chronicle, in Army Times 12.27.04

# “Fighting For Their Loyalty”

Fighting for the minds of the very soldiers who have been tasked to carry out this war even as we condemn their every act in the execution of the war is the very essence of what we have to be doing. Fighting for their loyalty, and fighting to turn their loyalty from the ruling class to the people, even as we endorse the Iraqi's right to resist by arms, is exactly who we are and who we have to be.

12.20.04 Left Hook!, LH Exclusive: **An Interview with Stan Goff**, By M. Junaid Alam with Stan Goff

Recently, *Left Hook* co-editor M. Junaid Alam was able to fire off some questions to **Stan Goff**, a former US Special Forces Master Sergeant with more than two decades of military experience who is now heavily involved in anti-war work with [Military Families Speak Out](#) and the [Bring Them Home Now](#) campaign, and is also the author of [Full Spectrum Disorder](#) and [Hideous Dream](#).

Below, he offers his sharp insights on recent tactical, military, and political developments taking place in Iraq, discusses the very real signs of growing discontent within the armed forces, and what the anti-war movement should do about it.

## **Part 2: To The Troops: [Part 1 below]**

**Alam: There's been a lot in the news about US soldiers criticizing or resisting the war in one form or another - a unit that refused to deliver supplies, thousands of deserters, attacking war claims, troops suing against stop-loss orders, pointed questions aimed at Rumsfeld in Kuwait.**

As someone involved in organizing dissenting soldiers and their families, what do you make of all this? **Do you see a pattern of growing disillusionment within the ranks?**

**Goff: Do we ever!**

Our contacts with the GI Rights Hotline, Quaker House, the National Lawyers Guild Military Law Task Force, and the military families network are very sensitive barometers to the morale and discipline inside the armed services, and all of them are reporting dramatic spikes in requests for assistance of all kinds, from filing for conscientious objector status to asking about the risks of intentional AWOL to wanting to know what agreements the US has with Canada that might force their repatriation.

**The little mutinies in the ranks do not constitute questioning the war or its reasons, but it's a beginning. When someone is willing to refuse an order to stick his or her neck out, that's a very strong indication that they have already determined that this war is not about protecting the US. If they believed that, there would be a greater spirit of sacrifice.**

For the most part, these folks are patriotic in their own chauvinistic, uninformed way. So refusal to do something demonstrates a nascent level of consciousness that we have to build on.

**I did a presentation recently in New York with Veterans for Peace and Military Families Speak Out, and we used it to begin drumming up support for a massive demonstration in Fayetteville, North Carolina this year, next to Ft. Bragg.**

**We are doing it on March 19th and making a national call for the anniversary of the 2003 ground offensive. Last year we had around 1,800 folks and it was very well-received. Even active duty military joined in - in civilian clothes, of course. This year, we want to take it to five digits. Come along, and bring 100 of your best friends.**

Now that things are starting to visibly break down inside the institution of the military, people have begun to express a renewed interest in GI and military family organizing. There's a Marine vet named Jimmy Massey from here in North Carolina who is shopping a book around that is about to blow the lid off of some murders that were known and sanctioned by members of the chain of command in Iraq.

We are encouraging whistleblowers, not just for the obvious reasons, but as a form of therapeutic intervention for PTSD - witnessing. And the dissent of the families, some of whose stories are horrendous, shreds the legitimacy of the Washington gang.

**Alam:** With the elections over and the situation in Iraq worsening, the college campus-based anti-war movement, represented by CAN, is on the rebound. Part of what it's doing now is helping organize speaking events for Iraqi veterans against the war. **How do you think the youth anti-war movement can best link up with anti-war vets, learn from them and lend support?**

**Goff: Come to Fayetteville!**

Inviting anti-war veterans, and don't forget military family members, to various public events is a good start.

Iraq Veterans Against the War has quite a few members who are near enough to college-age. I think the college students and the vets can learn from each other. Collaboration is the learning process. But even without the vets and families, any public education effort, forums and teach-ins and so forth that make the public smarter about the war are helping the overall movement.

The trick right now is not necessarily linking up, which will happen over time as resistance grows, but to put fire back into the belly of the anti-war and anti-empire movement, and to get us back up on our feet.

This damned election anesthetized us.

**Alam:** Appealing to dissenting soldiers is a political imperative for the American anti-war movement. But how do you approach the contradiction of trying to organize soldiers against the war while condemning soldiers for killing or torturing Iraqis? Is there a bigger culprit to be targeted for the atrocities?

**Goff:** No contradiction there for me.

**We not only want to appeal to those who are dissenting, it's time to start encouraging dissent in the ranks and more.**

**Some folks were uncomfortable recently when I said that we should see the US armed forces as ours, and begin to reclaim them.**

But we have to begin to see this struggle for what it must become, a fight for control over state power. That includes the military. And we have to attend to the situation in Venezuela and Cuba. A strong military committed to a people's agenda is essential.

**I am not calling for supporting the troops. This is a call for their eventual wholesale defection from the bourgeoisie's control.**

**In the same address, I called for the arrest and indefinite detention of the whole executive branch. That should put things in context.**

**How are we going to preach revolution as long as it remains a figurative term?  
We have to set our sights higher.**

Our focus should never be on individual crimes unless we point out the context. There are some situations that are atrocity-creating.

**There are those who execute the plans and those who make them. There are those who make the plans, and those who order them made.** There is racism and xenophobia and shocking ignorance at the heart of our system, and we on the Left know that those who own the means of production also own the means of production of what passes for knowledge.

**If all we do is condemn individual acts of violence, then we fall into the trap of claiming moral equivalence between the Iraqi resistance and the forces of occupation, but even worse than that, we abdicate our responsibility to explain how a situation like this comes to pass.**

**Fighting for the minds of the very soldiers who have been tasked to carry out this war even as we condemn their every act in the execution of the war is the very essence of what we have to be doing. Fighting for their loyalty, and fighting to turn their loyalty from the ruling class to the people, even as we endorse the Iraqi's right to resist by arms, is exactly who we are and who we have to be.**

Otherwise we are just fence-sitters, a bunch of self-righteous political spectators. Our job is to show that this is not black-and-white in the simple-minded terms we have been given, but that it is a complex and dangerous situation that can only be explained with an analysis of class and imperialism.

That's why I want to pull my hair out when I hear people saying stuff like "Peace is Patriotic."

This is drivel, and it is getting us nowhere.

**Dumbing down movements makes movements dumb.**

We cannot out-simplify the Right. They'll beat us every time. These are the people that won't allow high school science teachers to explain the fundamentals of biology. They empower ignorance. Our challenge is to fight ignorance. That's harder than what the Right has to do... for now anyway.

**Alam:** Recently you gave a powerful speech in NYC. At one point you said, "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."

In the longer run, what kind of movement - and what kind of strategies - will we need to not just "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable" but prevent the comfortable from afflicting others in the first place?

**Goff:** That's the jackpot question, isn't it? What is to be done? Always has been; always will be.

I'm not a big believer in long term strategies.

I believe in strategic goals, but not in trying to map out in detail how we get from here to there.

In the short term, we have to escalate. This is that tricky business of walking a line between co-optation and cowardice on the one side and reckless adventurism on the other. Finding the right place to push and the right people to push there is the key.

**Think about SNCC and the Freedom Riders. There's a certain amount of trial-and-error in this, but one thing I've noticed is that the more conservative forces in any movement will always tend toward inertia, and the steps that advance movements generally meet resistance not only from conservative elements, in terms of tactical approach, but also from entrenched leadership for obvious reasons.**

SNCC was bold, but it was disciplined. And they broke laws. We will definitely have to break laws, but this has to be done strategically, not just knocking out McDonald's windows - which is a good way to get picked off by provocateurs and infiltrators.

Each formation will have to find its own way in this movement, and the movement will have to be creative and flexible enough to build on discovered strengths and to ruthlessly abandon our weaknesses, as well as learn how to work in various kinds of alliances - local, national, and international.

I have been flogging a kind of formula lately that I call 3-D. Delegitimate. Disobey. Disrupt.

One might think of these as three separate activities, or as things that can go on at the same time. I like to fantasize about them as phases. One massive effort at achieving some threshold of delegitimation, followed on by the kind of mass civil disobedience that makes cops go home ashamed of themselves at night, followed by actual disruption of business as usual - once there is enough public support to ensure that what we do doesn't just piss off working class people.

**I'm thinking here about the Bolivians who blocked all avenues in and out of La Paz and closed the capital down. Now that's a disruption! But it has to have broad support, or it becomes a pretext for jailing a movement's leadership.**

**Short-short term, like this year, I think we have to put everything into finding ways to push through or bypass media propaganda and reach as many people as possible with any information and analysis that exposes our government and this war for that government's and that war's essential criminality.**

**This effort needs to be in your face and relentless. It needs to inflame public opinion on both sides and sharpen political polarization.**

And as much as anything, we need to begin the process of doing what the Left can do - in that process of polarizing - to destroy the Democratic Party, which has now become a complete drag anchor on the working class, on women and LGBT folks, and on oppressed nationalities.

We desperately need to start the development of a red-black-green party of some kind as an alternative that sees electioneering as secondary to militant street, community, and workplace struggles. At least, that's how I see it.

**But I don't have a crystal ball, and I am not a long-term veteran of the Left. I'm just some guy that fell into this politics with a very peculiar standpoint owing to my heterodox personal history. This conversation about how to refound a viable revolutionary Left in the United States in the context of this anti-war work is one we should all be having.**

**Alam:** Stan Goff, thank you for your time.

**Goff:** Thanks again for being part of that process I just described.

## **WHAT THE FUCK AM I DOING *HERE*?**



**December 03, 2004 From Raed's Blog**

**Part 1:**

**Instead, we have thousands of miles of pipeline that can not be secured, surrogate cops who have a life expectancy of about a month, a puppet government that does little else but attend to its own physical survival, and bases that now have to be supplied not by vehicle convoys, but by the far more expensive and complicated method of airlift. The resistance has turned the whole place into a kind of grinding, low-grade Dien Bien Phu.**

**Alam:** Stan, thanks for doing this interview with *Left Hook*.

**Goff:** Thanks for *Left Hook*. And I want to apologize for rushing through this. Things are getting hectic these days.

**Alam:** The decimation of Fallujah did not either curb or destroy the insurgency. Instead insurgents continue to dominate Iraq's geographical center, threatening US supply lines and striking at will. Meanwhile, US-trained Iraqi forces seem prone to falling apart, as recently evidenced in Mosul. Does this mean US war planners' hopes for finding an "exit strategy" are unfounded?

**Goff:** The situation in Iraq generally and in places like Fallujah is incredibly unclear in the details. Reporters who attempt to get inside these zones are subject to be kidnapped, caught in the crossfire, or even targeted for death as American forces have done on a couple of occasions. And the problem with communiqués from any partisan in an active battle is that these communiqués are inextricable from tactical and political objectives - so in terms of their empirical value, they are always highly questionable. This is not moralizing. It's just part of the political constitution of war.

Having said that, there is little doubt about the large tendencies we are observing there. **Almost from day one, contrary to all the hype from the Pentagon about "winning the war and losing the peace," and a "great tactical victory," the US forces, and to a lesser extent the British forces, lost the initiative - that is, the ability to choose the time and place and manner of combat engagements.**

**They want to swallow this fact up and regurgitate it to the public as "fog of war," which is plain bureaucratic bullshit. They are losing, and they have been losing in some sense from the very beginning, as some of us were pointing out by April 2003.**

**Several factors contributed to this almost immediate loss of advantage.**

One that is now clear is a fairly thorough and sophisticated preparation by some forces for a protracted guerrilla struggle that has neutralized the technical advantages of the US military as well as US military doctrine.

Two is that US military doctrine itself was thrown into an abrupt flux by the acceleration of Rumsfeld's new warfighting doctrine in the middle of active preparation and conduct of two huge military operations. New doctrine take years to rationalize and debug, and Rumsfeld force-fed his to his own generals - which could account for why they are standing silently behind the right-wing Republican dogpile that is hitting Rumsfeld now in the wake of that Reservist asking about "hillbilly armor."

Three is that the loss of the Turkish front for the initial ground offensive took them completely by surprise and pushed them into last minute revisions of the ground offensive plan as their weather window was closing. This put the Iraqi resistance at least a year ahead in its development, because it created this huge geographic space, now called the Sunni Triangle, for a tactical withdrawal that preserved untold numbers of fighters and materiel, as well as safe-areas for reorganization.

**Finally, the combination of reliance on, may his name never be spoken, Ahmed Chalabi for post-invasion intelligence scenarios, and the incredibly brutal way the entire operation has been carried out - which has created a near absolute ideological resistance to the occupation. This generalized Iraqi opposition is difficult to overestimate. None of this impacts an "exit strategy," however, because there never was one, though we may start to hear ruling circles start to clamor for one now as this whole situation goes further into the toilet.**

The intent of this invasion was to establish a permanent military presence in the region, and to gain complete control over the Iraqi economy. Apparently, these are still the objectives among the inner circle around George W. These guys are a little like Slim Pickens in the final scene of Dr. Strangelove.

**Another goal of the invasion was to demonstrate US military invincibility to the rest of the world. The reality has accomplished exactly the opposite. There is no more significant outcome of this war than that.**

**If the decision is finally taken to get out, and there is a real chance that this could happen if the resistance continues to refine its tactics and strengthen its popular bases, it will not be a decision taken coolly, but one forced on whichever administration we have here by the Iraqi resistance. That's not an exit strategy. That's getting kicked out.**

Not only have the Iraqi forces frequently deserted, many of them have flipped into the resistance - I suspect more than we even know - and many took the training as preparation for defection back to the Iraqi side.

This war will not likely be Vietnamized any more than Vietnam was.

**Instead, we have thousands of miles of pipeline that can not be secured, surrogate cops who have a life expectancy of about a month, a puppet government that does little else but attend to its own physical survival, and bases that now have to be supplied not by vehicle convoys, but by the far more expensive and complicated method of airlift. The resistance has turned the whole place into a kind of grinding, low-grade Dien Bien Phu.**

**Alam:** As the Pentagon's Defense Science Board recently admitted, US foreign policy is only increasing hatred and resistance of America. At the same time, the US clearly does not have the manpower to launch further aggressive maneuvers on a large scale anywhere, including Iran. So what is impelling the ruling class toward this seemingly unsustainable course?



**Goff:** I don't know what the DSB might have said. I didn't hear it. It is frightening to think that I might agree with them on anything, even something this brainlessly obvious. Aren't those the guys who've been pushing this strategic missile defense thing? Another one of their jillion dollar toys failed to launch last week.

It didn't fail to hit a bullet with a bullet, which is what reputable scientists call the whole scheme. It failed to take off. There are hobby stores right down the road from where I live that sell rockets that 12-year-old kids can make launch. These guys are on the Pentagon gravy train, and they work very hard to keep their pals on the same gravy train.

**You are right about how this operation has constrained the US ability to intervene militarily elsewhere.**

**Even in Haiti, they couldn't send enough Marines to consolidate the February coup further out than a couple of upscale areas in Port-au-Prince. Now they have pushed the Brazilians and a couple of other damn fool governments into doing it for them.**

This is creating political ripples at home in these Latin American nations, Argentina and Chile are the other two big contingents, and being commander of the MINUSTAH has become about the most unenviable job on the planet. They are talking about sending contingents into the Philippines to assist relief efforts after a hurricane. Right. It just happens to be in an area where the NPA is well-entrenched and well-liked. But a couple battalions of Marines doesn't cover a lot of territory, and when you add a long logistical tail off of established lines of communication, they become a kind of low-impact, high-maintenance, high-cost black hole.

**Iran is more vulnerable to a US invasion than Iraq was, if the US had the assets, which it doesn't now. That's because there is a conventional force protecting a conventional state. This is the enemy that US doctrine is designed to defeat, but it has to have the freed-up capacity. It doesn't.**

I'm watching Iran closely these days, because they may very well come out of all this as the most significant power-broker in the region, with the potentially Iran-oriented Shia majority in the South of Iraq. Wouldn't it be something if it was George W. Bush who finally won the Iran-Iraq War?

**The real nightmare, of course, for the US right now, is the collapse of the Saudi royal family.**

This possibility was a huge factor in the decision to invade Iraq and establish bases there. And it is the real way in which Osama bin Laden and friends fit into the overall picture in the region. Since 1990, when he was shut out of the Saudi defense from a potential Iraqi attack, and the Royals chose the US over him to conduct the defense of the Holy Land, his main objective encompassing all other objectives, in my opinion, has been to overthrow the royal family.

With the erstwhile assistance of the Bush administration, he has come closer to that than he might have otherwise dreamed.

A fraction of finance capital in the US, people like George Soros the international currency pirate, have identified the increased probability of an uncontrollable storm within this kind of wild instability that could blow away the bloated mass of fictional value that surrounds their little summit like a thick cloud.

And no one wants to risk pissing the region off in such a way that we lose access to oil, even the little portion that comes from over there to the US. For all the silly talk over the last few years about a dematerialized economy, the US is still using over 25 percent of the world's primary energy for around five percent of the world's population. Turn the taps off here where I live, where the average commute to work is 25 minutes, and watch the burbs - George W. Bush's base - shrivel like a philodendron left out in an ice storm.

**I don't remember if it was Marx or one of those other smart people who said it, but the ruling class is caught inside this system every bit as much as the rest of us. Maybe more.**

**They can't change course easily. Especially in this period of capitalism when it is driven so much by hot money, by speculation. They have literally eaten away their own capacity to do long-range planning, and I think they see a train wreck on the horizon. That's why the Hail Mary thing they are trying in Southwest Asia. But Hail Mary plays don't often work, do they?**

The longer this goes on, the higher the likelihood of conscription, too. And not just that back-door Stop Loss conscription, but a plain old-fashioned draft. Rumsfeld opposes it, but he's looking more and more expendable these days. The scary thing about a draft is that it has to be made urgent somehow to keep it from becoming a political time bomb. That requires an event.

**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:**

# **24 Killed In Mosul Attack: Deadliest Since War Began;**

# White House Tells Stupid Lies As Usual



Workers and U.S. soldiers tend to the wounded, FOB Marez in Mosul Dec. 21, 2004. (Richmond Times-Dispatch/ Dean Hoffmeyer)

12.21.04 BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) & By KOMO Staff & BBC & CNN & BY JEREMY REDMON Media General News Service & Bloomberg

Officials confirm 24 fatalities in today's attack on a U-S military base near the Iraqi city of Mosul, the deadliest single attack on U.S. troops since the start of the Iraq war.

A spokesman for Task Force Olympia told CNN that in addition to the 24 dead, more than 60 others were hurt.

The commander of the task force says the dead include US military personnel, US contractors, foreign contractors and Iraqi soldiers.

**``The carnage was extensive,``** said Army Captain Phil Ludvigson, a spokesman in Mosul, in a telephone interview. ``It takes some time to put together the identifications, the remains, and to get an accurate count.``

A spokeswoman for Halliburton says seven of the dead worked for the company's KBR subsidiary or its subcontractors.

**Lt. Col. Steven Boylan, spokesman for the Coalition Press Information Center, said 19 U.S. troops were killed, along with three other soldiers of unknown nationality.**

Jeremy Redmon, a reporter for the Richmond, Va., *Times-Dispatch* embedded with the troops in Mosul said the dead included two soldiers from the Richmond-based 276th Engineer Battalion, which had just sat down to eat at Forward Operating Base Merez. He reported 64 were wounded, and civilians may have been among them, he said.

The dead included two soldiers from the Richmond-based 276th Engineer Battalion, which had just sat down to eat.

In addition to the two soldiers in the Richmond unit, two soldiers from Maine National Guard's 133rd Engineer Battalion were killed and 12 were wounded, the Portland Press Herald reported.

The base, also known as the al-Ghizlani military camp, is used by both U.S. troops and the interim Iraqi government's security forces. It also is used by members of the Stryker Brigade, based at Fort Lewis, Wash., a military official said.

**Like most mess halls at U.S. bases in Iraq, the meal area at Base Merez is covered with a tent. Insurgents have fired mortars at the mess hall more than 30 times this year. The hall was shielded by towering concrete walls - but it had no protected roof.**

The BBC's James Reynolds, who was embedded with US troops at the base last month, says the dining hall has always been seen as vulnerable.

**A US army colonel had told him he feared what would happen if insurgents managed to fire rockets into it.**

One [soldier] had told CNN it was only a matter of time before there was an attack on the mess hall.

Mortar attacks on U.S. bases, particularly on the huge white tents that serve as dining halls, have been frequent in Iraq for more than a year. Just last month, for example, a mortar attack on a Mosul base killed two troops with Task Force Olympia, the reinforced brigade responsible for security in much of northern Iraq.

Base Merez, also known as the al-Ghizlani military camp, is three miles south of Mosul and is used by both U.S. troops and the interim Iraqi government's security forces. It once was Mosul's civilian airport but is now a heavily fortified area surrounded by blast walls and barbed wire. Its two main gates are guarded by U.S. troops; Iraqi National Guard members man checkpoints outside to prevent cars from getting close without being searched.

Bill Nemitz, a columnist with the *Portland Press Herald* embedded with the Maine National Guard's 133rd Engineer Battalion, told CNN there was a concrete dining hall under construction that was supposed to be finished by Christmas.

**He said he heard "a lot of discussion" among the troops about the vulnerability of the tent. Hastings told CNN that "there is a level of vulnerability when you go in there and you don't feel like there's a hard — hard roof over your head, and when**

**there's mortar attacks and explosions that happen, there is a level of vulnerability."**

**The force knocked soldiers off their feet and out of their seats as a fireball enveloped the top of the tent and shrapnel sprayed into the area, Redmon said.**

Amid the screaming and thick smoke in the tent, soldiers turned their tables upside down, placed the wounded on them and gently carried them into the parking lot, Redmon said.

Scores of troops crammed into concrete bomb shelters, while others wandered around in a daze and collapsed, he said.

"I can't hear! I can't hear!" one female soldier cried as a friend hugged her.

**A huge hole was blown in the roof of the tent, and puddles of blood, lunch trays and overturned tables and chairs covered the floor, Redmon reported.**

Near the front entrance, troops tended a soldier with a serious head wound, but within minutes, they zipped him into a black body bag, he said. Three more bodies were in the parking lot.

Portland (Maine) Press Herald photographer Gregory Rec, who was sleeping about a quarter-mile from the mess hall when he was awakened by the loud explosion, said he rushed to the scene, where a soldier told him "he heard a whoosh, he looked up and saw a fireball halfway between the ceiling and the floor."

Sgt. Evan Byler, of the 276th, steadied himself on one of the concrete bomb shelters. He was eating chicken tenders and macaroni when the bomb hit. The blast knocked him out of his chair. When the smoke cleared, Byler took off his shirt and wrapped it around a seriously wounded soldier.

Byler held the bloody shirt in his hand, not quite sure what to do with it.

"It's not the first close call I have had here," said Byler, a Fauquier County, Va., resident who survived a blast from an improvised explosive device while riding in a vehicle earlier this year.

Byler started walking back to his base when he saw a soldier collapse from shock on the side of the road. Byler and 1st Lt. Shawn Otto of Williamsburg, Va., also of the 276th, put the grieving soldier on a passing pickup truck.

The 276th, with about 500 troops, had made it a year without losing a soldier and is preparing to return home in about a month.

"We almost made it. We almost made it to the end without getting somebody killed," Otto said glumly.

At least four other soldiers with the 276th were injured, but it was not clear how serious their wounds are.

Lt. Dawn Wheeler, a member of the 276th from Centreville, Va., was waiting in line for chicken tenders when a round hit on the other side of a wall from her. A soldier who had been standing beside her was on the ground, struggling with shrapnel buried deep in his neck.

"We all have angels on us," she said as she pulled away in a Humvee.

**White House spokesman Scott McClellan, responding to a question as to how Iraqis will be able to go to some 9,000 polling places on Jan. 30 if U.S. troops can't secure their own bases from attacks, said there was "security and peace" in 15 of 18 provinces in Iraq. [Silly stupid man. Everybody in the world knows better. Doesn't he have a clue that nobody believes this bullshit anymore?]**



By Dean Hoffmeyer, Richmond Times-Dispatch

The Ansar al-Sunnah Army claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement on the Internet. It said the attack was a "martyrdom operation" targeting a mess hall in the al-Ghizlani camp.

Officials initially said rockets or mortar rounds struck the camp. But they now say they're not sure if it was a mortar strike or a bomb attack. A spokesman says there was a "single explosion."

Witnesses said they heard several explosions and saw smoke rising from the base.

**One rocket hit the dining hall. Another landed on the ground of the base but did not cause any casualties. Other rockets landed outside the base, Pentagon officials said.**

**Two hours after the attack, insurgents fired mortar rounds on the Mosul airfield, injuring a U.S. soldier.**

Maj. James Zollar, the unit's acting commander, spoke to more than a dozen of his officers and urged them to keep their troops focused on their missions.

"This is a tragic, tragic thing for us but we still have missions," he told them. **"It's us, the leaders, who have to pull them together."** [Condescending asshole of the week award to Maj. James Zollar.]

**Earlier in the day, hundreds of students demonstrated in the center of Mosul, demanding that U.S. troops cease breaking into homes and mosques there.**

Also Tuesday, Iraqi security forces repelled another attack by insurgents trying to seize a police station there, the U.S. military said.

Much of the city centre is off limits to Iraqi security forces and US troops, who have been the target of daily attacks during the last month.



U.S. soldiers tend to the wounded after a mortar attack on a dining facility during lunchtime in Mosul. By Dean Hoffmeyer, Richmond Times-Dispatch

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

## **Five U.S. Soldiers Wounded By Hawija Car Bomb**

December 21, 2004 By MICHAEL McDonough, McCurtain Daily Gazette.

Five American soldiers and an Iraqi civilian were wounded when the Humvee they were traveling in was hit by a car bomb near Hawija, 150 miles north of Baghdad, the U.S. military said.

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## Finally The Truth About The 7 Dead Marines

[Remember when the Marine Corps announced 7 Marines were killed in one day but refused to say where, or how, using the usual “security” bullshit to hide the truth? We still don’t know the events but now, big surprise, we know where.]

December 20, 2004 By Gordon Trowbridge, Army Times staff writer

They had hoped to begin resettling Falluja’s 250,000-plus residents as early as Dec. 15. **But in recent days, renewed clashes with insurgents put those plans on hold. In one two-day period of clashes, seven Marines and as many as 50 rebels died in firefights,** John Kael Weston, one of two U.S. State Department representatives to Anbar province, confirmed.

**EXTRAORDINARILY REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



US Marines convoy through Fallujah. (AFP Photo/Mehdi Fedouach)

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**TROOP NEWS**



# Soldier Says He Asked Rumsfeld Armor Question Without Aid of Embed

December 19, 2004 By E&P Staff, Editor & Publisher, NEW YORK

**In his first public account of last week's controversy, Spc. Thomas Wilson says that he came up with the now famous armor question for Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld on his own, without the help of oft-criticized reporter Edward Lee Pitts. And he adds, "If this is my 15 minutes of fame, I hope it saves a life."**

The account appears in next week's edition of Time magazine.

Wilson, who serves with Tennessee's 278th Regiment in the National Guard, tells Time that he befriended Pitts, an embed for the Chattanooga Times Free Press, at California's Fort Irwin, where his unit trained. Later, in Kuwait, after Pitts learned that only soldiers could ask questions at the upcoming town hall meeting with Rumsfeld in Kuwait, he urged Wilson to come up with some "intelligent questions."

**After his convoy arrived at Camp Arijan in Kuwait, Wilson found hundreds of fully armored vehicles promised to another unit months down the road. Wilson says he asked if the 278th could use them in the meantime, and was told no. That inspired his question about the shortage of armor, which he showed to Pitts.**

**The reporter, far from being the protagonist, suggested that he find "a less brash way of asking the question," but Wilson "told him no, that I wanted to make my point very clear."**

Wilson says he also came up with three alternate questions on his own.

The Time account continues: "As for Rumsfeld's brusque response -- that even a fully armored vehicle 'can be blown up' -- Wilson says, 'Personally, I didn't like that answer.'" But he added, "I hope I didn't do any damage to Secretary Rumsfeld."

Following the meeting, Wilson told Rumsfeld he did not intend to put him "on the spot" or show disrespect, and the two shook hands. Most soldiers were "overwhelmingly positive" afterward, Wilson says, but **one officer suggested he should have asked the question in a more "proper forum."**

**Wilson says he replied: "What would the proper forum be?" He adds: "If it costs me my career to save another soldier, I'll give it."**

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## Injured Marine Home;

# Says 25% Wounded In His Battalion

**Mitchell says he doesn't personally know anyone else who has had four injuries in such a short period of time but he says about one quarter of the marines in his battalion in Fallujah have at least one Purple Heart.**

12.21.04 Gray Television Group Inc.

## **An Omaha marine has returned home after being wounded four times during combat in Iraq.**

Corporal R. J. Mitchell's most recent injuries happened in the former insurgent stronghold of Fallujah during vicious house-to-house fighting.

When Corporal Mitchell returned home, he was greeted by a yard filled with decorations, including a banner on his parents' front door that's signed by all the neighborhood kids. It's a small token of appreciation for a marine who was wounded four times in just five months.

Corporal Mitchell had only been in Iraq a couple of weeks when he earned his first Purple Heart. A rocket-propelled-grenade exploded near a roof, sending down a shower of shrapnel.

"Hit me right here in the head with a dime sized piece of shrapnel," Corporal Mitchell says.

That injury would be the first of four.

The 24-year-old marine soon found himself in Fallujah, in house to house fighting.

"It's crazy. It's nerve-wracking," he says. "It's everything, every emotion all rolled into one and you have it in an instant."

It was in that fighting that he was again hit with shrapnel, this time in the chin.

Not long after that came his third injury when a bullet pierced his lower right arm.

Corporal Mitchell says, "I can't explain the adrenaline at that time. Mostly it made me a little upset and I just wanted to keep going and get the guys that shot me."

He could have stopped at that point but kept going.

## **His fourth injury came just a day later when an enemy grenade exploded.**

**Corporal Mitchell says, "It fragged me from like here to here. There's still five to 10 pieces of shrapnel in me."**

**After that, his commander told him he'd done enough.**

**Mitchell says he doesn't personally know anyone else who has had four injuries in such a short period of time but he says about one quarter of the marines in his battalion in Fallujah have at least one Purple Heart.**

## Warm Homecoming For Hurt Soldier



Army 1st Lt. William Reynolds is hugged by high school friend Sarah Hunt after Reynolds arrived Sunday at the Greater Rochester International Airport. Reynolds was injured in a Nov. 7 explosion in Baghdad, Iraq. ANNETTE LEIN staff photographer

December 20, 2004 Jim Memmott, Senior Editor, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle

The applause started as soon as he came in view.

And as Army 1st Lt. William Reynolds got closer, there were cheers as well, as friends from school and church yelled out, "Willie!"

Sitting in a wheelchair, Reynolds looked up and smiled. The Pittsford native was home. At last. "It's great to see my family and friends," he said into the lineup of television microphones. "... It's great to be home."

The welcoming scene played out Sunday around 5:30 p.m. at the Greater Rochester International Airport.

It was another chapter in a saga that began when an improvised bomb exploded in Baghdad, Iraq, on Nov. 7, nearly taking Reynolds' life.

Reynolds, 24, had been at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., since Nov. 11. The former gymnast has made a remarkable recovery, but he still faces months of physical therapy.

**A 2002 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, he will have to go back to Walter Reed for more surgery and a knee replacement.**

The turnout of about 75 people at the airport Sunday on a frigid December day included members of the United Church of Pittsford, where the Reynolds family worships.

They greeted Reynolds with handshakes and hugs and a sign that said "Welcome Home Willie." Classmates and friends from Pittsford Mendon High School, where Reynolds graduated in 1998, were there, as well.

"He was the nicest kid in the world (at Pittsford Mendon), said Chris Drumm, who also attended that school. "He was always smiling."

**Longtime Reynolds family friends were at the airport, too. "I'm just glad he's alive," said Barbara Opira of Pittsford, who added that while she is relieved Reynolds made it back, she worries for the soldiers who are still there.**

**Reynolds had been in Iraq since July, leading a combat platoon. He was showing another platoon leader around an area of Baghdad when a buried bomb exploded.**

**The other platoon leader eventually lost part of his right leg from the explosion. Another soldier was hurt, but not so badly that he had to leave Iraq.**

Shrapnel from the explosion severed arteries in Reynolds' left leg and left arm. Quick action by his fellow soldiers saved him from dying of blood loss. Since his injury, he has had a dozen or more surgeries.

Doctors have fitted him with a device to immobilize his left knee, and the joint will have to be replaced. It was only Sunday morning that Reynolds was given the clearance to come home.

Reynolds' sister, Robin Wilt of Brighton, had been at Walter Reed all last week with Reynolds, along with her 5-month-old son, Gregory. They flew back together.

They were greeted by their sisters Suzzanne Reynolds Anicette of Pittsford and Dr. Evelyn Reynolds of Rochester. Another sister, Wilma Beaty, lives in Atlanta.

**Reynolds' parents, William and Evelyn Reynolds, have spent much of the last few weeks at Walter Reed. They are natives of Guyana in South America and will return later this week from a quick visit there.**

Reynolds will stay at home with his parents, who are both nurses. He will also do extensive physical therapy at Strong Memorial Hospital.

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Northern Pipeline Blown Up Again**

December 21, 2004 By MICHAEL McDonough, McCurtain Daily Gazette & (Reuters)

**Saboteurs have set a complex of oil pipelines ablaze in northern Iraq but exports on the line had already been halted by a separate attack at the weekend, oil officials and witnesses said on Tuesday.**

A large explosion ripped through the Baiji complex on Monday night, the officials said.

**The complex includes the main pipeline to the northern export terminal at Turkey's Ceyhan port and domestic links from refineries in the oil city of Kirkuk to a nearby power plant.**

The blaze could take a couple of days to extinguish, an official from the North Oil Company said.

**Saboteurs blew up a section of the northern export pipeline, which can carry 500,000 barrels per day, for the second week in a row on Saturday, halting oil flows to Turkey.**

**Another domestic oil pipeline was hit near Baiji on the same day. A wave of attacks has crippled refineries and caused severe fuel shortages and electricity outages, especially in Baghdad.**

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## **Resistance Bombed In Hit**

**[Another admission of helplessness. Bombing means ground forces are too weak to take the town.]**

December 21, 2004 By MICHAEL McDONOUGH, McCurtain Daily Gazette & Reuters

Early Tuesday, a U.S. aircraft engaged an "enemy position" with precision-guided missiles west of Baghdad, the military said.

Hamdi Al-Alosi, a doctor in a hospital in the city of Hit, said four people were killed and seven injured in the strike. He said the attack caused damage to several cars and two buildings.

Local tribal leader Sheikh Laith al-Hitti told Al Jazeera television by telephone that six people had been killed and nine wounded in the attack. He denied there were fighters in the area that was targeted.

Residents said the airstrikes followed several days of heightened tensions in Hit as insurgents stepped up attacks on U.S. forces in the area.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

**Destroying cities and torturing prisoners are things you do when you are losing the real war, the war your enemies are fighting. They are signals of moral bankruptcy. They destroy the confidence and respect of your friends, and reinforce the credibility of the enemy.** William Pfaff, December 21, 2004, International Herald Tribune

## Best Laid Plans Of Mice And Men...

[Thanks to CZ who sent this in:]

That fall, all that the Mission talked about was control: arms control, information control, resources control, psycho-political control, population control, control of the almost supernatural inflation, control of terrain through the Strategy of the Periphery.

But when the talk had passed, the only thing left standing up that looked true was your sense of how out of control things really were.

**Year after year, season after season, wet and dry, using up options faster than rounds on a machine-gun belt, we called it right and righteous, viable and even almost won, and it still only went on the way it went on.**

**When all the projections of intent and strategy twist and turn back on you, tracking team blood, "sorry" just won't cover it.**

**There's nothing so embarrassing as when things go wrong in a war.**

*Dispatches*, Michael Herr, pp 48-49.

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## Canonical Murphy's Laws of Combat

1. Friendly fire - isn't.
2. Recoilless rifles - aren't.
3. Suppressive fires - won't.
4. You are not Superman; Marines and fighter pilots take note.
5. A sucking chest wound is Nature's way of telling you to slow down.
6. If it's stupid but it works, it isn't stupid.
7. Try to look unimportant; the enemy may be low on ammo and not want to waste a bullet on you.
8. If at first you don't succeed, call in an air strike.
9. If you are forward of your position, your artillery will fall short.
10. Never share a foxhole with anyone braver than yourself.

### **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](http://www.ivaw.net))

## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

### **GEORGE BUSH: POLITICAL GENIUS The Commander-in-Chief Speaks**

Dec 20, 2004 By TERENCE HUNT, AP White House Correspondent

In a sobering assessment of the Iraq war, President Bush acknowledged Monday that Americans' resolve has been shaken by grisly scenes of death and destruction and he pointedly criticized the performance of U.S.-trained Iraqi troops. **"No question about it," he said. "The bombers are having an effect."**

"They're looking on your TV screen and seeing indiscriminate bombings, **where thousands of innocent — or hundreds of innocent Iraqis are getting killed ...**"

Polls show an erosion in Americans' confidence that a stable, democratic government will be established in Iraq. **"Polls change. Polls go up, polls go down," Bush said.**

**He said he could not predict when American forces could come home.**

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## **Bush Offers Support For Soldier-Killer**

*[New York Times, December 21, 2004]*

President Bush offered complete support for Secretary Rumsfeld, **saying that he is a compassionate man who agonizes over the country's combat losses.**

**[Right. He agonizes sooo deeply he lied and said that armored vehicles were being produced as fast as possible and got caught when the manufacturer reported the Pentagon hadn't placed any new orders yet. And the traitor-in-chief piece of shit in the White House defends him. Which is only logical, he's the biggest soldier-killer of all. He started a whole disastrous war for Empire and lied to the troops about the reasons for it.]**

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## Received:

# His Reaction To Goff

From: D  
To: GI Special  
Sent: Tuesday, December 21, 2004 9:24 AM

**Someone sent me Stanley Goff's speech. My reaction....kudos for an articulate and passionate reaction to this unjustified war.**

**I am a Viet Nam vet (1969-70) who came home a different person.**

As a native of Chicago and the Daley machine, I was familiar with the dirty tricks of politics.

**But not until I came "back to the world" did I realize how much they were lying to us. The "successes" were fabrications, the body counts were distorted, and the South Viet Nameese people (the real people...the ones in the villages I came in contact with) didn't seem to care who was in power.**

They too were simply pawns. Their "domino effect" meant that cabbage was 5 cents a head before the war and now it was 25 cents.

In our arrogance we knew nothing about them just as we no nothing about the Iraqi people.

**Damn...I understand we don't even have enough translators to communicate effectively with our Iraqi "enemies."**

**Sounds very familiar.**

One of the low points for me is when they gave the Nobel Peace Prize to Kissinger for "negotiating" the "Paris peace accords." There is man who should be tried as a war criminal which is the very reason why Washington will not agree to the International Court on Human Rights. **We have too many politicians who might qualify. Even now we can't admit that the VC/NVA outmaneuvered us and we actually LOST that war.**

On the heels of that came Watergate and more lies.

**I am one of the lucky ones.**

I came home to a marriage that had not withstood my absence but I finished college and got a Ph.D.

**I don't miss the opportunity to educate my students every semester about the lies and distortions of our political "leaders" along with the corporate and media hacks who keep them in office.**



Keep up the good work.

**REPLY: Respect to you. Here's what another Vietnam Vet wrote a few weeks ago:**

**"Whenever I think about Iraq and George Bush, which is every 3-5 minutes if you are normal, I think of what Napoleon once wrote: 'Do not interfere with the enemy when he is in the process of destroying himself.'"**

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

## **Parallels Between Chechnya And Iraq.**

From: SG  
To: GI Special  
Sent: Tuesday, December 21, 2004 9:56 AM

I started reading GI Special a few weeks ago. It has now become one of my daily sources for news about the war in Iraq. I heard about GI Special from the re-publication of the blog, Fight to Survive, on [www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org).

The article also listed your site and I quickly checked it out because the article got me interested in soldiers who are against the war. Your newsletter is wonderful and you deserve much praise for producing it daily. **[Not always daily because of full time job, and the good stuff comes from soldiers and veterans and military family members and a lot of other decent people; GI Special just offers a focus.]**

I especially like the fact that you include news from local newspapers because they are the ones that frequently report on the lives of returned veterans or soldiers who have been wounded or killed. Such stories are a remedy to the faceless, and increasingly invisible nature of this war in the American consciousness.

**I am currently in Russia for the next year on conducting research for my PhD and I see many parallels between Chechnya and Iraq.**

**The Chechen War entered its 10th year last week, and one sees its impact of the younger generation on the streets of Moscow. On the metro you sometimes witness maimed veterans, sometimes missing one limb (if they are lucky), other times they are missing both legs begging for money. It is truly a horrific site.**

What is more horrific, however, is the fact that you can see the guilt in many Russians faces as they give the vets change. Yet, the Chechen war continues. My fear is that the Iraq War will last as long due to a similar ambivalence by American citizens. This is why I think things like GI Special and soldier's blogs are a vital part in stopping the war.

I am not a soldier nor have I never been in the military, yet my concern goes out to every soldier and their families. I cannot even imagine what its like to be in that hell hole. I am against this war and have been since Bush began with his lies. I believe that the US will lose this war.

These wars are never won by the aggressor--in fact, every great power has lost a guerrilla war in the last century: Britain in Iraq, France in Algeria, Russia in Afghanistan, and the US and France in Vietnam.

**I have recently been quite convinced that the US will lose, and further, that this will be a good thing. American Empire must fall for the sake of the world. My moral dilemma and fear is that many, many more American soldiers and Iraqi civilians will die because our politicians, like the Russians, will not realize this truth that the war is unwinnable.**

Keep up the good work.  
Solidarity, SG

**[Note: SG maintains a blog from Russia on political events there. Not having his permission to list it, thereby identifying him by name, along with the opinions expressed here, the link is omitted. If he wishes it to appear in a future issue, delighted to do so.]**

#### Web Copies

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

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/> ; [www.qifightback.org](http://www.qifightback.org) ;

<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/qi-special.htm>,

[www.williambowles.info/qispecial](http://www.williambowles.info/qispecial)

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