

GI SPECIAL 2#C58

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME



A US soldier wounded in Mosul is transferred from a C-141 military transport aircraft to an ambulance, at the US airbase of Ramstein. (12.22.04 AFP/DDP/Thomas Lohnes)

Rewarding Incompetence: Cindy Sheehan - Whose Son Died in Iraq - Responds to Time Magazine's Choice for "Man of the Year"

[Thanks to Phil G. for this article.]

December 22, 2004 by Cindy Sheehan, TomPaine.com Cindy Sheehan lives in California

Dear Time Editors:

My son, Spc. Casey Sheehan was killed in Iraq on 04/04/04.

This has been an extraordinary couple of weeks of "slaps in the faces" to us families of fallen heroes.

First, the Secretary of Defense-Donald Rumsfeld-admits to the world something that we as military families already know: The United States was not prepared for nor had any plan for the assault on Iraq.

Our children were sent to fight an ill-conceived and badly prosecuted war.

Our troops were sent with the wrong type of training, bad equipment, inferior protection and thin supply lines.

Our children have been killed and we have made the ultimate sacrifice for this fiasco of a war, then we find out this week that Rumsfeld doesn't even have the courtesy or compassion to sign the "death letters"-as they are so callously called.

Besides the upcoming holidays and the fact we miss our children desperately, what else can go wrong this holiday season?

Well let's see.

Oh yes. George W. Bush awards the Presidential Medal of Freedom to three more architects of the quagmire that is Iraq. Thousands of people are dead and Bremer, Tenet and Franks are given our country's highest civilian award. What's next?

To top everything off-after it has been proven that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction, there were no ties between Saddam and 9/11 and over 1,300 brave young people in this country are dead and Iraq lies in ruins- what does Time Magazine do?

Names George W. Bush as its "Man of the Year."

<p>The person who betrayed this country into a needless war and whom I hold ultimately responsible for my son's death and who was questionably elected, again, to a second term, is honored this way by your magazine.</p>

I hope we finally find peace in our world and that our troops who remain in Iraq are brought home speedily-after all, there was no reason for our troops to be there in the first place.

No reason for my son and over 1,300 others to have been taken from their families. No reason for the infrastructure of Iraq to be demolished and thousands of Iraqis being killed.

No reason for the notion of a "happy" holiday to be robbed from my family forever.

I hope that our "leaders" don't invade any other countries which pose no serious threat to the United States.

I hope there is no draft.

I hope that the five people mentioned here (and many others) will finally be held responsible for the horrible mistake they got our country into. I hope that competence is finally rewarded and incompetence is appropriately punished.

These are my wishes for 2005.

This isn't the first time your magazine has selected a questionable man for this honor-but it's the first time it affected my family so personally and so sorrowfully.

Cindy Sheehan

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Marine Killed In Vehicle Accident

December 22, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 04-12-21C

AI ANBAR PROVINCE, Iraq - One Marine assigned to the I Marine Expeditionary Force died of wounds received in a vehicle accident Tuesday, December 21.

Humvee Destroyed In Al-Latifiya

23 December 2004 Aljazeera.Net

A US Humvee vehicle was destroyed when an explosive device targeting a US military patrol detonated in al-Latifiya.

Mosul Attack Carried Out By Human Bomb; Silly JCS Chief Says Base "Not Unsecure"

23 December 2004 Aljazeera.Net & AP & HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS RELEASE Number: 04-12-22C & Bell Globemedia Inc. & By Maher al-Thanoon, Reuters & By DUSAN STOJANOVIC, Associated Press Writer & Dec. 21 RICHARD A. OPPEL Jr., New York Times

According to a tally by the U.S. military command in Baghdad, the attack killed 22. The dead included 18 Americans - 14 service members and four U.S. civilian contractors - and four Iraqis, the military said.

An additional 69 people were injured in the attack, 51 of them members of the U.S. military.

Seven are U.S. contractors, five are U.S. Defense Department civilians, two are Iraqi civilians, 10 are contractors of other nationalities, and one is of unknown nationality and occupation. Twenty-five of the wounded were treated and returned to duty the same day.

The focal point of the blast appeared to have been where the soldiers collected plastic folks and spoons at a stand a few feet from the long serving line, where a four-inch deep crater, about a foot wide, was blown into the thick concrete floor, said Capt. Pat Roddy.

The tiles on the floor near the serving line "were covered with so much blood you couldn't see what color the tiles were," Captain Roddy, of Fort Lewis, Wash., said in a telephone interview from Mosul. "At least 50 percent of the tables and chairs had been obliterated by shrapnel. Anybody who was sitting in there, with the magnitude of the explosion, it was large enough, it could have killed anybody."

Outside, he said, "there were half-burned boots, not attached to any soldier, and you could see blood trails coming past the concrete barriers." In the sinks outside, where soldiers washed their hands before entering the dining hall, there were "glass, parts of uniforms, watches and gloves" strewn about basins full of an inch or two of blood, he said.

At the military hospital near Mosul airfield, doctors and orderlies treated dozens of soldiers for burns, shrapnel wounds and damage to their eyes.

"This is the worst we have seen in the 11 months since we have been here," said Master Sgt. David Scott, chief ward master for the hospital.

The Tuesday attack on a US Army canteen in Mosul, northern Iraq, that killed 13 American soldiers appears to have been the work of a human bomber, the chairman of US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard Myers, said on Wednesday.

"At this point, it looks like it was an improvised explosive device worn by an attacker," Myers told reporters at the Pentagon.

"We have had a suicide bomber apparently strap something to his body ... and go into a dining hall," he said.

U.S. military investigators found a suicide vest likely used as a backpack and remnants of a torso, ABC News reported.

The Ansar al-Sunnah Army also posted details about the alleged suicide bomber on a website.

The statement said the 24-year-old man was from Mosul and he worked at the base for two months and provided the group with information. It also said the man hid the explosives in his clothes.

Myers said that the military would now investigate security at the base and how an attacker was able to gain access. **[Try working "at the base for two months." That's how he "gained access." Duh.]**

"He made his way on to the base, someone who was a trusted individual," Myers said.

"The base is not unsecure," he said. [That will be a great comfort to the families of the dead and maimed.]

This particular tent has been the target of at least 30 rocket attacks.

But Halliburton, the company responsible for building the replacement mess hall, is behind schedule.

In Mosul "Students went to school but were told to go home. People went to the shops, saw American troops in the streets, and went home," said Ahmad, 25, a car dealer who declined to give his surname.

"The place is shut down," said another resident, adding that mosques and markets were also virtually empty. [No flower throwing today.]

MORE:

Even Bigger Idiot General In Mosul

12.22.04 NBC12 News

“The general called it a cowardly attack because they weren't present. It hit soldiers when they were sitting down to lunch and least expecting it.” --- Times-Dispatch reporter Jeremy Redmon [War isn't a video game. The whole point is to attack the enemy when they are “least expecting it.” Evidently, this general thinks one is supposed to attack when the enemy is most expecting it. What a fool and an active menace to those under his command. Well, that's why they made him a general.]

MORE:

More Silly Whining

December 22, 2004 By Jeremy Redmon, Richmond Times-Dispatch

Lt. Col. Ed Morgan immediately caught a flight to Mosul and rushed to the hospital, where he visited Wright. **Morgan said the attack showed cowardice. “There is no face on this enemy that killed my troops,” he said. “Who was there to fight? *It is not honorable.*”**

[Right. And dropping a 500 pound bomb from an aircraft on Falluja *is* “honorable?” Why doesn't the silly man go tell that to the Air Force pilots? Let him instruct them that they should carry their bombs on their backs and throw them, face to face, up close and personal, in an “honorable” way? Where do they get these dickheads? At reruns of John Wayne movies? War is about killing the opposing troops with the smallest losses and the greatest effect possible; in this case, one resistance fighter willing to die for his cause got over twenty U.S. troops.

[These U.S. “officers” were born 225 years too late. They would have found a true home for their incompetence and stupidity commanding British troops in 1776. They could have really pissed and moaned about the cowardly American revolutionaries shooting them while hiding concealed behind trees and stone walls instead of standing like dummies out in the open to be slaughtered like “real men.” Officers like this are more dangerous to their own troops than the resistance, and absolutely sure to kill them in great numbers, given their complete inability to get a grip on reality. The abysmal quality of U.S. commanders is one of the greatest assets the Iraqi resistance has. T]

MORE:

Time To Come Home

December 22, 2004 Gene Johnson, AP

Gary Ficken, 50, a truck driver who stopped by a bar near the Madigan Gate at Fort Lewis on Tuesday, added: “It doesn't matter which units they were with. They're all American soldiers. **You just want them to get the job done and get out of there.**” **[The only “job” left *is* “getting out of there.”**

MORE:

War Profiteer Employees Hit; 4 Dead, 16 Wounded

12.22.04 By Matt Kelley, Associated Press

Halliburton Co. lost four employees in the attack on a mess tent at a military base in Iraq, the Houston-based contractor said Wednesday.

Sixteen other Halliburton workers, including 12 subcontractors, were injured seriously in the attack during lunchtime Tuesday at the base in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, company officials said.

"It is extremely difficult to prevent these appalling and horrific attacks," said Wendy Hall, spokeswoman for Halliburton Co., the Army contractor that provides food services in Iraq. **[Wrong. Just get the fuck out and go back where you came from. That solves the whole issue immediately.]**

MORE:

Area Soldier Killed In Mosul; "I Think This War Is A Waste," Vietnam Vet Says

December 22 WorldNow and WNEP

A flag flew at half staff at a home near Hazleton Wednesday, honoring a fallen soldier. Inside, the family of Master Sergeant Paul Karpowich grieved. They were told Tuesday night that the 30 year old Army Reserve officer died in a suicide bombing in Iraq. That happened after a bomber attacked a tent full of soldiers who were eating.

Master Sergeant Karpowich grew up in the Freeland area. "He was very proud to be in the military. He served his four years and then wanted to go into the Reserves. He was just called over a couple of weeks ago and it's sad that something like this could happen," said Freeland Mayor Tim Martin.

Karpowich graduated from Bishop Haffey High School and got his degree at Luzerne County Community College. **He married his high school sweetheart, Amanda, one year ago. He loved his family. He spent time hunting and recently bought land near Hazleton. His plan was to settle down and possibly raise a family.**

He was ordered to Iraq the day before Thanksgiving.

"It's a shame. It's not an easy thing to go through," said Thomas Herman of Sandy Valley. He spent two years in Iraq working for the military. Both he and Joseph Karlick, a Vietnam veteran from Freeland, know Karpowich's father.

"We sustained rocket and mortar attacks every day at our base too and you just hope that they don't hit where you're at," said Herman.

"I think this war is a waste. It's a waste of young people," added Karlick.

Karpowich comes from a military family. His brother serves overseas and his step-father served in Afghanistan. **In fact, he said Wednesday afternoon he will now be deployed to Iraq after the first of the year.**

MORE:

Local Man Injured In Mosul Blast

Dec 22 Associated Press

Sergeant Kyle Wright of Richlands will probably never forget this wedding anniversary. He spent it in a hospital, recovering from wounds suffered in a rocket attack on a military mess hall near Mosul, Iraq.

Wright was about to take a bite of chocolate cake when the blast knocked him out of his chair yesterday. Two other Virginia National Guardsmen picked him up and rushed him out of the chow-hall tent.

MORE:

42 U.S. Soldiers, Civilians Wounded In Mosul Attack Flown To Landstuhl



A wounded US soldier is transferred from a C-141 military transport aircraft to an ambulance, at the US airbase of Ramstein. (12.22.04 AFP/DDP/Thomas Lohnes)

December 22, 2004 By MICHAEL PROBST, Associated Press Writer

A group of 42 U.S. soldiers and civilians wounded in a deadly insurgent attack on a base in northern Iraq were flown here for treatment Wednesday at a U.S. military hospital in Germany, many of them brought out in stretchers as a light snow fell.

Eight patients were in intensive care, hospital spokeswoman Marie Shaw said. She had no details on their condition, but said the injured generally have ``chest wounds and shrapnel wounds and broken bones."

MORE:

Two Maine Soldiers Killed In Mosul Attack

Dec 22, 2004 By Beth Staples, Waldo

Gov. John Baldacci confirmed Wednesday morning that two Maine soldiers with the 133rd Engineer Battalion of the Maine National Guard died Tuesday during an attack on a mess hall at Base Marez.

Sgt. Lynn Robert Poulin Sr., 47, of Company A, 133rd Engineer Battalion (Belfast and Skowhegan Armories) served as a metal worker. He lived in Freedom and was married with two grown children.

Specialist Thomas John Dostie of HSC, 133rd Engineer Battalion (Gardiner and Portland Armories) served as a mechanic. He was 20 years old. His parents live in Somerville.

In addition, 10 other members serving with the Maine Army National Guard's 133rd Engineer Battalion were injured in the attack.

One member was a New York guardsmen serving with the 133rd. Seven of the injured were treated and returned to duty. Staff Sgt. Harold Freeman Jr. and Sgt. Christopher Rushlau were transported to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany, for additional treatment. Their medical conditions are unknown but are not believed to be life-threatening. Rushlau is the brother of Knox, Waldo and Lincoln County District Attorney Geoffrey Rushlau.

Flags will be flown at half-staff to commemorate the loss of Poulin and Dostie on the days of their funerals.

Updates on this story will continue to be posted on VillageSoup.

TROOP NEWS

Wounded Must Beg For Charity

[Read between the lines. Billions for Halliburton Corporation and other Bush buddies, and wounded troops have to beg for charity so their families can visit them. That really says it all. A corporate war for Empire the corporations don't want to pay for. The enemy is in Washington DC running the government, not in Iraq. The war is bullshit and a cash register for those on top.]

12-22-2004 27 News

On September 12, National Guard Lieutenant Chris Justice of Mount Horeb was part of a convoy carrying laboratory specimens to a hospital in Baghdad. A suicide bomber detonated an explosive near the convoy. "Blood was running off my arm and it was a horrible haze, everything was like in slow motion," said Justice. Justice survived, but required extensive skin grafts to one of his arms and continues to receive treatment for his injuries.

At the family's expense, Justice's wife and two young children made an extended stay to Washington, D.C. to be at his bedside at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

"When you plan to go on vacation, you save for that vacation. **However, there was no saving for this incident. But there was never a question that my family would come to Walter Reed. I figured I have the rest of my life to make up this financial burden. How I was going to do it, I had no idea.**"

Justice applied for help with the non profit group, Unmet Needs, which is administered through the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Wisconsin soldier was approved for \$2500 of help.

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)

Demands For Clemency For Imprisoned Troops Growing;

Does Bush Give A Shit?

December 22, 2004 Associated Press

A Democratic senator from Illinois asked President Bush on Tuesday to grant clemency to six Ohio reservists court-martialed and charged with felonies for taking vehicles abandoned in Kuwait by other units so they could carry out their own mission in Iraq.

“You can acknowledge that what may have been a technical violation or poor judgment should not be treated as a felony deserving of prison time,” Sen. Dick Durbin wrote the president. He asked Bush to excuse the reservists in the spirit of Christmas.

Clemency could restore the military benefits and change the dishonorable discharges for Darrell Birt, of Columbus, Maj. Cathy Kaus and four other Ohio-based reservists charged in the case.

Kaus, 46, who is completing her prison sentence in San Diego, grew up in Casco, Wis., where her relatives have been contacting their members of Congress to help win clemency for her. Rep. Mark Green, R-Wis., said Friday he would work with Ohio congressmen on the effort.

The members of the 656th Transportation Company based in Springfield, west of Columbus, said they needed the equipment to deliver fuel that was needed by U.S. forces in Iraq for everything from helicopters to tanks.

Sen. Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, sent two letters last week to Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, commander of the multinational force in Iraq, asking that the Army grant clemency to Birt, Kaus and Staff Sgt. Michael Summers.

He also asked that Kaus be released from prison early. She is set to be released Dec. 25.

In his second letter, DeWine said an Army lawyer told his staff that it was too late to seek clemency for the other three soldiers. DeWine asked that in those cases, the Army “consider appropriate measures to mitigate the long-term impact of their sentencing.”

In Wisconsin, Kaus’ sister, Cindy Tadisch, told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel this week that the only thing Kaus wants is her honorable discharge, retirement and rank.

“It’s not like she stole anything to benefit herself,” Tadisch said, as quoted in Tuesday’s edition of the newspaper.

600 More Reservists Called Up For War

December 22, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1313-04

This week, the Army and Air Force announced an increase in the number of reservists on active duty in support of the partial mobilization, while the Marines and Navy had a decrease and the Coast Guard number remained the same. **The net collective result is 634 more reservists mobilized than last week.**

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



Iraqi students display the Iraqi national flag and shout anti-US slogans during a demonstration in the northern city of Mosul. The 300 or so students also called for an end to military raids on mosques in the city. (12.22.04 AFP/Mujahed Mohammed)

1000 Dead Occupation Cops, So Far

December 22, 2004 The Sydney Morning Herald

One thousand policemen have been killed in Iraq since the US-led coalition re-established the war-torn country's security forces, interim Interior Minister Falah al-Naqib was quoted as saying yesterday.

"We have so far lost 1000 police in clashes with rebels," the minister told Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper.

Attack In Al-Latifiya Kills Occupation Guards

December 23, 2004 Times Of Oman

BAGHDAD — Nine people were killed and 13 wounded yesterday when a bomber rammed a car into an Iraqi forces checkpoint south of Baghdad, a National Guard officer said by telephone from the scene.

The Guardsman said the attacker drove his vehicle at high speed into the checkpoint, on the northeastern entrance to the town of Latifiya. Traffic was heavy at the time.

The blast destroyed around five civilian cars. **National Guards and police manning the checkpoint, near the main road linking Baghdad to the south, as well as civilians were among the dead, he said.**

Union Official Regrets It Wasn't 2000 Dead U.S. Occupation Troops

[Thanks to Phil G. who sent this in.]

12.22.04 By DUSAN STOJANOVIC, Associated Press Writer

There was little apparent sympathy for the dead Americans on the streets of Mosul, particularly among its large population of Sunni Arabs. The city also is home to a Kurdish minority whose two main political parties are U.S. allies.

"When occupiers come to any country (they) find resistance. And this is within Iraqi resistance," Sattar Jabbar said of the attack.

"I prefer that American troops leave the country and go out of cities so that Iraq will be safer and we run its affairs," Jamal Mahmoud, a trade union official. "I wish that 2,000 U.S. soldiers were killed, not 20."

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, after years of costly, frustrating and considerably less than successful war, Britain's armed forces were swept by disaffection culminating in the widespread mutinies in most of the ships and fleets that constituted England's "wooden walls" against France.

Writing to a friend in 1779, Britain's First Lord of the Admiralty said, "The Channel Fleet is now lost to the country as much as if it was at the bottom of the sea."

From: Col Robert D Heinl Jr's article about Vietnam in Armed Forces Journal, June 1971, entitled **The Collapse of the Armed Forces.** [Sent in by CZ]

"There are so many ways nowadays for a soldier that is smart and bad to get back at you." ~a West Point lieutenant colonel commanding an airborne battalion, circa 1971 [Sent in by CZ]

Mosul: Bad Moon Rising

22 December 2004 By Thomas E. Ricks, The Washington Post & Yochi J. Dreazen & Greg Jaffe, Wall St. Journal

In April 2003, as the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq was ending, the Pentagon projected in a formal planning effort that the U.S. military occupation of the country would end this month.

Instead, December 2004 brought one of the deadliest single incidents of the war for U.S. forces when a U.S. base near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul was blasted at lunchtime.

The major difference between the latest attack and the earlier incidents is that it was an attack on a U.S. base, rather than on troops in transit in vulnerable aircraft. That difference appears to reflect both the persistence of the insurgency and its growing sophistication, as experts noted that it seemed to be based on precise intelligence.

Yesterday's strike also highlights the downside of a months-old American strategy for reducing hostility by closing small bases and concentrating troops in larger compounds on the outskirts of major Iraqi cities.

While the large bases are more easily fortified and allow the U.S. to lower the visibility of its forces, they present enticing targets for insurgents hoping for a high-profile, mass-casualty attack.

"If you're going to have 150,000 troops in Iraq, they should be out patrolling and being aggressive," said Lawrence Korb, a former Pentagon official who is a senior fellow at a Democratic-leaning think tank, the Center for American Progress. **"If they're just sitting on huge bases, all they are is bigger targets."**

If anti-American violence does hit a new level, pressure is likely to increase on the Bush administration to either boost the U.S. military presence in Iraq **or find a fast way to get out.**

A private-sector security expert who recently left Baghdad after more than a year there agreed, noting that the United States originally put an entire division in the Mosul area, the 101st Airborne, but replaced it earlier this year with a force about half that size, only to see insurgent attacks increase.

"We have replaced a division with a brigade and think we can offer the same amount of security," he said, insisting on anonymity because his opinions are so at odds with the official U.S. government view.

Another principle, less noted but painfully clear yesterday, is that insurgents also tend to sharpen their tactics as time goes by. Over the past 20 months, enemy fighters have learned a lot about how the U.S. military operates and where its vulnerabilities lie.

"The longer you are anywhere, the more difficult it becomes," said Army Col. Michael E. Hess, who served in northern Iraq in 1991 and in Bosnia in 1996. **"They have changed their tactics a lot in the year-plus."**

A byproduct of such a strike is that it tends to drive a wedge between U.S. personnel and the Iraqis who work on the base. "I think that this tells us first that our base facilities are totally infiltrated by insiders who are passing the word on when and where we are most vulnerable to attack," said retired Marine Col. Edward Badolato, a security expert.

But others were throwing up their hands.

"This sure isn't playing out like I thought it would," said retired Marine Lt. Col. Jay Stout, author of a book about the 1991 Persian Gulf War against Iraq, in which he fought. He said he is no longer confident about what the U.S. strategy in Iraq should be.

"We have few choices: We can maintain the status quo while trying to build an Iraqi government that will survive, we can get the hell out now and leave them to kill themselves, or we can adopt a more brutal and repressive stance."

His choice? "I don't know the right answer - I gave up guessing a few months ago."

[Comment on this story from kelebdooni, 12.22.04:

"We have few choices:

1. We can maintain the status quo while trying to build an Iraqi government that will survive..." Some people never read history!

2. we can get the hell out now and leave them to kill themselves" O how cruel of you stout Col. sir!

3. we can adopt a more brutal and repressive stance." More brutal & repressive?
So you have been brutal & repressive? Shame on you stout liberator!

His choice? "I don't know the right answer - I gave up guessing a few months ago." Perhaps the best he's done!]

Denying Defeat: How Politicians Slaughter Troops When Everybody Knows A War Is Lost

22 Dec 04 David Day, The Australian

The historical record reveals that governments tend to keep their armies fighting long after defeat has become almost certain.

To avoid the political cost of surrender, they enter a state of denial about defeat.

Rather than cutting their losses at an early stage and thereby limiting the bloodshed, political and military leaders tend to keep the troops fighting and the civilians dying until defeat is incontrovertible.

Thus, within three weeks of the landing at Gallipoli in 1915, it was clear to British military and political figures that Winston Churchill's mad plan for capturing the Dardanelles was doomed to failure. Yet no one was prepared to pay the political cost that would be incurred by calling a stop to a campaign that had already taken the lives of 15,000 Allied troops. **It would take seven more months of senseless fighting, tens of thousands more deaths and the exposure of the debacle in the press before the British admitted defeat.**

Similarly, on the Western Front of World War I, millions of troops were sent to their deaths in useless offensives when both sides knew their forces would be unable to break through the formidable defences of trenches and barbed wire to score a decisive victory. It was only when the German home front collapsed, partly under the impact of the economic embargo, that the generals and politicians conceded the uselessness of it all and agreed to an armistice.

Despite nearly 50,000 dead, the Americans were loath to acknowledge Vietnam as a defeat. Some blamed the US, under pressure from the peace movement, for supposedly restricting its forces from unleashing their full fury against the Vietnamese and thereby denying them victory.

Not that much was held back, with everything from defoliation to napalm used against the Vietnamese at the cost of more than 1million lives.

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

‘It’s Like Watching Your Son Playing In Traffic’

Dec. 21 By KIRK JOHNSON, The New York Times

"It's just like Vietnam: the longer we stay there, the more anti-American sentiment will be drummed up, the more organized the insurgency becomes," said Mike Hoffman of Iraq Veterans Against the War (www.ivaw.net) and a former Marine lance corporal who was in Iraq from March to early May 2003. "Unfortunately, the longer we stick around, the more we're likely to see attacks like this."

One soldier who has been to Iraq and is soon to go back said he believes the war itself has changed, and that guerrilla attacks like the one in the northern Iraq city of Mosul on Tuesday have constricted the view on the ground about how to proceed.

"When we went to war there was a clear-cut enemy," said Specialist Richard P. Basilio, 27, of Philadelphia, who leaves for Iraq after the holidays for a 12- to 18-month deployment as an Army computer technician. **It will be his third tour to the Middle East and his second to Iraq .**

"Now the rules have totally changed. You don't know what's going on," he added. "You just have no idea who's your friend and who's your enemy."

Mr. Basilio's mother, Janet Bellows of Daytona Beach, Fla., said the bombing in Mosul, combined with the prospect of her son's departure, have left her "absolutely devastated."

"It's like watching your son playing in traffic, and there's nothing you can do," Ms. Bellows said. "You can't reach him."

OCCUPATION REPORT

War Profiteer Getting Out Of Iraq; Quarter Billion \$ Contract Abandoned

2004/12/22 Iran Broadcasting News Network & AFP

Washington, Dec 22 - **Contrack International Inc. has become the first major US contractor to pull out of the reconstruction effort in Iraq, the Los Angeles Times said Wednesday, adding that high security costs were to blame.**

"We reached a point where our costs were getting to be prohibitive," company president Karim Camel-Toueg told the paper.

Contrack, based in Arlington, Virginia, had won a 325-million-dollar award to rebuild Iraq's shattered transport system.

US officials said Contrack's decision to terminate work in Iraq was reached with the US government in November, but had not been publicly disclosed.

Contrack, the leader of a partnership that won one of 12 major reconstruction contracts awarded in 2004, was the largest company to pull out of Iraq to date, the officials told the Times.

"It's a very bad sign," said Michael O'Hanlon, a scholar at the Brookings Institution thinktank in Washington. "If this is how other private companies are thinking, it's a very bad potential warning."

In the eight months Contrack was under contract in Iraq it was paid about 30 million dollars, mostly for site assessments and design work, company and US officials told the daily.

The Contrack partnership intended to build new roads, bridges and transportation terminals in Iraq, but only managed to refurbish a handful of train depots, company officials said.

OCCUPATION SOLOMON ISLANDS

Australian Officer Shot

[THANKS TO MAX WATTS WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: HE WRITES: THIS WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER, I'D EXPECTED IT IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA...CHICKENS DO COME HOME TO ROOST, BUT AS THEY ARE STUPID BIRDS THEY OFTEN MIX UP THE HOMES.]

[The Australian government has been doing some occupying of its' own, not just sending troops to kill Iraqis, but grabbing some nearby Pacific real estate that doesn't belong to them. As usual, invasion and occupation is lied about as "peacekeeping" blah blah blah.]

December 22, 2004 The Sydney Morning Herald

Australia will send a rapid response unit to the Solomon Islands after a sniper shot dead a young Australian in what authorities fear was a targeted attack.

Australian Protective Service (APS) officer Adam Dunning, 26, died when he was shot in the back during the early morning attack in what had been considered a secure area of the capital, Honiara.

Late this afternoon, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and Defence Minister Robert Hill said the government would immediately redeploy an Australian Defence Force rapid response unit from Townsville.

"This is to send a clear message to the thugs ... that we will not tolerate the murder of our police officers," Senator Hill said. **[Looks like the thugs that run the Australian government got sent the message.]**

A 100-strong infantry company from the 2nd Royal Australian Regiment will begin leaving Australia tomorrow. [Brilliant. Now soldiers can get killed too.]

Mr Dunning, of Canberra, died when two of six bullets fired from a military-style rifle hit him as he and a fellow officer were on routine patrol in their unarmoured Toyota Land Cruiser. He died at the scene.

Australian Federal Police commissioner Mick Keelty said the attack appeared to be the work of a sniper with the deliberate intention of targeting police. [Wow. Did he figure that out all by himself?]

An estimated six shots were fired from a military-style weapon, with four entering the rear of the vehicle and two hitting Mr Dunning.

"The officer's routine patrol was a night shift patrol of secure areas." **[Very secure indeed.]**

The AFP currently has about 150 personnel in the Solomons, 95 of them police officers and the rest members of the Australian Protective Services (APS), [translation: occupation cops] which is now part of the AFP.

They are part of the Australian-led **Regional Assistance Mission** to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) which arrived in the country in July last year. **[Translation: occupation force.]**

"We believe that the weapon that was used is a 7.62mm cartridge," Mr Keelty said.

"That would indicate that the weapon has been fired from a high-powered weapon which is a SLR rifle or an AK47 rifle but it's early stages in the investigation."

Mr Keelty said the vast majority of Solomons' people welcomed RAMSI's presence, intended to rescue the country from becoming a failed state after murderous civil strife. [Just like the Iraqis welcome the U.S. occupation

“presence.” Imperial politicians need some new writers, all the lame bullshit starts sounding the same.]

But there was clearly a minority which was seeking revenge for the work of RAMSI, which has made more than 4000 arrests and seized more than 3700 weapons. [Probably some Saddam Hussein remnants and die hard Baath Party members.]

"The message for the SI people who have carried out this murder is that we will not be put off by the murder of our officer," he said.

"The murder of our officer has not been in vain. The work of the police, not only for the AFP but for the other participating police forces of the Pacific region, has to continue.

"It has to continue for the future of the people of the SI."

He said the killing was something that could happen to police anywhere in the world. **[That is certainly to be devoutly hoped for, anywhere cops occupy somebody else's country.]**

Prime Minister John Howard today expressed his sorrow at Adam Dunning's death but said the country's mission there would continue undeterred. "It is a reminder that although the intervention has been remarkably successful, it is still dangerous." **[Grabbing somebody else's nation usually is.]**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Whine Whine Whine; Bullshit About Why Kerry Lost Still Neck Deep

[Like sewage from a broken pipe, the chattering class has been moaning for over a month now about how Bush won because of “religion,” “values,” and, from the most contemptible of them, the “ignorance” of the population. They just can't see that people understand perfectly that the Democratic Party is just as much a wholly owned subsidiary of the rich and powerful who own the USA as the Republican Party, even more committed to Imperial war, and even more disconnected from working class people than the Republicans.

[They would do us a great favor if they did move to Canada, since their pathetic moans only demoralize people, obscuring reality. Their tedious lies and disgusting ass-kissing of the Democratic Party is one of the more serious problems we face in building movements to take back our society.

[This article by Thomas Frank, National Interest columnist for New York Magazine, presents the cold reality of politics and power. He wrote it before the election, while all kinds of “intellectuals” were out stooging for Kerry. And he got it right.]

The Powerless Elite

By Thomas Frank, New York Magazine, October 11, 2004

One of the reasons Democrats are never able to mount a convincing comeback is because, at the bottom of their hearts, many of the party's biggest thinkers agree with the “liberal elite” stereotype. They can't simply point to their working-class base and their service to working-class America, because they aren't interested in that base; they haven't tried to serve that constituency for decades.

BY ALL objective standards, this ought to be a Democratic year. The recovery isn't recovering. The national adventure in Iraq has not only gone sour, it is now clear to everyone that it was launched on a contrived and specious premise. Meanwhile, the president's economic policies perfectly express the mean-spirited self-interest behind the conservative revolution that he leads, while he seems oblivious to the disaster. Besides, he didn't win the popular vote last time around. John Kerry ought to be mopping the floor with him.

And yet it is George W. Bush who is drawing the adoring throngs in the dying steel towns and the hard-bitten coal-mining regions. It is his team that is always there with a comically vicious TV commercial or a well-targeted counterpunch.

This election is beginning to seem like a terrible mismatch: the New England Patriots versus the squad from Ball State.

The reason, as ever, is the intensity and internal coherence of Republican populism.

Beneath all the so-called issues, beneath the overpowering force of Republican organization, lies a simple idea: John Kerry is an “elitist:” as are all liberals, while George Bush expresses in his person and bearing the essential down-home nobility of Republicans. Liberalism is snobbery; it is weakness; it is rule by intellectuals and experts; it is the opposite of patriotism.

That Republicans were going to elitist-bait Kerry was obvious from the get-go, since they've elitist-baited every other Democrat to come down the pike for nearly 30 years now. The strategy is no secret, it is impossible to miss if you read even a single popular conservative book, and it would have been applied to whomever the Democrats chose this year.

The mystery is why Democrats have proved so vulnerable to the charge, and why they can't fend it off even when it's hurled at them in a hypocritical or self-refuting fashion.

One of the reasons Democrats are never able to mount a convincing comeback is because, at the bottom of their hearts, many of the party's biggest thinkers agree with the "liberal elite" stereotype. They can't simply point to their working-class base and their service to working-class America, because they aren't interested in that base; they haven't tried to serve that constituency for decades.

For them, the real divide between the parties is—or ought to be, anyway—an industrial one:

Republicans represent one sort of business and Democrats another; Republicans are Old Economy while Dems are New; Republicans represent square, repressive capitalism while Dems speak for the hip, creative, tolerant new breed.

In this new political arrangement, the working class is to have no role at all, except maybe as loyal and grateful employees of one or the other sort of enterprise.

The constituency that such thinkers hanker after is "professionals," upper-middle-class but sensitive voters who might support a Democratic Party that takes a liberal stand on cultural issues but who are also believers in free trade and the neo-laissez-faire economy.

In such thinkers' minds it is only natural that, say, steelworkers or coal miners would decide to vote Republican: Such people toil in old-school industries, survivals from the Republicans' beloved nineteenth century, and it is fruitless for cool people like us to try to speak to them or understand their concerns.

The transition rightward in the Democratic Party was gradual, commencing under Jimmy Carter and gathering force all through the eighties. Democrats were simply no longer content, in this era of costly TV campaigns, to be the party of the outsiders and the have-nots. They wanted to play with the big boys, and ditch their thirties-era reputation as the "anti-business party."

By the end of the Clinton years, the leaders of both parties had essentially reached a point of consensus on the big economic issues: NAFTA, the WTO, welfare, deregulation, antitrust, even partial Social Security privatization. And although Democratic thinkers in 2004 would like to take credit for the New Economy boom of the nineties, they must ultimately share the limelight for that dubious achievement with hard-core conservatives like Ronald Reagan, George Gilder, and Newt Gingrich.

Achieving economic unanimity with the GOP may have enhanced the Dems' respectability among the professional class, but it also means that dissent, at least as we used to know it, has become a disrespectable and in some ways a forbidden pursuit; the anger and the sense of victimization that are out there on the edge of every town get channeled instead into the cultural realm, where the Republicans' enormous alienation-harvesting apparatus awaits.

The GOP likes to refer to John Kerry as one of the most liberal Democrats of them all, but in fact he is yet another representative of the "safe" wing of the Democratic Party, a budget-balancer and free-trader (if you go to the "trade" section of his Website, you will

find an essay feigning outrage at Bush for . . . *not filing enough grievances with the WTO*) whose triangulating instincts led him to vote Bush the authority to prosecute the Iraq War and thus cripple any effort to use what ought to be, after all, the strongest Democratic issue of the campaign.

It is true that Kerry enjoys an easy rapport with the much-coveted professional class, but he just can't seem to turn it on with the party's traditional working-class base. (Which may also explain the campaign's boneheaded inclination to keep populist powerhouse John Edwards in the shadows.)

Kerry's politics may jazz the centrist D.C. pundit set, but they will serve the candidate poorly as the campaign heads into its final month and the emphasis shifts to getting out the vote. Like all the triangulators before him, Kerry will have little to offer his base on November 2, few incentives to mobilize them apart from the candidate's simply not being George W Bush.

Nevertheless for some of the party's big thinkers, 2004 is turning out to be the year that all their fence-mending paid off.

Consider, for example, the flurry of stories that appeared a few months ago in which Democratic brass enthused over the venture capitalists and Silicon Valley industrialists whose donations were promising to erase the Republicans' longtime advantage in political fund-raising. Their enthusiasm was so contagious, evidently, that certain journalists were moved to borrow from management theory to describe the shift. Writing in *The New York Times Magazine*, Matt Bai told readers that the heroic millionaires coming to the Dems' rescue "have come to view progressive politics as a market in need of entrepreneurship, served poorly by a giant monopoly--the Democratic Party--that is still doing business in an old, Rust Belt kind of way."

All that was needed was a little free-market magic, a little reengineering, a little outsourcing, a little de-unionization maybe (at one point Bai refers to labor leaders as "union bosses" whose time has come and gone), and this lumbering dinosaur could be transformed into an agile competitor.

Not that Democrats should be turning away the votes or the money of anyone in these parlous times. **They should be aware, however, that adopting the language of consultants, buyout artists, and billionaires isn't an unalloyed good; that it just might complicate their claim to be the "party of the people;" not to mention infuriate certain members of their electoral base.**

A particularly egregious case in point is the item I noticed in a San Francisco city magazine about the efforts of the local beautiful people to raise money for Kerry, including a campaign to persuade the fashion-conscious to give up on expensive new shoes until the election is won. The story concludes with the musings of the wife of a prominent "VC" who has donated millions to the effort: "I tell my girls I'm investing their inheritance:' Words to get out the vote with, surely.

Were Republicans to settle on a single figure who embodies and even celebrates the "liberal elite" stereotype, they would do well to choose Richard Florida, the sociologist

whose musings on urban revitalization are much revered by the Democratic Establishment.

In particular, Florida is concerned with what he calls the “creative class,” an economic cohort whose hunger for art institutions, specially targeted tax cuts, and edgy urban bohemia must be fed, on peril of terminal decline, by cities across the land. These “creatives” are liberal in the sense that they like rock music and ethnic restaurants while shunning homophobia; they are an elite in that Florida says the rest of us must either service the cool people or die.

So when Florida advises Republicans to “stop sneering at the elites:” as he did in a Washington Monthly story back in January; he does so not because it is hypocritical or delusional of Republicans to pretend to oppose elites, but for precisely the opposite reason: GOP anti-elitism genuinely scares elites away.

Florida reminds us of the blockbuster movies that have been filmed overseas since Bush took office and the high-powered academics who have moved to countries where stem-cell research is less heavily regulated, he protests the shabby treatment meted out to scientists visiting the U.S. and decries the visa troubles experienced by “the Bogota-based electronica collective Sidestepper,” and he generally laments the “disastrous economic consequences” of Bush’s “Know-Nothing views.”

The global creative class is “highly mobile and very finicky;” and by loudly proclaiming their Middle American populism, the GOP has committed precisely the transgression that Republicans have accused liberals of for years: By failing to cater to these tasteful transnationals’ every whim, they have damaged our country’s ability to compete.

That’s right: The problem with Republicans is that, in being so square, they aren’t pro-business enough.

A nice trick if you can pull it off—and if you feel comfortable with the idea of bosses’ being better and cooler and even more rebellious people than their employees.

For most Americans, though, I suspect that this is a fundamentally loathsome perspective, and my guess is that the tighter the Democratic Party hews to it, the more its troubles will grow.

For me, the most disheartening aspect is watching this collection of bad ideas, crushingly discredited years ago in the economic sphere, be embraced so cock-surely by a party that ought to know better. And that would have every shot at winning if it would only follow its instincts.

[At the end, Frank fails too. The Democratic Party *is* following it’s instincts perfectly, serving the rich and powerful, fucking over the working class, and fully committed to killing more U.S. soldiers wars for the Empire first and foremost Iraq. That’s why the only major changes for the better in American politics in the last 100 years have come when people build movements from below and get nasty in the streets. That’s the only thing the elites fear, and the only thing that moves them at all. T]

MORE:

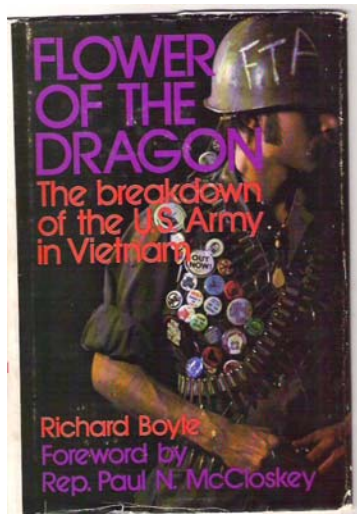
The Vietnam Soldiers Knew What The Anybody-But-Bush Zoo Couldn't Get A Grip On

“Right on,” Beagle added. “The people of this country have been fucked over, cheated, and lied to by all of them. Johnson’s the same as Nixon, and Nixon’s the same as Muskie or Humphrey: they all want to screw you.”

It was the troops who pulled off the French Revolution and it was rebelling soldiers and sailors who stormed the Winter Palace in Russia in 1917. If there are too many more Kent States, or Jackson States, or Atticas, and the people revolt, I think the grunts are going to be with the people, not with Nixon and the lifers. And I think the Pentagon knows it.

I hope that someday, before it is too late, the American people learn the truth. That you men of Bravo Company are a cross-section of this nation.

From:



Each night our rap sessions at the beer hail grew, until some nights there were about twenty vets, with their girlfriends, bitching about the way everything was going. We all felt powerless. Our country was getting deeper into trouble, but what could anybody do?

“They’re all the fucking same,” said Jim. “Can you tell the difference between Muskie and Nixon’?”

“Right on, man,” Cheyenne added. “There’s no difference between the two parties.”

One night Beagle came in with a piece of paper. He was excited. "Hey, hear this."

He read the Declaration of Independence. "Man, it says it right here. If the government fucks you over, it's not only your right but your fucking duty, man, your *duty* to bring it down. Those guys like Jefferson knew what they were doing."

A lot of the guys had never read the Declaration of Independence, or at least hadn't paid much attention to it.

"It says it right here," Beagle went on. "If Jefferson and Paine and those dudes were here tonight, do you think they'd be with Nixon or with us'?"

"Shit, man," said Cheyenne, "Nixon's the same as King George."

"Right on," Beagle added. "The people of this country have been fucked over, cheated, and lied to by all of them. Johnson's the same as Nixon, and Nixon's the same as Muskie or Humphrey: they all want to screw you."

"That's what this whole war was," Jim said, "a big ripoff. Fifty-five thousand guys died to make some people rich."

"Everybody's always trying to sell somebody out," said Cheyenne. "Labor leaders sell out their membership, politicians sell out the voters, and even our own guys sell us out."

"That's why this war is still going," Jim said. "There's something in it for everybody."

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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.

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