

GI SPECIAL 2#C59

**THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.**



THEMEMORYHOLE.ORG

An Open Letter To Our Leaders From A Concerned Iraq War Soldier

The war is wrong.

Our soldiers are not receiving the support they and their families need.

There is incredible waste in the military process, beginning with lives, and ending with honor.

Until America leaves Iraq to the Iraqis, and brings its soldiers home, freedom cannot begin to materialize for the Iraqi people.

Soldiers are dying, civilians are dying, and America is the perpetrator.

The only support that we should be giving our soldiers now, is in bringing them all home, where they can defend what is their duty to defend... their families, their country, and their honor.

When the American people are shown the truth of the sacrifice our soldiers make, when they are told the truth of the manner in which our government fails to support those soldiers, and their families, when they see the destruction that this war has actually caused, in vivid Technicolor reality, then, perhaps the war will be called to a close, our soldiers brought home where they belong, and Americans will come together in strength against this ever happening again.

December 22, 2004 Published by Dissident Voice

**From: Sgt. Kevin and Monica Benderman
3rd Infantry Division -- Ft. Stewart, GA**

I am writing to you because you have been elected to serve the people. I am one of those people, my family is one family in America.

We are just a family, we care about each other, we work hard and we believe in good things. We have a modest income, not much, but enough to give us what we need. Like most American families, we struggle with the way things are these days.

We try to justify that our votes have mattered, our voices are heard, our opinions count, all the while watching decisions being made, unable to recognize the "voice of the people" in the final outcome.

I have worked for years serving those whom I felt called to serve, our elderly. I have fought hard for them, to ensure that they receive the respect they deserve, not only from family, but from community as well. But now, I have left my fight for the elderly, to do what I can to help in a more significant effort.

My husband works with an equal amount of passion. Everything that he has been asked to do by his employer, he has done.

Everywhere he has had to go, he has gone with the trust that the words of his employer are honest, and committed to his needs and the needs of his fellow workers. Lies. My husband has had faith in an employer who cares more about the American lifestyle than its people .

My husband is an American Soldier.

My husband deserves so much more than what he has been given in return by his country. I deserve more, my children do.

The families of all the soldiers who have VOLUNTEERED to serve and now are asked to fight in a war that is not about defending this country deserve more.

This country has disrespected them at every turn. This country has and is failing them. It is failing all who have given with faith, who have fought for the right thing, who have been led in their commitment with the false promises and empty words of our leadership. This is the fight I take on now, and my husband joins me. **Now, I write to show you some of the specifics of the last year of disrespect that my husband and I have seen, as his unit has prepared for a possible return deployment to Iraq.**

Our soldiers are putting their lives on the line. Our VOLUNTEER army is sacrificing its integrity to fight for a cause that has lost its meaning, in a country that did nothing to America before we chose to invade it and occupy it in the name of democracy.

As they serve in the most dangerous situations, we hear how they are supported, how our government fights to give them everything they need. We see no pictures of the sacrifice. That is hidden, and our media is ordered not to show it. We see only words and videos of politicians speaking boldly about supporting our military, and honoring their service with all the best equipment, supplies, and motivation. We see nothing of the loss, the destruction: It is kept from us.

We have seen faulty leadership. We have seen a company commander who is not strong enough to understand that the men he leads do not “sweat the small stuff.” They have been in hell, and survived. The small stuff means nothing when you have a choice of fighting over petty paperwork issues or leaving for the day to spend time with your family. We have experienced this commander’s frustration repeatedly.

When a Private 1st Class received a DUI one weekend, off post, this commander decided that he would punish his entire unit by forcing them to participate in training classes on their weekend, an illegal order that was promptly disobeyed by most of the NCO’s in the unit. There is an Army regulation that states, “extra training or instruction is used when a soldier’s duty performance has been substandard or deficient.” This company commander tried to threaten these soldiers with what is known as an “Article 15,” for having disobeyed his order. When the soldiers demanded that they be given a Court Martial so that they could defend their actions, the company commander withdrew from the fight.

In a later situation, this same Company Commander was quite irritated when a bag that he was to have prepared and maintained with his equipment could not be found. Many soldiers had observed the commander leave with his bag, and yet he insisted that he could not be responsible, that a soldier had taken it. He ordered the entire unit to stay at the Company headquarters until 10:30 at night, as discipline for his not being able to monitor his own equipment. Again, more than 15 soldiers appealed this order.

Military radios are a sensitive piece of equipment. They must be kept under lock and key when not being used, and in most units, they are kept in the Arms Room along with the weapons that the soldiers are registered to use. When there is a deployment, training mission, qualifying day, the soldiers must sign the weapons out of the room, and return them for verification after use. This procedure is also followed with the radios. Except in the situation of this particular unit. Radios have been lost, or missing on

several occasions, because this Company Commander does not see the need to assign anyone to be responsible for them.

When he discovers them missing, temper tantrums ensue, and soldiers who have had nothing to do with the radios are disciplined in his rage. But this Commander will not take responsibility for his actions.

Almost a month ago, this unit was sent to the rifle range for a weekend of qualifying. Supplies being what they are, the soldiers could not perform any night firings. There is not enough ammunition available.

On Sunday, soldiers watched while their Company Commander prepared to qualify. He could not. It is required that a soldier fire a minimum of 26 rounds into the bulls-eye area of the target in order to qualify. This Commander could not get 15 rounds on the target, let alone near the bulls-eye. Finally, at the end of the day, the 1st Sergeant of the unit had to spot for the commander, and he returned a target with 29 rounds on the bulls-eye. The 1st Sergeant, when questioned by the Training Room NCO regarding the validity of the target, ordered that NCO to document that the company commander had qualified. The Training Room NCO refused the order, saying that the 1st Sergeant would have to accept that responsibility.

This same Company Commander and 1st Sergeant have asked the Training Room NCO on several occasions to “pencil-whip” the training reports that are being sent on to the Battalion Command. This is a new Company, and they are having quite a bit of trouble getting organized. The Battalion Command is never satisfied with the reports, and the numbers regarding soldiers’ training records. Rather than do what is needed to improve the actual training programs, this Company Commander files misrepresentations of facts.

After the initial experience of the Iraq invasion, the Defense Department determined that it was time to make the Army more streamlined and moveable. In January of this year, they took several units offline in order to redesign them. The Company that my husband was reassigned to was one of these new companies. There was talk about the change for several months, dates changed, soldiers changed.

Finally, as the brigade was preparing for its rotation to the National Training Center in California, the Command decided it was time to make the change. All soldiers would travel to California with their original assignment and return as part of their new units. These changes are still trying to situate, and as a result, soldiers’ needs are still not being met.

While in California, Company Commanders participated in “cat fights” over who actually commanded which units. These temper tantrums repeatedly flared up in front of the soldiers they were supposed to be leading.

When the units returned from California at the end of June, there were no headquarters prepared for the new support units to report to or work out of. They set up temporary offices in old motor pools, with nothing but desks and chairs. There were no phones, no computers, no paper, and no idea whose command they fell under.

Now, almost 5 months later, when these soldiers should be concentrating on training, they are finally getting offices in shape, only to have to break them down to load them into Conex boxes to prepare for their possible deployment. The Training Room NCO finally received his laptop computer last month. His responsibility is to take care of all the training records, and qualification records for the almost 200 soldiers in his unit. In the office itself, there are now 5 laptops, with printers.

There is only one printer cartridge, and it is in the office of the 1st Sergeant. He has a habit of becoming very upset when a report he has asked for is not on his desk, but when the Training Room NCO suggests that he has to use the 1st Sergeant's printer since it is the only one with a cartridge, the response is that "no one is allowed in my office, or using my equipment."

There could be more supplies, if the Supply Sergeant could have been given access to an account to be able to purchase what the unit needed.

Three weeks ago, the 1st Sergeant ordered the soldiers in the unit to mark all the duffle bags that they would have to pack for deployment, and the markings were to be in Tan and Black paint. Unfortunately, the company had no money to purchase the paint, so part of the order was that the soldiers had to buy their own paint, paint their bags over the weekend and have them at the company the following Monday. What is wrong with this picture?

Once again, most soldiers disobeyed what they saw to be an illegal order.

The Training Room NCO reported the order to the Brigade Sergeant Major on that Monday, who informed the 1st Sergeant that he could not order soldiers to buy paint. His response, the Army had not given the unit any means to purchase what they needed. The Supply Sergeant was finally issued a debit card to use for Company purchases, unfortunately, he was not allowed to activate it for an additional week, and since that time it has been de-activated. In the meantime, it became time for the soldiers to mark these same bags with an additional marking, this time with large width bright orange tape. Once again, they were ordered to purchase the tape, for the Company had none to supply.

Interestingly enough, there are some supplies that seem to be in an over-abundance in the military. We are quite concerned with this matter, as we have seen this on more than one installation. The infantry soldiers spend about two weeks out of every month in the field training. During this time, they remain in the field, usually training sites that are in remote parts of the installations they are stationed at. While they are training, the support units bring all the supplies they will need out to the field in military semi-trucks.

Supplies include army cots, food for every meal, canned fruits and vegetables, fresh produce, condiments, industrial sized cans of coffee, powdered creamer, etc., plates, napkins, cups, plastic ware, everything a soldier would need for a two week stay in the field. At the end of the training period, the semi trucks return to the garrison area and DISPOSE of EVERYTHING THAT WAS NOT USED DURING THE FIELD PROBLEM.

Army cots are disposed of, canned fruits and vegetables that could be returned to the storage building, unopened cans of coffee, paper products, EVERYTHING

leftover is thrown away. This is taxpayers' money, my money, our soldiers' money, being thrown away.

The armored vehicles, Bradley fighting vehicles and tanks that our soldiers use are in no better condition than the organization.

The waiting period for most parts is still longer than two weeks in most cases. The equipment is not to the standard that our government would like people to believe. **Most of the equipment was damaged during the first tours in Iraq, as it was not made to withstand the heat and sand of the Iraqi deserts, and the waiting period for repairs in Iraq was so long that there were times when mechanics pieced parts together, to make the equipment last longer.**

General Sanchez himself wrote to our administration about the failure to provide adequate supplies for repairs of equipment and vehicles last February. Not much has changed. Civilians are responsible for much of the maintenance on the vehicles that are not deployed or being used in a training field problem. Civilians work 4 day weeks, and are paid 3 times what our soldiers are paid for the same work.

Soldiers defer to the civilians in many aspects of vehicle services which makes it difficult for soldiers in the field and in combat to be able to deal with the repairs needed as efficiently and accurately as they could if they actually had to do the work offline as well.

Commanders demand reports giving a 90% readiness on vehicles when that number is actually closer to 60%, and even at that, there are many vehicles with only partial system function.

Security on our military installations has deteriorated in the last 8 months. It was about that long ago that our government decided to contract the security of the military installations to private security firms in an effort to free more soldiers to train for combat. Prior to that time, soldiers were assigned periods of gate duty, and routinely patrolled all access points to each installation.

As a rule, all personally owned vehicles of military members and their families must be registered on post and bear a decal indicating this. When vehicles approach access gates, each is stopped, decals are checked along with military identification cards of all vehicle occupants. If someone does not carry a military ID card, they may present a driver's license for identification purposes. All vehicles that do not bear a military decal must be stopped, and vehicle registrations, insurance cards, and driver identifications are verified and a temporary pass to the installation is issued.

No vehicles carrying any weapons are allowed through the gates, and any trucks and trailers must pass through a separate gate equipped with x-ray machines. There should be routine safety checks of vehicles, in which a vehicle is stopped and searched inside and out, to deter any who might consider passing through the gate with contraband items. **Since the civilian contractors have taken over, security checks at these gates have become quite haphazard.**

There have been many times when guards merely hold ID cards, and don't even look to verify the information. There have been times when trucks have been allowed to pass through without security checks. Last month, a soldier was shot and killed on Ft.

Stewart, in the evening of a weekend night, the victim of a drive by shooting. This is appalling, and un-nerving.

The security guards were obviously not doing their job. This weekend, we carried a rifle, in a case, across post to the rifle range on the other side of the installation. We placed the rifle case in the rear of the truck, in the open, and drove through the gate. No one even questioned the rifle. They looked briefly at our ID's and let us through without one glance at the rifle. **These are the people that our government has hired to secure our military installations.**

Soldiers are being told how lucky they are and how much they are going to love being in Iraq. They are being told that they will have air conditioning, and heat, and larger cots. They are told that the meals they will have will be almost like home, and that there will be internet access in Iraq, so that they can take college courses for military credit while they are there. **They have very low morale now.**

The chaplain here works overtime, and it is difficult to get access to him. He spends so much time counseling soldiers to prepare for this deployment. Their way to boost morale is to assure the soldiers of how much they will have over there, and how good it will be.

After all the misrepresentations they have already experienced, and with leadership being what it is, how can they trust anything now?

The war was based on misrepresentations, and the manipulations are continuing.

Today brought a briefing from West Point cadets to the enlisted soldiers. The briefing was on "Selective Perception." Veteran soldiers from this Iraq war, were given a lesson by students who have yet to see a battlefield, on how to alter the reality of what these soldiers see in combat. **They are being taught to recreate their reality, the reality being shown the American public is being created by politicians, and somewhere in between, the reality is that soldiers are dying, civilians are dying, and a country is being destroyed for no good reason.**

The story of this war is no different at any level.

In the grand design, it was destined to fail before the invasion happened. The government of America is failing to support the service of our military men and women, and it is denying the sacrifice of those same soldiers and their families in the manner in which it leads the American people.

When the American people are shown the truth of the sacrifice our soldiers make, when they are told the truth of the manner in which our government fails to support those soldiers, and their families, when they see the destruction that this war has actually caused, in vivid Technicolor reality, then, perhaps the war will be called to a close, our soldiers brought home where they belong, and Americans will come together in strength against this ever happening again.

The discipline of our leadership is a farce, the support of our leadership is a farce, and the truth needs to be shown to everyone who can make a difference.

The illusion is that the war is going well.

The illusion is that our soldiers are strongly motivated and emotionally prepared for what they have volunteered to face.

The illusion is that we are actually giving the Iraqis their freedom.

The illusion is that we in America have that freedom to give.

The illusion is that we are taking care of those who are making the greatest sacrifice.

The illusion is that our government cares about any of the humanity involved in this war.

The illusion is that this war is right.

The truth is different: When the passion and commitment of our government equals the salary they have voted for themselves, when the campaign promises are no longer forgotten after the elections, when I can look a senator in the eye, or a president, or a secretary of defense, and know that he will remember words he spoke to me in the truth of his actions, THEN AND ONLY THEN, will our government begin to come close to deserving what all of our soldiers and their families have sacrificed in the name of freedom for America.

Then the illusion may begin to fade and truth become strong.

The war is wrong.

Our soldiers are not receiving the support they and their families need.

There is incredible waste in the military process, beginning with lives, and ending with honor.

We, as Americans, cannot give the Iraqis their freedom.

Freedom is earned, and it is the Iraqis who will have to do the fighting, if it is truly freedom that they want.

Until America leaves Iraq to the Iraqis, and brings its soldiers home, freedom cannot begin to materialize for the Iraqi people.

Soldiers are dying, civilians are dying, and America is the perpetrator.

The only support that we should be giving our soldiers now, is in bringing them all home, where they can defend what is their duty to defend... their families, their country, and their honor.

Someone has to be strong enough to stand against the illusion and tell the truth.

And Americans have to be strong enough to bear witness to what they are told.

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:

More Marines Dead In Falluja; Only Small Part Of City “Secure”



SIX WEEKS AGO IS WAS A “WEEKLONG BATTLE”

U.S. Army soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment outside Falluja awaiting further orders Nov. 10, 2004. U.S. warplanes, artillery and mortars struck areas across Falluja on Monday **as groups of diehard insurgents held out to the last in the weeklong battle.** Picture taken November 10, 2004. (Reuters - Handout)

December 23, 2004 Wheeling News-Register & AP & Aljazeera

Only people in a small neighborhood called Andalus, a generally commercial district, were allowed to return on Thursday.

Today in Iraq, U.S. Marines battled insurgents in Fallujah with warplanes dropping bombs and tanks shelling suspected guerrilla positions, causing deaths on both sides, as the first 200 residents returned to the battered city.

Marine officers said that both sides had suffered casualties.

"We did have three marines killed in action in the Al-Anbar province today," spokesman Lyle Gilbert said.

Other officers confirmed that the deaths were linked to an attack by Falluja resistance on marines in the city's northern districts.

American troops have repeatedly clashed with pockets of resistance in the city.

Only people in a small neighborhood called Andalus, a generally commercial district, were allowed to return on Thursday.

Witnesses said U.S. F-18 fighter-bombers struck at targets in the city's southern neighborhoods. Tank and artillery fire was also heard.

Several insurgents were also killed, they said.

The BBC reported that residents who had planned on returning to the war-ravaged city turned back after they heard explosions rock the city and saw plumes of smoke rise above buildings. Some said it would not be safe for them to remain.

"I don't want to come back yet. I've heard it's still not secure."

Speaking to Aljazeera from the outskirts of Falluja's al-Andalus entrance, Abd Allah Mahmud al-Issawi, said: "Displaced families gathered at the entrances to enter the city - not because they like coming back to their demolished homes but escaping from the cold weather, hunger, shortage of water, food and services they have been suffering from."

He said they had suffered in the makeshift tents, structures, schools, and government buildings in the vicinity of the city, where they were forced to stay for the past six weeks.

Al-Issawi also said US soldiers had distributed printed instructions which returning residents had to abide by while in the battered city.

"The instructions stipulated that no car can move inside the city. No child or elderly can cross the street and they are not responsible for anyone's security, meaning that residents will live in a cage inside the city."

According to another Falluja resident who returned to the city for the first time since 8 November, charred and half-eaten corpses festooned the streets.

"We headed to the area where we live and saw some bodies lying about the streets," said Abd al-Rahman Salim.

"I entered my neighbour's house and found him, after identifying him from an identity card. His corpse had lain on the ground, nothing left of him but some bones.

"The scene was very shocking and I could not stay as the smell in the houses and the street was intolerable," he said explaining why he left Falluja.

"Before entering the city, they [US forces] told us that the city is suitable for living but we were shocked when we found no water, no electricity and no simple services."

Baghdad IED Kills One U.S. Soldier, Wounds Two

December 23, 2004 Wheeling News-Register

In western Baghdad, a U.S. soldier was killed and two were wounded by a roadside bomb, the U.S. command said. The attack occurred at 8:00 a.m. Thursday and the victims were members of the U.S. Army's Task Force Baghdad, which is in charge of security in the Iraqi capital.

The death raises the number of U.S. troops who have died since the start of the war in March 2003 to at least 1,322 members, according to an unofficial count by The Associated Press.

Incompetents In U.S. Command Killed Mosul Troops

12.22.04 Online Newshour

GEN. RICHARD MYERS: This is an insurgency. We have no front lines. The front line can be the dining hall; it can be the road outside the base; it can be the police station or the governor's office or the mayor's office down at Mosul.

That's their territory. They operate all over that. They can wear-- and they do -- wear clothes like every other Iraqi. It's a much different thing and the mindset has to be much different.

LT. COL. RALPH PETERS: Well, what mystified me when I heard about this, Gwen, was that even in maneuvers back in the Cold War days when you were just playing war, you got your chow and you dispersed because in war if an artillery shell would hit you wanted them to kill two or three or four soldiers at most, not forty or fifty or sixty or eighty.

And what's clearly happened in Iraq is we violated our own rules about troop dispersion in wartime. I suspect it has to do with outsourcing. This mess hall, mess facility, chow hall was run by a contractor.

And, instead of security, what we saw was convenience and efficiency. **But it just baffled me that this base and this chow hall specifically, dining facility as we term it now, PC version, it had been attacked before with rocket fire, with mortars.**

And we were still crowding these troops not even staggering the schedules. It just astonished me.

Amid all the complexity of warfare and insurgencies and counterinsurgencies and as complex as warfare gets, some things are simple: One if you give an enemy a prime target, they will take advantage of it.

WANTED FOR MURDER, HIGH TREASON, AND GENERAL STUPIDITY



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Richard Myers and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld Dec. 22, 2004 in Washington. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

Iraq: Rumsfeld and Myers said the U.S.-led forces were winning the battle against the insurgents. Dec 23, 2004 MATT KELLEY, Associated Press Writer

Vietnam: Johnson and Westmoreland said the U.S.-led forces were winning the battle against the insurgents. Dec. 23, 1967

Yugoslavia: Hauser and Himmler said the German-led forces were winning the battle against the insurgents. Dec. 23, 1944

America: Lord Cornwallis and Lord North said His Majesty's forces were winning the battle against the insurgents. Dec. 23, 1780

Mosul “Success Story”

December 23, 2004 Wheeling News-Register

In the immediate aftermath of Saddam Hussein's ouster in April 2003, **U.S. commanders cited Mosul - with a population of 1.2 million some 225 miles northwest of Baghdad - as a success story.** But armed opposition has mounted, especially since last month's assault on Fallujah.

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)

Half Of Mosul Injured In Intensive Care

December 23, 2004 The Associated Press

LANDSTUHL, Germany Nearly half the 42 injured U-S military personnel transported to Germany from the deadly attack at a base in Mosul, Iraq, are in intensive care.

Commander Rhonda Cornum says it's certainly been the largest single influx of wounded since she came to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in southern Germany in July 2003.

Cornum says the wounds differ from normal battle injuries because the troops in the mess tent weren't wearing their body armor when an apparent suicide bomber blew up, killing 22 people including 14 service members. Cornum says injuries range from shrapnel, broken bones, chest wounds and burns to a couple of amputations.

U.S. military doctors worked through the night into Thursday stabilizing soldiers and civilians, a hospital spokeswoman said.

"We've been working around the clock," said Landstuhl spokeswoman Marie Shaw.

"Even our commander went in to surgery last night," she said in a telephone interview.

The hospital was preparing to evacuate 11 patients later Thursday to Brooks Army Medical Center in Texas, which has a burn center.

"They need specialized care," Shaw said.

LA Soldier Dies In Mosul Bombing



Lionel Ayo

December 23, 2004 WorldNow and WAFB

One of the 18 Americans killed in that mess hall bomb in Mosul, Iraq was from New Iberia Louisiana. He was 22-year-old Lionel Ayo, who joined the army two years ago.

Lionel Ayo's mother says she often talked -- up to an hour -- on the phone with her son. However, she says her last conversation did not go that well.

"When he called last Saturday, it was a lot of static. So I couldn't understand what he was saying and he couldn't understand what I was saying. But he was a very, very lovable person. Very caring person," says Catherine Ayo.

Mrs. Ayo says her son loved driving big trucks and hoped to use his army income to launch a trucking business.

TROOP NEWS

Seabees Remember Fallen Gulfport Sailor Killed In Mosul

12/22/04 WorldNow and WLOX, by Brad Kessie & 12.23 Associated Press

Master Chief Danny Duval was part of the entourage sent to Chief Petty Officer Joel Baldwin's Gulfport home moments after the explosion in Mosul.

"It's a tough thing," Duval remembered. "The hard thing is thinking what's the impact of the family, especially a few days before Christmas. That's the hard part."

Christmas was why Handsboro Kiwanis Club members donated turkeys to Seabee families. The giveaway provided a few minutes of holiday cheer for a Gulfport base that was mourning the loss of Chief Petty Officer Baldwin.

Baldwin is survived by a wife and a nine-year-old daughter. Gulfport Seabee commanders have not been told when he'll be flown back to Gulfport.

Pam Datlof, a teacher at the elementary school Baldwin's daughter attends, remembers Baldwin as a strong, sensitive man and adoring father to Cali.

"He helped her with her invention, which was the Roller Stroller, to help her handicapped cousin," Datlof told WLOX-TV in Biloxi. "She's always thinking of others. She learned that from her parents. He wrote me a very long letter telling me what a rewarding experience it was to have that opportunity to work with her."

Datlof recalls the last time she spoke to Baldwin, just before he left for Iraq in October.

"It was in the hall. He said, 'Ms. Datlof, if you would, have the boys and girls to write. That would mean so much to me to stay in close contact, because I really support Cali and her education,'" Datlof said.

Her gifted class adopted the chief petty officer. Just days ago, they sent him a Christmas care package filled with tissue, lotion and his favorite snack, Slim Jims.

[Bush lied. He died. Payback is overdue.]

Local Soldier Survives Attack; "Body Parts Everywhere"

December 23, 2004 By Shari Sanger The Record Herald

GREENCASTLE - A soldier from Greencastle was among 72 people injured in a blast at a mess tent in northern Iraq on Tuesday that killed 22.

Staff Sgt. George Weber, 38, was just 50 feet from the explosion at the base in Mosul and suffered some hearing loss, according to his wife of 18 years, Tammy (Sanchez) Weber.

"He said there was blood and body parts everywhere," she said. "He also had someone's burnt flesh all over his back. He said it was not a pretty sight."

VanWormer Injured

December 23, 2004 MediaNews Group, Fort Bragg, CA

Sgt. Jesse VanWormer of Fort Bragg was transported to Germany Monday to undergo surgery on his hands after being injured by a roadside bomb while stationed in Iraq. Van Wormer is with the U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division, and was stationed near Baghdad.

According to Jesses mother, Cindy VanWormer, he was still in Iraq as of Sunday morning awaiting transport to Germany.

Jesse sustained injuries to both hands, with more severe damage to his left hand. "Thankfully, he has all his fingers, and they'll be able to correct it, said Cindy, noting that doctors will assess the damage further, before determining if he should be given leave or discharged. Cindy also said Jesse may be transported to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C. pending the results of further evaluation.

Jesse served in Iraq previously for four months, and has been stationed in Iraq since June of this year. His wife, Sarah, lives in Fort Bragg. The two were married in January.

Eugene Military Buff Wants His Arm Back For Christmas; Says Most Iraqis Support Insurgents

December 23, 2004 By Jeff Wright, The Register-Guard

All Michael John Oreskovic wants for Christmas is his left arm back.

The Army specialist from Eugene lost the arm in a suicide bomber's car attack in Mosul, Iraq, on Oct. 11 - on his final mission after a yearlong stint in Iraq. **The attack came four days after he was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries sustained in a similar attack Oct. 5.**

He's undergone 11 surgeries in preparation for a prosthesis. He faces at least six more months of rehabilitation and physical therapy.

But for now he's at the home of his parents, Michael and Georganna Oreskovic, thanks to a 30-day convalescence leave.

Oreskovic was with the Army's 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, based at Fort Lewis, Wash. The division rotated out of Iraq in October and a new Stryker Brigade - named for the armored vehicle the units use - rotated in. Members of that new unit, the 1st Brigade, 25th Division, may be among the dead and injured in Tuesday's attack.

"But it doesn't matter if I know them personally," Oreskovic said. "I just know that some of those guys aren't coming home for Christmas for the rest of their lives."

The prospect of civilian life doesn't sit well with Oreskovic, whose biggest plan for Christmas break is to head up to Fort Lewis next week to visit some of his buddies.

On Oct. 11, he and his colleagues had secured a Mosul neighborhood and were preparing to return to base. But first they had to form a convoy along a traffic circle known as a favorite target of insurgents. Oreskovic and a buddy argued good-naturedly over whose turn it was to ride the Stryker's turret and whose turn to ride inside the hole.

Oreskovic took the turret. He held a grenade launcher in his left hand, while the turret's hatch lid protected his right side. He had on headphones, listening to Metallica's heavy metal. Intelligence reports said to be on the lookout for a brown Ford Focus that could be a car bomb.

Oreskovic never saw a Ford Focus. Nor did he see the bomb-wired vegetable truck that ambled out of an alley. But he heard the explosion and saw the fireball that raced toward him, and felt the first shrapnel strike his left cheek just below his goggles.

Then he saw his arm, or what was left of it. He slipped down into the vehicle's hole, never losing consciousness, as comrades rushed to apply a tourniquet below his shoulder.

The turret's hatch lid, he said, saved his life by cushioning part of the blow. The squad leader in the next Stryker wasn't so lucky; he was killed instantly by the direct impact.

The friend who wangled out of turret duty later expressed deep remorse, telling Oreskovic that he was the one who should have taken the hit. But Oreskovic, who is single, told him he shouldn't feel that way.

"He's married and I'm not," said Oreskovic, who once gave up a home-leave pass to another buddy whose wife had just had a baby. "He's got more in his life than I do."

Oreskovic said he still feels phantom pains where his fingers, wrist, arm and elbow used to be. He battles nightmares, and it's hard to watch the TV news "because I can *feel* the explosion all over again."

The worst part of losing an arm?

"Everything," he said. "I hate not being able to tie my shoes as easily as before. I hate not going to the gym and working out. I can't play video games or go target shooting."

Oreskovic concedes that his view of the Iraqi people has soured, with most now seemingly intent on protecting or supporting insurgents. He said he and other U.S. soldiers spent a lot of time at first befriending Iraqi children, many of whom now throw rocks or grenades at them.

"At first people like you but when they don't get what they want, they hate you," he said.

But Oreskovic said his war experiences also have softened him. One example: a much deeper appreciation for his parents and the childhood they gave him in Eugene.

"Now when I tell them 'Drive careful' or 'Be careful,' I really mean it," he said. "I tell my dad 'I love you' every night now.

"It's like you don't know what you have until you lose it."

‘Now He’s In Iraq And It Ain’t That Good’

December 23, 2004 WorldNow and WAFF

A Valley family finds out their loved one has been injured in Iraq.

38-year old Teddy Williams of Phil Campbell was hurt in a different bomb attack in Mosul.

WAFF 48 News Reporter Rosanne Riesenman talked to Teddy William's 10-year-old son. He's glad his dad is okay. But worries about his safety.

Teddy's son Dylan says, "I've always been worried and now I say a prayer for him."

10-year-old Dylan Williams clutches a picture of his dad, Sergeant Teddy Williams. He's serving in Iraq with the 115th Signal Battalion.

"Well, it's been hard. First time, he went to Kentucky. It was fine. Now he's in Iraq and it ain't that good," Dylan says.

Monday morning, Dylan got a phone call he never expected. He found out his dad had been hurt in a bomb attack. "He told me he injured his leg and some bombs blew up near him and it blew a piece of metal. It blew a piece of metal into his leg, Dylan said.

Soldiers carried Williams to a nearby hospital where they stitched his leg. Dylan worries about his dad's safety. **"Every time I talk to him, I worry. Last night, I talked to him and I was worried about how he got hurt and stuff," Dylan says.**

Dylan's glad his dad is okay. But it's hard not having him around especially for the holidays. Dylan says, "It's sad cuz he won't be here on Christmas and couldn't get to come home for and didn't get to come for my birthday."

Dylan hopes his dad will come home soon.



Brittany Bergquist, 14, left and her brother, 12-year-old Robbie Bergquist pose in their Norwell, Mass. Home Dec. 20, 2004. With \$14 from their piggy banks, **the pair started Cell Phones For Soldiers which provides prepaid calling cards for American soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait.** The organization raises money by collecting old cell phones and selling them to companies that refurbish them for resale on the Internet, then use it buy the calling cards. (AP Photo/Sarah Brezinsky) **[And unless civilians and the troops act to stop this bullshit war, they'll both get to use the cards themselves in a few more years.]**

S. Georgia Soldier Wounded

December 23, 2004 WorldNow and WALB, Grady County

When Brenda Sellers first learned her 22-year-old son, Specialist Nick Sellers, had been critically injured in an attack, one of the first people she called was her friend and co-worker, Peggy Hancock. "All she knew at the time was he had been hurt, and she didn't know how bad he had been hurt," says Hancock.

She would later learn that Sellers was in critical condition, with serious injuries to his chest and abdomen. He was flown to Germany for surgery and then to Walter-Reed hospital in Washington, D. C. Hancock says, "He's able to squeeze the nurses hand when she asks him questions and blink his eyes."

The news makes it hard for family members to blink back the tears. "Well it was just about the worst thing I could have heard," says Granddad Albert Sellers. **He says the only good news will be when Nick comes home to stay. "Oh, I'll feel great. That's the best thing in the world to see him and know that he's all right."**

Though for now, he considers Nick to be one of the lucky. He says, "Unlucky that it happened, lucky to be alive." Alive and fighting to keep his life.

Specialist Nick Sellers parents, brother, wife and daughter are all on their way to Washington, D. C., to see him. His family says he is still in critical condition, but his vital signs have improved and he is expected to recover.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Oil Pipeline On Fire

23 December Focus 1 News

Baghdad. An oil pipeline in northern Iraq is on fire, reported AP. The Iraqi Ministry of Oil announced that insurgents had attacked the oil pipeline. According to witnesses, a fire erupted after an explosion. Four of the attackers were injured.

Occupation Cops, Guard Killed

12/23/2004 AFP

Thursday, **a mortar round exploded outside a police station in Baghdad's Al-Mamun district, killing one policeman and wounding another**, police said, adding that it was the third attack against the station in recent days.

In Baquba, northeast of Baghdad, a policeman was killed overnight in the third assassination by insurgents in the city in the past three days, police said.

North of Tikrit, an Iraqi national guardsman was killed and two wounded when their patrol vehicle hit a roadside bomb, an officer said.

In the southern city of Nasiriyah, the bullet-riddled body of a policeman was fished out of the Euphrates river after he went missing three days ago, police said.

Fuel Truck Burned

23 December 2004 (Reuters)

A fuel truck driving along the main highway running north from Mahmudiya was attacked on Thursday by gunmen, who set the truck ablaze and kidnapped the Iraqi driver, police in Mahmudiya said. Bandits as well as militants operate in the area.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Dispatches:

[Thanks to CZ, who sent this in.]

1. Courage

A lot of what people called courage was only undifferentiated energy cut loose by the intensity of the moment, mind loss that sent the actor on an incredible run; if he survived it he had the chance later to decide whether he'd really been brave or just overcome with life, even ecstasy. **A lot of people found the guts to just call it all off and refuse to ever go out anymore, they turned and submitted to the penalty end of the system or they just split.**

Dispatches by Michael Herr, p. 66

2. Then And Now

Many of the houses had been completely collapsed, and not one had been left without pitting from shell fragments. Hundreds of refugees held to the side of the road as we passed, many of them wounded. The kids would laugh and shout, the old would look on with that silent tolerance for misery that made so many Americans uneasy, which was usually misread as indifference. **But the younger men and women would often look at us with unmistakable contempt, pulling their cheering children back from the trucks.**

Dispatches, Michael Herr, p. 73

3. Getting Friendly In '67

At dusk, while we all stretched out along the canal bank eating dinner, **two Marine gunships came down on us and began strafing us**, sending burning tracers up along the canal, and we ran for cover, more surprised than scared. **"Way to go, motherfucker, way to pinpoint the fuckin' enemy," one of the grunts said, and he set up his M-60 machine gun in case they came back. "I don't guess we got to take that shit," he said.**

Dispatches, p. 75

4. Free at last

In the station there was the youngest-looking Marine I'd ever seen. He'd been caught in the knee by a large piece of shrapnel, and he had no idea of what they'd do with him now that he was wounded. He lay out on the stretcher while the doctor explained how he would be choppered back to Phu Bai hospital and then put on a plane for Danang and then flown back to the States for what would certainly be the rest of his tour.

At first the boy was sure that the doctor was kidding him, then he started to believe it, and then he knew it was true, he was actually getting out, he couldn't stop smiling, and enormous tears ran down into his ears.

Dispatches, p. 82

5. Liberated?

Seventy percent of Vietnam's once lovely city was destroyed, and if the landscape seemed desolate, imagine how the figures in that landscape looked.

Dispatches, p. 83

Tofu?

[Thanks to CZ, who sent this in.]

Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, defended General Ham's security plans on Wednesday.

“We have had a suicide bomber apparently strap something [tofu?] to his body and go into a dining hall. We know how difficult this is, to prevent people bent on suicide and stopping them,” Myers said Wednesday at a Pentagon news conference. “This was the insurgents that did this.” **[So it's not General Ham that attacked his dining hall. Thank heavens for small favors! Even so, better keep an eagle eye on officers, from genius Myers on down: there are many ways to waste troops!]**

OCCUPATION REPORT

Time Magazine Baghdad Bureau Chief Says Iraq “A Disaster”

NOVEMBER 24 2004 MICHAEL WARE INTERVIEW ON WNYC, HOST LEONARD LOPATE [excerpts]

WARE: When we avail ourselves of broader media opportunities on television and radio, we are all saying the exact same thing: Iraq is an absolute disaster.

And it's ...it's... it's not improving. It's deteriorating with a rapid pulse. It's a failing mission. I mean, for me, I've been asked, "Are we winning?" And I say, "Well, that's not really the proper question. The question is how can we prevent from losing?"

Journalist Michael Ware is the Baghdad Bureau Chief for Time Magazine. He was embedded in Fallujah during the recent US offensive earlier this month, and has covered the war in Iraq since February 2003. He joins us today with his perspective on the situation in Iraq.

LOPATE: Did you feel that it was okay to leave Fallujah because things have been brought under control?

WARE: No, I mean, I don't think we're ever going to be able to confidently say that Fallujah is under control. I guess it depends on what your measure of control really is. There will always be insurgents in Fallujah.

We may be able to dominate the city now that it's been retaken, but whether you effectively control it; whether you stamp out that rising tide of resistance, I don't think so.

LOPATE: Mosques and homes?

WARE: Oh, absolutely, I mean... For example, the military unit I was with, I mean, the operation in Fallujah involved largely Marines, but also some army elements. I was with one of those elements. The way they proceeded through the city, given that there was booby-traps, improvised explosive devices, riddling the streets everywhere. Entire houses were rigged to blow. The way they proceeded was what they call "Reconnaissance by Fire."

If you're going to go down a street first you scour it for any potential danger. How do you do that? You do it with a 25mm cannon on an armoured Bradley fighting vehicle. Or you do it with one 20mm tank round. Just blow up everything that looks vaguely suspicious. Then if someone shoots at you from a building, or there's an explosion near a vehicle, don't mess with it. Don't go into the building looking for the guy... just level the building. And then go through the rubble afterwards.

LOPATE: Well, that can't be pleasing people who are not in support of the insurgents, but who consider Fallujah their home...

WARE: Well, Fallujah, is actually called the City of Mosques . And whether you're a Sunni, like most of the people in Western Iraq are, or whether you're just an ordinary

Iraqi, it still has some resonance. **And to see a city destroyed liked that obviously won't go without some repercussion.**

LOPATE: I mean, how much success can we claim?

WARE: Okay, in Fallujah, it was a sweeping military victory. The objective was to retake territory. To deny the insurgents sanctuary. **By and large that's been accomplished. Congratulations. Has that broken the back of the insurgency? No. Not at all... Maybe you've dented them temporarily...**

LOPATE: The numbers I've heard is 250 insurgents rounded up, which doesn't seem like very much considering the cost in American lives, and Iraqi lives... the Iraqis who have fought along side the Americans. Haven't most of the insurgents just slipped out and regrouped elsewhere?

WARE: Yeah, when they say "250 insurgents rounded up", that's just men of fighting age. Some will be insurgents, most certainly. Others may not be. Some we'll never determine. And, I don't know, **just every step take we're alienating the Iraqi people more and more and more... And we're producing more terrorists and insurgents.**

LOPATE: How would you suggest the military deal with the issue of bombing mosques? We've been criticised for shooting at them, but the insurgents often use them as, as havens, don't they?

WARE: Yeah, it's a very thorny issue. I mean, the entire crux of this war is... it's a matter of propaganda and perception. **This is a war, as the insurgents were telling me even last year, it's not going to be won and lost on the battlefield, but on television. This is what the military calls an "IO Campaign." An Information Operation. So, the insurgents are extraordinarily adept at it, much better than the US military. So, by using a mosque as a fighting position, that has immediate tactical advantage, but they know that forces the US military to reduce that mosque to rubble, and that has an enormous play....**

LOPATE: Did they have a lot of sophisticated weapons themselves?

WARE: The insurgents? The insurgents have untapped resources to weaponry and explosives. They don't have great use of heavy weaponry, like Dushka heavy machine guns, yet they still have mortar systems, they are very adept, **in fact the military intelligence officers I mix with describe them as ingenious at improvised explosive devices, booby traps, and the way they lay their snares for us, are just extraordinary.**

LOPATE: You talked about the information war, why has there been such disagreement over the dead and wounded on both sides? Is it because... the US government agencies have been downplaying them, and the... the Iraqi insurgents have been inflating them? Or is this also a way that the different media control reporting on this war.....?

WARE: It's a very complicated issue, but let me boil it down to one broad principle: In this war, like every other war I've been in, there's one absolute, and

that is that everyone lies. On all sides. Civil, military, the West, the Insurgents, the Jihadis, everyone is spinning the story. For their own purposes. I mean, don't forget....

LOPATE: My guest is Michael Ware, who is Baghdad bureau chief at TIME magazine. Recently he returned from Fallujah, where he was tracking Alpha Company's 3rd Platoon in their battles in Fallujah. We will continue our conversation after we take a little break here on WNYC. Stay with us.

LOPATE: We're back with Michael Ware who is Baghdad bureau chief for TIME magazine.

WARE: When we avail ourselves of broader media opportunities on television and radio, we are all saying the exact same thing: Iraq is an absolute disaster.

And it's ...it's... it's not improving. It's deteriorating with a rapid pulse. It's a failing mission. I mean, for me, I've been asked, "Are we winning?" And I say, "Well, that's not really the proper question. The question is how can we prevent from losing?"

LOPATE: But, aren't a lot of people putting their hopes... pinning their hopes on the elections that are coming up?

WARE: Well they can pin as much as they like on those elections. I don't know what good it's going to do them. I mean, I'll tell you right now, you can set any Disneyland date you like, let's call it January 30th. You can hold an election. It will certainly look like an election. And it will sound like an election. But, anything other than sham, you can't hope to produce. I mean, the... the West will do it's best to support this process, but under no circumstances can I see any election in Iraq now or anywhere near in the future that will produce anything akin to a real mandate for anyone.

LOPATE: Why was Fallujah deemed so important to win? Couldn't it have just been cordoned off and kept under control?

WARE: That... That's... That was one option, although that's not as a simple a thing to do as one might think. I mean, until you're out on a battlefield, you don't really understand the nature of the confusion of it all.

And to seal a city, I mean, can you appreciate just how many tens of thousands of troops you would have to dedicate to that task? I mean, you'd almost have to introduce the draft here in America just to seal off Fallujah, to add to the troop numbers that are already there. The other thing is that there was a political imperative. I mean, obviously, Fallujah was a festering sore. It was a gross act of brazen defiance against the Iraqi government and against the US forces...

LOPATE: Worse that Mosul ? Worse that Baquba?

WARE: Oh, absolutely. Now, I've spent a lot of time in all those places: in Baquba, in Ramadi, in Tikrit, in Behji, in Mosul , in Kirkuk ... Oh, I've spent much time in all those

places on both sides of the fence. **Fallujah was particularly symbolic, I mean, operationally it was very key. It was actually a city that the insurgents and the Jihadis controlled. And on their secret websites and on their secret message boards, that I've been able to monitor, through the assistance of the insurgents.. I get to see the way they talk... and they referred to Fallujah as... as ... Iraq and The Independent Islamic State of Fallujah....**

LOPATE: So, it had a symbolic significance?

WARE: Absolutely. But, I mean, militarily? At best this is a tactical victory.

We have reclaimed territory. Strategically, it's done nothing to stop the terror. And much like the entire invasion of Iraq of itself, but you know.... In many ways there was certain reasons for doing it, but, but this is... this is...(stend ?) nothing.. nothing at all. I mean, it was important... I mean, cos, at the heart of an insurgency, or an insurgent war, classic counter-insurgency tactics is that essentially you must deny population from the insurgents. It's not about taking territory and holding ground. That's got nothing to do with the nature of the fight in Iraq.

So, we're supposed to drive a wedge between the ordinary people who support and shelter, or at the very least, acquiesce to the presence of the insurgents. By that measure, how are we fairing? Well, their support is growing. It's not reducing.

LOPATE: Well, one of the first things we heard was that we had to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people. So is that the battle we're really losing right now?

WARE: I mean it would be glib to say that the hearts of minds of the people that we haven't yet killed... but... there is an element of.... Truth to that. I mean, honestly, I see day by day as we add to the ranks of the insurgency... Now, be it, I've been there... I've watched civilians atomized before my eyes by withering US fire. And....

LOPATE: And it's hard to tell who is an innocent and who's an insurgent, isn't it?

WARE: Absolutely, and when you have a confused Iraqi father, driving his terrified family.. trying to escape a battleground somewhere and he tentatively and fearfully approaches a US checkpoint, which is manned by baby-faced teenagers who have seen their friends and colleagues horrendously torn apart and who are coming under almost constant fire from every direction from an enemy who hides as a civilian, and leaps out when it's least expected.... **As that family approaches that checkpoint a nervous trigger finger is a nanosecond away from... from wiping them all out.... And I've... I've just experienced far too much of that....**

WARE: I mean, I wasn't in the room when that happened. But I was in that battlefield, and I've certainly seen.... Put it this way, that... wouldn't have been the first such occasion. If I had been there.... And even in Fallujah itself, I saw stuff that was very akin to that. And that's the nature of war. And it's not so much.... I wouldn't credit to the anger of an individual soldier who pulled that trigger. It doesn't have to be anger.. You don't sleep for a week. You're in constant battle. You're on a perpetual adrenaline rush.

It's all that keeps you going. You're nerves are absolutely fried. It's just instinct half the time.

LOPATE: You sound like you're battling post-traumatic stress syndrome. Do you feel that way?

WARE: I don't know. I'm rarely sober enough to think about that. No, I'm just joking. I mean, no, I wouldn't say that. .. **I mean, let's just say that..... war is not an easy business. And it always exacts a toll in one form or another. On everyone who is touched by it.**

LOPATE: Well, actually, this war is closest to World War Two, because so much of it involves urban warfare, isn't it? We had Vietnam where it was dangerous to go out of the cities, but relatively safe within the cities. And then the First Gulf War was a long distance war, and we were kind of told that that's the way future wars would be conducted. But, here you were going from house to house. From street to street. Weren't you? With these soldiers?

WARE: Actually, we weren't just going from house to house. WE were, without a hint of exaggeration, fighting room to room. I mean, I'm sitting in your studio here, I'm looking at a large pane of glass that leads onto the corridor... in one of the fights that the unit I was with was in... we were on this side of the pane of glass, and the insurgents were on the other. We.. They were firing at each other from anything from four to eight feet away.

LOPATE: How prepared are the soldiers... the American soldiers for this kind of fighting? In one of your articles they seemed to be in awe of the insurgents....

WARE: I mean, I don't know if the soldiers themselves are in awe. They certainly have grown to respect their foe. And any... to do anything else would be extraordinarily unhealthy for them. I mean, they still deride them with... with terms and names... but I mean, that's the nature of a soldier. But, every individual grunt has a certain respect for the enemy with whom he is engaging. They can't not. I mean, the resilience, the tenaciousness, and the ingenuity of the insurgents.... It goes without question.

And I mean, there's another thing... combat, of any kind, but particularly something so close as point blank range in urban warfare, is an extraordinarily personal affair. There is nowhere to hide from yourself in combat. There's... You can't pretend to be anything other than you really are. There's no room for bravado. There's no room for pretences of any kind. You are stripped bare. And you are who you are. And that's on all sides of the conflict.

LOPATE: I get the feeling that you're also telling me that Fallujah may be won for the moment, and maybe won for the rest of this war, but there'll be many more Fallujahs...

WARE: Oh, absolutely. There's not going to be the great.... You know... weeping sore that Fallujah was... I mean, it was a stellar act of defiance. I mean, to be able to actually secure and control a city, and to beat off the US military, and to play

such a savvy political game that it tied the military hands... But, we're going to see it popping up here, there, everywhere... In front, in behind, beside us, up and down, everywhere. I mean..... this doesn't feel like victory to me....

LOPATE: We've run out of time, but I do have to ask you whether you think anyone in Washington is listening to you?

WARE: They may listen, but do they hear? I don't know. I mean, I'm what am I? I'm just one insignificant little voice that rails against the horror and the lunacy that I see. I mean, I don't have any expectation whatsoever that I can actually change things. The best I can do is just document and record and speak with the voice of the people who are there.

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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