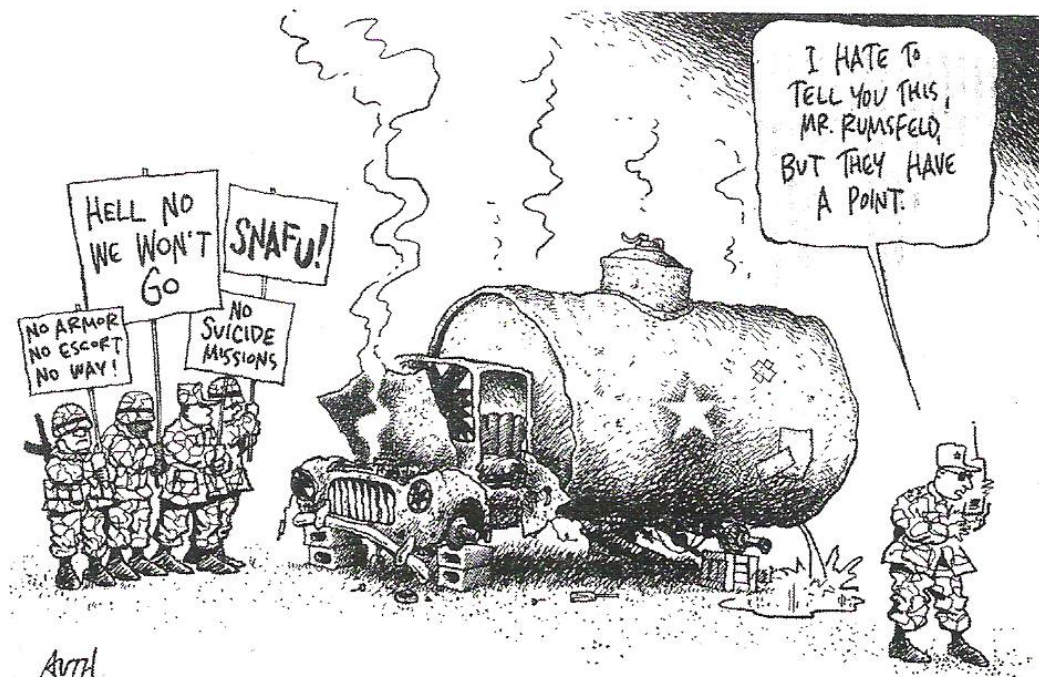


GI SPECIAL 2#C7



The Soldiers Who Said No: "It's Like A Fist, It Makes A Mighty Blow."

10/27/2004 Tom Robbins , Village Voice (New York)

"From what I was told there have been many direct orders disobeyed before this," said Butler. "But it was just one person. This was so many, all at the same moment."

"They all stood together, they made a united front, that's what makes the difference," added McCook. "It's like a fist, it makes a mighty blow. I know you don't have any clout when you stand alone."

"I don't know how he [Bush] says these soldiers are all so enthusiastic," said Butler. "He is getting some bad information from someone."

No matter how the military ultimately decides to deal with Staff Sergeant Michael Butler for disobeying orders, once the war in Iraq is through with him, he'll be welcomed home by an adoring family and the big yellow ribbon that is pinned to the tall long-leaf pine tree outside his one-story brick house in Jackson, Mississippi.

"I am very, very proud of him. He is a definite leader, someone who is capable of doing many things," said Butler's wife, Jackie, as she sat in her living room facing a wall of awards earned by her husband during his 24 years of duty in both the regular army and the reserves. There are a half-dozen Army Achievement Medals and a plaque for "1997 NCO (Non-Commissioned Officer) of the Year." Four short words of high military praise are inscribed on it: "Can do. Damn good."

It was that same type of leadership that Butler, 44, was exhibiting this month, his wife insisted, when he and 17 others in his army reserve platoon did the militarily unthinkable by refusing direct orders to drive a convoy of fuel trucks from their post at the Tallil Air Base in southern Iraq to Taji, north of Baghdad.

It has also rekindled memories of the last days of the Vietnam War, when there were incidents of demoralized U.S. troops refusing orders they believed would accomplish little other than placing themselves in peril.

A couple of miles away, Patricia McCook, whose husband, Sergeant Larry McCook, 41, was also serving in the 343rd, was awoken at 5:12 that same morning when he called from Iraq.

Among the names her husband gave her was that of Michael Butler. The two wives had never met, but within a few days, Jackie Butler and Pat McCook were granting joint interviews to media from around the country, holding court in Butler's living room, so much in tune with each other's concerns that they noddingly finished each other's sentences.

In many ways, they are an unlikely pair to be taking on a mighty military establishment. Both are devout churchgoers: Butler at Zion Travelers Missionary Baptist, McCook at the Jones Chapel Church in nearby Flora, Mississippi, where her husband is a deacon. McCook is raising a pair of teenagers; Butler, a hairstylist, is stepmother to two children, ages 10 and 14. The trunk of Pat McCook's sedan bears a "Support Our Troops" yellow-ribbon sticker.

Another urges people to find guidance through prayer. McCook was born in Flora and raised in Jackson; Butler has lived here all her life. Her modest but comfortable home is on a street of well-groomed lawns and spreading magnolias, a quiet neighborhood located in the city's northeast, where the only discordant note is the protective metal bars that cover most windows. It is about a mile and a half from another pleasant neighborhood of single-family homes, where Jackson civil rights leader Medgar Evers was shot dead in his driveway in 1963 by a virulent racist.

Despite the unexpectedness of the crisis, both women quickly rose to the challenge posed by the emergency messages from the other side of the world. **Armed with a mutual bedrock belief in their husbands' integrity, they enlisted friends, relatives, and local politicians in a campaign to expose what they called "a terrible cover-up" by the army.**

"It's a leadership problem," said McCook. "They knew those vehicles were unsafe. Why in the world would you send soldiers out unprotected like that?"

Both women declined to discuss their own political preferences. "I don't deal with politics," said Butler. "I vote for the best person."

They both said, however, that they believed President Bush to be badly misinformed in his assurances to the public that troops in Iraq have all necessary equipment. "He should go to the 343rd," said McCook.

"I don't know how he says these soldiers are all so enthusiastic," said Butler. "He is getting some bad information from someone."

The issue of shortages isn't new, they said.

"It's not as though this hasn't come up before," said McCook. "Even General [Ricardo] Sanchez [former commander of coalition forces in Iraq] wrote a letter to the Pentagon about the equipment problem."

"From what I was told there have been many direct orders disobeyed before this," said Butler. "But it was just one person. This was so many, all at the same moment."

"They all stood together, they made a united front, that's what makes the difference," added McCook. "It's like a fist, it makes a mighty blow. I know you don't have any clout when you stand alone."

Pat McCook has a first-person understanding of how the military works. She spent three years on active duty, serving as an army administrative specialist in 1983 in Fort Polk, Louisiana, where she met her husband. "I loved everything about him," she said. Larry McCook followed her home to Jackson and, about 10 years ago, joined the army reserves. He was working for the Hinds County Sheriff's Office as a detention officer when he was called up last year. In February, he was shipped to Iraq from Rock Hill, South Carolina, where the 343rd is based.

Iraq is Michael Butler's second round of combat in the Middle East. He served in the 1990-91 Gulf War and came home to Jackson, maintaining his enlistment in the reserves. He married Jackie three years ago. When he was summoned for active duty last fall he was working as a carpenter for the Jackson public school system. "I asked him why he was in the army," said Jackie Butler. "He said, 'Baby, I volunteered. I was looking to serve my country, and I wanted to go to school.' He did, too. He got himself licensed as a mechanic and learned carpentry skills. He did well by the army."

Jackie Butler gave her husband a pre-paid telephone calling card when he left. When he was able, they managed to speak two or three times a week. **Not all of the calls were reassuring. "I've been talking to him on the phone when I hear the bombs coming in. You hear that sound, 'Ssssss,' and the explosion, and then my husband says, 'Got to go, baby.'"**

Michael Butler was home for a two-week leave at the end of August. "He was fine. We didn't go out much; we had the family over, had a lot of fun, eating and laughing. At night, though, me and him would sit together and talk. He talked about the problems he was having over there, the trouble with the equipment. He told these stories. I said, 'Just go to him, your commander.' He said, 'She's a female, and I tried that. She's not going to do anything.' "

Pat McCook also noted changes in her husband after he went to war. "Most of all I love his sense of humor; he is just a naturally funny man. People say he even looks like Eddie Murphy so he should be funny. But ever since he went over, I don't hear it as much in him. I can tell he's worried."

Their husbands' complaints kept coming back to the trucks, both women said. "I remember him pulling out of Rock Hill, South Carolina," said Jackie Butler. "They had to drive down to Fort Stewart, Georgia. Even then the trucks were breaking down. He said he could've outrun those trucks, they went so slow. They were just no good."

In Iraq, breakdowns had occurred while the trucks were on their way to deliver fuel and supplies, the men told their wives. "He said they just sleep on top of the trucks when that happens," said Jackie Butler.

"What they wanted was bulletproof armor for the trucks," said Pat McCook. "At least it gives them a fighting chance."

Since then, both women say, their husbands have been guarded in their conversations with them about the incident. "We try not to talk about stuff like that over the phone now," said Butler.

Whatever the army's reasons --- either the mini-maelstrom kicked up by the media, or its own second thoughts --- the platoon members were freed after being held for about a day, according to relatives. Five members of the platoon, however, including Butler, McCook, and Shealey, were sent to other units. "They saw them as the ringleaders," said Jackie Butler. Pat McCook said her husband told her he is back driving a fuel truck again, this time one in good condition and equipped with armor. "He said it's like going from driving a Yugo to driving a Cadillac," she said.

"What I would like is to have the army admit that this is why these soldiers did this --- "to save lives of other soldiers," said Jackie Butler. "They should fix the problem, finish the mission, and get our husbands home.""

"Alive and whole," interjected Pat McCook, beside her on the couch.

"The same way they left," added Butler.

MORE:

Legal Experts Say Combat Refusal Soldiers May Have Good Defense

November 01, 2004 By Jane McHugh, Army Times staff writer

Lawyers who specialize in defending service members say that the soldiers who refused convoy duty in Iraq can fight any charges against them on a couple of fronts.

As many as 18 members of a platoon with the 343rd Quartermaster Company reportedly refused to haul fuel between bases in Iraq on Oct. 13.

Some of the soldiers contacted relatives to say their trucks were not roadworthy or properly armored, that the fuel they were to deliver was contaminated, and that convoy protection measures were inadequate.

None of the soldiers has been charged or disciplined, although five have been reassigned to different units. Nevertheless, two investigations are underway, Lt. Col. Steve Boylan, director of the Combined Press Information Center in Baghdad, told Army Times.

One will assess whether there's any validity to the soldiers' complaints, he said.

The other will determine whether any of the soldiers violated the Uniform Code of Military Justice. If guilt is determined, the outcome could be prison sentences.

Although details of the incident remain sketchy, several top civilian attorneys specializing in military law shared their views of the possible defenses the troops may put up, if charged.

All agreed that if the UCMJ was violated, the charge likely would be failure to obey an order.

Attorney Charles Gittins said that if a commander of the 343rd issued an order that required violating standard operating procedures, that automatically makes the orders illegal.

So the soldiers could be cleared because they felt it was wrong in the first place, he said.

Military defense lawyer John Wickham said if it were his case, he would look into whether someone in prior command in the 343rd, either an NCO or an officer, had previously ordered the fuel undeliverable due to contamination — only to have a subsequent or replacement leader countermand that order. The soldiers “may have been trying to follow [the original] orders in good faith,” Wickham speculated. **“You’re talking about 18 or so soldiers. That’s quite a consensus.”**

To Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University Law School, “the biggest factor was that they were reservists.

“Routinely, National Guard and Army Reserve troops have long complained about substandard equipment.

“These are citizen-soldiers — and they tend to be more citizen than soldier in their outlook. They also tend to be more subject to military snafus,” Turley said.

All three lawyers said the case is highly charged politically as the war effort is a big issue in the Nov. 2 presidential election.

Gittin predicted that if anyone is charged and convicted, punishment would be fairly mild. He said that Article 15 commanders' hearings or letters of reprimand, if any disciplinary action, would be appropriate.

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 in Iraq. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION SOLDIER KILLED IN BALLAD RPG ATTACK

October 28, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release
Number: 04-10-26C

TIKRIT, Iraq – A rocket-propelled grenade attack on a combat patrol south of Balad killed a First Infantry Division Soldier at about 12:40 p.m. Oct 28.

Baghdad IED Kills U.S. Soldier, Wounds 2 More

28 October 2004 (AFP) & Aljazeera.Net

A US soldier and at least one Iraqi civilian were killed and two soldiers wounded when a bomb hit a military patrol in southern Baghdad, the army said.

An explosives team was on the scene to determine the cause of the blast, which tore under a flyover along the main road south to the cities of Hilla and Najaf.

Witnesses saw one US army vehicle burst into flames before the whole area was sealed off.

"I heard the blast," said Amir Hasan, a security guard. "I rushed up to the roof of the centre to look at what happened I saw one US military vehicle on fire and a lot of smoke coming from the area."

HOW MANY MORE FOR IMPERIAL WAR?



Pastor Steve Parker watches over family members crying in front of Pvt. David Waters' coffin during a memorial service at Parkside Church of the Nazarene in Auburn Oct. 27. Waters, 19, was killed Oct. 14 in a bomb attack in Iraq. (Sacramento Bee/Brian Baer)

Local Soldier Killed

10/28/2004 The Herald News

RAYNHAM -- Cpl. Brian Oliveira never turned his back on a friend and fulfilled his youthful dreams when he joined the military.

The 22-year-old Marine from Raynham, who attended local schools as Brian Horseman, died Monday from injuries suffered during a battle in Al Anbar Province in Iraq, the Department of Defense announced yesterday.

He had been living in San Diego with his wife. He is also survived by a 6-week-old baby boy he had only met in pictures. Little Nathan was born on Sept. 11.

Former neighbor Jean Ouellette, whose daughters Kate and Mollie spent much of their teenage years with him, last saw Oliveira in 2001 when he told her he had joined the Marines.

"He said he thought it would be a good idea, that he could get an education," she said.

He left for his second deployment to Iraq in May.

His father, his mother Lillian Oliveira and sister Carolyn Horseman all live in Fall River.

Three Marines Wounded In Ramadi Fighting; Marine Captain Says Resistance Resources “Bottomless”

**NO WIN POSSIBLE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



A US marine walks pass a bullet-riddled wall in Ramadi. (AFP/Patrick Baz)

Oct 28 By Alistair Lyon, BAGHDAD (Reuters) & (AFP) & 28 October 2004 Aljazeera.Net

In Ramadi, U.S. troops clashed guerrillas who fired grenades at a U.S. base and the regional government office.

Eight people wounded, including three US marines.

The fighting in Ramadi, which an AFP reporter said flared in the centre and the west of the city some 100 kilometres (60 miles) west of the capital, erupted after marines sealed

off a section of the city to conduct a pre-dawn search of houses for bomb-making equipment, said Captain Sean Kuehl.

At Ramadi's main hospital, Doctor Amer al-Obeidi said two dead Iraqis had been received and five wounded people admitted, including a policeman, following the clashes.

A car bomb exploded in front of a mosque in the path of a US military, said police Lieutenant Abdel Sattar al-Dulaymi, while the marines said mortars were fired at a local government building around lunchtime.

Kuehl said the marines had killed 700-800 insurgents in the unrest since their arrival, noting that they faced a "limitless" opposition.

"There is a limitless pool of manpower these guys can draw on; it's bottomless," he remarked.

Iraqi journalist Mahmud Abd Allah told Aljazeera US forces were engaged in weapons search operations in different neighbourhoods in Ramadi city.

"The forces have called on citizens through loudspeakers to stay in their homes, threatening to arrest or open fire at any one who violates the instructions," he added.

"Ramadi city is paralysed," Abd Allah said. "Schools and governmental departments are all closed, as the forces have closed all roads," he added.

"US forces have also detonated a citizen's house, arresting three of his family members, claiming they have found explosives in his house," Abd Allah said.

"However, the owner of the house confirmed that no explosives were found in his house, saying that US forces said so to blow up his house and arrest three of his sons"

Mosul Patrol Attack: One Wounded

28 October 2004 (AFP) & 28 October 2004 Aljazeera.Net

A US soldier was wounded in the al-Masarif neighbourhood west of Mosul city when a bomb hit a patrol, a spokeswoman said.

A Deadly Road: Insurgents Rule Highway 8 South Of Baghdad

[Los Angeles Times, October 28, 2004]

Highway 8, just south of Baghdad, is a 20-mile stretch of bad road. Charred cars dot the roadside, reminders of dozens of killings, carjackings and kidnappings. **The cities along that part of Highway 8---Latifiya, Mahmoudiya, Yousifiya and Iskandariya---have been dubbed the Death Triangle** by locals. **U.S. Marines are attempting to establish a presence in the area. [Really bad idea.]**

TROOP NEWS

10 Months At Home And Back To Bush's Slaughterhouse To Drive Fuel Trucks

October 28, 2004 WorldNow

SAVANNAH, Ga. **One-hundred-fifteen members of the Army's 416th Transportation Company are on their way back to Iraq -- after just ten months at home.**

They departed Hunter Army Airfield in Georgia last night for their second deployment since the war began. **Members of the unit will be driving supply and fuel trucks** and will be supporting combat units west of Baghdad.

Sergeant Ray Thompson, whose daughter was born last week, says it wasn't much of a break. He says since they came home, they've basically been preparing to go back. He says he's bought a video camera so his daughter can see him.

MORE:

Lejeune Troops Get Orders For Iraq

[Jacksonville Daily News, October 28, 2004]

Some 14,000 Marines and sailors with II Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune will deploy to western Iraq in early 2005.

Record Number Of GI's Going AWOL; "Former Commander" Invites Cops To Kill One Of Them

10.28.04 By: Angela Williams, Piedmont Television

Fox 24's Angela Williams reports that an arrest warrant has been issued for a Middle Georgia Soldier for deserting his unit in Iraq. And, an investigation by Fox 24 News shows that there are a record number of G.I.'s not reporting in for duty overseas and turning up AWOL.

A Middle Georgia man is reported AWOL from the army national guard, in an act that has become quite common.

According to Army Officials, Jeffery Glover from Dry-branch, Georgia has not reported back to his 175th Maintenance Company for duty. Glover already served time over in Iraq, but now can not be found, and **his former commander says he can be considered dangerous. [That is a clear, direct invitation to police officers to kill him. In a just world, the "former commander" would be buried first.]**

Bill Galvin is a spokesperson for the GI hot line and website that help council men and women thinking about going AWOL or already have. He says that numbers show a third of inactive reserves have not checked in.

Bill Galvin/ Spokesperson for G.I. Hotline: *"The ones that almost universally will go AWOL are the ones that have already been there and something that they witnessed or experienced or are apart of made them realize this is wrong I can't do it and I wont do it."*

AWOL, standing for going absent without leave reached its all time high during the Vietnam War. The act is a violation of military law, but apparently does not seem to be on the minds of those doing it.

Bill Galvin/ Spokesperson for G.I Hotline: *"The max penalty is 2 years in jail and a bad discharge, if they charge you with deserting the max is quite a bit."*

Galvin says the purpose of the hot line and web site is to make sure those who do desert, know the consequences and their options.

Bill Galvin/Spokesperson for G.I Hotline: *"We get lots of calls from people who have been to Iraq or Afghanistan and they when they get orders to go back hey say, 'no I won't do it'."*

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.

Strykers In The Mud

“If there is any kind of soft dirt or mud, it causes a lot of problems — you just get stuck,” Capt. Matt Blome, commander of 1-14’s B Troop said. **“I think the tires are too narrow and too small.”** (November 01, 2004 Matthew Cox, Army Times staff writer)

Soldier Lost Both Legs In Iraq; “I Felt, ‘I’ve Got To Go Defend My Country.’ Stupidest Thing I’ve Done In My Life.”



Jonathan Bartlett at Walter Reed Hospital. (VICKI CRONIS PHOTOS/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT)

October 27 By KATE WILTROUT, The Virginian-Pilot

WASHINGTON — **Over the course of a few hours, a string of emotions rolls across Jonathan Bartlett’s face.**

Amazement. Anxiety. Pain.

Anger, though, isn’t one of them. Neither is defeat.

The 19-year-old soldier admits to crying sometimes at night — mostly because of the pain, partly because he feels so alone.

A month after an improvised explosive device ripped apart the Humvee he was driving in Iraq and changed his world forever, one mood dominates the room of this teenage double amputee: frustration.

Bartlett is frustrated by his lack of mobility, his confinement, the year he will spend in and out of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, learning how to walk and live again.

Even so, the frustration is tinged with excitement for what lies ahead. He's curious about walking on new, manmade legs. About going to college and starting a career. About whether years from now, he'll be like the Vietnam amputees who have visited him, guys who had to show him their prosthetic legs to convince him they'd lost a limb.

Other moments, he's filled with wonder. That it happened to him. That he survived. That he needed 11 units of blood. That his tall, muscular frame — which boasted a 44-inch chest and 29-inch waist — has withered to 140 pounds. That he can pinch his thigh and feel loose skin between his fingers. That he will never again race around a track on his own legs.

Perhaps most surprising is the sympathy the private first-class feels for others, like soldiers or Marines who lost their arms. He sees them sometimes in the hallways of Ward 57, and he gives thanks that he only has to relearn how to walk - not how to hold a fork, dial a phone, button a shirt.

Bartlett is one of more than 8,000 U.S. military members who have been injured in Iraq, many catastrophically.

Bartlett entered the Army two months after graduating from Maury High School in Norfolk, with dreams of becoming a Ranger or Green Beret.

He had other options. Bartlett, who was enrolled in some honors courses, said he graduated in the top third of his class, and he scored within two points of the maximum on the Army's IQ test. But his father was the first person on the family tree to finish high school, and Bartlett wasn't ready to commit to college without knowing what he wanted to study.

"I felt starry-eyed out of high school," he said. "I felt, 'I've got to go defend my country.' So goddamn stupid. Stupidest thing I've done in my life."

Bartlett chose to be "a grunt" — his words — and serve in the infantry. He graduated from basic training at Fort Benning, Ga., then tried, unsuccessfully, to get through basic Special Forces training. **Bartlett said he did so well on the land navigation portion that instructors thought he cheated and pushed him out.**

On Sept. 25, Bartlett's unit was finishing up a mission just south of Fallujah, a hotbed of insurgent activity. **Suited up with a Kevlar vest, helmet and shatter-resistant glasses, he drove a Humvee that had extra layers of armor on its skin.**

But an improvised explosive device, or IED, hit the Humvee where it was most vulnerable — its engine. Bartlett said the homemade bomb consisted of two, 120-millimeter artillery shells chained together. All three occupants were injured in the explosion, but no one died.

Bartlett ended up with pieces of the engine embedded into his body armor. He was told that if he hadn't been wearing the safety glasses, he would have been blinded. His legs, though, were hit the hardest: His right calf was sheared off below the knee, its femur broken above it. The left leg bled heavily, putting him in danger of losing so much blood he wouldn't recover.

"I'm surprised I had it in me to just keep living," Bartlett said. "But if my body was that adamant to survive, I'm not going to let it stop me."

Although he has no memory of what happened, he was told he stayed conscious while medics treated him and discussed amputating his left leg above the knee.

"They decided they had to chop it off, or I would die," he said.

Because Bartlett was on heavy pain medication, the weeks following the explosion are a blur.

A month afterward, the pain – and his reliance on narcotic drugs – has decreased. But Bartlett still writhes around on his bed trying to get comfortable. He's constantly rearranging four pillows, flipping from his back to his stomach, and occasionally grabbing the bar that runs the length of his bed to do pull-ups and even hang upside down.

For a guy who ran track in high school, and considered himself a "PT stud" in Army physical fitness terms, the inactivity is painful. His rear end hurts from sitting too much, he complained.

Still, Bartlett says the pull-ups have made his arms stronger. Other parts of his body are unrecognizable to himself. Bartlett was 5-foot-11 – "most of it legs," he said – and 180 pounds. Now, his legs are different lengths. One amputation was done below the knee, the other above the knee – what's known in amputee parlance as "B&A."

In his last surgery – either the sixth or seventh, he has lost count – the doctors shaved bone off of both stumps and positioned the skin around them to ready him for prosthetic legs. He can't wait to get them.

Visits from men who lost limbs in previous wars helped Bartlett see past the phantom pain that still haunts him. Their pants hide the prostheses, and they move like normal.

One particular veteran is an inspiration. "You can't tell he's an amputee," Bartlett said. "He looks like an old guy – an elderly old guy, but not a crippled old guy."

Last Saturday, Bartlett received an award he had never desired: the Purple Heart.

Bartlett's Purple Heart came from Maj. Gen. Robert Wilson and Command Sgt. Major Terrence McWilliams, both visiting from Fort Carson, Col., where Bartlett's unit will be stationed when it leaves Iraq.

The two career soldiers and their wives, **as well as an Army photographer** and assistant, packed Bartlett's hospital room. They asked Bartlett about his injuries, and he related what he had been told.

Toward the end, he added: “Just for the record sir, I never wanted a Purple Heart.”

The men said they were proud of him, that he had a good attitude, that if needed any thing, they would try to help him get it. With handshakes and claps on the back, they were gone in a matter of minutes. **Bartlett asked a visitor to put the medal and the citation away in a drawer.**

“I don’t have the heart to tell a two-star and a brigade sergeant major that I’m not going to be in the Army much longer,” he said. “I’ve already served my country. I have the wounds to prove it.” Earlier, when his veins were coursing with painkillers, Bartlett had told his parents that he wanted to stay in the Army, that he even wanted to keep jumping out of planes.

But the drugs, and that sentiment, have worn off. Instead, Bartlett hopes to go to college – on the Army’s dime – and perhaps work for a prosthetics company, helping to design bionic arms. He anticipates he’ll receive \$3,000 in disability payments monthly, and to a 19-year-old, that sounds pretty good.

“I’m going to get that degree and start making arms,” he said.

After the general left, Bartlett recounted the twists his life has taken.

“I’m 19, with a Purple Heart, got my legs blown off, and the rest of my life is taken care of financially,” he said. “I’d much rather have to work for it.”

Friends of the Bartlett family have opened an account to help pay for their travel to Washington to visit their son, and for a handicapped-accessible addition for their home.

Those interested in donating money should deposit it in SunTrust account #1000027873214. The account is in the name of “Ruth Roper and Rocky Wayne Bartlett, fbo Jonathan Bartlett.”

“Our Sons Are Seen As Cannon Fodder”

October 24 2004 Lorna Martin, The Observer

Lorna Martin meets the families of the Black Watch soldiers incensed by 'betrayal' over Baghdad posting

Brenda Brady is pacing furiously up and down the living room of her neat Dundee home. She says keeping on the move is the only thing that helps contain her anger. It doesn't seem to be working.

Mrs Brady, 44, a mother of six, is seething. But then, along with the other families, friends and veterans of the Black Watch regiment, she believes she has good reason to feel aggrieved.

Two of her four sons are serving with Scotland's most famous regiment, whose impressive history stretches back to 1725. Only weeks ago, it was in effect facing disbandment.

Now, after a week of rumour, denial and uncertainty, it has finally been confirmed that it is to be redeployed from the relative security of UK-controlled Basra to flashpoints in a US-controlled area south of Baghdad.

Mrs Brady's son, Charlie, 22, was due home tomorrow at the end of his second six-month tour of duty in the Gulf. Instead, he will be part of the 850-strong unit heading north to free US troops and enable them to join the long-awaited battle to retake Falluja.

'I am so angry at the callous and heartless way we have been treated and at the lies we have been told,' she said. 'One minute we are being told that the regiment may no longer exist. The next the boys are being asked to give their all to clean up after the Americans. I am terrified of what my son's going to see and I'm dreading, more than ever, that I'm going to get that knock on the door. It's a terrible waiting game.'

Mrs Brady last spoke to Charlie on Thursday evening. 'He was trying to sound upbeat. But I'm his mother. I could hear the disappointment in his voice. You want to cry and tell him how much he is loved and that you can't wait until he walks through the door and says "Hi Mum". But you can't. You don't want to let him know how worried everyone is back home.'

Like many of the families of the Black Watch, which has its HQ in Perth, Mrs Brady's anger is not simply about the sudden change of plans for her sons' regiment.

Although both the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and the Defence Secretary, Geoff Hoon, have given an assurance of a strict time-limit on the redeployment, most families have dismissed such promises as meaningless.

James Buchanan said he expected his son Gary, 26, to spend his second consecutive Christmas in the Gulf.

'We've had lies, lies and more lies about this war from Hoon and Blair,' he said. 'Why should we believe them now when they say our boys will be back for Christmas?'

Back at Mrs Brady's home, she was rereading her son's latest letter. In it, he said he hoped to be back in Dundee for Christmas. His mother isn't optimistic.

'We know our boys signed up for this and we know they'll do the job to the best of their ability. But while Bush and Blair and Hoon will all have their families around the table at Christmas, we won't. Because our sons are being treated as nothing more than cannon fodder.'

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW 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)

Bulgarians Want Out Of Iraq

[International Herald Tribune, October 28, 2004]

Seven Bulgarian soldiers have been killed in Iraq during the past 18 months. **Bulgarians question their contribution to the war.** The soldier's death follows the decapitation of two Bulgarian truck drivers in July and adds pressure brought on the government by socialists to withdraw troops from Iraq by the end of January.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Contractors Captured

Oct 28 By Alistair Lyon, BAGHDAD (Reuters)

Two Iraqi contractors working for U.S. forces were abducted.

Resistance Blows Up Occupation Guards Post, 4 Wounded, 2 Captured

Oct 28 By Alistair Lyon, BAGHDAD (Reuters)

Four Guards were wounded in evening clashes between U.S.-led forces and insurgents in Duluiya, said hospital staff in nearby Balad. Rebels blew up an Iraqi National Guard post. The attackers seized two Guards.

Occupation Cops Hit Near Baquaba; Two Dead

28 October 2004 Aljazeera.Net

Two Iraqi policemen and their driver were killed and four others injured in overnight attacks near the city of Baquba, a witness said on Thursday.

Ibrahim Muhammad said unknown assailants opened fire on the police officers as they entered the Abu Sayda station in the city's northeastern district.

Unknown attackers also opened fire on an Iraqi National Guard patrol a few kilometres away at the Ghalbiya checkpoint.

Captured Collaborator Guards Executed: “Your Love For The Dollar Drove You To This Fate”

28 October 2004 Aljazeera.Net & AP

A written statement warned that "we will not forget about the blood of our elderly, women and children that are shed daily in Falluja, Samarra, Ramadi and elsewhere on your hands and the hands of those you work with."

On Thursday, a purported Iraqi group said on its website that it had killed 11 Iraqi troops taken captive south of Baghdad.

The Ansar al-Sunna Army said it had beheaded one and shot the ten others. The 11 Iraqi National Guardsmen had been captured on the highway between Baghdad and Hilla.

"After investigating with them and [hearing] their confessions, it turned out this group was responsible for guarding the Crusader American troops in Radwaniya area and what's around it in southern Baghdad," a statement posted on the web site said.

The web site had a video link showing the soldiers who read out their names and the name of their unit. It then showed the graphic execution of the men- some of whom were squatting, their hands tied behind their backs, before they were shot or beheaded.

A voiceover- identified by a subtitle as that of the head of the group or "Emir al-Jamaa" - addressed all Iraqi security forces.

"A call to the army and police: Repent to God ... abandon your weapons and go home and beware of supporting the apostate Crusaders or their followers, the Iraqi government, or else you will only find death."

A written statement warned that "we will not forget about the blood of our elderly, women and children that are shed daily in Falluja, Samarra, Ramadi and elsewhere on your hands and the hands of those you work with."

"We have repeatedly warned you and you refused but to support the Crusaders. **Your weakness and love for the dollar drove you to this fate, which is incomparable to the torture God has for you,"** the statement added.

Senior Occupation Politician Attacked

28 October 2004 Aljazeera.Net

A senior member of Badr organisation, which belongs to the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution (SCIRI), and two of his bodyguards were seriously injured when unknown armed men attacked their car west of Baghdad, Iraqi police sources told Aljazeera.

Fakhri Abd is in a very critical condition and has been transferred to a hospital in Baghdad to receive treatment, the sources added.

Foreign Ministry Official In Occupation Regime Killed

BAGHDAD, Oct 28 (Reuters)

The resistance killed a senior Iraqi Foreign Ministry official in Baghdad.

Labeed Abbawi told Reuters four men pulled up outside a house in central Baghdad yesterday and tried to force Qusay Mehdi Saleh, who was Iraq's ambassador to the United Arab Emirates until a month ago, into their car.

When he resisted, he was shot twice, Abbawi said.

After returning from the Emirates, Saleh held a senior position in the Foreign Ministry.

The Islamic Army in Iraq, one of several groups fighting the interim Iraqi government and its US backers, claimed responsibility for the killing, Al Jazeera television reported.

Prominent Chalabi Buddy Killed

28.10.2004 New Zealand Herald

BAGHDAD - Gunmen have killed a senior Iraqi politician, a party official said on Wednesday.

Mohammad al-Ayash, the Iraqi National Congress party's chief for Sunni western Iraq, was killed on Tuesday as he left his Baghdad home, party spokesman Entifadh Qanbar said.

Ahmad Chalabi, a scion of a Shi'ite merchant family from Baghdad, founded the secular party in the 1990s.

Three Injured By Basra Occupation Cop Bus Bomb Attack

28 Oct 2004 "PA"

A bomb hit a bus carrying 20 police officers in southern Basra, injuring three, police said.

Lt. Col. Kareem al-Zaidi said the 6.30 am (0300 GMT) attack happened in the Qibla neighbourhood in the western part of the city.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

How Will I Vote? I Won't And It's Not Because I Don't Care

October 3, 2004 By Kwaku O. Kushindana, The Washington Post. Kwaku Kushindana works for US Airways (Express) at Reagan National Airport.

In many ways, I fit the profile of those considered most likely to vote. College educated. In my early fifties. African American and born in the South. Well read and traveled. A regular listener of C-SPAN radio, who also watches political movies and attends conferences focusing on the needs of the disenfranchised. I even worked on the first Senate campaign of Louisiana Sen. Mary L. Landrieu.

Some would call me a political junkie.

So it is sure to strike many as heretical that I have absolutely no intention of voting in the Nov. 2 presidential elections. I am proud to say that I have been registered since I turned 18, when the vestiges of voter discrimination were very much alive in my home state of Louisiana. Yet I have rarely voted in local or national elections unless I have seen a clear issue or a candidate who reflects my concerns.

Those of us who choose not to vote are rarely given the opportunity to discuss this option. We are routinely dismissed as uninformed or just plain stupid. The venom leveled against us ironically prevents those who do plan to vote from thinking critically about what going to the ballot box actually means. Although I can't speak for others, after looking at the presidential voting process, I've concluded that there is little to vote for. It isn't apathy driving me away from the polling places, but passion of a different sort.

One of the most vociferous cries raised against African Americans who consider the possibility of not voting is: People died for your right to vote. I've concluded that this is only partially true.

It is correct that the civil rights establishment championed the right to vote, but what has been forgotten is that there was no consensus within that movement about the way to promote the advancement of African Americans. **The SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) and the black power movement sought to change the fundamental power dynamic in this country, not simply to win the right to vote.**

How then did electoral politics get pushed to the top of the African American agenda? It was with the rise of black elected officials and the emergence of a privileged black community (who, by the way, had the most to gain) that the unthinking mantra developed.

Is there anybody to vote for? President Bush was correct when he spoke before the National Urban League and suggested that Democrats take the black vote for granted.

Oh, the Democrats have done a good job of persuading African Americans that they are our "friends." But with friends like these, there is no need for enemies. With Democrats believing they have blacks in their pocket, they fail to put a high priority on our concerns and thus fall short as an affirmative choice.

As for the Republicans, their lack of concern for the interests of the poor and their neglect of black issues disqualify them for my vote. Sen. Trent Lott's apparent nostalgia for racial segregation in his endorsement of his colleague Strom Thurmond's career was hardly auspicious. His successor as majority leader doesn't strike me as much better. Sen. Bill Frist has voted to end affirmative action in the government's funding of small businesses, and in 2000 he voted against the enactment of federal hate crime laws.

What about the notion of voting for the "lesser of two evils"? I would ask, is it really the lesser of two evils or the flip side of the same coin?

If you take a look at the Center for Responsive Politics' contributions lists and correlate the contributions to both major political parties, it is hard to discern the "good guys" from the "bad guys."

The power of money has corrupted the entire electoral process.

MORE:

"The essence of oligarchical rule is not father-to-son inheritance, but the persistence of a certain world-view and a certain way of life ... **A ruling group is a ruling group so long as it can nominate its successors... Who wields power is not important, provided that the hierarchical structure remains always the same.**": George Orwell, 1984

“Then, Will A Giant Awaken?”

10/28/04 By John Pilger

From Guatemala to Iran, from Chile to Nicaragua, to the struggle for freedom in South Africa, to present-day Venezuela, American state terrorism, licensed by both Republican and Democrat administrations, has fought democrats and sponsored totalitarians.

Most societies attacked or otherwise subverted by American power are weak and defenceless, and there is a logic to this. Should a small country succeed in breaking free and establish its own way of developing, then its good example to others becomes a threat to Washington.

And the serious purpose behind this? Madeleine Albright, Bill Clinton's secretary of state, once told the United Nations that America had the right to 'unilateral use of power' to ensure 'uninhibited access to key markets, energy supplies and strategic resources'.

Or as Colin Powell, the Bush-ite laughably promoted by the media as a liberal, put it more than a decade ago: "I want to be the bully on the block." **Britain's imperialists believed exactly that, and still do; only the language is discreet.**

That is why people all over the world, whose consciousness about these matters has risen sharply in the past few years, are 'anti-American'.

It has nothing to do with the ordinary people of the United States, who now watch a Darwinian capitalism consume their real and fabled freedoms and reduce the 'free market' to a fire-sale of public assets.

It is remarkable, if not inspiring, that so many reject the class and race based brainwashing, begun in childhood, that such a class and race based system is called 'the American dream'.

What will happen if the nightmare in Iraq goes on? Perhaps those millions of worried Americans, who are currently paralysed by wanting to get rid of Bush at any price, will shake off their ambivalence, regardless of who wins on 2 November.

Then, will a giant awaken, as it did during the civil rights campaign and the Vietnam war and the great movement to freeze nuclear weapons? One must trust so; the alternative is a war on the world.

OCCUPATION REPORT

World Class Cluster Fuck: Iraqi Police Put In The Firing Line Without Weapons

28 October 2004 By Kim Sengupta in Baghdad, The Guardian

At Albiya, Col Khaldoun Abdullah could hardly contain his mirth at American and British claims that his forces were ready and equipped to take over fighting the insurgents.

"I keep on reading and hearing that we have been trained and we have been given the arms necessary by the Americans. But I somehow seemed to have missed all this," he said.

The five policemen standing on the roof of the Albiya station had one pistol between them. They have not been issued with rifles or body armour. Three of them did not even have any documents to show they were in the police. All of them, however, have come repeatedly under fire.

Albiya has gained the reputation as a Fort Apache of Baghdad, one of the most bombed, mortared, rocketed and shot at police stations in the city.

The last two blasts killed 38 policemen, injured 110 and demolished a part of the building. **In recognition of the dangers the Americans sent some more weapons - the 215 officers now have one-third of a semi-automatic rifle each.**

These are the men, the Iraqi police and army, that the US and British government insist will take over security in Iraq, combating the ferocious rebellion, allowing their troops to be pulled out. They are already doing the bulk of the dying for the occupation forces, as last weekend's massacre of 49 recruits highlighted.

What marked out those particular killings, apart from their brutality and the numbers involved, was the public accusation by Iyad Allawi, Iraq's interim Prime Minister, that gross negligence by US forces had led to the men's deaths.

He was joined by Roj Nouri Shawis, the interim Vice-President, and Tawfiq al-Yasseri, the head of the interim parliament's security committee, demanding to

know why the Americans training the recruits had sent them unarmed and unprotected to their deaths.

The fact that these men, who owe their positions to the US authorities, are so openly critical, is an indication of the growing anger here about the perceived indifference of the Americans to the horrendous rate of casualties among Iraqi security forces.

At Albiya, Col Khaldoun Abdullah could hardly contain his mirth at American and British claims that his forces were ready and equipped to take over fighting the insurgents.

"I keep on reading and hearing that we have been trained and we have been given the arms necessary by the Americans. But I somehow seemed to have missed all this," he said.

"I have officers going out to face men armed with the latest guns - call them terrorists, the resistance, what you will - unarmed. It is not just they who are in danger, but their families get attacked too. I have repeatedly asked for more protection, but hardly anything ever happens. It is not just the Americans, no one from our government came to visit this station after we had so many people killed."

An officer came in, almost fell over attempting to execute an exaggerated salute, and then left after delivering some papers. "Look at that man, a new recruit sent to me," sighed the Colonel. "He is not so bad I suppose, just an idiot.

"But we have had people sent here who I would not trust at all. I have discovered that the Americans have made no checks on these men. Do you wonder why police stations and army barracks get blown up?"

Sergeant Abdul Razak, 42, showed a bullet scar on his left leg. "This is not unusual, many of the men have been shot. Problem is that they have little to shoot back with."

He waved at a file of police cars, and battered pick-ups, about to roll out on patrol. "None of these is bulletproof. You won't see Americans driving around Baghdad in them, of course, and the same with the foreign contractors. They have these armoured Toyota Land Cruisers which cost about \$200,000 [£110,000]."

The roof of the police station has four submachine-guns on each corner after a spate of snipings and mortar attacks.

But Jabbar Kadhan's main concern was that he has not got a police warrant card despite months of trying. "There were two of us answering a call the other day, we were in plain clothes. We came to an American checkpoint and they would not let us go past. We said we were policemen, and they said 'where is your ID?' Of course we did not have any, and they would not believe the reason," he said.

"Don't do that too often," warned Sergeant Amer Jassem. "You are lucky you weren't shot, you know what the Americans are like."

RECRUITING FOR THE RESISTANCE CONTINUES



Iraqis lie handcuffed as US soldiers carry out a raid on a house in Ramadi.
(AFP/Patrick Baz)

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

No Comment

President Bush said that the U.S. was doing everything in its power to locate 380 tons of missing explosives in Iraq, adding, "We are checking eBay every day."
10.27.04 The Borowitz Report

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Supply Vehicle Ambushed

Oct 28, 2004 By Syed Ullah, JUS Pakistan

In Paktia, Taliban Mujahideen dressed in military uniforms have attacked a vehicle carrying supplies for US soldiers and setting it ablaze. No specific details on casualties are yet available.

Web Copies

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

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/> ; www.qifightback.org ;

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

www.williambowles.info/qispecial

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for purely educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. Go to: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml>. for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.