

## GI SPECIAL 2#C64

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



New England Journal Of Medicine, Dec. 9, 2004, Peoples et al.351 (24): 2476, Figure 8

**“For The American  
People, I Feel For Them  
Too,  
I Send My Love To All  
The Troops”**

[This is a message to Americans from Rose Gentle. Her son was killed in Iraq. She leads a campaign to bring all the Scots and other troops home from Iraq, now. Her words carry more weight, and contain more truth, than 5000 pages of bullshit from the politicians. T]

**From:** Rose Gentle, [justiceforgordongentle@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:justiceforgordongentle@yahoo.co.uk)  
**To:** GI Special  
**Sent:** December 27, 2004

Iraq's kids need mums and dads,  
the best gift Bush could give them is to give them their homes back  
and stop killing them  
and I would still have my boy,  
him and Blair are just pigs.

Gordon only did 6 months training,  
went to Iraq on May 20 this year and killed on 28th June,  
Gordon's my only boy,  
I have petitions out all over Scotland,  
bring our troops home now  
and for the American people I feel for them too,  
I send my love to all the troops,

Rose Gentle.

**MORE:**

## **A Soldiers' Mother Charges Murder**

[This is from an interview with Rose Gentle:]

By Susan Flockhart (Sunday herald) limited, 29 August 2004

**In her first major interview, the mother of a 19-year-old soldier blown up in Basra explains why she believes he was murdered by the British government. Her 19-year-old son Gordon, a soldier with the Black Watch, was killed by a roadside bomb in Basra earlier this year.**

**MURDER is an ugly word.**

**But Rose Gentle hates euphemisms about falling on battlefields or being "killed in action".**

**Two months ago in Basra, her 19-year-old son, Gordon, died when a roadside bomb exploded, and as far as Gentle is concerned, he was murdered.**

"If somebody puts a bomb under John Prescott's feet and he stands on it, that's murder," she reasons. "It's like getting stabbed in the street."

So who is the murderer? Gentle isn't saying the Iraqis are blameless and she'd like to get her hands on whoever planted that bomb. **But the bulk of her ire is directed**

**towards the British government, who she thinks used her son as “a bit of meat” in a conflict she describes as “a war over oil”.**

“Look out there,” she says, pointing through the window of her impeccably neat front room, “and tell me 18-year-olds around here are aware of what’s happening in wars.” In this street she reckons only three or four lads have work – as part-time school cleaners. “That’s no job for a young boy.”

Before he signed up, her son was on £42 weekly benefit. After dropping into his local JobCentre last November, Gordon got talking to the chaps on the army recruitment stall. Next thing his parents knew, officers were calling at their house and driving him to the recruitment office to watch videos.

Sure, Gentle and her husband, George, tried to talk him out of it. “But he turned round and said, ‘There’s nothing much happening here’. **All Gordon wanted was his driving licence and a trade as a mechanic. He thought, ‘If I join the army, I’ll get my trade, a driving licence.’ He always said after he came back from Iraq, he’d have his driving licence, get a car. But he never got a chance to do any of that.**”

Rose’s son – known locally as the Gentle Giant because he was 6’3” and always doing odd jobs for the community – died on June 28, just weeks after he’d completed his training and a few hours before power was officially handed to the Iraqi government. Rose, a cleaner, was at work that day, and army officers broke the news in the back of their car. “They told me Gordon had been killed. I asked how. They said he’d been blown up.”

**This morning, Rose Gentle has been thinking about the young Black Watch soldier from Glenrothes who was killed in Basra on August 12, and whose mother has also called for troop withdrawal. It’s the eve of Marc Ferns’s funeral, and Gentle’s heart goes out to his distraught family. She herself looks tired and drawn. But while her husband seems to have been choked into a grief-stricken silence, Rose Gentle can’t hold back the rage that burns more fiercely every time she hears of another soldier’s death.**

She’s mad at John Prescott, the “arrogant man” who invited the Gentles into the Downing Street office during Tony Blair’s absence, then talked so much “rubbish” she and Maxine stormed out.

**She’s outraged at “con man” George Bush, and incensed by our “halfwit” Prime Minister who was so busy “sunshining himself” on holiday, his letter of condolence didn’t arrive until seven weeks after Gordon’s death. If Tony Blair really believed in this war, why didn’t he encourage his own sons to get out there and fight?**

But mostly, she just feels desolate. There’s a terrible emptiness in this house, swelling up from the floorboards and sloshing through the front door into the bare, flowerless garden that Gordon cleared ready for mono-blocking before he left for Iraq.

Every night she sits in her son’s bedroom. The walls are decorated with dozens of the Celtic shirts that were left on the garden fence by a shocked community. His Royal

Highland Fusiliers beret hangs from a hook and everywhere there are photographs: Gordon at home, cuddling his baby godson; Gordon mucking about on a camel beneath a Persian sun; Gordon in uniform, smiling.

**In the saddest corner sits a small suitcase with its lid half-open and the contents bulging out as though someone had begun unpacking, but hadn't the heart to continue. An army major delivered it last Friday: all Gordon's things, including his last letter from his mother. "Mind and dodge the bullets," it said.**

Not everything came back. There was a pair of shoes Gordon had left at the home of one of his army friends. "That boy phoned recently and said – 'Rose, I'm all dressed up for a night out and I'm wearing Gordon's shoes. Do you mind?' I said – No, son, you wear them and be proud."

Gentle's voice is growing hoarse. She misses her son and "his mad wee daft ways". He used to come home joking, saying, "Hey, woman of the house, get the dinner on!" He used to smile down at her, calling her his "daft wee mam". She still sometimes wonders if it's all a terrible dream. **But since she can't seem to wake up, she channels her energy into a campaign she hopes might prevent other mothers from being dragged into a similar nightmare.**

**The repercussions of Rose Gentle's outspoken attack on the political and military forces that led her son to war could be profound. With growing numbers of bereaved relatives in Britain and America condemning their governments' involvement in Iraq, commentators like No Logo author, Naomi Klein, predict they might actually succeed in ending their countries' involvement in that conflict.**

**Here in the UK, relatives like Rose Gentle are leading the public eye into places Tony Blair's government would rather forget: shabby streets and empty homes from which bright young people disappear into a war they don't understand.**

<p><b>Rose Gentle, who left school at 16 to work in a factory and has spent her life in a place scarred by poverty, is not accustomed to debating with deputy prime ministers. She can't offer a sophisticated analysis of Blair's motivations for war, except that she believes they are linked to greed, money and power.</b></p>
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The inarticulateness of rage and grief is, however, a measure of its magnitude.

The bereft have no need to justify their emotions.

Governments that send young soldiers to their deaths, on the other hand, are duty-bound to explain themselves.

**With high-profile Labour politicians like Robin Cook now calling on Tony Blair to admit he has "learned lessons" over Iraq, it seems possible that Rose Gentle, and mothers like her, may force him to concur.**

**And if he cares to accept Rose's Gentle's invitation, there is much for a prime minister to learn in a small Pollok bedroom, where the Union Jack that covered a young man's coffin now sits in the corner with his un-emptied suitcase.**

**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:**

### **Sgt. Dies Of Samarra Wounds**

December 28, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1323-04

Staff Sgt. Todd D. Olson, 36, from Loyal, Wis., died Dec. 27 in the 67<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital in Tikrit, Iraq from wounds sustained in Samarra, Iraq on Dec. 26, when an improvised explosive device detonated. Olson was assigned to the National Guard's 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 128<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Neillsville, Wis.

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### **British Soldier Found Shot**

28 Dec 2004 By Tim Moynihan, PA

**A British soldier has been found dead with a gunshot wound in Iraq, the Ministry of Defence said today.**

**Sergeant Paul Connolly was discovered at Shaibah Logistic Base, south west of Basra, on Sunday.**

"His death is being investigated by the Royal Military Police, but initial inquiries do not indicate hostile action or other suspicious circumstances," the MoD said in a statement.

It added: "Sgt Connolly, inevitably nicknamed 'Billy', served with the Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers, attached to 21 Engineer Regiment of the Royal Engineers. Aged 33, he came from Crawley in West Sussex, and was separated, with three children.

"He joined the REME in 1989 and, after initial military training, became a metalsmith. "He progressed to become a master welder, responsible for fabricating and welding a wide range of military equipment.

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### **Maine Soldier Seriously Wounded;**

# Other Bodies Coming Home

December 28, 2004 By BILL NEMITZ and JOSIE HUANG, Staff Writers, Blethen Maine Newspapers Inc.

MOSUL, Iraq - A Maine soldier was in "very serious" condition Monday after being wounded by shrapnel during the second bombing attack on a battalion of the Maine Army National Guard in less than a week. Sgt. Harold Gray, 34, of Penobscot was recuperating from head and back injuries at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany

Gray, a member of the 133rd Engineer Battalion, was the most seriously injured in the attack Sunday that also wounded two other Mainers.

**The three men were part of a four-vehicle convoy from the 133rd's Alpha Company that was traveling through northeastern Mosul to deliver heating units to an Iraqi National Guard commando post when a roadside bomb exploded.** "The good news is that (Gray is) in stable condition and breathing on his own," Lt. Col. John Jansen, the 133rd's commander, said Monday.

**Gray's wife, Laurie Gray, 36, kept vigil by the phone Monday, waiting to learn more about her husband of just a year. She described him as a carpenter with a tough exterior and passion for stock-car racing that belied a gentleness with his three daughters and her daughter.**

Gray was driving one of two five-ton dump trucks in the convoy through Mosul around 10:45 a.m. Sunday when an improvised explosive device planted by the curb detonated. Wilson was the passenger in Gray's truck, Jansen said. Kendall was the gunner in the rear Humvee and had his back to the explosion.

He sustained a shrapnel injury to the back. Both he and Wilson were treated and returned to duty.

**The truck driven by Gray was equipped with door armor that is hung over the panel with steel brackets. But by the time the truck was salvaged, the armor had been stripped from the vehicle by Iraqis at the scene, said Capt. M.D. Mitchell.**

**Laurie Gray said she worries every day about her husband and expects the worst. But the timing of the convoy attack, the day after Christmas, was particularly cruel.**

On Christmas they had been communicating through Web cameras, and her husband talked giddily about breaking in the new stock car he had left behind. On his head was the cap she had sent him, emblazoned with "20," the number of his favorite driver, Tony Stewart. "He told me merry Christmas and we just talked on the computer just like it was a normal day," she said.

**He shipped out to Iraq in January with the 133rd, the largest contingent of Mainers deployed in the war. His job is running heavy equipment used to build roads.**

"He didn't love being over there," his wife said. "But he's very proud to wear his uniform."

The bodies of slain soldiers Sgt. Lynn R. Poulin Sr., 47, of Freedom and Spc. Thomas Dostie, 20, of Somerville are expected to arrive in Portland today aboard a commercial airliner. Memorial services will be held later this week.

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## **ENDLESS LOOP: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



US Marines from 3rd Squad Bravo Company during house-to-house searches in the city of Fallujah. (12.28.04 AFP/Hrvoje Polan)

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# **General Says "Troop Frustration Growing" Huge Numbers Say They Are Not Properly Trained For War**

Dec 26, 2004 Matt Gnaizda, The Epoch Times

As of Christmas Eve, there have been over 1300 U.S. military casualties in Iraq- 90% of which have occurred after President Bush declared the war was over. Sneak attacks and suicide bombers appear to be eating away at American morale.

**“Troop frustration is growing,” said a four-star general, speaking on condition of anonymity.**

**Only 60% in the regular military and 40% in the National Guard and Reserves said they felt they were properly trained and equipped, according to a recent poll of 655 troops on active duty by The National Annenberg Election Survey.**

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## **Former Officer Says Combat Tours A “Total Absurdity”; Quarter Of 2004 Combat Deaths From Pendleton**

Dec. 27, 2004 Phillip Carter and Owen West, MSN Slate. Phillip Carter is an attorney and former Army officer

Today's burden is not wide, but it is deep.

Communities such as Oceanside, Calif., home to Camp Pendleton and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, have suffered tremendous loss during this war -- **nearly one-quarter of U.S. combat dead in 2004 were stationed at Camp Pendleton.**

Military leaders should be mindful of this fact: **To send infantrymen on their third rotations to Iraq this spring is akin to assigning a trooper three tours in Vietnam: harsh in 1966 and a total absurdity by 1968.**

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## **Campus Anti-War Network Commits To Reaching Out To The Troops**

“Earlier This Month”: Left Hook, From M. Junaid Alam interview with Campus Anti-War Network Reps.

Desmond G., Southern Representative, Georgia State University:



Coming out of our November national conference CAN was unified in the idea that reaching out to soldiers and doing counter-recruitment work would be our main long-term focus.

Most of us recognize that GI resistance is what stopped the war in Vietnam, and it is the job of the antiwar movement to make sure soldiers are a part of this movement.

More student antiwar activists are realizing that if we want to end the war, we have to support the resistance within the military.

This means working with military families and vets but, in particular, reaching out to soldiers--people who are actually in the military.

I think the main task of the antiwar movement is to make soldiers feel like they are a part of the movement and to give them confidence to take the actions necessary to end the war.

We need to make sure antiwar military families are in touch with each other on the local level.

We need to let soldiers know about organizations like Iraq Veterans Against the War, publications for GIs like Traveling Soldier and GI Special, and we need to listen to soldiers. A lot of them feel like civilians are just blind to what's going on. They feel isolated, and they want someone to listen to them.

### **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! ([www.ivaw.net](http://www.ivaw.net))

## **Court-Martialed Major Defiant**

(New York Daily News, December 28, 2004)

**A former Ohio Army Reserve commander who was court-martialed for scrounging abandoned Army vehicles in Kuwait to outfit her unit returned home unrepentant, saying she would "do it all over again."** Maj. Cathy Kaus was released from a Navy brig in San Diego, Calif., where she served six months for theft, willful neglect and conspiracy.

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# Too Long In The Combat Zone: “The Military's Dirty Little Secret”

"These guys are going over there and fighting for their country and come back and don't have their country fighting for them," she said.

Dec. 28, 2004 JON SANCHE, Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. - **When National Guard Sgt. Jeffrey Sloss returned home last May after nearly a year of duty in Iraq and Kuwait, his wife and 10-year-old stepdaughter immediately knew something was wrong.**

**The 33-year-old seemed different, unable to concentrate or perform simple tasks on his job as a South Carolina state trooper.**

He feared seeking psychological help because of what it might mean for his career, said his wife, who nonetheless persuaded him to call an Army program that helps soldiers find treatment. But he wasn't truthful on the phone, answering no when asked whether he thought of harming himself.

**Just a few hours later, with his stepdaughter playing outside, Sloss shot himself in the heart as his wife rushed to try to knock the gun out of his hand.**

The psychological toll from the war in Iraq is climbing, according to new research and experts who cite the severe stress of fighting a deadly insurgency. **Though the Pentagon says mental health care, including battlefield counseling, is expanding, critics counter that military suicides and post-traumatic stress disorder cases have exposed gaps in how treatment is delivered to soldiers.**

"There have been improvements. We have now combat stress teams in Iraq, we have programs for soldiers when they come back," said Stephen Robinson, executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center, a veterans advocacy group. **"But it's still the military's dirty little secret that lives are shattered and often we don't do enough when the war is over and these people have to deal with the consequences of what they saw and did."**

Said Wayne Smith, a former combat medic and PTSD counselor with the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, **"They know that PTSD is real, know that the soldiers in Iraq are way overstressed, but they don't have the ability to recycle those soldiers, to rotate them out of the combat zone."**

**Pamela Sloss said she believes her husband began displaying symptoms of a mental disorder even before he left for the Middle East in May 2003. Though he was a veteran of the first Gulf War, he was in denial about his deployment this time, believing he would be sent home from Fort Jackson, S.C., rather than to Iraq.**

His communications unit came under mortar fire 61 times in Iraq. When he returned, he was a different person than the man she married shortly before he left.

"He just became really paranoid about things he couldn't do," Sloss said in an interview from her Union, S.C., home. "He couldn't focus, couldn't concentrate. At his civilian job, things that were like tying his shoe before he left, he just couldn't do."

**Sloss believes her husband didn't receive proper counseling before he was released from active duty. She told the House Armed Services Committee in a letter that "services did not seem readily available" when her husband mentioned he was having trouble with focus and concentration.**

**"The only numbers I had were for a chaplain and a major at Ft. Jackson," she wrote. She found a number for an Army program on the Internet and her husband called.**

"When he got off the phone, he told me that he was not completely honest with the woman on the other line," Pamela Sloss said. "He told me that she asked if he had had any thoughts of hurting himself and he said he told her 'no.' That was my first indicator that he had thoughts of that nature."

Now, the widow can only think of what might have saved her husband.

"I guess I just wasn't strong enough or that he was just determined," she said. **But the military, she added, has done a poor job of teaching soldiers and their families about where to turn for help.**

**"These guys are going over there and fighting for their country and come back and don't have their country fighting for them," she said.**

## **133rd Member Suffers Brain Damage In Convoy Attack**

Dec 27, 2004 By Beth Staples, VillageSoup

**Laurie Gray was celebrating Christmas with her daughters Sunday, Dec. 26 when she received a call that her husband Sgt. Harold Gray of Penobscot, a member of the 133rd Engineer Battalion, was injured during an attack on a convoy.**

Harold's father George Gray, also of Penobscot, said Monday afternoon that Harold underwent a six-hour operation in Iraq, which saved his life. After Harold was stabilized he was reportedly flown to a hospital in Germany. George said the plan is to transport Harold soon to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. At that time, Harold and his daughter-in-law will take a flight there to see him.

According to George, Harold, 34, was driving a Humvee in a convoy Sunday morning when an improvised explosive device detonated on the road on the driver's side of the Humvee.

**George said his son suffered injuries to his head including the left, right rear portions of his brain, and to his eyes and left arm in the attack.**

Medical personnel, said George, are keeping Harold, a graduate of George Stevens Academy in Blue Hill, in a medicated coma so his brain will not swell. **George reported that there has been some movement in one of Harold's legs.**

**George said Harold, a carpenter, has plans to go back to school when he returns from Iraq and wants to study to become a teacher or counselor. Harold and his wife Laurie have four daughters ranging in age from 3 to a teenager.**

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## **Ron Kovic Asks if Vietnam Taught Us Anything**

September 19, 2004 STEVE LOPEZ / POINTS WEST

Ron Kovic comes toward me in his wheelchair before the doors of the elevator close. He reaches for my hand and squeezes hard. "Come on," he says, and we slip into the third-floor Redondo Beach apartment where he's been painting, writing, suffering through another war.

Kovic's home is strikingly neat, as if this is his way of bringing order to the world. His canvas paintings hang from the walls like Polaroids of disturbed dreams. They hang next to photos of him with Oliver Stone and Tom Cruise, who played Kovic in the movie based on his searing, angry and sorrowful book, "Born on the Fourth of July."

Kovic, with clipped white beard and wire rim glasses, apologizes for not answering my first call a couple of weeks ago. He was holed up here, in mourning and rebellion, as the three-year anniversary of Sept. 11 rolled around about the same time the toll of dead American soldiers in Iraq hit 1,000.

**"What did we learn from Vietnam?" Kovic asks.**

**It all comes back to that. Kovic, 58, was shot on a Vietnam battlefield 36 years ago, and he has been paralyzed from the chest down ever since. When he gets into his hand-controlled vehicle and drives to a war protest, when he shifts his body onto his bed at night and closes his eyes, he has to believe his sacrifice has advanced the cause of peace.**

I don't have the heart to tell him we aren't conditioned to learn from mistakes, but he already knows it.

"The president says the terrorists hate us because we're free," Kovic says, bristling at the simplification.

Let's go get the terrorists, he says. But let's admit there's a backlash against decades of hypocritical U.S. foreign policy based on economic self-interest, and let's admit this country has bedded a long line of despots.

"People forget that we supported Saddam Hussein to begin with," Kovic says. "What's been missing after Sept. 11 is a national dialogue about all of this."

It's missing in the presidential campaign too.

"Democracy is loud, it's angry, it's spirited, it's passionate," Kovic says. "I love this country and care about the safety of every American, and for our future security, we have to talk about what happened, and why, and go on from there."

Kovic is writing a book on the subject. He's also writing a fresh preface for the re-release of "Born on the Fourth of July," drawing on current events.

"When I first heard it was 1,000 dead in Iraq, I went online and looked at the faces," he had told me earlier by phone. "I scrolled down and looked at as many of them as I could, and I saw the same young faces I saw from my days in the service."

He saw himself too. **The gung-ho New York kid who was born on Independence Day, dreamed of playing for the Yankees and couldn't wait to enlist with the Marines.**

**If you were strong, you answered the call without question.**

**You believed.**

**You believed everything they told you until you were surrounded by the screams of young men without faces or limbs, and it was only then that none of the justifications added up.**

**Iraq, 40 years later, has raised Kovic's ghosts.**

**"People say, 'Yeah, I support the war, I support the president, I think we should be in Iraq.' Do they really know what it's like to be there? To be hit by a bullet? To live with your wounds for the rest of your life? Do they have any idea what parents go through?"**

Kovic leans forward, eyes burning.

"Will these people who support the war be there when these soldiers come home? Will they be there on lonely nights five years later, 10 years, 20 years later? Will they be there when they're homeless because their lives have been ruined, or they're in prison because they were never able to adjust?"

"I'm glad President Bush didn't have to suffer the way some of us did. I'm glad he didn't get shot and end up in a wheelchair and suffer all the awful consequences. I know what

it means. I've been on the battlefield fighting for my life when another Marine came up to save my life and was killed.

**"I know what it means to come home to a government that isn't prepared for all the wounded. I saw paraplegics and quadriplegics. I remember it, I can smell it and I will never forget it.**

**"This is a war we should never have fought to begin with, and it's becoming a catastrophe and a mirror image of Vietnam. Another guerrilla war, another senseless quagmire.... It can only make us greater targets of terror, and it can only harm the soul of America."**

Kovic takes off frequently on these flights of rage, then almost seems to pull himself back. Don't get him wrong, he tells me. He's not a cynic, because he can't afford to be.

"I feel a lot of energy," he says. "This is a great challenge."

He looks down toward frail bent legs, smiles and says:

**"How can I turn this into something wonderful? Victorious? It's important for me not to be a victim. Dignity over despair is what I tell myself.**

**"Dignity over despair."**

Kovic takes me on a tour of his apartment. In the dining room is an abstract scrawl that might be called a self-portrait for its sadness and hope.

"Look to the sky," say the painted words, "when the tears of life are driving you wild."

Kovic leads me out and toward the elevator. He asks about my wife and daughter and says he's always wanted to get married, but hasn't found the right girl yet.

Out front, he is on the porch as I walk away, thanking me for coming.

**I get into my car and open "Born on the Fourth of July" to the first page:**

***I am the living death***

***The memorial day on wheels***

***I am your yankee doodle dandy***

***Your john wayne come home***

***Your fourth of july firecracker***

***Exploding in the grave***

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

## Kewanee Soldier Injured By Roadside Bomb

12/28/04 By Star Courier staff

A Kewanee soldier in the Galva National Guard unit was in a hospital in Germany today after the truck in which he was riding was hit by a bomb near Baghdad on Christmas Eve.

Marcus Johnson, a 2002 Wethersfield High School graduate, was the gunner in the truck and was behind the gun when the bomb exploded.

Maj. Michael Kessel, commanding officer of the Galva unit, detailed the incident in an e-mail to Dan and Karen Ramsey of Kewanee, Johnson's grandparents. Johnson is the son of Mark Johnson and Nancy Mederos.

**"When the bomb went off, I remember the truck lifting off of the ground before slamming back down on all four blown tires," Kessel's e-mail said.**

**"The truck also immediately filled with smoke and dirt from the explosion," the e-mail said. "When we came to a stop, the driver side doors were jammed but fortunately I was able to get mine open."**

Kessel wrote that Johnson and a civilian police adviser who was riding in the truck were both severely injured.

**"Both of the severely injured men were out of the vehicle and being treated within a minute," the e-mail said.**

**Kessel wrote that at first, Johnson's injuries "did not look that bad." But when medics removed his vest, they saw that shrapnel had entered his left lung.**

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## Worth Remembering

A 25-year-old from South Dakota, he is very clear on his opposition to the war.

***"I object to the Iraqi war because it is an act of aggression with no defensive basis.***

***"Before the US dropped the first bomb, it was quite evident that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. And the notion that the US wants to export democracy to Iraq is laughable***

*Democracy is by the people, not an appointed puppet theatre."*

American war resister Jeremy Hinzman, who fled to Canada from Ft. Bragg to avoid fighting in Iraq. (Socialist Worker, Canada, 9.1.6.04)

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## **PHILADELPHIA HOMELESS FAMILIES OCCUPY ARMY RECRUITMENT CENTER, DEMAND MONEY FOR HOUSING, NOT FOR WAR!**

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

NOVEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>

Today, as part of their "Homes For The Holidays: Operation Bring the Money Home" Campaign, dozens of homeless families belonging to the Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KWRU) have moved their Bushville Tent City to sit in at the main Army Recruiting Office in Philadelphia. As police and Civil Affairs officers attempted to lock the families out of the office, the families quickly placed signs saying "Billions for the War, Still Nothing for the Poor" and photographs of homeless children with the words, "Bring the Money Home" on every available space in the office.

**"The Bush administration continues to put billions of dollars towards a needless, brutal war while families across America suffer without the basic necessities of life. This is not a fight for a bed in a homeless shelter; it is a fight for decent, affordable housing for everyone in this wealthy nation."**

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## **More Canonical Murphy's Laws of Combat**

11. Never go to bed with anyone crazier than yourself.
12. Never forget that your weapon was made by the lowest bidder.
13. If your attack is going really well, it's an ambush.
14. The enemy diversion you're ignoring is their main attack.
15. The enemy invariably attacks on two occasions: a. When they're ready.  
b. When you're not.
16. No OPLAN ever survives initial contact
17. No inspection ready unit has ever passed combat.
18. Five second fuses always burn three seconds.
19. No combat ready unit has ever passed inspection.
20. A retreating enemy is probably just falling back and regrouping.



21. Incoming fire has the right of way.
  22. The easy way is always mined.
  23. Teamwork is essential; it gives the enemy other people to shoot at.
  24. When you have secured the area, make sure the enemy knows it too.
  25. Never draw fire; it irritates everyone around you.
  26. If you are short of everything but the enemy, you are in the combat zone.
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## Left Turn Only

(Inside the Navy, December 27, 2004, Pg. 1)

A problem with the Marine Corps' Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle's main computer has threatened to delay an operational assessment of the amphibious transport scheduled for spring, according to the EFV program manager. **Last month, an EFV was conducting open-ocean testing off Camp Pendleton, Calif., when the computer locked up, leaving the vehicle stuck in a left turn while skimming over the water at 27 knots. The operator had to shut down the computer to regain control.**

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## IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

## **33 Occupation Guards, Occupation Cops Killed Today; General Ambushed**

12-28-2004 SAMARRA, Iraq (AFP) & By DUSAN STOJANOVIC, Associated Press  
Writer & Reuters & Slobodan Lekic, The Associated Press & Aljazeera

In one of a series of apparently coordinated strikes in Sunni Muslim strongholds north of Baghdad, **insurgents stormed a police station in Dijla between Tikrit and Samarra and killed 13 policemen**, police said. "They attacked with many weapons," Major Ali al-

Tikriti said. "They attacked with heavy weapons. It was not clear if the attackers suffered any casualties."

"Armed men took control of the police station and executed 12 policemen, three of them officers," one police source said, adding that **the attackers then dynamited the building.**

**Just outside Tikrit, the hometown of ousted dictator Saddam Hussein, three policemen were killed in an attack on a checkpoint.**

**Another four policeman and a national guardsmen were shot dead at a police station in Ishaki,** south of Samarra. The home of the town's police chief was also attacked but no one was hurt.

**A huge number of fighters attacked al-Ishaki police station, the emergency squad and the al-Ishaki directorate building, injuring two others,** police sources told the Iraqi journalist.

He said the attacks seemed well organised and coordinated.

**Three of the US-backed guardsmen and three civilians were killed in a car bomb attack targeting a US-Iraq military convoy in Samarra, hospital sources said.** Also in Samarra, U.S. troops killed three gunmen when they attacked an American post, the military said. No U.S. servicemen were wounded.

**In Baquba, 50 kilometres (30 miles) northeast of the capital, six national guardsmen were killed** in an attack **that wounded an additional 26** after the paramilitary troops cordoned off an area in order to disarm a roadside bomb, said U.S. Maj. Neal O'Brien.

**Unidentified fighters killed Capt. Na'em Muhanad Abdullah, a Baqouba police commander, and wounded three other men,** a spokesman said.

**At Al-Shurqat, 180 kilometres (110 miles) north of Samarra, two policeman were killed** in an attack on their post, an officer said.

**In Baghdad, a bomber was killed and six people wounded in an attack against the convoy of an Iraqi national guard general Modher Abud** as he was leaving his home, the interior ministry said. Witnesses said the car laden with explosives appeared to have been parked close to the general's house in a long line of vehicles waiting overnight for petrol, a common feature of Baghdad's fuel crisis.

**Another policeman was killed in Balad** when insurgents opened fire on security forces guarding a voter registration centre, wounding two more.

**In Mosul, 225 miles northwest of Baghdad, a gunman attacked a police station in the northeastern Hadbaa district, killing one policeman,** said police Capt. Ahmed Khalil.

**Several mortar rounds targeted an Iraqi police station in Mufriq, north of Baghdad, injuring three policemen,** said Lt. Saleh Hussein. The three were hospitalized.

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

## **Four Civilian Collaborators Killed**

12-28-2004 SAMARRA, Iraq (AFP)

**Three Iraqi businessmen working with the US army were killed at Suleyman Beg,** 155 kilometres (93 miles) north of Baghdad and a curfew imposed on the city afterwards, an officer said.

**An Iraqi interpreter for the US army was killed and an Iraqi businessman traveling with him was captured** another officer said.

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## **Eight Mercenaries Killed**

By DUSAN STOJANOVIC, Associated Press Writer

**A militant group claimed it executed eight Iraqi employees of an American security company.**

**Militants released a videotape Tuesday, saying they have executed eight and released two Iraqis who were employed by Sandi Group, an American security company,** and had been held hostage since Dec. 13. The claim could not be independently verified.

The insurgents claiming to represent three Iraqi militant groups — the Mujahedeen Army, the Black Banner Brigade and the Mutassim Bellah Brigade — said in the tape obtained by APTN that **"the eight have been executed because it was proven that they were supporting the occupational army."** The other two will be released for the lack of evidence, a statement read by one of the militants.

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## **Diyala Deputy Governor Killed**

12.28.04 Associated Press

The deputy governor of the restive Anbar province, Moayyad Hardan al-Issawi, was killed near Ramadi, east of Baghdad, police official Abdel Qader al-Kubeisy said.

**Fighters who shot him left a statement next to his body: "This is the fate of everyone who deals with the American troops." The statement was signed by the group Mujahedeen al-Anbar, or "holy warriors of Anbar."**

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## OCCUPATION REPORT

### THE ALI BABAS LOOT IRAQ



## Who Grabbed Iraq's Oil Money? Only \$8 Billion Unaccounted For: Former U.S. Official Says Money "Squandered"

By Lisa Myers & the NBC investigative unit, Nov. 30, 2004

After the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the United States took control of all of the Iraqi government's bank accounts, including the income from oil sales. The United Nations approved the financial takeover, and President Bush vowed to spend Iraq's money wisely. **But now critics are raising serious questions about how well the United States handled billions of dollars in Iraqi oil funds.**

Frank Willis, a former senior American official in Iraq, tells NBC News the United States failed to safeguard the oil money known as the Development Fund for Iraq.

**"There was, in my mind, pervasive leakage in assets of Iraq, and to some extent, those assets were squandered," says Willis.**

In one example of insufficient controls, the United States stored hundreds of millions of oil dollars in a vault in a Baghdad palace. Government auditors found that the key to the vault was kept "unsecured" — in a U.S. official's backpack.

**Iraq's U.S. administrator, Paul Bremer, pledged last year to hire a certified public accounting firm to ensure proper controls. But the United States gave the contract not to an accounting firm but to a tiny consulting company, Northstar — which NBC News found is headquartered at a private home near San Diego.**

"They violated the rules. They picked a contractor who didn't meet their requirements," says Paul Light, a government contracting expert and professor at New York University.

Northstar's president says the Pentagon knew Northstar was not a certified public accounting firm and that four experienced employees went to Iraq and did a good job. **However, one audit notes that a single Northstar employee maintained spreadsheets tracking billions of dollars.**

<b>NBC News has learned that a draft government audit faults the United States for "inadequate stewardship" of up to \$8.8 billion in oil money, handed over to Iraq's ministries but never fully accounted for.</b>
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## **National Guard Abuses Anger Public: “This Isn’t A Police Force - It’s A Bunch Of Thugs In Uniform.”**

By Hussein Ali al-Yasiri and Imad al-Shara in Baghdad (ICR No. 92, 29-Nov-04)

The US-backed and trained Iraqi National Guard is facing allegations of misconduct and ill-discipline.

**In recent weeks, there have been a number of complaints about guardsmen beating and abusing members of the public.**

**Farook Shamran, an investigator at a police station in the al-Beya’a suburb of Baghdad, says he was not only beaten up and accused of being a terrorist by guardsmen, but also alleges that they stole a large sum of money from his vehicle.**

"My brother-in-law and I were arrested by guardsmen who broke into our house one night. I showed them my police ID but they beat us both and then arrested us. We were in custody for two days, during which time they beat us again and accused us of being insurgents," he said.

**“Eventually, I was released, but when I got back to my car, which the guards had kept the key to, I discovered they had taken the money I had left there. Almost 2,000 US dollars and two million Iraqi dinar [1300 dollars] had gone missing,” he continued.**

“It was stolen money we had recovered from a gang we arrested, and technically it belongs to the government.

“I tried to follow up on the incident and get an explanation but no one would talk to me. **This isn’t a police force - it’s a bunch of thugs in uniform.** Unless the government sorts this out quickly, the National Guard will become useless and corrupt.”

In another incident, Doctor Bashar Ali, an orthopedist at al-Kindi hospital in Baghdad, said guardsmen tried to force him to treat one of their colleagues ahead of other more serious cases.

**“They told me to ignore everyone else and treat their colleague first. When I refused they started to slap and punch me. Other staff had to intervene to prevent them arresting me,” he said.**

While the behaviour of some guardsmen has provoked anger, there are those who say that even their appearance raises doubts about their professionalism.

“Their uniform looks quite like the US military’s and they’ve started wearing black sun glasses and cutting their hair really short too. They also try to act like them, holding their rifles with their fingers on the trigger and using sign language rather than talking.”

While senior guardsmen insist they will clamp down on indiscipline, some are not convinced.

**Members of the municipal council in the Baghdad neighbourhood of Al-Rashid, who recently had a run in with guardsmen carrying out over-zealous searches of council members entering a meeting, said they weren’t confident the situation would improve.**

**“We asked for guardsmen to come and provide security for a meeting we were having. But the lieutenant on duty was incredibly rude to the people they were searching,” said Jacob al-Mosawi, a council member. “Even Saddam’s henchmen didn’t talk like that to normal people.”**

Mosawi said his colleagues complained to guard commanders, who said they were appalled by what had happened and would take necessary steps to stamp it out. “But,” said Mosawi, **“As far as we can see, nothing has changed.”**

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

# CLASS WAR NEWS

## Struggles Explode Throughout China

December 22, 2004 by David Whitehouse, Dissident Voice, First Published in Socialist Worker

Growing inequality and social displacement in China have fueled a string of protests, riots and strikes since August.

**Unlike the 1989 protests centered around Tiananmen Square, which brought out mostly state-employed industrial workers in support of students in the major cities, the current unrest comes from all sectors of the workforce. Peasants in the interior, veteran employees of state enterprises and young workers in the booming coastal “export zones” have all been involved in major confrontations that display a high degree of class solidarity.**

**The explosions of struggle reflect long-simmering anger at the arrogance of China’s rulers --including the Communist Party bureaucrats who routinely cash in their political clout for personal gain.**

**In October, according to an account posted to the Web, a tax official in central China’s Sichuan province beat a migrant worker on the street with a pole and broke his leg. When police arrived, they backed up the official.**

**Within hours, tens of thousands of infuriated workers rallied at government offices in Wangzhou City to demand justice. They broke windows and set police cars on fire. Thousands of police and paramilitary forces used tear gas and rubber bullets in street battles with crowds of workers that ran into the night.**

In another central province, Shaanxi, 6,800 workers at a newly privatized textile factory beat back an assault on their livelihoods in a bitter seven-week strike that ended in late October. The new owners sought layoffs, lower wages and elimination of workers’ seniority, benefits and pensions--measures that are typical of the “restructuring” that goes along with the sell-off of state-owned factories.

**In response, the workers, mostly women, occupied the factory in September. Authorities sent 1,000 cops to expel the workers, but thousands of supporters held back the police--singing revolutionary songs including the “Internationale.”**

In Sichuan, 100,000 farmers protested being evicted from prime farmland because of the construction of a hydroelectric dam. Reports of police repression included 17 deaths, 40 injuries and more than 100 arrests.

**Meanwhile, young sweatshop workers in the booming southern coastal province of Guangdong -- who produce export items such as shoes and electronics for**

**wages of \$2 a day -- have mounted an unprecedented wave of strikes since the summer.**

**In the midst of the current unrest, Chinese officials decided December 8 to cancel an international conference on workers' rights slated for the following week in Beijing.**

Since the repression of the 1989 Tiananmen rebellion, in which hundreds of worker militants were killed and thousands arrested, struggles in China have grown in a familiar pattern. The harsh conditions of China's boom produce widespread anger and contempt for authority, but state repression of the most basic rights keeps the anger bottled up until it explodes.

**Workers typically endure 12-hour workdays and six-day weeks,** the continual threat of mass layoffs and some the most dangerous working conditions in the world. For example, China produces one-fifth of the world's coal--but four-fifths of the world's deaths from mining accidents.

Outside the highest-growth centers along the coast, there is mass unemployment in rural areas and industrial "rust-belt" towns. Official joblessness runs at 4 percent, but Robin Munro of the Hong Kong-based China Labour Bulletin puts the real figure as high as 23 percent. Layoffs from state-owned enterprises total 25 million since 1998, says Munro, and only two-thirds of those workers have found new jobs.

**President Hu Jintao has announced a final round of privatizations to reduce the number of state-owned enterprises from 190,000 to 190 in the next few years -- which promises new windfalls for investors and Communist Party bosses at the expense of current employees.**

In the countryside, where 800 million of China's 1.3 billion people live, conditions are even more harsh. Peasant families lease land leased from the state, but the plots are less than five acres, so peasants consume 65 percent of what they produce. Meanwhile, the state has withdrawn peasants' medical benefits and increased taxes for education. In the past decade, as many as 70 million have lost their land to construction of housing, roads, factories and dams, according to the New York Times, and figure is likely to reach 100 million.

This year, the government relaxed apartheid-like restrictions on internal migration, so hundreds of thousands of peasants are fleeing to the cities in search of jobs. According the Far Eastern Economic Review, urbanized peasants are sub-leasing their land to agro-conglomerates, which are stitching together plots to form large-scale cash farms employing landless migrants at less than \$2 a day.

The newest parts of the economy continue to boom -- centered mostly in the coastal provinces of Guangdong and Fujian -- and account for a large share of China's 9 percent overall growth rate. In fact, there is a labor shortage in some of these areas, which helps explain the boldness of Guangdong's workers in the past six months.

**Workers' strong bargaining position comes at a time when bosses are trying to squeeze them because of price hikes in oil and raw materials. Food costs are**



inflated, too, with a 30 percent rise in the price of staple grains as farmland gets paved over or converted to profitable orchards and vegetable farms.

The working population has every reason to struggle -- and has the fighting spirit and class solidarity to do this. The task is to build organization and broader links that can sustain, coordinate and escalate these struggles.

#### Web Copies

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

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

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

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

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

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