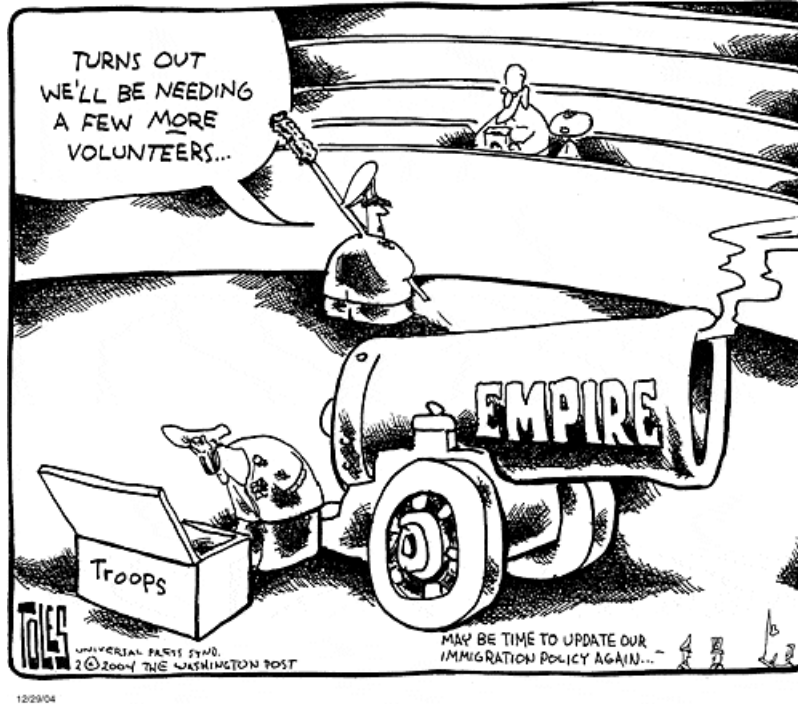


GI SPECIAL 2#C66



“People Are Losing Life And Limb Every Day” (Letter From A Friend Of Mine In Iraq)

From: Lou P

Sent: December 30, 2004

Subject: Letter from a friend of mine in Iraq

One of the friends I have in Iraq sent me this message last week. His car is parked in my driveway for the next year and I am watching his pet snake during the deployment. He lets us know that we are supporting him and the rest of the 82nd Airborne in a way that he can appreciate.

Feel free to use this letter in your organizing if it will help you



CONVOY

hello Lou

hope everything is alright there.

it is x-mass eve. i am in Baghdad right by the airport. so far this experience has been nothing like i expected.

everything has changed so much since i was here last time, the highways that we run our supplies on, the bases, and the structures for us troops.

it is creepy because the stuff that they are building all says that we are not going anywhere soon.

in ways it is sick because literally everything is about money.

it is almost like a sell out war.

Anything like coffee cups, t-shirts, coats, bags and on and on all have OIF logos and shit on them. i am drinking out of the lid of my thermos cause i refuse to buy a coffee mug or anything else for that matter that says OIF on it. i tell all the soldiers that are with me that this is not a fucking disney land or six flags it is a fucking warzone.

people are losing life and limb every day and it is not a positive thing.

out in the open desert i feel half way safe convoying due to the fact that there are so many soft targets heading south. convoy after convoy of trucks full of oil with military escorts.

i have no faith in the decision making process of the major officers appointed above me.

so far this camp i am at gets rocketed or mortared 3 or 4 times a week. my first night here we got mortared. about a week ago i woke up and 2 trailers behind me a rocket hit sometime during the night but did not explode. i took pictures of it just sticking out of the sandbags reinforcing our sleeping quarters. the same thing happened right outside where i work, another rocket was found just sticking out of the ground.

when i 1st got here it did not matter if it was incoming or out going i just hit the deck. now it is just like nothing at all.

at night we cant have any lights on outside because we will be a possible target. but on the other hand we are still expected to salute? mortars are hitting all around us but it is just business as usual.

but now a defac [dining facility] gets hit 220 mile north of here and they decide to raise our threat level. **and i put my life in the hands of the people who make these decisions?**

i am sorry i did not mean to sound all negative.

i wanted to make sure that my snake is healthy. has he been eating? also i take it that my car is ok?

Well anyway i hope that you are having a merry x-mass.

another thing i never made a copy of fahrenheit 911. if you could get me a copy of it i will appreciate it.

anyway i know that you are supporting us troops out here the best way possible. trying to get us back!

a lot of soldiers are like sheep and don't see it that way. but know this one is really grateful for people like you.

happy brave new year.

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)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Numbers Of U.S. Dead, Wounded Growing Faster: "The Prospects In Iraq Are Grim"

RUMSFELD'S REAL PRIORITY



December 30, 2004. REUTERS/Luis Enrique Ascui

Dec. 30, 2004 ROBERT BURNS, Associated Press, WASHINGTON & By John Grant Emeigh / Post-Tribune staff writer

Key measures of the level of insurgent violence against American forces in Iraq, numbers of dead, wounded and insurgent attacks, show the situation has gotten worse since the summer.

They suggest insurgents are growing more proficient.

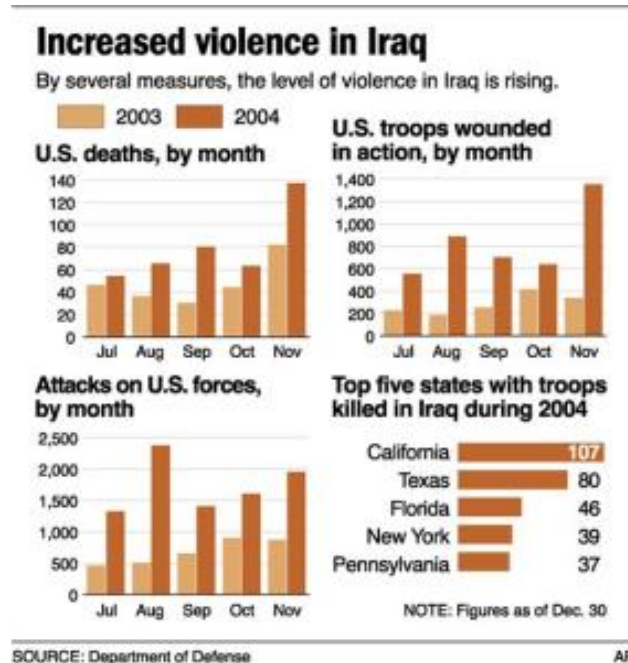
For example:

The U.S. military suffered at least 348 deaths in Iraq over the final four months of the year, more than in any other similar period since the invasion in March 2003.

The number of wounded surpassed 10,000, with more than a quarter injured in the last four months as direct combat, roadside bombs and suicide attacks escalated.

When President Bush declared May 1, 2003, that major combat operations were over, the number wounded stood at just 542.

The number of attacks on U.S. and allied troops grew from an estimated 1,400 attacks in September to 1,600 in October and 1,950 in November. A year earlier, the attacks numbered 649 in September, 896 in October and 864 in November.



(AP Graphic)

"The prospects in Iraq are grim," Dan Goure, an analyst at the private Lexington Institute think tank in Washington, said Thursday.

U.S. commanders constantly analyze the insurgents' tactics and make adjustments. Yet although U.S. forces have found tons of hidden weaponry and ammunition, the insurgents kill almost daily with makeshift bombs known as improvised explosive devices, or IEDs.

Pentagon statistics show that for all of 2004, at least 838 U.S. troops died in Iraq.

Of that total, more than 700 were killed in action, by far the highest number of American battlefield deaths since at least 1980, the first year the Pentagon compiled all-service casualty statistics. It almost certainly is the highest KIA total for any year since the Vietnam War.

U.S. deaths averaged 62 per month through the first half of the year.

But since June 28, when U.S. officials restored Iraqi sovereignty and dissolved the U.S. civilian occupation authority, that average has jumped to about 78.

Deaths among U.S. National Guard and Reserve troops are rising, reaching a single-month peak of 27 in November.

At least 17 were killed in December. Nearly 200 Guard and Reserve troops have died since the war began, and more than one-third of those deaths happened in the past four months.

According to statistics released by the Pentagon, American forces suffered more than 10,000 wounded in action from the beginning of the war through Dec. 22.

Through the first week of April, the casualty total was 3,178. By September the total had reached 7,000.

U.S. Soldier Dies After Mosul Car Bomb Blast; Command Says Resistance Increasingly Effective

GUESS WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE.



Resistance fighters patrol the streets of Mosul. (12.30.04 AFP/Mujahed Mohammed)

Dec 30, 2004 MOSUL, Iraq By Maher al-Thanoon (Reuters)

A U.S. soldier died in a military hospital Wednesday from wounds sustained in a car bomb attack on a patrol in the city of Mosul, the American military said on Thursday.

Troops in Mosul came under sustained attack Wednesday afternoon, with two suicide bombers and dozens of gunmen attacking a combat outpost and patrols in the city.

Wednesday's attack was one of the stiffest U.S. forces have faced since the guerrilla war began last year.

The variety of tactics being employed by the rebels, the quantities of weaponry at their disposal and their apparent willingness to stand and fight and take heavy losses against well-armed Americans are giving U.S. forces cause for concern.

U.S. generals conceded this month that they face a "sophisticated" and increasingly effective enemy.

**VERY BAD PLACE TO BE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



A grenade explodes as US Marines take cover during a house-to-house search in Fallujah. (12.30.04 AFP/Hrvoje Polan)

C-130 Has “Mishap” In “Northern Iraq” Crew & Passengers Survive

Baghdad, Iraq -- A U.S. military C-130 suffered a mishap on landing at an airbase in northern Iraq at 11:50 p.m. on Dec. 29. The aircraft was conducting a regularly scheduled mission when the incident occurred.

There were 11 crew members and passengers on board and all have been accounted for. **[A “mishap” is when you trip over your shoelaces. “All have been accounted for” sounds like more than a “mishap.” But the panic is so deep in command now that the loss of an aircraft carrier would be called “a minor setback.”]**

**WARNING: DEAD-END STREET:
NO WAY OUT:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. marine in Falluja, December 29, 2004. REUTERS/Akram Saleh

Militants Destroy Telephone Exchange In Mosul

BAGHDAD, Dec 30 (KUNA) -- A group of unknown militants destroyed Thursday a telephone exchange in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

A statement issued by the multinational forces said a group of militants destroyed early of today's morning a telephone exchange near Al-Maghreb district in western Mosul. The statement added the attack caused a breakdown in the telephone exchange in the entire town.

Humvee Destroyed In Samarra Fighting

12.30.04 Aljazeera

In al-Muatasim neighbourhood, south of the town of Samarra, US forces killed two Iraqis and wounded a third.

A US Humvee vehicle was destroyed when an explosive device detonated in the same town.

British HQ And Convoy Attacked In Basra

12.30.04 Aljazeera

In the southern town of Amara, an explosive device hit a British convoy and damaged one of its vehicles.

The blast occurred in front of the headquarters of the British forces, which had earlier came under a mortar attack from unidentified fighters.

TROOP NEWS

Airline Assholes Won't Give Up Seats As Family Tries To Reach Brain-Injured Soldier

December 30, 2004 Bangor Daily News

The wife of a critically injured soldier in the Maine Army National Guard's 133rd Engineer Battalion was en route Wednesday to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, where she was expected to see her husband.

Sgt. Harold Gray, 34, of Penobscot is one of three members of the unit who were injured when insurgents attacked their convoy in Mosul on Sunday.

Gray underwent six hours of neurosurgery in Iraq before being stabilized and flown to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany.

After doctors concluded that he was stable enough to travel, the soldier was flown Wednesday to Walter Reed.

The soldier suffered injuries to both eyes and to his left arm and has shrapnel in his brain and chest, according to his father, George Gray.

The sergeant is in an induced coma to allow his brain to rest, but in preparing him for the flight, medical staff said that his legs twitched, according to Hamm. "That's a very good sign," she said.

No passengers on a Bangor flight were willing Thursday to give up their seats so that Gray's wife, mother and father could travel together, family members said.

Injured Local Marine Taken To San Antonio

12.30.04 By DEBRA LANDIS, CORRESPONDENT, The State Journal-Register

Marine Cpl. Matthew Dickson of Springfield is in a San Antonio military hospital, where he is being treated for severe injuries resulting from a suicide bomb attack on a 7-ton truck he was driving in Iraq earlier this month.

Dickson, the son of Mike and Leslie Dickson of Springfield, suffered burns to his face, neck and ears, as well as abdominal injuries, his mother said Wednesday. He is in an intensive-care burn unit of Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio.

"We are cautiously optimistic," said Leslie Dickson, though she added it is uncertain how long her son will be hospitalized and what treatment will be required.

She said she anticipates that Matthew, who is 23, will wonder if he could have done anything to avoid the Dec. 22 attack that left him and six others injured.

"It is difficult to recognize the enemy. There are no front lines now," Leslie said

Humvees Linked To 1 In 5 U.S. Deaths In Iraq

Some U.S. troops continue to use vehicles with less to shield them against bombs and bullets than the average family sedan. They also complain that even hardened Humvees leave the vehicles' floors insufficiently protected.

December 30, 2004 By LISA HOFFMAN, Scripps Howard News Service

In the earliest days of the war in Iraq, an enemy grenade destroyed the Humvee carrying Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch and four other soldiers caught in an ambush in Nasiriyah.

Though Lynch was spared, the others died.

Last week, nearly two years later, Army 1st Lt. Christopher Barnett, 32, of Baton Rouge, La., was killed on a patrol mission in the outskirts of Baghdad when a roadside bomb eviscerated his Humvee.

Throughout the 21-month war, no other piece of military materiel has been associated with so many U.S. fatalities.

According to a Scripps Howard News Service study, at least 1 in 5 of the 1,320 fallen American troops has died in incidents involving the ubiquitous vehicles. Hundreds more have been wounded in them.

No other piece of war equipment has been the focus of as much criticism, as well.

When Congress returns in January, high on its agenda will be hearings into what some lawmakers, frustrated troops and anxious families say have been the needless deaths and maimings of GIs - particularly early in the war - while traveling in vehicles unduly vulnerable to bombs and other attacks.

Based on official Pentagon casualty reports, news accounts and interviews, the Scripps Howard study found at least 275 troop deaths have been associated with Humvees.

By far, most of those fatalities came when a Humvee crossed paths with a roadside bomb planted by insurgents and often detonated by remote control. On Dec. 3, for instance, that was the fate of Army Staff Sgt. Henry Irizarry, 38, of the Bronx, a father of five who was killed by an explosion that blew him out the right side of his Humvee in Taji.

Others, such as Army Pfc. George Harrison of Knoxville, Tenn., were killed in their Humvees by snipers or insurgents shooting rifles and machine guns. Harrison, 22, was shot Dec. 2 in Mosul while on a joint U.S.-Iraqi patrol.

Accidents in Humvees - which are used for transporting troops, guarding convoys, evacuating the wounded and patrolling - have also claimed the lives of dozens of troops. In December alone, five troops died that way, including Marine Cpl. Bryan Wilson, 22, of Otterbein, Ind. The married father of a 20-month-old daughter, Wilson died of internal injuries after his Humvee overturned in the Fallujah area.

Even troops in Humvees that have been equipped with armor are not immune from deadly strikes. Two New York National Guardsmen were killed Nov. 29 in Baghdad when a bomb destroyed their armored Humvee.

Never designed to withstand direct bomb attacks or serve as combat vehicles, Humvees instead were envisioned to provide transport behind the lines. As a result, only 2,000 of the 10,000 Humvees initially deployed to Iraq was armed with steel protection and bulletproof glass. Instead, most were constructed with fiberglass and aluminum, and equipped with "soft sides" and fabric roofs.

Some U.S. troops continue to use vehicles with less to shield them against bombs and bullets than the average family sedan. They also complain that even hardened Humvees leave the vehicles' floors insufficiently protected.

But after a National Guardsman complained in December to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld that his unit had to scrounge in Kuwaiti junkyards to find material to reinforce

their Humvees - triggering a firestorm of criticism on Capitol Hill and elsewhere - the Army announced a \$4 billion program to armor all its vehicles, including trucks.

The Pentagon now says that about 75 percent of the approximately 19,000 Humvees in Iraq have been armored *in one way or another*. [These are the kind of Pentagon weasel words that heap up the dead. If you get handed a kitchen paring knife, you're armed *in one way or another*.]



Jeff Stahler

A Budding Iraq Veterans Movement Against The War

By John Grant, Veterans For Peace newsletter, June 2004. John Grant is president of the Philadelphia VFP chapter. He is a Viet Nam veteran.

Mike Hoffman, a Philadelphia VFP member who served as a Marine in the invasion of Iraq, recalls a surreal moment on the outskirts of Baghdad.

Besides being a Fire Direction Controller or the guy who uses a computer to calculate elevation and direction for the 155mm rounds from their battery, Hoffman's job was to scout ahead for new battery locations as the First Marine Division moved north.

A lance corporal, he remembers standing outside with a first lieutenant, both carrying M-16s and all the gear of war, at a dusty location with one of the world's major Arab capitals, Baghdad, looming in the near distance.

The lieutenant graduated from Notre Dame and knew a lot of US history, and as they stood there where their battery's guns would soon be in range of Baghdad, they got into a discussion of Noam Chomsky, US imperialism and world oil politics.



VFP member Mike Hoffman recently returned from active duty in Iraq.
Photo by John Grant

“He agreed essentially with much of what I was saying,” says Hoffman, who had read Chomsky before leaving for Iraq. “He knew what I was talking about.” As the conversation deepened, the lieutenant stopped.

“Wait. This isn’t what we should be talking about right now.”

The subject was dropped and they went back to their jobs. This, Hoffman says, sums up the political posture of soldiers in the midst of a war zone like Iraq.

In another case, a staff sergeant who had told Hoffman he was “too smart for his own good,” put it this way: “I may not be too sure about the reasons for us being here, but we have to do our duty.”

Hoffman’s first sergeant also told him, “Maybe I don’t agree with this war, but we’re here and we have to do it.”

Once the unit crossed into Iraq for the assault on Baghdad, virtually all questions about the war stopped.

“Talking with other marines, we all agreed, the first thing is, we’re all going home. We’ll deal with the consequences of what happens later. You naturally try not to think about things like why are we here.”

Hoffman says his reading of Zinn, Chomsky and others before arriving in Iraq "opened my eyes. It gave me the tools to see what was going on. Because of my reading I understood what it meant when we were going through those Iraqi towns."

Now that he's a member of Veterans For Peace, newly married and going to community college, Hoffman is exploring ways to reach out to other Iraq War veterans like himself.

"I would love to see something along the lines of Vietnam Veterans Against The War," he said. "Right now the numbers are nothing like VVAW was. But talking with Dave Cline and others from VVAW, I realize VVAW started in the same way with, maybe, five guys trying to figure it out."

Veterans For Peace and other groups can be helpful, he says.

"Right now we're spread out too far and few between. There's a lot of fence-sitting. Soldiers come back feeling not too sure where to go and where to turn."

Pressure to conform to a positive view of the war can be intense.

Hoffman, who has spoken with maybe 15 active and discharged Iraq War soldiers against the war, says the answer is to get the veterans-against-the-war message out there as much as possible.

"Because returning soldiers don't have any other options, they get the idea that the war is great," he says, referring to pro-war peer pressure. "If we make it easier for them to be aware of another view of the war, I'm convinced more of them would get off the fence. If we can find a way to let people know we're here, we can help a movement grow."

He recommends speaking at or advertising in community college newspapers, any place where returning soldiers might be contacted. In Philadelphia, we are talking about taking out ads in popular men's magazines like Maxim - even the Army, Marine and Air Force Times, all unexpectedly quite independent.

Finally, there is the issue of advice from older vets, an issue we try to address with Mike here in the Philadelphia chapter, which is composed largely of WWII, Korean and Vietnam era vets.

"Older vets need to listen," Hoffman says. "After being in the military, no one wants to be told what to do. No matter what their stories are - good, bad, horrible, sad or whatever - the important thing is to listen."

"The reactions to my stories have been incredible," he says. "People are sick of getting the whitewash story about Iraq they get on TV."

Join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

Army Caught Faking Tillman Killing; "The Investigation Is A Lie," Father Says



© Arizona Republic. Dist. by UFS, Inc.

Steve Benson

"I'm disgusted by things that have happened with the Pentagon since my son's death. I don't trust them one bit," Mary Tillman said in a telephone interview last week from her home in San Jose.

December 6, 2004 By David Zucchino, L.A. Times Staff Writer

SPERA, Afghanistan — Pat Tillman died in the dark between two black boulders, halfway up a canyon wall, just below the mud farmhouse of Zamir Jan. To Jan, Tillman was just another American stranger. But to millions of people a world away, who watched Tillman give up a lucrative professional football contract to fight for his country, his death was an American tragedy.

At first, Pentagon officials said Tillman was killed by enemy fire. A month later, they said it was friendly fire, triggered by an enemy ambush. Today, more than seven months after Tillman died, even that amended Pentagon conclusion is contradicted by Afghans who were there the night of April 22.

Afghan police and militia commanders here, along with local residents like Jan, say U.S. Army Rangers overreacted to an explosion — either a land mine or roadside bomb — and fired wildly at Tillman and other Rangers. They say there is

no evidence that insurgents opened fire in the remote canyon where Tillman was raked by gunfire from a section of his own Ranger platoon.

Tillman's parents say the military has deceived them and stonewalled their attempts to find out how their son died. Although the Tillmans believe the Rangers who shot their son had been fired on by insurgents, they also say the Pentagon has tried to cover up deadly mistakes and negligence that night.

"I'm disgusted by things that have happened with the Pentagon since my son's death. I don't trust them one bit," Mary Tillman said in a telephone interview last week from her home in San Jose.

Mary Tillman accused the military of burning her son's uniform and gear in an attempt to cover up the circumstances of his death. She said her son Kevin, a Ranger in the same platoon as Pat Tillman that night, was ordered to guard the shooting scene but was not told until later that his brother had been killed.

It was not until weeks later, Mary Tillman said, that the family learned that Pat had been killed by his fellow Rangers. Pat and Kevin Tillman both were members of 2nd Platoon, A Company, 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, which was part of an elite group of U.S. forces seeking "high value" Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters near the Pakistani border.

Tillman's father, Patrick Tillman, said in a separate interview Friday that the family has been frustrated by what he described as deception and inconsistent statements by the Pentagon.

"The investigation is a lie," he said. "It's insulting to Pat."

As a result of the family's complaints, an Army officer said Sunday, the Pentagon is reviewing its investigation of Tillman's death, completed in May. An official with U.S. Central Command said military legal officers are reviewing the investigative report because of "inconsistencies" in the official account. **A Freedom of Information Act request filed July 6 by The Times, requesting the investigative report and other documents, has not been fulfilled.**

The Pentagon first said Tillman had been killed by insurgents who had ambushed his patrol, triggering an intense firefight in which he had fired on the enemy.

A month later, on May 29, the military said Tillman had died "as a probable result of friendly fire" from fellow Rangers during the chaos of a nighttime ambush by a dozen insurgents firing automatic rifles and mortars. **The Pentagon said the new conclusion was reached after additional investigation, even though Rangers on the scene knew right away that Tillman had been killed by friendly fire.**

On Friday, a spokesman for the Army Special Operations Command said the investigation had concluded that there had been an enemy ambush April 22.

"The information available to this command (from the theater investigation last May) indicates that enemy forces were part of the events that led to the death of Cpl. Tillman," Lt. Col. Hans E. Bush said in an email statement.

In a two-part series, The Washington Post reported Sunday and today that Tillman "died unnecessarily after botched communications, a mistaken decision to split his platoon over the objections of its leader, and negligent shooting by pumped-up young Rangers." The newspaper said its account was based on witness statements, e-mails, investigation findings and other documents.

The Post reported today that at least two low-ranking Rangers had accepted administrative punishments, but said it could not determine what actions — if any — were taken against more senior officers.

Tillman, a four-year NFL defensive back, gave up a \$3.6-million contract with the Arizona Cardinals to volunteer as an Army Ranger. He survived a tour of duty in Iraq, only to die on a remote hillside here, three hours by donkey trail from the nearest town.

In interviews with The Times, two Afghan police security chiefs who investigated the incident, along with two commanders of the Afghan militia unit assigned to Tillman's patrol, said militiamen had told them that a sudden explosion triggered long bursts of gunfire that night. They said either a land mine or roadside bomb had exploded halfway up a mountain. It caused no injuries but seemed to confuse and alarm the Rangers, they said.

Although insurgents may have set off the explosion, Afghan militiamen insisted there had been no enemy gunfire or other attack in the canyon where Tillman had died, said Karim Khan, the security chief for the Spera district.

"It was just the Americans and the militiamen shooting at each other — just a terrible mistake," Khan said.

Khan's deputy, Yusef Din, added: "There was an explosion, and the two sides thought it was a Taliban attack. It wasn't — it was just the two sides attacking each other."

Two commanders of the Afghan militia unit involved said militiamen had told them immediately after the incident that Rangers had opened fire in the dark shortly after the explosion. The commanders said some militiamen had tried to get the Ranger commander to order the firing to cease, but could not make themselves understood.

The commanders spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they had been ordered by American commanders not to discuss the incident. A request to interview Rangers and militiamen at their base at a camp outside the Afghan city of Khowst was denied by the U.S. military.

Earlier on April 22, Tillman's platoon had split into two sections after a Humvee broke down and had to be towed, according to a summary of a military investigation released May 29. Kevin Tillman was in the section that split off from his brother's unit. **The Post reported that the Ranger base company commander, under pressure from a faraway senior officer to get moving, had ordered the split.**

Tillman's parents angrily reject allegations that there had been no enemy attack, saying that Kevin Tillman had told them that his unit was ambushed. He was adamant that he had been fired on by insurgents, they said. The Post said Kevin was not asked by Ranger investigators to provide sworn statements.

According to Mary Tillman, Rangers who fired on Pat Tillman's group, believing they were insurgents, were no longer taking enemy fire by that time.

"They had already come out of the ambush area," she said.

The Post quoted military investigative accounts in which Rangers said they had heard an explosion that they assumed to be a land mine or roadside bomb. The Rangers told investigators they later saw mortar rounds explode near them and thought they could see their attackers moving on the mountainside above them, the paper reported.

Tillman and several men from his section moved toward the explosion to help the other group of Rangers, which was backing away from the explosion and toward Tillman. The other group opened fire, not realizing they were shooting at their own men, the Post said.

The Pentagon's summary said an enemy ambush had triggered an intense, 20-minute firefight. Ten to 12 insurgents attacked "from multiple locations over approximately 1 kilometer in very severe and constricted terrain with impaired light conditions," according to the account.

"Hearing the engagement, the other section of the platoon maneuvered to the location of the ambush and engaged in the fight," the summary said. A Ranger squad leader mistook a bearded Afghan militiaman standing next to Tillman for an insurgent and opened fire.

"Other members of the platoon, observing the direction of fire by the squad leader, oriented their fire in the same direction," the summary said.

Both Tillman and the Afghan were killed, and two American soldiers were wounded, the summary said.

The night Tillman died, Zamir Jan said he had been saying evening prayers around 7:30 p.m. when he heard a distant explosion high up a canyon wall south of his mud-walled dwelling. Jan, a thin, white-bearded farmer who said he did not know his age, is the only resident of the Laka Gorge, a series of rocky canyons hugging the Pakistan border.

Shortly afterward, Jan said, he heard gunfire that continued for at least 20 minutes. Just after the shooting stopped, he said, a group of American soldiers broke down his door and stormed into his house. He said they searched the dwelling, destroyed his food supplies and accused Jan of setting the explosion.

Jan said he told the soldiers' Afghan interpreter that he knew nothing about the explosion. The soldiers then asked him for a mattress, saying they needed it for a badly wounded American soldier outside.

Jan said he learned later that the soldier bleeding in the dark between two boulders on a ridge just below his house was a famous American football player. Later that night, he said, an American military helicopter landed in the streambed and evacuated Tillman's body.

Police chief Khan and his deputy, Din, said they were eating a dinner of flatbread and chicken at the tiny stone district police station a few miles from the canyon that evening. Hearing an explosion, they gathered up several policemen and set out in four-wheel drive vehicle to investigate.

"This is my district, and it's my responsibility to investigate whenever there's gunfire," Khan said.

When they reached the canyon, the two men said, they were intercepted by American soldiers who refused to answer questions or allow them to speak to Afghan militiamen.

Early the next morning, Khan said, he and his men returned to the canyon and were able to question militiamen who had witnessed the shooting.

"They said the Americans misunderstood what was happening," Khan said. "They were so worried about being attacked by the Taliban that they overreacted."

The explosion, which sent rocks tumbling down the mountainside in the dark, created a series of confusing echoes, Din said. Both Ranger units "thought the Taliban or Al Qaeda had opened fire on them," he said.

More than seven months after his death, his mother said she and her husband are determined to pursue the truth about his final hours.

"The military thinks we'll just accept their story," she said. "They obviously don't know this family."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Baghdad Occupation Cops Under Widespread Attack; 30 Resistance Fighters Set Up Checkpoint

December 30, 2004 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN)

In separate incidents Thursday, four police stations were attacked in Baghdad.

Insurgents attacked two Iraqi police stations in the western part of the city.

The other two Baghdad police stations were attacked 4 a.m. (8 p.m. Wednesday ET), as insurgents driving two cars fired at al-Yarouk police station. Police returned fire, and the attackers fled. Three hours later, insurgents fired on al-Kadraa police station. The police officer offered no other details.

About 30 rebels, armed with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms, set up a false checkpoint in Baghdad's al-Ghazaliya neighborhood. After a 30-minute gunfight, police detained one of the insurgents, the officer said.

700 Mosul Election Workers Resign; Nobody Answers The Phone Call From Baghdad

Dec 30 NICK WADHAMS, BAGHDAD (AP)

Three militant groups warned Iraqis against voting in Jan. 30 elections, saying Thursday that people participating in the "dirty farce" risked attack. All 700 employees of the electoral commission in Mosul reportedly resigned after being threatened.

The United States, which has said the vote must go forward, has repeatedly sought to portray recent attacks that have killed dozens of people as the acts of a reeling insurgency, not the work of a force that is gathering strength. [And the New York Yankees will surely beat the Red Socks.]

If true, the move will severely hamper efforts to prepare for the vote in Mosul, which has been too dangerous for most work to even begin though the vote is now only a month away.

Farid Ayar, spokesman of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, could not confirm the Al-Jazeera report.

"We have been trying to contact our people in Mosul to see if the report is accurate but we have not been able to reach them," Ayar told The Associated Press.

Across Iraq, dozens of insurgents, Iraqi civilians and security forces have been killed in attacks over the last 48 hours, and **the guerrillas have shown new ingenuity to inflict large casualties.**

Mohammed Salah, a Cairo, Egypt-based expert on Islamic militancy, suggested that insurgents may be experimenting with new tactics to test the Americans after the guerrillas lost their stronghold in Fallujah, west of Baghdad. Up to now, their chief weapons have been roadside bombs and suicide attacks.

"Since they are always pursued, they try to be creative," Salah said. "They have to be creative because they know repetitiveness is dangerous for them."

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

Power Plant Oil Refinery Attacked: Electricity Supply Lousy Already; Not Sure If It Made Any Difference

December 31, 2004 News Limited

A MORTAR or rocket strike set fire to Baghdad's Dura oil refinery today, an Iraqi interior ministry official and US military said.

After an initial blaze, the fire was contained, a US military spokesperson said.

Two civilians were treated for smoke inhalation in what the US military called a probable rocket attack.

Earlier, an interior ministry official said Baghdad firemen were struggling to douse the fire.

The Dura refinery is also home to Baghdad's main power plant. The refinery provides fuel for the plant, which provides electricity for most of Baghdad and outlying areas.

It was not immediately clear if the fire had affected the power plant. In Baghdad and much of Iraq, electricity is erratic, with households enjoying power sometimes for as little as three hours per day.

Lone Attacker With Gas Cylinder Blows Up Major Pipeline

December 29, 2004 Energy Security

December 28 - 0:30am attack on a gas pipeline in Barjisiyah, southwest of Basra.

The pipeline, which links Iraq's second largest refinery in Shueiba to the storage units of South Oil Company, was blown up by a single attacker using a gas cylinder. On December 26 the northern pipeline near Fatha was also attacked.

Collaborators Killed, U.S. Military Convoys Attacked

12.30.04 Aljazeera

On Thursday, in Baiji, four Iraqis thought to have been working with US forces, were found killed inside their car.

In Baghdad, two trucks transporting supplies to the US army were destroyed on the highway leading to Baghdad's international airport.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Vietnam Soldiers In Revolt: ARTICLE 138

Thirty-six of us signed an Article 138 complaint (*a seldom used but sometimes effective provision allowing servicemen to seek redress of grievances against superiors*) and let it be known that we would not give in to further threats.

From: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975

Most of the members of the 26th Army Band stationed within the Fort Hamilton complex at Fort Wadsworth were professional musicians who had enlisted for duty as bandsmen to avoid a draftee infantry assignment in Vietnam; many were decidedly anti-military and outspoken in their views against the war.

When the second *GI Press Service* petition came to our attention, thirty-five of the fifty-five men assigned to the unit agreed to sign.

The Fort Hamilton commander, Major General Walter Higgins, would not allow such activities, however, and through a series of threats, forced the group to withdraw their names.

An uneasy peace then prevailed for a few weeks, until an incident at a July 4 parade in New York led to renewed confrontation.

Five women—four wives of band members and my fiancée, Monica—showed up at a parade in which the band was performing to demonstrate against the war. The action sparked a near riot among irate onlookers and generated considerable adverse publicity. Needless to say, the commanders at Fort Hamilton were outraged, and a few days later began a crackdown on the unit, imposing numerous restrictions and petty harassments.

The command's efforts backfired, however, for the band members decided to fight back.

Thirty-six of us signed an Article 138 complaint (a seldom used but sometimes effective provision allowing servicemen to seek redress of grievances against superiors) and let it be known that we would not give in to further threats.

When the command responded by issuing transfer orders to three of the most active dissenters (myself included), the group decided to take the matter to court and on July 23 filed a class-action suit in the Eastern District federal court in Brooklyn.

From this point on, a sort of continuous confrontation took place.

Nearly all military functions ceased, as the command was busied with legal defense and the enlisted men pursued the offensive: filing additional court actions, writing to Congress, and establishing a GIs United chapter.

Although I was in fact transferred to Fort Bliss on July 24, the federal court agreed to maintain jurisdiction over the matter and review the facts.

(In February 1971, Judge Jack B. Weinstein found that the transfer had been unconstitutional and ordered that I be returned to Fort Hamilton. The decision was overturned by the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals in June 1971, however, and a further appeal to the Supreme Court was denied in early 1972.) The remaining GIs continued the fight, although eight of them also received orders during the first month.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

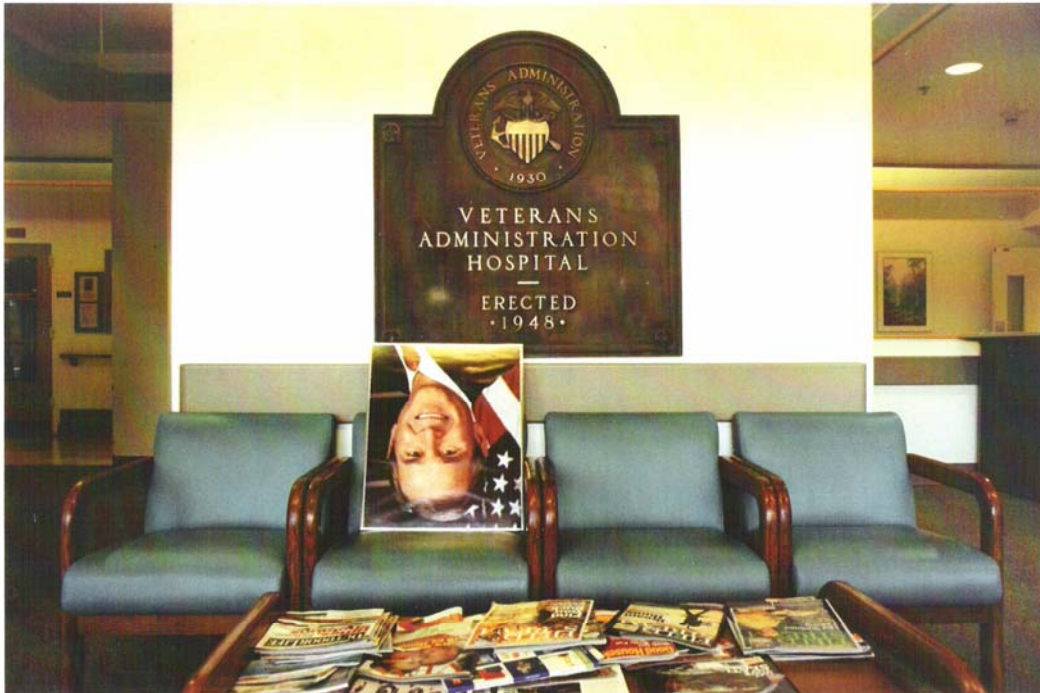
Al-Sadr Followers Arrested And Tortured To Death

12.30.04 Aljazeera

Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr's political office announced it was taking legal action against the interim Iraqi government for alleged torture and murder of its members.

Fadhil al-Shara, an al-Sadr official, said the legal action focused on the Iraqi police in Hilla, who are alleged to have arrested 15 al-Sadr supporters in the town and tortured another four to death.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Mike Hastic Army Medic Vietnam 1970-71

*"Bring 'Em On"
George Bush
July 2, 2003*

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, U.S. Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (Please contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) for examples of his outstanding work. T)

Received:

Proud Of Paredes

From: MG
To: GI Special
Sent: December 30, 2004
Subject: proud of Paredes

Yes, I am very proud of this sailor.

I heard him interviewed on Amy Goodman's program.

She mistook him for Army—he was articulate, clear and respectful.

I admire his courage and see leadership in how he handles himself. **I'd like him to know he is supported by many vets and community members.**

His story is especially critical for high school kids without economic hope to hear.

Recruiters are saying whatever they can to hook kids—being 17 and saying yes to the sales pitch is criminal in itself.

The Iraq war is criminal and everyone of us is responsible for the death and destruction in our name.

I too have trouble living with this. I will do all I can to stop the war.

MG
Olympia, WA

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.

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/gi-special/> ; www.gifightback.org ;
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>,
www.williambowles.info/gispecial

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.