

## **GI SPECIAL 3A15:**

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



James E. Wright source: Associated Press via [Cryptome](#)

# **It's Official: My Brother Died in Vain: After Two Years, The Government Has Called Off Its Fruitless Hunt For WMD**

*[THANKS TO CINDY SHEEHAN WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: She writes:  
This OP-ED was written by a dear friend of mine. My family has gotten to know  
the Zappala family quite well...unfortunately. We only know each other thru our  
losses and our activates for peace.*

*The article pretty much says it all.*

*Someone needs to be held accountable and we need some justice for Casey  
[Sheehan] and Sher's deaths.....and for the rest of our soldiers and tens of  
thousands of innocent Iraqis.*

Love  
Cindy]

January 14, 2005 LA Times

By Dante Zappala. Dante Zappala is a part-time teacher in Los Angeles

This week, the White House announced, with little fanfare, that the two-year search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq had finally ended, and it acknowledged that no such weapons existed there at the time of the U.S. invasion in 2003.

**For many, this may be a story of only passing interest. But for me and my family, it resonates with profound depth.**

**My brother was Sgt. Sherwood Baker. He was a member of the Pennsylvania National Guard deployed a year ago with his unit out of Wilkes-Barre.**

**He said goodbye to his wife and his 9-year-old son, boarded a bus and went to Ft. Dix, N.J., to be hastily retrained.**

**His seven years of Guard training as a forward observer was practically worthless because he would not face combat. All he needed to do was learn how to not die.**

**He received a crash course in convoy security, including practice in running over cardboard cutouts of children. We bought him a GPS unit and walkie-talkies because he wasn't supplied with them.**

**In Iraq, Sherwood was assigned to the Iraq Survey Group and joined the search for weapons of mass destruction.**

**David Kay, who led the group until January 2004, had already stated that they did not exist.**

Former United Nations weapons inspector Hans Blix had expressed serious doubts about their presence during prewar inspections. In fact, a cadre of former U.N. inspectors and U.S. generals had been saying for years that Iraq posed no threat to our country.

**On April 26, 2004, the Iraq Survey Group, at the behest of the stubborn administration sitting safely in office buildings in Washington, was still on its fruitless but dangerous search. My brother stood atop his Humvee, securing the perimeter in front of a suspect building in Baghdad. But as soldiers entered the building, it exploded; the official cause is still not known. Sherwood was struck by debris in the back of his head and neck, and he was killed.**

**Since that day, my family and I have lived with the grief of losing a loved one. We have struggled to explain his death to his son. We have gazed at the shards of life scattered at our feet, in wonder of its fragility, in perpetual catharsis with God.**

I have moved from frustration to disappointment to anger. And now I have arrived at a place not of understanding but of hope — blind hope that this will change.

**The Iraq Survey Group's final report, which was filed in October but revealed only on Wednesday, confirmed what we knew all along. And as my mother cried in the kitchen, the nation barely blinked.**

I am left now with a single word seared into my consciousness: accountability.

The chance to hold our administration's feet to that flame has passed. But what of our citizenry? We are the ones who truly failed. We shut down our ability to think critically, to listen, to converse and to act. We are to blame.

**Even with every prewar assumption having been proved false, today more than 130,000 U.S. soldiers are trying to stay alive in a foreign desert with no clear mission at hand.**

**At home, the sidelines are overcrowded with patriots.**

**These Americans cower from the fight they instigated in Iraq.**

In a time of war and record budget deficits, many are loath to even pay their taxes. In the end, however, it is not their family members who are at risk, and they do not sit up at night pleading with fate to spare them.

Change is vital. We must remind ourselves that the war with Iraq was not a mistake but rather a flagrant abuse of power by our leaders — and a case of shameful negligence by the rest of us for letting it happen. **The consequence is more than a quagmire. The consequence is the death of our national treasure — our soldiers.**

We are all accountable. We all share the responsibility of what has been destroyed in our name. Let us begin to right the wrongs we have done to our country by accepting that responsibility.

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## **Army Sergeant Who Refused More Iraq War Told He “Probably” Won't Be Charged**

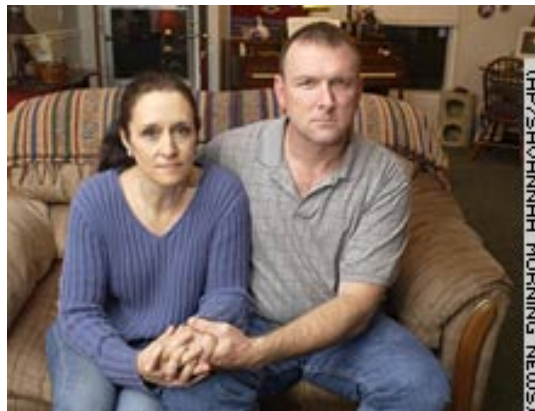
[Bloomberg.com, January 13, 2005]

U.S. Army Sgt. Kevin Benderman, a 10-year veteran who refused a second deployment to Iraq has been told he **probably** won't be charged by the military. **The military says that situations like those presented by Benderman are on a downward slide.**

[Bullshit. There are another 20 at Sgt. Benderman's base who also refusing to go back to Iraq for another tour. The truth is the "military" is pissing its pants that prosecution can lead to a shitstorm of support from the anti-war movement, and national publicity. They're just hoping it'll all go away. But more and more service members every day are deciding the war is wrong. What's on a "downward slide" is the ability of the Imperial Government in Washington to keep troops committed to a lost war for an evil purpose.]

MORE:

## From Monica Benderman



Sgt. Kevin Benderman and his wife, Monica, sit at their Hinesville, Georgia, home.

{[The War.8.2471](#)}: Monica Benderman {[mdawnb](#)} Wed, 12 Jan 2005 19:33:38 CST (10 lines)

Kevin and I just wanted to say HI.. and thank you!!!

The support is overwhelming, and we are grateful. Kevin has been placed on Rear Detachment with a new unit here at Ft. Stewart.

There is an investigation opening, into everything that happened prior to deployment, and he is getting good support, now, in getting his CO status considered.

**We are still worried about the rest of this unit, and their treatment, and hope that they will begin to speak out for themselves as well.**

Thank you again.. there are some pretty fantastic people in this world.. we're glad to have "met" so many of them.

Happy night!!!!

**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:

# SOLDIER KILLED, 3 WOUNDED IN MOSUL IED ATTACK

January 14, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS  
RELEASE Number: 05-01-18C

**MOSUL, Iraq -- A Task Force Olympia Soldier was killed and three were wounded after their patrol was hit by a roadside bomb on Jan. 13.**

The wounded Soldiers were transported to a military hospital here.

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## Laredo Marine Killed

January 14, 2005 *Associated Press*

LAREDO, Texas A 23-year-old Marine reservist from Laredo has been killed in the fighting in Iraq.

Relatives say they've been notified that Lance Corporal Juan Rodrigo Rodriguez died yesterday during an explosion that left two dead and several hurt.

He was assigned to Charlie Company, First Battalion of the 23rd Marines -- based in Corpus Christi.

Rodriguez called his family regularly, and last told them he was O-K during a conversation Tuesday.

Rodriguez made his mark as part of the United South High School Junior R-O-T-C Marine Corps. He graduated in 2000.

**Friends say Rodriguez had attended school and worked at a pawn shop to provide for his younger sister and ailing parents.**

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## 1<sup>st</sup> ID Soldier Dead In "Non-Combat" Incident

January 14, 2005 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN)

**Thursday, a 1st Infantry Division soldier died near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul in a non-combat-related death, which is still under investigation, according to the 1st ID.**

**1,364 U.S. troops have died. Of those, 1,076 were killed in combat.**

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## **U.S. Military Vehicle Damaged In Dawra**

14 January 2005 Aljazeera

**Aljazeera has learned that a US military vehicle was damaged by an explosive device planted on the highway in al-Dawra district, south of Baghdad. Witnesses said US troops flooded the area to evacuate the injured.**

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## **U.S. Troops Burn Down Baghdad Shops**

14 January 2005 Aljazeera

**US troops burned down commercial shops in al-Radwaniya district, west of Baghdad, saying they came under attack from that area, Aljazeera has learned.**

Eyewitnesses said the US troops encircled the area and closed all roads to it before setting the shops ablaze.

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## **Hewlett Soldier Seriously Injured; "At Least She Didn't Come Home In A Box."**

January 13, 2005 By: Jeff Lipton, Herald Community

Jennifer Riddle, an Army Signal Corps staff sergeant, was sent on a mission with a convoy to repair downed communication lines on Tuesday, Jan. 4, when her Humvee broke down. The convoy apparently came under enemy fire, and Riddle was hurrying to make repairs to the vehicle when her hand got caught in the vehicle's generator.

"Her Humvee broke down and she got out to repair it," Riddle's mother, Marlene, said in a phone interview from her home on Hewlett Parkway last Thursday. "Her hand was all mashed up."

Riddle's mother said that even though her daughter has been in the armed forces for 12 years, she still worries constantly about her. She stays glued to the TV, watching coverage of the day's events in Iraq. "I'm just glad she came home," she said. "At least she didn't come home in a box."

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IRAQ: Texas, USA:-PFC. AMANDA MOHON suffered a shrapnel wound in the leg and burns to her face and hands. She was a survivor of the Dec. 21 attack on a U.S. base near Mosul, Iraq. Photographer: Man Hui Agency: San Antonio Express / ZUMA

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## **Delco Soldier Killed In Grenade Attack; "Of Course, We Weren't In This Mess Back Then."**

01/14/2005 By JASON MCKEE and TIMOTHY LOGUE, The Daily Times

A Delaware County man serving in Iraq was killed Tuesday in combat, according to information released Thursday by the Pentagon.

Michael J. Smith, 24, a soldier with the Army's 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 2nd Infantry Division, died when his armored vehicle was struck with a rocket-propelled grenade on a road in Ar Ramadi, a city located along the Euphrates River about 70 miles west of Baghdad.

Smith, who grew up in Springfield and most recently lived in Upper Providence, is the first Delaware County resident to be killed in Iraq. He joined the Army in November 2002.

Michael Smith's unit was based in South Korea and scheduled to be transferred to Fort Carson, Colo., when its tour of duty in Iraq expired this summer, according to Lt. Col. David Johnson, the public affairs officer at Fort Carson.

Spc. Smith was traveling in an armored vehicle when the attack occurred on a road outside Ar Ramadi at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday. "He was part of the rear detachment for the 2nd Brigade combat team," Johnson said.

**"His family used to live within a block of us, and I remember him riding up and down the street on his Big Wheels and bicycles," said state Rep. Bill Adolph of Springfield. "He always gave a big wave and a smile."**

Adolph, who used to do the family's tax returns, said Michael Smith had a hard time dealing with his mother's death as a teenager. Nancy Smith died of cancer in 1995.

"He had some problems growing up, but he struck me as the kind of kid who might have found his niche in the military," Adolph said. "Some kids take longer than others to mature, and I think his mom's death really set him back."

James Smith said his son was married to a Russian woman, Oksana, whom he had met while stationed in Korea. "She is coming home for the service," he said.

Though Michael Smith most recently lived in the Hunt Club Apartments on State Road in Upper Providence, most of his life was spent in Springfield, where he grew up in the 300 block of E. Springfield Road.

**Though Smith dropped out of high school, Springfield School District Superintendent Joseph O'Brien said Smith was well-liked and not a troublemaker.**

**"He was a very loving and very caring kid with a lot of friends -- the kind of kid you wanted to say 'Hi' to," said O'Brien, who was the principal at Springfield High when Smith was in school. "His mom's death was really difficult, and he had more than his share of problems to deal with for such a young person.**

**"Last I heard, Mike was thinking about joining the military, which was probably a good thing for him, to give him some structure. Of course, we weren't in this mess back then."**

Funeral arrangements for Michael Smith were incomplete last night. In addition to his wife and father, he is survived by a half-brother, Jim, who serves full time in the Pennsylvania National Guard.

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## **Matthew Holloway Killed In Iraq War**

January 14, 2005 The Rockport Pilot





Matthew Holloway

Marine Corps officials were in Rockport Thursday evening to notify the family of Matthew Holloway he had been killed that morning while in service with the USMC in Iraq.

Two representatives from the USMC sought assistance from the Rockport Police Department in locating the young man's parents. When they arrived in the city, however, they discovered the address is a motel, the Rod and Reel.

Sheriff Mark Gilliam heard the call on the scanner regarding locating the owners of the hotel and responded to the call.

Upon arrival at the hotel, Gilliam said he accompanied officials to the business office to ask about the Holloways, not knowing they manage the motel.

Matthew's father was in the office when the group arrived. Officials met with both Holloways to give them notification of Matthew's death.

Holloway, a 2002 graduate of Rockport-Fulton High School, was a punter for the Pirate varsity in 2002, the year they won district with a 10-0 record.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# **Defying Pentagon Ban, La. Guard Unit Allows Footage of Returning Coffins**



The casket bearing the remains of Louisiana National Guard Staff Sgt. Kurt J. Comeaux is removed from a plane at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base at Belle Chasse, La. Wednesday Jan. 12, 2005. Six member of the Louisiana National Guard were killed in Iraq on Jan. 6. (AP Photo/Bill Haber)

January 13, 2005 By Editor & Publisher Staff & AFP

**NEW YORK The Pentagon ban on newspaper and TV images of coffins returning from Iraq suffered an unexpected jolt in Louisiana yesterday.**

**A Louisiana National Guard unit defied a Pentagon request to prevent television news crews from filming six flag-draped soldiers' coffins arriving in the state following the men's deaths in Iraq last week, according to a report by CBS News.**

The Pentagon has barred US media from filming the coffins of US service members arriving at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.

The Louisiana National Guard allowed a CBS crew to film the arrival of six soldiers' coffins at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse, La., near New Orleans. Lt. Col. Pete Schneider, a spokesman for the Louisiana National Guard, told CBS: **"What we thought was, we're going to do what the family asked us to do."**

Footage broadcast by CBS showed an honor guard carrying the soldiers' flag-draped coffins out of an aircraft to six waiting hearses, watched by grieving families. The six guardsmen died last Thursday after their armored vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Baghdad.

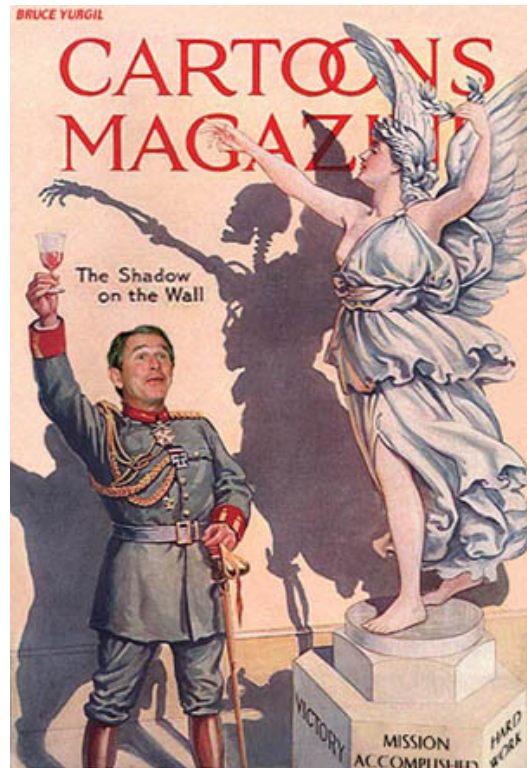
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## **Fear Diverts Navy Supply Ships From Suez Canal**

[Newhouse.com, January 13, 2005] The U.S., for security reasons, is diverting some massive supply ships carrying critical war materiel away from the Suez Canal, sending

them instead on a long, solitary trek around the Cape of Good Hope en route to the Persian Gulf.

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## [Warning: Adults Only Please:] Lie Girls

### **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))

## IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

# White House Says Iraqis Want Resistance To Win War

January 14, 2005 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN)

**"In survey after survey, the Iraqi people say, 'We want to choose our leaders,'"**  
White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters in Washington.

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## 38 Abu Ghraib Prisoners Shoot Guard, Escape

**BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) -- Iraqi police are on the lookout for 28 Abu Ghraib prisoners who escaped while en route to Baghdad for trial.**

The detainees, which included several Arabs from other countries, were traveling aboard a bus from the prison to the courthouse late Thursday, according to a police official.

**But due to a shortage of handcuffs, several had their hands bound with rope and were able to loosen the knots before overpowering police and security guards in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Sa'alam.**

Iraqi police found handcuffs and rope scattered in the streets.

**One prisoner managed to seize an officer's AK-47 and critically wounded him with it. Four guards and the bus driver were severely beaten.**

All 38 detainees escaped, but multinational and Iraqi forces were able to capture 10 of them shortly afterward.

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## Insurgents Attack Baghdad

Jan. 14, 2005 Associated Press, BAGHDAD, Iraq

**Insurgents fired rockets Friday night against targets in the center of Baghdad,** causing no casualties, police said. Other attacks were reported on the western edge of the capital.

Strong blasts were heard on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, which flows through the heart of the capital, and were followed by a brief burst of small arms fire.

**Police said two of the rockets exploded near the Sadeer Hotel, which is used by Western contractors and third fell near the Ministry of Education - both in the downtown area.**

Elsewhere, insurgents fired a rocket-propelled grenade at an Iraqi police patrol in the Amiriyah district on the western edge of the city. **Three explosions also were heard near the main road from central Baghdad to the city's international airport, police said.**

**Central Baghdad had been relatively quiet for about two weeks until a series of mortar attacks Thursday near the U.S.-controlled Green Zone.**

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## **15 Occupation Guards Captured At Baghdadi**

14 January 2005 Aljazeera & AP

Fifteen Iraqi soldiers were captured by armed men off their bus after they finished work on Friday at the Al-Asad US military base in the western province of Al-Anbar.

**The men, who ride daily out of the Al-Asad airbase, about 150 kilometres west of Baghdad, were ambushed with rocket-propelled grenades and Russian-made RPK machine guns, said police Colonel Fadel Abd al-Dulaimi, leaving the bus in flames, a guard official said..**

Witnesses said attackers opened fire as the guard members were heading to a local U.S. military headquarters. The attack happened near Baghdadi, about 90 miles west of the capital.

"The soldiers were wearing civilian clothes and hiding their weapons under the seats ... The gunmen forced them to surrender and took them away," Dulaimi said.

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## **Insurgents Kill 3 Occupation Allies**

January 14, 2005 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN)

**Three Kurdish Peshmerga fighters died Thursday while fighting alongside Iraqi national guard forces against insurgents in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, according to a Kurdish Democratic Party official.**

The incident happened around 7 p.m. (11 a.m. ET) in Mosul's southwest district of al-Zira'i.

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# Resistance Blows Up More Oil Pipelines

14/01/2005 By Reuters & Energy Security

FATHA, Iraq - **Saboteurs have fired a Katuysha rocket on an oil pipeline complex in northern Iraq, setting off a fire that will take days to control**, witnesses and oil officials said on Friday.

It was not immediately known whether the attack on Thursday night in the Fatha area near the refining centre of Baiji had damaged the Iraq-Turkey export pipeline, which passes through the area as well as 24 oil crude and product pipelines feeding refineries and power stations.

**Another pipeline linking Kirkuk and the Daura refinery, near Samarra, running from the Kirkuk oilfields to the 350,000 barrel per day (bpd) Baiji refinery was also hit on Friday in the Safra area, officials said.**

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## Baghdad Election Center Director Killed; Israeli Candidate Escapes

14 January 2005 Aljazeera & CNN

**Partisans killed the director of a Baghdad election center Thursday.**

"Abd al-Karim Jasim al-Ubaidi, director of the voting station at al-Salam in al-Amil district, west of the capital, was gunned down on Thursday," said an official.

"He was hit by several bullets in the head," he added.

He was in charge of an election center in the al-Khadoumiyah neighborhood in the northern part of Baghdad.

Insurgents also made an apparent assassination attempt on Iraqi presidential candidate Mithal al-Alousi, the second bid in two weeks.

**Al-Alousi, who supports normal relations between Iraq and Israel, was attacked Tuesday at midnight in western Baghdad.**

<p><b>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</b></p>
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**FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

# **“I Hope He Finally Made It All The Way Back Home To The World.”**

**From:** David Honish  
**To:** GI Special  
**Sent:** Friday, January 14, 2005 4:18 PM  
**Subject:** PTSD

**Recent GI Special articles about the Marine Lance Corporal that shot it out with the police in California rang some bells from the past.**

**I wonder if the cops would have been fired upon if they were plainclothes, and in an unmarked car?**

In 1986 I worked in a private psychiatric hospital with a psych tech who was a former Marine veteran of Viet Nam; I Corps Zone, way up north by the DMZ. Sometimes "over the fence" as they say about the missions into Laos and North Viet Nam that are still classified, and officially denied.

An old staff joke is that it is sometimes hard to tell the patients apart from the staff in a psych hospital. In the psychiatric intensive care unit we had boxing gloves for the patients to vent their anger safely by beating on a mattress stood up against the wall in the seclusion room. This psych tech was working on his own personal demons one day at work when he broke his hand with the gloves and mattress.

He couldn't stand to live in town "and be around people."

He lived in a small tent that he kept in the trunk of his car.

He'd find a spot to pitch his tent out in the woods around the large lake west of town. Never in the same place twice, he'd move to a new location every day, leaving no trace of his previous camp site. Good tactical procedure.

He had a .44 magnum revolver that he insisted on showing me one evening after work, after discovering in conversation that I had a similar .357 magnum made by the same manufacturer. He wasn't the sort of fellow that you say no to, so I went to his car with him after our shift. While opening the trunk he explained "I keep it back here instead of in the glove box, so I won't get in trouble with some jerk in traffic."

Not satisfied with me merely looking at it, he insisted that I heft it, feel it's balance, and sight it on some trees in the greenbelt park behind the hospital.

That lasted about a minute before I suggested that waving a .44 magnum around in the parking lot of a psych hospital at midnite might draw some unwanted attention.

He declined my invitation to join me and most of the hospital's evening shift staff at a local bar to unwind after work. He said that he unwound by "conducting night ops in my AO."

Night operations in 'his' area of operations consisted of a one man patrol with his .44 magnum in the woods by the lake.

He said he didn't think that he would actually hurt anyone, "**UNLESS THEY WERE ARMED, AND IN UNIFORM.**"

He worried about the fact that game wardens, park rangers, and county sheriffs department deputies wore tan uniforms, THAT REMINDED HIM OF THE TAN UNIFORMS WORN BY THE NVA.

**I hope he is well today, where ever he may be.**

**I hope he finally made it all the way back home to the world.**

**I hope all the young men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan find the help they need when they return, BEFORE it is too late for them.**

David Honish

<http://www.ptsd-alliance.org>

<http://www.veteransforpeace.org>

**What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org). Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.**

## **I'm Not Accusing Anyone Of Lying, But...**

By Molly Ivins

AUSTIN, Texas --- Excuse me, but is that smoke in your ear?

I wouldn't go calling anyone a liar, but as we say in our quaint Texas fashion, this administration is stuffed with people who are on a first-name basis with the bottom of the deck.

**They've been telling us only four out of the 18 provinces in Iraq will be too unsafe to vote in. Doesn't sound that bad, does it? Unless you happen to know that about 50 percent of the population lives in those four provinces.**



Will someone explain to me what earthly good they expect to do by misleading us? If, God forbid, the Iraqi election turns out to be a disaster, will we be better off for not having expected it? How long are Bush and Cheney going to sit there pretending the problem is that the media won't report the "good news" out of Iraq? Be a lot more useful if they paid attention to some of the bad news.

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## **Don't Buy The "Civil War" Bullshit**

**The peace movement must not fall for the media stereotyping of Iraq into simple ethnic divisions. A huge industry has emerged, the sole purpose of which is to peddle sectarian rubbish and to sow fear. Iraq is in danger, but it will not automatically implode along sectarian lines. The security problem can be addressed through a credible political process that is not seen to be manipulated by the occupation.**

1.13.05 By Kamil Mahdi, alternet.org. Mahdi is an Iraqi and lecturer in Middle East economics at the University of Exeter.

It is a plain fact that the United States – supported by a few adjunct states – waged a premeditated, illegal and unjustifiable aggression against Iraq.

**The nature of the deposed Iraqi regime as a repressive dictatorship that is despised by the vast majority of the population of Iraq has little relevance for a simple reason, which is that the invasion was not a humanitarian intervention that was carried out in the interests of the Iraqi people, with their consent, with their participation and with respect to their dignity and independence.**

The invasion was also carried out in clear defiance of international public opinion, and the current debate about the stance of the peace movement with regard to the continuing occupation of Iraq must not lose sight of these basic facts.

**The Bush administration – and the Congress that empowered it to act in the manner it did – are not about to alter their behavior and to act in compliance with international law, in deference to world public opinion and in the interests of the Iraqi people. Moreover, the peace movement that was unable to stop the invasion is not in a position to dictate the behavior of occupation troops and to offer elaborate political plans for a gradual end to the occupation.**

**If the occupation is to end, this is going to be the result of political and armed Iraqi resistance combined with a reawakening of the U.S. and international public to the threat posed by the neo-conservatives' imperial project.**

In other words, the project has to be abandoned, not liberalized.

**Liberals and the left must stop looking for like-minded Iraqis they can patronize and rear in order to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion to the occupation. This must not be a precondition for the early and complete withdrawal of U.S. troops.**

It is of course proper to be concerned about the consequences of a U.S. withdrawal, for it is neither possible nor desirable to return to the pre-war situation.

**The dangers of a total breakdown of security and of civil war are real.**

**However, it would be foolish to believe that all that stands between these dangers and Iraq is the U.S. military presence.**

**Quite the contrary, the occupation's sectarian and ethnic vision of Iraqi politics is the major part of the problem.**

There is virtually no history of ethnic and sectarian conflict in Iraq at a popular level, and what little there is has been incited by outside powers.

That is not to say that members of different communities have not come into conflict with the state, nor is it to say that Iraq's society is in essence, liberal and democratic. However, it would be correct to say that society in Iraq is historically tolerant and at ease with its multi-ethnic diversity, and that it is open to change and to peaceful development.

On the other hand, the occupation has not only attacked a regime that practices sectarianism and discrimination, but it has set about destroying the secular state as well as a kind of unwritten social compact that keeps communities at peace with each other and holds everyone committed to their Iraqi identity.

**Thus, even aside from the suffering and disregard for Iraqi life and welfare, the longer this occupation remains the more dangerous and destructive it becomes.**

**The peace movement must not fall for the media stereotyping of Iraq into simple ethnic divisions. A huge industry has emerged, the sole purpose of which is to peddle sectarian rubbish and to sow fear. Iraq is in danger, but it will not automatically implode along sectarian lines. The security problem can be addressed through a credible political process that is not seen to be manipulated by the occupation.**

The peace movement must fight for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops, and also for the U.S. and the whole world to accept its responsibility to help Iraq recover. It is absurd to hold that the U.S. can only help Iraq through troops and contracted mercenaries.

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## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

**Phones Down, Borders Sealed, Troops On  
The Streets:  
It's Time For Democracy;**

# State Of Alert Will Match The Battle For Fallujah

[London Times, January 14, 2005]

Authorities are considering a complete lockdown of Iraq ahead of the Jan. 30 elections. International borders would be sealed, movement between cities tightly controlled, mobile phone networks shut off and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi security forces and foreign troops deployed in a show of force not seen since the height of the war nearly two years ago.

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

## Who Says They Weren't Greeted With Flowers?

By: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photos on: 12.01.2005 photo captions in bold by eurohippie; alternate suggestions welcomed

*They were. And still are, in fact. In the mock Iraqi villages of Jarbar Nahr and Sadiq, set up in May 2004 in Fort Polk, Louisiana, USA, to simulate "the conditions that soldiers will face when dispatched to Iraq". Move over, Disneyland*



1. "As a representative of the Iraqi people, let me assure you your noble mission will be one great big cakewalk."

USA. Fort Polk, Louisiana. March 2004. US Military prepare new troops at the "Joint Readiness Training Center," in the mock Iraqi village of Jarbar Nahr. Local women have been hired as "role players" to recreate the conditions that soldiers will face when dispatched to Iraq. Louise is a retired grocery store owner from a small town 40 miles north of the base. **Stacy, the woman to her right, joins in provoking the troops to give them water and accept flowers.**

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# **(Remember When The Bullshit Began?) (How Long Ago It Seems) Keep Out Of Town Hall, Kut Tells US Troops**

**25 April 2003** Jonathan Steele in Kut, The Guardian

**First the marines tried to get this dusty town's 200 police officers back to work, but 100 dropped out after local people warned them that only traitors collaborated with America.**

**Then the police station burned down. It was still smouldering yesterday as frustrated US troops began to realise that governing a people is much harder than defeating one.**

"We've all just been issued with non-lethal equipment: batons, riot gas, shields, and stun grenades," Corporal Nathan Braden said.

Two hundred metres away several hundred Iraqis were guarding the gates of the governor's office, trying to ensure no that Americans entered. "No, no to America; no, no to Israel. Yes, yes to unity; yes, yes to Islam," some were chanting.

**Pictures of two leading Shia clerics murdered during Saddam Hussein's regime were stuck on lampposts, and some of Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim, the head of an Iraqi opposition group. Protesters carried banners with the names of a local sheikh and four other people arrested by the Americans.**

**Throughout southern Iraq confrontation between Shia Muslims and the US forces is rising.**

In Baghdad and most small towns it is still only a battle of words, but in Kut and its province, Wasit, it has gone further.

**An anti-American governor is ensconced in the administration building, issuing decrees, delivering food aid, and taking money from the bank to pay local employees.**

Night-time shootings are on the increase and the front of the hotel serving as marine headquarters was peppered with bullet holes shortly before dawn yesterday.

**Kut was the site of a famous siege in the first world war when 10,000 British troops were surrounded and killed. The Americans are a long way from a similar fate, but they seem at a loss what do next.**

The prophecy that "Iraq will become Palestine" which some Iraqis were making within hours of the US entry into Baghdad is not as far-fetched as it first seemed.

**On Wednesday four army lorries and a Humvee were ambushed by 400 people on a bridge over the Tigris. Backpacks and other loose gear were ripped from the back of the Humvee and a window was smashed.**

**Yesterday stones were thrown when combat engineers brought in bulldozers to remove a barricade outside the town hall.**

**Two marines were injured and at some point in the ensuing melee Daoud Salman Abu al-Heel, a 25-year-old demonstrator, was killed.**

**Mohammed Hanin Nasir said he had been walking with him at the head of several hundred people.**

**"We stopped about four metres in front of the troops. First they poked Daoud with the barrel of a gun, then they fired."**

Lieutenant-Colonel Doug Fairfield confirmed that a death had been reported, but added: "We have contacted all our marine units and are satisfied that no shots were fired by the marines." **[And the lies by command have never stopped.]**

Three gunships clattered over the town shortly after the killing. **Low-flying helicopter gunships, stone-throwing crowds, arrests of popular leaders, and now the first death: the ingredients of an intifada are beginning to appear.**

The protesters have three grievances. They want Iraq to be an Islamic republic, **they reject US efforts to choose its government, and they are afraid Washington will reimpose Saddam's Ba'ath party.**

**Hatred of Saddam was on full view yesterday in a long tent which the vigilantes had erected on the front lawn.**

A spellbound crowd was watching a video recording of a foreign television documentary called The Crimes of Saddam, the first chance any had had to see such material.

**Upstairs in an ornate audience chamber Saeed Abbas, a retired schoolteacher and tribal leader who has taken over as governor, was meeting two dozen distinguished-looking men "American troops want to appoint their own administration and not listen to the opinion of the people in the street," he said. "The people they have appointed so far were in the Ba'ath party and the previous**

**regime. People mistrust them. They will not cooperate with anything the troops do."**

**It would make no difference if the Americans succeeded in evicting him. "I can manage these people from the mosque."**

Meanwhile, the marines were planning their hearts and minds campaign. The first issue of their free paper, the Wasit Times, shortly to be issued in Arabic, was hot off the press.

**It made no mention of government appointees but described how the coalition forces were getting the water and power back on, clearing schools of weapons left by Saddam's forces, and preparing to start paying local government workers.**

The marines' spokesman, Major Michael Griffin, said Mr Abbas was self-appointed, represented a minority of Kuts's citizens, and was rumoured to have links with Iran.

He had entered late when the unit's commander, Brigadier-General Rich Natonski, was meeting the advisory council of local leaders on Saturday, announced: "I want to inform you that half the people here are Ba'athists," and was virtually shouted down," Maj Griffin said.

"In Iraq it is almost impossible to find someone who is not a Ba'athist," he added.

"We identify the top person in a department, then go to his deputy and the man below that and ask what the top man was like. "It is hard for people to understand that. They think being a Ba'athist is automatically bad.

**"We want to show we are not here to take over. We are trying to put across the theme 'Iraq for the Iraqis'. "The goal is to show that by working with us you can get things working the way they were before, minus Saddam." [Same old same old.]**

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

# **16 Representatives Urge Bush To Start Pullout From Iraq**

2005-01-13 Edward Epstein, San Francisco Chronicle

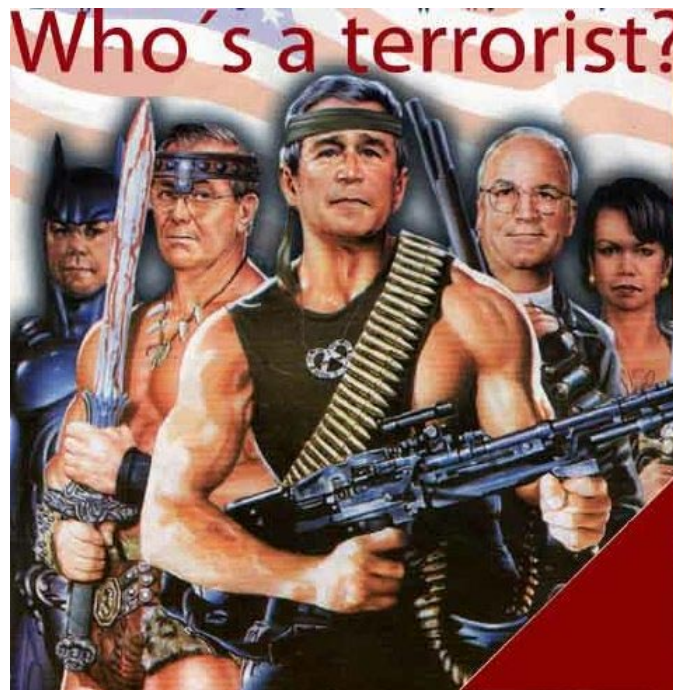
Washington -- Sixteen House Democrats led by Rep. Lynn Woolsey of Petaluma called on President Bush on Wednesday to **begin** the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, just as some administration supporters are starting to question the wisdom of staying the course in the war.

Woolsey and the other House Democrats, including Reps. Sam Farr of Carmel, Pete Stark of Fremont and Barbara Lee of Oakland, urged the administration to move swiftly.

**"While it may be logistically difficult to immediately remove every American soldier, we urge you to take immediate action to begin** the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. This is the only way to truly support our troops," said the letter signed by Woolsey and her colleagues.

"By removing our troops from the country, we will remove the main focus of the insurgents' rage," the letter added.

**[At this rate, maybe by 2006, a few Democrat politicians will be for bringing the troops home *now* ---demonstrating once again that it takes a real movement, at home and in the armed services, to stop this war, not sitting around waiting for politicians to have enough courage and sense to come to the rescue. Never happen, GI.]**



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## **The Bankrupt Empire Pisses It Away: War Cost \$102 Billion Through September, Pentagon Says**

[Bloomberg.com, January 13, 2005] The U.S. spent \$102 billion through Sept. 30 on the invasion and occupation of Iraq, **with costs averaging \$4.8 billion per month.**

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# Inauguration Marchers Forbidden To Look At Bush

**Other instructions given performers include a warning not to look directly at Bush while passing the presidential reviewing stand, not to look to either side and not to make any sudden movements.**

01/11/2005 By: Joan Lowy, Scripps Howard

WASHINGTON - The nation's 55th presidential inauguration, the first to be held since 9/11, will take place this month under perhaps the heaviest security of any in U.S. history.

Dozens of federal and local law enforcement agencies and military commands are planning what they describe as the heaviest possible security. Virtually everyone who gets within eyesight of the president either during the Jan. 20 inauguration ceremony at the U.S. Capitol or the inaugural parade down Pennsylvania Avenue later in the day will first go through a metal detector or receive a body pat-down.

**Other instructions given performers include a warning not to look directly at Bush while passing the presidential reviewing stand, not to look to either side and not to make any sudden movements.**

Thousands of performers - marching bands, color guards, pompon dancers, hand bell-ringers, drill teams on horseback and Civil War re-enactors - will be bused early in the morning to the Pentagon parking lot across the Potomac in Virginia.

**While performers disembark and go through metal detectors, bomb-sniffing dogs will search the buses. Then everybody will get back on the buses for a trip to the National Mall, where they will spend most of the day in heavily guarded warming tents.**

**Participants have been warned that they will not be allowed to leave the tents except to go to portable toilets accompanied by a security escort.**

"They want you to just look straight ahead," said Danielle Adam, co-director of the Mid American Pompon All Star Team from Michigan, which also performed in the 2001 inaugural parade.

"Last time we went security was really tight," Adam said. "This time we got almost like a book of things we needed to fill out beforehand."

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**



## **Six Afghan Soldiers Captured And Killed**

[Washington Times, January 14, 2005] **Resistance fighters captured and killed six Afghan government soldiers in a former Taliban stronghold in southern Afghanistan. [What the fuck does “former” mean in this context?]**

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## **OCCUPATION PALESTINE**

### **Three Israeli Soldiers Killed, 10 Wounded By Resistance In Northern Gaza Strip**

January 13, 2005 IMEMC & Agencies

**Three Israeli soldiers were killed, on Thursday at night, and at least 10 injured; three seriously, in a double bombing in Karni Netzarim crossing, in the northern part of the Gaza Strip.**

The Israeli TV reported that two bombers detonated a 150kg bombs near a wall between that Israeli and Palestinian sides of the crossing at 22:00, and infiltrated into the Israeli side and detonated explosive belts they were wearing.

According to the Israeli army, a large bomb was used to demolish a wall dividing between the Israeli and Palestinian sides of the crossing; apparently the bomb was smuggled into the crossing in a vehicle.

The TV stated that Al-Aqsa brigades, the military wing of Fatah claimed responsibility of the double suicide bombing.

**Leader of Al-Aqsa brigades in the northern Gaza Strip “Abu Mas’ab”, to Arabynet news website that the bombing at the crossing was not planned to be suicidal, but it was supposed to be an attack against the military base adjacent to Karni Crossing, and an attempt to abduct Israeli soldiers from the crossing.**

**Also, a prominent leader of the brigades stated that the bombing comes in retaliation to the assassination of a Fatah resistance fighter, Tuesday at night in the northern part of the Gaza Strip.**

**Elsewhere in the Gaza Strip, a resistance group exchanged fire with Israeli soldiers near Kfar Darom settlement in the Gaza Strip.**

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, to: [www.rafahtoday.org](http://www.rafahtoday.org) The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.]

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## **Received:**

# **“Taliban Country”**

From: Carmela Baranowska [cbaranowska@yahoo.com.au](mailto:cbaranowska@yahoo.com.au)  
To: GI Special  
Sent: Friday, January 14, 2005  
Subject: Taliban Country

I am a friend of Max Watts who's recommended I contact you.

**I am a documentary filmmaker based in Australia who has recently completed a documentary called "Taliban Country" which follows the actions of US Marines in one of the most remote and dangerous parts of Afghanistan (I traveled there last year) and which has led to 3 US military inquiries.**

It's a 45 minute film - follow link to view online [www.talibancountry.com](http://www.talibancountry.com)

**Taliban Country  
Carmela Baranowska,  
45 mins, Australia, 2004**

**In May/June 2004, Walkley-award winning investigative reporter Carmela Baranowska was embedded with U.S. Marines in one of the most dangerous and remote parts of Afghanistan, beyond the reach of UN and aid agencies.**

**Frustrated by the limitations imposed on what she could report, Baranowska decided to travel back to Oruzgon Province independently of the U.S. Marines and Afghan militia that she had journeyed with up to that point.**

Western media outlets reported her kidnapping by the Taliban; a 'fact' the documentary dispels. (The source of reports of an abandoned vehicle and Taliban abduction of a western woman has never been uncovered.)

**More importantly, Baranowska's footage offers disturbing first-person accounts of the treatment being dealt Afghans by U.S. marines in the war on terror and has led to the opening of two U.S. military investigations.**

**END**

**I'll be traveling across the US in February, screening the film and talking about it.**

**Also, do let me know if you have contacts with a group or university which may be interested in screening "Taliban Country" in your area [If you're interested, write to the email address above.]**

All the best,  
Carmela Baranowska

#### **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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