

GI SPECIAL 3A22:



LET THE PUNISHMENT FIT THE CRIMINAL

“I Am Not Going To Another War”

From: Soldier, Iraq

To: GI Special

Sent: January 18, 2005 1:47 AM

Subject: Bad news bad news good news

There has been another boy killed in our battalion. It was a very sad accident that occurred while one of our tank sections was up in [X].

An NCO accidentally discharged a 50cal machine gun mounted on a tank while the kid was standing in front of it. The 50 cal round is about as fat as a salt shaker. It split the kid apart.

The worst part is that they Army is lying to protect the NCO. **They are saying that it was the dead kids fault so the man doesn't go to prison.** I think it is all so horrible.

The kids family will be grieving a lie and the man that is responsible will never be able to get over the guilt if he is never punished for what he did.

The first Abu Ghraib guy was sent away to prison. I guess that is some irony. It is too bad his superiors aren't being prosecuted.

Everyone involved in that scandal needs to be put on trial, but only the lowest ranking soldiers are going to pay.

People say they were just following orders. I don't think I could live with myself obeying an order like that. I could live with myself going to prison for disobeying orders.

The whole situation at Abu Ghraib has cost the lives of so many American soldiers. The Geneva Conventions were set up to protect the lives of combatants.

In the first war so many Iraqis gave up because they knew that they would be treated fairly. Now Iraqis fight to the death because they fear disappearing to some American Gulag to be humiliated and killed.

Sounds like we will be at war with Iran soon.

I hope I can get out of the Army in time and Inactive Reserve doesn't look my way. I am not going to another war. My sanity and health can not take this again. I doubt I will live through another year like this one.

So the good new is that by March I will be out of Iraq and by June I should be a civilian again. If all goes well.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

ONE 1ST ID SOLDIER KILLED, ONE WOUNDED IN OPERATION NEAR AD DULUIYAH

January 21, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release Number: 05-01-28C

TIKRIT, Iraq –**One 1st Infantry Division Soldier was killed and one was wounded in an operation near Ad Duluiyah on Jan. 21 at about 2:10 a.m.** The Soldiers were conducting a raid to kill or capture known improvised explosive device cell members when the incident occurred.

The Soldiers were evacuated to Coalition medical facilities. The wounded Soldier is in stable condition.

The raid, which encompassed eight locations, netted 22 individuals. One was killed in the operation.

AH-64 Down In Kuwait, One Dead

January 21, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release Number: 05-01-29C

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- **One AH-64 Apache pilot was killed and a second injured in a training accident that occurred northwest of Kuwait City around 2 p.m. today.** The names of the Soldiers and their unit are being withheld pending notification of the next of kin.

The injured Soldier was medically evacuated to a U.S. military hospital and is in stable condition.

Italian Soldier Killed In Helicopter;

January 22, 2005 AFP

A member of the Italian military contingent in Iraq has been killed in the city of Nasiriyah when his helicopter came under fire.

The soldier was rushed to a hospital, where he died of his wounds.

The aircraft had been on a patrol along the Euphrates river south of Nasiriyah when it drew fire.

ANSA reports tension has been high in the city, where a Portuguese patrol had been shot at before the incident involving the Italian troops.

ENOUGH. BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW.



Scott Peterson/Getty Images

Street Fighting Worsens In Baghdad; “Let's Face It, There's Not A Lot Of Love For Us Here,” Said Sgt Mitchell

"They're very well organised, they have a network of people helping them, informing them of our movements.

"They also know the place much better than us."

21 January 2004 From the GDN's PHIL SANDS, Gulf Daily News

BAGHDAD: Vicious urban fighting continues in the Haifa Street area of Baghdad, with teams of US special forces struggling to crush resistance ahead of this national elections.

The area, which lies within the Karama district of Northern Baghdad, earned a fearsome reputation when three election workers were executed in broad daylight there last month.

Since then dozens of Iraqis have been reported shot dead by US forces and 11 American servicemen have suffered minor wounds in grenade attacks.

In the last two days alone there has been a suicide bombing on a local police station, rocket-propelled grenade attacks, mortar strikes and gun fights in the maze of streets on the Tigris River's south bank.

At least three Iraqis have been killed by US snipers.

Most of the fighting involves paratroops of 82nd Airborne, a crack US regiment sent to the area shortly before Christmas with orders to win it back for the Iraqi government.

The festive period saw large scale battles, including a Christmas Eve assault on the paratroops' base, known as Predator Palace.

Although US soldiers now go on unarmoured foot patrols in the area - something unheard of six weeks ago - resistance is still significant.

On Haifa Street, US squads come under fire almost daily, 82nd Airborne paratroops report.

They also say insurgent fighters are learning better tactics and becoming more organised in their attacks.

Sergeant Richard Mitchell, based at Predator Palace, described the firefights as "savage, classic guerilla warfare".

"When you're out on the street it's hard to tell who is friendly and who is the enemy - they can attack us and then melt back into the background.

"They're very well organised, they have a network of people helping them, informing them of our movements.

"They have kids running round, acting as their spotters because they know we can't shoot unarmed civilians.

"They also know the place much better than us."

Despite the difficulties, Sgt Mitchell insisted that 82nd Airborne would complete its mission and push the insurgents away from the residential area. **But he admitted it was an open question as to whether the insurgency could be defeated entirely.**

"If you ask me, will Iraq be free from this 10 years from now, I'd have to say I don't know. A lot of Iraqis round here seem thankful for what we're doing but let's face it, there's not a lot of love for us here," said Sgt Mitchell.

[Despite the difficulties, Sgt. Mitchell insisted that His Majesty's Royal Manchester Volunteers would complete its mission and push the insurgents away from the residential area. But he admitted it was an open question as to whether the insurgency could be defeated entirely.

["If you ask me, will His Majesty's Colonies in America be free from this 10 years from now, I'd have to say I don't know. A lot of Americans round here seem thankful for what we're doing but let's face it, there's not a lot of love for us here," said Sgt. Mitchell. London Times, January 20, 1778.]

Lesson Unlearned: USA 1776 Iraq 2005

For the Pentagon, perhaps the chief lesson of Vietnam has been that sustained counterinsurgency warfare is no longer a realistic option, that the commitment of a huge expeditionary force is politically and militarily disastrous and threatens the very survival of the armed forces. From: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975

TROOP NEWS

LETTER FROM A GRIEVING MOTHER

From: Southeast Asia News
To: GI Special
Sent: Friday, January 21, 2005 1:48 PM
Subject: **LETTER FROM A GRIEVING MOTHER**

The following letter was received today at Southeast Asia News and appears here in original format

Scotland

01/21/2005
1632 GMT

my name is rose gentle

on the 20th of may 2004, my son gordon gentle was sent to iraq,
after only 6 month training, he was killed by a roadside bomb, in basra.

gordon was only 19, he was 20 on the 23rd of december, he signed up for
the army, when he went to sign on for his benefits he was a classical economic
conscript, if he had access to half decent job then he and many other young
soldiers like him would not have considered joining the army; gordon's life
could have been saved if the mod had provided his regiment with the proper equipment.

all the troops should be out of iraq this war is illegal bush, and blair should
be prosecuted not the troops, how is blair's boys not in the army this war is for oil.

bush is a lamer look at 9.11, how did blair go in to this war, i don't just blame the iraqis
for murdering my boy it was blair he sent him to iraq, gordon, is my only boy, and
i have to girls, i love to bits but i miss him so much;

i am now out every where telling people this war is illegal.

i will not shut up or give up my campaign is justice for gordon gentle.

blair noise ho i am he will not see me, he would love me to shut up

moore, and, moore people are coming out now, never give in to these men/
i sent a video to mrs blair, it was [mum to mum [my appeals to the prime
ministers wife to listen to me, mother to mother/ to tell her husband to
bring the troops home, i just go in to my boys room and sit and look at his
photos, and say i need my boy home.

it hurts so bad i feel the pain in my heart.

but gordon i will do this for you, i will be with him one day.

gordon gentle in iraq FOR 4 weeks. 23 12 1984 killed on 28 7 2004.

rose gentle
52 templeland rd pollok glasgow
g53, 5pg/
phone. 0141 883 4536
Or 07951767530

Mrs. Gentle may also be written to at justiceforgordongentle@yahoo.co.uk.

Congressman Reveals How Rumsfeld Kills Troops: Armored Vehicle Production Was Slow To Save DoD Money

Eighty-seven percent of Humvees in Iraq now have extra armor, and only so-called up-armored Humvees are going out on combat missions, Hunter said. Also, 55 percent of medium trucks and 37 percent of heavy trucks in the theater are armored, he said.

Hunter said Rep. Rob Simmons, R-Conn., a former aerospace executive who has experience with industrial production rates, found that *companies could be producing equipment faster if the Defense Department was willing to pay for it.*

January 24, 2005 By Rich Maze, Army Times staff writer

A congressional delegation visiting U.S. troops and their families in Texas and North Carolina heard about problems that have made headlines, such as equipment shortages for deployed troops, but also about relatively lesser-known issues such as proposals to cut back on community services on some bases to save money.

At Camp Lejuene, N.C., Marine Staff Sgt. Jubal Young told Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., the House Armed Services Committee chairman, that units in Iraq needed extra radio components to keep communications gear operating, something Hunter promised to look into.

Vehicle armor and explosive-jamming devices remain a critical need. "Marines who are in Iraq right now are telling Marines about to deploy to make getting more armor a top priority."

Eighty-seven percent of Humvees in Iraq now have extra armor, and only so-called up-armored Humvees are going out on combat missions, Hunter said. Also, 55 percent of medium trucks and 37 percent of heavy trucks in the theater are armored, he said.

Hunter said Rep. Rob Simmons, R-Conn., a former aerospace executive who has experience with industrial production rates, found that *companies could be producing equipment faster if the Defense Department was willing to pay for it.*

Under an agreement struck by Simmons, the Pentagon will shift money between accounts to pay for a higher rate of production, Hunter said.

The delegation also promised to investigate complaints about family and health care programs. **[Don't hold your breath.]**

MORE:

Army Approval For Heavier Armor In Iraq Delayed Until Last Month

[Inside The Pentagon, January 20, 2005, Pg. 1]

After the public confrontation [December 2004] between Rumsfeld and a soldier in Kuwait about how troops in Iraq lacked adequate armor for their vehicles, the Army began up-armor procedures. Field commanders are now concerned that even newly armored humvees don't offer enough protection against insurgent arms, and they have pressed to get more rugged alternatives.

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.

The Betrayal Of F Company

“The final point [is] that the part-time soldier comes at his countries calling at a moments notice. [He] gives up his civilian life, leaves his family and more then likely will lose his job to come here. Some have left life and limb in this accursed place. Then to add insult to injury, he is given next to no training, poor equipment and expected to execute a mission as well as the active component. If he falls short he can expect to be court-martialed or face lesser forms of military justice. The officers in charge can rest easy because the enlisted part timers will take the fall.”

This is how one grizzled sergeant from F Company, a former U.S. Army Ranger and Special Forces-qualified soldier, described his unit's subsequent training experience at Fort Bliss: “Bullshit.”

2005-01-10 By Nathaniel R. Helms, Soldiers For The Truth

12-30-2004: Training Failures Left Guard Unit Unready for Iraq

Back home in Michigan, the men of F Company, 425th Infantry, Long Range Surveillance, Michigan Army National Guard, are heroes. But in Iraq, they call themselves “The Kings of the Damned.”

How they fell from glory is a stain on the proud history of the U.S. Army and clearly reflects the Pentagon's inability to meet its mission goals in Iraq with a force largely constituted of Reservists and National Guardsmen who found themselves under-trained, under-equipped, and unprepared for the rigors of battling the Iraqi insurgents.

What is especially shocking is that F Company has long been an elite, airborne-trained, three-time volunteer fighting force, one of only a handful of airborne-qualified units in the Army National Guard. Its roster includes lawyers, physicists, police officers, fireman, and in fact the entire gamut of professions shared by the best and brightest of America's sons who enlisted as part-time soldiers in case their country called. Just two years and three months after 9/11, they responded to the summons.

On Dec. 10, 2003, amidst a flag-bedecked ceremony filled with patriotic fervor, more than 300 families from all over Michigan gathered to send their sons, brothers and fathers in harm's way. Maj. Gen. Thomas G. Cutler, adjutant general of the Michigan National Guard, told the men their mission was one they had trained long and hard to be ready for despite their knowledge it would be a long and difficult struggle: "You hope there isn't a fire but you have trained hard and you're eager to fight it," Cutler told the assembled men and their families. He then presented the unit with a Michigan National Guard flag to be flown in Iraq.

The next morning, filled with the curious combination of anticipation and trepidation that for centuries has marked the warrior's entrance into war, F Company arrived at Fort Bliss, Tex., to begin a two-month period of intense training the Army claims is designed to prepare the deploying soldiers for the rigors of combat.

The Army calls the training offered deploying soldiers like those in F Company "Theater Immersion Training."

To do that the Army has created at Fort Bliss and other stateside bases a mock Iraqi village and compound similar to what Vietnam-bound neophyte infantryman discovered when they passed under a giant Combat Infantryman's Badge at the portals of Fort Polk, La., three decades ago.

"Instead of living in a normal garrison environment, soldiers will see concertina wire, entry control points, and guard towers to simulate the Forward Operating Base (FOB) environment," Honoré explained in Atlanta. "In an FOB, small-unit leaders not only train on theater-specific tasks, [but] they have an opportunity to exercise their troop-leading procedures and basic discipline on a continuous basis."

Unfortunately, according to a number of F Company soldiers, they found instead what one later described as a "circus of stupidity" at the Texas base. If the troops of are to be believed, they were immersed in a bureaucratic tangle of ill-prepared quarters, non-existent training situations, very little practice ammunition, no hand grenades, limited range time, broken trucks and equipment, and cast-off weapons they rarely if ever had the chance to fire.

This is how one grizzled sergeant from F Company, a former U.S. Army Ranger and Special Forces-qualified soldier, described his unit's subsequent training experience at Fort Bliss: "Bullshit."

"Our experience here at McGregor has been one of absolute agony by way of 'bullshit.' The personnel here cannot be trusted to plan a square dance. This generalization applies to the highest command of this fiasco called a 'MOB.'

"The soldiers of the 425th are only prepared for their deployment for operations in harm's way because of their own efforts. Very little credit can be given to the MOB site except for issues pertaining to supply and maintenance."

If that assessment weren't scathing enough, several members of F Company described their training experiences at McGregor as "fruitless, worthless, useless, and a waste of time that only benefited the cadre who seemed to enjoy inflicting chickenshit nonsense on us to pass the time of day." Those comments represent some of the more constructive criticisms offered by the men of F Company.

In addition, the AAR describes the condition of the weapons provided, the amount of ammunition F Company soldiers expended in training, and the quality of the instruction provided by the reservists of the 91st Division, **a non-combat training command filled with inexperienced reservists called up to train the war fighters for missions they themselves had never performed using weapons and tactics they had never used. The kindest thing said of them in the report is that they showed up for work most of the time.**

One paragraph about the availability of training ammunition described in the AAR sums up the frustrating situation in which F Company found itself:

"Ammo for training is key when training for combat."

"We are not a CS (combat support) or a CSS (combat services support) unit: We are Infantry – 'we fight.' I cannot put it any simpler than that. While here, we fired 24 rounds to zero and 40 rounds to qualify. We were then given 120 rounds of blank ammo for the entire SASO training block. Who in their right mind signed off on this?

"We have been called away from our homes and families for hostile operations. We are owed a chance to be trained properly and given the tools to obtain that objective. I, and all the soldiers resent the fact that we are just 'checking the blocks' to be moved into theater.

"As an 11B [infantry MOS] we are suppose to fire the AT-4, use a claymore mine, throw hand grenades, fire the [Mk-]203 grenade launcher, fire our crew-served weapons, fire the Mk-19 grenade launcher, fire a .50 cal machine gun; almost none of which has taken place.

"While in theater we will be expected to execute any number of tasks, most will involve infantry duties and accomplishing the bare minimum is not an option when my soldiers are in the game. **May God have mercy on your souls, you miserable wretches."**

This is one Company F soldier's response from Iraq: "The final point [is] that the part-time soldier comes at his countries calling at a moments notice. [He] gives up his civilian life, leaves his family and more then likely will lose his job to come here. Some have left life and limb in this accursed place. Then to add insult to injury, he is given next to no training, poor equipment and expected to execute a mission as well as the active component. If he falls short he can expect to be court-martialed or face lesser forms of military justice. The officers in charge can rest easy because the enlisted part timers will take the fall."

1-03-2005: Broken Weapons, Ammo Shortages, Latrine Security

While the proud National Guard warriors of F Company, 425th Infantry sweated out so-called "Immersion Training" at Fort Bliss, Tex. for several months beginning in late December 2003, they griped and groused and wished they were already in Iraq, away from the seemingly pointless training chickenshit in which they were being buried alive.

Instead of weapons training, small unit tactics, weapons familiarization activities and live-fire exercises, they found themselves attending lecture classes. Rather than shooting hundreds of rounds of live ammunition, they were limited to zeroing in their personal weapons with a mere 24 rounds, qualifying with 40 rounds, and firing all of 120 blanks wearing MILES gear while pretending they were on a search-and-cordon operation in Iraq.

The M-60 machine gunners were issued 200 rounds for live fire and in squad training the troopers fired 100 rounds of M-16 ammunition. F Company spent the rest of its 10 weeks getting shots, physicals, filling out paperwork, listening to excuses, performing first-echelon maintenance and otherwise uselessly spinning its wheels – or at least trying to get them to spin – as one F Company soldier observed.

Meanwhile, the Army trainers at Fort Bliss, reservists from the 91st Division (Troop Support) based in northern California, tried to prepare the men for what they would encounter in Iraq. The training is based on the Army's model of what soldiers who find themselves in Iraq can do to protect themselves from insurgents who excel in attacking convoys and security teams lashed together from transportation units and other support personnel unfamiliar with the finer points of close combat. **The trainers themselves were admittedly unfamiliar with the scenarios they were required to present and even less qualified in infantry tactics and doctrine that F Company's 140 troopers – one of only a handful of Airborne units in the Army National Guard – have long excelled in.**

"There are many instances of a tasks being taught one way at one station and that same task is being enforced in a completely different manner at another station." a senior F Company NCO wrote in an unofficial After Action Report (AAR) on his unit's experiences at Fort Bliss and later in Iraq. Here's how training inconsistencies cropped up at Fort Bliss:

"For example, we just completed the squad live-fire exercise, we were taught how to bound and move in squad and team size elements. The day after we completed the squad live fire, we moved on to the vehicle live-fire range, where they are enforcing a

completely different standard on how to move under fire. Vehicle live fire focuses on individual movement as a squad, while the squad live fire focuses on moving and bounding in fire teams On the other hand, the CS and CSS units that have never done this are becoming confused on which technique is to be used. The stations should coordinate on how the soldiers are being taught and enforce the same standard across the board. This will help cement the tasks into the minds of the soldiers; a basic case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing!"

There was unfortunately, very little training ammunition to be had. The men were never able to fire any AT-4 anti-tank rounds despite the fact the M136 AT-4 is the Army's primary light anti-tank weapon. **Nor did F Company shoot its M-19 grenade launchers or throw any hand grenades, not even dummies, F Company troopers reported.**

But F Company did receive a heavy dose of regular Army discipline.

The strict discipline Michigan's elite sky troopers were subjected to at Fort Bliss' McGregor Range training area was necessary to "put their heads back in the game," a second 91st Division spokesman said. The "game" apparently included breaking down the citizen-soldiers' independent streak, exemplified by their desire to go to the latrine without supervision.

It seems a corrective action was considered necessary to keep soldiers being trained from wandering off during duty hours. **That led to an order that mandated that soldiers wishing to use the latrine had to turn over their ID cards before doing their business, one F Company soldier reported. The order included senior non-commissioned officers as well as junior enlisted men, a situation that enraged F Company's experienced troopers more than perhaps any other situation they encountered at Fort Bliss.**

"The [ID card] action took the cake," the soldier told his superiors in a confidential correspondence obtained by *DefenseWatch*. "We of the 425th can go into harm's way; most of us have 15 years or more years in the military system and we have to turn in our ID card to use the toilet. Who is the numbskull who cooked that up? It sounds to me like something a West Pointer would do. I would like to thank whoever came up with this from the bottom of my heart for destroying our last spark of morale, and humiliating us one last time, before we depart your festering stinkhole."

Unfortunately, leaving Fort Bliss was not as easy as jumping in their newly assigned vehicles and driving away to their embarkation station with their carefully prepared weapons. The equipment they were issued was rife with problems, particularly among crew-served weapons, vehicles and communications gear, according to the F Company AAR obtained by *DefenseWatch*. Upon receiving their weapons, several F Company NCOs with operational experience in Grenada, Panama, Afghanistan and Iraq in airborne infantry units inspected the weapons for functionality. What they discovered was a laundry list of appallingly dangerous problems for an infantry company preparing to encounter close-quarters combat.

Out of 21 M-60 machine guns receipted to F Company, 13 were either below minimum standards or completely inoperable, the AAR said. Only three of the essential weapons were completely functional. And this was after the weapons had been returned from repairs at the Fort Bliss support facility known as the "CUBE." Some of the problems included broken firing pins, worn ejectors, cracked barrels, weak operating rod springs, broken locking lugs and a host of lesser evils. Several M-9 pistols and 20 of the unit's M-203 grenade launchers also had deficiencies *after* being repaired. F Company's armorer was able to fix most of the deficiencies with scrounged parts and experience, but several of the crew-served weapons were shipped still broken, the AAR added.

One senior F Company NCO said that the "weapons were turned in with 2404 and 2407 forms [repair/maintenance request forms] completely and correctly filled out. These noted all deficiencies and all weapons were returned untouched with the exception of one or two weapons."

Ditto for F Company's five-ton trucks and Humvees. Almost 50 percent of them broke down almost within sight of McGregor Range while on a test run before the unit deployed.

"The maintenance people at Bliss had plugged oil leaks with grease, signed off on broken parts like they were fixed, and told us we would have a better chance to get everything fixed once we arrived in Kuwait for our pre-deployment workup," one soldier said. "We got a lot of excuses."

"We turned our vehicles in for maintenance, we played the game and filled out all the paperwork in triplicate and were told we were good to go," the AAR stated. **"On Feb 2, 2004, we signed our vehicles out for a test drive. Thank God we did, because almost half developed problems within 10 miles of leaving the facility. Some of the vehicles blew transmissions. Bottom line, we were told that all problems had been fixed and the vehicles were cleared to go into theater. The vehicles were 5-ton trucks and Humvees. The whole Army is using them; you would think that your maintenance facility would know how to fix them by now."**

"Bottom line," one soldier noted in the AAR, "your facility [CUBE] did next to nothing. I have no idea why this base was awarded the number one MOB site in the country. I could believe number one in bullshit, I will give you that."

Regardless of whether it was ready or not, F Company received its departure orders during the first week of February 2004 and prepared to leave. On Feb. 18, after receiving a hale and hearty farewell speech from a Fort Bliss-based general, F Company was deemed ready to depart and sent on its way.

"We were told the decision had been made to throw out our two-and-a-half months of wasted 'training time' at Ft Bliss. We would have additional training sessions in the country of Kuwait. We would also have access to firing ranges and ammo to fire our crew-served weapons, which up to that point we did not have a chance to fire," one soldier reported.

“Apparently the demand for our unit in theater was so great that we were flown directly into Balad, Iraq. We were forced to drive via convoy to our Forward Operation Base at Abu Ghraib prison. We drove in Iraq for the first month with no armored vehicles, some of which had no doors. Many of our crew-served weapons had not even been test fired as promised.”

A number of F Company soldiers signed a statement that was ultimately passed up the line to senior commanders in Iraq

Famous Last Words: 3rd ID “Apprehensive” As General Babbles Bullshit Happy-Talk

Command Sgt. Maj. William Grant, one of Webster’s top advisers, said he’s noticed “some apprehension” among troops about returning to war with a shadowy enemy that prefers hidden roadside bombs to direct combat.

January 21, 2005 By Russ Bynum, Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — **The commander of the 3rd Infantry Division predicted Thursday insurgent attacks will “settle down a bit” after Iraq holds elections Jan. 30, though he added his deploying troops will be ready if violence continues to escalate. [What utter bullshit. The Iraqis are fighting for their national independence and they won’t stop till they win it back. They are right to do so.]**

“We’re preparing for that potential course of action, for the violence to increase further after the elections,” Maj. Gen. William G. Webster said. “But as the Iraqi people see that they’re going to have a big role in securing their own future, my belief is things will settle down a bit.” [The Iraqis already see that they’re “going to have a big role in securing their own future.” It’s called the resistance, and they’re winning the guerrilla war. Things will indeed “settle down a bit” when the last foreign occupation troop leaves Iraq, Allawi is hanged from the nearest tree, and the Bush dictatorship in Iraq is over.]

The general said his troops have trained hard in the past year to battle insurgents who “do not follow the law of land warfare.” [The U.S. command bombs hospitals, killing the staff; overruns other hospitals and throws out the patients and doctors; makes hostages of relatives of suspected resistance leaders they can’t find; arrests Muslim preachers; and this asshole has the gall the whine about “the rules of land warfare! For the whole list, see the article below “Torturer-In-Chief.”

[If those laws really meant anything, the U.S. command would be standing in front of firing squads, not sucking up the fine foods and other comforts of the Green

Zone while their troops die in the dirt to make Iraq safe for Bush and his campaign contributors. Big news: the enemy is in Washington DC, running the government.]

Command Sgt. Maj. William Grant, one of Webster's top advisers, said he's noticed "some apprehension" among troops about returning to war with a shadowy enemy that prefers hidden roadside bombs to direct combat.

Spc. Brian Mintzlaff, 32, didn't anticipate going to war twice when he left his printing job in Texas to join the Army in 2001, shortly after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. He left for his second tour Thursday, a day after his daughter's sixth birthday.

"In hindsight, I say it might not have been the best decision I ever made," Mintzlaff said. "But I'm proud I did it, and I'm here now." [Read between the lines.]



AP / Dario Lopez-Mills

[From the Inauguration. To avoid unbalanced reporting, a diligent search will be made for a corresponding male anti-Bush activist. Contributions welcome.]

THREE FUCKED UP PLANES

Severe C-130J Woes

[Defense Today, January 21, 2005, Pg. 1] A report that says the C-130J transport plane might be unreliable in some circumstances.

Citing Problems, Marines Halt Osprey Flights

[Los Angeles Times, January 21, 2005] The Marine Corps suspended flights of the tilt-rotor Osprey aircraft after discovering that the coating of a crucial part is wearing off faster than expected.

Lockheed Marine Aircraft Faces 'Significant' Risk, Tester Says

[Bloomberg.com, January 20, 2005] The Marine Corps' Joint Strike Fighter, built by Lockheed Martin, runs "significant risk" that it will be too heavy for some missions, says Pentagon Director of Operational Test and Evaluation Thomas Christie.

General R. Myers Teaches The Art Of Shameless Ass Kissing

[USA Today, January 21, 2005, Pg. 9]

JCS Chairman Gen. Richard Myers said President Bush's swearing-in ceremony is a morale booster for U.S. troops abroad.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Guerillas Openly Behead Occupation Cop In Ramadi

BAGHDAD, Jan 21 (KUNA)

Witnesses said here Friday that a number of guerillas beheaded a policeman and stuck a note on his corpse describing as traitors those working with or helping the police.

About ten gunmen in two cars in the Ramadi area stepped out of their vehicles, attacked a soldier, tied his hands behind his back, and cut his head off before the eyes of onlookers in the street, the witnesses said.

Two Occupation Base Workers Beheaded

Jan 21, 2005 DUBAI (Reuters)

A group led by al Qaeda ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi beheaded two Iraqis who said they worked at a U.S. base in Iraq and the group posted an Internet video of the killings on Friday.

One of the hostages said he worked for a Lebanese company at a U.S. base in the western city of Ramadi and the other man said he worked as a driver at the base.

"We were told that we would work for a Lebanese company, not a U.S. base," one of the men said.

The tape showed two men, who identified themselves as Ali Hussein Jassem Mohammad al-Zubaidi and Ahmad Alwan Hussein al-Mahmadawi, standing in front of a banner bearing the name of Al Qaeda Organization of Holy War in Iraq.

The tape, which was posted on an Islamist Web site, later showed militants severing the heads of the two hostages, who were blindfolded with their hands bound behind their backs.

A statement by the group which appeared on the video warned that this would be the fate of those who "sold their religion and honor for the pleasures of life" and labeled them atheists and rejectionists.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

Hit Police Station Overrun, Destroyed

21/01/2005 (SA)

Baghdad - A dozen gunmen stormed a police station north of Baghdad on Friday and blew it up, police said. No one was hurt in the attack.

Insurgents burst into the station, which was nearly empty for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, and placed explosives inside, said Iraqi police Captain Abdullah al-Hiti. The blast destroyed the station in the centre of the town of Hit, about 165km northwest of Baghdad.

Pipeline Blown Up As Usual

January 20, 2005 Energy Security [**"Energy Insecurity" would be more like it.**]

January 17 - a bomb blew off a section of a pipeline in Fatha.

OCCUPATION REPORT



IssuesandAlibis.com

Operation Iraqi Fill-The-Prisons

[Washington Post, January 21, 2005, Pg. 12]

U.S.-run detention sites in Iraq are near capacity, with the number of suspected insurgents in custody at the highest level since March.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Dancing the War Away

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

January 21, 2005 By BOB HERBERT, New York Times

Watching the inaugural ceremonies yesterday reminded me of the scenes near the end of "The Godfather" in which a solemn occasion (a baptism in the movie) is interspersed with a series of spectacularly violent murders.

Even as President Bush was taking the oath of office and delivering his Inaugural Address beneath the clear, cold skies of Washington, the news wires were churning out stories about the tragic mayhem in Iraq. There is no end in sight to the carnage, which was unleashed nearly two years ago by President Bush's decision to launch this wholly unnecessary war, one of the worst presidential decisions in American history.

Incredibly, with more than 1,360 American troops dead and more than 10,000 wounded, and with scores of thousands of Iraqis dead and wounded, the president never once mentioned the word Iraq in his Inaugural Address. He avoided all but the most general references to the war. Lyndon Johnson used to agonize over the war that unraveled his presidency. Mr. Bush, riding the crest of his re-election wave, seems not to be similarly bothered.

In January 1945, with World War II still raging, Franklin Roosevelt insisted on a low-key inauguration. Already gravely ill, he began his address by saying, "Mr. Chief Justice, Mr. Vice President, my friends, you will understand and, I believe, agree with my wish that the form of this inauguration be simple and its words brief."

Times have changed. President Bush and his equally tone-deaf supporters spent the past few days partying hard while Americans, Iraqis and others continued to suffer and die in the Iraq conflagration. Nothing was too good for the princes and princesses of the new American plutocracy. Tens of millions of dollars were spent on fireworks, cocktail receptions, gala dinners and sumptuous balls.

Ten thousand people, including the president and Laura Bush, turned out Wednesday night for the Black Tie and Boots Ball. According to The Associated Press, one of the guests, Lorian Sessions of San Antonio, "donned a new pair of black kangaroo boots, decorated with a white star and embroidery, with an aqua-colored mink wrap she bought on sale at Saks."

An article in The Washington Post mentioned a peace activist who complained that the money lavished on the balls would have been better spent on body armor for under-equipped troops in Iraq.

As the well-heeled Bush crowd was laughing and dancing in tuxedos and designer gowns, the situation in Iraq was deteriorating to new levels of horror. The Black Tie and Boots Ball was held on the same day that 26 people were killed in five powerful car and truck bombs in Baghdad. With the elections just a week and a half away, American commanders, according to John F. Burns of The Times, are seeking "to prepare public opinion in Iraq and abroad for one of the bloodiest chapters in the war so far."

A photo at the end of Mr. Burns's article showed an Iraqi National Guard member carrying the remains of a suicide bomber in a garbage bag.

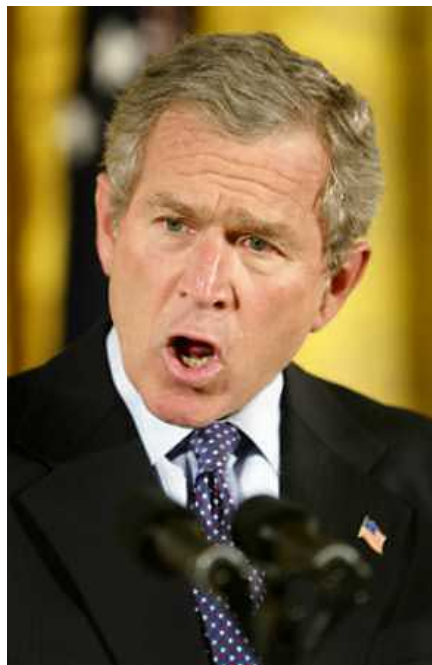
The disconnect between the over-the-top celebrations in Washington and the hideous reality of Iraq does not in any way surprise me. It's exactly what we should expect from the president and his supporters, who seem always to exist in a fantasy realm far removed from such ugly realities as war and suffering. In that realm you can start wars without having to deal with the consequences of them. You don't even have to pay for them. You can put them on a credit card.

People traveling in the real world may see Iraq as a place where bombings, kidnappings and assassinations are an integral part of daily life; where police officers are blown to pieces as they line up for their pay; where innocent men, women and children are slain by the thousands for no good reason; where cities like Falluja are leveled in order to save them; where America's overwhelming superiority in firepower has not been enough to win the war; and where the upcoming elections seem very much like a joke since many of the candidates have to keep their identities secret and the locations of many polling places remain undisclosed.

People traveling in the real world may see Iraq that way. But in the fantasy-laden Bush realm, Iraq is a place where freedom is on the march. So why not raise a toast to freedom, and dance the night away.

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.

TORTURER-IN-CHIEF



(Jason Reed/Reuters)

19 January 2005 From Amnesty Int. Letter

Amnesty International takes this opportunity to list some of the detention or interrogation techniques that are alleged to have been authorized or used by the USA during the "war on terror".

Some of the techniques appear to have been tailored to specific cultural or religious sensitivities of the detainees, thereby introducing a discriminatory element to the abuse.

Neither gender nor age has offered protection. Children, the elderly, women and men are reported to have been among the subjects of torture or ill-treatment. The following list does not claim to be exhaustive:

- Abduction
- Death threats
- Dietary manipulation
- Dogs used to threaten and intimidate
- Dousing in cold water
- Electric shocks, threats of electric shocks
- Excessive and cruel use of shackles and handcuffs, including "short shackling"
- Excessive or humiliating use of strip searches
- Exposure to weather and temperature extremes
- "False flag", ie making a detainee think his interrogators are not US agents
- Forced shaving, ie of head, body or facial hair
- Forcible injections
- Forced physical exercise
- Hooding and blindfolding
- Humiliation, eg forced crawling, forced to make animal noises, etc.
- Immersion in water to induce perception of drowning
- Incommunicado detention
- Induced perception of suffocation or asphyxiation
- Isolation for prolonged periods, eg months or more than a year
- Light deprivation
- Loud music, noise, yelling
- Photography as humiliation
- Physical assault, eg beating, punching, kicking
- Prolonged interrogations, eg 20 hours
- Racial and religious taunts, humiliation
- Religious intolerance, eg disrespect for Koran, religious rituals
- Secret detention
- Sensory deprivation
- Sexual humiliation
- Sexual assault
- Sleep adjustment
- Sleep deprivation
- Stress positions, eg prolonged forced kneeling and standing
- Stripping
- Strobe lighting
- Threats of reprisals against relatives
- Threat of transfer to third country to inspire fear of torture or death

Threat of transfer to Guantánamo
Threats of torture or ill-treatment
Twenty-four hour lighting
Withdrawal of "comfort items"
Withholding of medication
Withholding of food and water
Withholding of toilet facilities, leading to defecation and urination in clothing

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The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/> ; www.gifightback.org ;

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

www.williambowles.info/gispecial

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