

GI SPECIAL 3A26:



Major Says "I'm Not Going. No Matter What. I'm Not Going There"

If you know a soldier, or have a chance to sit down and talk to one, remember, he or she is an American like you. A person with a strong feeling that they have chosen their profession to do good in the world, to protect you and me and those things they and we cherish about our country.

And many of them also have within them a growing fear that the profession they have chosen has been turned into something they never in their worst nightmares intended.

January 15, 2005 By Jack Radey, Portside Tidbits

Last night a friend of mine came over.

Let me describe my friend to you, his name is his own business and I don't feel its right for me to use his name in this situation. He is a major in the Army reserve, a veteran of Gulf I.

He was then a mortar platoon leader, now a civic affairs officer. He was once a Young Republican, last year he wore a Veterans for Kerry button. He is currently still in the Reserve, despite advancing age and physical ailments, he has been on stop-loss status for almost two years.

He described to me letters he has been receiving from an active duty officer he served with.

He said he has been receiving letters from her the whole last year, from the time she volunteered to serve in Iraq and was sent over, until last week, when her letter moved him to tears. She will be home soon.

She intensely believed in the effort in Iraq in the beginning. She has become so bitter and disillusioned that he is shocked by it, although he has no more illusions about the war.

She, like he, is a civic affairs officer. Civic affairs involves essentially what used to be called "hearts and minds" work. Relations with the local population. Providing aid for construction, public health, repairing the damage of war.

He said that in the past year her unit has been able to do almost nothing at all, only go through the motions. The reason is not the security situation. The reason is the withholding of nearly all the money earmarked for construction and helping the civilian population, or its diversion into either purely military needs or perhaps into someone's pockets. Her unit built two schools in one year. One was financed by a Muslim charity organization, the other by contributions made directly by the GIs themselves.

He told me that what he wants to see in the American press is more pictures of what high explosive does to human bodies. He said he saw pictures from Fallujah, a picture of a woman and her child. The woman was pretty chewed up, the child was mangled. By US firepower.

He said, "I'm not going. No matter what. I'm not going there. What would that woman see if she looked at me, even though I'm a civil affairs officer, and I wouldn't be willing even to put a clip in my rifle? She would see another soldier of the Army that killed her son. I can't do that."

He told me that he has a son, 16 years old. That if there is a draft, his son has made up his mind, he's not going, no matter what. He says, "Dad, I respect what you do. But I won't do it." The father is very proud of his son.

He told me that his unit is being mobilized to be sent over. Only captains and below, the higher officers are not to go.

They will be sent as trainers to another unit, and that unit will go over as fillers for yet another unit in Iraq.

In his reserve unit, all the talk was about the letter to the President, sent by the lieutenant general, the head of the Army Reserve. Who told the President that the Reserve is nearly a "broken force", that too much is being asked of it. That it will not be able to perform its function much longer. Every officer in the unit commented favorably about the letter. Even his colonel, his unit commander, who he describes as very right wing.

He told his colonel, that if they want 48 men from his unit to go, they had better cut orders for 58 of them.

"Why?" he was asked.

He said its not that anyone is likely to refuse orders. But soldiers whose child care depended on a relative being willing to look after the kids while they were on active duty would find that arrangement no longer available. That soldiers with nagging medical problems that they had been toughing out would be taking a turn for the worse. That soldiers with 20, 22 years in grade would be deciding that this was a really good time to take retirement.

Of course many loopholes are closing. Before, if you "pissed hot" you would not be deployed. Now, you get busted a rank or two, and get deployed anyway. Overweight? No dice, extra physical exercise, and off you go. I'm not sure how they are treating pregnancy these days, during the work up for Gulf I a lot of women soldiers made a point of getting pregnant. That would keep them out of combat, I'm not sure if that will still work.

Like many soldiers I have talked to recently, he is just angry about Iraq.

He thinks there is no excuse for it, no reason, and our effort there produces nothing but evil, for the Iraqis and for us.

But like many soldiers I have talked to, he is uncomfortable with the concept of just standing up and saying no, I won't do this. But when I started talking about how the UCMJ requires officers and men to refuse to carry out illegal orders, and that the provisions in the Geneva Conventions, outlawing aggressive war, in fact making it the chief among international crimes, his expression changed. I could see he was doing some serious thinking.

He had no difficulty calling it an aggressive war, or being furious at the Bush administration for doing this, to his fellow soldiers, to the Iraqis, and to our country. He is not alone, and from four star generals down, there are a lot of Americans in uniform doing a lot of talking and thinking about these things.

They know that Sergeant Graner took the rap for something he did, and General Miller, the man who supervised Gestapo methods at Guantanamo and brought them to Abu Grahib, got a promotion. That Secretary Rumsfeld was retained, and Antonio Gonzales got a promotion, or will probably get one. General Boykin, the man in charge of military

intelligence who thinks his god is bigger than everyone else's (are bigger gods better ones?), got retained as well.

He knows Iraq was never a threat to our country, and he knows what high explosives do to human beings. He should. He was a mortar platoon commander, and he has seen his handiwork. I have seen a tape of an interview with my friend, done just after Gulf I. He was asked about seeing what it meant to him, seeing the soldiers he had killed. "It didn't bother me a bit, it really didn't," he replied earnestly. Back then. Now, well, now he doesn't sleep much at night. Many nights, not at all.

He is not the only one.

If you know a soldier, or have a chance to sit down and talk to one, remember, he or she is an American like you.

A person with a strong feeling that they have chosen their profession to do good in the world, to protect you and me and those things they and we cherish about our country.

And many of them also have within them a growing fear that the profession they have chosen has been turned into something they never in their worst nightmares intended.

Talk to him or her. And more important, listen.

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:

5 U.S. Troops Dead In Bradley Wreck At Khan Bani Saad

January 25, 2005 By Sameer N. Yacoub, Associated Press,

TIKRIT, Iraq - A Bradley Fighting Vehicle rolled into a canal during a combat patrol north of Baghdad during fierce sandstorms Monday night., killing five U.S. soldiers and wounding two others, the military said Tuesday.

The soldiers from the Army's 1st Infantry Division were pronounced dead on arrival at a military medical clinic.

One of the two wounded soldiers was in serious condition, the other was stable, a military statement said.

The M2 Bradley rolled into a canal during the patrol near the town of Khan Bani Saad on Monday night.

TASK FORCE BAGHDAD SOLDIER DIES FROM IED

January 25, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-01-32C

BAGHDAD, Iraq – **A Task Force Baghdad Soldier died of wounds at approximately 7 p.m. Jan. 24. The Soldier sustained the injuries when a patrol was attacked with an improvised explosive device in western Baghdad.**

DoD Identifies “Non-Combat” Army Casualty

January 25, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 073-05

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier.

Sgt. Leonard W. Adams, 42, of Mooresville, N.C., died Jan. 24 in Camp Bucca, Iraq, of non-combat related injuries. Adams was assigned to the Army National Guard's 105th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, Asheville, N.C.

Bomb Attack Wounds British Soldier

25 January, 2005 BBC

A soldier has been seriously wounded in a bomb attack in Iraq.

Private Darron Curtis from North Baddesley in Hampshire was serving with the 2nd Battalion of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

The explosion occurred outside a military base 20 miles from Basra.

Private Curtis needed treatment to his hand, eye and neck after suffering shrapnel injuries in the attack.

Gaylord Solider Loses Leg

January 25, 2005 David Silva, WorldNow and WOODTV

GAYLORD, Mich. A Gaylord high school graduate serving in Iraq is hospitalized with serious injuries after a roadside bomb attack last Monday in Ramadi.

Private First Class Derrick Harden underwent surgery in Germany where doctors had to remove one of his legs from the knee down. He's now at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington recovering from multiple broken bones and shrapnel wounds.

Today Harden's family left to be with him. They plan to spend the next two weeks by his side.

Church members set up a fund for any donations to help the family deal with time off work.

Harden enlisted in the army right after his 2003 high school graduation.

“Thundering Third” Took 33% Casualties At Falluja

1.13.05 By TONY PERRY, Los Angeles Times

"On the second day of the fight, word came down to focus on head shots, that body shots were not good enough," said 1st Lt. Tim Strabbing, a platoon leader with the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, one of lead units in the assault to oust the insurgents. **The battalion, known as the Thundering Third, suffered 23 dead and 300 wounded.** [From Kevin Thompson]

TROOP NEWS

Ex-Recruiter Turns Against The War



photo: Brian Kennedy

January 24th, 2005 Village Voice Media, Inc

Chris Dugan, 27, signed up for his future hitch in the marines while still in high school. "I wanted to be hard and serve my country," he says. "My grandfather was a marine." Dugan was lucky enough to serve in peacetime, from 1995 to 1999.

Included was a short stint as a recruiter for high schoolers like himself, patriotic working-class kids without a lot of options to pay for college, get job training, or find work. **"These recruiters psychoanalyze you and pitch you a story," he says. "They have a quota, and if that quota isn't met, it's their ass. They'll do whatever they can to get you in."**

But now Chris is out—far out. He's a master's student at Hunter College and a member of the International Socialist Organization and the Campus Antiwar Network. And he's a counter-recruiter, part of a growing grassroots national movement to keep kids like him out of Iraq.

Injuries Claim Bragg Soldier 9 Days Into Tour

[Thanks to Lou P who sent this in.]

Jan 25, 2005 By Justin Willett, Staff writer, Fayetteville Online

Five days after Capt. Joe Fenton Lusk II left Fort Bragg for Kuwait and a one-year tour in Iraq, he phoned his mother to tell her that things were going well.

"He said they were getting their aircraft and checking them out," Susan Lusk said Monday in a phone interview from her home in Reedley, Calif.

"When he got off the phone he said, 'Mom, I love you. It'll be fine.'"

Joe Lusk had been in Kuwait nine days when he was injured Friday during an Apache training accident. He died later that day at Camp Buehring. He was 25.

Lusk, an Apache helicopter pilot and third-generation West Point graduate, was the first Fort Bragg soldier to die in 2005 in the Iraq theater. **He was the 47th Bragg soldier to die in the Iraq theater since the invasion in 2003.**

Lusk was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division. The Apache battalion was part of the 229th Aviation Regiment, which disbanded last year. The battalion was reassigned to the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Ga., but will remain at Fort Bragg until after its yearlong deployment to Iraq.

She was notified of his death Friday afternoon, she said, just after she finished a lunch break at home. "When I went to leave two officers were at the door," she said.

Susan Lusk said she is thankful that she got some time with her son before he was deployed.

"I did have him home before Christmas for a week," she said. "He was just a really sweet and neat kid."

Joe Lusk followed a family tradition when he decided to attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. His paternal grandfather and namesake, Joe Fenton Lusk, graduated from the academy in the 1940s, and his uncle Patrick graduated in 1976, Susan Lusk said. Joe F. Lusk II graduated in 2001.

Lusk said her son loved Fort Bragg. She said he lived off post with some Army buddies and traveled on weekends to see his girlfriend, Jodi Church, in Atlanta.

“This Is An Insult To Our Children For Whose Deaths They Are Responsible.”

23 Jan 2005 Forwarded from networker Lane Anderson to all on Vietnam Veterans Against The War NET

From Sr. Suarez del Solar, Father of Jesus Alberto Suarez del Solar Navarro Lance Corporal USMC 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, First Fallen in Iraq!

Today I must declare my objection to the inauguration of Mr Bush as president of the United States.

In a week long celebration that cost more than \$40 million, Mr Bush displays his arrogance and presumption and thereby insults millions of poor children around the world.

He also insults the US soldiers who bravely fulfill their obligation, for we must remember that they still lack the proper protective equipment in Iraq. Nevertheless, money flows freely for the kingly coronation of one of this era's most criminal politicians.

In several of his speeches this week, Mr Bush has thanked our soldiers and their families for their sacrifice.

And what sacrifice has he made for our nation? Which member of his family is fighting the war on terror? Which member of his administration has sacrificed for our freedom and democracy?

One hesitates to mention democracy given that his reelection is marred by shady electoral "mistakes." **One hesitates to mention freedom when police, soldiers, and other security forces block real Americans from demonstrating in our nation's capital.**

Bush also has said that now is the time for unity. Yes, it is time for unity since more than any previous president in history he has divided the nation with fear and lies. It is time to unite against this administration that today seeks to initiate four more years of criminal attacks around the world.

His new secretary of state says that now is the time for diplomacy.

After more than 1300 young men and women killed and more than 100,000 dead Iraqis, she admits that they made a mistake, that the famous weapons of mass destruction never existed, and that now what is needed is diplomacy.

This is an insult to our children for whose deaths they are responsible.

It is an insult to the global community that, according to international polls, believes a second Bush administration endangers the entire world. Everyday we are more exposed to terrorist attack as a result of Bush's criminal behavior.

Today is an historic day because the whole world will raise its voice in protest against George W Bush.

Rumsfeld's Contempt For The Army

Jan. 17, 2005 By Dan Baum, The New Yorker

No matter how clever its captains and lieutenants are becoming in the face of the insurgency, the Army may never be able to declare victory in Iraq.

Thirty years after the fall of Saigon, the military finds itself thrust into another war with limited public support, insufficient resources, and a murky definition of success.

It remains to be seen whether its appetite for learning the lessons of Iraq will extend to analyzing how it got into such a war in the first place.

When General Shinseki failed to persuade Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to allocate more troops to the initial effort, he appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee, where, under cover of answering a senator's question, he went public with his estimate that the war would require "several hundred thousand" troops. His move failed. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz called Shinseki's estimate "wildly off the mark," and the Army invaded Iraq - with about a hundred thousand soldiers.

Thomas White, who was fired from his job as Secretary of the Army in May of 2003 for clashing with Rumsfeld on a number of issues, including how many troops would be needed, told me that the lesson the Army needs to take away from the run-up to Iraq is precisely the one no officer wants to learn.

"If I had it to do again, what Shinseki and I should have done is quit, and done so publicly," he said.

White called it a measure of Rumsfeld's contempt for the Army that he didn't name a permanent Secretary of the Army to replace him until this past November. "To spend more than a year at war without a Secretary of the Army is unthinkable," White said.

Army Southern Command Caught Lying About Guantanamo Prisoners Suicide Attempts

January 25, 2005 By Paisley Dodds, Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Twenty-three terror suspects tried to hang or strangle themselves in the military prison at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Cuba, during a mass protest in 2003, the military confirmed Monday.

The incidents came during the same year the camp suffered a rash of suicide attempts after Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller took command of the prison with a mandate to get more information from prisoners accused of links to al-Qaida or the ousted Afghan Taliban regime that sheltered it.

Between Aug. 18 and Aug. 26, the 23 detainees tried to hang or strangle themselves with pieces of clothing and other items in their cells, demonstrating "self-injurious behavior," the U.S. Southern Command in Miami said in a statement. Ten detainees made a mass attempt on Aug. 22 alone.

U.S. Southern Command described it as "a coordinated effort to disrupt camp operations and challenge a new group of security guards from the just-completed

unit rotation.” [“Hey Ahmed, I got a great idea bout how to disrupt camp operations. I’ll kill myself. Gee, that will really test the new guards too.” What idiot writes the scripts for these sadistic assholes?]

Those incidents were mentioned casually during a visit earlier this month by three journalists, but officials then immediately denied there had been a mass suicide attempt. [Stupid liars. They really think they can cover up everything, including the fact that the place was run by torturers. Won’t fly. Sorry about that.]

Alistair Hodgett, a spokesman for Amnesty International’s office in Washington, was critical Monday of the delay in reporting the incident.

“When you have suicide attempts or so-called self-harm incidents, it shows the type of impact indefinite detention can have, but it also points to the extreme measures the Pentagon is taking to cover up things that have happened in Guantanamo,” he said.

“What we’ve seen is that it wasn’t simply a rotation of forces but an attempt to toughen up the interrogation techniques and processes.”

In 2003, there were 350 “self-harm” incidents, including 120 “hanging gestures,” according to Lt. Col. Leon Sumpter, a spokesman for the detention mission.

The military has reported 34 suicide attempts since the camp opened in 2002, including one prisoner going into a coma and sustaining memory loss from brain damage. [A “gesture” no doubt.]

Of the 23 men who tried to hang or strangle themselves during the 2003 protest, two required hospital treatment and then were transferred to the psychiatric ward, the military statement said.

Sixteen remain at Guantanamo Bay, while seven were transferred to other countries, the statement said without giving details. Some transferred detainees have been released while others continue to be detained in their native or other countries.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. 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 RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Senior Allawi Government Judge Shot Dead In Baghdad

January 25, 2005 (AEDT) & Aljazeera

Resistance fighters in Baghdad have shot dead a senior judge.

Qaiss Heshem al-Shamari, 32, was the chief administrator of the Council of Judges in Iraq, the body which supervises all courts across the country.

Judge Qais Hashim al-Shammari was killed with his brother-in-law in a roadside ambush, the sources said on Tuesday.

He was shot dead when fighters in another car cut them off while they were driving in eastern Baghdad.

12 Polling Centers Wasted

25 January 2005 Aljazeera & (KUNA) & (Xinhuanet)

10 polling centres in areas north of Baghdad came under overnight attack.

A further voting station was hit in the south of the country.

Mortar rounds and rockets pounded three voting centres in Tikrit on Monday night and a fourth station was hit on Tuesday morning, Iraqi police Colonel Abd Allah al-Juburi said.

In Tuz Khurmatu, north of Tikrit, fighters dynamited a voting station, said Captain Ahmad Bayan al-Din.

Six mortar rounds hammered a centre in the refinery town of Baiji and in Samarra four rockets hit a polling station, police said. South of that city, fighters also launched rocket and mortar attacks on voting offices in Ishaki and Yathrib.

Six mortar shells also shook a voting centre near al-Dujail, police said.

The attacks across Salah al-Din province, a main area of the violence, caused severe damage to the stations, most of them located in schools, police said.

Meanwhile, Polish troops in central Iraq reported a polling station in Diwaniya had been sprayed with gunfire on Monday night. There were no casualties in the attack.

Insurgents in Karkuk blew up an elementary school which was planned to be a polling center, police said Tuesday.

The al-Kadhemiya school, located 50 km west of here, sustained extensive damage as a result of the explosion, Brigadier Sarhat Qader told KUNA today.

A youth club in Samarra taken as the headquarters of the independent committee responsible for Iraq's landmark elections was attacked by mortars on Tuesday, police said.

"The mortar rounds hit the building taken by the Independent Electoral Commission as its headquarters in the city and caused great damage," a policeman who refused to give his name told Xinhua.

Nobody was hurt in the attack as it took place early in the morning, he added.

The Commission staff in Samarra, numbering at about 24, had resigned earlier this month in response to the call of the Muslim Scholars Association to boycott the elections.

Justice Done! After Occupation Cops Fire On People Handing Out Leaflets, 11 Cops Killed

Fighting erupted in Baghdad's eastern Rashad neighborhood as Iraqi police fired on insurgents who were handing out leaflets warning people not to vote in Sunday's national elections.

Armed men lured police into a trap with a decoy car bomb and then opened fire, killing seven of the officers, according to policeman Khazim Hussein.

A bomb also blew off the gate of a secondary school and gunmen opened fire on Iraqi and U.S. forces responding to the blast. Witnesses said two Iraqi policemen and an insurgent were killed.

An official at Kindi Hospital said 11 policeman were killed altogether in the fighting.

Assorted Collaborators Captured, Killed

1.25.05 By Sameer N. Yacoub, Associated Press & Aljazeera

Assailants shot and killed a man who worked for a district council in western Baghdad as he was on his way to work, police said.

Guerrillas firing from a speeding car wounded three staffers from the Communications Ministry as they were going to work, police Lt. Lyman Abdul-Hamid said. The three workers, one of them a woman with serious injuries, were rushed to a hospital.

Insurgents also shot and killed the son of an Iraqi translator working with U.S. troops, police said.

A police colonel was also killed as he was driving in southern Baghdad, officials said. Col. Nadir Hassan was in charge of police protection forces for electric power facilities in two provinces flanking the capital.

Partisans in northern Iraq captured a senior official in the Iraqi Communist Party, Mohammed Nouri Aqrabi, in the city of Mosul, a party official said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

"I can train a monkey to wave an American flag. That does not make the monkey patriotic." Scott Ritter

Lt. Gen. John Sattler: Idiot

January 25, 2005 Brian Cloughley, Counterpunch

In November Marine LtGen John Sattler said his troops had "taken away this safe haven" of Falluja, which he stated was the base for the entire Iraqi uprising (he called it "rebellion") against US occupation troops. The Marine offensive, he said two months ago, has "broken the back of the insurgency" across Iraq. "We have", he announced proudly, "liberated the city of Falluja . . . the enemy is broken."

Following General Sattler's declaration that his enemy was broken there was a massive increase in ferocious anti-US attacks throughout the country. In the weeks after he mouthed his idiot words, over 150 US soldiers have been killed and scores more maimed.

A few hundred Iraqi fighters against occupation have died. And hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Iraqi civilians have been slaughtered - but who the hell cares about them?

Lesson Unlearned

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

The strategy of using massive forces for counterrevolutionary warfare has been abandoned.

Under new tactical arrangements now being developed, foot soldiers are to be replaced by machines and advanced electronic devices, in a system of technological warfare characterized by General Ellis Williamson as “firepower, not manpower.” A crucial element of this is the “electronic battlefield,” first publicly announced by General Westmoreland in a historic address to the Association of the United States Army in 1969. “We are on the threshold of an entirely new battlefield concept,” the general intoned, one that will “replace wherever possible the man with the machine.”

An integral part of the new military strategy is an increase in the readiness of the nation’s 900,000 standby-reserve forces. The Pentagon has abandoned the disastrous Vietnam-era policy of increasing draft calls and expanding the size of the active forces to meet an emergency, and in the future will rely instead on a smaller force backed up by combat-ready reserves.

Secretary Laird defined this “Total Force” concept as follows: “The Reserves and Guard will be the initial and primary sources for augmentation of the active forces in any future emergency.”

The increased emphasis on weekend warriors is quite clearly the result of the reduced strengths and capabilities of the active forces. **As the 1971 Army Greenbook candidly explained: “If the active structure continues to decline, while strategy requirements remain the same, then Reserve divisions will have to be mobilized for any major commitments.”**

The Pentagon thus seems fully committed to molding the reserve forces into a major component of American military strength.

Indeed in September of 1974 Manpower Secretary Brehm made the shocking proposal that the President or Secretary of Defense be allowed to mobilize fifty thousand reservists for up to ninety days without prior congressional approval or declaration of national emergency. The once-safe haven of the reserve forces is being prepared for the serious business of war.

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. Occupation Regime Unleashes Reign Of Terror In Iraqi Prisons; Allawi “Human Rights” Official Says Torture “Not So Serious”

1.25.05 Reuters

Interim Iraqi authorities routinely torture prisoners, a leading human rights group that has cited dozens of abuse cases says.

The US-based group Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Monday that prisoners have been beaten with cables and hose pipes, and suffered electric shocks to their earlobes and genitals.

Some have been starved of food and water and crammed into standing-room only cells, HRW said.

HRW said it interviewed 90 Iraqi prisoners between July and October last year, just after the government of interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi assumed power from the US-led forces which ousted Saddam Hussein.

Seventy-two of the 90 said they had been tortured or mistreated.

"Detainees report kicking, slapping and punching, prolonged suspension from the wrists with the hands tied behind the back, electric shocks to sensitive parts of the body ... and being kept blindfolded and/or handcuffed continuously for several days," the group said in a report.

"In several cases, the detainees suffered what may be permanent physical disability."

The report also said Iraq's intelligence service had violated the rights of political opponents.

It highlighted the systematic use of arbitrary arrest, pre-trial detention of up to four months, improper treatment of child detainees and abysmal conditions in pre-trial facilities.

While the HRW report looked solely at Iraqi institutions and did not address torture of prisoners by US soldiers, it said **international police advisers, mostly Americans, had turned a blind eye to Iraqi abuse.**

"We are sure that there are violations in these prisons, but not so serious. The investigation is still under way," said Husham al-Suhail, an official in Iraq's Human Rights Ministry. [And when the resistance catches up to this traitor and chops his fucking head off, watch the apologists for the Occupation whine about the resistance "targeting civilians."]

Operation Limited Freedom: Life In The Imperial Fort, Baghdad; It Takes A Regiment To Defend An Embassy

January 22, 2005 By Tyler Marshall, L.A. Times Staff Writer

BAGHDAD — Like many a senior U.S. diplomat on official business around the globe, Robert J. Callahan dresses up a bit and travels in chauffeur-driven style to meetings outside the embassy.

But for Callahan, who serves as the senior public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy here, diplomacy is no suit-and-tie affair. First there's the flak jacket and helmet. Then there's the three-car convoy of armored vehicles and 12 armed guards.

He makes no trip without 24 hours of preparations that include surveillance of the location he plans to visit and security procedures that tell him how long he can stay and precisely how to get in and out.

"There's not a lot of spontaneity," he said, in what could only be described as an understatement.

Such is life inside one of the world's most dangerous diplomatic assignments: the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad. When it comes to living with danger on a daily basis, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad is in a category of its own.

"This is an assignment like no other," said Limbert. He was one of 52 Americans who survived the 444-day hostage ordeal in Tehran, where "we moved around freely until the day it all happened. We didn't face conditions like that."

Even Soviet diplomats in Afghanistan during the 1980s had greater mobility, said Moscow's current ambassador in Kabul, Zamir Kabulov. A junior officer at the time, Kabulov reminisced about those years, when the Soviet occupation was the target of Afghan militants, including a young Saudi commander named Osama bin Laden.

"There was no danger of terrorism in the streets of Kabul then," Kabulov said in a telephone interview with The Times. "A random artillery explosion, yes, but no blown-up cars, no suicide bombings, no ambushes, no kidnappings."

The mission's administrative chief, Stephen A. Browning, who has helped evacuate embassies during his career, acknowledges that his experience in Baghdad has been unique. [Good choice; his prior experience will be valuable when they have to make a run for the roof.]

"We've never done this. We've always been heading in the other direction," he said. "We're bringing in all these people used to pinstripes into this war zone, giving them color-coordinated helmet and flak jackets and telling them, 'You go be a diplomat.' There's just no model for what we've done."

The diplomatic beachhead here doesn't come cheap. **Browning estimated that it cost nearly half a billion dollars to keep the embassy operation going for the last six months of 2004.**

Whereas most of the United States' 250-plus missions around the world exude an atmosphere of hushed efficiency, the Baghdad mission feels more like New York's Grand Central station at rush hour, with streams of civilian and uniformed personnel moving through the long, narrow corridors.

The mission has so many types that Browning counts beds to determine how many work, eat and sleep on the embassy grounds. The number is 3,700.

Security personnel alone number 2,500, a unit only slightly smaller than a full Marine Corps regiment. At its heart, the embassy is home to 135 State Department career diplomats, several hundred U.S. civilian contract employees and local Iraqi support staff. Five of the senior diplomats, including Ambassador John D. Negroponte, previously served as ambassadors.

For all who work here, life's rhythm is dictated by a concern for physical safety. The embassy has its own hostage negotiator, its own psychiatrist and its own fleet of helicopters. **It is even building its own fire department because it's considered too risky to rely on the city's firefighting force.**

With the exception of Negroponte, who has his own house nearby, the non-Iraqi staff lives in small trailer-like cabins amid piles of biodegradable sandbags, gun emplacements and signs that read: "Beware! Attack Dogs on Patrol."

The trailers are bunched in clusters, each with names that appear to mock reality. There's Edgewood Park, Embassy Estates and Poolside Suites. A sign in the middle of a lifeless swath of dirt proclaims, "Keep Off the Grass."

Staffers take their meals in the mission's main dining area, a grand hall with green-and-white marble walls and a huge glass chandelier. "This place qualifies for its own ZIP Code," Browning said.

Because shopping outside the security cordon is considered too dangerous, every need, from toilet paper and paper plates to staples, paper clips and bottled water, must be trucked in from outside the country. Supply convoys sometimes are attacked, but embassy officials say there's little alternative.

"I'm not going to risk someone's life to go out and buy Post-It notes," Browning said.

An Iraqi employee was reportedly assassinated this month after insurgents learned that he worked for the embassy. To reduce the danger, the 250 local employees have been given training on how to spot surveillance and shake it off.

Simple staff lists containing telephone numbers are treated as secret documents, and local employees automatically qualify for flexible hours so they can change their times and routes to work. They even have permission to drop out of sight for days at a time, embassy officials said.

Still, recruitment is a problem and attrition is high. Officials say they lose 30% of all local employees within their first month.

Although the number of Iraqi employees is a fraction of the 600 discussed at the State Department last summer, Limbert says interest among U.S. career diplomats for a Baghdad assignment has been so high that many have had to be turned away.

The perks include a relatively short, one-year assignment, hazardous duty and hardship pay that boost the normal salary by 50%, and the chance to work on the highest-priority foreign policy issue. With little to do but work, few bother to take days off.

For what little time off they get, there are DVDs, a gym, a pool fashioned out of one of the palace's large fountains, poker nights and informal parties.

"The social life's not all that bad," said a 22-year-old civilian on the embassy support staff. "It's kind of like college."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

The Bankrupt Empire: \$80 Billion More For The War; \$1-2 Billion For Baghdad Embassy Building

1.25.05 Aljazeera

The Bush administration is to seek about \$80 billion in new funding for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, pushing the total for both conflicts to almost \$300 billion so far.

Administration and congressional officials said on Monday that the new request would come on top of the \$25 billion in emergency spending already approved for this fiscal year.

That means funding for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan will total nearly \$105 billion in fiscal 2005 alone - a record amount that shatters initial estimates of the cost.

The funding request comes as the US army says it is now planning to keep at least 120,000 troops in Iraq for the next two years to train and fight alongside Iraqi forces against those opposed to their presence.

The White House is bracing for a backlash from Democrats and some Republicans.

The administration is also considering including \$1 billion to \$2 billion to construct a new US embassy complex in Baghdad.

Administration and congressional officials had initially expected this year's supplemental spending to total closer to \$50 billion. ***But cost estimates have skyrocketed to as much as \$100 billion as the anti-US movement in Iraq has intensified.***

Critics have long accused Bush and his advisers of understating the costs.

<p>Before the invasion, then budget director Mitch Daniels predicted Iraq would be "an affordable endeavour" and Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz assured Congress: "We are dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction and relatively soon."</p>

The Inaugural Ball: Dancing With Wolves

January 20, 2005 by Susan Lenfestey, Star Tribune / Minneapolis, Minnesota

It's time to party.

As the families of bomb-flattened Fallujah huddle in make-shift refugee camps, drinking from sewage-filled streams, Iraqi policy mastermind Paul Wolfowitz fastens the last stud into his starched collar.

As the Iraq Survey Group ends its search for WMD, concluding that there was no imminent mushroom cloud or even a smoking gun, Condi Rice draws herself a hot bath.

As Sgt. Kevin Benderman, an Army mechanic with nine years of service, refuses a second deployment to Iraq, saying "you just don't know how bad it is," Colin Powell pours himself a drink.

As Specialist Charles A. Graner, miscreant and major-domo of Abu Ghraib, shuffles off to prison, Donald Rumsfeld straightens the black tie of his tux.

As the 9/11 widow tucks her children into bed, wondering why the recommendations made in the 9/11 Commission Report weren't implemented, Tom Ridge tightens his cummerbund.

As prisoners charged with no crimes, and given no recourse, languish in the hellhole of Guantanamo Bay, torture apologist Alberto Gonzales clicks his cufflinks into place.

As Dan Rather retires in disgrace over forged documents, former CIA Director George Tenet, proponent of forged documents about Iraq's nonexistent nuclear program, adjusts the Medal of Freedom around his neck.

As the working mother in Chicago wonders how to keep her child from being left behind now that her special-ed program has been cut, Armstrong Williams polishes his shoes.

As Valerie Plame walks away from a distinguished career as a CIA "operative," destroyed when her identity was revealed by columnist Robert Novak, Mr. Novak walks to his limo.

As Osama bin Laden chuckles in his cave to see America's fortunes sink in the morass of Iraq and as fresh recruits to his cause multiply like flies, Dick Cheney pops the cork on a bottle of Dom Perignon.

As America's trade gap surges and the red ink in the national debt bleeds to a record level, Treasury Secretary John Snow finishes shaving and dabs at a spot of blood on his chin.

As the Republican Congress gets ready to underfund everything from Head Start to veterans' benefits, Speaker Dennis Hastert checks his profile in the mirror.

As Pfc. Francis Obaji, oldest son of an immigrant Nigerian family, is zipped into a body bag for the sad journey home, Laura Bush zips up her Oscar de la Renta gown.

And as his corporate pals, forgetting for a moment the bottom line that forces them to ship jobs overseas, slide their millions across the table to dance at his ball, George W. Bush pulls on his snakeskin boots.

Check This Out....

http://www.i-am-bored.com/bored_link.cfm?link_id=7819

Don't Know Much About Algebra

January 20, 2005 By Maureen Dowd, New York Times

Lawrence Summers, the president of Harvard, has been pilloried for suggesting that women may be biologically unsuited to succeed at mathematics.

He may have a point.

Just look at Condoleezza Rice.

She's clearly a well-educated, intelligent woman, versed in Brahms and the Bolsheviks, who has just been rewarded for her loyalty with the most plum assignment in the second Bush cabinet.

Yet her math skills are woefully inadequate.

She can't do simple equations. She doesn't even know that X times zero equals zero. If you multiply 1,370 dead soldiers times zero weapons of mass destruction, that equals zero achievement for Ms. Rice, who helped the president and vice president bamboozle the country into war.

Was Condi out doing figure eights at the ice skating rink when she should have been home learning her figures? She couldn't have spent much time studying classic word problems: If two trains leave Chicago at noon, one going south at 20 miles an hour and one going north at 30 miles an hour, how far will each have gotten by midnight?

Otherwise, she might have realized that if two cars leave the Baghdad airport at noon on the main highway into the capital of Iraq, neither one is going to get there with any living passengers. Our 22 months at war have not added up to that one major highway's being secured.

It's lucky for Ms. Rice that she's serving with men who are just as lame at numbers as she is. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz couldn't be bothered to tally correctly the number of dead soldiers when he testified before Congress. And his boss, Donald Rumsfeld, didn't realize that using an autopen signature on more than 1,000 letters to the relatives of fallen troops added up to zero solace.

Our new top diplomat has obviously not mastered fractions. When she asserted during her confirmation hearing that 120,000 Iraqi troops had been trained, Senator Joe Biden corrected her, saying she was off by a bit. His calculation of trained Iraqi troops was actually 4,000 - hers was 30 times that. Maybe she's confusing hyperbole and hypotenuse.

Her geometry is skewed if she thinks she'll now be more powerful than Rummy and Dick Cheney. Doesn't she know that the Pentagon has more sides than her Crawford triangle with George and Laura?

She could at least have read "The Da Vinci Code." Then she would have learned about Fibonacci numbers, a recurring mathematical pattern in nature. When you invade a country, you should expect an insurgency. Or, as Fibonacci might have calculated it, if you kill one jihadist, two more arrive to take his place; if you kill three, five more pop up; if you get five, eight more appear, and so on.

The incoming secretary of state and her colleagues are, alas, also lousy at economics. After Bush officials promised that the postwar expenses would be covered by Iraqi oil revenues, we find ourselves spending \$1 billion a week of our own money.

Ms. Rice and her fellow imperialists know so little about physics that they arrogantly jumped into "spooky action at a distance," turning the country they had hoped to make into a model democracy into a training ground for international terrorists, a nucleus for a new generation of radioactively dangerous fanatics.

How could they forget Newton's third law: for every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction?

The administration needs a lesson in subtraction. How do we subtract our troops and replace them with Iraqi troops while the terrorists keep subtracting Iraqi troops with car bombs and rocket-propelled grenades?

Condi may not know Einstein's theory of relativity, but she has a fine grasp of Cheney's theory of moral relativity. Because they're the good guys, they can do anything: disassembling to get into war; flattening Iraqi cities to save them; replacing the Geneva Conventions with unconventional ways of making prisoners talk. The only equation the Bushies know is this one: Might = Right.

It is puzzling that if you add X (no exit strategy) to Y (Why are we there?) you get W²: George Bush's second inauguration.

At Condi's hearing, she justified the Bush administration's misadventures by saying history would prove it right. "I know enough about history to stand back and to recognize that you judge decisions not at the moment, but in how it all adds up," she told a skeptical Senator Biden.

Problem is, she's calculating, but she can't add. For now, Sam Cooke is right about the Bushies. They don't know much about history.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Israeli Soldiers Refuse Occupation Duty

From: JFL

To: GI Special

Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2005 12:05 AM

Subject: Israeli refuseniks

There are at least 1393 Israelis refuseniks including 27 Israeli airmen, more than a dozen members of Sayeret Matkal, and Noam Bahat, Hagay Mattar, Adam Mouar, Shimi Tzamrit and Mittan Kminar who are serving prison terms for refusing to serve in Israel's illegal, immoral war against the Palestinians.

That's like 60,000 people here.

It is no more anti-Semitic or anti-Israeli to be anti-Likud than it is anti-American for an American like myself who loves his country to be vehemently opposed to "our" present viciously war-mongering and anti-democratic American regime.

In fact patriotism demands that we all repudiate the regimes that are making war criminals of us all.

Think what the Israeli refuseniks are standing up against in their country. See <http://oznik.com/index.html>

Solidarity.

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

Received:

A Correction:

TO: GI Special

FROM: PB

Correction to a readers' comment in the last GI Special:

It was Lenin who said: peace to the huts, war on the palaces (not castles!!)

Received:

“Something Happened To My Son”

From: JM

To: GI Special

Sent: January 25, 2005 4:50 AM

Subject: “Something Happened To My Son”

Of cause something happened - he was taught to kill civilians. Civilians just like this poor girl.

The other young man shot at policemen - men in uniform - because he was affected by what he had seen and done. He hated civilians being murdered by war. He also hated men in uniform because they represented the sort of violence that destroyed all he believed in.

This man was affected a different way. He was changed by the things he saw and did, but accepted that to kill civilians was right. He became one of the sufferers who vent their trauma on the defenceless.

Both these young men were victims and so were those they killed. The criminal is the state that forces troops to do things that they believe are monstrous crimes. Their minds cannot cope with the feeling of guilt.

Some want to die in order to apologise for what they have done. Some want to go on killing because they have been trained into believing it is correct..

Someone who kills in order to protect his home and family can live with it - it was wrong - but necessary. A man who is taught to kill, without reason or cause, on command, is different. He may start believing what he is taught is right but actually killing another human being changes things. He finds that there are parts of him he never knew were there - he may enjoy the kill.

Later he has to come to terms with this and find a way of living with guilt. Drug taking, beating up his family, committing murder, are all part of this. Some find a way of putting the past behind them, some even boast how much they enjoyed killing. **Very few, no matter how strong, are unaffected.**

This is part of war and governments who want to wage war must accept it. It is a fact, of all wars, more civilians die than fighters. This is hard for young people to accept, especially those who think.

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.

Received:

Monty Python Strikes Again

1.24.05
From JM
To: GI Special

I've just read a very interesting interview. Laura Miller, of Salon, interviewing Terry Jones of, the British comedy team, Monty Python.

He's started writing political pieces because he thinks the media is biased and Bush/ Blair have erased the line between absurdity and horror. I am sending just a few bits of the interview that I think will interest you. --- JM

--- after 9/11 George Bush said exactly the right things. He said we have to catch the evil perpetrators of this evil crime. But if you're going to catch the perpetrators of a crime, I would have thought that what you need is speed and secrecy.

What you don't do is announce where you're going to look. "We're going to look in Afghanistan, all right?" You don't say when you're going to do it. "We're going to do it in two months' time. Two months' time, OK?" And you don't say what you're going to do.: "We're going to bomb you!" I would have thought any evil perpetrators would have got out of Afghanistan by then. I certainly would have done, if I were an evil perpetrator.

--- If you keep repeating, "Security forces are putting down insurgents in Iraq," rather than saying "Our illegally occupying army is killing the freedom fighters in Iraq," people will actually start believing it.

If we were in France in the Second World War, we'd be talking about brave resistance fighters stopping the illegal occupation of France. We would call the Vichy government quislings and collaborators. Whereas we're talking now about the great Allawi, who's just doing what the Americans want him to do.

Another one is the four "civilian contractors" whose murders prompted the attacks on Fallujah. They were mercenaries. They work for Blackwater, and if you go to Blackwater's Web site, it's really quite interesting. hey offer two courses on sniping. ----

---I just read a piece in the Guardian this week, in which the writer asked why people were getting so distressed and putting up so much money to help the victims of the tsunami disaster - which I applaud, by the way - when the same number of people have been killed in Iraq and nobody's making a fuss about them.

No one's running fundraisers or aid programs to help the victims of the West in Iraq, but **there have been at least 100,000 killed by U.S. and British bombs and artillery fire, according to the Lancet**, which is the only scientific estimate we've got. That's a huge number of people being killed. **You can't say those people are better off than they would have been under Saddam Hussein.** ---

--- **Monbiot had a piece in the Guardian recently suggesting that America attack itself, since if it's intent on attacking those who support and train terrorists, well, the American military trained not only Osama bin Laden but Saddam Hussein.** ---

--- Iraq has no connections with al-Qaida at all. I'm sure Osama bin Laden hated Saddam Hussein, with his worldly, nonreligious government. Al-Qaida would be dead against that sort of thing. What they should have done was get al-Qaida to attack Saddam Hussein. ----

Received:

Reworked Country Joe Song For These New Times

From: Gerald Wadsworth

To: GI Special

Sent: January 19, 2005 2:56 PM

Here's a little ditty I reworked from Country Joe and the Fish - updated to better reflect the debacle in the Middle East....Feel free to send it out - I'm sure CJ&TF wouldn't object to my revisionism! Gerry Wadsworth

Yeah, come on all of you, right wing men,
ol' King George needs your help again.
He's got his ass in a terrible flack.
Way on over in Iraq.
So put down your palm pilots, pick up a gun,
We're gonna have a whole lotta fun.

And it's O, I, L,
That's what we're fighting for.
You know Cheney don't give a crap,
He's bombing old Iraq;
And the C, E, O's,
Who are stealing all the loot.
Well, there ain't no time to question why,
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

Well, come on Halliburton, move real fast;
Your chance for oil has come at last.
Gotta kill some towel heads —
The only good Arab is the one who's dead.
And you know that peace can only be won
When we've blown 'em all to kingdom come.

And it's O, I, L,
That's what we are fighting for.
Bechtel don't give a damn,
rebuilding is a scam;
And those C, E, O's,
They don't have to fight at all.
Well, there ain't no time to wonder why,
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

So, come on Rumsfeld, break the law,
This war in Iraq is shock n' awe.
There's plenty of oil to be had,
if killin' GI's doesn't make you mad.

Just hope and pray that when we drop the bomb,
They drop it on the right Imam.

And it's O, I, L,
That's what we're fighting for.
Ask Condi if she gives a hoot.
kicking Arabs with her boot.
And those C, E, O's,
Never have to send their kids.
Well, there ain't no time to question why,
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

Oh, come on Kellogg, Brown and Root,
There's plenty of Arabs left to shoot.
Years of sanctions have run 'em down,
Now's your chance to rebuild the town.
Serving up food that's covered in blood,
Who cares about a little crud.

And it's O, I, L,
That's what we're fighting for.
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,
Next war is in Iran.
And those C, E, O's,
Ripping off the middle class.
Well there ain't no time to prosecute
When there's money that we can loot.

So, come on mothers don't look back,
Pack your kids off to Iraq.
Come on dads, invest your son,
In a war that can't be won.
Be the first one on your block
To have your kids come home in a box.

And it's O, I, L
That's what we're fighting for.
Don't ask Rummy to give a shit,
Just nuke 'em in Tikrit.
And it's contract heaven,
Open up the money gates,
Well there ain't no time to check the lies,
Whoopee! we're all gonna die.

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