GI SPECIAL 3A28:

ROLL CALL

Two Ohio Marines Among Dead In Helicopter Crash: "She Can't Find Justification For The War That Claimed His Life"

January 27, 2005 RUTBAH, IRAQ (AP)

Two Marines from Ohio were among 31 who died Wednesday when their helicopter crashed in a desert sandstorm in Iraq. The parents of Lance Cpl. Jonathan Edward Etterling, 22, of Wheelersburg in southern Ohio, were informed by the military on Wednesday that he was aboard the CH-53E Super Stallion that went down, killing 30 Marines and one Navy sailor aboard.

"I went in to change clothes and when I saw the Marines in the house, I prayed, 'Let him be wounded, let him be wounded,'" said his father, William Etterling. "My heart just fell."

The family of Michael Finke Jr., 28, of Wadsworth in northeast Ohio, also was informed of his death. Finke, a Marine for nine years, had told his family a day earlier that he was headed on a special mission.

Finke's stepmother said she can't find justification for the war that claimed his life. "I'm sure there are many other parents out there that don't think there is, either," Nadine Finke said.

Etterling joined the Marines in 2002 after graduating from Wheelersburg High School, where he played football. Etterling and three close friends graduated from Paris Island together.

Etterling was in Fallujah for five months and was involved in some heavy fighting, his father said. **He talked to his parents on Saturday, telling them he was tired and had lost more than 15 pounds.**

Wheelersburg is about 87 miles south of Columbus. Wadsworth is about 32 miles south of Cleveland.

Four Lynchburg-Based Marines Killed, Four Hurt

January 27, 2005 From staff and wire reports, Danville Register and Bee

Four members of the Marine Reserve unit based in Lynchburg were killed and four were injured in combat in Iraq Wednesday.

One of the Marines, Sgt. Jesse Strong, 24, of Albany, Vt., was a seminary student at Liberty University in Lynchburg.

The other men killed during an ambush on a convoy near Hadithah in western Iraq were Cpl. Johnson Bowling, 23, of Stuart, Cpl. Christopher Weaver, 24, of Fredericksburg, and Lance Cpl. Karl Linn, 20 of Chesterfield.

Company C was activated in June 2004 Wagner said, and left for Iraq in September 2004 . The company was attached to the 1st Marine Division in Iraq.

Wagner identified the other injured as Cpl. Charles Gentry, Cumberland, Tenn. and Sgt. William Meyers of Mooresville, N.C.

Strong had just graduated from Liberty University and had attended one semester of seminary before his unit was activated. He arrived in Iraq in August and had been due to come home in March.

Local Marine Killed In Iraq Helicopter Crash

January 27, 2005 WESH NewsChannel

Military officials said bad weather might have contributed to the cause of a helicopter crash that took the lives of 30 Marines and a sailor Wednesday.

The parents of one of those Marines lives in Central Florida, WESH NewsChannel 2 reported.

Gael Saintvil, 24, was killed in the crash, and he had been in Iraq for four months.

"I heard the news, a helicopter crash in Northern Iraq. I got the feeling my son was on it," said Belga Saintvil, Gael's father.

On Wednesday night, his fears were confirmed.

"He does what he have to. That's the job chosen," said Mary Saintvil, Gael's mother.

"Even though I don't like the war, I do support the troops and the job they do. What they're trained to do," Belga said.

Knowing the risk ahead of time, a wary father said out loud he wished his son would never have to go.

"I hope you don't have to go, and he said, 'Pappy, I must go and be with my unit.' He wanted to be there so bad," Belga said.

The Marine Corps lost a security specialist, but the Saintvils lost so much more.

Gael's oldest sister is married to a Navy man who is also in the Middle East. There was talk he'd escort Gael home, but has decided to come straight home instead to be with family as soon as possible.

No arrangements have been made yet.

Marine From Aurora Killed In Iraq Helicopter Crash

January 27, 2005 ABC Inc., WLS Television, Inc

A Marine from Aurora was killed in Iraq. Hector Ramos was onboard a helicopter that went down in the western part of Iraq on Wednesday, killing 30 marines and one sailor.

When Hector's mother, Nancy Ramos, heard the news that a helicopter crashed in Iraq Wednesday, killing 30 Marines and one sailor, she immediately thought the worst. She called her son's recruiter who told her "No news was good news." She took comfort in that until Marines knocked at her door.

"When 9/11 happened, the first day he went to go sign up. He came home and said, 'I need to do this," said Nancy.

Nancy said she was scared about the prospect of her son going to war. When he enlisted, Ramos was just 18 years old. Two years after signing up, Hector was killed in the helicopter crash. In a letter written to his family, Hector wrote that war had changed him.

"He felt that place had changed his life, his whole outlook on life. I don't think I'll be able to take another second of my life for granted ever again," said Nancy.

One of Hector's two brothers recently joined the Marine Corps. He is now going through boot camp in San Diego. His youngest brother, Isaiah, is 12 years old.

"He was a good brother and I'm going to miss him," said Isaiah. "I felt something would happen, but I didn't know what."

Hector graduated from East Aurora High School in 2003. He was a member of the school's honors drama club and loved art.

"Very honest young man, a very respectful young man. I think he's everything we as educators look for in a student," said Shirley Best, guidance counselor.

Respect is a quality the 20-year-old showed from Aurora to Iraq. He ended his last letter home with a simple "thank you."

"He said thank you for raising me right and not letting me ever take the wrong path in life," said Nancy.

Hector was injured in the battle for Fallujah. He was hit with shrapnel and a bullet grazed his leg.

Ex-Centennial Student Was One Of Marines Killed In Crash

January 27, 2005 By PAUL WOOD, THE NEWS-GAZETTE

CHAMPAIGN – A former Centennial High School student was one of the Marines killed Wednesday in a helicopter crash in Iraq.

Champaign city employees today were raising donations and making plans for a tribute to Nathan Moore, the son of veteran animal control officer Amber Moore.

"Our sympathies go out to Amber and her family for this terrible loss," said Champaign City Manager Steve Carter in an e-mail late Wednesday to city staffers and officials.

Mr. Moore transferred out of Centennial after his junior year in 2000, said Principal Judy Wiegand.

Late Wednesday afternoon, Carter e-mailed colleagues to let them know of the loss by Mrs. Moore, her husband Duane and daughter Amanda.

Amber's sister, Jodee Bean of Quitman, Texas, said the loss was "devastating."

"He's her only son; they were very close. He was supposed to come home around March," Bean said,

She remembered a happy boy.

"He loved sports. Nathan was really into gymnastics – I remember him doing flips around the house – and baseball. Boy, that kid had red hair! He wasn't going to let nothing stop him," she said.

Bean, who lost her only child to asthma, said there is a Marine tradition in the family. Amber met Duane when he was in the Marines.

Champaign Police Deputy Chief John Murphy said the death was felt like a family member's throughout the department.

"Probably more than any other place, police and fire departments see death, but nobody can be prepared for this," he said.

"Ever since the department found out Wednesday afternoon, there has been a marshaling of effort for Amber and her family."

He said today that a city service will be planned when family gets more information about the crash and funeral arrangements.

Donations were being accepted at the police department's front desk.

Local Marine Killed In Iraq Chopper Crash

Dustin Shumney (ABC7)

1.27.05 ABC7

The loss from the deadly helicopter crash in Iraq has hit home. Among the 31 servicemen killed is a 30-year-old marine who grew up in Benicia.

He leaves behind a wife and three kids in Texas and a mother in Benicia, devastated by his death.

Shama Shumney had a bad feeling yesterday morning. It began with the word of yesterday's helicopter crash in Iraq, then the worst of her worries came true.

Shama Shumney, Dustin's mother: "Yesterday afternoon two marines came to the house."

First Lt. Dustin Shumney graduated from Benicia High School, worked at the local grocery store and joined the marines shortly after graduation. He was Shama Shumney's only child.

Shama Shumney: "In fact, he just got my care package."

Shama Shumney: "And when I asked what he wanted he said gummy bears. And so I brought him bags and bags of gummy bears."

Friends describe Dustin Shumney as handsome, athletic and good to his family. He leaves behind a wife and three small children who live in Texas. They knew he had planned to make the marines a career. They saw themselves as a military family.

Mrs. Shumney works for the school district in Walnut Creek. This was her son's second tour in Iraq. Funeral arrangements are pending his return home next week.

Second Local Marine Dies In Iraq Helicopter Crash

January 27, 2005 KSAT.com., SAN ANTONIO

A 2003 graduate of Medina Valley High School was among the victims killed in a helicopter crash in Iraq on Wednesday.

Lance Cpl. Rhonald Dain Rairdan is the second Marine from the San Antonio area to die in the crash, which was initially blamed on a sandstorm.

Rairdan was expected to visit his family in Castroville within the next two weeks, a family member said.

"He told us that they were getting ready to get on a helicopter to go someplace for the (Iraq national) election," his father David said Thursday afternoon. "Then they were going to go back to their ships."

David Rairdan said the 20-year-old Marine was called Dain by friends and family.

He is the second San Antonio-area Marine known to have been on the Super Stallion transport helicopter.

Lance Cpl. Tony Hernandez, 22, of Canyon Lake, the helicopter's crew chief, was also killed in the crash, his family said Wednesday.

David Rairdan, who last summer retired from the Air Force after 24 years, said his son's unit deployed to the Middle East in October, about four months after he joined the Marines.

Dain, who grew up in Medina County just outside San Antonio, was a machine gunner stationed at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, as part of the 1st Marine Division.

"Most of the guys with him (in the helicopter) went through boot camp with him and they died with him," David Rairdan said. "We felt like we knew them through his cards and letters."

He described his son as very personable with a lot of friends, and that he liked to be around people. As a Marine, his dad said, he was very good at his job.

"We're looking at the positive things, that we had as much time with him as we did," the father said. "Of course it all hasn't sunk in. We haven't seen the coffin yet -- that's going to be a terrible thing. But sometimes bad things happen to good people."

Ohio Marine Killed

1.27.05 Associated Press

Killed was Cpl. Richard Gilbert Jr., 28, of Dayton.

Gilbert had been scheduled to return home next week after being in Iraq since August, said his mother, Helen Gilbert.

"The last time I talked to him was Monday," she told The Associated Press. "He was tired and anxious to get a shower."

Gilbert loved music and played the guitar, his mother said. He attended Patterson Cooperative High School and then later went on to Sinclair Community College in Dayton, where he majored in political science.

"Once he graduated from college he was going to run for City Commission, for mayor, then Congress, then president," Helen Gilbert said.

Gilbert joined the Marines in December 2001 following the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

"There was no talking him out of it," she said.

Utah Marine Killed In Chopper Crash

Jan. 27, 2005 Tonya Papanikolas Reporting, KSL Television & Radio

The family of a West Valley marine is mourning his loss after learning he died in a helicopter crash in Iraq.

The family says they all heard about the helicopter crash yesterday. For some reason, it didn't sit well with them. The mother says it was almost like Matthew was preparing them for the news they never wanted to hear.

A candle burns at Colleen Parkin's home in honor of her son, Corporal Matthew Reed Smith. A flag is flown at half-staff outside and a life-size cutout reminds the family Matthew is with them in spirit.

Colleen Parkin, Son Died in Iraq: “It's still not reality that he's gone, but in our hearts, Matthew will always be here."

“It’s funny that he should be in harm’s way and be dodging bullets and make it out okay, and then on a transport helicopter heading to another area lose his life.”

Spencer Smith, Matthew's Brother: “All the stuff that we get to do, he wanted to do – start a family and be with his family.”

Roseburg Soldier Killed

James Moore: Remembered for his easy-going nature

January 27, 2005 JOHN SOWELL, The News-Review (Oregon)

A Roseburg soldier was among 31 killed Wednesday when a military transport helicopter crashed in western Iraq.

The incident was Douglas County’s first fatality in the Iraq war.

U.S. Marine Cpl. James Lee Moore, 24, was inside the helicopter along with 29 other Marines and one sailor.

According to a recent News-Review article, Moore enlisted in the Marine Corps shortly after Sept. 11, 2001 and has been in Iraq since late summer. He was born in Roseburg and is a graduate of Roseburg High Class of 1999.

He is the son of Garry Moore and stepmother Suzanne Moore and mother Darlene Moore of Roseburg.

N.H. Marine Killed In Helicopter Crash

January 27, 2005 TheWMURChannel

MERRIMACK, N.H. -- A Marine from Merrimack was one of 31 service members killed in a helicopter crash Wednesday in Iraq. Cpl. Timothy Gibson, 23, was killed.

Gibson lived in Merrimack and graduated from Merrimack High School in 2000.

Friends said Gibson was active in high school, playing centerfield on the baseball team and quarterback for the football team.

"Tim was a very outgoing, bubbly, charismatic boy who loved everybody," said Rick Walker, a guidance counselor at Merrimack High School. "He was an individual who got along with everybody. He was very popular with the staff and his peers."

Gibson's mother said her son wanted to enlist to gain the traits of being a Marine: honor and pride. She said that she told him he didn't need to go to boot camp to achieve those traits because he already had them.

In an interview last year with News 9, Gibson's family shared letters he wrote while overseas.

"This has been a very different experience than anything I could ever imagine," Gibson wrote.

Gibson was on his second tour of duty in Iraq and was due to return home in the spring.

Hawaii-Based Sailor Killed In Iraq Helicopter Crash; Due Home In Three Weeks

1.27.05 HONOLULU (AP)

Another Hawaii-based serviceman was among the victims of a helicopter crash in Iraq.

A newspaper in California identifies the sailor as Pearl Harbor-based Navy corpsman John Daniel House.

The Ventura County Star says the 28-year-old sailor was scheduled to return to Hawaii on February 20th.

The newspaper says he had been stationed for a year at Pearl Harbor, where he lived with his wife Melanie, who give birth to their son on Christmas Eve.

Clinton Soldier Loses Leg

January 27, 2005 The Iowa Channel.com

CLINTON, Iowa -- A Clinton County soldier has been injured for a second time in Iraq, this time listed in critical condition with an amputated leg, skull fracture and shrapnel fragments in his head.

His mother said that 42-year-old Sgt. 1st Class Brent Jurgersen was riding in a Humvee on Wednesday morning when the vehicle was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade. Lavonne Jurgersen of Clinton said a gunner riding on top was killed and her son was left in a coma.

Last June, a bullet ricocheted off his M-16 and struck him in the mouth. He went through emergency surgery in Baghdad and was transferred to a hospital in Germany, where he was placed in an induced coma and stayed on life support for several days.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

ONE 1ST ID SOLDIER DIES FROM GUNSHOT WOUND

01/27/05 Centcom Release Number: 05-01-37C

One 1st Infantry Division Soldier died from a gunshot wound sustained about 2:05 a.m., January 27 on Forward Operating Base Normandy.

Marine Killed Near Iskandariyah, Four Wounded

Jan 27, 2005 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

One Marine was killed and five others were wounded when insurgents fired mortars at their base near Iskandariyah, about 30 miles south of Baghdad in tense Babil province.

Fighting & Car Bomb In Samarra

Jan 27, 2005 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer & Reuters

A car bomb has exploded near an Iraqi army patrol in Samarra, killing an Iraqi soldier and two civilians, a U.S. officer in the restive town north of Baghdad says.

Doctors at the local hospital said on Thursday at least four Iraqi soldiers and two civilians were also wounded in the blast.

Sporadic clashes also erupted in Samarra between U.S. troops and armed men, killing one Iraqi civilian and injuring another, Mohammed said.

Mortar shells fell on a designated polling station in Samarra, police said. Armed men in Samarra blew up a school administration building after first ordering the staff to leave, police Lt. Qassim Mohammed said. The destroyed building had been scheduled to be a voting center Sunday.

Car Bomb Explodes Near U.S. Base In Ramadi; Patrol Attacked

Jan 27, 2005 RAMADI, Iraq (Reuters) & ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

A suspected suicide car bomb exploded outside a U.S. military base in the western Iraqi city of Ramadi on Thursday, witnesses said.

A thick cloud of smoke rose from the site of the blast and there was an exchange of gunfire immediately afterwards, the witnesses said. There was no immediate information on any casualties.

Also in Ramadi, capital of the province of Anbar, an Iraqi national guard soldier was killed when insurgents attacked a joint U.S.-Iraqi force guarding a voting center at a school, police Lt. Safa al-Obeidi said.

Fighting In Baghdad Center City

Jan 27, 2005 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

U.S. troops and rebels also exchanged fire Thursday on Haifa Street in central Baghdad, witnesses said.

Eight Australian Soldiers Injured In Baghdad Blast

January 28, 2005 By LUKE McILVEEN, The Daily Telegraph

SENIOR Australian diplomats may have been the intended target of a suicide car bomb attack in Baghdad that injured eight of our troops, two of them seriously.

Two members of the Darwin-based 2nd Cavalry Regiment suffered shrapnel wounds and broken bones in the attack. Arrangements were being made last night for them to be flown to Germany for surgery.

Six other troops suffered injuries, ranging from severe concussion to burst eardrums, from the blast, detonated by a suicide bomber.

The troops had been ferrying the diplomats in a convoy of three armoured vehicles last week between the Australian Embassy and Baghdad airport.

The Daily Telegraph understands one of the civilians was a senior male official with the Department of Foreign Affairs, who may have been the target of insurgents.

The officials escaped uninjured but the troops trained to protect them took the brunt of the impact.

At almost exactly the same time as the car bomb ripped into the Australian convoy about 10am on Wednesday, a sniper opened fire on our soldiers across from the Australian Embassy.

The Australian Light Armoured Vehicles (ASLAVs) were travelling on a notorious stretch of road known as Route Irish, which connects central Baghdad to the Iraqi capital's only airport.

Eyewitnesses described how a BMW parked on the side of the road exploded as the ASLAVs passed just three metres away, killing the bomber instantly.

TROOP NEWS

Helicopter In Iraq Crash Was An Aging Deathtrap: "The Thing Has Had Safety Problems."

January 27, 2005 The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The CH-53E Super Stallion is a Marine Corps workhorse that requires a lot of care and attention to stay in the sky.

For every hour the Super Stallion flies, it requires 44 man-hours of maintenance, he said.

It costs $14,000 an hour to fly, Milliman said.

The CH-53Es were grounded in 1996 and again in 2000 after crashes.

"It's an awfully big helicopter. It's got a lot of things on it that can break," said John Pike, a military expert at globalsecurity.org. "The thing has had safety problems."

"As A Reservist, You Are Just Supposed To Die On The Battlefield"

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
1.24.05

In the wake of the controversy surrounding Abu Ghraib and the 343rd Quartermaster convoy refusal, we have heard much discussion about the state of the Army Reserve and Guard, their obligations and their abilities.

While the Army leadership has made great efforts to portray an integrated force, the reality is quite different.

As a Reserve captain with nine years of active service, I was struck by how profoundly different the treatment of reservists was when I was mobilized and sent to Fort Carson, Colo.; I had been an active-duty soldier, both as an officer and as an enlisted man, at Fort Carson.

What I experienced as a reservist was a consistent prejudice and disdain for the efforts of Reserve soldiers in all ranks.

Remarks such as, "As a reservist, you are just supposed to die on the battlefield" are unfortunately common.

Telling a soldier, "I think of you as an active Army soldier" has become a condescending compliment given to a reservist by an active soldier.

Some of this bias is even institutionalized in health-care and customer-service functions on military installations. Time and again, I was told, explicitly or implicitly, that my spouse and I were not a priority for service because I was a mobilized reservist.

Countless instances of poor treatment, condescension and derision erode that sense of duty and the willingness to sacrifice that sustains our ranks in times of war.

Many in letters to this newspaper have argued that these Reserve soldiers who have performed poorly are traitors and cowards, and have characterized the reserve services as rife with poor morale, training and loyalty. Indeed, the actions of reservists in these two units were unacceptable, and the reserve force does have these problems.

However, the Army's active ranks have failed to bring these soldiers into the family, train them, equip them and build with them that esprit de corps and pride that is the foundation of what is best about the American soldier.

If we are to hold reservists and guardsmen to the highest standards of the American soldier, then we have to treat them like American soldiers, not deride them as second-class citizens.

Capt. Wayne Crawford
Fort Bliss, Texas

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)

Wounded Florence Marine Home, On Road To Recovery

Jan 27, 2005 By DWIGHT DANA, Morning News

FLORENCE - A Florence Marine whose life hung by a thread after being seriously injured in Iraq during the second assault on Fallujah, Iraq, on Nov. 10 has returned to a home festooned with yellow ribbons and balloons.

Wesley "Camp" Ross, 18, defied all the odds when his 26-ton amphibious assault vehicle was hit by an explosive device. Ross had just exited the turret and was standing with his back to the vehicle when the device hit the engine compartment. He suffered severe head and shoulder wounds from the shrapnel that sprayed from the engine.

The Marine entering the turret was killed. Had the attack occurred a minute sooner, Ross would have been killed, too.

Ross is undergoing physical therapy at HealthSouth. He will return to Bethesda (Md.) Naval Hospital this spring for reconstructive surgery on his head. Although he suffered traumatic brain injury, doctors say the memory and intelligence sections of his brain are intact. The prognosis for recovery is very good, but it could take anywhere from six months to two years.

Ross was crew chief of the assault vehicle, which has a crew of three and can carry 20 men. It had made two runs into Fallujah and was preparing for a third when the vehicle was hit in a staging area. Ross has just finished a security watch in the turret.

"All I remember was a whistling noise, and then everything blacked out," he said Wednesday. "It all happened in less than a minute."

Fellow Marines at the scene said his fight for survival was Herculean as he kept going in and out of a coma. Eyewitness reports said the Marines were surrounding him, holding hands and yelling, "Fight Ross, fight Ross."

"Every time he slipped back into the coma, the yelling got louder and louder and he kept coming out again and again," the report read. "It was an amazing and extremely emotional event. That Marine is a fighter. He is in our thoughts every second."

Camp's condition was so grave that his parents and sister were flown to Germany in hopes that their presence would help him pull through. He was flown from Iraq to the military hospital in Germany. He whispered their names and struggled to open his eyes when they arrived at his bedside.

He was flown from Germany to Bethesda. He spent a month in ICU and was in a medically-induced coma for three weeks to give the swelling in his brain time to go down.

Iraq Veterans Turn War Critics

January 23, 2005 By NEELA BANERJEE, New York Times

Sean Huze enlisted in the Marine Corps right after the Sept. 11 attacks and was, in his own words, "red, white and blue all the way" when he deployed to Iraq 16 months later. Unquestioning in his support of the invasion, he grew irritated when his father, a former National Guardsman, expressed doubts about the war.

Today, all that has changed. Haunted by the civilian casualties he witnessed, Corporal Huze has become one of a small but increasing number of Iraq veterans who have formed or joined groups to oppose the war or to criticize the way it is being fought.

The two most visible organizations - Operation Truth, of which Corporal Huze is a member, and Iraq Veterans Against the War - were founded only last summer but are growing in membership and sophistication. The Internet has helped them spread their word and galvanize like-minded people in ways unimaginable to activist veterans of previous generations, who are also lending help.

"There's strength in numbers," Corporal Huze said. "By ourselves, we're lone voices, a whisper in a swarm of propaganda out there. Combined, we can become a roar and have an impact on the issues that we care about."

Those who turn to the groups are generally united in their disillusionment, though their responses to the war vary: **Iraq Veterans seeks a quick withdrawal from Iraq; Operation Truth focuses on the day-to-day issues affecting troops and veterans.**

Iraq Veterans Against the War, which started in July with 8 people, now has more than 150 members, including some still serving in Iraq, said Michael Hoffman, a former lance corporal in the Marines and a co-founder of the group.

For Corporal Huze, the transformation began when he returned home in fall 2003. Unable to forget the carnage he had seen in Iraq, he began to grapple with the justification for the war, he said.

"By sometime in December 2003, I came to the conclusion that W.M.D.'s weren't there and that Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with 9/11, and now I'm left with all that I'd experienced in Iraq and nothing to balance it," Corporal Huze said, emphasizing that he was speaking as a citizen, not as a marine. "When I came to that conclusion, I felt this sense of betrayal. I was full of rage and depression."

That rage has since fueled Corporal Huze, a native of Baton Rouge, La., who is awaiting a medical discharge for a head injury. With the consent of his commanding officers at

Camp Lejeune, he speaks regularly to the media and others as a representative for Operation Truth. **[Hardly a surprise, the organization is *not* for bringing the troops home now.]**

"Who I was before the war, who I was in Iraq and who I am now are three very different men," Corporal Huze said. "I don't think I can ever have the blind trust in the government like I had before. I think that my being over in Iraq as an active participant, I'm a bit more responsible than others for things there. And I think by speaking out now, it's my amends." He added, "I don't know if it will ever balance."

In March 2003, reports of suicide-bombing attacks on American soldiers had reached Sgt. Rob Sarra's Marine Corps unit in an Iraqi town called al-Shatra. A short time later, soldiers saw an older woman walking toward them with a small bundle. The marines, fearing that she might be a bomber, called to her to stop, but she kept walking.

"I was looking at her, and I thought 'I have to stop this woman,' " Mr. Sarra said. "So I fired on her, and then the other marines fired on her."

"When we got to her, we saw that she was pulling out a white flag," he said. "She had tea and bread in her bag. I kept thinking, 'Was she a grandmother? Was she a mother?' "

Mr. Sarra, who has left the Marines after nine years, struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder in Iraq and at home in Chicago before seeking counseling and help from other veterans. Now he is one of the leaders of Iraq Veterans Against the War. [Which is for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from Iraq.]

"When someone is wounded or goes through P.T.S.D., it brings what they went through to the forefront," Mr. Sarra said. "I knew when I joined the Marines that if I was going to be there for 20 years, I'd face combat. **But the question is, why did we go?"**

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.

Did As They Were Taught

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
1.24.05

In reference to "Scrounging for parts brings felony conviction" [Dec. 27], the Army from Day One has trained every soldier to carry out the mission first.

The Army taught us that, when things go bad, you improvise, adapt and overcome any situation.

That is exactly what these soldiers did, and they were punished for it.

Staff Sgt. David Marrrero
Indian Trail, N.C.

Join

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Quaker House ~ Fayetteville Peace with Justice
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and North Carolina Council of Churches

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Pentagon Helping Crooks Rip Off Veterans

January 15, 2005 By Jim Hightower, AlterNet

In the wild and woolly world of unbridled commerce, you'll often encounter disgusting life forms that can only be described as sleaze or slime. For example, take the roving band of companies that profit by essentially bilking vulnerable military veterans of their pensions.

These financial corporations appeal to vets who face some personal crisis and need quick cash. No problemo, say the financial agents, just sign over your military pension payments to us for awhile, and we'll advance you some cash. **Only later do these desperate veterans realize that they've been robbed - to get, say $20,000, they give up $60,000 or more in monthly pension payments, amounting to as high as 75 percent interest.**

These schemes are illegal, for the law says that future military pensions cannot be signed away by a retiree.

Incredibly, though, the Pentagon sides not with our soldiers, but with the profiteering companies that prey on them, even handling the paperwork to divert the retirees' pay to the corporation. Pentagon officials twist the language of the law, declaring that these are not assignments of retiree pay, which would be illegal, but merely the "collateral" for loans taken by retirees.

The companies twist the language further, denying that these are even loans. Rather, they say that these deals are straightforward commercial transactions: "We are just purchasing a stream of payments," one company lawyer said coldly.

Even colder, whenever veterans balk at paying the usurious ripoff, company lawyers sue them, usually in courts far away from where the vets live. Financially-strapped retirees cannot afford to challenge these companies, so they are losing the cases by default, and often having to file for personal bankruptcy.

What's bankrupt here is a system that's robbing veterans.

Where's Bush? Where's Rumsfeld? Where's Congress? **To help battle this outrage call the National Consumer Law Center: 202-452-6252**

Canadian Military Oks Gay Marriages

January 19, 2005 Associated Press, OTTAWA (Canadian Press)

Gay and lesbian couples in the Canadian Armed Forces will be able to get married on military bases.

The military has drafted a policy calling for its chaplains to formally bless same-sex weddings, the Ottawa Sun reports.

Guidelines — considered interim until the federal government passes a law redefining marriage — outline the process for pre-nuptial counselling and using base chapels for same-sex ceremonies.

Col. Stan Johnstone, a military chaplain who helped draft the policy, says the guidelines reflect the primary role of ministering to all Forces members and their families.

Johnstone said chaplains vary on personal convictions and theology, but don't discriminate against anyone in need of counsel.

The guidelines are "essentially a statement of the way the law is going," he said.

"No one is being put under any constraint to do something they wouldn't normally do."

The roughly 150 military chaplains on bases across the country would not be required to perform same-sex marriages if it was against their religious beliefs, but they would have to find a colleague to conduct the ceremony.

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.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Bodies Of Four Dead Allawi Soldiers Discovered In Ramadi

RAMADI, Iraq, Jan 27 (AFP)

The bodies of four executed Iraqi soldiers were found Thursday dumped on a roadside in the rebel Sunni Muslim city of Ramadi, west of Baghdad, witnesses said.

Four Iraqi soldiers were captured Wednesday as they left a US military base west of the city, but the witnesses who found the bodies said they were not the same men.

Assorted Attacks On Collaborators

Explosion at a governor's palace in northeastern city of Baquba Thursday. By Hrvoje Polan, AFP

Jan 27, 2005 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer & KUNA

Attacks were reported Thursday in at least seven provinces, including relatively peaceful Basra in the south, where militants fired mortar shells at four schools designated as polling stations.

In Tamim province, insurgents attacked seven polling stations in the city of Kirkuk with mortars and machine guns, killing one policeman, authorities said.

An Iraqi army soldier was killed and five civilians and two Iraqi police officers were injured when a car bomb exploded near an Iraqi patrol in Baqouba in Diyala province, U.S. officials said.

The body of Talib Minshid, a colonel in the former Iraqi intelligence under Saddam, was found in Baqouba, according to a hospital official, Mohammed Ali. Minshid had been abducted by armed men two days ago.

Four Iraqi National Guard soldiers and one officer were captured Wednesday in Baghdadi, 90 miles west of Baghdad. **The capture occurred after the Iraqi soldiers' car was stopped by insurgents at a checkpoint,** according to witnesses.

Anonymous guerillas assassinated last night an Iraqi police officer in the city of Mosul north of Iraq.

Eyewitnesses confirmed in a phone call with KUNA that they have assassinated Brigadier Sami Al-Hamdani in one of Mosul's neighborhoods, adding that they have showered Al-Hamdani's car with heavy fire killing him immediately.

Al-Hamdani is an officer of the installations protection force, affiliate of the Iraqi Interior Ministry.

There has been a number of kidnapping and assassinations attempts against policemen and Iraqi army soldiers in the city of Mosul, which is currently witnessing instability.

Traitor Allawi’s Secretary Executed

28jan05 Queensland Newspapers

The al-Qaeda Group in the Land of Two Rivers announced on a website that it had executed Salem Jaafar al-Kanani, "secretary of the traitor Iyad Allawi", and said a video would be released at a later time.

Mr Kanani, a man described as the secretary of Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, had been a candidate from Mr Allawi's party in the Iraq elections.

In the video, Mr Kanani makes a confession and calls for Iraqis, especially the young, "not to collaborate with the enemy occupier".

"I ask them to serve their nation and their people ... Personally, I am ready to work in the service of Iraq and the Iraqi people," said Mr Kanani, who was kidnapped by gunmen on a central Baghdad street on January 19.

"I was captured by the mujahideen (Islamic fighters) who have treated me very well," he said, before being gunned down with several bullets.

Mr Allawi's party has had 22 of its members killed in the space of two months.

IF YOU DON’T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

America Really Does Have A Ruling Class: Some High Offices Appear Inherited, Not Elected

With at least 18 senators, dozens of House members and several administration officials boosted by family legacies, modern-day Washington sometimes resembles the court of Louis XIV without the powdered wigs.

January 23, 2005 By Dana Milbank, Washington Post Staff Writer

It came as little surprise last week when Doris Matsui announced, four days after her husband's funeral, that she would run for his seat in Congress.

If the widow is successful in succeeding her late husband, Rep. Robert T. Matsui (D-Calif.), she will join a long list of lawmakers to follow relatives into office.

With at least 18 senators, dozens of House members and several administration officials boosted by family legacies, modern-day Washington sometimes resembles the court of Louis XIV without the powdered wigs.

In Alaska, for example, Lisa Murkowski (R) was elected to the Senate in November after being appointed to that position by her father, who vacated the seat to become governor. And in Illinois, Rep. William O. Lipinski (D) announced his retirement too late for a primary to be conducted, allowing him to persuade party elders to select his son, Daniel, to represent the comfortably Democratic district.

With names such as Boren, Mack and Carnahan, at least seven of the 41 new House members are relatives of prominent politicians. These legacies take office along with the newly reelected president, who is the grandson of a senator, son of a president and brother of a governor.

Dynastic families, and whiffs of nepotism, have been a part of American politics since John Adams made his son John Quincy Adams his envoy to Prussia.

But what is striking is the endurance of American political legacies and the growth of new ones -- witness Hillary Rodham Clinton's move to the Senate as her husband left the White House -- even as other democracies move away from the perception of familial privilege. In Britain, Prime Minister Tony Blair's government has thrown out more than 600 "hereditary peers" in the House of Lords who earned their positions because of their birth.

Here, a seat in Congress is not a birthright, but the name recognition and political connections that come from having an office-holding relative are often enough to propel a candidate to office.

"We've always had members of the same family serving in Congress right back to the beginning, but I notice more than there have been," said David W. Rohde, a Michigan State University political scientist. "It's a combination of name recognition and access to money."

Rep. Rodney P. Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.) is the sixth generation of Frelinghuysen to represent New Jersey in Congress, dating to 1794.

Blue blood is not required for political legacies; a number of those in Congress now are black or Hispanic: Rep. Kendrick Meek (D-Fla.), son of former congresswoman Carrie Meek; Rep. Harold E. Ford Jr. (D-Tenn.), son of former congressman Harold Ford; Rep. Charlie Gonzalez (D-Tex.), son of former congressman Henry Gonzalez; Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.), daughter of former congressman Edward Roybal; Rep. William L. Clay Jr. (D-Mo.), whose father was a congressman; and Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.), daughter of former Georgia state representative Billy McKinney.

President Bush, who rose to power with a famous political surname, has rewarded several children of his ideological allies. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's son became chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist's daughter was made inspector general at the Health and Human Services Department, Justice Antonin Scalia's son was appointed to a top job in the Labor Department, and Vice President Cheney's daughter and son-in-law scored prestigious positions in the State and Justice departments.

Bush also chose the wife of Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky) to be his labor secretary, and the sons of Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn as his press secretary and Medicare director. And in 2001, he chose former House member Asa Hutchinson, brother of then-Sen. Tim Hutchinson (R-Ark.), to lead the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Newly elected Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt (R) is the son of U.S. House Majority Whip Roy Blunt (R-Mo.)

The most extensive political pedigrees, though, are to be found in Congress.

In the Senate, no fewer than six current officeholders have followed their fathers in that body: Murkowski, Evan Bayh (D-Ind.), Lincoln D. Chafee (R-R.I.), Christopher J. Dodd (D-Conn), Robert F. Bennett (R-Utah) and Mark Pryor (D-Ark.).

Five others had famous relatives in other high places: John E. Sununu (R-N.H.), whose father was governor and White House chief of staff; Judd Gregg (R-N.H.), whose father was governor; Mary Landrieu (D-La.), whose father was New Orleans mayor; John D. Rockefeller IV (D-W.Va.), whose uncle was vice president; James M. Jeffords (I-Vt.), whose father was chief justice of the state supreme court; and Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), whose father served in the House.

According to the Center for American Women and Politics, 45 women have been elected to Congress to fill vacancies created by their husbands' death. There are least three widows of former congressmen now in the House: Reps. Mary Bono (R-Calif.), Lois Capps (D-Calif.) and Jo Ann Emerson (R-Mo.). In the Senate, there are three wives of prominent politicians: Elizabeth Dole (R-N.C.), Clinton and Olympia J. Snowe (R-Maine), wife of former Maine governor John R. McKernan Jr.

Congress also has at least three pairs of brothers: the newly elected Rep. John T. Salazar (D-Colo.) and Sen. Ken Salazar (D-Colo.), Sen. Carl M. Levin (D-Mich.) and Rep. Sander M. Levin (D-Mich.), and Reps. Lincoln and Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.) (sons of a former Cuban senator). Then there are the Udall boys: Rep. Mark Udall (D-Colo.) is son of former congressman and presidential candidate Morris Udall,

cousin of Rep. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) -- whose father was a Cabinet secretary -- and cousin of Sen. Gordon Smith (R-Ore.).

Many in the House clearly benefited from political predecessors: Russ Carnahan (D-Mo.), whose father was governor and mother was a senator; Dan Boren (D-Okla.), Connie Mack (R-Fla.) and Rush D. Holt (D-N.J.), whose fathers were senators; Patrick J. Kennedy (D-R.I.), whose father is Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.); Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.) and Jim Matheson (D-Utah), whose fathers were governors; Stephanie Herseth (D-S.D.), whose grandfather was governor; and William Shuster (R-Pa.), Walter B. Jones Jr. (R-N.C.), John J. Duncan Jr. (R-Tenn.) John D. Dingell (D-Mich.), Charles Bass (R-N.H.), James T. Walsh (R-N.Y.), Alan B. Mollohan (D-W.Va.) and Daniel Lipinski (D-Ill.), whose fathers all served in the House.

CLASS WAR NEWS

Union workers march through the streets during a protest against attacks on their income Panama City, Panama, Jan. 27, 2005. (AP Photo/Arnulfo Franco)

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