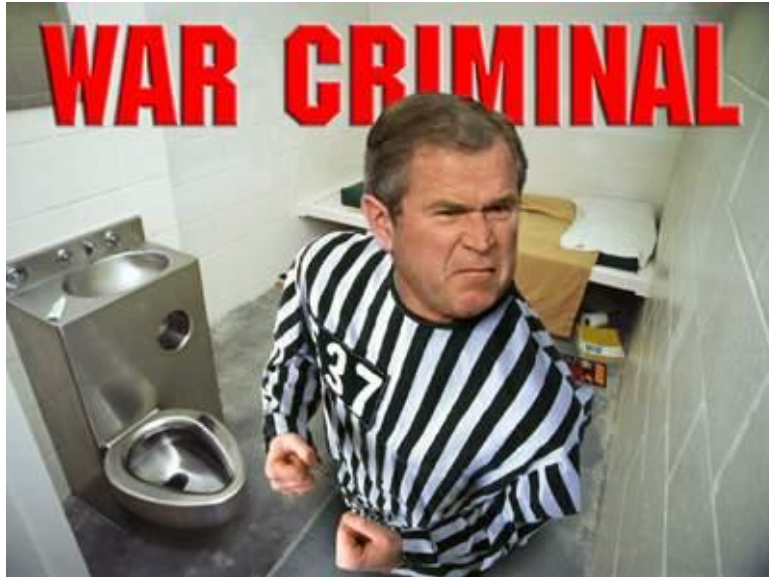


GI SPECIAL 3A3



Last Six Months Of 2004 Deadliest Ever For US Forces In Iraq

January 1, 2005 AFP BAGHDAD

The last six months of 2004 proved the deadliest period for US forces in Iraq despite the formal end of the US-led occupation in June, with a total of 503 soldiers killed, figures showed.

The deadliest month was November when 141 troops were killed, reflecting the heavy combat in the Sunni Muslim bastion of Fallujah where US troops battled rebels in the street in some of the heaviest fighting ever in Iraq.

In December, a total of 75 soldiers were killed, 14 of them in last week's unprecedented suicide bombing of a US army base in the northern city of Mosul -- the deadliest single strike ever on Americans in Iraq.

Another 67 lost their lives in October, 87 in September, 75 in August and 58 in July. The tolls include combat and non-combat deaths.

Observers say the violence testifies to the insurgency's staying power and evolution.

"There is no question the growing death toll indicates a growing insurgency," Jorst Hiltermann, Middle East director of the International Crisis Group, told AFP.

"When you have people using car bombs to target convoys and locations, they have the ability to choose their time and place," said Lieutenant Colonel Steve Boylan, who had said in September that 60 percent of all insurgent attacks were either bombings or mortar or rocket fire.

But he also attributed the mounting death toll to fact US forces had taken a more aggressive stance in recent months.

"Whenever there is a significant increase in combat operations, you expect casualties to rise," he said.

Still, Boylan acknowledged that the fight in those places and the continuing battle to control those cities was brutal in nature.

"It (fatalities) are the unfortunate byproduct of what we're doing. Fighting an insurgency is the toughest and hardest type of operation. Cities make it even tougher," Boylan said.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

“Westerners” Wounded In Kirkuk

1.2.05 Aljazeera

In Kirkuk, a number of westerners were injured when an explosive device targeted their car in al-Sinai (industrial) neighbourhood, north of the city.

Humvee Destroyed In Baghdad

1.2.05 Aljazeera

On Sunday in Baghdad city, a US Humvee was destroyed when fighters launched an RPG attack at a US military patrol in a southwestern suburb.

Sniper Kills Inside Green Zone

01 Jan 2005 (Reuters)

An unidentified sniper shot dead a Lebanese national on Saturday inside Baghdad's Green Zone, the seat of the Iraqi government and the U.S. and British embassies, Lebanon's foreign ministry said.

It said in a statement the dead man, 24-year-old Nabil Mahmoud, worked for a Kuwaiti company. It said another Lebanese was wounded in the Green Zone.

Resistance Winning Oil War; Fresh Attack Near Baiji

January 2, 2005 AFP & Aljazeera

A fire broke out in an oil pipeline when an explosive device, planted by unidentified men, went off in al-Fatha area, north of Baiji city.

Insurgent attacks on Iraq's vital oil industry have cost the country nearly \$US8 billion in lost export revenue since March 2003, Oil Minister Thamer Ghadban said on Sunday.

"We want to tell the Iraqi people that there is an all-out war against the country's oil infrastructure," Mr Ghadban told reporters as he toured the capital's Dura refinery, which came under mortar fire last week.

"Exports are now limited only to the south, there are no exports in the north," he added.

Iraq sits on the world's second largest reserves of crude oil.

Power supply is also affected, with most sections of Baghdad plunged in darkness almost every night and residents having to rely on generators.

Mr Ghadban said attacks continued over the weekend, with a pipeline transporting crude from the oilfields of Kirkuk in northern Iraq to the Baiji refinery bombed and a power plant in Mussayab, south of the capital, also attacked.

TROOP NEWS

This Could Save Your Life!

Iraq is a dangerous environment for U. S. troops, especially new arrivals who know nothing of the local language.

If you find yourself at risk of harm from pissed off Iraqis, and there are several million of them, yelling these simple phrases may save your life:

Yekhrob beit Bush! (May Bush's house fall down and be destroyed.)

Khurr'ub Bush! (Shit on Bush.)

Try them out on some kids to get the pronunciation right, and just watch the big smiles come. Somebody might actually throw a flower. And, **provided you do not display hostile intent**, you might not get fired on, if the resistance has any sense at all.

Also useful for other occasions. Use your imagination.

G.I. Families United In Grief, But Split By The War

January 2, 2005 By MONICA DAVEY, New York Times

They have met on the Internet and on cross-country road trips. But mostly they find one another at the funerals. As the number of American troops killed in Iraq has risen above 1,300, mothers of the dead have built a grim community of their own, mostly invisible to outsiders and separated by geography, but bound together by death. Some have met in pews, recognizing one another from newspaper photographs or with the simplest introduction: I lost my son, too.

"My closest friends now are three other mothers I have met who lost their sons," said Cindy Sheehan of Vacaville, Calif., whose son, Specialist Casey Sheehan, died in an ambush on April 4. "I feel closer to them, even the ones who live far away, than I do to the people I have known for years. I feel closer to them than to the people who knew Casey. Us moms are really the only ones who know what we're going through."

In this network linked by sorrow and empathy, however, one issue divides them: the wisdom of the war.

Karen Hilsendager, of Philomath, Ore., said she found herself struggling with her doubts about the war and what they meant for the death of her son, Specialist Eric S. McKinley, who was killed in June.

<p>Ms. Hilsendager said she was irked by a comment people often made about her son. "They tell me: 'Thank you so much for his service. He's a hero,'" she said. "And I want to say back, 'He's not a hero, he's a victim.'</p>

"At another Oregon soldier's funeral this summer, Ms. Hilsendager met a mother whose son had also died - and who also opposed the war. The two women live two hours apart, but they have since shared phone calls, lunch and e-mail exchanges.

Ms. Hilsendager said they had leaned on each other, exchanging stories of their sons' quirks and wondering what their sons would think of their friendship. "And we talk about how mad we are about Bush, and why we're there," she said, "We really have a common thing."

Ms. Hilsendager said her feelings against the war were no blemish on her son, his service or his memory. "My son was following orders, and I'm proud of him for doing that," she said. "But I am not proud of the administration that sent them. They did it wrong. They should not have gone over there yet. I'm not saying never, but not this way."

Not far away, in Independence, Ore., Clay Kesterson and his wife, M. J., say they stand firmly and proudly behind the war that killed Warrant Officer Erik C. Kesterson, Mr. Kesterson's son and Ms. Kesterson's stepson.

Ms. Kesterson said she felt compassion for those who did not agree with the war and said she thought their struggle must be even harder. **"It is a relief that we not only understood the mission but that we understood the uniform," she said. " [See the letter below from Cindy Sheehan about that.]**

But even within the Kestersons' extended family, there are divisions.

Dolores Kesterson, Erik's mother and Mr. Kesterson's former wife, who lives in Santa Clara, Calif., said she was plagued by her doubts about the war and what it meant about her only child's death. "I feel it was a waste, like Vietnam," she said. "All these deaths are as big a waste as Vietnam."

In a way, she said, she wishes someone who lives in Iraq could change her mind for her. "Can't I see the light or something and look at it differently?" she said on a recent afternoon. "I wish I could. But then I watch and it gets worse over there."

Dolores Kesterson said she had grown close to two other mothers who are as troubled by the war as she is. She exchanges e-mail and talks with them on the phone, she said, but she cannot bring herself go to all the soldiers' funerals, as some people do. It would be too crushing, she said.

But the funerals keep coming, 21 months after the first ones, and some mothers say they feel compelled now to keep watch for any other soldier who dies from their town or county or state and to attend as many funerals as possible, even those miles away, just as other grieving mothers did for them.

Many said seeking out other families was not an option, but a necessity. Their new bonds became their only solace over months, they said.

These were the only people who could really understand the dizzying memory of those first uniforms at the front door, the tears that might come at any time, the sons who reappeared in dreams, the emptiness of the holidays.

MORE:

COMMENT FROM CINDY SHEEHAN

From: Cindy Sheehan
Sent: Sunday, January 02, 2005
Subject: New York Times article

Dear NY Times Editor,

I wish the article could have mentioned some of the positive things we families of Fallen Heroes who oppose the war are doing. We do all we do to bring our brave troops home before any more are killed and before any other families have to go through what we are going through.

Without enumerating the countless lies this administration has told to justify an unjust war, my son, Spc Casey Sheehan, enlisted in the Army to protect America: not to die occupying a foreign land.

I wish I could believe Casey died for any other reason than to make some rich people richer.

My heart and soul are with the families of Americans and Iraqis who have lost loved ones to this misguided war.

We are all so proud of our children.

I know Casey is proud of the work I do to end this war and to bring his buddies home.

Sincerely,
Cindy Sheehan

<p>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.</p>

**Soldier Blinded In Iraq Harassed
By Bill Collectors**

He's been dogged by creditors seeking about \$9,800 from a medical procedure he underwent on his eyes after returning home. The Army was supposed to pay the bill, but officials told Ross it wasn't paid because of a clerical error. While the Army sorted it out, the hospital turned the issue over to a collection agency.

1/2/2005 By JENNIFER C. YATES, The Associated Press

Sam Ross Jr. has three laundry hampers in the bedroom of his sparsely furnished trailer. One for jeans, one for T-shirts and the other for underwear. They're always in the same place and same order.

In the family room, he also has a routine: He keeps the 60-inch TV on so he can listen to the History Channel or "Jeopardy!," his favorite show.

When he's in the kitchen, he's extra careful around the stove. He's burned himself several times since returning last year from Iraq blinded by shrapnel from a land mine explosion.

Doctors thought he wouldn't survive. But he hung on, and today the 22-year-old former high school wrestler smiles often as he talks about his ability to go on with his life — often alone, with no sight and a prosthetic leg that starts 6 inches below his left knee.

He has approached his blindness as both a challenge and an opportunity, a chance to make a new start for someone from a troubled family in a small town in rural southwestern Pennsylvania.

Kevlar helmets and vests have improved the survival rate for soldiers fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Blast wounds are being treated in high numbers, along with many serious combat-related eye injuries.

"Troops have traditionally not wanted to wear eye protection because all of it might in some way limit their vision," said Col. Thomas Ward, consultant to the U.S. surgeon general in ophthalmology. "Early on, I don't think people really appreciated how vulnerable the eye was."

Nine percent of the soldiers wounded in Vietnam had eye injuries. That number rose to 13 percent in the Persian Gulf War, and anecdotally appears to have risen in Iraq, Ward said.

The lucky ones have had pieces of metal or glass removed from their eyes. Others, suffering direct blasts to the face, had eyes blown out.

Cousins, an aunt and a girlfriend, Jenna, have helped him get around.

But because they all work during the day, he often stays alone in his mobile home, which sits in woods near the end of a gravel road, with few homes nearby.

Dozens of calls have not turned up any group that provides transportation for the blind in his community. Once, Ross says he walked a couple of miles into town in the rain because he was hungry and couldn't wait for help.

He says he's proud of having served, and eagerly tells stories about his days in Iraq — traveling from city to city in long convoys, taking part in nearly 24-hour street patrols. He smiles when remembering playing baseball with other soldiers in Karbala.

In language full of acronyms, he explains in detail how mines work. He says he never assumed he'd return home safely.

"You have to realize that death is imminent. It's part of the battlefield," Ross says. "You have to accept it and realize you're already dead."

Battles of a different kind face him now.

He's been dogged by creditors seeking about \$9,800 from a medical procedure he underwent on his eyes after returning home. The Army was supposed to pay the bill, but officials told Ross it wasn't paid because of a clerical error. While the Army sorted it out, the hospital turned the issue over to a collection agency.

"It's all paperwork, thousands of dollars hanging out there," said Ross, adding that he's confident it will get worked out sooner or later.

He's gotten thousands of cards from well-wishers, including a poem about heroes that sits on the fireplace mantel.

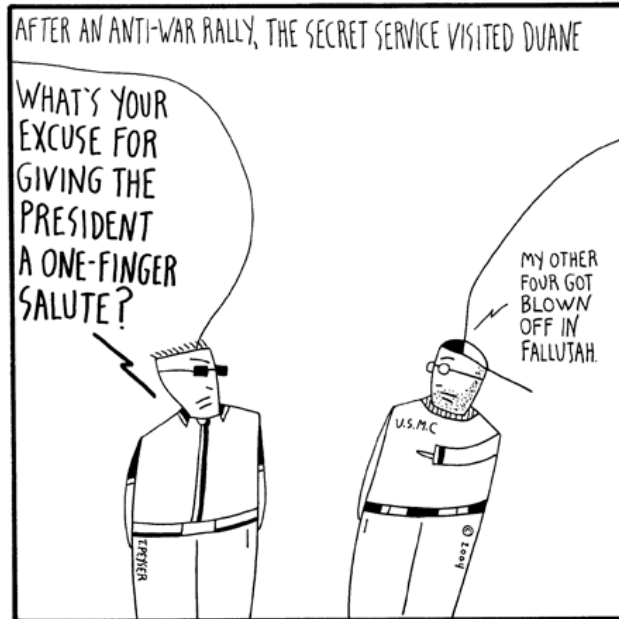
Beside the poem are two pictures of Ross and several buddies taken before he was deployed. He smiles, eyes wide open.

Contradictions

January 2, 2005 By FRANK RICH The New York Times

An ABC News/Washington Post poll found that 70 percent of Americans believed that any gains in Iraq had come at the cost of "unacceptable" losses in casualties and that 56 percent believed the war wasn't "worth fighting" — up 8 percent since the summer.

In other words, most Americans believe that our troops are dying for no good reason, even as a similar majority (58 percent) believes, contradictorily enough, that we should keep them in Iraq. [Right. One view is the future, another left from the past. Guess which is which.]



[Thanks to John Gingerich, Vets For Peace, who sent this in.]

Miscounting the Wounded:

December 22, 2004 Bill Berkowitz, Dissident Voice

The Pentagon has an unorthodox way of counting the wounded.

There have been some 25,000 troops that have been wounded in Iraq, although the Pentagon's preferred statistic is 9,556 soldiers, "a number," writes Occupation Watch's Andrea Buffa, "that includes only those who have been 'wounded in action.'"

At the end of November, the Pentagon admitted to CBS' news show "60 Minutes" that more than 15,000 troops have been evacuated from Iraq due so-called "non-battle" injuries.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Attacks Kill 40 Anti-Iraqi Forces

January 2, 2005 Associated Press & By DUSAN STOJANOVIC (AP) & By Matt Spetalnick, (Reuters)& Aljazeera

An attacker detonated a car bomb north of Baghdad today, killing 26 Iraqis - all but one of them National Guardsmen.

Four Iraqi policemen were killed in a separate attack further north.

The car bomb blast near Balad, 50 miles north of Baghdad, also wounded six guardsmen, U.S. military spokesman Maj. Neal E. O'Brien said. **The bomb detonated as their bus passed close to a U.S. base. Two insurgents in an explosives-laden vehicle veered into the path of the bus and blew it up.**

Usama al-Samarrai, an Iraqi journalist described the explosion as very loud, adding that its impact left a large crater on the road.

He said ING headquarters and US military bases are under daily assault, with attendant loss of lives.

An Iraqi civilian - the bus driver - was among the 26 killed while the other casualties were members of Iraq's 203rd National Guard Battalion. The driver of the car that exploded also died.

A statement posted Saturday on an Islamist Web site along with the video denounced the officers as ``American dogs" and threatened other Iraqis with the same fate if they joined security forces.

In the other attack, four policemen were killed and a fifth was wounded while on patrol in Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, and insurgents also shot dead a member of the city's governing council as well as his driver and bodyguard, the military said.

In other violence today, Col. Abdel Karim Riyadh, the police chief in Jebala, a town 40 miles south of Baghdad, was killed when gunmen stormed his house, police said.

Assailants also killed a police officer in a drive-by shooting in southern Baghdad late Saturday, police commissioner Najm Eid said.

Gunmen shot dead a deputy governor of the eastern Diyala province in his car, doctor Ahmed Fouad at the Baqoubah General Hospital said today.

Meanwhile, provincial council leader Nawfal Abdel Hussein was killed along with his brother Fares outside his home in the restive town of Baquba, north of Baghdad, medics and witnesses said.

Police also discovered the body of another council member, veterinarian Ali Herdan, dumped on a roadside outside of town.

Six Guards were also wounded in the car bomb blast near Balad, 50 miles north of Baghdad, U.S. military spokesman Maj. Neal E. O'Brien said.

In al-Kadhimiya area, northeast of the capital, an Iraqi guardsman was killed by anti-interim government fighters.

An election organizing committee in the northern Sunni city of Baiji quit en masse after receiving death threats.

Muhammad Shahrhan, who heads the 12-member Baiji Higher Electoral Commission, said on Sunday that the people issuing the threats declared the election illegitimate because it occurs under occupation. Two committee members had already resigned two months ago.

Anti-US fighters are active in Baiji, home of Iraq's biggest oil refinery.

They have been mounting relentless attacks against US and Iraqi forces in the town, and on those working for them.

The fighters have also severely disrupted the import of goods and refined oil products from neighbouring Turkey.

On Sunday, insurgents ordered all municipal workers out of the main local government building in the town of Sharqat, near Mosul, and blew it up.

Occupation Consulates Attacked In Basra

1.2.05 Aljazeera

The US and UK consulates in Basra came under heavy attack, Aljazeera has learned,

An unidentified group fired a heavy barrage of mortar fire late on Sunday at both consulates.

British troops raced to the scene and fired at the source of the shelling. No casualties or damage have yet been reported.

Cop Dies While Trying To Remove Decapitated Human Body

BAGHDAD, Jan 2 (KUNA)

An Iraqi policeman died and two others were wounded while trying to pull a decapitated human corpse lying on the side of a road in the northern city of Mosul.

The forces said the incident occurred late on Saturday, when a bomb planted on the road side close the body went off.

Gunmen who had cut off the head of the body planted bombs on the road after dumping the corpse with the apparent intention of killing policemen trying to remove it.

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

Bloody Suppression Of The Strike Of Textile Workers In The City Of Kut

December 25, 2004 Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq

While thousands of workers of Textile Industry in the Iraqi city of Kut have been asking for their danger allowances which are trivial and not in proportion with the real risk they face at work due to poor safety standards, the administration resorted to procrastination, lying and threatened to sack and imprison the workers and eliminate their activist.

The workers were asking for 12000 dinars (Iraqi currency) as danger money but the administration was trying to reduce this amount even further.

The workers organized a protest against these measures and asked the manager to be sacked who was the key person behind the administration's misconduct.

The manager in cooperation with governor of the city called upon armed groups to suppress the protest. Groups of armed and masked men, allegedly from the National Guards raided the place and started shooting on unarmed workers wounding four workers and then arresting another 11 workers who were later release after interrogations.

Such incidents happen while the Ministry of Industry bans workers from establishing labour organization and the Minister of Industry issues resolution, which bans union activity.

Instead of bringing the manager Mr. Abdulla Alrawi to justice he was transferred to the ministry's headquarters.

7-UP & Basra Power Workers Fight Back

December 25, 2004 Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq

The workers in many branches of industries organized a series of strikes in many cities in Iraq

The workers the (7-UP) factory had held strike calling for their demands they call for increase their wages and improve the work conditions

The workers in Basra Electricity Company, threatened to strike for one hour and to shut down the system, unless the administration agree to accept their demands, which are: increase their salaries to Thirty percent, and improve the working conditions

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

U.S. Soldiers & Iraqi Oil Workers Together Have The Power To Change The World

From: Ewa Jasiewicz
To: GI Special
Sent: January 01, 2005

I met the most powerful men in the world, strategically, geo-politically, economically, in Iraq - oil workers, engaged in hand-to-hand refueling of global capitalism.

Situated at a crucial global industrial juncture, gigantic with power, sustainers of powers, but facilitators and conductors of so much destruction too.

And they had so much in common with US Soldiers, so much.

To me US Soldiers are all of the above. They too are engaged in the refueling of the profit system, and of facilitating and conducting so much destruction, ultimately their own destruction, our destruction, if we're looking at the long term picture.

Ecocide and genocide are our futures.

They too are the most powerful men in the world.

And I'd tell the Southern Oil Company guys, not that they needed telling, that they were more powerful than George Bush and Tony Blair, than all of these leaders, that it was them that made power, they had the power.

And that they were heroes and survivors and a total inspiration.

Because they'd survived the regime but were refusing their new regime's orders - in the case of the oil workers, to accept slave wages and the privatisation of their workplaces as well as the authority of the occupation to crush them and their sense of pride, belonging and autonomous achievement.

They have so much in common.

The most powerful men in the world and their families and poverty and dreams and their capacity for survival and heroism, the every day survival against all odds and the continual attack upon and desecration of your humanity by tyranny, whichever language its speaking or ideals its excusing itself with, and holding on to that humanity and making sure it lives and spreads and is defended, that everyday survival IS heroism.

Yeah, It Is Vietnam Again. Soldiers Dying In Vain In A Stupid, Lost, Useless, Pointless War

December 22, 2004 Stewart Nusbaumer, Intervention Magazine

Stewart Nusbaumer served with the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam on the DMZ.

Iraqis understand how to defeat the U.S. military machine, and they are; America, here comes another Vietnam!

With each Iraqi our military kills, more Iraqis join the insurgency. The longer our troops occupy Iraq, the better Iraqi insurgents become at killing our troops. In Iraq, violence is a great recruiter, and time is a wise teacher.

We are losing in Iraq, and next year we will be losing more. Iraq is our second Vietnam.

American political leaders insisted we would wipe out those Iraqi terrorists and criminals in no time, but it didn't happen. Just like in Vietnam. The U.S. media insisted that nearly all Iraqis welcomed U.S. occupation and that Iraqis would love Americans for giving them democracy and freedom.

But Iraqi insurgents are killing Americans, and U.S.-trained Iraqi troops refuse to die for the U.S. occupation of their country. In Vietnam, Vietnamization failed. In Iraq, Iraqization is failing.

In Vietnam, an Army officer said, "We had to destroy the village to save the village." In Iraq, an Army officer said that the destroyed Fallujah is now "free."

Last week we were told that many of the roads in Iraq are too dangerous for U.S. armed truck convoys, forcing our military to use aircraft to ferry supplies to outer

bases. Vietnam taught us that when you give up the land, you give up the people; when you leave the roads, you have lost the war. Iraq is just like Vietnam.

Yesterday we learned that 18 U.S. soldiers died in, as The New York Times put it, "one of the deadliest attacks on American forces in Iraq."

What The New York Times did not say is that this is only the beginning of the deadliest attacks on American forces.

We have killed 100,000 Iraqis: children, wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, grandparents, neighbors, cousins, aunts and uncles, school friends--we have killed so many Iraqis that there is now a limitless supply of outraged Iraqis who want to kill Americans.

It's just like Vietnam: the more we kill, the more Americans die. It's cause and effect. The U.S. military is killing people that should not be killed, so more Iraqis start killing Americans.

Americans believed the recycled myth that as a superpower we have super power--a silly, dangerous idea that has led us directly into another bloody Vietnam-type quagmire.

Believing our military technology can incinerate any ragtag opponent, hubristic thinking (or the suspension of thinking) enabled us to also bury history. **Our national hubris obliterated the memory that those ragtag Vietnamese defeated the world's greatest military, our military.**

Like the Vietnamese, the Iraqis will not fight a war that allows U.S. war technology to be effective; and the U.S. is incapable of defeating the Iraqis because its counterinsurgency warfare is ineffective.

So the war will drag on.

But the Iraqis understand that they do not have to win the war against the United States, merely not lose the war. They have learned to stay clear of the overwhelming firepower of the U.S. military and to survive another day, another month, another year.

The latest public opinion polls show that Americans are growing frustrated with the war and wary of the Bush Administration's handling of the war; over 60 percent are disturbed with the way the war is going. In the media we hear it is going badly because the Bush Administration did not plan for the peace. Fox News insists that liberal war dissenters are betraying our soldiers; a man in Nebraska screams that the media is defeating our war effort. Just like Vietnam.

During the Vietnam era, we heard that America lost the war because of the cowardly politicians, the unpatriotic antiwar demonstrators, and the traitorous media.

The truth is, we could not have won in Vietnam, and we cannot win now in Iraq. The world of insurgents understands our military and knows how to wear down

the great military leviathan. Our chances of winning in Iraq are the same as they were in Vietnam: zero.

This horrible, unnecessary, immoral war is all over; it was all over before it began.

But this does not mean that the dying is over; there is much more dying to come.

And this does not mean that Americans realize their soldiers are again dying in vain in a far off land.

I'm not sure if Americans will ever understand their soldiers dying in vain, but they are -- in Iraq today.

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.

Soldiers Can Revolt: Vietnam Days

“An army is always a copy of the society it serves---with this difference, that it gives social relations a concentrated character, carrying both their positive and negative features to an extreme.” L. Trotsky, History Of The Russian Revolution

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

The GI movement in the Army reached its peak during the spring of 1971.

The growing anti-military insurgency within the nation, dramatically evident in a massive upsurge in civilian peace action and the national emergence of ‘Vietnam Veterans Against the War’ (VVAW), kindled an intense outpouring of soldier resistance.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the center of anti-war activity at the time, Washington, D.C. Operating out of the “DMZ” coffeehouse, area soldiers published the paper *Open Sights* and established a wide network of organizers at local bases (including groups editing *The Oppressed* at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and *Liberated Castle* at Fort Belvoir).

Throughout the Washington mobilizations—beginning with the encampment of some two thousand VVAW members in April, culminating in the giant peace rally of April 24, and continuing until the “Mayday” disruption in early May—active-duty GIs were deeply involved.

When Vietnam veterans were threatened with forcible removal from the Mall on April 20, members of the 82nd Airborne Brigade (many of them combat returnees themselves) told the veterans they would refuse orders to interfere with their brothers.

A few days later, on April 23, hundreds of enlisted people participated in the anti-war memorial service sponsored by the Concerned Officers Movement in Washington's National Cathedral. Despite Pentagon press announcements that those attending in uniform would be prosecuted, over three hundred servicemen and -women came to the ceremony in uniform; another four hundred showed up in civilian clothes.

The next day, an estimated crowd of over three hundred thousand people marched against the war in the streets of Washington. Leading the demonstration was a contingent of over five hundred GIs, including groups from as far away as Fort Hood and Fort McClellan; many hundred more were among the vast crowd.

The Mayday civil disobedience actions planned for the following week posed a serious physical threat to government operations, and as a result, tens of thousands of policemen and soldiers were prepared for riot-control duty.

Many of the GIs supported the aims of the demonstrators, however, and played a vital role in aiding their plans, providing counterintelligence on the nature of the riot-duty force.

Because of its extensive support at area bases and its contacts with other GI projects, the DMZ was able to find out in advance which units were being prepared for civil duty and to monitor their preparations and movements. Leaflets were distributed at every affected base, including Fort Lee, Fort Eustis, and Quantico Marine Station, informing GIs of the aims of the protesters and asking that troop-movement information be called in to a central switchboard.

The DMZ bustled with activity during this period and was able to provide an extremely accurate account of what military units were being mobilized. As it turned out, the government was able to control the fifteen thousand demonstrators without resort to military units and thus was saved the risks of calling out young servicemen against civilians. Nonetheless, the Mayday events raised serious questions about the reliability of American troops in politically sensitive riot-control operations.

GI projects endorsed the Mayday actions not just in Washington but at bases throughout the country.

The GI Alliance at Fort Lewis displayed this solidarity in one of the most extraordinary undertakings of the GI movement—a mass sick call strike.

Like previous strike efforts, however, the May 3 sick-in encountered elaborate command countermeasures and repression and failed to attract the support necessary to halt post activities. In many units, officers came to work several hours early to check personally those going to sick call; and special medical dispensaries were set up inside barracks

buildings. Threats, petty harassments, and extra duty were imposed on many potential GI Alliance supporters.

Despite such measures, several post dispensaries reported three times the normal number of soldiers at sick call. Several training companies were forced to cancel duty because too many men were absent, and throughout the base GIs in various units boycotted the mess hall and engaged in other minor acts of resistance.

While failing to disrupt base operations, the May 3 strike did demonstrate widespread defiance among enlisted men and was a sign of the increasing militance of the GI movement.

The tactic was and still is a theoretically sound means of revolutionary struggle, but, as the Fort Lewis people later acknowledged, it could succeed only if supported by an elaborate network of activists in every barracks and small unit—a level of organization seldom if ever achieved within the GI movement.

As in 1970, the traditional pro-military displays of Armed Forces Day became the target of co-ordinated protests from GIs at many different bases.

In 1971, however, a stronger and more politically advanced movement organized the May 15 demonstrations without outside assistance and successfully carried out the largest united action of the Vietnam period.

On “Armed Farces Day,” as it was called, political gatherings occurred at nineteen separate posts, including nine Air Force and Navy bases. The largest soldier actions of the day occurred at Fort Lewis, Fort Bragg, Fort Bliss, and Fort Hood.

In Tacoma, Washington, the GI Alliance climaxed its vigorous spring campaign with a people’s fair attended by over seven hundred local servicemen from Fort Lewis and McChord AFB.

Armed Farces Day also attracted major support at Fort Bragg, where over three hundred soldiers braved heavy rainstorms for a March and rally in Fayetteville.

The day before, twenty-nine members of the local Concerned Officers Movement had published an ad in the Fayetteville *Observer* endorsing the aims of the protest.

At Fort Bliss, GIs for Peace continued to prosper, with a festival of some six hundred GIs and seven hundred civilians at McKelligan Canyon.

A fourth major action occurred at Fort Hood, where the newly formed “Spring Offensive Committee” sponsored a march and rally in Killeen. **Among the more than five hundred soldiers present were thirty men who had traveled all the way from Fort Polk, Louisiana.**

The upsurge of GI dissent continued into the weeks following Armed Farces Day, with Memorial Day protests in Beaufort, South Carolina, and in Washington, D.C.

At Beaufort, fifty Marines and a hundred fifty civilians conducted a memorial service for the war dead, laying a black wreath on the grave of a Vietnam veteran.

The action marked the founding of a new GI paper, *Chessman II*, distributed among Marines at Beaufort Marine Corps Air Station and nearby Parris Island Marine training center.

On the same day, the GI group at Walter Reed Hospital, in Washington, joined with VVAW in sponsoring an anti-war service at an on-post chapel. **Approximately two hundred soldiers joined in the ceremony.**

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

Going Price For Dead Iraqi Kids Today: \$1500 And Not A Penny More!

29 December 2004 BY AMY SCHLESING, ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - A sea of desperate faces and waving hands clutching white slips of paper rushed the door of the small metal trailer each time it opened into the bright sunshine.

They wanted money, they wanted attention, they wanted help.

And this cold, dark little trailer on the edge of Camp Taji is the place to get it. It's the claims office where Iraqis file for reparations to make up for noncombat damage caused by U.S. soldiers.

More than 800 claims for property damage and for the wounding or deaths of innocent Iraqis by U.S. troops - totaling more than \$600,000 - have been paid since Arkansas'

39th Infantry Brigade arrived in Iraq in April. The number of claims is expected to surpass 1,000 before the brigade leaves in March.

Even on claims they do pay, many Iraqis argue for more money.

An Iraqi spoke at length to the interpreter, using wild hand gestures and a flurry of words. His son died when he kicked a soccer-ball-shaped cluster bomb that he found in a field and that had never exploded after being dropped from a plane.

Carter paid \$1,500 to the man, counting in Arabic.

Tareeq the interpreter looked at Carter and translated, "It is not enough."

That was the gist of the conversation: The settlement was too little. It's a plea Carter and Niell hear every day.

"It is never enough," Carter said. "But that's all I can give you."



The January 30 Election: A Farce In One Act

02 January 2005 By Louise Roug, The Los Angeles Times

Baqubah, Iraq - At the former Baath Party headquarters known as the Blue Dome, everything was set for candidates in the upcoming elections to come in and tape political ads for local TV.

The cameraman trained his viewfinder on the far end of a conference table where dusty plastic roses in yellow and pink served as decorative props. But recording the campaign spots this recent morning didn't take long.

Only three people showed up.

"It's the hardest problem we've had here," said Army Maj. Kreg Schnell, the intelligence officer for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. Land mines and booby traps "are bad - they kill a lot of people. But an election going bad" - he shook his head - "that's really bad."

On this morning at the Blue Dome, Army Maj. Teresa Wolfgang acknowledged that the turnout was disappointing: three candidates from 13 regional coalitions vying for 41 seats in a province with an estimated population of 1.5 million people.

However Wolfgang, who oversees the 415th Civil Affairs Company, said she hoped that once word got out about the TV spots, more candidates would come in to tape their messages.

"They'll want to see what happens with these ads - if people get killed or not," she said.

Throughout Baqubah and its southern suburb of Buhriz, insurgent groups are distributing leaflets that promise death to those who vote. Freshly painted graffiti spell out "Praise Be Fallouja" - the insurgent stronghold recaptured in November - and "Join the Jihad."

MORE:

“It Won’t Look Good”

January 02, 2005 Baghdad Burning, Girl Blog from Iraq...

The elections are set for the 29th. It's an interesting situation. The different sects and factions just can't seem to agree. Sunni Arabs are going to boycott elections.

It's not about religion or fatwas or any of that so much as the principle of holding elections while you are under occupation. People don't really sense that this is the first stepping stone to democracy as western media is implying . **Many people sense that this is just the final act of a really bad play. It's the tying of the ribbon on the "democracy parcel" we've been handed. It's being stuck with an occupation government that has been labeled 'legitimate' through elections.**

We're being bombarded with cute Iraqi commercials of happy Iraqi families preparing to vote. Signs and billboards remind us that the elections are getting closer...

Can you just imagine what our history books are going to look like 20 years from now?

"The first democratic elections were held in Iraq on January 29, 2005 under the ever-watchful collective eye of the occupation forces, headed by the United States of America. Troops in tanks watched as swarms of warm, fuzzy Iraqis headed for the ballot boxes to select one of the American-approved candidates..."

It won't look good.

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.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Party Hearty: It Will All Be Over Soon

23 December 2004 By William Rivers Pitt

Everyone can relax. This thing is clearly getting ready to wind down. **Ask the brilliant minds up at the Pentagon. Back in April 2003, a formal Pentagon planning session stated emphatically that the U.S. occupation of Iraq would be coming to an end in December 2004.** Clearly we should start planning the tickertape parade down the Canyon of Heroes.

We can have Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld seated in the lead car, and let the love and adoration of this nation wash over him like a bath of warm milk.

Perhaps he will choose that glorious moment to reveal the 26,000 liters of anthrax, 38,000 liters of botulinum toxin, 1,000,000 pounds of sarin, mustard and VX gas, and the 30,000 munitions to deliver the stuff we all went to war for in the first place. We can festoon the Canyon with plastic sheeting and duct tape. It'll be a party of historic proportions.

Surely Don can make it to the parade. His Pentagon couldn't have been wrong about the whole deal being done in December, because he is far too smart.

Never mind that Senator McCain is calling for another 100,000 troops to be sent to Iraq.

One wonders where the Senator thinks we will get those soldiers.

Perhaps we could abandon Afghanistan, Europe and the Korean DMZ to throw every warm body into the fray. Perhaps there is some deep black program we

don't know about that allows the military to hatch fully grown, fully trained soldiers like chickens on a production line.



George W. Bush: The Perfect Candidate for Iraq

December 29, 2004 by Patt Morrison Los Angeles Times

Some time around high noon EST, three weeks from today, George W. Bush will be sworn in for a second term as president, or as some of us think of it, "Dubya Dubya Too."

Ten days after that, Iraqis will strap on their body armor and go to the polls to vote for leaders of their own.

More than 100 slates of candidates are in the running, but I know whom Iraq voters' choice should be.

Who better to govern Iraq than the man who broke it, bought it and now pledges to put it back together again: George W. Bush?

Like the Lone Ranger, Bush can make the claim to Americans that his work here is done. He has made his point: The Bush family second-term curse has been broken. It's all lame-duck downhill from here. So why not share his gospel of freedom in person and double-down democracy?

There are so many reasons, political and personal, that Bush should be the president of post-Hussein Iraq. Iraq could suit Bush a lot better than the Beltway culture of white-shoe lawyers and lobbyists and think-tank intellectuals. **The man who is pleased to "see freedom on the march" has earned the right to see it marching up close, from the reviewing stands of the Baghdad parade ground.**

The reasons for Bush to become president of Iraq:

The United States is already on Bush autopilot; his agenda is safe in the hands of Dick Cheney, who wrote a lot of the playbook anyway.

Karl Rove is getting bored and needs a real challenge, and Iraqi campaigning makes the rhetorical phrase "political bloodletting" real.

Bush could wear his "mission accomplished" flight suit all the time.

Iraq is running out of its own politicians.

Short campaigns mean less time to be caught in tongue-twisting contradictions.

Bush can institute his Social Security reforms without carping from elderly voters' lobby or economists — Iraqis may not live long enough anyway.

As a Texan, he'll fit right into a country that has more guns than cars.

The climate is more like Texas' than D.C.'s.

No term limits.

Iraqis love faith-based initiatives.

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

How To Stop Racist Cops From Murdering?

Burn Down The Police Station!

But another Aboriginal, said: "If every time a Black man died like Doomadgee a police station were to burn to the ground, I think these deaths in custody would soon stop..."

Max Watts, Annandale 30 November 2004

FACTS: On Palm Island, 70 kms North of Townsville, in Northern Queensland, Mr. Cameron Doomadgee, 36 years old, was found dead at 11:20 am on Friday, November 19, 2004. Found dead in the local Police cell.

As Cameron Doomadgee was an Australian Aborigine, and had been locked up an hour before as a "public nuisance", this was perfectly normal. Australian Aborigines are quite used to "Die In Custody".

According to Queensland (Labor) Premier Peter there were "only" 19 who did that in the past five years... in Queensland alone.

I haven't got the present figures, right now, for the other 5 states, the Northern Territory, but I'd say for Australia as a whole, between 50 and 100 ... would be about right ?

Long ago I wrote a long paper, published even in Queensland, in a Brisbane Magazine, "Outrider" – about such deaths. 90, or 100, known, there may have been more, in the ten years I studied. **They had "committed suicide" (hung themselves in their cells), or been shot "resisting arrest", kicked in the head, or just fallen down, anyway: died.**

That one thing certain was that they were dead. Like Cameron Doomadgee...

No, there was another thing quite certain, which I remember well from my study back then: "not one policeman, not one prison guard, was convicted of anything "serious". None, not one, ever went to jail, for any of these 90 plus deaths.

Eventually there was a federal Commission, to find out why so many Aborigines wind up "dead in custody".

It produced many a volume, and cost, I believe, about 30 Million Australian Dollars. It, the Commissioners, made many recommendations. But, as I have noted, the deaths continue. With little fuss.

The death of Cameron Doomadgee would also, I'd say, have been a minor, local, item... soon (except for his family..) forgotten. A week later, on Friday 26 November, the autopsy report was read at a public meeting on Palm Island; Cameron had, so the police – to the Coroner (who seems to have accepted this) died quite normally.

He had scuffled with a policeman and fallen on some concrete steps. Then locked up, he'd just died. Well, he did have four broken ribs, and they had punctured his liver, and his spleen. Of course no doctor was needed for that. Two other

Aboriginal prisoners (no whites available) said "Senior Police Sgt Chris Hurley had punched and beaten Cameron"... but that (as usual) made no impression on the Autopsist. "He fell on a hard surface, finish".

No, not, this time: Finished.

The people, the Aborigines, at the meeting, were, so Brad Forster, CEO of the Carpentaria Land Council, to me, today: "Not Happy".

They, he, then, now, say Cameron Doomadgee was murdered.

That Friday the frust of years boiled over: the crowd marched to the police station.. the 18 or so policemen (white, of course) – ran away. The Police Station was burned down. So were the barracks ...

This changed everything. 80 heavily armed anti-terrorist police overran Palm Island. Some journalists came. So – 8 days after Cameron Doomadgee had – quite "unremarkedly" – died in his cell – the State Premier Peter Beattie did "take notice", flew in.. spoke, speaks, muchly.

Mostly Beattie and Co speak about this inadmissible "riot". They attack the local Aboriginal leaders. The riot police, guns cocked, race around the island, arrest 9, 13, 18 .. Aborigines, fly them to Townsville, jail, court.. where bail is – of course – refused. **Police leaders speak of "attempted murder" (no, not of Doomadgee ! of the police, threatened by the Blacks !) and demand prosecutions...**

Premier Beattie, in a long statement Monday – leads in with "no police officer will be out of pocket" (Policemen have complained they lost Video recorders, TV sets, when their barracks burned down – these losses, so the premier will be made good - he hasn't said ought about compensating the family of Cameron Doomadgee, only that the "guilty" (Aborigines) will be charged, prosecuted).

Aborigine leader Brad Foster: "They want to forget about their murder, they'll go on about the burned police station, try and shuffle Cameron's death, yes, his murder, no one believes their version – under the carpet...

Yes.

But another Aboriginal, said: "If every time a Black man died like Doomadgee a police station were to burn to the ground, I think these deaths in custody would soon stop..."

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