

GI SPECIAL 3A48:



MORE OUTRAGEOUS BULLSHIT!! IRAQ SOLDIERS' LETTERS HOME RETURNED MARKED "POSTAGE DUE"!!

From: K, WIFE OF SOLDIER DEPLOYED TO IRAQ

To: GI Special

Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2005 3:42 PM

Subject: Letters from Iraq

Just thought I would let you know that soldiers in Iraq that are sending letters back home to the states, are receiving their letters back, marked POSTAGE DUE. I didn't know that Haji is selling stamps now, Ain't that some shit?

K

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Soldier Killed In Anbar

BAGHDAD, Feb 16 (AFP) & icWales

The military announced that a US soldier assigned to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action on Tuesday in the province of Al-Anbar.

SOLDIER DIES IN BALLAD VEHICULAR ACCIDENT

February 16, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-02-21C

LSA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq – One 1st Corps Support Command soldier is dead and another was wounded today as the result of a vehicular accident about 7 miles southeast of here at 7:30 a.m. Feb. 16.

The soldier was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident and the wounded soldier was evacuated to the hospital at Landing Support Area Anaconda.

TASK FORCE LIBERTY SOLDIER DEAD IN AS-SADIAYH VEHICLE ACCIDENT

February 16, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-02-20C

TIKRIT, Iraq -- One Task Force Liberty Soldier died and one was injured in a vehicle accident near As Sadiyah in Diyala Province at about 7:30 a.m. Feb. 16.

One Iraqi civilian died and two were injured when a Coalition vehicle and civilian vehicle collided. The injured Soldier was taken to a Coalition Forces medical treatment facility.

TWO SOLDIERS KILLED IN BABIL VEHICLE WRECK

February 16, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-02-22C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq -- Two Soldiers assigned to the 1 Marine Expeditionary Force were killed in a non-hostile vehicle accident Feb. 16 in the northern Babil Province.

TASK FORCE LIBERTY SOLDIER DIES OF NON-COMBAT INJURY

February 16, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-02-19C

TIKRIT, IRAQ -- A Task Force Liberty Soldier died of a non-combat injury on a Multi-National Forces base at about 9:15 a.m. Feb 16.

Des Moines Soldier Reported Killed

February 16, 2005 KCCI8, DES MOINES, Iowa

Military officials say a 21-year-old Des Moines soldier is one of three reported killed when their armored Humvee overturned into a canal near the town of Balad, Iraq, during a combat patrol.

Officials say Specialist Dakotah L. Gooding was assigned to the Army's 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry, 3d Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga. The accident occurred Sunday.

Relatives said Gooding grew up in Keokuk and he and his mother moved to Des Moines five years ago.

His mother, who was in Georgia last night awaiting his coffin, said he had wanted to be a soldier since he was five years old.

Relatives say Gooding, who also left a wife, two sisters and three nieces and nephews, had been in Iraq less than three weeks when he was killed.

Gooding is the 21st Iowa service member killed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Bombs Hit U.S. Military Convoys in Mosul

Feb 16 AP

MOSUL, Iraq - A car bomb exploded alongside a U.S. military convoy in northern Iraq on Wednesday, witnesses said.

Several people were injured in the blast near Mosul's Yarmouk Square, witnesses said. **At least one U.S. military vehicle was damaged in the blast.**

In a separate incident, a bomb exploded alongside another U.S. convoy in the east of the city, witnesses said.

No casualties were reported in the blast, but American troops opened fire afterward, injuring several people, residents said.

U.S. Forces Battle In Ramadi, Silly Marine Officer Says It Never Happened; More Fighting In Samarra, Diayla

2.16.05 AP

In Ramadi, 70 miles west of the capital, insurgents fired more than 25 mortar rounds at U.S. and Iraqi positions, including a group of American troops hunkered in an abandoned glass factory, witnesses said.

The attack sparked clashes in several parts of the city afterward, and American troops sealed off a southeastern district of Ramadi, said resident Hussein Molseh.

There was no word on casualties. **U.S. Marine Capt. Brad Gordon denied any clashes had taken place. [Why? What, exactly, is that obvious lie supposed to accomplish?]**

Clashes between militants and U.S. troops backed by Iraqi National Guardsmen also erupted in Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, leaving at least one Iraqi and wounding another, hospital official Alaa Eldin Mohammed said.

Also in Diyala province, Iraqi security forces and U.S. troops stormed an insurgent hideout, killing one insurgent and capturing another. One policeman was killed in the raid, Shabab said.

New Orleans Soldier Is Killed

February 16, 2005 By Walt Philbin, Staff writer, The Times-Picayune

A 22-year-old soldier from eastern New Orleans was killed in Iraq early Sunday morning when the vehicle he shared with two other soldiers rolled into a canal.

Sgt. Rene Knox Jr. died.

Knox was a graduate of Alfred Lawless High School, said Sheila Cordier, a cousin of Knox's father.

Cordier said her cousin was taking the news hard.

"That was his oldest son, and he himself just returned from serving in the Army in Iraq last year," she said.

Knox was the second of five children of Rene Knox Sr. and his wife, Eliria Knox, she said.

Knox is the 33rd Louisiana serviceman to be killed in Iraq, and the ninth person from the immediate seven-parish area.

Unconquered Falluja: Resistance Keeps On Fighting!

[Washington Post, February 16, 2005, Pg. 15]

U.S. Marines patrolling battle-torn Fallujah understand that insurgents still remain in the city, with their single idea set on killing U.S. and Iraqi security forces. [How many months has it been since the idiot Generals proclaimed the fighting in Falluja was over and the resistance had been wiped out?]

TROOP NEWS

3rd ID Back In The Shit; Bad Moon Rising

[Los Angeles Times, February 16, 2005]

The 3rd Infantry Division, which led the 2003 attack on Baghdad, learns about its new mission as it takes over from the 1st Cavalry.

The 3rd is assuming control of the hostile area in and around Sadr City. About 65% of the Division's 20,000 troops led the assault on Baghdad during the first weeks of the invasion in 2003.

[During the Vietnam War, nobody ever had to go back to the combat zone once their year was up. Never, ever, for any reason. Even so, Washington got an armed forces rebellion in Vietnam that finally ended that Imperial war. Today's crop of Imperial politicians appear to have no grip on reality whatsoever, just merrily sending the troops back over and over again. When the armed forces explode this time, it will be far, far worse for the corporate class and their political stooges in Washington than they can possibly imagine. Hopefully, it will put an end to them, their Empire, and their class once and for all. We didn't finish that job last time, and look at the price in blood being paid for letting them off the hook 30 years ago. No more second chances for these predators in human form. T]

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.

Off To The Imperial Slaughterhouse

1.) 40 More Vermont Guard Members; Replacing Soldiers Unit For Duty

February 16, 2005 COLCHESTER (AP)

Another 80 Vermont Army National Guard soldiers will be deployed within the next month, 40 each for duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Those going to Iraq will replace soldiers mobilized in January but later deemed unfit for active duty, said spokeswoman 1st Lt. Veronica Saffo.

The first 15 will leave Vermont on Sunday or Monday for Camp Shelby, Miss. They will join about 375 Guardsmen training at the base near Hattiesburg. Most belong to the 172nd Armored Regiment of the 86th Brigade or the Jericho-based 172nd Mountain Infantry. **They are training for a year of combat in Iraq, a mission expected to begin this summer. The entire deployment could last up to 18 months.**

One of the Guard members the Army said was unable to fight is a man with a back problem, Saffo said.

Other soldiers the Army deemed medically unable to serve include men with dental problems, newly diagnosed pre-existing conditions such as heart disorders, or Guardsmen injured during training, Saffo said.

Some of the 40 soldiers were sent home for family, legal or economic reasons, as well, she said.

"Typically it's about 10 percent that get sent back," she said. "Our rate over the past several months has been about 2 percent."

The percentage of the 375 soldiers returning to Vermont is about 11.

2.) 1800 More Guards, Reserves Called Up

February 16, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 165-05

This week, the Air Force and Navy announced an increase, while the Army, Marine Corps and Coast Guard had a decrease in the number of reservists on active duty in support of the partial mobilization. The net collective result is 1,811 more reservists mobilized than last week.

British Soldier Rejects "Obscene War" In Iraq

Andrew Burgin from the Stop the War Coalition liaises with the military families campaign. He read out a letter from an army wife on a base in Germany. She described how her husband was to be ordered off to Iraq, but did not want to go and fight an "obscene" war.

Socialist Worker (UK)

Reg Keys is the father of one of the six military police who were killed near Basra, southern Iraq, two years ago. He told the conference about one of the final telephone conversations he had with his son, Tom.

"He said, 'Dad, I don't know what we are doing here. These people are poor, they have nothing and we are not helping.'

"Tom and two other soldiers had to dig out a woman and her three children after an action by another unit. Her husband was distraught. He went into his house, got his Kalashnikov and said, 'I'm going north to Fallujah to kill Americans.'

So what do I call him? A terrorist? I think of him as a dehumanised human being. And who did that? It was Bush, Blair and this war.

I hold Tony Blair as guilty as the Iraqis who killed my son for his death. I like to think that they did not kill Tom, but killed what he represented."

Andrew Burgin from the Stop the War Coalition liaises with the military families campaign. He read out a letter from an army wife on a base in Germany. She described how her husband was to be ordered off to Iraq, but did not want to go and fight an "obscene" war.

She continued, "Last night one of my neighbours' husband was threatening to kill himself," rather than be sent to Iraq. "I want to be part of something to contribute positively to the people of Iraq," she concluded.

In the discussion that followed Lizi Allnatt from Stop the War in Exeter reported how her local group had leafleted a Territorial Army centre.

"We were nervous and so we decided to send all women, but the response was like a coffee morning," she said. "Loads of people really wanted to talk and take the leaflets. One man dropped off his son and then reversed back to come and talk to us . He wasn't totally convinced, but he said he would come to a meeting that Rose Gentle was to speak at."

The whole session underlined just how wide the potential support is for the anti-war movement in the run-up to 19 March and the general election.

“For A Veteran Maimed In Iraq Or Afghanistan It Is, In My Mind, Pure Treason.”

I am angered every time I see a "Support your troops" sticker. If a person honestly thinks that buying a magnet and proudly displaying it on their vehicle is helping us they are dead wrong. You are doing exactly the same thing the leaders in this country are doing, turning your backs on us.

02/11/2005 By: Michael H. Riordan, Veterans for Common Sense, East Hartford Gazette

I feel compelled to write again based on the president's new Veterans Affairs (VA) budget for 2006.

He does increase the spending by 2.7 percent over 2005's budget and overall 40 percent since taking office. **What he also proposes is that certain veterans pay a \$250 fee for use of the VA health care system and raises co-pays for some veterans from \$7 to \$15. These new charges incurred by veterans basically make up the 2.7 percent increase proposed meaning we receive no additional funding for 2006.**

On paper, 40 percent overall increase since President Bush took office in 2001 looks attractive. Let us not forget that two major conflicts have been fought during this time period in Afghanistan and Iraq. Secondly, we are still conducting operations in both theatres with ongoing casualties.

The main part of the Veterans Affairs budget goes to health care and disability payments. Prior to 2001 life was not pretty for veterans in the health care realm or the disability denial and wait system (Veterans Affairs Disability benefits system). Although I do admit the care I receive at the Veterans Health Center in Newington seems superior after reading stories about VA health care facilities throughout the U.S. However, we still as a standard do not see medical doctors as our primary care providers. I have a nurse practitioner that I see.

I have also had numerous confrontations at the facility with certain staff members that, at times, have disrespected me. Having been a Marine and still relatively young compared to most veterans I give it right back to them.

This practice would never be tolerated in a civilian facility. So why must we face this?

I guess being former property of the government they feel we don't deserve the same respect that a civilian receives.

I have current appeals that started as cases in 2000. Five years later I have been either denied twice for service connected disability claims or denied twice for increased disability ratings.

As you can picture in your mind we don't get anywhere quickly.

No one in Congress or in the White House ever seems to care about this part of taking care of veterans. In my own case I did however finally receive a proper rating for my service-connected asthma disability (one of my 8 service connections).

Three denials later they finally realized that had rated me improperly since 1996. That's only eight years to get it right. That is unacceptable for any veteran to face but for a veteran maimed in Iraq or Afghanistan it is, in my mind, pure treason. I

honestly wish people would step off of their patriotism clouds and take some action for us.

I am angered every time I see a "Support your troops" sticker. If a person honestly thinks that buying a magnet and proudly displaying it on their vehicle is helping us they are dead wrong. You are doing exactly the same thing the leaders in this country are doing, turning your backs on us.

You don't support someone by displaying a magnet, a ribbon, or a flag. You support us by standing up for us and taking action with our sleeping politicians. You support us by finding out the truth and not buying into twisted propaganda making it look like we are supported.

Remember, it is your responsibility to make sure that we are taken care of as promised by this country. Once we become veterans, let alone disabled veterans, our voice doesn't seem to mean that much anymore.

Michael H. Riordan
CPL. USMC 1991-1995
Disabled American Veteran, Veterans for Common Sense
1990 Synergy High graduate

A Hundred Thursdays Of Protest

[Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

February 12, 2005 By C. W. Nevius,. San Francisco Chronicle

The radicals of Benicia are a cheerful group. They were out on First Street on Thursday, holding signs protesting the war in Iraq and waving at cars.

Some drivers honked on the way down the street, and some honked going the other direction, which pleased those in the vigil although they knew the drivers were often the same people coming back.

The small group, about 20 strong, was out between 5 and 6 o'clock, just as they were the Thursday before. They started their little protest on March 20, 2003, the day the first bombs fell, and it went so well that some of them said they'd come back in a week.

That was 100 Thursdays ago.

They've stood in the rain, the wind and, until the days get long enough, the dark. The vigil fell on Christmas Eve in December, so Tom Dragavon and his wife, Darlene, brought Tom's 93-year-old mother out to hold a sign.

"We dragged her down here," said Tom Dragavon, who estimates he's been on the street for 90 of the 100 Thursdays. "She liked it. She got us all singing Christmas carols."

This week, Kniesler's signs, based on numbers from the Department of Defense, showed 1,450 killed and 10,871 wounded.

Thursday after Thursday, they've fallen into a comfortable and familiar routine. They see some regulars, who honk and wave -- Steph Burns, the guitarist for Huey Lewis and the News, flashed by last week. Even the counter-protesters are on a schedule.

"Is it 5:30 yet?" asked David Grumio, Iraq Casualty Count's media coordinator. "Usually, the pro-war people show up about now."

Not this week. The 100th Thursday came and went without an opposing view.

Down at the other end of the line was Cindy Sheehan of Vacaville, a tall woman with a ready smile and sad eyes. She held a poster with a photo of her son, Army Spc. Casey Sheehan. He was killed in Baghdad 10 months ago.

She's pretty much gotten used to the finger-flippers and profanity shouters, she says. The worst was in Florida, before the election. Sheehan and some other moms were at a Dick Cheney rally, silently protesting with pictures of their dead sons.

"A man came up and said, 'I went to Iraq but I came back,' and then he ran away," Sheehan says. "I yelled, 'That's probably why you came back, because you ran.'"

You can see she is pleased with her comeback, but it still stung. Sheehan has formed "Gold Star Families for Peace" (www.gsfp.org) and admits she's become a little obsessed.

"Sometimes I get up in the mornings and turn on the computer," she says. "And my husband comes home at 5, and I'm still there in my pajamas."

To be perfectly honest, the radicals of Benicia aren't sure what they are accomplishing. ***All they can really say is that the reaction from drivers used to be 50-50, and now there are probably 10 beeps and waves for every flip off or profanity.***

Does standing on a street for 100 Thursdays make a difference?

"I don't know," says Tom Dragavon. "But if I don't, I feel like I've done nothing."

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Four Oil Pipelines To Refinery For Baghdad Sabotaged By String Of Resistance Attacks



Middle East Online

2.16.05 Middle East Online & KUNA & By Aref Mohammed, (Reuters)

BAGHDAD - Four Iraqi oil pipelines were hit by insurgent attacks early Wednesday morning near Baiji, said the oil ministry, causing a large blaze and sending thick clouds of black smoke over the city, officials and witnesses said.

"The pipeline carrying crude from Kirkuk oilfields to Baiji refinery in Salahuddin was sabotaged near Fatha as well as another pipeline supplying the same refinery," the ministry said.

"It was sabotaged by a bomb at al-Fatha, seven km east of Baiji," Majid Menoun, director of pipelines at the Baiji refinery, told Reuters.

Others in Baiji said they heard a series of explosions early in the morning.

Smoke pouring from the main blast blanketed Baiji and sent several people to hospital with breathing problems, doctors said.

A hospital official said two people were killed by the fire and in a separate incident four Iraqi soldiers were wounded by shrapnel from a mortar attack on a cluster of pipelines north of Baiji.

He also added that an armed group bombed the major oil-pipe. The explosions were caused by bombs set by terrorists in these areas.

Another pipeline carrying oil from the north to Dura refinery in Baghdad was sabotaged in the same area, the ministry said, adding that oil had spilt into the Tigris River and indicating that both explosions caused huge fire.

A fourth pipeline was sabotaged in the Bajwan area, northwest of Kirkuk, the ministry added.

"Teams of firefighters have begun to tackle the fires caused by the sabotage and technical teams have begun to evaluate the damage with the aim of beginning repairs."

Asem Jihad added that the explosions will influence the performance of the struck refineries.

Beji refinery, according to Jihad, supplies Beji station with electricity, ad the station is the second largest power generation station in the county after Nasiriah Station.

Beji refinery is also responsible for covering 40-50 percent of requirements of Baghdad and the surrounding areas oil derivatives.

The refinery had previously stopped operating for 17 days due to resistance activities in the country causing a major fuel crisis in the country.

Northern Pipeline To Turkey Reopens And Is Immediately Blown Up, Cutting Exports North

Feb 16, 2005 By Aref Mohammed, (Reuters)

Iraq's oil export pipeline to Turkey has been hit by sabotage and flows are likely to be halted until early next week, an Iraqi oil official says.

In Kirkuk, an Iraqi army colonel, Ibrahim Ahmed, died of wounds suffered after resistance soldiers opened fire on his vehicle west of the city a day earlier, said police Col. Anwar Hassan. Police said on Wednesday Colonel Ibrahim Ahmed was killed in his car in the town of Ajeel west of Kirkuk.

Iraq had only just restarted crude exports along the pipeline from its northern fields via the refinery at Baiji to the Turkish port of Ceyhan on Monday, reopening a route that had been closed by sabotage since December.

Pumping had managed a flow rate of just over 100,000 barrels per day, and stocks in tanks at Ceyhan had reached only about 100,000-150,000 barrels, shippers said. The pipeline has the capacity to pump over one million bpd.

"It was hit by sabotage on Tuesday night and flows are expected to start again on Monday or Tuesday of next week," the Iraqi oil official told Reuters. [Yeah, right. Lots of luck.]

Falluja: The Next Generation

February 11, 2005 Anne Montgomery, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Voices from Iraq

"Tanks and airplanes do not frighten me. Our Fallujah is ours. We will build it with the clay of Fallujah and irrigate it with our blood. The American soldiers destroyed my toys and my life, and I want them to leave." (Ruah, 10, 5th grade)

"If the Americans are strong, why didn't they find Al Zaraqawi? Why did they destroy my books and games, the children's toys? Is my teddy bear Zaraqawi?" (Rania, 12, 7th grade)

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

Lots Of Resistance Attacks Everywhere Today

2.16.05 AP & Aljazeera & Middle East Online & (Xinhuanet)

In a northern district of the city, guerrillas seriously wounded a police colonel and killed his driver in Mosul, said Sayed Hussein, a medic at a Mosul hospital where the casualties were brought. The colonel's bodyguard was also wounded in the attack, he said.

In the capital, guerrillas shot dead Interior Ministry intelligence officer 1st Lt. Ghazi Hoshi as he was getting into his car to go to work in the southern neighborhood of Dora, said Falah Mohamadawi, a police detective.

Near Dhuluiya, north of the capital Baghdad, three Iraqi soldiers were killed and two others wounded by a bomb concealed in the burnt-out shell of a car

abandoned on the roadside. "The blast occurred near the village of Al-Amin," army Lieutenant Colonel Jomaa Mohammed said.

In Dujail, also north of the capital, two Iraqi soldiers and an Iraqi contractor were killed in a mortar attack on an army base, police said.

Clashes broke out overnight in the restive town of Baquba, leaving one Iraqi policeman and two gunmen dead, security sources said. **The fighting in the town's central Mohandessin neighbourhood lasted most of the night, the sources said.**

In nearby Buhriz, insurgents attacked a police station with machine-gun fire at dawn, but no casualties were reported, Shabab said.

Officials say they found the bodies of two policemen on a highway south of Baghdad. Each had been shot in the head.

In Mosul, three television technicians were injured after a mortar attack on Mosul TV station, an employee there said.

Assailants killed Jassim Mohammed Mousa al-Daraji, a former municipal official and ex-Baath Party member in the eastern Baghdad slum of Sadr City, residents said Wednesday as they gathered for his funeral.

In western Baghdad, unidentified attackers killed a civil aviation official and shot dead a police sergeant as he was driving through the east of the city, police said.

Two Iraqi security officers were killed on Wednesday while patrolling near the northern city of Tikrit, said the police.

"Unknown insurgents shot down two officers as they were patrolling along the main road between Tikrit and Kirkuk, close to the Hemreen oilfields," Colonel Hassan Ahmed of the Salahudin police headquarters told Xinhua.

The attackers left the bodies on the roadside near the Hemreen mountain and fled the scene, Ahmed added.

Eight Military Collaborators Found Dead Near Baghdad

2.16.05 AP

Police found the bodies of eight Iraqis in shallow graves in a desert-area north of Baghdad.

Officials say the men who had worked at a U-S military base had been bound, gagged and shot in the back of the head.

A piece of paper was attached to each body, on which was written: "This is the punishment of the traitors and those who work for the American occupation."

Seven of the slain men were last heard from as they were heading from a military base in al-Bakr to their homes in Dejali. An eighth unidentified corpse was discovered along with them, Latif said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Dutch Soldiers Get Rid Of The Salute

LEFT FACE, Soldier Unions and Resistance Movements in Modern Armies, By DAVID CORTRIGHT AND MAX WATTS; Contributions in Military Studies, Number 107; GREENWOOD PRESS, New York • Westport, Connecticut • London

As Dutch soldiers gained increasing rights and became more active, they began to take exception to certain military customs and traditions that they considered obsolete in a democratic army. **The conscripts were no longer willing to play the role of mere pawns, and they objected to previously accepted rituals that reinforced rank privilege.**

Saluting in particular came to be seen as a demeaning vestige of the old system, and an important movement developed within the ranks to do away with it.

The pioneer in the saluting campaign was Henk Van der Horst, who was a VVDM [the Dutch soldiers' union] activist in the base at Oirschot. In 1970 Van der Horst shocked his colleagues and local military commanders by declaring that henceforth he would no longer salute anyone.

Van der Horst's public announcement excited many of his fellow conscripts, but it outraged his commanding officers. They responded swiftly and harshly (by normally tolerant Dutch standards) and sentenced him to eight months' imprisonment, equal to his remaining time of service.

Far from quieting the situation, the army's stiff sentence against Van der Horst proved counterproductive and sparked widespread indignation within the ranks.

Many soldiers agreed with Van der Horst that saluting was ridiculous and anachronistic, and they were concerned about the harsh sentence meted out to their fellow unionist.

VVDM responded to these concerns and came to the aid of Van der Horst by organizing a defense campaign.

Soon the VVDM leadership went beyond merely defending Van der Horst. The union decided to take up his cause and launched a campaign to put an end to mandatory saluting.

Their choice of tactics was both unusual and inventive, and was strongly influenced by the example of the freewheeling Provos and Kabouters: they decided to use the weapon of ridicule.

The union called for a “national saluting day,” urging soldiers on that day to salute anyone and everyone, regardless of rank, civilians included. The first saluting day was held on July 1, 1970, and proved to be a rollicking success. Once again the press helped the conscripts by providing widespread news coverage. Soldiers saluted everyone--garbagemen, other conscripts, policemen—thoroughly lampooning the saluting regulations.

The union kept up the fight for two more years, demanding that saluting regulations be changed. In summer 1971 a second national saluting day was held, with soldiers sending postcards to the government objecting to mandatory saluting. Several thousand cards were actually sent to the Ministry of Defense under the heading “Greetings from the barracks.”

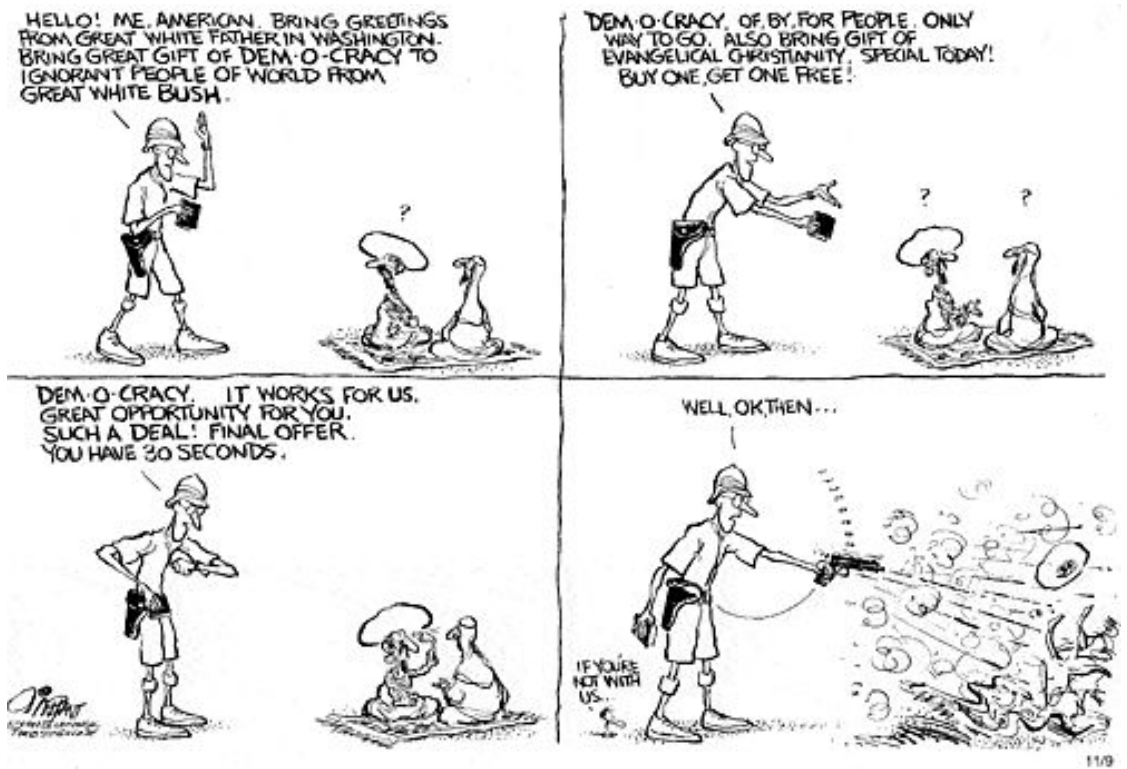
In Havelte there was a demonstration of around 600 soldiers to protest saluting and other military restrictions. In 1972 there was a third national saluting day. This time soldiers were urged to act “normally,” that is, to refuse to salute. Many soldiers participated in the action, and a number of demonstrations were held, including an action at one base where 150 soldiers clapped, waved, and cheered as their officers came through the gates after lunch.

In 1973, after three years of struggle, the saluting campaign finally achieved victory.

Elections that year produced a new, Social Democratic government coalition in Holland. The new officials, especially Defense Minister Henk Vredeling, brought with them a more progressive and democratic view of the military. Vredeling was much more sympathetic to the views of the conscripts than were his predecessors. In fact, he was once quoted as saying, “My whole life I have been against discipline. . . I am in fact absolutely allergic to uniforms.”

Under Vredeling’s leadership the Ministry of Defense finally responded to the union’s demands. New regulations were issued making saluting optional. According to the new rules, the salute would no longer be automatic but would have to be earned by officers through respect and enlightened leadership.

OCCUPATION REPORT



U.S. Mercenaries In Iraq Say They Witnessed Murder Of Unarmed Civilians



[Thanks to Carl Rogers, who sent this in.]

Feb. 15, 2005 By Lisa Myers & the NBC investigative unit

There are new allegations that heavily armed private security contractors in Iraq are brutalizing Iraqi civilians. **In an exclusive interview, four former security contractors told NBC News that they watched as innocent Iraqi civilians were fired upon, and one crushed by a truck.** The contractors worked for an American company paid by U.S. taxpayers.

The four men are all retired military veterans: Capt. Bill Craun, Army Rangers; Sgt. Jim Errante, military police; Cpl. Ernest Colling, U.S. Army; and Will Hough, U.S. Marines. All went to Iraq months ago as private security contractors.

"I went there for the money," says Hough.

"I'm a patriot," says Craun.

"You can't turn off being a soldier," says Colling.

They worked for an American company named Custer Battles, hired by the Pentagon to conduct dangerous missions guarding supply convoys. They were so upset by what they saw, three quit after only one or two missions.

"What we saw, I know the American population wouldn't stand for," says Craun.

They claim heavily armed security operators on Custer Battles' missions — among them poorly trained young Kurds, who have historical resentments against other Iraqis — terrorized civilians, shooting indiscriminately as they ran for cover, smashing into and shooting up cars.

On a mission on Nov. 8, escorting ammunition and equipment for the Iraqi army, they claim a Kurd guarding the convoy allegedly shot into a passenger car to clear a traffic jam.

"(He) sighted down his AK-47 and started firing," says Colling. "It went through the window. As far as I could see, it hit a passenger. And they didn't even know we were there."

Later, the convoy came upon two teenagers by the road. One allegedly was gunned down.

"The rear gunner in my vehicle shot him," says Colling. "Unarmed, walking kids."

In another traffic jam, they claim a Ford 350 pickup truck smashed into, then rolled up and over the back of a small sedan full of Iraqis.

"The front of the truck came down," says Craun. "I could see two children sitting in the back seat of that car with their eyes looking up at the axle as it came down and pulverized the back."

"I said, 'Wow, what hit this car?'" remembers Hough.

Could anyone have survived?

"Probably not. Not from what I saw," says Hough.

The men assume that in all three incidents the Iraqis were seriously hurt or killed. But they can't be sure.

"It was chaos and carnage and destruction the whole day," says Craun.

Two of the men — Craun and Colling — say they quit immediately.

Craun, in an e-mail two days later to a friend at the Pentagon, wrote: "I didn't want any part of an organization that deliberately murders children and innocent civilians."

Errante says he also quit after witnessing wild, indiscriminate shootings on two other missions.

"I said I didn't want to be a witness to any of these, what could be classified as a war crime," says Errante.

Once back in the U.S., Craun — recipient of the Bronze Star — took the allegations to Army criminal investigators. The Army tells NBC News it's looking into the matter. [And the check is in the mail.]

The company is already under criminal investigation for allegations of fraud centering on the way it billed the government. Those allegations are also at the heart of a lawsuit by former associates. **In September, the military banned the firm and its associates from obtaining new federal contracts or subcontracts.**

In any case, the ban didn't stop the company from fulfilling its old contracts, such as the missions performed by Craun, Hough, Colling and Errante.

"These aren't insurgents that we're brutalizing," says Craun. "It was local civilians on their way to work. It's wrong."

Anyone who's been there says Iraq is a brutal, deadly place. So why do the men blame Custer Battles?

"Simply, they're negligent," says Colling. "(Just) throwing people out there and then forcing us to use these brutal tactics. They're responsible, absolutely

So why are these men going public with these allegations now? They say because they care about American soldiers and about winning the war.

"If we continue to let this happen, those people will hate us even more than they already do," says Craun.

And they say that only makes Iraq more dangerous for American soldiers.

HERE COME THE DECOYS



(Feb 9, AFP/POOL/File/Mohamed Messara)

From: Ahmed Al-Habbabi
To: The Anti-Allawi Group
Sent: February 10, 2005
Subject: Here come the decoys

Excellent Iraqietnamization:

1. They're cheap! at \$150 a month each
2. Readily available! in a country with 70% unemployment caused by the liberation
3. Dispensable and Replaceable! we count only the coalition casualties naturally
4. Dependable? a mere 40% desertion rate (so they say) so far
5. Loyal? give me a reason
6. Uninfiltratable? your guess now...

“Our Governments Do Not Like It”

Our governments do not like it when we present evidence that contradicts the upbeat official version.

February 12, 2005 Rory McCarthy, The Guardian

What the US and Britain have yet to acknowledge about the past two years in Iraq is the searing humiliation brought by their occupation. It is helping fuel the insurgency and is turning even moderate Iraqis against the western forces who once promised liberation.

To a journalist the security threat is paramount. **Nearly all the roads out of the capital are too dangerous to drive and several districts of Baghdad itself are too dangerous for us to enter.** Many of my colleagues have been shot at, kidnapped, arrested or killed.

At the same time we come under tremendous pressure to accept the US and British official version of events. Too often we have sat and listened to officials tell us what is happening in an Iraq that they themselves are barely able to visit.

In the summer of 2003 I sat in Baghdad with a British diplomat who told me in all seriousness that the killing of Saddam's two sons, Uday and Qusay, in a gunbattle in Mosul would be the "tipping-point" that would halt the violence. Since then so many other supposed tipping points have passed: the capture of Saddam himself, the handover of sovereignty in June last year, two assaults on the rebel bastion of Falluja and then last month's elections. Yet the insurgency remains stronger than ever.

Our governments do not like it when we present evidence that contradicts the upbeat official version.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

The Poetry Of Donald Rumsfeld

Slate has compiled a collection of Rumsfeld's poems, bringing them to a wider public for the first time. The poems that follow are the exact words of the defense secretary, as taken from the official transcripts on the Defense Department Web site.

"The Unknown"

As we know,
There are known knowns.
There are things we know we know.
We also know
There are known unknowns.
That is to say
We know there are some things
We do not know.
But there are also unknown unknowns,
The ones we don't know
We don't know.

Feb. 12, 2002, Department of Defense news briefing

"Glass Box"

You know, it's the old glass box at the
At the gas station,
Where you're using those little things
Trying to pick up the prize,
And you can't find it.
It's...

And it's all these arms are going down in there,
And so you keep dropping it,
And picking it up again and moving it,
But.....

Some of you are probably too young to remember
Those glass boxes,
But they used to have them
At all the gas stations
When I was a kid.

Dec. 6, 2001, Department of Defense news briefing

"A Confession"

Once in a while,
I'm standing here, doing something.
And I think,
"What in the world am I doing here?"
It's a big surprise.

May 16, 2001, interview with the New York Times

"Happenings"

You're going to be told lots of things.
You get told things every day that don't happen.

It doesn't seem to bother people, they don't mind,
It's printed in the press.
The world thinks all these things happen.
They never happened.

Everyone's so eager to get the story
Before in fact the story's there,
That the world is constantly being fed,
Things that haven't happened.

All I can tell you is,

It hasn't happened.
It's going to happen.

Feb. 28, 2003, Department of Defense briefing

"The Digital Revolution"

Oh my goodness gracious,
What you can buy off the Internet
In terms of overhead photography!

A trained ape can know an awful lot
Of what is going on in this world,
Just by punching on his mouse
For a relatively modest cost!

June 9, 2001, following European trip

"The Situation"

Things will not be necessarily continuous.
The fact that they are something other than perfectly continuous
Ought not to be characterized as a pause.
There will be some things that people will see.
There will be some things that people won't see.
And life goes on.

Oct. 12, 2001, Department of Defense news briefing

"Clarity"

I think what you'll find,
I think what you'll find is,
Whatever it is we do substantively,
There will be near-perfect clarity
As to what it is.

And it will be known,
And it will be known to the Congress,
And it will be known to you,
Probably before we decide it,
But it will be known.

Feb. 28, 2003, Department of Defense briefing

"Whom the gods would destroy they first give control of both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue."

"Well, while I'm here I'll do the work and what's the work?"

To ease the pain of living. Everything else, drunken dumbshow."

Allen Ginsberg

Received:

Changing To PDF

From: JT

To: GI Special

Sent: February 16, 2005

Subject: Changing to PDF format

Much thanks for your newsletter. I thought I'd heard it all on the Hotline; but you are giving us much new information. Wouldn't it be great to have this stuff on the headlines of the NYT!!!

I would like to change my subscription to PDF format.

Thanks for all your good work.

In struggle

REPLY: Thanks for your encouragement. Most of the credit goes to those who send in good stuff, especially people in the armed services, military family members, and veterans. They make it possible. PDF is available to anyone who wishes to receive in that format. T.

Received:

An Urgent Message On Depleted Uranium

02 Feb 2005 From Dr. Doug Rokke and Damacio Lopez. Forwarded from VVAW National Staffperson Jeff Machota to all on VVAWNET:

Dear Friends,

We have a proposal for those individuals and organizations who wish to stop the use of depleted uranium in weapons, ensure that medical care is provided, and ensure that all environmental contamination is cleaned up.

Please join us in a world-wide campaign in demanding that the Pentagon of the United States follow it's own directive requiring thorough environmental remediation and that medical care is provided to all individuals contaminated by depleted uranium and/or other low level radioactive materials.

These legal mandates are prescribed in Army Regulation 700-48, with specific maximum exposure criteria in US Army Technical Bulletin 9-1300-278. These require thorough environmental remediation and that medical care is provided to all casualties.

The responsible person to uphold this regulation is
Dr. Michael Kilpatrick
The Special Assistant, Deployment Health Support
Four Skyline Place - Suite 901
5113 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041
Ph 1-800-497-6264.
e-mail: special.assistant@deploymenthealth.osd.mil

Let's encourage Dr. Kilpatrick to uphold these legal requirements.

LT. General Ronald Peake, then Surgeon General of the U.S. Army, also appointed Colonel Robert Eng, Ph.D. (telephone 210-221-6612, email: Robert.Eng@amedd.army.mil, Fort Sam Houston, Texas) as his representative to ensure medical care is provided to all DU casualties when he issued his medical order dated April 29, 2004.

Please get this message to as many people as possible; this might be the straw that breaks the camels back. Past environmental remediation costs alone would be in the billions of dollars.

In Solidarity

Damacio Lopez and Doug Rokke, Ph.D.

Web Copies

**For back issues see: GI Special web site at <http://www.militaryproject.org/> .
The following that we know of have also posted issues: www.gifightback.org,
<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>, www.williambowles.info/gispecial,
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>**

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