

GI SPECIAL 3A54:

**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



Mosul (Infoshop.org)

Anaconda

From: WK
To: GI Special
Sent: February 18, 2005 2:42 AM
Subject: Anaconda

I would like to thank you for your time and care into what I perceive as a truly passionate issue in your life. I don't know if you have had or lost loved ones at Anaconda, have one there now, or are just a truly well-informed, patriotic America citizen. Whatever the case, thank you for your truly informative website.

My fiancé has just recently arrived at Anaconda (Sunday, Feb. 13, 2005). X has been either National Guard (11 years), and just recently Reserve for two years. We knew that he would be called up as an 88 Mike, and his orders hit last October. He is currently serving in that position in a new Reserve unit from XXXXXX.

I am just now opening my eyes as to what he must face on a daily basis in this life he must lead there.

I frankly don't think that he knew prior to arriving there; however, he may have, but just tried to protect me from it as he does.

I am fortunate that many of the other men serving with him have wives that I have become very good friends with here. That, in and of itself, is a blessing and a curse.

What he doesn't feel he can tell me, I still find out about, but even before that, I just know when something is not right with him.

In just the last three days, and I believe on his first mission out, they were hit with and IED or EID, I can never remember the order of that, but I don't guess that matters much, does it? Thank God no one was injured during that mission, but it just hit too close to home.

I just guess if you could provide me any helpful information as to survival at this so called base, tips, and what to write to any congressmen, senators, and/or military officials, I would be eternally grateful if it would bring my man home.

Thank you in advance for your help and concern for the men on the ground.

I am the daughter of a Marine DI, and trust me, I'm a good girl, but he always had to work for the "sir"!

Thank you so much, Sir, in advance, for your help,

WK

[Anybody who would like to help out can send an email to Anaconda, C/O GI Special at the upper left address, and it will get forwarded on to WK. This means people who have spent some time in Iraq, and have some survival tips to offer. She's trying to help out her man over there, and how about getting some help to her? Do the right thing. FYI: Soldier X and Soldier "Tom Joad" have been asked privately for their suggestions. How about some help from some IVAW troops? T]

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

MARINE KILLED IN AL ANBAR PROVINCE

February 22, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-02-32C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq -- **A Marine assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action Feb. 21 in the Al Anbar Province.**

3 Minnesota Guardsmen Killed

Feb. 22, 2005 JOSHUA FREED, The Associated Press

Three Minnesota National Guardsmen were killed in Iraq, family members and civilian sources confirmed today.

They were identified as Staff Sgt. David Day, of Morris; 1st Lt. Jason Timmerman of Tracy, both of the 151st Field Artillery based in Montevideo, and Jesse Lhotka of Appleton, whose rank and unit weren't immediately known.

Word of Day's death came from his grandmother, LaVonne Day. Timmerman's death was reported by Carmen Brunsvold, who leads a Marshall-based Guard support group. Lhotka's death was confirmed by his grandmother, Arvilla Lhotka of Waconia.

LaVonne Day said the family was told that Day was checking on an overturned Humvee when a roadside bomb went off, killing him. The military reported three soldiers were killed Monday in Baghdad by a roadside bomb as they were evacuating a fellow soldier, though it couldn't immediately be confirmed whether those three were the Minnesota soldiers.

"This Humvee was on its side, tipped over, and he went over to see if anybody was hurt when it blew up," she said.

"He was going to help. That would be David, that would be exactly him."

Arvilla Lhotka said her grandson lived in Appleton with his wife. They were just married in September.

Brunsvold told the Independent of Marshall that she spent Monday evening with Timmerman's parents, Gary and Pat Timmerman.

Marshall Mayor Bob Byrnes said word of Timmerman's death had been slowly spreading.

"It'll be felt by the entire community," he said.

Timmerman graduated from Lakeview High School and had gotten married last year, the Independent reported.

"He bought her a brand new car and the diamonds, and he said 'Now I want you to be taken care of.' They were together for about four or five days" before he deployed, she said.

Jason Timmerman was a high school math and computer teacher at Lake Benton Public School last year, Principal William Delaney said. While Delaney himself didn't know Timmerman - this is his first year with the district - he said students and staff said Timmerman had a "zeal for learning and helping students learn."

"Many times they mentioned they'd got one of their own over in Iraq," Delaney said.

In Cottonwood, where Timmerman went to high school, grocery store owner Jim Munson called Timmerman's death "a gut-check." He said his own son, Josh, also serves in the 151st but in a different area of Iraq.

"I'm waiting to call my wife after our noon rush, because I know she's going to break down," Munson told the Independent of Marshall.

Timmerman's younger brother, Travis, is also serving in the Guard in Iraq, Rep. Marty Seifert of Marshall said.

Arvilla Lhotka said her grandson lived in Appleton with his wife. They were just married in September.

Lhotka graduated from Lac qui Parle Valley High School in Madison in 1999. Superintendent Robert Munsterman told the West Central Tribune of Willmar that Lhotka made a trip back to the school a couple of years ago to tell his former teachers he made sergeant.

Monday's deaths made it easily the worst day for the state since combat began in Iraq in 2003. During Vietnam, Minnesota lost multiple soldiers on several days, including nine on May 5, 1968, according to the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

1 MEF Marine Killed In Vehicle Accident

February 22, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-02-34C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – One Marine assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in a non-hostile motor vehicle accident February 22 in the Al Anbar Province.

Illinois Marine Killed

February 22 CHICAGO (AP)

Long-time neighbors say a Tinley Park serviceman who was killed in Iraq was a sweet man who told neighborhood kids that he always wanted to join the Marines.

Philip Clarke said today that his son, 21-year-old Corporal Kevin Michael Clarke, was killed last week by small arms fire in Qaim, near the Syrian border.

At Andrew High School, Clarke was on the varsity wrestling, track and football teams. Wrestling coach Dave Arndt says Clarke was a very sincere and motivated young man.

Philip Clarke says his son was scheduled to return from his second tour of duty in March.

Clarke is the second alum of Andrew High School to be killed in Iraq.

U.S. Military Convoy Hit In Doura

22 February 2005 The Associated Press

A U.S. military convoy was hit in a roadside bomb attack in the southern Baghdad neighborhood of Doura, police Lt. Haitham Abdul Razak said.

Bomb Blast Injures Vancouver Soldier

February 22, 2005 By DEAN BAKER, Columbian staff writer

A 23-year-old U.S. Army sergeant from Vancouver suffered wounds Friday in Iraq when a bomb destroyed his Humvee.

Justin K. Wright, a 1999 graduate of Mountain View High School, was driving an armored Humvee when a homemade bomb blew the vehicle apart, said his mother, Kathryn Wright of Cascade Park. The incident happened near Tel Afar, a city of 350,000 west of Mosul in northern Iraq.

"Apparently, Justin has a shattered shoulder blade, and he is really bruised and has a concussion. The captain who called us said he looks like he was in a horrible car accident, but we are very thankful that it wasn't worse," Kathryn Wright said.

A passenger in the Humvee, Staff Sgt. Tony Wilson of Tooele, Utah, walked away from the blast with minor injuries, said Wright's mother, a substitute teacher in the Ridgefield School District.

She and her husband, Richard, manager of offices in The Academy building in downtown Vancouver, spoke briefly with Justin, who was heavily medicated.

"We didn't say much," Kathryn Wright said. "We just wanted to make sure he had his arms and legs because that's the worst injuries that happen to specialists like him."

Wright, who was an Eagle Scout in Vancouver, is an ordnance disposal specialist. He was just eight days into his second tour in the war zone, having served earlier in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. He is one of about a dozen soldiers in the Tooele-based 62nd Explosive Ordnance and Disposal Company.

Wright married his wife, Christine, an air traffic controller in the U.S. Air Force, on Jan. 3. She is stationed at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., Kathryn Wright said.

Falluja: "Insurgents Still Reported In The City"

February 20, 2005 Washington Post Staff Writer

As the battlefield is gradually transformed into a construction zone, U.S. officials acknowledge that they have a limited amount of time to establish faith among residents eager for life return to normal.

If they do not rebuild the city quickly enough, the officials say, they risk losing their already tenuous support, a potentially dangerous situation with insurgents still reported in the city. [Of course. Otherwise known as Iraqis.]

TROOP NEWS

Thousands In Military "Just Say No" To Iraq

02/19/2005 Phillip O'Connor, St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Unlike Vietnam, where only volunteers served a second tour, many of today's armed forces members are being ordered to return for a second or even third tour in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And in a war theater where rocket attacks, roadside ambushes and suicide bombers are a constant threat, many spend their entire tour in constant danger with little chance to relax.

The Army was forced to confront the issue when the number of deserters more than tripled between 1995 and 2001, to 4,739. **Shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, regulations changed. Rather than shipping deserters off to Fort Knox or Fort Sill to await military justice, the Army now returns them to their unit, where discipline is left to the unit commander.** The unit commander can retain and rehabilitate the person, separate him or her from service or seek a court-martial. Each case is evaluated on its merits.

"They want to give them some punishment just to let everybody else know you just can't walk and nothing will happen," said Morse of the GI Rights Hotline. **"But on the other hand, they don't want to lose that person as a soldier. Their primary thing is if that person comes back, they want to make sure that that person gets deployed."**

Gold Star Families Loss In Iraq Turns Into Antiwar Activism

Like other Gold Star families, she recalls that her son began to express disillusionment over Iraq. "Some of his men had to go to civilian Web sites to get boots," she said. "He did not have enough parts for his tanks." Neil, who had married his college sweetheart at 22, was killed on Aug. 13, one month shy of his 25th birthday.

February 22, 2005 By Evelyn Nieves, Washington Post Staff Writer

VACAVILLE, Calif. -- Five minutes after President Bush began his State of the Union address, Cindy Sheehan clicked off her television set.

She would read the transcript, watch the salute to the parents of a Marine killed in Fallujah, chew over such words as "ultimate sacrifice" and "fight against tyranny" -- the next morning.

But that night, live, in her living room, so close to her son's photos and medals on the foyer wall -- no. It was too much to hear the cheering for the man who had sent her son to Iraq on the premise that Saddam Hussein stockpiled weapons of mass destruction.

Casey Sheehan, a former Eagle Scout and altar boy who had joined the Army hoping to serve as a chaplain's assistant, was killed at age 24 in a war he wasn't sure why he was fighting. And more soldiers like him were dying every day. Where was the outrage?

Cindy Sheehan found it where she always does: in other families who have lost a loved one in a war they neither believe in nor want to believe will continue, without end, with the nation's acquiescence.

They call themselves Gold Star Families for Peace. Organized less than two months ago, it is part support group and part activist organization, with members united by grief and the belief that their loved ones died in a war that did not have to happen. The Gold Star Families say they support the soldiers because their mission is to speak out to help bring them home and minimize the human cost of the war.

They include Bill Mitchell of Atascadero, Calif., who lost his son, Mike, 25, in the same April 4 ambush that killed Casey Sheehan, and who also was unable to watch Bush's speech.

And Celeste Zappala of Philadelphia, whose eldest son, Sherwood Baker, 30, a National Guardsman, was killed while on the search for weapons of mass destruction. She watched Bush's speech with the sound turned down, "trying to discern some truth amidst the choreography of clapping and fawning." Other Gold Star Families shared the same knot in their stomachs, the same sense of stunned disbelief.

The families stumbled upon one another through the Internet and through Military Families Speak Out, an antiwar group for families with loved ones serving in Iraq. With no outreach and little publicity, Gold Star Families for Peace -- the name is a variation on American Gold Star Mothers, a group for mothers of slain soldiers that dates from the 1920s -- gets inquiries from two or three families nearly every day, Sheehan said.

They are regular people: teachers, civil servants, stay-at-home moms and hardware-salesman dads. Most are not used to political protests or speechmaking. Their loved ones -- sons, mostly -- had joined the military because they wanted to, usually out of a sense of duty.

Patrick McCaffrey, who managed an auto shop in Palo Alto, Calif., joined the National Guard after Sept. 11, 2001.

"He wanted to protect the homeland from terrorism," said Nadia McCaffrey of Tracy, Calif. Her only child, 34 years old and with a wife and two children, never dreamed he would be sent abroad to fight. "He would never have signed up if he thought that was a possibility," McCaffrey said. "His family was too important to him."

They have written letters and made calls to Bush and to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, "yet there has been no response at all," Zappala said. On Inauguration Day, half a dozen Gold Star Families, letters in hand, tried to gain an audience with Bush and Rumsfeld. They were turned away at the White House by guards.

Many of them will meet in person for the first time when they converge with peace organizations in Fayetteville, N.C., March 19 to mark the second anniversary of the start of the war.

Then, they say, they will go full steam ahead in speaking out against the war, together, in ones and twos, and with other peace groups. The most prominent member is Lila

Lipscomb of Flint, Mich., who was featured in Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11." The film shows her encouraging her son, Michael Pederson, to join the Army for its career opportunities, only to end up grieving for him two weeks after the war in Iraq began.

"I consider being in that movie such a blessing," she said, "because it has given me the opportunity to have an audience."

Bill Mitchell said Gold Star Families in general have had no problem capturing a crowd's attention. "When we get together," he said, "it's pretty powerful."

For the families, discussions always begin with their loved ones' lives.

Mitchell talks about his son, Mike, a high school track star who found time for a run the day he died. He had volunteered for the Army with friends "out of a sense of brotherhood," said his father, a retired corporate manager. After 11 months in Iraq, Mike Mitchell was killed two weeks before he was scheduled to leave. Engaged to marry a German woman who had moved her graduate studies to Southern California in preparation for their life together, he was eager to return home. But he volunteered for one last mission.

It was the same mission that Casey Sheehan, in Iraq for two weeks, was on when they were ambushed. A devout Catholic, he had also entered the Army in solidarity with friends. He did not have a steady girlfriend, and had told his mother that he wanted to stay a virgin until he married. After his tour was over, he planned to become an elementary school teacher.

"The sons and daughters dying in that war are the most decent people," said Sheehan, who raised four children while her husband worked as a hardware salesman.

Vicki Castro's only son, Jonathan, could have gone to college but enlisted in the Army as a combat engineer, almost against his parent's wishes, she said. "We told him, 'Just apply to college and we'll pay for wherever you want to go,' " said Castro, a high school math teacher in Corona, Calif. "But he wanted to learn things most people don't, and experience things you don't when you go from high school to college."

He had designed and built scooters with motorcycle parts -- "chopperscooters," he called them. Upon returning from Iraq, he planned to use the Army's small-business loan program to open a shop on the beach and rent them out. He was more than ready to return, but the Army extended his stay one year. He died at age 21 in the Dec. 21 suicide bombing that killed 22 soldiers in a mess tent in Mosul.

Diane Santoriello, who teaches troubled elementary school students in Pittsburgh, knew her son would be sent abroad. First Lt. Neil Anthony Santoriello Jr. had joined the Army after high school.

"He wanted this as a career from the time he was in fifth grade, though he knew I wasn't crazy about it," she said. Neil had been an Eagle Scout, along with friends who joined the Army with him. "Nine scouts that were with my son are currently in uniform," Santoriello said. "His two best friends are over in Mosul right now."

Like other Gold Star families, she recalls that her son began to express disillusionment over Iraq. "Some of his men had to go to civilian Web sites to get boots," she said. "He did not have enough parts for his tanks." Neil, who had married his college sweetheart at 22, was killed on Aug. 13, one month shy of his 25th birthday.

"He was very interested in government and politics," his mother said. "We all knew that he was going to change our country in some way. Maybe I consider what I'm doing now a way of carrying on his work."

Australia To Send 450 More Troops To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

ABC Online, February 22, 2005. 1:09pm (AEDT)

Prime Minister John Howard has announced an extra 450 Australian Defence Force personnel will be deployed to Iraq.

The troops are a new task force to provide security for Japanese engineers and will cost Australia between \$250 million and \$300 million per year.

The soldiers will be mainly from the 1st Brigade based in Darwin and will leave for southern Iraq in 10 weeks' time. Mr Howard says there are currently about 950 Australian Defence personnel in and around Iraq.

"Self-evidently we would have liked the major combat to have gone differently ... (but) **Coalition withdrawal or defeat is unimaginable.**" ["Unimaginable?" Only if you're brain dead. Even the clowns in the White House can imagine it.]

Pentagon A Sewer Of War Profiteer Waste

(Washington Post, February 21, 2005, 2004, Pg. B2)

Of the 25 items on this year's list of high risk federal activities issued by the Government Accountability Office, the Defense Department is a key player in 14. **"This is unacceptable and should not be tolerated," David M. Walker, the head of GAO, said.**

He suggested that the revolving door between government and big business might contribute to the Pentagon's lack of ability to deal with complex management issues.

Photo Essay: Who Says They Weren't Greeted With Flowers?

By: Susan Meiselas, Magnum Photos on: 12.01.2005

They were. And still are, in fact. In the mock Iraqi villages of Jarbar Nahr and Sadiq, set up in May 2004 in Fort Polk, Louisiana, USA, to simulate "the conditions that soldiers will face when dispatched to Iraq". Move over, Disneyland.



"Now let's hear it for our brave liberators! Hip hip..."

The scene being played out shows the 'Imam' negotiating with the "villagers" who are protesting the troops presence.



"Hey meester! Give us a Coke and we will tell you the location of every IED in the volatile Al Anbar province!"

USA. Fort Polk, Louisiana. March 2004. US Military prepare new troops at the "Joint Readiness Training Center", in the mock Iraqi village of Jarbar Nahr. 1200 "role players" have been hired to recreate the conditions that soldiers will face when dispatched to Iraq. **Here villagers harass American troops as they attempt to enter the village.**

Half IRR Won't Go: Pentagon Says OK

(St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 20, 2005, Pg. 13)

By the end of last year, the Army had issued mobilization orders to 3,845 ready reservists to fill vacancies, mostly in Army Reserve units, including some in Iraq. **Almost half requested a delay or exemption from reporting, generally for medical and family care, and all but 85 were approved.**

Taliban Fanatics Seize Control At Pentagon

(New York Post, February 22, 2005)

The Pentagon has blocked soldiers in Iraq from accessing an "amateur porn" site on the military's Internet service that is posting nude pictures of their female comrades-in-arms and warned soldiers that they would face discipline if the activity continues.

Royal Navy Campaigns To Recruit Gays

(New York Times, February 22, 2005, Pg. 1)

Five years after Britain lifted its ban on gays in the military, the Royal Navy has begun actively encouraging them to enlist and has pledged to make life easier when they do. The service announced that it had asked Stonewall, a group that lobbies for gay rights, to help it develop better strategies for recruiting and retaining gay men and lesbians.

<p>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.</p>
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“The Army Was My Life. Fuck Them Now.”

Quack “Doctors” At Walter Reed Torment PTSD Soldiers Into Giving Up Their Benefits

Army buddies who visited him in the days before his death said Soto-Ramirez was increasingly angry and despondent. "He was real upset with the treatment he was getting," said René Negron, a former Walter Reed psychiatric patient and a friend of Soto-Ramirez's. "He said: 'These people are giving me the runaround ... These people think I'm crazy, and I'm not crazy, Negron. I'm getting more crazy being up here.'"

"They asked me if I missed my wife. Well, shit yeah, I missed my wife. That is not the fucking problem here. Did you ever put your foot through a 5-year-old's skull?"

Perhaps most troubling, the Army seems bent on denying that the stress of war has caused the soldiers' mental trauma in the first place.

(There is an economic reason for doing so: Mental problems from combat stress can require the Army to pay disability for years.)

Feb. 18, 2005 Mark Benjamin, Salon

They're overmedicated, forced to talk about their mothers instead of Iraq, and have to fight for disability pay. Traumatized combat vets say the Army is failing them.

WASHINGTON -- Before he hanged himself with his bathrobe sash in the psychiatric ward at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Spc. Alexis Soto-Ramirez complained to friends about his medical treatment.

Soto-Ramirez, 43, had been flown out of Iraq five months before then because of chronic back pain that became excruciating during the war. But doctors were really worried about his mind. They thought he suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder after serving with the 544th Military Police Company, a unit of the Puerto Rico National Guard, the kind of unit that saw dirty, face-to-face combat in Iraq.

A copy of Soto-Ramirez's medical records, reviewed by Salon, show that a doctor who treated him in Puerto Rico upon his return from Iraq believed his mental problems were probably caused by the war and that his future was in the Army's hands.

"Clearly, the psychiatric symptoms are combat related," a clinical psychologist at Roosevelt Roads Naval Hospital wrote on Nov. 24, 2003. The entry says, "Outcome will depend on adequacy and appropriateness of treatment." Doctors in Puerto Rico sent **Soto-Ramirez to Walter Reed in Washington, D.C., to get the best care the Army had to offer. There, he was put in Ward 54, Walter Reed's "lockdown," or inpatient psychiatric ward, where the most troubled patients are supposed to have constant supervision.**

But less than a month after leaving Puerto Rico, on Jan. 12, 2004, Soto-Ramirez was found dead, hanging in Ward 54.

Army buddies who visited him in the days before his death said Soto-Ramirez was increasingly angry and despondent. "He was real upset with the treatment he was getting," said René Negron, a former Walter Reed psychiatric patient and a friend of Soto-Ramirez's. "He said: 'These people are giving me the runaround ... These people think I'm crazy, and I'm not crazy, Negron. I'm getting more crazy being up here.'

"Those people in Ward 54 were responsible for him. Their responsibility was to have a 24-hour watch on him," Negron said in a telephone interview from his home in Puerto Rico. While Soto-Ramirez's death was by his own hand, Negron and other soldiers say the hospital shares the blame.

In fact, repeated interviews over the course of one year with 14 soldiers who have been treated in Walter Reed's inpatient and outpatient psychiatric wards, and a review of medical records and Army documents, suggest that the Army's top hospital is failing to properly care for many soldiers traumatized by the Iraq war.

As the Soto-Ramirez case suggests, inadequate suicide watch is one concern. But the problems run deeper. Psychiatric techniques employed at Walter Reed appear outmoded and ineffective compared with state-of-the-art care as described by civilian doctors.

The troops also complain that the Army relies too much on pills; few of the soldiers took all the medication given to them by the hospital. [Benjamin has it 100% wrong. The "pills" soldiers are given are not "medication." They are drugs. Medication attacks physical illness. Drugs have only one effect: mental numbing. They do nothing to solve problems. They just stun the person who is fed them.]

Perhaps most troubling, the Army seems bent on denying that the stress of war has caused the soldiers' mental trauma in the first place.

(There is an economic reason for doing so: Mental problems from combat stress can require the Army to pay disability for years.)

Soto-Ramirez's medical records reveal the economical mindset of an Army doctor who evaluated him. "Adequate care and treatment may prevent a claim against the government for PTSD," wrote a psychologist in Puerto Rico before sending him to Walter Reed.

"The Army does not want to get into the mental-health game in a real way to really help people," said Col. Travis Beeson, who was flown to Walter Reed for psychiatric help during a second tour with one of the Army's special operations units in Iraq. "They want to Band-Aid it. They want you out of there as fast as possible, and they don't want to pay for it."

Indeed, some psychiatric patients at Walter Reed are given the option of signing a form releasing them from the hospital as long as they give up any future disability payments from the Army.

One soldier from Pennsylvania, who was shot five times in the chest and saved by body armor, told me he would do anything to get out of Walter Reed, even relinquish disability pay. "I'll sign anything as soon as I can get my hands on it," he told me several days before being released from the hospital. "I loved the Army. I was obsessed with it. The Army was my life. Fuck them now."

The conditions for traumatized vets at the Army's flagship hospital are particularly disturbing because Walter Reed is supposed to be the best. But leading veterans' advocate and retired Army ranger Steve Robinson, executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center, agrees that when it comes to psychiatric care, Walter Reed doesn't make the grade. "I think that Walter Reed is doing a great job of taking care of those suffering acute battlefield injuries -- the amputees, the burn victims, and those hurt by bullets and bombs," said Robinson, who has spent many hours visiting psychiatric patients at Walter Reed. "But they are failing the psychological needs of the returning veterans."

The high level of satisfaction among inpatients as reported by Walter Reed is completely opposite what I saw and heard while tracking soldiers there over the last year.

The soldiers I interviewed invited me to their bedsides in the lockdown ward. They handed over their private medical records. They allowed me to call their buddies, their girlfriends, their mothers.

All professed to loving the Army, though some said their trust in the institution had been irrevocably shattered.

All said their symptoms either stayed the same or worsened while at Walter Reed; two said they made suicide attempts. While it's true that patients' self-reports about treatment are not always objectively based, the repeated, bitter complaints I heard over the course of more than a year, in combination with conversations with civilian experts, cast serious doubts on Walter Reed's approach to treating PTSD sufferers.

It all convinced me that something is seriously amiss at the Army's top hospital.

Politicians and celebrities -- like Dale Earnhardt Jr., ZZ Top and President Bush -- routinely visit the wounded at Walter Reed; but dignitaries don't come to Ward 54.

When I first visited the lockdown unit in February 2004, it held around 35 patients, who slept as many as six patients to a room.

Soldiers who have stayed in the lockdown unit say they were heavily medicated the entire time. **Some remember hearing screaming, or patients being subdued on stretchers after shock therapy.** "Inpatient can be a traumatic experience for anyone," said Lt. Julian P. Goodrum, 34, who was in Ward 54 last February after serving in Iraq. Records show Goodrum was held in the ward 13 days longer than needed while the Army decided whether to charge him as absent without leave when, after getting back from Iraq, he was earlier hospitalized by a civilian psychiatrist. He is fighting those charges.

The soldiers told me about their textbook symptoms of PTSD: sudden, ferocious bouts of rage, utter detachment, anxiety attacks accompanied by shortness of breath, and increased perspiration and rapid eye movement. They complained of relentless insomnia, racing thoughts, self-loathing, blackouts, hallucinations and the constant reliving of war through flashbacks by day and nightmares at night.

Some described vivid fantasies of violence toward the Army brass in charge of patients there -- slicing their throats, throwing them out windows or shooting them. [That's not insanity. That's a perfectly reasonable response to abuse.]

One psychiatric outpatient, who watched as his best friend was blown up by a roadside bomb in Iraq, said: "It does not matter how hardcore you are. Once you go to that war and you start to see dead bodies -- you see an arm over here, you see guts over there. There is no way you are ever going to erase that."

When it is done right, PTSD treatment is a delicate task. Trust is crucial, and medications are carefully administered and monitored. **[Here comes the "medication" bullshit again.]**

What bewildered the soldiers at Walter Reed, though, was that the Army seemed determined to downplay their war trauma and search for other causes for their mental health problems. In group therapy, sessions often focused more on family relationships and childhood experiences than war, the soldiers said. One outpatient soldier was so angered about this avoidance of the topic of war, he threw a chair during group therapy. Doctors promptly sent him to lockdown.

"When you get (to Walter Reed), they analyze you, break you down, and try to find anything wrong with you before you got in" the Army, said Spc. Josh Sanders, in a telephone conversation from his home in Lovington, Ill.

"They started asking me questions about my mom and my dad getting divorced. That was the last thing on my mind when I'm thinking about people getting fragged and burned bodies being pulled out of vehicles," said Sanders. "They asked me if I missed my wife. Well, shit yeah, I missed my wife. That is not the fucking problem here. Did you ever put your foot through a 5-year-old's skull?"

Sanders, 25, served in Iraq with the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, from May until December 2003. I met him in the summer of 2004 while he was getting treatment at Walter Reed in the outpatient clinic. Sanders had been evacuated from Baghdad because of the toll the war had taken on his mind. His complaints about Walter Reed

were sadly typical. "Nobody hears about this. Nobody hears about what really happens when you are there getting the 'premier' medical treatment," Sanders said.

Dr. Herbert Hendin, medical director of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention spent many years studying and treating veterans with PTSD after the Vietnam War. In discussing their treatment, Hendin said, "What veterans need is not simply to be able to talk about their combat experiences but to be able to talk about them with someone who understands the context." Hendin said a combat veteran "needs to feel an empathic connection with the treating professional." But to the soldiers, the atmosphere in the Walter Reed psychiatric units wasn't conducive to feeling understood, or getting better.

In Ward 54, recent combat veterans are mixed with other soldiers and even civilians suffering a wide range of mental problems.

For them, coming back from Iraq and being treated alongside soldiers with schizophrenia, for example, or maybe even soldiers' dependents with schizophrenia, makes them feel "crazy," as opposed to having a natural reaction to combat stress. "If you are a hard-charging person, or somebody who tries to do things right, you are already taking a huge hit to your ego by being put in there," Beeson, the Army colonel, told me. One of the two Walter Reed officials who spoke on condition of anonymity agreed that recent combat vets shouldn't be lumped in with other psychiatric patients. Those soldiers "need to have a specialized unit," the official said.

"They are labeled goofy and crazy, and they are not crazy."

Beeson served in Iraq with the Army's Civil Affairs Command, part of the Army's special-operations units. He is a 47-year-old reservist with 26 years of service under his belt, a wiry man grizzled by war. Beeson says his PTSD manifested during his second tour in Iraq. He was flown to Walter Reed.

When I first met him in August 2004, heavy medication made him speak in slow, halting sentences like a drunk with a stutter. [Repeat: this is not "medication" of any kind whatsoever, that has any curative value of any kind whatsoever. He was given legal drugs, designed to produce a nice, happy, quiet little fellow the shrinks can torment further. In NY City, Iraq vets with PTSD report they are given thiorazine, which produces irreversible central nervous system damage and impotence, and valium, a benzo, one of the most highly addictive drugs known to medical science.]

"A lot of the therapy was counterproductive to me," Beeson said in a telephone interview from his home in Arkansas, after getting out of Walter Reed. "It was a very paranoia-inducing place. If I was not paranoid when I got there, I was paranoid when I left ... To me, they need to figure out if they are going to treat people for war or be a regular hospital."

Josh Sanders, like the other soldiers I spent time with, also believes he is worse off because of his treatment at Walter Reed. "I don't trust anybody now ... I wish people could understand," he said. Sanders made two suicide attempts while under outpatient care at Ward 53. Hospital officials would not answer questions about the prevalence of

suicide attempts at Walter Reed, but said two incidents that occurred there in January, one apparent fatal overdose and another suicide attempt, are under investigation.

The Army's system for allocating disability pay to traumatized vets is another source of their frustration and anger. An Army panel at Walter Reed, called the Physical Evaluation Board, decides what percentage of income each soldier should get from the military to compensate him if he is too ill to serve any longer. The doctors decide whether wounds are combat related, and then the board decides how much disability the Army will pay. The board's decision is critical for soldiers trying to make a living after leaving the Army with what can be a debilitating mental condition. Fighting with the hospital about disability pay is a source of considerable stress just as these soldiers are trying to heal their minds.

Some of the soldiers are fighting decisions by the board at Walter Reed. Out of the 14 soldiers interviewed, five have left Walter Reed. Three ended up getting zero percent of their income as disability pay, despite what they said was serious mental stress that made it more difficult or impossible to work. Even those who got a third of their pay still had trouble making ends meet.

(In every case I followed, the Department of Veterans Affairs made a later determination that the soldiers deserved more. The soldiers can choose to take the higher percentage of pay from the V.A., but in some cases if they do so, they must pay back what they have received so far from the Army.)

After 26 years of service, the Army gave Col. Beeson, from the Army's Civil Affairs Command, zero percent of his income as disability pay for his mental wounds. Luckily, he still gets some retirement pay because of his many years of service, but he says he struggles with his injuries every day. He is appealing Walter Reed's decision.

Josh Sanders, from the 1st Armored Division, got 30 percent from the Army, but the Army also said his problems did not come from the war. "When I was over there [at Walter Reed] the PEB (Physical Evaluation Board) process was degrading. It is like pulling money from an insurance company. All my paperwork says 'non-service connected.' If it is non-service connected, then why am I getting 30 percent?" he asked. The V.A. recently decided to give him 70 percent disability.

One Army reservist I spent time with tried to return to his day job as a policeman after the war, but his mental state prohibited him from carrying a gun. The reservist cannot go back to policing, but since the Army decided his mental problems did not come from the war, the small percentage of disability pay he got is not enough to make ends meet, he said. He's hoping the V.A. will give him more.

René Negron, the former soldier who visited Soto-Ramirez before the suicide, was given 30 percent of his pay until February 2006, when he'll be reevaluated. Negron was a psychiatric patient at Walter Reed after 11 months in Iraq. At one point he checked himself into the emergency room there because he thought he might kill himself. But the Physical Evaluation Board determined that "the soldier's retirement is not based on disability from injury or disease received in the line of duty," according to a copy of Negron's evaluation board proceedings. "This disability did not result from a combat-related injury."

Negron, 48, taught hair care and cosmetology before serving in Iraq as an Army specialist with the Puerto Rico National Guard. Now, he says his debilitated mental state after the war has left him unable to work. He drives two hours each way for mental health treatment at a V.A. medical center. "You think I can live on \$700 a month?" Negron asked. "I can't work. My wife is suffering. She can't leave me alone. Sometimes I feel suicidal. Sometimes I hear voices. Sometimes I see lights. I feel like I'm being shot at. They sent me home like that. I've been dealing with this since I got back," Negron said. **"I left here in good condition. If I have a mental condition, they have to deal with it ... I did my part. Why can't they do their part?"**

[Negron doesn't get it. They are "doing their part." They are indeed doing their job. Their job is saving money by denying soldiers their benefits so Bush can buy his new billion dollar personal helicopter fleet, the war profiteers can get their cut, and the political whores who fill Congress can get their free medical care for life and their fat paychecks. It's just a question of priorities, so fuck the troops. And hopefully one day payback will come to every one of the predators on top. And hopefully it will come at the hands of the very troops they fuck over now. Payback is overdue.]

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)

6% Of Wounded Are Amputees

February 21, 2005 KATE WILTROUT, The Virginian-Pilot

Advanced trauma care means more troops in Iraq are surviving severe combat injuries that might have killed them in earlier conflicts.

But 6 percent of those wounded become amputees, twice the figure of previous wars.

Suffering On The Home Front;

Mom Wishes Soldier Son Would Head For Canada

February 16, 2005 BY PETER GORMAN. Ft. Worth Weekly

Many military families are in agony over Iraq.

Lynn Jeffries figured she knew about emotional trauma from her years of working as a registered nurse in the emergency room of a Lubbock hospital. Then in late 2003, her 24-year-old son Nathan, a sergeant in the Army's 3rd Cavalry, was deployed to Iraq — and Jeffries was soon dealing with the worst emotional pain of her life, with almost nowhere to turn.

Shortly after Nathan left for Iraq, Jeffries found herself unable to take care of trauma patients; she left the emergency room to work as a hospice nurse. "I just started crying at everything," she said. "I was so angry about this war, but at the same time I felt like I couldn't fight against it without betraying my son. It just ate at me every day, more and more."

Her depression grew until, she said "at one point I thought of taking my own life in order to get my son home. It's just made me a little crazy. I've never felt so helpless in my life — there were days I could not even leave the house."

Jeffries' son was home on leave when she spoke with Fort Worth Weekly, and she said she was feeling a little better. But he was scheduled to go back to Iraq soon thereafter. "What will happen the day I have to put him back on the plane to go back?" she asked — and had no answer.

"I would do anything to have him go to Canada, but he says his friends need him and he can't leave them."

One of Teri Wills Allison's two sons is deployed in Iraq. The Austin woman said that since her son left for that war zone, she has become so depressed that "though I'd never taken pills before, I've needed Xanax just to get through the day since my son's deployment." **[Horrible idea. Xanax is one of the most addictive legal drugs going, and once addicted, which can happen quickly, people who can't get the next fix can go into convulsions, coma and death. Many heroin treatment programs won't treat people if they are addicted to Xanax; too much trouble and too much risk. They have to detox from Xanax first.]**

Sharon Allen, from Fort Worth, held it together during her son's first tour in Iraq. Now he's scheduled to go back, and the news has shaken her to her core. I'm a wreck," she said. "I don't know how I will get through this one."

"The mothers and fathers of the boys in Iraq, we're getting by, but barely," Wills Allison said. "Some of them tell me they need a six-pack before bed to fall asleep. Others can't leave the house for fear they'll come home to have that call from the military waiting on the machine. Some families are just torn apart by this."

Nancy Lessin, who helped organize military-family protests in front of the Pentagon during George W. Bush's inauguration, acknowledged that, "Every member of every family who has ever sent a loved one to war has suffered." But, the Massachusetts activist said, "this one is different. The stresses are different." **Her stepson, Joe Richardson, served in Iraq during the invasion and is expected to be called back for a second deployment there any day.**

For some, the feelings of helplessness are beyond endurance. In late November 2004, Marine Lance Cpl. Charles Hanson Jr. was killed in a roadside bombing of his convoy in Iraq. One week later, on Nov. 30, his stepdad, 39-year-old Mike Barwick, entertained guests at his Crawfordville, Fla., home with stories of the stepson he loved so much.

Three days later, just hours before guests were coming for a wake at the home Barwick shared with Charles' mother, Dana Hanson, Barwick shot and killed himself. Family members were quoted in the local newspapers as saying it was clear he simply couldn't live with the pain.

Misha ben-David, a drug and trauma counselor from Austin, said he remembers his own family being torn apart when his father went to Vietnam. He's beginning to see the same kind of trauma developing again now that his son is being deployed to Iraq.

"The stress on the family is unbearable," he said. "I can already hear my ex-wife starting to freak out, retreating into a 'rah-rah, do you love your son or not?' frame of mind. We've got so much pressure on us from people like the Fox network to see this as a black and white issue—either you're for the war and a patriot or you're a no good, liberal, anti-American."

There is also the added stress — not just on the soldiers, but on the family members as well — of involuntary tour extensions, multiple deployments, and shortages while the troops are in the field of body and vehicle armor and, sometimes, supplies as basic as drinking water. "Put it all together, and what you've created is an emotionally explosive situation," said ben-David, an Military Families Speak Out member.

This is also the first war in which soldiers have access to the internet, intended by the military to keep morale up by keeping soldiers in regular contact with their families. But there have been unintended consequences to such regular contact as well.

"It's not a letter every couple of weeks, where parents can try to imagine that everything is OK," Lessin said. "With the internet we're learning that our loved ones don't have enough food or water or weapon replacements or armored vests, things that leave us feeling helpless."

Wills Allison eloquently described her feelings of helplessness in an essay that initially appeared on the internet. One of the worst aspects of this war, she wrote, is the wedge it's driven between her and much of her family. "They don't see this war as one based on lies. They've become evangelical believers in a false faith,

swallowing Bush's fearmongering, his chickenhawk posturing and strutting, and cheering his 'bring 'em on' attitude as a sign of strength and resoluteness

"These are the same people who have known my son since he was a baby, who have held him and loved him and played with him, who have bought him birthday presents and taken him fishing. I don't know them anymore."

But for most families, MFSO and a few other internet forums are the only things that even begin to fill the void. "It's the only place I can go at 4 a.m. when I can't sleep, even with the Xanax, to talk with people who feel like I do," Wills Allison said.

Vietnam, Iraq Wars Cited For Minister's Suicide; He Wrote That The Latest Conflict Brought Back Unbearable Horrors

"He was a casualty of Vietnam," Waggoner told the crowd of several hundred gathered at St. Luke's. "After 38 years the horror never left him. He lived with it, and he died with it."

February 22, 2005 By Mike Lewis, SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER REPORTER

WENATCHEE -- He never was inclined to talk much about the damage, at least not to his wife and children. They knew -- it was obvious -- that a land mine in Vietnam took large portions of both of the Rev. Alan McLean's legs 38 years ago.

They knew that the single detonation in 1967 triggered ongoing waves of psychological temblors when McLean heard helicopters or when war footage appeared on the news. They knew that the decorated veteran was profoundly distressed by the Iraq war, an anxiety that ran as deep as the former Marine's patriotism.

But they didn't know about the .45-caliber pistol. Or the suicide note in his laptop, written but never printed out, seven days before he used that pistol. In it, McLean, the popular rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church here, apologized to his wife, Betsy, and his children for not being stronger. The war in Iraq, he said, unbearably amplified his nightmares.

He said he'd had enough.

"35 Marines died today in Iraq, only slightly more noticed than my legs," the former second lieutenant typed on Feb. 4. "I did not get any of my Marines of Charlie (Company) killed. It is possibly a sign of God's presence there. Certainly not of my ability."

With his final decision to call 911 from his church office and turn his pistol to his chest on Feb. 11, McLean, 62, became a casualty of two wars, his family members said.

"I underestimated the power of the war to take his life," said his daughter, Mary Watkins, 29, of Tacoma. "And I really feel that though my dad's been in Wenatchee, the war in Iraq killed him."

Betsy McLean, Alan's widow, agreed.

"That is why he killed himself," she said while sitting in the family home as relatives, friends and visitors drifted in and out. "Noticeably, it had become a burden, the frustration about what was being said. He was anxious about the soldiers coming home."

McLean discovered he first wanted to be a soldier while working on his undergraduate degree at Harvard. Some friends had enlisted. He felt a responsibility to serve, Betsy said.

In 1966, the collegiate rugby player picked the Marine Corps, completed his degree and went into basic training.

He was commissioned a second lieutenant and was sent to Vietnam. He had been there one month when he stepped on the mine.

As a result, he was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star. After five months of surgeries and rehabilitation -- his right leg was amputated above the knee; his left, below -- McLean was out of the service and back in Cambridge, Mass.

On crutches and at a party, he began chatting with the other person in the room also on crutches. "I had broken my leg," recalled Betsy. "He asked if I wanted to sit down. He said he needed to."

Betsy kidded him about needing to sit. After all, she didn't. He said in a matter-of-fact way, "Well, I lost my legs."

Betsy, who couldn't see past the khakis to the prosthetics, said "Oh, sure," and chuckled. Then he lifted a pants leg and showed her. She smiled at the memory.

"He was right."

The pair later married and moved to Palo Alto, Calif., where McLean earned a master's degree in business from Stanford University. In 1969, the Pillsbury Corp. hired him for its finance department, and by the fall of 1970 the pair had moved to Paris, where they would live for five years as McLean climbed through corporate ranks.

Every year, Betsy said, he would bring up the notion of becoming an Episcopal priest. Every year, something would get in the way.

"It took him a while to get that collar turned around," she said.

In the fall of 1985, he entered the seminary. He never looked back.

"He loved his new life in the church," she said.

After graduating from the Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis in 1990 at 42, he eventually ended up as a pastor, first in Pine Bluff, Ark., and then Forest, Va., before coming to St. Luke's two years ago. In all three places, he made disabled access to the church a priority.

But stress disorder episodes dogged him.

The first Gulf War left him nearly debilitated, his daughter said. Panic attacks followed the whup-whup-whup of a helicopter. War footage, especially about ground wars, left him shaken. Over the years, the reactions worsened.

"It got worse and worse," Betsy said. "We stopped watching the news."

Unexpectedly, in the past couple of years he began to talk more about his experiences, Watkins said. He told his daughter about the mine, about how he was upended by the blast.

In recent weeks, they chatted about the war in Iraq.

"It's funny. I assess people for suicides every day at work," said Watkins, who is a behavioral-health specialist for Pierce County. "Looking at what my dad had been doing with his life I would not have assessed him as suicidal."

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder experts say the condition comes from a single event or a series of events such as involvement in a war, natural disasters, sexual or physical abuse, or any life-threatening trauma. The stress reaction can cause nightmares, memory problems, feeling of imminent threat and continual reliving of the event, among other things.

Once called shell shock or combat fatigue, the disorder can be minor and disappear in months. Or they can last for years, sometimes worsening.

Noted a war veteran who attended a memorial service for McLean and asked that his name not be used: "Many of us go through it in one way or another. Some of us (veterans) never really get over it."

Six months after the Iraq war began, McLean gave a sermon about having faith in what the government was doing. His family and friends noticed the war began to have an increasingly heavy effect on the rector.

Half a year later, he offered a different view, one that divided parishioners in the conservative farming town. He told the congregation he was no longer sure the country was doing the right thing.

"Some people were upset with him," Betsy said. "But he was not unpatriotic by saying that. He was deeply patriotic. He supported the troops, just not the war."

McLean is survived by two other children: a son, Robb McLean of Albuquerque, N.M.; and a daughter, Margaret Kennedy of Olympia.

In a memorial service Saturday -- 38 years to the day that McLean was wounded -- Spokane Bishop James Waggoner Jr. said what his friend suffered from was "the human condition" of what people can do and what they can endure.

"He was a casualty of Vietnam," Waggoner told the crowd of several hundred gathered at St. Luke's. "After 38 years the horror never left him. He lived with it, and he died with it."

Imperial Recruiting Stations Under Siege

"I've had people throwing objects at me when I was driving by. I've had people who as soon as they see me on the street, they cross to the other side. Those situations never occurred before, and it makes me wonder how far is this all going to go."

February 21, 2005 By DAMIEN CAVE (Source Unknown; from internet.)

EAST ORANGE, N.J. - The five United States Army recruiters who work from a storefront office here arrived on the morning of Feb. 5 to discover that a plate-glass window above the main entrance had been shattered, along with a window in the Navy office next door.

By noon, about 35 protesters were marching out front with antiwar placards, condemning the American invasion of Iraq and the recruiters' efforts to enlist new soldiers.

The group's leader, Lawrence Hamm, a New Jersey civil rights activist, said the protesters had nothing to do with the broken windows, and he condemned any violence against the recruiters. The police have not found any evidence of a political motive.

But for the men on the other side of the broken glass, and recruiters throughout the New York area, the vandalism here underscored what they say are the risks of signing up young people for the military during a war that has polarized the American public.

The shattering of windows here followed two similar incidents in New York City and a third in the Midwest that week. On Jan. 31, authorities said, recruiters at a station near the Flatiron section of Manhattan reported that a door had been cracked, and that anarchist symbols had been scrawled in red paint on the building.

That same day, before dawn, the police arrested a 19-year-old Manhattan College junior who they said threw a burning rag into an Army recruiting station that was closed for the night in the Parkchester section of the Bronx, and jammed the door

locks with powerful glue. He was caught carrying a handwritten note declaring that a "wave of violence" would occur throughout the Northeast on Jan. 31, aimed at the "military industrial complex" in response to American military actions, the police said.

A day later in Toledo, Ohio, a bucket of manure was thrown at the window of a recruiting station that housed all four branches of the military, the police said, and antiwar obscenities were scrawled on a nearby wall.

Since the beginning of 2003, there have also been more than a dozen other often violent incidents aimed at military recruiters or property throughout the country, according to the police, recruiters and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In a few cases, vehicles have been set on fire; in others, blood has been thrown through windows. Spokespeople for the armed services have downplayed the incidents even as some recruiters have increased security at their stations.

Douglas Smith, a spokesman for the Army Recruiting Command at Fort Knox, Ky., said that no recruiters had been hurt and that most of the nation's nearly 1,700 Army recruiting stations had not been harmed or attacked.

"We're aware that there are some instances of damage to stations, and we're keeping an eye on this," he said. "But it is not something that has us overly concerned."

Several recruiters in the field, however, said that they remained on edge. On Jan. 20, the day of President Bush's inaugural, several hundred students at Seattle Central Community College surrounded two Army recruiters on campus, shouting insults and hurling water bottles until the recruiters were escorted away by campus security. The protest was covered by The Army Times, and several recruiters said that they feared such situations might become more common.

Sgt. First Class William C. Howard, a recruiter here in East Orange, said that the antiwar sentiment seemed to have grown more aggressive. Though recruiters are still frequently thanked for their service, he said, the insults, dirty looks and other signs of discontent seem to be increasing.

"Within last year, the whole security issue has become more of a concern with me," he said. **"I've had people throwing objects at me when I was driving by. I've had people who as soon as they see me on the street, they cross to the other side. Those situations never occurred before, and it makes me wonder how far is this all going to go."**

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Car Bomb Kills 2 Allawi Soldiers, Wounds 30

22 February 2005 (Reuters) & (Xinhuanet)

BAGHDAD - A car bomb detonated near an Iraqi troop convoy as it left Baghdad's fortified Green Zone on Tuesday, killing three soldiers and wounding 30, police and hospital sources said.

The attack happened shortly after midday as the convoy was leaving a main Green Zone exit near the Mansour district of western Baghdad. Police said the car blew up as a commando unit was passing, spraying shrapnel across a wide area.

The sound of the blast echoed across the city.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

It Really Was Blood For Oil, And That's All It Ever Was

February 20, 2005 Shailmanman, Anti-Allawi Group

Following is an excerpt from an interview with John Perkins, author of "Confessions of an Economic Hit Man", in which he reveals how the U.S. became the world's largest superpower by forcing developing countries into debt.

Copied below is his reply about Iraq that confirms economic reasons for the invasion, and Iraq's refusal to play along with imperialist wishes.

February 16, 2005. By Amy Goodman, Democracy Now!

Iraq: How does that fit in?

Well, Iraq followed Saudi Arabia. After our tremendous success in Saudi Arabia, we decided we should do the same thing in Iraq. And we figured that Saddam Hussein was corruptible. And, of course, we had been involved with Saddam Hussein anyway for some time.

And so the economic hit men went in and tried to bring Saddam Hussein around, tried to get him to agree to a deal like the royal House of Saud had agreed to. And he didn't. So, we sent in the jackals to try to overthrow him or to assassinate him. They couldn't. His Republican Guard was too loyal and he had all these doubles.

So, when the economic hit men and the jackals both failed, then the last line of defense that the United States, the empire, uses these days, is the military. We send in our young men and women to die and to kill, and we did that in Iraq in 1990.

We thought Saddam Hussein at that point was sufficiently chastised that now he would come around, so the economic hit men went back in the 1990s, failed once again. The jackals went back in, failed once again, and so once again the military went in - the story we all know - because we couldn't bring him around any other way.

Iraq had become very, very important to us for many reasons. Its strategic location, the fact that it controls a great deal of the water of the Middle East, the Tigris and Euphrates both flow through and out of Iraq and, of course, its oil.

And now we're not so sure we can keep the House of Saud in control. It's become extremely unpopular amongst its own people. Over 100 assassinations this year. We've been recently reading about the U.S. Consulate being attacked in Saudi Arabia. The House of Saud is losing control. It's very unpopular, partly because it accepted this deal with the West. It did a lot like what the Shah of Iran has done.

And Osama bin Laden, of course, is very against it. But so are a tremendous number of Muslims around the world.

So we've been afraid that we're going to lose the grip on the House of Saud. One way to protect against that is by taking over Iraqi oil fields, which may be larger than those in Saudi Arabia.

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

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