

GI SPECIAL 3A55:



Photo: Vietnam 1970: 155 mm artillery gun super-imposed over Vietnamese children.

If the American people knew how many innocent civilians were killed by our own government during the Vietnam War, they would have panic attacks. Same for Iraq.

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran**

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, U.S. Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (Please contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) for more of his outstanding work. T)

“We Can Win, And We Will Win”

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larger campaign to show people in the US why this war is being waged at their expense, and at the expense of their children.

“We can win, and we will win. If we don't stop, we will defeat not just the war drive, but imperialism itself. Have faith.”

By Stan Goff, Master Sgt., U.S. Special Forces (ret'd) February 9, 2005 Green Left Weekly. Excerpts from <http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/2005/614/614p12.htm>

Revolutionary socialist and author Stan Goff spent the majority of his military career in a field euphemistically termed “Special Operations”.

Beginning with Vietnam in 1970, Goff was deployed to eight countries designated as “conflict areas”, including Grenada, El Salvador, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, the ill-fated US mission to Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993 and Haiti in 1994. Goff also trained troops in Panama, Venezuela, Honduras and Korea and taught military science at the US Military Academy at West Point and tactics at the Army's Jungle School in Panama.

Goff is now a member of the coordinating committee of Bring Them Home Now and has a son serving in Iraq.

Green Left Weekly's Kiraz Janicke asked Goff about his views on the US war drive and the need to rebuild the global anti-war movement.

Can you give me an idea of the level of opposition to Bush's war drive within the US armed forces?

That's difficult to do for at least two reasons — first, because there is just no way of getting some kind of representative sample for a number of demographic and technical reasons, and second, because there are so many different dimensions of “opposition”

What we can see are tendencies.

In the military organizing that I have been involved with, we are seeing the institutional breakdown of the military via the increasing numbers of dissenters, deserters and refusers. We are connected with various outreach and counseling efforts, so this is something we can measure. And the numbers are climbing, fast.

The longer this goes on, the worse it will be, and that's why there are cracks developing inside the Pentagon. There are generals who are both opposed to this war and devoted to the military.

You've seen the iron fist of US imperialism in action first-hand. What was the most significant factor in your political transition?

Well, going blind on the road to Damascus makes a great drama, but that's not how I personally got here from there.

I don't think there was one outstanding factor that resulted in my embrace of revolutionary politics, unless it was being in the military itself, paradoxical as that might seem at first blush.

Any soldier with a high level of intellectual curiosity is a potential political scientist.

Once we become curious, our experience — if one works in combat arms as I did, and actually spends a great deal of time deployed abroad — does not incline us to a great deal of abstraction. An aversion to abstraction makes a natural Marxist, I think. What Marxists call fetishization and reification, soldiers call eyewash... or sometimes there's a more scatological term.

All the characteristics that make a good soldier are also useful for professional revolutionaries — knowing the distinction between strategies, campaigns, and tactics, for example; coordination and collectivity; discipline; mission focus; taking calculated risks; a culture of criticism and self-criticism. And there is a principle leaders learn early in the military — even though many fail to follow it. That is, employ your unit in accordance with its capability.

At bottom, though, what motivates anyone to embrace revolutionary politics is an element of faith — not the religious variety — but faith in the ability of human beings to participate in their own history, and in the possibility of a future society that is both conscious and driven by human decency. There's a soldiers' fatalism there, but also that perennial human need to make meaning.

Any comments on the US elections in Iraq? And any comments on the Iraqi resistance?

It appears that — as has been the case from the very beginning — the US has once again wildly underestimated the slum-cleric Moqtada al Sadr, who is possibly the most popular — as opposed to “revered” in the case of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the most popular Shia cleric in the country. With his amateur militias... there were very few former military among them, the reason their casualties were so horrific... but with them he shifted the political balance of power during last year's Shia rebellion and forced Sistani to acknowledge Sadr's influence.

Since the ceasefire, which humiliated the US which had sworn to arrest or kill Sadr, Sadr has used his increased public stature to consolidate political control over vast areas of Baghdad, turning them effectively into US military no-go areas.

Sadr has been very coy on the election question, probably to gauge the degree of influence Sistani would actually exercise over both the process and the outcome of that election.

The US will have to somehow intervene to ensure Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's continued influence over the Iraqi National Assembly, because Washington has not the least intention of allowing an Iraqi political body they prop up to orient toward Iran.

Bush's handlers must realize by now that they are on the cusp of winning the Iran-Iraq War, and this is definitely not the desired outcome for them. ***Cheney's clique is***

making noise like they want to attack Iran, even though they have not the least capacity for such an action and it would be political suicide.

Sadr — as the Shia cleric who made the most direct overtures to Sunni guerrilla forces for a national united front — is now positioned to take the most significant leadership role in the wake of the election, the next time the Shias rebel... which will be when the afterglow fades and the US is forced to expose its true agenda.

The armed resistance in the north continues to grow apace, and the election has not changed that one whit. But the real wild card here is Sadr, in my opinion.

The elections have created a momentary political boost for the US administration at home, but in the final analysis, it may be the biggest political setback it has suffered to date. And war is purely political at the end of the road.

Can the US war drive be defeated?

In many ways it is being defeated right now.

This is the most important thing the left can grasp right now, in my opinion. Failure to grasp this fundamental fact could lead to that very fact being reversed because of demoralization and demobilization. We are having a material effect on US power, and we cannot let up.

The most unfortunate result of the last 20 years of counter-revolution has been the left's loss of its combat edge, if you'll forgive the military language. Many people have taken to whining and putting on hair shirts.

But when the conditions are not propitious — which they were not during the disintegration and defeat of first epoch communism — we have to recognize that these are the conditions.

By the same token, when the conditions are favorable for intervention from the left, we have to switch out emotional gears, and go back into overdrive.

A deep analysis of the current conjuncture, some of us have been arguing, shows a decaying US imperium that is increasingly fragile and increasingly dependent on the two remaining pillars of its power — monetary hegemony and its immense and immensely expensive military.

Part of that military supremacy is real — the lethal high technology and capacity to project it worldwide. But part of that is mystique, the belief shared even by many on the left that this military is invincible. Iraq is proving that it is not.

The United States is objectively losing the war in Iraq, and it is caught in a terrible dilemma. It can not win militarily, but it can not quit politically. So it is paying a price, economically and politically.

Our job globally, I think, is to ensure that this price is as high as possible — both politically and economically. Resistance to neoliberalism in any and all forms right now, rebellion against the loan-sharking of the United States, is very important in this regard.

Popular movements in the global South must push hard for national default on external debts, for example. Boycotting and shutting down US companies in these countries is essential. If the movement needs a slogan, I've got one: Make them pay.

Here in the US, we will continue to put pressure on our craven elected officials at some level, through escalating tactics including disobedience and even social disruption.

But the linchpin of the campaign I work with is to hollow out to the extent possible the ideological support for the war inside the military, as part of the larger campaign to show people in the US why this war is being waged at their expense, and at the expense of their children.

We can win, and we will win. If we don't stop, we will defeat not just the war drive, but imperialism itself. Have faith.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

TASK FORCE LIBERTY SOLDIER KILLED BY IED NEAR TUZ

February 23, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-02-34C

TIKRIT, Iraq – A Task Force Liberty Soldier was killed by an improvised-explosive device about 9 a.m. Feb. 23 near Tuz. The site has been secured by Coalition Forces Soldiers.

Marine Killed During Third Tour In Iraq:

"But After Going To Iraq Three Times, He'd Had Enough."



Feb 23, 2005 ELK GROVE VILLAGE, Ill. (CBS/AP) **A Marine killed in hostile action in Iraq was on his third tour of duty there, and while proud of his service, was ready to come home, a family friend said Tuesday.**

Cpl. John T. Olson, 21, was killed Monday in hostile action in the Anbar Province of Iraq, the U.S. Defense Department said Tuesday. He was assigned to Headquarters Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force based in Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Olson is the 32nd Marine from Illinois to die in Iraq since the war started.

His father, John Olson, said his son graduated from high school in 2001 and joined the Marines right after Sept. 11.

"My son was proud to be what he is, that is a Marine," John told reporters late Tuesday. "He was proud to defend our country, and we are proud of him. And we love him."

Family friend Marla White described Olson, a graduate of Elk Grove Village High School, as an engaging man who was close to his father, mother and 16-year-old sister. White is acting as a spokesperson for the family.

"He wasn't a big guy, but he was a tough little cookie," she said. "And he had the most beautiful smile. He really lit up a room."

White, who lives across the street in this Chicago suburb from Olson's parents, John and Diana Olson.

The family received word about Olson's death Monday when three Marines came to the door.

"When Diana saw them at the door, she screamed," said White. "She hasn't been able to sleep since yesterday (Monday)."

A letter arrived from Olson on the same day the family was told of his death.

"He was always telling his mother not to worry," White said.

Diana Olson also recently received a gold, diamond-studded necklace from her son as a gift.

"They were such a close-knit family," said White. "They were always together. It's heart wrenching."

And even though he was in Iraq, John Olson found a way to call his 16-year-old sister last week on her birthday.

White said Olson saw his mission in Iraq as a job that had to be done. When he returned home on leave, dressed in his Marine uniform, he was embarrassed when people would come up to him and thank him for his military service.

"He always volunteered for the heavy duty jobs in Iraq, and he was never afraid," she said. **"But after going to Iraq three times, he'd had enough."**

His mother and father were also wary when he recently returned to Iraq.

"The family was feeling very nervous about the third tour," White said. "How many times can you be lucky?"

Car Bomb Hits U.S. Checkpoint In Ramadi

Feb 23, 2005 —RAMADI, Iraq (Reuters)

A car bomb blew up at a U.S. military checkpoint in the western Iraqi city of Ramadi on Wednesday but there were no immediate reports of casualties.

Witnesses said a car drove toward the checkpoint in the Sofiya district of the city and blew up with U.S. troops standing nearby.

Earlier this week the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, backed by Iraqi troops, launched a security sweep in Ramadi and other nearby towns to try to crush insurgents holed up in the area.

TROOP NEWS

60% Want Timetable For Getting Out Of Iraq

Wall St. Journal 2.18.05

60% say the administration should set a public or private timetable for reducing U.S. troops. "The overall sense of opinion here is, 'We need to get troops home,' says Democratic pollster Peter Hart who conducts the Journal/NBC survey with Republican Bill McInturff.

By 50% to 27%, Americans say Bush and Congress should focus on domestic issues rather than terrorism and foreign policy.

Top priorities, embraced by at least 60%, are expanding health care, reducing the deficit and improving public high schools.

Sgt. Kevin Benderman To Face Court-Martial

February 23, 2005 **Associated Press**

FORT STEWART, Ga. — An Army hearing officer has recommended a court-martial for a soldier charged with desertion after he refused to deploy to Iraq last month.

Sgt. Kevin Benderman, 40, would face a general court-martial, the most serious type of court-martial, if Fort Stewart's General Court Martial Convening Authority accepts the recommendation.

Benderman, an Army mechanic, refused to deploy with his unit Jan. 7 for a second tour in Iraq, 10 days after he gave commanders notice that he was seeking a discharge as a conscientious objector. **He said he became opposed to war after serving in the 2003 invasion.**

Benderman has been charged with desertion and missing movement. In a general court-martial, he would face up to seven years in prison, reduction in rank to private and a dishonorable discharge.

Benderman's conscientious objector application is being considered separately from the charges against him.

Fort Stewart officials say Benderman should have obeyed orders to deploy with his unit, the 3rd Forward Support Battalion of the 3rd Infantry Division, while his objector application was being processed.

Pentagon Admits Drugging Iraq Troops

(Army Times, February 28, 2005)

Some U.S. troops in Iraq are given drugs such as Prozac, Zoloft and Paxil, as well as sleeping drugs, to help keep them fit for combat duty, according to a top military psychiatrist and physicians in the field. Army Col. Elspeth Cameron Ritchie, an associate professor of psychiatry at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, said that anecdotal reports she has received indicate the drugs are working.

Desperate Pentagon Pulls Officers Out Of Training For Iraq

(Washington Times, February 23, 2005, Pg. 6)

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has asked the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide options for cutting back officer training "stress periods" - such as during the war in Iraq - to allow greater numbers to be available for deployment. **At the same time, the Army's 4th Infantry Division has decided to pull 29 officers out of its 10-month professional education curriculum early to send them to Iraq.**

What The Fuck?

(European Stars and Stripes, February 23, 2005)

First lady Laura Bush thanked service members and families who "serve without a paycheck" during her first visit to Ramstein Air Base in Germany. [Is this a tip George has something new in mind to cut the budget deficit? Or is she talking about the thousands of reservists who didn't get their military pay checks?]

VA Not Screening Half Of Vets For PTSD

2/23/2005 Join Together Online

The Associated Press reported Feb. 17 that the federal Government Accountability Office (GAO) has raised concerns in a new report about the ability of the Veterans Administration (VA) to cope with an expected flood of PTSD cases among returning vets.

The VA says it has already treated 6,400 veterans of the Iraq and Afghan wars for PTSD, but GAO noted that less than half of those using VA health services are screened for PTSD.

Pentagon Reveals Mysterious Death Of Guantanamo Physician

(Miami Herald, February 23, 2005)

Ten months after the fact, the Pentagon disclosed the death of a Navy doctor at the Guantanamo Bay naval base in Cuba. Pentagon spokesmen would not explain the circumstances surrounding the death of Navy Cmdr. Adrian Basil Szvec, 43, Chicago, a 19-year career naval medical officer who died at the base on April 12.

GUARD/RESERVISTS DOUBLE FUCKED: Part-Time Soldiers Battling 'Pay Gap'

(Baltimore Sun, February 22, 2005)

As America enters the third year of the Iraq conflict, the deployment is taking a financial toll on part-time soldiers who make up about half of the 150,000 troops there. Forty-one percent of National Guard and Reserve soldiers are losing thousands of dollars through a "pay gap" between their civilian salary and military pay, officials say.

Jobs Don't Always Wait For Guards, Reservists Citizen Soldiers Find Duty In Iraq Can Ruin Families' Finances

(San Francisco Chronicle, February 20, 2005, Pg. 1)

Thousands of National Guard and Reserve troops are returning home from overseas deployments and finding a range of difficulties--from paperwork hassles to losing their homes and businesses--as they try to fit back into civilian life.

RUMMY TV

By Arianna Huffington TRIBUNE MEDIA SERVICES, INC.

The Bush administration has shown a willingness to do just about anything to manipulate public opinion. It paid pundits to say nice things about it. It spent lavishly to create bogus--and, according to the comptroller general, illegal--video news reports on the president's Medicare, education and drug policies.

Now the Bushies are taking things to the next level. Not content to buy their press coverage retail, they are producing and distributing their own news network. And, no, I'm not talking about Fox. It's the Pentagon Channel, a 24/7 niche network brought to you by the Department of Defense.

Started last year as an internal public relations unit within the Pentagon designed to keep U.S. soldiers and their families informed about all things military, the network is now expanding its reach to the general public. A number of cable systems, including Time Warner, already carry the Pentagon Channel--and the Dish Network will soon begin beaming the station to its more than 11 million viewers right alongside the half-dozen porn channels the satellite giant offers.

DoD television execs (there's a new phrase) say Pentagon Channel viewers can expect programming that is "a mix between CNN and C-SPAN"--combining military news and lifestyle shows with live coverage of military briefings, speeches by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Congressional appearances by The Man himself, Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld.

So fire up those TiVos, disinformation fans; Rummy TV is coming soon to a flat screen near you. "If you hate the truth, you'll love DoD TV!"

Now, if Secretary Rumsfeld were really interested in following the network's motto--"Serving Those Who Serve"--he might want to consider a more realistic lineup. How about:

-- "The Real World: Fallujah." What happens when a group of former Abu Ghraib guards, forced to share a bombed-out, camera-filled apartment in Fallujah with a collection of their former prisoners, stop being polite? Series highlights: Lynndie England hooking up at a Green Zone nightclub with a Baathist hottie who turns out to be none other than the guy she had on the leash! Then Mohammed, one of the ex-prisoners, getting wasted, prank-calling new Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, and asking him if being sodomized with a broomstick sounds "quaint."

-- **"Pimp My Humvee." Xzibit, Mad Mike, Big Dane and the "Pimp My Ride" crew lend a helping hand to American soldiers forced to scrounge through junk yards in an effort to outfit their vehicles with the armor the military has failed to provide--hooking our troops up with protective plates, as well as slammin' paint jobs, state-of-the-art sound systems, and spinning tire rims able to detect the roadside explosives responsible for so many U.S. casualties. The Humvees go from wimp to pimp while the soldiers go from sitting ducks to Mac Daddies.**

-- "Desperate Military Housewives." There may be a lot of dark secrets on Wisteria Lane--but not half as many as there are in the homes of America's military families. "DMH" peels the curtain back on the home-front havoc being caused by President Bush's stop-loss policies and the extended tours of duty that result. **Don't miss the very special episode where the president promises to "support our troops," then proposes a budget that slashes veterans' benefits and leaves one in five military families needing food stamps or Women, Infants and Children program aid to get by.** Is it drama? Is it comedy? We produce. You decide.

-- "Iron Chef, Iraq." It's military cooking on an unlimited budget! **Watch as the master chefs at Halliburton show what kind of battlefield-mess-hall-magic they can create with a noncompetitive, no-bid, cost-plus contract that allows them to overbill the Pentagon \$186 million for meals that were never served. Who needs fast food when you can feed the troops phantom food? Sponsored by (who else?): "Halliburton, proud to serve our troops . . . and even prouder of the money we rake in by not serving them!"**

-- "Survivor: Pentagon." Forget Africa, the South Pacific and the Australian Outback. **This classic reality show really gets interesting when Donald Rumsfeld is cast adrift in the halls of the Pentagon with a tribe made up of people he has clashed with and helped push out the door, including former Secretary of State Colin Powell, former Secretary of the Army Thomas White, former Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki, former Secretary of the Air Force James Roche, and former head of the Iraqi Occupation, Jay Garner. Outwit. Outplay. Outlast. Out on your ass.**

Will Rummy TV be a hit? Who can say? As The Man himself once put it: "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."

Stay tuned.

Warhorse

[Dedicated to the GI resistance troops who have served at FOB Warhorse.]

7.19.04 By Gina Cavallaro, Army Times Staff Writer

BAQUBAH, Iraq — The pre-dawn patrols were routine for Alpha Company — deliberate sweeps of main supply routes aimed at catching the people who plant killer roadside bombs under cover of darkness.

Danger was more than a probability, it was always present, and contact with the enemy was something soldiers were prepared for.

But on June 24, the soldiers of 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment out of Wilmington, N.C. — part of the National Guard's 30th Enhanced Separate Brigade — had no clue they would be ambushed by more than 150 enemy fighters. The fighters had infiltrated and set up firing positions overnight as part of a coordinated multicity attack that claimed scores of lives all over the country.

"It was one of those days we'll be talking about for the rest of our lives," said Spc. Ralph Isabella, one of the company's medics.

The 3rd Platoon rolled out the north gate of forward operating base Warhorse at 3 a.m. and was less than a half-hour from wrapping up its three-hour patrol when insurgents launched an aggressive ambush against them. The sun was coming up, and the patrol

were slowing to stop on the side of the road so the drivers could switch out night sights with daytime periscopes.

“I was thinking: ‘In 30 minutes we’ll be off this patrol and I’ll get my laundry, I’ll get my breakfast,” Bradley gunner Sgt. Charles McIntyre recalled.

Then the first rocket-propelled grenade sailed past the front of his tracked vehicle and exploded.

Within seconds, the 3rd Platoon soldiers were thrust into full combat by masked fighters shooting at them from positions in two- and three-story buildings on both sides of the road. A hail of RPGs, small-arms fire and large-caliber machine-gun fire showered the three Bradleys with lethal projectiles that pinged, clanged and whizzed past.

Heading south, the platoon sped through a half-mile-long kill zone and emerged relatively unscathed on the other side, taking cover with a quick about-face, pointing the frontal armor toward the enemy.

But the enemy kept creeping toward them, expanding the kill zone.

Everyone recalled seeing enemy fighters wielding RPGs, creating such a large number of targets that they couldn’t fire fast enough. “There were more of them, about 30 to 50 guys, but we weren’t outgunned,” said McIntyre, one of three gunners who returned fire from their 25mm cannons and coaxial machine guns.

“These guys were very organized,” Bradley commander Staff Sgt. Will Murray said.

After regrouping in the area just past the ambush, 3rd Platoon was ordered to maintain contact with the insurgents and bring them out into the open so the threat could be assessed and reinforcements brought in. Stroud directed his platoon to move toward the ambushers, who had already moved closer to the platoon’s position, allowing the enemy to continue its attack from both sides of the road.

The acrid smell of cordite hung in the still morning air, and the unrelenting rain of metal destroyed water cans and boxes of MREs strapped to the outside of the Bradleys. The optical sights on one vehicle were damaged, and the turrets on the two other Bradleys were immobilized when pieces of armor became wedged under the turret, locking the guns into one position.

“On the fourth time through, they started mortaring us, and off of a pedestrian crosswalk, they were tossing down improvised explosive devices, but they missed,” Murray said. The patrol had taken a dozen hits from RPGs, and no one was hurt, but the experience left an indelible impression.

“When they hit the Bradley with an RPG, the explosion was like a white flash of sunlight. It feels like your brain is going to leak out your eyes,” Sgt. Jeff Dedrich said.

Fatal ambush

It was just before 6 a.m. when 3rd Platoon was ordered back to Warhorse north of town so it could refit and reorganize for a fight that showed signs of becoming a long engagement.

Picking up the baton, Alpha's 1st Platoon was dispatched to secure two bridges in the center of the city. In addition to the platoon's three Bradleys, the lineup included tracks commanded by Capt. Christopher Cash and his executive officer, 1st Lt. John Wilaby. The five Bradleys pushed into the same ambush and made it to the site of the bridges, but with tragic and irreversible consequences.

It was about 6:20 a.m. when Cash, 36, was felled by a machine gunner perched atop a building.

Moments later, an armor-piercing RPG ripped through another Bradley, mortally wounding gunner Spc. Daniel Desens, knocking the Bradley's commander unconscious and wounding five other soldiers in the back of the vehicle.

The Bradley's turret was in the nine o'clock position when the projectile pierced the periscope on the left side of the hull and struck the 25mm ammunition rack at Desens' feet. The high explosive rounds blew, shrapnel flew in all directions and Halon gas filled the back of the track. All communications were destroyed in a magic-bullet shot that sliced through the wiring harness.

"We banged on the turret and there was no response. It was kind of panicky. When you're in the back of a Bradley, you don't really know what's going on," Spc. Christopher Durham said. Without their ability to communicate with the driver or the turret crew, the men, in the back of the track had no idea if the Bradley was careening with no one at the helm, he said.

The only working radio was a manpack in the back of the vehicle, but the thunderous roar of the tracked vehicle overpowered their voices.

The driver was unhurt and in control, but without communication with the rest of the crew — most of whom were wounded. He stayed the course to the bridges, following the Bradley in front of him. It was only when they stopped and set up security at the bridges that the wounded were tended to and evacuated.

Desens, everyone recalled, continued shooting after he was hit, even though his femoral artery was destroyed and, part of his leg was blown away by the ammo explosion. "We had to pry his fingers off the gun," said Isabella, who confirmed that Desens, 20, killed the man who shot the RPG before he slumped down into the turret.

Sgt. Chad Stephens climbed to the top of the Bradley under fire and hoisted Desens up and out of the gunner's hole.

"He had lost a lot of blood, but he was breathing and had a pulse," Isabella said.

The 1st Platoon Bradleys pulled away from the bridges and began speeding toward nearby forward operating base Gabe for medical evacuation and treatment of the other wounded.

Desens stopped breathing and Isabella revived him with cardiopulmonary resuscitation three times, including once when the Bradley carrying the wounded was hit by an RPG and filled with Halon gas.

Both Cash and Desens died on the 10-minute helicopter ride to a combat support hospital in Balad.

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)

“Why I Won't Fight In Iraq” “It's A War For Oil”

February 15, 2005 George Solomou, The Guardian

I am resigning from the Territorial Army because I believe the war in Iraq is wrong.

This has not been an easy decision. I have been in the TA for five years - years in which I have learned a lot; won a humanitarian award for helping save the life of a fellow soldier; made many friends; and, I hope, contributed something to this country.

I have no doubt that some of my fellow soldiers will feel I am letting them down. Since I have spoken out against the war in the last few weeks I have had a lot of support from soldiers, but I have also been called a coward. I am a trained medic and there is no doubt my skills could be used in the field to save lives. But after a lot of soul-searching I have concluded my priority must be to try to save lives by taking a public stand against this war.

So I am resigning because I don't want to fight a war that is unjustified and illegal. But I also have a deep concern that British soldiers are being used in Iraq.

Soldiers from my regiment tell me that much of their work in southern Iraq involves protecting convoys of oil tankers shuttling between Basra and the Kuwaiti border. Their stories have just confirmed my growing cynicism about the motives for the war.

It has taken me two years to be able to say it, but I really believe that our foreign policy is being driven by the needs of US power, particularly the need to control the flow of oil.

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.

Veterans Complain Of Skimpy Funding In Bush's Budget Plan

February 22, 2005 By Ann McFeatters, Post-Gazette National Bureau

WASHINGTON -- Alfred J. Casey, 82, of White Oak, is a news junkie. Every day he reads newspapers, watches TV and devours magazines. And ever since he read about the president's proposed budget earlier this month, he's been stewing.

"I think this administration is cutting money from the veterans, and that will hurt a lot of people in Pittsburgh," said Casey, who served in the Ardennes in France in World War II. "A lot of veterans are in bad shape healthwise. A lot of people in this country forget that besides those who don't come back, many come back needing help for the rest of their lives."

Anthony Principi, Veterans Affairs secretary during Bush's first term, told reporters recently that the nation was simply not spending enough on its veterans. Principi noted that nearly one in five soldiers returning from Iraq or Afghanistan is suffering from mental health problems because of urban warfare's stresses.

Principi is not popular with many veterans, however, because he acted while secretary to rule that many of them are no longer eligible for health care from the VA. Because thousands of veterans were waiting an average of 38 days (and a quarter of them waited two months) for appointments at the department's hospitals and 856 out-patient clinics, Principi rationed care in favor of the less well-off and disabled. **That meant thousands were shut out of the system. Even Principi's deputy, Gordon Mansfield, injured in Vietnam, was turned away from six overbooked VA centers.**

Rep. Marcy Kaptur, D-Ohio, who has served on the House Veterans Affairs Committee for much of her more than two decades in Congress and who sponsored a bill that led to erecting the World War II Memorial in Washington, said her reading of the president's budget shows that it would fall \$15 billion below what is needed for veterans over the next five years.

"So how are we going to care for all those new veterans with serious injuries coming home?" she asked. "For nursing homes, they cut \$351 million. They [the administration] would eliminate state grants and would serve 24,000 fewer patients. Only those who are highly disabled will be served.

Some Republicans as well as Democrats were dismayed by the president's budget request. Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said the amount requested would not even keep pace with the current level of services, let alone improve them, keep up with inflation or help returning soldiers from the Middle East.

White Oak's Casey, who knows a lot of veterans, says most of them think they have lost benefits in recent years. He said he is convinced that America as a nation is showing less and less gratitude toward its veterans and is less determined to keep its promise to make certain that veterans get good care.

"It's par for the course," Casey lamented. "After the war is over, our government forgets about the veterans."

Vets Fucked Over Again; "By The Way, Better Not Get Wounded Or You'll Have To Pay Extra For Your Health Care."

Feb. 7, 2005 WASHINGTON

The leader of the nation's largest military veterans organization reacted strongly to the effects that President Bush's budget plan will have on veterans. He called it a smoke screen to raise revenue at the expense of veterans.

"This is not acceptable," said Thomas P. Cadmus, national commander of the 2.7 million-member American Legion. **"It's nothing more than a health care tax designed to increase revenue at the expense of veterans who served their country."**

Cadmus was referring to the portion of the proposed budget that would double the co-payment charge to many veterans for prescription drugs and would require some to pay a new fee of \$250 a year to use their own their own health care system.

"Is the goal of these legislative initiatives to drive those veterans paying for their health care away from the system designed to serve veterans?" Cadmus asked. "The President is asking Congress to make "health care poaching" legal in the world's largest health care delivery system."

"When the President first came to Washington, among his first official acts was to triple the prescription co-payment from \$2 to \$7," Cadmus said. "Once again, the President wants to double the co-payment and fortunately, Congress has wisely rejected that proposal. Making veterans pay for timely access to quality health care is wrong."

This is the third year in a row the President has attempted to establish an enrollment fee for those veterans making co-payments and third-party reimbursements to the VA.

"Many of these veterans are Medicare-eligible and already paying the federal government for their part A and B coverage, so why should they have to pay an additional enrollment fee? VA can't even bill Medicare," Cadmus said. "Other veterans with private health insurance make co-payments and then VA is reimbursed for services. Again, why should they be forced to pay an additional \$250 to go to VA medical facilities?"

"During my visits to VA hospitals, I have not run into Bill Gates, Donald Trump, or Ross Perot seeking care. I see mostly veterans - many on small fixed incomes - trying to make ends meet and exercising their very best health care option." Cadmus observed.

"Veterans' health care is an ongoing expense of war," he added. "You don't thank veterans for serving their country and then tell them, **'By the way, better not get wounded or you'll have to pay extra for your health care.'** This is offensive to every veteran in America. That is why this government must move VA health care out from under the umbrella of discretionary spending to mandatory spending," Cadmus stressed.

"As young Americans in uniform battle terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as 119 other countries, it is incomprehensible that our veterans will pay for the shortfall in VA health care funding from their own pockets as tax dollars flow out the back door of America," Cadmus said.

"Our budget request is very realistic when you consider the Secretary has slammed the door in the face of hundreds of thousands of veterans eligible, but currently forbidden from seeking quality care from VA."

"The current appropriations process is broken and is not adequately funding VA medical care," Cadmus said.

"No active-duty service member in harm's way should ever have to question the nation's commitment to veterans. This is the wrong message at the wrong time to the wrong constituency."

Said John Furgess, the VFW's commander-in-chief, **"This budget will cause veterans' health care to be delayed and may result in the return of six-month-long waiting periods. That is especially shameful during a time of war."**

"The message that this budget communicates is that part of the federal government's deficit will be balanced on the backs of military veterans," he said, **"because it's clear that the proper funding of veterans health care and other programs is not an Administration priority."**

The budget proposal slashes \$351 million from veterans' nursing homes by serving 28,000 fewer residents and significantly reduces state grants from \$114 million to \$12 million.

It cuts \$4 million from medical and prosthetic research, bringing to \$53 million the total amount cut from research in two years.

The proposed increase of 113 employees to help process veterans disability claims barely covers the number of positions that were deleted just last year, and won't begin to make a dent in the current backlog of 480,000 compensation and pension claims, a number of which are from veterans from the current war

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

February 24, 2005 AFP & (CNN) & Middle East Online

In the key northern oil city of Kirkuk, a police officer was killed and another wounded when an unknown person opened fire on them in a restaurant at breakfast time, local officials said.

"A police officer was killed and another wounded this morning at 6:00 am when an unknown person opened fire on them in a restaurant in the centre of Kirkuk," said police Colonel Adel Zin al-Abidin.

Salman Abderahman was hit by nine bullets and his colleague was slightly wounded, he said, adding that two suspects had been arrested.

An Iraqi soldier was killed and another wounded in a mortar attack on their base early Wednesday near Dhuluiya, 75 kilometres north of Baghdad, police said.

Another mortar strike on an Iraqi base near Tarmiya, north of Baghdad, killed two soldiers, an army officer said.

An Iraqi subcontractor working on an Iraqi base was killed and another wounded in an attack on their car near Suleyman Beg, 200 km north of Baghdad, the wounded man told AFP.

"The attackers concentrated on my colleague Nader Shawkat and they left as soon as they saw he was dead," said Ahmad Ghali.

Insurgents assassinated an official in Diyala province who was a member of the Dawa Party. "Khalil Ali Shuker, a local representative from Dawa, was killed Tuesday around 7:30 pm by a group of three men in the centre of Moqdadiyah," around 100 kilometres north of Baghdad, a police officer said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

"When the missionaries came to Africa, they had the Bible and we had the land. They taught us to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them, we had the Bible in our hand, and they had the land." -Jomo Kenyatta, Kenyan independence leader and first president

Conspiracy Of Silence No More

Now, here it is 2005, and I see the same horror happening all over again. If anyone does not understand the lies of the Vietnam War, they will not understand the lies of Iraq. Vietnam was a crime scene, from the Delta to the DMZ. (The U.S. government dropped 8,000,000 tons of bombs on Southeast Asia.)

Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2005 6:34 AM
Subject: Conspiracy of Silence No More
From: **Mike Hastie, U.S. Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71**

To G.I. Special,

A year before I went to Vietnam, I went through a 41 week advanced training as a medic. This course was at Fitzsimmons General Hospital in Denver Colorado. There were two rotations I remember the most: Orthopedic, and the psyche ward.

There were a lot of amputees there from Vietnam. Lots of young American soldiers without limbs. I would see them in the hospital, and everywhere on the hospital grounds. Most of them had been injured by mines and booby traps.

I could see the anger and pain in their faces as they wheeled past me. Very seldom would they make eye contact.

Shortly before I got orders for Vietnam, I witnessed " shock therapy " on a young soldier who had been diagnosed as a schizophrenic. In reality, he was suffering from " Post-Traumatic Stress," from his experiences as a combat soldier in Vietnam. Seeing him practically jump off the bed after being shocked, was not an easy thing to watch.

Ten years later, I found myself in a padded cell of a VA hospital, reflecting back on what I saw on that psyche ward in 1969.

I was filled with absolute rage, and hatred for the country I was born in. I felt like America had thrown me away like a paper cup after a movie.

Several months before I was admitted to the hospital, I can remember having fear every time I saw an American flag. In retrospect, the flag represented a punishing parent, something I could no longer trust.

My belief system was dismantled, and along with that profound sense of reality came the truth. My greatest revelation of being in Vietnam, was the overwhelming realization that I was the enemy in Vietnam.

This truth catapulted me into another world. Now, I truly understood why I never received any validation from mainstream America. My political beliefs threatened the norms of society, and virtually everyone I came in contact with. This went from relatives, old high school friends, and the gamut of VA mental health. It was like walking into an ambush.

Now, here it is 2005, and I see the same horror happening all over again. If anyone does not understand the lies of the Vietnam War, they will not understand the lies of Iraq. Vietnam was a crime scene, from the Delta to the DMZ. (The U.S. government dropped 8,000,000 tons of bombs on Southeast Asia.)

If anyone does not believe this, they need to make a trip to Vietnam, and talk to the Vietnamese about the American War. I did this in 1994, and five months after I returned, I was admitted to another psychiatric facility for severe depression.

The Bull Shit of the Vietnam War had a long shelf life for me. This same Bull Shit is now being manifested in this war in Iraq. It has become a runaway freight train, and it is going to crash into every home in America--except the rich.

As Senator Bob LaFollette once wrote: " Wealth has never yet sacrificed itself on the alter of patriotism."

As a medic in Vietnam, when you see a teenage American soldier take his last breath, or a Vietnamese civilian, you are changed forever.

This war in Iraq is a bright shinning lie.

Every time I see the word WAR, I see three words, Wealthy Are Richer.

I will scream this truth even if it kills me.

"There is no rest for the messenger, until the message has been delivered."

Mike Hastie

You Do The Math

2.23.05 By Tom Engelhardt & Nick Turse, Tomdispatch

The various factions of the insurgency are usually described by American officials as having in total perhaps 10,000-20,000 members -- and nearly ten thousand Iraqis are imprisoned for activities assumedly related to the insurgency.

You do the math and try to explain it.

Either we have close to the whole insurgency in jail, or we're holding an awful lot of innocent people, or the insurgency is far bigger than anyone cares to imagine.?

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

Pentagon Is Lying Its Way Out Of An Unwinnable War – Again

2005-02-22 Col. David Hackworth (ret'd), Nashua Telegraph (New Hampshire)

As with Vietnam, the Iraqi tar pit was oh-so-easy to sink into, but appears to be just as tough to exit.

This should be no big surprise! Most slugfests - from bar brawls to military misadventures like Vietnam and Iraq - take some clever moves to step away from once the swinging starts.

This is why most combat vets pick their fights carefully. They look at their scars, remember the madness and are always mindful of the fallout.

That's not the case in Washington, where the White House and the Pentagon are run by civilians who have never sweated it out on a battlefield. Never before in our country's history has an administration charged with defending our nation been so lacking in hands-on combat experience and therefore so ignorant about the art and science of war.

Now the increasingly flummoxed Bush team is stealing the page on Vietnamization from Nixon's Exit Primer, coupled with the same deceitful tactics he used to get us out of the almost decade-long Vietnam quagmire: telling lies.

The Nixon gang kicked off its con in 1969 via a killer of a PR snow job to pacify an American public whose support for the war was exhausted. The guts of this spin show were: We have clobbered the enemy; the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) is main-event material and ready to take over the fighting; and we can bring our troops home. **This propaganda was supported by ARVN combat-readiness reports systematically doctored by our brass to show that the units we were advising were good-to-go.**

I was on the ground as an adviser to ARVN when the campaign launched, and I was completely floored. Even the elite outfits - Rangers, Special Forces, paratroopers - were not fully capable of defending their country when put to the test. And these gung-ho troops were ARVN's finest. **Average ARVN grunts down in the ordinary infantry divisions were so ineffective that they couldn't have fought their way out of a day-care center without massive U.S. air support.**

Meanwhile, U.S. units started redeploying. Two years after the last grunt climbed on the last silver "freedom bird" and headed home, ARVN folded like a wet noodle.

All that blood, sacrifice and billions of American taxpayer dollars went for naught because politicians hadn't worked out the endgame before Round One. And then their solution-without-honor was to lie their way out of a no-win war.

Thirty-five years later, President Bush told the nation that Iraq had nine fully trained combat infantry battalions. Just as he was proclaiming the prowess of the Iraqi army, a major in the Iraqi Training Command told me that the soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, when committed to their first battle, threw down their weapons and ran. "Not sure where the president is getting his info, but we have only one battalion that's good-to-go," he said.

Inquiring minds want to know: Is our president still being fed bad skinny comparable to the intel incorrectly linking Saddam to Sept. 11 or claiming that Iraq was chockablock full of weapons of mass destruction?

More recently, Pentagon hype claimed 140,000 trained and equipped Iraqi troops were set to go toe to toe against an estimated 15,000 insurgents. But when congressional pressure from both Republicans and Democrats lit fires around the feet of both Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Richard Myers, they were quick to admit that only 40,000 Iraqi soldiers were ready to meet the tiger. The rest, according to Myers, "were useful in less-taxing jobs . . . in relatively stable southern Iraq."

Adam Smith Had It (Partly) Right

"The workmen desire to get as much, the masters to give as little as possible. The former are disposed to combine in order to raise, the latter in order to lower the wages of labour... **But whoever imagines, upon this account, that masters rarely combine, is as ignorant of the world as of the subject. Masters are always and every where in a sort of tacit, but constant and uniform combination, not to raise the wages of labour above their actual state.**"

"Whenever the legislature attempts to regulate the differences between masters and their workmen." "Its counselors are always the masters. When the regulation, therefore, is in favour of the workmen, it is always just and equitable; but it is sometimes otherwise when in favour of the masters."

"People of the same trade seldom meet together even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Bush's War Profiteers Uncle Gets Half Million \$

(Los Angeles Times, February 23, 2005)

The Iraq war helped bring record earnings to St. Louis-based defense contractor Engineered Support Systems, and new financial data show that the firm's war-related profits have trickled down to a familiar family name: Bush. **William H.T. "Bucky" Bush, uncle of the president and youngest brother of former President George H.W. Bush, cashed in ESSI stock options last month with a net value of nearly half a million dollars.**

Bush Gets Hot Welcome In Mainz

Feb 23, 2005 By Alexandra Hudson, MAINZ, Germany (Reuters)

About 12,000 protesters, many carrying banners reading "Bush go home," "No. 1 Terrorist" and "Warmonger," marched through the German city of Mainz on Wednesday, but were mostly kept away from the visiting U.S. president.

The official rally, which was twice as big as expected, never got within earshot of President Bush, but a small group of protestors rushed toward his car as he left to visit a U.S. base in nearby Wiesbaden. Police wrestled several demonstrators to the ground and led them away in handcuffs, a Reuters witness said.

Bush was visiting Germany for the first time since the 2003 Iraq war, which Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and most Germans opposed.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Pakistan Army Told To Fire At Intruding Americans

February 24, 2005 By Khalid Hasan, Daily Times

Washington: **Pakistan has issued new rules of engagement permitting its Army to fire at US forces that cross the border from Afghanistan without coordinating first,**

according to a report contributed to the magazine 'American Conservative' by a former CIA officer.

Philip Giraldi, now an international security consultant and writer of intelligence matters, writes in the February 28 issue of the magazine's 'Deep Background' column that **"President Musharraf has been receiving angry reports from his military that US forces have been engaging in hot pursuit across the border in violation of bilateral agreements.**

Earlier Giraldi, quoting Seymour Hersch, reported in 'Intelligence Brief,' a newsletter he co-edits that the White House has given the Pentagon permission "to operate unilaterally in a number of countries where there is a perception of a clear and evident terrorist threat," including Algeria, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Malaysia and Tunisia. **The chain of command reportedly includes Donald Rumsfeld and two of his deputies.**

Received:

The Slaughter

From: RD
To: GI Special
Sent: February 23, 2005:
Subject: The Slaughter

You might be interested in this, someone may like to know besides people who worry about their beautiful minds.

Oct., 2003
Cher on Cspan

This morning. Transcript provided by norn:

CHER c-span transcript

Peter Slen, C-Span Moderator: Good Morning Miami Beach

caller: Good morning! Thank you for C-span, I watch it every day!

Uh, I would like to say i had the occasion the other day to spend the entire day with troops that had come back from iraq & had been wounded and..um...I also visited troops during the Vietnam era...but the thing that I was most shocked by...um...as I walked into the hospital the first person i ran into was a boy about 19 or 20 years old who'd lost both of his arms...and when I walked into the hospital & visited all these boys all day long...uh...everyone had lost either one arm...one limb or two limbs or had lost one limb and there were...

there were a lot of legs that seemed to be missing and a couple of the boys told me it was because that their vehicles ...that the rockets pierce the vehicles so much its like being kind of in a tin can...it doesn't have...there isn't...the walls of the humvees are very soft and there's no protection...but three guys in the same vehicle have lost a leg. ...and another thing that I saw was that...um...if they'd lost one leg that... that shrapnel that had hit the other leg had been so devastating that they were having to pull like the thigh...you know...the muscle and the thigh around the bottom of the calf to try to make the leg workable but in some cases these boys had lost one leg and the other leg was so damaged that they weren't sure what they were gonna be able to do.

C-Span Moderator: Where did you spend the day?

caller: Walter-Reed.

C-Span Moderator: And you're down in Miami beach, back in Miami beach?

caller: I'm down here today.

C-Span Moderator: what were you doing at Walter-reed? are you a volunteer?

caller: no, I was just asked to come and spend the day. I was working that day in Washington, DC and...

C-Span Moderator: what kind of work do you do?

caller: um, I'm an entertainer.

C-Span Moderator: oh, what kind of entertaining? are you USO?

caller: no, I actually was called by the USO but I'm...I'm...I'm just...I'm an entertainer. And I really don't want to go much past that but...um...

C-Span Moderator: Is this CHER?

caller: yeah.

C-Span Moderator: (worshipful silence) ok. And you spent the day at Walter-Reed.

caller: Yeah.

And I spent the day with, I mean they were great guys...and the the men that took me around were in the...you know...the services, you know, they were fabulous men...uh...Mike and John ...and they these boys had unbelievable courage and they still said for the most part that they were glad that they did it, they felt that it was their duty...and there were a few of the national guards that felt it was their duty that once they were over there but they wondered why they were taken out of America to spend that much time as actual service men when they really felt that their job was to be, you know, protecting this country.

...but I I have to say that they had the most unbelievable courage and it took everything that I have as a person to...to not...you know... break down while I was talkin to these guys...but I just think that if there was no reason for this war this was the most heinous thing I'd ever seen... and also I wonder why...why are none of Cheney, Wolfowitz, Bremer, the president, why aren't they taking pictures with all these guys?

Because I don't understand why these guys are so hidden and why... and why there aren't pictures of them because you know, talking about the dead and the wounded...that's two different things but these wounded are so devastatedly wounded...you know...that I think that... the wounded...its just... it's unbelievable...its just unbelievable to me and I'm an independent but I....

C-Span Moderator: Are you supporting anyone yet for 2004?

caller: I'm not a bush supporter, that for sure...and I'm definitely not Ashcroft or Cheney or any of them...but I would just like to see them have...**you know, if you're going to send these people to war then don't hide them, you know...and have some... have some news coverage where people are sitting and talking to these guys and seeing how they are and seeing their spirit and its just... I just... I think its a crime.**

C-Span Moderator: When you were up here for your farewell concert earlier this month, is that when you went to Walter Reed?

caller: Yeah.

C-Span Moderator: Ok well thanks for your time this morning, thanks for watching.

caller: Oh I have to tell you I watch you every day and **I really appreciate it because I go all over the world and I must say that the news we get in America has nothing to do with the news that you get outside of this country** And I think that's why people don't..people don't understand why so many of the allies did not...you know, our usual allies did not join us because if you get outside the United States you hear a different kind of news you know and so...

C-Span Moderator: What's your favorite news source outside the US?

Caller: Well there's a source that I really like inside the US that gives you special documentaries called WORLDLINK but I think my favorite source outside the US is BBC because they are our allies but you still get...on the nightly news you get...you know, much more coverage and I think much more honest coverage...**I don't know, I guess they're not...well...they're independent so they're not owned by any of the major corporations that are... you know, have vested interest in this war.**

C-Span Moderator: thanks for your call this morning.

caller: ok, thank you!

This was done in Oct. 03. A very classy lady.

<p>Web Copies For back issues see: GI Special web site at http://www.militaryproject.org/ .</p>
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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/maqalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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