

GI SPECIAL 3A71:

**HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WAR?
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



Debbee Way, center, as her son's casket is loaded into a hearse March 9, 2005, in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Way's son, Lt. Brian Gienau of the Iowa Army National Guard, on duty with Company A, 224th Engineer Battalion out of Burlington, Iowa, died when his Humvee was struck with a bomb in Iraq. (AP Photo/Dan Nierling)

**"They're Tired. They're
Tired Of Being Here."
"When We Get Back, We're
Done--Out Of The Marine
Corps."**

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

Mar 10 By Mike Dorning, Chicago Tribune correspondent

The 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, provided one of the enduring **[faked]** images of the fall of Baghdad, toppling a statue of Saddam Hussein before cheering Iraqis and a worldwide television audience. **[A long-distance camera shot showed about 80 “cheering Iraqis”: the whole thing was a scam.]**

The unit is once again part of a signature moment: In January, it became the first Marine battalion to return to Iraq for a third deployment, according to a Marine Corps spokesman. **More are to follow.**

With less than six months in the U.S. between deployments, said Cpl. Kellen Scott, 22, of West Chicago, Ill., "it almost seems like I never left Iraq and my time home was just a dream."

On the first deployment, Lance Cpl. Dusty Lansdorf's family was anxious but supportive. On the second, they were incredulous that he had to return, said Lansdorf, 22, of Oroville, Calif.

Their reaction this time: "Don't go. You're rolling the dice too many times."

The unit's tough schedule is testament to the heavy burden America's ground forces have shouldered in a fight that has gone on much longer than the Pentagon planned, against more tenacious resistance than expected.

The men of "Darkside," as the battalion is nicknamed, have been present for many of the high points and low moments in a conflict that has taken plenty of unexpected turns. More than half the unit's 800 Marines have been with the unit for all three deployments.

They speak of pride in having been part of a historic moment that their children and grandchildren will read about.

But they also murmur of weariness with their repeated deployments.

"They're tired. They're tired of being here," said Navy Lt. Matthew Weems, the battalion's chaplain.

Most in the battalion thought they were finished with Iraq after bringing down Hussein. They were stunned in February 2004 when they were summoned back during a deployment to Okinawa, Japan, because of a deteriorating security situation.

Though the third deployment came as no surprise, its timing did.

The Marines' Christmas leaves were cut by half as the battalion was rushed to Iraq nearly two months ahead of schedule because of concerns that the January elections would be disrupted.

Many in the unit said they are resigned to the likelihood that the battalion will be called to Iraq a fourth and fifth time.

Many said they want no part of it.

"How do we get through a third deployment?" asked Cpl. John Woodham, 22, of Dothan, Ala. "This will be the last time we do this. When we get back, we're done-out of the Marine Corps."

Despite a re-enlistment bonus of \$18,000 for corporals and \$21,000 for sergeants, Marines up for re-enlistment in the next year overwhelmingly say they plan to leave, said Staff Sgt. Michael Hunt, the battalion's retention specialist.

In many cases, Marines with months of service remaining have lined up civilian job offers or early acceptance at colleges. Often, parents anxious about their sons' safety have found jobs for them when they get out.

It is something Hunt had rarely seen.

"From the colonel on down to the company and platoon commanders, everybody is concerned about who's going to be around for the next deployment, who's going to train the young Marines for the next time," Hunt said.

Living conditions are rudimentary for the battalion's line companies, positioned in patrol bases across southern Fallujah. India Company is stationed in a bombed-out soda bottling plant. Kilo Company is in a compound of houses with a hole blasted through a wall.

The room shared by the company's platoon commanders is pockmarked on all four walls and the ceiling from a grenade explosion during November's fighting.

There is one hot meal delivered every other day. Showers are available only when Marines pass through the battalion headquarters on the edge of the city, usually about once a week but sometimes less frequently, officers said.

For warriors trained to take ground and kill the enemy, the duties of an occupying force patrolling streets are uncomfortable. **And they remain frustrated with a faceless opponent who fights with roadside bombs and blends with the civilian population. [Wrong. The "faceless opponent" is the civilian population. They hate being occupied by George Bush. That's why they fight.]**

They also cite the strain of time away from family during deployments and even during the brief periods at home, which are filled with intense training schedules and extended exercises in the field to keep the unit prepared for duty.

"I have 13 years in the Marine Corps, and my wife has put me on notice: If we have another deployment, I have to choose between the Marine Corps and my wife," said Lt. Brian Sitko, 33, the battalion's adjutant, who was commissioned an officer after service in the enlisted ranks.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Marine Killed In Al Anbar Province

March 11, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-03-07C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq -- One Soldier assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in a non-hostile accident March 11, 2005.

Lunatic New York Commanding Officer Sorry His Men Aren't Being Attacked: "I've Made My Peace With God."



[Lt. Col. Geoffrey J. Slack of Long Island, deranged commander of the Fighting 69th, pretending to monitor Route Irish, the highway into Baghdad from the airport, while giving photographer a nice right-profile warrior pose for the customers of his tree-cutting business back home. God help his troops.] (Ramin Talaie for The New York Times)

"I'm agitating to get off this mission," he grouched. "It's been deathly quiet, deathly quiet."

His sentiment is shared by few of his officers and almost none of his troops. After Taji, the new assignment came as a relief to the men of the 69th.

March 4, 2005 By Kirk Semple, New York Times [Thanks to PB for sending this one in.]

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Feb. 26

If there has been a single transformative moment in Iraq for the men of the First Battalion, 69th Infantry, it came on Nov. 29 with the explosion of an enormous bomb and the death of two of their own.

The blast, on a dirt road in the countryside northwest of Baghdad, tore through a Humvee, killing Staff Sgt. Christian P. Engeldrum, 39, and Specialist Wilfredo F. Urbina, 29.

They were the first casualties the New York City battalion had suffered since arriving in Iraq in October for a one-year tour of duty - and the battalion's first combat deaths since World War II. The attackers had buried a 200-pound aerial bomb attached to two 155-millimeter artillery shells and detonated the charge by remote control.

"It made it all a lot more scary," said Sgt. Louis Olander, 21, a college student from Manhattan and a soldier in the battalion. "It was a moment of clarity - but terrifying clarity."

The Fighting 69th, as the battalion is known among its devotees, is part of the 42nd Infantry Division of the National Guard, though it is operating apart from the rest of the division during this campaign. The battalion's armory is on Lexington Avenue, and the soldiers here take great pride in the idea that they are carrying a banner for New York City.

The unit has always drawn from the immigrant population - it was formed in 1851 with several predominantly Irish militia companies - and now comprises an array of cultures and ethnicities that mirror the city's diversity. In the battalion's personnel office alone, the staff includes a Puerto Rican real estate agent raised in Lower Manhattan, a Jew from the Bronx, a white Manhattan publishing executive from Oklahoma, an Ecuadorean student living in Queens, an Italian-American from Staten Island and naturalized American citizens from Barbados and China who now live in Brooklyn.

The 69th was mobilized after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to guard ground zero, West Point, and the city's bridges, tunnels and subways. "Most of us went from 9/11 to here," said First Lt. Rafael A. Muñoz, 38, a narcotics detective in the New York Police Department. "It's a continuing saga. We're wondering when we're going to start our lives."

The battalion's first job was to ferret out insurgents and provide security in and around Taji, a rural area northwest of Baghdad. The soldiers raided homes, made arrests and searched for roadside bombs and caches of explosives.

It was dangerous work, and after the Humvee attack on Nov. 29, more casualties came quickly.

On Dec. 3, Staff Sgt. Henry E. Irizarry died and three others were wounded in the blast of another huge roadside bomb.

On Jan. 6, attackers detonated about 200 pounds of explosives they had buried under a dirt road, destroying a Bradley fighting vehicle and killing all seven soldiers inside,

including Specialist Kenneth VonRonn, 20, of the New York National Guard, and six members of the Louisiana National Guard.

Specialist Brian Burns, 24, who works as a chef back home, was a close friend of Specialist VonRonn. The two had grown up together in Pine Bush, N.Y., and had been roommates during predeployment training at Fort Hood, Tex.

Specialist Burns was part of a contingent that returned to the bomb site the following day to clean up what he calls "the parts": pieces of the vehicle and of the corpses, including his friend's. Limbs and heads had been blown clear away from torsos, which remained intact in their bulletproof vests. Specialist Burns cried for days, he said, and found that the only way of controlling the grief was to stay busy.

In all, 10 men working under the command of the 69th died in the Taji area, and seven were wounded seriously enough to be removed from active duty. (Two other members of the 69th, under the command of other units, have also died in Iraq in the past three months.)

"Taji? It's one of those things when you get in the vehicle and you say, 'Is today my day?' " said Sgt. Javish J. Rosa, 25, from Washington Heights in Manhattan. "Anywhere you ride, you feel like you're going to die."

The battalion was reassigned a few weeks ago to Camp Liberty, a military base in Baghdad, and was given the job of safeguarding a roughly five-mile stretch of highway linking the Baghdad airport and the green zone, the fortified compound that houses American and Iraqi government buildings.

The trash-strewn highway, known as Route Irish within the military, is frequently called the most dangerous road in Iraq.

Yet the assignment elicits scorn from Lt. Col. Geoffrey J. Slack, 47, the battalion's commander. It is a boring assignment, he said. No roadside bombs, no sniper attacks, no kidnappings, no ambushes. He complained that the highway's grim reputation was overblown and that his men had been turned into "New York state troopers."

"I'm agitating to get off this mission," he grouched. "It's been deathly quiet, deathly quiet."

His sentiment is shared by few of his officers and almost none of his troops. After Taji, the new assignment came as a relief to the men of the 69th.

"Quiet is good," said Capt. Michael G. Drew, a sergeant in the New York Police Department who commands Company A of the First Battalion. He has already lost two men under his command.

Colonel Slack, a resident of Mastick Beach on Long Island, and the owner of a tree-cutting company in Seaford, N.Y., is tall, lean and edgy. He stands up straight, moves in

definitive strokes, litters his sentences with expletives and is rarely without a lighted unfiltered Camel in his mouth.

Colonel Slack goes on patrols with his troops every day - unlike most commanders of his rank or higher - and has no interest in the paperwork or ceremony that come with his job. **"I like nothing more than to be in a tussle," he said.**

For this, he has earned the respect of the soldiers. *But they also say his actions are sometimes too risky.*

"I've made my peace with God," he tells them. [Hopefully a meeting can be arranged without further delay.]

On a recent patrol, Colonel Slack led his convoy to the shell of a building on Route Irish. Colonel Slack calls it the Red Sniper Building because rebel snipers had used it as a roost from which to attack American patrols. *He liked to stop there on his rounds and make his presence known.*

After climbing to an upper floor, he was asked if he thought that returning to the building time and again might be inviting trouble, like a booby-trap bomb or a sniper attack.

"Absolutely," he replied. "Nothing around here comes without the risk." He returned to studying the traffic and smoked in silence until his cigarette was gone. [Head case: unfit for command. What, somebody has to draw a picture?]

The colonel may get a fight after all. **[Wrong. It's the troops who will suffer and die for having an insane piece of shit like this giving suicidal orders.]**

In the days after his visit to the Red Sniper Building, a roadside bomb exploded next to a battalion Humvee, causing no casualties; a patrol found a powerful explosive known as a platter charge planted on the airport highway; and a bomb squad destroyed two 120-caliber mortar rounds buried near the base of the Red Sniper Building.

The battalion patrols Route Irish in shifts. The soldiers look for anything out of the ordinary in a totally unfamiliar country. Every car on the side of the road is a potential car bomb, every driver under the hood tinkering with his engine a potential assassin. Every piece of trash in the road, even the corpse of a dog, could be concealing a radio-controlled explosive. They study the buildings, rooftops, windows.

Still, the soldiers say this is better than Taji - no dirt roads, a smaller area, fewer attacks.

But, their work is grueling and they wonder all the time whether their luck will hold.

Far more relevant now is what sustains the soldiers of the 69th through the aching homesickness in a place where most do not want to be. Their families. A conviction that they are making a difference. Camaraderie and loyalty. Cigarettes and faith: smoking and God have attracted many new adherents among the soldiers of the 69th.

Some draw a straight line from the Sept. 11 attacks to Iraq, regarding their involvement here as a form of payback. "It's personal," Colonel Slack said. "In some ways I think they are exorcizing that trauma."

But others say this is, in the end, only a job they are obligated to do.

Late one night, Captain Drew of Company A spoke about the difficult commitment the soldiers of the 69th had made. Six weeks before he was activated, he had married and moved from Jackson Heights, Queens, to Long Island.

"The guys who are here want to be here," he said, then caught himself: "Not 'want' to be here, **but they know what they've got to do.**" [Where Colonel Slack is concerned, one certainly hopes so. There are parts of the UCMJ that cover a commanding officer who has lost touch with reality, is so sorry more of his men aren't being killed and maimed, and who parades around like this is a movie set and he's John Wayne. Think about that, Captain Drew.]

He looked worn out; it had been a long day. [Right. And tomorrow you have no idea what Colonel Slack has in store for you and the troops, do you? He's "made his peace with God." You know what that means, don't you? He's capable of anything, isn't he? And totally out of control, right? Quit pretending you don't know exactly what's going down and how the regs provide for dealing with it. This is the loony owner of a Long Island tree-cutting company for Christ's sake, not Patton. In Vietnam, he would have had an extremely short life expectancy. Soldiers there developed survival skills.]

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.

Another Stupid Pentagon Lie Exposed In Calipari Killing

March 12, 2005 By Natasha Bitá in Florence, News Limited & Mar 10 By PATRICK QUINN, Associated Press Writer

ITALIAN prosecutors want US troops in Baghdad to hand over the car and satellite phones used by the secret agent killed by US soldiers while escorting a freed hostage to safety this week.

Rome and Washington have blamed each other for the death of Italian intelligence agent Nicola Calipari, who was shot dead by US forces in a hail of gunfire while shielding freed hostage Giuliana Sgrena as he escorted her to Baghdad airport last Saturday.

Italy's public broadcaster, RAI, showed photographs of the car after the attack and reported that the US gunshots had been aimed at "passenger level". A US military spokesman had claimed the troops shot at the engine block.

The Italian Government honoured Calipari with a posthumous bravery medal and gave him a state funeral on Monday, after 100,000 Italians queued in the rain to pay homage to their fallen hero as he lay in state.

U.S. troops who mistakenly killed an Italian intelligence agent last week on the road to Baghdad's airport were part of extra security provided by the U.S. Army to protect U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte, a U.S. official said Thursday.

"The mobile patrol was there to enhance security because Ambassador Negroponte was expected through," U.S. Embassy spokesman Robert Callahan said, confirming reports in Italian media. The newspaper La Repubblica reported Wednesday that the checkpoint had been "set up to protect the passage of Ambassador Negroponte."

It was not known if Negroponte, who was nominated last month by President Bush to be the new director of national intelligence, had already passed through the checkpoint.

The shooting took place about 8:55 p.m., about two hours before Baghdad's 11 p.m. curfew.

Senior U.S. officials such as the ambassador, who is by far seen as the most important American in Iraq, normally travel by helicopter to avoid roadside bombs and insurgent attacks along the airport road.

The Army has acknowledged the checkpoint was temporary but has provided no details about why it was set up.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT 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)

TROOP NEWS

Mother of Fallen Soldier Says Get Out Of Iraq Now

Mar 11th, 2005 By WilliamPitt

For the last several days, there has been a running debate on this page about how and when the United States should withdraw from Iraq. It began with a post of mine asking FYI forum members to come up with a plan to do this, as everyone appears to be in agreement that leaving Iraq is something that must happen.

Yesterday afternoon, I received a letter from Cindy Sheehan, co-founder of Gold Star Families For Peace and mother of Spc. Casey Austin Sheehan, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, who was killed in Baghdad on April 4th, 2004. He was 24 years old.

Beyond being an unassailable voice of moral strength and brutally-won wisdom on this matter, Cindy Sheehan brings an absolutely necessary perspective to this conversation. It is the curse of policy and issues analysts everywhere: We dig into the facts and theories and possibilities and potential ramifications of this or that, and sometimes get away from the flesh-and-bone realities of what we are dealing with.

Casey Austin Sheehan was a man, alive and well, and now he is gone because of this war. I am ashamed that I needed to be slapped across the head to remember this, but I am glad for it as well. I needed it, and perhaps some FYI readers needed it, too.

Cindy Sheehan was kind enough to allow me to reprint her letter here, which I have. My response to her words is below the letter.

Dear Will:

My son was KIA in Iraq on 04/04/04. I think you have already made up your mind that our troops need to remain in Iraq...which is very sad. This is in response to your blog question yesterday and your reply to anti-war.com today.

I admire your tireless efforts to get the truth out...but I seriously have to disagree with you.

I think that our presence in that country is fueling the insurgency that killed my son; which has also killed many more of America's sons and daughters (many more than the official count); has maimed almost 30,000 of our kids; and has killed hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis and demolished their country.

Don't you think that the Iraqi people can rebuild their own country?

Before the US invasion in March of 2003, they had a very capable work force filled with construction workers, contractors, engineers, etc. I think the 81 billion dollar appropriation's bill that this president wants Congress to pass would better be a reparation's bill.

Also, I know you know the despicable condition that the VA system and military hospital system are in right now.

Are you suggesting that we create thousands of more mentally and physically wounded of our children who will be dependent on a system that is so flawed?

Not to mention the even more serious implications of depleted uranium syndrome which will probably never be recognized by our government. I know some soldiers who have returned who are suffering terribly from PTSD and they have been waiting for over a year for VA approval to get treated. PTSD is rarely diagnosed, so they don't receive the help they need.

And, most importantly and devastatingly, this war is based on lies and betrayals.

Not one American soldier, nor one Iraqi should have been killed.

Common sense would dictate that not one more person should be killed for lies.

One of the people, my son, was more than enough for me and my family. I will live in unbearable pain until I die. First of all, because my first born was killed violently, and second of all, because he was killed for a neo-con agenda that only benefits a very chosen few in this world. This agenda and their war machine will chew up and spit out as many of our children as they can unless we stop them now.

Also, your views have the effect of invalidating what I, my organization, Gold Star Families for Peace, and other peace groups are doing to bring our troops home immediately, if not sooner.

In 1967 it was recognized by our government officials that Viet Nam was unwinnable...I don't even know how many more of our troops and innocent Vietnamese were killed before we finally pulled out in 1975. Please use your forum to expose the lies and the devastation this invasion/occupation is causing. We should not stay. We should not let Israel/USA invade Syria or Iran. The consequences of this would be too shocking to even contemplate.

In addition, my family and my group are offended by hearing this administration say that our troops have to remain in Iraq and complete "the mission" to honor our loved one's sacrifices. First of all, no one can explain the mission to us and we don't want any more innocent blood spilled just because it is too late for our soldiers and our families.

Thank you for your time and your courage in speaking the truth.

Love and Peace!!!

Cindy Sheehan Co-Founder of Gold Star Families For Peace Mother of Hero: Spc Casey Austin Sheehan KIA 04/04/04

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.

Knox DIs Charged With Abuse Of Recruits

March 11, 2005 Associated Press

FORT KNOX, Ky. — Four drill sergeants were charged Friday in the abuse of recruits who were allegedly slammed into lockers and pulled down a hallway by their ankles, the Army announced.

The Army said the recruits, who reported for duty Feb. 3, were also pushed, slapped and kicked. The abuse ended five days later, according to the Fort Knox public affairs office.

The drill sergeants were investigated after their battalion commander, Lt. Col. Chester Dymek, received reports of abuse from soldiers in an adjacent barracks. An investigation was conducted by the Army's Criminal Investigative Command.

Sgt. 1st Class David H. Price, 36; Sgt. 1st Class Ricky L. Stauffer, 35; Staff Sgt. Michael G. Rhoades; 33, and Bryan G. Duncan, were each charged with maltreatment of soldiers and obstruction of justice. Price also faces an additional charges of violation of lawful regulation.

Price and Stauffer each have been drill sergeants for more than two years. Rhoades and Duncan have been in the position for more than months.

All were assigned to Company E, 1st Battalion, 81st Armor Regiment, which is part of Fort Knox's 1st Armor Training Brigade.

Dispatches From The Quagmire: Hurt Says He "Doesn't Understand Why The Military Is Still There."

2005-03-10 Nina Shapiro, Seattle Weekly (Washington)

In the Seattle armory on a recent Saturday morning, several dozen spouses and parents of National Guard soldiers stationed in Iraq listen to a briefing by Guard and Veterans Affairs staff on what to expect when their loved ones return and how to deal with it.

There's a recently returned soldier in the room, too, and he's exuding a serious intensity and nodding his head as such issues as scream-inducing nightmares and emotional numbness arise. He's in the room as a media handler, not a participant, but the discussion strikes such a painful chord that he raises his hand.

"It's kind of difficult for me sitting here listening to this," says 48-year-old Sgt. 1st Class Jack Martin, adding that he might have to leave.

Martin served nine months in Iraq with the Guard's 81st Brigade Combat Team and returned early, shortly before Thanksgiving, because of back problems aggravated by war.

"Every day for three months, we got mortared and rocketed," he relates, referring to attacks on his base near Balad, about 50 miles north of Baghdad. The experience has left him so jittery, he says, that when he heard someone humming upstairs in the armory, he thought an alarm was going off and nearly jumped out of his seat. Sleeplessness is a chronic problem. "Last night, I went to sleep at 5 o'clock," he says. "My alarm went off at 5:30."

Michael Kunzelman served in Iraq for 15 months with the Guard's 1161st Transportation Company. Hauling supplies around Iraq, Kunzelman once had his truck blown three feet off the ground by a roadside bomb. His truck landed in one piece, and he just kept driving.

For the most part, the 39-year-old Burien resident is functioning normally, having taken a new job upon his return for a company that rebuilds railroad tracks. But he has his moments, like on a business trip when he awoke in a motel at 3 in the morning, on the floor, with his blankets spread from one side of the room to the other. **The weirdest thing, as he told his dad, was that he remembered nothing of the tortured night. "I know," said his dad, a Vietnam vet.**

Meantime, one gets the sense that [spc.] Hurt and his peers are still making sense of what they saw in Iraq and what they continue to see on TV. Hurt calls Iraq "a whole different world," where people in remote areas live in mud houses and the men, according to his commanders, send their wives and children out to the middle of the road to stop an Army convoy.

"We were cautioned not to stop for anything," he says, a directive that unsettled several in the unit, including him, "a pretty strong Christian."

Having seen the insurgency and the resulting casualties, Hurt says he "doesn't understand why the military is still there. . . . If the country doesn't want to be free, let 'em be."

400 Disabled Veterans Raise Hell At Congressional Hearings On VA Budget

March 10, 2005 By Leo Shane III, Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - Hundreds of disabled veterans booed and jeered Republican House members on Tuesday for their budget proposal for veterans' health care, which critics call inadequate to deal with the future needs of current troops.

Following testimony before a pair of congressional committees by officials from the Disabled American Veterans, or DAV, the crowd of more than 400 wounded and disabled veterans cheered House members who criticized the president's budget plans and heckled representatives who defended the spending.

The loudest heckling was reserved for House Veterans' Affairs chairman Rep. Steve Buyer, R-Ind., who was criticized by Democrats on the committee and rebuked the crowd at one point by saying "where the river is the shallowest, it makes the most noise."

The proposed 2006 budget includes a 1.1 percent increase for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which officials from the DAV called too little to deal with the large number of servicemembers expected to return from Iraq and Afghanistan with missing limbs, mental illnesses and other service injuries.

In addition, the budget would require veterans without combat injuries and who make more than \$25,000 a year to pay a \$250 enrollment fee to use department health services.

James Sursely, national commander of the DAV, which calls itself the voice of service-connected disabled veterans, said he wants to see an additional \$3.4 billion added to the budget for veterans' medical care, and see the new fees removed.

Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., called Buyer and his supporters hypocrites for scheduling Tuesday's hearing without any intention of considering the veterans' budget concerns.

"This budget is an insult to our troops and to you," he told the crowd, who responded with a standing ovation. "This is unconscionable."

Rep. Corrine Brown, D-Fla., called promises made by Republicans "frankly a lot of bullshit," and was quickly censured by Buyer as the crowd roared in approval.

Army Sgt. Tyler Hall, a 24-year-old Alaskan who lost part of his left leg in an improvised explosive device blast in August, said he attended Tuesday's hearing to learn more about the legislative process and see how he can help other soldiers like himself.

"The number of disabled vets is growing, so this affects us quite a bit," he said.
"You almost automatically go into the VA hospitals, so we need to make sure the care is there."

Recruiter Says "This War Is Stupid"

Hundreds Of SFSU Students Protest Iraq War: Administration Assholes Crack Down On Counter-Recruitment Activists

From: Brandi Chalker, Students Against War
To: GI Special
Sent: March 11, 2005
Subject: counter-recruitment at San Francisco State

Hi,

I'm a student at San Francisco State University and a member of Students Against War, which is part of the Campus Antiwar Network.

I got an email from Dianne Rejman of Vets for Peace (she said she knows you) and she said that I should contact you about what's been happening on my campus.

She also said that you did an article about what happened on the 9th at City College of New York, and our story is directly linked to them.

Dianne said you might be able to help get the word out about what's happening at SFSU. We're going to be holding a press release very soon, as well as a community support effort to email/fax/call our school's president with messages of support for the student activists.

If you have any questions, feel free to email me or call me (415) 250-2809.

Thanks,

Brandi Chalker
Students Against War

Here's a statement put out by Students Against War:

March 10 Kristin Anderson. CampusAntiwarNetwork

On March 9th, Students Against War (SAW) at San Francisco State University-a chapter of the Campus Antiwar Network (CAN)- cooperated with other campus student groups to organize a protest against the presence of military recruiters on SFSU's campus.

At 11am, over 200 students rallied outside the student center expressing their outrage at the presence of military recruiters in the nearby job fair. People spoke out against the war in Iraq, the budget cuts, the bigoted anti-gay, racist and sexist policies of the military, and the fact that while money for college is increasingly hard to find the Military is getting more funding for recruitment.

SAW members proceeded to lead the crowd into the student center where military recruiters-- The Army Corps of Engineers and the Air Force-- were tabling at a job fair.

Over 100 people poured in holding signs and chanting "US Military Out of Our Schools" Surrounding the tables we proceeded to chant them down for about 90 minutes before we sat down around their tables.

The Army Corps almost immediately abandoned their tabling commenting to some activists that they were also against the war.

One recruiter said "this war is stupid".

Then, protesters lined up to take turns speaking on the bullhorn. We held a peaceful anti-war teach in until they decided to pack it up at 2pm-one hour before the job fair was supposed to end and without any new recruits. As they left we sang "Sha na-na-na hey hey hey good Bye" It was fantastic!

The press was all over this with leading stories on CBS, Fox, ABC, NBC, Telemundo, the World Journal (a Chinese language paper)...the list went on.

According to these reports the SFSU Administration will be sanctioning groups who sponsored this event, as well as suspending individual students who helped with the action.

Today when activists entered the second day of the Job fair and began passing out pamphlets with facts about the military, eight police officers muscled them out the door, twisted their arms, and detained them and took down their information.

We are organizing a campaign to force the administration at SFSU to stop these outrageous attacks on political activists--please keep your eyes peeled for our email/fax campaign.

We stand in solidarity with the CAN activists from the City College of New York (CCNY) who were arrested, assaulted by cops, and charged with felony-assault for protesting recruiters on the same day that we did.

UPDATE ON ARRESTED CITY COLLEGE COUNTER-RECRUITMENT ACTIVISTS

From: Meredith Kolodner meredithkolodner@hotmail.com
Friday, March 11, 2005

Dear Anti-war and Counter-recruitment Activists,

The 3 City College students arrested, and brutalized, yesterday for peacefully protesting the presence of military recruiters at City College's "career fair" were arraigned and released today and charged with misdemeanor counts of assaulting an officer, resisting arrest, and disturbing the peace, among other things. Their court date is set for April 5.

Many thanks to everyone who came out to the press conference at very short notice, including Iraq Veterans Against War, the War Resisters League, the NY Civil Liberties Union, the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM) at City College, the Campus Anti-war Network, the Out Now Coalition, Veterans For Peace, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) union of CUNY, the International Socialist Organization, NYC Labor Against War, the Neighborhood Defenders Service of Harlem, the Legal Aid Society, and student activists in general from City College and other CUNY schools. And thanks to the many more who couldn't make it but expressed their support and solidarity.

Special thanks to the NY Civil Liberties Union and Victor Paredes for their amazing help with press which resulted in coverage and presence of reporters from the New York Times, Newsday, The Nation, WOR radio, News 12/Bronx, the Amsterdam News, Democracy Now, Pacifica Radio and more.

The students will be discussing strategies for a response over the next few days and very much appreciate all the support they have been receiving. They can be contacted at hadasthier@earthlink.net

Please note that a similar "career fair" is planned at Hunter College next Wednesday, March 16 and the Hunter Campus Anti-war Network and other student activists plan to go ahead with their protest against the presence of military recruiters there as well. For more information, email hfleury@hunter.cuny.edu

Military recruitment numbers are down and protests are up - we are having an impact!

Keep up the good work!

In Solidarity,
Meredith Kolodner

[MORE ON CCNY:](#)

As people may have seen, 3 City College Students were arrested and assaulted by campus security guards yesterday for simply peacefully protesting the presence of military recruiters on campus.

Please take a minute to call Gregory Williams' office (the President of City College) The number is 212-650-7000, you'll get an operator and ask for the president's office. You'll talk to a guy named Jacob.

They would not comment but said a statement was coming out soon. Call them and tell them that you are outraged that the administration is doing nothing to defend the students and that they allowed these students to be arrested by the campus security, also known ironically as "peace officers."

Thanks,

Monique Dols
CAN Coordinating Committee

Rumsfeld Leaves Planet Earth U.S. Gaining Respect From Wars, He Asserts

[Washington Post, March 11, 2005, Pg. 4]

Secretary Rumsfeld defended U.S. policy in Iraq and Afghanistan, saying they are powerful demonstrations of American military prowess that will force other countries to rethink making "mischief" around the world. **[Clearly Rumsfeld is suffering from senile dementia. Everybody knows there isn't a country in the world larger than Monaco that can't tell Geroge W. to go shit in his hat. There isn't anybody left to stop them doing what they fucking please. Iraq has tied down the U.S. army like a roach motel. Chavez, the President of Venezuela, didn't have to think twice before going on Venezuelan national TV and telling Bush, in English, "Kiss My Ass." Iraq and Afghanistan are "powerful demonstrations" all right, of Imperial greed, stupidity, incompetence and weakness.]**

Rumsfeld Finds Another Way To Kill U.S. Troops:

[Baltimore Sun, March 11, 2005]

No excuse should be tolerated for the Pentagon's failure to provide combat troops with potentially lifesaving \$20 tourniquet. Our soldiers should not have to depend on donations from volunteer organizations to get something so cheap that saves lives.

Silliest General Of 2005, So Far

12mar05 By IAN McPHEDRAN, Advertiser Newspapers Pty Limited

AUSTRALIAN troops will start patrolling in the Al Muthanna province of southern Iraq in early May.

The 450-strong force will begin moving into the region via Kuwait by air and sea from about Anzac Day and the first patrols will take place during the first two weeks of May.

Army chief Lieutenant General Peter Leahy said the soldiers would be well protected against the hazards in Iraq.

Air Force's Troops Prefer Not To Do Convoy Duty In Iraq. Duh.

[European Stars and Stripes, March 10, 2005]

Only about 60 airmen have taken advantage of the Operation Blue to Green program during its first seven months. The program, begun to help reduce the 17,000 extra airmen in the service while helping the Army with its manning shortfall, **offers bonuses to Air Force personnel to transfer into high-demand specialties with the Army.** [Like the air force troops now assigned to convoy duty in Iraq? At the rate they're getting killed and maimed, definitely "high demand."]

Dimwit Senators Question Absence Of Blame For Senior Officers In Abuse Report

Washington Post, March 11, 2005, Pg. 17 & New York Times

Several senators expressed dismay that no senior military or civilian Pentagon officials have been held accountable for the policy and command failures that led to prisoner abuse in Iraq and Afghanistan. A review of the situation by Navy Vice Adm. Albert Church III largely failed to say where that accountability should lie. [What, the Senators are so terminally stupid they don't know what basic military procedure is? Simple: every disaster is caused by somebody below you in the chain of command.]

Vice Adm. Albert Church, who just completed the latest military probe into prisoner abuse at U.S. military detention centers, told Congress that high-level officials failed to establish clear guidelines for interrogating detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan, **but said it wasn't his job to hold anybody responsible.** [Translation: if he held the scum on top responsible, he wouldn't have a job.]

Vietnam Vets Still Living With The Pain

March 8, 2005 C.W. Nevius, San Francisco Chronicle

A couple of times a night, Bill Green gets up to prowls his Albany home. He keeps the lights out because he wants to be able to check for movement in the backyard.

"You might call it paranoia," the former Army infantry officer says. "We call it being on patrol."

Thirty-seven years ago, two weeks before the Tet Offensive, Green, landed in Vietnam. Twelve months and three Purple Hearts later he left.

Nothing has ever been the same.

"It does change your life unbelievably," says Green, now 57. **"The thing about it is, you don't realize it. It is only as you grow older that you find little things that will trigger it."**

Green's good friend, Mike Martin, works in sales in Danville. Martin was a naval supply officer in Da Nang in 1969.

Today, he's 56, successful, and loves to listen to the oldies on KFRC. "But every once in a while a song will come up," he says, "and I have no idea why, but I start crying."

Martin and Green are founding members of Viet Nam Veterans of Diablo Valley, a group some 150 members strong, who often speak to high schools and colleges about the historical perspective of the Vietnam War.

PTSD is not a new phenomenon, but at a public gathering Thursday in Livermore, the Vietnam generation will offer a warning: PTSD will infect the troops in Iraq, who will need more than a little time on the beach when they get home if they are to get over it.

"Anybody that goes to war is going to be affected in some shape or form," Martin says. "We tucked those feelings in our footlockers and 20 years later they came out."

To be perfectly honest, not everyone was sure that talking publicly about Vietnam was a great idea. It was hard enough to discuss the flashbacks and demons with their families.

Martin made it to the stage at his first public meeting, but couldn't bring himself to speak. And even after they begin, many vets may not finish.

"When some of us get up in front of people to give these talks," Martin says, "some of us will literally break. Something flashes in our head and the voice starts to quiver and eyes will well up."

Green, a retired electrician who was such a tough guy on the job his nickname was "Grumpy," admits rarely making it all the way through without a quaver. But the audience is transfixed.

"The first time they came," Ross says. "you could hear a pin drop."

The vets talk about who they were when they left for Vietnam, what they did when they were there, and how they were changed when they returned.

Green, who was "in country" in the northern mountains, lived on the ragged edge of anxiety for 12 months. There were times, he says, when he went 30 days without a firefight. And there were times when they came every day.

"Did you ever kill someone?" a high school kid sometimes asks.

"Yes," Green replies, matter-of-factly. "Next question."

In some ways, Green never left Vietnam. When he walks in a park he finds himself checking for places a sniper might be hiding. He doesn't like crowds. When he goes to a restaurant, he makes a point of sitting with his back to the wall. He doesn't want anyone coming up behind him.

Martin, on the other hand, tells students that he never fired his rifle and never unholstered his pistol while he was in Da Nang.

"But every night I was in Vietnam I was either rocketed or mortared," he says. "I saw things I wish I'd never seen. I was 22 when I went, 23 when I came back, and it has changed every day of my life."

Right now the vets are waiting and watching. Both Green and Martin say that when the Sept. 11 terror attacks took place, some in their group "began to lose it a little." They understand the stress of battle.

And they know troops are coming back from Iraq with loads of baggage.

"Every time a car drives by them for the rest of their life they have to be thinking it is going to blow up," Green says.

They empathize, and would like to help, but continue to struggle with their own pain.

But at least today's troops will have a chance to make the transition. After pretending for years that PTSD was not a problem, the military has recognized the need to provide more support.

Of course, it would be hard to provide less than what the Vietnam vets got.

Green left Vietnam in jungle fatigues, landed in Seattle at 5:30 in the morning, was headed to San Francisco by 11, and was ordering a drink at San Francisco International Airport by 2 p.m. -- only to be hassled by the bartender.

He didn't think Green was old enough to drink.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

For A Little Cash, Iraq Resistance Troops Can Join Occupation Police

March 12, 2005 Navhind Papers & Publications Ltd

All an insurgent needs to join the Iraqi police force is a little cash.

“They just pay some money, get a uniform and a pistol and a salary then kill who they want,” a police official who asked to remain anonymous told Reuters.

“Some who are suspected leave after a month and others just stay in the police force getting information on police officers’ movements and sharing it with other insurgents.”

Some gain access to police operations. Others pose as policemen at fake checkpoints where they stop their victims then shoot them, execution-style.

The police official, a member of the force for 15 years, said widespread corruption and lax screening of job applicants had enabled insurgents to carry out numerous inside jobs.

The police force had become so murky that it was difficult to determine who was wearing police uniforms, he said.

“Policemen sell the insurgents information on officers for \$ 5000. Six days ago a policeman sold two officers who were shot and he is still among us. They know his name is Haidar but no one knows what he looks like.”

Some Iraqi officials have argued that members of Mr Hussein’s Baath Party intelligence network should be brought back to help improve security.

But the police official said settling of scores after decades of dictatorship was hurting those efforts after January 30 elections brought some of Mr Hussein's enemies to power.

"Now you have followers of these new parties killing former intelligence and security officials. Everyone knows this is happening but nothing is being done about it," he said.

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

Occupation Base Attacked

Mar 11 (Prensa Latina)

Rebels launched Friday a mortal shell attack against an Iraqi military base in Dhuluiya, 43 miles north of this capital, killing two Iraqi troops and wounding others.

Iraqi police reported Friday Iraqi businessman Farhan Saadi -who had worked for the US occupation forces- was found dead in Dujail village, 24 miles north of Baghdad.

OCCUPATION REPORT

US Army Held Eight-Year-Old In Iraq Prison

March 11 2005 Independent Online & By MATT KELLEY, AP

Children held by the United States army at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison included one boy who appeared to be only about eight years old, the former commander of the prison has told investigators, according to a transcript.

"He told me he was almost 12," Brigadier General Janis Karpinski told officials investigating prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib.

"He told me his brother was there with him, but he really wanted to see his mother, could he please call his mother. He was crying."

Karpinski did not say what had happened to the boy in her interview with Major General George Fay.

Military officials have acknowledged that some juvenile prisoners had been held at Abu Ghraib, a massive prison built by Saddam Hussein's government outside Baghdad. But the transcript is the first documented evidence of a child no older than 11 being held prisoner.

On another subject, Karpinski said she had seen written orders to hold a prisoner that the CIA had captured without keeping records. The documents released by the ACLU quote an unnamed Army officer at Abu Ghraib as saying military intelligence officers and the CIA worked out a written agreement on how to handle unreported detainees. An Army report issued last September said investigators could not find any copies of any such written agreement.

Karpinski, one of the few generals to be criticized in Army detainee reports for poor leadership, quoted several senior generals in Iraq as making callous statements about prisoners.

Karpinski said Maj. Gen. Walter Wodjakowski, then the No. 2 Army general in Iraq, told her in the summer of 2003 not to release more prisoners, even if they were innocent.

"I don't care if we're holding 15,000 innocent civilians. We're winning the war," Karpinski said Wodjakowski told her. She said she replied: "Not inside the wire, you're not, sir."

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

That's What They're For: Iraqi Forces Dying At Twice Rate Of U.S.

[New York Times on the Web, March 11, 2005]

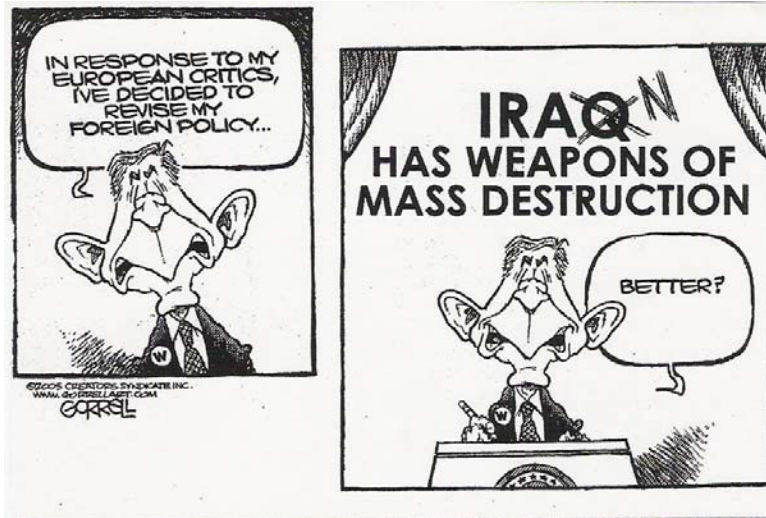
Iraqi security forces are getting killed at twice the rate of U.S. soldiers in the country, according to JCS Chairman Gen. Richard Myers.

Imperial Capitalism A Huge Success In Iraq! Food Prices Double Since Hussein Fall!!

[USA Today, March 11, 2005, Pg.10]

Prices are rapidly climbing. Salaries have lagged behind food price increases. Prices for even the most basic foods have double since Saddam Hussein was toppled.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Army Times 3.14.05

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