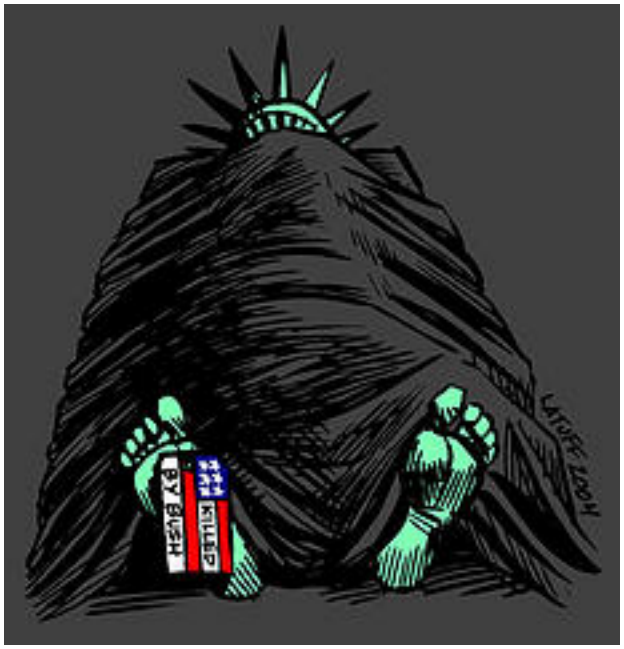
GI SPECIAL 3A73:



Vet Says 60% Of Troops Oppose War:

IRAQ = "I Really Am Quitting"

3/11/05 By Stu Woo, Brown Daily Herald - Campus News

Critical of the U.S. media and Bush administration, a veteran of the war in Iraq spoke Thursday night about the realities of the conflict, saying that U.S. soldiers there were ill-equipped, poorly trained and largely unsupportive of the war.

Specialist E-4 Patrick Resta, who served as an Army medic in Iraq for eight months before returning to the United States in November, spoke before an audience of about 80 Brown students and local community members in Salomon 001.

Resta pointed out how poorly equipped U.S. soldiers were in Iraq. He said that of the 1,000 vehicles his brigade brought into Iraq, only about 10 to 15 percent of

them were armored. In addition, of the vehicles that were armored, many of them had only a half-inch sheet of plywood or sandbags as protection.

"If you look at this fuel truck," Resta said, referring to a vehicle in a photograph, "what you see are three sandbags. That's the armor on that vehicle."

Resta said many troops, including him, took out loans to buy their own personal armor, which they either wore or used as protection in their vehicles.

He said he was never trained to use the rifle he was issued and his gas mask did not fit properly.

Resta also dismissed the idea that most of the troops in Iraq were satisfied with their situation, citing a poll in a military magazine that found that about 60 percent of soldiers in Iraq did not approve of the war. He also said soldiers were open about their disapproval of the war, and many wanted to leave.

"There was a running joke that IRAQ stood for 'I really am quitting,' " he said.

Audience members also said they found Resta's presentation important. Some called the media's representation of the war in Iraq alarming.

"I think that it's a disgrace that our media does not portray everything in Iraq," Liza Littenberg-Brown '08 said.

"It's just unfathomable that what's going on in Iraq is this far off the mark," added Leah Segal '08.

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.

"If You Can, Come To Fayetteville."

We have a big weed to pull on March 19, the second anniversary of the invasion. I want to invite anyone and everyone to come help yank on it. It's in Fayetteville, North Carolina, home of Fort Bragg, the 82nd Airborne Division, the United States Army Special Operations Command, and Special Forces Command.

Faith is starting the journey without knowing exactly how we will get where we are going, but with the belief that through organization and perseverance and the development of strong revolutionary cultures and communities, we can get there.

We have no idea what the last battle will look like, or what the battles of others might look like in other places. We make the fight that is in front of us, here and now. When that one is done, we can step back and see how our interventions have changed things, and prepare for the next.

March 12 / 13, 2005 **By Stan Goff, Master Sergeant, U.S. Special Forces, (Ret'd)**
CounterPunch. (Full article at: http://www.counterpunch.org/goff03122005.html)

It is hard to be an optimist these days, especially when we have access to the internet, where we can quickly familiarize ourselves with a seemingly infinite list of particular and terrible manifestations of this system in its current US imperial form.

The depredations of this system are no longer symptomatic of a class that is aggrandizing their power, but of a class astride a system that -- almost like the yeast used to make a bottle of wine, that expands madly toward its own point of no return to extinction -- is in an inevitable decline.

That's hard to see sometimes, because they have accumulated so much power, and because that system has so penetrated every dimension of our lives all over the world. **And the chieftains of communications have so monopolized the images we see of the world and the interpretations of that world to which we are exposed that this power is magnified, while this decline is denied and minimized.**

But recognizing the accumulation of insults to humanity in this system's billions of daily doses of misery and defeat does not imply that we have failed by failing to defeat the system in each and all of its symptomatic forms.

That's the mistake. That's the first step down the path of despair.

Revolutionary optimism is not pollyanna optimism that leaves everything to God, or fate, or whatever. A correspondent on an old list I was on said, "Praying for peace is like praying for a weedless garden." Revolutionary optimism contains an element of faith, too, but not faith in some intangible realm that envelops our own, and not faith that the world is permeable to our incantations.

Revolutionary optimism and faith is the optimism of an activist and a movement that makes up its mind not to quit until it prevails, and faith in ourselves and the efficacy of collective action.

Faith is starting the journey without knowing exactly how we will get where we are going, but with the belief that through organization and perseverance and the development of strong revolutionary cultures and communities, we can get there.

We have no idea what the last battle will look like, or what the battles of others might look like in other places. We make the fight that is in front of us, here and now. When that one is done, we can step back and see how our interventions have changed things, and prepare for the next.

Despair is individual. It dies with each of us. The revolution is for our grandchildren, for future generations. Think about it. And the best way to fight despair is to connect with a community and do something.

I am an activist in the movement against the United States' attempt to consolidate a permanent and vastly expanded military presence in strategic Southwest Asia. The mass movement in the US and abroad is now making the demand that the US end its occupation of Iraq. The political rulers of the US have taken grave risks and fought off one challenge after another, even from factions of their own class at times, to achieve this goal of a permanent and expanded military presence in this region, because they think it is vitally important to maintain the US position as an imperial hyper-power. They may be right.

If they think achieving this objective is essential to the maintenance of that malignant power, then I tend to think that resisting that agenda has some special strategic value for us...something that goes well beyond the day-to-day struggles against the particular and symptomatic outcomes of the system. Defeating them on this agenda, I believe, will help weaken them and accelerate the end of that imperial power, and the organization we achieve as a movement in the process will strengthen us and give us new wisdom for the next stage, which we can not see clearly until we have resolved this phase.

I just believe we can defeat them on this one, and a lot of us have made up our minds not to quit until we do.

One of the key vulnerabilities of the administration strategy is its over-reliance on the military. The military is not composed mostly of bureaucrats who are protecting their careers.

It is composed mostly of enlisted people, who are often only a short step out of high school.

They are often ignorant and confused, but then so are most of us.

Many of them are also idealistic, and they believe the horse manure that has been shoveled at them, from 'Army of One' Madison Avenue recruiting pitches to the US military as protector of the weak in a caricatured world.

The reality of Iraq has been particularly hard on the most idealistic of these youngsters, and on some older troops as well.

One of the interesting things about this struggle against the occupation of Iraq are all the comparisons being made to Vietnam, especially comparisons to the resistance that developed against the invasion and occupation of Vietnam from inside the military.

There is resistance within the military against this war, too. But it is different in several ways.

First of all, during Vietnam, the US public and the world did not get into motion against the war for several years. In fact, there was more public support for the Vietnam war when Nixon began the process of getting out than there is for the Iraq occupation now.

Now half the US opposes the war, and there was an internationally networked and highly militant opposition to the war even before the occupation began in March 2003. So there is a general situation that lends itself more to doubt about the official excuses for the war.

That public doubt affects the people who are in the US military.

There is also the internet, where more dissident voices are available, including many well-crafted analyses that give the lie to administration bullshit. Soldiers are on the net.

During Vietnam, much of the antiwar effort was concentrated in universities, and many of the activists who tried to connect with dissident GI's and to carry the message against the war to military service members were college students... which was difficult, because there was a good deal of social distance between working class military people and the often class-privileged college students. **This time around, resistance developed early... inside military families.**

A soldier does not feel suspicious and stand-offish with his mom or his spouse or his sister like he might with some unknown college student. I mention women, because the core of the military families antiwar work -- while it certainly includes dads and brothers and such -- has been women. This is another departure from the experience of Vietnam.

Finally, there was no Veterans for Peace or Korean Veterans Against the War already on the ground and organized when the aggression against Vietnam took off. But there is a very vital Vietnam Veterans network and a Veterans for Peace now, which constitute a set of voices that have special access to soldiers, and who have created communities prepared to support dissident soldiers in a variety of ways.

So the Bush strategy is vulnerable, and the institution upon which he has placed the burden of this strategy -- the military -- is vulnerable to our interventions.

I am optimistic.

There's plenty to be optimistic about.

Since the resistance from within military communities started, military families groups and veterans groups have combined their efforts. Military Families Speak Out spawned Gold Star Families for Peace, an organization of families whose loved ones have been killed in the war. Veterans for Peace has midwifed Iraq Veterans Against the War. GI counselors from legal and faith communities, including the GI Rights Hotline, the National Lawyers Guild Military Law Task Force, Quaker House, and Catholic Worker have developed personal and working relationships with each other, and have begun to network their efforts with antiwar military families in UK.

We have linked up with September 11 victims' families in September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows. We have also integrated our work and collaborated with national

organizations like United for Peace and Justice and International ANSWER. Press and activist organizations from all over the world seek out spokespersons from this network.

In Iraq, there is a powerful and multiform resistance to the occupation that is proving to be very resilient. But that is only half the battle to stop the occupation and derail the imperial goal of an expanded and permanent US military presence in the region. In the United States and UK, we have a special responsibility, and that is to attack and destroy the credibility of the Bush-Blair enterprise and to mount an increasingly militant resistance at home until the political cost is so high, they must leave.

I am optimistic. This is inevitable, because certain people have simply made up their minds not to stop until we win. But we have to continue to pull the weeds in the garden.

We have a big weed to pull on March 19, the second anniversary of the invasion. I want to invite anyone and everyone to come help yank on it. It's in Fayetteville, North Carolina, home of Fort Bragg, the 82nd Airborne Division, the United States Army Special Operations Command, and Special Forces Command.

We need numbers. We need big numbers, because when they are big enough, especially at Fort Bragg, even the capitalist press has a hard time ignoring it. We need numbers, because then the press that is drawn by their own competition to the site will have to see and hear the voices of opposition coming from soldiers, from veterans, from soldier's families, and from those who have had their loved ones sacrificed on the alter of Empire.

We need numbers to further polarize our society, to deepen that polarization until it becomes a crisis for the rulers. Big numbers are optimism in action, and our optimism right now is our most potent weapon.

If you can, come to Fayetteville. Google search "fayetteville march 19" to find bus schedules and details. Buses are coming from Georgia to Maine. Plan a road trip. Catch a plane. [For more, see http://www.ncpeacejustice.org/article.php?id=91.]

Don't despair and we'll see you there.

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)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed In Mosul; 1514 In Combat So Far

March 13, 2005 AP

A U.S. soldier was killed late Saturday in a small arms fire attack in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, 225 miles northwest of Baghdad, the U.S. command said Sunday.

The death brought to at least 1,514 the number of members of the U.S. military who've died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

U.S. Convoy Attacked Near Abu G

March 13, 2005

West of Baghdad, on the road to Abu Ghraib, a US convoy was attacked on Saturday causing damage to at least one tank.

Bomb Kills Two U.S. Mercenaries

Mar 13, 2005 BAGHDAD (Reuters) & By PATRICK QUINN, Associated Press Writer

A roadside bomb has killed two American contractors in Iraq, the U.S. embassy said on Sunday.

An embassy spokesman said the contractors working for the Blackwater security company were headed for the southern town of Hilla when the bomb exploded as they passed by on Saturday.

A third contractor was wounded in the attack.

The Blackwater employees killed Saturday were in the last vehicle in a four-vehicle convoy and were traveling to Hillah from Baghdad. The road crosses an area known as the "Triangle of Death" because of the frequency of insurgent attacks.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the contractors were assigned to protect American diplomats.

The Blackwater employees killed Saturday were believed to be traveling in a black Chevrolet Suburban, a foreign security official in Baghdad said on condition of anonymity.

Resistance Massed Fire Taking Out Tanks

March 14, 2005 BY Sean D. Naylor, Army Times staff writer

About 1,135 Abrams tanks have seen action in Iraq, Maj. Gen. Terry Tucker, the Army's chief of armor, said in a Feb. 18 interview.

Tucker acknowledged that the loss of even a few Abrams tanks has come as something of a reality check to the armor community. In the 1991 Persian Gulf War, during which Tucker commanded a cavalry squadron, tank combat involved Abrams tanks engaging and destroying their Iraqi counterparts with overwhelming fire in the open desert.

"This fight's different," he said. "The enemy's learned from that. And the technique that they're using is massed fire against one tank: 14, 18, 20 RPGs — I've heard reports of tanks taking 50 RPG hits. It's a new technique that they're using, and in fact we're having some significant damage on tanks that has to be repaired before we put them back in the fight."

The general estimated that Iraqi insurgents have used a dozen different types of RPGs against the Abrams in Iraq. **"My concern is that in the future we'll see more of the newer types, which are more powerful and have more capability," he said.**

TROOP NEWS

Fuck The Troops: Bush Wants $200,000 A Year For Top Political Hacks Serving In Iraq

March 14, 2005 Army Times

Tens of thousands of U.S. federal civilian employees live and work alongside the 150,000 American troops in Iraq

The Bush administration is asking for bigger salary caps for those civilian employees.

Current law limits federal civilian pay to a range of $128,200 to $141,194 per year, depending on an employee's home duty station; the White House says 500 federal employees in Iraq are hitting those six-figure wage ceilings due to hazardous-duty premiums.

As part of its $82 billion wartime spending request sent to Congress, the White House seeks permission to raise the income ceiling to $200,000 per year for those in the U.S. Central Command region or in support of other contingencies.

"Such employees routinely work extended overtime hours and often reach the annual limitation on premium pay before their overseas tour or operational assignment ends," the White House said. **[Boo hoo hoo. Poor babies. Fuck 'em.]**

Uniformed service members get combat-zone pays worth $430 to $680 per month, and those involuntarily extended beyond one year in a war zone earn an extra $1,000 per month on top of that. However, not many folks in uniform are in danger of breaking the six-figure ceiling.

TRAITOR
SOLDIER-KILLER
AN ENEMY DOMESTIC
UNFIT FOR COMMAND

Rumsfeld Kills Again: Guard Unit Sent To War With Antique, Worthless, Deadly Junk:

Still Forced To Use Unarmored Vehicles Today; No Replacements For Damaged Body Armor

After his injury, he requested new body armor to replace the jacket damaged in the ambush. He showed what he was given — an old, torn jacket.

The rear panel was so torn that it could not hold the ceramic plate that is crucial to stopping bullets. Instead of using it, the resourceful guardsman cut up some of the extra Kevlar sheeting they had been given for the M113s, stuffed it in the hole and taped up the shoulder piece.

Some of his troops found a collar piece, left on the floor by the Virginia National Guard unit they replaced.

"I scrubbed it up and used it. It was better than what they sent me," Foss said.

March 13, 2005 By Steve Walsh / Post-Tribune staff writer

Outside of Tall Afar in Iraq, soldiers with the Indiana National Guard 113th Engineer Battalion were embarrassed by the slow-moving, out-of-date equipment they brought from Indiana.

At times, the local soldiers said they were relegated to guarding towers inside the base because the command didn't trust their aging personnel carriers inside the often dangerous city.

"The vehicles we have are antiquated. They are almost museum pieces and we don't have parts for them. ... It's what we have, and the active duty guys don't understand that," said Sgt. Steve Foss of Michigan City while sitting in the office inside the motor pool.

Nearly three years after the war began in Afghanistan, Guard officials frankly said they had not expected their role would expand to make up 40 percent of the force deployed in Iraq.

They said it will take time to break the decades-old practice of equipping reserve units with equipment cast off by the regular Army.

In early February, after the 113th Engineers were in Iraq about a month, one of the four armored personnel carriers brought from Indiana had blown its engine's head gaskets and was leaking oil so badly that it could not be used. The chassis of another of the four M113 armored personnel carriers had a manufacture date of 1967 — a year before the Tet offensive in the Vietnam War. Its engine and

transmission had been refurbished 24 years ago, in 1981, the year Ronald Reagan took office.

The National Guard unit, based in Gary with companies in Valparaiso and LaPorte, deployed with bulldozers manufactured in the mid-1970s.

Soldiers with the 113th Engineer Battalion suffered with equipment failures on election night in Mosul. A front loader broke down. Local soldiers had been taking fire in the city that night. They had inherited front loaders built in the early 1980s, from the Virginia National Guard unit they replaced. The aging front loaders — which had already been heavily used in the months before the Indiana soldiers arrived in Mosul — often broke down.

In at least one critical case, local soldiers left behind better equipment back in Indiana. The Northwest Indiana unit was sent into Iraq with an older model of armored personnel carriers, even though soldiers trained on newer equipment at Camp Atterbury in southern Indiana.

The commander at Camp Atterbury, Col. Kenneth Newlin, speculated that the training equipment could have come from other units that could later be deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. Newlin began his military career as a soldier in the 113th Engineer Battalion, based in Gary. He later commanded the unit before taking over as the commander of the National Guard training base in Edinburgh, Ind.

“I have to believe the 113th (armored personnel carrier) issue was simply beyond their ability to fix,” he said.

The Indiana unit replaced a Virginia National Guard unit. Newlin pointed out that commanders with the Virginia National Guard unit recommended the Indiana soldiers not bring any M113 armored personnel carriers to Mosul. But the Virginia unit was more mechanized, with a larger array of “up-armored” Humvees — a term to describe a street version of the Humvee that is armored with a metal plating from a kit or scrap to make it more resistant to attack.

The Indiana unit had fewer Humvees and none of them had been up-armored before they left Indiana.

Newlin and 113th Engineer Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Richard Shatto discussed taking personnel carriers anyway, because the Indiana unit had “fewer ways to get around on the battlefield.” **Newlin said he could not recall being asked to hand over newer A-3 armored personnel carriers so they could be sent to Mosul. [How convenient it is to have a bad memory when troops are dying and you didn’t give them the best.]**

A week after Newlin was contacted, Indiana National Guard spokeswoman Capt. Lisa Kopczynski confirmed the local soldiers had trained on newer A-3s at Camp Atterbury.

Why weren’t the 113th Engineers, who were deployed to one of the most dangerous regions in Iraq, given a priority for the newest equipment?

Kopczynski could only site military procedure. Atterbury was given the A-3 armored personnel carriers for training. The 113th Engineers took their own equipment to Iraq. *It was inspected at Camp Atterbury and deemed fit for service.* [By who? Can we have some names please, so they can be invited to the funerals? Or better yet, sent to Mosul for a re-inspection. And put Kopczynski on the first plane out.]

"The unit leaves with the equipment on their authorization documents," she said.

At Forward Operating Base Sykes in Iraq, Foss and other local soldiers were frustrated that active duty commanders were leaving them out of missions.

But old and poorly armored equipment could be more than embarrassing; it could be deadly.

None of the 113th Engineers understood that more than Foss. He was the first Purple Heart recipient from the local unit. He was hit by a piece of shrapnel the size of a rabbit's foot when his convoy was ambushed on the way from Kuwait to Tall Afar.

Ironically, the day before Foss's convoy left Kuwait, his friend, Sgt. Jason Otto of LaPorte, talked about the poor quality of the steel plate being installed on the Humvees and trucks for the drive through Iraq.

Soldiers from Northwest Indiana had arrived roughly a month after a Tennessee National Guard soldier in Kuwait on Dec. 8 publicly asked Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld why they were being forced to scrounge for scrap metal to armor their vehicles.

In early January, the jagged steel panels the U.S. Army was issuing to armor the Humvees and trucks still had the look of hastily assembled scraps.

Local soldiers covered jagged edges with duct tape so they wouldn't cut themselves on the doors or the gun turrets.

Anxiety was running particularly high because soldiers were originally told they were going to deliver a fleet of factory up-armored Humvees to Task Force Olympia in Mosul.

The plan fell through the day before the convoys were preparing to leave for Iraq.

A group of soldiers took one of the metal panels for the trucks into the Kuwaiti desert and tested it with various weapons. The makeshift steel panel didn't do much to repel small-arms fire. Their larger weapons cut the steel door panel in half.

Otto described how the soldiers had been instructed to modify the vehicles, attaching steel to the exterior and placing sandbags on the floor. Factory up-armored Humvees had larger engines to handle the extra load and a bulletproof windshield. Soldiers had already dubbed the kits "Mad Max" armor or "hillbilly" armor.

“To be honest, I don’t know how it’s going to work. I’ve never previously deployed with equipment such as this. In theory, it will deflect any of the shrapnel thrown up by IEDs (roadside bombs), small arms fire,” Otto said.

On the third day of the convoy, Otto’s group was caught by a roadside bomb during the ambush outside Tall Afar. The blast would miss his Humvee, exploding in front of the vehicle. The windshield broke but no one was injured.

Foss was ahead of him. His Humvee would take a direct hit when a second roadside bomb exploded. The glass windshield shattered. The gunner, Spc. Michael Kieszkowski of Rolling Prairie, received a Purple Heart after being hit in the leg by flying glass.

A chunk of metal hit Foss’ body armor in the seam between the detachable collar and shoulder. The metal slid around and lodged in his back, near the spinal cord. The heavily armed convoy returned fire but kept moving until it reached the base.

Dazed by the explosion, Foss got out of his Humvee. He checked the soldiers in the other Humvees for injuries. When Otto saw the blood, he told Foss to sit down. After Otto opened the vest, Foss began to feel dizzy from the blood loss.

After the ambush outside Tall Afar, Shatto said the Kuwait-armored Humvees would not be allowed off the bases. The local unit would use the Humvees left by the Virginia unit until its Humvees were up-armored.

The same guarantee could not be made for trucks. There remains a shortage of up-armored packages for trucks throughout Iraq.

Shatto said the trucks were not as vulnerable. They ride higher. Roadside blasts tended to detonate underneath, rather than destroying the crew compartments, as they would with a Humvee. **[This, of course, is the commanding officer babbling all this moronic happy talk. For some reason, he rarely drives a truck out on the road to enjoy how safe it is without any armor.]**

In January and February, the Indiana National Guard in Mosul sent the M113s into Mosul without additional armor. The M113s were operating on election night in the Palestine section of Mosul — possibly the most dangerous neighborhood in Iraq.

According to soldiers with the Stryker unit that patrols the area, American troops are attacked by insurgents nearly every time they enter the Palestine neighborhood.

Guard units are still sent with their own equipment. If they do not have what they need, they can ask their home state. If the state cannot find the equipment, the request is funneled to the National Guard Bureau in Washington. The Guard then calls units throughout the country. If the Guard can’t find the equipment, it asks the regular Army for additional supplies, Johnson said. **[And how many are dead by the time that circle jerk is over?]**

Asked if active-duty forces go through a similar process, Tolson said, "No, active-duty units are pretty much prepared for this sort of deployment."

The National Guard Bureau disputes any notion that it has left units unprepared for duty in Iraq. In the case of the better M113s left at Camp Atterbury, **there is no evidence that a request was ever made to take the newer equipment. [Anybody from the 113th care to comment on that? Your name will be with-held to protect the innocent and nail the guilty.]**

Not all of the equipment sent with the Indiana National Guard to Iraq was built for Vietnam. The local soldiers were outfitted with the latest body armor, lightweight Kevlar helmet and new M-4 carbine rifles.

For Foss, the layer of new equipment appeared to run thin.

After his injury, he requested new body armor to replace the jacket damaged in the ambush. He showed what he was given — an old, torn jacket.

The rear panel was so torn that it could not hold the ceramic plate that is crucial to stopping bullets. Instead of using it, the resourceful guardsman cut up some of the extra Kevlar sheeting they had been given for the M113s, stuffed it in the hole and taped up the shoulder piece.

Some of his troops found a collar piece, left on the floor by the Virginia National Guard unit they replaced.

"I scrubbed it up and used it. It was better than what they sent me," Foss said. [The enemy is in Washington DC running the government, not in Iraq. Duh.]

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.

DEFEND FREE SPEECH AT CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK (CCNY): Asshole College Pres. Finds Counter-Recruitment Protesters Guilty Before Trial; Defends Goons Who Beat Them Up:

Bans One Student From Campus

PICKET the City College of New York administration in defense of free speech!

Thursday, March 17, 12:30 p.m.

Meet in front of the administration building, 138th and Convent Avenue

SIGN a letter of support (see below)

DEFEND FREE SPEECH AT CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK (CCNY)

The three CCNY students arrested and brutalized Wednesday, March 9, for peacefully protesting the presence of military recruiters at City College's "career fair" were arraigned and released Thursday.

They were charged with misdemeanor counts of assaulting an officer, resisting arrest, and disturbing the peace, among other things.

Hospital records from Mt. Sinai confirm that Nick Bergreen and Justino Rodriguez suffered multiple contusions and post concussion syndrome. Their court date is set for April 5.

CITY COLLEGE HITS BACK WITH SUSPENSION AND ANOTHER ARREST

Friday, March 11, Hadas Thier, an undergraduate student at CCNY, was informed that she had been suspended from the University for "posing a continuing danger," and was banned from even setting foot on campus, pending a hearing to take place sometime in the next seven days.

Meanwhile, Carol Lang, a CCNY staff member, was arrested in connection with Wednesday's protest and also charged with assault.

Gregory H. Williams, the president of the College, sent an email to the entire faculty and student body repeating allegations against the students as if they were facts. "The confrontation escalated and several of the demonstrators grabbed and hit the officer. At this point, the three students involved in the attack on the officer were arrested," he wrote.

It is a disgrace that the administration has so clearly sided with campus security without any evidence or due process, rather than looking out for the rights and safety of its students, faculty, and staff.

Together, the actions of the security guards, the City of New York, and the CCNY administration have served to stifle dissent and create a climate of intimidation.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Let them know what you think: (and copy cityfreespeech@earthlink.net on your emails)

Gregory Williams, President Maureen Powers, VP for Student Affairs 212-650-7285/7286, 212-650-7680 (fax) 212-650-5426, 212-650-7080 (fax) c/o Chief of Staff Michael Rogovin c/o Assistant to the VP George Rhinehart mrogovin@ccny.cuny.edu grhinehart@ccny.cuny.edu

George Crinnion, Director of Public Safety Danny Vasquez, Security Specialist 212-650-7992, 212-650-7991 (fax) 212-650-7988, 212-650-7991 (fax) gcrinnion@ccny.cuny.edu dvasquez@ccny.cuny.edu

2. Sign on to the letter supporting free speech on campus. Please find the letter attached. To sign onto the letter, send an email to:cityfreespeech@earthlink.net

3. Picket the administration (and deliver your letter in person)

Meet in front of the administration building, 138th and Convent Avenue THURSDAY, March 17, at 12:30 p.m.

Bring signs and placards in support of free speech on campus!

****

Dear President Williams,

We, the undersigned, are outraged that freedom of speech for faculty, staff, and students of the City College of New York (CCNY) was so blatantly attacked last week.

We were dismayed to learn that three students were attacked and arrested by campus security guards for exercising their constitutionally protected right to assemble and to protest.

We were further outraged to learn that you swiftly moved -- without evidence, due process, or a discussion with the arrested students -- to suspend one of the students and to arrest another protester after the fact.

This guilty-until-proven-innocent approach sends a chilling message: security forces have free reign on campus.

We demand that you defend the CCNY students, drop all disciplinary proceedings against the students involved in the protest, and launch an investigation into the actions of campus security.

Signed,
X, On behalf of:
Hadas Thier, CCNY Class of 2005
Justino Rodriguez, CCNY Class of 2007
Nicholas Bergreen, CCNY Class of 2007

Traveling Soldier Says:
Thank You #5:

GI Specials sister publication, Traveling Soldier, http://www.traveling-soldier.org/ got in trouble five weeks ago, when the computer used for Traveling Soldier blew up. The various files, including distribution lists, and archives, couldn't be accessed.

GI Special sent out a fund appeal.

So far, $1470 has come in of the $1300 need to retrieve the files from the old computer, and get a moderate quality new computer! The excess will be used to pay web site rent.

Thanks to:

KP: Brookline, Mass: $15

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Full Spectrum Disorder
By Stan Goff

Army Sees Rise In Noncombat Ailments;

“We’ve Never Gone To War With Guys As Old As This Before”

March 13, 2005 By Russ Rizo, Stars and Stripes

In many ways, Maj. William Wolfe is a typical Army reservist.

The 47-year-old high school history teacher from outside Hershey, Pa., has served 21 years in a variety of roles as an active-duty and Reserve soldier.

Before deploying with his transportation brigade in January, Wolfe had no major medical problems and worked full-time behind a desk.

But once he arrived at Camp Spearhead in Kuwait, Wolfe soon found his body was not ready for the rigors of deployment: the long shifts lifting cargo and climbing stairs; the stress of a daily commute on roads insurgents were known to attack; the lack of sleep from living with others in a tent.

Within a month, Wolfe’s body sent him a warning. A nagging pinch developed near his heart, and he found himself dizzy and out of breath — signs of possible heart trouble he feared could lead to an attack if ignored.

“You can’t work 14- to 16-hour shifts when you’re 47 years old when you haven’t been in that kind of environment and expect to be fine,” Wolfe said recently from a bed at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany.

To doctors at Landstuhl, Wolfe represents a new reality for the U.S. military. As reservists and National Guardsmen are called to duty in unprecedented numbers, they are bringing new medical challenges with them.

Part-time soldiers now make up about 40 percent of the 150,000 troops in Iraq, a Pentagon spokesman said. Overall, more than 184,000 reservists in all services are deployed worldwide, according to the Army National Guard Web site.

And because these troops tend to be older, military doctors find themselves dealing more with illnesses and injuries common in older patients.

The average age of reservists in all services is 33, according to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. A quarter of all reservists are over age 40.

At Landstuhl, where most soldiers injured downrange go for medical treatment, more troops arrive with noncombat injuries than fighting wounds. Eight out of 10 soldiers airlifted from battle zones since the beginning of the war in Iraq were treated for noncombat injuries, according to the reserve affairs office.

They suffer from diseases such heart problems, joint pain or noncombat injuries such as fractures suffered during training.

Atop the list of ailments is chest pain, followed by back pain and hernias.

For Dr. (Col.) Randolph Modlin, chief of cardiology at Landstuhl, the figures are easy to explain.

“We’ve never gone to war with guys as old as this before,” he said.

In 2004 alone, Landstuhl physicians treated 559 soldiers who suffered from heart disease or experienced chest pain downrange, according to hospital statistics. That’s an average of almost 11 heart patients a week.

By comparison, the hospital treated an average of 24 patients a week for all types of war wounds combined last year, according to hospital statistics.

While most heart patients are over age 40, like Wolfe, Modlin said doctors have seen clogged arteries in reservists in their 30s.

“It’s just amazing how much coronary disease we’ve seen,” said Dr. (Maj.) Michael Huber, a cardiologist at Landstuhl.

Just last month, doctors found a 95 percent blockage in an artery of 37-year-old Sgt. 1st Class Kris Barrett, a National Guardsman from Michigan. They later discovered Barrett came to war with another artery partially clogged that he knew nothing about.

While guarding Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, Barrett felt a pain in his chest and found himself out of breath while walking.

His first reaction: “I thought I needed to work out more,” Barrett said from a bed at Landstuhl before flying to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., for heart surgery.

Like Barrett, some patients go to war with heart trouble they do not discover until they push their bodies carrying heavy flak jackets in the desert heat.

For others, heart disease develops in combat because of habits common to the battlefield, including stress, poor diet and smoking, doctors said.

“An average 40-year-old there puts on 40 pounds of gear in that heat and lets people shoot at him — that’s a recipe for heart failure,” Modlin said.

Back pain is the second most common noncombat injury Landstuhl doctors see. Like heart patients, back patients tend to be older, because bones and joints naturally deteriorate over time, doctors said.

“That low-back twinge a reservist felt at home suddenly becomes a war-stopper,” said Michael Kilpatrick, deputy director of deployment health support in the reserve affairs office.

Hernias are the third most common noncombat injury seen at Landstuhl. Most of these patients are reservists and National Guardsmen because of their older ages, said Dr. (Col.) Tyler Putnam, a general surgeon who treats hernias.

An EKG test likely would have shown Barrett's early heart trouble, preventing him from going to Baghdad in the first place.

But Wolfe's diagnosis was different. After days of evaluations at Landstuhl, doctors released the reservist back to Kuwait. His heart showed no problems.

"I guess it was just the stress," Wolfe said.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Demonstrators from the Ministry of Health hold a protest against salary cuts in Baghdad March 13, 2005. **Hundreds of employees, *including security officers* working at the ministry, protested after the Health Department cut their wages.** (Thaier Al-Sudani/Reuters)

Assorted Resistance Action:

3/13/2005 TheDay & AFP and Turkish Press

In Mosul, guerillas killed three policemen and wounded a fourth at a funeral procession.

Two Iraqis, including one policeman and the head engineer at the Baghdad airport, were killed in two attacks in Baghdad, an interior ministry source said Sunday.

Four other people were killed in a bomb attack on a police chief's home in the north on Saturday.

The chief engineer at Baghdad airport, Moayad Ibrahim al-Muslah, was shot dead Saturday at his home in Ghazaliyah district in western Baghdad, the source said.

Separately, a policeman was killed at 8:15 am (0515 GMT) when a mortar struck a checkpoint in Maamel district in eastern Baghdad, the source said, adding three other officers were wounded in the attack.

Two other Iraqis were killed when a US military vehicle smashed into four cars in southern Baghdad, the source said.

In northern Iraq, four people were killed, including two Iraqi policemen, when a pickup truck bomb exploded Saturday outside the home of Lieutenant Colonel Mohammed al-Juburi, one of the police commanders in the town of Al-Shurgat, said police.

Two Iraqis soldiers died in a bomb attack in Siniya near Baiji, home to Iraq's largest refinery, 200 kilometres (153 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Outside Baquba, 60 kilometres north of Baghdad, a truck driver was killed and two others wounded by armed men after they delivered gravel to a US base.

An official from the party of secular Shiite politician Ahmed Chalabi was seriously wounded by gunmen Sunday morning in Ramadi, 100 kilometres west of Baghdad, police said.

Hamid Farhan Dlimi, a member of the Iraqi National Congress, was driving his car when a vehicle drove up and gunmen opened fire, said police lieutenant Khaldun Dlimi.

Dlimi, his body riddled with bullets, was taken to hospital and listed in serious condition, said Dlimi.

Two policemen were wounded in Tuz, 160 kilometres north of Baghdad, local police said, adding three soldiers had been wounded in a mortar strike in Dhuluiyah, 70 kilometres north of the capital.

In Mahahawil, 90 kilometres south of Baghdad, two shepherds were found dead and a third wounded when they accidentally set off unexploded bombs from the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, police said.

In Latifiyah, six armed men were arrested, two of them wounded, after a gunfight when the rebels tried to blow up a railroad line on a bridge, the source said.

IF YOU DON’T LIKE THE RESISTANCE

END THE OCCUPATION

Oil Pipeline Mortared

March 13, 2005 (AP)

Two attacks on oil installations left pipelines ablaze in Iraq on Saturday.

One blaze occurred between Samara and Fallujah to the east of the Iraqi capital, while the other started after an attack close to the northern city of Kirkuk.

An oil installation security officer in Kirkuk said the pipeline was attacked by mortar fire.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

"Terrified At The Prospect Of An Iraq Ruled By Iraqis"

March 9, 2005 by Naomi Klein, The Nation

Terrified at the prospect of an Iraq ruled by Iraqis, former chief US Envoy Paul Bremer designed elections that gave the US-friendly Kurds 27 percent of the seats in the National Assembly even though they make up as little as 15 percent of the population.

And since the US-authored interim constitution requires an absurdly high majority for all major decisions, the Kurds now hold the country hostage. Their central demand is control over Kirkuk; if they get it, and then decide to separate, Iraqi Kurdistan will handily include the massive northern oilfields.

Kurdish Iraqis have a legitimate claim to independence, as well as understandable fears of being ethnically targeted.

But the US-Kurdish alliance has handed Washington a backdoor veto over Iraq's democracy. And with Kirkuk as part of Iraqi Kurdistan, if Iraq does break apart Washington will still end up with a dependent, oil-rich regime--even if it's somewhat smaller than the one originally envisioned.

OCCUPATION REPORT

“These Are All The Same People Who Came Riding On American Tanks.”

March 13, 2005 By Alissa J. Rubin, Times Staff Writer

BAGHDAD — **With Iraqis increasingly concerned about a security vacuum, the man who is expected to become the next prime minister on Saturday defended the winning blocs, which have not formed a government nearly six weeks after millions of people risked their lives to vote.**

Throughout Baghdad, one of the most mixed cities in Iraq, there are rumblings of discontent and cynicism, even though many people here voted for one of the three slates that took the most votes: the United Iraqi Alliance; Iraqi List, the ticket of interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi; or a coalition of the main Kurdish parties.

The doubts are still deeper among those who did not vote — supporters of anti-American **[translation: anti-occupation]** cleric Muqtada Sadr and many Sunnis Arabs who feel they have been left out of the political equation.

Toward evening in Sadr City recently, several tribal sheiks gathered outside Sadr's office to chat before prayers.

"You know, we've never had any real government and now this is not a real government either; these are all the same people who came riding on American tanks. They did nothing before and they will do nothing in the future," said Awad Abid Zubaidi, 35, before adding a common refrain: "We don't really know who is in charge or whether a government will be formed."

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

"Foreign Forces Must Leave Iraq As Soon As Possible"

08 March 2005 By Patrice Claude, Le Monde

Permanent American bases in Iraq? The question seems so incongruous to His Most Austere "Eminence Abdul Aziz Al-Hakim," (as the leader of the Shiite party which won the January 30 elections identifies himself on his visiting card) that he almost bursts out laughing.

"Ha! Ha! No. No one in Iraq desires the establishment of permanent foreign bases on our land. The United Nations Security Council resolutions are clear: it will be up to the elected Iraqi government, when the time comes, to give those forces a specific departure date. As soon as possible."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

The Spoils Of War: How Cheney's Buddies Looted Iraq

[These are only a few examples of the war profiteers at work, from a very long article. These thieving assholes were supposed to be taking care of the troops. While troops were eating sand and sleeping in rat holes, these parasites, like any organized crime gang, took care of themselves first, and then funneled the money back to the bosses on top as profits. But hey, that's what the capitalism is about, and profits for capitalism is what the war is about. Duh. Dead troops are just a minor business expense.]

March 11, 2005 MICHAEL SHNAYERSON, VANITY FAIR

It was at the LOGCAP office that deYoung saw how well KBR managers in Kuwait were living.

They stayed in expensive waterfront hotels in Kuwait City and its environs at more than $100 a night per room. They availed themselves of hotel laundry service, even while KBR was paying outrageous prices to a subcontractor for laundry. And when they left their hotels, they didn't carpool or take buses. They'd requisitioned expensive-brand S.U.V.'s for themselves.

DeYoung did some number crunching and came up with the figure of $73 million a year. That, she concluded, was what KBR was spending for its top managers in Kuwait City to live so well.

More accurately, that was what U.S. taxpayers were paying—not including the extra 2-to-3-percent profit that came with the cost-plus system. (KBR says only a few managers are in off-base housing and that those in hotel rooms are routinely doubled up. DeYoung says the only people who stayed two to a room were men with girlfriends, "often the lesser paid Balkans girls.")

What were the KBR managers actually doing there?

Not overseeing construction projects, or kicking the tires of convoy trucks they'd brought in to supply the troops, or looking at blueprints for new army bases in Iraq.

According to deYoung, they weren't doing any of that. They were sitting in their hotel rooms, or out on their waterfront balconies, giving the nod to subcontractors to do all the work. Once a subcontractor was hired, the KBR team had no idea whether goods or services were delivered, deYoung asserts. The team just paid whatever invoices the subcontractors submitted, and hoped for the best.

Back in Washington, Congressman Waxman had been raising a stir about KBR's runaway costs in Iraq, so by the time deYoung reached the LOGCAP office a "tiger team" of senior KBR managers had flown over from Houston to Kuwait City for an intense examination of how the company was managing the job.

The tiger team, deYoung recalls, had an odd way of pursuing the problems.

Instead of demanding accountability from all the local vendors to whom KBR had doled out contracts, the "old men," as deYoung puts it, sat by the pool, not at their desks.

"Their objective was not to set up clean accounts or justify costs," deYoung explains. "Their No. 1 objective was to close the books because they were operating under the assumption that if the books were closed they wouldn't be subject to auditing."

In that, they may have been right: when teams of Defense auditors finally reached Kuwait, in the winter of 2004, to start questioning contracts, they focused only on the open, ongoing ones. DeYoung says the closed ones were ignored.

The tiger team was a "social gang," deYoung says, and "insiders were rewarded with fancy digs … and promises of promotion." To stay in the gang, you had to play the game—seeing that contracts were awarded to the favored contractors.

Proper contracting called for competitive bidding. But according to deYoung that's not the way the gang did it. "Typically, the high-ranking guy would go to a young, inexperienced person and use him to award this contract to the subcontractor of choice," deYoung explains. "If the young person refused, he'd be threatened: 'You have 24 hours to make a decision.' If he was adamant, he'd either be sent home or to Iraq.

Which was to say they'd put his life in danger.

"In the subcontracts department, deYoung adds, KBR went through 12 managers in one year. "When you got too close to what was going on, you got moved."

What was going on?

"The subcontractor would come in with bills for four or five times the expected cost," deYoung explains, "which had to do with under-the-table payments."

In May 2004, deYoung came home. She'd seen a lot, and felt she'd had enough. Her one regret was that she hadn't gotten into Iraq; as a former soldier, she'd

desperately wanted to do that. And so she didn't see what it was like to work for KBR on the ground in Iraq, day after day.

But James Warren and David Wilson did.

Warren and Wilson were two of the hundreds of truckers who signed on for Iraq duty with KBR in the fall of 2003. Patriotism was one draw, adventure another. And the money wasn't bad: with premiums for working in Iraq, combat duty in a convoy, and overtime, a driver could earn about $8,000 a month. Like their fellow civilian recruits, they started in Houston with a three-week orientation. For Warren, 48, a Nebraska-born ex–navy man who drives his own rig, the doubts began there.

"Things didn't seem right to me from the first day in Houston," Warren recalls, speaking to Vanity Fair by cell phone from his truck on an all-night drive through half a dozen southwestern states. "The amount of money being spent on these drivers, recruiting them! Every job I've ever had, I stayed at a Motel 6 or Days Inn. These were $200-a-night hotels. And they didn't even put two people in a room with two beds." His KBR recruiter kept saying, "We're spending about $10,000 on each of you in orientation." Warren says, **"So taxpayers were paying hundreds of thousands of dollars before KBR even found out if I was a felon or not."**

The honeymoon ended in Iraq, when Warren and some of the other recruits were shuttled to the U.S. military base known as Camp Cedar, south of Baghdad. Now they were put in big tents, with 50 to 60 people to a tent. And yet, for KBR's managers, Warren noted, the perks kept on coming.

"My first day at Camp Cedar, I noticed flatbed trucks were bringing brand-new S.U.V.'s, like Toyota Land Cruisers, Hummers, 4Runners—some of the most expensive S.U.V.'s that money can buy. I saw hundreds of them going to Iraq." The S.U.V.'s weren't hauling anything, Warren says. They were just for KBR personnel to ride in from base to base. They had power windows and CD players. "You don't have CD players in a car in wartime," Warren says wonderingly. On such delicate vehicles, desert conditions were brutal. "Within 90 days," he says, "they were completely trashed."

Warren's job was to haul supplies on an almost daily basis from Camp Cedar north to Baghdad to Camp Anaconda—a distance of about 300 very dangerous miles. **He realized pretty quickly that the KBR people in charge of loading up the convoys had no experience in trucking.**

"A majority of the goods we transported were transported the wrong way," Warren explains. "You can't haul paper towels and napkins on a flatbed when it's raining and there's no tarp. We lost millions of dollars of goods that scattered on the roads. Pants, boots, shirts, water…. And we couldn't stop to pick that stuff up. We told KBR time and again, You can't haul this stuff on a flatbed—you need it in a container. But they never did change. And what happens is, when you start losing things that way, you attract Iraqis. We had people following convoys so they could pick up stuff that fell off the truck."

Just how much Halliburton has profited from these huge Iraq contracts is a matter of some debate.

David Lesar, Halliburton's C.E.O., told analysts last fall that Halliburton's Iraq contracts have yielded $1.4 billion, with a profit of merely $4 million after taxes and expenses. KBR, which handled most of those, actually incurred an operating loss in 2003 of $36 million on revenues of $9.3 billion, even as the rest of Halliburton increased operating profits by about $200 million to $826 million. If the company bids for more Iraq contracts, Lesar groused, it will probably "jack the margins up significantly."

But there's another way to look at KBR's work in Iraq. Without it, the company would be in truly bad shape. In fact, the Iraq work accounts for nearly all of KBR's growth at a time when it has staggered under $4.2 billion in asbestos claims—thanks in large part to Halliburton's former C.E.O. Dick Cheney.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Two Israeli Troops Shot In Hebron

7 March, 2005 BBC News

Two Israeli soldiers have been wounded - one seriously - in a clash with Palestinian soldiers in the flashpoint West Bank city of Hebron.

The soldiers were injured when guerrillas opened fire at an Israeli security post near the Tomb of the Patriarchs, a shrine holy to both Muslims and Jews.

Hundreds of troops are based in Hebron to protect 600 Jewish settlers who live in the city of 120,000 Palestinians.

Soldiers opened fire in the direction of the Old City where the shots appeared to have come from before imposing an immediate curfew on the area, witnesses are quoted as saying.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, to: www.rafahtoday.org The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.]

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