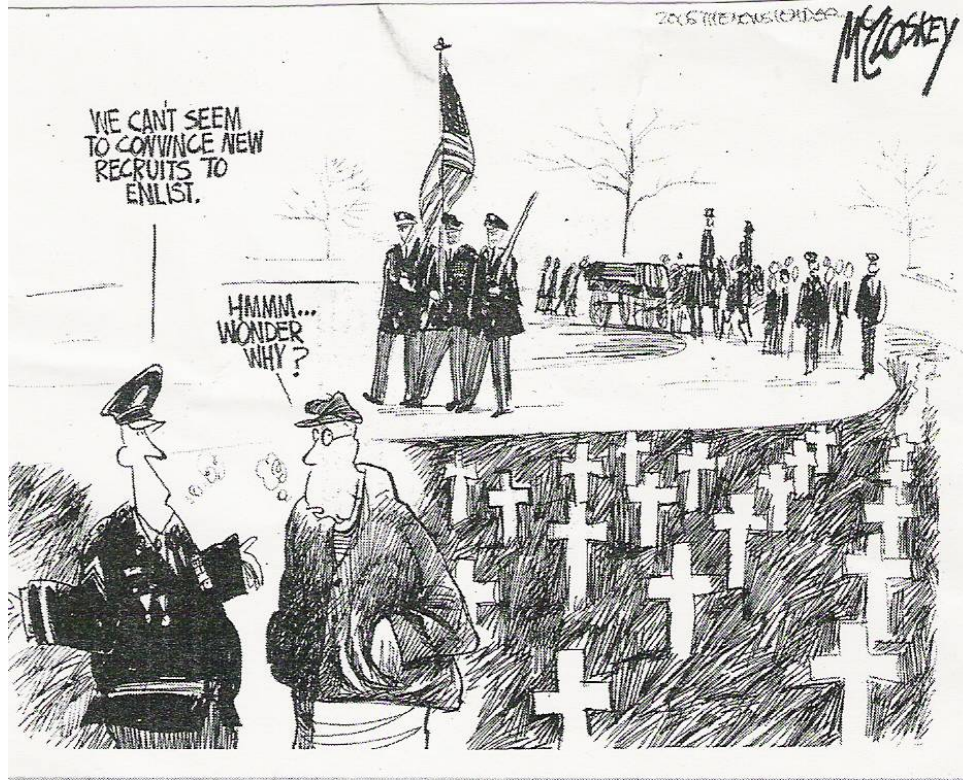


GI SPECIAL 3A84:



**“Now Is The Time For
The Lies To Stop And
The Help To Start.”**
**“Before A Soldier Takes His Life
When It Could Be Prevented.”**

From: Dawn Marie Beals

To: GI Special

Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2005 12:48 AM

Subject: SPC David Beals, 3rd Infantry Division

To everyone it concerns.

This is an update on Spc. David Beals.

I spoke to my husband today, 29 March 2005 0830 (Iraq time).

At this time he seems very depressed, upset, angered, frustrated and at wits end. But more so than anything, he seems to be slipping back into the dark of suicidal thoughts.

He arrived in Tikrit, Iraq last night to his permanent Forward Operating Base.

When he inprocessed he had been advised and given paperwork by his Rear Detachment Commander that he was being re-assigned to Alfa Co, which would have been at a separate FOB from the ones my husbands has made accusations against in the prior months to deployment --- So that he could be safe and seek treatment away from the ones who ill treated him.

However, when he arrived to be inprocessed, reduction of rank orders were handed from his SSG to his 1SG and he was never notified or told of any of this -- he was continuously kept in the dark.

At this time his 1SG picked him up to take him to where he needed to be and at this time he made statements to my husband that, he should APOLOGIZE to the ones who treated him wrong and did not get him help prior to his attempted suicide, he told him that everyone there was mad at him, even though this man knows my husband may still be suicidal, he told him that the Rear Detachment Command Cpt. XXXXX of the 2-7 In. 3rd ID, had been copying him on all the emails going between everyone back in the states before my husband deployed, *and that he purposely lied to my husband telling him that he would go to a different FOB just to get him to deploy.*

NOW, my husbands life is in more jeopardy than if he was to go to another fob to seek treatment, because he has no hope left and thinks that no one cares or will help him.

He is giving up.

I have a letter that will be sent up and down the entire chain of command for the 3rd ID by Thursday morning that will re-affirm that EVERYONE on this installation knows what my husband is suffering from and dealing with and how the Army has failed to help one of their own.

It will also acknowledge that IF my husband becomes yet ANOTHER statistic to take his own life in the country of Iraq, I will personally hold each one accountable and I will not stop until someone decides its time to stand up and say "enough is enough."

We can help every other country, but we can't help our own Soldiers.

I may not win this battle, to be able to save my husband, but in the end WE will win this war.

We listened and we followed there rules, but now is the time for the lies to stop and the help to start. Before a Soldier takes his life when it could be prevented.

bc: Congressman Jack Kingston, Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, CNN Headline News.

God Bless,
Dawn Marie Beals

[Any email offers of help sent c/o GI Special will be forwarded to Dawn Marie Beals. She has been referred to ArchAngel.]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

II MEF SOLDIER KILLED IN NON-HOSTILE INCIDENT

March 29, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-03-20C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Soldier assigned to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, died March 28 in a non-hostile incident.

Humvee Hit In Hit

2005-03-29 Xinhua

In the town of Hit, some 160 km west of Baghdad, fierce clashes erupted between US troops and insurgents, said Dulaimy, adding that a US Humvee was destroyed and two insurgents were killed.

At The Front:

Pentagon Said Nobody Going Without Armor Now. Pentagon Still Lies While Troops Die

Some say they try to think of anything except the jury-rigged "hillbilly armor" some have added to their Humvees for protection, or the military-issue "up-armor" kits that can leave gaps in the armor plating. Soldiers say they try not to imagine shrapnel or super-heated shards of the vehicle blasting through the gaps.

March 27, 2005 By David Zucchino, L.A. Times Staff Writer

BAGHDAD — The war in Iraq is the first American conflict in which a GI on patrol can risk evisceration from artillery shells rigged to a cell phone, then return to base in time for ESPN's "SportsCenter," a T-bone steak, a mocha cappuccino, a gym workout, an Internet surf session, a hot shower and a cold, if non-alcoholic, beer. **[It's sure as fuck the first war where the beer has to be "non-alcoholic," thanks to the "religious" assholes and their "moral" police-state mentality. They'd bust Jesus for having wine. What bullshit.]**

In Iraq, there is the "fob" — the forward operating base — and there is life outside the fob. A soldier's existence in Iraq is defined by the fob, and by the concertina wire that marks its boundaries.

The war beyond the wire is so draining that each of the more than 100 fobs in Iraq is a hardened refuge for the nearly 150,000 U.S. troops here. Brig. Gen. Karl Horst, a 3rd Infantry Division commander based at the Baghdad airport's FOB Liberty, calls them "little oases in the middle of a dangerous and confusing world."

This is a war without a front but with plenty of rear. Many soldiers spend a year in Iraq without ever leaving their fortified bases. Others may never meet an Iraqi, much less kill one. A soldier may patrol for months without ever seeing the enemy, yet risk death or disfigurement at any moment.

Each day in Iraq will end, almost without exception, with an American on patrol losing an arm, a leg, an eye or a life to an earth-shattering detonation of high explosives.

That these bombs are embedded in the most prosaic emblems of Iraqi life — a car, a donkey cart, a trash pile, a pothole — only intensifies the dread that attends every journey outside the wire.

Inside each fob lies an ersatz America, a manifestation of the urge to create a lesser version of home in a hostile land.

The three vast airport fobs, home to the 3rd Infantry Division and 18th Airborne Corps, have the ambience of a trailer park set inside a maximum-security prison.

Soldiers live in white metal mobile homes piled high with sandbags. They have beds, televisions, air conditioning, charcoal grills and volleyball courts.

At the flat, dusty airport fob called Liberty, there is a Burger King, a Subway sandwich shop and an Internet cafe. **TV sets in mess halls and gyms blare basketball games or Fox News, the unofficial official news channel of the U.S. military.** A sprawling PX sells CDs, DVDs, "Operation Iraqi Freedom" caps and T-shirts that read: "Who's Your Baghdaddy?"

Every need — food, laundry, maid service — is attended to by a legion of imported workers from non-Muslim nations, mostly Indians, Filipinos and Nepalese.

They are a chipper, efficient lot who, combined with soldiers from places like El Salvador and Estonia, give the fob the breezy, cosmopolitan feel of a misplaced Olympic Village.

The mess halls are like shopping mall food courts, with salad bars, taco bars and ice cream stations. Cheeseburgers and cheesesteaks hiss and pop on short-order grills. The aisles are clogged with M-16 automatic rifles and flak vests set aside by soldiers. Fit young men and women in combat fatigues mingle with civilian contractors, some of them beer-bellied, bearded and well into middle age. **[And getting a couple thousand dollars a week, while the troops get shit.]**

Administrative specialists who never leave the fob are known, with some condescension, as fobbits.

Like every soldier here, a fobbit is always at risk of sudden death from a random rocket or mortar round. But on most days the greatest danger to a fobbit's health is the cholesterol-packed mess hall meal served in three heaping, deep-fried daily portions.

From the relative safety of fobs, U.S. commanders deliver calm, reassuring accounts of progress — insurgents captured, weapons seized and Iraqi soldiers trained to one day fight the insurgency on their own.

Some commanders plot strategy in marble-walled offices inside Saddam Hussein's former palaces, beneath massive chandeliers and tiled ceilings.

For staff officers billeted at fobs, the war sometimes has all the glamour and drama of a doctoral dissertation. Maj. Tom Perison, the future operations chief for the 42nd Infantry Division at FOB Danger in Tikrit, likes to joke that he is "at the pit of the spear" — a play on the "tip of the spear" analogy used by combat commanders. Perison spends much of his time in one of Hussein's palaces analyzing local political currents and worrying about the state of the regional oil industry.

The measure of military success in Iraq lies not in cities taken or enemies killed. "The key is learning who has control of the local population — the imams, tribal sheiks, local council leaders — and turning that to your advantage," said Maj. Doug Winton, a planner with the 3rd Infantry Division.

This is a war in which soldiers must also be politicians, diplomats, engineers and city planners, as familiar with municipal budgets and sewage capacity as M-16s and Abrams tanks.

Their daily schedules are consumed by acronyms.

The typical BUB — the daily battle update brief — lists attacks by roadside bombs and raids on insurgent hide-outs. But the briefings devote far more time to trash pickups, mosque sermons, road paving, school attendance and repairs to electrical substations. Many officers spend more time with Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations than in armored Humvees.

They preside along with local officials at DACs and NACs (District Advisory Councils and Neighborhood Advisory Councils). They work with civil affairs officers in CMOCs (Civil Military Operations Centers) and with Iraqi police and municipal workers at JCCs (Joint Coordination Centers). **Each meeting requires a perilous round-trip patrol.**

Not even an armored U.S. patrol equipped with 21st century weaponry is guaranteed safe passage on Iraq's roads. To leave the blast walls and sandbags is to virtually guarantee American casualties — without forcing the face-to-face firefights that U.S. troops are certain to win.

If the defining mission of the Vietnam War was the jungle foot patrol, the defining mission of Iraq is the vehicle patrol. There are hundreds a day involving thousands of GIs. There is no such thing as a "routine patrol" in Iraq. Every patrol, whether to raid an insurgent hide-out or deliver the mail or attend a meeting, is a combat patrol.

"We're fighting the hardest war this country has ever had to fight," said Brig. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, who finished an exhausting year in Iraq late last month.

Each journey begins with a pre-combat review, a weapons check, a map session and a grave discussion of how casualties are to be handled. There are medics on every trip. Soldiers scrawl their blood types on their helmets and boots. Aspirin is banned — it promotes bleeding.

In this war, face-to-face combat is rare. It is a war of stealth and cunning and brutally effective means of shredding human tissue. The signature weapon is the IED, the improvised explosive device, a lethal fusion of ordinary combat munitions and the electronic signal of the ubiquitous cell phone. It is the single biggest killer of U.S. troops, 1,524 of whom have died so far.

Every trip outside the wire is also, by necessity, a mission to search for IEDs. Soldiers on patrol are forever scanning the roadside. Their radio chatter focuses on the endless places to hide an IED, and on divining the intentions of approaching drivers, vegetable-cart owners and grinning little boys. Every car is a potential bomb, every pedestrian a possible suicide bomber.

For soldiers on patrol, every Iraqi is the enemy until proven otherwise. All Iraqis are known as "hadjis," for the hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. Often the terms "hadji" and "the enemy" are used interchangeably.

Some children smile and wave and try to cadge candy or coins from passing convoys. Most soldiers wave back but keep one hand on their weapons.

Most Iraqi men, particularly young men, offer only baleful stares. Women are distant, spectral figures in black. [Gee, can it be “most Iraqi men” support the resistance and want Bush’s Imperial occupation gone? Why, imagine that! Silly Iraqis. If they don’t like the occupation, why don’t they go back where they came from? Or at least read more Command press releases about how happy they are to have Bush and his buddies running their country. Maybe they’d stop those “baleful stares.”]

There is a delicate ballet on roadways when convoys pass. U.S. forces have learned to hog the middle of the road to reduce the effects of IEDs from either side. Iraqi drivers have learned to pull off the road entirely and stop, flashing emergency blinkers to signal an absence of malice. Scores of Iraqi civilians have been shot dead by U.S. soldiers and Marines at checkpoints and on roadways.

Many U.S. vehicles display huge signs, in Arabic and English, warning drivers to stay 50 meters away to avoid possible "lethal force." Some soldiers joke that the signs should say, "If you can read this, you're just about to get shot."

It is the job of civil affairs officers to somehow mitigate the poisonous relationship between many Iraqis and U.S. soldiers. In Baghdad's Shiite Muslim slum of Sadr City one day recently, Capt. Raul Gamble, a civil affairs officer, made a point of stopping a patrol to pass out candy, pencils and paper Iraqi flags to a group of children and teenagers.

Predictably, the handouts attracted a rowdy throng of grasping youths. Other soldiers on the patrol, fearing the crowd would draw an insurgent attack, were eager to leave. But Gamble patiently threaded his way through upraised arms to deliver a small stuffed bear to a 2-year-old boy in his grandfather's arms.

"It's the little things that add up to big things," he said, satisfied. [Now if the Brits had only tried this back in 1776, Washington and Ben Franklin and the rest of those terrorists wouldn't have had a chance. Would they?]

Other encounters are less congenial. A day after a soldier in their unit was killed by an IED outside Muqdadiyah, north of Baghdad, soldiers in an IED search team known as the Trailblazers discovered and detonated a roadside bomb nearby.

A crowd of young men gathered to watch, smirking and snickering over the American's death a day earlier. On a concrete wall behind them was a drawing of an ass and the word "Bush."

IEDs are notoriously capricious. Surviving 100 patrols is no guarantee of surviving the 101st; the first trip is as dangerous as the last.

On Feb. 4, two 3rd Infantry Division soldiers who had just arrived in Iraq, Staff Sgt. Steven G. Bayow and Sgt. Daniel Torres, rode in a patrol with members of the unit they

were replacing. It was a "right seat" ride, designed to familiarize new arrivals with conditions outside the fob. Both soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb.

Soldiers on patrol say they find themselves bracing every few moments, anticipating an explosion. The stress saps their concentration, producing more stress when they realize they've lost their focus.

Some say they try to think of anything except the jury-rigged "hillbilly armor" some have added to their Humvees for protection, or the military-issue "up-armor" kits that can leave gaps in the armor plating. Soldiers say they try not to imagine shrapnel or super-heated shards of the vehicle blasting through the gaps.

On his first convoy since he watched a good friend killed by a roadside bomb, Sgt. Travis Hall drove past the site of the explosion. It was a tense, taxing journey, made almost unbearable when Hall's Humvee was stalled in rush-hour traffic for half an hour.

Three hours later, Hall pulled his Humvee safely past the berms and blast walls of FOB Warhorse. He was one month into a one-year tour in which he expects to take several patrols a week.

"Made it," Hall said, stepping out to clear his rifle. "Only 200-some more to go."

Like any war, the one in Iraq is defined by long periods of excruciating boredom punctuated by intervals of sheer terror.

After hauling weapons and anti-American propaganda from an insurgent hide-out on the shore of Lake Hamrin near the Iranian border recently, a patrol from Task Force 1-30 of the 3rd Infantry Division spent a listless afternoon on futile searches of surrounding hillsides.

Then, in rapid succession, they watched another unit chase suspected insurgents through a village across the lake; listened to U.S.-fired 155-millimeter artillery shells whistle over their heads toward an insurgent redoubt a few miles away; and stumbled across the ingredients of a powerful roadside bomb on their way back to base.

A soldier in Lt. Brian Deaton's platoon noticed a pile of rocks at the edge of the roadway, halting the convoy. Insurgents often leave markings to warn civilians about IEDs. A search of a culvert revealed a pair of 9-foot-long, 122-millimeter rockets tucked under a riverside roadway.

As the patrol radioed for an ordnance-disposal team, Deaton noticed several men standing on a far ridge. Fearing they were spotters preparing to detonate the rockets by remote control, he ordered a gunner in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle to fire a burst from his 25-millimeter main gun. The rounds thudded against the ridge, scattering the men.

Fearing a detonation or ambush, soldiers took cover in the hills as two bomb-disposal experts, Staff Sgt. Dustin Flowers and Pfc. Forrest Malone, sent out a tiny remote-controlled robot on wheels to investigate the rockets. Malone steered the robot, a Mars Rover look-alike the size of a child's wagon, from a computer screen set up on the hood of his armor-plated vehicle.

As he guided the device toward the rockets, the robot's batteries suddenly died and it rolled to a stop.

Flowers, who had taken cover behind a boulder several hundred yards away, cursed at Malone over a two-way radio. He thought the private, who was just six months out of military explosives school, had botched the remote-control operation. Flowers is a veteran of 50 ordnance disposal missions in Iraq.

He stomped over to Malone. When the private explained that the battery had died, Flowers muttered, "That robot is gonna be the death of me," and began climbing into a 70-pound bomb-protection suit. He would inspect the rockets himself.

Even wearing the suit, Flowers said, he wouldn't survive if the rockets exploded in his face. "The suit just gives them something to bury me in," he said.

Struggling to walk in the clumsy clothing, Flowers lumbered toward the rockets, but he couldn't get safely close enough to see whether they had been wired to a detonator. He asked Deaton to have a Bradley gunner fire machine-gun rounds into the rockets. The bullets would detonate the rockets if they had been wired to explode.

The gunner fired several bursts, but couldn't manage to hit the rockets. Finally, Flowers decided to take matters into his own hands. Sweating profusely inside the suit, he made his way down into the culvert. He maneuvered close enough to see that the rockets had not been wired.

He and Malone hauled the heavy rockets, one at a time, down an embankment. They wired several blocks of C-4 plastic explosive to them, set a fuse, then hurried back to their armored vehicle and sped to safety.

The rockets exploded with a thump that echoed off the hillsides. A black mushroom cloud rose over the river valley.

The smoke spread as the patrol raced down the roadway, still scanning both sides of the curving mountain road for more IEDs. At dusk, the soldiers eased back into FOB Warhorse, safely home in time for evening chow, DVDs and a hot shower.

Like any war, the one in Iraq is defined by long periods of excruciating boredom punctuated by intervals of sheer terror.

TROOP NEWS

TONY BLAIR OUT

[This is a message from Rose Gentle. Her son was killed in Iraq. She leads a campaign to bring all the Scots and other troops home from Iraq, now. T]

From: Rose Gentle
To: GI Special
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2005 3:47 PM

**my email i got to day;
from john o farrell**

"FROM: THE LABOUR PARTY

"TO: JUSTICE FOR GORDON GENTLE,

***"THIS ISN'T EMOTIONAL BLACKMAIL,
OH ALL RIGHT, IT IS EMOTIONAL BLACKMAIL.
BUT WHAT THE HELL.***

***"IT IS VITAL THAT WE GET OUR LEAFLETS THROUGH MILLIONS OF LETTER
BOXES, OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS,***

***"THOSE RAPID ROTTWEILERS, WAITING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR
WILL HAVE NOTHING TO RIP TO SHREDS.***

***"JUST IMAGINE MICHAEL HOWARD ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FRONT DOOR
OF DOWNING STREET THE MORNING AFTER THE ELECTIONS."***

HOW CAN THE LABOUR PARTY BE SUCH PIGS

O ITS OK GORDON HAS BEING KILLED FOR 8 munths.

ROSE WILL FOR GIVE US, WILL I HELL.

TONY BLAIR OUT, I AM THE MUM OF ONE BOY (KID) WHO

WILL NOT SHUT UP. LABOUR IS IN FOR A SURPRISE

NEX WEEK. I WILL LET YOUS ALL NO

Idiot Army Leader Says Situation In Iraq "Could Lead To Violence"

(Providence Journal-Bulletin, March 28, 2005)

The commander of American forces in the Persian Gulf said that he is "cautiously optimistic" about prospects for Iraq's emerging democracy. **But Army Gen. John P. Abizaid warned, "It's also possible that the politics could fail, and if the politics fail, it could lead to violence."**

[What the fuck does he think troops are dying from now, non-violence? As for his idiotic optimism, check the next story:]

Resistance IED Offensive Gaining Strength In Mosul

(The Hill, March 28, 2005)

Improvised explosive devices in northern Iraq have gone up exponentially in numbers and destructive power, according to an Army colonel whose battalion patrols the western half of Mosul. **When his unit arrived in Iraq last October, it did not find a single IED while patrolling Mosul's streets. But in November, it found three, followed by 15 in December, 50 in January and 134 in February.**

1,200 Florida Guard Troops Called To The Imperial Slaughterhouse

(Miami Herald, March 29, 2005)

More than 1,200 Florida National Guard troops, including about 200 Iraq war veterans, have begun reporting for up to 18 months of active duty, about a year of it in Afghanistan helping train the Afghan army.

Injured Veterans Still Getting Shit On

(Miami Herald, March 29, 2005)

Newspaper investigative reports have found that soldiers who seek disability payments from the Veterans Affairs Department face interminable delays, inconsistent rulings from state to state and a Byzantine appeals process.

Un-Volunteering: Troops Improvise To Find Way Out

March 18, 2005 By Monica Davey, The New York Times

One by one, a trickle of soldiers and marines - some just back from duty in Iraq, others facing a trip there soon - are seeking ways out.

Soldiers, their advocates and lawyers who specialize in military law say they have watched a few service members try ever more unlikely and desperate routes:

taking drugs in the hope that they will be kept home after positive urine tests, for example; or seeking psychological or medical reasons to be declared nondeployable, including last-minute pregnancies. Specialist Marquise J. Roberts is accused of asking a relative in Philadelphia to shoot him in the leg so he would not have to return to war.

Many of the tactics also defy simple categories like official desertion.

"There are a lot of people, many more than normal, who are trying to get out now," said Sgt. First Class Tom Ogden, just before he left for a second trip to Iraq with his Army aviation unit from Fort Carson, Colo. He said he had seen fellow soldiers in recent months who seemed intent on failing drug tests because they believed they would be held back if only their tests "came back hot," while others claimed bad backs and necks, with the same hope.

"I'll tell you what," Sergeant Ogden said, "they're coming up with what they consider some creative ways to do it now."

A group of former soldiers who succeeded in achieving conscientious-objector status has created a Web site, www.peace-out.com, showing people how to apply. The site reported 3,000 hits the first day.

At a base in Germany, Specialist Blake Lemoine, 23, who served in Iraq last year, sent his chain of command a letter this year, announcing all the reasons he should be allowed to quit: the Army conflicts with his religious beliefs and rituals; he and his wife are not monogamous, counter to military policy; he is bisexual.

In February, Army officials brought court-martial charges, accusing him of refusing to perform his assigned duties.

Although available Pentagon records date back only a few years, they show a rise in applications for conscientious-objector status. In 2002, 31 soldiers and marines applied, compared with 92 in 2003. As of November, the latest month for which records were available, 75 soldiers and marines had applied in 2004. Of the 75 applications, 34 were approved, 41 turned down.

That path, though, can be slow and complex. Military rules require that a service member show that he has developed a true moral, ethical or religious opposition to all war.

In his interview with the police, Specialist Roberts said that his wife, worried about his imminent return to Iraq, had suggested a shooting: "She said, 'Why don't you do what everyone else is doing?' She meant for me to try to find some way out of it."

A hearing is scheduled for next week. The rest of his unit, meanwhile, is in Iraq.

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.

Romanians Want Soldiers Withdrawn From Iraq

March 29, 2005 Angus Reid Consultants & March 29, 2005 By Salam Faraj in Baghdad, Agence France-Presse

Many Romanians believe their country's participation in the Iraq war must come to an end, according to a poll by the Centre for Urban and Regional Sociology. 55 per cent of respondents believe Romania should not have a military presence in Iraq.

The Romanian foreign ministry announced that three journalists working for the private television station Prima TV were feared missing in Iraq.

"Contacted by the management of Prima TV about the possible disappearance in Iraq of three of its journalists, the ministry and the main intelligence services have formed a crisis cell," a statement said.

The apparent disappearance of the journalists, including a woman, follows a surprise visit to Romania's 800 soldiers in Iraq by President Traian Basescu on Sunday.

1st MEF Commanding General Says Iraqis Not Intimidated By Occupation

March 28, 2005 By: PAUL SISSON - Staff Writer, North County Times

Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler says "The people are no longer intimidated ... they're starting to stand tall and take their future into their own hands."

Soldiers Join A Revolution: "We Gave Our Oath To The People, To The Constitution, Not To The President."

3.25 & 3.28.05 Wall St. Journal

As the demonstrators broke through the fence surrounding the government building, they faced the army.

“Calm down, sister!” Gen. Abdigul Chotbayev, commander of the garrison told a protester who asked him to resign from the military. **Several minutes later, the soldiers retreated in the face of an unruly crowd that pushed its way to the main entrance and threw rocks at the windows.**

“We have enough bullets here to kill thousands,” said Evgenii Razinkin, a military guard posted outside Mr. Akayev’s office. “But we gave our oath to the people, to the constitution, not to the president.”

Thousands of Bishkek residents responded to televised calls by Mr. Kulov and others to form militias and patrol their neighborhoods and the city’s landmarks.

“We came out because it’s our city,” said Igor Fadeyev, a printshop worker, who donned the citizens’ militia red arm-band and came to stand guard in front of the Central Department Store.

“If we don’t protect it, who will?”

Iraq War Is Top Problem for Americans

28 March 2005 Angus Reid Consultants

Many adults in the United States remain worried about the war in Iraq, according to a poll by CBS News. 26 per cent of respondents say the military operation is the most important problem facing the country today.

What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?

War in Iraq	26%
Economy / Jobs	15%
Terrorism	6%

Recruiting In The Toilet

[Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

March 28, 2005 By Mark Sappenfield, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Five months into its recruiting year, the Army Reserve is 10 percent behind its goal and the National Guard is 24 percent off.

Since 2001, more than 60,000 Guard and Reserve troops have been deployed at least twice, blurring the line between active and reserve soldiers and affecting recruitment efforts.

MORE:

The Most Despicable Recruiting Lie Of 2005, So Far: “No Soldier Died Because They Were Missing Armor.”

March 21, 2005 By Joseph R. Chenelly, Army Times staff writer.

Relaxed for the moment, the recruiter pulls his government vehicle into a parking lot to pick up a 20-year-old potential recruit.

The stocky young man stands on the curb wearing a half-unbuttoned white dress shirt with yellow stains. He still has an apron from work tied around his waist. He pulls the car door open with force, flops onto the velour-covered front seat and flicks the green pine air freshener dangling from the rearview mirror.

“Ready to meet my mom?” the young man asks with a grin. “She said she’s ready to meet you.”

“Of course,” the recruiter replies, stepping on the accelerator even before the passenger door slams shut. “I’m always ready to meet mothers.”

Her eyes well up and redden at times, but she is mostly silent. When the recruiter is finished, he asks if she has any questions.

“How long until he is in Iraq?” the mother asks first. “How long will he be there? Why should he go? He can make something of himself here, too, you know.”

Without a pause, the staff sergeant tells her about the training the young man might undergo depending on his military occupational specialty.

He says her son won’t be sent anywhere until he is ready. He says the son would likely be ineligible to deploy “for at least a year, maybe longer, because he will be learning his new job. **With only four years on active duty he might not even go over. But there is, of course, the possibility:**’

The mother peppers the recruiter with more questions, including one about news reports of soldiers in Iraq without armor.

The recruiter had heard that one before and has a response ready: "CNN stretched the truth on that. Everyone who needed armor had it. The guys who didn't really need it, didn't have it at first, but they have it now.

"No soldier died because they were missing armor."

"I've been recruiting for six years, and it is tougher right now than at any other point I can remember," said the staff sergeant, a recruiter in central Virginia.

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)

***War Hero Calls Army Chiefs
"Rubbish"
"Their Only Experience Of
Fighting Was In The School
Playground"***

[Thanks to artisan, who sent this in:]

"Generals see themselves as corporate executives not soldiers - and they are rubbish at it. Many of them have no understanding of what we were trying to do in the combat zone."

Mar 29 2005 By Paul Gallagher, mirror.co.uk

THE Gulf War hero whose moving speech on the eve of battle earned him world fame has called British Army chiefs "rubbish".

Colonel Tim Collins said their only experience of fighting was in the school playground and that they had no understanding of the combat zone.

The former commanding officer, who told his troops to be "ferocious in battle yet magnanimous in victory", also hit out at Tony Blair for cuts.

In a speech at the University of Kent in Canterbury, Col Collins, 42, said: "The Army is under-resourced and under-funded but no one is willing to stand up to the Government."

And he said: "Many in High Command have never been involved in real battle, except maybe in the playground.

"Generals see themselves as corporate executives not soldiers - and they are rubbish at it. Many of them have no understanding of what we were trying to do in the combat zone."

Col Collins quit the military two years ago, soon after an American soldier falsely accused him of abusing an Iraqi prisoner.

The claim was only made after he objected to the way a US liaison officer was treating Iraqis.

Col Collins said: "A lot of Americans regard non-Americans as animals because it is rare for them to stray outside the US.

"The local people welcomed us as liberators and we needed their co-operation. We certainly didn't want their antagonism."

He was totally exonerated after a war crimes investigation and left the Army with his 25-year career record unblemished.

President Bush even has a framed copy of his speech to the 1st Battalion of the Royal Irish hanging in the Oval Office in Washington.

He told troops: "If you are ferocious in battle, remember to be magnanimous in victory. "We go to liberate, not to conquer. We are entering Iraq to free a people and the only flag which will be flown in that ancient land is their own. Show respect for them."

In his speech at the university, the former SAS soldier said he had to give the talk to justify the war he was sending his men into.

He explained: "On the day before fighting started, one of my men asked me what our mission was. I didn't know what our objective was.

"We were given reasons which were inaccurate but it will be down to history to decide whether the nation was deliberately misled - although there is strong suspicion that it was." Last September Col Collins said the post-war period in Iraq had been marred by "gross incompetence".

West Coast USA



[Thanks to Niko for sending in.]

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Mortar Fire Near Parliament

3/29/2005 Anatolia.com Inc.

The Islamic Army in Iraq, one of the main armed groups in the country, claimed responsibility Tuesday for the firing of mortar rounds near the convention center in Baghdad where the new Iraqi parliament was meeting.

A unit fired "four mortar rounds against the seat of the Iraqi National Assembly in the Green Zone where a meeting was underway in the afternoon," the IAI said in a statement posted on the Internet.

Two mortar rounds struck near the convention center where MPs were gathering for the session at around 1:15 pm (1015 GMT).

Militant Group Kills Three Occupation Military Drivers

Mar 29, 2005 DUBAI (Reuters)

Islamic militant group Army of Ansar al-Sunna shot dead three Arab drivers in Iraq and posted an Internet videotape of the killings on Tuesday.

The hostages on the tape said they worked for a Jordanian firm that transports goods to U.S. forces.

The video later showed gunmen repeatedly shooting the three men outdoors. "I advise everyone to repent and quit their jobs," said one hostage in the tape, which was posted on an Islamist Web site.

"While the brave soldiers of God defend the honor of Muslims ... there are those who sell their religion and honor for cheap earthly interests by working as servants beneath the crusaders' feet," Army of Ansar al-Sunna said in a statement.

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

Assorted Resistance Action

March 28 (Xinhuanet)

"About 10 insurgents attacked the Tel-Ksaiba police station early on Monday, flaring fierce clash with the policemen who defended their building," Iraqi police colonel Hassan Ahmad told Xinhua.

In the Doura district of southwestern capital, police chief Abdel Karim al-Fahad and his driver were shot dead by unknown attackers, said local police.

**“God Willing, We Will Make An
Example Of Them.”**

[Thanks to Joan M. who sent this in.]

18 March 2005 By Awadh al-Taei and Steve Negus, Financial Times

Two bursts of automatic gunfire rang out across a busy street in west Baghdad, echoing off the walls of the Australian embassy and one of the city's major hotels.

A few seconds later, a three-vehicle convoy belonging to a private security company, transporting a foreigner working to facilitate Iraq's parliamentary elections, began to drive away from the scene.

Askew in the centre of the street sat a civilian car, a neat line of bullet holes piercing its hood and windscreen. The driver lay some five metres away, wounded in the side and stomach, and going into shock. Later that day, he died in hospital.

Another motorist, who was driving with his two children in the car, stood dazed in the street, his head lightly grazed by a bullet.

Scenes such as this, witnessed by FT correspondent Awadh al-Tae on January 23, repeats itself time and again across Iraq. This Baghdad neighbourhood of Kerrada alone, according to local police, sees one fatal shooting a week by either private security companies or the military.

Under constant threat from suicide attackers driving explosive-rigged cars, coalition soldiers and contractors follow combat zone rules of engagement to protect themselves: warn drivers who stray too close, but if that fails, shoot. **With procedures designed to protect the identities of anyone who might be singled out for retaliation, the victim's families may never know what happened, let alone obtain justice.**

In this case, the situation was eventually resolved to the satisfaction of the victim's family after negotiation with the security company. However, it is not clear if the parties would have found each other had foreign journalists not been involved.

The unarmed victim of the January 23 shooting was Abd al-Naser Abbas al-Dulaimi, age 29. Unmarried, he worked in the power station across the river to support his mother, two sisters, and the two children of an older brother who went missing in the 1991 Kuwait war. When he was shot, say police, he was out looking for petrol, which most Iraqis are forced to buy on the black market because of a recent shortage at the pumps. They found no weapons on his body, nor in his car.

In such incidents, the victims have little legal recourse.

According to the coalition's Order 17, enacted by US administrators shortly after the invasion, military personnel and most private contractors working in Iraq cannot be brought before Iraqi courts

The US military's standard payout is \$2,500 - about two days' pay for a western ex-military security man, or two years' wages for a mid-level Iraqi civil servant. Many security companies use this as a base.

"This is the price of an Iraqi citizen," snorted one Kerrada policeman in disgust.

In fact, *fasal* - blood money - is often paid when an Iraqi kills an Iraqi, particularly in a rural area. Representatives of the victim's tribe will sit down with the killer's tribe and discuss among themselves the amount of compensation. In these disputes, \$2,500 would be a fairly average payout.

However, while Iraqis resign themselves to the tribal system of arbitration in the absence of a functioning judicial system, when foreigners get involved the process can become insulting.

Tribal arbitration sessions are meetings of equals, often held in bedouin-style tents with all the pomp and circumstance of traditional Iraqi society.

For a relative of an Iraqi shot by a foreigner to even find out whom to contact for compensation, he must often stand for hours outside the barbed wire of bases and police stations, endure intense questioning and weapons pat-downs. When the money is paid, it seems more like a token payout to make a problem go away.

"Two thousand five hundred dollars," said a relative of the deceased Mr Dulaimi derisively. "Twenty-five million would not pay for a hair of his head. I have experience in fighting, and my friends have offered to fight with me. God willing, we will make an example of them."

Resistance Success Confirmed: Foreign Oil Corporations “Scared Off”

The sabotage campaign has created an inhospitable investment climate in Iraq and scared away oil companies that were supposed to develop its oil and gas industry.

March 28, 2005 Energy Security, By Gal Luft

Pipelines are very easily sabotaged. A simple explosive device can put a critical section of pipeline out of operation for weeks. This is why pipeline sabotage has become the weapon of choice of the insurgents in Iraq.

Since President Bush declared the end of major hostilities in April 2003, there have been close to 200 pipeline attacks. According to the Iraq Pipeline Watch at the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, most of the attacks took place in northern Iraq, primarily on the pipeline running from Kirkuk to the Turkish Mediterranean terminal of Ceyhan.

In addition, there have been dozens of attacks on oil and gas pipelines leading to the refineries around Baghdad, primarily near the Bayji refinery complex 125 miles north of Baghdad.

In March 2004, guerrillas began striking at oil installations in the south near Basra as well, where more than two-thirds of Iraq's oil is produced. The attacks have exacted a heavy price from the new Iraqi government— it is estimated that pipeline sabotage costs the country more than \$10 billion in oil revenues.

The sabotage campaign has created an inhospitable investment climate in Iraq and scared away oil companies that were supposed to develop its oil and gas industry.

“Resisting Foreign Occupation Runs In His Blood.”

March 29, 2005 By ROBERT F. WORTH, New York Times

BAGHDAD, Iraq, March 28 - For several weeks, Iraq's most powerful politicians and foreign diplomats have been streaming like anxious pilgrims to western Baghdad, to the vast blue and gold dome of the Mother of All Battles mosque, which was commissioned by Saddam Hussein.

They are there to visit Sheik Harith al-Dari, a 64-year-old cleric and tribal leader who has become a leading spokesman for Iraq's disaffected Sunni Arabs.

Mr. Dari, a taciturn man with an air of cold authority, greets his guests in a dim office off the mosque's main hall, which is surrounded by a moat and tall minarets designed to look like Kalashnikov rifles. Then the guests get down to business. Will Mr. Dari, they ask, be willing to help bring Iraq's Sunnis into politics?

Much could depend on the answer. No new government will be viewed as legitimate without the participation of the Sunni Arabs, who largely boycotted the election in January and dominate the violent insurgency here.

But in a rare interview, conducted Monday through an interpreter in his office at the mosque, Mr. Dari made clear that he would continue to view the armed resistance as legitimate until the American military offered a clear timetable for its withdrawal - a condition very unlikely to be met.

"We ask all wise men in the American nation to advise the administration to leave this country," he said. "It would save much blood and suffering for the Iraqi and American people."

Resisting foreign occupation runs in his blood. His grandfather, Sheik Dari al-Mahmoud, is said to have sparked the Sunni phase of the rebellion against the British in 1920 by killing a British officer near Falluja. He joined the rebellion, which had begun with Shiites in the south, and fought in it until he was captured and imprisoned in 1927.

His house in Khan Dari, a village west of Baghdad, has been raided repeatedly by American military teams

Mr. Dari's authority comes partly from his family. In his ancestral home, Khan Dari, his family members have been tribal leaders for at least a century. He also taught Islamic law at Baghdad University for many years before leaving Iraq in 1997 to teach in the United Arab Emirates until Mr. Hussein's fall in 2003. It was only then that he joined the Muslim Scholars Association and attained his current role.

At a recent conference in Baghdad convened by Sherif Hussein, all the applause was for speakers who praised the insurgency.

Some tribal leaders tried to shout down those who spoke in favor of joining the new government.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Insurgent, Resistance, Terrorist?

Indeed, America's first president, George Washington, was a resistance fighter. Is there some commonality between militants in Falluja defending their town and George Washington? According to the dour Webster, there is. Americans may not like it, but there it is. That's the trouble with an unprovoked invasion.

23 March 2005 By Sandy Shanks, Aljazeera.Net

Noting that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for a world treaty banning terrorism on 11 March, one might say it is about time.

But don't be too hard on the good secretary-general. There are already 12 treaties relating to terrorism.

Unfortunately, no one yet has come up with a universal definition as to what exactly a terrorist is. It seems rather simple, but it most emphatically is not. As an example, there is the old saw: "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."

By following the mistaken intelligence provided by the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans - a department conceived by Deputy Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz - it has been argued that the US engaged in state terrorism by attacking Iraq for causes that did not exist.

The issue is, obviously, complex, and I wish Annan my very best in his endeavour to define terrorism.

The three terms in the title of this article have all been used to describe the militants fighting the coalition forces in Iraq headed by the US. The three words have completely different meanings, so they can't be all three.

It is more than a question of rhetoric. Rather, it is a question of subtle propaganda, and the terms are used to describe the same militants by different parties based on their own agendas.

Justifying the attack in terms of the war on terrorism, President Bush's favourite term of endearment for the militants is "terrorists".

The term of choice for the American news media is "insurgent". Webster defines insurgent thus: "A person who revolts against civil authority or an established government."

To believe that the militants are insurgents, one has to accept that the Iraqi government is sovereign and in control of their own destiny without outside interference from another power. That's a bit of a stretch.

Even the American news media refers to the "occupation of Iraq". So why use such an inaccurate term?

Getting back to subtle propaganda, the term "insurgent" has a dubious connotation. They are the bad guys.

The Iraqi government of today is fragile and dependent on occupation forces for security. Noting that these forces are not entirely successful in providing security at the moment, clearly the militants are not insurgents.

Are they resistance fighters?

Recalling that former members of the Fidayin Saddam, Republican Guards, Presidential Guards, remnants of the Iraqi regular army, and others, nearly all members of the Sunni sect, fought American forces in places such as Falluja, Ramadi, Tikrit, Samarra, and other cities within the Sunni Triangle, along with Mosul and other places, perhaps one should, once again, consult Webster. **Resistance: to fight against an aggressor.**

The fact remains that the US clearly instigated the attack and occupation of Iraq, and Webster is unrelenting in his definitions, offering no exemptions for the US.

When a nation attacks and occupies another, there is the attendant baggage that goes along with that act.

Will the American press be more accurate in its use of terms?

There are serious doubts.

The phrase "resistance fighter" conjures up the fighters of occupied Europe during the second world war, courageous men and women confronting Hitler's SS, Gestapo and vaunted Panzer divisions.

<p>Indeed, America's first president, George Washington, was a resistance fighter. Is there some commonality between militants in Falluja defending their town and</p>

George Washington? According to the dour Webster, there is. Americans may not like it, but there it is. That's the trouble with an unprovoked invasion.

I have a healthy respect for a resistance fighter who is attacking or defending against his counterpart - a military force - even if said military force is my Marine Corps. In a combat environment, one respects his foe ...or dies.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

The “Liberation” Farce Rolls On: Occupation Parliament Blacks Out TV Report After Speaker Criticizes Politicians

29 March 2005 By Ellen Knickmeyer and Fred Barbash, The Washington Post

Iraq's attempt to fill the first posts in a national-unity government erupted in shouting and factional strife Tuesday, as what politicians described as last-minute power plays overran a Shiite- and Kurd-led effort to form a coalition with Sunnis.

A National Assembly session meant to elect the essential post of assembly speaker opened with Islamic prayers followed by a veiled lawmaker rising to her feet in black robes to denounce "these behind-the-scenes" talks on a new government.

A quick series of complaints followed with rank-and-file lawmakers expressing frustration at the more than two months of haggling over forming a government following the Jan. 30 national elections.

"Why don't you give us the details of what is going on in this democratic process?" said the robed lawmaker, whose identity was not discernible from a television feed that was journalists' only access to the session.

"What shall we tell those who sacrificed their lives in the 30th of January?" lawmaker Hussein Sadr, whose own bloc has been linked to this week's latest delay, asked the assembly.

"Speed up!" Sadr said.

Assembly leaders abruptly ordered news cameras out of the hall after 22 minutes.

For the Iraqi public, television broadcasts of what was only the second session of their new parliament snapped to black, then went to a Saddam Hussein-era-style tape of a popular singer warbling an Iraqi national anthem.

The “Liberation” Farce Rolls On: Two Leather Dealers Paraded As A Officers In Syrian Intelligence

29 March 2005 Dahi Hassan, Khaleej Times Online

MA'ARAT AL NO'UMAN, SYRIA, 29 March 2005 — The families and relatives of the Syrian citizens, who last week appeared on Iraqi state television making confessions alleging that they were Syrian intelligence officers, confirmed that those "officers" are merely leather dealers who left their shops at this small town to sell their products in the neighbouring Arab country.

They asserted that Ahmed Al Farra and Mahmoud Al Rammah were threatened and forced by Iraqi and US intelligence agents to make such anti-Syrian political confessions as part of a well-organised campaign to destabilise Syria and build up a case to attack it.

"My son Ahmed is a colonel! A colonel in the intelligence! He has not even completed his elementary school. He is a sick man who has recently undergone several surgeries," said Umm Ahmed, mother of Ahmed Al Farra, the Syrian citizen who appeared on Al Iraqiyya Satallite TV Channel, claiming that he was a colonel in the Syrian intelligence apparatus which was running agents in Iraq and managing insurgents camps.

Umm Ahmed said that she was surprised to see her son Ahmed appearing on the Iraqi state television, but her surprise turned into an utter shock when he said that he was a colonel serving at the Syrian intelligence!

"Ahmed never left this town for long periods of time since his birthday in 1977. He has been always busy collecting raw leather materials, handling them, then selling them throughout the country. It was only few years back when he was convinced to sell his products in Iraq as he was told that he can make more money over there," she said, wondering how can a 27-year-old man be a colonel or a brigadier!

<p>Dr Ziyad Al Hiraki, a physician based in Ma'arat Al No'uman, said that the second "Syrian intelligence officer" who appeared on the Iraqi TV station making confessions against his own country, was nobody but Mohmoud Al Rammah, one of his patients.</p>

"I knew Mahoud for a long period of time since he is a sick man with chronic ear diseases. I was shocked to see him on TV since I knew that it was very difficult to him to travel since he can not even walk," said Dr Al Hiraki, adding that fat Mahmoud kept sitting throughout the interview and his interviewers were keen not to show his disability.

Imad Abdulrazzaq Al Sheet, a leather dealer from Ma'arat Al No'uman, said that he knew both Ahmed and Mahmoud for a long time since they all work in the same profession.

Army Admits Violations Of Geneva Conventions!

26 March 2005 The Associated Press

Washington -- **Newly released government documents say the abuse of prisoners in Iraq by US forces was more widespread than previously reported.**

An officer found that detainees "were being systematically and intentionally mistreated" at a holding facility near Mosul in December 2003. The 311th Military Intelligence Battalion of the Army's 101st Airborne Division ran the lockup.

Records previously released by the Army have detailed abuses at Abu Ghraib and other sites in Iraq as well as at sites in Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The documents released Friday were the first to reveal abuses at the jail in Mosul and are among the few to allege torture directly.

"There is evidence that suggests the 311th MI personnel and/or translators engaged in physical torture of the detainees," a memo from the investigator said. The January 2004 report said the prisoners' rights under the Geneva Conventions were violated.

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two U.S. Soldiers, Six Afghans Wounded In Ambush

March 29, 2005 Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Attackers using bombs and guns ambushed U.S. and Afghan government troops Tuesday in regions of the country rife with Taliban militants, wounding six Afghan and two American soldiers.

Insurgents detonated a bomb beside a vehicle carrying Afghan troops near Asadabad, 120 miles east of Kabul, in Kunar province, and then shot at them, the U.S. military said.

Four of the six wounded soldiers underwent surgery at U.S. military hospitals, a military statement said. The other two wounded soldiers were listed as stable.

Also Tuesday, two American soldiers were wounded in a similar ambush near Tirin Kot, 250 miles southwest of the capital, Kabul, in central Uruzgan province, the statement said. Both were evacuated to a U.S. base for treatment and were in stable condition, it said.

Kunar and Uruzgan are hotspots for Taliban-led militants, who have vowed to step up attacks on government and foreign targets with the end of the harsh Afghan winter.

Another Afghan soldier was wounded when a comrade stepped on a land mine in western Afghanistan on Monday, the U.S. military said. Three children also were wounded.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Soldier Wounded In Jenin

YNetNews 3/28/2005

JENIN – An Israeli Occupation Forces soldier sustained light wounds after Palestinians hurled an explosive device at an Israeli force operating in the West Bank town of Jenin.

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

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