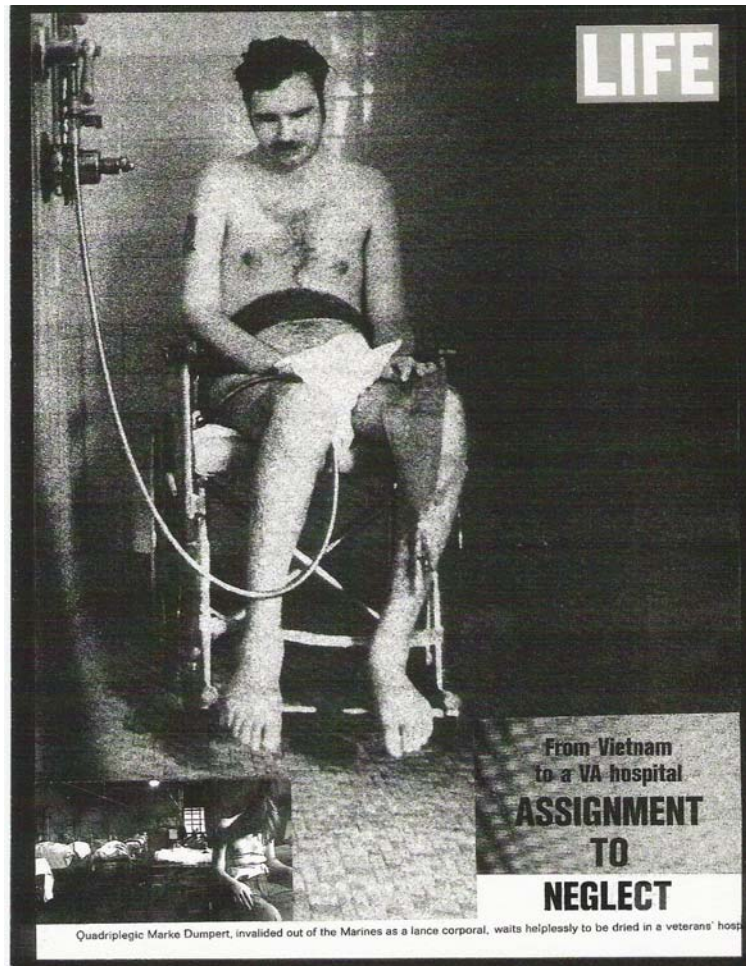


GI SPECIAL 3A85:



An historical trip down memory lane during the Vietnam War.

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

The Truth Will Set You Sane:

Mike Hastie To Dawn Marie Beals:

From: Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71
To: GI Special
Sent: March 30, 2005
Subject: The Truth will set you Sane.

To G.I. Special,

I have a powerful suggestion to give Dawn Marie Beals.

If your husband is that emotionally distraught, he should walk into the Orderly Room, and tell his commanding officer that his tour in Iraq is over.

Now, they will threaten him with everything under the sun, but he has a moral right to say " No." He simply says, "I will not be a part of your madness anymore."

When I was a medic in Vietnam, I saw people go over the deep end.

Nobody would listen to them, so they took their own life.

And in the end, the military did not give a damn. That soldier was just another statistic. It's all numbers to the military.

I have a friend that said " NO " to the military in Vietnam.

He walked into the Orderly Room, and said his tour in Vietnam was over.

His CO threatened him with everything, including a firing squad, which he knew was bullshit, but the military pulls out all of the stops.

The reason my friend was so adamant about saying he was done in Vietnam, was because he finally realized that he was giving radio communication to B-52 pilots who were bombing civilian targets.

That's it! He was done playing kill the civilians.

He was sent back to the U.S. with a psychiatric profile. Can you imagine that?

While the so-called Hippies were dropping drugs in the Sixties, the U.S. Government was dropping Napalm on innocent Vietnamese villages. I could etch that in stone!

After my friend got back to the States, he was discharged six months later with an Honorable Discharge.

Several years later, he got 100% disability from the VA for PTSD.

He is alive and well today, and suffers absolutely no guilt or remorse about confronting Uncle Sam. In fact, he and I go on hikes, and enjoy life.

Dawn Marie Beals, repeat after me, tell your loving husband to say, "NO to Insanity."

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

MARINE KILLED IN ACTION NEAR AL QAIM

March 30, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-03-21C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq -- A Marine assigned to 2nd Force Service Support Group was killed in action today while conducting a combat logistics patrol enroute to Al Qaim.

The Marine was killed when the vehicle he was in struck a land mine.

British Soldier Found Dead

03/30/05 MOD

Private Mark Stephen Dobson of B (Green Howards) Company, The Tyne-Tees Regiment, was found dead in his accommodation at Basrah Air Station on 28 March 2005. The incident is being investigated but is not thought to have been the result of hostile action. Private Dobson was 41 years old and came from County Durham.

Private Dobson joined the Territorial Army in July 1996. He deployed to Iraq on 10 November 2004, and was attached to the Force Protection Unit providing security for

personnel working out of the Multi National Division (South East) Headquarters at Basrah Air Station.

Private Dobson was mobilized in September 2004 as part of a 34 man group from The Tyne-Tees Regiment who joined the East and West Riding Regiment's "Normandy Company" for their deployment on Force Protection duties in Iraq. He had great support from his parents and two younger sisters all of whom live in the area.

U.S. Forces In Ramadi Pull Out Of Barracks After Heavy Attack

3/30/2005 Al Jazeera Publishing Limited

It has been reported that the U.S. forces started early Monday abandoning one of their barracks in the Iraqi city of Ramadi, after intensive rocket bombardments blasted the facility throughout last week.

U.S. Marine Sergeant who gave his name as Dudin has been quoted by unknown news sources as saying that the U.S. occupation forces started leaving their position in a glass and ceramic factory behind the Al Warrar Bridge west of Ramadi after being targeted several times by resistance fighters' attacks.

The sergeant added that the Marines would "continue to exert control over the area with the help of Iraqi forces from another barracks that we will work to make available at a later time."

At around 10:00 am Monday morning, the U.S. troops threw out families from three houses near the factory, setting up observation posts on the buildings' roofs to be able to watch and thus prevent residents from leaving the street on which they have now settled in, witnesses said.

This not the first time for the American forces to use civilians living in the neighborhood as human shields.

After being thrown out of their homes by the American forces, the three families were then told that they would receive compensation for their houses, to rent housing in other parts of the city.

31st MEU Takes Heavy Casualties During Six Months In Al Anbar Province

March 31, 2005 By David Allen, Stars And Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — More than 2,000 Okinawa-based Marines and sailors of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit are scheduled to return home Saturday after a six-month deployment to Iraq.

While in Iraq, 221 members of the 31st MEU were wounded and 50 were killed, including 27 lost in a CH-53E helicopter crash near Ar Rutbah in January.

MQ-1 PREDATOR CRASHES

March 30, 2005 March 30, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL
COMMAND NEWS Release Number: 05-03-32

COMBINED AIR OPERATIONS CENTER, Southwest Asia – An Air Force MQ-1 Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle crashed in Rawah, Iraq, at approximately 7:00 p.m. March 30.

The aircraft was assigned to the 15th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron at Nellis AFB, Nevada. It was in the Central Command area of operations.

Local Soldier Severely Injured



March 30, 2005 WorldNow, KATC

The mother of an Opelousas soldier says her son is being treated at a German hospital tonight after being badly wounded in Iraq.

Sergeant Vincent Hall was hit by a road-side bomb while patrolling the streets with ten other soldiers.

The side of his face was severely damaged, including one of his eyes.

Mary Ellis hall says she has no idea when her son will come home, but she's praying it will be soon.

Mississippi Soldier Loses Legs, Three Others Wounded

Mar. 30, 2005 HOLBROOK MOHR, Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. - One Mississippi Army National Guard soldier lost his legs and three other soldiers also were injured when their vehicle hit an improvised explosive device in Iraq, Guard officials and the soldiers' families said Wednesday.

Guard officials said Specialists David W. Yancy of Ripley and William E. Brooks of Southaven, and Sgt. Leonard A. Casper Jr., of Myrtle and Sgt. 1st Class Wyman C. Floyd of Hattiesburg were injured in the explosion. The men are members of the 155th Brigade Combat Team.

Brooks' mother, Carolyn, told The Associated Press her son was the most severely injured.

"What we know right now is he is in critical but stable condition," Carolyn Brooks said. "He had both legs amputated below the knee."

Carolyn Brooks said the four soldiers were in the same vehicle Tuesday traveling in convoy near Baghdad when the explosion "blew them out of the Humvee."

Carolyn Brooks said her son is a 23-year-old graduate of Southaven High School and had attended Northwest Mississippi Community College and Mississippi State University.

Tanks Take A Beating In Iraq; Resistance Hitting Weak Spots

3/29/2005 By Steven Komarow, USA TODAY

The U.S. military's Abrams tank, designed during the Cold War to withstand the fiercest blows from the best Soviet tanks, is getting knocked out at surprising rates by the low-tech bombs and rocket-propelled grenades of Iraqi insurgents.

In the all-out battles of the 1991 Gulf War, only 18 Abrams tanks were lost and no soldiers in them killed.

But since the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, with tanks in daily combat against the unexpectedly fierce insurgency, the Army says 80 of the 69-ton behemoths have been damaged so badly they had to be shipped back to the United States.

At least five soldiers have been killed inside the tanks when they hit roadside bombs, according to figures from the Army's Armor Center at Fort Knox, Ky. At least 10 more have died while riding partially exposed from open hatches.

The Army will not discuss details of how tanks have been damaged by insurgents, lest that give tips to the enemy.

"It's a thinking enemy, and they know weak points on the tank, where to hit us," says Col. Russ Gold, who commanded an armored brigade in Iraq and now is chief of staff at the Armor Center. **[Which is it? A big secret, or something the resistance already knows. Typical stupidity.]**

Because it was designed to fight other tanks, the Abrams' heavy armor is up front. In Iraq's cities, however, insurgents sneak up from behind, fire from rooftops above and set off mines below. [Well, if it was a secret, it's not any more. There it is.]

A favorite tactic: detonating a roadside bomb in hopes of blowing the tread off the tank. **The insurgents follow with rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and gunfire aimed at the less-armored areas, especially the vulnerable rear engine compartment.**

It's "a dirty, close fight," says an article in *Armor*, the Army's official magazine of tank warfare, by a group of officers led by Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli of the 1st Cavalry Division.

"Be wary of eliminating or reducing ... heavy armor" as the Army modernizes, the officers warn, arguing it is crucial against insurgents' "crude but effective weapons."

The Army says most of the "lost" tank hulls can be rebuilt and returned to battle someday. **Meanwhile, the Army is upgrading the Abrams, including better protection for the tank's engine compartment.**

"In classic armored warfare, you bypass the cities," says Montgomery Meigs, retired Army general and 1991 Gulf War tank commander. Nearly invulnerable on the battlefield, tanks lose a lot of their advantage in urban fighting. "It's a completely different ballgame," Meigs says. **The enemy "can get a lot closer to you, and he can get behind you and above you" to hit places where a tank's armor is thin.**

The upgrades are needed because instead of facing against other tanks 2 miles away, for which the tank is well armored in front, soldiers face an enemy of foot soldiers who bury mines in the streets and fire rocket-propelled grenades from rooftops and alleyways.

"You have a threat that operates to the side and to the rear," he says.
"Understandably, we've got some vulnerability."

Even during the initial invasion two years ago, the Iraqi resistance knew the weak spots on the Abrams.

During the first "Thunder Runs" of U.S. armor into downtown Baghdad troops reported that Iraqi ambushers would wait for a tank to pass and then fire their rocket-propelled grenades at the tank's rear engine compartment en masse, sometimes a dozen or more at once, hoping for a disabling hit.

"Nothing's invulnerable," Meigs says. He says the key to effective use of the Abrams is how it is used. By itself it can be hit.

OOPS: British Occupation Troops Break Into House, Arrest 12 Relatives Of New Member Of Parliament

Mar 30 AFP

The British army apologised for barging into the home of an Iraqi MP in Basra and arresting his relatives.

"It has subsequently become clear that the information that we acted on was wrong." the military said in a statement.

A deputy from Basra, Mansur al-Tamimi, lashed out during Tuesday's disastrous Iraqi parliament session at British troops for blasting into his home in the southern city overnight and arresting 12 members of his family, who were later released.

TROOP NEWS

***"The Government Is Sending
You Back Into The World,***

Without A Job, Without A Fallback."

More Severely Wounded Troops Fucked Over By VA

His former hospital roommate, who lost all his fingers and the use of his badly burned hands, waited six months before his forms were approved. VA officials told Gabe it could take anywhere from a few months to a year before his claims are processed.

While he waits, the bills keep piling up and the family income is dwindling.

03-29-2005 By Justina Wang, La Raza

AURORA — The only sign of the hardships that the Garriga family has been through in the last couple years are a few burn scars and a stack of paper on the living room counter about 8 inches high.

Illinois Army National Guard Sgt. Gabe Garriga, smiling a big toothy grin, looks nothing like the photographs of him in the Texas hospital just a year ago.

The graphic pictures — an odd assortment of plastic tubes sticking out of a bloated, red body — tell the story of a young soldier who suffered second- and third-degree burns on more than one-third of his body from a gasoline explosion in July 2003 in Iraq. His mom, Gisele, said she barely recognized her normally 170-pound son when he swelled to more than 250 pounds because of his injuries.

Gabe still gets tired easily and can't stand for long periods of time, but on Tuesday afternoon, the scars on his arm were barely noticeable and the 20-year-old soldier looked happy to be home in Aurora.

"He hasn't changed; he's the same old Gabe," Gisele said triumphantly.

Though she says the most important thing is having the chance every morning to hug her youngest son, who was at one time given less than a 1 percent chance of survival, **their troubles didn't end when he checked out of the hospital this month.**

The huge stack of papers — forms to be filled out to get disability benefits from the Veterans Administration — is growing.

Gabe is returning to Brooke Army Medical Center this weekend to fill out the paperwork, and he'll continue his job in their public affairs department while he waits for the benefits to kick in.

And that could be a while.

His former hospital roommate, who lost all his fingers and the use of his badly burned hands, waited six months before his forms were approved. VA officials told Gabe it could take anywhere from a few months to a year before his claims are processed.

While he waits, the bills keep piling up and the family income is dwindling.

"People think (a wounded soldier) only affects a family financially if it's a father or a husband who is hurt," Gabe said. "I'm just a son, but look at us."

Before Gabe left for Iraq, the family bought a house in Rochelle, in the hopes that Gabe, his brother and his parents could all live together when he returned. They worked in different towns, but they figured the commute was worth it and they'd all chip in to make the payments.

Gabe's mother and older brother, Daniel, worked at a small food processing plant in Ashton. His father worked as a night supervisor at Hormel Foods in Aurora. And Gabe sent home his Army paychecks to help with the payments.

But when Gabe was injured, Gisele took off work to be at his bedside every day of the 20 months in the hospital. His father and brother flew back and forth, often taking off weeks at a time from their jobs.

Last year, they lost the house and the family split up into small apartments near their workplaces.

If Gabe is issued 100 percent of his disability pay, he'll receive about \$2,300 a month.

"Not to diminish what the VA is doing," said Alex Garba, who co-founded For the Fallen, a Chicago-based fund-raising group for injured veterans. **"But \$2,300 for all that he's done, to me, that's not enough."**

On Tuesday, Garba, along with state Sen. Chris Lauzen, R-Aurora, and Operation Illinois Wounded Soldier, presented the Garrigas with a \$1,000 check. Lauzen founded Operation Illinois Wounded Soldier last winter after hearing about the financial strains that many wounded soldiers return home to.

Many stay in hospitals for long periods of time before returning home, and their families take time off work and pay thousands of dollars in travel expenses to visit them.

Though Garba said he wished there was more money to give out, Gisele clutched the check, repeating her overwhelming gratitude.

"You guys have done so much. This is so nice, so nice," she said emotionally.

Garba's goal is to be able to present families of injured veterans with \$20,000 to \$30,000 to "help them get through the first year" —

"The first year is the most difficult," he said. "The government is sending you back into the world, without a job, without a fallback."

[Marvelous. Nearly killed in a rotten Imperial war for corporate greed, he can't get his disability money for a year, and his family has to sell their house to be with him and nurse him back to health. Fuck this government and the criminal predators who control it. They, not the Iraqis, are the deadly enemy of every member of the armed forces.]

Pentagon Killed Troops With Late With Orders For Armored Humvees: Problem In Iraq Has Taken Nearly 2 Years To Remedy

(USA Today, March 28, 2005, Pg. 1)

The Army repeatedly underestimated the need for more armored Humvees, and even after recognizing its miscalculations it was slow to order more armored versions. It then transported them to Iraq from its existing worldwide supply in fits and starts, according to Army records, Pentagon documents and correspondence with Congress.

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)

Winfield Soldier Still Recovering: "To Me, It Was A Setup," He Said. "These Guys. They're Pretty Smart."

March 30, 2005 March 30, 2005 By SHANE T. FARLEY

Some day in late spring, Marine Lance Cpl. Timothy Horton expects to return home to Winfield. First he has a goal to reach.

"I want to start walking," Horton said. "Before I come home, I want to be walking."

It's an ambitious benchmark against which the young soldier measures himself. At present, Horton uses crutches to navigate the halls of Walter Reed Army Medical Center where he has been hospitalized since last week. He still needs a wheelchair for longer distances.

And Horton has yet to be fitted for the prosthesis that will replace the portion of his left leg irreparably injured when a bomb exploded under the Humvee he was driving in Iraq. He will undergo at least one more surgery before leaving the hospital.

No matter the obstacles, Horton said, he feels fortunate to be alive and starting his recovery. The move to Walter Reed is an accomplishment in itself because the hospital in Washington, D.C., is geared more toward recovery than the Naval hospital he left in Bethesda, Md.

Physical therapy will help strengthen the muscles that will make walking possible. Horton does crunches to build up the muscles in his back and abdomen. It's an important early step to the recovery.

"I've been working on balancing type things, too," he said. "But if you work out your (abdominal muscles), it won't hurt you as much when you start to stand up."

Horton is setting his sites on mid-May as a date for a possible return to his hometown. One brother will graduate from college and another will graduate from high school in May, said Horton, who is a 2003 graduate of Winfield High School.

"I'd like to be there for that," he said.

John Horton, Tim's father and pastor of Central Baptist Church in Winfield, knows of his son's goal but expects it will take time for complete recovery.

One thing the elder Horton is sure of: his son is "doing much better" than he was when he was hurt in February, better than he was a month ago and even two weeks ago.

If memories of the events of Feb. 5 haunt Tim Horton, it's not readily apparent as he talks on the phone. His voice seems weakened a bit by all that he has been through, but when asked about the explosion, he speaks matter-of-factly and in detail.

It was a Saturday, and Horton was driving the lead Humvee as a group of vehicles left through a gate at Camp Junction City in Ramadi, Iraq.

"Many people have been killed or hurt" near Junction City, Horton said. "It's a dangerous place."

He thinks the blast that got him was a "total setup," one that was carefully coordinated.

As he left the gate that day, he travelled just a few feet when he saw a small blast go off about 50 meters in the distance.

Horton stopped the Humvee and was beginning to back up when his vehicle rolled over an improvised explosive device, or IED. Suddenly, there was an explosion and "it blew stuff everywhere," he said. The bomb detonated almost directly under the driver's seat of Horton's vehicle. A passenger in the Humvee was injured and treated for minor shrapnel wounds.

Horton had the presence of mind to turn off the vehicle and then waited as some Army soldiers removed him from the wreckage.

"I was still conscious," he said. "I can remember everything that happened."

Horton believes insurgents had observed the base at Junction City and knew the small decoy explosion would create a traffic jam near the gate as the drivers of the vehicles reacted. Then the explosive in the road could be detonated under the stationery vehicle.

"To me, it was a setup," he said. "These guys. They're pretty smart."

It's Horton's hope that the U.S. military will learn from the incident that nearly killed him. "Hopefully, we're getting smarter, too," he said.

The blast was hardest on the left side of the young soldier's body. From Ramadi, the 20-year-old Horton was quickly taken to Germany for various surgeries.

The femoral artery in his leg was cut and had to be repaired. Horton also had a crushed elbow, a fractured orbital bone in his face and a number of broken bones. Some fingers on his left hand were badly mangled and have yet to fully straighten, he said. He was on a ventilator for a short time.

"I have a bunch of scars on my arms," he said.

Regardless of what is ahead and the permanent effects of his injuries, Horton feels fortunate.

"There are people here worse off than I am," he said. Walter Reed is renowned for its work with war veterans and amputees.

Horton has made no decisions about the future and is just happy to have family around as he recovers. He is grateful to all those who have thought about him and said prayers.

"I'm just taking this a day at a time," he said. "I've appreciated all the cards and prayers. It helps."

“There's No Way I Could Go Die For Money And Oil, Rich People's Investments.”

[Thanks to Paul D who sent this in.]

"I started thinking about the insurgency they're fighting. And I remember seeing their faces and I remember being in combat against them. These were just regular people, there were elderly men, young men. And then I remember looking around Baghdad and seeing the blown up buildings, the people on crutches, the dismembered people, and thinking that these are just their family members.

If someone blew up your house and killed a couple of your family, you're going to pick up a weapon and you're going to fight a war for it."

March 28, 2005 by Benjamin Witte, The Dominion

HALIFAX--US Army Specialist Darrell Anderson hated his seven months in Iraq. He hated the people he was fighting against, hated the people he was fighting for. There was hate between soldiers. And hatred against the Iraqi people. Anderson hated facing death every day. Knowing people who died made him hate even more.

"You stub your foot, you're going to hit something. You ruin your life, you're going to kill someone," the stocky 22-year-old Kentucky man told a crowd gathered at Dalhousie University in early March.

In all likelihood, Anderson did kill people. That, after all, is what the US Army trained him for. In Najaf, he and his fellow soldiers in the 1st Armored Division fired hundreds of rounds. Of course people died. But that was combat at a distance. It was impersonal. Anderson didn't see his enemies fall. Najaf isn't what keeps him up at night.

What haunts the young American instead are a pair of incidents in which he came very close to killing innocent Iraqi civilians. Anderson says he is haunted in recurring nightmares by a series of "what-ifs". What if I'd pulled the trigger that day? What if I'd followed procedure and fired?

Those are the questions he focuses on now, as he looks back on the recent chain of events and decisions that led him to flee the US Army and join a handful of other American war resisters in Canada.

"That's why I can't go back to Iraq," says Anderson. "You can't have a normal life after killing innocent people."

At one point, he and a group of soldiers were stationed in front of a roadblock near an Iraqi police station. For several hours they sustained enemy fire. Several soldiers had died. Then, for a while, it was calm. Suddenly a car drove toward Anderson's position. It

had broken what soldiers call a "safety perimeter." Also the car was emitting sparks, probably from bad brakes. Protocol in that situation is to shoot first and ask questions later, which is what Anderson's fellow soldiers were yelling for him to do.

"It's ok, it's ok, it's a family," he yelled back.

Anderson held his fire. He had assumed the driver was confused, that he was trying to flee the city. He guessed right. Before the car sped away Anderson could make out two children sitting in the back seat. A boy and a girl, he thinks.

"Why didn't you shoot?" some of the other soldiers asked him. "Next time you shoot," they ordered. "They got their procedures," says Anderson. "Even if it is a family, you're supposed to open fire, cause they broke the safety perimeter."

Anderson has another combat memory he can't shake. A hot, Baghdad morning. There had been reports of people with RPG's [Rocket Propelled Grenades], he recalls. "They sent us out to confirm this, which basically means they were out there waiting for us."

To investigate the reports, Anderson and about four or five other soldiers boarded a Howitzer tank. Several guys, including one of his best friends, were leaning out of the tank's portholes, guns in hand. Anderson and the rest of team sat inside, across from each other, eyes closed, "just calmly getting ready for what's about to happen."

The attack came suddenly. The deafening rally of machine gun fire drowned out all other sounds.

"The next thing I know," Anderson recalls, "my buddy's falling, and he falls on top of me, 'cause I'm sitting down, and he's bloody, and he's spitting up blood thinking he's going to die. He's asking us if he's going to die." Anderson looked around. Everyone was scared. No one wanted to take his friend's vacated spot atop the vehicle. So Anderson took it upon himself, moved into the porthole position. "I go up there, and I'm thinking, 'right, we're under attack. Shoot somebody!"

Anderson lifted his gun, aimed, pulled the trigger. Nothing. He'd forgotten to switch the safety to off.

"I turn it to fire, I point again, and it's a little kid, 14 years old. He's running for his life scared," says Anderson. "Just like me and my fellow soldiers." Again, if he'd followed procedure, he would have shot. In a firefight situation, procedure and training dictate that if you're shot at, you fire at anyone around. They're not innocent anymore, Anderson was told.

If they're standing there when someone's done this crime against you, they're guilty. "I joined the Army to serve my country," says Anderson. "I joined knowing there's a fact that we could fight wars. But the war in Iraq is an illegal war. There's no reason for these kids to be over there doing this, and thousands of innocent Iraqis are being killed.

"I started thinking about the insurgency they're fighting. And I remember seeing their faces and I remember being in combat against them. These were just regular

people, there were elderly men, young men. And then I remember looking around Baghdad and seeing the blown up buildings, the people on crutches, the dismembered people, and thinking that these are just their family members.

If someone blew up your house and killed a couple of your family, you're going to pick up a weapon and you're going to fight a war for it."

"So there's no way I could go back. It's my human right to choose not to kill innocent people," he says. "And there's no way I could go die for money and oil, rich people's investments. That's when I decided I couldn't go back."

What You're Fighting For:

War Profiteers Have So Much Money They Don't Know What To Do With It

(Aviation Week & Space Technology, March 28, 2005, Pg. 44)

Across the aerospace and defense industries, senior executives are grappling with the enviable dilemma of what to do with all the excess money their companies are generating. The wealth is a by-product of soaring profits from robust U.S. government spending on defense and homeland security since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Hey, It's Only Rape: Military Sex Assaults Get No Action: Pentagon Stalling Reforms To Protect Women In Service

(USA Today, March 28, 2005, Pg. 14)

Since the early 1990s, studies, scandals and news accounts have shown that women in uniform are plagued by sexual abuse. **The disclosures have led to a succession of investigations but only minor policy changes, as the Pentagon lags on compiling basic data on assaults and revising the statutes that cover the crimes.** For reform to work, the brass will have to take these crimes seriously. The Pentagon's track record suggests that has yet to happen.

Hey, It's Only Rape: Air Force Secretary Helps Buddies In Sex Assault Scandal Get Off The Hook

(Denver Post, March 27, 2005)

The departing Air Force secretary who exonerated a lengthy roster of former Air Force Academy generals from accountability in the school's sexual-assault scandal acknowledged past leadership problems at the school but said that commanders made "honest mistakes" and that punishments would be "replowing old ground."

The official, Peter Teets, acknowledged, however, that he did not interview anyone connected to the rape cases, including former or current female cadets, but said that, in retrospect, doing so would have been a reasonable step to take.

163 Black Troops Killed In Two Years Of War

Mar 21, 2005 Sherrel Wheeler Stewart, BlackAmericaWeb.com.

In the two years since the March 20, 2003, pre-dawn invasion of Iraq launched by President George W. Bush to topple the regime of Saddam Hussein, 163 black men and women have died in the conflict.

That number represents about 11 percent of the military war deaths through Jan 26, 2005, according to figures released by the Department of Defense. Of the blacks who died in the war, 132 were in the Army, 24 in the Marines, three in the Air Force and 4 in the Navy.

As of Friday, more than 1,500 Americans had been killed in Iraq.

Though blacks make up about 30 percent of the military, the percentage of deaths has been less because of their job placement, said David Segal, director of the University of Maryland's Center for Research on Military Organization.

"Blacks are attracted to military jobs that have transfer value to the civilian economy when they leave the military. Enlisting in the infantry doesn't do that for you," Segal told BlackAmericaWeb.com.

"Historically, blacks have been over represented in the military, but not in the combat arms," Segal said. "A larger percentage of blacks work in administrative jobs, logistical services or medical fields."

According to data from the U.S. Department of Defense, 41 percent of blacks in the military work in technical jobs, 47 percent are in administrative jobs and 12 percent are in combat.

British Troops 'Were Supplied With Blank Ammunition'

[Thanks to artisan for sending this in.]

20 March 2005 By Andrew Johnson, Jonathan Thompson and Severin Carrell, Independent News & Media (UK) Ltd.

British troops in Iraq have been supplied with blank rounds instead of live ammunition, one of a catalogue of failures during the occupation that have put their lives at risk, according to a hard-hitting report to be published this week.

Inability to provide body armour and medical supplies in sufficient quantities are also understood to be among logistical shortcomings identified by the influential Commons Defence Select Committee.

News of its findings came as tens of thousands of protesters marched through central London yesterday on the second anniversary of the invasion, calling for the Government to withdraw British troops from Iraq.

The Commons committee report on "post-conflict operations" in Iraq, to be published on Thursday, paints a picture of shambolic organisation since the war.

It praises the Army's professionalism during the fighting, but says "woeful intelligence" left soldiers expecting garlands of flowers. Instead, they found themselves facing a hostile people hardened by a bombing campaign against them.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

Mar 30 AFP & By Antonio Castaneda, Associated Press & March 30 (KUNA)

In Balad, 70 kilometres north of Baghdad, a rebel was killed and an Iraqi soldier was wounded during an hour-long shoot-out, while in nearby Dujail, unknown guerrillas kidnapped a truck driver and killed his passenger, security officials said.

Close to Baiji, 200 kilometres north of the capital, two brothers who worked for the Iraqi army were found dead by soldiers, said an army captain.

In Mosul, guerrillas attacked the headquarters of the Kurdish Democratic Party's local committee with an RPG missile this afternoon, said a member of the party. Two guards of the Peshmerga got wounded in the attack.

A bomb blast killed two Iraqis including one policeman and wounding four others in the governorate of Al-Diwaniah in the south of Iraq on Wednesday, police said.

The bomb blast occurred at a time an Iraqi military patrol was passing on a main road between Al-Hellah and Al-Diwaniah, the police said.



Former Iraqi policemen hold a protest to demand reinstatement and back pay in the town of Falluja March 19, 2005. Following a November 2004 coalition-led offensive against insurgents operating in Falluja, the local police force were fired. REUTERS/Mohammed Faisal

Iraqi Collaborators Terrified To ID Selves; The Resistance Is Everywhere

(Washington Post, March 28, 2005, 2004, Pg. 13)

Many Iraqis working for U.S. forces say they dodge or lie outright in response to questions about their jobs from neighbors, shopkeepers and strangers, but word can still filter out. Sometimes, simply being seen leaving the concertina wire-topped concrete walls of the Green Zone is enough to draw an assailant.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

With enlistment levels falling, the Pentagon said it would focus its recruitment effort on people who had not read a newspaper in the past two years. 3.30.05, The Borowitz Report

Who Reads The Newspapers?

March 17, 2005: James, Vetpax

1. The Wall Street Journal is read by people who run the country.
2. The Washington Post is read by people who think they run the country.
3. The New York Times is read by people who think they should run the country and who are very good at crossword puzzles.
4. USA Today is read by people who think they ought to run the country but don't really understand The New York Times. They do however, like their statistics shown in pie charts.

A Question Of Class

March 24, 2005, From an interview With Gore Vidal by Steve Perry, City Pages Media

[Thanks to Carl R. who sent this in.]

CP: You've observed many times in your writing that the United States has elections but has no politics. Could you talk about what you mean by that, and about how so many people have come to accept a purely spectatorial relationship to politics, more like fans (or non-fans) than citizens?

Gore Vidal: Well, you cannot have a political party that is not based upon a class interest. It has been part of the American propaganda machine that we have no class system.

Yes, there are rich people; some are richer than others. But there is no class system. We're classless. You could be president tomorrow. So could Michael Jackson, or this one or that one.

This isn't true. We have a very strong, very rigid class structure which goes back to the beginning of the country. I will not go into the details of that, but there it is.

Dear War Supporter: Since You Asked . . .

March 27, 2005 by R. J. Eskow, New York Times

"I have to infer from that (statement) that you would be happier if Saddam Hussein were still in power." Paul Wolfowitz

Let's deal with this question once and for all, OK? It's the classic retort given by neocons and other war supporters when anyone questions the wisdom of the Iraq War.

In this case, it was Wolfowitz's response to a student who had just said the following: "We are tired, Secretary Wolfowitz, of being feared and hated by the world. We are tired of watching Americans and Iraqis die, and international institutions cry out in anger against us."

Let's say I get disturbed by a spider crawling the garage wall. I slam the car into it at 50 miles an hour, destroying the car and causing a few thousand dollars in damage to the garage. When my wife objects, I say:

"I have to infer from that statement that you would be happier if that spider were still crawling up the wall." No, schmuck, she says, I'd be happier if we still had a car and didn't have to fork out ten thousand dollars to fix the garage.

"Well, maybe you think our house is safe from spiders," I say. "Maybe you don't think spiders are a health problem. Maybe you don't realize some spiders are venomous."

Thinking of Joe Lieberman, I add "Maybe you're in a 'spider-hole of denial.'"

With David Horowitz-like reasoning, I go on to say "Maybe you support the spiders. Maybe you and the spiders are allies." I then show my wife a chart that includes her picture, together with a tarantula and a black widow, as part of an international network of spider-supporters. "Since you're so pro-spider," I ask her, "why don't you just go discuss this little problem with your 'friends' here?"

Spiders can be a health problem, she says, but there are lots of spiders in the neighborhood. This one wasn't a threat to us, and we can't go destroying things and spending tons of money every time we see a spider.

Before I can respond, Wolf Blitzer happens by. Wolf comes in and surveys the damage, then helpfully points out that "there have been some successes in the war on spiders, to judge by the corpse visible under the crumpled fender of this sedan." You don't make any sense either, she says.

"Well, if you care more about your spiders than you do about keeping this house safe," I tell my wife, "I don't think we can talk about this rationally."

So Dear Wolfie, and anybody else tempted to pose this question: No. I would not be happier if Saddam Hussein were still in power. I would be happier if 1,500 Americans were still alive. I would be happier if 20,000 - 150,000 Iraqi civilians were still alive. I would be happier if tens of thousands of American soldiers didn't have to face a future of disfigurement, disability, and/or psychological torment.

My happiness was never going to be influenced by Saddam Hussein's career path. Instead, my happiness is affected by the well-being of Americans and Iraqis who have suffered needlessly as a result of your war.

Next question.

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.

On Struggle

[Quoted by David Cline, Veterans For Peace]

If there is no struggle there is no progress.

Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, want crops without plowing up the ground.

They want rain without thunder and lightning.

They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.

This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle.

Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

-- Frederick Douglass 1849

[PS from: Gene Glazer Veterans For Peace March 30, 2005]

(That Frederick Douglass quotation has two more sentences - which were the real heart and soul of his statement:)

“Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or both.

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.”

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Head Of Iraq Basketball Federation Shot By U.S. Occupation Troops

03/30/05 irib

According to Dubais al-Arabiya News Network, Hussein Amidi was targeted by US troops Tuesday night as he was on his way to Baghdad airport to fly to Jordan for participating in the West Asian basketball Championship. Also in the shooting the driver of Amidi's car lost his knee. No explanation has yet been made by US troops in this regard.

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

A Death In “Liberated” Falluja

March 24 2005 Eman Ahmed KHAMMAS, (ex Occupation Watch director)

Sudden closing of the roads is a big problem:

We had to attend a very important meeting on reconstructing Fallujah. Mohammad, of the Human Rights Organization in Fallujah, told us that we have to be in Fallujah Cement Factory, where the meeting is held, at 8 am. We did our best to be in time, but the high way was closed just near the cement factory, we had to go all the way back to

take a side road. When we were there, the meeting was over, the head of the Reconstructing Falloja Committee, Mr. Fawzi, was leaving.

Mr. Samir, a director in the factory, volunteered to talk to us.

"Closing the roads is a big problem, soldiers close the roads at any minute, there are no signs, and people do not know which road is open and which is closed at a certain moment. They have to be very careful.

"We lost an employee in the factory because of this problem. Hadi Saleh Hantoosh, who was leaving the factory, did not know that the road he came on in the morning was then closed. He was shot dead by the American soldiers. An ambulance driver was also shot dead, he had an emergency case, again did not know that the road was just closed".

A Sheikh said, "Our city, our history, our documents, our libraries are all erased; we want to know why is that?"

MORE:

26/3/2005, Studies Center of Human Rights and Democracy, Baghdad Iraq

Despite that there is an Iraqi official committee for reconstruction, the occupation forces give out contracts without knowledge or coordination with that committee.

For example one contract to build a school cost One million US dollar for each school, while the official committee estimates the cost between 200 000 and 300 000 US dollars. No local or official committee is supervising these money transactions.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**JUSTICE DEPT. CONSIDERING
TORTURE IN SPACE:
'Thinking Outside The Box,'
Gonzales Says**

March 13, 2005 The Borowitz Report

Acknowledging the legal barriers to torturing detainees in U.S. custody, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales confirmed today that the Justice Department was exploring the feasibility of torturing prisoners in outer space.

According to a Justice Department memo, lawyers for the department are exploring whether interrogation methods banned by the Geneva Conventions would be legal if used on a space station orbiting the earth, or perhaps on the moon.

The memo validated rumors that the Bush administration was actively planning to begin launching detainees from Guantanamo Bay into orbit in order to expand the menu of available interrogation options.

Under the plan, the detainees would be reclassified as "detastronauts" and would no longer be protected by international law, but rather by the somewhat less defined rules of outer space.

In Washington, Mr. Gonzales denied that the memo represented a shift away from his earlier disavowals of torture, arguing that torturing prisoners in zero gravity conditions was merely a case of "thinking outside the box."

"The United States government steadfastly maintains that torture is never appropriate," Mr. Gonzales said, "on this planet."

But according to Dr. Tammy Nabel, a professor of astrophysics at the University of Minnesota, torturing prisoners in outer space may be "easier said than done."

"There are major challenges inherent in torturing prisoners in zero gravity," Dr. Nabel said. "For one thing, it's really hard to make those hoods stay on."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

A Visit To Peaceful, Liberated Afghanistan

March 30, 2005 By Deb Riechmann, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Inspired by Afghan women who have boldly shed their burqas after years of Taliban repression, Laura Bush stepped out here Wednesday, albeit under tight security, to support the emerging rights of women in this war-wrecked nation.

Mrs. Bush's trip was kept secret until the last minute for security reasons.

U.S. troops manned M-60 rifles at either end of four helicopters that flew the first lady and her entourage to Kabul University.

The flights met no peril, but passengers in one helicopter were startled by a loud pop and smoke when a test flare was fired off one of the aircraft — just to make sure they were working.

There was plenty of evidence that the region is not yet safe. The first lady's helicopters were guarded by attack gunships.

During her speech at the institute, the power went out briefly, leaving Mrs. Bush speaking into a dead microphone.

Snipers stood atop the roof of the presidential palace.

Received:

The Iraq POW Camp Tunnels

From: JM

To: GI Special

Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2005 8:14 AM

Subject: "US Military Uncovers Tunnels at POW Camp"

There were some good films about the allied prisoners digging tunnels to escape, from German POW camps, in WW 2.

Maybe someone will make a film of this attempted escape and the men who made it will become famous.

Web Copies

For back issues see: GI Special web site at <http://www.militaryproject.org/> .

The following that we know of have also posted issues: www.gifightback.org,
<http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>, www.williambowles.info/qispecial,
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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