

GI SPECIAL 3B10:

**BETRAYED AND
THROWN AWAY:
How The Enemies Domestic
Slaughtered The Troops Of
Company E**



"Captain Royer was a decent man that was used for a dirty job and thrown away by his chain of command," Sergeant Sheldon said. Photo By J. Emilio Flores for The New York Times

[Thanks to Lietta Ruger, Military Families Speak Out, for sending this in. She writes: The troops speaking out ... truth we know but don't hear....and this story is painful.]

April 25, 2005 By MICHAEL MOSS, The New York Times

In returning home, the leaders and Marine infantrymen have chosen to break an institutional code of silence and tell their story, one they say was punctuated not

only by a lack of armor, but also by a shortage of men and planning that further hampered their efforts in battle, destroyed morale and ruined the careers of some of their fiercest warriors.

On May 29, 2004, a station wagon that Iraqi insurgents had packed with C-4 explosives blew up on a highway in Ramadi, killing four American marines who died for lack of a few inches of steel.

The four were returning to camp in an unarmored Humvee that their unit had rigged with scrap metal, but the makeshift shields rose only as high as their shoulders, photographs of the Humvee show, and the shrapnel from the bomb shot over the top.



Four marines were killed in this Humvee with jury-rigged armor when it was struck by a car bomb in Ramadi last May. Photo By Capt. Kelly D. Royer

"The steel was not high enough," said Staff Sgt. Jose S. Valerio, their motor transport chief, who along with the unit's commanding officers said the men would have lived had their vehicle been properly armored. "Most of the shrapnel wounds were to their heads."

Among those killed were Rafael Reynosa, a 28-year-old lance corporal from Santa Ana, Calif., whose wife was expecting twins, and Cody S. Calavan, a 19-year-old private first class from Lake Stevens, Wash., who had the Marine Corps motto, Semper Fidelis, tattooed across his back.

They were not the only losses for Company E during its six-month stint last year in Ramadi. In all, more than one-third of the unit's 185 troops were killed or wounded, the highest casualty rate of any company in the war, Marine Corps officials say.

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only by a lack of armor, but also by a shortage of men and planning that further hampered their efforts in battle, destroyed morale and ruined the careers of some of their fiercest warriors.

The saga of Company E, part of a lionized battalion nicknamed the Magnificent Bastards, is also one of fortitude and ingenuity. The marines, based at Camp Pendleton in southern California, had been asked to rid the provincial capital of one of the most persistent insurgencies, and in enduring 26 firefights, 90 mortar attacks and more than 90 homemade bombs, they shipped their dead home and powered on. Their tour has become legendary among other Marine units now serving in Iraq and facing some of the same problems.

"As marines, we are always taught that we do more with less," said Sgt. James S. King, a platoon sergeant who lost his left leg when he was blown out of the Humvee that Saturday afternoon last May. "And get the job done no matter what it takes."

The experiences of Company E's marines, pieced together through interviews at Camp Pendleton and by phone, company records and dozens of photographs taken by the marines, show they often did just that.

The unit had less than half the troops who are now doing its job in Ramadi, and resorted to making dummy marines from cardboard cutouts and camouflage shirts to place in observation posts on the highway when it ran out of men. During one of its deadliest firefights, it came up short on both vehicles and troops. Marines who were stranded at their camp tried in vain to hot-wire a dump truck to help rescue their falling brothers. That day, 10 men in the unit died.

Sergeant Valerio and others had to scrounge for metal scraps to strengthen the Humvees they inherited from the National Guard, which occupied Ramadi before the marines arrived. Among other problems, the armor the marines slapped together included heavier doors that could not be latched, so they "chicken winged it" by holding them shut with their arms as they traveled.

"We were sitting out in the open, an easy target for everybody," Cpl. Toby G. Winn of Centerville, Tex., said of the shortages. "We complained about it every day, to anybody we could. They told us they were listening, but we didn't see it."

The company leaders say it is impossible to know how many lives may have been saved through better protection, since the insurgents became adept at overcoming improved defenses with more powerful weapons.

Likewise, *Pentagon officials say they do not know how many of the more than 1,500 American troops who have died in the war had insufficient protective gear.*

[Well, there it is, isn't it. "Pentagon officials say they do not know." They have the equipment and intelligence gathering capacity to count the pimples on the ass of a sheep herder in Chicken Crotch, North Dakota, but "do not know" how many troops have been killed by their incompetence. Well, that's perfectly understandable. They never tried to "know." They were too busy pretending they were winning the war and everything was just fine.

[Nothing but a criminal enterprise of lying murderers, from Bush to Rumsfeld to Myers to the whole collection of sorry ass kissers that infest the Pentagon, The White House and Congress.

[Every member of the armed forces has sworn an oath to protect us against “the enemy domestic.” Well, there they are, in living color. The enemy. Time to make that oath mean something for a change. Time to cash that in.

[There is no enemy in Iraq. That’s smoke and mirrors. Repeat, the enemy has an address, Washington, DC. You think not? Read on. See what comes next.

[Payback is way, way overdue, and the memory of every troop murdered by these Imperial assholes demands it.]

[And get this straight: failure to act against those who betrayed the Armed Forces is one more betrayal of those who gave up their lives or pieces of their bodies in this war for Empire and corporate greed.

[The whole pack of politicians in DC, Democrat and Republican alike, brought this war on for the benefit and profit of the elite class that buys and sells them with “campaign contributions.” All the other reasons offered for invading and occupying Iraq were just so many stupid bullshit lies. And you know it.]

But while most of Company E's work in fighting insurgents was on foot, the biggest danger the men faced came in traveling to and from camp: 13 of the 21 men who were killed had been riding in Humvees that failed to deflect bullets or bombs.

Toward the end of their tour when half of their fleet had become factory-armored, the armor's worth became starkly clear. A car bomb that the unit's commander, Capt. Kelly D. Royer, said was at least as powerful as the one on May 29 showered a fully armored Humvee with shrapnel, photographs show. The marines inside were left nearly unscathed.

Captain Royer, from Orangevale, Calif., would not accompany his troops home. He was removed from his post six days before they began leaving Ramadi, accused by his superiors of being dictatorial, records show. His defenders counter that his commanding style was a necessary response to the extreme circumstances of his unit's deployment.

Company E's experiences still resonate today both in Iraq, where two more marines were killed last week in Ramadi by the continuing insurgency, and in Washington, where Congress is still struggling to solve the Humvee problem.

Just on Thursday, the Senate voted to spend an extra \$213 million to buy more fully armored Humvees. The Army's procurement system, which also supplies the Marines, has come under fierce criticism for underperforming in the war, ***and to this day it has only one small contractor in Ohio armoring new Humvees.***

[In case you missed that, here it is again: “*and to this day it has only one small contractor in Ohio armoring new Humvees.*”]

Marine Corps officials disclosed last month in Congressional hearings that they were now going their own way and had undertaken a crash program to equip all of their more than 2,800 Humvees in Iraq with stronger armor. The effort went into production in November and is to be completed at the end of this year.

Defense Department officials acknowledged that Company E lacked enough equipment and men, but said that those were problems experienced by many troops when the insurgency intensified last year [that's not an excuse, that's justification for a firing squad. And another stupid lie at that. Command knew there was an "intense" insurgency in June 2003, when the 3rd ID got shifted out of Baghdad, and told it had to stay in Iraq.] and that vigorous efforts had been made to improve their circumstances. [A "vigorous effort" with "only one small contractor in Ohio armoring new Humvees." Any further doubts about who and where the real enemy is? Case closed.]

Lt. Gen. James N. Mattis of Richland, Wash., who commanded the First Marine Division to which Company E belongs, said he had taken every possible step to support Company E. He added that they had received more factory-armored Humvees than any other unit in Iraq. "We could not encase men in sufficiently strong armor to deny any enemy success," General Mattis said. "The tragic loss of our men does not necessarily indicate failure - it is war." [He lies. He did not take "every possible step." He did not go public and yell for everybody to hear that his troops were being slaughtered for lack of armor. Oh fuck no. Rumsfeld wouldn't have liked it. Bush wouldn't have liked it.

[And get the idiot excuse for not having enough armor for his troops, and refusing to raise hell about it. "OK, troops from E got killed because they had no armor. But even if they all had armor, some still would have gotten killed." What the fuck is that? It's nothing but the babbling of another enemy. And that's what an officer who puts himself ahead of the lives of his troops is. This government and military leadership are rotten to the corps -- and rotten to the core.]

Company E's troubles began at Camp Pendleton when, just seven days before the unit left for Iraq, it lost its first commander. The captain who led them through training was relieved for reasons his supervisor declined to discuss.

"That was like losing your quarterback on game day," said First Sgt. Curtis E. Winfree.

In Kuwait, where the unit stopped over, an 18-year-old private committed suicide in a chapel. Then en route to Ramadi, they lost the few armored plates they had earmarked for their vehicles when the steel was borrowed by another unit that failed to return it. Company E tracked the steel down and took it back.

Even at that, the armor was mostly just scrap and thin, and they needed more for the unarmored Humvees they inherited from the Florida National Guard.

"It was pitiful," said Capt. Chae J. Han, a member of a Pentagon team that surveyed the Marine camps in Iraq last year to document their condition. "Everything was just slapped on armor, just homemade, not armor that was given to us through the normal logistical system."

The report they produced was classified, but Captain Royer, who took over command of the unit, and other Company E marines say they had to build barriers at the camp - a former junkyard - to block suicide drivers, improve the fencing and move the toilets under a thick roof to avoid the insurgent shelling.

Even some maps they were given to plan raids were several years old, showing farmland where in fact there were homes, said a company intelligence expert, Cpl. Charles V. Lauersdorf, who later went to work for the Defense Intelligence Agency. There, he discovered up-to-date imagery that had not found its way to the front lines.

Ramadi had been quiet under the National Guard, but the Marines had orders to root out an insurgency that was using the provincial capital as a way station to Falluja and Baghdad, said Lt. Col. Paul J. Kennedy, who oversaw Company E as the commander of its Second Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment.

Before the company's first month was up, Lance Cpl. William J. Wiscowiche of Victorville, Calif., lay dead on the main highway as its first casualty. The Marine Corps issued a statement saying only that he had died in action. But for Company E, it was the first reality check on the constraints that would mark their tour.

A British officer had taught them to sweep the roads for bombs by boxing off sections and fanning out troops into adjoining neighborhoods in hopes of scaring away insurgents poised to set off the bombs.

"We didn't have the time to do that," said Sgt. Charles R. Sheldon of Solana Beach, Calif. "We had to clear this long section of highway, and it usually took us all day."

Now and then a Humvee would speed through equipped with an electronic device intended to block detonation of makeshift bombs. **The battalion, which had five companies in its fold, had only a handful of the devices, Colonel Kennedy said.**

Company E had none, even though sweeping roads for bombs was one of its main duties.

So many of the marines, like Corporal Wiscowiche, had to rely on their eyes. On duty on March 30, 2004, the 20-year-old lance corporal did not spot the telltale three-inch wires sticking out of the dust until he was a few feet away, the company's leaders say. He died when the bomb was set off.

"We had just left the base," Corporal Winn said. "He was walking in the middle of the road, and all I remember is hearing a big explosion and seeing a big cloud of smoke."

The endless task of walking the highways for newly hidden I.E.D.'s, or improvised explosive devices, "was nerve wracking," Corporal Winn said, and the company began using binoculars and the scopes on their rifles to spot the bombs after Corporal Wiscowiche was killed.

"Halfway through the deployment marines began getting good at spotting little things," Sergeant Sheldon added. "We had marines riding down the road at 60 miles an hour, and they would spot a copper filament sticking out of a block of cement."

General Mattis said troops in the area now have hundreds of the electronic devices to foil the I.E.D.'s. [Fine. Put him in a Humvee on patrol for six months. Let him prove it. And not in the lead vehicle either.]

In parceling out Ramadi, the Marine Corps leadership gave Company E more than 10 square miles to control, far more than the battalion's other companies. Captain Royer said he had informally asked for an extra platoon, or 44 marines, and had been told the battalion was seeking an extra company. The battalion's operations officer, Maj. John D. Harrill, said the battalion had received sporadic assistance from the Army and had given Company E extra help. General Mattis says he could not pull marines from another part of Iraq because "there were tough fights going on everywhere."

Colonel Kennedy said Company E's area was less dense, but the pressure it put on the marines came to a boil on April 6, 2004, when the company had to empty its camp - leaving the cooks to guard the gates - to deal with three firefights.

Ten of its troops were killed that day, including eight who died when the Humvee they were riding in was ambushed en route to assist other marines under fire.

That Humvee lacked even the improvised steel on the back where most of the marines sat, Company E leaders say.

"All I saw was sandbags, blood and dead bodies," Sergeant Valerio said. "There was no protection in the back."

Captain Royer said more armor would not have even helped. The insurgents had a .50-caliber machine gun that punched huge holes through its windshield. **Only a heavier combat vehicle could have withstood the barrage, he said, but the unit had none.** Defense Department officials have said they favored Humvees over tanks in Iraq because they were less imposing to civilians.

The Humvee that trailed behind that day, which did have improvised armor, was hit with less powerful munitions, and the marines riding in it survived by hunkering down. "The rounds were pinging," Sergeant Sheldon said. "Then in a lull they returned fire and got out."

Captain Royer said that he photographed the Humvees in which his men died to show to any official who asked about the condition of their armor, but that no one ever did.

Sergeant Valerio redoubled his effort to fortify the Humvees by begging other branches of the military for scraps. "How am I going to leave those kids out there in those Humvees," he recalled asking himself.

The company of 185 marines had only two Humvees and three trucks when it arrived, so just getting them into his shop was a logistical chore, Sergeant Valerio said. He also worried that the steel could come loose in a blast and become deadly shrapnel.

For the gunners who rode atop, Sergeant Valerio stitched together bulletproof shoulder pads into chaps to protect their legs.

"That guy was amazing," First Sgt. Bernard Coleman said. "He was under a vehicle when a mortar landed, and he caught some in the leg. When the mortar fire stopped, he went right back to work."

A Captain's Fate

Lt. Sean J. Schickel remembers Captain Royer asking a *high-ranking Marine Corps visitor* [gee, who could that be?] whether the company would be getting more factory-armored Humvees.

The official said they had not been requested and that there were production constraints, Lieutenant Schickel said. [There is just no end to the betrayals.]

<p>Recalls Captain Royer: "I'm thinking we have our most precious resource engaged in combat, and certainly the wealth of our nation can provide young, selfless men with what they need to accomplish their mission. That's an erudite way of putting it. I have a much more guttural response that I won't give you."</p>
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Captain Royer was later relieved of command. General Mattis and Colonel Kennedy declined to discuss the matter. His first fitness report, issued on May 31, 2004, after the company's deadliest firefights, concluded, "He has single-handedly reshaped a company in sore need of a leader; succeeded in forming a cohesive fighting force that is battle-tested and worthy."

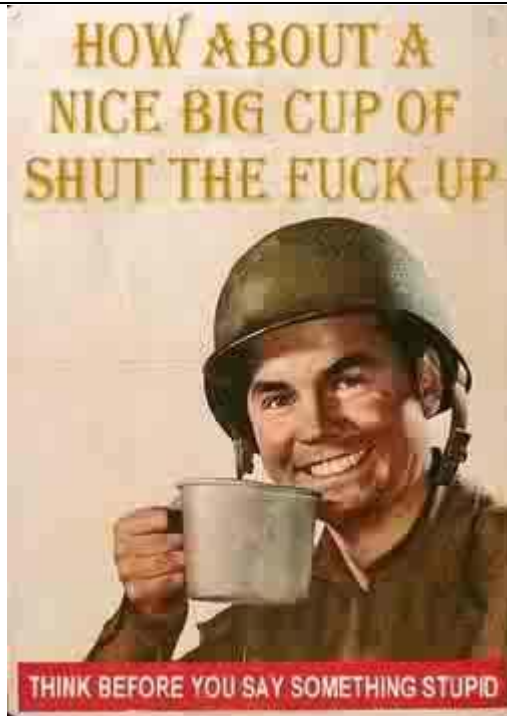
The second, on Sept. 1, 2004, gave him opposite marks for leadership. "He has been described on numerous occasions as 'dictatorial,' " it said. "There is no morale or motivation in his marines." His defenders say he drove his troops as hard as he drove himself, but was wrongly blamed for problems like armor.

"Captain Royer was a decent man that was used for a dirty job and thrown away by his chain of command," Sergeant Sheldon said.

Today, Captain Royer is at Camp Pendleton contesting his fitness report, which could force him to retire. Company E is awaiting deployment to Okinawa, Japan.

Some members have moved to other units, or are leaving the Marines altogether.

"I'm checking out," Corporal Winn said. "When I started, I wanted to make it my career. I've had enough."



Lt. Gen. James N. Mattis of Richland, Wash., who commanded the First Marine Division to which Company E belongs, said he had taken every possible step to support Company E. "We could not encase men in sufficiently strong armor to deny any enemy success," General Mattis said. "The tragic loss of our men does not necessarily indicate failure - it is war." [Thanks to K for the graphic.]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

At Least One Task Force Baghdad Soldier Killed in IED Attacks

4/24/2005 AP & HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE 05-04-26C

In the Baghdad area, insurgents attacked several U.S. military convoys Sunday.

In one attack, **a roadside bomb hit a convoy, killing one American soldier and wounding two, the U.S. military said.** A Task Force Baghdad Soldier died April 24 at 7 a.m. when the unit on patrol struck an improvised explosive device in east Baghdad.

The military said a bomb also exploded near a U.S. patrol in western Baghdad on Sunday, but no one was hurt.

Iraqi police say a roadside bombing in Baghdad has killed two U-S soldiers.

IED Kills Sailor In Fallujah

April 24, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE 05-04-25C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Sailor assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed yesterday by an improvised explosive device while conducting combat operations in Fallujah, Iraq.

Resistance On The Offensive: Collaborator Forces Collapsing, Running Away, “Completely Ineffective”: “Large Areas Of The Country Dominated By Insurgents”

Many attacks have gone unchallenged by Iraqi forces in large areas of the country dominated by insurgents, according to the U.S. military, Iraqi officials and civilians and visits by Washington Post correspondents.

In city after city and town after town, security forces who had signed up to secure Iraq and replace U.S. forces appear to have abandoned posts or taken refuge inside them for fear of attacks.

April 24, 2005 By Ellen Knickmeyer, Washington Post Foreign Service & By Oliver Poole, Telegraph Group Limited. [Thanks to Desmond, who sent this in.]

Violence is escalating sharply in Iraq after a period of relative calm that followed the January elections. Bombings, ambushes and kidnappings targeting Iraqis and foreigners, both troops and civilians, have surged this month while the new Iraqi government is caught up in power struggles over cabinet positions.

Many attacks have gone unchallenged by Iraqi forces in large areas of the country dominated by insurgents, according to the U.S. military, Iraqi officials and civilians and visits by Washington Post correspondents.

Hundreds of Iraqis and foreigners have either been killed or wounded in the last week.

"Definitely, violence is getting worse," said a U.S. official in Baghdad, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"My strong sense is that a lot of the political momentum that was generated out of the successful election, which was sort of like a punch in the gut to the insurgents, has worn off."

This week, at a checkpoint bunker in Tarmiya where insurgents downed a helicopter, a teenager in sunglasses clutching an AK-47 marked the limits of the Iraqi army's authority. "I wouldn't advise going there," the young Shiite Muslim recruit said, referring to Tarmiya, a Tigris River town a few hundred yards up the road that is dominated by Sunni Muslim landowners who were loyal to Saddam Hussein.

Up the road, insurgents run relatively free, and last week they appeared to have used a hilltop outside of town to fire what they later said was a shoulder-launched, heat-seeking missile. The missile hit a chartered Russian-made helicopter Thursday.

Greatest concern has focused on Madain, the town 14 miles south of Baghdad that in the past few weeks has been at the centre of the biggest crisis.

When a convoy of police did try to install order, insurgents ambushed them. Those who survived were burnt to death.

The U.S. official said this week that overall attacks had increased since the end of March.

Roadside bombings and attacks on military targets are up by as much as 40 percent in parts of the country over the same period, according to estimates from private security outfits.

Soldiers and police across much of Iraq have fallen into inaction. The Defense and Interior ministries are run by interim chiefs slated for replacement. Initiatives by the Iraqi forces against the insurgents have all but ceased.

The insurgency has found new hideouts, gathering points and recruiting areas in western and central Iraq, and in eastern Iraq along the Tigris River, as well as in other locations.

Meanwhile, officials describe setbacks in the security situation in the Sunni Muslim city of Husaybah on the Syrian border, near the area where fighters tied to al Qaeda had staged the second of two well-planned attacks on a U.S. military installation this month.

An Iraqi army unit that had once grown to 400 members has dwindled to a few dozen guardsmen "holed up" inside a phosphate plant outside of Husaybah for their protection, a Marine commander said.

Maj. John Reed, executive officer for the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, which has a company in Husaybah, said the Iraqi guardsmen retreated to the phosphate plant compound with their families after insurgents attacked and killed scores of people in recent months.

"They will claim that they've got hundreds ready to come back and fight," said Reed, whose company seldom patrols inside Husaybah. "Well, there are no more than 30 of them on duty on any given day, and they are completely ineffective."

At Tarmiya, along the heavily Sunni-populated banks of the Tigris, Shiite recruits sent by the government usually stay well out of town unless accompanying U.S. patrols, a correspondent for The Post observed. Police officers man a station inside Tarmiya, but they are Sunnis from the same tribes as the townspeople. Even they are seldom seen.

In city after city and town after town, security forces who had signed up to secure Iraq and replace U.S. forces appear to have abandoned posts or taken refuge inside them for fear of attacks.

"We joined the police, and after this, the job became a way of committing suicide," said Jasim Khadar Harki, a 28-year-old policeman in Mosul, where residents say patrols are dropping off noticeably, often appearing only in response to attacks.

When a school principal in Mosul saw insurgents place explosives outside the gates of a police station next door, the principal didn't tell police -- only quietly dismissed pupils for the day, townspeople said.

The Interior Ministry is a distant force to which the police appeal for supplies, Harki said, "but they rarely respond."

[Time to do a few practice copter evacuation runs from the roof of the Baghdad embassy building, just in case.]

U.S. ESTABLISHES IED INTEL TEAM IN IRAQ

4.24.04 WASHINGTON [MENL]

The U.S. military has established an intelligence team to find bombmakers and their support cells in Iraq. **[More likely, the bombmakers will find them.]**

TROOP NEWS

Casualties Of War: "My 8-Year-Old Daughter Has To Help Me Lift A Gallon Of Milk"

April 24, 2005 By Corey Kilgannon, The New York Times

In Manhattan yesterday, purple medals bearing the bust of George Washington were hung on the left breast pockets of six soldiers wounded in the war in Iraq.

The soldiers were members of the First Battalion, 69th Infantry of the New York Army National Guard, more commonly known as the renowned Fighting 69th. They were receiving the purple hearts for being wounded during combat.

All six men were injured when their Humvees were blown up by roadside bombs. Three of the recipients - Specialist Daniel Swift, Pfc. Richard Cornier and Sgt. Felix Vargas - were injured on Nov. 29 while on patrol outside Baghdad.

An explosion ripped through the vehicle, and Specialist Swift, 24, a firefighter from Yonkers and the unit's medic, quickly saw that Staff Sgt. Christian Engeldrum, 39, also a firefighter, was killed immediately and that the Humvee's driver, Pfc. Wilfredo Urbina, 29, of Baldwin, on Long Island, was bleeding too rapidly to survive.

Specialist Swift, who worked as a paramedic in the South Bronx before joining Ladder 43 in East Harlem, saw that Specialist Vargas would live, but that Private Cornier needed help immediately.

Bleeding heavily from shrapnel in his right eye and both legs, Specialist Swift, under fire, raced to Private Cornier, who was thrown 40 feet onto his head and was choking to death.

"He looked dead, but I pulled out his tongue and opened his airway and he took a big breath," Specialist Swift recalled yesterday at the ceremony. He said he grabbed Sergeant Vargas's gun and lay over him until Apache gunships appeared overhead and other patrol vehicles returned.

Private Cornier, of Roosevelt Island, was in a coma for three weeks and lost 80 pounds and most of his long-term memory. **"I really don't remember Iraq," he said, as his girlfriend, Chrisel Urena, 18, looked away.**

Another recipient, Specialist Anthony Gilkes, 21, from Crown Heights, Brooklyn, said that his Humvee was wrecked by a car bomb that shattered his goggles and blinded him in his right eye.

"I wasn't looking to get a medal for getting hurt," he said.

The final two recipients, Cpl. John Cushman, 32, of Farmington, N.Y., and Sgt. Adrian Melendez, of the Bronx, were injured when their Humvee blew up on patrol near Taji.

Corporal Cushman was thrown 115 feet and suffered a shrapnel wound to his jaw and nerve damage that has drastically weakened his body.

He said that before he was injured he could bench press 425 pounds but now, "my 8-year-old daughter has to help me lift a gallon of milk."

Bulgarian Copter Airline Withdrawing From Iraq

24 April 2005 Novinite Ltd

The employees of the Bulgaria's commercial airline company Heli Air will return from Iraq to Bulgaria, it became clear on Sunday.

A helicopter of the company was shot down by insurgents' missile fire north of Baghdad on Thursday, killing 11 people on board - three Bulgarian pilots, six American civilians and two Fiji guards.

The news broke Heli Air CEO Mihail Mihaylov after his return from Iraq, where he went with his team to get acquainted in person with the circumstances around the incident.

**“WE DID STAND UP TO THEM”
“WE WILL NOT GO AWAY”**

[Rose Gentle and Reg Keys are parents of soldiers killed in Iraq. Both decided to run for Parliament against Blair and the war, and both are for bringing the troops home now. Respect and honor to them. T]

From: Rose Gentle
To: GI Special
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2005 5:49 AM
Subject: Re: GI Special 3B9: Only A Tear Remains

FROM REG KEYS, TO ROSE GENTLE:

SORRY I CANT BE WITH YOU TONIGHT, BUT AS YOU NO THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL TAKES UP ALL YOUR SPARE THEM, ESPECIALLY IN THESE LAST TWO WEEKS.

HOPE ALL GOES WELL FOR YOU THIS EVENING.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT LAST FRIDAY. IT WAS GOOD TO MEET UP AGAIN AND SEE YOU.

CONGRATULATIONS ON BEING NOMINATED FOR SCOTTISH WOMAN OF THE YEAR.

YOU TRULY DESERVE IT.

THE RUSSIANS REFERRED TO MARGARET THATCHER AS THE IRON LADY.

WELL ROSE SHE PALES INTO INSIGNIFICANCE COMPARED TO YOU.

AFTER ALL YOU HAVE BEEN THROUGH, AND ALL THE HARD WORK YOU ARE DOING, YOU DESERVE THE TITLE OF THE REAL IRON LADY.

VERY BEST WISHES.

FROM REG KEYS,

INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE FOR SEDGEFIEL

TO REG FROM ROSE GENTLE, INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE, (SCOTLAND)

WE WILL NIVER FORGET, THE HURT WE HAVE, OR MR BLAIR.

THE KILLERS OF OUR TROOPS,

AND THE IRAQ PEOPLE.

2 WEEKS TO GO,

IF WE DONT GET IT, WE DID STAND UP TO THEM

AND TONY BLAIR WILL NIVER FORGET US,

I WILL NOT LET HIM.

YOU ARE A GOOD MAN, AND A VERY GOOD DAD,

SO WE WILL LET THEM NO ON THE 5TH OF MAY WE WILL NOT GO AWAY.

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.

Poisoned By Perchlorate

[Thanks to TE who sent this in.]

April 24, 2005 By ERICA WERNER, Associated Press Writer

Like dozens of other towns nationwide, this working-class suburb is facing an emerging threat of uncertain dimensions - a chemical used in rocket fuel and defense manufacturing that has befouled nearly half its drinking water supply.

Concern spread along with the underground plume of water that carries the chemical from barren land that once housed World War II munitions, Cold War weapons-makers and, now, fireworks warehouses and a dump.

As one city well after another tested positive for perchlorate - six of the city's 13 wells in all - projected cleanup costs ballooned to more than double Rialto's \$40 million annual budget.

The town sued the Defense Department and dozens of other suspected polluters, pleaded with residents to conserve water and hiked water rates 65 percent.

Officials and townspeople, meanwhile, want to know just how hazardous perchlorate is. High amounts can be dangerous - the chemical can interrupt the production of thyroid hormones, which are needed for pre- and postnatal development. But how much exposure should be permissible sparks debate in governmental and scientific circles.

The conclusion of city leaders: Piping any amount of perchlorate into homes posed an unacceptable gamble.

Rialto is a case study of what can happen when a community refuses to take that risk. The choices faced here - when to close wells, whom to sue and how not to get sued - confront officials in 36 states where the Environmental Protection Agency says perchlorate has been detected.

A majority black and Latino town of 98,000, Rialto has palm-dotted streets with small single-family homes, its downtown a mix of old-time churches, homes, businesses and strip malls. Residents work in manufacturing or retail jobs, some slogging through a 50-mile commute west into Los Angeles.

The source of Rialto's perchlorate problem is a 2,800-acre plot north of downtown, once isolated but now surrounded by new homes, notes Bill Hunt, a geologist consulting for the city.

The military used the site as a pit stop for weapons bound for the Port of Los Angeles and then the Pacific theater in World War II. Later, Cold War defense contractors built, tested and stored rockets and munitions. Then came the fireworks industry and the county dump.

With each successive tenant, city officials believe, came growing deposits of perchlorate, an oxidant used in fireworks and road flares and as an accelerant in rocket fuel.

"We'll probably never know definitively who did what and how much," says Hunt.

What the city does know is that 400 feet below ground begins a 7-mile plume of perchlorate that's polluting Rialto's aquifer, as well as groundwater drawn by residents of other nearby communities.

Standard filtering doesn't work on perchlorate, so the town has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in equipment that uses a resin to rid water of perchlorate molecules.

The water rate increases paid for those systems on two of the six contaminated wells - the others remain shut - and for the town's legal fight against the Pentagon, San Bernardino County and a host of corporations large and small, from General Dynamics to Pyro Spectaculars Inc.

"The city is trying to do their best, but by going after the polluters they've raised the water bills," said former Rialto resident Jan Misquez, who now lives in neighboring San Bernardino. "Us taxpayers are having to foot the bill."

None of the 42 defendants has admitted liability and some of the companies no longer exist, leaving the city to battle insurance companies with only paper connections to the events of decades ago.

Thus far no state has issued a final drinking water regulation, and the EPA, under pressure from both sides, hasn't decided whether it will take such a step. A regulation would force cleanup, while the agency's safety standard offers only its guidance on exposure levels.

With Rialto's detections ranging as high as 88 parts per billion, city officials decided to shut down any well where perchlorate was found.

"Until there's more clarity on what is the safe amount of perchlorate for the human body to ingest, our council has chosen not to serve any amount," said City Attorney Bob Owen. "We can go online right now and find a Web site saying, 'Do you live in Rialto? Have you drunk water in Rialto? And if you have, join our group, we're going to all sue them.'"

Town officials believe the only long-term solution is forcing polluters to fund a cleanup.

"For us it's critical," said Rialto's water superintendent, Peter Fox. "We just don't have other water available to us."

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Attacks Tikrit Police Academy: Many Occupation Cops Killed & Wounded

4/24/2005 AP & 25 April, 2005 BBC

A car bomb exploded outside a police academy in Saddam Hussein's hometown, and another one went off moments later as authorities rushed to the scene.

As police imposed a curfew in the city, Mohammed Ayash, a doctor at Tikrit General Hospital, said four policemen and two civilians were killed by the bombs, and 33 people were wounded, most of them policemen.

The carefully coordinated attack by insurgents in Tikrit occurred as academy recruits were about to travel to Jordan for training, said police Lt. Shalan Allawi.

The blasts in Tikrit came within 20 minutes of each other.

A bomber crashed his vehicle into the gate of a police academy where recruits had gathered.

Then a second bomber attacked while rescuers were trying to cope with the aftermath.

Police said about a metric ton of explosives was used in the attack.

The U.S. military said it received a report that at least one explosives-rigged car, parked near an Iraqi police station in western Baghdad, had detonated, causing some 30 casualties.

A gun battle between police and insurgents in Baquba, 60km (35 miles) north-east of Baghdad wounds two policemen and one militant, police tell the Associated Press news agency.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Idiot Futility Of The Crimes At Abu G: Interrogation Methods Can Elicit Confessions From Innocent People

April 15, 2005 By Sharon Begley, Wall St. Journal

For cops, this was as good as it gets: The 14-year-old boy they arrested in the February murder of a man who found an intruder in his parked car in Rockford, Ill., didn't just confess. After the police took him from his home around midnight and isolated and interrogated him until dawn, he also re-enacted the crime for them, describing the inside of the car and relating how he had broken into it, struggled with the victim and shot him in the chest.

There was only one problem. After the boy had spent two weeks in detention, police, acting on a tip, discovered the real shooter was a 17-year-old.

Scientists who study false confessions aren't surprised.

During the hours-long interrogation, says Shelton Green, the boy's public defender, detectives called the boy a liar, told him he would go to prison for 10 to 15 years if he didn't admit his role, suggested he shot the man in self-defense and promised to help him if he would own up.

"This was almost a perfect storm of criminal injustice," says Rockford prosecutor Paul Logli, president-elect of the National District Attorneys Association.

Suspects confess for a number of reasons. "But the most important," says Saul M. Kassin, professor of psychology at Williams College, Williamstown, Mass., "is that standard interrogation techniques are masterfully designed to leave people with almost no rational choice but to confess."

Typically, detectives isolate the suspect, heighten his stress and let him know that denial is futile. Crucially, says Prof. Kassin, they insist "we know you did it," make him think he can go home if he confesses, and lead him to think the evidence against him is strong.

"If he thinks this is what he'll face at trial, a young suspect in particular may think it's better to confess" and hope for leniency, says Prof. Kassin, who testifies for defendants "two or three times a year, in false-confession cases so egregious they break my heart."

In a review of 50 years of studies, he and Gisli H. Gudjonsson of King's College London analyze why an innocent person would confess to a heinous crime.

Isolation, confrontation, offering (false) incriminating evidence and implying the crime was justified can elicit confessions from the guilty and are recommended in police manuals. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the use of manufactured evidence in interrogations.

"Interrogators are trained to suggest to suspects that their actions were spontaneous, accidental, provoked, peer-pressured, drug-induced or otherwise justifiable by external factors," Profs. Kassin and Gudjonsson write in the journal *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*.

But what Prof. Kassin calls the "social-psychological weapons" of interrogators are so powerful they also can extract confessions from the innocent. Making the suspect anxious about his denials, challenging inconsistencies (a taste of what he would face at trial) and justifying the offense all induce confessions.

Those most likely to confess to a crime they didn't commit are compliant, suggestible, young, mentally retarded, mentally ill, or afraid of confrontation and conflict.

These folks aren't confessing to jaywalking.

Of 125 proven false confessions from 1971 to 2002, 81% were for murder and 8% for rape. Although it is impossible to know how many confessions are false, of the first 130 exonerations that the New York-based Innocence Project obtained via DNA evidence, 35 involved people convicted after false confessions.

People have confessed to murdering someone who is still alive, and to crimes committed when they were demonstrably somewhere else.

Some innocent people even come to believe they are guilty. In one infamous case, Michael Crowe, 14, was suspected in the 1998 stabbing death of his sister in Escondido, Calif. Through hours of questioning (with neither a lawyer nor parent present), he denied any involvement.

But after detectives told Michael (falsely) that his hair was found in his dead sister's hand, that her blood was in his bedroom and that he had failed a polygraph, he came to

believe he had a split personality and confessed. Last year, a drifter who was seen in the neighborhood on the night of the murder and had the girl's blood on his clothing was convicted in the killing.

Police and prosecutors are starting to express concern about false confessions. "There are interrogation techniques that can lead to this," says Mr. Logli, the Rockford prosecutor. Minnesota, Alaska, Illinois and Maine mandate videotaping interrogations so prosecutors and juries can judge whether cops used methods likely to elicit false confessions.

A report from Canadian prosecutors notes "hundreds of cases where confessions have been proven false" and recommends that investigators and prosecutors receive training about "the existence, causes and psychology" of false confessions.

Earlier this year, a Chicago firm that trains detectives offered a course about permissible "trickery and deceit during an interrogation."

I have written in the past about the lack of a rigorous scientific foundation for fingerprints, eyewitness testimony, standard lineups and other forensic techniques. Add to that list the assumption that only the guilty confess.

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.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to John Gingerich, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

The US Postal Service has created a stamp with a picture of President George W. Bush to honor his first term achievements.

In daily use it has been shown that the stamp is not sticking to envelopes.

This has enraged the President, who demanded a full investigation.

After a month of testing, a special presidential commission has made the following findings:

- 1) The stamp is in perfect order.
- 2) There is nothing wrong with the applied adhesive.
- 3) People are spitting on the wrong side.



Received:

MOTHERS, FAMILY MEMBERS OF SLAIN SOLDIERS IN PORTLAND APRIL 30 AND MAY 1ST FOR ART EVENT

Art Installation

Sat., April 30; 1-5pm,

Opening; Sun, May 1, 1-5pm

First Thursday, May 5, 5-8pm; Sat. and Sun, May 7, 8; 1-5pm

Location: The Tribe Gallery

510 NW Glisan

For more information

503 736 9136 503 235 3455

Is grief the same, regardless of whether or not you support the war that took your child's life? If an artist were to create an artistic tribute to your child, a fallen soldier, what would it look like? If your grief led to action against the war, what stories would you tell?

These are among the questions considered in the **Human Faces of War**, a locally sponsored project that brings together artists and soldiers' families in expressing their experiences of war. In an interactive exhibit, stories contributed by families across the country will be displayed along with the artists' works and written responses by artists. The exhibit gives a glimpse of memories, soldiers' dreams and families whose grief has turned to activism.

Many of the families involved are part of an organization called "Gold Star Families for Peace."

Each has received the "gold star" awarded to families when a loved one has died in war. Gold Star Families for Peace have organized to "prevent other families from the pain they are feeling" as the result of their losses.

"We are a group that prays daily for no new members," says Annette Pritchard of Oregon City. Her 19-year-old nephew William Ramirez was killed in Iraq on February 11, 2004.

Pritchard, along with other Gold Star Families for Peace will be present at the Human Faces of War opening event on **Saturday, April 30th** and **Sunday, May 1**. The families speak with a sense of urgency. Pritchard wishes that every American “could take just a moment to imagine what it would be like to be Gold Star Family.

Think with love and pride of that young relative filled with life and potential...Bury that young person and all their hopes and dreams. Continue living each waking and dreaming moment with that ache that never eases, that no flag, medals or military pomp can gloss over. How many more mothers will have to mourn their children before we stand up to demand an end to the waste?”

Cindy Sheehan, whose son was killed in action a little over a year ago, writes about an interview she was supposed to have had with Larry King: “One of the questions I was going to be asked was: Do I think my son’s sacrifice was ‘worth it’?...I would have asked Larry King if he would want to sacrifice his children for sham elections in Iraq... No it wasn’t worth it.”

Cindy Sheehan’s stories and memories brought this response from artist Janine Bradley, whose Human Faces of War artwork portrays Sheehan’s son, Casey. “This piece is watercolor on Upo paper. Upo resists the paint, it’s not absorbed,” Bradley writes. “I chose this medium because of the resistance I felt. I did not want to be painting this young man’s face. He is a man who died for my country, yet I would not have sent him there. I honor this man who bravely went where politicians surely fear to tread. As a mother, I weep for him, his family and our country...”

The Human Face of War Project was conceived by a small interfaith group of Portland residents. The goals for the project included giving the community a chance to reflect on the war in a different way, and to pay tribute to the military families speaking out on the war by providing public space for their stories and thoughts. About 20 local artists are involved in painting the portraits of 10 families. The families represented also include conscientious objectors and an Iraqi family.

Given the sensitivity of the issue of war deaths the show has historical significance.

This sensitivity was witnessed in last year’s Nightline controversy about reading the names of soldiers killed, and in the recent Oregonian discussion on whether or not to publish stories of Oregon’s war dead on the front page (Public Editor, 3-20-05). Viewed from this perspective, the work of the Gold Star Families for Peace could be likened to the work of the Mothers of the Plaza de Cinco de Mayo in Argentina and the mothers in Chile who worked for years to bring to light the anguish and cost of the civil unrest in those countries.

Sponsors include: 1st Unitarian Church Peace Action Committee; Portland Mennonite Peace, Justice and Environment Committee; Military Families Speak Out; Living Earth Gatherings and others.

**Interview contacts:
Human Face of War organizing committee:**

Carole Scholl

(503) 235-3455
(503) 988-3136, x27299

Shirlee Geiger
(503) 235-6189

Tess Beistel
(503) 257-2042

Interview contacts for Participating families:

**Eric Blickenstaff, Portland brother of Joe Blickenstaff, KIA 12./8/03
(503) 708-6190**

**Cindy Sheehan, mother of Casey Sheehan, KIA 04/04/04
SCINDY@aol.com A link to a web page dedicated to Casey can be found at
www.gsfp.org**

Interview contacts for Participating families: (continued)

**Sue Neiderer, mother of Seth Dvorin, KIA 2/3/04
(609) 737-9591 (New Jersey)**

**Dorothy Halvorsen, mother of Erik Halvorsen, KIA 4/2/03
(Vermont) Dhalvors@aol.com**

**Nadia McCaffrey, mother of Patrick McCaffrey, KIA 6/22/04
California (209) 814-7182; (209) 830-9955**

Nadia McCaffrey is also known as the “mother who defied the Bush Administration” after she invited the press to cover the arrival of her son’s coffin. This was the first media coverage of a coffin arriving home.

Interview contacts for ARTISTS:

Dan Shea, (503) 661-1317

Bette Lee (503) 281-3761

Other artist contacts and artwork available upon request.

Received:

**Troops Home Now! Rally:
(Wm & Mary - Williamsburg!)**

From: RegimeChanger.Com <tom@regimechanger.com>
To: GI Special

Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2005 9:05 PM

Just got back from an antiwar rally in Williamsburg, VA William and Mary College

On Sunday, April 24, the Tidewater Labor Support Committee, along with numerous on- and off-campus organizations, held a rally demanding the immediate return of all Coalition forces from Iraq.

The rally was significant for several reasons - 1st the Location (Conservative Upscale College in Va) and Henry Kissinger is Chancellor no less...

And Editor notes: from my speech - Camp Peary is AKA the Farm - thee CIA boot camp - is located right across the highway!

And also just as importantly it brought labor together again with the antiwar movement, on a college campus!

By Tom Palumbo, Veterans for Peace

I'd like to welcome those from neighboring Camp Peary for attending – but I will opine that we are not the dangerous ones to America. **The real danger to America are the mega corporations and the White House! Those are the ones that need to be investigated and jailed!**

When I enlisted, it was a peacetime Army with Jimmy Carter in office, and I swore to **defend** the Constitution and the United States from all enemies foreign and domestic! **(Defend being the operative word!)**

Today I am speaking as Veteran For Peace...

The other day I saw a military recruiting commercial – it had some cool music, it had kids snowboarding in the mountains, and then it flashed to fighter jets and GI's.

Good People - joining the military has nothing to do with snowboarding!!!-- it's just another seductive lie that recruiters are to get people to volunteer for their war!

A Navy friend shared his basic training experience with me and he talked about the marches and drills that were non stop - and after boot camp - he said he never did a parade march again.

Its about rituals – if you want rituals-- Attend Mass! The military is not about marching! Marching is part of the conditioning that takes away individual thought and action!

The last time I was ordered by our government to report for duty was Feb 7, 1991.

The telegram from Papa Bush said come on down - were having a war in the Middle East. And my orders read “for a period not to exceed one year” - As you may remember in Gulf War 1 – we didn't stay as occupiers and I was discharged before my conscientious objector papers were able to leave the base.

Today – the Neocons are using the men and women in the military as their captive labor force to preemptively attack sovereign people for this Empires version of Rape and Pillage!

And the government’s legal stance on enlistment contracts? “Fuck the contract – you’re stop lossed!” You are not going home until we tell you or we ship you home broken or in a box!

Support the troops?? It isn’t a yellow ribbon or feeding into the collective delusion that this war was justified and Iraq is better off for it!!

Although you won’t hear it from our quasigovernment media - we have a lot of brave troops who are defending us against domestic enemies! Those enemies are Bush! Cheney! Rove, Rumsfeld and Rice!

The troops I support are the courageous of the 343rd Supply Company who took a stand and spoke truth to power, when they refused a suicidal mission to transport fuel without armor.

The troops I support are the hundred plus War resisters living in Canada seeking asylum from Bushes insanity!

The troops I support include the nearly 6,000 troops who are AWOL and just aren’t showing up! *Hell it worked for the commander and chief during Vietnam!*

When the war drums began beating - I said I intended to speak out against the war

Some Virginians here who are comfortable with the status quo told me it couldn’t be done in a military town.

But The more I spoke out - the more I found others who shared my opinions!

I am not a pacifist! I am an activist and I encourage others to do the same!

Some people were quiet – and made their contribution financially, or with letters to the editor – that’s good... keep it up!

There are those who volunteered to get out the vote and change things through the electoral system – to them I say our battle continues

And there are those that take it to the streets - hundreds of thousands strong! Millions In cities around the world! And Like here in Williamsburg! We are not alone and we are in every city, state and nation!

I told those after the election we may have lost a political battle but not the cultural war!

Since moving to this area I have had the good fortunate to meet literally thousands of others who share our rally cry to End the War and Occupation!

There was no one rally or march that ended the Vietnam quagmire - but rather it was constant call to the American people to do the right thing!

During Vietnam – people could pretty much tell your position on the war by the length of your hair and the clothes that you wore. Today – that's just not the case!

Stay visible! Use every opportunity to open the dialogue about peace and justice!

I make it a point to wear T-shirts or buttons expressing my viewpoint – and more often than not- it lets others know they are not alone! And makes for some great outreach!

Get the medias' attention – better yet be the media! Be a part of Indy Media! Start an underground paper or Start a Website , like my own RegimeChanger.Com !

Get on the airwaves! Recently Indy media went live in Richmond with WRIR radio!! Just pass the word!

And while voting is important – take it to another level: Run For Office!! Why Not You?? Raise the questions – Take to the people and most importantly question Authority! Its your patriotic duty!

Be a part of the organizing such as with the Virginian AntiWar Network and with our Brothers and Sisters in the Labor Movement. We need stay together, and stand together!

Show up -- take care of each other – because I believe the most precious resource we have on this earth is human!

And as my time is ending - I need to say this: If you're in the service now or thinking of joining –

Listen to the call I bring you from the growing communities of non-violence and resistance:

We are convinced that war is the greatest evil on earth. We believe that humankind must end war, or war will end humankind.

Our convictions have driven us time and again to the Pentagon, White House and Congress in acts of civil resistance to war.

Now, we bring our plea to you, sisters and brothers, in the armed forces. Refuse to kill.

Refuse the order to go to war.

Leave the military before it is too late.

We know your resistance to war will be difficult and require great courage But please reflect:

- **Is it more difficult than fighting in war?**
- **Is it more difficult than being a pawn of corporate greed?**

- Is it more difficult than living with a violated conscience?
- Is it more difficult than living with the poisons of war in your body and spirit?
- Wrong is easy.
- Right is difficult and long.
- Do what your heart says is right.

Keep fighting the good fight!
Peace!

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:

<http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>, www.williambowles.info/qispecial,
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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