

GI SPECIAL 3B14:



(From Soldier X 4.26.05)

A Letter From Captain America

From: Soldier X

To: GI Special

Sent: April 26, 2005

Try coping with the pressures to conform into the red, white and blue poster boy. I represent the armed conservatives, I am Capitalism's hit man, I am the defender of materialism, I am Captain America.

What happens to our troops when they head home? They leave in flag draped caskets or with trauma. They are confused and betrayed. They go back home I guess? But where are they? Do they blend in so well we don't notice? I bet I will be able to spot a veteran a mile away. The Joes with their duffle bags all stuffed with guilt and bad dreams.

Greetings once again,

So we just got back from Hamburg this morning. Did I say Hamburg? Oh yes, I went to Hamburg and Bremen over this weekend. We took the train which is the best way to move about Europe. If the States had anything close there would be so much less need for automobiles and oil.

But then again we would need a government that was closer to socialism for the people to afford it.

The ride took five hours and was fairly comfortable. Which was great because I stayed up the night before.

I guess I should go back to the night before. Thursday we went out to Nuremberg. We went to all our favorite spots. It took us four years on and off in Europe to find them and no other soldiers know about them which makes them unspoiled by the Ugly American GI, which we rarely get along with or act like. So the night passed by with Guinness, Long Islands, Seventies Music and Indie Underground. There was a night walk that involved graffiti blitzkrieg and a run through a medieval moat.

As soon as we got back in I headed back out with another group of friends to Northern Germany.

So green fields and cobble stoned villages blurred by as I drool on myself in deep slumber.

In Hamburg we had a hard time finding a place to sleep. There was an unexpected marathon in town and most the hotels were taken up. We had to settle for a cheap dive in a seedy Turkish district.

The Turks are Germany's minority that is seen as a dangerous underclass and they set up casinos, strip clubs and doner kabeb stands. Doners are like Greek gyros.

We couldn't rest our first night in Hamburg so we went to the world famous St. Pauli district for some hard drink. St. Pauli and Reeperbahn Strasse is a notorious party location. Block after neon lit block of night club and pubs. I was looking for one place in particular. The location that the Beatles got off their feet. We finally found it after dipping into a few interesting joints for a beer. The R+B and Jazz Bar is all it said out front.

The entrance was poorly lit and after getting into the door there was a curtain still dividing the inside and doorway. After parting the cloth it was a world of Jazz and soft red candle light. The bar was a heavy wood and old blues characters leaned against it milking their long drinks. As we passed through, we glanced at the black and white photos of Ringo Star playing with the sound board, Aretha Franklin posing with the old owner and Frank Zappa sitting at the piano that was still on stage...

Jimi Hendrix wailed out of the red box speakers from every corner of the bar while we settled into some broken in leather couches surrounding a coffee table. Once we

learned the bartender could make mean Long Islands and Singapore Slings knew right then we found heaven on earth. Before and after every thing we did all weekend we went to that bar. It was our little base of operations.

The whole time in Hamburg we encountered youth dressed in denim jackets with flare covering them. On the backs of the jackets were written the words Turbo Youth and then some European city affiliation. These kids were Turbo Negro fans, the punkish band from Norway.

Apparently the band was in town all weekend and their die hards came out of the woodwork and all wore matching uniforms. They all were in our way everywhere we went and became a nuisance. I guess that is punk rock now? I just don't understand how punk became so conformed?

Despite the "Turbo Kinder," as we called them, I did manage to see the Kunsthalle (Art Museum) while some of the guys slept of hangovers. There was some great stuff there. A Man Ray photography exhibit was the attraction this month and those surreal photos were pretty impressive.

No Schiele there however. When all of us were awake we saw the U-434, a Russian U-boat submarine from WWII. It is now a museum and you can walk through it.

I would not have made a good sailor. Those quarters are far to cramped for my liking and I must have hit my head on a dozen pipes, gages, and round doorways. There was a cool statue of Bismarck that was giant, The Rattans (city hall), and St. Michael's Kirsch (a cathedral with a huge golden statue of the Angel stabbing a devilish looking beast).

On the way home we stopped in Bremen for four hours. It was a small city famous for its music scene. I had a children's book about the animals that were abused by their masters and one by one joined the traveling pack to get to Bremen and become musicians. So I so very wanted to find the statue in their honor.

We walked and walked throwing Jelly Bellys, singing out loud, and not seeing the statue. I even asked a few people who sent us on wild goose chases. We followed signs that ended up just being some bike path that used the acrobatic animals as it's symbol. Finally I bought a postcard that made the Bremen Musicians look huge. Once I walked around pointing at the postcard and looking confused we stumbled into the reel deal. A small sad icon of one of my favorite books.

We also stopped by the World Trade Center in Bremen to perform a small performance. We folded an American dollar into a paper airplane and slowly flew it toward the building. As it came in close we lit it on fire and CRASH!

Smashed it into the front door while security looked on in tense stares. I thought it was symbolic and beautiful.

The rest of the Bremen day trip was spent in a pizza joint drinking beer and eating "ZA". Then we headed back home in a more crowded Sunday train ride and said good bye to Northern Germany, the Turbo Kinder, and our favorite Beatles bar.

I have to go to another formation here and receive an award for being one of God's favorite murderers. This Army is sick. I will be back to reply to your letter in an hour.

That was a lot faster for you than me.

I just got an Army Commendation Medal for my work in Iraq. It is a pretty prestigious award. Now I have a bronze hexagonal medal with an eagle holding a bunch of arrows. What the hell am I going to do with it I wonder???? FLUSH!

It is so hard to hide my distaste for it all.

Thinking secretly, quietly, unobtrusively is my daily routine. I live in a world of oppression where not only will I be viewed in a strange light if people found out of my liberal subversive nature, I will be punished.

They will take my money, force me to do extra labor, restrict my weekends, demote me, and confine me to prison.

So I understand quite fully the difficulties of being different.

The military is the anti-freak power and it gnaws at me every day. Paranoia and patriotism and the battle to maintain some humanity and spirit is a constant challenge.

Try coping with the pressures to conform into the red, white and blue poster boy. I represent the armed conservatives, I am Capitalism's hit man, I am the defender of materialism, I am Captain America.

Trust you me, it makes me ill and I will be lucky to survive the next hour much less the near month I have left in service.

The things I don't understand any longer is how this is reflected in the real world. Small town America is foreign to me. Apple Pie is now Apple Strudel and Baseball is Soccer. I haven't lived yet in America at war with terrorism. I left before all that. But not for long.

I am out of touch with the yellow ribbon wavers mental, emotionally, and even physically. Soon I will be among them self absorbed pricks once again.

What happens to our troops when they head home? They leave in flag draped caskets or with trauma. They are confused and betrayed. They go back home I guess? But where are they? Do they blend in so well we don't notice? I bet I will be able to spot a veteran a mile away. The Joes with their duffle bags all stuffed with guilt and bad dreams.

We have been warned to stay clear of the Arabic people here in Germany. This is very hard considering the Turkish immigrants are numerous.

I have never had a problem with any of them and all and all Europe is a fairly law abiding place compared to the US.

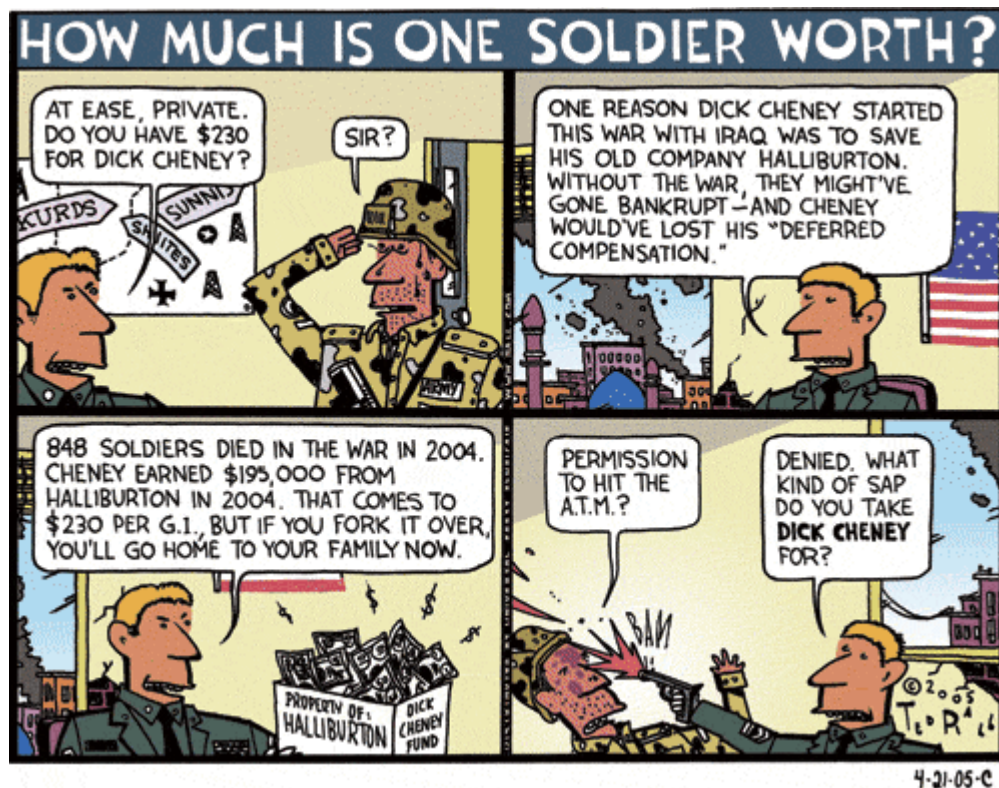
I guess the Muslim is an easy target for the unknown fearing Americans. The Western world has no understanding of the Arabic culture, language or religion. It makes them different and open for attack. They are on Prejudice Pete's black list for a long time I am afraid.

Americans love to choose sides and when you look and act so distinctly from someone else it is simple to pick who is on what side of the holy barbed wire. Bigotry is a disease for the numb mind.

I am off again to yet another formation. This one is in the motor pool and most likely was called just to waste my time.

The Army hates me and I hate the Army,

Soldier X



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

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

York Man Injured, Two Others Wounded

Apr. 28, 2005 By the Lincoln Journal Star

A York soldier was injured Friday while sweeping for land mines in Iraq, his father said Wednesday.

Second Lt. David Folkerts of the 7th Engineering Battalion out of Ft. Riley, Kan., was working with three other Army soldiers Friday when a mine exploded, said his father, Curtis Folkerts. David Folkerts' left arm and hand were badly injured in the blast.

David Folkerts was rushed to a hospital in Baghdad and was then transferred to Germany before he arrived at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He underwent surgery in which a vein from his leg was placed in his arm, and will undergo another surgery today, Curtis Folkerts said.

Three of the four soldiers sweeping for mines were injured, Curtis Folkerts said.

David Folkerts graduated from Heartland Community High School in Henderson and later from Wayne State College with a degree in education, his father said. He had been in Iraq for about a month before being wounded.

Curtis Folkerts said it was too early to tell the extent of his son's injuries — in an e-mail to family members earlier this week David Folkerts said he had feeling in just two of his fingers but hoped to make a full recovery.

The e-mail was short, his father said, because he typed it with just his right hand.

Tikrit Car Bomb Wounds Three U.S. Soldiers

4.28.05 By Alexandra Zavis, AP & Aljazeera

Near Tikrit, a car bomb exploded near an Iraqi army checkpoint, wounding three U.S. soldiers, the U.S. military said.

The car bomb went off at 7.30am (0330 GMT) and targeted a joint US-Iraqi military checkpoint in the north of the city, about 180km north of Baghdad, US Major Richard Goldenberg said.

Iraqi police said that two Iraqi soldiers were killed, adding that 12 other Iraqis were wounded, seven of them soldiers.

TROOP NEWS

Sgt. Benderman Denied CO Status: Faces May 11 Trial For Combat Refusal



From: Robert Finnegan
To: GI Special
Sent: Thursday, April 28, 2005 4:23 PM
Subject: BREAKING NEWS/WAR/IRAQ

This is today's: Breaking/Sgt. Kevin Benderman.
Feel free to publish.
Warm Regards
Robert S. Finnegan

04/28/2005 By Robert S. Finnegan, Managing Editor, Southeast Asia News

They could not give a reason for their refusal of his request, they simply refused.

Ft. Stewart, GA

Yesterday at Ft. Stewart Georgia, U.S. Army Sergeant Kevin Benderman was dealt a setback in his battle with the U.S. Army when his application for Conscientious Objector status was denied by his command.

Benderman applied for CO status after having already served one combat tour in Iraq during which his Captain ordered personnel in the unit to fire on Iraqi children throwing rocks. This was one of many incidents during his deployment that Benderman said convinced him that war is immoral and it is his duty to refuse to kill.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has pronounced the war in Iraq illegal and recent polls show a significant decline in American and British public support for continuing what majorities in both countries now believe is a lost cause. Both administrations have been battered recently over revelations regarding non-existent WMD's, Iraqi civilian casualties, torture allegations, missing funds, American casualty counts and aggressive recruiting practices targeting disadvantaged youths.

There has also been a recent surge in complaints from both active duty and Iraq war veterans, who are now going public with their stories. In addition, recent police actions targeting protesters at anti-war rallies, reminiscent of the Vietnam War demonstrations have outraged the public and threaten to unleash a wave of lawsuits against both local and federal law enforcement personnel.

Benderman is also being charged with Desertion and Missing a Movement under Articles 85 and 87 of the UCMJ.

His courts-martial is scheduled for May 11 at Ft. Stewart, with a heavy worldwide media presence expected to cover the trial.

The trial in itself promises to be contentious and acrimonious, pitting a lone combat veteran NCO, his beliefs and his attorneys against the full weight of the U.S. Army.

The outcome could set precedence for Conscientious Objectors and the military as a whole, in addition to bringing into the public domain possible instances of illegal activities by Benderman's former command staff, who under UCMJ law must be brought back from Iraq to testify against him, providing the opportunity for Benderman's attorneys to interrogate them under oath.

Immediately following Benderman's application for CO status he received a letter from his then-Battalion Chaplain, Captain Matt Temple who is now in Iraq, informing him that Temple was "...ashamed of the way you have conducted yourself. I certainly am ashamed of you. I hope you will see your misconduct as an opportunity to upgrade your character and moral behavior for your own good and the good of your fellowman."

Benderman said the letter disgusted him, stating "Nothing in my career as a professional soldier has prepared me to respond to something like that letter from Chaplain Temple."

He also noted that his then-First Sergeant Donald McClinton, also now in Iraq and due to be recalled for his upcoming courts-martial had called him a "coward."

A subsequent interview however with Benderman's newly assigned Chaplain; Major Pete Brzezinski yielded a different analysis. "It is my belief that Sgt. Benderman's beliefs are sincere and that he holds strongly to his asserted convictions. His demeanor, lifestyle and his outward manifestation of his beliefs demonstrate his sincerity. Sgt. Benderman's willingness to file for this status is an expression of his deeply held conviction and his moral belief that he is forbidden to bear arms and take life. Everything else is subordinate to this belief.

"It is my opinion that the applicant is sincere in his beliefs and that his lifestyle is congruent with his claim for conscientious objection," Brzezinski said.

Monica Benderman's views are succinct and to the point.

"When someone truly believes in what they stand for, what they speak out for, they have no problem expressing those beliefs and feelings. Kevin has spoken quite eloquently about his beliefs and feelings regarding war and it's opposite, non-violent solutions to our problems.

"I find it intriguing that he has so easily put voice to his beliefs, and yet those who have denied his constitutional right to stand for his beliefs really do have no justification for that denial. Their response to Kevin's request to be allowed to follow his conscience was to have no response."

"They could not give a reason for their refusal of his request, they simply refused."

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.

U.S. Majority Says Iraq War Not Worth It

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

April 28, 2005 by Brad Knickerbocker, Christian Science Monitor

Asked if "it was worth going to war in Iraq," the latest Gallup poll finds 45 percent saying "yes" and 53 percent answering "no." Put another way, 46 percent of those polled say sending US troops to Iraq was "a mistake."

What does this bode for President Bush? He's now running at his lowest approval rate (45 percent) yet, according to Gallup.

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)

Olean Man Injured In Iraq Receives Purple Heart

04/28/2005 By CHARLES FIEGL, The Times Herald

U.S. Army Spc. Todd Reed of Olean received the United States' oldest military decoration on Saturday — the Purple Heart.

The award came as no surprise to Spc. Reed, he said by phone from the Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday. He was presented the honor at the Amherst Pepsi Center in Amherst.

On Dec. 3, Spc. Reed suffered severe injuries during a roadside bomb attack north of Baghdad, Iraq. He's now restricted to a wheelchair recovering from multiple broken bones in his legs. Doctors say he'll be able to walk in two years.

Soldier Wins Fight Against Iraq Deployment; "I Feel Like I Have A New Lease On Life"

April 28, 2005 By Associated Press, POTSDAM, N.Y.

The Army honorably discharged a Reserve officer who had gone to court to challenge his assignment to Iraq, saying he had properly resigned more than a year earlier.

Carl A. Petitto, 32, dropped his lawsuit against the Army after securing his honorable discharge, which took effect Thursday.

"I feel like I have a new lease on life," said Petitto, who resigned as a first lieutenant to run two health-care centers in rural northern New York.

After serving 14 years of active and reservist duty for the Army and Navy, Petitto filed for resignation in February 2004.

His lawyer said the military failed to respond for nearly a year, then denied the application. He was to report for duty on March 24 and faced deployment to Iraq for at least a year and a half.

U.S. Army Reserve spokesman Steve Stromvall said when Petitto's first application for resignation was denied, he was told he could try again if he provided "more compelling reasons" for the Army to grant the request. Petitto did and the resignation was approved, Stromvall said.

Louisiana House Committee Endorses DU Testing For La. Troops

From: Ward Reilly
Sent: April 28, 2005 3:45 PM

Today the Louisiana House Committee endorsed legislation (HB 570) calling for all Louisiana troops to be tested for Depleted Uranium, stipulating that the Federal Government see to it, through their budget, to test all Louisiana troops that have served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

VFP and VVAW members Bob Smith of New Orleans, and Ward Reilly of Baton Rouge, testified before the House Committee at the capitol, making the request for the legislation, sponsored by Rep. LaFonta, New Orleans.

As lagniappe, (the word for the day, all you veterans, and there WILL BE a test!) we also managed TV interviews on the subject with Baton Rouge's local ABC and CBS stations, and the major newspaper in Baton Rouge, "The Advocate".

This is a solid first step in seeing to it that DU does not become the next Agent Orange, at least as far as caring for those exposed. Obviously we need to ban DU completely, but that is another issue.

Peace from Ward,
SE contact-Vietnam Veterans Against The War & Veterans For Peace

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

The Iraqi Resistance: “An Indigenous Response To An Illegal War”

April 27, 2005 By Raed Jarrar, Raed In The Middle

Anyone who had even a minimum of information about Iraq and Iraqis would have known that Iraqis would have strong resistance to the occupation.

Iraqis, with their heterogeneous demography and culture, have decades of experience in fighting and enough weapons to go through long wars; they were not expected to stand still under the illegal foreign occupation.

In addition, what made things even worse and more violent than expected is the corrupt, irresponsible and culturally-insensitive plans the US army and administration used with Iraqis.

The Iraqi resistance is the very direct reaction to the invasion and occupation. It's simply an indigenous response to an illegal war. All the attempts of the US administration to accuse non-Iraqi-Arabs-and-Muslims of administrating the emergent resistance in Iraq didn't and won't work.

What's happening in Iraq was predictable and is very easy to analyze: a national, cultural and religious defense against a national, cultural, and religious offense.

The Jafari government will be announced today or tomorrow, but as the Iraqi proverb says: We fasted for three months then broke our fast with an onion.

Most of the bogus governmental structures built in Iraq by the US administration are falling apart. They were born deformed and weak in the first place, they didn't do their work efficiently in the first place, but now they are falling apart.

A short report in Ad Dustour, a Jordanian Newspaper, had interesting news about the Iraqi Ministry of Interior.

<p>The report said that more than 250 top officials and other thousands of low-level officers and clerks are not showing up to their jobs in the “anti-terrorism” departments. The Ministry of Interior in Baghdad is losing contact with other offices of the ministry around the country.</p>
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I said this three years ago, and I said it three months ago, and I'm saying it again today: The US army is going to burn in Iraq. We are still way off peak.

MORE ON J. TALABANI:

April 28, 2005 By Kelebdooni, Anti-Allawi Group"

Incidentally, does anybody know that Talabani spent a good portion of his shifty life fighting rebel Kurds led by Barzani (father of current one) on behalf of the central government, before and during the Saddam era? And he's probably responsible for killing more Kurds than anyone else?

Also, he executed Iraqi soldiers and civilians who happened to be in and around Sulaimaniya in 1991 immediately upon receiving the gift of US protection? I even heard a live execution on BBC radio at the time.

Naah... I don't suppose that matters anymore.

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

Six U.S. Military Drivers Killed

Apr 28, 2005 DUBAI (Reuters)

Militant group Army of Ansar al-Sunna said it shot dead six abducted Sudanese drivers working for U.S. forces in Iraq, according to a video posted on the Internet Thursday.

The hostages said on the tape they were hired by a Jordanian firm to work at the U.S. base near the capital Baghdad.

"I regret what I did and advise my brothers who work with occupying U.S. forces to quit immediately," said one hostage in the video posted on a Web site used by Islamists.

"We tell those who want to work with American forces that sooner or later this will be their fate," the group said in an accompanying statement.

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

Assorted Resistance Action

4.28.05 UPI & By Beth Potter, Middle East Online & By Alexandra Zavis, AP & Aljazeera

Guerrillas killed a senior Interior Ministry official in Baghdad Thursday.

Iraqi police said Gen. Mohsen Abdel Sada, assistant Interior Ministry director for intelligence affairs, was riding in the neighborhood of Dora, in the southwestern part of Baghdad, when insurgents intercepted his car and sprayed him with bullets, killing him instantly.

The attackers then sped off and ran away.

In another similar incident, **suspected insurgents killed a senior police officer in eastern Baghdad Thursday** before escaping.

In the city of Tikrit, **a booby-trapped car exploded near a convoy of Iraq national guards, wounding nine.**

At least two people connected with fuel distribution have been murdered in recent months. The son of Luey Jabbar, manager of imports, was killed a week ago, an oil ministry manager said, declining to be named.

Hussein Fattah, the former imports manager, was killed in January, and his family has gone into hiding.

In Baghdad, Lt. Col. Alaa Khalil Ibrihim, who worked in the visa section of the Interior Ministry, was killed on the way to work in eastern Baghdad, police said. A roadside bomb exploded, wounding two policeman, in a different part of Eastern Baghdad.

In Samarra, about 100km north of Baghdad, a roadside bomb placed on a motorcycle killed two police officers and wounded five, police said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Fall of Saigon April 30 1975: An Eyewitness Report

April 16, 2005 By John Pilger, lewrockwell.com [Yeah, it's long, but he was there.]

Saigon, April 1975.

At dawn I was awake, lying under my mattress on the floor tiles, peering at my bed propped against the French windows. The bed was meant to shield me from flying glass; but if the hotel was attacked with rockets, the bed would surely fall on me. Killed by a falling bed: that somehow made sense in this, the last act of the longest-running black

farce: a war that was always unnecessary and often atrocious and had ended the lives of three million people, leaving their once bountiful land petrified.

The long-awaited drive, by the legates of Ho Chi Minh, to reunify Vietnam had begun at last, more than 20 years since the "temporary" division imposed at Geneva. On New Year's Day, 1975, the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) surrounded the provincial capital of Phuoc Binh, 75 miles from Saigon; one week later the town was theirs. Quang Tri, south of the Demilitarised Zone, and Phan Rang followed, then Bat Me Thout, Hue, Danang and Qui Nhon in quick succession and with little bloodshed.

Danang, once the world's greatest military base, was taken by a dozen cadres of the Front for the Liberation of Vietnam (the NLF, known as the Vietcong by the Americans) waving white handkerchiefs from the back of a truck. A United Press wirepicture of an American punching a South Vietnamese "ally" squarely in the face as the Vietnamese tried to climb on board the last American flight from Nha Trang to Saigon held a certain symbolism of what had gone before.

By mid-April, the end was in sight as the battle for Xuan Loc unfolded 30 miles to the north-west of Saigon, which itself was already encircled by as many as 15 PAVN divisions armed with artillery and heatseeking missiles. On 20 April, Xuan Loc was captured by the PAVN. Only Saigon was now left.

Among the ribbons of refugees heading away from the fighting were embittered troops of the army of the US-backed Saigon regime, whose president and commander-in-chief, General Thieu, had acknowledged their defeat by fleeing to Taiwan with a fortune in gold. On 27 April, General Duong Van ("Big") Minh was elected president by the National Assembly with instructions to find a way to peace. It was "Big" Minh who in 1963 had helped to overthrow the dictator Ngo Dinh Diem and had sought, with his fellow officers, to negotiate a peace settlement with the NLF. When the Americans learned about this they bundled Minh out of office, and the war proceeded.

It was now eight o'clock; I hurried across Lam Som Square to get some urgently needed coffee. Saigon had been under rocket attack for two nights. One rocket had cut a swathe through half an acre of tiny, tightly packed houses in Cholon, the Chinese quarter, and the fire storm that followed had razed the lot.

There were people standing motionless, as if in a tableau, looking at the corrugated iron which was all that remained of their homes. There were few reporters; yesterday's rockets were news, the first to fall on Saigon in a decade; today's rockets were not. A French photographer blundered across the smouldering iron, sobbing; he pulled at my arm and led me to a pyre that had been a kitchen.

Beside it was a little girl, about five, who was still living. The skin on her chest was open like a page; her arms were gutted and her hands were petrified in front of her, one turned out, one turned in. Her face was still recognisable: she had plump cheeks and brown eyes, though her mouth was burnt and her lips had gone completely. A policeman was holding her mother away from her.

A boy scout, with a Red Cross armband, clattered across the iron, gasped and covered his face. The French photographer and I knelt beside her and tried to lift her head, but her hair was stuck to the iron by mortar turned to wax by the heat. We waited half an

hour, locked in this one dream, mesmerised by a little face, trying to give it water, until a stretcher arrived.

Following the attacks the American Ambassador, Graham Martin, appeared on Saigon television and pledged that the United States would not leave Vietnam. He said, "I, the American Ambassador, am not going to run away in the middle of the night. Any of you can come to my home and see for yourselves that I have not packed my bags. I give you my word." America's last proconsul on the continent of Asia, Martin was a private, strong-willed and irascible man.

He was also very sick; his skin was sunken and skinned grey from long months of pneumonia; his speech was ponderous and frequently blurred from the drugs he was taking. He chain-smoked, and conversations with him would be interrupted by extended bouts of coughing.

To describe Graham Martin as a hawk would be to attribute to that bird qualities of ferocity it does not have. For weeks he had told Washington that South Vietnam could survive with an "iron ring" around Saigon supplied by B-52s flying in relays back. But Martin could not ignore completely what he saw; he knew it was his job, and his job alone, to preside over the foreclosure on an empire which had once claimed two-thirds of Indo-China, for which his own son had died, nine years before. In the American embassy, a tree, one of many mighty tamarinds planted by the French a century before, dominated the lawns and garden outside the main foyer.

The only other open space big enough for a helicopter to land had the swimming pool in the middle of it, and the helipad on the embassy roof was designed only for the small Huey helicopters. If a helicopter evacuation was called, only the marines' Chinook and Jolly Green Giant helicopters would be able to fly large numbers of people to the Seventh Fleet, 30 miles offshore, within the course of one day. The tree was Graham Martin's last stand. He had told his staff that once the tree fell, America's prestige would fall with it, and he would have none of it.

Tom Polgar was the CIA station chief. Unlike many of his predecessors, he was unusually well informed and he despaired openly of the Ambassador's stubbornness. When Thieu locked himself in the bunker beneath the presidential palace for three and a half days, refusing to resign or even to take any phone calls, it was Polgar, together with the French Ambassador, Jean-Marie Merrillon, who finally persuaded Graham Martin that he should intervene.

To Martin, the felling of President Thieu became like the felling of the embassy tree: a matter of pride and "face," for himself and for America. The United States government had solemnly committed itself to Thieu and the southern state it had invented; he often said that his own son had died so that Thieu's "South Vietnam" could remain "free." On April 28 the NLF raised their flag on Newport bridge, three miles from the city centre. The monsoon had arrived early and Saigon now lay beneath leaden cloud; beyond the airport were long, arched bolts of lightning and the thunder came in small salvos as President Minh prepared to address what was left of his "republic."

He stood at the end of the great hall in the presidential palace, which was heavy with chandeliers and gold brocade, and he spoke haltingly, as if delivering a hopeless prayer. He talked of "our soldiers fighting hard" and only, it seemed, as an afterthought did he

call for a ceasefire and for negotiation. As he finished speaking, a succession of thunderclaps drowned his last words; the war was ending with a fine sense of theatre.

I walked quickly along Tu Do, the city's main street, as the lightning marched into the centre of the city. Half a dozen shops had closed since the day before, their owners having evacuated themselves to the bowling alley and gymnasium at Dodge City, the code-name for the old American command cocoon at Tan Son Nhut airport, where they paid handsomely for a place in the queue.

The Indian tailor at No 24 Tu Do, "Austin's Fine Clothes," was morosely counting his dollars and cursing his radio for not picking up the BBC World Service news. I had known the tailor at Austin's for a long time, and our relationship had always been one of whispers and comic furtiveness, involving the handing over of one green note, which would be fingered, snapped, peered at and put up against the light, and the receiving of a carrier bag filled with best British Vietnamese piastres. (Britain's greatest export to South Vietnam was banknotes.)

Thunder pulverised the city as the tailor counted his money; he had at least 5,000 dollars in that drawer, today's and yesterday's takings, and his Indian passport protruded from his shirt pocket. "Communists respect passports," he said, patting his without knowing what they respected. He said Saigon would not fall for at least a month, which caused the Vietnamese assistant, whirring at his sewing machine behind the curtain, to laugh.

The thunder had a new sound, dry and metallic. It was gunfire. The city seemed to be exploding with weapons of every kind: small arms, mortars, anti-aircraft batteries. "I think we are being bombed," said the tailor, who flinched from his counting only to turn up the volume on his radio, which was tuned to the Voice of America's Oldies and Goldies hour.

For the next half-hour the shop itself seemed to be a target and I ensured that two walls stood between me and the street. The tailor, however, remained at his post and counted his dollars while the Voice of America played "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White," which was barely audible above the gunfire. It is a profoundly witless song, but I sang along with the tailor, and I shall probably never forget the words.

In a far corner, like a wounded bird, an old Vietnamese woman clawed at the wall, weeping and praying. A joss stick and a box of matches lay on the floor in front of her; she could not strike the matches because her whole body was shaking with fear. After several attempts I was able to light it for her, only then realising the depth of my own fear.

The loud noises, including the thunder, stopped, and there was now only a crackle of small arms fire. "Thanks to the gentlemen who have bombed us," said the tailor, "the rate has just risen a thousand piastres." He opened the steel shutters, looked out and said, "OK, run!"

It seemed that all of Saigon was running, in spasms of controlled, silent panic. My own legs were melting, but they went as they never had before, and were given new life by an eruption of shooting outside the Bo Da café.

A military policeman, down on both knees, was raking the other side of the street, causing people to flatten or fall; nobody screamed. A bargirl from the Miramar Hotel,

wearing platform shoes, collided with the gutter, badly skinning her legs and her cheek. She lay still, holding her purse over the back of her head. On the far corner, opposite the Caravelle Hotel and outside a gallery which specialised in instant, hideous girlie paintings, a policeman sprayed the sky with his M-16 rifle. There was a man lying next to him, with his bicycle buckled around him.

Saigon was now "falling" before our eyes: the Saigon created and fattened and fed intravenously by the United States, then declared a terminal case; capital of the world's only consumer society that produced nothing; headquarters of the world's fourth greatest army, the ARVN, whose soldiers were now deserting at the rate of a thousand a day; and centre of an empire which, unlike the previous empire of the French who came to loot, expected nothing from its subjects, not rubber nor rice nor treasure (there was no oil), only acceptance of its "strategic interests" and gratitude for its Asian manifestations: Coca-Cola and Napalm.

At one o'clock in the morning, Graham Martin called a meeting of his top embassy officials to announce that he had spoken to Henry Kissinger, who had told him that the Soviet Ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, had promised to pass his (Kissinger's) message to Hanoi requesting a negotiated settlement with President Minh's government. Martin said Kissinger was hopeful that the Russians could arrange this. He said he wanted the evacuation by fixed-wing aircraft to continue for as long as possible, perhaps for 24 hours.

It was shortly after four o'clock in the morning when scores of rockets fell on Tan Son Nhut airport, followed by a barrage of heavy artillery. The waiting was over; the battle for Saigon had begun. The sun rose as a ragged red backdrop to the tracer bullets.

A helicopter gunship exploded and fell slowly, its lights still blinking. To the east, in the suburbs, there was mortar fire, which meant that the NLF were in Saigon itself, moving in roughly a straight line towards the embassy. A 6am meeting between Martin and his top officials was, said one of those in attendance, "a disaster." All of them, except Martin, agreed that they should start the evacuation immediately. Martin said no, he would not "run away," and announced to their horror that he would drive to Tan Son Nhut to assess the situation for himself.

There was no more than a suspicion among the embassy staff that the last proconsul of the empire might, just might, have plans to burn with Rome. When the meeting ended in confusion, Polgar ordered that the great tamarind tree be chopped down.

The tree-cutters assembled, like Marlboro men run to fat. These were the men who would fell the great tamarind; a remarkable group of CIA officers, former Special Forces men (the Green Berets) and an assortment of former GIs supplied by two California-based companies to protect the embassy.

They carried weapons which would delight the collector, including obsolete and adorned machine guns and pistols, and a variety of knives. However, they shared one characteristic; they walked with a swagger that was pure cowboy: legs slightly bowed, right hand hanging loose, fingers turned in and now and then patting the holster. They were issued with axes and a power saw, and secretaries from the embassy brought them beer and sandwiches. They were cutting down the Ambassador's tree without the Ambassador's approval.

At the same time, a fleet of cars and trucks pulled into the market outside the Botanical Gardens and Zoo, and quickly discharged their cargo: frozen steaks, pork chops, orange juice, great jars of pickles and maraschino cherries, cartons of canned butter beans and Chunkie peanut butter, Sara Lee cakes, Budweiser beer, Seven-Up, Wrigley's Chewing Gum, Have-A-Tampa plastic-tipped cigars and more, all of it looted from the Saigon commissary, which had been abandoned shortly after an NLF sapper unit strolled in Indian file past its rear doors.

To the Saigonese, stealing from their mentors and patrons had become something of a cultural obligation, and there was a carnival air and much giggling as fast-melting T-bones were sold for a few cents. A pick-up truck discharged a dishwashing machine and a water cooler was quickly sold and driven away in a tri-shaw; the dishwasher was of the Blue Swan brand and on its box was the Blue Swan motto: "Only the best is right for our customers." The dishwasher was taken from its box and left on the road. Two hours later it was still there, unsold and stripped of vital parts, a forlorn monument to consumer enterprise in Vietnam.

Saigon was now under a 24-hour curfew, but there were people in the streets, and some of them were soldiers from the 18th ARVN Division which had fought well at Xuan Loc, on Highway One. We had been expecting them and awaiting the first signs of their anger as they watched the Americans preparing to leave them to their fate. That morning, when they first appeared in the centre of the city, they merely eyed foreigners, or robbed them, or fired into the air to relieve their frustration.

I walked back to the Caravelle Hotel where I was to meet Sandy Gall of Independent Television News (ITN); he and I were the "evacuation wardens" for the TCN Press, which meant Third Country Nationals, which meant everyone who was not American or Vietnamese. For some days Gall and I had concerned ourselves with the supremely eccentric task of trying to organise those representatives of the British, Canadian, Italian, German, Spanish, Argentinian, Brazilian, Dutch and Japanese press who wanted to be evacuated.

The American embassy had distributed a 15-page booklet called SAFE, short for "Standard Instruction and Advice to Civilians in an Emergency." The booklet included a map of Saigon pinpointing "assembly areas where a helicopter will pick you up." There was an insert page which read: Note evacuational signal. Do not disclose to other personnel. When the evacuation is ordered, the code will be read out on American Forces Radio. The code is: THE TEMPERATURE IN SAIGON IS 112 DEGREES AND RISING. THIS WILL BE FOLLOWED BY THE PLAYING OF I'M DREAMING OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS."

The Japanese journalists were concerned that they would not recognise the tune and wondered if somebody could sing it to them. At the Caravelle, Gall and I had nominated floor wardens who, at the first hint of yuletide snow in Saigon, were to ensure that reporters who were infirm, deaf, asleep, confined to a lavatory or to a liaison, would not be left behind. There was more than a modicum of self-interest in this arrangement; I had, and have, an affliction which has delivered me late for virtually every serious event in my life.

Two C-130 Hercules aircraft from Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines were over Tan Son Nhut. They were ordered not to land. Scouts sent to the perimeter of the airport reported that two platoons of PAVN infantry had reinforced the sappers in the cemetery a mile away; a South Vietnamese pilot had landed his F-5 fighter on the runway and abandoned it with its engine running; and a jeep-load of ARVN were now ramming one of their own C-130s as it tried to take off. "There are some three thousand panicking civilians on the runway," said General Homer Smith on the VHF. "The situation appears to be out of control."

Graham Martin, alone in his office, watched the tree fall and heard his CIA Station Chief cry, 'Timberrrr!' When Kissinger phoned shortly afterwards, in compliance with President Ford's wish that the American Ambassador should take the final decision on the evacuation, he listened patiently to an exhausted and ailing Graham Martin. At 10.43 a.m. the order was given to "go with Option Four" (the helicopter evacuation; the other options had involved evacuation by sea and by air). But Martin remained steadfast in the belief that there was "still time" to negotiate an "honourable settlement."

The Caravelle emptied without the knowledge of the Unofficial Joint TCN Warden. Nobody told me. Bing Crosby did not croon on my radio. When I emerged, the rooms looked like the Marie Celeste, with clothes, papers, toothbrushes left. I ran to my room, gathered my typewriter, radio and notes and jammed them into one small bag; the rest I left. Two room attendants arrived and viewed my frantic packing, bemused and slightly in awe.

One asked, "Are you checking out, sir?" I said that I was, in a manner of speaking. "But your laundry won't be back till this evening, sir." I tried not to look at him. "Please ... you keep it ... and anything else you see." I pushed a bundle of piastres into their hands, knowing that I was buying their deference in the face of my graceless exit. After nine years, what a way to leave. But that I wanted to leave was beyond question; I had had my fill of the war.

Outside, Lam Son Square was empty, except for a few ARVN soldiers slouched in doorways and in the gutter. One of them walked briskly up Tu Do, shouting at me; he was drunk. He unholstered his revolver, rested it on an unsteady arm, took aim and fired.

The bullet went over my head as I ran. A crowd was pressing at the gate of the American embassy; some were merely the curious who had come to watch the Americans' aerial Dunkirk, but there were many who gripped the bars and pleaded with the marine guard to let them in and waved wax-sealed documents and letters from American officials.

An old man had a letter from a sergeant who a long time ago had run the bar at the Air Force officers' club in Pleiku. The old man used to wash dishes there, and his note from the sergeant, dated 5 June, 1967, read, "Mr Nha, the bearer of this letter, faithfully served the cause of freedom in the Republic of Vietnam."

Mr Nha also produced a toy Texas ranger's star which one of the pilots at Pleiku had given to him. He waved the letter and the toy Texas ranger's star at the marine guard who was shouting at the crowd, "Now please don't panic... please!" For as long as they could remember, these people, who worked for the Americans, had been told to fear the

communists; now they were being told, with the communists in their backyards, that they should not panic.

The old man attempted to slide through the opening in the gate and was pushed to the ground by the marine who was telling them not to panic. He got up, tried again and was tackled by a second marine who propelled him outside with the butt of his rifle and hurled the Texas ranger's badge over the heads of the crowd.

Inside the embassy compound the marines and the cowboys were standing around the stump of the great tamarind tree. "OK, you tell me what we're gonna do about this immovable bastard?" said one of the cowboys into his walkie-talkie. "Take it easy, Jed," came an audible reply, "just you and the boys level it down by at least another foot, so there's plenty of room for the rotors.

And Jed, get all those shavings swept up, or sure as hell they're gonna be sucked into the engines." So the marines and the cowboys went on swinging their axes at the stump, but with such mounting frustration and incompetence that their chopping became an entertainment for those both inside and outside the gate, and for the grinning French guards on the high wall of the French embassy next door.

There is in the Vietnamese language, which is given much to poetry and irony, a saying that "only when the house burns, do you see the faces of the rats." Here was Dr Phan Quang Dan, former deputy prime minister and minister responsible for social welfare and refugee resettlement, a man seen by Washington and by Ambassador Martin as the embodiment of the true nationalist spirit of South Vietnam.

An obsessive anti-communist who was constantly making speeches exhorting his countrymen to stand and fight, Dr Phan Quang Dan was accompanied by his plump wife sweltering under a fur coat and by a platoon of bagmen whose bags never left their grip. The "beautiful people" of Saigon were also there, including those young men of military age whose wealthy parents had paid large bribes to keep them out of the Army.

Although they were listed as soldiers on some unit's roster, they never reported for duty and their commanding officers more than likely pocketed their wages. They were called "ghost soldiers" and they continued to lead the good life in Saigon: in the cafés, on their Hondas, beside the pool at the Cercle Sportif, while the sons of the poor fought and died at Quang Tri, An Loc, and all the other places.

"Look, it is me ... let me in, please ... thank you very much ... hello, it is me!" The shrill voice at the back of the crowd outside the gate belonged to Lieutenant-General Dang Van Quang, regarded by his countrymen and by many Americans as one of the biggest and richest profiteers in South Vietnam.

The marine guard had a list of people he could let in, and General Quang was on it. With great care, the guard helped General Quang, who was very fat, over the 15-foot bars and then retrieved his three Samsonite bags. The General was so relieved to be inside that he walked away, leaving his 20-year-old son to struggle hopelessly in the crowd. There were two packets of dollars sagging from the General's jacket breast packet. When they were pointed out to him, he stuffed them back in, and laughed. To the Americans, General Quang was known as "Giggles" and "General Fats."

Among the Americans in the embassy compound there was a festive spirit. They squatted on the lawn around the swimming-pool with champagne in ice buckets looted from the embassy restaurant, and they whooped it up; one man in a western hat sprayed bubbly on another and there was joyous singing by two aircraft mechanics, Frank and Elmer. Over and over they sang, to the tune of "The Camp Town Races":

**We're goin' home in freedom birds,
Doo dah, doo dah;
We ain't goin' home in plastic bags,
Oh doo dah day.**

"This is where I've come after ten years," said Warren Parker almost in tears. "See that man over there? He's a National Police official ...nothing better than a torturer." Warren Parker had been, until that morning, United States Consul in My Tho, in the Delta, where I had met him a week earlier. He was a quiet, almost bashful man who had spent 10 years in Vietnam trying to "advise" the Vietnamese and puzzling why so many of them did not seem to want his advice.

He and I pushed our way into the restaurant beside the swimming-pool, past a man saying, "No Veetnamese in here, no Veetnamese," where we looted a chilled bottle of Taylor New York wine, pink and sweet. The glasses had already gone, so we drank from the bottle. "I'll tell you something," he said in his soft Georgia accent, "if there ever was a moment of truth for me it's today. All these years I've been down there, doing a job of work for my country and for this country, and today all I can see is that we've succeeded in separating all the good people from the scum, and we got the scum."

At 3.15 p.m. Graham Martin strode out of the embassy lift, through the foyer and into the compound. The big helicopters, the Jolly Green Giants, had yet to arrive and the stump of the tamarind was not noticeably shorter, in spite of the marines' and cowboys' furious chopping and sawing. Martin's Cadillac was waiting for him and, with embassy staff looking on in shock, the Cadillac drove towards the gate, which was now under siege. The marine at the gate could not believe his eyes.

The Cadillac stopped, the marine threw his arms into the air and the Cadillac reversed. The Ambassador got out and stormed past the stump and the cowboys. "I am going to walk once more to my residence," he exclaimed. "I shall walk freely in this city. I shall leave Vietnam when the President tells me to leave." He left the embassy by a side entrance, forced his own way through the crowd and walked the four blocks to his house. An hour and a half later he returned with his poodle, Nitnoy, and his Vietnamese manservant.

As the first Chinook helicopter made its precarious landing, its rotors slashed into a tree, and the snapping branches sounded like gunfire. "Down! Down!" screamed a corporal, high on Methedrine, to the line of people crouched against the wall, waiting their turn to be evacuated, until an officer came and calmed him.

The helicopter's capacity was 50, but it lifted off with 70. The pilot's skill was breathtaking as he climbed vertically to 200 feet, with bullets pinging against the rotors and shredded embassy documents playing in the downdraft. However, not all the embassy's documents were shredded and some were left in the compound in open plastic bags.

One of these I have. It is dated May 25, 1969 and reads, "Top Secret ... memo from John Paul Vann, counter insurgency ...900 houses in Chau Doe province were destroyed by American air strikes without evidence of a single enemy being killed.

The destruction of this hamlet by friendly American firepower is an event that will always be remembered and never forgiven by the surviving population..."

From the billowing incinerator on the embassy roof rained money. I found it difficult to believe my eyes. The unreal and the real had merged. From the heavens came 20, 50 and 100 dollar bills. Most were charred; some were not. The Vietnamese waiting around the pool could not believe their eyes; former ministers and generals and torturers scrambled for their severance pay from the sky. An embassy official said that more than five million dollars were being burned. "Every safe in the embassy has been emptied and locked again," said an official, "so as to fool the gooks when we've gone."

At least a thousand people were still inside the embassy, waiting to be evacuated, although most of the celebrities, like "Giggles" Quang, had seen themselves on to the first helicopters; the rest waited passively, as if stunned. Inside the embassy itself there was champagne foaming on to polished desks, as several of the embassy staff tried systematically to wreck their own offices: smashing water coolers, pouring bottles of Scotch into the carpets, sweeping pictures from the wall. In a third-floor office a picture of the late President Johnson was delivered into a wastepaper basket, while a framed quotation from Lawrence of Arabia was left on the wall.

The quotation read: "Better to let them do it imperfectly, than to do it perfectly yourself, for it is their country, their war, and your time is short."

It was approaching midnight. The embassy compound was lit by the headlights of embassy cars, and the jolly Green Giants were now taking up to 90 people each. Martin Garrett, the head of security, gathered all the remaining Americans together. The waiting Vietnamese sensed what was happening and a marine colonel appeared to reassure them that Ambassador Martin had given his word he would be the last to leave. It was a lie, of course. It was 2.30 a.m. on April 30 when Kissinger phoned Martin and told him to end the evacuation at 3.45 a.m.

After half an hour Martin emerged with an attaché case, a suit bag and the Stars and Stripes folded in a carrier bag. He went in silence to the sixth floor where a helicopter was waiting. "Lady Ace 09 is in the air with Code Two." "Code Two" was the code for an American Ambassador. The clipped announcement over the tied circuit meant that the American invasion of Indo-China had ended. As his helicopter banked over Highway One, the Ambassador could see the headlights of trucks of the People's Army of Vietnam, waiting.

The last marines reached the roof and fired tear-gas canisters into the stairwell. They could hear the smashing of glass and desperate attempts by their former allies to break open the empty safes. The marines were exhausted and beginning to panic; the last helicopter had yet to arrive and it was well past dawn.

Three hours later, as the sun beat down on an expectant city, tanks flying NLF colours entered the centre of Saigon. Their jubilant crews showed no menace, nor did they fire

a single shot. They were courteous and bemused; and one of them jumped down, spread a map on his tank and asked amazed bystanders, "Please direct us to the presidential palace. We don't know Saigon, we haven't been here for some time."

The tanks clattered into Lam Som Square, along Tu Do, up past the cathedral and, after pausing so that the revolutionary flag on their turrets could catch the breeze, they smashed through the ornate gates of the presidential palace where "Big" Minh and his cabinet were waiting to surrender. In the streets outside, boots and uniforms lay in neat piles where ARVN soldiers had stepped out of them and merged with the crowds.

There was no "bloodbath," as those who knew little about the Vietnamese had predicted. With the invader expelled, this extraordinary country was again one nation, as the Geneva conference had said it had a right all those wasted years ago.

The longest war of the 20th century was over.

“Act Of Betrayal” **Curry Spied On US Soldiers Who Didn’t Support The War; Then He Turned Against It Himself**



27 April, 2005 BBC News, Washington

[Thanks to Z, who sent this in.]

David Curry turned against the war during his time as an intelligence officer

Intelligence officer David Curry was based in a bar, not the jungle during his Vietnam war.

But he did not escape the psychological scars.

Mr Curry spied on US soldiers who did not support the war effort. Sometimes he interrogated them.

"I remember gradually getting more and more disillusioned with the job," he told the BBC.

"I helped to identify three South Vietnamese soldiers working against us and I later found out that those people were killed. That was when I turned the corner."

He asked for a discharge, but was refused.

"Many people saw it as an act of betrayal," he said.

"But as those people moved away from me, more people came towards me - people who shared similar views.

"At first I actually thought that I hated the Vietnamese - but I saw they were people whose whole lives were being changed by forces beyond their control, and I had a whole different attitude towards my country.

"They are thoughts that still stay with me today - I get very emotional."

Huge U.S. Majority Still Rejects Vietnam War

April 28, 2005 by Brad Knickerbocker, Christian Science Monitor

"There's little question that the average American considers the Vietnam War to have been a mistake," writes Frank Newport, editor in chief of the Gallup Poll.

"In fact, a majority of the public began to think the war was a mistake in the summer of 1968 as the war was still raging, and have continued to think so across 12 separate polls conducted since that point. Most recently, in November 2000, 68 percent said that it was a mistake, while 24 percent said that it was not."

Absent North Korea invading South Korea, or a terrorist attack in the US on the scale of Sept. 11, "US public opinion will not accept an Indochina-size war under any circumstances I can think of," says Fred Branfman.

"This is the enduring legacy of Vietnam in the 21st century as I see it," he says. A new strategic landscape

Received:

Thanks To Billy Kelly

From: JF
To: GI Special
Sent: April 28, 2005
Subject: [30 April 1975 - 30 April 2005]

I write the poor man, less frequently than I used to, to remind him that he is a liar, murderer, and a war criminal. Sometimes I think the poor bastard just went out way over his head.

But he took the job. He bears responsibility for what he's done.

A real man could still stop now. What could they do, kill him?

So I play the million to one shot.

That's the odds, if you ask me, of any reversal coming about before these guys fly the plane we're all on straight into the goddam ground.

**Thanks to Billy Kelly for telling it like it is.
I'm sure he'll never forget what he did.
But he has regained his humanity.**

JF's Letter To GWB:

Dear George W Bush,

Here are the reflections of a man, Billy Kelly, who did not stay safe at home during the American War in Viet Nam, as you and I did. As Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz and the rest of the war mongers in "your" administration did.

Billy Kelly recounts the things he wishes he had never done. See :
<http://www.militaryproject.org/article.asp?id=543>

What Billy Kelly feels now, thirty years after the end of that monstrous war, the war that murdered 50,000 Americans and more than 2,000,000 Viet Nameese, the war which the United States of America waged with chemical weapons that are maiming and destroying newborns in Viet Nam to this day, the war in which the United States of America strew murderous munitions throughout Lao, Cambodia and Viet Name that murder and maim to this day, **what Billy Kelly feels now is what all the innocent Americans you've sent to murder and be murdered in Iraq and Afghanistan are beginning to feel now and will feel for the rest of their lives.**

"The conclusion I have reached with enormous personal pain and sorrow is this: If the end is immoral, unlawful and dishonorable, then, whatever the means used to reach such, will be equally immoral, unlawful and dishonorable.

"There are no free passes. No shrink in the world can undo what I did. I killed other human beings who were fighting against me for what is now recognized as an honorable and just end. My opponents were fighting for their freedom, liberty and independence. The Viets had a goal. A justifiable end might permit a justifiable homicide.

"I envy them. All wars suck but some might be deemed just or necessary. Our opponents took up arms to defend their homeland from an aggressive invader who was occupying their land. An occupier who was intent on imposing his will upon the will of another by use of brute force. To resist that is a persons duty and obligation.

"Sadly, I now know that I was the neighborhood bully!

"Solitudinem Faciunt, Pacem Appellant"

"They Made a Wasteland and They Called It Peace" - Tacitus

"Hoa Binh, Billy Kelly"

You are personally responsible for every violent death in Iraq since your shocking, awful invasion and occupation of that country.

You are a liar, a murderer, a war criminal.

You call yourself a Christian. It would be far better for you if a millstone were tied around your neck and you were hurled into the deepest sea than for you to have done what you have done.

You will be tried as the war criminal that you are. You can run, but you cannot hide.

Yet still, even now, you can stop the murders in Iraq. How many more innocent people will you murder and maim if you continue as you have done until January 20, 2009?

Stop! Now!

You are a murderer and will have to answer for your crimes, but you can still stop murdering now! You can stop compounding your error. Your terror.

Think of the joy that thousands of wives, mothers, children and sweethearts will feel if you do not murder their husbands, fathers and lovers between now and January 20, 2009! You have the power to stop in your wicked, monstrous tracks and prevent thousands more murders!

Or you can continue as you have, a mad dog of man. Undeterred by reason. Murdering, maiming and destroying. Snorting and blaspheming as you do so.

Stop. Just stop. Just say no to Perle, Cheney, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld and the rest.

I can assure you that not only will a crushing burden be lifted from your shoulders, it will be lifted from the shoulders of innocents throughout America and the world.

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/gi-special/>, www.williambowles.info/gispecial,

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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