

GI SPECIAL 3B19:



[Thanks to Lietta & Arthur Ruger]

“Send Your Friends To Iraq, Or You'll Have To Go.”

From: A
To: GI Special

What i am including below is from my friend that i mentioned who is in the national guard i don't know anything about how the army works on these matters, but this shit doesn't sound kosher at all.

"By the way, as far as the Army . . . I would love to borrow from you knowledge as a union organizer.

This one is really kind of an FYI in case you're talking with any other activists out there. (maybe this weekend I will bring a tape recorder to drill. actually, i think i might).

First the recruiter offered us \$100 cash for each lead who joins. As far as I understand it, at least as far as my superiors have verified, that's cash out of his pocket, not directly out of Army funds.

So that's bad enough, right? But get this . . .

This month and every month hereafter, Battalion expects one "good lead" from each soldier in our unit. I have gotten several phone calls about this. And they keep passing around lists for me to add my friends' personal information.

I never put anything down.

But this month they told us we all NEED to bring a lead. I told my squad leader i'm not doing it because i think it's wrong of them to make us do it. But i'm probably going to face a talk from the commander, at the very least. Probably, it wont get up to Battalion (BN) level because someone else will give two leads and my leaders will put one of them down as being mine.

Somewhat indirectly, they have told us that if we don't provide a lead, we will be moved up on the list to go to Iraq.

Actually, they said it pretty directly. They said something just like "If this BN doesn't present enough good leads, we will be moved up on the list to go to Iraq." I don't know if that's for real or not, but it's pretty fucked up.

"Send your friends to Iraq, or you'll have to go."

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 WAR REPORTS

ONE SOLDIER KILLED, ONE INJURED IN BAGHDAD IED ATTACK

May 3, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-05-01C

LSA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq – One 1st Corps Support Command Soldier was killed and one other was injured when an improvised explosive device detonated near their vehicle during a combat logistics patrol south of Baghdad International Airport at approximately 9:45 p.m. May 2, 2005.

Marine Pilots' Body Found

05/03/05 Reuters & (CNN) & ASSOCIATED PRESS and UNION-TRIBUNE

The U.S. military has found the body of the pilot of one of two Marine Corps jets that crashed in Iraq.

In Washington, defense officials said they suspected the two fighters collided in mid-air at 30,000 feet, but no final conclusion had been reached.

One official, who asked not to be identified, said an emergency beacon from one of the planes was located on the ground about 25 km (15.53 miles) southwest of Kerbala.

A heavy sandstorm and lightning hit central Iraq on Monday night.

Late last year, Marine Corps officials said a sharp increase in deadly accidents involving Marine aircraft had forced a close look at possible causes of the mishaps.

An ejection seat from one of the jets was found at the site of the emergency beacon, but the official said he was not certain where the body was found.

According to several Web sites that track naval deployments, only one squadron on the Carl Vinson matches the description from yesterday's report. That would be the Miramar-based Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323, known as the Death Rattlers.

If the missing planes are from that squadron, they are Miramar's first combat planes – and possibly crew – to be lost during the war in Iraq.

The Boeing-built F/A-18C Hornet is an all-weather fighter and attack aircraft that costs \$35 million or more. It has been in service since the 1980s.

Two Michigan Soldiers Killed

May 3, 2005 WTOL

Two Army officers raised in Michigan were killed in a suicide bombing in Diyarah, Iraq, their families said. Capt. Ralph J. Harting III, 28, and Capt. Stephen Frank, 29, died Friday while inspecting a truck at a checkpoint 30 miles south of Baghdad, their families said.

The driver detonated a bomb, killing himself and the two officers.

Frank was born in Lyndhurst, Ohio, and was raised in the Lansing area, graduating from Haslett High School.

Harting, nicknamed Jay, was born in Pontiac and raised in Union Lake. He graduated in 1998 with a mechanical engineering degree from the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. His classmates included Frank, who earned a geography degree.

Kansas National Guardsmen Killed

May 3, 2005 The E.W. Scripps Co.

TOPEKA, KS- A third Kansas Army National Guard soldier has died in Iraq. The Guard said Tuesday that Specialist Derrick Joseph Lutters of Burlington, Colorado, died Sunday when his vehicle was hit by a car bomber.

Lutters was 24 and a member of Detachment One of the 170th Maintenance Company, serving in Iraq with the 891st Engineer Battalion out of Iowa. He was a gunner in one of three vehicles performing a bridge and road reconnaissance mission.

Two Bulgarian Soldiers Killed In Wreck

3 May 2005 FOCUS News Agency & Novinite Ltd

Another Bulgarian soldier has died in Iraq after Tuesday's road accident.

Line Sergeant Valentin Donev became the second Bulgarian fatality in the crash as he died of his wounds at a Basra hospital.

Earlier on Tuesday, Private Preslav Stoyanov from Fourth Infantry Battalion was killed in the crash.

The convoy was moving from the Camp Virginia in Kuwait to Tallil near An Nasiriyah in Iraq. The jeep crashed amid bad weather before noon.

Early reports had said that Donev had his leg broken but his condition was stable.

The announcement about his death came surprisingly in the afternoon.

There was a crash at 11:30 Bulgarian time on the route Kuwait – Virginia base on Iraqi territory.

The accident happened in desert storm when Hammer jeep crashed and private Preslav Yordanov Stoianov from Third Light Infantry Company from the Fourth Infantry Battalion died, announced spokesman of the Defense Ministry in Sofia Vladislav Prelezov.

The relatives of private Stoianov and Junior Sergeant Donev have already been informed.

There is an investigation going on about the incident. Private Stoianov was born in the town of Silistra on March 10, 1978. He graduated from secondary school and participated in the First Infantry Battalion.

Six U.S. Soldiers Wounded Near Al Qaim

May 2, 2005 Reuters

Six U.S. soldiers were wounded in a firefight and bombing close to the Syrian border on Monday, the U.S. military said in a statement on Tuesday.

Coalition forces followed a truck which drove to a small camp from a suspected insurgent location at the town of al Qaim, 200 miles northwest of Baghdad and 1 mile from the Syrian border, the U.S. military said.

The truck was loaded with material from a shed and tent at the camp and several adult males also boarded the truck before it headed back toward al Qaim, the statement said.

"Before the occupants in the vehicle could reach their destination the commander of the operation decided to interdict the vehicle; upon stopping the truck, the suspected insurgents opened fire on Coalition forces," it said.

"A firefight ensued with nine enemy adult males killed in action and one enemy wounded."

The U.S. military said a six-year-old girl "sustained a minor injury to her right calf and to her head" and a suspected insurgent was also wounded.

Doniphan Soldier Badly Hurt

"I think the scariest part is not knowing and not being able to find out. There isn't any place I can call," the worried father said. "I'll feel a lot better when he gets to Walter Reed."

5.3.05 By JACKIE HARDER ~ Staff Writer, Daily American Republic

Army Sgt. Greg Crain, 32, is currently hospitalized in Germany, awaiting transport to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He has been awarded the Purple Heart for wounds he suffered in a suicide car bombing on Friday.

Sgt. Crain's father, David, said family members have spoken with his son several times over the phone and learned Sgt. Crain's right foot was crushed and his face and neck are burned. David Crain said he's anxious to hear a detailed report from a doctor, but added that this morning his status was upgraded from "serious" to "not serious."

There were two other soldiers in the humvee at the time a suicide car bomber crashed his vehicle into them. The Army lieutenant sitting in the passenger's seat was killed, and a machine gunner that was perched on top of the humvee is said to be in critical condition.

"How Greg is alive and the guy sitting beside him is dead? Only God knows that," David Crain said.

Sgt. Crain was driving the lead humvee in a convoy north of Baghdad when the attack happened. According to David Crain, his son was blown out of the vehicle. The humvee then rolled, crushing Sgt. Crain's right foot.

Sgt. Crain is the son of David and Carolyn Crain and grandson of Dorothy Crain, all of Doniphan. He graduated from Doniphan R-1 in 1991 and has served in the U.S. Army for about eight years. Stationed at Fort Polk, La., he and his wife, Kim, have three children; Kevin, Tristen, and Cheyanne.

He is a truck driver with the 603rd Transportation Company, 142nd Corps Support Battalion, and was sent to Iraq in January.

Sgt. Crain's younger brother, Mike, is also serving in Iraq, with Poplar Bluff's 735th Main Support Battalion of the Missouri Army National Guard. Mike Crain had a two-week military leave set for June, but that was moved up to begin May 19 after he received word of his brother's injuries. Instead of coming back to Missouri, Mike Crain is hoping to spend some time with his brother in Washington, D.C.

Though he has spoken with his son over the phone, David Crain said he won't feel completely at ease until his son is flown to the Washington, D.C. hospital.

"I think the scariest part is not knowing and not being able to find out. There isn't any place I can call," the worried father said. "I'll feel a lot better when he gets to Walter Reed."

“Huge” Battle In Ramadi

5.3.05 AFP

Fifteen people -- two civilians, an Iraqi soldier and 12 insurgents -- were killed in huge gunbattle that broke out when a checkpoint manned by US and Iraqi forces was attacked Tuesday in the western rebel stronghold of Ramadi.

Alabama Soldier Dies Of April 19 Injuries

May. 03, 2005 Associated Press, JACKSON, Miss.

A Mississippi Army National Guard soldier from Alabama has died of injuries he received when a roadside bomb ripped through his vehicle in Iraq.

Four others were injured in the April 19 blast.

Staff Sgt. Tommy S. Little of Aliceville, Ala., died Monday, the Guard said. Little was assigned to the Guard's Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 114th Field Artillery in Columbus. Little was being treated at Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, when he died.

TROOP NEWS

'Do Not Ask Rumsfeld About Uparmored Humvees On Threat Of An Article 15'

From: L & A Ruger
To: GI Special
Sent: Monday, May 02, 2005 12:59 PM

Learned yesterday that my sil's unit was briefed on their redeployment to Iraq (2nd for him) and were told that Rumsfeld to be visiting their unit (Germany). I am not sure when he will visit nor how many unit(s) will be included to hear Rumsfeld's encouraging support message. **Unit was given this admonishment however;**

'Do Not Ask Rumsfeld About Uparmored Humvees On Threat Of An Article 15'

Why not?

It's public knowledge there are production problems with getting the troops the uparmored humvees; it's public knowledge the question was already asked of Rumsfeld months ago by a soldier in the field; it's public knowledge the President

responded that we need to do all we can to get the troops the protection they need; it's public knowledge that production of uparmored humvees is being done by only 1 company; it's public knowledge that production has not improved since that question was put to Rumsfeld.

Since my sil (and all of his unit + the other units of 1st Armored) has orders to redeploy to Iraq and is Stop Lossed, and situation in Iraq is worsening, what more logical question could they ask than what kind of equipment they will have during combat?

Lietta Ruger, an MFSO family, Pacific Northwest (<http://www.nwmfso.org>)

DEFEND PABLO PARADES AND KEVIN BENDERMAN: CALL FOR A NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR GI RESISTERS ON MAY 10, 2005

May 2, 2005

We urge you to join us in a "National Day of Action for GI Resisters" on Tuesday May 10, 2005.

This is the day before the US military is planning to bring sailor Pablo Paredes and soldier Kevin Benderman before military court martial tribunals for their opposition to the Iraq War. They face forfeiture of pay and benefits, and military jail time.

On December 6, 2004, Navy Petty Officer Pablo Paredes refused to board his ship as it left the San Diego Naval Station in support of the Iraq War and occupation. At the time of his refusal, Pablo said he hoped his protest might inspire other GI's to refuse to take part in the war.

On January 5, 2005, Kevin Benderman refused to deploy for a second tour of duty in Iraq with the Army's Third Infantry Division. At the same time seventeen other soldiers from his unit went AWOL, two tried to kill themselves and one had a relative shoot him in the leg to avoid deploying.

Both men applied for discharge from the US military as conscientious objectors. The military has wrongly rejected both claims.

It's time for us to escalate public pressure and action in support of Pablo, Kevin and the thousands of other courageous men and women who have followed their conscience to uphold international law and to take a principled stand against the unjust, illegal war and occupation of Iraq. It's time we had their backs.

Objection and resistance by military servicepersons is a healthy and important assertion of Democracy in a country where the decisions to invade Iraq, to maintain an occupation, and engage in widespread human right violations and torture were made undemocratically in violation of international law and based on continuing lies and disinformation.

Please join us by organizing a public demonstration, vigil or rally of support on May 10. Every action, no matter how large or small is important.

Also,

* Send letters of support and donations to cover legal fees to Pablo and Kevin via their websites listed below.

*** Come to San Diego, California (Pablo) or Fort Stewart, Georgia (Kevin) to show your support during their trials.**

* Write letters to the editor, and help educate your organization, church, union, school, co-workers and community.

Resisting illegal occupation and war is not a crime! The right to conscientious objection is being systematically violated by the military. Those objectors who are publicly asserting their rights are being singled out for punishment. We demand that military personnel retain their right to follow their conscience, publicly dissent and that their basic democratic rights be respected.

A better world is possible,

- * Monica Benderman - spouse of Kevin Benderman
- * Victor Paredes - brother of Pablo Paredes
- * Aimee Allison - Gulf War CO; Oakland City Council Candidate
- * Medea Benjamin - CodePink, Co-Founder; Global Exchange, Founding Director
- * Andrea Buffa - CodePink; Global Exchange, Peace Campaign
- * Leslie Cagan - United for Peace and Justice, Nat'l Steering Cmte
- * Stephen Funk - former Marine and first public Iraq War resister
- * Susan Galleymore - MotherSpeak; military mother; Courage to Resist
- * Lynn Gonzalez - San Diego Military Counseling Project
- * Jack Heyman - Int'l Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, Exec Board
- * George Johnson - Veterans for Peace, Nat'l Exec Board
- * Ragina Johnson - College Not Combat
- * Naomi Klein - activist; writer
- * Sharon Lee Kufeldt - Veterans for Peace, Nat'l Exec Board VP
- * Barbara Lubin - Middle East Children's Alliance, Director; ANSWER, Nat'l Steering Cmte
- * Efia Nwangaza - Afrikan Am Institute for Policy Studies
- * Siri Margerin - United for Peace and Justice, Nat'l Steering Cmte; Iraq Peace Panel Project

- * Steve Morse - GI Rights Program Coor, Central Cmte for Conscientious Objectors
- * Jeff Paterson - Not in Our Name; former Marine and 1991 Gulf War resister
- * David Solnit - People Powered Strategy Project; Courage to Resist
- * Vida Shahamat and Brain Barry - South Bay Mobilization Against the War
- * Aryeh Shell - Courage to Resist; Popular Education and Action Collective
- * Samina Faheem Sundas - American Muslim Voice
- * Fernando Suarez del Solar - Gold Star Families for Peace, father of Marine Jesus Suarez killed in Iraq
- * Fr. Louie Vitale, O.F.M., St Boniface Church; Korea War veteran
- * Liat Weingart - Jewish Voice for Peace, Co-Director
- * Bob Wing - War Times
- * Howard Zinn - historian; author

(organizations listed for identification purposes only)

More info about Pablo Paredes: <http://www.SwiftSmartVeterans.com>

More info about Kevin Benderman: <http://www.BendermanDefense.org>

For May 10 actions, leaflets, and more: <http://www.CourageToResist.org>

Call initiated by Courage to Resist, a new group of concerned community members, veterans and military families organizing support for military objectors to illegal war and occupation and the underlying policies of empire.

We have adopted a people power strategy to weaken the pillars that support the Iraq war and occupation by supporting GI resistance, which together with counter-recruitment and draft resistance work can remove the supply of obedient troops.

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.

***A LETTER FROM MONICA
BENDERMAN:
"YOU, Sirs, HAVE BETRAYED
YOURSELVES"***

[Thanks to DG, who sent this in.]

From: Monica Benderman
Sent: May 03, 2005 8:41 PM
Subject: letter re: Kevin Benderman

Last week, after three months of Kevin having to justify in every way possible why he might actually not want to participate in war any longer, he received a terse response from his chain of command denying his claim.

Interestingly, only one even gave a reason, the rest merely circled disapproval on a form letter, thus blocking Kevin from the very rights that should be afforded him by the Army Regulations themselves which in Article 600-43(Conscientious Objection) state that the applicant is allowed to respond to any and all additions and recommendations to his claim by anyone throughout the chain of command.

I have forwarded my letter to his chain of command to each member, and wanted to make certain that they knew that they are not the only ones receiving my thoughts on their inconsiderate handling of something that will affect not only one soldier's life, but the life of everyone who cares about him.

For the ten years of honorable service that this soldier has given to his country, his command gave a one minute response, and not one valid reason to deny his right to live by his conscience.

Thank you for sharing this... and thank you for caring.

Monica B.

An Open Letter To My Husband's Chain Of Command: The Players Of The Game

May 3, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR Director, Military Personnel Mgmt., Dept. of the Army, Wash. DC.

MEMORANDUM THROUGH Installation Commander, Ft. Stewart, Georgia
Division Rear Detachment Commander, Ft. Stewart, GA
Brigade Rear Detachment Commander, Ft. Stewart, GA
Company Rear Detachment Commander, Ft. Stewart, GA
Battalion Forward Support Chaplain, Ft. Stewart, GA
Conscientious Objector Hearing
Investigating Officer, Ft. Stewart, Georgia

SUBJECT: Getting to the Heart of the Matter

I read with interest, the response given by all of the above mentioned in my husband, Sgt. Kevin Benderman's, chain of command, with regard to his application for Conscientious Objector status. I reviewed the completed recommendation, and gave it

a thorough examination before coming to the conclusion that I must respond to it in this manner.

My review took exactly one minute. My interest was piqued. The net worth of YOUR time in a matter involving the rest of my husband's life, and MINE, having made the commitment (YES, Sirs... COMMITMENT) that I did, to support him as he chose to do the right thing and follow his conscience, **THE NET WORTH OF YOUR TIME in this matter was a mere one minute's worth of reading for a message that had all the human interest of a computer generated condolence letter.**

I have been involved in the process of my husband's coming to the difficult decision that he did since long before any of you even knew his name. For the record, I believe that even at this point, that is truly all any of you do know of this man. Which leads me to this question:

How exactly is it that any of you could, in GOOD CONSCIENCE, make any recommendation whatsoever on my husband's choice of conscience, having never really taken the time to get to know him?

Col. John Kidd, Ft. Stewart Installation Command, I have heard so very many things about you from a variety of sources. Soldiers, family members, wives, and media have all given me their thoughts on the type of person that you are.

There have been some favorable comments, but most claim that you lost a feeling for the humanity of the soldiers and families that have come to you for help somewhere in the seemingly difficult work that you have had to do dealing with war and its aftermath.

You have never met my husband, and yet you claim to know his soul. I have no opinion of you, Sir. I couldn't have, we have never met. I believe you do somehow respect humanity, and the choices you make are because you have had to close your heart to feeling, as so many soldiers must in these difficult times. Now that it is closed, you have trouble seeing when a soldier needs to stop soldiering to save himself, and to be what he needs to be for the family he has committed to. Family commitment, FIRST above all else, is a duty that must be served for life.

Lt. Col. Noel Nicholle, Ft. Stewart Division Rear Det. Commander, I have heard very much the same about you. I do not know you, but others have had much to tell me. I choose to withhold judgment until I have met you face to face. I am sure there is a man there who does care about humanity, and who does care about what matters most to his soldiers. I hope to one day be able to meet that man.

Major John Amadeo, Brigade Rear Det. Commander, I have heard your name. I would imagine we have crossed paths somewhere on Ft. Stewart.

Would you know it if we had? Would you know how I felt if you saw me walking into your office next week? Do you know, when you hear a soldier's name that he needs to save himself before he can save the world? And would you be the commander who cares enough about his soldier to let him do what is right? Would you make every attempt to honor that soldier by getting to know him before you judge him?

OR.... Would you simply circle a word on a form letter, and pass it along, never even giving that soldier a chance? Never giving yourself a chance to know a MAN with more heart, more courage, more life than you will ever meet again. Sir... You did yourself a disservice when you never raised your eyes to get to know my husband before you judged him. I will not do the same in return. I have never met you. I cannot say, in truth, what kind of a man you are... nor can I say that I recommend disapproval of your life for having committed to continue in war.

Capt. Diogo Tavares, Company Rear Det. Command, I have seen your eyes. I trusted you, Sir, and I spoke in support of you to my husband. I saw a man who is a soldier, but who is a soldier because he cares about humanity, NOT because he understands or supports killing.

I saw a man who seems to respect choices other than serving on the "killing fields," for you continue to serve HERE, away from the conflict. You serve here, leaving work everyday to return to your family, and to golf, to laugh, to watch movies and to take long weekends, all the while telling your soldiers that they do not have the right to defend their own conscience.

You deny their request to step away from killing and live as their conscience demands. You serve here, Sir, and yet you circled disapproval on a form letter denying my husband the rights that our constitution (the one all soldiers are ordered to defend) have given him, the "Right to Conscience," the right to say that his beliefs will no longer allow him to participate in war. You are here, at a desk, in an empty office, ALIVE. I trusted you to know my husband, one of your soldiers, better than most, to know his sincerity better than most... and yet you failed. You let your soldier down, Sir. You never did know him, and now, it seems that you never will.

None of you gave my husband the chance to let him show you who he is. You signed a form letter, and circled one word. None of you dared to speak to my husband, none of you dared to face him, to look in his eyes and hear what he had to say, to know his conscience.

Are you afraid?

Do you, serving in Rear Detachment positions, also have thoughts of saying NO to war, of seeing a way far better than war as a solution to our problems. Did you not want to face what he might make you question within yourself? Surely, if you truly believed what you claim, you would have given him the chance that the Army regulations allow, and that you denied... and you would have let him have a reason so that he could offer his SINCERE response in defense of his actions against your reason.

Cpt. Victor Aqueche, CO Investigating Officer, I saw your eyes. I really do not believe that I saw a lie. And yet, as I read your recommendation, I was confused.

You wrote that it was unbiased, and yet there was no mention of our conversations during the hearing. You wrote that you considered all facts brought to the light, and yet there was no mention of what we spoke of, and what you admitted during the hearing to having a full understanding of.

Did you forget, Sir... or were you afraid to see the truth?

All soldiers put away their feelings when training for war. My husband did just as he was trained to do, and closed down his humanity, and became a robotic killer, as did you. A year before the war, Kevin and I met. Three months before the war, we married. And after his deployment, he returned and we began living a life that gave him his feeling back. You see, Sir, I love my husband, and I will not let him be the robot he, and others, like yourself, had become. He didn't want that, he doesn't want that. Who in their right mind, with good conscience, would? BUT... we talked about this in the hearing, and you recognized then that it was a strong aspect to the change of my husband's beliefs.

We talked about his issues of stop/loss, how not re-enlisting would have been the easiest way for him to leave the military, but the military would not give him the easy way. We talked about his beliefs, how I watched him come to his decision over a period of time after he returned, how strong he is, and independent. You questioned why his thoughts had never been expressed to commanders and others around him, and I responded by telling you that he comes to his decisions on his own, and talks when he is SURE of what he has decided.

You said you understood, and you accepted what we talked about. You did ME a disservice, Sir. I know this man better than anyone, and yet you did not include my testimony on my husband's behalf in your recommendation. You spent two hours speaking with my husband, 15 minutes with me. You gave one paragraph to an alleged article that had my name on it, even after you had stated on record that any articles would not be included.

You gave NOTHING to my testimony. You mentioned NOTHING about what you claimed to understand in your recommendation. You DISHONORED ME, Sir. And, you betrayed yourself in the process.

Cpt. Matt Temple, chaplain. I hesitated to type chaplain after your name, but it's the position you serve -- rather, fill.

Service, to me, would mean that you were doing the work. Sir, you failed both Sgt. Benderman and me with your lack of service to the chaplaincy of the US Army.

I wonder, Cpt. Temple, if you remember me? I wonder if you remember the 5 telephone calls we had from January 2004 until August 2004? I wonder if you remember the hour long phone conversations we had, discussing how we could see a much greater vision for what the US Army could be, both for the soldiers and their families?

I wonder if you remember the conversation in which you told me that you were relatively new to your position, but that in just the short time that you were there, you could see how little was really done for the families of the soldiers, and how much work there was to be done before they were given real support and their true needs were addressed?

I wonder if you remember the phone call following your battalion's time at NTC, in California? We talked about the questions we both had in regard to deployment, and war. We talked about the military and how it could be used as a tool to promote positive growth in the lives of its members, if we could just find enough others who shared our vision.

Do you remember? I do. You see, that conversation made an impact, and I passed it along to my husband. I told him, finally there is one person that I was confident he could talk to who would understand. I felt that there was one person who was strong enough in his convictions that he, as a **chaplain**, would be there and listen as my husband addressed his concerns and tried to define the actions he must take to calm his conscience.

You failed me, Sir.

You failed my husband and you failed your service. I trusted you, Matt. I spoke with you from my heart, and talked to you about the true sense of my concerns with the military, in particular what it was doing to my husband. You NEVER REALLY LISTENED. Do you remember the emails, beginning in October, that you and my husband, Sgt. Kevin Benderman, exchanged? Do you remember, from October on, ending every email with a comment, "We have to talk about this more," or "I would be happy to speak with you about this in person."? Do you remember?

Which is the truth, Sir, what you expressed to me, what you expressed to my husband, when offering both of us your support as the Battalion Chaplain?

OR is the truth that you hide behind your commission reward plan, and you choose to fill the role of a chaplain, but never did intend to SERVE. Faith matters to me, and to my husband. Faith in myself, and in those in the service of God who tell me that they are there for those I care about as they search for the true answers to questions of their conscience.

I trusted you, Matt. I had faith in you. Who should I put my faith in now, Chaplain Temple?

I know what it is like to be betrayed. Each one of you in Sgt. Kevin Benderman's chain of command must as well.

The difference is, Sgt. Benderman and I retain our integrity.

We were betrayed by others than ourselves. Chaplain Temple, Cpt. Aqueche, Cpt. Tavares, Maj. Amadeo, Lt. Col. Nicholle, Col. Kidd, Brig. Gen. Byrne, commissioned officers in the US Army, for you the feeling must be far worse, a feeling I never could imagine --

YOU have betrayed one of your own soldiers, and his family.

By not standing to defend what you have sworn to defend -- our Constitution -- by backing down, by hiding behind letters of form, and nothing but excuses -- YOU, Sirs, HAVE BETRAYED YOURSELVES.

Army, Marines Miss Recruiting Goals For 3rd Month;

Young People, Parents Don't Support War

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

May. 03, 2005 Associated Press, WASHINGTON & May 2, By Will Dunham, Reuters Limited

With the Iraq war straining the all-volunteer U.S. military, the Army has missed its recruiting goals in April, marking the third consecutive monthly shortfall, and expects to do so again in May, while the Marines also fell short, officials said on Monday.

The Marines also missed their goal for signing up new recruits in April for the fourth straight month, said Marine Corps Recruiting Command spokesman Maj. David Griesmer.

Officials did not release exact recruiting figures for April, but said the Army Reserve also came up short. They said Army National Guard figures were not completed, but expected a shortfall there as well. The Army National Guard has missed every monthly recruiting goal to date in fiscal 2005.

As of April 30 the Army had achieved only 85 percent of its target for the first five months of the fiscal year, which began Oct. 1.

Opinion surveys have indicated that a growing number of young people and their parents are wary of the Army's recruiting pitch at a time when soldiers in Iraq are killed and wounded virtually every day.

Boyce said he did not have specific figures for April but it fell short of the monthly goal of 6,600.

The Army National Guard and Army Reserve have had even more trouble recruiting.

In March the Army Reserve signed up barely half the 1,600 soldiers it sought. It has not met a monthly goal since December 2004, and for the period from October 2004 through March it met only 82 percent of its goal.

Recruiting Fraud Out Of Control:

Recruiter Says Superior Officers “Threatened To Ruin Their Careers”; "The Problem Is That No One Wants To Join"

The offenses varied from threats and coercion to false promises that applicants would not be sent to Iraq.

"The fact that they would recruit someone straight out of a psychiatric hospitalization - give me a break," he said. "They were willing to put my son and other recruits at risk. It's beyond my comprehension, and appalling."

[Thanks to PB and AS who sent this in. PB writes: Even if they are only short 5, 10, or 15 percent in their recruitment numbers at the end of the year, it's because they are taking mental patients, the medically unfit, and they've lowered the mental standards as well.]

May 3, 2005 By DAMIEN CAVE, New York Times

It was late September when the 21-year-old man, fresh from a three-week commitment in a psychiatric ward, showed up at an Army recruiting station in southern Ohio.

The two recruiters there wasted no time signing him up, and even after the man's parents told them he had bipolar disorder - a diagnosis that would disqualify him - he was all set to be shipped to boot camp, and perhaps Iraq after that, before senior officers found out and canceled the enlistment.

Despite an Army investigation, the recruiters were not punished and were still working in the area late last month.

Two hundred miles away, in northern Ohio, another recruiter said the incident hardly surprised him. He has been bending or breaking enlistment rules for months, he said, hiding police records and medical histories of potential recruits.

His commanders have encouraged such deception, he said, because they know there is no other way to meet the Army's stiff recruitment quotas.

"The problem is that no one wants to join," the recruiter said. "We have to play fast and loose with the rules just to get by."

Interviews with more than two dozen recruiters in 10 states hint at the extent of their concern, if not the exact scope of the transgressions.

Several spoke of concealing mental-health histories and police records. They described falsified documents, wallet-size cheat sheets slipped to applicants before the military's aptitude test and commanding officers who look the other way. And they voiced doubts about the quality of some troops destined for the front lines.

The recruiters insisted on anonymity to avoid being disciplined, but their accounts were consistent, and the specifics were verified in several cases by documents and interviews with military officials and applicants' families.

Yesterday, the issue drew national attention as CBS News reported that a high-school student outside Denver recorded two recruiters as they advised him how to cheat. The student, David McSwane, said one recruiter had told him how to create a diploma from a nonexistent school, while the other had helped him buy a product to cleanse traces of marijuana and psychedelic mushrooms from his body. The Army said the recruiters had been suspended while it investigated.

By the Army's own count, there were 320 substantiated cases of what it calls recruitment improprieties in 2004, up from 199 in 1999, the last year it missed its active-duty recruitment goal, and 213 in 2002, the year before the war in Iraq started.

The offenses varied from threats and coercion to false promises that applicants would not be sent to Iraq.

Many incidents involved more than one recruiter, and the number of those investigated rose to 1,118 last year, or nearly one in five of all recruiters, up from 913 in 2002, or one in eight.

Recruiters and some senior Army officials, however, said that for every impropriety that is found, at least two more are never discovered. And the Army's figures show that it is not punishing serious offenses as it once did. In 2002, roughly 5 of every 10 recruiters who were found to have committed improprieties intentionally or through gross negligence were relieved of duty; last year, that number slipped to 3 in 10.

Recruiting has always been a difficult job, and some say the scandals that have periodically surfaced are inevitable. **But the temptation to cut corners is particularly strong today, some experts on the military say, as deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan have created a desperate need for new soldiers, and as the Army has fallen short of its recruitment goals in recent months, including April.**

"The more pressure you put on recruiters, the more likely you'll be to find people seeking ways to beat the system," said David Segal, a military sociologist at the University of Maryland.

The two cases in Ohio show just how badly the system can veer off track. In the case of the 21-year-old who had just left a psychiatric ward, it is not clear what he revealed when he approached recruiters in September.

But details of the young man's troubled past could have been easily found on the Web sites of local courts. County court records show that he was arrested in July and charged with assault; though the charge was dismissed after his accuser failed to appear in court, the records could have raised a red flag.

Probate court records show that in a case later last summer, a judge committed the man, finding him a danger to himself and others after he showed up at his parents' door bloodied and disoriented. He was released in late September under the guidance of a treatment program.

Recruiters are not required to check probate court records unless they are made aware of a specific case.

But the man's parents said they did just that.

After hearing that he had enlisted, they said, they wanted to make sure the Army understood his condition. They said they went to the recruiting station with the probate court record, gave recruiters the court's Internet address and even showed photos of their son. The recruiters, they said, claimed they had never seen him. "They acted sympathetic," the father said.

The parents say they went back twice more after the recruiters failed to return their calls. At their urging, their congressmen in early October finally learned that the recruiters had indeed enlisted their son. Days before he was scheduled to ship out, the young man was disqualified only after the father told the commander of the regional processing station about his illness.

In an interview, the commander confirmed the general outlines of the case. The Army would say only that at least two recruiters had been investigated in the case, which is closed.

But the man's father said Army officials told him they had found no wrongdoing. **"The fact that they would recruit someone straight out of a psychiatric hospitalization - give me a break," he said. "They were willing to put my son and other recruits at risk. It's beyond my comprehension, and appalling."**

Co-workers in the stations where the recruiters worked said last month in interviews that the two were still on the job. One of the two declined to comment when reached on his recruiting-command cellphone; the other did not return a half-dozen phone messages.

Recruiters in Ohio, New York, Washington, Texas and New England said that as long as an offending recruiter met his enlistment quota of roughly two recruits a month, punishment was unlikely.

"The saying here is, 'Production is power,' " the recruiter in northern Ohio said. "Produce, and all is good."

He said that in the last year, he had seen recruiters falsify documents so that applicants could earn ranks they were not qualified to hold. When enlistees tested positive for

marijuana, he said, recruiters coached them to drink gallons of water before visiting military doctors.

Occasionally, the recruiter said, he has been ordered to conceal police records and minor medical conditions like attention deficit disorder, which usually disqualifies a candidate. When he and others resisted such orders, he said, superiors threatened to ruin their careers.

The recruiter, who has fought in several conflicts including the current war in Iraq, said one in every three people he had enlisted had a problem that needed concealing, or a waiver.

"The only people who want to join the Army now have issues," he said. "They're troubled, with health, police or drug problems."

The recruiter said he believed in the Army and his job, often working 80-hour weeks. **But he sometimes worries about the mental capabilities of those who are enlisted, he said, especially as they move up the ranks.**

"If they are in a leadership position and they're sending 10 or 11 people all over the place because they can't focus on the job at hand," he said, "we're in trouble."

Congressional Assholes Attacking Commissary And Exchange Systems

At those career-counseling sessions we used to have in which they tried to persuade us to re-enlist, commissary/post exchange privileges along with free medical and dental care for ourselves and our families were strong selling points.

Well, the latter proved to be bogus piles of steaming offal when push came to shove. And it seems that if the government has its way, the commissary/PX system that we know and love will disappear as well.

April 25, 2005 By Mark A. Chevalier, Army Times. Mark A. Chevalier is a retired Air Force master sergeant who lives in Lancaster, Pa.

Ah, springtime. The crocuses and forsythia are starting to show signs of bursting forth, the migratory birds are heading back to assault my bird feeder and the Congressional Budget Office is attacking the commissary and exchange systems.

It seems whenever the number crunchers at the CBO get together to come up with creative ways of saving money, they always return to the notion that the best way of shaving dollars off the federal budget is to scrap that infernal commissary system.

The fact that commissaries exist is apparently such an unceasing affront to them that they have even included it as a special “axis of evil.”

CBO's latest plan consists of three options:

1. Combine the three exchange services into one entity.
2. Combine the exchange system with the commissary system to create a military version of Wal-Mart.
- 3. Combine the commissary, exchange and military dental clinics so that you earn “savings” only when you get a Frequent Flosser certification card endorsed by the oral hygienist.**

OK, I made up that last option.

But rest assured, it's only because they didn't think of it first.

CBO suggests the second option would save the Pentagon about \$1.1 billion annually, or roughly what the Pentagon pays to provide medical coverage to legislators and their families at Walter Reed and Bethesda medical centers in Washington and Maryland.

Of course, those savings come at a cost to the patrons of the commissary system (what budgetary maneuver doesn't come at the expense of the military service member?). The commissary patrons would lose that lauded “30 percent average savings” that commissaries supposedly provide.

But to replace that, CBO is offering an innovative way of softening the blow. An annual \$500 tax-free “grocery allowance” would be instituted. That should more than compensate you for your heartburn over its proposed plan.

Oh, and that grocery allowance? Just for you active-duty folks. Retired folks? Reservists? Guardsmen? Tough nails, farmer.

I'll be candid. With the exception of my overseas assignments where commissaries were vital repositories of American cuisine (Where else could I stock up on Beefaroni and aerosol processed cheese product?), I've never been a strong supporter of the 30 percent savings notion espoused by commissary officials.

I'm convinced that when they say an overall 30 percent savings, your best chance of saving 30 percent is if you buy selected products that nobody wants — like canned eels in garlic sauce. Other than that, you'd be better served by heading down to the local Piggly Wiggly.

And as a retired swine, renowned among active-duty types for being chronic cloggers of commissary aisles, I admit I almost never visit commissaries to do my grocery shopping. Where I live is a considerable drive from the nearest commissary, and anything I might save by stocking up on canned eel would be eaten up in gasoline.

Having said that, I understand there are a vast number of patrons — active-duty, reservists, Guard and retired families — to whom the commissary is a vital part of making ends meet.

It is and always has been one of the selling points for recruitment and retention.

At those career-counseling sessions we used to have in which they tried to persuade us to re-enlist, commissary/post exchange privileges along with free medical and dental care for ourselves and our families were strong selling points.

Well, the latter proved to be bogus piles of steaming offal when push came to shove. And it seems that if the government has its way, the commissary/PX system that we know and love will disappear as well.

Sure as God created wilted commissary lettuce, this latest plan for commissary savings, if accepted, will turn into the dismantlement of the entire benefit.

If they offer you an annual \$500 payoff for taking away your commissary savings, how much longer will it be before they give you a \$1,500 annual payoff and eliminate the commissary?

MORE:

***Don't Touch COMMISSARY:* “Could It Really Be True That Wal-Mart Does Run The Department Of Defense?”**

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
May 02, 2005

As a retired veteran, I have been pleased to tell my nieces and nephews how proud I was to have served my country for 24 years. That is until I read “Exchange-commissary merger eyed as cost-cutting measures,” April 11.

For me, the loss of the old commissary system is the “line in the sand.”

The day I no longer have an appropriated commissary, but have only the high-priced food at a nonappropriated post exchange super store, is the day that I tell my nieces, nephews and any other young person, “The Defense Department will promise you anything to get you to join and then deliver nothing.”

The Defense Department cannot seem to understand that it is the recommendations of the proud old warriors that bring in the new warriors. The small amount that appropriates the commissary is a small price to pay to care for the old warriors.

Shortfalls in recruiting do not seem to trouble the Defense Department.

Could it really be true that Wal-Mart does run the Department of Defense?

Lt. Col. Sam Booher (ret.)
Augusta, Ga.

Italian Government Says Pentagon Report On Killing Of Italian Agent Falsifies What Happened

May 3, 2005 (CNN)

Disputing the findings of a U.S. report, an Italian investigation into the fatal shooting of an Italian intelligence agent says stress and inexperience among American soldiers played a role in the incident.

Italian intelligence agent Nicola Calipari, 50, was killed in the March 4 incident shortly after he secured the release of journalist Giuliana Sgrena, who had been held by insurgents in Iraq.

The Italian report said there were coordination problems among officials in Iraq, but U.S. officials had been told about the plans to rescue Sgrena -- something the U.S. military has denied.

The Italian report also said no clear warning signs were given to the vehicle -- that flashing warning lights came at the same time troops began firing.

In addition, the report took issue with the American report about the speed the vehicle was traveling, saying it was 20 to 30 miles per hour (30 to 50 km/h) compared with the U.S. military's claim it was around 50 mph (80 km/h).

Italy has been a staunch U.S. ally in Iraq and provided more than 3,000 troops for missions there but **Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has faced increasing calls to bring the troops home in the wake of the U.S. report clearing its troops.**

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

5.3.05 Turks.US & AFP & AP

Two Iraqi policemen were killed and three people wounded in a car bombing on Tuesday in Baghdad.

The car bomber blew himself up in the Gazalia district, just as a patrolling police car was passing by. The blast occurred at 1430 (local time).

A senior water ministry official was killed in southern Baghdad in broad daylight Tuesday, while three policemen were also killed in separate attacks north of the capital, security sources said.

Further south, an Iraqi soldier and a businessman working for the US military were killed.

A loud explosion was heard in central Baghdad on Tuesday. Thick black smoke was seen rising from the direction of the heavily fortified Green Zone, home to government offices, foreign embassies and the U.S. military.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Iraq Resistance Kneecaps The Empire

5.2.05 By Mark Mazzetti, The Los Angeles Times & MAY 4, 2005 By Thom Shanker The New York Times

The concentration of U.S. troops and weapons in Iraq and Afghanistan limits the Pentagon's ability to deal with other potential armed conflicts, the military's highest-ranking officer told Congress.

Just weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks, the Pentagon issued a sweeping defense strategy detailing a new vision for winning swift wars against global terrorist networks and outlaw regimes. One year later, the White House unveiled its "National Security Strategy," which discussed using the U.S. military to launch preemptive wars and snuff out threats before they materialized - a strategy that would later be known as "The Bush Doctrine."

Now, with nearly 140,000 U.S. troops in Iraq two years after the fall of Baghdad, along with commitments in Afghanistan and for the global war on terrorism, many Pentagon officials admit that the bloody insurgency in Iraq has tempered that vision of what the U.S. military can and cannot do.

General Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff cited reduced stockpiles of precision weapons, which were depleted during the invasion of Iraq, and the stress on reserve units, which fulfill the bulk of combat support duties in Iraq, as among the factors that would limit the Pentagon's ability to prevail as quickly as war planners once predicted.

The general's report appears to provide a slightly different assessment than President George W. Bush offered at a news conference last week when he said that the number of American troops in Iraq would not limit Washington's military options elsewhere.

Bush said he had asked Myers, "Do you feel that we've limited our capacity to deal with other problems because of our troop levels in Iraq?"

"And the answer is no, he didn't feel a bit limited," Bush said. "It feels like we got plenty of capacity."

The strains include those placed upon military personnel by large and lengthy overseas deployments and those placed upon weapons and vehicles by wear and tear.

Strains also are placed on war planners trying to counter potential adversaries despite the fact that forces previously committed to such places as South Korea are now engaged elsewhere.

The half-dozen senior officials who discussed the chairman's assessment seemed motivated at least in part by concerns that its findings might be misinterpreted by adversaries as an admission of vulnerability and be seen as an invitation to adventurism that could lead to war.

The officials who discussed the assessment asked for anonymity because the document is classified.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Iraqi Media Under Attack From Occupation Collaborator Regime: "We've Become Hated Because We Say The Truth"

In recent months, however, Iraqi police have begun cracking down on local journalists, creating a wave of fear reminiscent of Saddam's era.

May. 03, 2005 BY MOHAMMED AL DULAIMY, Knight Ridder Newspapers

A photographer for a Baghdad newspaper says Iraqi police beat and detained him for snapping pictures of long lines at gas stations. A reporter for another local paper received an invitation from Iraqi police to cover their graduation ceremony and ended up receiving death threats from the recruits. A local TV reporter says she's lost count of how many times Iraqi authorities have confiscated her cameras and smashed her tapes.

While Iraq's newly elected government says it will look into complaints of press intimidation, local reporters said they've seen little progress since reporting the incidents.

Some have quit their jobs after receiving threats - not from insurgents, but from police. Most Iraqi reporters are reluctant to even identify themselves as press when stopped at police checkpoints. Others say they won't report on events that involve Iraqi security forces, which creates a big gap in their local news coverage.

"Tell me to cover anything except the police," said Muth'hir al Zuhairy, the reporter from Sabah newspaper who was threatened at a police academy.

In recent months, however, Iraqi police have begun cracking down on local journalists, creating a wave of fear reminiscent of Saddam's era.

"If things carry on like this, we will have to carry weapons along with our cameras and recorders," said Israa Shakir, editor of Iraq Today, an independent Baghdad newspaper.

Although Baghdad is the main hub for Iraqi journalists, complaints have poured in from other provinces, said Ibrahim al Sarraj, director of the Iraqi Association to Defend Journalists.

In southeastern Iraq, he said, a weekly newspaper was shut down in October for criticizing the governor of the Wasit province. A judge related to the governor sentenced two editors to several months in prison, Sarraj said. The court papers accused the men of "cursing and insulting" the politician.

In the northern town of Baqouba, a cameraman for a local TV station was filming a mosque when Iraqi troops detained him on April 9 for trespassing "in a prohibited place" and for shooting videos that could be used to help insurgents. He's still in custody, said Salah al Shakerchi, one of the man's colleagues at Al Diyar TV.

"There was no warrant. It was totally illegal, and he's being kept in poor conditions," Shakerchi said. "That's all we know. We have had no further contact with him."

Several Interior Ministry officials didn't return phone messages seeking comment on the journalists' complaints.

The local journalists make easy targets for several reasons: Police aren't used to press coverage of their activities, authorities aren't well-versed in press freedoms and Iraqi politicians frequently gripe that negative news reports aid the insurgency.

"We've become hated because we say the truth, and the truth is that Iraqi police make a lot of mistakes," said Ahmed Abed Ali, the photographer arrested Jan. 13 for taking pictures of long lines at gasoline stations.

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

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