

GI SPECIAL 3B53:



Eyewitness: “It’s Not Like I Would Be Proud To Have Taken Part In A Lie”

From: Tim Goodrich, (USAF ret'd), Co-founder, Iraq Veterans Against the War /
Western Region www.ivaw.net)

To: GI Special
Sent: June 07, 2005

I don't know if you saw this in the news last week, but if not, it's worth a look.

29 May 2005 By Michael Smith, The Sunday Times UK

The RAF and US aircraft doubled the rate at which they were dropping bombs on Iraq in 2002 in an attempt to provoke Saddam Hussein into giving the allies an excuse for war, new evidence has shown.

The attacks were intensified from May, six months before the United Nations resolution that Tony Blair and Lord Goldsmith, the attorney-general, argued gave the coalition the legal basis for war. By the end of August the raids had become a full air offensive.

It was not until November 8 that the UN security council passed resolution 1441, which threatened Iraq with "serious consequences" for failing to co-operate with the weapons inspectors.

The systematic targeting of Iraqi air defences appears to contradict Foreign Office legal guidance appended to the leaked briefing paper which said that the allied aircraft were only "entitled to use force in self-defence where such a use of force is a necessary and proportionate response to actual or imminent attack from Iraqi ground systems".

I'm just glad that someone finally got this information out to the public.

I was helping with those missions because I was deployed to Saudi Arabia from August-October of 2002.

I knew they intensified the bombing six months before the war started. I even saw the Army troop movements go through my base on their way into Iraq; again six months before the war started.

But guess what?

Even though I was helping bomb Iraq and the war apparently started at least six months before the "official" date, I'll never be recognized for it.

Neither will all of the other troops that took part in the "pre-war" with Iraq.

This even means that some won't get their benefits that they deserve for fighting in OIF- all because it hadn't "officially" started yet.

Even if I was honored for something such as this, it's not like I would be proud to have taken part in a lie anyway, so I guess it's not so bad.

The part that gets me the most is this, though: I've been telling people all across the United States that this happened.

Now, a news story finally comes out about it, and the people still don't care.

What is it going to take to wake up the general population of the U.S.? A draft? A nuclear bomb set off by Iraqi terrorists that we have "made" over the past 2+ years?

Sorry to ramble on here, I guess I just needed to vent. Feel free to print this if you think it's worthy.

[Your words, and those of other Iraq veterans, carry more weight, contain more truth, and are more worthy, than 5000 pages of bullshit from the politicians. Never doubt it. And we will prevail. Thankfully, members of our armed forces, and veterans, will do the right thing. They have taken the oath to protect us against all enemies, foreign *and domestic*. Every day makes it clearer to all concerned exactly who those enemies are. T]

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

MARINE KILLED NEAR FALLUJAH

June 7, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-06-05C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to Regimental Combat Team-8, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), died June 6 from wounds sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle.

The incident took place during combat operations June 5, near Fallujah.

ANOTHER MARINE KILLED NEAR FALLUJAH BY IED

June 7, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-06-06C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to Regimental Combat Team-8, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed in action June 6 when an improvised explosive device detonated near the vehicle in which he was traveling.

The incident took place near Fallujah, Iraq.

SOLDIER DIES AT CAMP DUBLIN

June 7, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-06-07C

BAGHDAD, Iraq – **A U.S. Soldier died of non-combat related injuries June 5 at Camp Dublin near the Baghdad International Airport.**

Soldier From Idaho Killed

06/07/05 AP, BOISE, Idaho

A 19-year-old Caldwell woman has become the first female soldier from Idaho to die in fighting in Iraq.

Spec. Carrie L. French died Sunday afternoon. She had been assigned to the National Guard's 145th Support Battalion, which is based in Boise.

She is the 13th soldier from Idaho to die since the March 2003 invasion.

French's family declined requests for interviews. She's survived by her mother, Paula Hylinsky, and father, Rick French.

"Carrie was a fun-loving young woman with a warm heart and desire to serve," a statement from her family said. "She will be dearly missed."

According to a Defense Department statement, the front of French's convoy vehicle was struck by the bomb at about 3 p.m. in Kirkuk.

French was an ammunition specialist with the battalion, which provides logistical and medical support as well as supplies to the National Guard's 116th Brigade Combat Team. The 116th is headquartered at Boise's Gowen Field and includes about 1,700 Idaho residents among its 4,300 soldiers.

Boone Soldier Killed: “He Didn’t Actually Believe In The War He Was Fighting”

June 07, 2005 By Charles Shumaker, Staff writer, The Charleston Gazette

Brian Scott Ulbrich, who brought a little bit of his Boone County expertise to help his Army unit in Iraq, was killed this weekend by a roadside bomb in Baghdad, his mother said Monday evening.

Ulbrich, a 23-year-old private first class, died Sunday after a bomb exploded outside his Humvee in Baghdad, according to his mother, Barbara Ulbrich. He was a cavalry scout based at Fort Carson, Colo.

Ulbrich, known as "Scotty," usually drove a Bradley Fighting Vehicle but was behind the wheel of the smaller Humvee when the explosion rocked the vehicle, his mother said. Ulbrich and other soldiers got out just as a second roadside bomb exploded, killing Ulbrich and two other men, Barbara Ulbrich said.

Two Army chaplains met with Barbara Ulbrich on Sunday evening. He died Sunday, about 4:30 a.m. West Virginia time, they said.

One of those killed alongside him was a sergeant who had written a letter to Ulbrich's mother last month that spilled over with compliments for her son, she said.

"He said [Scotty] was so good at what he did," Barbara Ulbrich said.

Her son and the other seven soldiers in his unit scoured Iraqi land for insurgents before other soldiers came through.

On a recent mission, Scotty Ulbrich and other soldiers came upon a canal that looked to be uncrossable, Barbara Ulbrich said.

She said her son spotted a bulldozer nearby, ran to it and hopped on it. Before his commanding officers could react, he had the engine started and had a plan to cross the canal.

When a doubting officer questioned him, he replied, "Sir, I'm a West Virginia coal miner and I know what I'm doing." He plowed a path that helped his unit navigate the canal a short time later.

Scotty Ulbrich spent his weekends home from Marshall University working part time at a Boone County coal mine. He learned the ins and outs of running a bulldozer there, she said.

His mother, a fourth-grade teacher at Brookview Elementary School in Foster, took a week off in February to visit her son in Colorado before he went to fight.

Even though "he didn't actually believe in the war he was fighting," Scotty Ulbrich was determined to do his job, his mother said.

Scotty Ulbrich, his mother and 21-year-old sister, Beth, stayed in close touch between his missions in Iraq. E-mails, letters and telephone calls were always topped off with Scotty Ulbrich's wit, his mother said.

"I am more proud of him than anything," she said. "He had such a love for life and for putting a smile on everyone's face. He was just a phenomenal person."

Southern Illinois Soldier Killed

6.7.05 Associated Press

SIMPSON, Ill. A soldier from the small town of Simpson in southern Illinois has died in Iraq.

Melinda Astin of Dongola says she was notified yesterday that her son -- 20-year-old Army National Guard soldier Brian Romines had been killed by an explosive.

Astin says she's waiting for a phone call from the military so she can get more details.

Romines joined the National Guard after his 18th birthday and had been in Iraq since early this year.

The two were last in contact by instant messenger on their computers Friday. He told his mother he was worried because there was lots of activity going on.

Astin says her son tried to hide his nervousness from her when they talked the last time over the phone on Mother's Day.

(Simpson is about 30 miles southeast of Carbondale.)

Project Site Attacked

7 June, 2005 BBC

Colonel Peter DeLuca, US military, Baghdad, 1950 LOCAL TIME (1550 GMT)

The trip to and from the range was blessedly uneventful and everybody received training on the variety of weapons in the section.

The heat was another thing and definitely can suck the energy out of you if you don't consume water like a maniac.

There was a breeze today and it helped even though it was a hot and dusty wind out at the range.

The interview with the representative from Joint Forces Command was relatively brief, touching on the high points of how we execute construction in Iraq. Some controversial points from us perhaps but nothing that anyone actually involved in construction in Iraq wouldn't agree about.

Today we received some very sad news as well.

One of our project sites west of Baghdad was hit with rocket fire and several Iraqi workers were killed and wounded.

This is the worst attack on any of our job sites since August 2004. We are attempting to gather all the pieces of information and share it with all who need to know including coalition and Iraqi security forces.

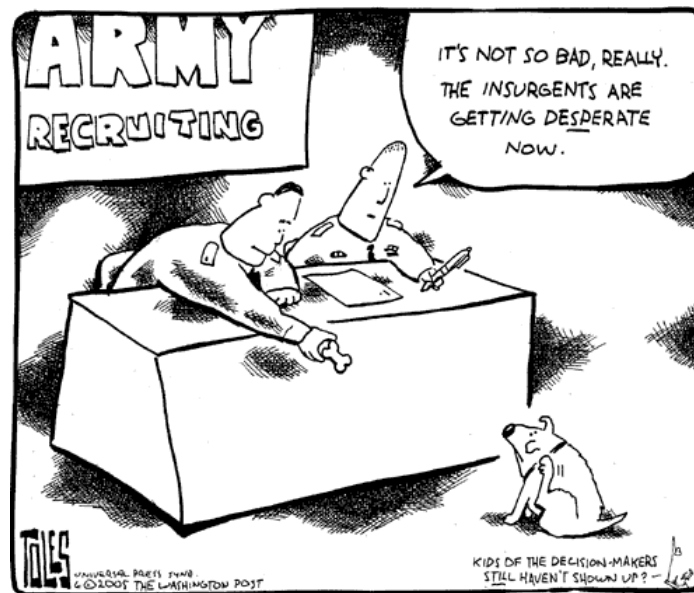
The contractors and our J7 officer at the site are working to notify and coordinate with the families of the injured and dead.

Whack-A-Mole

Los Angeles Times, June 7, 2005

Iraqi commanders have deployed about 40,000 troops to Baghdad for a security crackdown, leaving other trouble spots virtually unprotected and more vulnerable to insurgent attacks. **With troops scouring Baghdad for insurgents, militants will seize the chance to strike cities from which forces have been pulled.**

TROOP NEWS



June 7, Downing Street Memo, Say What?

June 7, 2005 Article written by Lietta Ruger, a member family of MFSO

To: GI Special

Sent: June 07, 2005

"In exchange for our uniformed young people's willingness to offer the gift of their lives, civilian Americans owe them something important: It is our duty to ensure that they never are called to make that sacrifice unless it is truly necessary for the security of the country.

"In the case of Iraq, the American public has failed them; we did not prevent the Bush administration from spending their blood in an unnecessary war based on contrived concerns about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. President Bush and those around him lied, and the rest of us let them. Harsh? Yes. True? Also yes. Perhaps it happened because Americans, understandably, don't expect untruths from those in power. But that works better as an explanation than as an excuse."

May 30, 2005, The Star Tribune

May 1, 2005, The London Times article; The Downing Street Memo. Classified information released and reveals origins of initiation of war in Iraq.

**June 7, 2005,
No media coverage in USA on this important document, save one lone newspaper,
The Star Tribune.**

That is the passing of a month and what do Americans know about the Downing Street Memo? Do Americans even care, I ask myself?

The official minutes of a briefing by Richard Dearlove, then head of Britain's CIA equivalent, MI-6.

"Dearlove briefed Prime Minister Blair and his top national security officials on July 23, 2002, on the Bush administration's plans to make war on Iraq.

Blair does not dispute the authenticity of the document.

In emotionless English, Dearlove tells Blair and the others that President Bush has decided to remove Saddam Hussein by launching a war that is to be "justified by the conjunction of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction." Period. What about the intelligence? Dearlove adds matter-of-factly, "The intelligence and facts are being fixed around the policy."

When this article was made known to me within the day of its release, I understood the potential impact and waited to see if American mainstream news would even report it and not surprisingly it went unreported.

Of course, not so on internet and in blogosphere where the impact was also understood. Yet it is newsworthy, surely more so than the headline stories of the past month.

If it's not newsworthy, not notable, it really does beg the question, doesn't it, of why it is not.

And in the interim, Amnesty International has made its 2005 report citing

"The US government is operating an "archipelago" of prisons around the world, many of them secret camps into which people are being "literally disappeared," a top Amnesty International official said.

And the Bush Administration finds this an unfair attack, yet cited Amnesty International reports as among the reasons to take out Saddam Hussein. How low we've fallen, USA, to now be the subject of an Amnesty International Report citing our country's villainy and not inaccurately either.

If as early as July 2002, both Bush and Blair knew they were taking their countries to war in Iraq, knew they would be sending in troops, why then by March 2003 (8 months later) was neither prepared to equip the troops they knew they would send into Iraq?

If there was lead up time to prepare the plans to go to war and induce fear into a susceptible congress/parliament and citizenry, there was time then to adequately prepare for the needs of troops being sent into combat.

Even if an optimistic case scenario of shock and awe and a quick finish was an expectation of these 'planners and leaders', now 2 + years later it's abundantly apparent this will be a long drawn out IraqNam and IranNam next?

And if PNAC had years to prepare their blueprint, why didn't that blueprint include the needs of troops in combat? How disposable are our troops?

So for me, a military family speaking out in support of our troops deployed in combat, I continue to wait, watch, say what I can when I can, and hope the American public will listen to the disquiet that must by now be rumbling around in their gut telling each there is something very wrong about what we are doing in Iraq.

More than that, I continue to wait and watch and hope the American public will not continue to try to quiet those inner feelings of agitation by out shouting them with their voices reciting the now tired rhetoric, jingoism and platitudes of why our loved ones are in combat in Iraq.

And more than that, I continue to wait, watch and hope the American public will be moved to action on behalf of our troops and call to account this Administration's culpability of deception.

We become collectively culpable as a nation and it troubles me deeply to now fully appreciate and understand how it might have been once upon a time for the German people as a nation when they seemed frozen and unable to act to hold their own leaders accountable.

Don't misunderstand as I am not making a comparison of our Administration to that period of time, but I am making a comparison of the American public response to the German public response and have come to know the answer to the question that I used to ask 'how could they do nothing, let it happen, let it continue'.

It is a question I now mentally ask daily these days about our own American public.

Sign the Congressman Conyers Letter To President Bush Concerning 'The Downing Street Minutes' (link: <http://www.johnconyers.com/>)

Sign the Petition to Prime Minister Tony Blair supporting the public inquiry into the Iraq war. (link <http://www.petitiononline.com/mfaw/petition.html>)

Army Drops Silly Larceny Charge Against Sgt. Benderman

[Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

Jun. 06, 2005 RUSS BYNUM, Associated Press, SAVANNAH, Ga.

An Army investigator has recommended a court-martial on desertion charges for a soldier who refused to deploy to Iraq.

Sgt. Kevin Benderman, 40, faces up to seven years in prison if the recommendation of the investigating officer - whose role is similar to that of a civilian grand jury - is followed by Fort Stewart commanders.

Benderman, an Army mechanic, refused to deploy with his 3rd Infantry Division unit for a second tour of duty Jan. 8, days after he told commanders he was seeking a discharge as a conscientious objector.

A military judge halted Benderman's first trial May 11 and ordered a new preliminary investigation, ruling previous investigative hearings may have been biased against Benderman.

Following that ruling, prosecutors added charges of larceny against Benderman, saying he accepted \$2,922 in combat pay and related deployment bonuses while he remained in the United States.

The hearing officer, Maj. David Bedard, said in his report released Friday that the larceny charges should be dropped, blaming the payments on an accounting error.

Bedard's recommendation to Col. John M. Kidd, Fort Stewart's garrison commander, would leave Benderman in the same position as his prior legal fight: facing charges of desertion and missing movement in a general court-martial.

Maj. Scot Sikes, Benderman's military defense attorney, applauded the recommendation to drop larceny charges, which carried a maximum penalty of 10 years.

"We're very pleased he saw the added charges for what they are - an administrative oversight by Army finance," Sikes said. "As for the desertion and missing movement charges, we just feel like there's exonerating evidence that, at trial, will carry the day."

Benderman's attorneys have argued that at worst, the soldier had been absent without leave - a lesser charge than desertion - because he reported for duty the Monday after his unit's weekend deployment.

“US Trusts Military, Distrusts Main Stream Media” HMOs, Big Business & Congress Also In The Toilet

[Thanks to Heather, who sent this in. She writes: "We the people" get it.]

Here's some very compelling evidence that the mainstream media is drastically out of step with the majority of the American public: Military Tops Public Confidence List in New Gallup Poll

WASHINGTON, June 3, 2005 By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service

The American public has more confidence in the military than in any other institution, according to a Gallup poll released this week.

Seventy-four percent of those surveyed in Gallup's 2005 confidence poll said they have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the military - more than in a full range of other government, religious, economic, medical, business and news organizations.

Those surveyed expressed strong confidence in the military, with 42 percent expressing "a great deal" of confidence in the military and 32 percent, "quite a lot" of confidence.

Eighteen percent said they have “some” confidence, 7 percent, “very little,” and 1 percent, “none.”

This year’s 74 percent confidence level exceeded that of all 15 institutions included in the 2005 survey.

Health maintenance organizations bottomed out the list, with just 17 percent of responders expressing high confidence in them.

Big business and Congress tied for the second- and third-lowest rankings, with 22 percent of responders expressing “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in them.

The Gallup organization noted that public trust in television news and newspapers reached an all-time low this year, with 28 percent of responders expressing high confidence in them.

Casualties? Could Be Worse, “Experts” Say

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, June 6, 2005

Some military experts say the number of casualties suffered by U.S. forces in Iraq reflect the cost of war, with one noting that casualties would be worse if “things were getting really bad.”

***Avenge The Betrayal!* USS Liberty Veteran’s Association Announces War Crime Report Filed Against Israel**

[Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

Captain Ward Boston, a JAG (Naval Legal) Officer involved with the initial inquiry and retired FBI agent examined the original copy of the Court of Inquiry record released under the Freedom of Information Act and declared it a fraud. “It is not the record I certified and submitted in 1967,” says Captain Boston.

June 7, 2005 Common Dreams Online

CONTACT: Gary Brummett, President, USS Liberty Veterans Association

WASHINGTON, DC - Friday, June 10 at 1:00 pm, Hotel Washington, 515 15th. St NW, Washington Room 11th floor (hit R for roof in elevator), Moe Shafer, board member of the USS Liberty Veterans Association and Rear Admiral Merlin Staring, USN, Ret., Former Judge Advocate General of the Navy who was involved with the initial Court of Inquiry investigating the attack in 1967 will present details of the "Report of War Crimes" brief filed on behalf of the USS Liberty Veteran's Association concerning the 1967 Israeli attack on the USS Liberty.

The "Report" was filed with by James R. Gotcher, General Legal Counsel, USS - LVA, with the Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon on June 8, the 38th anniversary of the attack on the USS Liberty.

By establishing prima facie evidence that Israel committed war crimes the Secretary of Defense under existing Dept. Of Defense directives is obligated to initiate an inquiry into the commission of war crimes, an investigation that should have been carried out 38 years ago.

Gotcher was an Air Force intelligence officer in Vietnam in 1967 and is one of three intelligence officers who were in different parts of the world at the time.

Independent of each other they signed sworn affidavits that they saw intelligence messages saying the USS Liberty was under attack by Israeli aircraft in the Mediterranean.

Moe was a 3rd class communications technician on the USS Liberty and survivor of a torpedo attack that killed 25 of his ship mates in the part of the ship where he was stationed.

Captain Ward Boston, a JAG (Naval Legal) Officer involved with the initial inquiry and retired FBI agent examined the original copy of the Court of Inquiry record released under the Freedom of Information Act and declared it a fraud. "It is not the record I certified and submitted in 1967," says Captain Boston.

Lloyd Painter, Officer of the Deck on the USS Liberty and retired secret service agent of 24 years testified that his statement mentioned in the report, "that the Israeli torpedo boat crews machine gunned the USS Liberty inflatable life boats" was removed from the final report that was submitted in 1967.

Immediately following the press conference there will be a panel discussion at the Washington

Calif. Guard Commander Quits Under Fire: Faked Shooting Skills Test

June 07, 2005 Associated Press, SACRAMENTO, Calif.

The commander of the California National Guard has resigned amid allegations he failed to meet a Pentagon shooting-skills requirement and improperly tried to arrange a military flight for members of a Republican group.

Major Gen. Thomas Eres stepped down late Monday after questions about his conduct and qualifications were raised by the San Jose Mercury News and Contra Costa Times.

The two newspapers obtained interviews and documents indicating that Eres did not pass a required shooting-skills test before visiting troops in Iraq last fall and that a top aide falsely informed the Pentagon that the general had passed the test.

The newspapers also said Eres attempted to arrange a flight for a Lincoln Club group — a GOP organization — that wanted to travel last month to the North American Aerospace Defense Command center in Colorado. The trip, which was eventually canceled, appeared to violate military rules because of the group's party affiliation.

Eres was appointed in March 2004 as leader of the nation's largest National Guard force. The California Guard includes 22,000 troops, 13 bases and more than 100 armories.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

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

A History Of Injustice In Our Armed Forces: Military Scapegoats Walk A Well-Worn Path

June 7, 2005 Jonathan Turley, USA Today,

When scandals occur, scapegoats are gathered from the military's lower ranks and offered up for the sins of their superiors. Generals may be retired early or

demoted in rare cases, but jail time is largely the province of the lower ranks. The Abu Ghraib investigation has pretty much followed this unseemly, seamless tradition.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Has Infiltrated Security Organizations

June 7, 2005 Barry R. Posen, New York Times

U.S. and Iraqi counterinsurgents face two key tasks---collecting intelligence on the rebels and preventing the insurgents from gaining intelligence on their own troops. The weight of evidence suggests that U.S. and Iraqi agent are behind on both counts. The insurgents have good information. **There are many reports that they have operatives within the Iraqi security organizations and bureaucracies.**

New Base Bombed

Washington Post, June 7, 2005

A new Iraqi base for security forces in Baghdad was hit by a bomber who drove straight into a building where men were housed. The full extent of the attack has not been determined. One police official said three policemen and three bystanders were injured.

U.S. Military Supply Convoy Ambushed & Destroyed: At Least Seven Dead

Jun. 07, 2005 Associated Press, BAGHDAD, Iraq

A convoy of trucks believed to be carrying supplies to a U.S. military base west of Baghdad was ambushed Tuesday, and reporters who arrived after the attack said they saw the bodies of at least seven people.

The attack occurred in Habaniyah, 50 miles west of Baghdad and between Fallujah and Ramadi. The victims, all apparently Iraqi men in their 20s and 30s, were placed side by side in a ditch on the side of the road, the reporters said.

Several bullet-riddled trucks were on fire and bystanders, including young boys, were seen taking items from the trucks. As some at the scene of the attack tried to put out the fires, a group of heavily armed and masked men came to watch.

Hart Security Ltd., a Cyprus-based British security firm, announced that a convoy of trucks its employees were escorting had been "ambushed by insurgents" near Habaniyah.

"It has not been possible to confirm the whereabouts or safety of certain members of this convoy," said the announcement posted on its Web site.

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

Prisoner Uprising At Abu Ghraib

07 June 2005 Aljazeera.Net

Dozens of Iraqi prisoners rioted against guards in the U.S.-run Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad and pelted them with stones, the American military said in a released statement on Tuesday.

Several guards and detainees were injured after rioting erupted in the notorious US-run prison of Abu Ghraib on Baghdad's western outskirts after a detainee tried to escape.

"The disturbance occurred shortly after a detainee, using the hours of darkness and a heavy sandstorm, was caught trying to escape," the US military said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Detainees in several of the compounds began throwing rocks at the portable light generators and the guards," it said.

The US military said the incident occurred on Sunday shortly before midnight. Four guards and six detainees were injured and treated at the scene.

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

Assorted Resistance Action:

Collaborator Lt. Says Go Kill Americans



Iraqi soldiers look at destroyed vehicles after three suicide bombers struck almost simultaneously, targeting army checkpoints on the northern, western and eastern entrances of the town of Hawijah. © AFP Marwan Ibrahim

"This is a terrorist act because real resistance should only target American troops, not Iraqis trying to protect their country." Lt. Sadiq Mohammed 26

June 07, 2005 (AFP) & Aljazeera.Net & By Paul Garwood, AP & Reuters

Near the former rebel stronghold of Fallujah, west of Baghdad, three civilians died and 13 were wounded in a mortar attack on a military base.

Also near Falluja police said a roadside bomb targeting a convoy of contractors enroute to the U.S. military base at Al-Jabaniya killed three people and injured one.

Fourteen Iraqis died, half of them soldiers, in early morning car bomb attacks around the northern town of Hawijah in the latest major attack on Iraq's security forces.

The explosions occurred as officials hailed gains from Operation Lightning, a more than two-week-old sweep of the capital.

A coordinated string of four bomb attacks within seven minutes targeted army checkpoints on the northern, western and eastern entrances of the town, 210 kilometres (130 miles) from Baghdad, police said.

Tuesday's early morning attacks appeared coordinated and aimed at checkpoints manned by members of Iraq's fledgling army, which has been a constant target of fighters opposed to the country's new government.

The first explosion, caused by a roadside bomb, rocked Hawija, about 65km south of Kirkuk, at around 9.30 am.

Heavily armed US soldiers sealed off the bomb scene, allowing only ambulances to enter and reach the dead and wounded.

Soon after, three bombers waiting in lines of cars at army checkpoints to the west and north of Hawija struck in quick succession.

In the deadliest attack, 10 civilians and one soldier were killed at a checkpoint in Dibis, two miles west of Hawija, army Lt. Faleh Ahmed said. Three soldiers and two civilians were killed at a checkpoint in Bagara, three miles west of Hawija. Two soldiers died in an attack on the Aziziya checkpoint at the northern entrance to Hawija.

"I was standing some distance from the checkpoint when I heard a big explosion and I was thrown onto the ground," Lt. Sadiq Mohammed 26, whose right leg was wounded in the Dibis attack, said from his hospital bed.

"This is a terrorist act because real resistance should only target American troops, not Iraqis trying to protect their country."

"The three car bombs attacks were coordinated because they happened almost at the same time and in the same way, where the drivers of the cars waited in lines of traffic before reaching the checkpoints before exploding their cars next the soldiers," police Col. Ahmed Hammoud said.

US forces sealed off what quickly became a virtual ghost town with Apache attack helicopters circling overhead, an AFP correspondent reported.

Nine people were killed in the northern city of Mosul, including four peshmerga militiamen reportedly shot dead by police after they were mistaken for insurgents.

One policeman died in a drive-by shooting in the city's industrial district and another in a mortar attack on his station in Tun Kubri, to the south.

North of Baghdad, four Iraqi soldiers were killed in an ambush and roadside bombing.

Inside the capital, an employee of the foreign ministry was killed in a drive-by shooting and a commando was shot dead in the southern Aamel neighborhood.

A third shooting left an Iraqi police official critically wounded.

The body of a policeman bearing gunshot wounds was also discovered near the infamous Abu Ghraib prison west of Baghdad.

And the managing director of a state agency attached to the ministry of housing was seriously wounded in a drive-by shooting that killed his driver.

A new car bombing in Baghdad on Tuesday wounded 28 people. The blast hit a police patrol in the predominantly Shia Shula district in northern Baghdad, an interior ministry official said.

The blast occurred near a coffee shop this morning. The U-S military confirms that a bomb planted in a parked car exploded, as an Iraqi police patrol passed.

A convoy of contractors was attacked near Baghdad at 11:30 a.m. June 7, while they were delivering supplies for Coalition forces west of here.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

A History Of Mutiny

June 2005 by Neil Davidson, Socialist Review (UK) [Excerpts]

Award-winning historian Neil Davidson considers the precedents for army disaffection and revolt.

The crime for which George Galloway was expelled from the Labour Party was appealing to British soldiers not to carry out illegal orders during the invasion of Iraq.

Since the invasion was itself an illegal act, Galloway was effectively committing the offence which the ruling class refer to as 'incitement to mutiny'. This may explain some of the hatred with which they have responded to his election.

In the end, all revolutions succeed or fail depending on whether they have been able to break the military power of the existing state. Generalised violence against the mass of the population is not, of course, the preferred method of bourgeois rule, since regimes that depend mainly on repression to maintain themselves in power tend to be unstable and insecure.

But in a crisis, when the very existence of the system seems under threat, the military will always be the final barrier against the working class and its allies.

We are not yet in a revolutionary situation, alas, but any weakening of the command structure, such as implied by Galloway's eminently moderate invitation for the troops to obey international law rather than criminal orders, threatens to weaken the final bulwark upon which our rulers depend.

The one thing armed forces are not supposed to do is think, at least in other than instrumental ways; part of the otherwise incomprehensible nature of military discipline is precisely to instil obedience to orders, no matter how pointless, illogical or perverse. The Victorian Poet Laureate Tennyson spoke more truthfully than he perhaps intended when he wrote of the Light Brigade at the Battle of Balaclava, 'Theirs not to reason why...'

Refusal to obey orders or, even worse, to establish an alternative source of command, everywhere carries the most severe of penalties, including - as in the British army until 1998 - death.

Mutiny is therefore a serious business, and not one which members of the armed forces of any country undertake lightly. In general, it occurs only when they are either supremely confident or extremely desperate. For this reason, the question of how sections of the armed forces have, in the past, abandoned their posts, or even changed sides, is of considerable interest to socialists.

The New Model Army

The first serious mutiny took place during the English Revolution, but it was a mutiny within the revolutionary forces, not those of the Stuart state.

By 1647 the soldiers of the New Model Army had several grievances, including opposition to being sent to Ireland to suppress the Catholic rebellion and resentment at not receiving their arrears of pay. The situation produced several innovations. Within the New Model Army itself rank and file soldiers elected representatives ('agents' or 'agitators') and came under the influence of the first real political organisation in modern history, the Levellers.

The demands of the men quickly generalised from their immediate concerns to the broader issue of who should have the franchise. Indeed, it was difficult for them to ignore the contrast between their ability to elect representatives within their own ranks, and the way they were prevented from doing so in the wider society they were sworn to defend.

The actual rebellion followed on from the inconclusive outcome to the famous Putney Debates, but was easily overcome by a combination of (actually quite limited) repression and successful appeals to the loyalty of the troops in the face of Charles's attempt to restart the civil war. The significance of this episode is that it was essentially a dispute over the extent of democracy in the post-revolutionary state, in which the more consistent democrats lost.

The New Model Army was an ideologically committed army, with a membership drawn from a relatively homogenous social group of independent farmers and small producers. The British bourgeoisie had no intention of allowing such body, or a standing army of any sort, to be recreated.

Nevertheless, for the century between the consolidation of the English Revolution in 1688 and the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, the British army had several differences from most of those in continental Europe. It no longer relied on mercenaries, but on an army raised from volunteers and supplemented by men forced into service or 'pressed' - although the latter phenomenon was considerably more important in the navy. Men enlisted for economic reasons, and nowhere in the 18th century was this truer than the Highlands of Scotland. This was a society in crisis even before the Battle of Culloden in 1746, and it entered a period of total disintegration shortly afterwards.

One effect of this was massive levels of recruitment to the British army. The regiments were often composed of men from the same estates. They received agreement that they would be allowed to retain their local regimental identities and not be sent outside the British Isles.

Both promises were regularly broken, with the result that there were at least 16 serious mutinies by Scottish Highland regiments between 1743 and 1804.

Far more significant were the naval mutinies at Spithead and the Nore in 1797, since the British state relied on the navy for protection to a far greater extent than it did on the army. Here we encounter for the first time, not just opposition to bad conditions, but a possible political direction which is opposed to the existing state. The extent to which political influence of Jacobin radicalism influenced the sailors is still widely disputed by historians, but it is surely significant that the fleet contained several thousand Irishmen, given the proximity of the mutiny to the revolt of the United Irishmen the following year. The notion of going on strike - meaning here the 'striking' or lowering of sails - may actually originate in these events.

What changed the political significance of mutinies was, from the middle of the 19th century, the introduction of conscription - that is, of the systematic, compulsory enlistment of men of a certain age who met certain (initially relatively low) physical standards.

Outside of the Balkans, Europe was at peace between the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 and the start of the First World War in 1914. In other words, the latter event was the first major war to have taken place since the completion of the bourgeois revolution in the main European states. Conscription was universal between 1914 and 1918 and it was during this great imperial slaughter that the first explicit connection was made between the struggle for socialism and the revolt in the armed forces. (There is a precursor in the 1905 revolt of the Kronstadt sailors which was one of the opening episodes of the 1905 Russian Revolution.)

Two elements were necessary for these connections to be made.

The first was that socialists who were called up did not try to evade the process by going on the run or pleading conscientious objection, but that they 'went with their class', as the saying had it.

This was important, because when the massed armies and navies of the combatants began finally to crack under the unrelenting pressure of the slaughter and deprivation, there were socialists alongside them who could try to explain their situation and what could be done about it.

Essentially, the army and navy mutinies varied in significance depending on whether or not the country involved was suffering defeat, with all the heightened social pressures that involved. The Russian Revolution of 1917, as Trotsky pointed out, was a combination of a peasant uprising for land and a working class uprising for socialism. Below the officer corps the Tsarist army consisted of members of both classes and so their rebellion - which in many places simply involved mass desertion-linked the two great revolutionary classes and effectively broke the ability of the Tsarist regime to resist.

In Germany a revolt by sailors at Kiel, in opposition to a suicidal attempt to engage the British fleet, effectively began the revolution of 1918.

On the Allied side, however, the role of mutinies played a less significant role, which reflected the fact that the revolutionary wave itself was weaker in Britain, France and the US than in Central and Eastern Europe. At the end of the war these were mainly about the speed and equity of demobilisation, although at least one important naval mutiny, by the French Fleet in the Black Sea, was directed against intervention against the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War.

Mutinies played a generally far smaller role in the revolutionary movements at the end of the Second World War.

Discipline did not break down among the Axis Powers. In Germany, unlike in the First World War, the Wehrmacht fought on to the end. In part this is because of the savage reprisals which deserters could expect - the ruling class was famously obsessed with avoiding the collapse of 1918 - but also because of fear of what the advancing Russian armies would do in retaliation for the atrocities committed by German troops in the east.

In the case of the Allies, such mutinies that did occur were again principally concerned with demobilisation. This was certainly the case with the British army in Egypt, although revolutionaries, including Trotskyists like Duncan Hallas, were involved.

The main exceptions, and they were very important indeed, occurred in the colonies.

Events such as the mutiny of the Indian Fleet in 1946 were clearly part of the opening rounds of the struggle for liberation in Asia. (The hostility of both Congress and the Communist Party to the mutineers is also indicative of the betrayals that were to follow.)

The revolt of the GIs

The final episode I want to discuss, which in a sense still casts its shadow over all succeeding events, is the American experience in Vietnam.

First, by the time of the war in Vietnam the class experience of the army had come to represent the class and racial structure of society to a far greater degree than previously. In the Second and - especially - the First World Wars the level of casualties among the officer class was, in relative terms, extremely high, something which they were increasingly determined to avoid.

On the other side, however, black participation in the fighting was far more extensive - there had been black troops in the world wars, of course, but they were often restricted to non-combatant roles at the rear. This was now reversed. It was the American working class who died in the jungles of Vietnam.

The revolt of the GIs was different from those of the world wars, in that it did not take the form of a classical collective refusal to serve. On the one hand it saw an intense degree of politicisation, including the production of regular anti-war, or at

least anti-army, bulletins and newspapers. On the other, it saw a drugged withdrawal from active service. At its most extreme, it involved a guerrilla strategy of selectively assassinating particularly gung-ho or oppressive officers through the use of fragmentation bombs ('fragging').

In the end, large sections of the US combat forces in Vietnam were simply unreliable for one reason or another, and this was recognised by the more intelligent sections of the officer corps. Colin Powell was among those who suggested to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that it might not be entirely sensible to send black US troops to oppose the black nationalist movement, the MPLA, which was on the verge of power in Angola during 1976. There is at least a case for arguing that, uncharacteristic though it was, this was the most effective mutiny in military history.

What had happened?

Essentially two things. In the battlefield was an enemy whose increasingly successful struggle against superior force and technology had belied US propaganda claims about their supposed minority status among the population. At home a mass movement that involved the friends and relatives of the troops acted to remove the usual sense of isolation that troops beginning to doubt their role usually feel.

The precise circumstances of Vietnam are unlikely ever to be repeated, even in Iraq, but several elements are still in place.

The fact that conscription has largely been abandoned by the imperialist powers (except where they are colonial-settler regimes like Israel) does not mean that mutinies are no longer likely to occur.

[The] majority of private soldiers and naval ratings still come from the working class (the class basis of the air force tends to be slightly different) - and often from the poorest and worst educated sections of the working class at that, as the role of Lynndie England in the Abu Ghraib atrocities has demonstrated. To say in advance that this layer of people cannot be won to socialist politics is effectively to write off whole sections of the working class.

This does not mean that troops will automatically achieve class consciousness, but this is also true of working class people in civilian life.

On the other hand because - unlike the police - the army is far less likely to be used regularly against the home population, there are greater opportunities to connect the intense class divisions within the armed forces with those in the outside world. The prospect of what used to be called 'disaffection in the ranks' escalating to the point of refusal to fight, let alone any further action, is likely to be enhanced by three factors.

The first is division within the ruling class, including the chiefs of staff themselves. Where the leaders are divided on tactical questions - and they are of course unlikely to question the fundamental political or moral positions of their class - it can produce a

situation of institutional paralysis that reduces to some extent the risks involved in disobedience.

The second is resistance on the ground against invasion and occupation. Without this ruling classes would rarely question the correctness of their strategy, let alone split over the issue. But it also true that without the prospect of stand-off or defeat a large enough number of troops are unlikely to question their role - even if only from the point of view of self-preservation. But without one final factor, the effect of battlefield violence, death and the loss of comrades is just as likely to turn to blind hatred towards the enemy as to a refusal to fight.

That final factor is an active mass movement 'at home' articulating reasons for opposing the war and supporting those in the armed forces who do so.

A movement like the Stop the War Coalition can give potential dissidents in the forces the confidence to refuse orders.

In this context, the importance of developments like Military Families Against the War cannot be underestimated, and it is important to understand just how rare it has been for this to happen during a war.

Although the stories about returning GIs being spat on by protesters during the Vietnam War are mainly lies, it is vital that the movement continues to emphasise that it does not see individual soldiers as the enemy, and that we, rather than the politicians and generals ordering them to their deaths, are their true allies.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace]

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.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Bolivia: President Resigns, Leaves Town La Paz “A City At War” General Strike Called

[Thanks to CS who sent this in.]

Are Hormando Vaca Diez and the other politicians afraid of the groups fighting in the streets of La Paz? Today, one of the slogans was clear: “Send Vaca to the slaughterhouse!” (“Vaca” is Spanish for “cow.”)

6.7.05 By Jean Friedsky & Luis Gomez, Narco News & BBC

Mr Mesa, who came to power 19 months ago after his predecessor was forced out by popular protests, announced his resignation in a televised address on Monday after a day of mass protests.

"This is as far as I can go," he said.

Anti-government demonstrators have fought running battles with police in Bolivia's main city, La Paz, despite the president's offer to resign.

As La Paz streets turned into rivers of people, wiphalas, placards and banners, the strikes and blockades across the nation continued to work their tactical magic: El Alto, paralyzed for days; La Paz, a virtual island, with blockades at all entrances, lacking gasoline and certain food supplies; Cochabamba and Potosi, shut down by protesters; the nation's highway system, over 70 impenetrable road blocks halting shipping and transport.



(BBC)

From all angles, it was a day unlike the others.

By noon, people had filled San Francisco for a cabildo abierto (open public meeting) that demonstrated a growing unity and confidence.

Within minutes of adjourning the cabildo to encircle the Plaza Murillo, the thousands of protesters were besieged by gas and rubber bullets.

The police were relentless, raining their dispersal weapons upon crowds in all directions. For the next hour, people were pushed block by block away from both San Francisco and the Plaza Murillo by the pursuant police. As we made our way up and over from San Francisco, we could hear the alternating explosions of dynamite (protesters) and gas canisters (police) in the distance.

The BBC's Elliott Gotkine reports from La Paz that if Mr Mesa thought his offer to resign was going to pacify the protesters, he was wrong.

If anything, they have grown more violent and the place now feels like it is a city at war, our correspondent says.

Throughout Tuesday, poor Indian peasant farmers, miners and trades union members clashed with the police.

When they hurled deafening charges of dynamite, riot police responded with tear gas, forcing demonstrators and unlucky civilians to scurry for cover.

An Associated Press news agency correspondent says he saw at least three ambulances taking people away, and police making arrests.

The road blockades across Bolivia are strangling the country, with access to many of its neighbours now impossible.

In La Paz, prices on some products like meat have tripled, and rubbish is not being collected because lorries have no fuel.

The protests erupted last month after a law was passed imposing taxes on foreign companies that have invested in Bolivia's gas reserves, which are the second-largest in South America.

The protesters said the law did not go far enough and called for the gas industry to be nationalised.

They also want constitutional reforms to give greater rights to the country's impoverished highlanders, most of whom are of indigenous descent.

They oppose demands from Bolivia's resource-rich eastern provinces for greater autonomy and more foreign investment.

As clashes erupted between police and the protesters in La Paz on Monday, Mr Mesa left the presidential palace in the city under an armed escort.

He later appeared on national television to announce his resignation.

Mesa's resignation creates more questions than it answers because though many people in the streets are burning Mesa dolls in effigy, his action does nothing to address their primary demand of nationalization.

Here are the complications:

First, Mesa's actual release of power is contingent on Congressional approval and we don't know when the Congress is going to meet next, let alone how they will vote on this.

Second, the next in line, President of the Senate Hormando Vaca Diez is a right-winger and supporter of regional autonomy who has minimal support outside of Santa Cruz and is hated by the social movements. His ascension to power would only bring on a fierce leftist opposition.

Third, should Vaca Diez be pressured to step down, new elections would be called within three months. However, new elections do nothing - in and of themselves - to attain the nationalization of Bolivia's natural resources.

Leftist groups would have to transfer the momentum of the streets to a momentum of the ballot box if they wanted the outcome of this battle to have an effect on their primary goal.

In a country where the people have little faith in their elected officials, this is a risky and difficult task.

Fourth - and of immediate importance - is the question of tomorrow.

Congress will not convene despite its promise and so the questions above will most likely, remain unanswered.

Based on immediate reactions by movement leaders, Mesa's resignation only strengthens the people's resolve. The ongoing road blocks and strikes remain in effect.

La Paz workers have announced for the first time in these few weeks, a general and indefinitely long strike starting tomorrow.

On the streets, everyone that was present today is planning to return in the morning, plus some. The miners and the bulk of the Altiplano campesinos - the two most notoriously fierce social movement groups - will be in attendance. With the addition of these two and the increasing intolerance the police demonstrated today, tomorrow could again make history.

Are Hormando Vaca Diez and the other politicians afraid of the groups fighting in the streets of La Paz? Today, one of the slogans was clear: "Send Vaca to the slaughterhouse!" ("Vaca" is Spanish for "cow.")

The shouts of "die!" hurled against the Congress president (who seemed quite excited yesterday at the prospect of taking power) were no joke... the leader of the Movement of Unemployed Workers of La Paz, Jaime Alanoca, told us at the beginning of the day: "This is the big one... we won't allow Hormando to govern for even two hours."



(BBC NEWS)

"Tomorrow, we will sack this place," was one of the slogans heard among the Aymara... and, surely taking that as a warning, the police tried to disperse the people unsuccessfully.

This, and, for example, the march of more than 20,000 people today in Cochabamba (which the local farmers, the same ones behind the "water war" of 2000) have also blockaded, is what Hormando Vaca Diez is afraid of: he knows that we are now in outright civil war, and that if he assumes the presidency, it could get worse.

The demonstrators are regrouping, enduring the teargas, raising barricades, and nothing can stop them...

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