

GI SPECIAL 3B55:

How Many More For Bush's War? Bring Them All Home Now, Alive



Two women mourn after a memorial ceremony to honour fallen soldiers of the U.S. Army 1st Infantry Division and Task Force Danger who have died in Iraq at the Leighton Barracks in Wuerzburg June 6, 2005.

U.S. Majority Rejects Iraq War: Six In Ten Say The War Wasn't Worth Fighting

[Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

6/8/2005 By Dana Milbank and Claudia Deane, Washington Post Staff Writers

Nearly three-quarters of the Americans say the number of U.S. casualties in Iraq is unacceptable, two-thirds believe that the U.S. army there is bogged down, and nearly six in ten say the war wasn't worth the fighting; all three cases reflect the highest level of pessimism yet recorded.

For the first time since the war in Iraq began, more than half of the American public believes the fight there has not made the United States safer, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll.

Perhaps most ominous for President Bush, 52 percent said war in Iraq has not contributed to the long-term security of the United States, while 47 percent said it has.

It was the first time a majority of Americans disagreed with the central notion Bush has offered to build support for war: that the fight there will make Americans safer from terrorists at home. In late 2003, 62 percent thought the Iraq war aided U.S. security, and three months ago 52 percent thought so.

More than four in ten also think the U.S. presence in Iraq is becoming similar to the experience in Vietnam.

Some U.S. officials on war and public opinion said the new figures show that pessimism about the Iraq war has reached a dangerous level. [Dangerous for the Democrat and Republican Imperial politicians who engineered this disaster and their corporate elite masters; wonderful news for U.S. troops and Iraqis.]

"It appears that Americans are coming to the realization that the war in Iraq is not being won and may well prove un-winnable," said retired Army Col. Andrew Bacevich, a professor at Boston University.

"That conclusion bleeds over into a conviction that it may not have been necessary in the first place," he added. [No shit?]

Overall, more than half -- 52 percent -- disapprove of how Bush is handling his job, the highest of his presidency.

A somewhat larger majority -- 56 percent -- disapproved of Republicans in Congress, and an identical proportion disapproved of Democrats. [People are not stupid. The people who are stupid are the chattering class elitist assholes who think working class Americans are stupid. Fuck 'em.]

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

MARINE KILLED IN VEHICLE ACCIDENT NEAR THE TOWN OF HIT

June 9, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-06-11C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to 2nd Force Service Support Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed in a vehicle accident near the town of Hit, June 8.

**LETHAL ENVIRONMENT
NO HONORABLE MISSION
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



US soldiers at a checkpoint during a military operation in southern Baghdad. **Four US soldiers were killed in less than 24 hours in attacks north of the capital.** (AFP/Yuri Cortez)

Filipino Worker Injured In Mortar Attack On U.S. Base

[Thanks to Dennis O'Neil, who sent this in.]

June 08, 2005 Inquirer News Service

AN OVERSEAS Filipino worker working for the American-Iraq Solutions Group in Baghdad had to have his left arm amputated and his spleen removed after being injured in a mortar attack on Camp Victory at the Baghdad International Airport in Iraq on May 31, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said Wednesday.

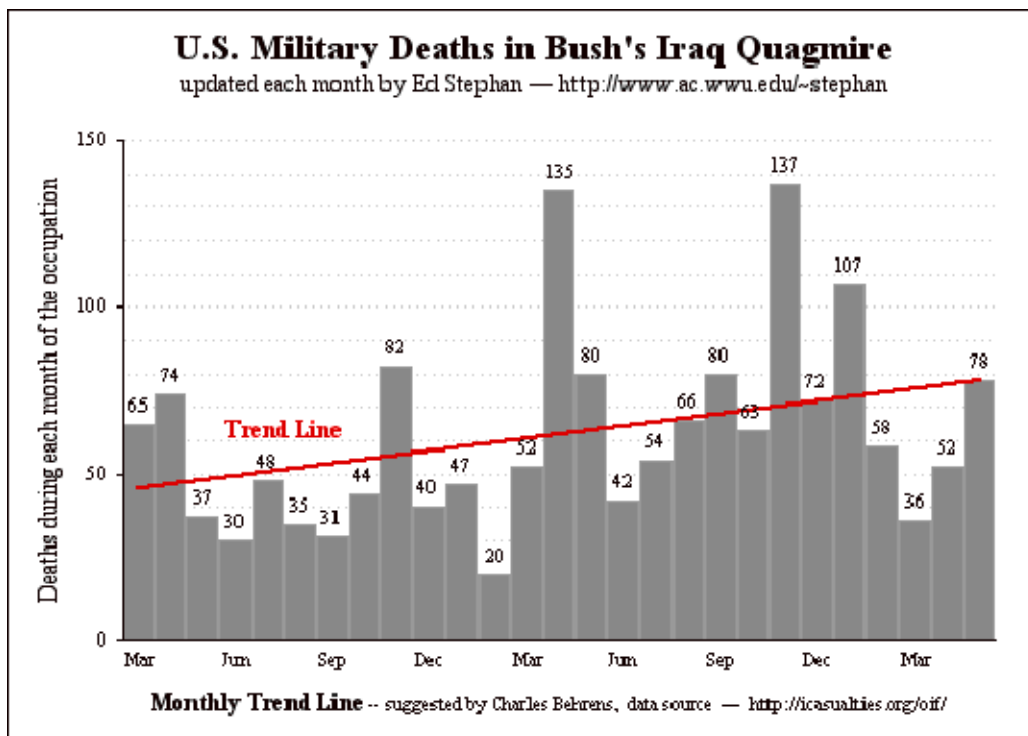
Quoting embassy attaché Joel Nunag and labor attaché Angelo Jimenez, the DFA identified the injured Filipino as Jose Mark Cullilap and said he suffered shrapnel wounds on his back and left arm.

Cullilap, 28, of Caloocan City and holder of a US Department of Defense ID, was airlifted to Landsstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany for surgery.

Airlifting Cullilap to Landstuhl indicated that his injury was beyond the capacity of the combat support hospitals in Baghdad, said Labor Undersecretary for Employment Manuel Inson.

Filipino eyewitnesses said soldiers aided and lifted Cullilap after the attack and transferred him to Camp Liberty, from where he, two other wounded Asians, and a dead soldier were flown to Germany.

The Philippine consulate in Bonn, Germany, confirmed Cullilap's arrival in Landstuhl also on June 4 and a medical liaison officer said the Filipino worker "seems to be out of danger."



Notes From A Complete Disaster:

**4,000 Marines, 30,000 Hostile
Square Miles:
Exciting New Mission Goal:
“Give People Here A Reasonable
Doubt About Siding With The
Insurgents” As Troop Strength Cut**

Insurgents in a region that is hundreds of miles across in any direction are opposed by Davis' three battalions of roughly 1,000 men each--all three of them short 150 men--plus a force that varies between about 200 and 1,000 at the Al Asad base. Until January, there had been four fully manned battalions in the area.

Over the same period, Marine units throughout Anbar and its restive cities of Fallujah and Ramadi have dwindled from 13 battalions to nine.

June 4, 2005 By James Janega, Chicago Tribune

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq -- To reach his battalion stationed at the town of Al Qaim, Marine Col. Stephen Davis must fly more than an hour by helicopter to the edge of 30,000 square miles of dusty badland that is Iraq's most dangerous territory.

Another battalion under Davis' command is split between bases in Haditha and Hit. The towns are 20 miles from Davis' home base at Al Asad but take two nerve-racking hours to reach by Humvee.

His third and final battalion is 150 miles away from Al Asad in the town of Rutbah. The unit's outposts on the Jordanian and Syrian borders are so distant that radios sometimes fail to reach them.

Between those forces are dozens of towns where Marines suspect the heart of Iraq's insurgency has taken refuge. To patrol the region, the Marines must traverse miles of pockmarked desert roads on which it is assumed every pothole hides a land mine.

This is western Anbar province.

Insurgents in a region that is hundreds of miles across in any direction are opposed by Davis' three battalions of roughly 1,000 men each--all three of them short 150 men--plus a force that varies between about 200 and 1,000 at the Al Asad base. Until January, there had been four fully manned battalions in the area.

Over the same period, Marine units throughout Anbar and its restive cities of Fallujah and Ramadi have dwindled from 13 battalions to nine.

By now, military leaders had expected Iraqi forces to make up the shortfall. But training in Anbar has lagged, and construction has yet to begin on bases for the Iraqi troops. American liaisons don't expect to see the soldiers until fall.

In the meantime, Davis is under no illusion that his sweeps last month in Al Qaim and Haditha have quelled the insurgency, and he promised this week that more large operations would follow. On an enormous wall map in his office, he pointed to vast regions where U.S. troops never have patrolled.

"Sooner or later, I would like to get here," he said of a stretch of canyons and high desert near Saudi Arabia. Then he pointed to another desert region closer to Syria, with trails and scattered settlements. "And then maybe up here." **[Right. And Rommell wanted Cairo.]**

The terrain is a complication, military officials say. Deceptively open country is crisscrossed with deep, dry riverbeds that provide cover for smugglers, thieves and insurgents.

Yet only 4,000 or fewer Marines in Davis' Regimental Combat Team-2 are assigned to patrol Anbar province beyond Fallujah and the provincial capital, Ramadi.

U.S. officials estimate more than 150,000 members of Iraqi security forces are now trained and equipped, for the first time outnumbering American troops in Iraq. **But only a single unit of 30 reconnaissance troops has been sent to western Anbar.**

Ethnic tensions in Anbar also complicated the situation. According to Davis and local Iraqis, some guardsmen were Shiites eager to mete out revenge against the province's Sunni majority, which had oppressed them under Saddam Hussein.

Sunnis complained to Marines in Anbar that Shiite National Guardsmen stole household items during raids and threatened more violent retribution once American forces left the country.

Because of the poor performance of Iraqi guardsmen, Marines have shouldered the burden of policing Anbar.

In Haditha, troops of the 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines endured agonizing weeks in which they never saw an enemy fighter yet watched comrades get killed or maimed by anti-tank mines tearing into lightly armored Humvees.

Along the Jordanian and Syrian borders, Marines of the 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion feared roadside bombs as they patrolled hundreds of miles of highways and looked in on nearly deserted border outposts.

Marines-- based in a shuttered railroad station in Al Qaim and at Camp Gannon, a Spartan outpost on the Syrian border--patrolled small towns south of the Euphrates River.

But they could not spend much time on the border, and almost never went north of the river, said Maj. John Day, the battalion's operations officer. Their efforts often were directed far to the east, where the terrain made it easier to stop travelers.

The battalion has fewer than two men for every square mile it is supposed to patrol, but Day bristled at any suggestion that his units are short-handed.

"I can do anything. At a cost," he said in early May, while acknowledging that even more limited operations soon take their toll on equipment and men. "Then we kind of have to lay up and lick our wounds." [Insert your own comment here; a multitude of choices.]

"This is not something that we are going to solve. This is something where we can provide stability so that the government can form and resolve it," said Lt. Col. Lionel Urquhart, commanding officer of the 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines, whose troops occupy garrisons in Haditha and Hit.

Their new goal, he said, "is to give people here a reasonable doubt about siding with the insurgents." [Now there's a bold, confident war aim!. Might as well just pack up and leave now. Why kill more troops in this hopeless goatfuck?]

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)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two U.S. Soldiers Killed, 8 Wounded

June 09, 2005 By Daniel Cooney, Associated Press, KABUL, Afghanistan

Rebels fired rockets at a military base in Afghanistan, killing two U.S. service members and wounding eight as they were unloading supplies from a helicopter, in one of the bloodiest assaults against American forces since insurgents ramped up their fighting in March.

U.S. war planes and helicopters rushed to the area around the base in Shkin, seven kilometers (four miles) from the border with Pakistan, to hunt for the attackers, but found no trace of them, U.S. spokesman Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara said.

The wounded were flown to U.S.-led coalition bases for treatment, he said.

An initial military statement said mortars had hit the base, but O'Hara later said an investigation had found the attackers had fired four rockets.

The deaths brought to 148 the number of U.S. service members killed in and around Afghanistan since Operation Enduring Freedom began in 2001, according to Pentagon figures.

Wednesday's killings came five days after two other U.S. forces were killed and another wounded when a bomb exploded near a military convoy, also in eastern Afghanistan near the border.

Even though U.S. officials remain upbeat about progress toward peace, there has been a steep rise in bombings, shootings and other killings since spring's warmer weather melted thick snow on mountain passes the rebels use. [Now check the stupid lie that follows.]

O'Hara said. "Security is not as good as it should be. **But when you look at it over the course of months, incidents are on the decline.** But that doesn't appear to be the case today." [Now check the reality that follows.]

Resistance To Occupation Growing: Almost-Daily Attacks Have Killed Dozens

Washington Post, June 9, 2005

Insurgents have begun an offensive in Afghanistan. An almost daily menu of bombings and assassinations that have killed dozens of U.S. and Afghan military personnel and civilians in recent weeks are creating fear throughout the international aid worker community.

Afghans Flee Army Over Resistance Offensive And Low Morale

London Daily Telegraph, June 9, 2005

Thousands of Afghan soldiers are deserting the new British and U.S.-trained national army, their moral undermined by poor conditions and the resistance threat.

TROOP NEWS

***Tough Luck:* Local Family Receives No Help From Army After First Trip To Visit Soldier Wounded In Iraq**

[Billions for Bush's pack of thieving war profiteers at home and in Iraq, and this family has to beg for money to visit their wounded soldier. The enemy isn't in Iraq, the enemy is the government in Washington DC, running an evil war for Empire.]

June 08, 2005 By Bekah Porter, Staff Writer, Mt. Pleasant News Inc.

With the conflict in Iraq being so far away, it can often be easy to forget that it is even happening. However, for Salem and Hillsboro residents, the danger and reality of the war has become very real through the experiences of resident Sgt. Robert Briggs and his wife, Michelle.

Robert, who was deployed to Iraq in August of 2004 with the 224th Engineer's Battalion Company C, was seriously injured while on duty near Baghdad when an improvised explosive device (IED) was launched into his base. Robert sustained traumatic head injuries and was shipped to an army hospital and classified as VSI (very seriously injured).

For Michelle Briggs, the fear of her husband being injured was always present.

"I always knew that it was a possibility, said Michelle, "but I just tried to keep busy. I tried not to think about it."

Michelle, who owns and runs A Paw Above in Salem, kept very busy between running her own business and raising her and Robert's two children, Ashlea, 5, and Cody, 13 months. Michelle kept busy right up until April 16 when Robert was injured and she received that infamous call.

"I knew that if someone was injured that it would be Major Seyb calling, so when I heard his voice, I kind of knew what he was going to say," said Michelle. "He told me what little information he could at the time."

Michelle admitted to being "a little hysterical" when Seyb called, but she knew that she had to calm down and figure out what her plans would be for the next couple months.

Robert, who was evacuated to Baghdad then to Germany then to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., had sustained injuries serious enough that the army felt that Michelle should come to Washington.

"If a soldier is injured badly enough that the doctors feel that the soldier would benefit from the presence of his family, then they invite us to come," said Michelle.

Michelle, along with Robert's parents, Robert and Sandy Briggs of Keokuk, flew to Washington D.C. on April 21.

"The army pays for the flight out and back, and they pay for *some of the lodging, and they reimburse the food to a certain extent,*" said Michelle, *"but the family still has to cover quite a bit."* [Right. Otherwise there'd be less money for Halliburton and Bush's other buddies. Couldn't have that, could we?]

Robert was transferred to a veteran's hospital in Minnesota on June 2, and Michelle made the trip with him. Needing to come home to her children, who had been staying with Michelle's mother, Carol Nelson, Michelle just returned to Salem last Saturday.

Since being home, Michelle is trying to tie up the loose ends and make more arrangements for her family and her business before flying out to Minneapolis next week.

"I plan on going back and forth about two times a month," said Michelle. "I'm not sure how long I will stay. We will just have to see what is happening. We'll just have to take it day by day."

As of yet, the children have not seen their father.

"He needs to recover a little bit more before the kids get to see him," said Michelle.

Michelle thinks that the time away from each other is hard not just on the kids but on Robert as well.

"The kids and I are his life," said Michelle. "But we do everything we can to keep close. There are a lot of phone calls. There is a phone call everyday, sometimes even two or three times a day."

Right now, with Robert's medical condition improving every day, the main worry is raising the funds for Michelle and eventually the children to visit Robert as *the army only pays for the one initial trip.* [There it is.]

If interested in helping the Brigg's family, please call 319-258-9106.

Rolling Coffins Stuck With Useless Weapons System: No Help Is On The Way

June 09, 2005 By Matthew Cox, Army Times staff writer

Stryker brigade commanders, in need of more firepower, have asked for an early fielding of the Mobile Gun System variant for street fighting in northern Iraq.

But they're going to have to do without it.

The high-tech, wheeled cannon won't be seeing combat for at least a year after the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (SBCT) returns home this fall, Stryker program officials say.

The unit is equipped with the Anti-tank Guided Missile Strykers, but the wire-guided, TOW missile system is proving to be ineffective against fast-moving insurgent forces operating in crowded neighborhoods of Mosul.

The plan is to begin equipping Stryker brigades with the MGS in fiscal 2007.

"The unit is operating at a reduced capability until they get MGS," Fuller said, describing how 1-25 had sent an "urgent operational needs statement" in March asking that the MGS be fielded as soon as possible.

British Lt. Col. Openly Contradicts British Army Spokesman; "In Three Or Four Months, We Could Begin Withdrawing"

"Conditions determine when forces withdraw," said Maj. David Steel, a British army spokesman. "We're in this for the long term."

But Col. Williams said Britain cannot be in a position of occupying Iraq over the long term.

June 08, 2005 By David Axe, THE WASHINGTON TIMES, AL AMARAH, Iraq

British forces could begin pulling out of one southern Iraqi province as early as this year, said Lt. Col. Andrew Williams, the senior commander here.

"In three or four months, we could begin withdrawing from Maysan province," Col. Williams, 43, said during an interview at his headquarters at Camp Abu Naji near Al Amarah, 100 miles north of Basrah and home to more than 1,000 soldiers with Britain's Coldstream Guards and Royal Hussars regiments.

Col. Williams called the security situation in Maysan "serious," but added that local forces are on track to take over security this year.

Iraqi soldiers and police in the area are still incapable of independent operations, said British officers at Abu Naji. The police, especially, are widely considered corrupt and inept.

On a patrol on Thursday, Coldstream Guards Sgt. Gary Howe, 32, met with Iraqi police officers at several stations in Al Amarah and asked them to identify troublemakers and suspected insurgents in town.

Iraqi police Capt. Mohammed Radke said that he knew of an insurgent driving a white Toyota, but declined to give details. Sgt. Howe looked frustrated by the answer.

Asked whether he trusts the local police, Col. Williams answered bluntly: "No."

Col. Williams said that reducing the number of foreign troops will reduce the level of violence in the province to historic levels by removing a major target of insurgent attacks.

"Violence is a way of life in Maysan. There has always been violence; there is always going to be violence. If you were to take away multinational forces from Maysan, would there be less violence? Yes."

Officers at Britain's Permanent Joint Headquarters, which oversees all deployed British forces, said there is no schedule for drawing down British forces in Iraq.

"Conditions determine when forces withdraw," said Maj. David Steel, a British army spokesman. "We're in this for the long term."

But Col. Williams said Britain cannot be in a position of occupying Iraq over the long term.

"You've got to get to a state in this country where you start handing it back to the Iraqi people. We're not going anywhere unless it's agreed upon by the Iraqi government. They clearly don't want us here forever."

Asked whether a British withdrawal would allow Maysan to become a haven for terrorists, Col. Williams said, "That's crystal ball gazing."

Drill Sgt. Who Threatened Witnesses Gets Off Easy

June 09, 2005 By Joseph R. Chenelly, Army Times staff writer

A third drill sergeant was convicted Wednesday of abuse in a trainee maltreatment scandal at Fort Knox, Ky.

Sgt. 1st Class Ricky L. Stauffer was found guilty by a jury on one count of abuse and another of obstruction of justice, a Fort Knox spokeswoman said. **He was busted down one rank to staff sergeant and issued a letter of reprimand.**

Stauffer was found to have slammed a trainee into a wall and to have threatened trainees with punishment if they cooperated with an investigation into the abuse. He was acquitted of a charge that he punched a former specialist in the stomach.

Panic At The Pentagon, Con't: Army Lowers Standards For Officers

Baltimore Sun, June 9, 2005

Army officials have loosened the requirements for junior officer candidates--- accepting prospects who exceed the current age limit by more than a decade, and permitting more flexibility to waive their minor criminal or civil offenses.

Bigots Rule At Air Force Academy

June 9, 2005 Richard Cohen, Washington Post

The Air Force Academy allowed a culture of militant Christianity, intimidation and outright bigotry to become so entrenched that no one even realized something was wrong. Congress needs to look hard at the academy and the officers it has graduated. **They can fly, but maybe they don't understand what they are flying for.**

Rich Kids Turn Backs On Armed Services

[Thanks to David Honish and PB who sent this in. PB writes: Wonder who has the more impossible mission - the recruiters, or the troops in Iraq?]

June 9, 2005 By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer

The Army appears likely to fall short of its full-year recruiting goal for the first time since 1999, raising longer-term questions about a military embroiled in its first protracted wars since switching from the draft to a volunteer force 32 years ago.

Charles Moskos, a sociology professor and expert on military personnel issues at Northwestern University, has said the Army's recruiting woes are likely to persist until the children of upper-class America begin to enlist more readily. He also sees a possibility of the services relying more on non-Americans to sign up.

Moskos said in an interview Wednesday that of the 750 males in his graduating class at Princeton University in 1956, more than 400 went on to serve in the military. Of the 1,100 males and females in last year's Princeton class, eight joined.

"That's the difference," he said.

Counter-Recruiters: Target The Predators! **Another Report Of A Disgusting Lying Asshole Piece Of Shit Abducting Kid**

[Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

He could serve anywhere he chose and leave any time he wanted on an "apathy discharge" if he didn't like it. And he wouldn't have to go to Iraq if he didn't want to.

At about 3:30 in the morning, Alex was awakened in the motel and fed a little something. Twelve hours later, without further sleep or food, he had taken a battery of tests and signed a lot of papers he hadn't gotten a chance to read. "Just formalities," he was told. "Sign here. And here. Nothing to worry about."

June 8, 2005 By SUSAN PAYNTER, SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER COLUMNIST

For mom Marcia Cobb and her teenage son Axel, the white letters USMC on their caller ID soon spelled, "Don't answer the phone!"

Marine recruiters began a relentless barrage of calls to Axel as soon as the mellow, compliant Sedro-Woolley High School grad had cut his 17th birthday cake. And soon it was nearly impossible to get the seekers of a few good men off the line.

With early and late calls ringing in their ears, Marcia tried using call blocking. And that's when she learned her first hard lesson. You can't block calls from the government, her server said. So, after pleas to "Please stop calling" went unanswered, the family's "do not answer" order ensued.

But warnings and liquid crystal lettering can fade. So, two weeks ago when Marcia was cooking dinner Axel goofed and answered the call.

And, faster than you can say "semper fi," an odyssey kicked into action that illustrates just how desperate some of the recruiters we've read about really are to fill severely sagging quotas.

Let what we learned serve as a warning to other moms, dads and teens, the Cobbs now say. Even if your kids actually may want to join the military, if they hope to do it on their own terms, after a deep breath and due consideration, repeat these words after them: "No," "Not now" and "Back off!"

"I've been trained to be pretty friendly. I guess you might even say I'm kind of passive," Axel told me last week, just after his mother and older sister had tracked him to a Seattle testing center and sprung him on a ruse.

The next step of Axel's misadventure came when he heard about a cool "chin-ups" contest in Bellingham, where the prize was a free Xbox. The now 18-year-old Skagit Valley Community College student dragged his tail feathers home uncharacteristically late that night. And, in the morning, Marcia learned the Marines had hosted the event and "then had him out all night, drilling him to join."

A single mom with a meager income, Marcia raised her kids on the farm where, until recently, she grew salad greens for restaurants.

Axel's father, a Marine Corps vet who served in Vietnam, died when Axel was 4.

Clearly the recruiters knew all that and more.

"You don't want to be a burden to your mom," they told him. "Be a man." "Make your father proud." Never mind that, because of his own experience in the service, Marcia says enlistment for his son is the last thing Axel's dad would have wanted.

The next weekend, when Marcia went to Seattle for the Folklife Festival and Axel was home alone, two recruiters showed up at the door.

Axel repeated the family mantra, but he was feeling frazzled and worn down by then. The sergeant was friendly but, at the same time, aggressively insistent.

This time, when Axel said, "Not interested," the sarge turned surly, snapping, "You're making a big (bleeping) mistake!"

Next thing Axel knew, the same sergeant and another recruiter showed up at the LaConner Brewing Co., the restaurant where Axel works. And before Axel, an older cousin and other co-workers knew or understood what was happening, Axel was whisked away in a car.

"They said we were going somewhere but I didn't know we were going all the way to Seattle," Axel said.

Just a few tests. And so many free opportunities, the recruiters told him.

He could pursue his love of chemistry.

He could serve anywhere he chose and leave any time he wanted on an "apathy discharge" if he didn't like it. And he wouldn't have to go to Iraq if he didn't want to.

At about 3:30 in the morning, Alex was awakened in the motel and fed a little something. Twelve hours later, without further sleep or food, he had taken a battery of tests and signed a lot of papers he hadn't gotten a chance to read. "Just formalities," he was told. "Sign here. And here. Nothing to worry about."

By then Marcia had "freaked out."

She went to the Burlington recruiting center where the door was open but no one was home. So she grabbed all the cards and numbers she could find, including the address of the Seattle-area testing center.

Then, with her grown daughter in tow, she high-tailed it south, frantically phoning Axel whose cell phone had been confiscated "so he wouldn't be distracted during tests."

Axel's grandfather was in the hospital dying, she told the people at the desk. He needed to come home right away. She would have said just about anything.

But, even after being told her son would be brought right out, her daughter spied him being taken down a separate hall and into another room. So she dashed down the hall and grabbed him by the arm.

"They were telling me I needed to 'be a man' and stand up to my family," Axel said.

What he needed, it turned out, was a lawyer.

Five minutes and \$250 after an attorney called the recruiters, Axel's signed papers and his cell phone were in the mail.

My request to speak with the sergeant who recruited Axel and with the Burlington office about recruitment procedures went unanswered.

And so should your phone, Marcia Cobb advised. Take your own sweet time. Keep your own counsel. And, if you see USMC on caller ID, remember what answering the call could mean.

[Sooner or later, a panicked parent is going to lose it completely and blow away one of these child molesters. The only problem her attorney will have is whether to plead justifiable homicide or temporary insanity.]

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.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

“Fuck This, What’s The Point? Same Thing Tomorrow.”



An Iraqi fireman walks away from a burning oil pipeline fire near the northern town of Baiji June 8, 2005. Photo by Stringer/Iraq/Reuters

Occupation Propaganda Lies: Car Bombs Aimed At Military Targets

2005-06-08 Michael Schwartz, Asia Times

Don't be fooled by the press coverage - the car bombs are not detonated at random, nor are they primarily directed at Shi'ite mosques.

In fact, only a handful have been targeted primarily at civilians - the vast majority are aimed at recruits or active duty members of the Iraqi police and army; the civilian injuries are - to use the ghoulish American military jargon - "collateral damage".

The targeting of police is a direct response to the American policy of "Iraqification" of the war - an attempt by the US military to train an Iraqi force that can relieve the overstressed American armed forces. The intention is to deprive the Iraqification campaign of the manpower it needs, and thereby weaken the occupation.

Farhan Ali, 52, a shepherd from the village, said insurgents told him to clear out of an area on a busy dirt road from Abu Ghraib to Smailat because they had planted a bomb in a cardboard carton that was set to blow up next to the foot patrol. "All the people in the area knew about it," he said.

"The insurgents asked us to stay out of the road ... All of us were just watching," Ali said. "There were a bunch of kids standing away from the road expecting and watching to see an explosion."

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

Assorted Resistance Action

06/09/05 IOL & AP

Insurgents stopped nine trucks and three accompanying vehicles delivering supplies to the United States army west of Baghdad on Thursday, a police source said. Several trucks and SUVs were destroyed.

Police spokesperson Ahmed Salih said gunmen attacked a convoy of trucks carrying foodstuffs and other supplies to American troops. Salih said the drivers, all foreigners, were taken to an unknown place and some of them were killed.

The incident took place near Malahma village north of Khalidiyah, 80km west of Baghdad. US forces sealed off the region to search for the kidnapped and the attackers.

The attack was the second against a convoy transporting goods for American forces this week west of Baghdad.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

“Lies Or Misinformation?”

June 8, 2005 by Greg Rollins, Christian Peacemaker Team

Last summer my teammate Max and I took one of our many walks down Sadoon St. Sadoon runs along side a park adjacent to the Tigris River. When the U.S. ousted Saddam, they closed off part of Sadoon to protect the Palestine/Sheraton hotels and several business offices. The U.S. Army occupied about seven blocks of Sadoon.

Cantina wire, waste-high concrete barriers and multiple checkpoints choked and divided the road. Almost all the shops and homes in the area were closed. Only authorized vehicles were allowed on this part of the street. People who wanted to walk in the area were forced to pass through checkpoints where guards would question them thoroughly about their business. Dust and weeds filled the park.

On the day Max and I passed, U.S. soldiers and Iraqi work crews were preparing to take down the cantina wire. The soldiers told us that Sadoon was going to be reopened. Life would return to the area; shops would open, vehicle traffic would resume and people would once more walk throughout the area without any problems. The checkpoints would be pulled back to the hotels.

A few weeks later I saw work crews began to rebuild the park and the sidewalks damaged over the last year and a half by U.S. tanks.

When I was here this past February I passed through the Palestine/Sheraton several times. The clean up of the park and sidewalks was still taking place. The workers were pulling out the weeds and laying down green sod. It was a hopeful sign but something didn't look right. The street no longer had cantina wire but it did have more concrete barriers.

Recently I walked down Sadoon.

The U.S. Army is still there.

The concrete barriers are still there, many of them no longer waste- high but two or three metres high.

The park that was green grass in February has fallen to dust and weeds once more. The shops are still closed. They look forgotten.

The checkpoints let fewer people pass.

It has been over a year and Sadoon hasn't changed as the soldiers told us it would.

Perhaps they lied, or perhaps they were misinformed or maybe no one cares what happens to Sadoon St.

Whatever the answer is, it made me think.

If you compare these several blocks of Sadoon to Iraq, how long will it take to rebuild the rest of the country? And when it is rebuilt, how will it be rebuilt? With bigger concrete barriers and stricter checkpoints? With lies or misinformation? Perhaps no one will care.

As the infrastructure here continues to crumble, many Iraqis feel their country has already fallen to dust and weeds.

"This Is The Alamo. We Fight Or Die Here"

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

Heidingsfield acknowledged that the overall situation is "discouraging." Why? "The insurgents are extremely alive and well and it upsets me when I hear otherwise ... No one can say that we've prevailed."

Days later, he went still further: "My concern is that it could go on like this forever."

June 01, 2005 By BARTHOLOMEW SULLIVAN, Scripps Howard News Service

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Getting blown up on the job is constantly on Michael Heidingsfield's mind. As the man in charge of Iraqi police training, he has already had a near miss.

In March, insurgents in a stolen garbage truck killed two guards at the gate of the Iraqi Agriculture Ministry before rolling up and detonating an estimated 3,000 pounds of explosives at the perimeter wall of the Al Sadeer Hotel.

Heidingsfield can't watch it. "It frightens the hell out of me," he says. He was blown out of bed by the blast. Forty-eight people were wounded.

He has a "gut-wrenching fear" of being kidnapped, worsened recently when his armored SUV came under fire on a Baghdad street. Constantly exhausted because he can't sleep, he has dropped 25 pounds in six months on a diet of Frosted Flakes. When gunfire erupts, he curses.

Heidingsfield, who runs the Texas-based DynCorp program under a State Department contract, is on a year's leave from the presidency of the Memphis and Shelby County Crime Commission.

In the past year, six DynCorp employees have been killed and nearly a hundred security personnel have suffered line-of-duty casualties.

As a policeman in Arlington, Texas, he once had his own gun held to his head. He later went on to become police chief in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Now he has one of the most dangerous civilian jobs in war-torn Iraq: He spends much of his time on the streets, assessing the training and organization of the police forces that are the constant target of insurgents. More than 650 police and police recruits have been killed so far this year.

"My greatest concern is that Iraq, if it is not stabilized, will never get beyond where we are today," he said in his ground floor apartment in the now-repaired Sadeer. "And if the level of insurgency were to continue, it will be a daunting challenge to reshape the Iraqi police into an organization that understands that they're critical to the future of the country. That's what worries me."

Heidingsfield acknowledged that the overall situation is "discouraging." Why? "The insurgents are extremely alive and well and it upsets me when I hear otherwise ... No one can say that we've prevailed."

Days later, he went still further: "My concern is that it could go on like this forever." [Not to worry. The troops will take care of ending the war, just like they did in Vietnam. When the troops decide the war is over, the war is over. "Forever" never happen.]

Even before the bombing, the hotel and DynCorps headquarters in the nearby Baghdad Hotel had been on a heightened threat level. Since the bombing they have been retrofitted with 15-foot concrete walls backed by barriers filled with tons of dirt. Eighty DynCorp security employees oversee 1,400 Iraqi guards armed with Kalashnikovs.

Despite his constant anxiety, Heidingsfield expects to complete his yearlong obligation, but won't dawdle beyond that.

He travels the chaotic streets in a convoy of armored Chevy Suburbans bristling with machine guns that makes him a high-profile potential target of suicide bombers. Frank Matthews, 37, his South African bodyguard, is never far away.

Because the threat is both constant and completely random, there's never really a time when he isn't on alert, Heidingsfield says.

"Basically, the premise I go on is the risk is everywhere," he says.

Two thunderous bombs went off within blocks of the Sadeer compound one Saturday morning, shaking the ground. The second was what the Americans call a VBIED, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device traveling Al Sa'adoon Street, a main boulevard Heidingsfield takes daily. It killed two American contractors in an SUV and dozens of civilians nearby. Intelligence suggested the bomber raced into the convoy from behind.

A week earlier, Heidingsfield's convoy had been attacked from behind by a white Passat immobilized when the convoy's rear machine-gunner shot up its engine block. At the same time, the convoy came under small-arms fire but was able to punch out of the kill zone.

He says his "biggest, gut-wrenching fear" is getting kidnapped. "There's no way I could be taken hostage. Whatever it takes. No way."

Heidingsfield has a close and friendly relationship with his security detail, particularly his personal protection officer, Matthews.

Matthews keeps things light during tense moments. One morning, as the convoy inched along in heavy traffic past acre after acre of above ground tombs on the edge of the capital, Matthews pointed to a woman draped in black approaching the convoy, then passing between the SUVs. "That would be an LBIED," he joked. "A lady-borne improvised explosive device."

Heidingsfield groaned. The joke bombed. The lady didn't.

Heidingsfield's executive officer, lawyer and former Alabama state trooper Patrick Mahaney, 53, who shares his office in the Baghdad Hotel, employed a kind of gallows humor when asked about evacuation plans in case of an attack.

"There's no evacuation," Mahaney said. "This is the Alamo. We fight or die here." [And everybody knows how that one ended.]

OCCUPATION HAITI

Senior U.S. Official Visits Haiti; Resistance To Occupation Growing

Miami Herald, June 9, 2005

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Roger Noriega arrived in Haiti Wednesday to assess a mounting surge of resistance to the occupation and increasing demands for the resignation of U.S.-backed Prime Minister Gerard Latortue.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

People On Top Grabbing It All

The share of the nation's income earned by those in this uppermost category has more than doubled since 1980, to 7.4 percent in 2002. The share of income earned by the rest of the top 10 percent rose far less, and the share earned by the bottom 90 percent fell.

[Thanks to Phil G and Katherine G who sent this in.]

June 5, 2005 By DAVID CAY JOHNSTON, The New York Times & June 6, 2005 By BOB HERBERT, The New York Times Company

The war that nobody talks about - the overwhelmingly one-sided class war - is being waged all across America. Guess who's winning.

A recent front-page article in The Los Angeles Times showed that teenagers are faring poorly in a tight job market because of the fierce competition they're getting from older workers and immigrants for entry-level positions.

On the same day, in the business section, the paper reported that the chief executives at California's largest 100 companies took home a collective \$1.1 billion in 2004, an increase of nearly 20 percent over the previous year. The paper contrasted that with the 2.9 percent raise that the average California worker saw last year.

When F. Scott Fitzgerald pronounced that the very rich "are different from you and me," Ernest Hemingway's famously dismissive response was: "Yes, they have more money." Today he might well add: much, much, much more money.

The people at the top of America's money pyramid have so prospered in recent years that they have pulled far ahead of the rest of the population, an analysis of tax records and other government data by The New York Times shows. They have even left behind people making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

Call them the hyper-rich.

They are not just a few Croesus-like rarities. Draw a line under the top 0.1 percent of income earners - the top one-thousandth. Above that line are about 145,000 taxpayers, each with at least \$1.6 million in income and often much more.

The average income for the top 0.1 percent was \$3 million in 2002, the latest year for which averages are available. That number is two and a half times the \$1.2 million, adjusted for inflation, that group reported in 1980. No other income group rose nearly as fast.

The share of the nation's income earned by those in this uppermost category has more than doubled since 1980, to 7.4 percent in 2002. The share of income earned by the rest of the top 10 percent rose far less, and the share earned by the bottom 90 percent fell.

The Bush administration tax cuts stand to widen the gap between the hyper-rich and the rest of America. The merely rich, making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, will shoulder a disproportionate share of the tax burden.

President Bush said during the third election debate last October that most of the tax cuts went to low- and middle-income Americans. In fact, most - 53 percent - will go to people with incomes in the top 10 percent over the first 15 years of the cuts.

Under the Bush tax cuts, the 400 taxpayers with the highest incomes - a minimum of \$87 million in 2000, the last year for which the government will release such data - now pay income, Medicare and Social Security taxes amounting to virtually the same percentage of their incomes as people making \$50,000 to \$75,000.

¶Those earning more than \$10 million a year now pay a lesser share of their income in these taxes than those making \$100,000 to \$200,000.

The analysis examined only income reported on tax returns. The Treasury Department says that the very wealthiest find ways, legal and illegal, to shelter a lot of income from taxes. So the gap between the very richest and everyone else is almost certainly much larger.

From 1950 to 1970, for example, for every additional dollar earned by the bottom 90 percent, those in the top 0.01 percent earned an additional \$162, according to the Times analysis.

From 1990 to 2002, for every extra dollar earned by those in the bottom 90 percent, each taxpayer at the top brought in an extra \$18,000.

Mr. Bush eliminated income taxes for families making under \$40,000, but his tax cuts have also benefited the wealthiest Americans far more than his predecessors' did.

The Times analysis also shows that over the next decade, the tax cuts Mr. Bush wants to extend indefinitely would shift the burden further from the richest Americans. With incomes of more than \$1 million or so, they would get the biggest share of the breaks, in total amounts and in the drop in their share of federal taxes paid.

Another reason that the wealthiest will fare much better is that the tax cuts over the past decade have sharply lowered rates on income from investments.

Economic mobility - moving from one income group to another over a lifetime - has actually stopped rising in the United States, researchers say. Some recent studies suggest it has even declined over the last generation.

The privileged classes, with the Bush administration's iron cloak of protection, avoid their fair share of taxes, are reluctant to pay an honest dollar for an honest day's work (the federal minimum wage is still a scandalous \$5.15 an hour), refuse to fight in their nation's wars, and laugh all the way to their yachts.

The American dream was about expanding opportunities and widely shared prosperity. Now we have older people and college grads replacing people near the bottom in jobs that offer low pay, no pensions, no health insurance and no vacations.

Bolivia: Government Murders Miners' Union Leader; "There Are Signs Of Deep Division Within The Military Ranks"

June 8, 2005 Luis A. Gómez & Al Giordano, Narco News & 09 June 2005 By Héctor Tobar, The Los Angeles Times & June 7, 2005 By FORREST HYLTON, Counterpunch

*"Pal cementerio se va
La vaca de mala leche
Pal cementerio se va
Ni dios le va a perdonar"
- Manu Chao*

A few minutes ago the miners that were headed for Sucre, to stop Hormando Vaca Diez from becoming president of Bolivia, faced repressive forces in the town of Yotala... and one of those miners has died.

It seems that a peaceful miners' march was held back with gas and bullets by a combined group of military and police. Mineworker Juan Toro, president of the March 27 Miners' Cooperative, received a gunshot wound and died on the spot. Four others are injured.

The Federation of Bolivian Miners' Cooperatives (FENCOMIN) has confirmed that this came from an "order from Vaca Diez," part of his plan to take power.

In several communities around Sucre, the military has begun to arrest social leaders and stop the demonstrators heading towards the capital to surround the National Congress, or join the blockades.

The first victim has fallen... the scenario has gotten much darker...

In El Alto the strike continues, impeding the distribution of gasoline and of gas tanks for the home. The president of the Federation of Neighborhood Committees of El Alto, Abel Mamani, said just minutes ago that the Aymara city will not let up this pressure, because "the congressmen don't listen to what the people ask for." Mamni said he hoped the social movements' demands would be attended to, but he refused any talk of a truce.

1,500,000 barrels of gas per day were blocked when the lowland Guaraní took over fields in Camiri, Santa Cruz, while in Milluni, La Paz, approximately 100 peasants blew up part of the canal that brings water to the capital.

Three hydroelectric plants were taken over, while in Tapacarí, Cochabamba, under pressure from peasants, workers shut down pipeline valves -- property of the transnational Transredes (Enron) -- carrying 20,000 barrels of gas to Chile.

Thousands of miners and peasant farmers have now arrived in Sucre. Several groups of demonstrators are one block away from Plaza 25 de Mayo, where the House of Liberty (Congress' original headquarters before the government was moved to La Paz) is located.

The legislators had to be flown to Sucre in military airplanes to pull the underhanded maneuver that is on today's docket: the installation of an unpopular, indeed reviled, politician and oligarch, Hormando Vaca Diez, as illegitimate president. The blockades that have shut down 120 points along the country's roads and highways would not let these powerful men pass over by land.

And yet this morning, in the darkness, the barricades have lifted in each town and hamlet along the path so that the common people – the majority owners of Bolivia – could pass toward Sucre on roads where the corrupt politicians could not. To the roosters' crow, the path opens.

The pro-democracy pilgrims are handed cooked potatoes, fried bananas, maybe some fried trout, *salteñas* or *chicharrón* for sustenance along the way by a population that supports their cause. They ride on the backs of pickup trucks over dirt and gravel roads past the oil fields they have occupied in recent days, the closed gas valves, the plugged water mains, the stranded tractor-trailers filled with rotting produce, and the US-funded military bases where poor, indigenous, young men worry about being sent to massacre their own in the coming days.

And once the caravan passes through, the locals recover the roads with rocks, toppled trees, barricades and banners. The battle has begun. There is no turning back.

Bolivia's Congress could not meet on Tuesday nor on Wednesday. The men of wealth and power with legislative titles feared to tread in the administrative capital of La Paz this week because the masses had come down from the hills to put a stop to the simulation of democracy and to demand a real one. And so Vaca Diez convoked the military to swoop up the legislators and fly them to Sucre, where they will meet this morning.

According to a national public opinion poll taken this week by the daily La Razon in La Paz, 84-percent of the Bolivian people do not want Vaca Diez to assume the presidency. But within that remaining 16-percent is Mr. Vaca Diez himself: that's why he has gone to such lengths to move Congress to a far-away location in order to ratify his coronation.

Vaca Diez also told reporters: “If one faction from the many social sectors chooses to set aside these principals (of national unity) and pushes toward confrontation and a blood bath, it will end in authoritarian government.” It sounded like he was talking about the protestors, but the words apply more to his own faction.

The word “faction,” after all, means “a small united group within a larger one, especially in politics” (Oxford American Dictionary).

The group that opposes Vaca Diez’s ascension to the throne is, according to the aforementioned poll, a large majority. It therefore cannot, by definition, be a “faction.”

In other words, a Vaca Diez presidency will lack any legitimacy or public support from its first day – which seems to be today. It will block an electoral solution to the crisis. And that’s a very dangerous cocktail that ensures the “bloodbath” that he has virtually called for when stating his Doctrine of Authoritarian Government.

In Vaca Diez’s own words: “I am absolutely convinced that the armed forces will back us and will help guarantee that democracy does not die in Bolivia.”

Translation: He will send in the military to fight against his own people in order to keep a man most of them hate – himself – in power.

There are signs of deep division within the military ranks.

The soldiers themselves, poor and indigenous, are not thrilled with the prospect of massacring their own.

Much of the military brass, as Narco News mentioned yesterday, has already told Vaca Diez that they will not obey such orders.

Many of the military officials are from La Paz, from Cochabamba, and from other regions distrustful of the motives of the oligarchs of Vaca Diez’s state of Santa Cruz, with its dreams of secession and seizing control of the nation’s gas and oil fields.

According to sources in La Paz, the only branch of the military that has pledged its support to a wave of repression under Vaca Diez is the smallest branch: the Air Force. (And, after all, how could an Air Force stop road blockades without ruining the roads and thus keeping them blocked?)

The social upheaval has spread across the country. Local media reported that poor farmers demanding nationalization of the country’s oil reserves had seized at least seven oil wells in remote areas of Santa Cruz province. In Potosi province, indigenous leaders announced that they would seize property owned by large landholders.

Two air carriers, LAN Chile and American Airlines, canceled flights to La Paz on Wednesday. The airport is in the El Alto suburb, an Indian stronghold.

Received:

“War Opposers Tend To Be Polite To A Fault”

From: S (UK)
To: GI Special
Sent: June 09, 2005

Really admire the site.

I went on all the UK anti-war demos and argued against a friend of Jeff Hoon (as it happened my boss at the time was best mates with UK Defence Sec) in 2002 about the non-existence of WMD.

Never got the chance to say 'I told you so you New Labour Patsy friends of murdering bastards!' as war opposers tend to be polite to a fault.

Time to lose that now I think?

REPLY: Got that right. T

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The following that we know of have also posted issues:
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