

## GI SPECIAL 3B75:



[Graphic by Soldier X]

# **Soldier's Life: Back From Iraq: The Brigade Run**

From: Soldier X  
To: GI Special  
April 29, 2005

**[Note: publication delayed so Soldier X could clear the described hostile environment.]**

Hello again,

Here is the long version of last weekend from my adventure journal.

Seeing as we had to prepare ourselves for another weekend outing, we decided to continue the trend of going to O'Sheas Irish Pub in Nurnberg on Thursday night. We had to make sure our tolerance hadn't slipped a notch from Monday through Wednesday. Due to extreme hangover and sleepiness I missed a Brigade Run Friday morning.

**The Brigade Run is when, after a big event like say returning from Iraq, the entire 3rd Brigade, over 5,000 soldiers, take to the streets of V-Town to,,,,,,,,,run. The entire road system is shut down as we sweat by. It is like critical mass with no cause.**

**You would figure these assholes would be happy that they kept their legs all the way through the war and just pack it in and go the fuck home. But nooooooo they want to test them out. See what they really got. They want to "Get Some!" or "Pick it Up!" or "Push it Out!" These are all phrases that the Army seems to believe motivates you to run harder.**

**Then there are the stupid chants and cadence that we have to "Sound Off!" with.**

**A Sergeant will be off to the left of the formation and what ever he sings you are supposed to repeat. My new favorite, after my arrest for walking home on the railroad tracks, is an old Army classic that goes something like this: "hey hey captain jack,,,,,,,,,meet me down by the railroad track,,,,,,,,,put that dagger in my hand,,,,,,,,,I want to be a stabbing man" it goes on like this until you are a shooting man,,,,,a drinking man,,,,,a smoking man,,,,,and even a loving man.**

**I usually just want to be a quieting man and when I was down at the tracks I just wanted to get to bed and be a sleeping man. So most Sergeants only know the same one or two cadences so you trudge along K after K chanting the same moronic song. It makes the run seem to last an eternity.**

So as the entire Brigade ran past an orange brick four story barracks, through a center third floor window I was soundly sleeping off my fifth long island. No one bothered to wake me or even cared later that day that I never showed up for work. Could I be under the radar? Are they not tracking me anymore? Can I do this everyday?

I think I will have to test this a bit more before committing myself to becoming a ghost.

We were released early that day to prepare for the Brigade Ball which I wasn't going to. The ball is very fancy dress up dinner and dance in Class A uniform with all the shiny medals and you bring a date in a pretty dress so all the soldiers can ogle at. I went to the pre-deployment ball and I regretted it. I had better plans. I had to get to Frankfurt to meet M. I had three different ways to contact him and knew what hotel he was staying in so I packed a bag and hit the road. Jeff escorted me as far as Nurnberg and hinted that him and Joe might be looking for something to do Saturday night. I told him I would call after the meeting.

**The long train ride went quickly for me as I read a book on Socialism (thanks Thomas) and started a GREAT book called "Confessions of an Economic Hit Man" by John Perkins (thank you Robin).**

**He was an economist that got mixing up with the espionage and politics of destroying under developed countries by convincing those nations to take up huge loans from World Bank to pay off American corporations to build up energy, transportation, and resources in that country. Then when the country can't pay off the loan and they end up cutting welfare and support programs to pay it off. The author describes his experience in these countries, how he became seduced by the corporations and his learning and understanding on why his job was wrong over all.**

I figured the best thing to do once I got to Frankfurt was, find the hotel M was staying in, The Intercontinental, and get a room. So, I checked a wall sized map in the train station while eating some greasy pizza I got at a sandwich stand. It was close by. I shouldered my pack and set out on foot.

It was a surprisingly warm day. I was unsure if it was because I was at a lower altitude than V-Town or all of Germany was experiencing this amazing weather. The light and heat wasn't the only thing to hit my senses as I left the station. A familiar smell of Arabic food floated past my nose in wisps and a huge red flag with a yellow star being eaten by a thin Pac Man moon waved in my view. Many people, mostly teenagers and college aged youth wearing red shirts and tanned skin, gathered. It was some rally about Turkey rights. I was offered a flyer every few feet as I moved through the crowd.

As I broke out the other side I saw Polzi standing close by in three or fours. They seemed to not be concerned and mostly talked amongst each other without paying to much attention to the Turks.

I thought it was good that the Turkish kids didn't seem to much of a risk that the polzi would hardly notice their gathering, but, I also saw that every body else seemed to ignore them equally. I tried to figure what the fuss was about but, the Turks all spoke German and Arabic and the flyers were written in German.

I only asked a few on the outside of the pack and didn't bother to keep any of the flyers, but I think back and wish I did more. I felt that it was some complaint about employment or some civil right issue. I continued on.

I checked in, left a message to M when I called his room, and watched a little tv. Still exhausted from the swell fest the night before I stayed in and read. I was woken at midnight by a phone call from M and we made arrangements to meet for breakfast at the hotel restaurant. I woke up early, got ready, and checked out. I left my bag at the luggage holding room and went to the dinning room.

I saw M right away. He was positioned right at the first available table. I noticed his slick black wheel chair pulled up to the small round table. His short white hair was very vivid and he was in the thinking man pose.

I couldn't help but picture Professor X, the wheel chair bound leader and mentor of the X Men comic heroes. Perhaps I read too many comic books? I thought about what was going on in his mind. Was he thinking on how to bring peace to the world, fight mutant extremists, or maybe how he was hungry and could use a good breakfast? I didn't think that he had me in mind to much. I believe what he knew of me was only what he heard

from Trish, one of the wonderful people that works in M's foundation, and now a friend of mine through the internet.

With all the great things that M has done, his powerful personality, his influential contacts, the pressure that I needed to win him over to have the opportunity to work with the Foundation, and the thought of the most wise and honorable comic hero Professor X, I was becoming a bit nervous. I stepped up and brought him out of his daze. "M" I said "I am Gary It is great to finally meet you." He replied with a "Gary!" and we shook hands. He had a strong grip. As I sat down he motioned me to the chair on his right. "It's my good ear".

Out of nervous energy I jumped right to the heart of it after brief small talk. I explained how I got in touch with Trish and heard about the Foundation and how I first heard the name M. I told him I was interested in working with him and thought that under his wing was the only chance of success I would have of being listened to seriously.

He asked about my clothes and jewelry. I was wearing a shirt Robin gave me from Politics and Prose, a book store in Washington DC. It said "so many books so little time" on the front. I told him that she was using the writings of our war blog for a book called "Boots".

I told him about the Bouncing Souls "anchors aweigh" necklace that I wore. How K8, the souls manager and maternal sister, gave it to me when we first met the band in person, at Schweinfurt, Germany, with orders to keep the rest of the guys safe. I told M how my letters to them eventually were made into a web page on the Soul's site.

It was the first time I realized how easily it was to communicate to so many people from my isolated base in Iraq. M was interested because he is close friends with Bruce Springsteen and The Boss and The Souls are both from Jersey. He told me that he was going to ask Bruce if he knew them. I think they meet before so that will be interesting in future developments.

**He told me some history about himself and we discussed politics, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the Inactive Ready Reserve, life in the Army, War. We talked about existing organizations of Iraqi Vets, and what the plans or lack of plans M was working on and the history of the Foundation. I allowed M to talk as much as he was willing. It was an excellent chance to hear from an intelligent source who went down the road that I am looking down.**

**It was amazing to pick his brain on the subjects that I felt really mattered. He got into the senators that he interacted with, the CIA agents he knew, he mentioned that him and Robert McNamara, who he hated for a long time, now could sit down and have constructive conversation.**

**I imagined how even though Professor X and Magneto were arch enemies they also were close friends. All the "big game" talk got me thinking about the book I was reading about economic hit men and John Perkins getting caught up in it all.**

Our talk was moved out into the lobby after breakfast and we were joined by one of M's German friends. I will leave his name out for now because he talked about being

cautious about who I gave out his information to. I will say he was an extremely smart man that seemed patient and confident.

He spoke of great ideas for instance an International Civil Court that was like the International Criminal Court that already exists, but tries countries on Civil issues. It seemed so logical, but he told me it was thrown out by both America and Germany. He said they called it Utopian.

M told his friend about me based on what I told M just that morning. He didn't miss a thing and with as few words as possible summed up every detail. He remembered clearly everything I said. I was impressed. Also I was flattered.

Once when I was walking back from the bathroom and approached the two men sitting there, I was hit with the strangest feeling of awe. I had such an opportunity to meet with incredible people and could learn from some of the most dynamic minds if I was able to stay near M in any fashion.

I only offered him my honest self and I hoped that would be enough. And if he didn't like what he saw, I was not right for the job. I decided to trust M's intuition and if he felt I was what he wanted, than despite any confidence issues I might have, I was who he needed.

After a while longer I left M and his friend to discuss the matters they needed. With a hand shake and exchange of e-mail addresses and business cards I grabbed my bag and was off. I called Jeff "the Heckle" and "Joe Public" from the train station. We decided to meet in Heidelberg and check out an ancient gothic castle. I told him I would call again once I got a hotel since I was much closer. I read more about John Perkins on the train.

Heidelberg smelled like flowers. Birds were chirping and bicyclists were out in force. It was a hot summer day. There was a strange guy/girl ratio there were it seemed the gals outnumbered the dudes three to one. Which, I couldn't help but enjoy as I walked past the river. The banks of the wide Neckar River was a grassy park like slope where sun bathers laid out on blankets and towels. There must be a large University there to support such a large number of teens and twens.

The streets in Heidelberg looked like an East coast Victorian housed neighborhood with a walk in front of small walled lawns and gardens then a row of large trees separating the street from the walk. Every once in a while a street car trammed by the center with a brassy ding ding. It felt comfortable.

I found a hotel for cheap. Only 90 euro a night for a three bed room. I read my book in the open widow sill above the street car stop until my friends arrived. They pulled up in a cab and called up "how much" as if I was selling sex in a red light. I still let them in because they owed me 30 euro each for the room. I read about a bar that claims Nirvana played at so we figured it was a shot that we might hear some good music there. We all agreed that we were starving so it was a plan to stop and eat somewhere too.

As we got on the tram we met a young man with a Misfits tee and a Drop Kick Murphy patch. We asked if he knew the Bouncing Souls and he hadn't. Then we got into the punk scene in Heidelberg and the local bars that were decent.

Tim the Punk claimed that students came in and out that listened to Punk, but there was never any good following that lasted. After trying to explain directions to a bar that served good beer and had decent music he gave up and told us he would guide us there. When I asked what he was going to do before encountering us he told us that he was going to a party on the hill but was feeling sick. He drank a few beers and split.

**A group of kids maybe fourteen to sixteen years old were sitting behind us. They all spoke English and dressed like Americans. We strung up a conversation "Are you guys Army brats?" They were, one of them being the son of a two star general. We talked about how they hate the Army and sneak off to party every weekend. They told us the place to be that night was on the hill. It was a huge party that only happened twice a year and that it was BYOB (bring your own beer).**

We thought this was a grand idea and found a cab to take us to a gas station for some beer and wine. Equipped we sped off again. The cab only made it so far before being stopped by road blocks. We joined a trickling line of people slowly moving through the outer limits of town.

Eventually the streets we were on joined up with other tributaries and soon we were in the middle of a long crowded procession. The houses thinned out and trees took their place. The artificial city lights slipped behind us and people with torches and flashlights guided us onward.

There was a small amount of people coming down from the hill as well. They were sun burned and exhausted. They had the look as if they had been out all day partying and enjoying the weather. Most staggered with a drunken merriment. We passed people taking breaks that decided not to start the fest at the top.

The hike continued switching back and forth the higher we climbed. An hour and a half later we made it to an intersection. People were moving each direction in equal numbers.

Just as we were about to ask which way to the party, we heard a roar that can only be compared to a sold out sporting arena. It grew loud and long and the burst of fireworks could be seen illuminating an area just through the woods. We made our way over, just now beginning to comprehend the size of the party.

As we got to the rim of the path thousands of flames could be seen. Some were stationary and others moved slowly about. Even others spun about and around and arched into the air. There was a saddle in the ridge and some sort of ruins were built into it. We stood in the center low edge of the saddle and on all sides were people.

As a man breathed liquor at his torch in a ball of fire we could see the teeming mass of people all over the area. There were drum circles pounding away and as we gathered courage and moved through the crowd we saw that some people had flaming balls on chains that they swung around like candy kids at a rave.

The smell of marijuana was thick and bottles were being raised to mouths. We found a set of broken stairs that brought us up onto one side so we could peer deep down into

the center. Between the hypnotizing drums, the spinning fire, the wine and the contact high I was in a euphoric state. We stared and watched jaw dropped for an hour or so.

We ventured on once we got our wits back. We decided we had to investigate the reasons for this celebration. After interrogating some locals we learned it was an old Pagan ritual holiday. Something to do with the official end of the frost and the coming of Summer. I was told that it was called "Volpstagnacht" or something like that.

There was another celebration around Samhain (or Halloween), but this was the larger of the two. The amphitheater was constructed by Hitler to practice occult with his soldiers. This year was especially huge because it marks the sixtieth anniversary of the end of WWII.

So a structure used by centuries of Pagans and then a ruthless dictator is now being used to celebrate love, life and peace. I was amazed. I asked a person how many people were there and he told me last year there was thirty thousand all day total and he expected twice as much. The news the next day reported close to fifty thousand, so he was close to the mark.

We made a lot of temporary friends and talked and drank the dark away. We decided not to see the trashed aftermath in the morning and rather preserve the memory of the fire lit night. As we made the long walk back we saw couples tucked away asleep behind bushes and drunkards stuffed in the middle of bushes.

Paramedics were scouring the area for the injured or dead and I think they might have found both. It was a long march back to the hotel and we were some what in silent respects of an extreme experience. We were all still trying to believe what we took part in.

The sleep was short before being kicked out of the room by maids. We stood fast and made sure we all had showers before letting them take the room over. It was two hours past check out when we left and there was still a castle to see. We ate an excellent tv detective named breakfast in an outside café watching girls on bikes ride by in summer dresses. We drank boat drink cocktails and relaxed. With food and strong drink we assaulted the castle hill.

The opposite side of the river from the party was the castle. This hike involved ten kilometers of stairs. We reached the top dehydrated and sweat covered. There was another out door restaurant so we got some more natural and refreshing beverages. It was close to four pm and we still hadn't made it to the castle.

We all agreed that we were lazy and probably would never see the castle if we just lounged around all day at European cafes so we ordered some ice cream. It could have been the tastiest scoops I ever had. Most the "Eis" in Germany is Italian style. It is less creamy, but silkier.

We tore ourselves from underneath our umbrella and forged on. The tickets to get into the door were a reasonable three euro but we tried anyways to get the student fare that was only one fifty. Inside we marveled at the crumbling ancient gothic stone work. It was falling to pieces, but only because it was razed by the French in the thirty year war. Towers leaned into each other and huge sections fell away down the cliffs.

Empty windowed walls would reach up into the sky fifty stories with no connecting sides or roof. It was covered in many parts with vines and trees interwoven into cracks and cannon holes. It was haunting and beautiful. We walked through the moat and the dungeon We walked the defensive walls and royal balconies. Not even the bar inside the heart of it distracted us from the site. I can say truthfully that it is my favorite castle in Germany so far, and I have seen my share.

So we left Heidelberg happy, but a bit tired. I was too groggy to read on the train ride home. We listened to music and tried to rest until we split up with Joe in Ansbach and made it to V-town eventually. I just kept going over the weekends events and watched small German towns pass by through my reflection. The fair summer weather was heralded in properly and I have a new job with a peaceful non profit organization. Things seem to be headed the right direction and I am happy to finally have some control again of my future.

Hmmmmmm and I already bought us tickets to Paris for next weekend. A four day...

Soldier X

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Army Pilot With Cecil County Roots Killed**

June 29, 2005 The Associated Press

Family members say an Army pilot from Maryland was killed Monday when his chopper crashed during a mission near Baghdad.

Keith Mariotti had been stationed in Iraq with the Army's Third Infantry Division since January. The Pentagon has not explained how the crash occurred.

Mariotti's mother Nancy lives in Elkton, Maryland. His wife, Denise Adomines, lives near Fort Bragg.

Nancy Mariotti says her son had wanted to fly since he was a child. Mariotti's father, the Reverend Dilio Mariotti, is a former pastor of Elkton United Methodist Church and now lives in North Carolina.

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### **LC Soldier Injured By Sniper**

June 27, 2005 Reported by Pam Dixon, KPLC



A Lake Charles soldier is recovering from a sniper attack that almost took his life in Iraq. He's the same soldier who rescued his comrades in January after a roadside bomb killed two and injured four.

27 year old Eric Sessions survived not one but two attempts on his life in less than six months while fighting in the war in Iraq.

**With just 30 minutes to go on his shift, the Louisiana National Guardsman was shot by a sniper June 14th** and is now recovering in Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C. with his mother, Eppie Sessions, and his two sisters by his side. Eppie Sessions says, "I know he'll pull through it with the grace of God."

**Sessions' sister Felicia Armstrong says the sniper's bullet, carefully aimed between the protective plates of his armored vest, pierced his side. Armstrong says, "It injured a kidney, which they had to remove. It injured his spleen, which is also removed, his pancreas, his stomach, his bowel. Basically all of his digestive system has been injured in some way or form."**

Sessions was deployed to Iraq last October with the Louisiana National Guard's 256th Infantry Brigade.

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## **Two Polish Soldiers Wounded In Divnaiya**

29.06.2005 Polskie

**Polish soldiers have been attacked in central Iraq. Two soldiers from the multinational forces surveying the south central zone of Iraq under Polish command, have been wounded in an explosion of a hand grenade in the town of Divaniya.** They have been hospitalised immediately and their life is not in danger.

**Initial information shows that the assailants hidden near the city hospital hurled the grenades at the patrol, in return soldiers answered with machine guns.** It is still not know how many assailants were there and how many have been killed or wounded.

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## **Bradley Damaged In Tal Afar**

June 29 (Reuters)

**In Tal Afar, U.S. forces said in a statement, a Bradley armoured vehicle was damaged** by a bomb in the town. No one was hurt in that incident.

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# U.S. Command Caught In Another War Crime

June 29 (Xinhuanet)

Nine people were killed in Iraq's western town of Hit on Wednesday as US and Iraqi troops launched their latest offensive aimed at curbing insurgency in western Iraq, medical sources and witnesses said.

"We received nine bodies of civilians shot dead by US snipers," medical sources in the Hit Hospital told Xinhua.

**The US forces detained Dr. Nazar al-Kubaisy, the head of Hit hospital, after accusing him of treating insurgents in the hospital, the sources said. [Wrong. "U.S. forces" act under command of an officer. The criminal here, in violation of the Geneva Conventions, is the officer in command of the act. Civilian hospitals are required to treat any person in need, regardless of affiliation, are neutrals, and are supposed to be respected as such. Of course that never bothers Imperial criminals in command, who ignore the laws of warfare.]**

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

## AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

### **Downed Chinook Helicopter May Have Been Carrying SEAL Unit: "An Insurgency That Is Widening"**

June 29, 2005 By Daniel Cooney, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Bad weather hampered rescuers from recovering a U.S. special operations helicopter carrying 17 troops that crashed during a mission against al-Qaida militants in rugged mountain terrain, officials said Wednesday.

**The U.S. military said a rocket-propelled grenade probably brought down the MH-47 on Tuesday in the mountains near Asadabad, in eastern Kunar province. The military has said only that the fate of the troops is unclear.**

**If those on board are confirmed killed, the downing of the Chinook helicopter could be the deadliest blow yet to American forces in Afghanistan, already grappling with an insurgency that is widening, rather than winding down.**

The helicopter was carrying forces into the area as part of Operation Red Wing against al-Qaida militants, the military said. Even before the crash was announced, a Taliban spokesman claimed responsibility and said he had footage of the attack, though no video has yet surfaced.

**Only eight months ago, Afghan and U.S. officials were hailing a relatively peaceful presidential election here as a sign that the Taliban were finished. That bravado has been yet another casualty in a war some feel could escalate into a conflict on the scale of Iraq's.**

**In some of the latest fighting, suspected rebels detonated a roadside bomb under a police vehicle in the same province as the helicopter crash, killing a district police chief and two other officers, said Zahar Murad, a defense ministry spokesman in Kabul.**

**U.S. military spokesman Col. James Yonts said the helicopter was shot at as it was approaching a landing zone while rushing reinforcements to a battle**

**It flew on, but crashed about 1.2 miles away at dusk Tuesday, he said.**

**"The aircraft was taking indirect fire and direct fire from elements on the ground," he told reporters.**

In addition to the stormy weather, rescue operations were also hampered by the rugged terrain at the remote crash site, reachable only by foot, officials said.

The downed military chopper — believed to be an MH-47, a special operations variant of the CH-47 Chinook — was carrying Navy SEALs, one U.S. official said. Another said it was carrying special operations forces but was unsure if they were SEALs or from another unit.

The twin-rotor Chinook — an all-purpose cargo helicopter — was one of the workhorses of the Vietnam War, where it was first used, and has been in service in all wars since. It is able to lift large loads of fuel or ammunition, or retrieve smaller helicopters.

It has a crew of four, including two pilots, a flight engineer and a crew chief, who man M60 machine guns to protect it.

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**TROOP NEWS**

# **Soldier Back Home Today After Losing Legs In Iraq**

June 29, 2005 By Holbrook Mohr, The Associated Press

A National Guard soldier who lost both legs in Iraq is expected back in Mississippi today, three months from the day a roadside bomb ripped through his Humvee.

Spc. William E. Brooks of Southaven, a 23-year-old Mississippi State University student, was injured on March 29 along with Spc. David W. Yancey of Ripley, Sgt. Leonard A. Casper Jr., of Myrtle and Sgt. 1st Class Wyman C. Floyd of Hattiesburg.

Yancey and Brooks, the worst injured, have been recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and were each presented with the Purple Heart for combat injuries last week.

The men are members of the 155th Brigade Combat Team, which is made up of about 3,500 soldiers from 49 communities in the state.

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## **“Please, No More.”**

June 29, 2005 By David Crary, Associated Press

Martha Rudd, an Army spokeswoman, attributed the recent surge in divorces to the stress and uncertainty caused by a stepped-up deployment cycle.

**“An awful lot of people are going back to Iraq for a second tour — that must be hard to take,” she said. “You can get through one tour, but then you think, ‘Please, no more.’”**

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## **Bush War Speech? “He Doesn’t Know What The Course Is,” Iraq Vet Says**

June 29, 2005 By Tim Whitmire, Associated Press

In Ohio, reactions to president’s speech echoed the divisions of last fall’s presidential race, when the state narrowly secured Bush’s re-election.

**Frances Troutman, who with her husband James is retired from the Air Force, dabbed at tears as she talked about the likelihood that daughters Danielle and**

**Jennifer, both in the Air Force, will have to return to Iraq from their home in Kettering, near Dayton's Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.**

"It's going to turn into a Vietnam," Frances Troutman predicted. "... I listened very intently to what he had to say, but it doesn't change the fact that I still believe we're in the wrong place."

**Danielle Troutman, on leave from the Air Force after spending 4½ months in Iraq as a security escort, was even blunter than her mother.**

"He doesn't know what the course is," Danielle Troutman said of the president.

**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.**

## **Bush War Speech? "NOT Worth The Sacrifice!"**

From: JL  
To: GI Special  
Sent: June 29, 2005  
Subject: NOT worth the sacrifice!

***Here is a stunning letter from Debby Pattin of Olympia, WA VFP 109 to our president in response to his pathetic excuses to the American people last evening:***

Debby Pattin  
June 29, 2005

Dear President Bush:

**This war in Iraq is NOT worth the sacrifice. If you would take the time to attend the funerals of the fallen Americans killed in Iraq, you would soon learn this lesson first hand.**

**Ask the family of Regina Clark, the 42 yr. old female Navy reservist killed last week in Iraq. She was a single mom and leaves behind an orphaned son. Why don't you fly out here in Air Force One and attend her funeral this week in Centralia, WA?**

**I know that you have flown all over the USA on Air Force One promoting Social Security, and before that, flew all over campaigning for election. But you have not flown or driven to any funerals. Even if you only attended the local ones, there would be plenty of opportunity right there at Arlington.**

To further expand your experience in the real sacrifice, why don't you and Mrs. Bush spend some time volunteering at Walter Reed?

My friend served for two years as a Red Cross volunteer there while her husband was on active duty. She was assigned to a family each time there was an incoming medical flight from Germany. She sat with the wife / husband, mother / father, brother / sister, children of the injured service man or woman. She went back and forth between the triage area, and then accompanied the family to the bedside.

**Sometimes the word came that the serviceman or woman had died in surgery and she sat with the family then, as well. If you and Mrs. Bush ever spent any time with the horrifically injured, maimed and dying servicemen and women and their families, I doubt you would continue to say the war is worth the sacrifice.**

**Additionally, Vice President Cheney, who also failed to serve in combat during Vietnam, could spend his time attending military funerals and seeing the bodies of these young people laid out dead in the front of the church or funeral home.**

He would learn first hand that "having other priorities" during Vietnam spared him and his family the anguish that these other families are going through. Then he might realize, also, that this war is NOT worth the sacrifice.

**All of your cabinet could commit to attending one funeral each month, or if the casualty rate continues to increase, one funeral each per week. They could each take a shift a week as a Red Cross volunteer at Walter Reed.**

**And your cabinet members and you yourself should encourage any children, grand children, nieces and nephews that they and you have, to enlist.**

**Because IF the sacrifice is worth it, why is only everyone else's kids who are suffering and dying?**

**Why aren't your daughters serving?**

There are many young women your daughters' ages currently serving.

I was actually shocked last spring to learn that neither of your daughters had been in ROTC and that they were not being commissioned as Officers.

**Their failure to serve leads Americans to believe that this is a war fought by the poor on behalf of the rich (Halliburton, for instance), and that those in power, such as yourself, don't believe that the sacrifice should affect YOUR family, only other people's families. Just like Vietnam.**

Debby Pattin  
Wife of a Vietnam vet

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# “Bush Bombs At Ft. Bragg, We Rock!”

06/28/05 By Lou Plummer

In Fayetteville, NC today, military families and veterans were once again at the forefront of the national resistance to the war in Iraq.

Beginning at noon, Military Families Speak Out members Stan Goff, Larry Syverson and myself joined members of Fayetteville Peace With Justice at Quaker House to prepare for an afternoon press conference. Media representatives included MSNBC, National Public Radio and all of the local TV stations serving the Ft. Bragg area.

**Iraq Veterans Against the War member Charlie Anderson from Norfolk, VA drove home the message "Bring them home now and support them when they get here."**

**The publicity for the event reached the Fayetteville community in plenty of time to spread our message to potential new members of MFSO and IVAW. Charlie was able to sign up several Iraq vets. Stan and I spent hours talking to new contacts.**

Also, in this VERY red state, activists motivated by the results of the hard work of our groups and the NC Peace and Justice Coalition traveled for hours from the coast and the mountains to support the Fayetteville community's event.

More than a hundred attended a four-hour vigil. Many who attended took a turn as we read, one by one, the 1743 names of US military members killed in Iraq. We also read the names of Iraqi and US civilians whose lives have been ended by the war in Iraq.

**As George Bush rattled off a predictable speech to a captive audience Ft. Bragg, the truth was being told once again by those who know the real ground truth – veterans and military families just a few miles away.**

Lou Plummer  
Military Families Speak Out  
Bring Them Home Now  
Fayetteville Peace With Justice

**MORE:**

## **Bush Speech “A Minor Success”**

June 29, 2005 USA Today

**A USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll of 323 people who saw President Bush’s televised speech on Iraq indicates that the president scored only a minor success.**

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# Washington Post Caught In Stupid Lie About U.S. Opposition To Iraq War

[Thanks to PB who sent this in.]

June 29, 2005 By MIKE SCHAEFER, Counterpunch

**In a deceitful boost to Bush on the morning of his Iraq address, the Washington Post and ABC News released a poll of U.S. public opinion on Iraq.**

**But the Post's numbers in their print version (in the body of the article) underestimates the "Out Now" position by more than 3 times. One has to look at their actual numbers (Poll Data) to see that support for "staying the course" is much smaller than the article suggests.**

The Washington Post published the results of their joint survey with ABC News on the front page yesterday under the heading "Survey Finds Most Support Staying in Iraq - Public Skeptical About Gains Against Insurgents" by Richard Morin and Dan Balz.

The first two paragraphs read:

"a new Washington Post-ABC News poll finds that most Americans do not believe the administration's claims that impressive gains are being made against the insurgency, but a clear majority is willing to keep U.S. forces there for an extended time to stabilize the country.

**The survey found that only one in eight Americans currently favors an immediate pullout of U.S. forces, while a solid majority continues to agree with Bush that the United States must remain in Iraq until civil order is restored -- a goal that most of those surveyed acknowledge is, at best, several years away."**

**The article misrepresents the actual numbers as published under "Poll Data" which can be accessed through the article's webpage**

Question #7 under "Poll Data" reads: "Do you think the United States should keep its military forces in Iraq until civil order is restored there, even if that means continued U.S. military casualties; OR, do you think the United States should withdraw its military forces from Iraq in order to avoid further U.S. military casualties, even if it means civil order is not restored there?"

**Keep forces = 58%**

**Withdraw forces = 41%**

**No opinion = 2%**



41% is just over two out of five, not "one in eight" (12.5%) as the second paragraph suggests.

And 8% over half is not a "solid majority" for "staying the course." It would be more accurately described as a "slim majority!"

### **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](http://www.ivaw.net))

## **Resistance To Iraq War Grew From Below**

[Thank to D who sent this in.]

June 26, 2005 By Doyle McManus, L.A. Times Staff Writer

Several recent polls have found that a majority of Americans now believe that the United States made a mistake in going to war in Iraq, and increasing numbers — but not a majority — said they want U.S. troops to be withdrawn immediately.

"What's interesting in this decline in support for the war is that it has sprung from the public itself," said pollster Andrew Kohut of the Pew Research Center. "It wasn't led by politicians or by an antiwar movement. It started back in May, when the focus in Washington was on other issues."

"Senators are hearing from back home: If things are going so well, why do we hear every morning that 30 people have been killed in Baghdad?" said a top Republican advisor who refused to be identified.

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## **Metrics: Only 34% Of Americans Say U.S. Is Winning Iraq War**

June 28 (Bloomberg)

**Only about a third of Americans say they think the U.S. and its allies are winning the war against insurgents in Iraq, the lowest level yet,** according to a poll by Gallup for USA Today and Cable News Network.

Just 34 percent of Americans say the coalition is winning the war against an insurgency whose attacks have claimed more than 1,000 lives since Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari on April 28 named members of his cabinet.

**That's down from 43 percent in February, and the lowest out of four times the question has been asked since October. Poll data was published on the Gallup web site.**

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## **“What's The Use? Guys Are Dying, For What?”**

**"I'm getting out as soon as I can," he wrote. "Everyone I know plans on getting out, with a few exceptions. What have you got to look forward to? If you come back from a tour of getting the job done in war, it's to a battalion commander who cares more about the shine on your boots and how your trucks are parked in the motor pool than about the fitness of your unit for war."**

June 28, 2005 By LUCIAN K. TRUSCOTT IV, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

JUNE is the month in which West Point celebrates the commissioning of its graduating class and prepares to accept a new group of candidates eager to embrace the arduous strictures of the world's most prestigious military academy. But it can also be a cruel month, because West Pointers five years removed from graduation have fulfilled their obligations and can resign.

**My class, that of 1969, set a record with more than 50 percent resigning within a few years of completing the service commitment.**

**And now, from what I've heard from friends still in the military and during the two years I spent reporting from Iraq and Afghanistan, it seems we may be on the verge of a similar exodus of officers.**

The annual resignation rate of Army lieutenants and captains rose to 9 percent last year, the highest since before the Sept. 11 attacks. And in May, The Los Angeles Times reported on "an undercurrent of discontent within the Army's young officer corps that the Pentagon's statistics do not yet capture."

**I'm not surprised. In 1975, I received a foundation grant to write reports on why such a large percentage of my class had resigned. This money would have been better spent studying the emerging appeal of Scientology, because a single word answered the question: Vietnam.**

Yet my classmates were disillusioned with more than being sent to fight an unpopular war. When we became cadets, we were taught that the academy's honor code was what separated West Point from a mere college. This was a little hard to believe at first, because the code seemed so simple; you pledged that you would not lie, cheat or steal, and that you would not tolerate those who did.

**We were taught that in combat, lies could kill.**

But the honor code was not just a way to fight a better war.

**In the Army, soldiers are given few rights, grave responsibilities, and lots and lots of power. The honor code serves as the Bill of Rights of the Army, protecting soldiers from betraying one another and the rest of us from their terrifying power to destroy. It is all that stands between an army and tyranny.**

However, the honor code broke down before our eyes as staff and faculty jobs at West Point began filling with officers returning from Vietnam.

**Some had covered their uniforms with bogus medals and made their careers with lies - inflating body counts, ignoring drug abuse, turning a blind eye to racial discrimination, and worst of all, telling everyone above them in the chain of command that we were winning a war they knew we were losing.** The lies became embedded in the curriculum of the academy, and finally in its moral DNA.

**The mistake the Army made then is the same mistake it is making now: how can you educate a group of handpicked students at one of the best universities in the world and then treat them as if they are too stupid to know when they have been told a lie?**

I've seen the results firsthand.

I have met many lieutenants who have served in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq, practically back to back. While everyone in a combat zone is risking his or her life, these junior officers are the ones leading foot patrols and convoys several times a day. Recruiting enough privates for the endless combat rotations is a problem the Army may gamble its way out of with enough money and a struggling economy. But nothing can compensate for losing the combat-hardened junior officers.

In the fall of 2003 I was embedded with the 101st Airborne Division in northern Iraq, and its West Point lieutenants were among the most gung-ho soldiers I have ever encountered, yet most were already talking about getting out of the Army. I talked late into one night with a muscular first lieutenant with a shaved head and a no-nonsense manner who had stacks of Foreign Affairs, The New Yorker and The Atlantic under his bunk. He had served in Bosnia and Afghanistan, and he was disgusted with what he had seen in Iraq by December 2003.

"I feel like politicians have created a difficult situation for us," he told me. "I know I'm going to be coming back here about a year from now. I want to get married. I want to have a life. But I feel like if I get out when my commitment is up, who's going to be

coming here in my place? I feel this obligation to see it through, but everybody over here knows we're just targets. Sooner or later, your luck's going to run out."

**At the time, he was commanding three vehicle convoys a day down a treacherous road to pick up hot food for his troops from the civilian contractors who never left their company's "dining facility" about five miles away.**

He walked daily patrols through the old city of Mosul, a hotbed of insurgent activity that erupted in violence after the 101st left it last year. The Army will need this lieutenant 20 years from now when he could be a colonel, or 30 years from now when he could have four stars on his collar. But I doubt he will be in uniform long enough to make captain.

One cold night a week later, I sat on a stack of sandbags 50 feet from the Syrian border with another West Point lieutenant; he, too, was planning to leave the Army. "I love going out on the border and chasing down the bad guys," he told me as he dragged on a cigarette. "We've got a guy making runs across the border from Syria in a white Toyota pickup who we've been trying to catch for two months; we call him the jackrabbit.

**"He gets away from us every time, and I really admire the guy. But when we catch him, there'll be somebody else right behind him. What's the use? Guys are dying, for what?"**

A couple of weeks ago, I got an e-mail message from another West Point lieutenant; he was writing from a laptop in a bunker somewhere in Iraq.

**"I'm getting out as soon as I can," he wrote. "Everyone I know plans on getting out, with a few exceptions. What have you got to look forward to? If you come back from a tour of getting the job done in war, it's to a battalion commander who cares more about the shine on your boots and how your trucks are parked in the motor pool than about the fitness of your unit for war."**

When members of the West Point class of 1969 and other young officers resigned nearly en masse in the mid-1970's because of Vietnam, Washington had a fix. Way too late, and with no enthusiasm, the politicians pulled out of Vietnam, ended the draft and instituted the "all volunteer" military, offering large increases in pay and benefits. Now, however, the Pentagon has run out of fixes; the only choices appear to be going back to the draft or scaling back our military ambitions.

**The problem the Army created in Vietnam has never really been solved.**

**If you keep faith with soldiers and tell them the truth even when it threatens their beliefs, you run the risk of losing them.**

**But if you peddle cleverly manipulated talking points to people who trust you not to lie, you won't merely lose them, you'll break their hearts.**

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## **Bush War Speech?**

# **“Mr President, I'll Fly My Flag At Half Staff On July 4”**

**By Lietta Ruger, military family, 2 Iraq veterans facing second deployments to Iraq**  
To: GI Special  
Sent: June 29, 2005

Mr President, I'll fly my flag at half staff on July 4

**I was struck by the demeanor of the 700 soldiers in dress uniform attending the President's speech last night at Ft Bragg. They were polite. The singular time there was applause came at the prompting of a White House Advance team person.**

**The soldiers were the dignity and nobility in that room last night. Their Commander in Chief, our President seems to have a way with exploiting the dignity of our military and our loved ones deployed who are doing the grist of the 'hard work' . The litany of disrespect shown to our troops by this President and this administration is a wearisome and growing list.**

**There will be much said about the President's speech and I took my own notes. I will do as the President asked and fly my flag on July 4th. I will fly it at half staff in respect for the fallen soldiers, for the fallen ideals of what the United States of America has come to represent, and as an effort to represent with dignity the soldiers who fight under the auspices of our flag and do so in honor, integrity and good faith.**

They are doing their job and their Commander, the President, needs to do them justice by doing his job.

I will fly my flag for them, Mr President, in respect for them. I will fly it at half staff. Would that you would so order, in the deepest respect, that Americans fly their flags on the Fourth of July at half staff to honor the troops who are doing the job with their very lives.

I have checked the protocols regarding the flag and checked with my Governor's office and there is no penalty or wrongdoing if I choose to fly my flag at half staff and when I indicated my reasons for wanting to do so I was given a welcome to do so....

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## **The Soldier**

From: Dawn Marie Beals  
To: David Beals  
Sent: June 28, 2005

**The soldier stood and faced God,**

Which must always come to pass.  
He hoped his shoes were shining,  
Just as brightly as his brass.

"Step forward now, you soldier,  
How shall I deal with you?  
Have you always turned the other cheek?  
To My Church have you been true?"

The soldier squared his shoulders and said,  
"No, Lord, I guess I ain't.  
Because those of us who carry guns,  
Can't always be a saint.

I've had to work most Sundays,  
And at times my talk was tough.  
And sometimes I've been violent,  
Because the world is awfully rough.

But, I never took a penny,  
That wasn't mine to keep...  
Though I worked a lot of overtime,  
When the bills got just too steep.

And I never passed a cry for help,  
Though at times I shook with fear.  
And sometimes, God, forgive me,  
I've wept unmanly tears.

I know I don't deserve a place,  
Among the people here.  
They never wanted me around,  
Except to calm their fears.

If you've a place for me here, Lord,  
It needn't be so grand.  
I never expected or had too much,  
But if you don't, I'll understand."

There was a silence all around the throne,  
Where the saints had often trod.  
As the soldier waited quietly,  
For the judgment of his God.

"Step forward now, you soldier,  
You've borne your burdens well.  
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets,  
You've done your time in Hell."

Dawn Marie Beals

~In War there are no un-wounded Soldiers~

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Bush War Speech? “Bush Does Not Want To Pull Out The American Forces”**

June 29, 2005 By Frank Griffiths, Associated Press

**“The transfer of authority was a great dream but nothing took place,” said Samah Abdul Mihsen, a 24-year-old housewife living in al-Amin al-Thaniyah, a middle-class neighborhood in eastern Baghdad.**

**“Bush does not want to pull out the American forces although we can defend our country. There are so many problems because of the presence of foreign troops.”**

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### **Assorted Resistance Action**

June 29 (KUNA) & By Frank Griffiths, Associated Press

**An explosion thought to be the work of saboteurs damaged a natural North Oil Company gas pipeline linking storage facilities in Yousfiyah, south of Baghdad, to one of two plants where the gas is bottled in the capital. The gas leak caused a fire outbreak.**

The extent of the damage was unclear and it was not known if it would lead to a shortage. Most people in Baghdad use gas for cooking.

**Guerrillas killed police Lt. Jasim Mahmoud and wounded another officer north of Baghdad near the city of Baqubah on Wednesday, police Lt. Col. Ahmed Khamis said.**

<p><b>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</b></p>
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### **Collaborator Ranks Plagued By Infiltrators**

June 29, 2005 Los Angeles Times,

Iraq's security forces face a dangerous reality---insurgents are joining up. That puts those forces at terrible risk, already proven by two suicide bombings ignited by Iraqi security officers that killed some 30 soldiers and police officers. Weak controls allow rebels to inflict harm in security forces' midst.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

### **A Matter Of Honor**

From: Mike Hastie  
To: GI Special  
Sent: June 29, 2005  
Subject: A Matter of Honor

To G.I. Special:

**I heard George Bush's speech at Ft. Bragg on June 28th.**

**If I had lived on Fantasy Island all of my life, I would have thought it was a wonderful speech.**

**But, having been raised in the '60s, and having served in Vietnam as an Army medic, where I saw teenage boys die for corporate greed, I can honestly say that every word that came out of Bush's mouth was a lie.**

Even though the Vietnam War was a lie, I gave every fiber of my being to help save American lives. For me, this was a matter of honor. It is the one thing that kept me from committing suicide when I returned home to a country that was more concerned about sports, than anything soldiers did in Vietnam.

**Honor is something I recognize in other people, especially people in uniform.**

**Because, honor is all about sacrifice, it is putting someone else's well being before your own.**

**The number one thing I notice about George Bush, is he has no honor.**

**George Bush is the great impostor.**

**He is not the genuine item, like the soldiers I saw in Vietnam, or the American soldiers in Iraq.**

**The war in Iraq is in total chaos, and George Bush is in total damage control.**

**Mike Hastie**



**Vietnam Veteran**

**In memory of:  
Willie Hemphill and Bobby Drew**

**They did not die in Vietnam, but as a result of being there.**

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

## **Bush War Speech? “Fine Words Vs Ugly Reality”**



**“There, that'll teach the terrorists to mess with my imperial projects!”  
(Graphic: Asia Times)**

From: Z  
To: GI Special  
Sent: June 29, 2005  
Subject: Fine words vs ugly reality

Listening the other night to the fine words of President Ninny the Fearless may give one a sense of deja vu. Like other imperial missions before it, this one sounds just too damned wonderful to be true.

In the 1950s movie 'China Gate,' starring Nat King Cole and Angie Dickinson, the narrator explains that the French came to Indochina to teach its people to love God and one another.

Evidently the poor people of Indochina knew almost nothing about life until the French arrived to show them. (Ultimately, lo and behold, they did have a thing or two to teach the French, as did the people of Algeria).

**Not surprisingly, imperial adventures have always been advertised as nobly motivated and absolutely essential to general wellbeing. "Please kill and be killed for the benefit of the wealthy and powerful nincompoops who own and control your country!" has just never made it as a seductive slogan.**

**Instead, for instance, as Japan's military was ravaging China in 1938, a Japanese publicist told everyone persuasively and reasonably what it's all about:**

**"The objective of Japanese expansion is neither the attainment of capitalistic supremacy nor the acquisition of colonies, but the realization of harmony and concord among the nations of East Asia and the promotion of their common happiness and prosperity."**

Great as that sounds, the Chinese did not buy it, and fought stubbornly against their ostensible benefactors.

**The Japanese government tried to win the war by every means it could think of: intensive public relations, massive counter-insurgency, low-tech 'shock-and-awe' that was the rape of Nanking, formation of a puppet government, on and on--but nothing worked. After some fifteen exceedingly bloody years, the Japanese military pulled out with the proverbial tail between its legs.**

**All of which may call to mind that often quoted line by the Spanish-born American skeptical philosopher George Santayana: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."**

**Fortunately, we do remember.**

Solidarity,  
Z

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></b></p>
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## **“The Nation Of Prison Houses”**

**From:** Anita Job  
**To:** GI Special  
**Sent:**, June 29, 2005  
**Subject:** Last GI Spec

**The last GI Special contained a comment about prisons in the U.S.**

Lenin called Tsarist Russia the "prison house of nations" because the government had taken over so many territories and created so many oppressed nationalities.

The U.S. is the nation of prison houses - from California to the New York Isle, from Guantanamo Bay to Abu Ghraib.

Let's hope we can celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution with one of our own.

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## Old Time Hard-Ass

Once war has started, it is unthinkable to run away from it. One must go ahead and do the work of a socialist.

In the ranks of the Army, people think and brood, perhaps, more than "at home." One must go there and organize the working class for the ultimate aim, as it is utopian to think that the working class will achieve its aim in a peaceful way.

It is impossible to pass from capitalism to socialism without breaking national frameworks, as it was impossible to pass from feudalism to capitalism without adopting the idea of a nation.

V. Lenin, Golos, Nos. 37 and 38, October 25 and 27, 1914.

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## Time To Move!

From: Z  
To: GI Special  
Sent: June 26, 2005

As war's stench assaults all noses  
Rums and Condi strike tough poses  
Dick deep in his bunker dozes  
Dub insists shit smells like roses.

Do we wait till God and Moses  
Flush these turds to hell with hoses?

Or do we grab plane, tank, and truck  
To get the fuck out of this muck  
As our common sense proposes?

### Web Copies:

For back issues see GI Special web site at <http://www.militaryproject.org/> .  
The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>,  
[www.williambowles.info/gispecial](http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial),  
<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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