

GI SPECIAL 3B84:



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[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace]

“Sometimes I Feel That We Are Fighting For The Wrong Reason” U.S. Sailors Fraternize With Australian Anti-War Activists

From: James Courtney; james.courtney@au.greenpeace.org

To: GI Special

Sent: July 08, 2005 2:28 AM

Hello all.

Last night in Sydney, at the end of a day of peaceful protest a small group of activists conducted a candle lit vigil in the shadow of the uss Kitty Hawk, uss John Paul Jones and uss Cowpens.

At the main gates of the naval base through which all service personnel coming or going passed and in full view of the bridge of the Kitty Hawk we laid out candles in the shape of the peace symbol.

The response was moving and inspiring.

We had naval personnel helping to light candles and taking photos.

Many words of thanks from ships crew some with tears welling in their eyes.

We had nothing but positive feelings from the ships crew that spoke with us.

We managed to hand out around 200 copies of *Traveling Soldier*, but noticed that that this was mostly from crew going ashore and that many were cautious about taking it.

We also set up a data projector and huge PA. The US navy tried to get the local police to stop us - but the local cops told them we had a democratic right to protest and supported us.

We projected David Zeigers documentary "sir no sir" onto the side of a shipping container sitting beside the Kitty Hawk. We estimate that at least 700 personnel saw some of the movie. around 200 or so watched it for 10-15 minutes. The US MP's and around 15 plain clothed US military staff watched the whole movie (it was right in their face so they didn't have much choice). The sound system was very loud so we expect that possibly thousands of personnel heard what was happening.

After playing the whole movie we played video piece produced by Eric Blumrich (<http://www.ericblumrich.com/y2.html>)

This was a very moving and inspirational experience for the small group of people that made it happen. We felt moved by the plight of the young men and women that we met.

<p>There was one line that we heard from many, "sometimes I feel that we are fighting for the wrong reason."</p>

We learnt that a simple message of peace without politics, blame or judgment will most likely be met with support and gratitude by our brothers and sisters trapped in the horror of war.

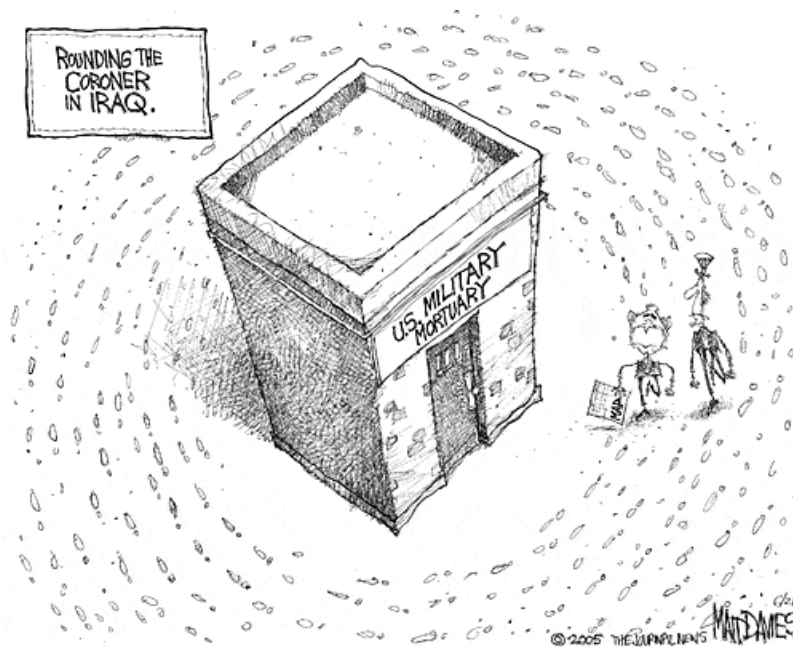
We came away understanding how they feel, what they live with, felt the same eyes watching us that watch them and - we hope - made them feel that change will come and that peace will prevail.

Sincere regards

James Courtney
Peace and nuclear disarmament campaigner
Greenpeace Australia pacific

[Magnificent work. Let us go and do likewise. No excuses not to any more. T]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS



The Butchering The 1st Of The 325th : Back From Iraq Three Whole Months, Unit Sent Out For Third Tour: To Afghanistan!!

July 08, 2005 Associated Press, FORT BRAGG, N.C.

Some 700 to 800 members of a Fort Bragg-based battalion that returned from Iraq in March will head to Afghanistan in about two weeks.

The 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment is preparing for deployment, Fort Bragg officials said Friday.

From February 2003 to February 2004, the 325th AIR deployed to Iraq, then returned to that country from December 2004 to March 2005 to provide security during the Iraqi election process.

Comment:

Incredible.

After two tours in Iraq, and three whole months stand-down, their reward is to go to Afghanistan, where the kill rate for U.S. troops is *higher* than Iraq. And an Army Times news story quotes a Congressman saying there is a shortage of armored vehicles in Afghanistan. (See story about that below, under Afghanistan War Reports.)

All this for Bush's bloody Imperial dreams. The enemy is in Washington DC, not Iraq or Afghanistan. The mission of these enemies domestic is to keep themselves in political power by refusing to admit what disasters they have set in motion, no matter how many troops they kill in the process.

To say that payback is overdue is the understatement of the year, so far.

And payback is coming.

The words of Soldier X, who spent 15 months in combat in Iraq, were never more fitting:

"We are just beginning to build on the movement. It will grow as the soldiers start coming back and seeing what a lie the war was.

"The boys and I will stay active and it will gain speed and mass. By the time we hit the real brick walls we should have enough power to blast them down.

"Every avalanche starts with one snow flake, but requires a million more to wreck some shit.

"We just have to learn where to dynamite!"

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.

TWO U.S. TROOPS WOUNDED IN BAGHDAD IED ATTACK



U.S. soldiers stand next to a damaged Humvee after a roadside bombing in Baghdad July 7, 2005 wounded two U.S. soldiers. REUTERS/Ceerwan Aziz



Photo by Ali Jasim/Reuters

Balad Car Bomb Kills Isle Soldier; Injures Three From Unit

July 8, 2005 Gregg Kakesako, Honolulu Star

A Hawaii soldier with the Hawaii Army National Guard was killed today when a car bomb exploded in Balad north of Baghdad.

Three other soldiers were injured in the blast. They are not from Hawaii but are members of the Hawaii-based 29th Brigade Combat Team.

Balad is near Logistic Support Area Anaconda — about 50 miles north of Baghdad — where soldiers of the 29th Brigade's 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry and the unit's 29th Support Battalion are deployed.

The Associated Press reported the car bomb explosion occurred at 1 p.m.

As of today, 23 soldiers, two sailors, 42 Marines and one civilian with Hawaii ties have been killed in Iraq since the war started on March 19, 2003.

Fifteen soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks were killed in Afghanistan, as well as two Marines and four Pearl Harbor Navy SEALs.

Ambush Wounds Three U.S. Soldiers Near Suwayrah

6.8.05 AP

A roadside bomb and small arms fire wounded three U.S. soldiers in an attack on a coalition convoy south of Baghdad near Suwayrah, according to the Polish military, which is responsible for patrolling the area.

***Famous Last Words:* Another Deluded Idiot Commanding General On The Loose**

Jul 8, 2005 By Robert Burns (AP) BAGHDAD

U.S. and Iraqi forces have “mostly eliminated” the ability of insurgents to conduct sustained, high-intensity attacks in Baghdad, Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr., the top U.S. commander in the Iraqi capital said Friday.

Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr. said in a video-teleconference interview from Baghdad with reporters at the Pentagon that offensive operations by U.S. and Iraqi troops in recent weeks had sharply reduced the number of insurgent bombings.

Webster painted a remarkably positive picture of the prospects for improving security in Baghdad.

He predicted that, “in the next couple of months we will not see sustained, long bloody months in Baghdad.”

[They just never learn, do they. Or, more accurately, they refuse to learn. Not for lack of available information, either. Basic rule of counter-insurgency warfare: when things get quiet, be very, very afraid: the opposition is preparing the next offensive. But generals like Webster know nothing but how to move their mouths in front of reporters. And their troops pay the price. They just get another promotion up the career ladder, expanding the effective range for the exercise of their blind stupidity. Why didn't he just say “Bring It On?” like the murderous Imperial traitor in the White House?]

GOD-AWFUL PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



US soldiers search a field in Zaafarniyeh, south of Baghdad. (AFP/USAF/SPC. Ben Brody)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Afghan Troops Fighting Without Armor: Death Rate Exceeds Iraq

July 11, 2005 By Vince Crawley. Army Times staff writer

At a June 22 House Armed Services Committee hearing, military officials reported seeing a number of anti-coalition tactics in Afghanistan that seem to be imported from Iraq, such as the use of roadside bombs.

And a lawmaker who frequently visits Afghanistan says troops tell him they are short on armored vehicles and don't have enough logistics bases, forcing them to drive long distances with large amounts of fuel and making them easy targets for rebels.

"I don't want Afghanistan to be the forgotten front," said Rep. Ike Skelton, D-Mo., the committee's ranking Democrat.

[That may explain why the deaths per 100 troops are higher in Afghanistan than Iraq.]

TROOP NEWS

The New Issue Of Traveling Soldier Is Out!

1. You can't eat a soccer ball - <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/7.05.soccer.php>
2. "Our motivations had more to do with oil and imperialism than to with Saddam Hussein or WMDs" - <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/http://www.traveling-soldier.org/7.05.ivaw.php>
3. A letter from Iraq: "When I found your site, I became excited to find a military paper, more precisely a soldiers' paper, that will cut through the bullshit" - <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/http://www.traveling-soldier.org/7.05.mail.php>
4. Soldiers debate the war - <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/7.05.debate.php>
5. "Dean, you have become one of them" a military mom's letter to the Democratic Party boss - <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/7.05.dean.php>
6. Kerry knew about WMD lies and didn't care <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/7.05.kerry.php>
7. It's about damn time! <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/7.05.Sept24.php>
8. Words from the front-lines ? <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/http://www.traveling-soldier.org/7.05.words.php>

9. Download the latest issue so you can distribute it: <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/TS11.pdf>

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.

Italy To Start Pulling Troops Out Of Iraq In 60 Days

July 8, 2005 By ALESSANDRA RIZZO, Associated Press, Gleneagles, Scotland

Premier Silvio Berlusconi said Friday "We will begin withdrawing 300 men in the month of September."

Mr. Berlusconi, who was a strong supporter of President Bush on Iraq, sent 3,000 troops to the country after the ouster of Saddam Hussein to help rebuild the country.

In recent months, Italian officials have gone back and forth on when a withdrawal might begin. Berlusconi said September was a possibility, but Foreign Minister Gianfranco Fini then talked of early 2006.

Relations between Washington and Rome have been strained in recent months — first by the killing of an Italian agent by American soldiers in Iraq and then arrest warrants issued by an Italian court accusing 13 purported CIA operatives of kidnapping a militant Egyptian cleric from Italy and sending him to Egypt, where he was reportedly tortured.

Reforms Minister Roberto Calderoli of the right-wing Northern League party said Friday the time had come for the United Nations to begin discussing "the progressive withdrawal of troops, beginning with our contingent, perhaps by September."

"It's evident that after New York, Madrid and London, Italy represents the most probable next objective of the terrorists," he said. "The time has come to begin to think also about our house, and to use the same resources currently committed in Iraq to prevent and combat possible attacks on our territory."

Pressure on Berlusconi has been mounting, even from within his own conservative coalition.

Iraq "must come to a point where it must guarantee its own security," the Italian leader told reporters.

Mother Of N.C.-Based Marine Unsure What To Tell Sister

Jul. 08, 2005 Associated Press, LOS ANGELES

His 5-year-old sister keeps asking when Marine Cpl. Carlos Pineda will come home. Although more than a 100 people packed into his funeral, she insists the man in the wooden box was a doll, not her brother.

"What do I say to her?" asked Pineda's mother, Silvia Hernandez, on Thursday from her home in Los Angeles. Hernandez buried her oldest son last week after the Camp Lejeune, N.C.-based Marine was killed during combat in Fallujah, Iraq.

"I can tell her that he died doing what he believed in, but the pain is the same," she said.

Pineda, 23, June 24 as a result of wounds from enemy small-arms fire. He was assigned to 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force.

Pineda, a native of El Salvador, grew up fast in East Los Angeles. His father was murdered by local gang members when Pineda was 9, and he quickly became the man of the family, acting as an older brother to other kids in the neighborhood.

Soldiers Dies Suddenly After Allergic Reaction To Pain Medication: "You Don't Expect Them To Walk Into A Shower And Die From It"

Jul. 05, 2005 Associated Press

CORINTH, N.Y. - A 23-year-old soldier who was injured in Iraq in September has died in his home on an Army base, his family said Tuesday.

A spokesman for Fort Riley in Kansas said he could not release any details on the death of Army Spc. Stephen V. Madison.

Madison's parents said the soldier was recovering from third-degree burns he received while showering at a base in Balad, Iraq. He was treated at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas before returning home late last year.

Stephen R. and Debra Madison said their son was hospitalized June 28 after an allergic reaction to new pain medication. His wife, Mary Walsh, found him unconscious in their home the next day, they said.

"Our son just died in Iraq," Debra Madison said. "Whether it was a bullet or an accident, he still died in Iraq, serving his country."

She said the military has not given them enough information about what happened.

"I'm not out to point fingers, but we deserve to know," she said. "If we give our sons to the service, we know there's danger. But you don't expect them to walk into a shower and die from it."

Madison was a helicopter mechanic with the 82nd Medical Company, 541st Maintenance Battalion. The Corinth High School graduate joined the Army in January 2001 and arrived at Fort Riley in August 2001. He served two tours in Iraq.

A military burial was scheduled for Saturday in Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery. Corinth is 40 miles north of Albany.

Combat Veteran Fighting 'Cruel' Travel Policy: "I Want To See My Sons But My Commander-In-Chief, Won't Let Me. And I Don't Think It's Right."

[Thanks to Sam F who sent this in.]

JUNE 26, 2005 By JIM DEFEDE, THE MIAMI HERALD

Walking the halls of Congress last week, Sgt. Carlos Lazo cut a striking image in his full dress uniform. A combat medic with the 81st Brigade of the Washington state National Guard, Lazo recently returned to the United States after serving a year in Iraq.

Among the many medals and ribbons on his chest is a Bronze Star, awarded for his heroism during the battle for Fallujah, one of the most intense and costly campaigns of the war.

"We had to treat a lot of wounded and carry out a lot of dead," Lazo recalled. "It was a very painful experience. But the one thing that kept me going was that I knew I was bringing these dead and wounded back to their families, that we weren't just going to leave them there."

Family was the reason Lazo, 40, was on Capitol Hill, cornering every member of Congress he could find during his three-day trip. "I want to see my sons," he said. "But my commander-in-chief, the president of the United States, won't let me. And I don't think it's right."

Lazo was born in Cuba, and two of his sons still live there. Under travel restrictions instituted last year by President Bush, Cuban Americans can only visit family once every three years. Lazo last saw his sons in 2003. He won't be allowed to see them again until the middle of next year.

Several months into his tour of duty in Iraq, Lazo was given a two-week leave, and he flew from Iraq to Miami, hoping to catch a flight to Havana before Bush's travel policy took effect, but he wasn't able to get aboard a flight in time.

Standing at the airport, watching the last planes leave, he broke down and cried.

"I didn't know if I was going to die in Iraq, and I just wanted to see my sons," he said. "I wanted to hold them and tell them I loved them."

When he got back to Iraq in July, Lazo made a videotape that he sent to members of Congress. It eventually made its way onto MSNBC. Lazo's tears had given way to anger, and he lashed out at President Bush. "President Bush and this administration hypocritically preach about family values, but they divide the Cuban-American families and the Cuban families," he charged on the tape, which was shot at Camp Anaconda, a U.S. base 40 miles north of Baghdad.

Holding up pictures of his two sons, he labeled the travel restrictions "cruel" and "un-American" and accused Bush of "pandering to the most conservative sector of the Cuban community in the United States." "These measures have nothing to do with democracy and everything to do with politics in an election year," he said.

Lazo's video appeal to members of Congress, however, went nowhere. In fact, it got him in trouble with the Pentagon. His commanders in the National Guard gave him their unqualified support, however, and threats of a court martial quickly faded.

His tour of duty in Iraq ended in March, but he is still fighting to see his kids. He has become a leading spokesman for a coalition of groups, including the Center for International Policy, which is fighting to repeal the travel restrictions to Cuba.

Even his 12-year-old daughter, Jessica, who was born in Miami, has taken up the cause, sending a letter to President Bush last month. She wrote how she used to visit Cuba often before the restrictions to see her brothers and grandparents. Like her father, Jessica won't be able to go again until next year.

"I and many thousands of Cuban Americans take this matter seriously," she wrote by hand. "If you were restricted from seeing family members once each three years because of your government, you wouldn't like that. So anyway, think about."

Rep. Jeff Flake, an Arizona Republican and outspoken critic of the travel restrictions, is considering introducing a measure this week to allow Lazo to travel to Cuba, a spokesman for the congressman said.

Such a measure would create a dramatic showdown: Will members of Congress deny a decorated combat veteran the opportunity to see his children?

Sadly, they probably will. Because Lazo was correct when he said on his video that the restrictions aren't about promoting democracy, they are about politics.

It's a lesson he must have learned in Iraq, as well.

Abuse By Knox Drill Sergeants Described

June 27, 2005 By Dylan T. Lovan, Associated Press

FORT KNOX, Ky. — The recruits of Echo Company stumbled off the bus for basic training at Fort Knox to the screams of red-faced drill instructors.

That much was expected. But it got worse from there.

Echo Company's top drill sergeant seized a recruit by the back of the neck and threw him to the ground. Other soldiers were poked, grabbed or cursed.

Once inside the barracks, Pvt. Jason Steenberger says, he was struck in the chest by the top D.I. and kicked "like a football." Andrew Soper, who has since left the Army, says he was slapped and punched in the chest by another drill sergeant. Pvt. Adam Roster says he was hit in the back and slammed into a wall locker.

Eventually, four Army drill sergeants and the company commander would be brought up on charges. Four have been convicted so far.

But Army regulations in effect since 1985 say superiors cannot lay a hand on their recruits to discipline them. The Army's Training and Doctrine Command regulations also disallow any physical or verbal hazing, which includes "cruel or abusive tricks." Vulgar or sexually explicit language is also prohibited.

The Army gets complaints of abuse by drill sergeants "all the time, but we **often** find that they are not founded," said Connie Shaffery, a Fort Knox spokeswoman. **[Unless the English language has lost all coherent meaning, Shaffery also just said that they often find that they are very well founded indeed!]**

The Fort Knox case, involving a unit of the 1st Battalion, 81st Armor Regiment, was unusual, too, in that a company commander was convicted.

The abuse took place in early February. An Army investigation began the next week, as the company's leaders were removed and the 25 recruits were sent to another command. Six of the trainees have since left the Army, including two who went AWOL.

"It was just chaos — constant commotion, constant yelling," Sgt. 1st Class Paul Holley said. Holley said he had come over from another company that day to help out, but was quickly turned off by what he perceived to be abuse, and left.

"In my eyes, it wasn't the way I would conduct an initial pickup," he said.

Staff Sgt. Jason J. Harris, a drill sergeant who has not been charged in the scandal, testified at one court-martial that it was the worst treatment of recruits he had ever seen.

The evidence in the scandal included a 25-minute video — taken by a sergeant as the recruits stepped off the bus — that showed the recruits being poked, grabbed and berated. Recruits are often videotaped on arrival, and the footage is shown during their training graduation or at family days to show how far they have come.

Capt. William C. Fulton, 35, the company's commander, was convicted last week of false swearing and dereliction of duty for not halting the abuse. He was sentenced to six months' confinement.

Harvey Perrit, a spokesman for the Army Training and Doctrine Command in Fort Monroe, Va., said there 120 allegations of abuse against Army drill sergeants in fiscal year 2004, and as a result 16 drill sergeants were relieved of duty.

So far in fiscal year 2005, there have been 42 complaints of abuse, and six sergeants have been relieved of duty, Perrit said.

MORE:

Privates Bring Down Lying Captain

July 04, 2005 By Joseph R. Chenelly, Army Times staff writer

The only officer charged in a trainee abuse scandal at Fort Knox, Ky., is now in jail. "I failed as a leader and I have failed my soldiers," said a tearful Capt. William C. Fulton, a decorated combat veteran, shortly before he was led away in handcuffs to begin serving six months behind bars.

Fulton, 35, was convicted June 21 after a two-day court-martial for negligently failing to stop drill sergeants under his command from physical abuse he witnessed and then making a false statement under oath to investigators.

Fulton testified that he did not see any abuse of trainees. But several privates testified that they saw the captain watch as drill sergeants assaulted the recruits.

Vodka Run Crashes: APC Stuck In The Mud

7.11.05 Army Times

Two Russian soldiers who took an armored personnel carrier out of their unit's motorpool for a quick run to buy liquor might have gotten away with their joy ride if they hadn't become stuck in the mud on their return trip.

The Interfax news agency reports the two soldiers in Siberia drove 25 miles to buy some vodka and couldn't resist cracking it open on the ride back to their base.

They soon got stuck in mud on a country road, whereupon they abandoned the APC and were spotted by security guards at a nearby car-sales lot.

The two ran into the lot to try to hide, but police arrested them. They have been charged with unauthorized use of military equipment and public drunkenness. The local prosecutor, without providing details, said the troops will face "severe punishment" if found guilty.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Huge Fire At Iraq Refinery After Resistance Mortar Attack

7/8/2005 AFP, BAGHDAD

A huge fire broke out at the Dura oil refinery outside Baghdad on Friday after it was hit by a mortar attack, an interior ministry source said.

Firemen were on the scene trying to bring the blaze under control, he said.

"This is a major fire because the mortar fell on the petrol refining area. There are probably many victims. Many ambulances have arrived on the scene," he said.

Egypt Closes Its Diplomatic Mission In Baghdad;

Demonstrators In Cairo Condemn U.S. Occupation



A demonstration in Cairo following Friday prayers on July 8, 2005 denouncing the US occupation to Iraq and calling for the withdrawal of the Egyptian mission from Iraq. (AP Photo/Mohamed al Sehety)

7/8/2005 Aljazeera & Associated Press

Egypt recalled its staff from Iraq and will temporarily close its diplomatic mission in Baghdad, an Egyptian official said.

Last month, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari announced that Egypt would be the first Arab country to upgrade its diplomatic representation by appointing a full-fledged ambassador.

The official, who demanded anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue, said that the remaining staff in Baghdad, six diplomats and six administrative employees, were ordered to leave the country on Friday.

Saad Mohammed Ridha, the head of Iraq's diplomatic mission in Cairo, also confirmed that the Egyptian Foreign Ministry will close its Baghdad mission.

Iraqi officials, meanwhile, sought to assure foreign governments that their diplomats would be safe. **[Really? These collaborators can't set foot outside the U.S. green zone without enough protection to start their own war, and they come up with this silly bullshit?]**

Resistance Cuts Baghdad Water Supply, Again; Gas Line Still Burning

Jul 7 Agence France Presse

Iraqi rebels bombed a water pipeline feeding Baghdad, cutting off supplies to half the city in the third such attack in three weeks.

The pipeline carries water to Karkh, on the west side of the capital, where temperatures currently top 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

"The pipeline linking the Tarmiyah pumping station to the capital was sabotaged," an official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"We are going to the site to evaluate the damage," he added Thursday.

The United States has poured some two billion dollars to fund reconstruction projects in the capital over the past 18 months, but a significant amount goes to ensuring security for the projects, according to a senior US military officer. [Aside from filling some war profiteers' bank accounts, didn't do much good, did it?]

Speaking before the latest attack, the officer, who declined to be named, said such attacks suggested a "new turn in strategy" for rebels who are out to disrupt essential services to the capital.

He pointed to two other assaults on the city's water supply **and to a recent bombing of a gas pipeline south of the city, which is still on fire.**

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

Bomber Wrecks Collaborator Convoy In Fallujah

7.8.05 Associated Press

A car bomber hit an Iraqi army convoy in Fallujah, some 40 miles west of Baghdad, witnesses said. The remains of human flesh and mangled cars were seen, but police officials said they had no details about the attack.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Metrics” Through The Looking Glass: The Past As The Future

Not understanding basic tenets of guerrilla warfare, Vietnamese and American senior officers converted fatalities into “victories.” This was a great mistake: Dead bodies do not mean destroyed infrastructure. Dead bodies, particularly those of innocent peasants, mean a strengthening, not a weakening, of the insurgent cause.

From: **WAR IN THE SHADOWS: THE GUERRILLA IN HISTORY**, BY Robert B. Asprey; William Morrow And Company; New York, 1994

All this was heady stuff that impressed a good many American officials. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara returned from Vietnam, in May 1962, and stated: “. . . Every quantitative measurement we have shows we’re winning this war.”

General Maxwell Taylor returned from a second trip to Saigon impressed by “a great national movement” that would destroy the Viet Cong. In January 1963—the American presence in Vietnam had increased to nearly ten thousand—President Kennedy, in his State of the Union message, said: “. . . The spearhead of aggression has been blunted in South Vietnam.”

These and other glossy statements were unduly optimistic.

Tactical gains amounted to little more than a gossamer sheen woven by temporary technological superiority.

Despite intensification of fighting, the problem remained essentially a guerrilla suppression problem and for this the Vietnamese army and a large proportion of American advisers proved singularly ill-prepared, not only showing themselves unable either to adjust tactically or to exploit tactical gains by a forceful and effective civil-affairs program.

Not understanding basic tenets of guerrilla warfare, Vietnamese and American senior officers converted fatalities into “victories.” This was a great mistake: Dead bodies do not mean destroyed infrastructure. Dead bodies, particularly those of innocent peasants, mean a strengthening, not a weakening, of the insurgent cause.

Neither did McNamara or Taylor serve the President well. **Not understanding the complexities of insurgency warfare himself, he could not know that they had escaped the conventional mind of Taylor and the computer mind of McNamara, both of whom often accepted false reports from the field, quantitative reports presenting a dangerously inaccurate picture.**

Perpetrators of these reports probably intended no deception at first. Alike untrained in insurgency warfare, military and civil advisers and observers, with some splendid exceptions, misread field developments to report extravagant tactical gains that so excited Washington officialdom in 1962.

This is understandable if scarcely commendable.

Top officials, military and civil, were putting careers on the line. Vanity was at work and so was ambition, but over these rode an appalling ignorance that produced an unhealthy, indeed fatal, arrogance that would admit of no error.

When the bloom wore off, these people refused to accept that the tactical flower had died, and when mourners turned up for the funeral, they were brusquely advised there was no funeral.

Although several factors combine to explain this unfortunate fact, it was due primarily to American military ascendancy in Vietnam affairs since 1954 **and concomitant insistence on seeking a military solution to an essentially political problem.**

Once the military began to rule the American presence, arrogance of ignorance asserted itself to begin eliminating rational thought.

And when rational thought disappears, error multiplies finally to explode into catastrophe—which is what happened to the U.S. effort in Vietnam.

MORE:

Metrics 2005

21 June 2005 By Dan Murphy, The Christian Science Monitor

The US military strategy in Iraq has been consistent for months now: Use aggressive military operations to disrupt the flow of foreign fighters entering the country and the insurgent support lines that run along the Euphrates River west to the Syrian border. Simultaneously, the US is training Iraqi troops to fill the security vacuum that persists in the center and north of the country.

By any metric of tactical military success, it's working, say analysts. US forces have strung together victory after victory. Marine and Army operations from Najaf in the south to Fallujah in the heart of the Sunni triangle and on to Mosul in the north have ended with thousands of insurgents killed and captured and tons of enemy munitions destroyed with minimal US casualties.

Iraq Beginning To Look A Lot Like Vietnam

July 3, 2005 Richard Cohen, Miami Herald

About two years ago, I sat down with a colleague and explained why Iraq was not going to be Vietnam. Iraq lacked a long-standing nationalist movement and a single charismatic leader such as Ho Chi Minh. The insurgents did not have a sanctuary, such as North Vietnam, which supplied manpower and materiel and leadership, and the rebel cause in Iraq -- just what is it exactly? -- was not worth dying for.

On Tuesday, President Bush proved me wrong. Iraq is beginning to look like Vietnam.

Bush sounded downright Johnsonian in talking about progress in Iraq. He cited rebuilt "roads and schools and health clinics," not to mention improvements in "sanitation, electricity and water."

This, too, had a familiar ring to it. We got the same sort of statistics in Vietnam. Some of them were simply concocted, but most, I think, were sort of true.

Roads were paved and schools opened and village councils elected -- and yet, somehow, it never mattered. The newly elected village council could meet in the newly opened school and get there on a newly paved road -- and spend the night planning an attack on U.S. forces.

It is all so depressing.

In Vietnam, it took the United States forever to recognize that it was not fighting international communism but a durable and vibrant nationalist movement led by communists.

Something similar may be happening in Iraq.

Yes, foreign terrorists are flocking to the country. But the Sunni insurgency is a different thing. The Sunnis may work with foreign terrorists and gladly use their expertise, but their goals are not the same.

The salient and depressing fact remains that no insurgency can survive for long without either the cooperation or the apathy of the populace. Someone's making bombs, and someone's not turning them in. Bush may extol Iraqi democracy but, at the moment, not enough Iraqis feel it is worth dying for.

Finally, Bush descended to Vietnam-speak. This is the language used by the Johnson and Nixon administrations to obscure the truth by emitting a fog of numbers.

Thus Bush cited the "eight million Iraqi men and women" who voted, the "30 nations" with troops in Iraq (a total joke, and the president knows it), the "40 countries" and "three international organizations" that have pledged "\$34 billion" in reconstruction assistance (another joke), the "80 countries" that met in Brussels to aid Iraq **and the "160,000 security forces trained and equipped for a variety of missions" -- one of them being, clearly, to stay out of harm's way.**

The war Bush declared to rid Iraq of WMD is not the war being waged. The two have only one thing in common -- rhetorical sleight of hand.

I know Iraq is not Vietnam. But Tuesday night it sure sounded like it.

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.

The London Bombings:

#1:

Blowback Hits Britain: Londoners Pay Heavy Price for Blair's Deception

July 8, 2005 By PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS, Counterpunch

Do you feel safer now that George Bush's and Tony Blair's barbaric attacks on Iraq have brought barbaric attacks to London?

Coordinated attacks on London's transport system have apparently killed 38 and injured 700. It is a terrible thing but hardly surprising.

Blair and Bush are on their high horses claiming the morality of "civilized nations" and denouncing the retaliation they have provoked as "barbarism."

Their hypocrisy plays poorly in the world. Far more innocent Iraqi civilians, especially women and children, have been slaughtered than British and Americans. Why do Bush and Blair believe they should be praised for slaughtering civilians and only Muslims denounced?

The American and British people had better wake up, depose their immoral leaders, and put a halt to this war.

#2:

“Tony Blair Had Placed Their City In The Firing Line”

July 7, 2005 By MIKE MARQUSEE, Counterpunch

This morning, the suffering, grief and terror that have visited so many innocents in recent years came to London. We have not paid the kind of price that people have paid in Fallujah, Najaf or Jenin, but it is a steep price nonetheless. And its root causes are the same.

The bomb blasts were grimly predictable. Indeed, they had been widely and repeatedly predicted - not least by rank-and-file Londoners, who knew that by taking Britain into Iraq side-by-side with the USA, Tony Blair had placed their city in the firing line.

#3:

Blair's Alliance With Bush Bombed

July 8, 2005 by Robert Fisk, Seattle Post-Intelligencer

"If you bomb our cities," Osama bin Laden said in a recent videotape, "we will bomb yours."

It was clear Britain would be a target ever since British Prime Minister Tony Blair decided to join President Bush's "war on terror" and his invasion of Iraq. We had, as they say, been warned. The G-8 summit was obviously chosen, well in advance, as Attack Day.

It is easy for Blair to call yesterday's bombings "barbaric" -- they were -- but what were the civilian deaths of the Anglo American invasion of Iraq in 2003, the children torn apart by cluster bombs, the innocent Iraqis gunned down at American military checkpoints. When they die, it is "collateral damage"; when "we" die it is "barbaric terrorism."

If we are fighting insurgency in Iraq what makes us believe insurgency won't come to us?

#4:

Terrorist Attacks On Civilian Shopping Malls

6 July 2005 William Van Wagenen, Electronic Iraq

Before the 2003 American invasion the Bush administration declared that the strategy of "Shock and Awe" bombing would be used to assault Iraq.

Driving through Baghdad during my stay here in the last month has allowed me to see some of the destruction caused by the aerial bombardment, which preceded the US invasion.

One thing that struck me as odd was a bombed out government run shopping mall, which resembled the huge Wal-Mart stores back home in the States. I asked our driver about it, who said the Americans bombed it during the 2003 invasion. He said one could find anything there, including food, clothing, and so forth.

Curious as to whether the bombing of this shopping mall had been an accident, I asked our driver whether any other malls had been bombed. He simply laughed and said, "Many!"

He later showed us several of the shopping malls around Baghdad that had been bombed by US forces.

In all, we saw three government run shopping malls, and two major markets which had been destroyed.

We noticed that the bombing of the Rashid market in downtown Baghdad was so precise that no other buildings next to it, including a mosque, seemed to be harmed. Our driver knew of other malls that had been bombed, but they were either far away or in areas he felt were too dangerous to visit.

#5:

8 Jul 2005 From David Honish, Veterans For Peace:

I think my youngest brother is the best wit in the family:

"I found it beyond ironic that after the bombings W said we all need to be "more vigilant." Didn't he just run over a cop on a bicycle the day before he said that?"

OCCUPATION REPORT

An Exiting New Hit: The U.S. Occupation TV Torture Show!



In this image from an al-Iraqiya Television broadcast July 6, 2005, alleged Iraqi insurgents are questioned as they appear on a program called 'Terrorism In The Grip Of Justice.' **The program has also come under criticism from Iraqi lawyers, former detainees and families of suspects who accuse security officials of abusing suspects to extract the confessions, a practice reminiscent of Saddam Hussein's era.** (AP Photo/al-Iraqiya Television)

The Iraqi lawyers association, however, has criticized the show and suggested the purported confessions are based more on fear than on fact.

In a recent report, the association named 27 people it says are alive despite televised statements by people claiming to have killed them.

July 6, 2005 Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- **As she tells it, security forces put her in solitary confinement for days on end, whipped her with electric cables and accused her of having sex with a stranger. Humiliated and fearful for her life, the 46-year-old Iraqi housewife went before a TV camera and "confessed" to helping insurgents.**

It didn't matter that her confession was a lie, Khalida Zakiya said.

"If you don't say what we tell you," she claims one interrogator told her, "I will rip your clothes off and leave you naked in front of everyone." Another threatened to sodomize her with a bottle, she said in a phone interview Tuesday from her home in Mosul.

Zakiya appeared on a much-touted Iraqi TV program that airs confessions of alleged insurgents. The show has won the praise of security officials who credit it with boosting Iraqis' confidence in security forces, hurting the insurgency.

But the program has come under criticism from Iraqi lawyers, former detainees and families of suspects who accuse security officials of abusing suspects to extract the confessions, a practice reminiscent of Saddam Hussein's era.

The program, which airs nightly, began in February. Officials say they don't know exactly how many alleged confessions have been televised, and some episodes have been repeated. But they believe the number is in the hundreds.

The Iraqi lawyers association, however, has criticized the show and suggested the purported confessions are based more on fear than on fact.

In a recent report, the association named 27 people it says are alive despite televised statements by people claiming to have killed them.

The report claims that the show's interrogators "have twisted the truth and limited their work to words extracted under duress," practices it says are a throwback to the days of Saddam when torture was widely used against opponents of the regime.

Iraqis who watched the show in February might have seen Zakiya, her pale face framed by a black veil, claiming to have given insurgents money and explosives.

She said the elite Interior Ministry force known as the Wolf Brigade arrested her to try to force her brother to turn himself in. He is now in detention on suspicion of being a high-level insurgent in Mosul, but she claims he is innocent.

After she had spent 11 days in solitary confinement, two men appeared at her cell door, blindfolded her and dragged her away. "Shut up! We will tear you to pieces and throw you in the river if you utter a word," she claims they said.

She was taken to a room where interrogators confronted her with a man she says she had never met before. The man said he had sex with her and that she gave him money and explosives to attack Americans.

"How can you say such things?" she asked him when the officials weren't looking. He raised his pants and showed her blood running down his legs, she claimed. "I knew he said this because he was tortured."

She was then blindfolded again, handcuffed and gagged as about six men whipped her with electric cables for 15 minutes, she said.

Two days later she was escorted to a room and handed pieces of paper with a scripted confession, she claimed. She recalls saying into the TV camera: "When my brother is not around, I give the people working with him money and dynamite."

Freedom came when the brigade left Mosul and transferred her to local authorities who, believing her to be innocent, released her 10 days later, nearly three months after her detention, she said.

Another former detainee, Khalid Ahmed Ibrahim, said he admitted to killing Iraqi security forces because he believed the alternative was to die of torture. Ibrahim's photo ID appeared on the program as he was branded a terrorist and a drug dealer, he said.

Ibrahim claimed he was tied to a ceiling fan and whipped on the chest, legs and head. He was released when he proved to his investigators, also from the Wolf Brigade, that he had three relatives who had been members of Iraq's security forces, two of whom were killed by insurgents.

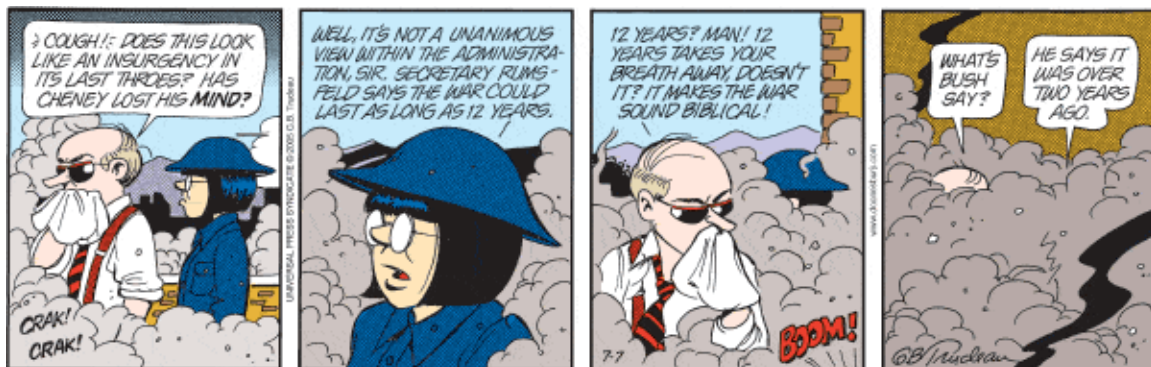
After Zakiya's release, Mosul's police chief visited her at home, apologizing to her on local television.

"She's an honorable and pure woman," Zakiya remembers him saying.

Zakiya was troubled the most by the sexual allegations against her. "I wish they had executed me and not tarnished my honor. In a way, they have killed me, at least socially, in the eyes of the people."

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

Received:

Writers Wanted For "10 Reasons Not To Join The US Army"

From: Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg: elizabethwg@gmail.com
To: GI Special
Sent: July 08, 2005
Subject: New book: 10 Reasons Not to Join the US Army

Colin Robinson of The New Press recently hired me to create a book called -- 10 Reasons Not to Join the Army.

We'd like each chapter to be written by a different person who has both personal experiences to share and some expertise in the area. Each chapter will be brief -- about 2000-2500 words.

The three chapters that I am still looking for writers are:

- 3) You may be injured**
- 4) If you are injured you may not be looked after properly**
- 8) If you are a woman or a gay you may be sexually harassed/ You may be bullied**

Thank you! I really appreciate any suggestions you have!

Peace, Elizabeth

Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg
The Washington Blade
202.797.7000 x258
917.273.7088 (cell)



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The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>,

www.williambowles.info/qispecial,

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