

GI SPECIAL 3B90:



"Where's The Damn Outrage"

"Our son does not want to see another soldier blown up because someone in headquarters thought it would be a good idea to check IED craters on the side of the road.

"He does not want to see another soldier die or become injured permanently because headquarters want convoys to drive around all day as targets for VBIED's, or IED's."

From: Cindy Sheehan, Gold Star Mothers For Peace

Sent: July 14, 2005

Like people have been saying, "Where's the damn outrage." Why do we have to bear it all?

From: Army Infantry Mom

To: Cindy Sheehan

Sent: July 13, 2005 9:34 AM

Cindy,

Again I feel for your loss. I cannot imagine what you have gone through.

Everyday our son was over in Iraq I just prayed he would come home safe. He was injured but was sent back. He told us each day that he went out, he did not know if he would come back alive.

His men were more important to him than his own welfare. It was his job to keep his men alive, despite some of the orders he was given that put his men in direct danger.

Iraq has become a haven for terrorists everywhere in the Muslim world.

Because of the lack of experience in this type of war, the senior officers have no idea what is happening on the streets. This is a serious problem. The junior officers have very little say in what they do day to day. They are the ones on the front line, making life or death decisions. Seven out of eight soldiers in our sons group died not in fighting insurgents, but as sitting/walking targets.

This is happening all over Iraq. The psychological toll to junior officers is much greater than people realize. Their men are their responsibility, their loss is never forgotten.

The situation in Iraq is not getting better. It has deteriorated. Each new group that is sent over from the states starts from scratch, making the same stupid mistakes that the group they are replacing has made.

There does not seem to be adequate training for replacements in the states by people who have actually been in battle. Our son had to counter many of the things his replacements had been told to do. The junior officers who have been in Iraq should be the ones training the reservists and the national guard. They essentially have no control, no say in how things are being run, yet they are the ones fighting in the streets everyday.

This coupled with long deployments away from loved ones, has made reenlistment for junior officers extremely undesirable. Our son did not know of any junior officers that planned on staying past their enlistment requirements. Many that he knew were extremely bitter about being stop lossed.

The responsibility of young mens lives is too great to be taken lightly. When they see young men dying needlessly, it is unacceptable, yet they are powerless to do anything.

Our son does not want to see another soldier blown up because someone in headquarters thought it would be a good idea to check IED craters on the side of the road.

He does not want to see another soldier die or become injured permanently because headquarters want convoys to drive around all day as targets for VBIED's, or IED's.

He does not want to set up another checkpoint that does not catch insurgents, but lets units become targets for VBIEDs that drive up and blow themselves up.

Junior officers are responsible for their men. When they cannot protect their soldiers adequately from harm, they cannot do their job, nor do they want to.

There is no satisfaction in this war that is getting worse by the day. Our son said that he did not think that we had any business being in Iraq. Afghanistan, but not Iraq.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Italian Soldier Dies In Iraq Crash

July 14 (ANSA)

An Italian soldier was killed and two others were injured in an auto accident in Iraq on Thursday .

Sergeant Davide Casagrande died when his patrol vehicle veered off a desert road and overturned .

He was the 26th Italian military casualty in Iraq. Military sources ruled out an attack by insurgents .

They said the crash took place near the southern city of Nassiriya where the Italians are stationed .

Casagrande's injured companions will shortly be flown back to Italy. One has a broken arm. The other broke a leg .

Good Target Selection: A Brig. General

2005-07-13 Edward Wong and James Glanz, The New York Times

In Falluja, an American marine opened fire on a convoy carrying Brig. Gen. Saleh al-Ani, the police chief, as General Saleh was driving to the local government center in the morning to interview potential police recruits, police officials said.

A spokesman for the Second Marine Division, Capt. Jeffrey Pool, said in an e-mail message that the marine fired after a vehicle accelerated toward a checkpoint rather than slowing down or stopping, as directed by hand signals.

**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



US soldiers where a bomber blew himself up among recruits for the Iraqi security forces in Baghdad. (AFP/Yuri Cortez)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

4 Fugitives Ditched Prison Garb Before Escape:

Inside Help At Base?

July 14, 2005 Los Angeles Times

Four suspected al Qaeda members who escaped from an American-controlled air base ditched their orange prison jumpsuits before escaping from a detention facility in Afghanistan. **U.S. officials have not said where the prisoners found a change of clothes or if they received outside help in their escape.**

TROOP NEWS

IRAQ TO LONDON,

[This is a message from Rose Gentle, in Scotland. Her son was killed in Iraq. She leads a campaign to bring all the Scots and other troops home from Iraq, now.]

From: Rose Gentle
To: GI Special
Sent: July 13, 2005
Subject: Re: GI Special 3B88: Throw-Away Soldiers

IRAQ TO LONDON,

I WAS SENT THIS EMAIL.

***DONT SHOW ME THE PALM TREES SHOW ME THE DATES,
IF YOUR LEADERS CANT TELL YOU THE TRUTH ABOUT IRAQ,
AND WHAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR OR, WHY YOUR
CHILDREN ARE DYING, WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY TELL US
IN IRAQ, NOBODY LIKES TAKING THE LIFE OF ANOTHER,
BUT WE ARE ONLY DEFENDING OUR LAND AND THE WAY
OF LIFE, ISLAM IS OUR WAY OF LIFE,
AND TRANQUIL RELIGION WHICH TEACHES US TO RESPECT
OTHERS, AND VALUE ABOVE ALL THE LIFE OF OTHERS***

And ... you know I'm patriotic and I'm supportive of our president and I'm supportive of our military, but right now, my true feelings are that I've had enough.

I've had enough of this war. This family needs their daddy. I need my husband. I've had it with him being gone.

Kara Hollingsworth:

I'm not an outsider, an agitator, or a traitor to my country. I'm a 25-year-old mother and I'm married to a soldier. My husband is on his second tour in Iraq.

Biewen: Kara Hollingsworth's husband, specialist Dante Hollingsworth, has been assigned to Fort Bragg since 2002. She says she hesitated to speak at the protest. [This refers to the anti-war rally at Fayetteville, March 19, 2005]

Hollingsworth: This is my community, I care what they think. I care about whether they're offended, I care about not needling them unnecessarily, you know.

Biewen: But Hollingsworth says she's discovered many others in local military families who oppose the Iraq war. She says her husband is keeping his promise to the Army, to simply do his job.

Hollingsworth: So that's why I do this work, because he may not be able to say anything.

But I'm not in the Army. And it's kind of like a mother with her child. ... I'm gonna stick up for my family, for my husband, for my baby.

And I don't care if it's against the president or this whole town. I wouldn't ask another mother to stay silent and not defend her family, so nobody should ask that of me.

Lawmakers Betray Troops Ruined By Payday Loan Predators

The House passed a military financial protection bill two weeks ago that included provisions about payday lenders but did not cap the interest rate.

An interest rate or fee cap on payday loans was not included in the House bill because financial institutions oppose setting such a limit.

July 14, 2005 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer

Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Thomas Burden and an intern dressed in a shark costume were the highlights of a congressional news conference called to get support for capping the interest rates charged on payday loans.

Burden, assigned to Fort Hood, Texas, said he knows firsthand about the risks of borrowing money from businesses that promise service members quick cash with few questions.

He borrowed \$300 last fall because he needed money in a hurry during a family emergency. When he had trouble paying it back, the amount quickly rose to \$1,200. He finally paid off the debt with a conventional loan from another lender.

Burden said he knew when he walked into the loan office that he wasn't going to get the best deal, but borrowing at a rate of \$20 in interest every two weeks for each \$100 in principal didn't seem so bad — until he couldn't keep up with the payments.

"It snowballed," he said. "There are a lot of things we can do to take care of our soldiers, and this bill is one of them," Burden said.

He was referring to HR 97, a bill sponsored by Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo., that would cap the annual percentage rate that can be charged for loans to military personnel and their spouses at 36 percent. [Wow, only 36%? How generous. Nothing is too good for our troops.]

Some payday loan operations are charging basic fees that equal interest rates of as much as 400 percent — a level that Graves said is excessive.

"I understand they need to make money but 400 percent is too much," he said.

In fact, loan fees can be much higher if there are penalties for falling behind on payments.

George Brown, executive vice president of the Durham, N.C.-based Center for Responsible Lending, said he has seen interest rates of as high as 1,400 percent.

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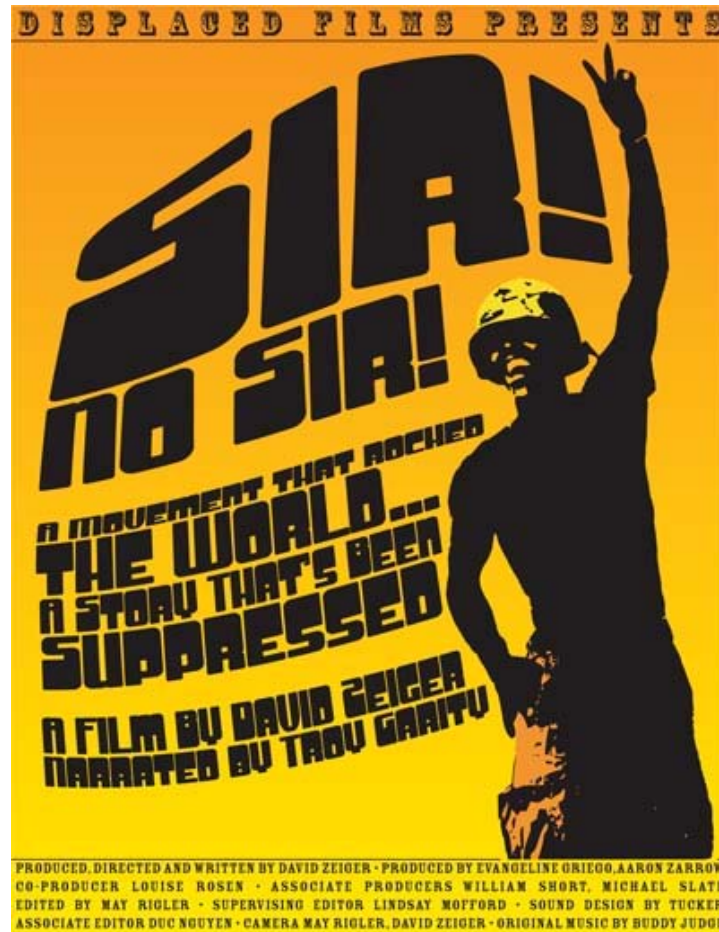
Industry officials also warned Congress that many payday loan companies would have to close if their fees were capped. **[Good. Send the assholes to Iraq.]**

War Profiteer Gets A Billion: Navy Gets Worthless Piece Of Shit

July 14, 2005 Norfolk Virginian-Pilot

Navy inspectors said that “poor construction and craftsmanship” found on a new amphibious ship last month could be an ominous sign for the service and the U.S. shipbuilding industry as they begin a host of other ship programs.

Inspectors examined the San Antonio, a \$1.2 billion helicopter and troop carrier scheduled to join the fleet this fall, and found hazardous wiring, uninstalled ventilation and a crash-prone engineering control system. They said the ship is not ready for its crew to come aboard.



Sir! No Sir! premiered at the Los Angeles Film Festival to a packed house of over 500 people, and received the first standing ovation since the premiere of *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Word spread fast and people had to be turned away at the sold-out second screening. *Sir! No Sir!* won the Audience Award for Best Documentary.

Around the same time, members of Greenpeace in Australia projected *Sir! No Sir!* on a wall across from where the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Kittyhawk was docked. Several hundred sailors watched some or all of the film. There has never been a more critical time for the suppressed story of the GI revolt against the Vietnam War to be told.

Stay tuned to our newly designed web site, www.sirnosir.com, and help spread the word. Once we finalize our distribution plans, Sir! No Sir! will be seen in theaters, festivals, schools, and homes across the country and throughout the world.

Debunking several myths about America's invasion of Vietnam, David Zeiger's documentary might be the most important documentary to screen in Los Angeles this year. Knowledge is ammunition.

Pasadena Weekly

A penetrating eye-opener of a documentary.

Hollywood Reporter

Anyone waging war with American troops might want to listen carefully to the largely untold story of David Zeiger's new documentary, "Sir! No Sir!," of how some of the most dedicated troops became some of the most damaging supporters of the movement to end the war in Vietnam.

Los Angeles Times

Displaced Films

323-906-9249

displaced@mindspring.com

www.sirnosir.com

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

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action:

7.14.05 Agence France Presse & ROBERT H. REID (AP) & By Peter Graff, Reuters & Aljazeera

Two suicide bombers blew themselves up outside Baghdad's fortified government compound, killing a civilian. The wounded included five policemen. Reuters correspondents in Baghdad also heard heavy machinegun fire from the same area after the blasts.

The explosions have been followed by a mortar attack on the Green Zone, which formerly housed Saddam's main presidential palaces.

Five Iraqi police were killed and six wounded in separate shooting attacks near Baghdad and the northern oil hub of Kirkuk.

Two members of the protection force set up to guard oil installations were found dead after being captured on Wednesday in central Iraq.

Near the northern oil capital of Kirkuk resistance fighters killed three policemen and wounded two when they shot at their car in the town of Rashad.

In Kirkuk itself an Iraqi soldier was killed and a female comrade wounded when guerrillas in a car opened fire on a minibus ferrying civilians to work at army headquarters

Police said guerrillas killed five Iraqi employees of an American base in Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, as they were driving outside the base.

Guerrillas killed an Iraqi soldier in Baghdad and another outside the Taji air base north of the capital, police said.

Two bands of gunmen in western Baghdad and near the northern city of Kirkuk killed three policemen each.

Roadside bomb kills two policemen between the towns of Samawa and Diwaniya, police said.

BASRA - A policeman was killed and another wounded after guerrillas shot them in the southern city of Basra, police said.

Assailants killed police Capt. Manhal Salim, an expert in defusing bombs, late Wednesday in the capital.

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

London Bombings? Chickens Coming Home To Roost

July 15, 2005 Daily Times

“(US President George W) Bush and (British Prime Minister Tony) Blair say Iraq is the battleground in the fight against terrorism, and they say they need to fight here to stop violence from spreading to their own homes,” said Soad Mohammed, a 40-year-old teacher in a Sunni district of Baghdad.

“But it’s precisely because of what they’re doing in Iraq that they now face violence at home,” she said.

“They are reaping the fruit of what they sowed,” she added.

For Karrar Mohsen, 33, shopping in the Shiite Al-Shuala district of town, the London attacks prove that if Westerners “think they can escape terrorism, they are very much mistaken,” he said.

“Seeing innocent people on their way to work being killed makes me sad,” but “they are now drinking from the same bitter cup as we,” he said.

“It’s US and British policy towards the Arab world and towards Iraq which is to blame for the attack in London,” said Mustafa Mohammed, 45, selling furniture in the Sunni district of Al-Adhamiyah.

“If you live in a glass house you shouldn’t be throwing stones,” he added. “The West must alter its policies or the whole world will be engulfed in violence,” said Nabil Mohammed, a professor of international relations at Baghdad university.

“In Iraq people have been subject to attacks for over two years all because of the occupation of the country” by foreign forces, he added.

Resistance Comes Out Ahead In Body Counting; Only 781 “Insurgents” Killed In Six Months

July 14, 2005 By BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press Writer

Between Jan. 1 and June 30 of this year, figures from the Ministries of the Interior and the Defense showed 275 Iraqi soldiers and 620 police were killed in bombings, assassinations or armed clashes with insurgents. [This does not include U.S. and other foreign fighters killed.]

The Ministry of Health said in response to an AP request that the insurgent death toll for the six months is 781.

Voices Of Resistance: An Interview With Dr. Mohammad Al-Obaidi Of Iraq's Peoples' Struggle Movement

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

July 12, 2005 By LAITH al-SAUD, CounterPunch

The mainstream media's attenuation of information regarding Iraq has now rendered public discourse about US policy in Iraq incoherent and incomprehensible.

Completely obliterated in all this is the suppression by the mainstream media of an entire side of the issue: the opposition.

What follows is an interview, (in what is hoped to be a series of interviews of individuals and groups,) with someone actually connected to Iraq and those opposed to the American occupation. I should add that while I make no secret of my moral and political support for the Iraqis' right to defend themselves convincing the reader to adopt the same position is not the intention of the following discussion. It is simply to provide more information regarding one of the most important issues of our time.

Dr. Mohammad al-Obaidi is a member of the People's Struggle Movement, more information on this group can be found at www.kifah.org in which links are provided to their political communiqué, available in English.

Laith al-Saud: Many in the Bush administration argue that the resistance is made up of former regime members who have been marginalized by the current situation and by so-called "foreign fighters." What is your assessment and how does the resistance view the former regime?

Dr. Mohammad al-Obaidi: The Iraqi people in general and the Iraqi National Resistance, which is its real name and nature, know that this claim is part of the propaganda and psychological warfare being targeted at Iraqis.

What is clear on the ground is that the resistance is made of a plurality of groups with a single aim - namely to end the occupation of Iraq.

The plurality of the resistance is a strength, not a weakness, as it shows that it is a *nationalist* resistance where being Iraqi trumps any sort of sectarianism - religious, ethnic, ideological or otherwise. It is well known in Iraq that the resistance is comprised of all sects and segments of Iraqi society: Islamists, Ba'athists, patriotic nationalists, and above all Arab Sunnis and Shii's.

The Americans claimed before the last assault on Fallujah that the majority of the freedom fighters are so-called "foreign" Arabs and Muslims. (Though, after the inhumane destruction of Fallujah American officials openly said that Arab fighters represent no more than 2% of the total number of freedom fighters in Iraq.)

Most important, however, is the practical and logical conclusion that the Iraqis come to. When the US invaded Iraq she brought with her troops from all around the world.

From thousands of miles away , from every quarter, the US employed several nations to occupy our country, so why can't our brother Arabs come to our

country to help us defend our land and kick the occupiers out? This is a very logical question that I would like to ask the American people.

As for the resistance's view of Saddam's regime, I think that all resistance factions condemn the regime for what happened in Iraq, but in the meantime we must keep in mind that the regime is gone now and forever and the Americans cannot hold Iraq hostage with the memory of the past.

LS: How should the world distinguish between those groups who belong to the Iraqi National Resistance and those who do not?

MO: By actions. It is known to all Iraqis that any operation carried out by the resistance targets the occupation and the security forces. It must be kept in mind that at this point in time, with the absence of any true sovereignty in Iraq, the security forces are merely an extension of the occupation itself.

Those operations that do otherwise and target civilians can be said for certain to not belong to the National Resistance. For example, hundreds upon hundreds of university professors, military pilots, scientists and doctors have been killed in Iraq. What possible benefit would the resistance have in attacking our country's most talented and educated people? It is clear to all Iraqis that there are foreign fingers pulling the triggers to commit these crimes and murder the human resources of Iraq, all the while attempting to steal the country's natural resources.

LS: Although many opposition groups in Iraq have repeatedly and explicitly condemned the targeting of innocent civilians in the country, the Bush administration has continually charged that this is part of the resistance's strategy. What is your response?

MO: Once again, this has always been part of the propaganda of the occupiers. As I have said no resistance groups has ever targeted civilians or condoned it.

All groups have clearly said that their targets are not and never will be the Iraqi people. How could it? The National Resistance is made up of the Iraqi people.

Yet the question remains why do the occupiers not say anything of the killings being carried out by the militias that have been allowed to operate in our country, such as the *peshmerga* and the *Badr* Brigade? We have repeated reports that such militias have targeted clerics, worshippers and other Iraqis who have opposed the occupation and the current puppet government in Iraq. Yet the occupying powers and the international community in general have remained completely silent.

LS: How have Iraqis who you have spoken to in the country described the nature of the occupation and the resistance?

MO: Allow me to answer your question with another question. How would anyone feel if they had lost a loved one to an aggressive invasion and occupation? There are hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who find themselves in such a position and have lost dear ones to the hands of the occupiers. This is not to mention the prisoners, both men and women, who have families in the thousands.

The destructiveness of the occupation affects the vast majority of Iraqis in a negative way and thus they are fed up with the presence of occupiers on our land. The resistance is not short on recruits to join them, as it is not difficult to find people sympathetic with the goals of the resistance in the country. Quite simply there are hundred of thousands of people in Iraq who are ready to sacrifice their lives for their country.

LS: You suggest that the US military and administration has used methods of collective punishment in Iraq. What evidence can be shared with the world that this is happening in Iraq?

MO: I am not suggesting, Laith. I am confirming that this is what is happening in Iraq. No one can deny what the US military has done in Falluja, Sammarra, Ramadi, Karbala, Heet, Qaim and other towns and cities. People have been denied water, electricity, medical treatment and other services. This has not only been confirmed by Iraqi eyewitnesses on the ground, which should be enough, but by international services such as the Red Crescent and others. Is that not collective punishment?

Think of Baghdad for a moment. People in Baghdad never have electricity for three or four continuous days or clean running water for a week's time. Reuters has published photos of American soldiers swimming in the cool and clean water of a pool in one of Saddam's palaces; let the world compare this to the many photos of Iraqi children fighting for clean water.

LS: Donald Rumsfeld recently claimed that the resistance lacks unity and has no vision for the future of the country? In this regard what are the long-term goals of the resistance?

MO: Rumsfeld's claim is absolutely not true.

The resistance factions are first and foremost united in ending the occupation and all traces of it. **All resistance groups, which maintain strong ties and communications at all levels, believe they have a responsibility to all Iraqi people and are committed to defending the rights of the Iraqi people.**

It is very important that Iraq is completely liberated of all traces of the occupation and its effects; including the political, legal and social consequences of the occupation. As for the long-term goals, we seek a unified (non-federal), pluralistic and democratic Iraq where all Iraqis are thought of in terms of citizenship rather than ethnicity or sect. We are not opposed to elections. We are opposed to elections under occupation as they are tainted by the powers and pressures of the occupying forces.

If anyone has questions as to the goals of the Iraqi National Resistance all they have to do is listen to the public spokespersons of the opposition in Iraq. The goals of the resistance have always been made clear.

LS: What, then, is the resistance's position towards the current government in Iraq?

MO: First of all the resistance, which represents the will of the majority of Iraqis is certain that the election was a violation of international law. International charters that regulate

the relationship between occupiers and occupied do not give occupying authorities the mandate to instigate a change in the country's social, economic, and political structure.

The election has changed the political composition of Iraq to suit the interests of the occupation of the authorities. The changes led, as we can now see, to ethnic, sectarian and religious divisions that the Iraqi people have succeeded in avoiding.

Historically, Iraqis have always co-existed without any consideration of sectarianism or ethnic division; only after the country was stricken by the US-led occupation did the specter of civil war loom. These division serve the purposes of the occupying power as it is clearly and beyond any doubt an exercise in divide and conquer.

The resistance, both political and martial, see that all steps have been taken to secure full US domination of decision makers in Iraq.

A look at the electoral process and the composition of the current national council reveals that the election's main mission and accomplishment was the installation of some of the country's most notorious politicians who have often spoken proudly of their links to international intelligence agencies.

Take for example Iyad Allawi and Ahmed Chalabi. The election has given power to every politician who has assisted the invaders and collaborated with them to consolidate the occupation; therefore the resistance confidently asserts that the political decision-making process in Iraq is taking place in the US embassy inside Baghdad and that the elected government is not more than a vehicle to carry out Washington's decisions.

It is difficult for any sensible person to believe that the US would give up its domination of Iraq after spending billions of dollars and sacrificing the lives of hundreds of its soldiers.

Iraqis never believed that the US would simply allow free and democratic elections that could, and would, result in a government that would make its first priority ending the occupation. In fact, the main purpose of the election process was to secure a government that will facilitate long-lasting agreements with the US to keep its forces on Iraqi soil and transform the country into an American colony.

The US administration has worked hard to portray the Iraq election as a political achievement to cover over the scar that the war has left on its credibility.

Washington has used the election card to pull the wool over the eyes of the international community and prevent it from seeing the tragic consequences that the war has left on the Iraqi people.

For all these reasons, the resistance will also fight the current puppet government the same way they are fighting the occupiers.

OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION

BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

"We must realize that today's Establishment is the new George III. Whether it will continue to adhere to his tactics, we do not know. If it does, the redress, honored in tradition, is also revolution." -- Justice William O. Douglas "Points of Rebellion"



A lonely Vietnam Veteran isolates himself near the Oregon Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Portland. Memorial Day 2005

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (Contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net for more of his outstanding work. T)

Homeless

From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: July 14, 2005

It has taken me a long time to fully comprehend the definition of the word, "homeless."

I would think of all kinds of images that represented this dismal existence.

Then it dawned on me that maybe I needed to expand the definition of homeless. What I discovered would eventually fracture my own world of denial. Like blending in with the surrounding camouflage, I finally realized I had been nearly as homeless as the countless Vietnam veterans I saw on the streets across America.

Like alcoholism, there is not much difference in drinking away your life in the privacy of your own home, as opposed to doing the same thing in a dirty alleyway on skidrow.

Over the years, I had become homeless in the mind. My world had become very small, and I lived in a constant state of panic.

I got honest with myself, when I faced the truth that I felt abandoned and brutally betrayed by a country I once loved so deeply.

Yes, I needed to expand the definition of homeless.

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam veteran**

That War

By Marc Levy, Spring 2005, The Veteran, Vietnam Veterans Against The War

I wear the Combat Medical Badge and Cav patch on my fatigue shirt as Veterans for Peace march in Boston's Veterans Day Parade. As per a state court ruling, we are officially excluded from such occasions but allowed to march one mile behind. Burly sunglassed motocops straddle bikes on either side of us; grimy street sweepers are hot on our gray-flecked tails.

Thirty-five of us march, in old army field jackets, or store-bought boonie hats, or standard-issue street gear. Two men carry a life-sized black coffin draped with the American flag. Behind them, two members in dignified spirit and step hold a large banner that reads SUPPORT THE TROOPS, BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW! And right behind that commonsense radical cloth totem, a final pair hoist a five meter white banner whose bold black letters ask WHO WANTS TO BE THE LAST MAN TO DIE FOR A MISTAKE?

Most people clap as we march past in our official seclusion, though not a few smug faces turn away. Every so often, a boisterous sidewalk patriot will bark out a "Fuck off" to our assembled ranks, to which we energetically reply, "Fuck you!"

After a time, we pass a solitary black man, sixtyish in age, neatly dressed in a Disabled American Veterans costume: tan cunt-cap with silver piping, the cap spangled with dainty cloisonné pins; a shiny satin jacket embroidered with the letters *DAV*; a thicket of medals pinned to his chest.

Humble and sad and irreproachable, with no one on, either side of him; I think that is strange. As the coffin trundles past, the black vet snaps a slow rising salute, holds it for several dignified seconds, then gracefully brings it down. Those of us who see it are instantly grief-struck. We continue marching, step by strident step. To the beat of a lonely drum, a man aptly named Winston calls cadence.

At parade's end we gather near the busy intersection of Boylston and Tremont. Mulling about, I make eye contact with an Army Ranger wearing Class As dotted with polished brass insignia, campaign ribbons, the Good Conduct Medal, a unit patch I've never seen. He is not quite fit, a tad heavy, maybe Reserve or National Guard. Without thinking I walk over and warmly shake his hand. "Were you in Iraq?" I say. "No," he replies, "were you?" He is genuinely bewildered.

"No, I say. "I was in a different war. I hope you don't go, but if you do, I hope you get back in one piece."

The Ranger looks even more uncomfortable, as if someone had just grabbed him by the balls. But I am calm and sincere, and maybe he sees that in the heart of my eyes, or hears the soft beat of sorrow in my trembling voice.

We're standing near the traffic light; when it blinks green, he crosses the street to join a bunch of Junior ROTC students who wait for him. Poor guy. They have been watching him going head-to-head with a veteran peace freak the whole time. Who was it that said: "So it goes"?

All in all, it was a good day, a well-spent day, but the war—the one where US Marine snipers shoot civilians, the one where billion-dollar high tech is outsmarted by primitive IEDs, where Fallujah is destroyed to save it, where suicide bombers run amok or steer hell on wheels, the war that can't be won, that's already lost, over and done with, kaput, yeah, that fuckin' war—that war drags on.

MARC LEVY SERVED WITH D 1/7 CAV IN VIETNAM/CAMBODIA '70 AS AN INFANTRY MEDIC.

HIS SHORT STORY, "HOW STEVIE NEARLY LOST THE WAR," WAS PUBLISHED IN NEW MILLENNIUM WRITINGS, ISSUE 14 (2004-2005).

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.

Time To Toss The Toady In The Thames (For Bastille Day)

From: Z
To: GI Special
Sent: July 14, 2005
Subject: time to toss the toady in the thames

**Hey, there's one more bomber, isn't there,
loyal flunky with his share
of terrorizing everywhere
sidekick in a vicious pair
as Dubya's foreign legionnaire
for empire decayed, threadbare
Quisling, terrorist extraordinaire
silly windbag puppet Tony Blair.**

In Bergen, the beautiful former capital of Norway, saw a poster just the other day showing photos of two poorly armed but determined groups of young people. One of the photos is captioned 'Norway 1945' and the other 'Iraq 2005.'

In other words, the armed resistance against the present US occupation of Iraq is being likened to the armed resistance against the German occupation of Norway 60 years ago.

What a damned shame it is that US troops today have been put into a position comparable to that of the Italian, Japanese, and German invaders and occupiers of World War II...

Incidentally, though Norwegians -- like people worldwide -- despise the US administration and its policies, they are certainly not anti-American.

In fact, an attractive Norwegian woman said with a friendly smile that she likes my shirt which bears the words: Bring the Troops Home; End Occupation.

**Solidarity,
Z**

PS Happy Bastille Day!

A History Of U.S. Armed Forces Rebellions

By Martin Smith (Sgt. USMC; out-of-service)

Writing this was about healing a really dark chapter in my life, my experience in the marine corps. The words I wrote came out of an inner pain and experience that needed to heal.

But most of all, I hope that my words in some way bring an end to this god damn war and that no one else will have to come back in a body bag.

This isn't about me, it's all about bringing the troops home now,

Martin Smith

From Search And Destroy To Search And Evade

[Continued]

But the story of the U.S. soldier in Vietnam is complicated when we see beyond the war atrocities and also accept the possibility of these same troops to disobey orders out of a necessity for their survival. For some, survival meant holding on to one's sanity within a world of madness; while for others, survival was the day-to-day grind of staying alive while "humping" through the deadly fields and jungles of Vietnam.

For example, Stan Goff recalls how his platoon of thirty men that engaged in "search and destroy missions" also refused an order by a lieutenant. On April 3, 1971, D Company, a sister unit, got caught in a "regimental size NVA [North Vietnamese] ambush and they were in a lot of trouble...the place was just crawling" with the enemy. Goff uses a racialized description typical of some troops who saw all Asian people as sub-human and swarming. His unit was lifted in by helicopter to assist, and eventually ran out of water.

When the lieutenant ordered his men to assist the sister company, the thirty men in his unit refused, because he ordered them to enter a free-fire zone, an area where troops shoot anything that moved, a deadly and dangerous terrain. Goff explains the situation:

"It was a dumb order. We weren't doing it, and there was really not much he could do about it. What's he going to do? He's got thirty people with guns and he's going to tell them that I'm going to make you go down there and commit suicide, so you know we disobeyed the order and it was a good thing and that was not infrequent."

The troops who came to Vietnam and believed in the war, the very soldiers who killed out of revenge and committed war crimes, could also transform. Some soldiers, such as Goff, saw their interests as different from that of their officers. And still other troops, as my later evidence suggests, began to question the nature of the war and for what purpose they were fighting for.

Ron Kovic describes how his belief in the American Dream was also shattered by his experience in Vietnam in his autobiography, Born on the Fourth of July. As his birth date on the patriotic holiday suggests, Kovic went to Vietnam, believing in the Ozzie and

Harriet myth that Stan Goff mentioned as well. Likewise, Kovic's encounter with combat forced him to begin questioning his core beliefs. On one patrol, he reveals that his unit mistakenly fired into a village thought to be full of rifles and enemy personnel to find only Vietnamese children and old men:

"Oh Jesus Christ." He started to cry. "We just shot up a bunch of kids!" The floor of the small hut was covered with them, screaming and thrashing their arms back and forth, lying in pools of blood, crying wildly, screaming again and again. They were shot in the face, in the chest, in the legs, moaning and crying."

When the other soldiers realized what occurred, they began sobbing and dropped their rifles. "They were weeping now with their hands against their faces. 'Oh Jesus, oh God, forgive us,'" Kovic describes.

When the lieutenant in charge began ordering his men to move, Kovic writes, "They could not move, and they did not listen to the lieutenant's orders. They just sat with the rain pouring down on them through the roof, crying and not moving."

Yet the lieutenant tried to retain control of his men and cruelly barked orders, chiding the men's masculinity, "You men! You men have got to start listening to me. You gotta stop crying like babies and start acting like marines!"

The tension inherent between the officers and the men, as the lieutenant coldly disallows his troops to realize that they had just murdered innocent people, old men and children like themselves, sparked a minor rebellion. Kovic's testimony is emblematic of the contradictory positions that troops witnessed that forced many to question the very purpose and legitimacy of the war.

In fact, the contradiction between the justifications for war and how it was actually experienced by soldiers was another source of conflict.

Many soldiers came to feel they were backing the wrong side, which produced a larger questioning of the war.

Jan Barry was a radio operator and was assigned to Vietnam in 1962, before the ground troops landed at Da Nang. In an interview in Winter Soldiers, Barry reveals how even in the buildup to the war, the contradictions were apparent:

"The ones who were the real gung-ho professionals, who were out there pressing it, came back very disillusioned. They kept saying, 'We're backing the wrong side. The other side is raising the right issues on behalf of the people here, and the side we're backing is the dictatorship'..."

"It became very clear that what was being claimed in Washington and out of Saigon headquarters had nothing to do with what we could see for ourselves. McNamara and various other VIPS would come through, and there were warning that no one was to tell these people what was really going on...that we had two different agendas: one for the public and what the real agenda was.

“Slowly, one by one by one, everything was undermined as to the presumed reasons we were there. We were devastating the shit out of these little people, for what purpose?...We weren’t in any way helping these people.”

Similarly in Mark Baker’s Nam, a collection of anonymous oral histories, one marine recalls the shock he felt when he first landed in country at Cam Ranh Bay, a large seaport developed by the US. army in South Vietnam, and rode in a school bus with mesh over the windows for protection from grenade attacks.

“Here we are at one of the largest military installations in the world and we have to cover the windows to protect ourselves from little old men. I didn’t put it all together at the time, but intuitively I knew something was wrong,” the veteran recalls.

Both examples show that troops’ actual experience often contradicted the official military explanations. Such contradictions led many troops to ponder and question what the real purpose of the war was about. Soldiers moved from loyal and faithful “insiders” to troops that were disloyal and questioning “outsiders,” who resisted orders and laid the basis for the soldiers’ rebellion.

Yet this analysis proves problematic, because identity for white ethnics and troops of color differed and shaped the degree of loyalty or faith that a given soldier might hold in the U.S. and in the Armed Forces, as examined more fully in a later chapter.

The Ozzie and Harriet suburban myth did not likely resonate with most African Americans. The war in Vietnam for many Blacks was just an extension of the war already being fought at home against racism. Neither did the theme of lost innocence and manlihood, as portrayed in Kovic’s Born on the Fourth of July, apply to all soldiers.

Nonetheless, it is the complexity of the human condition, driven by the circumstances of war and that of the grunt’s life, which explains the contradictory emotions and experiences that informed the soldiers’ rebellion.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

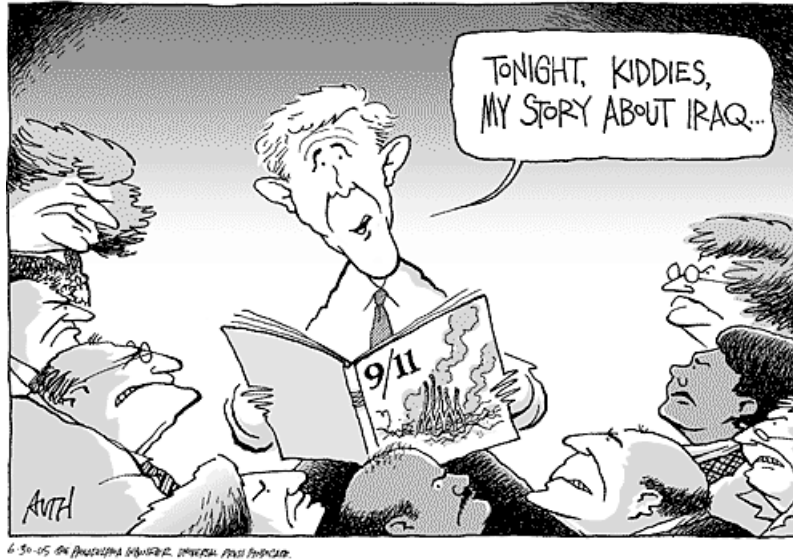
Bush Honesty Rating Drops To Lowest Point

13 July 2005 By Mark Murray, NBC News

Washington - The last two weeks certainly have been eventful ones in America and across the globe: President Bush gave a prime-time speech on Iraq and attended a G-8 summit in Scotland; Sandra Day O'Connor announced her retirement from the Supreme Court (with perhaps another retirement on the way); and suicide bombers killed approximately 50 people in London.

After these events, the latest NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll finds that Bush's overall job rating has slipped and that his rating for being "honest and straightforward" has dropped to its lowest point.

Only 41 percent give Bush good marks for being "honest and straightforward" - his lowest ranking on this question since he became president. That's a drop of nine percentage points since January, when a majority (50 percent to 36 percent) indicated that he was honest and straightforward.



U.S. MAY NOT BE ABLE TO WAGE WAR AGAINST IRAQ AND GAY MARRIAGE AT THE SAME TIME:

War On Obesity Also In Jeopardy, White House Concedes

July 13, 2005 The Borowitz Report

Signaling a shift in strategy, the White House acknowledged today that the United States may not possess adequate forces to wage war against Iraq and gay marriage at the same time.

In the past, Pentagon planners had always formulated their budget requests on the assumption that the U.S. must be able to fight the insurgency in Iraq and the rising tide of gay marriages at home simultaneously, but that calculus has changed, the White House said.

In a press briefing, spokesman Scott McClellan acknowledged the difficulties of trying to wipe out the insurgency and gay weddings at the same time: "It turns out that these insurgents are more determined than we originally expected, and so are these damn gay couples."

Mr. McClellan also raised the possibility that the insurgency in Iraq could prevent the U.S. from continuing to fight the war on obesity.

"Let's face it, folks," Mr. McClellan said. "For the near term at least, we may be looking at a gayer, fatter America."

Mr. McClellan's statements drew a sharp rebuke from Dr. Charles Helsing, a persistent critic of the Pentagon who believes that the proposed shift in strategy is short-sighted: "While we are in Iraq, why don't we try to take out a few gay weddings and fat people over there? The time has come for these Pentagon pinheads to think outside the box."

Received:

Occupation: Dreamland Screening

From: Angela D
To: GI Special
Sent: July 14, 2005

Hello Everyone:

This is the film that A and I saw at the Human Rights Film Festival. It's a must see. Please mark your calendars and come out to this screening.

*Peace,
Angela*

Occupation: Dreamland will screen as part of the Woodstock Film Festival at the Two Boots Pioneer Theater in NYC on Tuesday, July 19th at 7pm.

Please help spread the word about this important film.

The Two Boots Pioneer Theater is located at 155 East 3rd Street (at Avenue A) in NYC

There is free beer and pizza afterwards at a reception downstairs...

Ticket link: <http://pioneertheater.tix.com/Event.asp?Event=31618>
(212) 591-4034

David Beilinson

OCCUPATION: DREAMLAND is an unflinchingly candid portrait of a squad of American soldiers deployed in the doomed Iraqi city of Falluja during the winter of 2004. A tense and grimly humorous study of the soldiers unfolds as they patrol an environment of low-intensity conflict creeping steadily towards catastrophe.

Through the squad's activities OCCUPATION: DREAMLAND provides a vital glimpse into the last days of Falluja. The film documents the city's waning stability before a final series of military assaults began in the spring of 2004 that effectively destroyed it.

Filmmakers Garrett Scott and Ian Olds were given access to all operations of the Army's 82nd Airborne. They lived with the unit 24/7, giving voice to soldiers held under a strict code of authority as they cope with an ambiguous, often lethal environment. The result is a revealing, sometimes surprising look at Army life, operations and the complexity of American war in the 21st century.

For more info and to view a trailer visit: occupationdreamland.com

"...the invaluable Occupation: Dreamland ... an eerie portrait of a city quietly about to explode and an unnervingly intimate look at eight young soldiers that accords their individuality due scrutiny." Dennis Lim, Village Voice

"A sympathetic look at the average joe doing duty in hell." Jay Weisberg, Variety

"... a gut-wrenching six weeks in the life of the 82nd Airborne Division... a portrait of tension rising." - Chris Vognar, The Dallas Morning News

Received:

“Subscription?” Yes!

From: Wes Hamilton
To: GI Special
Sent: July 13, 2005
Subject: Subscription

Is there any way to get daily E-mails of your posts?

I am a member of VFP (Rachel Corrie Chapter 109) working as part of the anti-war movement in England with Rose Gentle and the UK Stop the War Coalition.

I am also working with Tim Goodrich and Michael Hoffman, with IVAW (Tim is coming over here to stay with us for a few days in August to be a part of the Parliamentary hearings scheduled to coincide with Congressman Conyers visit).

My partner, Judy Linehan, a representative of the US Military Families Speak Out, and I address rallies and events all over England.

I will be addressing a vigil tomorrow to show respect for the victims of the recent bombing in London.

On Sunday Judy will be addressing a large Stop the War Coalition rally in Russell Square, where the bus bombing occurred, as part of the effort to call for an end to the cycle of retribution, and demand an end to the occupation of Iraq.

Your timely and relevant information would be an asset to our effort to offer current information at each of the events we attend.

Please let me know.
In peace, and with deepest respect,
Wes Hamilton

REPLY: GI Special exists to be of service to troops against the war, military family members, veterans, and activists. Anyone who wishes to receive GI Special can write to the address top left of the front page. No charge, ever. Reports on activities like the meeting at Russell Square are most welcome. Respect to you all. T.

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.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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