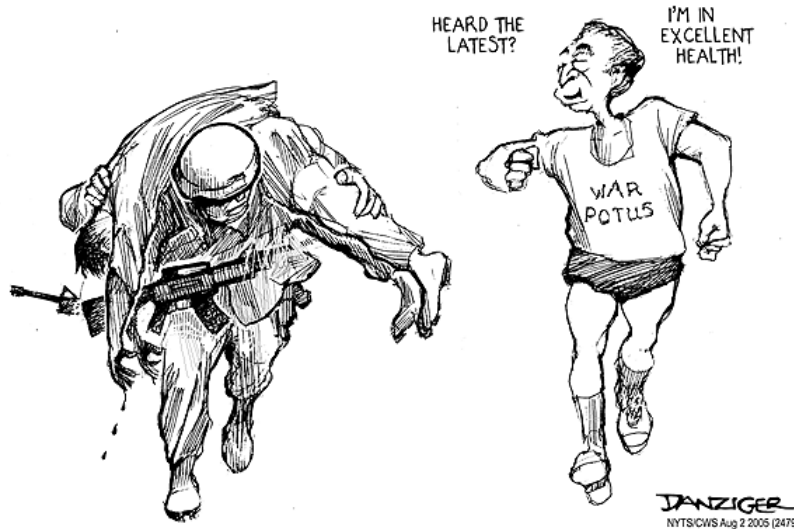


GI SPECIAL 3C15A:

More Than 1800 US Killed in Iraq War



[Thanks to Kate, who sent this in.]

**“We Are Not Going To
Win This War”**

**Soldier Says “The Longer We Are
There, The More People Are Going
To Join The Fight Against Us”**

**“They Won't Give Up Until We Are
All Gone Off Of Their Soil”**



Zechariah, while he was stationed in Iraq.

After six months of being there, I knew that we were fighting a people that would never give up and we could never beat. I didn't blame them either. One of the Turks put it into perspective for me. What if one day, here in Seattle, I looked up and there were Iraqis falling out of the sky in chutes invading the U.S. He asked what I'd do. I thought about it and I'd be doing exactly what they were doing to us over there.

I took an oath to defend my country when I enlisted. Iraq has nothing to do with defending my country. I didn't sign up to defend someone's personal interests, whatever it may be.

August 4, 2005. By Celina R. De Leon, AlterNet. Celina R. De Leon is a social justice journalist based in Brooklyn, NY.

This is the first in a continued series of profiles of some of the tens of thousands of Iraq War veterans who have come home bearing the scars of battle -- emotional and physical wounds that may never heal unless the nation pays them the attention and care that they deserve. We at AlterNet believe it is the one issue that can and must bring us all together as Americans.

Zechariah, 25, of Lynnwood, Washington, enlisted in the Army when he was 21, and was deployed to Iraq from March 2003 to January 2004 with the 173rd Airborne Brigade as a medic.

Zechariah grew up in a military family; both his mother and father were medics in the Army. Zechariah wanted to work in the medical field as a nurse, but couldn't afford school. So he signed up to be a parachute infantry medic for the job experience, money for school, and a little adventure.

He spoke to AlterNet about the war, his hopes and fears, and the hard road ahead.

What were you told were the reasons for the war in Iraq when you first began your duty?

The only thing that we had really heard was that Saddam was hiding weapons of mass destruction and we were going to go and oust him and find them.

I knew about the gassing of the Kurdish population in northern Iraq and was scared of being attacked while on the ground there with chemical and biological weapons. I highly

doubted that they had any type of nuclear weaponry though, so I wasn't worried about that. I think if Saddam had that stuff, he would have shown it off with either a test or public display. He was a pretty arrogant person, in my opinion.

Did your beliefs change once you were participating in the war?

I think my beliefs had changed once we were on the ground. Within days we had seized all of the oil fields in northern Iraq and our primary mission was to protect them. Bush had said this war wasn't about oil, but there I was defending oil fields at all costs in the middle of Iraq. A lot of the piping and workings of the fields had been destroyed by the fleeing army and before we even started to help the people by fixing the power or water supplies, they had construction crews trying to get everything up and running on the oil fields.

They say this war isn't about oil. How about they go and trade places with one of the soldiers that would love to come home, and see what's going on around the oil refineries and see how much work is being put into them and how little is being put into restoring power and water. My brother just got back and said they still only have power and water for maybe five to six hours out of the day.

I also worked with a lot of the local hospitals. The whole time we were there, the hospitals kept getting worse and worse. They never had any supplies or new machines installed. Even some of the more simple machinery, like X-ray machines, were never replaced. Every time I went into one of the hospitals I almost emptied my aid bag so they could have sterile catheters and needles. I couldn't believe my eyes to see that they were having to reuse these supplies because they couldn't get replacement equipment. They didn't even have soap.

All of this helped me to see where the priorities in this war were. Obviously, not in the people.

How were some of your experiences interacting with local Iraqis?

We lived in a normal house in a neighborhood that was pretty helpful. They always told us that as long as we protected the neighborhood, they would do all they could to help us. Whenever we got attacked, some of the neighbors would normally know where they came from. They also gave us tips whenever they happened to hear of something weird going on. We worked pretty heavily with the Turkmen populations and the Kurdish populations. Both were very friendly.

We personally re-supplied three schools in a Turkmen neighborhood through family donations and personal contributions for the help they gave us in finding weapons, caches, and insurgent hideouts. They invited our whole platoon to a dinner and dance put on by the school of elementary-age students for our help.

My brother said they aren't friendly to U.S. forces anymore. I'm sure we wore out our welcome in the past year.

Did you ever express dissent? Did any soldiers express dissent or not agree with the reasons for the war once they were actively participating in the war?

I never expressed any dissent towards anyone above me or towards a mission.

My squad leader and platoon sergeant were both really outspoken people and when a command or operation came down to us, they were really good about saying that was a stupid or suicidal mission and find someone else to do it.

One mission in particular changed even our Company Commander's (CO) views. We were ordered to do a mission that was not Army protocol and would be dangerous if done that way. We were forced to do it and we lost three soldiers in two minutes. After that our CO was very vocal and active in how missions would be done.

Orders would come down from some officer sitting in an office that had never left the wire and had no idea how the city and its people and the insurgents work. After that night, our Commanders and Platoon Sergeant were really good about "making slight" changes to plans so that it would be more safe for their men. They would get in trouble, but it came down to the fact that they planned on seeing their families again.

How did you maintain your strength to finish your service when you found yourself questioning the war?

I questioned the war from the start so the whole thing was hard. Especially after watching one of my really good friends that I had trained day in and day out with for the past three years die while I was trying to do all I could to make sure he made it home to his wife and for what reason? Kyle saved my life that night by taking fire that was intended for me. After Kyle's death, I just counted the days. I didn't really care anymore. I was saddened to know that so many more were going to have to experience what I had done and seen.

Before that, I thought about what I was going to do when I got home. Daydreams, lots and lots of daydreams. I'm really into motorcycles so I read lots of motorcycle magazines and made lists of parts to buy with my pay and mapped out rides that I wanted to take -- anything that would take my mind off of the frustrations of being there.

After six months of being there, I knew that we were fighting a people that would never give up and we could never beat. I didn't blame them either. One of the Turks put it into perspective for me. What if one day, here in Seattle, I looked up and there were Iraqis falling out of the sky in chutes invading the U.S. He asked what I'd do. I thought about it and I'd be doing exactly what they were doing to us over there.

Were you ever informed of an exit strategy while you were on active duty?

An exit strategy? They couldn't even figure out what day we were going home, let alone the whole entire military.

We initially went, being told to only take enough supplies for 90 days. Three months later, we were told another month, then another month, and another. Finally, seven months into it, we were told that they had no idea as to when we were going home. At

about the 10-month mark, they finally said that we would be doing a full year and the good news was we only had two months left.

This game of when we were going home wreaked havoc on the morale of the troops about as bad as being attacked day in and day out, and living off of MREs for a year -- they have a shelf life of something like 14 years I think.

How do you feel about the need for an exit strategy now?

I still feel just as strong about the need for an exit strategy as before.

We are not going to win this war. The longer we are there, the more people are going to join the fight against us.

We asked detainees why? Most said because they had lost a family member. So, if we figure that most families are three to four people and every time we kill one insurgent, they recruit two to three new members that may have not hated the U.S. until they lost a family member by their hands.

It's the same as if they invaded here. Most households have a weapon in the house. That's millions and millions of weapons and people that are willing to protect their family and country from foreign invaders. They won't give up until we are all gone off of their soil.

Do you remember your feelings on your last day of active duty?

Yes. I still feel them every time the topic of Iraq comes up, or it pops into my mind. I felt elated to have survived, but then I felt guilty for surviving when so many in our unit hadn't made it home. Three of these were personal friends. I sat on the flight out of Iraq and asked why was I chosen to make it and why were these guys not allowed to go home. I thought before I went to Iraq that I would come home feeling like a hero. All I felt on that flight home was shame, guilt, and sadness. I still feel the same a year later.

What do you think about Secretary Rumsfeld's projection that we could be in Iraq for another 12 years?

I think he needs to spend some time over there and see how out of control it has gotten in just two to three years. If he thinks that we are going to somehow magically regain control of that country, he really has no idea as to the severity of the situation over there.

Also, within two to four years they won't have a large enough army to fight anything with the enlistment and re-enlistment rates that I'm hearing. I got out and I will never go back there. My brother is getting out also because of the mess over there.

I took an oath to defend my country when I enlisted. Iraq has nothing to do with defending my country. I didn't sign up to defend someone's personal interests, whatever it may be.

How are you doing now?

I have nightmares almost every night involving Iraq and those that died. I have been working with someone that specializes in war PTSD. She has helped me understand the dreams and keep them from being triggered. They don't bother me in the daytime anymore. I wake up, think that was another bad dream and then go on with my day. For a couple of months I would only sleep for two to three hours a night and I finally decided I couldn't do this anymore.

I've been going to school knocking out all of the prerequisites for the RN program at one of the local community colleges and restoring a vintage VW Bug. I should be applying this fall depending on how my summer courses go.

Are you getting the services you need to transition back into civilian life?

Yes, but it is getting harder. For some reason the funding for my PTSD counselor has just been stopped and I have to go and meet with her to figure out what hoops I have to jump through now to get it reactivated again. It's supposed to be free for two years but about every two months things change and it gets cancelled and I have to do something different to go back and meet with her.

Have you been reconnecting with old friends and family members? Do you miss any fellow soldiers you met in Iraq?

I am back here with my family. As to old friends, I've found that I like to keep to myself. There are a few that I see every now and then, but I'd rather just hang out with my brother and my girlfriend who has gone to some of the meetings to understand what's going on with my head at times.

I have heard from a few of my old Army buddies, but it's weird. I can't explain why yet. I just know that when I talked to the guys that were my brothers while in Iraq, I feel like a traitor or ashamed. Being their medic or "doc" was the best feeling in the world, but when soldiers die in your care and my platoon watched as I tried to do what they were counting on me to do, I felt like I lost their respect.

I did do good things. One of the guys I worked on lost his right arm, but had it successfully re-attached and almost full use of it again. But just losing that one in front of everyone made me feel detached from them. I miss them, but I couldn't look them in the eyes or spend an evening drinking with them if I ran into them. I feel like a failure in their eyes, I guess.

Looking back, is there anything you wish you knew, that you weren't told?

I think the hardest thing that I know now that we were never trained for was the loss of friends, and to see them go in front of you. We train as if machines with no emotions, but once it happens and you see every thing unfold in front of you, with people you know better than your own family, it is really destructive to your emotions and morale.

I remember after Kyle was killed, I sat in my sleep space and cried for almost an hour praying that this would end and I was on my way home over and over.

I know now that it's easier to work with those that you have no emotional ties. If I had to go back, I would tell the platoon that I got assigned to that I don't want to know anything about you. I'm here as your medic and that's it. It is really hard to work on those you know. I can do a better job of putting you guys back together if I don't know you.

Is there anything you would like to add?

I keep hearing that the troops' morale is high over there.

When you have a high-ranking officer standing next to you prepping your answers, it's hard to speak your mind. We weren't allowed to talk to media unless a Major or above was with us to prep our answers and screen certain questions.

I couldn't tell you of a single soldier that was excited to be in Iraq having rockets shot at them and IEDs blowing up their friends on a daily basis.

Some of these guys are on their third or fourth tours over there. Do you really think they are excited to be in the 130 degree desert, living off of MREs, missing their children being born, watching friends die, praying they aren't next.

President Bush, like Cheney, obviously has no idea as to what is going on over there and doesn't care.

This whole thing about taking the fight to the terrorists has got me mad.

He already proved to us and himself that Iraq wasn't a threat and that they had no WMDs and he is still trying to say they were terrorists and we need to stop them.

They weren't terrorists until we killed off parts of their family. Now they are terrorists because they have lost something that the U.S. took from them, parts of their families.

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Two Soldiers Killed, Three Wounded By Samarra IED

August 7, 2005 MNF

TIKRIT, Iraq – Two Task Force Liberty Soldiers were killed and three were wounded when an improvised explosive device detonated near a vehicle patrol near Samarra at about 6:00 p.m. on August 6.

The Soldiers were evacuated to a Coalition Forces medical facility where two Soldiers died of wounds sustained in the attack.

Marine Killed In Amiriyah

8.7.05 AP

A U.S. Marine was killed in a car bombing in a village west of Baghdad, the military said Sunday.

The Marine, assigned to Regimental Combat Team 8, 2nd Marine Division, was killed Saturday in Amiriyah, a few miles south of Fallujah, the statement said. Fallujah is 40 miles west of Baghdad.

The death brings to at least 30 the number of American service members to die in Iraq since the beginning of this month.

At least 1,828 U.S. military personnel have died since the Iraq war began in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

Former Staten Islander Killed By Sniper: *“There Is A Backlog At Arlington National Cemetery” Of Deceased Service Men And Women Waiting To Be Buried*

August 07, 2005 By STEPHEN HART, STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Nils George Thompson was like a lot of 19 year olds.

He was a fan of "The Lord of the Rings" books, he enjoyed fishing and he loved riding his four-wheel terrain vehicle through wooded areas.

But the former New Brighton resident -- a U.S. Army Private First Class killed in action Thursday in Mosul, Iraq -- was unlike a lot of teen-agers, too. Especially when it came to knowing what he wanted to do in life.

"He wanted to join the military since he was 2 years old," recalled Frances Thompson of her son, speaking from the family home in Confluence, Pa, a farming community southeast of Pittsburgh to which the family had moved in 2000. "I didn't want him to join because of what was going on in Iraq. But we were all supportive of his decision."

According to a cousin, Jeffrey Coogan, the family was told by the Army that Thompson was out on patrol with his C-Company 1/24 Stryker Brigade near an Iraqi police station when Thompson -- situated in a "guard hatch position," a turret atop and outside a Stryker vehicle -- was shot once in the head by a sniper and killed.

Thompson's death occurred one day after his 19th birthday.

"He was the only person in his outfit killed, everyone else on that patrol was inside the vehicle," said Coogan, of New Brighton, speaking from the Thompson home. "The attack took place around 2 p.m. in Mosul (6 a.m. EST)."

Coogan said that it is "still undetermined" as to when his cousin's body will be flown back to the U.S., since "there is a backlog at Arlington National Cemetery" of deceased service men and women waiting to be buried.

When his body is returned, the funeral will be from St. Stanislaus Kostka R.C. Church, New Brighton. Arrangements are being handled by Harmon Home for Funerals, West Brighton.

Kentucky Member Of 98th Division Dies

August 7, 2005 By Steve Orr, (Rochester) Democrat and Chronicle

An Army sergeant who lived in Western Kentucky was killed Friday in Iraq in an apparent Humvee accident.

Sgt. 1st Class Robert V. Derenda, 42, of Ledbetter in Livingston County, was killed when the Humvee he was driving overturned and exploded.

Derenda, who served with the Rochester, N.Y.-based 98th Division, had been trying to avoid a civilian fuel truck that had pulled in front of him on a highway in northern Iraq, 98th Division spokesman Maj. James Lincoln said.

Derenda, who lived for many years in Cheektowaga, N.Y., near Buffalo, was a member of a Military Transition Team, a unit that leads the training and mentoring process. He was based at a large training facility at Al Kasik, near the scene of the highway incident.

Derenda was on active duty with the Army from 1986 to 1991, then joined the Reserve, serving with the 98th until January 2003.

He was assigned to a Kentucky unit until he was transferred back to the 98th in September 2004 and called to active duty.

Derenda was a chemical engineer with Celanese Chemicals Ltd. in civilian life, the division said. He is survived by his parents and a sister.

FALLUJAH: BACK TO SQUARE ONE: IT NEVER ENDS: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



US marines search a building in Fallujah. (8.7.05 AFP/File/Mike Escobar)

TROOP NEWS

A Message From Brook Park, Ohio: “Support Our Troops, Bring Them Home Now”

07 August 2005 By Rupert Cornwell. The Independent (UK)

26 US servicemen died - almost half of them from the third battalion of the 25th Marine Regiment headquartered in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio -

Americans want out from Iraq. A sign among the flowers and US flags around Brook Park's marine base says: "Support Our Troops, Bring Them Home Now."

The sheer power of the roadside bomb on Wednesday, which killed US soldiers and blew their vehicle to smithereens, has not only stunned the public. It has thrust into the debate the whole question of an exit strategy from a conflict that is starting to look like Vietnam.

Last week, the Pentagon was even arguing that the spike in US casualties showed that its forces were coming to grips with the insurgents.

But Americans are less and less inclined to see the war that way. To many, Iraq appears a futile drain on American blood with dubious prospects of success. Approval for President George Bush's handling of the war has slumped to a new low of 38 per cent.

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 Soldiers "Blown Up" Because Officer Wanted A Trophy

[This just came in. Although published in February, the killing of the soldiers has not been circulated widely. Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

February 2005 Quaker House Newsletter

A special report by "Joanna," a Quaker social worker/therapist whose practice is located near a large Army Base.

Since the soldiers began returning from the Iraq war at the turn of the year, my therapy practice has been inundated with a variety of problems that come from the soldiers' experiences in this war. Chuck asked me to write about what I am seeing.

This can be caused by a variety of incidents, from life threatening experience for the soldiers themselves to the experience of a good friend or buddy being injured or killed.

But many soldiers I've seen have PTSD symptoms due to the inhuman things that they had to do in this war:

One was forced by his superior to run over a woman and child trying to stop a convoy on a road where many convoys were attacked.

One NCO had nightmares of watching two of his soldiers being blown up when they picked up what turned out to be a live bomb, on the orders of an officer who was collecting booty for his "trophy room."

This NCO, a career soldier, then lost faith in the military when he was forced to lie about the incident to protect the officer.

Pope Planes, Aircrews Worn Out

8.4.05 Fayetteville Observer

Planes and crews of Pope AFB have been conducting missions around Iraq since the war began in 2003. They have airdropped supplies in Afghanistan when winter closed supply routes. **The pace of deployment is taking its toll on the crews as well as on the aircraft, some of which are close to 40 years old.**

General Says Iraqis Agree: “The Coalition Has Got To Go”

August 3, 2005 Doug Lorimer, Green Left Weekly

General John Custer, director of intelligence for US Central Command, said: “One of the biggest misconceptions, I guess because of the ‘rock star’ status of Zarqawi, is the foreign fighter piece: that there are thousands and thousands of foreign fighters pouring into Iraq.”

“Whether you are a jihadist on the far right of the spectrum or a nationalist, everybody can agree to one thing first: The coalition has got to go.”

“I’ve Been To Combat Two Times In The Last Three Years, And There Are Those Who Have Not Gone At All”

8.8.05
Letters To The Editor
Army Times

I’m in 3rd Infantry Division. When I leave Iraq, I will be transferred to another unit of action that is on its way to Iraq. With training, I’ll be home for maybe eight or nine months, then I’ll go back in.

We need to get rid of all the people at Department of Army and go to a computer system because everybody knows that if you know someone at DA, you will avoid the units of

action. Let's use a computer that puts out a list once every three years. This way everybody in the Army can get some of this war.

I don't understand how there can be people in the Army who don't have on a combat patch right now.

I've been to combat two times in the last three years, and there are those who have not gone at all.

When will the soldiers who have been out here get their chance to be with their family for a year free of deployments?

I guess when they get out.

Sgt. Kip J. Wheeler

Gov. Wants National Guard Troops Back Home For Emergencies; Pentagon Tells Him To Fuck Off

August 01, 2005 Army Times

The Pentagon has turned a deaf ear to Gov. Brian Schweitzer's request to return more of the state's National Guard members to Montana for the heart of the wildfire season.

Schweitzer said the Defense Department not only ignored his March plea to reduce the number of Montana Guard soldiers deployed, but has since increased the demand on his state's units.

Lt. Gen. Steven Blum, the Army general in charge of National Guard forces, provided information showing that 44 percent of Montana's Guard members were mobilized as of July 12. That is the third-highest rate in the country; only Hawaii at 50 percent and Idaho at 46 percent have more soldiers activated.

Schweitzer said he's aggravated that Montana's figure is that high four months after his request.

"They're saying, 'We at the Pentagon don't care what you're thinking in your state. We'll do what we want for as long as we want and you'll get used to it,'" he said.

"This is not cooperation. They don't listen to governors at all. This is zero response to governors."

Brit General Says Rumsfeld Full Of Shit About Iran

8.5.05 By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer

The commander of British-led forces in southeastern Iraq said Friday that concerns about Iranian efforts to influence events in Iraq are based more on speculation than on facts.

The remark by Maj. Gen. Jim B. Dutton of the British Royal Marines contrasted with criticisms of Iran by U.S. officials, including Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, who have said repeatedly that Iran is interfering in Iraq's internal affairs.

Rumsfeld said Thursday that Iran is opposing Iraq's efforts to build a democracy.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

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

55 Louisiana Soldiers Prosecuted In Iraq

August 5, 2005 (AP)

At least 55 soldiers serving in Iraq with the Louisiana National Guard's 256th Brigade have been tried and convicted of criminal charges, many of them drug-related.

The brigade's commanding officer, John Basilica, delivered the news to reporters via teleconference from Baghdad Thursday at the brigade's Lafayette headquarters. Basilica says he doesn't consider the number especially high, because it's a small percentage of the 4,000 soldiers with the brigade.

He says the convictions came in a period beginning in May 2004, when the brigade was called up and sent to Fort Hood, Texas, for training. He says the criminal behavior has had no effect on readiness, but added that drug and alcohol use was especially disturbing because it could impair a soldier's behavior and endanger others.

Soldiers are barred from possession of alcohol or any illegal drug in Iraq.

But Basilica says some soldiers probably buy the contraband from civilian contractors, who aren't subject to the same oversight as soldiers. Others received drugs in the mail from the United States.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



Carrying black flags Iraqis protest against the arrest warrant for Shiite Muslim cleric Mahmud al-Hassani, 07 August 2005. Hundreds marched towards the capital's fortified 'Green Zone' where US and Iraqi administrative headquarters are located, protesting against the arrest warrant and 50,000 US dollar bounty offered by the Interior Ministry for Shiite Muslim cleric Mahmud al-Hassani. AFP PHOTO/AHMAD AL-RUBAYE (AFP/AHMAD AL-RUBAYE)

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

Assorted Resistance Action

August 7, 2005 (CNN) & Aljazeera & Reuters & Agence France Presse

In Tikrit, a bomber blew up a fuel tanker Sunday about noon near the Iraqi police headquarters, killing seven officers and wounding 17 others, an official with the governor's office said.

Baghdad: Three Iraqi soldiers were shot dead while driving in civilian clothes to their base early Sunday, a police official said. A fourth soldier was wounded in the attack, which occurred in the southwestern neighborhood of Saydiyya.

Guerrillas killed two Iraqi Oil Ministry employees in their car early Sunday, an Iraqi police official said. The shooters also wounded two other ministry employees while they were in the New Baghdad district of southeastern Baghdad.

On Saturday night, two people were killed in the capital's southwestern Bayaa neighborhood, a police official said. Gunmen killed Haider Harbi, an employee of the Independent Electoral Commission in Iraq, and Mehdi Abbas, a member of the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq's Shiite party.

The two men were walking together near their homes when the attack occurred, police said.

BAQUBA - Two Iraqi policemen and a civilian were killed and four injured when a roadside bomb detonated near a police convoy in Baquba, police said.

One of those injured was Lieutenant-Colonel Sabah Salih, the head of Baquba's police patrols.

SAMARRA - The bodies of two police officials who were shot dead were found in the northern city of Samarra, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Tipping Point:

#1:

“Follow The News Folks!”

I like to think the tipping point has been reached and this visit to Crawford is the beginning of more to come. Our collective pebbles, one by one by one over this past 2 + years has built a mountain and we are about to see the turning point (my optimistic hopefulness is showing?).

From: Lietta Ruger
Sent: August 06, 2005
Subject: The Vigil has begun, Cindy Sheehan is not leaving Crawford ranch, follow the news folks! [Excerpt]

Dear Friends,

I've been following the blogosphere regarding Cindy Sheehan, GSFP and delegation (IVAW, VFP, MFSO, Code Pink, Peace House) going to Crawford, Texas to ranch where President Bush is 'vacationing'.

It's breaking out into mainstream media all over, and globally.

If you haven't been following the news on her vigil, tune in. She is NOT leaving and the cry has gone out for people across the nation to join her in Crawford, set up tents and stay with her until the President comes out and addresses the message.

I don't think this story can disappear, and whatever the outcome, the American public will not be able to avoid hearing this particular truth, which has much more support among the ordinary citizens than the media could have imagined.

Cindy has gained the popular support of the people and this vigil transcends partisan politics....my opinion.

I like to think the tipping point has been reached and this visit to Crawford is the beginning of more to come. Our collective pebbles, one by one by one over this past 2 + years has built a mountain and we are about to see the turning point (my optimistic hopefulness is showing?).

Code Pink has already initiated a hunger strike until the President comes out to meet with her. Two aides have gone out to meet with Cindy, Joe Hagin, Asst to the Chief of Staff and Steven Hablen from National Security. Gave her the typical talking points, she's not having it. She plans to stay as long as it takes until the President comes out to hear her message.

I'm blogging it on my blog, Dying to Preserve the Lies, <http://dyingwarriors.blogspot.com/> with links and photos, but there is much information to find now on internet at this day's end.

I have a good feeling about this as I don't think this story is going away. Light candles or whatever you do in support of this Vigil that Cindy seems determined to see through. She's cleared her August calendar and plans to stay, set up tent and even as supporters encourage her to bivouac at more comfortable setting, the Peace House, she declines.

I'm HOPEFUL, friends, very Hopeful.

Replies, responses appreciated, would love to be sharing with others at this time and part of our larger group supporting Cindy's efforts as they are our own efforts and she has taken a visible and popular point position these days in the popular support for her, Mother to a Fallen soldier in Iraq.

Working towards the light, in peace,

Lietta Ruger, member family MFSO, military family of 2 Iraq veterans; second deployments
email; rugerla@techline.com

#2:

Grim Days For The Marines In Iraq

August 5, 2005 The New York Times, Letters To The Editor

To the Editor:

Re "14 Marines Killed by Roadside Bomb in West Iraq City" (front page, Aug. 4):

The continuing slaughter of American service men and women in Iraq can be ended only by the prompt withdrawal of our troops from Iraq and by the recognition by President Bush that the war has been lost.

It seems true that the civil war that has already been started in Iraq will explode when we leave, but we have shown that we are helpless to prevent the sects in Iraq from fighting and killing their neighbors.

To delay withdrawal in the hope that an Iraqi government under a democratic constitution will emerge and end the civil war is sheer foolishness.

Two years and more than 1,800 American deaths and thousands of casualties are enough for this mistaken adventure.

It is time for our government to extricate our military forces from the Iraqi quagmire.

Burton Kreindel
Newton, Mass., Aug. 4, 2005

To the Editor:

How can President Bush go on a monthlong vacation when our troops are at war and fighting what appears to be a losing battle?

Has he no compassion for the families that are not going on vacation because a loved one is in Iraq? Or the families that have lost a member in the fighting?

What about the marines who were just killed, most of whom were based in Ohio?

President Bush needs to act responsibly - be a leader and wait at his desk until his troops come home or until he can make them safer over there. No one would quibble about a few days off, but this is ridiculous and insulting to all military families, past and present.

I am the daughter of Lt. Col. James White, who served and was a prisoner of war in World War II. He did America proud.

President Bush, make us proud of you.

Marilyn Mulcahy
Huntington Beach, Calif.
Aug. 4, 2005

To the Editor:

Bob Herbert's touching column about Specialist Fourth Class Hugo Luis Gonzalez, a maimed Iraqi war veteran, hit me especially hard ("Forget the War? Many Can't," Aug. 4).

I spent last weekend at a Silver Springs, Md., hotel near Walter Reed Army Medical Center. There, on Sunday morning, I helped a young wife wheel her legless husband into the elevator, then the dining room. He dandled a pretty 2-year-old on what remained of his lap. Another tiny beauty clutched the wheelchair, trying to help.

As we entered the dining room, we saw 10 or 12 cheery young men and women about to be seated.

When the amputee rolled into view, he waved to the group. Only one of the group waved back. Another gave the vet a thumbs-up gesture.

Strangely, all the others looked away or fumbled with napkins, newspapers and chairs.

Eavesdropping on them during the meal, I think that I discovered why so many of them seemed ill at ease.

They were members of a conservative college student group, and the subject of their breakfast meeting was how to improve their campus recruitment activities.

Some World War II feistiness left in me wanted to ask, "If you're so ardent about the war, why don't you enlist?"

Art Shay
Deerfield, Ill., Aug. 4, 2005

To the Editor:

Re Bob Herbert's Aug. 4 column:

I am not sure if we are "tiring of stories about the war" or if we are discovering that it has become increasingly difficult to rationalize the loss of so many loved ones without having to face the truth about our involvement with Iraq and our tendency to deny the losses to avoid mourning them.

Of course denial can be exhausting, and if left unexamined, it can lead to horrible consequences. Forgetting is not an option.

The war won't go away, and we cannot forget it. The dead and the wounded will always be here to haunt our memories.

For those who are "sick of hearing," I suggest that it is not the stories about the war that ail us, but our indifference to this reality, from which there is no escape.

To Specialist Fourth Class Hugo Luis Gonzalez: My gratitude for the sacrifice you and your fellow soldiers have made.

Neil Friedman
Brooklyn, Aug. 4, 2005

Comment:

From: Don Bacon smedleybutlersociety@msn.com
To: GI Special
Sent: Sunday, August 07, 2005
Subject: **RUMMY SAYS IT'S JUST A MUSLIM RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE**

"This is not a war between the United States and the Muslim faith or between the West and the Muslim faith. It's a struggle essentially within the Muslim faith, between extremists and moderates, and the extremists represent a very small minority. Free nations are best able to counter the lines terrorists use to attract recruits and suicide bombers if we're in partnership with moderate Muslim leaders."

(THAT SHOULD MAKE CINDY SHEEHAN FEEL BETTER -- NOT)

Notes From The Veterans For Peace Convention

From: David Honish, Veterans For Peace
To: GI Special
Sent: Sunday, August 06 & 07, 2005
Subject: Re VFP Convention?

VFP Convention FRI, From A 2:30am SAT Perspective

What a frigging incredible day! I feel PRIVILEGED to have shared the same room with some of these folks! You'll have to forgive if this turns out to be a rambling disjointed note, but it was a 17 hour day for me, plus an hour drive home.

Where to begin? Well yesterday I not only was the first to shake the hand of Hiroshima bombing survivor Professor Satoru Konishi, but I also valet parked the car he & his entourage arrived in.

Tonite he was one of several speakers in Lynch Hall auditorium. Only in VFP could I hear the speech and poetry of a Hiroshima survivor while sitting next to a former B-29 pilot. Real quiet during his speech, except for a few sharp intakes of breath and throat clearings from a room full of folks who like myself were not embarrassed to have our eyes water up, but were glad all the same that none of it ran down our cheeks.

No surprise that the VFP National Convention is vastly different than a local chapter meeting. A lot of humor seems to be common to most. Many wear fragments of old uniforms, some with VFP patches replacing old unit shoulder patches.

Canes are common, as are impaired gaits shattered decades earlier by bullets and shrapnel. Missing arms and legs are not uncommon, sometimes more than one on the same guy. There is at least one wheelchair, and one using a single crutch instead of a cane.

There are a few 50 or 60-is guys who still are in fighting trim, still able to wear their old uniform sharply, and look like they have not missed a step since their long ago war.

There are also thinning scalps, and beards and shoulder length hair long gone grey or white that still hint of their hippie past. Agent orange scars can also be seen here. Ages of the members range from the 20's to the 80's.

Among the speakers tonite were Mike Hoffman of IVAW re-telling how he became a Marine and how IVAW got started. Dahr Jamail did a speech and slide show presentation showing us what a honest uncensored reporter COULD do if not stifled by corporate media.

Cindy Sheehan got our now dry eyes watering again, and had a few openly crying without embarrassment. As you reported tonite, she plans to be in Crawford Saturday. She says she is not leaving "until I talk to George," and she will pitch a tent in Crawford if necessary. "George is taking August off to spend in Crawford, and I have nothing scheduled now for the rest of the month so I can stay there that long too until he talks to me. I'm going to tell them that a mother of a soldier killed in Iraq wants to talk to the President about it, so get George out here now."

She mentioned that she wished to pose some questions to him about the veracity of some of his and Mr. Rumsfeld's statements. Well, actually she didn't quite put it like that. I believe "lying bastards" was the term she used.

She won't be going to Crawford alone tomorrow. Her impromptu decision to visit Crawford had some concerned about diverting some VFP folks who plan to join her from dealing with VFP business tomorrow. VFP National President Dave Cline summed it up best by saying "There is about a platoon of folks going to Crawford with her tomorrow. We have a little over 200 members here, that's about a full strength company. The company will remain here to take care of business while the platoon runs a separate mission to Crawford."

The VFP Impeachment Tour Bus, "The White Rose" will be making the trip as the platoon's 'personnel carrier.' My own small part in that was running down a pair of giant 8D batteries to replace those on the White Rose. I was happy to lead their driver to a local Sam's Club where he could use my member's card to get the batteries for about \$55 less than another vendor. I think the \$55 will be better invested in diesel fuel for the Crawford trip.

A non-Texan VFP member asked what/where is Crawford? I described it as a wide spot in the road with a single stop light. Austin VFP Chapter President and National Convention organizer Dick Underhill corrected me by saying "Actually it is a flashing light, not a stop light, and it is eight times brighter than the President."

Cindy expressed mixed feelings about the decision, saying that she brought a "really cute dress" to wear to the Saturday night VFP Banquet, but now she expects to be spending Saturday night either camped out or in jail in Crawford.

James McMurtry blew us all away with an acoustic solo version of his new song "We Can't Make It Here Anymore." Go to <http://www.jamesmcmurtry.com/> to download the song. Awesome tune!

Camilo Mejia had a sharp and concise speech dealing with "When there is a conflict between being a good soldier and a good human being, we need to be good human beings."

FBI agent / lawyer Coleen Rowley spoke of her questioning why the FBI ignored evidence of the impending 9/11 attacks, and the media censorship of her statements on the subject. Residents of the suburbs south of St. Paul Minnesota will be fortunate to have her as a choice for their next Congressperson on their ballot.

We are getting some fair press coverage from both national and international media here.

I was told that we got a 5 minute segment on NPR news, but I've been too busy to listen to any news except what I hear on the truck radio for the hour there or back each day.

I hear that less than half of Americans polled now do not believe President Bush, which was the corporate media's best spin on MORE THAN HALF OF AMERICANS KNOW HE IS A LYING BASTARD!

Cindy Sheehan was right on the money with her assessment, and the majority of America agrees with her.

David Honish
<http://www.veteransforpeace.org>

MORE FROM THE NEXT DAY

Well I've been working the convention as a volunteer, so I have not been to the specialized workshops for activists where things may have been a bit more heated?

From what I hear & see of folks in the registration / merchandise area, or at last night's speaker's forum, I would say that while nobody is fond of the GW regime, the mood here would be more of one of wanting to get even instead of getting mad.

Discussion seems focused on constructive steps to take toward the objective of BRING THEM HOME NOW! News reports during the convention of GW dropping in the polls is encouragement that what we are doing is working, and that the majority of Americans are with us, and the numbers are growing.

After viewing the film "Sir, No Sir!" last night I could not help but think that if DVD's of it were wrapped in bubble wrap and dropped from aircraft over all military bases, we would see the sort of GI resistance movement that there was in the late 60's / early 70's that helped to end the Viet Nam War.

I was not present during most of the consideration of resolutions today, but was there to see some, including the plan to increase membership in VFP by extending membership at no cost to any interested active duty service member. Seems like a good idea to me. What better way to spread the word to those directly concerned.

Yeah, I got into it with a couple democan ladies that hung out for a bit by the VFP merchandise booth.

One was another non-VFP volunteer, the other was her friend.

They were not real keen to hear me tell them that the democats & republicrats are just flip sides of the same coin.

Told them the only difference was the democats paid better lip service to environmental issues, and the republicrats did a better job of getting corporate contributions. I almost feel like a playground bully picking on a retarded kid when I find some ignorant person who knows nothing of firearms presume to decide what kinds that the rest of us may own. I ripped her up pretty good with some real data to counter her delusions.

So then she tried to talk about FDR, to which I replied, so what have the democats done for us in the last 60 years?

She tried changing gears to the environment, to which I pointed out that it was the republicrat Teddy Roosevelt that started the National Park System. She tried coming back to the Second Amendment, and I finished her off quickly. She stood for a moment with her eyes popping and her mouth moving without making any sound.

She walked away stunned & silent, so I called after her "I ALWAYS GET THE LAST WORD WHEN I HAVE MY FACTS STRAIGHT AND YOU HAVE NO DEDUCTIVE REASONING OR A VALID ARGUMENT."

I don't think I made a new friend.

I did get her attention when I told her the democats will NEVER win a national election until they can provide a jobs program that puts Americans to work instead of shipping our factory jobs to Mexico, and that secondly they need to support the 2nd Amendment or count on losing. With the NRA delivering a consistent 20% swing vote, how dumb do you have to be to keep doing gun control rhetoric and expecting different results?

Wage peace,
David

Mother And Child

From: Z
To: GI Special
Sent: August 07, 2005
Subject: mother and child

On August 9th the US government dropped its second atomic bomb to test the effectiveness of plutonium and to impress the Russian government still more with its brand new toys.

The official mantra that the atomic bombings saved lives has been repeated ad nauseam for sixty years. In fact, the A-bombs didn't have a damned thing to do with saving lives, American, Japanese, or anyone else's.

Having broken the Japanese code early in the war, the US government was fully aware that its Japanese counterpart was frantically looking for a face-saving way to surrender. The US dropped the bombs anyway, not because Japan refused to quit its war but in order to test new weaponry and to impress upon the Russians the extent of its own military might.

Not only did the atom bombs brutally terminate the lives of countless Japanese civilians and Korean forced laborers, they also knowingly killed dozens of American POWs held in the two cities.

So long as many continue to justify the nuclear terror attacks on the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is difficult even to begin to come to grips with the desperate need to abolish nuclear weapons and thus eliminate the possibility of similar atrocities being repeated ever again.

Solidarity
Z



Nagasaki mother and child. Neither one bombed Pearl Harbor.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Winning More Friends:

For The Armed Resistance That Is



A U.S. soldier of the third battalion of the seventh infantry division questions a woman inside her house about gunfire on the street in Baghdad August 2, 2005.
REUTERS/Andrea Comas

There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?

Received:

From: VR
To: GI Special
Sent: August 07, 2005

From the latest newsletter -

[A ditch in rattlesnake country, the reporter forgot to mention. Asshole deputies, asshole sheriff, asshole law, meaning no law at all, just assholes wearing uniforms and carrying guns, just what Bush likes to call "terrorists," who have only contempt for the liberties of Americans, and are unfit to associate with decent people. These scum also repeatedly threatened to arrest a group of U.S. war veterans who wanted to get off their bus in the public parking area of a public school in the area later in the day.]

Calling deputies & sheriff assholes? Come on.....they're just doing their jobs.

Reply:

Depends on what their jobs are. These cops were doing their jobs too. And “assholes” would be quite mild in describing them. T

Occupation Cops Shoot 46 Iraqis Demonstrating For Water & Jobs



An Iraqi man lies wounded on the street in the southern Iraq town of Samawa August 7, 2005. Police opened fire on the crowd, hitting at least 46 people, witnesses said.

Residents of the normally calm, mainly Shi'ite town outside the governor's office demanded his resignation, the witnesses said. REUTERS/Mohammed Ameen

August 7, 2005 (CNN) & (KUNA) & By Hamed Fadhil, Reuters

An Iraqi was killed and at least 45 others were injured when police in the Shiite city of Samawa began shooting at demonstrators Sunday, protesters said.

More than 1,000 residents of the town, about 230 kilometers (143 miles) south of Baghdad, protested a lack of water, electricity and jobs, and called for the provincial governor to resign when police began shooting.

Protesters said Samawa police began firing randomly at them and gunmen wearing black appeared to be helping the police.

The governor, Mohammed al-Hassaani, is backed by SCIRI, one of the Shi'ite political parties dominating the national [translation: collaborator] government. Mohammed al-Zayadi, the head of the provincial council, is seen as a supporter of the Americans.

Fiery Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, who led two violent uprisings against U.S. troops, also has followers in the town, 270 km (168 miles) south of Baghdad.

The protests over poor water, electricity and sewage were called by the local council, which is dominated by Samawa's town elders, not Shi'ite parties. That

suggests grassroots anger over what some say is widespread neglect by the new government.



An Iraqi man throws a stone at a burning police vehicle as police opened fire on the crowd. REUTERS/Mohammed Ameen

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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