

## GI SPECIAL 3C33:



**Abandoned In Iraq:  
“The Higher Command  
Leadership Is Gutless And  
Appalling”  
“The People Here Hate Us And  
Will Always Hate Us Until We  
Go Home”**

[Via David Macreynolds]

*[A pair of letters to Maine Senator Olympia Snow's office, one from a pissed off American sergeant in Iraq and the other from his outraged parents.]*

Sent: Monday, August 15, 2005 11:37 AM

**Subject: SGT Ben Kamilewicz is abandoned in Iraq**

**As parents of Ben, a soldier we love, who is engaged in daily combat in Ramadi, Iraq, we thought you should be aware of what he and his soldiers are going through in the name of the United States of America. Ben grew up in Maine and lives with his wife in Vermont and is in the Vermont National Guard. It is shameful. See our letter below to JC of Senator Snow's office along with Ben's letter to J.**

**D and G K  
27 [XXXXXX] Road  
[XXXXX], ME 040[xx]**

August 15, 2005

JC  
Office of Senator Olympia Snow  
Washington, DC

Ben sent us a copy of the email he sent to you last Wednesday. We have read it, and we believe that every member of the Maine and Vermont Congressional delegation should see it along with our comments.

It is a very disturbing letter not only in terms of substance, but also very revealing in terms of his physical and mental condition after a month in Iraq totally abandoned by the U. S. Army and his country.

**It is our understanding that he has had only one day off since arriving in Kuwait in mid July. His letter reflects the abandonment he feels and the stress he is under.**

**He has been working 12 hours a day, at the very least, in the field on patrol, and he just returned from a grueling 20-hour door-to-door mission in the heart of the "insurgency."**

**These soldiers work in 120 -130 degree temperatures under the incredible stress of an imminent firefight, IED attack, or car bomb every day. At the rate he and his men are working, it is only a matter of time before exhaustion causes a meltdown that ends up killing a bunch of them.**

**It appears that the U.S. Army is really a virtual parallel enemy to our own troops. This is a command that doesn't admit incredibly serious mistakes: deplorably inept and inappropriate training; inexcusably poor equipment; lack of a mission or plan for these soldiers, the war or Iraq; a complete disrespect for life; and an abandonment our soldiers to the point that their entire energy is needed just to survive. They are setting our soldiers up to be murdered. This is an Army that runs scared because of political decisions and is irretrievably broken.**

**Please read Ben's letter. His Humvee has "no floor armor," there are "bullet holes and shrapnel cuts that you can look directly through," "these vehicles have been**

**through two tours . . . and are starting on their third,” the “vehicles have to be hot started,” Ben’s “vehicle constantly breaks down” because of a shortage of maintenance and mechanics, his turret which is the main weapons platform hardly spins, and after Ben told an officer about his truck’s condition, his only comment was to fix it; presumably during the 12 hours he isn’t on patrol.**

Where is all of the money we are pouring into this damned war? Don’t you care to get an answer to that question?

Remember that the Army responded in writing that the concerns outlined in Ben’s letter last March to Senator Collins were all going to be taken care of? All this confirms that Secretary of Defense and the general staff command do not care about elected officials and certainly does not care about soldiers, something that every member of the Maine Congressional delegation knows first-hand after BRAC.

Do you think that this is an over-reaction based upon the letter from Ben and his constant reports of incompetence and undelivered promises by the Army?

When you consider Ben’s experience after arriving in Iraq together with his previous letter (that was sent to every member of the Maine delegation) along with the evidence you are receiving from other soldiers and families of soldiers, will you ignore this for another six months and accept lame excuses from the Pentagon and Defense for their failure to live up to their promises?

**We have seen some of their arrogant testimony.**

**Look at what happened to the 20 Ohio soldiers.**

**Will you allow that to happen to Ben and his men?**

Look at the significant increase in lethal attacks using sophisticated techniques and materials by “insurgents” against our troops. Look at the substantial number of reports of Iraqis participating in the insurgency because it is the only way to make money to feed their children because all employment has been stopped in huge areas of Iraq because of our presence. We have a broken force in Iraq that is being set up for slaughter by the incompetence and arrogance of the leadership of our country.

Will you continue to ignore our cries for help like the President has? Will you, too, take part in the slaughter and maiming of our soldiers by not lifting your voice in public on their behalf?

**What will it take for you to summons the courage to stop this insanity?**

Will you let Ben and all the others trapped in this immoral, illegal war be killed in cold blood like Casey Sheehan was on April 4, 2004?

Doesn’t Cindy Sheehan, the Mom who waits in Crawford, Texas to talk to the President, deserve answers to the questions she has about the death of her son? Don’t we deserve straight answers from those who sucked us into this war and who now are on the verge of abandoning those who were sent to cover their blunder?

**We need to bring our troops home immediately -- even the Iraqis do not want us there, and everyone knows it.**

While everyone is quick to offer thanks to our soldiers for their service and their sacrifice, most of the Congress and Administration does not send loved one's to this war. President Bush's rhetoric on this subject is particularly empty to us as his daughters sit safe at home while other women serve and sacrifice in Iraq.

If you had a son or daughter in Ben's position, as we do, perhaps you would care more deeply and really do something about all of this, but you don't have to live with this day after day, do you?

The very least all of you can do is not to abandon them and fail to support them where it counts -- in theater.

**You are all doing a lousy job, and you should be ashamed.**

**How can you sleep at night?**

D and G K

## **SGT BEN K'S EMAIL (08/10/05) to J C, OFFICE OF SENATOR OLYMPIA SNOW**

From: B K  
To: J C  
Sent: Wed, 10 Aug 2005 00:29:57 -0400  
Subject: Re: HMMWVs

J C  
Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff  
U.S. Senator Olympia Snow  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. C

We have not received all the 1114 HMMWV's that are required for our mission.

**I still head out of the gate in a 1025 Humvee that doesn't have floor armor, basically all you have is armored windows and sub par armored doors. As evident by the bullet holes and shrapnel cuts that you can look directly through I would say they aren't very effective.**

Most of these trucks have been through two tours here taking numerous poundings and are starting on their third. We have inadequate maintenance manpower to maintain these vehicles having much less maintenance staff, and when I mean much less that is a gross understatement.

It is being felt at all levels, many vehicles have to be hot started which means a switching of the crews leaving no time for proper maintenance. Our maintenance guys are champions working there butts off to keep us going.

**The command structure at the highly levels has grossly mismanaged this brigade.**

The only thing we had going for us through the 6 months at Camp Shelby was that we were training together. At the last moment most of the groups have been re-task organized splitting us up. It amazes me that the command could not have foreseen this earlier since they could have talked and consulted with the group in this area.

**Shelby taught us nothing and was a waste of the tax payers dollars, a tremendous misallocation of resources. Nothing we learned there is applicable here and I learned more in our "right seat ride" with the 1/9th than the whole time at Shelby.**

**General Honare (Sp) made the statement at our deployment ceremony we are the best trained, best equipped soldiers, ever sent from Camp Shelby. If that is true the Army is broken which it is and is quite evident.**

**My vehicle constantly breaks down, my turret which is the main weapons platform hardly spins and some don't spin, and our tanks which have had problems since Shelby are now breaking down.** I think the tankers would want me to tell you of their woes since no one else seems to care.

When I asked about my trucks condition to one officer his only comment was fix it, I am not a mechanic and spend 12 hrs preparing and working on my mission am I to spend the other 12 hrs fixing my vehicle.

**The higher command leadership is gutless and appalling. They all seem to have 1114's and I haven't seen one of them outside the wire.**

This is just the equipment issues.

**The people here hate us and will always hate us until we go home.**

**Some officer might blow smoke up the proverbial ass and say that people like us but I work with them everyday.**

**They hate our interference in their government which only serves as a recruitment drive for the enemy and makes life miserable for the moderates.**

**I was talking to a friend of the 1/9th, the group we replaced, and he said when he first arrived the market was open and the economy was puttering along after the war, now the economy is gone and the lure of hard currency to become and support insurgent activities is more common place.**

On top of things you cannot win a hearts and mind campaign here so every time we play that game people get hurt because it looks like weakness on our part and they take advantage of it.

We fight for survival my men and I. There is not greater or ethereal agenda, it is to survive. They have sent a National Guard unit in the worse place in the world according to the state department.

**People here are tired of being lied to and are frustrated with the apparent lack or care of anyone.**

**The people of this land want us gone and if we support a democracy and true democratic processes then we should do as they bid and let them become a sovereign nation again.**

**I most likely will be reprimanded and or punished for telling you about the inadequacies of the Army and its run down nature right now but the truth needs to be heard and that is something that not one here or at home seems to want to face.**

Our hands become more tied here everyday, we fight by rules of engagement that do not apply to the war being fought here. We were reprimanded for test firing our weapons outside the FOB the other day to see if they were in good working order. Then were apologized to when we told them what goes on out there and that you need your weapon up. Now we are hesitant to fire our weapons and here that will get you killed.

**The commanders here exist and try to convince themselves that everything is fine which it is not. It is very frustrating and I look forward to coming home and leaving this broken Army.**

**Integrity, honor, selfless service, and many of the cornerstones of the Army are gone and they began their demise at the very top of the chain of command.**

Please feel free to ask questions it makes it easier for me to respond.

I thank you for your concern and help and look forward to returning to the shores of Maine.

Take care, sincerely, SGT B K

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

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

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



US soldier during a reconnaissance mission on the outskirts of Baghdad. (AFP/Liu Jin)

---

## **Laporte Guardsman Injured In Telafar**

August 25, 2005 The Herald-Argus

**LAPORTE — When LaPortean Sherie Schroeder answered the phone in her home about 10:15 a.m. Wednesday, it was not a call she wanted to receive.**

**The Pentagon was calling to tell her that her son, Sgt. Damon Schroeder, 28, serving with the 113th Battalion of the Indiana National Guard in Iraq, was injured Tuesday.**

**“The Pentagon said he and four others were standing by a Humvee when it was hit by a mortar,” his mother said. “He has shrapnel in his arms, legs and face.”**

Schroeder’s injuries were the worst, but fortunately, they aren’t life-threatening. He was released later Wednesday, and will be kept off active-duty patrols for seven days, his mother said.

Schroeder, an 11-year National Guard member who lives along Mayflower Road, had just returned to Iraq after being home on leave July 23 to Aug. 10.

He was called for active duty in October and shipped overseas in December, his mother said. He’s stationed in Telafar, Iraq.

Schroeder is single and the father of a 5-year-old son. He’s a LaPorte High School and Purdue University North Central graduate and works for Camp Summit in LaPorte County.

---

# Another Serviceman From WNY Wounded

Aug 25, 2005 WorldNow

Another serviceman from Western New York has been wounded in Iraq. Lance Corporal James Caflisch II of Lakewood was hit in the hip by a ricocheting bullet Tuesday.

The marine is expected to make a complete recovery and is due home next month.

**His father, James Caflisch, is the Republican Minority Leader of the Chautauqua County Legislature.**

---

## AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

### “A Small And Poorly Equipped Enemy Has The Initiative In This Province”

"In Iraq, there was more open fighting, a greater willingness to attack," he said. "Here it's different. They know how to fight guerrilla war -- they grew up fighting the Russians. They're smart and they try to fight on their terms, not ours. We set up checkpoints, but they know to avoid them -- it's too easy, and we're being too clumsy. You've got to have some respect for the way they're doing it; it's pretty professional."

August 21, 2005 Phil Sands, San Francisco Chronicle Foreign Service

**Maidan Wardak, Afghanistan -- In the poor villages of Maidan Wardak province, southwest of Kabul, Afghanistan's capital city, two brothers have successfully set up a Taliban cell that has already launched a series of ambitious attacks against U.S. and government forces in the area, Afghan security forces say.**

**With almost complete impunity, the brothers, whose identities have not been revealed by authorities, have found recruits to help them wage holy war on the Americans. According to Abdul Naeemi, the governor of Maidan Wardak, they moved about openly, carrying weapons.**



**"They are local fighters," he said. "I spoke to people in the villages, and they said they come from here. Their families live here, they are from the same villages. This makes it very difficult for us. ... They had money to buy equipment, and to buy influence. They would carry their AK-47s openly, as fighters, and they would talk to the people and ask them to join their fight, to help them."**

**The recruitment drive apparently worked.**

**According to a senior officer of Afghanistan's secret police, the NDS, the cell now comprises between 10 and 15 dedicated and capable guerrilla fighters.**

In recent weeks, the brothers' cell has carried out a number of strikes, including a successful raid Aug. 6 on a police station in the town of Kowl-e.

**In a well-planned night assault, they overran the building, wounding one police officer and causing the others to flee. They then escaped before reinforcements could arrive, taking 24 captured automatic rifles, ammunition and rocket-propelled grenade launchers.**

**Lt. Col. David Anders, head of the 82nd Airborne Division's 1-325 infantry regiment now stationed in Wardak, said of the raid: "The attack hit three sides of the building simultaneously. ... They seemed to have very good intelligence on the layout of the building and strength of forces inside. It was quick, disciplined and well planned. The police retreated from the building in the face of overwhelming firepower."**

**A few days later, as darkness fell, the same militants attacked a convoy of 82nd Airborne paratroopers, according to Afghan police and the U.S. military. The trap was sprung on a major road and caught the soldiers so unaware they barely returned fire, instead pushing through to safety in their armored vehicles.**

**The ambush was meticulously planned: fighters armed with AK-47s and a heavy machine gun were stationed on each side of the route to maximize the effects of cross fire. A bomb, made using three mortar shells, was rigged to explode in the road. Rocket-propelled grenades were fired at the convoy.**

**Local traffic using the busy road had been deliberately stopped, in a move that kept fields of fire clear when the Americans passed and ensured there were no civilian casualties.**

**U.S. officials insist the insurgents -- "enemies of Afghanistan" -- have no regard for innocent lives. However, Afghans questioned about the incident said the decision was deliberate: The guerrillas rely on the goodwill of surrounding villages and do not want to make enemies by killing local noncombatants.**

No U.S. troops were killed or wounded, but the body of a young bearded man wearing a black mujahedeen-style uniform and turban -- apparently shot accidentally by his colleagues -- was later found at the ambush site. American intelligence officers hope its discovery will prove a crucial element in the militant group's undoing.

With the body in a Kabul morgue, the Wardak governor and 82nd Airborne chief Anders called a joint meeting with local village elder. They all insisted they could not identify the man, but word evidently spread and the fighter's family and friends came to claim the body for burial. That allowed Afghan security services to confirm his identity. His name was Islam, and he was one of three brothers. The other two had also lost their lives fighting for the Taliban.

Capt. Devin Hollingsworth, 27, an 82nd Airborne intelligence officer, said his units were working closely with Afghan forces to track and capture or kill the insurgents.

"We are learning how these people work, and we are closing in on them," he said. "It's difficult to get information, but we are succeeding, piece by piece. We'll find out where they are and when they're going to be there, and we'll get them in the end." **[The Russians used to say the same thing.]**

**But the group remains at large, and it remains on the offensive -- even launching a rocket strike on the paratroops' base.**

**Sgt. Ralph Porras, 35, of First Battalion's D Company, said the Afghan fighters were in many ways more formidable than their Iraqi counterparts.**

"In Iraq, there was more open fighting, a greater willingness to attack," he said. "Here it's different. They know how to fight guerrilla war -- they grew up fighting the Russians. They're smart and they try to fight on their terms, not ours. We set up checkpoints, but they know to avoid them -- it's too easy, and we're being too clumsy. You've got to have some respect for the way they're doing it; it's pretty professional."

**Porras is not the only paratrooper to express respect for the insurgents he has been sent to hunt and kill -- thus far unsuccessfully.**

Lt. K.D. Castro, a Special Forces veteran on deployment in Afghanistan, said his men had to adapt to new ways of fighting.

"It's frustrating out here, and you have to learn to be patient and methodical. We've got to get the locals on our side and show we are here to help support them. If we do that properly, we're more likely to pick up intelligence and the enemy will find it harder to hide. Then they'll make a mistake. They'll make the wrong attack at the wrong time, and we'll get them. We only need one chance." **[The Russians used to say the same thing.]**

Winning the political war for influence over suspicious tribal chiefs will be a key battleground for the Americans. Some villages in Wardak make no attempt to hide their contempt and hostility for U.S. troops. Others seem friendlier.

**American officials insist the majority of Afghans are in favor of their presence, but the assertion is untested -- more a hypothesis than scientific fact.**

***And despite a charm offensive backed by thousands of U.S. dollars -- soldiers are helping build walls and wells in the more hostile areas -- there is no real evidence of local allegiances shifting in favor of the NATO- led international coalition.***

An experienced interpreter working with U.S. forces explained how difficult the task of winning hearts and minds was.

"You must understand how important religious and family relationships are in Afghanistan," he said. "Blood is thicker than water, and much thicker than money. ... Afghanis are suspicious of foreigners, they've seen them come and go. They know in the end what is left are their own people. The Americans will go home one day, but the Taliban are home and will not leave. Even if a village likes the Americans, the Taliban will hold more influence over them, either through loyalty or fear, or a mix of both."

Talking to regional National Police in Logar, 82nd Airborne's Anders made clear his frustration.

**"A small and poorly equipped enemy has the initiative in this province," he said. "We are all reacting to an enemy. I've heard nothing of offensive operations or gathering intelligence, I've heard nothing of getting out and killing the enemy. We will start killing the enemy now." [The Russians used to say the same thing.]**

---

## **TROOP NEWS**

# **BUSH AND BLAIR**

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

**From: Rose Gentle  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 25, 2005  
Subject: lied**

### **BUSH AND BLAIR**

**TONY BLAIRS LIES, WE WILL GET YOU**

**TONY BLAIR LIED, THAT IRAQ HAD WEPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. WICH COULD BE READY WITHIN 45 MINUETS OF AN ORDER TO USE THEM.**

**TONY BLAIR LIED THAT IRAQ HAD EXPELLED THE UN, WEAPONS INSPECTORS. THE US GOVERNMENT WITHDREW THEM,**

TONY BLAIR LIED. THAT HE WANTED TO AVOID WAR, HE HAD ALREADY ENTERED INTO A SECRET WAR PACT WITH BUSH WHEN HE MET BUSH AT HIS TEXAS RANCH IN APRIL 2002.

TONY BLAIR LIED. THAT IRAQ'S POSSESSION OF WMD WERE THE REASON FOR WAR, HE LATER ADOPTED BUSH'S ILLEGAL POLICY OF REGIME CHANGE,

TONY BLAIR LIED, ABOUT THE LEGALITY OF THE WAR, THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN HAS ALSO DECLARED THAT THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ IS ILLEGAL.

TONY BLAIR IS PLANING FUTHER WARS ALONGSIDE THE US. IRAN, SYRIA ARE NEX ON THE US HIT LIST, BLAIR WANTS US TO BE PRISONERS OF BUSHES POLICY, WHILE BUSH MAKES THE WORLD A MORE DANGEROUS PLACE,,

I LOST GORDON BECAUSE THIS GOVERNMENT LIED TO TAKE THIS COUNTRY TO WAR, I DONT WANT ANY MORE MOTHERS TO LOSE THEIR SONS FOR TONY BLAIRS LIES, OUR PRIME MINISTER REPEATEDLY LIED TO AND DECIVED US ABOUT IRAQ, WEAPONS CAPABILITY HE HAS MISLED THE BRITISH PEOPLE ON A MASSIVE SCALE,. SO I WILL FIGHT TONY BLAIR ON THIS ALL THE WAY

I WILL NOT GIVE UP TILL I GET JUSTICE FOR MY BOY, AND ALL THE TROOPS BLAIR AND BUSH HAS KILLIED.

NO MORE CROSSES FOR BLAIR.

PS

yes it is going good now, bet bush loves yous

i have not stopt geting things dune for the 24 september

the big demo. in london, we now have a stop the war in

glasgow, it has hit people hard, i receved letters to day from new york

people saw me on the CNN NEWS, giving me support.

rose

---



Cindy Sheehan takes a moment after placing her son's boots at the cross bearing his name at 'Camp Casey', named after her 24-year-old son, Army Spc. Casey Sheehan, who was killed last year in Iraq, Crawford, Texas, Aug. 25, 2005. (AP Photo/LM Otero)

---

**Gold Star Mother Asks:  
“Why Have Their Deaths Not Been In  
Vain?”**

24 August 2005 Reuters

Sue Niederer, who with Sheehan and other families of dead soldiers founded "Gold Star Families for Peace," on Wednesday vowed to pursue the president with her anti-war message.

"We are going to be continuously on Mr. Bush and make him understand we are not going away. We are very, very steadfast in what we doing," said the 56-year-old housewife, real estate agent and substitute teacher from Hopewell, New Jersey.

Niederer, whose 24-year-old son Seth Dvorin died in Iskandariya, Iraq, on February 3, 2004, said she and others plan to travel to wherever Bush will be speaking.

Anti-war groups kept the pressure on the president this week as he made speeches in Utah and Idaho, where he promised that U.S. troops would remain in Iraq to complete their job to honor those who already died there -- a logic Niederer disputed.

**"You are dishonoring the soldiers, you are not honoring them," she said of Bush's speech.**

**"Given the reasons for why we went into this war, why have their deaths not been in vain?" she asked, referring to Bush's now disproved pre-war assertion in 2003 that Iraq might have stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction.**

---

## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Assorted Resistance Action**

25/08/2005 ABC & AFP & (AKI) & QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA, Associated Press & Reuters

**Armed fighters shot dead eight bodyguards of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and wounded fifteen others in an attack north of Baghdad on Thursday, police said.**

"Two bodyguards of the president were killed and seven others wounded when their convoy was riddled with bullets," said Colonel Abbas Mohammed, police chief of the city of Tuz Khurmatu.

The attack took place at around midday (0800 GMT) in Al-Odhaim area, 120 kilometers (75 miles) northeast of Baghdad.

Talabani, a Kurd, "was not in the convoy which was coming from Kirkuk to Baghdad," Mohammed said.

**A Filipino contract worker has been killed in an ambush by suspected insurgents in the Iraqi city of Kirkuk. Two Iraqi companions also died in the attack.**

**The Foreign Ministry in Manila says the Filipino was an engineer for the American company Lucent Technologies.**

**Police say a car bomb has gone off in the city of Baqouba. They say the blast injured 14 people, including 12 police officers. Police say the car blew up as a three-car police convoy drove by.**

**HAWIJA - One Iraqi soldier was killed and three people wounded when a roadside bomb blew up near their patrol in the northern Iraqi town of Hawija on Wednesday, the defence ministry said.**

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

## **Fighting Breaks Out Between Shia Collaborators And Mehdi Army**



Supporters of Iraqi cleric Moqtada al-Sadr show their support during a demonstration in Najaf August 25, 2005. (Thaier Al Sudani/Reuters)

25/08/2005 AFP & (AKI) & By ROBERT H. REID, The Associated Press & QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA, Associated Press & By SALLY BUZBEE, Associated Press Writer

Clashes erupted between rival Shiite groups across the Shiite-dominated south Wednesday.

**Two Hawn missiles were fired at the headquarters of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution (SCIRI) in the southern Iraq city of Basra on Thursday morning.**

A police source said the attack injured at least one person and broke windows in the building and surrounding homes.

It follows an attack on Wednesday night on the Badr organisation (the armed wing of SCIRI, which is one of the two main Shiite groups in Iraq) **[translation: SCIRI, which is part of the collaborator occupation government.]**

**It is thought that the missile attack may be the work of supporters of Imam Muqtada al-Sadr, in retaliation for previous attacks on al-Sadr's headquarters, which were blamed on members of the Badr organisation.**

**Trouble in the south began when supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr tried to reopen his office in the Shiite holy city of Najaf, which was closed after the end of fighting there last year.**

When Shiites opposed to al-Sadr tried to block the move, fights broke out. Four people were killed, 20 were injured and al-Sadr's office was set on fire, police said.

That enraged al-Sadr's followers, who blamed the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, or SCIRI.

21 pro-al-Sadr members of parliament and three senior Cabinet officials announced they would refuse to perform their duties indefinitely to protest the Najaf attack.

Municipal officials loyal to al-Sadr in several southern cities issued similar declarations.

As word of the Najaf attack spread, clashes broke out between the two Shiite rival groups across central and southern Iraq.

Fighting was reported in at least six Basra neighborhoods as al-Sadr's followers attacked SCIRI offices and the headquarters of SCIRI's Badr Brigade militia, setting it ablaze, police said. Al-Sadr's headquarters in Basra was attacked with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire, according to police.

**In Amarah, eight mortar shells were fired at the SCIRI office, and a dozen pro-al-Sadr officials announced they were also suspending work. Fighters from al-Sadr's militia patrolled the streets. Clashes were also reported in Kut, where a SCIRI-owned building was torched, and in Nasiriyah.**

Earlier Thursday, Muqtada al-Sadr called on his followers to end clashes with Shiite rivals, one day after his office in the holy city of Najaf was burned and four of his supporters were killed.

"I will not forget this attack on the office ... but Iraq is passing through a critical and difficult period that requires unity," he told reporters in his home in Najaf.

He demanded that Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, leader of the rival Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, or SCIRI, condemn "what his followers have done."



**"I urge the believers not to attack innocent civilians and not to fall for American plots that aim to divide us," al-Sadr said. "We are passing through a critical period and a political process."**

There also were clashes Wednesday night in Samawah, where Japanese troops are based. Offices of SCIRI were attacked with rocket-propelled grenades.

**During his news conference Thursday, al-Sadr criticized the Shiite-led [translation: occupation] government, in which SCIRI plays a major role.** He also criticized portions of the draft constitution, saying it was not strong enough against Saddam Hussein's Baath Party, and spoke out against federalism, which is also opposed by the Sunni Arabs.

**"We reject federalism and if America has schemes, it should not try to implement those schemes," al-Sadr said.**

Al-Sadr plays an unusual role in the constitution stalemate. He is Shiite, a fiery preacher and the son of a famous cleric believed murdered by former dictator Saddam Hussein. But in the constitution fight and on other issues, he is allied with Sunni Arab hard-liners.

**Both al-Sadr and the Sunnis have strong grassroots appeal among ordinary Iraqis disaffected by the political process.**

**Both have fought against the Americans al-Sadr in two bloody uprisings last year, the Sunnis in the insurgency. Both view any constitution written under a strong U.S. military presence as illegitimate.**

And both vehemently oppose the main Shiite faction's constitutional proposal that would allow a Shiite mini-state in the south and possibly even central Iraq someday. **Al-Sadr feels that would undermine Iraq's Arab identity, since a Shiite mini-state would likely come under heavy Iranian influence.**

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

**OOPS:  
THE SOLDIERS COME OUT FOR  
"VEHEMENTLY" ANTI-  
OCCUPATION SADR**



**Members of the Iraqi Interior Ministry's elite force hold a picture of Ayatollah Mohammad Sadeq al-Sadr, father of Moqtada al-Sadr, in Najaf, August 25, 2005. Supporters of al-Sadr are opposed to a new U.S.-backed constitution.**  
(Stringer/Reuters)

25 August 2005 By Dexter Filkins and Kirk Semple, The New York Times

**Mr. Sadr, a cleric who is thought to be in his 30's, has vehemently opposed the American military in Iraq,** and has used this stance to set himself apart from the other parties.

Late last month, Mr. Sadr's organization announced that it had collected one million Iraqi signatures during a three-week petition drive demanding that foreign troops leave the country.

Mr. Sadr has also been among the staunchest Shiite opponents of autonomy in the south and, according to Reuters, some of his supporters joined Sunni demonstrators in a march on Wednesday in support of "no" votes in a referendum on the new constitution.

---

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

### **“What Will Pulling Out Of Iraq Mean For The United States?”**

August 21, 2005 By Andrew J. Bacevich, The Washington Post Company. Andrew Bacevich is a Vietnam veteran. [Excerpt]

**What will pulling out of Iraq mean for the United States?**

It will certainly not mean losing access to Iraqi oil, which will inevitably find its way to the market.

To be sure, bringing the troops home will preclude the Pentagon from establishing permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq -- but the Bush administration has said all along that we don't covet such bases anyway.

In addition, withdrawal will put an end to extravagant expectations of using Iraq as a springboard for democratizing the Islamic world -- but that notion never qualified as more than a pipe dream anyway.

### **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

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

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

## **The Will To Bear Witness Is Born**

From: Mike Hastie  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 24, 2005  
Subject: The Will To Bear Witness Is Born

To G. I. Special:

I just finished reading the piece by J. D. Engelhardt on August 24, 2005. ["The Soldier I Once Was"]

As a Vietnam veteran who has been back from the insanity of the Vietnam War for 34 years, I HAVE to say, that every word he said was 100% true. Not 99% true, but 100% true.

Reading and feeling what he wrote, was like having a conversation with 1,000 Vietnam veterans in the past. The war in Southeast Asia, and the war in Iraq, are Xerox wars.

I do a lot of photojournalism, and it's like printing two copies of the same picture. Everything in the picture is identical.

**The Vietnam War was nothing but a lying dog and pony show, just like Iraq. Both wars were staged from the beginning, right down to the last paperclip. They both used the exact same amount of Duct Tape.**

The only difference is, and it may sound like I'm backing off from the Xerox part, is that Vietnam was not sitting on the second largest oil reserves in the world. That is why Iraq is going to have a different outcome. And, that difference is going to be a MONSTER.

**Unless we see the largest anti-war movement in the history of the United States, these gangsters in The White House will commit non-stop mass murder in the Middle East. It has the potential to set off a domino affect, that would sober up a drug addict in a coma.**

**The United States of America has walked into a trap. If we walk out of it, it will be obvious to every pro-war person in America, that they were duped. It will set off a shock wave that the Bush administration betrayed the American people.**

As Iraq veterans and Vietnam veterans, many already know this to be true. So, the ultimate quagmire is the secret of the LIE.

And, if you do not expose that LIE, then you have an endless war, to keep pro-war Americans from experiencing the dismantling of their belief system.

This Toxic Twist, is exactly what put me in a padded cell, because I could not articulate what was happening to me.

**If Iraq veterans can understand this Toxic Twist of being in an emotional whiteout, they do not have to go to that padded cell. "An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation, is normal behavior."**

**Once you can back away from the insanity, and articulate the betrayal, you are far less likely to take your own life.**

**The absolute necessity to survival, is to bond with other veterans who can verbalize the ultimate wound of betrayal.**

**As Malcolm X once wrote, " The only thing worse than death is betrayal."**

**Once again, if veterans can articulate the wound of betrayal, and FEEL that wound, they WILL survive.**

**That is a Promise!! The Buddy System, is the stretcher to survival.**

Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71



## **PTSD?**

**A Marine Iraq veteran who still need protection.**

**Mike Hastie,  
Vietnam Veteran**

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](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) for more of his outstanding work. T)

# **True Or False?**

**[The email that follows was sent in to GI Special.**

**[After the text are two comments from former soldiers with extensive combat experience. One thinks it's bogus, the other says maybe yes, maybe no. Time will tell.**

**[Having received a fair amount of email from soldiers in Iraq, this is the first that ends "you will not be able to contact me," while having an email return address. Were it to read, "it's not secure to reply, do not reply" that would be understandable. It would also be the first that says nothing about branch of service, or even vaguely mentions location.**

**[In the fall of 2003, an asshole faked interviews that were supposed to be with anti-war soldiers, so poorly done that the writer had one talking about a "dust off" coming for the wounded, a term not common since Vietnam. There are plenty of**

**real troops around who hate Bush and the war without having to engage in bogus bullshit.**

**[On the other hand, if this is genuine, then deepest apologies for the doubts. T]**

From: XXXXXXXX  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 23, 2005  
Subject: Soldiers want to come home

Hello, I am writing you in secrecy from Iraq. My fellow brothers and sisters in arms here in Iraq want to say something, but first we want to tell you GI Special, that we thank you for what you are doing. Some of us, other commands and all, are told that we are not allowed to read your articles on the internet, which I think is wrong. You and a few others who post, tell the real, and true story about what all is going on over here. The T.V. cameras that are here, they know the truth as well, but do not show it to the people back home. They only show the stuff that our leaders want them to show. Anyway, we are glad that you are there.

We troops want to say this. WE WANT TO COME HOME!!!!!! We are tired of our officers putting our lives at risk for their advancement in the military. We are tired of killing innocent lives, making children orphans because their parents fight us because they want us to leave. They are happy that Saddam is no longer in power, and they will be even happier when he is dead like his sons.

Now, they want us out of the picture. Some of the young men who join their country's military, we ask them why are you joining, and 99% of them tell us because they want us to leave. It kind of scares us when we hand them a weapon knowing they can easily turn around and shoot us. We troops thank that is really sad, don't you. My parents tell me that they watch some new show on FOX T.V. called Over There. They ask me questions because of it, and I tell them, that even though it is T.V. most of it does happen especially about our officers putting our lives at risk for something that they want to make them more comfortable.

There are a couple guys here who are snipers, that have killed people right in front of their children because they crossed a line that their commanders told them that if anyone did, to shoot no matter what. Sometimes they tell me that they wish those officers were the ones crossing the lines. Can you imagine shooting a father, whom was unarmed, in front of his son because his foot, and I mean one foot, crossed this so called line? It's hell hear, and you know what after all that I personally have done, I don't know if the Good Lord will take me or not because I am killing people who just want us out of their country.

We all have been told that there are all kinds of people back home trying to get us back, and man, do we wish they will succeed because we want to come home. We have no idea what our real mission is now. We did when this war started, but then, that turned out to be bogies. I wanted to fight to find WMD's, and to get rid of Saddam, but now that we know there are no WMD's, and Saddam is no longer in power, what is our real mission here? We are told that we have to train Iraqis, stay here so that the Iraqis can vote, and they did. You know what, during the presidential elections, a lot of us sure

hoped that Kerry would have won, because our so called commander and chief is not much of a leader at all.

Hold on, I think someone is coming.....

OK, were was I.

Oh yeah, our so called commander and chief. We troops, and I mean a group of us would like to know what is this so called stay the coarse thing that he keeps saying. Can someone please tell us what the heck does that mean? Our commanders keep telling us that our coarse is to stay in Iraq to make sure that a government is formed and that the Iraq people are truly free. We thought that they were freed when Saddam was gone, and they all voted. If that isn't freedom, then what is. To tell you the truth, we troops know what this war is about, and our opinion about the so called stay the coarse, it only means one thing, OIL. What is sad, is that there are American contractors here working on these pipe lines for almost 35 to 40 thousands dollars a month, and here we are protecting them for a lousy 1500 if not less a month. Where is all that money coming from, and were is this oil going if our gas back home is what \$3.00 a gallon now, that is what I have been informed that is. I don't understand that. You should here some of these contractors here talking about they are making this much money and all they have to do is flip a switch, turn a wheel, or watch some pressure gage. Here we are in full battle gear in 135 degree weather killing people for what. It just doesn't seem right.

Most of us are on our 2nd tour here, and it's not any better then it was when it first started. We all agree that we are fighting a rich mans war and that man gets richer every sec. that we are here. One civilian here told some of us that he wishes this war would go on forever. A buddy of mine said," then you should put on a uniform," because he has no idea what war does to a man/woman. Just that week, we heard that guy was heading back home because it was getting to hot for him. Man, I wish I could just say hey I quit, it's too hot here for this crap, but no, I can't and neither can my fellow brothers in arms. Makes you wonder what would happen if we could do that. If that was some how possible, I would have been home a long time ago with my wife and son whom I miss very much.

You know I only got to see my son for I think a total of 3 months out of his 1 1/2 years of life so far. It's not fair you know, to them the children and spouses. My wife supports me being a Soldier, because that is what I am, but she does not support this war, and wishes for my term of service to hurry up and end. Take my word for it, as soon as it is up, I am gone, and to protect my son, my wife and I have discussed leaving the US for Canada or somewhere where our son will not have to worry about joining the military to earn a living or what ever the reason. It's not worth loosing you life over some lie that was fabricated.

My wife informed me that there is a mother camped out in front of President Bush's place. I have seen bits and pieces of the article that you have posted, I hope she gets answers, I truly do, and I would like to thank her for what she is doing. In fact all my fellow troops want to thank her. Because from what we have been told, America has been informed that we want to stay here and finish the job, but again, besides the oil, what is the job? We troops want to come home. We understand that we all cannot come home at once, but a little at a time would be a start, and that means leaving Iraq, not bringing in more to replace the ones leaving. Then again, if it takes some coming in

to start getting us out, then lets start packing up. You know what I bet the Iraqis would be more than happy to help us pack if we were leaving. The quicker we get out of their country, the happier they will be.

Hold on, evening formation has been called, be right back....

Ok, lets see have I left anything out? I don't think so. I guess all that I really wanted to say, is that we want to come home, we hope that the people will stand up and tell the government that they want their sons and daughters to come home. I would like to go home and visit the graves of two of my buddies who have fallen here. I sure miss them. God please stop this madness. I can't see how you win a war against an enemy who thinks that it's God's will for him to die. If God forbid I die, I hope it's because of old age, and not for some damn fools bank account. God keep my family safe, my fellow troops safe, and God please tell Bush that he needs to start bring his troops home.

I got to go. Please GI Speical, I would like you to post my letter on your web site.

Just make sure you don't add that screen name.

You will not be able to contact me, but if I get another chance, I will try.

I hope that some of my fellow troops some how contact you. You should hear what they have to say about this God forsaken war.

Most of it is what I wrote about, but some have other comments, and it's all against this war.

God Bless,  
Soldiers in Iraq

**MORE:**

# No

From: M, Combat Veteran  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 22, 2005

I think this letter is bogus. The person writing it gives you the impression that he is just some simple guy who is really starting to figure the war out. He wants to credit G. I. Special with helping them with this insight.

I believe the writer, or writers, are much older, and are probably officers, and they are not stupid.

Your publication is no doubt a thorn in their ass, and they would love to shut it down.

They may have coded the letter in some way, but that is out of my league.



I think they are playing you for a chump.

G.I. Special is obviously a threat of some kind, how big, that is a 64 dollar question. If you get anything else, I would delete it.

**MORE:**

## **Maybe Yes, Maybe No**

From: G, Combat Veteran  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 24, 2005

There is nothing in the letter to make me believe it is a fake and nothing that cries out that it is the real deal.

I think u should post it.

The worst thing that happens is you look like a fool for posting a false letter.

The best thing that could happen is you post it and encourage a handful of soldiers to continue to speak out.

I think the risk vs. the rewards are justified.

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

## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

# **More Incoherent Ravings From Senile Defense Chief And Brain-Dead JCS Chair**

August 10, 2005 By Lisa Burgess, Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. military is “good for several years” if the current troop level in Iraq must be sustained, but third tours for active-duty servicemembers might be needed, Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Tuesday.

**And the Defense Department is adhering to the prohibition on placing reservists on active status for longer than 24 months, Myers told Pentagon reporters during a news conference that included Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.**

**However, “there’s the possibility of people going back for a third term, sure,” Myers said. “That’s always out there. We are at war.”**

**Rumsfeld, meanwhile, scoffed at reports that many are already on their third tour.**

**“There’s always a risk when people grab into the middle of something, take the worst of what might be, and then wave it around as though it’s reality,” Rumsfeld said.**

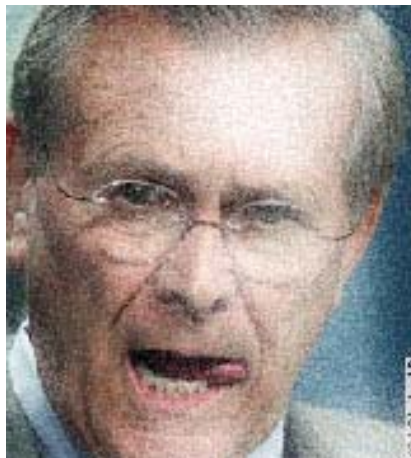
In fact, different services have different policies concerning deployment lengths, the secretary said.

**“So when you start hearing rumors about people on their third tours or fourth tours, you start checking into it, and looking at what you got, you’re going to have people who may be in the Air Force who’ve gone back in on three-month tours, or you may have people who’ve volunteered because that’s what they want to do,” Rumsfeld said.**

**In response to a USA Today story Monday about a Marine Corps colonel in Iraq who said he repeatedly asked for 1,000 more Marines, Rumsfeld said such a request was not an indication that there are too few U.S. troops in Iraq.**

**“The idea ... that because somebody wishes they had more at a certain moment suggests the total number is wrong is a non sequitur, obviously a non sequitur,” Rumsfeld said.**

“There’s 137,500 U.S. forces and a good slug of coalition forces, and how they are parceled out and allocated within the country of Iraq is for Gen. Casey and Gen. J.R. Vines to determine,” Rumsfeld said.



**NOT A USEFUL CONSTRUCT**

Myers, meanwhile, said that “more troops are needed, and they are being provided by the Iraqis. There’s 178,000-plus of them.” [Will Rumsfeld pull Myers’ feeding tube? Will anybody give a shit? Tune in tomorrow for an update.]

Neither Myers nor Rumsfeld replied directly to a question about how many Iraqi security forces are actually able to operate independent of coalition forces, a query the defense secretary dismissed as “not a useful construct.”

---

## **Received:**

### **Fewer Americans Still Baffled By Bullshit?**

From: JL

To: GI Special

Sent: August 25, 2005 4:31 AM

Subject: Escape Tunnel, Improvised Weapons Showcase Determination Of Prison Inmates:

Dear GI Special,

*'Before long, the ground was carpeted with pieces of cinderblock, much of it flung with slingshots fashioned from thin rubber gloves the Americans had given the inmates to distribute food. The detainees used what Brown called "standard David and Goliath" slings cut from the canvas tents.'*

**Stories like this fill me with admiration for the Iraqis who will stand up and do what it takes to liberate their nation from their oppressor.**

Their oppressor is my country!! How could this have happened? How could an American president stand up and lead the country into a war of aggression in broad daylight?

How could day have turned to night so quickly? How is it that there are so many Americans who still support the present American regime?

**Thanks for the picture of Bill Moyer wearing his bullshit protector while "listening" to his commander in chief in Salt Lake City. The main stream media reported the "thunderous applause" Bush got there on his speech. Maybe it wasn't quite so thunderous as they made out. It doesn't look like Bill Moyer joined in.**

**Maybe there are a lot fewer Americans still baffled by bullshit than the MSM lets on. We'll see on September 11th and then again on the 24<sup>th</sup> won't we?**

**Let's hope we're all filled with admiration for the Americans who will stand up and do what it takes to liberate their nation from their oppressor.**

---

## **Received:**

### **Information Wanted On Contract Workers In Iraq**

From: Posr Posr  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 24, 2005  
Subject: Contractors in Iraq

**I desperately need information on contract workers in Iraq being immune to military courts because they are not in the military and are private workers.**

**Any information or news stories showing that these contract workers are not officers of the U.S. will be greatly appreciated.**

mail to posrp@hotmail.com  
Thanks  
Posr A. Posr

---

## **Received:**

### **Homebrew From The Front: Information Requested**

From: Jon Franklin: chilefranklin2000@yahoo.com  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 25, 2005 1:39 PM  
Subject: homebrew from the front

**I am writing stories about Iraq and GI survival skills.**

**One thing I cant figure out, how do you make a drink over there? What kind of home brew is being mixed up. I heard there are some wild recipes out there, I want to put those together, any help is appreciated.**

This is for Maxim magazine.

Jonathan

---

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for purely educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. Go to: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml> for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

---

**If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.**