

GI SPECIAL 3C37:



Madison Soldier's Family Grieves While Seething At Military Brass: "In Iraq, He Became Disillusioned" "I Respect Mrs. Sheehan For Wanting To Get The Message Out"

[Thanks to PB and NB, who sent this in.]

"They can take a \$1 million missile and put it up some Iraqi's ass and they can't tell me what time my son's coming?" Ray fumed. "This is why my son's dead, this total incompetence."

August 24, 2005 By Steven Elbow, The Capital Times

Every time the wound begins to heal at Ray and Diane Maida's house, something comes along to rub salt into it.

First came news that their son, Mark Maida, a 22-year-old Army sergeant, was killed in Iraq by a roadside bomb on May 26.

Then, a week after his death, the Army gave only hours' notice that the body would be arriving at Gen. Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee, forcing the grieving family into a frantic scramble to retrieve it for a funeral two days later.

Letters and packages to Mark from home arrived for a time almost daily, marked "Return to sender." Then a slow trickle of possessions arrived from Iraq and his unit's base at Fort Irwin, Calif.

To top it off, despite repeated efforts, Army officials failed to provide details of Mark's death. More than two months later, the Maidas finally got the details of his death, not from the Army, but from the Washington Post.

"It's just been one wound after another," Diane said. "And just about the time you think you're on the upswing, then you get shut down again with another incident."

For the Maidas, pain from the loss of their son has been compounded by countless snafus. Ray said an Army official even admitted, unofficially, that the Army lacked a proper protocol for dealing with the families of dead soldiers.

It's part and parcel of what Ray sees as a pervading ineptitude in conducting the war and the military's inability to protect its troops.

"They can take a \$1 million missile and put it up some Iraqi's ass and they can't tell me what time my son's coming in?" Ray fumed. "This is why my son's dead, this total incompetence."

On Aug. 12, the Maidas finally found the information the Army wouldn't provide. Ray's daughter, Juliann, learned of a Washington Post article that ran two days earlier in which Terry Rodgers, a soldier and good friend of Mark's, recounts his last moments and his last words.

"I went online and began to read it and I had to stop," said Ray, pausing, his eyes welling up. "I just started crying, you know? I guess it changed my picture or the dreams I had. That one I wake up to in the morning, that picture changed."

Reluctant warrior: Mark Maida graduated from Memorial High School in 2001, a few months before the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11.

"Mark wasn't about the military, but he was in the military," Ray said. "After 9/11, because he wasn't going to go to college, he thought he'd do his service."

He was also motivated by a sense of duty that echoed back for generations. Both of his grandfathers served in WWII and his father, a retired Madison detective, was a combat veteran in Vietnam. Mark's older brother, Chris, had been in the Marines since 1999.

Shortly before his three-year stint was up on Nov. 1, 2004, Mark applied for an early release from Fort Irwin to attend school - a common request - but Mark's unit mishandled his paperwork until it was too late, Ray said.

His unit was deployed to Iraq and, although Mark only had a month to serve out his time, a military "stop-loss" order kept him in uniform until his unit was to return to its home base at Fort Irwin.

"Of course Mark was upset by that," Ray said. "But Mark didn't raise hell. He didn't protest and followed orders."

In Iraq, he became disillusioned.

Mark and his fellow soldiers patrolled trouble spots, often looking for insurgents planting roadside bombs. Although Mark was trained as a gunner on a Bradley fighting vehicle, the soldiers typically traveled in Humvees, which insurgents have been remarkably successful in blowing up.

"He's in Iraq and he's serving and he's getting frustrated, frustrated at the incompetence of leadership," Ray said. "He didn't feel he was accomplishing what America was saying was being accomplished."

But he had a sense of obligation to his fellow soldiers that outweighed his aversion to the military.

At a memorial service in Iraq captured on video, Spc. Shawn Klock, Mark's roommate for two years, said "he didn't like the military, but he did his job to the best of his ability because he loved his friends and family."

Maida could have challenged his deployment, Klock said. Others had. He could have gotten out and followed his dreams of going to college and one day buying a Harley and cruising across the country. In Madison he had a girlfriend, Elizabeth Jacobs, and they planned to get married.

"I asked him one time why he did not fight harder to get his (discharge), and he told me 'I could not live with myself if I knew that one of you guys got hurt and I was not there to help you,'" Klock said. "He chose to take this deployment because of the love he had for his friends."

Stateside, Mark's family and girlfriend contacted U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold after his deployment, asking for a review of the stop-loss order that was keeping Mark in Iraq.

Mark didn't want to be involved, but something in Feingold's response to a letter from his girlfriend changed his mind.

Feingold's letter said the senator had concerns about stop-loss. But he indicated that the Army was applying the policy across the board, retaining deployed soldiers who have met their contractual obligations as well as those who were scheduled to retire.

Mark, who had just seen his sergeant major get discharged for retirement, fired off a letter to Feingold dated May 18, eight days before his death.

"I am curious how this can be if 2/11 ACR (Mark's armored cavalry regiment) is still under stop-loss orders," he wrote. "My original (discharge) date was 31 October, 2004 and I'm still here. I feel very unappreciated. What are they trying to say? That the three years I gave my country wasn't enough? I don't care if he did do 20-plus years, he's in the same army I'm in."

He added, "There are many soldiers in this unit in the same situation and would all be grateful if you could help us get out of this bad situation."

Fearing that a letter addressed to a U.S. senator might arouse suspicion, Mark sent the letter to his parents to make sure Feingold got it.

Feingold's office did not return inquiries about whether there was an investigation of Maida's complaint.

Mark's legacy: When speaking of the stop-loss policy, which he considers a back-door draft, and his family's attempts to get Mark home, Ray's voice rises.

"Mark would want to pursue people's knowledge about stop-loss, that there are kids being kept in," he said, "that there's this, what I call involuntary servitude, that we fought the Civil War to stop."

He also said Mark would want people to know about a military that is needlessly placing its soldiers in jeopardy, particularly by putting them in Humvees, the bombing of which are now claiming the bulk of U.S. casualties.

Ray said he is encouraged by Cindy Sheehan, who also lost a son to the war and whose anti-war vigil at President Bush's vacation home in Crawford, Texas is putting pressure on the administration to answer some questions about how the war is being conducted.

"I respect Mrs. Sheehan for wanting to get the message out," Ray said. "It took Mrs. Sheehan driving to Crawford, Texas and sitting at the gate of Bush's vacation home to get the message out, 'Are we telling the truth about the protection of the troops?'"

Ray and Diane said Mark's death has motivated them to speak out about the government's failure to provide adequate equipment for soldiers in Iraq.

"When it comes to equipment, supplies, he would want to let the world know that they weren't adequately equipped," Ray said.

While Mark's death could raise awareness about the incompetence that led to his death, Ray said his legacy is unlikely to include a successful venture in Iraq.

"History will tell us what he did for Iraq and its people," he said. "We don't know right now. Some of us are speculating that we have destroyed Iraq. Some are speculating that we've given them this newfound desire for freedom. I hope his legacy is that spark of freedom. I don't see it, but I hope that's it."

Supporting the troops? If there's one thing that galls the Maldas, it's the endless parade of bumper sticker ribbons.

"Do you know what my government's not doing to support the troops?" Ray said. "I want people to know the lack of respect and the folly of 'We Support Our Troops.'"

Mark's brother, Chris, 24, was a Marine, serving only 10 miles from Mark's unit, although they never saw each other in Iraq. After several of his friends died from being blown up in their Humvees, Chris made it home safely on April 1.

"It's a glamorized pickup truck," he said. "We're riding around in Humvees that obviously aren't strong enough to withstand an IED (improvised explosive device) blast. Myself and all the Marines were pissed we were put in this position."

When he found out that Mark was patrolling in a Humvee, not a Bradley, Chris' first instinct was to try to save his brother.

"Chris, the week before Mark died, he was begging him, begging him not to get into Humvees," Ray said.

Chris later recounted the conversation.

"Tell them you refuse, you know, it's not worth your life," Chris remembered telling Mark over the phone.

Chris said the reason troops in Iraq are patrolling in Humvees instead of fighting vehicles is the cost, which makes many soldiers feel like they are expendable.

"If they feel the troops are worth it, why not spend the money?" he said. "It's human life. You can't put a price on it, so I don't see why they're putting them in this position."

Now Chris has a college degree and works in Milwaukee as a counselor for troubled girls. But he is hounded by his experiences in Iraq - the dead friends, the loss of his little brother and the guilt of having survived.

"I felt like I shouldn't have left if he was over there," he said. "Not only that, you see a lot of innocent civilians die, and that really screws your head up. I've lost a lot in this war, and I've seen a lot of bad things. I don't know if I've seen enough good over there to feel it's justified."

Of Chris, Ray said, "Physically, he's intact. But he lost his buddies and he lost his brother. So I sacrificed two sons to this war. At least the people in charge should let me know what the sacrifice was about, what my son was doing when he was killed."

House of pain: The grief at the Maida's spacious duplex on Madison's far southeast side is palpable. Ray and Diane have three remaining children, Juliann, 32, Aaron, 29, and Chris, which helps. They are extremely tight-knit. But Mark's death still weighs heavily in the air.

Several boxes were recently delivered to the Maidas - Mark's belongings from Fort Irwin, which the Army had initially told them didn't exist. They remain in the garage, unopened. "I know what's in them," Ray said. "I helped him pack them."

A picture of Mark in desert camouflage, which was displayed during his unit's memorial for him in Iraq, sits on a counter in the kitchen. Diane's eyes linger on it when she passes.

"Just when you think things are starting to get normal, all of a sudden it's another dip in the roller-coaster ride," she said. "That's made the healing process more difficult for us - those repeated wounds. Like his belongings coming back from Iraq one week, then the next week another set of belongings coming back, then there's this article in the Washington Post that we didn't know was coming out."

The last wound, they maintain, could have been averted if someone from the Army - someone who knew Mark and could tell them what happened - had called.

"Mrs. Sheehan wants to talk to the president a second time," Ray said. "I just want to talk to a lowly officer in a company level command or a battalion level command."

While seeing the story of his son's death in print was a shock, Ray and Diane are beginning to see it as a blessing. "We finally said, well, it does reinforce the fact that he wasn't still alive in that helicopter suffering on the way to Baghdad with Terry Rodgers," Ray said. "And so, you know, it helps."



Ray Maida and his wife, Diane, hold photo of son Mark who was killed in Iraq. (Photo by Mike DeVries/The Capital Times)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Four U.S. Soldiers Wounded In Tal Afar

Aug. 29, 2005 By Steve Walsh / Post-Tribune staff writer

The family of Sgt. Damon Schroeder, 28, of LaPorte, was notified by the military last week that he and four other soldiers were hit by shrapnel near where they are stationed in Tal Afar. Schroeder is expected to return to active duty after seven days.

Under U.S. Noses, Insurgents Rule

Last year the US trumpeted its rehabilitation of a nearby power plant: "The incredible progress at Haditha is just one example of the huge strides made by the US army corps of engineers."

August 22, 2005 Omer Mahdi in Haditha and Rory Carroll in Baghdad, The Guardian [Excerpts]

A three-day visit by a reporter working for the Guardian last week established what neither the Iraqi government nor the US military has admitted: Haditha, a farming town of 90,000 people by the Euphrates river, is an insurgent citadel.

That Islamist guerrillas were active in the area was no secret but only now has the extent of their control been revealed. They are the sole authority, running the town's security, administration and communications.

A three-hour drive north from Baghdad, under the nose of an American base....Haditha exposes the limitations of the Iraqi state and US power...

For politicians and diplomats in Baghdad's fortified green zone the constitution is a means to stabilise Iraq and woo Sunni Arabs away from the rebellion. For Haditha, 140 miles north-west of the capital, whether a draft is agreed is irrelevant. Residents already have a set of laws and rules promulgated by insurgents.

Within minutes of driving into town the Guardian was stopped by a group of men and informed about rule number one: announce yourself. The mujahideen, as they are known locally, must know who comes and goes.

The Guardian reporter did not say he worked for a British newspaper. For their own protection interviewees cannot be named.

There is no fighting here because there is no one to challenge the Islamists. The police station and municipal offices were destroyed last year and US marines make only fleeting visits every few months.

A year ago Haditha was just another sleepy town in western Anbar province, deep in the Sunni triangle and suspicious of the Shia-led government in Baghdad but no insurgent hotbed.

Then, say residents, arrived mostly Shia police with heavyhanded behaviour. "That's how it began," said one man. Attacks against the police escalated until they fled, creating a vacuum filled by insurgents.

The mobile phone network was shut down but insurgents retained their walkie-talkies and satellite phones. Right-hand lanes are reserved for their vehicles.

From attacks on US and Iraqi forces it is clear that other Anbar towns, such as Qaim, Rawa, Anna and Ramadi, are to varying degrees under the sway of rebels.

In Haditha hospital staff and teachers are allowed to collect government salaries in Ramadi, the capital of Anbar, but other civil servants have had to quit.

Last year the US trumpeted its rehabilitation of a nearby power plant: "The incredible progress at Haditha is just one example of the huge strides made by the US army corps of engineers."

Now insurgents earn praise from residents for allegedly pressuring managers to supply electricity almost 24 hours a day, a luxury denied the rest of Iraq.

Twice in recent months marines backed by aircraft and armour swept into Haditha to flush out the rebels. In a pattern repeated across Anbar there were skirmishes, a few suspects killed or detained, and success was declared.

In reality, said residents, the insurgents withdrew for a few days and returned when the Americans left.

The US military declined to respond to questions detailing the extent of insurgent control in the town.

There was evidence of growing cooperation between rebels. A group in Falluja, where the resistance is said to be regrouping, wrote to Haditha requesting background checks on two volunteers from the town.

Tribal elders said they feared but respected insurgents for keeping order and not turning the town into a battleground.

They appear to have been radicalised, and condemned Sunni groups, such as the Iraqi Islamic party and the Muslim Scholars' Association, for engaging in the political process.

The constitution talks, the referendum due in October, the election due in December: all are deemed collaboration punishable by death.

The task now is to bleed the Americans and destabilise the government. Some call that nihilism. Haditha calls it the future.

CRAWFORD WAR REPORTS



Crawford, Texas: Martin Sheen, Cindy Sheehan, Iraq Veterans Against the War
Photo by Jeff Paterson, Not in Our Name, Aug. 29, 2005: jeff@paterson.net

Will Ms. Sheehan's Movement Spread?

August 29, 2005 By ELISABETH BUMILLER, The New York Times [Excerpts]

Will Ms. Sheehan's movement spread? The historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, whose son, Lt. Joseph K. Goodwin, served with the First Armored Division in Baghdad, said that it was too soon to judge, and that much depended on what happened in Iraq over the next weeks.

"But if more mothers and more women connect to the losses over there, it could move like wildfire across the country," Ms. Goodwin said.

Ms. Zappala, who protested against the Vietnam War in college and was a main speaker at an antiwar demonstration in Salt Lake City on Monday, added: "Maybe women feel more compelled, more empowered. Maybe it's because men in our country don't speak so easily about things that are personal and so hard."

They resent it, the protesters said, when their opponents call them agents of the left.

"I may be a grieving mother, but I'm not stupid," said Ms. Zappala, who runs a city program for the elderly in Philadelphia. "No one has to tell me what to say. And if people help me amplify myself, God bless them."

In a telephone interview on Friday from her home in Pocatello, Idaho, Ms. Pruett said that the White House learned of her story through two programs on CNN. This past weekend, a picture of Mr. Bush hugging Ms. Pruett was at the top of the home page of the White House Web site.

Ms. Sheehan's supporters immediately pointed out that while there are mothers who have lost children in Iraq who still support the president, Ms. Pruett had lost none and should not be compared with them.

"Actually, I would agree with them completely," Ms. Pruett said. "I have not experienced what they experienced, and I wouldn't judge how they chose to express their grief."

Pro-Bush Demonstration Flops: Democrats Run Away

29 August 2005 By Andrew Gumbel, The Independent UK & By Sam Coates, The Washington Post

There could have been no starker symbol of the political divisions vexing George Bush's America this weekend than the railroad track running right through the heart of Crawford, home to the president's summer holiday ranch in the scorched plains of central Texas.

On one side of the tracks was the Crawford Peace House, base camp for the activists who have poured in to support Cindy Sheehan, the bereaved mother of one of America's Iraqi war dead who has become the political sensation - and lightning-rod - of the summer with her simple but powerful gesture of parking herself in front of the presidential ranch to demand an explanation for the death of her son, Casey.

The counter-demonstration failed spectacularly in its aim of outnumbering the anti-war activists by three or four to one, as chartered buses turned up half-empty, and cars adorned with "You don't speak for me, Cindy" bumper stickers created a

traffic jam stretching only one block rather than the miles the organisers had hoped for.

Camp Casey "is the road from Baghdad to the airport and he won't go down it," she proclaimed. "He didn't even know there were people in the country who opposed him until we came down and ruined his vacation. This is America standing up and saying: we've had enough."

Senior Democrats sought to distance themselves Sunday from Sheehan's protest. On "Fox News Sunday," Byron L. Dorgan (N.D.), a member of the Senate Democratic leadership, said: "*If we withdrew tomorrow, there would be a bloodbath in Iraq. We can't do that.*" [Where do they dig up these idiots? What does he think is going on right now, a fraternity party?]



Crawford, Texas: Tomas Young, wounded in Iraq the same day Casey Sheehan was killed. Photo by Jeff Paterson, Not in Our Name Monday, Aug. 29, 2005
jeff@paterson.net

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)

TROOP NEWS

Fiji Army Will Refuse Orders For Iraq Unless Government Comes Up With Enough Equipment: Unlike U.S., Fiji Commanders Not Soldier-Killing Cowards

29 Aug 2005 Australian Broadcasting Corporation

In Fiji, the army has announced it will not send an additional 90 soldiers to Iraq next month unless the government properly equips them.

The soldiers have been training in preparation for deployment to Basra, in southern Iraq, and the northern city of Irbil, at the request of the United Nations.

Fijilive reports army spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Orisi Rabukawaqa, says the soldiers need equipment such as night vision goggles, protective jackets, respirators and helmets.

The equipment will cost almost \$US2 million.

He says if the soldiers are not provided with adequate equipment, the army will pull out of the mission.

U.S. Opposition To Iraq War Growing Faster Than During Vietnam War;

53% Now Equals % After Tet In 1968

8.28.05 WILL LESTER, AP

More than half of those polled, 53 percent, say the United States made a mistake in going to war in Iraq.

That level of opposition is about the same as the number who said that about Vietnam in August 1968, six months after the Tet offensive -- the massive North Vietnamese attack on South Vietnamese cities that helped turn U.S. opinion against that war.

Various polls have shown that erosion of war support has been faster in Iraq than during the Vietnam War in the 1960s.

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.

Hundreds Convicted By Military Courts May Be Innocent: Lab Worker Faked Forensic Tests

August 29, 2005 By Robert Burns, Associated Press

The Army is investigating allegations that a civilian forensic examiner at the Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory at Fort Gillem in Forest Park, Ga., falsified DNA test results.

The allegations, if true, would throw into doubt hundreds of criminal cases dating back at least a decade.

The examiner was suspended from duty in May after the allegations surfaced. His name was not released.

The Gillem lab is now reviewing all cases that the unidentified examiner handled, including an unspecified number that led to criminal convictions, officials said. The Army

also is seeking assistance from other agencies to review DNA testing procedures to ensure that the matter is limited to the one accused examiner.

The Fort Gillem lab is the only Army facility that performs forensic examinations in support of military criminal cases.

This was not the first indication of potential problems at Fort Gillem. The examiner now under investigation was temporarily suspended from DNA case work in January 2004 when contamination was detected in his testing process, officials said. After "remedial action and retraining" he was returned to work in September 2004.

“Get Out Of Our Town” Crowd At Soldiers’ Funeral Goes After Anti-Gay Bigots, Chases Them Down Highway

[Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

"If they were protesting the government, I might even join them," Danny Cotton, 56, said amid cries of "get out of our town" and "get out of our country."

Aug 28, By BETH RUCKER, AP, SMYRNA, Tenn.

Members of a church say God is punishing American soldiers for defending a country that harbors gays, and they brought their anti-gay message to the funerals Saturday of two Tennessee soldiers killed in Iraq.

The church members were met with scorn from local residents. They chased the church members cars' down a highway, waving flags and screaming "God bless America." [Excellent. That's a start, and about time. Wherever and whenever they show their faces, go after them, using physical force to remove them. That's the way to put and end to them and stop this ongoing torment of grieving families.]

"My husband is over there, so I'm here to show my support," 41-year-old Connie Ditmore said as she waved an American flag and as tears came to her eyes. "To do this at a funeral is disrespectful of a family, no matter what your beliefs are."

The Rev. Fred Phelps, founder of Westboro Baptist in Kansas, contends that American soldiers are being killed in Iraq as vengeance from God for protecting a country that harbors gays. The church, which is not affiliated with a larger denomination, is made up mostly of Phelps' children, grandchildren and in-laws.

The church members carried signs and shouted things such as "God hates fags" and "God hates you."

About 10 church members protested near Smyrna United Methodist Church and nearly 20 stood outside the National Guard Armory in Ashland City.

Members have demonstrated at other soldier funerals across the nation.

The funerals were for Staff Sgt. Asbury Fred Hawn II, 35, in Smyrna and Spc. Gary Reese Jr., 22, in Ashland City. Both were members of the Tennessee National Guard.

Hundreds of Smyrna and Ashland City residents and families of other soldiers turned out at both sites to counter the message the Westboro Baptist members brought.

So many counterdemonstrators were gathered in Ashland City that police, sheriff's deputies and state troopers were brought in to control traffic and protect the protesters.

The church members held protesting permits, and counterprotesters in Smyrna turned their backs to Westboro Baptist members until time expired on the protest permits.

"If they were protesting the government, I might even join them," Danny Cotton, 56, said amid cries of "get out of our town" and "get out of our country."

"But for them to come during the worst time for this family - it's just wrong."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Senior Military Officers Report Insurgency Growing

8.28.05 Tom Regan, Christian Science Monitor

The Government Accountability Office said in its latest report that as of May 2005 "According to senior military officials, the insurgency in Iraq has grown in size, complexity, and intensity and has affected reconstruction priorities."

Reuters also reported on Aug. 10 that the US Army Corps of Engineers said, "The Iraqi insurgency is damaging US army efforts to leave an impressive array of reconstruction behind as its presence recedes in Iraq."

“Everywhere Sadr Gets Stronger”

30 August 2005, By Salih al-Qaisi in Najaf and Oliver Poole in Baghdad. Telegraph Network UK

"I was against him but have understood the fact that he is working for the sake of the people," said Abu Mohammad, 48, a shopkeeper in Kufah.

"That is why everywhere Sadr gets stronger."

In recent local elections in the city's Abasiya and Huriya districts, both of which had shown little enthusiasm for Sadr in the past, representatives promoting his policies won 60 per cent of the vote.

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

Assorted Resistance Action

8.29.05 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer & Aljazeera & CNN & (KUNA)

Two rockets slammed into the parking lot of the Oil Ministry building wounding an employee and damaging several vehicles, police said. Only one missile exploded; the other failed to detonate. Police said the missiles hit the main parking lot next to the ministry building.

Armed fighters shot and killed Brig. Gen. Numan Salman Faris, director of the district rapid response force in Baghdad's Azamiyah district.

Gen. Nu'man Selman Thabit, an Interior Ministry assigned to the Iraqi Electoral Commission, was assassinated Monday at noon in the northeast Baghdad neighborhood of Wazeeriya when armed fighters opened fire on his civilian car, Baghdad emergency police said.

He died immediately while the gunmen escaped from the scene of the murder.

In Mosul the body was found belonging to an Iraqi policeman who was shot dead.

In al-Ishaqi town, north of Baghdad, a truck driver who was among a convoy transporting supplies for the US army was killed.

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

Pipeline & Well Blown Up

August 27, 2005 Energy Security

259. August 26 - Insurgents sabotaged an exporting oil well north of Kirkuk.

260. August 27 - bomb beneath an oil pipeline supplying the Daura oil refinery in Baghdad, causing an hour-long fire.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Did Bush think that at least some Iraqis some would not stand and defend their country? Is patriotism simply an American phenomenon? 8.29.04 Helen Thomas, Hearst Newspapers

“I Am Just One Angry Mom”

From: D [Mother of soldier hurt in Iraq]

To: GI Special

Sent: August 28, 2005

Subject: Re: GI Special 3C35: "Pissing In The Wind"

On a news briefing the big Star General said he visited the troops in Iraq and moral was good, better than ever - everyone of them and he said one of the female soldier came up to him and thanked him for letting her have the tour to help in Iraq.

I didn't quite didn't believe that line of Bull - I don't know about all the rest of Americans watching but I can smell Bull -

Well anyway lies go on - and I agree with you it is not a show and pony ride - everyone knows it, but the groups that are trying to make a point are not covering all the facts -

Now you do but, but some groups are just not getting across to the republicans and they should but they aren't - some in Congress are seeing it and some are speaking out - it is a mess a bloody mess!!!!

As for me I am just one angry mom whose son came home and he is not the same at all - he is on a waiting list to have back surgery. What BS is that and Walter Reed is closing down, moving down the road

The military is in trouble if we don't get out of there.

When they do attack us we are sitting ducks...

You know they talk about Ramadi, Fallujah a lot.

That is were my son got wounded in that area. It is a bad area. The Marines came in along with the Army cleaned it up last year - what happened???

Bush told on TV that there would be more fighting due to the Iraqis can't get it together over there - now the time line is in December.

So we will see more wounded and the VA is overwhelmed with all the wounded coming home - so see what is really going on.

D

Americans Leaving The Bush “Dream World”

28 August 2005 By Tom Engelhardt, TomDispatch.com [Excerpt]

Your message, which worked like a dream for so long, goes off-message, and then what do you do?

This is, I suspect, exactly what growing numbers of Americans are experiencing in relation to our President. It's a mysterious process really -- like leaving a dream world or perhaps deprogramming from a cult.

Once you step outside the bubble, statements that only yesterday seemed heartfelt or powerful or fearful or resolute truths suddenly look like themselves, threadbare and impoverished.

In due course, because the repetitious worldview in the President's speeches is clearly a believed one (for him, if not all of his advisors) and because it increasingly reads like a bad movie script for a fictional planet, he himself is likely to look no less threadbare and impoverished, no less -- to use a word not often associated with him -- pathetic and out of touch with reality to some of those who not so long ago supported him or his policies.

<p>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.</p>
--

What He Left Out

Aug 29, 2005 Steven R. Weisman, Posted by Veterans For Common Sense

Instead, Mr. Bush sought patience. "I want our folks to remember our own constitution was not unanimously received," he said, comparing the fractious debates in Iraq to those among America's founders.

What he left out of his analogy is that while the Constitutional Convention of Philadelphia was convening, there was not an insurgency in the countryside that seemed to be growing because of disaffection with the political process.

Getting Rid Of Dangerous Officers, 1915

From: MAX WATTS
To: G.I. Special
Sent: August 29, 2005

MET OLDIE OTHER DAY WHO TOLD ME THAT IT WAS COMMON IN GALLIPOLI (1915) TO GET RID OF DANGEROUS YOUNG OFFICERS - BUT STRAY BULLET, RATHER THAN FRAG.

NOT THAT HE WAS THAT OLD! BUT HE KNEW IT AS MILITARY FOLK-LORE.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Winning Iraqi Hearts And Minds: The U.S. Ambassador Speaks

Aug 29, 2005 Jonathan Finer and Omar Fekeiki, The Washington Post

In a remark unusual for a U.S. ambassador in the Arab world, Khalilzad compared the Iraqi draft constitution's personal status law to Israel's, saying that both allow men and women a choice of civil and religious legal options in matters of marriage and divorce.

More Notes From A Lost War:

The Traitors' Army Has No Wheels:

“When They Have Problems, These Guys Will Just Leave Their Uniforms And Walk Off”

“I Don't See Things Changing Here. We're Not Reaching The People”

[As you read this, think over the question not discussed. Why is it the resistance does not have the slightest problem finding highly motivated, highly dedicated, highly skilled professional troops in endless numbers to fight the occupation? Why does the U.S. command try to avoid discussing that little question, at all costs? Why isn't even mentioned in this story? Patrick Henry knew the answer in 1776. People fighting for their freedom fight with a will. Traitors serving a foreign Imperial enemy have little motivation, and no heart, because they are fighting for nothing decent or honorable at all. T]

Aug. 26, 2005 By Tom Lasseter, Knight Ridder Newspapers

HIT, Iraq - American Sgt. LaDaunte Strickland, sweat pouring down his face, stared at the four Iraqi soldiers sitting in the shade of a truck.

They were supposed to be helping Strickland and a group of U.S. Marines man a vehicle-control point, a basic operation in which troops hope to catch insurgents at traffic stops they set up quickly on the roadsides.

"Come on. Come on! Get up," said Strickland, 30, of Cleveland, stabbing a cigar in the air to make his point. "Damn, will you PLEASE get up!"

The Iraqis didn't stir. Without an interpreter - a common occurrence - the Iraqis didn't understand Strickland, no matter how loud he got.

Three weeks of patrols and interviews in restive Anbar province suggested that Iraqi security forces will need years of preparation before they're ready to take charge of the complex and violent tribal areas of western Iraq. **President Bush has said repeatedly that U.S. troops will withdraw only when Iraqi troops are ready to take over. [No. They will be gone long, long before that. Just as in Vietnam, these troops will rebel, and the war will stop. Not as soon as Americans might wish, but sooner than the enemy in Washington DC thinks.]**

Many of the Iraqi troops were in poor condition, unable or unwilling to complete long foot patrols without frequent breaks. They often didn't know what to do in complicated situations, standing back and letting American Marines and soldiers take the lead.

In Fallujah, after a U.S. assault last November routed the insurgency that had demolished the town's police force, the Interior Ministry sent in its Public Order Battalion. Residents accuse the battalion of being a de facto Shiite militia. **[No. They know the Public Order Battalion is an *occupation* militia. Were Sadr's army there, they would be in the streets cheering, and it's Shia, but then The Mehdi Army hates the occupation too. Enough with this Bush propaganda.]**

Marine Maj. Shaun Fitzpatrick, 36, of San Antonio said the Marines were aware of the sectarian problems and were hoping to put a predominantly Sunni police force on the streets in coming months. Until then, he said of the public-order troops, "Basically, they're Shiite and they're from Baghdad or Basra (a Shiite town). We've had problems. There are inevitable cultural clashes." **[Sure sign of a lost war: the Major is utterly clueless that it's a question of patriots vs. collaborators, not Shia vs. Sunni. So, since he has no grip on reality, defeat is assured.]**

In the meantime, insurgents are attacking new police stations and intimidating contractors.

The Iraqi National Guard, heralded last year as the answer to security in the area, has been disbanded because morale was low and insurgents had infiltrated it.

The old national guard trucks, with their blue emblems, now sit rusting. As with the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, the predecessor to the national guard, American officials say the new Iraqi army and police will establish security in places such as Anbar.

However, the police force has collapsed in Ramadi, the provincial capital. Two divisions of Iraqi soldiers - a total of 12,000 men - are to establish security, but so far only 2,000 are available, and half of them lack basic training.

Hit, a city of 130,000, has no police force.

North of Hit, in Haditha - near the site of attacks that killed 20 Marines this month - the police chief handed over all the patrol cars to the Marines in January.

"He said, "We can't protect these anymore," said Maj. Plauche St. Romain, the head intelligence officer for the Marine battalion that oversees Haditha, Haqlaniya and Hit. "He turned in the uniforms and (armor) vests, too."

That police chief was assassinated in April.

"It was pretty obvious what happened with the police. Their police stations got blown up and a lot of them were murdered," said Army Maj. William Fall, 48, of Cresson, Pa., who oversees Iraqi security-force operations in Ramadi.

Marine Capt. John LaJeunesse, who works with the police in Ramadi, said it wasn't fair to put too much blame on the police.

Those who've remained to get trained and be part of the new force haven't been paid in two and a half months, he said. [This just gets better and better, doesn't it? Of course they haven't been paid. The collaborators running the fake Iraqi

government in Baghdad need the money for their foreign bank accounts, so they'll have a few million to live on when the resistance takes the country. They haven't survived this long by being complete idiots, and know the war is lost. Why waste the money? If something has to be wasted, let it be American troops lives, right?]

So far, a little more than 5,900 police officers have been screened for all of Anbar, about half the number needed. Most of those still must be trained, said LaJeunesse, 30, of Boise, Idaho.

"The ones that stay are working without pay, and the insurgents are threatening their families," he said.

During a recent operation in Haqlaniya, a squad from the Iraqi Intervention Force, one of the more seasoned units in Iraq's army, swept through neighborhoods looking for insurgents. One of the soldiers was so overweight that he had trouble putting on his flak vest.

During a raid on a suspected insurgent hideout, the Iraqis discovered they'd forgotten their bolt cutters.

Instead of sending someone back to get them, they tried breaking a lock off an outside gate with the butts of their AK-47s. By the time they were through, they'd made so much noise that everyone in the neighborhood was aware of their presence on what was supposed to be a stealth operation.

When they arrived at their second objective, still without bolt cutters, the men wanted to use grenades to breach the door.

Their supervisor, U.S. Army Capt. Terrence Sommers, stepped in and said they'd risk hurting themselves and would give away their position to insurgents.

"They've still got a ways to go," said Sommers, 34, of Trenton, N.J. [Wrong. Their search and evade skills are perfect.]

One of the Iraqi officers, Maj. Ahmed, said his men were less than motivated because they didn't understand why the Americans kept sweeping through towns and moving on without leaving troops behind to secure them.

"The people are scared to give us information about the terrorists because there are many terrorists here. And when we leave, the terrorists will come back and kill them," said Ahmed, who gave only his first name out of fear of retribution from the insurgents. "The army has to stay in these cities; that way we would have control. But this way, no, it doesn't make any sense."

On a nighttime raid in Ramadi this month, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Chris Chapin, a military adviser to the Iraqi army, said he hadn't been able to get the Iraqi troops to mount a platoon-sized operation. Chapin had no interpreter with him, and none of the Iraqis could speak English.

"We definitely need to do something about this interpreter thing," said Sgt. 1st Class Anthony James, 33, of Vicksburg, Miss. "I don't see things changing here. We're not reaching the people."

Because the Iraqis and Americans couldn't communicate with one another, they frequently ended up wandering in the middle of the street, yelling commands in English and Arabic and heading in opposite directions. [This is a fucking HBO comedy show.]

Chapin, 39, of Proctor, Vt., walked around at one point, yelling, "Lieutenant, where is my lieutenant?" Two of the target houses were within a block of each other, and the entire neighborhood was probably aware of the soldiers' presence, blowing any chance of making a quiet entrance.

"They're always getting bunched into a gaggle, especially at night. I think it's because they're scared," said Sgt. Adam Detato, 24, of Montoursville, Pa. "Between the language barrier and a lot of them having a fifth-grade education, it's hard to teach them our tactics."

In Hit, Strickland finally managed to get three of the Iraqi soldiers to help him with the checkpoint. The fourth remained in the shade, making hand gestures indicating that he needed a light for his cigarette. Within five minutes the other three were making frequent motions toward the sun and then in the direction of the base. "Finish?" they asked. "We finish?"

A Marine standing nearby suggested to Strickland that maybe the answer was to train Iraqis as traffic police, give them orange vests and have them do traffic stops on their own.

Strickland laughed. "Yeah, until the muj finds out the Americans gave them the vests; then they'll kill 'em," he said, referring to the insurgents by the Arabic word for "holy warrior," mujahedeen.

"When they have problems, these guys will just leave their uniforms and walk off."

U.S. Will Have Iraqis Trained In Only 100 Years

28 August 2005 By Frank Rich, The New York Times [Excerpts]

Mr. Bush's current definition - "as the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down" - could not be a better formula for quagmire.

Twenty-eight months after the fall of Saddam, only "a small number" of Iraqi troops are capable of fighting without American assistance, according to the Pentagon - a figure that Joseph Biden puts at "fewer than 3,000." At this rate, our 138,000 troops will be replaced by self-sufficient locals in roughly 100 years.

John McCain has talked about sending more troops to rectify our disastrous failure to secure the country, but he'll have to round them up himself door to door.

Lest any propaganda opportunity be missed, Arlington's gravestones are being branded with the Pentagon's slogans for military campaigns, like Operation Iraqi Freedom, The Associated Press reported last week - a historic first.

If only the administration had thought of doing the same on the fallen's coffins, it might have allowed photographs.

Even though their own poll numbers are in a race to the bottom with the president's, don't expect the Democrats to make a peep.

Republicans, their minds increasingly focused on November 2006, may well blink first.

In yet another echo of Vietnam, it's millions of voters beyond the capital who will force the timetable for our inexorable exit from Iraq.

Reuters Soundman Killed In Baghdad, Police Blame US; Dying Man Treated "Like Dog"

"They treated us like dogs. They made us, ... including Khaled who was wounded and asking for water, sit in the sun on the road," Reuters Television soundman Mohammed Idriss said.

28 Aug 2005 By Alastair Macdonald, Reuters

A Reuters Television soundman was shot dead in Baghdad on Sunday and a cameraman with him was wounded and then detained by U.S. soldiers.

Iraqi police said they had been shot by U.S. forces.

Waleed Khaled, 35, was hit by a shot to the face and at least four to the chest as he drove to check a report from police sources of an incident involving police and gunmen in the Hay al-Adil district, in the west of the city.

"A team from Reuters news agency was on assignment to cover the killing of two policemen in Hay al-Adil; U.S. forces opened fire on the team from Reuters and killed Waleed Khaled, who was shot in the head, and wounded Haider Kadhem," an Interior Ministry official quoted the police incident report as saying.

"I heard shooting, looked up and saw an American sniper on the roof of the shopping centre," cameraman Kadhem, who was wounded in the back, told colleagues who arrived at the scene.

The only known eyewitness, he was later detained by U.S. troops and was still in custody six hours later despite Reuters' requests that he be freed to receive medical attention. His precise whereabouts were not clear.

Two Iraqi colleagues who arrived on the scene minutes after the shooting were also briefly detained, then released.

"They treated us like dogs. They made us, ... including Khaled who was wounded and asking for water, sit in the sun on the road," Reuters Television soundman Mohammed Idriss said.

Reuters correspondent Michael Georgy, who arrived at the scene about an hour after the shooting, said the soundman's body was still in the driver's seat, the face covered by a cloth.

Entry and exit wounds could be seen on the face indicating shots from the victim's right. There were several bullet holes in the windscreen and at least four wounds in the chest.

His U.S. military and Reuters press cards, clipped to his shirt, were caked in blood. In one, there were two bullet holes.

To the right of the scene, a U.S. soldier, apparently a sniper, was posted on the roof of a shopping centre.

A British security adviser working for Reuters said it seemed likely that high-velocity rounds had been fired at the car from roughly the direction of that building.

The car, an ordinary, white four-door passenger vehicle, was heading down an offramp, about 200 metres from a main road.

U.S. armoured vehicles blocked off the scene. After a brief inspection of the car, they allowed Reuters staff and the dead man's family to have it towed away.

One soldier said there were no suspicious items in the car. Colleagues and relatives were handed a military body bag to remove the corpse.

As Waleed's tearful relatives inspected the body at the scene, a U.S. soldier said: "Don't bother. It's not worth it."

A few other soldiers joked among themselves just a few feet (metres) from the body.

Waleed was a jovial character loved by colleagues with whom he had worked for two years. He leaves a 7-year-old daughter and his wife, who is four months pregnant.

Reuters' cameraman in the city of Ramadi, Ali al-Mashhadani, was arrested by U.S. forces three weeks ago and is being held without charge in Abu Ghraib prison. U.S. military officials say he will face a judicial hearing as soon as Monday but have still given no access to the journalist or said what he is accused of.

MORE:

Occupation Holding Murdered Reuters Staff Members' Cameraman Prisoner In Secret Location; No Visits Allowed

"Our outrage is compounded by the fact that they arrested Kadhem, the only eyewitness, who was himself injured," it said.

Aug 29, 2005 By Alastair Macdonald, (Reuters)

Reuters demanded the immediate release on Monday of an Iraqi cameraman who was still being held by U.S. forces more than 24 hours after being wounded in an incident in which his soundman was killed.

The U.S. military said it was still investigating and refused to say what questions it was putting to cameraman Haider Kadhem. It would not say where in Baghdad he was held nor identify the unit holding him.

"Reuters demands the immediate release of Haider Kadhem," Global Managing Editor David Schlesinger said.

"We fail to understand what reason there can be for his continued detention more than a day after he was the innocent victim of an incident in which his colleague was killed."

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Whetstone, a military spokesman, said: "He is being questioned by our investigating officer." **[No, that lie won't cut it. A day of questioning a victim of a criminal act? Refusing to let anybody see him? "He is being kept from talking to anybody while we try to figure out some way to lie our worthless asses out of this cold blooded execution," would be the truth, but what Lt. Col. is going to tell the truth about a cold-blooded execution?]**

He said there were "inconsistencies" in Kadhem's statements and officers were looking into "events that led up to the incident". **No military investigator, however, had contacted Reuters, whose senior staff offered a full account of the assignment on which they dispatched the journalists shortly before they were shot.**

Reporters Without Borders, a Paris-based media rights group, called the shooting "extremely disturbing" and said the Reuters soundman was the 66th journalist or media assistant killed in Iraq since the invasion of 2003, three more than died in 20 years in Vietnam.

"Our outrage is compounded by the fact that they arrested Kadhem, the only eyewitness, who was himself injured," it said.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Whistleblower Who Exposed Bush Buddies War Fraud Thrown Out Of Her Job



Bunnatine H. Greenhouse, former chief contracting officer of the Army Corps of Engineers, is seen in her official undated government photo. Greenhouse, a high-ranking Army Corps of Engineers official who publicly criticized the Pentagon's decision to award Halliburton Co. a no-bid contract for work in Iraq, has been demoted officials said Monday, Aug. 29, 2005. **She was removed, effective Saturday, for what Corps of Engineers officials called a poor job performance.** (AP Photo/HO, file)

The failure to abide by the agreement and the circumstances of the removal "are the hallmark of illegal retaliation," Kohn wrote to Rumsfeld. He said the review Strock cited to justify his action "was conducted by the very subjects" of Greenhouse's allegations, including the general.

August 29, 2005 By Griff Witte, Washington Post Staff Writer & By Robert Burns, Associated Press & Erik Eckholm, The New York Times

A high-level contracting official who has been a vocal critic of the Pentagon's decision to give Halliburton Co. a multibillion-dollar, no-bid contract for work in Iraq, was removed from her job by the Army Corps of Engineers, effective Saturday.

Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, commander of the Army Corps, told Bunnatine H. Greenhouse last month that she was being removed from the senior executive service, the top rank of civilian government employees, because of poor performance reviews. [Only if her job includes kissing his worthless scrawny ass.]

Greenhouse's attorney, Michael D. Kohn, appealed the decision Friday in a letter to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, saying it broke an earlier commitment to suspend the demotion until a "sufficient record" was available to address her allegations.

"Her removal will send a message to all concerned that if they dare stand up to corrupting influences within the Army contracting world their careers will be destroyed," he added.

The Army said last October that it would refer her complaints to the Defense Department's inspector general.

The failure to abide by the agreement and the circumstances of the removal "are the hallmark of illegal retaliation," Kohn wrote to Rumsfeld. He said the review Strock cited to justify his action "was conducted by the very subjects" of Greenhouse's allegations, including the general.

Known as a stickler for the rules on competition, Ms. Greenhouse initially received stellar performance ratings, Mr. Kohn said. But her reviews became negative at roughly the time she began objecting to decisions she saw as improperly favoring Kellogg Brown & Root, he said.

Greenhouse came to prominence last year when she went public with her concerns over the volume of Iraq-related work given to Halliburton by the Corps without competition. The Houston-based oil services giant already had a competitively awarded contract to provide logistics support for the military in the Middle East and was awarded a no-bid contract to repair Iraq oil fields on the eve of the war there in 2003.

"I can unequivocally state that the abuse related to contracts awarded to KBR represents the most blatant and improper abuse I have witnessed" in 20 years working on government contracts, Greenhouse said

When superiors overruled her objections to awarding the contract to KBR without competition, she recorded her concerns by writing next to her signature on the contract a warning that the length of the deal could convey the perception that limited competition was intended.

As Greenhouse became more vocal internally, she said she was increasingly excluded from decisions and shunned by her bosses.

Received:

Louisiana Guard Hurricane Relief Hampered By Lack Of Equipment?

From: Tom Condit; www.peaceandfreedom.org
To: GI Special
Sent: August 29, 2005
Subject: Hurricane and Louisiana National Guard

On Amy Goodman's "Democracy Now" show this morning, she said in passing that the Louisiana National Guard (didn't say "who" specifically) was complaining that their hurricane relief efforts are hampered by the fact that much of their equipment -- in particular the high-wheeled "swamp buggy" style of Humvees -- had been shipped to Iraq.

I don't know how to follow up on this, but you might check for leads.

Tom Condit

REPLY: Does anybody have further information about this? T

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 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. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators.** Go to: 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.