

GI SPECIAL 3C43A:

THE MOST FRIGHTENING SIGHT AN IMPERIAL PRESIDENT CAN SEE, FOR NOW



Kellisa Stanley, wife of Fort Hood soldier, speaks against the war, with honor guard. Camp Casey, Crawford, Texas. By Jeff Paterson, Not in Our Name Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005 at 10:21 PM. jeff@paterson.net

“I’m So Angry At Our President, I Can’t Even Stand To Look At Him,” She Said.

When he tries to shoot a basketball – an activity he once loved – the ball sputters to the ground. He bellows at the therapist who came up with the idea.

“They keep wanting me to try things they think I might enjoy. But I don’t enjoy life now. To me, this is not living,” he said.

09.04.2005 By Carol Ann Alaimo, ARIZONA DAILY STAR

RIO RICO – There’s a sound Maria Castillo can’t get out of her mind since her son was nearly killed in Iraq.

It’s the awful sound of mothers weeping for their maimed sons and daughters in the corridors of Walter Reed Army Hospital .

“The nurses tell you not to cry in front of the patients, so the mothers go out in the hall,” said Castillo, a reservations agent at American Airlines in Tucson.

Thirteen months have passed since her son, Army Spc. Erik Castillo, was hit by mortar fire while on convoy duty in Baghdad, leaving a grapefruit-size hole in his skull that likely would have killed him had it happened in a different era.

The wounds left him looking like a Picasso painting, with asymmetrical eyes and other facial features. Despite several surgeries and months of grueling therapy, the 22-year-old is deaf and disfigured on his right side and lame on his left, with no chance of complete recovery.

His laid-back personality is gone, too, replaced by an angry streak doctors say is typical in survivors of severe head trauma. At this point, they don’t know when – or if – his old temperament will return.

“It breaks my heart to see him suffering like this,” said Maria Castillo, 39.

The pain was so great that she started abusing alcohol and later took anti-depressants as the enormity of her son’s situation sank in.

A single mother, she blames herself because she pushed her middle child to enlist for college money about a year before the war in Iraq began.

“Can you imagine how I feel?” she asked, her voice hoarse as she fought tears in her kitchen in this small community, 50 miles south of Tucson.

When the Army provided grief counseling to help her cope, she sat in the therapist’s office and raged.

“I would cry and yell at the doctor: ‘The person in that bed is not my son! I want my son back, the one I had before this happened.’”

Afterward, she would sit alone in the hospital cafeteria, paralyzed by churning emotions.

“I would look at the walls and think, ‘My God, am I ever going to wake up from this nightmare?’ “

Erik Castillo does not remember much about the attack that turned him into someone else.

The day started as normally as any can in a war zone, with the sound of killing and conflict in the distance as he stood atop a parking garage outside one of Saddam Hussein's palaces.

An artilleryman trained to fire a howitzer, he instead found himself assigned to convoy duty when he arrived in Baghdad with the 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas.

Soldiering did not come naturally to him, Erik Castillo said. He chafed at the rigors of military discipline, the lack of personal freedom and the seeming pettiness of some superiors.

When the war began in Iraq, he worried about being sent overseas.

"I was nervous, and all kinds of things were going through my head," he said. "I remember thinking, 'I hope I come back in one piece.'"

But he steeled himself against such thoughts, determined to do more with his life than lie around his mother's house.

That's about all he'd been doing since he graduated from Rio Rico High School in 2001, he said. By enlisting for three years, he could get the military to pay for his college education.

"Just because it was hard, I wasn't going to let that stop me," he said of Army life.

That was how he came to be in the path of an incoming mortar round on July 27, 2004. It hit him as he was inspecting the Humvee he was supposed to drive that day.

Three weeks later, he awoke to a reality more grim than any he had pictured before going to war.

He was imprisoned in an immobile body. He drooled constantly, could not talk, swallow or move anything except his right index finger.

His parents, long divorced, were in the room with him at Walter Reed, in Washington, D.C. Gradually, they and doctors told him that about 40 percent of his cranium was gone. Even with the best care, he would never be his old self.

"When I was alone in my room, I would cry to myself, just knowing my life would never be the same," he said.

"To go from running two miles a day and lifting weights to not being able to move your body, it was hard for me to understand that."

The months since have been a blur of pain, and of progress measured in baby steps as he struggles to regain speech and recapture some mobility. Medically discharged by the Army, he'll have his hospital bills and living expenses covered for life.

His face and skull are mostly reconstructed now, though several more surgeries are ahead. His right hand and foot work, but his left hand and foot are limp from damage to

the right side of his brain, which controls movement on the left half of the body. Doctors say it will take several more months before they'll know how much function will return.

Once mild-mannered and quiet, Castillo now lashes out when stymied by small tasks.

At the Phoenix rehab home where he now lives, he tries to stick a straw into a foil drink pouch with his good hand, but misses, and liquid squirts out.

When he tries to shoot a basketball – an activity he once loved – the ball sputters to the ground. He bellows at the therapist who came up with the idea.

“They keep wanting me to try things they think I might enjoy. But I don’t enjoy life now. To me, this is not living,” he said.

Doctors have given him anti-depressants to combat the feelings, but he still flies off the handle. He can't seem to help it.

“I have a short fuse now,” he said. “I get mad at any little thing.”

His anger often is aimed at his mother – the person who has been at his side through the worst days and nights of his life.

“She was there for me,” Castillo said. “She stayed with me for almost a year, 22 or 23 hours a day. She would sleep in the room with me, take a shower and then come back.”

Yet as soon as he could talk again, his first words were an expletive-laced “Shut up!” directed at his mom, he said.

“My doctor told me, ‘You and your family better get used to it, because this is how you’re going to be for a while’ until I learn to control it.”

Her son’s temper is troubling for Maria Castillo, a source of depression that drove her to drink last spring when she was sleeping for weeks at a time on a recliner near her son’s hospital bed at Walter Reed.

During one bad spell, she said, he grabbed her fingers and twisted them so hard it hurt.

So when she met another mother at Walter Reed who was sneaking wine into the hospital, the two would drink to try to forget their woes, she said.

As weeks passed, it became a habit – drinking “enough to get me drunk” in the hospital or at dinner during the rare times she ventured to a restaurant.

Disgusted with herself, she said, she quit boozing after a few months but became so downhearted that doctors prescribed anti-depressants.

The drugs numbed her, made her feel half alive, she said, so she eventually quit them, too.

“I couldn’t cry anymore,” she said of the impact of the pills. “Now, I let myself cry when I need to. I allow myself to grieve.”

She still struggles not to let her son's outbursts bother her. But on bad days, she feels like an emotional punching bag.

"I get so tired sometimes," she said. "Sometimes, I just feel like I want to run away."

Such scenes are not unusual in military families coping with brain trauma, said Harriet Zeiner, a clinical neuropsychologist at the veterans hospital in Palo Alto, Calif. There, dozens of soldiers, including Erik Castillo, have been treated for head injuries in recent years.

Patients with frontal lobe damage, like Erik Castillo, often are unable to self-edit their speech and will say whatever comes to mind even if it's hurtful or inappropriate, Zeiner said. She calls it "gumballing" – when thoughts leave the brain at random, the way a gumball drops when someone puts a quarter in a machine.

"A lot of us think things that we don't actually say because our frontal lobes allow us to keep our mouths shut," she said. "You might want to tell your mother to shut up, but you don't. But a brain-injured person will say it. It's as if they are thinking out loud."

"One of the things I am really impressed with is the basic resilience of the human being," she said. "These are all people to whom something terrible has happened. Their dreams have been crushed, and yet all of them, including Erik, keep struggling, keep trying to be better, keep trying to create new dreams."

"It makes you realize what the essence of a human being is. When we are stripped down, we are rather noble."

Maria Castillo does not feel noble. But she is determined to stay strong, not just for Erik, but for her other children, 13-year-old Israel and 22-year-old Gerardo Jr., who recently moved from Rio Rico to Phoenix to be near his brother.

Community support has been a big comfort to the family.

For example, colleagues at American Airlines pitched in and covered Maria Castillo's shifts for much of the past year while she spent days at her son's side. A group of Hispanic veterans from the Silvestre S. Herrera Veterans Council in Phoenix covered her car payments and other bills when she missed work.

Maria Castillo said she would like to believe her son's sacrifice and her family's suffering was meaningful on a larger scale, that the Iraq War was a just cause that will make the world safer.

But she does not think so.

She believes America went to war without adequate justification because the president wanted revenge on Saddam Hussein, who reportedly once tried to have the elder President Bush killed.

"I'm so angry at our president, I can't even stand to look at him," she said.

Her son is not so willing to discard the idea that the war eventually may bring positive changes to the Middle East.

Erik Castillo said the sweetness of the Iraqi children he met gave him hope that future generations might not be as bitter toward the United States.

“The reasons might not be easy to see now,” he said. “But later on, maybe something good will come of all these people dying.”

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

2nd BCT “Maybe The Hardest Hit I’ve Seen”

September 05, 2005 By Gina Cavallaro, Army Times staff writer. [Excerpt]

FORT CARSON, Colo. — Pressing out their rumpled uniforms with the palms of their hands, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team soldiers disembarked from the chartered Airbus 300 into a noonday sun.

Home from Iraq.

Sixty-two 2nd BCT soldiers were killed in combat during the year the unit worked under the Marine Corps in the violent city of Ramadi, 75 miles west of Baghdad. Another six were lost in non-combat deaths and more than 350 were wounded.

Col. Heidi Terrio, chief of deployment health at Evans Army Community Hospital who has been on the job in the Carson SRP for two years and has processed thousands of post-combat soldiers, said the 2nd BCT “is one of the hardest hit units ... maybe the hardest hit I’ve seen.”

TROOP NEWS

Sir! No Sir!: “A Shattering Documentary Of Vietnam- Era GI Resistance”

JoAnn Wypijewski, September/October 2005 Issue, MotherJones [Excerpt]

Sir! No Sir!, a shattering documentary by David Zeiger expected to be in theaters by year's end, provides many of the statistics of Vietnam-era GI resistance cited above.

More, it discloses the soul of soldiers, in story after story, who thought about their life, about everything they'd believed about fair play and honor and being a man and saw it negated, cynically; who realized, as former Air Force linguist Tom Bernard says in the film, that "the lies were so stark it challenged your own dignity, it challenged your own loyalty, it challenged your own humanity."

Iraq veterans are coming home with some of the same conclusions and nightmares.

Few talk about this publicly, but a caution to a young brother or sister, an unaccustomed silence or strange anger, and word travels. Murphy says that 50 to 70 percent of the kids he addresses say they know someone who's in the military, in Iraq, or just returned.

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.

New Orleans: **“The Troops Had Found Their Mission. It Just Wasn't What They Thought It Was Going To Be”**

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

September 3, 2005 By Scott Gold, L.A. Times Staff Writer

NEW ORLEANS — Forty-four troops pressed together in their truck, swaying as one at every bump and turn like reeds in a river.

As they plunged into the dark water engulfing the business district of New Orleans, their wake pushed the body of a woman onto the steps of the Superdome. The floodwater had ripped her pants down to her knees. She was facedown in the muck, a red ribbon still tied neatly around her graying hair.

The troops, members of an elite Special Response Team from the Louisiana Army National Guard, were the first convoy out of what was rapidly becoming a massive military staging ground.

Their mission, simply, is to turn New Orleans into a police state — to "regain the city," 1st Sgt. John Jewell said.

The truck lurched through the streets, past buildings burning unabated and MPs in gun turrets. When they stopped to gear up for their arrival at the New Orleans Convention Center, where more than 15,000 people had been living in squalor since Katrina, these words echoed — for the first time, one would imagine — through the intersection of Poydras Avenue and Carondelet Street: "Lock and load!"

"Sixteen in the clip!" one Guardsman shouted, a common refrain used to indicate that rifles are fully loaded.

But when they arrived, they did not find marauding mobs. They did not come under fire. They found people who had lost everything in the storm and, since then, their dignity.

The troops were part of the Superdome team that came to town before the hurricane. For days, they had been cut off from news reports, sleeping and working among the refugees and the vicious rumor mill at the Superdome.

Their Superdome duties left them with a terrible image of the city. They knew that out on the streets, a police officer had been shot in the head, that looting was widespread, that snipers were taking shots even at boaters trying to rescue victims from rooftops and attics.

Their mission was to establish a command post at the center, which officials have increasingly turned their attention to, particularly as the evacuation of the Superdome nears its end. They would then build a staging area to bring in food and water. Finally, they would send in teams to seize control of a massive and lawless facility.

The troops braced for the worst.

"Is this the calm before the storm?" one asked as they rolled through the streets.

"There are a lot of gangs out here in the water," said Sgt. 1st Class Maris Pichon, a 26-year veteran of the National Guard who served in Afghanistan last year. "This is not going to be a cakewalk."

Two trucks pulled beside them, one carrying water and one a massive pile of ready-to-eat military meals in boxes.

"Tell me they're not letting the food go in before the troops," one Guardsman said.

"That's called bait," another said.

They pulled into a parking lot next to the convention center in full battle mode. They spilled over the sides of the truck, formed a tight circle and began walking outward,

stepping over the detritus of the refugees. Dirty underwear. A CD that included the song "Thank God I'm a Country Boy."

A troop carrier rolled over an empty water bottle, popping it like a balloon. The troops yanked their weapons to a firing position before realizing what it was.

"No civilians in this parking lot!" a sergeant shouted. "Hold your perimeter!"

No one came at them but a nurse. She was wearing a T-shirt that read "I love New Orleans." She ran down a broken escalator, then held her hands in the air when she saw the guns.

"We have sick kids up here!" she shouted. "We have dehydrated kids! One kid with sickle cell!"

Another storm victim, Cory Williams, 50, a respiratory therapist spending his third day at the convention center, greeted the troops as they came up the stairs.

He had ridden out the storm at his 9th Ward house. On Tuesday morning, when the flooding began in earnest, 6 feet of water came inside in five minutes, he said. He tried to stay on top of a car in the garage but the water continued to rise, so he made a run for it, dragging several neighbors out behind him on an inflatable raft as he swam, then waded, through the water.

He made it several miles west, toward downtown and higher ground, then watched police stop at gunpoint a Ryder van that had been hot-wired by thieves. The officers told the men inside that they had to stop looting and must try to get people out of the neighborhoods, that people were dying.

"Believe it or not, those dudes got the message," Williams said.

The thieves began ferrying people out of the devastated neighborhoods to the east. The police had deputized looters.

"They had to," Williams said. "There was no other way to get people out."

The thieves dropped him off at the convention center, where he stayed until the troops arrived.

People at the convention center had received a single deposit of food and water, dropped from a helicopter, since Katrina's strike. The drop caused a riot; Williams, an Army veteran, said he feared the people clambering onto the pallet of food as it neared the ground were going to pull the helicopter into the parking lot. The craft never returned.

Children slept on laps and on the ground. There was an elderly emphysema patient. A diabetic. The boy suffering from sickle cell anemia, his eyes puffy and his skin yellowish-brown.

The troops arrived Friday, ready for anything.

"You've got to do something," said the nurse in the New Orleans T-shirt.

"We'll get you some help as soon as some people get here," Lt. James Magee said as the troops arrived. "OK?"

Inside, human waste covered the floor. An elderly woman tumbled out of her wheelchair and landed on the ground. Her housedress was soiled. A man had poured fruit punch into an industrial-size bottle of floor cleaner and was drinking it with a straw.

"If you kept a dog in an environment like this, they would arrest you for animal cruelty," said Cindy Davis, 39, the nurse, who had been separated from her group while caring for a patient and stranded at the convention center three days ago. "It's like a cesspool."

Frankie Estes, 80, said she was glad to finally see the troops. It was a glimmer of hope. Friday night marked her fifth night sleeping on the sidewalk in front of the center.

"I haven't had food or water for three days," she said. "I didn't know if I was going to make it."

By Friday night, dinner had been served to a seemingly endless line of refugees. Helicopters had begun descending on the convention center, airlifting the most critically ill.

The troops had found their mission. It just wasn't what they thought it was going to be.

“What Happened To MOBILITY???? What Happened To HUMANITARIAN AIRLIFT????”

Via Anita

Sent: September 04, 2005

Subject: Veterans For Peace Discussion: **From a Tampa Bay Veterans for Peace
Chapter 119 Member**

Dear Tax-Paying Veterans and Friends –

**For 25 years, I was of the belief that my USAF uniform was worn for the people
who were paying me - Mr and Mrs American taxpayer.**

Just as you did, I watched in horror, day after day, the "tax-paying citizens" of New Orleans, Biloxi, Gulfport and communities in between, begging for any help they could get. BEGGING FOR THEIR LIVES.

Keesler AFB was in Katrina's bullseye, taking a major hit - EXCEPT FOR THE RUNWAY. So all last week I am having flashbacks of my time in the USAF blue uniform.

Between wars, I was in command and control units in the Air National Guard. MOBILITY was my middle name. Every year we practiced instant mobilizations, where we had to deploy our radar site in Air Force aircraft - get this - IN 2 DAYS from the time of notification.

Before and after Desert Storm, I was in an Air Force Reserve search and rescue unit in Portland, Oregon. MOBILITY was my middle name. This was a full time mission assigned to the Air Force Reserve. Our helicopter and C-130 crews deployed on A MOMENT'S NOTICE to pluck people off mountains, out of swollen rivers, out of the forests - some injured, some not, some dead.

Lives were risked to go into the blast zone to save people from the erupting Mt. St. Helens. We flew para-rescuers to Homestead, FL to save victims of Hurricane Andrew. We flew rescuers to San Francisco after the killer earthquakes in Oakland.

None of these people had to ask to be saved. THIS WAS OUR JOB. We mobilized on A MOMENT'S NOTICE. That was the name of our unit's newspaper. I was the PAO that produced it and worked with the media who covered the courageous deeds of my colleagues.

I spent my last 6 years working full time for the USAFR in California airlift units. MOBILITY was my middle name. The aircraft in my units flew HUMANITARIAN AIRLIFT missions.

We flew water purifications systems and medical help to refugees in Rwanda. We flew water delivery systems and medical help to the refugees in Somalia. We flew canine search teams to Oklahoma City after the bombings.

We airlifted and air-dropped food and supplies to North Dakota after a killer blizzard. MOBILITY was our game, and when we took off, you can be sure that help was on the way.

SHOCK and AWE describes me now. I am in total SHOCK over how our Gulf Coast neighbors - TAX-PAYERS who pay for our military forces -- were left to suffer and die, day after day.

What happened to MOBILITY???? What happened to HUMANITARIAN AIRLIFT????

Then there's AWE - as in "awe shit" after I received the Keesler AFB damage report from a group of former USAF radar operators and ground controllers. I went to tech school at Keesler in 1972 at the height of the Cambodian bombing raids, to be trained to tell fight

But the "awe-shit" reaction was not because of flashbacks to that other war.

It was in knowing that RESCUE and MOBILITY and HUMANITARIAN AIRLIFT into and out of Keesler AFB was possible before and after Katrina.

These assets could have been staged somewhere nearby, gee - like at Scott AFB in Illinois - HEADQUARTERS FOR THE USAF'S AIR MOBILITY COMMAND - and then flown in to Keesler.

There could have been a MASS EVAC out of Keesler after the 'cane. The Air Force practices these every day, all over the world.

I am too emotional to write to the folks at the Air Mobility Command or anywhere else. But I have included the string of addresses from those who were sending around the Keesler Damage Report.

I urge you to write to them, to your congressional leaders, to anyone that could make a difference.

Ask them what the hell they spent our Gulf Coast neighbor's tax dollars on, because we know it sure wasn't them. And tell them I sent you.

Debra K. Hedding, Major, USAFR, retired
Vietnam, Desert Storm, Cold War
VFP Chapter 119 - Tampa Bay
Mom, citizen, tax-payer

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)

Recruiter Father “Comes Home So Angry And Stressed Out All The Time Because He's Lying To These Kids”

JoAnn Wypijewski, September/October 2005 Issue, MotherJones [Excerpt]

A Jamaican kid named Conrad ("just Conrad") tells me about a student he met whose father is a recruiter. Recruiters don't necessarily choose the job; they're assigned because they're good talkers, good looking, and this father "comes home so angry and stressed out all the time because he's lying to these kids."

Whatever their dream, he's got to pitch the Army as the highway to it.

And then Conrad remembers something a returned soldier told him. There was this Iraqi whom everyone in the platoon knew, and knew his name, but "they call him hadji, and everyone in Iraq is hadji." In Vietnam, "they called them gooks," Conrad says, recalling what his history teacher, a vet, had told him. "And I was like-wow-that's a racist name, there's no moral attachment so you can just kill them," which is what that teacher has been carrying for 30-some years.

When I met Conrad, he was with a citywide group called the YA-YA Network (for Youth Activists, Youth Allies), which runs counter-recruitment workshops for teenagers and won the legal right to leaflet outside schools. YA-YA doesn't lecture about hegemony; it explains the job of the soldier at this time and place.

"That's where it starts," says Dave Cline, reviewing his own trajectory from grunt in Vietnam to war protester to president of Veterans for Peace.

WHY?



Tomas Young, wounded in Iraq the same day Casey Sheehan was killed. With Iraq Veterans Against The War and Cindy Sheehan, at Camp Casey, Crawford, Texas. By Jeff Paterson, Not in Our Name, Aug. 30, 2005 at 10:21 PM.
jeff@paterson.net

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Kirkuk Oil Exports Halted After Rebel Attack

09.04.2005 (AFX)

Oil exports from Iraq's northern fields were completely halted yesterday following a rebel attack on a major pipeline west of the oil centre of Kirkuk, an Iraqi oil industry official told Agence France-Presse.

'We have some interruption in the pipeline. There are no exports at all right now,' the official said on condition of anonymity.

He said he had 'no idea' when exports might resume since the scale of the damage had not yet been assessed.

An official in charge of oil installation protection said the explosion occurred after insurgents ignited an oil leak.

'Rebels set fire to some crude oil that was leaking from the pipeline. The fire then engulfed the pipeline, setting off an explosion,' said Captain Ali Obeidi.

The pipeline links the four Kirkuk oilfields to the Baiji refinery 200 kilometres (125 miles) north of Baghdad.

Assorted Resistance Action

04 September 2005 Aljazeera & Reuters & The Manila Standard & PRAVDA

Five soldiers were shot dead in an ambush in the town of Siniyah, near Baiji, about 200km north of Baghdad, Army Captain Ali Yussef told AFP on Sunday.

A police officer was killed and two wounded when a car bomber blew himself up at a checkpoint leading into Iskandariyah, 60km south of the capital, police Lieutenant Saad al-Handani said.

KIRKUK - An Iraqi army lieutenant was shot dead by armed fighters in central Kirkuk, 250 km (150 miles) north of Baghdad, on Saturday, police said.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said she has received a call from Ron Bartolome, the country's welfare officer in Kuwait, confirming reports that a Filipino worker has been lying comatose in a hospital there for the past three days after suffering from third degree burns and gunshot wounds.

"The report is still sketchy but from what we have gathered, the OFW's name is Jorge Cahiyang. He has been airlifted from Iraq and is in comatose condition in a hospital in Kuwait," Sto. Tomas said in an interview.

Armed fighters also abducted three Iraqi contractors after they left the U.S.-run Taji air base some 10 miles (16 kilometers) north of Baghdad, police Lt. Miqdad al-Khazragi said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**"There is no flag large enough to cover the shame of needless death."
Grant E. Remington**

"Cheeseburgers And Water"

A village idiot should have been able to figure out those water trailers should have been the first thing brought in to the Superdome, and the Convention Center.

I saw them used in Vietnam, very simple operation. Very easy to fly in. VERY SIMPLE TO FLY IN BY HELICOPTER. We Americans need to ask why " Water Buffaloes " were not brought in within the first few hours after the storm stopped.

From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: September 04, 2005

I can't believe what is going on in America. George Bush should have plastic handcuffs on by now.

The U.S. government better build gigantic levees around the White House, because "Gestapo George," will not be safe anywhere.

There is more anger in this country right now, than has ever been in the history of America. When the dust settles, there are going to be some bad things happen. If Bush survives this, he will survive anything.

The mask of racism has been removed for all to see. I expect some rioting. I do not see how it can be avoided. The dominoes are falling.

If I was a black soldier in Iraq, I would be livid, especially if I was from the Hurricane George area.

Lets see if the levees hold in Washington, D.C. The anti-war rally in three weeks is going to be very tense. We should all carry water bottles, with "WHY" written on them.

Watching the news from Hurricane George, I never saw a Chinook Helicopter with a Water Buffalo hanging from it. Probably most of those helicopters and water tanks, are in Iraq.

A village idiot should have been able to figure out those water trailers should have been the first thing brought in to the Superdome, and the Convention Center.

I saw them used in Vietnam, very simple operation. Very easy to fly in. VERY SIMPLE TO FLY IN BY HELICOPTER. We Americans need to ask why " Water Buffaloes " were not brought in within the first few hours after the storm stopped.

Cheese burgers could have been brought in by helicopters, especially near the Superdome, and Convention Center. Cheese burgers and water would have saved a lot of lives.

This is not rocket science. When I was in Vietnam, this would have been a no-brainer.

CHEESE BURGERS AND WATER!!!! You can stay alive for a long time with, CHEESE BURGERS AND WATER.

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran**

Just Wondering

From: Z
To: GI Special
Sent: September 04, 2005 5:47 PM
Subject: just wondering

Who killed more Americans, Osama and his gang through criminal attack or Dubya and his gang through criminal neglect?

“Why Are They Shooting At Us?” The Decent Soldier Has To Wonder

September 3, 2005 GARY LEUPP, CounterPunch [Excerpt]

"Hell no, I'm not glad to see them. They should have been here days ago. I ain't glad to see 'em, I'll be glad when 100 buses show up," said Michael Levy, whose words were echoed by those around him yelling, "Hell, yeah! Hell, yeah!" "We've been sleeping on the ... ground like rats," Levy said.

"I say burn this whole ... city down."

Meanwhile Spc. Cliff Ferguson of the 527th Engineer Battalion says that violent reactions of New Orleans residents to the Guard are "making a lot of us think about not reenlisting." Ferguson said. "You have to think about whether it is worth risking your neck for someone who will turn around and shoot at you. We didn't come here to fight a war. We came here to help."

Just like in Somalia. Just like in Iraq. "Why are they shooting at us?" the decent soldier has to wonder.

"Our mission is just to restore order and help these people."

The problem is, a lot of people associate the U.S. military with wealth and power, invasions, cruelty, arrogance, indifference to human life.

They don't think oppressors can be saviors, so like the Michael Levy quoted above, they're not cheering the arrival of the cavalry.

While the federal government failed to take action to help the flooded city, people waiting for the buses and for some justice in this world took matters into their own hands, producing what the Army Times calls "a full state of anarchy."

Levy's call to burn the city down recalls the "Burn, baby, burn" slogan of the Watts riots in 1965.

Oppressed people rose up and in unfocused rage wound up incinerating their own neighborhood.

This was the action of people who had nothing to lose, and who really hated the system under which they lived. The system that alienated them continues to breed resistance 40 years later.

Of course, the city's not the problem, and you can't burn down what's already under water. The system itself is the problem---a system looking as vulnerable as the City that Care Forgot. "Hell yeah," say its victims, in an incendiary mood. In a looting mood, savoring the system's collapse.

"I'm gonna get my share of what's mine." Jimmy Cliff's "The Harder they Come" keeps running around in my head as I watch images of looting, or read in my morning paper about how it's become routine for the Superdome refugees to foray out in the mornings to help themselves to food and beverages in the surrounding shops.

Why not?

And when the troops come in and say, "No, those things don't belong to you," why say, "Yes sir, thanks for finally showing up to restore order"?

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.

“I Guess I Was Sleeping When Iraq Marched Into Czechoslovakia And Poland?”

From: David Honish, Veterans For Peace
To: GI Special
Sent: August 31, 2005

[Personal Message: I guess I was sleeping when Iraq marched into Czechoslovakia and Poland? To paraphrase Lloyd Bentsen, Mr. Bush, I didn't know FDR, and FDR was not a friend of mine, but Mr. Bush, YOU'RE NO FDR!]

Bush Calls Iraq War Moral Equivalent Of Allies' WWII Fight Against the Axis

8.30.05 By Peter Baker and Josh White

CORONADO, Calif., Aug. 30 -- Invoking the spirit of Franklin D. Roosevelt, President Bush on Tuesday cast the war in Iraq as the modern-day moral equivalent of the struggle against Nazi fascism and Japanese imperialism in World War II, arguing that the United States cannot retreat without disastrous consequences.

OCCUPATION REPORT

“Women's Social Rights Are Not Critical To The Evolution Of Democracy”

Another plus: Ayatollah al-Sistani is antichoice. According to his website, sistani.org, even a rape victim can have an abortion only if her relatives would murder her for getting pregnant. So Iraqi fetuses are all set.

Sept. 3, 2005 Katha Pollitt, The Nation [Excerpt]

So now we know what "noble cause" Cindy Sheehan's son died for in Iraq: Sharia.

It's a good thing W stands for women, or I'd be worried.

The new Constitution, drafted under heavy pressure from the administration, sets aside the secular personal law under which Iraqis have lived for nearly half a century in favor of theocracy lite.

We don't yet know what any of this means concretely, but if Iraq turns out to resemble Iran--and boosting Iran's regional influence was another thing Casey Sheehan died for--women have a lot to look forward to: being married off at the age of 9, being a co-wife, having unequal rights to divorce and child custody, inheriting half as much as their brothers, having their testimony in court counted as half that of men, winning a rape conviction only if the crime was witnessed by four male Muslims, being imprisoned and flogged for premarital sex, being executed for adultery, needing mandatory permission from husband or father to work, study or travel.

Bush supporters who find any of this disturbing--hello?

Independent Women's Forum-can console themselves with the thought that, as former CIA official Reuel Marc Gerecht said on Meet the Press, "women's social rights are not critical to the evolution of democracy."

Another plus: Ayatollah al-Sistani is antichoice.

According to his website, sistani.org, even a rape victim can have an abortion only if her relatives would murder her for getting pregnant. So Iraqi fetuses are all set.

It always seemed a little strange to me that Bush was carrying the standard of secularism and pluralism and women's rights in the Muslim world when he is so keen against all three here at home.

In the liberal hawks' fantasy war, Bush was the love child of Mary Wollstonecraft and Voltaire, striding forth to battle the combined forces of Osama bin Laden and Jacques Derrida.

Sometimes I thought that to Bush, as an evangelical Christian, even the Enlightenment was better than Islam, the rival faith.

But given the way things are turning out, it's clear that Bush's world is big enough for two kinds of religious mania: America gets creationism, Iraqis get Sharia.

Fundamentalists get both countries, and women get the shaft.

New Iraq Constitution Has Actually *Less* Protection of Women's Rights



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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

The Empty Suit

September 3, 2005 Ed Naha, SmirkingChimp.com [Excerpt]

The President appears on the tube and tells us to just hang in there. Whoo-hooo. Go team.

In a photo op in Mobile on Friday, Bush basically phoned it in. Confronted by chaos, he returned to his Bible of braying bromides, saying that everything was going to be fine. We should love our neighbors the way we want to be loved ourselves and he talked

about compassion. By speech's end, he seemed to be on the verge of breaking out into "The sun'll come out tomorrow," from the Broadway musical "Annie."

He later hit Mississippi (hugging a lot) and flew over New Orleans, finally taking to the podium at Louis Armstrong airport and declaring "And may God continue to bless this country."

Um, if this is a blessing, what exactly would you consider a curse?

THE TRAITOR: "He rots the soul of a nation."



(Jason Reed/Reuters)

Marcus Tullius Cicero observed:

"A nation can survive its fools & even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within.

"An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known & he carries his banners openly. But the traitor moves among those within the gates freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of govt. itself.

"For the traitor appears not traitor: He speaks in the accents familiar to his victims & he wears their face & their garments & he appeals to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of all men.

"He rots the soul of a nation.

"He works secretly & unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of a city; he infects the body politic so that it can no longer resist.

"A murderer is less to be feared".

New Orleans Citizens Urgently Need More Weapons For Self- Defense: Murderous Maniacs On The Loose: A First Hand Report

[Thanks to Liz Burbank for posting.]

After 15 minutes, the last of more than 350 images shot by Oleniuk depicted officers delivering a fierce beating to the two suspects, an assault so fearsome one of the suspects defecated.

09/02/05 By Tim Harper, Toronto Star, WASHINGTON BUREAU

NEW ORLEANS – I wheeled the car around and headed back to the scene of the shooting, looking for Toronto Star photographer Lucas Oleniuk, when the officer turned, spotted me and pointed the shotgun right at the windshield.

“Stop the car right now. Back up, or I’ll shoot,” he screamed.

A couple of others cocked their weapons and trained their guns on the car, purpose in their eyes.

Instinctively, I raised my hands above the wheel and gunned the Pontiac in reverse over fallen tree limbs and debris in the street.

This was our indoctrination into a Big Easy that’ll never make a picture postcard.

Minutes earlier, as Oleniuk and I first saw downtown New Orleans looming after a long odyssey to get into the locked-down city, he shouted at me to stop when he spotted armed officers crouched behind a cruiser, training their guns on an apartment block.

His welcome to the besieged city came the second he left the vehicle when three shots rang out — a quick “pop-pop-pop.” Oleniuk stumbled behind a lamppost for protection and began shooting photos.

In seconds, as many as 40 officers sped to the scene, most in marked cars — but one in a Kinko’s van — some of whom set up behind Oleniuk, their guns aimed over his left shoulder.

Others, guns drawn, shouted at me to get out of the way.

Realizing he was in the line of fire, Oleniuk raced for cover behind a cruiser and worked alongside a group of police as they fired into the building.

After 15 minutes, the last of more than 350 images shot by Oleniuk depicted officers delivering a fierce beating to the two suspects, an assault so fearsome one of the suspects defecated.

Realizing their frontier justice had been captured for posterity, the police turned on the photographer, one ripping a camera from his neck with such force it broke its shoulder strap.

Another grabbed a second camera and, somewhere in the melee, Oleniuk's press pass was ripped from his neck.

The officers fumbled with the cameras, finally pulling out the memory cards with the photos.

Oleniuk pleaded for the return of his cameras, was rebuffed, then, after retreating about a block, approached them again and asked for his cameras back.

One of the officers who had been hunkered down with Oleniuk during the 15-minute shootout said he could have his cameras, but when he asked again for his pictures, he was gruffly told: "If you don't get your ass out of here, I'm going to break your motherf---ing jaw."

In the chaos that is New Orleans, police menacingly pointed loaded weapons at me four times, and Oleniuk and I watched later when four officers armed with machineguns, after first demanding to know where we were going, turned on an approaching cab and screamed at the Hispanic driver to get his hands off the wheel or they'd open fire. When he wouldn't do so immediately, it appeared for a split second that he would be shot on the spot.

Mercifully, his shaky hands finally appeared above the dash.

FBI Scum Harass Gold Star Family, Other Activists

Besides the National Guard and FBI activities against opponents of the war, a different kind of federal response happened to the family of Marine Cpl. Jorge Gonzalez, who died in Iraq in 2003. After his mother, Rosa Gonzalez, protested against the war, a man she considers her brother, a nearly twenty-year US resident who owned property here, was deported to Mexico. "I think there is a connection," she said. "I don't protest anymore. I'm scared."

September 1, 2005 John S. Friedman [Excerpt: Sent in without publication identification]

In the 1970s Senate and House investigations established what many antiwar protesters and campus activists had believed for several years: that they were being watched and sometimes targeted by the government, including the National Guard and the FBI. Scattered evidence accumulating around the country suggests that the domestic surveillance that occurred during the Vietnam War may be returning, involving a more coordinated federal effort through the National Guard as well as the Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs), teams of state and local police, and federal agents, led by the FBI.

Troubled by an increase in domestic spying, the ACLU filed a lawsuit in May against the FBI to force the release of files on numerous activists and groups in about ten states, charging that "the FBI and local police are engaging in intimidation based on political association and are improperly investigating law-abiding human rights and advocacy groups."

The few documents received to date shed light on the FBI's misuse of the JTTFs to engage in political surveillance.

For example, FBI documents obtained by the Colorado ACLU reveal that in July 2004, FBI agents and members of the Denver Police Department, dressed in SWAT gear, questioned 21-year-old Sarah Bardwell, an American Friends Service Committee intern who was also active in Food Not Bombs, at her home "to conduct pretext interviews to gain general information."

These documents, said Mark Silverstein, Colorado ACLU legal director, "confirm that the FBI was more interested in intimidation than in trying to gather information."

In another example a student and two former students at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri, who were planning to go to the Democratic convention last summer, were questioned by the FBI and subpoenaed by a grand jury.

Although never charged with any crime, they were under twenty-four-hour FBI surveillance for almost a week afterward. "The subpoenas and surveillance were not to get information but to harass and intimidate them," said Denise Lieberman, former ACLU legal director in eastern Missouri. "It worked. It was very frightening."

This past November, several days after George W. Bush's election, an FBI agent and plainclothes officers from the Raleigh, North Carolina, police department came to the residence of Brad Goodnight, a 21-year-old student majoring in computer science and psychology at North Carolina State University.

He went with them to police headquarters, where he was asked about specific friends, about his role in Campus Greens, Food Not Bombs and other organizations, and whether he recognized photos of people in the audience at a local punk rock concert. His interrogation was apparently related to an earlier protest rally near Republican headquarters, where vandalism had occurred and three people were arrested. Goodnight said he was told, "We have paid informers and treat them well."

He was warned that if he didn't agree to cooperate he would face continued scrutiny. He refused. He had not committed any crime, was not charged with any offense and was soon released.

Besides interrogating Goodnight, the FBI knocked on dorm-room doors, and campus police increased their presence at peace vigils, all of which "definitely had a chilling effect," said Elena Everett, a recent NCSU graduate and chair of the North Carolina Green Party. "People, especially international students, didn't feel comfortable speaking out anymore."

"Just about every university in the country" has some connection to the JTTFs, according to an FBI spokesman in Texas. At one end of the spectrum is Brown University, which receives advisories only in a "one-way relationship."

At the other end are some dozen campuses where at least one university police officer is assigned on a full-time basis to the FBI, according to Christopher Blake, associate director of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators.

The number may be much higher than a dozen, given that a survey of universities conducted by The Nation found that at about a third of some fifteen schools picked at random, an officer is assigned to work for the FBI. The officer's salary is paid by the university, and the FBI pays for overtime and expenses.

Neither Blake nor FBI headquarters would name specific schools, but universities admitting such arrangements to The Nation include the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana; the University of Texas, Austin; the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; and the University of Florida, Gainesville. Michigan State has three detectives assigned on a part-time basis. Rutgers refused to say whether it has campus cops serving as full-time FBI agents. Yale has a campus policeman who is assigned to the FBI--one of the few private universities with such an arrangement--but a Yale spokesperson refused to comment on the officer's duties.

Besides the National Guard and FBI activities against opponents of the war, a different kind of federal response happened to the family of Marine Cpl. Jorge Gonzalez, who died in Iraq in 2003. After his mother, Rosa Gonzalez, protested against the war, a man she considers her brother, a nearly twenty-year US resident who owned property here, was deported to Mexico. "I think there is a connection," she said. "I don't protest anymore. I'm scared."

"Unfortunately, there is little doubt that the Bush Administration has misappropriated the awesome power of the Justice Department to monitor and quash lawful critics of the war in Iraq," said Congressman John Conyers Jr., ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee.

He adds, "With the near total lack of Congressional Republican oversight of this Administration's conduct after September 11, we must turn to the courts. I support the ACLU's lawsuit."

MORE:

FBI Scum Harass Peace And Affirmative Action Groups

August 29, 2005, American Civil Liberties Union

NEW YORK -- The American Civil Liberties Union today released an FBI document that designates a Michigan-based peace group and an affirmative action advocacy group as potentially "involved in terrorist activities." The file was obtained through an ongoing nationwide ACLU effort seeking information on the FBI's use of Joint Terrorism Task Forces to engage in political surveillance.

"This document confirms our fears that federal and state counterterrorism officers have turned their attention to groups and individuals engaged in peaceful protest activities," said Ben Wizner, an ACLU staff attorney and counsel in a lawsuit seeking the release of additional FBI records.

"When the FBI and local law enforcement identify affirmative action advocates as potential terrorists, every American has cause for concern."

The document released today is an FBI report labeled, "Domestic Terrorism Symposium," and describes a meeting that was intended to "keep the local, state and federal law enforcement agencies apprised of the activities of the various groups and individuals within the state of Michigan who are thought to be involved in terrorist activities."

Among the groups mentioned are Direct Action, an anti-war group, and BAMN (By Any Means Necessary), a national organization dedicated to defending affirmative action, integration, and other gains of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The FBI acknowledges in the report that the Michigan State Police has information that BAMN has been peaceful in the past.

"Labeling political advocacy as 'terrorist activity' is a threat to legitimate dissent which has never been considered a crime in this country," said Kary Moss, Executive Director of the ACLU of Michigan.

"We're disturbed and dismayed that the FBI is misusing its power by spying on anti-war groups and monitoring political dissent to target activist groups," said 23-year-old Sarah McDonald, a member of Direct Action and recent graduate of Michigan State University. "We've protested the war, racial discrimination and the military recruitment of the high school students, but we're certainly not a terrorist group."

In addition to the state FOIAs, the ACLU filed a lawsuit in federal court to expedite its request for FBI surveillance files on its own organization as well as other national groups including Greenpeace, United for Peace and Justice, Code Pink, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and the Muslim Public Affairs Council. In response to

the lawsuit, the FBI has revealed that it has thousands of pages of documents that mention those groups.

The ACLU launched its nationwide effort last year in response to widespread complaints from students and political activists who said they were questioned by FBI agents in the months leading up to the 2004 political conventions.

The FOIAs seek two kinds of information: 1) the actual FBI files of groups and individuals targeted for speaking out or practicing their faith; and, 2) information about how the practices and funding structure of the task forces, known as JTTFs, may be encouraging rampant and unwarranted spying.

Documents previously obtained by the ACLU in response to the FOIAs include an FBI memo on Food Not Bombs, a Colorado group that provides free vegetarian food to hungry people and protests war and poverty, and a report on United for Peace and Justice, a national peace organization that coordinates non-violent protests.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

COWARDS IN UNIFORM



A Zionist army soldier kicks a foreign activist before arresting him during a protest against the construction of Israel's ghetto segregation wall in the Palestinian village of Bil'in near the occupied city of Ramallah, Sept. 2, 2005. The occupation army surrounded the village and arrested several demonstrators. (AP Photo / Nasser Nasser)

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a racist foreign power, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.]

Web Copies:

For back issues see GI Special web site at <http://www.militaryproject.org/> .

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

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

www.williambowles.info/gispecial,

<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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