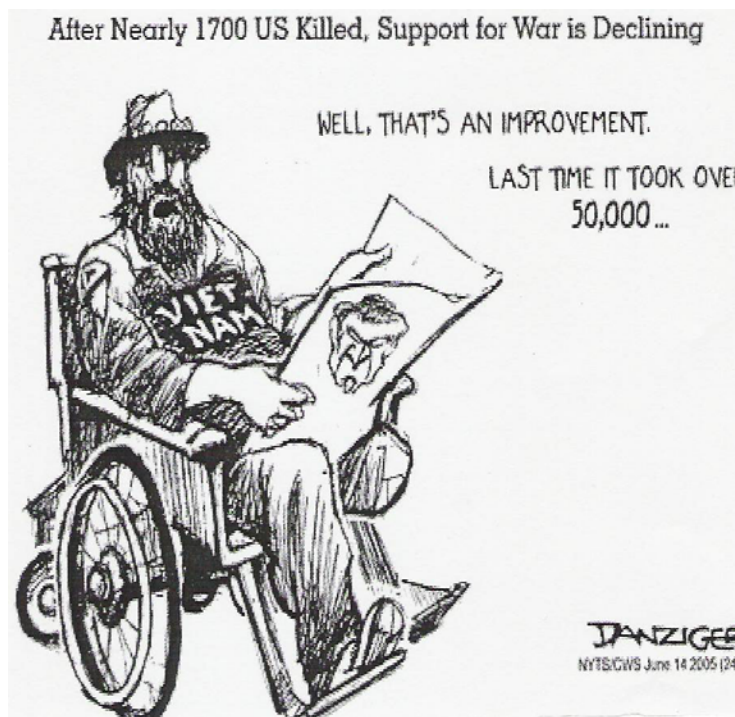


GI SPECIAL 3C9:



Is Anybody Listening? **Soldier And His Mom Want The Truth About Casualty Figures**

Distorted US causality figures are of grave concern to him, and his fellow soldiers, and he says, "should be brought to the forefront of the news reaching those who's lives may be given because of the lies this administration told them and must be given the importance it deserves. Otherwise, we'll (the soldiers) be wondering which one of us won't be included in those figures, making what all of us have done a f***ing sham." Alycia A. Barr, 7.31.05

From: Alycia A. Barr
To: GI Special
Sent: July 29, 2005

I have been aware, for some time, of the reports circulating from the DoD that confirm more than 4,100 US troop deaths, and that number is suspected to be even higher. This dispute in numbers is due largely because soldiers dying in German Hospitals, and enroute to them, along with troop deaths occurring in US hospitals, were not being reported in the "official" count.

Being just a military mom, my sources are limited, and now even more so with the order from a 3 star general, making it mandatory for US soldiers to register their blog sites with their commanders.

Maybe, you would have the capability to check into this subject further, and get the attention of someone in Congress that may be willing to address it.

If my son is aware of this problem then, chances are, a lot more fellow soldiers are as well.

Thank you, again, for your publication, and your concern. You keep writing...I'll keep reading.

In Peace and Humanity,
Alycia A. Barr

Have attached a letter I wrote that appeared in the local paper in a community that is choking itself with the American Flag. It's a start:

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

“Why do you keep pushing the issue of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) where Iraq is concerned? They’re no longer an issue. We’re past that. We’re there to bring “freedom and democracy” to the Iraqi people. We can’t leave until that can be implemented by the Iraqi government. We must STAY THE COURSE!”

Those are the comments and question people have confronted me with time and again for the last 2 years.

Because, it has become tiresome, as well as repetitive to continually convey the same response, here it is in writing, along with some questions and comments of my own for you to think about, and maybe respond to.

First, WMD are the reason given by the administration to the American public and to Congress, in order to garner authorization to use force against Iraq. WMD is also sighted as the reason for a second UN resolution needed to justify attacking Iraq in an illegal preemptive war. UN Res. 1441 didn't give the administration enough cover for an attack so, when the US's intentions of it's' use was questioned they sited 2 other resolutions. Res. 687, from April 3, 1991 made a ceasefire dependent on conditions that included dismantling WMD. The US interpretation of them was opposed by every member of the UN Security Counsel, except for the UK.

Secondly, for the vast majority of those still supporting this war, now espousing it was “freedom” and “democracy” that were the motivating factors for it, here are a few questions I challenge you to answer.

If you take WMD out of the equation, what is it that scared the American people so badly about Saddam that it prompted us to go to war?

Were you afraid he might fly to the US and use our God given right to free speech to mouth off to Mr. Bush? Or was it that he might ask where the missing 8,000 pages of his country’s report, submitted by request to the UN, containing the details on how, when, and where his WMD was destroyed were?

Please, rethink your position on the importance of “not” finding any WMD in an alternative context.

A very dear friend of mine’s son, Sgt. Sherwood Baker, was killed 33 days after Mr. Bush was photographed looking for WMD under office furniture saying, “...are some WMD here? Or maybe there’re over there.”

Sherwood was a member of the US weapons team searching for the WMD Mr. Bush was so cleverly making sport of not being found. His Mother didn’t laugh then and doesn’t think it’s amusing now...would you?

It is not so much the blatant lies this administration continues to circulate about Iraq, and its WMD capabilities that bothers me. Politicians have been lying since our founding father’s time.

No, what really gives me cause to object are the self proclaimed “good Christians” who blindly support his policies, and actually make up excuses for his lies.

Don’t label yourself a “Christian” then wholesale a man whose principal put in motion is in direct contradiction to the teachings, and the life of Jesus Christ.

Are WMD important...why don’t you ask yourselves who it is Jesus would bomb, gas, blow up or kill. When any of you who have questioned my position on this issue can answer that question with the words imparted to us by Jesus, I will be the first to say, “I support your cause.”

In Peace and Humanity,
Alycia A. Barr

MORE:

**40,000 Wounded, So Far:
“It's That Patriotic Crap”**



Jack Robinson, legislative director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America of Dallas, Texas.

“Before this damn thing ever started, I said, there's not one American life worth Saddam Hussein's life. I wouldn't trade one American soldier for Saddam Hussein and you're gonna go over there and you're gonna kill thousands.

“They killed 3200 women and children going into Baghdad in their apartments doing nothing. These people are home. They are with their families and their kids and we blew the holy hell out of them. They got relatives. Cousins, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles. We're creating millions who hate us because of the uniform we wear.”

[Thanks to Kate, who sent this in.]

June 30, 2005, By Rose Aguilar, Stories In America

Interview with Jack Robinson, legislative director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America of Dallas, Texas. [Excerpts]

When we were in Dallas, we stopped by the Paralyzed Veterans of America center and sat down with legislative director Jack Richardson.

What is the process involved when someone is badly injured in Baghdad?

They get processed. Then from Baghdad, they usually go to Germany and get transferred to another aircraft. Then they go to Walter Reed. From there, they are processed out to all 50 states in different hospitals and bases.

When I was up in Washington, I asked Congressman Chet Edwards how many wounded they had so far because the count I got the year before was over 15,000 wounded and maimed.

He said it was into the 40 thousands. Now this is accidents, trucks, everything. That includes mortars and roadside bombs.

What do the guys who come here for treatment say about the war?

They agree with Afghanistan.

They think Iraq is a personal thing for Bush. For the man. They felt they should have stayed after bin Laden, the man who attacked the United States instead of pulling our troops out of Afghanistan, leaving 9,000 tense rangers over there, 20,000 French, 20,000 German and some New Zealanders to chase the Taliban.

We pulled 100 and something thousand out to go start a war with a country that was not at war with anybody. We had no fly zones north and no fly zones south. They had a little strip of their own country, which isn't as big as Oklahoma in the first damn place, so they were really a big threat to the United States, right? big threat.

We already knew there were no weapons of mass destruction over there because we knew how much we sent over in 1982 when Ronald Reagan signed the order to fight Iran. They used it one time. Then they put them in a warehouse and never used them again. I'm not defending Iraq. I'm just saying they used them one time. When they saw what it did, they warehoused it. We blew it up during Desert Storm. We blew up the warehouses with airplanes.

Have you seen the effects of depleted uranium?

My personal opinion on that is you're gonna see leukemia.

I don't think the government knows and I don't think they care about the effects of depleted uranium.

This group just don't seem to care. To them, the military is a non-entity.

Cheney said one day, well it's all volunteer. What does that mean? They're nothin'? So they volunteer, so they don't mean anything to the country. So they're cattle. They can just go out and shoot 'em and kill 'em and it's no big deal.

Of course, they had deferments because they had better things to do.

Truman said the truth: any politician that goes to Washington and comes out rich is a crook.

What do you think about the level of loyalty in this country? I've met a lot of Republicans who aren't happy with Bush's environmental policy or the huge deficit, but when it comes to the war, they hesitate to speak out. Some do, but they ask to remain anonymous.

If you are not behind it, you're not patriotic.

It's that patriotic crap.

To me, the most patriotic people in this country are the ones who are fighting the war; the ones who are against this war because they don't want to see their young people killed.

Before this damn thing ever started, I said, there's not one American life worth Saddam Hussein's life. I wouldn't trade one American soldier for Saddam Hussein and you're gonna go over there and you're gonna kill thousands.

They killed 3200 women and children going into Baghdad in their apartments doing nothing. These people are home. They are with their families and their kids and we blew the holy hell out of them.

They got relatives. Cousins, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles. We're creating millions who hate us because of the uniform we wear.

People are crazy if they don't realize that. What are they gonna get out of it? Didn't we learn anything in Vietnam? I spent two and a half years over there. Didn't we learn anything? One day we packed our bags up and left. They're doin' a pretty good job over there. Why aren't we over in North Korea dealing with the atomic bomb? There's no oil in North Korea.

How does all of this shape your politics?

I was a Republican. Let me confess. I donated lots of money to the Republican party and I'm so damned ashamed of it, I can't see straight.

During the election, people said Bush is going to win because he has the military vote. Based on your experience and the people you work with, why does the military tend to lean Republican?

I can tell you about some of the people who said they were told how to vote. They had to vote for their commander-in-chief. That's what they all said. If you don't and they find out, it's a career killer. That's a fact.

Is that because they're so used to following orders?

They follow orders. I don't know if you saw 60 Minutes where the young man is going through PTSD. In Iraq, he killed a seven-year-old kid. The kid had a gun. He was holding it by the clip and he killed him. He's going through mental hell right now.

It's just like Vietnam. We were told to go in there and kill. Don't leave a chicken, a pig or anybody alive.

I don't care what the brass says. You talk to the guys who actually did the killing and they're going through hell.

When I was in basic training, I had to follow orders. You may not get a chance to talk. You may not get a trial. And that's what you're told.

A few people I've spoken to who have relatives in Iraq and are in favor of the war say they don't watch TV because it's so negative. They say we're building schools and hospitals, but we don't see that side of the story.

They feel like they're doing a service for the people there.

The thing is, they really shouldn't have been there in the first place.

The 1600 that are dead really shouldn't have been there.

What about the 40,000 that are maimed? You can see them out here with their arms blown off. They're trying to figure out how to use their arms. Their legs are blown off.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is hitting these kids years faster than it hit the Vietnam Vets. The vets that came back from Vietnam didn't know what PTSD was. They crawled in alcohol bottles. They crawled in whiskey and marijuana and anything they could do to eliminate their minds. They wound up here 30 years later. We have a wing of them on this floor. You'll see them wandering around here saying, where am I?

Tell me more about the people you help here.

We got a guy here who's trying to live on \$800 a month. He's paralyzed and he's in a wheelchair. He's a vet. He's not 65. He don't get social security. He begs for money to buy gas to come in for therapy.

He doesn't have enough money for gas. Do you buy food or medicine or gas? Or do you get kicked out of your apartment?

Mike over there arrives with me and I take him home. He has no car. He has no money. Social security is gonna be a lifesaver for him. At one time, he was a business owner and made tons of money. His divorce wiped him out and now he lives in an apartment and has a few pair of clothes. That's it.

They want people like Mike to pay \$50 for an office visit for specialized care, \$40 for a standard visit and \$15 for each therapy session in the pool.

They're charging people who have no money. They're gonna take everything they got.

Once a year we have a program where all the homeless vets come in and we feed them, clothe them and cut their hair. We check their teeth, their eyes, give them backpacks and sleeping bags. We get about a 100 of 'em.

These guys come in looking like hobos and they don't live inside. These are the trash leftover from Vietnam and Desert Storm. Then they all have a big turkey dinner and get fed. Then they put their stuff on their backs and walk off into the night. We have a meeting next week to talk about what park we'll have it in next year.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Local Soldier Injured

August 1, 2005 IBS

A soldier from York County is recovering after being wounded in Iraq.

Sgt. Andrew Welsh, a York Suburban High School graduate, was wounded over the weekend when a roadside bomb went off near Baghdad.

Welsh's mother told News 8 that Welsh's injuries do not appear to be life-threatening and that he will stay in Iraq while he recovers.

This is Welsh's second tour of duty in Iraq.

He was promoted to sergeant Monday.

Fallujah: This Is The Good News?

August 01, 2005 AFP

Colonel Mark Gurganus, the commanding officer of US marines in Fallujah, said "I accept that the city is still dangerous... I still have to wear my helmet and body armour when I walk on the streets, but it is not what it was earlier."

He expressed confidence that insurgents will be unable to carry out "spectacular" attacks on coalition forces.

"There is no way they can try anything spectacular.

“There is no way they can take control of Fallujah again,” he said.

DON'T LEAVE THEM HANGING: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Marines patrol in the outskirts of Fallujah. (AFP/File/Jaime Razuri)

TROOP NEWS

Former MSU Students Nursing Wounds From Iraq

7/31/2005 Daily Journal, From Mississippi State University

STARKVILLE - William Brooks was steering his Humvee along a gritty, sand-blown stretch of roadway 15 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq when the Army vehicle suddenly triggered a hidden explosive device.

In the blink of an eye, the young soldier's life was forever altered.

He lost both legs above the knees.

"We veered off the road and hit an IED buried beneath the ground," Brooks explained. An IED is what the military calls improvised explosive devices or roadside bombs. "I have no recollection of the impact; I was out of it for a week and a half."

The booby trap that spelled disaster for the 23-year-old Mississippi Army National Guard specialist from Southaven was tripped during a routine convoy escort mission along San Juan Road in war-torn Iraq last March 29 - just 20 days after his six-year term of enlistment with the 155th Brigade Combat Team was supposed to have expired.

Another Mississippian, Marine Lance Cpl. Aaron Rice of Sumrall was driving a Humvee during a combat mission in Iraq's Al Anbar Province on March 18 when his vehicle struck a land mine. The explosion left a heap of twisted metal and mangled body parts entwined along the desert highway west of the Euphrates River.

"I looked down and my left leg, below my knee, was pointing back up at me," said the 21-year-old reservist with Jackson-based Echo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment. "My boot was lying in my lap."

A 2002 graduate of Oak Grove High School, Rice lost his leg below the knee.

Thomas C. "T.C." Rollins was manning a machine gun from his perch on another Humvee on a convoy security run between the Iraqi cities of Falluja and Ramadi on Feb. 9 when the speeding vehicle swerved onto a gravel road, fishtailed and flipped one and a half times, sending the Marine reservist and some of his fellow soldiers airborne.

"I was thrown about 15 feet," said the 21-year-old Columbus native, who suffered a leg wound from the body-piercing shell of a companion's bouncing M-16 assault rifle, which discharged upon impact.

The bullet severed an artery as it entered the back of Rollins's left thigh, creating a gaping hole as it exited the front part of his leg and leaving a fragment of shattered bone protruding from the wound. His right lung also collapsed and his pelvis was broken in three places as the vehicle landed upside down.

"I'm pretty lucky to be alive," said the 2002 New Hope High School graduate and member of Bessemer, Ala.-based Lima Company, 4th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment.

All three soldiers have spent the past several months recuperating from their debilitating injuries, and undergoing inpatient and outpatient rehabilitative treatment - Brooks and Rice at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. and Rollins at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

“Their Deaths Resonate Differently Back Home”

"I used to be able to get about eight people a month," said National Guard First Sgt. Derick Young, a New Orleans recruiter. "Now, I'm lucky if I can get one."

Aug. 01, 2005 BY RON HARRIS, St. Louis Post-Dispatch

HOUMA, La. They all left together, Charlie Company, the so-called "Black Sheep," 160 members of the Army National Guard on their way to Iraq from this small southern Louisiana community.

As the buses rolled down Main Street, residents poured out of homes and businesses to wave goodbye to their citizen soldiers - college students, truck drivers, river workers, clerks. Students from Terrebonne High School left class and streamed onto the street for a last glimpse, some with tears rolling down their faces.

Three months later, six of them returned together in flag-draped coffins following the worst single combat incident for the National Guard in Iraq. Seven soldiers had been killed when a roadside bomb struck their Bradley fighting vehicle, flipping the 50,000-pound vehicle upside down and killing everyone inside.

Six of the men were from Charlie Company, four from Houma and nearby Raceland. The community was devastated.

"The city took it very hard, even if you didn't know the soldiers," said Graham Douglas, principal of Terrebonne High School. "There was a lot of mourning."

The funerals lasted days, and before the six soldiers could be buried, two more Louisiana National Guardsmen were killed by another roadside bomb.

Men and women who just months ago held jobs such as truck driver, accountant and teacher now make up nearly one of every four servicemen and women being killed in the war.

And when they are killed, their deaths resonate differently back home, because unlike regular military, guard and reserve units are populated predominately by people from the same communities.

In no state have those deaths registered more than in Louisiana. Louisiana, along with New York, has lost more guardsmen and reservists - 23 as of July 24 - than any state in the nation, and all but one of those deaths have come in the last eight months.

And like so many fighting in Iraq, the soldiers are from small, tightly knit towns - Olla, Batchelor, Opelousa, Pineville, Natchitoches, Ruston, Crowley and Houma.

Traditionally, members of the Guard and Reservists trained one weekend a month and spent two weeks in the summer training at a military base. They might be called away for storm duty, as Charlie Company often was as hurricanes and tropical storms touched southern Louisiana. But seldom were they called away for months at a time.

That new reality is putting tremendous strain on the Guard and Reserves, which make up half of all military personnel. Both are struggling to maintain their strength.

Recruitment is down dramatically, mostly because prospective recruits are worried about deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan or another country. In recent years, Guard members and reservists have served extended tours in Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor and Haiti.

"I used to be able to get about eight people a month," said National Guard First Sgt. Derick Young, a New Orleans recruiter. "Now, I'm lucky if I can get one."

Retention is down, too, as Guard members and reservists take into account the impact deployments, some as long as 18 months, have on their families and their civilian careers.

Guard officers said the retention rate is higher among those who already have been to Iraq and Afghanistan.

For years, the primary lure of the Guard and Reserves was money for college and some additional pay. That's what attracted Christopher Babin, one of the six Louisiana guardsmen killed. The same for Warren Murphy of Marrero, La., who was killed with Babin. And for Lee Goldbolt of New Orleans, a Southern University student and one of two Louisiana soldiers killed in March when a car bomb detonated near their Humvee.

"When he saw it was so hard to get a decent job and to go to college, he joined the Guard," his mother, Denise Goldbolt, said. "It meant he was able to go to college, and have an afternoon job. And he wanted to help me because I hadn't worked for a while because of major surgery."

The deployments are an economic hardship for many Guard members and reservists.

According to the National Guard Association, 40 percent of guardsmen earn less money when they are deployed, "sometimes a lot less," Goheen said. "You got people who are truck drivers who make pretty good money, and they don't make that when they are deployed."

Recruiters say dramatic pay cuts over long periods of time have caused some Guard members to choose not to re-enlist.

"Good soldiers are getting out because they fear going back overseas," Young said. "I'm making \$150,000 and my wife is a stay-at-home wife. Now I'm in Iraq and I'm making \$30,000. I can't take that kind of pay cut for a year, 18 months."

"It's harder on us because we're not used to this, we're not set up for deployment like the active military," said Louisiana guardsman Josette Paul, who spent seven months in Kuwait. "If you're in the regular military, they're already away from home. We have to suddenly take our lives and put it in storage."

"If you're a single parent, somebody now has to take your children. And what if you're single like me, no kids, no dependents. Who is going to take care of my things, bills, rent, car, home, pets, while I'm away?"

More Troops To Iraq?

“So Why Ask For Something You Know Doesn't Exist?”

[This quote, evidently from a recent news story, was sent in to GI Special unattributed to reporter or publication. It appears authentic. T]

Sending in more troops, the American solution year after year in the Vietnam war, does not seem to be an option.

President Bush has said that he would send more troops to Iraq if the military commanders in the field asked for them. He claims that they have not done so.

But others suggest a more serious obstacle. Senator Jack Reed, the leader of the Democratic Party in the Senate, has said that US military commanders in Iraq have told him that they need more troops but they know none are available.

Reed has said, "The conclusion I reach is that they know the soldiers aren't there, so why ask for something you know doesn't exist?"

General Barry McCaffrey, now a professor at the Military Academy at West Point, wrote in the Wall Street Journal that the US is in a "race against time" in Iraq because of the strains on the military - the military is "starting to unravel".

He argues that "The US army and the Marines are too under-manned and under-resourced to sustain this security policy beyond next fall."

Change eArmyU Eligibility

August 01, 2005
Letters To The Editor
Army Times

I am a career soldier and I have a major problem with the eArmyU program. Why is the technology package limited to personnel with fewer than 10 years in service?

There are people who joined the Army before this program came into effect and have not had the chance to take college classes due to deployments or other mission requirements.

Now that we are at a place that gives us the time to take college courses, we have to sit in a classroom or take Distance Education classes — if we can find a computer that someone else isn't waiting for.

eArmyU should lift the time-in-service requirement so career soldiers are eligible.

Career soldiers have re-enlisted so they meet the time-in-service-remaining requirements set forth by eArmyU.

I hope the Army sees the flaw in this program and adjusts the requirements. I think it might help with retention.

At least then we would actually be getting something, considering that “indefinite soldiers” do not get any options when they re-enlist.

Staff Sgt. Michael J. Curry
Fort Gordon, Ga.

Lt. Col. Patrick Frey: “An Erratic Egomaniac Who Ruled Through Intimidation”

8.1.05 Los Angeles Times, August 1, 2005

Lt. Col. Patrick Frey, who commands a California National Guard battalion, is portrayed by his men as an erratic egomaniac who ruled through intimidation during their stay in Iraq.

As a result, Frey has become the focal point of an investigation into how members of at least three of the five companies under his command might have been involved in widespread misconduct.

Congressional Critics Say Pentagon & V.A. Liars Covering Up Failure To Treat PTSD: “Everything's Not Fine - We Have Suicides”

July 28 By RYAN HOLEYWELL, United Press International

WASHINGTON, July 28 (UPI) -- Several Members of Congress blasted the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Pentagon this week, saying the agencies not doing enough to aid soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq with post-traumatic stress disorder.

"All I hear is 'we're doing everything right.' All I hear is 'everything's fine.' Everything's not fine - we have suicides," Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., told a panel of witnesses from the VA and the Army at hearing of the House Veterans Affairs Committee on Wednesday.

He went on to call government claims about proactive treatment of PTSD in soldiers "demonstrably false."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

“The Americans’ Statements Are Always Untrue”

July 28 Ellen Knickmeyer and Naseer Nouri, The Washington Post

"The Americans' statements are always untrue," said Ali Abed, 50, a taxi driver standing in a 1 1/2 -mile-long line for gas. "We are fed up.

"They destroyed the country, and now they say they want to leave," Abed said. "Let them go to hell, not to their home."

"Electricity is like medicine in Iraq now," a much-repeated joke on Iraq's al-Sharqiya TV declared this week. "You get it every six hours."

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

Assorted Resistance Action

Aug 1 By Waleed Ibrahim and Mussab al-Khairalla, Reuters & Aljazeera & (Xinhuanet)

BAGHDAD - Interior ministry official Brigadier Salam Lutfi was killed and two of his guards were wounded when militants attacked his car on a highway in eastern Baghdad, a police source said.

KIRKUK - One Iraqi soldier was killed and six injured when a roadside bomb struck near their patrol in Tuz Khurmatu, 60 km (40 miles) south of Kirkuk, a police source said.

Guerrillas disguised themselves as police kidnapped eight people in Abu Dshir area in southern Baghdad early on Monday, a police source said.

The armed men, driving in four police vehicles, were masked and wearing bullet-proof vests when they stormed houses in the area, the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

Two police officers working for an oil protection police force and one policeman were among the captured, the source added.

The raid took place around midnight during the time of the curfew imposed on the capital between midnight to 05:00 a.m., the source said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Palestine, The Anti-War Movement And The Quest For Genuine Unity: A Failure Of Leadership

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

The problem with anti-war movement organizers is that both UFPJ and ANSWER/TONC do not trust their own constituencies - as though only the leaders can understand these supposedly complex issues.

July 28, 2005, by Toufic Haddad, ZNet **[Excerpt]**

Rather than making attempts to force out Palestine as an organic element of anti-war movement organizing, the anti-war movement must move towards forcing out the Zionist elements within it, as a corrupting and contradictory force which sews ideological confusion within its ranks.

Hereafter the anti-war movement can begin to take up the issue of addressing the need for a broad based educational campaign around the issue of Palestine, in order to clarify the outstanding questions which remain and are in need of clarification: *the difference between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism*; demythologizing the "peace process"; understanding the exclusivist racist nature of Zionism etc.

The need for such a campaign will also have important theoretical contributions to the movement for ending the occupation of Iraq and for bringing the troops home.

This is because the occupation of Iraq is not an isolated byproduct of a deranged American president, but the aggressive expansion of US imperial policies in the region - policies it is worth pointing out which are supported by both Democrats and Republicans in Congress and the Senate.

US support for Israel represents a core axis of US policies in the region, of which the direct US occupation of Iraq is merely an extension.

While Israel has worked furiously since its inception defending the interests of its imperial backers (including ensuring access through the Suez canal, destroying pan-Arab nationalist regimes and leftist movements, defending pro-American Arab dictatorships, ensuring that no counter-hegemonic anti-US imperialist project emerges to 'threaten' access to this crucial geo-strategic region etc.), the US now works to secure control of the oil spigot itself, so as to be able to leverage control over this crucial resource against its economic competitors, particularly the EU, Japan and China.

Iraq and Palestine thus represents two wings of one US imperial strategy, and the sooner the anti-war movement internalizes this, the sooner it can begin to develop effective counter strategies and movements.

The de-linking of Iraq and Palestine within the US anti-war movement is illogical when viewed in this light.

Furthermore, the pre-assumption that anti-war activists don't sufficiently understand the question of Palestine and hence would leave its ranks if it were to be included in its agenda, is also illogical.

On the contrary, including Palestine within the anti-war movement's agenda necessitates having a holistic critique of the causes of this war (US imperial ambitions, and US capitalist competition against its competitors), and can only serve to galvanize, orient and engage anti-war movement actors for the long haul.

I believe all genuine anti-war forces in the US can achieve and internalize this understanding, without serious dissention.

The problem with anti-war movement organizers is that both UFPJ and ANSWER/TONC do not trust their own constituencies - as though only the leaders can understand these supposedly complex issues.

Both coalitions act as though their agendas, with or without the inclusion of Palestine, is a fait accompli, without seeing the need to address and dialogue with their constituencies about the need to set firm principles upon which the anti-war movement is to be based, and then to work to develop and educate the movement as a whole to address their respective educational insufficiencies - be it regarding Palestine or Iraq.

Needless to say, let there be no illusions as to the fact that plenty of educational work also needs to be taken up around the issue of Iraq, given the gross misunderstandings and indeed dehumanization that exist within the anti-war movement surrounding issues like the right of Iraqis to resist, their right to self-determination etc.

UFPJ drew the conclusion after the last US presidential campaign that their movement needs "to reach potential new allies and expand our base. . . An education working group will be created to develop the long-term educational strategy to reach new constituencies."

What new constituencies is UFPJ talking about? The increasingly organized Right-wing?

The statistic polls already show that the majority of Americans are against the war in Iraq.

This is the anti-war movement's constituency - a constituency which proved its forces even before the war in Iraq began in the largest demonstrations witnessed in the history of the planet.

UFPJ's strategy mirrors the policies of the Democratic party which believes it must "reach out" to "red staters" - as though there is a middle ground on issues like the war in Iraq, or a woman's right to an abortion.

The role of the Left must be to organize its real and potential constituency around its principles, trusting that its values and interpretation of reality are applicable and necessary for the American people to live in freedom, equality and at peace with other people around the world.

It must not see its role as organizing the Right.

The problem with the anti-war movement was not that it wasn't big enough, but that it was not organized around a set of politics which could tackle the reasons for this war, and what it would take to stop it.

Is it any wonder then, that while UFPJ heads off in search of "new constituencies", Arab and Muslims in America - representing a constituency severely effected by the wars in Iraq and Palestine, the bogus "war against terror", and domestically targeted and scapegoated by everyone from "homeland security" to the Columbia University administration - are distancing themselves as far as possible from this wing of the anti-war movement?

Is it any wonder that Arab and Muslim representation at the UFPJ conference was virtually non-existent, when beneath the banner of "inclusiveness" UFPJ bumps out Palestine, so as not to alienate open Zionists?

Is it any wonder why Arab and Muslim organizations like the National Council of Arab Americans and the Muslim American Society are calling the UFPJ demonstration on September 24th "segregated".....

Tragically, I am sure that the great majority of the UFPJ constituency would side with Palestinian rights if given a fair chance to hear and learn about the necessity to have Palestine within its agenda for the health of the anti-war movement as a whole, and for its ability to build an effective struggle.

But when they are precisely prevented from doing so by the leadership of UFPJ beneath the bogus concern that it will "narrow and weaken" the anti-war movement, the result can only be further splintering of anti-war movement ranks, and deeper confusion over the anti-war movement's trajectory.

All this indeed during "a time of possibility" when the everyday scandals, lies and incessant blood-letting of the war in Iraq provides the anti-war movement with more than enough fodder to expose and demythologize the US campaign in Iraq for the savagery and colonialism that it is.

As for ANSWER and TONC, both coalitions should indeed be credited for their principled and courageous stand, and for seeing the political and organizational importance of the inclusion of Palestine at the forefront of the anti-war movement's agenda.

Acknowledging this however does not excuse their anti-democratic methods of organizing, which have also tragically shown themselves to be incredibly destructive for movement building as a whole. Each demonstration they organize is like a carbon copy of those organized years ago, as though history is static and new circumstances and questions have not arisen that need to be addressed.

Although in name ANSWER says it is a coalition, in reality the decisions it makes are done behind closed doors and are not accountable to needs and demands of what should be anti-war movement priorities.

I know this from experience, after having attended one such meeting in which I attempted to raise a political disagreement regarding the question of whether the anti-war movement has achieved an anti-imperialist consciousness.

The next day I received word from one of ANSWER's main national organizers that "The ANSWER meetings have brief political updates/orientations, followed by short discussions on the various points, and then breakdown into working groups. They are organizing meetings and are not meant to be forums for carrying out political debates..."

If ANSWER is a genuine democratic coalition made of groups and individuals committed to building an antiwar movement, why would it eschew political debate?

In fact without political debate, the movement remains constipated and insular, unable to process and adapt to the changing reality on the ground, thereby aborting its ability to undertake the challenges a changing reality poses to movement organizers in building effective struggle.

If the methods of ANSWER organizing are not seriously reformed they will over time (if they haven't already) lead the movement and its constituency in ANSWER-organized cities, into political obscurity.

Needless to say, as the anti-war movement experience throughout the course of the past few years has shown, the process and methods of organizing cannot be separated from the goals we are trying to attain.

Likewise the goals we strive for cannot be separated from defining the movement's independent elementary principles and values, which must uphold the categorical rejection of occupation, colonialism, and racism while defending the right of self-determination, the right to resist an illegal occupation and the need for historical justice.

Without having all these elements combined within democratic structures that encourage political debate, the unity we all strive for to once and for all put an end to the inhuman occupation of Iraq and Palestine, will never materialize.

It would be a genuine catastrophe for the people of Palestine and for the US anti-war movement as a whole if on September 24th, the anti-war movement cannot formulate a united position on this impending blood bath. Worse yet, if UFPJ led demonstrations entirely ignore the issue of Palestine like an ostrich putting its head in the sand.

Without a radical transformation of the approaches and agendas of the anti-war movement, the blood flowing from Iraqis, Palestinians, and US soldiers will be so plentiful and mixed together that it threatens to soak into every hole, where every ostrich burrows its head.

JANE FONDA, VANESSA REDGRAVE, RITA AND PLEKHANOV: “The FTA (Fuck Or Free The Army) Troup She Led Played With And For Some 60,000 GIs”

August 02, 2005 By Max Watts.

[With David Cortright, Max Watts co-authored LEFT FACE, Soldier Unions and Resistance Movements in Modern Armies, Contributions in Military Studies, Number 107; GREENWOOD PRESS, New York • Westport, Connecticut • London]

Jane Fonda is an American actress

Vanessa Redgrave is a British actress

Rita: is an acronym, an abbreviation for: Resistance Inside The Armies

Jane Fonda and Vanessa Redgrave are mutual Friends, and Friends of Rita

Plekhanov was a Russian who described the role the Individual and the role of the Accident in History. Around 1890 Plek taught Lenin about Karl Marx, who had died in London in 1883.

Plekhanov wrote that economic developments, mass movements, were fundamental.

Particular individuals would fill new vacancies created by history. Plek took Napoleon Buonaparte as his classic example, wrote that if Nappy had had an accident, fallen off his horse, died, young, someone else would have taken his place, done similar things using the energy of the French Revolution.

Maybe. I note that Plek is looking at the negative, at early deaths, and their effects on events, history.

I wonder about the positives.

A new resistance inside the American Army, RITA, arose after thousands of American, a million Vietnamese, deaths. During the 1960's.

It was quite different, from earlier GI resistance movements – in other lost colonial struggles. Such as the American invasion of North Korea in 1950, or – who remembers that one? American attempts to "save" China (from falling) - to the Chinese – Communists – in the late 1940's, frustrated by a massive, but brief, "we are going home" revolt in the US army.

The American RITA after 1965 was also quite different from earlier resistance movements in the Dutch, British, French, even (later) the Portuguese Armies.

Yes, RITA existed in these armies, fighting losing colonial wars, but it was smaller, and usually much less organised. For instance these soldiers then rarely published "GI Papers", common amongst American GIs after 1967.

And – as far as I know – the Dutch, British, even French Resisters then had no such friends, Fritas, as Jane Fonda, Vanessa Redgrave. To pick on two particular, - yes - important – individual examples.!

I'd love to ask Plekhanov, who, unfortunately, is no longer with us – whether the action of such "famous individuals" was foreordained?

Could others have taken the place of Fonda, of Redgrave, even if there had been no – it really was a quite accidental – initial encounter between the pregnant Jane and US Rita Private Dick Perrin in Paris, in 1968? Which, so Jane Fonda:

"would never have happened had my beloved former stepmother Susan not come to Paris to check up on me during my pregnancy. At dinner one evening, a friend of hers introduced me to a nineteen-year-old fresh-faced kid ... Dick Perrin ... a U.S. Army resister from the First Battalion of Sixty-Fourth Armored Brigade, stationed in West Germany... it was my introduction to what within two years would become a major focus of my activism: GIs against the war....RITA". ()*

"Would never have happened if not..." This encounter was an accident. How would Plek see it? Would Jane Fonda have met another such RITA later? Or would another actress meet Perrin and – as Fonda "soon knowing but no longer willing to keep quiet" – take on the role, the battles, the struggles as effectively as Jane Fonda soon did? (*)

Not only in France, the USA, the Pacific, where the FTA (Fuck or Free the Army) troupe she led played with and for some 60,000 GIs, RITAs (*).

Fonda, in California, created another "historic accident" – linked, surely, to her as an individual.

She persuaded her friend Vanessa Redgrave to come with her to Camp Pendleton, to the US Marines base. To distribute RITA GI papers. Anti-war, Anti-Marine-Corps.

Redgrave, scared, feared they would be attacked, harassed, by these "Baby-killers".

The – for her surprising - most positive anti-war, FTMC, reception the Marines gave them converted the British actress into a dedicated FRITA, Friend of the Resisters.

Back in London Vanessa took the lead organising the highly successful June 1970 anti-war meeting at the Lyceum Ballroom.

She invited 5 active duty GIs from the American 7th Army in Germany and Vietnam. The GI's, particularly Spec/5 John Fisher, all breaching innumerable Army Regulations, spoke, in Uniform, from the Lyceum platform, captured the audience.

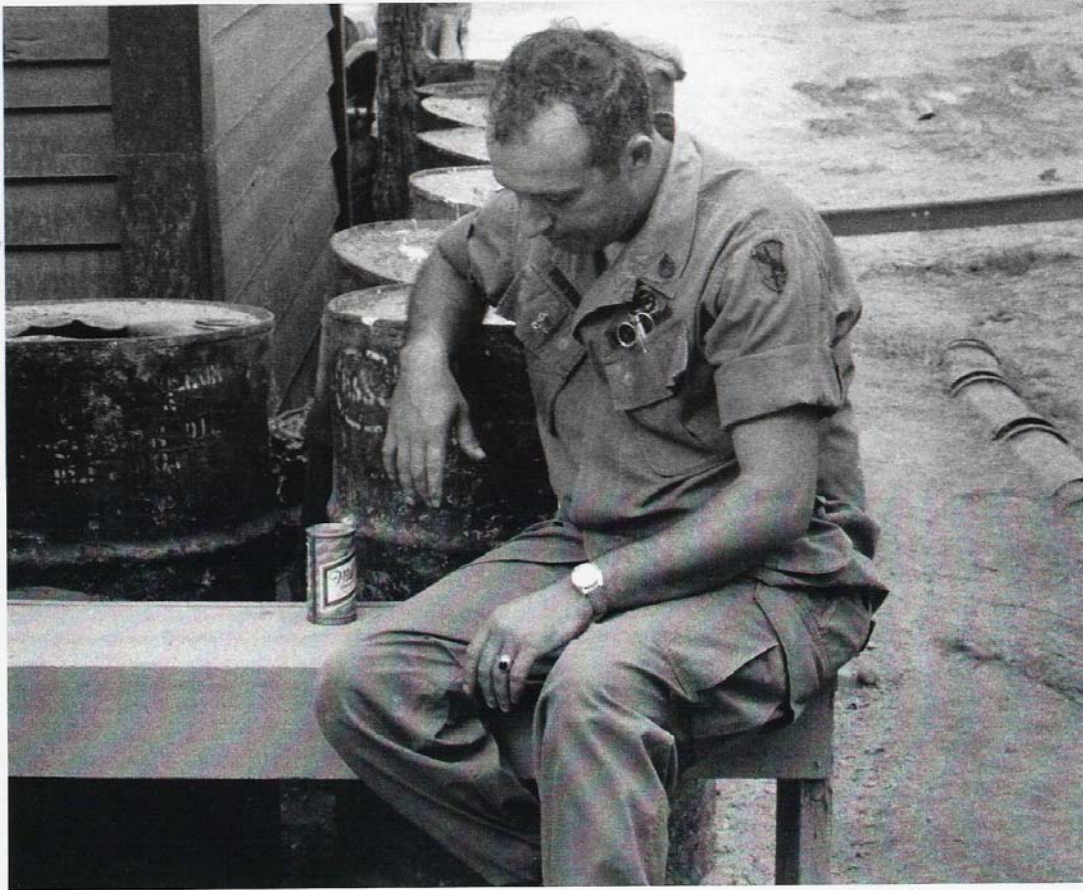
That meeting, and Vanessa's further support, helped establish the most effective US Air Force RITAF organisation of the American/Vietnam war: "People Emerging Against Corrupt Establishments. – PEACE – with almost legal papers, offices, in eight US Air Force Bases in Britain. A mass organisation, only eventually countered by massive discharges. A harbinger that even "safe", quite unshot at, Airmen, Airwomen, would resist their role as killers.

Plek: a question: Were these – two - highly effective women, Fonda, Redgrave, Individual Accidents? Or part of a then almost world-wide movement? When the US ruling class had the "bad luck" to fight, and lose, its – last ? – old Flag Imperialist war at the climax of a historic "Wave" – the wide-spread Youth Revolt of the 1960's ?

I can only observe, witness. Maybe discuss, Act. I'll leave the theory to the philosophers.

(*) This is a brief, somewhat hurried, note. Details concerning these events, Waves, Flag and Dollar Imperialism, RITA Films and books, exist in other papers, available on application. mw

The World Only Veterans Know



Mike Hastie Vietnam 1970

"The Last Field Dressing"

Above and beyond all things considered, learn to forgive yourself. I don't care what you did or didn't do, try to forgive what you've considered the unforgivable. For there will simply come a day when you will finally understand that there is absolutely nothing else left to do. Bring loving people into your life, because you cannot forgive yourself alone. If this was possible, you would have done so a long time ago. Expose the emotional silence, so your wounds can finally be healed. Let the self-inflicted guilt die, instead of you.

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

T0: GI Special
Jul 28, 2005

Homeless

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

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

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

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

Over the years, I had become homeless in the mind.

My world had become very small, and I lived in a constant state of depression and panic.

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

Yes, I needed to expand the definition of "Homeless."

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
July 28, 2005**

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Bush Buddies Blood Money: KBR Announces 284% Increase In War Profits

25 July 2005 Halliburton Watch

Halliburton announced on Friday that its KBR division, responsible for carrying out Pentagon contracts, experienced a 284 percent increase in operating profits during the second quarter of this year.

The increase in profits was primarily due to the Pentagon's payment of "award fees" for what military officials call "good" or "very good" work done by KBR in the Middle East for America's taxpayers and the troops.

The Pentagon has provided preferential treatment to Halliburton on a number of occasions, including the concealment from the public of critical reports by military auditors.

Audits conducted by the Pentagon's Defense Contract Audit Agency determined that KBR had \$1 billion in "questioned" expenses (i.e. expenses which military auditors consider "unreasonable") and \$442 million in "unsupported" expenses (i.e. expenses which military auditors have determined contain no receipt or any explanation on how the expenses were disbursed).

But the top Pentagon brass ignored these audits and rewarded KBR's work anyway.

Time For Blair To Dissolve The People And Elect Another

July 27, 2005 By Andrew Murray, Guardian

Tony Blair appears to be on the brink of a Brechtian moment, in which he will need to dissolve the people who have lost his confidence and elect another.

Certainly, if he claims that anyone who believes there is a connection between the government's foreign policy - above all, Iraq - and the July 7 massacre in London is a "fellow traveller of terrorism", then he has his work cut out. Fully 85% of the public do, according to a Daily Mirror/GMTV poll.

The government's refusal to associate cause and consequence, which would be child-like were it not so obviously self-serving, is sustained only by hysterical warnings against the new evil of "root-causism" from the residual pro-empire liberals.

This attempt to close down debate as to why Britain - London above all - is now fighting the misbegotten "war on terror" on its own streets, is doubly dangerous.'

Not only does it block the necessary re-evaluation of foreign policy, it also places the onus for preventing any repetition of July 7 on the "Muslim community", which - in a form of collective responsibility - is accused of breeding an "evil ideology" in its midst.

This approach risks reaping a different whirlwind in anti-Muslim attacks, physical and verbal. It also creates the climate in which Brazilians allegedly wearing coats on a hot day can become targets for a shoot-to-kill policy imported from Israel.

"Iraq" is shorthand for describing the problem. As well as the occupation of Iraq, it encompasses the faltering occupation of Afghanistan, the misery of the Palestinians, Guantánamo Bay and the carefully photographed torture at Abu Ghraib and Camp Breadbasket.

The British government bears less responsibility for some of these policies than for others. But if the British ambassador to Washington is briefed by Downing Street that his job is to "get up the arse of the White House and stay there", as has been reported, then it is small surprise that nuances of difference get overlooked.

Of course, al-Qaida and its reactionary ideologists may have broader objectives than ending the occupation of Iraq. But no one is going to bomb Britain because of Chechnya.

All roads lead back to the government's uncritical identification with the US neoconservative agenda.

The first step in a realignment must be ending the occupation of Iraq. This is not "appeasing terrorism": that would only be the case if the occupation had been wildly popular, and producing results before July 7, and a U-turn was urged as a result of the carnage in London.

In fact, the occupation was wrong, and failing, before July 7 and it is wrong afterwards. It was opposed by most of the people before it began, and by most people most of the time to this day.

The main argument for ending it is not what has happened, or is threatened, in London but what is happening in Iraq daily.

Every day is July 7 in occupied Iraq, where Britain has, along with the US, arbitrarily, violently and unlawfully constituted itself the de facto authority.

Whether one talks of 25,000 violent deaths, as claimed by Iraq Occupation Focus, the 39,000 counted by the Swiss-based Graduate Institute of International Studies, or the 100,000 "excess civilian deaths", including nonviolent casualties of occupation, identified by the Lancet, this is a massacre of innocent people that the government apparently believes is a price worth ignoring for its Iraq policy.

Whether these killings are directly attributable to the occupying force, or caused by the terrorism that has flourished on the occupiers' watch along with economic and social chaos, they are the best reason for bringing the troops home. It should be done for the Iraqis, not just for ourselves.

Such a move would not necessarily end the threat of terrorism overnight - but it would be right. It would send a signal, not to al-Qaida but to the British people, that a disastrous foreign policy can be changed by means of democratic pressure.

Two million people, including a vast number of British Muslims, took to the streets against the invasion of Iraq.

Blair preferred the warmth of the White House's embrace. Ignore the marchers and you risk igniting the murderers.

If the alternative to terrorism is democracy, then it is time the people of Britain and Iraq alike were listened to and the occupation ended.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Talk About The Scum Of The Earth: Unions Compete To See Who Can Get Workers The Lowest Wages!

7.19.05 By Kris Maher, Wall St. Journal

Hoping to reduce infighting among affiliated unions and gain wage and benefit parity, the AFL-CIO is pursuing ways to bargain for industrywide standards in a wide range of businesses, including retailing, construction, food and transportation.

The 13-million-member group, the largest U.S. federation of unions, has proposed creating industry coordinating committees that would set wage and benefit standards in order to reduce competition among members.

Unions sometimes undercut one another by negotiating lower pay and benefit agreements with companies in the same industry or region.

The SEIU says that a fellow AFL-CIO union undercut its efforts to organize workers at two private health-care vendors in Washington State twice in the past four weeks.

Jim Phulliou, national organizing director for SEIU, says a rival AFL-CIO union stepped in and negotiated contracts for workers that were less generous than the terms SEIU had been negotiating throughout the state for new workers.

Under the existing rules against raiding, the SEIU is barred from trying to organize those workers, even though it contends it can get a more favorable contract. "This is one of the reasons why we're considering not being in the AFL-CIO," Mr. Philliou says.

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.

Received:

Marine Vets On GI Bill Wanted For Documentary Interview

To: GI Special
Sent: August 01, 2005
Subject: **Marine Vet Documentary follow up**

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us about our documentary about Marine Veterans. We appreciate all the people you've put us in touch with so far. They've been invaluable for our research and have referred us to many other people.

One type of Marine that we are still looking for is someone who has returned from Iraq and has decided to go back to school and use the GI Bill.

Do you know of any Marines going through this process or know of a good source for finding these Marines?

Thank you so much for any additional contacts you can provide.

Kindest regards,

Laura Nix
Director / Producer
213-351-0444 x 104
Laura@automatpictures.com

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

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