

GI SPECIAL 3C90:



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

Dead In New Mexico: V.A. Traitors Get Their First Vietnam Vet Kill

October 21, 2005 By Leo Shane III, Stars and Stripes. [Excerpt]

WASHINGTON — Veterans groups and House Democrats blasted VA plans to review all post-traumatic stress disorder claims because of irregularities in their compensation system, calling it insulting to heroes who have served their country.

“To the VA, this is simply a process seeking out voids in paperwork,” said Rep. Tom Udall, D-N.M., at a Thursday hearing on Capitol Hill. “But to veterans, it’s a jolting realization that their day-to-day struggles are being questioned again.”

[C]ritics called it a way for the department to save money by shirking its duty to care for disabled veterans. Quentin Kinderman, deputy director of legislative service for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, called the IG report flawed and the proposed review a waste of money.

“There is very little potential to reduce the number of cases here,” he said. “And we’ve very concerned about the impact of the review and publicity on veterans, especially those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, who need the kind of counseling that the VA can provide.”

Udall said in one case, a veteran in his district committed suicide after hearing about plans for the review. Officials from New Mexico found the man, a Vietnam veteran, with information regarding the review beside his Purple Heart when he took his life.

[This new rule, designed to cut thousands off the VA rolls, demands that a Vet document the “specific incident” that caused his or her PTSD. Since most armed forces PTSD is brought on by an extended period of cumulative stress in combat, rather than a “specific incident,” that makes meeting the new requirement nearly impossible. Then, no more disability payments. This is nothing less than murder. But it’s important murder. Got to save money somewhere. The Bush Buddy war-profiteers need their billions. Can’t have Halliburton going without. What are some dead Vets compared to that? T]

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)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

THREE MARINES KILLED IN ACTION NEAR NASSER WA SALAAM

October 21, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Release 05-10-28C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – Three Marines assigned to Regimental Combat Team 8, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), were killed in action

while conducting combat operations against the enemy when their vehicle was attacked with an improvised explosive device in the vicinity of Nasser Wa Salaam on Oct. 20.

II MEF SOLDIER DIED FROM WOUNDS

October 21, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Release 05-10-27C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq –A Soldier assigned to Regimental Combat Team 2, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), died of wounds sustained from an indirect fire attack in Hit, Oct. 20.

Georgia Soldier In 48th Dies

10/21/05 By ANNA VARELA, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

A National Guard soldier from Georgia died Thursday from a "non-hostile" gunshot wound in Baghdad, Army officials announced Friday.

The soldier was a member of the 48th Brigade Combat Team, said Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Ken Baldowski.

This is the 22nd death among 48th Brigade soldiers since the Georgia-based unit was mobilized in January.

Spc. James T. Grijalva, 26, of Burbank, Ill., served in the Urbana-based 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment. He died Oct. 12.

Another South Dakotan Dies In Iraq



10/21/05 KSFY

As KSFY first told you Thursday night at 6, another South Dakota soldier was killed in Iraq 2 days ago.

George Kuhler of Kuhler Funeral home in Huron has met with family and says Specialist E-4 Daniel D. Bartels died on Tuesday while serving in Iraq.

The Department of Defense has also confirmed his death and it was non-combat related. Bartels was assigned to the 4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team based in Fort Wainright, Alaska.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. Marines in Al Taqaddum September 30 2005. REUTERS/USMC/Lance Cpl. Bobby J. Segovia/Handout

Anderson Marine Killed

October 21, 2005 By Steve Kemme, Enquirer staff writer

Anderson Township– U.S. Marine 1st Sgt. Rick Pummill, an Anderson Township native, was killed in Iraq Thursday along with two other Marines when an explosive device struck their Humvee that was part of a convoy traveling about 25 miles west of Baghdad.

Pummill had been in Baghdad since July.

He joined the Marines after graduating from Anderson High School in 1996. He spent his last two years in high school attending Scarlett Oaks Vocational School.

His wife, Chantel, lives in Jacksonville, N.C., where Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune is located. He leaves a 3-year-old son, Donald Richard “Cliff” Pummill, who lives with Pummill’s first wife.

Helicopter Down In South Baghdad

21 Oct 2005 Reuters

BAGHDAD - A U.S. helicopter made what the military called "a hard landing" while trying to evacuate some soldiers wounded by a roadside bomb in south Baghdad late on Wednesday. There were only minor injuries and the helicopter was recovered, the military said.

TROOP NEWS

Grounds For Armed Insurrection:

Pentagon Scum Promise Troops Huge Re-Enlistment Bonus For Six More Years: *Then Refuse To Pay*

October 16th, 2005 LES BLUMENTHAL; The News Tribune

WASHINGTON – The Pentagon has reneged on its offer to pay a \$15,000 bonus to members of the National Guard and Army Reserve who agree to extend their enlistments by six years, according to Sen. Patty Murray (D-Seattle).

The bonuses were offered in January to Active Guard and Reserve and military technician soldiers who were serving overseas. In April, the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs ordered the bonuses stopped, Murray said.

“This is outrageous,” the senator said in a telephone interview. “It makes me angry that this administration has broken another promise to our troops.”

A Pentagon spokeswoman, Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke, confirmed the bonuses had been canceled, saying they violated Pentagon policies because they duplicated other programs. She said Guard and Reserve members would be eligible for other bonuses.

Krenke said some soldiers had been paid the re-enlistment bonuses, but she was unsure how many or whether the money would have to be repaid.

Murray's office said that as far as it knew, no active Guard or Reserve members had received the bonuses.

A Murray spokeswoman, Alex Glass, said Krenke's explanation was unacceptable.

"They can spin it anyway they want," Glass said. "But this is a promise they are trying to explain away."

The bonus offer was part of the Pentagon's effort to retain Guard and Reserve members at a time of declining enlistments in the regular Army.

Roughly 3,400 members of the Washington National Guard's 81st Armor Brigade were serving in Iraq at the time the bonuses were offered.

The bonuses were tax-free because they involved soldiers stationed overseas.

"As in the private sector, bonuses are quite effective in keeping talented people with high demand skills," Krenke said in an e-mail response to questions.

Murray, a leading Capitol Hill critic of management of the Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs, said she didn't know why the bonuses were dropped but suspected it was connected to the tight federal budget.

"It feels like every day I wake up to something else gone wrong," she said. "And it all goes back to this administration not planning adequately for the Iraq war."

The senator said she first learned the bonus program had been canceled this summer from members of the Washington National Guard. In late August she wrote officials of the Pentagon's National Guard Bureau demanding an immediate explanation.

The decision to cancel the bonuses had caused "tremendous uncertainty" among Guard members who had been counting on the money after they decided to re-enlist, Murray said in her August letter. [Uncertainty is putting it mildly. Try "caused thoughts of marching on the Pentagon."]

In a two-paragraph reply to Murray, Donna Warren, the National Guard Bureau's congressional liaison, said the bonus program had been scrubbed by order of the Office of Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. Warren said it had been discovered that Defense Department regulations prohibited such bonuses, but she offered no elaboration.

Warren said the bonuses remained a "critical issue" and that officials of the Guard bureau were "aggressively engaged" in discussions with the defense secretary's office.

Murray said Warren's response was inadequate. Earlier this month she wrote Thomas Hall, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs. Murray asked not only for a further explanation, but also asked Hall to reverse himself and reinstate the bonus program.

Murray said she expected a quick response and would pursue the matter further if Hall's response were insufficient. **[The troops may also wish to “pursue the matter further.” Somehow it seems unlikely they would lack for public support. After all, increasing numbers of Americans understand the enemy is in Washington DC, not Iraq, including increasing numbers in the armed services.]**

MORE:

Senators Told Of Guard Misery

10.20.05 Seattle Times

Many National Guard members return from Iraq only to face a pile of debt, an uncertain job future and lurking health concerns due to stress and physical injuries, a Senate panel was told.

Government officials, members of the military, business owners and an employment-development official from Washington state offered suggestions how to ease the burden for returning Guard members. [Gee, how about paying them the fucking money they were promised for re-enlisting for another six years. Duh.]

The Horrible Reality Of The Iraq War: Medical And Political



Intervention Magazine

[This article manages to combine a deeply compassionate view of those badly wounded in Iraq with some execrable politics that echo the social patriots who tried to stop the anti-war rally at Ft. Bragg last Spring. Big surprise. Nusbaumer was campaigning for Kerry when Kerry was demanding Falluja be destroyed more quickly than Bush was willing to do and calling for 40,000 more troops for the Imperial slaughterhouse.]

Oct 20, 2005 Stewart Nusbaumer, Intervention Magazine. [Excerpts]

Inside Walter Reed Army Hospital is the horrible reality of the Iraq War, a reality that few Americans see, and fewer want to see.

Washington, DC -- In the dining hall is a family of three. The mother's shirt says "Thank a Soldier," the father's hat says "Vietnam Veteran," and the son's T-shirt says "Seattle Sonics." A normal family, except the son has no legs.

I see in the halls of Walter Reed hospital soldiers with leg braces and neck supports, soldiers with faces slashed by bombs and stitched up by doctors. Soldiers with legs terribly mangled, soldiers with no legs -- amputees with short stumps, with long stumps, without any stumps since entire limbs are missing. A man walks by without an arm. I suddenly travel back in time to another war, to another hospital when I was one of those young men without a limb. But the human carnage and waste in Walter Reed is too overwhelming to escape for more than a flash of time.

Dining Made Difficult

In the large dining room, mothers prepare their son's food, applying ketchup to hamburgers, cutting pork chops, raising tables for their wheelchairs to clear. Fathers mostly sit with slight smiles on their faces. The conversations are mundane, and sedate. Talk about family, talk about the weather, talk about the future. Recuperating from serious wounds is slow so it's best not to go too far into the future.

In a wheelchair, a young man who barely looks 17 years old rolls by with a pair of ugly "road kill" legs -- the spaghetti I'm eating rumbles in my stomach -- followed by a soldier on crutches, doing a Frankenstein walk with stiff legs thrown outward. Several tables away, a slightly older soldier, in his early 30s, with a nasty looking scarred leg propped up on a chair, rubs his fingers over the smooth surface of his Purple Heart Medal.

This is the medal given for combat wounds, to everyone wounded by enemy fire. This is the medal that delegates at the Republican Party mocked.... I need some fresh air.

In front of the hospital a man in his mid-20s sits down on the bench next to me. His right leg is bloated to at least double its normal size. Most of the top layer of skin had been removed, it's raw reddish. Puss glistens in the sun light, or maybe it's some kind of ointment.

"Looks like you had a bad day" I wisecrack gently.

“Yeah,” he snickers.

“An IUD?” (Improvised Explosive Device, roadside bomb or land mine.)

“Nope, bullet, it splattered bone.”

The sergeant has been back from Iraq since January, nine months in Walter Reed, and his leg remains ugly looking. It will probably always be ugly looking. But in Walter Reed looks mean nothing, what matters is walking. I remember my obsession to walk, an obsession that overcame the pain and the blood, anything to be able to walk again. And the sergeant is walking, with crutches. But I doubt this sergeant will do much walking in his lifetime.

Sometimes it’s best to just cut the leg off, but doctors can not always do what is best. The sergeant stands up, struggles to walk five feet, stops for a rest. He looks over his shoulder and says, “I’ll make it, I have to make it.”

“Yes you will,” I say, knowing clearly that as the years pass his walking will become even more difficult, until there is no walking. All this sergeant from North Carolina ever wanted was a normal life, with a normal family, a boy and a girl. A smile broke his straight face when he said, “a boy, and a girl.” But his normal life is gone and all he has is the dream of returning home to North Carolina, and hopefully that boy and girl.

The Rules of War

In America’s shock and horror at Walter Reed there are rules. I will give you the four that I believe are most important.

Rule 1: talk to the person and not to the wound. This can be difficult in the beginning since ugly wounds tend to overwhelm. But the bearer of ugly wounds remains much more than a wounded person, and this you need to respect. You can ask about the wound, but you cannot talk to only the wound.

Rule 2: allow wounded soldiers to do what they can do themselves. Give them the space and the opportunity to have control over their lives, even when severely dependent upon other people.

When I was in Bethesda Naval hospital in the late 1960s, leg amputated and bed ridden, frustrated with my constant dependence on others, a visitor asked me for a cigarette -- in those days you could smoke right in the hospital -- and I was ecstatic to hand him one. It felt great to do something on my own, in this case hand another human being an simple item.

Rule 3: forget your moral questions about the war. Morality is for those who support the war and for those who oppose the war, not for those in the war. Those seriously wounded are still fighting the war so clam up about the immorality of this stupid war.

A corollary to this rule is never protest against a war in front of a military facility, especially a military hospital. That is a no-brainer. You demonstrate against those who made the policy to go to war, not against those who are sworn to carry out the order to go to war.

[Bullshit. When Veterans For Peace, with Iraq Veterans Against The War, protested against the war right in front of Walter Reed last summer, some soldiers came down and out the door to thank them, take their anti-war materials, and bring them back inside the hospital to give to other wounded troops. The anti-war Vets weren't allowed to go inside.

[Troops aren't stupid. They knew very well that the action wasn't "against those who are sworn to carry out the order to go to war." They knew the vets were reaching out to them. They may be bad hurt; they are not fools.

[And at Fayetteville last March, lots of military families and troops from Ft. Bragg were absolutely delighted that the anti-war movement had staged the biggest anti-war rally at Ft. Bragg since Vietnam. They came. They said so. This shit about not demonstrating at military bases or VA hospitals was put out by war supporters to try to kill the Bragg rally. Didn't even make a dent. Sorry about that.

[And that was just as true during Vietnam. You don't think so? Read the letters to the editor in *Vietnam GI* from those days, and see that lots of troops in VA hospitals back then burned with hate for the politicians and the war, and loved contact with anti-war activists, including those who demonstrated against that stupid Imperial war right in front of their faces. They weren't fools either. Despite the war-lovers pathetic propaganda, they knew very well the anti-war demonstrators weren't against the troops, and so do the troops today. Sure, there were some idiots who believed in that war right up to the helicopters taking the Imperial Ambassador off the Embassy roof, but anybody remotely familiar with reality then knows the overwhelming mass of troops hated the war and the government. It wasn't just Stalin who loved to re-write history. Today's' apologists for keeping troops in Iraq would rather forget what really happened inside the armed forces in Vietnam days, and not just in Vietnam.]

Rule 4: don't assume this is a sad time for these recuperating men. For most their physical pain is receding or is being managed by drugs, and the true mental anguish has yet to sink in. They are focused on their future which after a close call with death looks darn rosy.

"Hey, man how you doing?" a soldier greets another stepping into the elevator.

"Great," he replies. I notice out of the corner of my eye he is missing a chunk of his cheek, it's ugly.

"Guess what, man? Smithy's coming up!"

"Really?"

"Yeah, he's driving up this weekend."

“That’s great, man.”

This is the spirit that America sees when it sees anything of these wounded soldiers. It makes Americans feel good, proud of their country, confident about their military. But it is only part of the truth. There is a hidden truth. It is ugly.

The “For What” Questions

With spirits high -- hey, they just “cheated” death -- surrounded by fellow soldiers day and night, with family and friends visiting and attentive, life is not bad. But this is the easy middle, coming after the initial shock of being seriously wounded and before the tortuous work of transforming one’s identity to accept the new reality. The easy middle is relatively easy.

When discharged from the hospital, their tight support network disappears and the strong optimism in the wake of a close call begins to wane. There is now time and space to think, and to ask questions.

Sitting alone in an apartment, probably a spartanly furnished apartment, maybe in a dingy bar with their back against the wall, the questions start. They always do, for those severely wounded. Those “for what” questions: for what do I have to put on an artificial limb every morning? For what must I live with this horrible pain every day? For what did my buddy die? For what was all the horror for?

Some will attempt to evade these questions, but that’s not possible. They paid too high a price. Some will turn to stock replies, such as, “It was for God, country, and family.”

To the degree this works is the degree that they cut themselves off from reality. Vietnam was not for God, America, and family, and neither is Iraq. Most of the wounded will learn this, and then they will demand a real answer to, “For what?”

The only satisfactory answer is for defense of country. Nothing else justifies the sacrifices, sacrifices Americans quickly forget but endure a lifetime for these men and women. The other answers, to rebuild another country, to stay the course so others won’t perceive America as weak, to fulfill a president’s fantasy of a great legacy, to fill our vehicles’ gas tanks, to save the world from the latest new evil, they cannot withstand the ugly questions that come from horror and suffering. “For what?” is too strong for weak answers.

Barbara Portia, whose son Jonathan was killed in Iraq, said if he had died in Afghanistan that would have probably been easier to accept -- still horribly difficult, of course, but easier than Jonathan dying in the worthless Iraq War.

In defense of country is the only justification for our dead and wounded soldiers and marines, nothing else is acceptable in the long run. Nothing else is ever acceptable.

I am walking through Ward 57, the amputee ward, walking on the 5th floor. There are grisly sights here. Sights that the dinning room and outside benches do not want to see,

that I do not want to see. Bodies wrapped in blood soaked bandages. Eyes covered in agony. Nurses' huddled over broken bodies. The air is thick on the 5th floor, hard to breath. The flag of patriotism is less intensely displayed here. The pain of war is stronger.

I feel a deep anger at America rising in me. Then I see -- I walk quickly, I need some fresh air. **["America?" "America" didn't start the war on Iraq. The people who run the government started the war on Iraq. Same shit they did in Vietnam. Lies. Fake reasons. Remember?]**

But at Walther Reed, ground zero for ugly war, there is no break from horror. A young man sits down on the bench next to me -- "blew the lower part of my leg off ... an IUD ... getting my first leg next week ... going to college when I get out ... girl friend visits"

Whether the "For what?" is answered with a closed mind, or with an honest answer, many seriously disabled veterans will in time turn bitter and cynical. But others will swallow hard, refusing to let the injustice crush them, and move on in life. But all will be deeply scarred. If their sacrifices were truly for the defense of our country, that helps a lot. That cause can justify the sacrifices, but an unworthy cause justifies nothing.

A veteran with Iraq Veterans Against the War recently commented that after the guys return home and realize that on the home front Americans barely cared about the war, that here patriotism is an empty gesture because no one sacrifices anything, they will become angry. **[Iraq Veterans Against The War is for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of every U.S. troop from Iraq, and that means now. Check out their web site. www.ivaw.net. And they were angry long before they got back, and not because of some nonsense about patriotism and sacrifices, they were and are angry because the whole war was a pack of bullshit and lies, a war for Empire, and they knew it then and know it now.]**

To this day, some 38 years later, when I hear someone on the radio discuss the World Series in 1967, or some similar remark about 1967, I cringe. That was the year I was fighting in Vietnam. That was the year thousands of young Americans were dying and losing limbs and their minds for, supposedly, their country. But our country was excited about the World Series, and.... If a war is important enough for soldiers to be maimed and to die for, it is important enough for all Americans to sacrifice something. Something!

[And if the war is bullshit and lies, and for corporate greed and Empire, what ought to be sacrificed is the government that brought it on, not some baseball game. And millions of Americans were organizing against the Vietnam war in 1967, not just going to baseball games, and some gave their lives, at Kent State and other schools, to fight that war, and a rebellion was brewing inside the U.S. Army in Vietnam that exploded into massive combat refusal, the killing of officers, and "search and evade," that eventually made it impossible to carry that war on, a history displayed in the new film *Sir No Sir*, fortunately, since there seems to be such a determined effort by social patriots and Imperial politicians to pretend all that never happened.]

The World Series of baseball should have been cancelled in 1967, as it should be cancelled today, because America has young men fighting in a war.

But Americans are barely paying attention and would refuse to give substance to their patriotism, a clear indication this is not a war for the defense of America.

[About a quarter of a million people came to DC last month, who seemed to be paying a considerable amount of attention, and everybody over the age of reason knows that a majority of Americans think the Iraq war is the most important issue in America today, and a majority of Americans have had enough of it. If that isn't paying attention, what the fuck is? This is so condescending and dismissive it's hard to believe it comes from the same pen as the rest of this article, which is so deeply compassionate. But then that's politics, and this article is part compassion and part very conscious politics. Yeah, there is criticism of the war insinuated, but is the writer for keeping the troops in Iraq longer, so even more can come home missing all the body parts the writer describes? That topic is not mentioned. And when Iraq Veterans Against The War is touched on, it's position for immediately, unconditional withdrawal is also not mentioned.]

[Surely the writer must want every troop home yesterday? Why not say so? It's not exactly a ground breaking point of view. No more missing legs, eyes, feet, hands, arms? Right? "Sacrifice?" How about sacrificing George Bush's Imperial dreams? Not another day, not another dime, not another life.]

We have an administration that won't fully fund veterans' health care, while it does not properly equip our troops in war. And we are a people not insisting our veterans have adequate health care and our soldiers have proper equipment. This is wrong, America. Wrong to those with "road kill" legs, wrong to those with partial faces, wrong to those with missing limbs.

I stand up from the bench, it's hard for me to sit for too long, and it's hard for me to walk for very far.

Instead of returning to the 5th floor, I return to my car. Driving through the gate of Walter Reed and onto Connecticut Avenue -- a cab whizzes by, a speeding van honks, a couple on the sidewalk hugs -- my head shoots back as pain rips through my stump, just as fast it leaves.

But I know the pain will be back.

This is for a lifetime.

What's inside Walter Reed is also for a lifetime.

[Therefore, either you are for more of it, or you want to stop it *now* and bring *all* troop home *now*. There is no fence to sit on. Duh.]



A paid advertisement in the Warwick Valley High School Survey, the school's student newspaper.

(Photo: www.recordonline.com)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Assorted Resistance Action

Oct 21 (KUNA) & People's Daily

An unknown militant assassinated Deputy Chairman of the Arab-Kurd Friendship Society in Diyali Shawakt Bader Thursday evening in the city of Baqouba, northeast Baghdad.

Police sources said the militants fired four shots at the official while on his way home, killing him instantly.

Armed fighters opened fire at a minibus in northern Baghdad on Friday morning, killing three Iraqi soldiers and wounding four police commandos, an Interior Ministry source said.

"A group of armed men opened fire from their car at a minibus carrying civilians in Taji area, killing three of them and wounding four others," the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

Iraqi police rushed to the scene. The three killed were identified as Iraqi army soldiers and the four wounded were police commandos from the Iraqi Rapid Reaction Force, the source said.

He added that "the victims, who were disguising in civilian clothes, had rented the minibus to join their military units in north of Baghdad fearing insurgents."

<p style="text-align: center;">IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“The Curse Of The People Must Be Paid
For”**

10.20.05 Via Information Clearing House

"Many are they who are touched at the heart by these things.

“Those they sent forth they knew; now in place of the young men, urns and ashes are carried home to the houses of the fighters.... The citizens speak: their voice is dull with hatred.

“The curse of the people must be paid for.”

Agamemnon (lines 432-436, 456-7, Grene and Lattimore translation)

They Are Not Numbers

Oct 21, 2005 by Cindy Sheehan, Daily Kos. [Excerpt]

I received this email the other day. I have removed the names:

"Dear Ms. Sheehan

"I wasn't sure how else to contact you, so am sending this thru the gsfp website. I just want to thank you for posting your essay entitled, 'A Peaceful Day' dated October 17th on the commondreams.org website, a site I visit every weekday.

My cousin, "brave soldier", 30, originally of Indiana, was one of the five U.S. soldiers killed on Saturday, October 15th -- Iraq's 'peaceful day.' He is survived by his wife, his two children, his parents, his sister, our grandma, his aunt, his two uncles and his two cousins. We are currently awaiting confirmation per dna identification.

I thank you for taking notice. The loss of his life and that of his comrades does not make for a peaceful day ~ may their souls will rest in peace.

Thank you for your efforts.

The 2000th tragically appalling death of American troops is, unfortunately, coming up rapidly in Iraq.

The official death count today from the War Department's Casualty site is 1992. The toll could reach 2000 within a couple of days.

Of the 1992, 13 are pending notification.

I have written about "pending notification" before.

13 families are going through their normal lives today not even knowing that the other shoe is about to drop. They have been worrying about their loved one for days, weeks, or even months. Some of them may know that 11 of our children have been killed in the last 2 days and they may be anxiously awaiting news. Will it be their lives destroyed today? Or is it another family who was randomly picked by the universe to suffer this violent assault on their homes?

There are so many people in our country today that are happily certain that their lives are not about to be turned upside down because their darling child will be killed in a meaningless war.

This would include every member of this criminal administration and Congress and every person who puts headphones on and spews right-wing hate from their mouths.

Not one of these people who mostly support the war, either out-spokenly, or tacitly by their silence in not calling for an end to the occupation of Iraq, have any idea of the horror of laying awake at night worried about your wonderful child, or walking around all day with an icy-cold stomach because you heard that soldiers were killed in Iraq today.

We know that George Bush and his supporters who are crumbling like 3 day old sugar cookies care not one whit about the people they have sent to die and kill innocent people in Iraq.

We know that George, Dick, Condi (who I believe is the Deputy Secretary of War...she never thinks of the Diplomatic solution), Donny (In charge of the killing department), and the rest will never admit that they made a mistake, because guess what folks? Things are going just as they have planned in Iraq!

They are happy as clams in their shells that things are in chaos and turmoil in the Middle East. That means that they and their partners in crime can rake in more money, rape Iraq of its resources and empty our treasury of money and our communities of future leaders.

Out of the tens of thousands of mothers in Iraq who have had their children killed, how many of them remember their baby boy or pre-teen child with their innocent eyes reflected with the mom's hopes and dreams of their future?

Casey had such a bright future ahead of him. Someone asked me the other day what I miss about him the most. I just miss him. I miss everything about him. I miss his presence on this planet. I miss his naïve joy and heartbreaking hope for the future. I miss his future and I remember his past with love and pain.

On the sorrowful day of the 2000th soldier killed, I am sure there will be candlelight vigils all over the country to honor the ones who have been killed. That is nice, but that doesn't help bring our other troops home or insure the safety of the Iraqi people.

On the day of the 2000th, I will be in DC. I will go to the White House. Our house.

I will sit on the sidewalk again and demand that the war criminals who live and work in there bring our troops home.

I suggest instead of candlelight vigils and singing "Give Peace a Chance" every person who cares about ending the immorality of the occupation of Iraq take signs and their presence to their Congressional offices near them and demand that each and every Congress person do everything in his/her power to bring our precious lifeblood home from the nightmare.

It is time to get peacefully radical.

The day of the wrought with voting fraud constitutional referendum in Iraq, George said:

"Democracies are peaceful countries."

Let's hold him and our other elected officials accountable for that hypocritical statement. If George won't make it so, we must!

Our young people aren't numbers.

Our young people are confined to early graves because of criminals who should be confined to prison that are profiting handsomely from the undeclared mess in Iraq. The Iraqi people are less than numbers. If they are counted or thought of at all, they are very often wrongly counted as "insurgents" when they are children and women.

If mere numbers will wake America up, think of Dr. and Mrs. Death (Donny and Condi) when they say that this occupation could last at least a dozen or more years.

What number are you comfortable with? One was too much for me.

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.

Want To Stop The War? Tax The Rich At 95%

[Looks like things are getting shaky in the great heartland.]

I have seen a lot of dirty stuff in politics in my life but nothing quite as obscene as sending hundreds of thousands of Americans into harm's way in Iraq while cutting taxes for the upper two percent of the wealthiest citizens; a pay back to mostly the president's supporters. It's just plain obscene. I'd like to see our president explain that one to a group of troops about to embark to the Mideast.

August 21, 2005 by Murray Cohen, The Delphos [Ohio] Herald Inc.

While Americans are being injured and killed in Iraq and while we are headed, unless something changes, for trillions of dollars in additional debt under the Bush presidency, there is no reason for not taxing at a rate of 95 percent all businesses with a profit of 1 billion dollars a year on anything above that and all individuals earning more than a million dollars on anything above that.

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There are Americans earning tens of millions of dollars while the country sinks into an ever-growing debt; much of it held by ever-strengthening China (how many Chinese troops are being killed in Iraq or even near the place?) and other Asian countries.

There are many corporations, including the oil companies, earning multi-billions of dollars at a time when every week, U.S. citizens are dying in a distant land.

One failed executive was recently fired and received a \$30,000,000-plus termination package. At least \$29,000,000 of that should not have gone into his pockets.

When we start doing this, they'll find a way to get us out of the mess.

When the last American soldier has left Iraq and when the national debt has been reduced to what it was when George Bush took office and when every injured soldier has been properly taken care of financially and medically and every family taken care of generously if their loved one died over there, we can go back to tax levels we were at several years ago.

It's time to change our course of action regarding how we use our strength. In the future, we need to refrain from entering other people's civil wars. And we will be tempted. The best and most sophisticated public relations campaigns will be directed at us to get involved.

Great Britain, at the end of World War II, made a decision to stop being an empire. Their resources would be used at home. They got suckered into helping George Bush on Iraq, but by and large, they have stayed out of their several hundred years of battles all over Asia and Africa.

Other than responding with overwhelming force, we are the most powerful nation that has ever existed. If we are attacked as on 9/11, our resources should go for building hospitals, medical training, ending the still present hunger and starvation in the world, providing clean water, ending child prostitution, ending slavery, lowering worldwide pollution of the land and air and seas, saving endangered species, exerting our moral pressure to end torture and imprisonment for expressing ideas.

We could do it for pennies on the dollar compared to what warfare costs us.

To think what we could have done for our own country and the world with the treasure we have expended in Iraq, it can make you sick, especially that it has been revealed that Iraq had largely dismantled its military to the extent that it was no longer a threat to the region.

Although it may not seem so at times, the United States, I believe, is the most spiritual nation in the world and had the best values. We have done more to make this a better world than any other country in history. We need to refocus, and military and "nation building" is not the answer. If we never knew that before, we sure know it now.

We can consider we “won” in Iraq by toppling the monster Hussein and giving Iraqis the opportunity to create a government without him. Pretty soon, it’s time to declare our purposes have been achieved and it’s up to the Iraqis to work out how they want to spend the next hundred or thousands of years.

Politicians For Sale: Let’s Go Shopping!

I am constantly struck by the small amounts of money it takes to purchase the friendship of some US politicians — even those of high rank. They accept paltry sums that would be insulting to any high-ranking government official in this part of the world.

18, October, 2005, Amr Al-Faisal, Arab News

Recently there has been a rumor that our dear friends and allies, the Americans, have been pressuring their friends in the Gulf to purchase hundreds of billions of dollars in US government securities.

The idea behind this is to use the vast windfall profits reaped by the Gulf oil producing states to prop up the tottering US economy.

The subtext to this is the possibility of the forces of freedom paying an unfriendly visit to anyone reluctant to comply.

This is a familiar concept to the people of this region as we are used to have similar arrangements with marauding Mongol armies.

I would like to suggest an alternative strategy — one that is more effective in the long run and definitely cheaper.

From the news stories coming out of the US these days it is perfectly obvious that some American politicians, journalists and other opinion makers are suffering from the increasingly high cost of living in their country.

They are also having great difficulty practicing their professions due to lack of necessary funding.

This has led to a vast industry catering to the specific needs of this class of Americans.

The industry is called lobbying and is nothing more than a polite way of saying bribery.

I would therefore suggest using a small fraction of our wealth to help fund these people.

This method is much more personal and provides us with a direct way to influence US policy and build long-term friendships. It also opens tantalizing possibilities of directing the legions of liberty against our own enemies (whom I shall call the Forces of Evil).

After all, the Persian Empire in its heyday dealt with its opponents with its Golden Archers (Persian gold coins of the period had the figure of a bowman stamped on one side) to great effect and spared themselves devastating wars.

I am constantly struck by the small amounts of money it takes to purchase the friendship of some US politicians — even those of high rank. They accept paltry sums that would be insulting to any high-ranking government official in this part of the world.

US politicians are thankfully quite reasonable in their demands and we can pay them in US dollars thereby avoiding currency risk.

We must be careful because Israel's friends in the US are way ahead of us in this game and will resent our meddling in what they consider to be their backyard. But, where there is a will there is a way.

We can rely on a charming habit of our American friends and allies which is their ability to make something illegal or immoral, legal and moral by simply calling it a different name and passing laws that make it legal. An example of this is calling bribes “soft loans”.

I believe that a sustained and (most importantly) discreet campaign of donations and contributions to the causes of democracy, human rights...etc. (wink, wink, nudge, nudge) in the US will have a much better return on our investment than simply buying a bunch of ultimately worthless US securities and will cost us far less.

The War On Nationalism: “If Only The Americans Would Leave Us Alone”

Oct 7, 2005 By Pepe Escobar, Asia Times. [Excerpt]

For Washington, the real enemy is not Islamic fundamentalism: it's Arab nationalism.

For decades the ultimate target of Israeli foreign policy has been to sow disunion among Arabs. Secular Arab nationalism is the ultimate threat to Israel, thus to the US, in neo-con thinking. The crux is not religious: it's political.

Historically, over the past 20 years, radical Islam has been the key channel for expressing rage against Western exploitation - because every progressive channel of expression failed, or was thwarted, by corrupt, American-supported regimes.

Radical Islam spent a long time fighting the rise of progressive nationalist movements in the Arab world: it became anti-Western only after the end of the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan and the first Gulf War.

There may be a debate raging within the American elites between the gung-go, armchair warrior neo-cons and the "exporting democracy" gang, but meanwhile the Greater Middle East concept keeps accumulating facts on the ground. The divisive project for the new Iraqi constitution, to be voted in the end of next week, is a mechanism to soften the partition of Iraq.

When the "war on terror" mantra was coined, it all boiled down to what are you going to sell to American and world public opinion. It was much easier to market a war against al-Qaeda - pictured as a cartoonish bunch of demented Arab, Wahhabi freaks with no agenda except evil destruction of the American way of life - than to tell the world about the real deal: as Arabs see it, this is a war against Arab nationalists bearing a very long list of widely-documented grievances and exploitation and a very clear, concrete set of demands: self-determination in all its forms all over the Arab world and the end of foreign occupation, domination and interference.

The key data in all this drama is what the people who live in the Middle East themselves think.

A very helpful guide is a study on Middle Eastern public opinion - conducted in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine - and released by the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan.

The results are devastating. One of the most important findings is that the Arab street does not identify a "clash of civilizations"; they identify their woes as direct consequences of British colonialism and US foreign policy.

How is "terrorism" defined in the Middle East?

For over 85% of the population in four of the five countries polled (64% in Lebanon), the US war on Iraq was an act of terrorism.

Ninety percent in all countries polled say that Israel's killing of Palestinian civilians is terrorism. Hamas and Hezbollah are not terrorist groups: they are regarded as legitimate resistance organizations. For a majority of Jordanians and Palestinians, even al-Qaeda's fight is legitimate.

And to top it all, the US is also seen as a major violator of human rights. The majority of people polled had just a simple wish: if only the Americans would leave us alone.

Your Neighborhood Recruiter Needs Help: Send In The Name Of Somebody Who Just Loves The War In Iraq

[And don't back off because the Iraq war-loving individual is a senior citizen, or missing body parts, or a veteran either. The fighters for national liberation in Iraq come in all varieties: senior citizens, veterans of the war with Iran, and missing body parts. Let it be even-steven. Shit, if the army won't have them, take up a collection and buy them a ticket. They can catch a ride from Jordan into Iraq. They can buy an AK for a few, and they don't need uniforms either. Or armored vests. The other side doesn't have uniforms or armored vests. Let the assholes opposed to bringing all the troops home *now* risk their fucking lives right now, or shut the fuck up. People who want the troops to stay longer but won't go themselves are nothing but cringing cowards, and there are *no* exceptions. They all the more contemptible if they pretend they are "anti-war." All they do with their bullshit is give the rest of us a bad name.]

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

October 16, 2005 by Rick Mercier, CommonDreams

Feeling a little extra pressure at work lately? Cheer up. For most of you it could be worse. You could be an Army recruiter.

The guys charged with replenishing the Army's ranks are as welcome in some quarters as carriers of bird flu.

These days that fry-cook job at McDonald's is looking a lot more enticing to potential young recruits than it did a just few years ago. And parents across the land have come up with an alternate take on an old cheer, crying out "Go away, Army" to beleaguered recruiters.

And the future doesn't look any brighter. The number of recruits signed up for the delayed-entry program has fallen dramatically the past couple of years.

That spells trouble for recruiters because they depend on the program to give them a head start toward meeting annual recruitment goals. In fiscal 2004, 46 percent of the Army's enlistment target was met upfront by recruits who had opted for delayed entry.

Last fiscal year, only 18 percent of enlistees were delayed entry, and the Army came up way short of its annual goal.

For the fiscal year that's just begun, the Army can count on only 11 percent of its recruitment target to be met by delayed-entry enlistees-which means recruiters have a lot of ground to make up in coming months.

The four-letter explanation, of course, is Iraq. And many would say that other I-words-such as ill-advised and incompetent-come to mind when they contemplate the Bush administration's military adventure in the Middle East.

Polls show that few Americans except hard-core Bush partisans believe in the Iraq war anymore.

Sure, there are the true believers who'd say the outlook for Iraq isn't really all that bad. There's a slim chance they may even be right.

So why aren't these folks the first ones signing up for service (they're accepting recruits as old as 42!), or offering up their kids who are enlistment age?

Since a lot of the "stay the course" crowd is a little shy when it comes to approaching a military recruiter, perhaps the rest of us can give them a little push by passing their information along to the Army.

You probably know some of these pro-war types. Maybe you've had to endure the guy next door or the guy in church talking up the war.

Well, why not log on to goarmy.com and sign him up for an info pack? Old Earl can slap that flag magnet of his on the Hummer he'll be driving through Sadr City.

And high-school students, how about "volunteering" the teachers and administrators who've welcomed recruiters and JROTC programs into your classrooms? With any luck, school will be out for quite a while for Mr. Crabtree.

As for me, I've got my eye on a few scribes who bellowed for this war and branded those who opposed it as America-haters and friends of terrorists.

I know where some of you live, keyboard warriors, and I've got some phone numbers, too. The recruiters will be in touch.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Afghanistan, Iraq Among Most Corrupt Countries In World

19th October, 2005 Irish Sun

Iraq is the most corrupt country in the Middle East, and Afghanistan leads a nest of nations in Central Asia that fail the corruption test.

The Berlin-based Transparency International's 2005 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), released Wednesday, showed more than two-thirds of the 159 nations surveyed, scored less than 5 out of a clean score of 10, indicating serious levels of corruption in a majority of the countries surveyed.

Iraq's score of 2.2 was near the bottom of the barrel as was Afghanistan's score of 2.5. The worst countries were Bangladesh and Chad with a score of 1.7. The former Soviet states that form Central Asia all performed badly, with Afghanistan the worst.

“Reconstruction” Projects Cut: Money Used Up On Occupation “Security”

Oct 18, 2005 By Vicki Allen, (Reuters)

Many rebuilding projects for Iraq will be dropped as security costs drain resources and with the growing awareness that more money must be spent to sustain Iraq's existing infrastructure, the top U.S. auditor for Iraq's reconstruction said on Tuesday.

In the coming year money needed to operate Iraq's existing health, water, oil and electrical infrastructure and to complete planned reconstruction projects "will outstrip the available revenue," said Stuart Bowen, the U.S. special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction.

"Though the causes may be numerous and valid, the existence of the gap simply means that the completion of the U.S.-funded portion of Iraq's reconstruction will leave many planned projects on the drawing board," Bowen told a House of Representatives Government Reform subcommittee.

Of the almost \$30 billion in U.S. funds for Iraq, just seven percent had not yet been committed, Bowen said.

Because the infrastructure is under attack by insurgents, up to 26 percent of the funds have been spent trying to protect the investment, he said.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS

“To Hell With Mubarak And We Are Not Slaves”

October 14, 2005 From: ZANU-PF forever via anti-allawi-group: Che-Leila interview Dyab Abu Jahjah. [Excerpt]

Dyab Abu Jahjah is an immigrant living in Belgium who is an Arab from south Lebanon.

Taka: very recently the AEL held a demonstration at the Egyptian embassy in Brussels, in your press release you said it was against dictatorship in Egypt. What was that about?

Dyab: Well, it's part of the enemy camp.

We see the enemy on the one hand the invaders and the colonisers, including the US and Zionists; the second part of the enemy, although its one camp, are the dictatorships.

On a more radical note the states themselves, because we are Arab Nationalists, we don't believe in these states.

As long as they exist colonialism exists because colonialism created them. We believe if you democratise them the people will choose to eventually eliminate them, so the fight is with the dictators too. We don't believe that one fight should be postponed against another, they are both the enemies.

That's the clear message that, for example, the Egyptian movement Kifayah ('Enough') is giving. This is the most radical and daring one, and they are not Islamists.

It's the first movement that went to the street and said to hell with Mubarak and we are not slaves, and said it out in the open.

The Muslim Brothers never did that, they do it inside the Universities, Kifayah did that and started with a small group of Nasserists and communists, and they started gaining momentum and support and they now have branches everywhere in Egypt.

They keep going for it.

The police are using all kinds of techniques to harass them, beat them up, they are trying whatever they can but they cannot stop it.

At the same time it's not your US friendly movement. If you go to their internet site the first thing you see is 'Our Arab Nation,' very clear Arab Nationalist angle, they don't talk about just Egypt as such, they talk about facing two dangers.

The danger of the Zionists American great Middle East project and the second danger is the dictatorships that are exhausting and keeping down our people.

It's a perfect analysis and it's our analysis and that's why we link up with these people, and try to give this message here and wherever we are.

Received:

Soldiers With Hand Injuries

From: Janchef@aol.com
To: GI Special
Sent: October 21, 2005 12:17 PM
Subject: Soldiers with hand injuries

Hi, I am a nurse interested in finding anyone who sustained a hand/finger injury where digits were amputated.

I am particularly interested in the use of the WoundVac to treat these wounds.

If you know of anyone or physicians, medics or nurses who treated them, please have them e-mail me at Janchef@aol.com and state RE: WoundVac

Thank you.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

All GI Special issues achieved at website <http://www.militaryproject.org/>.

The following have also posted issues; there may be others:

<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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