

GI SPECIAL 3C93:

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?



From Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

He writes: Iraq Veterans Against The War member Michael Cuzzort of New Orleans, getting arrested at the (very) White House on 9-26, 2005....more "troop support" from the admin... Afghan War vet can't stand on the sidewalk he owns...Michael sent me these pictures, and he is also working in our VFP Katrina relief effort down here.

**LIAR
TRAITOR
CRIMINAL
SOLDIER-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND**



Rumsfeld At It Again: Up-Armored Humvees Sit Idle In Texas As Marines And 3rd ID Die Unprotected From IEDs

The Army repeatedly has said it has enough top-of-the-line, armored Humvees in Iraq. But Hunter said the 3rd Infantry Division, which has suffered most of the Army casualties in Iraq, has only 20 percent of the vehicles it requires. The Marines have requested 2,814 such Humvees but have received only 744.

[Remember all those lies Rumsfeld and the Generals told about how everybody had the up-armored vehicles they needed? Guess what. The enemy is in

Washington DC, not Iraq. U.S. troops and Iraqis have a common enemy: the politicians in Washington who brought this war on to satisfy their own greed for Empire. The Bush occupation dictatorship kills Iraqis overseas, and kills U.S. troops overseas, with a fine even-handed impartiality. As long as the war-profiteering corporations get their billions, they really don't give a shit who dies.]

October 23, 2005 Scripps Howard News Service

WASHINGTON - Hundreds of new, top-of-the-line armored Humvees are parked in Texas and Kuwait and won't be shipped to troops in Iraq even though those soldiers face daily roadside bombs, the Army acknowledged Thursday.

The Army said it's keeping the vehicles out of Iraq until the 3rd Infantry Division's replacements, the 4th Infantry Division, arrive at the end of the year.

But with reports that more than one in four U.S. soldiers' deaths in Iraq have been caused by roadside bombs, members of Congress are incensed that 824 new Humvees won't go straight to Iraq. The newer, so-called "uparmored" Humvees have better technology to absorb roadside blasts.

"Let's not have them in parking lots. Let's move them up to Baghdad, let's move them up with the 3rd ID or move them over to the Marines, who've taken 50 percent of the hits yet have roughly 6 to 7 percent of the" uparmored "Humvees," said Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., who chairs the House Armed Services Committee.

Hunter called both Cody and Army Secretary Francis Harvey to testify Thursday, after he learned about the unused Humvees only because a committee staffer saw them parked at Fort Hood during a staff tour.

More than 585 of the 1,988 U.S. soldiers who had died in Iraq as of Oct. 5 were killed as a result of roadside bombs, according to the Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, which compiles information from news reports and the Pentagon's official releases.

The Army repeatedly has said it has enough top-of-the-line, armored Humvees in Iraq. But Hunter said the 3rd Infantry Division, which has suffered most of the Army casualties in Iraq, has only 20 percent of the vehicles it requires. The Marines have requested 2,814 such Humvees but have received only 744.

The 824 new vehicles are the newest and most modern, with not only more protection but sophisticated communications equipment to help the soldiers in battle.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**NO MISSION:
LETHAL ENVIRONMENT:**

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Private First Class Michael Trim of US Ironhawk Troops searches for hidden explosives in outskirts of Baghdad, August 2005. **The most powerful military force in the world faces a steady loss of life in Iraq from makeshift bombs planted by or even under the roadside -- deadly items soldiers call improvised explosive devices, or IEDs.** (AFP/File/Liu Jin)

II MEF MARINE KILLED IN RAMADI

October 24, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Release 05-10-32C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed in action by small-arms fire during combat operations against the enemy in ar Ramadi, Oct. 23.

Soldier From New York Killed

10/23/2005 The Associated Press

LOWVILLE, N.Y. (AP) — A Marine from northern New York was killed in Iraq this week, according to published reports.

Seamus Davey, 25, a Marine reservist based in Reno, Nevada died in an explosion, his mother told radio station WWNYT in Watertown.

Davey, a 1998 graduate of Lowville Academy in Lewis County, would have turned 26 next week.

He is the second soldier from the village killed in Iraq in the past six months.

Lowville lies 60 miles northeast of Syracuse.

Bolivar Soldier Killed When Tank Blown Up



Army Spec. Richard Hardy, 24, died Oct. 15, 2005, in Ramadi. Hardy, was on his second tour of duty in Iraq. (AP Photo/The Repository)

October 24, 2005 Internet Broadcasting Systems, Inc.

BOLIVAR, Ohio -- A soldier from Bolivar in Tuscarawas County has died in Iraq, his father said.

Army Spec. Richard Hardy died Oct.15 in Ramadi with four other soldiers when a rocket-propelled grenade got inside their tank and exploded, said his father, Richard "Rick" Hardy of Dennison.

The 24-year-old Hardy was on his second tour of duty in Iraq.

Master Sgt. James Waialae of the 758th Maintenance Company in Canton said it was a lucky shot that killed the five soldiers. He said the grenade must have entered the tank through an open hatch.

Hardy lived in Bolivar until his parents divorced, then lived in the Canton area for a while until he moved back with his father in Dennison. He graduated from Timken High School in Canton in 2000.

Families Of Five Benning Soldiers Notified Of Deaths

October 24, 2005 The Associated Press

Families of five Fort Benning soldiers killed by a roadside bomb in Ramadi, Iraq, have been notified -- more than a week after family members were first told their relatives may be dead.

The October 15th blast caused the largest loss of life in one day involving Fort Benning troops since October third, 1993 -- when six soldiers were killed in Mogadishu, Somalia.

Among the members of the Second Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment killed in the explosion were 21-year-old Army Specialist Tommy Byrd and 30-year-old Specialist Jeffrey Corbin.

The Army says the troops were riding in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle in a village on the outskirts of Ramadi when a roadside bomb exploded.

Navy Corpsman From Millers Creek Dies

October 24, 2005 By Monte Mitchell, JOURNAL REPORTER

MILLERS CREEK

A Wilkes County native, who was a Navy corpsman assigned to the Marines, was killed in Iraq on Friday in a roadside bomb attack.

"I can't let my Marines go without me," Chris Thompson, 25, told his father, just before shipping out on his second combat tour. "I take care of them."

Thompson was a petty officer hospitalman third class. Thompson and another member of the 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) were killed in the bombing near Amiriyah, 25 miles west of Baghdad. Thompson was riding in the left rear seat of an armored vehicle when someone set off an improvised explosive device, his parents said.

Larry and Geraldine Thompson were home at 9:25 p.m. Friday when they got the news. She was already in bed reading. While he was in the living room, Larry Thompson looked up from the television and through the front door's glass panel to see Navy officers in dress blues. He knew immediately why they were there, Larry Thompson said.

Churches throughout Wilkes County offered up prayers for Chris Thompson and his family yesterday as news of his death spread. Mourners offered condolences at the family's home beside a road off N.C. 16 in the Millers Creek community.

Local Soldier Injured

October 24, 2005 Internet Broadcasting Systems, Inc.

A 24-year-old soldier from Highland Township was injured in a bombing in Iraq Saturday.

The family of U.S. Army Spc. Nick Vallier said they felt extreme relief knowing their son survived the roadside bomb. Vallier and four others were injured when their Humvee drove over a bomb, Local 4 reported.

Jennifer and Bob Vallier said they are thankful their son is alive. "When the phone call came, that was the most important thing to me," said Jennifer Vallier.

Vallier said she heard her son say, "Mom, I'm OK."

Bob Vallier said the Humvee had serious damage.

Vallier suffered a concussion, a ruptured eardrum and a neck sprain. He is expected to recover.

Vallier is scheduled to return home in January.

Hotel For Foreigners Blown Up



October 24, 2005 Internet Broadcasting Systems, Inc. & By Jonathan Finer and Omar Fekeiki, Washington Post Foreign Service & ROBERT H. REID, AP

BAGHDAD, Oct. 24 -- Insurgents launched a multifaceted attack including three car bombs, rockets and small-arms fire on a hotel complex favored by foreign

journalists and contractors [translation: mercenaries] Monday evening, killing at least 20 people and wounding 22, according to government officials, police and witnesses at the scene.

A U.S. Bradley Fighting Vehicle parked inside the compound was destroyed in the blast. No one was inside at the time.

Deputy Interior Minister Hussein Kamal, said four or five Iraqi police were among the dead.

Another bomb exploded inside a car not far from the police position on the northeast side of Firdous Square and more than 100 yards east of the hotel grounds.

Shortly before the explosion a truck was seen coming under fire nearby, according to APTN.

Security photos showed first a white car drove up to the concrete blast wall that separates the hotel complex from Firdous Square at 5:23 p.m. local time. That vehicle exploded, blasting out a section of the wall.

Two minutes later and on the opposite side of the square, a second car blew up next to the 14th Ramadan Mosque. Then, one minute later, the cement truck drove through the breach in the blast wall and appeared to get about five to six meters (15 to 20 feet) inside the compound when it suddenly stopped. It repeatedly drove short distances back and forth, as if stuck on something, as gunfire broke out. Then it exploded in a huge yellow ball of fire and smoke.

Gunfire erupted after the blasts as police cars rushed to the scene and established a cordon two blocks away. Ambulances and civilian vehicles driven by private security companies streamed out to evacuate victims to the neighborhood's Ibn Nafees hospital.

A statement from the U.S. military in Baghdad said rockets were also fired at the site, near an Iraqi police post outside the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, which includes the Sheraton Hotel and is close to the Ministry of Agriculture.

"About five to 10 armed men used RPGs and light weapons, but the courageous Iraqi army, police and the Facilities Protection Service prevented the armed men from going inside," Rubaie added, referring to a private security company that guards the complex.

Police and journalists said there's heavy damage to the hotel. TV pictures show a huge cloud of smoke rising from the scene, and debris falling from the building.

Security sources said the explosions occurred two minutes apart.

A photographer for The Associated Press said at least three fellow photographers were injured.

Two AP television employees inside the hotel sustained minor injuries.

Three of the wounded were in the hotel but were not hurt seriously. Three others were at a U.S. military checkpoint at the northwest corner of the hotel compound.

Monday's attack blew down light fixtures, blasted pictures off the walls and shattered windows.

The attacks caused heavy damage to the south side of the 19-story hotel, forcing journalists, including those from AP, Fox News and the U.S. government-funded Alhurra TV station to take refuge in the corridor. Fox and Alhurra said their staff members were safe. After the bombing, Iraqi forces opened up with heavy automatic weapons fire, apparently firing at random. There was no sign of a further assault on the hotel.

APTN video taken immediately after the explosions from inside the hotel showed people evacuating through damaged hallways with panels from the ceilings and walls blown out in the stairwell. Debris from the blasts was seen on the floor of one empty room, where a television set was still turned on.

Moments before the second blast, journalists, photographers and technicians were walking up and down hazy corridors in a state of confusion, urging each other to remain calm, put on flak jackets, and to stay away from windows. Thicker clouds of smoke filled the far end of one hallway, with many people coughing and waving their hands.

The second explosion shook the building momentarily. Confusion and panic again set in, with those inside debating whether to exit, but all eventually deciding to stay in the corridor and sit propped against walls, most in flak jackets. Sounds resembling gunshots could be heard outside.

Strips of floorboards were strewn about and air vents were blown in.

MORE:

The Incredible Brain-Dead General

[The very day that the attack on the Palestine Hotel is rolled out, read what this fool had to say.]

24 October 2005 By Lee Keath, The Associated Press

Still, with the toll among American service members in the Iraq war approaching 2,000 dead, the U.S. military said it has hampered insurgents' ability to unleash more devastating suicide bombings with a series of offensives in western towns that disrupted militant operations.

"We have interrupted the flow of the suicide missions into the large urban areas. Certainly, we have had success denying free movement of car bombs into Baghdad," Brig. Gen. Donald Alston told reporters in the capital.

Meeting Of Americans And Managers At “Ultra-Secure” Refinery Blown Up: Many Dead

25 October 2005 Aljazeera

A bomb attack against the ultra-secure Baiji petroleum refinery on Monday killed five participants at a meeting attended by Americans and injured several others, police said.

The bombs were placed against walls surrounding a residential complex at the base, 200km north of Baghdad, where the meeting was taking place between refinery managers and the Americans, according to police colonel Hassan Saleh.

He said the bodies of five Iraqis were recovered from the collapsed ruins of the building where the meeting was being held. Saleh said nine Iraqis were injured.

There was no indication whether any US nationals were among the casualties.

Pressure-Triggered Bombs Worry U.S. Forces: “These Are A Group Of Dedicated Professionals Trying To Improve Their Craft”

“There's a tendency to think of the insurgency as a bunch of guys running around the desert with Kalashnikovs,” Wollan said. “These are a group of dedicated professionals trying to improve their craft.”

October 24, 2005 USA Today

BAQOUBA, Iraq - Just before midnight on the eve of Iraq's vote on a draft constitution, an armored Humvee carrying four soldiers from the Army's 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment drove over a wire on a road south of Baqouba, triggering a deafening explosion.

Shrapnel pierced the Humvee's armor, shredding calves, toes and legs. Two soldiers were hurt badly enough to be airlifted to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. The other two were transported to a military hospital in nearby Balad. The military says all of them will survive. There was nothing particularly remarkable about the Oct. 14 incident. U.S. troops in Iraq hit roadside bombs, or improvised explosive devices (IEDs), on a daily basis.

But the technique used to trigger many of the bombs has U.S. officers here concerned. Until recently, most roadside explosives in this area were triggered remotely by an insurgent using a cellphone, doorbell or other wireless device.

This bomb was detonated by a pressure switch that activates when a vehicle drives over it. The incident means that U.S. forces here, who have improved their ability to spot remotely triggered bombs, now have a different type of weapon to worry about.

"The new weapon out there is the pressure-detonated IED," Col. Steven Salazar, commander of the Army's 3rd Brigade Combat Team, warned company commanders during a recent battle briefing. "It's a very dangerous tactic."

The bomb that caused the Oct. 14 blast was the 14th pressure-switch device found or detonated in the area in the past four weeks.

For insurgents, the advantage to a pressure switch is that no one has to risk capture by remaining nearby to trigger the explosion. The downside for insurgents is that they can't control when such bombs go off: Any vehicle heavy enough can set off the blast, including civilian cars and trucks.

The re-emergence of pressure-activated bombs has come as insurgents have acquired more expertise in building and placing them. "These guys either received additional training, or new personnel has moved in to show them how to do it correctly," Maj. Dean Wollan, intelligence officer of the 3rd Brigade, said.

He said insurgent groups are swapping information on DVDs and on paper, or by assigning explosives experts to train with bombmakers in other cells and groups.

"There's a tendency to think of the insurgency as a bunch of guys running around the desert with Kalashnikovs," Wollan said. "These are a group of dedicated professionals trying to improve their craft."

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)

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. army soldiers on mission to search for improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, in Tikrit, October 24, 2005. REUTERS/Jorge Silva

TROOP NEWS

Marine Iraq Vet Says: “The U.S. Military Is Not Going To Stop The Violence In Iraq”

October 23, 2005 (Reuters)

Beyond Sheehan's plans, a candlelight vigil is planned at the White House to mourn the 2,000-death milestone. Hundreds of other demonstrations are scheduled for the day after the milestone number is reached.

"I hope that this milestone marks the point when the American people realize the U.S. military is not going to stop the violence in Iraq, and they instead start demanding a political solution to this problem," Sean O'Neill, a U.S. Marine who served in Iraq, said in a statement.

15,220 Wounded: 7,100 Too Badly To Return To Duty

Oct 23, 2005 By Will Dunham (Reuters)

U.S. Army Sgt. Joey Bozik remembers coming out of a coma at Walter Reed Army Medical Center not fully understanding why he was there.

"I knew something had happened to me, I just didn't know what," Bozik said.

He first inquired about his family, then about himself.

"I had an above-the-knee amputation of my right leg and a below-the-knee amputation on my left leg. I had a below-the-elbow amputation on my right arm. And on my left hand, my thumb and pinkie were fractured and the metacarpals in my hand were fractured and I fractured my wrist," Bozik said.

The human toll for the U.S. military in the Iraq war is not limited to the nearly 2,000 troops deaths since the March 2003 invasion.

More than 15,220 also have been wounded in combat, including more than 7,100 injured too badly to return to duty, the Pentagon said. Thousands more have been hurt in incidents unrelated to combat.

Bozik, a 27-year-old from Wilmington, North Carolina, recounted what happened to him, as he used his left hand and a prosthetic right hand to pedal a stationary hand bike in the physical therapy room at Walter Reed. His 25-year-old wife, Jayme, stood watchfully behind.

On October 27, 2004, Bozik was in the front passenger seat in a vehicle on patrol south of Baghdad, checking for insurgent roadside bombs, known as improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Coming down a highway overpass, his driver steered the truck more widely than the two vehicles in front.

It rolled over an anti-tank mine with two mortar rounds attached. The explosion blew two other soldiers free of the vehicle. But Bozik was trapped inside.

Military statistics showed that while 23 percent of U.S. troops wounded in combat in World War Two died and 17 percent in the Vietnam War, 9 percent of those wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan died.

Without the advances since Vietnam, the U.S. death toll in Iraq would be nearly double the current total.

But military doctors said some troops who may have died in previous wars are surviving, but with grievous injuries such as multiple limb amputations.

More than 300 troops have undergone at least one limb amputation. By far the single biggest cause of combat wounds are blasts from IEDs.

"We look at patients oftentimes and feel like it's a miracle that they're alive," said Lt. Col. Paul Pasquina, chief of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Walter Reed, which has treated more than 4,400 troops hurt in Iraq.

"Someone who loses one limb is a challenge to get back to a meaningful, functional lifestyle," Pasquina said. "But somebody who loses three limbs, on top of other types of soft tissue wounds, fractures, head injury, spinal-cord injury, paralysis...?"

Pasquina and Lt. Col. Warren Dorlac, chief of trauma surgery and critical care at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany cited several factors for why a larger percentage of wounded U.S. troops were surviving:

-- advances in body armor, with torso armor better protecting the chest and abdomen, heart and lungs and helmets better protecting the brain;

-- better trained and prepared battlefield medics;

-- improved in-country surgical capabilities allowing patients to be stabilized so they can be quickly flown out of Iraq.

Moving patients to U.S. hospitals usually took 45 days during the Vietnam War, but has been reduced to as little as 36 hours now. Most troops flown out of Iraq are then treated at Landstuhl before being sent along to facilities in the United States including Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas or Walter Reed in Washington.

For the first anniversary of the blast that wounded him, Bozik and his wife are planning a celebration with friends.

"We'll call it my 'life-day,'" Bozik said, wearing red shorts and a white T-shirt with an athletic gear manufacturer's slogan, "Just Do It."

"He's always got that positive attitude," his wife said.

"The way I look at it is I've been given a second chance on life," Bozik said. "Everybody always wants to know what the meaning of life is. I'm not saying I have the answer. But I can tell you one thing, I have a better understanding of what life's about."

Soldiers Lost In Iraq Top Those Lost In First Four Years In Vietnam

Oct 24 AScribe Newswire

CLINTON, N.Y.-- "The nearly 2,000 Americans killed in combat (1,998 on October 24, 2005) in Iraq since 2003 are more than were lost in Vietnam combat in the first four years of U.S. combat (1961-1965, when just over 1800 died).

This total is more than were lost in the last two years of combat (1971-1972, when just over 1600 died)," recounts Maurice Isserman, co-author of "America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s."

"Today public opinion polls show that the percentage of Americans who believe that it was a mistake for the U.S. to go to war in Iraq is roughly comparable to the number of Americans who believed it was a mistake for the U.S. to go to war in Vietnam in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive in 1968.

The principal difference between the anti-war opposition of 2005, and that of 1968, is that in the Vietnam war a significant group of Democratic Party leaders - starting with Senators Morse and Gruening in 1964 and eventually including such figures as Senators Fulbright, McCarthy, Kennedy (Robert and Ted), and McGovern - joined the opposition to the war. This lent legitimacy and influence to the opposition. Today, the Democratic party, with a few brave exceptions, mostly in the House of Representatives, is supportive of or silent about the war," observes Isserman.

How Bad Is It?

October, 2005 BY LESLIE SABBAGH, Popular Mechanics. [Excerpts]

The voice is flat and uninflected but its effect is electric: "Medevac, medevac, medevac."

It takes only one "medevac" crackling over the walkie-talkies to spur the air ambulance company into action. Medic Spc. April Krueger and crew chief Sgt. Trevor Twite bolt from the Ready Room. Chief Warrant Officer Gerald McGowan, command pilot, runs from the office next to Flight Planning as pilot Capt. Jason Yellman jumps up from his desk. The soldiers head to Flight Ops, a room crammed with receivers, handsets, tactical maps and gun racks. There, Staff Sgt. Stephen D. Scott, the noncommissioned officer in charge of operations, reports that a road patrol about 5 miles to the north has been hit by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG). Scott relays the ground unit's request: "One urgent litter, U.S. soldier with head wounds."

Once we're in the air McGowan calls Flight Ops for an update on gunship support: negative. Medevac Black Hawks are the only aircraft that fly single ship in combat; all other aircraft fly in pairs or larger formations.

Generally, Black Hawk crews rely on the extra eyes and firepower of Apache escorts. But in poor weather--low ceiling, limited visibility--the Apaches are not allowed to fly. More helicopters operating in those kinds of marginal conditions mean more risk for crashes.

In fact, there is no gunship support for nearly a third of the Black Hawk flights--many of them, like today's, into hot landing zones.

Minutes later we're circling a pair of tanks and four Humvees lined up along a narrow, unpaved country road; one of the Humvees is damaged and listing. Rotor downwash kicks up a thick cloud of dirt and dust as Yellman sets down in a deeply rutted field of tall grass about 150 ft. from the road.

Soldiers are scattered everywhere, pulling security from the turrets of the tanks and Humvees and from behind dusty bushes and scrubby trees. As I start to unbuckle my four-point harness, Twite shakes his head. Reluctantly, I sit back down. It's not safe for me to leave the helicopter.

The risks in hot "roadsides"--medevacs not on secured military installations--are high.

The Geneva Conventions do not allow medevac helicopters to employ assault weapons systems, so the defensive capability of an air ambulance crew is limited to the M-4s and Berettas carried by crew members, along with the forces on the ground and gunship support, when it's available.

Enemy attack is assumed to be imminent, and Black Hawks that land in these locations become high-value targets.

So I stay put. Twite handles security while Krueger picks her way through the grass to the damaged Humvee. The wounded soldier is already on a litter, unconscious; four platoon mates carry him to the Black Hawk with Krueger guiding them. It only takes a moment to load the casualty, and then we're off.

As soon as the Black Hawk touches down on the helipad at Balad, medics run out with a litter and rush the soldier into the long, low tent that serves as the emergency department.

The Black Hawk is waiting on the pad, ready to return to Camp Taji in time for the next medevac.

The 50th Medical Company, based in Fort Campbell, Ky., is a close-knit group of 102 soldiers with one of the most dangerous missions in aviation. Like all air ambulances in the Iraqi operation, the medevac Black Hawks launch in weather that would ground any other helicopter, fly solo to the PZ, and land on the violent streets of Baghdad, in the middle of roadside firefights--anywhere there are casualties.

With Baghdad as part of its beat, the 50th is the busiest air ambulance crew in Iraq.

By the time I arrived, the unit had flown 1900 missions, including 400 roadsides, since its deployment in December 2004.

Howard has never stopped a launch; he lets his pilots make the final call. "If they have to abort due to weather," he says, "I support them. If they make a call to a hot PZ where bullets are flying but the ground unit is adamant that this pickup could mean a life, I stand behind them."

The cohesive teamwork extends to the 32 men who work on maintaining the unit's 12 Black Hawks--not an easy assignment.

Each flying hour requires 10 hours of maintenance, and upkeep is especially tough with these birds, which are the original model of Black Hawk. All the airframes have more than 4000 hours on them, and the engines are old and underpowered for the armored ships.

It's easy to see why pilots swear by their mechanics. "They're a bunch of smartasses," Capt. Scott Brown says, "but I wouldn't trade them for any other soldiers."

Medevac, medevac, medevac." This time an IED (improvised explosive device) has slammed a ground patrol, call sign Iron Hawk, in central Baghdad. The radio call comes in: "One urgent litter, U.S. soldier with abdominal wounds."

With the crew hitting the 4-minute mark again, the Black Hawk lifts off in 35-mph gusts that rock the aircraft. Command pilot Brown and pilot Warrant Officer Craig Parker are in the cockpit; medic Sgt. Jamilah Posey and crew chief Spc. Billy Myers flank me. The mood is intense; voices are tight and clipped. Thirty seconds later, we're out of Taji airspace; Brown calls Baghdad Radio, the military unit that coordinates airspace over the city, to give them our landing site.

Then he calls Flight Ops about gunship support: Again, it's negative.

Soon we're circling the mess that is the PZ--tumbledown mud-brick homes and decrepit low-rise apartment buildings bordering an open area covered with trash and crisscrossed with telephone poles and powerlines. Humvees and other vehicles clutter the landing zone, and it's hard to tell where the casualties are located. Brown has better sightlines than Parker so he takes the controls and makes a steep descending left turn while Myers calls out powerlines to the pilots.

"Clear," he says once we've dodged the flight hazards.

Brown sets the Black Hawk down about 200 ft. from a damaged Humvee. At our 9 o'clock position dozens of locals mill about; Myers jumps out of the helicopter with his M-4 and pulls security by the side of the aircraft.

The swelling crowds are about 300 ft. away--too far for rocks or hand-thrown grenades, but well within range for RPGs. Posey disconnects her communication line and runs to the casualty while Brown turns the controls back over to Parker. Brown unholsters his Beretta, chambers a round and places the pistol on his lap,

his hand resting on the weapon as he scans the crowds, keeping close watch on the heads that pop up in windows and on roofs.

It turns out the initial assessment was wrong. There are two casualties, not one, and both have grievous wounds.

One soldier lies on a litter near the bumper of the Humvee; the ground medic has stabilized him. The big man--he's more than 6 ft. tall and about 230 pounds, with a linebacker's broad, muscular shoulders--is alert. Both legs are partially amputated, attached only by skin and tendons. His right arm is completely amputated at midbicep. There's an IV in his intact left arm.

The unit's soldiers take him to the aircraft while Posey goes to the other casualty. She signals Myers for a stretcher. He breaks security, grabs a litter and runs to her.

The other wounded soldier, who has lost both arms, has two IVs in his legs. A couple of men in his unit open the litter, put him on it and then place the IV bags under his thighs to keep the fluid flowing once he's in the aircraft.

I can hear the first man screaming over the sound of the rotors when he's still 6 ft. from the aircraft. As litter bearers pass Parker's door, the pilot looks away. The downwash from the main rotor sprays blood through the open right door.

"My arm!" the wounded man yells as the soldiers shove the litter onto the litter pan. He grimaces, eyes squeezed shut, teeth clenched when the litter slides off its track. I kneel on the floor and try to lift the front of the litter back on the track, but I'm not strong enough. Myers runs to the left door, opens it all the way and climbs in. He lifts the litter, and the soldiers all help push and pull the triple amputee inside the aircraft. Myers helps load the second casualty. By the time he closes the doors, Posey is already at work, monitoring vital signs.

The Black Hawk has been on the ground for only a few minutes when Parker takes off to the north in a steep climb to avoid the powerlines.

"Clear wires," Myers says.

Parker flies as fast as possible--about 135 knots (155 mph)--given the 120-degree temperature, the underpowered engines and the poor visibility. Posey has injected both casualties with 20 milligrams of morphine. The double amputee in the upper litter turns to me. "Can I go to bed now?"

"Yes," I say over the rotor's roar.

He smiles and closes his eyes, his face peaceful. I hold the remaining forearm and hand of the triple amputee in the bottom litter so Posey can read his pulse and blood oxygen levels.

As soon as the Black Hawk sets down, medics rush out. Once inside the emergency department, Posey transfers care of her patients to the CSH medical staff. It has been 18 minutes since the call came in.

During the silent flight back north to the airfield, Brown radios Flight Ops to request a pressure washer to clean the inside of the helicopter; his voice is grim.

Back at base, the crew meets before dinner for a debriefing. Brown goes over the flight and pickup details. "We've seen a lot of trauma," he says, "but this was the worst." Parker, who is usually quick with a comic retort, is downcast. He admits he was too shaken to fly back to Taji; he became tearful when he saw the triple amputee being carried into the CSH.

When Brown asks Posey how she thinks the casualties will fare, the strong, composed woman says what we're all thinking: The triple amputee may not make it.

The next morning, during another mission to the CSH, Posey checks on the status of the two men and discovers that the double amputee is alive. The triple amputee, however, died during surgery, leaving behind a wife and four children.

After months of medevacs it is understandable that the crews long to return home. But even though they desperately miss their families, they retain a powerful commitment to their mission.

"I try not to look back too much as patients are being loaded," Parker says later. The former barber from Bel Air, Md., goes on: "Sometimes the eye contact is a flash into a hell that I'm not sure I'm able to comprehend fully.

"It goes home with me. But I love the medevac mission, and I'm glad to go into harm's way to retrieve our wounded soldiers."

Krueger, a native of Lino Lakes, Minn., became a medic because she loves helicopters. But it's become more than that. "I'm the link between someone being hurt in the field and getting to the hospital," she says. "I have the best job in the world, because I'm helping people."

One evening while walking back from dinner, McGowan expresses frustration that he can't take on even more medevacs, citing the free rein of Vietnam helicopter pilots. "They went in no matter what was going on," says McGowan, a self-described Air Force brat who was born in Germany. "We're more restricted, but I won't let the guys on the ground deteriorate just because there's a chance we'll get shot at. We make a difference. I still have an e-mail from a soldier I medevaced, thanking our crew for saving his life."

***Panic At The Top:* Silly Body Counts Are Back; Commanders Worried About Troop Morale**

The release of such figures also can serve to boost the morale of U.S. forces and bolster confidence "that their plans and weapons work effectively," said Marine Lt. Col. David Lapan, spokesman for the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, which operates in western Iraq.

24 October 2005 By Bradley Graham, The Washington Post

Eager to demonstrate success in Iraq, the U.S. military has abandoned its previous refusal to publicize enemy body counts and now cites such numbers periodically to show the impact of some counterinsurgency operations.

On Saturday, for instance, the U.S. military reported 20 insurgents killed and one captured in raids on five houses suspected of sheltering foreign fighters in a town near the Syrian border. Six days earlier, the 2nd Marine Division issued a statement saying an estimated 70 suspected insurgents had died in the Ramadi area as a result of three separate airstrikes by fighter jets and helicopters.

That Oct. 16 statement reflected some of the pitfalls associated with releasing such statistics. The number was immediately challenged by witnesses, who said many of those killed were not insurgents but civilians, including women and children.

Privately, several uniformed military and civilian defense officials expressed concern that the pendulum may have swung too far, with body counts now creeping into too many news releases from Iraq and Afghanistan.

They also questioned the effectiveness of citing such figures in conflicts where the enemy has shown itself capable of rapidly replacing dead fighters and where commanders acknowledge great uncertainty about the total size of the enemy force.

During the Vietnam War, enemy body counts became a regular feature in military statements intended to demonstrate progress. But the statistics ended up proving poor indicators of the war's course. Pressure on U.S. units to produce high death tolls led to inflated tallies, which tore at Pentagon credibility.

"In Vietnam, we were pursuing a strategy of attrition, so body counts became the measure of performance for military units," said Conrad C. Crane, director of the military history institute at the U.S. Army War College. "But the numbers got so wrapped up with career aspirations that they were sometimes falsified."

The Vietnam experience led U.S. commanders to shun issuing enemy death tallies in later conflicts, through the initial stages of the Iraq war.

"We don't do body counts on other people," Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said in November 2003, when asked on "Fox News Sunday" whether the number of enemy dead exceeded the U.S. toll.

That policy appeared to shift with the assault on the insurgent stronghold of Fallujah in November, an operation considered crucial at the time to denying safe havens to enemy fighters.

U.S. military officials reported 1,200 to 1,600 enemy fighters killed, although reporters on the scene noted far fewer corpses were found by Marines after the fighting.

High-ranking commanders also have contributed to the trend. In January, Army Gen. George Casey, the top U.S. officer in Iraq, said U.S. and Iraqi forces had killed or captured 15,000 people last year.

In May, Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, mentioned the killing of 250 of insurgent leader Abu Musab Zarqawi's "closest lieutenants" as evidence of progress in Iraq.

The release of such figures also can serve to boost the morale of U.S. forces and bolster confidence "that their plans and weapons work effectively," said Marine Lt. Col. David Lapan, spokesman for the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, which operates in western Iraq.

Still, defense specialists such as Crane cautioned that enemy body counts in Iraq and Afghanistan are prone to inaccuracy and are of questionable significance. The murky nature of the conflicts, they said, make it difficult to know at times who is an insurgent, a criminal or an innocent civilian.

"There still are problems in identifying who is who, just as there were in Vietnam," Crane said.

“Nearly Every Major Counterinsurgency In The 20th Century Failed”

“The Army's Doctrine Hasn't Changed Since The 1840's”

"The soldiers fighting the insurgents became demoralized because they were the strong fighting the weak," van Creveld says. "Everything they did seemed to be wrong. If they let the weaker army kill them, they were idiots. If they attacked the smaller army, they were seen as killers. The effect, in nearly every case, is demoralization and breakdowns of discipline."

Oct 24, 2005 Dexter Filkins, The New York Times Company

"It's a chronic problem that runs deep in the DNA of the Army," says John Waghelstein, a retired colonel in the Special Forces who helped to conduct the American-backed counterinsurgency campaign in El Salvador. "The Army has never taken counterinsurgency seriously.

"The Army's doctrine hasn't changed since the 1840's." At the Army's Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kan., attended by all American officers hoping to rise above the rank of major, students must pass a rigorous program consisting of roughly 700 hours of instruction.

Of that, not a single required course focuses on how to fight guerrilla wars.

Waghelstein says that the Army's leaders actually decided to de-emphasize counterinsurgency following Vietnam.

When Waghelstein was an instructor at the Command and General Staff College, the school eliminated several courses that dealt with guerrilla war or turned them into electives, he says.

Kalev Sepp, a retired Special Forces officer and a counterinsurgency adviser to the American command in Iraq, told me: "It's a cliché that the Army is always fighting the last war, but with the American Army, that's not true.

"When the Vietnam War ended, the Army tried to pretend it never happened. The typical officer in the military knew far more about the Battle of Gettysburg than he did about Vietnam. Initially, in Iraq, they were just making it up."

In most of the 20th century's guerrilla wars, the armies of the countries battling the insurgents have suffered serious breakdowns in discipline.

This was true of the Americans in Vietnam, the French in Algeria and the Soviets in Afghanistan. Martin van Creveld, a historian at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, says that soldiers in the dominant army often became demoralized by the frustrations of trying to defeat guerrillas.

Nearly every major counterinsurgency in the 20th century failed.

"The soldiers fighting the insurgents became demoralized because they were the strong fighting the weak," van Creveld says. "Everything they did seemed to be wrong. If they let the weaker army kill them, they were idiots. If they attacked the smaller army, they were seen as killers. The effect, in nearly every case, is demoralization and breakdowns of discipline."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

A New Record: **Resistance Attacks Blow Up 16 Oil Pipelines**

10.24.05 Aljazeera

Fighters attacked oil pipelines in Iraq's north on Monday for the second time in four days, sparking fires and further setting back the resumption of exports into Turkey, oil officials said.

"Three mortars fell just after 10am on a network of oil and gas pipelines that had already been hit on Thursday by mortar fire," said an official responsible for oil security.

The explosions set off a fire "and no less than 16 oil pipelines are on fire", around the network, which is 60km west of the northern city of Kirkuk, a technician in charge of repairing oil installations said.

The attack came as the fire sparked by Thursday's attack was brought under control and technical teams were preparing to repair the damage.

According to the technician from the Northern Oil Company (NOC), the damage caused by Thursday's fire will take at least four weeks to repair. [At which time it will be blown up again. This has only been going on for 2½ years now.]

It is only then that the oil can flow again and feed the main export pipeline. **[In your dreams.]**



10.24.05: A member of the Iraqi Northern Oil Protection Force at burning oil pipelines in Tari al-Baghl area, 60 kms west of the city of Kirkuk, in northern Iraq.

Oil exports from Iraq -- estimated to have the world's second largest reserves -- have been completely halted by a combination of insurgent attacks in the north and bad weather in the south. (AFP/Marwan Ibrahim)

GET THE MESSAGE?



Iraqi children shout and clap hands after US troops abandoned three houses used as a checkpoint on the outskirts of Ramadi Oct. 24 2005. .(AP Photo/Bilal Hussein)

Assorted Resistance Action



Iraqi national guards look at the damage on a car following a roadside bomb attack against a Kurdistan Democratic Party motorcade in Kirkuk, October 24, 2005. REUTERS/Slahaldeen Rasheed

24 October 2005 (AFP) & AP & Aljazeera & (CNN) & (KUNA) & Reuters & United Press International & By Lee Keath, The Associated Press

Two employees of the Moroccan embassy in Baghdad have disappeared on the road between the Jordanian capital Amman and Baghdad, the Moroccan ministry of foreign affairs and cooperation said on Monday.

“The Moroccan embassy in Iraq has not heard from two Moroccan staff of the chancellery since Thursday,” the ministry said in a statement.

In Baghdad, suspected insurgents opened fire at two civilian cars, killing three municipal workers.

Armed men opened fire on an Iraqi army checkpoint in western Baghdad, killing a soldier and a girl who was standing in front of her nearby house, said police.

In two other attacks in the capital, a drive-by shooting killed one policeman, and in Shaab neighborhood of northern Baghdad, a car bomb near a police patrol wounded five people, including two police officers, the Interior Ministry said.

Elsewhere in Baghdad, armed fighters killed a city official Monday morning in the southwestern neighborhood of Saydiya, the Interior Ministry said.

In Kirkuk, 290km north of Baghdad, a roadside bomb exploded at 8.30 am (0500 GMT) near a car carrying Ibrahim Zangana, a senior member of Iraq's Kurdish Democratic Party, seriously wounding him, killing one of his bodyguards and injuring another one, said Brigadier-General Sarhat Qadir, the commander of Kirkuk's police force.

Another drive-by shooting, this one in Mosul, 360km northwest of Baghdad, killed a policeman.

Director of the supplies department in the Iraqi south oil company in Basra was abducted Monday, according to an official in the company.

The source, who requested anonymity, said that the official, Khudeir Fatahallah was kidnapped after unidentified armed men attacked his vehicle in Basra as he was heading to work.

MUSSAYYIB - A bomber detonated a car laden with explosives on Monday near a police checkpoint in the town of Mussayyib, south of Baghdad, wounding one police officer and one civilian, police said.

MUSSAYYIB - Armed fighters 12 Iraqi construction workers who were building a police station in the town of Mussayyib, south of Baghdad, police said on Monday. The attackers, who arrived in two cars, also kidnapped the contractor who had hired the workers.

A policeman was killed when a roadside bomb exploded near his patrol in the northern city of Kirkuk on Monday.

Armed fighters attacked a convoy of trucks transporting wheat in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, the ministry of commerce said.

Several trucks were burned and their cargo destroyed in the attack, which killed three drivers and wounded two others.

Armed fighters also killed three Iraqis driving a water truck to an Iraqi army base on a highway near Taji, north of Baghdad, police Lt. Abdul-Razaq al-Hayali said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“No Parent Would Want Their Child Over Here”

All of us, as we went about our routines, were thinking of Chase, talking about him, and he was already dead. We just didn't know it yet.

October 23, 2005 by Missy Comley Beattie, Common Dreams. [Excerpt]

Soon, it will be three months since my brother Mark's son, Marine Lance Cpl. Chase J. Comley, was killed by a suicide bomber.

His battalion is now stateside. A few days ago, Chase's brother received a video, filmed just hours before Chase died. According to my mother, the film showed him as he horsed around with his friends, squirting a water pistol and being the kid that he was, full of “frogs and snails and puppy dog tails.”

Who knows what Chase was thinking? He'd already had two close calls. He'd told his brother that he'd driven over a bomb that exploded seconds later behind his vehicle.

In a letter to his sister which she read to me, he'd written, “No parent would want their child over here.”

I think of that Sunday morning when my sister called and said, “Chase was killed in Iraq last night.”

Her words echo in my head many times a day and go to bed with me every night when I lie awake, trying to fall asleep.

Saturday, the day before we learned of Chase's death, I spoke with my brother. He told me that Chase was in the field and would call when he could. It was at the end of that

week when all those troops from Ohio died and my mother had a terrible feeling, almost a portent about Chase.

In fact, my mother asked my niece who'd stopped by on Saturday, "Do you understand your brother may not come out of this alive and that if he does, he may be wounded physically and mentally?"

Chase's sister never considered this a possibility. She just expected him to return when his tour was over and be the same person he was when he left.

All of us, as we went about our routines, were thinking of Chase, talking about him, and he was already dead. We just didn't know it yet.

Many people deny the reality of this war. Even those who have been touched personally still refuse to read and become informed about the reasons we're in Iraq.

It's easier to accept that we're there because we're fighting to preserve our freedoms and to bring democracy to the people of the region than to examine the huge role that American empire and oil acquisition play in our policies, not to mention that war generally insures the reelection of an incumbent.

The number of American dead is approaching 2,000. Chase's number was somewhere around 1,830. In the less than three months since my nephew's death, more than 150 troops have died and, probably, thousands of Iraqis have perished.

Chase's death will never be an acceptable distance from my family's hearts. The troops killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom, a misnomer if I've ever heard one, should be "Breaking News" every single day.

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.

Received:

“You Will Be Tried. You Can Run But You Cannot Hide”

From: JL

To: GI Special

Sent: October 24, 2005

Subject: **"It's Bad Down There. We Didn't Know It Was Going To Be Like This"**

Dear George W Bush,

“Two American soldiers climbed out of a hatch, the first with his pant leg on fire, and the other completely in flames. The first rolled over to help the other man, but when they touched, the first man also burst into flames. Insurgent gunfire began to pop.

“Several blocks away, Lance Cpl. Jeffrey Rosener, 20, from Minneapolis, watched the two men die from a lookout post at a Marine encampment. His heart reached out to them, but he could not. In Ramadi, Iraq's most violent city, two blocks may as well be 10 miles.

“I couldn't do anything,” he said of the incident, which he saw on Oct. 10. He spoke quietly, sitting in the post and looking straight ahead. “It's bad down there. You hear all the rumors. We didn't know it was going to be like this.” ’

"Bring 'em on!" Wasn't that your line, George Bush?

It would be better for you if a millstone were tied about your neck and you were hurled into the deepest sea than for you to have done what you have done to America's most unquestioning citizens. You are utterly unworthy of them.

You are a liar, a murderer, a war criminal.

Please, get on your knees and pray that your god will give you the strength to stop lying, murdering and committing war crimes. You can still spare the lives of tens of thousands of innocents between today and January 20, 2009.

You will be tried. You can run but you cannot hide.

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.

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