

GI SPECIAL 3C95:



Members of Veterans For Peace stand around 2000 candles in Oakland, California, October 25, 2005 in memory of the 2,000 U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq. (Kimberly White/Reuters)

**“Grieve Little And Move
On,” He Counseled Her.
“I Shall Be Looking Over You.
And You Will Hear Me From
Time To Time On The Gentle
Breeze That Sounds At Night,
And In The Rustle Of Leaves”**

"He was angry, angrier than I've ever heard," said Ima Lee Jones, his grandmother. "He said, 'I don't mind going. But what the insurgents haven't blown up or burned, we can't get parts to fix. The trucks can't drive more than 40 miles per hour. It's like having a bull's-eye on the door.' " Sergeant Jones was driving one of those trucks when it was shattered by a roadside bomb on June 14, killing him.

October 26, 2005 By JAMES DAO, The New York Times. [Excerpts]

Sgt. Anthony G. Jones, fresh off the plane from Iraq and an impish grin on his face, sauntered unannounced into his wife's hospital room in Georgia just hours after she had given birth to their second son.

For two joyous weeks in May, Sergeant Jones cooed over their baby and showered attention on his wife. But he also took care of unfinished business, selling his pickup truck to retire a loan, paying off bills, calling on family and friends.

"I want to live this week like it is my last," he told his wife.

Three weeks later, on June 14, Sergeant Jones was killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad on his third tour in a war that is not yet three years old. He was 25.

"It was like he knew he wouldn't come back," said his grandmother, Ima Lee Jones, who buried Sergeant Jones beside towering oaks near her home in Sumter, S.C.

"He told me, 'Grandma, the chances of going over a third time and coming back alive are almost nil. I've known too many who have died.'"

Sergeant Jones's tale may be unusual in its heartbreaking juxtaposition of birth and death, but it has become increasingly common among the war dead in one important way: one in five of the troops who have been killed were in their second, third, fourth or fifth tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many of those service members returned voluntarily to war because they burned with conviction in the rightness of the mission. Others were driven by powerful loyalty to units and friends. For some it was simply their job.

But as the nation pays grim tribute today to the 2,000 service members killed in Iraq since the invasion of 2003, their collective stories describe the painful stresses and recurring strains that an extended conflict, with all its demands for multiple tours, is placing on families, towns and the military itself as they struggle to console the living while burying the dead.

"Two tours is more than you should ask anyone to do," said Randall Shafer, 51, an oil industry consultant from Houston whose son, Lance Cpl. Eric Shafer of the Marines, just finished his second tour in Iraq.

"They know they could die anywhere at any time. That will take a toll on anybody. And it takes a toll on their families."

The differences between the first 1,000 and the second 1,000 dead illuminate recent trends regarding who is serving in Iraq, who is dying and how the war is progressing.

Most strikingly, death has come quicker, a sign of the insurgency's increasing efficiency.

While it took 18 months to reach 1,000 dead, it has taken just 14 to reach 2,000. More powerful and sophisticated explosive devices are a major reason, causing nearly half of the deaths in the second group.

Whites, who represent the vast majority of combat troops, accounted for a larger share of the dead among the most recent 1,000, about three out of four. Blacks and Hispanics died at a somewhat slower rate over the last year.

More than 420 service members, the majority of them marines and soldiers, have died while on repeat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. That number is expected to climb steadily as the Pentagon continues to rotate its main front-line combat battalions into Iraq.

The Marine Corps suffered a particularly heavy toll, accounting for a third of the second 1,000 deaths, though marines represent less than 20 percent of the American force in Iraq. Marines have been stationed in some of Iraq's most violent precincts and assigned to lead dangerous anti-insurgent sweeps in restive Sunni areas like Falluja.

The nation's part-time warriors in the National Guard and the Reserve also shouldered a larger burden, accounting for about 30 percent of the deaths, an increase of more than 10 percentage points. The heavier toll came as Guard and Reserve forces were called to combat in larger numbers than at any other time since Vietnam, a role the Pentagon plans to scale back in the coming year.

Every state in the country was represented on the roster of the dead, as were Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, Micronesia, the Virgin Islands and American Samoa. California and Texas had the most deaths, as they did for the first 1,000, followed by New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. At least 17 of the last 1,000 dead were women.

It was the tour that was not supposed to happen.

Last year, Sergeant Jones signed a contract with the Army certifying that he would be sent to Kentucky to be trained as a scout and then deployed to Germany. He had already served two tours driving heavy equipment into Iraq from Kuwait, and his wife was pregnant with their second child.

But his unit, the 104th transportation company of the Third Infantry Division, was short of soldiers, and at the last minute the Army changed his orders, dispatching him to Iraq.

He dutifully deployed in February, while complaining bitterly about the Army's broken promises and voicing deep concerns about poor equipment.

"He was angry, angrier than I've ever heard," said Ima Lee Jones, his grandmother. "He said, 'I don't mind going. But what the insurgents haven't blown up or burned, we can't get parts to fix. The trucks can't drive more than 40 miles per hour. It's like having a bull's-eye on the door.' "

Sergeant Jones was driving one of those trucks when it was shattered by a roadside bomb on June 14, killing him.

Like Sergeant Jones, more than 300,000 American troops have served more than one tour of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, most of them in Iraq. But just how those troops and their families are coping with repeat tours is the subject of much study and debate, as repeated deployments to a war zone are a relatively new phenomenon.

Iraq and Afghanistan are the first conflicts since 1973 to demand large continuous rotations of troops. In dozens of interviews, parents and spouses described the seven-month Marine or 12-month Army deployments to Iraq as periods of unremitting tension.

Roberto Rivera of Chicago, the father of a recently returned marine, said he jogged every day to relieve stress, losing 40 pounds over a seven-month tour. Thomas Southwick of San Diego said he stopped watching the news during his marine son's third tour of duty, which ended in September.

"You're just a constant nervous wreck," Mr. Southwick said, "waiting for a knock on the door."

Many parents said they found second and third deployments more gut-wrenching than first ones, partly because they had learned from their children about the gruesome realities of war, and partly because death seemed to loom larger with each tour.

"How many times can you go out there and be so lucky?" Diana Olson of Elk Grove Village, Ill., said she told her 21-year-old son, Cpl. John T. Olson of the Marines, after his second tour. But he re-enlisted in 2004, only to be killed when a bomb caused his truck to tip over last February on his third tour.

"Multiple tours have long been a problem for families," said Morten G. Ender, a sociologist at the United States Military Academy at West Point. "And these are dangerous, high-stress tours."

Like many other soldiers, Sergeant Jones was fatalistic about his third tour, telling his wife, Kelly, that he had "a bad feeling" about returning to Iraq. While there, he wrote letters and journal entries musing on death. His wife found one among his belongings after his death.

"Grieve little and move on," he counseled her. "I shall be looking over you. And you will hear me from time to time on the gentle breeze that sounds at night, and in the rustle of leaves."

As Opposition Rises, Black Enlistment Falls

Sandra Williams-Smith never supported the invasion of Iraq, even though she is married to a former Air Force sergeant and has worked on military bases as a nurse. But Mrs. Williams-Smith kept her views mostly to herself, particularly after her oldest son, Jeffrey A. Williams, joined the Army out of high school in 2003. He saw the military as a steppingstone to becoming a doctor, and she encouraged his ambition.

But on Sept. 5, Specialist Williams, a 20-year-old medic, was killed by a roadside bomb in Tal Afar, Iraq.

Mrs. Williams-Smith, 42, is silent no more. Though her oldest living son is in the Navy, and her youngest son wants to join the Marines, she openly rages against the war and President Bush.

"It's time to bring these boys home," said Mrs. Williams-Smith, of Mansfield, Tex. "My feelings for Bush are harsh. He should have taken care of the needs of his own people before going across the ocean to take care of someone else's."

The anger Mrs. Williams-Smith, who is black, feels toward the war is shared by many other African-Americans, according to polls, military officials and experts. And that opposition is beginning to have a profound effect on who is joining the military - and potentially who is dying in Iraq, many experts say.

This year, about 14 percent of new Army recruits were black, down from nearly 23 percent in 2001.

Polls indicate that support for the war has dropped among whites as well. But the disparity between blacks and whites is immense: while 45 percent of whites said the invasion was a mistake, 77 percent of blacks felt that way, according to a New York Times/CBS News poll conducted last month.

As black enlistment has declined, whites have come to represent a larger share of the Army's lowest enlisted ranks, and a larger part of the dead: 78 percent for the second 1,000, up from 70 percent in the first 1,000. The death rate for Hispanics and blacks declined in the second group.

[T]here is broad agreement among military experts that if black enlistment continues to fall, it could create long-term manpower problems for the Army.

In many ways, Patricia Roberts is hoping that will be the case.

Ms. Roberts's son, Specialist Jamaal R. Addison, was part of the invasion of 2003 when his convoy was ambushed by Iraqi forces near Nasiriya. The attack became famous because six soldiers, including Pfc. Jessica D. Lynch, were captured. But nine others from the unit died during and after the ambush, including Specialist Addison, who was 22.

After his death, Ms. Roberts, 45, said she lost her job as a customer service representative because she frequently broke down in tears. After much prayer,

she resolved to devote her life to offering alternatives to military service to young blacks.

Since then, she has formed a nonprofit foundation named after her son and begun raising money for mentoring, motivational and scholarship programs. Ms. Roberts, who lives near Atlanta, says she will not discourage anyone from joining the military for patriotic reasons. But too many blacks, including her son, have joined solely for the paycheck or college tuition, she asserts.

Sgt. Jonathan B. Shields, 25, might have been one of those people. The eldest of four children raised by a divorced mother, he saw the military as a way out of his low-income, high-crime section of Atlanta. After marrying a woman with three children in 2003, he also began to see it as a career, re-enlisting while in Iraq last year.

He died in Falluja last November after an American tank ran into him. His mother, Evelyn Allen, 48, of Decatur, Ga., said she had been unable to work since Sergeant Shields's death. Ms. Allen has sought to relieve her grief by participating in antiwar rallies. But she fears that her protests will not shorten the war. So she is focusing on a more attainable goal: preventing her three living children from joining the military.

"They would not even think about it," Ms. Allen said. "Our loss is just too drastic."

Lance Corporal Strain was killed by a sniper in Ramadi on Aug. 3. He was two weeks short of his 21st birthday, six weeks short of coming home from his second tour of duty.

His unit, the First Battalion of the Fifth Marine Regiment, or the 1/5, is one of the most battered units in the service that has proportionately taken the heaviest death toll in the war. In three deployments to Iraq, including the invasion, the battalion has suffered about 20 deaths, all but six of those in its most recent tour, which ended in September.

One of the first units to enter Iraq during the invasion, the battalion returned when the insurgency gained momentum in 2004. That April, the 1/5 assisted in the assault on Falluja that left more than 50 Americans dead. It returned early this year to patrol the streets of Ramadi, the capital of Anbar Province, where nearly 700 American troops have been killed, the most of any Iraqi province.

Despite the repeated deployments and heavy casualties, Marine Corps officers say that morale in the 1/5 remains high and that its re-enlistment rate remains strong.

But at a homecoming celebration for 260 members of the 1/5 at Camp Pendleton in late September, many parents who said they loved the Marine Corps also expressed deep weariness with the war, and said they hoped their children had had enough, too.

Bob Krieger, 53, a corporate pilot from near Grand Rapids, Mich., said that during two tours in Iraq, his son had seen a friend shot dead, retrieved the bodies of fellow marines blown to pieces by roadside bombs and endured close calls of his own, including having a rocket-propelled grenade shot through his pant leg.

Now, Mr. Krieger, who initially supported the invasion, says it is time to bring the troops home. "It just feels like there is no light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

His son, Cpl. Jeff Krieger, 23, agreed, saying he planned to leave the Marines next year. "Even \$20,000 isn't enough to make me go back," Corporal Krieger said.

Another member of the 1/5, Cpl. Jeffrey B. Starr, rejected a \$24,000 bonus to re-enlist. Corporal Starr believed strongly in the war, his father said, but was tired of the harsh life and nearness of death in Iraq. So he enrolled at Everett Community College near his parents' home in Snohomish, Wash., planning to study psychology after his enlistment ended in August.

But he died in a firefight in Ramadi on April 30 during his third tour in Iraq. He was 22.

Sifting through Corporal Starr's laptop computer after his death, his father found a letter to be delivered to the marine's girlfriend. "I kind of predicted this," Corporal Starr wrote of his own death.

"A third time just seemed like I'm pushing my chances."

“My Very Dear Sarah”

[Maj. Sullivan Ballou died in battle against the traitor slaveholders shortly after writing this letter.]

**July 14, 1861
Camp Clark, Washington**

My very dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days - perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more.

I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in, the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American civilization now leans on the triumph of the government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and sufferings of the revolution. And I am willing - perfectly willing - to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this government, and to pay that debt..

Sarah, my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me unresistably on with all these chains to the battle field.

The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years,

when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together, and seen our sons grown up to honorable manhood around us.

I have, I know, but few and small claims upon divine providence, but something whispers to me - perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar, that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battle field, it will whisper your name. Forgive my many faults, and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have often times been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears every little spot upon your happiness...

But, O Sarah! If the dead can come back to this earth and the unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the gladdest days and in the darkest nights...always, always, and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath, as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah, do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Army Staff Sergeant George Thomas Alexander Jr. (2000)



U.S. Army Staff Sergeant George Thomas Alexander Jr. The Pentagon announced on October 25, 2005 that Alexander, 34, of the 3rd Infantry Division, has died at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas from wounds he received in Samarra, Iraq earlier this month when a bomb planted by insurgents exploded near his Bradley Fighting vehicle. Alexander is the 2,000 U.S. military fatality in the Iraq war, was married and a father of two children, and also served in Operation Desert Storm. Alexander was in his third tour in Iraq when he was injured. REUTERS/Family Photo/Handout

SOLDIER FATALITY IN VEHICLE ACCIDENT NEAR CAMP BUCCA

October 26, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-10-35C

CAMP BUCCA, Iraq—A Soldier was killed in a vehicle accident on Oct. 25 around 7 p.m. near Camp Bucca, Iraq. The Soldier was medically evacuated to Shiba Hospital in Basrah.

Catawba Marine Killed In Iraq Leaves Behind New Marriage

October 26, 2005 The Associated Press

Like his father, Gray Cockerham III joined the Marines.

But the younger Cockerham won't get to enjoy post-military life or his young marriage.

The 21-year-old Marine corporal was killed Friday by a roadside bomb near Al Amariyah, Iraq. He was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune, the Department of Defense said Wednesday in officially announcing his death.

Cockerham joined the Marine Corps in May 2003 and left soon after for Iraq. He married his girlfriend, Amanda Johnson, on a trip home to Catawba County about a year ago. Both had graduated from Hickory's St. Stephen's High School in 2002, where Cockerham played on the school soccer team all four years, according to friends.

Over the summer, he was called back for a second tour of duty.

Cockerham was initially listed as missing in action, and friends and family members held out hope he would be found alive.

But they learned the bad news Monday night.

Chuck Davis, the former boys' soccer coach at St. Stephens, remembers Cockerham's hard work on the team, which he shared with younger players.

"I told them how Gray was a hard worker and how he sacrificed," he said Tuesday. "If you want to score goals bad enough, you'll be like Gray Cockerham."

Members of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church posted a message on its sign asking people to pray for the Cockerham family.

Cockerham is survived by his wife, Amanda Johnson Cockerham; his parents, Ben and Jill Cockerham; and a younger brother, Adam.

He will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

Capt. Tyler B. Swisher, 35, of Cincinnati, Ohio, also of Camp Lejeune, died in the same accident as Cockerham, the defense department said Wednesday. Their vehicle was traveling beside a canal when the explosion caused them to be thrown into the water.

2 Miss. Guardsmen Hurt

October 26, 2005 The Associated Press

McCOMB — Two of Mississippi's National Guard members were injured in Iraq by an improvised explosive device, military officials said.

Sgt. Brian Russ of Centreville and Spc. Charles White of Shaw were hit by shrapnel in the Oct. 16 explosion. Both guardsmen are with the Army National Guard's 155th Brigade Combat Team.

"Their platoon was conducting a combat patrol in a hostile area when the attack occurred," said Lt. Col. John M. Rhodes, commander of the 155th, in an e-mail to the Enterprise-Journal. "Sgt. Russ received shrapnel in the back of his leg while Spc. White was hit in side." Russ and White are expected to recover from the injuries, Rhodes said.

Russ was riding in a Humvee with two other soldiers when they hit the device, said Russ' father, Jerry Russ.

"There were some more soldiers nearby," Jerry Russ said. "And they came over to the rescue when this thing went off."

Russ and White were transferred to a medical facility in Germany, Rhodes said. Since then Russ was sent to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and is currently receiving treatment at a military hospital in Augusta, Ga., said Jerry Russ.

"I think his wounds are going to heal," Jerry Russ said. "I think he'll be all right."

The 155th unit received orders to deploy to Iraq in August 2004, it is expected to return in December.

Mississippi has lost 37 soldiers in the war.

Baghdad Humvee Destroyed: Casualties Not Reported

October 26, 2005 AP

Baghdad: A roadside bomb destroyed a Humvee in a US convoy, but no casualties were reported.

**UNWANTED:
NO HONORABLE MISSION:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



A soldier from the U.S. Army's Third Infantry Division in central Baghdad Oct. 26, 2005. **Some Iraqis said they hope the U.S. 'occupiers' will soon go home.** (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

TROOP NEWS

Death Rate For U.S. Troops Accelerated: “The Bad Guys Keep Getting Smarter”

"The more unnerving part of it is — you know they're out there, but you can't find all of them," said Lilly, whose Humvee was hit the first time he drove through Tall Afar a few weeks ago.

26 October 2005 By Doug Smith and P.J. Huffstutter, The Los Angeles Times

The fatality rate for American troops shot up more than a year ago, and no political or military advance has been able to slow it.

A year and a half ago, at the first anniversary of the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the death rate for American troops accelerated. Since then, none of the political milestones or military strategies proclaimed by U.S. officials have succeeded in slowing the toll.

This is among the most striking conclusions of a Times analysis of the fatalities, which have reached 2,000, U.S. officials announced Tuesday.

For the first year after the capture of Baghdad, the deaths of American soldiers accumulated slowly — about one a day. Then, on March 31, 2004, shortly after the anniversary of the invasion, four American contractors were slaughtered in the Sunni-dominated city of Fallouja, west of Baghdad.

Despite blips up and down, the overall trend since the Fallouja incident — an average of roughly 17 deaths a week — has continued unabated.

One hundred nineteen American troops died in the initial three-week campaign to capture Iraq. One thousand eight hundred eighty-one more Defense Department personnel, including five civilian Pentagon employees, have now died trying to hold it. About 15,000 American troops have been wounded, with about half hurt too severely to return to duty.

Improvised explosive devices, as American military officials call them, "are that hidden monster you're always aware of," said Sgt. Chip Lilly, a 35-year-old contractor from Staunton, Va. He serves with the Army National Guard near Tall Afar, a city of roughly 200,000 in northern Iraq.

"The more unnerving part of it is — you know they're out there, but you can't find all of them," said Lilly, whose Humvee was hit the first time he drove through Tall Afar a few weeks ago.

"It's the easiest way for them to attack both Iraqi and coalition troops," said National Guard Capt. Christopher Zimbardy, a 35-year-old truck parts salesman from Philadelphia. "I hate long rides — it's really stressful."

"We think that we're smart, but the bad guys keep getting smarter," said one Pentagon official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak on the record.

Army Pfc. Jeffrey R. Wallace, 20, was another of the hundreds of victims of roadside bomb attacks in the last year. He and two other soldiers were killed May 24 when a roadside bomb detonated next to their Humvee as it crossed a bridge over the Tigris River in Baghdad.

Friends and family said Wallace, who had been a high school football player in the small, central Illinois town of Hoopeston, had joined the Army partly because his grandfather had served in the military, partly because he felt a need to join other friends and acquaintances and get into the fight, partly because he hoped to use the money he earned to go to college.

A few months before he shipped out to Iraq last winter, he married his longtime friend and recent sweetheart, Sarah, during a two-week leave from his base at Ft. Stewart, Ga. By the time he returned to base, Sarah was pregnant. Their daughter, Ava Grace, was born four months after his death.

When he notified the family of Wallace's death, a military bereavement officer told them that all that remained of Jeffrey was "body parts that had to be scraped out of that Humvee," according to Sarah's mother, Karen Gossett, 51. His remains fit into a small box. The box was put in the casket, and his uniform was placed on the box. His medals were pinned to the uniform. Then the casket was closed.

Family Aches, But Endures, For Lost Son: "We Should Be Out Of There"

[Thanks to Anna Bradley, who sent this in.]

"If this country cares so much about inequalities between people, why don't they start fixing things right here?" she asked. "To think that Michael was killed protecting oil. I find that a little hard to stomach."

October 23, 2005 Donna Jackel, Staff writer, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle

For Cathy Pernaselli, there are still surreal moments, like when the telephone rings and she thinks that it might be her younger son, Michael.

A moment later the pain hits her again as she remembers: Petty Officer 1st Class Michael J. Pernaselli, along with two other young men, was killed by a suicide bomber in the Persian Gulf 18 months ago.

Since the night a Navy commander appeared on their Brighton doorstep to tell them the terrible news, the lives of Cathy Pernaselli, 50, and her husband, John, 53, have changed in countless ways.

They have learned that to bury a child is just the beginning of grief.

John Pernaselli, a retired shift worker from Eastman Kodak Co., has come to realize he no longer supports U.S. involvement in Iraq.

And the couple has taken on an enormous responsibility: raising Michael's daughters, Nicole, 4, and Dominique, 5. Pernaselli and his wife were divorced in 2003 and he was granted legal custody of their daughters.

"Without them relying on me, I probably would have gone to bed and not had a reason to get up," said Cathy. "They gave me a reason to keep going."

Caring for two energetic little girls is hard work, but a blessing. Nicole and Dominique not only distract the Pernasellis from their grief but also from constant worry. Their other son, Capt. John Pernaselli, 30, is a company commander with the U.S. Army Chemical Corps 4th Infantry Division.

He and his wife, Julia, have three children, ages 8 and younger. He just returned from his third tour of duty in the Middle East, but is scheduled to return to the Middle East in January.

Nicole and Dominique

At the Pernaselli home, the day begins at 4:30 a.m. with the care and feeding of Michael's impressively large dogs, a Rottweiler named Stoney and a mastiff, Caesar. By 7 a.m., Nicole and Dominique are on their way to Seton Catholic School, where they attend prekindergarten and kindergarten, respectively.

Since Michael was killed, the girls have attended counseling and are making good progress, Cathy said. Their "meltdowns" over their loss are growing fewer, she said.

But their father is still very much with them.

The Pernasellis — "Boompa" and "Nona" as the girls call them — installed an above-ground pool in the back yard for their granddaughters. This summer, a white butterfly frequented the yard. The girls became convinced it was their father. During a visit to her great-grandparents, Nicole wandered into the living room and began talking to a photo of her father.

"I know that you are in heaven, but today I would like you to be down here with me," great-grandmother Ellen Pernaselli heard her saying.

"How do you explain forever to the girls?" asks Cathy. "I still don't get it."

When Dominique and Nicole ask Boompa why their Daddy died, he tells them, "Daddy was doing his job. He's always by your side when you're sleeping."

John tries to fill his son's shoes as best he can. Michael used to take each girl out regularly on "dates" to a movie or restaurant. Now, Boompa does.

"What keeps me going is that there's never a dull moment," he says, smiling and shaking his head. "Their hair ... their clothes. It's totally different raising girls

Michael

Pernaselli died three months before his service commitment was up. He was seriously considering leaving the Navy to join the police force in Groton, Conn., where he had been stationed for a few years.

It wasn't an easy decision.

"Michael loved the Navy," said Cathy. But "he wanted to get out for the girls."

She and her younger son were close.

"There was nothing we couldn't talk about," she said. In high school, he tolerated being called "mama's boy" by his friends who noticed that he would call his mother when he arrived anywhere so she wouldn't worry.

The former altar boy was easygoing, loyal and loved challenges. As a child, he had a mischievous side — in first grade, he and a friend hung from the water sprinklers in the school bathroom, springing a leak and causing a flood that brought the fire department. But he grew into a responsible young man and a wonderful father, his family says. His grandfather, Arthur Pernaselli, 81, remembers a loving child.

"He would never come in the house or leave without saying, 'I love you,'" he said.

Cathy always knew Michael would never fit a 9-to-5 desk job.

"He was very smart, but school wasn't his thing," she said. "I don't know if he ever cracked a book."

Right after graduating from McQuaid Jesuit High School in 1995, Pernaselli joined the Navy. For three years, he served on a supply ship, the USS Arctic, in the Persian Gulf, Kosovo and the Mediterranean.

He expected a lot from himself — and his shipmates.

"He didn't tolerate whining," said his mother. "He felt that if there was a job to do, just do it right."

Shortly before he shipped out for the last time, Michael visited his parents for a belated Christmas. His mother smiles at the memory.

"He gave the girls Barbie Karaoke. The three of them were on the floor with the two dogs, singing out of tune for a long time."

A couple of days before he was killed, Michael called home. Although it was late at night, he asked his mother to wake up his daughters so he could talk to them. He told his father he would be gone on assignment for about a week.

"The last thing I said to him was, 'Be careful,'" said John . "He said, 'I know. We do our job.'"

Michael, another sailor and a Coast Guardsman were killed April 24, 2004. Michael led a seven-member team aboard a rubber boat to inspect a small commerce ship that was refusing to leave a prohibited area in territorial waters near the Al Basra Oil Terminal. As the Navy boat approached, the attacker detonated explosives on board. Michael was killed instantly.

He was posthumously awarded a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star with Valor, for alerting "all in the area to an organized, coordinated attack, allowing security forces to destroy two more explosive-laden vessels preventing massive casualties, environmental damage and destruction of oil wells."

John

It should have been me," Capt. John Pernaselli, 30, told his father when he came home for his brother's funeral. "It shouldn't have been anybody," his father replied.

As the brothers crisscrossed the globe, nearly three years passed without them seeing one another. But they were close, their parents said, and kept in touch by phone.

Pernaselli now wears a bracelet bearing his brother's name.

When he was home for Michael's funeral, the Army captain told his father there was little time for his men to rest or even sleep in Iraq.

"In one area, the people will cheer you. In another village, they will be throwing rocks and shooting at you," he said.

It was always John, not Michael, who family members worried might be injured or killed. He was on foot patrols while Michael was at sea. John was the one they didn't hear from for long periods of time, while Michael's calls came with reassuring regularity.

People ask the Pernasellis why John was permitted to return to Iraq after Michael's death. The answer, they say, lies with John, a 1997 graduate of the prestigious military school The Citadel.

"We have to continue for Mike and all the others who have passed away," he told his parents.

It is a logic lost on Cathy Pernaselli: "I told him that returning to Iraq will not alter the fact of his brother's death." She never supported the war in Iraq and was always honest with her sons about her position.

"If this country cares so much about inequalities between people, why don't they start fixing things right here?" she asked. "To think that Michael was killed protecting oil. I find that a little hard to stomach."

But she is quick to stress that she supports those serving in Iraq "for doing what they are supposed to."

As children, Michael and John Jr. often saw their father in military uniform. He served with the U.S. Army Reserves for 13 years. A U.S. flag flies outside the Pernaselli home.

But with one son dead and one due to go on his fourth tour of duty in the Middle East, John has turned against the war and his president.

"I'm no longer a Bush supporter," he said. "I'm fed up with the whole idea. We should be out of there. You want to run your own country? Run it."

Yet he won't try to talk his son out of going back.

"It's his job," Pernaselli said. "Will I give him my support? Yes. Is it in my heart? No."

The Pernasellis each cope in their own way.

John is addicted to CNN's Iraq coverage and surfs the Internet for military updates, while Cathy avoids the news.

"I try not to think about it or I'd be institutionalized. I try to do what the counselor said: I only worry about the things I have control over," said Cathy, who goes to the same counselor as her granddaughters.

Not a day passes that the Pernasellis don't think about Michael.

"The pain never goes away," said John. "You just try to deal with it."

He draws some comfort visiting the memorial bench erected for his son last year behind Brighton Town Hall.

"I talk to him, 'You have to give me a little help here. Watch out for your girls, your mom, the two dogs.'"

Cathy feels her son all around her.

"We have many conversations," she said. "I try to do my grieving in private."

She relies on a circle of women friends. "If I want to have a good cry, they'll cry along with me and then we move on."

Friends — and strangers

As news of Michael Pernaselli's death hit the media, the family was showered with boxes of letters and cards, gifts and phone calls.

On the first Mother's Day after his death, flowers and an anonymous card were left at their front door.

War veterans, McQuaid high school and Kodak held fundraisers for Dominique and Nicole. And an anonymous benefactor paid school tuition for the two girls — for six years. A Texan sent Cathy Pernaselli a gold heart on a chain and a letter thanking her for her son's sacrifice.

"I never used to send a card when I heard a soldier had died," she said. "Now I do. I know it's just the beginning for these poor people."

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)

“I Believe My Husband Is Rolling In His Grave Every Time One Of His Buddies Dies”

October 26, 2005 By AUDREY PARENTE, Staff Writer, News-Journal Corporation

Karen Anderson of Daytona Beach, whose husband Michael was killed in Ramadi, Iraq, in May 2004, said "people don't care any more."

She estimated he was about 850 in the death-toll count, and a year ago when someone found out her husband died in Iraq, they were "appalled," she said. But now, "When they say (to her daughter), 'Did your dad drive you to the party?', 'No, he died in Iraq,' they just say 'Oh, that's too bad.' "

Anderson said "at this point I would have to say 'get out of Iraq.' Some say that would mean he died in vain. I don't believe that. I believe my husband is rolling in his grave every time one of his buddies dies."

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.

THE GOVERNMENT ARE TRYING TO INTIMIDATE ME

[This is a report on anti-war action from Rose Gentle. Her son was killed in Iraq. She leads a campaign to bring all the Scots and other troops home from Iraq, now. T]

From: Rose Gentle
To: GI Special
Sent: October 26, 2005
Subject: shut me up

WELL MR BLAIR, I WILL NOT GO A WAY. HAVE YOU GOT, SUMTHING YOU CANT TELL US, CAN YOU NOT SAY ILEGAL. IF I HAVE TO I WILL GET THE £20.000, AND PAY FOR IT, OUR TROOPS DONT HAVE A PRICE ON THEM,

JUSTICE 4 GORDON GENTLE PRESS RELEASE 25 OCTOBER 2005

From Justice 4 Gordon Gentle Campaign

Today, the J4GG campaign has been informed that the solicitors representing the 4 Deep Cut families at the Blake Review, have each been paid a sum of £6,000 for attending one day of the review. This money has been paid to the aforementioned solicitors from the public purse.

Considering many families have been denied legal Aid in their fight to have an enquiry held into their children's deaths, whether at military barracks at home, or in illegal wars such as Iraq, the J4GG campaign welcome's this financial support the Deep Cut families have received towards their legal costs.

Rose Gentle said "The MOD & the government have now set a precedent. If public money can be used towards the Deep Cut families' legal costs, then it should also

be made available to families who have lost their loved ones in Iraq or at the Catterick Barracks.

Rose added "I applied for legal aid because I am seeking a public enquiry into why this country went to war in Iraq in the first place, a war that led to the death of my son. I have been refused legal aid. The government are trying to intimidate me by making it clear that they intend to 'pursue costs vigorously in this case.'

I intend to write to the Armed Forces Minister, Adam Ingram to demand that finance be made available to pay for legal costs for my family and other military families.

MORE FROM ROSE GENTLE:

IRAQ CHILDREN



Aysha orphaned in Falluja with Rose Gentle

From: Rose Gentle
To: G.I. Special
Sent: October 26, 2005

IRAQ CHILDREN

THIS IS LITTLE AYSHA SHE WAS ORPHANED

BY TONY BLAIR AND GEORGE, BUSH

THIS LITTLE 4 YEAR OLD GIRL LOST HER MUM, DAD AND BROTHERS,

AND SISTERS, AND 8 MEMBERS OF HER FAMILY

SHE WAS BROUGHT, TO BRITAIN, AS SHE WAS BADLY HURT

SHE HAS A WEE BOX WITH ONE EARRING AND A PEICE OF A NECKLIS
TO REMEMBER, HER OF HUR MUM, I WENT TO SEE HER IN THE
HOUSPITAL. IT WAS SO HART BREAKING,

TO THINK KIDS HER AGE ARE GETING KILLIED, I WOULD OF LOVED,
BUSH AND BLAIR TO LOOK IN TO THIS LITTLE GIRLS
EYES, AND SAY, IT WAS US THAT KILLIED YOUR MUMMY AND
DADDY, BUT THEY WILL NOT, SO OUR TROOPS HAVE TO LIVE
WITH THIS, ITS WRONG. THAY MUST FELL LIKE SHITE WHEN
THEY SEE KIDS, IN THE STREET, DEAD, ,. AS THEY HAVE KIDS TOO

I WANTED TO BRING HER HOME WITH ME, TO KEEP HER AND
PROTECT HER, I JUST HOPE WHEN SHE IS OLDER SHE WILL
UNDER STAND THAT OUR TROOPS, WERE NOT AT FAULT.

AND I HOPE TO SEE HER AGAIN, IF SHE IS NOT SENT BACK
TO IRAQ, IF SHE IS I CAN ONLY PRAY SHE WILL BE OK
AND SHE WILL REMEMBER HER MUM AND DAD, AND THAT WE ARE
NOT ALL BAD PEOPLE.

LOOK AT THIS LITTLE GIRL. A BABBY, AND SAY I WILL NOT GIVE
IN. I WILL ALL WAYS REMEMBER HER,

ROSE

Recruiter Scum Chase Iraq Vet: Criminals Act Without Authority Against Civilian

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

Oct. 26, 2005 By Carol Biliczky, Beacon Journal staff writer

A 24-year-old Akron man has been charged with disorderly conduct for climbing an artificial rock wall and unfurling a peace banner at Kent State University.

David Airhart said he unhooked his safety gear and tied the homemade cloth sign to the top of the 30-foot wall outside the MAC Center to protest the war in Iraq and the presence of military recruiters on the Portage County campus.

"I hope that Kent State realizes that what I'm trying to do is in their best interest," he said. "I don't want to see any more young, innocent people go to Iraq and die for something that doesn't make any sense."

The Kent State Anti-War Committee planned to hold a press conference at noon today at the Student Center to discuss its response to the charge against Airhart.

Nicole Robinson, a group member and English major from Akron, said she was among about 25 students doing "counter-recruiting" at the Army's daylong visit on Oct. 19.

The protesters held signs and urged other students to reject the military.

When Airhart, a Marine veteran who served in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, reached the top of the climbing wall and displayed his banner bearing the peace sign, recruiters ordered him to come down.

They then climbed up the wall to retrieve him, Airhart said, adding that he climbed down the back of the wall and "had words" with a recruiter.

[Airhart showed remarkable restraint. The recruiters were engaged in the commission of assault against a civilian under the color of military authority. He would have been justified in exercising his right of self defense and whipping them to their knees. As for these thugs thinking they can chase or give civilians "orders" to do anything at all, they need to be told to go shit in their hats.]

KSU spokesman Ron Kirksey said Airhart's behavior put him and other students in danger because the wall could have toppled and killed or hurt people.

"We don't care what he said. Anyone who knows Kent State knows we believe in free speech," Kirksey said. ***"He was cited for causing a risk to himself and others."***

[Hey stupid Ron, everybody saw the recruiters climb the very same wall to chase him. The reporter just reported it. So, who arrests them? Or is it only the vet that's against the war that gets arrested, but the recruiters don't? Didn't the recruiters risk "killing or hurting people" by climbing the wall too, your excuse for arresting the vet? If they don't get arrested, obviously, you are a lying, sneaking, rotten piece of shit, right? Because all your excuses about why the vet got arrested show up as naked as your wrinkled saggy ass.]

Airhart, an anthropology major, will face an arraignment in Kent Municipal Court on Thursday and a \$105 fine. He could face disciplinary action on campus, Kirksey said.

In a related action, the Kent State Anti-War Committee will sponsor a walkout at noon Thursday on campus to protest the war. The group is part of the Campus Antiwar Network of 42 universities and some high schools nationwide. Six other Ohio colleges and universities, including Cleveland State, are in the national coalition.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Huge U.S. Success Bringing Iraqis Together: They Agree: Attack Occupation Forces

October 26, 2005 By Mariam Fam, Associated Press

Jeremy Binnie, an analyst with Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center, said Sunni Arab participation in the political process poses a dilemma for the insurgents: "How do they maintain local support and also continue their work?"

The answer is fewer indiscriminate attacks on Iraqi civilians and more on U.S. and Western targets. Although the hotel bombings killed only Iraqis, the compound is widely perceived among Iraqis as a bastion of foreigners.

"If he makes it more focused against Western targets, (al-Zarqawi) can shore up some of the support he has been losing," Bennie said.

"The one thing everyone can agree on is the opposition to the U.S. military presence."

OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION

BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

Resistance Attacks Up Again

Oct 25 By JIM KRANE, AP

While American troops are killed at the rate of about 60 to 70 per month, the new Iraqi military suffers that many deaths in a week, mainly from insurgent attacks that rose to about 90 per day in September, O'Hanlon said.

Assorted Resistance Action



Local men gather around the car of an Iraqi policeman who was shot and killed by insurgents as he travelled through the Iraqi town of Ramadi, 110km (70 miles) west of Baghdad, October 26, 2005. REUTERS/Stringer

Oct 26, 2005 DPA & Aljazeera & Reuters & WISTV & (KUNA)

FALLUJA - Three policemen were killed and two wounded when a roadside bomb exploded beside their patrol in central Falluja, police said.

HADITHA - Four bodies were found in northeastern Haditha, 220 km (140 miles) northwest of Baghdad, a doctor said. Three of them were wearing army uniforms and the other was a contractor working with U.S. companies. The doctor, Saad al-Hadithi, said the corpses were bound, gagged and had gunshot wounds to the head and chest.

In Jirf al-Sakhar, 85 kilometres south of Baghdad, two policemen were killed and three others injured by a roadside bomb targeting a passing police patrol Wednesday, said the police.

In Tikrit, police said Wednesday that gunmen kidnapped the sister of the Minister of Housing and Reconstruction Jassim Mohammed Jaafar on the highway between Tikrit and Kirkuk.

Colonel Hassan Ahmed told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa that a group of armed fighters abducted Yalmaz Jaafar late Tuesday, along with the brother of the head of the health directorate, Mahdi Zainulabidine, and the director of an agricultural supplies company in the city, Sarmad Shakir.

The woman was released later in the day while the men were still held captive.

RAMADI - Two policemen were killed when armed fighters attacked a police station in Ramadi, police said.

BAGHDAD - Police said that armed fighters killed an official at Iraq's Ministry of Culture, Nabil Moussawi, and seriously wounded his driver in southern Baghdad.

BAGHDAD - Armed fighters opened fire on a convoy of bodyguards for Iraq's minister of water resources in western Baghdad, wounding two people. Police said that the minister, Abdul Latif Rasheed, was not present.

Police say four insurgents waiting behind a mosque in Baghdad repeatedly fired on a vehicle carrying a government accountant and his driver.

In another attack, suspected insurgents killed down five Iraqi policeman and two Iraqi soldiers.

In another incident, armed fighters opened fire on cars of guards of the Financial Resources Minister Abdullatif Rasheed. The assault caused no injuries.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Bush Will Receive His Punishment”

26 October 2005 By Fernando Suarez del Solar, Truthout Letter. [Excerpt]

I do not know if Bush in his self absorption and his feigned Christianity understands the tremendous suffering he is causing - the families' anguish, the harm to our nation that he has placed in even greater danger.

But I am sure about one thing. Bush will receive his punishment, a punishment that will make him cry tears of blood as my family and 1999 other families are shedding as they remember their lost children.

How much more blood will it take to end this criminal war? How many more Iraqi children have to die? How many more brave young Americans will have to make the ultimate sacrifice? How many more parents will have to weep for their sons and daughters? Who can answer me? Who?

We must demand that the lies and the dying stop today.

End the occupation of Iraq and bring our troops home now.

End the occupation of Iraq. Bring our troops home now.

Fernando Suarez del Solar, father of Jesus Suarez del Solar [KIA].

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

“I Would Also Like To Ask George What He Is Sacrificing”



Cindy Sheehan carries a wreath as Juan Torres wipes his eyes while carrying a photograph of his son Juan at the Arlington Cemetery October 26, 2005 as the number of military deaths reached 2,000. REUTERS/Jim Young

26 October 2005 By Cindy Sheehan, Truthout Perspective. [Excerpt]

Yesterday, in another hand-picked audience propaganda speech in front of military spouses, George Bush said: "This war will require more sacrifice, more time and more resolve."

Besides asking him for What Noble Cause did he kill 2,000 of our wonderful and brave young people, I would also like to ask George what he is sacrificing. Is he even sacrificing a good night's sleep?

Is he sacrificing his future with his child?

He is not sacrificing anything.

He and his cabal of warmongering crooks are asking us Americans to give up our lives and our children's lives for his lies and mistakes, and I am sure the grim milestone barely caused a blip in their souls yesterday.

George and his wealthy buddies don't even have to pay more taxes for the horror in Iraq or to rebuild New Orleans, which is another Bush horror.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Iraq's Top Cleric Won't Back Al-Jaafari

[Thanks to PB who sent this in. He writes: LOOKS LIKE SISTANI IS FEELING THE HEAT FROM BELOW.]

10.26.05 By HAMZA HENDAWI and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA, Associated Press Writers

Iraq's top Shiite cleric has decided to withhold his endorsement of a Shiite coalition that swept last January's general election, rejecting repeated pleas by senior politicians for him to reconsider, associates on both sides said Wednesday.

The move by the Iranian-born Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani reflected the cleric's disappointment with the performance of Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari's Shiite-led government, according to three associates of the cleric who are in regular contact with him. They spoke on condition of anonymity because al-Sistani's closest allies are not permitted to talk to media on the ayatollah's positions.

Their comments represent the first known rift between the prominent ayatollah and the Shiite political parties he has supported since the ouster of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

“Leading Liberals Swallow Their Tongues”

October 28, 2005 Editorial, Socialist Worker. [Excerpt]

Democrats like John Kerry and Hillary Clinton, while criticizing Bush’s tactics, have been careful to defend the core political assumptions behind his “war on terror”: that the U.S. has the right to carry out pre-emptive military strikes to preserve its status as the world’s only superpower.

Anyone who doubts this should watch as leading liberals swallow their tongues while Bush demands “regime change” in Syria and threatens Iran, and leading Democrats try to sound even tougher.

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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