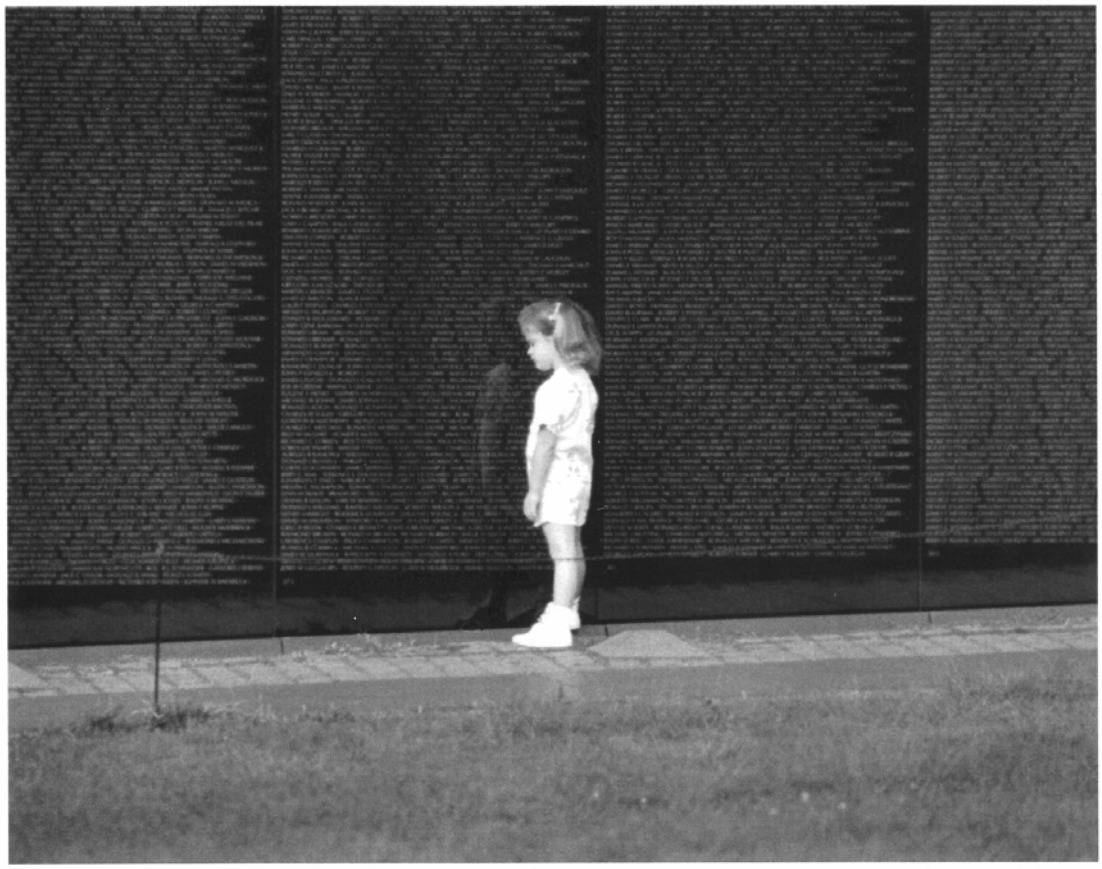
thomasfbarton@earthlink.net 11.13.05 **Print it out: color best. Pass it on.**

GI SPECIAL 3D13:



"The Wall" 58,000 Average Age 19 — From the Senior Prom to Vietnam
Mike Hastie Army Medic Vietnam 1970-71

"As God walks atop this wall and weeps,
I hear him say, "These were my sons."
The sound of his tears fall silenced,
As hands are washed in the Potomac,
And it runs red with waste!
The Pontius Pilates of the new Rome,
Repeat history on full automatic."

Nicholas James Weber
Poet Warrior
Vietnam 1968-69

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

Soldiers On Dialysis:
Big Surprise!
Medically Unfit Troops Being Shipped To Iraq

Reserve forces that are diabetic and require insulin pumps have been called to active duty. A soldier was called up only two weeks after receiving a kidney transplant. Other reservists have required kidney dialysis.

November 9, 2005 by Gene C. Gerard, Dissident Voice [Excerpt]

Last week the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the investigative unit of Congress, released a report indicating that the Pentagon has been calling up reserve soldiers who are ill or medically unfit to serve.

The reservists are serving primarily in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Although the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is responsible for managing medical and physical fitness policy and procedures, the report determined that this office has no way to determine if reserve soldiers are fit to serve or have pre-existing medical conditions prior to deployment.

The report also found that the Defense Department has not even determined what type of pre-existing medical conditions would preclude a reservist from being called to duty.

Consequently, it doesn't track the pre-existing conditions of reserve soldiers being deployed. According to the surgeon's office of the commander of the U.S. Central Command, "there were many instances of individuals who deployed into Iraq and Afghanistan with conditions for which they should have been considered non-deployable."

Given the recruitment shortages that the armed services currently face, it shouldn't be surprising that reservists in poor health are being called up.

What has not been known until now is that recruitment shortages have resulted in the Pentagon calling up reservists who are ill or medically unfit.

According to the GAO report, this includes reservists who have suffered from heart attacks, those with severe asthma (weather conditions in the desert exacerbates this condition), hernias, severe hypertension, and a woman who was four months into chemotherapy treatment for breast cancer. It also includes reservists suffering from sleep apnea who need medical equipment to help them breath, yet large portions of Iraq and Afghanistan lack the electricity necessary to run the equipment.

Reserve forces that are diabetic and require insulin pumps have been called to active duty. A soldier was called up only two weeks after receiving a kidney transplant. Other reservists have required kidney dialysis.

The GAO report also found that reserve soldiers have been called to active duty that suffer from psychiatric problems, including bipolar disorder. By one estimate as much as ten percent of the reservists who have been medically evacuated out of the Middle East was attributable to pre-existing medical conditions that could not be treated properly.

The GAO report ominously concluded, "The impact of those who are not medically and physically fit for duty could be significant for future deployments as the pool of reserve members from which to fill requirements is dwindling and those who have deployed are not in as good health as they were before deployment."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Two Soldiers Killed And Two Soldiers Wounded In Kirkuk Area Accident

11/12/05 MNF Release A051111f

LSA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq – Two 3rd Corps Support Command Soldiers were killed and two Soldiers were injured in a vehicular accident while performing a combat logistical patrol northwest of Kirkuk at about 6:15 a.m. on Nov. 11.

Sgt. Dies Of 10.17 Wounds

November 12, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1175-05

Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn C. Cashe, 35, of Oviedo, Fla., died on Nov. 8 at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, TX from wounds suffered Oct. 17 in Samarra, Iraq.

Cashe was on patrol in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle when an improvised explosive devise detonated near his vehicle. He was assigned to 1st Battallion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, based in Fort Benning, Ga.

Soldier With NC Roots Killed

11/12/2005 By: Associated Press

(CANTON) — On the day that veterans honor those fallen in battle, a North Carolina woman was helping to plan her son's funeral.

Staff Sergeant Mike Parrott was killed by sniper this week as he patrolled a highway in Iraq. His mother, Suzanne Parrott, got word of his death late Thursday at her home in Canton.

Suzanne Parrott is a retired nurse and hospice volunteer, and she's used to coping with death. But when her daughter-in-law called with the news, Parrott said she couldn't breathe.

Parrott and his wife met when they were attending U-N-C—Asheville in the mid-'80s. They lived in Timnath, Colorado, where she is a professor at Colorado State.

Parrott works in construction at the college, and was in Iraq with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. He would have turned 50 next month.

Progress, Sort Of, Somewhat

November 10, 2005 Baghdad Dweller, Roadstoiraq.com

After 3 years and many people died, there is some progress in Iraq at last the US troops managed to liberate one Iraqi street, it is the Airport road…

well not totally true….

[From] the video *Iraq's Perilous Airport Road*:

"I would have to tell you that by the purest definition of secure, I still haven't been successful. (Securing the road) is a work in progress,"…..

Despite making the road somewhat safer, attacks continue and there is no clear victory in sight.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION:
FUTILE EXERCISE:

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!

U.S. soldier at the scene of a car bomb attack in Baghdad 10.6.05.
REUTERS/Ceerwan Aziz

TROOP NEWS

Iraq Vet Staff Sgt. Opposes The War; Organizing To Stop It

07 November 2005 By Michael Blanding, AlterNet [Excerpt]

"It's just insanity when the government determines you should be called to active duty, but you have been laboring for years under outdated equipment," says Staff Sergeant Andrew Sapp, a member of the Massachusetts National Guard who just returned from an 18-month deployment north of Tikrit.

In addition to ailing equipment, he says troops in his chemical hazmat unit received inadequate training for their duties protecting a base from sniper fire and mortar attacks.

The 48-year-old high school teacher was not naive about the possibility he might be called up to active duty some day. But seeing the buildup to Iraq was like "watching a train wreck happen and not being able to stop it."

"I always thought if I were called up for active duty, the circumstances would be dire enough that we would really be talking about the national defense," he said.

"We are not imperiled by Iraq. At some point, the citizens have to ask themselves if they are willing to sacrifice the people in their community."

Since returning to Massachusetts this month, Sapp has broken ranks by joining Military Families Speak Out….

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.

"From What I Saw, We Just Created More Chaos And Violence"

Iraq war veteran Kelly Dougherty, 27, of Colorado Springs, right, smiles as Korean War veteran E.L. Van Laningham, 75, of Colorado Springs, offers words of support following a press conference at the Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Center in Colorado Springs on Aug. 25. Rodolfo Gonzalez © News

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

October 31, 2005 By Deborah Frazier, Rocky Mountain News

COLORADO SPRINGS:

Sgt. Kelly Dougherty went to Iraq in 2003, doubting that the war was just.

She returned in 2004, certain it was wrong, and co-founded Iraq Veterans Against the War.

"People say you are a traitor. People say you are unpatriotic," said Dougherty, 27, about her anti-war work. "We are doing this because we feel strongly about America.

Dougherty was stationed near Nazaria in southern Iraq for 10 months with the Colorado National Guard's 220th Military Police Co. She saw action but never fired her weapon.

Dougherty said the thousands of innocent civilians who have been killed and the broken American promises about repairing water, electricity and sewage systems convinced her the troops should come home.

The faces of Iraqi civilians mirrored her growing doubts.

"At first, the Iraqis smiled and waved, but at the end of my 10 months there, they'd turn away or make rude gestures," Dougherty said.

After she came home in February 2004, and left the Guard after eight years with an honorable discharge, Dougherty embarked on a new mission.

She put her life and income on hold to talk to college students, high school classes and community groups across the country.

"The war in Iraq is not about protecting this country. The war is about aggression," said Dougherty, who doesn't receive a salary for her work against the war.

"Most of us wanted to help the Iraqi people, but the only good we could do was give kids candy," she told six Regis students who gathered on a warm fall afternoon to listen to her. "That's not what they need. They need clean water and security."

The worst events she experienced involved civilians, including children, hit by contractor convoys that thundered along rural roads under orders to never stop.

"I wasn't protecting America. I was protecting Halliburton trucks going to military bases," she said.

Dougherty said her MP unit provided security for investigators at rural crash scenes, including a fatality where a military convoy killed a boy.

"The family was there. An older relative fell to his knees and collapsed on the ground. There was nothing they could do," she said.

Dougherty said she had hoped that American troops would help rebuild power plants, water systems and schools, but the only construction she saw was at military bases.

"From what I saw, we just created more chaos and violence," she said. "I became less and less convinced that we were there for a good purpose."

Dougherty, whose parents divorced when she was a child, grew up in a working-class neighborhood in Cañon City. She was a good student who asked questions. When she graduated from high school in 1996, she knew two things: that she wanted to go to college and that her parents couldn't afford to send her.

Her stepfather, Army veteran Jim Brenner, suggested she sign up for the National Guard for the college benefits.

Her father, Sean Dougherty, a Vietnam veteran, argued against it.

Nevertheless, Dougherty enlisted, along with her best friend, Elizabeth Spradlin, in the Colorado National Guard in Pueblo.

Her unit first went to Kuwait, where they huddled in a bunker for two days as alarms signaled incoming Scud missiles fired by the Iraqis.

"We were in full protective gear because we were told the missiles had chemical and biological weapons," Dougherty said.

The soldiers again were misled, she said. The U.S. later admitted that the Iraqis didn't have biological or chemical agents or weapons of mass destruction.

At North Presbyterian Church in Denver on Tuesday, more than 75 people - the group's largest audience of the week - listened to Dougherty and two other Iraq veterans relate their experiences.

One of the audience members, Matt Walsh, 25, said he hadn't heard about the large civilian losses or the lack of water and food that had turned many of the Iraqi people against the U.S.

"I don't know anyone who's in Iraq," said Walsh, who graduated from college this year. "It could have been me that signed up to go to Iraq."

The audience gave Dougherty and the other vets a standing ovation.

"I came to find out from the ranks what has really gone on in Iraq," said John Addison, an Army veteran who was stationed in Germany during the Vietnam War.

"I was impressed with what these soldiers had to say," he said.

During her talk, Dougherty said her few encounters with Iraqis, especially with the women, confirmed her belief that Iraqis are good people.

"It made me wish all the more that I was there in a different capacity than being part of the military," she said.

Jeff Chapman, a deacon at the church who wore an American flag tie and an American flag pin on his jacket lapel, listened, but disagreed.

"I feel more people would die here, in this country, if we didn't fight the Iraqi terrorists there," said Chapman, an Air Force veteran.

"But what these people are doing is great," he said. "I fought for their right to say these things."

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)

Crude Slobs Attack Peace Flags In Vets Cemetery

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

November 11, 2005

WATERVILLE, Maine (AP) -- Protesters led by a veterans post tried to remove a flag display placed by peace activists at a veterans cemetery, and five were charged with criminal trespass.

The display remained intact Friday, Veterans Day, despite a threat by at least one of the protesters to return later to finish yanking up the flags.

The display of 2,000 white flags, meant to remember U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq, was set up at Veterans Memorial Park cemetery Oct. 30 under a permit issued to Waterville Area Bridges for Peace and Justice.

Members of the local Veterans of Foreign Wars post complained, saying they wanted the flags removed before Veterans Day. The permit allows the flags to remain in place until the first snowfall.

On Thursday, about 10 people went to the cemetery and, under the glare of television camera lights, some began removing the flags as eight peace group members and sympathizers gathered nearby. Police moved in quickly to make the arrests.

[Obviously being a veteran does not confer sainthood. Adolph Hitler and Joseph McCarthy were both veterans. They were the scum of the earth.]

"Tell Me Again What My Son Died For?"

Gold Star Mother Tormented By Assholes Parade Marshals & Cops At NY City Veterans Day Parade

While I stood with the Veterans for Peace, and the Iraq Vets Against the War, a brave collection of men and women who honorably served their country, I was surrounded by police with handcuffs ready, who treated all of us as suspicious.

11 Nov 2005 By Celeste Zappala Via Ben Chitty, New York Vietnam Veterans Against The War

Today I marched in the Veterans Day Parade in New York City, I was invited by the Veterans for Peace. I carried a picture of my son, Sgt Sherwood Baker, a PA National Guardsman who was killed in Baghdad on April 26, 2004.

I am proud of my son-proud of his courage, his decency and his love for his country. I love this country too, and I mourn the death of every single American who has been killed in this reckless war in Iraq.

These were the reasons I went to NY today, and yet I as a "Gold Star" Mother along with Sue Niederer, Mother of Seth Devorin, was relegated to the very end of the parade, just a few feet in front of the trash trucks.

While I stood with the Veterans for Peace, and the Iraq Vets Against the War, a brave collection of men and women who honorably served their country, I was surrounded by police with handcuffs ready, who treated all of us as suspicious.

After standing in the cold watching every high school band, and the Falun Gong, march ahead of us, after spirited discussions with the police, after waiting to see what the Parade Marshalls would decide finally - I was permitted to carry my sons' picture in the Veterans Day parade.

Tell me again what my son died for?

Tell me why his picture, and his memory were deliberately pushed to the absolute end of the parade, tell me why our message - love the warrior hate the war - is so confusing and confounding that the organizers of the Veterans Day parade felt that the only place for our message was ten feet in front of the trash trucks.

Could it be that the wonderful responses we received from so many of the remaining crowds is in some way a threat to the organizers of the parade?

As we marched down the street and so many people cheered and clapped for us I decided not to allow this last place position to be a humiliation to my son's honor, I decided to proudly carry his picture, because I know in my heart that I loved this warrior and with all my heart I hate this war.

Yours in peace,

Celeste Zappala
Mother, Sgt. Sherwood Baker, KIA 4/26/04
Member Military Families Speak Out

"I Used To Be A Republican Until They Killed My Son"
"She Wants American Troops Brought Home"

In a phone call home a week before his death, he told his father he lacked body armor and ammunition. "He said, 'Dad can you do something?' " Hart remembered. Alma Hart said she and her husband were stunned, though they had heard news reports of ill-equipped soldiers.

November 11, 2005 By Maggie Mulvihill, Boston Herald

Alma Hart stood over her only son's grave at Arlington National Cemetery in November 2003, vowing to honor his life.

Pfc. John Hart was just 20 when he was shot dead by an Iraqi enemy – just three months after his arrival in Iraq.

"When we buried John I promised him I would think of him every day," said Hart yesterday, her voice breaking. "And I have."

Today, as another Veterans Day passes, Alma Hart, 47, her husband, Brian, 46, and their two teenage daughters will lay a wreath in John's memory at Memorial Park near their Bedford home. John Hart was one of 31 Massachusetts soldiers killed in the war so far.

But helping the living is what helps his mother make sense of her child's death. She has begun volunteering at Bedford's Veterans Administration hospital, determined to make sure the soldiers there aren't ignored like many who returned from Vietnam.

“I will not let this happen to the Iraq generation. We can’t just stuff them in a hospital and leave them there,” Hart said. “This is how I will honor my son. I just can’t sit around and stare at John’s picture. There are guys that still need me.”

John Hart was killed as he traveled with fellow soldiers in a canvas-covered Humvee in Northern Iraq.

In a phone call home a week before his death, he told his father he lacked body armor and ammunition. “He said, ‘Dad can you do something?’ ” Hart remembered. Alma Hart said she and her husband were stunned, though they had heard news reports of ill-equipped soldiers.

“We were hoping it wasn’t true. President Bush had announced the war was over in May and I thought they were just there on peacekeeping stuff,” Hart said.

By the time the couple decided to write a letter to Massachusetts congressmen, “the Army was ringing the doorbell to say John was killed,” Hart said.

“They sent him into an ambush where there wasn’t a snowball’s chance in hell he was going to survive,” she said.

She vividly remembers the early morning in October 2003 when her doorbell rang. Looking out the window she saw a local police officer, a priest and an Army official.

“I thought: ‘I just won’t open the door. They can’t tell me if I don’t open the door,’ ” Hart said.

Hart feels deceived the White House hasn’t established that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction or a connection to al-Qaeda.

“I bought the whole line. The president told me something and I believed him,” Hart said. “But Brian and I have this nagging fear that it is going to come to nothing. We want something meaningful to come out of this for John. This is the big tragedy for us, and to think he was lied to by his government and sent over there ill-equipped and unprepared is very upsetting.”

“I used to be a Republican until they killed my son,” Hart said. “Killing my boy was the last straw.”

She wants American troops brought home.

“It isn’t just John’s death. It isn’t only about our son. It is about everybody’s sons. It is about all the innocent Iraqis who are trying to raise a family just like me. We can’t fight their civil war for them.”

Iraq Veterans Fucked Over Again:

Bush Regime Refusing To Pay Promised Educational Benefit

Nov. 11, 2005 By ALISON YOUNG, Knight Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON — More than a year ago, Congress passed a law giving extra college money to as many as 175,000 veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan and other actions against terrorism.

Aimed at activated members of the Reserves and the National Guard, the new benefit is worth as much as $827 a month.

But as a second Veterans Day goes by, not a single check has been mailed and most reservists have not even applied for it.

The program remains in bureaucratic limbo. Those who are eligible have not been told they qualify. School officials at Kansas City schools who could help cannot get information. The Department of Veterans Affairs is still waiting for a Pentagon database needed to process benefit applications.

Students such as Gabriel Medina, 23, a history and political science major at the University of California-Riverside, will spend another Veterans Day waiting as he struggles to pay for tuition, housing and other expenses.

"Trust me, this would make a big difference," said Medina, a Marine Corps reservist who spent nearly two years on active duty beginning in January 2002, including a tour in Iraq as a machine gunner. Medina, a full-time student, works two jobs, receives grants and has taken out student loans.

Medina receives $297 a month from the VA through the older Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve program, also called a Chapter 1606 benefit. But he should receive more than double that under the new program, called Chapter 1607.

"We're in the same fighting role with the active-duty guys, but we don't qualify for the same educational benefits," Medina said. "I think it legitimizes our service." Active-duty military personnel are eligible for monthly education payments of up to $1,034.

Throughout the country, students and college financial aid officials say they have been unable to get basic information about how the new benefit will work.

Mike Anderson, manager of student accounts at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, said Thursday that he had been unable to get any information from the VA regional office in St. Louis.

Two of his student-veterans have inquired, and one has sent in an application.

It’s frustrating, Anderson said, after the benefit was dangled before these veterans. “They’re not terribly happy,” he said. “I said I wouldn’t plan on having that money for Christmas.”

Pamela Yeager, financial aid adviser for Penn Valley Metropolitan Community College, knows of three students waiting on the new benefits. The extra money would make a difference.

“We’re talking about enough to buy a couple of credit hours and get books and possibly get their school done sooner,” she said.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Why The Royal Dictatorship In Jordan Was Attacked

11 November 2005 By Serge Truffaut, Le Devoir [Excerpt]

Without a break in the Iraqi conflict, Amman has become in many respects Iraq's capital annex. It's here in this city that diplomats busy with the Iraqi issue meet, as do NGO leaders, and, above all, the actors in economic development and on the political scene. In fact, many symposia and colloquia devoted to Iraq take place in ... Amman's hotels.

Hence the shot aimed at those places.

Another thing must be added to these variables and facts. At the beginning of this year, King Abdullah launched the country on a path of reform. Entitled "The National Agenda," the projected plan is supposed to transform Jordan over the course of the next ten years.

But then the plan's articulation was confided to the country's notables, the King's intimates.

Not a single representative of the opposition, not a single technocrat, not a single spokesperson for the poorer and middle classes has participated in this work. To put it bluntly, the mechanism used to prepare the whole business was not especially democratic.

IF YOU DON’T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION

Anti-Occupation Oil Workers Union Expands

From: Ewa Jasiewicz
Sent: November 04, 2005
Subject: The General Union of Oil Employees Expands to Form the IFOU

The UK Support committee for the now IFOU - formerly known as the GUOE - General Union of Oil Employees - received this statement from the union last month. More information regarding the possible affiliation of an independent oil union in Kirkuk is expected soon.

But the ball is rolling, the Union is expanding into an Iraq-wide oil workers federation and upping the ante, organisationally, against the encroaching privatisation of Iraq's oil and maintaining an 'Out Now' stance for an IMMEDIATE end to the brutal occupation - military and economic - of Iraq. They need as much support as possible.

Naftana (Arabic: 'our oil'), is the GUOE's UK support committee. To sign up for our alerts, please send an email to: naftana-subscribe@lists.riseup.net .

These are sent every month or so, and keep supporters informed of strikes, and other union activities. If you also send your mobile phone number, we will add you to the urgent alerts list, which will be used to mobilise protests in the event of attacks on GUOE members.

See also the union's home page for regular news updates: www.basraoilunion.org

MORE:

The Stance Of The GUOE In The Southern Region Towards The Occupation: "The Immediate Departure Of The Occupation Forces From The Country"

August 2005 By GUOE President Hassan Jumaa Awad Al Assadi

Greetings to you my dear friends,

I would like to convey the greetings of all the union executive committee members' greetings and to clarify the union's opinion. I hope that you do not listen to the third party who wants to undermine your trust in the union, for we have set a path for ourselves that all of us in the union shall not deviate from.

Our stand is frank and clear towards the occupation, and we constantly demand "the immediate departure of the occupation forces from the country," because we are capable of administering the state as Iraqis, whatever the consequences, and because such ability exists amongst the Iraqis. The current divisions are caused by the occupation.

The union's stand is frank and clear, and it is an inner (deeply felt) and patriotic feeling of all the union's members that the occupation forces must leave the country immediately, whatever the consequences.

The statements that we issue demanding rights are addressed to the Iraqi state, which is why we do not mention the occupation in them and why we issue the occasional specific statements on the occupation and its drawbacks.

Greetings to all of you, Hassan Juma'a Awwad Al-Assadi President of the union

MORE:

GUOE Position On Privatisation: "We Will Stand Firm Against This Imperialist Plan"

August 2005 - Statement by Union President Hassan Jum'a Awwad Al-Assadi, translated from Arabic by Dr Kamil Mahdi, University of Exeter

In The Name of God the Merciful and Beneficent

Subject: The Stance of the GUOE in the southern region on privatisation

Greetings (Assalamu Alikum wa rahmatu-allhi wa barakatuhu)

Friends, I wish to convey to you the greetings of your friends the members of the Executive Board of the Union, and we wish to clarify to you our view on privatisation, an issue of major concern for us as workers' movement leaders in this most important of work venues, i.e. oil. Our stance on this intricate issue is clear and explicit.

The privatisation of the oil and industrial sectors is the objective of all in the Iraqi state, and we must state that we will stand firm against this imperialist plan that would hand over Iraq's wealth to international capitalism such that the deprived Iraqi people would not benefit from it.

We reaffirm our unshakeable position on this basic issue for the future of the new Iraq, for we cannot build our country unless its wealth is in its own possession, and we need your assistance and support as we are fighting our enemies on the inside and you are our support outside.

The GUOE is the only union which has taken this courageous stance of fighting privatisation, and we are taking this path for the sake of Iraq's glory even if it costs us our lives.

The reason for this is that we feel that the Iraqis are capable of managing the their companies and their investments by themselves, because they have huge capabilities and technical knowledge.

We want you to know that we transformed the Iraqi Drilling Company from a non-existent entity into a company that is akin to international one, and it now owns 13 Drilling Towers which is a pride to all of us.

For that and for all the achievements in the Oil Sector, we stand firm against privatisation, and I trust you confidence in the Union will not be shaken, for we have charted our steady and clear path from which we cannot ever never deviate.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Veterans Front And Center:
Call And Response

Call:

From: Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace
To: GI Special
Sent: November 11, 2005 9:57 AM
Subject: RE: GI Special 3D11: Iraq Vets Front And Center

T, you and I were both there when IVAW was "born" at Ft Bragg last March 18-20, and you and I even had the honor of attending their first national meetings, and we obviously understand the importance of IVAW leading the anti-war movement(along with MFSO and GSFP), with folks like us in assistance.

The simple answer to getting the "right people" on stage is for the "right people" to do the organizing. While I completely understand the importance of having vets doing the leading, I also realize that those that do the organizing are the ones that pick the speakers.

I am not defending the stupidity of the choice of speakers on 9-24, only pointing out that it is the organizers RIGHT, via the nature of the HARD WORK of organizing.

My point is that WE need to do the organizing, thereby guaranteeing the most effective speakers.

Our anti-war groups here in south-Louisiana have organized about 35 demonstrations, and we ALWAYS feature vets, just as we featured Charlie Anderson (IVAW), Pat Dooley (Cav combat vet, VN), Michael Cuzzort (IVAW) Bob Smith(3 combat tours, Green Beret, VN), AND Cindy Sheehan, in June of this year at the "SOULstice Experience" BEFORE Crawford, Texas made "Cindy" a household name.

Again, the point is that if we had done the organizing work itself for 9-24, which means the tedious work of meetings, fund raising, media awareness, advertising, flyering, etc., we would have had all the right people on stage.

It's easy to walk on stage and speak, just as its easy to bitch about why vets were not represented.

It was OUR OWN FAULT for not being more involved with the organizers themselves.

Let's learn from the mistake, and see to it that it doesn't happen again.

Much love, and all respect to ALL VETERANS today on "our" day.

Happy Veterans Day, from Ward Reilly

RESPONSE:
Silencing The Iraq Veterans Gives Aid And Comfort To The Enemy

It is perfectly true, as Brother Reilly writes, that veterans could have waged a more vigorous fight to take the lead in the 9.24.05 action.

It is also true that unlike the Iraq vets, the leadership of ANSWER and UFPJ have decades of hard core political organizing experience under their belts.

Therefore, either:

They are, despite decades of experience, drooling idiots too stupid to find their feet with both of their hands in broad daylight and therefore have no clue that the greatest public impact in our war to end this war is the impact made by Iraq Veterans Against The War and other veterans, like David Cline, Veterans For Peace; or Stan Goff, Bring Them Home Now, or many others, and are clueless about who these people are.

Or

They decided their own sectarian political agendas were what mattered, and therefore chose speakers to push their own sectarian political agendas, and fuck the Iraq and other veterans.

Since they somehow manage to figure out that the Vets should lead this and prior marches, three guesses which answer is true. Duh. Veterans for window dressing are fine, as long as they take orders and shut the fuck up. Hmmm, what does that remind you of?

The 9.24 leaders are not fit for command, unless they apologize for their narrow greed, focused wholly on promoting their private agendas, and make it clear this kind of idiotic bullshit will never, ever happen again.

Don't hold your breath for that.

It is hard to blame the Veterans for failing to appreciate that the leaderships would give powerful political support to Bush and the war by keeping the best critics of the war, the men and women forced to fight it, from taking the lead on the speakers platform.

Silencing the Iraq Veterans was the answer to a White House prayer.

Sure, Veterans could have pushed harder, and brother Reilly is 100% right about that.

But when the commanders betray the troops, where does the blame belong?

With the troops?

Or with the commanders?

Lesson learned.

Time to cleanse the movement against Imperial war of those who have other priorities.

Veterans against this war front and center, in the lead.

"Let's learn from the mistake, and see to it that it doesn't happen again," Brother Reilly writes.

Church, say Amen!

T

Three Guesses

November 10, 2005 Medea Benjamin & Gayle Brandeis, The Nation [Excerpt]

What is the impact on soldiers still in Iraq to learn that the Bush Administration manipulated the intelligence about weapons of mass destruction in order to justify an invasion?

How must they feel when they learn that Iraqis don't want us there or understand that their acts of bravery are not making their families safer at home?

How demoralizing must it be to see their buddies die in a war that increasing numbers of soldiers don't even believe in?

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.

Democracy? OK! Let Iraqis Vote On Ending Occupation: Yes Or No!

[Thanks to Don Bacon, The Smedley Butler Society, who sent this in.]

And while many Democrats say it was a mistake to go into Iraq, very few have the nerve to say it's also a mistake to stay. The two parties are fighting about how the war began so they don't have to talk about how it will end.

November 10, 2005 Steve Chapman, Chicago Tribune

Last week, Senate Democrats infuriated Republicans by forcing a secret session on whether the administration fudged intelligence data before invading Iraq. This quarrel may be interesting for historians and campaign strategists, but it can't repeal the invasion.

What it can do is allow both parties to dodge a more immediate question that they prefer not to answer: Should we stay in Iraq?

That is a question Americans are asking themselves, and increasingly the division is not between "yes" and "no" but between "no" and "you've got to be kidding."

A recent CBS News poll found that 50 percent of Americans think we should leave "as soon as possible," with only 43 percent saying we should stay the course.

Republicans, of course, refuse to consider the possibility that their president has made a hopeless mess of the war.

And while many Democrats say it was a mistake to go into Iraq, very few have the nerve to say it's also a mistake to stay. The two parties are fighting about how the war began so they don't have to talk about how it will end.

The position of the Bush administration is that we are building democracy and training Iraqi police and soldiers to take over the fight against the insurgents. But our efforts have yielded no progress in the war.

Recent weeks mark a new low by almost any measure. Last month, American fatalities totaled 93, the most since January. Insurgents carried out an average of 100 attacks per day, the most furious pace of the entire war. Iraqi civilian and security personnel have been dying at double the rate earlier this year.

Supporters of the war complain that the news media fail to report all the good news about Iraq. But Fox News didn't report much good news from London when terrorists set off bombs in the subway last summer, killing 52 people. Iraq suffers the equivalent of a London subway bombing every day.

We've made steps toward constitutional government in Iraq, but establishing democracy in a country racked with such turmoil is like planting pine seedlings during a forest fire--it's not likely to succeed, and you may get killed trying.

So what should we do instead? My preference is to acknowledge that we don't know how to win the war and bring our troops home, say, week after next.

That makes far more sense than persisting for another year, or two, or three, at the cost of hundreds of American lives, before we finally recognize the inevitable.

Supporters of the war insist that pulling out will doom Iraq to civil war, as if it were currently an oasis of tranquility.

If the country fell into civil war, how would we tell the difference?

In any case, it's just as likely that the announcement of our early departure would force Iraqis to come up with their own antidote for the insurgency.

The administration and its allies insist we have an obligation to the people of Iraq to finish what we started, no matter how much American and Iraqi blood we have to spill.

Oddly, though, nobody who favors the war ever considers expanding the drive for democracy to the central issue.

"What is missing from this picture?" ask Abigail Fuller and Neil Wollman, professors at Manchester College in Indiana. "Any discussion of what the Iraqi people themselves want." They make a proposal that is long overdue: Give the Iraqi people the chance to vote for their preference.

The administration takes great pride in midwifing democracy in Iraq. It has certainly demonstrated that it is possible to carry out mass balloting across the country, despite the insurgency.

But if establishing rule by the people is our goal, we can hardly justify refusing to give Iraqis any say on the occupation.

Conservatives insist we have the support of the people there. A recent secret poll commissioned by the British defense ministry indicates otherwise. No fewer than 45 percent of those surveyed endorse attacks on British and American forces, and 82 percent are "strongly opposed" to the presence of foreign troops on Iraqi soil.

Inviting Iraqis to express their sentiments in a genuine referendum, rather than a mere poll, would clarify the issue once and for all, not to mention giving the United States vital information about the value of our mission in Iraq.

Of course, there's always the possibility that the Bush administration will find that neither Americans nor Iraqis support its policy there.

But now is no time for it to give up on democracy.

“The Disintegrating Authority Of The Governing Classes”

November 2, 2005 By William Greider, The Nation [Excerpt]

The burnt odor in Washington is from the disintegrating authority of the governing classes.

The public's darkest suspicions seem confirmed. Flagrant money corruption, deceitful communication of public plans and purposes, shocking incompetence -- take your pick, all are involved. None are new to American politics, but they are potently fused in the present circumstances.

A recent survey in Wisconsin found that only 6 percent of citizens believe their elected representatives serve the public interest. If they think that of state and local officials, what must they think of Washington?

We are witnessing, I suspect, something more momentous than the disgrace of another American President. Watergate was red hot, but always about Richard Nixon, Richard Nixon.

This convergence of scandal and failure seems more systemic, less personal.

The new political force for change is not the squeamish opposition party called the Democrats but a common disgust and anger at the sordidness embedded in our dysfunctional democracy.

The wake from that disgust may prove broader than Watergate's (when democracy was supposedly restored by Nixon's exit), because the anger is also splashing over once-trusted elements of the establishment.

Heroic truth-tellers in the Watergate saga, the established media are now in disrepute, scandalized by unreliable "news" and over-intimate attachments to powerful court insiders. The major media stood too close to the throne, deferred too eagerly to the king's twisted version of reality and his lust for war.

The institutions of "news" failed democracy on monumental matters. In fact, the contemporary system looks a lot more like the ancien régime than its practitioners realize.

Control is top-down and centralized. Information is shaped (and tainted) by the proximity of leading news- gatherers to the royal court and by their great distance from people and ordinary experience.

So You're Being Tortured To Death In An American Military Prison! “There Are Many Terrorist Pastry Chefs”

June 01, 2005 by Medium Lobster, Fafblog.blogspot.com

Q: Help! I'm being tortured to death in an American military prison! What should I do?

A: First of all, you should get your facts straight. You're not being tortured to death in an American military prison; you're being interrogated to death in an American detainment facility. America does not tolerate torture.

Q: Is there any sort of legal representative or due process I could get before being beaten to death?

A: No. Lawyers, open legal procedures, and basic civil liberties are all tools the enemy can use to escape justice - the justice of being beaten to death in a prison camp.

Q: It's just that my name is Musab Mohammed Khan, the pastry chef, and I believe you have me confused with Musab Muhammed Khan, the al Qaeda associate also known as "The Fist of Jihad."

A: First, there are many terrorist pastry chefs, just as there are many terrorist pastries. Second, competent intelligence and accurate prison records are both tools the enemy can use to escape justice.

Q: I seem to be losing all feeling in my lower body. Is there a doctor in the gulag?

A: Please: we find the term "gulag" absurd and offensive. A "gulag" is Russian. You are not being interrogated to death by Russians. You are being interrogated to death by the greatest country in the world.

Q: Is there a more accurate term you'd pre- aaaa! AAAAAAAA!

A: We prefer "outpost of liberty" or "island of freedom." Stringing together Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, and Bagram Airbase creates the Freedom Archipelago.

Q: So! Much! FreeedaaaAAAAARRRRRGGGGGGH!!!

Q: When I die in a few minutes, will my death help the cause of freedom?

A: Not really. But in a way, isn't death itself just freedom from life - the greatest prison of all?

Q: Wow... you've HRAAACK totally blown my mind - and my lung and ribcage and my kneecaps!

A: Oh, don't thank us - it's all part of being tortured to death in an American military prison!

MORE:

So You're STILL Being Tortured To Death In An American Military Prison! “Ducks Are Dangerous Terrorists And Enemies Of The United States”

November 08, 2005 by Medium Lobster, Fafblog.blogspot.com

Q. Help! I'm still being tortured to death in an American military prison! What should I do?

A. Sigh. We've been through this before. You can't be getting tortured to death because we do not torture.

Q. Whew, that's a relief! For a second there I thought I was being forced underwater until near the point of death.

A. Ha ha, that's not torture! That's what we call a "freedom dip."

Q. Can I be released from this American military prison?

A. No, because we can neither confirm nor deny that this military prison even exists. For all we know, you might not even be here!

Q. Wow, that'd be great! Any idea where I might be?

A. Not a clue! It's a mystery.

Q. Gee, I hope I'm home with my family drinking a nice big mug of cocoa.
A. You keep that up.

Q. I sure - AAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Q. Is this non-torture legal?

A. Absolutely. We will beat you, bash your limbs to pulp, and leave you to die of exposure, but we will do so under the law.

Q. Congress is trying to ban the cruel, degrading, and humiliating treatment of prisoners in U.S. custody. Will this non-torture be illegal then?

A. Of course not, because this non-torture is neither cruel, degrading, nor humiliating. Although we will veto any such legislation if passed by Congress. While we do not torture, we reserve the right to hypothetically torture.

Q. Is the CIA agent breaking my legs being cruel, humiliating or degrading?

A. The CIA agent breaking your legs is doing so in the most dignified and humane way possible.

Q. What about the army officer raping me with a chemical light?

A. The army officer raping you with a chemical light will later serve you a delicious meal of orange chicken and rice pilaf.

Q. Ooh! And for dessert?

A. Death by asphyxiation and a magnificent crème brulée!

Q. I can't waAAAAAAAAAAAHH OH GOD

Q. Why am I being not-tortured in this non-prison?

A. Because you're a dangerous terrorist and an enemy of the United States.

Q. Ah! How'd you find that out?

A. You told us, right after we started torturing you.

Q. You also got me to say I was a duck.

A. Ducks are dangerous terrorists and enemies of the United States.

Q. And to think I never knew! Who told you that?

A. Some duck we tortured.

Q. At some point between going to war and beating me to death while I'm chained to the floor in my own feces, do you think you went too far?

A. No, because this is a different kind of war.

Q. Different because the threat is more dangerous, or different because it's more complex?

A. Different because it gives us an excuse to torture people to death in American military prisons.

Q. Well, I certainly don't want to stand in the way of defending America. RRRGGGKK Or I wouldn't, if I still had the ability to stand.

A. It's the least any of us can ask of someone else when they're being tortured to death in an American military prison!

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

"Iraq Is A Roadside Bomb In American Politics"

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in. He writes: IF ONLY BUSH KNEW HOW IT FELT TO HAVE AN I.E.D. CRIPPLE HIM OR HIS FRIENDS]

Nov 11 By WILL LESTER, Associated Press Writer

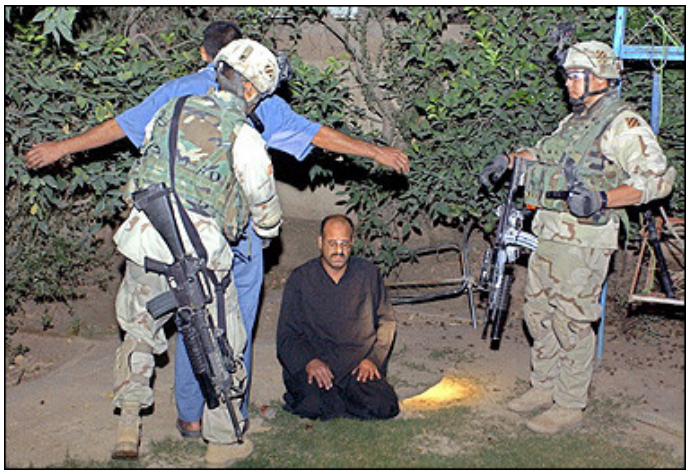
Two crucial pillars of President Bush's public support — perceptions of his honesty and faith in his ability to fight terrorism — have slipped to their lowest point in the AP-Ipsos poll.

Almost six in 10 now say Bush is not honest, and a similar number say his administration does not have high ethical standards.

"To use an unfortunate metaphor, Iraq is a roadside bomb in American politics," said Rich Bond, a former national Republican chairman.

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS.



A US soldier from Alfa company 2/7 searches an Iraqi during an overnight raid in the city of Tikrit. (AFP/Tauseef Mustafa)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqis over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign" and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any changes being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to occupy their country and kill them. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that?]

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Workers Wages Not Keeping Up With Inflation: Only Up 4.6% In 24 Years

Inflation has now reached a 5 percent pace. The upshot is that hourly earnings are effectively 2.3 percent below last year's level.

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

Nov 7 By Mark Trumbull, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

For all its strength, the current economic expansion is not boosting the American worker's paycheck.

Wages have been rising nominally: Average pay rose 8 cents last month to $16.27 an hour, according to a government report Friday.

That's not fast enough to counter inflation.

By one common measure, average pay for an hour's work has less purchasing power than it had four years ago - when the current growth cycle began.

It's a pattern of weak wage growth that's now several years old, but the trend has worsened in recent months. Wages for the most recent quarter were 2.3 percent lower, after inflation, than workers received a year before.

Even the fact that budgets have grown tighter for many debt-laden families is a volatile issue for the nation politically and financially. And economists say that while the pay pinch affects a wide swath of occupations, the impact is hardest on those without college degrees.

"It's two different worlds," skilled and unskilled, says John Silvia, chief economist at Wachovia Corp. in Charlotte, N.C. "There's no way you can consider this one overall labor market."

Well-trained job seekers are in hot demand, he says. But the labor market is weak for those whose education ended in high school. In some cases, "weak" is an understatement.

Inflation has now reached a 5 percent pace. The upshot is that hourly earnings are effectively 2.3 percent below last year's level.

"The inflation bar is very high right now," says Jared Bernstein of the Economic Policy Institute. So even the 2.7 percent hourly earnings growth, from a year earlier, "doesn't get you over."

The numbers above, for example, come from a widely cited wage report, a BLS survey of nonfarm employers called "current employment statistics."

In this survey, hourly wages for nonsupervisory workers rose by a total of just 4.6 percent during the 24-year period from 1979 to 2003, a recent Labor Department study found.

Still, on the issue of real pay for an hour's work, none of the government surveys show wages rising by even 1 percent a year between 1979 and 2003.

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