

GI SPECIAL 3D15:



VETERANS DAY NEW YORK CITY
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“He Was Under No Illusion About This War” Colorado Man Killed By Sniper: “My Husband And I Both Loath And Despise The War”

He didn't believe the Bush administration's reasons for the war, but Parrott believed he could do some good, Corwin said.

Nov 12, 2005 (AP) CANTON, N.C.

A member of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard who lived in Colorado was killed by a sniper as he patrolled a highway in Iraq, his family said Friday.

Staff Sgt. Mike Parrott, 49, worked in construction at Colorado State University, his wife, Meg Corwin told the Asheville Citizen-Times from her home in Timnath, Colo.

"I've lost my best friend, and I don't know what life will be like without him," said Corwin, who also is a professor at the school.

Parrott, a member of the 28th Infantry of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, died Thursday, his mother, Suzanne Parrott said. The Defense Department has not yet reported his death.

Suzanne Parrott is a retired nurse and hospice volunteer who said she takes death really well, but she had trouble breathing when Corwin informed her of her son's death.

"This is different," his mother said. "This is real different."

Corwin and Parrott met in 1986 at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, where he worked in the facilities department after graduating about five years earlier and she was a political science student with a young son.

Parrott's brown eyes, his big smile and the fact he read Voltaire in the bathroom charmed her. They had much in common, including a dislike of the war in Iraq.

"My husband and I both loath and despise the war," she said. "He was under no illusion about this war."

He didn't believe the Bush administration's reasons for the war, but Parrott believed he could do some good, Corwin said.

"Mike went over there because he really had this notion ... his experience might actually save some young kid's life and he also wanted to feel that he was useful and a part of something," Corwin said.

For his upcoming 50th birthday in December, she had planned to send him an iPod filled with his favorite music, including Nanci Griffith and Steve Earle.

"He sort of walked sideways on the crossbeam of life," Corwin said. "He never walked it straight. "He promised me. He said 'I won't get hurt.'"

Sanguinette Said Her Son's Death Was Senseless:

“All Because Of President Bush And His Ego Trip,” She Said Angrily

11/13/2005 By Monica Rodriguez, Staff Writer, Los Angeles Newspaper Group

POMONA - Shakere Guy liked dancing, playing video games and teasing his mother. The serious side of him looked forward to returning to Pomona from Iraq and continuing his studies in computer engineering, while spending time with his family and fiancée.

All those plans were wiped away when Guy died Saturday in Iraq.

The 23-year-old was killed when a roadside bomb detonated near his Humvee while he was on patrol in Baghdad, the Defense Department announced Tuesday.

A sergeant, Guy was assigned to the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, which has been hit hard by insurgent attacks, suicide bombers and roadside bombs.

Guy is the second Pomona man to die in Iraq. Cesar Baez, a Navy hospital corpsman, was killed in June.

Donna Sanguinette said Guy, her youngest child, called her as often as he could. She said she's going to miss his voice and his playful joking.

"If he didn't get me in the morning before work he'd get me at night," she said Tuesday evening at her Pomona home. "Just playing tricks on me. I'll miss that."

He would call and when his mother answered the phone he'd ask for Mrs. Sanguinette. When she responded that it was her on the phone he'd say it was Shakere.

On Saturday, military officials came to her door and informed her of her son's death.

One of four people traveling in the Humvee, he was a passenger in the front seat. The other three were injured in the explosion. Guy was part of a mission that required "going into buildings and finding the bad guys," Sanguinette said.

Another soldier in a separate Humvee was also killed.

The Modesto-headquartered 1st Battalion had recorded 71 combat injuries and seven soldiers killed in action as of mid-October, more than any other California unit in Iraq, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Last Tuesday Guy called and spoke with his family for what turned out to be the final time.

"Tuesday he must have talked to everybody," Sanguinette said. "He said he's coming home and getting his own apartment."

A 2001 graduate of Pomona High School, Guy had been in Iraq for 10 months and was expecting to return home in December.

He was about a month and half away from completing his tour of duty in Iraq and his commitment to the Army National Guard.

He was to have completed his commitment in September but his time in the service was extended, his mother said.

Sanguinette said her son's death was senseless.

"I could understand if my son had died on American soil or if he had died in Afghanistan. But for my son to die in Baghdad ... All because of President Bush and his ego trip," she said angrily.

"How can you liberate people (when) all they know is war?" she said.

Guy was born in Jamaica but became a U.S. citizen in July 2004, something he had looked forward to, family members said.

He joined the National Guard as a way to pay for his education. Before being called up to serve in Iraq he was able to complete a semester at DeVry University in Pomona and also worked at Home Depot's Mira Loma store.

But he was disappointed with the National Guard because it wasn't everything he'd been told it would be, Sanguinette said. He tried to transfer into the Navy, but that proved to be a complicated move filled with red tape.

In April, Guy came home for two weeks and relished the time with his family.

Then he had to return overseas.

"He wasn't as enthused to go back as when he was leaving for the first time," his mother said.

While at home he didn't speak about his experiences in Iraq.

"He was so closed in he wouldn't talk that much," she said.

Sanguinette said her son seemed to be constantly in harm's way -- always in the midst of fighting.

"Whatever it takes, get out of there alive," she recalls telling him.

Sanguinette said she's cried so much she can no longer shed tears and there are no words that can comfort her.

All she has at this point is her faith in God.

"I don't know when I'm going to heal," she said.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

2 Marines Killed In Assault On Small Iraqi Town, At Least 7 Wounded

November 14, 2005 By KIRK SEMPLE, The New York Times Company

CAMP AL QAIM, Iraq, Nov. 14 - Two American Marines were killed today and at least seven were wounded as about 2,000 American and Iraqi troops stormed Ubaydi, a small town on the Euphrates River in western Iraq, and encountered stiff armed resistance and a labyrinth of mines and booby-trap bombs, Marine commanders here said.

An Iraqi army soldier was also wounded in the operation.

Military officials offered no details on the American casualties except to say the majority were caused by hidden bombs that detonated as troops were searching streets and buildings while simultaneously responding to small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenade attacks.

Capt. Conlon Carabine, commander of India Company of Third Battalion, Sixth Marine Division, said Marines captured many insurgents during the operation while pre-assault raids and strikes killed members of the "high-level leadership."

He also allowed that some rebels probably melted into the civilian population or managed to slip through the loose cordon of troops that surrounded the two towns during the past week.

TWO SOLDIERS KILLED AND TWO SOLDIERS WOUNDED IN KIRKUK AREA ACCIDENT

November 14, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-11-21C

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.

Indiana Marine Killed



Lance Cpl. Scott Zubowski

November 14, 2005 AP

NEW CASTLE, Ind. -- The parents of a Marine from east-central Indiana say he was killed in Iraq on Saturday when a roadside bomb exploded under the military vehicle he was riding in.

Lance Cpl. Scott Zubowski, 20, and another Marine died when the bomb exploded during combat operations near Fallujah in Iraq's Al Anbar province, said his mother, Barbara Weitzel.

Zubowski was a rear passenger in the military vehicle when the bomb exploded, critically injuring a third Marine and slightly injuring two others, she said.

Barbara Weitzel said she and her husband last spoke to Scott about two weeks ago. "He was the same wonderful kid he always was," she told The Courier-Times on Monday morning. "He was just a great kid."

Zubowski was on his second tour of duty in Iraq.

His brother, David, is also serving in Iraq and is expected to return home for the funeral.

Funeral arrangements are pending.

Zubowski is the 49th person from Indiana to have died after being sent to the Mideast since the buildup for the invasion of Iraq began in 2003.

Two South African Mercenaries Killed In Baghdad Blast



A damaged sport utility vehicle after a car bomb detonated near one of the main gates leading into the fortified Green Zone in central Baghdad Nov. 14, 2005, killing three foreigners and wounded two others, an interior ministry official said. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

Nov 14 iafrica.com & Kuna & Business Wire & Aljazeera

Two South African contractors were killed when a bomber blew up a booby-trapped car outside Baghdad's high-security Green Zone early Monday, the US embassy and interior ministry reported.

The blast occurred near one of the main entrances to the heavily-fortified Green Zone, home to the US and British embassies and to Iraqi government offices.

The explosion was followed by small arms fire and billowing black smoke that could be seen across the city.

One witness said the bomber rammed the last of three civilian sports utility vehicles which were travelling in a convoy. Such vehicles are commonly used by security contractors for transporting high-ranking officials.

Ignatius Du Preez and Johannes Potgieter, both DynCorp International security team members from South Africa, were killed today in Iraq when their armored vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device. Two other DI security employees were seriously injured.

The team was traveling in a convoy from the International Zone to the Iraq Ministry of Justice when an explosion hit their vehicle on the driver's side. The vehicle immediately caught fire, and team members from another vehicle rescued the injured members.

Protective Security Detail member Ignatius Du Preez, 36, of Randfontein, South Africa, was pronounced dead on arrival at the 86th Combat Support Hospital. He was traveling in the car's gunner position.

PSD member Johannes Potgieter, 53, of Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa, died instantly from his injuries. He was the driver of the car. Both Du Preez and Potgieter joined DynCorp International in October 2004.

The two seriously injured members were transported to the 86th Combat Support Hospital for treatment.

The blast injured three others inside the car, embassy spokesperson Elizabeth Colton said.

Two of those injured, a South African and an Iraqi, were injured seriously, while an American also in the car escaped with lesser injuries, Colton said.

Reports also indicate an Iraqi Police officer was killed and four other civilians were injured in the incident.

According to a security source, the blast was the result of a booby trapped car detonated 200 meters from the embassy and 500 meters from the zone.

Notes From A Lost War:

Resistance Returning To Husaybah

11.14.05 Mideast Stars and Stripes

Husaybah, a border city on the far western edge of Iraq's Euphrates River Valley, has reached a turning point—a window of time when military combat begins to resemble police work, when direct assaults give way to routine patrols, and when killing insurgents seems easy when compared to simply finding them.

Although U.S. Marines conducted a house-by-house sweep of the entire area last week, they have begun to find signs that insurgents may already be slowly returning.

In addition to propaganda posters, Marines found several unexploded roadside bombs they believe were freshly set since troops came through last week.

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)

NO HONORABLE MISSION HERE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



Paratroopers from Company D, 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, in Tal Afar, Iraq Nov. 12, 2005. (AP Photo/US Army, Pfc. James Wilt)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

One German Occupation Soldier Killed, Four Wounded

14 November 2005 Aljazeera

At least three people, including one German soldier from the NATO-led peacekeepers [translation: occupation troops] have been killed in two car bomb attacks by Taliban fighters in the Afghan capital, officials and witnesses say.

In the first attack on Monday, a man rammed his car into a patrol vehicle belonging to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) killing the soldier and himself.

"It was a suicide attack," Mohammad Akbar, a senior commander for the area, told Reuters.

"One ISAF soldier has been killed, two other ISAF along with three civilians have been wounded."

General Mahboub Amiri, chief of the capital's rapid reaction police force, said the ISAF casualties were all German, but a spokesman for the peacekeeping force confirmed the casualties, but not the nationalities.

Shortly afterwards, there was a second car blast some 3km down the same road, witnesses said, adding that they heard a small explosion and gunfire a little later.

A police office said this was also a bomb attack, and added that another two peacekeepers[translation: occupation troops] had been wounded.

TROOP NEWS

**THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



Honor guard members from Fort Carson, Colo., carry the casket of Army Spc. Dennis Ferderer Jr. outside St. Pius Catholic Church after funeral services Nov. 14, 2005, in New Salem, N.D. Ferderer, 20, was killed in Iraq on Nov. 2 when a hand grenade was thrown at his Humvee. (AP Photo/The Bismarck Tribune, Mike McCleary)

“That War Was Pointless”

“There Was No Need”

“The Common Soldier Doesn’t Get Crap Out Of It”

“Soldiers do not give two shits about the American way, freedom, terrorism—all they want to do is survive. That war was pointless. There was no need. The only people that are getting anything out of it are the people that invested in the companies that are rebuilding Iraq, ’cause they’re making billions of dollars a day on this. The common soldier doesn’t get crap out of it. Every day he wakes up, he’s scared shitless, he doesn’t want to go out on patrols, he doesn’t want to leave the gate.”

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

November 2005 Maxim [Excerpts]

As I write this, it’s a sunny summer day in America, the third summer of war, and one year, one month, and two days since Jeff Lucey, a Marine reservist who came home from Iraq with a big smile on his face, hanged himself in his parents’ basement.

When you’re over there, well, you’re over there, and it’s so far away, and when you’re home, have you come home yet? You just seem to disappear.

Sure, some veterans are briefly in the news: Jimmy Massey and Michael Hoffman of Iraq Veterans Against the War testifying to the human costs of doing battle. But most of them just go home and quietly pick up their lives. Or quietly don’t.

Here’s a typical story making the rounds at a college on Long Island: A combat vet is enrolled in school, but his friends say he doesn’t go to classes. In fact, he doesn’t leave his dorm room. He’s holed up there drinking, they say. They think he’s waiting to be called back to Iraq. It’s a sketchy story—he’s walled himself off, and he’s not talking to anybody. The guys he went to war with are back home in Indiana or Pennsylvania, back in Iraq, wounded, or dead, but at any rate, not around.

Who knows what things bump and slither in that room with him? Jeff Lucey kept a flashlight under his bed at home because he would hear camel spiders crawling there at night.

As 23-year-old Spc. Steve Mortillo puts it, “We wanted to get back. We didn’t want to deal with problems. A whole year we’d been looking forward to getting back, drinking some friggin’ beers, and getting laid. Then we got back and went crazy. I know I did. I

got back and got smashed, just because. I went out to a club every friggin' night. It was just a celebration of life, you know?"

But soon the elation disappears. Demons dance in your head. And you have the rest of your life to figure out.

A World of Denial

One of the hallmarks of this war is an unprecedented number of severely wounded soldiers coming back. Because of innovations like the new plated Kevlar vest, soldiers are surviving wounds that would have killed them in any previous war. Of wounded soldiers who are alive when medics arrive, 98 percent survive, but they survive with lost limbs, severe burns, and brain injuries.

Robert Acosta, a 22-year-old ammunition specialist, was traveling in a Humvee near the Baghdad airport on a chicken-and-soda run when someone tossed a grenade into the truck. He immediately snatched it to throw it out the window. "As soon as I wrapped my fingers around it, it blew up. It blew my hand completely off and my leg almost off, broke both my legs, and threw me back in my seat."

He spent seven months at Walter Reed, where he was fitted for a prosthetic hand. A metal rod was inserted in his leg, and pins were put in his toes. Yet he was initially awarded only partial disability for his leg. Though he eventually received full benefits, he still had to use duct tape to hold his prosthesis together because he couldn't get it repaired quickly at the VA hospital.

Before Lorin Bannerman's Washington Army National Guard unit came back home, they joked about making up T-shirts: IRAQ? DON'T FUCKIN' ASK. His wife, Stacy, says that when Lorin returned after an 18-month mobilization, he was still in Iraq, still in the role of sergeant first class, speaking to her abruptly, as if he were barking orders.

"You know what they never tell them," Stacy says to me, "is that when you go into combat, you're walking through a one-way door. You will never come back that way again."

Since 9/11, close to 1.1 million Americans have passed through that door. An Army study has found that one in six soldiers who have returned from Iraq reports symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depression, or serious anxiety disorders.

And those numbers are conservative, because at least one group known to have an especially high rate of PTSD—the National Guard and Reserve—was not included in the survey.

Not every soldier develops PTSD, of course. And among those who do, there's a continuum, and it runs from Jeff Lucey, who committed suicide, to soldiers who have been diagnosed with PTSD to vets who get no clinical diagnosis but come home and feel like strangers to a life that moves placidly from breakfast to dinner to TV at night.

As Bob Stillwell told me, "I really don't care about things as much, things just don't seem that important anymore."

“Like what?”

“Like my girlfriend and stuff. Life. Everything.”

The Sound of the Fury

Jason Gunn is “home.” That is, the 26-year-old veteran of the First Armored Division is living at his parents’ house in Northeast Philadelphia after an eight-year stint in the Army and two tours of Iraq. He arrived here two weeks ago.

“I got out without a plan,” Jason says, and then thinks again. “Well, I did have a plan. I wanted eight years of my life back, and I wanted to pick up where I had left off.” But his high school friends are long gone, done with college, four years into their careers. There are one or two friends still in the area, but Jason doesn’t talk to them. “I mean, what can you say?”

It’s early evening, and we sit at a picnic table in the backyard. The air is filled with the sharp, metallic cries of birds and the occasional clang of wind chimes in the yards around us. Jason, who’s tall and wiry, dark-haired, dark-eyed, his right arm inked with tattoos, his left bearing the scars of shrapnel wounds, stares into the distance as he talks.

“All you want is a little bit of a break, and, thank God for me, I got that break,” Jason says. He got a job driving a delivery truck.

The pay is good, better money than he’d be making at jobs he’d consider “embarrassing” after two tours of combat. Jobs a lot of guys coming out have to take.

“They’ve been through so much, and when they get out they’re working at Staples or McDonald’s, and it breaks your heart. The military trained them for nothing.”

Jason plans on attending community college and studying to become a paramedic, because it was the medics in Iraq that he truly admired.

That’s Jason on the surface. But he’s got ugly pictures inside his head, dead friends he feels he has to live for, no love for the military, and a truckload of anger for civilians. That anger shoots out in all directions—at people who bitch and moan about the smallest inconvenience in their world while soldiers die in Iraq, at the grasping and accumulation of a consumer society, and at those little yellow ribbons stuck on the backs of our cars.

“People put those stickers on their cars to make themselves feel better about themselves,” he says. “It makes them feel they’re doing their part, so they don’t seem like bad people. I mean, do you really believe in supporting our troops? Do you really believe in bringing them home now, or do you just get that thing to slap on your car? Do you even know it’s still there?”

During his first tour, Jason was wounded and a close friend was killed when the truck Jason was driving hit an IED. The device went off on the driver's side, right next to the rear passenger's seat where Sgt. Timothy Hayslett was sitting.

Jason was "peppered," a term he hates. "It sounds like I got a paper cut," he scoffs. "I had big holes through my thigh, all through my calf, all through my foot, up the side of my arm, all down my back, my flank up under my armpit.

"Everything was all smoky, and I didn't really want to look in the back of the truck because, from Sergeant Hayslett being hit, there was blood everywhere, there was shit all over the seats. I tried waking him up, and when I saw how bad he really was, right off the bat I said, 'He's dead.' It didn't even look like him, his face was all swollen up, and basically just blue, and his leg was cocked up over the top of his head."

Jason was flown to Landstuhl Hospital, where he spent months recovering. Even though a team of military shrinks recommended he remain in Germany to be treated for PTSD, he was ordered back to Iraq. When he got back they were going to "baby-sit" him at the base for a while. He thought, The hell with you, you brought me back here, and for what? He insisted they send him out on patrols, almost hoping he would get hurt again, and he was sent to Karbala.

"Karbala was an actual stand-up fight. These guys actually fought, the Mahdi army. That first month in Karbala, we burned that shit to the ground; we burned the entire city. And it was fun. We got payback. Finally, we could say, 'Hey, here we are. This is what we're about.' I mean, if we're going over there to fight, let us fight. Don't tell us to go over there and be police officers and day-care-center and civil-rights leaders. We're soldiers. Soldiers are meant for one thing. We're trained to kill, that's it.

"Soldiers do not give two shits about the American way, freedom, terrorism—all they want to do is survive. That war was pointless. There was no need. The only people that are getting anything out of it are the people that invested in the companies that are rebuilding Iraq, 'cause they're making billions of dollars a day on this. The common soldier doesn't get crap out of it. Every day he wakes up, he's scared shitless, he doesn't want to go out on patrols, he doesn't want to leave the gate."

Jason has stopped taking the medication he was prescribed for PTSD. He didn't like the way it made him feel.

He won't go to the VA for help; the VA is "like going into an old-folks home, it's just depressing. All the waiting you do, the little help you do receive, it's not adequate, and it's a waste of time. I'll deal with it on my own."

The Unexpected Battle

Danny Edwards lives with his wife and two kids in a trailer in Hinesville, Georgia, a small town outside Fort Stewart. When he and his platoon returned to Fort Stewart in August 2003, Danny thought that his life would work out. It would be cake and ice cream compared to eight months in Iraq, compared to killing and getting shot at, seeing his friend's leg hanging off his body. "My feeling was we just fought a war, we some type of

heroes, America's gonna love us," he says. "Everybody had those expectations—man, maybe this will change our lives, which it did. It changed our lives for the wrong reasons."

He had six months left of active duty, and the Army put him on funeral detail, folding flags over caskets. Danny can't help but laugh. "Funeral detail. After coming back from Iraq."

Then he was discharged.

"I never known nothing but training, war," says Danny, a massive man his friends call a big teddy bear. "They left me hanging. I really don't have no guidance, nobody to go and talk to."

His recruiter had told Danny that if he was a fueler in the Army, he'd get a good job as a fueler once he got out. But once he started looking for that kind of work, he found out that his Army licenses were no good back here, and his experience driving fuel trucks through combat zones was not the experience civilian employers were looking for.

"It seems like after we got out of the military, we suffer from wanting to be back in the military," Danny says. "It's just not the same. The military teaches us that you can't go nowhere without your battle buddy, but now that I'm out of the Army, it's just me here."

Danny was unemployed for seven months before getting a job on post, doing security at \$13 an hour.

When Herold Noel used to tell his sergeant that he was going to get out of the Army and enjoy the real world, his sergeant would say, "Man, this is the real world. This is what it's all about. If you go out there, civilians don't care about you. They say they support you. They don't give a fuck." Herold ended up homeless when he returned to New York—an ominous sign of things to come, as a third of this nation's homeless men are already military veterans.

Who Is Responsible?

"We looked at him—we saw no wounds," says Kevin Lucey. "But he had fatal wounds. He really did."

It was almost one year after his son Jeff returned from Iraq that he hanged himself in the basement.

When I arrive at the Lucey's house in rural Belchertown, Massachusetts, Jeff's mom, Joyce, is on the back deck trying to save a dying mouse. The mouse is lying on its side in a shoebox filled with straw, an ant wiggling around on its eyeball. The mouse is breathing rapidly, its front paws pulled up to its chest. A half-hour later, while Joyce and her youngest daughter, Debbie, are inside trying to feed the mouse with an eyedropper, Kevin confides quietly to me, "He's not going to make it." And then the mouse dies.

A sense of failure hangs in the air. It's almost unbearable. "Jeff died on my watch," Kevin says, for on the day his boy killed himself, Joyce was out of town. "I've tried to apologize to Jeff's mom. I blame myself. I do."

Jeff was "just a boy from Belchertown," his father says, as if that is self-explanatory, and in a way it is. One winter during a snowstorm, Jeff and his friend used the roof of their house as a ski slope. When he was nine, his parents took him to Walt Disney World, and Jeff shook hands with all the Disney characters while holding a hand buzzer. Just a boy from Belchertown who grew up and joined the Marine Reserves for the college money and to prove to himself that he was tough.

Jeff could never square Iraq in his mind. Like so many soldiers I talked to, he wanted to be sent to Afghanistan to go after Osama bin Laden. His unit went into Iraq with the first invasion forces in March 2003.

When Jeff first returned that next summer, only his girlfriend noticed any difference in him—he seemed a little distant. She was also the only one who knew he wore two dog tags, both belonging to Iraqi soldiers. Friends asked him if he had killed anyone. In fact, it was the first question his little sister asked, and she regretted it later. Jeff waved them all off.

Jeff went back to college. Four months passed. The first crack in his exterior appeared on Christmas Eve, when he got drunk and threw the two dog tags at his sister Debbie, crying, "Don't you understand your brother is a murderer?" But on Christmas Day, he was his old self again, and his parents thought, OK, bad moment, he'll have some of those. The downward spiral began in March, and it was so furious, so dark and relentless, that Kevin compares it to "a fast-moving cancer."

First Jeff quit going to classes. He was drinking a lot. He couldn't fall asleep at night; he could only pass out. His parents found out that he was suffering from hallucinations. He heard camel spiders scuttling across his room, felt that people were touching him. He was involved in an immense struggle inside of himself, and he seemed to be all alone. One night his mother heard a shout. She tapped on his door, "Are you OK?" Heard him say, "Fuck," softly to himself, as if he'd been caught, found out. He called out to her that he was fine.

He didn't begin talking of his combat experience until April, and even then mostly when he was drunk, and never in complete sentences: Driving in a truck at night, 2Pac's "Cradle to the Grave" blasting, a group of marines sitting without speaking, seeing nothing but fire and explosions in the darkness, and heading toward them. House-to-house searches conducted in an alley. Shoveling body parts into ditches.

He told his sister how the little kids would run around the trucks expecting candy, but all the drivers were given orders never to stop their vehicles for anything or anyone. "Bumps in the road" was the brutal, psyche-saving phrase the soldiers used in Iraq to describe people who might step in front of their vehicles. "Don't look back" was the only advice they were given.

Jeff said the dog tags belonged to two Iraqi soldiers he'd been ordered to kill. The Marines later investigated Jeff's story and decided it wasn't true. "He assumed guilt and responsibility not only for those two deaths but for the destruction of their families," Kevin

says. "The ripple effect that he imagined was horrible. He took away somebody's son. He took away somebody's father. He took away somebody's husband."

Near the end he became a recluse, spending hours holed up in his room. But on a Monday, the night before he killed himself, Jeff began talking to his father about Iraq. He asked if he could sit in his father's lap. Later Jeff's therapist would tell Joyce and Kevin that was a sign Jeff was near the end. He was regressing, the therapist said, and desperately looking for a safe place.

"That night he sat on my lap for about 45 minutes," Kevin says. "I scratched his head. It felt a bit awkward, but how could I say no?" They sat and rocked. A middle-age man and his 23-year-old son.

On Tuesday night Kevin arrived home from work at 6:45. The TV was on in the living room, but Jeff wasn't there. Kevin didn't see the note left on one of the chairs: "It's 4:35, and I'm near completing my death." Kevin went to Jeff's bedroom, saw the dog tags lying on his bed. Coming back through the house, he noticed that the basement door was open and the light was on. He went down the stairs to take a closer look. On the floor in the center of the room, three large photos were spread out—one of Jeff's platoon, and on either side pictures of his sisters, and arranged in a semicircle at the top were many smaller photos of his family. Kevin suddenly felt Jeff standing behind him. "As I was turning around, I saw the hose around his neck. I remember howling something, I don't know what."

It's 11 at night, and Kevin, Joyce, and Debbie are showing me pictures of Jeff and the other marines arriving home in New Haven, a sea of smiling faces; Jeff at seven or eight, collecting shells with his little sister; Jeff and sisters Kelly and Debbie piled on their father's lap. His father cannot go into the basement anymore, though he tries. Joyce hid the hose her son used to hang himself; she just can't bring herself to throw it away.

At the door when I go to leave, Joyce warns me to watch out for the frogs on the road. It has rained a little since we've been inside, just a drizzle, but the roads have a sheen and the air has become heavier. The frogs come out after the rain, she says, and you have to keep a close eye on the road or you'll run over them.

In one of the letters Jeff left behind, he wrote that he'd had a wonderful childhood, but his innocence was gone, and he could no longer stand the pain. "You bring up your kids, and then you lose them to something you don't even understand," Joyce says.

I drive out of Belchertown, Massachusetts, under pine trees that are so tall they seem to be a thousand years old.

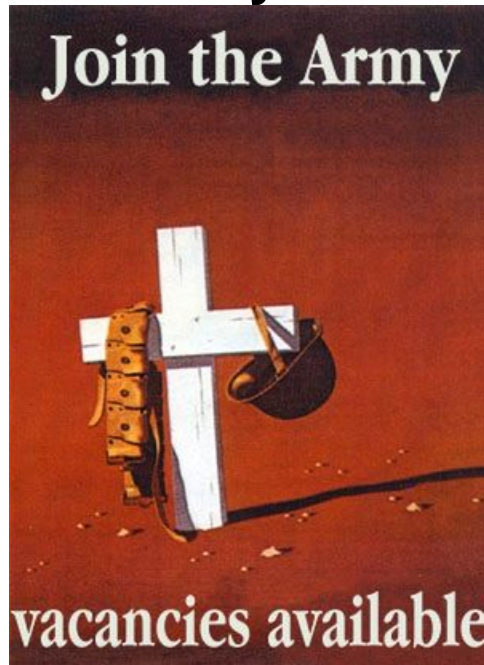
When Jeff returned from Iraq, he told his family he never wanted to see sand again. He sat on the backyard deck of his childhood home, looking out over the wildflowers and into the pine woods, speaking in broken sentences of dead children, fiery explosions in the night, and grim, frightened men.

But no matter how many times he tried to tell his family what war was like, Jeff also told them that unless they were there, they would never understand.

He said it so often, in fact, that Kevin wanted to carve it on his son's tombstone.

It is the refrain of combat veterans everywhere: Unless you were there...

“A Trend” 5,000 In Massachusetts Remove Their Names From Military Recruitment Lists



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro]

Lowell High School was among the schools still accepting opt-outs late last week, and had not yet handed over its list to recruiters. "They get impatient, but we will respond in proper time," said Headmaster William Samaras. "At times you're pushed, and so you push back."

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

November 13, 2005 By Maria Sacchetti and Jenna Russell, Boston

More than 5,000 high school students in five of the state's largest school districts have removed their names from military recruitment lists, a trend driven by continuing casualties in Iraq and a well-organized peace movement that has urged students to avoid contact with recruiters.

The number of students removing their names has jumped significantly over the past year, especially in school systems with many low-income and minority students, where parents and activists are growing increasingly assertive in challenging military recruiters' access to young people.

In Boston, about 3,700 students, or 19 percent of those enrolled in the city's high schools, have removed their names from recruiting lists. At Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 952 high school students, more than half the student body, ordered the school system not to give their names to the military this year.

Overall, approximately 18 percent of the public high school students eligible in Cambridge, Boston, Worcester, Lowell, and Fall River have opted to remove their names.

"There's momentum you can see," said Felicity Crush, spokeswoman for the San Francisco-based Leave My Child Alone project. "As soon as people become aware of it, they start to take action."

Students cite the rising death toll in Iraq as a key factor for their lack of interest in the military, but also acknowledge concerns raised by their parents.

Gwen Claiborne, 18, a senior at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School in Roxbury, said she had her name removed from the call list at the urging of her father, who served in the military.

"It's much more scary now," said Claiborne, who wants to be an electrician. "A whole bunch of troops are dying."

Lidija Ristic, 17, a senior at Cambridge Rindge and Latin, fled war-torn Serbia with her family when she was 4. Now an opponent of the war in Iraq, she said she feels urban students are especially being targeted by recruiters.

"I'm just for peace," she said. "I think it's horrible that they come here and try to recruit people."

One Massachusetts Army recruiting commander, however, expressed concern that school officials' increasing efforts to accommodate students who want their names omitted are causing delays in the Army obtaining the contact lists. More than two months into the school year, roughly one-third of the 75 public high schools in communities north of Boston have not handed over their lists yet, said Captain Mark Spear, based in Woburn.

"About 35 percent are still delinquent, and we're haggling back and forth, and they're saying the opt-out hasn't ended," he said. "By this time of year we would like to have the names in hand."

Lowell High School was among the schools still accepting opt-outs late last week, and had not yet handed over its list to recruiters. "They get impatient, but we will respond in proper time," said Headmaster William Samaras. "At times you're pushed, and so you push back."

Jarhead

11.17.05 Rolling Stone Magazine film review

Jake Gyllenhaal, Jamie Foxx, Peter Sarsgaard, Directed by Sam Mendes & Written by William Broyles Jr.

WAR IS HELL, BUT it's the waiting that kills you.

Jake Gyllenhaal stars as Anthony Swofford, a Marine Sniper ordered to fight the first war in the Persian Gulf by staying in constant readiness for a shot that never comes.

It's the best acting Gyllenhaal has ever done (and he triumphs in the upcoming *Brokeback Mountain*).

Gyllenhaal is the heart and soul of a darkly intense and ferociously funny movie that sets its sights on soldiers under the gun of doing nothing. "It's the waiting — that's our life," says Swoff.

If you're thinking that boredom is a problematic subject for a war movie, you wouldn't be wrong. Oscar winning director Sam Mendes (*American Beauty*, *Road to Perdition*) can't always keep our minds from wandering either.

What he does do, with unnerving honesty, is render a war of bombs and burning oil fields — the media mostly relied on aerial views — from the point of view of the ground soldiers eating the smoke and dirt. That alone makes *Jarhead* unique.

The spark is the source material, a memoir by Swofford who was twenty and full of piss and vinegar when he enlisted in the Marines in the summer of 1990 and shipped out to the deserts of Saudi Arabia. Swofford's book was published much later, in 2003, when Gulf War 2, dubbed by the Bush administration as Operation Iraqi Freedom, further soured Swofford's view.

Mendes and screenwriter William Broyles Jr., a former Marine, use chunks of narration to show Swoff's change from innocent to skeptic. The film doesn't need the editorializing. What it loses in velocity it makes up for with a greater sense of purpose.

Mendes begins on familiar ground — the boot-camp scenes are right out of Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket*. As the guys watch Francis Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, they cheer the chopper attack on a Vietnamese village to the thundering sounds of Wagner's "The Ride of the Valkyries."

But when an enlistee complains that this war needs its own music, Mendes pulls out "Don't Worry, Be Happy" to underscore the irony.

References to war movies, from *Platoon* to *The Deer Hunter*, fail to provide these Marines with an identity. They find it in the desert.

"Welcome to the suck," says Troy (Peter Sarsgaard) a Marine scout who will become Swoff's spotter as they train to locate and terminate a target.

The film finds time for the men who make up the Surveillance and Targetunit, from Evan Jones as Follower, the irritant in the group, to Lucas Black as Kruger, the rebel who won't keep politics out of the equation as the others try to do.

But it's Sarsgaard, hiding his character's secrets and his temper until he's pushed too far, who delivers a performance of implosive brilliance. The sight of Troy shooting his gun impotently into the night air is meant to shake us. Sarsgaard makes damn sure that it does.

And save an oo-rah for Jamie Foxx, the *Ray* Oscar winner who makes up for the stench of *Stealth* with a hard-nosed and surprisingly touching performance as Sgt. Sykes, the Marine lifer who whips these empty vessels (jarheads) into obedient slaves.

In a trenchant scene, the sarge tells Swoff why he prefers war to his family's drywall business. Foxx puts a human face on a cliché and tears you apart.

That's Jarhead at its best, with the great cinematographer Roger Deakins using a hand-held camera to capture the look, the light and the texture of this desert storm, and the actors using everything in their arsenals to keep the story blunt and intimate.

The porn tapes, the jerking off, the Christmas-party revel that nearly gets them killed are all a buildup to how these Marines can survive the crisis of inaction. Even when the script slips into sermonizing — a Swoff voice-over informs us that we're all still "in the desert" — Mendes keeps invading us with emotions.

The jolt of Jarhead is undeniable, and it comes when you least expect it,

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action



An Iraqi army vehicle hit by a road-side bomb in Kirkuk, November 13, 2005. Five soldiers were injured in the attack, police sources said. REUTERS/Slahaldeen Rasheed/Str

Nov 14 (KUNA) & People's Daily Online

"A roadside bomb struck a police commando patrol at about 8:30 a.m. (0530 GMT) in Saidiyah district in southern Baghdad, killing a commando member and wounding three others," Ahmed Abdullah from Baghdad police told Xinhua.

Al-Doura south Baghdad also witnessed a security incident and a Police source said an Iraqi Policeman was killed by an explosion while on patrol today.

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

**GET THE MESSAGE?
THE OCCUPATION RUNS A TERRORIST REGIME**



Iraqis holding placards reading 'No to state terror' during a protest in Baqouba Nov. 14, 2005, against the arrests and raids carried out by the Iraqi collaborator troops in Diyala province. 310 people were arrested Saturday in the Diyala raids. (AP Photo/Mohammed Adnan)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Iraq Vets Front And Center: A Proposal

From: JML
To: GI Special
Sent: November 13, 2005
Subject: Re: GI Special 3D11: Iraq Vets Front And Center

In response to the ignoring of Iraq Veterans Against the War, I would encourage them to consider the idea of running as candidates for US Senate and US Congress as Independents, Greens, Peace and Freedom, or any other non-corporate party that is willing to run against the Democratic and Republican parties of war.

They will get plenty of attention in their own right and they will help galvanize the antiwar movement, build participation by soldiers, and put intense pressure on mainstream politicians.

If they take on high profile senate races in 2006, all the better.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

US Military Arresting People Faster Than New Board Can Review Their Cases: Concentration Camps Filling Up

15 November 2005 Reuters

The United Nations has reported that the US military in Iraq is detaining people faster than a new board can review their cases to determine whether their rights are being respected.

The US-led force continues to hold far more prisoners than the Iraqi government, and most are individuals picked up in mass arrests and detained for "imperative reasons of security," the world body said on Monday.

"While progress in reviewing cases led to the release of hundreds, the overall number of detainees continued to increase due to mass arrests carried out during

security and military operations," the UN mission said in its latest progress report on human rights, covering the period 1 September to 31 October.

The number of detainees now held by the multinational force has climbed to 13,514, according to the latest Pentagon figures, up from about 6000 in June and 9600 in September.

That is far more than the 7577 in the custody of Iraq's Justice Ministry, the 3916 held by its Interior Ministry and the 342 juveniles in the hands of its Labour and Social Affairs Ministry as of 26 October, according to Iraqi figures.

The United Nations has repeatedly expressed concern about the large number of detainees being held in Iraq without apparent due process, alleging that thousands were being held for extended periods without charges or even preliminary reviews to determine whether charges were ultimately likely.

The US military insists Iraqi detainees are having their cases promptly reviewed, whether through referral to an Iraqi court or through the new prisoner review board.

But the UN report said its standards violated both Iraqi and international laws governing the treatment of civilians.

And while the board is reviewing 200 to 250 cases a week, "resulting in some releases," the overall number of detainees is still climbing due to more mass arrests, it said.

The US-led force is able to detain Iraqis under an exception to the Geneva Conventions - which govern the treatment of civilians in wartime - granted by the 15-nation UN Security Council in June 2004.

Falluja: The People Say That They Are Living In A Prison

One man visiting the sheikh challenged us by saying, "If I come and smash everything in your house and take all your money, and then I do the same to all your neighbours, what would you do to me?"

November 13, 2005 Doug Pritchard, Electronic Iraq. Christian Peacemaker Teams is an ecumenical violence-reduction program with roots in the historic peace churches.

Christian Peacemaker Teams visited the city of Falluja again on Nov. 8th. This day marked the first anniversary of a major U.S. assault on the city. In that attack, the largely

Sunni population of 300,000 was expelled, its industrial base and services destroyed, and one-third of its homes were flattened. What has happened since?

The city is now surrounded by a tight network of checkpoints controlled by U.S. forces and Shi'a members of the Iraqi Army. No one is allowed in without an identification card issued by the U.S. Marines, or other permission.

Even with such permission it took 75 minutes for us to enter. These checkpoints are choking economic life in the city, doubling prices for basic foodstuffs, and cutting off surrounding villages from Falluja's markets, services, and hospital. The people say that they are living in a prison.

Our first visit was to a sheikh who heads a major mosque. He said that most of the population has returned to the city centre, but those who live further out cannot because their homes were the most damaged.

Power is only available downtown, and only for a few hours in the middle of the night.

The majority of the population is still unemployed since the city's factories have not been rebuilt. The economic situation is so desperate that the limited reconstruction funds are being consumed by the immediate needs for food and material aid.

Schools are mostly open, but three schools and the Ministry of Education offices are still being occupied by U.S. forces.

As we spoke to the sheikh, members of the U.S. forces and the Iraqi Army swept up the street searching homes and threatened to blow-up our driver's car which was parked outside the mosque.

Several days before, Iraqi Army troops blew up a teacher's car and on this day he had come to the mosque just before we arrived, weeping. The sheikh offered to start a collection to raise the \$5,000 US needed to replace his car.

The sheikh said that when they complained, the U.S. forces said, "Talk to the Iraqi Army." When they talk to the Iraqi Army, they say, "You are all children of Saddam."

We then met with the manager of a popular downtown restaurant. He described the violence that is growing in the city. For example, in September 2005, there was an explosion in the street near his restaurant.

On arrival, the Iraqi Army sprayed his restaurant and the neighbouring businesses with machine-gun fire.

A few days later he found a sign on his door saying that anyone who sold goods to the U.S. forces or the Iraqi Army would be beheaded. He said that he felt caught between two enemies. When he refused to serve the Iraqi Army, they detained him for several hours, but a friendly policeman secured his release.

He said that on Nov. 1, after another explosion near his restaurant, several children ran away from the danger, and three were shot dead by the Iraqi Army. On the same day, the Iraqi Army set up a new roadblock.

An old man drove up the street, became confused by the roadblock, began driving away, and was shot dead by the Iraqi Army.

On Nov. 6, U.S. forces broke into and commandeered his uncle's house to set up a sniper post. As they searched the house, they found his \$10,000 US in savings and confiscated it as "the proceeds of terrorism."

On the same day, his cousin was passing through the checkpoints into Falluja. The Iraqi Army found his wages of \$200 US in his pocket and confiscated it.

Our final visit was to the only hospital in Falluja. They are operating, but are very short of modern equipment like incubators, anaesthesia machines, and electrical generators. They said that U.S. officials have repeatedly promised aid, but so far have only supplied blankets and a few kerosene heaters.

The staff said that the number of violent deaths is increasing, and now averages 100 to 200 per month.

One man visiting the sheikh challenged us by saying, "If I come and smash everything in your house and take all your money, and then I do the same to all your neighbours, what would you do to me?"

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Bush Has "Negative Approval Ratings" So Do Democrats And Congress

11.12.05 Wall St. Journal

While 21% say their mid-term election vote will reflect support for the president. 39% say they'll be sending signal of opposition.

Congress draws 57% disapproval, highest in nine years.

Journal/NBC pollsters Bill McInturff and Peter Hart cite “troubling numbers” for Bush: his net negative approval ratings of seven percentage points among white men, 25 points among senior citizens, and 33 points among independents.

Republican Party is viewed negatively overall by 437 to 32 margin, but so are Democrats, 36 to 33%.

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.

“Earlier Today, I Ordered America's Armed Forces To Strike Military And Security Targets In Iraq”

Earlier today, I ordered America's armed forces to strike military and security targets in Iraq. They are joined by British forces.

Their mission is to attack Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs and its military capacity to threaten its neighbors. Their purpose is to protect the national interest of the United States, and indeed the interests of people throughout the Middle East and around the world.

Saddam Hussein must not be allowed to threaten his neighbors or the world with nuclear arms, poison gas or biological weapons.

I want to explain why I have decided, with the unanimous recommendation of my national security team, to use force in Iraq; why we have acted now; and what we aim to accomplish. . .

The international community had little doubt then, and I have no doubt today, that left unchecked, Saddam Hussein will use these terrible weapons again.

President William Clinton, December 16, 1998

CLASS WAR REPORTS

France: The Rebellion Goes On

14 November 2005 Aljazeera

An overnight curfew was in force in 40 municipalities, and the authorities in the southeastern city of Lyon banned public gatherings to prevent a repeat of clashes in the historic centre.

In scattered attacks overnight on Sunday-Monday, rebels in the southern city of Toulouse rammed a car into a primary school before setting the building on fire and burned cars in northeastern Strasbourg.

In northern France, they set fire to a sports centre in the suburb of Faches-Thumesnil and a school in the town of Halluin, the North regional government said.

A gas canister exploded inside a burning rubbish bin in the Alpine city of Grenoble, injuring two police officers, the national police said, adding three other officers were injured elsewhere.

EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said "The best social politics is to create employment. That is the main thing. When you have 60% of youths unemployed in suburbs, it is a problem."

MORE:

The French Have Been Keeping Immigrants In Disgusting Ghettos For 90 Years

"Brilliant" France which, 125 years ago, fought for freedom, and therefore calls its present war for its own and the English slaveholders' "colonial rights" a war for liberation, keeps hundreds of thousands of Italian workers in special ghettos.

The petty bourgeois crew of this "great" nation does its best to keep them in isolation, to insult and humiliate them in every possible way. N. Lenin, Imperialism And Socialism In Italy, 1915

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

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www.williambowles.info/gispecial, http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/,

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