

## GI SPECIAL 3D18:

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



(The Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Department of the Air Force)

# **“If I Die Here, What The Hell Did I Die For?”**

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15 November 2005 By Jeff Riley, wsws.org [Excerpts]

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Key is now in Canada with his wife and four young children, having joined a growing number of US soldiers who have fled there seeking refugee status.

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“I was with the 43rd Combat Engineer Company 2/3 ARC [Armed Cavalry Regiment]. We were an asset to the Army because they could put us anywhere they wanted. Our main objective, at least what we thought it was when we first arrived, was to clear mines and explosives.

“But after we got there, that wasn’t the case at all. We were never trained in how to raid houses and do traffic control points, or how to institute curfews throughout cities and make it work, but that’s what we were doing. When we arrived we expected the war to be over because that’s the way they made it sound.

**“They told us that we were going to Ramadi, a city of 300,000 Iraqis. I think there was only one platoon of the 82nd Airborne there, and we were going in to keep control of the city.”**

“When we first arrived it was difficult to tell much from the expressions on the Iraqi people’s faces—many people were coming out of their houses just sort of standing there as we would drive by,” Key recalled.

“But then we learned that when Saddam was in power, if his military rolled through the city, if everyone didn’t come out and run and cheer, his people would go into their houses and give them a reality check. It was mandatory for people to come out and cheer and clap. So it got to the point where we knew that’s just what the people are used to doing out of obligation. So if they came out as we rolled through town, it was more because they didn’t want anything to happen to them or their homes. It’s what you would call habit—minus the clapping and cheering. You actually saw anger in their faces.”

The so-called intelligence that led to targeting certain homes, Key said, was almost invariably groundless.

**“You know, it (the intelligence) never panned out,” Key said. “It could be something as simple as a wedding—where it’s a tradition for Iraqi people to fire guns in the air when someone gets married—they’ve been doing that for God knows how many years. So suddenly you have a QRF (Quick Reaction Force) that moves in and starts raiding the home; and your commander gets mad because there’s nothing there and cordons off an entire neighborhood and starts raiding every house.”**

**“But usually you raid a house in the middle of the night or early in the morning, almost always in the dark,” Key continued. “Most of the time we would pull up in civilian vehicles. You drive up to an address. If the door was made out of wood we would simply kick it in. Most of the time we would put C-4 explosives in and just blow the door right off. You run in there and people are running around and crying—let’s face it, it’s pretty traumatic to have the door blown off your home with C-4 in the middle of the night—and there’s usually about six or seven of us doing the raiding.”**

“You just clear room after room forcing everyone down to the ground at gunpoint.” Key added. “Then you zip-cuff the males and throw them out the door. They say that we only do that to the males that are over a certain age, but it generally happens to every male in the house no matter how old. Thirteen and fourteen year-old-boys are taken and zip-cuffed and thrown out to a squad waiting out front. They get thrown into the back of a five-ton truck and who knows what happens to them from there.

“People are detained for a very long time before they ever see their families again, and I can say that I never saw anyone returned and I definitely never returned anyone back to their home myself. There are tens of thousands sitting in jails for no reason whatsoever. Farming families that depend on the men of the house to survive are ripped apart, with the women left alone to fend for themselves.”

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“There was not a lot of violence at first. I got to Iraq on the 27th of April, 2003. We were in Ramadi, and for the first month there was hardly anything. Every now and then you’d have small arms fire, but you weren’t getting mortar attacks and RPGs right and left, I

mean it was real calm. And then you start bringing in inexperienced soldiers into the mix—they just move people around all the time so it's never clear what we're doing.

**Everyone has the same objective, to raid homes, patrol and do traffic control points, and Iraqi civilians were getting shot up during all of it.”**

He continued, “Then you start getting people that are real jumpy. When we got into the country we were told that if you feel threatened, you shoot, and a lot of us did just that. We all heard stories from some of the other platoons about soldiers just shooting down people during raids or in the streets in neighborhoods, because someone may have thrown a rock.

**“Well the commanders say if you can't tell the difference between a rock and a grenade, go ahead and shoot.**

**“Me personally, I can tell the difference and I was just not okay with that. I mean, come on, if you can't handle a rock being thrown at you in a situation like this, then there is something just not right. It has only made the Iraqi people hate us that much more.”**

Key recalled a checkpoint that he was part of where American soldiers just stood waving their hands in the air trying to get people to stop. He explained how he had to pull a young wounded boy from a car that was shot up by his squad for failing to stop when signaled.

“They just opened fire on the car because that's what we're told to do,” Key explained. “Rather than think for a second, ‘Hey, they don't know what the hell we are saying here and it looks like a man and a child—let's just hold off until they get up here,’ they just open fire on them. And then you have to pull the bodies out of the car and take the injured off to the hospital, and you know they are just innocent people.”

**“Even in the first month I felt that we shouldn't be there, and my only concern—and the concern of most of the guys I knew—was when do we get to go home,” Key explained.**

**“And then it got to the point where we were being attacked every day—and we were being mortar attacked throughout the night. We were in hell, and we couldn't even sleep.**

**“And then people you know start getting hurt, and there were even some who were shooting themselves in the foot just to come home. So then you're asking yourself, ‘What's going on here?’ Obviously they don't have weapons of mass destruction or they would have used them on us—we all felt that way.”**

Key continued, “They have all these people searching for this stuff—they can't find it. And all we're hearing about is how highly guarded the oil fields are, and that this is really the main concern for America. And then you start getting demonstrations by the Iraqi people and they send you in there to calm them down, and when you get there, they're all pissed off with the US government.

**“But they’re pissed off at you because you are the American government to them, when you are actually just a soldier doing what you’re told. And they’re asking you, ‘Why the hell are you guys still here? Why are you monopolizing our Benzine (gas)? Why are you here?’**

**I mean, I’d like to tell them the truth: ‘We’re here to take your oil, take all of your natural resources;’ and ‘How long are you going to be here for? Well, we’re gonna be here forever.’ You’re not supposed to say that of course, but that’s what I wanted to say all the time.”**

“At first it didn’t matter if I was going to die or not because we were dying for a purpose—you’re dying because your country is at war and we had to take care of Saddam Hussein,” he said. “He was a dictator and you’re thinking of it all as sort of a Hitler situation.

**“But then it sinks in—the lies, and you start getting mad—your friends are getting hurt and then you start thinking, ‘Man, if I die for this, what did I die for?’**

**“And everybody’s asking the same thing, ‘If I die here, what the hell did I die for?’**

“Well, we died for the greed of President Bush. We died so his friends’ companies can thrive over in the Middle East. And it got to the point that I realized I wasn’t going to die for that, and I wasn’t going to sit in prison for it either.”

**“Most of the Joes felt that way,” Key continued, “at least those with a conscience—most of the guys like myself with ranks up to E-5, and after that it becomes all political. For the officers it’s a life deal, but even some of them felt that way.**

**“At one point I had a squad leader who was a Staff Sergeant who was getting ready to be promoted to Sergeant First Class. He’d been in the military for 16 years, and he told me ‘When I get home, I’m not going to do this shit again, I’m getting out as fast as possible because I don’t know what we’re doing here.’ I think that demoralized us all.”**

Questioning the purpose of the US invasion and occupation of Iraq, Key attests, was more prevalent within the ranks than anyone on the outside knew. Many were constantly asking—in some cases to their superiors—why they were there. This question was all too frequently driven home with incidents of devastating violence.

**Key explained, “One of my sergeants got his leg blown off. I used to talk to him even before that happened, and even he couldn’t give us a reason for us being there. All of us would ask him, ‘What is the good of this?’ After a combat situation, there are those that you become friends with, and those you don’t, and he was one that you did. We became good friends, and you felt like you could talk with him. But to my platoon sergeants or platoon leaders, you could never ask anything like that because they were all ‘Go Army’, while the rest of us, the Joes as they call us, are sitting around saying, ‘Why are we putting our lives in danger for this?’”**

Key continued, "I always felt bad that I wasn't there during the incident when my sergeant lost his leg. I had just finished an eight-hour guard shift, and they were on patrol and then they got shot up with an RPG-17 that tore the legs off of three people in their APC. And they later discovered it was actually one of the United States' own weapons that was given to them during the Iran/Iraq war."

"It's coming across the radio," Key continued, "so we're all waiting for them to get back and help them as much as we can, and then they get there and you actually have to sit there and pick up one of your friend's legs and set it beside them so it's with them when they get medivaced out."

"Our superiors then made us take their weapons and their vehicle that was totally blood-soaked and told us that we had to clean it all up. I'm like, 'You've got to be shitting me.' This was my friend, and that's all their blood, and they're telling you that you have to clean it all up so that someone else can use it."

**After returning from Iraq, Key became aware that the administration and the media were portraying the war to the American public as a struggle against foreign terrorists seeking to disrupt "democracy."**

**"When I was in hiding I would watch the news trying to see what exactly was going on, I just wanted to keep on top of it," Key recalled. "And every day, that's all you would have. You know, 'Two American soldiers die from terrorists,' or 'Ten wounded from terrorists.' It was always terrorists—they never consider it just being people that are fighting for their country. It's still a war to them and they are fighting against the invasion of their country.**

**Key continued, "Even when I was there you're hearing all the time about insurgents coming in from Syria, 'they're coming in from Jordan, they're coming in from everywhere,' and there may be a few, but for the most part they are the farmers, they're the people whose homes you invaded for no reason and took their family members off to jail and destroyed their lives, maybe killed their son or their father and they want you out of their country.**

**"They look at us as being guilty of war crimes and we are. We impose killing, we detain them, we torture them—we're the ones that caused it all."**

"We were getting letters from back home saying that everyone is being told that Iraq was linked to Al Qaeda and we were all saying, 'There's no way that's true.'

**"Saddam Hussein didn't like terrorists, I mean he was not a good man himself, but he didn't allow terrorists into his country. We knew that he was not a radical fundamentalist like Osama bin Laden—I mean there was no connection. But we had all pretty much figured that out right away and we couldn't believe that the American people were standing behind us because they believed that we were fighting terrorists that were involved in September 11, and that was basically Bush's reason for invading Iraq."**

In early 2003, back at Fort Carson in the weeks before leaving for Iraq, Key was told that he would be there no more six months. On the day before he left, the Army changed that to 18-24 months. That was the same time that the military implemented a Stop-

Loss program, preventing soldiers who have served their full term in the military from retiring or leaving. In Iraq, as Key recalled, there was no sense of how long or how many tours they would have to serve there.

**When he was given two weeks leave from Iraq in November 2003, Joshua and his wife and children climbed into a used car, left the base at Fort Carson and drove east. They decided to stay in Philadelphia, thinking that it was a big enough city to remain anonymous. Running out of cash, Key took a welding job, and his wife Brandi worked in a restaurant. For over a year, they moved every 30 days to a new motel so people wouldn't ask questions, all the while fearing a knock on the door from law enforcement.**

Key was a wanted man, and the FBI had already contacted his mother in Oklahoma, who hadn't seen her son since before his deployment in 2003. Agents threatened her with being charged with aiding and abetting a criminal.

**One day, Key logged onto the Internet and typed 'Deserter—Need Help.' He eventually made contact with the War Resisters League in Toronto and lawyer Jeffry House, who advised the couple to wait for their soon-expected fourth child to be born before heading north.**

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **II MEF MARINE KILLED IN ACTION NEAR HADITHAH**

November 17, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND  
NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-11-28C

**CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to Regimental Combat Team - 2, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed in action from an improvised explosive device attack while conducting combat operations against the enemy in the vicinity of Hadithah, Nov. 16.**

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### **SOLDIER KILLED IN VEHICLE ACCIDENT, FOUR MORE INJURED**

November 17, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND  
NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-11-29C

**TIKRIT, Iraq – A Soldier from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division was killed Nov. 17 in a vehicle accident south of the oil refinery in Baiji.**

Four other Soldiers were injured in the accident and were evacuated to a medical treatment facility. Their conditions are unknown at this time.

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## Local Soldier Killed



November 17, 2005 IBS

BEAVER COUNTY, Pa. -- A former Freedom High School student is the latest to be killed in Iraq.

Dylan Paytas, 20, graduated in 2003.

He was on the basketball and track teams.

After high school, Paytas enlisted in the Army.

Paytas' father was notified of his son's death on Wednesday.

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## LOP Marine Killed



Lance Cpl. John Lucente

November 17, 2005 By: Ryan Sabalow, Journal Staff Writer, Gold Country Media



**A day after learning their son had been sent to the front lines in Iraq, a Lake of the Pines family received the tragic news Wednesday he had been killed in a grenade attack.**

Marine Lance Cpl. John Lucente, 19, was killed with four other Marines as they performed a sweep for enemy combatants in Iraq's al-Abar province near the Syrian border, said his stepfather, Shawn Mason.

His parents learned the news Wednesday when two Marines made the trip to the gated community north of Auburn to tell them that Lucente had been killed.

The news that their oldest son was dead came as a complete shock to his stepfather and his mother, Kristine Mason.

**"I was under the impression he was on a world tour," Kristine Mason said Wednesday night in a phone interview. "The last I knew he was in Cairo. Then last night I got an e-mail that had been delayed about a month. In it he said, 'I am going into Iraq. Pray for me.'"**

Before losing the ability to speak, she added, "I was praying fervently then."

**Mason said she's struggling with the fact that her oldest son will never meet the newest addition to the family.**

**"He has a new baby brother," she said. "He even named him Jake. He will never have a chance to hold him because he was just born seven weeks ago."**

Lucente, who enlisted in the Marine Corps while he was junior at Bear River High School, is known to his friends and family as "JT."

Lucente's parents described him as a quiet, hardworking young man, who would rather spend time with his family or attend church at Calvary Chapel in Grass Valley than socialize with his classmates.

He enjoyed playing computer games and spending time with his two younger siblings, Cris, 15 and Cassie, 9.

Mason said he tried to discourage Lucente from joining the Marine Corps, suggesting instead he enlist in the Air Force or the Coast Guard.

"He said no. He wanted to be a Marine," Shawn Mason said. "He knew that's what he wanted to do."

Lucente was assigned to Regimental Combat Team 2 of the 2nd Marine Division, which was patrolling near Obeidi, 185 miles northwest of Baghdad near the Syrian border. An explosion occurred as Lucente's squad entered a farm house. Insurgents then raked survivors and rescuers with small arms and grenade fire before other Marines could recover the dead and wounded and kill the attackers.

**Lucente is the third Auburn-area resident to die while fighting in Iraq.**

Members of the close-knit community say they are deeply saddened by the news that one of their own had been killed.

"It's hitting way too close to home," said Chuck Lautrup, president of the Lake of the Pines board of directors. "We're all torn up, to be quite honest. What a tragedy. What a tragedy."

**Shawn Mason said the family is having a difficult time coping with Lucente's loss, but his mother, still nursing an infant, is hardest hit.**

**"She never got to see her oldest and youngest together," he said.**

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## Lansing Native Killed

November 10, 2005 BY JULIE EDGAR, FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

First Lt. Justin S. Smith knew what it meant to be a father. He had spent a lifetime thinking about it.

**Raised by his mother, who separated from his father while she was pregnant, Justin was a devoted son, brother, grandson and later husband. When he became a father to Ayden last year, the boy became the center of his orbit. Every call he made from Iraq, every e-mail he sent was devoted to details of the baby's first steps, his first teeth, his first birthday party, his first "bye-bye."**

**And now, Ayden, who shares his father's eyes and even his strong hands, will know his dad through photographs and other people's memories.**

Smith, a Lansing native, was killed Monday in Baghdad, along with three other soldiers on foot patrol. A car rigged with explosives detonated as it drove by the group at about 5:15 p.m.

**Smith was the 69th member of the armed services with ties to Michigan to die in Iraq.**

Smith, 28, had been in Iraq since March. He had been married for nearly two years to Shellie Smith of Clayton, N.C. After Ayden's birth in October last year, he saw him at Thanksgiving and then three more times, the last in February. His plan was to come home to North Carolina for a few weeks next month and then to move the family to Colorado when he finished his tour in Iraq next March.

Reached at her home Wednesday, Shellie Smith said her husband was to come home Dec. 1 on leave. The pair had been planning to discuss the home they'd build in Colorado Springs. They were planning to drive to Lansing with Ayden and Spensir, Shellie's son from a previous marriage, for a few days to visit Smith's family.

"On Sunday, when we talked, he said he was coming home for some R and R. That was our next milestone. If we could get him home the first of December for two weeks, we could survive the rest of the time until he got home for good," Shellie Smith said.

She described her husband, whom she met at a dance and married six months later, as an extremely good-looking, loving person.

"He was so strong -- a protector," Shellie Smith said. "He was hot: When my friends met him they were like 'Oh my God.' But he was more beautiful inside than he was outside. Everybody liked Justin. I know that's a cliché, but he was so good to everybody." Shellie Smith, 31, said her husband will be buried with full military honors in North Carolina, where he was stationed at Ft. Bragg for several years before he was sent to Ft. Carson in Colorado Springs for artillery training.

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## Cedar Springs Man Killed

Nov. 07, 2005 Associated Press

CEDAR SPRINGS, Mich. - A man who joined the Michigan Army National Guard largely because of the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, has been killed in the war in Iraq, his family said.

Spc. Timothy Brown, 23, of Cedar Springs, died Friday when a roadside bomb detonated while he checked for explosives near the Humvee in which he and four other soldiers were riding, relatives said.

Brown, who attended Cedar Springs High School, enlisted in the Guard in 2003, his mother, Cindy Brown, told The Grand Rapids Press for a story published Monday. He was activated in January of this year and sent to Iraq in June as a member of Company B, 125th Infantry.

Timothy Brown, who went by the nickname Timmy, always wanted to be a soldier. As a child, he dressed up in fatigues and played war in the woods with his friends, his father, Tim Brown, tearfully recalled.

Tim Brown called his son "a good soldier."

Timothy Brown, who was unmarried and childless, had been scheduled to take leave from the war in October but switched his leave with another soldier who has children, his relatives said. Brown told his family that the other soldier needed a break from the war more than he did.

"He wanted to come home as much as the next guy, but he thought it was more important for (the other soldier) because his children were missing him," his mother said.

She said her family was on pins and needles during his tour of duty in Iraq.

**"You go on with your life, but the fear, it's always there," Cindy Brown said. "You hear about other soldiers, you think of their families, you cry for them."**

She and her 20-year-old daughter, Stevie Brown, were returning home from their daily walk Friday when they saw a van parked in the dirt driveway of their rural Cedar Springs home. A woman dressed in uniform got out of the vehicle.

"I just told her, 'Don't say it, don't say it.' Then, she said it," Cindy Brown said.

Amplifying the family's loss was the fact that Timothy Brown had yet to meet his 2-month-old nephew.

Stevie Brown said people loved her brother's sense of humor. "He would always make me laugh," she said. "He was the funniest person I've ever met."

Funeral arrangements are pending. Timothy Brown's body was expected to arrive back home in five to 10 days. Cedar Springs is located about 20 miles north of Grand Rapids.

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## **Eleven Marines Wounded Wednesday In Obeidi**

16 November 2005 The Associated Press

Eleven Marines were wounded Wednesday in Obeidi, 185 miles northwest of Baghdad, according to a New York Times reporter traveling with U.S. forces.

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## **Three Danish Soldiers Wounded By Bomb**

Nov 17 (KUNA)

**Up to three Danish soldiers were injured in a bomb explosion inside their camp in Basra, in southern Iraq.**

**Spokesman of the Danish forces said in a statement Thursday that the three soldiers were wounded as they were trying to dismantle a bomb inside their camp on Wednesday night.**

There are about 539 Danish soldiers present in northern Basra.

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## **Two Pinoys Killed In Iraq Bombing Last Week**

11/17/05 abs-cbn news

Two overseas Filipino workers were among those were killed during a bombing in Iraq last week, TV Patrol World reported Thursday. The deaths of Ponciano Loque and cousin Benjie Carreon were confirmed by their relatives...

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## How Bad Is It?

November 17, 2005 Remarks by Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa.

**[I]nsurgent incidents have increased from about 150 per week to over 700 in the last year. Instead of attacks going down over time and with the addition of more troops, attacks have grown dramatically. Since the revelations at Abu Ghraib, American casualties have doubled.**

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**DEADLY ENVIRONMENT:  
NO HONORABLE MISSION:  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



A US soldier at the scene of a bomb attack in Baghdad Oct. 11, 2005. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

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**AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

# Occupation Legalizing Opium In Afghanistan To Favor “Pro-Democracy” Drug Warlords

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

**The fact of the matter is that the political system that has evolved in Afghanistan following the US invasion is extremely fragile, and verges on being a joke.**

**What really has been strengthened in Afghanistan since 2001 is opium production. Afghanistan now has "pro-democracy" drug warlords who raise illegal opium by the hundreds of tons every year.**

Nov 16, 2005 By Ramtanu Maitra, Asia Times

Reports indicate the West is now working toward a "solution" to the opium explosion in Afghanistan, namely the licensing of legal opium production for medical purposes.

The formal proposal was floated in September by the Senlis Council, a French think tank on narcotics. The council's study was conducted in partnership with Kabul University as well as academic centers in Europe and North America, such as Ghent University, Lisbon University and the University of Toronto.

The proposal comes in the wake of a general admission by Washington, its adjunct in Kabul and the United Nations that eradication of drugs in Afghanistan cannot be accomplished by the warriors against terror.

Touching a sensitive chord, however, Afghanistan's Counter- Narcotics Minister Habibullah Qaderi questioned the timing of the Senlis report. "We don't want to confuse the Afghan people, because while the government on the one hand wants to control and stop cultivation, we are talking about licensing."

**What Qaderi did not say was that the West, being unable to eradicate opium, is moving to repackage Afghanistan's uncontrollable scourge as a legalized and regulated industry, to be included along with elections among the "democratic successes" in that benighted land.**

Ted Galen Carpenter in a recent article argues that the US military must not become an enemy of Afghan farmers whose livelihood depends on growing opium poppy.

**"If zealous American drug warriors alienate hundreds of thousands of Afghan farmers, the Karzai government's hold on power, which is none too secure now, could become even more precarious," he wrote. "Washington would then face the unpalatable choice of letting radical Islamists regain power or sending more US troops to suppress the insurgency."**

Throwing an economic spin into his argument, Carpenter pointed out that for many Afghans involvement in the cultivation of opium poppy crops and other aspects of drug commerce is "the difference between modest prosperity and destitution. They will not look kindly on efforts to destroy their livelihood."

According to Carpenter, US efforts to eradicate Afghanistan's opium crop actually amount to beating plowshares into swords: such efforts drive Afghan farmers, who have so far helped in the "war against terror", straight into the arms and camps of anti-American terrorists.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's statements prior to her October 2005 visit to Kabul demonstrated that, indeed, Washington has nary a thought about the opium explosion in Afghanistan.

In her news conference en route to Kabul from Kyrgyzstan, Rice heaped praise on the US "success" in Afghanistan and congratulated the Karzai administration for bringing about "remarkable progress".

On the narcotics issue, however, all she could come up with was the following: "I'm going to have a meeting with the members of the cabinet who are responsible for the narcotics problem and to discuss with them how we might accelerate those efforts. We and the British - the British, of course, have the lead on this - [want] to help the Afghans to root out narcotics. If they can do that then I think they really have made a major step forward in stabilization - they will have made a major step forward in stabilization."

**Several hard realities raise questions about Rice's words. To begin with, Rice was fully aware that the US Department of Defense had made it clear that they would not antagonize the warlords and thus forsake their friendly alliance by going after opium cultivation.**

**Secondly, Rice is fully aware of the lack of strength of the Hamid Karzai presidency. It has been observed again and again that the writ of the US-backed Karzai does not extend beyond Kabul. It is ridiculous to try to make others believe that a president, who has to depend for his personal security on a foreign country - the occupying forces, really - would be able to go on a campaign to eradicate opium, battling hundreds of powerful warlords and about 30% of all Afghan families.**

**Finally, opium is not domestic garbage. Unfortunately, it is valuable, indeed, almost as expensive as gold, if not more so in some countries of the West. Those who bring it into western Europe, and carry it further west, generate enough money to corrupt not only the security infrastructure but the entire political economy of Europe.**

**To suggest that a weak president, without any real help from US and NATO forces, will be able to eradicate opium in Afghanistan is simply a cruel joke.**

Moreover, while Carpenter concludes that terrorist and other anti-government forces are hand in glove with the opium growers and traffickers, and that the connection between

drug trafficking and terrorism is a direct result of making drugs illegal and, therefore, extremely profitable, Rice chose to remain mum.

The fact of the matter is that the political system that has evolved in Afghanistan following the US invasion is extremely fragile, and verges on being a joke.

What really has been strengthened in Afghanistan since 2001 is opium production. Afghanistan now has "pro-democracy" drug warlords who raise illegal opium by the hundreds of tons every year.

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<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](http://www.ivaw.net))

## **TROOP NEWS**



## **He Has Just Represented Iraq Veterans Against The War At An Antiwar Event: “We Learned Our Lesson”**

"I don't blame the individual soldiers. As far as they can't control where they are, I think that their souls are safe. But for the men who sent them, I think they're finding out that there's going to be hell to pay for it."

November 13, 2005 By Nan Levinson, The Boston Globe Magazine [Excerpts]



**ANDY SAPP, an English teacher at Concord-Carlisle High School, is a National Guardsman who returned home to Billerica in October after nine months in Iraq. But he is still deployed overseas when the [Bring Them Home Now] bus tour comes to Cambridge.**

At an event the night before, his wife, Anne, a special-education tutor, talks about life without him: lobbying the governor, rushing home to pick up or drop off their daughters, defrosting pizza for dinner again. "I'm tired," she says. "I want my life back."

She also wants those daughters, Lydia, 17, and Mary, 8, to understand why political involvement matters. "As Americans, we can do this, and we should do it," she says.

**The next day at the Cambridge Common, she takes to the stage in an Army T-shirt, her hand plucking at her pants as she tells the audience that she worries her husband has changed. "He has a gentle soul," she says, then reads from an e-mail he has just written: "I get angrier and angrier. In fact, I wonder if I will ever NOT be angry."**

Andy was in the Navy when he and Anne met in 1979, and has been in various branches of the reserves or National Guard most of the time since. In March 2004, he found out that his National Guard unit was being deployed. Andy now says that everyone in the Guard knew he or she might have to go to war. Still, the Sapps had hoped that he, at 48, would be able to avoid it.

After Andy left for Iraq, Anne says she wanted to be with people in the same situation who were doing something about it. "There's a grieving process every day," she says, "but no focus." MFSO, with its mix of support and activism, clicked for her.

**Anne and Andy were raised in conservative families, "Republicans back to Abraham Lincoln," he says of his. He is a soft-spoken man with a mobile face and a ready laugh, and when he was home on R & R in August, he spoke with quiet, careful anger.**

**"The men and women who fight under our flag deserve to have civilian leaders who respect them, not as tools of international policy, but as the patriots they claim they believe we are."**

He argues that one way to show that respect would be for the chain of command to stop trying to portray antiwar protests as attacks on the military.

**"I have yet to run into a soldier in the Middle East who hasn't felt supported. I'm pretty sure that the majority of soldiers over there understand that there's discussion going on back here, some of it heated, about the justness of this war," he says. "What Anne is doing here is more important than what we're doing in Iraq, because if we're overseas bringing about democracy at the expense of our own democracy, then we're destroying ourselves."**

"RETURNING SOLDIERS always try to make it not a waste," observes David Cline, president of Veterans for Peace, a 20-year-old organization based in St. Louis with a national membership of about 4,000 people.

These are veterans of all of the United States' wars, though many of its leaders cut their political protest teeth in Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Redemption may not be on the minds of the 15 Vietnam- and Korea-era vets gathered in Davis Square in Somerville on a September evening for a meeting of the Smedley Butler Brigade, the Boston chapter of VFP, but they are clearly comrades against arms.

They discuss getting "boots on the ground" for a protest in Braintree, campaigning to pressure the Boston Globe to publish US casualty figures in Iraq on the front page, and gathering signatures for a ballot initiative requiring the governor to prevent further deployment of the Massachusetts National Guard to Iraq. "We're not antiwar," says member Ken Farr, a retired business analyst from Roslindale. "We're pro-peace."

Membership in VFP has swelled since 9/11, as has its role in helping returning soldiers deal with their disillusionment and frustration.

**In the summer of 2004 in Boston, with the conventions of both Veterans for Peace and, coincidentally, the Democratic Party as backdrops, nine Iraq vets announced the formation of Iraq Veterans Against the War.**

**Their influence is greater than their numbers, says Smedley Butler member Winston Warfield, a computer programmer and Little League coach from Dorchester, because they draw respect from soldiers in the field, and respect is what matters in the military.**

**Much as Iraq vets may have appreciated the hate-the-war-love-the-warrior stance of this new antiwar movement, now that they have returned to civilian life, some are eager to speak for themselves.**

**At 25, Joseph Turcotte of Derry, New Hampshire, is that state's youngest member of Veterans for Peace and also one of a handful of IVAW members in New England.** He says: "Going to Iraq has put me into a relatively small brotherhood of people who have been in armed conflict, and that puts me in a unique position. Someone sees (me protesting) and says, 'I agree with that guy. I just didn't have the courage to do it alone.' So now he comes, stands next to me. I'm not alone, he's not alone, and more people come. It just takes one person to start a movement."

Turcotte was in the first wave of US troops entering Iraq. Three years earlier, he was a high school graduate with a dead-end job at a large retailer and no money for college when a military recruiter phoned, looking for his roommate. The roommate, he says, "was arthritic, asthmatic, manic-depressive, a laundry list of -isms," and Turcotte got recruited instead. Attracted by the benefits and the derring-do, he joined the Marines, but the country had been at peace for most of his life, and he never expected to fight. Then came 9/11. On a large-screen TV at Fort Bragg, California, in what is called the "morale tent," he watched the World Trade Center crumble. He says, "The first thought we had was, 'God, we're all going to war!'"

On March 18, 2003, Turcotte had been stationed in Kuwait for about a month. Before soldiers go into battle, they are told to write a final letter home, and, that day, his officers told him to do so. "That night, one of the chaplains went out in the desert and started

playing 'Amazing Grace' with bagpipes," he remembers. "The next day, we loaded up on the trucks and headed across the border."

Turcotte is a reader - the bedroom of his tiny apartment is dominated by a bursting bookcase - and his reading had made him skeptical about the need for war, he says.

Still, he echoes other soldiers as he explains, "When you're out there, the only thing relevant is staying alive and making sure everyone comes home." Turcotte has thought hard about what he and his fellow soldiers do. "Every subject's duty is the King's, but every subject's soul is his own," he quotes from Henry V.

**"I don't blame the individual soldiers. As far as they can't control where they are, I think that their souls are safe. But for the men who sent them, I think they're finding out that there's going to be hell to pay for it."**

Turcotte is now back working a different dead-end job for a different large retailer, but he's making plans to go to college, and hopes to become a history teacher.

**Meanwhile, he has just represented IVAW at an antiwar event at the University of Vermont in Burlington. That such an active peace agenda should come from soldiers and their families is an irony he recognizes, but, he says simply, "We learned our lesson."**

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## **“We Will Get Stronger And Stronger Because Resentment Is Building Within The Military”**

[Thanks to Max Watts, who sent this in.]

November 14, 2005 Iraq War Vet Pat Resta Interviewed by Derek Seidman, Dissident Voice [Excerpts]

Derek Seidman: I want to discuss Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), but first a little background on you. Can you tell us about your service in Iraq? When were you in Iraq?

Pat Resta: I served as a medic in a tank battalion in Iraq from March to November of 2004. I went over there with the North Carolina Army National Guard's 30th Brigade Combat Team and we were assigned to the regular Army's 1st Infantry Division. I had two main jobs while I was there. I was either working in our clinic where we saw everything from the cold and flu to sports injuries and gunshot wounds, or I was going out with platoons on patrols of towns, roads, or to get supplies.

DS: Were you critical of the war before you were sent to Iraq? How did your feelings toward the war and occupation change while you were there?

PR: I was definitely critical of the war before it began and I protested it during the build up, after it started, and until I left.

**Once I got there, what I saw was a lot worse than what I could have ever imagined. All of the things we had been told that we were going there to do were shown unequivocally to be lies. We were told we weren't supposed to treat Iraqi civilians unless they were about to die and only if that injury was a result of an attack directed at us or inflicted by us.**

**Our supervisor told my platoon that "the Geneva Conventions don't exist in Iraq and that's in writing if any of you want to see it."**

**DS: He really said that? What did he mean? How did this make you feel?**

**PR: Those were his exact words in front of about eight soldiers. I think it caught us all initially by surprise that someone in command would say such a thing. Obviously, he wasn't coming up with that on his own. He'd been instructed that it was the policy in place and to make sure that it was followed.**

He wanted us to put aside any reservations we had about doing things that violated the Geneva Conventions, our roles as noncombatants, or our ethics. Again, this stuff isn't something a sergeant just makes up laying in his bunk at night.

DS: You could have been held accountable for violating the rules of the Geneva Convention. Had you ever thought about reporting what he said so he -- or whoever made that policy -- could be held responsible?

PR: Of course, I thought of reporting him, but who would I turn him in to? His boss was telling him to say that. I think that when you look at it these things, they are coming from the Secretary of Defense and probably higher.

I decided that I wasn't going to do anything that I wasn't comfortable doing and take note if I witnessed anything that I believed to be illegal. I think that's all someone can do in that kind of a situation.

DS: Did you have other experiences that had a similar disillusioning effect on you?

PR: My unit got to our base inside Iraq almost a year to the day after the war started. I think that for most of us the WMD issue had become a joke at that point. I was repeatedly told that we were going there to help the Iraqi people. Shortly after getting there we were told that we weren't to treat Iraqi civilians unless they were about to die and that their injury had been caused by an attack or perceived attack on US forces -- things like people being shot at checkpoints, roadside bombs meant for us that injured civilians, or car bombs meant for us that injured civilians. Some captain isn't making these rules up in his tent; these come from the top and have been Department of Defense policy since day one.

Civilians were turned away at our gate and told to go use their own facilities. Once you see these facilities it's readily apparent why they're not being used. The hospitals in my area had only one type of antibiotic, no glass in the windows, little if any functioning

diagnostic equipment, reused surgical instruments without proper sterilization, and on and on.

**Even when on patrol in towns, we were expected to turn civilians away. Our leadership would have informal investigations if they thought any medicine was missing and had been given to civilians. They kept basic life saving medical equipment under lock and key in a shipping container. I was really sickened by the total lack of value they had for any life, American or Iraqi.**

DS: Speaking of the situation in Iraq, what can you tell us about the effects of war and occupation on Iraqis?

**PR: I didn't see any improvement in the situation for the locals during my time there. The most I saw being done for the civilian infrastructure was the paving of some roads. The real construction and real money are going to build large military complexes so that the US military can set up a permanent presence in Iraq.**

DS: When did you join IVAW and what made you decide to join?

PR: I joined IVAW at their first formal national meeting here in Philly in January 2005. I got back to the states two days before Thanksgiving in 2004. At a Thanksgiving party, I met Jim Talib who was a member of IVAW. It was a strange night, and neither of us really wanted to talk about the war. It's easier to try and put all that behind you and try to get on with your life. But, at the same time you realize that you can't remain silent because it will continue and get stronger.

My main motivation has always been to stop other servicemen and women from having to go through what I went through. My job as a medic was to look out for soldiers' morale, welfare, and safety. It's a job I took very seriously and I'm doing more towards that end now than I ever did in the military. The leadership of the military and politicians has abdicated that responsibility and I think that if ever our men and women in the military needed an advocate, it's right now.

DS: But you were hesitant to get involved at first. Why was this? How did you actually get active? Where did you begin?

PR: It's not easy for vets to get out there and become active and I think people in the movement need to appreciate that a lot more than they do. They have to deal with a lot of issues like PTSD, and some are still in the military and subject to harassment, being made to feel anti-troops and so on.

DS: Did you experience any form of PTSD upon your return, and do you still?

**PR: I did have some problems when I first got back. I think that it's hard for anyone who has been in that environment to switch back to the way they were before they went at the snap of a finger. That's why I think that it's so important for the men and women coming back to get in touch with other vets and to know that they're not alone in the things that they're going through. I was very lucky to meet a lot of guys shortly after I got back and it helped me out a great deal.**

DS: Do you think there are a lot of returning soldiers who are against the war and occupation, but that carry the same kinds of fears, doubts, and sense of isolation that you initially had when you returned from Iraq?

PR: I absolutely believe that that's the case. The overwhelming desire is to put all of that behind you and to get on with your life. It's not fun to dwell on some of those things, so school, work, and other things become a distraction that you need. It takes most people a while to digest what they've seen and to decide where they want to go with it.

DS: You mentioned before that you believe some soldiers are hesitant to speak out for fear of being seen as "anti-troops". What do you think of the "support the troops 'rationale'"? How do you think IVAW can challenge this?

**PR: Maybe it's a little jaded, but I look at it this way. When I was over there, I didn't want to get stale brownies or a five-minute phone card in the mail. I wanted the American people demanding to know why hundreds of soldiers are dead for lies. Because they were sent into a country that was no threat to this one without basic equipment, ammunition, training, or even so much as a plan. The only way that you can support the troops is to demand answers and to hold people accountable.**

DS: Do you think the example of soldiers and vets like yourself speaking out helps increase the confidence of others who feel uneasy about their experiences in Iraq?

PR: Absolutely, I think that if we didn't have the guys in VVAW (Vietnam Veterans Against the War) to set an example for us, many of us wouldn't have come out publicly.

**The military is a strange place when you start to question the party line. You feel ostracized and you start to wonder if you're the only one that feels the way that you do. So, I think it's important that members of the military know they have a place to go, that they will be welcomed (mostly), and that they see that the American public wants to know the truth.**

DS: How would you articulate the basic mission of IVAW?

PR: IVAW has a three-part platform: one, an immediate withdrawal of all US forces. Two, real aid directly to the people of Iraq to rebuild that country. And three, real healthcare (including mental) for the veterans of this conflict. A lot of our members also work on other issues as well, such as radiological munitions, educating kids about the realities of military service, educating members of the military on the conscientious objector process, and setting up sessions where vets of the Iraq War can get together and talk about the war.

DS: How big is the organization right now? How do you view IVAW's future prospects for growth? What are some of the biggest obstacles towards growth (in size and influence) for IVAW?

**PR: IVAW was founded by six people in July of 2004 and has grown to three hundred members in just fifteen months.**

Vets are definitely looking for a way to get involved in stopping this war, and as soon as they find out we exist they join and get active.

As time goes on we will get stronger and stronger because resentment is building within the military.

The biggest obstacle we face is just getting our name out there and letting vets know a focused voice exists for them to help stop this war. We are almost completely funded by donations so we can't afford expensive advertisements in the mainstream media. We rely on word of mouth and face-to-face meetings at protests and other anti war events.

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.

## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Collaborator Politician Captured**

Nov 17 (KUNA) & Aljazeera

Insurgents captured here on Thursday a former member of the Iraqi National Assembly Tawfiq Al-Yasri, who is also the head of "Sun of Iraq" electoral list, said an Iraqi police here on Thursday.

The source, who requested anonymity, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the unknown armed fighters raided today Al-Yasri's house in the western Baghdad area of Yarmouk and kidnapped him.

**Al-Yasri used to be the head of the counter terrorism committee in the Iraqi parliament during the former rule of Iyad Allawi's interim government.**

Sun of Iraq is a mixed electoral list of Sunnis and Shiites political parties.

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

# Northern Pipeline Still Shut Down By October 20 Resistance Attack

November 18, 2005 Marwan Ibrahim, AFP

An oil ministry official said in July that Iraq had lost around \$11,35-billion from damage to its oil infrastructure and lost revenue since crude exports resumed in June 2003.

The last coordinated attack on October 20 hit a network of 16 oil and gas pipelines, bringing the entire system to a standstill.

**An official from the Northern Oil Company said the damage will be repaired some time next week, adding however that large cracks had appeared in the oil pipelines, most of which are more than 35 years old.**

**After the repairs, a week of tests will further delay the pumping of oil to the Baiji refinery north of Baghdad and to Turkey's Ceyhan terminal on the Mediterranean, he said.**

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## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

# The Imperial Officer Corps Moves Against The War In Iraq

Comment: T

**[As these articles make clear, Murtha speaks for the Pentagon officer corps, and he and they are perfectly willing to see the slaughter of U.S. troops and Iraqis go on for another half a year, stacking up more corpses and maimed bodies on both sides.**

**[But why be surprised?**

**[This isn't about stopping the U.S. Imperial politicians from inflicting misery and death anywhere in the world they see fit. It's about doing it effectively, and about how Bush is putting the Empire in the ditch. And it's also about keeping the war going and the troops dying while the Pentagon makes the detailed strategic redeployment of the Imperial armed forces that Murtha calls for in his remarks below.**



**[With the armed forces tied down in a hopeless war in Iraq, it's quite impossible for the Empire to take on Chavez in Venezuela, or anybody else.**

**[Murtha and the officer corps aren't completely stupid, and see the terrible risks to the U.S. corporate class that flow from Bush regimes' incompetence and the disaster in Iraq.**

**[Iraq is a losing proposition, inefficient and ineffective management of Imperial resources, and detrimental to Imperial objectives and interests.**

**[Not long ago, the business press reported that the Iraq war is hurting the profits of the biggest U.S. corporations everywhere in the world.**

**[That's where Bush crossed the line.**

**[As long as his regime was merely killing people wholesale, no problem, provided it benefited the American corporate class. But profits are taken seriously.**

**[This is not about whether or not to maintain the Empire, and kill whoever is necessary to do so. It is about how to do it successfully and therefore profitably.**

**[If that's what you're for, by all means hail John Murtha as your savior.]**

**[If not, then keep building the movement from below to end not only this war, but to bring about the kind of revolutionary change that can rid us of the whole corporate class that benefits from Imperial wars, including the next one, because as long as they rule, there will be a next one.**

**[Make no mistake, as long as they control the government, there will be more wars for their benefit, and as long as they survive as a class, they will use their wealth and power to control the government. They bought and paid for it a long time ago and they will not just walk away from their personal private property. It will have to be taken from them. When the crisis comes, the troops will be with us.]**

\*\*\*\*\*

November 17, 2005 By Vicki Allen, (Reuters) & LIZ SIDOTI, AP

**"It is time for a change in direction," said Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa., one of Congress' most hawkish Democrats.**

Murtha argued that U.S. troops have become the targets who have united the insurgency, and that continued deployments are breaking the military.

**He said he believed U.S. troops could be withdrawn within six months.**

<p><b>First elected to Congress in 1974, Murtha is known as an ally of uniformed officers in the Pentagon and on the battlefield. The perception on Capitol Hill is that when the congressman makes a statement on military issues, he's talking for those in uniform.</b></p>
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"The war in Iraq is not going as advertised. It is a flawed policy wrapped in illusion," Murtha said.

**MORE:**

November 17, 2005. Remarks by Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa. [Excerpts]

I believe before the Iraqi elections, scheduled for mid December, the Iraqi people and the emerging government must be put on notice that the United States will immediately redeploy. All of Iraq must know that Iraq is free. Free from United States occupation.

**My plan:**

*To immediately redeploy U.S. troops consistent with the safety of U.S. forces.  
To create a quick reaction force in the region.  
To create an over-the-horizon presence of Marines.*

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

## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

### **While Soldiers Died:**

# **War Profiteer Bribed Bremer's Flunkies**

November 17, 2005 Associated Press

**WASHINGTON -- An American businessman living overseas paid at least \$630,000 in kickbacks to U.S. occupation authority officials to win reconstruction contracts in Iraq, according to a federal affidavit made public Wednesday.**

Philip H. Bloom, a U.S. citizen who has lived in Romania for many years, was arrested recently at Newark International Airport in New Jersey.

Prosecutors at the court hearing did not detail the charges against Bloom, but U.S. Magistrate Judge Deborah Robinson said they involve money laundering and conspiracy to defraud the government.

Justice Department officials said they are unaware of previous indictments arising from contracting fraud in Iraq. But the charges against Bloom stem from a series of audits by Stuart W. Bowen Jr., the U.S. special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction.

**A government affidavit alleges that Bloom conspired with officials of the Coalition Provisional Authority and U.S. military to rig bids for contracts in Al-Hillah and Karbala, cities 50 to 60 miles south of Baghdad.**

**In some cases, Bloom's companies performed no work, Patrick McKenna Jr., an investigator in the inspector general's office, said in the affidavit.**

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



**A man searches for keys while his daughter looks on during a raid on their house by soldiers from the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division, near Balad Nov. 4, 2005. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)**

**[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. 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?]

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## CLASS WAR REPORTS

# Taxes On The 400 Highest-Income Americans Has Been Cut 40 Percent

11.16.05 By Ben Bagdikian, ZNet [Excerpt]

Last year, the IRS said they were so under-staffed that they could no longer do the normal examination of odd-looking tax returns of big corporations because those data were so complex and voluminous that the IRS, by now drastically understaffed, had to concentrate on the more simple middle-class and smaller tax payers' returns.

**One result has been that since 1993, the tax burden on the 400 highest-income Americans has been cut 40 percent and some of the richest executives defer paying taxes for years until they can stretch it out for fractions of what even the shrunken tax brackets call for.**

But Lord have mercy on the weekly wage earner whose annual W-2 form shows up at IRS with no matching tax payment.

### **GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out**

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

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

<http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>,  
[www.williambowles.info/qispecial](http://www.williambowles.info/qispecial), [http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi\\_special/](http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/),  
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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