

GI SPECIAL 3D27:

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW: ALIVE



Iraq November 2004: Marines carry wounded after mortar attack. Photo: Reuters.

“We Have Torture Conducted On Our Own Soldiers, Right Here In America, At Fort Lewis”

And did I mention torture,....can't have torture because it's against military regulations.....unless you call chaining a soldier up with his arms and legs tied behind him for 4 straight days in a chair, making him sit in his own waste, is torture,.....then Yes, we have torture, both mental and physical abuse conducted on our own soldiers...right here in America, at Fort Lewis in Washington State. Violating all military regulations on our own soil. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

**From: Monica Benderman
To: GI Special
Sent: November 25, 2005
Subject: investigative article**

This is the first in a series of investigative articles about Ft. Lewis Regional Correctional Facility. Pretty appalling stuff -- but we are still learning more - as are those investigating. We're hitting them as hard as we can.

November 23, 2005 by Tom Scott, Oraculo.blog.com. Tom Scott is a Vietnam Combat Veteran and Senior Investigative Reporter for Choice America Network.

It's about a 20 minute drive south from Tacoma in the beautiful state of Washington. Amid the beauty of this great state sits Fort Lewis, a "once upon a time" for many veterans and currently a place called home to many of the finest military men and women in our Armed Forces.

I arrived in October as the leaves were awaiting their seasonal fall to earth and as about 4000 brave soldiers from the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division celebrated with their family and friends their return from the War of Lies.

Many physically untouched, many scarred for life and all unaware of the nightmares they will carry for the rest of their days. You could smell it in the air, you could see it in their young eyes, the mixed emotions, joy for being home, sad and confused from where they had been and why. It reminded me of my tours in Nam, my years in Hell.

On the grounds of Fort Lewis sits the Regional Correctional Facility that houses close to 200 American military inmates. About 2,828 miles west from where the War of Lies is orchestrated by the true criminals - the other Washington.

All these men in this facility are serving time in a military hell hole hidden away from the rest of world.

Many that live in the state of Washington don't even know this hell hole exists. Millions upon millions of Americans don't know it exists. Not many of your Senators and Congressman know it exists. Not many of these returning soldiers, when asked, ever knew the RCF existed or what exactly went on behind its gates.

There are other military RCF's across our great country and I pray to God that what I have learned and witnessed at Fort Lewis, isn't happening elsewhere in our America.

For it should be of concern to you that the U.S. has repudiated the Geneva accords and espoused the use of torture in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, and secretly through proxy regimes elsewhere with the so-called extraordinary rendition program.

It is not only embarrassing but sickening to see this president and vice president insisting that the CIA should be free to perpetrate "cruel, inhumane or degrading

treatment or punishment" on people in U.S. custody but neighbor, it's happening right here in our own back yard, to our own men in uniform.

Mind you, many a state prison and county jail across America are luxury hotels compared to what these soldiers are put through at Fort Lewis.

I was fortunate to meet up with several recently released soldiers and developed good relations with a few willing to talk that actually worked in this RCF.

For a Conscientious Objector to this War of Lies and placed in Fort Lewis, as I would be today, you just have to stop, think and say what hypocrisy this is.

The criminal mass murderers and liars to the world are alive and dining well 2,828 miles away and we are currently letting them ruin the America that we have espoused over the last 230 years.

At Fort Lewis, I heard one horror story after another and verified each with those who worked at the facility, brave enough to come forth and verify the truth.

So let me be blunt and give it to you straight up.

For example, the facility has many female guards - some of which have participated in an organized prostitution ring. A very well organized prostitution ring. Yes you read it right damn it. Several inmates have written in detail of such illegal activity to their Senators and Congresspersons. Female guards also watch the all male inmates take showers and use the latrine, they have no privacy. You would think that Lt. Colonel Stephanie Beavers, the Commanding Officer in Charge would correct this situation or is this the responsibility of Enos Hobbs, the Civilian Warden; or is this just our militaries way of humiliating its "prisoners" of choice.

According to office personnel, one of whom that was exposed for "playing" with the inmates now works in an non-existent program.

What the hell is a non existent program may I ask? Makes you wonder who exactly is in charge.

These soldiers are kept from seeing their families.

They are kept from seeing legal representation.

There is no heat. There are broken windows and windows that do not close, which at this time of year in Washington State it gets pretty damn cold at night. They are given no blankets.

There is a non existent educational program - did I mention that? Inmates are kept from seeing the Chaplin of their choice and if they do get to see one, it takes months of paperwork and background checks to make sure that Chaplin of Choice is not going to attempt to "spring" the inmate with the help of God.

There are leaking sewage pipes with fresh raw sewage dripping from the ceilings, leaking toilets and sinks that flood the cells of inmates.

Regulations state firmly that there is to be one shower head per 8 inmates but one honest guard reports that on several "blocks" there are only 4 shower heads for 50 inmates. You have shower water building up under the bunks.

And did I mention there was no heat.

Abusive Guards become Counselors.

Numerous uncalled for head counts within a single day - sometimes up to 40, as if the great escape was in the works - no State Prison conducts that many head counts in one day.

And remember, these are American soldiers, they know the drill.

Many suffer from PTSD without help. Some have been framed by the military itself. Telephone calls are monitored when allowed and cut off after 20 minutes and cost roughly \$25 per call.

And did I mention torture,....can't have torture because it's against military regulations....

.....unless you call chaining a soldier up with his arms and legs tied behind him for 4 straight days in a chair, making him sit in his own waste, is torture,.....then Yes, we have torture, both mental and physical abuse conducted on our own soldiers,....right here in America, at Fort Lewis in Washington State. Violating all military regulations on our own soil. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

There is far more to report, all because of this Neo Con War of Lies.

I repeat, all of this madness stems from this War of Lies and we have let this Neo Con Administration attempt to divide our precious America. Wake Up, America! Unite!

Retired U.S. Army Col. Larry Wilkerson, who served as former Secretary of State Colin Powell's chief of staff, told CNN that the practice of torture may be continuing in U.S.-run facilities. He said and I quote: "There's no question in my mind that we did. There's no question in my mind that we may be still doing it," Wilkerson said on CNN's "Late Edition."

Lt. Colonel Wilkerson, visit Fort Lewis right here in America and see for yourself. Sir, make a surprise visit today. And being of military you should know the Art of Surprise, sir.

So I leave this information in your minds and in your hands my fellow Americans.

I, being a Vietnam Combat Vet, won't stand for such madness and suggest that you learn to take matters into your own hands and call every Senator and Congressperson you can think of in every state and report this abuse.

It is past time that we the people held our elected officials accountable for their actions and the actions of our own militaries lack of honorable leadership and demand they stop these Crimes Against Humanity immediately.

Fort Lewis, RCF; America and the World is watching.

God help your Command and those that conspire to follow such madness.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Highly Decorated Sgt.1 Killed: “He Didn't Feel Like We Needed To Be In Iraq” “We Should Have Left A Long Time Ago”

"He loved being a U.S. soldier. He loved the Army," Campbell said between sobs.

"He was fighting the war because he was an American soldier.

"That was his job. Not because it was a war he believed in. He didn't feel like we needed to be in Iraq. He didn't feel like he was making a difference anymore and that we should have left a long time ago."

November 26, 2005 By Leslie Williams of the Journal Star

PEORIA - A former Peorian who served the last 20 years of his life as a soldier for the U.S. Army was killed on Thanksgiving Day in an accident south of Baghdad.

The military has not yet officially announced that Sgt. First Class Eric Pearrow, 40, of DeRidder, La., died Thursday morning.

"He was so perfect," said Pearrow's fiancée, Niall Campbell, who confirmed his death during a telephone interview with the Journal Star on Friday night. "He was such a perfect soldier. None of this makes sense."

A member of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment Thunder Squadron, Mad Dog Company, from Colorado, Pearrow was due to come home Wednesday for a month-long leave. He also was about three months shy of retiring.

"He loved being a U.S. soldier. He loved the Army," Campbell said between sobs.

"He was fighting the war because he was an American soldier.

"That was his job. Not because it was a war he believed in. He didn't feel like we needed to be in Iraq. He didn't feel like he was making a difference anymore and that we should have left a long time ago."

Despite Pearrow's personal feelings about Operation Iraqi Freedom, he volunteered to command a tank division last November when the Army needed additional troops, said Pearrow's best friend, Don Bell of East Peoria.

"He had just filed for retirement," said Bell, adding, "He put that on hold. He said, 'That's fine.'

"He never dodged anything. He volunteered to go. He never fought it."

Always willing to lend a hand, even before he was asked, Pearrow was a soft-spoken man though he stood at 6 feet 6 inches tall, Bell said.

Campbell agreed, "He would have given anyone the shirt off his back."

Bell met Pearrow 26 years ago while cruising Main Street with mutual friends. Pearrow was a student at Woodruff High School; Bell was attending Richwoods High School.

"We really clicked," Bell said. "We dumped our other friends. We had a lot in common . . . and were just like brothers."

Memories of fishing, dirt biking and four-wheel riding with Pearrow flooded Bell's mind as he recalled their teenage years Friday. He laughed when he recalled the time the pair took roller-skating lessons in order to meet young women.

When they grew older, the fun never stopped. They both enjoyed riding their Ninja motorcycles, four-wheelers and attending NASCAR races together.

"We were two peas in a pod," Bell said. "This is a nightmare."

Bell had kept in contact with Pearrow after he left for Iraq in March, and last talked to his friend about two weeks ago.

The day before Thanksgiving, Bell tried to call Pearrow, but couldn't get ahold of him. On Thanksgiving Day, Bell tried again - 10 times.

"There was just silence (after dialing Pearrow's number), and then an automated voice said the destination was unavailable," Bell said. "From my understanding and from what I'm been told, the military shuts down the satellite link for the telephone system in respect to a fallen soldier, like a time of silence."

Bell had the suspicion something was wrong and continued to call Pearrow. On Friday, Campbell called him and told him the bad news.

"People say there's a spiritual connection (between two people) and when something happens you get a feeling, a tingle," Bell said. "(Thursday) was one of those feelings."

Campbell, who lived with Pearrow outside Fort Polk base in Louisiana, was notified Friday morning when a chaplain, an officer and a non-commissioned officer knocked at the door.

"I screamed at them to get off my property," Campbell said, crying. "You know what it is when you see those kinds of soldiers show up at your door. I knew as soon as I saw them," that Pearrow was dead.

Campbell was told Pearrow died in a tank accident, and that details of the accident would not be available until an investigation, which could take up to a month, is completed.

Pearrow had fought for the Army in Bosnia and in Desert Storm before serving in Iraq. He also completed tours of duty in Germany and South Korea.

He was a highly-decorated soldier, earning a Bronze Star, a Global War on Terrorism medal, seven achievement medals and six good conduct medals, just to name a few.

He wanted to some day be buried in Arlington National Cemetery, he had told both his fiancée and his best friend.

Pearrow also is survived by two daughters who live in Kentucky. Each have enlisted in the military.

U.S. Soldier Killed In Heit

Nov 26 (KUNA) & MNF Release A051126f

The US army said one American Soldier assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) was killed in combat in the western town of Heit.

He was killed in a bomb explosion in Heit, located at Al-Anbar province.

Several U.S. Army units are attached to II MEF (Fwd)

At Least One U.S. Mercenary Wounded

11/26/05 Aljazeera

A roadside bomb targeting a US military convoy exploded in a busy square in central Baghdad, wounding a US civilian contractor and four Iraqi nationals.

The bomb targeting the US convoy damaged two civilian cars being escorted by the US military, forcing their occupants to be evacuated to the military vehicles.

US Sergeant David Abrams declined to say whom the army was escorting but said a US civilian contractor was lightly wounded.

Speaking to Aljazeera from Baghdad, Iraqi journalist Ziyad al-Samarrai said four Iraqis, two men and two women, and an unidentified number of foreigners were wounded in the morning explosion.

Witnesses and police sources confirmed that foreigners were travelling in the targeted civilian vehicles. Samarrai was unable to confirm whether there were any deaths caused by the explosion.

**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE THEN
REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE NOW
NO MORE DELAY:
BRING THEM ALL HOME TODAY**



A U.S. Marine patrols near Haditha Aug. 4, 2005. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

Snapshots From A Lost War Of Occupation

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

November 26, 2005 By BENEDICT CAREY, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

"These guys go out in convoys, and boom: the first vehicle gets hit, their best friend dies, and now they're seeing life flash before them and get a surge of adrenaline and want to do something," said Lt. Col. Alan Peterson, an Air Force psychologist who completed a tour in Iraq last year.

"But often there's nothing they can do. There's no enemy there."

Some soldiers and marines describe foot patrols as "drawing fire," and gunmen so often disappear into crowds that many have the feeling that they are fighting ghosts. In roadside ambushes, service men and women may never see the enemy.

On a Sunday in April 2004, Commander Hoyt received orders to visit Marine units that had been trapped in a firefight in a town near the Syrian border and that had lost five men. The Americans had been handing out candy to children and helping residents fix their houses the day before the ambush, and they felt they had been set up, he said.

The entire unit, he said, was cursing with rage, asking: "What are we doing here? Why aren't the Iraqis helping us?"

This Is Not A Satire

[Thanks to Don Bacon, The Smedley Butler Society, who sent this in. He writes: Casey strikes out.]

November 25, 2005 By Liz Sly, Chicago Tribune

RAMADI, Iraq — Gen. George Casey, the commander of multinational forces in Iraq, has no doubt what would happen if U.S. forces precipitously pulled out of Iraq.

"The security situation would degenerate badly," he said Thursday during a whistle-stop tour of Iraq. "

So with opinion polls showing that Americans are turning against the war and pressure mounting in Congress for a swift withdrawal, **Casey devoted Thanksgiving Day to a morale-boosting mission aimed at convincing soldiers in the field that the war is working.**

Along the way, scudding low over the desert in a Black Hawk helicopter to avoid groundfire, he talked about his conviction that America's strategy for Iraq is on the right track.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Three Swedish Soldiers Wounded

26 November 2005 Aljazeera

In an attack on Nato-led forces, one soldier was in a "very serious" condition after the blast on Friday in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif, while the other two suffered minor injuries, the Swedish Armed Forces said in a statement.

A district police headquarters has been torched while four officers were abducted in a pre-dawn attack near Kabul.

The attack in Logar province sparked a gunbattle, said Abdul Rasool, the province's deputy police chief, but he said police suffered no casualties and he did not know whether any of the fighters were wounded or killed.

TROOP NEWS

U. Of Wisconsin Threatens Anti-War Students With Expulsion

26 Nov 2005 Via Phil Gasper

****Please forward widely****

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has launched a disciplinary investigation against the UW anti-war group, Stop the War, due to a complaint filed in relation to our group's demonstration against the Army ROTC on Nov. 2.

If the Dean of Students determines that members of Stop the War violated University Codes, there will be a disciplinary hearing which could result in probation, suspension or expulsion for Stop the War members.

We are asking everyone who believes in the freedom to protest to contact the administration and urge them to cease punitive measures against Stop the War.

See below for more information on the protest of Nov. 2.

Yolanda Garza, Assistant Dean of Students and the Investigating Officer in the complaint
(608) 263-5700
ygarza@bascom.wisc.edu

Lori Berquam, Interim Dean of Students
(608) 263-5702,
lberquam@bascom.wisc.edu

John Wiley, Chancellor
(608) 262-9946
jdwiley@bascom.wisc.edu

The complaint alleges Stop the War "jeopardized the safety of several individuals of the Military Science Department. It is alleged that attempts were made by your membership to gain entry to the building by pounding on doors and windows and attempts to destroy university property."

These charges are absurd.

-Stop the War was unable to even approach any member of the Military Science department. The doors of the building were locked, and no member came in or out.

-Although there were students knocking on the door, none of them were members of Stop the War. There was a large contingent of local high school students there, who are unaffiliated with Stop the War, who did most of the pounding on doors.

-No member of Stop the War made any attempt to damage university property.

The facts are these:

-Stop the War called a demonstration against the war in Iraq, military recruitment and ROTC on Nov. 2. After a rally attended by about 200 people, we marched around campus, eventually arriving at the Army ROTC building with about 100 people. The vast majority of these people were not Stop the War members or had ever been to a Stop the War meeting.

-The protestors chanted slogans, held signs and marched around the building. A few spoke through a bullhorn. Some people, none of them Stop the War members, knocked on the door.

-The only contact anyone had with members of the Military Science department was spotting them through a window. With the exception of the UW Police detaining a 14 year old high school student for throwing a penny at a window, there was no physical confrontation of any kind.

-Although the letter says that charges could be brought against "you and your leadership members," I am the only member who has received a letter or been named. The only explanation I can think of for this, is that I am the primary contact person on our student organization registration form. In other words, I am being singled out because I happened to be the one who filled out some paperwork a couple of months ago.

-Furthermore, although this complaint was filed on the day of the protest, Nov. 2. I did not receive notice until Nov. 22. The University is giving me ten days to

respond, but they waited three weeks to send me this e-mail at 3:30pm the day before the four day Thanksgiving break.

We ask that everyone who believes in the right to free speech contact the people listed above, and tell them to cease all punitive measures against Stop the War and its individual members.

Solidarity,
Paul Pryse
UW Stop the War

Lithuania Cutting Back Iraq Troops

11/26/05 AFP

Lithuanian Defense Minister Gediminas Kirkilas said his country would reduce the number of its soldiers serving in Iraq at the start of next year.

Some 100 Lithuanian troops are currently deployed in Iraq, around 50 under Polish command in central Iraq and 50 under Danish command in the British-controlled southern sector.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Assorted Resistance Action

11/26/05 (KUNA) & Aljazeera & Reuters

The Iraqi Police said that three Iraqi soldiers were killed, two wounded, when their patrol came under attack in the town of Balad.

In a separate incident, a member of Bader Organization was killed, three were wounded, while posting fliers for electoral campaigns in southwestern Baghdad.

An Iraqi Police source told reporters that the four members of Badr Organization were posting fliers for the United Iraqi [collaborator] Alliance electoral campaign in Adl neighborhood in southwestern Baghdad, when they came under attack by armed resistance fighters.

KIRKUK - Four people were killed, including two soldiers, when resistance fighters attacked an Iraqi army patrol in Kirkuk on Friday.

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

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

**NOT TODAY IS DOESN'T;
AND NOT TOMORROW EITHER**



This pipeline transports oil to the port of Ceyhan, Turkey
(AP Photo/Bassim Daham)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

A Taste Of History: 1970

AMBUSHES MAIM OR KILL G.I.s IN VIETNAM EVERYDAY

It's quite common for the Vietnamese to know that these G.I.s are walking into a trap,
and to say nothing to prevent it.

G.I.s know this.

Sometimes, after losing a few of their buddies in such a trap,
the surviving G.I.s will take revenge for their losses,
by killing the Vietnamese civilians who failed to speak out.

It is not pretty.

We are Vietnam Veterans

who have survived the trap in which our buddies have died
or been maimed.

Many of you have known that Vietnam is a trap, an ambush for American G.I.s.
and you have said nothing
to prevent our buddies (your sons) from going into it.

Today (if today is average) about 32 of our buddies in vietnam will be killed
and about 140 will be seriously wounded.

And YOU did not speak out to prevent their deaths,

You let them walk into that trap.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT YOU?

vietnam veterans against the war

156 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010

[Thanks to Joe Urgo, VVAW-AI, who sent this in.]

A History Of U.S. Armed Forces Rebellions:

Continued

By Martin Smith (Sgt. USMC; out of service)

Writing this was about healing a really dark chapter in my life, my experience in the marine corps. The words I wrote came out of an inner pain and experience that needed to heal.

But most of all, I hope that my words in some way bring an end to this god damn war and that no one else will have to come back in a body bag.

This isn't about me, it's all about bringing the troops home now,

Martin Smith

Counterculture

Soldiers' networks developed around other counterculture activities as well.

In particular, drug use was rampant in Vietnam. According to a series of Congressional reports in 1971, ten to thirty percent of troops in Vietnam used drugs. Troops on the ground put the figure much higher. According to Ramon Rosas, who served in the Americal Division from January 1970 to June 1971, "In my unit everybody was on some sort of drug—barbiturates, marijuana, heroin, opium, speed or alcohol." In an October 1970 article, Life magazine exposed the high drug rate of Alpha Company, 1st Air Cavalry Airmobile, where estimates of marijuana users in the unit ranged up to eighty-five percent. In the later years of the war, heroin reached epidemic proportions with as many as fifteen percent of the U.S. Armed Forces in Vietnam addicted to the deadly drug in 1971.

Yet rather than seeing all drug use as a problem, troops in Vietnam forged networks of solidarity and community that saw drugs as a coping mechanism and a means to relieve stress. "I smoked reefers (and) drank to numb it, because there was no mechanism" to make sense of the deaths, veteran Mike McCain, who arrived in Vietnam in 1967 and served in the marine corps, explained.

Likewise, in journalist Richard Boyle's *Flower of the Dragon*, a soldier at Dak To, located in the Central Highlands, explains to the author in 1969, "If it weren't for Mary Jane I'd be in the KO (psychiatric) ward right now."

Soldiers who smoked pot felt a common sense of unity and referred to themselves as "heads." As the soldier at Dak To, quoted above, put it, "If the Army knew how many heads they were making it would blow their fucking minds."

The heads communed together after work and reflected on the war, building soldiers' networks around drug culture.

“We pass the pipe around and we ask what the hell are we doing here?” one squad leader pointed out from Alpha Company, the unit that is the subject of the 1970 Life article mentioned previously.

Smoking marijuana became a standard initiation rite for newly arrived soldiers to Vietnam, where the older and seasoned troops would allow the new initiates or “newbies” into their countercultural networks. One anonymous veteran, who served during the siege of Khe Sanh (1967-68) and interviewed in Mark Baker’s Nam, explains the fear that gripped him when he arrived, “I’m scared...I’m looking at these bunkers and that long trench line and that barbed wire and cans and holes all over the damn place. My mouth fell open. All us new guys had that look of fear on our faces, like where the hell am I at. It did look like Hell to me.”

To ease his fears, the older troops in the unit broke him in by exposing him to the relaxing qualities of marijuana: “What blew my head was what they did to calm me down. The whole team got together and they’re sitting around laughing and bullshitting. My squad leader lit up a joint. He said, ‘Here, puff. You smoke, right? Well, go ahead. Light Up. Relax. You got plenty of time to be scared later.’”

In a similar example of the development of soldiers’ networks, CBS news filmed twelve soldiers at Fire Support Base Aires, fifty miles northeast of Saigon in War Zone D that “turn on” with marijuana in an incident that occurred, as described by Walter Cronkite, “as the war began winding down.” Roughly two hundred yards from the base perimeter near a muddy swimming hole, Vito the squad leader, uses “Ralph,” a twelve-gauge shotgun, to smoke pot, subverting the killing machine into a homosocial ritual. Vito puts the marijuana bowl into the chamber of the gun as the other soldiers smoke directly out of the end of the rifle. This collective action challenges military conventions, and the soldiers’ performance suggests male-to-male oral sex, thus breaking traditional gender roles. At least twelve troops participate, including one Black, one Chicano, and ten white ethnic troops, in a multi-ethnic bonding ritual that allows the men to forget about the war.

One soldier even confidently blows the barrel of marijuana smoke into the camera for television viewers to experience directly. After they are high, one soldier says, “Who cares about the war?”

Soldiers’ networks also formed the basis for a protest against the war on July 4, 1971. Troops organized around the Saigon area for an “Independence Day Peace Rally,” according to David Cortright, issuing a call for a mass rally and picnic at the local beach in Chu Lai, south of Da Nang on the South China Sea.

However rather than politics lighting up their interests, smoking out with marijuana proved a greater appeal for many troops. Over a thousand soldiers participated in the largest “pot party” in military history. This pot protest connected soldiers’ underground organizing, anti-war resistance, and the counterculture.

Such networks developed and formed the basis for a horizontal leadership that belies the myth that the rebellion in Vietnam was merely “survival-politics,” as coined by Fred Gardner in a 1970 New York Times article.

Free from the hierarchical relationship imbedded in the military rank structure, soldiers formed their own equalitarian communities of resistance to military authority centered on the counterculture and drug use. The military's vertical leadership structure gave way to a leveling of rank by the enlisted men based on cooperation and solidarity.

In addition, initiation rites of passage, also known as hazing, and gatherings centered on marijuana use cemented soldiers' bonds of camaraderie. The collective nature of the squad and the team contributed to the group mentality where troops looked out for each other both on the job and back in the "hooch," their living space or tents. Troops organized informal resistance with their fellow buddies that were often multiethnic in character, as the examples above reveal; however, the construction of race also served as a unique form of unity and a potential source of division, as discussed in the following chapter.

Fragging

One act of resistance based on such soldiers' networks and that occurred primarily in the rear was the act of "fragging," slang for the murder or threat of attack on NCOs and officers by throwing a smoke or explosive grenade, known as a fragmentation grenade which the slang word derives from, in their quarters.

As Joel Geier points out, while attempts on the lives of officers who are incompetent have been at part of all previous wars, in Vietnam, the use of grenades in the rear developed as a new tactic of resistance and the murder of American officers by their troops was an openly proclaimed goal. Fragmentation grenades became the weapon of choice because the evidence was destroyed in the act.

The Army, realizing the growing unrest, officially began counting these incidents in 1969 and reported that fraggings increased from 126 in 1969, 271 in 1970, and to 238 in the first seven months of 1971—and of these, eighty-two proved fatal and 651 were injured.

In addition, out of these eighty-two fatalities that occurred, the military only convicted twenty-one troops on murder charges and four of these received reduced sentences, a stunningly low conviction rate.

The elite Americal division alone averaged one fragging per week during 1971.

Moreover, in the House of Representative's Investigation of Attempts to Subvert the United States Armed Services, held in 1971, a committee exhibit listed homicide statistics that included Non-Commissioned Officers and Officers only, the career soldiers that the GIs called the "lifers." Of this group, the murder statistics were as follows: 1,348 in 1968, 997 in 1969, and 1,258 in 1970, revealing numerous additional murders not included in the official "fragging" statistics.

In fact, in a Defense Department Appropriations Hearing in 1971, a military official admitted that due to the nature of combat, it is impossible to have an accurate

account of all fragging incidents and that, perhaps, only about ten percent actually ended up in court. Indeed, the high number of homicides and the low number of convictions reveals there may be more to the story.

The intent of fraggings is often misunderstood. Some described these incidents as a “grisly” and “macabre ritual” or a reflection of the mean and dirty war in Vietnam; while others saw no shred of “political motivation” contained within them. For example, in the House of Representative’s Investigation, Rowland A. Morrow, the Director of the Defense Investigative Program Office, proclaimed there was no direct proof of “political motivation” in any of his department’s research of these incidents. Yet both of these interpretations, the dark inhumane act theory and the apolitical mishap explanation, miss the larger picture revealed by looking at fraggings from the viewpoint of the soldiers.

Fragging and threats of fragging were, in fact, acts of “intimidation,” and a means to discipline the brass and the lifers that were too “gung ho,” GI slang for soldiers who are extremely motivated for combat duty. Army judge Captain Barry Steinberg presided over many fragging trials and explained them as “the troops’ way of controlling officers” in an act that was “deadly effective.”

Steinberg felt that once an officer was intimidated by the threat of fragging, he could no longer carry out orders and that all officers and NCOs had to take into account the possibility of fragging before passing out orders. “A can of tear gas is like a first warning,” explained troops in Alpha Company, 1st Air Cavalry in a Life magazine article published in 1970. Thus, fraggings were means of disciplining the officers and NCOs that were too “hard-line” and that put their lives in danger. They were acts of forced negotiation.

Moreover the reaction by troops, as evidenced by military records, suggests that fraggings were not simply spontaneous individual acts of anger. According to Marine historian Colonel Heintz in a 1971 Armed Forces Journal article, the news of deaths of officers would bring cheers at troop movies and around base campus.

Soldiers put bounties on officers’ heads, which were collected jointly, and then given to the soldier who carried out the collective decision.

Such affirmation suggests there was widespread anger and dissent shared by many troops.

Eugen Linden reports a second lieutenant who refused an order to advance a dangerous hill and then in turn had a \$350 bounty removed from his head by his troops.

Soldiers placed a bounty of \$10,000 on the head of Lieutenant Colonel Weldon Honeycutt, after he had ordered the attack known as “Hamburger Hill,” which killed 84 grunts after 11 attempts to advance up the terrain, according to Heintz.

In an interview with private first class William C. Lewis, an African American soldier who served in the infantry, printed in September 1969, he reveals what he considers a rare moment of multi-racial unity around an incident of fragging.

Sergeant Davis, a lifer, was notorious for sending troops to the field who were close to the end of their tour of duty. "This dude had got a lot of dudes killed. The Brothers wanted him, the white dudes wanted him, everybody wanted him. That was the only thing the white dudes and the Brothers got together on, SGT Davis! They wanted him dead," Lewis contends.

These examples suggest that fraggings were part of a collective action that represented an open class war within the war itself. It also suggests there was a collective rebellion that possibly involved large numbers and an informal network of resistance aimed to challenge the military authority.

In another example of class warfare within the military, twenty to thirty troops attacked the officers club at Camp Eagle, north of Hue, a symbol of class inequality because the enlisted were not allowed into its facilities. The soldiers used combat tactics, including the use of grenades to storm the officers' prized fraternal residence.

In response, the officers held a meeting to discuss and negotiate grievances. This act was another part of what became an intra-army war, pitting the lower-ranking soldiers against the privileges of the officer class, further revealing the existence of class politics that went beyond "survival-politics."

Life in the rear brought different opportunities for resistance not possible in the combat units.

Soldiers developed networks of resistance and solidarity that organized underground newspapers and pirate radio stations.

Counterculture music connected the underground movements at home to the troops overseas and also joined soldiers in both the rear and the front in informal rebellion.

Soldiers used drugs as a coping mechanism and self-medicated as a means of building a soldiers' community that initiated the new troops and helped troops relax in the midst of war.

Individual anger and frustration transformed into fraggings and collective class warfare. Race, however, intersected the unity of the lower enlisted against the lifers and the brass. Life in the rear was a powder keg of racial division.

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.

Dying In A Mistaken Cause

25 November 2005 By Michael Kinsley, The Washington Post [Except]

It is a terrible thing to tell someone he or she is risking death in a mistaken cause. But it is more terrible actually to die in that mistaken cause.

The last man or woman to die in any war almost surely dies in vain: The outcome has been determined, if not certified. And he or she might die happier thinking that death came in a noble cause that will not be abandoned.

But if it is not a noble cause, he or she might prefer not to die at all.

Stifling criticism that might shorten the war is no favor to American soldiers. They can live without that kind of "respect."

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.

“The Hand Wringing Brigade”

From: Alan Stolzer
To: GI Special
Sent: November 26, 2005 7:32 AM

I've often wondered whether those in the hand wringing brigade who fret so much about Iraqi Civil War protested just as vigorously during the oil embargo of the Clinton years that yielded hundreds of thousands dead and, most infamously, the majority of them children.

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)

“Truth-Tellers In Chains, Murderers Enthroned”



November 24, 2005 Chris Floyd, Empire Burlesque

This AP picture shows Hiram Myers, 74, of Edmond, Oklahoma, being hauled off by armed officials for the heinous crime of sitting in a county-owned ditch in Crawford, Texas, to protest the war in Iraq.

It is of course simply intolerable to think that President Bush's holiday repose might be disturbed in the slightest by the presence of such miscreants in the proximity of his own sacred person.

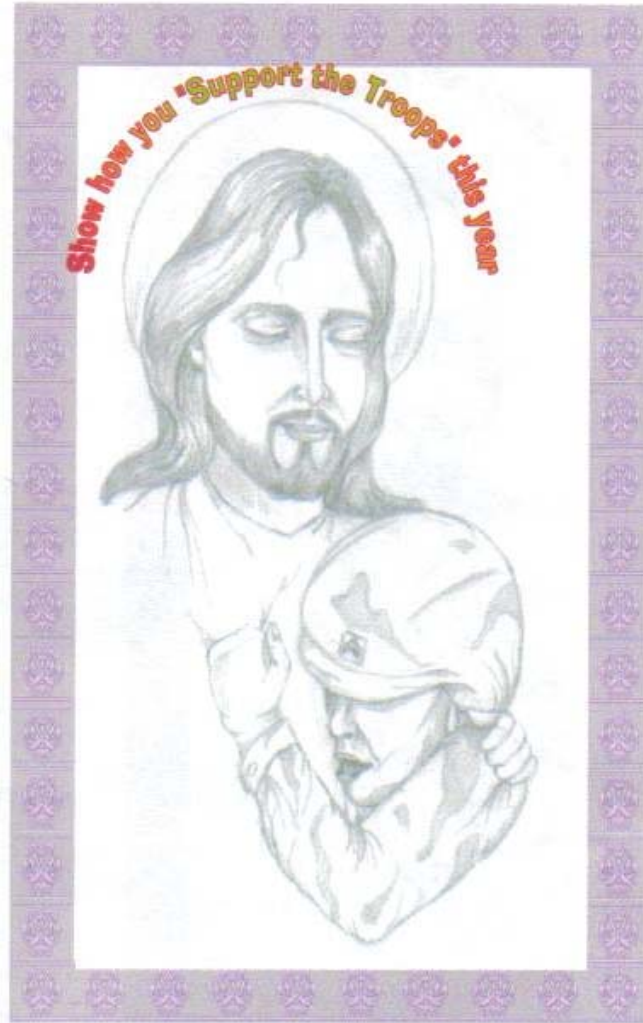
This is freedom in America today.

This is what our forefathers fought and died for.

This is why generations of American families have given the blood of their children on behalf of the nation: so some cowardly, ignorant, bloodthirsty little creep can cram his bowels with turkey and dressing without being reminded of the tens of thousands of people he has murdered, maimed and tortured in a war of aggression based on deliberate lies and murderous deceit.

This is America today: truth-tellers in chains, murderers enthroned.

Happy Thanksgiving.



*As shoppers get ready for the sales to begin
Many Veterans who served face a future that's grim*

*Their country had called them, some so long ago
They served without question, gave their heart and their soul*

*The battles are over, the cheers have all ceased
Left with unspeakable memories, minds tormented with grief*

*Have we all been forgotten? Aren't heroes in vogue?
Were our lives worth that little? Has our merit grown old?*

*This year before buying, for those least in need
Find a Vet, young or old, they don't whine, beg, or plead*

*They've unselfishly sacrificed, for your sake and mine
Isn't it time to say "Thank you"? They put it all on the line*

*Send a gift, card, or money to a struggling Vet
Instead of some relative who's needs are all met*

*There is no bumper sticker to encompass the truth
Give the season some meaning by "Supporting Our Troops!"*

Alycia Barr

Bankrupt Empire?

November 23, 2005 by Robert B. Reich, CommonDreams

The War in Iraq may end sooner rather than later – not because prominent congressmen or military experts say we should get out, and not because the American public is losing patience. It will end relatively soon because we can't afford the price tag of recruiting enough soldiers to fight it.

Our soldiers comprise what's called an "all-volunteer" army. But the job of soldiering is "voluntary" the same way any paid job is voluntary. You're not forced to do it. You're paid to do it. Since Richard Nixon ended the draft in 1973, most of the people who join the military do so because it's the most attractive job available to them.

Some are motivated by patriotism, of course, but let's not kid ourselves.

People facing a choice between a job in the private sector that's near home and safe, and one in the military that's thousands of miles away and may not be safe, will choose to remain civilians – unless the military job pays more. And for any given age and level of education, it does.

When the economy is expanding and private-sector jobs are becoming more plentiful, as they are now, the Pentagon has to pay even more to attract additional recruits. That's why the latest defense appropriations raises military pay 3.1 percent every year for the next five, considerably faster than civilian pay is expected to rise.

Cash isn't the Pentagon's only lure. The military is also offering signing bonuses up to \$30,000 for jobs in high demand. You can get up to a \$150,000 cash bonus for re-enlisting if you're with the Special Forces. And all recruits are eligible for up to \$50,000 to offset the costs of higher education and up to \$65,000 to pay back college loans. Not to mention generous housing, child care, and health benefits. But not even all this is enough.

According to new report just from Congress's General Accountability Office, the Pentagon is falling far behind its targets for recruiting and re-enlisting soldiers for vital combat positions – including as few as a third of the Special Force soldiers and intelligence specialists it aimed for last year.

All told, the military has failed to fully staff over 40 percent of its combat and non-combat specialties. Why? According to military experts, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan is scaring many potential recruits away. Even though only a portion of our 1.4 million active-duty personnel serve in a war zone or hardship area, the job of a soldier seems far more dangerous these days.

It's the law of supply and demand. If we want more people to sign up, and stay signed up, we've got to pay them even more. But here's the catch. Try paying them much more and we run into an incontrovertible obstacle called the federal budget deficit.

If you haven't heard, the deficit is out of control. That's why Congress and the White House are trying to put a cap on military spending, not increase it. The Pentagon is already scaling back or jettisoning major weapons systems that had been on the drawing boards. There's no money left for substantially higher pay and benefits for the troops.

Don't expect the White House and Congress to reinstate the draft. That would bring public hostility for the Iraqi War to the boiling point.

So with no more money in the kitty to recruit all the Americans who needed to "volunteer" to continue to fight the war, what will happen? The war will come to an end.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

BRAVE ZIONIST SOLDIER CAPTURES A FIENDISH TERRORIST DISGUISED AS A LITTLE BOY



A Zionist soldier kicks at a boy at a checkpoint that Palestinian children have to cross daily on their way to school, in the occupied Palestinian city of Hebron Nov. 24, 2005. Palestinians protest unnecessarily intrusive body searches of the children on their way to school. (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.]

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.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/,
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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