

GI SPECIAL 3D28:



Bush Pardons Turkey



For Iraq and Marines-



NO MERCY

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

MARINE DIES IN IED ATTACK NEAR CAMP TAQADDUM

November 27, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-11-45C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, 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 Camp Taqaddum, Nov. 26.

Resistance Launches Attacks In Falluja: U.S. Casualties Reported

11/27 Angop

"A powerful roadside bomb blast followed by a fierce gun battle took place on Saturday, when a joint US and Iraqi army patrol went through the Shuhada`a district in southern Fallujah," Abdul Rahman, a local journalist told Xinhua.

"Two Iraqi soldiers were killed and three others wounded after their vehicle was damaged by the blast," he said.

In the fierce exchange of fire following the roadside bombing, an insurgent was killed, he said, adding that there were also casualties on the US side.

Another roadside bomb blew off near an Iraqi army patrol in the same district, destroying an army vehicle and killing all the five soldiers aboard, Rahman said.

The Iraqi soldiers in the patrol opened fire after the blast and wounded two civilians, he added.

Bush Has It Right: There Is Progress In Iraq!

Two Congressmen Injured When Convoy Vehicle Overturns

Nov. 27, 2005 By Liz Fabian, Knight Ridder

A military vehicle carrying U.S. Rep. Jim Marshall, D-Macon, flipped on the way to the Baghdad, Iraq, airport Saturday, injuring two other members of Congress, said Marshall, who was not hurt.

Rep. Tim Murphy, of Pennsylvania, was airlifted to a military hospital in Germany for an MRI on his neck, Marshall said, while Rep. Ike Skelton, of Missouri, was being checked at a hospital in Baghdad.

In a phone interview from Baghdad, Marshall explained how dignitaries are shuttled in fast-moving convoys that often take up the middle of the road to deter oncoming motorists.

Shortly after dark Saturday, Marshall's vehicle encountered an oncoming truck that was not yielding to the convoy, he said.

"Then all of a sudden brakes get slammed on. Then we hit something and go off the side of the road and tip over," Marshall said.

The congressional delegation was riding in a "box-like" vehicle soldiers call the "ice cream truck," he said.

"Everybody sort of fell over to the side. There's no cushion to it. It's all solid metal with bolts sticking out," Marshall said. "I feel like a fool. I didn't put my seat belt on."

Marshall said it had been a great trip until the accident.

**[THIS IS NOT A SATIRE
EVERY WORD, INCLUDING THE
HEADLINE, IS FROM THE CENCOM
PRESS RELEASE]**

**“BUSY DAY FOR IRAQI, COALITION
FORCES”**

November 27, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-11-122

Police in Samarra investigated an explosion that occurred at a gas station southeast of the city Nov. 26 at about 11:30 a.m.

Four 155mm artillery shells, converted into IEDs, detonated before they could be moved out of the station, killing nine suspected terrorist and injuring four others. The four injured suspects were detained by the Samarra Police.

In the nearby city of Balad, U.S. Soldiers detained a suspect at a checkpoint after he attempted to avoid questioning. A search revealed that he was carrying more than \$3,000 in U.S. currency.

Comment:

[The guy trying to avoid having his \$3000 stolen is normal. No banking system; everybody buys and sells for cash.]

[But think over the other one. Thirteen terrorists plant four 155mm artillery shells, converted into IEDs, in a gas station. Thirteen mind you. Then they all stand around, maybe having tea or smoking a few cigarettes, and finally decide to detonate the shells “before they could be moved out of the station,” whatever that implies. Not one leaves, mind you, all thirteen hang out.

[And why mention “before they could be moved out of the station?” By who? The “terrorists?” What, all thirteen changed their minds and decided to pack up and take the shells with them? Or is this an insinuation that somebody else, like occupation forces, were on their way to remove the shells? And all thirteen terrorists were waiting for them in an ambush? And if they were, why detonate before the occupation forces got there?

[No, this dog won't hunt, any way you look at it.

[And the cops detain the four injured survivors as “terrorists”?

[And this is from an official Cencom press release! This isn't command. This is idiocy. But then, when have the two ever been separated? T]

JOB WELL DONE

A lot of credit for providing invaluable information, including information made available through GI Special, goes to this web site: <http://icasualties.org/oif/> The information is solid, thorough, with accurate compilation of casualty reports, and news, from the war.

Iraq Coalition Casualties takes no advertising, and is sustained out of pocket. If you can give a bit of help, go to the website. There's a way (upper left home page) to send help to keep it going. T

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT A CROOKED POLITICIAN WHO LIVES IN THE WHITE HOUSE WANTS YOU THERE, SO HE WILL LOOK GOOD.

That is not a good enough reason.



U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Jed Maki, left, of Ewen, Michigan, with other Marines including Cpl. Oliver Massey, right, of Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, in front of the shipping container that they live inside, at a patrol base called Iwo Jima in the town of Saadah, Iraq, eight miles from Syria, Nov. 26, 2005. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

TROOP NEWS

“It Seems Like I Was Just There For Sound Bites”

11/27/05 By Elizabeth Ridenour, Assistant City Editor, Muskogee Daily Phoenix

Jerry Ezell wants what most people want. He wants to make a living and support his family. Making that living has been a little tougher after being injured in Iraq.

Ezell, 33, of Haskell, was a sergeant first class in the U.S. Army and retired after 10 1/2 years of service. Not necessarily because he wanted to, but because he was injured shortly after arriving in Iraq last year.

"I arrived January 7 and was injured January 22," he said. "The vehicle I was riding in was attacked by IED, Improvised Explosive Device. It was my first convoy. We were transporting civilian field trucks from one camp to another."

Ezell was injured when he received shrapnel to several parts of his body. His right leg is paralyzed below the knee, his memory has been affected and he now wears a hearing aid in his right ear.

"I get retirement," he said. "It's tight."

Ezell, who grew up in Coweta, and his wife, a teacher in Haskell, have three children, ages 11, 10 and 6.

Earning decent wages has been tough.

Ezell has been fortunate that he has received some help from the Veterans Administration.

"Vocational rehab in Muskogee has been real good to me with getting equipment and information," he said. "My counselor, Janice Balsters, she's a good counselor."

He also was fortunate to have another skill that he could fall back on - metal fabrication.

"I've been a welder probably my whole life," he said. "One of my goals was to be a service-disabled owned and operated shop."

He would like to train other vets to be welders, which is the business that is keeping him in work for the moment.

"I've been to Washington and talked with my Congressman," Ezell said. "I was given a Trailblazer Award in June before my business ever got off the ground. It seems like I was just there for sound bites."

Ezell has a 1,600 square-foot shop at his home in Haskell. He has two employees. Both are handicapped, but neither are service-disabled, he said. He recently met a man on a plane and, through that meeting, landed some work in McAlester.

"He has allowed me to put up two metal fabricated buildings," Ezell said, noting the man didn't really even need the buildings

“Russell Was Clearly Against The War”

“He Would Never Have A Chance To Join Veterans For Peace”



Cindy Sheehan and Nina Nahvi, sister of Spc. Russell H. Nahvi killed in Iraq on 10/19/05. Photo by Jeff Paterson, Not in Our Name, Nov. 26, 2005 at 8:00 PM. jeff@paterson.net

November 26, 2005 Jeff Paterson, Not in Our Name [Excerpt]

Crawford, Texas (November 26, 2005) - Cindy Sheehan and peace activists from across the country wrapped up Thanksgiving outside the Bush vacation ranch today. Festivities included a press conference, book signing, big tent rally, secret service checkpoint protest, mass balloon release, and a evening candle light vigil.

Nina Nahvi, sister of Spc. Russell H. Nahvi killed in Balad, Iraq on October 19, 2005, spoke of her loss for the first time.

She said her brother Russell was clearly against the war, and she noted he would never have a chance to join Veterans for Peace. Russell was 25, and Nina is a few years younger. Seven other Gold Star Families for Peace members spoke at the rally, including Amy Branham and Bill Mitchell.

MORE:

“My American Dream Is In The Ground Forever”

November 26, 2005 IslamOnline.net

CRAWFORD, Texas: At the Crawford "Peace House," headquarters for Sheehan's supporters, Juan Torres wore a home-made T-shirt emblazoned with his son's photograph and the words "In loving memory of my son, John Torres. February 7, 1979 - July 12, 2004. Afghanistan."

"My American dream is in the ground forever," he said, his voice breaking. "This is not a game. This is the lives of our kids."



Beatriz Saldivar, aunt of Sgt. Daniel Torres who was killed in Iraq. Photo by Jeff Paterson, Not in Our Name Nov. 26, 2005 at 8:00 PM. jeff@paterson.net

“In Iraq, Morale Was A Big Issue”

[Late report.]

9.19.05 Los Angeles Times

California National Guard troops who have served in Iraq feel more comfortable with their latest assignment: providing relief for hurricane victims.

"The cool thing about New Orleans," says Lt. Jerry Gold, "is that my troops were all fired up to do the work. In Iraq, morale was a big issue."

Israeli Soldiers Refuse Orders For Jenin Mission

[Thanks to Adam Keller, Israel, and Max Watts, Australia, for making this available.]

11.24.05 Yossi Yehoshua, Ynetnews.com

Minutes before the start of an IDF operation in Jenin to arrest a senior suspect of the Islamic Jihad terror group, an officer and two soldiers, fearing for their lives, told their commander they do not wish to take part in the action, Israel's leading newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth reported Thursday.

In the early hours of Wednesday, IDF combat units and members of the police elite anti-terror unit readied to enter Jenin to nab Iad Abou al-Rob, a member of the Islamic Jihad, wanted for masterminding at least three suicide bombing attacks against Israel.

The Shin Bet security service received pinpoint intelligence tips that Abou al-Rob and other Islamic Jihad suspects are hiding in a building in Jenin. The IDF and the police braced themselves for what was tipped as one of the most important nabbing operations in the last five years.

The IDF commander overseeing the operation, an officer of the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, was hit by the news that three of his combatants want to shake off the dangerous mission, acknowledging that they are fully aware of the implications of their refusal to obey orders.

The three soldiers said they fear for their lives and refused to take part in the mission.

The stunned commander decided to suspend the renegade soldiers and passed on the issue to IDF Central Command head Maj. Gen. Yair Naveh.

The incident is highly unusual in the elite combat unit whose achievements against terror organizations in the West Bank over the last five years of violence have been praised by the IDF top brass

The killing of arch terrorist Louie Saadi in Tul Karem in October, in which the three soldiers participated, was one of the team's main achievements. Sources in the unit said the three soldiers took part in that operation, which included close-range combat, and added the battle may have affected the troops.

A senior commander familiar with the unit told Yedioth Ahronoth service in the unit requires a lot of nerves with almost every arrest conducted over the last few months resulting in clashes with gunmen.

MORE:

“The Fellow Soldiers Called Upon The Commanding General Not To Cashier The Four Refusers”

The fellow soldiers called upon the commanding general not to cashier the four refusers, all of whom are anyway due for discharge from the army within a few months, and to take their mental condition into account.

25/11/2005 By Yossi Yehoshua, Yediot Aharonot. Translated by TOI

New details have come out on the affair of elite unit fighters who had refused to participate in a dangerous operation at Jenin for fear of their life, which was first published in Yediot Aharonot yesterday.

It turns out that the fighters had been mentally broken by a particularly vicious battle in the course of which they had liquidated a senior wanted terrorist who had sent the suicide bomber to Hadera.

In the past weeks, they had repeatedly asked to be referred to a Mental Health Officer (MHO) but were refused. At a pre-dawn briefing ahead of going again into action they realized they could not take it any more. "The whole team is smashed up" said fellow soldiers.

It is a veteran team, hitherto noted for its high level of professionalism and to whose credit were marked astonishing operational successes in the past half a year. Among other things, a month ago the team successfully liquidated Luai Sa'adi at Tulkarm, who was considered the most senior among Islamic Jihad commanders on the West Bank.

The team commander, one of the four fighters who refused to go on this week's raid, was the one who had killed Sa'adi from a point blank range, after being lightly wounded himself. The fighters of this team also liquidated other senior commanders of Islamic Jihad and Hamas on dangerous raids and went ahead without blinking an eyelid.

And then, everything was changed by on raid into Kabatiya, three weeks ago.

The fighters of the team were sent to capture two senior commanders of the Islamic Jihad, Sherar Kamil and Jihad Awitrat, who had been among those who had sent the suicide bomber who exploded in the Hadera market-place. The battle with the two lasted long hours and got more and more complicated, until finally the two terrorists were overcome and liquidated.

The tough fighters were at last effected by the situation of endless pressure. They broke down and found it difficult to recover from the effects of this event. As fellow-soldiers tell, the fighters repeatedly asked to be allowed to get the help of an MHO to overcome their crisis, but were refused.

A day before yesterday, when preparations began for the raid against Abu Al-Rob, the team commander asked the company commander to excuse himself and his soldiers from participation. "He said they could not stand it any longer, but nobody was willing to listen to him".

Some ten minutes before they were due to board the vehicles, the fighters went to the company commander and with tears in their eyes told him they were not capable of undertaking this mission. The commander, came up to the team's soldiers and shouted: "Who are the cowards here?". The team commander, taking responsibility, raised his hand first, later joined by three other fighters. Immediately following the publication of this affair, the General of the Central Command decided to suspend the four pending the completion of an investigation.

Yesterday, all fighters of the team met with the commander of the unit, Lieutenant-Colonel A.

The fellow soldiers called upon the commanding general not to cashier the four refusers, all of whom are anyway due for discharge from the army within a few months, and to take their mental condition into account. "They are among the best soldiers in this unit, perhaps in the entire army" said a fellow soldier.

The soldiers' parents reacted with fury to the decision to suspend their sons from membership in this unit, saying it was an irresponsible act. "The commanders in this unit totally abandoned our sons and did not look out for them, despite all the alarm signals which they had made" said the father of one of the fighters. "These children came out of the last raid with a trauma.

"They came out alive only by a miracle, and asked more than once to get professional attention for their mental problem. The only thing the commanders did was smile and tell them everything will be all right. Our sons are good soldiers, but they are not robots. They are human beings, and human beings can break at one stage or another.

"We were always warned of the mental problems which crop up in this kind of unit, but we never thought things can deteriorate so far".

Meanwhile, until the investigation into the affair is complete, the military authorities decided to involve the army's Mental Health System. Immediately after the publication there arrived at the unit's base senior Mental Health Officers, acting on the basis of a special action model developed for cases of Extreme Anxiety Reactions To Battle Situations.

Their preliminary impression, after first talking to the soldiers, said that past fighting events had resurfaced in their minds on the last moment before going into action.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

“Bush Family: Your Nights Will Be Finished”

November 27, 2005 By EDWARD WONG, The New York Times Company

Mr. Sadr's oratory is as anti-American and incendiary as it has ever been.

A recent article in Al Hawza, a weekly Sadr publication that the Americans tried unsuccessfully to close last year, carried the headline: "Bush Family: Your Nights Will Be Finished." Another article explained that Mr. Sadr was supporting the December elections to rid Iraq of American-backed politicians who "rip off the heads of the underprivileged and scatter the pieces of their children and elderly."

Partly because of his uncompromising attitude, Mr. Sadr, who is in his early 30's, is immensely popular among impoverished Shiites.

On Nov. 12, after a car bomb killed 8 people and wounded at least 40 others in a Shiite neighborhood in eastern Baghdad, dozens of gun-wielding Sadr loyalists sealed off the area, only occasionally admitting Iraqi policemen.

“Tell Us Where Their Bodies Are”

27 November 2005 ALJAZEERA

In Baghdad on Sunday, a group of women protested outside the Ministry of Interior building, demanding information about relatives who have been taken by security forces, never to be heard from again.

"What have they done wrong?" asked one woman, who identified herself only as Um Nabeel.

"Let the government tell us where they are. If they were killed let them tell us where their bodies are."

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

Assorted Resistance Action

Nov. 27, 2005 Reuters & Aljazeera

BAIJI - An Iraqi translator working with U.S. forces was found shot dead in Baiji on Saturday, a day after he was kidnapped in Tikrit, police said.

MOSUL - A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol killed one Iraqi policeman and wounded another in Mosul.

RIYADH - An Iraqi army officer escaped an assassination attempt when a roadside bomb exploded near his car in the Riyadh area, 60 km (38 miles) southwest Kirkuk, police said. Two of the officer's bodyguards were wounded.

KERBALA - A major crimes unit official was killed in Kerbala.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Amazing Numbers Of Otherwise Sane People Sucked In Again By The Same Tired Old Bush Bullshit

[Believe it or not, a fair number of people are peeing their pants with delight over another appearance of this lame old bullshit the Bush regime has been handing out for over two years. Every six months or so, the enemy launches another peace offensive to shut up war critics, with whisper stores about troop cutbacks in Iraq. And right along with it, every six months or so, all kinds of bullshit flies around from apologists for the Empire celebrating the new reasonableness in Washington.

[Meanwhile, in the real world, as distinct from the delusional one, the number of U.S. troops in Iraq goes up and up and up, to a current new high of 160,000.

[Read what they are actually saying, in case you run into somebody who has lost their mind T.]

U.S. Starts Laying Groundwork for Significant Troop Pullout From Iraq

26.11.2005 By: Paul Richter and Tyler Marshall, LA Times

WASHINGTON — Even as debate over the Iraq war continues to rage, signs are emerging of a convergence of opinion on how the Bush administration might begin to exit the conflict.

In a departure from previous statements, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said this week that the training of Iraqi soldiers had advanced so far that the current number of U.S. troops in the country probably would not be needed much longer.

A former top Pentagon official who served during Bush's first term said he believed there was a "growing consensus" on withdrawing about 40,000 troops before next year's congressional election. [Leaving 120,000 U.S. troops in Iraq. Get it? Try again: leaving 120,000 U.S. troops in Iraq. 120,000? Got that?]

There are about 160,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, and a widening field of critics has called for reductions.

A senior U.S. official said that in signaling hopes for a large drawdown next year, Rice was only "stating the obvious" this week. "It looks like things are headed in the right direction to enable that to happen in 2006," said the official, who also spoke on condition of anonymity.

But he said those hopes could be derailed if there were setbacks.

But he said those hopes could be derailed if there were setbacks.

But he said those hopes could be derailed if there were setbacks.

[OK, get it now? Understand what that means? Clear? Do you need a power point presentation? Pictures? An interpreter? In Iraq, there are nothing but "setbacks."]

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)

“Doing Your Duty Is Understandable To A Point, But This Is Getting Ridiculous”

2005-11-25 By Dave Lindorff, Thiscantbehappening.net

If anything should have Americans of all political stripes calling for an immediate return of all US troops from Iraq, it would be the Iraqi summit conference in Egypt earlier this week, hosted by Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak, at which it was decided that attacking and blowing up US, British and other occupation troops should not be called "terrorism," but rather "acts of resistance."

That's pretty shocking, wouldn't you say?

And yet, there has been nothing but silence from the right-wing yak shows, little in the mainstream media, and nothing from the White House.

And how about the "support our troops" crowd? So far, not a word.

And what about the "noble mission" for which over 2100 American soldiers have so far died--the one Bush keeps citing as a reason to keep on sending more soldiers over to die?

Turns out our troops aren't being killed by terrorists, as President Bush and Vice President Cheney have been saying, but by noble Iraqi resistance fighters. Take it from the Iraqi leaders who we have installed as Iraq's puppet government.

According to them, it's only terrorism if you blow up other Iraqi citizens. Blowing up Americans or Brits is okay. It's even patriotic, apparently.

Man, if I was an American soldier in Iraq right now, I'd be ready to pack it up. I mean, doing your duty is understandable to a point, but this is getting ridiculous.

What I want to know is, where's the outrage?

I want to hear now from some of the parents of active-duty troops in Iraq who were trashing Cindy Sheehan for saying not one more mother's son should die in Iraq, now that they know how much the Iraqis want their sons and daughters over there.

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.

“We Have Made Enough Mess There Already”

September 21, 2005 Simon Jenkins, The Guardian

America left Vietnam and Lebanon to their fate. They survived.

We left Aden and other colonies. Some, such as Malaya and Cyprus, saw bloodshed and partition.

We said rightly that this was their business.

So too is Iraq for the Iraqis. We have made enough mess there already.

A History Of U.S. Armed Forces Rebellions; Continued: The Bloods of Nam

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

The Bloods of Nam



(http://mason.gmu.edu/~kbateman/hist697sp03/design_assign/soldiers_vietnam.jpg)

“Why should I come over here when some of the South Vietnamese live better than my people in “the world??” “We have enough problems fighting white people back home.”

Black marine interviewed by Wallace Terry, Bloods

The Vietnam War was the first fully racially integrated war fought by the United States. Though some integrated units fought in Korea, Vietnam was the first time Blacks had fought side by side extensively with white troops since the Revolutionary War. Black, Chicano, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Puerto Rican, Japanese, Native American, and white ethnicities all fought and served together.

Thus, the story of the soldiers' experience could be told from many different perspectives. Asian American troops, for example, faced the particular racism associated with the dehumanization of the Vietnamese and were called “Gook,” “Chink,” and “Ho Chi Minh” by their peers, according to Yen Le Espiritu in “Panethnicity and Asian American Activism.”

In basic training, a drill sergeant forced an Asian American soldier to stand in front of a platoon of recruits as an example of what the enemy, a “Gook,” in Vietnam looked like.

Soldados, by Charley Trujillo, reveals another hidden narrative, through oral histories of nineteen Chicanos living in Corcoran, California, an agricultural town. Both examples are perspectives rarely acknowledged as unique and provide a welcome addition to the complex story of how race impacted the lives of soldiers.

In this chapter, I will focus on the African American experience, not because the vantage of other ethnicities or discussions of other manifestations of racism in

the war are less important, but due to the unique resistance that was present amongst the Black troops who served during the war. Calling themselves “Bloods,” African Americans soldiers fought back and resisted the war, exposing the intersection of race and class.

Back in “the world,” during the late 1960s and early 1970s, racial tensions were exploding, and the Civil Rights Movement pushed northward as the demand for black power came to the fore. Ghetto uprisings erupted in the U.S. from Newark to Watts in the middle and late sixties. Black Nationalism spilled over into the labor movement in the late sixties and early seventies when the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) threatened corporate America at its Achilles Heel, the auto industry. DRUM pitted black activists against both the bureaucratized white United Auto Workers (UAW) and Dodge Main, where what some black workers called “niggermentation” had relegated blacks to dangerous and unhealthy work in the foundries and paint shops since the 1930s.¹

Overseas, Blacks were in a similar position of inequality in the military. African Americans, as in civilian life, found themselves assigned to the most degrading and hazardous work as soldiers. From Boot Camp, where Blacks swept the barracks while whites got easier chores, to Vietnam, where Blacks disproportionately served in combat roles while whites were often assigned to the rear, race was a factor in promoting the segmentation of military labor.

Blacks assigned as cooks or supply clerks often served in the field instead and when they came out, according to veteran Haywood T. Kirkland, “got the jobs burning shit in these 50-gallon drums. Most of the white dudes got jobs as supply clerks or in the mess hall.” Kirkland served in Vietnam from May 1967 to April 1968 and was interviewed by Wallace Terry in *Bloods*.

Also according to veteran Robert E. Holcomb, who served in 1970 in the U.S. army in Vietnam, African Americans “were put in the jobs that were the most dangerous, the hardest, or just the most undesirable. A white soldier would probably get a better position. And Hispanic soldiers and Jewish soldiers and Polish soldiers would catch some flack, too. But not as much as a Blood.”

The most perilous assignment in Vietnam was the job of a grunt, and as one advanced closer to the front, the color of the troops often changed. When Guillermo Alvidrez arrived in his army infantry unit in August 1967, “60 per cent of the troops were either black, Puerto Rican or Mexican/Chicano.” Similarly veteran Mike Soliz, who served his first tour in Vietnam from September 1968 to July 1969 recounts, “One of the things I couldn’t understand was why our unit out in the field, was eighty percent minorities: blacks, Chicanos, Indians, and Puerto Ricans. It seemed like it was the minorities who were always the infantry guys.”

In an article printed in the *Washington Evening Star* on May 7, 1968, Private James Barnes exposes that “it’s always the Negro who’s walking point (up front). That means he’s the first to get (hit) if a mine explodes.”

In an interview in Vietnam GI also published in 1968, veteran Dave Tuck, who spent most of his tour in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, also notes how the dangerous position of walking point, the job of leading a squad or platoon in the

front, was often a troop of color, “They do have a little discrimination as far as the job of point man. It seems invariably a soul brother ends up being the point man.”

The government’s own statistics expose the reality of racism. According to David Cortright’s research, in 1971, Blacks, who made of 12.1 percent of all enlisted, engaged in 16.3 of all combat job assignments and in some infantry units were 20 percent and even 50 percent of paratroopers. In fact, there were so many Blacks assigned to the field that many troops called it “Soulsville.”

Beyond the racialized division of job assignments, other forms of racism were a common experience as well. After Martin Luther King’s assassination in 1968, whites burned crosses at Da Nang and Cam Ran Bay, and confederate flags were rampant, worn on patches by white troops and hung from barracks.

Such overt expressions of discrimination only mimicked the institutionalized racism that denied Blacks promotions and advancement. In the navy in March 1972, for example, Blacks represented 6.2 percent of enlisted personnel but made up a staggering 16.8 percent of the rank seaman recruit, E1, the lowest pay rate for enlisted personnel. And in June 1972, Blacks made up only 3.9 percent and 1.5 percent of the officer class in the army and marine corps respectively, while whites made up 95.7 percent and 98.1 percent of the officers. As one black marine put it in an interview with Wallace Terry, published in Time in September 1969, “Just like civilian life, the white doesn’t want to see the black get ahead.”

The connection between race and class was shown starkly in then Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara’s Project 100,000. This program, introduced in 1966, lowered military entry standards so that thousands of formerly rejected entrants due to low test scores were now eligible for the draft and called “new standards men.”

McNamara proclaimed Project 100,000 to be the best chance for social uplift for the poor and was part of President Johnson’s “war on poverty.” “The poor of America...can be given an opportunity to serve in their country’s defense and they can be given an opportunity to return to civilian life with skills and aptitudes which...will reverse the downward spiral of decay,” McNamara boldly promised. However, according to the Department of Defense’s publication Black Americans in Defense of Our Nation, published in 1991, Project 100,000’s implementation proved devastating for African Americans and the poor.

According to Christian Appy, the effects were that over half of Project 100,000 participants, forty percent African American, were sent to Vietnam and later died at twice the rate of U.S. forces overall. While promising job training and opportunities, from 1966 to 1968 the military granted further training to six percent of the “new standards men.” Thus, the working class lives of people of color were seen as expendable, much like the work conditions at home.

Fierce debates continue about the death rates of African Americans and whether they were used as “cannon fodder” in the war. It is true that Blacks did not die at disproportionate rates when examining the entire period of the Vietnam War. However during the beginning years of the war, African Americans deaths approached twenty-one percent of the total in both 1965 and 1966, and they died at twenty-five percent of the total in many front-line units in 1968, though they made up only eleven percent of the

U.S. population. These rates expose how Blacks died at stark rates of disproportion through periods of the war, depending on which units they served in.

Civil rights leaders, outraged at the disproportionate death rates at the beginning of the war and the lack of social justice at home, developed an anti-war critique that examined the role of race. In one of the first petitions against the war and with the larger antiwar movement still in its infancy, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, originally organized to challenge the state's racist electoral process, proclaimed in 1965, "No Mississippi Negroes should be fighting in Vietnam for the White Man's freedom, until all the Negro People are free in Mississippi."

Then in 1966, Muhammad Ali refused the draft, inspiring African Americans throughout the urban ghettos. "No, I am not going ten thousand miles from home to help murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slave masters of the darker people the world over. This is the day when such evils must come to an end," Ali fearlessly asserted.

Ali's dissent made national headlines, and he spoke at two hundred campuses in 1968, while banned from boxing for refusing to recant. In 1966, Harlem Congressman Adam Clayton Powell spoke up as well, "First we provide an inferior education for black students. Next we give them a series of tests which many will flunk because of an inferior education. Then, we pack these academic failures off to Vietnam to be killed."

Similarly in the "Beyond Vietnam" speech delivered on April 1, 1967 in the Riverside Church in New York, Martin Luther King, Jr. blasted U.S. foreign policy:

"We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem.

"So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. So we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would hardly live on the same block in Chicago. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor."

Almost exactly a year before his death, Martin Luther King, Jr. connected race and class with a critique of the Vietnam War to the outrage of critics, as he also organized a Poor People's campaign aimed to connect civil rights with economic justice. In *The Brothers' Vietnam War*, Herman Graham III suggests a positive correlation between the Civil Rights Movement's criticism of the war and the resulting equalization of African American death rates, as the Department of Defense began reducing the commitment of Black troops to the front lines during the latter years of the war.¹

While the movement for civil equality was expressed at home through an emerging anti-war critique, the struggle for social justice in the military was also being fought overseas.

In fact, black protest in Vietnam may be a more likely direct cause for the withdrawal of Black troops from the front and the equalizing of death rates.

Blacks were not simply victims of a racist system but instead were active participants in the fight for equality in Vietnam. Yet the story of black protest is complicated by the experience of troops in the rear versus that of the grunts in the field.

There were, in fact, two broad narratives of black resistance during the war—one story of black consciousness and identity in the rear and another of solidarity between troops that reached beyond the color line in the combat zones.

Emboldened by Muhammad Ali's refusal to serve and angered by Martin Luther King's assassination, Black power inspired a significant number of troops, particularly in the rear, and raised Black consciousness above military identity. According to Herman Graham III, "Black consciousness offered a way for racially 'brainwashed' GIs to deprogram their ingrained attitudes so that they could experience a sense of personal power through their own culture and their relationships with their black brothers."

Veteran Haywood T. Kirkland explains the emerging black activism in Vietnam and his response to King's assassination as a growing sense of betrayal that many African American troops felt: "I was getting more of a revolutionary, militant attitude...when I started talking with friends before leaving 'Nam about being a part of the struggle of black people. About contributing in the world since Vietnam was doing nothin' for black people. They killed Dr. King just before I came home. I felt used."

Bonding rituals provided a means to counter military ceremonial customs. Blacks formed "soul sessions" or rap groups and discussed their concerns in their tent, as the previous quote by Haywood T. Kirkland expressed.

Such informal meetings later grew to become formal organizations and cultural awareness and political groups formed, such as the Better Blacks United, Black Liberation Front of the Armed Forces, Malcolm X Association, Unsatisfied Black Soldiers, and more.

The dap, a complex hand-shake of grips and slaps that could last minutes, was also a form of bonding that whites viewed with hostility and that naval officers even banned at some bases. To express solidarity rather than the subservience associated with the military salute, the dap, also called "the power," is Vietnamese for the word "beautiful."

In an interview by Herman Graham III in October 1993, a veteran described its significance, "It was a way to piss white people off, and any time we could do that, we felt good." In at least one incident, the dap led to a fight with whites who retaliated to this bold act of Black counterculture.

Yet the dap was one of many forms of informal resistance that also included protest culture, such as the wearing of black sunglasses, armbands, shirts, and gloves.

In addition, some unfurled the Red, Black, and Green Flag, popularized by Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association movement, to counter the rebel flags popular with Southern whites

In a Time article printed in September 1969, Black power members at Da Nang explained the significance of the flag: “red for the blood shed by Negroes in Viet Nam and at home, black for the face of black culture, and green for youth and new ideas. Crossed spears and a shield at the center signify ‘violence if necessary,’ and a surrounding wreath ‘peace if possible’ between blacks and whites.”

In the Navy, Blacks also won the right to wear longer hair out of a demand to keep the Afro hairstyle, popularized during the period.

Thus Black power in Vietnam encompassed both bonding rituals and cultural defiance.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Stupid Mercenaries Caught Hunting Iraqis As Trophies To The Music Of Elvis Presley

27/11/2005 By Sean Rayment, Defence Correspondent, Telegraph Group Limited

A "trophy" video appearing to show security guards in Baghdad randomly shooting Iraqi civilians has sparked two investigations after it was posted on the internet, the Sunday Telegraph can reveal.

The video, which first appeared on a website that has been linked unofficially to Aegis Defence Services, contained four separate clips, in which security guards open fire with automatic rifles at civilian cars. All of the shooting incidents apparently took place on "route Irish", a road that links the airport to Baghdad.

In one of the videoed attacks, a Mercedes is fired on at a distance of several hundred yards before it crashes in to a civilian taxi. In the last clip, a white civilian car is raked with machine gun fire as it approaches an unidentified security company vehicle. Bullets can be seen hitting the vehicle before it comes to a slow stop.

There are no clues as to the shooter but either a Scottish or Irish accent can be heard in at least one of the clips above Elvis Presley's Mystery Train, the music which accompanies the video.

The Foreign Office has also confirmed that it is investigating the contents of the video in conjunction with Aegis, one of the biggest security companies operating in Iraq. The company was recently awarded a £220 million security contract in Iraq by the United States government. Aegis conducts a number of security duties and helped with the collection of ballot papers in the country's recent referendum

The video first appeared on the website www.aegisiraq.co.uk. The website states: "This site does not belong to Aegis Defence Ltd, it belongs to the men on the ground who are the heart and soul of the company." The clips have been removed.

The website also contains a message from Lt Col Spicer, which reads: "I am concerned about media interest in this site and I remind everyone of their contractual obligation not to speak to or assist the media without clearing it with the project management or Aegis London.

"Refrain from posting anything which is detrimental to the company since this could result in the loss or curtailment of our contract with resultant loss for everybody."

A spokesman for Aegis Defence Services, said: "There is nothing to indicate that these film clips are in any way connected to Aegis." [Meaning, in addition to everything else, Aegis is too stupid at lying to have a hundred million dollar contract.]

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Heroism Above And Beyond The Call Of Duty



An Zionist soldier points his rifle at a group of Palestinian students during a protest at a checkpoint in the centre of the occupied Palestinian city of Hebron November 26, 2005. REUTERS/Nayef Hashlamoun

[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.]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

New Orleans? \$40 Million: U.S. Embassy Iraq? \$400 Million

19 September 2005 Kevin Zeese, DemocracyRising [Excerpt]

[Zeese is interviewing Eric Leaver. The Institute for Policy Studies which recently published an analysis of the cost of the Iraq War and occupation, "The Iraq Quagmire: The Mounting Costs of War and the Case for Bringing Home the Troops." The study was co-authored by two prominent researchers and writers, Phyllis Bennis and Eric Leaver. Leaver is a research fellow at IPS and serves as the policy outreach director for the Foreign Policy In Focus project.]

Leaver:

In August 2005, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the cost of continuing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan at current levels would nearly double the projected federal budget deficit over the next 10 years.

In June 2004, Walter Maestri, emergency management chief for Jefferson Parish, said to The Times-Picayune: "It appears that the money has been moved in the president's budget to handle homeland security and the war in Iraq, and I suppose that's the price we pay."

Ron Fournier of The Associated Press reported that the Army Corps of Engineers asked for \$105 million for hurricane and flood programs in New Orleans last year. The White House carved it to about \$40 million.

And while funds were being cut for projects at home, the administration was pushing for facilities in Iraq such as the \$500 million dollar embassy.



'I was chasing after a terrorist and somehow he led me down here.'

CLASS WAR REPORTS



Japan 2005 (Democraticunderground.com)

15,000 Demonstrating Against Azerbaijan Dictatorship Attacked By Cops



(Aljazeera)

26 November 2005 Aljazeera

Truncheon-wielding police have beaten and dispersed opposition protesters demanding a re-vote of disputed parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan.

About 15,000 opposition activists gathered on Saturday in Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, to protest the outcome of the 6 November parliamentary elections, which they said were rigged - the latest in a series of such opposition actions in recent weeks.

Unlike previous rallies, the demonstrators on Saturday tried to set up a permanent protest on a square in downtown Baku, triggering a swift police crackdown - the first time since the vote.

After opposition leaders said they were going to stage a sit-in on the square, police, in riot gear, rushed to disperse them, beating them with truncheons and pushing them away.

Protesters shouted "Freedom!" and some hurled stones at the police who hid behind shields.

Hundreds of soldiers and police officers quickly pushed protesters away from the square. They shattered a stand used by opposition leaders and broke the opposition's orange banners - the colour borrowed from Ukraine's Orange Revolution.

Opposition leaders said scores of protesters were beaten and many were badly injured, some admitted to hospital.

"They used force against a peaceful rally without any prior notice," said Ali Kerimli, head of the Popular Front, one of the parties in the Azadliq (Freedom) opposition bloc that organised the protest.

"Today Azerbaijani authorities showed their real face."

Police officials, at a news conference, justified the use of force against the demonstrators, saying the demonstration "was not peaceful". They branded the opposition as "provocateurs". [Favorite accusation of Stalinist/Maoist scum everywhere.]

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

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

<http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>,
www.williambowles.info/gispecial, http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/,
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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