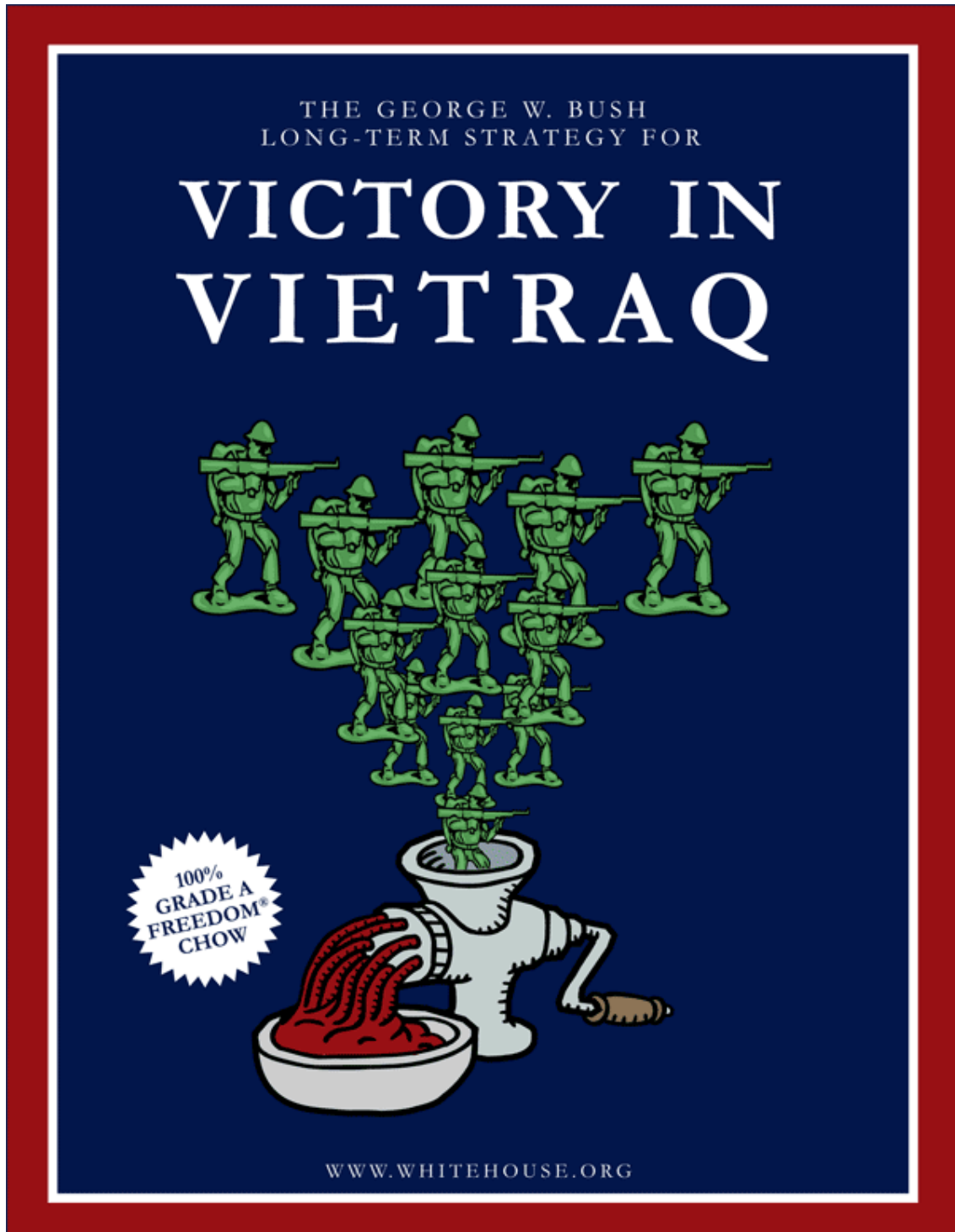


GI SPECIAL 3D33:



IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Ten Marines Killed Near Falluja In IED Attack: 11 Wounded

December 2, 2005 MNF & By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

FALLUJAH, Iraq – Ten Marines from Regimental Combat Team 8, 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) were killed in action by an improvised explosive device while conducting a foot patrol outside Fallujah Dec. 1.

The patrol was attacked with an IED fashioned from several large artillery shells. Eleven Marines were wounded in the incident. Of those, seven have returned to duty.

Regimental Combat Team 8 is a part of the II Marine Expeditionary Force.

In the nearly three years since the war began, 147 Marines from II MEF have died in combat, according to 2nd Marine Division spokesman Lt. Barry Edwards. Regimental Combat Team 8 has been in Iraq since the beginning of February.

Attack On Marines Worst Since Aug.

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in. He writes: BUSH'S IDEA OF PROGRESS IN IRAQ: NUMBER OF BOMBINGS IS DOWN, NUMBER OF MARINES KILLED IS UP.]

Dec 2 By SAMEER N. YACOUB, Associated Press Writer

A roadside bomb killed 10 Marines and wounded 11 while they were on a foot patrol near Fallujah, the Marine Corps said Friday, in the deadliest attack on American troops in nearly four months.

The attack came after U.S. commanders reported a drop in suicide and car bombings as a result of increased U.S.-Iraqi operations.

The fatality toll for November was at least 85, which was down from the 96 American deaths suffered in October; the fourth deadliest month since the war began.

But it was well above the 49 deaths in September.

Splendor Family's 'Diamond In The Rough' Lost: "At The Last Minute His Return Trip Was Delayed By A Month"

December 2, 2005 By Christina Lee, 11 News

A Splendor family had their Christmas wish turn into a nightmare Friday.

They found out early Friday morning that their son, who was a Marine in Iraq, was killed in Fallujah by a roadside bomb.

Robert Alexander Martinez was 20 years old and proud to serve his country, said his stepfather.

What's even more heartbreaking is that he was expected to come home on Monday.

However, at the last minute his return trip was delayed by a month.

Now Jeremy Hunt mourns the loss of his stepson.

"He was a diamond in the rough for me," said Hunt. "He was one of the greatest things I ever had come into my life. He was a great son, but not only a great son but a great friend to me."

The Marine graduated from Cleveland High School two years ago and was a varsity baseball pitcher.

Everyone remembered him as the boy with the infectious smile.

His parents are still waiting to find out when his body will be shipped home.

Two Minnesotans Among 10 Marines Killed

Dec. 02, 2005 Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS - Two men from Minnesota were among 10 Marines killed by a roadside bomb near the Iraqi town of Fallujah, family members and friends confirmed Friday.

The Marines from Minnesota were Scott Modeen, 24, a 2000 graduate of Cooper High School in New Hope, and Anthony Mcelveen, a 2003 graduate of Little Falls High School.

Their deaths brought to 30 the number of Minnesotans who have died in the Mideast during the war in Iraq.

OREGON MARINE ONE OF 10 KILLED BY ROADSIDE BOMB

12/2/2005 PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)

A Marine from Oregon was among the 10 Marines killed in a roadside bomb attack in Iraq that was one of the deadliest attacks against American troops in the past four months.

John Holmason, 21, of Scappoose was among those killed in an ambush Thursday near Fallujah against Marines from Regimental Combat Team 8, based at Camp Lejeune, N.C., his stepmother, Paula Holmason, told The Associated Press on Friday.

Word of the death first came from the Spotlight newspaper, which serves Scappoose, according to KGW-TV in Portland.

Eric Viuhkola, the vice principal at Scappoose High School, said Holmason graduated in 2002.

THREE 48TH BCT SOLDIERS DIE IN VEHICLE ACCIDENT NEAR ALI AIR BASE

December 2, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-12-06C

LSA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq – Three 48th Brigade Combat Team Soldiers were killed in a vehicular accident southeast of Ali Air Base at about 3:00 p.m. on December 2nd.

U.S. SOLDIER DIES OF WOUNDS IN RAMADI ROCKET ATTACK

December 2, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-12-07C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq –A Soldier assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), died of wounds received when the vehicle he was traveling in was attacked with a rocket while conducting combat operations against the enemy in ar Ramadi, Dec. 1.

Maryland Marine Killed In Falluja



This 2002 Hereford (Md.) High School yearbook photo shows Marine Cpl. Joshua Snyder of Hampstead, Md. who was killed Nov. 30, 2005 by small arms fire in Fallujah. (AP Photo/Courtesy Hereford High School)

Marine From Southern Michigan Dies

12/2/2005 AP

A U-S marine and former athlete at Union City High School has been killed in Iraq, school officials say.

Twenty-year-old Craig Watson graduated in 2003. Superintendent Martin Chard says he died yesterday.

Chard says a family member told him Watson was killed by a roadside bomb made from several large artillery shells.

Watson was an All Conference football player and a wrestler at the school.

He's survived by parents, Jay and Shirley Watson, and twin brothers who graduated in 2004.

Watson is the 71st member of the U-S armed forces with known Michigan ties to die supporting military operations in Iraq.

Texas Sgt. Killed In Taji



Sgt. Donald J. Hasse, 28, of Wichita Falls, Texas, a Fort Riley soldiers killed Nov. 29, 2005 when a roadside bomb exploded in Taji. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

Area Marine Killed By Roadside Bomb

12/02/05 KHOUA

Marine from Splendora and graduate of Cleveland High School, Robert Alexander Martinez, was killed in Iraq by a roadside bomb. It is not yet known if he was one of the 10 Marines who were killed Thursday near Fallujah.

Macon Marine Killed

Dec. 02, 2005 By Phillip Ramati, TELEGRAPH STAFF WRITER

A U.S. Marine corporal who was a former Macon resident and graduate of Northeast High School was killed in Iraq on Wednesday during a gun battle with enemy forces, according to the Marine Corps.

Marine Cpl. William G. Taylor, 27, was one of two Marines killed during combat operations Wednesday in Fallujah.

Taylor sustained a gunshot wound to the chest in a small gap in his Kevlar chest protector, according to information from the U.S. Marine Corps.

Services are being arranged by Snow's Memorial Chapel on Pio Nono.

EXTREMELY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldiers from the 3rd ID patrol along the airport road in Baghdad Oct. 31, 2005. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

TROOP NEWS

Yes

"Our guys are going over there and getting their butts shot off, for what?" the 40-year-old Tennessean said. "We have overstayed our welcome in Iraq." Former Marine Ken Rogers, quoted in Detroit Free Press, 12.2.05

ENOUGH: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Norma Mendez, the mother of a U.S. Army soldier who was killed in Iraq, cries during her son's burial, in Rincon, Puerto Rico, Dec. 2, 2005. Antonio Mendez, age 22, was killed in Kirkuk, Iraq, on Nov. 11. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

General (Ret'd) McCaffrey Says: "There's A Complete Lack Of Confidence In The Senior Civilian Leadership At The Pentagon"

12.1.05 Dave Hirschman - Staff, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Retired Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey, a highly decorated Vietnam veteran who was one of the top commanders in the first Gulf War, said Wednesday in Atlanta that the U.S. military is "in a race against time" to train its Iraqi replacements before running short of soldiers and Marines next summer.

"The wheels start falling off the Army and Marine Corps next summer," McCaffrey said. "We can't sustain the current deployment cycle beyond that without changing the law."

McCaffrey said the United States has little alternative to reducing the number of troops in Iraq, since it is also quickly running out of Reserve and National Guard forces to send.

"There's a complete lack of confidence in the senior civilian leadership at the Pentagon," McCaffrey said. "Fortunately, people have a lot of confidence in the armed forces leadership."

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.

Rats Abandon The Stinking Shit:

2 U.S. Allies To Leave Iraq; Others May Follow

[Thanks to PB who sent this in. He writes: More good news for our side.]

Struggling to shore up the coalition, Bush stopped in Mongolia on his recent Asia trip and praised its force of about 120 soldiers in Iraq as "fearless warriors."

December 2, 2005 By WILLIAM J. KOLE, ASSOCIATED PRESS

VIENNA, Austria - Two of America's allies in Iraq are withdrawing forces this month and a half-dozen others are debating possible pullouts or reductions, increasing pressure on Washington as calls mount to bring home U.S. troops.

Bulgaria and Ukraine will begin withdrawing their combined 1,250 troops by mid-December. If Australia, Britain, Italy, Japan, Poland and South Korea reduce or recall their personnel, more than half of the non-American forces in Iraq could be gone by next summer.

"The vibrations of unease from within the United States clearly have an impact on public opinion elsewhere," said Terence Taylor of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in Washington. "Public opinion in many of these countries is heavily divided."

In the months after the March 2003 invasion, the multinational force numbered about 300,000 soldiers from 38 countries. That figure is now just under 24,000 mostly non-combat personnel from 27 countries.

The coalition has steadily unraveled as the death toll rises and angry publics clamor for troops to leave. In the spring, the Netherlands had 1,400 troops in Iraq. Today, there are 19, including a lone Dutch soldier in Baghdad.

Ukraine's remaining 876 troops in Iraq are due home by Dec. 31, fulfilling a campaign pledge by President Viktor Yushchenko. Bulgaria is pulling out its 380 troops after Dec. 15 parliamentary elections, Defense Minister Veselin Bliznakov said.

Struggling to shore up the coalition, Bush stopped in Mongolia on his recent Asia trip and praised its force of about 120 soldiers in Iraq as "fearless warriors."

Thieving Officer Arrested For Stealing Iraq Cash & Taking Bribes From War-Profiteer: [Only A Couple Hundred Left To Hunt Down]

[During the first months of the occupation, Generals, Majors and other Perfumed Princes had access to millions of dollars in cash, passed out to them in boxes and suitcases, to do with as they wished. Time every one of the stinking predators had their bank accounts and safe-deposit boxes opened for inspection, and that includes Odious Odierno.]

Prosecutors said that Col. Wheeler on other occasions simply stole large amounts of reconstruction money. According to court papers, he and other government officials in Hillah stole hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash that they smuggled into the U.S. aboard commercial or military flights that faced no Customs inquiries.

December 2, 2005 By Yochi J. Dreazen, Wall St. Journal & JAMES GLANZ, New York Times

WASHINGTON—Federal prosecutors accused a U.S. Army Reserve lieutenant colonel of bribery, theft and a variety of other crimes stemming from a scheme to steer millions of dollars in Iraq reconstruction contracts to an American businessman, expanding a probe into Iraq-related corruption by U.S. officials.

The officer, Michael Brian Wheeler, formerly served in southern Iraq and is the highest-ranking U.S. official charged with wrongdoing in connection with the \$18.4 billion effort to rebuild Iraq **[so far]**.

In addition to contract rigging, prosecutors allege that he smuggled \$100,000 of stolen reconstruction money into the U.S. and used other stolen money to buy heavy weaponry such as machine guns and grenade launchers.

Prosecutors said Col. Wheeler, 47 years old, of Amherst Junction, Wis., was in league with a former civilian occupation official charged with similar crimes last month, and court filings said that other former civilian and military officials remain under investigation in connection to the case.

If convicted, Col. Wheeler faces as many as 30 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

The charges against Col. Wheeler, who was arrested on Wednesday, further highlight the mismanagement and outright criminality marring the U.S. rebuilding effort in Iraq. A variety of reports by congressional investigators and the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction have found evidence that hundreds of millions of dollars were spent without proper authorization, given to contractors who performed shoddy work or paid to firms charging unreasonably high prices.

Large sums of money remain unaccounted for, and auditors say they have little sense yet of how much may have been stolen.

According to court papers, Col. Wheeler was sent to an outpost of the Coalition Provisional Authority in the southern Iraqi city of Hillah in 2003 as a contracting officer for reconstruction projects.

Prosecutors said he soon began working with other government officials to rig contracts for the benefit of an American businessman seeking lucrative reconstruction work. The other conspirators in the case aren't named in the indictment, but officials familiar with the matter said the terms refer to businessman Philip H. Bloom and former contracting official Robert J. Stein, both of whom were arrested last month and charged with nearly identical offenses.

Prosecutors said Col. Wheeler and the other officials submitted fake bids for contracts that Mr. Bloom's firms were seeking and then awarded the work to Mr. Bloom as the low bidder. To evade scrutiny, Mr. Stein—who had the authority to award contracts of as much as \$500,000—typically awarded contracts to Mr. Bloom in amounts of as much as \$498,900.

All told, Mr. Bloom allegedly collected \$3.5 million in Iraq contracts. Auditors later found most of the work he performed was deficient.

Prosecutors said that Col. Wheeler on other occasions simply stole large amounts of reconstruction money. According to court papers, he and other government officials in Hillah stole hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash that they smuggled into the U.S. aboard commercial or military flights that faced no Customs inquiries. In the affidavit, prosecutors said Mr. Stein told them Mr. Wheeler personally took at least \$100,000 in cash from the reconstruction funds into the U.S.

Law-enforcement officials also said that Col. Wheeler and Mr. Stein laundered other stolen money through Mr. Bloom and used it to buy weaponry, including four grenade launchers and dozens of machine guns.

Mr. Stein initially told investigators the weapons were being sent back to Hilla for the protection of officials there, but prosecutors said the two men instead kept the weapons in the U.S. and "converted them to their own personal use."

It is unclear what the two men planned to do with the weapons.

Mr. Stein appeared obsessed with weaponry and his Hilla apartment was packed with everything from grenade launchers to AK-47's.

Messrs. Bloom and Stein have both pleaded not guilty, though the affidavit cites several instances where the two men admitted to various offenses related to the probe of Col. Wheeler.

Once he returned to the United States, Colonel Wheeler also bought a cache of illegal weapons, including more than 30 machine guns, 4 grenade launchers, high-caliber pistols and silencers, the affidavit said. Colonel Wheeler allegedly had the weapons shipped first to Fort Bragg, N.C., before taking them to a hotel room, where Mr. Stein picked them up and took them to his garage near Fayetteville, N.C.

Investigators found the weapons in the garage, according to the charges. Along with two .45-caliber pistols and two submachine guns from the cache, Colonel Wheeler left North Carolina with his \$100,000 cut.

Colonel Wheeler originally went to Iraq with the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion, based in Ashwaubenon, Wis., near Green Bay. Jennifer Slusarek, an administrator with the 432nd, described him as a "team chief - he was in charge of three or four people."

But like so many other civilians and military personnel, his responsibilities expanded once he landed in Iraq. Working out of Hilla, Colonel Wheeler was responsible for outfitting four provincial fire departments with fire protection and rescue equipment, creating 19 democracy centers throughout the region, and working with farmers on irrigation systems, the Army official said.

A Coalition Provisional Authority news release dated Feb. 24, 2004, cited Colonel Wheeler's work in distributing to Iraqi schoolchildren in Hilla 11 boxes of school supplies collected from an elementary school in Wisconsin. The donation came about after Colonel Wheeler spoke about needs in Hilla at the Wisconsin school, where his son was a student, the release said.

Photographs show a man identified as Colonel Wheeler, wearing a baseball cap, dark jacket and a thigh holster carrying a pistol, handing out the supplies. "After receiving the school supplies," the news release said, "the Iraqi students smiled and gave the thumbs-up."

The unsealed charges make it clear that prosecutors believe others were involved in the scandal. The charges refer to a "Co-conspirator 3" and his spouse, several other unnamed officials, and an Iraqi said to be cooperating with prosecutors and referred to as Witness A.

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)

Murderous Asshole War Profiteer Who Manufactured Defective Body Armor For Iraq Troops Spends \$10 Million On Daughters' Party

[DHB Industries made the defective body armor that soldiers and Marines were issued in Iraq. But hey, when you can make millions from killing U.S. troops, who gives a shit, right? This miserable thieving scumbag deserves nothing less than an all expenses paid trip from the USA to Ramadi, in shackles and wearing a nice orange jumpsuit.. Then, suitably equipped in one of his useless, worthless body armor vests, let him be staked out in the center of town, all by himself. That is, if the Marines let him get that far. Oh yeah, did we mention, he tried to destroy the union that represented the workers at his Florida plant and blew the whistle on the crap he was selling?]

01/12/2005 By Harry Mount in New York, Telegraph Group Limited

A New York body armour tycoon has spent £6 million [\$10 million] on his 12-year-old daughter's coming-of-age party, flying in Tom Petty, Aerosmith and the rapper 50 Cent for the evening.

David Brooks, 50, booked the Rainbow Room, the restaurant on the 65th floor of Manhattan's Rockefeller Centre, for the evening last weekend.

Elizabeth Brooks, who was celebrating her bat mitzvah, the Jewish ceremony that takes place on a girl's 12th birthday, might have been slightly bemused by some of the entertainment.

Many acts on the bill appeared to cater more for Mr Brooks's 150 adult guests, rather than his daughter's 150 friends.

Members of the Eagles and Fleetwood Mac and the saxophonist Kenny G played until 3am. At one point, Mr Brooks, dressed in a black-leather, metal-studded suit, joined Aerosmith on stage.

The rock group allowed Mr Brooks's teenage nephew to accompany them on drums in return for their £1.2million fee for a 45-minute set.

Miss Brooks might have been more familiar with 50 Cent, currently starring in the new film, *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*.

As part of his £300,000 deal, the rapper customised one of his songs, singing, *Go shorty, it's your bat mitzvah, we gonna party like it's your bat mitzvah.*

Any disappointment the children might have felt at failing to recognise the wrinklier acts was tempered by their £600 goody bags, stuffed with digital cameras and video iPods.

The 1934 art deco restaurant, run by the Cipriani family, owners of Harry's Bar in Venice, was equipped with a stage, concert equipment and Jumbotron screens to accommodate the rock stars. They were flown to New York on Mr Brooks's company jet.

The bill for the party is small change for Mr Brooks, the chief executive officer of DHB Industries, a bullet-proof vest manufacturer which takes its name from his initials. Last year, Mr Brooks made £44 million [\$74 million] in salary and company stock options.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT THE FIRST TIME:

BE ADVISED: BODY ARMOR DEFECTIVE!

(GI Special 2#47 reported that the corporation with the monopoly contract to supply body armor was run by a self-admitted securities fraud crook and union buster.

(Now we learn this corporation, DBH Industries, has been caught *supplying defective body armor to the New York City Police Department!*)

(Not only have the soldier-killers who run the U.S. government failed to supply all U.S. troops in Iraq with body armor by November 15, 2003 as they promised, because they gave only one corporation the contract----now we find that the one defense contractor supplies worthless shit.)

Prison Legal News, March 2004

DBH Industries subsidiary Point Blank Body Armor Co. has settled a dispute with the New York Police Department

The dispute started when a NYPD officer noticed weakening of his vest at the folds. **Tests then showed penetration of some of the vests by .357 Magnum rounds. Initially, 1,000 vests were believed defective.**

Later figures were as high as 5,000 defective vests.

Former Point Blank employees have also alleged that they were ordered to place updated labels on out-of-date body armor, vest sizes were mislabeled, and vest shells were mismatched with their ballistic liners. Each of these defects could compromise its effectiveness.

Sources *DBH Industries news release; Law Enforcement News*

MORE: FROM

GI SPECIAL 3B35

5.20.05

How Many Died? Pentagon Knowingly Issued Defective Body Armor To Marines In Combat

[Thanks to PB who sent this in.]

Faced with the imminent publication of this story, the result of an eight-month investigation by Marine Corps Times, the Marine Corps on May 4 issued a Corpwide message recalling 5,277 Interceptor vests from 11 lots that failed government ballistic performance tests — slightly more than half the total vests issued to Marines from questionable lots.

May 09, 2005 By Christian Lowe, Army Times staff writer

The Marine Corps issued to nearly 10,000 troops body armor that government experts urged the Corps to reject after tests revealed critical, life-threatening flaws in the vests.

In all, the Marine Corps accepted about 19,000 Interceptor outer tactical vests from Point Blank Body Armor Inc. [part of DBH] that failed government tests due to “multiple complete penetrations” of 9mm pistol rounds, failing scores on other ballistic or quality-assurance tests, or a combination of the two.

“Since these are lifesaving pieces of equipment and are being used in support of the Iraq war, I urge immediate action since this technical office has little confidence in the performance of the items to provide the contracted levels of protection as defined in the performance specification,” wrote ballistics expert James MacKiewicz in a memorandum rejecting two lots of vests on July 19, 2004.

Gulf War & Q Veterans Getting Fucked Over By The Enemy: Bush & VA Politicians, Of Course: Who Else?

[Thanks to George McAnanama, Veterans For Peace Chapter 034 NYC, for posting.]

November 15, 2005 Editorial, The Staten Island Advance [Excerpts]

Last week the nation paused -- all too-briefly in our minds -- to honor the hundreds of thousands of veterans who have given, and continue to give, so much to this country.

Presently, there are close to 200,000 American troops fighting in Iraq, and as of today, some 2,067 have paid the ultimate cost for their bravery and died in battle. Thousands more have come home wounded in body and spirit.

So, it is with no small amount of outrage that we add our voice to those who are lambasting the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs directly, and by extension the White House, for its broken promise to the very same veterans, and their brothers and sisters still in arms in Iraq and Afghanistan, that President Bush once again used as a backdrop on Veterans Day.

Despite pledging to spend \$15 million a year on Gulf War illness research, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs spent only \$400,000 this year on studies of how toxic substances affected the war's soldiers, according to reports yesterday.

In addition, advocates for veterans told the ASSOCIATED PRESS, no money has been spent on a new center to study treatments for soldiers exposed to oil fires, vaccines, nerve gas and other toxic substances as former VA Secretary Anthony Principi promised last year.

"They are breaking the covenant that they made with soldiers of taking care of them when they come home," charged a rightfully angry Steve Robinson, executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center, an advocacy group.

Thousands of Gulf War veterans have experienced undiagnosed illnesses with symptoms such as chronic fatigue, loss of muscle control, diarrhea, migraines, dizziness, memory problems and loss of balance.

Unfortunately, for years the government turned a deaf ear to their pleas for better more comprehensive health care, and apparently has been in full denial about the possible links between the illnesses the veterans experienced and the mutations used and environmental conditions they were subjected to during the wars in which they fought.

Last year, with much fanfare on the part of the Bush administration, the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Illness released its report.

The bottom-line recommendation from the panel, after two years of reviewing Gulf War illness studies, was that the Veterans Administration should abandon stress studies and focus solely on toxic substances veterans encountered during the war.

That is when the \$15 million-a-year promise was made. The Veterans Administration was to set aside the funds for Gulf War illness studies, with the understanding that it would no longer pay for studies seeking to show stress as the primary cause of the ailments afflicting veterans of the 1991 Gulf War.

Last September, the VA's Office of Research reported it would spend more than \$9 million for Gulf War research and a similar amount in 2006. But it was recently learned that members of the advisory panel found -- after reviewing where money was spent -- that only \$1.7 million was for new projects and more than \$7 million was for projects already in place before 2005.

Over the Veterans Day weekend, retired Marine Gen. Joseph P. Hoar joined other critics of the health care veterans are receiving.

"President Bush has consistently refused to provide enough money for veterans' health care," said Gen. Hoar, who was the U. s. military commander in the Middle East.

"They also repeatedly tried to increase the cost of prescription drugs and health care services for veterans nationwide."

"Thousands of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan will require mental health care, yet the Bush administration has not taken action to deal with this emerging problem," said Gen. Hoar.

"As a veteran and a former commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, I have seen first hand the kind of sacrifices they are making for us. It's a debt we will never be able to repay," he continued during an interview. "But we have a special duty to make sure our veterans receive the benefits they have earned and deserve when they return home."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

December 2, 2005 CNN & Aljazeera & AFP

In Baquba, which lies on the Diyala River northeast of Baghdad, armed fighters targeted two brothers who serve on Iraq's electoral board, killing one and wounding the other, police in Baquba said.

Majid Jabbar Brisem al-Hamdani was killed about 2 a.m. Friday, police said. His brother, Hamed Jabbar al-Hamdani, who also served on the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq and was head of al-Zaghamiya election center, was wounded and hospitalized.

In the northern oil-hub of Kirkuk, an army officer and the bodyguard of a government official were killed, police said.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

Complexity Of Insurgency Helps It Survive: “They Have Adopted A Structure That Assures Their Longevity”

DECEMBER 2, 2005 By Dexter Filkins, The New York Times

While on Wednesday President Bush promised nothing less than "complete victory" over the Iraqi insurgency, the apparent proliferation of militant groups offers perhaps the best explanation as to why the insurgency has been so hard to destroy.

But whatever the appearances, American and Iraqi officials agree on the essential structure of the Iraqi insurgency: it is horizontal as opposed to hierarchical, and ad hoc as opposed to unified.

Attack any single part of it, and the rest carries on largely untouched. It cannot be decapitated, because the insurgency, for the most part, has no head. Only recently, American and Iraqi experts say, have they begun to grasp the new organizational structure that, among other things, is making the insurgency so difficult to stop.

"There is no center of gravity, no leadership, no hierarchy; they are more a constellation than an organization," said Bruce Hoffman, a terrorism expert at the Rand Corporation. "They have adopted a structure that assures their longevity."

In a war as murky as the one in Iraq, details about the workings of the insurgency are fleeting and few. But what is available suggests that the movement is often atomized and fragmented, but no less lethal for being so.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Got That Right #1

Bush was right when he said that Iraqis now are free to express their views, but what they are expressing in overwhelming numbers is the desire for American troops to leave their country. 01 December 2005 Star Tribune Editorial

Got That Right #2

12.2.05 Gail Russell Chaddock, Christian Science Monitor

Says Don Carns, a construction worker dropping in for lunch at the Byers-Tosh Post of the American Legion in Ligonier, Pa.: "Bring the kids back. It's a millionaire's war, and the poor people suffer."

“The Last Helicopter Will Pull Out Of The Green Zone. Let Us Hope That It Is Not Then Shot Down”

December 2, 2005 by Gary North, LewRockwell.com [Excerpts]

Here is the crucial American political fact of the Iraq war: *the hawks have no statistic that rivals the death toll.*

"We don't do body counts," said General Tommy Franks (retired). The Administration is betting the war on the outcome of the election to be held later this month. But once the election is over, what then? There are too many years in between elections.

The death toll rises every day. It is the Chinese water torture of statistics.

The debate has now been reduced to the doctrine of sunk costs. It therefore cannot be won by Bush.

The voting public thinks: "All those troops have died. We dare not lose. This would turn those deaths into a gigantic meaningless sacrifice."

This argument works to one side's advantage in every war. Before it finally ceases to be believed by the other side's supporters, it works until the public finally recognizes the meaning of the doctrine of sunk costs: the past is past. The past cannot be changed.

The voters hang on to their belief that going to war was a good idea, that all those deaths were not in vain. But eventually they realize that more deaths cannot resurrect the dead troops. They know this in theory from the beginning, but they do not know it emotionally.

This is why the death toll is the death knell for one side or the other in a war. At some point, one side says, "It's better to surrender than to fight on."

The debate today is over the meaning of the body counts. The war's defenders are still in the phase where they will not acknowledge the reality of the doctrine of sunk costs. They will. The fact that the insurgents have tripled the number of attacks in 2005 over 2004 shows where this war is headed.

Bush has broken the pottery. He owns it . . . for now. Whether the next President will play Nixon to Johnson, there will eventually be a President who will play Ford to Nixon.

The last helicopter will pull out of the Green Zone. Let us hope that it is not then shot down.

In The Footsteps Of An Old Fiasco: "Time For The Spear-Carriers To Bring Down The Curtains And Exit"

From: Z
To: GI Special
Sent: December 02, 2005
Subject: in the footsteps of an old fiasco

"In the confusion that followed the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, a force of Czech volunteers, unable to continue fighting on the eastern front after Russia's separate peace with Germany, decided to make their way out of Russia along the Trans-Siberian. Their objective was Vladivostock.

“America, Britain, Canada, and France, urged on by Japan, agreed to help the Czechs by sending an expedition to Siberia to secure the last part of their line of retreat.

The force to be employed was intended to be modest, but for the Japanese army the opportunity was not one to be missed.

“It deployed five divisions in 1918, instead of the one that had been promised, identifying their task as being 'to maintain peace in the Far East by occupying various strategic points in Russian territory east of the Lake Baikal.'

“This was a good deal more than saving the Czechs. Local puppet regimes were established under Japanese supervision in the area north of the Amur. Operations were later undertaken as far away as northern Sakhalin.

"In the end it all came to nothing. The cost was enormous; the western powers became restive about Japanese actions; no reliable anti-communist government took shape.

“Meanwhile Bolshevik troops advanced steadily from Omsk.

“In January 1920 the United States decided to withdraw, soon followed by Britain, Canada and France. Two years later Japan reluctantly did the same.

“The failure seriously weakened those in Japan who had hoped for a 'forward policy' on the mainland, backed by force. The army even lost public reputation.

“In the 1920s, it was said, army officers had trouble finding young women willing to marry them.”

W.G. Beasley, *The Japanese Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 238-239.

[Z writes:]

"Humanitarian intervention," a perennial imperial favorite.

New theater, some different actors, same wretched old farce.

Time for the spear-carriers to bring down the curtains and exit.

**Solidarity,
Z**

PS: Any rotten eggs on hand for the director?

“Withdrawal”:

“A Way To Maintain Or Intensify The War, While Pacifying The American Public”

In the end, ignore (if you can) the whirlwind of withdrawal language that will turn all sorts of non- or semi-withdrawal schemes into something other than what they are, and try to keep your eyes on those shoals of reality.

01 December 2005 By Tom Engelhardt, TomDispatch [Excerpts]

In draw-down terms, the plan seems to go something like this: While withdrawal was making onto the public agenda, our actual force in Iraq has risen in recent months from approximately 138,000 to about 160,000.

So the first "withdrawals" (plural) the administration will be able to announce after the December 15 election - about 20,000 troops - will simply get us back to the levels that Donald Rumsfeld and his planners always meant us to be at.

General George Casey, US commander in Iraq, and others have been letting the news ooze out for a while (despite rumors of presidential slap-downs for doing so) that, if all goes half-well, we will perhaps withdraw another 40,000 troops (the figures vary depending upon the leak) in 2006, leaving us with just under 100,000 troops there.

In 2007... well, who knows, but the process, it's clear, is meant to be more or less unending, and, mind you, that's according to the Pentagon's "moderately optimistic" scenario. (Seymour Hersh claims that the administration's "most ambitious" plans call for all troops designated "combat," which is not all troops, to be withdrawn by the summer of 2008.)

The thinking behind such strategies is, in fact, as recognizable to those of us who lived through the Vietnam era as "Vietnamization." Here's what I wrote about such "withdrawal" plans during the Vietnam era in my book, *The End of Victory Culture*, published a distant decade ago. See if it doesn't have a familiar ring to it:

"The idea of 'withdrawing' from Vietnam was there from the beginning, though never as an actual plan. All real options for ending the war were invariably linked to 'cutting and running,' or 'dishonor,' or 'surrender,' or 'humiliation,' and so dismissed within the councils of government more or less before being raised. The attempt to prosecute the war and to withdraw from it were never separable, no less opposites.

“If anything, withdrawal became a way to maintain or intensify the war, while pacifying the American public.

"Withdrawal' involved not departure but all sorts of departure-like maneuvers - from bombing pauses that led to fiercer bombing campaigns to negotiation offers never meant

to be taken up to a 'Vietnamization' plan in which ground troops would be pulled out as the air war was intensified.

“Each gesture of withdrawal allowed the war planners to fight a little longer; but if withdrawal did not withdraw the country from the war, the war's prosecution never brought it close to a victorious conclusion.”

American "senior officials" in the glory days of our Iraq adventure spoke regularly and without shame about the need to "put an Iraqi face" on Iraq.

This was a wonderfully grim phrase which, in a strange way, expressed their deeper meaning exactly; they wanted to put a comforting Iraqi mask over the American face of the occupation.

Now, we find a military version of the same, whose bluntness makes a certain sense of our moment, as quoted in a mid-November piece from Anton La Guardia, Diplomatic Editor of the British Telegraph:

"Senior US military commanders have long argued that the way to defeat the insurgency is to reduce substantially the number of foreign troops in order to 'reduce the perception of occupation' and draw Sunnis into the political process."

To "reduce the perception of occupation," that's a phrase to savor for its truth-telling essence. It catches something of the administration's policy now that it's actually on the run at home.

Air Power: It remains amazing to me that Hersh's report is the first serious mainstream piece since the invasion of Iraq to take up the uses of air power in that country.

It's a subject I've written about for the last two years.

After all, we've loosed our Air Force on heavily populated urban Iraq, regularly bombing (and sometimes destroying significant sections of) Sunni cities and towns (and in 2004 Shiite ones as well). There have been hundreds and hundreds of reporters in Iraq, many embedded with the military - and yet it's as if they simply never look up.

Figures on the use of air power are almost impossible to come by, though Hersh tells us in his Democracy Now interview that the bombing has "gone up exponentially, certainly in the last four or five months in the Sunni Triangle."

He adds, however, that "we don't have reporters at the air bases. We don't know what's going on with the air war."

Here's just one passage that gives a modest sense of some of what the Bush administration has been doing from the air: "Naval efforts in Iraq include not only the Marine Corps but also virtually every type of deployable Naval asset in our inventory. Navy and Marine carrier-based aircraft flew over 21,000 hours, dropped over 54,000 pounds of ordnance and played a vital role in the fight for Fallujah."

In the end, ignore (if you can) the whirlwind of withdrawal language that will turn all sorts of non- or semi-withdrawal schemes into something other than what they are, and try to keep your eyes on those shoals of reality.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

So Much For That “Sovereignty” Bullshit: US Military Plans Unannounced Inspections Of Iraqi Jails

02/12/2005 (AFP)

The US military plans unannounced inspections of suspected Iraqi jails to make sure prisoners are not being abused in secret Interior Ministry facilities, a top general said Friday.

A US-led raid last month freed about 170 mostly Sunni prisoners from an Interior Ministry jail in Baghdad where at least seven detainees had been tortured and others deprived of food, water and medical care.

Not Quite Slavery, But Close:

Iraq Soldiers Secretly Get The Word Out About Extreme Exploitation Of U.S. Base Laborers

There is no provision for sick leave. Any employee who threatens a strike or attempts to organize is subject to immediate dismissal and the employee required to pay for his return plane ticket. Most of the workers are deemed unskilled and work seven days a week for 12 hours a day. Two Army officers alerted UPI to the issue and arranged the first meeting with the Sierra Leone worker.

Dec 2, 2005 By Pamela Hess, United Press International

WASHINGTON, DC, United States (UPI) -- While the United States spends billions on troop support in Iraq, the people serving the meals, scooping the ice cream, and washing the dishes make as little as 50 cents an hour.

Those workers are recruited from countries with already low wages, where jobs are scarce. And as pressure to keep the logistics contract cost down has increased, subcontractors have moved from country to country in search of cheaper labor markets.

That is what brought around 770 workers from Sierra Leone, Africa, to Iraq in July to work for ESS Support Services Worldwide, A British-based food service company specializing, according to its Web site, in 'remote site, defense and off-shore locations.'

Most of the workers are deemed unskilled and work seven days a week for 12 hours a day, according to their contracts, one of which was obtained by United Press International. In practice, workers said in interviews, most only work six days a week.

There is no provision for sick leave. Any employee who threatens a strike or attempts to organize is subject to immediate dismissal and the employee required to pay for his return plane ticket.

For this they are paid \$150 a month, roughly 45 cents an hour.

Salaries are deposited in bank accounts in Africa so the money is available to the workers' families.

The workers also get a \$40 a month cash allowance on top of that, but the contract states the money is a gift, and the amount discretionary and may be eliminated. Their housing -- three to a standard size trailer -- laundry, food and uniforms are provided free.

Employees are prohibited from discussing the contract and 'ESS internal issues or complaints' with anyone outside the company, including the military and media.

A copy of the contract was provided to UPI by an ESS employee via e-mail, with the assistance of a U.S. military officer. The worker quit Iraq and has now returned to Sierra Leone.

Previous to the Sierra Leone contract, ESS employed workers from Sri Lanka who were paid about \$400 a month for the same work, according to a U.S. military officer who oversees the logistics contract at one of the bases where ESS provides dining services.

Paul Kelly, ESS group corporate affairs director, acknowledged previous workers were paid more in an interview in October with UPI. He tagged the higher wages to less competition for the LOGCAP subcontract. When more companies entered the fray, ESS found cheaper labor to improve its pricing to the government.

'Initially wage rates were higher because there were fewer companies bidding (on the subcontract),' said Kelly, declining to confirm the old wage. 'As more companies competed for contracts -- labor is one of those areas companies have been targeting' to drive down the bids.

The switch to cheaper labor came as Gen. George Casey, the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, launched an effort to drive down the costs of LOGCAP.

'Increasing expenditures in theater ... jeopardize our ability to maintain public support as the costs associated with our operations continue to rise,' he wrote in a memo issued to commanders this summer, and exclusively reported by UPI. 'Our spending in theater not only affects us directly, it has a ripple effect throughout all of the services.'

'When we started there were a handful of companies competing. Now there are probably 20 or 30, which does drive price down, and of course that's what LOGCAP wants,' said Kelly.

Acknowledging the Sierra Leonean workers agreed to work for the advertised pay, military personnel interviewed in Iraq still expressed surprise and discomfort at the wages paid to those feeding and cleaning up after them every day, with whom many say they are quite friendly.

Two Army officers alerted UPI to the issue and arranged the first meeting with the Sierra Leone worker.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Reality Vs. Bush: **“The Insurgency Remained Robust As Ever And Could Grow A Good Deal Stronger”**

12-02-2005 (AFP)

A study released by the Washington Institute of Near East Studies on Thursday, however, suggested that the insurgency remained robust as ever and could grow a good deal stronger. Researchers said the insurgency had managed to exploit only a fraction of the disgruntled minority Sunni Arab population with any kind of military training.

"Should the insurgency succeed in exploiting this untapped potential, it could greatly increase its military capabilities," they wrote.

The analysts said the insurgents had scored "important tactical and operational successes" while establishing themselves as a major force in the Sunni Arab community.

The study maintained that foreign jihadists represented only five to seven percent of the insurgency and did not account for the majority of attacks or fatalities.

The tone of the report contrasted with the assertion in the "national strategy for victory in Iraq" unveiled on Wednesday by President George W. Bush, who said US forces were making "significant progress" in containing the insurgency.

Bush Praises Scum Who Stole Azerbaijan Election [They Got Oil]

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

12.2.05 AFP

A European observer mission to elections in Azerbaijan has attacked President Bush for "double standards" on democracy.

Leo Platvoet, head of a mission to the former Soviet republic from the 46-member Council of Europe, said on Friday: "We can be disappointed that Mr Bush has double standards when he's talking about democracy in Azerbaijan."

The United States issued a statement earlier in the day praising Azerbaijan, which has large oil reserves, for its handling of election fraud after a controversial vote on 6 November. The statement said the US was looking forward to co-operation with the new pro-government parliament.

CoE envoys, who said earlier that the parliamentary elections had failed to meet international standards, said the US embassy statement amounted to a contradiction with Washington's stated aims of promoting democracy.

Andreas Gross, a delegation member, said: "I hope European countries will not be a similar source of disappointment."

Azerbaijan's opposition, which won only nine of 125 seats in the election according to official results, has boycotted the parliament, which held its first session on Friday, and called for new elections.

The ruling Yeni Azerbaijan party of Ilham Aliyev, the president, took 55 seats, and scores of nominally independent parliamentarians are seen as ready-made allies for his party.

The opposition has accused Western powers of sidelining their concerns for democracy in Azerbaijan in favour of backing the ruling government because of the country's considerable oil reserves. [Duh.]

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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