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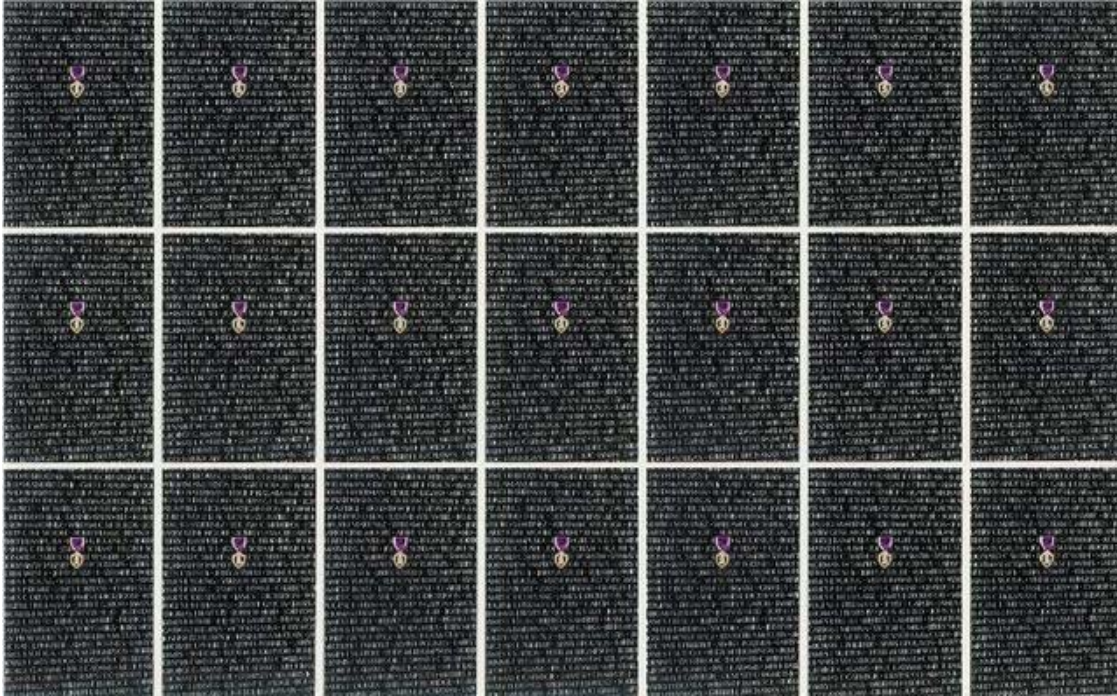


Photo from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) T

**“The Civilian Politicians
Are The Ones Who Stick
Us In It”**

**“Reserve Officer Says I Should
Continue To Work Against War”**

January 13, 2006 by Susan Van Haitsma, Common Dreams NewsCenter [Excerpt]
Susan Van Haitsma is active with Nonmilitary Options for Youth in Austin, Texas and
can be reached at jeffjweb@sbcglobal.net.

Entering a local high school just before the holidays, I was pleased to see a peace sign among the seasonal decorations painted on the front doors. The image I noticed next, placed on a coffee table in the front office where I signed in, was an Army Of One recruiting display featuring a young soldier and the slogan, "Every generation has its heroes. This one is no different."

Later that day, I heard presentations by two actual soldiers back from Iraq who indicated they didn't feel like heroes.

In fact, one of the young vets said that it hurt to be called a hero because it made him feel empty inside. "The loneliness of your self-sacrifice only grows," he said. "I've been out of the Army a year and some change, but it hasn't gotten any better. I don't know how I can deal with this for 30 years. Talking about it helps, but I can't ever get to specifics. Why would I tell my mom what a burning baby smells like?"

His Army unit was one of the first to enter Iraq on March 20, 2003, and later he was transferred suddenly from field artillery to military police and assigned to Abu Ghraib.

On Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, my brother-in-law, a reserve officer in the US Air Force, is scheduled to be en route to Iraq.

He and I are the same age, and as a 48 year-old professional in the medical field, he believes that part of his duty as an older reservist is to provide needed leadership to younger soldiers regardless of his personal views about the war. He volunteered to go. "I didn't stay home and hide," he explains.

We've talked about his reasons for going, and his motivation jibes with what I hear from other soldiers. It has to do with brotherhood and a desire to save your brothers from death. It's a heroic impulse that I believe our government leaders intentionally exploit by creating a maelstrom of disaster that keeps drawing in more soldiers who want to save each other.

My brother-in-law, who I love dearly, knows that I support other ways to not stay home and hide that don't involve carrying a gun.

And when I ask what I should do to support him, he says I should continue to work against war, because "the civilian politicians are the ones who stick us in it." He is entering the maelstrom, and the only way I can think to save him is to follow that advice.

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

SOLDIER KILLED NEAR RAMADI

1.26.06 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS RELEASE

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Soldier assigned to 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), died of wounds from a rocket attack on his vehicle while conducting combat operations against the enemy near Ramadi, Jan. 25.

MND-B SOLDIER KILLED, ANOTHER WOUNDED IN ROADSIDE BOMB ATTACK

1.26.06 AP

A U.S. soldier was killed and another wounded by a roadside bomb blast south of Baghdad.

Soldier Killed In Falluja

1.26.06 Reuters

FALLUJA: A U.S. soldier died after his vehicle was hit by a rocket during combat operations in Falluja, 50 km (32 miles) west of Baghdad, on Wednesday the U.S. military said in a statement.

Kansas Soldier Killed

January 26, 2006 (AP)

The Defense Department says a Kansas man was one of two soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas, killed Monday in Iraq.

The Pentagon identifies the Kansan as 18-year-old Private First Class Peter D. Wagler of Partridge, located about ten miles southwest of Hutchinson. He would have turned 19 in February.

Wagler and 32-year-old Staff Sergeant Lance M- Chase of Oklahoma City died Monday in Baghdad of wounds they suffered when an explosive device went off near their tank.

Both were assigned to the First Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, Fourth Brigade Combat Team of the Fourth Infantry Division at Fort Hood.

Vermont National Guard Sgt. Killed



(AP: Photo/Vermont National Guard)

01/26/06 AP & WCAX

Vermont National Guard Sgt. Joshua Allen Johnson, 24, of Richford, Vt., died in surgery Jan. 25, 2006, about six hours after being injured while riding in an armored Humvee just west of Ramadi.

Johnson, 24, was from Richford, where he lived with his grandparents. Johnson was born in St. Albans.

Johnson was in the right front seat of the vehicle, wearing armor, when a rocket-propelled grenade smashed through the windshield in front of him.

Johnson, a graduate of Richford Junior-Senior High School, lived in Richford with his grandparents Phyllis and Harold Johnson. Officials identified Johnson's mother and stepfather as Laura and Kevin Royea.

Johnson was deployed a year ago with Task Force Saber. He was due home on leave next month and was to return for good during the summer.

Johnson formerly was a member of the active duty Army where he served from 2001 to 2003 before joining the Vermont Guard. He worked for Century Arms in Franklin County.

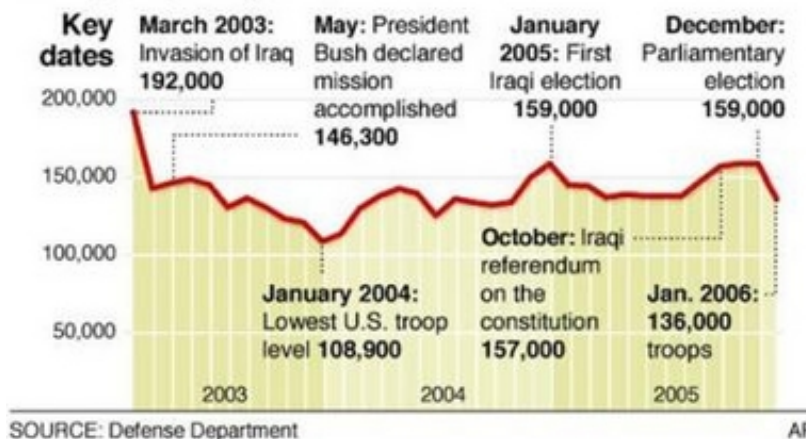
The death is the 20th in Iraq of an American servicemen with ties to Vermont. A 21st Vermonter died of natural causes in Kuwait while training to go to Iraq.

Maj. Gen. Martha Rainville, commander of the Vermont National Guard said she did not believe members of the Vermont Guard were in particular danger.

U.S. Troops Levels Don't Fall In Iraq

U.S. troop levels fall in Iraq

There are currently around 136,000 U.S. troops in Iraq. The number of American troops in Iraq has increased since the low reached nearly two years ago.



UPDATES troop numbers for 2006; chart shows number of U.S. troops in Iraq, by month. (AP Graphic 1.26.06) [Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

TROOP NEWS

Rumsfeld Says Army Not “Stretched”

1.26.06 USA Today

Secretary Rumsfeld dismisses two new reports that warn of badly stretched U.S. military because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He said the reports' authors are ill-informed about America's "battle-hardened" forces.

MORE:

Top U.S. General Says Rumsfeld Full Of Shit

Jan. 26, 2006 NICK WADHAMS, Associated Press

DIWANIYAH, Iraq: The top U.S. general in Iraq acknowledged Thursday that American forces in this country are "stretched," but he said he will only recommend withdrawals based on operational needs.

Gen. George Casey told reporters he had discussed the issue with Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker on Wednesday and that the Army chief of staff believes he can still sustain the mission in Iraq.

**LIAR
TRAITOR
SOLDIER-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND**



REUTERS/Jim Young

Angry British Soldiers Demand A British Armed Forces Federation To Represent Them

Jeff Duncan of Save the Scottish Regiments, said: "All they are asking for is some respect and be treated fairly and honestly. Many within the military have reached breaking point, either leaving en masse or attempting to protect themselves via this organisation.

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

January 26, 2006 Audrey Gillan and Richard Norton-Taylor, The Guardian [Excerpts]

A groundswell of discontent among members of the armed forces is leading to calls for the formation of a federation to campaign for the rights of the 250,000 servicemen and women in the UK.

A battery of concerns over Iraq, including shortages of kit during the invasion, as well as misgivings about the proposed new deployment to Afghanistan, along with the issues of bullying, the fall in recruitment and retention of soldiers, have galvanised the call for an association.

The proposal, which would see the formation of an association along the lines of the Police Federation, has been raised in the House of Lords and has been widely discussed among the rank and file. With the provisional title of the **British Armed Forces Federation**,

Today, the defence secretary, John Reid, will confirm that Britain will send up to 4,000 troops to Afghanistan in the spring.

The soldiers' association would represent the interests of members of the army, navy and air force in everything from welfare to legal matters. Its supporters say it could provide help for soldiers facing court martial as a result of actions in Iraq and assist those who feel they are victims of bullying.

The idea came earlier this month from members of a website for the armed forces called the Army Rumour Service. It picked up such a head of steam that Lord Garden, raised the issue in parliament.

Yesterday, an MoD spokesman said it was not considering a federation, saying: "There are a range of avenues for soldiers, sailors and airmen to express their views on matters which affect their service." **[Fragging, for example, if the Ministry of Defense would prefer that.]**

Jeff Duncan of Save the Scottish Regiments, said: "All they are asking for is some respect and be treated fairly and honestly. Many within the military have reached

breaking point, either leaving en masse or attempting to protect themselves via this organisation.

MORE:

WHEN A UNION'S INSPIRATION IN THE SOLDIERS' BLOOD SHALL RUN

January 26, 2006 By Max Watts

**WHEN A UNION'S INSPIRATION
IN THE SOLDIERS' BLOOD SHALL RUN
WILL THERE BE A NEWER POWER
UNDER THE IRAQI SUN ?**

**YET WHAT FORCE IN BASRA'S WEAKER
THAN THE PRIVATE STRENGTH OF ONE?
WILL THE BAFF NOW GET US OUT?**

**SOLDIERS NEED A REAL UNION
SOLDIERS NEED A REAL UNION!
SOLDIERS NEED A REAL UNION
BUT THE BAFF MAY BE A START?**

BAFF!

**(WITH APOLOGIES TO JOHN BROWN, WHO FOUGHT SO ALL MEN SHOULD BE
FREE! Max Watts)**

[With DAVID CORTRIGHT, MAX WATTS is co-author of LEFT FACE, Soldier Unions and Resistance Movements in Modern Armies; Contributions in Military Studies, Number 107; GREENWOOD PRESS, New York • Westport, Connecticut • London]

War Profiteer Grabbing Even More Profits

1.26.06 Washington Post

General Dynamics Corp. registered a 21 percent increase in its fourth-quarter profits, buoyed by continued military spending on technology and demand for its Gulfstream business jets.

**IMPOSSIBLE MISSION
FUTILE EXERCISE
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



U.S. combat engineers from Battalion Landing Team 1st Bn., 2nd Marines carry artillery shells they unearthed at a village in Hit January 7, 2006. REUTERS/ Sgt. Richard D. Stephens/Handout

**Joint Chiefs And Bush Regime
Scum Plan Huge Increase In
Military Retiree Medical Care
Costs:
Fuck The Vets:
They Want The Money For
Weapons**

“In the middle of a war, with troops and families vastly overstressed, recruiting already in the toilet, and retention at risk, the Defense Department wants to pay for

weapons by cutting manpower and trying to cut career military benefits by \$1,000 a year or more? That's just flat unconscionable. Not only is it grossly unfair to the people, but it poses terrible risks for long-term retention and readiness."

January 26, 2006 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer

A Pentagon proposal that could triple some Tricare insurance costs for military retirees and their families is drawing sharp criticism from military advocacy groups and members of Congress.

Increases would be substantial: as much as \$1,200 more a year by 2009, with no end in sight because the plan calls for annual rate hikes in 2010 and beyond that would match inflation.

Senior Pentagon leaders, both military and civilian, know their plan will meet with stiff opposition and are trying to prepare a united front, defense sources said.

The Joint Chiefs are considering sending a rare joint letter to Congress explaining why the fee increases are important because they do not see how the military can afford needed weapons programs if soaring health care costs remain unchecked, sources said.

"This is wrong on so many levels," said Steve Strobbridge, government relations director for the Military Officers Association of America.

"In the middle of a war, with troops and families vastly overstressed, recruiting already in the toilet, and retention at risk, the Defense Department wants to pay for weapons by cutting manpower and trying to cut career military benefits by \$1,000 a year or more? That's just flat unconscionable. Not only is it grossly unfair to the people, but it poses terrible risks for long-term retention and readiness."

Strobbridge acknowledged that health care costs are rising, but said he can't see why defense officials are willing to accept massive increases in the cost of weapons but not in personnel.

"If DoD is willing to accept 400 percent to 500 percent cost growth in weapons systems, then people are no less important," he said, noting that the cost of an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer has increased 392 percent since 1985, while the cost of an F-22 Raptor has jumped by 526 percent.

"The Pentagon needs to acknowledge its own management responsibility for rising weapons costs rather than trying to stick military retirees with the bill."

"For anyone well along in their career who is thinking about retirement, this is a blow to their expectations about what the government is going to do for them," said Jim Lokovic of the Air Force Sergeants Association, who has been traveling to military bases to discuss changes in pay and benefits.

"Many of the people I have been talking with have 10 or more years of service, and remember when they were told by recruiters and career counselors that if they

just stayed around, the government was going to provide them with free health care in retirement,” Lokovic said.

“Well, we learned years ago it wasn’t free, and now we are learning that it isn’t cheap either,” he said.

“I think those who are well along toward retirement in their career are going to stay ... but those who are at the decision point are going to see this as an erosion of retirement benefits. I promise you some are going to get out because of it.”

Strobridge agreed. “Don’t try to tell us that a country that can afford hundreds of billions of dollars in pork spending and tax cuts can’t afford to pay for both military weapons and retiree health care,” he said.

An Honorable Officer Tries To Stop \$200 Million Of Pentagon Thieving And Procurement Fraud: Command Couldn’t Care Less: They’ll Cut Vets Medical Benefits So The Rats Can Steal More!

"They never did anything; not a whisper from them," Fellencer, a retired Army Reserve lieutenant colonel, told Knight Ridder. "It's just typical. I'm just so frustrated."

January 24th, 2006 by Steh Borenstein, KRT NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON -- A retired Army Reserve officer called the Pentagon's fraud hotline last year to complain that the Defense Department had overpaid for kitchen appliances: \$1,000 for popcorn makers and toasters, \$5,500 for a deep-fat fryer that cost other government agencies \$1,919.

Although the officer provided a four-page spreadsheet showing 135 cases of higher prices, the Defense Department dismissed the tip without checking with him.

Documents acquired by Knight Ridder under the Freedom of Information Act reveal Paul Fellencer Sr. tried to blow the whistle on what he estimated was as much as \$200 million of wasteful spending.

At issue is a multibillion-dollar Pentagon purchasing system called the prime vendor program, which uses middlemen who set their own prices, instead of direct purchases from manufacturers or competitive bidding.

A Knight Ridder investigation of the program found that, for 102 of 122 pieces of food equipment, the Pentagon had paid higher prices to prime vendors than the government did to contractors outside the system. For example, the Pentagon paid \$20 apiece for ice cube trays that retail for less than a dollar.

Last year, the Pentagon's waste-and-fraud hotline received four tips complaining about the prime vendor program.

One was from Fellencer, who documented Defense Department purchases in a spreadsheet complete with stock numbers and purchase orders. It showed that the Pentagon had spent 39 percent more using prime vendors, compared with buying the items through the civilian General Services Administration. The data were provided to officials at the hotline.

Pentagon investigators never called Fellencer. They spent a total of eight hours investigating his tip, talked to the officials responsible for the program and dismissed the tip as "unsubstantiated," the documents obtained by Knight Ridder show.

"They never did anything; not a whisper from them," Fellencer, a retired Army Reserve lieutenant colonel, told Knight Ridder. "It's just typical. I'm just so frustrated."

According to Diana Stewart, a Defense Logistics Agency spokeswoman, investigators didn't need to contact Fellencer because his letter and spreadsheets "provided adequate information for the examining official to conduct the review and investigation of the complaint." [

Stewart defended the agency's inquiry.

She said a Defense Logistics Agency investigator found that prime vendors were charging reasonable prices most of the time, *"based on interviews with the food service-equipment prime vendor team and his own evaluation of a statistically valid sample of food service-equipment item prices."*

[Get that? Stewart asked the thieves whether or not they were stealing!!]

Fellencer's spreadsheet included the following:

An April 2004 purchase of two deep-fat fryers for \$5,501.20 apiece; the same item was on the General Services Administration price list for \$1,919.

A December 2003 purchase of an electric waffle iron for \$1,781.90, compared with the GSA price of \$655.96.

A January 2004 purchase of a \$1,033 popcorn maker that could have been bought for \$768.95.

Four toasters bought in September 2003 for \$1,025 apiece that other federal agencies were buying for \$790.60.

Other tips to the fraud hotline involved allegations that prime vendors substituted cheaper materials than the ones they'd been paid for and that Defense Logistics Agency officials in South Korea were receiving gifts of food, drink and visits by "juicy girls," an expression for female bar companions. Those complaints either were called unsubstantiated or sent to other agencies for criminal investigation.

‘Friendly Fire’ “Her Son's Death Has Been Sullied By Partisan Politics And International Intrigue”

Even today, 20 months later, Peggy Buryj, a Bush supporter who believes strongly in the Iraq war, is left with swirling questions, a shattered faith in the Army, and the unsettling feeling that her son's death has been sullied by partisan politics and international intrigue.

Jan. 17, 2006 By Josh White, MSNBC

WASHINGTON: Army Spec. Jesse Buryj was in the gun turret of a Humvee that night, guarding a traffic circle in Karbala, Iraq. The soldiers were on edge, they had been warned about a car bomb, so when a dump truck came barreling into the intersection, they opened fire from all sides. But the truck kept coming and crashed into Buryj's armored vehicle, sending the 21-year-old hurtling to the ground.

The next day, May 5, 2004, an Army officer notified Buryj's wife and parents in Canton, Ohio, that he had been killed in a crash early that morning. Several days later, as the family pressed for more information, a casualty assistance officer said that Buryj also had been shot. A death certificate that arrived in July listed a gunshot wound as the cause of death, but provided no information about the circumstances.

Peggy Buryj asked everyone she could to help find out the details of her son's last hours. She even asked President Bush when she and other grieving parents met with him during a campaign stop in hotly contested Ohio.

He promised to look into it. Soon afterward, she said, his campaign called and asked her to appear in a commercial for him, but she declined.

Months went by with no clarification. "We had a lot of questions," said Amber Buryj, 22, Jesse Buryj's bride of seven months. "We were left in the dark."

And in the dark they stayed.

Family members say they were not told Jesse was killed by "friendly fire," though the Army later said they were.

They did not know that Polish soldiers with Jesse's unit may have fired the fatal shot and that his death had the potential to cause a rift with a coalition partner right before the 2004 presidential election.

They asked friends in Jesse's platoon what had happened, but the soldiers had been told not to discuss the incident until the investigation was complete.

Even today, 20 months later, Peggy Buryj, a Bush supporter who believes strongly in the Iraq war, is left with swirling questions, a shattered faith in the Army, and the unsettling feeling that her son's death has been sullied by partisan politics and international intrigue.

Of the approximately 1,500 Army deaths so far in the Iraq war, 11 have been officially attributed to friendly fire. Even Army officials acknowledge that the number is too low, citing the difficulty of ascertaining the cause of death during intense firefights.

But military experts agree there's another reason friendly-fire cases are often left unexamined: morale. Retired Lt. Col. Charles R. Shrader said these incidents can be so devastating to other troops that it is "not helpful" to investigate most of them. "The only reason for pursuing one of these things is to work out the rules and principles to avoid it in the future," he said.

Buryj was killed just days after former professional football player Pat Tillman was mistakenly gunned down by his own men in Afghanistan, and Buryj's family likens his case to the more famous soldier's death.

The Army first reported that Tillman died while charging up a hill at the enemy. He was awarded a medal for bravery, members of his unit were told not to discuss the incident, evidence was destroyed and the nature of his death was hidden from his family until after his nationally televised funeral.

And while Tillman's case had the potential to become a public relations disaster in the United States, Buryj's death had international ramifications. U.S. officials alleged within internal channels that Polish troops killed him with reckless shots. Polish officials said Polish troops could not have killed him.

Tests that could have determined the truth were not conducted.

"If they can lie to Pat Tillman's family, what do you think they're going to do to Ma and Pop in Middle America here?" asked Peggy Buryj, who had supported her son's decision to join the Army after his high school graduation in 2002. "The story changes. You can't believe anything."

Peggy and Amber Buryj believe they were strung along because Jesse's death became a diplomatic embarrassment.

Documents obtained by The Washington Post reveal one investigation that was abruptly terminated because of diplomatic concerns, another that was not shared with Polish allies, and delays in the release of official reports about Buryj's death.

Those documents were not issued until after Bush was reelected, with the help of a slim margin in Buryj's home state of Ohio.

"I'm angry, I'm so angry," Peggy Buryj said. "I gave them my son, and he served proudly. He didn't deserve this. His family didn't deserve this. I just want to know the truth."

According to Army documents, investigation reports and interviews, a scene of chaos played out the night of May 4, 2004.

Jesse Ryan Buryj was a team gunner with the 4th Platoon, 66th Military Police Company, based at Fort Lewis, Wash. His unit was taking part in Operation Dagger Stab in response to the April uprising of the Mahdi militia, led by Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr. There had been several reports that the militia was converting heavy vehicles into massive car bombs, one of the most deadly insurgent tactics.

At 11:30 p.m., Buryj's unit linked up with Polish troops and the several dozen soldiers convoyed to an intersection in Karbala, where they set up a checkpoint at a traffic circle. It was the first mission in which the unit had operated jointly with Polish troops.

"The Poles were very liberal in their use of force when they perceived a threat," a U.S. officer, who was not named, said in an interview with investigators. (Many names in the documents were redacted for security reasons.) U.S. soldiers reported that Polish troops opened fire on several vehicles that night, sometimes without justification.

Buryj was in the turret of an armored Humvee with a trailer on the east side of the circle, while Polish and U.S. units manned several entrances to the checkpoint.

At 1 a.m. on May 5, a dump truck approached the circle from the south and slowed, as if to stop.

"It just sat there for a few seconds, hesitated, and then it just plowed through," Sgt. Chris DeCloud, a member of Buryj's unit, said in a recent interview. "The engine revved and boom, it was coming through the checkpoint. The Poles were lighting it up from all sides. We lit it up."

The tires blew, and the truck veered to the right but did not slow. Its windshield cracked into a ragged spider web, and the driver slumped, dead. Buryj, seeing the truck coming directly at him, fired several rounds from his M249 machine gun. The truck rammed his vehicle, sending it up on its passenger-side wheels and tossing Buryj to the ground.

"We thought this truck was going to blow up, this is the end. We all did," DeCloud said, adding that he didn't think his unit was taking fire from the Poles. "I thought we were the only ones shooting" when the truck hit the Humvee.

One soldier told investigators he did not remember hearing his own weapon fire or the truck hitting the Humvee. "The atmosphere during the fight for me was one of confusion and like I was looking on from the outside," he said.

The U.S. investigation rules out the possibility that the U.S. soldiers at Buryj's side could have accidentally shot him, although several soldiers reported bullets flying in all directions. Investigators later found holes in Buryj's vehicle that appeared to show that the bullets came from close by, so close the tracers were still burning when they hit.

At 1:08 a.m., the U.S. platoon leader called for medical support. Buryj was on the ground, complaining that he couldn't feel his legs. Medics who arrived 10 minutes later surmised he had a broken back. They took him to a base camp and then transferred him to a combat hospital in Baghdad.

On the way there, about two hours after he was injured, medics discovered a puncture wound in his lower back. By this time he was unconscious. He died of internal injuries at 4:49 a.m.

Meanwhile, soldiers at the traffic circle in Karbala found that the dump truck was filled with dirt or sand, not explosives. "The driver and passenger were wearing civilian clothing and no weapons were found," an incident report said.

An official U.S. casualty report said that Buryj had died of "a back injury" caused by hostile enemy activity.

DeCloud, Buryj's roommate and a close friend, said the death devastated his unit.

"He was just awesome. The kid was hilarious," he said. "In the worst circumstances, he could still make you laugh. The whole thing was really hard. I always wondered why it had to be him."

A military police battalion commander wrote a letter to the family on May 7, praising Buryj and crediting him with killing one attacker and wounding another in the incident that killed him.

"Unfortunately, the truck hit Jesse's military vehicle in the fight and Jesse sustained severe injuries that he was unable to overcome," the letter reads.

Buryj was awarded a Bronze Star for valor. A death certificate issued four days later, however, called the incident a "homicide" caused by a "penetrating gunshot wound of the back." Buryj was buried in Canton on May 15, with military honors.

The death certificate was handed over to the family about two months later.

As for the source of the bullet, one investigator reported that "it is impossible that the round came from a U.S. weapon." That officer interviewed Polish troops but wrote that "sworn statements were not taken due to the International sensitivity of

this investigation." The investigation was suspended on May 18 "due to the combined nature" of the operation.

A follow-up U.S. investigation by higher-ranking officials that was submitted to commanders on July 27, 2004, classified Buryj's death as a "tragic accident" most likely caused by fire from Polish forces.

It recommended that they be "held accountable" for violations of standard rules of engagement but also noted that "tragic errors and inevitable mistakes can be used by international critics to attempt to hinder or derail the democratic cooperation" in Iraq.

The Poles also investigated. Their report, finished on June 25, 2004, and translated into English, found exactly the opposite: Polish troops could not have fired the shot because of their locations, but U.S. troops may have.

Piotr Paszkowski, a spokesman for the Polish Ministry of Defense, said he was shocked to learn that the Army was blaming Polish troops. He said a joint U.S.-Polish investigation revealed insufficient evidence to show who shot Buryj.

"Any suggestions that Jesse Buryj was shot by Polish troops on the night of May 4-5, 2004, at a joint American-Polish checkpoint in Karbala, have no basis in fact," Polish defense officials said in a written response to questions, translated from Polish.

The Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory in Forest Park, Ga., could have cleared up the mystery. It reported that the bullet and fragments recovered from Buryj's body provided "sufficient individual characteristics for comparison purposes" and suggested collecting all suspect weapons for analysis.

But that didn't happen. DeCloud said the unit offered to turn over its weapons for testing but "they never got back to us."

Because the investigation wasn't complete, "we couldn't talk about it for a year, and we were pretty pissed off about it," said DeCloud, who is a friend of Amber's. "Maybe they didn't want to show there were problems within the coalition. It undoubtedly caused some tension between the two forces. No one wants to take the blame for what happened."

A statement from a task force commander in June 2004 expressed the same sentiment: "I am concerned as a commander of the effects of fratricide on the continued operational partnership between the MPs and the Poles."

In July 2004, two months after their son died, Steve and Peggy Buryj met Bush after a rally at the Canton Civic Center and passed him a letter asking for the truth. "I asked him to do what he could," Peggy said. "He appeared concerned and was very sincere. He said that sometimes all it takes is a call from the president."

Nothing happened, and Peggy Buryj doesn't know whether he made that call.

In early October, she said, she received a call from the Bush campaign in Ohio. She said Darrin Klinger, then executive director of the Bush-Cheney Ohio campaign, asked her if she would be interested in appearing in a campaign commercial as a grieving mother who was sticking by her president.

(Klinger, reached at his office in Columbus, Ohio, said he is familiar with the Buryj family but does not recall that conversation.)

She said she refused. "I told them that if he finds out what happened to my son, I'll win him an Academy Award," she said. "I voted for Bush, I was a supporter. But I was just getting strung along, and I knew it at that point.

"I think Bush needed Ohio to swing the election, and I think they didn't want the publicity of what really happened to Jesse," she said.

The final casualty report was prepared on Nov. 22, 2004, attributing Buryj's death to "hostile action." The death certificate said he died within "minutes" of sustaining the gunshot wound, but it listed the time of death as hours after the incident.

The final autopsy report, dated Nov. 24, 2004, attributed the death to friendly fire, but Peggy Buryj didn't receive it until February. She says it was the first indication she had that her son was killed by friendly fire. One other inconsistency:

The Army Safety Center officially lists Buryj as having died from U.S. friendly fire, according to an Army spokeswoman, though U.S. investigations rule out gunshots by Americans.

Peggy Buryj received her official briefing on her son's death in April. An Army officer confirmed that he had been killed by friendly fire and indicated that Polish troops "most likely" fired the deadly shot.

On the PowerPoint presentation used in the briefing, this statement appeared: "12 May 2004, 1400 notified next of kin on change of finding from hostile incident to friendly fire incident."

Peggy and Amber Buryj said they were shocked and disputed the claim that they had been told so early: If that was true, why would they have spent the better part of a year trying to find out how Jesse died?

Peggy Buryj said the briefers had no response.

Asked about the discrepancy for this article, Army spokesmen said they do not discuss individual cases.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action



A fuel tanker burns after being hit with gunfire from guerrillas Jan. 26, 2006, in Baghdad.
(AP Photo/Asaad Muhsin)

Jan 26 AFP & AP & (Reuters) & (KUNA) & Aljazeera

Industry Minister Osama al-Najafi survived a roadside bomb attack but his three bodyguards were killed.

Ministry spokeswoman Dhuha Mohammed said the convoy was hit near the town of Balad. The blast also wounded another of Najafi's guards, she said.

Mohammed said the minister, a Sunni, had been travelling home to Mosul in northern Iraq for the weekend.

Senior government officials often travel by air because of the threat of roadside bombs.

A police patrol in Baghdad came under attack, with one policeman killed.

North of Baghdad, five Iraqi soldiers were killed and two wounded by another roadside bomb on Wednesday afternoon, police Lt. Amir al-Ahbabi said.

The attack happened in the Ishaki area on the Baghdad-Mosul highway, about 55 miles north of the Iraqi capital.

BAGHDAD: Guerrillas attacked a convoy of oil trucks with rocket propelled grenades in a western district of the capital, setting at least one truck on fire, police said. The police said that the attack took place on the highway close to Abu Ghraib town. The attackers escaped the scene, said the police.

In Kirkuk, meanwhile, unknown guerrillas killed an agricultural engineer and employee working for the US-led troops in the country.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Freedom From Insanity Is Not Free



Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

From: Mike Hastie
Sent: January 25, 2006
Subject: Freedom From Insanity Is Not Free

To G.I. Special:

The United States Empire would make the Roman Empire look like a catchall drawer.

If you are not involved in the anti-war movement, time is running out. Don't be caught dead with a diary full of good intentions.

Freedom from insanity is not free.

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
January 25, 2006**

OCCUPATION REPORT

Southern Iraq Oil Exports Suspended Again

01.26.2006 (AFX)

Crude oil exports from southern Iraq were suspended today for the second time this week following a storm in the Gulf, oil industry and port terminal officials said.

'The two offshore terminals suspended operations starting from 0700 am (0400 GMT),' a port official said. 'Eight ships are now waiting outside the terminals to take on their loads of crude oil.' Another four tankers are loaded and ready to go but cannot due to the large waves. They include a ship carrying 1 mln barrels at the Khor Amaya terminal and three tankers carrying 3 mln barrels each at Basra.

An official with the Southern Oil Company confirmed the suspension, but added that oil shipments to the internal Iraqi market were unaffected.

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



U.S. Marine Sergeant Brian Toblin, from Jacksonville, Florida, with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), shoots the lock off a door during a search near Hit January 25, 2006. The Marines are conducting Operation Koa Canyon, a sweep through towns and villages along the Euphrates River in search of munitions and insurgents.
REUTERS/Bob Strong

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqis over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign" and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any changes being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Welcome To Occupied America: Bush Regime Traitors Trying To Stop DC State Of Union Protest

26 January 2006 By Karlyn Barker, The Washington Post

Organizers planning a protest during President Bush's State of the Union address next week say they have been denied a permit to hold the demonstration around the US Capitol Reflecting Pool because that area has been reclassified as part of the security perimeter for the day of the speech.

The organizers of the Tuesday protest, called "World Can't Wait - Drive Out the Bush Regime," say the National Park Service and the US Capitol Police initially offered them the Capitol Reflecting Pool as a demonstration site but changed their minds.

Demonstrators have been told to confine their gathering to the gravel walkways on the Mall between Third and Fourth streets, farther from the Capitol. The grassy areas are fenced off because they are being resodded.

Travis Morales, one of the organizers of the demonstration, said the restrictions effectively deny the protesters a meaningful public space to gather as a group. The nearest place to meet together, he said, is Seventh Street, about a mile from the Capitol.

"We are being told that turf renovation and security trump our First Amendment right to protest," he said.

Morales said the group was offered use of the area around the Capitol Reflecting Pool on Jan. 10 and that the site was not then part of any security perimeter. But on Jan. 19, he said, the group was told the security area had been expanded to include the Reflecting Pool.

He called the change "politically motivated," adding that the Bush administration "is trying to push us so far away that we can't be seen or heard. . . . A protest not seen and a protest not heard is not a protest."

The demonstrators filed a federal lawsuit yesterday seeking a court order that would enable them to gather at the Capitol Reflecting Pool. US District Judge Ricardo M. Urbina will convene a hearing, possibly today.

A spokeswoman for the US Capitol Police declined to comment on Morales's allegations that politics played a part in the decision and would not say if the Capitol Reflecting Pool has been used in the past as a protest site.

"Many of the questions you are asking are security-related, so we can't comment on that," said Sgt. Kimberly Schneider, a public information officer with the agency.

Mara Verheyden-Hilliard, a lawyer with the Partnership for Civil Justice, said the area around the Capitol Reflecting Pool on the west side of the US Capitol has historically been a site where demonstrators have staged protests.

"It's been used time and time again for major demonstrations and small demonstrations," she said. "It's been a critical location for First Amendment expressive activity for a long, long time."

James R. Klimaski, an attorney for the demonstrators, said protesters have been told they can't use the area because it would interfere with Bush's motorcade. But, Klimaski said, that portion of the Capitol grounds is normally used as a parking lot.

Welcome To Occupied America: The Traitor Bush's Political Police Spy On Vegetarians In Atlanta: Arrest Citizen For Writing Down Their License Plate Number!

[While you're off in Iraq fighting for oil and Empire on behalf of Americans' corporate elite, this is what the rats in control of the U.S. government are doing back home. We need you back here to defend what's left of our liberties. There is no enemy in Iraq. Iraqis and U.S. troops have a common enemy: the traitors in control in Washington DC.]

1/25/2006 WXIA TV Atlanta

The ACLU of Georgia released copies of government files on Wednesday that illustrate the extent to which the FBI, the DeKalb County Division of Homeland Security and other government agencies have gone to compile information on Georgians suspected of being threats simply for expressing controversial opinions.

Two documents relating to anti-war and anti-government protests, and a vegan rally, prove the agencies have been "spying" on Georgia residents unconstitutionally, the ACLU said.

For example, more than two dozen government surveillance photographs show 22-year-old Caitlin Childs of Atlanta, a strict vegetarian, and other vegans

picketing against meat eating, in December 2003. They staged their protest outside a HoneyBaked Ham store on Buford Highway in DeKalb County.

An undercover DeKalb County Homeland Security detective was assigned to conduct surveillance of the protest and the protestors, and take the photographs.

The detective arrested Childs and another protester after he saw Childs approach him and write down, on a piece of paper, the license plate number of his unmarked government car.

"They told me if I didn't give over the piece of paper I would go to jail and I refused and I went to jail, and the piece of paper was taken away from me at the jail and the officer who transferred me said that was why I was arrested," Childs said on Wednesday.

The government file lists anti-war protesters in Atlanta as threats, the ACLU said. The ACLU of Georgia accuses the Bush administration of labeling those who disagree with its policy as disloyal Americans.

"We believe that spying on American citizens for no good reason is fundamentally un-American, that it's not the place of the government or the best use of resources to spy on its own citizens and we want it to stop.

"We want the spies in our government to pack their bags, close up their notebooks, take their cameras home and not engage in the spying anymore," Gerald Weber of the ACLU of Georgia said during a news conference.

"We have heard of not a single, government surveillance of a pro-war group," Weber said. "And I doubt we will ever hear of a single surveillance of a pro-war group."

As for Caitlin Childs' protest against meat eating, the files obtained by the ACLU include the DeKalb County Homeland Security report on the surveillance of Childs and the others.

The detective wrote that he ordered Childs to give him the piece of paper on which she had written his license tag number, telling her that he did not want her or anyone else to have the tag number of his undercover vehicle.

The detective did not comment in his report about why his license tag number was already visible to the public.

The detective wrote that Childs was "hostile, uncooperative and boisterous toward the officers."

Childs said today that the agents shouldn't have been there in the first place, squelching legal dissent.

"We have the right to gather and protest and speak out."

[But only if our troops defend our rights, arms in hand.]

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

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)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

<http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>,
www.williambowles.info/qispecial, http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/,
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