

**GI SPECIAL 4B14:**

# Free Sgt. Kevin Benderman



**FREE KEVIN BENDERMAN NOW !**

[www.geocities.com]g

Feb. 12, 2006 By Katherine Tam, The Olympian

**FORT LEWIS:** About two dozen activists, including eight from Olympia, called Saturday for the release of a soldier imprisoned here for refusing to deploy to Iraq a second time.

The activists held a banner that read "Free Kevin Benderman from Fort Lewis Brig" over the Interstate 5 overpass at DuPont near the military installation while drivers honked from below.

“He served in the military very faithfully and went to Iraq,” said Wally Cuddeford, who was in the Navy for a year and a half. “The military, instead of honoring the service he has given to his country, is locking him up.”

Benderman was deployed to Iraq from March to September 2003. He filed for conscientious objector status in late 2004; his application was denied. Conscientious objectors are morally opposed to war.

Benderman was to leave for Iraq again in January 2005, but he refused. He was charged with desertion and intentionally missing movement for not boarding the plane for Iraq when his unit left. He was found guilty of the second, lesser charge and sentenced last summer to 15 months in prison. He is serving that sentence at Fort Lewis.

Many activists at Saturday’s vigil said they have never met Benderman, but they support his right to be a conscientious objector.

The group included veterans and those who have never been in war all from Seattle, Olympia and Tacoma.

“I feel it’s a crime to imprison him for doing what his conscience dictates,” said Alice Zillah of Olympia.

“You don’t have to kill someone to be a hero,” added Phan Nguyen, also of Olympia. “A conscientious objector is a hero, and I support people who risk their careers to do what’s right.”

**At least three people did not share those sentiments and came to the overpass to hold a counter-rally.**

“It’s a disgrace,” Shelley Weber of Olympia said as she waved a large American flag. “I rally here every Saturday and, upon arrival, I see these people on the bridge. I decorated this bridge. I bought the yellow ribbons and flowers.”

**“This is the weekend our troops come in for drill. Their protest demoralizes our troops,”** added Terry Harder, whose 23- and 26-year-old sons are in the military. Harder is a member of Operation Support Our Troops. **[Let’s see. People who want the troops to come home now alive, and with their body parts, are demoralizing them, but Harder, who wants his own kids to stay neck deep in the shit and fight Bush’s unwinnable Imperial war for oil, is good for morale. So, if he really believes it, why doesn’t he take his worthless self straight to Iraq. He doesn’t even have to be in the armed forces. He can show his courage and patriotism by taking a plane, crossing the border, buying an AK, and fighting the bad guys. Unless he’s the cowardly type, who would rather sit safely at home while his own sons do the dying for him.]**

Meanwhile, the two sides exchanged words.

**“Do you know who Kevin Benderman is?”** an activist said.

**“I couldn’t care less,” Weber said,** while another man added, “Kevin’s where he belongs.”

**MORE:**

Lietta Ruger writes:

email from Monica Benderman: see their websites; [www.BendermanTimeline.com](http://www.BendermanTimeline.com)

Thank you.

**Kevin called last night and let me know that more than one MP told him about the vigil.**

**You know, military families are going to present a different view to the public than what the soldiers present in private.**

**We have heard from over 600 soldiers in the past year who are trying to find the courage to take their own personal stand. We are doing everything we can to show them that they can succeed, if it is done with dignity and respect for differing views.**

**The worst fear of the soldiers is the public negativity and divisiveness. If we can show that the soldiers do matter, that their choice should come first, there will be many more that will cross the line.**

**We appreciate this.  
Monica and Kevin**



[Photo via Lietta Ruger]

**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**

# **Marine Killed, Six Troops Wounded In Two Baghdad Area IED Attacks**

2.14.06 By DPA & By SINAN SALAHEDDIN, The Associated Press

A roadside bomb killed a U.S. Marine in western Baghdad on Tuesday in one of two attacks that also wounded six coalition military personnel, the military said.

Eyewitnesses in Abu Ghraib said that the roadside bomb at Abu Ghraib had targeted a US military patrol made up of six vehicles.

The attack that killed the Marine happened at about 10:30 a.m. near Abu Ghraib, the military said in statement. Two other coalition personnel were wounded in the attack that also damaged their vehicle. He said that he did not have information about the nationalities of the casualties.

About an hour later, another coalition convoy was attacked by a roadside bomb and small-arms fire in the Baghdad's Salaam area.

**Six wounded soldiers were removed from one of the vehicles, eyewitnesses said, adding that one of the vehicles was destroyed and another set ablaze.**

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## **U.S. Casualties Reported From Husayba Car Bomb**

Feb. 14 (Xinhuanet)

**A roadside bomb hit a U.S. patrol in the Husayba al-Sharqiyah, a town in eastern Ramadi, some 110 km west of Baghdad, local residents told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.**

**The attack also destroyed a U.S. Humvee, killing or wounding all the soldiers aboard, they said.**

The U.S. troops revenged and opened fire randomly after the attack causing unknown number of casualties, the residents said.

A U.S. helicopter landed at the site of the attack to evacuate American casualties, they said.

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## **Car Bomb Hits US Military Patrol In Fallujah**

Feb. 14 (Xinhuanet)

**"A powerful blast caused by a car bomb struck a U.S. military patrol on the highway to the west of Fallujah, destroying a U.S. Humvee," the witnesses, who refused to be named, told Xinhua.**

**They said it was not clear whether there was any casualties among U.S. soldiers, adding after the blast, the U.S. troops blocked the highway for more than one hour, preventing people from approaching the scene.**

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**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



2.9.06: A US soldier in a building in the Hateen weapons compound in the town of Hsawa, south of Baghdad. (AFP/US Army)

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

# **“We Will Kill To Protect The Honor Of Our Women And Children”**

**Government authority hardly extends beyond Kabul, and what little had been established is quickly eroding. Many believe the Taliban are clearly on the ascendancy and that some territories are again reverting to its control.**

February 8 2006 by Curt Goering, Amnesty International USA [Excerpts]

During the recent meeting of the Afghani legislature, Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld toured the country making upbeat assessments about Afghanistan's transformation into a peaceful and stable democracy.

But during a recent Amnesty International mission in which I interviewed scores of Afghans, including prisoners released from U.S. detention centers, discovered the reality is considerably more complicated and claims of success are greatly exaggerated.

**Government authority hardly extends beyond Kabul, and what little had been established is quickly eroding. Many believe the Taliban are clearly on the ascendancy and that some territories are again reverting to its control.**

Yet the patience of many Afghans with the U.S. presence is wearing thin.

**We heard repeated accounts of aggressive tactics during raids on homes or shops, particularly by U.S. troops in the southern and eastern provinces, and of torture and ill-treatment in U.S. custody. The complaints included beatings, sleep deprivation, hooding, and being stripped naked.**

Some of the most serious allegations concerned treatment in detention cells at U.S. Forward Operating Bases, where detainees are initially held after arrest before transfer to Bagram, the U.S. airbase where at least eight Afghans have died in U.S. custody.

We took scores of testimonies from individuals who alleged wanton destruction or theft during raids.

We also heard tales of males being humiliated by, among other things, being forced to kneel on the ground with heads bowed while being blindfolded and handcuffed, sometimes hooded, in the presence of their families before being taken away for interrogation.

We heard numerous accounts of deeply offensive behavior toward women by U.S. forces, such as ransacking women's belongings and verbal abuse during weapons searches. "We will kill to protect the honor of our women and children," said one released detainee whose family had allegedly endured such treatment.

We were also assured that the United States is committed to investigating allegations of abuse and to holding those responsible accountable. Yet we heard dozens of complaints about poor investigations into abusive treatment or property destruction, in which those responsible for abuse were merely slapped on the wrist.

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## **Afghans Have Had Enough Of Occupation "Dogwashers"**

2.14.06 Christian Science Monitor

The cartoon protests of the past week, which have been the deadliest in the Islamic world, are largely a barometer of domestic frustrations, with protesters turning their anger on the U.S., the West and the "dogwashers," a derisive term for expatriate Afghan technocrats who have returned to top posts in the government.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

### **War Is Good Business: Invest Your Son Or Daughter**

2.14.06 Tim Grieve, Salon.com

From a short item inside the Times' business section Sunday:

**"No matter how one feels about this particular conflict, war always has winners and losers, on both sides."**

Some "indisputable winners" so far?

Defense contractors.

Courtesy of the Times, here are six top defense contractors and the percentages by which their profits have increased since 2004: Boeing (37.4 percent), Lockheed Martin (44.2 percent), General Dynamics (19.1 percent), Northrop Grumman (29.2 percent), Raytheon (108.9 percent) and Halliburton (292.9 percent).

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



Cynthia Garcia left, mother of U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Ruel Garcia, and his wife Apple Garcia during his funeral Feb. 7, 2006 in a cemetery in Obando town, north of Manila. Warrant Officer Garcia, a pilot of the U.S. Army 4th Aviation Regiment, Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division was killed in Taji, Iraq while on mission. (AP Photo/Pat Roque)

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## **70% Don't Want Attack On Iran Now**

2.14.06 USA Today

**Nearly seven out of ten Americans surveyed worry that the U.S. may move prematurely to use force against Iran's nuclear facilities.**

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## **Pentagon's Stupid "Don't Ask" Anti-Gay Policy Cost Taxpayers \$363 Million**

February 14, 2006 By Liz Sidoti, Associated Press



**Discharging troops under the Pentagon's policy on gays cost \$363.8 million over 10 years, almost double what the government concluded a year ago, a private report says.**

**The report, to be released Tuesday by a University of California Blue Ribbon Commission, questioned the methodology the Government Accountability Office used when it estimated that the financial impact of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was at least \$190.5 million.**

"It builds on the previous findings and paints a more complete picture of the costs," said Rep. Marty Meehan, D-Mass., who has proposed legislation that would repeal the policy.

The university study said the GAO erred by emphasizing the expense of replacing those who were discharged because of the policy without taking into account the value the military lost from the departures.

So, the commission focused on the estimated value the military lost from each person discharged. The report detailed costs of \$79.3 million for recruiting enlisted service members, \$252.4 million for training them, \$17.8 million for training officers and \$14.3 million for "separation travel" once a service member is discharged.

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## ***Idiots In Action:*** **Pentagon Singles Out Schools As Security Threats: Spying Helps Build Support For Anti-War Group**

**He said since MSNBC released information about the Pentagon's list, the student group has received increasing support on campus, even from those who do not completely agree with the group's philosophy.**

01/24/2006 The Daily Free Press (Boston U.)

**According to the Pentagon, several universities in the U.S. may pose a danger to national security.**

**On-campus protests against military recruitment landed eight national universities, including New York University and University of California-Berkeley, on a Pentagon watch list for being threats to national security.**

In mid-December, MSNBC released the list from the Department of Defense database that cited various domestic "threats," including the college campus demonstrations.

The list, which was part of a 400-page document, recorded more than 1,500 domestic occurrences over the past 10 months, ranking them as either "credible" or "not credible".

According to the document, all of the campus protests were aimed at campus recruiters and were held at the New York University, the State University of New York at Albany, Southern Connecticut State University, City College of the City University of New York, UC-Berkeley and UC-Santa Cruz, an unspecified campus of the University of Wisconsin and "a New Jersey university."

"We were surprised, to say the least, that our university was on the list," said Josh Taylor, a New York University spokesperson. "We were a bit concerned, understandably, because we are not entirely clear how we wound up on it."

NYU protesters' opposition to the Solomon Amendment and various campuses anti-war demonstrations are two of many global activities that the Pentagon monitors in the name of national security, according to a Pentagon Spokesperson.

**"This counterterrorism and surveillance are across the board," said a Pentagon spokesperson. "This is not just about antiwar protests and it is not targeted against one type of threat, this is a broad issue."**

Compiled by the Pentagon's Counterintelligence Field Activity, the record contains "dots of information" provided by worldwide law enforcers, intelligence groups, security agencies and citizens who report "suspicious activity," the spokesman said. "These dots are put in to try to 'connect the dots' before another major terrorist attack occurs."

**The only university to be deemed as a "credible" threat in the expansive DoD document was the UCSC.**

**The targeted event, a non-violent Students Against War protest at UCSC, was held on April 5 and drew more than 250 students and some faculty who were opposed to military recruiting at an on-campus college career fair.**

**"We hoped that it would make a statement and to show that recruiters weren't welcome on campus," said second year UCSC student and participant Kot Hordynski. "We weren't thinking it would be deemed a credible threat to national security."**

Hordynski, who is from Berkley, Calif., has been a member of Students Against War campus group since it began in January of 2005. He said he was disturbed but not surprised but the Pentagon's surveillance.

"Honestly, when we learned about that we were pretty astounded," Hordynski said. "What we feel we do is just a demonstration of our first amendment right and what we set out to do is non-violent."

**He said since MSNBC released information about the Pentagon's list, the student group has received increasing support on campus, even from those who do not completely agree with the group's philosophy.**

"We want to stick to our message to end occupation abroad and to oppose recruitment on campus," he said. "But we want to get the message out that the government wastes their money -It's a complete abomination that we should be spied on."

In one of the two official statements released by UCSC Chancellor Denice Denton, she said the University had not provided any federal agency with information about the event in April and did not receive a request for such information.

**Denton's letter was sent to all UCSC colleagues and stated that the UCSC administration asked local Congress members to, "request a definition of "credible threat;" to determine why the April 5 demonstration was classified as one; to learn how the information was gathered; and to address our concern that future monitoring could have a chilling effect on the exercise of free speech on our campus."**

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Assorted Resistance Action**

Feb. 14 (AP) & Harriyet & (KUNA) & MAKFAX & Aljazeera

**A roadside bomb blast at 8 a.m. struck a police patrol in southern Baghdad's violent Dora neighborhood, wounding two policemen, police said.**

**Another police patrol was targeted at 8:40 a.m. near the University of Technology in downtown Baghdad's Karradah district, wounding one policeman, police said.**

**A Turkish driver was injured in a rocket attack, while delivering supplies to the US forces in Iraq, sources reported on Monday. Huseyin, the driver of the truck, which was part of a convoy of six Turkish trucks was delivering dry foodstuff to US soldiers stationed in Baghdad.**

Serious damages to the trucks were also reported.

**A police source in Kirkuk told KUNA, armed militants in a red pick-up, opened fire towards another car on Al-Abasiya road, which led to the death of a policeman and the injury of two civilians, who were later on transferred to a nearby hospital.**

**At least two Croat drivers have been reported missing when a convoy, which included at least three Croatian trucks, came under fire in Baghdad.**

Zagreb's daily Vjesnik says the assailants had fired grenades on the convoy near the US base Anaconda north of Baghdad.

The owner of transport company said the survivors have already contacted their families, but they didn't know what happened with their colleagues.

The Anaconda base, US largest support base in Iraq, is quite frequently a target of mortar attacks by Iranian rebels.

**An Iraqi army major and his son were killed when they were fired on by guerrillas in the Taji area north of Baghdad, U.S. military said.**

**A police colonel escaped an assassination attempt when insurgents opened fire on his car while he was heading to work in Baquba, police said. The colonel and his bodyguard were wounded, police added.**

**An Iraqi contractor working with the Iraqi army was killed by resistance forces in Tikrit.**

**A police colonel and one of his relatives were wounded when resistance forces opened fire on them in the oil refinery city of Baiji.**

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

## **Basra Cuts Off Relations With British**

February 14, 2006 Guardian Unlimited

**The Basra provincial council has suspended relations with the British following new claims of abuse of Iraqis by UK troops, British military officials said today.**

Officials in Basra cut off relations yesterday, a day after the News of the World reported video footage showing British troops apparently beating Iraqi civilians.

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## **“It Is Impossible Now To Be Friends With An Occupier”**

February 12, 2006 By Anthony Loyd, Palestine Chronicle

BAGHDAD: Although the footage may be nearly two years old, the reaction of Iraqis to scenes of British soldiers beating youths barely out of childhood, and to the leering commentary of the cameraman, was one of immediate outrage. It threatens an explosive dispute at a vulnerable point in Britain's troop deployment in the Shia-dominated south of the country.

“I ask one question,” said Hanan al-Tamimi, a leading figure of a women's organization in Basra, who was furious after watching the images on the al-Jazeera television station.

“Would British mothers accept their sons being exposed to such brutality by cowardly soldiers?”

Other Iraqis were even more vitriolic. “It reflects exactly the real situation in Iraq,” Muhanned Atta, a physician at al-Kadumiya hospital, in Baghdad, said as he watched the footage with patients and colleagues. “The beating happens behind walls. All the bad things happen here behind walls.

**“To our faces the British and Americans try to look like perfect liberators, but it’s a false image and this is the reality. The British now look no different to those behind the Abu Ghraib scandal.”**

Although Iraqis are incensed by the gratuitous beating inside the camp walls and the lack of interest displayed by other soldiers who stroll past or simply stare without intervening, they are just as angry at the cameraman’s voice-over. He has repulsed Iraqis with his leering, laughing and panting during the thrashing, and with his mocking imitation of the teenagers’ cries for mercy. “What does he think he’s doing, having sex?” asked one Iraq man as he listened.

Whether an isolated incident or part of a wider pattern, the troops’ behavior undermines one of their commanders’ key aims: the establishment of law and order. The sight of British soldiers “who are responsible for training the police force” battering teenagers to the floor inside their base erodes not only their credibility but that of the forces they have spent so long building up and educating.

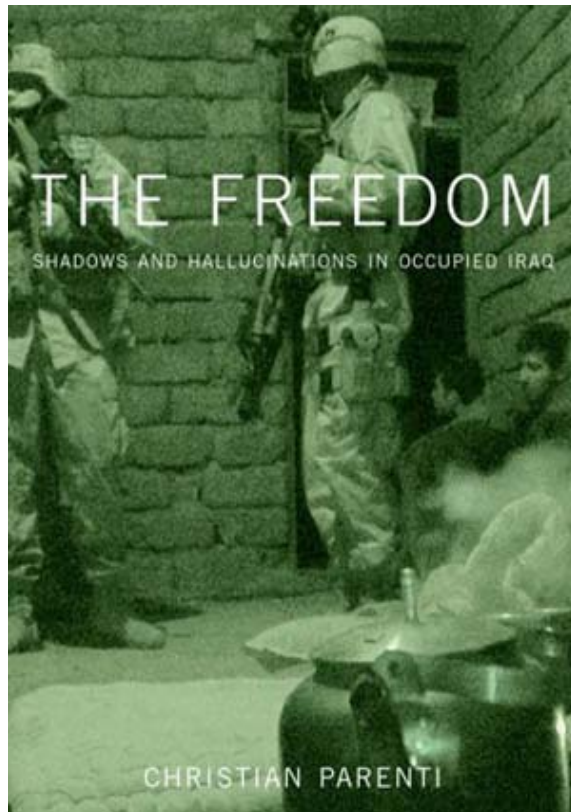
**“It reminds me of the footage I used to watch as a child of Israelis beating Palestinian kids,” Imad Jassim, an al-Kadumiya doctor, said.**

**“It is impossible now to be friends with an occupier. And people ask why there is so much violence against the British and Americans! Look at the video and you see the answer.”**

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

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

**“Those Recruiting Posters?  
Man, The Cooler That Shit  
Looks The More It Sucks!”**



## **THE FREEDOM: SHADOWS AND HALLUCINATIONS IN OCCUPIED IRAQ**

**“Crawling through swamps. Sleeping in the mud, putting paint on your face, all that Special Forces shit? I’ve done all that; it fucking sucks! I tell all my friends; those ads, right? the cooler that shit looks the more it fucking sucks ass!”**

**Considering all these dynamics, it seems that failure is, in fact, America’s only option. And when the full history of this bloody circus is written, people will look back slack-jawed at the scale and brazenness of the occupation’s corruption and incompetence.**

BY CHRISTIAN PARENTI  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERU KUWAYAMA

The New Press, New York, November 2005  
\$14.95 PB; 208 pp.  
ISBN: 1-56584-948-5

**[Excerpts. Magnificent Conclusion. Highly recommended. T]**

The trucks move out in slow, orderly stages, then make a high-speed dash under the cloverleaf and down the dusty stretch of road back to the safety of FOB Volturno, where the only risks are occasional mortar rounds.

During Operation Dozer's after-action report the issues discussed are all tactical. Alpha Company's commander, the very serious and bespectacled Captain Caliguire, runs down the list of what worked and what didn't.

Absent from the discussion is the issue of winning hearts and minds. "On that front," explains Caliguire later, "we do our best. We treat people with respect and dignity but you can't win them all. Security comes first. Do people resent the house searches? Yes. But my job is to bring security to Falluja and keep my men safe. And there's not gonna be any reconstruction or NGOs or UN in here if there isn't security first."

Relaxing on his cot, Lt. Bacik makes similar points. "I do what I am told. If they want me to build a bridge, I'll do it. But right now we have to suppress this resistance. We fight with restraint and discipline and concern for civilians, but this is a war."

**In short, the 82nd is focusing on what seems to work best: "search and attack." That means arresting and killing the underground and its supporters. The methods in this fight are cordon search operations, undercover Special Forces, local spies and information extracted from detainees, who, by the Pentagon's own admission, are subject to effective psychological torture such as isolation and prolonged sleep deprivation.**

Using whatever intelligence it can get, the 82nd launches continuous lightning raids in and out of Falluja. As for the delicate task of winning the people's loyalty; that will have to be someone else's job; someone who can provide work, fix the electricity; clean up the garbage and get Iraq's oil flowing. In the meantime, the war in Falluja is far from over.

What do the troops think of all this?

Bacik, a West Point grad, twenty-five, and very good at what he does, stays on message, stays positive, and is circumspect about his doubts.

Lt. Lipscombe, who I meet first at a big operational briefing and then later when his platoon from Delta Company is holding down some streets in Falluja, is immediately more candid:

"I am not sure I want to stay in the military. I've got a little baby I haven't seen." But opting to not re-enlist (one of the main ways disaffection with the war is expressed) is a no-no in the culture of the professional military.

**The career NCOs cajole, then threaten and ridicule and emotionally ice-out soldiers who don't sign re-enlistment papers.**

**Doc Pacheco is getting a taste of the re-enlistment pressure. The grunts call this campaign of harassment "getting the panther penis" because they are part of Task Force Panther; sometimes it's just called "the 82 inches."**

Pacheco is a valuable asset: muscled, tough, fit, he's a combat medic with advanced skills, and at the young age of twenty-three he could be good for at least a decade more of jumping out of airplanes, shooting at bad guys and clamping shut ripped-open arteries. But Pacheco doesn't want to be a career soldier; he joined the military as a way to become a Chicago firefighter.

**“The best way to get into the department is as an EMT. But those classes are really expensive. If you join the army they pay for it.” Pacheco has done his time, which included cleaning up the brains of a friend who was shot in a accidental discharge in Afghanistan. Pacheco wants out.**

**“When they try to get you to re-enlist, they always say, ‘What are you gonna do out there? You’ll be sucking dick for beer money.’**

**“That’s one of the first sergeant’s favorite lines,” says Pacheco, sitting on the edge of his cot and jiggling his legs nervously. His bunkmates joke grimly about the military and how they are trying to screw Pacheco. But the doc, fresh from a hot trip to Falluja, wears the expression of a hurt boy.**

**“I think I did my part. I never wanted to stay in the military my whole life. I think they should accept that and stop fucking with me.”**

**Along with the glares and verbal abuse from the NCOs, the Green Machine’s faceless bureaucracy is also pushing “the panther penis” by losing Pacheco’s pay records, deleting his accumulated vacation time and making the ensuing appeal process a nightmare of red tape.**

Other soldiers seem less affected by the pressure. Ryan Martin, the water polo player, is oblivious to the pressure. Like many guys in this company Martin also served in Afghanistan.

**“Those recruiting posters? Man, the cooler that shit looks the more it sucks!” says Martin.**

As he rails away, a meek lieutenant from the mortar platoon walks by, Bible in hand, headed to Sunday chapel, pretending not to hear the rant.

**“Crawling through swamps. Sleeping in the mud, putting paint on your face, all that Special Forces shit? I’ve done all that; it fucking sucks! I tell all my friends; those ads, right? the cooler that shit looks the more it fucking sucks ass!”**

One of Ryan’s buddies is Joseph Wood, the company armorer and a roommate of Doc Pacheco.

He’s boyishly handsome, with a mother from Venezuela, the land of beauty queens, while his father is a dissolute, downwardly mobile southern aristocrat. Above his bunk hang Tibetan prayer flags, he burns incense, wears flip-flops around, and reads books about spirituality. He served in Afghanistan, jumping out of choppers and pulling security for teams of Special Forces operatives.



Now he wants to move to New York and design women's clothing. He already has a stunningly crafted portfolio. So single-minded is Wood in his quest for an art education and a career that the army's re-enlistment pressures are irrelevant to him.

"Man, the army is for fucking zombies, people who can't think for themselves." And he's antiwar, but in a weird, frontline combat sort of way.

**"I don't think we should be here; it's all about oil. But I am not a pacifist. Anyone fucks with us, we'll light 'em up. They gotta understand that." At another time he tells me: "The army sucks, but I am not saying people shouldn't join. I mean, the army can be cool; it's about defending our freedoms. Know what I mean?"**

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### **Abu G:**

"There are fathers in there with their sons who are as young as thirteen. There are lots of teenagers," says Muhammad.

**"At one point our family got a lawyer, but he just took our money and left. There is no law here. Even 90 percent of the soldiers say they know you are innocent but they can do nothing to let you go.**

"It is very bad, there is not enough food, not enough water and many people are sick inside. During Eid, at the end of Ramadan, we had a big demonstration in some of the camps. We shouted Allahu Akbar!' Some people threw stones and the soldiers started shooting. I heard that they injured twenty people, but I only saw one man shot in the hand."

During the interview we try to be inconspicuous, crouching on the gravel behind a berm and some blast barriers. Muhammad says that he saw three different demonstrations by prisoners during his detention.

**The protests in response to bad conditions were met with more abuse. "The soldiers do very bad things. They step on the food to make it dirty." He and other men who are standing nearby tell stories of frequent psychological torture, mostly sleep deprivation, lack of adequate food, limited water, and widespread illness and bureaucratic chaos.**

"There is no process, no lawyers. They just put you in a tent and forget about you."

**I ask about Sunni/Shia relations. "There is no division. We are all united.**

**"We are all Muslims and we all hate the Americans."**

At this point another former detainee joins in. His name is Haji Sabor, and he shows me some discharge papers with a serial number. He says he was in Camp Six inside Abu Ghraib.

**With Akeel translating, he says, “Look, I have a message for George Bush. Tell him he is an asshole. But also, I thank George Bush because now we are all brothers; Shia and Sunni together.”**

**What does he think should be done? “Solution?” says Haji Sabor. “They take mothers away from their little children. This is an affront to Islam. They are awful. There is no solution, there is no formal way out of this, there is only al-jihad!”**

**I check with Akeel as to what exactly Sabor means by this. “He means jihad. Holy war, not just struggle in the path of God,” explains Akeel with a look that says, Silly journalist, what do you think is going on here?**

Jihad is not the answer one usually gets in Iraq.

“They smashed everything in my house because I was a member of the Baath Party,” says one man. “They capture lots of students, they are afraid of the Iraqi students,” says another.

**One man calmly pushes closer while the others are getting riled up and talking with each other. “Write this down: They shot a man in the chest. His name was Mazan Thuwany Daud, number 152615. He was shot in the chest and they took him away. I do not know if he lived. I am not lying. Write it down.”**

Our little throng isn’t so little or quiet any more and has attracted the attention of some MPs in a Humvee. They pull up on the other side of the wire-topped berm.

**One of the MPs gets out and swaggers up and down, his helmet and body armor stiffening his gait, a huge unlit cigar jammed in the side of his mouth, hatred radiating through his wraparound mirrored shades. He is such a cliché that I recall feeling disappointment and thinking, “Too bad no one will actually believe how ridiculous this guy is when I try to describe him.”**

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“We had one guy lose his mind. He started crying and begging to lie down.” When asked how the prisoners were fed and given water, Mejia stares off into space for a minute. Then he says, “I don’t remember how we fed them.”

This soft-spoken young man has plenty of other bad stories as well. There’s the time his squad killed a civilian who ran a checkpoint, and the time they shot a demonstrator.

**There’s the officer who forged orders so he could get his unit into combat, and the other officer who broke his own ankle to get out of combat.**

**There is the father who wasn’t allowed temporary leave even though his young daughter had been raped.**

Or there’s the story of the GI who took shrapnel in the head and now can’t talk, can’t take care of himself, can’t recognize his family, and wakes up in the middle of the night confused and sobbing.

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**In every guerrilla war where lack of real reform has lost the battle for hearts and minds, that is, where corruption has fatally undermined attempts to co-opt the insurgency, the government or occupation forces have had to escalate their use of violence.**

**If the proverbial carrot is consumed by the maggots of graft, nepotism and theft, then all that remains is the stick.**

**In that case, separating the “fish” of the guerrilla from the “sea” of the people must become a matter of bombardment, crop destruction, depopulation, forced resettlement and torture.**

**From the American plains of the 1870s to the Philippines of the early 1900s to the Cold War era conflicts in Vietnam, El Salvador, Guatemala and Colombia, military terror against civilian populations has been the central feature of American counterinsurgency.**

**In El Salvador and Vietnam the countryside belonged to the guerrillas while the cities were government controlled. In Iraq the insurgency has its bases or rather lives and operates) in the cities.**

**Can Falluja, Baquba, Najaf or Baghdad’s al-Thawra be treated like the countryside of Vietnam, “drained” of population? Russia has applied such a strategy to Grozny, but the war there goes on.**

**Urban massacres in Iraq by American troops would massively undermine the already tattered political legitimacy of the United States on the world stage.**

**In short, the US is trapped in a political maze where no path leads to victory.**

**Considering all these dynamics, it seems that failure is, in fact, America’s only option.**

**And when the full history of this bloody circus is written, people will look back slack-jawed at the scale and brazenness of the occupation’s corruption and incompetence.**

**History will record Halliburton’s colossal greed; the Bush administration’s reckless ideological delusions; Paul Bremer’s capricious mismanagement; the venality and duplicity of Chalabi, Allawi and the other disobedient, incompetent puppets.**

**And this criminal farce will be visually branded, linked to images of bombed mosques in Falluja, the burning Baghdad library with idle US troops watching, sexual torture and humiliation in Abu Ghraib, and to the swollen skulls of children sick from radiation poisoning.**

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**March 15, 2004, starts with a chilly gray morning. Camilo is going to turn himself in to the military.**

**I drive from New York to the Peace Abbey in Sherborn, Massachusetts, where he will hold a press conference and then surrender.**

**Camilo has hooked up with two activist groups, Citizen Soldier and Military Families Speak Out. Their organizing efforts have brought the press out in force.**

At the abbey Camilo is wearing a medallion that has lacquered into it a bit of cloth stained by the blood of the slain Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero. "This is to give me strength," he says as he shows me the talisman.

The questions from the press are insipid but the coverage is good; worldwide.

**In Nicaragua thousands march in Camilo's honor.**

The moment when Camilo is cuffed and taken away at the gate of Hanscom Air Force Base west of Boston is awful: the state bares its teeth and swallows my friend.

**In the end Camilo is court-martialed at Fort Stewart in Georgia and sentenced to a year in prison.**

**But Camilo bears it like the soldier he is.**

**And in so doing he points the way forward, he connects all the pieces: personal trauma, moral responsibility, and a critique of American empire.**

**Like a soldier, he takes action and makes sacrifices in the interest of others.**

**And like all soldiers he will pay a dear price, but this time his fight is just and worth the cost.**

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## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

***Good News For The Iraqi  
Resistance!!***

**U.S. Occupation Commands'  
Stupid Tactics Recruit Even**

# More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops



Iraqi women and children wait as foreign troops from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) search their home in the village of Abu Rayat February 4, 2006. REUTERS/Bob Strong

**"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."**

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

## OCCUPATION HAITI

# Haitians Rebel Against Vote Fraud: Take Control Of Streets, Build Barricades

14 February 2006 By Manuel Roig-Franzia, The Washington Post [Excerpts]

**Port-au-Prince, Haiti:** Haiti's hopes for a peaceful presidential election exploded Monday in a torrent of violence as mobs [translation: rightly pissed off citizens protesting an attempt to steal their election] overturned cars, set piles of tires ablaze and built elaborate roadblocks across major highways, protesting delays in the vote count and alleged fraud in last Tuesday's balloting.

Demonstrators paralyzed cities across the country, from Cap-Haitien in the north to this impoverished seaside capital, where tens of thousands of people took to the streets to demand that Rene Preval, a former president and favorite of this city's poor, be named president.

In Port-au-Prince, at least one protester was killed, a luxury hotel [where the vote stealing thieves were headquartered] was occupied by demonstrators and the international airport was closed.

Preval had urged calm in recent days, but he had also stoked emotions among followers by accusing Haiti's electoral commission of lowering his vote total to force him into a runoff and by mockingly singing, "They're stealing our votes," on his porch.

Transportation between cities almost completely stopped with more than 100 roadblocks on main roads between Cap-Haitien and Port-au-Prince.

Thousands of Haitians walked for hours along this nation's pitted highways. Others idled at roadblocks, arguing politics and trying vainly to squeeze their pickup trucks or cars past the barriers.

Some of the roadblocks were marvels of rapid-fire construction, with stacked stones and looping chains. In other places, protesters dragged the rusted frames of buses and trucks into the roadways, piled logs or set fire to old tires.

The chaos flourished in the almost total absence of law enforcement [translation: pro-occupation cops loyal to the rich] except for selected areas of the capital.

Smoke was already rising above the mountains before dawn Monday near Preval's home in Marmelade, where he had been monitoring the vote count for almost a week.

**At a crossroads less than an hour's drive from Preval's home, a lanky teenager named Pierre Jacky thrust his fist into the air as another pile of tires went up in flames. "They are plotting to keep Preval from being president," Jacky said of Haiti's electoral commission. "We are going to show the world that we are behind our president."**

**Preval, who was president from 1996 to 2001 and came out of quiet retirement to run for his old job, has an overwhelming lead in the presidential race. But his advantage has shrunk each day since partial results were first announced on Thursday, dipping from 61 percent to 48 percent.**

If that last figure holds, Preval will be forced into a risky runoff, in which he could face a coalition of opposition groups.

Violence is also feared because of the increasingly tense mood since the election in Port-au-Prince's huge slums, where Preval is popular.

**A member of Haiti's electoral commission said this week that he suspected the commission of manipulating the vote totals to prevent a first-round victory for Preval. Suspicions have been raised because of a huge number of invalidated votes, topping 7 percent of all votes cast, according to partial results.**

At a roadblock outside Gonaives, the thugs [translation: the citizens standing up for their rights] weren't budging, but a Haitian driver displayed a photo on his cell phone of him next to Preval.

A cheer went up. And the roadblock disappeared. [How very unthuglike.]

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

# **50% Of Public Rejects Police State Tactics**

12 February 2006 By Nat Hentoff, The Village Voice [Excerpt]

**The rising present anger around the country, across party lines, is reflected in a February 3 Zogby Interactive poll that "finds Americans largely unwilling to surrender civil liberties, even if it is to prevent terrorists from carrying out attacks. . . . Even routine security measures, like random searches of bags, purses, and other packages, were opposed by half (50 percent) of respondents in the survey. .**

.. Just 28 percent are willing to allow their telephone conversations to be monitored."

On the other hand, nearly half (45 percent) favored at least "a great deal" of government secrecy in the war on terror.

But the public's awareness that the United States has increasingly become a nation under surveillance is indicated by resistance not only to random searches and tapping into our telephone conversations. Zogby says: This is a "public obsessed with civil liberties."



2-10-06 IN AMERICAN MIRROR: INTERAL PRESS SERVICE

[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

## The Idiot Gonzales Says George Washington Used Electronic Surveillance More Than Bush

14 February 2006 By William Rivers Pitt, Truthout Perspective [Excerpt]

Another famous member of the Washington Wack-Pack is Attorney General Alberto Gonzales.



**Gonzales, testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding warrantless wiretapping of American citizens authorized by Mr. Bush, said, "President Washington, President Lincoln, President Wilson, President Roosevelt have all authorized electronic surveillance on a far broader scale."**

Really. George Washington authorized electronic surveillance on a far broader scale than what the National Security Agency is capable of today. How did he do this in an age when the whale-oil lamp was the height of technology? Did he use the old two-cans-and-some-string wiretap trick?

Perhaps he was able to bug the Hessians using Ben Franklin's kite and key. Mumbles and Moleman have said some pretty bizarre things at my bar, but Alberto blew them both out of the water with this one.

**If the president does it, it can't be illegal, or impossible, for that matter.**

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

# **HOMELAND SECURITY DEPARTMENT UNVEILS CHENEY ALERT SYSTEM Color-Coded System Would Warn Nation Of Future Attacks By Veep**

February 13, 2006 The Borowitz Report

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff announced today that his department would immediately implement a "Cheney Alert" system to warn Americans if an attack by Vice President Dick Cheney is imminent.

The Department of Homeland Security has been under pressure to respond to the widespread panic and anxiety that have gripped the nation since Mr. Cheney shot and wounded a fellow quail hunter while on a hunting trip in Texas over the weekend.

Across the country, people have holed up in their homes and hoarded food and water, fearing another senseless attack by the gun-toting vice president.

"What we have learned, the hard way, is that Dick Cheney can attack without warning," Mr. Chertoff said. "It is our hope that with this Cheney Alert system we will be able to give the American people some warning before he strikes again."

The alert system, with five color-coded levels indicating the likelihood of another brutal pellet attack by the Vice President, was derided by some in Congress such as Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del), who likened it to "closing the barn door after the horses have escaped."

"The fact is, the White House already had ample warning that Dick Cheney was going to strike, and they sat on their hands and did nothing," Mr. Biden said, referring to a Presidential Daily Brief dated February 4 with the title, "Dick Cheney Determined to Strike in US."

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

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

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