

GI SPECIAL 4B2:

ENOUGH: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Relatives of U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Ramon Acevedo Aponte sit by the casket containing his body, during a wake, in Penuelas, southern Puerto Rico, Nov. 7, 2005. Acevedo Aponte, age 51, and another soldier were killed when a bomb exploded near their humvee in Rustamiyah, Iraq. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

The Tipping Point Is Here, Now

**Letters To The Editor
Army Times
2.6.06**

I was very interested in the editorial "Doubts about war grow" (Jan. 9), which indicated that support for the war is down from 63 percent last year to about 54 percent in December 2005.

I think it is even lower than that if the right people are polled and are not afraid to speak up.

Sgt. 1st Class Robert L. Moore (ret.)

Auburn, Mass.

[This refers to the 2005 Military Times Poll. It over-represents the higher ranks. T]

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

BAGHDAD ROADSIDE BOMB KILLS 3 U.S. SOLDIERS

2/2/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-02-02CP

BAGHDAD, Iraq: Three Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldiers were killed Feb. 1 while on a combat patrol when their vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb south of Baghdad.

II MEF MARINE DIES FROM WOUNDS NEAR FALLUJAH

2/2/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-02-02C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: A Marine assigned to 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), died of wounds from enemy small-arms fire while conducting combat operations near Fallujah, Feb. 1.

U.S. SOLDIER DIES FROM WOUNDS FOLLOWING BAGHDAD SMALL-ARMS ATTACK

BAGHDAD, Iraq: A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier died Feb. 1 from wounds incurred when his unit was attacked with small-arms fire in south-western Baghdad.

Green Bay Soldier Wounded In Roadside Bombing

Feb 2, 2006 By Emily Matesic, WBAY

A Green Bay soldier was hurt in the roadside bombing that also seriously wounded a soldier from Neenah this week.

Sergeant Luke Luther, 28, and Andrew Neumeyer, 26, were riding in the same vehicle struck by the bomb in northern Iraq. Both are both members of the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry based in Appleton.

Neumeyer, 26, suffered a serious head injury. His parents said he's being flown to Walter Reed Army Medical Center outside Washington, DC.

Luther's family said he lost part of his hand in the explosion in Iraq. His thumb was partially severed and had to be reattached. He had surgery in Iraq to put two pins in his finger before he was flown to a military hospital in Germany.

Luther's sister, Melissa Stoltz, and his wife Paula told Action 2 News that Luther is expected to make a full recovery.

Stoltz says the family is doing okay, and is grateful he's going to be fine. "Very thankful that he's okay. I don't like to dwell on what could have, but he's safe and that's what matters right now."

He could be brought back to the U.S. soon to begin rehabilitation, which could take three months. His wife and sister both said they'll head to see him as soon as they know when he's coming back and what military hospital he's going to.

The family wasn't sure if Luther would go back to Iraq after he completes his rehabilitation.

Two Humvees Damaged In Tarmiyah

February 2, 2006 By SINAN SALAHEDDIN, Associated Press Writer

Two roadside bombs targeted an American patrol, damaging two Humvees in Tarmiyah, 30 miles north of Baghdad, said police Lt. Ali al-Bayati. The military said there were no U.S. casualties.

Great Moments In Idiotic Occupation Military Tactics: Opening Fire On Baghdad's Sadr City, U.S. Forces Kill A Woman And Wound 2 Year Old Child



Local residents gather at the scene of a US military helicopter attack on homes early Feb. 2, 2006, in the Sadr City area of Baghdad, Iraq. A U.S. helicopter fired rockets into a crowded Shiite neighborhood of eastern Baghdad on Thursday, killing a young woman and enraging both residents and Shiite politicians. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

The U.S. has recently pointed to the neighborhood as a model of improving relations between Americans and Iraqis. [Well, so much for that.]

2.2.06 The Associated Press, By SINAN SALAHEDDIN, Associated Press Writer & Mail & Guardian

A morning barrage of rockets was fired by a U.S. helicopter into the nearby eastern Baghdad area of Sadr City, power-base of radical anti-American Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

The fighting occurred between 2am (11pm GMT on Wednesday) and 4am (1am GMT), the official said.

“At night, the aircraft bombed this and that house. One girl died. The aircraft remained bombing us until morning,” a Sadr City resident, who declined to identify himself, told AP Television News.

The attack, which the U.S. military said came in response to gunfire from men in the neighborhood, was condemned by followers of al-Sadr from Baghdad to the southern city of Basra.

Transport Minister Salam al-Maliki, an al-Sadr supporter, condemned the U.S. attack and demanded compensation for victims.

“These military operations aim at weakening the supporters of the Sadrist movement, are considered provocative and represent a clear violation against the security situation in the country,” al-Maliki told The Associated Press in the southern city of Basra.

Military spokeswoman Sgt. Stacy Simon said American forces were in Sadr City at about 1 a.m. pursuing a “known terrorist associated with Ansar al-Sunnah,” a Sunni militant group that has claimed responsibility for many suicide attacks and beheadings. At least two people were detained, but their identities were not known.

“As troops were leaving the area in a U.S. military helicopter, men on a nearby rooftop began firing at the aircraft,” Simon said. “The helicopter returned fire with guns and rockets.”

A 20-year-old woman was killed when a rocket crashed into her home, said her father, who was wounded along with a woman and a 2-year-old child.

An Al-Sadr supporter, Shiite lawmaker Falah Hassan Shanshal, accused the U.S. of trying to “draw the Sadr movement into a new fight to affect our participation in the political process.”

“The occupation is trying to shake the United Iraqi Alliance after their successful election results,” said lawmaker Bahaa al-din al-Araji, an al-Sadr supporter and a senior member of the Shiite bloc that did best in the Dec. 15 polls.

Sadr City was the scene of fierce clashes between Shiite militiamen and American forces in 2004 and early 2005.

The U.S. has recently pointed to the neighborhood as a model of improving relations between Americans and Iraqis.

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

**REALLY BAD IDEA:
NO HONORABLE MISSION;**

HOPELESS WAR BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. Marines with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) search property near the Hit January 25, 2006. REUTERS/Bob Strong

TROOP NEWS

**“Soldiers In Iraq Have Told Me
They Don't Want To Be There.
They Want To Come Home”**

January 31, 2006 Stop the War Coalition [England] & Bushra Juhi, Canadian Press

BAGHDAD (AP) - A British soldier was killed in a roadside bombing Tuesday, the second member of the country's armed forces to die in Iraq in as many days and the 100th fatality since the conflict began in March 2003.

Message from Rose Gentle (mother of Fusilier Gordon Gentle, killed in Basra on 28 June 2004): “Soldiers in Iraq have told me they don't want to be there. They want to come home.

“They have told us to step up our campaign of resistance to this government's war policies. We must act now, bring the troops home and end this illegal occupation.”

Congressional Rat Calls Iraq Vet Who Lost Arm A Liar: The Coward Says “I Don’t Believe You” When Vet Tells Of V.A. Issuing Worthless Shit To Replace Lost Limbs

February 2, 2006 By Rod Thompson, Honolulu Star-Bulletin [Excerpts]

HILO: Robert Acosta looked straight into the eyes of the man who threw a grenade at him from only six feet away.

The Iraq war veteran did not see the grenade until it landed inside his Humvee at his feet. He was reaching for it when it went off, ripping his left leg and blowing off his right hand.

Acosta, 22, from Orange County, Calif., is on the Big Island this week with award-winning New York photographer Nina Berman to talk about and show the lives of Americans wounded in Iraq.

Acosta grew up in a good home with a brother and a sister, his father working in construction, his mother a housewife. But he dropped out of high school and was using methamphetamine. In 2001, before the Twin Towers attack in New York, he met an Army recruiter. "It was just a way out," he said of his decision to enlist.

In 2003 his unit, the 1st Armored Division, was sent to Kuwait and from there invaded Iraq.

On July 13, 2003, he looked into the eyes of his would-be killer. He shouted, "Grenade," but it was too late.

"There was blood all over the windows. I was in a zone. I wasn't really there," he said.

Now, when he talks to high school kids, they want to know what it was like. That is the point, Berman said.

Television reports show funerals of Americans killed in Iraq, but the dead cannot talk. Only the survivors can tell their stories, she said.

Acosta and Berman do not comment on any party or any public official. But to anyone whose car has a yellow ribbon urging support of the troops, they ask whether the owner voted for a member of Congress who voted against money for veterans.

While casualties have risen, Congress has cut benefits for veterans, Berman said.

Acosta has several prosthetic arms, he said. Like many veterans, he had to use duct tape to hold them in place. They all broke so he stopped using them.

Acosta and others once explained their problems to a mainland congressman, who replied point-blank, "I don't believe you." [Name this useless piece of shit, please. He can be found. Corrective educational discipline can be administered at a time and place he least expects it, in a modality that will make a permanent impression. Sooner or later, what goes around comes around.]

Some wounded veterans are desperate, Acosta said. "They have to really, really try not to flip out," he said.

Paying The Price In Blood For Bush's Imperial Dream: "We Expect To Follow These Patients For The Rest Of Their Lives" Dr. Scott Said

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

January 31, 2006 By ERIK ECKHOLM, New York Times Company [Excerpts]

TAMPA, Fla.

Morning rounds at the Tampa veterans hospital, and a phalanx of specialists stands at Joshua Cooley's door.

Inert in his bed, the 29-year-old Marine reservist is a survivor of an Iraq car bombing and a fearsome scramble of wounds: profound brain injury, arm and facial fractures, third-degree burns, tenacious infections of the central nervous system. Each doctor, six in all on a recent day, is here to monitor some aspect of his care.

As they cluster at the threshold, one gently closes the door, not to shield their patient from bad news, but to avoid overstimulating the nervous system of a man whose frontal lobe has been ripped by shrapnel. Not that the news right now is good: Corporal Cooley is spiking a fever, presumably because of his newest problem, blood clots in his left leg.

The doctors sort through a calculus of competing interests. Should they prescribe a blood thinner to dissolve the dangerous clots, even though that could cause more

bleeding in the brain? Or should they just wait? At this point, the doctors decide, the clots pose the greater risk.

Thousands of miles from the battlefield, intricate medical choices have become routine here, at one of four special rehabilitation centers the government created last year to treat the war's most catastrophically wounded troops.

"These soldiers were kept alive," said Dr. Steven G. Scott, the Tampa center's director. "Now it's up to us to try and give them some meaningful life."

With their concentrated batteries of specialists and therapists, these centers are developing a new model of advanced care, a response to the distinctive medical conundrum of the Iraq war. With better battlefield care and protective gear, the military is saving more of the wounded, yet the insurgents' heavy reliance on car bombs and buried explosives means the survivors are more damaged, and damaged in more different ways, than ever before.

To describe the maimed survivors of this ugly new war, a graceless new word, polytrauma, has entered the medical lexicon. Each soldier arriving at Tampa's Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center, inside the giant veterans hospital, brings a whole world of injury.

The typical patient, Dr. Scott said, has head injuries, vision and hearing loss, nerve damage, multiple bone fractures, unhealed body wounds, infections and emotional or behavioral problems. Some have severed limbs or spinal cords.

The multiple wounds have required medical balancing acts and unusual cooperation across departments. One quadriplegic patient was so weakened by recurring infections that doctors had to wait a year before removing shrapnel from his neck. In other cases, the risk of new infection has delayed treatment of the spasms that some paralyzed patients suffer, which can require an implanted pump to inject medicine into the spinal column.

Of some 90 soldiers with extreme injuries who were treated in Tampa over the last year only one has died, of a rare form of meningitis. The drama here is more excruciatingly drawn out: Over months and months of painstaking physical and psychological therapy, the patients and their families start learning the boundaries of their future lives.

The medical challenges are often persistent and daunting, but the real focus of the new centers is rehabilitation. Even as doctors battle drug-resistant bacteria blown into wounds with Iraqi dirt, patients start relearning to talk and focus their thoughts, to walk and run or maneuver a wheelchair. Some go home in almost normal shape; for others, simply swallowing is a milestone.

To spend several recent days here is to witness a panorama of quiet struggles. A young man with brain and nerve damage slowly fits big round pegs into big round holes. Another beams after jogging a full minute for the first time since his injury, but cannot voice his mix of pride and impatience because shrapnel destroyed the language center in his brain.

A quadriplegic is lifted by a giant sling from his bed to a high-tech wheelchair, which he has learned to drive with a mouthpiece.

Progress on these wards can be measured in agonizing increments.

Corporal Cooley, a 6-foot 6-inch former deputy sheriff, arrived in Tampa on Sept. 29 after more than two months at the Bethesda Naval Hospital outside Washington. His doctors and relatives were encouraged when, after another couple of months, he wriggled his fingers and feet, and answered yes-no questions with blinks.

"They got him to make noises the other day," offered his wife, Christina. "He's doing really well." At "rehab rounds" one recent day, assorted therapists took up Corporal Cooley's case, reporting on small steps forward and compromises along the way.

The speech therapist said he was responding to questions with blinks about 30 percent of the time when she was alone with him, but less if distracted. She described her gingerly efforts to train him to swallow, using thin pudding, apple sauce and ice chips.

The respiratory therapist said his tracheotomy had to be changed to a larger, cuffed device that would allow them to expand his lower right lung.

The speech therapist groaned, "That will make it harder to swallow." They agreed that the lung had to take priority, but the speech therapist added, "Let's get rid of that cuffed trach as soon as possible."

Brain injuries, the signature wounds inflicted by the blast waves and flying shrapnel of explosives, are pervasive, and they tend to dictate the arc of care.

"It's really the brain injury that directs how we approach other impairments," Dr. Barbara Sigford, V.A.'s national director of physical medicine and rehabilitation and chief of the Minneapolis polytrauma center, said in a telephone interview. "Many types of rehab rely on intact thinking, learning and memory skills."

Using advanced prosthetic limbs, for example, requires control of specific muscles; patients without that capacity must use simpler models. Blind people are normally taught to navigate using their memory of the environment; if memory is spotty, they must find other ways.

In the recreational therapy room in Tampa on a recent day, several men are being led through a round of Uno, a card game that involves matching numbers and colors. Some play well. Some fumble trying to pick up cards. One rocks in frustration at his inability to summon the word "blue."

Sgt. Antwain Vaughn, 31, an Army combat engineer who took a roadside blast in the face on Aug. 31, arrives late and in a wheelchair. A padded helmet covers a large indentation where his shattered skull will receive a metal plate.

Sergeant Vaughn came to Tampa after two months on a ventilator and feeding tube. In addition to brain damage, facial fractures, pulmonary problems, blood clots and infections, he lost an eye and has trouble with complex tasks, something the card game could help.

Here he has learned to swallow and eat and in daily therapy, when he is feeling up to it, he is working to reclaim a life. But this time, he will not join the game. "My head's hurting a lot," he quietly tells the group.

In the hallways, the banter tends to be upbeat, as perhaps it needs to be for patients and staff. A patient shows off his stair-climbing wheelchair. Others compare the merits of prosthetic leg models. Nearly every patient vows, not always realistically, that he will get back on his feet and more.

"The way I see it, if I get able to walk a little bit, then eventually I'm going to walk a lot," said Specialist Charles Mays, 31, who was left with multiple fractures and partial paralysis of his legs after being blasted out of his Humvee by a vertically buried rocket south of Baghdad.

Sometimes the hallways bring success stories like Specialist Nicholas Boutin, who was slowly walking on his own to speech therapy in a hockey helmet, apparently not at all self-conscious about the red pit where an artificial eye will be implanted or about the large dent where a piece of skull will be replaced.

Specialist Boutin, 21, had arrived in Tampa just five weeks before, mute and hardly able to swallow, his right arm and leg almost useless. During a midnight patrol in a village near Samarra, an insurgent dropped a grenade into his Bradley fighting vehicle. Fragments sprayed into his face and the left side of his brain, leaving him with Broca's aphasia; able to comprehend but not to speak.

He weathered fungal infections, facial pain where nerves were damaged and the destruction of his pituitary gland and a maxillary sinus, the kind of internal wound that can torment a person for life.

But now, after hard hours each day in therapy, he can jog briefly and write messages with his right hand. As speech therapists coax the right side of his brain to take over lost functions from the left, he has begun to make one-word responses and spontaneously utter a few words at a time. Soon he will head home to Georgia for continued therapy.

"Yes," he uttered instantly when asked if he felt he was progressing. Determination gleamed from his remaining eye.

Behind closed doors, though, bravado sometimes gives way to depression, explosive anger, survivors' guilt. Some patients sit quietly with glum faces or obsess endlessly about their buddies and time in Iraq.

As much as the nurses are often buoyed by their patients' progress, they say the relentless intensity of the work can sometimes bring them to tears. They spend as much time interacting with stressed-out relatives as with the patients.

"Relatives take out their frustrations on the nurses," said Lauren G. Doloresco, assistant nursing chief. "It's also hard on the nurses because of the youth of the patients. Many of them have sons the same age."

At the bedsides of many of these young men are their equally young wives, whose lives have also been wrenched onto unexpected paths.

Though the average stay in polytrauma centers is 40 days, many patients remain for months and some for more than a year.

In the end, a few must go to nursing homes, but most go home, where they receive continued care at less-specialized veterans hospitals, with oversight from the centers. Some require round-the-clock home aides and therapists and costly equipment, paid for by the government on top of monthly disability payments. Even so, wives or parents often must give up their jobs.

For the worst off, the ongoing annual costs, largely hidden costs of this war, can easily be several hundred thousand dollars or more.

"We expect to follow these patients for the rest of their lives," Dr. Scott said.

"But I have a great deal of concern about our country's long-term commitment to these individuals. Will the resources be there over time?"

THE TRAITOR BUSH: LIAR DOMESTIC ENEMY SOLDIER-KILLING RAT UNFIT FOR COMMAND



(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

**Maimed In Battle?
The Army Will Take Your Pay
And Leave Your Family Broke:
8 Out Of 10 In 1st ID Fucked Over
By DoD Scum:
Clueless Piece Of Shit Col. Richard
Shrank Doesn't Even Know How
Many:
“And The Military Basically Is, Like, They
Turn Their Back On You, You Kind Of
Feel That You've Just Been Used”**

[The soldier is right: dishonorably used to fight a war for oil and empire. The enemy isn't in Iraq. There is no enemy in Iraq. The real enemy, the common enemy of the Iraqis and U.S. troops, is in Washington DC. It's the politicians running the government and the super-rich corporate class that buy them, sell them, and give them their orders to loot the world on their behalf. What a big surprise.]

Jan. 31, 2006 By BRIAN ROSS, ABC News Internet Ventures

It was one of the thousands of roadside bombs in Iraq that paralyzed Staff Sgt. Eugene Simpson.

"My first instinct was to jump farther back into the Humvee, you know, for protection," Simpson said. "But in doing that, I opened my back up to all the scrap metal and debris, which hit my spine and severed my spine, paralyzing me."

He was soon on a plane home.

Fast-working, skilled Army doctors saved his life, as they have so many.

Slow, bumbling Army bureaucrats would make his life miserable, as they have so many.

"And the military basically is, like, they turn their back on you, you kind of feel that you've just been used," Simpson said.

It started with a phone call from his wife, home with their four children. She didn't have enough money to pay the bills.

"And she was like, well, we haven't been paid," Simpson said. "And you know, instantly I was like, I don't know what to do. You know, I'm still in the hospital. I can't actually get up and go around and talk to these different people."

And until "Nightline" inquired at the Pentagon, Simpson said he could not find out what happened.

"Every day is something different," he said. "Well, this person isn't in. I'll have them call you back, give it a couple days. Couple days go by, I call back, well I got somebody else for you to talk to. And days lead to weeks, and weeks lead to months."

It turns out the Army had mistakenly continued to pay Simpson a combat duty bonus while he was in the hospital.

He had been overpaid thousands of dollars, and the Army wanted the money back.

"By law, he's not entitled to the money," said Col. Richard Shrank, "so he must pay it back."

So, the Army said it withheld the paralyzed soldier's pay until it got back the amount he owed: with no advance notice, Simpson said.

"Four months," he said. "I didn't get paid for four months."

Simpson is not the only one. A study commissioned by the First Infantry Division estimated that eight out of 10 of its wounded soldiers from Iraq have gone through the same or a similar ordeal.

Capt. Michael Hurst, now out of the Army, conducted the study.

"You have to understand that these soldiers are suffering from incredible injuries, some of them have lost limbs, some of them may never walk again," Hurst said. "And in the midst of that struggle, to then get a paycheck for nothing really hurts morale."

And the Army can play tough to get its money back.

In the case of Sgt. Ryan Kelly, who lost his leg in Iraq, he had just finished going through rehabilitation when the Army sent a letter threatening to ruin his credit and call in debt collectors.

He had been overpaid by \$2,200 while in the hospital, but, like most, never realized it.

It took Kelly almost a year to cut through the red tape and get the debt forgiven.

"Soldiers receive a paycheck and reasonably think that this is their accurate pay for the month," Hurst said.

"And being in the situation they're in, having just been injured and in some cases spouses have to quit jobs in order to spend time at Walter Reed, many of these families are really hurting for funds. So a lot of that money gets spent right away."

The Government Accountability Office described the Army as having failed the test of taking care of its wounded from Iraq. The report concluded that the soldiers fighting to defend the nation have paid the price for that failure.

Shrank disagreed, however. "No, I would not agree that we have failed the test, because we are making the fixes to bring it up to standard," he told "Nightline."

Shrank took over as commander of the United States Army Finance Command last summer to help fix the problem, a problem the GAO said had been ignored until the soldiers went public.

"Nightline" asked when the problem was first realized and why it took so long to realize it.

"We first realized it was a problem when it came into our view through many different channels," Shrank said. "You see it on (television), read about it in the papers. A soldier without a paycheck is a situation that nobody wants to see."

Shrank was asked if it had happened thousands of times. "I, no, I do not think thousands of times," he said. "It happened, one time is too many."

Shrank could not name an exact number, but the Army told "Nightline" that 5,549 soldiers, or about one out of five soldiers who were removed from battle for medical reasons later had payroll problems.

"You know, as a West Pointer and as a leader in the Army that one of the main things that we're taught is when you have soldiers that you are responsible, you have to take care of them, you have to take care of their family," Hurst said.

"And that's kind of the exchange that takes place between leaders and soldiers. And for a lot of these soldiers this is just a betrayal really. They feel abandoned, when they're in such a vulnerable position and their leaders aren't taking care of them."

Shrank said the process failed the soldiers, "but the leaders didn't fail the soldiers because we are making the changes to improve the processes to take care of our soldiers and their pay."

Shrank said he is not aware of anyone losing their command over the thousands of incidents.

Meanwhile, Simpson gave up trying to rectify the situation.

"I mean, I've had people on the phone just flat out tell me, I can't help you, no need for you to call here anymore," he said.

Dr. William Winkenwerder, DoD Rat In Action: Retiree Says "The Only Thing I Feel Rich About Is How Richly I'm Being Backstabbed"

Dr. William Winkenwerder, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, described the military health benefit as "extremely rich."

"I certainly don't feel very rich," said Jackie E. Turpin, 43, of Sterling, Va., who retired in 2004 after 23 years as a Navy corpsman. "I'm now self-employed and the only thing I feel rich about is how richly I'm being backstabbed."

January 30, 2006 By John Lee, Post-Crescent staff writer

Bob Everson can't understand a tentative Pentagon proposal that would sharply increase the costs military veterans pay for health care.

He earned two Purple Hearts in Vietnam, is on a 100 percent disability, and is upset with talk among veterans groups that a proposal to double or triple costs for veterans to help pay for other defense programs.

"They said they'd take care of us if we served our time, and now instead of taking care of us they are trying to charge us," Everson, of Appleton, president and interim treasurer of the Fox Valley Vietnam Veterans Association, said Sunday.

"How do you explain to a man coming back from Afghanistan with both legs blown off and you are going to tell them they have to wait until they are 65?" for health coverage.

Retirees and military service organizations have started sounding off about the possible increases, which could make in into President Bush's budget proposal on Feb. 6. More than a million retirees under the age of 65 could be caught by the change.

Military service organizations say the proposal calls for the annual enrollment fee for the plan known as Tricare Prime to increase substantially in the next three years.

The fee is now \$230 for single enlisted and officer retirees, and would rise to \$450 for enlisted retirees and \$750 for officers.

Family coverage, now \$460 a year, would increase to \$900 for enlisted retirees and \$1,500 for officers, according to the Military Officers Association of America.

A plan called Tricare Standard, which now has free enrollment, would cost \$300 for single officers and \$600 for family coverage. Enlisted retirees would see costs climb to \$200 for single coverage and \$400 for a family. Also being considered are increases in some pharmacy co-payments.

Everson was hit twice in Vietnam, by grenade fragments on April 21, 1966, and shot 13 times on May 17, 1966, when he was "bagged and tagged," or pronounced dead and zipped into a body bag.

Now, at 62, he rides a bike a mile to work at a grocery store — he can't drive because of his disability — and he also worries that his dad, a World War II veteran, isn't getting services he deserves from the Veterans Administration.

"My dad is 86 and a veteran and he never drew a penny from the government for anything. The last five years he had to pay to get medication out of the VA," he said.

In a briefing to the Military Coalition, an umbrella group of 36 military and veterans organizations in mid-January, Dr. William Winkenwerder, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, described the military health benefit as "extremely rich."

I certainly don't feel very rich," said Jackie E. Turpin, 43, of Sterling, Va., who retired in 2004 after 23 years as a Navy corpsman.

"I'm now self-employed and the only thing I feel rich about is how richly I'm being backstabbed.

[A previous story explained the DoD needs the money to buy more from defense contractors and other war profiteers.]

**Dr. William Winkenwerder,
Lying DoD Rat In Action:
He Covers Up How Quack Doctors
Helped Torture Prisoners And**

Labeled Soldiers Who Complained As Psychos

Lancet, quoting documents uncovered by the ACLU in their ongoing FOIA lawsuit with the Pentagon, also discovered incidents where U.S. Army doctors: held detainees down during interrogations, provided interrogators the medical records of detainees in order to facilitate an interrogation strategy, or in some cases, literally looked the other way as detainees were physically abused.

Jan 31, 2006 David DeBatto, Veteransforcommonsense.org

Since the fall of 2002 at the military prison at Guantanamo Bay (GITMO), and during the fall of 2003 and early winter of 2004 at the now infamous U.S. Army detention facility at Abu Ghraib, Iraq, several Iraqi, Afghani, Pakistani and other "enemy combatant" detainees were abused, tortured and in some cases, murdered. No one has ever been charged with any misconduct at GITMO.

Seven low ranking Army National Guard soldiers were later convicted at Abu Ghraib.

No commissioned officers have yet to be charged in that case. Neither have any of the military medical personnel that, at the very least, according to a report in both the January 2005 issue of New England Journal of Medicine and the August 2004 issue of the British medical journal, Lancet, collaborated with interrogators during the abuse and torture and in some cases, actually facilitated it.

In the spring of 2003, Sgt. Frank "Greg" Ford, CA Army National Guard, was strapped to a gurney after accusing his fellow soldiers of torturing Iraqi detainees in Samara, Iraq, and flown to an Army hospital in Landstuhl, Germany for mental evaluation.

His "medical evacuation" was approved and supervised by an Army Psychiatrist Cpt. Merle Madera, even though that same doctor had never filed any written reports requesting a medical evacuation or evaluation. In fact, Madera had previously diagnosed Ford as "normal", in no need of further testing or hospitalization.

However, she cooperated fully with both her commanding officer and the combat commander, Cpt. Victor Artiga, when she was ordered to change her diagnosis, to "mentally unstable", and to get Ford "out of theater immediately." Ford spent almost one year in various Army psychiatric facilities until his discharge from the Army in early 2004.

During the spring and summer of 2003, there was such an onslaught of soldiers arriving at the Landstuhl Regional Mental Health Facility for psychiatric evaluations from Iraq, that Chief of Psychiatry, Col. Charles Tsai, said that he advised them all to "take a number".

Tsai said that they all had similar stories.

The soldier would make a formal complaint of detainee abuse or another serious violation of regulations to their commanders, and the next thing they knew, they were being “evac’d” to Landstuhl for a “mental eval.” Unless they were clearly delusional (most were not, he said) he wrote up a report recommending further examination stateside, to at least “get them out of harm’s way.”

According to Dr. Daniel Soeke, a clinical social worker and forensic expert that specializes in military and federal whistleblower cases, the doctors in the cases listed above are all “guilty of malpractice, and so are their bosses if they are doctors as well.”

Soeke has testified in federal court over 80 times against doctors, often psychiatrists, that are used by their agencies to “go after” a whistleblower and have them declared mentally incompetent.

Soeke goes on to say that another common scenario with both the military and federal civilian agencies, like NSA, CIA or the FBI, is the use of military or staff psychiatrists to certify a whistleblower “mentally unsuitable” so they can suspend and eventually revoke their security clearance.

“In the case of someone that needs a security clearance as a requirement for his or her job, this is usually the end of his or her career” he added. “The case against Sgt. Ford is a classic example of how a federal agency uses the medical staff to do their dirty work.”

“Even Col. Tsai, who at least did a partial examination of Ford and also found him mentally stable, should have done a more complete workup and not allowed Ford to be sent back to the states for possible further abuse by the system.”

With all of the notoriety Abu Ghraib and GITMO have received over the past year and a half, including several “investigations” by the Pentagon, why has there not been more of an outcry from the public about the obvious violations of the Hippocratic oath and other seemingly egregious behavior by care givers?

According to the Pentagon, the American public should have no worries about military medical professionals.

Assistant Secretary of Defense, William Winkenwerder, Jr. said in a Washington Post article early last year that, “We have no evidence of maltreatment by physicians, or of physicians participating in torture or torturous activity.”

However, a contradictory statement is made by David N. Tornberg, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Clinical Program Policy, he actually says that, “When a doctor participates in an interrogation, he is acting as a combatant, so the Hippocratic oath does not apply.”

Lancet, quoting documents uncovered by the ACLU in their ongoing FOIA lawsuit with the Pentagon, also discovered incidents where U.S. Army doctors: held detainees down during interrogations, provided interrogators the medical records

of detainees in order to facilitate an interrogation strategy, or in some cases, literally looked the other way as detainees were physically abused.

According too both Soeke and M. Gregg Bloche, law professor at John Hopkins University and co-author of the NEJM report, these actions are clear violations of the Geneva Convention, the Hippocratic Oath and Army Regulations.

They were both puzzled by the fact that nothing had come in the wake of the Lancet article and the NEJM report.

In fact, Dr. Soeke was so outraged, that he said he is going to call for congressional hearings on the whole issue of military medicine and torture immediately.

“I am very upset that the American public, but particularly, the U.S. Congress has failed to look into this disgraceful behavior by our military medical providers. Our soldiers deserve better.”

Indeed they do.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action



Damaged oil pipeline complex in Khabaza village near Kirkuk February 2, 2006. The oil complex was damaged after mortar attacks by insurgents, residents said. REUTERS/Slahaldeen Rasheed

Feb 1 (KUNA) & 2.2.06 The Associated Press, By SINAN SALAHEDDIN, Associated Press Writer & AFP & Mail & Guardian & Reuters

Insurgents attacked an oil storage facility near the northern city of Kirkuk setting off a massive blaze, an official with the Northern Oil Company said.

He said the attack occurred at 3am (midnight GMT), adding the blaze was still continuing as the sun rose.

Three mortar shells exploded at the northern Iraqi plant used for cleaning and processing crude oil.

The attack occurred at the Oil Concentrating Complex, about 30 miles west of Kirkuk, police Capt. Farhad Talabani said.

The complex processes about 150,000 barrels of the crude oil a day from the northern oil fields before shipment to refineries, the Northern Oil Company said.

Oil Ministry spokesman Assem Jihad said work at the complex had stopped about a week ago following an earlier attack of the main pipeline that feeds crude oil from the northern oil fields.

A member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), led by Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, was assassinated Wednesday in the northern city of Mosul.

A PUK source told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that unknown gunmen opened fire on two PUK staff late Tuesday, killing Ali Hassan Younis and wounding Majid Nouri.

He added that the attack occurred while the victims were entering their residence in Al-Jazaer neighborhood, noting that the attackers fled the scene.

A security source in Tel Afer District told reporters that 12 Iraqi soldiers were killed and nine others were seriously wounded when four mortar rounds hit a military camp inside a hospital. The camp was established to provide security for the medical facility.

In another incident, four Iraqi policemen were wounded in southern Kirkuk today when an explosive device targeted a police patrol securing oil facilities.

Chief of Police in Kirkuk Brigadier Sarhad Qader told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the explosion damaged two patrol vehicles.

A roadside bomb Thursday killed three Iraqi army soldiers in eastern Baghdad's Ghazaliyah neighborhood, and a police major and his driver were killed by three resistance soldiers firing from a speeding car in Basra.

A high ranking official at the industry ministry, Mary Hamza al-Rubai, was captured on her way to work. Two cars filled with guerrillas stopped her car, released her driver and took the woman away.

The US military said two children died in the town of Hit during a gunfight between security forces and insurgents on Wednesday. It said insurgents attacked a joint Iraqi-US patrol in which one Iraqi soldier was wounded.

The body of a policeman captured on Wednesday was found in an eastern suburb of Baghdad, riddled with bullets.

BASRA: A police major was wounded and his driver killed when resistance fighters attacked their car in the southern city of Basra, police said.

TUZ KHURMATU: Four soldiers were wounded on Wednesday when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in Tuz Khurmatu, local authorities said.

SHIRQAT: Guerrillas attacked the car of the head of the Shirqat town council, killing his driver and wounding his bodyguard, said local authorities in the town, about 300 km (185 miles) north of Baghdad.

MOSUL: A policeman was killed and five wounded when a roadside bomb hit their patrol in the northern city of Mosul, police said.

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

EX-STATE DEPT HEAD OF IRAQ INTEL GETS IT RIGHT: CALLS IT "THE RESISTANCE"

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in. He writes: EX-STATE DEPT HEAD OF IRAQ INTEL GETS IT RIGHT, CALLS IT "THE RESISTANCE"]

2.1.06 By JIM KRANE, Associated Press Writer

Guerrilla attacks in Iraq have forced the cancellation of more than 60 percent of water and sanitation projects, in part because American intelligence failed to predict the brutal insurgency, a U.S. government audit said.

American goals to fix Iraq's infrastructure will never be reached, mainly because insurgents have chased away contractors and forced the diversion of repair funds into security, according to an audit of the Iraqi Relief and Reconstruction Program released last week.

"The whole purpose of those attacks was to drive those contractors out," said Wayne White, who headed the State Department's Iraq intelligence team until last year. "Lots of them had to leave. They were terrified."

"But nobody predicted anything of this magnitude in terms of resistance," said White, now an analyst with the Middle East Institute in Washington. ***"And in part, the magnitude of the resistance was spurred by our failures in reconstruction."***

"So many of our goals were not met, in part because of really expert sabotage by the resistance," White said. "But it was also the fault of being overly focused on long-term projects that weren't bringing short-term relief."

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



An Iraqi citizens held at gunpoint as U.S. Marines 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit search his home near Hit, January 28, 2006. 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?]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Conservative And Liberal Legal Scholars Agree: The Traitor Bush Lied About Spying

February 2, 2006 By Charlie Savage, The Boston Globe [Excerpt]

WASHINGTON -- Legal specialists yesterday questioned the accuracy of President Bush's sweeping contentions about the legality of his domestic spying program, particularly his assertion in his State of the Union speech on Tuesday that "previous presidents have used the same constitutional authority I have."

But legal specialists said yesterday that wiretaps ordered by previous presidents were put in place before warrants were required for investigations involving national security. Since Congress passed the law requiring warrants in 1978, no president but Bush has defied it, specialists said.

Bush's contention that past presidents did the same thing as he has done "is either intentionally misleading or downright false," said David Cole, a Georgetown University law professor. Only Bush has made the assertion that his wartime powers should supersede an act of Congress, Cole said.

Moreover, Bush said in his address that "appropriate members of Congress have been kept informed" about the program. But Senator Arlen Specter, a Pennsylvania Republican and chairman of the Judiciary Committee, has said that under law Bush was required to brief all members of the intelligence committees. not just their leaders, as he did.

<p>Bush's assertion that his program was legal prompted a group of 14 prominent law professors, including both liberals and conservatives, to pen a joint letter objecting to his arguments.</p>

The Traitor Bush Discussed Using American Spy Plane In UN Colors To Lure Saddam Into War

02 February 2006 By Gary Gibbon, Channel 4, London

Channel 4 News tonight reveals extraordinary details of George Bush and Tony Blair's pre-war meeting in January 2003 at which they discussed plans to begin military action on March 10th 2003, irrespective of whether the United Nations had passed a new resolution authorising the use of force.

Channel 4 News has seen minutes from that meeting, which took place in the White House on 31 January 2003. The two leaders discussed the possibility of securing further UN support, but President Bush made it clear that he had already decided to go to war.

The details are contained in a new version of the book 'Lawless World' written by a leading British human rights lawyer, Philippe Sands QC. President Bush said that: "The US would put its full weight behind efforts to get another resolution and would 'twist arms' and 'even threaten'. But he had to say that if ultimately we failed, military action would follow anyway."

Prime Minister Blair responded that he was: "solidly with the President and ready to do whatever it took to disarm Saddam."

Mr. Sands' book says that the meeting focused on the need to identify evidence that Saddam had committed a material breach of his obligations under the existing UN Resolution 1441. There was concern that insufficient evidence had been unearthed by the UN inspection team, led by Dr Hans Blix. Other options were considered.

President Bush said: "The US was thinking of flying U2 reconnaissance aircraft with fighter cover over Iraq, painted in UN colours. If Saddam fired on them, he would be in breach."



Eric Olson protests during the State of the Union Address giving by US President George W. Bush January 31, 2006 outside the US Capitol in Washington. Several hundred protesters rallied outside the US Capitol during the address calling for the impeachment of Bush. REUTERS/Joshua Roberts [Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

Received:

To Representatives Of The Middle East:

From: MC
To: GI Special
Sent: February 02, 2006

To Representatives of the Middle East:

We the People of the United States, wish to respond to your grievances. Although we are not in a position to resolve your internal affairs, we would like to inform you, that we are coming to understand the nature of your suffering - and its causative agents. We wish now to inform you, that we want no part in interfering with your progress.

Illusions often appear as realities, and we were the object of deception. Many of us have been misled in so many ways with respect to your culture and motives - that we can no longer reasonably trust even the most innocuous sounding agenda being manufactured for you. We want to tell you now, unequivocally, that we want no part of your resources; we want no part in changing your beliefs; and we want no part in expecting even the smallest amount of gratitude from you. If we can ever be friends, we realize that condition can only be achieved with the freedom that every human being deserves.

Of course, this is a truth that does not satisfy everyone. There are those who seek to profit off of your misery, and capitalize on your suffering. For those smirking fools, who think they can exploit you, and fail to know your proud history, do not over-react for them - as they are all but finished.

We recognize that you have a right to defend yourselves; and that you have a right to seek compensation for any loss that has been unjustly inflicted on you. We know this once again because; these are the rights of each and every human being - whom God has ever created. We do esteem these rights as vital prerequisites, for the civilized manner by which we seek to conduct ourselves - and by which we seek the same respect from you.

In the spirit of good-will and reciprocity, we hereby request that you continue on in your good judgment and patient restraint. We fully realize that our mutual enemies are actively trying to antagonize both of us, seeking an opportunity to exploit the consequences. We respectfully request, that you do not give them the opportunity they seek. Again, we fully acknowledge your right to self-defense and justice. We, in no way, wish to diminish that fact.

Our request here, is an appeal to your humanity, that you may exercise your free-will among men, and that you may choose to do good for the sake of God Almighty. The future is already written for those who violate the sanctity of human life, and the fate of those who choose to do so will surely be torment. Please follow the path of goodness, and be balanced in the decisions you make.

For us, the future is unpredictable. We have every reason though, to expect the current waves of human depravity to recede; until you are once again standing firmly on the grounds of justice; and are once again able to rest on the shores of peace. If the tide of exploitation and violence against you does not abate, we will not deny you your right to resist it. No human being should have to live helplessly in chaos.

The People of the Middle East have proven for centuries, upon centuries, that they are strong, resilient, and stable in force. They have proven time and time again, that not only are they capable of self-governance but, that self-governance for them is nothing less than an inevitability. With the great asset of self-determination, as their long history attests, the People of the Middle East also understand the duties and responsibilities they have toward others. I hope and pray that future decision-makers can follow in at least some of the examples shown to the world by the great leaders of Middle Eastern history. Their accomplishments serve as an underlayment for all civilizations still today.

Representatives of the Middle East: Please give us, The American People, more time to bring justice to the criminals and terrorists from among us. The 2006 elections in our country should serve to be the beginning of their punishments. If these criminals and terrorists escalate the violence in your lands, or if they are able to maintain the current level of their disgusting acts beyond our next elections, we will not ignore your right to self-preservation.

If the horrors in your land do draw to a close soon, we also respect your right to be fully compensated for the damage that has been done to you. We ask you for the opportunity to pay reparations on behalf of our government, in this event. If you do not gain justice by this way, we have no right to fault you for seeking justice in other ways.

If however, you obtain the human rights and respect that we wish for you, please work with us in shaping a better world for all of us.

Regards from the American People.

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://robinlea.com/GI_Special/, <http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>,
<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>, www.williambowles.info/qispecial,
http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/, <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>,
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>**

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.