

GI SPECIAL 4B25:

**“On My Command, Green Light, Go”
“Lima Charlie That, Sgt.”**



As a team of Iraq combat vets wait in concealment nearby, U.S. President George W. Bush picks up a frayed electrical cable he noticed on the South Lawn of the White House February 22, 2006. [Thanks to J, back from Iraq.] REUTERS/Jason Reed

**Fayetteville Filth At Work
They Take Soldiers Tuition Money:
They Trash The Wife Of A Man
Killed In Combat**

[Thanks to Lou Plummer, Veterans For Peace & Bring Them Home Now, who sent this in.]

February 24, 2006 By Kevin Maurer, The Fayetteville (NC) Observer [Excerpts]

Connie Moralez-Piper lost her husband in the war on terrorism.

In her grief, she spent 11 weeks away from her job with a Troy University program that teaches courses to Fort Bragg special operations soldiers.

When she returned to work, she said, she found that her personal belongings in the office had been packed in three boxes.

She said her boss and the director of the program, Dr. George Poteat, told her he would help her pack up the rest of her office.

“Let’s go pack your boxes and put them in your car. I’ll help you,” he told her.

Moralez-Piper said Poteat wanted to get rid of her. She wanted to keep her job, which she saw as her own contribution to the war effort. But about three months later, she said, she resigned under pressure.

She said her case raises questions about whether military spouses who lose loved ones have sufficient job protections when they take time off to deal with the loss.

“I think there should be a law that protects spouses when they are in a situation like mine,” Moralez-Piper said. “I just don’t want to see other spouses go through something like this.”

She complained about the circumstances of her departure to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which reported finding no discrimination in her case.

But the head of a group that advocates for surviving spouses says her case illustrates the need to do more to protect them.

“For her company to treat her like this after the sacrifice her husband made is really underhanded and sickening,” said Nicholas Rocha, president of the United Warrior Survivor Foundation.

Rocha, a SEAL, said there are laws that protect the jobs of National Guard and Reserve soldiers, but surviving spouses have no protection.

“In a situation like this, we know these women are in a fog for the first 12 to 18 months. They are not going to be productive. They are going to be in survival mode,” he said. “I have seen it in other cases. Companies find it easier to not to deal with it.”

Poteat would talk little about the case, but said that problems existed before her husband died.

“What we have is a situation that was very tragic,” Poteat said. “There were a lot of things prior to her husband dying.” Poteat said he wanted to keep Morales-Piper.

“She had a difficult time. *The issue is not being in the office. It’s getting the work done. Getting the work done is what mattered,*” Poteat said.

“All we wanted was Connie to show up on time at the office and not have unexplained absences.” [Well, asshole, which is it? You just contradicted yourself.]

He did not elaborate.

Morales-Piper was hired in February 2005. Her duties included helping coordinate the students’ trip to Washington, booking guest speakers for the course and managing the office finances.

She said she was devastated when soldiers knocked at her door in June 2005. Staff 1st Class Christopher Piper had been severely burned when the Humvee he was in hit a bomb in Afghanistan.

As she frantically prepared to leave for Germany, Morales-Piper said she asked Christy Gaines, a friend, to take over her duties.

“I found my own temp at a time when one hundred percent of my thoughts and efforts should have been with Chris,” she said.

Morales-Piper spent about two weeks with her husband, first in Germany and then at the Army’s burn unit at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. He died June 16 at age 43.

“I watched him die. You don’t know how painful that is,” Morales-Piper said.

Over the next several weeks, Morales-Piper buried her husband in Marblehead, Mass., and spent time in Texas with her father.

She believes Poteat decided to get rid of her even before she came back to work. He called her, she said, in August at her father’s house in Texas to see if she wanted to keep her job.

She said he told her that she should not feel obligated to come back, that she had missed too much.

Morales-Piper returned to work that month, after being gone 11 weeks. North Carolina state law allows 12 weeks for bereavement leave.

At no point, she said, was she ever told she was doing a poor job. In fact, her work was highlighted during a graduation ceremony, she said, and Poteat was complimentary of her in a May e-mail.

“You’re doing so great so stick with it!” Poteat wrote.

But after her return, she said, Poteat made it clear he didn’t want her working there anymore.

Among other things, she said, he badgered her about a 26-cent discrepancy on some expense reports. After reviewing the office’s financial records, she found that the mistake was made by Troy University a year before she started the position.

Moralez-Piper said she also had to e-mail Poteat every time she left the office, something no one else in the office was required to do.

When Piper requested a few days off in September to attend her husband’s medal ceremony and a fund-raiser in his honor in Massachusetts, Poteat told the program’s military liaison in an e-mail that Moralez-Piper was “making herself expendable.”

After she returned from the fund-raiser, she was called to Poteat’s office. Waiting for her were Dr. David White, the university’s southeast regional director, and Jim Farris, the human resources director. The men offered Moralez-Piper a lesser position at the university’s Bragg Boulevard office because the relationship between her and Poteat could not be repaired, she said.

She refused the position.

In October, Poteat asked Moralez-Piper to sign two disciplinary statements: one said she was disrespectful during a meeting in August and the other was for a minor error concerning a monthly reimbursement report.

She declined to sign the statements at first because she didn’t feel the criticisms were fair. She agreed to sign only when White and Farris explained to her that signing the statements only acknowledged receiving them and that she was allowed to add comments.

Later that month, she said, she was again called into a meeting with Poteat, White and Farris and told that she could either take the other position or resign. She resigned.

Gaines, the temp who filled in while Moralez-Piper was on bereavement leave, was hired last month to fill the position.

Moralez-Piper said Fort Bragg officials knew about the situation, but could not act. By law, the Army cannot interfere with a contractor unless the contract demands are not being met.

In an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission report on the case, the former battalion commander in charge of the training said he ordered his staff to stay out of the matter.

Moralez-Piper remains upset about her departure.

“For Dr. Poteat and the university to not support me in my time of grief and hardship is inconceivable,” Moralez-Piper said.

Poteat said he does care about Moralez-Piper, and about the special operations community as a whole. He said that many spouses have done very well after their husbands were killed.

“She is a casualty of the war. We all are,” he said. [No, she’s a causality of Dr. Poteat; a heartless shit eating ass monkey slime fuck clueless lame brained waste of fucking space and bane of all human existence, to quote an Iraq combat veterans expressive words, which continue as follows: “If you ever brought that bullshit attitude to my neighborhood I’d shove it so far up your ass that you’d be coughing stars and stripes until the war was over.”]

“I am sorry Connie is still injured.” [Hopefully some veterans can visit Dr. Poteat, and share their views with him, soon, in an effective way even he can understand, or at least give him a phone call. See the box below.]

Moralez-Piper plans to work with the United Warrior Survivor Foundation’s legislative committee in hopes of helping other surviving spouses. The group is following her case and may lobby Congress for protections in the fall.

“It is something we would like to look at to ensure that this type of thing doesn’t happen again,” Rocha said.

If you have something you’d like to say, perhaps a message for Dr. Poteat, or the administrators who backed him up, here’s the contact information:

**Troy University, Bragg Campus
811 Stamper Road, Suite A
Fayetteville, NC 28303
(910) 484-6839**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

MND-B SOLDIER DIES FROM NON-COMBAT RELATED INJURIES

2/25/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-02-02CA

BAGHDAD, Iraq: A Multi-National Division Baghdad Soldier died from non-combat related injuries Feb. 24.

4TH ID Soldier Killed



Army Staff Sgt. Curtis T. Howard II was killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq. Howard, 32, was on his second tour in Iraq as a member of the Army's 4th Infantry Division. (AP Photo/Photo Courtesy of the Howard Family)

Bamberg Native Shot In Chest



Sgt. Irons

February 25, 2006 By LISA B. STOKES, T&D Bamberg Correspondent

A Bamberg native, Sgt. Quincy Irons, 26, is in serious condition after being shot in the chest late Tuesday in an incident near Ramadi, Iraq.

Irons, a 1998 graduate of Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School and the son of John and Pastor Clotine Irons of Bamberg, is hospitalized in Iraq but will be moved to a hospital in Germany no later than Sunday, his sister, Patricia Irons Ramsey of Orangeburg, said Friday.

"Right now, the only thing that we know is that he was shot in the chest. We also know that he has been upgraded from critical to serious," she said. "Once he is evaluated in Germany, he'll be flown to Washington, and his wife and the rest of the family will join him there."

Irons, who joined the United States Army immediately after high school, was deployed to Iraq in September.

"We do know that communication is a problem for Quincy. He can't talk right now. With the tubes and things in his mouth, communication is very difficult," she said. "His wife said he is able to respond through other movement though."

Sgt. Quincy Irons is married to the former Kim Wilson of Ehrhardt, who is also a 1998 B-E graduate. She and their 7-year-old son, Quincy II, are living in Aiken, where the family has been since Irons' first deployment. While Irons was deployed to Israel for a brief period, the family moved to Aiken.

Irons' wife is coping with the news of his being wounded as well as can be expected, Ramsey said, but she said her mother has been struggling with the news.

"Mom has had a difficult time with this ... since we got the news," Ramsey said. "The family has had a lot of support from other family members and friends. This has been very helpful."

British Embassy Hit By Rockets: Two Occupation Staff Wounded

February 25, 2006 (AP)

Two rockets exploded in the British Embassy compound in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone late Friday, causing minor injuries to two British workers, the U.S. military reported.

555 Resistance Attacks Last Week

Feb. 24, 2006 By Tom Lasseter, Knight Ridder Newspapers [Excerpt]

Insurgents are still staging hundreds of attacks a week. Last week, they struck 555 times, according to American military officials.

And while the 555 attacks last week were fewer than the numbers from late last year, in the run-up to the constitutional referendum and national elections, they're relatively numerous compared with the amount of attacks during the past 17 months.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. Marines with the 6th Marine Regiment search a house in Asragiya June 10, 2005. REUTERS/USMC/Cpl. Photo by Reuters (Handout)

505 Mercenaries & Drivers Killed So Far

A DynCorp employee working in Iraq's international police mission might earn up to \$120,631 a year, Lagana said.

February 23, 2006 By ALEJANDRA FERNANDEZ-MORERA, Scripps Howard News Service

During his year in Iraq as a top security contractor, Michael Heidingsfield watched his employees perish at the rate of one a month, all victims of roadside bombs set by anti-American insurgents.

Heidingsfield, now safely home in Germantown, Tenn., lost 13 colleagues in just 13 months. They were seven American and six South African security experts recruited by DynCorp International to help train Iraqi police.

"What is even more tragic is that I have been back six weeks and eight more have been killed," said Heidingsfield, 55, who in December ended his tour as contingent commander of the State Department's Police Advisory Mission in Iraq.

His security-personnel losses are among 505 civilian contractors who have died in Iraq since the beginning of the war. Another 4,744 contractors have been injured, according to insurance claims by 209 companies on file at the Department of Labor.

"We were as well-equipped as we could be for our mission," said Heidingsfield. "But it is virtually impossible to defend yourself from improvised explosive devices."

At least DynCorp's security personnel were armed and in a position to try to defend themselves. Heidingsfield warned that other contractors working to rebuild Iraq's crumbling infrastructure in unprotected areas have jobs that are "inviting disaster."

Some former contractors are embittered by their experiences in Iraq.

"I went to Iraq because I was hoping to make a lot of money," said Steven Thompson, who worked six months as a truck driver for Halliburton subsidiary KBR. "On the outside it looked real good, but it doesn't look so good now."

Thompson, 42, survived an improvised-explosive-device (IED) attack on a truck convoy. He said he ended his \$1,850-a-week contract six months early when he began suffering symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and could no longer drive a truck.

American-employed civilian contractors are dying at an average of 14 each month.

The only official report on civilian deaths and injuries in Iraq comes from a summary of insurance claims issued by the Department of Labor, although the report is heavily censored. Of the 209 companies that reported deaths or injuries in Iraq, the exact number of casualties was withheld for 197 of these firms. (The government does report a grand total for the dead and injured, however.)

It also is not known how many of the civilian dead are Americans.

The Labor Department provides imprecise information about exactly how many civilians work in Iraq (the current estimate is 20,000), where they've been assigned to work, their pay, their nationality and even the nature of the work they've been hired to do.

"The lack of numbers, missing on everything from how much we are spending to how many are being killed or wounded, is just stunning for this day and age," said Peter Singer of the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based research and policy center.

DynCorp spokesman Gregory Lagana said his company has lost 26 employees in Iraq since 2003 - 19 in hostile actions and seven from accidents. He said DynCorp has between 1,000 and 2,000 people in Iraq.

A DynCorp employee working in Iraq's international police mission might earn up to \$120,631 a year, Lagana said.

White's online database provides some hints about the demographics of contractor fatalities. Nearly half are U.S. citizens.

The most dangerous occupations seem to be security personnel, accounting for 84 fatalities, and truck drivers, who have suffered 57 deaths.

The most common causes of death, according to White's data, are from IEDs, accounting for 57. Another 51 perished in insurgent attacks on convoys, 29 in executions carrying out by insurgents, 25 from small-arms fire and 22 by suicide bombers.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Notes From A Lost War:

Afghan Campaign Deadlier For U.S. Troops Than Iraq: 2005 Loses Worst Yet

February 25, 2006 The Pak Tribune

Despite purported military success in Afghanistan, the U.S. Institute of Peace says the country in 2005 was more dangerous for American troops per capita than Iraq.

According to USIP, in the spring of 2005 U.S. troop casualties, both injured and killed, reached 1.6 per 1,000 soldiers in Afghanistan, compared with a casualty rate of 0.9 per 1,000 in Iraq.

Afghan insurgents, likely including Taliban and al-Qaida fighters, are adopting methods proven effective in Iraq.

The year 2005 proved to be the deadliest for U.S. troops since the 2001 invasion. There were 1,500 casualties, 100 of them killed in action.

TROOP NEWS

Fucking Soldier-Killing DoD Rats At It Again: Ignoring Combat Hearing Loss That Renders Troops Incapable Of Threat Perception

"Our soldiers on patrol can hear a weapon that is being cocked from 1,000 meters if their hearing is intact, but only from 46 meters if there is significantly degraded hearing due to unprotected exposure to noise," Helfer wrote in an e-mail interview.

Feb. 21, 2006 BY BRUCE TAYLOR SEEMAN, Newhouse News Service [Excerpts]

Thousands of U.S. soldiers sent to Iraq have suffered serious hearing damage from bombs, rocket explosions and other combat noise, a new Army study suggests.

Many of these injuries might have been prevented. But earplugs have been in short supply.

And the Army has not told soldiers enough about the noise risks of battle or monitored them adequately for hearing damage, according to the report published Tuesday in the American Journal of Audiology.

Meanwhile, the Army operates with a reduced force of audiologists, half the estimated 70 hearing specialists it employed in the 1990s, and currently has only one deployed to Iraq at any given time, said Thomas M. Helfer, the retired Army reservist and hearing specialist who led the study.

The issue has important consequences for communications and self-protection.

"Our soldiers on patrol can hear a weapon that is being cocked from 1,000 meters if their hearing is intact, but only from 46 meters if there is significantly degraded hearing due to unprotected exposure to noise," Helfer wrote in an e-mail interview.

Auditory problems are the third most common veterans' disability, the IOM report said. It said veterans whose primary impairment is hearing loss or tinnitus, ringing in the ears, receive about \$850 million in compensation each year from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The IOM, federally chartered to conduct research requested by Congress, noted that service members are often exposed to prolonged loud noises from guns, rockets and other weapons, plus heavy-duty vehicles, planes and ships.

Yet between the early 1980s and 2002, the IOM found, only about 30 percent of Navy or Marine Corps personnel were given hearing tests at the beginning and end of service. For the Army and Air Force, the rate was around 12 percent.

The new Army study examined the cases of 806 U.S. soldiers diagnosed with "post deployment noise-induced hearing loss" at audiology clinics worldwide between April 2003 and March 2004.

By comparing the hearing of those who had served in Iraq with the hearing of those who had not, researchers concluded that soldiers sent to battle zones were 52.5 times more likely to suffer auditory damage.

"These are not just mild hearing losses that you and I might have from listening to music, or from aging," said Brenda Lonsbury-Martin, director of science and research for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. "These are pretty severe hearing losses that will impact your life."

The most common problems were tinnitus and "permanent threshold shift," which means inner ear damage resulting in lifelong hearing loss. About 30 percent of the soldiers studied suffered these conditions.

In about 16 percent of those studied, the report found, the hearing losses were likely to affect their performance in combat.

The Army's study, however, almost certainly underestimates the rate of hearing injury, Helfer said, because it does not fully count injuries among Army Reserve and National Guard troops. Those soldiers typically seek treatment from civilian doctors or other providers outside the military medical system.

Moreover, Helfer said, "many soldiers with blast injuries had hearing loss as a secondary injury, with primary wounds that needed immediate surgical attention."

While primary wounds were treated, hearing injuries may not have been examined in military audiology clinics, he said.

"The kinds of noises that these guys hear are not the kinds we'd see in civilian life," she said.

"But the point is, they should be given as much pre-deployment information as possible about how to protect themselves."

[Who is the enemy? Where is the war?]

“It’s An Ugly War,” Vet Says:

“They Have A Good Reason To Be Protesting”

February 24 By Melissa J. Brachfeld, Montgomery County Sentinel

The Prince George's County Broader-Horizons/Counter Recruiting campaign held a demonstration last Tuesday afternoon in front of the Hyattsville military recruiting station to protest the war in Iraq and what they call recruiters' "high pressure tactics and deceptive pitches."

About 15 protesters marched up and down the sidewalk in front of 6525 Belcrest Road carrying signs that read "Send Our Youth to College, Not War," "Education Not Occupation" and "Recruiters, Please Don't Glamorize War."

Thomas Paul, a World War II veteran and a resident of Hyattsville, watched the protest from the parking lot while he waited for his wife to pick up her prescription drugs from inside the building. He said he felt that the war in Iraq was an "ugly war."

"They have a good reason to be protesting," Paul said. "And I think it'd be pretty hard to recruit young men right now to go over there and fight the type of war they're fighting. It's just a shame."

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



A relative of U.S. Army Cpl. Sergio Antonio Mercedes Saez, who was killed recently in Iraq, holds a portrait of Saez, at his burial in San Pedro de Macoris, east of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Feb. 20, 2006. Sergio was born in Puerto Rico and grew up in the Dominican Republic. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

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

**2005:
Sailor Plans To Defy His Deployment
Order:
Afghan War Vet “Would Rather
Spend Time In The Brig Than Be A
Target In Iraq”**

**2006:
“My Cousin Was Arrested Two Nights
Ago”**

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

Jun 22, 2005 by House, Daily Kos

This is a story about my cousin and his family. A salutorian two years my elder. Who upon graduating enlisted in the Navy in 1991.

This is also a story about his wife and her attempted suicide a week ago. And the now disintegration of his nuclear family.

More around the corner...

(and sorry about the use of my title, not sure if "hollow military" is a ©)

My cousin "Mikey" is a brilliant man and enlisted in the Navy in their nuclear engineering program. He grew up in a bitter custody battle between his Mom and his now gay Dad. His mom protested his seeing his dad and would not even buy him basic toiletries such as deodorant and toothpaste. Forcing him to have an independent view of responsibility at a young age.

Mikey has served the U.S. Navy for 13 years. And during that time met and married "Denise". He now has two sons, "Jim" 8 and "Tim" 5.

Mikey has already served a tour during the "War on Terror" when his carrier unit dispatched for the gulf to aid with Afghanistan. His role is a nuclear engineer.

Two years ago, his family started showing strain due to his absence. Denise had ran up some burdening credit bills during his departure.

Rather than stick with the Navy for 7 more years (for retirement benefits), he resigned, to save his family. Quickly, the family had to acclimate to a new life. His new job was not making ends meet.

Denise finally pressured him to join the National Guard to help with the bills.

With his contract about to expire on July 11th 2005, he was back-door drafted a few weeks ago.

Two weeks ago he retained a lawyer that has worked with his commanding officer. And upon suggestion was advised to seek the opinion of an eye doctor. Born with a severe lazy eye, that required multiple years of surgery, he sought a hardship case due to this detrimental hazard.

His plight seemed to be turning good. Until last week. Denise tried to commit suicide by overdose. Now hospitalized in intensive care, Denise arrived with kidney failure, liver damage, and a 50/50 case of survival.

She felt at guilt for his upcoming ground deployment.

Now he is seeking a legal separation to protect his children. Plans to sell his house. His once feuding parents have agree to set aside their differences and watch his sons.

He also plans to defy his deployment order.

He would rather spend time in the brig than be a target in Iraq.

2006: "My Cousin Was Arrested Two Nights Ago"

Feb 25, 2006 by House, Daily Kos

We need help.

My cousin was arrested two nights ago. I diaried about his back-door draft a few months ago. We knew this day would come and we need more awarness of this.

My cousin has been staying with his two divorced parents, back and forth.

I assume the MP surveiled both houses.

Two nights ago while staying with his Mother (my Aunt) and Step-dad, the MP showed up a 1AM. A few hours after his parents had left for work. He was home alone with his two sons, age 6 and 8. They were held in child protective services for a night. I can not imagine how frightened they were.

My Uncle (his father) picked the children up in the morning yesterday and has been trying to get his ducks in a line that day. Frantically, calling their military lawyer, getting media contacts, scouring email contacts. I was contacted late last night with his plea, to send this into the blogosphere. He has several contacts and wants more, Cindy Sheehan, OpTruth, Veterans for peace, etc.

Unfortunately, my cousin has about until tonight before he is transferred from a county jail in Sonoma County, CA to what he believes will be Bremerton. We have been in contact with him via collect calls. He fears that once he gets into the military jail system, his contact with the outside will be very diminished and we have no idea for how long.

I will be emailing Paul Rieckhoff of Optruth, the link to this diary. My Uncle had been in contact with him in May. Please join us in emailing him too. Our biggest concern is that he will get buried in the Military's system with no contact available.

(Update: Upon completing this diary I called my Uncle for the latest news. He says the story was on Kron4 News last night.)

(Update 2: I redacted an email from my cousin from an earlier version, here in his own words is his military record, edited by me.)

Here is a little more history and information for you. I served as an active duty naval sailor for 12 1/2 years. Upon completion of my service, I enlisted in the active naval reserves. I have been there for only 4 months and have only been separated from active duty for 5 months.

Military life was destroying my spouse and my marriage. She started to have mental and drug problems due to her isolation. Over the last few years she has accrued a documented history of depression, being clinically diagnosed manic depressant this last year. I have two children who depend on their mother when I am gone and I am concerned for their welfare at times when I am away.

The navy used it's best scare tactics in attempt to make me stay longer and the last few months of active duty were excruciating as I was constantly questioned about why I was leaving and how I was wasting my life away as a result.

The navy also knows that I am graduating with a BA in Criminal Justice and that I am a federally employed Radiological Controls Technician with the department of the navy.

I voluntarily served as a nuclear propulsion chemist for the navy for over 12 years, during which I did volunteer to serve as a member of the Bangor Submarine Base, WA auxiliary security force after September 11th 2001 in order to defend my country against invasion. Now, I have volunteered as a naval instructor at a training unit in the naval reserves. I am an engineer and a ship sailor.

I received my activation orders on Friday, May 20th 2005. Consequently, I was the only person in my unit recalled for duty at this time, and I am also the newest person in the unit of only being an affiliate of four months.

My departure date is July 11th 2005 for training in Norfolk, Virginia. Then my final destination is Naval Reserve Expeditionary Logistics Support Force Forward in Iraq, to arrive about August 2005 for a duration of 365 days minimum NTE 2 years. No one will tell me exactly what this unit does or where about it is located.

My orders even state "full seabag not required. Authorized to deploy with operational seabag which includes the desert camouflage utility uniform (DCCU)."

Sadistic Scumbag "Doctor" At V.A. Gave Gulf War Veteran Fake Pills To Cure Pain: [Fragging In Retaliation Not Yet Reported, But Stay Tuned]

"It is absolutely ridiculous that they're giving Gulf War veterans a sugar pill to cure pain. It's like giving a cancer patient a sugar pill to cure cancer," said veterans' advocate Steve Robinson.

"To me, it's so wrong. It's immoral," said Dr. Damian Alagia, Medical Society of Washington, D.C. Alagia agrees that prescribing placebo to patients who haven't provided their consent is unethical.

February 23, 2006 WSOCTV.com

A Gulf War veteran undergoing medical treatment said he was given placebos, or sugar pills, instead of real medicine.

Like thousands of other soldiers, Army veteran Mike Woods said he developed bizarre symptoms after serving in the first Gulf War: blackouts, chest pain and numbness in the extremities.

Woods looked to the Veterans Administration for help. He said his VA doctor prescribed him a drug called Obecalp.

"She told me there was this new drug out that would really help me with all of my physical conditions, and my pain. She really wanted me to try it," said Woods.

But when the pill provided no relief, Woods did some research and learned that Obecalp isn't a medicine at all, but a sugar pill. He was shocked to learn the word "obecalp" is placebo spelled backward.

The American Medical Association said placebos should only be used as part of a clinical trial and doctors must be extremely thorough in obtaining informed consent from patients that they may not be getting a real drug.

"Nobody ever said, 'You might be part of a study? You might get a placebo?'" asked reporter Alison Burns.

"No. Never. I never signed up for a study in my life, much less with the VA," said Woods.

Woods recently shared his ordeal with members of Congress investigating complaints about how the government is caring for patients with Gulf War Syndrome.

"The first step to fixing any problem is to recognize the problem is real," said Woods.

"It is absolutely ridiculous that they're giving Gulf War veterans a sugar pill to cure pain. It's like giving a cancer patient a sugar pill to cure cancer," said veterans' advocate Steve Robinson.

"To me, it's so wrong. It's immoral," said Dr. Damian Alagia, Medical Society of Washington, D.C. Alagia agrees that prescribing placebo to patients who haven't provided their consent is unethical.

Woods.....said getting Obecalp is one more way the government is letting him down after he served his country.

"That's how they treat Gulf War illnesses: give you a placebo and send you down the road and hope that your mind will cure itself," said Woods.

No one from the VA could explain why Woods got a placebo prescription.

They said, *as a rule*, VA doctors are not supposed to use placebos as medical treatment. [And there are those so typical little VA weasel words.]

PTSD:

**“His Best Therapy Has Been Talking
To Other Veterans”**

**“I Feel Like A Lot Of Us Are Being
Left Behind”**

"When we signed that contract, we swore to God we were going to take care of this country and defend it and America was going to do the same for us," said Adams. "And I feel like a lot of us are being left behind."

02/25/06 KSDK

When David Adams came back from Iraq, the war followed him home. Adams is from Joliet, Illinois. He was a specialist in the 101st Airborne from Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, destined to be in the military. "My father had served in the Marines. My mother's father served in World War Two in Patton's army. All my uncles and cousins, they've all served," said Adams.

Adams was serving when the US went to war with Iraq in 2003. "We were told this thing about winning the hearts and minds of the people and one of the way we can win the hearts and minds is to give them a bottle of water and throw candy to the kids," said Adams.

Their orders were to keep the convoys moving through every village. Do not stop for any reason. That included one April morning. "Out of the left corner of my eye, I can see a child start to run across the street," remembered Adams.

Adams continued, "She was a little girl, probably about 5 or 6 years old, and as she is running across the street, she's not looking where she's going. She's just a kid and she gets run over by a truck. I would say there isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about her."

When Adams came home five months later, he enrolled at SIU-Carbondale and tried to plan for the future. Then came the nightmares, anxiety and violent temper. One day he just started screaming at his mother and sister.

"My dad comes out into the driveway and he says, 'What's wrong? What's the matter with you?' And so I put my fists up like I'm going to fight him," recalled Adams. "And I'm yelling at him and told him to go back in the house or I'll kill you in the driveway right now."

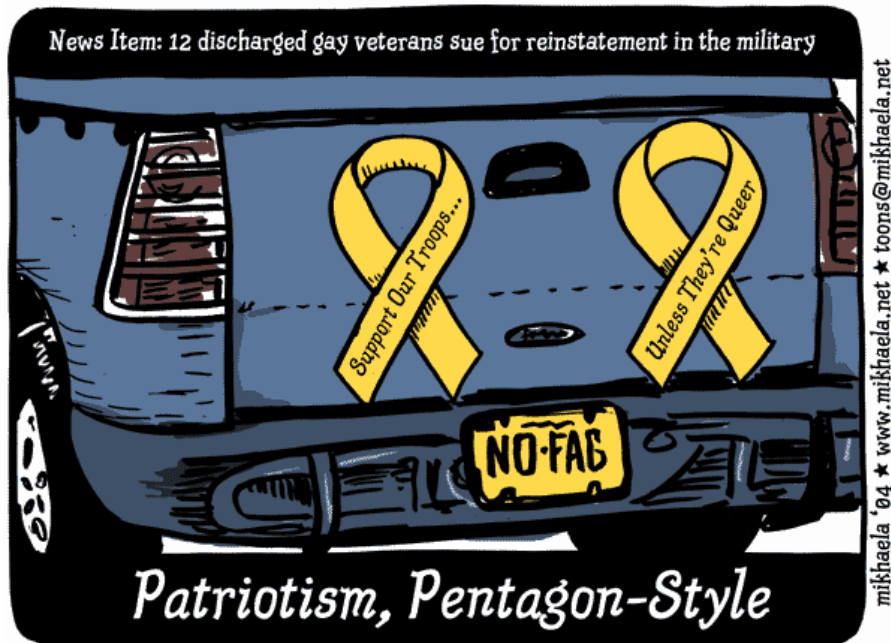
A short time later, Adams was diagnosed with PTSD, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

As for Adams, now 25, he's back in school studying administrative justice. He says he still has nightmares and probably drinks too much.

But his best therapy has been talking to other veterans. Still he worries about all his brothers, as he calls them, who've yet to get help.

"When we signed that contract, we swore to God we were going to take care of this country and defend it and America was going to do the same for us," said Adams.

"And I feel like a lot of us are being left behind."



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

“Thank God For IEDs” Anti-Gay Bigots Celebrate A Soldiers’ Death



Mike Waldman, left, and Randy Smejdir Feb 25, 2006, across the street from a group of protesters outside the funeral for Army 1st Lt. Garrison Avery in Lincoln, Neb. Avery and two other soldiers were killed in Baghdad when a roadside bomb exploded near their Humvee on Feb. 1.

Members of the Westboro Baptist Church, led by Rev. Fred Phelps, picket funerals and memorial services for fallen soldiers, contending that American troops are being killed in Iraq as vengeance from God because the United States abides homosexuals. AP Photo/Dave Weaver)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Bad News For Bush: Anti-Occupation Forces Join Hands



Iraqi Sunni and Shiite clerics perform a joint prayer at Sunni Abu Hanifa mosque in Baghdad. The movement of anti-occupation cleric Moqtada al-Sadr publicly joined with anti-occupation political and religious Sunni leaders. (AFP/Amar Karim)



An Iraqi Sunni Muslim, in red shirt, shakes hand with a Shiite Muslim after a joint afternoon prayer, in Shiite district of Sadr City, in Baghdad Feb. 25, 2006. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

Assorted Resistance Action

2.25.05 Anatolia.com & Post Wire Services & Telegraph Group Limited & Reuters & (KUNA)

A bomb tore open a fuel pipeline near the northern Iraqi refinery town of Baiji yesterday and was likely to disrupt supplies for about three days until repairs.

The bodies of 14 police commandos were found near the Qubaisy mosque in Baghdad following a series of clashes with guerrillas overnight, police said.

Two policemen and one Iraqi soldier were killed and 10 wounded in a bomb attack and shooting on the funeral procession of an Al-Arabiya journalist.

Guerrillas shot at the uniformed forces when the funeral was headed to the cemetery, killing the two policemen and wounding five others.

An advance guard of soldiers went to clear the return route and were ambushed by a car bomb which killed one soldier and wounded five others.

US forces reported Saturday the death of one police commando and an insurgent during a late Friday clash between commandos and insurgents in southern Baghdad.

The body of a police officer with gunshot wounds was found near his home east of Tikrit, police said.

An Iraqi police source said in a statement that militants opened fire that immediately killed a policeman at Al-Khadra suburb, Mosul.

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

GUESS WHICH SIDE THEY'RE ON



Iraqi policemen display a poster of anti-occupation political leader Moqtada al-Sadr in Najaf, February 24, 2006. REUTERS/Ali Abu Shish

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Amen To That

From: Don Bacon, Smedleybutlersociety@msn.com
To: GI Special
Sent: February 25, 2006

"We gotta get out of this place" by the Animals.

As a Vietnam Vet, it was the song sung by everyone ready to leave.

**We gotta get out of this place
If it's the last thing we ever do**

We gotta get out of this place
'cause girl, there's a better life for me and you

MORE:

The Last Telex

From: Mark Shapiro
To: Thomas F. Barton
Sent: Sunday, February 19, 2006 4:15 PM
Subject: the last telex to the us embassy in 'Saigon'

I expect something very similar to be issued to the US Embassy in Baghdad sooner or later: Mark

TO: AMBASSADOR GRAHAM MARTIN
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

1. THE PRESIDENT HAS MET WITH THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND HAS MADE THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS:

A. IF THE AIRPORT IS OPEN FOR FIXED-WING OPERATIONS TODAY, YOU ARE TO CONTINUE THE EVACUATION OF HIGH RISK VIETNAMESE BY FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT. YOU ARE ALSO TO EVACUATE BY THE END OF THE DAY ALL AMERICAN PERSONNEL AT TAN SON NHUT AS WELL AS ALL BUT BARE MINIMUM PERSONNEL FROM THE EMBASSY.

B. WHILE YOU SHOULD NOT SAY SO, THIS WILL BE THE LAST REPEAT LAST DAY OF FIXED-WING EVACUATION FROM TAN SON NHUT.

C. IF THE AIRPORT IS UNUSABLE FOR FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT OR BECOMES SO DURING THE DAY AS A RESULT OF ENEMY FIRE, YOU ARE IMMEDIATELY TO RESORT TO HELICOPTER EVACUATION OF ALL REPEAT ALL AMERICANS, BOTH FROM THE DAO COMPOUND AND FROM THE EMBASSY COMPOUND. FIGHTER CAP AND SUPPRESSIVE FIRE WILL BE USED AS NECESSARY IN THE EVENT OF HELICOPTER EVACUATION.

2. ADMIRAL GAYLER WILL BE RECEIVING IDENTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FROM DEFENSE.

3. WARM REGARDS.

GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY

SECURITY COUNCIL

OPERATIONAL INFO, CIA FOR VIETNAMESE EVACUATED BY THE END OF THE DAY AT TAN SON NHUT, THE EMBASSY.

TO BE THE LAST HELICOPTER EVACUATION FROM TAN SON NHUT, HELICOPTER EVACUATION OF ALL AMERICANS, BOTH FROM THE DAO COMPOUND AND FROM THE EMBASSY COMPOUND, WILL BE USED AS NECESSARY IN THE EVENT OF HELICOPTER EVACUATION.

IDENTICAL INSTRUCTIONS

TO: AMBASSADOR, SAIGON

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

***** NUMBER COMMENT *****

REPARLINE, ROOM 6600

PROCESSED RECALLED OF RI FOR/IN/RE/DATE OTHER/RE/RE AND PS

***** WFO/US/CS/SF ***** COPY

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13526, 11/18/01
BY 488 10/06/06

Portion of original and last memo
to the U.S. Embassy in Saigon.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Minister Says Iraq Shrine Bombing Was Specialist Job: Took 12 Hours To Plant Explosives

2/24/2006 Agence France Presse, BAGHDAD

The bombing of a revered Shiite shrine which sparked a wave of violence in Iraq was the work of specialists, Construction Minister Jassem Mohammed Jaafar said Friday, adding that the placing of the explosives must have taken at least 12 hours.

"According to initial reports, the bombing was technically well conceived and could only have been carried out by specialists," the minister told Iraqia state television.

Jaafar, who toured the devastated thousand-year-old shrine on Thursday a day after the bombing which brought down its golden dome, said "holes were dug into the mausoleum's four main pillars and packed with explosives."

"Then the charges were connected together and linked to another charge placed just under the dome. The wires were then linked to a detonator which was triggered at a distance," the minister added.

To drill into the pillars would have taken at least four hours per pillar, he also estimated.

The Great Iraqi Troops Training Fiasco Rolls On:

[Thanks to Don Bacon, The Smedley Butler Society, who sent this in:]

January 2006

Bush: Iraqi Forces Will Take More Control In 2006 President Predicts U.S. Force Levels Will Drop

Wednesday, January 4, 2006

WASHINGTON (CNN) President Bush said Wednesday that U.S. efforts in Iraq are bearing fruit, and predicted that Iraqi forces will shoulder more of the responsibility this year and that U.S. force levels will drop.

A year ago, Bush said, "only a handful" of Iraqis were trained and equipped to fight the insurgent forces. "Today, 125 combat battalions are fighting the enemy, and 50 of those are in the lead," he said. "That's progress."

[Bush forgot to mention that only ONE battalion was capable of fighting without American support]

February 2006:

THIS JUST IN #1: IRAQI FORCES HEADED SOUTH: Iraqi Troops Downgraded; No Iraqi Battalion Now Capable Of Fighting Without U.S. Support

February 24, 2006 (CNN) CNN's Mike Mount contributed to this report.

The only Iraqi battalion capable of fighting without U.S. support has been downgraded to a level requiring them to fight with American troops backing them up, the Pentagon said Friday.

The battalion, made up of 700 to 800 Iraqi Army soldiers, has repeatedly been offered by the U.S. as an example of the growing independence of the Iraqi military.

The battalion, according to the Pentagon, was downgraded from "level one" to "level two" after a recent quarterly assessment of its capabilities.

"Level one" means the battalion is able to fight on its own; "level two" means it requires support from U.S. troops; and "level three" means it must fight alongside U.S. troops.

Though officials would not cite a specific reason for downgrading the unit, its readiness level has dropped in the wake of a new commander and numerous changes in the combat and support units, officials said.

It was not clear where the battalion is operating within Iraq.

THIS JUST IN #2

Pentagon Reports

South Vietnamese Army

Now Ready for Combat Operations

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.

British Corporation Gets Contract To “Redesign” Najaf But They Won’t Go There: Too Dangerous

[Thanks to JM who sent this in. She writes: I consider this the ultimate insult to Iraq. How can a bloody British firm redesign one of the most historic cities in the world?

[Only the people of Najaf are capable of rebuilding what the Barbarians have destroyed. The complete ignorance of both history and Iraq are appalling.

[The thought of Najaf as a modern home for fast foods, and slums, fills me with horror. It's a nightmare vision.

[The oldest civilization in the world had free education, for both sexes, before the invasion and Saddam was restoring historic sites.

[How dare the occupiers, who have so wantonly destroyed history, presume to think they are as knowledgeable as the people of Iraq. How dare they offer an insult of this proportion. May history condemn the perpetrators of such horrific contempt.]

February 22, 2006 Duncan Campbell, The Guardian

One is famous as a new town, the other as an old town, but this week the fates of Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire and Najaf in southern Iraq were indelibly linked: the firm that

turned the former into a model modern town in the 1960s is remodelling the Iraqi city that has faced suicide bombers and bloody firefights.

The firm Llewellyn Davies Yeang, based in London, has signed a \$1.6m (£916,000) contract to redesign the centre of the ancient city of Najaf.

But it will not visit the site. "It's unheard of to do a job where you don't go on site," said Martin Crookston of Llewellyn Davies Yeang yesterday. "Normally, you want to see every inch of the site but we don't go at the moment because of the security situation."

Coalition money is also funding the construction of a football stadium, something the Milton Keynes planners regarded as essential for building a community.

One of the problems is that reconstruction can be sabotaged, which deters investors outside the coalition forces.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

GET THE MESSAGE?



Lebanese students burn a placard of President George W. Bush during a sit-in held in the southern port-city of Sidon February 23, 2006. REUTERS/Ali Hashisho



Pakistani Shi'ite Muslim clerics protest in Karachi against an attack on the Golden Mosque in Iraq February 22, 2006. REUTERS/Athar Hussain

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.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html>

http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/, <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>,

<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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