

GI SPECIAL 4B4:



**“I Heard Him Tell Me
That Morale Was Low,
That He And Others Had
No Idea What Their
Mission Was”**

**“He Did Not Believe He Was Doing
Any Good In Iraq, And He Began To
Say The Troops Should Get Out Of
There”**

Feb 03, 2006 ELIZABETH FREDERICK, Baltimore Sun [Excerpts]

As the partner of an Iraq War veteran, I pay attention to the news. I watched the president's State of the Union address Tuesday night hoping to hear some good news. Instead, most of what I heard made me frustrated and angry.

When Mr. Bush decided to wage war on Iraq, he lost my trust.

As he continued to make speeches about the progress in Iraq and high morale of our troops, I heard an entirely different story from my own soldier, who was deployed in northern Iraq for most of 2005.

I heard his stories of Iraqi citizens who had nothing but disdain for U.S. soldiers.

I heard him tell me that morale was low, that he and others had no idea what their mission was and that their only concern was for each other and making it home alive.

I heard him express frustration that for every insurgent they arrested, two more were there to take the detainee's place.

Soldiers rebuilt the same roads time and again because they kept being blown up.

Troops were spending thousands of dollars of their own money on armor and equipment because it wasn't being supplied. I heard him tell me private contractors were benefiting from this war, not the Iraqi people.

Above all, I heard him tell me the military had become political, something he had never seen happen before, and that those in charge were more concerned with themselves and profiting from this war than with the soldiers whose lives they were entrusted with.

He is a soldier, not an activist.

He went to Iraq thinking it was a noble cause and he could do some good.

It did not take long for him to start saying that the cause was neither noble nor just.

He did not believe he was doing any good in Iraq, and he began to say the troops should get out of there.

For these words and stories to come from him, an experienced combat veteran who, at 26, has spent the better part of a decade in the military, said more to me than all of Mr. Bush's speeches combined.

Mr. Bush said Tuesday that there was nothing honorable about retreat. I say there is nothing honorable about waging wars of choice. There is nothing honorable about refusing to admit mistakes and covering up lies. Invading Iraq was wrong; moreover, it was immoral and irresponsible.

Mr. Bush also said military families have made great sacrifices. I do not need the president to remind me of this.

Every day for a year, I waited and wondered if my soldier would be the next person to be killed or wounded in a war that should not have begun. Every day, I watched the news in tears and prayed that another family would not have to shoulder the burden of loss. I prayed selfishly, hoping it was not my soldier.

Every day, I lived with the knowledge that I could lose the man I love in a war of choice and that his service and sacrifice to this country were being wasted and abused by this administration.

I never needed the president to tell me I had made sacrifices before, and I do not need him to now.

What the other families and I need is a plan to bring the troops home now.

As much as the president may wish people to forget his actions, we will not. We have earned the right, and we have the obligation to speak out against the president, to say that this war is wrong because we and our soldiers have experienced it firsthand.

Our soldiers are not putting spin on the situation in Iraq. They are simply telling loved ones honest stories about what is happening.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

“Take Care Of Your Son,” He Said. “I Don't Have A Son Anymore”



Pfc. Caesar S. Viglienzzone posted photos of himself in Iraq on his MySpace.com Web site.
Courtesy photo

02/04/06 By RANDI ROSSMANN, THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

A 21-year-old Santa Rosa soldier, due home on leave next month from Iraq, was killed this week along with two Army comrades in a roadside bombing, the Pentagon announced Friday.

"I'm coming home for two weeks midtour leave in March . . . which should be a spectacular tease, no doubt the best two weeks of my life!" Army Pfc. Caesar S. Viglienze wrote on his Internet site Jan. 15.

But Viglienze died Wednesday while on a combat patrol near Baghdad.

He was the only child of Dennis and Norma Viglienze of Santa Rosa.

Neighbors said the Viglienzes last saw their son over the summer when they traveled to Fort Campbell, Ky., for his graduation into the 101st Airborne Division.

Viglienze is the fifth Sonoma County soldier to die while serving in Iraq.

He joined the Army in October 2004 and earned his air assault wings in June. He was in Kentucky for his 21st birthday, on Sept. 10. Two weeks later, he deployed to Iraq.

Caesar set up a Web page on MySpace.com, where he posted photos of himself and posted some of his feelings about Iraq and the war.

In his last blog entry, Viglienze said he was serving with an anti-armor infantry company and described Iraq in less than glowing, at times profane, terms. Clearly he was anxious to be home.

"As of today, I only have nine more months here!! . . . Hit me up, if you feel so inclined," he wrote. "Peace."

Asked during the news conference about some of the language in the blog, Viglienze's father acknowledged his son's strong words but asked people to remember their own youth.

Pressed by a TV reporter about the entries, Dennis Viglienze became angry and could no longer hold back his grief.

"Take care of your son," he said. "I don't have a son anymore."

Wabash Soldier Hurt: Convoys Under Constant Attack

February 3, 2006 By SHEILA RHOADES, Wabash Plain Dealer

A Wabash native serving in Iraq will return stateside Sunday after being injured in a recent attack near Baghdad.

U.S. Army Sgt. Nathan Thomas received injuries to his head after the convoy he was traveling with two weeks ago was hit with rocket propelled grenades (RPFs), improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and insurgents shooting AK-47s.

After several attempts to ascertain Thomas' whereabouts and what injuries he may have suffered, The Plain Dealer received an e-mail from him as he rests in an American military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany.

"I was informed that you ... wanted to know what happened to me," his letter began. "Well, I figured that I would give you the true story instead of you hearing it from someone else."

Thomas, husband of CiGi Thomas, Wabash, and father of three children, Latasha, 5, Tabitha, 4, and Koby, 2, said he was in the Individual Ready Reserve, a program where soldiers have completed their original enlistment, but haven't served a total of eight years. It was then he was called back to active duty to serve during Operation Iraqi Freedom and was deployed from Fort Bliss, Texas, he said.

"I had my Military Occupational Service, which is your job in the military, switched to be a truck driver," Thomas told The Plain Dealer in his email. "I was sent to Tallil Air Base, Iraq, where I (traveled) on various convoys through all of Iraq ... delivering supplies to various bases."

The dangerous missions took Thomas through high risk areas each trip, including such cities as Fallujah, Mosul, Kirkuk and Tikrit to name a few. His first convoy was to Baghdad.

" ... we delivered supplies to troops stationed there," he said. "While on that convoy we encountered small arms fire, RPGs and IEDs. One of the trucks in our convoy had broken down and we had to get out of our trucks and pull security while other troops prepared the truck to be towed out of the 'kill zone.'"

He explained that the kill zone is a military term for an area under attack "in a place where the chances are extremely high that someone will be killed."

That was one of several attacks his convoy would endure.

"We were surrounded by insurgents shooting AK-47s and RPGs at us. After we got the truck hooked we got back in our trucks and got out of the kill zone."

He said he was injured during another trip to Baghdad.

"I can't remember the full details of it, but I remember an IED blast," he said, adding the no one else was seriously injured.

During the blast his head impacted the inside of his truck. Although injured, he made several more convoys, until on Jan. 20, he could go no further.

"While returning from the convoy from Northern Iraq, I had gotten dizzy while driving," he explained. "So after returning to base I went to sick call the next day. The doctors at

Tallil evaluated me and they felt that I needed to be Med-Evaced (medical evacuation) to Camp Anaconda. I was evaluated by doctors there who felt I needed to be airlifted to Landstuhl, Germany."

After arriving at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, the largest American hospital outside the U.S., Thomas was found to have a condition called Post Concussion Syndrome. Also, fluid was building up behind his right eye causing blurred vision.

"It (the blurred vision) may go away and it may not go away," he said. "And Post Concussion Syndrome could take anywhere from one to five years to fully recover."

Even still, Thomas continues to count his blessings.

"Seeing all the kids over in Iraq, the poor living conditions they live in and the effect that Saddam has had on them, makes me realize how lucky I am to have three wonderful and healthy children and to have such a caring and loving wife back home," he said. "I never realized how much I could ever miss Wabash until I was deployed to Iraq.

"And I would like to tell my wife Cigi that I love and miss her and the kids so much."

Thomas, 24, is the son of Greg Thomas, Wabash, and Debra Harmon, Columbia City. His maternal grandmother is Mintie Taylor Kerr, Wabash, and his paternal grandmother is Laura Thomas, Roann. He is a former student of Northfield High School and said he left school early, earned his GED and joined the Army to serve his country.

He is expected to return to Fort Bliss this weekend. It is unknown at this time how long he will remain there.

“U.S. Troops Get One Or Two Penetrating Brain Injuries A Day”

2.2.06 Washington Post

The two Army neurosurgeons who treated ABC anchorman Bob Woodruff and cameraman Bob Vogt have become experts in treating head trauma injuries since they arrived in Iraq.

In Iraq, they handle one or two "penetrating brain injuries" a day, either from gunfire or roadside bombs.

World Class Strategic Stupidity:

U.S. Command Marches To Defeat With Heads Firmly Implanted Up Asses

[Thanks to Joshua Karpoff, who sent this in. He writes:

["The first paragraph of this article is absolutely ridiculous. It really demonstrates the fact that commanders in Iraq have absolutely no idea what is going on, nor what to do about it. What are they teaching them with our tax dollars?

["Oh wait that's right 'mandatory bible study' for officers.

["I guess that's because they're looking to a higher power to get them out of this quagmire."

[But it's even worse than Brother Karpoff writes:

[What anybody with even a casual third-hand acquaintance with counter-insurgency warfare knows is that the example taken by occupation commanders as their guide to Iraq, how the British did things in Malaysia, only worked because most guerrillas were Chinese, and the mass of the Malaysian population were not Chinese. They were Malaysians. Duh.

[Thus, the British could identify the guerrillas, isolate them from the Malay population by portraying them as agents of Mao, and organize the mixed armed force that defeated them along those lines.

[And these idiots think that has something to do with Iraq. T]

Feb 1 By NICK WADHAMS, Associated Press Writer

The Iraqi police colonel listens as his American counterpart, Maj. Richard Greene, explains American strategy in this northern Iraqi city. U.S. soldiers will start by making one neighborhood secure. Then, security will spread, like an oil stain.

"It's like we start with a base and then we spread out," Greene tells the colonel. "The main problem is not the terrorists, it's the people who give them information. But if we're there with a presence, they'll see us there and will be less likely to cooperate with the terrorists." **[Where did they find this genius, central casting? No, more likely he emptied wastebaskets for Rumsfeld.]**

Anyone looking to understand the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq in the last few months need look no farther than Andrew Krepinevich, a prominent analyst who came up with the "oil stain" theory.

Evidence of Krepinevich's influence is immediately apparent during time spent with soldiers. They mimic his language and cite Britain's use of similar strategies in the 1950s in Malaysia when it was a British colony. [Right. And the French tried it in northern Vietnam before Dien Bien Phu. That's why Hanoi is now known as DeGaulle City.]

"Kill them with kindness," said Capt. Sean Troyer, with the 1st Squadron 61st Cavalry Regiment in eastern Baghdad. "We're going to wave at them, treat them nicely, with cultural sensitivity, with respect."

U.S. troops wave incessantly to children and adults.

Troops who have arrived in places like Mosul and Baghdad recently do not know the Iraq of those days, when winning hearts and minds meant "a bullet through the heart and two through the mind."

Comment: H

I think more accurate names for this new strategy would be, "How to beg for mercy after getting the shit kicked out of you" or "The effects of illegal drug usage in America".

If this weren't so serious, I'd say this is the worst comedy I've ever watched.

Where do they find these people???

Do they really think that after just recently shooting their innocent family members to death, that anybody on planet Earth is all of sudden going to trust them as just nice people who've come to lend a helping hand???

And these fuckers even joke about the irony of it. What a mind trip!

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

“A Government That Appears Unable To Protect Them And Their Children”

2.2.06 Christian Science Monitor

Across southern Afghanistan, insurgents are setting primary schools aflame-eight of them in Kandahar alone, eroding one of the few solid gains the country has made since the fall of the Taliban: education.

By threatening or killing teachers and principals and burning down schools, insurgents have found a method for bringing the war home to ordinary Afghans,

and to weaken their faith in a government that appears unable to protect them and their children.

TROOP NEWS

“Dead Friends, Frustration With The Military, Hatred For His Government”



Many unhappy returnees: Iraq war veterans (clockwise from top left) Dave Adams, Garrett Reppenhagen. Photograph by Jeff Fusco

But there is one thing Gunn does know: Iraq veterans already need more help. "War is going to happen regardless, so why not deal with something that's within our grasp? Helping the soldiers that are returning," he says. "They've dedicated the majority of their lives to the service, and now they're getting out with nothing."

By Cassidy Hartmann, February 1-7, 2006 Philadelphia Weekly [Excerpts]

Outside the red brick home of Jason Gunn, a suburban winter day begins quietly in ice. It's nearly Christmas in this sleepy Lansdowne neighborhood, and Gunn has been home from the military for five months. But inside his parents' house the 26-year-old sits wrapped in a blanket, eyes fixed on the ceiling, his mind still lingering on hot desert air.

"We were crossing over this bridge in Baghdad we'd crossed hundreds of times." he says flatly, his hands clasped behind his stubbly head. "They set off an improvised

explosive device just as the front of the truck had nosed across. The guy behind me took the majority of the blast, like point blank. Everything that didn't hit him, hit me."

Gunn's lanky body is covered with ink. His right arm bears a green graffiti-like tattoo that reads "Misled Youth," the name of a favorite band but also a hint at one source of Gunn's burgeoning anger. His left arm and torso are dimpled with scars.

"I can turn one way and it looks normal. I turn the other way and I'm full of holes," he says, tracing his left side from ankle to chin, and pointing out the places where shrapnel, glass and gravel are imbedded in his skin. Considering the unarmored Humvee Gunn was driving had no doors, he's lucky to have survived at all.

"I was conscious for the whole thing," he says of the blast that obliterated his close friend and left him barely able to walk. "I got a whole bunch of tattoos to try to cover up the scars."

"I believed that if I did get out, every door, every opportunity was mine," says Gunn. "I just had to want it and take it. But when I got back nothing was falling into place. I got into this big funk about how my life was turning out."

Gunn has stopped taking the PTSD medication he was prescribed while recuperating in Heidelberg Hospital in Landstuhl, Germany. "That's some horrible stuff. It turns you into a zombie," he says. "You basically have no emotions whatsoever."

Gunn was in Germany for two and a half weeks and home for 45 days before the Army sent him back to base camp and then to Iraq, with the rationale that facing his fears would help him work through whatever was bothering him.

"The doctors said I shouldn't go back because I had to go through a whole bunch of treatment. I couldn't carry any weight. I was still using a cane to get around. I was still wrapping my own bandages and stuff like that."

Despite his doctors' objections, Gunn redeployed in February 2004. He says he signed the deployment form "to stop all the bullshit."

"Once they got me over there, it was such a big fiasco. I was like, 'I don't care where you put me, where you send me. Just get me there and stop making me tap dance for you.'" At that point Gunn had already given up most of his hope of making it home for good. He said goodbye to his family and friends for what he told them would be the last time. But Gunn did make it home.

And since then he's become something of a media spokesperson for the antiwar movement, a poster child for the tragedies of war.

Gunn has been quoted in numerous publications and TV programs, and was featured in Maxim magazine last November. He also appeared in Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 9/11.

Despite the media interest, Gunn has been unable to hold a job for more than a few weeks since he returned from Iraq. He quit his last job driving a delivery truck when his boss blamed him for missed deliveries he says weren't his fault.

"It all goes back to Iraq," he says. "The insecurity, not knowing if you're going to see tomorrow. So any chance you get to get into a safe zone, to get the hell out of a place you feel is going to be bad, you just bounce. I find myself doing a lot of running."

Gunn also finds the transition into a world outside regimented Army life a crippling challenge. "When you get out, you're like, 'What do I do now?' It's real hard for guys to adjust when you're coming from a structured environment where people are telling you where to go, when to be there, how to be there, who's in charge and who's under you. You come out here to work. Nothing is structured."

Gunn refuses to name his current job, which pays poorly and has him working graveyard shifts, because he finds it too embarrassing. "It's something to do until I get myself back into school," he says.

Most of Gunn's high school friends are employed, having long since finished college and moved on with their lives. He says joining the Army wasn't a popular choice at Penn Wood High School in Lansdowne, from which he graduated in 1997. But Gunn is one of a set of triplets in a military family, and money for school was tight. Which is why in 1996, at 17, all three brothers enlisted.

But unlike his brother Jerome, who left the Army during basic training, and Justin, who served one year in Korea, Gunn was sent to Iraq. And unlike Jerome, who now works at a tattoo parlor in West Philadelphia, or Justin, who works two jobs and is in training to be a computer specialist, school is further from his reach than he'd originally planned.

He'd hoped to go to school on the GI bill, but the Army isn't making it easy for him.

"They aren't paying for anything," he says. "They sent something back saying they had no record of me ever processing out of the service. So now I got to go through all these other channels to figure out what the hell is going on. It's just another obstacle in the way of what I want to do."

What Gunn wants to do is study medical science and become a paramedic.

He was inspired by the medics he observed in combat in Iraq, like those who airlifted him from the smoky remains of his Humvee on that bridge in Baghdad. But even with a specific goal in mind and the money he deserves for community college, Gunn remains ambivalent about his future: "The military prepares you for only one thing-to fight. That's it. There are days when I think the only thing I can really do well is be a soldier."



Patrick Resta says the military discourages departing soldiers from reporting medical and psychological problems. Photograph by Jeff Fusco

Patrick Resta, a 27-year-old New Jersey native who served in Iraq with the North Carolina National Guard, now lives with his wife in a small South Philadelphia apartment.

Resta, who served eight and a half months as a medic 75 miles northeast of Baghdad, has been waiting 14 weeks for an MRI of his right knee, which has bothered him since his return home in late 2004. Resta's back also causes him serious pain, but for that he's on a different waiting list to see a specialist.

"You have to go through the VA for everything," he explains. "That's the mess I'm in now."

Resta says the military's healthcare problems surface even before vets start the waiting game with the underfinanced VA. The first concern, he says, is the army's postdeployment health assessment survey, which is the primary way the mental and physical health of soldiers is evaluated before they return home.

"It's this medical checklist, and you basically fill in ovals that say yes, no, maybe for questions like: 'While you were over there, did you ever have diarrhea? Did you ever vomit? Did you ever cough?'

"And then farther down the list, something like, 'Do you now or have you ever thought of harming yourself, your family members or people in your community?'" he explains. "And you're told before you fill this thing out, if you answer this the wrong way you're going to be stuck here while they sort it out."

"I don't know anyone that would put, 'Yes, I'm thinking about killing myself' unless you're totally whacked out. Especially after being told you're going to be there for months."

During out-processing in 2004, which Resta calls "really disorganized," he told the Army doctor about the pain in his back and his knee: "The doctor told me, 'Oh, just give that a month and it'll go away.' I looked at him and said, 'Excuse me?'"

Resta says the doctor then took a look at his chart. "It looks like you've been away from home about a year now," he said. "Well, you've got a choice here. You can either go home and try to fight it out with the Veterans Administration, or you can sit here for six months waiting to see an orthopedist. What do you want to do?"

"That's not a choice. I grabbed my stuff and walked out of there," says Resta, who is now a nursing/premed major at Community College of Philadelphia.

"The goal is to get you off the payroll as soon as they can. That's what they're trying to do."

"I was like, 'Oh my God, what the hell was this? What did I just do?'" says Dave Adams, 25, remembering the time when he almost smashed his mother's car window and nearly threw a punch at his dad. It was the incident that sent him to the Chicago VA hospital and back home with a diagnosis of PTSD.

"I was put on some medication, but I didn't like it. It didn't seem to help. And that's when I became involved with IAW and discovered there were other veterans having the same issues I was having," he says.

Adams tells his story surrounded by several other Iraq vets, all of whom are in Philadelphia for an Iraq Veterans Against the War (IAW) training weekend.

"That's been much more therapeutic for me than taking any kind of medication."

Adams says he asked about group therapy options when he visited the VA in his Chicago hometown. "The doctor I had didn't really make it seem like that was an option," he says. He just wrote prescriptions.

Adams served in Iraq for five months, between February and July 2003. When he returned home on the Fourth of July, he bought \$700 worth of fireworks, and pretended the loud cracks and flashes of light in the sky didn't make his heart pound and his body tense. He began drinking about a case of beer a day. Just before starting school at Southern Illinois University, Adams was drinking a couple bottles of Southern Comfort a week.

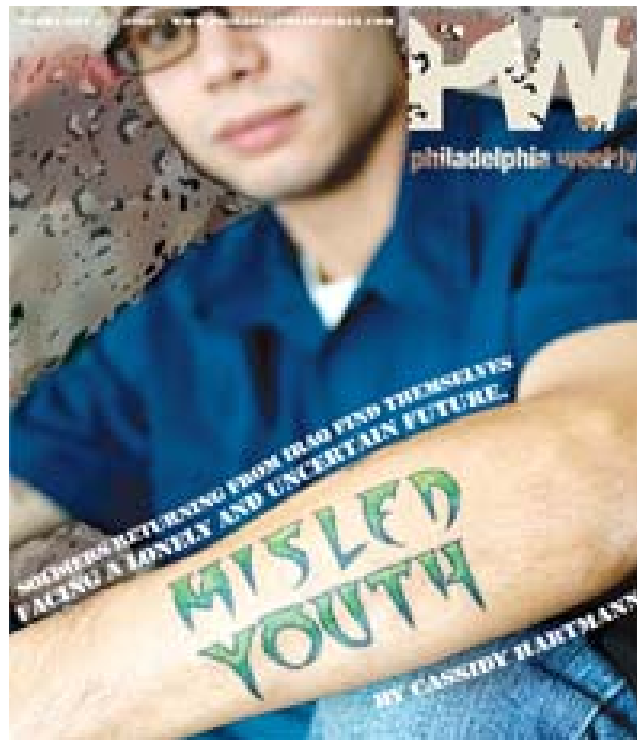
The drinking took its toll on his relationship with his fiancée, the woman he'd been dating since before he was deployed. "I told her I needed some time to decompress," he says.

"To me, that just kind of meant drinking my ass off every day. She wanted me to go get help, and I thought I was under control with drinking. She broke off the engagement."

Before starting school, Adams took a job at Abercrombie & Fitch.

"You know, with everything that a lot of us have been through, you'd think a job like that would be as easy as it could be," he says. "But I'd get panic attacks there. It happened probably at least once a day if I wasn't in 100 percent control of what was happening. My heart would start pounding, and I would start sweating profusely. I haven't been working since."

"If I see something on the news, it makes me think about my friends, and I make a trip to the bar I probably shouldn't make. And I have a few drinks, and a few more I probably shouldn't be having," he says. "So it kind of prohibits me from going to class the next day."



Smoking Gunn: Jason hasn't been able to hold down a job since returning from Iraq. He says being a soldier is the only thing he knows well and does well. Photograph by Jeff Fusco

Still slumped on the couch but now exuding anger, Jason Gunn is counting the friends he's lost in Iraq. "I lost a friend named Spanky; he was shot by a sniper. Another one was killed by an IED," he says.

"He died the worst. It hit him so bad that it blew him in the back of the Humvee, and the Humvee caught fire. They couldn't get his body out of the truck, so he just burned. Another guy was killed from an RPG attack on top of a tank. It took four guys getting killed like that to learn you should shut the hatches."

This is what lives inside Jason Gunn's head. Dead friends, frustration with the military, hatred for his government and a war, he says, "that's never going to end."

"I've been through so much, and I deserve so much better. I can do so much better than this, but for some reason I don't get myself out of this funk," he says. "I have no idea why I don't do it."

But there is one thing Gunn does know: Iraq veterans already need more help. "War is going to happen regardless, so why not deal with something that's within our grasp? Helping the soldiers that are returning," he says. "They've dedicated the majority of their lives to the service, and now they're getting out with nothing."

It's nearing lunchtime, and outside the window a bitter wind jostles spindly trees wrapped in strings of lights.

"I don't know anything around here. All my friends are gone," Gunn says glumly.

"When I get feeling like that, I think about going back in. I'd get my rank right back, go back to hanging out with my friends again. Yeah, I probably would end up going back to Iraq, because they're back there now, but at least I'd end up doing something I know and can really do well. It's the only thing that ever made any real sense to me."



www.ivaw.net

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.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS FUCKED UP LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT A CROOKED POLITICIAN WHO LIVES IN THE WHITE HOUSE WANTS YOU THERE, SO HE WILL LOOK GOOD. That is not a good enough reason.



Marines from the 22nd Expeditionary Unit searching houses near Hit January 28, 2006.
REUTERS/Bob Strong

Reservist Sues Army For “Involuntary Servitude”

2.2.06 Boston Globe, February 2, 2006

An Army Reserve captain has filed a lawsuit accusing the service of breach of contract and involuntary servitude for refusing to let him resign after completing his 8-year obligation. Jonathan O'Reilly, 32, enlisted in ROTC at age 18 to get a scholarship at the University of Notre Dame. The Army says it still needs his skills as a supply officer.

GRIEVING DAD HITS OUT AT ARMY: “Her Son Had Been Unhappy About Going Back To Iraq After Being Home For Leave Over Christmas”

04 February 2006 CAROLINE BRODIE, This Is North Scotland

The grieving father of an Aberdeen soldier shot dead in Iraq on Monday strongly criticised the Army last night for delaying the release of his son's body.

Walter Douglas, whose son, Lance Corporal Allan Douglas, was the 99th member of the British armed forces to die since the conflict began, is due to travel to the military base at Brize Norton, in Oxfordshire, on Tuesday - the day before his son's body is being flown back into the country.

But last night, the distraught father was told that his son - a soldier in the Highlanders regiment and a former pupil of Northfield Academy - was not going to be flown the final leg of his journey to Aberdeen on Wednesday as he had originally been led to believe.

Instead, he was told, his son's body was "highly likely" to be held back for another two days while a post-mortem examination is carried out.

Last night, an emotional Mr Douglas, 54, said: "This has never been mentioned to me before.

"It is almost a week now since my son was shot and we still do not have him home.

"I just think it's time he was home and buried."

Mr Douglas says he is unwilling to travel south on Tuesday night and wait around for two days while he could be at home comforting his heartbroken wife Diane, 53, who is too grief-stricken to contemplate the journey.

Their 22-year-old son died on Monday after he was shot by a sniper while putting up an aerial near Al Amarah in Maysan province.

On Wednesday night, the family joined hundreds of others at a poignant candlelit vigil at the city's cenotaph, which was organised by the Stop the War Coalition after fellow Scot Corporal Gordon Alexander Pritchard became the 100th member of the British armed forces to die since the conflict began.

The married Edinburgh father-of-three, who was in the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, was killed by a roadside bomb on Tuesday.

Mr and Mrs Douglas and their daughter, Donna, called on Prime Minister Tony Blair to bring the British troops home, saying it was "not their war".

Mrs Douglas said her son had been unhappy about going back to Iraq after being home for leave over Christmas and his father said he was angry that his son had died fighting in a war with which he did not agree.

It's Getting Worse

Feb 03, 2006 By Carol Flaherty, Montana State University

***A thousand* U.S. soldiers in Iraq have come down with leishmaniasis, a disease transmitted by the bites of sand flies that can leave disfiguring scars or, in rare cases, attack the eyes, liver or spleen.**

D.A.V. Stomps On JCS Bullshit

[Thanks to Anna Bradley, who sent this in.]

February 2, 2006 By Howard Kurtz, Washington Post Staff Writer

In a protest with an unusual number of high-level signatures, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and each of its five members have fired off a letter assailing a Washington Post cartoon as "beyond tasteless."

The Tom Toles cartoon, published Sunday, depicts a heavily bandaged soldier in a hospital bed as having lost his arms and legs, while Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, in the guise of a doctor, says: "I'm listing your condition as 'battle hardened.'"

Dave Autry, deputy communications director for Disabled American Veterans, said he was "certainly not" offended by the cartoon.

"It was graphic, no doubt about it," he said. "But it drove home a point, that there are critically ill patients that certainly need to be attended to."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

04/02/2006 AFP & (KUNA) & (Reuters)

A roadside bombing in the Al-Bayae neighbourhood of Baghdad wounded two policemen.

Two security men were seriously injured in a booby-trapped car explosion that took place near a joint parade of the Iraqi Army and the Multi-National Forces (MNF) units in the northern city of Mosul, an Iraqi police source told KUNA Friday.

KIRKUK: Five policemen were wounded when a roadside bomb struck their patrol in the northern city of Kirkuk, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

UP AGAINST THE WALL!

From: J.D. Englehart (Former) SPC 1st Infantry Division, United States Army
To: GI Special
Sent: February 03, 2006
[Excerpts]

Everyone else seems to have something to say about George W. Bush's State of the Union address, so why not me?

I'm not going to delve too much into it for the simple reason that it was dreadfully boring, hopelessly ridiculous, and seemed to resemble more of a high school pep rally than it did an act of government.

Not even the spineless democrats (who couldn't even manage to filibuster Samuel Alito this week) could add flavor to the charade when sarcastically cheering against Bush's social security privatization plan. Interesting though it was, I find it impossible to give even a little credit to the better half of a pathetic two-party system.

Bush said nothing he can actually back up in reality, nor does he have the track record to make him believable in any fashion.

"War in Iraq: Necessary and winnable" despite his own generals on the ground, pentagon officials, 58% of the US population, and even the RAND Corporation claiming the exact opposite.

"The United States has a bolstering economy" although his presidency stands for an ever widening gap between the ultra rich and hopelessly poor, a record setting deficit and unemployment, and conniving tax cuts for the rich.

"Education is key for global market competition" except that his No Child Left Behind program is a horrible failure for schools across the nation, not to mention the \$12.7 billion cut from college student loans.

He claims that the environment weighs heavily on his pea-brained mind, but has never signed the Kyoto agreement for cleaner air and gleefully wishes to begin drilling for fossil fuels in Alaska and our beautiful national parks.

Despite his ignorance and dishonesty, everybody cheered and applauded their hearts out after he left his podium, gave a cute little wink to his dark overlord Cheney, and marched off into the crowd for handshakes and sloppy kisses to admiring bimbos. Head held high, he calculatedly cowed an American population through his typical mundane rhetoric, lies, and propaganda.

I could almost imagine the typical Bush fan commentating from behind his premium cable television set at home... "Yeah George, you tell 'em! We're at War! WAAAAR!! We'll show them goddamned ragheads and Jesus hatin' Bleedin' Hearts and all them faggits and homos and spanglish speak'n Mex-ee-cans, foul'n up our economy, I saay shoot'em at the border.....Goddamnit woman shut them snot-nosed brats up or I'll beat the hell outta all y'all...and get me another Bud' while yer at it!!"

The State of Dysfunction address was a colorful display of brainwashing that would make Joseph Goebbels blush. And I'm sure Pappy George was sitting in his CIA protected mansion just proud as hell that George Jr. was perpetuating his New World Order scheme into an actual reality.

While taking her seat just prior to Bush's speech, Cindy Sheehan was spotted by Capitol Police wearing a shirt that said, "2245 Dead. How many more?" An officer shouted, "Protester," and Cindy was escorted out of the Capitol Building in handcuffs.

Cindy Sheehan's arrest is not an isolated incident.

I have friends who were arrested at antiwar protests because they looked like anarchist punks.

At the Republican National Convention in 2004, similar wrongful arrests were made during peaceful demonstrations.

In those instances, heavily armed police officers forced peaceful citizens into small boundaries constructed out of tape and barriers. They called these boundaries "Free Speech Zones".

Violators of these free speech corrals were arrested and thrown into dirty jail cells overnight, only to be charged with misdemeanor crimes upon their release. Worse yet, innocent protestors, punks, squatters, and other "undesirables" were detained at the 2004 RNC protest and locked up, without charge, in what was

called Pier 57, a warehouse insulated with asbestos and guarded by armed police and razor wire.

Most of the over 1900 detainees reported that they were held in filthy conditions and denied water and medical attention during their 18+ hour imprisonment.

Why were these people arrested in the first place?

Were they guilty of violent crimes or inciting riots?

Were these people endangering themselves or others around them?

Were these people terrorists?

Certainly not!

These were American citizens who should have been protected by the Constitution of the United States, and this was the price they paid for exercising their Civil Rights!

Bill of Rights

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

No infringement on these rights deserves to be ignored. It just so happens that some injustices are made more public than others.

All in all, I would say that the evening of the State of the Union address was a good one.

It was filled with all the ups and downs and excitement that you can only watch on American television.

We got to sit back and watch G'Dubya look like the lying, hypocritical bastard that we've all grown to know and love.

We saw the Democratic Party doing what they do best: Sitting on their worthless asses, sulking, and doing nothing.

In a hip-hop, glamorized society of spectacle, Cindy Sheehan is the new "in". Just by wearing a controversial t-shirt to the State of the Union, she managed to build a reputation far more dangerous than gangsta'rap. In the end, Cindy Sheehan has more Street-Cred than the Bush administration has moral integrity.

J.D. Englehart

(Former) SPC 1st Infantry Division, United States Army

www.ftssoldier.blogspot.

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.

Iran: “Secret Enrichment Plant” Has A Large Billboard (30 Foot X 20 Foot) In Front That Proclaims “New Uranium Enrichment Plant”

February 02, 2006 By James Murphy, Vietnam Veterans Against The War. org [Excerpt]

Today, the Journal News (a daily paper for Rockland and Westchester Counties) published the following letter from James Murphy in their community view section:

It would take too long to discuss the inaccuracies in the latest letters regarding Iran and Iraq, but I would like to list some points of information.

Tehran is the Los Angeles of the Mideast. It has a terrible air pollution problem. When we were there in December, the city had to close down schools, etc., for several days due to the air quality, too many cars and too many oil-burning power plants.

U.S. contractors have been invited to bid on the construction of nuclear power plants and the uranium enrichment facility necessary for nuclear power.

General Electric could have been a partner were it not for the Bush administration.

By the way, the secret enrichment plant is on a heavily traveled highway and has a large billboard (30 foot x 20 foot) in front that proclaims "New Uranium Enrichment Plant" in five languages, including English.

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



Foreign occupation troops from the U.S. Army searching an elderly Iraqi citizen for explosive residue during a home invasion raid in Ramadi Feb. 1, 2006. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

[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?]

***Another Stunning Military Victory:
Occupation Grabs Trucks And 11 Truck
Drivers Delivering Wheat***

February 04, 2006 SANA

Minister of Transport Mukarram Obeid discussed with his Iraqi counterpart Salam al-Malik on phone Saturday the issue of 11 Syrian drivers detained by the U.S. forces in Ramadi, Iraq as they were transporting by their lorries wheat imported to Iraq via Syrian ports.

Minister Obeid asked his Iraqi counterpart to immediately intervene to set free the Syrian drivers and enable them to continue delivering the shipment to its destination in Iraq.

The Iraqi Transport Minister promised to take the needed steps in this regard to positively reflect on the movement of transport into Iraq.

Guess What: Those Hoods Are Back!!



An Iraqi detainee sits with his head covered by a sand bag while an American soldier covers another detainee's eyes with tape during a raid in Ramadi Feb. 4, 2006. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

“This Is One Of The Most Serious Constitutional Crises That We've Ever Faced In The Country”

2.3.06 Capitol Hill Blue [Excerpt]

In Vermont, more than half that state's legislators have signed a letter requesting that Gov. James Douglas' Homeland Security Advisory Council denounce President Bush's domestic spying program.

"Vermont has always had a tradition of vigilance in matters of security and vigilance in matters of protecting individual rights from an overreaching government," said the letter, which was drafted in mid-January and delivered to the governor's desk late Tuesday. "Vermonters have managed in the most trying of times to balance the needs of both, when demands of one were not sacrificed for the needs of another."

Legal scholars have joined with former government officials in an open letter to Congress to question the President's actions.

Federal law is supposed to prohibit using the NSA to spy on Americans and many legal scholars say Bush violated that law by signing executive orders authorizing the domestic spying program.

"This is one of the most serious constitutional crises that we've ever faced in the country," said Jonathan Turley, a George Washington University law professor. Turley added the president's claim of executive authority based on Article II "would put our system on a slippery slope."

"The president's use of the war resolution borders on absurdity," Turley continues. "To have the attorney general putting forward an interpretation that he cannot possibly believe is true, because he's not a moron, is deeply disturbing."

William and Mary Law Professor William W. Van Alstyne is among the 14 scholars and former officials who signed the letter.

"At an earlier time, kings of England could ignore acts of Parliament and were, indeed, above the law. It was part of the very design of our Constitution that no one elected president would fancy himself to possess any similar prerogative," Van Alstyne says.

"So, now, the proposition is once again being tested. It is no small matter, and I would have felt professionally derelict not to join in a public statement that simply straightforwardly articulates why all who care about the integrity of our constitutional system and of the rule of law itself should do all they can to preserve it rather than have it subverted by instruments of executive stealth."

Among those who signed the letter is former FBI director William Sessions who calls the entire concept of domestic spying "a gross violation of basic American rights and a colossal abuse of Presidential power."

The Traitor Bush Refuses To Give Senate Information About Spying On Citizens

February 2, 2006 By ERIC LICHTBLAU, New York Times Company

WASHINGTON, Feb. 1

The Bush administration is rebuffing requests from members of the Senate Judiciary Committee for its classified legal opinions on President Bush's domestic spying program, setting up a confrontation in advance of a hearing scheduled for next week, administration and Congressional officials said Wednesday.

The Justice Department is balking at the request so far, administration officials said, arguing that the legal opinions would add little to the public debate because the administration has already laid out its legal defense at length in several public settings.

With the committee scheduled to hold the first public hearing on the eavesdropping program on Monday, the Justice Department's stance could provoke another clash between Congress and the executive branch over access to classified internal documents.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

“Let The Dogs Of The Empire Bark, That's Their Job”

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in. He writes: NOT BAD, COULD BE BETTER: "Let the dogs of the empire bark, that's their job," he said. "Ours is to battle to achieve the true liberation of our people."]

Feb 3 By VANESSA ARRINGTON, Associated Press Writer

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, receiving a U.N. prize handed over by Fidel Castro on Friday, said Washington was right to be concerned by Latin America's tilt to the left because it represents a threat to the U.S. "empire."

"They are right to be worried, because they know what's happening here," Chavez said in a speech lasting more than 2 1/2 hours after accepting his prize. "They will forever try to preserve the U.S. empire by all means, while we will do everything possible to shred it."

Chavez was visiting Havana amid an intensifying propaganda war between Washington and Latin America's leftist leaders. U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld compared Chavez to Adolf Hitler and warned darkly Thursday about populist leadership in Bolivia and Cuba.

Chavez downplayed Rumsfeld's Hitler comparison.

"Let the dogs of the empire bark, that's their job," he said. "Ours is to battle to achieve the true liberation of our people."

Received:

Re: New York City Activists Reach Out To Troops

From: JF
To: GI Special
Sent: February 03, 2006
Subject: New York City Activists Reach Out To Troops

"I am very happy to report that the response from the soldiers was overwhelmingly positive. We were successful in distributing the information in a very friendly and receptive environment."

Please keep up the good work.

REPLY: Amen to that. T

Received:

Military Week Site Is Operational Again!

“The Best Answer To The Circling Buzzards Is To KEEP KICKING!”

From: Pastor D
To: GI Special
Sent: February 03, 2006
Subject: Military Week Site Is Operational Again!

I decided to check my mail before crashing, and just learned the militaryweek site is now operational again. <http://www.militaryweek.com/index.shtml>

This is great news as they've done quality work in the past and some writers actually know something about military and strategic studies. Likely you know that they're up and running again, but I wanted to make sure. I'm not mistaken, you've featured that site on your own in the past.

Thanks so much for e-mailing those reports so each day. Dole out a few articles now and again. A few pastor friends may actually be starting to listen. That may be a minor miracle in itself.

Take care.

Remember: the best answer to the circling buzzards is to KEEP KICKING!

REPLY: Amen to that too! T

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/gispecial,
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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