

GI SPECIAL 4C28:



[Photo: Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace]
Iraq Veterans Against The War
Mobile To New Orleans March 3.06

Army Bans Use Of Privately Bought Armor: “THE SOLDIER KILLERS IN THE PENTAGON HAVE STOOPED TO A NEW LOW”

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in. He writes: WHAT THE FUCK - THEY DON'T GIVE YOU THE BODY ARMOR, AND THEN THEY FORBID YOU TO BUY IT TOO??? THE SOLDIER KILLERS IN THE PENTAGON HAVE STOOPED TO A NEW LOW.]

"On the surface this looks to be another of many attempts by the Army to cover up the billions of dollars spent on ineffective body armor systems which they continue to try quick fixes on to no avail."

3.30.06 By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press Writer

Soldiers will no longer be allowed to wear body armor other than the protective gear issued by the military, Army officials said Thursday, the latest twist in a running battle over the equipment the Pentagon gives its troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Army officials told The Associated Press that the order was prompted by concerns that soldiers or their families were buying inadequate or untested commercial armor from private companies — including the popular Dragon Skin gear made by California-based Pinnacle Armor.

Murray Neal, chief executive officer of Pinnacle, said he hadn't seen the directive and wants to review it.

"We know of no reason the Army may have to justify this action," Neal said.

"On the surface this looks to be another of many attempts by the Army to cover up the billions of dollars spent on ineffective body armor systems which they continue to try quick fixes on to no avail."

The move was a rare one by the Army. Spoehr said he doesn't recall any similar bans on personal armor or devices. The directives are most often issued when there are problems with aircraft or other large equipment.

Veterans groups immediately denounced the decision.

Nathaniel R. Helms, editor of the Soldiers for the Truth online magazine Defense Watch, said he has already received a number of e-mails from soldiers complaining about the policy.

"Outrageously we've seen that (soldiers) haven't been getting what they need in terms of equipment and body armor," said Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., who wrote legislation to have troops reimbursed for equipment purchases.

"That's totally unacceptable, and why this directive by the Pentagon needs to be scrutinized in much greater detail."

Early in the Iraq war, soldiers and their families were spending hundreds or even thousands of dollars on protective gear that they said the military was not providing.

Then, last October, after months of pressure from families and members of Congress, the military began a reimbursement program for soldiers who purchased their own protective equipment.

The Marine Corps has not issued a similar directive, but Marines are "encouraged to wear Marine Corps-issued body armor since this armor has been tested to meet fleet standards," spokesman Bruce Scott said.

There have been repeated reports of soldiers or families of soldiers buying commercial equipment or trying to raise thousands of dollars to buy it for troops who are preparing to deploy overseas.

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



"You? You want good body armor? Eat shit and die."
(AP Photo/Heesoon Yim)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**ONE AIRMAN KILLED, ONE WOUNDED
IN IED EXPLOSION NEAR BAGHDAD**

3/30/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 06-03-03CJ

One Airman assigned to the 447th Air Expeditionary Group was killed and one Airman was injured by an improvised explosive device (IED) while conducting safing operations in the vicinity of Baghdad, Iraq, today.

U.S. Soldier Killed In Fallujah Fighting

3/30/2006 Reuters

A U.S. soldier died from wounds which he received in clashes in Fallujah, the U.S. military said on Thursday.

"A soldier assigned to the 9th Naval Construction Regiment died of wounds sustained in fighting in Fallujah on March 28," the military said in a brief statement.

Ceres Soldier Injured In Iraq

03/30/06 Manteca Bulletin

A Ceres couple has received word this week that their son, Jose M. Pacheco Jr., has been injured in an explosion in Baghdad, Iraq.

A colonel called Jose Pacheco Sr. on Monday to explain that his son's humvee was blown up by an improvised explosive device (IED). The explosion occurred while he and two other soldiers were patrolling a road in Baghdad sometime on Sunday, March 26 or early Monday.

Pacheco, a 2002 Ceres High School graduate, was airlifted to a medical camp north of Baghdad where temporary surgery was performed. The blast shattered one leg and shot shrapnel into his other leg. He was later flown to an Army medical facility in Landstuhl, Germany where doctors repaired and wired his right knee and removed shrapnel from his left leg.

Pacheco also suffered burns to his chest and to the right side of the thorax.

Plans were to send him home for therapy pending an evaluation of the injuries.

The other two soldiers suffered less extensive injuries. One suffered shrapnel to the leg and an eye injury, while the third had minor injuries to his hand but is staying on patrol.

Jose and Ernestine Pacheco were able to speak to their son Wednesday through a toll-free number supplied by the Defense Department.

"He seemed depressed," said Pacheco, "because he may be discharged. He loves the military. It's going to be months and months of therapy. He hasn't been able to walk since the accident."

The soldier had plans to finish out his commitment to the Army, then use government money to seek training to become a civilian registered nurse. He is also engaged to a woman in Germany, said his father.

The news met Jose Sr. who was in Arizona watching the A's and Giants in spring training.

"We returned and it was so stressful the whole time coming back."

Pacheco was on his second tour in Iraq. His first tour lasted 18 months but he returned in November for a second tour.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK 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.



U.S. soldiers from the 14th Cavalry Regiment and their sniffer dog climb to the roof of a building in search of explosives, in the Iraqi town of Rawah March 27, 2006. REUTERS/US Army/Lance Cpl. Andrew Young/Handout

TROOP NEWS

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



Hye Jarak, the widow of Army Master Sgt. Ivica Jerak, right, wipes away tears during burial services at Arlington National Cemetery on Sept. 9, 2005. **Jerak of Cameron, N.C. is the 173rd person killed in Iraq to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery.** (AP Photo/Kevin Wolf)

***The Mask Comes Off:* Troops Sent For “Temporary” Pilgrimage Duty To Stay In Iraq**

3.30.06 Washington Times

Top U.S. commanders in Iraq will not recommend the next stage of U.S. troop withdrawals before the Iraqis form a new unity government, according to senior defense officials.

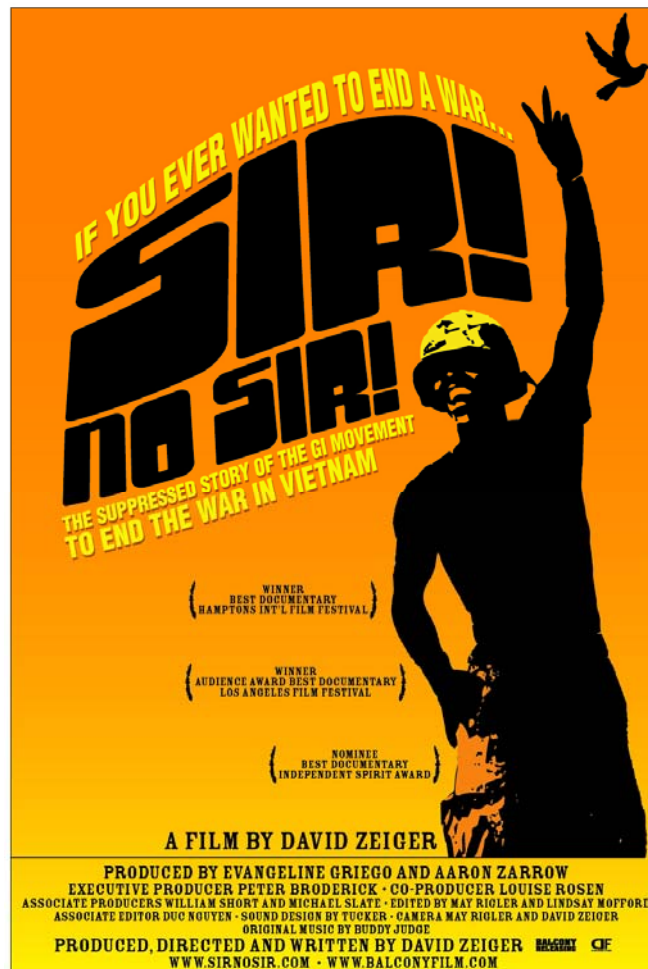
They also said that a 700-soldier reinforcement unit, brought into Iraq from Kuwait for the annual Shiite pilgrimage, will remain until the unity government is in place, or at least announced.

Soldiers Patience With Iraq War Wears Thin

3.30.06 Christian Science Monitor

While their officers remain largely on message and outwardly optimistic, many of the front-line men, who patrol "outside the wire" twice daily, say that their patience is wearing thin.

Sir! No Sir! On the Web



From: "David Zeiger" displaced@mindspring.com
Sent: March 30, 2006
Subject: Sir! No Sir! On the Web

Dear Friends,

The brand new, exciting, dynamic web site for Sir! No Sir! is up!

Please take a moment to go to <http://www.sirnosir.com/> and see what it has to offer:

--The theatrical trailer for Sir! No Sir!;

- Daily updates of theatrical openings;
- Downloadable posters, photos, and press releases;
- Reviews from around the world;
- The story behind Sir! No Sir!;
- Links to dozens of web sites and publications;
- A bulletin board to join the discussion and debate surrounding Sir! No Sir! ;
- An extensive and constantly growing archive of the GI Underground Press and original material from the GI Movement, including previously classified military investigations Displaced Films was able to get for the film;

This is a site you will want to return to over and over, as Sir! No Sir! spreads to theaters around the country.

(If you have visited the site previously using Safari, make sure you empty your Cache to let the new site in).

Thanks, and enjoy the site,

David Zeiger

"Sir! No Sir!" combines exceptional artistry and insightful analysis with great story telling. This is no facile agitprop piece, but a careful dissection of a growing military rebellion that permanently altered American society, but has largely been forgotten. International Documentary Magazine

Nominated for the Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary
Audience Award Best Documentary--Los Angeles Film Festival
Jury Award Best Documentary--Hamptons International Film Festival
Jury Award Best Film on War and Peace--Vermont International Film Festival
Nominated for a Gotham Award and International Documentary Association Award

www.sirnosir.com
Displaced Films
3421 Fernwood Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90039
323-906-9249
323-913-0683 fax
www.displacedfilms.com

Hundreds Of U.S. Soldiers Flee To Canada To Avoid Iraq: “Many Say They Feel Tricked By The Military”

March 28, 2006 Duncan Campbell, The Guardian

Hundreds of deserters from the US armed forces have crossed into Canada and are now seeking political refugee status there, arguing that violations of the rules of war in Iraq by the US entitle them to asylum.

A decision on a test case involving two US servicemen is due shortly and is being watched with interest by fellow servicemen on both sides of the border.

At least 20 others have already applied for asylum and there are an estimated 400 in Canada out of more than 9,000 who have deserted since the conflict started in 2003.

Ryan Johnson, 22, from near Fresno in California, was due to be deployed with his unit to Iraq in January last year but crossed the Canadian border in June and is seeking asylum. "I had spoken to many soldiers who had been in Iraq and who told me about innocent civilians being killed and about bombing civilian neighbourhoods," he told the Guardian.

"It's been really great since I've been here. Generally, people have been really hospitable and understanding, although there have been a few who have been for the war." He is now unable to return to the US. "I don't have a problem with that. I'm in Canada and that's that."

Mr Johnson said it was unclear exactly how many US soldiers were in Canada but he thought 400 was a "realistic figure". He had been on speaking tours across the country as part of a war resisters' movement and had come across other servicemen living underground.

Jeffry House, a Toronto lawyer who represents many of the men, said that an increasing number were seeking asylum. "There are a fair number without status and a fair number on student visas," he said, and under UN guidelines on refugee status they were entitled to seek asylum.

Lee Zaslofsky, 61, the coordinator of the War Resisters' Support Campaign in Toronto, said that he was impressed by the young men who were seeking asylum.

"Some have been to Iraq and others have heard what goes on there," he said. "Mainly, what they discuss is being asked to do things they consider repugnant. Most are quite patriotic ... Many say they feel tricked by the military."

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.

Blaming The Veteran: The Politics Of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

By D.E. Ford, M.S.W., Commander Jeff Huber, U.S. Navy (Retired) and I.L. Meagher

11 Feb 2006 Epluribusmedia.org

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) became part of the American vocabulary after the Vietnam War as its effects on veterans became widely publicized.

Now, a new generation of American veterans are again victims of PTSD.

This series explores the impact of politics on the funding, diagnosis and treatment of veterans suffering from PTSD.

It examines the propaganda used to justify a reduction in benefits to veterans with PTSD and the effort to redirect blame for the ravages of war to the soldiers themselves.

Part I: Stacking the Deck - With trillion dollar estimates for the Iraq war, the Administration looks to cut costs, eyeing treatment for the returning PTSD wounded veterans.

Part II: Ration & Redefine: Redefining PTSD and substance abuse as moral/spiritual failings opens the door to cheaper unregulated, unlicensed faith-based "treatments."

Part III: Malign & Slime: Propaganda is used to stigmatize veterans seeking help, reduce benefits to veterans with PTSD and to blame the soldiers for their own illness.

MORE:

“The Government Listens To Out Of Touch Apologists And Sycophants”

March 29, 2006 From: Keith Tennent via Firebasevoice@yahoogroups.com

This policy has already started in Australia in several ways, but most noticeably with the use of Writeway by DVA which formulates and presents unprofessional, inaccurate and biased "reports" on Australian Veterans' disability claims.

Writeway is a private, for profit company which is contracted by DVA to substantiate various incidents and situations which sick and disabled Veterans say occurred which triggered the stressors which led to their PTSD.

The Government wonders why enlistment and retention rates are going through the floor, yet it simply won't look at the real reasons such as the denial of legitimate claims, and the theft of compensation and health care from those whose claims have already been accepted.

Instead the Government listens to out of touch apologists and sycophants when taking advice on enlistment and retention rates.

Some of these individuals and business entities who give advice to Government have vested interests in hiding the real issues from the Government, one of the reasons being their reliance on the Government for their cash flow via various contracts they hold with the Government.

It's a sick, sad and sorry situation which the R&SL, in particular, refuses to bring to the Governments notice because it just doesn't wish to upset its cosy relationship with the Government. Meanwhile sick, disabled and dying ex Service members are hung out to dry, and the enlistment and retention disaster lurches from one failure to another.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT?

MORE:

Welcome To World Of Disposable Soldiers.

From: Bodey L & R via Firebasevoice@yahoogroups.com

Sent: March 29, 2006

Subject: Blaming the Veteran: The Politics of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Be afraid

Be very afraid !

The obvious hardening of attitude displayed in recent times by the DVA must be viewed as a warning.

What happens in the USA, and appears to benefit the government of the day, will surely flow on to Australia.

Welcome to world of disposable soldiers.

Cheyenne

The New Issue Of Traveling Soldier Is Out!

This issue features:

1. "We definitely needed something more, more armor than just plywood and sandbags because that wasn't really going to stop much" says Iraq vet Joseph Woods in the first installment of a three part interview with Traveling Soldier's T Barton.
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.06.woods.php>
 2. "I have not heard a worthwhile nor just reason for staying the course" says Iraq veteran Captain Justin Gordon.
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.06.gordon.php>
 3. "The government had a plan, but it did not include the poor black people of the south" An active duty soldier speaks out about the war on Iraq and the abandonment of Katrina victims.
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.06.soldiermedic.php>
 4. Media Chatter Ignored Soldiers for Cindy Sheehan
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.06.sheehan.php>
 5. How the Soldiers Stopped the Vietnam War: a book review of the newly republished classic, *Soldiers in Revolt*.
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.06.cortright.php>
 6. **Download the new Traveling Soldier to pass it out at your school, workplace, or at nearby base.**
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/TS12.pdf>
-

Air Force Poison Killing Civilians Near Kelly Air Force Base

3.30.06 Los Angeles Times

On nearly every block surrounding the former Kelly Air Force Base in Texas, small purple crosses sprout from front lawns, marking the homes where cancer has struck.

The residents call their neighborhood the "toxic triangle," alleging that the Air Force poisoned it with an industrial solvent, trichloroethylene, or TCE.

It was casually dumped at the base for decades and spread for miles through a shallow aquifer under 22,000 nearby houses.

Texas health authorities have found elevated rates of liver cancer among residents, as well as higher-than-normal rates of birth defects.

MORE:

Too Few Dead: Pentagon Scum Want To Kill More Civilians

March 30, 2006 Los Angeles Times

After years on the defensive, the Pentagon-with help from NASA and the Energy Department-is taking a far tougher stand in challenging calls for environmental cleanups.

It is using its formidable political leverage to demand greater proof that industrial substances cause cancer before ratcheting up costly cleanups at polluted bases.

The military says it is only striving to make smart decisions based on sound science and accuses the EPA of being unduly influenced by left-leaning scientists.

But critics say the defense establishment has manufactured unwarranted scientific doubt, used its powerful role in the executive branch to cause delays and forced a reduction in the margins of protection that traditionally guard public health.

Camp Lejeune Marines: Pretty In Pink

April 03, 2006 By C. Mark Brinkley, Army Times staff writer

Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Marines are Marines, right?

Not according to their movie preferences. While the West Coast gang is busy renting "Dumbo," you guys are watching — well, let's just say someone has some explaining to do.

"Pretty in Pink," the cheesy '80s teen flick starring Molly Ringwald and a bunch of other also-rans, took the top spot at the home of the 2nd Marine Division.

Can this be? For starters, you can see it 95 times a week for free on cable. For another thing, no one blows anything up.

If you tell us you rented it for the deleted scenes, we'll scream.

Frankly, we're at a loss for words. Don't think putting "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" in at No. 8 makes up for it, either.

Next thing you know, we'll hear Debbie Gibson songs blaring from your car windows.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

March 30, 2006 The Associated Press & Aljazeera & VNP & (Reuters) & Khaleej Times & (Reuters)

Assailants in speeding cars killed a police commando as he was leaving his house in south Baghdad Thursday.

A car bomber rammed a police convoy in west Baghdad's Yarmouk neighborhood, killing one police commando and wounding four others.

Resistance soldiers wounded at least two policemen in Baghdad.

Insurgents blew up a pipeline transporting oil from the northern city of Kirkuk to the Baiji refinery on Thursday, an engineer in the region said.

Resistance guerrillas ambushed and killed eight workers from Iraq's main oil refinery in the northern city of Baiji on Thursday, police said. One worker was also wounded when their minibus was stopped at a roadblock after they left work for the day. The militants, some of them masked and in civilian clothes, opened fire.

Baiji, north of Baghdad, supplies much of Iraq's domestic fuel needs and is the biggest refinery in the country. It and its employees have been attacked before.

A policeman was killed and five others wounded when a roadside bomb hit their patrol in the northern oil city of Kirkuk, 250 km (150 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Elsewhere, gunmen gunned down Salem Hameed, a member of the (Shiite) Al-Daawa [collaborator] Party in Al-Jameaa district in western Baghdad, the source said, adding that another member of the same party, Majed Hameed, was shot dead in Al-Adel district in the western part of the city.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“I’ll Fight, But It’ll Be Right Here
In The Streets Of America
Because I Know Who The
Enemy Is”**

September 15,1982 Story by Michael Letwin, WIN Magazine

Heidi, Heidi, Heidi, Ho,
We're just hereto let you know,
Heidi, Heidi, Heidi, Hey,
Vietnam vets won't go away,
Sound off: 1, 2
Sound off: 3, 4
Bring it on down: 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2—3, 4!

The tourists strolling down the malls of Washington, DC, in the week leading up to Armed Forces Day—May 15—did a quick double take when they looked toward the sound of marching feet and military cadences.

Instead of a color guard from the Pentagon, however, marched a military style column of around 300 veterans, their friends and their families, dressed in remnants of old uniforms.

Their banners were emblazoned not with the names and numbers of Army divisions, but with calls for aid to those poisoned by Agent Orange, for better benefits and treatment from the Veterans Administration, for “No More Vietnams!”

The tourists had met Operation Dewey Canyon 4, a four day “limited incursion into Congress land” named after the secret US “incursions” into Laos in 1969 and 1970. This Dewey Canyon, however, like Dewey Canyon 3 in 1971, was organized by Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), the group which, a decade or more ago, played a key role in bringing the reality of the Vietnam war back home.

“I did a year’s tour of duty in Vietnam,” said Barry Johnson, a wiry black man on the steps of the Capitol. “I was wounded twice. I’m a victim of Agent Orange. I’m 35 years old, but I feel 75 ‘cause the war has aged me. . .

“I’m sick and tired of hearing the same damn stories down at the VA (Veterans Administration). They give me medication, but all they’re doing is slowing me down.

Effects Of The War

Post Traumatic Stress disorder. Agent Orange. The VA. Racism, unemployment, poverty. These are some of the reasons Vietnam veterans gave for coming to Dewey Canyon 4, many of them from across the country. They share these concerns with hundreds of thousands of other veterans who could not come.

Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) is a label given to the continual re living of war experiences that many Vietnam vets go through in a society that has shunned them since their return from the war. The result is that very large numbers of vets have been unable to return to the lives they led before. If s effects have been staggering:

Eighty percent of those who were married before the war were divorced within a year of their return.

Veterans, especially those who were in combat, have had a high alcohol and drug abuse rate.

The Vietnam vet suicide rate is 33% higher than the average, some 100,000 having committed suicide since the war.

Twenty five percent of the inmates in US prisons—100,000—are Vietnam vets.

Not widely known is that many of the 7465 women Vietnam veterans also suffer from PTS as a consequence of their work in MASH units.

The VA admits that one million Vietnam veterans suffer from PTS, and experts expect their numbers to increase in the 80s.

Vets say that the VA's only answer to those who seek help for PTS is dangerous and ineffective drugs which cost much less than real treatment and which avoid the controversial issue of why the war had such a devastating effect on the GIs who fought it—and who is to blame.

Hardest hit are working class, poor and minority veterans who were most often on the front lines during the war, and who today remain on the front lines of unemployment, cutbacks in social spending and racial discrimination. About 40% of black Vietnam vets are currently under PTS as compared with 20% of white vets.

“It's a class thing that the guys who went to fight the war were the sons of working class people,” noted Peter Mahoney, an Army lieutenant during 1970-1 in Vietnam.

“We were the ones with the least political power and ability to get out of the draft. And when we came back we were treated the same way.”

Agent Orange

I do believe the C.O. lied,
When he made us use that herbicide,
He said it'd only kill the trees,
But now I got this strange disease,
Sound off. . .

Agent Orange was the military's name for a lethal chemical used to defoliate the countryside of Vietnam between 1962 and 1971 in order to deny cover and food to guerrillas of the National Liberation Front and their many civilian supporters. In all, approximately 11.2 million gallons of the herbicide, largely produced by Dow Chemical, which also manufactured napalm, were sprayed over 3.6 million acres of land, taking a dramatic toll on vegetation and on the health of the Vietnamese exposed.

But American GIs were told by their superiors that the chemical would not harm them.

Years later, tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans have reported the outbreak of an epidemic of diseases that have been linked to Agent Orange—chloracne, bladder and kidney infection, skin lesions, abscesses, shingles, liver disorders, nerve damage, personality change, chronic fatigue, sores and cancer.

The government denies that Agent Orange is responsible for veterans' problems and refuses to make disability payments to veterans who have put in claims which they

believe result from Agent Orange poisoning. Until recently, the VA was also forbidden from conducting tests related to Agent Orange.

But Vietnam vets think otherwise. The following letter to Ronald Reagan, from an unnamed vet exposed to Agent Orange, was read on the steps of the Capitol:

“My wife and I were married in 1969 and lost our first child due to a miscarriageOur daughter had some problems at birth. . .a slightly deformed finger on one hand and a congenital hip disorder. . . . With the third child we took every possible precaution to have a normal pregnancy. . . . Our third child, a boy, was born with an upper extremity amputation. . . he has no arms or hands. . . at three years of age (he developed) a severe kidney disease. . .

“At that time my wife and I decided never to have any more children. ... The reason I question the effect of Agent Orange is because I come from a family of four boys who have had a total of 17 children, three of which were deformed or died. . . Those three were all mine.”

“We need testing, treatment and compensation for Agent Orange,” confirmed John Lindquist, a Wisconsin vet who served in the Third Marines in 1968 9 and who is one of four national officers of the VVAW “We don’t want to be 30 years down the road like the atomic veterans,” he said, a reference to the soldiers exposed to atomic testing in the early 1950s who have suffered an extremely high rate of cancer.

The Next Vietnam

General Haig he wants a war,
Ship him to El Salvador,
Drop him on the jungle floor,
He won’t bother us no more,
Sound off. . .

Why, many people ask, don’t Vietnam veterans put Vietnam behind them?

Veterans respond that the scars of the war are too deep and ongoing to forget.

“We were just killing innocent people, children,” explained Cowboy, a New Yorker who spent 1967 8 in Vietnam with the Second Marines.

“You were in somebody else’s homeland and the people who lived there defended it against you. You saw your partners being killed. And after a while, people started talking to you, you learned the land. You began to ask, ‘What am I here for?’“

He is now a member of Black Veterans for Social Justice in Brooklyn, New York.

The bitterness that many of America’s 8.5 million Vietnam veterans feel about their experience was graphically reflected at an open microphone set up at the steps of the

Capitol where vets lined up to speak their minds and contemptuously fling their medals from the war in long arcs over the marble steps.

A vet from St. Paul, “and probably from Da Nang, Vietnam” threw his crossed rifles infantry insignia onto the steps “because the only thing our brothers got was crosses in your damn cemetery,” a reference to the 57,865 US soldiers who died in ‘Nam and the 43,000 others who died later from their wounds.

During a solemn memorial ceremony for the dead earlier in the day at Arlington National Cemetery, Pete Zastrow, who as a captain commanded an infantry company in the First Air Cavalry Division in 1968 9, noticed a nearby gravestone.

It was that of Medgar Evers, a black veteran of World War II who had survived D Day on the beaches of Normandy only to be assassinated by white racists in 1963 for his role as a leader of the civil rights movement.

“That’s what you get for fighting for this country,” said Zastrow as he walked away from Arlington.

Dewey Canyon vets spoke of Vietnam also because they believe they are witnessing the same kind of war today in El Salvador.

“The governments down there are terror governments,” said one vet in reference to Central America. “They believe in torture, killing people, and I just can’t believe in supporting them.”

“When I went to pick up my wife who works at the VA hospital recently,” recalled Bob Anderson of western Pennsylvania, “she pointed out to me that a whole wing of that hospital is shutdown.

“They say they don’t have the money to run the thing, yet Reagan’s spending \$20 million to bring these death squad troops from El Salvador to Fort Bragg to train them to go back and kill people who are fighting for their rights over there. They tell us there’s no money, but there is.”

Perhaps the greatest pressure to discuss the parallels many vets see between Vietnam and El Salvador is a feeling that they have a special responsibility to use their experience to prevent today’s young people from being sent to El Salvador as today’s vets were sent off to Vietnam almost a generation ago.

“Being a minority person,” explained Jerry Simmons, a black vet from Milwaukee, “I see El Salvador as the rich helping the rich to oppress the poor. And I don’t feel that 18 year olds from this country should go help somebody fight against a people fighting for their freedom when we ain’t got none here.

“Anyone who says that black people should fight is a fool. The majority of black people who have come out of the service haven’t been any better off (than) when they went in.”

The “war is going on right at home right now,” concludes Wayne Smith, a black veteran who was a combat medic attached to the Ninth Infantry Division in 1969 70 and who

today counsels other Vietnam vets in Providence, Rhode Island. "These are our battles."

And if the young people present at Dewey Canyon 4 were any indication, the message is being heard.

"I was too young to fight in Vietnam, but I'm prime meat for the wars coming up," declared Michael Gooding of Columbia, South Carolina. "I'll, fight, but it'll be right here in the streets of America because I know who the enemy is."

"I'm presently in the US Navy," added an unidentified young man dressed in a borrowed olive green fatigue jacket to disguise his identity, "and if they think I'm going to El Salvador, they can go to hell."

Conflicting Feelings, Growing Unity

Speaking out on the wars on Vietnam and El Salvador has had its price, explained Zastrow. "Because we are coming here for both decent benefits and for 'No More Vietnams,' we have lost the support of vet groups like the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion," he said. "But we don't think we can possibly divorce the issues. El Salvador sounds so much like what we remember about Vietnam—and it's Vietnam that made the Vietnam vet. Vietnam brought us Agent Orange. Vietnam caused Post Traumatic Stress."

But Pat MccAnn, who spent Vietnam in the Air Force on duty in the US and who is now an electrician and unionist in the DC area, doesn't think Dewey Canyon's focus on the controversial issues of Vietnam and El Salvador was a major obstacle to winning support from ordinary Vietnam vets.

"Seventy five to ninety percent of the guys here were ground troops in 'Nam," said MccAnn, whose brother and father were both stationed in Vietnam.

"This is the first time in my entire association with the VVAW that's been true. In fact, there are people here who were kind of unclear about the war.

"They have a sense they fought for the rich and got screwed. But they don't understand that the Vietnamese liberation movement was just. There's a lot of conflicting emotional problems because the Vietnamese blew their buddies away.

"But even those who don't understand El Salvador say 'We ain't going through this again.' What happened here this week proves that you can link the issues if you do it the right way."

The feeling of most vets at Dewey Canyon 4 was that their "incursion" had successfully brought together, reactivated, and perhaps broadened a network of Vietnam vets based on very powerful common bonds, which non-veterans could not easily share.

Unlike many other actions by Vietnam veterans, Dewey Canyon 4 was attended by both black and white veterans—which some vets felt was a reflection of the fact that, despite the racism they saw in the military, GIs had been forced to rely on each other under fire.

“I think the group here has the same type of unity we had in the service,” agreed Cowboy. “We can relate to each other better than we can talk to somebody else. This is a family of us who are still here, who made it back. It’s a tribute to our comrades who didn’t.”

While the vet’s movement, and what many vets at Dewey Canyon 4 saw as a broader movement against Reagan and militarism was not viewed with rose colored glasses, many vets expressed an overall feeling of optimism about the future.

John Lindquist looked back over the decade to put some perspective on Dewey Canyon 4.

“After the war ended a lot of people dropped out of the movement,” he said. “But when the Agent Orange issue broke in 78 it lit a fire, then the registration for the draft lit a fire under other, anti war veterans. Then the hostages came home. The vet movement has been growing bigger ever since. Now, with the possibility of another Vietnam in El Salvador and the economic situation, this was the prime time to be here. Operation Dewey Canyon 4 is a high point, pulling out of the closet after the war.”

“We shed our blood in Vietnam, and I shed my last tear today at Arlington Cemetery,” said Bill Davis as he wound up the last moments of Dewey Canyon 4.

“And I hope the rest of you did too, because from here on in it’s straight ahead, brothers and sisters, and kickin’ ass. Thank you for coming to Washington DC for Dewey Canyon 4. We’ll see you the next time.”

Contact:

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, PO Box 25592, Chicago, IL 60625; (312) 463 2127.

Black Veterans for Social Justice, 1119 Fulton St., Brooklyn, NY11238; (212) 789 4680.

“Does One Have To Be Pro Saddam To Be Anti Occupation?”

Comment: T

Subject: Reply to the question: “does one have to be pro Saddam to be anti occupation?”

The rights of nations to self determination and self-defense against Imperial invasion have nothing whatever to do with the political character of the regime in power prior to the attack, or for that matter, the political character of the

leaderships of the resistance now, many of whom in this instance merely covet the wealth that will accrue from oil production for themselves and their class allies, regardless of what religious or secular costumes they wear at any given moment, as may be convenient.

Surely if the regime change in Iran after the fall of the Shah has shown anything, it is how religion is used as a smoke screen for the establishment of naked greed and class privilege: the use of oil wealth to enrich the few at the expense of the many.

Frequently one finds writers complaining that Bush kills *innocent* Iraqis. By using that weak formulation, they implicitly give the U.S. Empire the right to kill Iraqis who are not “innocent,” and to determine who is “innocent” and who is not.

The U.S. Empire has no business killing any Iraqis at all, not one, from Hussein down to the most degraded sadistic torturer in his prisons (now happily working for the occupation), or having one soldier set foot on Iraqi land for one minute. Innocence has nothing to do with it.

Nor do a pack of Imperial predators, or their collaborators, have the standing to put one Iraqi on trail for anything at all, from Hussein on down.

Their justice is the justice of a mob boss pretending to give justice to a junior mob boss that the big boss has decided to kill, in order to grab his territory, wealth and income. It is obscene to even use the word “justice” in connection with such an event as the Hussein & Co. show trial.

The character of the old regime was odious, corrupt, and brutal.

Falsification about that reality serves no useful purpose, except to lose adherents to opposing the war, who are not idiots, and find fawning adulation of rich dictators and the privileged elites that surround them repellent, and rightly so.

Bowing down before predators is not necessary in order to oppose the even more predatory political leadership of the U.S. Empire and advocate the right of Iraqis to resist their attempt at the Imperial subjugation of Iraq, whoever the Iraqi leadership may have been or is now.

<p>What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to thomasfbarton@earthlink.net. Name, I.D., address withheld unless publication requested. Replies confidential.</p>
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Piranha Decal On The Back Of A Pro-War Truck



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

“The Vast Majority Of Iraqis Are In Favor Of National Unity And Opposed To Both Chauvinist Violence And Foreign Occupation”

March 29, 2006 Richard Becker, Socialism and Liberation [Excerpts]

The Associated Press refers to the Interior Ministry as "Shiite-controlled."

This formulation, repeated throughout the media, is really another propaganda falsification intended to exacerbate religious conflict.

It is a well-documented fact that occupation forces did not turn the Interior Ministry over to "Shiites" in general, but to one particular organization, the Badr Brigade; "an infamous paramilitary death squad.

The Badr Brigade is the military wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

The SCIRI leaders, like most of those today in leadership in the Iraqi client government, had been in exile from Iraq and only returned alongside the U.S. invading army in 2003. A spin-off of the Badr Brigade is the Wolf Brigade, noted for its extreme brutality, including against Palestinian refugees in Iraq.

The vast majority of Iraqis are in favor of national unity and opposed to both chauvinist violence and foreign occupation, all key elements throughout the history of modern Iraq.

OCCUPATION REPORT



Collaborator-In-Chief Tells Bush To Fuck Off

March 28, 2006 Nancy A. Youssef and Warren P. Strobel, Knight Ridder Newspapers &
March 30, 2006 By EDWARD WONG, The New York Times

Facing growing pressure from the Bush administration to step down, Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari of Iraq vigorously asserted his right to stay in office on Wednesday and warned the Americans against interfering in the country's political process.

"There was a stand from both the American government and President Bush to promote a democratic policy and protect its interests," he said, sipping from a cup of boiled water mixed with saffron.

"But now there's concern among the Iraqi people that the democratic process is being threatened."

"The source of this is that some American figures have made statements that interfere with the results of the democratic process," he added. "These reservations began when the biggest bloc in Parliament chose its candidate for prime minister."

U.S. officials sent a message this week to Iraq's senior religious cleric asking that he help end the impasse over forming a new Iraqi government and strongly implying that the prime minister, Ibrahim al-Jafaari, should withdraw his candidacy for re-election, according to American officials.

During a news conference Tuesday, Salim al-Maliki, the minister of transportation and a member of the dominant United Iraqi Alliance, said al-Jaafari was still the slate's candidate.

"We do not accept interference by the United States or any other foreign body because it is an internal decision of United Iraqi Alliance," al-Maliki said.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan denied reports in Baghdad that President Bush had sent a letter to leading Shiite politician Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, a statement that, while true, was incomplete.

Al-Hakim visited al-Sistani at his home in Najaf on Tuesday. Before a throng of supporters, al-Hakim promised that the Iraqi leadership would move quickly to form a government.

When he mentioned a raid by U.S. and Iraqi forces that some charge occurred in a mosque, the crowds chanted: "No, no America."

Judith Yaphe, a Persian Gulf expert at the National Defense University in Washington, called the reported attempts to pressure al-Jafaari to resign "heavy-handed."

"They have to know that Sistani does not want to be seen as interfering in the political process," she said. "You're guaranteed to get the result that you don't want."

This week, there's been a growing chorus of complaints from Shiite politicians that the Bush administration doesn't want al-Jaafari as the next prime minister. They have

charged that American officials are trying to usurp their election results, despite promising to bring democracy to Iraq.

Earlier this year, the United Iraqi Alliance, the largest Shiite slate, chose al-Jaafari to be its nominee for the top post in the permanent government. That virtually assured that he'd win, since the slate won nearly a majority of seats in the new parliament.

Governor Can't Visit Ramadi: Too Dangerous

3.29.06 Salt Lake Tribune

Gov. Jon Huntsman, back in Utah following a 31-hour trip to Iraq, said his request to visit Utah National Guard troops near the volatile city of Ramadi was turned down for security reasons.

Two-Thirds Of Collaborator Troops Go AWOL

3.29.06 London Financial Times

An Iraqi army unit bivouacked in a former chicken coop in Hit is not happy.

One weary veteran says two-thirds of his unit have gone absent without leave since it arrived in the western Iraqi town in September, and he too would have left if there were any jobs at home and his meager pay were not the only way to support his family.

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

***Organized Crime At Work:*
Bush Buddies Stole Iraq Money White
Soldiers Died**

Mar 28 By Andrea Shalal-Esa, Reuters

Halliburton, a Texas-based company formerly run by Vice President Dick Cheney, dismissed the committee report as partisan and said it focused on old issues with the two-year contract that have been resolved.

The Pentagon's Project and Contracting Office (PCO) found that Halliburton repeatedly overcharged the government, Waxman said, citing the documents.

In one case, the agency said Halliburton tried to inflate cost estimates by \$26 million. In another, it said Halliburton claimed costs for laying concrete pads and footings that the Iraqi Oil Ministry had already installed.

The report said the same agency reported Halliburton was "accruing exorbitant indirect costs at a rapid rate," while the Defense Contract Audit Agency challenged \$45 million of \$365 million in costs as unreasonable or unsupported.

The PCO also cited "profound systemic problems" with Halliburton's cost reporting and said some documents were stripped of information that would allow tracking of details.

It said Halliburton's work under RIO 2 was 50 percent late and officials refused to cooperate with oversight officials.



[Thanks to NB, who sent this in.]

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

<http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html>;

http://robinlea.com/GI_Special/; <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>;

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

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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