

## **GI SPECIAL 4E10:**

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



[Information Clearing House: President Bush's "Bring Them On" Picture Album]

# **Predator Recruiter Scum Sign Up Autistic Kid: Then They Tell Stupid Lies And Try To Destroy Reporters' Tape When They Get Caught**

Velasco initially denied knowing Jared but later said he'd spent a lot of time mentoring him because Jared was going to become a cavalry scout.

After he had spoken for a few moments, Velasco suddenly grabbed the reporter's tape recorder and tried to tear out the tape, stopping only after the reporter threatened to call the police.

May 07, 2006 MICHELLE ROBERTS, The Oregonian, Via Veterans For Common Sense [Excerpts]

Jared Guinther is 18. Tall and lanky, he will graduate from Marshall High School in June. Girls think he's cute, until they try to talk to him and he stammers or just stands there -- silent.

Diagnosed with autism at age 3, Jared is polite but won't talk to people unless they address him first. It's hard for him to make friends. He lives in his own private world.

Jared didn't know there was a war raging in Iraq until his parents told him last fall -- shortly after a military recruiter stopped him outside a Southeast Portland strip mall and complimented him on his black Converse All Stars.

"When Jared first started talking about joining the Army, I thought, 'Well, that isn't going to happen,' " said Paul Guinther, Jared's father. "I told my wife not to worry about it. They're not going to take anybody in the service who's autistic."

**But they did. Last month, Jared came home with papers showing that he not only had enlisted, but also had signed up for the Army's most dangerous job: cavalry scout. He is scheduled to leave for basic training Aug. 16.**

**The Portland Army Recruiting Battalion Headquarters opened its investigation into Jared's case last week after his parents called The Oregonian and the newspaper began asking questions about his enlistment.**

Maj. Curt Steinagel, commander of the Military Entrance Processing Station in Portland, said the papers filled out by Jared's recruiters contained no indication of his disability. Steinagel acknowledged that the current climate is tough on recruiters here and elsewhere.

"I can't speak for the Army," he said, "but it's no secret that recruiters stretch and bend the rules because of all the pressure they're under. The problem exists, and we all know it exists."

Jared lives in a tiny brown house in Southeast Portland that looks as worn out as his parents do when they get home from work.

Paul Guinther, 57, labors 50 to 60 hour weeks as a painter-sandblaster at Sundial Marine Tug & Barge Works in Troutdale. His wife, Brenda, 50, has the graveyard housekeeping shift at Kaiser Permanente Sunnyside Medical Center in Clackamas.

The couple got together nearly 16 years ago when Jared was 3. Brenda, who had two young children of her own, immediately noticed that Jared was different and pushed Paul to have the boy tested.

"Jared would play with buttons for hours on end," she said. "He'd play with one toy for days. Loud noises bothered him. He was scared to death of the toilet flushing, the lawn mower."

Jared didn't speak until he was almost 4 and could not tolerate the feel of grass on his feet.

Doctors diagnosed him with moderate to severe autism, a developmental disorder that strikes when children are toddlers. It causes problems with social interaction, language and intelligence. No one knows its cause or cure.

School and medical records show that Jared, whose recent verbal IQ tested very low, spent years in special education classes. It was only when he was a high school senior that Brenda pushed for Jared to take regular classes because she wanted him to get a normal rather than a modified diploma.

Jared required extensive tutoring and accommodations to pass, but in June he will graduate alongside his younger stepbrother, Matthew Thorsen.

Last fall, Jared began talking about joining the military after a recruiter stopped him on his way home from school and offered a \$4,000 signing bonus, \$67,000 for college and more buddies than he could count.

**Matthew told his mother that military recruiting at the school and surrounding neighborhoods was so intense that one recruiter had pulled him out of football practice.**

**Brenda phoned her two brothers, both veterans. She said they laughed and told her not to worry. The military would never take Jared.**

The Guinthers, meanwhile, tried to refocus their son.

"I told him, 'Jared, you get out of high school. I know you don't want to be a janitor all your life. You work this job, you go to community college, you find out what you want. You can live here as long as you want,' "Paul said.

They thought it had worked until five weeks ago. Brenda said she called Jared on his cell phone to check what time he'd be home.

"I said 'Jared, what are you doing?' 'I'm taking the test,' he said -- the entrance test. I go, 'Wait a minute.' I said, 'Who's giving you the test?' He said, 'Corporal.' I said, 'Well let me talk to him.' "

Brenda said she spoke to Cpl. Ronan Ansley and explained that Jared had a disability, autism, that could not be outgrown. She said Ansley told her he had been in special classes, too -- for dyslexia.

"I said, 'Wait a minute, there's a big difference between autism and your problem,' " Brenda said.

**Military rules prohibit enlisting anyone with a mental disorder that interferes with school or employment, unless a recruit can show he or she hasn't required special academic or job accommodations for 12 months.**

**Jared has been in special education classes since preschool. Through a special program for disabled workers, he has a part-time job scrubbing toilets and dumping trash.**

Jared scored 43 out of 99 on the Army's basic entrance exam -- 31 is the lowest grade the Army allows for enlistment, military officials said.

**After learning that Jared had cleared this first hurdle toward enlistment, Brenda said, she called and asked for Ansley's supervisor and got Sgt. Alejandro Velasco.**

**She said she begged Velasco to review Jared's medical and school records. Brenda said Velasco declined, asserting that he didn't need any paperwork. Under military rules, recruiters are required to gather all available information about a recruit and fill out a medical screening form.**

**"He was real cocky and he says, 'Well, Jared's an 18-year-old man. He doesn't need his mommy to make his decisions for him.' "**

The Guinthers are not political activists. They supported the Iraq war in the beginning but have started to question it as fighting dragged on. Brenda Guinther said that if her son Matthew had enlisted, she "wouldn't like it, but I would learn to live with it because I know he would understand the consequences."

But Jared doesn't understand the dangers or the details of what he has done, the Guinthers said.

When they asked Jared how long he would be in the Army, he said he didn't know. His enlistment papers show it's just over four years. Jared also was disappointed to learn that he wouldn't be paid the \$4,000 signing bonus until after basic training.

During a recent family gathering, a relative asked Jared what he would do if an enemy was shooting at him. Jared ran to his video game console and killed a digital Xbox soldier and announced, "See! I can do it!"

"My concern is that if he got into a combat situation he really couldn't take someone's back," said Mary Lou Perry, 51, a longtime friend of the Guinthers'.

**"He wouldn't really know a dangerous thing. This job they have him doing, it's like send him in and if he doesn't get blown up, it's safe for the rest of us."**

Steinagel, the processing station commander, told The Oregonian that Jared showed up after passing his written exam. None of his paperwork indicated that he was autistic, but if it had, Jared almost certainly would have been disqualified, he said.

On Tuesday, a reporter visited the U.S. Army Recruiting Station at the Eastport Plaza Shopping Center, where Velasco said he had not been told about Jared's autism.

"Cpl. Ansley is Guinther's recruiter," he said. "I was unaware of any type of autism or anything like that."

Velasco initially denied knowing Jared but later said he'd spent a lot of time mentoring him because Jared was going to become a cavalry scout. The job entails "engaging the enemy with anti-armor weapons and scout vehicles," according to an Army recruiting Web site.

After he had spoken for a few moments, Velasco suddenly grabbed the reporter's tape recorder and tried to tear out the tape, stopping only after the reporter threatened to call the police.

With the Guinthers' permission, The Oregonian faxed Jared's medical records to the U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion commander, Lt. Col. David Carlton in Portland, who on Wednesday ordered the investigation.

The Guinthers said that on Tuesday evening, Cpl. Ansley showed up at their door. They said Ansley stated that he would probably lose his job and face dishonorable discharge unless they could stop the newspaper's story. [Excellent. That's a start.]

The Guinthers are eager to hear whether the Army will release Jared from his enlistment. Jared is disappointed he might not go because he thought the recruiters were his friends, they said. But they're willing to accept that.

"If he went to Iraq and got hurt or killed," Paul Guinther said, "I couldn't live with myself knowing I didn't try to stop it."

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## IRAQ WAR REPORTS

### **IED ATTACK KILLS COALITION SOLDIER**

5/9/2006 06-05-09C

**BAGHDAD, Iraq: A Coalition Soldier was killed May 8 following an IED attack in east Baghdad, Iraq.**

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### **New Jersey Marine Dies At Bethesda Of Anbar Wounds**

May 9, 2006 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 416-06

**Sgt. Matthew J. Fenton, 24, of Little Ferry, N.J., died May 6 at National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md., from wounds received while conducting combat**

operations against enemy forces in Al Anbar province, Iraq on April 26. He was assigned to Marine Forces Reserve's Inspector and Instructor Staff, 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Fort Devens, Mass.

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## South Dakota National Guard Soldier Killed in Iraq



5.9.06 KSFY

Gov. Mike Rounds announced today that he has received word of the death of Staff Sgt. Gregory A. Wagner of Mitchell, S.D. who was serving with Yankton's Battery C, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery, that is currently in Iraq supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Wagner, 35, was killed in Baghdad on Monday, May 8, when his vehicle was hit by an improvised fired projectile.

Two other Soldiers from Charlie Battery were injured during the incident.

Wagner was a team leader for Charlie Battery that is currently serving a one-year tour in Iraq. Charlie Battery's mission involves training and evaluating the Iraqi Police Force in one of the city's police districts.

Wagner, a 1989 graduate of Hanson High School, is the son of Velma and the late Charles Wagner of Alexandria. He was not married.

Staff Sgt. Wagner worked full time for the National Guard as a heavy mobile equipment repairer at the Surface Equipment Maintenance Complex in Mitchell. Prior to deploying with the Yankton unit, he was a member of Mitchell's Battery A, 1/147th FA.

Battery C, 1/147th FA was mobilized in July of 2005 and deployed to the Middle East in October 2005.

Further details about funeral arrangements will be announced when they become available.

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## Fort Leonard Wood Soldier Killed

May. 05, 2006 MELISSA TRUJILLO, Associated Press

DENVER: An Army soldier from Pueblo on his second tour of duty in Iraq was killed earlier this week when a roadside bomb detonated near his military vehicle, family and the Department of Defense said Friday.

Staff Sgt. Gavin B. Reinke, 32, was one of two soldiers who died after the explosion Thursday in Baghdad. Also killed was Spc. Bryan L. Quinton, 24, of Sand Springs, Okla.

Both men were assigned to the 5th Engineer Battalion, 1st Engineer Brigade at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

Reinke's wife, Carole Reinke, said she was told her husband died while trying to help fellow soldiers whose Humvee had been hit by an explosive moments earlier.

"That's exactly the kind of person he was," Reinke said from her home in Saint Robert, Mo., where she lives with their 3-year-old daughter, Kayleigh. "He was an amazing man. As a friend, as a father, as a husband, and it carried over to being a soldier."

She said her husband wasn't an outgoing person, but once people got to know him, he would do anything to help them. When they lived on base, he would take the time to mow the lawn of his neighbor, a single mother, when he had finished his own, she said.

"Everybody that knows him is just as proud as they can be of what he did," Reinke said.

Gavin Reinke was born in New Jersey, but his family moved to Pueblo in 1980, his father, Scott Reinke, said. He graduated from Central High School and joined the military in 1996. Carole Reinke said he loved his job and wanted to stay in the Army for at least 20 years.

His second tour had begun in November, and his family believed he would have returned to the United States for a break in the summer.

"He truly believed in what he was doing," his mother, Karen Reinke, said.

When his work day was over, he relaxed by hunting deer, elk and turkeys, fishing and riding all-terrain vehicles - basically any activity that could be done outdoors, Carole Reinke said. Usually, his young daughter was by his side.

"He loved to go fishing with his daughter," Scott Reinke said as he looked at a photo of his son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter, with Kayleigh holding a large catfish.

Scott Reinke said a memorial service for his son was planned for Monday in Iraq, with a military funeral service to be scheduled later at Fort Leonard Wood. Besides his parents, wife and daughter, Gavin Reinke is survived by a younger brother.

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## Indiana National Guard Soldier Killed

05/05/2006 WLFI-TV

An Indiana National Guard soldier from Indianapolis has been killed in a suicide bombing in Iraq.

It occurred just two weeks before he was to return home. The Pentagon says 38-year-old Sergeant Joseph Proctor was killed Wednesday during combat operations near Ramadi. His year-long tour of duty with the National Guard's 638th Aviation Battalion was about to come to a close. Family and friends talked about their lives with Proctor.

"He was a good Christian man. He always went to church, and was always there for me if I needed anything," said Rod Flodder, a friend of Proctor's. "I know that he's my best friend and he's like the best person anybody could ever have in their life," says Cassey Proctor, Joseph's daughter.

Proctor leaves behind a wife and three children. He served in the Army during the 1991 Gulf War and re-enlisted in the National Guard in 2002.

**Proctor is the 59th member of the military from Indiana to die after being sent to the Mideast for the war in Iraq since February 2003.**

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## Salute To Fallen Medic



05/06/2006 Sig Christenson, Express-News Military Writer

Cpl. Jason Brent Daniel was described in a brief Army biography as a young man for whom "everything in life was an adventure."



That adventure came full circle Friday, as four Percheron mix draft horses pulled his flag-draped casket on a wooden caisson around a bend at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

A toddler cried, but not a word was spoken as Daniel's family, friends and fellow troops stood under a shelter. Then six members of the Fort Sam Houston Honors Platoon placed the casket over his final resting place just a mile from where he trained in the summer of 2004.

Three rifle volleys rang out. Taps sounded.

"He joined the Army for the education and sense of patriotism," Fort Sam's commander, Maj. Gen. George W. Weightman, said following the burial. "He wanted to be a medic so he could learn how to take care of people."

A San Antonio native, Daniel, 21, was killed April 23 with two other soldiers when a roadside bomb detonated in Taji, a town in the Sunni Triangle, long a hotbed of the Iraqi insurgency.

**He was the 36th medic killed in Gulf War II, Fort Sam spokesman Phil Reidinger said, and the 46th soldier from Fort Hood's 4th Infantry Division to die in Iraq since it began its second tour there late last year.**

**As a stormy night gave way to a sunny, muggy morning, 65 members of the Patriot Guard Riders stood outside Fort Sam's 1910 Gift Chapel in honor of Daniel, the 16th San Antonian to die in Iraq.**

They'd driven their motorcycles from across the state to stand outside the chapel, all clasping American flags.

"We came here to pay respect to our fallen heroes, pay respect to the family and our community," said Bill Papa, 66, of San Antonio and an Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War.

Inside, family, friends and a mix of troops from various service branches listened as Chaplain (Capt.) Francisco Stodola conducted a Catholic service.

There was no eulogy and no family members or friends spoke at the service. Family members also declined to comment.

When he came to Iraq, Daniel quickly became known as "Little Noah." It was a term of endearment with a history. The unit's former physician's assistant had been given that name, but it was passed on because Daniel looked so much like him, Weightman said, adding that they called him "doc" as well.

Daniel was known as a quick study and hungry to improve his skills, but learning wasn't his only strong suit. Folks also discovered that if he had \$5, he'd send \$4 of it to his wife, Monika Villafranca Daniel, an Army Reservist in training as a medic.

"They said he was small in stature," Weightman said, "but had a big, huge heart."



The casket of Cpl. Jason Brent Daniel is carried by caisson to his funeral at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery. Members of the Patriot Guard Riders lined the road Friday and held flags as they honored the San Antonian killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq. Bahram Mark Sobhani/Express-News

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**REALLY BAD IDEA:  
NO MISSION;  
HOPELESS WAR:  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. Marines from the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment scan streets and surrounding buildings for insurgents during a patrol in Ramadi April 10, 2006. (AP Photo/Todd Pitman)

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**Plankinton Soldier Wounded**

5.9.06 KOTA

MITCHELL, S.D. A soldier from Plankinton is one of two who were wounded in an attack on their convoy in Baghdad -- an attack that killed their comrade from Mitchell.

Brian Knigge is in a military hospital in Germany.

His vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device yesterday.

The blast killed Staff Sergeant Greg Wagner.

The soldiers are with Charlie Battery of the 1st Battalion of the 147th Field Artillery based in Yankton.

Knigges parents, Jim and Janet Knigge, say they will to travel to Washington, D-C, to see their son when he arrives in the United States.

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## TROOP NEWS

# “There Was A Powerful And Burgeoning Anti-War Movement Within The Military Ranks As Well”

May 4, 2006 By Rob Thomas, The Capital Times

The collective memory that most of America has about the Vietnam War is that the soldiers were on one side of the fence while the anti-war protesters were on the other.

The anecdote that always comes up is of a protester walking up to a soldier home on leave and spitting in his face.

**The engaging documentary "Sir! No Sir!" argues that such stories were deliberately promoted to cover up an uncomfortable truth: There was a powerful and burgeoning anti-war movement within the military ranks as well.**

**GIs published and distributed underground newspapers from their barracks. Thousands cheered as Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland spearheaded "FTA" ("Free the Army" was the polite term) rallies near their bases.**

**Hundreds were jailed for their anti-war activities.**

It's a chapter of Vietnam War history that I've never seen told on screen, aside from the third act of "Born on the Fourth of July."

**What makes "Sir! No Sir!" so engaging and powerful is how it goes back over old ground that everyone thinks they know and discovers new and surprising things there.**

Filmmaker David Zeiger is no neutral bystander; during the war, he was closely involved with many of the GI-driven protests and worked at a coffeehouse near a Texas military base that was a safe haven for anti-war soldiers.

So "Sir! No Sir!" is unabashedly partisan and gives no time to soldiers who supported the war.

But the upside is that Zeiger's close connection to his subject matter is that his film has a wealth of archival footage to choose from, whether it's copies of those crude but powerful anti-war leaflets or footage of Fonda singing joyfully off-key at the rallies.

Fonda will always be "Hanoi Jane" to some, but "Sir! No Sir!" resurrects the image of her as a powerful and motivating symbol for anti-war GIs, and she remains committed and charismatic in present-day interviews with Zeiger. (Her son, Troy Garity, narrates the film.)

**There's plenty of interesting ground that Zeiger nimbly covers, from the notorious "Winter Soldier" hearings, where Vietnam War soldiers testified about atrocities they had witnessed and committed, to a campaign by sailors in San Diego to get local residents to vote on whether their aircraft carrier should be sent to Vietnam.**

And Zeiger goes over the infamous "spitting" story in great detail, concluding that it's likely an urban legend, even though as authoritative a source as Rambo cites it in "First Blood."

**What's striking about these uniformed protesters is that they're not pacifists who believed armed conflict is never the answer; they joined the military, for heaven's sakes, either voluntarily or were willingly drafted.**

The soldiers' disillusionment at what they saw in Vietnam is palpable, and Zeiger does a service by bringing their stories out of history's forgotten files and into the light.

**Sir! No Sir!:**  
**At A Theatre Near You!**  
**To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>**



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## South Korea Begins Cutting Troops In Iraq

5.9.06 The Associated Press

South Korea began bringing troops home from Iraq Tuesday under a plan to scale back its presence there by a third, military officials said.

Seoul plans to withdraw about 1,000 of its 3,200-member contingent stationed in northern Iraq by the end of this year.

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***It's Official, From His Own  
Mouth:  
The Secretary Of The Army Is  
An Incompetent, Drooling Hack***

# Who Understands Nothing Whatever

May 09, 2006 By Gina Cavallaro, Army Times staff writer

Camp Buehring, Kuwait: Army Secretary Francis J. Harvey embarked today on a week-long trip to visit troops in Kuwait, Iraq and Germany, where he is also scheduled to meet with a number of civil and military leaders before heading home.

**[T]he Army secretary watched a tragic video filmed by enemy fighters a year ago that showed the deaths of eight American soldiers by multiple, timed bombs.**

***After watching the clip, he angrily remarked on the cowardice of the enemy and questioned their refusal to “come out and fight.”***

**[Well, there it is, in living color. This dumb piece of shit thinks war is about something out of the Middle Ages, knights on horses maybe? Duels? Who knows what the fuck goes on in his empty head, if anything at all goes on there?**

**[First, dickhead apparently is so ignorant he doesn't even know the resistance does “come out and fight,” on a regular basis. That's why there are over 2000 dead U.S. troops.**

**[Second, he apparently has no grip on the fact that the objective in war is to kill as many of the enemy as possible, while losing as few of one's own troops as possible.**

**[When a resistance is fighting an occupation army, that's guerrilla warfare. Guerrilla warfare has it's own tactics and strategy employed by the commanders of the resistance. Standing around like so many ninnies waiting for the occupation forces, with superior firepower at their disposal, to slaughter their forces, is not one of them. Duh.**

**[Some of the brain dead British officers used to whine the same way about the American fighters during our first Revolution. You know, back when we were the “terrorists” and “insurgents.” They hid behind trees. They hid behind stone walls. They hid anyplace they could, and happily killed British troops, while exposing themselves as little as possible. And you bet your ass if they had IEDs, they would have used them wholesale. They lived. They won. Those “cowards,” like “Swamp Fox” Marion and “Light Horse” Lee, became American heroes. Double duh.**

**[This pathetic piece of shit hasn't the first clue, any more that the British officers did, who called the American revolutionary war soldiers “cowards” who wouldn't “come out and fight.”**

**[With a stupid turd like this running the army, the Iraqi resistance could not ask more if he were one of their own. T]**

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Whose Streets? Our Streets!**



Insurgents patrol a street in Ramadi May 8, 2006. (Ali Mashadani/Reuters)

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## **Assorted Resistance Action**

MAY 9, 2006 BY BORZOU DARAGAH, The Baltimore Sun & By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHARA, Associated Press Writer & by Kamal Taha, AFP & (Xinhua) & RTÄ?

The deputy governor of Nineveh province narrowly avoided an assassination attempt, the second attempt on his life in a week.

A roadside bomb hit a police car in Baghdad, killing one officer and wounding two.

On Tuesday two delivery men working for an Iraqi army catering service company were captured in northern Iraq.

Umer Hejab Jasim, a bodyguard of parliament speaker Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, was wounded as guerrillas attacked him in western Baghdad.

"Judge Muhaimin Mahmoud Abbod was killed by unknown fighters while he was driving his car on the main road near the Nafaq al-Shurta tunnel," the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

A roadside bomb attack in Baghdad against a patrol of FPS, a special security unit tasked with guarding ministry buildings and power stations wounded four members of the patrol.

In the northern city of Kirkuk, an Iraqi soldier was killed and two others wounded when their patrol was attacked.

The beheaded bodies of three army soldiers were found in the south, security officials said. The three were captured on Monday from Hilla where they had gone for training.



The wreckage of a police truck following a roadside bomb attack that killed one person and wounded another, in central Baghdad. (AFP/Ahmad al-Rubaye)

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

**FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

***Reflections On A "Noble  
Cause"***



# Vets Look Back On The Vietnam War

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War, for making this available.]

The reality, says Stahl, is that the U.S. lost the war above all because most Vietnamese were united in their opposition to the U.S. in the cause of national independence from their centuries-long domination by the West and Japan.

“As long as the last Vietnamese was still alive and had a bullet in their rifle,” he insists, “they were not going to give up. If you killed one, there were ten others waiting in the wings to take up the gun and wage war against the invader. We weren’t going to break that backbone.”

Connolly remembers one such incident following an especially high casualty rate in his unit caused by an overzealous officer. “We came in at six or seven o’clock and the officer responsible was dead by ten. He was killed by our brothers who spent the night listening to this shit go on, knowing that we were going through because this motherfucker decided he was going to extend his manpower.”

“I think Vietnam veterans learned early on in the war that we were there to fight for the interests of the multinationals,” concludes Stahl. That we were losing, just wasting life to protect their investments, in a country that we should never have been in. And that pissed us off to be used like pawns.”

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Spring 1982 by Michael Letwin, Wavelength (UMass/Boston) [Excerpts]

*“Well, it’s time we recognized that ours was, in truth, a noble cause . . . We will never again ask young men to fight and possibly die in a war our government is afraid to let them win.” —Ronald Reagan on Vietnam, August 18, 1980*

*“We didn’t win, thank God.”—Vietnam Veteran David Connolly, April 1981*

The Vietnam War ended seven years ago this month. Does it matter, after all this time, what we think about Vietnam?

It does to Ronald Reagan. He’s sending tens of millions of dollars in military aid and dozens of U.S. “advisors” to prop up El Salvador’s junta and to crush the country’s popular nationalist revolution. He’d like to send American troops in to finish the job. What’s stopped him so far is that people at home remember Vietnam.

Although the war ended in April 1975, and that the government has tried to have us forget it ever happened, the mere mention of Vietnam continues to evoke images of saturation bombing, burning villages, peasant massacres, corrupt U.S. “allies” and tens of thousands of dead and maimed GIs.

The images remain so powerful that even the much-discussed “New Patriotism” of the Iran-hostage days has faded, while the “Vietnam Syndrome”—the administration’s term—has led to growing and powerful opposition to U.S. intervention in El Salvador, even before American troops have been sent.

Because these policies lack popular support at home, the administration has also been waging a massive propaganda campaign to whip up support for continued, and if possible, expanded U.S. intervention. They argue that the revolution in El Salvador is nothing more than a creation of the Russian, Cuban and Nicaraguan governments, who, the administration claims, are out to take over the Western hemisphere by way of Central America and Mexico.

Because this is the identical argument that previous administrations used to justify Vietnam, the Reagan administration has had to insist, on the one hand, that Vietnam and El Salvador have nothing in common, and at the same time, that we shouldn’t oppose U.S. intervention in El Salvador because Vietnam was a “Noble Cause.”

**In Reagan’s version of Vietnam, JFK, Johnson and Nixon were right about Vietnam all along: that it was fought to defend a small “Democracy” in Asia against “Communist Aggression” on the part of Moscow and/or Peking.**

**The American military machine was the hero of the war, the argument continues, and would have won if it wasn’t for the treason of the Antiwar Movement at home which prevented it from going “all the way.” American GIs were thus stabbed in the back by the Movement, which is therefore responsible for the dire plight of Vietnam vets today.**

**Through this logic the administration hopes that we will associate our negative feelings about the war with the fact that the U.S. was defeated, rather than memories of the destruction wreaked by the American military and the dictatorship it supported.**

**The bottom line of Reagan’s version is that preventing another Vietnam means not that the U.S. government should stay out of other peoples’ countries, but that when it goes into El Salvador, it should be sure to win.**

**The administration isn’t alone in recognizing that the way we remember will determine our reaction to El Salvador.**

**This article, drawn from interviews with six Boston-area men active in veterans’ rights and antiwar organizing, reflects the views of a growing number of Vietnam vets who have begun to speak out against Reagan’s version of the war they fought.**

**To them, Vietnam was anything but “Noble.”**

**It was a war against the people of Vietnam and against American GIs themselves, since it was working class and minority kids who died on the front lines. They saw the Vietnamese and their own brother GIS sacrificed in the name of “Democracy,” when what was really at stake was the quest for a world where American capitalism could be guaranteed safe profits.**

**For them, massive Vietnamese insistance made Vietnam a war the US couldn't and shouldn't have won.**

**And they resisted the U.S. military in the field and joined the Antiwar Movement at home in that belief.**

Today, Vietnam remains an unending nightmare which has profoundly affected their lives and the lives of their fellow vets.

**It was the U.S. government, they point out, not the Antiwar Movement, which poisoned them with Agent Orange.**

**And they say that rather than solving the problems which the war created for them, the administration is exploiting Vietnam vets to whip up support for new wars which will result in the destruction of another generation of young people in the coming Vietnam.**

**These vets have resolved to tell their story, especially to the young people who didn't experience Vietnam first hand so that we will never allow the government and those it represents to create it again.**

**Only in this way, they believe, will their war not have been in vain.**

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## **Part 1 Of 2:**

Is Reagan right in calling the Vietnam war a “Noble Cause”?

**Rick Stahl was an in-flight helicopter mechanic in the 16th Marine Air Group of the Third Marine Air Wing between 1967-69.** Today, he lives in Cambridge and is counselor at the Vietnam Educational Training Program at the Boston campus at the University of Massachusetts.

“Originally,” says Stahl, “I felt that I could help someone in Vietnam, enlighten them. I thought that by waging war in their country, they would have automobiles, factories, telephones and TVs. That they could turn on the nightly news and see what life was all about.

**“But it wasn't long before I started meeting other GIs who had a different attitude. They were ashamed of what they were doing. We were landing outside of villages where little kids would be coming up to you, spitting on you, giving you the finger,**

**and telling you to go home. By the second week I was in Vietnam I began to ask 'What are we doing here?'"**

Stahl doubts turned to disgust as he witnessed U.S. treatment of the Vietnamese.

"I remember one time in early '68 when a couple of helicopter gun ships I was in were heading back to base with some extra ammunition. All of a sudden, the pilots saw a farmer riding his bike next to a rice paddy, just minding his own business. They just dropped the extra thirty-six rockets we had on the farmer and blew him to pieces."

**David Connolly was in Vietnam from '68-69 in the Army's 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.** He lives in South Boston where he grew up, works at New England Telephone as a frame person, and attends the University of Massachusetts part-time.

"I saw how we'd walk in and kill a whole village," says Connolly. "The Army'd call it 'Search and Destroy.' Or we were relocating people into cities where there was no sanitation, no food, nothing. The people had to try to make it on the black market, through crime and prostitution. There were 500,000 prostitutes in South Vietnam—one for every GI!

"I'm saying, 'Wait a minute.' I remember my younger brothers and sisters. I couldn't imagine doing things like that to little kids and babies."

**Atrocities, says Connolly, were not the result of individual GI "excesses." Rather, he says, they were the product of a carefully devised American military strategy.**

"In a war where the 'Enemy' was a guerrilla movement with immense popular support, all Vietnamese were fair game," he says, pointing to the "Body count" programs whose goal was to kill the greatest possible number of Vietnamese, civilians, old people, women or children included. "If it's dead, it's Viet Cong," was the attitude of the military, he explains. "It gave us a license to kill."

Another part of U.S. strategy, says Connolly, was the "Strategic Hamlets" program, in which civilians were herded into barren concentration camps to prevent them from aiding the guerrillas. Torture and rape, he says, were regularly practiced to gain information and to terrorize the population.

Connolly points out that this war against the Vietnamese relied heavily upon an intense conditioning of GIs by the military. In part, he recalls, the Army used technical sounding words intended to camouflage reality. "Instead of saying 'kill,' the military invented terminate with extreme prejudice.' And you never heard that you were going to take this humane being and section him almost evenly with this weapon they gave you," he says.

**Ron Armstead, a black vet who was aboard the USS Natchez off the Vietnamese coast in 1966 67 and who is now a counselor at the South End Veterans Outreach Center, explains that the military also encouraged racism among GIs. The Vietnamese became less than human. They were called 'dinks, 'slopes; 'gooks.' They were dehumanized in the war."**

However, GIs found out that the military's policies against the Vietnamese made victims of U.S. soldiers as well, says Steve Miller (a pseudonym), who was an aerial artillery

spotter in the Army's First Infantry Division in 1968-69. "There was a real pressure on the higher officers for the numbers of bodies. But they just had to gamble with men."

**"All we were was bait," agrees Connolly. "You'd be expected to go from such and such a landing zone to the next LZ to draw fire so that they could call in high technology.**

"You want some figures on American casualties during Tet, the first big National Liberation Front push on Saigon in 1968? Four thousand, one hundred and fourteen killed in action, 19,285 wounded, 604 missing. In just a two month period!"

**The feeling that they were being freely sacrificed highlighted the glaring contrast between GIs and officers, says Connolly.**

**In the field, he says, "You rarely even saw a captain. They'd drop the general in on his helicopter with gunship coverage, and he'd get a Silver Star. Meanwhile, we didn't have enough Medevacs to get the wounded out. We could call in half a million dollars worth of artillery for a noise or a light, but we couldn't get any underwear or a new pair of boots. The officers would sell your food, and you'd have C rations."**

**From what they saw in the war, these vets find Reagan's claim that the Government "didn't allow them to win" to be a false explanation of U.S. defeat in Vietnam.**

Throughout the war, argues Connolly, the Government did everything it could to win, short of nuclear war. At its height, he, points out, the US had more than 500,000 troops in Vietnam, that it waged a decade long massive air-war in which more bombs were dropped than in all of World War II, that it defoliated a huge area of the countryside, experimented with a space age "electronic battlefield," and waged secret wars in Cambodia and Laos.

"The Government pushed as hard as it could," say Connolly, "and there are about two million Indochinese and one hundred thousand Americans—fifty-three thousand of whom died later from their wounds—to prove it."

**The reality, says Stahl, is that the U.S. lost the war above all because most Vietnamese were united in their opposition to the U.S. in the cause of national independence from their centuries-long domination by the West and Japan.**

**"As long as the last Vietnamese was still alive and had a bullet in their rifle," he insists, "they were not going to give up. If you killed one, there were ten others waiting in the wings to take up the gun and wage war against the invader. We weren't going to break that backbone."**

**In contrast to the anti-American forces, the U.S.-backed Saigon regime was corrupt, brutal and had no cause to fight for other than personal gain, says Miller.**

**"The South Vietnamese national police would come around in groups," he recalls, "bully somebody and take whatever people had. They wore these white uniforms and were called 'White Mice.' It was like putting the mafia in uniform. They'd kill**

**GIs or anybody for their money. And when you'd see that kind of thing, you'd wonder: 'Are these the people I'm fighting with?'"**

Connolly recalls that ARVN (Saigon Army) soldiers were usually drafted peasants who had no interest in fighting. "Their own soldiers didn't do anything," he says. In the big battle at Hue in '68, US Marines were outnumbered four-to-one on the battlefield because the ARVNs who were supposed to help them were looting the bodies of the dead Marines."

**In addition, as the war ground on, GIs, sickened by their role and the pointless loss of life, began to resist the war effort, says Miller.**

**He recalls that Black troops were often the most active resisters. "There was a lot of Black Power, especially in the infantry. There was a general refusal to do anything. They're not going to work, they're not going to wear their uniforms right. There was this Black GI who had all these medals, tons of them. On his last day there, he just walked into the Commanding Officer's office, took his chunk of medals, and chucked it right at him."**

The particularly militant attitude of Black troops, say these men, was due not only to the general experience shared by all GIs in Vietnam, but also to the specific situation of Black soldiers. For example, they point out, Blacks were assigned by the military to the dirtiest and most dangerous positions, one result of which was that while they made up only 11 per cent of the population in 1970, they suffered 23 per cent of the casualties in Vietnam.

Black resistance was also fueled by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements in the US, which led many Black GIs to feel that, as Black victims of racial segregation and discrimination, poverty and repression at home, they had no reason to fight and die in Vietnam, especially when "No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger," as a popular saying went. Especially after the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968, many Black GIs came instead to believe that their battle was against the society that had sent them to Vietnam while leaving racism intact at home.

As Armstead recalls, "I came back and my community looks worse than when I went. It looks like the war was in Roxbury! I can't go six miles into South Boston. Yeah, I went twelve thousand miles to fight for something I can't get right here."

GI resistance, however, came to be widespread among GIs of all races. Large numbers chose to go AWOL or to desert entirely. Drug use and general disrespect for authority was common.

**One of the most popular acts of resistance, recalls Miller, was "fragging"—killing officers responsible for needlessly sending GIs to their death. "There were more officers killed by their own men in Vietnam than in any war this country's fought," he says.**

**Connolly remembers one such incident following an especially high casualty rate in his unit caused by an overzealous officer. "We came in at six or seven o'clock and the officer responsible was dead by ten. He was killed by our brothers who**

spent the night listening to this shit go on, knowing that we were going through because this motherfucker decided he was going to extend his manpower.”

As the war went on, incidents of larger scale mutiny became more common. Says Connolly, “I remember being in the field in late ‘69, and the radio telephone operator put the headset up to my ear and somebody said: ‘A Company, 2nd of the 7th Infantry, 199th Light Infantry Brigade just told their company commander, ‘Fuck you. We ain’t fighting.’ And then he went off. Lots of times we just said ‘no’ when the orders came down.

“So we obviously couldn’t win,” insists Connolly. “The only people who wanted to fight for the country were on the other side.”

The conclusion that these and many other GIs came to during the war was that US intervention was not motivated by a desire to “defend Democracy” in Vietnam. Rather, they came to believe, they were sent to Vietnam in part to protect investments of Western capitalism in the region. For example, Connolly recalls that 59 of his comrades were killed one afternoon in a firefight over a rubber plantation owned by Michelin Rubber Company near Dau Tieng in 1968.

Stahl came to this realization when “You’d be pullin’ bodies out of this jungle someplace and there’s two big tanks marked ‘Shell Oil.’ And we’re losing soldiers to protect it. So it didn’t take long to realize who we’re fighting the war for. It was for the interests of the rice people, the rubber plantations, the oil.”

Perhaps even more important, say these vets, were the fears of American business and government policy makers that a Vietnamese victory would encourage revolutions elsewhere, thereby threatening the “stability” of US economic and political dominance.

Miller doesn’t dispute what politicians and generals then called the “Domino Theory,” pointing out that revolutions have followed the US defeat in Vietnam. But, unlike the policymakers, he believes that every people has the right to decide the direction of its own society.

“If you look around the world, there’s the same thing going on in many countries. People want the right to determine their own existence and their own way to go about things. I think that is a democratic principle. The US doesn’t respect that, the Soviet Union doesn’t respect that, in Ireland the British don’t respect it.”

The belief that the US used them for a war of conquest in Vietnam has left many vets more bitter and much wiser, as is reflected in the lines of Connolly’s poem, “Thoughts on a Monsoon Morning”:

*Used, by the rich of my country.  
Duped, by those I looked up to.  
Wondering, how can I tell those  
who blindly wave the red, white, and blue?*

[To be continued]

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.

## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

**“Democracy? What Democracy? We Do Not Have Democracy”**  
**“This Democracy That Bush Talks About, It Is A Completely Empty Structure”**

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in. She writes: An Iraqi has made a film about the suffering of Iraqi women.]

May 8, 2006 The Guardian

*Women in Iraq are living a nightmare that is hidden from the west. Now one has turned film-maker to give us a window on to what they endure. She tells Natasha Walter what she saw*

Rayya Osseilly is an Iraqi doctor who cares for other women in the beleaguered city of Qaim. Unsurprisingly, her tale is not a happy one. "I never feel that today is better than yesterday," she says. "It always seems that yesterday was better than today." Looking at the bombed-out remains of the hospital where she works, it is clear she is struggling against the odds.

**It is unusual to see at close quarters what is going on for women in cities like Qaim, which last year came under heavy attack from American troops. Access for the western media is severely restricted. Now, though, we have a window on to Qaim thanks to another Iraqi woman, a film-maker who has travelled through the country speaking to widows and children, to doctors and students, in pursuit of the reality of her fellow country-women's lives.**

The film-maker, who lives in Baghdad, wants to keep her identity secret because she fears reprisals, so I'll call her Zeina.



When I spoke to her by telephone, the first thing I asked her was why it is that she feels she has to hide her identity, and in her answer she does not distinguish between the government and the insurgents, in the way that we are taught to do here. "I feel the threat from the government and from the sectarian militias," she says. "The danger in Iraq comes from the Americans, from the sectarian militias - and, of course, it also comes from the crime, the gangs, the random kidnappings."

She decided she wanted to make this film because the things she saw every day were not being seen by the outside world. "No one sees what we are going through. All Iraqis are psychologically traumatised by what is happening. I have seen an eight-year old child who has involuntary tremors, whenever she hears an aeroplane or sees soldiers. I have seen families displaced. I have seen women forced into prostitution because of the poverty of their families."

Zeina was not a supporter of Saddam Hussein's regime. During his rule, she worked as a journalist and a translator of literary criticism. "Politically, before the war, I was not happy," she says. "So many things were not right. We had no freedom of speech, no freedom of expression. But I never imagined the change would be this way, so bad. I never imagined that at all."

From the very start of making her film, this fiftysomething writer knew she would be taking risks. "We travelled just two or three of us, in an ordinary car. It was dangerous. When we went into Qaim we had to travel across the desert because the Americans had blocked the road. It was dark when we got to Qaim, and we could see a cloud of dust ahead of us, and then there was a flash of light in the dust. We were driving right towards the guns. The driver moved so fast off the road that the car almost overturned. Then another time we were filming the hospital that had been bombed. We went to the roof of the hospital and the Americans began shooting at us. They didn't want to kill us, I think, but they wanted to threaten us, they wanted to show us who was in control."

That footage - of the film-makers taking refuge from gunfire in a ruined hospital - is in the finished film. Indeed, the film that has resulted from Zeina's journey is not a polished product, but more like a filmed blog, a series of telling observations that dip in and out of women's lives. Often you are left frustrated, eager for more context in which to slot these moments. But given that western journalists are so constrained by the security situation that most of the country has simply become invisible to us, you can forgive the film's limitations.

**The film is particularly good at capturing the texture of family life lived in such insecurity, and one effective section concentrates on the tale of a young girl, just eight years old, who was picked up by American troops after an attack on the car in which she and her father and other Iraqis were travelling.**

**The troops first took her to a military hospital, but then her family say she was held for three months. They were not informed of her whereabouts and she was interrogated by being asked to identify Iraqi corpses in photographs. Her grandfather eventually tracked her down in Baghdad, and as we see her weeping in his lap we sense her family's frustration at having no accountable authority to whom they can take their anger.**

Zeina also shows, in a way that will surely give pause for thought even to those people in Britain who supported the war, how women's lives are being curtailed by the rise of religious fundamentalists who have stepped into the power vacuum. "All the time in the television and the newspapers there is propaganda concerning women. It is really disgusting, it is nothing to do with Islam, but everything to do with taking women back into the home and depriving them of rights."

To show the negative effects of these developments on women, Zeina travels to Basra. It will not come as news to those who have followed developments in southern Iraq that women are being forced to wear the hijab and prevented from living their lives freely.

**But it brings these developments home when we see young women and their families talking about being sent bullets and death threats because they played sport or did not wear a headscarf. As Zeina emphasises, this kind of experience is new to most women in Iraq, who enjoyed economic and social freedom before the occupation. "A while ago, I was looking at photographs of my aunt in college in the 60s, wearing pants and sleeveless tops, playing sports in the college yard; and then I looked at the photographs of the women in college today, and they are covered in black from head to toe, their faces also covered."**

**Zeina says the responsibility for these developments squarely at the feet of the occupation - it has given sectarianism the opportunity to flourish.**

She simply laughs when I ask her whether she feels grateful for the democracy that America has given Iraq.

**"Democracy? What democracy? We do not have democracy.**

**"This democracy that Bush talks about, it is a completely empty structure, based on sectarian and ethnic interests. How can you have democracy when you are afraid that your life will be threatened, or your husband will be killed if you express yourself freely? It is a bad joke."**

Not all women in Iraq are against the occupation - women are as divided as the men, and we in the west have heard Iraqi women speak in support of the US war.

But it is hard to resist the force of Zeina's passion as she describes the chaos that the war has brought to Iraq. She longs to go on documenting the situation of women, despite the very narrow limits within which she has to work. "I feel very restricted. I really want to report on the families who are being arrested, on the bodies that are being found, on torture. But either you are a journalist who is working with the Americans - embedded with them - or you jeopardise your life to cover these stories."

Despite the dangers, she is eager to communicate the reality as she sees it, and she would like us to listen:

**"I do want people in Britain to understand that the occupation of Iraq is not in the interests of Iraq or Britain.**

“Your soldiers are getting killed and nothing is better for the Iraqi people. On the contrary, the situation is going from bad to worse every day, especially for women”

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

## The Great Iraqi “Sovereignty” Myth Rolls On

May 10, 2006 Doug Lorimer, Green Left Weekly [Excerpt]

Revealing how the “fully sovereign” Iraqi government remains a puppet of the US occupation forces, the April 28 US News reported that several “US diplomats will serve as unofficial advisers to Iraqi prime minister designate Nouri al Maliki to help him create a transition team and prepare him to assume the top post once he assembles a cabinet.

The team will include officials from the US embassy in Baghdad, along with James Wilkinson, a key aide to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.”

Wilkinson, it reported, stayed behind in Baghdad after the joint visit by Rice and US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld on April 26, five days after Maliki was appointed by Iraqi President Jalal Talabani as the country’s new PM.

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[May 8, 2006 Michael Rivero, What Really Happened]

## NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! ([www.ivaw.net](http://www.ivaw.net))



[Thanks to Z and NB who sent this in.]

**Received:**

# Afghanistan

From: Paul G  
To: GI Special

Sent: May 09, 2006

It seems to me that the Taliban is kicking the Bush army out a lot quicker than it took them to kick out Russia. It's true the Bush army has way less guys, but hey, the point is that Bush sucks.

**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.**

**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://robinlea.com/GI_Special/); <http://imagineaworldof.blogspot.com/>; <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>; [http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi\\_special/](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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