

GI SPECIAL 4E20:

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



A wounded U.S. Army soldier is carried on a stretcher from a Blackhawk medical evacuation helicopter after landing next to a military hospital in Baghdad. (Chris Helgren/Reuters)

**“The Constitution
Trumps The UCMJ”
“An Officer’s Oath Is To The
Constitution, Not To The
President”**

May 15, 2006 Army Times [Excerpts]

Retired generals' comments provoke reader response

An April 24 story, "Retired generals blast Rumsfeld," inspired readers to debate whether generals should go public with their opinions while on active duty or keep silent even after they retire.

Letters To The Editor,
Army Times

I, too, thought the selection of Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would strike a balance to the secretary of defense. It is not to be.

Sadly, with our present administration committed to a course of action that will result in more lost American lives, more wounded, and more grieving families — balanced with a complicit military senior leadership that appears to compromise its professional obligations to our nation's service members — it should come as no surprise that history will be a harsh judge.

Fortunately, this administration and these leaders will pass from the stage. Unfortunately, it will not be without significant cost to our people and our nation.

History has proven that Congress will respond, in time, to the people's increasing concerns.

My own professional concern rests on how the civilian-military relationship will be congressionally changed as a consequence of an executive who seeks, demands and obtains, from a compliant senior military leadership, fealty to the government over loyalty to the Constitution.

Col. Jaime R. Roman
Sacramento, Calif.

Letters To The Editor,
Army Times

An officer's oath is to the Constitution, not to the president, the secretary of defense or any one person.

Critics of these retired generals have correctly pointed out that under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, officers are forbidden from disparaging the president or our civilian leaders.

These critics miss the bigger picture. The Constitution trumps the UCMJ.

That's the point of an officer's oath.

If we, as officers, are given orders that we feel are illegal, immoral or unconstitutional, then it is our duty to question those orders and perhaps not obey them.

If we choose the latter, we must accept the consequences of our actions whether or not we are right.

I do not agree with what the retired generals have to say, but I do think they have a right to say it.

Air Force Capt. Jason Belcher
Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas'

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

NH Soldier Killed By Bomb In Iraq



(AP Photo/Cournoyer family photos)

5.19.06 By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, CONCORD

A soldier from Gilmanton was killed this week in Iraq, a spokesman for the New Hampshire National Guard confirmed Friday.

Pfc. Nicholas Cournoyer, 25, was killed Thursday around 2:30 p.m. Iraq time by an improvised explosive device, Maj. Greg Heilshorn said.

"It was in the vicinity of Baghdad. They were in a convoy when the attack occurred," Heilshorn said. There were multiple fatalities. No other details were available.

Cournoyer is the 10th serviceman from New Hampshire killed in Iraq.

He worked as a mason's assistant before joining the Army in January 2005. He was an infantryman with the 10th Mountain Division based in Fort Drum, N.Y., and was scheduled to return from Iraq late this summer.

Cournoyer is survived by his parents, Denis and Lenda Cournoyer, and a sister, Natalie.

Cournoyer was a 2000 graduate of Gilford High School. In the yearbook, he listed joining the military as one of his goals.

Faculty members remembered him fondly.

"He just had a happy presence in school," school nurse Meg Jenkins told WMUR-TV. "He was very polite, very kind - always had a twinkle in his eye."

Soldier From Md. Killed

MAY 19, 2006 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EMMITSBURG: An Army officer from Emmitsburg was killed in action in Iraq yesterday, according to a published report.

First Lt. Robert Seidel III, 23, died when the Humvee he was riding in was struck by an improvised explosive device, Seidel's mother, Sandy, told The News-Post of Frederick.

Seidel was a 2000 graduate of Catoclin High School and graduated from West Point in 2004. He was a rifle platoon leader assigned to the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, N.Y.

His mother lives in Gettysburg, Pa.

Roadside Bomb Kills Concord Soldier, 20: "Zieske Said Her Son Was Not Particularly Happy About Fighting In Iraq"

May 09, 2006 By Cassandra Braun, CONTRA COSTA TIMES, CONCORD:

Benjamin Zieske joined the Army hoping to improve his life, get a college education.

Like many young men, Benjamin Zieske saw the military as an opportunity. It was his ticket to an education and a better life.

That promise was cut short Wednesday when the Army private first class from Concord was killed by a roadside bomb in Kirkuk, Iraq.

A scout assigned to the 101st Airborne Division, Zieske was on foot patrol in the town about 180 miles north of Baghdad when an improvised explosive device detonated near him, the Department of Defense reported Monday.

The former Olympic High School student died two weeks shy of his 21st birthday, his mother, Laurie Zieske, said Monday.

"I was so proud of him," she said, recalling her youngest son. "He was a great kid, a great boyfriend, a great uncle. He was my heart."

The young soldier grew up in a modest beige home on the well-trafficked Willow Pass Road near the business district of Todos Santos Plaza.

Zieske said her son was not particularly happy about fighting in Iraq. When he was home on leave in January, Benjamin recounted stories of bombings and bloodshed. It was early in his tour, yet the young soldier's encounters with devastation and warfare seemed to have already changed the boy she knew.

"He went over as a boy and died as a man," Zieske said. "I could tell. He had grown up. He was more mature, less selfish."

The Concord mother said her son had adopted a pair of wayward kittens at his base in Iraq. But he wanted to return home, he had a girlfriend waiting for him.

Still, Laurie Zieske says the young man was determined to join the Army last March as a way to improve his life. He hoped that eventually he would go to college and later become a Concord police officer.

"He wanted to get on his own," Zieske said. "I agreed because I wanted him to get out of Concord and do better than us."

Zieske's older brother, Shawn, recently graduated from the Navy's boot camp. He is currently doing advanced computer technology training at a base in the United States and is not expected to be deployed to Iraq.

"I told (Shawn) I didn't want him to go too," Laurie Zieske said. "I don't want to lose another son. But I didn't want to stand in his way."

A videotaped message wishing his family a happy Easter is the last image Zieske has of her son Benjamin. She had no idea the video clip existed until it was shown to her for the first time a few days ago. She broke down crying.

Zieske will keep with her the image of her son smiling.

"I'll remember the way he laughed," Laurie recalled. "You could never stay mad at him long."

Bellevue Soldier Killed

May 19, 2006 KETV, OMAHA, Neb.

A soldier from Bellevue has been killed in Iraq.

Family confirmed to KETV NewsWatch 7 that Lonnie Calvin Allen Jr., 26, died on Thursday.

Mother Sally Allen said her son has been in Iraq since August.

"Calvin" Allen graduated from Bellevue East High School 1998. He leaves behind a wife who lives in Bellevue. The couple does not have any children.

Marine From Little Ferry Dies After Being Wounded In Iraq

May 9, 2006 NEWARK, N.J. (AP)

A 24-year-old Marine from Little Ferry died Saturday after being wounded in combat operations in Iraq 10 days earlier, the Department of Defense said Tuesday.

Fenton was wounded by shrapnel when a bomb exploded near the vehicle in which he was riding outside Fallujah on April 26. He was airlifted back to the United States for treatment of a head wound.

He had been assigned to the Marine Forces Reserve's Inspector and Instructor Staff, 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division.

Relatives said Fenton always wanted to be a Marine and joined the Corps shortly after graduating from Ridgefield Park High School.

He had been stationed in Okinawa, Japan; Cherry Point, N.C.; and Fort Devens, Mass., before shipping out for Iraq in March.

"He volunteered to go," his mother Diane said. "He wanted to be with the other Marines."

For weeks Fenton e-mailed his parents regularly, but they became concerned when the e-mails stopped arriving during the last week of April, relatives said.

His parents and other relatives gathered at his hospital bedside as he lay unconscious last week.

"He wanted to be a Marine because he wanted to be the best," Diane Fenton said.

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



U.S. soldiers inspect the scene of a bomb attack in Baghdad May 8, 2006. (Ali Jasim/Reuters)

Mine Finding Vehicle Finds Mine: One U.S. Soldier Wounded, Vehicle Destroyed

5/19/2006 (AP) & Reuters

On Friday a hidden bomb hit a U.S. convoy in Dora, a mixed Sunni-Shiite-Christian area and one of the city's most violent districts.

The blast heavily damaged the armored vehicle used by explosive ordnance disposal teams to search for mines, which often are buried in the dirt beside roads or in piles of garbage. One U.S. soldier was severely wounded, the U.S. command said.

Marine From Dothan Injured In Iraq

5/19/2006 (AP) DOTHAN, Ala.

A Marine from Dothan was seriously injured when the Humvee he was driving in Iraq struck an explosive device, killing three other Marines.

Lance Cpl. Adam McDuffie sustained a severe arm injury during the combat operations in the Al Anbar province in northern Iraq on Sunday. The extent of his other injuries are unknown, The Dothan Eagle reported Friday.

McDuffie, a 2003 graduate of Northview High School, might have been saved by his protective gear, according to information provided by the U.S. Marine Corps. He was reportedly wearing a newly issued Kevlar helmet, flak jacket with front and side protective plates, ballistic goggles, special gloves and throat and groin protector.

McDuffie was transported to Al Asad Surgical in Iraq, then was apparently transferred to Germany for more surgery.

McDuffie played football for four years at Northview on the offensive and defensive line. He was voted "Most School Spirit" by his classmates.

U.S. Armored Vehicle Hit By Baghdad IED:



5.19.06 VOA News & AP

A U.S. armored vehicle lies burning after a U.S. convoy was hit by a roadside bomb in the Dora neighborhood of Baghdad, May 19, 2006. An American soldier was wounded.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

“Almost All The Villages Are Taleban”

May 19, 2006 By Tim Albone, The Times (UK) [Excerpt]

The mission's loosely defined aim is to create the stable conditions required for Afghanistan's reconstruction, but with 3,000 British troops patrolling an area roughly four times the size of Wales there is a danger that the hunters will become the hunted.

“The British don't have the capacity to fight us face to face,” Muhammad Hanif, a spokesman for the reclusive Taleban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar, told The Times.

“We are here to destroy the British. We will hunt and kill them. We will not let them go back to England and say that they have defeated the Afghans.”

Malam al-Haj Mir Wali, an MP for the province, told The Times: “The Taleban are very active in Helmand. Although most of the district centres are under government control, almost all the villages are Taleban.”

Privately, some of the soldiers do express concern about the threat from suicide bombs. “How can you protect yourself if someone is willing to blow themselves up?” one paratrooper, who would not give his name, asked.

RESISTANCE ACTION

May 19 (KUNA)

In Ghazni province, Taliban engaged in a firefight with the provincial security forces for more than an hour which, according to official sources, resulted in killing of two policemen and eight Taliban. The battle was preceded by an ambush by Taliban on a police convoy in which five constables and a senior officer suffered injuries.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of Marine Corps Sgt. Matthew J. Fenton, who was killed in Iraq, during funeral services at St. Margaret's of Cortona church May 13, 2006 in Little Ferry, N.J. (AP Photo/Bill Kostroun)

Bush Regime Says Fuck What The Troops Want: They Stay In Iraq

[Remember the poll last month that found over 70% of U.S. troops in Iraq though they should all come home no later than 12.31.05, and 29% were for immediate withdrawal of all troops? Well, they just got their answer: fuck you.]

5.19.06 By Gordon Lubold, Army Times staff writer [Excerpt]

Iraq will have 75 percent of its security force brigades up and running and in the lead by the end of summer, a top commander said, but it may not lead to significant U.S. troop withdrawals.

Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, commander of Multinational Corps-Iraq, said Iraqi security forces still aim to take the lead in the majority of operations by August.

But that success may not translate to fewer U.S. troops on the ground there, as Pentagon officials are backing away from the notion that a meaningful withdrawal of U.S. forces could occur this year.

U. S. General Says Unemployment Causes People To Fight Occupying Army!!

5/19/2006 (AP)

The No. 2-ranking U.S. general said the key to reducing American casualties is getting a government that can revive the economy and “take the angry young men off the street, to give them an alternative” to violence.

“I honestly believe that as this government begins work on the policies that will be required to put people to work and make use of the vast resources of Iraq that you're going to see a decrease in violence,” Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, commander of Multinational Corps Iraq, told reporters.

[Now why didn't:

The Nazi generals think of that in occupied France,

Or

The U.S. generals think of that in occupied Vietnam?

[Answer: they weren't drooling idiots.]

“Freedoms Are Secured”

“I Have To Believe That”

***“Otherwise This Is Sheer
Madness”***

**Fort Eustis Brassholes Afraid Of
“Baghdad ER” Film:**

Won't Let Reporters Speak To The Doctors

Daily Press attempts to interview Weed, the Fort Eustis doctor featured in the film, were met with roadblocks.

On Wednesday, the Fort Eustis medical center spokeswoman, Hope Kujawski, said Weed was not permitted to participate in an interview because "Army guidance" forbade it.

May 19, 2006 BY STEPHANIE HEINATZ, Daily Press

The two young soldiers were stretched out on gurneys, side by side, covered to their waists in blankets.

Dried blood peppered one man's bare chest.

Tears streamed down the other's face.

They spoke softly.

"Can't close my eyes without seeing it, dude."

"I know."

Before arriving at the combat hospital in Iraq, the two men were hit by a roadside bomb.

Another soldier in their Humvee didn't make it. The face of their friend, they said, was gone.

A new HBO documentary, "Baghdad ER," takes viewers to Baghdad's fortified Green Zone and inside the 86th Combat Support Hospital, where injured troops arrive in hopes of having their lives saved.

The powerful hourlong film debuts Sunday at 8 p.m. The Army warned veterans of the potential for flashbacks from viewing the graphic footage.

At the CSH, pronounced cash, Army medical personnel work to stabilize the troops so they can be sent out of Iraq.

"Iraq's dirty," a doctor explains in the film. "We don't make any incisions here that we don't have to."

Within 36 hours, most patients are flown to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, and then to Walter Reed in Washington.

The doctors attempt to make each other laugh throughout the film - often their way of coping with the job. War and its wounds aren't easy to see.

Doctors order nurses to bring them amputation kits.

Surgeons, including one now stationed at the Fort Eustis-based McDonald Army Medical Center, attempt to remove the shrapnel caused by roadside bomb explosions.

“These guys have injuries all over the place,” Maj. Al Weed says in the documentary after a patient came in with gunshot and shrapnel wounds. “You have to prioritize which injuries take precedence. Life over limb.”

Medics perform CPR.

Senior officers visit their soldiers, medals in hand, to say, “On behalf of the president and a grateful nation, I present you with the Purple Heart for wounds received in combat.”

Some recipients of the prestigious award were hurt on their first day in Iraq.

“Goes to show you never know when or where,” a doctor says.

Another young soldier holds his head in his hands.

“I want to go home.”

A tag is tied to a toe. Wedding rings are removed. Chaplains pray over body bags.

“I purposefully have not counted the deaths, how many I've prayed over,” one chaplain says. “It would overwhelm me.”

The Defense Department has responded - or not responded - to the film in various ways.

On Monday, according to the Washington Post, only a few soldiers attended a screening at the National Museum of American History's theater in Washington.

HBO executives had expected an audience of camo-clad men and women.

“Maybe people (at the Pentagon) feel the truth will discourage people” from backing the war, Sheila Nevins, president of HBO's documentary unit, told the Post. “The film certainly tells you what could happen in a war, but it's also about the heroism, courage and dedication of our troops.”

But in various military news releases, the film is praised, even referred to as a “poignant testament to the sacrifice of American troops and the dedication of military medical personnel.”

Because of the doctors, nurses, medics and air ambulance teams, one injured soldier says in the film, “we know if we go and get injured, it's a good chance we're going to survive.”

Daily Press attempts to interview Weed, the Fort Eustis doctor featured in the film, were met with roadblocks.

On Wednesday, the Fort Eustis medical center spokeswoman, Hope Kujawski, said Weed was not permitted to participate in an interview because “Army guidance” forbade it.

A Pentagon spokeswoman, however, said Thursday that many of the other doctors featured in the film had already spoken to the press, and that the Department of Defense encouraged it.

“There was conflicting Army guidance,” Kujawski explained early Thursday afternoon. “Up until yesterday the guidance was pretty cut and dry. We were not participating in any of these types of interviews. That’s changed.”

For many of the soldiers, the mental anguish that comes with the illness begins shortly after they arrive at the combat hospital.

Because a roadside bomb explosion can be so traumatic, doctors keep their eye on more than the patients’ physical well-being.

Comrades comfort each other.

“It’s OK to cry,” one soldier says to another. “It really is.”

The medical personnel attempt to comfort themselves.

Near the end of the film, one surgeon says he believes that Iraq is better for the war. Lives are helped. Freedoms are secured.

“I have to believe that. Otherwise this is sheer madness.”

Exciting New Way To Kill More U.S. Troops: Part 3: MENTALLY UNFIT, FORCED TO FIGHT

**“All I Can Say Is The Man Was Sick.
He Shouldn't Have Been Over There”**

“Whoever Made The Decision To Keep

Him In Iraq, I Wish I Could Get My Hands On Him”

May 14, 2006 By LISA CHEDEKEL, The Hartford Courant [Excerpts]

DEL CITY, Okla.: There is not enough guilt to go around here, so intent is each woman in Jeffrey Henthorn's life on owning a piece of the blame.

His sister, Shannon Austill, had found him in the living room, laughing at a CD he had brought back from his first combat tour; images of Iraqi adults and children who had been shot, dismembered, burned beyond recognition.

"Jeffrey," she remembers chastising him, "that's immoral. That's disgraceful. Why do you have these pictures?"

He had shrugged her off. "I don't know - because I can't believe it," she recalls him saying. "Anyway, c'mon, they're all dead."

Trisha Fish, his ex-wife, had seen the anguish in his eyes when he jolted awake from a nap, grabbed her by the shoulders and appealed for absolution - for killing a young Iraqi boy, about the same age as their son. He told family members he was tormented by memories of shoving a boy off a moving tank and watching his limp body slip under the track wheels.

"Jeffrey wasn't the same - he was really messed up," says Trisha, 27, who remained close to Jeffrey after their breakup. "I knew he wasn't right, but I didn't know what I could do."

But no one wears the guilt like Henthorn's mother, Kay, a speck of a woman who has literally seemed to shrink under the burden, her family says. More than a year after his death, she still winces as she replays the last time she saw him - Christmas 2004, at Fort Riley in Kansas the day before he shipped out for his second Iraq tour.

When she hugged him goodbye, her brave soldier son - the boy who had grown up respecting the uniform, in the sprawling shadow of Tinker Air Force Base - had crumpled in her arms.

"I don't want to go back," he sobbed. "I don't want to go."

She told him she loved him and that everything would be OK.

And then she did what she was supposed to do:

She left him there.

"I will never forget the look on his face when he looked at me. It eats all over me," says Kay, 57, who works at the deli counter of the local Wal-Mart.

"Why didn't I turn the car around, bring him home, and say the hell with them, the hell with the Army?" Her breath catches in her throat. "I didn't know."

No one knew that Jeffrey, 25, would be flown back to Tinker less than two months into his second deployment - in a box.

Shortly after noon on Feb. 8, 2005, he shot himself through the mouth with an M-16 rifle at an Army camp in Balad, Iraq, according to the military.

While the women left behind wrestle with the clues they missed, Henthorn's father, Warren, an Air Force veteran, seethes over what the Army missed: his son's freefall into depression, including suicide warnings that were known to his Army superiors. The elder Henthorn, divorced from Kay, is an unassuming man who runs a heating and air-conditioning repair business in the back-pocket town of Choctaw, where Jeffrey spent most of his childhood.

"This whole thing hasn't felt right from the get-go," Warren says. "If a man is having serious emotional problems, and the chain of command knows about it, you get him out of there and get him help."

Henthorn's case is perhaps the most egregious example of a military mental health system that is focused on retaining troops in combat, even when they exhibit clear signs of psychological distress.

Since the war in Iraq began, the military has stressed the importance of treating troubled soldiers on the front lines and improving "return-to-duty" rates - principles that some believe are being taken too far, putting troops' safety at risk.

Henthorn is one of 11 service members identified by The Courant who killed themselves in 2004 and 2005 after being kept in Iraq despite obvious mental problems. His family agreed to speak out in the hope that "we can maybe save a couple of families from what's happened to us," in Warren Henthorn's words.

Warren has come by his anger at the Army the hard way.

First, there was a 14-month wait for an investigative report on Jeffrey's death, despite his repeated appeals to U.S. congressmen and top Army brass for answers.

Then, when the report finally arrived last month, it contained no mention of the possibility of combat-related stress, and made only passing reference to his son's suicide threats - the first, shortly before his second deployment to Iraq, when he crashed his car and then slashed his arm with a knife, and the second, three weeks before he died, when he locked himself in a latrine with his rifle in Kuwait and had to be forcibly removed before he could harm himself.

Although the report makes clear that Henthorn's superiors in the 24th Transportation Company knew of both incidents, there is no indication that any of them was held accountable, or even questioned extensively about their actions.

For Warren, whose own father, uncles and brother all served in the military, the past year has unfolded like a religious conversion, stripping him of his faith.

"You've gotta understand - we have oil, we have gas, we have cattle and wheat, and then we have military here," Warren says. "The largest employer in the state is Tinker, and then you've got Fort Sill, the artillery school for the entire Army," about 90 miles away.

"The whole state's pretty well dominated by the military. I mean, I respect them. But I'm not going to kowtow to them."

Jeffrey Henthorn's life could have ended eight years earlier, in the woods of Harrah, Okla., if Trisha Fish's father had squeezed the trigger.

"I could take him out right now," Trisha recounts her father boasting to his friends as he pointed a gun at the scrawny 18-year-old from the neighboring town who had gotten his daughter pregnant.

Jeffrey and Trisha had met while attending rival high schools, a giddy flirtation of late-night phone calls and after-school detours that quickly turned serious, over their parents' objections.

"It wasn't two months into dating, he was only 16, he said, 'I love you. I really do love you,'" recalls Trisha, who grew up on a farm in Harrah. "Then we just became inseparable."

In the next year, the two would drop out of school - Jeffrey at the end of his junior year, Trisha as a senior - and move in together to a rundown apartment in Midwest City. Both would earn their GEDs, and Jeffrey would juggle jobs at Pizza Hut and his father's business to cover the bills.

Shortly before Trisha became pregnant with their son, Chance, in 1997, Jeffrey came home one day and abruptly told her he was joining the National Guard.

"He said to me, 'My Mom's picking me up. They're making me go in the Guard,'" she recalls. "I said, 'Are you going to have to go away from me?' He said, 'Yeah. But let me do this for them.'"

Kay Henthorn acknowledges that she and Warren had pushed their only son to join the Reserve after he dropped out of school. About that, she expresses no regret.

"He needed structure. I wasn't about to watch him lay around and waste his life," Kay says. "He took to it fine. It was a once-a-month thing. He was always responsible about doing his duty."

Jeffrey's family says he seemed proud of his role in the Guard, and the experience helped him mature. The teenager whose moods rose and fell on the rock band Linkin Park, Austin Powers movies, Mustang cars and Sooner football was responding to tornado emergencies and hauling hay to cattle farmers affected by drought.

Still, Jeffrey, who divorced Trisha in 2000, spent his early 20s in what family members describe as a delayed, freewheeling adolescence. He fathered a son, Brenden, with a woman he did not marry, then married a woman who was pregnant with another man's child. He worked steady jobs installing heating and cooling units, and sought refuge from his tangled romances at Kay's house in Del City.

In early 2003, when he decided to enlist full time in the Army, Jeffrey's oldest sister, Jayme Ivie, was relieved - even as the march to war was underway.

"My Mom had kind of babied him and always come to his rescue, and we were thinking it would be good for him to cut the apron strings," recalls Jayme, 36. "He needed to be out on his own."

Jeffrey joined the Army on March 3, 2003, walking away with a \$6,000 signing bonus and an assignment to Fort Riley, about five hours away.

When Jeffrey came home from Baghdad in the spring of 2004, the first things they noticed were his eyes.

"They were glossy, kind of hazy," Jayme says.

"They were empty, like all the emotion was gone," Trisha says.

"He just had this blank stare, like he wasn't there," Shannon says.

What the women did not know at the time was that later the same night, Jeffrey would slash his arm, "possibly a suicidal attempt on his life," according to a sworn statement that Jayme provided to Army investigators after she learned about the incident from the wife of Jeffrey's best friend.

That friend, a sergeant at Fort Riley, had "informed their chain of command of the incident," Jayme's statement says.

Kay, who did not learn about the arm injury until after her son's death, says Jeffrey's call about his car crash had rattled her.

But she assumed that if he were having any serious problems, the Army would get him help.

There is no indication in the investigative report into Jeffrey's death that he ever received any psychological counseling, beyond a mandatory debriefing after his return from Iraq. And there is no mention of how - or whether - the "chain of command" responded to his reported suicide threat.

When Jeffrey returned to Oklahoma for a family visit later in November, accompanied by Alaina, the two made no mention of any problems and were already making plans to get married. They were set to deploy to Iraq together right after Christmas.

Kay and Shannon say Jeffrey seemed anxious and drank more heavily than usual, but he hardly spoke about having to go back to war. "He was kind of quiet. He kept a lot of things inside," Kay says.

He made a point of making sure his family listened to a music CD he brought home - a song called "This is Your Life" by the band Switchfoot:

"This is your life, is it everything you've dreamed it would be
When the world was younger, and you had everything to lose ... "

When they went to Kansas on Christmas Day to see Jeffrey off for his second tour, Kay and Warren brought along their grandson, Chance. When his boy was around, they say, Jeffrey wore a mask of strength.

"The last time I saw him was Christmas of 2004," Chance would later write on a message board dedicated to the memory of his father. "He got me race cars and a xbox he let me sleep with him in fort riley he left the next day to go to Iraq."

Chance dubbed his father, who would not survive the next 45 days, "the best soldier I ever saw."

Spec. Jeffrey Henthorn killed himself over girlfriend trouble.

That's what the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command implies in a 106-page report on his death.

Although Alainna Neal herself and several other soldiers told investigators that the couple was not having any serious problems, the Army inquiry is focused almost exclusively on the relationship.

The possibility of combat stress is never discussed. In fact, the report does not even mention that Henthorn had completed one tour in Iraq and died just weeks into his second deployment.

The report also does not dwell on an incident in Kuwait in January 2005, as Henthorn's unit was getting ready to head to Iraq, in which Henthorn, reportedly upset over an argument with Neal, had locked himself in a latrine with his gun and had to be forcibly removed before he could harm himself.

A sergeant at the scene told investigators he heard "a sound he described as a slide being pulled back on an M-249" and "immediately forced the door open and took Spc. Henthorn's weapon away."

The platoon sergeant spoke to Henthorn for about 30 minutes, then directed a staff sergeant to return the gun, the report says. A first lieutenant was notified of the incident; it was unclear if the company commander also was told.

"Spc. Henthorn and Spc. (Neal) were back on good terms and he got his weapon back," the unidentified sergeant recounted to investigators.

Asked if he had ever heard Henthorn talk about suicide, the sergeant said he could not recall.

But asked if Neal had ever approached him with concerns that Henthorn might harm himself, he acknowledged, "Yes, but I can't recall. We kinda just blew her off." [The Sgt. is obviously having trouble remembering his lies.]

Neal would end up the only witness to Henthorn's death, three weeks after his Kuwait suicide threat.

According to Neal's statement to investigators, Henthorn came into her room at Camp Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, around noon on Feb. 8, when he was supposed to be working on paperwork for a promotion, and presented her with birthday and Valentine's Day cards. He sat on the floor near her bed and asked her what she thought of the cards.

"I told him that for where we were, they meant a lot and that it showed he cared, even being out here," she told investigators, according to a transcript.

He then asked for the key to her wall locker and took out her gun. When she asked him what he was doing, he said "he was going to make my birthday memorable," her statement says. He fired one shot into his head and collapsed on the floor, while she screamed in vain, "No! No! Jeff!" The blast tore off a portion of his skull, and he died instantly.

In her statement, Neal allowed that tensions in their relationship may have been a tipping point for Henthorn's despair. She acknowledged that she and Henthorn had argued during their deployment together because she "wasn't giving in to what he wanted."

"The transition was hard for both of us by not being (able) to walk hand in hand, kiss and wake up next to each other," she told investigators. "I guess he thought I didn't love him as much as he loved me."

But she also maintained that "the relationship wasn't going to be lost and ruined."

Two other soldiers and a sergeant also said they were not aware of any serious problems in the couple's relationship.

Neal, who now lives in Texas, declined to speak with The Courant, but sent an e-mail response. "All I can say is the man was sick. He shouldn't have been over there," she wrote.

Warren and Kay Henthorn say the long-awaited investigative report has only fueled their frustrations with the military, leaving open their questions about why Jeffrey was not sent home, or to a hospital, to get help.

"Whoever made the decision to keep him in Iraq," Kay says, "I wish I could get my hands on him."

The Henthorns did not learn about Jeffrey's suicide threat in Kuwait until after he died, when Jayme was told about the incident by friends of her brother.

Warren and Kay did say they were troubled by phone calls they had received from Jeffrey from Kuwait in January, in which he sounded weary and depressed. Warren says

he was concerned enough about Jeffrey's mood to suggest he find a Catholic priest to talk to.

The last time they spoke to their son, in late January, he sounded better. He told his father that the conditions at Camp Anaconda were good, and in a Jan. 26 phone call with Trisha, he suggested they take Chance away for a family vacation when he got home.

Kay says she last heard from Jeffrey about a week before his death, when he called to ask her to send him a care package with cigarettes, boxer shorts and some University of Oklahoma memorabilia - sheets, a sweat shirt and jogging shorts.

She scrambled to oblige him, as always.

The package would arrive in Iraq the day after he died.

Wildfires are raging outside Choctaw and tornado season is closing in, but the Henthorns do not notice.

They are a matchstick family now, fragile and full of peril.

One day Kay seems bent on suing the Army for negligence; the next, she is so wracked with grief, she resents waking to another sunrise. She cannot bear to look at Jeffrey's childhood photos or to hear the old songs she used to play for him - Paul Anka, Brenda Lee, Neil Sedaka, they have all become her tormentors.

"Personally, no matter what happens," she says, "things will never be right with me again."

Trisha sought refuge from the past by moving to a house on Lake Eufaula, 100 miles and a world away from Midwest City, where she takes Chance fishing and tries to teach him about God and prayer.

"What do you want to pray for?" she asked him one recent night, before she put him to bed.

"I want to pray," said the 7-year-old, who has not yet been told how his father died, "that I never have to go into the Army."

Warren has gone head-to-head with Arlington Memory Gardens, a non-military cemetery in Midwest City, for refusing to let him put an American flag on Jeffrey's grave. Every time he plants one, someone comes by and removes it. Warren is so offended by the cemetery's policy barring such displays, he has written letters to his state legislators, who have promised to try to help.

He knows he might be diverting his anger into this small-time battle of wills.

But the bigger issue behind his anguish seems impossible to resolve.

"Let's face it, how many people really care about these soldiers?" he says matter-of-factly. "I mean, it's not your kids, right? Not that many people are being affected. They're out of sight, out of mind.

"You're down at Wal-Mart, you're over at Target, just like always," he finishes. "This is somebody else's kid."

MORE:

Contempt For Congress: Pentagon Lawbreakers Ignore Deadline To Start Up Troops' Mental Health Task Force

May 22, 2006 Army Times

The Defense Department has blown an April 7 deadline for appointing a task force on mental health that was mandated by Congress, prompting complaints from Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., who crafted the requirement.

"Missing this deadline is both a violation of law and an unacceptable abdication of responsibility on a matter of urgent importance to our military service members, their family and our country," she said in an April 28 letter to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

MORE:

VA Management Scum Found Practicing "Illegal Restrictions On Care"

May 19, 2006 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer [Excerpts]

An internal Department of Veterans Affairs report finds that some medical benefits, such as home-based treatment, adult day care and respite care, have been improperly denied to eligible veterans.

The report from the VA inspector general also says, as veterans have long suspected, that the VA is not meeting its goal of cutting the waiting time to 30 days for initial care and does not even seem to count the waiting time for specialty care such as cardiology, orthopedic surgery and gastroenterology.

Sen. Daniel Akaka of Hawaii, ranking Democrat on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee who had requested the investigation after hearing complaints about roadblocks in the way of getting treatment, said the report "has once again shown us that underfunding VA means that veterans do not get the care they deserve, be those long-term care services or critical cardiac procedures.

"Indeed, investigators found that budget shortfalls led to illegal restrictions on care."

"Even though non-institutional care services are available to all eligible veterans, some medical facilities limited access of certain non-institutional care services to only the highest priority veterans, such as those with at least 70 percent service-connected disability," the IG report says.

"Some medical facilities were either unable or chose not to provide veterans with non-institutional care in remote regions of their geographic areas."

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)

South Koreans Fight Off U.S. Military Base: "It's Up To The Korean Police To Get Them Out Of There," Grumbles An American Officer" "I Can't See Why They Don't Get Them Out Of There"

May 17, 2006 By Donald Kirk, Asia Times [Excerpts]

DAICHURI, South Korea: The prayers and chants of the elderly farmers and young activists waft from the circle of land in front of a small white-walled church at the heart of this village on the prow of a hill some 65 kilometers south of Seoul.

"No US base," they shout in Korean. "Save our land."

It is a daily ritual staged in defiance of thousands of South Korean police against a plan to turn the region of rice paddies and orchards into one of America's largest overseas bases.

The police control the countryside, blocking off traffic, but the farmers cling to this enclave of sturdy brick homes in a standoff that embarrasses the United States and South Korea, and reveals some of the weaknesses in a deteriorating alliance.

"It's up to the Korean police to get them out of there," grumbles an American officer, observing the standoff from the security of nearby Camp Humphreys, shielded by double rows of wire fencing. "I can't see why they don't get them out of there."

The reason appears to be the desire of Korean leaders to avoid a showdown of tear-gas grenades and bashed heads and also underlying questions about South Korea's relationship with the United States.

Korean officials swear they're living up to their agreement for the US to build the base, and South Korean soldiers are busy setting up a 24km barbed-wire fence surrounding the whole area set aside for the base.

The fact is, however, they're appalled by the prospect of the base becoming an easy target for the same activists who've been demonstrating off and on for years outside US bases elsewhere.

An assault by 10,000 police officers on May 4 managed to dislodge hundreds of activists from an abandoned school building but failed to stop the protest, much less get the farmers to leave the sturdy brick homes that they view as their reward for more than half a century of hard work tilling the soil since the Korean War.

That refusal of farmers to leave makes their cause an easy one for activists, who for years have demanded the departure of all US forces from Korea.

A firebrand Catholic priest leads daily slogan-shouting protests at the epicenter of the worst standoff in nearly four years between South Korean forces and an array of student groups and labor organizations.

The priest, Moon Jeong-hyun, 69, returned here less than a week after holding out for most of a day on the roof of the school building with nine other priests and two National Assembly members defying the riot police, who drove the activists from the building, some of them kicking and screaming.

A distinctive figure with a flowing beard, often seen holding a video camera as he records prayer meetings and confrontations, Moon and his cohorts were promised they would not be arrested before descending down a ladder from the roof on May 4.

Moon has lived in the village for the past two years, making it the center of the same anti-US struggle that he led during enormous protests in Seoul after the deaths of two schoolgirls, run over by a 50-ton US armored vehicle during military exercises nearly four years ago.

"Pray for this land," Moon preaches to the villagers. "You have prospered on this land. Pray for your homes. You have built these homes. The land is yours. Your prayers will protect you."

Now Moon is protected by activists manning checkpoints at entrances to the village within shouting distance of police blocking off narrow paved roads across the rice paddies into the village, on the western fringe of the bustling town of Pyongtaek, on the main railroad to Seoul.

The activists carry banners, not weapons, but they're clearly ready to battle any attempt by police to enter the village. They appear to have returned quietly by night across the rice paddies, staying in the homes of farmers who view them as defenders against government forces.

They meet in the church and a small government building, having lost the school to demolition by bulldozers and loaders that tore it down as soon as Moon and his cohorts came down from the roof on May 4.

Police officials directing the thousands of officers in well-ordered array at strong points on the roads are under strict orders to avoid violence, stopping protesters with shields, throwing them back in occasional clashes, but refraining from bashing heads, much less using weapons.

Some wonder if the South's governing Uri Party is actually encouraging the standoff in which an assembly member from the party, Im Jung-in, is playing a leading role.

Im was up on the roof with the priests before they all came down on May 4 - and has appeared again at rallies in the village. He talks frequently on his mobile phone with party officials, and his presence in the village symbolizes support for the farmers and activists in the government.

US officials, fearful of upsetting already strained relations with the government, say only that they expect South Korea to live up to the agreement and turn over the land for a base. They wonder, however, how the US can move its military headquarters from Seoul to the base while protests persist.

"We'll have to build a new headquarters building," says a US officer. "That's not going to be easy."

The ruckus over the base provides a rallying cry for anti-American forces at a time when the US and South Korea are at odds over how to deal with the North on such issues as nuclear weapons, counterfeiting and human rights.

At this village, Moon and other activists see the whole military issue as irrelevant.

"South and North Korea are reconciling with one another," says another priest visiting the village. "We don't need US forces in Korea at all."

That's a view that US officials fear may come to dominate the outlook of a South Korea government already seen as left of center as thousands of police face the unpleasant task of finally removing the diehards from their homes, and the troublesome priest from the village chapel.

Because Incompetent “Politically Connected” War Profiteer Got Contract, More Troops Will Die

February 2006 The Hightower Lowdown [Excerpt]

Equally disgusting, many soldiers have died because their lightly armored Humvees are easily penetrated by roadside bombs.

An armored truck called the Cougar could have saved their lives, but the Pentagon started ordering this vehicle only last May, and delivery to Iraq is three months behind schedule!

This delay comes because the Cougar contract went to a small, politically connected outfit in South Carolina that had never mass-produced vehicles and botched the job.

A dozen prototypes did get to Iraq, but they had to be recalled because of failing transmissions, etc.

Meanwhile, our blasé leaders dismiss criticism, saying they're doing all they can as fast as can be expected.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

“We Will Return The U.S. Army To Their Homes By Death Boxes And Coffines”

May 18, 2006 By ANNA BADKHEN, Abilene Reporter-News [Excerpt]

Baghdadis who lived on Ghazaliya's Abu Ghraib highway have moved out of their sprawling mansions. What once were picture windows resemble empty eye sockets, their glass shattered after numerous bombings and shootings. Metal gates are riddled with bullets. Orange trees, heavy with ripe fruit, stand inside tall, ornate fences, but there is no one to pick the oranges.

Gardens have become impromptu landfills, where armed militias hide their caches and garbage rots in 110-degree heat. Gunmen prowl the streets, and insurgents plant roadside bombs.

A spray-painted message on an abandoned residential building reads, in misspelled English: “We will return the U.S. Army to their homes by death boxes and coffines.”

Governor Of Anbar Tells U.S. Occupation Forces To Get Out Now

5.19.06 By James Rainey The Los Angeles Times

One of the first tasks for [Collaborator] Maliki and his new government will be to recommend when Iraqi military and police units are ready to assume national security responsibility from the U.S.

The governor of Al Anbar made his own recommendation Thursday, saying he wanted the Americans to withdraw from Ramadi and other cities.

Gov. Mamoun Sami Rasheed said U.S. forces had been unable to bring stability to the region racked by the Sunni Arab-led insurgency. Al Anbar residents, he said, “have suffered a lot because of the military operations.”

American commanders did not immediately respond. [They don't have to. The resistance owns Ramadi.]

Assorted Resistance Action

May 19 (KUNA) & Reuters & By VOA News & (AP)

In Qahtan Square in Yarmouk district, three Iraqi soldiers were wounded when a bomb exploded as three Iraqi Army patrol vehicles were passing by. One of the vehicles was damaged in the explosion.

In the northern city of Kirkuk guerrillas shot and killed a petroleum engineer outside his home. Mohammed al-Iqabi, an employee of the northern state-oil company, was killed down on Thursday night in the rich-oil city of Kirkuk, police said on Friday.

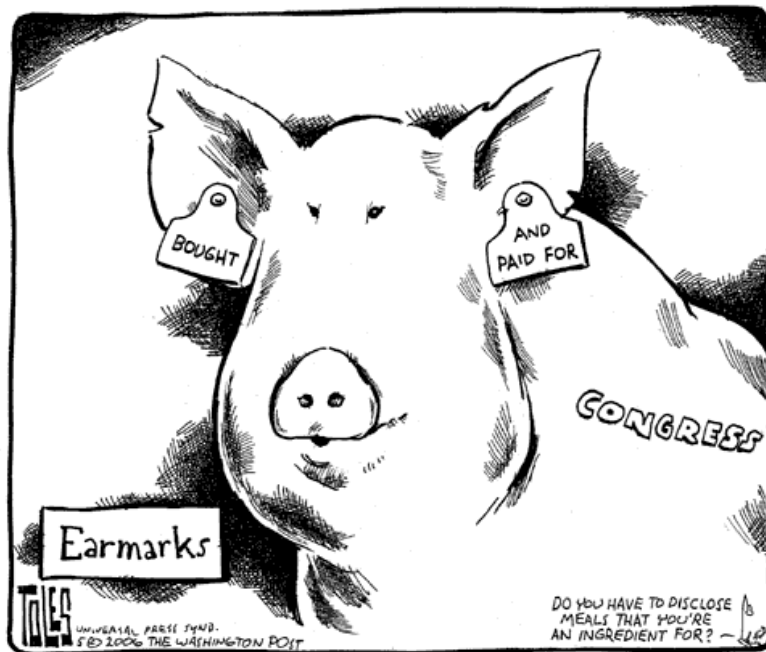
A roadside bomb exploded near an Iraqi army patrol in western Baghdad, wounding three soldiers, said Abdul-Razzaq.

Guerrilla fighters shot dead Ghassan Kadhem, a leading member of a Shi'ite Islamist [collaborator] political party in Kerbala 110 km (68 miles) south of Baghdad, the party said.

Two police commandos were wounded during clashes between police commandos and insurgents in Jihad District, southwestern Baghdad.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

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:

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