

GI SPECIAL 4G27:

GOT THAT RIGHT: TROOPS HOME NOW



Police remove Medea Benjamin from the House gallery after she disrupted a speech by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki July 26, to a joint meeting of Congress. **“Iraqis want the troops to leave; bring them home now,” she shouted repeatedly. “Listen to the Iraqis.”** (AP Photo/Dennis Cook) & Anne Plummer Flaherty AP

Command Incompetence Killed Marines

July 24, 2006 By Christian Lowe, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

The Marine Corps lost valuable time when it moved to reinforce its logistics trucks against the deadly effects of roadside bombs, settling on inferior solutions and falling behind on its armoring schedule, according to a June report from the Government Accountability Office.

The report said the Corps should have coordinated more closely with Army efforts to bolster its vehicle fleets, suggesting Pentagonwide coordination of urgent wartime needs and clearer rules on when those wartime needs should be satisfied.

“A more unified and coordinated approach between the Marine Corps and the Army might have allowed the Marine Corps to field a better interim armor solution that provided sufficient protection against” improvised explosive devices, GAO investigators said in their June 22 report titled “Defense Logistics: Lack of Synchronized Approach Between the Marine Corps and Army Affected the Timely Production and Installation of Marine Corps Truck Armor.”

The GAO said the Corps waited too long before asking steel suppliers for material thick enough to resist roadside bombs, learning that worldwide steel inventories were low two months after the Army had placed its orders.

That led to a months-long delay in fielding truck armor sporting three-eighth-inch steel panels. The Corps instead fielded a mix of three-sixteenth-inch steel plates and Kevlar or ceramic panels to bolster its truck fleet, a solution GAO investigators said fell short of well-known requirements.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

MNC I SAILOR DIES

7/26/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-07-02C

BAGHDAD, Iraq: A Sailor assigned to Multinational Corps Iraq died at approximately 2:15 p.m. today in Baghdad.

The incident does not appear to be the result of enemy action and is under investigation.

Two American Servicemen Killed In Baghdad

26 July 2006 AFP

Baghdad

Two American servicemen were killed in Baghdad on Wednesday, AFP reported, without reporting details regarding the death of the U.S. citizens.

Oceana County Native Reported Killed

July 26, 2006 HESPERIA (AP)

A native of west Michigan has died while fighting in Iraq. Army Specialist Dennis Samson, of Hesperia in Oceana County, was killed Monday by enemy gunfire.

Survivors include Samson's mother, Dawn Ackley of Hesperia, and his father, Dennis Samson Senior of Seattle.

Samson graduated in 2000 from Hesperia High School.

Lewis Soldier Injured

July 26, 2006 WPTZ

LEWIS, Vt.

A Lewis soldier was wounded in Iraq after a rocket-propelled grenade hit his Humvee in Bayji, which is north of Baghdad. Glenn Gentles, 22, was flown to Germany, where he had surgery before being flown back to the United States. He is now at a military hospital at his base in Kentucky.

Gentles' wife, Erika, said that they are grateful to be alive because the soldier who was driving the Humvee was killed in the attack.

"Glenn was the gunner on top of the Humvee, but what was really weird about it was Glenn was supposed to be driving the Humvee," she said.

Erika Gentles said she was shocked by the phone call from the U.S. military.

"I couldn't breathe ... it was like the room was shrinking," she said.

Gentles' father, Joe, said he knew a call was coming because for days he had a strange feeling that something was wrong.

"He went around the corner on a regular, routine patrol, and he said, 'Dad, I saw the triggerman and the next thing I knew, it was a boom and a flash,'" Joe Gentles said.

Gentles suffered shrapnel injuries to his face and eyes, and a flash burn on his face. He also suffered leg and arm injuries.

Erika Gentles said their son Gabriel, 2, is helping her deal with what's happened. "He's a pretty funny, playful kid, so when I am feeling sad, it helps to have him around because he's making funny faces," she said.

Family members said they hope Gentles will be home in time for his birthday on Aug. 7.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. military at area of a car bomb attack July 5, 2006, in Mosul. (AP Photo/Mohammed Ibrahim)

Can The Occupation Hold Baghdad? [The Question Is The Answer]

7.26.06 USA Today

The battle for Iraq's future has come down to this: Can the country's U.S.-backed government control escalating violence in the streets of Baghdad? [It's come to this. Not a new question: Can Cornwallis hold Yorktown? Can Lee hold Richmond? Can Westmoreland hold Saigon? Same old same old.]

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Lewisburg Soldier Killed In Pesch

7/26/2006 ABC 24:

The Defense Department says a Tennessee soldier has been killed in Afghanistan.

Sergeant David Hierholzer died Monday from injuries sustained from small arms fire when enemy forces attacked his platoon.

The 27-year-old soldier died during the attack in Pesch, Afghanistan.

Hierholzer was assigned to the First Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, Third Brigade Combat Team, Tenth Mountain Division at Fort Drum, New York.

Texas Soldier Killed



Army Pfc. Andrew Velez of Lubbock, Texas. According to Velez' father, military officials informed the family July 25, 2006, that Velez was killed in Afghanistan. Velez' brother, Spc. Jose A. Velez, was killed in Fallujah in November 2004. (AP Photo/family handout via The Lubbock Avalanche-Journal)

U.S. Soldier Killed By Kabul Bomb

Jul 26, 2006 AP

A bomb exploded near a taxi on a busy Kabul road Tuesday, killing two Afghans, and a U.S. soldier

Australian Command Finally Admits 6 Australian Special Forces Wounded In Southern Afghanistan

July 26, 2006 By Fisnik Abrashi, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Australia announced on Wednesday that six of its special forces soldiers were wounded in southern Afghanistan earlier this month.

Six Australian special forces soldiers were wounded during heavy fighting in mid-July in southern Afghanistan, said Brig. Gus Gilmore, spokesman for the Australian Defense Force.

He would not say when or where the incident happened. Australia has 300 troops in a special forces task group operating in Uruzgan province.

Assorted Resistance Action

26/07/2006 Evening Echo & By Fisnik Abrashi, ASSOCIATED PRESS & By Mirwais Afghan in Kandahar, Reuters

Afghan guerrillas today killed an Afghan worker and wounded three others building a road to a US-led coalition base in the south of the country.

The shooting happened in southern Zabul province when the gunmen ambushed a car taking the men to work on a road linking the town of Qalat with a new US air base just outside town, said Noor Mohammed Paktin, provincial police chief.

Militants in southern Afghanistan attacked a coalition patrol with rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns Tuesday.

A defence ministry statement said an Afghani soldier was killed by an explosion in Helmand province.

TROOP NEWS

Young Vets Joining Unemployment Lines; “It’s Incredibly Discouraging, And Frankly, It’s A Betrayal”

<p>“The reality is there’s no jobs there at all,” he said. “With all the factory cutbacks, everyone’s scrambling to get what they can.”</p>
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July 26, 2006 By Katherine Hutt Scott, Gannett News Service [Excerpts]

Young veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are having a harder time finding a job than their peers who didn't serve in the military.

Last year, about one in six veterans between 20 and 24 was jobless, nearly double the rate for nonveterans their age. It was brighter in the second quarter of this year, when young vets had an 11.2 percent jobless rate, but that was still higher than the 8 percent for nonvets their age and more than twice the overall unemployment rate.

Labor and veterans officials are surveying young vets to try to find out why. But experts have some theories:

Some who saw combat in Iraq or Afghanistan suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, which makes it difficult for them to work and makes employers leery of hiring them.

Permanent jobs that offer middle-class wages and benefits are scarcer these days in some regions.

"With the prestige of a combat veteran, I thought I'd hold a little more weight than the average high school or college graduate," said Jason Seidel of Battle Creek, Mich., 25, who served one year in Iraq during his four-year Army stint. He has spent two fruitless months searching for a decent-paying job that doesn't require a college degree.

"The reality is there's no jobs there at all," he said. "With all the factory cutbacks, everyone's scrambling to get what they can."

Historically, veterans have had a lower unemployment rate than the population as a whole.

"It's incredibly discouraging, and frankly, it's a betrayal," said labor professor Bob Bruno of the University of Illinois at Chicago. "There's a strong consensus that if you put your life on the line with some kind of service for your country, you should be rewarded with the opportunity to earn the American dream."

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)

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



The casket of Marine Lance Cpl. Geoffrey R. Cayer, 20, at St. Joseph's Church for his funeral service in Fitchburg, Mass., July 26, 2006. Cayer, assigned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif. died July 18 while on duty in Iraq. (AP Photo/Elise Amendola)

Did “Inadequate Training For Castner's Wisconsin National Guard Unit Kill Him”



July 26, 2006 CEDARBURG, Wis.

The U.S. Army said Wednesday it will look into circumstances surrounding the death of a Wisconsin soldier killed this week on his first mission escorting supplies in Iraq.

Army spokesman Paul Boyce at the Pentagon said Wednesday that military officials will look into the circumstances and any factors that would have to be examined in the future, such as lessons learned from the death of Spc. Stephen Castner, 27, of Cedarburg.

U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner called on the Pentagon on Tuesday to investigate allegations of inadequate training for Castner's Wisconsin National Guard unit.

He sent Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld a letter detailing the matter and said he was trying to reach Rumsfeld by telephone to push the issue.

The Department of Defense said Castner was killed Monday when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee vehicle during combat operations in Tallil, Iraq.

Castner's father, Stephen Castner, told The Associated Press he had earlier contacted Sensenbrenner, expressing concern about the training his son had at Camp Shelby in Mississippi.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

26 Jul 2006 Reuters & (AP) & (KUNA) & AFP

British forces escaped injury during an attack on an armoured vehicle in Iraq Wednesday, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in London said.

An MoD spokesman said the vehicle came under rocket-propelled grenade fire in an exchange in Maysan Province but the device did not detonate and the UK forces returned fire.

Guerrillas shot at a police convoy in Nahrawan, 15 km south of Baghdad, killing local police chief Lieutenant Colonel Khadum Bressam and his brother, and wounding four officers.

Guerrillas captured police brigadier Abdullah Hmood, the director of the residency office in Baghdad, as he rode in an unmarked car, police sources said.

A policeman was wounded when a roadside bomb went off targeting his patrol in the city of Mosul 390 km north of Baghdad, police sources said.

Two brothers serving in Iraq's police forces were killed Wednesday when a roadside bomb struck their vehicle as they returned to their home in southeastern Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas attacked a police patrol, killing a policeman and wounding another, and also killed a civilian, in the city of Baquba 65 km north of Baghdad. Police said they had detained three suspects.

General Abdullah Shadah, a director in the interior ministry's immigration department, was seized by unidentified gunmen in the Al-Shaad district of Baghdad at around 10:30 am, a police official said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

BULLET DUCKERS

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: July 26, 2006

Written by Dennis Serdel: Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div, 11th Brigade, purple heart; Veterans For Peace; Vietnam Veterans Against The War; United Auto Workers GM retiree. Perry, Michigan

BULLET DUCKERS

the unknown soldier is pot bellied now, swinging an atrophied leg
back
and forth
like a grandfather clock although he never had a wife or children.
young teenagers would make fun of him
from time to time, calling him a freak, you can get work in a circus
they shout,
you don't need a Halloween mask, he chains smokes three packs of
cigarettes
a day, his doctor gave up on his smoking, smokers are hated now-a-days,
thought to be ignorant, are you trying to kill yourself they ask, you
can kill
yourself, just don't kill me

with that second hand smoke.
you have no willpower, no balls, you're weak, disgusting.

why do you get all the marlboros, the grunts would ask him,
when you have been here as long as I have,
then you will get all the marlboros,
the unknown soldier would answer.
when he was hit, he ran like a deer to lower ground behind a stump,
his 16 aimed at the enemy ready to return fire.
his adrenalin was so high he barely felt
the burning in his body and the blood pouring out.
the others came slowly to him loudly telling him
it's alright, sarge stepped on a mine, you alright ?
he peered down at his arm and leg, blood soaking both, he was
still at the ready position.
look, don't shoot, they told the unknown soldier
as they approached, he's hit they shouted.
a medic came running over, made him lean back and started treating
his neck, the unknown soldier didn't know
he had been hit in the neck too.
they tried to take his 16 away but he clung to it as if it was life.
he asked for a cigarette, you'll get plenty where
you're going, they replied. all I have is a few of these
stale old ww2 pall malls, give me a cigarette,
they gave the unknown soldier a cigarette.

he didn't care about life as much as he did back then.
now he was old, a tragedy,
a geek that now thought that people were ugly, not enough evolution
at best or this is just their nature, love it or leave it.
he had to go downtown again,
he hated going downtown, the closest he could get
was on the other side of the park.
after walking like a tightrope act,
his bad leg started twisting and electric spasms
ran up and down his leg like a yoyo. the closest park bench
had a bum on it covered with a grey coat. he sat down
next to his feet and bent up and down,
his face twisted like a whiteface clown
frowning upward through the trees.
some kids came slowly rolling by on their bicycles,
one said, why don't you bums just die,
nobody wants you around, the other kid said,
maybe we should just kill you, nobody would care.
he moaned, pounding on his leg for the pain to stop
and mumbled, I wish I had my 16, I'd waste you little motherfuckers.
the bum rustled the grey coat
off his face and shoulders,
you in 'Nam man ? yeah, me too!
can I bum a cigarette, man
yeah



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

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

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR;

RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



Iraqi citizens stop to view a home that was burned during a raid by U.S., July 23, 2006, in Sadr City, Baghdad. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqis over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country.]

[What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."

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

Major General Caldwell Just Doing His Job: Ass-Kissing Rumsfeld & Bush; As Collaborator Troops Hide, He Says “Iraqi Security Forces Again Took The Lead”

Jul 26 by Paul Schemm, AFP News

Somewhere around the fourth car bomb attack against their checkpoint, the Iraqi army soldiers pulled out of their position on a once busy commercial thoroughfare in the Amiriyah neighborhood of Baghdad.

Now they "guard" the debris-littered street, complete with the burned-out carcasses of three car bombs, from the safety of nearby buildings.

On Monday, coalition spokesman Major General William Caldwell said that "Iraqi security forces again took the lead in the neighborhoods... to make their capital safe."

In reality, however, the beefing up of the US presence and the continuing spiral of violence is an indication that Iraqi security forces have not been able to handle the situation.

"In the beginning we saw many Iraqi patrols, even with tanks, moving through the neighborhood," said a resident of a Amiriyah, a formerly prosperous area that is a main focus of insurgent activity.

"But then, after a few days, the number of patrols dropped," he said on condition of anonymity, adding that the violence and shooting has been much worse in the past weeks.

Iraqi forces should be better at maintaining security in these neighborhoods having more familiarity with the people and the ability to speak the language, but according to US officers, they have not been getting out onto the streets.

"There are some checkpoints on the main streets, sometimes they are manned, sometimes they aren't," said Sergeant Coy Greer, of the 8th Squadron's Apache Troop, during a patrol through the barricade-filled streets of Amiriyah.

At an Iraqi army base near the airport, a patrol formed up to go out with the Americans and soldiers piled into flat bed pickup trucks with some crude metal sheets welded on the sides.

Nearby a row of a brand new armored humvees -- the general-purpose all terrain transports used by US forces -- stood unused.

"The humvees are for emergency cases," said Master Sergeant Osama Abed Ali, a patrol leader from 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army division, responsible for Amiriyah. "The operations officer doesn't allow us to take them out." It was something he and his man were not happy about.

Two days later, over in the nearby Khadra district, the 8th Squadron's Charlie Troop got ready to patrol with an Iraqi national police unit responsible for the area.

The US sergeant commanding the joint patrol carefully placed the police SUVs and their makeshift armor plated SUVs in the center of the convoy.

"They are a softer target vehicle than us, they need all the protection they can get," said Staff Sergeant Michael Emery. "Also they don't scan for IEDs that well."

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

“Heavy Fighting Slows Israel’s Ground Forces” “Israeli News Outlets Ask Why So Difficult To Push One Militia Off Israel’s Border”

[Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

In recent days, Israeli news outlets, which had largely lined up behind the army's conduct of the war, have begun to ask why an army that once defeated the armies of several Arab neighbors in six days was finding it so difficult to push one militia off Israel's border.

July 26, 2006 By Jonathan Finer and Anthony Shadid, Washington Post Foreign Service
[Excerpts]

AVIVIM, Israel, July 25

Israeli tanks and infantrymen fought house to house Tuesday against Hezbollah fighters whose hit-and-run tactics and punishing attacks have frustrated Israeli troops and slowed their onslaught.

Several days of intense clashes gave way by late afternoon Tuesday to sporadic firefights. Exchanges of Israeli artillery and airstrikes and Hezbollah mortars and rockets, which shook the surrounding hills, turned dry patches of ground into smoke-spewing fires.

Some Israeli soldiers involved in the fight, their faces drawn with fatigue, expressed frustration at Hezbollah's tactics while grudgingly acknowledging their effectiveness.

"They don't come right at us because they know we'll shoot them. So they just shoot and run away, shoot and run away. They do what they can do, and we do what we can do," 1st Sgt. Erez Kremer, 21, a tank commander, said in an interview after returning from a 72-hour mission in Lebanon. A Hezbollah missile had narrowly missed his vehicle Tuesday morning, he said, exploding on the side of a nearby building.

"If they face us, they don't have a chance," he said. "I think they fight like cowards, but it can be effective." **[Gee, that's what the Redcoats said about the Minutemen at Lexington and Concord. Whine whine whine.]**

Dozens of people who fled Bint Jbeil arrived in the morning in Tibnin, where they joined at least 1,350 people huddled in a hospital that has become a camp for the displaced. Many were angry, frustrated and scared.

"This isn't our land?" asked Hoda Fawwaz, 50, carrying a blue radio tuned to broadcasts of Hezbollah's radio station, al-Nur. "They're the ones aggressing against us. We're not the ones aggressing against them."

Others shouted condemnations of Israel, the United States and other Arab states for failing to defend them. "God destroy Israel," said Hassan Hamza, 19.

Meanwhile, Israel's battle-weary Bokim Battalion, which lost two soldiers in Hezbollah ambushes Monday, returned from the fighting exhausted Tuesday afternoon, lounging in the shade of a kiwi grove and hanging their sweat-soaked uniforms out to dry.

They described a complex attack in which one of their tanks, sent to evacuate wounded ground fighters, was pounded by three Hezbollah missiles. A second tank struck a mine or other explosive as it rushed to provide aid, they said.

"My radio only lets me hear people inside the vehicle, so I didn't realize right away that they had died. Then I just started to cry. I couldn't stop," said Avi Chai, 19, a tank driver whose hands and arms were still black with smoke and grease. Beside him, soldiers stripped to their T-shirts sung along to Hebrew pop songs as another soldier played guitar.

"It's easier not to talk about it," Chai said. "You just feel heavy."

An army major, speaking on condition that only his first name, Eli, be used, said he took over the battalion when its commander was badly wounded in the attack Monday.

In an evening briefing for reporters, Brig. Gen. Gal Hirsch, commander of the Israeli army's Galilee Division, which is responsible for the Israel-Lebanon border, said Israeli forces had fought "alley to alley and house to house" for Bint Jbeil.

In recent days, Israeli news outlets, which had largely lined up behind the army's conduct of the war, have begun to ask why an army that once defeated the armies of several Arab neighbors in six days was finding it so difficult to push one militia off Israel's border.

Terrorist Donkey Joins Family in Death; Zionist Filth Slaughter Family Collecting Figs



The corpse of the donkey that was carrying a family when it was subject to an Israeli attack, 25 June 2006 (Sami Abu Salem/WAFA)

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

25 July 2006 Sami Abu Salem writing from Beit Lahia, occupied Gaza; Live from Palestine

The paramedics and witnesses could not differentiate between the pieces of flesh of the eleven-year-old Nadi al-Attar, and those of his grandmother, 57-year-old Khairiyya, or the donkey's, scattered on the branches of lemon and boxthorn trees on both sides of the dusty road in Beit Lahia, north Gaza.

Yesterday, the old woman and her three grandsons Nadi, Shadi (14), and Ahmed (17) were riding a donkey cart, heading to their field to collect ripe figs that fetch a good price in Gaza's markets when Israeli rocket hit their cart and blasted two of them into small pieces.

The smell of burned flesh filled the area where several people were still collecting pieces stuck to the trees and fences of the nearby orchards. The corpse of the donkey lay near the broken cart, where a teenager phoned emergency services to inform them of the remains.

Ahmed, 17, had arranged empty boxes on the cart and left room for his grandmother and cousins. The old woman and Ahmed sat on the front of the cart while Shadi and Nadi in the back.

Shadi, who was wounded in the attack, said that his grandmother "vanished" after the attack, and said that he does not know whether the rocket was fired from a tank, helicopter or a drone.

"The rocket hit my grandmother - I flew in the air and did not see anything," said Shadi, who is still laying in Kamal Udwan Hospital, north Gaza.

"The dust filled the area. I heard Ahmed screaming and asking for help. I did not see my grandmother or Nadi. They killed our donkey and destroyed the carriage," he said.

Nadi al-Attar, 55, the grandfather of the deceased boy, was ashamed when he admitted that he refused to share his salad with his wife before she left to the orchard.

"She made salad and asked me to share (it with) her, but I said no and left the house to work; it was the last salad in her life," he said while sighing deeply.

Nadi, who works as a driver, said that he was working when a radio station reported that Israeli artillery hit a donkey cart carrying an old woman and children.

"I drove so fast that I (almost drove) over several people returning home, where I realised I lost my wife and grandson," he said.

He wondered, "Why did they kill an old woman and a child? Were they fighting or carrying weapons? They just were going to pick up figs."

Ahlam al-Attar, 37, who lost her mother Khariyya and her son Nadi, said she knew about her mother and son from the radio.

She and her family members were to go to the hospital when some people relayed the bad news. "I do not understand why they killed my mother and son; I never imagined that I would lose any of them." **[He doesn't get it. It's the duty of the strong and**

racially pure to exterminate the sub-humans before they breed even more sub-humans that can pollute the master race.]

We knocked on the doors of several houses among the trees not far from the scene of the crime, but one of the neighbours said that others had left because of the continued Israeli shelling.

In a different home, an old woman named Um Hassona said that she could not see anything when the Israelis hit the cart.

"We were astonished when we heard a very strong explosion; our house was shaken strongly, and dust filled the place. I ordered my children not to peep from the window; thus, we did not see any thing," she said.

Um Hassona asserted that it was too difficult to find an eyewitness, as the area is mostly unpopulated after most residents left because of the Israeli bombardment.

The paramedics collected the rest of the pieces of flesh, which they took with the corpses, and the donkey was still lying under the boxthorn tree, waiting to be removed by municipality workers.



Shadi al-Attar, 14, who was wounded in the attack, in Kamal Udwan Hospital. (Sami Abu Salem/WAFA)

“They Are Innocent People. They Are Carrying White Flags, And They're Trying To Escape” “It’s Nothing More Than Revenge, Revenge On Civilians,” Zabit Said From His Bed

July 24, 2006 By Anthony Shadid, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

TYRE, Lebanon, July 23

The day ended in Tyre as it began, with a desperate cry of grief.

"Where's my father? Where's my father?" asked Mahmoud Srour, an 8-year-old whose face was burned beyond recognition after an Israeli missile struck the family's car Sunday.

His mother, Nouhad, lurched toward his hospital bed, her eyes welling with tears.

"Is he coming?" he asked her.

"Don't worry about your father," she said, her words broken by sobs.

Barely conscious, bewildered, he lay with his eyes almost swollen shut. His head lolled toward her. A whisper followed.

"Don't cry, mother," he told her.

Mahmoud's father, Mohammed, was dead.

An Israeli missile had struck their green Mercedes as they fled the southern town of Mansuri, where the family had been vacationing. The boy's uncle, Darwish Mudaihli, was dead, too.

The bodies were left in the burning car.

Mahmoud's sister Mariam, 8 months old, lay next to him, staring at the ceiling with a Donald Duck pacifier in her mouth. Her eyes were open but lifeless, a stare that suggested having seen too much. Her hair was singed, her face slightly burned. Blisters swelled the tiny fingers on her left hand to twice their size. In other beds of Najm Hospital were their other brothers, 13-year-old Ali and 15-year-old Ahmed.

"What happened?" Ahmed shouted to no one in particular.

It was a question asked often Sunday in Tyre and its hinterland, a bloody day for civilians, even by the standards of this war.

Israeli forces repeatedly struck cars on southern Lebanon's already perilous roads in attacks that victims said were indiscriminate.

Seven people were killed, three of them when an Israeli helicopter fired a missile at a white minibus carrying 19 people fleeing the village of Tairi, which Israeli forces had ordered residents to evacuate.

The missile tore through the roof of the vehicle as it sped around a bend in the road. Loyal Najib, a 23-year-old photographer for the Lebanese magazine al-Jaras, was killed when Israeli forces struck near her taxi outside the town of Qana to the northwest. She was the first journalist killed in the 12-day conflict.

"Are there any armed men here? Is there any resistance here?" asked Ali Najm, a physician helping to treat the injured in Tyre.

He surveyed the wounded, struggling to maintain the detachment of a medical professional and suppress the anger of a neighbor watching a war that he said he did not understand.

"There is no aim to this," he said. "They are innocent people. They are carrying white flags, and they're trying to escape."

The day's events began at 10:30 a.m. when the Mercedes of Mahmoud's family was struck as it barreled down a coastal road dotted by palm trees and banana plantations.

As it burned, Zein al-Abdin Zabit passed in his white Nissan with his wife and four sons. His drive was already frantic: Along the road from Naqoura, he had picked up someone wounded in Qlaile, trying to take him to the hospital. A few more miles, then he reached Maaliye, where he picked up two men wounded as they rode a motorcycle.

Near the hospital, a missile struck behind his car, and it caught fire. He floored it for 200 yards more, feeding the flames as he tried to make it to the hospital. Near its entrance, he crashed into a curb, and his ribs were broken. He and the others clambered out, and the gasoline tank exploded. Hours later, the car was a charred carcass. Its tires still smoldered along a row of seared palm trees.

"It's nothing more than revenge, revenge on civilians," Zabit said from his bed.

The hospital was in chaos. Someone with a fire extinguisher tried to put out the flames incinerating Zabit's car as other cars barreled past, fleeing the south. Mahmoud was carried in, cradled in someone's arms. Knots of women sobbed.

Then the victims of the minibus arrived from near the town of Kafra. Gurney after gurney entered.

One boy's left hand was shredded by shrapnel.

A woman sat in a chair, dazed, as others tried to ask her questions. A stretcher smashed into a row of chairs.

"We didn't feel anything. We didn't see anything coming down," said Ali Shaita, a stocky 14-year-old, whose uncle, Mohammed, and grandmother, Nazira, were killed in the attack on the minibus. "It just hit us," said his 12-year-old brother, Abbas.

Ali sat in a bed at Najm Hospital, holding his IV. He was wounded in his chest and left leg. Blood, his and that of his relatives, drenched his red shorts. His brother was hurt in his right leg, head and right arm. His jeans were splotted with more blood. In another room, their mother, Muntaha, sobbed. Her head was wounded, as was her left arm. Her femur was broken in the attack.

"The bandages are too tight on my head," she pleaded to a nurse.

The Shaitas said the car was speeding out of the village at midmorning. The boys' uncle was carrying a white flag with his hand, as was another passenger. Soon after they were hit, a Red Cross ambulance arrived, the crew worried about roads they deemed too risky.

Abbas Bahr, an orthopedic surgeon, had just come out of six hours of surgery, and his face was drawn.

"This is so hard," he said. "I don't know." He repeated the words again.

"And still I don't know what will happen tomorrow."

The day before in Bint Jbeil, two cars carrying seven people were following a Red Cross ambulance when one was wrecked in an Israeli attack, he said. Two wounded women were put in the trunk of the other car. They had died when they arrived at the hospital in Tyre.

The story of pain and fear was the same across the region, whose inhabitants have abandoned it or are in hiding. The Srours were one of the last families left in the village of Mansuri. The Lebanese family had come from Germany on vacation and had been too afraid to leave. As elsewhere in the south, rumors flew among the huddled: that a ship would take them away, that they had safe passage, that they might be evacuated.

At Jabal Amel Hospital, director Ahmed Mroueh opened the ledger of the wounded.

"This is today," he said. "It begins at No. 267 and ends at 300. This is today, until now."

The physician pointed out the children: 8-year-old Diana Said, 4-year-old Hatem Naame, 7-year-old Mariam Hamadeh.

He shook his head. "This is the worst day we've seen."

A relief worker arrived in an ambulance carrying two corpses from an attack on Srifa, where bodies remain buried in rubble.

"Take them to the government hospital," Mroueh told him. "Our morgue is full."

The hospital director turned away. "Ten days," he said -- that was how long he thought the staff could cope with the pace.

"It has to stop," he said matter-of-factly. "It has to stop."

Upstairs was Diana Said, hurt in the attack on the minibus. A white bandage covered her left eye. She sat at the foot of the bed of her father, 34-year-old Said Finjan. He asked a doctor about the car's Syrian driver, Mohammed Abed Sheikh, who was killed.

"Where did they put him?" he blurted out.

Across the hall was his wife, 25-year-old Fawziya Finjan, her face swollen and her head bandaged.

"Thank the Lord," she said softly. "God saved my daughter. That's the most important thing."

**“They Know Everything. They Shoot Us Wherever They Like. It's Their Country”
Zionist Soldier Has The Answer:
Kill Every Lebanese Man, Woman
And Child Now;
[He Can Help Build The Gas Ovens
Next Week]**

[Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

7.26.06 By JIM SCIUTTO, ABC News

For Israeli troops deployed inside Lebanon, the fight is difficult and dangerous.

We spoke with a group of soldiers returning from 48 hours of intense fighting, including the rescue of soldiers from a tank destroyed in the fighting.

"They are attacking us in a very organized position," one soldier said. "They know where we are coming from. They know everything. They shoot us wherever they like. It's their country."

He added they are "very well armed."

Now more Israeli soldiers are on the way, including an armored unit being transferred from Gaza to Lebanon. They have been told civilians have left the region where they will fight.

"Over here, everybody is the army," one soldier said. "Everybody is Hezbollah. There's no kids, women, nothing."

Another soldier put it plainly: "We're going to shoot anything we see."

“Israel Suffered Its Worst Casualties In Southern Lebanon Today”

[Thanks to D and PB, who sent this in. PB writes: MAYBE THIS WILL BE ISRAEL'S IRAQ.]

26 July 2006 By Craig S. Smith, The New York Times & By SAM F. GHATTAS, Associated Press Writer

Avivim, Israel

Israel suffered its worst casualties in southern Lebanon today since the current conflict with Hezbollah started, as thousands of Israeli troops there fought house to house, and village to village, in an attempt to create a buffer zone that Israel hoped would be filled by a multinational peacekeeping force.

At least eight Israeli soldiers were killed and many were wounded in the ground battles, according to unofficial reports from military officers, who were not yet authorized to speak publicly about casualties and had not yet received a full account of the day's toll.

The Israeli military has not yet officially confirmed the figures, but some news service reports indicated that the death toll could be as high as 14.

On the so-called Avivim line, a road that runs parallel to the Lebanese border, an Israeli army major, who said his first name was Sahar, said he sent his forces over the border to extricate a tank this morning in which a battalion commander was wounded.

The fighting was "very, very heavy, and it took a long time," said the major, who is in charge of some armored bulldozers that he said were preparing to go back in again soon.

As they munched watermelon yesterday, sweating Israeli soldiers were visibly shocked by the stiff opposition they had encountered, describing their Hezbollah opponents as a "guerrilla army" with landmines and anti-tank missiles capable of crippling a Merkavah battle tank.

“It was really scary. Most of our armoured personnel carriers have holes,” a paramedic told The Times after recovering three wounded tank soldiers.

“It’s a very hard situation. We were in Lebanon before but it wasn’t like this for a long time.” A tank commander said: “It’s a real war.”

In the Galilee town of Safed, Brigadier-General Shuki Shachar, deputy commander of the northern forces, conceded that the foe was not an easy one.

His forces had never intended to “conquer every square inch” of Bint Jbeil but had now achieved their objectives of taking the high ground. [Yeah, sure.]

Israeli troops had thought they secured the area around the town, but the guerrillas ambushed a patrol before dawn, said Capt. Jacob Dallal, an Israeli army spokesman. A rescue force went in, and fighting escalated.

Hezbollah said its guerrillas ambushed an Israeli unit from three sides as it tried to advance from a ridge on the outskirts of the town.

Eight soldiers were killed and 22 wounded in the fighting, the army said.

It later reported a ninth soldier killed and several other casualties in the nearby village of Maroun al-Ras.

The area features dense growth of underbrush and trees, with hills and narrow, winding roads — ideal for guerrilla emplacements and ambushes.

Israeli media reported that some of the casualties resulted from direct hits by anti-tank rockets and others from roadside bombs.

The Israeli bombardment has failed to stop guerrilla rocket fire, even while killing hundreds, driving up to 750,000 people from their homes and causing billion of dollars in damage.

Hezbollah fired another large barrage into northern Israel on Wednesday — 151 rockets that wounded at least 31 people and damaged property from the suburbs of the port on Haifa on the Mediterranean Sea to the Hula Valley above the Sea of Galilee.

The Government Of The Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, Is Facing A Barrage Of Criticism;

“The Original Objective Of ‘Breaking Hizbullah’ Has Been Quietly Watered Down To ‘Weakening Hizbullah’

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

7.26.06 The Guardian (UK)

The government of the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, is facing a barrage of criticism over its handling of the war in Lebanon, with questions being raised about the decision to attack Hizbullah, mounting military losses, continuing missile strikes on northern Israel, and disquiet about Lebanese civilian casualties.

Israel has yet to confirm reports of 12 soldiers killed in heavy fighting around the south Lebanese town of Bint Jbeil, but analysts in Jerusalem said fatalities on that scale are likely to bring pressure from the army and the public for a significant change of tack.

Two weeks into the fighting, growing unease about a wide range of war-related issues has burst into the open with a series of anxious comments by politicians, former officers and leading experts and pundits.

Experts say Israel's much-vaunted intelligence services have underestimated Hizbullah capabilities, especially in not knowing it had an Iranian-made missile capable of hitting an Israeli naval vessel off Beirut.

The air force has also come under scrutiny after the loss of three US-built Apache helicopters and an F16 jet, with one helicopter reportedly downed by friendly fire. Five Israeli soldiers have also been killed by friendly fire.

Wall-to-wall TV and radio talk shows have wheeled out reserve or former officers highlighting the shortcomings of those running the show, bringing defensive responses from the IDF general staff and even charges of disloyalty in wartime.

The main worry is that Hizbullah can still launch 80-100 rockets a day despite thousands of Israeli sorties over Lebanon. Haifa, Carmiel and other northern areas were hit again on today.

Israeli ground operations have inflicted losses on the guerrillas in Maroun al-Ras and Bint Jbeil, but none have been mounted in the Tyre area further west from where missiles are being launched at Haifa. Hizbullah has been damaged but is far from crippled.

Commentators are also questioning whether key government decisions were thought through in the context of an overall strategy.

They say the government's response has been to shift its goals and lower public expectations.

The original objective of "breaking Hizbullah" has been quietly watered down to "weakening Hizbullah". Mr Olmert's sudden agreement to the deployment of a multinational force on the border reflects reluctant recognition that Israel cannot itself disarm the Lebanese militia and needs a foreign buffer.

"Even before we know who will win this campaign we can state with certainty that Israel has suffered a terrible propaganda defeat in Lebanon and the Arab world," wrote the Ma'ariv columnist Jacky Hugi.

"One country cannot destroy another without explaining to the neighbour the logic behind its actions. From being our silent allies the Lebanese have become the victims of our blind pounding."

On top of all that there are bitter complaints about poor conditions in air raid shelters in the north, the failure to compensate those whose property has been damaged by enemy action and the confusion caused by a plethora of officials giving out conflicting messages.

Nahum Barnea, the country's leading political commentator, warned earlier this week that the Israeli public had exaggerated expectations of what might emerge from this crisis.

"Israel is like the guy who promised to jump off the big top at the circus but freezes the moment he gets up there. 'Why isn't he jumping,' the spectators ask. 'No question of jumping,' the guy replies. 'The only question is how I can get down'"

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Bush Getting Rid Of IRS Auditors Who Go After Rich Tax Cheats: "This Is Not A Game The Poor Will Win, But The Rich Will"

July 23, 2006 David Cay Johnston, New York Times

The federal government is moving to eliminate the jobs of nearly half of the lawyers at the Internal Revenue Service who audit tax returns of some of the wealthiest Americans, specifically those who are subject to gift and estate taxes when they transfer parts of their fortunes to their children and others.

The administration plans to cut the jobs of 157 of the agency's 345 estate tax lawyers, plus 17 support personnel, in less than 70 days. Kevin Brown, an IRS deputy commissioner, confirmed the cuts after the New York Times was given internal documents by people inside the IRS who oppose them.

The Bush administration has successfully lobbied Congress to enact measures that reduce the number of Americans who are subject to the estate tax -- which opponents refer to as the "death tax" -- but has failed in its efforts to eliminate the tax entirely.

But six IRS estate tax lawyers whose jobs are likely to be eliminated said in interviews that the cuts were just the latest moves behind the scenes at the IRS to shield people with political connections and complex tax-avoidance devices from thorough audits.

Sharyn Phillips, a veteran IRS estate tax lawyer in Manhattan, called the cuts a "back-door way for the Bush administration to achieve what it cannot get from Congress, which is repeal of the estate tax."

Over the past five years, officials at both the IRS and the Treasury have told Congress that cheating among the highest-income Americans is a major and growing problem.

The six IRS tax lawyers, some of whom were willing to be named, all said that clear evidence of fraud was pursued vigorously by the agency, but that when audits showed the use of complicated schemes to understate the value of assets, the IRS had become increasingly reluctant to pursue cases.

The lawyers said the risk analysis system the IRS used to evaluate whether to pursue such cases gave higher-level officials cover to not pursue tax cheats and, in the process, emboldened the most aggressive tax advisers to prepare gift and estate tax returns that shortchanged the government.

"This is not a game the poor will win, but the rich will," said John Hruska, another IRS estate tax lawyer in New York who, like Phillips, is active in the National Treasury Employees Union, which represents IRS workers.

Received:

The War Lovers

From: J
To: GI Special
Sent: July 26, 2006
Subject: The War Lovers

Dear GI Special,

The War Lovers

By John Pilger, March 23, 2006, Antiwar.com/orig/pilger.php?articleid=8744

'The war lovers I have known in real wars have usually been harmless, except to themselves. They were attracted to Vietnam and Cambodia, where drugs were plentiful. Bosnia, with its roulette of death, was another favorite. A few would say they were there "to tell the world"; the honest ones would say they loved it. "War is fun!" one of them had scratched on his arm. He stood on a land mine.

'I sometimes remember these almost endearing fools when I find myself faced with another kind of war lover – the kind that has not seen war and has often done everything possible not to see it.

'The passion of these war lovers is a phenomenon; it never dims, regardless of the distance from the object of their desire. Pick up the Sunday papers and there they are, egocentrics of little harsh experience... Turn on the television and there they are again, night after night, intoning not so much their love of war as their sales pitch for it on behalf of the court to which they are assigned.

'For me, one of the more odious characteristics of Blair, and Bush, and Clinton, and their eager or gulled journalistic court, is the enthusiasm of sedentary, effete men (and women) for bloodshed they never see, bits of body they never have to retch over, stacked morgues they will never have to visit, searching for a loved one. Their role is to enforce parallel worlds of unspoken truth and public lies...'

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

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