

GI SPECIAL 4H18:

**NO MORE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



Spc. Jarrod Nordby, of Charlie Company, 4-23 Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, between missions near Rabea'a, Iraq, on June 27. The bulk of the 172nd Brigade was still in Iraq when Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld last month extended their deployment. Overall, the brigade has about 3,900 troops. (AP Photo/U.S. Air Force, Sgt. Jacob N. Bailey)

A Reporter Gets It: “Troops Express Worries About Iraq Progress” [Associated Press Headline

August 17, 2006 By PAULINE JELINEK, AP, WASHINGTON [Excerpt]

President Bush is not frustrated over the slow progress in Iraq, the White House insists. But a lot of other Americans are, apparently including U.S. troops.

The Pentagon’s top general says troops suggested to him during a recent trip to Iraq that they are among those who are worried.

Troops are also disgruntled over Iraqi efforts, according to questions put to Marine Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, when he visited the country over the weekend.

One asked how much more time the Iraqi government should be given to achieve the political unity needed to stabilize the country.

Another wanted to know whether U.S. forces will stay if Iraqis descend into all-out civil war.

And a third ended a question about continued U.S. troop deployments to Iraq by asking, “Is the war coming to an end?”

Pushing Iraqis along for three years through formation of an interim government, the writing of their constitution and election of the current government — only to have the fighting worsen — has grown old for many in civilian and military quarters.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

SOLDIER DIES IN AL ANBAR

8/17/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-08-01CM

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: A Soldier assigned to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division died from wounds sustained due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province Aug. 16.

MND BAGHDAD SOLDIER KILLED BY IED

8/17/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-08-01CL

A Multi National Division Baghdad soldier died at approximately 7 a.m. today when he was hit by an improvised-explosive device south of Baghdad while conducting a dismounted patrol.

Senior DoD Official Says Insurgency Gaining Strength And Popular Support: IEDs Aimed At GIs At A New High For The War

[Thanks to PB and Phil G, who sent this in.]

While the number of Americans killed in action per month has declined slightly, to 38 killed in action in July, from 42 in January, in part reflecting improvements in armor and other defenses, the number of Americans wounded has soared, to 518 in July from 287 in January.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 16 By MICHAEL R. GORDON, MARK MAZZETTI and THOM SHANKER, The New York Times [Excerpts] & The Associated Press

The number of roadside bombs planted in Iraq rose in July to the highest monthly total of the war, offering more evidence that the anti-American insurgency has continued to strengthen...

[T]he number of daily strikes against American and Iraqi security forces has doubled since January.

The deadliest means of attack, roadside bombs, made up much of that increase. In July, of 2,625 explosive devices, 1,666 exploded and 959 were discovered before they went off. In January, 1,454 bombs exploded or were found.

An analysis of the 1,666 bombs that exploded in July shows that 70 percent were directed against the American-led military force, according to a spokesman for the military command in Baghdad. Twenty percent struck Iraqi security forces, up from 9 percent in 2005. And 10 percent of the blasts struck civilians, twice the rate from last year.

“The insurgency has gotten worse by almost all measures, with insurgent attacks at historically high levels,” said a senior Defense Department official who agreed to discuss the issue only on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak for attribution.

“The insurgency has more public support and is demonstrably more capable in numbers of people active and in its ability to direct violence than at any point in time.”

But the number of roadside bombs,, or improvised explosive devices as they are known by the military, is an especially important indicator of enemy activity. Bomb attacks are the largest killer of American troops. They also require a network: a bomb maker; financiers to pay for the effort; and operatives to dig holes in the road, plant the explosives, watch for approaching American and Iraqi forces and set off the blast when troops approach.

The increased attacks have taken their toll. Explosive devices accounted for slightly more than half the deaths.

While the number of Americans killed in action per month has declined slightly, to 38 killed in action in July, from 42 in January, in part reflecting improvements in armor and other defenses, the number of Americans wounded has soared, to 518 in July from 287 in January.

Taken together, the new assessments by the military and the intelligence community provide evidence that violence in Iraq is at its highest level yet.

In addition to bombs, attacks with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small-caliber weapons against American and Iraqi military forces have also increased, according to American military officials.

In late July, D.I.A. officials briefed several Senate committees about the insurgent and sectarian violence. The presentation was based on a draft version of what became the Aug. 3 study, and one recipient described it as “extremely negative.”

Deputy Health Minister Adel Muhsin said Wednesday that about 3,500 Iraqis died in July in sectarian or political violence nationwide, the highest monthly death toll for civilians since the war started in March 2003.

Welcome To Baghdad; Have A Nice Bomb

8/18/2006 REUTERS

Since arriving two weeks ago, two Strykers have been hit by roadside bombs, causing no major damage, and several others have been shot at, soldiers said. The unit's base has also been rocketed and mortared.

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO
COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS
EXTREMELY HIGH RISK LOCATION AT THIS
TIME, EXCEPT THAT A CROOKED
POLITICIAN WHO LIVES IN THE WHITE
HOUSE WANTS YOU THERE, SO HE WILL
LOOK GOOD.**

That is not a good enough reason.



U.S. troops as shots are fired after a car bomb attack in Mosul July 30, 2006. (Khaled al-Mousily/Reuters)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Landmine Kills U.S. Soldier In Paktika

8.17.06 AFP News

A US soldier was killed Thursday by an apparently old landmine. A US soldier was killed in eastern Paktika province Wednesday in an explosion caused by a mine that appeared to have been left over from the resistance to the 1979-1989 Soviet occupation.

RIR Soldier Shot In The Head

17 August 2006 BY Debra Douglas, Independent News and Media

A Royal Irish Soldier was today fighting for his life after being shot in the head in Afghanistan.

The Scottish soldier, a member of the Third Battalion, is believed to have been shot during fighting with Taliban forces in the Helmand province.

It is believed the incident happened last week but details have only emerged now.

The soldier, who has not been named, is being treated in a civilian hospital in Pakistan where his condition is thought to be critical.

The 38-year-old from the Coleraine area had been on night patrol in Sangin, in the southern province of Helmand.

U.S. Soldier Seriously Wounded In Kandahar

8.17.06 By Noor Khan, AP

In Kandahar Province, the Afghan Interior Ministry says a bomber attacked a NATO-led ISAF convoy today on the main Kandahar-Kabul highway. The U.S. soldier was wounded "pretty seriously", a US military spokesman said in Kabul.

The bomber died and an U.S. armored Humvee vehicle was damaged in the blast.

The soldier was with the US-led coalition and was helping to train the fledgling Afghan National Army, spokesman Thomas Collins said.

Afghan officials had said earlier they believed the soldier was from the NATO-led security force that has been officially operating in southern Afghanistan for just over two weeks although it has been setting up for months.

Human flesh, believed to be the attacker's, could be seen scattered around the site, while an overturned military vehicle was lying on the roadside.

A military medical helicopter landed at the blast site before taking the wounded away, an Associated Press reporter saw.

U.S. Occupation Forces Give Resistance A Helping Hand; Kill 11 Collaborator Cops And Brigade Commander

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

Aug. 17, 2006 AP & Reuters & Aljazeera

SHARANA, Afghanistan

A bomb dropped by a U.S. warplane in southeastern Afghanistan killed 12 border police on Thursday and wounded two more, the provincial governor said.

The policemen were killed when coalition aircraft mistakenly "dropped a bomb" on a two-vehicle border police patrol in Turwa area of southeastern Paktika province at 10:30 a.m., said Gen. Abdul Rahman, Afghanistan's deputy chief of border police. There were no survivors, he said.

Col. Tom Collins, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition, said they were aware of the reports of the friendly-fire bombing that killed policemen, but could not "divulge details at this time."

Rahman said border police transported the bodies of those killed to Sharan, the capital of Paktika province.

An Afghan official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to media, said the police had been patrolling in pickup trucks. He said border police brigade commander, Mohammad Kabir, was among those killed.

Hamid Karzai, the president of Afghanistan, said he was "shocked and angered" and had ordered his own investigation.

The bombing is the latest in a string of coalition bombings that have killed civilians or Afghan security forces.

"I have repeatedly asked the coalition forces to take maximum caution while carrying out operations and I want that incidents like this must not be repeated," Karzai said in a statement which put the death toll at 10.

Assorted Resistance Action

Aug 17, 2006 KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (Reuters) & AFP News & AP

An attacker exploded bombs strapped to his body as he walked into a police checkpoint in neighbouring Uruzgan province, wounding eight policemen, interior ministry spokesman Yousuf Stanizai said.

Uruzgan police chief Mohammad Qasim said the bomber had detonated explosives strapped to his body as he neared the post while being chased by other police, adding that three of the injured were critically ill.

Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousuf said the group had carried out the attack and the bomber was an Afghan. He said several police had been killed or wounded.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Kurt Dechen, in Springfield, Vt., Aug. 11, 2006. Dechen was killed on Aug. 3, his 24th birthday, in Fallujah, Iraq. (AP Photo/Toby Talbot)

Asshole Secretary Of The Army Mouths Stupid Lie To Block Shorter Downrange Deployments

August 17, 2006 By Gina Cavallaro, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

Troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan are completing a survey from the Center for Army Lessons Learned about aspects of surviving in combat during a unit's first 100 days in theater.

The survey began in theater about 30 days ago and is directed to enlisted soldiers and officers up to the grade of colonel.

A May 2006 CALL study sought to assess whether soldiers were more vulnerable to hostile attacks and likely to suffer more casualties during a unit's first few weeks on the ground in Iraq.

For that study, CALL used public source data on the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and concluded that "While there may be anecdotal evidence that a unit is at greatest risk in its initial weeks in Iraq, the case of 3ACR does not offer evidence that would confirm this theory."

Army Secretary Francis J. Harvey has made reference to the same theory.

In response to questions from soldiers on duty in Iraq about the possibility of shorter rotations, Harvey said he supported shorter rotations, but that because of the level of violence, shorter rotations would make troops more vulnerable.

"The casualty rate is highest in the initial part of the deployment in theater and the final part," he told troops in Baghdad during a visit last May. "For several weeks at the beginning and for several weeks at the end is the peak casualty rate for obvious reasons."

A spokeswoman for the secretary said she was not sure where he had obtained the information.

No, This Is Not A Parody

8.17.06 Washington Times

National Guard troops deployed along the U.S.-Mexico border have been assigned bodyguards, some of the same agents the soldiers were sent to relieve.

British Soldiers Walking Away From War

**“They Don’t Believe That This War Is
Right. They Don’t Believe That They Are
Helping. And They Don’t Want To Go
Back.”**



Reg Keys and Rose Gentle

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

19 August 2006 by Andrew Burgin, Military Families Against the War, Socialist Worker (UK)

Figures released by the ministry of defence this week show that the number of soldiers deserting the army has more than doubled since the start of the Iraq war.

The figures show that 2,030 soldiers went missing from their units between 2003 and 2005 and were later dismissed by the service; 740 are still on the run but have not yet been dismissed.

The situation in Iraq and Afghanistan is descending into chaos. Thousands of innocent lives have been lost in George Bush and Tony Blair’s drive for control of the Middle East.

At home British troops are facing up to the reality of “bringing democracy” to the region; and many are choosing to walk away.

Rose Gentle, whose son Gordon was killed in Iraq said, "Half of these boys are little more than kids.

"They've not got the right equipment. They see their friends killed. It's affected a lot of them mentally. That's why they're not going back.

"Every day I get more and more of these boys calling me. They don't believe that this war is right. They don't believe that they are helping. And they don't want to go back."

Despite having announced a "victory" in Iraq over two years ago, the resistance to the illegal occupation continues to grow.

Rather than bringing democracy, the occupation has pushed the country to the brink of civil war.

In Afghanistan, where troops are there as "peacekeepers", they are under attack on an almost daily basis. Reports have described the conflict as the worst faced by British troops since the Korean war.

Every day our television screens are filled with images of new atrocities as more and more lives are lost, yet Bush and Blair attempt to push towards a new war in Iran.

We have to keep on fighting to get the troops home and against any attack on Iran.

We need to make the demonstration outside the Labour Party conference next month the biggest anti-war mobilisation that Manchester has ever seen.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

8/16/06 Xinhua & Reuters & (KUNA)

Guerrillas in Iraq assassinated on Thursday a senior official of Mosul police station while he was going out of his house in the center of Mosul, about 400 km north of Baghdad, a source from local police told Xinhua.

"Unknown armed men opened fire at the officer while he was walking out of his house in the center city at about 7:30 a.m. (0330 GMT), and he was shot dead immediately," the source said on condition of anonymity.

One Iraqi soldier securing oil fields was found dead, with 13 gunshot wounds to the head, a day after he was kidnapped in Balad, 80 km (50 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Three Iraqi policemen were killed in a car bomb attack in the western suburb of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, on Thursday, police said.

A source at the police said in press remarks a booby-trapped car went off near a police patrol in the upscale Baghdad neighbourhood of Mansur in western Baghdad.

The attack killed three policemen and damaged the vehicle, said the source.

Resistance fighters killed a policeman in the city of Falluja.

An Iraqi interpreter working on a U.S. military base was killed by guerrillas in Mahmudiya, about 30 km (20 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

Five were wounded when a car bomber targeting Kurdish security forces blew himself up on a road in Sinjar, northwest of Mosul, said police Colonel Kareem Khalaf.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“This One Has A Familiar Ring To It”

From: David Honish, Veterans For Peace
To: GI Special
Sent: August 17, 2006
Subject: This one has a familiar ring to it

"You will kill ten of our men, and we will kill one of yours, and in the end it will be you who tire of it." Ho Chi Minh 4 SEP 67

Einstein On Zionism

From: JF
To: GI Special
Sent: August 17, 2006

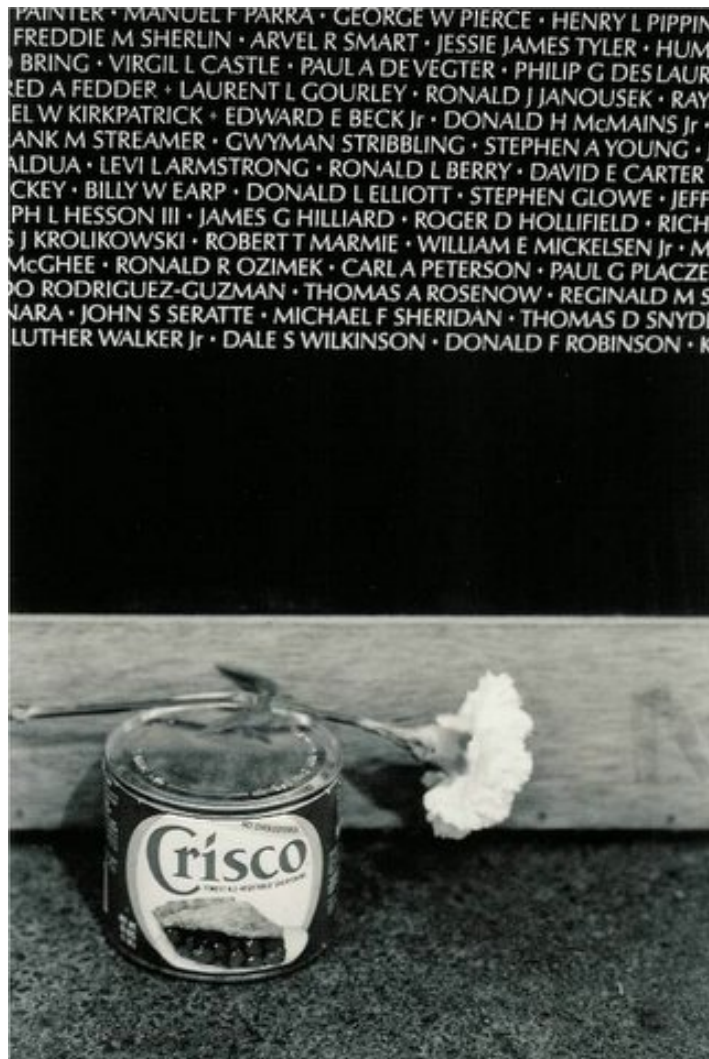
"I should much rather see reasonable agreement with the Arabs on the basis of living together in peace than the creation of a Jewish state.

“Apart from practical consideration, my awareness of the essential nature of Judaism resists the idea of a Jewish state with borders, an army, and a measure of temporal power no matter how modest.

“I am afraid of the inner damage Judaism will sustain, especially from the development of a narrow nationalism within our own ranks, against which we have already had to fight strongly, even without a Jewish state.”

Albert Einstein, 17 April 1938

Silent Scream



From: Richard Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: August 15, 2006
Subject: Silent Scream

Silent Scream

A Vietnam Veteran leaves a powerful message at the Moving Wall in Salem, Oregon, in 1989.

This will be the legacy of the War in Iraq--the Political Incest of the Bush Administration, the betrayal of another generation.

Tie a Yellow Ribbon around the Bull Shit Tree.

The working class and poor Americans will die in Iraq, just like in Vietnam.

I never saw a rich American take his last breath in Vietnam. NEVER!!

Duped by the Rich, so they can get laid in a stretch limousine, while American soldiers get blown to pieces in a Humvee.

The Silent Scream is right in front of you.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
August 15, 2006**

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

“The Officials Are Lining Their Pockets So They Can Pay To Live Abroad While We Rot Here”

“The Economy May Be On The Brink Of Collapse”

18/08/2006 By Oliver Poole in Baghdad, Telegraph Group Limited 2006 [Excerpts]

Iraq has the third largest oil reserves in the world but yesterday drivers were forming mile-long queues outside petrol stations, knowing that they would spend the night in their cars before they could fill up.

Only six weeks ago, Baghdad's streets were jammed with traffic. Now they are nearly empty because pumps have all but run dry.

The official explanation is attacks on infrastructure. A pipeline from the northern oilfields around Kirkuk was targeted last month while the Beiji power station, one of the country's largest, was partially closed after workers fled following death threats.

But drivers queueing outside the Muthana petrol station in central Baghdad suggested that the real reason was crooked officials in the oil ministry. They accused officials of selling fuel to criminal gangs who sell it abroad at a huge profit.

The shortage could have more far-reaching consequences than creating misery for Baghdad's car owners.

It is the latest sign that the economy may be on the brink of collapse. Inflation is running at 50 per cent, corruption is rife and, most importantly, the end of next month will bring to a close the American-funded reconstruction programme, even though electricity in Baghdad remains on for one hour in three at best.

"I have been here since yesterday afternoon and still I am not at the line," said Abu Omar. "The officials are lining their pockets so they can pay to live abroad while we rot here." Others dismissed everyone in the government as "thieves".

The latest report from the oil ministry inspector-general supports their claims. It is estimated that about \$4 billion worth of oil was smuggled out last year.

A report this month by the US special inspectorate general for reconstruction found that only 38 per cent of oil and gas projects had been completed and that nearly a third of planned electricity projects had not even started.

A crucial oil pipeline predicted to bring the government nearly \$15 billion in revenue remains two years behind schedule. There is doubt whether it will ever be finished.

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON



[Thanks to "Anonymous One" who sent this in. He writes: Pretty much what happened.]

**Hezbollah Fighters Emerge From
the Rubble;
“We’re Still Here, We Still Have Our
Lives, We Still Have Our Land”**

“If This Is The Sacrifice For Dignity, This Is Nothing”



“Rice, They Will Not See Ur New Mideast”

Lebanese men, sitting in the back of a pick-up truck, flash V-signs as they cross under a banner signed by the Hezbollah in the southern town of Kfar Kila, Lebanon, Aug. 17, 2006. (AP Photo/Mohammed Zaatari)

[Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

August 15, 2006 By Anthony Shadid, Washington Post Foreign Service

KHIAM, Lebanon, Aug. 14

A little after dawn Monday, the shells crashed every few seconds. The last fell at 7:56 a.m. Then they stopped, as suddenly as they had begun 33 days before. And into the streets of this Shiite Muslim town, where electricity wires laced through rubble and a tree branch sprawled across the hood of a green BMW, the fighters emerged, bathed in a cool mountain breeze.

There was no gunfire in the air, no chants, no jubilant displays of celebration. There were, rather, the satisfied expressions of survival. Men embraced, kissing each other's

cheeks, some emerging into sunlight for the first time in weeks. Cellphones, in almost everyone's hand, rang with queries of others' whereabouts, the fate of houses and the reality of a cease-fire that still seemed fragile.

They smiled. "Thank God for your safety" was the refrain.

And Hussein Kalash, burly, hard and confident, offered three words that defined the war for Khiam's defenders, the Hezbollah fighters.

"We're still here," he said.

The war ended Monday -- at least for now -- in Khiam, a hilltop town perched within eyesight of the Israeli border. But the fighters began weaving the narratives even before a bulldozer threw up dust as it cleared rubble from the town's tattered streets, where hardly a building was untouched. They were myths of resistance -- of tanks repulsed across the fertile plain that frames the town; of surviving on chocolate and water for two weeks along the town's front line; of faith serving as their greatest weapon.

In an undecided war, perception becomes paramount, and the gaggles of fighters Monday, some with drawn faces, others with a look of contentment, walked like victors through a town that was gouged, cratered and pockmarked but, they said, still theirs.

"They couldn't enter," said Abu Abboud, wearing a jersey that read "Narkotic" and khaki military-style pants.

He sat on a short staircase, rubble skirting the building, its facade torn by shelling. Its red and yellow steel gates were tossed in the street like crumpled pieces of paper. A cat tentatively crawled through the wreckage, as Israeli aircraft sounded overhead. He greeted another fighter, in military-style pants and black hiking boots, black prayer beads hung around his neck.

"Either we live with dignity and strength or death is better," he said.

Conveying the Wounded

Two ambulances arrived on the outskirts of Khiam at 10:10 a.m., past charred, terraced fields. They were met by a man named Abu Heidar, dressed in khakis. He had a cigarette in one hand. In the other was his cellphone, and he pleaded for help.

"It's closed," he shouted, staring at the road. "What about the way near the house next to your friend?"

Concrete was sprayed on the ground before the ambulances, some pieces the size of glass shards, others like boulders.

Abu Heidar turned to the ambulance driver, pointing to the wounded fighters in the town.

"You need to get up there," he told him, taking the phone away from his ear.

The driver's face was tense and tired. "I know the way, but it's blocked," he answered. "What can we do?"

The ambulances plowed ahead, and turned back. They lurched forward, then returned. One Red Cross volunteer heaved rocks from the road himself, helped by Abu Heidar, and they tentatively crept forward to a street near the May Salon for Women, where a purple veil was still draped on the head of a mannequin. On one wall was a poster: "Israel is an absolute evil." Cologne worn by one of the fighters gave off a faint scent. In the floors above, window frames were torn from balconies, their curtains fluttering in the breeze.

Three fighters carried out the first of the wounded, an elderly woman with a stare so blank it seemed lifeless. Flies gathered unnoticed on her still body. The fighters clambered across the rubble and past a few unspent bullets, pieces of shrapnel the size of a fist, a charred bed spring and the twisted fender of a vehicle. Before them was a blackened car that looked like a tin can ripped open.

A wounded fighter followed. His head was bandaged, and an IV was hooked to his arm.

"Just a minute," one of the fighters told the Red Cross volunteer. The fighter pointed to where he was hurt, and they carefully hoisted him onto another stretcher. He gripped his wallet across his chest. "Little by little," one of the fighters said.

Another fighter followed, gingerly walking in black sandals. His head was bandaged, as well as his right arm and left hand, where an IV was connected. His face was sprinkled with scabs. As he approached the ambulance, he gave Kalash a number to call.

"I'm safe," he said into the phone. "Tell everyone there. There's no time now, they want to take me, but I'll call you later."

By noon, about 20 men had emerged on the sidewalk. Some had walkie-talkies, the communication of choice for Hezbollah guerrillas. Many wore civilian shirts over military-style pants. A few had sneakers, others hiking boots. After weeks of staying away from cellphones, fearing the Israeli military might pinpoint the calls, they chatted aimlessly: whether they would be sent elsewhere in southern Lebanon, who was where, who was hurt.

"Everything's okay, it's okay, I just saw him," one called out.

Estimates of the number of fighters ran into the hundreds in Kham, a town once best known for an Israeli-run prison that Hezbollah turned into a museum after the 18-year Israeli occupation of the south ended in 2000. After this war started, Israeli aircraft destroyed it.

A War Of Perceptions

A few of the fighters were exuberant, filled with bravado from a battle they clearly believed they had won.

"We don't want it to end," Kalash said. He pointed toward the Israeli border. "We want to keep going, all the way inside."

More common among the fighters was the subdued demeanor of Abu Khafif, the heavysset, bearded commander, who drove through the town square in a black Mercedes, the rim of a flat tire on the car creaking across the street. Its windshield was cracked like a spider web, and a rifle sat in the front seat.

In black pants, a black Izod shirt and white Fila tennis shoes, he was friendly, smiling as he asked another fighter to change the tire. A black plastic bag with five AK-47 assault rifles sat next to the spare tire, and he casually stocked the trunk with canned luncheon meat and a 10-liter bottle of water. He was confident, grinning at questions. But he was professional, leery of saying anything too revealing.

"Are you going to bother me with talk?" he asked. "I'm not a spokesman, I'm a fighter."

There was a word repeated time and again Monday in Khiam, by both fighters and the residents who chose to stay through the war.

It was karama , or dignity.

In the speeches of Arab leaders, ridden with clichés that often provided the rhetorical buttress of authoritarian regimes, it had come to lose much of its meaning. But in Khiam, it was uttered so often, so fervently, that it felt different.

"This is our land," said Bilal Ali Saleh, a 42-year-old beekeeper. "Can we leave our land? Would you leave your land?"

He looked out at the street, where two men carried bundles of bottled water. He glided his hand across his black beard, peppered with gray, grown because, he said, no barber had opened since the war started. And he spoke softly, almost matter-of-factly.

"I remember that the Arab armies in 1967 were defeated in a few days. The Israelis advanced across hundreds of kilometers of land. From what you see here in the south, from what you hear on the radio, they advanced seven kilometers in 33 days, and they couldn't go any further," Saleh said.

"Is that not a victory? Do you consider it a legend or not?"

"My view, my sense of this, is that no one who comes from their land and is attached to it can ever be defeated," he added. "It is the land of their fathers, it is the land of their grandfathers."

Saleh had stayed the entire time in Khiam. He hadn't tended to his bees, which he kept a few miles outside town. "You think I could go there?" he asked. His store selling household goods was destroyed. He had sent his wife, two sons and three daughters to Beirut. And he weathered the Israeli shelling in Khiam, munitions falling so often that he said it felt like bubbles bursting in boiling water.

"It wasn't less than 20,000 shells that fell here, that's my impression," he said.

Waiting For The Raid

After the shelling started, fighters from Hezbollah and another Shiite movement, Amal, waited for what they feared would be an Israeli commando raid. They said shopkeepers had left their keys to provide food -- tuna, luncheon meat and rice. They slaughtered goats, but slept little. Much of it was a test of endurance; for the first three weeks, no Israeli troops approached the town.

But on Wednesday, after dark, fighters said, two Israeli tank columns approached, one heading toward the Christian town of Marjayoun, another into the plain below Khiam, interspersed with cedars and olive trees.

Residents said fighters took cover in a school and in several houses that were already destroyed down the hill. Amal fighters had lighter weapons, one fighter said; Hezbollah's far more numerous militiamen had the heavier armaments to use against tanks. By Thursday morning, fighting had erupted.

A 35-year-old fighter said they destroyed two tanks in the morning, then struck again when the Israelis tried to withdraw the equipment the next day. He said they struck other tanks and armored vehicles before the cease-fire went into effect Monday -- a dozen, perhaps more. The fighters believed Israeli troops were trying to enter the city, although there was no indication of that. Other fighters said the militiamen manning the lower hills of Khiam survived on candy bars and water, too wary to move elsewhere for food.

But even Monday, after the guns fell silent, secrecy prevailed.

At one house where men were gathered, shouts of "Go! Go!" greeted approaching people. To any question on strategy, the 35-year-old fighter demurred. As for his name, he shook his head. On Hezbollah's own losses, he declined to answer.

The fighter -- who described himself as a 20-year veteran, recruited while still in high school -- stood in a gutted, unfinished house. An incinerated rocket-propelled grenade launcher was next to him, beside a barely recognizable carcass of a car.

"The Israelis said this was a battle for life and death, but with everything they had, they couldn't defeat us," he said.

By afternoon, fighters mingled with residents in festive scenes dissonant with the destruction around them. They drew on references to the Shiite faith, whose narrative intersects with Hezbollah's Lebanese and Arab nationalism. Nearby, a poster of two militiamen read, "Lebanon is victorious with its martyrs." A passenger in one passing car flashed a V-for-victory sign.

A bulldozer barreled down the streets, sweeping chunks of concrete, clods of asphalt and Coke bottles to the side. It worked quickly and recklessly; at one point, it knocked down the rest of the wall of a collapsed house. Cars began plying the streets again, and people returned to the streets, some sitting in the sidewalks near the Abu Abbas market, whose windows were shattered.

"Money comes and goes. This is all money," said Hassan Sweid, a 37-year-old resident, his eyes darting around the block. "We're still here, we still have our lives, we still have our land."

"If this is the sacrifice for dignity, this is nothing."

The Master Race, Whipped In Lebanon, Bravely Turns On Palestinian Farmers And Shepherds

[Thanks to JM, who sent these articles. She writes: Whist the eyes of the world have been focused on Lebanon the Israeli government has started the process of genocide in Gaza.

[In the West bank they have stepped up the confiscation of Palestinian land and are herding the population into ghettos that are no more than prisons. This is information received from Palestine and I have added some notes of explanation.]

Palestinian Farmers, Shepherds And Shopkeepers Face The Destruction Of Their Livelihoods



Closed shops in the old city of Hebron

August 13th, 2006, Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign

The Zionist project to force Palestinians to leave their cities, villages and homes in order to make space for further colonization of the West Bank is continuing unabated. Livelihoods of petty merchants, farmers and shepherds are systematically destroyed leaving hardly any chances for survival behind the ghetto walls.

In the old city of Hebron, the Occupation forces orders shop owners in 21 different roads to close their shops. Most of the shops are located in the area around the Abraham mosque, in the central square of the old city.

This area has already been almost ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian residents as a result of the continuous harassment and threats of the Zionist forces and settlers. Keeping shops open in this area has become an act of resistance as continuous curfews and the risk clients have to take to come to the shops render almost any commercial activity unprofitable.

West of the city, in Beit Ula, the Occupation Forces continue to bar farmers from accessing and harvesting their land behind the Wall. This closure comes at time when most of the crops are ready for harvesting.

The crops are now rotting on the land while the farmers lose the entire income of their work and their investments. "This is just another step to steal our land and to isolate it from our reach," points out one of the effected farmers.

The Occupation Forces have further confiscated the ID cards from the farmers that have attempted to reach their lands and forced them to go to the military base in Jaba'a, in south Bethlehem, to get their ID cards back.

In the Qalqiliya district new confiscation orders are still being handed out. The Occupation forces announced the theft of 8 dunums from Hajja, east of Qalqiliya, in order to construct another military base. The base will rise west of the village on lands belonging to families from Hajja and Kufr Laqif. It is located north of the settlers' road which connects Karne Shamron and Ma'aleh Shamron settlement bloc.

In the Jordan Valley, the Occupation Forces pester the shepherds in Sahel Libqe'a and bar them from entering their land. In the last week, soldiers have repeatedly attacked the shepherds in Sahel Libqe'a, east Tamoun, beat them, confiscated their ID cards and expelled them from their lands.

The mechanisms implemented to destroy Palestinian livelihoods are diverse and uncountable. The Occupation is relentlessly encroaching on every aspect of Palestinian economy and life.

MORE:

Life In The Ghettos:

Closed Checkpoints, Iron Gates And Surveillance Cameras

August 13th, 2006, Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign

In the Hebron district, the watch-tower controlling the northern entrance to Hebron city has been equipped with surveillance cameras. The tower overlooks the Palestinian road from Hebron to Bethlehem and the settlers' road that connects the Zionist colonies in Hebron to Jerusalem. To make things worse, a checkpoint has been placed on the Palestinian road forcing people to endure long and humiliating procedures.

[Israel is still building settlement roads on confiscated land. These are well constructed and Palestinians are not allowed on them. They use inferior roads or tracks. -- J]

MORE:

Occupation Forces Close Only Entrance In Qusin Village, Nablus

August 12th, 2006 Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign,

Occupation Forces have started uprooting and levelling lands east of Qusin village, situated to the west of Nablus.

The destruction of Palestinian lands is in preparation for fencing beginning from the Beit Iba checkpoint (north east of the village) until Jet village (south east). Part of the wider Apartheid Wall project which ghettoises Palestinians throughout the West Bank, the fencing will isolate villagers from Nablus city.

A major historical Palestinian road linking Nablus to Tulkarem once ran through the village. However, the Occupation developed "Road 60" which cut the Palestinian road from the north to the south and ensured Zionist colonies became linked to each other.

Three years ago the Occupation began to construct trenches along this road, blocking Palestinian access. With this apartheid road running west of the village, the road to the east serves as the only entrance to Qusin. It is exactly this eastern side where works for additional fences are currently underway.

To clear the way for this fencing, the Occupation Forces have ordered a series of shop owners south east of Qusin to leave their premises and move to the village centre.

To the north of Qusin extends a mountainous area, unusable for cars and public transportation. South of the village, the Occupation has built a checkpoint containing a military camp, and protecting an industrial zone for chemical factories built on 30 dunums of the village lands.

[Israel always builds military sites etc close to settled areas, normally only Arab ones. This is why Hezbollah missiles killed some Israeli Arabs. They were aiming at military bases and missed the target. Nuclear waste and sewerage from settlements is also deposited near Palestinian villages and towns. -- J.]

Recently an additional area of 2000 dunums was taken by confiscation orders to allow the expansion of this industrial zone. This not only steals more land from Palestinians but also increases the pollution from the zone containing chemical plants that have already caused numerous health problems for villagers and the surrounding environment.

Dozens of olive and almonds trees located close to the industrial zone have died because of chemical waste dumped on the land by Zionist colonizers. The toxic fumes released by the factories have also increased the number of cancer cases and related diseases amongst villagers.

Once the fencing is completed, Qusin will be completely cut-off and isolated from the rest of Palestine.

Encaged from all sides, villagers will be left without sustainable means of livelihoods, while the overall structure of apartheid roads, fences and colonies isolate the cities of Nablus and Tulkarem.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

Bush Said To Be Frustrated By Level of Public Support in Iraq [He Has Lots Of Company]

8.16.06 New York Times

President Bush, at a private meeting, said he is concerned about the lack of progress in Iraq and frustrated that the new Iraqi government -- and the Iraqi people -- has not shown greater public support for the American mission in that country.

[Adolph Hitler, at a private meeting, said he is concerned about the lack of progress in Norway and frustrated that the new Norwegian government -- and the Norwegian people -- has not shown greater public support for the German mission in that country.

[Hideki Tojo, at a private meeting, said he is concerned about the lack of progress in China and frustrated that the new Chinese government -- and the Chinese people -- has not shown greater public support for the Japanese mission in that country.

[Joseph Stalin, at a private meeting, said he is concerned about the lack of progress in Czechoslovakia and frustrated that the new Czech government -- and the Czechoslovakia people -- has not shown greater public support for the Russian mission in that country.

[President Johnson, at a private meeting, said he is concerned about the lack of progress in Vietnam and frustrated that the new Vietnamese government -- and the Vietnamese people -- has not shown greater public support for the American mission in that country.

[Chairman Mao Zedong, at a private meeting, said he is concerned about the lack of progress in Tibet and frustrated that the new Tibetan government -- and the Tibetan people -- has not shown greater public support for the Chinese mission in that country.]

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.

Judge Rules Against The Traitor Bush:

NSA Spying On Citizens Unconstitutional

August 18, 2006 By Dan Eggen and Dafna Linzer, Washington Post Staff Writers
[Excerpts]

A federal judge in Detroit ruled yesterday that the National Security Agency's warrantless surveillance program is unconstitutional, delivering the first decision that the Bush administration's effort to monitor communications without court oversight runs afoul of the Bill of Rights and federal law.

U.S. District Judge Anna Diggs Taylor ordered a halt to the wiretap program, secretly authorized by President Bush in 2001, but both sides in the lawsuit agreed to delay that action until a Sept. 7 hearing. Legal scholars said Taylor's decision is likely to receive heavy scrutiny from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit when the Justice Department appeals, and some criticized her ruling as poorly reasoned.

Ruling in a lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union and other advocacy groups in the Eastern District of Michigan, Taylor said that the NSA wiretapping program, aimed at communications by potential terrorists, violates privacy and free speech rights and the constitutional separation of powers among the three branches of government. She also found that the wiretaps violate the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the 1978 law instituted to provide judicial oversight of clandestine surveillance within the United States.

"It was never the intent of the framers to give the president such unfettered control, particularly where his actions blatantly disregard the parameters clearly enumerated in the Bill of Rights," Taylor wrote in her 43-page opinion. ". . .

"There are no hereditary Kings in America and no powers not created by the Constitution. So all 'inherent powers' must derive from that Constitution."

The eavesdropping program, revealed in news reports in December 2005, allows the NSA to intercept telephone calls and e-mails between the United States and overseas without court approval in cases in which the government suspects one party of having links to terrorism.

The NSA declined to discuss Taylor's ruling or whether it had suspended any surveillance activities.

Several dozen lawsuits have been filed around the country challenging the program's legality, but yesterday's ruling marked the first time that a judge had ruled it unconstitutional.

The Justice Department argued that the NSA program is well within Bush's authority as president, but that proving it would require revealing state secrets. Taylor agreed with the ACLU and other plaintiffs that many details about the

program had already been publicly acknowledged by numerous government officials, including Bush.

The ruling was hailed by lawyers involved in related, though legally separate, lawsuits elsewhere in the country.

"We now have a ruling on the books that upholds what we've been saying all along: that this wiretapping program violates the Constitution," said Kevin Bankston, staff attorney for the Electronic Frontier Foundation in San Francisco, which has filed a class-action case against AT&T. The suit alleges that the telecommunications company collaborated with the NSA in its surveillance program.

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)



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

Got That Right

August 17, 2006 Joe Balshone, Firebase-Humor

One day a fourth-grade teacher asked the children what their fathers did for a living.

All the typical answers came up....Fireman, Mechanic, Businessman, Salesman, Doctor, Lawyer, and so forth.

But little Justin was being uncharacteristically quiet, so when the teacher prodded him about his father, he replied, "My father's an exotic dancer in a gay cabaret and takes off all his clothes in front of other men and they put money in his underwear. Sometimes, if the offer is really good, he will go home with some guy and make love with him for money."

The teacher, obviously shaken by this statement, hurriedly set the other children to work on some exercises and then took little Justin aside to ask him, "Is that really true about your father?"

"No," the boy said, "He works for the Democratic National Committee and is helping to secure the nomination of Hillary Clinton....."

"But I was too embarrassed to say that in front of the other kids."

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