

GI SPECIAL 4H2:



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace]

“Without Much Doubt In My Mind, If I Were An Iraqi Under The U.S. Occupation, I’d Be An Insurgent”

“I Believed In The Mission Because I Had To;

After All, What Soldier Wants To Die For An Unworthy Cause?”



This was the scene in October of 2003 after U.S. soldiers nearly broke the arms of a fragile elderly Iraqi man (in pink head-covering) as they tossed him “zip-tied” to the ground during a raid in Husaybah, an Iraqi town near the Syrian border that is a suspected entry point for foreign insurgent fighters. (This is not a photo of the U.S. Special Forces soldier described in the article.) Nir Rosen

“You couldn’t escape the fact that our actions only fueled the insurgency. For every insurgent or jihadist we caught, we created two times as many future fighters.”

Jun 27, 2006 By Nir Rosen, Truthdig, L.L.C. [Excerpts]

Editor’s note: The following is an oral history of a U.S. soldier who served with the Army’s Special Forces during the allied occupation of Iraq in 2003 and 2004, as told to journalist Nir Rosen.

The oral history is composed almost entirely of e-mail correspondences that Rosen received from the soldier, who wished to remain anonymous.

About the soldier: He served in Iraq during 2003 and 2004 as part of a Special Forces unit whose job, as he told Rosen, was to “hunt enemies and destroy their networks” --to go after “former masterminds and leaders of Saddam’s Baath Party.”

His targets soon morphed into members of “Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia” and insurgents—“a broad term that extended to criminals, influential gangs, bomb-making masterminds and generally pissed-off Arabs across the Sunni Triangle laid off by CPA Order #2-- which dismissed all Baath Party members.”

The soldier left the Army in May 2005 but can be recalled in case of a “national emergency.” He joked to Rosen that “the day we invade Iran or North Korea is the day that I become a Canadian citizen.”

Rosen met the soldier in Washington, D.C., during the spring of 2006 and struck up a friendship, “feeling a bond,” in Rosen’s words, “that all who have served in Iraq in some way must feel.”

About the soldier’s wish to remain anonymous, he wrote the following to Rosen:

“If my friends from the army even knew I was corresponding with a journalist, I’d probably lose a lot of respect. I am bound by legal contract and personal loyalty to protect the operational security (OPSEC) of my former unit.

“Because of the sensitivity of their work, their insane burden in Iraq (I still have friends in the military), and the oath of my contract, it is illegal for me to discuss many things; units we work with, equipment, locations, technology, and activity within the country, etc. Furthermore, as I was raised in the community of special operations, I am skeptical almost to the point of paranoia about talking to anyone about Iraq outside of my former unit and family. There is a good reason for this—namely: Loose lips sink ships.”

Nir Rosen’s account of the soldier’s oral history begins below.

My friend wanted to begin his recounting of his time in Iraq by discussing “the character of the American men fighting this war.” He joked that “it might be a shock to some of the architects of this war that our fighters don’t read magazines like The Weekly Standard or The New Republic or give a rat’s ass about where our occupation in Iraq is headed.”

He continued:

“The reason most of them signed up for service (me included) was to get some action, destroy Al Qaeda and come home with a body count to brag about at a local bar. Who gives a fuck about the rest? I think it can be best summed up in a conversation I overheard at my recruitment station. When one kid was asked why he joined the infantry, he didn’t have any doubts: ‘I enlisted to kill towelheads.’

“The very nature of special operations and the infantry is to kill and/or capture dangerous people, destroy shit and prevent attacks. Creating rapport with the local population isn’t really part of the vocabulary—especially if the local population is as insanely dangerous as Iraq. In the eyes of many fellow soldiers who signed up because of 9/11, and because of the Bush administration’s portrayal of Iraq as part of the ‘war on terror,’ many of the guys fully believed that they were in a hunt (for) men responsible for the blood bath in lower Manhattan.”

My friend added that regardless of where soldiers are, “be that a foreign country or a local bar in a military town, they usually wear out their welcome anywhere they go—they’ve perfected the skill.”

My friend stressed that “our officers took extra special care to fully explain the Rules of Engagement (ROE) in formal briefings to men in my company, and over the course of 140 missions they practiced professional restraint with their actions.

But there is also a golden explicit rule with everything you do in war: Make sure that your ass comes home alive.

This necessitates aggressive infantry platoon behavior on the part of the U.S. military that ultimately results in something quite the opposite of our stated goals: ‘building democracy’ and winning ‘hearts and minds.’

While we were largely successful in hunting the men we were pursuing, my personal impression was that we probably created two times more insurgents than we caught, not to mention the communities we greatly angered with our raids.

Our actions were a direct contribution to, as (allied commander) Gen. George Casey said in September 2005, an occupation that is ‘fueling the insurgency.’ ”

He told me a story about his platoon’s return to the U.S. after its second deployment to Iraq, when its members went to see the premiere of the film “Team America.” Made by the creators of television’s “South Park,” “Team America” was a comical marionette action flick about a jingoistic fire team whose utter recklessness was matched by their righteous yahoo attitude that America must preserve the very fabric of civilization. No film has more accurately depicted our presence in Iraq; it was a looking glass and it instantly became a platoon favorite.

There is a classic scene in the movie where Team America’s overbearing red, white and blue helicopter lands on top of a bazaar in the Middle East, crushing an Arab’s cashew stand. The side of the helicopter read: “We Protect, We Serve, We Care.”

That scene hit so close to home, it was scary.

Later in the movie, in a high-speed chase against terrorists, a missile gets misfired and destroys the Sphinx (in Egypt). “The movie theater, packed with guys from my platoon, was howling with laughter.

We even sarcastically recited lines from the theme songs ‘Freedom Isn’t Free’ and ‘America, Fuck Yeah’ before and after missions on our third tour in the winter of 2005.

“By then the disconnect between the lofty rhetoric of our leaders and the crap we dealt with on the ground couldn’t have been greater.

The mentality of soldiers in Iraq is compounded by a group of factors; wrecked relationships, senselessly drawn-out deployments, sex/alcohol deprivation, and getting mortared on a nightly basis, to name a few.”

He added that “Iraq is a scary fucking place. Every hard-hitting thing we did there was due in large part to our fear of that place.”

My friend explained that over the course of his three deployments to Iraq he discovered what he described as a “breakthrough method of communicating in foreign languages. It was so cutting-edge that Rosetta Stone (the language-training program) doesn’t even know about it. It goes something like this: The louder you yell at an Arab in English, the more the Arab will understand you.

“I’ve seen this done by my brothers in arms on a hundred-plus occasions. Hell, even I did it. And let me be the first to exclaim that it works wonders. The language barrier has done irreversible damage to our entire occupation.

“On the rare occasions that we’ve had men who speak the language with us, it has yielded key information; in one case it almost resulted in the capture of a high-value target. I can’t begin to imagine the kind of miscommunication damage we could have avoided had we had interpreters during two of our three deployments.

“Nothing adds to the disconnect between U.S. soldiers and the Iraqi populace like absolute miscommunication. We are astronauts and they are Martians, plain and simple. The average soldier looks like Buzz Aldrin, loaded with enough high-tech gear to land him on the set of a sci-fi flick.

“Every night we descend unexpectedly upon Mars from helicopters. Under the cover of darkness we prowl across mud-hut villages on the search for wanted Martians that communicate with each other in weird, harsh sounds. As a matter of fact, the glow on our eyes created from our night observation devices earned us a nickname by Sunni Arabs across Al Anbar; they called us the ‘men with green eyes.’ ”

Many of his missions in the Anbar province of western Iraq involved “ground insertion,” which meant that “we had to shoot our vehicles through multiple narrow streets to hit the objective. I remember one night vividly breaking the rear-view of every car parked on both sides of the street for three blocks, because our Stryker vehicle couldn’t be accommodated on the road. When we reversed the vehicle after a wrong turn, we backed right into a Red Crescent van, putting a four-foot dent into the side of the ambulance and shattering its rear lights. Every time we went out, vehicular damage onto Iraqi-owned cars was always common in urban terrain.”

One evening his unit thought it had a breakthrough of “actionable intelligence,” he told me. “Some leading figures in the insurgency were believed to be at a meeting in a farmhouse off the Euphrates River: some six officials in total.

The mission was treated with an abnormal level of planning. We rolled out with a large group of men, using both ground and air assets. When reaching the objective, men in the house burst out running in multiple directions. Brought just for that scenario was an

attack dog trained to stop insurgents from getting away. Trained to attack the arms, he was sent to catch one of the fleeing men.

“By the time the guy returned, his arm was so torn up, it looked like it had been shot by an AK-47 7.62-millimeter round. We rushed the man back for immediate medical assistance. An American doctor sewed his arm back together. After a thorough investigation, it was concluded that all six men had no intelligence value.

“Our interrogators smelled a rat, so they brought the accuser into the room of the men we captured. From what I heard, they were livid. ‘He is a car thief! He is a criminal!’ Apparently he was from a rival tribe and had a feud.

“They were taken back to their home, courtesy of the U.S. ‘Oops, We Fucked Up’ cab company. They dropped off all of the captured men and the accuser at the same location. After all of the time and resources spent on that one, street justice was given its time to take care of that one. This would be one of the few cases that I was aware of when the innocent men were given reparations; medicine for the arm and \$500, a decent sum by Iraqi standards.”

The only ice cream my friend ever had in Iraq was when his unit raided an ice cream parlor run by two suspected resistance fighters in a major Sunni city. “After grabbing them in a daytime raid in front of hundreds at a local souk,” he told me, “we dumped enough of their ice cream to feed our entire platoon in one of our assault packs. By the time we got back to base, most of it had melted. A hole at the bottom of the pack made to let out water was flowing out with a stream of white vanilla cream onto the sand. It must have been 110 degrees. We ate what we could and couldn’t stop laughing about what had transpired.”

My friend described a “highly planned mission that utilized many military assets ... over 200 special forces went on a head hunt against a high-value target in the heart of Al Anbar.” The mission occurred at 1 p.m. on a Friday, prayer time in the Muslim world.

“What essentially transpired was the seizure of two central mosques right in the middle of prayer time—our target was believed to be in one of the mosques.

“Two other platoons were in charge of taking over three surrounding blocks of families ‘sympathetic’ to the insurgency. When we rolled up to the central mosque, you could see hundreds of pairs of shoes and sandals lined out by the front door.

By the time my platoon had raided a local house, which including the standard demolition of a locked gate door with a linear charge, we launched into the family’s two-story house with three fire teams. Our entrance included accidentally stepping all over the family’s freshly prepared lunch of salad and kabobs—Arabs typically eat on the floor.

“After kicking down every door, busting open every cabinet and flipping over every mattress, unearthing every prayer rug and breaking every lock in the house in the search for weapons and bombs, we proceeded to detain a 15-old-kid (‘male of active age,’ i.e. possible insurgent) and tossed him in our Humvee while his

mom cried and pleaded with us that he was innocent (at least that's what I thought she said; none of us had an Arabic vocabulary besides 'Shut up' 'Stop or I'll shoot' and 'Get the fuck out of my face').

"It required a unique form of telepathic genius to understand the people we were liberating if you didn't understand Arabic, and none of us possessed that skill. After our block was pacified, we linked up down the road at the central mosque.

By that point another platoon had very clearly disrupted prayer service, as testified by hundred of Sunni Arab men standing on the front landing of the mosque giving us what I could only refer to as the 'Arab look of death.'

"Another team herded a line of stumbling blindfolded and handcuffed men like cattle into one of our vehicles. By that time at least 20 of us had our weapons pointed at the Muslim congregation, not taking any chances. A fire team across the road was jumping over a nearby wall and breaking into a backyard shed. Two F-16s flew in figure eights overhead, buzzing the city and reminding any cavalier haji (our affectionate term for Arab citizen) that day to think twice before they act.

"We detained some 15 men, including the target's brother (the main target was apparently a no-show that day).

"We rolled out staring at a thoroughly humiliated community on their most sacred day. Their home doors blown off their hinges, some of their teenage children stolen by Kafirs, and in the house that I raided, a hard-earned lunch kicked across the dirty floor. We would later return to the same neighborhood three times during that deployment, looking for the same guy.

"Each time, doors were blown off their recently repaired hinges, house glass was broken, car tires were slashed, the few interior possessions found in the houses were thrown around, damaged and destroyed. But still, we couldn't find the guy we were looking for. We would go on to conduct a follow-on mission on that specific day, raiding a building reported to house 'eight hard-core Syrian fighters.' We blew down the door with electrical charging tape to find a broken Kawasaki dirt bike.

"We also went down the road to an elementary school (school was out that day) that was reported to be an arms cache for the insurgency, and our orders were to raid the entire building. After breaking into one room only to find school books, one of our officers ... called back the mission and decided any further damage to the school was folly, given the apparent effort to win 'hearts and minds' across Iraq."

One summer evening my friend's unit targeted a sheik who was reportedly a mastermind of the resistance. The sheik lived in a mansion behind a tire store, my friend recalled. "He reportedly had the material and spiritual support of the surrounding area. Thus, the objective of our mission would be not just to capture the sheik, but to capture every male in the entire neighborhood for intelligence about the sheik.

"I was in the fire team whose objective was to raid the house next door to the sheik's. Approaching the house, we tried to enter in text-book fashion; using something called the 'hooligan tool' to break the lock on the front door.

"After two unsuccessful tries, we used a steel rammer, which did nothing but break the glass on the door. Then we went with Plan C: we turned the door handle on the door next to the one we were trying to break. The door was unlocked. Our two teams then flowed in, full of yelling to add to the shock value of our dynamic entry. 'Get the fuck down,' 'Shut the fuck up,' 'Don't move,' etc. Of the four rooms in the house, two were full of women and children, the other a kitchen, and the fourth, a middle-aged man and a senior citizen.

Three of our men rushed the man while the old man on an oxygen tank starting hitting a couple of us with his cane. The old man was quickly dropped to the floor, next to his oxygen tank, while we zip-tied his arms and legs. This wasn't out of personal preference, but we were trying to control the situation. I walked out the blindfolded middle-aged man, who was weak and fell to his knees, trembling and mortified. His wife and two daughters were crying hysterically. I can only guess that they thought I was going to execute him.

I wish I knew enough Arabic to tell him that things would be OK if he was innocent, but honestly, why should I be confident enough to say that? Tens of thousands of innocent Iraqis have been thrown in detention facilities across the country with incompetent oversight and filtering processes. Even if I did know Arabic, I probably wouldn't want to tell him the honest truth: 'Sir, after you leave here, I'm sorry, but I have no fucking idea what's going to happen to you.'

"After consolidating the detainees we got the orders to clear the surrounding structures. After running with two fire teams across a typical Iraqi backyard farm, we used a shot gun to blast open the door lock. Unbeknownst to us, we were about to score a major intelligence victory in the war on terror: a den of 40 smelly goats. We immediately took one casualty on that raid, a goat got hit in the ass with one of the buckshots. If our raid on 20 homes wasn't yet successful in waking up everyone in the neighborhood, then that pissed-off goat sure did the job.

We had to seek cover on the rear side of the building as another team 'leapfrogged' to an adjacent house. In all of our distraction, the goats poured out of their den. When we eventually left the objective, I saw the group of goats wandering down the main highway that we had taken on our way to the sheik's crib. We just had conducted a raid of liberation.

I was reminded of one of Gen. Zinni's early warnings about Iraq: 'There are congressmen today who want to fund the Iraqi Liberation Act, and let some silk-suited, Rolex-wearing guys in London gin up an expedition. We'll equip a thousand fighters and arm them with 97 million dollars' worth of AK-47s and insert them into Iraq. And what will we have? A Bay of Goats, most likely.' Just add 130,000 U.S. soldiers and hundreds of billions of dollars to the equation and the statement still stands.

“Acting on intelligence and orders beyond our control, we succeeded that night in sending a father of four off to who knows where, losing his livestock livelihood that barely made ends meet, detaining five others guilty of living in that neighborhood and finding no sheik.”

“Before departing, I remember a wild dog staring at me in the eye as he consumed the flesh of a fellow dead dog. Our presence didn’t seem to faze him.

On the way back from this glorious mission, we came onto an unexpected surprise. To our great amusement, in the middle of desert nowhere (the closest village was eight miles away), we found two men engaged in passionate homosexual intercourse on top a sand dune. I don’t think they were expecting any extra company. I guess nowhere was safe in Al Anbar from the U.S. occupation.”

My friend quipped that “infantry soldiers have never been known for their raw talent in mathematics.” Therefore the explosives charges made by soldiers sometimes exceed the bare minimum necessary to blow off a door handle.

“In one case,” he told me, “I watched a charge succeed in blowing a door five feet across a living room. Being as the suspect was about to open the door after hearing the ruckus on his doorstep, he went airborne as well. And the steel door landed on top of him. Like in a scene out of the movie ‘Heat,’ blood and puss flowed down both of his ears on the trip back to base.”

During the summer, my friend’s unit temporarily inhabited one of Uday Hussein’s palaces on the Tigris River. “It was fully furnished with gold-leaf furniture,” he said, “working bidets and a nice swimming pool. As the story goes, he had women walk in circles by the pool and he chose which one to rape for the evening. We just used the pool to forget about the fact that we were in Iraq.

That summer our tanning sessions by the pool were often interrupted by mortar attacks on our compound. Apparently the chain of command threatened a scorched-earth policy on the surrounding farm communities if they didn’t put a stop to whoever was doing it.

We also did our part by directing warning shots at local fishermen floating slowly down the Tigris River and staring at the compound. If they didn’t get the point the first time, we shot closer to their boat. They would get the message and start rowing like Vikings on speed until they were out of our eyesight. It was only in our self-interest to keep all unwanted activity away from our bases. By the summer of 2004, all trust had fully dissipated.”

My friend was rare in that he had somehow overcome the necessary brainwashing soldiers undergo and was able to critically assess his role in Iraq.

“In hindsight,” he said, “I have often asked myself what my reaction would be like if I were on the opposite end of this equation.

“After years of living under a harsh dictatorship, 150,000 soldiers of Sharia show up and offload into Georgetown from boats on the Potomac River after shelling the Capitol.

“They have a simple mission, they say: transplanting Islamic enlightenment in the decadent land of Kafir. They take over the D.C. Mall and throw a wall around the Smithsonian buildings; they call it the ‘Halal Zone.’ The White House becomes the embassy of Iraq. Some asshole like John Walker Lindh (Ahmed Chalabi), who has lived in the Middle East while the U.S. suffered under dictatorship, is Iraq’s favorite child for taking over the peacock throne of the U.S.

“My house gets raided and my mother patted down by hygiene deficient Wahhabis, so I go to Georgetown to force the humiliation off my mind. A group of wirey majahedin show up at Haagen Daaz while I’m enjoying a cone of cookies and cream, a rare moment of bliss in a country going to shit, and grab the owners while taking their ice cream. I return to my home, after walking through one foot of raw sewage water, to turn on the radio and hear the Arab ‘viceroy’ declare in a fatwa that all Christian values should be erased from our governing culture.

“Meanwhile my dad is laid off from his paycheck for the crime of serving in the U.S. Army to provide for his struggling family.”

My friend concluded that “without much doubt in my mind, if I were an Iraqi under the U.S. occupation, I’d be an insurgent.”

I sympathized with what must have been his painful realization that he had inadvertently committed crimes. “All the way up to my third deployment I was an avid reader of a lot of foolish writing on the war,” he said.

“I believed in the mission because I had to; after all, what soldier wants to die for an unworthy cause?

“I wanted to believe in the propaganda and I willfully avoided things that harshly rubbed against my hope that we were sacrificing for a good cause. When you put your life on the line every night, you don’t have the luxury to be skeptical or even critical.

In certain ways, I feel embarrassed about my belief that this was once a noble mission, but I have the honesty to admit that I was wrong.

I deployed to this war with many great assumptions about our national leadership: I assumed that the WMD intelligence case wasn’t a cherry-picked house of cards, I assumed we had a plan for the aftermath of the invasion, I assumed our leaders had a greater understanding of the character of Iraq outside the mouths of Ahmed Chalabi and Kana Makiya. I assumed, I assumed, I assumed.”

“As a soldier trained exclusively to fight, destroy and capture,” my friend said, “I was no more different than any of the rest of the men in my platoon who viewed Iraq as a broken country, loaded with assassins and inhospitable people.

“Hardly any of us spoke Arabic, which added to the dehumanization of the people (or should I say, ‘targets’) that we hunted and disrupted on a nightly basis; during my time there we conducted over 140 missions.

“We were always decent to the men we captured, but a raid by definition can never be a humanitarian act.

“I could never escape the impression from our heavy-handed insertions into hundreds of family homes that our presence only fueled more and more hatred.

“Every night we returned to base, the adrenaline rush faded and everything in hindsight looked like a black comedy.

“You couldn’t escape the fact that our actions only fueled the insurgency.

For every insurgent or jihadist we caught, we created two times as many future fighters.

And that is the tragedy; good men inadvertently pissing off an entire population.

As our fearless leaders walked into this debacle without a plan, you can rest assured that few at the top ever considered the historical meaning of occupation to Arab civilization.

Also, the White House fixation on figureheads like Zarqawi, which bolstered the Al Qaeda/Iraq smokescreen, ensured that our myopic obsession with foreign fighters blinded us to the understanding that 90% of the insurgency was home-grown.”



Nir Rosen

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

ONE SERVICE MEMBER KILLED, ONE WOUNDED IN IED ATTACK ON CONVOY

8/1/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 8/1/2006

Logistical Support Area Anaconda, Iraq; A service member assigned to the 16th Corps Support Group was killed in action by an improvised explosive device while conducting a convoy south of Baghdad, Iraq July 31. A second service member from the unit was wounded in the same attack.

U.S. Soldier Killed In Anbar

Aug 1 By VIJAY JOSHI, Associated Press Writer

An American soldier, who was assigned to the 1st Armored Division, died "due to enemy action" in Anbar province west of Baghdad, the U.S. command said.

British Soldier Killed In Basra Mortar Attack

August 1, 2006 AFP/Reuters

A British soldier was killed in a mortar attack on a multinational force base in southern Iraq early on Tuesday, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) says.

The soldier from Britain's 1st Battalion Light Infantry died after the strike on the base in Basra.

The soldier suffered serious injuries from the explosion and was airlifted to an army hospital, where he died of his wounds. There were no other casualties

Roadside Bomb Kills Guardsman From Pender

August 01 AP

Sgt. Joshua Ford, a 20-year-old Nebraska National Guardsman from Pender, was killed Monday in Iraq.

Ford died when an improvised explosive device struck his vehicle during a convoy mission in south central Iraq.

He is the 32nd U.S. service member with Nebraska connections to be killed in Iraq.

Ford, a 2004 graduate of Pender High School, joined the Nebraska National Guard as a heavy vehicle driver while still in high school. He finished basic training between his junior and senior year, said Sgt. 1st Class Brad Wieland, a friend of the family.

In high school, Ford was “in theater, and he loved art. He was a kid that just enjoyed life. And he believed in what he was doing,” said Wieland Tuesday.

In Iraq Monday, two Army National Guard soldiers were driving a military truck in a convoy from Forward Operating Base Delta to Tallil Air Base when their truck was struck by the IED near An Numaniyah, according to a news release.

The second soldier, who was seriously wounded in the blast, has been evacuated to Germany.

Ford was among the 175 members of the 189th Transportation Company that went to Iraq in October 2005, according to David Nore, public information officer. The 189th is based in Norfolk and Wayne.

“When these kids join the guard, you see them transform from a kid to a young man or young woman and a soldier,” said Wieland, who has been with the unit since 1977.

Ford believed in the guard so much that he talked three of his buddies into signing up, Wieland said.

Ford attended high school in Wayne before moving to Pender for his junior and senior year. He planned to go to school when he got back from Iraq, Wieland said.

Ford is the fourth Nebraska Guardsman to die in Iraq.

He is survived by his father, Lonnie W. Ford, of Pender, three sisters, Erin, Jessica and Shawn; his fiancée Michelle Frohlich; his grandmother Ella Petersen of North Bend, and nephew, William Dyer.

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



US soldiers at the site of a car bombing near the heavily fortified Green Zone, the seat of the Iraqi government and headquarters of the US military in Baghdad. (AFP/Wisam Sami)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Three UK Soldiers Killed In Helmand, One Wounded

August 1, 2006 Guardian Unlimited & BAKU TODAY.

An insurgent attack on a patrol vehicle in southern Afghanistan today killed three British soldiers and seriously wounded a fourth.

Militants armed with rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns ambushed the patrol in the volatile Helmand province.

The Ministry of Defence initially confirmed that two soldiers had been killed and a third was missing, presumed dead; Lt-Col Kevin Stratford Wright, spokesman for the British Helmand Task Force, later confirmed that the missing soldier had been killed. The deaths bring the number of British soldiers killed in Afghanistan in the past two months to nine.

British newspapers have reported dissatisfaction in the military at the vulnerability of army vehicles being used in Afghanistan, especially Land Rovers. It was not clear which vehicles were involved in Tuesday's attack.

Police Kill Prison Protestor

August 01, 2006 Xinhua

One prisoner was killed as inmates staged a protest demonstration in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province on Tuesday, provincial police Chief General Nabi Jan Mullahkhil said.

Inmates say that police firing left one prisoner dead in Helmand's central jail in the provincial capital Lashkargah, Mullahkhil told Xinhua.

Accusing the jail officials of highhandedness and applying maltreatment, the inmates said that warders and jail officials treat them inhumanly.

Around 300 peoples including criminals and Taliban-linked militants were held in Helmand's central jail.

"We are trying to find a peaceful solution to the problem through negotiation with the inmates," Mullahkhil added.

TROOP NEWS

Broke Down Army: "The Grass On The Parade Field Is About 2 Feet High" [Will The Last One Out Turn Off The Lights?]

July 31, 2006 By Gina Cavallaro, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

Pick a catch-phrase, be it belt-tightening, money woes, penny pinching or budget shortfalls. Any of them will work to describe the effects of more than four years of war on the state of Army garrison operations.

And the funding squeeze promises to get worse.

A shortfall of \$530 million in the last round of supplemental funding has forced cutbacks at every Army installation for services such as grounds and building maintenance, cellular and digital communications, and government vehicle usage, among others.

But there's more to it than that, say Army officials, who point to Army Transformation, rising fuel prices and currency exchange rates as examples of costs that help increase the deficit.

People are dialing back thermostats, and light switches are being turned off.

[At Fort Knox, Ky.] The grass on the parade field is about 2 feet high, [Col. Mark] Needham said, except for patches mowed by units that want to hold ceremonies there. Some grassy areas at intersections are being kept groomed for safety reasons, as is the grass on the ranges.

Spc. Says Deployment Spurred Crime Spree: [There Really Are Better Ways]

Army Times 7.31.06

A Wyoming National Guard soldier arrested in early June told investigators he went on a five-day crime spree in Montana and Wyoming to avoid deployment to Iraq, The Associated Press reported.

Spc. Daniel J. Uptain, 21, of Casper, Wyo., was charged July 17 with stealing a \$35,000 Hummer H-2 and a 1965 Mustang valued at \$15,000, along with two counts of felony burglary and one charge of misdemeanor theft.

Court records show Uptain told investigators the crimes occurred after he learned that his unit, the 1041st Engineer Company, was being deployed to Iraq. The unit was mobilized July 7, said Guard spokeswoman Deirdre Foster. **[Well, for sure he's not off to Iraq.]**

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

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action;

20 Collaborator Troops Killed In Baiji



A massive roadside bomb ripped apart a bus carrying Iraqi soldiers in the northern outskirts of Tikrit. (AFP/Dia Hamid)

01 Aug 2006 Reuters & AFP News & Xinhua & By VIJAY JOSHI, Associated Press

A roadside bomb blast followed by a gunmen attack targeted an Iraqi army convoy near the northern Iraqi town of Baiji on Tuesday morning, killing 20 Iraqi soldiers and wounding 13 others, a source in the local U.S. and Iraqi liaison office told Xinhua.

"An Iraqi army convoy was passing near the Raiyashi gas station just outside the oil-refinery town of Baiji early in the morning when gunmen blew up a roadside bomb near the convoy before they opened fire," said the source from the Joint Coordination Center of the Salahudin province, where Baiji is located.

A car bomb ripped through the middle class Baghdad neighbourhood of Karrada, killing 10 soldiers and four civilians, according to defence ministry and hospital sources.

The bomb-laden car blew up near a bank in the once-fashionable Karradah neighborhood of Baghdad. The target was well chosen because Iraqi security forces draw their salaries from the bank on the first of every month.

The local hospital reported receiving 10 dead soldiers and dozens of wounded. An interior ministry official said the bomber targeted a military patrol as it was passing a police checkpoint.

The bomb exploded along Rushdie street, not far from where a car bombing and a series of mortar strikes killed 31 of people on Thursday. The blast set several cars on fire in the leafy Shiite neighborhood. Dismembered bodies were strewn on the sidewalk.

Two policemen were killed and another wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near their patrol in the northern oil city of Kirkuk, police said.

A car bomb targeting a U.S. patrol exploded in Zayouna district, eastern Baghdad, police said, wounding three police commandos.

A car bomb exploded in the violent city of Muqdadiyah. The blast took place outside a police post and a bus station. One police officer was killed and four wounded, but the rest of the victims were civilians, police said.

Gunmen shot at an Iraqi Army checkpoint in the northern outskirts of Baghdad, wounding five soldiers and one civilian, an Interior Ministry source said.

A roadside bomb exploded beside a fuel truck wounding its driver in an area near Kut, 170 km southeast of Baghdad, police said.

Militants attacked two minibuses carrying civil servants in the electricity department of Baghdad, killing four and wounding seven, police said.

Three Iraqi soldiers were killed Tuesday evening when a car bomber attacked a checkpoint in the northern city of Tal Afar, the Iraqi army said.

WELCOME TO BAGHDAD: GET THE MESSAGE?



An Iraqi woman burns a U.S. flag during a protest in Baghdad's Sadr City July 31, 2006. Hundreds of Iraqi Shi'ite people marched through Sadr City protesting against Israel's attacks on civilians in Lebanon and killings in the southern village of Qana. REUTERS/Kareem Raheem (IRAQ)

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Here Rests In Emotional Silence, An American Soldier Known But To God



From: Richard Hastie

To: GI Special

Sent: August 01, 2006

Subject: Here Rests In Emotional Silence, An American Soldier Known But To God

The most powerful revelation I had from being in Vietnam, was the realization that I was the enemy in Vietnam.

This is the cornerstone of my PTSD.

I inherited my country's shame, and that was my worst pain. From then on, all of my life experiences post Vietnam, were funneled through that poison prism.

My anger eventually put me into a pill bottle, because there is a close connection between anger and shame. If one feels the pain of shame too long, the only defense for it is to get angry.

You can only take shame so long. Guilt is I have done something bad, shame is I am bad.

I inherited my country's shame.

Once I realized my government was the real enemy, I began to own my own belief system.

Lying is the most powerful weapon in war.

When I was in Vietnam, I was serving the lie of war profiteering.

When I came home, I methodically tried to destroy my life, because I felt so much shame and anger.

I am angry about the war in Iraq, but it is not connected to a personal feeling of shame.

I am free today, because I am no longer a prisoner of betrayal.

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
August 1, 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

Alaska's 172nd Stryker Brigade: "Soldiers And Occupied Peoples Have Never Felt At Liberty To Share Their Feelings With The Oppressors"

31 July 2006 By Cindy Sheehan, Truthout Perspective [Excerpts]

I saw the Angel of Death in the skin of Donald Rumsfeld say, while he was busy rushing in or out of the Pentagon (it doesn't really matter), that it is "unfortunate" that the soldiers have to remain in Iraq.

I think it is unfortunate for our troops and for the innocent people of Iraq and Afghanistan that Donald Rumsfeld has to remain as the Secretary of War.

I can't imagine how disappointed the families and the soldiers must feel. The 172nd has been in the violent Anbar Province for almost a year and I am sure they and their families were starting to really look forward to their homecoming.

I can imagine that there are more than a few mothers out there who were allowing themselves to start breathing again.

I am sure mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, sisters, brothers, children, aunts and uncles, and extended family and friends were already planning coming-home parties and anticipating the enormous hugs and overwhelming sense of relief that would accompany their soldiers home, too.

Now the 172nd will be redeployed to Baghdad to be right smack dab in the middle of sectarian violence and back in the thick of things.

Four more months of heat, spiders the size of puppies, MRE's, anxiety and peril; as their Secretary of War and Commander in Chief drive around DC in cushy air-conditioned and up-armored SUVs and also get to sleep in comfy beds, cozy in the fact that the sacrifices of our children and their families are guaranteeing Exxon and other war bandits billions of dollars in profits.

Recent polls showed that 72% of our troops wanted to start coming home by the end of this year and 83% of the Iraqi people want the occupation to end.

Those numbers are significant if only for the fact that they are probably low - soldiers and occupied peoples have never felt at liberty, or even secure to share their feelings with the oppressors.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

**Idiots In Command Fucking With
Mahdi Army, Again;
And Trash A Mosque While Doing So**

[Obviously, They Want More Iraqis To Come After U.S. Troops And Kill Them]



Under the portrait of the late Shi'ite Ayatollah Mohammed Sadiq al-Sadr, a man inspects the interior of a mosque in the al-Sheala district of Baghdad August 1, 2006 after last night's raid by U.S. troops. REUTERS/Thaier Al-Sudani (IRAQ)

Aug 1 Associated Press Writer

U.S. troops on Tuesday arrested a Baghdad-area representative of the Mahdi Army.

The arrest of Sheik Ahmed al-Ashmani was reported by Mahdi Army staff, which said 10 other members of the movement were detained. There was no confirmation from the U.S. military.

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

Iraq Oil Pipeline A Useless Piece Of Shit:

How Much Did Bush Buddy War Profiteers Steal This Time? The Whole \$82 Million? “Quality Of The Construction Was Suspect, The Report Said”

2006-08-01 Reuters

WASHINGTON: A plan to rebuild a 30-mile (50-km) pipeline from Iraq's Kirkuk oil field to the Baiji refinery to bring the Iraqi government badly needed cash is years behind schedule with no sign it will ever be finished, an independent watchdog said on Monday.

A total of \$82 million from the coalition force's Development Fund for Iraq was allocated for the pipeline repair but it was not clear how much had actually been spent, said the independent Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction in a report.

Kellogg, Brown and Root, a Halliburton subsidiary which was originally supposed to build the pipeline, gave varied estimates of the actual cost of work performed, ranging from \$1.8 million in March 2004 to less than \$1 million in June 2004, the report said.

It subcontracted out much of the project to Iraq's State Company for Oil Projects, or SCOP, a company the report called inexperienced. Three places where the pipeline crossed canals were originally to be done by KBR but its contract was terminated and given to Parsons Iraq Joint Venture, or PIJV.

Violence has also taken its toll on the pipeline, the report said.

"According to PIJV, four separate subcontractors have refused to complete the remaining canal crossings (of the pipeline) because of threats and kidnappings," the report said.

Quality of the construction was suspect, the report said.

"The entire pipeline project lacked any significant monitoring of construction practices," the report said. "Even though its quality assurance program was limited, KBR identified that approximately 25 percent of SCOP's welds were flawed."

Last, it could not be determined how much of the pipeline was completed since inspectors could not even travel to some of the areas where the pipeline was under construction, the report said.

But it was clear that long after the March 31, 2004, deadline for completing the project had passed, what was supposed to be a pipeline that would bring billions of dollars to the Iraqi government annually was instead a leaky, polluting pipeline

that carried 500,000 barrels of oil per day rather than the 800,000 the updated pipeline was designed to carry.

"Revenue potential of approximately \$14.8 billion has been lost to the Iraqi government due to the unavailability of increased capacity for moving oil," the report said.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

Mass Murderers At Work: Vladimir Jabotinsky Would Be Proud Of His Inheritors: The Racist, Terrorist State Of Israel



A civil defense worker carries a body of a young Lebanese child recovered from the rubble of a demolished building that was struck by Israeli war plane missiles at the village of Qana near the southern Lebanon city of Tyre, July 30, 2006. Israeli missiles struck this southern Lebanese village early Sunday, flattening houses on top of sleeping residents. Civil defense workers said up to 36 children who had sought refuge in a building that collapsed were killed. (AP Photo/Nasser Nasser)

Get The Message?



Egyptian women hold a sign that reads "Condoleezza Rice midwife from hell" during a protest in downtown Cairo, against the Israeli offensives against Lebanon and Gaza. Rice won a 48-hour suspension of Israeli air strikes in southern Lebanon, in a much-needed boost hours before ending her beleaguered Middle East peace drive. (AFP/Khaled Desouki)

Get The Message?



Demonstration and march in Hong Kong July 30, 2006 demanding the governments of Israel and the U.S. to stop attacks on Lebanon. REUTERS/Paul Yeung (HONG KONG)

[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

Bush Administration Cuts IRS Accountants for High Income Taxpayers

BLESSED ARE THE RICH, FOR THEY SHALL BE UNAUDITED.



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace]

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)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

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

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

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/;

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