

GI SPECIAL 4H21:

COMMENT UNNECESSARY



FORT LEWIS, WA (August 16, 2006) On the eve of Lt. Ehren Watada's first military hearing resulting from his refusal to deploy in support of the illegal war in Iraq, three hundred supporters rallied in his defense at the gates of Fort Lewis, Washington.

Photo: Lt. Watada supporter by Jeff Paterson, Not in Our Name, Aug 18th, 2006 3:07 PM (Indybay.org)

“But None Of The Soldiers That I Know Are 100 Percent For This War”

March – April 2006, By Francesca Fiorentini And Steve Theberge, The Nonviolent Activist

MICHAEL HARMON was born and raised in Brooklyn. He enlisted in the Army in May 2002, and was deployed to Iraq on April 3, 2003, where he remained until he redeployed home in April 2004.

After being honorably discharged from the military, Michael joined Iraq Vets Against the War (IVAW).

He is currently physics major at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, and regularly speaks about his experiences in Iraq at high schools, antiwar demonstrations, and other events.

Francesca Fiorentini is editor of the Nonviolent Activist. Steve Theberge is WRL's Youth and Countermilitarism coordinator. They interviewed Michael Harmon in February.

What prompted you to enlist in the military?

Well there were two things that really affected my decision to enlist. One was 9/11, and being a native New Yorker and seeing those people on that day. I didn't know President Bush at the time. And he came on TV at one time and said, "Every man should do two years for his country." So I said, "You know what, the dude is right."

There was also no direction in my life. I didn't want to do the college thing yet, I'd just finished high school, and I didn't know where to go. So I just checked army.com, and put in my information. It just so happens that the week the recruiter called, I was going through a life crisis, if you want to call it that. So it was good timing on his part.

What was your first impression when you joined your unit and arrived in Iraq?

I wanted to go back to basic when I got to my unit, that's how bad my unit was, honestly.

No training taught us what we were going to see. I was a combat medic. They don't call you that though, they call you "health care specialist." I thought it was going to be a couple injuries. I knew it was war but they didn't prepare you.

I was young at the time too, I was 19. We said, "We need some more training" and they said "Don't worry about it, you'll get it over there."

When we got to the unit, it was really lackadaisical, really bad. Soon as we get over there, injuries started like crazy. The children, I mean if you want to get graphic, faces blown off, people's faces were actually hanging, intestines out, because the body armor at the time wasn't top-notch.

And that's the worst, to see a mid-20s man screaming for his mother because he's afraid he'll never see her again.

And a three-year-old girl, I remember, who got her leg blown off, by our fire of course, because the soldiers were untrained. An IED went off and they just started spraying everywhere. Little kids got hit, a guy got hit, one kid got shot in his head and it mohawked him. And I kept putting bandages on the kid, and they were just slipping off; he was finished.

When did you start to have doubts about the war?

Here's the thing that turned my table real quick. We got there April 3, and by April 15, (a major) told us to put away our protective gear: gas masks, protective suits, chemical suits, and boots. And I said, "Sir, with all due respect, I thought we were here for weapons of mass destruction." And he said, exact quote, "Just fucking do it, listen to what I say."

I'm not a stupid guy. We're there for weapons of mass destruction, and two weeks into the war, we put our weapons of mass destruction chemical gear away? What's up with that?

And that's when it just turned me.

But you know you have to put your feelings aside while you're over there because it's life or death, kill or be killed, so you can't dwell on it too much. When I came back, I think that's what really messed me up; with the children, the lying, and even the soldiers too. You grow a bond with these guys and you see them with their guts spilled. That's not cool.

How did the other soldiers feel? Did they seem to be going through the same transition?

Other guys I talked to said that the minute they set foot, they saw what we were doing and started to realize. So much had changed from what they imagined.

When we came back home 60 percent of my unit left. They all felt pretty much the same way I did, because the unit itself was bullshit, too, you know, lack of leadership.

Actually a lot of them are speaking out also.

A couple of them are still kind of 50/50, because they feel like they're disgracing the friends we lost by speaking out.

But I tell them it's the complete opposite.

If we pull out now, another soldier's not going to get hurt or killed.

But none of the soldiers that I know are 100 percent for this war.

What impressions did you get from Iraqis about American occupation?

I asked a couple people, "What do you want from us?" They said, "Now that you got Saddam out, we want you to go home. We don't want you on our holy land." I got that a lot. So I'm thinking to myself, these people don't want us here, we don't want to be here, hey, let's go home.

They just don't want our ways.

Not everybody wants a Starbucks on every corner, not everybody wants Wal-Marts. They just wanna live how they wanna live.

They just wanted Saddam out of power, and we did it, so, let's leave!

It's going on two years now and the same BS is going on.

They still don't have computers up or a proper phone line; how hard is it to get phone service?

Another thing is the rebuilding the Iraqi troops. We had to interview them and I taught them first aid and stuff like how to do pressure dressings and tourniquets. And 90 percent were ex-military. Does it really take three years to train exmilitary people, and hand over their country to them? I don't think so.

What was it like when you came home from Iraq?

When I redeployed back home, I was a different man. I had a hot temper, and I didn't know where it was coming from. I went to the clinic and they evaluated me with PTSD, and I got chaptered out because I started with alcohol abuse.

I was drinking about a gallon of Crown every two days, which is serious business. And then I started with cocaine, and I never did that before in my life, just needed something to cope.

And they were just throwing pills at me, Paxil and all this junk that made you very suicidal. So I got chaptered out, honorably.

I really believe that war took five years off my life. I had a full set of hair before I left New York, and now, I'm balding, I'm stressed out. My facial features look a lot older, it just wore me down real bad. I was always an easygoing guy, and then afterwards I was just like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. That's what my ex-girl called me.

The hospitals don't care; they just tell you it's all in your head. It's not.

So life was in shambles last year, and I'm just starting to pick up the pieces now, going to school and stuff like that.

How'd you get connected to the IVAW?

Well I got into a bad car accident, which coupled with the PTSD. I bought a new car and, some people; the people who really know me; say maybe I wanted to hit the tree. I think that was the point where everything turned around for me.

And I have no health care, period, because it expires 90 days after you get out. I got 55 stitches in my leg, and I broke my foot.

So I was laid up in a cast, and I just was so angry; I didn't know where to turn that anger though.

And I just typed in a Google search, Iraq veterans against war, and sure enough, IVAW popped up.

And people say, "You're doing this for publicity." What publicity? This is grass-roots, nobody wants to hear us.

I mean you guys and Military Families Speak Out, IVAW, I could go across the board and you could mention that to anybody on the street and they're like "Who? What? Where?" So there's no publicity.

I just don't want no more soldiers to get hurt, or die. I mean kids, soldiers, civilians, anybody.

Why war? An unjust war at that.

He lied completely from the get-go.

Why kill, what is it 2247 now or something like that?

Those are lives that those mothers and sisters and brothers will never get back.

How has it been working with IVAW?

Great, great experience.

I spoke at that World Can't Wait Times Square rally, which was great. I only speak to like 20-25 people but to speak to 2000 people was kind of, you know.

But I got up on stage and said my piece and when I got down, people who lost family members were crying, gave me hugs and stuff. I've gotten a 90 percent good response. The other 10 percent is just people who don't know.

I want to save soldiers' lives, and not get hurt, because nobody wants a crippled veteran.

Even to work in the real world.

You get your legs blown off, stuff like that, they're like "Oh, yeah, thanks for serving the country, bud, but we don't want you to work here, we don't want to deal with maybe handicapped ramps to put up and stuff like that."

It's ridiculous. And the other reason I do this is for my own therapy. This is very therapeutic for me, very therapeutic.



www.ivaw.net

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Ex-Fire Chief Nephew Slain



Murray NEWS
Michael Glover

August 18, 2006 BY OREN YANIV and LEO STANDORA, DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

The nephew of former FDNY Chief of Department Peter Hayden has been killed battling insurgents with his Marine unit in Iraq, his mother confirmed yesterday.

Queens-born Michael Glover, 28, was mortally injured in a firefight Wednesday outside the insurgent hotbed of Fallujah, 35 miles west of Baghdad.

"I'm very proud of him," Glover's mom, Margaret, said. "He wanted to do this, to go over there, for himself and for the country." Hayden, who retired from the Fire Department in June, was traveling and couldn't be reached for comment.

Margaret Glover said her son died on his first tour of duty in Iraq, which was to end Oct. 28.

"I didn't allow myself to focus on anything else but the fact that my son would be home for Thanksgiving and we'll have dinner with the big family," she said wistfully.

Glover was born and raised in Far Rockaway, where he attended Xavier High School.

The heartbroken mother said Glover worked summers as a lifeguard, played the guitar and "always found a way to make people laugh." His mom said he graduated with honors from Albany State University and interrupted his law studies at Pace University to join the Marines. "He said he had thought about joining all along because it was something he wanted to do . . . to fight for his country. He was ready to go," she said.

A cousin, Rita Martin, shook her head and said sadly, "He just had more friends than anyone can count."

Funeral arrangements were incomplete last night.

Blast In Iraq Kills GI Who Was Native Of Hillsdale



1st Sgt. Aaron D. Jagger

August 15, 2006 By JC REINDL, BLADE STAFF WRITER

HILLSDALE: A veteran U.S. Army soldier and 1980 graduate of Camden High School was killed in Iraq last week by an enemy explosive, the U.S. Defense Department announced yesterday.

Army 1st Sgt. Aaron D. Jagger, 43, was among three soldiers who were killed Wednesday when a roadside bomb detonated near their vehicle in Ramadi, Iraq.

He was a member of the Army's 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Armored Division. He was stationed out of Friedberg, Germany.

A guitarist and vocalist in his company's band, The Bandits, Sergeant Jagger often performed with the group at memorial services for fallen soldiers, his mother, Carol Bailey, said in a telephone interview from her home in Rossville, Ga.

The victim has a wife and four daughters living in Germany, and another daughter who lives in Rossville, Ga., Mrs. Bailey said. His father, Dale, and a brother, Anson, live in Hillsdale, she said. Family in Hillsdale could not be reached for comment last night. "He believed in what he was doing and thought it was the right thing," Mrs. Bailey said.

Sergeant Jagger was born in Hillsdale and lived in the area through high school. He first began playing guitar when he was 13 and went on to participate in numerous school musicals and plays, Mrs. Bailey said.

Shortly after graduation he moved to Rossville and worked at a hospital for a year before deciding to enlist in the Army with the hope of gaining money to attend college, his mother said.

"After he got out of high school and got a job, he realized he wasn't really going to get anywhere without a degree," Mrs. Bailey said.

He took college courses at various schools over the years wherever he happened to be stationed, and had interest in business administration. He finally acquired enough credits for a bachelor's degree, but never officially graduated, Mrs. Bailey said.

Sergeant Jagger had been serving his third tour of duty in Iraq. He had previously served two tours in Bosnia and was a tank commander during the Persian Gulf War, his mother said.

"He was gone from here for months at a time," she said. "We hadn't seen him in almost two years."

Sergeant Jagger will be buried at Berg Cemetery in Hillsdale next to his younger brother, Quintin Jagger, who died two years ago from brain cancer.

Services are being handled by the Hampton-Kurtz Funeral Home in Hillsdale. A date for the services was not available.

Marine From Cordova Killed

August 1, 2006 By Jody Callahan, Contact

A 21-year-old Cordova man was killed in Iraq last week, becoming at least the eighth local soldier to die in the Iraq war, military officials said Monday.

The Marines said Lance Corporal Adam R. Murray died July 27 during fighting in Al Anbar province.

Based at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Murray was a member of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division.

Tom Murray, Adam's father, said he didn't want to talk about the death, adding that his son had asked him previously not to speak to the media. Several neighbors said the family had asked them not to speak about Murray, either.

Murray was a 2003 graduate of Cordova High School, county schools spokesman Mike Tebbe said.

County Man Wounded

8.20.06 By John Barnhart, Bedford Bulletin

Specialist Michael Parker, a Bedford County man serving with the 101st Airborne in Iraq, was wounded last week in fighting there. His mother, Jackie Parker got the news via a phone call on Aug. 8 from the Department of Defense. The Parkers' caller ID showed 703 as the area code for the incoming call indicating that it originated from Northern Virginia.

She was glad that they notified her within 11 hours of the incident, but was frustrated because she had a lot of questions but the caller had little information to give her.

Shortly she got more information from Specialist Parker, himself. His cousin, Kip Parker is a captain in the Air Force. Captain Parker visited Specialist Parker in the hospital and told him that his mother had been contacted, so he called home.

According to what her son told her, his unit came under fire. They were trying to find out what was behind the door of a building and Parker, as part of the effort to break it down, fired into it. One of his bullets ricocheted back, hitting him in the hand. The wound was serious enough that he was taken to an Army hospital for surgery.

Jackie Parker said that she has been in contact with her son several times and, according to the most recent, he was rejoining his unit.

Michael Parker is the son of Joseph L. Parker and Jackie Parker and has been in the Army since 2003. His brother, David, recently completed an enlistment in the Marine

Corps, which included three deployments to Iraq. Another brother, Joseph, is a Virginia State Trooper.

Both sides of his family have a tradition of military service with most male members of both his father's and mother's families having served in some branch of the armed services. His paternal grandfather, Billy Parker, served in the Army in World War II and was a prisoner of war for eight months. His paternal great-uncle, Earl Parker, was one of the "Bedford Boys" and was killed in action on D-Day.

Wilmington Bomb Contractor Killed By Bomb

08/20/06 By Patrick Gannon, Staff Writer, Wilmington Star

A 40-year-old Wilmington man working as a contractor in Iraq was killed Thursday when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb, according to a news release from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The job of Richard Todd Rhodes in Iraq was to help clear the land of dangerous weapons and ammunition, including items used to make improvised explosive devices like the one that caused his death. Rhodes worked for Tampa-based Cochise Consultancy, which does contract work in Iraq for the Corps.

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



8.4.06: A US soldier in the Dura market of southern Baghdad. (AFP/Ho)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

British Soldier Killed, 3 Wounded In Northern Helmand

08/20/06 SkyNews

One British soldier has been killed and three injured in Afghanistan..."The soldier died as a result of injuries sustained during a contact in Northern Helmand province at around midday local time"

TROOP NEWS

Stupid 70's Law Costs 61,000 Military Widows Thousands Of \$s In Benefits; "They Are Financing Their Operation From Money Stolen From Military Widows"

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in]

August 19, 2006 By LIZETTE ALVAREZ, The New York Times [Excerpts]

As many as 61,000 military widows whose husbands died of causes relating to their military service lose out on thousands of dollars a year in survivor benefits because of a law that dates from the 1970's.

Widows and retirees have spent decades trying to persuade Congress to change the law, which hits hardest at the widows of lower-ranking service members and is referred to by many critics as the "widow's tax."

The Senate passed such a change last year and again this year as part of the military authorization bill.

But House Republican leaders oppose the change because of its steep price tag, nearly \$9 billion over 10 years, Senate legislative aides from both parties say.

A change was not in the military bill that passed the House, but lawmakers who support the change are hoping to make it part of the bill's final version, which is now being worked on by a bipartisan Congressional committee.

"My husband thought he was securing my future," said Edie Smith, a member of the Gold Star Wives, a group of military widows who are lobbying to change the law. "He didn't realize his own disability would void the benefit he purchased for me."

A 1972 law created the Survivor Benefits Plan, a Department of Defense retirement income fund similar to a life insurance policy. The plan, in turn, pays benefits calculated according to a dead service member's rank and length of service.

In addition, widows of veterans who died of service-related causes receive monthly cash stipends from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Known as the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation stipend, it is currently \$1,033 plus \$257 for each child.

But under the law, which placed restrictions on the plan that it created, the payment to widows enrolled in the Survivor Benefits Plan is reduced, dollar for dollar, by the amount of the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation stipend.

For example, a widow who would be entitled to \$1,000 from the Survivor Benefits Plan and the \$1,033 Dependency and Indemnity stipend receives \$1,033, not \$2,033.

Widows whose husband paid into the plan are reimbursed their premiums, without interest, but the amount is taxed and does not make up the losses from the plan.

The Department of Defense opposes changing the law to allow both payments, arguing that survivors should not receive two separate benefits for a single death.

But widows and their supporters say that the Pentagon's opposition to a change in the law really stems from its cost, especially at a time of rising expenses for the war in Iraq.

They also argue that because service members paid into the Survivors Benefits Plan, its benefits should not be reduced.

"If you take one benefit from another, you don't leave the survivor with very much," said Col. Lee Lange, the deputy director of government relations for the influential Military Officers Association of America, which has made this issue a priority. "These are widows. Let them collect both."

Juan del Castillo, a retired Coast Guard commander who has been paying into the plan since 1972, accused the Pentagon of "stealing money from widows."

"They are financing their operation from money stolen from military widows," Mr. Castillo said. "They have been doing that since 1972."

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)

They Go To The Gates Of Ft. Lewis [Where It Means Something]



[Instead of wasting time and resources in the customary trivial, moralistic bullshit anti-war actions, it would appear that at least several hundred people decided to go and take the message where counts: to the gates of an armed forces military base.

[All honor and respect to them.

[GI Special will keep covering this type of action. Unless it's a matter of mass demonstrations against the war, which are valuable, necessary and important, GI Special will not waste much space with the other shit, like a bunch of people thinking it means something to go heckle some sleazy politician in Texas, when

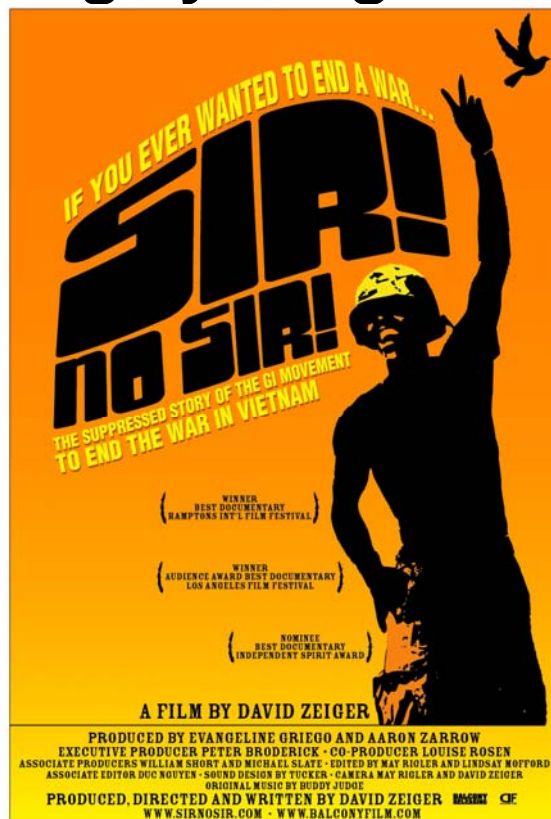
they could have gone to the gates of Ft. Hood and shown support for the troops there against the war. Guess what, Ft. Hood is also in Texas. T

FORT LEWIS, WA (August 16, 2006) On the eve of Lt. Ehren Watada's first military hearing resulting from his refusal to deploy in support of the illegal war in Iraq, three hundred supporters rallied in his defense at the gates of Fort Lewis, Washington.

Photo: Across from Ft. Lewis gate by Jeff Paterson, Not in Our Name Friday Aug 18th, 2006 3:07 PM (Indybay.org)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Radical Opposition To The Vietnam War By Thousands Of Our Own Servicemen Has Been Largely Forgotten”



August 9, 2006 Bill Gallo (The Seattle Weekly) [Excerpts]

Sir! No Sir! never mentions the words Iraq or Afghanistan. It doesn't have to.

Unseen and unremarked upon, those bloody venues nonetheless inhabit the entire 83 minutes of David Zeiger's impassioned documentary like some deadly, creeping virus for which there's no cure.

Zeiger's actual subject, which he says has been on his mind for decades, is the GI antiwar movement of the late '60s and early '70s, a phenomenon far more powerful than Swift boaters and neocon revisionists would have us believe.

From its mild beginnings, poetry readings and discussion groups for young recruits, to its angriest, most desperate measures (the "fragging" of officers in the field by their own men), radical opposition to the Vietnam War by thousands of our own servicemen has been largely forgotten.

So have the uniformed dissidents' underground newspapers, pirate radio stations, and huge stateside demonstrations. If we can believe Zeiger (and his evidence is pretty convincing), the entire movement has been more or less erased from the record, like the inconvenient fact of romantic love in 1984 or the notion of individual freedom in Stalinist Russia.

Sir! No Sir! recalls the follies and failures of one American war, but disturbing parallels to the current one are inescapable.

For Zeiger, who as a young activist helped organize demonstrations of veterans against the war, the time is right to remember. To that end, he has assembled a collection of grizzled servicemen who have plenty to say about what happened to them.

Dr. Howard Levy, a dermatologist who served three years in prison for refusing to continue training Green Beret medics, tells how during his court martial, hundreds of GIs would hang out of their barracks windows, flashing him the peace sign or the clenched fist. David Cline, an ex-grunt wounded three times in combat, recalls the terrible day that he shot a North Vietnamese soldier at close range and, moments later, stared into the dead man's face, wondering about his family, his life, his dreams.

Medic Randy Rowland remembers grotesquely paralyzed U.S. soldiers begging him to kill them in their hospital beds because they couldn't do it themselves. Later, convicted of mutiny, Rowland recalls, "Within two days of hitting the stockade, I was facing a death sentence for singing 'We Shall Overcome.'"

Love her or leave her, Jane Fonda's also in the film, talking (a bit self-absorbedly) about how she found a way to combine her acting career with her antiwar sentiments ("It just seemed like a perfect fit").

As it is, this one is compelling enough: a potent mix of outrage, residual anger, and sorrow that speaks not just to the legacy of our misadventures in Vietnam but to the entire uncertain future of a nation at war.

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

The Sir! No Sir! DVD is on sale now, exclusively at www.sirnosir.com.

Also available will be a Soundtrack CD (which includes the entire song from the FTA Show, "Soldier We Love You"), theatrical posters, tee shirts, and the DVD of "A Night of Ferocious Joy," a film by me about the first hip-hop antiwar concert against the "War on Terror."

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.

“Chicken Cheney”
[Take One]



From: Richard Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: August 17, 2006
Subject: "Chicken Cheney"

"Chicken Cheney"

If there is any man who has ruthlessly betrayed American soldiers more, it is Dick Cheney. He is a multi-millionaire, and former Halliburton war profiteering monster. During the Vietnam War, he received 5 deferments to keep himself out of the military. He later stated, "I had other priorities."

Fast forward 40 years, and he is sending American soldiers to hospitals and funeral homes all across America for shameless corporate greed.

Dick Cheney is a malignant cancer, who destroys everything he touches.

I watched American soldiers take their last breath in Vietnam, while Hawks like "Chicken Cheney" made money off of their shed blood.

He is one of the worst Bloodhounds in American History.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
1st Squadron 10th Cavalry
4th Infantry Division
Vietnam 1970-71
August 17, 2006**

Photo and caption 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)

Prisoners Of War

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: August 19, 2006
Subject: Prisoners Of War

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

Prisoners Of War

Bob knocked on the door.
Rose opened the door.
Bob stood there alone holding
a paper bag full of
American flags and lies.
"What do you want ?"
Rose asked him hard.
He had noticed the American
flag on the flag pole
and just below, the POW flag
flying like hatred in the wind.
"Is your husband
a Vietnam veteran ?"
"No, I am," Rose replied
looking Bob straight on.
Bob pulled out a killer
American flag
from the ammo dump
bag he carried.
We're raising money
to bring the mobil
Vietnam Wall to
our town."
"Are you a Vietnam veteran,"
she asked him.
"I was in Supply
Da Nang 1968,"
Bob answered as though
standing at attention.
Rose dropped her head
a black angel
with white POW eyes
looked up and smiled.
"I was a nurse in Chu Lai,
but they gave me
a dishonorable discharge
for injecting the gooks
and killing them,
I hated them laying next
to our wounded guys,"
Rose said.
"How much are the flags ?"
"Well," Bob began,
"these are made in the USA,
most are made in China now."
"They cost \$12," he answered.
"I'll take two of them."

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

**“Combat Veterans Crave Rest, But
When We Talk Of Sleep We Recount
Nightmares, Night Sweats, Not
Wanting To Fall Asleep”
“Because Ghosts Populate Our
Dreams”**

August 19 / 20, 2006 By MARC LEVY, CounterPunch [Excerpt]

Marc Levy served with Delta Company 1/7 First Cavalry as an infantry medic in Vietnam and Cambodia in 1970. His decorations include the Combat Medic Badge, Silver Star, two Bronze Stars for Valor, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal. He was courtmartialled twice and received a General Discharge. His earlier piece on PTSD ran here on August 1. . He can be reached at landmarc@mindspring.com.

U Mass Boston 2006

His name is not William but that will do.

He reads his war poetry in front of twenty people. He talks as if he must speak over outgoing shells, or the blast of incoming rounds, or the whirling blades of Blackhawk choppers.

"My name is Tom and I'm from Montana," the dying man says to the medic in the startling poem.

And William, twenty-two, black-haired, dark-skinned, handsome, continues his pummeling words, then pauses, rocks, trembles, clenches his jaw, clenches it tight, clutches the podium, holds back tears, belts out the refrain, stares at the audience, stares, sits down next to me, cannot stop shaking.

Cannot shake off Iraq.

"Let's get out of here," I say. We get up, walk to a quiet place. Standing close, I take William in my arms. Immediately we begin sobbing.

When it's over I say, "Have you ever cried like that before?"

He says, "No."

I say, "You did good, William. You did real good."

We return to the room, now emptying out.

Two middle-aged therapists approach the young Iraq vet. The first leans against William, curls her arm around him. "You fought for your country. You must be proud of what you did. Welcome home, son," she says. An embarrassed, shameful look fills his angular face.

When she is done a second woman brays at him like a hungry wolf to a harvest moon. "You have a problem. You need counseling," she says. "I know about trauma. I work with people like you."

I say, "Thank you very much. If you don't mind, me and William need to be alone." When she doesn't stop, I say, "You can go now."

My voice is not pleasant; she is gone.

I turn to a beautiful young woman who has worked with Vietnam combat vets. "He needs you," I say. She takes William by the hand, leads him outside, sits with him, listens to him, for two solid hours. There is beauty in knowing what to do, and how to do it.

Question: When the killing is done, when they are safe at home, what can those who have murdered for the state tell us?

I've done my share of group therapy with combat vets.

No one dreams of victory parades, high hoisted flags, happy home comings, no one speaks or dreams of freedom.

No one!

Combat veterans crave rest, but when we talk of sleep we recount nightmares, night sweats, not wanting to fall asleep.

Because ghosts populate our dreams.

Ghosts who do and say whatever they like, and often what they like is not pleasant.

“Let’s Dismantle FEMA And Bring Hezbollah To The Gulf Coast”

August 18, 2006 By Audrey Mantey, Stangoff.com [Excerpts]

Hezbollah’s leader, Nasrallah, gave a victory speech Monday in which he offered to pay a year’s rent for a house plus a furniture budget to all displaced Lebanese refugees.

The following day, just one day after the cease-fire, Lebanese refugees began returning home.

As the NYT reported on Tuesday, "hundreds of Hezbollah members spread over dozens of villages across southern Lebanon began cleaning, organizing and surveying damage. Men on bulldozers were busy cutting lanes through giant piles of rubble. Roads blocked with the remnants of buildings are now, just a day after a cease-fire began, fully passable. ... Hezbollah men also traveled door to door checking on residents and asking them what help they needed."

When Katrina hit, it took Bush days to direct a person to chair a task force to coordinate the relief efforts. It took days for the National Guard to appear on the scene. Despite FEMA having 500 buses on standby on the day of the storm, ready to be deployed, it took almost a week to get those buses to the Convention Center in New Orleans to begin evacuations there.

Nearly a year after the storm, hundreds of thousands of refugees still have not returned to their homes.

Rather than paying an emergency agency to explain to us why it’s not their job to respond to emergencies, or why if they did participate in relief work, it would maximize their "potential for failure," let’s hire an organization that’s so dedicated to relief and reconstruction that they provide those services despite it not being their job.

Let’s dismantle FEMA and bring Hezbollah to the Gulf Coast.

Hezbollah has practical experience managing schools, hospitals, and reconstruction projects.

Hezbollah has access to both bulldozers and intelligence assets, unlike FEMA, who neither owns equipment nor has the capability to find out who does. FEMA

Aside from a bit of PR, the only thing they’re missing is their own distinctive uniforms. We would need to provide those, so we’d have a way to distinguish the terrorists from the police forces shooting at evacuating civilians.

MORE

“These Guys (Hizbullah) Are Out There With Their Own Bulldozers And What Are We Doing?”

Aug. 18, 2006, IslamOnline.net & News Agencies

"These guys (Hizbullah) are out there with their own bulldozers and what are we doing? It takes forever for us to start up rebuilding projects," a senior State Department official told Reuters Friday, August 18, on condition of anonymity.

Bill Garvelink, a senior US aid agency official, said that the US near-term efforts will focus on helping rebuild damaged homes in Lebanon, adding that American engineers were in Lebanon assessing damage to bridge and roads.

But US officials said that the American bureaucracy was hindering the US aid efforts from taking the lead from Hizbullah.

MORE:

“The Slow-Motion Rebuilding Of The Gulf Coast Region Looks Identical To What Has Happened To Date In Afghanistan And Iraq”

Aug 17, 2006 CorpWatch [Excerpts]

On the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, "disaster profiteers" have made millions while local companies and laborers in New Orleans and the rest of the devastated Gulf Coast region are systematically getting the short end of the stick, according to a major new report from the nonprofit CorpWatch.

A CorpWatch analysis of FEMA's records shows that "fully 90 percent of the first wave of (the post-Katrina reconstruction) contracts awarded - including some of the biggest no-bid contracts to date -- went to companies from outside the three worst-affected states.

The CorpWatch report also exposes abusive "contracting charge pyramids" where the companies doing the actual reconstruction work often get only a tiny (and insufficient) fraction of the taxpayer money awarded for projects and widespread non-payment of local companies and laborers, including what has been alleged to be the deliberate and systematic exploitation of immigrant workers, including undocumented individuals.

"One year after disaster struck, the slow-motion rebuilding of the Gulf Coast region looks identical to what has happened to date in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"We see a pattern of profiteering, waste and failure - due to the same flawed contracting system and even many of the same players" says CorpWatch Director Pratap Chatterjee.

"The process of getting Katrina-stricken areas back on their feet is needlessly behind schedule, in part, due to the shunning of local business people in favor of politically connected corporations from elsewhere in the U.S. that have used their clout to win lucrative no-bid contracts with little or no accountability and who have done little or no work while ripping off the taxpayer."

"Big, Easy Money" report author Rita J. King said: "The devastation of the Gulf Coast is tragic enough, but the scope of the corporate greed that followed, facilitated by government incompetence and complicity, is downright criminal.

Sadly, disaster profiteering has become commonplace in America.

Well connected corporations are growing rich off of no-bid contracts while the sub-contractors - the people who actually perform the work - often do so for peanuts, if they get paid at all."

How It Is

August 20, 2006 Hana Abdul Ilah Al Bayaty, Uruknet.info [Excerpt]

Attempts to choke Arab development cannot but fail.

The three main currents developed by Arab societies; nationalists, Islamists and leftists; are intrinsically anti-imperialist and therefore opposed to US-Israeli regional designs.

For nationalists, retaining control of national resources to serve the general interest is sacrosanct. For leftists, opposing the international chains of imperialism and globalisation is a baseline. For Islamists, resistance to foreign occupation, as written in the Quran, is a duty. Their interest lays currently in achieving unity in the struggle.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

The Lebanese Army Stands With Hizbullah

August 19 2006 Clancy Chassay in Beirut, The Guardian [excerpts]

An internal Lebanese army statement, circulated among forces in the past week, has called for troops to stand "alongside your resistance and your people who astonished the world with its steadfastness and destroyed the prestige of the so-called invincible army after it was defeated".

Another Retired General, Amin Hoteit, Now A Professor At The Lebanese University, Said: "The Army Sees Hizbullah As A Group That Is Defending The Country And So Assists Them As Best It Can."

Speaking last year, the Lebanese army chief of staff, General Michel Suleiman, said: "Support for the resistance is one of the fundamental national principles in Lebanon and one of the foundations on which the military doctrine is based. Protection of the resistance is the army's basic task."

The relationship had been strong for many years, Gen Kader said. "From 1996 onwards there has been a consensus in the army command that Hizbullah was a legitimate national defence force and that the government should extend its umbrella to protect the resistance."

He said most army officials viewed the deployment primarily as a "counter-penetration force" working to prevent the infiltration of Israeli intelligence and military patrols.

The UN's expected deployment of 15,000 troops is seen as an additional force to assist in Lebanon's defence against Israel. "We are happy with such a large force to provide sufficient deterrent to Israeli aggression," said Gen Kader.

Suggestions from Washington that the Lebanese army should forcibly disarm Hizbullah have been met with alarm by the army command.

"If the mission of the army is to defend the people then the whole country will be behind it, but if it is to act against the resistance, it puts a big question mark over the future of the country," Gen Hoteit said.

MORE:

“Side By Side With The Resistance”

19-08-2006 Uri Avnery, Gush-shalom.org [Excerpts]

"Side by side with the Resistance": side by side with Hizbullah. "Which have amazed the world with their steadfastness": the heroism of the Hizbullah fighters.

"Blown to pieces the reputation of the army about which it has been said that it is invincible": the Israeli army.

Thus spoke a commander of the Lebanese army, the deployment of which along the border is being celebrated by the Olmert-Peretz government as a huge victory, because this army is supposed to confront Hizbullah and disarm it.

Israeli commentators have created the illusion that this army would be at the disposal of the friends of the US and Israel in Beirut, such as Fuad Siniora, Saad Hariri and Walid Jumblatt.

It is no accident that this item was drowned in the deluge of TV blabber, like a stone thrown into a well. After broadcasting the item itself, no meaningful debate about it took place. It was erased from the public mind.

“We Won’t Fully Realise The Impact Nasrallah Has Had On The Arabs For A While But He Feels It Is Profound”

17 - 23 August 2006 Amira Howeidy, AL-AHRAM [Excerpts]

"Don't underestimate the significance of Hizbullah flags and posters of Nasrallah in an Arab capital like Cairo," one senior Arab official told Al-Jazeera's Lebanon Bureau Chief Ghassan Ben-Jedo privately last week. And not just in Lebanon, Ben-Jedo argued, recalling his conversation with the Arab official.

"He said we won't fully realise the impact Nasrallah has had on the Arabs for a while but he feels it is profound."

Nasrallah, who is also a powerful Shia symbol, now enjoys the admiration and respect of the vast majority of the Arab world's public opinion, which ironically is largely Sunni.

This is unprecedented, says El-Naggar, but it's more significant within Lebanon's Shia community because now they have secured a victory that is unrivalled in the Arab-Israeli conflict. "This is to their credit."

"Hizbullah dramatically changed the status of Lebanon's Shia who were traditionally perceived as society's underdogs. This was felt when the Israeli occupation forces pulled out from south Lebanon in 2000," argued El-Naggar.

This time around, however, Hizbullah achieved what Nasrallah described as a "historic strategic victory" over Israel when previously all the combined forces of the Arab armies failed.

In his 21 July interview with Al-Jazeera's Ben-Jedo, Nasrallah employed a famous Karbalaa quote on the people of Iraq who let Imam El-Hussein meet his tragic fate: "their

hearts are with him but their swords are against him"- to deliver an angry message to Arab leaders who criticized Hizbullah for abducting the two Israeli soldiers on 12 July. Saudi Arabia and Egypt said that Hizbullah's action was a "miscalculated adventure."

"We don't want your swords or even your hearts," he said, "just get off our backs."

The words stuck. Two days later, the independent Egyptian weekly El-Destour appeared with the headline "To Arab leaders: get off our backs."

[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

President Bush said he was "not surprised" by federal judge Anna Diggs Taylor's decision to declare his practice of warrantless wiretaps unconstitutional, telling reporters, "I heard her talking to her husband about it last week." August 20, 2006, The Borowitz Report



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

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