

GI SPECIAL 4H3:



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace]

A Soldier Maimed By War Now Questions The Mission

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

August 2, 2006 By Brian MacQuarrie, Boston Globe Staff



Sergeant Brian Fountaine, 24, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington this week, was injured in June while on patrol near Baghdad. (Jay Premack for the Boston Globe)

WASHINGTON: President Bush came and sat by the side of Sergeant Brian Fountaine, a 24-year-old tank commander from Dorchester, a gung-ho soldier who had lobbied to be deployed a second time.

Now Fountaine was among the wounded at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, his legs amputated below the knees after an explosion June 8 ripped apart the Humvee in which he was riding.

The president chatted about the sergeant's beloved Red Sox, but made no reference to the war, the soldier said.

If the topic had come up, the president might not have liked what Fountaine had on his mind. In a dramatic change of heart, Fountaine now considers the war a military quagmire in which American soldiers are caught in a deadly vise between irreconcilable enemies.

In his view, troop morale has plummeted, suicide has increased, and the sacrifices being made in American blood and treasure suddenly seem questionable.

The war began with the justifiable goal of toppling a reckless, dangerous dictator in Saddam Hussein, the soldier said. But as the country slides toward civil war, Fountaine added, the goal of a democratic Iraq seems more distant by the day.

"You have to wonder, what exactly are we doing?" Fountaine said.

"In my opinion, (Iraq) is a country that has been at war with itself and with other enemies for thousands of years. And we're supposed to make them happy? I don't think so. I don't see it happening."

When asked if history will justify the life-altering sacrifice he has made, Fontaine paused for several seconds, lowered his head, and slowly replied: "If in 10 or 20 years, if Iraq is in the same spot and America is still losing boys over there, then, no, I think my sacrifice will be as futile as anyone else's."

That sacrifice has been profound, excruciatingly exacted from Fontaine's body by two large bombs on a dusty road a dozen miles north of Baghdad.

The pain has been both physical and psychic. On June 30, while visiting the Marine Corps War Memorial in a wheelchair he was still learning to use, Fontaine lost control and fell over. Nothing he experienced in the explosion outside Taji -- not the searing burn, not the loss of blood, not the experience of binding his own mangled legs with tourniquets -- equaled the humiliation of that moment.

"It was like a hammer to the face," Fontaine said this week as he sat on his hospital bed. "I just sat there for about 5 minutes, and I said, 'How does one go from being a combat-hardened tank commander to being a poor wretch on the ground?'"

That journey began in April 2001 when Fontaine enlisted in the Army, fulfilling a childhood dream to follow his father, a Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam era, into military service.

"I was patriotic before Sept. 11 happened," said Fontaine, a 2000 graduate of Whitman-Hanson Regional High School. "It doesn't take a tragedy to make me realize I'm proud to be an American."

His father and mother, Paul Fontaine and Roberta Quimby, are separated and take turns visiting their son in a convalescent home on the Walter Reed grounds, each staying for 10 days at a time.

The rotation, clearly, is a boon for the sergeant, whose room contains several Red Sox caps, loaves of bread, cans of Spam, get-well messages, and a carefully arranged display of medals. One of those medals, the Purple Heart, was not discovered until Paul Fontaine rummaged inside his son's travel bag at a hospital at Ramstein Air Base in Germany, where Brian Fontaine woke after several days of unconsciousness. Until that discovery, Brian did not know he already had received the Purple Heart, which is awarded to combat-wounded veterans.

The elder Fontaine listened quietly as his son spoke to a reporter about the US mission in Iraq. But he said he would gladly serve in Brian's place and that, as a soldier, "all you can do is do what your country tells you."

When he enlisted, Brian's plan was to serve two years and then join the Boston Fire Department, where his father, a 26-year firefighter, is assigned to Rescue 2 in Egleston Square. But a zest for military life and steady promotions drove the younger Fontaine to reenlist during his first tour in Iraq, where he served from mid-2003 to mid-2004 with the Fourth Infantry Division.

During his first deployment, Fontaine said, his unit routinely came under attack from mortars and rifle fire. But he volunteered for mission after dangerous mission, he said.

Although the potential for death or injury was everywhere, he added: "I accepted the fact that I was a soldier. And I expected this to happen, either a loss of limb or a loss of life."

During his next tour, when the two bombs detonated under the Humvee carrying Fountaine, it was the fifth time that the soldier had survived an improvised explosive device, the military's name for the makeshift bombs used by insurgents. Fountaine knew, as soon as he found himself face-first in the dirt beside the truck, that he had been hurt badly. The sight of his mangled feet and fractured legs, spewing blood as his wounded driver screamed in agony nearby, gave Fountaine a gory glimpse of his future.

"I knew I would become some sort of an amputee," said Fountaine, massaging the stumps of his legs, amputated 10 inches below the knees. "I won't be able to feel the grass between my feet or the sand under my toes, but the important thing is I still have my life."

He said he expects to receive prosthetic legs this week, and to continue arduous daily therapy to ease the transition to life outside the Army. He still has nightmares, Fountaine said, and he occasionally forgets that he does not have all of his legs.

"When you swing your legs over the side of the bed, you wonder why your feet don't hit the floor," Fountaine said. "And then you remember: It's because you don't have feet, stupid."

A whitewater-rafting trip to the Grand Canyon is on Fountaine's schedule for late this month, courtesy of the Wounded Warrior Project, which provides services for seriously wounded military personnel and their families. Fountaine said he hopes to be leaving Walter Reed within months and to live with his father in Dorchester for a short while.

Despite his reservations about the course of the war, Fountaine said he would return, if he could, to serve the remainder of his tour with the First Brigade Combat Team of the Fourth Infantry Division. The bonds forged in war between soldiers, he said, are reason enough to sacrifice one's life and limbs for the good of the unit.

"Those guys over there are my family just as much as that guy over there is my father," Fountaine said. "I wish I could have stayed there, and I wish I could come home with them."

Despite the incessant drumbeat of bad news, Fountaine said there are small positives that occur every day in Iraq, whether soccer games between soldiers and children or offers of water to thirsty farmers.

"Regardless of everything that's going on and the anger you may have," Fountaine said of the war, ". . . just know it's a lot of regular guys, just like you, who have volunteered to serve their country."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

TWO MORE MARINES KILLED IN ANBAR IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS

8/3/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-08-03C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: Two Marines assigned to Regimental Combat Team 5 died, in separate incidents, due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province today.

SOLDIER KILLED IN AL ANBAR AUG 2.

8/2/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-08-02CL

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: A Soldier assigned to 9th Naval Construction Regiment died due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province today.

MARINES DIES IN AL ANBAR AUG 2

8/2/2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 06-08-02C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: A Marine assigned to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division died due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province today.

“Bomber Drove A Car Loaded With Explosives Into A Building Just Behind The Checkpoint”

August 3, 2006 The Great Falls Tribune

A Lakeland, Fla. newspaper reported Thursday that Marine Cpl. Phillip Baucus and the two Marines who perished with him were killed by a suicide bomber last weekend in Iraq.

The Ledger interviewed the family of Sgt. Christian B. Williams, 27, of Winter Haven, Fla., who was killed on Saturday along with Cpl. Anthony E. Butterfield, 19, of Clovis, Calif. and Cpl. Baucus, 28.

“They were killed in the Al Anbar province, Iraq when a suicide bomber drove a car loaded with explosives into a building just behind the checkpoint to their base,” the Ledger reported.

Merrill Soldier Killed



Spc. Ryan Jopek Contributed photo

August 3, 2006 By Rick LaFrombois, Wausau Daily Herald

Family and friends learned Wednesday of the death of 2004 Merrill High School graduate and Army National Guard member Spc. Ryan Jopek in Iraq.

Jopek, 20, was expected to complete his service in a few weeks with the 4th Platoon, A Company, 2-127 Infantry Battalion for the National Guard. The day Jopek was killed and the circumstances of his death were not immediately known.

Jopek is the second soldier from Merrill killed in support of the war in Iraq.

Spc. Grant Dampier, 25, was killed near Balad, Iraq, when the truck in which he was riding hit an improvised explosive device. Dampier was a member of the U.S. Army's 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry. He died May 15.

Jopek's death left his friends stunned as they gathered outside his home on Main Street.

"The hardest part (of his death) was that he was so close to being done," said Jessica Fox, 20, of Merrill.

Fox was one of more than 20 friends who were gathered Wednesday evening on the front porch of Jopek's home, swapping stories and shedding a few tears over their friend. More than 50 friends visited the home throughout the day.

The porch was the hangout place for Jopek and his friends from high school to his two-week leave just six weeks ago. During his leave, Jopek celebrated his birthday, and his friends said they soaked up as much time with him as they could.

Parked in the yard was what friends said was Jopek's "baby" -- his 1966 Chevy pickup. Jopek, whose friends called him by his last name, planned to fix up the truck when he returned. A bouquet of flowers rested on its hood.

Jopek's friends said his smile, Kansas drawl and his deep friendships with so many people left the deepest impression on people. Jopek moved to Merrill from Kansas his sophomore year.

"He made everyone feel like they were his only friend and that they were very important to him," said Kailey Bender, 19, of Merrill.

By joining the Guard, Jopek followed in his father's footsteps. Staff Sgt. Brian Jopek is in the National Guard's public affairs division and once served in Iraq. Fox said the younger Jopek took his job seriously and looked forward to returning to the Middle East after his most recent leave. Jopek was a machine gunner on a Humvee for convoy missions, friends said.

Queens Marine Killed In Iraq Laid To Rest

29 July 2006 (1010 WINS)

NEW YORK: Family members laid to rest on Saturday a Marine who died in combat earlier this month in one of Iraq's most volatile regions.

Cpl. Julian A. Ramon of Queens was killed July 20 while in the Anbar province, west of Baghdad.

He was on his second tour of duty and was due to return home in September. Military officials told his family he had died in an explosion.

On Saturday, a Marine honor guard carried his coffin into St. Michael's Church in Flushing for Mass. Later, at the funeral, the guard presented Ramon's mother with his Purple Heart and shot a 21-gun salute.

Friends from Ramon's alma mater John Bowne High School remembered him as a humble young man who joined the Marines so that he could go to college.

Ramon joined the service in June 2003 and was stationed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

He served as a field radio operator and was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force.

Troops Remember Sgt. 'Vecc,' A 'Soldier's Soldier'



Sgt. Mark R. Vecchione, Company B, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, was killed in Iraq July 18

July 28, 2006 By Matt Millham, Stars and Stripes

FRIEDBERG, Germany

Sgt. Mark R. Vecchione avoided death one time, but fell squarely in its path seconds later.

Vecchione, 25, of Eastham, Mass., a member of Company B, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment; part of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division; was recently given command of a tank of his own.

But, on July 18, he volunteered to fill in as gunner on another tank as it was about to roll out on a mission in Ramadi, Iraq. During the operation, a roadside bomb explosion set fire to the front fuel cell of Vecchione's borrowed ride.

Remarkably, every member of the crew made it through the blast without a scratch. But with the front of the vehicle engulfed in flames, they were forced to abandon it.

Under normal procedures, Vecchione would have been one of the first people to get off. But he was the last, jumping right onto another roadside bomb.

"If he'd jumped three feet to the left or three feet to the right, this wouldn't have happened," said Capt. Jason Irwin, the company commander, who considered his former soldier and gunner a friend. Nobody else was injured.

It was an astonishing stroke of bad luck that ended the life of this soldier, whom colleagues and superiors said could have made sergeant major of the Army.

Hundreds of mourners packed the chapel at Ray Barracks on Wednesday to honor the fallen soldier.

"Anyone who even knew his name, that's who's going to miss him," said Sgt. Jason Sawyer, one of Vecchione's closest friends.

Sawyer and others spoke of Vecchione's indomitable work ethic, unflinching optimism and reputation for perfection, which made him somewhat of a legend in the battalion.

During the unit's first deployment to Iraq in 2003, Vecchione was assigned to work in the battalion's tactical operations center as a radio telephone operator. He would rather have been doing his regular job as a tanker, but the leadership wouldn't let him go because he was so good at the job, said Staff Sgt. Scott Ramen, who worked with Vecchione during that deployment.

"That's why he was determined to get his stripes, because they'd have to let him back on a tank," Ramen said.

Despite the fact Vecchione considered his radio job boring, Ramen and Sawyer said they never once saw him without a smile on his face.

"He was a soldier's soldier," Sawyer said.

When the unit got back to Germany, Vecchione got his sergeant stripes and was made Irwin's gunner. The position is given to the best gunner in the company, and brings with it the responsibility of commanding the tank in the commander's absence.

"Sergeant Vecchione used to joke that it was his tank, and he only let Captain Irwin ride in it sometimes," Sawyer said.

Vecchione's crew was quickly recognized as the best in the battalion.

"Officers used to go to him for advice on making their crews better," Sawyer said.

Officers don't usually ask for advice from lower enlisted, he said.

Not long after he got to Iraq, Vecchione's excellence earned him another promotion; he was given command of a tank of his own.

He addressed the possibility of his own death on his Web page. A questionnaire posted on it asks, "Goal you would like to achieve this year?"

Vecchione answered, "Making it home alive."

To the question, "How do you want to die?" Vecchione answered, "With as little pain as possible."

The questionnaire also asked, "Do you believe in yourself?"

"Of course," Vecchione responded. "Who else would."

He sorely underestimated his influence on his friends and colleagues.

"Nobody's going to talk about the deceased badly," Sawyer said, admitting that troops killed in war are sometimes lionized for their sacrifice even if they weren't fantastic soldiers. "But Sergeant 'Vecc' was the kind of guy who, no matter how hard you looked, you couldn't find anything wrong with him."

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A US soldier at the site of a car bombing near Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone.
(AFP/Wisam Sami)

Attacks Levels Up In Anbar, Top Marine Commander Says; *"Much Like All Of Iraq"*

August 2, 2006 ANTONIO CASTANEDA, Associated Press Writer

Maj. Gen. Richard C. Zilmer said most of the recent increase in attacks in Anbar province occurred around the provincial capital of Ramadi. Progress in pacifying the Sunni Arab-dominated province has lagged far behind most of the country.

"Right now, much like all of Iraq, the attack levels are up," Zilmer told The Associated Press.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Bomb Kills Canadian Soldier In Kandahar; Four More Wounded

08/03/06 Reuters & CCMatthews & By NOOR KHAN, ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

A roadside bomb killed a Canadian soldier on Thursday in Afghanistan's south, where NATO troops took over security from U.S. forces this week.

In the first incident, one soldier was killed and another wounded when their LAV III Light Armoured Vehicle struck an improvised explosive device at about 4:20 a.m. Kandahar time.

Dead is Corporal Christopher Jonathan Reid of the 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based in Edmonton. Cpl. Reid was evacuated by helicopter to the coalition medical facility at Kandahar Airfield where he was pronounced dead.

The injured soldier was also evacuated by helicopter to the coalition medical facility where he was treated for minor injuries. As he is expected to return to duty, his identity will not be released.

Another soldier was wounded when the bomb hit a NATO vehicle near the village of Pashmul in Kandahar province, a stronghold for Taliban insurgents, NATO said in a statement.

Three other soldiers were also wounded in a second incident at about 7:15 a.m. Kandahar time when their LAV III struck an improvised explosive device in the same area. All were evacuated by helicopter to Kandahar Airfield. One is in good condition with non life-threatening injuries while the other two are being treated for minor injuries and are expected to return to duty.

In the southern Zabol province, 12 highway police manning a checkpoint abandoned their post overnight, said Yousef Stanezai, a spokesman for Interior Ministry.

Stanezai said the men defected as the police were preparing to arrest them for extorting money from motorists and hijacking a fuel truck.

Insurgents Wound Danish Soldier In Attack On Habibullah Camp

August 2, 2006 NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer

Taliban insurgents attacked a Danish camp in southern Afghanistan Wednesday, seriously wounding one soldier in the third assault on Denmark's contingent since it deployed to the volatile region last week.

The Danish soldier injured in the attack on the camp in the remote district of Musa Qala, in Helmand province, was transferred to a hospital in the city of Kandahar, the Danish Army Operational Command said in a statement. No further details were immediately available.

An Afghan policeman was killed during the battle, and four Taliban were wounded.

The raid took place in the village of Habibullah near the city of Garmser, which Taliban militants seized and held for several days last month before U.S.-led coalition troops and Afghan forces wrested it back.

“15 Police Surrendered As The Rebels Were About To Attack Their Post”

August 2, 2006 NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer & India Defence

In another province in the Taliban's southern heartland, 15 police surrendered as the rebels were about to attack their post, the Taliban said on Wednesday.

15 police surrendered to the Taliban on Tuesday in Zabul, another province in the south, as rebels readied to storm their post just outside Qalat, the provincial capital, Taliban commander Mullah Zahir said.

An explosion destroyed an Afghan Finance Ministry car in Kabul, killing the driver and wounding a passenger and a bystander, officials said.

TROOP NEWS

11,000 More Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

August 02, 2006 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 738-06

The Department of Defense announced today major units scheduled to deploy as part of the next rotation of forces operating in Afghanistan. This announcement involves a combat brigade, headquarters element, and combat support and combat service support units totaling approximately 11,000 service members as presently envisioned. The scheduled rotation for these forces will begin in late-2006.

Decisions made by the secretary of defense at the recommendation of military commanders in Afghanistan may result in changes to this rotation and may affect units now being identified and advised to prepare to deploy.

This rotation continues the U.S. commitment to Afghanistan, yet is flexible and adaptable in order to meet the evolving requirements for the mission.

The major units announced today include:

82nd Airborne Division Headquarters, Fort Bragg, N.C.

4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C.

The individual services will announce the smaller, supporting units for this rotation.

The Coward Col. Michael Steele: He Won't Testify About Whether He Gave The Orders That Led To His Soldiers Going On Trail For Murder

Aug. 1, 2006, By JONATHAN KARL, ABC News & Aug. 02, 2006 RYAN LENZ,
Associated Press

Col. Michael Steele, whose heroics were portrayed in the movie "Black Hawk Down," is under investigation for allegedly encouraging his men to go on a killing spree.

The investigation begins just as the Army has started to make its case against four soldiers who are charged with murdering three Iraqi civilians while under Steele's command, ABC News has learned.

The soldiers' defense is that they were under orders to kill all military-age males.

Pfc. Bradley Mason, speaking at a hearing to determine whether the four must stand trial, also said that their brigade commander, a veteran of the 1993 "Black Hawk Down"

battle in Somalia, told troops hunting insurgents to "kill all of them." Mason is not one of the accused.

"He (Steele) just said that the rules of engagement were that 'we get to kill all the male insurgents,'" Mason said.

"Kill all of them," Mason quoted Steele as saying. When asked who those people were, Mason said "insurgents, terrorists."

Mason said the squad's 1st sergeant would tell soldiers they did a good job if they killed an Iraqi. Mason said he believed it was a competition for kills.

ABC News has learned that Steele has already been reprimanded for the incident.

Military sources familiar with the case said it appears that the soldiers in this unit at least believed their commander had issued an order to shoot to kill all Iraqi men during this operation.

Steele has a storied military career and it was his unit that came under attack in 1993 in Somalia, as was portrayed in the movie "Black Hawk Down."

During the current conflict, Steele has been heard boasting about his unit's record of killing insurgents. Last November he said, "We are absolutely giving the enemy the maximum opportunity to die for his country."

A source familiar with the investigation said Steele kept a "kill board" tallying the number of Iraqis killed by units under his command, and in some cases he gave out commemorative knives to soldiers who killed Iraqis believed to be insurgents.

A U.S. soldier testified Wednesday that four of his colleagues accused of murdering three Iraqis during a raid threatened to kill him if he told anyone about the shooting deaths.

Mason testified that Spc. William B. Hunsaker threatened him a day after the alleged killings. He said he was accosted by Staff Sgt. Raymond L. Girouard and Pfc. Corey R. Clagett on May 29 when he was on his way to the Criminal Investigation Division.

Asked what was said that was of a threatening nature, Mason replied that Girouard told him: "'If you say anything, I'll kill you.' I took them pretty seriously."

Clagett's civilian lawyer, Christopher Bergrin, has said he intends to call Steele to testify during the hearing. Steele has apparently signed a statement invoking his right not to testify.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

8.2.06 By SAMEER YACOUB, Associated Press Writer & Reuters & 8.3.06 By SAMEER YACOUB, Associated Press Writer & Reuters & AFP News

Two traffic police colonels were killed and two guards wounded in a drive-by shooting in Khalis, 50 miles north of Baghdad.

A police patrol was hit by a roadside bomb in the northern city of Mosul, killing one policeman and injuring four, police said.

A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army convoy exploded on a main road between Simawa and Diwaniya, south of Baghdad, killing one soldier and wounding three, police said.

A roadside bomb exploded near an Iraqi army patrol, wounding two soldiers in Diwaniya, 180 km (112 miles) south of Baghdad.

Ahmed Abdel Hussein, chief of traffic police in Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, was gunned up along with his bodyguard and two others were wounded, police said.

Insurgents attacked a police station and wounded one policeman in Tal Afar, 420 km (260 miles) northwest of Baghdad.

Two off-duty Iraqi soldiers and a civilian were killed and four civilians wounded when a roadside bomb went off beside a truck carrying wheat in Hawija, 70 km (43 miles) southwest of Kirkuk, police said.

A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army convoy exploded on a main road between Simawa and Diwaniya south of Baghdad, killing one soldier and wounding three, police said.

Three policeman were killed in fighting near Madaen, south of Baghdad, Iraqi police said.

Guerrillas captured a food contractor for the Iraqi army on Wednesday, the Joint Coordination Centre said.

Three Iraqi soldiers were wounded when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in Balad, 80 km (50 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Iraqi police came under attack and fought intense battles with guerrillas overnight in the southern outskirts of Baghdad

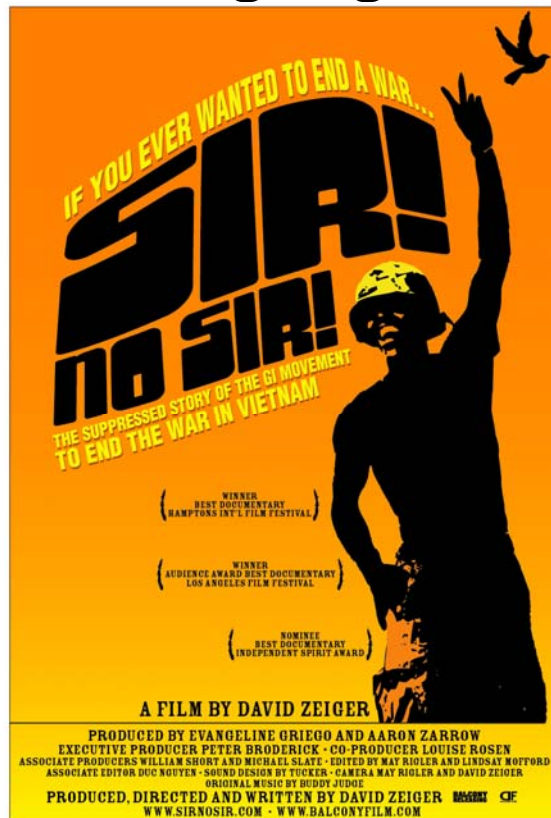
In the first clash, 30 kilometres (19 miles) south of the capital, guerrillas attacked a police checkpoint killing 14 people, including six policemen, Kut police said on Thursday.

A second battle erupted nearby between a joint military and police force and insurgents, the prime minister's office announced. Two policemen died.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

***VIETNAM:*
Not Everyone Was Following
Orders;
“I Was Doing It Right But I Wasn’t
Doing Right”**



The film also floats the compelling notion that president Richard Nixon's decision to scale down the ground war in favour of raining death from the skies was greatly influenced by officers' worries that they were about to get fragged by their own men.

July 21, 2006, By Jason Anderson, Special to The Globe and Mail [Excerpts]

"I was doing it right," one ex-GI says of his stint in Vietnam, "but I wasn't doing right."

Trained to follow the orders of their superiors and counter communist aggression in Southeast Asia, the interview subjects in *Sir! No Sir!* describe their growing misgivings about the war and the many different ways they chose to express them

David Zeiger's informative and swiftly paced documentary reveals the under-publicized history of dissent among the U.S. military's rank and file during the Vietnam war.

In so doing, his film highlights the efforts of soldiers like the "Nine for Peace," nine servicemen turned protesters who chained themselves to clergymen before being arrested by military police in 1968, and Howard Levy, an army doctor who was sentenced to three years in prison for refusing to give medical training to Green Berets.

Sir! No Sir! also charts the proliferation of unrest-fomenting GI coffeehouses and underground zines with monikers like *WORMS* (We Openly Resist Military Stupidity).

There's even a brief account of Jane Fonda's infamous travelling theatre group, whose anarchic spirit was meant to counter the more gung-ho nature of the USO. Interviewed for the film, Fonda expresses her admiration for the soldiers who resisted all that military stupidity.

The film also floats the compelling notion that president Richard Nixon's decision to scale down the ground war in favour of raining death from the skies was greatly influenced by officers' worries that they were about to get fragged by their own men.

The possibility that stories about returning GIs being spat on by hippie girls were media myth is equally fascinating but, like many of the points here, dealt with too hastily.

However, Zeiger is wise not to spend time drawing specific parallels between the conflict in Vietnam and America's current military imbroglio.

He leaves it up to the audience to make those connections and perhaps wonder whether similar stories of resistance are currently unfolding.

**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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

***Stupid Shitheads In Command
Try It Again:
Attack And Kill Members Of Mahdi
Army Traveling To Baghdad Mass
Rally Against Israel And U.S.
Occupation;
"Mr. Sadr Counts Many Of The
Millions Of Disaffected And
Impoverished Shiites Among His
Constituency"
[So, The Daryl Dumbfucks In Charge
Want "Millions" More Trying To Kill U.S.
Troops. Brilliant.]***

August 3, 2006 By KIRK SEMPLE, The New York Times [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD, Iraq: American troops opened fire today on a vehicle carrying armed Shiites to an anti-Israel demonstration in Baghdad, killing two occupants and wounding at least 16, officials said.

An official at the Ministry of Interior said the vehicles' occupants were followers of Moktada al-Sadr, who has called for a mass demonstration on Friday against Israel's bombardment of Lebanon.

The shooting comes at a time of rising tensions between the American military and Mr. Sadr's organization.

In recent weeks, American and Iraqi forces have conducted a series of raids against bases of Mr. Sadr's militia, the Mahdi Army, and have arrested high-ranking militia leaders.

Thousands of Mr. Sadr's supporters from Shiite-dominated cities in southern Iraq began converging on the capital today in anticipation of the rally.

They boarded buses decorated with pictures of Hezbollah's leader, Sheik Hassan Nasralla, waved Iraqi and Hezbollah flags, and chanted "Death to America! Death to Israel!" according to news agencies.

Israel's offensive in Lebanon is highly unpopular among Iraqis, and Mr. Sadr was among the first politicians to publicly condemn Israel's actions, warning last month that his followers would "not sit by with folded hands before the creep of Zionism." He also accused the United States of culpability in the bombardments because of its close relationship with Israel.

American and Iraqi security forces were bracing for enormous crowds at the rally, which is planned for Friday afternoon in the teeming, working-class neighborhood of Sadr City, the cleric's main stronghold here. Charismatic and decidedly anti-American, Mr. Sadr counts many of the millions of disaffected and impoverished Shiites among his constituency.

Sadr City demonstrations in the past have been intense and angry but generally free of violence.

But Israel's three-week-old offensive, in addition to the recent government raids against the Mahdi Army, has increased the anger and resentment among Mr. Sadr's followers.

In his call for the demonstration, which he issued on Tuesday, Mr. Sadr seemed to anticipate violence, by his opponents, however, not by his followers.

"I know very well the dangers of holding demonstrations in our beloved Iraq, from the enemies of Allah and Islam," he said.

"But it is our duty and our love for martyrdom and to die for the sake of Allah, that is calling us to support truth and its people. If any of you seeks heaven then here are the open doors, wear your shrouds and stand up to support your struggling and patient brothers in Lebanon and Iraq."

The demonstration comes at a time of rising tensions between the American military and Mr. Sadr's organization.

In recent weeks, American and Iraqi forces have conducted a series of raids against Mahdi Army redoubts and have arrested high-ranking militia leaders.

Mr. Sadr is among the country's most powerful politicians. In the legislative elections last December, his bloc won at least 30 of 275 parliamentary seats, making it the equal of any political party in Iraq.

Buses full of supporters left from several southern cities today, including Basra, Najaf and Hilla.

The Associated Press reported that a convoy of about 20 buses, accompanied by police vehicles, drove out of Basra carrying young men, many of them draped in white cloths to symbolize their willingness to die for martyrdom.

The Great Iraq Reconstruction Fiasco; While U.S. Troops Died, "You Had A Big Pot Of Money And You Had A Lot Of Hogs In The Creek"

Aug 2, 2006 By Andy Mosher and Griff Witte, Washington Post [Excerpts]

NASIRIYAH, Iraq, Aug. 1 - A flailing Iraq reconstruction effort that has been dominated for more than three years by U.S. dollars and companies is being transferred to Iraqis, leaving them the challenge of completing a long list of projects left unfinished by the Americans.

While the handover is occurring gradually, it comes as U.S. money dwindles and American officials face a Sept. 30 deadline for choosing which projects to fund with the remaining \$2 billion of the \$21 billion rebuilding program. More than 500 planned projects have not been started, and the United States lacks a coherent plan for transferring authority to Iraqi control, a report released Tuesday concludes.

Sen. Byron L. Dorgan (D-N.D.) blamed contractors for not delivering on promised work even as they continued to cash their checks.

"We paid for air conditioning and ended up with a ceiling fan," Dorgan said. "You had a big pot of money and you had a lot of hogs in the creek wallowing and shoving and grunting, trying to get some of it."

"It looks like they were a lot more effective at getting the money than they were at doing reconstruction."

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



Iraqi citizen inspects the damage 03 August 2006 to his house which was raided overnight by US occupation troops. (AFP/Wissma Al-Okaili)

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

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

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

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace]

**“You Go A Bit Crazy When You
See Little Body After Little Body
Coming Up Out Of The Ground”**

August 2, 2006 Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, The Guardian

Three days ago, next to the gutted and destroyed house in Qana, seven bodies lay covered with bedsheets, a blanket and a prayer mat.

One small arm stretched out from under the sheets; thin, the arm of a little girl, a piece of cloth like a bracelet wrapped around the wrist. As bodies were loaded on the stretcher, I saw another dead girl; she was dressed in a black shirt with a coloured scarf wrapped loosely around her head. Her face was swollen.

In some ways I was relieved. The rumour we had heard in the hotel in Tyre was that at least 40 people, half of them children, had been in the house in Qana when it was bombed by Israeli planes, and here I was an hour later, with Red Cross workers and others running up and down, and all I could see was the bodies of two girls and five adults.

It's weird, the things that make you feel better in the south of Lebanon, but seven dead instead of 40 gave me a sense of relief.

But even as I stood there registering that emotion, hellish scenes were unfolding.

Four medics carried a little boy by on an orange stretcher: he was perhaps 12 years old, dressed in black shorts and a white T-shirt with a coloured motorcycle on it. His arms were stretched behind his head, but apart from the bruises on his face and the swollen lips, he looked OK. For half a second I told myself, as I tell myself every time I see death, that he was just sleeping, and that he would be fine. But he was dead.

Then came two more boys in the arms of the rescuers. One of them, the younger, around eight years old, had his arms close to his chest, his nose and mouth covered with blood. The elder, around 10, had dirt and debris in his mouth. Their slight bodies were put on a blanket, the head of the younger boy left resting on the shoulder of the elder, then four men carried the blanket off, stopping twice to rest as they took them away. The bodies of the boys were piled with other corpses in the back of an ambulance.

Two more small dead boys followed them. The medics were running out of stretchers, so they piled the corpses of the boys on one orange stretcher. One of the kids was slightly chubby; he was wearing a red T-shirt and shorts. His head rested on the lap of the younger, who was about six years old; both had the same exploding lips, covered with blood and dirt. It was obvious to everyone that these boys were not sleeping.

Then another child was pulled from under the rubble, and another followed, and then another.

You go a little crazy when you see little body after little body coming up out of the ground. I looked around me and all I could see in the house was the detritus of their short lives - big plastic bags filled with clothes, milk cans, plastic toys and a baby carriage.

By three in the afternoon, when the corpse of a one-year-old boy was pulled from the rubble, he looked more like a mud statue than a child. The medics held him high above

their heads, clear of the rubble. The faces of the rescue workers said everything that needed to be said.

There are the official statistics, and then there are the children, who seem to be everywhere in the heart of this conflict, all with their own, painful, awful stories.

A week ago I met Abbas Sha'ito, a chubby 12-year-old boy in a bright orange T-shirt who was sitting on the side of a road south of Tyre, blood covering his face, his T-shirt torn by the bomb that had hit the minivan he had been in. He and 17 others had been inside; his mother, brother and aunt were all injured, moaning and in agony a few feet away. Inside the minivan remained the headless corpse of his uncle, and the bodies of his grandmother and another man who had been fleeing with them.

Abbas was weeping, and had an arm round his mother, who seemed to be fading fast: she was injured in the chest and head, and one of her arms was almost severed at the bicep. "Don't leave me, mother," the boy wept. "Don't go, don't go."

It was clear that his mother believed herself to be close to death. "Take care of your brothers and sisters," she said to Abbas.

"Don't leave me," Abbas kept saying.

"My purse is under me. There is money, take care of it," his mother said; as she did, her head began drooping, and Abbas screamed, and a medic rushed in: "Don't cry, don't cry, she will be OK. Just keep talking to her," the medic said.

As it is, Abbas's mother is still alive, although still in intensive care, but Abbas was not to know this then. He buried his face in his hands and wept, while his brother Ali stood nearby, one hand bandaged and his eyes on the horizon.

Last Wednesday, in a hospital in Tyre, I met Samah Shihab, a seven-year-old girl with beautiful long eyelashes from the hamlet of Mlooka near Tyre. She was in the yard of her house with her two brothers, aged four and nine, and her 14-year-old sister, when a shell fell.

"I was playing with my sister and brothers when the rocket came," said Samah. "They started screaming and crying. There was pressure in my ears and my hands and legs were all in blood. I was scared. My brother was screaming and I was scared." According to her doctors, Samah, who was badly burned and needs skin grafts on her legs, is unlikely to walk again.

On Monday I met Ali (he didn't give me a second name), who is nine and had been hiding in the basement of his house, along with his aunts, his grandmother and an uncle with learning difficulties, for 20 days in the village of Bint Jbeil. While the family hid below, war raged above: the village has suffered the heaviest shelling of anywhere in the south of Lebanon, as well as intense street battles between Israeli soldiers and Hizbullah fighters. When Ali emerged from the basement on Monday, during a brief halt to the aerial bombardment, he was visibly frightened and shocked, and seemed unable to recognise his surroundings.

As he made his first steps on the big chunks of rubble and concrete strewn everywhere, clutching a bottle of water in one arm and a blue bag in the other, he began shaking and crying. His grandfather, who was leading him through the rubble, collapsed in the shade of a doorway, and Ali and other family members continued their walk to the Red Cross vehicles - parked a kilometre away, at the edge of the village, beyond the edge of the vast and almost impassable rubble field - without him. I walked with them.

As we walked, jumping from one boulder to the other, Ali said: "My father and mother went with my other brothers and sisters to another town. They said they will come and get me when the bombs stop."

In the scorching sunshine above, Israeli jets were flying, their sound mixed with that of the drones. Suddenly a thud came from the hills and Ali froze. "They are going to bomb again!" He started to cry. "Why are the Israelis hitting us? Do they hate us? My cousin Mahmoud called me on the phone and he told me that the nuclear bombs are really big. Are they as big as these rockets?"

It's hard to convey quite how shocked, perhaps quite literally shell-shocked - this little boy was. He was almost delusional.

In another hospital in Tyre, which has seen 120 injured and 35 dead so far, I meet the young son of the head of the hospital. Muhammad Najem, 11, spends his days inside where it's safe, because a week ago a car was hit by a missile on the road directly outside the hospital. Muhammad draws on a computer: his latest drawing is of Hizbullah fighter.

Next to the fighter is a star of David stabbed with a dagger - blood drips down into a vat full of blood marked "Hell".

His elder brother Ali Najem, a fourth-year medical student in his 20s, is rueful. "The Israelis are planting very bad hatred in the children against Israel," he says.

Ali has spent the past three weeks documenting the stories of the children who have passed injured or with their injured families through his father's hospital. He particularly remembers one boy, aged about seven, who was caught in a convoy that was hit in the first days of the bombing. This boy described to him, quite calmly, "as if it were a cartoon", how a baby from the car in front of them was ejected out of the window when the vehicle was hit. The boy's father had been killed at the scene.

Ali also talks about the impact on women delivering babies in the midst of conflict. In the first week of the war one of them named her new son Intisar, which means victory. In the past week, two new names have been given to newborns at this hospital: "Wahid, which means 'the lonely', and Dayaa, which means 'the lost'."

The woman who gave birth to Dayaa did so alone, having been separated from her husband somewhere in the Bekaa Valley. Ali says that she became disturbed, and called out to her husband: "If you don't come and take me out of this place, I will put myself under these bombs and kill myself and the baby."

For newborns, as well as for the older children, the scars of this war are going to take a long time to fade.

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.

“‘Are My Wife And Kids Terrorists, Do They Have Rockets?’ He Screamed In Pain”

August 01, 2006 By Mohammed Zaatari, Daily Star staff

NABATIEH: He stepped out to get some water for his family and when he came back, he found a demolished home and no one left but his dead wife and four children. Adnan Harakeh from Nabatieh wandered the street where his home once stood and holding pictures of his family, cried and screamed: "I am responsible for their death. I wish I had moved to Beirut."

An Israeli raid that hit their home in Nmeirieh had left the man homeless and alone.

"You went and left me alone ... What will I do without you?" he cried.

"I went to bring some water for my children ... 20 minutes later, Israeli warplanes raided my house, killing my wife and kids," he told The Daily Star.

Harakeh is a civil defense worker who worked on aiding dozens of civilians killed and wounded during Israel's strikes on Nabatieh.

"Are my wife and kids terrorists, do they have rockets?" he screamed in pain.

"Israel is cruel. I can say nothing but may God have mercy upon them."

Staring at the photo of his youngest son, Hadi, Harakeh said: "My son was handsome, he used to pray everyday ... he is gone now."

Volunteers and the Lebanese Army worked on removing bodies from under the rubble while Israeli war jets continued to fly in the area.

After over three hours, the bodies were retrieved from the rubble and taken to the Ragheb Harb hospital in Nabatieh.

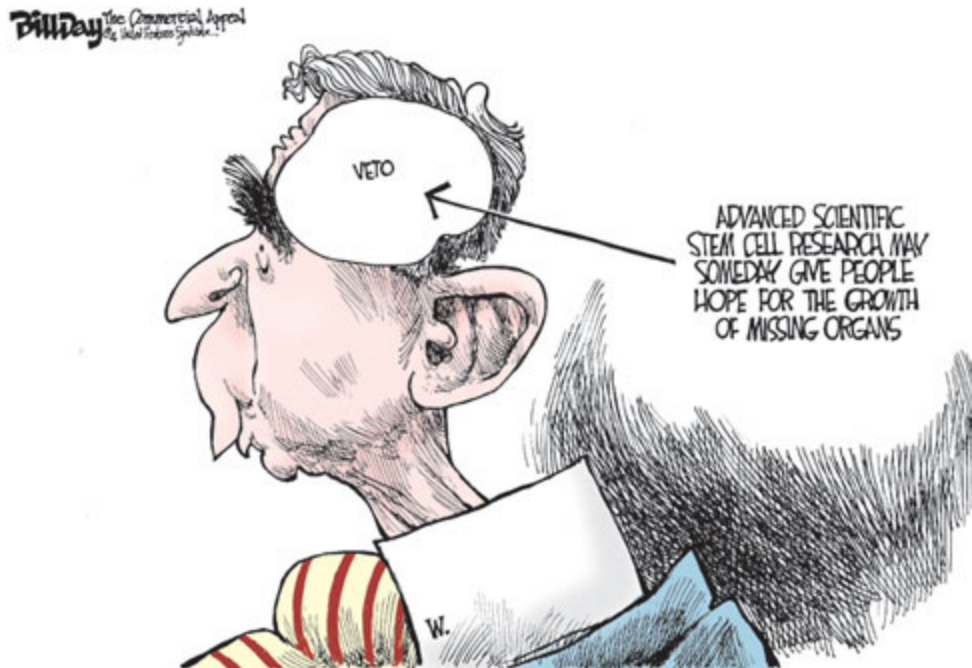
"The youngest child, Hadi Harakeh, was still alive when he arrived in the hospital," one of the volunteers, who wished to remain anonymous, said.

"However, it did not take long before he died - his injuries were too serious," he added.

Amid the destruction, workers found Jamal Yadir, Harakeh's neighbor whose house was also destroyed in the Israeli raid.

[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



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[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace]

Police Spies Led Anti-War Protest That Was Attacked By Police Thugs

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

July 28, 2006 Demian Bulwa, San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer

Two Oakland police officers working undercover at an anti-war protest in May 2003 got themselves elected to leadership positions in an effort to influence the demonstration, documents released Thursday show.

The department assigned the officers to join activists protesting the U.S. war in Iraq and the tactics that police had used at a demonstration a month earlier, a police official said last year in a sworn deposition.

At the first demonstration, police fired nonlethal bullets and bean bags at demonstrators who blocked the Port of Oakland's entrance in a protest against two shipping companies they said were helping the war effort.

Dozens of activists and longshoremen on their way to work suffered injuries ranging from welts to broken bones and have won nearly \$2 million in legal settlements from the city.

The extent of the officers' involvement in the subsequent march May 12, 2003, led by Direct Action to Stop the War and others, is unclear.

But in a deposition related to a lawsuit filed by protesters, Deputy Police Chief Howard Jordan said activists had elected the undercover officers to "plan the route of the march and decide, I guess, where it would end up and some of the places that it would go."

Jordan, in his deposition in April 2005, said under questioning by plaintiffs' attorney Jim Chanin that undercover Officers Nobuko Biechler and Mark Turpin had been elected to be leaders in the May 12 demonstration an hour after meeting protesters that day.

Asked who had ordered the officers to infiltrate the group, Jordan said, "I don't know if there is one particular person, but I think together we probably all decided it would be a good idea to have some undercover officers there."

He noted that "two of our officers were elected leaders within an hour on May 12." The idea was "to gather the information and maybe even direct them to do something that we want them to do," Jordan said.

"I call that being totalitarian," said Jack Heyman, a longshoremen's union member who took part in the May 12 march. He said he was not certain whether he had any contact with the officers that day.

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)

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