

GI SPECIAL 4/20:



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

As previously announced, because of time required to participate in organized outreach to anti-war troops, some coming GI Specials will be abbreviated, or delayed. T

**“I Got To Experience
Firsthand The Mess That
We’re In Over There”
“I’m Not A Big Fan Of It”**

“Even As He Fought, His Dad Fought To Bring Him And His Comrades Home”

September 17, 2006 By Bill Nemitz, Blethen Maine Newspapers, Inc

He's by no means the poster boy for his father's long-shot congressional campaign. Truth be told, Sgt. Ben Kamilewicz is too busy adjusting to life after Iraq to be shaking hands and eating rubber-chicken dinners.

But make no mistake about it.

Dexter Kamilewicz's independent quest to unseat Congressman Tom Allen and end the war in Iraq has no bigger cheerleader than his 30-year-old, battle-weary son.

"I got to experience firsthand the mess that we're in over there," said Ben in an interview last week from Minnesota, where he now works as an oil refinery technician. "I'm not a big fan of it."

He never was. An avid biathlete, he joined the Vermont National Guard a few months before the attacks of Sept. 11 because he saw the Guard's national biathlon team as a potential ticket to the Olympics. The next thing he knew, the country was at war.

His infantry unit deployed to Ramadi, Iraq, in July 2005 and came home in June. During the stint, Ben experienced the horror of a roadside bomb upending his Humvee, wounding a member of his platoon.

He also still relives the day he opened a van door during a routine traffic stop and saw four insurgents with their fingers on the triggers of their AK-47s. Ben emptied his 9 mm handgun into the van, then grabbed an automatic weapon and ended the ambush.

When he wasn't just trying to stay alive, he became known as the soldier who fired off volleys of e-mails to Maine's and Vermont's congressional delegations. His message: To send soldiers to war without the protection they need - starting with armored Humvees - was nothing short of criminal.

"And I got results," he said, crediting Sen. Olympia Snowe with rattling the right cages and getting the equipment delivered.

It came as no surprise last April when Ben heard that his dad, a vocal war critic, had collected enough signatures for a spot on Maine's 1st District ballot.

Now he's back, living in his wife's home state and listening to the war debate rage. And while many dismiss Dexter Kamilewicz as a well-meaning fringe candidate. Ben doesn't.

"I think people are finally realizing that what they were sold wasn't the truth," Ben said. "I really think he's that dark horse who's going to surprise a lot of people."

And if Dexter Kamilewicz were to actually win?

"Oh God," Ben said. "I'd be so proud. I'd be very proud."

But win, lose or disappear, Ben will remember this chapter of his family history as a time when the world came knocking - and the Kamilewicz clan answered.

A time when he went to war more out of loyalty to his platoon buddies than to murky Bush administration policies.

A time when, even as he fought, his dad fought to bring him and his comrades home.

He'll also remember the simpler times, like the nights when he and his dad would sit atop Tumbledown Mountain and stare at the full moon. Dexter Kamilewicz would trot out a favorite quote from Mark Twain.

"Do the right thing," he'd tell his son. "It will gratify some people and astonish the rest."

Words to change the world by?

"My dad's got a fire in him," Ben said. "He's out there doing it."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

89th MP Brigade Soldier Killed And Two Others Wounded By Mosul Car Bomb

Sept. 19, 2006 Multi-National Corps Iraq PAO RELEASE No. 20060919-09

TIKRIT, Iraq: An 89th Military Police Brigade Soldier was killed and two other Coalition Force Soldiers were wounded at approximately 3:45 p.m. Tuesday when the vehicle they were traveling in was struck by a suicide car bomb in Mosul. The two wounded Soldiers were evacuated to a coalition forces military treatment facility.

Baghdad Roadside Bomb Kills One Soldier, Wounds Two On Patrol

September 19, 2006 The Anchorage Daily News

WAINWRIGHT: A Fort Wainwright soldier was killed in Iraq on Sunday when his vehicle struck a roadside bomb as he was conducting a mounted patrol in Baghdad, U.S. Army Alaska spokesman Maj. Kirk Gohlke said.

The soldier was identified by Army officials Monday night as Sgt. David J. Davis, 32, of Mount Airy, Md. He was assigned to the Army's 4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team at Fort Wainwright.

Two other 172nd soldiers were injured in the incident.

One was listed as seriously injured, the other as not seriously injured. Both were evacuated to medical facilities in Iraq.

The names of the injured soldiers have not been released, but Gohlke said their families had been notified.

Baghdad Taskforce 3d MEDCOM Soldier Dies

Sept. 19, 2006 Multi-National Corps Iraq PAO RELEASE No. 20060919-03

BAGHDAD: A Soldier assigned to Taskforce 3d MEDCOM died yesterday in Baghdad from non-battle related injuries. The Soldier was part of the medical task force which provides care throughout Iraq.

Five U.S. Soldiers Wounded In Diwaniya; Tank Damaged

19 Sep 2006 Reuters

Five U.S. soldiers were wounded on Monday night when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in the southern city of Diwaniya, 180 km (112 miles) south of Baghdad, the U.S. military said. A tank was damaged in the explosion.

Rocket Attacks Hit Basra Occupation Base And Offices

09/19/06 By ELENA BECATOROS, Associated Press Writer

A string of rocket and mortar attacks hit compounds housing the Iranian, British and U.S. consulates, as well as British bases, in Basra, police and military officials said.

Five rockets hit the Iranian consulate area; one hit a room in the building, another struck a car parked outside, a third hit the compound wall while the fourth fell in the garden, Basra police said.

The fifth missed the compound and fell outside the walls.

Three rounds were launched against Basra Palace, a compound that houses a British base as well as the British and U.S. consulates, said British military spokesman Maj. Charlie Burbridge.

Of the three, only one landed in the compound, he said.

Rockets were also fired at the Shat al Arab Hotel base and at the main British base in the city, but did not strike their targets, he said.

British bases in Basra frequently come under rocket and mortar attack.

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



A U.S. soldier from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, in Baghdad September 16, 2006. REUTERS/Thaier al-Sudani (IRAQ)

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of Marine Cpl. Johnathan Benson at Fort Snelling National Cemetery, Sept. 18, 2006. Benson, 21, of North Branch, Minn., died Sept. 9 of injuries suffered from a roadside bomb in June during his second tour of duty in Iraq. (AP Photo/Jim Mone)

“How Much More Can A Family Take?” “One Knock Is Enough!”

Letters To The Editor
September 18, 2006
Army Times

I am writing in reference to the article about “Quest for the truth” in the Sept. 4 issue.

My husband, Sgt. Lee Duane Todacheene, was the first Navajo killed to the war in Iraq. He died in Balad, Iraq, on April 6, 2004.

I have to agree that the family members are the last to find out the truth about our loved one’s death. I was informed of my husband’s accidental death seven months after he was killed. Those words “We are sorry to inform you, but the status of your husband’s death has been changed to accidental death.”

How much more can a family take? How hard is it for military officials to be truthful about an accidental death?

The first knock at the door with two guys in uniform was bad enough. Informing us of the status change months later is like another knock at the door.

We learned to accept the fact that my husband was killed by a mortar attack. Then we come to find out it was one of our own guys who killed him.

You would think the government and military would take care of their own, and this is what we get?

They left my two sons without a father, left me without a husband. How do we cope with this senseless accident? How do I explain this to my sons?

I am on my feet everyday, trying to do the things my husband used to take care of: taking our sons to school, helping them with their homework, picking them up from practice after school, feeding them, doing laundry, cleaning and being a full-time student at a college at the same time.

That is our job as widows.

The Army needs to work on some changes to prevent putting these families through any more grief. One knock is enough!

Jackie Todacheene

Body Armor Reimbursement Claims Due Oct. 3

September 18, 2006 By Jim Tice, Army Times Staff writer

Time is running out to get paid back for battle rattle you bought for the war zone. Reimbursement claims for body armor and other battlefield safety gear purchased by soldiers out of pocket must be filed with the Army by Oct. 3.

Congress authorized the reimbursement program in 2005 after it became apparent many soldiers and their families spent their own money on body armor, helmets, protective eye wear, hydration systems, lightweight gloves and knee and elbow pads before military supply systems could provide such items.

To qualify for reimbursement, purchases must have been made between Sept. 11, 2001, and April 1, 2006, in anticipation of, or during, deployment to Afghanistan or Iraq.

The Army will provide reimbursement for qualifying purchases made by either a soldier or by another (such as a parent or spouse) on behalf of a soldier. But the soldier for whom the equipment was purchased (or the survivor of a deceased soldier) must file the reimbursement claim.

Claimants will be paid the full item price plus shipping if they still have their receipt, up to \$1,100 per item. Claimants without receipts will be paid according to a Defense Department sheet of estimated costs.

Claims should be filed with a serving soldier's current unit, while veterans should mail their claims to the Army Claims Service at Fort Meade, Md., with a postmark no later than Oct. 3.

For detailed application procedures, soldiers should access the Judge Advocate General's Corps homepage, which has a link to the Army Claims Service, application forms and a list of reimbursable items.

Halliburton To Wounded Employee: You'll Get A Medal If You Don't Sue; "What They Did Was Murder"

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

September 18, 2006 By Justin Rood, Tpmuckraker.com

Halliburton will help its combat-zone employees get the honors and recognition they deserve -- if they promise not to sue the company. That's according to new documents released today by Senate Democrats.

Ray Stannard was a truck driver in Iraq for Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg Brown and Root. In 2003, he was part of a fuel convoy that was ambushed by insurgents. Seven Americans died in the attack and 26 were injured, including Stanner. He is suing the company.

His company knew the convoy's route was dangerous and unprotected, he says, but sent the convoy through anyway. "What they did was murder," Stannard told CBS News recently. "And I stick by that."

The circumstances of his injuries qualified Stanner for the U.S. Defense of Freedom medal, the civilian equivalent to a soldier's Purple Heart.

In offering to forward Stanner's medical records to the Department of Defense so they could confirm and approve his award, KBR required him to sign a release form.

The document, sent to Stannard in November 2004, appears to be boilerplate -- but for one curious paragraph that appears to indemnify KBR from any wrongdoing that may have led to Stanner's injuries:

"I agree that in consideration for the application for a Defense of Freedom Medal on my behalf that. . . I hereby release, acquit and discharge KBR, all KBR employees, the

military, and any of their representatives. . . with respect to and from any and all claims and any and all causes of action, of any kind or character, whether now known or unknown, I may have against any of them which exist as of the date of this authorization. . . . This release also applies to any claims brought by any person or agency or class action under which I may have a right or benefit.”

Stannard didn't sign the form. He received the medal. And he filed suit against the company the following May.

\$400,000 Of Items Missing From Detrick

9.18.06 Washington Post

About \$400,000 of equipment at Fort Detrick has been reported lost or stolen during the past three years. About a quarter of the missing equipment is computers and monitors.

Dad Uses Tank For Ice Cream Run

September 18, 2006 Army Times

A 34-year-old father in the Czech Republic is in trouble with the law for making a trip to buy ice cream for his children.

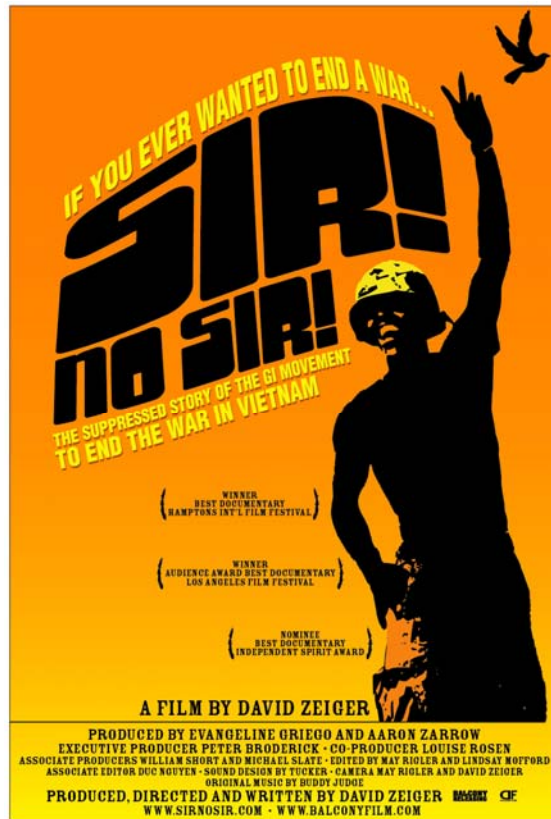
When Moroslav Tucek's car broke down, he decided it was too far to walk, so he drove off in a T-55 military surplus tank that happened to be sitting in his yard, according to news reports.

Police in Hradec managed to stop him just before he entered a historic district. The problem wasn't the vehicle, which Tucek legally bought from the Czech military, but its weight, which exceeded the limit for the town streets.

His fine is going to be about \$560, making for one expensive ice cream run. But the damage could have been far worse.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Even Conservative Military Towns Became Hot Beds Of Activism”



Film Review, Sir No Sir; Kent Turner, Film-Forward.com [Excerpts]

Who was actually spat upon?

That's the question raised by Jerry Lembcke. He served in Vietnam and authored the book *The Spitting Image*, raising doubts of an often-cited incident, usually entailing a soldier returning home from Vietnam, arriving at the San Francisco Airport only to be spat upon by a hippie chick on the tarmac.

Lembcke punctures holes in this elusive urban myth – military personal wouldn't have arrived in a civilian airport, for one – and his investigation hasn't uncovered an actual occurrence.

This is one of many provocative and informative chapters crammed in director David Zeiger's account of and tribute to the anti-war movement within the military.

Its purpose is loud and clear: to prevent the rewriting of history.

Instead of debate or a rehashing of the reasons for the war, one woman and over a dozen men who had served in Vietnam discuss their personal experiences for opposing the war. The documentary more than succeeds in getting its point across.

Echoing a sentiment that grew during the Nixon administration, naval officer Ron McMahan felt the only way to stop the war was to stop fighting it.

And according to the film, the Pentagon at one point counted 550,000 incidents of desertion among military personnel.

One episode has enough material and issues to be its own film: an African-American draftee, Billy Dean Smith, was tried by a military court for "fragging," the killing or maiming of an officer. (Fragmentation grenades were often used, hence the name.) After serving 22 months in solitary confinement, he was cleared of all charges; over 30 years later, he was living on the streets of LA and is now in prison.

Even conservative military towns became hot beds of activism. (In one off-base coffeehouse in Killeen, Texas, a poster of Malcolm X hangs alongside Marilyn Monroe.)

A highlight of this time capsule are clips from the "Fuck the Army" tour, starring Donald Sutherland and, most notably, Jane Fonda, a counterweight to the more traditional Bob Hope USO tours. Sir! No Sir! is a reminder of Fonda's star power, past and present. She stands out not simply because she's one of the few women interviewed; her charisma and zeal haven't mellowed a bit. She's a natural-born activist. (Her son, Troy Garity, narrates.)

Sir! No Sir! doesn't mention Kerry. Nor does it directly refer to the war in Iraq, and is more thought provoking because of that.

**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."

**“People Must Understand That
The World Is Being Run By A**

Very Small Clique Of The Wealthiest People”

You can think of our Middle East policies as a way of socializing costs and privatizing profits because that is exactly what they do. The socialized cost is born by those who fight and die, while those who lobby for war - the chicken hawks and their corporate brethren - are raking in billions. I guess that makes the dead the cost of doing business.

September 17, 2006 CHARLES SULLIVAN, Interviewed by Angie Tibbs, Uruknet.info/?p=26756 [Excerpts]

Charles: The electoral process is controlled by special interest money. It is little more than a legalized form of bribery -- a sham that should never be mistaken for Democracy. That is why I get so frustrated when people think they are going to change the system through the vote alone.

America did not achieve emancipation from England by voting.

Understand I am not saying that people should not vote, but they must understand that voting can at best bring about only minor reform, not the kind of sweeping change that is needed. Capital will not allow it.

The poison tree can bear only poison fruit.

When capital controls every aspect of the electoral process, it also controls the outcome of the elections. So the working class people have no real representation in government.

Angie: And how do you visualize a growth in resistance? To make a difference against almost insurmountable odds, what must the ordinary citizen do?

Charles: Regardless of the outcome, it is important to fight the fight.

Resistance to tyranny is all that keeps hope alive, whereas capitulation, apathy and indifference assure its continuation, and seals our fate as a people and as a nation.

It is important for people to know that individuals can, and must, resist injustice. Resistance to wrong-doing makes justice possible.

Ordinary people fighting back was how civil rights were won. There must be a willingness to step outside of the system, to disobey unjust laws, and to undermine illegitimate government. That is what brought about the merciful end to the Viet Nam War.

The impetus behind current U.S. foreign policy is the same as it has always been, only it is becoming more overt. That impetus is, of course, privatized profit and insensate greed.

Capitalists care about one thing — capital.

And they do not care who they have to kill to get it. They did not hesitate to kill thousands of American workers in the strikes of the 1800-1900s. So why would they think twice about sending our soldiers to die in the Middle East or anywhere else?

Militarism is the iron fist of capitalism.

You can think of our Middle East policies as a way of socializing costs and privatizing profits because that is exactly what they do. The socialized cost is born by those who fight and die, while those who lobby for war - the chicken hawks and their corporate brethren - are raking in billions. I guess that makes the dead the cost of doing business.

If truth ever becomes widely known, the people would clearly be able to discern the criminality of corrupt government and not many would continue to support it.

There would be revolt and perhaps even revolution.

It is ironic that so many individuals fail to realize how much power they actually have. The government knows they have power. People marginalize themselves by thinking they are powerless. That power is amplified when the people organize and mobilize against injustice.

What America is trying to do is rule the world by military force and economic policy. That is the wrong thing to do, and I doubt whether the majority of the people really support such imperialistic doctrine. Empire and Democracy are mutually exclusive.

I do not believe that this issue can be resolved at the polls.

It is going to require massive citizen involvement, serious economic disruption, boycotts, general strikes, and acts of civil disobedience over a long period of time.

The war makers must be driven from office, regardless of their political stripes. I doubt whether they will leave of their own accord. The same thing must occur not only in the U.S. but around the world.

People must understand that the world is being run by a very small clique of the wealthiest people. It is run to accrue wealth to them by exploiting the rest of us.

They are a tiny fraction of one percent of the global population, and they intend to lord power over all and to subjugate.

The Plutocratic elite have enormous wealth, and they have access to high-tech weapons with the awesome power to destroy. They are driven by insensate greed and lust for power. They are incredibly selfish and violent people, and they want it all.

On the other hand, we have superior numbers; well over 99.9% of the population.

Ours' is a just cause, theirs is not.

We are builders; they are destroyers.

But we must be willing to struggle; we must organize and mobilize, and forge a viable global solidarity movement.

We must be willing to stand up for our beliefs and to fight for them.

It may be necessary for some of us to sacrifice our freedoms and our lives.

Otherwise we will end up with a global Plutocracy run by corporations and distinguished by two classes: master and slave.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

British Troops Kill Basra Mahdi Army Leader: “They Executed This Man At The Embassy Complex”

Sep 19 (AFP)

British soldiers have shot dead a Shiite militia commander in the main southern Iraqi city of Basra, a military spokesman said.

"We were conducting a search operation in which we approached the house and the patrol came under small arms fire," Major Charles Burbridge, spokesman for British forces in Basra, said Monday.

"In returning the small arms fire, we killed the gunman."

A British soldier was wounded in the firefight, which took place shortly after midnight (2000 GMT Monday).

The Shiite radical movement of Moqtada Sadr identified the dead man as a commander of its Mahdi Army military wing -- Habib Jassim al-Ibadi, also known as Abu Haidar -- but gave a different account of the circumstances of his death.

"British forces behaved in a brutal manner when they executed this man at the embassy complex," charged Shiite radical MP Aqil Abdel Hussein.

"We are shocked by this behaviour, over which we will not remain silent."

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

“The Zionist State And Palestinian Liberation Are Indeed Incompatible”

8.19.06 By John Rose Socialist Worker UK, July 22, 2006. [Excerpts] John Rose is author of The Myths Of Zionism And Israel: The Hijack State.

In fewer than five days in July, USA re-equipped Israeli war planes wrecked the infrastructure of Lebanon's society. Lebanese civilian deaths were running at over ten times the number of civilian deaths in Israel. What we see here is the blood-stained application of a Zionist doctrine known as the "Iron Wall" philosophy.

This was pioneered in the 1920s by Zeev Jabotinsky, founder of the far right "revisionist" school of Zionism. It argued that Zionists should use overwhelming force to defeat their Arab foe.

As the progressive Israeli historian and Oxford University professor Avi Shlaim showed in his book "The Iron Wall" - a brilliant modern history of Israel - nearly every Israeli leader has signed up to this murderous doctrine.

Today's Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, is no exception.

Jabotinsky was openly racist. Here he followed Theodore Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, who saw the European Jewish colonial settlement of Palestine as "the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism."

Of course many Jews, fleeing anti-Semitism in Europe and looking for a "safe haven" in the Zionist settlements of Palestine, did not see it this way.

But as the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky put it, Zionism created a "trap" for these Jews.

They may not have wanted to become colonialists - indeed many of the original migrants thought they were socialists - but settlement in Palestine required "displacing" the Arab peasants who had tilled the land there for centuries.

The Jewish migrants became colonialists whether they wished it or not. Indeed the famous "kibbutz" commune settlements were often built on stolen Arab land.

There is another factor driving Israeli aggression.

Successful Zionist settlement of Palestine always required the backing of the Western powers.

In the middle of World War One, Britain's entire imperial war cabinet, with the one honourable Jewish exception of Edwin Montagu, converted to the cause of Zionism.

David Lloyd George, Winston Churchill and Arthur Balfour saw the expanding Zionist settlements as a device for securing Palestine for the British empire.

A British-backed Zionist colony would become a military fortress at the heart of the Arab world, they reasoned. It would help secure control of both the Suez Canal and the oil coming on stream in British controlled Mesopotamia, as Iraq was then called.

In the latter part of the 20th century, the US replaced Britain as the sponsor of what was now the Zionist state of Israel.

It was US President Richard Nixon who ratcheted up military and financial support for Israel. His administration, and all US administrations afterwards, came to regard Israel as a "proxy", or "strategic asset" that would keep the Arab world in a condition of permanent submission.

By the end of the 20th century, the US had spent no less than \$100 billion backing Israel militarily and financially. This is a figure that dwarfs US contributions to its other client states.

In this century, the so-called "war on terror" has given an added ideological twist to US backing for Israel. The neo-conservative strategy that drives George Bush's Middle East policies foresees the US and Israel reshaping the whole of the Middle East in their interests, by force if necessary.

According to this plan, Islamic regimes and Islamic political influence must be rooted out, regardless of the democratic will of the people.

Thus the present crisis erupted when the US, Britain and Israel refused to accept the mandate the Palestinian people had given its newly elected Hamas government.

Unlike its predecessor Fatah, Hamas refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the state of Israel.

It is a measure of the bankruptcy of the "Iron Wall" philosophy that Israel, with US-backing, has ignored the Hamas offer of a long term truce and comprehensive negotiations.

If an old imperial power like Britain can negotiate with Sinn Fein and the IRA, if the South African apartheid regime could negotiate with the "terrorist" Nelson Mandela, then Israel can certainly negotiate with Hamas.

Herein lies the crux of the problem: the Zionist state and Palestinian liberation are indeed incompatible, because Zionism systematically privileges those legally defined to be Jews at the expense of the Arab population.

Dismantling the Zionist state structure provides the only context for Arab and Jew to live together on the basis of peace, equality and harmony.

[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

“This Reminds Me Of What I Read About Nazi Germany, The Gestapo Coming In And Yanking People Up”

9.15.06 By RUSS BYNUM, AP [Excerpts]

STILLMORE, Ga.: Trailer parks lie abandoned. The poultry plant is scrambling to replace more than half its workforce. Business has dried up at stores where Mexican laborers once lined up to buy food, beer and cigarettes just weeks ago.

This Georgia community of about 1,000 people has become little more than a ghost town since Sept. 1, when federal agents began rounding up illegal immigrants.

The sweep has had the unintended effect of underscoring just how vital the illegal immigrants were to the local economy.

More than 120 illegal immigrants have been loaded onto buses bound for immigration courts in Atlanta, 189 miles away. Hundreds more fled Emanuel County. Residents say many scattered into the woods, camping out for days. They worry some are still hiding without food.

At least one child, born a U.S. citizen, was left behind by his Mexican parents: 2-year-old Victor Perez-Lopez. The toddler's mother, Rosa Lopez, left her son with Julie Rodas when the raids began and fled the state. The boy's father was deported to Mexico.

"When his momma brought this baby here and left him, tears rolled down her face and mine too," Rodas said. "She said, `Julie, will you please take care of my son because I have no money, no way of paying rent?'"

For five years, Rodas has made a living watching the children of workers at the Crider Inc. poultry plant, where the vast majority of employees were Mexican immigrants. She learned Spanish, and considered many immigrants among her closest friends. She threw parties for their children's birthdays and baptisms.

The only child in Rodas' care now, besides her own son, is Victor. Her customers have disappeared.

Federal agents also swarmed into a trailer park operated by David Robinson. Illegal immigrants were handcuffed and taken away. Almost none have returned. Robinson bought an American flag and posted it by the pond out front - upside down, in protest.

"These people might not have American rights, but they've damn sure got human rights," Robinson said. "There ain't no reason to treat them like animals."

The raids came during a fall election season in which immigration is a top issue.

Other than the Crider plant, there isn't much in Stillmore. Four small stores, a coin laundry and a Baptist church share downtown with City Hall, the fire department and a post office. "We're poor but proud," Mayor Marilyn Slater said, as if that is the town motto.

The 2000 Census put Stillmore's population at 730, but Slater said uncounted immigrants probably made it more than 1,000. Not anymore, with so many homes abandoned and the streets practically empty.

"This reminds me of what I read about Nazi Germany, the Gestapo coming in and yanking people up," Slater said.

At Sucursal Salina No. 2, a store stocked with Mexican fruit sodas and snacks, cashier Alberto Gonzalez said Wednesday that the owner may shutter the place. By midday, Gonzalez has had only six customers. Normally, he would see 100.

The B&S convenience store, owned by Keith and Regan Slater, the mayor's son and grandson, has lost about 80 percent of its business.

"These people come over here to make a better way of life, not to blow us up," complained Keith Slater, who keeps a portrait of Ronald Reagan on the wall. "I'm a die-hard Republican, but I think we missed the boat with this one."

Since the mid-1990s, Stillmore has grown dependent on the paychecks of Mexican workers who originally came for seasonal farm labor, picking the area's famous Vidalia onions. Many then took year-round jobs at the Crider plant, with a workforce of about 900.

Crider President David Purtle said the agents began inspecting the company's employment records in May. They found 700 suspected illegal immigrants, and supervisors handed out letters over the summer ordering them to prove they came to the U.S. legally or be fired. Only about 100 kept their jobs.

The arrests started at the plant Sept. 1. Over the Labor Day weekend, agents with guns and bulletproof vests converged on workers' homes after getting the addresses from Crider's files.

Antonio Lopez, who came here two years ago from Chiapas, Mexico, and worked at the Crider plant, said agents kicked in his front door.

Lopez, 32, and his 15-year-old son were handcuffed and taken by bus to Atlanta with 30 others. Because of the boy, Lopez said, both were allowed to return. In his back pocket, he carries an order to return to Atlanta for a court hearing Feb. 2.

But now, "there's no people here and I don't have any work," he said.



David Robinson, who owns a mobile home park that was raided, said he posted the upside-down American flag as a sign of outrage and protest.

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special 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.

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)

Received:

Correction To Article "Ft. Carson Was A Powderkeg With The Fuse Lit"

From: Darnell Stephen Summers, Stop The War Brigade;
stopthewarbgde@hotmail.com>
To: GI Special
Sent: September 19, 2006
Subject: Re: correction of typos-Attica & Bernard Stroble aka Shango

My [article] could give people the impression that I was still in the Army when the Attica Uprising broke out . My mistake and I hope that this can be corrected before posting on the Site. [Arrived to late; issue sent. T]

This slight correction, in the first paragraph, should serve to eliminate any confusion.

"September 10th 1970, less than one year before the Attica Uprising, I was still in the US Army."

Darnell Stephen Summers

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