

GI SPECIAL 4/25:

The Devil



(AFP/Jim Watson)

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: September 23, 2006

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

the devil

the 4 star death generals drip blood
from their eye teeth like little children
with their halloween masks
as they shout trick or treat ba-a-a-by
many ugly americans with w
jump up and down with stars and stripes

**in their bully mouths
crying kill kill kill like laughing hyenas
awol-ing this war with sulfur yellow
support the war stickers plastered
on the backs of their cars trucks
suv's on backs of the soldiers
overseas fighting for other people's land
the rabble wearing their death t-shirts
that bark america bless god
huge statues of jesus on the cross
are being used as hammers
to slam the muslims flat
killing mohammed everybody
loving dripping blood
and the devil in the white house
gurgling lies every time he speaks
kills 24 hours a day
horns hoofs and tail dragging hell
on earth torturing missing arms
legs children women old men
young men putrid air sand gunpowder
oil exhaustion sweat
i don't care bombs guns landmines
the devil is at his ranch making money
killing anyway he can**

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Two Marines Killed In Al Anbar

24 September 2006 MNF-W Public Affairs RELEASE No. 20060924-02

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

The Bad News: Mercenaries Wound Two U.S. Soldiers

September 24th Sean Cockerham, The News Tribune

BAGHDAD, IRAQ: Civilian security contractors wounded two Fort Lewis soldiers in a case of friendly fire Saturday, capping a violent day in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Ghazaliyah. It happened in an area known among troops as RPG Alley, short for the rocket-propelled grenades favored by enemy fighters.

The soldiers were hurt while trying to stop an ambush on a supply convoy the contractors were guarding. The contractors "obviously didn't know we were there. They saw shooting and returned fire," said Capt. Matt Pike of Lacey, commander of Comanche Company of the 1st Battalion of the 23rd Infantry Regiment.

One of the C Company soldiers was shot in the leg. The other was hit in the face with shrapnel. Pike said the injuries are minor and both men were expected to be fit enough to return to duty today.

The soldiers are part of 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, the team of Strykers that returned to Iraq this summer from Fort Lewis. The brigade has battalions in Baghdad and Mosul, in the north.

Pike, after returning from the scene of Saturday's firefight, said the identity of the contractors who fired on his troops was not immediately clear. He said there will be an investigation.

Pike wasn't happy. The contractors should have the ability to distinguish friend from foe in the battle zone, he said.

The contractors were escorting a convoy of trailers carrying new pickup trucks on a major Baghdad thoroughfare where attacks are common.

About 10 insurgents ambushed the convoy with rocket-propelled grenades about 6 p.m., Iraq time.

A small team of C Company soldiers, who had been in the area lying in wait for enemy activity, then fired on the attackers. So did the contractors.

The contractors turned their weapons on the soldiers, not realizing who they were, said Lt. Craig Coppock of DuPont, who led the soldiers trying to protect the convoy.

Coppock said his troops didn't fire back on the contractors. His men did report killing four enemy fighters and wounding four during the exchange.

Pike said the contractors were firing indiscriminately but that there was no evidence of Iraqi civilian deaths. He said a van was caught in the crossfire between the contractors and the insurgents and four people were injured, none seriously.

Two semitrucks with trailers from the convoy were engulfed in flames, and a pickup used by the security contractors was destroyed. The contractors didn't stick around, so it's unknown whether they had casualties.

This was the second attack on Comanche Company on Saturday near the infamous RPG Alley. A Stryker vehicle was hit by sniper fire Saturday morning in almost the same spot. No one was hurt in the morning attack, which came as C Company was guarding an explosives team that was disposing of a roadside bomb found beneath an overpass.

It is the same area where two Comanche Company soldiers died in an improvised explosive blast last month.

Mercenaries Blown Up



Children throw stones at a burning vehicle, after a roadside bomb attack, in Baqouba Sept. 24, 2006. Insurgents attacked a convoy of two vehicles of foreign contractors, seriously damaging one with a roadside bomb and wounding its four occupants. Witnesses said the other vehicle took the injured men away from the scene. (AP Photo/ Jalal Mudhar)

Severna Park Soldier Killed In Iraq

Sep 24, 2006 (AP)

SEVERNA PARK, Md.: A Maryland soldier has died in Iraq.

Family members of Private Eric Kavanagh say the 20-year-old was killed Wednesday.

Kavanagh attended Folger McKinsey Elementary School, Severna Park Middle School and Chesapeake High School. Later, he worked at the Maryland Pennysaver then enlisted in the Army.

Services are scheduled for 11 a.m. Wednesday at Barranco and Sons Severna Park Funeral Home, 495 Ritchie Highway. He will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Kavanagh was the fourth member of the military from Maryland to be killed in Iraq in the past two weeks.

Notes From A Lost War:

“They’re Working Against Us” “There’s Nothing We Can Do,” Came The Reply From Senior Officers

9.24.06 By ANTONIO CASTANEDA, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts]

The plan was simple: Iraqi troops would block escape routes while U.S. soldiers searched for weapons house-by-house.

But the Iraqi troops didn't show up on time. When they finally did appear, the Iraqis ignored U.S. orders and let dozens of cars pass through checkpoints in eastern Baghdad, including an ambulance full of armed militiamen, American soldiers said in recent interviews.

It wasn't an isolated incident, they added.

Senior U.S. commanders have hailed the performance of Iraqi troops in the crackdown on militias and insurgents in Baghdad. But some U.S. soldiers say the Iraqis serving alongside them are among the worst they've ever seen, seeming more loyal to militias than the government.

Last week, for example, Sgt. 1st Class Eric Sheehan could barely contain his frustration when he discovered that barriers and concertina wire that were

supposed to bolster defensive positions had been dragged away, again, under the noses of nearby Iraqi soldiers.

"(I) suggest we fire these IAs and get them out of the way," Sheehan, of Jennerstown, Pa., reported to senior officers, referring to Iraqi army troops.

"There's nothing we can do," came the reply.

U.S. soldiers from the 4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment eventually blocked the road again while Iraqi troops watched from a distance.

Some Americans speculated the missing barriers were dragged off to strengthen militia defenses in nearby Sadr City, a sprawling Shiite neighborhood that is a stronghold of anti-U.S. cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

"They've been doing this all week. They're working against us," said Sheehan, who resorted to waking up the senior Iraqi officer at the checkpoint to complain, futilely.

During another mission, Iraqi soldiers were suspected of looting the house of a wealthy resident, U.S. troops said.

"From my perspective, you can't make a distinction between Iraq army Shiites and the religious militias. You have a lot of soldiers and family members swayed and persuaded by the religious leadership," said Col. Greg Watt, who advises one of two Iraqi divisions in the city.

He then pointed to the nearby guards of an Iraqi army division commander.

"There's no doubt in my mind that he has soldiers who are followers of religious leaders," Watt said. "Are they loyal to the division commander? Yes. But they may be loyal to both."

One immediate solution would be to bring in more units from outside Baghdad. Although many of those units are largely Shiite, too, the soldiers would be less likely to have family living under militia control.

But many Iraqi troops refuse to serve away from home. The commander of U.S. forces in Baghdad, Maj. Gen. James Thurman, said his requests for 3,000 more Iraqi soldiers have been refused because the troops won't leave their home areas.

That attitude frustrates American soldiers.

"They have to step up, make sacrifices. We've made thousands of sacrifices for our own country's freedom," said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Chinnis, 30, of Richmond, Va.

"I think they think the Iraqi people don't support them."

[Looks like he's figuring it out. Why on earth would any decent people "support" a batch of traitors recruited by a foreign invader to keep their country under the

thumb of George W. Bush and his war profiteer billionaire buddies who make up the U.S. Imperial ruling class? Duh.]

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



9.24.06 US soldiers at the site where a car bomb exploded in Baghdad. (AFP/Wisam Sami)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

“British Troops In Afghanistan Are Exhausted And Desperately Short Of Helicopters”

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

September 23, 2006 Richard Norton-Taylor, The Guardian

British troops in Afghanistan are exhausted and desperately short of helicopters, and there is no sign that the casualty rate will fall, according to accounts yesterday from officers on the frontline.

The reports, including a leaked email describing the RAF as "utterly, utterly useless", put the government under fresh pressure over whether it adequately prepared British troops for operations in the hostile south of the country.

The most graphic accounts came in emails from Major James Loden of 3 Para, who described British forces as desperately short of reinforcements and helicopters, and berated the RAF for being "utterly, utterly useless".

Maj Loden, who was awarded the Bronze Star medal in 2004 by the US military for his services in Afghanistan in support of its Operation Enduring Freedom, lambasted the pilot of a Harrier fighter bomber for firing phosphorus bombs closer to British troops on the ground than the enemy.

"A female Harrier pilot 'couldn't identify the target', fired two phosphorus rockets that just missed our own compound so that we thought they were incoming RPGs, and then strafed our perimeter missing the enemy by 200 metres," Maj Loden said.

The major also said two junior colleagues appeared "very frightened and slow to react" when called on to help save a dying man during an intense ground battle last month. He said his men were exhausted and at times reduced to tears. The major's emails were leaked to Sky News.

A shortage of helicopters and problems with supply lines have also led to troops running short of food and fresh water.

TROOP NEWS

Betrayed And Lied To Stryker Families Demand Rumsfeld's Resignation

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

21 September 2006 AP

A half-dozen members of a military families group in Alaska are calling for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's resignation.

They are upset with Rumsfeld's portrayal of events in Iraq and have asked U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski to call for the secretary's resignation. The requesters are part of the Alaska chapter of Military Families Speak Out.

Rumsfeld met with families of the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team shortly after the brigade's tour in Iraq was extended.

The letter says Rumsfeld told families that the 172nd's arrival in Baghdad had contributed to a 40 to 50 percent decrease of civilian deaths there.

Group members now question those figures.

A Washington Post article says morgues in Baghdad reported that the death toll nearly tripled in August and that deaths from car bombings and mortar attacks are not included in the military's count.

The letter says Rumsfeld was "wrongfully deceptive" in his August remarks about civilian casualties.

MORE:

Never Forget What The Traitor Rumsfeld Did:

[Excerpts from: <http://www.bringhome172nd.org/stryker/>]

On July 26th, the men and women of the 172nd Stryker Combat Brigade prepared to end their unit's deployment to Iraq. This unit of 3,800 Americans had endured the fight for a year, distinguishing itself as an essential and effective factor in bringing stability to the North of Iraq. A small number of the brigade had taken the first steps back on U.S. soil, arriving to their base near Fairbanks, Alaska, while many others were already in Kuwait waiting to board homebound planes.

With these successes behind them, their flak vests packed, personal items sent stateside, and their Stryker Armored Vehicles turned over to other newly-arrived units, this battle brigade was able to breathe a sigh of relief and prepare to Go Home.

The following day, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld gave his approval to extend the 172nd Brigade's deployment in Iraq. Instead of greeting their loved ones, the Strykers will help to fight the insurgency in Baghdad.

The New Issue Of Traveling Soldier Is Out!

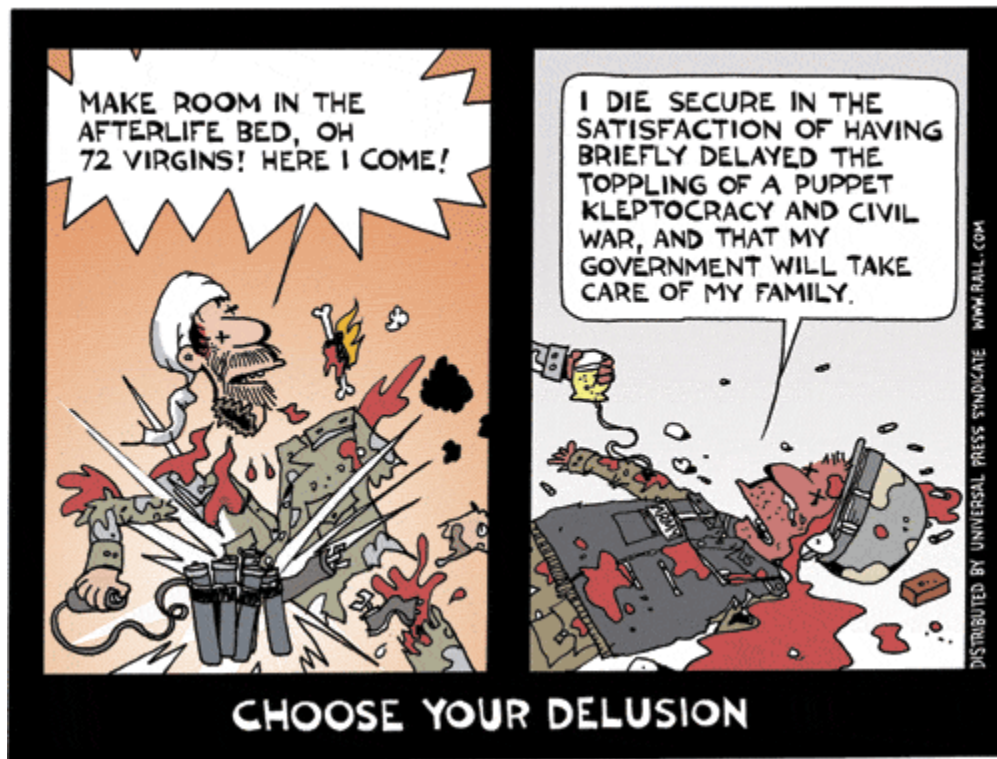


This issue features:

1. "A solid number, perhaps a majority, of the ordinary soldiers believed this war was bullshit" says a soldier stationed in Baquba, Iraq.
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/9.06.majority.php>
2. A Call From Baghdad - "He refused to wear his flame suit this morning"
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/9.06.call.php>
3. Join the Military Project, an organization dedicated to reaching out to anti-war soldiers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/9.06.join.php>
4. Dissenting Patriot, U.S. Military: "If we did free them, why is popular support for the insurgency growing? Why is everyone who works with us constantly in fear of kidnapping, torture, and assassination? ... Our duty is to speak up against these policies and demand that Iraqis are truly given the chance to determine their own future." <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/9.06.choice.php>
5. Peace Mom Speaks Out: "You soldiers who all are serving our country so honorably have a right to expect respect from our politicians. And, I don't think you are getting it. ... By being out on the streets holding my sign I am not in any way, shape or form disrespecting you soldiers. I am trying to support you."
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/9.06.peacemom.php>
6. Seaman Hutto's shares his story of fighting racism and calls on active-duty personnel to rebuild the GI anti-war movement!

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/9.06.rebuilding.php>

7. Download the new Traveling Soldier to pass it out at your school, workplace, or at nearby base. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/TS14.pdf>



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

The Movement Against The War Comes To DeKalb, Illinois: “Dozens” Rally, Then A March On Recruiting Office

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

Sep 22, 2006 Daily-Chronicle

DeKalb: [population 42,805] As part of a demonstration against the Iraq war, a group of middle-aged and senior-citizen protesters active in local peace movements marched to DeKalb's military recruitment office Thursday under the guise of signing up for service.

Patrick Spillane, a DeKalb resident since 1994, literally beat an antiwar drum as the group went north on Normal Road, hung a left at Lucinda Avenue and continued to the recruiting station at 901 Lucinda under police escort.

Some of the marchers carried signs brandishing antiwar slogans such as “War is hell” and “Red Alert: U.S. government out of control.”

Cele Meyer of the DeKalb Interfaith Network for Peace and Justice said the police were there to accompany the marchers. One officer stopped traffic at Normal and Lucinda to allow the marchers to pass by.

When the marchers reached the recruiting office, two other police officers were present and the marchers entered the office to inquire about enlisting.

The recruiter, Sgt. Chambala Cuney, greeted DeKalb residents Meyer and Lolly Voss and offered them information on the military's age restrictions and requirements, which basically said they were too old to enlist. Meyer and Voss eventually asked if they could come in and sit down.

Cuney said that people with appointments were on their way in and that they couldn't accommodate their request.

Meyer also asked whether copies of the age policy document could be obtained for all seniors there.

Cuney said it couldn't.

“With us doing the enlistment packets we run out of paper very often,” he said.

The enlistment attempts were meant to be a symbolic protest against the war.

“We want to go in place of our grandchildren,” said Voss, a DeKalb County resident for more than 35 years. Voss and Meyer were the first two marchers to attempt to “enlist.”

Voss, a former teacher in the Hinckley-Big Rock School District, ran into one of her former students, Nicole Begne, while waiting for Cuney to print out the age policy documents. They recognized each other immediately.

“Hey, Nicole, what are you doing here?” Voss asked her.

“I'm enlisting,” Begne said.

“Really, are you? My heart goes with you,” Voss said.

Meyer and Voss both tried to dissuade Begne from enlisting.

“You know, they're losing more and more every day,” Meyer said. “They say they don't have enough troops and the American people are not willing to send more, so the ones that go are really on their own.”

Another DeKalb resident who inquired about enlistment was Cliff Cleland, a 1965 NIU graduate who has lived in DeKalb for more than 35 years.

Cleland said he liked the idea of grandfathers enlisting instead of their grandchildren. He noted the act was an obvious protest.

Only one of the marchers who attempted to enlist was even close to being eligible for service.

Spillane is an eight-year naval veteran, and his age of 43 made him eligible for enlistment.

The maximum age for enlistment is 42, but his prior service put him in a different eligibility category.

Recruiters told him, however, he wouldn't meet the height and weight requirements.

Before the march to the recruitment office, [John] Laesch, who is running against Speaker Dennis Hastert in the 14th Congressional District, highlighted his stance on the Iraq war.

Laesch is a former naval intelligence officer. Part of his message was aimed directly at U.S. troops, such as his brother, Pete Laesch, who he said is serving with the U.S. Army in Baghdad, Iraq.

“My fellow brothers and sisters, I support our troops and I believe that supporting our troops means getting out of Iraq,” John Laesch said.

He said he disagreed with the Bush administration's framing of the Iraq war as part of the overall war on terror.

“I want to make sure the American people know that Iraq is not connected to the war on terror,” Laesch said.

Attendance at the rally, sponsored by the DeKalb Interfaith Network and the Northern Coalition for Peace and Justice, numbered in the dozens.

British Military Families Hunt Down Blair; “The Iraqis Are Asking Our Troops To Go, But Blair’s Government Is Not Listening” “How Can They Say That Is About Democracy?”



Rose Gentle and Lynda Holmes (Pic: Dave Swanson)

“When my son was killed, I started to look into the question of the war. I couldn't believe that someone would lie about something so big.

23 Sept 2006 by Esme Choonara, Socialist Worker (UK)

Military families campaigning against the war in Iraq and Afghanistan are delighted to have won the right to set up a peace camp in Manchester's Peace Gardens, an area in the city centre that borders Albert Square, the assembly point for tomorrow's demonstration.

The council had originally refused the families permission to hold a protest camp, but backed down at the last minute.

The families, who will spend two or three nights camping out, can see the luxury hotel where Tony Blair will stay from their tents. They are determined that both Blair and whoever is going to replace him will have to hear their protests.

Lynda Holmes told Socialist Worker that her son has recently returned from Iraq. "I am here to bring all the troops home," she said.

"My son was in Basra working for a minimum wage in scorching temperatures with very little sleep. I don't see why he should be risking his life for an illegal war. We hope that tomorrow Tony Blair will take notice of us, and that whoever takes over from Blair will also take notice of us, because our campaign is not going away."

Pauline Hickey's son was killed in Iraq.

She told Socialist Worker why she had come to Manchester. "My son was killed in Iraq last year.

"I have been liaising with Blair but I haven't had any satisfactory answers.
"I believe that this war is illegal and I want Blair to be accountable for what he has done.

"When my son was killed, I started to look into the question of the war. I couldn't believe that someone would lie about something so big.

"The war was an ego trip and a war for power. The Iraqis are asking our troops to go, but Blair's government is not listening - how can they say that is about democracy?"

The camp is in a busy part of the city centre behind the Town Hall.

Janet Lowrie, whose son has recently returned from Iraq, said that they had received a lot of support from people walking past the camp.

She said that she had traveled from Glasgow to join the camp, "to try to get the troops out of Iraq and to get more people to protest with us."

The camp has also been supported by local people who have brought food down. A restaurant in North Manchester that has been involved in the Stop the War Coalition for some time brought curries for the families on Thursday night to welcome them to Manchester. Someone else donated breakfast.

The mother of a serving soldier came from Chester to support the camp after reading about it in the newspaper.

"My son is serving in Basra at the moment. When I heard about the camp and felt that I should come and support it. The government don't care at all. They don't care about the impact on the families. I am annoyed about the lack of equipment. My son had a foot complaint - he couldn't get any medication."

Many of the families feel that they will have to keep campaigning whoever replaces Blair.

George Solomou, who quit the Territorial Army because he opposed the Iraq war, said, "We are going from strength to strength. It is a sign of our growing influence that we can set up a camp outside Blair's hotel.

"The majority of the public are with us and now we need to tip the politicians into stopping this barbaric war. Brown will be no different to Blair. He helped to write Blair's policies."

Margaret Middleton appealed to people to make stand and join the demonstration.

She said, "I am here to support the military families - my nephew is just back from Iraq. It is time for everyone to stand up, not just to talk about it, but to make a stand.

"Our message is not just to Tony Blair, it is to all of the government. This has to stop."



George Solomou

Send Her To Prison! That Will Teach Her Not To Whine About Command Rape!!

9.19.06 Washington Post

Army specialist Suzanne Swift is bracing for a possible court-martial because she could not bear the thought of a second tour-of-duty in Iraq.

If she is convicted of desertion, Swift faces prison time and a dishonorable. She was sexually harassed by one superior and ordered to let another have sex with her.

[Rather than serve under them, literally, she went AWOL.

[While activists have rallied to her support, command is planning to rape her again, of course, this time with the Universal Code Of Military Injustice.]

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 RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action



The wreckage of a police vehicle in Kirkuk. (AFP/File/Marwan Ibrahim)

24 September 2006 By DAVID RISING, The Associated Press & Reuters & Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO RELEASE No. 20060924-01 & AFP

A mortar attack on the Health Ministry slammed into the ministry building and its garden at 8:40 a.m., seriously injuring three civilians, police Lt. Ahmed Mohammed Ali said. The attackers were not identified.

In eastern Baghdad, a car bomb targeted a police patrol. The bomb was detonated in a parked car as the patrol went by at 10:15 a.m. One policeman was among the dead and five officers were injured, police Lt. Bilal Ali said.

An Iraqi soldier died in a morning attack in east Baghdad, where he was killed in his car on his way to report to his unit, police said. In Adhamiyah, a car bomb targeting an army patrol killed two soldiers and wounded two other people, including a soldier.

Two Iraqi more soldiers were killed and another three injured when a car bomber slammed into a checkpoint in Tal Afar, 260 miles northwest of Baghdad. The soldiers opened fire on the car as it sped toward the checkpoint but were unable to prevent its detonation, police said.

Also Saturday, a senior officer was attacked in Tikrit after dinner breaking his Ramadan fast.

Police Col. Ismaiel Chehayyan, deputy head of the Salahadeen province police headquarters, was at a friend's house in the city center when unknown assailants stormed the building, killing the officer and wounding the host, police said.

Guerrillas killed an Iraqi translator working with the U.S.-led forces on Saturday in the city of Samawa, 270 km (168 miles) south of Baghdad, one of his relatives and a hospital source said.

At approximately 12:43 p.m. soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division, were attacked 30 kilometers south of Baghdad, killing an Iraqi soldier after firing on the IA forces with rocket-propelled grenades and machine-gun fire.

Three civilian drivers were killed when insurgents launched a combined attack of small-arms fire and a roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army convoy near Abu Ghraib on the western outskirts of Baghdad, a security source said Sunday.

In another incident, a civilian was killed and 14 people wounded, including four policemen, when a car bomb blew up in central Baghdad's Karrada district, targeting a police patrol. One police vehicle was destroyed in the blast, which took place just across the street from a church.

In Diyala province a police officer shot near his home at the provincial capital in Baquba.



Blown up police vehicle following a car bomb explosion in Baghdad Sept. 24, 2006. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Germinal: “The Truth Of Working People Down To Their Withered And All-Suffering Soul And Bones”

<p>For agitational purposes, I've still never read anything like “Germinal” and severely doubt any Left Wing, Right Wing or Chicken Wing dictator would</p>

distribute it to their respective population(s). It's too close to reality, and maybe that's why no one discusses it or worse, tells others, especially the young, to read it.

From: Alan Stolzer, The Military Project
To: GI Special
Sent: September 24, 2006
Subject: Germinal

Years ago I traveled to Western Europe for adventure, new horizons, etc. At the time the only Marx I knew of was the Brothers so I was clearly wide open for the mentioned horizons.

I ran into people who knew something about Left politics who steered me toward Marx-Engels and severe life defining moments.

I was also lent a copy of "Germinal," the epic, uncompromising and harrowing novel by Emile Zola that depicted a mining community in Northern France embroiled in strike during the latter part of the 19th century.

It wasn't only the political nature of the book but the social relationships of the workers, their attitudes, needs and overall desperation of their lives – strike or no strike – that impressed me most.

I was floored, immediately realizing it was entirely relevant to what Marx and Engels were talking about: the revolutionary role of the working class, its desperate reality and lastly and most importantly, it's (inevitable) task of changing history.

Upon returning to the U.S. years later, eager to join struggle in my home country, I, naturally, looked for "Germinal", subconsciously expecting to see it prominently displayed as a fictional "bible" to be devoured by any class-conscious individual.

To my never-ending shock I found one copy in all of the Left bookstores I browsed.

Mind you, it was decades ago so there may have been two or even three copies, but I remember only one copy of the most revolutionarily charged novel I could ever imagine!

And to this day "Germinal" appears to be a secret or "conveniently" ignored text that is only referred to in passing but never employed (to my knowledge) as the tool it is – the truth of working people down to their withered and all-suffering soul and bones.

And please remember, the author is Zola: not, by any standards, some obscure novelist that 8-10 intellectuals know about so they can trumpet him as some new found genius

The French, to their credit, made a movie about the book around 12-15 years ago (there may have been an earlier version). Pictorially it worked but (in my opinion) lacked the soul of the novel.

My feeling is the convenience of middle class existence that many have settled into (consciously or otherwise) has something to do with that since all one has to do to discover or rediscover the lessons of "Germinal" is to check out a sweatshop in Chinatown without having to purchase expensive travel to Guatemala or Taiwan, among many, many other places.

For agitational purposes, I've still never read anything like "Germinal" and severely doubt any Left Wing, Right Wing or Chicken Wing dictator would distribute it to their respective population(s).

It's too close to reality, and maybe that's why no one discusses it or worse, tells others, especially the young, to read it.

OCCUPATION REPORT

***Welcome To Liberated Iraq:* U.S. Military Dictatorship Attacks Office Of Non-Violent Resistance Organization**

September 10, 2006, Anti-War.Com

The Baghdad headquarters of the Iraq Freedom Congress were raided by U.S. troops last week, according to IFC member Amjad Al-Jawhary.

The IFC, a nonviolent secular resistance movement, condemned the attacks Sept. 7-8, and pledged to continue its peaceful struggle to end the occupation.

The raid came after a series of civil activities against the occupation.

IFC leaders said U.S. forces were outraged by the anti-occupation banners and posters on the walls showing international solidarity with Iraqi people. They reacted violently and broke all internal doors, destroyed furniture, and confiscated most of the office property, IFC leaders said Friday.

"These kinds of acts reveal the true face of the occupation and its hypocrisy about the freedom and democracy they brought to the Iraqi people," said IFC in a written statement.

The IFC said the U.S. occupation and the U.S.-backed government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki have "failed miserably to bring security and basic civil services to Iraq." It

also blames the U.S. occupation for unleashing the widespread violence perpetrated by sectarian militias and for "turning a blind eye to the daily killing of civilians in broad daylight."

Welcome To Liberated Iraq: None Of That Silly "Freedom Of The Press" Here

September 9, 2006 by Aaron Glantz, Antiwar.com/ [Excerpts]

Censorship seems to be on the rise in Iraq.

Two years ago, the Iraqi government banned al-Jazeera, the largest and most popular Arabic satellite news channel and yesterday the Iraqi Cabinet banned its main competitor, Dubai-based al-Arabiya for allegedly stoking the flames of sectarian conflict.

In addition, Joel Campagna of the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists said "Working reporters have repeatedly been detained at the hands of the US military and Iraqi security forces.

"There are also efforts by local authorities to use the courts to punish outspoken independent journalists. There was a case just last week where two reporters were jailed for 10 years for allegedly insulting a former governor."

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!</p>

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

**"Hundreds Of Thousands" Rally In
Beirut:**

**"We Came To Show That The Resistance
Population Is Increasing, Not
Decreasing"**



General view of Hezbollah supporters waving red and white national flags and the Shiite Muslim group's yellow flags at a massive rally in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon, 22 September 2006 (EPA)

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

September 23, 2006 By MICHAEL SLACKMAN, The New York Times Company
[Excerpts]

BEIRUT, Lebanon: Hundreds of thousands of people stood Friday and chanted "God, God, protect Nasrallah." It was the moment they had waited for: Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, in person, declaring that his militia was stronger than ever and that no army in the world could force it to disarm.

This was Sheik Nasrallah's first public appearance since the war with Israel started in July, and it was steeped in defiance: at Israel, the United States, Arab heads of state and those political forces in Lebanon aiming to clip Hezbollah's political and military power.

If there was any thought the war weakened Hezbollah, Sheik Nasrallah had a different message: "It is stronger." Even after Israel's 34-day bombardment of Lebanon, Hezbollah, he said, still has more than 20,000 missiles. "Not a single army in the world will be able to dismantle our resistance," Sheik Nasrallah said, as he stood beneath a big

banner that read "The Victory Rally." "No army in the world will be able to make us drop the weapons from our hands."

The crowd was mammoth, packing every corner of the 37-acre square in the southern suburbs of Beirut. There was a plastic chair for nearly everyone, and a baseball cap for protection from the sun. Hezbollah's martial choir belted out chest thumping music. The crowds waved flags, wildly cheering for Sheik Nasrallah, who has become a folk hero to many here and throughout the Arab world. The audience came on foot, by car and by bus from the south and the north, and in every case, people said they came because Sheik Nasrallah asked them to.

"Whatever Sayid Hassan wants Sayid Hassan gets," said Hossain Zebara, 29, using a title reserved for descendants of the prophet Muhammad. Mr. Zebara said it took him 24 hours to walk from his home in the southern part of Lebanon to be at the rally.

"We came to show the American administration, the British administration, the French administration, that the resistance population is increasing, not decreasing."

In a country of about four million, turning out hundreds of thousands of people in a disciplined, highly orchestrated event, is a sign of strength.

And he aimed hard at Arab leaders, criticizing them for not being willing to fight Israel. "These Arab leaders prefer to protect their thrones as opposed to protecting Palestine," he said, taking a shot at the traditional power brokers, like the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak.

No one knew if Sheik Nasrallah would appear. People here talk about his assassination by Israel as though it is not just a matter of if, but when.

"I couldn't talk to you from afar," he said. "I insisted to be with you."

Judging from the size of the rally, and the remarks of the participants, Hezbollah's base did not blame Hezbollah for the death and destruction. They blamed Israel and the United States. "This is good, good," said Fatima Saad, 50, whose son, Kasem, was killed. There was no hint of sadness in her bearing. "I am very proud," she said as she patted a picture of her son pinned to her chest. He was 20 when he was blown up.

Ahmed Hussein, 78, made the trip to Beirut from his southern village of Kafr Kila. He said his house and most of his neighbors' homes were destroyed, but that Hezbollah gave them tents and water tanks to help them get by. "All of us whose houses were destroyed we came here for Nasrallah, to tell him what we lost is nothing," Mr. Hussein said.

MORE:

“Hezbollah’s Main Appeal Lies In Its Willingness To Challenge Israeli Aggression And U.S. Imperialism”

Hezbollah’s main appeal lies in its willingness to challenge Israeli aggression and U.S. imperialism, not its Islamist ideology and the backward elements of its social and political program.

September 22, 2006 JON VAN CAMP, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

ISRAEL CALLS it a “terrorist” and “extremist” organization. George Bush says it is a tool of Iran, and claims it has “killed more Americans than any terrorist organization except al-Qaeda.”

But the leaders of governments trying to destroy Hezbollah are not the only ones condemning it. Both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have accused Hezbollah of human rights violations, and Robert Fisk, the Independent journalist who has helped expose some of the worst Israeli and U.S. crimes in the Middle East, says that Hezbollah “provoked the latest war” in Lebanon, and bears responsibility for “bringing catastrophe upon their coreligionists.”

Meanwhile, however, Hezbollah has gained growing support in the Middle East, well beyond its base among Shia Muslims in Lebanon--for the simple reason that it is, in the words of Aijaz Ahmad, writing in Frontline magazine in India, “the only entity which has, through armed resistance, forced the Israelis to relinquish any territory that the Jewish state has ever captured.”

What kind of organization is Hezbollah, and how should the left view it?

HEZBOLLAH CAME out of a Lebanon fractured by civil war.

The region of Lebanon has always contained various religious communities, but the French colonialists who dominated the area favored the Maronite Christians, who became the most powerful community once the state of Lebanon was formed.

According to the terms of a 1943 pact, Maronites were given the presidency, and Christians were allocated a majority of seats in the parliament. The post of prime minister was reserved for a Sunni Muslim, and Shia Muslims--soon to become the largest segment of the population--were left with the relatively powerless position of speaker of parliament.

Maronite leaders were traditionally pro-Western and pro-Israel, while Muslim leaders became increasingly influenced by Arab nationalism. These tensions were at the roots of Lebanon’s civil war, which lasted more or less continuously from 1975 to 1990. Israel and the U.S. backed the right, grouped around the Christian Falange.

In 1978, Israel seized a strip of territory in Southern Lebanon, and four years later, it launched a full-scale invasion--with the aim of installing a right-wing Christian government and driving out Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters based in the country.

The U.S. sent Marines as part of an international force to oversee the withdrawal of the PLO--these "peacekeepers" began to intervene more and more openly on the side of the Lebanese right and Israel's occupying force.

Throughout this conflict, the group that suffered the most was the Shia--by then the most numerous religious community in Lebanon, comprising about 40 percent of the population, and by far the poorest, inhabiting the slums of Beirut's southern suburbs and the villages in southern Lebanon directly in the path of Israeli attacks and invasions.

By 1982, several Shia military groups emerged--many with funding and training from the new Islamist government in Iran, which took power after the 1979 Iranian Revolution and was seeking to project its influence in Lebanon amid the other rival forces of the civil war. The Iranian-backed militias, though only loosely connected, were known together as Hezbollah, meaning the "Party of God" in Arabic.

Shia militias engaged in several small but devastating attacks, including the bombing of the U.S. embassy, and a suicide truck bombing of the Marines barracks in October 1983 that killed 241 Marines. These attacks led Ronald Reagan to "cut and run"--and withdraw troops from Lebanon.

In 1985, Shia clerics declared the foundation of Hezbollah in an "Open Letter to the Downtrodden in Lebanon and the World." Still associated mainly with its backing from Iran, Hezbollah continued to battle for influence among Lebanese Shiites, including military clashes with the more moderate Amal, formed in the 1970s.

Quickly, however, it became predominant in the military resistance to the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon. Hezbollah attacks did use suicide bombers, but increasingly into the 1990s, the balance shifted toward guerrilla operations directed at inflicting damage on the Israeli occupation force. Hezbollah is generally credited with forcing Israel to withdraw from Lebanon in 2000.

After 2000, Hezbollah continued to carry out military operations to pressure Israel to leave Shebaa Farms--the last sliver of Israeli-occupied territory in Lebanon--defend against repeated Israeli incursions and provocations, and win freedom for Lebanese prisoners held by Israel. Hezbollah's July 12 raid that captured two Israeli soldiers--which the Israeli government made the pretext for its war against Lebanon this summer--fits this pattern.

Unlike Israel's indiscriminate bombing campaign, Hezbollah primarily targeted Israeli military forces. A majority of Israeli casualties during the onslaught were soldiers, while the vast majority of Lebanese killed by Israeli missiles and bombs were civilian bystanders.

HEZBOLLAH IS a political party that runs a network of schools, clinics and other services that many people rely on to fill the gap for what the Lebanese government doesn't provide. It also controls an array of businesses, including bakeries, banks,

factories and an Islamic clothing line, as well as a satellite television station and a radio station.

Hezbollah organized relief efforts for southern Lebanon after the Israeli bombings of 1993 and 1996, and is currently promising furniture and rent money to all whose homes were destroyed in this summer's assault.

Beginning in the early 1990s, Hezbollah decided to take part in mainstream politics, first winning election to the Lebanon's parliament in 1992. Currently, the organization has 12 members in parliament and two in the cabinet.

It leads a parliamentary bloc in which other forces, including secular parties and non-Muslim parties, are involved. The list of candidates for this alliance during the 2005 elections included not only Shiites, but Christians, Sunni Muslims and Druze.

Hezbollah gets aid and support--including military backing--from Iran and Syria. But it is not a puppet of these governments, as the Bush administration insisted.

While Iran had decisive influence during Hezbollah's early years, the organization has since developed its own elected council and command structure to make political and military decisions. According to a post-ceasefire report by the mainstream political analyst Anthony Cordesman, "[N]o serving Israeli official, intelligence officer or other military officer felt that the Hezbollah acted under the direction of Iran or Syria."

More generally, Hezbollah is viewed as a legitimate national resistance organization, among Shia and non-Shia, throughout much of Lebanese society. Even before this summer's war, a 2005 Center for Strategic Studies survey found that three-quarters of Lebanese Christians--the traditional base of the right--identified Hezbollah as a legitimate group in challenging Israeli aggression.

Some on the left focus on Hezbollah's commitment to Islamic fundamentalism to minimize its political importance: for example, a recent letter-writer to Socialist Worker who dismissed Hezbollah as "a movement partially analogous to our own fundamentalist right."

Hezbollah's Islamism need to be understood concretely. For example, though it accepts prejudices against women predominant in Islam, and Christianity, for that matter, Hezbollah's Shia ideology is not as reactionary as, for example, the Wahhabists of Afghanistan's Taliban and the rulers of Saudi Arabia. Thus, women lead many of Hezbollah's social service projects, although they are excluded from political and military leadership.

Hezbollah does uphold anti-gay attitudes common to many currents of Islamism, and some of its leaders have used anti-Semitic slurs in describing their opposition to Israel.

On the other hand, unlike its backers in the Iranian political establishment, Hezbollah does not have a goal to building of Islamic state--at least in Lebanon. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah has said, "Lebanon is a pluralistic country. It is not an Islamic country."

This sheds light on why Hezbollah has been able to gain support beyond its Shia base--both within Lebanon and more broadly across the Middle East. Hezbollah's

main appeal lies in its willingness to challenge Israeli aggression and U.S. imperialism, not its Islamist ideology and the backward elements of its social and political program.

By successfully preventing Israel from accomplishing its objectives in this summer's onslaught, Hezbollah has set an example of resistance that could inspire further struggles across the Middle East, potentially opening the way for a secular, left-wing alternative to take root and grow.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

The Traitor Bush At It Again

9.19.06 Bruce Fein, Washington Times

President Bush is trying to frighten Congress into crippling the Great Writ of habeas corpus, the best shield ever invented against arbitrary executive detentions.

Not a crumb of evidence has been produced showing the public safety requires changes to the Great Writ.

Habeas corpus for illegal combatants is not a superfluous affirmation for indefinite detentions already known to be reliable, but a necessity to avoid wrongful deprivations of liberty.

CIA Officers Defied Bush: Stopped Secret Prison Work



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

September 20 2006 By Guy Dinmore in Washington, Financial Times

The Bush administration had to empty its secret prisons and transfer terror suspects to the military-run detention centre at Guantánamo this month in part because CIA interrogators had refused to carry out further interrogations and run the secret facilities, according to former CIA officials and people close to the programme.

The former officials said the CIA interrogators' refusal was a factor in forcing the Bush administration to act earlier than it might have wished.

When Mr Bush announced the suspension of the secret prison programme in a speech before the fifth anniversary of the September 11 terror attacks, some analysts thought he was trying to gain political momentum before the November midterm congressional elections.

The administration publicly explained its decision in light of the legal uncertainty surrounding permissible interrogation techniques following the June Supreme Court ruling that all terrorist suspects in detention were entitled to protection under Common Article Three of the Geneva Conventions.

But the former CIA officials said Mr Bush's hand was forced because interrogators had refused to continue their work until the legal situation was clarified because they were concerned they could be prosecuted for using illegal techniques.

One intelligence source also said the CIA had refused to keep the secret prisons going.

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