

## GI SPECIAL 4J24:



# “A War He Saw As Futile And Senseless” Sgt. Nicholas Sowinski, KIA

October 17, 2006 By Katie McDevitt, Tribune

**If all had gone as planned, Sgt. Nicholas Sowinski would have been home by now, his mission in Iraq complete.**

**But now, three months after the Army's 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team was issued an extended deployment, Sowinski is dead.**

The U.S. Department of Defense on Monday officially identified Sowinski, 25, of Tempe, as the soldier who was killed early last Wednesday when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb during a mounted patrol in Baghdad. The bomb injured four others, including one who was seriously hurt and taken to a hospital in Baghdad. The others are back on duty.

In July, some members of the brigade, based in Fort Wainwright, Alaska, had already returned home and others were packing their bags when they learned that their deployments were extended by up to 120 days. The order angered and saddened some of the soldiers' families in Alaska. Since then, five soldiers in the 4,000-member combat team have died.

**“These kids should’ve been home. It’s just an outrage,” said Rich Moniak, in a phone interview from Juneau, Alaska, whose son is a Stryker. “Until they’re home, there are other people who are going to not make it.”**

Sowinski graduated from Brophy College Preparatory in 1999. Four years later, he joined the Army. In November 2003, he was assigned to Fort Wainwright, where he became a Cavalry Scout with the 4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

Attempts to locate Sowinski’s family were unsuccessful, but in a blog called Common Sense, a person saying he’s Sowinski’s godfather asked that Sowinski and their “huge Italian Ukrainian Catholic family” not be forgotten.

“I am writing to you because I don’t want Nick to be a statistic,” the man wrote. “I want everyone to think about a family grieving for a child, a husband, a brother, who will not come home again from war.”

**The godfather describes Sowinski as “proud to be a soldier” despite a “war he saw as futile and senseless.”**

**Just 11 days ago, the soldier was quoted in the national media, expressing frustrations.**

**“There’s a lot of politics going on now and we’re a police force, not an army,” Sowinski said in an Oct. 5 story by The Associated Press. “It limits our options.”**

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said last week that she received word from Army officials that the brigade’s deployment will not be extended again, meaning the Stryker soldiers should return to Alaska by mid-December.

**But this time, many of the family members of the soldiers refuse to get their hopes up.**

**“They are not making any plans to bring our guys home on the 15th,” said Jennifer Davis, of Anchorage, Alaska, whose husband of four years is in Iraq. “The official word they’ve given us is: Don’t make plans for your guys to come home.”**

**Davis remembers vividly the feeling she had the week that her husband was due home, only to find out he would have to stay in Iraq.**

**“Your insides are tied in knots because you don’t know if they’re dead or alive . . . or if they will come home in one piece,” said Davis, who has been married for four**

years. “Just when you think you see the sun rising, they drop something else in your lap.”

Both Davis and Moniak are part of the recently formed Alaska chapter of the group Military Families Speak Out. The chapter drafts letters to officials and works to gather information.

To them, Sowinski’s death is another reminder that their families should have come home, Moniak said.

“You breathe easier when you know it’s not your son, but then you feel guilty because you know someone else is going through it,” Moniak said. “They should’ve come home. They are tired.”

**MORE:**

## **NEVER FORGET WHAT RUMSFELD DID:**



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

[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.*

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Baghdad Soldier Killed By Roadside Bomb**

23 October 2006 Multi-National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20061023-02

BAGHDAD, Iraq: A Multi-National Division Baghdad Soldier died at approximately 5 p.m. Sunday when the vehicle he was riding in was struck by an improvised-explosive devise in western Baghdad.

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### **Another Marine Killed In Al Anbar Province**

23 October 2006 Multinational Force-West PAO RELEASE No. 20061023-04

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: One Marine assigned to Regimental Combat Team 5 died Oct. 21, from enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province.

**(This release is not a duplicate of the MNC-I press release # 20061022-01, which announced the death of another RCT 5 Marine.)**

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### **2 Michigan Soldiers Killed In Iraq**

Oct 23, 2006 WLNS

Two Michigan servicemen have been killed in the line of duty. Lansing- based Charlie Company confirms two Marines died in Iraq.

One of those Marines was from Chelsea, the other from Royal Oak. The names of the Marines aren't being released until the families have been notified.

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# Local Soldier Killed In Iraq

October 23, 2006 Star-Gazette

WESTFIELD: A Westfield-area soldier and 1994 graduate of Cowanesque Valley High School has been killed in Iraq.

Sources close to the family said Tony Knier, 31, was killed by a roadside bomb on Saturday. Knier was a member of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Knier, who was married to the former Bobbie Kline of Wellsboro, had three children. His widow and the children are at Fort Bragg, N.C., friends of the family said.

His father is dead and his mother lives in the Lancaster, Pa. area.

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## Orlando Soldier Killed In Iraq Shortly Before Scheduled Homecoming

October 16 2006 By Sandra Pedicini, Orlando Sentinel

**Sgt. Gene A. Hawkins' family thought he was en route to Orlando from Iraq last week. Instead, they learned Friday that Hawkins, 24, had been killed.**

His siblings and grandmother were told he died Thursday from head injuries after a bomb detonated near his military vehicle in Mosul.

Hawkins was assigned to the 14th Engineer Battalion, 555th Combat Support Brigade (Maneuver Enhancement), in Fort Lewis, Wash. Troops from the battalion are coming home this month, with 160 of them scheduled to arrive today, officials from Fort Lewis said Sunday.

Hawkins' family said they thought he was supposed to leave for home Wednesday.

Hawkins talked with his grandmother Gwendolyn Taliver by phone last week. "He said that when they left and he got to Germany, he would call me," she said.

But Hawkins had stayed with other soldiers from his battalion. Hawkins was supposed to help new troops get acclimated to their surroundings, they said.

Hawkins joined the Army in February 2003, weeks before the Iraq war began.

"He wanted to make that his career," said Taliver, who raised Hawkins and his siblings Jamal Hawkins, Justin Francis and Christina Francis throughout his later childhood and teenage years. "He wanted to go as far as he could."

On Sunday, Hawkins' younger brother Jamal Hawkins said he wanted to join the military in honor of his brother's memory. "I want to be able to follow in his footsteps," said Jamal

Hawkins, 23. "I'm ready to make that commitment to him." He said his brother, who wanted to work as a recruiter, had tried persuading him to enlist.

"He had liked the changes it helped him make for himself," said Ron Howard, a family friend. He moved quickly through the ranks, Howard said, and "it brought him out of his shell some."

Gene Hawkins had lived in Orlando since 1995, when his grandmother moved there to be near family members after she retired. He had previously lived in Uniondale, N.Y.

He attended Colonial High School for a time and earned a diploma through the Job Corps program, a family member said.

He attended Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, where Taliver said he had helped serve Communion.

His family said he was a man of deep Christian faith. "We all have strong faith. We know that he's in a better place and we will see him again," his grandmother said.

His battalion was deployed to Iraq in November 2005. Troops conducted thousands of route-clearance patrols, in which they found and destroyed hundreds of improvised bombs and performed construction missions.

Family members who gathered at Taliver's house Sunday afternoon described Hawkins as a quiet person who enjoyed video games and cartoons. He especially liked The Simpsons and King of the Hill.

Taliver talked to her grandson about throwing a party when he came home from Iraq. He didn't want one.

"He said, 'No, I want to stay in my room and watch cartoons,'" Taliver said. "If he wasn't in his room, he was with one of his friends. He was not one to be in the street, unless he was out there playing basketball."

Taliver had been shopping when a neighbor called her cell phone and said she needed to come home.

When she saw a car with government license plates, "I said, 'No, no, no, they've got the wrong house.'"

Hawkins had often called and sent short e-mails but didn't talk much about the dangers of life in Iraq. "I think mainly he just didn't want me to worry," she said.

Taliver had hoped to have her grandson at home for a holiday celebration.

Though there will be a void, she said, the family must still gather for the holidays.

"We really need to celebrate his life and honor him," she said. "I want to hang up his Christmas stocking."

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# Central Fla. Soldier Killed In Iraq

Oct 23 WKMG

A 27-year-old soldier from Deltona, Fla., is among the latest casualties in Iraq, according to Local 6 News.

Officials said Pvt. 1st Class Nicholas Rogers was killed in action in Baghdad Sunday.

Rogers is survived by his wife and two daughters.

**The death toll in Iraq is now up to 86 Americans this month.**

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## Family Remembers Outgoing Marine From Aurora Killed In Iraq

October 22, 2006 By Jeff Long, Chicago Tribune staff reporter

Family members Sunday remembered a Marine from Aurora killed last week in Iraq as a fan of war movies and paintball games, an outgoing man who was dedicated to his country.

Lance Cpl. Edwardo Lopez Jr., 21, was killed by gunfire early Thursday morning in western Iraq, family members said.

"I'm just thinking that it's going to be hard for me to keep going in life," his mother, Martha, said. "He was my right hand."

Edwardo Lopez loved cooking and could make his own tortillas. His mother described him as someone who watched out for neighbors, like the time one couldn't get her front door locked late one night and he went over to help.

His interest in the military dates to childhood, family members said. "He always liked guns and tanks and armies," said his brother, Alex, 20. "When it would snow, we always built forts and pretended like we were in a war."

Lopez was fun to be around and was often the life of the party, his family said. "He loved going out," his brother said. "He loved making people laugh. He was very outgoing, a very outgoing person."

Lopez's cousin, Seferino Alonzo III, remembered the way the Marine liked to joke. "He said he didn't need a girlfriend," Alonzo recalled. "He said his guns were his girlfriend."

Alonzo said Lopez, a 2003 graduate of East Aurora High School, seemed cut out for the Marines.

"He wanted to do something different," Alonzo said. "He didn't want to go to college. A lot of people who were in the Marines were telling him about how it is to go into the military."

Alonzo added, "He was looking forward to going a lot of places they were going to send him. He just wanted to explore what was out there, and he wanted to do what he loved best and what he was proud of."

**Lopez previously saw combat in Afghanistan. He spent a few days at home over Labor Day weekend and shipped out to Iraq on Sept. 8. His brother said the deployment to Iraq felt more foreboding than Afghanistan.**

**"We did feel something was going to happen," Alex Lopez said. "And my brother did too. He cried, and he hugged me with a passion."**

Although he was only a year younger, Alex Lopez said that his older brother always looked out for him.

"He would always protect me," he said. "Every time someone would mess with me, he would look out for me."

There was a time when the younger brother wanted to follow his sibling into military service. "I was so proud of him," he recalled. "He gave me his dog tags. Something told me I couldn't do it because I didn't have the courage. He was brave."

The Marines haven't explained to the family the exact circumstances of his death, but Alex Lopez imagines his brother taking the lead in a dangerous situation, a position he often relished.

"He was always a risk-taker," Alex Lopez said. "If he did something, he did it because he felt it was right. Whatever he did, I'm still proud of him."

Martha Lopez talked to her son by phone Oct. 15, when he called to thank her for the box filled with Gummy Bears, Twizzlers and other desert warfare necessities.

He told her he was going on a mission and wouldn't be in touch for about three weeks.

"You pray for me, Mommy," he told her. "And tell everyone I love them very much."

Lopez is also survived by his father, Eduardo Lopez.

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## Vancouver Man Killed In Iraq

October 19, 2006 By MIKE BARBER, P-I REPORTER

**Among the U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq this week was a 53-year-old Vancouver man who never expected to be called back to the Army Reserve after leaving active duty 13 years ago.**



**And as word of his death was confirmed Wednesday, Ronald Paulsen became the oldest of the 139 members of the armed forces with ties to Washington to die in Iraq since the war began in March 2003.**

Portland-area media said Paulsen was killed by a roadside bomb this week. He was among at least 11 Americans killed in Iraq since Tuesday and among at least 70 so far this month. October is on pace to be one of the deadliest months of the war so far for American forces.

KOIN/6, a Portland television station, interviewed Paulsen last year when he was called up after being out of the Army for 13 years.

Paulsen had served in the active Army for 14 years before leaving in 1992. He told the news station that he was given a choice: accept a lump sum payment of \$30,000 and be finished with the military, or accept \$7,000 a year but with one hitch.

"I went for the annual," Paulsen told KOIN last year after he was called up after 13 years, "but you had to stay in the inactive reserve to get it. Thirteen years later they're calling their cards."

Paulsen, who reportedly served with an Army Reserve civil affairs/psychological operations unit, said roadside bombs were his biggest concern, KOIN reported.

At Fort Lawton in Seattle, headquarters to Army Reserve units based in the Pacific Northwest, spokesmen said Paulsen did not appear on its rolls but appeared to be assigned to a Fort Bragg, N.C., unit.

The Columbian newspaper of Vancouver reported that Paulson's wife contacted his employer, Gunderson Inc., in Portland to say that Paulsen had been killed.

"It's really tragic. He was married not too long ago. People here were in his wedding," said Scott Eave, vice president of Gunderson, which builds rail cars and barges. "We've had crisis counselors brought in, and we will have them back tomorrow."

He said Paulsen, who was in inventory control, was on his second tour of Iraq,

"Ron was a very well-respected, very well-liked guy," Eave said. "He was one of those guys who is a part of this place."

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## **Mercenary Killed, Four Soldiers Wounded By Baghdad IED**

23 October 2006 Multi-National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20061023-03 & (AP)

BAGHDAD: Four Soldiers were wounded at approximately 11:36 a.m. Sunday after their vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device in east Baghdad.

A Camden man working in Iraq for a private company as a police trainer was killed today when the military convoy in which he was riding was struck by a bomb.

58-year-old Brian M. Brian died at about 11:30 a.m. local time near the city of Rustamiyah, outside of Baghdad. He was working as an international police liaison officer with DynCorp International.

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## **Baghdad Soldier Reported As Duty Status - Whereabouts Unknown**

23 October 2006 Multi-National Division Baghdad PAO RELEASE No. 20061023-10

BAGHDAD: A Multi-National Division Baghdad Soldier was listed as duty status-whereabouts unknown Oct. 24 in Baghdad at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces immediately responded to attempt to locate the Soldier, the search is ongoing.

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## **U.S. Command Stages More Stupid Attacks On Mahdi Army**

Oct 23 (KUNA)

[Eventually there will be a response to these deliberate provocations. Then there'll be another 20,000 armed fighters out hunting down U.S. troops. T]

The U.S. troops broke into offices of Shiite militias in the two cities of Holla and Diwaniya, southern Iraq Monday morning.

They thundered the offices of Al-Mahdi Army, a Shiite militia led by Muqtada Al-Sadr in Holla, the major city of Babel province, south Iraq, according to an Iraqi police officer.

Despite the shoot-out that accompanied it, the operation did not cause casualties, the source noted.

The target of the operation is not clear so far.

Meanwhile, U.S. and Iraqi joint force broke into the house of Mahdi Army local leader in Diwaniya Province but failed to arrest him.

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**REALLY BAD IDEA:  
NO MISSION;**

## HOPELESS WAR: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldiers at the scene of a car bomb attack, which targeted a police patrol in Kirkuk, October 15, 2006. REUTERS/Slahaldeen Rasheed (IRAQ)

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## AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

# “They Can’t Get The Taliban, So They Arrest Us”

October 22, 2006 By ELIZABETH RUBIN, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

**And in the Pashtun regions, which make up about half the country, Afghans are fed up with five years of having their homes searched and the young men of their villages rounded up in the name of counterinsurgency.**

It is not at all clear that Afghans want the return of a Taliban government.

But even sophisticated Kabulis told me that they are fed up with the corruption.

And in the Pashtun regions, which make up about half the country, Afghans are fed up with five years of having their homes searched and the young men of their villages rounded up in the name of counterinsurgency.

Earlier this month in Kabul, Gen. David Richards, the British commander of NATO's Afghanistan force, imagined what Afghans are thinking: “They will say, ‘We do not want

the Taliban, but then we would rather have that austere and unpleasant life that that might involve than another five years of fighting.”

He estimated that if NATO didn't succeed in bringing substantial economic development to Afghanistan soon, some 70 percent of Afghans would shift their loyalty to the Taliban.

The Taliban were feeling bold enough that one afternoon Mullah Ibrahim, a Taliban intelligence agent, dropped by my hotel for lunch.

He was a Ghilzai, from Helmand, and told me he had tried to lead a normal life under the official amnesty program. Instead, he was locked up, beaten and so harassed by Helmandi intelligence and police officers that his tribal elders told him to leave for Pakistan and join the Taliban there.

Then, about a year ago, he decided that he was tired of fighting and living as a fugitive and accepted a reconciliation offer from an Afghan general. Pakistani intelligence got wind of this and imprisoned him; upon his release, the Pakistanis gave him money and a motorbike and pressured him to go back to war. He is still tired of war, but the Pakistanis won't let him live in peace, and now if he tries to reconcile with the Kabul government, he told me, the Taliban will kill him.

When fighting broke out on the main highway near Kandahar, I saw that the police had tied up a group of villagers, but the Taliban had all escaped.

One of those village men, his hands bound behind his back, told me that he had peeped out from his house earlier that day and saw some 200 Taliban with new guns and rocket launchers. They wanted food and threatened him and other villagers. “But I am not afraid of them,” he said loudly.

**“I am only afraid of this government.”**

**Why?**

**“Look at what they do. They can't get the Taliban, so they arrest us. We have no hope from them anymore. And when we call and tell them Taliban are here, no one comes.”**

As an engineer from Panjwai who had been an Afghan senator during the Communist era told me: “We are now like camels. In Islam, a camel can be slaughtered in two different ways.

“The Taliban are using rivalries and enmities between people to get soldiers, the same tactics as the mujahedeen used against the Russians,” the engineer continued.

“Just like in Russian times they come and say, ‘We are defending the country from the infidels.’ They start asking for food. Then they ask the people for soldiers and say, ‘We will give you weapons.’ And that's how it starts. And the emotions are rising in the people now. They are saying, ‘Kaffirs have invaded our land.’”

**Qayum Karzai, the president's older brother and a legislator from Kandahar, seemed utterly depressed when I met him. “For the last four years, the Taliban**

**were saying that the Americans will leave here,” he said. “We were stupid and didn’t believe it. Now they think it’s a victory that the Americans left.”**

With the Americans on their way out and the NATO force not yet in control, the Kandahar Police were left on the front line: underfinanced, underequipped, untrained, and often stoned. Which is perhaps what made them so brave. One afternoon I ran into a group who said their friends had just been killed when a Talib posing as a policeman served them poisoned tea.

A shaggy-haired officer in a black tunic was standing by his pickup, freshly ripped up by a barrage of bullets, and staring at my feet. “I envy your shoes,” he said, looking back at his own torn rubber sandals. “I envy your Toyota,” he said and laughed. And then looking at my pen and notebook, he said, “I envy you can read and write.” It’s not too late, I offered feebly, but he tapped his temple and shook his head. “It doesn’t work anymore,” he said. “I smoke hash. I smoke opium. I’m drinking because we’re always thinking and nervous.”

He was 35. He had been fighting for 20 years. Four of his friends had been killed in the fighting the other night. He had to support children, a wife and parents on a salary of about \$100 a month. And, he said, “we haven’t been paid in four months.”

No wonder, then, that the population complained that the police were all thieves.

At Kandahar’s hospital I met a 17-year-old policeman (who had been with the police since he was 14) tending to his wounded friend. He was in a jovial mood, amazed he wasn’t dead. He said they had been given an order to cut the Taliban’s escape route. Instead they were ambushed by the Taliban, ran out of bullets and had no phones to call for backup.

**“We ran away,” he said with a nervous giggle. “The Taliban chased us, shouting: ‘Hey, sons of Bush! Where are you going? We want to kill you.’”**

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## **TROOP NEWS**

***Now What The Fuck Are You  
Dying For?***

**U.S. Government Offers  
Unconditional Amnesty To  
Resistance Fighters;**

# Negotiating With Baath Party

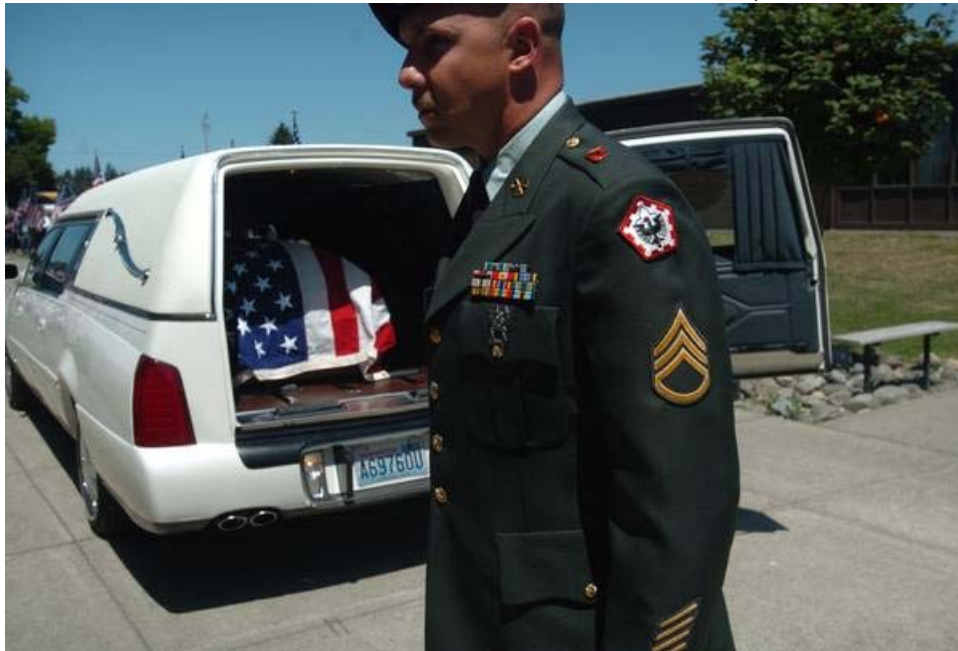
October 23, 2006 Steven R. Hurst, Canadian Press

Hoping to find a political solution, the Bush administration has asked [Prime Minister Nouri] al-Maliki's government to issue an unconditional amnesty to Sunni Muslim insurgents, prominent Kurdish legislator Mahmoud Othman told The Associated Press. He is a confidant of Jalal Talabani, the country's president.

He and Hassan al-Seneid, a member of parliament close to al-Maliki, also told AP that U.S. officials were engaged in ongoing talks with members of the insurgency, including members of Saddam Hussein's outlawed Baath party, to seek an end to the fighting that has plagued American forces in Baghdad, surrounding areas and sprawling Anbar province to the west.

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



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

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**Women On War:  
Activism, Media, And Veterans**

Compared to previous U.S. campaigns the Global War on Terror has brought with it the increasing participation, responsibility, and visibility of women.

Both famous and infamous women have emerged during this current conflict.

From the debate over burqas in Afghanistan, to the Jessica Lynch story, to Abu Ghraib, and representatives in the halls of government women have been at the forefront of public discourse on the war.

This panel discussion with activists, journalists, scholars, and veterans will examine women's roles in efforts to both perpetuate and end the war.

## **Speakers:**

**Laura Flanders, Air America Radio**

**Judith LeBlanc, United for Peace and Justice**

**Melissa Van, Peace Action NY**

**Anuradha Bhagwati, Iraq Veterans Against the War**

**Jen Hogg, Iraq Veterans Against the War**

**Rupal Oza, Women's Studies, Hunter College/CUNY**

**Kelly Anderson, Film & Media Studies, Hunter College/CUNY**

## **WHEN:**

**Friday, November 3rd from 6:30pm to 8:30pm**

**Screening of The Ground Truth (4:00pm to 6:00) and discussion with Desmond Mullins (IVAW) and Martin Lucas (Film & Media Studies)**

## **WHERE:**

**Lang Recital Hall, 4th floor: Hunter College, City University of New York**

(Enter on 69th Street between Park & Lexington) Take the 6 train to 68th St.

### **Sponsored by:**

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Code Pink NYC

Peace Action NY

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**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 or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657**

## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **WELCOME TO RAMADI: HAVE A NICE DAY**



Insurgents on a road in Ramadi October 22, 2006. REUTERS/Stringer (IRAQ)

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**Anti-Occupation Mahdi Army  
Holding Amarah;  
Mopping Up Operations Continue**



10/23/2006 (AP) & Steven R. Hurst, Canadian Press

Two police commanders were killed in Amarah, where rival [pro- and anti-occupation] Shiite militias battled each other last week, a local hospital official said. Lt. Sarmad Majid al-Shatti from his home at 4:00 a.m. (0100 GMT) and his body was found six hours later at a farm on the southern city's outskirts with bullet wounds to the head and chest, said Ali Chaloub of Sadr General Hospital. Lt. Alaa al-Kabi was shot to death at 9:20 a.m. (0620 GMT) outside his home, Chaloub said.

**Residents said police stations there remain closed and the city was largely in the hands of Mahdi fighters, who had pushed the police to the edges of town and were pursuing officers who had taken part in the fighting.**

The Iraqi army set up a few roadblocks but did not interfere in the movement of Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army fighters after police fled the streets.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki announced a military crackdown to tame the country's staggering armed violence, taking special aim at continuing lawlessness in Amarah.

**But his statement, while notable for its timing, appeared toothless, especially given that his army was standing aside in Amarah.**

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## **“As We Have Liberated Amara From The British, Basra Is Next,” He Said”**

October 21, 2006 Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, The Guardian [Excerpts]

Ten days ago I sat on a mattress on the floor of a Mahdi army safe house talking to Abu Mahdi, a slim 40-year-old, bearded former Arabic teacher and low level commander in the Shia militia.

I had first encountered him in Najaf in August 2004, when the Mahdi army seized the holy city. Now he boasted of how his comrades were effectively in control of his home town, 200 miles south of Baghdad.

**"As we have liberated Amara from the British, Basra is next," he said. "My men are everywhere, can you see the British anywhere? For the people in the street it's my men who rule the town."**

The elections organised by the British produced a city council dominated by religious parties affiliated with militias.

**For more than a year now it has banned any official dealing with British army.**

Meanwhile the militias rained down mortars on the camp daily and ambushed supply lines. According to Lt Col David La Bouchere, commander of the Queens Royal Hussars battle group, around 283 mortars were fired in from last March to August.

**The camp needed constant resupplying by around 160 trucks every couple of weeks.**

"It was a very stupid situation, we needed six to seven companies of soldiers just to protect the base," said Lt Col La Bouchere. "The answer was to leave the base and depend on a more mobile force."

**When the British left two months ago, officers called it a tactical redeployment; the people of Amara called it a retreat.**

The British army said it was handing the base to the Iraqi army which would take responsibility for securing the town. But within a few hours thousands of Iraqis had massed at the gates. Within 48 hours the camp had been looted.

**"We weren't fair to the Iraqi army, we only told them that we would hand them the base few hours earlier, so they were not prepared," explains Lt Col La Bouchere.**

*"We couldn't trust them to tell them in advance that we were leaving."*

<p><b>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!</b></p>
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**“There Is No Way To Drive A Wedge  
Between Us And The Resistance”  
“We Are All One Voice”**

October 19, 2006 By Muthana Aidan and Ali al-Mawsawi, Azzaman [Excerpts]

**Iraqi rebels are determined to turn the Muslim holy month of Ramadan this year into a turning point in their struggle to defeat the United States.**

**In interviews with residents and insurgents in violence-ridden areas, particularly in central Iraq, it appears that rebel tactics of turning the holy month into the bloodiest for the occupiers have been “a resounding success.”**

“We have long queues of people willing to have themselves killed if they guarantee they will take one of the ‘Olooch’ with them,” said an Iraqi man who had spent sometime with a few rebels in a prison.

“Olooch” is the Arabic term the rebels use to refer to U.S. troops which is invariably translated into infidels.

The rebel, who refused to be named like all the sources in this story, cited the latest battles in Anbar, one of the most violent provinces in Iraq, in which U.S. troops were dealt heavy blows.

“U.S. military operations there were met with stiff resistance. Fighters joined the resistance from across the country and neighboring states. Many of them would rather blow themselves up in the face of the Olooch,” he said.

**Residents in rebel-held areas denied reports that Iraqi resistance was losing its popular base.**

**“Everybody would opt for resistance and support it. There is little choice. It is hard for anyone in our area to even sympathize with these Olooch,”** said a farmer in a village close to Falluja.

**The use of disproportionate force and policies and actions hostile to the religious and cultural aspirations of the population in these areas has apparently turned most of the people against U.S. troops.**

Stories of U.S. atrocities; mistreatment of prisoners, molesting of females, killing of innocent Iraqis as well as reported rape and murder; are the main topics of conversation almost everywhere in this volatile region.

**“There is no way to drive a wedge between us and the resistance. We are all one voice that it is either us or them (U.S.),”** said a tribal chieftain, also not willing to reveal his name.

There were reports that the tribes were unhappy with the rebels but the tribal leader said if differences existed they “will never be at the expense of efforts to humiliate and defeat the Olooch and their backers in Iraq.”

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**“The Resistance Is Controlling  
Baghdad Now”**

**“The Armed Resistance Has  
Finished All The Preparations To  
Control Power In Iraq”**

**“The increase in U.S. casualties are rising sharply as part of a decision by the resistance to increase these attacks. Within four or five hours we can impose security and stability in Iraq after the Americans withdraw.”**

October 22, 2006 Robert Dreyfuss, robertdreyfuss.com [Excerpts]

The following is the transcript of a lengthy interview, slightly edited for grammar, that I conducted by telephone with Salah Mukhtar.

Mukhtar, who lives in Yemen, is a former Iraqi official and diplomat who worked in the Information Ministry and who served at the United Nations and as Iraq's ambassador to India. At the time of the invasion in 2003, he was Iraq's ambassador to Vietnam.

**Though he does not claim to be a spokesman for the resistance in Iraq or for the Baath party, he is close to both. Here is what he had to say:**

\*\*\*\*\*

*Q. How strong is the Iraqi resistance?*

**A. The armed resistance has finished all the preparations to control power in Iraq.**

**The middle class collaborators with the United States have started to leave Iraq already. Most of them are outside Iraq: Ahmed Chalabi, Iyad Allawi and others.**

**A second wave of agents are preparing to leave, and some have already left, to Jordan, to Syria, to Britain, and some other places, because the strategic conflict, practically speaking, has reached the point of putting an end to the occupation.**

**The resistance is controlling Baghdad now.**

Yesterday, I spoke to many people, and they said that the attack on the American base was part of a new strategy to inflict heavy casualties on American troops in Iraq.

I assure you, the resistance has the upper hand in Iraq. The only thing we are worried about is the direct intervention by Iran. Otherwise, everything is guaranteed.

**Within four or five hours we can impose security and stability in Iraq after the Americans withdraw.**

That's why we want the UN Security Council to declare its opposition to any outside intervention in Iraq, to guarantee that Iran won't intervene in Iraq. Otherwise, those people allied with the United States will have to leave when the United States leaves.

The resistance holds the ground almost everywhere in Iraq.

*Q. Why don't we see a resistance movement in the Shiite areas of Iraq?*

**A. There are Shiites occupying high positions inside the resistance, with the Baathists. No other organization has popular support inside Iraq.**

**But the media does not cover what is going on in the south.**

The legitimate army has been rebuilt, the army that went underground in the invasion. And they are ready to control Iraq right now.

**Ninety per cent of all Iraqi resistance is made up of Iraqi army. There are highly qualified officers of the Iraqi army are leading nearly all resistance operations in Iraq.**

They built the Iraqi army on a sectarian basis, with Badr Brigade and pesh merga (the Kurdish militias).

**But there are some nationalists inside the army, and the resistance gets information from nationalist officers inside the official army.**

*Q. Will there be a Tet Offensive-type of attack? Will the Green Zone come under attack?*

A. There has been talk in Baghdad about liberating the Green Zone, especially over the past few weeks. But this is not likely for the time being, because the strategy of the resistance is based on collecting points, as in boxing.

You collect points, one by one, to see who is winning.

**So you exhaust the enemy, by attacking from time to time, until he collapses. The victory of the resistance in Iraq will not be achieved by one battle.**

**We expect the first month of next year will be decisive.**

**The Americans are exhausted, and the resistance is preparing simultaneous attacks on American forces everywhere.**

**The increase in U.S. casualties are rising sharply as part of a decision by the resistance to increase these attacks.**

*Q. Many Iraqis are being polarized by the killings, driven to sectarianism.*

A. It is not sectarian fighting.

It is political fighting.

**In the highest leadership of the resistance there are Shiites and Sunnis, Christians and Muslims. They are working together inside the resistance, including Kurds and Turkmen.**

<p><b>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</b></p>
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## **Assorted Resistance Action**

10/23/2006 (AP) & Reuters

A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol killed two policemen and wounded two in Baghdad's western Ghazaliya district, an Interior Ministry source said.

Insurgents killed four policemen from the Facility Protection Services (FPS) in al-Fadhil district in central Baghdad, an Interior Ministry source said. FPS protects the country's infrastructure.

A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol killed three and wounded 13 near the shrine of a Sunni cleric in central Baghdad, police said.

One policeman was killed in Baiji, 180 km (112 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

One Iraqi soldier was killed and four wounded in clashes between the Iraqi army and guerrillas near Balad, 80 km (50 miles) north of Baghdad.

HADITHA: About 70 residents demonstrate to demand release of local Imam detained by Iraqi soldiers on Monday in connection with insurgent activity.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

# **Cutting Through The Bull Shit Of Unrecorded History**



Mike Hastie 10.23.06

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: ([hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

**What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org):. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. *Same to unsubscribe.***

## **“You Don’t Have Any Either”**

October 21, 2006, By David Cline, Veterans For Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against The War

**Today I went to Times Square in NYC to hang around for a while and while I was crossing 6th Avenue, I heard a lot of people yelling several blocks down. Figuring that it was a demonstration, I walked over to see what it was about.**

**What I encountered was an Immigrant Rights rally of about 1500-2000 people who had marched from Union Square to Times Square. They had speakers, rappers etc. and the energy level was very high.**

**The speakers and rally participants were also militantly against the war in Iraq.**

As I walked through the crowd I ran into two people I knew, a young woman leader of DRUM, a South Asian group, and a Puerto Rican labor activist I had worked with during the Vieques struggle.

Other than that, I didn't know anyone and the overwhelming majority of demonstrators were Asian and Latino youth under 30. Many flags of the Philippines, Palestine, Columbia, Ecuador, Mexico, Korea and other third world nations fluttered in the breeze.

Across the street about a dozen counter-demonstrators gathered with Remember the Alamo", Texas and California Republic flags and anti-illegal immigrant signs and banners. Interestingly, they had no American flag other than one with 13 stars and 76 written in the circle.

**When I was leaving I walked over to where these jokers were to hear what they were saying. One fat white boy was yelling "Why don't you have any American flags".**

**When I heard that, I went off and yelled at him "You don't have any either". He was actually stunned when he realized that was true and shut his mouth until I left.**

I am telling this story because what I saw today was not the mainly white middle-aged (and largely middle class) peace movement in the streets but youth of color standing up for their rights.

**The revolution is alive and growing in the ghettos, barrios and ethnic enclaves of America.**

**This was an inspiration to me.**

**Dave Cline**

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## **Life Outside The Paranoid Empire**

By Joan Chittister, OSB; Sept./Oct. 2006 Human Quest [Excerpt]

We are a country held hostage by fear.

It's difficult to go through an airport these days, and I go through lots of them here and around the world, without doing some serious soul-searching about it.

The famous question repeats itself over and over again: in the tiniest of ways in me: Are we better off today than we were five years ago?

**In Asia, for instance, I do not need to take off my shoes, jackets and jewelry and buckles and cell phones as I go.**

**In Europe there are no body scans and puffers as there are in Albuquerque.**

**In Africa and South America, they do not submit my computer to body scans of its own.**

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## **OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON**

**CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS  
JAILED FOR 14 DAYS EACH AFTER  
REFUSING TO ENLIST:  
He Refuses To Be Part Of An  
Occupation Army**



October 23, 2006 Refusers' Parents Forum Via David McReynolds

**HAVING REFUSED TO WEAR ARMY UNIFORM OMRI EVRON WAS IMMEDIATELY TRANSFERRED TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT**

**OMRI IS NOT ENTITLED TO MAKE TELEPHONE CALLS OR HAVE VISITORS - EXCEPT FOR LAWYERS OR MKs. WE THEREFORE URGE ANY LAWYER WHO WISHES TO SUPPORT OMRI TO VISIT HIM IN JAIL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THIS IS OMRI'S ONLY CONNECTION WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD.**

**Omri Evron:**

On Sunday 15 October 2006, after refusing to enlist for military service, Omri Evron was sentenced to 14 days in military jail.

Omri explains that he opposes the ongoing military occupation of the Palestinian people, an occupation that further entrenches and aggravates the hatred and terror between the two peoples.

On arrival at military prison #4, Omri stated that he would not wear military uniform. He comments: "I refused to wear a uniform because I am not prepared to consider myself a soldier." As a result he was put in the prison's solitary confinement.

Omri was not allowed to continue wearing his trousers nor was he given permission to keep any books with him other than "holy books".

On Tuesday he was sentenced again, now on grounds of his refusal to wear a uniform - this time he received, in addition, a suspended sentence of 7 days. Later that day he was permitted to wear trousers, and he also was given a prayer book. He received this in response to his request for a Bible, one and a half days earlier.

MK Dov Chenin visited Omri in prison on Wednesday and he appealed to the officers in charge to allow Omri non-religious books. Attorney Smadar Ben Natan visited Omri on the same day, and she too made the same request. To date, however, Omri's situation in terms of reading material has not changed.

We have been informed that he has been threatened several times with a repeat sentence for refusal to wear uniform, though this had not actually happened at the time Attorney Ben Natan visited. Omri has decided to write a request to be released on grounds of conscience in the next few days.

**Yakir Peretz:**

Yakir Peretz, too, was sentenced on Sunday 15 October 2006, to 14 days in military prison, after he refused to enlist on grounds of his pacifist conviction and his opposition to the Occupation.

**We first came to know of him because he was sentenced at the same time as Omri. Yakir said that he refuses to be part of an occupation army.**

"I have the right not to be in the army and they are, at the moment, depriving me of that basic human right. Even if we were talking of an army of angels, I would not be obliged to support any armed struggle." Yakir is running his sentence in the A section of military prison #4.

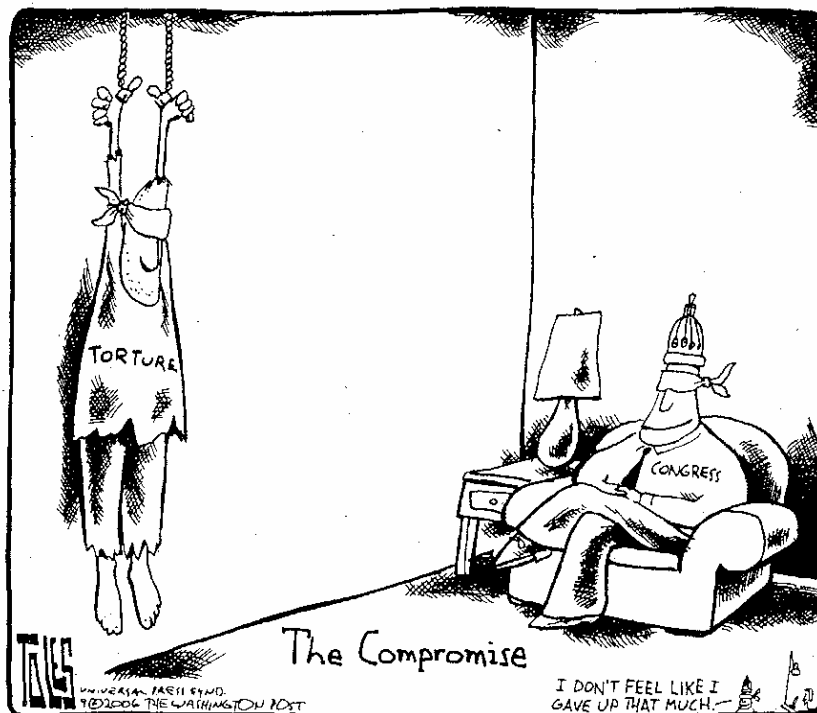
Yakir formed his decision not to enlist when he was an 11th grader at high school. He was only partially informed about the existence of the army's "conscience committee" and his right to appear before it, so he turned up on his enlistment day and refused to be conscripted.

He was seen, last Wednesday, by attorney Smadar Ben Natan, and decided to request a hearing at the "conscience committee". Yakir will write his letter, requesting to appear before the committee and be released on grounds of conscience, in the next few days.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: [www.rafahtoday.org](http://www.rafahtoday.org) The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



# Woman Sues Over \$100 Ticket For Anti-Bush Bumper Sticker

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

Oct. 17 By DANIEL YEE, AP

A woman who was ticketed for having an obscene anti-President Bush bumper sticker filed a lawsuit in federal court Monday against DeKalb County and its officials.

**Denise Grier, 47, of Athens, Ga., got a \$100 ticket in March after a DeKalb County police officer spotted the bumper sticker, which read "I'm Tired Of All The BUSH IT."**

Although a DeKalb judge threw out the ticket in April because the state's lewd decal law that formed the basis for the ticket was ruled unconstitutional in 1990, Grier is seeking damages for "emotional distress" against the county, according to the lawsuit.

**Grier also seeks a declaration in federal court that her bumper sticker is considered protected speech under the First Amendment because she is "uncertain and insecure regarding her right to display her bumper sticker in DeKalb County," the lawsuit said.**

The lawsuit was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia.

"This type of sarcasm in relation to political figures is as old as the country," said her attorney, Frank Derrickson. "We think this bumper sticker is just the latest example of this.

**"We want to be assured that not just Ms. Grier but anyone who wants to have fun with the powers that be should be able to do that under the First Amendment."**

Grier, a nurse who works at Emory University and other hospitals, also is seeking punitive damages against the DeKalb police officer who gave her the ticket because he "acted with reckless disregard" of her rights, the lawsuit said.

The state law prohibited lewd or profane stickers and decals on vehicles. A phone message to the office of DeKalb County CEO Vernon Jones was not immediately returned Monday.

Derrickson said Grier still has the anti-Bush bumper sticker on her car.

"I think she's got better ones than that, at least the ones that I saw," he said.

## **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](http://www.ivaw.net))

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[http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi\\_special/](http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/);

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