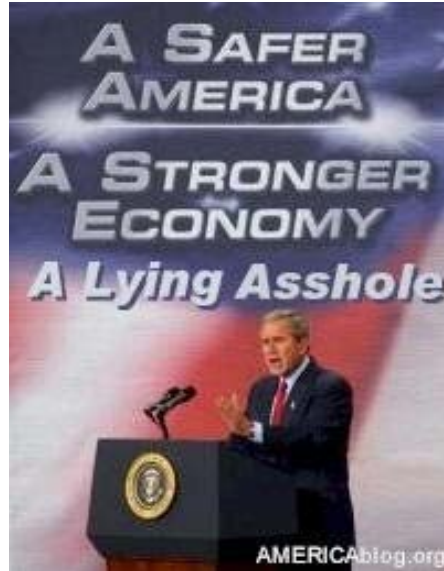


GI SPECIAL 4J8:



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

**“American Troops
Increasingly Ask
Themselves If This Is
Their Fight Anymore”
“We’ve Been Here For So Long
And We’ve Done So Much, But
It’s Just So Far We Can Go”**

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, The Military Project, Mark Shapiro, and Don Bacon, The Smedley Butler Society, who sent this in.]

Oct 7, 2006 By Richard Engel, Beirut bureau chief, NBC News [Excerpts]

The U.S. Cavalry's Crazy Horse, 3rd Platoon ventures out into Southern Baghdad, where the enemy is invisible, Iraqi allies untrustworthy, and where American troops increasingly ask themselves if this is their fight anymore.

And who is the enemy?

"It's not clear now who we're always fighting: they're terrorists, they're criminals, they're religious radicals," says Sgt. Mike Schmieder of the Army's 1-14 Cavalry.

Just how murky it's become is obvious after only an hour on patrol. The platoon finds the body of a Sunni man executed and dumped by the roadside just 30 minutes earlier, along with his ID and a photograph of his daughter.

The body that these soldiers found had been shot by an Iraqi policeman's pistol; witnesses saw an Iraqi police car leave the scene. Now the soldiers are investigating to see if these police were themselves involved. Surprisingly, an Iraqi police lieutenant tells us he thinks fellow police did it.

"My men are infiltrated by Shiite militias and I can't get rid of them," he says. "If I report them, they'll kill me."

The troops say it's frustrating not to trust their Iraqi counterparts. Do soldiers here ever ask themselves, "Why are we here? Is this our war anymore?"

"Oh yes, all the time. I ask myself that a lot, too," says Spc. Vernon Roberson of 1-14 Cavalry.

"We've been here for so long and we've done so much, but it's just so far we can go."

"It's time for them to take the reins and take responsibility for their country," they say.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**Number Of U.S. Wounded Highest
Since '04:
Hundreds Last Month;**

Experts Say It's More Telling Than Death Toll; Pentagon Too Scared To Report Number Of U.S. Wounded In Baghdad

October 8, 2006 Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post [Excerpts]

The number of U.S. troops wounded in Iraq has surged to its highest level in nearly two years as Americans fight block-by-block in Baghdad to try to check a spiral of sectarian [translation: anti-occupation] violence that U.S. commanders warn could lead to civil war [translation: could lead to the defeat of the U.S. military dictatorship that controls Iraq].

Last month, 776 U.S. troops were wounded in action in Iraq, the highest number since the military assault to retake the insurgent-held city of Fallujah in November 2004, according to Defense Department data.

It was the fourth-highest monthly total since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

The sharp increase in American wounded -- with nearly 300 more in the first week of October -- is a grim measure of the degree to which the U.S. military has been thrust into the lead of the effort to stave off full-scale civil war in Iraq, military officials and experts say.

Beyond Baghdad, Marines battling Sunni insurgents in Iraq's violent western province of Anbar last month also suffered their highest number of wounded in action since late 2004.

More than 20,000 U.S. troops have been wounded in combat and 2,700 killed in the Iraq war.

While much media reporting has focused on the number of dead, military experts say the number of wounded is a more accurate gauge of the fierceness of fighting because advances in armor and medical care allow many service members to survive who would have perished in past wars. The ratio of wounded to killed among U.S. forces in Iraq is about 8 to 1, compared with 3 to 1 in Vietnam.

"These days, wounded are a much better measure of the intensity of the operations than killed," said Anthony Cordesman, a military expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

U.S. commanders have appealed for weeks for 3,000 more Iraqi army troops to help secure Baghdad but as of Thursday had received only a few hundred, according to military officials in the Iraqi capital.

"The Baghdad security plan and the general spiral of operations is driving us to be more active than we have been in recent months," said Michael O'Hanlon, a military analyst at

the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based think tank. "We have more people on patrols and out of base, so we get more people hurt and killed in firefights," he said, explaining that U.S. military offensives -- more than other factors such as shifting enemy tactics -- tend to drive the number of American casualties.

In March, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Iraqi forces -- not U.S. troops -- would deal with a civil war in Iraq "to the extent one were to occur." Today's operations in Baghdad demonstrate that that goal was not realistic, experts say.

"In a sense, the Baghdad security plan is a complete repudiation of the earlier Rumsfeld doctrine where he said the Iraqis would prevent the civil war," said O'Hanlon.

Withington [Lt. Col. Jonathan Withington, a spokesman for the U.S. military command in the city] said he was not authorized to release the number of U.S. military personnel wounded in Baghdad or the number of attacks in the city, although the military has released such data in the past.

A survey of reports on combat deaths from August through early October, however, shows an increase in those killed in Baghdad from small-arms fire as well as bombs along roads.

Dense urban terrain in the city of 6 million people, where enemy fighters have many places to hide and can attack from close quarters, reduces the advantage of the better-trained and better-equipped U.S. forces. **[No shit? Who could ever have guessed.]**

Attacks Against U.S. Forces Have Climbed 27% In Al Anbar Since Last Year

October 7, 2006 By Solomon Moore and Louise Roug, L.A. Times Staff Writers

Attacks against U.S. forces have climbed 27% in Al Anbar since last year, according to the U.S. Marine Corps.

Marines say there are 5,000 Iraqi police officers and 13,000 Iraqi soldiers in the province, but that the Iraqi forces remain fragile and unable to sustain themselves.

Half the Iraqi soldiers are on leave at any given time, and many don't return to duty. In May, desertion rates in some Iraqi units reached 40%.

In August, threats from insurgents led half of Fallouja's police force to stay home for days, a U.S. general said. And Fallouja at least has a police force.

Other strategic cities, including Haditha, Hit and Ramadi, remain virtually lawless [translation: are under full control of Iraqi nationalist armed forces].

Massachusetts Marine Killed In Anbar



Marine Lance Cpl. Edward M. Garvin, 19, of Malden, Mass., was killed during a combat operation Oct. 4, 2006 in Al Anbar province. (AP Photo/Family Handout)

Baghdad Soldier Killed By Small-Arms Fire

08 October 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20061008-01

BAGHDAD: A Multi-National Division Baghdad Soldier died at approximately 1:15 p.m. Oct. 7 when terrorists attacked his patrol with small-arms fire northwest of Baghdad.

Stryker Soldier Killed

08 October 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20061008-03

MOSUL, Iraq: A Task Force Lightning Soldier assigned to 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, based out of Fort Lewis, Washington, was killed Saturday, Oct. 7, by an improvised explosive device detonation.

Family, Friends Remember Brave Hero, 'Gentle Soul'



September 28, 2006 The Capital

Two pictures came up on the screen inside Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church in Severna Park yesterday morning. One showed a picture of Pvt. Eric Matthew Kavanagh in uniform, a member of the 26th Infantry of the First Division Blue Spaders. The other showed him in similar garb, but as an elementary school-aged child.

Then Pvt. Kavanagh's photo came up on the screen again, but this time with long hair and a wide smile as he sat on a motorcycle. That was followed by one of him with a shaved head playing a sunburst Stratocaster-style guitar.

A number of other photographs showed him posing with family members, or candid shots of him making silly faces or showed him proudly smiling as he stood in uniform.

Family and friends said goodbye to the 20-year-old Severna Park man, a week after he was killed by an improvised explosive device in Baghdad.

The photo compilation, set to Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Simple Man" was put together by Pvt. Kavanagh's younger brother Patrick.

After a final few seconds of a video of Pvt. Kavanagh playing guitar, a dedication came across the screen. "Eric you are a true hero and will not be forgotten," it said.

More than 250 people attended the funeral service. But Pvt. Kavanagh's immediate family clung to each other as they followed the casket, draped with an American flag, inside the crowded church.

"Behind that gentle happy, huggy guitar player there was grit and determination," the Rev. W. Terry Schoener said during the service.

Pvt. Kavanagh, who grew up attending Folger McKinsey Elementary and Severna Park Middle School, left Chesapeake High School and knew he wanted to go into the armed forces. "Here's where the hand of God and the inner strength of Eric united," the Rev. Schoener said. "He was sensing a calling."

Pvt. Kavanagh's father, Kevin, wrote a letter about his son that Mr. Kavanagh's brother-in-law, Forrest Mays, read in church.

"My son Eric is a gentle soul, always with a smile on his face - a smile that beamed with love, enthusiasm and compassion," Mr. Mays read.

Mr. Kavanagh wrote that his son wasn't satisfied with the 9 to 5 world and that he wanted to do something important and make a difference.

Mr. Mays said Mr. Kavanagh wrote the letter the night before. "His sacrifice brought together a family in need of healing. Yes, my son is a hero, but to each of us he's so much more," Mr. Mays said.

He talked about Eric's love in talking with his brother and younger sister, Alanna.

Mr. Kavanagh is also survived by his mother, Rhonda Kavanagh of Glen Burnie, and his grandparents, Shirley Kerns of Glen Burnie and Keith Morris of Stockbridge, Ga.

Mr. Mays said the family wanted those who knew Pvt. Kavanagh to share their stories with them as the days pass.

The Rev. Schoener reminded Pvt. Kavanagh's siblings to remember their brother at holidays and share stories about him.

"Eric is a gentle soul," Mr. Mays finished reading from the letter. "Eric is a gentle soul."

Mr. Mays then presented the family with a plaque that read "There is nothing so strong as gentleness and nothing so gentle as real strength."

Family and friends later spilled into the hallway from a reception room at Arlington National Cemetery as Pvt. Kavanagh was posthumously awarded a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star for his sacrifice in the war on terror in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

As the procession left for the grave site, a couple of cars had yellow ribbons attached as they went through the winding hills of the cemetery.

There was also a private celebration of Pvt. Kavanagh's life at the Knights of Columbus Columbian Center in Severna Park last night.

Soldier Killed In Iraq Remembered As Leader

September 27, 2006 HOPKINSVILLE, Ky. (AP)

Friends of an Army soldier from western Kentucky who was killed last week in Iraq remembered Windell J. Simmons as a leader and energetic friend.

Simmons, 20, known by his middle name, Jeryd, joined the Army after he graduated from Christian County High School in 2004. He died of injuries he suffered Saturday in Taji, Iraq, when a roadside bomb detonated near his vehicle during combat operations, the military said.

He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division at Fort Hood, Texas.

One of his former high school teachers remembered Simmons on Wednesday as a serious student, who was quiet in class.

"I had Jeryd for two years in pre-calculus and (advanced placement) calculus," teacher April Harris told the Kentucky New Era of Hopkinsville. "He could have taken the easy route, but he wanted to prepare himself."

She said Simmons was more relaxed around his friends. She said she knew he had an interest in joining the military, and it broke her heart when she heard Simmons had been killed in combat.

One of his high school friends, Tad Abukuppeh, said Simmons enjoyed life and his friends.

"No matter what it was, he was always energetic about anything we did together," said Abukuppeh, now a student at Western Kentucky University. "He was like the ringleader; he was the best."

Friends said he enjoyed a popular interactive video game known as "Dance, Dance Revolution" where players stand on a mat and dance to the beat of music while following video instructions on where to step.

Another friend, Justin Baker, said Simmons was a leader among his peers.

"He was pretty quiet in school but when you got him out of school he was one of the funniest guys you would meet," said Baker, who attends Hopkinsville Community College. "He was the idea man. If we were bored, he would think of something to do."

On Wednesday, Hopkinsville Mayor Rich Liebe ordered that all flags should be flown at half-staff until Simmons' burial.

Gov. Ernie Fletcher directed that flags at state office buildings remain at half-staff in Simmons' honor. The flags were lowered earlier this week in memory of Sgt. 1st Class Charles Jason Jones, a Kentucky National Guardsman who died September 20 in Iraq.

Funeral arrangements for Simmons were pending at Gamble Funeral Home in Hopkinsville.

U.S. Tank Destroyed At Diwaniyah: Casualties Not Announced; Idiots In Command Pick Another Fight With Mahdi Army

10.8.06 by Zeinab Mohammed, AFP

Gunbattles broke out in Diwaniyah after a joint Iraqi and US force tried to arrest a local Shiite militia leader accused of slaughtering Iraqi soldiers during a previous clash in August, Iraqi officials said Sunday.

A US tank was disabled by a barrage of rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) during the clashes, but the snatch squad returned and seized their suspect, identified by Iraqi sources as a local commander of the Mahdi Army militia.

An Iraqi defence official named the suspect as Kifah al-Greiti, a commander in the Mahdi Army of Shiite radical leader Moqtada al-Sadr.

The attempt to arrest Greiti provoked a fierce response.

"An M1A2 Abrams tank was struck by multiple RPG rounds and was severely damaged."

Later, US and Iraqi forces sealed off and entered the hospital, apparently hunting for wounded militiamen.

MORE:

<p>Civilian hospitals organized to give care to the wounded and sick, the infirm and maternity cases, may in no circumstances be the object of attack, but shall at all times be respected and protected by the Parties to the conflict. (Geneva Conventions, Article. 19)</p>

Whack-A-Mole Rolls On: As Occupation Command Concentrates Forces In Baghdad, Resistance Attacks In North Escalate

October 08. 2006 LEE KEATH, Associated Press Writer

Thousands of U.S. and Iraqi troops have been carrying out an intensified sweep of Baghdad since August, searching neighborhood by neighborhood to root out insurgents and militias who have killed thousands this year.

But at the same time, shootings, bombings and other attacks has been swelling in northern areas such as Kirkuk and Mosul, the capital of the province where Tal Afar is located, though the bloodshed has not been on the scale seen in Baghdad.

**REALLY BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
HOPELESS WAR:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. Army Stryker armored vehicles in eastern Baghdad Oct. 3, 2006. (AP Photo/Darko Bandic)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**“‘Happy Thanksgiving,’ Schofield
Said Darkly,
‘Another Canadian Dead’”**

After Silly Commanders Boasted Of Success “More Canadian Soldiers Have Died Than During The Two-Week Combat Period”

[Note how news of another successful resistance attack is carefully buried in the last sentence of a very long report. T]

October 08, 2006 Renata D'Aliesio, CanWest News Service; Calgary Herald

The sun was near rising when a fiery ball seared the dark sky.

Throughout the night, two crews of soldiers had kept watch on a dirt road near Pashmul. They were looking for insurgents attempting to hide more deadly explosives in the dark sand that the soldiers had come to call moon dust.

The pre-dawn explosion, though, happened on a bend of road they couldn't see. Master Cpl. Shane Schofield immediately suspected the worst.

Within minutes, military radios delivered the news to the troops a tragic day in Afghanistan once again.

"Happy Thanksgiving," Schofield said darkly. "Another Canadian dead."

The deaths have come so often lately, many soldiers dwell only for a moment before returning to their work.

The blast from an anti-tank mine was so powerful it tore a Nyala vehicle into shreds of twisted metal.

The South Africa-made four-wheel-drive jeep, designed for reconnaissance work, is built to withstand impact from two simultaneous anti-tank mines.

It wasn't clear Saturday why the Nyala blew apart, Canadian military spokeswoman Lt. Sue Stefko said Saturday.

Some soldiers wondered whether the hatch was open for air, weakening the Nyala's ability to withstand the blast.

The Canadian-led offensive against the Taliban in the Zhari-Panjwai districts of Kandahar province included a bombardment of bombs and gunfire.

By the time troops marched into the Taliban stronghold of Pashmul on Sept. 13, the insurgents had fled.

NATO quickly declared the mission a success, claiming roughly 1,000 fighters had been killed.

But in the development stage that has followed, more Canadian soldiers have died than during the two-week combat period.

An array of guerrilla-style tactics have been used: a suicide bomber on a bicycle, an ambush with mortars and gunfire, and anti-tank mines hidden in dirt roads

The increase of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) has been particularly irksome they're difficult to guard against.

"I'm getting really annoyed with it," Holler said. "I'd just like to find these guys who are doing this and make it stop.

"The best bet is to be more vigilant when watching routes, but it's hard with all the marijuana fields."

Mingled with crops of vegetables here are gigantic marijuana plants, many towering over 6 feet. The plants are grown to make hashish while poppies are the base for heroin production.

On Saturday night, Afghan police officers begin monitoring the same dirt road Canadians had eyes on the night before. The hope is to eventually have 250 police officers between Zhari and Panjwai, Lt.-Col. Omer Lavoie told the Panjwai district leader last week.

Their ranks, so far, total 65 and many of the police officers are poorly trained and paid, making some susceptible to corruption.

Many sections of the military have lost a member in Afghanistan, and they're only a third into their six-month tour.

No battle group has lost more soldiers to deaths and injuries than the Princess Patricia's from A Company, Shilo.

And now, they're pushing deeper into Pashmul again to take on the insurgents who have returned to the farm fields.

Meanwhile the IEDs keep popping up. One was unearthed before it could explode on Saturday morning in an old battle ground near a white school.

But later in the day, an IED went off, injuring coalition soldiers.

MORE:

Heavily Armoured Truck's Failure To Protect Soldier Puzzles Expert:

Most Famous Last Words In Combat Heard Again; “This Isn’t Supposed To Happen”

October 08, 2006 Doug Fischer, CanWest News Service

OTTAWA -- The heavily armoured truck carrying the Canadian soldier killed Saturday in a bomb attack in Afghanistan was designed "to save lives in exactly such a situation," says an expert on military hardware.

"This isn't supposed to happen, certainly if the explosion happens underneath the vehicle," Alex Ingram, a former consultant to the U.S. Marines, said Saturday. "Without knowing all the facts, I'd say the machine was either faulty or it was some kind of freak thing. These things are built to withstand mine attacks."

Co. Fred Lewis, deputy commander of Canada's troops in Afghanistan, couldn't explain how the bomb was able to penetrate the vehicle.

"In this particular case, I think the enemy got lucky," he told reporters. [From the most famous last words to the most fatal last words. When you hear a commanding officer say that, you know your life is in the hands of an incompetent fool.]

In an effort to reduce the number of Canadians killed by bombs in Afghanistan 19 of the 40 deaths have come that way since 2002 Canada spent \$92 million to deploy 50 of the chunky Nyalas to the region over the spring and summer.

Until then, Canadian patrols were carried out in Mercedes-Benz G-Wagons, a lightly-armoured vehicle that even military brass admitted was a "chink" in the country's armour on the ground in Afghanistan.

Notes From A Lost War:

“We Are Dying From Lack Of Food And Water, And They Call Us Al- Qaida Or Taliban”

10/08/2006 By Fisnik Abrashi and Jason Straziuso, Associated Press [Excerpts]

DASHTAK, Afghanistan: The village of Dashtak sits on a bumpy, washed-out specter of a road, an hour's drive off the main highway between Kabul and Afghanistan's lawless southeast.

It has 16 new wells financed by an aid agency. But the village men who gather around a visiting journalist offer a litany of complaints: no paved roads, no running water, no electricity, and the closest health clinic is two hours away by donkey.

Their frustration boils over when talk turns to 10 villagers recently arrested on suspicion of aiding insurgents.

"I swear to you, I have not seen a single dollar bill. I do not know its size or color," said Shah Mahmood, a 55-year-old with a long white beard and stark black turban. "We are dying from lack of food and water, and they call us al-Qaida or Taliban."

The 40,000 U.S. and NATO troops appear further away from bringing stability than they did three years ago when their number was two and a half times smaller.

"Our police are doing all of those crimes that they have a duty to stop," said Shamsul Haq, a 48-year-old grape farmer and car salesman from the Taliban's former seat of power in Kandahar.

And in some areas, there are no authorities to bribe. Said Jawad, the Afghan ambassador to the United States, noted that Uruzgan, a southern province about the size of West Virginia, has only 45 police officers.

Large areas of southern and eastern provinces near the Pakistan border are under Taliban control, said Ayesha Khan, an Afghanistan expert in Britain. Abdul Salaam Rocketi, a lawmaker and former Taliban commander, ticks off the militant strongholds: Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, Zabul, Paktika, Khost, Kunar and Ghazni provinces.

TROOP NEWS

Letter From An Officer:

“An Unidentified Farmer In A Fairly Remote Area Who, After Being Asked By Reconnaissance Marines If He Had Seen Any Foreign Fighters In The Area Replied ‘Yes, You’”

Oct. 06, 2006 Time Inc. [Excerpts]

Written last month, this straightforward account of life in Iraq by a Marine officer was initially sent just to a small group of family and friends. TIME's Sally B. Donnelly first received a copy three weeks ago but only this week was able to track down the author and verify the document's authenticity. The author wishes to remain anonymous but has allowed us to publish it here — with a few judicious omissions.

All: I haven't written very much from Iraq. There's really not much to write about.

More exactly, there's not much I can write about because practically everything I do, read or hear is classified military information or is depressing to the point that I'd rather just forget about it, never mind write about it.

The gaps in between all of that are filled with the pure tedium of daily life in an armed camp. So it's a bit of a struggle to think of anything to put into a letter that's worth reading.

Worse, this place just consumes you. I work 18-20-hour days, every day. The quest to draw a clear picture of what the insurgents are up to never ends. Problems and frictions crop up faster than solutions. Every challenge demands a response. It's like this every day.

Before I know it, I can't see straight, because it's 0400 and I've been at work for 20 hours straight, somehow missing dinner again in the process. And once again I haven't written to anyone. It starts all over again four hours later.

It's not really like Ground Hog Day, it's more like a level from Dante's Inferno.

Rather than attempting to sum up the last seven months, I figured I'd just hit the record setting highlights of 2006 in Iraq. These are among the events and experiences I'll remember best.

Worst Case of Déjà vu: I thought I was familiar with the feeling of déjà vu until I arrived back here in Fallujah in February.

The moment I stepped off of the helicopter, just as dawn broke, and saw the camp just as I had left it ten months before: that was Déjà vu. Kind of unnerving. It was as if I had never left. Same work area, same busted desk, same chair, same computer, same room, same creaky rack, same . . . everything. Same everything for the next year. It was like entering a parallel universe. Home wasn't 10,000 miles away, it was a different lifetime.

Most Surreal Moment: Watching Marines arrive at my detention facility and unload a truck load of flex-cuffed midgets. 26 to be exact. We had put the word out earlier in the day to the Marines in Fallujah that we were looking for Bad Guy X, who was described as a midget.

Little did I know that Fallujah was home to a small community of midgets, who banded together for support since they were considered as social outcasts. The Marines were anxious to get back to the midget colony to bring in the rest of the midget suspects, but I

called off the search, figuring Bad Guy X was long gone on his short legs after seeing his companions rounded up by the giant infidels.

Most Profound Man in Iraq: an unidentified farmer in a fairly remote area who, after being asked by Reconnaissance Marines if he had seen any foreign fighters in the area replied "Yes, you."

Worst City in al-Anbar Province: Ramadi, hands down. The provincial capital of 400,000 people. Lots and lots of insurgents killed in there since we arrived in February.

Every day is a nasty gun battle. They blast us with giant bombs in the road, snipers, mortars and small arms. We blast them with tanks, attack helicopters, artillery, our snipers (much better than theirs), and every weapon that an infantryman can carry. Every day.

Incredibly, I rarely see Ramadi in the news. We have as many attacks out here in the west as Baghdad. Yet, Baghdad has 7 million people, we have just 1.2 million. Per capita, al-Anbar province is the most violent place in Iraq by several orders of magnitude. I suppose it was no accident that the Marines were assigned this area in 2003.

Bravest Guy in al-Anbar Province: Any Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician (EOD Tech). How'd you like a job that required you to defuse bombs in a hole in the middle of the road that very likely are booby-trapped or connected by wire to a bad guy who's just waiting for you to get close to the bomb before he clicks the detonator? Every day. Sanitation workers in New York City get paid more than these guys. Talk about courage and commitment.

Second Bravest Guy in al-Anbar Province: It's a 20,000 way tie among all these Marines and Soldiers who venture out on the highways and through the towns of al-Anbar every day, not knowing if it will be their last, and for a couple of them, it will be.

Worst E-Mail Message: "The Walking Blood Bank is Activated. We need blood type A+ stat." I always head down to the surgical unit as soon as I get these messages, but I never give blood; there's always about 80 Marines in line, night or day.

Greatest Vindication: Stocking up on outrageous quantities of Diet Coke from the chow hall in spite of the derision from my men on such hoarding, then having a 122mm rocket blast apart the giant shipping container that held all of the soda for the chow hall. Yep, you can't buy experience.

Cooliest Insurgent Act: Stealing almost \$7 million from the main bank in Ramadi in broad daylight, then, upon exiting, waving to the Marines in the combat outpost right next to the bank, who had no clue of what was going on. The Marines waved back. Too cool.

Most Memorable Scene: In the middle of the night, on a dusty airfield, watching the better part of a battalion of Marines packed up and ready to go home after over six months in al-Anbar, the relief etched in their young faces even in the moonlight. Then watching these same Marines exchange glances with a similar number of grunts loaded down with gear file past; their replacements.

Nothing was said. Nothing needed to be said.

Biggest Hassle: High-ranking visitors. More disruptive to work than a rocket attack. VIPs demand briefs and "battlefield" tours (we take them to quiet sections of Fallujah, which is plenty scary for them). Our briefs and commentary seem to have no affect on their preconceived notions of what's going on in Iraq. Their trips allow them to say that they've been to Fallujah, which gives them an unfortunate degree of credibility in perpetuating their fantasies about the insurgency here.

Biggest Outrage: Practically anything said by talking heads on TV about the war in Iraq, not that I get to watch much TV. Their thoughts are consistently both grossly simplistic and politically slanted. Biggest Offender: Bill O'Reilly.

Worst Sound: That crack-boom off in the distance that means an IED or mine just went off. You just wonder who got it, hoping that it was a near miss rather than a direct hit. Hear it practically every day.

Happiest Moment: Well, it wasn't in Iraq. There are no truly happy moments here. It was back in California when I was able to hold my family again while home on leave during July.

Most Common Thought: Home. Always thinking of home, of my great wife and the kids. Wondering how everyone else is getting along. Regretting that I don't write more. Yep, always thinking of home.

Judge Rules Army Full Of Shit: CO Can Leave Service

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

Oct 7, 2006 (CBS4)

A Boston area doctor will be allowed to leave the Army as a conscientious objector, a federal judge ruled Friday.

Dr. Mary Hanna had agreed to serve four years on active duty and another four years in the reserve in exchange for the Army's paying for her Tufts Medical School education.

In December, near the end of her anesthesiology residency at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital in Boston, Hanna notified the Army that she wanted to be discharged as a conscientious objector. Under military regulations, conscientious objectors may ask to be released or to serve in non-combat roles if they are sincerely opposed to war.

The 30-year-old anesthesiologist said her religious beliefs changed since she first agreed to serve. Hanna has said through her lawyer that she would be willing to repay the government for her \$184,000 in school bills.

An Army review board denied her request last month after weighing conflicting opinions from priests, a psychiatrist and military officers.

That change on Friday, when U-S District Judge Nancy Gertner in Boston determined that Hanna was sincere in her opposition to war, and ordered that she be discharged.

U.S. Attorney Michael Sullivan, representing the Army in federal court, called the ruling "regrettable" and said he's considering an appeal.

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



Pallbearers carry the casket of Pvt. Eric Matthew Kavanagh down the steps of Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church yesterday. Pvt. Kavanagh was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Photo by Paul W. Gillespie, The Capital, September 28, 2006

Marine Guards Bragg About Beating Guantanamo Prisoners:

“Everyone In The Group Laughed At The Others’ Stories Of Beating Detainees”

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

October 7, 2006 Thomas Watkins, Associated Press

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.: The Pentagon said it will investigate a Marine's sworn statement that guards at Guantanamo Bay bragged about beating detainees and described it as a common practice.

The Marine, a paralegal who was at the U.S. Navy station in Cuba last month, says that several guards she talked to at the base club said they routinely hit detainees.

"From the whole conversation, I understood that striking detainees was a common practice," the sergeant wrote. "Everyone in the group laughed at the others' stories of beating detainees."

The Marine said in the sworn statement that she has been working at Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton in Southern California on a Guantanamo-related case, and was in Guantanamo from Sept. 20-27.

She said some Marines had invited her to the base club Sept. 23. She didn't see them but a group of at least 15 sailors invited her to join them. She said she spoke with the sailors for about an hour, during which she had one drink, and that the sailors did not appear drunk.

A 19-year-old sailor, referred to only as Bo, "told the other guards and me about him beating different detainees being held in the prison," the statement said.

"One such story Bo told involved him taking a detainee by the head and hitting the detainee's head into the cell door. Bo said that his actions were known by others," the statement said. The sailor said he was never punished.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

07 Oct 2006 Reuters & 10.8.06 by Zeinab Mohammed, AFP & Reuters & October 7, 2006 By Solomon Moore and Louise Roug, L.A. Times Staff Writers

Guerrillas attacked an Iraqi army checkpoint and wounded four soldiers near the town of Ishaqi, 80 km (50 miles) north of Baghdad on Friday. A security source said one was killed in the attack.

A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol killed one policeman in the southern Baghdad district of Dora, police said.

In Al Anbar province, in the west, a car smashed into a line of police recruits and exploded, killing 13 by fire and shrapnel.

In Baghdad, a senior officer in the Iraqi police internal affairs department was shot dead. The bullet-riddled body was dumped in Baghdad on Saturday night.

The victim was identified as Colonel Tamer Salman, assistant to the director of police internal affairs, an increasingly important unit at a time when the government is under pressure to purge disloyal officers.

A roadside booby-trap exploded in the northern town of Rabiaa on the Syrian border, killing police Colonel Yahya Mohammed as his convoy passed, his colleague Major Ahmed Mohammed told AFP.

Police found the bullet-riddled body of police Colonel Thamir Selman, deputy chief of the Interior Ministry internal affairs office, dumped in Baghdad on Saturday night, an Interior Ministry source said.

A roadside bomb killed Colonel Yahya Hamid, the police chief of Rabia, a small town near the Syrian border, police said.

Guerrillas killed a policeman and his 8-year-old son on Saturday in the city of Samarra, 100 km (60 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Two roadside bombs near a police patrol in northeastern Baghdad wounded at least six policemen, an Interior Ministry source said.

BAGHDAD - A mortar round landed near a police patrol, killing one policeman and wounding two people, an Interior Ministry source said.

BAGHDAD: A roadside bomb near a police patrol wounded a policeman in southern Baghdad, an Interior Ministry source said.

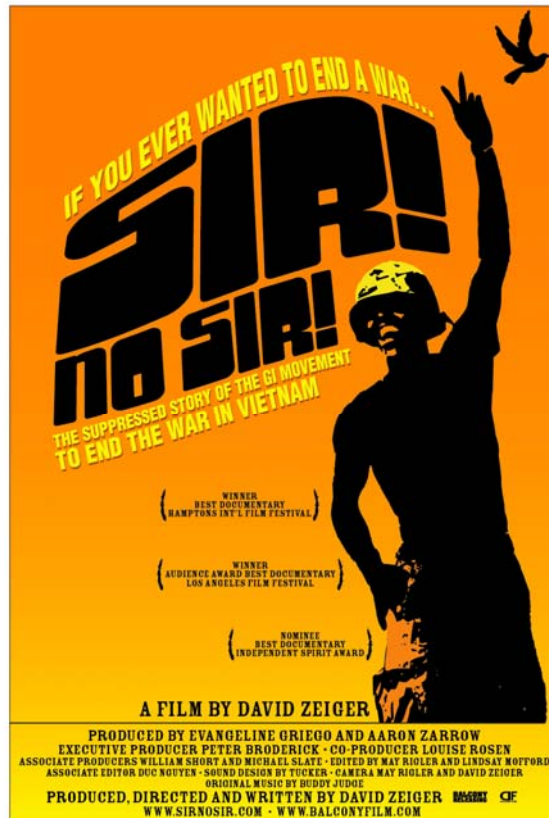
Guerrillas attacked a police patrol on Saturday while it was trying to retrieve a dumped body in the town of Jurf al-Sakhar, 80 km (60 miles) south of Baghdad. Police said one policeman was wounded.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

“A Fresh Look At The Soldiers Who Resisted Fighting The Vietnam War”



04/7/06 Eleanor O'Sullivan, Pulse Movie Writer, Pulse Online.

Even if you're against the Iraq War, or perhaps less than gung-ho about it, you have to support our American troops. Right?

That theory works for David Zeiger's stunning documentary, "Sir! No Sir!" a fresh look at the soldiers who resisted fighting the Vietnam War.

Zeiger has made a very smart movie that's practically pro-war critic-proof: how can you not support men (and one woman Navy officer) who went to war, without protest, then, after fighting and seeing their comrades and civilians die or be maimed, changed their minds?

The beauty part of "Sir! No Sir!" is that the servicemen (and woman) that Zeiger interviews contemporaneously and also shows in vintage photos and home movies, are smart, sensitive, knowledgeable, compassionate, funny and patriotic. They also are from a cross-section of American life, which really throws our assumptions off about just what kind of person would be anti-war.

Back then, when they enlisted or were drafted without complaint, the interviewees weren't hippies, drug addicts or slackers with nothing better to do; most were middle-class, many college educated; one, a Hispanic man with a successful law practice tells us tearfully that he was the first graduate of the United States Military Academy to refuse to serve in a war.

Startling also are the two attractive, gray-haired men who look as if they just played a round of golf at a country club, where they might have lunched with pals from elite corporations. They could be, but they also remember, with regret, how they fought in a war they came to understand was not in their country's best interests.

Or the foursome, now middle-aged, balding and lined, who worked in intelligence during the Vietnam War, eavesdropping on the enemy's radio transmissions. How incongruous to watch prosperous, intelligent men in their boating shoes and Izod shirts reveal that once they realized raw intelligence was being doctored by the Defense Department to sell the war, they became resisters, too.

One participant after another explains why they changed their minds, and none of their rationales is frivolous.

Some are rueful about the war, others full of remorse. Two elderly women, one angry, the other sad, remember their black relative, a resister, who was arrested by the Army, placed in solitary confinement on a false charge and, after coming home, never regained his balance.

Jane Fonda is a beneficiary of "Sir! No Sir!" Beautifully groomed and upbeat in her short hairdo and green sweater set, Fonda explains in a recent interview what she did and why she did it, to protest the war. There is no mention of the "Hanoi Jane" incident; only old films showing her and a traveling troupe singing and doing skits for young servicemen.

The documentary, which is always about the troops not the politicians or profiteers, becomes inexpressibly sad when we ponder the loss of youthful life then and now.

**Sir! No Sir!:
At A Theatre Near You!**

To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>

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

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

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

“The Violence Of An Imperialist Occupying Force Cannot Be Equated With The Resistance Of An Occupied Population, As If Both Sides Are Equally Responsible For The Bloodshed”

By SHARON SMITH, September–October 2006 International Socialist Review [Excerpt]

Just as in Iraq, the violence of an imperialist occupying force cannot be equated with the resistance of an occupied population, as if both sides are equally responsible for the bloodshed.

One side is fighting to conquer an oppressed population; the other side is fighting to free an oppressed population.

Antiwar movements cannot be effective unless they accept this principle and champion the right to resist war and occupation. This is particularly the case for an antiwar movement in the heart of the imperialist beast.

There can be no equivocation on this issue among those who profess to be for peace and against war.

There is no symmetry in this conflict, and to pretend so is to obscure and distort what is really taking place in Lebanon and Gaza today. This attack on Lebanon is an extension of the U.S. war on Iraq.

It is therefore astonishing that the dominant organizations of the U.S. antiwar movement are acting as though this is a sideshow, “even-handedly” condemning both sides.

UFPJ's equivocation is not surprising, since it takes its political lead from the virulently pro-Zionist Democratic Party.

But UFPJ's weak response to this crisis has left a political vacuum-allowing pro-Israeli forces to pose as “peace” advocates.

Thus, at a pro-Israel rally in San Francisco, a thousand Israeli flag-waving protesters demonstrated in support of Israel's war on Lebanon-carrying signs stating, “Pro-Israel, pro-peace,” unchallenged by the mainstream of the antiwar movement.

But Israel's own barbarism has forced its role as attack dog for U.S. imperialism to the front and center of the antiwar movement. And over the last month, the antiwar movement is reviving on a principled basis, despite the gaping absence of its largest national coalition.

There is evidence that the fear and demoralization among Arabs and Muslims that have prevented larger scale mobilizations in recent years is beginning to fade.

Furthermore, judging from the turnout at the July protests, there are indications that more non-Arabs and non-Muslims-that is, native-born antiwar activists-are turning out than in the past few years and expressing their solidarity with Palestinians and Arab victims of U.S./Israeli wars. A larger number of antiwar activists are drawing similar conclusions about the “war on terror” and the issue of Palestine.

Ten thousand came out to protest Israel's war on Lebanon and Palestine in Dearborn, Michigan. Two thousand came out on a weekday afternoon in New York City. Four thousand came out in Chicago. One thousand came out in Boston. In each case, the demonstrators were predominantly Arabs and Muslims, but supported by a significant layer of antiwar activists.

Moreover, the connection between the U.S. war on Iraq and Israel's war on Lebanon and Palestine were repeatedly made clear.

At the Chicago protest, for example, there were chants such as “Free, free Palestine; free, free Lebanon; free, free Iraq”; “Occupation is a crime, from Iraq to Palestine!” and “No justice no peace, U.S. out of the Middle East!”

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org or write to: The Military Project, Box

126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



U.S. soldiers and their interpreter, left, from Alfa company 1-17 regiment of the 172th brigade prepare to search the home of an Iraqi citizen in eastern Baghdad Oct. 3, 2006. Iraqi citizens have no right to object to the searches, which are carried out with armed force and violence if the citizens refuse to open their doors to the foreign occupation troops. (AP Photo/Darko Bandic)

There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's

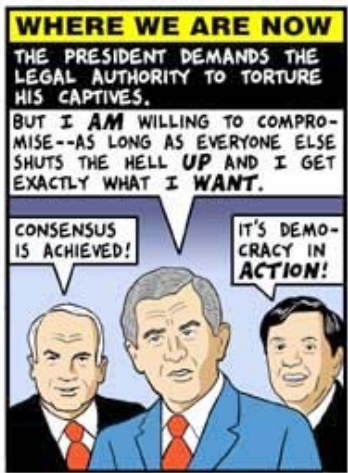
raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



TM TOMORROW © 2006... www.thismodernworld.com

Angry Protesters Chase Jeb Bush Into A Supply Closet

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

October 07, 2006 By Ervin Dyer, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, in town for a fund-raiser for Sen. Rick Santorum, had a close encounter with a large group of anti-Republican protesters as he was making his way to the Duquesne Club, Downtown.

It was about 4:15 yesterday when Mr. Bush met up with the protesters near the corner of Liberty and Sixth avenues. The protesters were marching to join other pickets already gathered in front of the exclusive club, a little more than a block away at 325 Sixth Ave.

Protesters said Gov. Bush blew them a kiss, acknowledging the crowd of about 30 chanting pickets that was made up of United Steelworkers and members of Uprise Counter Recruitment, a tour traveling through 22 cities to support anti-war efforts.

The protesters came closer.

"Jeb, go home," they shouted.

Mr. Bush, accompanied by a security guard and a female aide, made a slow retreat toward the T-station at Wood Street.

"He was quickly getting out of the way and not wanting to engage us," said Jon Vandenburg, one of the protesters, who also is a researcher for the United Steelworkers.

Once in the subway station, Mr. Bush scurried to the escalators and descended to the mezzanine level, Mr. Vandenburg said.

By now, Mr. Bush was cornered. He was surrounded by signs that said "Pittsburgh is a Santorum Free Zone," "Honk if you're sick of Rick," and a crowd growing increasingly louder, according to Mr. Vandenburg.

"We don't want you here," protesters chanted.

Port Authority spokesman Bob Grove said six or seven officers responded to the scene to control the crowds.

He said Mr. Bush had been walking in the area near the T-station and the incident happened spontaneously when about 50 pickets "tailed him and stayed with him and went into the Wood Street station."

About 75 protesters remained on the street, said Mr. Grove.

He said the crowd was asked repeatedly to disperse.

Mr. Grove said a Port Authority canine unit was called in to help with crowd control. Two officers used their tasers to stun two protesters who "were asked to leave, but did not go," Mr. Grove said.

The tasers he said were empty of the cartridges that supply a more powerful charge.

"It was a very tense situation. They were very close to the governor and shouting on top of him."

As a precaution, the governor was ushered into a T-station supply closet and stayed there until the crowd left.

No arrests were made and no citations were issued, Mr. Grove said. Mr. Bush was not injured.

The two men who were tasered were shaken and left the protest, said David Meieran, with the Thomas Merton Center and one of the protesters with Uprise Counter Recruitment.

Mr. Meieran said the Port Authority officers were fairly aggressive and pushed them aside.

Pittsburgh police said they monitored the protest in front of the Duquesne Club, which they called peaceful, but did not respond to the incident in the T-station.

The entire incident lasted about 5 minutes. After calm was restored, the smaller group of protesters inside the T-station made their way back to the Duquesne Club where they staked out the front of the building and an alley entrance.

Mr. Vandenberg and Mr. Meieran said they later saw Mr. Bush escorted to the Duquesne Club, which he entered through a back door at about 5 p.m.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING THE NEW 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)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

<http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html>;

http://robinlea.com/GI_Special/; <http://imagineaworldof.blogspot.com/>; <http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/;

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