

GI SPECIAL 4J9:

U.S. OCCUPATION TROOPS ATTACK, DEFEAT TERRORIST REFRIGERATOR



House owner Majid Nawaf picks up a fridge door broken in a US raid in Baghdad's al-Jihad area Oct. 7, 2006. Nawaf was arrested along with his brother in a raid by the US forces Friday morning and released 24 hours later. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

“This Is Not About Liberation”

“It’s About A Few People Making A Lot Of Money On The Back Of The Poor And Now People Like Me Have To Pay For It With Their Whole Selves”

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

Counseling programs "were pushing all these pills my way without even hearing what I was going through, then they set me up with a counselor who has never known combat."

September 6, 2006 By Izzy "Socket" Klatzker, Clamor; Alternet.org [Excerpts]

Jody Casey, formerly a 19 Delta Cavalry Scout sniper now organizing with Iraq Vets Against the War (IVAW), set the tone of our conversation, "I wasn't ready for re-entry. I wasn't briefed about anything regarding re-entry. So, on top of dealing with the anger and isolation of being back, I also had to be my own advocate."

Casey advocated for work, securing mental and physical health care in a society that does not understand the realities of war.

Counseling programs "were pushing all these pills my way without even hearing what I was going through, then they set me up with a counselor who has never known combat."

He faced similar frustrations when looking for employment.

"The job on the top of the list was to be a teller at Wal-Mart. No offense to anyone who works there, it's just that I felt unseen, insulted, and under-valued... They trained us only to re-enlist or work for Black Water Security or KBR." (Kellogg, Brown and Root is a former subsidiary of Halliburton)

Both are mercenary war-profiteer subcontractor companies currently patrolling, fighting, and "providing security" at a much higher pay rate than U.S. soldiers receive in Iraq.

Casey stressed the enormous need for worker retraining programs and a modified GI bill that includes part-time and vocational students. "I only got trained to kill and be a soldier."

Casey matter-of-factly shared some ideas about how a worker re-training program could look. He suggested vocational training, something akin to "helmets to hardhats," utilizing an apprenticeship model, but provided by the Army. "Such a program could help you

retrain from war on many levels because right now they are unleashing unstable people back into society."

Sources from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., estimate that since the onset of the Iraq invasion and occupation upwards of 400 U.S. soldiers have come back needing amputations and prosthetics (30 percent have multiple amputations).

According to icasualties.org, since April 2003, between 18,000 and 20,000 U.S. soldiers' injuries include second- and third-degree burns, bone breaks, shrapnel wounds, brain injuries, paralysis, and eye damage.

In addition, 9,744 U.S. soldiers wounded in action returned to duty between 2003 and 2004, while 8,239 soldiers did not return to war.

"The rocket went through my leg like a knife through butter. It was a terrible scene ... there was just blood and muscle everywhere," Tristan Wyatt, 21, reported in a November 9, 2003, L.A. Times article entitled "Hospital Front."

A rocket had cut off his leg and those of the two other soldiers with him four months earlier in Fallujah, a type of injury treated frequently at Walter Reed. Doctors Dennis Clarke and Jim Kaiser both reported (upper extremity) amputations from the elbow down, (lower extremity) above the knee or through the hip resulting from roadside bombs, bullets, and IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices).

Kaiser concluded that "explosion injuries are vicious; they affect multiple body parts; for example, if one gets hit on the right side, part of the right leg, arm, and oftentimes their face gets exploded and pocked-up."

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits booklet is a confusing description of programs, muddling the options available to vets.

Examples of the poor wording include terms like "severely disabled" or "otherwise in good health" as requisites for coverage.

This represents a bureaucratic nightmare considering that a soldier may need multiple insurances to meet their medical and life expenses. Yet, who judges good health and on what basis?

Such are the obstacles encountering returning veterans who frequently are incapacitated, possibly not conscious, and focused elsewhere upon arrival from combat.

The booklet makes no mention that vets can get a liaison or advocate to help mediate their medical needs. Taking initiative is vital to accessing any of these benefits.

The IVAW website quotes Douglas Barber, later found dead by his own hand, "All is not okay or right for those of us who return home alive and supposedly well. What looks like normalcy and readjustment is only an illusion to be revealed by time and torment. Some soldiers come home missing limbs and other parts of their bodies. Still others will live with permanent scars from horrific events that no one other than those who served will ever understand."

Soldiers face a range of realities upon return. Some re-enter with a broad support network, adequate medical coverage, and stellar care.

Others return feeling like absolutely nothing is intact and any possible resources are inaccessible and inadequate.

Jim Kaiser stresses, "It is essential to provide constant quality follow-up care (to the veteran) once (he or she is) released from the VA system."

However, he worries that what is offered post-release pales and is lacking compared to what is offered immediately post-injury. In his practice of 120 people, 16 percent are disabled. "It is important to hire disabled people in the business of improving prosthetic care and not to shut people out." These needs for support, recognition, and employment may seem obvious to some, but they do not go without saying.

Returning to active duty may seem like the lone option to some vets.

Jody Casey had few prospects upon arrival home from Iraq. After being part of the U.S. military industrial complex, staying in can be easier than extricating oneself.

"A significant percentage (10-20 percent) of amputee soldiers remains in active duty," Dennis Clarke explains. "With prosthetic technology, one can do more than ever after sustaining these types of injuries and recover faster ... these soldiers are specialists in their field, and it is better to bring back experienced soldiers with good training and combat experience."

Jody Casey addressed the concept of support.

"They don't want you to know what your rights are ... I had no idea where my local VA was or what my medical coverage was."

He discovered that his coverage was "two years of full medical and six months of dental."

The IVAW and a veterans' support group are his community now and have become integral to his life. Having served in Iraq, working with IVAW and Vets for Vets has provided Casey with a different viewpoint of what the Iraq war is about -- war profiteering happening at every level.

"This is not about liberation" he concludes, "it's about a few people making a lot of money on the back of the poor and now people like me have to pay for it with their whole selves."



www.ivaw.net

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 WAR REPORTS

Three Marines Killed In Anbar

Oct. 8, 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20061008-08

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: Three Marines assigned to Regimental Combat Team 5 died Oct. 6 from enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province.

Three More Marines Killed In Anbar

10.9.06 Reuters

Three Marines were killed in action in Anbar Province in western Iraq on Sunday, the U.S. military said in a statement.

The U.S. military had reported the deaths of three Marines in the largely desert province on Friday.

The deaths of the three soldiers brought to at least 32 the number of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq since the start of October.

N.H. Soldier Killed In Iraq

10.9.06 The Associated Press

SALEM, N.H.: A soldier from Salem has been killed in Iraq.

Family members said 22-year-old Cpl. Nicholas Arvanitis was shot while on patrol on Friday. He was a member of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division.

Arvanitis' grandmother, Rita Dill of Salem, told The Union Leader the soldier passed up a scholarship to the Berklee College of Music to enlist after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

He had been in Iraq since August, after serving in Afghanistan.

The Salem High School graduate played baseball and soccer and was a member of a championship wrestling team.

“She Wept Again, More Bitterly Than Ever, After Learning That Benjamin Had Been Killed”



Maria Salgado, the mother of slain Marine Benjamin Rosales, pictured at left, is comforted by her sons, Angel Daher, 11, left; Abraham Daher, 15; and Edgard Rosales Salgado, 25, as she clutches her son's Marine cap. Benjamin Rosales was killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq on Wednesday. Photo: Steve Campbell: Chronicle

Oct. 7, 2006 By ALLAN TURNER, Houston Chronicle

Maria Salgado never bought the gun.

Really, she never planned to. She just was desperate to keep her son from joining the U.S. Marine Corps and fighting in Iraq, and thought a pistol might be the only way to chase pesky recruiters from her door.

Benjamin Salgado Rosales, her son, was passionate about the Marines. He wanted to join right away, at age 17, fresh out of Katy's Mayde Creek High School. The son of immigrants, he loved the United States, what it stood for and the opportunities it offered.

Salgado wept two years ago when she signed the papers that let her son enlist.

She wept Sept. 1 when the ramrod straight Marine corporal — married just weeks before to his longtime sweetheart — shipped out for the Middle East.

Friday she wept again, more bitterly than ever, after learning that Benjamin had been killed.

Rosales, 20, died Wednesday when a roadside bomb detonated in Iraq's Al Anbar province.

Assigned to the 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force based at Camp Lejeune, N.C., he is the 53rd Houston-area serviceman to die in combat in Iraq.

"I didn't want my son in the military," a tearful Salgado said Friday as she sat at her kitchen table, surrounded by family and friends. "I grew my kids in a lot of love. I taught them not to kill — not even bugs or plants. ... I didn't want the Marines to train my son to kill."

Ali Daher, Salgado's husband and Rosales' stepfather, said the family opposed the teen's enlistment on moral grounds. And Salgado, who came to the United States from Mexico 34 years ago, said she fervently would battle anyone who tried to invade the United States

"I told him if someone invaded our country, he could be the first to enlist," she said. "And I told him I would be right behind him."

Rosales was a sterling student and backyard basketball player who dreamed of becoming a plastic surgeon, said his brother, Abraham Daher, 15.

"He was quiet and polite," his stepfather added. "He seemed 10 years older than he was."

Family members were at a loss to explain Rosales' passion for the military.

"By the time he was in the 11th grade," his stepfather said, "he had made up his mind. It was a strong passion. ... He wanted to serve his country. The fact that he was the son of immigrants — he saw what the country offered his family, the opportunities in life, and wanted to give something back."

Daher, who immigrated from Lebanon in 1978, said he, too, opposed Rosales' entering the military "but not as strongly as his mother did."

Salgado pleaded with her son. She repelled recruiters, telling one to leave her son alone. At one point, she mused about arming herself to underscore her message.

"It wasn't a threat against the recruiter," her husband hastened to clarify.

"It was," Abraham Daher suggested, "a metaphor."

Rosales was determined to join two neighborhood friends in becoming Marines.

"Someone has to stand up for our country," he told his mother. "I'm sorry, Mom, but I'm joining."

Salgado asked what he would do if she refused to sign on his behalf. He responded he would wait until he was 18, then join anyway.

"I respected his feelings," Salgado said. "I knew that I could not change his feelings."

Rosales returned to Houston in August to marry his fiancée, Angela Chow, on Aug. 7. The Marine insisted on wearing his uniform during the ceremony.

"He was even more polite after he joined the Marines," his stepfather recalled. "It was no more 'Mom.' It was 'Yes, sir.' and 'No, ma'am.' "

Rosales turned 20 on Aug. 26.

He went to fight the war six days later.

Montgomery Marine Latest Casualty in Iraq

Oct 8, 2006 WSFA

The parents of Brad Payne tell WSFA 12 News their son was killed while serving with the marines in Iraq. They say they learned of the incident from military personnel on Friday.

Howard and Carol Payne said they could not speak publicly about their son's death until they talk further with the military.

WSFA 12 News has learned Payne died when his armored vehicle struck a roadside bomb. No other details of the incident were available.

The 24-year-old marine was on his second tour of duty. He leaves behind a wife, Erin Payne, who lives in North Carolina.

The Paynes say they are relying on the support of their church, Vaughn Forest Baptist. They say members of Eastern Hills Baptist, where their son grew up, have also provided support.

Rumsfeld Gets Another Kill:

“Rojas The Fourth Member Of Strykers To Die Since July When The Unit's Deployment Was Extended Up To 120 Days”

October 6, 2006 The Anchorage Daily News

HAMMOND, IND. A Fort Wainwright soldier killed in Iraq was looking forward to civilian life and starting a family with his wife, his sister said.

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Rojas, 27, of Hammond, Ind., was killed Tuesday by small arms fire in Baghdad, Army Maj. Kirk Gohlke said. No other soldiers were injured. Rojas was assigned to the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

Rojas was at the top of a tank instructing other soldiers when a sniper's bullet hit him in the back of the head, Rojas' family said.

Rojas, who was based at Fort Wainwright, was assigned to the brigade's 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment.

He was born in Mexico, joined family in Hammond in 1990 and graduated from Hammond High School in 1997. After serving seven years in the military, Rojas was looking forward to being a civilian and starting a family with his wife, Tasha Lynn, said his younger sister, Isaura Rojas.

"He was a great kid who never got in trouble," said his aunt, Sara Cruz. "He was very close to his family."

Rojas was playful, his family said. In August, he put himself on the waiting list for an Xbox 360 so he could play the newest football games.

"We're going to miss him being himself, doing stupid things, his company, having a brother, someone to talk to," said William Rojas, Jonathan's brother.

Rojas was the 66th person from Indiana to have died after being sent to the Mideast since the buildup for the invasion of Iraq began in 2003.

Rojas was the fourth member of Strykers to die since July when the unit's deployment was extended up to 120 days.

Members of the Fort Wainwright-based brigade were told just days before they began preparing to return to Alaska that their one-year tour in Iraq would be extended. Some soldiers had returned to Alaska and were sent back to Iraq.

MORE:

Never Forget: Payback Will Come



[<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.

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO
COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS
EXTREMELY HIGH RISK LOCATION AT THIS
TIME, EXCEPT THAT A CROOKED
POLITICIAN WHO LIVES IN THE WHITE
HOUSE WANTS YOU THERE, SO HE WILL**

LOOK GOOD FOR THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS.

That is not a good enough reason.



An U.S. soldier from Alfa company 1-17 IN regiment of the 172th brigade looks at his Stryker armored vehicle stuck in a ditch, in eastern Baghdad, Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2006. U.S. military have been performing scout missions aimed at preparing security operations to stop sectarian violence in the capital. (AP Photo/Darko Bandic)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Assorted Resistance Action

Oct 9 (KUNA)

A landmine blast and attacks on Afghan forces left 11 people, including three senior district officials and police and military personnel, dead in southern and eastern Afghanistan on Monday.

A vehicle carrying a district governor, district police and intelligence chiefs was blown up with a remote-controlled mine in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province. The blast left the three officials and two other people dead and two more wounded.

Afghanistan's Nangarhar province, sharing border with Pakistan, is comparatively calm from a security point of view. **[Right.]**

Today's attack was the worst registered in the previous three months in that province. Taliban claimed responsibility for the explosion and said several policemen had also

been killed in the landmine blast. Dr Hanif, the man calling himself spokesman for the militia, said the car was targeted by using a remote-controlled device.

In the southern province of Kandahar, which unexpectedly remained calm during the previous two days, a police convoy was attacked by Taliban killing three personnel. About half-a-dozen policemen injured in the attack. The Interior Ministry in Kabul announced that the attack was carried out last evening.

In a third attack that was carried out in Zabul province in the same region, three Afghan soldiers were killed and one wounded. Afghan officials said a military vehicle hit a roadside landmine planted by Taliban.

TROOP NEWS

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



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

A SLOW PACE;

“Wake Up And Smell The Coffee, General”

From: Don Bacon; smedleybutlersociety@msn.com
To: GI Special
Sent: October 09, 2006
Subject: A SLOW PACE

General Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently listed the three most significant stories from the war on terror that are not getting coverage. (Oct. 09, 2006 US DoD Defense Link)

GENERAL PACE:

Pace said one of the most significant aspects of the war not getting coverage is the enormous number of women going to school in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The Taliban in Afghanistan forbade women from attending school. Now, almost 50 percent of the students are girls, he said.

"That's a huge change in attitude," he said. "It also speaks well of the potential of a nation. Because I do not know how any nation aspires to greatness if it cuts itself off from one-half of its brain power."

THE TRUTH:

Afghanistan has a new constitution that guarantees equality for women - a rare declaration in the Islamic world. And nearly 2 million girls have returned to school and women have returned to the workplace, including to Parliament, where a quarter of the members are women.

But women say the new freedoms are largely superficial - that profound cultural restrictions remain. Most women still wear burkas in public, and those who don't must endure stares and hisses on the street.

Shukria Barakzai, the editor of a women's newspaper who is now a member of Parliament, said that many of her male colleagues in Parliament are unvarnished sexists, freely admitting that they would support her proposals if she were a man.

"It will take at least 20 years to change," Barakzai said in an interview at her home in Kabul. "We'll need a new generation, the ones who are now teenagers, when they become decision-makers." (Sep. 24, 2006 Philadelphia Inquirer)

GENERAL PACE:

A second story not getting the coverage it deserves deals with health care. The health-care systems in Iraq and Afghanistan are getting better, the general said. "They are not

great; it takes a long time to 'build' a doctor, but medical facilities are being built, expatriate medical personnel are returning and a great deal is going on," he said.

THE TRUTH:

". . . hospitals in Baghdad and Karbala are systematically killing Sunni patients and then dumping their bodies in mass graves." (Oct. 16, 2006 Newsweek)

GENERAL PACE:

"Americans do not fully appreciate the courage of the individuals who are striving to lead in Afghanistan and Iraq," Pace said.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai and his government and Iraqi President Jalal Talibani and his government are working to build systems in the face of tremendous opposition, he noted. They are also trying to emplace democratic systems in countries that have never had them, Pace said.

THE TRUTH:

Courage?

Come on.

They're bought and paid for just like our politicians.

Wake up and smell the coffee, General.

**SILLY GENERALS WORSE THAN
PINOCCHIO:
THE PUPPET WAS A FAST LEARNER
COMPARED TO GENERALS RICHARDS
AND CASEY;
HE ONLY NEEDED THREE MONTHS--
THEY NEED SIX**

From: Don Bacon; smedleybutlersociety@msn.com
To: GI Special
Sent: October 08, 2006
Subject: SILLY GENERALS WORSE THAN PINOCCHIO

"Poor Pinocchio, whether he liked it or not, had to learn all these wonderful things; but it took him three long months and cost him many, many lashings before he was pronounced perfect." --Carlo Collodi

Oct 8 Associated Press: KABUL, Afghanistan

NATO's top commander in Afghanistan said Sunday the country was at a tipping point and warned Afghans would likely switch their allegiance to resurgent Taliban militants if there are no visible improvements in people's lives in the next six months.

Gen. David Richards, a British officer who commands NATO's 32,000 troops here, warned in an interview with The Associated Press that if life doesn't get better over the winter, most Afghans could switch sides. [Psst: Dummy, they already have. D]

Oct 5, 2006 WARSAW (AFP) The US general in charge of the multinational coalition in Iraq, General George Casey, said that the next six months will be a decisive period that will determine Iraq's future.

"This is a decisive period for everyone and everyone knows it. The next six months will determine the future of Iraq," Casey said in a statement after attending two days of closed-door meetings in Warsaw to address "the challenges facing Iraq and the US-led coalition." [Psst: Dummy, you said in 2004 you'd have most of this done. D]

“But I Was Looking Down At This Kid, This Young Boy Who Was Trying To Just Drive Around Town And Took A Wrong Turn And Tried To Go The Other Direction, Was Shot At And Killed”

September 16, 2006 Sgt. Ricky Clousing speaks on his resistance to the Iraq War at Camp Democracy, National Mall, Washington, DC. Copyright 2006 Traprock Peace Center [Excerpts]

Transcript published October 2, 2006. Traprock thanks Mike Gorse for volunteering his time to transcribe this talk. It was a long program (over an hour, with Q and A that was not always easy to hear). He made an extraordinary effort to prepare this transcription.

Camp Democracy: This is someone in a very tough position who's taking on this war in a way that a lot of us can't and a lot of people don't have the courage to do, and he's facing court-martial for it. Give a round of applause to Ricky Clousing.

Clousing: Hello.... My name is Ricky Clousing, and I'm from Seattle, Washington. I'm just going to share my story of the last year and a half, the last few years that have led me to this point in my life where I am right now. Like David said, I'm facing court-martial from the army and a maximum of two years confinement in a military prison.

I'm 24 years old. Like I said, I'm from Seattle. I got through high school, and I went to the university for two years before I joined the army. I lived in Europe when I was younger, so I always really enjoyed traveling. I quit college actually to go and do some mission work in Thailand. It was part of a semester program of the school that I was in. So I was over in Thailand for a few months, actually when September 11 happened, and we were over there working in an orphanage and building some roads and stuff, so I've always really kind of been compassionate; I wanted to help people from an early age. I went to Mexico when I was younger and did that with a group from the church that I was going through in high school.

So 9/11 happened on that trip, and I came back from school and decided to quit college to go traveling more. My best friend from the school was German, so I flew to Germany to live with him and just backpack around.

When I was over there, the first wave of soldiers coming back from Afghanistan were traveling from the States to Germany to Afghanistan and back, and I'd spoken with some of the guys that had returned from there.

As I was running out of money in Europe, I was contemplating what to do next. It was either go back to the States and finish college, which the downside of that was that I didn't have money for that, and I was always kind of hesitant to jump into school debts and stuff, so I contemplated maybe going into the military.

Like I said, 9/11 had just happened recently, the wave of patriotism. I knew I didn't want to be an infantry soldier, but I went and talked to a recruiter in Europe, and the only job that really appealed to me--I really enjoy foreign languages as well; I studied Spanish a lot when I was in school, and I studied abroad--the only job that appealed to me was being an interrogator.

So I took a couple tests while I was there, and I passed, and I was qualified. The recruiter told me--he probably stretched the truth--but he told me that the only opening was in like two weeks. So I went to Amsterdam and decided that I was going to join the army and spend the weekend deciding if I was going to go. I went up there and decided that it was something that would be an exciting couple years and a journey and a new set of experiences.

I joined the army and was on a plane back to basic training. I was training for about 18 months. After basic training, I went to the airborne school in Georgia, and, after that, I went to my advanced individual training, which was the interrogation course at Fort Wachuka, Arizona, which is the U.S. intelligence base.

I was there for about six months in the interrogation course. After I completed that, I went on to the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. I studied French there, and, when I graduated from my school, I was then stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina in the 82nd Airborne division.

When I was in my interrogation course, the invasion of Iraq was unfolding, and I didn't know a lot about the politics of the war then. At the time, I felt skeptical about it. I didn't understand how we had come from 9/11 to now going into Iraq, but I didn't really understand it.

And, for me, at the time, I had a year and a half of training. I just tried to stay focused on what I had to do in my little reality. So, when I got stationed at Fort Bragg, my unit was already over there in Iraq, part of the first wave of deployments that happened when the war first started. In the winter of 2004, I received orders, when the first stage of the elections began, to go over there and provide support. Because I was in the 82nd Airborne, I know everybody doesn't know a lot about the military, but it's a tactical unit.

So I was an interrogator.

I was part of a tactical unit, so I was providing direct support for the infantry guys I was assigned. So I was going out with the infantry guys on raids and on searches and on patrols. Any insurgent activity that we encountered, I would then basically take the individuals and the insurgents and question them on the scene to decide if they needed to be detained back at our interrogation facility or not. And, then, once they were detained, we'd go back, and myself and my team would start conducting interrogations on the prisoners.

My time over there was about nine months after the Abu Ghraib scandal happened.

The intelligence community really started stressing interrogation tactics that were questionable. So we were basically told to shy away from a lot of the training that we were told is okay to do, so they kind of tried to refocus the way we were doing interrogations because the rest of the world was watching us, basically.

So, personally, in my time over there, I never saw any abuse of the detainees. I heard stories from guys that had been there before the Abu Ghraib scandal happened, and I heard of inducing hypothermia on the prisoners and putting fans on them.

A lot of times, they would leave the sandbags over the detainees' heads overnight and tie them around their neck, and there would be just barb wired areas with ... blasting Metallica or heavy metal music so the detainees were not able to sleep all through the night. So there was sleep deprivation ... but I heard stories of soldiers beating certain prisoners. Like I said, I never witnessed this firsthand, but I knew what was going on over there.

My experience with the infantry guys--because we went around the city on patrols and whatnot.

There were a couple of instances in particular that really stood out to me and made me question my ability to perform as a soldier and question my participation not only in Iraq but in the United States military in general.

I saw one time that one of the vehicles had been hit by an IED when we were providing security down the road, making sure none of the other vehicles turned down our road. A car with a young man driving, probably 18 years old, a small maybe high-school age kid, he was going about five miles an hour and turned down our road. Once he saw American soldiers with weapons drawn, he was obviously terrified. I was the one closest to the vehicle. I was providing rear security on our convoy.

So he was about 15 feet from me. I could see it in the windshield when he was approaching us at a slow speed, and he braked immediately, took his hands off the wheel, was terrified to see a whole bunch of Americans with big weapons as you can imagine. And he immediately grabbed the steering wheel and started turning the car around trying to get out of there.

Well, one of the soldiers in the turret of the humvee behind me just opened up fire on the machine gun on the vehicle. As the vehicle was turning away, all I heard above my head was *pop pop pop pop pop. This was my first deployment, my first combat experience was that moment right then, and just the sound of machine guns going off over my head. He popped about five or six rounds in the side of the vehicle.

Myself and two of the other guys ran over to the vehicle, smashed the window, and pulled the guy out to provide first aid on him. As the medic came over, I was in shock. I couldn't believe not only that that was happening but that this guy was bleeding and getting dragged out of his vehicle in front of me.

So, as they pull him out of his car, they laid him on the ground. I was providing first aid on him. I was standing above the kid, and it was a very interesting situation I found myself in at that time, because I was looking down at this kid who had just been shot in the stomach for no reason really--he was trying to leave--and, as the soldiers were doing their policy--the proper procedure is to provide first aid on injured civilians--they were crouched down, ripping the shirt open, bandaging him, and I was still just standing there in shock, looking down at this kid, and he looked right up at me.

And his mouth was foaming. His stomach was falling out in his hands. And I was just stricken with fear and shock and didn't know what was going on. And, as I looked down at him, he didn't say any words because he was obviously in a lot of pain. But I'm from a small town right outside of Seattle. I'm not from a big city. I've never seen anybody die. I've never seen a dead body before in my whole life.

But I was looking down at this kid, this young boy who was trying to just drive around town and took a wrong turn and tried to go the other direction, was shot at and killed, and I'm looking down at him now.

And we made eye contact for about five seconds, and he just looked at me with the most empty, terrified, confused look in his face that will never leave me in my whole life I'm sure.

There was no dialogue traded between us, but I could just feel the words inside of his head, just wondering 'why did this happen and what's going on? Why does this hurt so bad? What did I do? What's happening now? I don't understand what is going on right now.'

Really just put me in shock, and I was glued standing there. And it took me about 30 seconds to snap out of it. The guys that were providing first aid looked up at me and yelled at me to go back and pull security, and so I snapped out of it and ran over until we got him loaded in the vehicle. We drove to drop him out at one of the hospitals, and, when I got out, I went directly over there to see if he had survived or what his status was, and he had died in route to the hospital. So I was very upset that he didn't make it and that he was dead now.

And being in the army, being interrogators--I'm in a military intelligence unit with the masochism of the military, the interrogators kind of have the stigma of being the nerds of the army, so I was like the MI geek is what they called me, because we're not the hard-core infantry guys that are uugh going around.

It's a different caliber of people, pretty much, in the unit that I was in. So I was intimidated to approach these people and tell them that they were wrong not only because they were higher ranking than myself but also because this was my first deployment, and they had been on deployments before, but also because I wasn't an infantry guy, and I didn't earn the respect to speak up to the infantry guys that that's their job.

It took me about ten minutes, and I left the area right away and walked around, tried to catch my breath, and I knew I had to say something or I would be haunted forever of just rolling over and not mentioning it.

So I went up to the commanding officer of the unit and the Platoon Sergeant--I was an E5, I was a Sergeant myself, but this guy was higher ranking than me.

And I said Sir--I addressed him professionally, and I said, "Sir, I understand that your soldiers were scanning their lane of security, but your soldier ignored the rules of engagement that are outlined."

When we get to Iraq, you are given the rules of engagement, and there's a thing called the escalation of force that U.S. soldiers are allowed to use escalation of force as long as the force is matched. So if an Iraqi civilian comes up to me with a gun in my face, then I can raise my gun to his face, and, given that threat, I'm authorized to shoot. If I feel like the threat is lethal, then I can engage the enemy. Or if a kid walks by me swinging a stick, I'm not going to pull my gun out and shoot him in the face because that's not the matching escalation of force. So that was described to the U.S. soldiers when they come to the country. When you first get into Iraq, you're given all the briefings of rules of engagement, the laws of war, and, basically, you're given the summary of intelligence among the area of operation you're working in.

So this soldier completely ignored the rules of engagement.

The car was turning around, and. If a car is coming at you and they're not turning around and they're not slowing, a soldier is supposed to, the first step is waving your hands, letting them know "hey, you're going in. This is me. Do you realize what you're doing?" If they still ignore that and they still don't stop, then the soldiers are authorized to fire a warning shot in the air, just a pop-off round in the air to let them know like, hey, you're coming at us, and we have weapons in our hand, you might want to think twice. If they still ignore that, then a soldier is authorized to try to disengage the vehicle, which would be trying to fire at the tires to try to, even the vehicle itself, trying to just let him know, again, like this is what you're driving into. If the vehicle still doesn't stop, then you're authorized to engage the person driving the vehicle.

Because of the fact that this boy was going five miles an hour, he wasn't pouring his vehicle at us 50 miles an hour trying to ram into us, very clearly he was in the wrong place, he realized it, and he was trying to turn around. So I told the officer that, that he had to tell his soldier to analyze the situation better, and also, in a situation similar to that, he needs to follow the rules of engagement that we're supposed to be abiding by.

Well, they didn't take kindly to my advice and my perspective, so the officer and the senior-ranking Sergeant just basically ripped into me.

I won't say all the stuff that they said, but they just jumped on my back and basically wrote me off as an inexperienced soldier and said that I don't understand how infantry operations work and basically that this is what happens in Iraq.

This is the reality of it. And I was really taken aback. That point really was the pinnacle of where I was like 'what am I a part of? What is going on over here?'

I joined the army, and I'd always been kind of made fun of because I'm from Seattle, and in my unit in North Carolina, the guys know. A lot of the guys that are in my unit, they're from the south and the east coast and this and that, and they kind of poke fun at me because I'm west coast. I was always called like a tree-hugger and a hippie, and I surfed a lot, so they kind of made fun of me for that. I had this stigma of being this granola soldier that didn't adapt well to the army, so that carried on over there.

When I was deploying, when I was leaving, they even made the joke of not to let me interrogate prisoners without letting them go.

It wasn't that I was against the U.S. military or anything.

I just felt that a lot of the perception of Iraqis and of the war in general was totally misconstrued, and I've always just been reluctant to just buy what they tell me. So, when I was over there, the same kind of stigma stuck to me right away, and they were trying to get me not to go on certain missions and stuff, not to let me see and be out in what's actually happening.

[To be continued]

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

10.8.06 Reuters & 10.9.06 Reuters & Xinhua & AFP

Guerrillas attacked an Iraqi army checkpoint in Baghdad's eastern slum of Sadr City on Monday, capturing 11 soldiers, an interior Ministry source said.

"Unknown fighters in a minibus stormed the checkpoint of Hamza Square in Sadr City district and seized all the soldiers, apparently without shooting at any of them," the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

A roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol, killing one civilian and wounding nine people, including four policemen, in Tyran Square in central Baghdad, police said.

In Baghdad, guerrillas in camouflage uniforms killed Amer al-Hashemi, the brother of Iraq's Sunni vice-president Tareq al-Hashemi, when they stormed his home at dawn, police and sources in Hashemi's Islamic Party said.

Hashemi, a Sunni Arab, was also senior adviser in the Defense Ministry.

Amer al-Hashemi, a lieutenant-general in the Iraqi army, was at home in northern Baghdad's SulaiKh neighborhood when gunmen killed him and kidnapped his guards, the Islamic Party said.

A car bomber killed a policeman and wounded a policeman at a police checkpoint in the northern town of Tal Afar, about 420 km (260 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas shot dead police Colonel Faleh al-Obeidi in Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb targeted a police patrol, killing two policemen and wounding three others in a village near Baquba, police said.

Galli Najim, the head of the Iraqi National Accord in Basra, a party run by former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, escaped an apparent assassination bid on Sunday when a bomb planted inside his car exploded and killed one of his bodyguards and wounded two others. He was not in the car at the time of the explosion, police said.

A car bomb exploded at the main frontier crossing between Iraq and Jordan on Monday, wounding six Iraqi border police, security officials said.

The post at Traybil is the main land route into Iraq from Jordan on the highway linking Amman to Baghdad through the vast desert of Anbar province, a hunting ground for Sunni insurgents fighting under the Al-Qaeda banner.

Monday's attack came two days after the head of a tribal alliance which has pledged to drive Al-Qaeda out of Anbar boasted that his men had secured the road and made it safe for traffic.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Mike's Message In Black And White



From: Dennis Serde
To: GI Special
Sent: October 06, 2006
Subject: Mike's Message In Black And White

Written from a beautiful message from Mike Hastie in poetic form by Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

Mike's Message In Black And White

One night, Mike was flown out in a Medivac helicopter to pick up a wounded Lt. His arm was mangled in an explosion accident. Mike thought he was black because his face was black from the explosion accident. Plus the fact, it was at night. As they flew back to his aid station, Mike comforted him and told him, "You will be OK." He even called him "Soul Brother." When the chopper landed and they got him in the aid station, Mike realized he was a white Lt. They undressed the arm to examine the wound, which was really bad, put another bandage on it. Flew him down to a hospital in Qui Nhon. His arm was amputated. When this man was on the chopper with Mike, it didn't matter what color he was. He was a fellow soldier that needed help--period. Among best friends' of Mike was a black medic, they had trained together before they went to Vietnam. He was as good as any person Mike ever met in his life. Willie died a couple of years ago as a result of his experiences in Vietnam. Mike was always fascinated by the stories of other black soldiers in his unit. There will be no free white people, until there are free black people.

[Photo above 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) T]

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

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

U.S. Occupation Commands' Stupid Terror Tactics Recruit Even More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops



Iraqi citizen and home owner Majid Nawaf, left, tries to clean up, helped by his neighbor Moundhir Abdullah in Baghdad's al-Jihad area Oct. 7, 2006 after his belongings were destroyed by foreign occupation troops from the United States who broke into his home and wrecked it without a search warrant. Nawaf was arrested along with his brother by the US forces Friday morning and released 24 hours later. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqis over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence to destroy everything in sight, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who

doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

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

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

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

Operation Sinbad: Mission Failure Casts Doubt On Entire British Presence In Iraq; "There Are Not Enough British Troops Available"

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

08 October 2006 By Raymond Whitaker, Independent (UK) [Excerpts]

An operation by British forces in southern Iraq to root out death squads and extend civic control in the city of Basra has hit political problems and resulted in a series of retaliatory attacks, The Independent on Sunday has learned.

About 1,000 British soldiers are taking part in Operation Sinbad, seen as a crucial test of the ability of the UK-led multinational force (MNF) in southern Iraq to "clean up" the country's second-largest city. Working with about 2,300 Iraqi troops, the aim is to cordon off areas of Basra one by one, take over police stations infiltrated by "rogue elements" and allow contractors to carry out quick projects aimed at boosting public confidence, such as repairing street lights and clearing rubbish.

But the MNF spokesman, Major Charlie Burbridge, said yesterday that since the start of the operation on 27 September, there had been a spate of "what appear to be co-

ordinated attacks" on military convoys. "We are treating these as retaliation by the rogue elements we are targeting." No one had been hurt in the attacks, which numbered about four or five, the major said.

The most sensitive side of the operation, intended to last until next February, is the insertion of Royal Military Police "transition teams" into police stations for up to 30 days at a time. Their task is to sort out policemen doing the job properly from those "unable or unwilling to perform their duties".

According to other sources, however, there were doubts on the British side about the wisdom of the operation, and as soon as it started there were protests to Baghdad from the militias. "There was deep disquiet among British military commanders and diplomats in Iraq beforehand," said one source.

"The Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki, immediately demanded that the operation be heavily restricted in scope. It virtually came to a halt after one wave of raids, which demonstrated from the highest level to local militias that they can operate with impunity."

Louise Heywood, head of the UK armed forces programme at the Royal United Services Institute in London, and a Territorial Army officer who served in southern Iraq until earlier this year, saw Operation Sinbad as "almost a last attempt to be seen to be doing something" before security responsibilities are handed over to the Iraqi government, possibly in the first half of next year.

"The aim is to replicate what the Americans have been seeking to do in Baghdad, which is to go from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, clearing out the militias," she said.

"But there are not enough British troops available."

Some analysts see the operation as epitomising the inability of coalition forces to influence events in Iraq.

"Britain has never had the forces needed to make a sustained difference to law and order, and meaningful reconstruction is almost non-existent," said Dr Toby Dodge, an Iraq expert at Queen Mary College, London.

"Their role is a minor one, and the question is whether it justifies the casualties and the cost"

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)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

Denver Man Sues Secret Service Thugs For Arresting Him After He Spoke To The Traitor Cheney About Iraq War

And now, the administration has forged the final link by suggesting that if you exercise your constitutional rights to free speech in opposing this administration's policies in Iraq, you are therefore posing a threat to national security and subject to arrest.

[Thanks to Katherine G, Military Project, who sent this in.]

October 5th, 2006 Democracy Now [Excerpts]

AMY GOODMAN: Steven Howards joins us now from Denver, where he filed the suit on Wednesday in federal district court. Welcome to Democracy Now!

STEVEN HOWARDS: Thank you.

AMY GOODMAN: It's good to have you with us. Why don't you explain exactly what happened? What day was it?

STEVEN HOWARDS: I think it was the middle of June, and I was in Beaver Creek, Colorado, with my two kids, accompanying them to a piano camp. And that morning, I had read about the deaths, the rising death toll in Iraq.

And who walks by me, but Mr. Cheney. And to be honest, I couldn't resist the temptation. So I approached Mr. Cheney and told him that I thought his policies in Iraq were absolutely reprehensible.

AMY GOODMAN: Just one sec. He, by himself, walked by you in a mall? Vice President Dick Cheney?

STEVEN HOWARDS: Well, you know, yes. There was apparently -- Gerald Ford has an annual kind of get-together of political VIPs, if you will, that -- I don't know -- discuss world issues.

And I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to cross Mr. Cheney. Mr. Cheney was actually going across an outdoor mall, kind of a pedestrian mall, in Beaver Creek, Colorado.

And there were lots of Secret Service agents, but he was walking through, taking some time, shaking hands. There were probably more Secret Service agents there than there were members of Joe Public. But I, you know, I waited my turn, and I walked up to Mr. Cheney, and I told him what I thought. And then I quickly exited, because I didn't want to create a scene or give anyone opportunity to cause me any problems.

AMY GOODMAN: And so, what happened next?

STEVEN HOWARDS: Well, I then continued on, took my child to piano camp, came back about ten minutes later, because if you know this area, you've got to pass through the same area.

And I was approached by a Secret Service agent, who accused me of assaulting the Vice President.

My eight-year-old son was standing next to me at that point in time.

His exact words were, "Did you assault the Vice President?"

And I said, "No, I didn't. But I did tell him the way I felt about the war in Iraq, and if Mr. Cheney wanted to be shielded from public criticism, he should avoid public places."

And I closed by telling the agent that if freedom of speech was against the law, he should arrest me, at which point he grabbed me, cuffed my hands behind my back and started carting me across the mall.

I stopped and told him I could not abandon my eight-year-old son in the middle of a public mall, at which point he responded, "We'll call Social Services." Fortunately, on the way out, we passed my wife, who -- my son was with my wife. He had run off in terror. He wouldn't even talk, he was so scared.

They took me to jail, with my hands cuffed behind my back for three hours. The Secret Service agent told my wife, myself and anyone else that would listen that I was being charged with assaulting the Vice President. Those charges were later reduced to harassment. And two weeks later or three weeks later, the charges were dismissed altogether.

AMY GOODMAN: What happened to you during that time? During that two weeks, did other people see you being arrested? Did they know who you were?

STEVEN HOWARDS: Oh, yeah. Oh, absolutely. No, it was a scene.

I was treated as though I was a convict, like criminal. It was horrifying for my kids.

And so we waited for a few weeks. Actually, we left. We were going on vacation. We left a few days later.

This actually happened two days before Father's Day, so it was quite a memorable Father's Day, as you can imagine.

We left a few days later for our vacation, and we got back. In the mail, there was a notice that the charges had been dismissed.

Apparently, the Secret Service had come to my office and to try to see me, and they would not leave their names. It was very Gestapo-ish, I must say. But I never returned their calls, and I have no reason why they came to my place of work. And that's it.

AMY GOODMAN: And why have you decided to sue the government now?

STEVEN HOWARDS: You know, because it's such a transparent attempt to suppress free speech.

You know, we view the suppression of free speech and -- my family, we view the suppression of free speech and the assault that this administration has made on our constitutional rights to free speech as a greater threat to the future of this country than Osama bin Laden ever will be.

You know, first this administration argued that if you criticize their policies, you were in fact providing support to people like Osama bin Laden. You were boosting the threat to national security. Then they suggested that if you oppose their policies, you were actually equivalent to a Nazi sympathizer.

And now, the administration has forged the final link by suggesting that if you exercise your constitutional rights to free speech in opposing this administration's policies in Iraq, you are therefore posing a threat to national security and subject to arrest.

And I don't know about the rest of America, but I find that thought and that logic, that twisted logic, absolutely terrifying.

So we brought the lawsuit to really expose this issue and to raise the question of, do we in fact still live in a free nation, where people are free to express their opposition to government policies?

AMY GOODMAN: What are you asking for?

STEVEN HOWARDS: Right now, we're asking for a jury to -- we're actually deferring to a jury to decide what the resolution to this matter should be.

We're asking for some acknowledgement by the Secret Service and by the administration that people have a right to free speech.

We're asking for an apology to my kids for the wrongful arrest and search that occurred. And if any financial rewards or any financial settlement comes of this, that's great, but that's not the goal of the lawsuit. And if any financial rewards come, they'll go to a charitable organization. That's not our goal here. Our goal here is to prove a point.

AMY GOODMAN: *Isn't the Vice President immune from prosecution as he sits in office?*

STEVEN HOWARDS: Yeah, well, actually this is a civil suit. And it's against the Secret Service officer who did the arrest.

After he arrested us and, again, threatened my wife and myself, saying he was going to spend all day Monday in the U.S. attorney's office ensuring that felony assault charges were brought against us, he then gave us his business card.

So we know exactly who arrested us. And this is actually a civil suit against the Secret Service agent.

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