

GI SPECIAL 4K25:

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



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

**“As A Staff Sergeant
Deployed To Iraq
I Feel That The War In
Iraq And Afghanistan Is
Illegal And In Every Way
Wrong”**

From: Veterans Against Iraq War

To: GI Special
Sent: November 18, 2006
Subject: Letter from Iraq soldier

“If You Get Any Help For His Question At The Bottom Of His Letter, Let Me Know”

Another letter from soldier in Iraq...if you get any help for his question at the bottom of his letter, let me know. I haven't been able to email him yet...keeps bouncing. I think we need to spread this far and wide to protect him as he's been threatened with punishment for speaking the truth.

Bunkie
VAIW
Email: VAIW@hotmail.com
Telephone: 201-876-0430

November 18, 2006 By Alex, To Veterans Against The Iraq War

I would greatly appreciate it if you would allow me to take a moment of your time.

As a Staff Sergeant deployed to Iraq (area and unit withheld to protect soldier) out of Fort Lewis, I feel that the war in Iraq and Afghanistan is illegal and in every way wrong.

I have been heated since my arrival to my second tour of OIF and recently things have stacked up in a way that is so morally unjustified that I can no longer bear to live with what we are doing.

I was reminded of my bitterness late last week when I was participating in a ceremony in which Soldiers received Purple Hearts, the CIB (Combat Infantrymen's badge) and the CAB (Combat Action Badge).

After the ceremony, my squadron commander made a comment that struck hard. With his ignorance he blatantly stated that when the time comes we will find, chase, engage, pick up our M-4's and kill the enemy.

I couldn't help but think of who the "enemy" really was. Upon returning to my barracks I sat for hours contemplating what was said and could only come up with the following.

The enemy is not who the Government or the media says it is. Too many times American minds have been molded with false reports much like an artist forms clay in his hands. I too have been one of them but have recently found the truth.

The truth is that the enemy has been created by US and Coalition Forces.

The enemy is not someone who was waiting when we invaded.

He was not wearing a uniform, carrying military issued weapons or equipment....he was at home with his family when our bombs first dropped on Iraqi soil.

We've killed his family friends, trashed his house, kicked his door in, and taken the last bit of freedom that they had. And most people thought that Saddam ruled with an iron fist!

Bush says it's pay back for 9/11.

But what about all the people that we have killed or hurt, what about all the families that have been effected by this.

How can we justify our so called cause by taking more life?

As much as I stand by the side of LT Watada, I came here knowing what could happen and realized the only way I could make something of it was to watch over the lives of my men and the lives of the people that live within my area of operation.

Over time I have taught my men to think before shooting and that violence has and never will solve anything. To this day we have taken care of all problems without resorting to violence.

Although I am very proud of that, I am deeply concerned for the lives of the men under me. Which brings me to my next point.

As an Engineer we usually clear the roads during operations to make sure that there are no IED's along the routes. Of course this is very dangerous, but it is somewhat rewarding knowing that what we do can save American and Iraqi lives at the same time.

Recently my commander (the same man as noted before) decided that this was unnecessary and has seriously jeopardized everyone that we look out for.

Furthermore we are now shoveling, sweeping, and raking trash and sewage in our sector.

My entire platoon dismounts on some of the most dangerous routes (most vehicles won't even take them at night) to sweep and shovel trash.

Knowing that the possibility of losing a man is something that I cannot swallow, I have spoke up to my chain of command and told them that I will be contacting my Congressman, Senator, and local newspaper to tell of all the "good" we are doing here.

I have already been warned that if I take this route I will receive punishment from the highest source available.

The possibility of loss of rank, money, responsibility, and pride are prices I am willing to pay to let everyone know the truth.

I will not rest until I can accomplish this, which brings me to my final question.

Do you know of anyone who is willing to help with the relaying of information to local news reps or our local government?

If not, I am sure more research on my part will guide the way.

Thank you for taking the time to listen and for doing what you are doing. I envy your courage and hope to one day be able to stand with you.

Regards,
Alex

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 email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Marine Killed In Al Anbar

25 November 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory
RELEASE No. 20061125-10

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

U.S. Soldier Killed At Fallujah

11.25.06 The Associated Press

A U-S soldier was killed in a car bombing west of Baghdad.

A coalition spokesman says they died when a bomber attacked a checkpoint near Fallujah. Earlier, Iraqi police had said five Iraqi soldiers had been killed in the attack. That turned out to be inaccurate.

2nd Kane'ohe Bay Marine Killed Wednesday

November 24, 2006 By William Cole, Advertiser Military Writer

Ohio newspapers are reporting that a second Kane'ohe Bay Marine was among three killed Wednesday in Iraq's western Anbar province.

Ohio newspapers reported that Pfc. Heath Warner, 19, of Canton, was killed along with two other Marines by a roadside bomb that hit their Humvee at about 10 a.m.

On Warner's MySpace Web page, he says he is at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, and on a Sept. 6 post says he is "numb" with the departure for Iraq just a few days away.

Yesterday, the Pentagon identified Lance Cpl. Joshua C. Alonzo, 21, of Dumas, Texas, as one of three Marines who died during combat operations.

Marine Corps Base Hawaii said Alonzo was a team leader assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. Alonzo joined the Marines in June of 2004 and reported to Hawai'i later that year.

He deployed to Afghanistan with the 2nd Battalion from May 2005 to January 2006, the base said. He left for Iraq and a seven-month tour in September.

Approximately 1,000 Marines with the 2nd Battalion are serving in the Haditha Dam area northwest of Baghdad.

Western Anbar province is considered the Sunni heartland and a major source of resistance to U.S. forces. Hawai'i Marines have called it an "exceptionally hostile" environment.

With the latest deaths, at least 13 Hawai'i Marines have been killed in combat since late September.

Morse High Graduate Dies In Iraq

November 14, 2006 By Tanya Mannes, UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

A 2000 graduate of San Diego's Morse High School was killed last week in Iraq, leaving behind his young family and a grieving Filipino community.

Army Staff Sgt. Richwell A. Doria, 25, died Nov. 7 in Kirkuk after being struck by small-arms fire during an air-assault mission, the Pentagon publicly announced yesterday.

He is survived by his wife, Jasmine, and the couple's 4-month-old baby, Jada, of Ewa Beach, Hawaii, and many relatives in San Diego and the Philippines.

Doria grew up in San Diego after moving from the Philippines when he was 11. His parents sent him to the United States so he would have opportunities he couldn't get back home, said his aunt Zenaida Anderson.

He joined the Army out of high school. At that time he dismissed relatives' suggestions that he join the Navy, as an uncle had done.

"He said he will do his own thing and not follow in anyone's footsteps," his aunt said, sitting at the kitchen table of her Skyline neighborhood home, and surrounded by printouts of e-mailed photographs of her nephew.

Doria is at least the 35th county resident killed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Based in Hawaii, Doria served in Afghanistan for a year, returning in April 2005, Anderson said. Even though he had served abroad, he welcomed another mission, this one to Iraq.

Doria left Aug. 8, just weeks after the birth of his daughter July 14.

"He said, 'I don't want to sit around and do nothing,' " his aunt recalled. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Regiment.

His aunt said the family learned of his death Wednesday from two servicemen who came to the door. In the days that followed, many former classmates and friends gathered at the house to share memories.

Doria was known for his energy. Before he left for Iraq, he was talking about plans to remodel a condo he and Jasmine were buying in Honolulu.

His passion was cars, and he owned a Mercedes and a Honda Accord, Anderson said. He liked wearing designer clothing, especially Tommy Hilfiger jeans, and flashing his gold rings.

When he was 11, his mother and father, Fred and Rosario Doria, sent him to live with his grandfather, San Diego resident Benito Doria.

Anderson said she and her sister, Minda Doria, took care of Richwell as if he were their own child. He also was close to his uncle, Manny Doria, who is a leader in the Filipino community and an aide to Rep. Bob Filner.

Richwell Doria attended Audubon Elementary, Keiller Middle and Morse High.

Doria became a U.S. citizen about two years ago. "He called me up, he was so happy to be a citizen," Anderson said.

Benito Doria, who said he doesn't speak much English, wanted to give his grandson a better life. He even legally adopted him.

Now, he said he feels regret that he brought him out of the Philippines – and into harm's way.

“He blames himself,” Anderson said, her eyes filling with tears. “I told him: 'Maybe it was his fate to go earlier.' ”

His parents and sister, Rowena, still live in the Philippines, and his body will be sent there, Anderson said. A memorial will be held tomorrow in Honolulu. In San Diego, a Mass will be celebrated sometime next week at St. Michael's Catholic Church.

THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH; TIME TO COME HOME, NOW



A U.S. soldier from 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team gestures to motorists to stop as fellow U.S. and Iraqi soldiers search a vehicle at a checkpoint in Baghdad October 26, 2006. (Namir Noor-Eldeen/Reuters)

More U.S. Troops Dying In Iraq's Anbar Province Than In Baghdad

Nov. 25, 2006 By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press Writer

In the three months since thousands of U.S. forces poured into Baghdad to quash escalating violence, far more American troops have died in the volatile western Anbar province than in the capital city.

More than two-thirds of the 245 U.S. casualties between Aug. 7, the start of the Baghdad offensive, and Nov. 7 occurred outside Baghdad _ which military leaders have called the "center of gravity" of Iraq, and the key to success in the war. Four in 10 deaths over

those three months have been in Anbar province, a Sunni insurgency stronghold where U.S. Marines have largely taken the lead.

Marines, who comprise only about 15 percent of the 141,000 U.S. forces currently in Iraq, accounted for nearly 28 percent of the fatalities over the three-month period.

TROOP NEWS

Iraq Veteran, AWOL War Resister, Helping Rebuild Homes In New Orleans: Project Of Iraq Veterans Against The War

"Legally, I'm AWOL again. My lawyer has tried to contact Fort Leonard Wood like 75 times -- it's documented, 75 times -- and tried to get in touch with the military. They've avoided this entire subject," Snyder said.

November 25, 2006 By Janet McConnaughey, Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS: A U.S. soldier who fled to Canada rather than return to Iraq spent Thanksgiving week gutting houses flooded more than a year ago by Hurricane Katrina.

"There are so many engineering units of the U.S. military -- they should be here and not Iraq," Pvt. Kyle Snyder, 23, of Colorado Springs, Colo., said yesterday.

He was among two dozen volunteers from Iraq Veterans Against the War spending the week in New Orleans, gutting veterans' and musicians' houses destroyed by Hurricane Katrina on Aug. 29, 2005.

The work is a continuing project for the 300-member national group, which arranged for groups to spend two weeks each helping to gut houses from June through August, executive director Kelly Dougherty said.

Dougherty, who was in Iraq from March 2003 to February 2004 with a Colorado National Guard unit, said she thinks it's therapeutic for veterans who have returned from Iraq to

do good works in which they make visible changes for "a major city that looks in many places worse than Iraq."

Her 220th Military Police Company, sent some units to New Orleans immediately after hurricane Katrina, she said.

"Now they're back in Iraq."

Snyder, a former combat engineer, left the United States in April 2005 while on leave to avoid a second tour in Iraq. He said he worked as a welder and at a children's health clinic in Canada.

Snyder has said that he was put on patrol when sent to Iraq in 2004, which he said he was not trained to do, and that he began to turn against the war when he saw an innocent Iraqi man killed by American gunfire.

Snyder turned himself in Oct. 31, after his lawyer said he had reached a deal to have Snyder processed back into the army at Fort Knox and be discharged without a court martial. However, he went AWL again a day later.

Lawyer James Fennerty of Chicago said the army wanted to send Snyder back to his original unit at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., where commanders would determine his future.

Snyder said he's getting help from Iraq Veterans Against the War and other groups. "I just travel," he said.

"Legally, I'm AWOL again. My lawyer has tried to contact Fort Leonard Wood like 75 times -- it's documented, 75 times -- and tried to get in touch with the military. They've avoided this entire subject," Snyder said.

Mike Alley, a public affairs officer at Fort Leonard Wood, directed calls to the public affairs office at Fort Knox, where nobody answered the phone Friday.

"I'm not a rapist, not a murderer, not a child-molester. I'm not doing anything negative," Snyder said.

"I'm doing what I feel I have to do as a human being."

Equipment, help and general arrangements were provided by the Arabi Wrecking Krewe, a volunteer group created in the storm's aftermath. The house being worked on Friday belonged to a Vietnam veteran, said Armand (Sheik) Richardson, president of the group.

"He was a first lieutenant and had some heavy combat experience," Richardson said.

His group isn't political but he himself is against the Iraq war, said Richardson, who served in the U.S. marines and Marine Reserves from 1965-69.

"I opposed the Vietnam War and I'm opposing this one too, for the same reasons. Which is hard to believe but it's the truth," he said.

Richardson said the Wrecking Krewe can identify 110 houses it has gutted and helped rebuild.

"Probably more than that. That's the ones we can actually count."

"I started the day after the storm and pretty much haven't stopped," he said.



IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

“I Renew My Demand For The Withdrawal Of Occupation Forces”

November 25, 2006 By Solomon Moore, L. A. Times Staff Writer & AFP

From his pulpit in the southern city of Kufa, Muqtada Sadr also reiterated his demand for the withdrawal of U.S. troops, whom he blamed for the violence.

"I denounce and condemn this incident which targeted the beloved Sadr City," Sadr said. "From this pulpit ... I renew my demand for the withdrawal of occupation forces."

Sadr's political representatives in Baghdad, meanwhile, threatened to withdraw from the government if Maliki met with Bush as scheduled on Wednesday and Thursday in Jordan.

"If the situation does not improve, the government does not offer services and the prime minister doesn't cancel his meeting with George Bush in Amman, we shall suspend our membership in the parliament and any participation in the government," the Sadr bloc said in a statement.

White House officials said Maliki had confirmed that he would attend the meeting, and Iraqi officials discounted the Sadr group's demands as empty threats.

"I think this is a red herring," national security advisor Mowaffak Rubaie said. "It is more political posturing, but it doesn't mean anything." [Famous last words.]

The Sadr movement is known for its strong anti-US sentiment and regularly condemns US forces for targeting it, especially in Sadr City, in night-time raids.

Shiite And Sunni Clerics Agree: Bush: Get Out Of Our Country

November 26, 2006 By Solomon Moore, Times Staff Writer [Excerpt]

Shiite and Sunni clerics, among the last vestige of authority in a country rapidly losing faith in politicians, charged Saturday that Iraq's plight was the result of U.S. mistakes and pleaded with their faithful to stem the bloodshed that followed a devastating attack on a mainly Shiite Baghdad neighborhood.

In interviews Saturday and in recent sermons, clerics articulated one message that appears to be gaining traction on both sides of Iraq's civil war: The U.S. presence is making matters worse, and the Americans should go home.

"The roots of our problems lie in the mistakes of the Americans committed right from the beginning of their occupation," said Sheik Ali Merza, a Shiite cleric in Najaf who is a leader of the Islamic Dawa Party.

Iraq's most prominent Sunni cleric expressed a similar viewpoint. At a Cairo news conference, Harith Dhari demanded that American troops withdraw.

"Since the beginning, the U.S. occupation drove Iraq from bad to worse," said Dhari, who became a fugitive this month after the Shiite-led government issued a warrant for his arrest on allegations that he has supported terrorism.

Khalil Maliki, a Shiite cleric based in the southern port city of Basra, also blamed the United States.

"We have all concluded that the primary party responsible for all these massacres is the American occupation," said Maliki, a representative of anti-U.S. [translation: anti-U.S. Imperial government occupation of Iraq] cleric Muqtada Sadr.

Assorted Resistance Action

24 Nov 2006 Reuters & AP & 25 Nov 2006 Reuters & By Solomon Moore, L.A. Times Staff Writer

A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol killed one policeman and wounded another in the town of Iskandariya, 40 km (25 miles) south of Baghdad, on Thursday, police said. In a separate incident guerrillas attacked a police checkpoint, killing one civilian and wounding a policeman.

There were pitched battles between guerrillas and the army on Haifa Street, a dangerous thoroughfare running north from the Green Zone, site of the American and British embassies as well as the Iraqi government and parliament.

A roadside bomb wounded four policemen when it exploded near their patrol in Kirkuk, police said.

TIKRIT: A roadside bomb killed two guards and wounded three on Friday when it targeted the convoy of Brigadier-General Faridoun Talabani, who was slightly wounded, police said. Talabani is a senior commander in the Iraqi army.

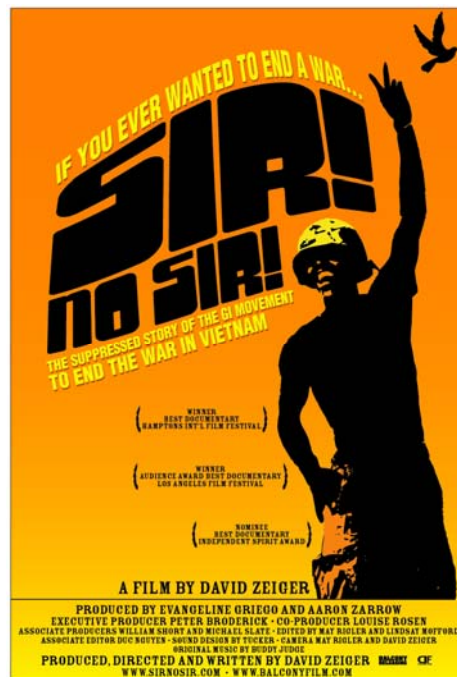
In Fallouja, a restive Sunni city in western Al Anbar province, a car bomb exploded at an Iraqi army checkpoint, killing at least six soldiers.

In the northern oil hub of Kirkuk, police found the bullet-riddled body of a pipeline security guard.

Gunmen ambushed and killed one policeman and wounded another in the northern city of Mosul and wounded three Iraqi soldiers, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



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."

In The Process Of Genocide



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: November 25, 2006

Subject: In The Process Of Genocide

In The Process Of Genocide

The United States Of America is committing genocide in Iraq, and will continue to do so, until the will of the Iraqi people is destroyed. This is the same slow process that happened with the American Indian.

Back then, the U.S. military was hanging Indian children from trees like Christmas ornaments. This was done to break the will of the American Indian. It was a message sent by the U.S. military, that if resistance did not stop, the U.S. Government would destroy everything that was Indian.

It is exactly what happened at the My Lai Massacre on March 16, 1968 in Vietnam. The My Lai Massacre was a blatant calling card sent by the U.S. Government.

It was a message to the people of Quang Ngai Province, that if they did not stop the resistance, the U.S. Government was going to continue to murder them as fast as American weaponry could.

Iraq is in total turm-oil, because the final prize is oil. The American people need that oil, like a heroin addict needs a fix.

When I went through the My Lai Massacre site in 1994, I could feel the evil that the U.S. committed at point-blank range.

When I saw American soldiers destroy themselves in Vietnam from heroin addiction, I could feel the madness of our presence in Vietnam.

We had destroyed everything, and now we were destroying ourselves.

When I unzipped a body bag and saw the body of an American soldier who had shot himself in the head, I saw the final calling card of the Vietnam War.

America had lost everything.

And, it continues to loose the Vietnam War on a daily basis through suicides.

The Iraq War is the other bookend to America's foreign policy of in-sanity.

The mass migration of people leaving Iraq is the same terror

that drove the American Indian to the reservation.

This is all happening right now, as millions of Americans are Christmas shopping.

Joy to the world.

It is surrealism at its highest order, like seeing Indian children hanging from Christmas trees.

It's all happening right now....
In the process of genocide.

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
November 24, 2006
Stop The War Now
Stop The Oil Addiction

Photo 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)

**“My War In Iraq Had Proven To
Be Excruciating”**

**“What Good Is A War That Kills
Innocent Muslims When The Real
Enemies Are At Home?”**

**“This Is Our World, And By All
Means, We Should Fight To Take It
Back”**

SOME PEOPLE assume that American soldiers are a faceless and mechanized fighting force, blindly following orders given to them by war hawks and profit gluttons in Washington, D.C. However, what is commonly missing from discussion is that soldiers are people, inherently capable of thinking individually, and they can easily come to despise warfare while engaged in its bloody practice.

February 24, 2006 BY Jeff Englehart, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

JEFF ENGLEHART is a former specialist in the U.S. Army's 1st Infantry Division. While serving in Iraq, he became an outspoken opponent of the war, communicating along with several fellow soldiers through the Internet, as the bloggers hEkLe, Heretic and Joe Public.

The three earned a reputation for reporting what was really taking place in occupied Iraq--especially during the brutal U.S. siege of Falluja on their Web log at ftssoldier.blogspot.com.

Returning from Iraq a year ago, Jeff began speaking out openly against an occupation for oil and U.S. empire. He wrote this article for Socialist Worker.

I WILL never forget the day the soles of my tan leather boots made contact with a gray tarmac runway at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Stoically, our company marched from the C-130 plane that had delivered us from one year in Iraq.

Funny, I thought, that these first steps of closure were not taken with the cheerful excitement that normally would accompany a soldier's glorious return from war. We were not welcomed with streamers, confetti or parades. Our homecoming presented us a bitter, freezing wind, carrying flurries of snowflakes, typical of a February afternoon in Germany.

As warriors of the desert, we were not prepared for the extreme differences in weather. The winter cold sliced like a surgeon's blade through our Gore-Tex jackets and severed the thrill of being home. Like camouflaged reptiles, our senses were dulled; our joys subdued. The barren and dismal surroundings seemed to be the physical attributes to the bewilderment that everyone seemed to be feeling unanimously.

With both feet on solid ground, I knew that the journey was over. I was home, but I could not convince myself that it was true.

Only six hours ago, we were sitting in bunkers as mortar rounds impacted on Balad Air Force Base, just prior to our flight home. The concept of being in a civilized society was too surreal to understand in its entirety. The war's end seemed to be a hallucination, yet here I was at the end of the road.

My war in Iraq had proven to be excruciating. Unlike the others in my company, I had to fight a war on three different fronts. One was against an insurgency that proved elusive and deadly. Another was against the Army, as I stood openly opposed to the war and became vulnerable to harassment. The other was fought against myself, battling a conscience that longed to resist participation in an illegal occupation.

I felt tired, battered and beaten. But I had made it, barely. Many times, I had almost lost the war on each front, but had managed to fight my way through it all.

Now we were home, and the war was over. It felt good, but somehow, the cold winter day only complicated the manner of our return. For some, it was an inconvenience that

could be overlooked. For me, it seemed the most appropriate ending to a long and dreary story.

Our company stood in formation under the cover of an unheated aircraft hangar, waiting for buses to take us to our Army post. I looked around at the other soldiers, wondering if their thoughts were similar to mine. Perhaps they were looking forward to meeting their estranged families. Maybe they were contemplating how the first night at the bars would turn out.

Maybe some were wondering how they could possibly make sense of the yearlong debacle.

Their emotions seemed placated as they stood with arms crossed over their bodies, staring at the ground with teeth chattering in the frosty air. No one was talking about whatever was running through their minds, including me.

As I glanced up to the hanging banner exclaiming, "Welcome Home, 1st ID!" I pondered what was next. How have I learned from this unique experience, and how could I continue the fight to end the war that was still raging on in Iraq?

SOME PEOPLE assume that American soldiers are a faceless and mechanized fighting force, blindly following orders given to them by war hawks and profit gluttons in Washington, D.C.

These soldiers are compared to "storm troopers," marching through obliterated towns in an ever-expanding empire. Unfeeling, uncaring, their rifles aimed toward the horizon with patriotic fervor and the American flag behind them, U.S. soldiers are commonly viewed as a world police force, killing in the name of democracy.

Most think that soldiers do not contemplate the ramifications of their jobs, nor is it their place to question the mission. They have the reputation of wholeheartedly supporting their commander-in-chief and never harboring antiwar sentiments.

However, what is commonly missing from discussion is that soldiers are people, inherently capable of thinking individually, and they can easily come to despise warfare while engaged in its bloody practice.

It wasn't until after I joined the Army that I began to understand what the American soldier represents.

Early in my enlistment, I came to despise the weak and callow men of authority, hiding behind their pretentious shields of rank and prestige.

I realized that I was low in the chain of hierarchy, and came to view GIs as a lowly proletariat, without a voice or a chance.

Their system was enforced by draconian rules and idiotic regulations, and held together by conformity and fear.

Individual thought was not encouraged. Orders were passed down from higher echelons and obeyed unconditionally every step of the way. Military life, for me, was stale and rigid. I felt surrounded by stupidity and herd mentality.

To preserve a different state of mind, I began to educate myself on U.S. imperialism and its history of enforcing hegemonic control over the world.

I saw the Army for what it was: a powerful militant arm of a corrupt and ruthless government; the crack at the end of the whip.

I was just another cog in the war machine, but I knew instinctively that in their world, knowledge was power.

I was naïve when I signed an Army contract, thinking that I could do some good for myself and my country. I was ignorant when I traded indentured service for college money and a chance to see the world. I enlisted prior to September 11th and did not expect war in the foreseeable future.

What a fool I was! That contract would send me to Iraq three years later. But in the long run, this mistake would prove to be a valuable lesson. Military service and live combat is an education that one cannot buy in college.

I saw firsthand the depraved condition of power and greed and the detriment of a corporate-driven war waged on innocent people.

Ultimately, it was the war in Iraq that single-handedly forged my strong antiwar beliefs.

While some may argue that soldiers do not -- or should not -- question the mission, I know from personal experience that not only is it possible to develop antiwar sentiments during warfare, but very probable.

As soldiers are faced with death, destruction and deep personal guilt during their role as occupiers, more and more of them will begin to question the reasons for such madness, and eventually grow to resent and oppose the nature of war itself.

I made it a personal resolution to speak out against war the very moment I arrived in Iraq.

It did not take long for me to feel convinced that the war was wrong.

As a gunner in a cavalry scout platoon, my view of what was going came from behind the perspective of a truck-mounted machine gun.

Upon our arrival, we conducted missions in Humvees that lacked even a shred of armor. The truck doors were made of plastic, and the windows could be shattered by a well-aimed rock. Gunners were the most susceptible, and the only form of protection was the trigger.

Daily, we raced down the streets of Baquba, trying to avoid direct contact with roadside bombs. Our missions primarily consisted of counter-mortar operations, house raids, combat patrols and escorting KBR-Halliburton convoys from one base to another. With

time and strong words from congressmen, our trucks received adequate armor, but the mission never changed.

Many soldiers began to question our purpose in Iraq.

We worked long hours at any given time, but did not see the Iraqi population ever warm to our presence. Despite many promises from our government to rebuild the Iraqi infrastructure, there was nothing but conflict. Schools were not being built, civilian populations continued without electricity or running water, and hospitals were desperately ill equipped.

Our military came to Iraq to build nothing more than a police state, setting up roadblocks and vehicle checkpoints, and storming random houses, based on bad intelligence.

After these tasks became too dangerous for our forces, we began to utilize subservient Eastern European militaries and U.S. trained Iraqi paramilitaries to do the dirty work.

While the Bush administration was boasting of success back home, we soldiers felt that we were involved in an endless game of cat and mouse.

AS MY own personal frustration became unbearable, I began to feel the need to speak out against the war. I found the best way to vent these frustrations was to write about what I saw and how I felt on the Web site "Fight To Survive," which I shared with two like-minded friends.

In writing about the war, I felt that I was making the best of a bad situation, by informing the outside world of the real conditions of Iraq. Writing also helped me to atone for the guilt I felt in being involved in a malicious war.

By writing antiwar/anti-government material, I placed myself in great personal danger from a disapproving chain of command. I used the pen name "hEkLe" to hide my true identity. But as the Web site gained more readers, anonymity no longer protected the site from leering eyes.

Eventually, the command uncovered the source of writings and singled out the authors. Drastic punishments were to be expected for such dissidence. Harassment soon followed.

During this time, I began to feel as though I had an enemy on both sides of the wire: the insurgents who were out to kill me as an American, and the Army that was out to crucify me for sedition.

Luckily in the end, Army intelligence and the Criminal Investigation Department could find no wrongdoing as far as leaking classified information. We were only guilty of speaking our minds. No punishments were issued, although we received the occasional browbeating and discrimination.

Soldiers have a very limited freedom of speech: one that hardly exists at all. The ironic aspect is that soldiers go to war to protect this freedom, which they can never have themselves.

This type of hypocrisy catalyzed my desire to speak out against all hypocrisies that Americans are faced with at home.

It became a personal goal to return home and help the public to understand the truth. However, as I departed from the Army and returned home, I began to discover the difficulties of challenging the status quo in a massively divided nation.

While being stationed in Europe for four years, I had only been home for one two-week leave. So when I returned home in 2005, I felt as though I hadn't been home in ages. Being overseas for that long had alienated me from American customs and social demeanors. I did not know the latest popular trend, the favorite actor or best TV show, or how I would react to new rules placed on American citizens. When I found myself stepping off a jetliner, I had no idea of what to expect.

Suddenly, I had discovered that, much to my dismay, the America I had left in 2001 had changed drastically for the worse. The Bush regime, the USA PATRIOT Act, a thriving police apparatus, a dismal economy and incredible social unrest--these traits marked bad times and worse to come. This was the New America.

Despite the odds of opposition, I submerged myself in a progressive antiwar scene. I met with other veterans of wars, both past and present, and attended gatherings, protests and demonstrations. I worked in solidarity with groups like Veterans For Peace and the new fledging Iraq Veterans Against War. Together, we were present when Camp Casey was erected in Crawford, Texas, and when thousands marched at the peaceful protest in Washington, D.C., during September 2005.

We were met with scorn and rule-crazy cops every inch of the way. However frustrating this may have been, we continued the drive for peaceful solutions at every obstacle we encountered.

The struggle thus far has been a matter of give and take. Protesting goes only so far, especially in a new society filled with "free speech zones" and unlawful arrests for citizens exercising their First Amendment rights.

Other problems exist within the movement itself. There is an incredibly large portion of society that feels disenfranchised by the current trend and forms into many groups of opposition.

Unfortunately, what we are faced with is a lack of solidarity among these groups. Much like what was seen at the September protest in D.C., different affinity groups collided into one appearance and seemed to compete for media coverage, while critical antiwar fronts like Iraq Veterans Against War went largely misrepresented and ignored.

Another unfortunate setback for the current movement is the vulgar hierarchical setup of these organizations. While centralized leadership may work to help to

collect an initial movement of individuals, its presence in organizing actions tend to make a group sluggish, lethargic and willing to bow to the institutions to which it is opposed.

Furthermore, this centralized hierarchy robs a group of what should be its fundamental function--that of absolute democracy. When members of a group feel that their voice is no longer heard, it creates a disaffection that could very well extinguish the flames of resistance. So while there are many outside antagonistic forces to deal with head-on, there are many improvements within the scene that must be made if any achievements are to come.

Other major issues need to be addressed as well. A huge problem that activist groups need to confront immediately is the lack of ingenuity and general malaise. Too often, these groups gather and plan for weeks at a time, but fail to make an impressive appearance in the public eye.

Perhaps the true meaning of "direct action" has been lost. Most confuse direct action with direct violence. On the contrary, an effective direct action must be peaceful, but must also completely disregard conventional authority. Direct action can come in the form of a massive act of civil disobedience. The movement should be reluctant to fight fire with fire, but it should not shy away from authorities either.

One has to wonder where civil rights would be today if not for protesters of the 60s who were willing to confront the authorities on the front lines. Not only did they take to the streets in enormous numbers, but they were also willing to sacrifice personal safety in the form of abuse by water hoses and billy clubs.

One should also acknowledge the antiwar movement during the Vietnam War, where protesters and veterans alike marched to the steps of Congress and demanded to be heard.

Direct action was even utilized by Vietnam soldiers in the fashion of sabotage and massive combat refusals to literally destroy the functions of the war machine. Even in recent years, direct action and civil disobedience were used when thousands of protesters successfully shut down the proceedings of the World Trade Organization in 1999.

Of course, this type of resistance cannot happen overnight, but must be pursued through hard work and perseverance.

The only question is: How long will it take for millions of agitated Americans to hit the streets and challenge this oppressive system?

However, as we are now approaching the third year of a bloody and disparaging war, it is extremely important that we do not give up.

A widespread response is now more than possible, as the pendulum seems to be swinging the other way.

The Bush administration is being exposed for the liars and criminals that they are.

While this may seem to be quite inefficient in light of the horrible travesties committed against humanity and true freedom, it is a huge step in the right direction. It means that people all over the world are beginning to awake from their slumber and place guilty parties responsible.

At this crucial time, the antiwar movement has a huge responsibility to kick their efforts into high gear. Our solidarity must exceed national boundaries. We must continue to stand opposed to war and global oppression. Through peaceful direct action and civil disobedience, we can demand a more rational society. It is no longer a matter of fighting for a utopia of ideas, but rather a fight for survival as human beings.

The turning point in this struggle will surely come among Iraq War veterans.

Already, more and more veterans are beginning to question their roles in a crusade for oil profits and corporate domination of the Middle East. And as they slowly return home, their experiences in this war will only be confounded by an America that is left in shambles.

Veterans will begin to ask themselves, “What good is a war that kills innocent Muslims when the real enemies are at home?”

Their glorious return will be welcomed by corrupt officials in the White House, who neglect the best interests of their friends and family in their communities.

America will open her arms to these soldiers with slim job prospects and a future of struggling poverty.

They will walk down the streets of their hometown, only to engage in more combat against an unruly police force, one example being Iraq veteran Elio Carrion who was horrifically shot by a trigger-happy pig while on leave in his hometown in California (<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=8907384305326268846&q=cop+shooting>).

They will arrive only to see the Constitution being torn to pieces by the very men who sent them to defend it in the name of freedom and democracy.

The oath to “defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic” is a solemn one, and with eyes wide open, these veterans will.

Someday, all the soldiers will come home from this war, and when they do, their stories and sentiments will follow.

One year has passed since that cold winter day in Germany. As I look back, I begin to realize that it wasn't the frigid air that froze my reasoning into shock. Instead, it was the realization that I had somehow survived through the madness and insanity of an entire year of conflict. The battlefield was limitless, but then again, it always is.

I discovered that we are all tied to this war in one way or another. Every day, we pay the price to fight a war based on ideals that are against ourselves and others across the globe.

When understanding this price, the conclusions are truly petrifying. We can try to omit the details of horror, or we can pursue this fight under the guise of false banners, but in the end, we will only destroy ourselves.

Some argue that war is a basic human attribute, and consequently, there will always be strife. I do not believe this to be true.

Even in the urban combat zones of Iraq, I saw people who were not my enemy, but people who believe in love and beauty and life, like anyone else in the world.

Human beings were never meant to wage war against each other. It is only the forces of corrupt power that persuade the masses to sacrifice their lives to the jaded exaltation of God and empire.

Modern man has certainly developed the intelligence and conscious capacity to find peaceful solutions to any problem, but only if that effort is made to the fullest.

The responsibility to ensure peace and justice in the world lies with all of us. No longer should we trust in fraudulent politicians to lead us into prosperity, nor pass the liability onto others or that of future generations.

No matter if we're veterans, activists, punks, peace-freaks, tree-huggers, commies or conservatives, the walls of social differences must be removed, and a broader task undertaken.

This is our world, and by all means, we should fight to take it back.

Occupation Lies Vs. The History Of Iraq: Objective: Destroy Arab Nationalism

After having identified Arab nationalism as enemy number one, they co-opted Arab nationalist criticisms of the sub-regional state and its dependence on tribal and sectarian groupings and then distorted and turned these criticisms against both the state and Arab nationalism.

Evidently, the rule of political sectarianism and the preparation of the Arab world for the latest colonialist weapon, requires partial collective memory alongside partial collective amnesia.

23 - 29 November 2006 By Azmi Bishara, Published in Cairo by AL-AHRAM [Excerpts]

In Iraq, as they and other colonial powers did elsewhere in the Levant, the British set about constructing a regional state, not as a means for superseding tribal and sectarian affiliations but as a structure that deliberately entrenched these divisions and aimed them against Arab nationalism.

Colonial authorities, we recall, depended primarily on minorities -- or those they classified as minorities -- to build the "national" army.

Now, nearly a century after the Sykes-Picot agreement, people are wringing their hands over the failure of that state, while throughout the colonial powers and their successors fought the only serious and feasible alternative, Arab nationalism.

And now they are scrambling for solutions, such as a loose federation or increasing the number of troops in Iraq, as a last ditch attempt to preserve the unity of the country before "bringing Iraq to an end".

Arab nationalists came under attack in the West, and in conservative and neo-conservative circles in particular, because they believed that the sub-regional states into which the colonial powers had carved up the eastern Arab world would not fill the identity vacuum and serve to build a nation in the proper sense.

The result of this onslaught was that the Arab nationalist movement was marginalised and increasingly radicalised the more the Arab world fell into disunity and fragmentation, especially following the 1967 war. By the time that the Saddam regime had renamed its official gazette Babylon and begun to stress a discrete Iraq identity and distinct Iraqi history, the sub-regional state had come under the crosshairs of the very groups that had formerly attacked Arab nationalism.

Now, they proclaim, the state has to be turned into a sectarian and denominationally based federation, i.e. the state has to be deconstructed, or terminated.

The idea that Arab identity can serve as an overarching bond for the people and simultaneously accommodate non-Arab minorities simply does not occur to them.

After having identified Arab nationalism as enemy number one, they co-opted Arab nationalist criticisms of the sub-regional state and its dependence on tribal and sectarian groupings and then distorted and turned these criticisms against both the state and Arab nationalism.

Now the Arabs are required to recognise tribal and sectarian divisions as the only structural basis for a pluralistic society and to stop thinking of these pre-modern allegiances as possible impediments to statehood and nationalism, as Europeans in the 18th and 19th centuries concluded.

Today's Iraqi occupation ideologues have concocted three super-simplistic myths to which they have reduced contemporary Iraq history: a Sunni-based Baathist regime ruled over the Shia, the oppressed Shia appealed to the US and Britain for

help, and the resistance to the occupation is really a sectarian war between the Sunni and Shia.

Their need to invent a fiction in order to cover up their failure and to suggest that Iraq either has to go the way they say or else, is not all that different from the fiction of weapons of mass destruction, the major difference being that they are now producing a real weapon of mass destruction aimed at Iraq and the eastern Arab world.

The Arab nationalist and leftist parties were not sectarian or ethnic allegiances. Iraq, together with its political elites and general public, passed through periods in which non-sectarian ideas and affiliations prevailed.

Nor were previous Iraqi governments sectarian in nature: they didn't even allow religious affiliations to appear on identity papers and other official documents, and the use or exploitation of sectarian allegiances was regarded as shameful, perhaps criminal and certainly politically incorrect.

If anything, it is the suppression of sectarianism that is contributing to the vehemence of today's sectarian chauvinists who are avenging past ills perpetrated by the Saddam regime.

But this regime was not "Sunni"; it was a monolithic state apparatus shored up by a single party and state police and intelligence agencies, all of which consisted of both Sunnis and Shias.

The same applied to the various opposition movements, which did not begin with the Shaaban uprising following the war to liberate Kuwait. Certainly, during the Iraq-Iran war, the regime concentrated its oppressive practices more heavily on predominantly Shia areas and Shia religious figures, operating on the assumption that any emphasis of Shia identity was an expression of disloyalty to the state.

However, apart from some well-known exceptions, it was not discriminatory pressure that made hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Shia soldiers fight in the ranks of their national army against Iran.

Under previous Iraqi governments, officials did not like to have sectarian tags affixed to them. Only now has this become the rule, which is applied retroactively even to those who lived and died without an ounce of sectarianism in their blood.

Abdel Karim Qasem is now labelled "Shia", Abdel-Salam Aref "Sunni"; the "Shia" Naji Taleb was prime minister under Aref; the founder of the Baath Party was originally "Christian", as was one of its most prominent members, Tareq Aziz, while Fouad Al-Rukabi, the first national chief of the Baath Party, was Shia. In 1963, in fact, all the civilian members of the Regional Command were Shia.

Over the period of Baath Party rule there were three prime ministers: Ahmed Hussein Khudeir "Sunni", Saadoun Hamadi "Shia" and Mohamed Hamza Al-Zubeidi "Shia" and of the two speakers of the National Assembly, one -- Naim Haddad -- was Sunni and the other -- Saadoun Hamadi -- was Shia.

It is no coincidence that people are now overlooking the fact that former foreign minister and the last minister of information under Saddam, Mohamed Said Al-Sahhaf, was Shia.

Nor do those who are talking of the Sunni-Shia political divide today care to be reminded of the names of the many Shia political, intellectual and religious leaders who dedicated their lives to realising Arab unity, such as the Independence Party leader Sheikh Mohamed Mahdi Kubba, Taleb Shubeib, Shamseddin Kazem, Hazem Jawwad, Muaz Abdul-Rahim, Ahmed Hububi, Ali Abdul-Hussein, Amir Al-Halw, Rasem Al-Awadi, Mahmoud Al-Sheikh Radi, Fadel Al-Ansari, Moussa Al-Husseini and Abdulillah Al-Nasrawi.

But it is pointless to cite this long list of names, not only because it will do nothing to alter the current poisonous sectarian mood, nor because it falls into the trap of imposing sectarian divisions on history, but also because sectarian partisans, these days, will simply discard the information on the grounds that the government official or political leader of his sect did not have real authority.

It is probably also futile to point out that things weren't always as monolithic and centralised as they were under Saddam Hussein, either in the government or the Baath Party, and that even under Saddam the monopoly on power was not a Sunni one wielded against the Shia but rather a monopoly by a military junta whose sway in the party and the state intersected with the regional and kinship ties of its constituents.

Iraqi governments have clamped down brutally on all opposition and everyone whose allegiance was suspect. The victims of repression are legion, and of all sects. Mohamed Ayish, Adnan Hussein, General Mohamed Mazloum Al-Dulaimi, Shaker Faza and Raji Al-Takriti were all Sunni.

The first religious figure to have died as the result of torture was Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Al-Badri Al-Samaraai, a Sunni. Mohamed Baqir Al-Sadr was executed ten years later.

Moreover, for those who care to remember, the Sunni and Shia fundamentalist offensive was directed against the "secularist regime" in Iraq and the Iranian media constantly reminded its public that the two assassinations were connected and proof of the Baathist regime's war against Islam, both Sunni and Shia.

But does anybody in the Iranian media mention Al-Badri today?

Similarly forgotten are the armed confrontations against the government in Falluja in the 1970s (The so-called "Dervish Uprising") and the Ramadi uprising during the funeral of Mohamed Mazloum.

Evidently, the rule of political sectarianism and the preparation of the Arab world for the latest colonialist weapon, requires partial collective memory alongside partial collective amnesia.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or

send to contact@militaryproject.org:. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. Same to unsubscribe.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

“For All The Sound And Fury In The Last Year, The NSA’s Wiretapping Program Continues Uninterrupted” “Democrats Are Of Mixed Minds About Additional Steps”

[Now the elections are over, and the Democrat propaganda campaign screaming about the evil Bush is no longer necessary, the other Imperial party can show its' true mission: using the power Bush accumulated for itself. The apologists for the Democratic Party, who sold their bullshit to the public, explain this sudden lack of concern about ending the war, and the spying, and everything else evil in DC, by yammering “Trust us. These things take time. Think about 2008. We have to be careful.” Well, that’s true. Playing traitor does have to be managed carefully. People might decide they’ve had enough, get into the streets, and decide to bring down the whole rotten system. Goodness, wouldn’t that be a shame. T]

25 November 2006 By Eric Lichtblau, The New York Times [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24: When President Bush went on national television one Saturday morning last December to acknowledge the existence of a secret wiretapping program outside the courts, the fallout was fierce and immediate.

Mr. Bush’s opponents accused him of breaking the law, with a few even calling for his impeachment. His backers demanded that he be given express legal authority to do what he had done. Law professors talked, civil rights groups sued and a federal judge in Detroit declared the wiretapping program unconstitutional.

But as Democrats prepare to take over on Capitol Hill, not much has really changed.

For all the sound and fury in the last year, the National Security Agency’s wiretapping program continues uninterrupted, with no definitive action by either Congress or the courts on what, if anything, to do about it, and little chance of a breakthrough in the lame-duck Congress.

While the Democrats have vowed to press for more facts about the operation, they are of mixed minds about additional steps.

Some favor an aggressive strategy that would brand the program illegal and move to ban it even as the courts consider its legality.

Others are more cautious, emphasizing the rule of law but not giving Republicans the chance to accuse them of depriving the government of important anti-terrorism tools.

"We could've fixed this early on," said Senator Arlen Specter, Republican of Pennsylvania, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and a believer that the surveillance program violates the 1978 law.

"For every day that passes," Mr. Specter said in an interview, "there's an invasion of privacy that could be cured."

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<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)

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