

## **GI SPECIAL 4K26:**

**UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH;  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



Lance Cpl. Joseph F. Voellm, from Alexander, Va., a 19-year-old assistant gunner, taps Lance Cpl. John A. Stephenson, Spartanburg, S.C., a 19-year-old machine gunner, on the back to fire at an insurgent outside of Patrol Base Steelers, Iraq, Oct. 18, 2006. The U.S. military on Monday announced the death of the 100th service member killed in Iraq this month. (AP Photo/Ray Lewis, US Marines)

# ***The Day That Haunts Me...***

**“Father Says He’s Proud, Friends  
Ask What Happened To The Person  
They Used To Know, And The  
Families Of Those Who Died, Friend  
And Foe, Greave Endlessly”**

November 13, 2006 By Hellblazer, Fight To Survive Blog, [www.ftssoldier.blogspot.com/](http://www.ftssoldier.blogspot.com/)

**"Hellblazer" is an Iraq war veteran and served in the US army as a Specialist Scout. The following, is his account of a battle that took place in Ba'Quba, Iraq in November 2004.**

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I believe that a good portion of a person's character is forged in times of great hardship.

It is these times that all of our strengths and weaknesses, both mental and physical, come to light.

We either come out of the situation humbled by how it made a quick end to our greatest efforts or confident of our abilities as we overcome.

But sometimes it takes us to another place.

A place where we succeeded in overcoming adversity, but at a cost we couldn't come to bear.

This is the place I visited, and will never forget.

Two years ago, I was a scout stationed in Iraq on a small dusty camp in the city of Ba'Quba.

Troubled times

The city was the largest in the area, containing roughly 300,000 residents. It was also congested, not as spread out as an American city, which made it difficult to operate in it efficiently.

In the past months my job had evolved into riding in the turret of my Humvee, with my two machine guns, patrolling the streets, a task that always seemed to lead to some sort of trouble.

At the time, one half of my unit was in Fallujah, battling the build up of insurgents that had been accumulating for months. Another quarter was north protecting a vital bridge across the Tigris River that insurgents had targeted in the past.

These forces were almost entirely made up of tanks, leaving us with four.

With tanks being the biggest bargaining chip we had, this use of the forces weakened our area, to say the least.

For this reason, my scout platoon, were tasked with keeping Ba'Quba and its surrounding areas under control.

Upon the initial push into Fallujah, insurgents identified the origin of the tanks involved in the fight, which quickly translated into where they came from: Ba'Quba.

With the notion of causing us to withdraw our forces from the Fallujah theatre, the insurgents moved quietly into the city of Ba'Quba the night prior, in preparation for an attack.

Rude awakening

They would not make their presence known until morning.

A deafening explosion, followed by what felt like an earthquake, pulled me out of bed that morning.

Insurgents had begun attacking Iraqi police stations in Ba'Quba, and a patrol in the area called in an air strike to clear a mosque containing armed insurgents. That deafening sound was two, 500-pound bombs making sand of the mosque.

Reports were coming in ranging from 50 to 200 insurgents still alive, attacking the city.

Not knowing what was correct, command assumed the worst.

We responded, in order, with our remaining four tanks, half of my platoon with our four trucks, and another platoon which would follow a good distance behind us, all flowing into the city in one long column.

Exodus

Upon exiting the walls of my camp, and starting the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile run into the city centre, I saw the peaceful population of Ba'Quba fleeing the city.

Thousands of people, carrying their most prized possessions, scurried down the side of the road, trying to stay as low as possible, as they thought at any moment they could be shot.

I remember one young man looking at me with a fear full eye, as if I myself contained all of the fury of hell within me and was about to unleash it on those remaining in the city.

This brought me to believe that this wasn't just some overzealous commander's response.

Behind the fleeing civilians rose the column of smoke from the bombs that had fallen not long ago. Judging by that, I figured any insurgent that was fighting had left, but either way, the city had to be secured. Once we passed the mass of people coming out of the city, we were left with what appeared to be a ghost town in front of us.

Seconds turned into hours as the first rocket ripped passed the tank in front of me, exploding across the street.

Many more followed in quick succession as the tank rotated its turret and shot its main gun into the building it came from, collapsing its entire front half which the tank quickly filled with machine gun fire.

Our turn...

Having trouble acquiring targets, and under a lot of fire, the tanks quickly pushed through, bringing us up to bat.

At the site of the exposed bodies of my fellow gunners and I standing out of the tops of our humvees, the insurgents quickly increased their efforts. The sides of the street were lined with one to three story buildings, divided by alleys. Every window seemed to have something being shot from it.

The gunfire sounded like popcorn. The tracer bullets still had a faint glow in the daylight.

I instinctively targeted each of these windows.

Much like trying to hit the gopher with the hammer at the arcade, trying to pick one window out of twenty is very difficult. In the confusion, the order came to "shoot anything the moved".

A logical enough order at the time, considering everything that was moving, was also shooting. With this, our four trucks erupted in a wave of hell that I wouldn't wish on anyone. Within seconds, multiple cars were exploding, balconies were collapsing, and buildings were catching ablaze. We moved from block to block.

Each volley of destruction was triggered by the sound of a bullet racing passed my ear, a rocket exploding nearby, or the vengeful eyes of my friends riding in the truck with me.

"Three O'clock, Second Floor! Five O'clock First Floor! Four O'clock Alley!"

I must have heard every combination.

Me or them

The insurgents would start to flee into other alleys only to be greeted by gunners to my front and rear. It was complete chaos, but we were staying alive.

It was me or them, and if I had anything to say about it, it was going to be them. I filled with a rage that I still cannot explain.

I felt my eyes swelling as my heart beat faster and faster, my arms burning from constantly wrenching the gun from target to target, my pores spewing sweat.

My nostrils grabbed the smell of gunpowder and car fires out of the air, my mouth tasted the gun oil coming off with every recoil, my ears ringing with a loudness almost equal to my surroundings.

All the intensity kept building at an almost exponential rate.

The skirmish lasted for nearly an hour, until it started to calm, resulting in only sporadic gunfire. We remained in place while other units in the area finished their objectives.

The muscles in my body had relaxed, but were still having spasms as the final traces of adrenaline left my blood. The sweat and gunpowder had started to dry into a black dust all over my face and hands.

My mouth was hoarse from yelling to the people in the truck, requesting ammo and water to cool my barrels. During the whole ordeal I never thought to put any water into my own body, and at this point water never tasted so good. I drank half and poured the rest of the bottle over my face.

I dropped the empty bottle down into the truck, which caused a small avalanche of spent shell casings to fall into the floorboards of the truck.

Over 700 of varying calibers covered my feet. I wiped my face with my sleeve, and then it happened.

Missed...

An Iraqi with an AK-47 was running down across the street one block down the alley. I caught him out of the corner of my eye when he was already half way across the street, I quickly swung my gun over, started to fire just before he came into aim, walking the rounds into their intended target; but just as the rounds were about to fall upon him, he made it to the other corner.

I immediately keyed the headset to radio the gunner who was covering the alley he was headed towards.

Before I finished, I heard the gunner down the block fire a burst, followed by some soft chatter on the radio. I don't remember what was being said, because just as that gun cut loose, my attention was fixed on the terror in front of my face.

As the Iraqi had made it out of my field of fire, my gun strafed into a rickety trailer parked right at the corner.

Now falling out from behind this trailer was the body of a teenage boy. The void in his chest replaced what was once his heart and his body convulsed slightly as his nerve endings fired their last.

His body lay there in the filthy dirty street, muddy water surrounding him from the drainage of the nearby houses. A rolling pain stared at my eyes.

I felt it work its way through the optic nerve, and into my brain. It swirled around at the top of my spine, and then drained down.

Sickening

Nausea filled my stomach and a cold feeling overtook my flesh. How long had he been behind that trailer? Had he been there through the whole mess? Not to long afterwards, an older man emerged from around a corner, immediately collapsing next to the young man's body.

It wasn't long before an ambulance arrived. Then the silence took over again. We would remain in place for another hour so, and then return back to the base, but my mind remains there to this day.

I was told a million times after that day, that what happened was completely out of my control, a series of unfortunate events.

A patriot might say "You did it for you country", while others scream baby killer, and hindsight is always 20/20.

**Father says he's proud, friends ask what happened to the person they used to know, and the families of those who died, friend and foe, grieve endlessly.**

**I've torn it apart a million times in my head, re-evaluated over and over again, each time with the same result. It was unavoidable, at that moment in time.**

**Everyone has their own tragedy, which relative to themselves, is equally painful to them as this was to me.**

**It is these events that shape us in our many facets.**

**In the end, we're the ones that have to live with it, but even if I got off easy.**

**I'm alive.**

**Hellblazer**

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Three Soldiers Killed In Baghdad, Two Wounded**

27 November 2006 Multi-National Corps Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20061127-03

BAGHDAD: Three Multi National Division Baghdad Soldiers were killed during combat operations in the Iraqi capital at approximately 9 a.m. Nov. 26.

Two other Soldiers were injured in the incident.

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### **Two Marines Killed In Combat In Al Anbar Province**

26 November 2006 Multi-National Corps Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE  
No. 20061126-02

One Marine assigned to Regimental Combat Team 5 and one Marine assigned to Regimental Combat Team 7 died Saturday from wounds sustained due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province.

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## **One Soldier Killed, Two Others Wounded By Diyala IED**

26 November 2006 Multi-National Corps Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE  
No. 20061126-03

TIKRIT, Iraq: A Task Force Lightning Soldier assigned to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, was killed and two others were wounded when an improvised explosive device detonated near their vehicle while they were conducting operations in Diyala Province Saturday.

The two wounded Soldiers were transported to Coalition Forces' medical treatment facilities.

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## **F-16CG Jet Down In Anbar, Pilot Killed**

11/27/2006 BAGHDAD (AP) & By Yehuda Gruber, Reuters

FALLUJA: An F-16 fighter on a combat mission near Baghdad crashed on Monday, and the pilot appeared to have died after ejecting.

A local journalist who shot film of the wreckage of the plane after it came down north of Falluja in Iraq's western Anbar province said he was in no doubt the pilot was dead.

The film showed the bloodied and motionless body of what appeared to be a man in a flight suit wearing a parachute harness lying in a field strewn with the wreckage of the plane.

The F-16CG jet was supporting coalition ground forces when it went down at about 1:35 p.m.

Mohammed Al-Obeidi, an Iraqi who lives in the nearby town of Karmah, said by telephone that he saw the jet flying up and down erratically before it nose-dived and exploded in a farm field.

He said other U.S. warplanes rushed to the crash site and were circling around it.

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# French Spy Killed In Basra, Another Wounded

November 28, 2006 News Limited

A FRENCH secret service agent was killed by militiamen last week at a checkpoint in the southern Iraqi city of Basra, the French defence ministry said.

France never releases operational details about its DGSE foreign intelligence service and announced the death only after Defence Minister Michele Alliot-Marie had attended the dead man's funeral.

"On November 21, a non-commissioned officer of the (DGSE) was killed by a local militia during an inspection at a checkpoint in Basra in southern Iraq," the ministry said. It gave no further details of the incident.

Le Point magazine reported on its website that a second agent was seriously wounded in the attack and flown back to France on Saturday.

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## Seven British Soldiers Wounded In Basra

11/26/06 KUNA

Seven British soldiers were injured when members of a local militia attacked their military base in the southern Iraqi city of Basra, a spokesman for the British forces said in a statement Sunday.

The militants launched missiles at the military base at Shatt Al-Arab Hotel, in the center of Basra causing injuries to seven British servicemen. The soldiers were taken for treatment to a British field hospital in Al-Shuaiba area, south of Basra.

**British soldiers and their headquarters are constantly the target of rocket attacks and armed clashes, the last of which took place last week when a soldier was killed in an armed clash west of Basra.**

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## Slocum Grad Injured In Explosion In Iraq

November 21, 2006 By BETH FOLEY, The Palestine Herald

**A 24-year-old Slocum High School graduate serving in the U.S. Army became the first reported casualty from Anderson County in Iraq late last week.**



Sgt. Bradley Gruetzner, 24, was critically injured Wednesday in Baquba, located in the Diyala province north of Baghdad, when an improvised explosive device, or IED, exploded near a Humvee carrying Gruetzner and three other soldiers from 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division deployed from Fort Hood.

Two — Sgt. 1st Class Schuyler B. Haynes, 40, of New York, and Spc. Mitchel T. Mutz, 23, of Falls City, Texas — were killed and Gruetzner and one other were wounded by the blast, which is under Army investigation, according to family members.

Gruetzner initially was treated in Iraq before being flown to Germany and then on to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, where he currently is being treated.

According to family members, Gruetzner suffered numerous serious injuries from the blast, including burns over 15 percent of his body, head trauma, a broken collarbone and ribs, punctured lungs and internal injuries. As of Monday afternoon, Gruetzner remained in a coma, his mother said.

“Bradley is critical but he is stable. He does have head trauma and burns,” Debbie Gruetzner said Monday afternoon, adding that the family was thankful to have him at Brooke. “From what we’ve been told, this is the best hospital in the country for this.”

Gruetzner’s wife, Rachel, said she was notified by a phone call from an Army official to the home of her husband’s parents, Burl and Debbie Gruetzner of Palestine, that her husband had been injured.

“He told me Brad had been involved in an accident,” Rachel Gruetzner said. “He wasn’t sure how bad.”

After more phone calls from Army officials, the Gruetzners were told that their son would be flown to Lundstahl Hospital in Germany and that they should fly to Washington, D.C. as quickly as possible to get their passports in order to possibly join him in Germany if his condition was not stable enough to fly to the United States.

Rachel’s step-father, Jerry Karriker, drove the three to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport for a flight to Washington, where they received word that Brad Gruetzner had stabilized enough to be flown back to the U.S. They were able to join him on the med-evac flight from Andrews Air Force Base to San Antonio, where they arrived Sunday night.

He received a skin graft Monday, with a good report afterward from his attending medical staff, according to Rachel Gruetzner.

“They did a skin graft surgery this morning,” Rachel Gruetzner said by phone Monday afternoon. “They said it went real good.”

Another positive sign, according to Debbie Gruetzner, came when doctors examined his neck Monday.

“They got to take his collar off his neck,” Debbie Gruetzner said, “because he’s not got neck fractures.”

Gruetzner’s current tour of duty in Iraq, which began this fall, isn’t his first. He deployed the first time to Iraq in January 2004 for 14 months as part of a tank crew with the 1st Cavalry, and was awarded the Medal of Valor for his efforts in helping to rescue 25 soldiers and civilians from a convoy ambushed in April 2004.

After his initial enlistment period ended, Gruetzner signed up for another four years, this time training to be a scout.

Ironically, Gruetzner had told a reporter during a May 2005 interview at the Texas State Railroad’s Armed Forces Weekend that seeing the show of support at the railroad park for the military had touched him, especially after recent combat experience in Iraq.

“When they say ‘thank you,’ it means a lot, especially when you are in a combat zone,” Gruetzner had said. “Knowing that people are here for you and supporting you really means a lot.” Now the support has become more than just pats on the back and hand shakes.

News of his injuries spread quickly throughout family and friends in the community.

Slocum High School Principal Cliff Lassiter said Monday that the school had fielded many phone calls from people wanting to know what had happened to one of its own, a young man described as a “good student” who had qualified for the 2000 Class A state track meet in the 3200-meter run as a senior and had played basketball and baseball, and whose sister Julie Gruetzner just graduated.

Lassiter, who had coached Gruetzner in cross country and track, said he was saddened to hear the news about a student he remembered as “a great kid at school. “He was the type of kid you could take anywhere and not have to worry about him,” Lassiter said. “A lot of people have sent up a lot of prayers for him. He’s definitely in our prayers.” According to Rachel Gruetzner’s mother, Kaye Karriker, and Debbie Gruetzner, several area churches have placed Gruetzner on their prayer lists.

Karriker’s co-workers have established a fund at Capital One Bank to help with expenses.

The Karrikers are watching their 2-year-old granddaughter, Brayden, to allow her mother to remain in San Antonio at her husband’s hospital room. Other family members are watching homes and picking up mail, Debbie Gruetzner said. “We have tons of family that are helping,” Debbie Gruetzner said.

In the meantime, they plan to be at Gruetzner’s side.

“It’s going to be a long process,” his mother said. “Everything’s a wait-and-see. It’s very hard.”

When asked about her husband’s outlook, Rachel Gruetzner said it was too early to tell.

“I’m not sure yet,” she said. “I just keep thinking baby steps first.”

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# Michigan Soldier Wounded

November 23, 2006 By Sarita Chourey, Kalamazoo Gazette

The call came at 5 a.m.

Ken Schuring picked up the phone, barely awake. It was Lynn, his daughter-in-law. She said his son K.C., a Marine in Iraq, had been shot three times -- twice in the leg and once in the head.

"So many things go through your head," Schuring said from his Portage office at John Schuring Jr. Insurance Agency. "Is he all right? Will he survive? I don't wish this on anyone."

For 12 hours last week he knew nothing, except that his 37-year-old son was on his way to Germany for medical attention.

Today, as families across the country give thanks for prosperity and well-being, the Schurings will be giving thanks for K.C.'s survival.

For the last five years, Ken Schuring has spent Thanksgiving in Farmington Hills with K.C., Lynn, and their two children, Carolynn, 7, and Christian, 11. This year he'll spend it with one of his other two sons, Chad, who works in the insurance office with him, or Ben, while K.C. is recuperating at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland.

When Schuring received word from Lynn that K.C. was going to be all right, he said, "It took a giant weight right off me. I hollered out to the front office, 'Chad! He's OK!'"

The next day, Schuring was able to reach his son by telephone.

"I said, 'K.C., what happened?' He said, 'I don't want to leave. I haven't completed my mission.'"

During that mission one morning last week, Maj. K.C. Schuring was shot by snipers. American and Iraqi troops were searching for arms and explosives in a city in northern Iraq when a bullet spun K.C.'s helmet and grazed his head, his father said.

He was knocked unconscious just before a second bullet severed his femur and a third lodged in his calf. Two fellow American soldiers dragged him off the road and into a courtyard. He told his father he never felt the bullets enter his body. Schuring said K.C., who had been in Iraq for two months, said he was sure he had killed one of the men who had shot him before he went down. What happened to the other shooter, he doesn't know.

A graduate of Portage Central High School and Hope College, where he was an art major, K.C. was working in quality control for a company in the Farmington Hills area that makes parts for General Electric before shipping out to Iraq.

Earlier this week, K.C. arrived at Bethesda to receive treatment for an infection in his leg and to have metal pieces inserted to reconnect his femur.

Ken Schuring said Thanksgiving has never been so meaningful. "I'll never forget this. We're all very, very thankful he's back in the U.S. again and is going to get excellent care here," he said.

"Hopefully he'll be home for Christmas."

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## **U.S. Military Post Mortared And Burning In Eastern Baghdad: Stupid Lt. Col. Pretends Resistance Attack A Big Secret; Casualties Not Announced**

November 26, 2006 The Associated Press

**BAGHDAD, Iraq: Two mortar rounds hit a U.S. military post in eastern Baghdad on Sunday, setting it on fire, police and witnesses said.**

A large cloud of black smoke was seen rising above Baladiyat, a predominantly Shiite area of capital, at about 3 p.m.

**Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl, a U.S. military spokesman, confirmed that "indirect fire rounds" had landed in the vicinity of the coalition forward operating base, but he refused to describe the results of the attack, saying that would allow "the enemy" to assess its effectiveness. [One guide to it's effectiveness is how hard this silly man is working to deny it had any effectiveness. No, not the "vicinity of," silly man. The witnesses and the local cops fucked up that lie. And gee, guess what, whoever launched the attack has better intelligence than Lt. Col. Bletchhole. And more intelligence, obviously.]**

He said the strike was launched from just outside nearby Sadr City, the Shiite slum where more than 200 people were killed on Thursday. Bleichwehl said other indirect fire attacks were launched on Saturday from the same area at the Sunni-Arab neighborhood of Azamiyah in north Baghdad.

**No casualties were reported by Bleichwehl or by police Capt. Mohammed Abdul-Ghani, who said Iraqi security forces didn't have access to the U.S. military post.**

**Residents witnessed the Baladiyat attack spoke on condition of anonymity out of concern for their own security.**

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# ***Great Moments In U.S. Military History:*** **Massacre In Husseinia;** **“The Americans Showed Up And Started Firing At Homes. They Killed Many People”**

11/27/2006 BAGHDAD (AP)

Police and witnesses also said U.S. soldiers shot and killed 11 civilians and wounded five on Sunday night in Husseinia, a suburb about 13 miles outside northeast Baghdad.

The U.S. military said it could not immediately confirm that such an attack had taken place. The police and witnesses spoke with Associated Press Television News on condition of anonymity to protect their own security.

**"We were sitting inside our house when the Americans showed up and started firing at homes. They killed many people and burned some houses,"** said one of the witnesses, a man with bandages on his head who was being treated at Imam Ali Hospital in Sadr City.

On Monday, about 250 attended a memorial service outside the hospital's morgue for the 11 victims, saying it was being conducted in the slum because the dead had been followers of radical anti-American Shiite cleric [translation: not very radical but anti-Bush-occupation nationalist politician] Muqtada al-Sadr. The cleric and his Madhi Army militia are both based in Sadr City.

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Occupation Soldier Killed, Three Wounded In Uruzgan And Panjwaij; Nationality Not Announced**

11/26/06 CanWest

Insurgents attacked occupation forces Saturday near Tirin Kot district in Uruzgan province. One NATO soldier was also killed in the incident.

In the Panjwayi district of Kandahar province, insurgents fired upon Afghan National Army and NATO soldiers Saturday. Three NATO soldiers were injured.

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## **2 Canadian Troops Killed In Afghanistan**

Nov 27 The Associated Press

A car bomber attacked a convoy of foreign troops in southern Afghanistan on Monday, killing two Canadian soldiers and an Afghan civilian, police said.

The attacker drove his car up to the convoy and detonated the bomb near a gate into Kandahar city, said provincial police chief Ismatullah Alizai. Another civilian was wounded.

Maj. Luke Knittig, a spokesman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force, confirmed that two ISAF soldiers were killed.

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## **Assorted Resistance Action**

Nov. 25 (Xinhua) & 11/26/06 CanWest

An explosion toward a military vehicle slightly injured an Afghan soldier in Afghan capital Kabul.

A bomber blew himself up at a restaurant in southeastern Afghanistan on Sunday, killing 15 people and wounding 24 including an Afghan special forces commander and a district chief who were apparently targeted for the attack.

The restaurant, in southeast Paktika province, was destroyed, said provincial governor Mohammad Akram Akhpelwak.

Akhpelwak said the attacker, who was Pakistani, was believed to be targeting the special forces commander and the district chief, who were at the restaurant and were among the injured.

In Zabul province, about 50 Taliban fighters attacked the Arghandab district chief compound on Saturday and clashed with police for about an hour,

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**TROOP NEWS**

# Italy To Complete Troop Withdrawal From Iraq Within Days

ROME, Nov. 27 (Xinhua)

Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi said on Monday that Italy will complete its troop withdrawal from Iraq by Dec. 2 after the last soldiers turn over their base in southern Iraq to Iraqi forces.

In an interview with local television Telegiornale, Prodi said that Italy currently has only 60 to 70 troops left in Nassiriyah and they will be back home between Dec. 1 and 2.

Prodi added that he talked about the pullout with U.S. President George W. Bush and the latter voiced regret about it.

Pulling all Italian troops out of Iraq by the year-end was a campaign pledge made by Prodi, whose party narrowly won the April parliamentary election.

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## Iraq Vets Needing Help Up 100,000 This Year: Government Adds 8 Staff Positions Since 2002

Nov. 27, 2006 Contra Costa Times [Excerpts]

AMERICAN VETERAN facilities and troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are at the eye of what might best be described as an imperfect storm.

We see signs that the number of troops needing assistance is about to overwhelm the Veteran Affairs medical system, especially the mental health system.

The number of vets seeking counseling or treatment for mental health issues more than doubled from 4,467 in October of 2005 to 9,103 in June. And the number needing other forms of help transitioning from military to civilian life more than tripled, jumping from 43,682 to 144,227.

Yet, the number of staff positions added to deal with such problems since 2002 is only eight.

Critics already contend the 206 vet centers throughout the country are understaffed and can't meet the demand for mental-health and counseling services needed now by veterans and their families.

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## IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

# Crowd Stones Iraq Collaborator Prime Minister's Motorcade



Security personnel surround the vehicle of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki as it leaves Baghdad's Sadr city November 26, 2006. Angry Iraqis threw rocks at Maliki's motorcade during his visit on Sunday to pay his respects to some of the 202 victims of last week's devastating bombing. (Mohammed Ameen/Reuters)

November 27, 2006 Reuters

The motorcade of Iraq's Prime Minister has been pelted with stones by fellow Shiites in a Baghdad slum when he paid respects to some of the 200 who died there last week.

The anger in Sadr City, stronghold of the Medhi Army, boiled over on the third day of a curfew imposed on the capital by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's US-backed national unity coalition as it scrambled desperately to stop popular passions exploding into all-out civil.

**"It's all your fault!" one man shouted as, in unprecedented scenes, a crowd began to surge around Mr Maliki.**

Men and youths then jeered and jostled as his armoured convoy edged through the throng away from a mourning ceremony for one of the 202 victims of Thursday's multiple car bomb attack in Sadr City.

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# **Resistance Blows Up Oil Pipeline Feeling Beiji Refinery, Again: Fire Out Of Control; All Kirkuk Oil Fields Shut Down**

11.27.06 Breaking News

A mortar attack started a huge fire tonight at an oil facility near Kirkuk, site of some of Iraq's richest crude deposits, an official at North Oil has reported.

The official said two mortar rounds hit a pipeline filtering facility 25 kilometres (15 miles) northwest of Kirkuk at 6:30pm, shutting down the flow of crude to the massive Beiji refinery to the southwest.

The fire was burning out of control and could take hours or longer to extinguish, the official said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to reporters.

He said the flow of oil from all of Kirkuk's rich fields had been shut down as well.

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# **Resistance Blows Up Oil Pipeline Feeding Baghdad, Again**

November 27, 2006 (AP)

A bomb exploded under an oil pipeline and set it on fire Monday south of Baghdad, and Iraqi and U.S. forces were sent to secure the area, police said.

No injuries were reported in the blast near Mahmoudiya, about 20 miles south of Baghdad, said police 1st Lt. Haider Satar. He said the bomb had been planted beneath the pipeline, which carries crude oil from storage tanks in nearby Latifiyah to the Dora refinery in Baghdad.

The U.S. command said Iraqi and American forces were deployed to the area as Iraqi firefighters battled the blaze, and Satar said the fire was out by about noon.

Since the U.S.-led war toppled Saddam Hussein in March 2003, the country's oil industry has suffered many such attacks on its pipelines, which run through remote areas of the country.

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# **“When The Americans Entered The Country And Kicked Saddam Out, We Were Very Happy” “But Then We Discovered Their Bad Intentions Against Iraq”**

**“I am very proud of any kind of accusation against me, especially related to the occupiers and those who serve the occupation.”**

**On Internet bulletin boards he is hailed as a Shi'ite hero. A typical message reads, "Abu Deraa is a hero to all oppressed people on earth, fighting international tyranny of U.S. forces and fighting domestic tyranny."**

Nov. 26, 2006 By APARISIM GHOSH, BAGHDAD, Time Magazine [Excerpts]

It was one of the most audacious operations, although not a single shot was fired. On the morning of Nov. 14, dozens of men wearing police commando uniforms pulled up in a fleet of pickup trucks at a building belonging to Iraq's Ministry of Higher Education. They fanned out across the four floors and herded everybody--staff and visitors--into a single room. All of them were ordered to hand over their cell phones. Then the women were taken into another room and locked in. About 150 men were marched outside, bundled into the pickup trucks and driven away. The whole operation took just 15 minutes.

When word of the kidnappings reached the control room of the Ministry of the Interior, an officer on duty there suspected immediately that the perps were acting on the orders of a fearsome Shi'ite militia warlord whose deeds the officer had been tracking for three years. "A ministry of mainly Sunni staff, 150 people taken captive--it can only be one thing," he says. "It had to be the work of Abu Deraa."

**Abu Deraa agreed last week to provide written responses to TIME's questions, which were passed to him by intermediaries.**

**He says his fight is against "occupiers, their supporters and takfiris"--a reference to Sunni insurgents linked to al-Qaeda.**

**He denied that he had kidnapped al-Taie, the missing U.S. soldier, but added, "I would be very proud if it was me who kidnapped that soldier, and I am very proud of any kind of accusation against me, especially related to the occupiers and those who serve the occupation."**

**He said he was motivated by a "sense of holy duty toward my faith (to fight) against any hostile enemy of my faith."**

Abu Deraa was born Ismail al-Zarjawi to a poor family in Sadr City. After a career in petty crime during the Saddam Hussein years, he became one of the first recruits of al-Sadr's Mahdi Army after the dictator's fall.

**"When the Americans entered the country and kicked Saddam out, we were very happy," Abu Deraa says. "But then we discovered their bad intentions against Iraq, so we started attacking the occupation forces."**

In the spring of 2004 he participated in the Shi'ite uprising against U.S. forces in Sadr City. That was also when he earned his nom de guerre Abu Deraa, or "Father of the Shield," a reference to his penchant for attacking U.S. armored vehicles.

He saw more action that summer in Najaf and that fall in Fallujah, when a small detachment of Shi'ites fought alongside Sunni insurgents against U.S. forces. Back then, he says, "it was a real resistance, and there was no sectarian affiliation."

Abu Deraa spent the next year consolidating his position as a Mahdi Army leader, first among equals of three commanders in Sadr City.

Unlike al-Zarqawi, Abu Deraa issued no statements and released no videos, except for a semicomical webcast, available on YouTube, that shows him offering a Pepsi to a camel. Still, his renown has spread beyond Iraq.

**On Internet bulletin boards he is hailed as a Shi'ite hero. A typical message reads, "Abu Deraa is a hero to all oppressed people on earth, fighting international tyranny of U.S. forces and fighting domestic tyranny."**

The ruthlessness of Abu Deraa--and perhaps his growing fame on the Shi'ite street--has caused even al-Sadr to distance himself from his former protégé. Last month al-Sadr put Abu Deraa on a list of people no longer part of the Mahdi Army.

As long as Abu Deraa enjoys al-Sadr's tacit protection, he won't be easy to run down. U.S. forces believed they had him surrounded in Sadr City last month, but the militia leader narrowly escaped.

**A U.S. air strike is believed to have killed several of his closest fighters and severed an arm of one of his sons. "This is an honor for him, me and the family," Abu Deraa told TIME.**

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

11.26.06 By BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press Writer & Reuters & 27 Nov 2006  
Reuters & AP

A car bomber slammed into an Iraqi police checkpoint on a highway near a Sunni mosque in Mahmoudiya city Sunday morning, killing five policemen and wounding 23, said police Capt. Muthanna Khalid Ali.

Scores of militants armed with assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades attacked government buildings in the center of Baqouba.

The fighting raged for hours in Baqouba, which is 60 kilometers (35 miles) northeast of Baghdad. Iraqi police have reported no casualties.

Several explosions occurred in central Baghdad near the Green Zone, where Iraq's government and the U.S. and British embassies are based. One sent up a large cloud of black smoke on the opposite side of the Tigris River, but no casualties were immediately reported.

**Forces of Moqtada al-Sadr Saturday seized the state television channel for a two-hour broadcast denouncing the government.**

**During the broadcast, three members of parliament answered questions from residents of Baghdad's Sadr City neighborhood at a community center, McClatchy Newspapers reported.**

Militants attacked a checkpoint near Dujail, 90 km (55 miles) north of Baghdad, and captured eight policemen, police said. A ninth policeman was wounded but managed to escape. One policeman was killed and another wounded when their patrol arrived at the scene and was ambushed.

Insurgents attacked a Baghdad municipal office in central Baghdad and killed a guard and captured three others, an Interior Ministry source said.

A police major was killed while he was trying to dismantle a roadside bomb in the oil refinery city of Baiji, 180 km (112 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Clashes erupted between guerrillas and police during the night, killing three policemen and one insurgent in Tal Afar, about 420 km (260 miles) north of Baghdad.

In the southern Baghdad district of Dora, armed men in two cars attacked a police patrol at 8:30 a.m., wounding six policemen, said police 1st Lt. Abdul Razzaq.

A half-hour later, other armed fighters attacked an Iraqi army checkpoint, wounding four soldiers, he said.

A police commando was killed and another wounded when guerrilla fighters attacked their patrol in west Baghdad, an Interior Ministry source said.

A policeman was killed and four were wounded when militants attacked their checkpoint in west Baghdad, an Interior Ministry source said.

Police captain Abdul-Qadir Abbas was captured outside the Sheikh Zayid hospital in central Baghdad, an Interior Ministry source said.

Gunmen killed an off-duty policeman in the northern city of Mosul.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

# **The Notion Of An Apathetic (And, Presumably, Politically Contented) American Majority Took A Thumping**

**[This one is dedicated to all those elitist snots out there who spend so much time whining about how ordinary Americans are “apathetic.” Sneering, posturing, and loudly praising themselves for being so much more brilliant than all those “apathetic” people they despise, they’re only so many pus pimples on the face of progress.**

**[How fortunate that their self-referential contempt for those they consider less well informed and less well educated than themselves is returned with interest by the 75% of Americans who may never have had the money to buy a college degree, but are far wiser about what reality is than these endlessly babbling and chattering assholes of the windy brigade. Fuck ‘em. Anytime you hear somebody whining about “apathetic masses,” you know you hearing an elitist scumbag in action. Your time would be better spent listening to commercials on TV. T]**

November 17, 2006 By Sharon Smith, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

COMMENTING ON the results of Election Day 2006, Republican Party pollster Bill McInturff told the Wall Street Journal that Republicans faced “the most difficult environment since Watergate,” referring to the scandal that forced President Richard Nixon to resign from office in 1974.

This is encouraging news for everyone who has spent the last week celebrating the Republican Party’s “thumping” by the angry electorate, to quote the visibly disoriented president, fumbling for words, in a White House press conference the day after.

Within 24 hours after the polls closed, we were treated to the sight of Donald Rumsfeld, no longer sneering, but instead choking back tears, during his brief Oval Office “resignation” ceremony, before Bush’s handlers quickly shuffled him permanently out of sight.

The seemingly unstoppable Bush regime unraveled with stunning rapidity when faced with a massive voter rebellion last Tuesday.

**The widely accepted notion of the apathetic (and, presumably, politically contented) American majority also took a thumping.**

**According to the New York Times' exit polls, six in 10 voters said their vote was based on national, not local, issues.**

**The same percentage disapproved of the war in Iraq and said the war had not increased the security of the United States.**

Six in 10 voters also disapproved of the way Congress was handling its job.

There was also a class component to the Democrats' victories. About half of all voters said they had just enough money to continue at their present standard of living (otherwise known as living a paycheck or two away from poverty), while one-fifth said they were falling behind financially.

THE DEMOCRATS must also appreciate that their victories in the November 7 elections were due in large part to a shift in corporate loyalties.

The Republican Party has traditionally been the preferred party of laissez faire capitalism. But the Democratic Party remains the corporate party-in-waiting, preserving the same class loyalties with compromises aimed at curbing mass discontent when it threatens the class status quo.

Corporate dollars began to shift to the Democratic side in the weeks before the 2006 election, signaling a ruling-class consensus on the need to shift from "Plan A" to "Plan B." It cannot be a coincidence that Rep. Mark Foley's sexual indiscretions became media fodder just six weeks before the election, since they were well known, apparently, years ago. While it is a pleasure to watch the mainstream media attacking Bush ruthlessly now, their corporate sponsors approved and encouraged the media's about-face.

Given the limits of the two-party system, the Republicans' loss was the Democrats' gain. But the message was unmistakable. As the Chicago Tribune noted on November 8, "This was an election driven by feelings of rejection far more than embrace."

BUT THE Democratic victories have led to a rise in mass expectations for an end to the Iraq war, a raise in the minimum wage, and an end to political corruption.

And the Democrats have no plans to shake things up.

**This election was widely touted as a referendum on the war. But so far, Democrats have provided only a vaguely worded "phased withdrawal" of U.S. troops from Iraq at an unspecified future date.**

**In a post-election interview with ABC News' Diane Sawyer, likely 2008 presidential contender Barack Obama backpedaled on his earlier pledge to begin withdrawing troops by the end of this year: "I think now it's too late to try to start something before the end of the year."**

Michigan Democrat Carl Levin, in line to become chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, was more explicit.

“We have to tell the Iraqis that the open-ended commitment is over and that we’re going to begin to have a phased withdrawal in four to six months,” he threatened, as if Iraqis invited the U.S. to invade their country in 2003 and are now taking advantage of Americans’ waning goodwill.

**The watchword of the victorious Democrats remains “bipartisanship.”**

**This is not surprising, since a U.S. defeat in Iraq would be on par with the humiliation U.S. imperialism suffered after its defeat in Vietnam. And both Democrats and Republicans are, after all, pro-war, imperialist parties.**

This should be a wakeup call to everyone who wants an end to the Iraq war, a raise in the minimum wage, a step forward for immigrants rights, and an end to politics-as-usual in Washington.

The door for social change is opening, but we must take action to achieve it.

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

## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

# **Short Life Expectancy For Collaborators Serving Foreign Occupation “Fallujah’s Police Force Would Crumble Without The Support Of U.S. Forces”**

# **“If We Train Them To Be Snipers It Could Be That One Day Soon They Are Firing At Us”**

**Fallujah is in the heart of Anbar and has a history of bloody struggle against foreign armies dating back to the days of Alexander the Great.**

**"The government is incapable of controlling the country.**

November 26, 2006 The Associated Press [Excerpts]

The 22-year-old police officer wraps a black scarf around his face when on patrol. He sleeps in the station and sees his new bride only a few hours a month. He watches his colleagues get shot and blown to pieces and wonders if he will be next.

**"I have to wear a mask because I'm from the city. When I do my duty the guerrillas can recognize me," said the officer, Kalid, who said having his last name appear in print would put his life in danger. [Not "terrorists," note well. "Guerrillas," the traditional term for those fighting back against a hated government, most often a hated foreign government occupying your country. He knows, even if the idiots in command try to pretend they don't.]**

"If they find out who I am, they will kill me within the hour. I hope they don't do it in front of my wife. I hope they don't make her watch."

Hundreds of police have been killed during those efforts, however, especially in al-Anbar, a western, overwhelmingly Sunni Arab province roughly the size of North Carolina that's home to 1.4 million and choked with insurgents battling 20,000 U.S. Marines spread thinly throughout the region.

**Fallujah is in the heart of Anbar and has a history of bloody struggle against foreign armies dating back to the days of Alexander the Great.**

The city was a stronghold for insurgents until November 2004, when U.S. forces stormed it, triggering the bloodiest urban combat of the war.

**Despite American efforts to maintain order, things here are starting to heat up again, with gunbattles, roadside bombs and snipers killing scores of Marines.**

Insurgents who cannot get to U.S. forces often slaughter police instead. **[This is surprising piece of stupidity. First, the resistance has been killing U.S. troops in Anbar at a higher rate than anywhere else in Iraq. Second, the local collaborator cops are not a substitute target; they're part of the war for national liberation from the occupation, just like French collaborator cops were targeted by the French resistance during the German occupation during World War II.]**



Last month, 18 police officers in Fallujah and its outskirts were killed. That number was down from the summer when 30 officers, an average of one every day, were slain.

"I'm a cop in Philly but being a cop in Fallujah isn't like being a cop in Philly," said Maj. Brian Lippo, a Marine reservist who heads a police transition team assigned to the city. "These guys aren't doing accident reports or domestic violence calls. They are hunted."

Made up almost entirely of locals, Lippo said the force has about 600 officers report for duty daily.

**Despite U.S. efforts, those numbers have been slow to increase because between 30 percent and 40 percent of those who graduate from police academies in Jordan and other places desert during their first few months back in Fallujah, he said.**

Those who flee so quickly have raised fears that they only joined to get a gun, uniform and police ID card, which then can help them facilitate killings and kidnappings for insurgents.

Kalid, the officer who didn't want his full name published, said Fallujah residents continue to sign up to be police not because of ties to insurgents but because there's few other ways to make a living since the start of the war. He said most who flee the service after a short period do so because they can't take the constant fear of being killed.

"We've lost too many officers," said Kalid, who married five months ago but said it's too dangerous to see his wife more than for one or two hours at a time, twice a month.

Lippo and other Marines assigned to train and protect the police have their own command post in the station, which is surrounded by blast walls and barbed wire and has sand bags piled high enough to block second-floor windows.

Their faces covered and bodies bundled in bulletproof vests and Kevlar helmets, Iraqi officers on patrol move in groups of at least three to make it tougher for would-be kidnappers and killers. Afraid to head home, some sleep on narrow metal bunk beds on the station ground floor.

**There is a jail on the police station's first floor, but it contains just four cells. Few arrests are made in Fallujah because of fears they will cause revenge killings.**

Hamad said he moves his family from house-to-house every three days to ensure their safety and has bodyguards take his children to school.

**He said Fallujah's police force would crumble without the support of U.S. forces.**

**U.S. teams say training efforts have been severely undermined by corruption and bureaucracy, a dearth of basic equipment and Iraqi soldiers' mistrust of those from different Muslim backgrounds and lack of faith in the fledgling central government.**

During a recent late-night operation, Marine helicopters and humvees cordoned off the southern district of Nazaal and two U.S. companies went house-to-house, hunting for

guns, explosives and suspected insurgents. An Iraqi company backed by three American advisers conducted its own search of one section of the neighborhood.

"They are our people and they are just doing their duty," said Abed El-Rahem, who sat in his socks on a couch while soldiers traipsed through his home, tracking mud on fine embroidered carpets.

[T]he Americans complain that much of their time is spent ensuring Iraqi soldiers are paid on time and in-full by the government in Baghdad and that they receive basic equipment such as flashlights and gloves.

**Higher-ups pocket supplies meant for the troops beneath them and many soldiers sell their uniforms and boots while home on leave, then return demanding new ones.**

**"Most of the time we can't advise. We are too busy running around protecting ourselves from attack or just making sure the army has the basics," said Sgt. Thomas J. Ciccarelli, 37, from South Lake Tahoe, California.**

**Part of the problem is the Iraqis don't have enough soldiers to patrol Fallujah. Officially, the 2nd Brigade of the army's 1st Division is more than 700 men from full strength, but problems with understaffing are actually far worse than the statistics indicate because of desertions and "ghost" soldiers who exist on paper and cash pay checks, but have never report for duty.**

Ciccarelli's transition team is supposed to be advising 465 soldiers, but actually interacts with only about 300.

**Lt. Col. James Teeples, a senior adviser to U.S. military training teams in Fallujah, said many of the problems on the ground stem from corruption at the top levels of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense.**

While the average soldier makes less than US\$700 per month, officials pay bribes of US\$15,000 to become brigade commanders, anxious to pocket kickbacks from the lower ranks.

"A good thing to keep in the back of your mind, kind of a realistic expectation, is that none of these guys are 100 percent clean," he said. "I consider them to be all dirty to a certain extent. Therefore when I find out they're dirty I don't get disappointed."

**Teeples said many Iraqi soldiers try to do their job honestly but still supplement their low incomes by stealing supplies like ammunition and selling them on the street.**

**Lt. Javier Torres, a 31-year-old Marine, Brooklyn native and member of the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion's Transition Team, said the advisers are careful not to teach Iraqi soldiers too much.....**

**"If we train them to be snipers it could be that one day soon they are firing at us," he said. "With everything we teach them, we have to be aware that it could eventually become a threat."**

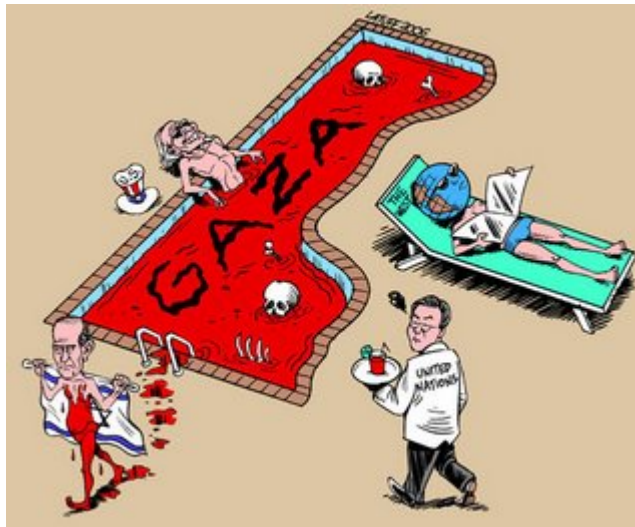
"The government is incapable of controlling the country. The militias are more powerful," he said.

"Many believe that the leaders were placed there by the U.S. and not elected by the people so they don't trust them." [Wow! Imagine that!]

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

## OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

**"Save Gaza Now"**



Carlos Latuff on Gaza

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veterans, who sent this in.]

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

**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**

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Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! ([www.ivaw.net](http://www.ivaw.net))

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