

GI SPECIAL 4K6:



From GI Underground Press: Vietnam Days
[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

**“Disaster” In Iraq
Commanding Officers Cut And
Run:
[Fuck The Troops, Save
Yourself]
“The Generals Were Speaking
Out Because They Could Sense
Disaster. ‘They Can Smell
Failure,’ He Said”**

But he added that military leadership was partly to blame. “We’ve never had a strategy to defeat the insurgency.”

[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

November 06, 2006 By Sean D. Naylor, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

The more sober tone adopted recently by generals regarding events in Iraq has raised eyebrows in Washington, with military and congressional sources saying the blunt rhetoric reflects frustration among military leaders at the worsening situation, as well as their desire to preserve their credibility and insulate themselves from blame if the Iraq war ends in disaster.

[R]etired Army Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg said the change in tone was the result of the Bush administration trying to shift responsibility for the war onto the shoulders of the generals.

“The administration has pushed it to them,” said Kellogg, who retired in October 2003 as the J-6 of the Joint Staff, and who served in Baghdad as chief operating officer of the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Until recently, Army leaders had played “the good soldiers,” he said.

“Now they’re saying, ‘Hey, if my name is going to be associated with this, and the good name of the United States Army is going to be associated with this, and the future of the Army is going to be associated with this, and the trust and confidence of the U.S. people in our Army is going to be associated with this, then by God, I’m going to have a say in it.’”

The generals are attempting to insulate themselves from future criticism that they tried to sugarcoat events in Iraq, he said.

The generals were familiar with “Dereliction of Duty,” the book by now-Col. H.R. McMaster that criticizes the senior military leaders of the Vietnam era for not speaking out as the U.S. slipped into war in Southeast Asia.

They are trying to avoid being written about in the same way, Kellogg said.

Another retired Army leader went further, saying the generals were speaking out because they could sense disaster. “They can smell failure,” he said.

But he added that military leadership was partly to blame.

“We’ve never had a strategy to defeat the insurgency. Our military strategy is essentially to transition to the Iraqi security forces so they can do it. And we’ve relied heavily on the political strategy of establishing an effective government.”

Part of the problem, the retired field grade officer said, was that senior leaders in Iraq, Central Command and the Pentagon let themselves be “seduced” by statistics that indicated more progress was being made than was the case. He cited the number of “trained and equipped” Iraqi troops as an example.

“There have been some serious splashes of cold water put in some people’s faces in the last 60 to 90 days,” he said. The difficulties encountered with Together Forward have “caused them to question all of their assumptions,” he added.

But the generals are also “trying to set the tone” for what might happen at home if the Democrats win control of Congress in the November elections.

“They’re trying to put the record straight (for) when the investigations begin,” he said.

“Part of that is going to be, ‘You never told us the truth about the war.’ The uniformed guys have been trying to say, ‘Hey, this is an ugly war, it’s going to be an ugly war, and don’t tell us we didn’t tell you that.’”

The shift in tone on the part of the generals is not completely consistent. While Caldwell said Oct. 19 that Together Forward had not met U.S. expectations in terms of a reduction of violence in Baghdad, Gen. George Casey, the MNF-I commander, said five days later in a joint press conference with U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad that the additional U.S. brigades sent to Baghdad for the operation have had “a decisive effect.”

“There are some people who have not taken the rose-colored glasses off,” said the retired field grade officer. “Somebody was misinformed, and my money is on it not being Caldwell. ... Caldwell is genetically incapable of lying. Caldwell would only say it if he believed it.”

“Casey and Khalilzad had a press conference because they were trying to correct the impression” that Caldwell created, a Senate staffer said. “I think Caldwell was pretty candid and expressing a frustration that these guys aren’t doing what they ought to be doing.”

But he suggested lawmakers had been hearing similar assessments from military leaders in private. Caldwell’s grim tone “is what they’re used to getting sotto voce, behind closed doors,” a House staffer said.

An active-duty Army general in the Washington area said he was aware of no formal or informal directive from the senior Army leadership that generals were freer to speak their minds about Iraq — but that would be unnecessary.

“It’s certainly not something you can sugarcoat right now,” he said. “We’re down by a couple of touchdowns here.”

[There is one small difference. In football, you don’t bury your mistakes and hand the families a flag at graveside. But for Generals like this, dead and maimed troops in a “disaster” are just so many numbers; what really matters is how they can save their precious careers. T]

President Stops by the Pentagon to Explain His Strategy



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Alaska Marine Killed



Lance Cpl. Nathan Ross Elrod

Oct. 24, 2006 DAVID PERLMUTT, The Charlotte Observer

As a boy, he'd roam the woods near his Salisbury home with paintball guns, playing war games with his buddies.

At East Rowan High School in Salisbury, Nathan Elrod was a soccer player and four-year Junior ROTC cadet.

After graduating in 2004, Elrod and his best pal, Bryan Wylie, joined the Marines together and found themselves experiencing war games with real bullets and bombs.

Saturday, Lance Cpl. Nathan Ross Elrod, 20, died when an explosive device hit his Humvee during combat in Iraq's Anbar province. Three other Camp Lejeune-based Marines also died: Lance Cpl. Clifford R. Collinsworth, 20, of Chelsea, Mich., Lance Cpl. Nicholas J. Manoukian, 22, of Lathrup Village, Mich., and Cpl. Joshua C. Watkins, 25, of Jacksonville, Fla.

"Nathan was always a credit to the Marine Corps," said Col. Rollins Collins, Elrod's ROTC instructor at East Rowan. "Since I first knew him, he always was looking to do some sort of military service."

With his love of rappelling cliffs and playing paintball, the strapping, 6-foot-3-inch Elrod wanted to be an Army Ranger, but a recruiter swayed him to become a Marine. In August, he left for his second tour in Iraq.

He saw little action on his first tour, close friends Laurel Julian and Lauren McLelland said Monday.

On his first tour, Elrod wrote his friends often. But back in Iraq for another seven months, he was too busy to write, so he called whenever he could.

He called a week ago.

"I didn't want to get off the phone with him," Julian said. "He told me not to worry if I didn't hear from him for a couple of weeks. They were very busy.

"I told him I wasn't worried. I just missed him and I wanted him to come home."

McLelland met Elrod at an ROTC camp five years ago, and they became "soul mates," she said. They dated, but decided they'd make better best friends.

"Nathan was the one person I'd do anything for," said McLelland, a freshman at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk who called Elrod "Blondy." He called her "shorty."

"He was such a good guy. He always told me, 'I can be the nicest guy ever, or the biggest jerk you ever met.' In five years, I never saw any jerk in him."

McLelland was on fall break in Maryland on Saturday when she got word about Elrod. She immediately drove home to be with her old friends and his family. At an East Rowan soccer game Monday night, she and others bowed in silence during a tribute to Elrod.

McLelland said Elrod wasn't scared of dying. "He was just worried about what he was leaving behind," she said. "He hated to see his family suffer."

Elrod's family declined to comment Monday.

Julian said Elrod was looking forward to returning in April and finishing his military service in 2007. He planned to become a diesel mechanic.

Sunday, Julian, who called Elrod "NateN," was in Elrod's room at his parents' house, watching videos of him on his digital camera. "It was weird to hear his voice and see him," she said. "It made me happy and sad. NateN made everyone happy."

Another Alaska Marine Killed



Cpl. Michael H. Lasky, 22, of Sterling, Alaska was killed Nov. 2 in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to Marine Forces Reserves 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, 4th Marine Division, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. (AP Photo/Family via Carol Lasky)

Marine Dies From Non Hostile Causes

05 November 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory
RELEASE No. 20061105-02

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: One Marine assigned to Regimental Combat Team 7 died from non-hostile causes Saturday while operating in Al Anbar Province.

For Every Combat Soldier In American And Other Foreign Contingents, There Are Three Performing Support Or Logistics Roles, U.S. Officials Say.

Mcdowell Man Dies Serving In Iraq

October 26, 2006 Lexington Herald-Leader

Lance Cpl. Jonathan B. Thornberry, 22, of McDowell followed his brother, father and grandfather into the military.

In a phone interview yesterday, Jeff Thornberry's voice cracked as he spoke about his only brother, who died earlier this week while serving in Iraq.

'He was a wonderful person,' Jeff Thornberry said. 'He was a good kid ... he loved his daughter and he loved his nephews.'

Jeff Thornberry served in the Air Force until 1998 and had spent time in Iraq. He said his father served in Vietnam and grandfather in World War II.

Jonathan Thornberry died Wednesday while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to Marine Forces Reserve's 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, in Johnson City, Tenn.

Thornberry graduated from South Floyd High School in nearby Hi Hat. He worked in coal mines and joined the reserves in January 2004, Jeff Thornberry said.

'It was just something he wanted to do,' he said.

Jonathan Thornberry married last summer and had a 20-month-old daughter.

'He loved kids,' Jeff Thornberry said. He enjoyed being with his family, hunting and riding four-wheelers.

He'd served in Iraq for about a month.

Jeff Thornberry said he had not talked to his brother since this summer, during a break in training.

Forty-six members of the military from Kentucky have died in Iraq since 2003.

Thornberry is survived by his wife Toni, daughter Haylee Jo, parents Jack and Judy Thornberry and his brother. Funeral arrangements are pending.

'We're still waiting to get him home,' Jeff Thornberry said.

Also yesterday, the Army announced that a Missouri soldier with the 101st Airborne Division based at Fort Campbell was killed Monday when a roadside bomb hit his patrol in Baghdad.

1st Lt. Amos Camden R. Bock, 25, of New Madrid, Mo., was a member of the division's 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade.

NO MISSION; HOPELESS WAR: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. soldier checks motorists at a checkpoint in Baghdad, October 24, 2006. (Namir Noor-Eldeen/Reuters)

Town Mourns Soldier Who Died In Iraq

Oct. 23, 2006 BY JENNIFER BJORHUS, Pioneer Press

A 27-year-old Minnesota soldier died Friday in Baghdad after being injured when a bomb exploded near his vehicle during a combat patrol, the Defense Department said Sunday.

Staff Sgt. Kevin M. Witte, of Beardsley, was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, based in Baumholder, Germany. His wife and son live in Germany.

Witte's close-knit hometown, a farm town of about 250 people on the border with South Dakota, is struggling to accept his death, said his aunt, Beardsley Mayor Mary Sykora.

"Nobody can believe it," she said. "Everyone feels their pain."

Witte, a 1997 graduate of Beardsley High School, was well-known and well-liked in town, Sykora said.

She had seen him earlier this year when he returned home from Germany for the funeral of his father, Marvin Witte, she said. Marvin, a truck driver, died of cancer, she said, and

Kevin Witte's death was the third tragedy for the family in just one year. Witte's grandmother died about a year ago.

"Kevin was a good kid and he was very proud of what he did," she said, adding that he had a lot of medals for his military service.

Rhonda Witte, Kevin's stepmother, declined an interview.

Witte was the 41st Minnesotan to die in connection with the Iraq war, including 10 this year.

A memorial and military funeral in Beardsley is being planned.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Major Killed In Afghanistan

November 4, 2006 Charlevoix, MICH (AP)

A member of the Army's 10th Mountain Division and a father of four was one of three people killed this week by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

Family said 40-year-old Major Douglas Sloan died Tuesday. The military has not yet announced his death.

TROOP NEWS

**“29 % Approve Of The Way Bush
Is Managing The War, Matching
Lowest Mark Of His Presidency”
40 Percent Think Democrats “Would
Seek To Remove All Troops”**

[The greater the illusions about the Democrats, the more profound the anger when they betray. A pissed off 40% would be a lot of people in the streets.]

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

November 2, 2006 By ADAM NAGOURNEY and MEGAN THEE, The New York Times

A substantial majority of Americans expect Democrats to reduce or end American military involvement in Iraq if they win control of Congress next Tuesday and say Republicans will maintain or increase troop levels to try to win the war if they hold on to power on Capitol Hill, according to the final New York Times/CBS News poll before the midterm election.

The poll showed that 29 percent of Americans approve of the way President Bush is managing the war, matching the lowest mark of his presidency.

Nearly 70 percent said Mr. Bush did not have a plan to end the war, and 80 percent said Mr. Bush's latest effort to rally public support for the conflict amounted to a change in language but not policy.

Americans cited Iraq as the most important issue affecting their vote, and majorities of Republicans and Democrats said they wanted a change in approach.

Twenty percent said they thought the United States was winning in Iraq, down from a high this year of 36 percent in January.

Voters said neither Democrats nor Republicans had offered a plan for governing should they win on Tuesday, the poll found.

Forty-one percent of respondents said they expected that troop levels would decrease if Democrats won control, *while 40 percent said the party would seek to remove all troops.*

Forty-one percent said they expected troop levels to remain the same if Republicans won, while 29 percent said they thought the United States would send more troops if the Republicans continued to control Congress.

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

Welsh Troops Condemn Iraq War And Useless Equipment:

“There Was No Reason For Us To Fucking Come Here” “The Army Are A Bunch Of Skinflints”

And Louie doesn't mince his words when asked what he thinks of the vehicle. "It's designed for Northern Ireland, for petrol bombs, stoning and riot control. "It's not designed for roadside bombs and it's not designed to be in the bloody desert," he said. "The Army are a bunch of skinflints and they'll adapt and bodge anything they can to do the job at bare minimum cost."

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

Nov 5 2006 Marc Baker, Wales on Sunday

WELSH soldiers serving on the frontline in Iraq have launched a scathing attack on the Government as pressure mounts for an inquiry into the war.

Our boys in the desert have given Tony Blair a bloody nose just days after the PM narrowly survived a House of Commons vote to force him to launch a probe into his decision to invade Iraq. Tuesday's debate - led by Plaid Cymru MPs - was the first full Commons debate on Iraq since the 2003 invasion.

But the Prime Minister is facing new criticism last after Welsh troops serving with the 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards (The Welsh Cavalry) claimed Whitehall failures were putting their lives at risk.

As well as criticising the quality of their weapons, the soldiers accused Mr Blair of making the UK a greater terror target.

It is the third time the QDG have served in Iraq in the past three years but many of the regiment's troops - of which two-thirds are Welsh - believe their current tour is one too far.

Their attack on the PM - which comes as the QDG reaches the end of its six-month tour of Iraq - follows a National Audit report out last week which warned the Army is understaffed, with rising numbers of personnel quitting early.

The QDG was left shell-shocked in May when two of its soldiers, Lieutenant Tom Mildinhal and Lance Corporal Paul Farrelly, whose mother lives in Anglesey, were killed in a roadside explosion in Basra.

And now, the pair's colleagues have told BBC Wales' Frontline Iraq documentary, to be screened on Wednesday at 10.45pm, of their fears on the frontline.

Corporal Alan 'Louie' Lewis - who spends his days securing military check-points - says Mr Blair was wrong to support America's invasion of Iraq.

He said: "I think we have kicked a hornet's nest, I really do. There was no reason for us to fucking come here. It's an absolute shit hole. I don't want to be here. I want to be somewhere else. I hate doing this mind-numbing job, day in, day out. I hate being here."

Another soldier, known only by the nickname Dav, said: "We have kicked up a hornet's nest and it is going to bite us. I think there is more threat to the UK because we are out here."

With insurgent roadside bombs, sniper fire and grenades always a threat, the Army's casualties are mounting and there are questions over how well protected the men are.

Of particular concern are lightweight Land Rovers - known as snatches - that are frequently used for QDG patrols.

And Louie doesn't mince his words when asked what he thinks of the vehicle.

"It's designed for Northern Ireland, for petrol bombs, stoning and riot control.

"It's not designed for roadside bombs and it's not designed to be in the bloody desert," he said.

"The Army are a bunch of skinflints and they'll adapt and bodge anything they can to do the job at bare minimum cost."

Back home in Bala, Louie's mum Mandy says that she hasn't watched news or current affairs for a year.

"I have to be detached," she says. "Otherwise I can't cope, and if he realises I can't cope he'll worry and that will affect his job."

The same goes for parents Buffy and Philip Jenkins from Tredegar.

Their son Ieuan was just 17 when he joined the QDG. The young squaddie recently celebrated his 18th birthday on the frontline.

Ieuan, who hopes to be back home for Christmas, recently escaped injury himself after witnessing a road-side explosion from his armoured vehicle.

But despite his age, Ieuan has become used to Army life and is learning to get to grips with the heat as well as live weapons and ammunition.

"It's just like using any tool at work," he said. "You're trained to use it so you just get on with it. I don't know how I'd feel about firing at anybody because I've never been in that situation."

His dad Philip said: "I back him, although we may lose him. But I have told him to keep his head down, obey orders and to remember his training."

Falklands War hero Simon Weston says it is now time MPs sat up and listened to what the Welsh troops had to say.

The former Welsh Guard said: "With this now out in the public domain, it is obviously politically damaging."

A Ministry of Defence spokesman would only say: "They are entitled to their views. If soldiers have an opinion they are entitled to say."

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



A U.S. military doctor attends to a wounded U.S. soldier inside an U.S. military hospital at the fortified Green Zone in Baghdad October 30, 2006. REUTERS/Thaier al-Sudani (IRAQ)

Iraq Vet Meets The Enemy: Yells At Bush "I Spent Two Years In Iraq!" "Get Out Of Iraq!"

November 5, 2006 By JIM RUTENBERG, New York Times [Excerpt]

GREELEY, Colo., Nov. 4: President Bush came to Colorado farm country on Saturday to lend support to Representative Marilyn Musgrave, a socially conservative Republican who is facing an unexpectedly tough Democratic challenge this year.

Mr. Bush came to this community of ranchers and farmers in north central Colorado to deliver his blistering message against Democrats on taxes and terrorism.

Just moments before, a war protester who infiltrated the rally stood up on a huge green tractor positioned in the exhibition hall and screamed, “I spent two years in Iraq!” and “Get out of Iraq!”

Security officers quickly pulled the man from the tractor and escorted him out. Mr. Bush continued unfazed.

Outside the hall, a group of war protesters held signs like “West Point Graduates Against the War.”

“Harold’s In There, He Just Hasn’t Figured Out How To Come Out Yet”



Harold Gray

November 02, 2006 Written by Jennifer Osborn, Ellsworth American, Inc.

PENOBSCOT: Sgt. Harold Gray, the local soldier wounded in Iraq, has begun showing signs of improvement, his father said.

Gray, 35, is a member of the Maine Army National Guard's 133rd Engineer Battalion. He suffered serious shrapnel injuries after a roadside bomb hit a convoy he had been riding in Dec. 26, 2004, in Mosul.

Gray has been at Togus VA Medical Center since July 2005 after spending six months at hospitals in Florida and Washington, D.C.

His father, George Gray, said Harold has been giving the “thumbs up” sign. When questioned, Gray has been blinking twice to answer “yes” and once to answer “no,” the elder Gray said. He can move his limbs and squeeze someone’s hand on command.

“He’s just doing good,” said Gray. “One of his main doctors who sees him says Harold’s in there, he just hasn’t figured out how to come out yet.”

“It’s been a long time,” Gray said. “So many ups and downs. I’ve said goodbye to him two or three times. It wasn’t because I wanted him to leave, but I wanted what’s best for him.”

The soldier’s wife, Laurie, travels to Augusta every day to take care of her husband. George Gray goes Saturdays. Harold Gray’s mother visits Sundays. The rest of the family, which includes the soldier’s young daughters, Natalie, Mercedes and Isabelle, visit as well.

When asked about his thoughts on the war, Gray said, “I don’t like it, but I don’t see how we can back out.”

“It’s hard every day to hear about some other boy getting hurt — or girl,” he said.

“Part of my stomach got ripped out when he was hurt,” Gray said. “But, he was doing what he thought he should be doing.”

Gray said he has gotten through the past two years thanks to his wife, Amy Gray, and Harold’s wife, Laurie.

The couple had been newlyweds when Harold was deployed to Iraq. They had dated about a year before marrying, Gray said.

Gray said the support the family has had from the community and the hospital has been wonderful. “I want to thank the whole state of Maine for the support we’ve had,” Gray said.

Gray attended a funeral a few weeks ago and someone he had never met asked him about his son.

All Gray wants for Christmas is his son back home in Penobscot.

Laurie Gray has had the couple’s house made handicapped-accessible.

“It might be all he needs to get home in familiar surroundings,” Gray said.

The Personal Impact of the War in Iraq: Veterans & Military Family Members Speak Out

Thursday, Nov. 16, 2006, 7:30pm
The Williamson Theatre,
Center for the Arts

The College of Staten Island.
2800 Victory Boulevard, S.I., NY

Two veterans from the group Iraq Veterans Against the War and two mothers of Iraq Veterans, one of whom lost her son in the war, will discuss the personal impact of the war and why they have taken a stand against the war.

Sponsored by: the Psychology Department
Social Issues Committee, Peace Action Staten
Island and the Program Development
Committee *CC Clue Certified*

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Directions/Parking:

The entrance to CSI is at the intersection of Victory Boulevard, I-278/Staten Island Expressway, and Route 440. To get to the Center for the Arts, upon entering the campus, go straight .6 miles. Take the first left after the left to Parting Lot 1. You can drop people off at the entrance the Center for the Arts. Parking at CSI is limited.

Usually they open up the faculty parking lot in Lot 1 after 7 PM. There are often spots there. If not, drive back to the entrance and follow the loop to the right. Parking Lot 6 is the first parking lot after looping to the right around the baseball and soccer field. There is always parking available in Lot 6. We recommend that you arrive a half-hour early to allow time to park.

Elaine Brower is a mother of a U.S. Marine who recently returned from Fallujah, Iraq. She is a member of Military Families Speak Out, Peace Action Staten Island and on the steering committee for World Can't Wait, Drive Out the Bush Regime. She has been interviewed by numerous new media outlets including "Good Morning America", the New York Times, and Newsday.

Christian Bustamante enlisted in the Army National Guard in 1999. He had a profound change in his personal beliefs about war following September 11, 2001 and applied for contentious objector status. He was honorably discharged in September, 2004. He is a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

Josh Middleton served as a medic with infantry units in Korea and North Carolina. He participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom 2 and completed his enlistment in May of this year. He is a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

Celeste Zappala is the mother of PA National Guardsman Sgt Sherwood Baker, killed in Baghdad on 4/26/04. Since Sherwood's death Celeste and her family have spoken out across the country, written articles and done interviews to try to bring an end to the war. They are members of Military Families Speak Out and Gold Star Families Speak Out.

Candidate For Illinois Gov:

“If He Wins, He Will Order The Illinois National Guard To Return From Iraq Immediately”

November 3, 2006 By Adam Turl, Chicago, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

IT LOOKS like Chicago voters will actually have some choices come Election Day.

The big story in the election is that the Green candidate for governor, downstate civil rights attorney Rich Whitney, is garnering 14 percent support in some recent polls.

Since the Greens have only a small, if dedicated, core of activists around the state, Whitney's support underlines most of all the disaffection of thousands with the ho-hum “official” choices in the governor's race. In one poll, 51 percent of voters said they weren't happy with either of the main candidates.

The Republicans are running “moderate” State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka against the pro-business Democratic incumbent Rod Blagojevich. Blagojevich raised the ire of thousands by raiding the state teachers' pension fund, while continuing the local tradition of corruption, with his former top fundraiser, Tony Rezko, being indicted for trying to trade a state pension deal for campaign contributions.

Rich Whitney's penniless campaign seems like an alien force on Illinois' wheel-and-deal political landscape.

Whitney opposes the Iraq war and has declared that if he wins, he will order the Illinois National Guard to return from Iraq immediately.

He supports full rights for gays and lesbians including marriage.

He has also spoken in support of immigrant rights. Unfortunately, even though Illinois is one of the strongholds of the immigrant rights movement, he hasn't made this a central feature of his campaign. There is nothing on his Web site about immigrant rights or the racist backlash against immigrants.

Worse still, his position on abortion rights mirrors the “legal but rare” position of Democrats like Hillary Clinton. This is in Illinois, which is one of the so-called “trigger” states, where abortion would be immediately outlawed if Roe v. Wade were overturned.

Nevertheless, Whitney's poll numbers show that thousands of Illinois voters want more than the corporate slop being served up by the Democrats and Republicans in Springfield.

MORE:

Whitney At 14%

November 3, 2006 By Sharon Smith, Socialist Worker [Excerpt]

Barely noticed by the mainstream media in this election season is the real story: massive voter discontent.

How else to explain the 11th-hour surge of the Green Party's unknown Illinois gubernatorial candidate Rich Whitney, reaching 14 percent in an October 23 opinion poll by Survey USA.

Among independent voters, Whitney is polling evenly (at 29 percent) with Republican Judy Baar Topinka (31 percent) and incumbent (and scandal-ridden) Democrat Rod Blagojevich (27 percent).

A week ahead of the election, the Aurora Beacon-News headline read, "Neither of the above," based on a poll by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and KMOV-TV. The poll indicated 58 percent of Illinois voters view Topinka unfavorably, matched by the 57 percent who disapprove of Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

Tennessee Senate Candidate Wants Immediate Withdrawal From Iraq

October 31, 2006 Green Party of the United States

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Green Party candidates and leaders called on voters to reject Democrats who supported President Bush's invasion and occupation of Iraq but now advertise themselves as the opposition to Republicans on the Iraq war.

"We want voters to beware of warhawk Democrats who are trying to position themselves as the alternative to warhawk Republicans," said Chris Lugo, Tennessee Green candidate for the U.S. Senate <www.chris4senate.com>, who is running against Democratic Congressman Harold Ford, Jr., who has consistently voted for the war.

"Mr. Ford said a year ago that he wanted to win the war in Iraq by sending 500,000 more U.S. troops, which spurred Mr. Lugo to run as a peace candidate.

"Mainstream Democrats joined Republicans in Congress when they jumped on the Iraq war bandwagon and voted in favor of transferring war powers to the White House, for bigger military budgets to fight the war, and against bringing U.S. troops home.

"The only party that represents the views of most Americans on the war is the Green Party, which calls for immediate withdrawal from Iraq," Mr. Lugo added.

Indian Soldiers Killing Officers And Themselves Over Endless Occupation Duty

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

Meanwhile, a paramilitary trooper killed two of his senior officers and later shot himself dead in a bizarre shooting spree in Manipur, officials said yesterday.

11/05/2006 AP

New Delhi: Nearly 100 Indian army soldiers commit suicide every year, most of them under stress from fighting insurgents in Kashmir and the remote northeast, a newspaper reported said yesterday citing India's army chief.

The soldiers have been taking their own lives because of work pressure and stress, despite their training, Gen J. J. Singh said during a visit to India's insurgency-wracked portion of Kashmir on Friday.

Singh said nearly 100 suicide cases have been reported in the army every year since 2001.

Earlier this week, Singh ordered an investigation into four recent cases of distraught soldiers posted in Kashmir who fatally shot colleagues, then committed suicide.

Military officials say 17 years of bloody insurgencies in Kashmir, and to a lesser degree in India's remote northeast, are wearing the military down.

India has an estimated 700,000 soldiers in Kashmir, along the frontier with Pakistan and in dangerous, violence-hit towns and villages.

Soldiers operate in an environment where they are not sure about the future, sometimes sparking these kinds of incidents, said Col Hemant Juneja, an army spokesman in Srinagar.

Military experts also say the army is becoming overextended with soldiers having to do long spells in difficult areas. After similar shootings in the early 1990s, the army reformed its rules, easing leave conditions and salary hikes for soldiers serving in difficult areas.

Meanwhile, a paramilitary trooper killed two of his senior officers and later shot himself dead in a bizarre shooting spree in Manipur, officials said yesterday.

A defence spokesperson said Avdesh Sharma, a sergeant of the paramilitary Assam Rifles, on Friday picked up his service weapon and attacked a captain and a junior

commissioned officer (JCO) at their base camp in Nongdam Kuki village, about 30 km from here.

"This was a gruesome incident with the soldier suddenly going amok and firing indiscriminately with his service weapon and killing the captain and the JCO," an Assam Rifles commander said on conditions of anonymity.

Sharma later shot himself in the head before his colleagues could overpower him. He later died in hospital.

"We are not sure as to the immediate provocation for the attack," the commander said.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

04 Nov & 05 Nov 2006 Reuters

A car bomb exploded in al-Talbiya in eastern Baghdad near Sadr City, wounding five, four policemen, police said.

A sniper wounded a policeman while his team was trying to defuse a roadside bomb in the northern oil city of Kirkuk, police said.

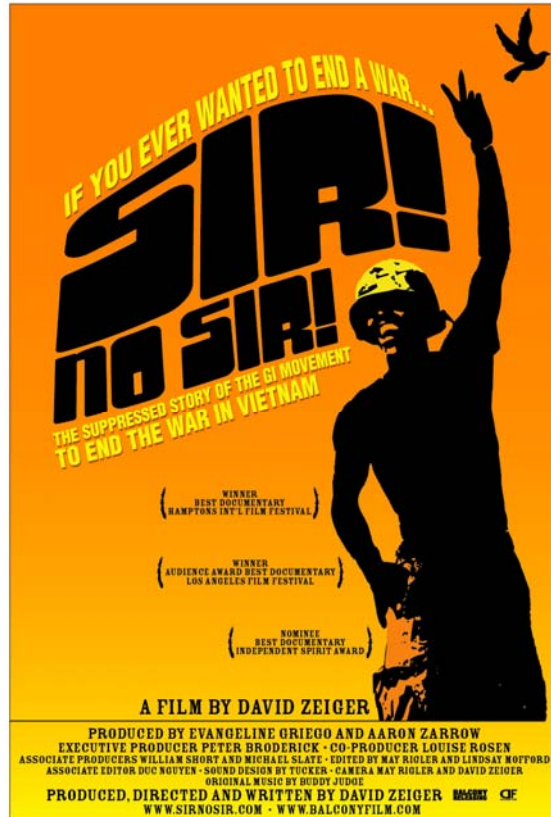
Mortar rounds landed on a police headquarters in eastern Baghdad, killing three policemen and wounding three others, police said.

A bomb exploded near a police patrol in Hawija, 70 km (43 miles) southwest of Kirkuk, wounding five people, including two policemen, police said.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Resistance To The Vietnam War Within The Military



April 19, 2006 Bill, Bill's Big Diamond Blog [Excerpt]

Every once in a while, I'm hit by the realization that the parameters of our political dialogue have become more and more restricted in the US today. A couple of reminders for me in the past few days make this clearer than usual today.

One recent reminder I've seen is historical in nature.

A new documentary about the resistance to the Vietnam War within the military, "Sir! No Sir!," includes scenes of soldiers attending coffeehouses outside their barracks and speaking out at protests against the war during the 1960's and 70's.

The film records the hidden history of their resistance to a war they believed illegal.

The terms they speak in are those of idealistic young men and women, doing their best to square their experience with their principles.

The documentary incorporates clips from the major television networks commenting on the sweep of antiwar sentiment within the armed forces (clips you'd certainly never see today).

"Sir, No Sir" implicitly expresses the zeitgeist of that period and its inherent resistance to arbitrarily wielded authority.

This particular reminder of dissent is inspiring and refreshing. It makes it easier to stand up to the aggressive behavior of our leaders today, looking back on what we all lived through in those times.

The courage of men and women in uniform to not only put their lives on the line in battle, but to risk all else in speaking out make an example that speaks loudly to our timid and cynical moment in history.

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."

Bring Me Home



The sign in the picture reads: Bring Me Home.

From: Mike Hastie

To: GI Special
Sent: November 05, 2006
Subject: Bring Me Home

Bring Me Home

**When I was a boy I played with toy soldiers.
When these toy soldiers were killed, they fought
another battle in my imagination.**

**When I became a man, and became a soldier,
soldiers were not reborn when they were killed.
When I came home from war with my horrible
pain and disillusionment, I wonder if my boyhood
days with toy soldiers had anything to do with me
not facing reality.**

**I never thought I would have to face the face of death.
After all, my toy soldiers always went back in the box,
to fight another day.
Death and dying was never part of my reality.**

**Now I'm left with coffins filled with buddies,
stories that will never be shared.**

**I wish I had never played with toy soldiers.
I wish I had learned to cry like my sisters.
Maybe I would have never been filled with fear
and anger, always ready to go to war to protect
what was so bottled up inside of me.
War toys.
Death toys.
Why can't I ever be happy?
What am I so fearful of?
Why do I feel I have to protect myself all of the time?
Guns, guns, guns!!!**

**Why didn't countless adults tell me the truth?
Why did they abuse me everyday with the lie?
Why didn't they tell me the truth about WAR?
Why did I have to find out the death way, that
WAR stands for, Wealthy Are Richer?**

**Why did the churches in America go along with the lie?
WAR spelled backwards is RAW.
I did not serve in Vietnam for the cause of freedom,
I served Big Business in America for the cause of profit.
WAR spelled backwards is RAW.
The RAW truth that was buried so long ago.
That is why boys play with toy soldiers.**

The horror of war is covered up with glorification.
Another generation is being groomed for glory.
More innocent civilians are killed than soldiers.
I don't recall killing innocent people with my toy soldiers.
Why that is against my childhood beliefs.
But, the ambush is always the same when soldiers come home,
when they realize that WAR stands for, Wealthy Are Richer.

It is a truth that will destroy many.
That way, they will never be able to bear witness.
Betrayal is the lethal dose that kills in silence.

But, I have a secret, that the government does not know.
It is not what we experience in life that destroys us.
It is our inability to feel the pain behind the experience
that destroys our lives.
That is what my elders never taught me.
Because they could never face their own pain about war.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
November 5, 2006

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

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

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

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

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS

**Hell Is Rising in Oaxaca:
An Interview With A Oaxacan
Rebel;
“This Is Our Moment, We Can’t Let
Them Continue To Oppress Us”**

From: Ron Jacobs

To: GI Special
Sent: November 05, 2006
Subject: Interview

By Ron Jacobs

When I lived in Washington state, some of my closest friends were from the Mexican state of Oaxaca.

I have kept in touch with a few of them and they have kept me in touch with the rebellion unfolding in the streets of Oaxaca the past few months.

After the escalation of the situation there on October 27, 2006, when paramilitary forces shot and killed four people (including Indymedia journalist Brad Will), I spoke with my friends David Abeles and Hilaria Cruz who helped me contact some of their people in Oaxaca city.

Given the circumstances currently existing in the area and the uncertainty of the immediate future because of the military and police presence there, I felt that the best way to get firsthand information out to the wider world would be to conduct an email interview.

The first interview is below.

I hope to have another one ready in the next couple days.

Ron: Hey Tomas. Thanks for taking the time to answer a few questions. Would you be willing to introduce yourself?

Tomas: Hi, I would like to salute all the readers of this electronic journal.

My name is Tomas Cruz, I am a native from a community in Oaxaca in the highlands. I was forced by the economic situation to migrate to the States. Fortunately I gained an education at the Evergreen State College. I also went the University of Texas for a graduate degree in Latin American studies.

Ron: So, you've been in Oaxaca during the entire uprising? Can you tell us the sequence of events as you see them up to now?

Tomas: I am a Oaxacan native with graduate training at the University of Texas at Austin. I have been involved in diverse NGOs working for the communities in Oaxaca up until the time of the Oaxacan uprising.

What we are seeing in Oaxaca is a breakdown of political system that is completely corrupt and deliberately abuses its citizens at will, using the legitimacy of the state to impose a government that only uses power to advance a personal agenda and that of a very small political oligarchy.

Since the start of the present government it was characterized by repression of political leaders, immediately killing them and imposing its repressive mode of government.

The result of the events which are occurring as we speak began with an every year demonstration by the teacher's syndicate. In the 14th of June, the state police attacked the teachers which were at the zocalo in a permanent demonstration.

The response from the citizenry was immediate, hundreds of people joined the teachers strike and saw an opportunity to stop the continued abuses from the government.

I can only describe what is occurring as catharsis of the population, especially of the immense poor population of the city, which survive.

After the attack by the state and the immense response from the population the most remarkable event in the politics of the movement has been the formation of a popular assembly of the pueblos of Oaxaca also known as APPO.

The APPO organizations have been capable of resisting all the attacks from the state government, from spots attacking the protesters as a bunch of radicals to the death squads sent to kill people that were protesting at night.

The response from the APPO was to develop barricades to stop the death squads.

This resulted in a historical and animated political culture, with also a strong popular support.

In the recent days, the violence escalated in one single day in which the international reporter died at the hands of the mercenaries payed by the governor.

Yesterday, there was an intervention from the federal police after the multiple deaths and probably also after the international pressure after the death of one international reporter. The federal police killed at least 4 people and raped one woman in the intervention. The response from the APPO is to maintain the protest until the governor resigns and the political system is reformed.

Ron: What groups were involved that you know of? Also, I imagine that many people were unaffiliated. What were their reasons for joining, in your estimate?

Tomas: This movement is composed of the poorest section of the population.

Old housewives which think of this as a parallel to the revolution of 1910 and are ready to resist for years, beggars which are tired of the abuses by the police, or simply sympathize with the movement because they see no hope and future in their lives. Mechanics, civil servants, citizens from the neighboring neighborhoods which have had their municipal presidents imposed on them. Citizens from the poorest sections of the city.

Ron: From my understanding, PRI and its allies were responsible for the shootings that killed several people on October 27th. Is PRI the only party responsible for the situation in Oaxaca or are other political parties also responsible?

Tomas: No, the PRI is seeing its last days and with it, it has resorted to the only thing that they know, violence.

Ron: You're in Oaxaca right now. What the hell is going on?

Tomas: Hell is rising in Oaxaca, the force of the government against teachers, students, housewives, mechanics, peasants. The whole city and the whole state is filled with federal police, local police, military.

Ron: How are the spirits of those in the rebellion? Where do they get their food and water?

Tomas: There is ample popular support for this uprising which results in a steady flow of donations from communities and lay citizens that donate at different points. Mainly this has been coordinated by using radio stations. At this point there is one station left which is being broadcast through the internet at www.indymedia.org you can listen to what is going on as we speak, (those that can speak Spanish)

The radio broadcasters which have little experience but a huge heart receive the needs of the people on the barricades as to what is needed. Yesterday for example they organized the installation of medical aid stations because the red cross got instructions from the governor and its director not to attend the flurry of people that were shot at by the governor's police.

Ron: Do you think there is a potential for armed conflict (beyond that seen already-- which seems mostly to originate from the forces of the state)?

Hmm, if the state continues on its support of a political figure which has lost completely popular support, especially from the poor, then we will see an escalate on violence. because the demands of the people after decades and some argue centuries have been unattended.

Honestly I think that this would continue in the same degree, as peaceful opposition and hopefully we would see a more democratic state.

Only if the government continues on its escalate of violence we would see a critical cyclical point in Mexico's history.

Ron: If the federal forces are able to quash the rebellion, what kind of repression do you think will follow? Indeed, based on past experiences, after the media leaves the region, what do you foresee happening to the movement, its participants and supporters, and the region in general?

Tomas: I think that the violence is going to be targeted at the organizers and the leaders of the movement.

Ron: In the greater scheme of things, how would you relate this to other struggles occurring in the Americas? What relationship do you see the demands of the protestors have, if any, to the anti-imperialist/anti-global capitalism movements in this hemisphere and around the world?

Tomas: This rebellion reminds me of Bolivia, because of its indigenous component. As in Bolivia, once the indigenous population determines that it needs to be overturned, we see that they gain a determination that has caused governments to fall.

In the case of Oaxaca, the most likely scenario is that the governor is going to be overthrown. What we are seeing also is a political scenario that changes everyday. The news today is that the political parties at the national level are all calling for the governor to resign.

If the movement maintains the level and determination that we are seeing, then we have this movement playing an important role in the national politics and possibly a shift in the neoliberal government of Mexico.

Ron: Anything more to add?

Tomas: I was in the scene five minutes before the reporter from indymedia was killed. I remember hearing the shots, people running all over the place, unarmed mechanics, housewives.

There was a woman there, I do not know if she was a teacher, I only remember her words " This is our moment, we can't go on living like this, it is enough. I went to school barefooted and it makes me cry to see what happens here.

Our only future is the border with the United States, It makes me sad to see our young finish a University Degree only to work as taxi drivers. This is our moment, we can't let them continue to oppress us."

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

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

http://robinlea.com/GI_Special/; <http://imagineaworldof.blogspot.com/>; <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>; http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/;

<http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>; <http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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