

GI SPECIAL 4K8:



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

Be Careful What You Wish For: Get It?

11.4.06 JACKIE CALMES And GREG HITT, Wall St. Journal

Already, Mrs. Pelosi, who would likely be Speaker if her party wins a House majority, is privately trying to insist that liberals tamp down expectations of getting out of Iraq now.

Democratic allies in the House say she wouldn't do anything to jeopardize the new recruits' electoral future, and by extension Democrats' newfound power.

MORE:

The Democrats “Have Promoted Military Solutions To Everything”

November 8, 2006 William M. Arkin, The New York Times [Excerpt]

A solid majority of voting Americans, according to both exit polls and the results, disapprove of the Iraq war and President Bush's job performance, mostly due to his handling of national security.

The Democrats and the administration now need to work together to craft the safest possible withdrawal strategy.

At the same time, though, we also need to reflect upon our tendency to turn national security into either a political football or a geopolitical plaything.

And we need to ask ourselves whether the Democrats who initially supported the Iraq war, and who have promoted military solutions to everything, are the voices to listen to.

MORE:

“Today, Bush May Be Denounced For Asserting American Hegemony, But His Democratic Predecessor Was Hardly Different”

November 2006 By Marcia Pally, Foreignpolicy.com [Excerpts]

In truth, the Democrats have more in common with President Bush than they care to admit.

The reason isn't simply that foreign-policy decisions typically lie in the domain of the executive.

It is because President George W. Bush's approach to America's role in the world is not as remarkable as it is often claimed to be.

We should not confuse the gravity of the effects in Iraq and elsewhere with the banality of the current approach itself, which falls well within U.S. foreign-policy traditions.

Indeed, the foreign policies of both parties have never been substantially different.

As they look ahead to the race for the Oval Office in 2008, Democrats are not likely to stray far from Bush's foreign policy, as it is a tradition partly of their own making.

Bush's critics often charge that his tenure has fashioned a new, hawkish character for American foreign policy. But since its birth, the United States has been expansionist for the purpose of domestic enrichment, a policy pursued with fervor by politicians of all stripes.

Cordell Hull, the U.S. secretary of state during World War II, declared American forces to be "missionaries of capitalism and democracy."

But the years after World War II, an exceptional period of U.S. internationalism and institution-building, have come to be seen as the norm for American foreign policy and a template to which the Democrats can return. In this year's midterm campaigns, Democrats and pundits at home and abroad nostalgically touted this period as a golden age for foreign-policy making.

This past summer, one of Germany's top political writers, Joerg Lau, assured me that "a return to the multinational institution-building" of the postwar era should be a priority for Democrats. When Robert Reich sketched a plan for the Democrats' response to terror in *The New Republic*, he reached back to the founding of NATO as his model.

Yet, America's postwar achievement was a unique moment. It, not Bush, is the outlier in the history of U.S. foreign policy.

Western Europe was liberated and liberalized economically and politically because of Europe's singular position as a buffer against the Soviets and as a market for U.S. goods. Similar conditions did not and do not exist elsewhere, and nowhere else has the United States repeated its postwar performance.

In the developing world, American presidents from Andrew Jackson to Bill Clinton have settled for economic liberalism coupled with political stability, and democracy was undermined by a long list of direct and proxy wars if local governments refused to go along.

Today, Bush may be denounced for asserting American hegemony, but his Democratic predecessor was hardly different.

The Clinton administration's 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review held that the United States should prevent other nations from challenging its preeminent world role. Clinton intervened in Bosnia and Kosovo not simply on humanitarian grounds, but to maintain NATO's *raison d'être* in Europe, a strategy aimed at preserving economic access along with military control.

He extended China's "Most Favored Nation" status despite China's abysmal human rights record, and he negotiated with the Taliban on behalf of an American oil company.

Even Bush's fight against terrorism has echoes in the 1990s. Clinton's 1995 Decision Directive 39 on terrorism read: "Return of suspects by force (to the United States) may be affected without the cooperation of the host government."

In light of this history, Bush's foreign policy cannot be considered radical.

He has furthered U.S. economic interests around the world, kept NATO under U.S. direction, and attempted to balance American interests in Russia and China against those countries' threat as geopolitical competitors.

He has no interest in North Korea other than containing nuclear proliferation, so he is only spending diplomatic capital there. Sub-Saharan Africa is no more forgotten than usual, save for an increase in aid from \$7 billion in 1997 to \$19 billion in 2004.

That is not to suggest that Bush's policies are good or bad, only that they are unexceptional. Since Sept. 11, 2001, as Robert Kagan, a scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, noted, "America did not change ... It only became more itself."

The results of Bush's invasion of Iraq may differ from previous interventions, but results often differ: Consider the Philippines, Korea, and Vietnam.

Yet Bush's policies fall well within the range pursued by both Republican and Democratic administrations. He has an interest in a stable Middle East that allows the United States access to key resources and development opportunities. He supports economically liberal and politically stable (if illiberal) states and seeks to liberate countries where autocratic leaders are uncooperative or losing control of their restive populations.

Considering the positions of the many presidents who have come before him, Bush's policies may even be described as ordinary.

The United States will eventually phase out of Iraq, but not because the Democrats won a few dozen seats in the House and Senate or because they could take the White House in 2008.

Iraq is but one of many future fights premised on an enduring tradition of furthering economic liberalism by "liberating" nations from alternatives Americans think worse.

A voluntary withdrawal of geopolitical reach lacks precedent by any party, or any power elsewhere in the world.

Only a profound cultural shift could alter America's sense of mission, and Tuesday's results are hardly evidence of that.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

One U.S. Soldier Killed In Kirkuk Providence; Three Wounded

11.8.06 Multi-National Corps Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No.
20061108-01

MOSUL, Iraq: A Task Force Lightning Soldier assigned to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, was killed Tuesday as a result of enemy action while conducting operations in Kirkuk Province.

Three U.S. Soldiers were also wounded during this operation. The wounded Soldiers were transported to a coalition forces medical treatment facility.

Baghdad Soldier Dies Of Wounds Following IED Attack

Nov. 7, 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No.
20061107-03

BAGHDAD: A Multi-National Division Baghdad Soldier died at approximately 10:40 p.m. Monday from wounds he received after the vehicle he was riding in was struck by an improvised-explosive device in northwest Baghdad.

Marine Killed In Al Anbar

11.8.06 Multi-National Corps Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No.
20061108-02

FALLUJAH, Iraq: One Marine assigned to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division died Wednesday from wounds sustained due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province.

Newlywed Ft. Myers Soldier Killed In Iraq

November 07, 2006 By Ed Johnson, The News-Press

Henderson, 24, and his wife, Artis, both claimed Fort Myers as their hometown, although he was originally from Canadian, Texas, a panhandle town of about 2,300.

His wife could not provide many details about his death. She said she was still in a state of shock and disbelief this afternoon.

She learned of his death last night when she came home and found two uniformed army officers at her front door.

The words they spoke were the same ones so many others have had to hear during wartime, devastating in their simplicity.

"They said they regretted to inform me that Chief Warrant Officer Miles Henderson had been killed in action and that the matter was under investigation," Artis said.

"I just stood there in disbelief. There was no way I was mentally prepared for this."

Now, sometimes choking back tears, Artis said, she is left with memories of the man she married five short months ago.

"My regret is that I was so convinced this would never happen," she added. "I wish I had prepared some kind of speech or something to tell you what he was like. He was so young, so handsome. Everything one could ask for in a husband."

He was also, she said, a dedicated soldier.

"He always said if something happened to him to tell everyone he was proud to serve his country," she said. "He was honored to be there (Iraq). He said he worked with a wonderful group of guys and girls. I know he would have went there even if he knew it would turn out this way. He was one of those who believed he was making things safer for all of us."

At some point his remains will be brought back to his family and, according to his wishes, he will be cremated and his ashes scattered above his family's ranch in Texas. For now, his widow -- a term she hasn't yet adjusted to -- lives with the memories of her whirlwind romance with the soldier a friend introduced her to.

She was working for then-Senator Bob Graham in Tallahassee and he was training at nearby Fort Rucker, Ala.

"It was just love at first sight," she said. "A friend introduced us and after that we were together every weekend. He was the man I had always dreamed about. He was so generous, so giving and so self sacrificing. I still haven't accepted this."

In the cruel calculus of war, number 2,268 died in that Iraq crash. For Artis Henderson it was her true love.

Springs Marine Dies From Iraq Wounds

November 8, 2006 By Hector Gutierrez, Rocky Mountain News

A Marine from Colorado Springs died over the weekend from wounds he suffered during combat operations in Iraq, the Department of Defense announced Tuesday.

Cpl. Kyle W. Powell, 21, died on Saturday after he was wounded in Anbar province.

According to the Marine Corps, Powell joined the service on Sept. 15, 2003. He was a combat engineer assigned to Charlie Company.

During his three years of Marine service, Powell earned several awards as part of the fight against international terrorism, Camp Pendleton base officials said.

Among the awards he received were the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal; the Iraq Campaign Medal; the National Defense Ribbon; the Combat Action Ribbon, the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, and the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

British Soldier Killed In Basra

November 7, 2006 Guardian Unlimited

A British soldier has been killed in an attack on an army base in Iraq, bringing the total number of UK service personnel killed since the invasion to 121.

The soldier, who has not been named, was serving with the 2nd battalion Duke of Lancaster's regiment.

A statement by the Ministry of Defence said the soldier was killed yesterday when a coalition base in Basra came under small arms fire.

British Mercenary Killed

07 November 2006 Sussex Express

David Vine, 28, of Parkside Road, Seaford, was a well known figure on the Seaford football scene.

He died near Baghdad on Monday morning.

Known as Viney, he was an ex-paratrooper working for a private security company. He was in the middle truck of a convoy when a vehicle in the oncoming lane was hit by a roadside bomb. The lorry shot across the road and Viney died instantly in the impact.

He had been with the paras for seven years before starting work with ArmorGroup in 2005.

Stop-Losses Wounded Soldier: **“It’s Time For Him To Come Home”** **“It Was Time For Him To Come In October”**

"He wouldn't have gotten hurt if he'd come home when he was supposed to," she said. "He would be home. But instead, he's still there."

Brenda said arbitrarily extending service time amounts to a backdoor draft, and she said it could end up that Michael will still have to serve more time once he recovers from his injuries.

11/07/06 By Jenny Welp, Journal staff writer, Sioux City Journal

A soldier with family in Sioux City was injured in Iraq last week when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near the Bradley vehicle in which he was riding.

Spc. Michael F. Hervey, 21, was sitting next to the vehicle's turret door when the IED exploded and the door blew into him, reported his stepmother, Brenda Hervey, who lives in Sioux City with two of Michael's sisters, Sarah and Megan.

She said the incident happened in Al Anbar province at about 2 a.m. Friday, Iraqi time. She said there were soldiers who were killed in the incident, and Michael was airlifted to Al Asad air base, where he is suffering from a broken right elbow, broken right leg and lacerations.

Brenda said she first learned of Michael's injuries about 12 hours after the incident, when he called her in between surgeries. She said he talked to her for about 40 minutes, and he also called his mother in Buffalo, N.Y.

Michael's family reported that he's been suffering from compartment syndrome in his leg, which means swelling blocked the blood flow and put him at risk for losing his limb. Brenda said doctors opened up Michael's leg to relieve the pressure, and when they close up his leg, he may need a skin graft.

Brenda said the American Red Cross has been very helpful, but even so the limited amount of information available has been frustrating. She said the casualty assistance center is having difficulty getting through to Michael's hospital to get regular condition reports.

"Not knowing is just excruciating. I can't even tell you how difficult it is," Brenda said. "When your child is sick or hurt, your place is really by him and with him -- not thousands of miles away."

Brenda said Michael signed up for three years with the U.S. Army in October 2003. He served 12 weeks in Iraq in early 2004, and then was stationed in Baumholder, Germany, until he was deployed to Iraq for a second time in January 2006.

Brenda said Michael's three years of service should have been fulfilled in October 2006, but he was sent back to Iraq after a two-week leave and told he would likely remain there until March or April and then not be discharged until August.

"He wouldn't have gotten hurt if he'd come home when he was supposed to," she said. "He would be home. But instead, he's still there."

Brenda said arbitrarily extending service time amounts to a backdoor draft, and she said it could end up that Michael will still have to serve more time once he recovers from his injuries.

"In our opinion, it's time for him to come home," she said. "It was time for him to come in October."

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. soldiers at a checkpoint in Baghdad October 24, 2006. REUTERS/Namir Noor-Eldeen (IRAQ)

Now They Report It: **Attack On U.S. Military Hospital:** **Hidden News Of The Year, So Far**

11/07/06 By DAVID MEKEEL, Staff Writer, Lebanon Daily News

Peggy and Michael Kreiser got the call around 10 a.m. on Oct. 7.

The voice on the other end of the phone belonged to a Marine Corps officer in Iraq. The Kreisers' 26-year-old son, Lance Cpl. Jared Kreiser, had suffered injuries from a roadside bomb — one of the infamous "IEDs."

"That first weekend was terrible," Peggy Kreiser said yesterday. "We got the call about two hours after it happened, but because of the time warp, we didn't get any further news until about 5 p.m."

The Kreisers, who live in Cleona, waited anxiously, not knowing the extent of Jared's injuries. For the families of soldiers deployed to Iraq, the Marines try to prepare them for the worst.

"They tell you if it isn't a serious injury, (the soldier) will make the call himself," Peggy said. "And we had an officer calling us. So it just became a game of waiting and waiting and waiting."

After seven grueling hours, the Kreisers finally got some more news — and it was good. Jared had suffered injuries to both of his legs, his left arm and his jaw. But he is expected to make a full recovery. Jared is currently being treated at the Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., where he received a Purple Heart from Gen. Michael W. Hagee of the Marine Corps.

Peggy Kreiser, who is the community and work-force development director at the Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce, said that Jared was serving as a Humvee driver and automatic-weapon gunner in Iraq. On the day he was injured, he was on foot patrol in Anbar province around 4 p.m., just before the daylight fasting that is customary with the month-long observance of Ramadan ended.

Jared was walking with other Marines when one of his comrades stepped on a pressure plate that set off a nearby bomb. Jared and one other soldier were hurt.

"He said what saved his life is that they did exactly what they were trained to do," Peggy said.

Peggy said that Lance Cpl. Shaun Travis and "Doc" Plunkett, a Navy corpsman, pulled him to safety while Lance Cpl. Dan Hilsdrof secured the scene until a medical unit arrived.

Even after they knew the extent of their son's injuries, the Kreisers' worries weren't over.

The day after the incident, the hospital where Jared had been taken was hit by a suicide bomber, Peggy said.

Jared had been scheduled to be transferred to Germany, and later to the U.S., and the Kreisers didn't know if he had been moved before the suicide bomber struck.

"My husband was able to find a security officer at the Carlisle barracks who happened to be a retired Navy chief and was in the hospital in Germany," Peggy said.

Through him, the Kreisers were able to call the military hospital in Germany and talk directly with Jared's doctor, who informed them that their son was safe.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Occupation Soldier Killed, 2 Wounded In Kandahar: Nationality Not Announced

07 November 2006 (Reuters)

A NATO soldier was killed when his vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb in troubled southern Afghanistan on Tuesday.

Two other NATO soldiers were wounded in the blast in Kandahar province, near the local capital, Kandahar city, NATO said in a statement.

Waldorf Man, 20, Dies During Duty In Afghanistan

October 31, 2006 By Martin Weil, Washington Post Staff Writer

Michael V. Bailey of Waldorf, who wanted to make people proud of him and believed it was sometimes hard to do that in civilian life, decided that he would enlist in the Army.

'It's the only way I can see that I can make something of myself,' " Gladys K. Wilborn, an older friend and neighbor, recalled him saying.

Pvt. Michael V. Bailey, 20, died Friday at Camp Salerno, Afghanistan, from injuries not related to combat, the Pentagon announced yesterday.

Bailey was assigned to the 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (light infantry), based in Fort Drum, N.Y., the Pentagon said. The death was under investigation, according to the Pentagon.

About a year and a month ago, Sierra Washington met Bailey at the St. Charles mall. They hit it off.

"He was my fiancé," she said last night. They talked constantly by telephone. The last time they spoke, she said, was Wednesday.

"He sounded very good, as usual," she said. The conversation was "nothing out of the normal."

He "told me how much he loved me," she said. But that was not surprising. "He tells me that all the time."

Washington said she did not know the details of how he died. "It hurts to not know what happened to my baby," she said. "I feel like I need to know."

Friends and neighbors in the Pine Field neighborhood of northern Charles County remembered Bailey as intelligent, good-humored and concerned about the feelings of others.

As far back as when they attended John Hanson Middle School, Josh Batschelet said, Bailey "seemed to want to make you feel good and boost your self-esteem," although not in an overt or overbearing way.

"He was a good kid," said Brandon Frere, who rode the school bus to John Hanson with Bailey.

Wilborn, to whom Bailey was particularly close, said he used to call her "Aunt Gladys."

He was especially fond, she recalled, of her chocolate chip cookies. "Anything home-cooked, he loved," she said.

She called him a happy person who laughed and "made you laugh along with him."

Bailey enlisted in the Army "to better himself," she said. He "just figured he would do better if he could go into the service."

He liked the Army, Washington said. "He enjoyed it. He enjoyed the challenge."

She said he enlisted in January, and she last saw him about three months ago. It was at Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, when he and his unit shipped out for Afghanistan.

Bailey's parents said last night that they were not ready to speak publicly about the death.

***Losing In Afghanistan:
“One Needs To Think
Unconventionally And Rapidly Adapt
To Changing Situations”
“The Military, In Its Current
Incarnation, Is Unable To Do That”***

Enduring Freedom was and continues to be a conventional operation run by a thoroughly conventional bureaucracy that cannot understand the nature of the enemy or what is required to successfully combat it.

BOOK REVIEW: Afghanistan & the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare.
By Hy S. Rothstein. Naval Institute Press. 218 pages. \$26.95

November 06, 2006 By David C. Meggett, Special to the Army Times. [Excerpts]

David C. Meggett, an Air Force major, is a student in the special operations curriculum at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif.

In late 2002, the Defense Department's Office for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict asked Hy Rothstein, a retired Army Special Forces colonel, to assess the effectiveness of combat operations in Afghanistan.

His independent report, delivered in January 2004, was promptly returned with instructions to "soften" its harshly critical conclusions.

Indeed, this rejection of reality was symptomatic of what Rothstein found in Afghanistan.

U.S. military leaders were unable to recognize that operations were based on a conventional framework unsuitable for victory over Taliban forces despite a continued effort to portray the campaign as unconventional.

Rothstein's conclusions instead went into this book, where his insight into the history and employment of Special Forces and analysis of the military organizational structure paints a decidedly unflattering portrait of the apparent "unconventional" military success in Operation Enduring Freedom.

After an introductory review of historical Special Forces experiences, Rothstein examines the current military structure from the standpoint of organizational theory.

The military bureaucracy has become so large and inflexible, in Rothstein's view, that it is incapable of the innovation and flexibility required to deal with the dynamic environment that characterizes unconventional warfare.

The vast technological advantage the U.S. enjoys over its conventional foes has only reinforced the view that massive, precision firepower is the best way to achieve victory — a belief deeply inculcated within the military.

Despite claims by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld that this was “a different kind of war,” Rothstein points out continual examples of the military applying conventional doctrine against an increasingly unconventional opponent.

While there certainly was integration of special and conventional forces in the early phases of the war, these operations still relied on destroying enemy forces in the field rather than a comprehensive approach to the sociopolitical climate that allowed the enemy to operate.

As conventional targets began to dwindle, the use of conventional methods to seek them out became more prevalent — and, as Rothstein found, ineffective.

In one telling example, a Special Forces team visited a village home, had a cordial discussion over tea, and left satisfied that there were no arms or guerrillas in the house. A few hours later, a conventional unit kicked down the door to the same house, subdued an elderly man and frisked the women for weapons, leaving them angry, frightened and dishonored.

Both teams did exactly what they were trained to do, but only one understood the importance of fostering close ties with the locals over finding and detaining — or killing — targets.

To fight an unconventional enemy, one needs to think unconventionally and rapidly adapt to changing situations.

The military, in its current incarnation, is unable to do that at a fundamental level.

One might think Special Operations Command would be the natural home for this capability, but Rothstein found that even this organization has steadily advanced a “hyper-conventional” mind-set that relies on direct-action missions to strike targets quickly.

The author's response to the problem is unconventional, as well. Rothstein's recommendation is the creation of a separate service for unconventional warfare.

Rothstein's logical train of thought makes his argument more compelling. This is necessary as he takes an enormous leap by questioning the very structure of the nation's defense.

While it certainly stimulates debate — particularly among the Special Forces, whose stated purpose is unconventional warfare — it does little to address the practicalities of its implementation. Nothing further is said, for example, as to how a new service would

be funded or how it could withstand the bureaucratizing forces to which the regular military has succumbed.

This should not detract, however, from the book's main thrust: that Enduring Freedom was and continues to be a conventional operation run by a thoroughly conventional bureaucracy that cannot understand the nature of the enemy or what is required to successfully combat it.

TROOP NEWS

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



A wounded U.S. soldier lies on a vehicle after he was evacuated by a helicopter to a U.S. military hospital at the fortified Green Zone in Baghdad, October 30, 2006.
REUTERS/Thaier al-Sudani (IRAQ)

**If Troops Are Forced To Take
Those Dangerous Anthrax Shots
“Then Every Flag Officer And Top-**

Level Civilian Official Should Do So, As Well”

November 06, 2006 Editorial, Army Times

As the Pentagon prepares to resume mandatory anthrax vaccinations, one would hope defense officials have learned at least a few things from their past missteps in the long, twisted saga of this highly controversial program.

Here are three to focus on:

Be candid and upfront about the purported threat. More than three years after major combat operations ended in Iraq, not a single whiff of anthrax has surfaced. And as for North Korea, the Pentagon will only say that there is a threat.

The question is, are these highly classified threat assessments real? Or is vaccinating U.S. troops really just a backdoor effort to discourage potential foes from acquiring anthrax weapons?

There's no reason to shove this behind a top-secret wall. After all, the bad guys already know if they have weaponized anthrax.

Be acutely sensitive and highly responsive to troops who have adverse vaccine reactions.

Asked specifically whether troops who have adverse reactions will have to continue the six-shot regimen, the Pentagon responded: “Medical exemptions following vaccine-associated adverse reactions are granted by primary health care providers consistent with good medical practice.”

Whatever that means.

The fact is, some troops have suffered severe reactions that have left them sick, disabled and even dead.

When Pentagon leaders were too slow to acknowledge those problems last time around, it raised the anxiety level about the shots throughout the force.

Senior leaders must set a swift and visible example by taking the shots — which was not always the case in the past.

If the grunts must roll up their sleeves for the shots, then every flag officer and top-level civilian official should do so, as well.

Any hint that leaders are ducking the shots will undermine the credibility of the program and raise fresh questions about the safety of this vaccine.

As Vets Services Cut Again: VA Plans Another Lying Bullshit Study: “Will Vet Center Leaders Be Willing To Admit To Their Bosses That They Can’t Deliver Services To All Who Ask?”

November 06, 2006 Editorial, Army Times

A recent survey of team leaders at about 30 percent of the Department of Veterans Affairs Vet Centers around the country has turned up disturbing news.

Staffers at 60 of the 207 Vet Centers — grass-roots focal points for VA programs and services — say they are seeing a surge in requests for help from veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and many say they’re having to cut back in critical areas due to staffing and funding constraints.

About 25 percent of the centers surveyed said they have taken or will take action to limit access to services, such as placing veterans who need one-on-one attention in group therapy instead, or setting up waiting lists for marriage and family therapy and other programs. About 30 percent say they don’t have enough staff.

Not to worry, say senior VA officials in Washington. The survey was conducted by the Democratic staff of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee — so it’s pure bunk, they say.

They say no Vet Center has a waiting list; every center takes veterans without appointments and assesses them within 30 minutes of arrival; and center staffing levels have been, and continue to be, expanded.

VA says it will do its own “scientifically valid” survey to prove its assertions. But that won’t settle this dispute; an internal study will hardly be more credible to outsiders than one conducted by a partisan political staff.

It’s hard for any agency to objectively analyze its own performance, but even harder if the analysis starts out trying to disprove charges that its performance is not up to snuff.

Will Vet Center leaders be willing to admit to their bosses that they can't deliver services to all who ask? Or will some fear that such honesty will bring repercussions?

What is needed is a thorough, independent review by the likes of the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office, something any member of Congress can request.

With the waves of combat vets showing no signs of abating, ordering such a study should happen sooner rather than later.

Asshole Who Ranted About Soldiers Enjoying Rap Music Gets Told

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
11.6.06

The writer of "Too much time to rap" (Letters, Sept. 25) goes on a tirade about soldiers who make music in their free time in the war zone.

Soldiers started making music in their free time as a stress release. It is proven that soldiers who do not have an outlet for stress end up doing stupid things like drinking, fighting, etc.

Each time you see a service member on some music channel, it allows Americans to put a face to the uniform. It allows them to realize we are people and not just bodies. It is public relations.

Music allows soldiers to take their minds off their issues and gives them time to unwind.

Staff Sgt. Timothy J. Lovato
Vicksburg, Miss.

MORE:

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
11.6.06

I am what the letter writer would probably term an "intel weenie." However, I fought with 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry, in Baghdad and in Fallujah, Iraq.

Allow me to protest loudly that "I'm a soldier, too."

If "spitting rhymes" helps soldiers relax from a stressful day of doing whatever it is they're doing all day, so be it. As a leader, you should encourage that.

When I was in Iraq and supporting an infantry battalion, I worked a hell of a lot more hours than they did. I worked around the clock to gather the intel that led to their raids, which, by the way, I also participated in. Those infantry soldiers I "supported" got way more sleep than I did. But, you won't ever see me talking down about them or anyone else.

The infantry doesn't hold the patent on battlefield fun.

Master Sgt. C.J. Grisham
Fort Irwin, Calif.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

11.6.06 Reuters & November 7, 2006 (AP) & Reuters & 11.8.06 Reuters

Mortar rounds slammed into areas around Baghdad's Green Zone, the fortified compound that was once Saddam's palace complex and now houses the courthouse where he was tried.

Six Iraqi soldiers died in sniper attacks and a roadside bombing in Karmah, 50 miles west of Baghdad

Gunmen killed a policeman in the northern oil city of Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Gunmen attacked a Civil Defence Centre and captured four employees, two of whom were later released, in a southeastern suburb of Baghdad, an interior ministry source said.

Insurgents killed two policemen in a village near Muqdadiya, police said.

A car bomb wounded four police commandos in the eastern Baladiyat district of Baghdad, an Interior Ministry source said.

Guerrillas killed a police lieutenant colonel on Tuesday in front of his house in Samawa, 270 km (170 miles) south of Baghdad, a medical source said.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE

END THE OCCUPATION

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“STAY THE COURSE”



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: October 31, 2006
Subject: STAY THE COURSE

STAY THE COURSE

**YOU CAN'T CUT AND RUN NOW
2,810 AMERICAN SOLDIERS ARE DEAD
WHY, THAT'S NOTHING COMPARED TO VIETNAM
IF WE DON'T STOP THE VIET CONG IN VIETNAM,
WE WILL HAVE TO STOP THEM IN AMERICA.
DON'T FORGET THE DOMINO THEORY.**

**IF WE DON'T STOP THE TERRORISTS IN IRAQ,
THEY WILL BLOW THEMSELVES UP AT STARBUCKS**

**UNITED "WE" STAND
HOME OF THE BRAVE
TAKE THE "I" OUT OF "WE"
AND SOMEONE ELSE DIES**

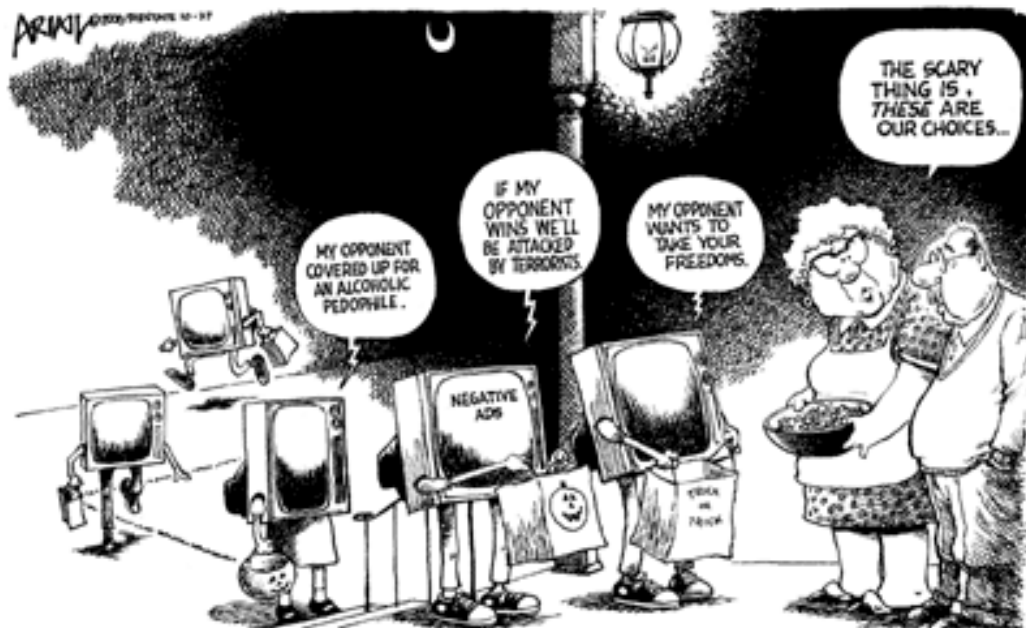
I did not serve in Vietnam for the cause of freedom,
I served BIG BUSINESS in America for the cause of profit.

**SOLDIERS IN PILL BOTTLES,
DIAGNOSIS BETRAYAL
MIA
MISSING IN AMERICA,
EVERY VETERANS DAY**

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
October 31, 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.



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

OCCUPATION REPORT



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OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

The Zionist Extermination Squads In Beit Hanun; “They Fired On Everyone. Children, Women, The Elderly”

[Thanks to J, who sent this in.]

November 08, 2006 Mehdi Lebouachera (AFP)

BEIT HANUN, Gaza Strip:

"Everything's destroyed. Like an earthquake," sighed Khaled al-Kafarna, his eyes wild with shock as he returned to his ruined home as Israeli armor rumbled out of Beit Hanun.

Israel's six-day operation, in which more than 60 Palestinians were killed and more than 200 wounded, has reduced the northern Gaza Strip town to a wasteland.

Roads were left gouged out, homes, two mosques and a school destroyed, the historic old town pockmarked with bullet holes and shell craters, electricity pylons ripped from the ground and sewage spewing freely in the streets.

Local residents, picking their way through the wreckage, mourned their "martyrs," eyes red with fatigue, and filled with hate and tears.

"Like all the men in town, the Israelis arrested me at the beginning. This is the first time I've come home but I have nothing left," said Khaled.

The front of his home has collapsed. Walls have been ripped apart.

"They committed a war crime in Beit Hanun," he cried, his voice cracking, his hands gesticulating toward the heavens.

Around 40 Palestinians once made their home in the three-story building in the old town of Beit Hanun.

"We've lost everything," weighed in Khaled's sister-in-law, Aida Ali Yasji. "The only thing I have are these clothes lent to me by the neighbors where I was staying."

In the same spot, a lone minaret that withstood Israeli bulldozer teeth and shell fire is all that remains of one of the oldest mosques in Gaza, the Nasser Mosque. Singed copies of the Koran were being gathered up by children.

"This mosque is more than 800 years old. It is part of our heritage and thousands of people visited it every year," lamented Akram Abdel-Jawd Qassam, whose family have been caretakers of the holy site for half a century.

"They said there were fighters in the mosque but they are liars. I have the keys and it was closed. They occupied my house for two days and never asked me to open the doors to show them that it was empty," he said.

Like the faces of all local residents, there is anger etched across his heavily lined face. "Why did they destroy the houses? Did the houses fire rockets? And the electricity network and drinking water? Did they fire rockets as well?"

Fathiyya Abu Zareq, whose house is next to the mosque, interrupted him.

"They are crazy. They fired on everyone. Children, women, the elderly. Afterward they say the Palestinians are terrorists but it's not these people who are the real terrorists," he said.

Moin Abu Arbid received condolence calls from relatives who solemnly line up in their dozens to pay their respects over the death of his 48-year-old brother Marwan, killed when his home collapsed following an Israeli bombardment.

"They bombed blindly," he sighs, his eyes red.

But pain takes a back seat when recounting the humiliations suffered when Israeli soldiers rounded up all the local men aged between 16 and 45.

"They penned us like dogs in a field of the agricultural college," he said. "They were perhaps 5,000 people. For six days, the Israelis turned Beit Hanun into a giant Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib prison."

Palestinians said they were stripped down to their underwear upon arrival, fed only bread and tomatoes during a three-day detention in the field while they were brought one-by-one for questioning at the college.

MORE:

The Savages Celebrate The Slaughter

November 06, 2006 By Gideon Levy, Haaretz [Excerpts]

A brigade commander tells his soldiers, who killed 12 people in one day: "You've won 12:0," and the soldiers grin broadly.

This is the moral nadir we have reached, following a long slide down a slippery slope: Human life has become cheap.

Proof of this came at the end of the week from the big mouth of Major General Elazar Stern, the head of the IDF Personnel Directorate, who occasionally says true things.

"The IDF's excessive sensitivity to human life led to some of the failures in the Lebanon war - and this should not happen," Stern told Channel 7.

Stern should be praised for these forthright words: Those who embark with unbearable lightness on a futile war of choice cannot allow themselves the luxury of showing sensitivity for the lives of their soldiers. In war, soldiers not only kill, but are also killed. This should have been stated in advance.

No one asked who these fatalities were, whether they all deserved to die, and what benefit Israel derives from this wholesale killing.

The IDF has been operating in the town of Beit Hanun for several days now. Operation Autumn Clouds is ostensibly intended to target Qassam launchers, but meanwhile it has only brought more Qassams on Sderot - besides the killing, destruction and terror it sows in the heart of the 30,000-resident town.

I was at the Beit Hanun home of the Abu Ouda family twice recently. The first time was when a shell destroyed the family's home. The second time was when soldiers killed the father, his son and his daughter, who were innocent of any crime. And this was before Operation Autumn Clouds.

The statement by Yedioth Ahronoth's military commentator, Alex Fishman, that one of the operation's goals is drilling the troops for the "big operation," does not stir any protest.

That the IDF is embarking on a "training operation" in a dense population center, sowing death and destruction - does this not show a frightening contempt for human life?

These futile operations will not stop the Qassams, which are aimed at giving us and the rest of the world a painful reminder of the imprisoned and boycotted Gaza residents' distress, which no one would notice if it were not for the Qassams.

MORE:

“The Dead Include A 70-Year-Old Man Who Went Out On His Balcony To Bring In His Disabled Son”

November 2nd, 2006 AMY GOODMAN, Democracy Now, Interviews Jennifer Loewenstein, visiting research fellow at the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University. She is working on a book about the transformation of the national Palestinian movement. [Excerpts]

JENNIFER LOEWENSTEIN: I was in the Shifa Hospital in Gaza City yesterday, deliberately because of this incursion. And by the way, it was nine Palestinians yesterday. They are very careful about documenting things here.

The dead include a 70-year-old man who went out on his balcony to bring in his disabled son.

I went around, and with the permission of one of the head doctors at the hospital, photographed the wounded, because I know from being an American citizen that we don't see Palestinian dead and wounded, we only see the Israelis. And so, I was taken to various wards in the hospital, where people were recovering, in particular, the intensive care unit, and photographed people with bullet wounds and with legs and arms bound up in plaster.

And in one case, a man was simply bleeding from his belly. I mean it was just -- it was really truly gruesome. And one of the people had died on the operating table that morning and was taken to the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Hanoun, where they take the dead. There were lots of relatives hanging around the hospital, waiting for news on their relatives.

And just as an aside, it was very touching, because, you know, you walk through these hospitals on a very hot and very humid Gaza day, there is no air conditioning, there are no proper bed linens.

One father was shouting at one of the nurses that his son had been there a week -- this was in another case -- and had not yet had changed bed linens, and the doctor telling me, "Look, we don't have them. We don't have basic supplies like that. We don't have dialysis machines for kidney patients. We don't have cancer drugs. We can't do elective surgeries anymore, such as for hernias or anything like that, because the more crucial or urgent situations have to take precedence."

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Government Office That Exposed War Profiteers In Iraq Abolished, In Secret, By War Profiteers Running The Government; Projects Reviewed "From Outer Space"

Because of security concerns, inspectors could not visit the \$2.23 million Al Karkh Courthouse in northwestern Baghdad, instead they had to rely on satellite imagery to view the courthouse complex from outer space.

Nov 6, 2006 By Carl Sears, NBC News Producer [Excerpts]

While surging violence grabs headlines, Iraq reconstruction continues to fall far short of U.S. and Iraqi goals, further undermining stability in the nascent democracy.

And in a "shoot the messenger" coup de grâce, the latest casualty in the war may be the office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) whose investigations have exposed waste, fraud, and mismanagement of billions of dollars spent by U.S. taxpayers in rebuilding Iraq.

In a stealth blow during a closed-door conference on a major defense bill, the Republican side of the House Armed Services Committee inserted a provision to shutdown the Special Inspector General (IG) office led by Stuart Bowen Jr.

Bowen's office opened in January 2004 with the task of tracking the \$18 billion in U.S. taxpayer dollars initially allocated for Iraqi reconstruction.

The Special IG office was supposed to be temporary, but then again so was the war.

The U.S. government's plan was to execute reconstruction rapidly in Iraq, but many of the efforts have been stymied by the worsening security in the country.

"This was a waste of money because the contractors were ordered to go to Iraq to work, but they weren't working," explained Bowen (whose office will disappear in October 2007 unless critics of the termination prevail in having the office continue).

Due to the deteriorating security situation, many contractors were forced to remain idle, but taxpayer dollars still had to pay for their food and housing while they waited to begin work in Iraq. "About \$62 million was spent on overhead for contractors that only accomplished \$26 million in construction work."

More than three and a half years after the U.S. invasion Iraq oil production is 12 percent below prewar levels.

Iraq currently pumps 2.3 million barrels a day, and exports 1.6 million of that.

Iraq did not meet any of its total critical refined product targets in the latest quarter (p. 40), and continues to suffer from severe shortages in all fuels. (p.39)

Electric production is up only six percent above prewar levels despite major U.S. funding and 88 percent of U.S. projects completed.

Attacks on electric lines in Baghdad on Oct. 20, 2006 reduced power in Baghdad to two hours a day for a week. Baghdad had less than five hours of electricity a day at the end of September.

The SIGIR report states: "repairing power lines is nearly impossible because of sniper attacks and death threats to repair crews."

While two-thirds of the U.S. money allocated for health care projects has been spent, just over one-third (36 percent) of these projects have been completed, "progress has been impeded by security and management problems".

In transportation, 88 percent of railway stations have been repaired, but "only a small number of trains continue to run nationwide because of security concerns."

U.S. projects have rehabilitated five Iraqi airports, and traffic is increasing but "the rise is attributed to a recent increase in military" flights.

Currently, only military and charter flights are permitted in Iraqi airspace.

SIGIR reports that: "security throughout Iraq remains a challenge to the management and oversight of many projects".

For example, because of security concerns, inspectors could not visit the \$2.23 million Al Karkh Courthouse in northwestern Baghdad, instead they had to rely on satellite imagery to view the courthouse complex from outer space.

Rumsfeld Quits

Nov 8 (Reuters)



**ONE SHIT-EATING RAT GONE
NEXT, PLEASE**



(Larry Downing/Reuters)

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

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)

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