

GI SPECIAL 5A7:



Iraq Veterans Against the War At Ft. Lewis. Photo by Lori Hurlebaus, Courage to Resist Jan 6th, 2007

“There Was Really No Need For It, She Said” Wisconsin Marine Loses Life In War;

“Kristie Schmitz Said She Supports The Troops In Iraq, But Doesn’t Agree With Sending Them There”

Dec 27, 2006 (AP)

MADISON A U.S. Marine from central Wisconsin died in Iraq Tuesday, according to family members and school officials.

The U.S. Department of Defense hadn't confirmed the death of Josh Schmitz, 22, of Loyal, Wednesday morning. But Joe Anderson, choir director at Loyal High School, and Schmitz's cousin, Kristie Schmitz, both said they had heard Schmitz had been killed.

"He was just such a good person," said Kristie Schmitz, 21. "I think he just wanted to do something for our country."

Kristie Schmitz said her cousin played linebacker for Loyal. Anderson, who doubles as team statistician, said Schmitz was tough on the field.

"Very intense love for football," Anderson said. "He was pretty good."

Schmitz played drums in band and, after some coaxing, sang in the choir his senior year, Anderson said.

The last time he saw Schmitz was July, when his former student stopped by the school to visit him. They talked for an hour about Iraq. Schmitz already had done one tour there, Anderson said.

"He knew he had a duty to perform. He was making sure he performed what he was asked to do and serve his country," Anderson said. "It's too bad. I feel really bad he's gone. That's one thing about being a teacher. It hurts a lot to see students pass on before you. It's very sad, for sure ... he was just an A-1 super kid."

Kristie Schmitz said she supports the troops in Iraq, but doesn't agree with sending them there.

"There was really no need for it," she said.

Schmitz was one of three Wisconsin military personnel killed within nine days in Iraq, making it one of the deadliest periods of the war for state troops.

U.S. Army Pvt. Evan Bixler, 21, of Racine was killed Sunday in Hit, Iraq. A funeral Mass was scheduled Friday for Marine Capt. Kevin M. Kryst, 27, of West Bend, who was killed Dec. 18 in Al Anbar province.

Sixty-six Wisconsin residents have died as a result of service in Iraq.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**REALLY BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
HOPELESS WAR:**

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A girl looks at a US soldier from the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team guarding a street in Baghdad, October 29, 2006. REUTERS/Mahmoud Raouf Raouf (IRAQ)

Dansville Grad Dies In Baghdad Bombing

December 27, 2006 BY ZLATI MEYER, FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

A 28-year-old Ingham Township resident who had married a fellow soldier died Saturday in Baghdad from injuries caused by a car bomb.

Four months into his second tour of duty in Iraq, Army Sgt. Curtis Norris was fatally wounded when an improvised explosive device exploded near his vehicle.

The 1997 Dansville High School graduate enlisted eight years ago, the third generation of his family to do so.

He married fellow soldier, the former Rose Moncrief.

When he reenlisted for three more years, Norris worked at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, where his paternal grandfather served during World War II. Then he reenlisted again and was assigned to the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) in Ft. Drum, N.Y.

"He wanted to travel and do things, more than just the things around here," his father, William Norris, said Tuesday.

"He was a good kid," his father, a Vietnam vet, recalled. "He just liked being with friends and got along well with everyone."

In addition to his wife and his father, Norris is survived by his 5-year-old daughter, Kira; his mother, Connie; his brother, Billy; and his maternal grandparents, Raymond and Barbara Myers.

Funeral plans have not been finalized.

Lafayette Soldier Killed In Iraq

12/25/2006 The Associated Press

LAFAYETTE, La. — A Lafayette family were not told what killed 25-year-old Army Staff Sgt. Jacob Gerald McMillan and left three other soldiers wounded when they were notified of his death.

McMillan was stationed in Kalsu, Iraq, but was in Baghdad at the time of the incident. The Lafayette High School graduate was the son of Kathryn McMillan and Gerald McMillan, both of Lafayette.

Jacob McMillan joined the Army right after graduation in 1999, Kathryn McMillan said, and was dedicated to serving in the military.

"He didn't always agree with the politics, but he believed in being a soldier," she said.

Jacob McMillan was close friends with Army Cpl. Joseph C. Thibodeaux, 25, of Lafayette, who died Sept. 1, 2004, in Hawijah, Iraq.

"They were best friends," his mother said.

Jacob McMillan and Thibodeaux had been friends at Lafayette High, where McMillan had lettered in wrestling.

"This is a parallel funeral to the one we had two years ago with Joe," McMillan said.

She added that his fiancée, Allegra Geffert, of Anchorage, Alaska, will be flying in for her sons funeral, which will be held later this week.

McMillan said the last time she saw her son was in September, while he was on leave from Fort Richardson, Alaska, his most recent duty station before his Oct. 6 deployment to Iraq. No details are available about the soldiers unit. Base personnel at Fort Richardson are absent during the holidays.

McMillan was attached to an airborne unit, his mother said, and was airborne-trained and Ranger-qualified.

After basic training at Fort Benning, Ga., McMillan had been assigned to the 508th Infantry Battalion at Camp Ederle in Italy. He later served with the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum in New York and served four months in Afghanistan before being assigned to Fort Richardson.

McMillan is survived by his parents and two sisters, Sarah Allison McMillan and Rebecca Lynn McMillan.

British Soldier Wounded

06 Jan 2007 Reuters

A British soldier was wounded when his convoy was hit by a roadside bomb but his injuries were not thought to be life threatening, Major Charlie Burbridge said.

Notes From A Lost War #1:

“Insurgent Leaders Are Well Organized And Have Relatively Deep Public Support”

“We Will Never Kill Or Capture Them All, And Even If We Do, There Are Plenty More Who Will Take Their Place, Lt. Col. Andrew Poppas Said”

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, NY City Labor Against The War, who sent this in.]

January 5, 2007 By Alexandra Zavis, L.A. Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

AL SHAMS, IRAQ — About 1,000 U.S. and Iraqi troops launched a major offensive at dawn Thursday in Diyala province, an increasingly violent zone east of Baghdad that has become a haven and training ground for Sunni Arab insurgents.

The target of the strike is an isolated landscape of farms and irrigation canals riddled with weapons caches, safe houses and training ranges, U.S. military officials said.

The insurgents, however, appeared to be well prepared for the slow-moving assault.

Smoke signals and flares arced into the sky as a column of tanks and Humvees from the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, pressed into an insurgents' redoubt. U.S. military officials said spotters used those techniques to warn guerrillas in the area that the U.S. and Iraqi forces were approaching.

Insurgents also had dug deep trenches into the roadways and sabotaged canal bridges to slow the troops' advance. U.S. commanders said they suspected that the obstacles were designed to divert approaching vehicles toward roadside bombs.

Four hours into the operation, an explosion ripped through the front end of a U.S. Humvee but failed to penetrate the cabin. The U.S. soldiers inside were not injured, but the wreckage blocked the road for two hours as troops salvaged the vehicle and searched for additional explosives hidden along the road.

U.S. commanders viewed the operation as an opportunity to test the 400 soldiers of Iraq's 5th Army Division.

Nonetheless, commanders kept details of the operation from their Iraqi counterparts until hours before it began, out of fear that information would leak to insurgents, said Col. David W. Sutherland, commander of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, which assumed control of Diyala in October.

Sutherland said he suspected that information from Iraqi soldiers compromised counterinsurgency operations in November and December.

Some Iraqi soldiers chafed at the secrecy around the operation, which was launched from a checkpoint south of Baqubah.

"They do not trust us," said one Iraqi soldier who identified himself as 1st Lt. Ali.

The rendezvous was a chaotic scene, with dozens of armored vehicles jammed into a checkpoint. U.S. officers shouted commands in English in an attempt to make them fall in line. Several Iraqi vehicles started off in the wrong direction.

"No, this way, this way!" shouted a U.S. soldier.

By the time the joint force swept into six villages to conduct searches, there were no military-age men to be seen.

U.S. military commanders acknowledged that it was difficult to root out insurgents spread over such a broad swath of sparsely populated farmland, but said they hoped to keep the insurgents off balance by disrupting training and operations.

"We will never kill or capture them all, and even if we do, there are plenty more who will take their place," Lt. Col. Andrew Poppas said.

"Our success, in my view, will be based on continued presence, denying this place as a safe haven."

Insurgent leaders are well organized and have relatively deep public support.

Abu Musab Zarqawi, leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, was killed by U.S. forces last year in western Diyala, and his group retains a strong presence in the province. Ansar al Sunna, another insurgent group, also is active. But the most well-established groups, such as the Council and the 1920 Revolutionary Army, are composed of ex-Iraqi soldiers, U.S. officials said.

Two hours after joining the Iraqi soldiers, the convoy rumbled toward Diyala's southeastern hinterlands. As they progressed, reports crackled over the radio of four more explosions, which disabled U.S. vehicles but did not injure any troops. Two more bombs were found before they were detonated.

Helicopters spotted small groups of armed men using the network of irrigation canals that crisscross the region to bypass U.S. and Iraqi ground troops. U.S. officials said they killed nine suspected insurgents and detained about nine others.

But large swaths of the region appeared to have been abandoned by military-age males. During a sweep of one hamlet, convoy commander Capt. Stephen Dobbins found only several women and children and a couple of teenage shepherds.

Dobbins asked a woman with a child on her lap where all the men had gone. To work, she said.

A search of the village turned up \$1,500, passports with foreign stamps on them, cellphones and two AK-47 rifles, the military said.

"Then why did I see men running away from here?" Dobbins said.

"Those men were from another village," the woman said.

MORE:

Notes From A Lost War #2:

Insurgents Elude Occupation Forces In Eastern Iraqi Province: “Villagers Deny Knowledge Of The Rebels”

“Weapons Have Been Stashed And The Rebels Have Scattered Among The Populace”

January 6, 2007 By Alexandra Zavis, L.A. Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

FONTIMIYA, IRAQ — U.S. and Iraqi forces trudged through waterlogged fields, crawled down tunnels and went house to house Friday in a painstaking search for Sunni Arab insurgents, combing a remote rural region east of Baghdad that has been a training and logistics base for Al Qaeda in Iraq and other militant groups.

But for the second day of the 1,000-troop operation, in home after home, they found only women, children and men too old to fight.

Time and again, U.S. forces in Iraq have staged major assaults on known insurgent hide-outs only to have key individuals melt away.

As with other operations, the military is attempting to dislodge insurgents from their hiding places in Diyala province, then sweep them into known escape routes where they can be intercepted.

But the area's sunken irrigation canals, vast agricultural fields, seldom-traveled back roads and widely scattered hamlets have given guerrillas innumerable ways to avoid capture.

"We are hardly finding any military-aged males," U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Pete Johnson said as he directed a truckload of Iraqi fighters into position outside a village in an icy downpour. "They have all pushed away somewhere. Either they have run away or they are waiting for us."

If the insurgents are preparing to make a stand, Johnson said, "we can definitely take the fight to them."

"But if they disappear and hide," he said, "there is no way we can establish positive identification and get them."

U.S. field commanders have struggled to keep pace with guerrillas' movements. Officials say the rebels use spotters, infiltrators in Iraqi security forces and contacts on or near U.S. bases to stay abreast of American troop movements.

When U.S. troops do learn of large gatherings of insurgents, they often arrive too late — weapons have been stashed and the rebels have scattered among the populace.

[And since even Occupation polls find the overwhelming majority of Iraqis want Bush's foreign fighters to get the fuck out of their country, Iraq as a whole is the

“sanctuary” for “insurgents,” and will always be so until the last Occupation troop goes home.]

After the U.S. eventually withdraws, the insurgents often return.

In Al Anbar province in western Iraq, Col. Brian Beaudreault, commander of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, said he was attempting to reestablish a police force in Rutbah, a town of 30,000 between Ramadi and Syria.

At least three waves of recruits have come and gone in many Al Anbar towns. Iraqi soldiers brought in to provide security in the absence of police have also been plagued by battle losses and attrition.

In Baqubah, Diyala's capital, guerrillas had virtually destroyed the police force by November. The virulence of the insurgency led Col. David W. Sutherland, the U.S. commander in charge of the province, to take stronger action against the Sunni militants.

But the region, a vast area of farmland dotted with palm groves about 40 miles northeast of Baghdad, is laced with canals and tunnels that insurgents use to evade U.S. aircraft and ground forces.

Fighter jets dropped a 500-pound bomb on six armed men as they crept through canals toward U.S. and Iraqi troops overnight, the military said. In the morning, troops found a 30-foot tunnel at the site with a store of food, blankets and religious texts. It was destroyed.

The Iraqi army said two of its soldiers were killed in a roadside bombing the previous day.

Two roadside bombs wounded two Iraqi soldiers and a U.S. soldier Friday. A disabled vehicle delayed a convoy for several hours, as did wind and rain, which further degraded Diyala's poorly maintained dirt roads and vexed air support operations.

In each village, U.S. and Iraqi troops are moving house to house, separating out military-aged men, swiping their hands for explosives residue and questioning them about insurgent activity in the area.

In Fontimiya, one of the larger wheat-farming communities, 20 men sat cross-legged in a windblown field, eyes downcast and some shivering in the cold, as U.S. soldiers barked out questions.

But the village was otherwise deserted, many of its mud-brick homes reduced to rubble.

Most denied any knowledge of insurgents. But a detained teenager told troops that the community included a number of fighters who fled on motorcycles through the canal network at the first sound of U.S. helicopters.

The boy also said residents received regular visits from masked men on motorcycles who warned them which roads were mined.

U.S. forces said they had positioned troops to block the insurgents' escape.

"The enemy is reacting the way we expected them to, and that will ultimately lead us to triumph and prevail," squadron commander Lt. Col. Andrew Poppas told superiors in a radio call later Friday night, as a sandstorm closed in and wailing winds buffeted their vehicles.

[And there you have the famous last words of every deluded Imperial commanding officer from the British in America in 1776 through the German commanding officers in occupied Yugoslavia, Italy and France in 1944 down to General Westmoreland in Vietnam.

[Carve these words on his tombstone: "weapons have been stashed and the rebels have scattered among the populace."

[Ass kissing bullshit wins no dishonorable wars of occupation. Never has, never will. Game over. Time for the troops to come home. Poppas can stay, triumphing and prevailing. T]

But Poppas has said that long-term success depends on the cooperation of the mostly Shiite Iraqi forces, who until recently had refused to patrol the area, which they consider a death trap. He plans to build them a new patrol base in the area.

TROOP NEWS

“Not One Of The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Guardsmen Or Marines I Interviewed Told Me That They Wanted More U.S. Boots On The Ground”

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

Jan 5 Jim Lobe, (IPS)

If, as expected, George W. Bush next week announces his intention to "surge" some 20,000 additional U.S. troops to Iraq to pacify Baghdad and Sunni-dominated al-Anbar province, he may find himself in a tougher fight than he expected even a week ago.

Not only are the new Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress lining up in opposition, but a growing number of Republican lawmakers -- even including staunch Bush loyalists -- are voicing serious reservations about the idea.

"Baghdad needs reconciliation between Shiites and Sunnis," Republican Sen. Norm Coleman, who just returned from Iraq and faces re-election in 2008, told the Los Angeles Times this week. "It doesn't need more Americans in the crosshairs."

Even ret. Lt. Col. Ollie North, a far-right talk-show host who gained fame as the White House coordinator of what became the Iran-Contra affair 20 years ago, reported that recent interviews with officers and soldiers in Iraq persuaded him that adding more troops to the 140,000 already deployed there would be a mistake.

"McCain and Lieberman talked to many of the same officers and senior NCOs I covered for FOX News during my most recent trip to Iraq," North asserted in his syndicated column Friday.

"Not one of the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Guardsmen or Marines I interviewed told me that they wanted more U.S. boots on the ground. In fact, nearly all expressed just the opposite. 'We don't need more American troops, we need more Iraqi troops' was a common refrain. They are right."

Bush Picks Arrogant Asshole And Showboating Media Hound To Run Iraq War

Jan 6, 2007 (CBS News) [Excerpt]

The president on Friday nominated Adm. William Fallon, described by people who have worked for him as "caustic," "arrogant" and an "SOB," to take over central command from Gen. John Abizaid.

Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, perhaps the most controversial officer in the Army because of his "Type A" personality and what many view as his too-cozy relationship with the media, will replace Gen. George Casey as top American general in Iraq.

Both men must be approved by the Senate.

Pentagon Orders Dead Officers To Report For Duty

[Thanks to David Honish & Alberto Jaccoma, veterans, who sent this in.]

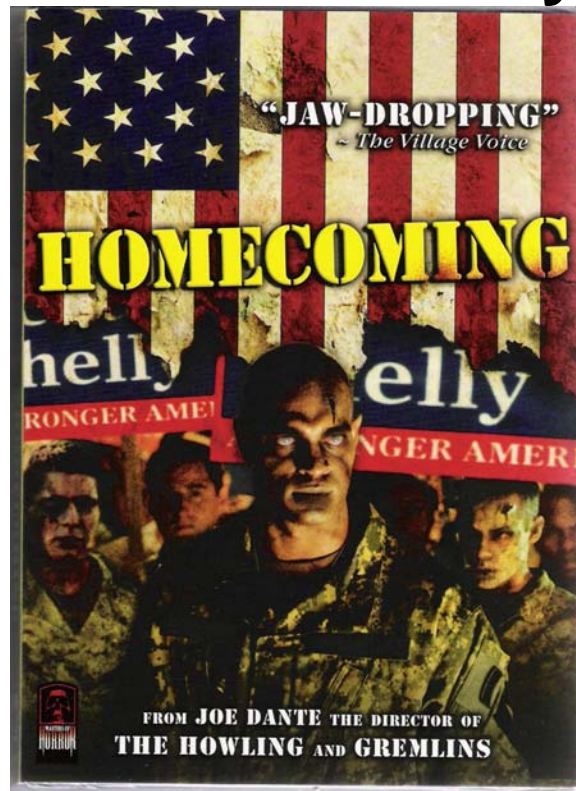
January 5, 2007 WASHINGTON (AP)

The U.S. army said Friday it would apologize to the families of about 275 officers killed or wounded in action who were mistakenly sent letters urging them to return to active duty.

The letters were sent a few days after Christmas to more than 5,100 army officers who had recently left the service. Included were letters to about 75 officers killed in action and about 200 wounded in action.

MORE:

Be Careful What You Wish For: KIA Return To Destroy Bush:



**“This Flick Praises The Troops In Iraq While Offering Up
The Politicians And Pundits Who Sent Them There As
Finger Food For The Undead”**

While Dante's film will no doubt raise hackles, my guess is that most members of the military would get a kick out of this flick that praises the troops in Iraq while

offering up the politicians and pundits who sent them there as finger food for the undead.

Dec. 2, 2005 By Grady Hendrix, Slate.com [Excerpts] [In case you missed it the 1st time.]

Just when things looked like they couldn't get any worse for President Bush, here come the zombies to vote him out of office.

They arrive courtesy of Joe Dante's Homecoming. One part satire of soulless Beltway insiders, one part gut-crunching horror flick, Homecoming kicks off when the flag-draped coffins of soldiers killed in Iraq burst open and the reanimated corpses of dead veterans hit the streets, searching for polling places where they can pull the lever for "anyone who will end this evil war."

His characters seem like people we've just watched on MSNBC.

There's David Murch, a political consultant for an unnamed Republican president who sounds exactly like President Bush. His new girlfriend, Jane Cleaver, is a bullying pundit cloned from Ann Coulter's DNA. There's also a James Carville look-alike and a Jerry Falwell doppelgänger, complete with quivering jowls.

Dante delivers the thrill of watching familiar figures spin the issues and dole out doublespeak, yet he doesn't stint on the satisfaction of seeing them have their brains eaten afterwards.

He's the first horror director to take the bits of media flotsam and jetsam that have been drifting around — the flag-draped coffins at Dover Air Force Base, the talking-head cable shows, the internment camps, the Ohio and Florida recounts, the "Mission Accomplished" banners — and make something electrifying out of them.

Today, zombies are the perfect metaphor for our soldiers in Iraq: They're shell-shocked, anonymous, and aren't asked to make very many decisions.

Unless you personally know a soldier, the war in Iraq has been a zombie war, fought by an uncomplaining, faceless mass wrapped in desert camo and called "our boys."

We talk about them all the time — supporting them, criticizing them, speaking for them — but we don't really have a clue as to what's on their minds.

They often seem like disposable units sent to enforce the will of our country.

But what if they come back and they're different?

What if they come back and don't want to follow orders anymore?

What's shocking about Dante's Homecoming is that he dispenses with the usual horror subtext completely. Pundits go on TV to defend the living dead's right to vote until they find out they're not voting Republican. Zombies rise from the grave, wrapped in the American flag. There's even a Cindy Sheehan stand-in with a zombie son. Nothing is too recent or too raw.

But Homecoming is on another level of guilty pleasures, a junk-food adrenaline rush that debunks the myth of glorious war, presenting every ugly wound in gory latex detail, while having nothing but compassion for the lonely, lurching, living-dead soldiers.

While Dante's film will no doubt raise hackles, my guess is that most members of the military would get a kick out of this flick that praises the troops in Iraq while offering up the politicians and pundits who sent them there as finger food for the undead.

“A Fire Of Resistance”



Darrell Anderson, Iraq Combat veteran and war resister. Photo by Lori Hurlebaus, Courage to Resist Jan 6th, 2007

2007-01-05 By Damon, ivawdeployed.org

On January 4th, 2007 the pre-trial of LT Ehren Watada began, sparking a fire of resistance that sustained IVAW members and activists as they gathered in the cold rainy weather outside the gates of Fort Lewis. Protesters held signs denouncing the war and supporting war resisters.

It was in the midst of this action, IVAW Deployed established Camp Resistance, a semi-permanent encampment to support LT Watada.

After its first day, the camp has inspired a wide range of response from local community members.

We have been met by several supporters who have driven by waving a thumbs up, or who have walked up off the street to thank us and offer us warm clothes.

We have also been received with hostility and resentment from other local residents. In both cases the passions have run high.

Fort Lewis is one of the largest military installations in the United States and is surrounded by towns like Lakewood, Washington, an economically depressed enclave that relies heavily on the military for employment and a sense of pride.

At the same time, the Fort Lewis area is inhabited by the family members of those deployed in Iraq, forcing serious discussion of the legality of the war that has called upon them to sacrifice so much.

In most cases, those who have approached the camp, regardless of their views, have shown a sincere respect for the fact that the camp was established by veterans.



www.ivaw.org

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

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Assorted Resistance Action

06 Jan 2007 Reuters & (KUNA)

A policeman was shot dead in Diwaniya, 180 km (112 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

The chief of Baghdad police, Major General Ali Yasser, survived a car bomb attack on his motorcade in Baghdad, sources at police headquarters said. The blast wounded three policemen.

Iraqi police clashed with guerrillas in central Baghdad today when they went to investigate a report that 27 bodies had been found in one location near a cemetery, police and interior ministry sources said.

A source at Baghdad police headquarters said local police in the area near Haifa Street, in central Baghdad, had found 27 bodies and called in reinforcements. When they arrived, they came under fire from gunmen.

The police source said they then called in support from US forces. An interior ministry source also said there had been clashes in the area.

A Mosul police source told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), unknown militants opened fire in Wihda district at Aref Mohammad, an employee at the municipality, and killed him instantly.

Mosul had witnessed over the past few days a number of civilian killings and shootings that targeted government employees.

Three policemen were killed on Friday while searching a house that was booby-trapped with explosives in Tal Afar, 420 km (260 miles) northwest of Baghdad, police said.

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

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“To Overcome The Asymmetry That So Solidly Favors The Iraqi Militants, The Number Of Additional US Or Coalition Troops Would Have To Be Enormous”

It appears obvious at this point that Iraqi insurgents could continue to operate successfully in an environment where the total US force has been doubled.

In this perspective, the addition of troops in Iraq is a horrifying mirage, a glittering image in the sands of that troubled place.

1-5-7 Terrell E. Arnold, Ret. Senior Foreign Service Officer of the US Department of State, Former Chairman, Department International Studies of the National War College And Deputy Director of the Department Of State Office of Counterterrorism; Rense.com [Excerpts]

The numbers are not terribly encouraging.

At present, we have about 130,000 troops in Iraq to deal with roughly 25,000,000 Iraqis. In truth, not all are troublemakers, but in an insurgent/incipient civil war situation it already has been demonstrated that a comparative few troublemakers can do enormous harm under the protective cover of a civil population.

With these numbers the ratio of US troops is one to every 190-200 Iraqis. If even two or three of those Iraqis are determined troublemakers, that one trooper is in deep trouble, and that is exactly where our forces are.

If we were to add 30,000 more troops, the ratio improves a bit to one US trooper for every 160 or so Iraqis.

However, the number improvement is better than the safety improvement for US forces, because a few troublemakers can still successfully exploit a protective or even merely sheltering civil population to do great mischief.

Something like this calculus leads a number of analysts to say we need a lot more troops in Iraq to actually make any difference in the situation.

But to overcome the asymmetry that so solidly favors the Iraqi militants, the number of additional US or Coalition troops would have to be enormous.

It appears obvious at this point that Iraqi insurgents could continue to operate successfully in an environment where the total US force has been doubled.

In this perspective, the addition of troops in Iraq is a horrifying mirage, a glittering image in the sands of that troubled place.

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.

“We At Least Must Pretend That Our Bankrupt Empire Is Intact”

January 6, 2007 By Ron Paul, LewRockwell.com [Excerpt]

Where the additional U.S. troops in Iraq will come from is anybody's guess. But surely they won't be redeployed from Japan, Korea, or Europe.

We at least must pretend that our bankrupt empire is intact. But then again, the Soviet empire appeared intact in 1988.

How long this financial charade can go on is difficult to judge, but when the end comes it will not go unnoticed by any American.

Silencing Conscience

From: Monica Benderman
To: GI Special
Sent: January 06, 2007
Subject: Silencing Conscience

Monica Benderman is the wife of Sgt. Kevin Benderman, a ten year Army veteran who served a combat tour in Iraq, and returned to file a Conscientious Objector request based on his firsthand experiences. To learn more, please visit www.BendermanDefense.org. Monica and Kevin may be reached at mdawnb@coastalnow.net

January 5, 2007 By Monica Benderman

In the Military Courts –Martial of Sgt. Kevin Benderman, having filed a Conscientious Objector application after ten years of honorable service in the Army including a combat tour in Iraq:

“COMES NOW THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, by and through its counsel, and files this Motion in Limine.

The Government moves this Court to grant the following relief:

(ii) Preclude the Defense from raising irrelevant issues to the Trier of fact, to Wit: the accused's status as a conscientious objector; the dictates of his conscience, religion, or personal philosophy; his patterns of belief concerning Operation Enduring/Iraqi Freedom and war generally; and his world views, and to exclude any documentary or testimonial evidence of any sort during the case on the merits concerning the accused's personal beliefs. Furthermore to also Preclude the Defense from raising irrelevant issues concerning his alleged reasons for seeking conscientious objector status, to Wit; experiences during the accused's prior deployment to Iraq including allegations the accused has made stating he was ordered to fire on Iraqi children; that he was not allowed to render medical attention or food to Iraqi civilians; that he was ordered to

perform hazardous duty he was untrained to do, and any other allegation of misconduct by his fellow soldiers.

ARGUMENT

(E) The accused in the instant case cannot claim a defense of necessity because no natural physical force put pressure on the accused. His feelings of conscientious objection, aversion to war, and the motives for going to war – even if true – do not provide a defense to the charge of desertion under necessity. To recognize such a claim in this case would open a Pandora’s Box and extend to all soldiers a possible defense never anticipated by the Code.”

What is wrong with a country where a soldier’s “dictates of conscience, religion or personal philosophy,” personal experiences in combat, and faulty orders from command are irrelevant issues in the defense of that soldier’s moral decision to follow his conscience?

In December 2004, having experienced every destructive aspect of war firsthand, including the misrepresentations necessary to encourage a nation of conscience to support the war, my husband, Sgt. Kevin Benderman, attempted to file a Conscientious Objector application with his unit command. He was a ten-year veteran of the Army, with commendations, superior recommendations and evaluations from all levels of command.

He had been to Iraq.

He witnessed the immoral acts of war, the unethical orders of superior officers, and the lack of support for the real needs of the soldiers he served with.

He had enlisted to fulfill what he saw to be his responsibility, to give to his country in defense of its laws and the principles of its constitution – the foundation for the freedoms all Americans enjoy.

His time at war gave him the firsthand experiences he needed to realize that his commitment and sacrifice were being disrespected even at the highest levels of command, and he would not compromise his principles to serve a cause he knew to be immoral, unethical and without merit.

As the law and Army regulations allow, and in keeping with his sworn duty to defend our laws and every American citizen’s right to be protected by those laws, he attempted to file a conscientious objector application requesting to be released from further military service.

His command violated not only Army regulations, but the law of our land by refusing to accept his written request, throwing it back at him and ordering him out of the office.

After public pressure, and a strong letter of support by our Congressional representative, he was released from a meeting with the Command Sergeant Major of his battalion, which had been arranged by the Commander of his battalion, and ordered to complete

all relevant paperwork necessary to file his CO claim. Without missing a day of duty, his command assigned him to the Rear Detachment unit of his battalion, his CO process was initiated, and he was given responsibilities commensurate with his rank.

He was never given an order to deploy, even as his forward commander gave a sworn statement that he left word with the Rear Detachment unit to see that Kevin was sent to Iraq on a plane scheduled to fly just one day after he was re-assigned to the Rear Detachment by that same command.

An Army major, Battalion chaplain met with Kevin and found him to be completely sincere in his beliefs, and his request for Conscientious Objector status:

“SGT Benderman is sincere in his moral and ethical beliefs... His beliefs are deeply held to the point where he has no choice but to act in accord with them. SGT Benderman’s willingness to file for this status is an expression of his deeply held conviction and his moral belief that he is forbidden to bear arms and take life. Everything else is subordinate to this ethical belief.”

Two weeks later, Sgt. Benderman was charged with Desertion and Missing Movement – violations of regulations he did not commit.

One asks – was it incompetence, disorganization or a strong desire on the part of the command to intimidate my husband into closing his mouth and acting as a “good soldier” should?

Only justice will show the truth.

Justice takes time.

It is time for the truth.

During the first of two courts-martial attempts to convict my husband of a trumped up charge for a crime he did not commit, the government, “by and through its counsel” went to great lengths to keep my husband from defending himself in court.

My husband did not speak out against the Iraq war in his Conscientious Objector application. Even as we spent time in several cities across America discussing Conscientious Objection, its meaning to us, and the reasons my husband would no longer participate in war, his reasons never pinpointed the immoral invasion of Iraq as a justification.

He knew, based on his firsthand experiences of war, conversations he had with veterans of past wars, lessons of his father and his own introspective process, that he would no longer allow himself to participate in anything as destructive, immoral and inhumane as war.

Sgt. Kevin Benderman stood on principle, and just as he enlisted in the military believing in the need to defend the foundation of our country, when he knew war no longer defined his values he requested legal release from the military, once again in defense of our constitution and the laws of humanity on which it was based.

Participation in war, and witnessing its destructive effects on all involved, should be enough motivation to speak out in defense of finding peaceful resolutions to the world's differences in ideologies, cultures and traditions. We believed it was enough justification to afford my husband the right to be released from the military after having selflessly given ten years of voluntary service to this country. It should have been enough, and we should have been satisfied.

The government "by and through its counsel," by filing a Motion in Limine to suppress my husband's beliefs and evidence justifying his principled stand in a court of law, opened the door to new considerations which extended beyond the simple statement that all war is wrong.

Why would the government be afraid of a man's conscience?

Why would the government feel it necessary to suppress one soldier's beliefs and recounting of his personal experiences in a public record?

What was the "Pandora's Box" the government was so afraid to raise the cover off of?

If we were not meant to question the actions of this war, then wouldn't justice in a court of law prove that to the government's benefit?

What was it they wanted to hide?

In its "Motion in Limine" the government lists as FACT, that "After redeployment (from his tour in Iraq), the accused re-enlisted in the Army and transferred to the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart."

In FACT, my husband re-enlisted several months prior to the invasion of Iraq, before his unit had ever deployed.

The government went on to state that "the Accused has been a featured speaker at many anti-war rallies during which he has spoken out against United States foreign policy; railed against the war in Iraq and perceived illegalities committed by the federal government."

Interestingly, every public discussion my husband participated in called for an end to all war and a move toward positive dialogue in an effort to resolve our differences without the inhumanity that war brings, and he refused to discuss the policies of this current war.

What did Kevin say that caused the government's counsel to manipulate facts in a legal document presented in a court of law as a request that the court grant the government relief from facing my husband's testimony of real fact in defense of their manipulated allegations against him?

Also included as Fact by the government counsel, "The accused has made numerous statements to the press...including on his website, stating the reasons for his actions. These include accusations that when he was in Iraq he was

ordered to shoot children and forbidden from rendering medical assistance to Iraq civilians.”

If the government knew my husband’s “accusations” to be unjustified, why did they work so hard to silence him?

In December 2004, Sgt. Kevin Benderman made a private petition to his command to be released from military service according to the regulations. He did not seek public attention, he did not want anything more than to be given his right to choose how to live his life, as the laws he served to defend allowed.

Even before his case became public, the Army commanders were working feverishly to silence my husband’s conscience.

In the end, truth cannot be silenced.

Isn’t it time we knew the truth?

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Israeli Security Service Vet Says If He Were Palestinian, He Would “Fight Against The Foreign Occupier” “In This Battle Soldiers Are Legitimate Targets”

January 5, 2007 By Uri Blau, Haaretz [Excerpts]

Nissim Levy served in the Shin Bet security service for 20 years. In his job as field coordinator in 1984 in Lebanon, and in refugee camps in the Gaza Strip before and after the Oslo Accords, he was in regular contact with the ‘other side.’ The endless searches for one more bit of information and the firsthand contact with the residents, those who ‘want to throw us into the sea,’ did not turn him into an Arab-hater who is tough on security matters. Perhaps even the opposite.

As someone who is familiar with the conditions of the Palestinians in Gaza, do you feel empathy toward them?

'Ehud Barak once said that if he were a Palestinian he would join a terror organization. If I were in their situation, I would make our lives bitter. I would not blow up women and children. I'm totally opposed to that.

But yes, I would fight against the foreign occupier. When you take a person and put him up against the wall and don't leave him many options, then what do you want him to do?

'Let's forget our patriotism for a moment.

'If a boy in Be'er Sheva falls in love with a girl in Haifa, what does he do? He picks up the phone, makes a date and drives to see her.

'If a boy from Bethlehem falls in love with a girl from Nablus, what does he do? He has to cross checkpoints, he needs a 1,001 permits.

'The moment that you reach the conclusion that you have nothing to live for, you immediately find that you have something to die for.'

Are soldiers legitimate targets?

'Yes. In this battle soldiers are legitimate targets.'

'My father was in the Etzel (the Irgun, a pre-1948 right-wing Jewish military organization that fought the British and Arabs). There was the British occupier and he fought against it.

The Palestinian is fighting against the Israeli occupier. When you come and call someone a 'terrorist,' the definition is totally subjective.

'I consider the Etzel fighters freedom fighters, and the British considered them terrorists...

'Weren't we the ones who invented this business of sacrifice?

'Who sanctified 'it is good to die for our country'?

'Didn't we sanctify those who were the first to charge in order to save the homeland?

Okay, so the Palestinians have taken it to much greater extremes.

'Do you think that if we were in their situation we wouldn't have suicide bombers?

'Isn't Baruch Goldstein a suicide bomber? (Goldstein, a Jewish doctor, fired at Muslim worshippers in the Tomb of the Patriarchs in February 1994, killing 29 and wounding 150).'

[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."]

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)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

“Bush Is Willing To Sacrifice American Troops And Iraqi Civilians In Order To Protect His Own Delusions”

“This Surge Option Is More Of A Political Decision Than A Military One”

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

December 21, 2006 By Paul Craig Roberts, AntiWar.com [Excerpt]

When word leaked that Bush was inclined toward the "surge option" of committing more troops by keeping existing troops deployed in Iraq after their replacements had arrived, NBC News reported that an administration official "admitted to us today that this surge option is more of a political decision than a military one."

It is a clear sign of exasperation with Bush when an administration official admits that Bush is willing to sacrifice American troops and Iraqi civilians in order to protect his own delusions.

**TRAITOR
CRIMINAL
DOMESTIC ENEMY:
UNFIT FOR COMMAND;
UNWORTHY OF OBEDIENCE**



(AFP/Mike Theiler)

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

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