

GI SPECIAL 5B16:



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

Wounded Again:
**“Us Soldiers And Veterans Need
Our Own Platform Too With Mikes
And Speakers To Speak From”**
**“The Only Other Option To Say To
The ‘Orders,’ Are ‘Sir, No Sir””**

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: February 08, 2007 9:37 AM
Subject: Wounded Again

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace 50 Michigan, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

Myself and another Veteran For Peace, also VVAW, both of us Combat Infantry in Vietnam, attended the 1/27/2007 Anti-War Demo in Washington DC. It was extremely crowded and we ended up way to the side with our Michigan VFP [Veterans For Peace] banner.

I was wounded in my leg, so I brought a portable chair and held one end of the banner. Then a Military Families Speak Out Member had a banner and wanted to tie into ours. We let him and that freed up my Brother to talk to others as I held one end of the banner and the MFSO man held the other end.

We had many "Way to go Michigan" thumbs up, many photos of our banner with a MLK quote at the bottom and a woman kissed me on the cheek.

I remember hearing the IVAW's [Iraq Veterans Against The War] short speeches and liked two antiwar songs sang by a couple of different people, but the rest was Hollywood and Democratic babble.

Speeches were way too long, with the only good result of such antics, was allowing many of us to bond again after a way too long ago last demo.

Then, we were "Ordered" to set up behind the stage on the road behind it to get ready to March. But after standing there too long holding our banners, many Veterans, including me were shouting "Hurry Up And Wait," again and again.

The IVAW's were in front of us old Veterans, but standing in one place too long on a road is torture, even with good legs. Torture can be defined as "Anything that hurts a human being, even standing in one place too long."

Then we seemed to begin to March and then stopped.

We just thought it was photo-op time for the Iraq Veterans Against The War.

But then we noticed Non-Vet Marchers going ahead of us from another way.

Before we became all mixed up with the crowd, an "Organizer" had us do some antiwar "cadence." They like those ditties.

We did as we were "Ordered" and she was happy and then left, left us inching up a little at a time to March.

Soldiers and Veterans being abused and used is nothing new, even by the Peace Movement.

To Not Be Wounded Again, I suggest what the Palestinians did in DC in the Marches before the war started. I know for sure that 30 + busses of them left from Detroit alone back then.

When they arrived, they had their own platform with mikes and speakers and the other part of the Peace Movement had their own apart from the Palestinians.

At a certain time, everybody Marched and all were happy.

Us Soldiers and Veterans need our own platform too with mikes and speakers to speak from.

We have a different language too, caused by being in the Military and being in War.

I would personally be happy to drive our Michigan VFP banner into the earth and let the earth hold it up, while I sit in my chair and listen to two hours of Iraq Veterans Against The War speak with a few songs in-between.

The only other option to say to the "Orders," are "Sir, No Sir."

We will Not speak and we will Only March when the rest of you are long gone down the road.

<p>"The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops." Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War</p>
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MORE:

**"If UFPJ Wants To End This War
And Occupation Now It Needs To
Get Over Its Fixation On
Celebrities And Liberal
Politicians"**

**"Where Was Iraq Veterans Against The
War, For Example?"**

**"The Organizers Were Out Of Touch With
The People"**

[Thanks to Charles Jenks, who sent this in. He writes: I saw your piece - with the note from my dear friend Ward - so I thought this may interest you.]

January 31, 2007 By Charles Jenks, Consumersforpeace.org. [Excerpts]

Charles Jenks is Chair of the Advisory Board and Past President of Traprock Peace Center, and he serves as its web manager. He writes and consults for ConsumersforPeace.org and the ExxonMobil War Boycott. A licensed attorney since 1980, he has practiced human rights law for over 20 years.

On January 27th, the people sent a clear message to Washington - "Get U.S. Troops Out of Iraq Now!" Hundreds of thousands of people marched, and they completely - for the first time in history it is reported - surrounded the Capitol Building. When the first marchers came to the end of the loop there were people still waiting to start marching.

Unfortunately, United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) - the primary sponsor - didn't live up to the standards set by the marchers.

Its continuing refusal to work with some other national coalitions, and its focus on celebrities and politicians, was reflected in its botching the start of the march and focusing of media coverage.

The great news though, from my perspective, is that this march drew such a broad range of people. Look at the people marching - www.traprockpeace.org has over 200 march photos - and you'll see a cross-section of America. This - as much as the numbers - is what should worry the Bush Administration and Congress.

This was as large as any march that I have seen in D.C. The 500,000 estimate given by organizers seems reasonable.

This writer saw not one instance of violence.

The mainstream media, of course, grossly under-reported the size of the march (AP called it tens of thousands, and cited police sources as saying it was less than 100,000). So what else is new?

So how did UFPJ manage to screw up the beginning of the march?

Here's my eye-witness account of what happened.

As the speeches from the main stage were winding down, march marshals patrolled a large taped-off square area on 3rd Street, directly behind the stage, where celebrities were gathering in preparation for stepping off.

The march route was to go down to Constitution Avenue and then take a right turn on Constitution toward Capitol Hill. The squared-off area, marked by yellow plastic ribbon, was about 100 feet along 3rd street on one side and the width of the street on the other. This squared-off area was in the middle of throngs of people.

Marshals were inside and outside the square telling people to get up on the sidewalks to keep the street clear to let the celebrities who were supposed to head the march pass through and get in front of the marchers.

About 100 reporters, with march supporters mixed in, gathered in a tight group jostling for good camera positions on the side the squared-off area closest to Constitution Ave.

Opposite this gaggle of press were celebrities, liberal Democrat politicians and organizers selected by UFPJ, taking up their positions behind the big UFPJ banner.

More and more people gathered as organizing the march took more and more time. There was a huge crush of people - very tightly formed - behind the celebrity formation. And there was the crush of press hugging onto the yellow ribbon opposite the celebs.

People were now surrounding the square, and people were ignoring marshals' pleas to clear the street along the beginning of the march route.

This unstable situation blew apart when media people - bristling with their video and still cameras - noticed that some of their number had managed to get up close and personal to the celebs and were getting great shots. Photographers next to this writer (and including this writer) yelled to one guy with a video camera to get out of the way of the banner. (He was facing it, camera in hand.) We were trying to get long-range shots.

Then, another photographer got in front of the banner. Enough was enough for the crush of photographers behind the yellow ribbon. One lifted the ribbon and sprinted for the banner to get her own great shot of celebrities. This led to an avalanche of photographers, trying to get close-ups (I got a few myself).

The celebrity formation was now confronted by a mass of photographers acting like paparazzi. (And truly, they were just that, as many, if not most, were there to take pics of the famous.) The celebs started moving forward, taking baby steps, as the reporters inched backwards, clicking away. Meanwhile, marshals were yelling to the now hundreds of people in the street to get off the street and to "fall in behind" the group of celebrities who were supposed to be heading the march and who were still inching along.

There was no place to fall in behind the celebrity "head" as there was a crush of people behind it and masses of people on the sides.

Finally, the police in front of the entire mass of people in the street - where the head of the march should have been - started up their motorcycles and started to move. The marshals were still pleading with people to get off the street to allow the celebrities to get in front of the marchers, but instead people already massed in front of them began marching.

One guy yelled out: "Hey, we're marching!" The celebs were now hundreds of people behind the real head - the people.

Is there a lesson here? I think there are several.

First, where's the A.N.S.W.E.R. organization when you need it?

UFPJ famously (notoriously) refused to work with A.N.S.W.E.R. after refusing to endorse national actions by World Can't Wait and refusing to follow the global call for mass demonstrations last March.

A.N.S.W.E.R. surely wouldn't have set up the march to begin in the middle of masses of people. Stupid they're not.

Second, with the focus of the “head” of the march so much on celebrities and liberal politicians (where was Iraq Veterans Against the War, for example?), it was inevitable that the crush of people would be exacerbated, and that the media that came would largely be there to photograph and quote the celebs.

[The Iraq veterans, of course, along with hundreds of others, and active duty troops, were getting kicked to the curb. When there are “celebrities” present, UFPJ could care less about the troops. T]

This was reflected in the media coverage, as on CNN. I'll be impressed with the celebrity who gives up a movie career - as so many dedicated organizers have given up or suspended their careers - at least until the U.S. is out of Iraq.

Until then, I see people who have bought their place at the head of the march with their fame, their money or both.

No wonder that people did not obey orders to “fall in behind.”

Which brings us to a third point.

The organizers were out of touch with the people.

How could they have thought that people would just obey them and fall in behind when there was no place to fall in?

Or that the people would clear a path, like drops in the Red Sea, for UFPJ's hand-chosen “head” to pass?

This march was about the people who came to protest the war and occupation.

It wasn't about the celebrities and politicians who gave a glamorous face and allowed march organizers to rub elbows with them.

Please understand me - I am glad that celebrities and pols participate. Yet media coverage would lead one to believe that it was all about the celebrities leading “10's of thousands.”

The huge masses of people were the real story, but these people weren't in the story.

<p>UFPJ needs to get off its high horse about being THE coalition of antiwar forces in the U.S., as it represented itself before the London International Peace Conference in December 2005.</p>

(In the next breath, UFPJ told international organizers that it was not going to participate in global mass demos in March 2006, preferring instead a mass demo in April as a way to have influence on the November elections.)

If UFPJ wants to end this war and occupation now, it needs to become a willing and cooperative partner with other national groups - including A.N.S.W.E.R. and get over its fixation on celebrities and liberal politicians.

Bits and Pieces

Biggest and most energetic contingents: International Socialist Organization, Campus Antiwar Network/SDS/WCW's Unified Youth and Student Contingent, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), U.S. Labor Against the War and Iraq Veterans Against the War.

(Why does UFPJ keep competing with the real energies of the student movement? It keeps promoting its NYSPC, whereas the most effective organizational energy since early 2003 has come from other student groups, such as CAN?)

Troops Out Now Coalition also took up a prime spot at 3rd and Constitution to lead chants via their bullhorn. And people wearing A.N.S.W.E.R. patches were all over the place. Though they've been shunned by UFPJ, they showed up.

Worst sign?

The ubiquitous Move-On sign that read "Iraq Escalation? Wrong Way." Hey, Move-On, this was a protest against the war and occupation, not merely against the escalation. This is the same Move-On that refused pleas to take a stand against attacking Iran. Instead, its petition merely calls for not nuking Iran.

"President Bush and Congress should rule out attacking Iran with nuclear weapons."

Is that helpful, Move-On?

Troops Invited:

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 email contact@militaryproject.org:. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Marine Killed In Anbar

Feb. 15, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070215-06

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to Multi-National Force-West was killed Wednesday while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province.

Shreveport Soldier Dies In Iraq



U.S. Staff Sgt. Ronnie L. Sanders (Photo courtesy of Juanita Sanders)

February 6, 2007 By John Andrew Prime, The Times

A soldier from Shreveport, a 1999 graduate of Woodlawn High School, died this weekend in Iraq, according to his grandmother.

Army Staff Sgt. Ronnie L. Sanders, a transportation unit member in his third tour of the war-torn country, had just returned to Iraq from visiting his wife, Rachel, and newborn twins at Fort Bragg, N.C., said his grandmother Juanita Sanders of the Queensborough neighborhood.

"He had just gone back," Sanders said of her 26-year-old grandson.

She said her grandson had planned to make the military a career but was rethinking his options since the birth of his twin daughters four months ago.

"After his babies were born, he wasn't too sure. He did not want to go back to Iraq. He didn't want to leave his babies."

The military said Sanders, which it listed as being from Thibodaux, died Saturday in Baghdad "of wounds sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle."

Sanders was assigned to the 407th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, based at Fort Bragg.

Ronnie Sanders enlisted in the Army after graduating from Woodlawn High. He was featured in The Times' "Front and Center" column in May 2000 after graduating from motor transport training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

Juanita Sanders said her daughter Ruth Ann Manley, of Arlington, Texas, has traveled to North Carolina to be with Rachel Sanders and the couple's children.

Juanita Sanders said her grandson will be buried in Shreveport, but funeral details are incomplete.

Ronnie Sanders is the third soldier from Woodlawn High to die in the war on terror.

The others are Army Staff Sgts. George Ray Draughn Jr. and Troy Ezernack. Draughn, 29, was killed in a bomb blast Sept. 1, 2005, in Iraq. Ezernack, 39, died Oct. 9, 2005, in a grenade attack in Afghanistan.

"All of them are so young. That's what so tragic about it," Juanita Sanders said. "My grandson — I was so proud of him."

Woodlawn High also lost four of its graduates in the Vietnam War: Edward Cox, Glenn Ogburn, Harold O'Neal and Henry "Trey" Prather.

Soldier With Mississippi Ties Reported Killed In Iraq

2.15.07 WMCTV

PICAYUNE, Miss. The family of Army Sergeant Carl Leonard Seigart, whose wife and four stepchildren live in Picayune, was killed in Iraq on Valentine's Day as he participated in a tank recovery mission.

Jessica Moeller, the soldier's stepdaughter, says Seigart was a tank mechanic with the 1st Cavalry, 3rd Battalion out of Fort Hood, Texas.

The family says they were told he was killed by an improvised explosive device.

Moeller says her mother, Suzanne Smith Seigart, had lived with her stepfather in Killeen, Texas, but had recently returned to Picayune.

She says her mother was staying with her while Seigart was overseas on his first tour in Iraq. He had been in the Army for 14 years.

She says Seigart was a native of San Luis Obispo, California.

Notes From A Lost War:

Suicide Captain Says “I Wanted The Most Dangerous Spot I Could Find”

Sane Sgt. Says “This Is Why We Can’t Trust The Iraqi Army”

Feb 15, 2007 By Jim Michaels, USA Today [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD — Capt. Erik Peterson’s newly established combat outpost is just blocks from a battle line separating Sunnis and Shiite militias, who fight in the streets almost every day.

Gunfire crackles through the night, and snipers occasionally fire into the fortified compound, which houses U.S. and Iraqi soldiers.

Yet Peterson says it’s the perfect place to start restoring order.

“I wanted the most dangerous spot I could find, so I planted my flag right here,” Peterson says. **[In Vietnam, psychotic death-hungry kamikazes like Peterson died quickly in combat. From American weapons. Survival came first.]**

Outposts such as this are a centerpiece of the new U.S. and Iraqi plan to improve security in Baghdad. About 100 American and 120 Iraqi soldiers are crammed into the outpost’s buildings, sleeping on cots. The outpost functions like a local police station, intended to quell violence and improve daily contact with ordinary Iraqis.

The plan is to win that confidence back by moving troops out of large bases, many of which are equipped with post exchanges, fast-food franchises and large dining halls that sometimes serve steak and lobster. “We’re getting away from the FOB mentality,” said Capt. Stacy Bare, a civil affairs officer in western Baghdad, referring to the massive forward operating bases that have sprung up in Iraq.

Driving into Ghazaliyah last week, a small U.S. convoy came under fire from insurgents in a nearby building. A bullet struck the door next to the driver, Sgt. Daniel Alonzo, 31, of El Paso, and rounds riddled the vehicle in front of him.

The vehicle's gunner, Spec. Joel Weiss, 23, of Salem, Ore., returned fire with his .50-caliber machine gun. Spent shells from the heavy machine gun flew from the chamber and rattled inside the armored Humvee.

The ambush occurred not far from Iraqi army checkpoints, leading a visibly angry and emotional Sgt. John Garcia, 33, who was in the passenger seat, to question whether the Iraqis were capable of securing the area.

"This is why we can't trust the Iraqi army," said Garcia, of Houston, as the Humvee veered to the side of the road.

A short time later, about 12 insurgents attacked a small Iraqi army checkpoint in the neighborhood. The handful of Iraqi soldiers at the checkpoint withdrew to a nearby building and returned fire, Peterson said.

Peterson said they performed as well as any American troops would have in a similar situation. "They just didn't have sufficient combat power" to hold their ground, he said.

But Nickolas, Peterson's battalion commander, disagrees.

He said some of the Iraqi forces in the area may be intimidated by the al-Qaida fighters, prompting them to withdraw without putting up a stiff fight. "We have to get the Iraqi army to stand up to the threat," said Nickolas, 43.

The insurgents eventually melted away after engaging in another gunfight with U.S. and Iraqi forces for several hours through Ghazaliyah's streets.

"The terrorists now have big weapons," said Iraqi army Capt. Mohammed Hussein, 32, whose troops came under fire. The 120 Iraqi soldiers at the Ghazaliyah outpost have only two armored Humvees. Peterson's company has about 20.

MORE:

Only 200 Collaborators Show Up For Sweep By 2,500 U.S. Occupation Troops

2.15.07 New York Times

Thousands of American troops in armored Stryker vehicles swarmed three mostly Shiite neighborhoods of northeastern Baghdad, encountering little resistance during what commanders described as the first major sweep of the new security plan for the capital.

But even though an Iraqi announced the new phase of the security plan, it was clearly an American-led operation: only 200 Iraqi police officers and soldiers were involved, commanders said, working alongside about 2,500 Americans.

FUTILE EXERCISE:

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



A soldier from C. Co., 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Infantry Division during a search operation in the Rusafa neighborhood of Baghdad, Feb. 11, 2007. The area was suspected to have been used to build car bombs, but none were found. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

TROOP NEWS

**3,000 In California Demonstrate
Against The War;
Hundreds Block California
Highway;
Speeches Included “One By A U.S.
Marine Who Initially Supported But
Has Now Turned Against The War”**

[Thanks to Denis O’Neill, Bring Them Home Now, who sent this in, just in time.]

2.15.07 by Jimmy Higgins, Firemtn.blogspot.com [Excerpts]

This is a breaking story, so I'll keep it short.

As part of the national day of student strikes called for February 15, 3000 students took part in a mass rally against the war at the University of California at Santa Barbara! As blogged by a UCSB student on DailyKos:

After about an hour of speeches, including one by a US Marine who initially supported but has now turned against the war, the organizers decided we should go walk across campus to give the people who didn't ditch a chance to change their minds and join us.

The line stretched for a half a mile, at least, all along the bike path, almost all students, as we chanted slogans like PEACE NOW and AINT NO POWER LIKE THE POWER OF PEOPLE CAUSE THE POWER OF PEOPLE DON'T STOP

A rumor began that the students were going to take nearby CA Highway 217. At 2:34, thousands of them did, marching half a mile before they hit a hastily improvised CHiPs roadblock. Hundreds sat down on the highway and held it for hours.

Let the student, nom du blog VoteHarder, have the last word:

"I've never been so proud of my university and my generation. We are against the war in Iraq and we're not willing to go by silently as men, women and children are killed in our name.

"END THIS WAR NOW.

"Resolutions don't stop casualties and suicide bombings. CUT THE FUCKING FUNDING.

**Pentagon Traitors Tommy
Morris & Ellen Embry Find
Clever New Way To Kill More
U.S. Troops:**

They Cut Off VA Doctor's Access To Medical Records Of Brain Injured Troops They Treat

February 16, 2007 By Al Kamen, Washington Post

Department of Veterans Affairs doctors are furious over a recent decision by the Pentagon to block their access to medical information needed to treat severely injured troops arriving at VA hospitals from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The VA physicians handle troops with serious brain injuries and other major health problems and rely on digital medical records that track the care given wounded troops from the moment of their arrival at a field hospital through their evacuation back to the United States.

About 30 VA doctors in four trauma centers around the country have treated about 200 severely wounded soldiers and Marines. The docs had been receiving the complete digital records from the Pentagon until the end of January, using the Pentagon's Joint Patient Tracking Application.

But on Jan. 25, when Shane McNamee, a physician in the Richmond VA Medical Center, tried to get the full records, he couldn't. He sent an urgent e-mail to VA chief liaison officer Edward Huycke. "My JPTA account has been disabled within last few days," McNamee wrote. "I called the hotline and was told that all VA accounts have been locked. Could not get a good answer why. Anyhow –

"I have 4 (Iraq/Afghanistan) service members to arrive within the next 2 days. This information is terribly important," the doctor wrote. Thirty-four minutes later Huycke e-mailed back: "Ok, Shane. Will get on it. Not sure what's up."

An hour or so later, a senior VA official forwarded McNamee's e-mail to Lt. Col. David Parramore at the Pentagon, saying that McNamee "needs his access back to JPTA to provide the best possible treatment for soldiers injured in (Iraq/Afghanistan) arriving there in a few days. Can you help?"

Tommy Morris, director of Deployment Health Systems, responded the next morning to Parramore's inquiry, after contacting Ellen Embry, deputy assistant secretary of defense for force health protection. "I spoke with Embry and no agreements, no data sharing via access to JPTA."

The access cutoff came after Morris, in a Jan. 23 e-mail, instructed a colleague: "If the VA currently has access I need a list of persons and I need their accounts shut off ASAP. It is illegal for them to have access without data use agreements and access controls in place by federal regulations and public law."

[Perhaps traumatic brain injuries could be arranged for Morris and Embry. That might heighten their sensitivity to the need for complete medical information in

order to conduct successful treatment. If that's too harsh, just ship them to Iraq, Falluja or Ramadi for example, which they might also find an educational experience. Certainly they wish to give their lives for their country, or at least their brains, and have no wish to sit comfortably in DC fucking over wounded veterans instead, right?]

VA officials apparently thought it might have been resolved Monday. But an e-mail Monday from Morris to a co-worker said: "The leadership has not authorized the VA accounts to be turned back on, in case someone approaches you about this."

Last week, Sens. Daniel K. Akaka (D-Hawaii) and Larry E. Craig (R-Idaho) -- the chairman and ranking Republican on the Veterans' Affairs Committee -- wrote David S.C. Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel, of their "deep concern" about VA trauma center doctors not having access to complete records.

"For those servicemembers suffering from a traumatic brain injury," they wrote, "VA's access to in-theater imaging is an important and valuable tool for tracking their patient's progress since being wounded or injured."

They suggested the VA doctor be given temporary access to JPTA while the data-sharing questions are worked out.

They're still awaiting an appropriate response. McNamee is still waiting for the records.

Asshole Commanders Ban Cheap High From Legal Plant; Use "Punishable Up To And Including A Discharge" [What Next? Banning Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, Fried Pies And Chocolate?]

Feb 15, 2007 By Seamus O'Connor, Army Times Staff writer

Officials at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, and Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont., are sending thoughts of a "legal high" up in smoke. Both have banned the use of *Salvia divinorum*, a hallucinogenic plant better known as salvia.

Maj. Gen. Kevin Sullivan, Ogden Air Logistics Center commander, "took steps to ban salvia rather than wait for a situation," said Merrie Schilter-Lowe, a spokeswoman at Hill. **[Merrie don't like people being merry.]**

The plant can be smoked, chewed or brewed into tea. Native to the Mazateca region near Oaxaca, Mexico, the plant has been used for hundreds of years by Mazatec Indians in healing and shamanistic rituals. It is currently available for purchase at numerous Internet sites for any would-be visionaries.

Salvia is still a legal substance, though laws restricting its use to differing degrees have been passed in Louisiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Delaware.

No attempts to federally declare salvia a controlled substance have been successful.

The Navy and Marine Corps have both banned salvia, but the Air Force has no official policy on it, according to Joann Rumble, a spokesperson at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

Usage or possession at Hill is now punishable up to and including a discharge.

“I Have No Faith In The Leadership” **The Universal Code Of Military Injustice Strikes Again; Staff. Sgt. Busted For Not Breaking Any Law**



Staff Sgt. Michelle Manhart courtesy of Playboy

Feb 15, 2007 By Erik Holmes, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

Staff Sgt. Michelle Manhart, an Air Force military training instructor who posed nude for Playboy magazine, has been removed from active duty, busted down to senior airman and given a letter of reprimand, she told Military Times on Feb. 15.

Manhart, who appeared both in and out of uniform in a six-page spread in Playboy's February issue, said her commander notified her Feb. 9 that she was being demoted,

removed from “extended active duty” and returned to the Iowa Air National Guard, where she was assigned before going on active duty.

She said she opted to resign from the Air Guard, which accepted her resignation and is processing her discharge.

“I’m actually quite relieved because I’m tired of dealing with their stuff,” Manhart said. “I’m just very displeased with the way things took place. ... I have no faith in the leadership.”

Oscar Balladares, a spokesman for Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, where Manhart worked as a basic-training instructor, confirmed that she was removed from extended active duty Feb. 9 but said Lackland did not discharge her.

“She was removed from active-duty status, and thus reverted to National Guard status,” Balladares said. “It is not up to the Air Force — it is not our jurisdiction to discharge her.”

Lt. Col. Greg Hapgood, a spokesman for the Iowa National Guard, told Military Times on Feb. 15 that he had received some — though not all — of Manhart’s separation paperwork and had not yet processed it.

Manhart, 30, said the letter of reprimand issued by her group commander included charges that she violated articles 92 and 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Article 132 is for failure to obey an order or regulation, and Article 134 is a general article that prohibits, among other things, “conduct of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces.”

She appealed to the wing commander, who summarily dismissed the appeal, she said. She plans to appeal the action after her discharge through the Board for Correction of Military Records.

Manhart told The Associated Press that the military’s action against her hinged on the fact that she was pictured in Playboy wearing her Air Force uniform.

She was photographed in uniform yelling and holding weapons under the headline “Tough Love.” The following pages showed her partially clothed wearing dog tags and fully nude. After the pictorial hit newsstands in January, Manhart was relieved of her duties pending an investigation.

Manhart said she understands that some people were offended by her decision to appear in the magazine, but that the fuss the Air Force made far outweighs the seriousness of the issue.

Manhart said she will continue to live in Texas with her husband and two children.

But she said she hopes that the exposure of appearing in Playboy will lead her west to Los Angeles.

She is in discussions to appear in a reality television show in the near future, she said.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Attack At Al-Hawijah Destroys Police Station

Feb 15 By Essam Tareq, (VOI) & Reuters

"An armed group waged last night an assault at al-Hawijah police station immediately after a bomber detonated there a truck crammed with explosives," a source at the combined operations room in Kirkuk told the independent news agency Voices of Iraq (VOI).

The source added "another car bomb was detonated minutes after a Multi-National and Iraqi combined force arrived at the location."

He said "the second blast brought down the police station building killing two policemen and an Iraqi soldier." Also five Iraqi soldiers and three policemen were wounded in the blast, the source added

The battle, which lasted several hours, was preceded by three car bombs in the town that killed three people.

Assorted Resistance Action

14 Feb 2007 Reuters & VOI & 15 Feb 2007 Reuters

Guerrillas killed a policeman on Tuesday in the southern city of Samawa, 270 km (170 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

A car bomber blew up his vehicle at the entrance of a police station in the western Iraqi city of Ramadi, killed at least five, police sources said.

Clashes erupted between guerrillas and Iraqi army, wounding three soldiers in the Baghdad Yarmouk district, police said.

Four Iraqi policemen were killed in an ambush by unidentified resistance fighters in the city of Falluja, 45 km west of Baghdad.

"Using automatic weapons, they killed four policemen and injured several others in an ambush to their patrol in al-Shurta (police) neighborhood, in central Falluja, at 9:30 am," the source told the independent news agency Voices of Iraq (VOI).

The armed men fled the scene after the attack, the source added.

Police battled tens of gunmen who stormed the Sunni town of Hawija south of Kirkuk on Wednesday night and killed four, police sources said.

Guerrillas killed a policeman in the city of Mosul, police said.

A car bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol, wounded a soldier near al-Shurta tunnel in western Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb hit a police patrol, killing a policeman in the northern city of Mosul, 390 km north of Baghdad, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

**“That Money Is Not For The Troops,
Never Has Been For The Troops”**

Feb 15, 2007 By Cindy Sheehan [Excerpt]

How many times have we heard: “We have to vote for the emergency funding for the troops.”

That money is not for the troops, never has been for the troops, and the troops in the field wouldn't need any support if they used the money that was already in the pipeline to bring our soldiers and marines home from the killing deserts.

“History Will Not Forgive Those Who Play Recklessly With Our Wealth”

Iraqi Oil Union Leader’s Speech On Proposed Occupation Oil Law

[Thanks to Ewa Jasiewicz, who sent this in.]

The British and U.S. Governments, the International Monetary Fund and nine multinational oil companies have all seen the law. Iraqi Mps and civil society organisations such as Iraq’s trade unions have not.

**For Immediate Release
February 8th 2007**

The Leader of Iraq’s most powerful oil union delivered a strong warning to the Iraqi government and ‘those calling for Production Sharing Agreements’ at a conference on the new oil law this Tuesday.

In a speech to over 200 delegates at the Oil Education Centre in Basra Hassan Jumaa warned ‘those acting against the will of Iraqis ...history will not forgive those who play recklessly with the wealth and destiny of a people...and those who spread the word that the oil sector will not improve except with foreign capital and production-sharing are dreaming.’

The Oil Working Group finalised a draft of Iraq’s controversial Hydrocarbon Law in January 2007. Parliament is expected to ratify the law by the end of March, according to Ministry of Oil sources.

The British and U.S. Governments, the International Monetary Fund and nine multinational oil companies have all seen the law. Iraqi Mps and civil society organisations such as Iraq’s trade unions have not.

The Law makes references to Production Sharing Agreements – long term contracts whereby foreign companies will control the production, development and sale of Iraqi oil for up to 45 years.

All Iraqi oil ministers since the invasion have advocated for the use of PSAs, as did the US State Department’s Future of Iraq Project energy working group on hydrocarbon policy in 2003.

PSAs are usually used in countries where oil exploration carries a high risk and reserves are uncertain. Iraq has the third largest proven and easily accessible oil

reserves in the world, their low-cost extractability defines them by industry standards as 'low hanging fruit'.

Iraq's neighbours, including Saudi Arabia and Iran, have never signed any PSAs with foreign companies. Critics call PSAs 'de-facto privatisation'.

They say the deals undermine the sovereignty and future profits of states, in particular those in a weak bargaining position due to financial constraints or conflict situations.

Contacts:

Hassan Jumaa Awad al Asadi, President of the Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions (Arabic only) 00964 7801 001 196

Ewa Jasiewicz: Naftana UK Support Group for the IFOU 07749 421 576
freelance@mailworks.org www.basraoilunion.org

Greg Muttitt, Co-Director PLATFORM and Specialist in Iraqi Oil Policy and the UK Agenda 07970 589 611 greg@platformlondon.org www.carbonweb.org/iraq

NOTES:

The Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions (previously known as The General Union of Oil Employees) represents over 23,000 oil workers in the governorates of Misan, Dhi Qar, Basra and Mauthanna.

The union is independent and has consistently opposed the dictatorship, occupation and foreign plans to control Iraqi oil since its establishment in April 2003.

Union members have carried out reconstruction work on drilling rigs, port equipment, pipelines and refineries since the invasion with minimal, mostly local resources.

The Union's President Hassan Jumaa was jailed three times under the Ba'ath regime.

MORE:

The Speech:

Speech by Hassan Jumaa Awad al Assadi, leader of the Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions the head of the Federation of Oil Unions in Basra to the meeting held to debate the (proposed) oil law and the oil investment laws on Tuesday 6th February 2007

To the audience, to the guests, to the distinguished professors,

Greetings, as-salamu 'alaikum wa-rahmatu 'illah wa-barakatuhu

I would like first to offer thanks to all the brothers and sisters who are participating in this conference to debate the Iraqi oil law, and particular thanks to the Centre for Arab Gulf Studies of Basra University, notably to Professor Dr Jabbar al-Hilfi and his colleagues who have contributed in every possible way in this action.

Dear colleagues

Iraq today passes through a great trial as all hostile forces join together against it. The people face attacks by takfiri zealots and the thugs of the deposed regime, which serve only to extend the war and the occupation which has succeeded in making Iraqi kill Iraqi.

This method is not new to the Americans and their allies; as long as chaos reigns in this country many of the sinews of life cannot operate.

Among the objectives America wishes to achieve from the military occupation of Iraq, all the causes of which we do not want to return to, but simply to emphasize one central objective of the American political leaders who crossed oceans and wasted billions of dollars, that is Iraqi oil.

Indeed we in the Federation of Oil Unions consider this the most important reason for this foul war.

Dear friends

And, following this short introduction, we can today see that many of those profiting from the occupation seek to waste the national wealth which God almighty has given Iraqis and to deliver to their masters that national wealth on account of which Iraqis paid a high price.

Although, right up to this hour, this wealth has not served Iraqis, we hope that it may yet bring ease not trouble to Iraqis.

If we turn back a little we find law number 80 of 1961 wherein the production areas of the foreign companies in Iraq were specified and limited, and we see the manner in which Iraqis planned to profit from the national wealth was laid out, and as an extension of this law, the decision to nationalize the shares of foreign companies on the basis of which full control of Iraqi oil was achieved.

Recently the Constitution of Iraq on which the Iraqi people voted in the most dire and difficult of conditions notes in clause 111 that oil and gas are the property of the Iraqi people.

But, alas, this clause in the constitution will remain but ink on paper if the oil law and oil investment law being presented to the Parliament are ratified, laws which permit production-sharing contracts, laws without parallel in many oil producers, especially the neighbouring countries.

So why should Iraqis want to introduce such contracts in Iraq given that applying such laws will rob the Iraqi government of the most important thing it owns?

In this regard we would like to clarify the following points:

1—We send a message to all the members of the Iraqi Parliament, when debating the oil and investment laws, to bear the Iraqis in mind, to protect the national wealth, and to look at the neighbouring countries. Have they introduced such laws even when their relations with foreign companies are closer than in Iraq?

2—If those calling for production-sharing agreements insist on acting against the will of Iraqis, we say to them that history will not forgive those who play recklessly with the wealth and destiny of a people and that the curse of heaven and the fury of Iraqis will not leave them.

3—We strongly warn all the foreign companies and foreign capital in the form of American companies against coming into our lands under the guise of production-sharing agreements.

4—Open the way to Iraqis to manage their own oil affairs. They are able to do that; they have the experience in the field and the technical training, have overcome hardships and proven to the world that they can provide the best service to Iraqis in the oil industry.

The best proof of that is how after the entry of the occupying forces and the destruction of the infrastructure of the oil sector the engineers, technical staff and workers were able to raise production from zero to 2,100,000 barrels per day without any foreign expertise or foreign capital.

Iraqis are capable of further increasing production with their present skills.

The Iraqi state needs to consult with those who have overcome the difficulties and to ask their opinion before sinking Iraq into an ocean of dark injustice.

Those who spread the word that the oil sector will not improve except with foreign capital and production-sharing are dreaming. They must think again since we know for certain that these plans do not serve the sons and daughters of Iraq.

Dear audience,

We do not oppose the introduction of new technology into the oil sector so as to increase production; we believe in that; but this must be done in a way that will safeguard the stature of the Iraqi state and its sovereignty over natural resources.

In conclusion, the law is in your hands.

We consider it unbalanced and incoherent with the hopes of those who work in the oil industry. It has been drafted in a great rush in harsh circumstances.

We believe this law to be more political than economic; it threatens to set governorate against governorate and region against region.

Therefore I call on all the intellectuals and professors and political leaders to participate seriously in debating this vital topic in a manner useful to those participating in the committee drafting the final communiqué to be sent to the Iraqi Parliament, the Presidency of the Republic and the Prime Ministry.

We say: 'By God I swear that we have told you, by God I say that we have warned you.'

And in closing I would like to thank you for your grace in listening and to call for God's mercy and blessing.

Hasan Jum'ah 'Awwad al-Asadi
Head of the Federation of Oil Unions
6th February 2007

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

SENIOR CALL-UP APPROVED: Bring The Yougin's Home, NOW!



Picture by AzureSky of Independents

1/8/2007 Veterans For Peace Discussion

A number of us Old Foggie 'Nam Vets have tried to Re-Enlist, not to mention the 'Raging Grannies.' Now with the escalation we can save the little chimps butt, before we indict the whole bunch!

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



An Iraqi citizen watches foreign occupation soldiers of C. Co., 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, second Infantry Division search his auto repair garage in Baghdad, Feb. 11, 2007. Iraqi citizens have no right to refuse these unannounced searches. If they resist, they may be arrested, wounded or killed by foreign troops. The area was suspected to have been used to build car bombs, but nothing was found. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqi troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses and workshops with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate

they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

**Imperial DemoRat Feingold
Condemns "Rapid Withdrawal"
Option;
Want More Dead U.S. Troops & Iraqis**

2.15.07 Washington Post

Democrats on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence have questioned whether the recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq gave political advantage to the Bush administration by making "rapid withdrawal" of U.S. troops the only alternative military option the NIE explored.

Sen. Russell Feingold, a panel member, wrote then-National Intelligence Director John Negroponte on Feb. 8: "Setting up a false choice between indefinite military involvement and a rapid, unplanned withdrawal distorts the current debate in Congress and in the country about how best to defend our national security interests in Iraq."

CLASS WAR REPORTS



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[Thanks to Katherine GY, Military Project, who sent this in.]

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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