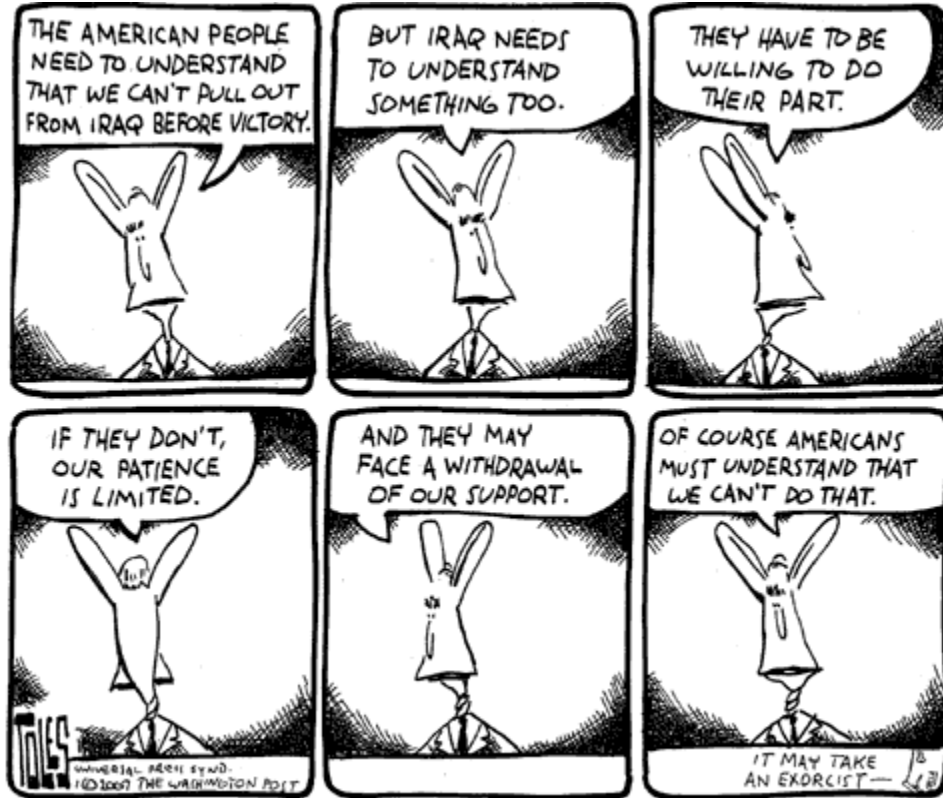


GI SPECIAL 5B22:



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

**Wounded?
Too Fucked Up To Go
Back?
The Pentagon Shit Bags Have
An Exciting New Mission!**

Fuck You Out Of Every Penny Of Disability Pay They Possibly Can And Then Pressure You Out On The Street

“The Army Is Trying To Give You The Lowest Amount Of Money Possible”



Staff Pvt. Rob Van Antwerp, a 20-year-old wounded soldier in the Medical Hold Unit at Walter Reed Army Medical Center cuts the hair of fellow soldiers to pass the time in "Building 18", a housing facility near Walter Reed for Medical Hold patients during the Medical Evaluation process. Van Antwerp, a soldier with the 101st Airborne Division, was hit in a vehicle-borne suicide bomb attack in Bayji, Iraq in November, 5, 2005. Photo: James J. Lee

In 2001, 10 percent of soldiers going through the medical retirement process received permanent disability benefits.

In 2005, with two wars raging, that percentage dropped to 3 percent, according to the Government Accountability Office. Reservists dropped from 16 percent to 5 percent.

Feb 20, 2007 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

Leaning over the sink in an almost-clean barracks bathroom across the street from Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Pvt. Robert Van Antwerp, 20, quickly sheared the hair of his new roommate into a fresh crew cut.

“This is what my dad does when he really wants to get to know someone,” Van Antwerp said, referring to Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, head of the Army’s Accessions Command. “He cuts hair. Now it’s a family tradition.”

His dad told him people reveal their deepest secrets while sitting in a barber’s chair, he said. It builds that sense of camaraderie — of taking care of each other.

“I cut hair the whole time I was in Iraq,” he said.

But as he cut, Van Antwerp revealed much more about himself than did his customer — who fell asleep in Van Antwerp’s gentle hands.

A pale scar creates a deep furrow connecting Van Antwerp’s eyebrows. Doctors replaced bone with titanium after he fractured his skull. Bare-chested as he trimmed, Van Antwerp has a deep, laddered line from beneath his sternum to at least the top of his sweatpants. A blast ruptured his spleen and ripped out his colon. Pushing up his left pant leg as he told his battle story, Van Antwerp showed where three ligaments tore away from his knee, and then pointed out the scar from his broken tibia.

Above his heart, the ranks and last names of two dead friends are etched in ink. But he calls a friend to ask their first names.

Short-term memory loss arrived for Van Antwerp in the same attack that killed his buddies.

In Bayji, Iraq, a suicide bomber drove a vehicle beside the truck Van Antwerp drove for the 101st Airborne Division and set off an improvised explosive device, killing Pfc. Alex Gaunky and Spc. Vernon Widner on Nov. 17, 2005. Van Antwerp said he believes in one of the Army’s oft-repeated mottoes: “No soldier left behind.”

He will always carry his friends with him.

Yet when it was time for the Army to take care of him, one of its wounded warriors, Van Antwerp gave up before he even began.

Rather than fight for a higher disability rating, he quietly signed for 20 percent — and no medical benefits — saying he knew he couldn’t do better.

He inherited his father’s stubbornness, he said, and refused to ask anyone to pull strings based on his dad’s rank.

Then his first medical board counselor, the person who would help him make his way through the medical evaluation board system, left. The second, he said, “wasn’t on the ball.”

“The Army is trying to give you the lowest amount of money possible,” he said. “A lot of people are appealing, but I’ll be going to (the Department of Veterans Affairs). I want to go home.”

Van Antwerp is one of thousands of wounded troops rushed from the war zone for health care and then stranded in administrative limbo.

They are at the mercy of a medical evaluation system that's agonizingly slow, grossly understaffed and saddled with a growing backlog of cases.

The wounded soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are stuck in holding companies awaiting hearings and decisions on whether they will continue their military service or be discharged, and if so, at what level of benefits — if any.

In 2001, 10 percent of soldiers going through the medical retirement process received permanent disability benefits.

In 2005, with two wars raging, that percentage dropped to 3 percent, according to the Government Accountability Office. Reservists dropped from 16 percent to 5 percent.

Soldiers go to VA to try for more benefits, but the department had a staggering 400,000-case backup on new claims in fiscal 2006, according to VA. For that reason, Van Antwerp faces another wait at VA. Cases there have an average of a one-year wait.

And this is important because it may take a while before Van Antwerp, who must carry a notebook to remember his daily chores, can make his way back to the work world.

Perhaps more important, many of the soldiers leaving Walter Reed face post-traumatic stress disorder. Studies have shown that if soldiers receive treatment within a year, they fare much better.

Van Antwerp has been a patient at Walter Reed since November 2005. He is one of 704 outpatient soldiers who are injured or ill and are waiting to make their way through the red tape of the medical evaluation board process at the medical center, according to officials there.

The board determines if the soldiers will remain in the Army, or if they will receive a lump-sum separation payment, medical retirement with benefits for life, or nothing at all. They remain in the medical hold unit until their paperwork is complete.

A soldier goes before a physical evaluation board if a medical evaluation board — a team of doctors — determines he is not able to do his job because of his injury. The physical evaluation board then determines again if the soldier should stay in the military and, if not, how much the Defense Department will compensate the soldier.

If the soldier receives a disability rating of 30 percent or higher, he gets a disability retirement check based on years of service, rank and the rating percentage. He and his family will also receive medical benefits for life. If the rating is lower than 30 percent, he gets a one-time severance payment.

Since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began, the number of soldiers wading through the paperwork, physicals and appointments has doubled at Walter Reed.

According to a Defense Department directive, it should take a total of 120 days from start to finish, but the average stay for Walter Reed soldiers is 270 days.

The soldiers navigate a complicated system with the help of counselors with little more experience — or rank — than they have, and who lack training, according to a March 2006 Government Accountability Office report.

On March 2, 2006, Col. Robert Norton, deputy director, Government Relations, for the Military Officers Association of America, told the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs that since October 2003, medical evaluation boards have averaged 67 days and physical evaluation boards have taken between 87 and 280 days.

“Taken together, the convalescence, (medical evaluation board) and (physical evaluation board) processes appear to average between nine and 15½ months for Army soldiers,” he said.

But Col. Ronald Hamilton, commander of the medical center brigade at Walter Reed, beamed when asked about the work done through the medical evaluation board.

“I think it’s being handled extremely well,” he said. **[Hey, he’s just doing his job. Lying and peddling complete bullshit.]**

Army-wide, the Government Accountability Office reported that the physical evaluation board caseload grew from 7,218 physical evaluation board cases in fiscal 2001 — before the wars began — to 13,748 cases in fiscal 2005. The number of soldiers waiting to go through the process nationwide averages 5,000.

An Army official who requested anonymity proposed that part of the problem may be that soldiers just don’t understand what part of the system they’re in: They think they’re in the medical evaluation board process, but they’re actually still in recovery.

The soldiers say that’s not the case.

In a classroom at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the first sergeant for the medical holding company lined up three soldiers to talk about their experience with the physical evaluation board.

Soldiers going through the physical evaluation board process report to the medical holding company for accountability, to be assigned jobs that work with their injuries, and to have a first sergeant and company commander who can speak up for them when they’re having problems.

In August 2004, as Spc. Karl Unbehagan, 29, reported to his new unit at Fort Benning, Ga., he developed intense migraine headaches.

Doctors told the infantry soldier he was not used to the humid weather. A couple of months later, they ran a CAT scan. “I had a tumor in the third ventricle of my brain,” Unbehagan explained, pointing to the shunt that runs from the scar on his

head down to his stomach to relieve the pressure in his brain. “They realized it had nothing to do with the weather.”

The physical evaluation board rated him at zero percent, saying the tumor was a pre-existing condition.

Unbehagen has been in the Army for four years, and his doctors found no proof the tumor existed before he joined, he said.

Rather than face the civilian world with no benefits, he talked with a free counselor from Disabled American Veterans who told him how to fight the discharge, reclassify as an electronics and satellite repair specialist, and stay in the Army. The process took eight months, which he spent in the medical hold company.

His board was restarted three times: First, his medical profile was lost. Then, somebody forgot to counsel him — a required part of the process. And finally, no one made his file active after he changed his job field, so no one saved him a slot at the repair school, he said.



SPC Karl Unbehagen, a 3rd Infantry Division soldier discovered, diagnosed with a brain tumor is currently a patient in the Medical Hold Unit at Walter Reed Army Medical. Since the tumor is deemed a pre-existing medical condition by medical evaluators, Unbehagen will receive no disability from the Army and has re-enlisted and re-classed as a Satellite and Electronic Repair Technician. December, 12, 2006. (James J. Lee / Times Staff)

Spc. Cari Uyttewaal, 24, is an operating-room technician who had been stationed at Walter Reed before beginning her physical evaluation board process. About a year ago, she began having back problems. Doctors discovered she had a herniated disc and

recommended she be processed out of the Army because she could not stand for the 10-hour shifts required in the operating room.

But even a soldier who works in the system didn't make it through without mishap.

“After five months, nothing had been done,” she said. “So my first sergeant transferred me (to the medical hold company) and said it would move faster.”

It took an additional five months before she accepted her informal physical evaluation and a 10 percent disability rating.

Pfc. Martin Jackson, 30, spent 16 months in Iraq as a supply sergeant with 4th Brigade, 27th Infantry Battalion. Two years ago, while running from a mortar round in Balad, Iraq, he tripped and twisted his leg.

“I thought it was just an ankle sprain,” he said. “One day I woke up and just couldn't move.”

He had twisted his spine.

Now the soft-spoken soldier cannot sit or stand for too long, or lift anything over 10 pounds, which limits his work as a supply clerk.

He has spent two years at Walter Reed going through rehabilitation and waiting for his discharge, which means he hasn't lived with his wife of 10 years for more than three years.

“She's been talking about a divorce,” he said. “I just signed (my rating) so I could go home and be with my family.”

He said his physical evaluation board counselor was another private first class. “She didn't know what she was doing,” he said. “Sometimes I had to tell her what was going on.”

The Army awarded him 20 percent disability — no medical retirement for his war injuries, and no insurance for his family.

“It's frustrating when you know the love you used to have for the military, and then you lose that,” he said. “This is their job: It shouldn't take months to give a person the same percentage you gave someone else with the same injury last week.”

About 30 percent of all cases are reviewed, [Col. Andy Buchanan, head of the Physical Disability Agency] said. He explained which cases: all general officers, anyone rated for PTSD and anyone who doesn't concur with his rating.

But that doesn't take into consideration the everyday soldier who signed his rating without realizing he could talk to a lawyer, without understanding that

doctors make mistakes, and without having read the thousands of pages of policy that apply to medical disability evaluation boards.

Part of the problem is that the system is understaffed.

On Feb. 17, 2005, Lt. Gen. Franklin Hagenbeck, former deputy chief of staff for personnel, told the House Committee on Government Reform that the Army did not have nearly the resources it had during the Vietnam War.

He said the Army processed 15,000 cases in 2004 with three physical evaluation board systems and a total of 70 employees.

“The last time we had that many cases was in 1972, when [we] processed 19,000 cases,” he said. “At that time, there were six (physical evaluation boards) across five states and the District with a total of 260 employees.”

Buchanan said that number has grown to 95 employees since the hearing, though he is only authorized 61.

The wait can cause other problems.

On Christmas Day, six soldiers spent their time at Walter Reed picking up trash, mopping floors and emptying garbage.

“I was planning to go home for the holidays,” said Spc. Ruben Villalpando, who dropped from sergeant rank when he came up hot for marijuana on a urinalysis while at Walter Reed. “There’s a 100 percent urinalysis policy for med hold.”

In other words, every soldier in the medical hold company is tested for drugs.

The other five soldiers also came up hot, he said. Not only did Villalpando lose his holiday, the reduction in rank means that if he does receive a disability payment, it will be lower than it would have been a month before.

Ray Parrish, director of the military counseling service for Vietnam Veterans Against the War, helps soldiers through the medical and physical evaluation boards and has worked as a counselor since his days as a soldier.

The long wait can be a problem, he said, especially for soldiers suffering from PTSD. Those soldiers have a tendency to self-medicate, as well as act out in anger.

“During that six- to eight-month wait, you’re just sitting around,” Parrish said. “It’s quite literally an opportunity to get in trouble.”

And soldiers discharged with other-than-honorable stamped on their DD214s can’t get benefits from VA.

Randy Reese, national service director for Disabled American Veterans, also works with soldiers going through the process.

He said he understands why they take the first rating they get: “They’re in the hospital for a long time away from their friends,” he said. “A lot of people will do whatever they have to do to get back home, and they’re missing out on a whole world of retirement benefits that could be available to them.”

Villalpando arrived at Walter Reed after forcing a fistful of antidepressants down his throat. While Villalpando was in Iraq in May 2005, his cousin, Marcos Omar Nolasco, was electrocuted in a faulty shower in Baghdad.

“He came back from a mission, and he took a shower, and he got electrocuted,” Villalpando said, surrounded by his own artwork and a Morrissey poster at the barracks across the street from Walter Reed.

“It did a good number on me. I was so close to him. I spent the remainder of my tour on antidepressants.”

The 7th Field Artillery, 1st Infantry Division, soldier said he attempted suicide to try to get help after falling into a depression.

Now his end term of service date has passed — he was to get out in August — and still he sits at Walter Reed.

In his case, there have been clerical errors, such as a mistyped Social Security number that meant his paperwork had to be processed again, he said.

“This place gets so depressing,” he said. “I’m frustrated. I’m tired. I’m angry. I want to go home.”

The medical evaluation process can be confusing, but understanding it can mean the difference between staying in the military or being kicked out, as well as getting medical benefits after being discharged — or not.

Here’s how the process works:

- A physician evaluates the soldier’s injury or disease.
- The doctor’s report initiates the medical evaluation board process. At least two doctors informally decide whether that soldier can return to duty. If so, he goes back to work — process over. That’s all supposed to happen within 30 days of the first diagnosis, according to Army regulations.
- If not, the medical evaluation board doctors forward their evaluation of the soldier deemed not fit to return to duty to the physical evaluation board. The soldier selects a counselor, either from the Army or a civilian provided by the Disabled American Veterans. Without the soldier present, the physical evaluation board conducts an informal assessment. Three voting members — a combat arms colonel, a personnel management officer and a physician — look at the evidence and decide whether the soldier is fit for duty. If so, the soldier is returned. If not, the board assigns that soldier a disability rating, based on injury- or disease-specific factors.

- If the disability rating is at least 30 percent, the soldier gets medical benefits for life as well as the same percentage of base pay.

If it is lower, the soldier receives a one-time severance payment, calculated by multiplying his number of years in service by his monthly pay and then doubling the total.

- The soldier then talks with his counselor about whether he should accept the recommendations or request a formal hearing. The government does not argue its case against the soldier — the board is there to hear the evidence from the soldier.

If the soldier is still not satisfied, he can appeal to the Physical Disability Agency — the Defense Department's oversight agency.



Military Times Pvt. Martin Jackson, a former 1st Armor Division soldier, injured his back in Balad, Iraq, running from a mortar attack. The 30-year-old patient from Montgomery, Ala. has been in the Medical Hold Unit at Walter Reed Army Medical for a year and says he is dissatisfied with the evaluation process and will leave the Army. December, 12, 2006. (James J. Lee / Times Staff)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Local Soldier Dies

2.20.07 WPBN

Family members have confirmed that a local soldier was killed in Bagdad. Justin Paton of Indian River was killed Saturday in Iraq.

Family members are waiting for more information from an officer.

U.S. Soldier Killed In Anbar

2.20.07 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070220-11

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Soldier assigned to Multi-National Force-West was killed Feb. 20 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province.

Mesa Soldier Killed In Iraq

February 20, 2007 By East Valley Tribune

A soldier from Mesa has been killed by a sniper in Iraq.

Nineteen-year-old Army Private Kelly Youngblood was killed Sunday just 16 days after arriving in Iraq.

His stepfather says Youngblood was shot and killed as he exited a tank.

Youngblood's mother and sister say Private Youngblood attended Dobson High School as a sophomore, and Tempe's McClintock High School as a junior and senior.

The family says they were informed of their loved one's death by a member of the military who came to their Mesa residence.

Soldier From Alanson Killed In Attack In Iraq

2/19/2007 ALANSON, Mich. (AP)

A 24-year-old soldier who worked as a hospital rehabilitation technician before joining the Army in 2005 was killed in Iraq when his patrol came under fire, his family said.

Pfc. Justin T. Paton, of Alanson, died Saturday, the Petoskey News-Review and the Cheboygan Daily Tribune reported. His sister, Stormy Dickinson, said the military told the family the attack was about 40 miles north of Baghdad.

Dickinson said her brother, a 2000 graduate of Inland Lakes High School, was a member of the 1st Cavalry Division. He was deployed to Iraq on Oct. 31 and had worked at Northern Michigan Hospital in Petoskey before joining the Army.

Frank Holes, a former principal at Inland Lakes High School, said he remembered Paton as a quiet but friendly student.

"He was kind of a quiet kid in school," Holes said. "He was a good student, he was always friendly, seemed to have lots of friends but he wasn't the kind of kid that did anything outlandish or drew attention to himself."

Jerry Carpentier, a family friend, said Paton liked to kayak and to be outdoors.

"My wife and I spent time with them and shared our common interests in hunting and fishing and camping," Carpentier said. "Justin liked to camp when he was young and even when he grew older he would always come."

Funeral arrangements were pending, Dickinson said.

Additional survivors include his parents, Donald and Shelley Paton of Alanson, and a brother.

Alanson is located in the northern Lower Peninsula, about 225 miles north-northwest of Detroit.

Now Army Says 29 Wounded, Not 17, At Tarmiyah Combat Post

2.20.07 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070220-10

Twenty-nine Multi-National Division Soldiers were injured when insurgents attacked a combat outpost in Tarmiyah Feb. 19. An initial release on Feb. 19 announced that 17 troops had been wounded and two killed in the attack.

During the attack, insurgents targeted U.S. troops with small arms fire, rocket-propelled grenades and a single vehicle-borne explosive device.

The Tarmiyah combat outpost was defended solely by American troops. Iraqi police left the site in December, relocating the district police headquarters to nearby Mushada.

“18 Soldiers Have Been Killed And Another 150 Have Been Wounded. And The Brigade Is Barely Halfway Into Its Deployment”

Feb 20, 2007 By Michelle Tan, Army Times [Excerpts]

For months, the dull gray structure sat empty; its only visitors were insurgents who took advantage of the massive, half-built thermal power plant as a place to meet, plot and train. When insurgents kidnapped, tortured and killed two soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division last year, they brought them to this power plant, and burned their bodies on the bridge leading to this place.

It became one of the most feared sites in the Euphrates River Valley, about 15 miles southwest of Baghdad.

But in October, soldiers with Alpha and Charlie companies, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, secured the roads and seized the power plant. Alpha Company promptly moved in, named it Combined Patrol Base Dragon after the battalion's Golden Dragons moniker, and has been here ever since.

About 90 percent of the soldiers in 2-14 live in forward positions, said Maj. Brock Jones, the battalion executive officer.

However, the area sees heavy traffic from cells that specialize in building and setting improvised explosive devices, vehicle-borne IEDs and heavy weapons trafficking, he said.

The area of responsibility has proven busy and dangerous for the brigade — soldiers here have unearthed more than 200 weapons caches, but 18 soldiers have been killed and another 150 have been wounded. And the brigade is barely halfway into its deployment.

Pfc. Bryce Klockenga, 22, the 1st Platoon medic, goes on patrol almost every day.

"It's been pretty productive," he said. "You go out around and talk to the people a lot. Some of them are thankful we're here. They're afraid to express it, but they're grateful," he said. **[Do not ask him, if they're afraid to express it, how, exactly, he knows they're grateful.]**

"Some of them live in fear, though. They get threatened a lot so they're afraid to talk to us." **[Do not ask him, how, if they're afraid to talk to him, he knows they been "threatened a lot." He's just puking back up the bullshit he's been fed from up top.]**

Counterinsurgency 102: Happy Talk Of The Blind And Stupid Vs. Cold Reality

1. The Happy Talk

Feb 18, 2007 By Robert H. Reid - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD — U.S. troops rolled into Baghdad primed for a showdown with Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias. But most of the shooting has come from Iraqi police firing weapons in the air to clear the way for their convoys.

Nevertheless, the capital has been relatively quiet since the operation began Wednesday.

For now, however, Baghdad is calmer than it has been for months — even with the Sunday car bombings.

The latest Baghdad security operation is aimed at giving the government a breathing spell to begin tackling the country's problems, and thus gaining public trust.

[And:]

Military Says Attacks In Baghdad Have Dropped
February 20, 2007 USA Today

The overall number of attacks on U.S. and Iraqi troops has fallen, said Lt. Col. Christopher Garver, a spokesman for the U.S. military.

2. Cold Reality: “A Lull In Guerrilla Action Is Usually A Danger Sign, Not A “Victory”

From GI SPECIAL 3B87

From: WAR IN THE SHADOWS: THE GUERRILLA IN HISTORY, BY Robert B. Asprey; Captain, USMC, ret'd; William Morrow And Company; New York, 1994

Whatever the President said about guerrilla warfare, these officers, in general, secretly believed that military professionalism would prove more than a match in any battle with “irregulars.” Although, in time, some of the younger advisers would realize this error, the bulk remained convinced that professionalism—by which they meant adherence to Western military doctrines—would *win the war*.

They had never heard of Major Callwell's writings on small wars, so they would never have pondered his sage advice to regard the native as the professional, the newcomer as the amateur.

They had never studied Gallieni's and Lyautey's pacification campaigns. They had never heard of General Gwynn and so did not realize that, in countering an

insurgency, the military was fulfilling a police role and had to apply minimum, not maximum, force; nor would they have known of his warning that a lull in guerrilla action is usually a danger sign, not a “victory”.

**THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR
HEALTH;
TIME TO COME HOME, NOW**



10 February: A US soldier gives an order as his squad engages in a sustained gunfight in northern Baghdad. (AFP/File/David Furst)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed Near Naray

2007/02/20 BBC NEWS

An American soldier has been killed in fighting in eastern Afghanistan, the US military says.

The soldier was killed during "combat operations" near Naray in Kunar province, it said in a statement released in Kabul.

Edwardsville Soldier Dies In Helicopter Crash In Afghanistan

February 20, 2007 nwtimes

EDWARDSVILLE, Ill. - A 20-year-old soldier from Edwardsville was killed in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan, his family said.

Pfc. Ryan Garbs, a U.S. Army Ranger, was killed in the crash on Sunday, according to his family.

"That's all he ever wanted -- to be an Army Ranger," his father, Doug Garbs told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "He was just a gung-ho young man. He knew it would be the adventure of a lifetime and that's what he focused on."

Ryan Garbs was a 2005 graduate of Edwardsville High School. He enlisted in the military later that year.

He was assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment based at Fort Benning, Ga.

Garbs served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Bomb Wounds 3 U.S. Soldiers In Afghan Hospital

Feb 20, 2007 KABUL (Reuters)

An Afghan bomber disguised as a doctor blew himself up at a hospital in southern Afghanistan on Tuesday, wounding three Americans.

Khost Governor Arsala Jamal told Reuters that U.S. soldiers opened fire on the man who was acting suspiciously as he and U.S. officers attended a function in the hospital.

The attacker tried to enter a room at the hospital, in eastern Khost city, where doctors and NATO-led troops had gathered for a ceremony to open a new emergency ward built by the alliance, the interior ministry said.

"He was shot by police. As he fell down he exploded his bombs."

WHINE WHINE WHINE

The Foreign Office Accuses NATO Allies Of Failing To Send Enough Troops

Feb 20, 2007 LONDON (Reuters)

The Foreign Office accused its NATO allies on Tuesday of failing to send enough troops and hardware to fight Taliban guerrillas in southern Afghanistan.

"This is a real test of the resolve and of the credibility of NATO and I'm not sure that every NATO member understands the significance of that," Kim Howells, the Foreign Office minister responsible for Afghanistan told parliament. [They understand it perfectly; that's why they're not sending more troops.]

He added: "I know of countries that have helicopters that might as well be parked up in leading European airports for the amount of good they are doing in some parts of Afghanistan."

Blinding Flash Of The Obvious: "Shooting Afghan Civilians, Police Officers And Soldiers Makes It A Lot Harder For Canadian Troops To Build Good Relations"

February 20, 2007 CBC News

The general in charge of Canadian troops in Afghanistan is advising soldiers to exercise restraint when using their weapons after three innocent Afghans were killed in recent days.

The military has acknowledged that shooting Afghan civilians, police officers and soldiers makes it a lot harder for Canadian troops to build good relations with the local population.

***And Now For The Good News:
Afghan Collaborator Army Will Be
Ready In 10 Years;
Desertion Rate Only 40%***

Feb 20, 2007 By Jason Straziuso, The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan: The Afghan army is struggling with old weaponry, low pay and desertions, yet performs better than the troubled Iraqi army and could defend Afghanistan without U.S. and NATO support in five to 10 years, military officials and analysts say.

Salary and spartan living conditions are sore points among the rank and file,

Adbul Wazim, an ANA soldier standing guard in the capital in a crisp green and brown camouflage uniform, said that despite the increase, he doesn't plan on re-enlisting after his three-year army commitment is up in six months.

"I will go back to my home area, though I don't know what I'll do," he said. "The salary just isn't enough."

In another example of discontent, 10 ANA soldiers at a security checkpoint in southern Kandahar province last month told U.S. Special Forces soldiers that they wanted to quit. The Afghan soldiers complained that they had been away from home too long, that they only had one uniform — and that they didn't get enough meat to eat.

[Afghan Defense Minister Abdul Rahim] Wardak says he has "close to 40,000" soldiers, but Lt. Cmdr. John Daniels of the U.S.-led training program said the number is really 32,300 after counting desertions.

He said the desertion rate has declined significantly, to 14 percent from 23 percent in 2003-04.

However, other NATO officials say that when recruits who abandon basic training are counted, the rate jumps to 40 percent.

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

TROOP NEWS

**Pentagon Rats #1:
Won't Even Pay To Return Bodies
Of KIA To Their Families:**

“Go To The Airport We Choose And Pick Up The Casket Yourself”

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

[Here it is again. Same old story. Used up, thrown away, and the politicians couldn't care less. To repeat for the 3,489th time, there is no enemy in Iraq. Iraqis and U.S. troops have a common enemy. That common enemy owns and operates the Imperial government in Washington DC for their own profit. That common enemy started this war of conquest on a platform of lies, because they couldn't tell the truth: this war was about making money for them, and nothing else. Payback is overdue. T]

February 19, 2007 By KIMBERLY HEFLING, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts

Death isn't the only burden the war has visited on the nation's small towns.

Another fairness issue, raised by Rep. Bart Stupak, D-Mich., is the Pentagon's practice of transporting the remains of military personnel killed in Iraq only to the nearest major airport. Stupak said it "imposes a burden on the family and friends when they should instead receive our support."

He has introduced legislation to require the DOD to deliver the remains to the military or civilian airport chosen by the family.

Pentagon Rats #2: Cheating National Guard Troops Out Of Incentive Pay Nationwide

[The traitors who run the government make sure their own pay isn't one minute late. Read these bullshit excuses about some "bureaucratic-administrative issue at the federal level." They could pay in advance if they gave a shit. But, fact, they don't give a shit. If it was Gates, or Bush, or any Senator, or any Representative, or any other Imperial politician, their money would be there in full to the minute, and it is there to the minute. But "fuck the troops" as far as the people who run the government are concerned, They are the domestic enemies of every member of the armed forces and every American citizen. T]

Whitford initially said the payment delays appeared to be a Connecticut issue and not a national problem, but later said after checking that it appears "other states are in the same boat."
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Feb 18, 2007 The Associated Press

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — More than one-fifth of 500 Connecticut National Guard soldiers of the 102nd Infantry serving in war zones are owed thousands of dollars in incentive pay that is months overdue.

The Assignment Incentive Pay of \$1,000 a month is paid to Reserve or National Guard soldiers who volunteer to extend active duty beyond 24 months.

Lt. Col. John Whitford of the Connecticut National Guard confirmed that about 110 soldiers are owed amounts between \$2,000 and \$17,000. He attributed the delay to a “bureaucratic-administrative issue” at the federal level.

The 1st Battalion of the 102nd left Connecticut for Fort Bragg in January 2006 and for Afghanistan the following April.

Whitford said the incentive pay was “way overdue” and that soldiers should not worry that they will eventually receive the money. **[Yeah, right, the check is in the mail. Hey, here’s an idea, let’s hold Asshole Whitford’s pay until every single Guard member gets his or her money. He just said soldiers “should not worry.” How dare this piece of shit, getting every penny of his pay, on time, in full, sitting on his fast stupid ass safely at home, tell the troops “not to worry.” What a despicable dishonorable weasel.]**

Whitford initially said the payment delays appeared to be a Connecticut issue and not a national problem, but later said after checking that it appears “other states are in the same boat.”

***Win One For Our Side;* Shitstorm Forces Pentagon To End Stupid Policy Hurting Wounded Troops**

2.19.07 Honolulu Advertiser

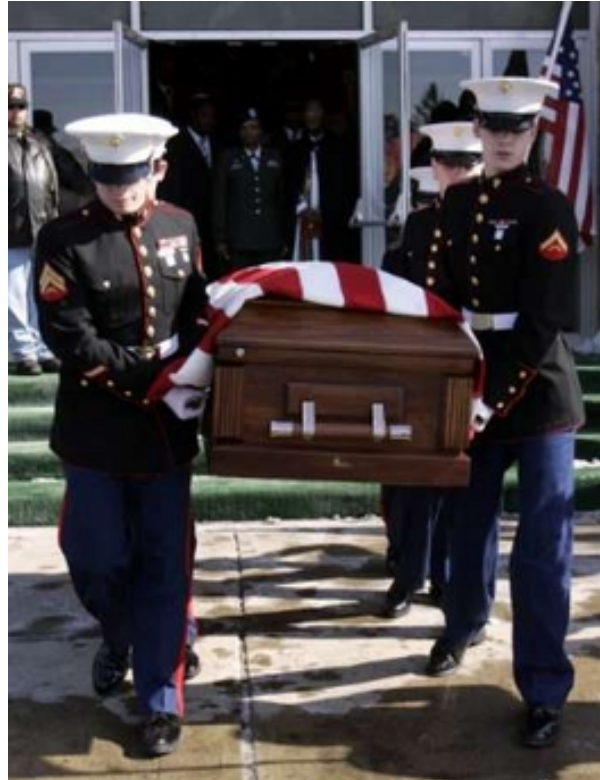
Responding to complaints, the Pentagon reversed a policy that barred Veterans Affairs physicians from accessing some Defense Department medical records of severely injured troops, the senators said.

The Pentagon had blocked access in January while an information sharing agreement was being worked out with the VA.

About 30 VA doctors at four trauma centers — in Richmond, Va.; Tampa, Fla.; Minneapolis, Minn.; and Palo Alto, Calif. — were had been cut off from information they

needed to track the medical treatment that injured troops received before arriving at the centers.

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



The casket containing the remains of 19-year-old Marine Pfc. Tarryl Hill at St. Paul Tabernacle Church following Hill's funeral in Detroit, Michigan February 16, 2007. Hill was killed in Fallujah. REUTERS/Rebecca Cook

Soldier Gets Three Months For Refusing To Deploy To Iraq

February 6, 2007 FORT BLISS, Texas (AP)

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

A soldier was found guilty Monday of deserting her Army unit on the eve of its deployment to the Middle East and was sentenced to three months in military prison.

A guilty plea by Spc. Melanie McPherson, a 28-year-old reservist from Tofte, Minn., to going absent without leave was superseded by a military judge's ruling on the more

serious charge of desertion. McPherson told the judge she hitchhiked to Minnesota after leaving Fort Bliss the day before her unit was to leave for Kuwait, in July.

McPherson was also reduced in rank to private and will receive a bad-conduct discharge after her prison term.

Trained as a military photojournalist, McPherson said she left because she was afraid she would eventually be deployed to Iraq as a truck driver or military police officer. She said she feared that if she were sent to war as anything other than a photojournalist, she would endanger herself and those around her.

McPherson also pleaded guilty to missing her deployment.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

2.20.07 (KUNA) & Reuters & (VOI)

Two Iraqi soldiers were killed and one was injured on Tuesday when a bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol went off in Al-Huwaija suburb south west of Kirkuk.

An Iraqi police source in Kirkuk told KUNA that the two soldiers died instantly while the third one was rushed to the hospital.

An oil installation guard was wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near his patrol in the town of Hawija, 70 km (40 miles) southwest of Kirkuk, police said.

Guerrillas attacked on Tuesday an Iraqi vehicle patrol in central Falluja, in Anbar province, leaving a Hummer vehicle destroyed, a source in Falluja police said.

"Unknown armed men attacked on Tuesday a vehicle patrol of Iraqi army at 5:00 pm on Tuesday in al-Muhandesin neighborhood, in central Falluja", the source, who asked not to be named, told the independent news agency Voices of Iraq (VOI).

The source added that the attackers destroyed an Iraqi Hummer by a rocket propelled grenade (RPG), noting that 10-minute fierce clashes followed the incident between the Iraqi forces and the guerrillas.

He said "the attack left casualties among Iraqi soldiers."

Two Iraqi soldiers were killed and another wounded when an explosive charge went off near their patrol in the district of al-Huwayja, southwest of Kirkuk, 250 northeast of the capital Baghdad, an official source in the Iraqi police said on Tuesday

Guerrillas set on Tuesday a convey of three tank-trucks carrying gasoline on fire and killed their drivers in al-Azim district, an Iraqi police source said.

Government press man killed: Two bodies of a journalist and his cousin, who were kidnapped last week, were found on Tuesday in Baghdad, a source at Iraqi media network said.

"Two bullet-riddled bodies belonged to Abdel Razeq Hashim al-Khaqani, a journalist who was working as an editor in the Iraqi radio, and his cousin, were found in forensic medicine department in Baghdad", the source told the independent news agency Voices of Iraq (VOI).

"The two men were kidnapped by an armed group last week in al-Jihad neighborhood in western Baghdad while visiting their relatives", he noted.

The Iraqi radio is part of the government funded Iraqi media network

<p style="text-align: center;">IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Peace Speaks From The Mirror

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: February 18, 2007
Subject: Peace Speaks From The Mirror by Dennis

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

Peace Speaks From The Mirror

**War is not a DVD
to eat pizza, drink some beers
and pause the war to take a pee.
War is a Soldier in a dark room all alone
you can not see his tears
because he hides them.
Those who think they know of war**

can never watch the Soldier weep.
A Soldier has a war on his TV
recorded in his heart, filmed by emotions
edited with pills
so he can live like normal people do.
There are no fast clips
of the dead, the wounded,
the Soldier must keep seeing them
the rest of his life.
But some nights he holds a pistol
to his head, his finger on the trigger
looking into a mirror
that speaks to him of peace.
"Think of your wife and children,
your suicide will hurt them
throughout their lives,
a life of emotions and tears,
you could never hurt them more."
So he puts the gun away
like he has done before
and peace speaks from the mirror
and reminds him once again,
"See, you are filled with love now,
I'll see you if you need me,
like if a thousand of white moths
turn into crosses on a hillside
as the war comes back to you
for coming back without them."

Ho Chi Bird says...



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: February 20, 2007
Subject: Ho Chi Bird says...

Ho Chi Bird says...

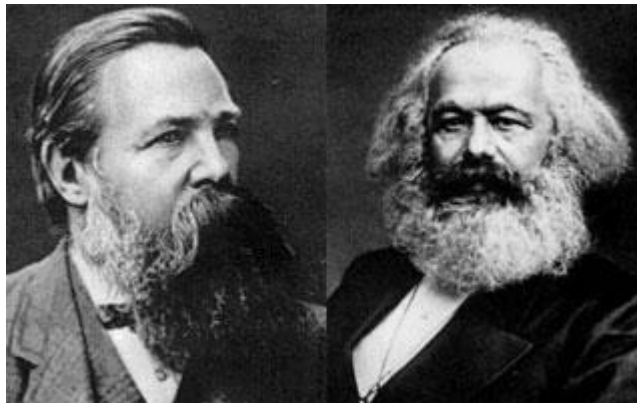
Americans cannot win in Iraq, because puppet government and U.S. military chain of command have been infiltrated all the way to the top.

Remember?

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
February 20, 2007**

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

February 21, 1848: A Small Book Appears, And Shakes The World



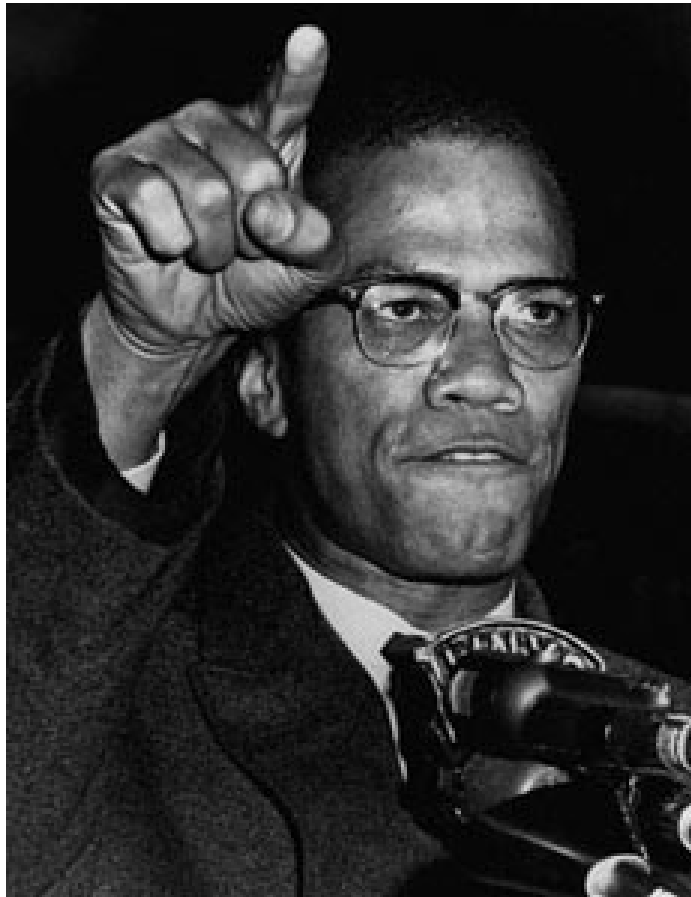
Friedrich Engels And Karl Marx

Carl Bunin Peace History February 19-25

“The Communist Manifesto,” written by 29-year-old Karl Marx with the assistance of Friedrich Engels, was published in London (in German) by a group of German-born revolutionary socialists known as the Communist League.

The political pamphlet—arguably the most influential in history—proclaimed that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" and the inevitable victory of the proletariat, or working class, would put an end to class society forever.

February 21, 1965: A Brilliant And Courageous Soldier For The Cause Killed In Action



Carl Bunin Peace History February 19-25

Malcolm X was shot and killed by rival Black Muslims in New York City, as he was about to address his Organization of Afro-American Unity at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City's Washington Heights. He was 39. **[He was killed not long after announcing his new politics: that working class whites and African-Americans can join together to fight those who own and control the society for their own wealth and privilege. T]**

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

U.S. Occupation Commands' Stupid Terror Tactics Recruit Even More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops



Two Iraqi children watch foreign occupation soldiers from U.S. Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team search their home in the Beida neighborhood bordering Sadr City in Baghdad. Iraqi citizens have no right to refuse the foreign troops entry into their homes day or night, and can be arrested, wounded or killed if they resist. (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 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.”

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.

Move To Invite In Foreign Oil Companies Stalls; Draft Law Arouses “Fresh Opposition”

2.20.07: Wall Street Journal

Foreign technology and capital are seen as vital to restoring Iraq's crumbling oil industry.

But as a draft petroleum law inches its way toward the Iraqi parliament, fresh opposition to the legislation is emerging, underscoring the difficulty that may still lie ahead for any move to invite in international oil companies.

Earlier this month, an influential union of oil workers in the country's south said it will oppose the legislation.

And opposition has emerged from prominent former Iraqi oil officials, who have recently fled the country's chaos but continue to hold some sway in Baghdad's oil bureaucracy.

The nationalization of the Iraqi oil industry in the 1970s under Saddam Hussein remains a point of pride for many Iraqis, and opposition still runs deep to any hint of foreign interference.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Imperials Democrats In Senate Give Bush Unconditional Promise To Keep On Killing U.S. Troops And Iraqis

Feb 18, 2007 By Hope Yen, The Associated Press

A day after Republicans foiled a Democratic bid to repudiate Bush's deployment of 21,500 additional combat troops to Iraq, Senate Democrats declined to embrace measures — being advanced in the House — that would attach conditions to additional funding for troops.

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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