

GI SPECIAL 5C23:

NO MORE. BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW.



US soldier SSG David Brown from Gator Company 2-12 Infantry Battalion after he was shot in the leg while on patrol in the al-Dora neighborhood of southern Baghdad. (AFP/David Furst)

On The Death Of Iraq Veterans Against The War Member Cpl. Timothy Swanson: Killed By An IED In Taji, Iraq 1.27.07

TO TIM:

I didn't know you Tim, but I personally feel a loss from your death. You had an impact on your friends like nothing I have ever seen.... Your best friend Kelly the vegetarian, ate a piece of STEAK in your honor yesterday!! You must have been someone amazing if you could drive a vegetarian to eat a whole plate of beef!! Your friends loved you more than anything on this earth... and though most of us in IVAW did not know you... we loved you too. You were and always will be our brother in arms and our bother fighting for peace. You will not be forgotten and you did not die in vain. We will end this thing and when we do, we will dedicate our success to you. You are the reason for our struggle. You are the reason that we persevere. Good luck in the next life Tim and have a white russian for all of us.

Peace and Godspeed,
Chas

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, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Alaska Soldier Killed In Iraq

March 14, 2007 By DON HUNTER, Anchorage Daily News

A soldier from Glennallen died in Iraq on Sunday when a bomb went off near his patrol, the Army said Tuesday.

Sgt. Daniel E. Woodcock, 25, was an infantry team leader with the 82nd Airborne Division. He was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

Woodcock was on patrol near Ad Dawr, a small town south of Tikrit, when he was killed, according to a press release from the U.S. Department of Defense.

His survivors include his wife, Alida, son, Gabriel, and daughter, Charlotte, all of Fayetteville, N.C., and his parents, Calvin and Linda Woodcock, both of Glennallen.

He was the 15th Alaskan to die in Iraq. That number doesn't include 23 soldiers based at Fort Richardson who have died in the war.

"Sgt. Woodcock was an outstanding team leader who continually put the welfare of his troopers before his own," Staff Sgt. Norberto Ruiz said in a statement issued by the 82nd Airborne public affairs office at Fort Bragg, N.C.

"He was a very dedicated father and spouse. He will be sorely missed."

Woodcock enlisted in the Army in July 2000 and joined the 82nd Airborne in January 2001. He was deployed to Afghanistan in 2003 in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Another paratrooper, Spc. Abel Alejandro, said Woodcock inspired his squad "because of his accomplishments and abilities to develop his team."

Woodcock's decorations include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and the Iraqi Campaign Medal.

His unit in Iraq will hold a memorial service for him. Funeral arrangements are pending.

Benbrook Family Mourns Fallen Soldier

(CBS 11 News)

BENBROOK A North Texas family learned this weekend their 23-year-old son was one of the latest casualties in Iraq.

"He was just a person you liked to be around. Craig knew he was going to Iraq when he signed up," the family's pastor Carroll Smith said. "He thought America had a moral obligation in birthing a new democracy."

Officials said Spec. Lance Springer II of Benbrook was killed by an explosive Friday in Iraq. The Army medic treated wounded from both sides of the war, his family said shortly after they learned of the loss of their son.

The 23-year-old joined the military two and a half years ago hoping to work on Humvees, his family said. "He believed in what he was doing and he was willing to put his life on the line for it," his father, Lance Springer said.

His father will always remember the Iraqi children his son met. The elder Springer said there was one boy in particular who represents many. "He's going to be able to vote for his own president because of what our service people have gone over there to do," he said.

Smith praised the younger Springer and called him "a good Christian young man. The kind you want your daughter to meet."

"I was planning on marrying him. But, I guess now I'll bury him."

Notes From A Lost War:

**Forced By Resistance Convoy
Attacks To Use C-130s, Now The C-
130s Are Falling Apart**

March 26, 2007 Army Times; By Rick Maze - Staff writer [Excerpt]

C-130 transports, for example, are “are doing great work on intratheater airlift, both in Iraq and Afghanistan. They’re getting hundreds of convoys off the roads, and, better, they’re getting thousands of our other forces off the roads and not exposed to improved explosive devices.”

But the cost, he said, is that C-130s are flying too much.

“Some of our C-130Es can no longer deploy to combat because we have literally flown the wings off them,” he said, referring to center wing boxes that are cracked.

“In fact, we have five C-130s at Ramstein Air Base (in Germany) alone with major structural issues. One is so hard-broken, it has not flown in four years.”

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



A U.S. soldier of the 1st Platoon Alpha company 2nd Battalion 12th Cavalry Regiment points to the damage caused to an armoured vehicle that was hit by gun fire, during a patrol in Baghdad's Al-Ghazaliyah neighborhood March 19, 2007. (Fabrizio Bensch/Reuters)

TROOP NEWS

Bringing The War Home Now: “The Result Was A Lot Of Shouting, Commotion And Tension In The Middle Of Workweek D.C.”



Photo by Lovella Calica [www.ivaw.org]

[Thanks to Garrett Reppenhagen & Andrew Sapp, Iraq Veterans Against The War, who sent this in.]

Iraq Veterans Against The War [www.ivaw.org] [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON, DC - In an effort to illuminate the true reality of the conflict in Iraq, members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) engaged in a series of street theater actions around the nation's capital on Monday.

Actual veterans of the conflict in Iraq played the part of American service members – with reenactments that highlighted various aspects of life in combat in Iraq. The event was treated like a military operation with participants in full military uniform, however, there were no weapons used at any time.

“We are calling Monday’s action Operation First Casualty because we believe that truth was the first casualty of this war.

“Our aim is to show the American public the truth of the US occupation in Iraq,” said Garrett Reppenhagen, IVAW board chair and one of the organizers of March 19th’s event. “It is time for the American people to know the truth so they will act to bring the troops home now.”

In actions staged around the city, local activist volunteers acted as civilians in realistic portrayals of actual interactions between U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians.

The result was a lot of shouting, commotion and tension in the middle of workweek D.C. – giving the American public a taste of what Iraqis and U.S. troops deal with day in and day out.

Participants hoped that by giving the American public a sense of the ugly reality of the war they would then be inspired to act to end the war now.

Iraq Veterans Against the War was founded in 2004 to give those who have served in the military since September 11, 2001 a way to come together and speak out against an unjust, illegal and unwinnable war. Today, IVAW is made up of close to 400 members in 42 states, Washington, D.C., Canada and serving in bases overseas.

IVAW gives its members the opportunity not only to connect with other veterans and active duty soldiers but also to speak with one voice. As eyewitnesses and participants in the war on terror, they are viewed as credible sources that are able to explain why the war must end now.

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



The casket of Spc. Michael D. Rivera during his funeral service March 21, 2007 in New York. Rivera died on March 7 in Baghdad, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near their vehicle during combat operations. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

Get Some Truth From: Iraq Veterans Against The War



Photo by Jeff Paterson, Courage to Resist (jeff@paterson.net) Indybay.org

“You Are Either With The President Or With The Troops”

02/01/2007 by Garrett Reppenhagen, Iraq Veterans Against The War, www.ivaw.org

I have a firm belief in “knowing my enemy” so the other night I nestled in to my hole in the wall basement DC apartment to watch our courageous President “Bloody” George inform America on the “State of the Union.”

As the comforting glow of the television hummed to life I sat through a couple of commercials in interest discovering what my neighbors are buying. I am always hypnotized by TV since I have almost completely cut myself off from the soul sucking broadcasted programming.

Staring affixed, the chamber comes into view as politicians find their seats gossiping and shaking hands.

The commentators talk about what is likely to be said by the president and they seem interested in who is sitting where. Already there is talk about the 2008 presidential race.

It seems clear that most of the people in the room are invested in their campaigns already. Morals and convictions are set to be compromised for the overall success in elections.

Again the war will be used by both parties as a political chip and the lives of my fellow soldiers and innocent Iraqis will pay the price.

In walks the President. It takes some time for him to make it to his position. He begins by brown nosing the new Speaker of the House and has a lot of great things to say about the first woman to hold that title.

I wonder if it is all lip service, after so many lies from our leader it is hard to believe anything he says.

Then he dives into how the Dems and the Repubs have to work together to face difficult challenges and threatened that it is a defining hour and it is a matter of urgency that there is bi-partisan cooperation. This is new. Were did the "I am going to do what ever I want" Dubya go?

"The economy is on the move." Next we have talks about how the country is doing AWESOME economically and how everyone in America has a job, ten cars and a swimming pool. Not only are we all sitting pretty but it is going to get better.

I had to look out my window for a quick glance of the homeless man curled into a ball across the street freezing in the winter night. Maybe Bush doesn't consider him a part of this "economy on the move"? The homeless man is probably a war veteran, that might mean he isn't even an American in the President's eyes.

Speaking of veterans, I am interested in hearing what George Bush says about us?

On and on he goes talking about these great new initiatives. It is almost as if he was just elected and he has been waiting to reveal these great projects that will fix all of our domestic problems.

I was reminded of Pedro from Napoleon Dynamite "Vote for me and your wildest dreams will come true." Maybe we will eliminate the National Debt in five years, and cut back on 20% of our gasoline usage, and give families tax breaks if they can't afford health insurance.

What about us veterans?

Ahhhh here we go, the war in the middle-east.

More of the same, we have to win, fight terror, defeat evil, take the fight to the enemy, (a free history lesson) free people are not drawn into violent ideologies blah blah blah.

Oh here is some news, "the American people didn't vote for failure." What do you call the 2000 and 2004 elections? Still nothing, just "Stay the Course More."

A basketball player, a local hero, wait wait,,,,,a soldier that was injured in Iraq. Close, but still nothing.

Some more ramblings and encouragement, some boogie man stories about Iran and catastrophe in Iraq and theeeeeeeeeen done.

Nope not once did the President utter the word "Veteran".

He spoke of increasing the military, sending more troops to Iraq and possibly taking harder measures against Iran, but forgot to mention that he cut veteran benefits.

Why bring it up when it might call attention to the more than 22,000 wounded in action that this war has produced and the fact that the attacks on our military in Iraq and Afghanistan are increasing everyday?

Why call attention to the fact that the escalation of troops in Iraq are the same troops that have just left and the troops still there that will have to be extended?

Why burden the public with the reality that it is "W" as the leader of this nation that is a failure and that in 2006 if we could have had a presidential election George W Bush would have been chased out of the White House with the worst land slide loss in history.

As our nation's President it is obvious by the State of the Union address that he doesn't stand by our nation's veterans, which means he doesn't stand by our troops. It has become clear as day that there are two sides.

You are either with the President or with the troops.

MORE:

Hammers Can't Fix Computers OR Why We Lost in Iraq, Part I"

**"We Stand No Chance Against Our
Enemy There, And Every Life Lost
Fighting Them Is In Vain"**

**"Our Training Is Limited To A Very
Specific Set Of Methods, Which Are To**

Be Practiced Without Consideration To The Enemy Situation”

March 20, 2007 By Jason Lemieux, Iraq Veterans Against The War, www.ivaw.org

Hi.

My name is Jason Lemieux, and I am veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps infantry.

I served three tours in the Iraq occupation, and I have something important to tell you.

You see, there are a lot of members of Iraq Veterans Against the War who speak out on the immorality of the occupation. Tons. While I agree with them that the occupation is immoral and unjustified, I don't think that you are all that moved by hearing it.

Don't get me wrong; I'm not implying that you, the reader, are a bad or uncaring person.

It's just that lots of things in this world are immoral, and for most of us they all blend together after a while.

What I want to tell you about the occupation of Iraq is something else entirely: Whether or not we are justified in occupying Iraq is irrelevant at a certain level, because we stand no chance against our enemy there, and every life lost fighting them is in vain.

As I left the Marine Corps last May, I wanted to be a scholar of military theory. I wanted to write academic articles in a snooty tone to like-minded professionals.

Recently though, I've come to a realization: Writing for an audience that totally agrees with you and has the same level of understanding that you do is a waste of time.

First of all, there's not likely to be a huge market for it.

Second, it doesn't end wars. The reason is that the mainstream, the people with the real power to influence change in America, never get the message.

That is why I want to tell you, America, the truth about war as we know it.

I intend this article to be user-friendly. If I don't present my ideas clearly and interestingly, my energy is wasted. That is why I plead with you to let me know if something I write here seems unclear or confusing. As I will explain in greater detail, insulating oneself from constructive criticism only leads to failure. I can be reached at jasonlemieux@ivaw.org.

First, you need to understand that our military is designed to defeat another world power like the Soviet Union.

The American way of war is what military scholars refer to as Second Generation or Attrition Warfare (2GW). Hereafter, I will refer to proponents of this style of war as attritionists. The idea in 2GW is to defeat other state militaries by killing the enemy and destroying their equipment. No thought is given to deceiving the enemy or undermining their will to fight, just to killing them with the most powerful weapons available.

America loves to loudly proclaim that we have the best military in the history of the world, but it's just not true.

Our training is limited to a very specific set of methods, which are to be practiced without consideration to the enemy situation. Any attempt at introducing new methods is squashed. There are many reasons why, some of which will forever remain a mystery.

Let's look at a couple of the ones we do know.

One reason is the plague that is the military-industrial complex. The methods we use depend on superexpensive technology produced by the defense industry.

The defense industry's lobbyists ensure that Congress buys their equipment, which we are then forced to tailor our methods around.

In the Department of Defense (DOD), generals get promoted by maintaining the status quo, which amounts to forcing these methods upon their troops. If they are particularly good at it, they can look forward to a sweet deal from a defense company when they retire.

Another reason is that we have done so well in past wars (or so we are told) that our pride doesn't allow us to admit there are things of which we are incapable.

We think that because we're "the greatest military in the world" that we already have all the answers. For example, one day I tried suggesting to my lieutenant that our platoon try a tactic used by the German Stosstruppen in WWII. He was in the middle of a conversation about which Harley-Davidson motorcycle was the best. He paused long enough to laugh at me, saying "Germany lost the war. Why would we use their tactics, Lemieux?"

"True," I responded, "Germany did lose the war, but mostly because they ran out of soldiers and equipment first. That doesn't mean their squads hadn't figured something out that was working until our superior numbers overwhelmed them."

He didn't seem interested in my response, and was satisfied to go back to his conversation about motorcycles. His attitude is typical of Marines and soldiers of all ranks.

Now that we've exposed the truth about the DOD, let's look at how this truth plays out in Iraq.

The war in Iraq is what's known among scholars as a Fourth Generation War (4GW). 4GW is war in which a state military, like ours, fights a non-state enemy, like the Iraqi resistance.

It's not just a guerrilla war because state militaries can use guerrilla warfare too.

We fight the 4GW enemy in Iraq in a couple of ways, and none of them is at all effective.

One tactic we use is combat patrols. What these boil down to is four to eight Humvees driving around, looking for enemy activity. The problem is that there isn't any way to spot enemy activity, especially from inside an armored Humvee.

The main weapon of the resistance is the roadside bomb. Planting roadside bombs takes only a minute or two and can be easily concealed with normal activity you'd expect to see happening in a city, like dumping out the trash or digging a new sewer line.

Once the bomb is in place, the bomber can detonate it from any building up to a mile away. The result is that a bunch of guys ride around in loud trucks with machine guns until a roadside bomb hits them, then they evacuate the wounded.

To understand the inward focus and zero-defect mentality of our military, consider the following: When a small-unit (30 soldiers or less) commander debriefs his soldiers after a roadside bomb attacks their patrol, he stands in front of them and says things like "you guys were on the ball getting that medevac called in" or "you did a good job of posting security quickly" instead of saying "I admit that I made us an easy target for our enemy.

"I guess driving four loud diesel trucks in single file down a main thoroughfare in broad daylight was not the best patrolling technique."

Our 2GW method of fighting is powerless to stop the attacks, because we can't kill the enemy. In the course of three combat tours, my unit was attacked by hundreds of roadside bombs. You can count on one hand the total number of times we found the guy that attacked us.

Some people, however, think that there is more they can do.

They have this idea because they are products of a military that has been content in the last 90 years to defeat other militaries solely by killing. They have the idea that if only we could kill more insurgents or their leaders, we'd defeat them.

They cannot understand that killing only makes their enemy stronger. If you kill an insurgent leader, you just turn him into a martyr. In Iraqi society, killing a leader isn't considered a disaster; it's motivation to continue fighting.

First of all, that we killed him just proves to them that we are the bad guys who deserve to be destroyed.

Second, martyrdom is considered an honor, and the martyr is understood to be experiencing a better existence in heaven because of the fact that he was killed fighting for his cause. He's actually thought to be better off now that he's dead. Ideas like this

influence the landscape of war. They're also ignored by servicemen who are only interested in killing bodies and then counting them.

The attritionist crowd also thinks that if we just corner enemy forces and then systematically destroy them all, we'll win.

They have the idea that if the enemy isn't stupid enough to play by our rules, we have some way to force these rules upon him.

Take for instance, the words of one misguided Marine corporal:

"The Insurgency will not abide by the rules we set so we must adapt to their tactics...they want to use fear and guerille (sic) tactics, you fight that by escalating your aggression, instituting a curfew, and most of all ENFORCE those rules. You dont (sic) capture a bad guy....asked (sic him to be nice and let him go...LIKE THE POLITICIANS DID TO AL-SADR. My Marine unit as well as Army Bn's had him and his militia surrounded. We had 2 Iraq Army Bn's ready to close w/ and destroy a hostile enemy yet politics allowed him to sign a peace treaty, move his troops to Baghdad and he's killing service members again."

"Close with and destroy" is a 2GW term straight out of WWI.

That this Marine used it to describe how he thinks Iraq should be won is further evidence of our inability to learn new methods.

Marines like this one don't understand that enemy forces in Iraq only get cornered when they want to, because all they have to do to escape is put down their weapons and walk away.

We have no way to tell who's been shooting at us and who hasn't.

The resistance doesn't even have to use guns, because roadside bombs work just fine anyway.

Furthermore, he doesn't understand that the "politicians" let Al-Sadr go (trust me, he probably would have slipped through our fingers anyway) because otherwise his death or capture would have been the reason for his entire militia to fight to the death, killing many more service members than they have since.

The inevitable carnage also would have made America look worse to the world than it already does, alienating the few allies we have left and placing more burden on us in the long run.

Al-Sadr did what every good commander should do; he put his enemy (us) in a lose-lose situation. Even if the militia wasn't moved to join Al-Sadr in martyrdom, his death would still be meaningless.

One of the main characteristics of 4GW groups like his is that they have an infinite number of people ready, willing and able to assume command in the event that their leader is killed.

Most importantly, the attritionists don't understand that in our situation, killing just creates more enemies.

Let me repeat myself: Killing just creates more enemies.

Ahh, I can hear the derogatory comments now: "typical liberal peacenik talk."

Well, to my conservative friends out there: I'm sorry (not really) to break it to you, but the majority of 4GW theorists are retired mid and high-level officers or civilians closely tied to the U.S., British and Israeli (!) militaries. They're hardly a bunch of Birkenstock-wearing Volkswagen jockeys.

The unavoidable fact is that in 4GW, winning the battle often means losing the war.

What I mean is that if you kill one person for any reason, his entire tribe is considered justified in getting revenge by killing everyone in your tribe. Since our military doesn't have identifiable tribes, every soldier becomes a justified target. Any warfighting philosophy that depends on killing is a sure way to failure in Iraq.

Quick example: An intelligence report I read explained how a member of the local police force (the report is classified, so I won't mention the city), whose tribe was pro-American, was killed one day in a crossfire between resistance fighters and a U.S. Army unit.

His family was well aware that his death was a complete accident. The same day that he died, two of his brothers and one of his cousins joined the resistance. In the accidental death of one Iraqi citizen that was on our side, we instantly turned three of his relatives to our enemy's side.

In the months that followed, I read version after version of the same story.

When X is killed or captured by American forces, W, Y and Z all make America their sworn enemy on the same day.

Winning by killing is a mathematical impossibility.

The "we're being forced to fight with our hands tied behind our backs" crowd complains until they're blue in the face that if all these pesky rules of engagement were lifted and "politics" were ignored so they could fight their glorious war, they could finally wipe their enemy off the face of the earth. In order to make this argument, they continually ignore the fact that killing creates more enemies, even when it's presented to them as plain as day.

Another element of 4GW that's impossible for us to overcome is the complexity of what we are calling our enemy.

I say "what we are calling" because many of them are our own creation, and if we hadn't invaded in the first place they wouldn't exist for us to deal with (a real blow to the "fight them there instead of here" argument).

Most of the time, the insurgent groups are presented to us as the Sunnis and the Shi'ites, who are in opposition to each other.

This is a gross oversimplification.

The 'enemy' is a vast array of groups who are fighting for different reasons. There are groups that technically fall under the category of Sunni or Shi'ite, but they're not all fighting to advance their interpretation of Islam.

Other motivations include:

People fighting for money – Businessmen attack their competitors. Also, teenagers are paid to plant roadside bombs. They're not doing it because they hate Americans; they're doing it because their mothers and little sisters are starving.

Political power - In both the Sunni and Shi'ite camps, many political parties in Parliament have an active military wing that attacks members of the other parties.

Organized crime – The resistance has tapped into the crime networks that existed while Saddam was in power. These guys have absolutely no political or religious loyalty at all; they fight for the highest bidder.

Tribal honor – Now that Saddam and his enforcement of order are gone, tribes are free to go to war with one another over any little breach of honor. If you insult someone in another tribe, his whole extended family tries to kill everyone in your family.

The different factions are constantly shifting their alliances and changing sides. They fight each other constantly; the only thing they agree on is that our troops should die.

Once you understand the complexity of the actors and motivations involved in this war, it's obvious that there's no way to legitimate victory.

Who could we ever negotiate peace with? At the end of what we commonly know as war, even the most hated enemies come together to negotiate the terms of surrender. We can't cram every tribal leader, crime boss, political leader, businessman, religious leader and charismatic guy with money in Iraq into one room to negotiate.

Even if we could, they're all fighting for different reasons. Whatever solution satisfied one group would just alienate another.

Since our military is designed to kill and destroy, expecting it to fix this incredibly complex social problem is like having a problem with your personal computer and expecting to fix it by smashing it with a ball peen hammer: "It isn't fixed yet. Smash harder!"

The 2GW mindset of our military turns every Iraq deployment into one long, pathetic, tragic joke.

I could go on and on about how completely pointless it is to have our 18-year old sons and daughters dying every day in Iraq and how the war was lost before it

even started, but I think you'll be better served if I stop here for now. In the rest of this series of articles, I'll explain some concepts that are extremely important for the American public to know when their countrymen are dying overseas.

Bibliography

Cpl. Damour, Larry. "Who'd be interested?" Online posting. 11 Mar. 2007. Iraq Veterans Against The War, Members & Supporters, www.ivaw.org 18 Mar. 2007 .

Lind, William S. "Understanding Fourth Generation War." Military Review (Sept.-Oct. 2004): 12-16. Air War College Gateway to the Internet. 31 Jan. 2007. Air War College. 13 Mar. 2007 .

Lind, William S., et al. FMFM 1-A, Rev. 3. Ms. Fourth Generation Seminar. Defense and the National Interest. 2006. Kettle Creek Corporation. 19 Mar. 2007 .

Lind, William S., Colonel Keith Nightengale (USA), Captain John F. Schmitt (USMC), Colonel Joseph W. Sutton (USA), and Lieutenant Colonel Gary I. Wilson (USMCR). "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation." Marine Corps Gazette (Oct. 1989): 22-26. Defense and the National Interest. Kettle Creek Corporation. 13 Mar. 2007 .

Van Creveld, Martin. "The First and the Last." The Changing Face of War: Lessons of Combat, From the Marne to Iraq. New York: Presidio, 2006. 261-270.

Also, consider reading *The Sling and The Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, an excellent civilian-friendly book by Col. Thomas X. Hammes, USMC.

MORE:

March 20th Is A Special Day **“Four Years Ago Today I Went To My First Protest, Then As A Soldier And Not Yet A Veteran”**

03/19/2007 by Jen Hogg, Iraq Veterans Against The War, www.ivaw.org

March 20th is a special day for me.

Four years ago today I went to my first protest, then as a soldier and not yet a veteran, with the belief that the war that started the night before in the cradle of civilization was anything but civil or the mark of a civilized nation enacting justice for 9/11 (back then we were still being told it was all about 9/11 and a mushroom cloud).

Four years later and into the start of the fifth year of the war I am still on the course I set myself on that day.

I have begun to connect the dots.

At that time when I went to one of the protests planned across the country for the day after the war started I saw the dots like stars in the night sky but had not yet connected them like those drawings of the Big Dipper and Orion on the ceiling at Grand Central Station.

At the time I was 21 and in college. I spent all my free time reading, reading EVERYTHING I could get my eyes to come across. I read the conspiracy theories, the Twin Towers were brought down by lasers, and I read the questions, like where was the body of the plane that hit the Pentagon. I didn't know the truth, and still don't, but I knew nothing quite added up.

I was activated for 9/11 with a faulty gas mask that was bent from years of storage and no longer was able to fit a face and make that life saving seal. My unit was rushed to NYC only to sit and wait (the real official policy of the US Military, hurry up and wait) get bored and wonder what the hell was going on.

None of it made any sense, but I was a military woman and I just did my job.

Then the ultimate nonsensical story came about and I had lots of questions that no one was going to guilt trip me into ignoring. We were going to invade Iraq.

No matter how much I thought before that as a soldier I just do what I am told I knew that there was something not right about this unfolding appetite for destruction. This day four years ago my life changed.

That was the first day I took a stand against the war in Iraq and I was not even 24 hours old.

This war has been a virtual Pandora's Box. The unleashed war machine on the Iraqi people that kills thousands, no one knows how many for sure because their lives aren't even worth counting to the bureaucracy that eats them up and spits them out, all in the name of their freedom.

Forced freedom sure does look a lot like genocide and murder.

The predictable deluge of veterans into the medical VA community that leaves so many with empty hands and terror filled minds of life shattering nightmares during the day and night.

The war that women are fighting within the war, unable to protect themselves from those sworn to Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage (LDRSHIP).

I am not sure how the rape of your fellow service member falls into that but I can pick out any 1 aspect of those 7 values and show you how it doesn't.

Saddam and his murderous cohorts have laughably been hung for 148 deaths. While the lives of those 148 surely deserve justice why haven't we explored the true nature of Saddam's crimes if they were so bad a war had to be started to right them.

As of right now we have unleashed this destruction for 148 people while not questioning why we sat idly by in the 80's when it happened. Surely we want to hold ALL accountable, all as in anyone and everyone who helped Saddam become the madman he was, right?

Except then we might learn the true rise of a madman includes a little help from your friends, friends with rather American sounding names like Rumsfeld, Reagan and Cheney. In this Pandora's Box those names don't matter unless they are making excuses for the lack of equipment our troops go into battle with or lying about how they never used the word "Mushroom Cloud" (Reagan had a better memory than some in our government).

I, with a little help from my friends like a retired drill sergeant, Iraq Vet, mother, grandmother and all around awesome person Eli PaintedCrow (she's nice now, never made me do one push up) have begun to connect those dots and its amazing how the dark night sky can light up with a little knowledge. Little bits of missed information like how our own country was founded on the genocide of the Native peoples.

How can we move onto a more civilized discussion, let alone course of actions, as long as we deny our past and allow it to repeat itself now on the people of Iraq?

This war is but a symptom of a larger disease.

We still continue to care more about stock options than housing options for low-income families. Homeless people still sleep on the streets every night in the richest country in the world. Children, and veterans, still go without healthcare.

The war is but a TV melodrama that inconveniently invades people's minds from 5-7 in the early evening.

At least pro-war and anti-war people, while totally divergent on their ideas, care enough to show up to protests. Care enough to read about soldiers. Care enough to engage in discussion on the merits of the war.

While I wish that those pro-war folks could see things from my point of view I at least have to hand it to them that they are doing more than sitting on their butts watching the latest pop star's eating habits. Its takes time for them to make those ugly signs, but none the less they are engaged in something more than idle thoughts of how to best avoid the war until American Idol comes on. I love you Pro-war folks too, even though I think you're wrong. Really, really wrong.

It is those conversations I can have with Eli and many others that let me see the bigger picture. Its taken four years but I continue to grow and appreciate every divergent turn my path has taken me on. I still don't have all the answers.

No one knows what exactly will happen in Iraq if we leave tonight (I don't believe in waiting till tomorrow) but I know the first step in Iraqis realizing their own self worth and self-governance will have happened.

I hope it will also allow the questions we should be asking about our own country to rise up and be asked.

Like why can't people get a living wage?

I know Vets, with bachelor's degrees and two tours of service in Iraq, that can't get a decent job that pays the bills. If that's how we treat vets you know people just struggling to get by have even less opportunity.

Why rent goes up and salaries don't.

Why drugs keep flooding our inner cities and guns trail closely behind.

I have been to some inner cities, there are no fields and there are no gun factories.

They got to come from somewhere, just ask Ricky Ross.

We have to ask why the farms keep shutting down and the farmers can't feed their families.

Why the rural areas trailers are on par with the city's housing projects but congress people and Senators friends make billions off the war in Iraq.

Whatever it is we have to start asking harder questions.

I started four years ago and the best things I can say today is if you think Iraq is the answer, then you aren't asking the right questions.

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.

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

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Get The Message?



People carry posters showing anti-occupation nationalist Muqtada al-Sadr, on the left, and his late father Ayatollah Mohammed Sadiq al-Sadr as they protest an arrest of an al-Sadr aid in the holy city of Kufa, Iraq March 23, 2007. (AP Photo/Alaa al-Marjani)

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“I Am Going To Baghdad To Kill
Americans”**

Reg Keys, who ran as an Independent candidate against Tony Blair, in the 2005 UK election and father of Tom, one of the six UK military police killed in Al Majar, in south eastern Iraq, in June 2003, told me of one of the last conversations with his young son.

From: Felicity Arbuthnot
To: GI Special
Sent: March 23, 2007

Re Walter Reid. It may be NOTHING yet it created an 'itch'. Your last bulletin:

'The Army also announced the same day Harvey resigned that Maj. Gen. Eric R. Schoomaker will become the new commanding general of Walter Reed. Schoomaker, now the commanding general of the Army Medical Research and Materiel Command at Fort Detrick, Md., is a doctor and the brother of Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, who is retiring in April.'

'Army Medical Research' commanding General at Fort Detrick.

That's where a pile of dodgy new weapons which affect the IS soldiers as they do Iraqis, comes from. The anthrax btw after 9/11 which killed various people came from Fort D. Which, it seems is why it went quiet. What a perfect person to oversee quietly what FD's weapons have done to the soldiers. I have NO PROOF so only fyi and some digging. What I'd lay money on is that there are a lot of soldiers with v serious 'unspecified' conditions that he may be in a good position to diagnose (tho' doubt publicly so.)

Re your 'recruiting resistance' items.

Reg Keys, who ran as an Independent candidate against Tony Blair, in the 2005 UK election and father of Tom, one of the six UK military police killed in Al Majar, in south eastern Iraq, in June 2003, told me of one of the last conversations with his young son.

The Americans had bombed a small group of homes. The MP's went to see what help could be given. They found a man digging with his hands in the rubble of his house, trying to find his wife and children.

The MPs helped and when they brought out the bodies, helped him bury them in waste-land near by, since travel to the cemetary and customary, proper burial was too dangerous under 'liberation's' strafing from the liberators.

Then they asked him if they could take him anywhere. He looked around at the devastation and said: 'I have no where to go.' Then, suddenly, he said : 'Yes, please take me to my home.'

They took him back to the rubble where his life had been based and his children born and he started to dig again.

Eventually he unearthed an ancient Kalashnikov. Then he thanked them and said goodbye.

Where was he going? They asked.

He looked up at the sky, shook his fist towards it and replied: 'I am going to Baghdad, to kill Americans.'

And Tom Keys? His father, Reg, says quite simply of Tony Blair and George Bush's invasion: 'Tom and his friends died for a lie.'

Across Iraq and Afghanistan, those on all sides are dying for the lies of the millennium.

Thousand Yard Stare



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: March 21, 2007

Thousand Yard Stare

The face of a mother who lost her son in Iraq.
4th Anniversary of "Operation Iraqi Freedom."

"Bring 'Em On"
George Bush
July 2, 2003

Mike Hastie

Vietnam Veteran
March 24, 2007

Photo 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)

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



Foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment conduct a search in an Iraqi citizens home in western Baghdad's neighborhood of Ghazaliyah, March 21, 2007. U.S. troops conducted a major house to house search in parts of Ghazaliyah Wednesday. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnjakovic)

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]

“My sons and wife were very terrified,” complained Muhammad Mihbas, 30, who said his brother and six cousins were taken in the sweeps. “Does the security plan mean arresting innocent people and scaring civilians at night?” BRIAN MURPHY, AP, Feb. 27, 2007

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

“The Democrats Are Dancing On The Graves Of Iraqi Citizens And U.S. Soldiers With Their Crass Political Calculations”

“The Democrats Appropriated More For The Wars In Iraq And Afghanistan Than Was Requested By President Bush”

With the Democrats back in power, Congress will provide “oversight” to this war while tens of thousands of Iraqis and hundreds of U.S. soldiers continue to be killed.

[Thanks to Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War, who sent this in.]

March 19, 2007 By Jeff Leys, Voices for Creative Nonviolence

“We don’t have the votes,” intones David Obey as he shepherds though the House the supplemental spending bill that provides another \$100 billion or so for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Obey’s protestations to antiwar protesters are an understandable figleaf covering his continued support for the war.

After all, he has voted in favor of all prior supplemental spending bills, excepting the October 2003 bill which actually included funds for reconstruction purposes in Iraq.

Of course, Obey, Murtha, et. al. offer the benefit of “oversight”.

With the Democrats back in power, Congress will provide “oversight” to this war while tens of thousands of Iraqis and hundreds of U.S. soldiers continue to be killed.

What did oversight net the antiwar movement in this supplemental spending bill?

The Democrats appropriated more for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan than was requested by President Bush.

This year, for these wars alone, the U.S. will spend \$81 billion for Operations & Maintenance for the armed services compared to \$59 billion last year. Where is the oversight when spending in this category increases by 37 percent in one year? This is the same category of spending that has raised eyebrows at the Congressional Research Service and Government Accountability Office because a quarter of the spending is accounted for as “miscellaneous” or “other” expenses.

Far more disturbing, however, is the manner in which erstwhile House progressives with long records opposing the war are falling into lockstep behind the Democratic party’s leadership. Jose Serrano set the stage last Thursday at the hearing of the House Appropriations Committee when he announced that he will vote in favor of the war funds. Serrano had consistently voted against war funding measures.

Ditto for Jan Schakowsky of Illinois. At a meeting on March 17 with local social justice advocates, Schakowsky announced that she will in fact vote in favor of the supplemental spending bill passed by the House Appropriations Committee. This comes despite representations from her office on January 29, during a lobbying visit, that Schakowsky would “absolutely not” vote for a supplemental spending bill.

Schakowsky’s support for the Iraq war funding bill also comes despite her protestations at a March 8 press conference of the Progressive Caucus that:

“Four and a half years ago, the president asked Congress to give war a chance. And despite our objections, he got that chance and he blew it. No more chances, no more waivers, no phony certifications, no more spending billions of dollars to send our children into the meat grinder that is Iraq. It is time to spend the money to keep them safe and bring them home.”

Now, mind you, the above statement came on the same day that the House Leadership team of Pelosi, Obey, Murtha and Hoyer were publicly rolling out the outline of the Democrats’ war funding bill.

Nine days later, Schakowsky is on board with continuing to fund the war for at least another 18 months, until September 2008.

The political calculations are crass—and utterly misguided. Schakowsky, Serrano and others who voted against war funding in the past are making a colossal error in judgment. They are willing to use their vote on a gambit which is certain to fail, the gambit being that the timetable for withdrawal will be included in the final version of the bill.

It is highly improbable that the terms and conditions for withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq which are contained in the House version of the bill will ever become law. Two significant obstacles exist — the Senate and the President.

As with most bills, the Senate is certain to pass a different version of the supplemental spending bill than that passed by the House. Almost certainly, the Senate version will not include the withdrawal timetable contained in the House version. The bill then goes to a conference committee, which consists of members of the House and the Senate. This committee develops the final version of the supplemental spending bill, which then is subject to a straight up or down vote in both the House and the Senate.

Even Obey acknowledges that it is highly improbable that the withdrawal timetable will survive the conference committee. Schakowsky, in her meeting with constituents, also acknowledged that the final bill to be voted on will most probably not contain the House language on withdrawal.

Perhaps then the erstwhile “antiwar” Democrats will attempt to salve their conscience by voting against the final version of the supplemental spending bill. But, absent the withdrawal timetable, the final conference committee version of the bill will easily garner majority support in the House and Senate. Schakowsky, Serrano and others will be able to state that they voted against the supplemental spending bill even though by voting in favor this week they create the preconditions for the bill’s ultimate passage. Anyone remember John Kerry’s infamous “I voted for it before I voted against it” statement of 2004?

But let’s engage in fantasy world for the time being and dream that the House supplemental spending bill survives with all of its conditions and timetables for withdrawal.

Erik Leaver of the Institute for Policy Studies estimates that 40,000 to 60,000 troops could potentially remain in Iraq under the terms of the supplemental spending bill, including 6,000 to 10,000 trainers; 15,000 to 20,000 “counter terrorist forces”, in particular in Anbar province; and 5,000 to 20,000 troops for protecting the embassy, diplomats and potentially areas in which the State Department’s “provisional reconstruction teams” operate. He notes that this estimate does not include private contractors who would remain in Iraq.

What this maneuvering by Pelosi, Obey and their minions really comes down to is crass political calculations.

Conveniently, September 8, 2008 — the date set for the withdrawal from Iraq to be completed — is the first Saturday following Labor Day. Labor Day traditionally marks the start of the fall election season.

The Democrats are dancing on the graves of Iraqi citizens and U.S. soldiers with their crass political calculations.

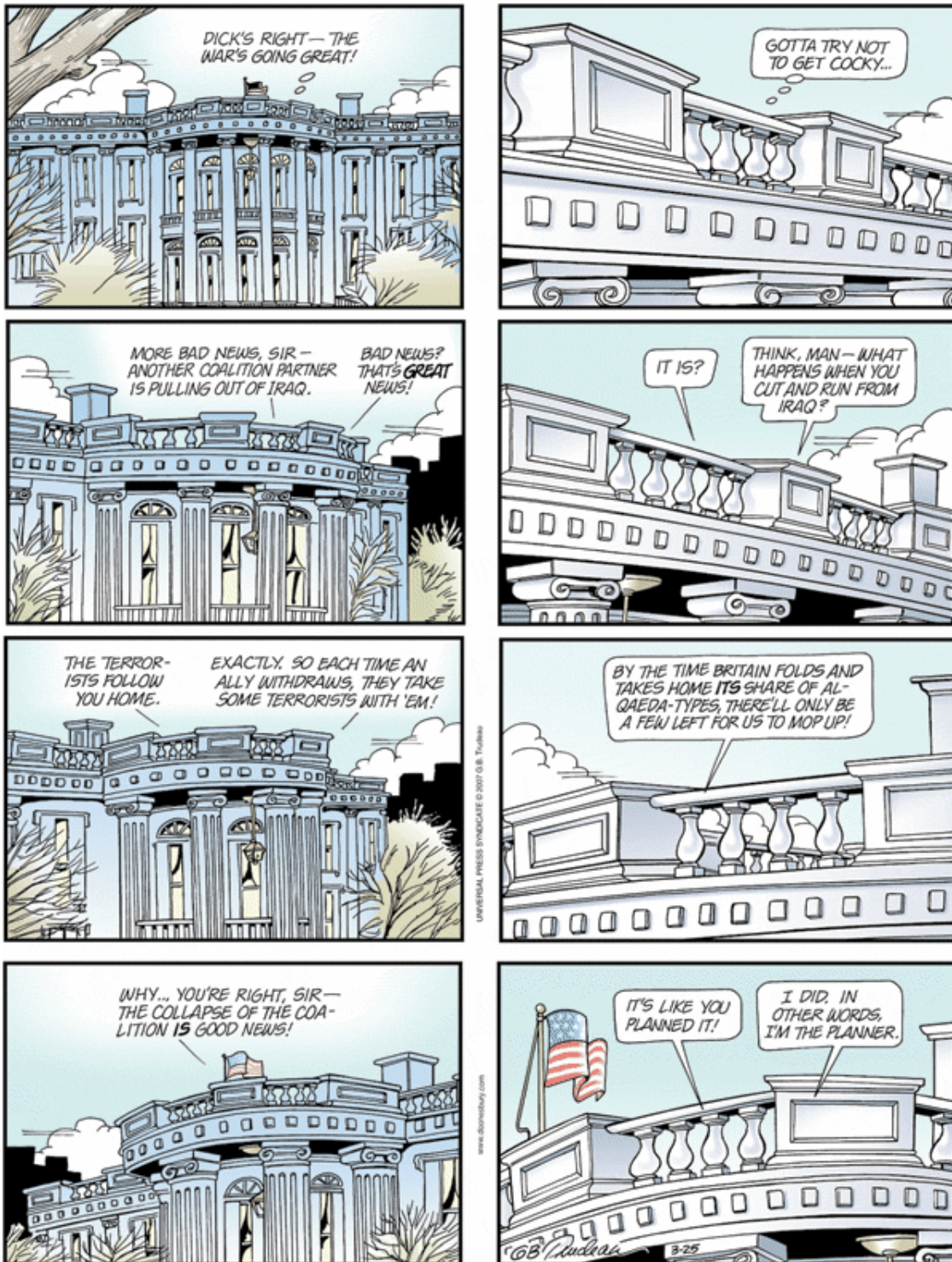
Fund the war this year.

Fund the war with another \$142 billion next year.

Make false promises of a withdrawal by the start of the election season in 2008.

Run as antiwar candidates.

And tap dance your way to the electoral season — no matter how many lives are lost along the way.



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

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.

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.org/)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

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

<http://imagineaworldof.blogspot.com/>; <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>;

<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/qi-special.htm>

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.