

GI SPECIAL 5D1:

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



The funeral of Army Spc. Michael D. Rivera March 21, 2007 at Greenwood cemetery in New York. Rivera died March 7 in Baghdad, Iraq, from an improvised explosive device. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

Hell Yes!

**From: [J]
To: GI Special
Sent: March 30, 2007
Subject: new member of GI SPECIAL**

here's a guy named [XXX], antiwar army sergeant, stationed in baghdad.

he would like to get on the GI SPECIAL list:

[email address xxxxxxxxxxxxxx]

also, he said he can't wait to join IVAW.

REPLY: Honored to be of service. This will be posted up front so everybody knows GI Special will be sent to any member of the armed forces anywhere who wishes to receive it.

Letters, comments and articles from troops serving in Iraq are especially important, so the truth gets around.

If you have something to say, send it in.

Names and any other identifying information is not printed, unless the writer wishes to go public because the cause is not served by bringing down grief on troops resisting Bush's deadly Imperial follies.

Never mind about writing long or pretty. Nothing much pretty going on.

And if you're for the war, say so.

Anybody serving in combat has earned the right to say anything to anybody anytime anywhere, no exceptions.

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IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Fallen Lowell Soldier Intrigued By Military



Pfc. John Landry Jr.

March 20, 2007 By Jessica Fargen, Boston Herald Health & Medical Reporter

John Landry Jr. was remembered yesterday as an “all-around good kid” and hardworking student whose fascination with the military led him to join the Army and deploy to Iraq, where he died this past weekend.

Pfc. Landry, 20, grew up in Lowell and graduated from Lowell Catholic High School in 2005 with a tight-knit class of only about 55 other students.

“John was just an all-around good kid,” said Donna Deveau, who works in alumni relations at Lowell Catholic, where Landry is remembered fondly. “He had a great sense of humor. He wanted to be friends with people. He worked hard at it.”

Landry, a 5-foot-10-inch tall, 240-pound linebacker in high school, was co-captain of the football team his senior year and played alongside Deveau’s son. He also played basketball and was an ambitious student who took honors courses, she said.

Landry’s parents, Pamela and John Landry Sr., received the news of their son’s death while vacationing in Florida.

William Landry, who lives in Billerica, said his nephew was killed in combat in Iraq on St. Patrick’s Day.

He said Landry was intrigued with the military growing up and passed up several college admission offers to join the Army, where he was a rifleman.

“Ever since he was a little kid, he always was fascinated with wars and generals, military strategies and history,” Landry’s uncle said. “You could ask him about any war and he knew everything.”

He said Landry, who was very close to his parents, was home on leave about 10 days ago and vacationed with his parents.

Deveau, who said Landry kept in contact with her after graduation, hopes the school can plan a memorial service in his honor.

A statement released yesterday by the school called Landry a “tenacious athlete, a hard-working student and a great citizen.”

“Overall, he was a well-rounded, happy-go-lucky kid who brought so much to Lowell Catholic High School,” the statement reads.

Landry served in the Army with Company C, 2nd Battalion, with the 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team in the 1st Cavalry Division.

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

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. army soldier from B Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment walks through the kitchen door of an Iraqi citizen's home to search it in west Baghdad's Ghazaliyah neighborhood, March 22, 2007. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnjakovic)

Guess Who's Not Surging: Nearly Twice As Many U.S. Troops KIA In March As Iraqi Occupation "Allies" Who Are Supposed To Have "The Leading Role"

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

3.31.07 By STEVEN R. HURST, Associated Press Writer

The U.S. military death toll in March, the first full month of the security crackdown, was nearly twice that of the Iraqi army, which American and Iraqi officials say is taking the leading role in the latest attempt to curb violence in the capital, surrounding cities and Anbar province, according to figures compiled on Saturday.

The Associated Press count of U.S. military deaths for the month was 81, including a soldier who died from non-combat causes Saturday.

Figures compiled from officials in the Iraqi ministries of Defense, Health and Interior showed the Iraqi military toll was 44.

According to the AP count 3,246 U.S. service members have died in Iraq since the war began in March 2003.

At least 83 American forces died in January and 80 in February, according to the AP tabulation.

TROOP NEWS

“In Short, This Weapon Poops Where It Eats”

Letters To The Editor
April 2, 2007
Army Times

With all due respect to retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. James R. Battaglini, he sounds more like an industrialist defending and espousing the virtues of his product rather than someone who wants to field the best equipment for the soldier (“M4 vs. H&K 416: Readers fire back,” Letters, March 12). I am not questioning his patriotism or his integrity, but his position seems to come from one of vested interest.

The M16 series weapon that his company makes has done great service to this country in its more than 40 years of service.

However, the M16 also has a design flaw that every weapons expert in the last 40 years has identified: the direct gas impingement system designed by Eugene Stoner.

In short, this weapon poops where it eats.

That can lead to problems. While manageable under most — and some might say ideal — circumstances, what happens when we are faced with adverse conditions when we are fighting?

The M16 series is adequate, but is adequate still acceptable?

Ask yourself, have we recently settled for mere adequacy in our major weapon system purchases in the last 20 years? No. We have gone all out to buy the best tanks, ships and aircraft available to us.

So why should a personal weapon take a back seat? Because it's not as sexy as an F-22 or a Stryker?

The soldier, Marine, airman and sailor deserve a firearm that will function no matter what the conditions are. If there is something better out there that can essentially be bought as an upgrade — and the beauty of the M16 series is that it is easily upgraded with a receiver swap — then why not?

Maj. Paul Labrador
Denver

Rodents, Bugs, Chronic Leaks, Dilapidated Furniture Found In New England VA Hospitals

Mar 26, 2007 The Associated Press

BOSTON — A review of veterans' hospitals and clinics in New England has revealed the presence of rodents, bugs, chronic leaks, dilapidated furniture and other poor conditions, according to a report.

The review was ordered after revelations about poor living conditions and bureaucratic delays at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, in Washington.

The agency, in an investigation made public last week, found those facilities were beset by maintenance problems such as mold, leaking roofs and even a colony of bats.

In New England, the review found mice at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Providence, R.I.; persistent reports of flies at an outpatient clinic in Hyannis, Mass.; and broken furniture in Manchester, N.H., the Boston Globe reported Monday.

“Veterans Battle With The VA Over Basic Eligibility, And Progress Through Long Waits In Crowded Waiting Rooms That More Closely Resemble A Russian Gulag Than A Contemporary Healthcare Facility”

Mar 29, 2007 By Tim Origer, Veterans For Peace Digest Number 1761 [Excerpts]

Tim Origer is a 100% disabled combat veteran of America's War in Vietnam and currently works as an activist for peace and veterans' issues in New Mexico.

Although the VA administration would adamantly deny it, initial attempts to seek care from the veteran's viewpoint generally begin in an adversarial environment where overworked, understaffed and under-funded facilities seek to limit the ever increasing numbers of possible beneficiaries at the primary level of entry into the system.

Thus, veterans battle with the VA administration over basic eligibility, and progress through the long waits in crowded waiting rooms that more closely resemble a Russian gulag than a contemporary healthcare facility.

Many of the veterans not seen within the VA system are combat traumatized veterans of past and current eras who find they would rather self medicate through drug and alcohol addictions or suffer silently, than engage the convolutions of this bureaucratic system.

Although I reside in New Mexico, the following are examples of what a veteran might encounter with no alternative than that of entering the VA system, anywhere in America;

As of March 3 of 2007, there was a national backlog of 401,000 un-adjudicated claims for compensation. Of these 115,000 have waited 6 months or more.

Many older claimants "will die while waiting for adjudication of claims," stated Randy Reese, National Service Director for Disabled American Veterans.

In 2000, 579,000 disability claims were filed.

By 2006, the number had increased to 806,000. While the backlog of claims continues to grow, lack of funding has resulted in hiring freezes at the Veterans' Benefits Administration making settlement of claims increasingly inaccessible.

Eligibility - Initial denial of benefits implying veterans' claims are based on "preexisting" conditions requiring extensive proof to be provided by claimant showing "service" connection.

Waiting lists - Once eligible, veterans encounter waiting lists of 2 months (initial consultations) to 2 years (routine checkups) for appointments.

Aging facilities - Most VA institutions are 50 years old or more and limited funding allows only cosmetic upgrades, not the complete renovations, which would be required to bring them up to par with private healthcare facilities.

Access to Care; Dependent upon nature of care required, VA District 18 veterans (Albuquerque, New Mexico) will travel from as far as Montana or Amarillo Texas for some types of healthcare.

In many cases identical care could be provided on a Fee Management basis locally without the need for extensive cross state commutes.

However, in cases where fee management care is authorized, many private facilities refuse care to veteran patients due to prior history of non-payment on part of the VA.

Travel pay/ per deim: Veteran beneficiaries receive reimbursement of \$.11 per mile contrasted with State or Federal employee rates of \$.445 per mile.

Rates and availability of food and lodging are not set federally but by district medical care provider (i.e. District office management.) In a recent Senate hearing, requests for an increase in these rates was met with the VA argument that fair compensation would result in an additional cost to the VA of \$1 billion which must in turn be deducted from veterans' healthcare funds.

All costs and expenses accrued by the veteran in accessing healthcare at a VA facility beyond those discussed above also become the direct responsibility of the veteran.

These "hidden" expenses amount to a very literal reduction in a veterans' income to subsidize access to healthcare, which it is the government's responsibility to provide.

Disputes - Disputes regarding compensation, benefits, or disability are addressed within the internalized system of the VA. Members of various VSO's (Veterans Service Organizations (VFW, DAV, Order of the Purple Heart, etc.)) are selected by the veteran to represent them in claims or appeals against the VA.

Claims can take as long as several months to several years to be resolved, moving through a hierarchical procedure which if not followed can result in denial of appeal or necessity of reinitiating the process from square one.

Veteran claims can often require a literal "act of Congress" to bring about final resolution.

See, The System Works! **Australian Gets Kangaroo Court At Guantanamo**

The sentiments of Brian J. Foley, a professor at the Florida Coastal School of Law and a widely recognised constitutional lawyer, are typical of large numbers of attorneys. He told IPS, "As these 'trials' get underway, the paucity of thinking that went into their design is emerging for even the dimmest-witted to see."

Mar 28 (IPS)

As Australian David Hicks awaits sentencing after being the first Guantanamo detainee convicted under the Military Commissions Act, human rights groups, legal scholars and some lawmakers are condemning the entire MCA process and again challenging its constitutionality both in the courts and in the U.S. Congress.

Earlier this week, Hicks, 31, pleaded guilty to providing material support for terrorists. He could face life imprisonment, but indications are that the U.S. may have struck a deal with the pro-George W. Bush administration of Australian Prime Minister John Howard to have a lighter sentence imposed and to allow Hicks to serve his sentence in Australia.

Hicks, sometimes referred to as "the Australian Taliban", has been in custody at Guantanamo for over five years. He was seized by the U.S. military in Afghanistan in 2001 after being turned over by the Afghan Northern Alliance, a warlord-led organisation that was helping the U.S. military.

For most of his time in detention, Hicks was charged with no crime, and given only sporadic and restrictive access to lawyers and to his family.

Hicks's trial has been characterised as something of a legal circus, with the colonel in charge of the court leaving many with the impression that the rules and procedures of these new bodies are still unclear.

At one point in the trial, the presiding judge, Col. Ralph Kohlmann, ruled that one of Hicks's civilian lawyers, Joshua Dratel, could not represent Hicks because he had not signed a form demanded by the court saying he would conform to the regulations governing proceedings.

Dratel protested, saying he could not sign the form because the regulations governing the conduct of attorneys had not yet been formulated by the secretary of defence. He said he was not going to sign a blank cheque for his ethical obligations.

Among Judge Kohlmann's other rulings was that an assistant to Hicks's military counsel, Marine Major Michael Mori, could not represent him because she was not a serving member of the military.

The judge also ruled in his own favour when Major Mori attempted to argue that judge Kohlmann was not impartial because he had not only effectively ruled against Hicks's defence team, but had also tried to schedule the hearing at a time when Hicks's civil lawyer was unavailable.

Hicks offered no plea during Monday's proceedings. But late the same night, his lawyers notified the court he would plead guilty to one of the two charges against him -- providing material support for terrorists.

He entered no plea on the second charge -- that he took part in paramilitary combat with the intent of killing U.S. and Coalition troops.

The sentiments of Brian J. Foley, a professor at the Florida Coastal School of Law and a widely recognised constitutional lawyer, are typical of large numbers of attorneys. He

told IPS, "As these 'trials' get underway, the paucity of thinking that went into their design is emerging for even the dimmest-witted to see."

"The basic problem underlying all the tribunals at Guantanamo is that the rules are rigged for easy U.S. 'victories,'" he said.

"But when we let tribunals use coerced confessions and hearsay, and when we make it hard for defendants to call witnesses and cross-examine, the joke is on us. At the end of the day, we cannot know if the people the tribunals say are terrorists are really terrorists at all, or if the plots they confess to participating in are not merely fantasies."

"The military commissions are illegal under U.S. and international law for many reasons, most important that they allow the admission of evidence obtained through torture and other coercion," said a CCR [Centre for Constitutional Rights] spokesperson.

"This is the first military commission to be held -- out of 800 detainees, only 10 were ever designated to be charged and that number has dropped to three at present.

There remain 385 men at Guantánamo that the government has never shown it had a reason to hold, who have been held indefinitely with no hope of being able to prove their innocence."

MORE:

HOWARD, HICKS AND LOGIC

From: Max Watts [Australia]
To: GI Special
Sent: March 29, 2007
Subject: HOWARD, HICKS AND LOGIC

Mr. Howard is an Oz [Australian] Big Shot, and - I have been told - at least during his student days was a "military man" - and - a student of law, of logic.

Some months ago I, writing an article for my paper, the Zuerich WOZ, asked him to explain his position about the complex question - of Overseas Shooters

On 26 July 2006 Sergeant Asaf Namerfiel, 26, died fighting in Bint Jbeil, in Lebanon.

Sgt Namerfield was an Australian volunteer in the Israeli Army. Several hundred other Australians also have gone to support, fight for, Israel. Premier John Howard approves, entirely. No crime here.

I asked Mr. Howard what if they went to fight for the other side? His secretary, Ben Mitchell, told me: No. That's prohibited. By Australian law.

I asked: How come ? Mitchell replied: The Israeli army is a regular army. That's OK to die for, shoot for, support. But "Hezbollah" - the other side - that's a terrorist organisation. Australians can't support that. Legally.

Aha.

I then asked if Australians, after all there are a lot from Lebanon here, could join the regular Lebanese army, shoot for them ? Maybe even at other Australians, in the Israeli army?

Howard's man Mitchell said: "I must check on that. I'll get back to you." I'm still waiting.

And then I remembered that Ozzie pilots flew - for years - gunship helicopters shooting Bougainvillians.

They weren't part of the Oz or the PNG [Papua-New Guinea] army. Just (soso) paid Mercenaries.

But they had had a permit: Killing Bougainvillians was in the interests of the defense of Australia. Well, Rio Tinto [mining corporation]. No problem.

I'm still a bit puzzled: If David Hicks had gone to Afghanistan, joined Bin Laden, against the Soviets, would that have been OK?

Or not ?

Guess he was just too late.

Now he is guilty. He's even admitted it.

Why he is guilty ... well, that's like fighting for the Lebanese.

Howard will get back to us.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**Oh Please, Quit Acting So
Shocked, Shocked, About What
Bush Does;
There's Nothing New About It**

Bush is merely the latest CEO of an empire that has used, and will continue to use, assassination, preemptive strikes, invasion and war to expand its power and influence throughout the world.

March 30, 2007, Fred A. Wilcox, Guest Column, The Ithaca Journal [Excerpts]

Unfortunately, many people appear to believe that before God told George W. Bush that he must become “the decider,” this nation was a beacon of peace, justice and democracy throughout the world.

Our secret agents did not torture people, or teach others how to torture people, in places like Vietnam, El Salvador, Guatemala, Columbia, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Our elected representatives did not support dictators in Chile, death squads in Argentina and homicidal killers in the Middle East and Africa.

Indeed, before Bush, Congress refused to support megalomaniacs who systematically violated the human rights of their own citizens.

Congress showed great compassion for our poor by appropriating funds to rebuild North Philadelphia, the South Bronx, East New York, South Chicago and Baltimore.

Before Bush became President, the Central Intelligence Agency did not assassinate people it deemed unfriendly to America’s corporate interests. The School of Americas did not train soldiers from Central and South America in the art of torture and murder.

The United States did not engage in chemical warfare by destroying the mangrove forests and jungles of Vietnam with Agent Orange; our military did not kill 2-5 million Vietnamese people.

Once upon a time, according to this revisionist history, the entire world admired the United States’ commitment to peace and social justice. When the United States bombed Iraqi civilians during the first Gulf war, the world understood that it was for a noble cause.

When we helped impose sanctions on Iraq that resulted in the deaths of 500,000 children, the world applauded our commitment to creating a world that works for everyone. When the United States supported Iran in a war with Iraq that killed more than a million people, we were demonstrating our commitment to spreading democracy in the Middle East.

Bush is merely the latest CEO of an empire that has used, and will continue to use, assassination, preemptive strikes, invasion and war to expand its power and influence throughout the world.

Historians will surely conclude that G.W. Bush is the worst president in our nation’s history, but they will not say that he is responsible for the fact that so many of our urban neighborhoods resemble war zones.

He didn't create the climate of fear that compels millions of Americans to carry guns or keep guns in their vehicles and homes.

He isn't responsible for an economic system in which CEOs make 400 times as much as the average worker — as much in one day as workers make in one year.

He didn't create the myth that an economic system that exploits and punishes the poor while rewarding the rich is compatible with democracy.

It doesn't appear that Congress has the will to hold Bush, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Richard Cheney and others to account for destroying Iraq.

And it does appear that many people, including progressives who should know better, will continue to express nostalgia for some golden pre-Bush era of democracy.

The Republican and the Democratic parties are responsible for our dysfunctional, dangerous, divided, nation.

Both parties support the military industrial complex that will, ironically, bring down the American empire.

Time Machine



From: Mike Hastie

To: GI Special
Sent: Saturday, March 31, 2007
Subject: Time Machine

Time Machine

A pro-war woman at the Peace rally in Portland, Oregon, March 18, 2007. She was screaming at the top of her lungs at the peace marchers, telling them they were supporting the terrorists around the world.

How many millions of times, did millions of Americans hear this same thing during the Vietnam War?

If we did not stop communism in Vietnam, they would land in Hawaii. The VC and the NVA would use their AK-47s as paddles and would come over in those little round bamboo boats.

Once they got here, they would kill our children first. They would then take over our missile silos and point them at every Christian church in America.

**Life as we know it,
would vanish in the sound of a gong.**

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
April 1, 2007**

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

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

Troops Betrayed By Fake Anti-War Democrat Scum:

“Out Now” Turns Into “Out Later”

Lee And Woolsey Won’t “Stand In The Way” Of Killing More U.S. Troops And Iraqis

Although she voted against the bill, Lee’s announcement -- along with other well-known critics of the Iraq war, like Reps. Lynn Woolsey and Maxine Waters -- that she would not “stand in the way” of the leadership bill was crucial to convincing liberals to fold their opposition.

March 30, 2007 By Lance Selfa, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

THE MARCH 23 vote in the Democratic-controlled House to pass the supplemental appropriations bill funding the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is an object lesson of liberalism in power.

By now, it’s a commonplace to characterize the Democrats’ sweep last November as an expression of the public desire to end the war in Iraq. So it’s understandable that many looked--and continue to look--to the Congress for a way out of the mess in Iraq.

But liberalism is not just the mainstream politics that provides a framework for people concerned with peace, equality and justice.

It is also, along with conservatism, one of the two main governing ideologies of the U.S. ruling class. And as such, it aims to manage, rather than to change, the U.S. empire and war machine.

Given the opportunity to exercise real power to end the war by cutting off its congressionally mandated funding, the Democrats instead opted to do the “responsible” thing: vote to continue funding the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan at a tune of \$124 billion over the next year.

The vote in the House is a recognition that the war(s) are a bipartisan endeavor.

Under this Congress, any attempt to wind down the Iraq war won’t be taken on behalf of antiwar principle, but on the grounds of positioning the U.S. to be better able to fight the “war on terror,” the war in Afghanistan or a coming war with Iran.

In the end, when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi needed every vote she could muster to get the leadership bill passed, only about a half a dozen formerly outspoken critics of the war voted against it. Key liberal members of the “Out of Iraq Caucus” voted for and urged their colleagues to vote for the bill.

A smaller number of antiwar liberals voted against the bill, but refused to put up a fight that would have defeated it.

What was going on here?

FIRST, SINCE the main vehicle of and arena for liberal politics is the Democratic Party, party leaders had a big institutional stick in their hands as they rounded up votes.

However principled liberal politicians think they are, they also respond to the trappings of congressional power and party loyalty. In fact, many liberals will say that it hurts their constituents and the causes they support to be perpetually outside the halls of power.

Reportedly, Pelosi or one of her minions threatened Rep. Barbara Lee with the loss of a key committee chairmanship if Lee refused to end her opposition to the leadership bill.

Although she voted against the bill, Lee's announcement--along with other well-known critics of the Iraq war, like Reps. Lynn Woolsey and Maxine Waters--that she would not "stand in the way" of the leadership bill was crucial to convincing liberals to fold their opposition.

Another war critic, Rep. Sam Farr, sold his vote on the war for aid to the spinach industry in his district.

Second, liberalism rests on the politics of the "lesser evil." In the two-party system that the U.S. has, almost every decision is boiled down to a liberal vs. conservative, Democrat vs. Republican choice. And the lesser evil is always easy to find.

Consider this statement by Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.), a member of the Out of Iraq Caucus and member of the board of the Progressive Democrats of America (PDA): "I have opposed funding this war from the beginning, and I have no interest in funding it today. But this Iraq Accountability Act, though flawed, and at odds with many of my beliefs, represents a chance for hope.

"It represents a first, albeit tentative, step in the difficult process of finally bringing this devastating war to an ultimate end. In good conscience, I could not sit on the sidelines, with the vote as close as it was, and witness a result that would reinforce this administration's unrestrained control of a war without end.

"Absent the need for my vote, I would have opposed this bill. I have conferred with constituents on all sides of this debate, and have looked at all the alternatives. I remained committed to opposing this bill until it became apparent that my vote was the only way to ensure some accountability against this runaway administration.

"Despite my skepticism in the efficacy of the benchmarks and certification elements in this bill, I remain confident that this will not be the last word by this Congress on Iraq, and I will continue to fight for the cause of ending this terrible debacle in Iraq."

So through these mental somersaults, Grijalva arrives at the reason for supporting the bill: at least it provides "some accountability." The radical 20th

century sociologist C. Wright Mills used to call this kind of reasoning “crackpot realism.”

The title of Cindy Sheehan’s statement on the vote said it all: “Betrayed! How the Democratic Congress betrayed American voters, the troops in Iraq and extended the occupation for at least another 18 months.”

It will be the continued commitment to grassroots antiwar struggle by activists like Sheehan -- and not maneuvers in Congress -- that will bring us closer to the end of the war.

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

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.

“For God’s Sake, What’s Wrong With Putting A Bag Over Her Head?”



I am confident we shall never see such abuse of
Iraqi prisoners again by the British Army!
We've confiscated everyone's cameras!

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

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

March 31, 2007 Terry Jones, The Guardian [UK] [Excerpts]

I share the outrage expressed in the British press over the treatment of our naval personnel accused by Iran of illegally entering their waters. It is a disgrace.

We would never dream of treating captives like this - allowing them to smoke cigarettes, for example, even though it has been proven that smoking kills.

And as for compelling poor servicewoman Faye Turney to wear a black headscarf, and then allowing the picture to be posted around the world - have the Iranians no concept of civilised behaviour?

For God's sake, what's wrong with putting a bag over her head? That's what we do with the Muslims we capture: we put bags over their heads, so it's hard to breathe.

Then it's perfectly acceptable to take photographs of them and circulate them to the press because the captives can't be recognised and humiliated in the way these unfortunate British service people are.

It is also unacceptable that these British captives should be made to talk on television and say things that they may regret later. If the Iranians put duct tape over their mouths, like we do to our captives, they wouldn't be able to talk at all. Of course they'd probably find it even harder to breathe - especially with a bag over their head - but at least they wouldn't be humiliated.

And what's all this about allowing the captives to write letters home saying they are all right? It's time the Iranians fell into line with the rest of the civilised world: they should allow their captives the privacy of solitary confinement. That's one of the many privileges the US grants to its captives in Guantánamo Bay.

The true mark of a civilised country is that it doesn't rush into charging people whom it has arbitrarily arrested in places it's just invaded.

The inmates of Guantánamo, for example, have been enjoying all the privacy they want for almost five years, and the first inmate has only just been charged. What a contrast to the disgraceful Iranian rush to parade their captives before the cameras!

What's more, it is clear that the Iranians are not giving their British prisoners any decent physical exercise. The US military make sure that their Iraqi captives enjoy PT.

This takes the form of exciting "stress positions", which the captives are expected to hold for hours on end so as to improve their stomach and calf muscles. A common exercise is where they are made to stand on the balls of their feet and then squat so that their thighs are parallel to the ground.

This creates intense pain and, finally, muscle failure. It's all good healthy fun and has the bonus that the captives will confess to anything to get out of it.

And this brings me to my final point. It is clear from her TV appearance that servicewoman Turney has been put under pressure. The newspapers have persuaded behavioural psychologists to examine the footage and they all conclude that she is "unhappy and stressed".

What is so appalling is the underhand way in which the Iranians have got her "unhappy and stressed".

She shows no signs of electrocution or burn marks and there are no signs of beating on her face. This is unacceptable.

If captives are to be put under duress, such as by forcing them into compromising sexual positions, or having electric shocks to their genitals, they should be photographed, as they were in Abu Ghraib.

The photographs should then be circulated around the civilised world so that everyone can see exactly what has been going on.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

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



A foreign occupation soldier from U.S. army B Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment kicks down a door in an Iraqi citizens' home in west Baghdad's Ghazaliyah neighborhood March 22, 2007. (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?]

The women and children were moved into a room, where they huddled together in silence. The men had been forced down onto their knees wherever they were apprehended, their hands secured behind their backs with plastic handcuffs and their eyes covered by makeshift blindfolds. YOCHI J. DREAZEN, Wall St. Journal, 3.12.07

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

OCCUPATION HAITI

Occupation Baby-Killers In Action

Comment: T

This report is so loaded with pro-Occupation propaganda that it might as well have been written by somebody in the Pentagon, which supports the invasion and occupation of Haiti by a variety of scum governments.

And the occupiers, slavishly imitated by the reporter, certainly follow the play book the Pentagon wrote for Iraq and used in 2003: everybody resisting the occupation is a "gang" member and a bloodthirsty criminal.

But, in spite of all that, the bitter truth comes through. Haitians are resisting the occupation, and the occupiers are killing Haitians wholesale, with children a favorite target.

Note how after one little boy is butchered, an occupier says he was killed because he had a gun, and later the occupation General says children are never killed.

This is the ugly truth about the invasion and occupation of Haiti, despite all the tired bullshit about how the kind, gentle occupiers are only there for “peacekeeping.” As much of the reporter’s stupid happy talk as possible has been cut.

April 1, 2007 The Observer [Excerpts]

Rue de l’Interrement, or Burial Street, is a thoroughfare in Port-au-Prince that makes a living from death. Coffins lean against the shop fronts. Every store is a funeral parlour or morgue privée. Refrigerating bodies is good business in a violent capital city.

In one of the mortuaries Dario Germain held his son, Berhens. The handsome and wiry nine-year-old looked tiny on the marble slab. The father lifted the boy’s head to show where the bullet had entered two days ago - the only mark was a slit on the top of his skull.

Germain claims his son was killed by peacekeepers from the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (Minustah). ‘Les blancs’ - the foreigners - had been patrolling the street in three armoured personnel carriers (APCs), he said. **[For this reporter, Haitians are always “claiming” this or that, implying there is doubt about what they say. Notice in the rest of the story that the occupiers quoted never “claim,” the reporter presenting what they say as acceptable without insinuation.]**

On the rooftop of his house in Cite Soleil, the largest slum in Haiti, home to a quarter of a million people, Germain points to a smear of Berhens’s blood. ‘It was around 10.30 in the morning. After he fed the chickens he sat on this ledge to play with a toy phone. A shot rang out and Berhens fell.’

A pink plastic mobile phone lay next to a drying pool of blood.

Cite Soleil is renowned for gang violence [translation: renowned for refusing to bow down to occupation forces, and ongoing resistance to the occupation.]

And now armed criminal groups who once waged war against each other - killing any innocent who happened to be in the way - have joined forces to ‘resist’ the UN peacekeepers. **[Makes a nice story, fiction of course, from Occupation press release # 8u47565.]**

But the family and neighbours **claim** there had been no gang shootings that morning.

‘We want justice for Berhens,’ said Ville, holding up a piece of cardboard.

Scrawled on it were the numbers 21119, 21110, and 21121 - the numbers of the three APCs near by at the time of the shooting.

After Berhens was hit, the armoured vehicles parked outside the Germain house for about ten minutes.

A neighbour went to the peacekeepers [translation: occupation murderers] - he thinks they were Brazilian.

'I told them, you have just shot a child,' he said.

“They replied: "He was holding a gun."“

Three years ago President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted by an armed uprising and Haiti slid into chaos. Since then, there have been no police or any kind of state presence in Cite Soleil.

'The difference between us and the gangs,' said General Dos Santos Cruz, 'is that we have rules of engagement. They shoot women and children, we don't.'

Brazilian General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz was appointed force commander of Minustah in January.

First you heard wailing - the crying and praying was like music. 'Ti Moun,' they cried, meaning child in Creole.

Two little girls lay dead on the floor of the wooden house. Stefanie's face was undamaged but there was a huge gash in her arm. An exit wound. There was another gunshot wound in her chest. She was four years old. Alexandra's nose and forehead were a mess of red. The bullet had entered the back of her skull. She was six.

Flies buzzed around the bodies of the daughters of Mercius Lubin and Marie Daniel Remy. Lubin had been shot in the arm, blood seeped through his bandage. 'Madame is in hospital,' he said, 'her leg has been shattered by a bullet. She is in surgery.'

Her dead children lay beside one of her sandals, a mattress decorated in cartoon characters and a few dishes.

'I can't tell how many bullets flew through our walls. We had to wait before it was safe to go to the hospital,' said Mercius Lubin, who **claims** UN peacekeepers killed his daughters.

'There were four tanks (APCs) outside my house, I could see their headlights through the cracks in the walls. They shot towards my house. I can't explain why Minustah [the occupation force] was shooting here because they control this area.'

A woman wailed and rolled around on the ground. 'Mes amis, mes amis!' cried another neighbour woman. 'Fuck you, Preval,' said a man, referring to Haiti's President, Rene Preval.

Neighbours gathered to denounce Minustah. The march began to swell through Cite Soleil's streets with some 2,000 marchers, men, women and children, dancing to homemade trumpets.

Men with loudspeakers condemned President Preval. 'We voted for you for peace, not for this.' The crowd ran past two Minustah bases, swarms of kids bleating: 'Baa, baa! Minustah steals goats,' a common taunt.

As the demonstrators reached a third UN position, peacekeepers opened fired with tear gas. Then plastic bullets.

Cars crashed, people fell off motorbikes.

I was there reporting for a Channel 4 documentary. Our director, Robin Barnwell, was filming in the crowd. He was hit in the back of the head by a plastic bullet.

The UN later said they had to break up the demonstration because it included armed gang members.

Stefanie and Alexandra were buried yesterday.

Dario Germain says he won't be able to cry until his son is buried - but he can't afford the funeral.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Meaningless Vote On Iraq War In The Senate Leaves Democrats, Republicans, White House All Suspiciously Happy

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

Mar 28, 2007 MATT TAIBBI, Rolling Stone [Excerpts]

In medicine they call it "drug-seeking behavior."

A guy shows up at three different regional hospital emergency rooms in the space of a month, each time complaining of severe but non-specific lower back pain. Suspiciously, he is well-versed in the various milligram dosages of commercial hydrocodone. Ask him to wait an extra hour in the exam room, he starts bouncing his knees, and his forehead starts to pour sweat...

Does this man's back really hurt? Maybe it does. You have to give him the benefit of the doubt, at least the first time. But the moment that orgasmic smile flashes across his face as soon as you hand him his Oxy scrip, you have to wonder.

Just like I'm wondering right now, after watching what looked suspiciously like a carefully-orchestrated congressional vote-seeking charade, i.e. the recent "controversial" scheduled-withdrawal/Iraq-timetable vote in the Senate.

It's been less than a few hours since the Chris Matthews of the world received the "breaking news" that Mississippi Republican Thad Cochran has fallen short in his valiant attempt to block the Democrat-sponsored vote, a measure calling for a withdrawal of all troops from Iraq by next March.

Cochran's gambit failed when Nebraska Republican Chuck Hagel decided to publicly sell out the President, noting about four years too late that Iraq was basically "Bush's war" (of course, it was also very much the Senate's war back when the polls happened to support it) and that the president's strategy was borne of "arrogant self-delusion reminiscent of Vietnam."

Taking a direct swipe at Dick Cheney, who as recently as last week emerged from his haze of coronary disorders to decry war detractors as traitors and terrorist enablers, Hagel also said that "this idea that somehow you don't support the troops if you don't continue in a lemming-like way to accept whatever this administration's policy is, that's what's wrong, and that is dangerous."

Of course it would have been nice if Hagel had taken on the administration's shameless witch-hunting and red-baiting of war opponents at a time when such a stance would have required actual political courage, and not when the poll numbers on a firm Iraq withdrawal are running about 60-38 in favor.

But that's where we are right now. Hell, Hagel's main ally in the House these days is none other than North Carolina Republican Walter Jones; the two men are the leading anti-war conservatives in their respective houses.

Back in February, the two men spent an enormous amount of time blowing kisses at each other in the pages of papers like the Washington Post, with Jones calling Hagel "one of my heroes" and Hagel lauding Jones's brave efforts to rally conservatives to vote against the Bush "surge."

So that's where we are: the very people who were leading the Crucible-like campaign against war dissent are now chanting "Not in our name!" and refusing to be "lemmings" for Dick Cheney.

As for everyone else -- specifically, the Democrats who sponsored and passed the timetable measure -- they benefited from the bill most directly, riding a crest of antiwar sentiment and setting the Democrats up as the party that will look the best in the eyes of frustrated, war-fatigued voters in 2008.

But lost amid all of this antiwar posturing were a series of inconvenient truths.

One was that the bill was always going to be meaningless because Bush was always going to veto it, there were never going to be enough votes to override the veto and everybody knew there were never going to be enough votes to override the veto.

The second is that the timetable measure was buried in an emergency spending bill to pay for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, a bill that ended up authorizing \$122 billion in spending when the supposedly evil, warmongering, politically isolated Bush White House only asked for \$103 billion.

In other words, the outwardly combative Democratic leadership not only refused to do anything substantive to bring the troops home, it actually tossed Bush an extra \$20 billion or for the war effort without prodding.

In my visits to Washington in the past few months I've heard different stories from Democratic congressional aides about what the party's intentions are. Some say they think the leadership is just going to stall and pass a bunch of non-binding, symbolic, Kumbayah horseshit to help propel whoever the Democratic candidate is into the White House two years from now.

Others claim with a straight face that all of these non-binding resolutions are only a start, that the strategy is to really end the war via a death-by-a-thousand-cuts type of legislative grind, with the leadership sending to the floor bill after bill after bill designed to eat away at either war policy or war funding. They claim that all of these votes are exercises in coalition-building, necessary steps to gathering the support needed to pass real biting measures later on.

But I'll believe that when I see it. Right now, it all looks too convenient.

With Bush a thrashing, drowning lame-duck whose endorsement in '08 will almost certainly be political poison to whomever has the misfortune to earn it, Republicans like Hagel and Gordon Smith are conspicuously free to break ranks and save themselves.

Moreover, the Democratic measure is crafted in such a way that the Hagels and Smiths and Ben Nelsons of the world can safely get on a soapbox about the war without having to face accusations of depriving the troops of equipment and "what they need" to fight, which just so happens to be the leitmotif/preoccupation of the Rush/Hannity talk shows of late.

That is called having one's cake and eating it too, and folks on the Hill love that kind of political diet. There's a reason why there are not many skinny Senators.

You'll know that something real is going on in Washington when either a) the Democrats force the "antiwar conservatives" to actually cast a vote on whether or not to cut off spending for the war, or b) a dozen or so more Republicans cross the picket line to set up a possible override of a Bush veto.

Until and unless one of those unlikely moments arrives, it sure looks like what we've got is one of those rare "good for both teams" baseball trades, an arranged standoff in which everybody gets to suck a little of that hot nourishing blood in the ballooning antiwar poll numbers.

My sense of this whole ballet from the start has been that with each passing season, as the antiwar rhetoric increases both among the public and in Washington, we'll see a corresponding increase in both financial and personnel commitment in the Iraq theater.

The logic here is irresistible; Bush will not preside over what he perceives to be a surrender, and the Democrats will not cast a vote "against the troops" in an election season.

So what we'll get is a lot of what we just saw -- non-binding antiwar votes hitched to troop increases and/or "short-term" funding boosts.

And no matter how encouraged everyone seems to be by this withdrawal vote, I still haven't heard anyone tell me how the real pullout is going to work, politically that is.

Because it's not enough that everyone knows it's necessary.

MORE:

“Rubber-Stamp Republicans And Timid Democrats” Happily Keep The Wars Going; [The Lives They Lose Won't Be Their Own]

March 28 Bill Scheurer, Editor; Peace Majority Report [Excerpts]

The past six years of rubber-stamp Republicans and timid Democrats have left the American people with a Congress that has reduced itself to the role of a "debating society" (Bush's prewar taunt to the UN), or a "Loya Jirga" (ala Afghanistan).

What these votes really do is give the Bush administration another \$100 billion and 2 more years to continue escalating the war in Iraq, and possibly expanding the war to Iran.

So, while these actions may have been politically advantageous for the Democratic Party (or at least, for certain interests that influence, fund, and control that party), they are very bad for our country, the world, and for any real prospects for peace.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

“Activism Works”

Girl Sentenced To 7 Years In Prison For A Shove To Get Released; Teen To Be Freed From A Scandal- Ridden Texas Juvenile Injustice System; Guards And Administrators Coerced Inmates For Sex

Her sentence, which ultimately was up to the discretion of prison officials, had twice been extended, first because she would not admit her guilt as required by prison regulations and then because she was found with "contraband" in her cell—an extra pair of socks.

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in. **He writes: Good example of how activism works.**]

March 30, 2007 By Howard Witt, Chicago Tribune senior correspondent

HOUSTON -- Shaquanda Cotton, the black teenager in the small east Texas town of Paris whose prison sentence of up to 7 years for shoving a teacher's aide sparked nationwide controversy, will be released Saturday morning, prison officials confirmed on Friday.

Her release, ordered by a special conservator appointed to overhaul the state's scandal-ridden juvenile prison system, is the first of what could be hundreds as a panel of civil rights leaders begins reviewing the sentences of every youth incarcerated by the Texas Youth Commission to weed out those being held arbitrarily.

Cotton, who is 15, had no prior criminal record when she was incarcerated a year ago under an indeterminate sentence that could have lasted until her 21st birthday.

Her case rose to national prominence and became the focus of ongoing civil rights protests after a March 12 Tribune story detailed how a 14-year-old white girl convicted of the more serious crime of arson was sentenced to probation by the same judge.

Cotton's case occurred against a backdrop of persistent allegations of racial discrimination inside the Paris public schools — allegations that are the subject of a continuing probe by the U.S. Department of Education to determine whether black students in the district are disciplined more harshly than whites.

The superintendent of the Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex in Brownwood, Texas, where Shaquanda Cotton is being held, called the girl's mother, Creola Cotton, Friday afternoon and told her she could come pick up the youth, Creola Cotton said.

Officials said Shaquanda Cotton was being released on 60 days' probation to allow her to access state health and counseling services. But after that, she would be completely free, they said. Creola Cotton said her daughter would not return to the Paris public schools but would pursue her GED at home.

What effect her release might have on the pending legal appeal of the youth's case was unclear.

Her sentence, which ultimately was up to the discretion of prison officials, had twice been extended, first because she would not admit her guilt as required by prison regulations and then because she was found with "contraband" in her cell—an extra pair of socks.

Those sentence extensions drew the attention of Kimbrough, who was confirmed by the state Senate on Thursday as conservator of the youth prison system, which has been rocked by a sex scandal over allegations that guards and administrators coerced inmates for sex.

[Conservator, Jay] Kimbrough, a former deputy attorney general, said last week that he was convening a special committee to examine the sentences of all 4,700 youths in Texas juvenile prisons to determine how many might have had their sentences unfairly extended by prison authorities — and that Shaquanda Cotton's was the first case he intended to review. Prison officials said it was Kimbrough who personally ordered the girl's release on Friday.

Since the Tribune's first account of Shaquanda Cotton's case, her story has been circulated on more than 400 Internet blogs and featured in newspapers and radio and TV reports across the country. Two protests demanding her release were held in Paris and a third, to be led by Rev. Al Sharpton, was scheduled for Tuesday.

Even before news of her impending release broke Friday, the Lamar County District Attorney's office, which prosecuted her and pressed for her to be sent to prison for up to 7 years, made an abrupt turnaround and said the youth had served enough time and ought to be freed. "Let her out of TYC," said Allan Hubbard, spokesman for Lamar County District Atty. Gary Young. "Hell, she's done a year for pushing a teacher. That's too long."

Hubbard also backed away from claims he and Young made this week in numerous media interviews that the judge in the case, Lamar County Judge Chuck Superville, had had no choice but to send the youth to prison because her mother had testified that she would not cooperate with probation officials had the judge sentenced the teen to probation.

On Thursday, Young's official Web site contained this assertion: "This juvenile's mother (Creola Cotton) told the judge she would not comply with conditions of probation."

But a review of the full court transcript shows no such testimony. In fact, Creola Cotton repeatedly answered "yes" when asked in court whether she would comply with any conditions of probation that the judge might impose.

On Friday morning, after an inquiry about this discrepancy by the Tribune, the district attorney's Web site was altered to read: "Through her actions of non-cooperation, Ms. Cotton told the judge she would not comply with conditions of probation."

Received:

“Grim Inevitability”

From: GC
To: GI Special
Sent: March 31, 2007

Please keep up the good work.

It's not pleasant watching Bush's sand castle fall apart since we live in it also.

But there's a grim inevitability about it which brings some satisfaction.

Reply: There is also a grim inevitability about the way the troops are turning against the war. Some old time English politician once noted that there is nothing that concentrates the mind like the certain knowledge one is to be hanged in the morning. There will come a point where our troops will be heard from, in ways the politicians in DC will not find pleasant. Since the politicians refuse to act to stop the war, necessity will compel action by those being sacrificed in vain.

The good work for GI Special is done by members of the armed forces, veterans, military family members and civilians who send in the articles, photos and poems that make it possible, and distribute the publication to those serving in the armed forces.

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