

GI SPECIAL 5D16:

**HERE'S THAT "PROGRESS" YOU'VE HEARD
ABOUT:
AND THEY'VE GOT WEAPONS TOO!**



Iraqi police chant during anti-US protest in front of their station in Baghdad's eastern neighborhood of Mashtal April 15, 2007. Dozens of Iraqi policemen demonstrated in front of their Baghdad station Sunday, accusing U.S. occupation command of treating them like 'animals' and 'slaves.' (AP Photo/Ali Kadim)

***Troop-Murdering Rats In
Command Caught Lying Again:
Secret Pentagon IG Report Says
Soldiers Being Sent Outside
The Wire Without Enough
Protection:***

**“I Definitely Want To Get Out,”
Says Santopoalo, 22, Of The 73rd
Cav;
“I Love The Army, But I Hate This
War”
“Men And Women Are Being Sent Into
Combat With Less Training, Shorter
Breaks And Disintegrating Equipment”**

Apr. 05, 2007 By MARK THOMPSON, Time Magazine [Excerpts]

For most Americans, the Iraq war is both distant and never ending.

For Private Matthew Zeimer, it was neither.

Shortly after midnight on Feb. 2, Zeimer had his first taste of combat as he scrambled to the roof of the 3rd Infantry Division's Combat Outpost Grant in central Ramadi. Under cover of darkness, insurgents were attacking his new post from nearby buildings.

Amid the smoke, noise and confusion, a blast suddenly ripped through the 3-ft. concrete wall shielding Zeimer and a fellow soldier, killing them both. Zeimer had been in Iraq for a week.

He had been at his first combat post for two hours.

If Zeimer's combat career was brief, so was his training.

He enlisted last June at age 17, three weeks after graduating from Dawson County High School in eastern Montana. After finishing nine weeks of basic training and additional preparation in infantry tactics in Oklahoma, he arrived at Fort Stewart, Ga., in early December.

But Zeimer had missed the intense four-week pre-Iraq training—a taste of what troops will face in combat—that his 1st Brigade comrades got at their home post in October.

Instead, Zeimer and about 140 other members of the 4,000-strong brigade got a cut-rate, 10-day course on weapon use, first aid and Iraqi culture.

That's the same length as the course that teaches soldiers assigned to generals' household staffs the finer points of table service.

The Army's rush to carry out President George W. Bush's order to send thousands of additional troops more quickly to Iraq is forcing two of the five new brigades bound for the war to skip standard training at Fort Irwin, Calif.

These soldiers aren't getting the benefit of participating in war games on the wide Mojave Desert, where gun-jamming sand and faux insurgents closely resemble conditions in Iraq.

"Given the new policy of having troops among the Iraqis," says Lawrence Korb, a former Pentagon personnel chief, "they should be giving our young soldiers more training, not less."

Zeimer's mother was unaware of the gap in her son's training until TIME told her about it on April 2. Two days later the Army disclosed that Zeimer may have been killed by friendly fire.

"They're shipping more and more young kids over there who don't know what they're getting into," Janet Seymour said quietly after learning what her son had missed. "They've never seen war other than on the TV."

The truncated training—the rush to get underprepared troops to the war zone—is absolutely unacceptable," says Representative John Murtha, the Pennsylvania Democrat and opponent of the war who chairs the House Appropriations defense subcommittee. A decorated Marine veteran of Vietnam, Murtha is experiencing a sense of déjà vu. "The readiness of the Army's ground forces is as bad as it was right after Vietnam," Murtha tells TIME.

Even Colin Powell—a retired Army general, onetime Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Bush's first Secretary of State—acknowledges that after spending nearly six years fighting a small war in Afghanistan and four years waging a medium-size war in Iraq, the service whose uniform he wore for 35 years is on the ropes.

"The active Army," Powell said in December, "is about broken."

A volunteer Army reflects the most central and sacred vow that citizens make to one another: soldiers protect and defend the country; in return, the country promises to give them the tools they need to complete their mission and honor their service, whatever the outcome.

So it is no small irony that today's U.S. Army finds itself under the greatest strain in a generation.

The Pentagon made that clear April 2 when it announced that two Army units will soon return to Iraq without even a year at home, compared with the two years units have traditionally enjoyed. One is headed back after 47 days short of a year, the other 81.

"This is the first time we've had a voluntary Army on an extended deployment," says Andrew Krepinevich, a retired Army officer who advises his old service.

“A lot of canaries are dropping dead in the mine.”

The main consequences of a tightly stretched Army is that men and women are being sent into combat with less training, shorter breaks and disintegrating equipment.

When those stories get out, they make it harder to retain soldiers and recruit them in the first place.

“For us, it’s just another series of never-ending deployments, and for many, including me, there is only one answer to that—show me the door out,” wrote an officer in a private e-mail to Congressman Steve Rothman of New Jersey.

Army equipment is wearing out even faster than Army troops.

Gear and weapons are usually left in the war zone to be used by newly arriving troops. That grinds the equipment into scrap up to 10 times as fast as in peacetime.

The lack of guns and armor back home has a boomerang effect: many of the troops training in the U.S. are not familiar with what they’ll have to depend on once they arrive in Iraq.

Repeated combat tours have “a huge impact on families,” General Peter Schoomaker, the Army chief of staff, told Congress in February. Those deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan more than once—170,000 so far—have a 50% increase in acute combat stress over those who have been deployed only once. And that stress is what contributes to post-traumatic stress disorder, according to an Army study.

“Their wives are saying, I know you’re proud of what you’re doing, but we’ve got to get out of here,” says Barry McCaffrey, a retired four-star general.

Today’s Army was molded for peacetime missions, with occasional spasms of all-out war, not for the lengthy guerrilla campaigns it is waging.

“Following Vietnam, a lot of thoughtful officers said, This is not the kind of war that we want to fight,” explains Senator Jack Reed, Democrat of Rhode Island, a Vietnam-era Army officer. Counterinsurgency wars didn’t play to the U.S.’s strong suit—superior technology—and instead demanded patience, which is harder to come by in this culture.

Even now, more than four years after invading Iraq, the Pentagon seems to be investing much of its current \$606 billion budget in an effort to fight the wrong war.

The Air Force continues to buy \$330 million fighters, and the Navy \$2 billion submarines. (The Army is not free of this tendency. It wants to spend \$160 billion on the Future Combat System, a network of 14 ground vehicles and drones of questionable value in the irregular warfare that’s likely in the 21st century.)

Even John Abizaid, the outgoing Army general who commanded the troops fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq for the past three years, acknowledges that he never had the right

tools for his mission. "This is not an Army that was built to sustain a long war," he told a Harvard audience last fall.

The force was so stretched, he warned Congress at the time, that a 20,000-strong troop surge in Iraq could not be sustained. Now that Abizaid is no longer in command, Bush has ordered 30,000 more troops into the fight.

Nearly 5,000 soldiers and their supporters met recently in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., at a gathering of the Association of the U.S. Army, a pro-Army group. A retired general spoke privately of a disconcerting change in recent months in the wounded soldiers he visits at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

"Ever since the war started, they'd be saying all they wanted to do was to get back to their buddies in Iraq to keep on fighting," he said. "Now it's more about getting out and wondering about civilian jobs. There's very little chatter about rejoining the unit."

In the field, manpower shortages are everywhere.

Captain David Eastburn's artillery company—part of the 2nd Infantry Division—arrived for its second tour in Iraq with only 72% of its personnel slots filled. "It just puts extra pressure on us," Eastburn, 30, says of his troops during a patrol in southeastern Baghdad.

"They have to work longer, harder to make up for the lack of personnel." After training to fire the artillery's big guns at foes 15 miles away, his unit is pulling infantry duty.

"I love the Army," the 12-year veteran, a native of Columbus, Ohio, says, "but I hate this war."

One response to difficulties in recruitment: stop people from leaving.

Sergeant Isaiah Santopoalo is one of 70,000 soldiers who have been barred from quitting the Army by a stop-loss order that keeps G.I.s in uniform beyond their retirement date or the end of their enlistment obligation. Since 2004, the Army has denied departures for troops headed to or already in Iraq or Afghanistan as a way to promote continuity in fighting units.

"I definitely want to get out," says Santopoalo, 22, of the 73rd Cavalry Regiment outside Baqubah, 30 miles east of Baghdad.

Three weeks before his enlistment was up last year, the Army ordered him to Iraq for a second tour. He had been planning to live with his wife in Chicago and attend film school by now. Instead, Santopoalo stalks insurgents through the palm groves.

"You start to think about what life could be—sitting on a beach drinking a Corona," he says. "That's when it affects you."

The Army has been turning to its sister services for enlistees. About 20,000 "sandbox sailors" from the Navy and airmen from the Air Force are serving as "in lieu of" soldiers—driving trucks and providing security in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Dedicating Air Force personnel to Army missions is hurting the Air Force, its leaders have told Congress.

“The Air Force doesn’t guard prisoners. We don’t have prisoners,” Air Force Secretary Michael Wynne told Congress Feb. 28. “The Army guards prisoners.”

But the Air Force is guarding them now in Iraq because the Army doesn’t have enough troops.

The Army is even cannibalizing the other services’ officer corps, recruiting 325 so far (in exchange for a \$2,500 bonus), with 200 more expected to switch to Army green this year, now that the bonus has been raised to \$10,000.

To fill the gaps, the Army is promoting green officers more quickly. Captains are advancing to major after 10 years instead of 11; lieutenants can be pinned on as captains after 38 months instead of the usual 42.

But the Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently warned that such fast promotion hurts officers’ ability “to master their duties and responsibilities.”

The Army now insists that troops don’t go “outside the wire”—leave their heavily defended posts in Iraq—without adequate protection.

But that’s not what the Pentagon’s inspector general reports.

Some troops “experienced shortages of force-protection equipment such as up-armored vehicles, electronic countermeasure devices ... weapons and communications equipment,” an unclassified summary of a still secret Jan. 25 report says.

“As a result, service members were not always equipped to effectively complete their missions.”

Meanwhile, far away from Washington and from Iraq, Matthew Zeimer was buried Feb. 12 in the middle of a Montana snowstorm.

Hundreds of mourners lined the route his hearse followed from Glendive’s Sacred Heart Catholic Church to the hilltop Dawson County Cemetery. They stood in silent salute in the bitter 8° cold.

Five members of an Army honor guard fired off volleys of three shots each. The Army bugler stepped from his warm car and played Taps into the biting wind.

The Army honor guard carefully folded the flag that had covered Zeimer’s coffin and presented it to his family. But a local priest had to conduct Zeimer’s funeral and burial.

The Army chaplain who was supposed to preside didn't make it in time. His car slid into a ditch about 100 miles west of town.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed In Baghdad

April 15, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070415-01

BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – An MND-B Soldier died when a patrol was attacked with small arms fire in a southern area of the Iraqi capital April 15.

The unit was responding in support of a partnered national police unit that came under fire near a local mosque.

IED Kills U.S. Soldier South Of Baghdad

April 15, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070415-19

BAGHDAD, Iraq – A Task Force Marne Soldier was killed south of Baghdad Saturday April 14, when an improvised explosive device detonated near troops conducting a foot patrol.

Marine Killed In Anbar

15 Apr 2007 Reuters

FALLUJA - A U.S. marine was killed in combat in western Anbar province on Saturday, the U.S. military said.

Two Brit Helicopters Down Near Taji: Two Dead, One Injured;

“The Military Had To Use Them In Iraq, He Said, Because The Roads Were Not Safe”

15 April 2007 BBC

Two British helicopters have crashed in Iraq, killing two military personnel and seriously injuring another.

The Ministry of Defence said both of the Puma helicopters were from RAF Benson in Oxfordshire.

Defence Secretary Des Browne said one of those killed was from the RAF and the other from the Army. Four other personnel were injured, one seriously.

The Puma helicopters came down in the early hours of Sunday in a rural area near Taji, site of a large US base. US forces had secured the crash site, Mr Browne said.

Two of the four injured had already been discharged and had returned to their units. The other two injured remain in a US military hospital - one remains in a “very serious” condition.

The BBC understands the helicopters had been taking part in a special forces mission.

Puma helicopters - mainly used to transport troops and equipment - are normally flown by the RAF.

However a Ministry of Defence spokesman would not confirm which regiment the dead personnel belonged to.

Retired Wing Commander Andrew Brooks told BBC News 24 that Pumas had been in service for around 30 years and were getting elderly.

The military had to use them in Iraq, he said, because the roads were not safe.

Boyd County Soldier Killed By Bomb In Iraq

April 06, 2007 Lexington Herald-Leader

A soldier from Boyd County has become the 54th Kentuckian killed in the Iraq war.

Army Spc. Joey Cantrell, 23, of Westwood, son of Joseph Cantrell III and Sondra Adkins, was one of two United States soldiers killed Wednesday at 5:55 p.m. Iraq time, 10:55 a.m. EDT.

'He was in a vehicle where they were defusing a roadside bomb,' his mother told The Daily Independent in Ashland. 'It blew up and killed him and his sergeant.'

She said she had last seen her son when he made a surprise visit home around Valentine's Day. He gave her a medallion, shaped like a soldier's dog tag, with a picture of himself, his mother and his brother. The medallion bore an inscription: 'Close at Heart.'

Cantrell, a 2002 graduate of Fairview High School, was the second soldier from the Ashland area killed in the Iraq war. Cantrell was killed three days after the 53rd Kentuckian died in the Iraq War.

Spc. William G. Bowling, 24, of Beattyville in Lee County, died Sunday when a roadside bomb exploded near a vehicle, killing him and three other U.S. soldiers.

The Department of Defense has confirmed 3,267 deaths in the Iraq War. Seven more confirmed U.S. deaths will be added to the total, pending notification of next of kin.

Cantrell was the first Fairview High School graduate killed in military service since two alumni died in the Vietnam War in 1966, said Bill Musick, superintendent of the Fairview schools.

Musick called Cantrell 'an outstanding student' and 'natural leader' whose presence lifted other students to higher levels of achievement and conduct.

Cantrell played running back and defensive back on Fairview football teams that Musick used to coach. 'The last time he was home he came by and said, 'Coach, don't worry about me,' Musick said. 'He loved the military. He lived it and breathed it.'

Jeff Preston of Preston Family Funeral Home said Cantrell's death was 'just heartbreaking to this community.' Preston, a Fairview school board member, said: 'Joey was doing what he loved.'

Cantrell had discussed enrolling at Marshall University in Huntington, W.Va., Preston said.

'He had aspirations of studying to be a doctor,' he said.

Preston said funeral arrangements were pending until Joey Cantrell's body is returned home. Preston said military officials told him that will take about 10 days.

A Soldier's Sad Ending:

Family Mourns Son Who Had Started To Recover From His War Injuries



Spivey, a Hilltop High School graduate, was photographed in Iraq. Photo courtesy of Spivey family

April 6, 2007 UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER, UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

CHULA VISTA – Bitter and broken, Army Spc. Curtis Spivey didn't feel much like a hero when he came home to Chula Vista from his third tour in Iraq last fall.

A roadside bomb had blown up his Humvee near Baghdad on Sept. 16, wounding the soldiers inside and throwing him 40 feet in the air from his perch as the vehicle's rooftop gunner. The blast shattered his legs, bruised his brain and broke his back, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down.

Spivey, 25, hated the thought of spending the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

"He was not a happy camper when he came here," said Al Kovach, president of the Cal-Diego chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, who counseled Spivey during his recuperation at the VA Medical Center in La Jolla.

"He kept the lights off, the shades pulled. The only person he would talk to was his father."

But nurtured by the tough love of his ex-Navy dad and the worshipful love of his 2-year-old daughter, Mariana, Spivey had made what relatives described as a remarkable turnaround. Last weekend, he talked with his family about his future for the first time.

"He realized there was another life," said his father, Joseph L. Spivey, 52, of Chula Vista. "He was looking to go to college, to start a second career."

Curtis Spivey's newly sunny outlook made his death Monday all the more shocking. A blood vessel in his weakened brain burst over the weekend, causing damage that doctors couldn't fix. His family removed him from life support Monday, and he slipped away soon after.

“I had never seen him in better spirits than in the days just before he died,” Kovach said. “His death was something we could not have seen coming.”

Curtis Spivey died barely one year after his 29-year-old brother, Joey – whom the soldier described in a MySpace.com entry as his hero – died of a congenital heart defect no one in the family knew about.

“It’s been a hard road,” said Curtis’ widow, Aida Spivey, 24.

Curtis Spivey had traveled a lot of hard roads himself. As a youngster, he loved Legos, Hot Wheels and Transformers and, most of all, video games.

But he struggled in school. When he was 7, doctors diagnosed him with attention-deficit disorder. His parents said Curtis was smart but had a tough time studying. He nearly flunked out of Hilltop High School in Chula Vista but graduated with his class in 2000 after completing 2½ years of classes in less than six months on a self-paced program policed by his parents.

“He had to learn his own way,” said his mother, Tania Spivey, 52.

In December 2000, Curtis Spivey enlisted in the Marine Corps as his father was finishing a 30-year Navy career as a command master chief.

“He always told me that he wanted to join the military like his dad, but not the Navy,” Aida Spivey said.

Joseph Spivey still has the coin Curtis earned at his boot camp graduation.

“I grabbed a hold of him and gave him a hug,” Spivey recalled, smiling at the memory. “He said, ‘You don’t hug a Marine!’ I said, ‘Well, this master chief does.’”

Assigned to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force at Twentynine Palms, Curtis Spivey fought during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, then served a second combat tour in 2004.

“It was horrible, just getting from one deployment to another,” Aida Spivey said. “He would just zone out. He would hear loud noises, and he would freak.”

Curtis Spivey finished his four-year hitch with the Marine Corps at the end of 2004. He left that service but immediately joined the Army and became a cavalry scout with the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Hood, Texas.

“I hated it. I thought he was crazy,” Aida Spivey said. “But you can’t tell someone he can’t do something.”

Curtis Spivey shipped out to Iraq in 2005, leaving behind his wife and baby daughter. During this and previous deployments, he would exchange instant messages on the computer with Joey. He came home in March 2006 to help his family with Joey’s burial before returning to Iraq.

And then came the bomb blast six months later. Curtis Spivey never remembered the explosion. During rehabilitation, he frequently grew angry at his nurses and would refuse to eat or exercise. His wife said Mariana helped break him out of his depression.

“The first time he got in a wheelchair, she said, “Yeah! Go daddy!” “ Aida Spivey recalled. “He was so in love with her – daddy’s little girl.”

Curtis Spivey will be buried with military honors April 12 at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery. Besides his parents and his stepmother, Bernadine, he is survived by a younger brother, Michael, and three stepsisters: Vicki DeLegrave and Rebecca Macedo of Chula Vista, and Marissa Macedo of Portland, Ore.

Despite Curtis Spivey’s loss, his family doesn’t regret his military service. “He did what he loved to do,” Tania Spivey said. “Why would I regret that?”

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. soldier near a car bomb attack in Baghdad April 14, 2007. REUTERS/Mahmoud Raouf Mahmoud

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

San Jacinto High Graduate Dies In Afghanistan:

“He Came Back Sooner Than We Expected”



The casket of Army Spc. Agustin Gutierrez at San Jacinto Valley Mortuary. Gutierrez, a paratrooper, was one of two soldiers killed March 28 when their vehicle overturned near Kabul, Afghanistan. Amanda Lucidon / The Press-Enterprise

April 3, 2007 By GREGOR McGAVIN, The Press-Enterprise

SAN JACINTO - A town that has already paid more than its share of the cost of war welcomed home one of its fallen Tuesday in a ceremony that included a police escort and an honor guard of the soldier's fellow paratroopers.

Army Spc. Agustin Gutierrez -- who had hoped to celebrate his 20th birthday here in June -- is the ninth man with San Jacinto Valley ties to die in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Gutierrez was one of two soldiers killed March 28, when the vehicle in which they were driving overturned near Kabul, Afghanistan.

Friends and family gathered outside the mortuary on State Street, where the soldier's flag-draped casket was delivered in a white hearse, escorted by local police on motorcycles and in a patrol car.

They hugged and cried and remembered the 19-year-old as being proud to belong to the elite 82nd Airborne Division.

“He would always talk to us with joy of the training he was doing, and we were very proud of him,” said his sister Cecilia Mendoza, 33, one of six siblings.

Gutierrez's mother, Elvira, wept as she gazed through a window of the hearse at the casket.

Gutierrez, who joined the Army almost two years ago, was assigned to the 782nd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team of the 82nd Airborne Division, headquartered at Fort Bragg, N.C.

More than a dozen members of the division's honor guard accompanied the hearse from Ontario International Airport to the mortuary. The paratroopers were clad in the crisp green uniforms and maroon berets of their unit, their black leather jump boots shining.

A half-dozen troopers stood at attention, rifles at present arms, as the American flag, fluttering outside the mortuary, was lowered to half-staff. Another group carried the casket inside.

Friends and relatives recalled Gutierrez as a quiet teen, who earned A's and B's on his way to graduating in 2005 from San Jacinto High School. He was proud of serving his country and had decided to make the Army a career.

"He was one of a kind," said Spc. Zeeshan Mithani, who served with Gutierrez at Fort Bragg but was prevented from going to Afghanistan with the rest of the unit in January because he had to have knee surgery.

Mithani said Gutierrez would complain from time to time about military life, but it was all an act. "He loved it. He wouldn't let anybody know, though," Mithani said.

Gutierrez was also low-key about his engagement to Rebecca Collado, 17. The two met nine months ago, when Gutierrez walked into the movie theater where she worked in Fayetteville, N.C., right outside the base.

Mendoza said her brother was looking forward to coming home in June to celebrate his birthday.

"He came back sooner than we expected," she said.

Loved ones plan to hold an extended viewing of the body today at Mendoza's home. That will be followed by a brief service with the honor guard and burial at 11:30 a.m. Thursday at Riverside National Cemetery.

Mercenaries Attacked In Spin Boldak

04.15.07 By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press

A bomber targeted a private U.S. security firm Sunday in southern Afghanistan, killing up to four Afghans working for the company and wounding another, officials said.

The security firm, U.S. Protection and Investigations, said that a bomber riding a motorcycle blew himself up near a convoy, killing two employees and wounding another.

Mohammad Asif Khan, a police officer in Kandahar province's Spin Boldak district, said the attack occurred on a main highway in the district, where the company was providing

security for road construction projects. Three security guards and their driver were killed, Khan said. The differing death tolls could not immediately be reconciled.

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



Foreign occupation troops from USA after setting fire to a “Taliban” shelter on the Afghanistan/Pakistan border, 31 March. (AFP/File/Matthew Leary)

Assorted Resistance Action

04.15.07 The Peninsula

KHOST, Afghanistan: A bomber yesterday blew himself up at the gate of a police headquarters in eastern Afghanistan, killing at least eight policemen and wounding 10 others, police and medics said.

Police had initially said some civilians were also among those killed but later said there were no civilian casualties in the attack.

A police witness he saw the bomber arriving at the gate and then there was an explosion.

“I saw him trying to enter the base. Our policemen guarding the gate stopped him and he blew himself up right at the gate,” Salahuddin said. “I was just metres (yards) away. Thank God it didn’t hit me,” he said.

Doctor Gul Mohammaddin Mohammadi at the Khost city hospital said that eight dead bodies were brought to the hospital. He said six wounded police were also admitted.

A local police official, Sher Ahmad Kochi, said a civilian was among the eight killed in the attack.

“We had a civilian at the gate waiting for his (police) brother. He was also hit and killed on the spot,” Kochi said.

A purported Taleban spokesman, Yousuf Ahmadi, called from an unknown location, claimed responsibility for the attack, saying the bomber was an Afghan.

“We carried out the attack. It was carried out by a devoted mujahid (holy warrior),” Ahmadi said.

Also in Ghazni, two Afghan army soldiers were killed when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in the province’s Ander district, Ahmadzai said.

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

TROOP NEWS

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



Funeral service at Wooddale Church Wednesday, April 11, 2007, in Eden Prairie, Minn., for Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Olsen, 20, who was shot and killed April 2 while conducting combat operations in the Fallujah area in Iraq. (AP Photo/Jim Mone)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

15 Apr 2007 Reuters & Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory
RELEASE No. 20070415-15

Two Iraqi soldiers were killed and 16 wounded when two oil trucks driven by bombers exploded outside a military base in the northern city of Mosul, police said.

Guerrillas killed a police colonel and a policeman and wounded two other senior officers in a drive-by shooting in the oil city refinery of Baiji, north of Baghdad, police said.

A group of insurgents destroyed a newly constructed local clinic near Jalula in Diyala province, Iraq, using explosives April 12.

Eight individuals in two vehicles approached the facility and told the hospital staff to leave the building before they destroyed it, a local Iraqi reported to the Coalition force.

There were no patients in the building and no injuries resulted from the attack.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**When U.S. Soldiers Stopped An
Imperial War:**

**BUY SIR! NO SIR! FOR ACTIVE DUTY
SOLDIERS NOW**

**HELP GET SIR! NO SIR!
INTO THE HANDS THAT NEED IT MOST**



Sir! No Sir!:
At A Theatre Near You!
To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>

The Sir! No Sir! DVD is on sale now, exclusively at
www.sirnosir.com.

Also available is a Soundtrack CD (which includes the entire song from the FTA Show, "Soldier We Love You"), theatrical posters, tee shirts, and the DVD of "A Night of Ferocious Joy," a film about the first hip-hop antiwar concert against the "War on Terror."

V.A. Health Benefits Cookie Jar



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: March 16, 2007
Subject: V.A. Health Benefits Cookie Jar

V.A. Health Benefits Cookie Jar

Every single day the U.S. Government betrays its military veterans. The Bush administration is not in it for the long haul. Too expensive... These deadly deceptions will help destroy the lives of countless veterans and their families. PTSD will ambush them at every turn. As Rumsfeld would say: You go with the cookie jar you have.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
March 16, 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)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

***Of Course Iraq Isn't Vietnam:
“American Soldiers Were Confronted
With The War's Most Troubling
Questions”
“What Are We Doing Here?”
“Where Is The Enemy?”
“Whom Can We Trust? Where Is It
Safe?”
“What Is Our Mission?”***

From: WORKING CLASS WAR, by Christian G. Appy, U. Of North Carolina Press, 1984

No one knew what to expect, but what they found was more bizarre and unnerving than anything they had ever imagined.

From their first moments in-country, American soldiers were confronted with the war's most troubling questions:

Where are we?

What are we doing here?

Where is the enemy?

Whom can we trust? Where is it safe?

What is our mission?

The answers received provided little comfort or clarity.

Instead, the green troops faced a series of confusing and incongruous experiences: ominous portents of a yearlong tour of duty against enemies they could not identify, among allies who did not welcome their presence, and on behalf of a policy that was neither meaningful nor realizable.

Such experiences provoked a range of questions and anxieties: Why did Americans require protection from Vietnamese civilians? After weren't the Americans in Vietnam to help those people?

Weren't those people our allies? Why don't they welcome our arrival?

Why the expressions of contempt?

And why does this other soldier refer to these civilians as "gooks"?

Are we supposed to consider every Vietnamese a gook?

And, if so, does that mean they are all enemies, or all potential grenade throwers?

In his novel *Fragments*, Vietnam veteran Jack Fuller suggests that the pervasive horror stories of civilian sabotage and betrayal reflected an "expectation of deceit."

The Americans expected Vietnamese civilians to prove themselves, in the end, loyal to the Viet Cong.

That expectation, Fuller believes, had a corrupting influence and contributed to the atrocities committed against Vietnamese civilians by American forces.

"My brother was here. . . . He told me about these villages. They may look peaceful. People will bow, children smile. But they'll blow you away in a minute if you give them a chance.

"My brother said the VC are always watching. They see through the eyes of the little kids peering from doorways, the old ladies doing their wash. You can feel the blood against your throat as you pass a young girl slicing fruit."

"He must be some storyteller," said Neumann.

"They weren't just stories. He told us all about it in his letters. Then he was killed."

In a way that I did not appreciate at the time. . . I recognized for just an instant a hint of what would happen to us in Xuan The (where an American soldier killed three Vietnamese civilians).

And sometimes I wonder whether it wasn't our expectation of deceit more than deceit itself that proved so corrupting."

MORE:

**“Soldiers In Vietnam Began To Write
UUUU On Their Helmet”
“The Unwilling, Led By The Unqualified,
Doing The Unnecessary For The
Ungrateful”**

From: WORKING CLASS WAR, by Christian G. Appy, U. Of North Carolina Press, 1984

Lost in the silence was the awareness that a significant number of American troops themselves turned against the war in its final years.

By the late 1960s, some soldiers in Vietnam began to write UUUU on their helmet liners, meaning the unwilling, led by the unqualified, doing the unnecessary for the ungrateful.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to 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.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

60% Of Iraqis Want U.S. Troops Dead: Big Surprise



A foreign occupation soldier from U.S. Delta company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment takes fingerprints from an Iraqi citizen without his consent in Baghdad's northwest Sunni neighborhood of Ghazaliyah March 24, 2007. REUTERS/Fabrizio Bensch (IRAQ)

Iraqi citizens have no right to refuse orders given by foreign troops. Any resistance may mean imprisonment, injury, or death.

[U.S. sponsored polls reported recently that 60% of Iraqis favor killing U.S. troops. It would take a drooling idiot not to understand why. Iraqis feel about U.S. troops trampling them in the dirt the same way Americans felt about British troops trampling them in the dirt in 1776. They are right to resist. T]

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

Bush's Surge Adds To Number Of Iraqis Imprisoned By U.S. Occupation Dictatorship;

Additional 1,000 Arrests Bring Total To 18,000 Now In U.S. Concentration Camps; [Only 13,200,000 “True Threats To Coalition Forces” Still On The Loose]

Apr 15 By WALTER PINCUS, WASHINGTON POST [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON -- In the past month, as the new security crackdown in Baghdad has begun, U.S. forces have arrested another 1,000 Iraqis, bringing to 18,000 the detainees now held in two U.S.-run facilities in that country.

The average stay is about one year, but some 8,000 of the current detainees have been held longer, including 1,300 who have been in U.S. custody for two years, according to a statement provided by Capt. Phillip Valenti, public affairs officer for Task Force 134, the U.S. Military Police group handling detainee operations.

“The intent is to detain individuals determined to be true threats to coalition forces, Iraqi Security Forces and stability in Iraq,” Valenti said.

[Well now, since over 60% of Iraqis, according to U.S. sponsored polls, favor killing U.S. occupation troops, that only leaves another 13,200,000 to go. T]

One year ago, fewer than 10,000 Iraqis were held in U.S. facilities in Iraq, but that figure has grown and could reach 20,000 by the end of this year, according to military contracting documents.

As of last month, the Iraqi detention system contained some 34,000 detainees.

Noah Feldman, a New York University law professor who helped draft the Iraqi constitution, asked, “Pursuant to what law are we holding people who are not turned over to Iraqi courts?” Since they are not considered prisoners of war, he said, the U.S. must consider them in the “enemy combatant” category used to justify the holding of individuals at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Welcome To Occupied America:

**“Criminalizing Very Young Children”
“A Highly Disproportionate Number Of
Those Youngsters, Like Desre’e, Are
Black”
“The Handcuffs Were Not Manufactured With
Kindergarten Kids In Mind”**

The officers were not fooling around. In the eyes of the cops the 6-year-old was a criminal, and in Avon Park she would be treated like any other felon. There was a problem, though.

The handcuffs were not manufactured with kindergarten kids in mind.

April 9, 2007 By BOB HERBERT, The New York Times Company

Avon Park, Fla.

When 6-year-old Desre’e Watson threw a tantrum in her kindergarten class a couple of weeks ago she could not have known that the full force of the law would be brought down on her and that she would be carted off by the police as a felon.

But that’s what happened in this small, backward city in central Florida. According to the authorities, there were no other options.

“The student became violent,” said Frank Mercurio, the no-nonsense chief of the Avon Park police. “She was yelling, screaming - just being uncontrollable. Defiant.”

“But she was 6,” I said.

The chief’s reply came faster than a speeding bullet: “Do you think this is the first 6-year-old we’ve arrested?”

The child’s tantrum occurred on the morning of March 28 at the Avon Elementary School. According to the police report, “Watson was upset and crying and wailing and would not leave the classroom to let them study, causing a disruption of the normal class activities.”

After a few minutes, Desre’e was, in fact, taken to another room. She was “isolated,” the chief said. But she would not calm down. She flailed away at the teachers who tried to control her. She pulled one woman’s hair. She was kicking.

I asked the chief if anyone had been hurt. “Yes,” he said. At least one woman reported “some redness.”

After 20 minutes of this “uncontrollable” behavior, the police were called in.

At the sight of the two officers, Chief Mercurio said, Desre’e “tried to take flight.”

She went under a table.

One of the police officers went after her. Each time the officer tried to grab her to drag her out, Desre’e would pull her legs away, the chief said.

Ultimately the child was no match for Avon Park’s finest. The cops pulled her from under the table and handcuffed her.

The officers were not fooling around. In the eyes of the cops the 6-year-old was a criminal, and in Avon Park she would be treated like any other felon.

There was a problem, though.

The handcuffs were not manufactured with kindergarten kids in mind. The chief explained:

“You can’t handcuff them on their wrists because their wrists are too small, so you have to handcuff them up by their biceps.”

As I sat listening to Chief Mercurio in a spotless, air-conditioned conference room at the Avon Park police headquarters, I had the feeling that I had somehow stumbled into the middle of a skit on “Saturday Night Live.”

The chief seemed like the most reasonable of men, but what was coming out of his mouth was madness.

He handed me a copy of the police report: black female. Six years old. Thin build. Dark complexion.

Desre’e was put in the back of a patrol car and driven to the police station.

“Then,” said Chief Mercurio, “she was transported to central booking, which is the county jail.”

The child was fingerprinted and a mug shot was taken. “Those are the normal procedures for anyone who is arrested,” the chief said.

Desre’e was charged with battery on a school official, which is a felony, and two misdemeanors: disruption of a school function and resisting a law enforcement officer.

After a brief stay at the county jail, she was released to the custody of her mother.

The arrest of this child, who should have been placed in the care of competent, comforting professionals rather than being hauled off to jail, is part of an outlandish trend of criminalizing very young children that has spread to many school districts and law enforcement agencies across the country.

A highly disproportionate number of those youngsters, like Desre'e, are black.

In Baltimore last month, the police arrested, handcuffed and hauled away a 7-year-old black boy for allegedly riding a dirt bike on the sidewalk.

The youngster was released and the mayor, Sheila Dixon, apologized for the incident, saying the arrest was inappropriate.

Last spring a number of civil rights organizations collaborated on a study of disciplinary practices in Florida schools and concluded that many of them, "like many districts in other states, have turned away from traditional education-based disciplinary methods - such as counseling, after-school detention, or extra homework assignments - and are looking to the legal system to handle even the most minor transgressions."

Once you adopt the mindset that ordinary childhood misbehavior is criminal behavior, it's easy to start seeing young children as somehow monstrous.

"Believe me when I tell you," said Chief Mercurio, "a 6-year-old can inflict injury to you just as much as any other person."

“A Bloated Justice System That Costs \$185 Billion A Year” 4 Times As Much As Is Spent Each Year On Educating Children

By Matthew T. Clark, February 2007 Prison Legal News [Excerpt]

According to a report released by the u.s. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics in April, 2006, the U.S. spent a record \$185 billion for police protection, detention, and judicial and legal activities in 2003. This represented a 418% unadjusted increase over 1982 justice expenditures.

Adjusting for inflation, real justice expenditures almost tripled.

Local governments funded 50% of the \$185 billion while state governments accounted for another 33% of the expenditures.

This means that state and local governments spent four times more on justice than on education and twice as much as they spent on public welfare. Justice expenditures equaled hospital and health care expenditures at the local and state level.

Justice expenditures increased as follows per U.S. citizen between 1982 and 2003:

Overall - 418%; detention - 423%; police - 241 %; justice and legal expenditures - 321% .

Federal intergovernmental justice expenditures increased from \$189 million in 1982 to over \$5.1 billion in 2003. This was driven by the creation of multiple large law enforcement grant programs in the 1980s and 1990s. Between 1982 and 2003, federal government justice expenses increased as follows: police protection - 708%, judicial and legal services - 573%; and detention - 925%. The increases for state and local justice expenditures were lower.

In short, the U.S. has developed a bloated justice system that employs 1 out of every 50 workers and costs \$185 billion a year, 4 times as much as it spends each year on educating its children.

No wonder the criminal justice system is caught in a feedback loop, growing ever larger and more expensive.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin April 2006; Justice Expenditure and Employment in the United States 2003

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/)

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