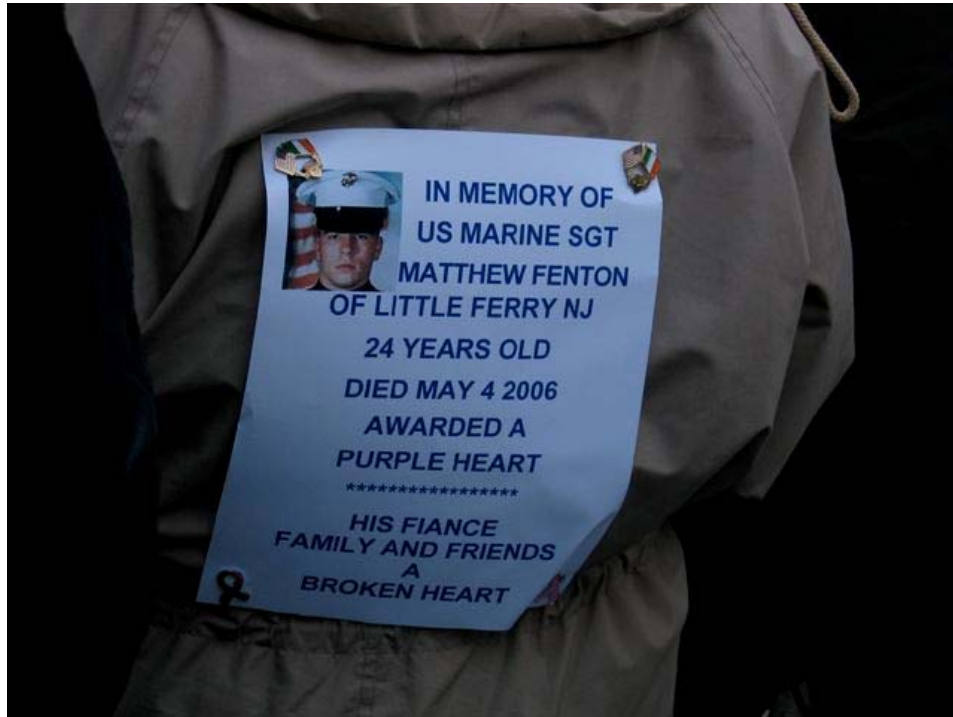


GI SPECIAL 5D2:

A BROKEN HEART



March 18 2007 Rally Against The War: Photo Katherine GY, Military Project

**78% Of Iraqis Opposed
To Presence Of
Occupation Forces;
So What The Fuck Are You
Doing There?**

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

WASHINGTON, Mar 19 (IPS)

Four years after the U.S.-led invasion, Iraqis have never been more pessimistic about their lives and antagonistic toward their purported liberators, according to a major new poll released Monday by BBC, ABC News, USA Today and the German ARD television network.

Some 78 percent of respondents said they either “somewhat” (32 percent) or “strongly” opposed the presence of U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq -- up from 65 percent in BBC poll taken in late 2005, and 51 percent from one conducted in 2004.

In addition, nearly six in 10 respondents (59 percent) said they now believe the U.S. now “controls” events in Iraq, compared to just 24 percent who took that position in 2005, during which two elections were carried out.

By contrast, the percentage who said they believed the Iraqi government was in control has dropped from 44 percent two years ago to 34 percent today.

As in the PIPA poll, the survey found major differences in view among Iraqis based on their sectarian or ethnic identities. Thus, the Kurds, who make up between 15 and 20 percent of the national population were the least pessimistic and anti-American among the groups.

By contrast, Sunni Arabs, who make up about 20 percent of the population, were the most pessimistic and anti-American. Shi'a respondents, who represent about 60 percent of the population fell in between the two.

The 56 percent majority who said they believe that Iraq is not involved in a “civil war” at this time and a similar percentage who said they considered a “civil war” either “somewhat” (46 percent) or “very unlikely” (11 percent).

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

6 U.S. Troops Killed Near Baghdad By Coordinated IED Attack; Two More Wounded

April 1, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070401-12

BAGHDAD – While conducting a combat security patrol, two MND-B Soldiers died and two others were wounded when an improvised explosive device detonated near their unit southwest of the Iraqi capital March 31.

Four additional Soldiers were killed when a second improvised explosive device detonated near a separate unit responding to the initial IED strike southwest of the Iraqi capital April 1.

Marine Dies In Anbar

April 1, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070401-14

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to Multi National Force-West died April 1 in a non-combat related incident in Al Anbar Province.

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A US soldier takes cover as a roadside bomb targets a US convoy in Baghdad's Bayaa district. (AFP/Wissam Sami)

Soldier From 2nd Battalion The Duke Of Lancaster's Regiment Killed In Iraq.

1 Apr 07 Ministry Of Defense & This Is Leicestershire

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm the death of a soldier from 2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment in Iraq earlier today, 1 April 2007.

The soldier died as a result of gunshot wounds sustained from an attack on a patrol in Basra's central neighbourhood of Ashar.

Next of kin have been informed and they have requested a period of time before further details are released.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Afghan War May Be Lost

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

March 30, 2007 ANDREW MAYEDA, CanWest News Service [Excerpts]

Two Afghanistan experts painted a sobering picture of the conditions there yesterday, arguing support among Afghans for NATO forces is plummeting, the U.S.-driven policy of poppy eradication is wrongheaded, and the war might not be winnable in its present form.

U.S. scholar Barnett Rubin and Gordon Smith, Canada's former ambassador to NATO, delivered their withering comments to a Commons committee only days after Canada's top military commander, Gen. Rick Hillier, touted progress being made there.

But Rubin, who has been to Afghanistan 29 times over more than two decades, said yesterday many Afghans are growing frustrated with the pace of Western efforts to stabilize the country.

"They're not at all happy. Support for both the international presence and the government has plummeted in the past year or so," he told the foreign affairs committee.

Smith, meanwhile, threw cold water on Hillier's suggestion that Canadian troops are facing a weakened enemy.

Smith recently released a critical report of his own, titled *Canada in Afghanistan: Is it Working?* He questions whether NATO can achieve its stated goals, even within 10 years. Canada has committed to maintain its military presence until 2009.

Assorted Resistance Action

4.1.07 By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer

In eastern Afghanistan, a car bomb targeted an Afghan army convoy near Laghman province's city of Mihtarlam. Eight soldiers were wounded.

In southern Kandahar province, suspected Taliban insurgents ambushed two convoys of Afghan police, killing seven policemen and wounding four, an official said Sunday.

Taliban ambushed one convoy patrolling Saturday night in the border area between Spin Boldak and Shorawak districts, said Kandahar provincial police chief Esmatullah Alizai. One policeman was injured in the ensuing clash, he said.

A second police convoy coming to help the first was also ambushed, and seven policemen were killed and three others wounded, Alizai said.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of U.S. Army Pfc. John Landry, Jr., at St. Thomas of Villanova Church in Wilmington, Mass, March 27, 2007. Landry, Jr., who was killed with three fellow soldiers by a roadside bomb in Baghdad March 17, will be buried in Wildwood Cemetery in Wilmington. (AP Photo/Chitose Suzuki)

“Home On Leave, They All Say They Hate It And Think The War Is Pointless”

March 30, 2007 Jonathan Steele, The Guardian [Excerpt]

On a foray to the south, one of the most conservative regions and the site of numerous military bases, I found the anti-war mood surprisingly strong.

In Alabama I heard a spruce young officer, still serving in the navy, tell a meeting organised by “Veterans for Peace” that he had stood that morning outside Maxwell airforce base in the state’s capital, Montgomery, holding an anti-war poster.

Scores of people driving in gave the thumbs up or honked their horns, he said with pride.

At Auburn university, a quarter of the students in a class I visited had close relatives in Iraq.

Home on leave, they all say they hate it and think the war is pointless.

At a campus meeting that I attended, some 200 faculty members and their friends gave a standing ovation to a lecturer who described Iraq as a defeat for America and called for the troops to come home.

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

“My Brothers And Sisters, Within The Active-Duty Ranks Of The United States Military”

“We’re Here Fighting A Domestic Enemy Policy, A Policy That Is Continuing To Destroy The Country Of Iraq”

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

March 19th, 2007 Democracy Now

[Jonathan Hutto is active duty U.S. Navy. This is what he had to say at the anti-war rally in Washington DC 3.17.07]

JONATHAN HUTTO: Alright! Alright! Alright! Money for jobs! Act like y’all hear me. Money for jobs, not for war! Money for schools! Money for healthcare! Money for jobs!

I come here as a cofounder of the Appeal for Redress.

If the other cofounder, Marine Sergeant -- now out of the Marine Corps -- Leon Madden is around, come up to the stage.

Right here, my brothers and sisters, within the active-duty ranks of the United States military, those of us who took an oath to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic, where now we’re here fighting a domestic enemy policy, a policy that is continuing to destroy the country of Iraq, to decimate its people in the hundreds and hundreds of thousands, a policy that has killed over thousands of American troops and soldiers, and sadly they come back here and cannot get proper jobs, proper healthcare and the proper treatment they need.

So what the Appeal for Redress is, building off the strength of the GI movement -- and there are veterans of the GI movement out there -- I’m going to wrap it up -- is it gives military members the right to appeal to their members of Congress to end the war in Iraq.

Go to www.appealforredress.org.

If you’re active duty, file your appeal.

Tell your Congressperson to get a backbone, to get a spine, and to stand up on the mandate that the American people gave them last November!

“No Room Left On FOBS So They Are To Live In Their Bradleys And Hummers”

March 21, 2007 Veterans Against Iraq War

and as soon as anyone important should enter area...well they will be put into temp housing then when joe snuffy legislator leaves they will find themselves back in hummers

From: P
To: vaiw@hotmail.com
Subject: PLEASE check this story out
Date: 21 Mar 2007

Will somebody PLEASE check this story out?

Below is part of chat with my son last night who is a doorgunner on a UH-60 Blackhawk,

I have removed his name as well as that of the pilot who relayed this information. I also removed my comments in between but as you can imagine they were strongly worded.

Thank you.

XXXXX tells me that there are guys he flew the other day that are going to be part of the surge...and guess where they are going to be living for 60 days?

in their hummers....someone forgot about housing

so these guys will have to seek their own shelter...maybe take over a building...

he says it was terrible...dropped them off southwest Baghdad and they will be living in a palm grove and there are tons others out there

he said that this is just a small sample...most will not have base housing...running water, electricity

no room left on FOBS forward operating bases so they are to live in their bradleys and hummers

just another thing bush somewhat forgot about

the guys are “like I guess we will deal with it”

yep...but they know about it.. and as soon as anyone important should enter area...well they will be put into temp housing then when joe snuffy legislator leaves they will find themselves back in hummers

XXXXX just said that anyone that has a mission to echo Rustimayah HAS to carry care packages....so they can make their way to these guys

The guys said that Stars and Stripes ran an article after a squad leader squawked upline Minnesota Redbulls and some are from a Hawaii based unit those are the first to arrive of surge but too many to count...that is what the guys have been doing all week

XXXXX was flat disgusted and he is a patient man

he is another pilot....cw4 ..he is second to XXXX

Iraq Veteran Says The War Is “Unjust And Illegal”

3/16/07 Kathleen Foody, The Daily Illini

The voices of protesters chanting "Hey Congress, what're you for if you can't stop this fucking war," echoed across the Quad and down Green Street Thursday afternoon as University students and community members gathered to call for an end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

Representatives from several community groups and student organizations, including Iraq Veterans Against the War, spoke at the rally.

Dressed in brown corduroy pants and an army camouflage jacket and hat, graduate student Thomas Ayala addressed the crowd of about 50 people.

Ayala served in the Army and was stationed in Afghanistan for about a year with an infantry unit in 2005 and 2006. But the war in Iraq is unjust and illegal, he said.

"I'm not a pacifist," Ayala said. "Even though I'm against the Iraq war I believe that the Afghanistan war was justified in the beginning. But now we have our troops just roaming around the country doing nothing but getting hit by snipers and by roadside bombs."

"War is dirty and sweaty and bloody and nauseating and confusing and traumatic," he said. "It's not for pampered politicians."

Dishonorable Scum In Command of 3rd ID Ordered Severely Injured Soldiers To Training Camps For Iraq Duty; “The Soldiers Who Were At Fort Irwin Described A Pitiful Scene” “You Had People Out There With Crutches And Canes”

[Here it is again. Same old story. Payback is overdue. T]

March 26, 2007 By Mark Benjamin, Salon.com [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON -- Last November, Army Spc. Edgar Hernandez, a communications specialist with a unit of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, had surgery on an ankle he had injured during physical training.

After the surgery, doctors put his leg in a cast, and he was supposed to start physical therapy when that cast came off six weeks later.

But two days after his cast was removed, Army commanders decided it was more important to send him to a training site in a remote desert rather than let him stay at Fort Benning, Ga., to rehabilitate.

In January, Hernandez was shipped to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., where his unit, the 3,900-strong 3rd Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division, was conducting a month of training in anticipation of leaving for Iraq in March.

Hernandez says he was in no shape to train for war so soon after his injury.

“I could not walk,” he told Salon in an interview. He said he was amazed when he learned he was being sent to California.

“Did they not realize that I'm hurt and I needed this physical therapy?” he remembered thinking. “I was told by my doctor and my physical therapist that this was crazy.”

Hernandez had served two tours in Iraq, where he helped maintain communications gear in the unit's armored Bradley Fighting Vehicles. But he could not participate in war

maneuvers conducted on a 1,000-square-mile mock battlefield located in the harsh Mojave Desert.

Instead, when he got to California, he was led to a large tent where he would be housed.

He was shocked by what he saw inside:

There were dozens of other hurt soldiers.

Some were on crutches, and others had arms in slings. Some had debilitating back injuries. And nearby was another tent, housing female soldiers with health issues ranging from injuries to pregnancy.

Hernandez is one of a dozen soldiers who stayed for weeks in those tents who were interviewed for this report, some of whose medical records were also reviewed by Salon.

All of the soldiers said they had no business being sent to Fort Irwin given their physical condition.

In some cases, soldiers were sent there even though their injuries were so severe that doctors had previously recommended they should be considered for medical retirement from the Army.

Military experts say they suspect that the deployment to Fort Irwin of injured soldiers was an effort to pump up manpower statistics used to show the readiness of Army units.

After arriving at Fort Irwin, many of the injured soldiers did not train.

“They had all of us living in a big tent,” confirmed Spc. Lincoln Smith, who spent the month there along with Hernandez and others. Smith is an Army truck driver, but because of his health issues, which include sleep apnea (a breathing ailment) and narcolepsy, Smith is currently barred from driving military vehicles.

“I couldn’t go out and do the training,” Smith said about his time in California. His records list his problems as “permanent” and recommend that he be considered for retirement from the Army because of his health.

Another soldier with nearly 20 years in the Army was sent to Fort Irwin, ostensibly to prepare for deployment to Iraq, even though she suffers from back problems and has psychiatric issues. Doctors wrote “unable to deploy overseas” on her medical records.

It is unclear exactly how many soldiers with health issues were sent to the California desert. None of the soldiers interviewed by Salon had done a head count, but all agreed that “dozens” would be a conservative estimate.

The soldiers who were at Fort Irwin described a pitiful scene.

“You had people out there with crutches and canes,” said an Army captain who was being considered for medical retirement himself because of serious back injuries sustained in a Humvee accident during a previous combat tour in Iraq.

“Soldiers that apparently had no business being there were there,” another soldier wrote to Salon in an e-mail. “Pregnant females were sent to the National Training Center rotation” with the knowledge of Army leaders, she said.

One infantry sergeant with nearly 20 years in the Army who had already fought in Iraq broke his foot badly in a noncombat incident just before being sent to Fort Irwin.

“I didn’t even get to put the cast on,” before going, he said with exasperation.

He said doctors put something like an “open-toed soft shoe” on his foot and put him on a plane to California. “I’ve got the cast on now. I never even got a chance to see the specialist,” he claimed.

The infantry sergeant said life in the desert was tough in his condition. “I was on Percocet. I couldn’t even concentrate. I hopped on a plane and hobbled around NTC on crutches,” he said.

He added, “I saw people who were worse off than I am. I saw people with hurt backs and so on. I started to think, ‘Hey, I’m not so bad.’”

“This Is A Classic Case Of Jerking Soldiers Around”

“They Don’t Know How They Will Feed Their Families When Their Activation Tour Ends Because It Cost Them Their Civilian Careers”

Letters To The Editor
April 2, 2007
Army Times

I’m not surprised at the recent letters and comments about employers now reluctant to hire reservists (“Civilian employers shy away from reservists,” Letters, Feb. 26).

What does surprise and thoroughly embarrass me are the continuing stories of short-notice notifications to reservists to report for active duty.

One letter writer said he was notified of his activation on a Saturday and told to report for his briefing on the following Monday.

This is a disgrace on many levels and should not be tolerated — but it is.

Why is that?

Where is the accountability for this incredibly negligent practice?

It's occasions like this that make me wish I could instantly be promoted to four-star so I could immediately fire all the key leaders involved in the process to approve orders resulting in short-notice activations.

This is a classic case of jerking soldiers around or, to put it a nicer way, it's certainly not "taking care of soldiers."

It can only contribute to future retention degradation — would you re-enlist after experiencing a call up like this? — and certainly will contribute to employers growing weary of supporting their citizen-soldiers.

Everyone must remember reservists are citizen-soldiers, not career soldiers. It doesn't make them less patriotic, it just makes their situations different. They have civilian jobs, careers and families to support.

How can we expect them to continue to serve as reservists if our Army jerks them around to the point where they don't know how they will feed their families when their activation tour ends because it cost them their civilian careers?

How would a career soldier feel if his career was ended because a part-time job yanked him away with little warning for over a year?

This problem is avoidable.

Unless a soldier has very unique skills or experiences and a key operational requirement from a war zone develops on short notice, all activations should be derived from known requirements in advance.

I'm pretty sure force requirements are on a radar screen somewhere. They sure were when I worked for a reserve-component post-mobilization training support brigade.

A senior leader forcing subordinates to adhere to an acceptable notification timetable would most likely eliminate this problem. It's a leadership thing.

For all the career officers and senior staff NCOs out there, can you imagine planning a significant operation in support of a known requirement but not telling your unit(s) about it until three days prior to execution?

Of course not.

You'd get fired — and rightly so.

Maj. Harry Xenitelis
Kailua, Hawaii

“The Powers That Be Are Letting The Soldiers Down” After Over Two Years, Soldier At Walter Reed Still Awaiting Surgery; “If You Ever Want To Support A Soldier, Use Your Voice”

Shannon’s wife says a sea of lost paperwork has made her husband’s recovery even more difficult. The staff at Walter Reed lost her husband’s paperwork three times, meaning the Shannons had to start the process over again.

March 23, 2007 News Channel 3

Your NewsChannel 3 spoke exclusively with a Suffolk woman who’s husband has had three surgeries at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Nearly two-and-a-half years later, her family is still waiting for her husband to come home.

Staff Sergeant John Shannon nearly died in the streets of Iraq after he was shot in the face. Two days later, he was admitted to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. He’s been there ever since.

Shannon’s wife says a sea of lost paperwork has made her husband’s recovery even more difficult.

“The powers that be are letting the soldiers down,” said Torrey Shannon.

And a soldier’s family is moving on.

Torrey Shannon and her three sons have just moved into a rental home in Suffolk while staff Sergeant John Shannon awaits facial reconstruction surgery in Washington. It’ll be his fourth surgery since Shannon, an Army sniper, was wounded in Ramadi in November 2004.

“John was shot through his eye and it came out through his temple,” recalls Torrey.

Staff Sergeant Shannon's first surgery stabilized his skull after he lost that eye. A second surgery for a skull implant four months later actually came ahead of schedule.

But then it took nine months for a third surgery to remove shrapnel from his shoulder.

Torrey says that's because the staff at Walter Reed lost her husband's paperwork three times, meaning the Shannons had to start the process over again.

"They need more case workers. Desperately. They just added 100 case workers and it's not nearly enough," Torrey said.

Sgt. Shannon was awarded a Purple Heart, but he's still waiting for the military insurance money that will allow him to undergo facial reconstruction surgery.

There's no end to that wait within sight of Sgt. Shannon's one good eye. And that upsets Torrey, as they endure two years of uncertainty together, while living apart.

"We've always thought that when we are in need, the military and the system would support us," said Torrey.

"That has not happened to our satisfaction. If you ever want to support a soldier, use your voice."

Sgt. Shannon visits his family in Suffolk on weekends. It could be another six months before he gets his final surgery, and comes home for good.

Veterans Suffering From Bedsores; Maggots In A Wound; Rooms Spattered With Blood, Urine And Feces; [Welcome To The Armed Forces Retirement Home]

Cox was hired from private industry in 2002 to bring down costs. In the past three years, the workforce has been cut from 736 to 447, and the operating budget has been reduced from \$76 million to \$54.7 million, according to figures provided by the home. The maintenance staff has shrunk from 127 to nine, despite a rising population, according to the senators' letter.

March 22, 2007 By Steve Vogel and Michael E. Ruane, Washington Post Staff Writers

Reports of a rising death rate and rooms spattered with blood, urine and feces at the Armed Forces Retirement Home prompted the Pentagon yesterday to begin investigating conditions at the veterans facility in Northwest Washington.

The Government Accountability Office warned the Pentagon this week that residents of the home “may be at risk” in light of allegations of severe health-care problems. Residents have been admitted to Walter Reed Army Medical Center with “the most serious type of pressure sores” and, in one case, with maggots in a wound, according to a GAO letter sent to the Defense Department.

Timothy Cox, the chief operating officer for the retirement home, said yesterday that the accusations are “without merit,” and he blasted the GAO for making “inflammatory allegations” without investigating them.

The reports came from medical personnel who treat residents at the historic veterans home, formerly known as the U.S. Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Home. The facility, run by an independent federal agency under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense, is home to more than 1,100 enlisted retirees, many of them veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

The Pentagon sent a team of four doctors on an unscheduled visit yesterday morning to view the conditions and speak to officials and residents. The team was appointed Tuesday in response to the letter sent a day earlier to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates by David M. Walker, the comptroller general and head of the GAO.

The letter reported allegations that inspectors received during its “oversight and monitoring” of the home, mandated by Congress in 2005. According to Walker’s letter, the allegations include a “rising number of resident deaths,” an increase in the rates of admission to Walter Reed, resident rooms befouled with human waste, and veterans suffering from bedsores.

Those who raised questions about the medical care have suffered retaliation from the private company that manages the veterans home, the medical personnel told GAO investigators.

Cox was hired from private industry in 2002 to bring down costs. In the past three years, the workforce has been cut from 736 to 447, and the operating budget has been reduced from \$76 million to \$54.7 million, according to figures provided by the home. The maintenance staff has shrunk from 127 to nine, despite a rising population, according to the senators’ letter.

Walter Reed: **Former Inspector Reports** **“Widespread And Dangerous**

Problems In Nearly All The Buildings”

“They More Or Less Told Me, Just Be Quiet And Let It Go. “I Won’t Sit Back And Watch Someone Get Killed”



“So the building the soldiers moved to is just as messed up as Building 18?” asked 9NEWS NOW Reporter Bruce Leshan. “Yes. Every one of the buildings at Walter Reed is the same way, or worse.”

3/16/2007 Written by Bruce Leshan, 9NEWS NOW

Washington, DC (WUSA) -- A major 9NEWS NOW EXCLUSIVE -- allegations from a former inspector at Walter Reed of widespread and dangerous problems in nearly all the buildings at the Army’s premier hospital.

Burst steam pipes near electrical cables, rats, mold, and holes in floors and walls - all of that extends far beyond the well-publicized problems at the notorious Building 18.

And 9NEWS NOW has learned managers may have been slow to respond.

A worried quality control inspector, Mark Cordell, finally quit last week in frustration, and brought his fears to 9NEWS NOW.

“I won’t sit back and watch someone get killed,” he says while running through 81 pictures of the problems on a laptop computer.

Cordell says the worst of it may be Building 40. The old research institute has been condemned, but last week, the private contractor now responsible for maintaining Walter Reed sent workers in to fix a leak.

Cordell points to a picture showing the terrible decay inside the building and says, “The water is actually on the ground floor here. There is water halfway across the ground floor.

“And there’s electricity too. There’s high voltage that goes to this building. Two thirteen thousand volt transformers. Through the basement filled with water.”

Cordell took more pictures in Building 1, the old hospital, that’s now the main administration building. Water damage in the walls; holes in the ceilings next to electric cables and computer servers; hazardous waste stored between occupied floors; and leaking pipes that are rotting floor joists.

“The steam pipes below these buildings have burst, and it’s making the rafters on the basement floor wet. People work on those floors,” says Cordell.

When the Washington Post exposed the black mold in Building 18, where wounded soldiers recover, the contractor sent Cordell in to coordinate repairs. He says he did 250 to 300 work orders in two weeks.

The Army moved many of the injured soldiers to Building 14 -- and Cordell says as soon as they arrived the troops found more problems.

“So the building the soldiers moved to is just as messed up as Building 18?” asked 9NEWS NOW Reporter Bruce Leshan.

“Yes. Every one of the buildings at Walter Reed is the same way, or worse.”

Cordell has a stack of e-mails -- nearly a week of trying to get managers to hire a qualified high voltage electrician to shut off the power to the flooded Building 40.

He finally went to the Garrison Commander who thanked him. But he’s still unsure if it’s been fixed.

He says, “They more or less told me, just be quiet and let it go.

“Well you know what, I can’t let that go. Look at this, this is corrosion, stuff just wasted away. When they fix one steam leak, it just bursts somewhere else.”



MORE:

While Wounded Troops Get Rotting, Shitty Conditions, Check Out What The VIPs Get At Walter Reed



No mice or mold in sight in one of the six VIP suites at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

March 19, 2007 By Gregg Zoroya, USA TODAY

Disclosures of substandard housing for troops treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center are prompting Congress to investigate whether the Army is running a plush ward at the complex for VIPs at the expense of ordinary war casualties.

House investigators are asking "if the allocations of resources is in any way adversely impacting the treatment of the troops," Rep. John Tierney, D-Mass., told USA TODAY in response to inquiries about the six-suite ward.

The large, comfortable suites on the hospital's top floor are reserved for the president, the vice president, federal judges, members of Congress and the Cabinet, high-ranking military officials and even foreign dignitaries and their spouses.

The only enlisted members of the military who are eligible to stay there are recipients of the Medal of Honor.

The suites have carpeted floors, antique furniture and fine china in the dining rooms. That's a stark contrast to mold- and mice-ridden housing that some wounded troops had been found to be living in.

The ward is staffed by 21 nurses, doctors and clinicians. It averages 72 inpatients and 2,600 outpatient visits a year, said administrator Frances Cheever.

The Eisenhower Executive Nursing Suite, also known as Ward 72, features heightened security, including bullet-proof windows and secure telephone lines. Among the other touches are flat-panel televisions and curio cabinets filled with gifts from foreign leaders.

Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., spent most of his final year in office in Ward 72. He retired in 2003 at age 100 and died the same year.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

31 Mar 2007 & 01 Apr 2007 Reuters & (KUNA) & By Laura King, L.A. Times & AP & (KUNA) & Ireland.com

There had been a serious security breach this week in the heavily fortified Green Zone in central Baghdad, which houses the Iraqi government and the U.S. embassy.

Two explosives vests of the kind typically worn by suicide bombers had been found, he said, without giving the exact location of the discovery. An investigation was under way.

A U-S military spokesman says the discovery “reflects the nature of the security challenge” that U-S forces are facing.

Two leading Iraqi figures escaped a bid on their lives near the Iraqi capital on Sunday, police said.

Police said the futile assassination attempt targeted Omar Al-Jabbouri, the advisor of the vice president, and Omar Abdel Sattar Al-Karbouli, member of the parliament and representative of the National Accord Front.

A bomb blew up close to a motorcade boarding the two leading figures in the district of Al-Yarmouk, west of the capital, police said. The explosion wounded one bodyguard.

Guerrillas ambushed a vehicle carrying workers employed at an Iraqi military base near Hawija, 70 km (43 miles) southwest of Kirkuk, killing eight and wounding two, police said. Four brothers were among the dead.

In Mosul, four Iraqi policemen were injured due to a mortar attack on Faisaliyah area.

Two truck bombs killed two people and wounded 17 at an Iraqi army base east of the northern city of Mosul today.

Police said the two dead were civilians while most of the wounded were soldiers.

Clashes had broken out in the Sinaea area where the explosions occurred, they added.

Guerillas killed an Iraqi police lieutenant-colonel and wounded his driver in the city of Tikrit, 175 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Omar al-Jubouri, a member of the Sunni Islamic Party and a parliament member, escaped a roadside bomb attack in the Yarmouk district of western Baghdad. No one in his motorcade was hurt, the office of the Islamic Party said. Police said two of his guards were wounded.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

What Is Blair Complaining About?

“He Doesn’t Give A Damn About The Prisoners Or Any Other British Military Personnel”

March 31, 2007 by Pham Binh, ZNet. Pham Binh is an activist and recent graduate of Hunter College in NYC. His articles have been published at Asia Times Online and Monthly Review Online. His blog is <http://prisonerofstarvation.blogspot.com> and he can be reached at anita_job@yahoo.com

British Prime Minister Tony Blair is mad as hell that Iran grabbed 15 sailors and marines in the Persian Gulf.

When Iran released a letter from Faye Turney, the only female sailor, Blair said “It is cruel and callous to do this to somebody in this position and playing this kind of game - it is a disgrace.” He even labelled their seizure “blatant aggression.” Iran has begun showing TV footage of some of the prisoners asking embarrassing questions like shouldn’t the British be getting out of Iraq?

Cruel, callous, and disgrace are strong words.

But I have two words for Mr. Blair and his phony outrage: Guantanamo Bay.

He (and the prisoners) are lucky they weren’t detained by U.S. forces where:

- 1.) They would disappear into a legal black hole after being labelled “enemy combatants.” Up until the Military Commissions Act of 2006 which legalized torture, ended the guarantee to habeas corpus, kangaroo courts, and secret distention, everyone detained in the so-called “War on Terror” has been subjected to this treatment by the U.S. military and intelligence agencies which is reminiscent of Hitler’s Germany or Stalin’s Russia.
- 2.) They would be sadistically tortured. Perhaps they would be subjected to beatings, water torture, forced to stay up for more than 24 hours at a time, force-fed when they went on hunger strike, and subjected to sexual and religious humiliation.
- 3.) They would “disappear” and not be allowed to communicate with their families, friends, or most of all, lawyers. After five, six, or seven years they would miraculously reappear and “confess” to committing acts of terrorism in a military tribunal instead of a court of law.

What Iran is doing - coerced statements and ridiculous TV “interviews” - to the British prisoners is positively humane by comparison.

Of course Iran is using these marines and sailors as pawns for political leverage!

With a British-American naval armada consisting of minesweepers and two carrier battle groups (a third carrier is on its way) stationed off Iran's coast and war talk coming from both sides of the aisle in Washington, this move shouldn't have come as a surprise. When superpowers and their poodle allies try to bully other countries, this is the price they pay.

Too bad it's a bunch of working class sailors and marines who are paying it, not those responsible, i.e. Bush and Blair.

And if this is Blair's idea of "blatant aggression," what the hell was invading Iraq under false pretenses? A picnic?

Over 650,000 Iraqis have died according to the British medical journal, The Lancet. Blair's government publicly dismissed the findings, but internally their Ministry of Defence's chief scientific advisor thought the study's methods were "robust" and "balanced" while other scientists working for their Department for International Development thought that the study was an "underestimation of mortality."

Over 130 British personnel have died in Iraq, and yet Blair has refused to meet with anyone from Military Families Against the War, forcing them to launch a petition to set up a meeting.

Somehow, he managed to find the time to meet with the families of Israel soldiers kidnapped by Hezbollah but he couldn't find the time to meet with the military families of his own country! And now we are supposed to believe he cares about the welfare of British troops?

If Blair is outraged, he's outraged at Iran making him look like the fool he is.

He doesn't give a damn about the prisoners or any other British military personnel, otherwise he wouldn't have put them in harm's way by invading and occupying Iraq.

His condemnations ring hollow as his closest ally tortures and convicts its way to defeat in the "war on terror."

Illinois Apple and Pork Festival A Terrorist Target

March 25, 2007 by Zbigniew Brzezinski, Washington Post [Excerpts]

That America has become insecure and more paranoid is hardly debatable.

A recent study reported that in 2003, Congress identified 160 sites as potentially important national targets for would-be terrorists. With lobbyists weighing in, by the end of that year the list had grown to 1,849; by the end of 2004, to 28,360; by 2005, to 77,769.

The national database of possible targets now has some 300,000 items in it, including the Sears Tower in Chicago and an Illinois Apple and Pork Festival.

Just last week, here in Washington, on my way to visit a journalistic office, I had to pass through one of the absurd “security checks” that have proliferated in almost all the privately owned office buildings in this capital -- and in New York City.

A uniformed guard required me to fill out a form, show an I.D. and in this case explain in writing the purpose of my visit.

Would a visiting terrorist indicate in writing that the purpose is “to blow up the building”?

Would the guard be able to arrest such a self-confessing, would-be suicide bomber? To make matters more absurd, large department stores, with their crowds of shoppers, do not have any comparable procedures. Nor do concert halls or movie theaters. Yet such “security” procedures have become routine, wasting hundreds of millions of dollars and further contributing to a siege mentality.

Government at every level has stimulated the paranoia.

Consider, for example, the electronic billboards over interstate highways urging motorists to “Report Suspicious Activity” (drivers in turbans?).

OCCUPATION REPORT

“A Police Officer Caught Smuggling Weapons To Be Used Against British Troops”

“Some Police Officers Had Apparently Colluded In The Attack On Their Own Station”

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

20 March 2007 By Paul Wood, BBC News defence correspondent, Dhi Qhar [Excerpts]

“You must get away from Basra,” said the British army. “The view you get there is too negative. We’ll take you to Muthana or Dhi Qar - those are the real success stories.”

Dhi Qar and its neighbour Muthana were the first two provinces to get control of their own security from the British, last year. They are held up as a model of how things should work in Basra.

After arriving at the main base in Dhi Qar, Col Ed Brown - of the newly-formed Rifles Regiment - took us to the police headquarters in Dhi Qar's capital, Nasiriyah.

Once at the police station, senior officers boasted of the low murder rate - less than 30 a month and mostly tribal killings. They looked forward to new business investment in the province, even tourists.

This was the good news story in Dhi Qar the Army was so anxious for us to see. But after listening to half an hour of this, Brig Gen Ghalib al Jaza'aere could contain himself no longer.

A gaunt figure, once imprisoned under Saddam, the general is now the Ministry of Interior official in overall charge of Dhi Qar and Muthana.

More recently, two of his sons were killed by the militias. He was in no mood for public relations.

At 0430 that morning, he said, the Mehdi militia had attacked the main police station in neighbouring Muthana with rocket-propelled grenades.

Minutes earlier, those guarding the station had mysteriously disappeared. Some police officers had apparently colluded in the attack on their own station.

The police chief for Dhi Qar, Gen Abdul Hussein Al Saffe, was also in the room. I asked him how many of his own men he couldn't trust because they were linked to the illegal militias.

"One third," he said, adding that they had political protection and he could not sack them.

The stories came pouring out.

A drug smuggler captured and sent to Baghdad but taken to a mental hospital for "treatment" lasting a couple of days then freed; a double murderer sentenced to death then mysteriously allowed out of jail; a police officer caught smuggling weapons to be used against British troops.

They sacked that officer, they said, but he was reinstated and even promoted by Baghdad.

A more immediate problem for these two senior officers is that, since January, they have received none of their budget from Baghdad.

Wages are paid, but there is no money for fuel, vehicles, equipment or weapons.

The hope now of the British high command, according to one senior officer, is to “tip-toe away from southern Iraq” leaving behind some kind of security structure which will survive.

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



Foreign occupation soldiers of the U.S. 6-9 squadron, 3rd brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, search an Iraqi citizens home at night in al-Khala village outside Muqadiyah, 90 kilometers north of Baghdad, March 5, 2007. (AP Photo/Dusan Vranic)

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

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

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

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

Troops Invited:

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email contact@militaryproject.org:. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

**“Cruel And Useless” NY City
Shitbird Cops Break The Law
Wholesale In Public:
Criminals In Uniform Arrest 220 Citizens
Who Found “Lost” Property Without The
Legal Authority To Do So**

“despite the fact that even the city’s own personal property law gives people 10 days to turn in found property worth more than \$20”

3.23.07 By Lynn Scarff, Socialist Worker Letter To The Editor

AS IF enough people weren’t languishing in jails in New York on charges of petty crimes or drugs, the New York Police Department has set out to lock even more up.

Last March, the NYPD started “Operation Lucky Bag,” in which police planted unattended bags in subway stations around the city, waited to see who would take them, and then immediately swooped in to arrest them.

It was recently reported that a total of 220 people were arrested last year in the sting—and it’s still continuing.

What a ridiculous stunt, and one that does something that I frankly thought was impossible: making the NYPD look even more cruel and useless when it comes to protecting the rights of ordinary people.

According to New York police, Operation Lucky Bag has cut crime on subways and caught many “career criminals.” But that’s just not true, according to the statistics. In fact, more than half of those arrested had no prior criminal records.

That includes Aquarius Cheers and Kia Graves, who recently went out to get diapers for their daughter and ended up getting busted instead. According to NY1 News, while waiting for a train at 59th Street, Cheers saw an unattended Verizon bag and looked inside. “I saw there was some electronics. Next thing I know, the train is coming,” he said.

The couple picked up the bag and rushed to make the train. “I was like ‘just bring the bag,’ not thinking twice about it,” said Graves. “I was thinking, ‘Oh we could find a receipt in there,’ and possibly go back to the phone company Verizon.” Instead, a team of undercover officers grabbed Cheers and charged him with petty larceny.

What’s especially sickening about Operation Lucky Bag is that police are basically playing a game of moral “chicken” with unsuspecting passers-by—betting (and hoping) that they can tempt people into committing a “crime.” It’s a perfect example of our cynical criminal justice system, and the bizarre things that constitute a crime in the society we live in.

I, frankly, have some sympathy for a lot of people who may be desperate enough to “steal” an unattended bag. Maybe that person was recently laid off. Maybe they can’t afford their exorbitant rent (like an increasing number of New Yorkers). Maybe they have kids they need to feed and clothe, and are wondering how to do it.

And just how do the police distinguish between someone who picks a bag up to “steal” it, and someone who picks a bag up in order to see if they can return it to an owner—like Cheers and Graves?

It’s clear: they don’t make any room for such ideas, despite the fact that even the city’s own personal property law gives people 10 days to turn in found property worth more than \$20.

As the New York Times commented in a recent editorial, “It is remarkable how many people in this city are willing to track down the owners of lost cellphones, wallets or bags.

“Arresting good Samaritans is bad enough, but encouraging them not to help in the future through this kind of overly aggressive policing is a downright shame. The best thing to do with this misbegotten program would be to end it.”

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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