

GI SPECIAL 5D25:



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

PRISONERS AGAINST THE WAR

Prisoners Against the War is hosting an essay contest for all prisoners in the country. Prisoners must write, in 250 words or less, an essay as to why they are against the war in Afghanistan and Iraq. The essay will eventually be sent to the troops still in harm's way. First place \$100; 2nd prize \$50; 3rd prize \$25; 4th prize \$10.

*Sponsored by Stanley Howard,
Prisoners Against the War
(PAW), the Military Project,
Statesville Speaks newsletter.*

Send your essay to:

*Bill Ryan, c/o Statesville
Speaks, 2237 Sunnyside Ave,
Westchester, IL 60154.*

[From The New Abolitionist]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Bush's Plan To Kill More American Troops Succeeding! Iraq Deaths Up 21%; “Over The Past Six Months, American Troops Have Died In Iraq At The Highest Rate Since The War Began”

[Thanks to Alberto Jaccoma, The Military Project, D & Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

April 14, 2007 ROBERT H. REID - THE ASSOCIATED PRESS & Apr. 16, 2007 By Shashank Bengali, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

Deaths among American soldiers climbed 21 percent in Baghdad compared with the previous two months.

Over the past six months, American troops have died in Iraq at the highest rate since the war began, an indication that the conflict is becoming increasingly dangerous for U.S. forces even after more than four years of fighting.

From October 2006 through last month, 532 American soldiers were killed, the most during any six-month period of the war.

March also marked the first time that the U.S. military suffered four straight months of 80 or more fatalities. April, with at least 58 service members killed through Monday, is on pace to be one of the deadliest months of the conflict for American forces.

Senior American military officials attribute much of the increase to the Baghdad security crackdown, now in its third month. But the rate of fatalities was increasing even before a more aggressive strategy began moving U.S. troops from heavily fortified bases into smaller neighborhood outposts throughout the capital, placing them at greater risk of roadside bombings and small-arms attacks.

Nearly 38 percent of military deaths since October have occurred in the capital, compared with 29 percent over the previous 12 months, according to the Iraq Coalition

Casualty Count (<http://icasualties.org>), an independent, U.S.-based Web site that monitors military and civilian casualties.

Some of the heaviest fighting has occurred in Diyala province, northeast of Baghdad, where 44 American service members have died so far this year – more than in the previous 22 months combined.

In the past, U.S. fatalities had a tendency to spike in months of heavy combat, then drop to lower levels in subsequent months. April 2004 and November 2004 were the deadliest months of the war for American forces, due mostly to intense combat in Iraq's western Anbar province.

The past several months, however, have brought the longest period of sustained heavy casualties since U.S. troops entered Iraq in March 2003.

December saw 112 soldiers die, the most since November 2004, and the subsequent three months registered 83, 80 and 81 fatalities, respectively.

Under the new security plan, Baghdad has supplanted Anbar as the deadliest region for American forces.

Of the 58 deaths so far in April, 34 have occurred in the capital. The figures include all deaths, not just those that the military says occurred due to hostile action.

"We do what we can to mitigate that risk," said Lt. Col. Chris Garver, a military spokesman.

"But General Petraeus' plan is to be out there in the neighborhoods as opposed to hunkered down on a FOB (forward operating base)."

Oregon Soldier Killed In Iraq

April 25, 2007 The Associated Press

OTIS, Ore. — A soldier from this small coastal city was one of nine paratroopers with the 82nd Airborne Division killed this week by a suicide bomber in Iraq, his father said.

Mike Vaughan, 20, of Otis and the other soldiers were members of the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team at Fort Bragg, N.C. It was the deadliest attack on the 82nd Airborne since 1969.

Vaughan, whose rank was not immediately available, is the third Lincoln County soldier to die in Iraq in the past six weeks.

Lance Cpl. Nathaniel Windsor, 20, of Newport died March 11 and Sgt. Nicholas Lightner, 29, of Toledo died March 21.

The soldier's father, George Vaughan, told The Oregonian that his son had been home on leave in March.

“He had seen enough,” Vaughan said Tuesday. “He wanted to come home and go to school. But he was proud to be serving, and even though he was afraid to go back, he went because of his comrades and to finish off his commitment.”

Mike Vaughan signed up to join the Army before he graduated from Taft High School in Lincoln City, his father said. Two months after his 2004 graduation, he went to boot camp.

“I am a disabled vet from the first Gulf War, and I think he wanted to be involved,” George Vaughan said. The young soldier’s grandfather, Bill Vaughan, is a Korean War veteran.

While home last month, he spent time with his school friend, Jesse Branum-O’Dell.

“He was outgoing, a fun person to be around,” Branum-O’Dell said. “He did tell me some things that were going on with the war, and he definitely saw some things that other people would have never believed.

“I got the feeling something was bothering him, like he didn’t want to go back out, but he never came out and said that.”

Ore. Marine Killed In Iraq, Family Says

April 25, 2007 The Associated Press

BURNS, Ore. — A Marine from Oregon has been killed by an improvised explosive device in Iraq, his family said Tuesday.

Lance Cpl. Dale Peterson, 20, was killed in action but the family was still learning details, said his older sister, Melissa Davies, from his mother’s home in Burns, where family members have gathered.

Peterson was with the 2nd Combat Engineer battalion of the 2nd Marine Division, based at Camp Lejeune, N.C. He joined the Marines after graduating from Redmond High School in 2005.

Davies, 23, who lives in Boise, Idaho, said her brother was the second-youngest of four siblings, the rest all sisters.

“Our world revolves around each other,” she said. “We talk to each other every day.”

She said Dale had been in Iraq for less than a month.

Peterson is the second Central Oregon Marine killed in action in less than a year. Lance Cpl. Randy Newman of Bend was killed by a roadside bomb while on patrol last August.

Peterson was the 87th military service members from Oregon or with close ties to the state killed in the war in Iraq, according to a list compiled by Gov. Ted Kulongoski's office.

Soldier Dies In Non-Combat Related Incident In Iraq

April 25, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070425-07

BAGHDAD, Iraq – A Soldier assigned to Multi-National Corps, Iraq, died April 24, 2007 in a non-combat related incident.

Clint Moore Remembered As One Great Guy



4/25/2007 By STEVE REED and REECE MURPHY, Of the Record Staff, Record Publishing Co.

There is shock and dismay both at the home base of the 82nd Airborne Division and in Benson, as people mourned the deadliest day of combat in the division's history since the Vietnam War.

Nine paratroopers, including Staff Sgt. Clint Moore, 27, of Benson, died and 20 others were injured Monday when two explosives-laden trucks blew up near a patrol base in Iraq's Diyala province.

But those lives are more than numbers and Sgt. Moore, but by all accounts, was an all-around great guy.

Sgt. Moore's sister, Leanne Benson of Benson, described him as charismatic and said people were drawn to him.

"He was such a sociable, outgoing guy," Mrs. Benson said. "He loved music, he loved life. He lived his life to the fullest." Mrs. Benson said all her brother ever talked about was joining the military and believed in its mission in Iraq. "I want everybody to know he believed in what he was doing," Mrs. Benson said. "He was very dedicated."

Sgt. Moore's aunt, Bobbie Parrish of Benson, said there were no words to describe what it felt like to hear her nephew had been killed.

"When Clint was home he said, 'Aunt Bobbie, I won't come back,'" Mrs. Parrish said. "He knew he was heading into the worst of the fighting and felt like things were so bad over there he wouldn't make it. We're proud of him and have been all the time."

Another relative talked about Sgt. Moore's kindness.

"He was one of the best boys in the world," Sgt. Moore's aunt, Jean Barefoot of Benson, said. "I loved him as much as one of my boys. He was good to everybody and had a good heart."

Sgt. Moore returned to Iraq for his second tour of duty last August. He was scheduled to return home in January, Mrs. Barefoot said.

Cora Godwin, an English teacher at South Johnston High School, remembered Sgt. Moore as a very outgoing, well-rounded student. He graduated from South Johnston in 1998.

"He was a young man who knew even as a high school senior that he wanted a military career," Ms. Godwin said. "During his senior year, the Army band performed at the school and Clint and several other boys who planned to enter the military were recognized in the assembly."

Ms. Godwin, who lives in the Meadow community where Sgt. Moore's family lives, said everyone has been touched by his death.

"There are family members and friends of the family here at South Johnston," Ms. Godwin said. "The entire student body is aware of the importance of what he's done. South Johnston is one of the great rural, wholesome schools left where we're aware of his patriotism and appreciative of the sacrifice he made."

It will be seven to 10 days before Sgt. Moore's body arrives in Benson, Mrs. Barefoot said. Ms. Godwin said the time lapse makes the experience surreal.

"It's hard to put closure on something you've not experienced yet," Ms. Godwin said. "In the Meadow community, where Clint lived, family and friends have been rallying around."

Family Says Soldier With Knoxville Ties Among 9 Killed In Iraq

Apr 25, 2007 Knoxville (AP)

A soldier who grew up in Knoxville is one of nine 82nd Airborne Division Paratroopers killed in a suicide truck bombing in Iraq.

The family of 20-year-old PFC Michael Rodriguez confirmed his death.

Relatives told the Knoxville News Sentinel that Rodriguez lived in Knoxville as a boy and attended Central High School in the city.

He had been in Iraq since August, and had been engaged since January.

Local Soldier Wounded Trying To Save Friend



Pfc. Steven James Cornford

April 25, 2007 by Toni Sawhill, Mountain Home News

Easter morning did not include baskets and colored eggs for one soldier. Instead he fought off insurgents and lost a comrade while serving in Iraq.

Pfc. Steven James Cornford, 18, of Mountain Home is stationed out of Fort Hood, Texas, with Alpha 38 1st Cavalry Division and he was recently deployed to Iraq.

While deployed to FOB Paliwoada Iraq with the United States Army, Cornford participated in an air assault into a small town northeast of Balad on Easter morning, Sunday, April 8.

While pursuing insurgents leaving the objective area, his fire team was engaged from close range with small arms, machine guns and grenades. Cornford was seriously wounded in the left shoulder during the firefight, but despite being injured he still bravely fought back and administered first aid to a fallen comrade, 1st Lt. Phillip Isaac Neel of Fredericksburg, Texas. Neel, however, later died from his injuries.

While in a field hospital at FOB Anaconda Iraq, Cornford was presented with the Purple Heart medal. "I'm glad he is being recognized. That kid's been through hell, and he's come a long way," said Cornford's father, Walter Cornford, with tears in his eyes.

Cornford has been evacuated to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. After treatment there he hopes to return to Fort Hood and Mountain Home during his convalescent leave for support from his family and friends.

Walter said Steven wants to continue with the Army even after Easter's events.

Pfc. Cornford's mother, Terri Cornford said, "Steven has been 'playing army' forever. When he was younger he use to dress-up in camo and play at Carl Miller Park. Stan Franks and Todd Monasterio use to call him 'park Rambo'."

Family Says Nebraska Soldier Killed Monday In Iraq

April 25, 2007 By ANNA JO BRATTON, Associated Press Writer

OMAHA, Neb.

A Nebraska man says his 28-year-old son was killed Monday in Iraq, possibly in the same attack that killed nine paratroopers with 82nd Airborne Division.

Ken Locker Sr. said he found out Tuesday afternoon that his son, Sgt. Ken Locker Jr., died in an attack Monday in Iraq. He was a soldier with the 82nd Airborne Division, the same division 26-year-old 1st Lt. Kevin Gaspers was in. Gaspers family was told Tuesday that he was killed Monday in a suicide bombing.

Ken Locker Sr. said Wednesday he had worried since he heard news of a deadly suicide truck bombing Monday that killed nine soldiers, the single deadliest attack for the 82nd Airborne Division in nearly 40 years.

Both were stationed in Fort Bragg, N.C., before they were deployed to Iraq last August.

Soldier From Prichard Killed In Iraq

April 10, 2007 By GEORGE WERNETH, Staff Reporter; Press-Register

Army Staff Sgt. Harrison "Duck" Brown, 31, a standout player on the Blount High School football team in the early 1990s, was killed Sunday in Iraq by a roadside bomb, family members said.

Brown, formerly of Prichard, was apparently killed by the bomb while riding in an Army humvee, his sister, Mary Dozier of Mobile, said Monday. She said her brother was a 1994 graduate of Blount and she noted that longtime Blount football coach Ben Harris took him "under his wing" and was a father figure to him.

She said her brother was "a sweet person" and that he had just visited Mobile for Mardi Gras while on leave before returning to Iraq.

According to family and friends, this was either Brown's third or fourth tour of duty in Iraq.

Harris said Brown was on the football team for four years 1991-1994 and was a wide receiver. "He made some great catches for us and he blocked well, too," Harris said. Blount won the state 5A high school football championship during Brown's four years on the team. Harris said Brown received a scholarship to play football for Tuskegee University.

Brown had "a great attitude and was a good student," Harris said. "If you want a son, you want one like him." He said the death of his former player was "really a big shock," adding, "My heart goes out to his family."

Dozier said her brother was married to Delisha Brown, who was "his high school sweetheart" and who also graduated from Blount in 1994. She currently is residing at Fort Benning, Ga., where her husband was based. They have three children, ages, 9, 12 and 14, Dozier said.

Brown's mother is Chris Ann Brown of Mobile and his father was the late Johnnie Brown of Mobile.

Dozier said her brother played one year of college football at Tuskegee but then left to join the Army to help provide for his wife and family. He served in the Army for about 13 years, she said.

Brown and a longtime friend and neighbor, Jabari Dotch, played football and other sports together at Blount. Dotch said Brown also played basketball and baseball at Blount "and was the best pitcher on our baseball team."

Dotch, who now lives in Saraland, said Monday that his friend "was probably one of the most popular guys in the school. He was the most popular guy in our senior class."

He said: "He's my hero. Everybody needs to know he was a hero."

General Petraeus Stakes Out His Sitting Duck Soldiers In Isolated Death Traps

[It's hard to believe that Petraeus is practicing the same fatal idiocy the French tried in Vietnam: sticking little outposts in the countryside, where they were surrounded by Vietnamese nationalist forces that destroyed them, slowly, one at a time. And everybody knows who won that war. Over fifty years later, glory hound Petraeus has learned nothing or cares nothing about the heaps of dead troops this suicide tactic produced. Call it what it is: murder by command stupidity. T]

[Thanks to Katherine GY, The Military Project, & Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

Apr. 24, 2007 By Mark Kukis, Baghdad; TIME Magazine [Excerpts]

You never get much sleep at a patrol base at night.

In Ramadi, where Marines man several combat outposts amid the inner city, darkness often brings fear as Iraqi security forces come and go, leaving some Marines wondering whether they are among friends or enemies.

In Ghazaliya, a violent neighborhood in western Baghdad with similar combat outposts, nearby gunfire cracks through the inky blackness outside seemingly every time you drift off.

And in Diyala Province, where nine U.S. soldiers died Monday, troops stand watch on rooftops overlooking stretches of palm groves where they know insurgents dwell, waiting for the right moment to strike.

Increasingly across Iraq, U.S. forces are leaving the comfort and safety of their fortified mega-bases and establishing small combat outposts and patrol bases like the one insurgents struck outside Baquba that left 20 soldiers wounded as well.

Some patrol bases are well protected with blast walls and large numbers of troops.

Others are little more than abandoned houses that a few platoons circle with Humvees while hunkering down inside.

As a reporter frequently embedded with U.S. forces, I've visited many such patrol bases, and the sense of vulnerability at them is all too palpable.

The paratroopers tasked with controlling the volatile territory on the outskirts of Baquba knew they would face attacks from insurgents in the area as they stepped up their presence by manning such patrol bases.

But they saw little choice, since the ongoing surge strategy calls for U.S. forces to abandon the old notion of return-to-base patrols in favor of living full time in deadly areas.

[It would appear the silly reporter thinks the troops commanded themselves to become suicide soldiers. He writes of the paratroopers, “they saw little choice.” “They” had nothing whatever to say about it. “They” were given orders and followed them. One day, as in Vietnam, when the whole U.S. army rebelled against that war and refused to fight it any longer, “they” will decide enough is enough; no more suicide missions. As happened in Vietnam, the war will end and the troops will come home.

[That day is not as close as we might wish, but it is far, far closer now than any of the bloody-handed Democrat and Republican politicians in DC can possibly imagine. This will be the year the troops in Iraq are heard from, and when they speak and act against this dishonorable war to save the honor of our country, and their own lives, “they” will shake the world because “they” have decided no more soldiers will die in an evil Imperial war. T]

Word of yesterday's deadly assault in eastern Diyala Province spread quickly among U.S. troops as far away as the western city of Tikrit, where soldiers with the 82nd Airborne kept a close watch on reports of their comrades sent to the Baqubah area to deal with rising violence there.

The strike was what U.S. soldiers call a complex attack, one involving elaborate planning to maximize casualties. In the end, the patrol base was all or mostly destroyed, with several soldiers dead beneath the rubble.

At least one other U.S. patrol base remains in the same area of the Diyala River valley as American troops struggle against insurgents who appear to be increasingly bent on turning the territory around Baquba into the most deadly front of the war in Iraq for U.S. forces.

Notes From A Lost War:

**“A Convoy Of Five Humvees Was Assembled” For “A Short Drive To A Spaghetti Factory”
The Spaghetti Factory Gets Blown Up After Inspection For U.S. Base Use;**

Two Days Later, Nobody Knows How Much Damage; [Too Dangerous To Go Look]

April 25, 2007 By David Finkel, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD, April 24 -- The soldiers called him Bob, and for the past several weeks, until Tuesday morning, he was the biggest obstacle to the success of an important mission in a small but crucial corner of the Iraq war.

"We can't get anybody to get Bob out. No one wants to do it," Army Maj. Brent Cummings, executive officer of the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, said with worry one recent morning as Bob's story began unfolding. Cummings was looking at an aerial photograph of an area in east Baghdad called Kamaliya, where there was an abandoned spaghetti factory with a hole in the courtyard, a hole in which some of his soldiers had discovered Bob.

Bob: It's shorthand for "bobbin' in the float," Cummings explained.

Float: It's shorthand for "two to three feet of raw sewage," he further explained.

Bobbin' in the float is shorthand, then, for yet another lesson in the comedy, absurdity and tragedy that is any moment in this war.

Bob was found as a result of the new strategy of trying to secure Baghdad by temporarily increasing the number of troops and moving them into neighborhood outposts. After the soldiers identified the spaghetti factory as the best place from which to secure poor, rough, dirty, insurgent-ridden Kamaliya, they began clearing the factory in order to move in.

One day, in one area, they found 16 rocket-propelled grenades, three antitank grenades, 11 hand grenades and 21 mortar shells. Another day, they found 14 more mortar shells. Another day, they found the makings of three roadside bombs. Another day, they found a square metal cover in the courtyard that they thought might be booby-trapped. Ever so carefully, they lifted it and found themselves peering down into the factory's septic tank at Bob.

The body, floating, was in a billowing, once-white shirt. The toes were gone. The fingers were gone. The head, separated and floating next to the body, had a gunshot hole in the face.

The body, it was quickly decided, would have to be removed before the 120 soldiers could move in. "It's a morale issue. Who wants to live over a dead body?" Cummings said.

He paused.

"I'd like to put him in a final resting place," he said, "as opposed to a final floating place."

But how? That was the problem. No one wanted to touch Bob. Not the soldiers. Not the Iraqi police. No one.

Days passed. The need for the soldiers in Kamaliya increased. Bob floated on. One day the skull sank from view. Another day a local Iraqi speculated that there might be more bodies in the septic tank, that Bob might simply be the one on top.

Finally, with no easy solution in sight, Cummings decided to go see Bob for himself.

How easy is anything in Iraq, such as a short drive to a spaghetti factory?

A combat plan was drawn up, just in case. A convoy of five Humvees was assembled. Body armor was strapped on. Earplugs were pushed in. Protective eyeglasses were lowered into place.

Off the convoy went, slowly, never exceeding 15 mph, because slow and steady is the best way to find a roadside bomb before it explodes, unless it is a bomb with a particular kind of trigger that is best defeated by flying pedal to metal. Yard by yard, decision by decision, the convoy advanced, past trash bags that might be hiding bombs, along dirt roads under which might be buried bombs, and now past something unseen that, just after the last Humvee in the convoy passed by, exploded.

No damage. No injuries. Just some noise and smoke in the air. The convoy kept going, now past a dead water buffalo, on its back, grossly swollen, one more thing in this part of Baghdad on the verge of exploding, and now the Humvees stopped against a high wall, on the other side of which was a yellowish building topped by a torn tin roof banging around in the wind.

"The spaghetti factory," Cummings announced. Soon he and Capt. Jeff Jager, commander of the company that would be moving to the factory, were staring into the septic tank, and suddenly Cummings had an idea.

"Lye and bleach and sanitize and cover it up," he said. "We bring our chaplain here, and we'll say some words and mark it."

Easy. Done.

Jager shook his head. "I think you gotta clean it out," he said. "I mean we're gonna have some heartache moving into a building that's got a dead body in a sewage septic tank."

"Yeah," Cummings said, realizing Jager was right. "We want to do right."

"Arabic culture, you know?" Jager said. "They bury their dead in 24 hours."

"I mean someone has disgraced him as bad as you can possibly disgrace a human being," Cummings said. "And there's not a playbook that we can go to that says when you open it up: Here's how you remove a body from a septic tank."

“The one contractor I brought up here, he was willing to do everything here, but he wanted nothing to do with that,” Jager said. “I asked him how much it would take for him to get that out of there, and he said, ‘You couldn’t pay me enough.’ “

“The Army has systems for this -- if it were our body,” Cummings said. “If it were a U.S. soldier, sure. We would be there in a heartbeat.”

“We could drop down there and get it out ourselves,” Jager said. “But--”

“But what soldier am I going to ask to go in there to do that?” Cummings said.

They continued to stare.

This is where the dining facility would be, he now told Cummings. This is where the soldiers would sleep.

They stepped outside the front gate, onto the street. Surrounded by soldiers and engineers, they walked down the street to plot a route for concrete blast walls that would be brought in by truck to encircle the factory. They turned a corner to keep plotting the route, and that was when Cummings saw a mud-brick hovel practically attached to the factory wall like a barnacle, and a shirtless man outside the shack who struggled to cover himself as the soldiers came through his gate.

Through an interpreter, Cummings began to explain why they were there, that U.S. soldiers would soon be moving into the spaghetti factory, that a wall was going to be built.

I will leave, the man interrupted, shaking.

“No,” Cummings said, asking the interpreter to explain again what he had said.

I will leave, the man said again, explaining that he and his family had come to this little bit of land because they had been uprooted, that they had been here two years, that they meant no harm, that they had nowhere else to go, and then, at last hearing the interpreter, he said, I don’t have to leave?

“No,” Cummings said.

I don’t have to leave? the man said again, and then, as his shaking subsided, and his rush of words slowed, his family emerged from the shack. Child after child. An old woman. More children. And finally, a young woman, very pregnant, who stood in the doorway, trying to push her dirty hair off her dirty face with her dirty hands as she looked at the soldiers, at first breathing nervously, then easing into a slight smile as she heard the man saying thank you for saving them from the terrorists, for enclosing them in a wall, for allowing them to stay.

“You’re welcome. And thank you for allowing us in,” Cummings said, and soon after that, with the gratitude of a living Iraqi as fixed in his mind now as the horror of one who had been tortured and killed, his visit to see Bob ended.

There is such decency in the country, he said, back in his office. That was why, more than ever, he wanted Bob removed and given some kind of proper burial. "I would hope someone would do the same for my body. And for any human being," he said. "Otherwise, we're not human."

That was Monday.

And then came Tuesday, and a phone call in the morning from Jager, who had received a call from the factory owner's brother, who had received a call from someone who lived near the factory.

Cummings hung up.

"The spaghetti factory has been blown up," he said.

It was only a first report, he cautioned, but the report said that there were a dozen men, and they were armed, and they wore masks, and the explosion was huge.

"Gone."

Throughout the day, there were attempts to verify this, but even in Iraq some days are harder than others.

The wind was up, so much so that most helicopters were grounded, as was most aerial surveillance, other than a fighter jet, circling high, whose pilot reported that some of the factory appeared to have been destroyed.

How extensive was the damage?

As of Tuesday night, no one was able to say for sure.

What about the nervous man in the flimsy house?

Nothing.

And his dozen children?

Nothing.

And the pregnant woman who was able to finally manage a smile?

Nothing.

And the plan to move into Kamaliya? Would the factory still become the outpost?

"I hope so," Cummings said.

And Bob? Cummings shook his head. Bob, he said, was no longer the biggest obstacle.

Humvee Destroyed In Baghdad; Casualties Not Announced



A U.S. armoured vehicle burns shortly after a bomb attack in Baghdad, April 25, 2007.
REUTERS/Stringer

Apr 25 By THOMAS WAGNER (AP)

A roadside bomb hit a U.S. military convoy in Baiyaa, southwest Baghdad, setting fire to one of its Humvees, police said.

AP Television News footage from the scene showed flames and smoke rising from a Humvee on a two-lane road, which was closed off by at least one other Humvee and a U.S. tank. It was not immediately known if the attack caused any casualties.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Somalia Fighting Spreads To Kismayu

Apr 23, 2007 Al Jazeera and agencies

Troops from Somalia's transitional government have clashed with clan members in the southern port of Kismayu, as fighting in the capital, Mogadishu, entered a sixth day.

Government soldiers were reported to have been pushed to the edge of the town by late on Monday. Al Jazeera's Mohammed Adow said residents told him that up to 15 people had been killed.

“This morning fighting occurred between one of the main clans there, its militia was fighting Somali government forces and as the day developed ... the clan militia got the upper hand,” he said.

“This is a clan that has not been happy with the government coming to Kismayu and has been complaining ... to senior government officials.”

In Mogadishu, at least 37 more people were killed as fighters opposed to the transitional government battled Ethiopian forces.

Mukhtar Mohamed, a resident of Fagah in northern Mogadishu, said: “I have seen Ethiopian tanks taking positions and heavily shelling insurgent positions.

“The fighting is heavier (than) yesterday, the rivals are exchanging machine gun, mortar and anti-aircraft fire.”

Hussein Said Korgab, a spokesman for the Hawiye clan, Mogadishu's largest, said: “The fighting is very heavy and the casualties are steadily increasing everyday. The Ethiopian forces are hitting civilians indiscriminately.”

Ethiopian troops helped Somalia's interim government push the Union of Islamic Courts from the country's south and central regions in January.

Since then, fighting has steadily grown worse as remnants of the movement backed by Hawiye clansmen continue to fight, vowing to defeat the interim government and drive out foreign forces from the country.

TROOP NEWS

**Lieutenant Colonel In Command
Of Camp Cropper Prison Camp
Charged With “Pornography,
Dereliction Of Duty & Aiding The
Enemy”**

He Faces Charges In Iraq

April 25, 2007 By Jim Popkin, NBC News Investigative Unit

WASHINGTON - NBC News has learned that the commander of Camp Cropper, the massive U.S. Army detention center in Baghdad, has been charged with aiding the enemy.

The Army tells NBC News that military police arrested Lt. Col. William H. Steele several weeks ago and that he is being held at a detention facility in Kuwait. He now faces an Article 32 hearing, the military's equivalent of a grand jury investigation, to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to prosecute him.

An Army statement listed these charges against Steele: "One specification of a violation of Article 104, aiding the enemy; one specification of a violation of Article 134, retaining classified material; two specifications of violations of Article 133, conduct unbecoming an officer, for relationships involving an interpreter and another Iraqi female; five specifications of a violation of Article 92, failure to obey lawful orders for wrongfully storing classified materials, improperly marking classified materials, failing to obey an order from a superior officer, possession of pornography and dereliction of duty as an approving official for the expenditure of government funds."

The Army said no other U.S. military personnel are believed to be involved in the case.

Lt. Col. James Hutton, an Army public affairs officer, said he could not explain how or why Steele allegedly aided the enemy. An e-mail to Steele's wife was not returned, and Hutton said he did not yet have the names of Steele's lawyers.

Camp Cropper, located near Baghdad International Airport, is the Army's main holding facility for Iraqi insurgents and detainees. Several thousand people are held there now. Saddam Hussein was held there prior to his execution in December.

Ass-Kissing Officer Of The Year, So Far: Shit-Bird Col. Says Extending Deployments In Iraq Will "Alleviate The Stress" On Troops

[Thanks to Dennis O'Neil, Bring Them Home Now, who sent this in. He writes: "ya see this one? unbelievable..."]

April 24, 2007 By Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, – Extended overseas deployments affecting soldiers serving in Afghanistan and other locales overseen by U.S. Central Command should help to alleviate the stress on the Army, a senior U.S. officer in Afghanistan told Pentagon reporters today.

“I’m absolutely confident that that’s going to work and that’ll manage the pressure and the stress on the force,” Army Col. Martin Schweitzer, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division’s 4th Brigade Combat Team, said during a satellite-carried news conference.

[OK, so let’s give this piece of shit his very own 15 months in a Humvee in Diyala. He’d go for that right? He’s not some cowardly piece of shit that just wants others to take the risks of death or maiming while he sits safely in a chair in an office, right? Right? T]

All active U.S. Army units already operating within U.S. Central Command’s area of responsibility, including Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa, or en route there “will deploy for not more than 15 months and return home for not less than 12 months,” Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates announced April 11 at a Pentagon news conference.

The change automatically increased the length of soldiers’ overseas tours in those areas from 12 to 15 months.

Schweitzer acknowledged difficulty in measuring how the extended deployment affects individual soldiers under his command.

However, he expressed strong support for the personnel decisions made by senior defense department and Army leaders.

Army Medic Who Refused A Second Tour To Iraq Released From Military Prison

[Thanks to Katherine GY, The Military Project; D; and David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in. David Honish writes: Six weeks in the stockade vs. fifteen months in Iraq is an easy choice.]

April 20, 2007 Associated Press

BERLIN - A U.S. Army medic who refused to return for a second tour to Iraq was released from a military prison in Germany on Wednesday after serving a sentence for desertion, the U.S. military said.

Specialist Agustin Aguayo, 35, was convicted at a court martial in March of desertion and other lesser charges and sentenced to eight months in prison, well short of the possible maximum of seven years, in a case that has become a cause for peace activists.

With credit for time already served, he spent less than six weeks behind bars before being released, said U.S. European Command spokeswoman Lt. Col. Elizabeth Hibner.

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



Burial services for U.S. Army Pfc. John Landry Jr., March 27, 2007, at Wildwood Cemetery in Wilmington, Mass. Landry was killed by a roadside bomb, March 17 in Baghdad. (AP Photo/Chitose Suzuki)

Honorable Soldier Reports Scumbag Lt. Col. Jeff Bailey Threatened Him If He Told Truth About Tillman's Death: Pentagon Made "No Effort" To Find Out Who Ordered The Lies



Spc. Bryan O'Neal

Thomas F. Gimble, the Defense Department's acting inspector general, said that investigators could not determine who altered O'Neal's statement and that no attempt was made to examine the document's electronic history.

[Thanks to Alberto Jaccoma, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- The last soldier to see Army Ranger Pat Tillman alive, Spc. Bryan O'Neal, told lawmakers that he was warned by superiors not to divulge -- especially to the Tillman family -- that a fellow soldier killed Tillman.

O'Neal particularly wanted to tell fellow soldier Kevin Tillman, who was in the convoy traveling behind his brother at the time of the 2004 incident in Afghanistan.

"I wanted right off the bat to let the family know what had happened, especially Kevin, because I worked with him in a platoon and I knew that he and the family all needed to know what had happened," O'Neal testified.

"I was quite appalled that when I was actually able to speak with Kevin, I was ordered not to tell him."

Asked who gave him the order, O'Neal replied that it came from his battalion commander, then-Lt. Col. Jeff Bailey.

"He basically just said ... 'Do not let Kevin know, that he's probably in a bad place knowing his brother's dead,' " O'Neal told House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Henry Waxman.

"And he made it known I would get in trouble, sir, if I spoke with Kevin on it being fratricide."

O'Neal testified that his superiors had him write a statement about the incident for Tillman's Silver Star commendation. He said the final version contained false statements about enemy fire that had been inserted by someone else.

Thomas F. Gimble, the Defense Department's acting inspector general, said that investigators could not determine who altered O'Neal's statement and that no attempt was made to examine the document's electronic history.

Still, Senior Chief Petty Officer Stephen White told the official heroism-under-fire story at a May 3, 2004, memorial service for Tillman.

"It's a horrible thing that happened with Pat," White, a Navy SEAL who was Tillman's friend, told the committee. "I'm the guy that told America how he died, basically, at that memorial. It was incorrect. That does not sit well with me."

Though the military blamed the erroneous report on an inadequate initial investigation, Mary Tillman told ESPN Radio last month that everyone involved in the shooting knew immediately that her son had been shot three times in the head by a member of his platoon.

**GUESS WHO'S WORRIED
GUESS WHO ISN'T
GUESS WHY
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



Iraqi citizens watch a U.S. occupation soldier on a street during patrol in Baghdad, January 23, 2007. REUTERS/Erik de Castro (IRAQ)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

Apr 25 (AP) & Reuters & By Laith Hammoudi, McClatchy Newspapers

A bomber wearing a hidden belt of explosives attacked a police station in Iraq's province of Diyala on Wednesday, killing at least four policeman.

Wednesday's explosion occurred at the front gate of the police station in a marketplace in Balad Ruz city, 45 miles northeast of Baghdad, police said. All fatalities were policemen and the wounded included five policemen, authorities said.

An Iraqi interpreter was injured in a roadside bomb attack on a military patrol in the west Rashid district of Baghdad, the U.S. military said.

Guerrillas killed a police officer and wounded two others when they attacked a patrol car just south of the town of Tuz Khurmato, 175 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded three Iraqi soldiers when it exploded near a military patrol in Baghdad's Adhamiya district around 4,30 pm.

Police sources said that a policeman was injured in an IED explosion targeted a police patrol near Ghirnata square downtown Kirkuk city around 12,50 pm.

Police sources said that 2 policemen (one of them is a captain) were killed and 3 others were injured in an IED explosion targeted their patrol on Toz motorway near Salman Bec check point north east of Tikrit yesterday evening.

A traffic police was injured when a mortar shell hit Al Waziriyah neighborhood north east Baghdad around 6:10 pm.

An Iraqi army soldier was killed in clashes between Iraqi army force and insurgents in Amiriyah neighborhood west Baghdad around 5 ,00 pm.

**Iraqis Unite To Fight Against
“The Sectarian, Racist And
Unjust Wall That Seeks To
Divide Sunnis And Shiites”
“This Wall Shows The Evil Will Of
The Occupier And Its Sectarian And**

Terrorist Projects Against Our People”



BAGHDAD, IRAQ APRIL 25: Iraqis Shiites in the Sadr city neighborhood protest against the building of a wall isolating a Sunni area by U.S. military on April 25, 2007 in Baghdad. Wathiq Khuzai/AFP/Getty

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

Apr 25 By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press Writer & By Aseel Kami (Reuters)

Muqtada al-Sadr strongly condemned construction of a wall around a Sunni neighborhood in the capital, calling for demonstrations against the plan as a sign of “the evil will” of American “occupiers.”

In his first public comment on the Adhamiya wall, Sadr said in a statement: “If this wall shows anything, it proves the cunningness of the occupier.”

“We the sons of the Iraqi people will defend Adhamiya and all other areas they want to isolate. We will stand hand in hand with you (Sunnis) to demonstrate and protect our holy land.”

The remarks, in a statement read by an aide, were the first by the anti-occupation nationalist cleric since the U.S. military announced last week that it was building a three-mile long, 12-foot-high concrete wall in Azamiyah, a Sunni neighborhood.

Many Sunnis also protested the plan, saying they felt like they were being herded into a prison.

Hours later, al-Sadr supporters demonstrated in Baghdad's Shiite neighborhood of Sadr City, chanting "No, no to division." Others carried a banner that read, "the building of the Baghdad wall is the beginning of Baghdad's division,"

Protesters in Azamiyah carried banners Monday with slogans such as "No to the sectarian wall" and "Azamiyah children want to see Baghdad without walls."

In the statement, al-Sadr said the protests showed that Iraqis reject the wall that seeks to divide Sunnis and Shiites.

"Did we not see and hear the voices of those dear to us in Adhamiya as they shouted 'no, no to sectarianism', rejecting the sectarian, racist and oppressive wall that would isolate them from us?" Sadr said.

"I am confident that such honorable voices will bring down the wall," he said.

"This wall shows the evil will of the occupier and its sectarian and terrorist projects against our people," al-Sadr said in the statement.



BAGHDAD, IRAQ APRIL 25: Iraqis Shiites in the Sadr city neighborhood protest against the building of a wall isolating a Sunni area by U.S. military on April 25, 2007 in Baghdad. Wathiq Khuzaiie/AFP/Getty

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

April 25, 1974: Portugal Most Honorable Anniversary **The Army Rises And Overthrows A Fascist Dictator**



Socialist Worker.co.uk

Carl Bunin Peace History April 23-29

A peaceful uprising by army and civilians, known as the carnation revolution (Revolução dos Cravos), ended 48 years of fascism in Portugal.

The regime killed four before giving into the popular resistance.

25 April 2004 By Manny Thain, Socialist World.net [Excerpts]

It started at 12.25 am on Thursday 25 April 1974 when the rebel song, Grandola Vila Morena, played on the radio.

By early evening the end of dictatorship was announced.

The Movimento das Forças Armadas (MFA), radical mid-ranking officers, had executed the plan devised by Captain Otelo de Carvalho. Troops secured Lisbon and the second city, Porto. Key installations were taken, ministers arrested.

THE news of the regime's downfall spread like wildfire.

People flooded the streets.

MFA vehicles were mobbed by adoring crowds.

Thousands of school students marched, shouting "Down with fascism".

Red carnations, the symbol of the revolution, blossomed in rifle barrels and festooned the streets in this festival of freedom.

The ex-dictator, Marcello Caetano, cowered in National Guard barracks.

He was the successor to the fascist regime consolidated in the early 1930s by António Salazar. Paramilitary groups terrorised left-wing and industrial militants. Independent trade unions and the right to strike were illegal.

The secret police had a massive network of agents and informers.

Torture was systemic.

But it was the armed African liberation struggles - especially Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique - begun in the early 1960s, which drove the final nails into the coffin of the fascist regime.

Many mid-ranked officers had been influenced by the Marxism they read in counter-insurgency training.

Radicalisation continued in Africa with the brutal repression meted out to the people fighting for their freedom. A policy of fast-tracking new officers fuelled the anger.

The MFA set up a 'junta of national salvation' to rule until a provisional government was formed. Elections were promised within a year. It announced freedom of association and expression, and an amnesty for political prisoners.

Having suffered at the hands of bosses and landowners linked to the regime, workers drove them out of the factories and off the land. The editor of the daily, Diário de Notícias, was forced out on 7 June after print workers seized the presses, publishing a front-page article exposing his fascist connections.

Homeless people occupied empty properties. Shipyard and underground workers went on strike for a 50% pay rise. Car workers won a 40-hour week. Bakery and textile workers struck. Train and tram conductors refused to collect fares.

General António de Spínola was made acting president. The son of a friend of Salazar, Spínola had impeccable fascist credentials. He had, however, called for the easing of direct colonial rule, which gave him a certain amount of support.

Spínola made one more pathetic bid for power, on 11 March 1975.

But the paratroopers he mobilised mutinied.

The fact that six members of the Espírito Santo banking family were implicated in the coup fiasco fuelled further outrage.

Get The Message? [And It's True]



A foreign occupation soldier of U.S. Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment collects the fingerprints of an Iraqi citizen next to a sign that reads "Infidel, there's no place to hide." in Mosul, 23 April 2007. (AFP/File/Mauricio Lima)

Troops Invited:

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 email contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



Mosul, Iraq: Iraqi citizens are forced to lie down on their faces in dirt at gunpoint waiting to be searched and questioned by US soldiers during a raid in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. Photograph: Mauricio Lima/AFP/Getty Images [Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

[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!**

Imagine That!

April 23 EDWARD WONG, NY Times [Excerpts]

Kurdish soldiers from the rugged north are the latest armed group to be introduced into Baghdad's boiling sectarian stew.

There have already been some clashes between the Kurds and Arab militants.

The captain's unit and American soldiers came under withering gunfire one night when they went into two mosques to detain hundreds of men and boys. [These people are dangerous. They defend themselves when attacked.]

The Kurds go out on patrol with the Americans and shun the Arabs.

"The Americans are our friends in Iraq, not the Arabs," Captain Hamasala said as he and 10 other Kurds left the base one night with an American foot patrol.

Another officer, Lt. Serwan Dawa Rashid, said one afternoon at a traffic checkpoint: "I consider the relationship between us and the United States to be like that between Tel Aviv and the U.S."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

FIGHT THEM HERE, SO YOU WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT FOR THEM OVER THERE



The traitor Bush in the White House April 23, 2007 accompanied by his chump Petraeus, commander of the occupation disaster in Iraq. (AP Photo/Gerald Herbert)

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