

GI SPECIAL 5D3:

The Slow Bleed



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

**“This Is My Second Tour
In An Illegal And
Immoral War”**

**“I Don’t Believe Anything Can
Be Accomplished By Remaining
Anonymous And Being Silent”**

From: Justin Thompson
To: GI Special
Sent: April 01, 2007
Subject: Justin Thompson here!

Hey there,

I think I might be the “antiwar army sergeant, stationed in Baghdad,” referred to in the 5D1 issue of GI Special. My name is Justin C. Thompson and I have no desire to remain anonymous. Feel free to publish my name as you wish.

This is my second tour in an illegal and immoral war. I was set to separate from the Army on the 27th of June, 2006. Thanks to stop loss, I deployed involuntarily on June 28th for a second combat tour.

I don't believe anything can be accomplished by remaining anonymous and being silent about this war. I just started receiving the GI Special and it's a breath of fresh air. I think every service member should read it.

Keep up the good work.

In solidarity,
Justin C Thompson

IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR LEAD THE MARCH ON THE PENTAGON



Alex Wong / Getty Images) Mar 17, 2007

“There Is No Task More Urgent Than To Get Organized And Get Out There To Bases And Armories And Show Our Support For Their Dissent”



Left to right: Jose Vasquez, Iraq Veterans Against The War; Katherine Gorell, The Military Project; Veronica Mackey, IVAW; Michael Harmon, IVAW & Michael Embrich, IVAW

From: Katherine GY, The Military Project
To: GI Special
Sent: March 20, 2007

Troops forced an end to the Vietnam War because they refused to fight a people they realized were not their enemy.

We have no time to waste in working toward that goal today.

Remarks at an Iraq Veterans Against The War Panel, New York City IVAW Chapter, March 18, 2006, New York City

The shirt I'm wearing used to belong to my father, who served in Pleiku, Vietnam as an Air Force medic.

He didn't believe in that war and was against it before he was drafted...but he went because he was asked to, and he was told that he would be defending the freedom that this country is supposed to represent.

He took an oath to defend the Constitution — like the sisters and brothers who have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan in the so-called "War on Terror."

Imagine how he felt after he got there, on the ground (or shot at in a helicopter), and realized even more clearly that there was no doubt about it: his life was on the line for an imperial lie.

This is what he wrote inside the cover of a copy of the December 1968 Army Digest:

"3.5 million a day on air strikes in Vietnam. It's more than irony, it's immoral, and harder to live with now that I see the people, the beauty of their country, and know what might be done with the money spent on "national defense."

Agent Orange poisoned him, along with so many Americans and Vietnamese. Now troops and Iraqis are being exposed to depleted uranium without any regard for their health.

Could a government that has used these chemical weapons on its own soldiers — never mind the inevitable "collateral damage" of needless civilians who happen to be living in the wrong country at the wrong time — stand for freedom and democracy?

What about self-determination? Occupying forces historically fail because people all over the world will fight, and justly so, for their right to self-rule.

Because the poverty draft isn't filling military quotas, the government is spending more and more money on marketing — appealing to people's best instincts, character and desire to get something out of life — to get them to do the dirty work of empire.

It's sick, and troops aren't going for it.

The question is whether they will feel supported enough by civilian activists to speak their minds and stand up to the domestic enemies that launched and continue to fund this perpetual war.

There is no task more urgent than to get organized and get out there — to bases and armories — wherever we can meet service members — and show our support for their dissent.

This can be done by sharing literature and inviting troops to write in and talk about their experiences and opinions — the Military Project does this through GI Special (you can find copies at the table in the back) and by developing organizing resources.

We also regularly visit a local National Guard armory when soldiers are drilling.

We give out homemade cookies — something that the warmongers in Washington have probably never thought of doing — and let them know, by our supportive presence, that we have their back and are willing to work to earn their trust.

This means a hell of a lot more than buying a yellow ribbon magnet and, through our inaction, allowing our comrades to be deployed to dangerous places by people who, to quote Sgt Kevin Benderman, “aren't worth the dust off of their boots.”

Our role as civilians in the anti-war movement should be to push for troops to lead every anti-war march and not take the backseat to politicians and celebrities.

It means actively supporting war resisters here and overseas — including those who are exposing the racism, sexism and homophobia tolerated and promoted by the military — and not giving up.

Troops forced an end to the Vietnam War because they refused to fight a people they realized were not their enemy. We have no time to waste in working toward that goal today.

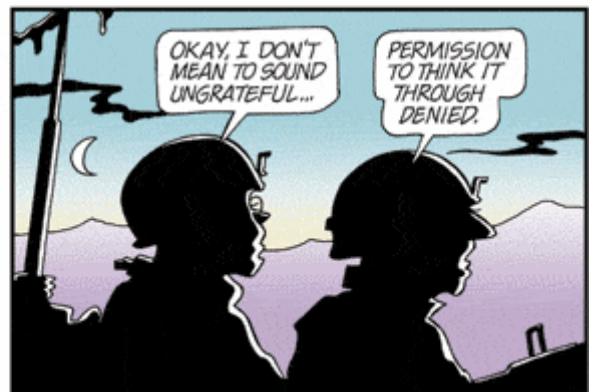
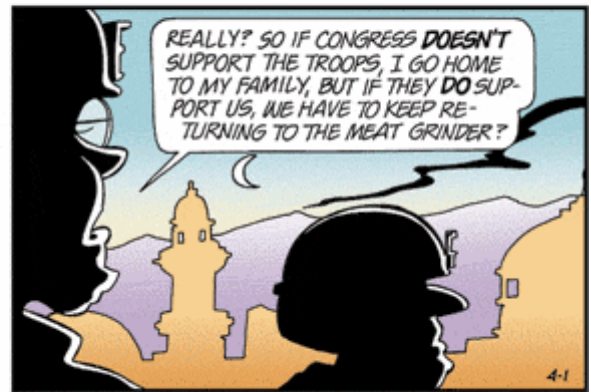
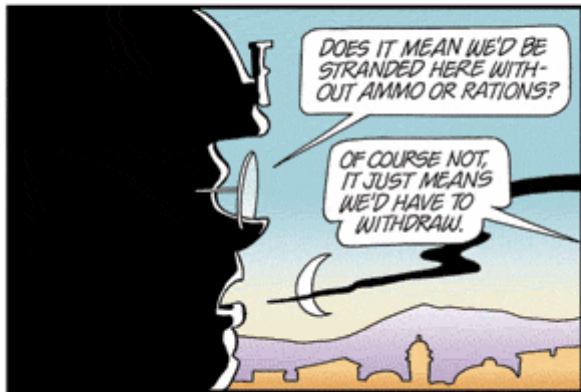
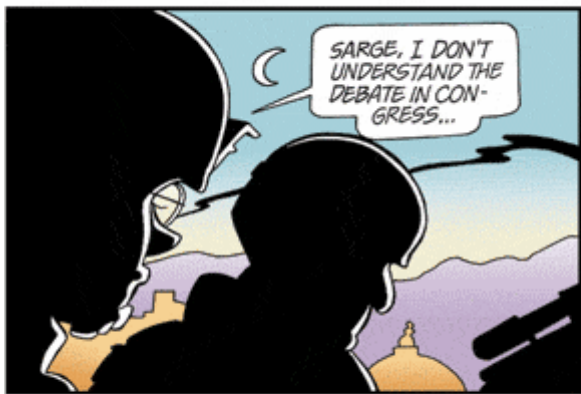
I would like to end with a quote from a statement from David Cortright, Vietnam Veteran, armed forces resistance organizer and author of *Soldiers in Revolt*:

“During the Vietnam era enlisted servicemen created massive pressures for change, despite severe repression, and significantly altered the course of the war and subsequent military policy.

“To sustain and strengthen this challenge we must...support those within the armed services, including National Guard and reserves, who defy the goals and program of Empire.

“The central lesson of the GI movement is that people need not be helpless before the power of illegitimate authority, that by getting together and acting upon their convictions people can change society and, in effect, make their own history.”

Thank you for listening, and let's get to work.



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran & Phil G, who sent this in.]

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Oklahoma Soldier Killed



Spc. Wilfred Flores Jr., 20, from Lawton, Okla., died March 31, 2007, in Baghdad from wounds received when an improvised explosive device detonated near the vehicle in which he was riding. (AP Photo/Flores Family Photo)

One U.S. Soldier Killed, Four Wounded: Attack Hits U.S. Troops Visiting Kirkuk Police Station

04-02-2007 BAGHDAD (AFP) & Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070403-01 & STEVEN R. HURST, Associated Press Writer

A truck bomber, his deadly payload hidden under bags of flour, crashed into a police station in a Kurdish neighborhood in the disputed city of Kirkuk on Monday.

The size of the blast also impacted a local girls' school and students were injured by broken glass and debris.

Videotape by an Associated Press cameraman at the scene in Kirkuk showed at least four wounded U.S. soldiers and one badly damaged American Humvee. The soldiers were being treated by Army medics, with one seated while having gauze bandages wound around his bloodied head.

An AFP correspondent saw just-shot television footage of five wounded American troops, including two who were tied on stretchers.

Another soldier, whose nose was bleeding, was standing and waving directions at others. A third soldier was carried away on a stretcher, and the fourth was being treated on the ground with his feet elevated against shock.

The U.S. military reported late Monday that a U.S. soldier was killed by a vehicle-bomb in Kirkuk.

Two Iraqi police officers were killed and seventeen IPs were wounded by the blast.

U.S. troops had been visiting an Iraqi criminal investigations unit at the Rahim Awa compound in a predominantly Kurdish neighborhood in north Kirkuk, city officials said.

The Kirkuk blast also was the third in seven days where attackers hit targets with their bombs hidden under loads of flour, a commodity that has been scarce in some outlying districts. The government only recently resumed shipping flour rations to some areas.

The blast that caused extensive damage and happened as US troops were visiting the police station, Kirkuk district police commander Major General Torhan Yussef Abdul Rahman said.

The force of the blast also wrecked four structures in the area, including a municipal building.

The attacker rammed the truck into the concrete blast barriers protecting the back of the compound at about 11:30 a.m., Kirkuk police spokesman Brig. Gen. Sarhat Qadir said.

U.S. Soldier Killed In Anbar

April 2, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070402-14

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Soldier assigned to Multi National Force-West died April 2 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province.

IED Kills U.S. Soldier In Fuhaylat

April 2, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070402-09

BAGHDAD – An MNC-I Soldier died Monday when a roadside bomb exploded next to the vehicle he was in while conducting operations in Fuhaylat.

British Soldier Killed, Another Wounded In Basra

4.2.07 Reuters

One British soldier was killed and a second wounded when their patrol came under fire in Basra, British military spokesman Major David Gell said. It was the second British soldier to be killed in two days.

Puerto Rican Man, Who Exchanged Fast-Food Job For Military Life, Dies In Iraq

2007-03-20 By YAISHA VARGAS, TOA BAJA, Puerto Rico (AP)

The impending arrival of Ed Santini's first child and his mother's advice that his job at a fast-food joint would not get his family ahead led him to enlist in the military at the age of 20.

Five years later, Santini - whose wife is now in her second pregnancy - was killed when the vehicle he was riding in was struck by a roadside bomb Saturday in Baghdad .

Santini's father, his grandparents and his two uncles served as his role model: they all had served in the U.S. military. His brother, Etienne, is also in the Army.

"He wanted to achieve a high rank. He did not want to remain in the lowest rank. His aspirations were so high, he was very proud of being in the military. He liked what he was doing," his mother, Sandra de Jesus, said Tuesday.

Santini, a sergeant, was a member of the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division. He had served three times in the Middle East after the Sept. 11 attacks, working as a mechanic, although he wanted to be in the infantry despite the warnings by his fellow soldiers about the dangers of such work.

When Santini prepared to leave for his final tour, his mother expressed concern for his safety.

"I told him that this gave me a lot of fear, that this was horrible, that it was a no man's land, but he said to me, 'Mom, there are some soldiers that will go with me to the end of the world,'" she said in a telephone interview.

Though he was upbeat and known for making people laugh, Santini was depressed in his last days from the fatigue of recent missions, during which soldiers had only Army rations to eat for several days.

He was also sad "because his wife was pregnant and he was not going to be able to be with her during the pregnancy," de Jesus said. "He was expected in July for the birth."

Santini graduated from high school in 2000 in Toa Baja, a town of 96,000 people located 25 miles (40 kilometers) west of San Juan on the U.S. territory's north coast. His military service took him to New York and later to Fort Bliss in Texas.

His mother-in-law, Leticia Arroyo, said Santini was a "fighter ... very smart."

The Toa Baja municipality will add Santini's name to the list of local soldiers who died in action to the Veteran Monument, which was recently placed in front of the mayor's office.

Santini is survived by his wife, Astrid, a four-year-old daughter and three brothers.

He is the 56th soldier of Puerto Rican origin to die in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Sgt. Lewis Was Father To His Family, Soldiers

March 26, 2007 By Paul Alongi, STAFF WRITER; The Greenville News

U.S. Army Sgt. Adrian J. Lewis witnessed the birth of his youngest daughter two weeks before he shipped out for his third tour in Iraq.

He won't hear her first words or see her first step.

Lewis, 30, was killed in Ramadi, Iraq, on March 21, after an encounter with enemy forces involving small-arms fire, the U.S. Defense Department reported Sunday.

The soldier, who grew up in Mauldin, left behind four children and a wife, Amanda Lewis.

"He was my best friend. He was my everything," she said at her mother's packed Simpsonville home Sunday.

Lewis' father, Jerome Harrison, said his oldest son loved his platoon and refused to leave his men. They looked up to him, Harrison said.

The sergeant once even sent money to a soldier who couldn't get back to base after going home for the holidays, he said.

"I questioned him many times: 'Why didn't you get a transfer after you went (to Iraq)?' He loved what he did," Harrison said.

Amanda Lewis said her husband wanted to go to Iraq the first two times but not the third.

"A lot of it had to do with the fact that the baby was just born," she said.

Amanda Lewis said her cousin set her up with her husband when she was at J.L. Mann High and he was at Southside High.

They had a child together and went their separate ways until reuniting seven years later and getting married.

"It was like we hadn't missed a beat," Amanda Lewis said.

After high school, Adrian Lewis worked for Michelin through a temporary employment agency, his father said. He called in 2000 and said, "There's nothing here for me," Harrison recalled.

Lewis told his father he was joining the Army.

Harrison said that putting on the uniform changed his son. His troops treated him like a father figure, Harrison said.

"I was impressed the way they took to him," he said.

Lewis served in Germany and Kosovo before the Iraq war started, his wife said. His first two tours were in Fallujah and Baghdad, she said.

If he had any doubts about surviving, he never expressed them to his wife.

"He promised me he was coming back home all the way to end," she said.

Adrian Lewis' face might be familiar to commuters. A month before his death, his smiling picture was used in an ad on an electronic billboard at Woodruff and Garlington roads.

The headline next to his helmeted head read, "We salute our fallen heroes."

The Lewises lived in Fort Stewart, Ga. He marched around his wife's hospital bed and whistled while waiting for his youngest daughter, Sade, to be born, said his mother-in-law, Elaine Mims.

That was Dec. 3. He left 12 days later, Amanda Lewis said.

She said she talked to her husband right up to the day he died.

Until his Internet connection failed last month, the soldier was able to see his family via computer screen every day.

Adrian Lewis was planning to go on leave in July to attend a family reunion and go on a cruise to the Bahamas with his wife.

But he didn't make it.

Amanda Lewis knew that something had happened to her husband when she received a call from a woman she didn't recognize.

At first, Amanda Lewis thought her husband had been wounded. It turned out to be much worse.

"I knew he loved me," she said, "and I loved him. In my heart, I felt like we were going to be together forever. But God has his ways."

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO
COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS
EXTREMELY HIGH RISK LOCATION AT THIS
TIME, EXCEPT THAT A TRAITOR WHO LIVES
IN THE WHITE HOUSE WANTS YOU THERE**
That is not a good enough reason



A US soldier takes cover from sniper fire in Baghdad's Haifa street, 19 March.
(AFP/Patrick Baz)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two U.S. Soldiers Killed In Wreck

April 02, 2007 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 367-07

The Department of Defense announced today the death of two soldiers who were supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. They died March 29 in North Kabul, Afghanistan, of injuries suffered during a non-combat related vehicle accident on March 28 in North Kabul. Their deaths are under investigation.

Killed were:

Sgt. Edmund W. McDonald, 25, of Casco, Maine.

Spc. Agustin Gutierrez, 19, of San Jacinto, Calif.

Both soldiers were assigned to the 782nd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C.

U.S. Soldier Killed At Korengal Outpost

April 02, 2007 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 368-07

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier who was supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

Spc. Christopher M. Wilson, 24, of Bangor, Maine, died Mar. 29 in Korengal Outpost, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered from a rocket propelled grenade explosion. Wilson was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y.

TROOP NEWS

4th ID Hq Unit Totally Fucked:

Ordered Back To Iraq Kill Zone 5 Months Too Soon; 10th Mountain Shafted Also

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

Apr. 02, 2007 LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON - For just the second time since the war began, the Army is sending large units back to Iraq without giving them at least one year of rest at home between deployments, officials said Monday.

The move signaled just how stretched the U.S. fighting force has become.

A combat brigade from New York and a Texas headquarters unit will return to Iraq this summer in order to maintain through August the military build-up President Bush announced earlier this year. A brigade is roughly 3,000 soldiers.

The 4th Infantry Division headquarters unit from Fort Hood, Texas, will return to Iraq after a little more than seven months at home - the largest break to date from the Army's goal of giving units a year's rest after every year deployed.

The 1st Brigade of the 10th Mountain Division, based at Ft. Drum, N.Y., will go back to Iraq after just 10 1/2 months at home.

3,500 From 82nd Airborne Held For Three More Months In Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

Apr 02, 2007 The Associated Press

FAYETTEVILLE – A Fort Bragg-based unit will remain in Iraq for an additional three months as part of deployments that will move most of the Army base's soldiers overseas later this year, the military announced today.

The 3,500 paratroopers in the 82nd Airborne's 2nd Brigade Combat Team will stay in Iraq for three months beyond their original return date in September, base officials said. The unit left in January as part of the troop buildup in Baghdad and is now scheduled to return in January 2008.

"At one certain time, in the latter part of the fall, a large percentage of this post will be gone," said Tom McCollum, a spokesman for the 18th Airborne Corps.

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



The casket of Army Staff Sgt. Blake M. Harris, of Hampton, Ga., during funeral service at Arlington National Cemetery March 28, 2007. Harris was killed earlier this month in Baghdad when a vehicle he was riding in was struck by an explosive. (AP Photo/Stephen J. Boitano)

Uncounted Thousands Of Severely Wounded Troops Shit On By Total Chaos In Disability Rating System; “The System Is Unfair And Does Not Rate Similar Injuries Equally”

April 02, 2007 By Kelly Kennedy, Staff writer, Army Times

As members of the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission wrestle with simplifying the disability benefits systems of the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, they have found they aren't the only ones mystified by the systems' complexity.

Of the counselors who help former service members through the VA system — which uses the same disability rating schedule as the military — 84 percent said the system isn't easy to navigate.

And out of 437 raters — the people who make decisions about disability ratings — 99 said the regulations and policies they use are inconsistent.

As veterans and service members complain that the system is unfair and does not rate similar injuries equally, 51 percent of counselors told researchers from the Center for Naval Analyses that if several raters from the office rated a service member for post-traumatic stress disorder, it was unlikely that they would all come up with the same rating.

Daniel Harris, an analyst for the center, told the commission March 22 that raters and counselors have the most trouble with cases dealing with mental health disorders, musculoskeletal issues, and sensory organs such as eyes or ears.

And even as 87 percent of counselors said medical cases are becoming more complex, 80 percent said they felt they were not well trained.

Eric Christensen of the Center for Naval Analyses presented a breakdown of military disability ratings by percentage and service from 2000 to 2006.

The data showed that:

- Airmen are 14 percent more likely than other service members to receive lifetime disability retirement pay rather than one-time severance pay.
- One-fourth of soldiers who go through the system receive a zero percent disability rating even as they are found unfit for duty.**
- About 93 percent of all service members get severance payments for ratings of 20 percent or lower rather than the disability benefits that include medical care for the rest of their lives.**
- Only 3 percent of Marines going through the system from 2000 to 2006 received disability retirement pay rather than severance pay.**

Christensen also said that in a comparison of VA and Defense Department ratings for the same injuries, the VA tended to rate at least 7 percent higher — even though both use the same rating schedules and have the same legal mandates.

For mental health issues, the differences are startling. The military tends to hand out ratings of 10 percent for bipolar disorder, which the VA upped to 38 percent.

The military also tends to award 10 percent ratings for major depressive disorder, which the VA upped to 34 percent.

The commission is due to submit a report in October, but members acknowledge it's a tough challenge because the system has not been overhauled since World War II's "Greatest Generation" went through it.

Now as Generation Y endures wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, they bring their own questions:

If several injuries by themselves don't disqualify a person for service, might the combination do so?

If a service member decides to stay in the military with a traumatic injury, such as an amputation, is he ultimately losing benefits he would gain by medically retiring, such as combat-related, tax-free income?

How should a service member be compensated for a lost career — and should he have to pay back his disability severance before receiving VA benefits?

Are there injuries that should be added to the list of issues that could, depending on their severity, disqualify a person from service?

Could having only one physical exam for both the military and VA streamline the process and help conquer year-long waiting times to get benefits?

Some questions have been easily answered in past meetings.

For example, service members should be given, as they have for the past couple of centuries, the benefit of the doubt if they say they have injuries that are service-connected.

Retired Army Lt. Col. Mike Parker, who has helped several service members fight their cases, said the other services tend to pick one injury or issue and rate only that — a practice he called cherry-picking.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“This Is Not A Civil War”

“There Is An Occupation, And The Occupation Is Dividing Us”

“This Is A Political War Between Those Who Supported The US Invasion, Which Is The Current Government And Its Death Squads, And The People Of Iraq, Who Resisted”

Iraqis are fed up with the administration allegation, and if there is any civil war taking place, they are saying, we should have it now, rather we have it later, one year later or five years later. Let's have it now and get over with it.

Then we will have our country back, we can rebuild it, and we rule it.

April 2nd, 2007 Democracy Now [Excerpts]

Our guest today is an Iraqi American who has been living in Iraq for most of the past three years.

His name is Sami Rasouli. We first spoke to Sami on Democracy Now! in 2004 just before he left Minneapolis to return to his home country to help it recover from the war and US occupation.

In Iraq, Sami Rasouli has spent much of his time in the Shiite holy city of Najaf, where he was born. He also helped establish the Muslim Peacemaker Team. He recently returned back to the United States for a visit. He is now in Minneapolis, where he joins us. Sami Rasouli, welcome to Democracy Now!

SAMI RASOULI: The US administration, through its occupation in Iraq, has failed, has failed profoundly, and every day passes by indicates more violence happening in Iraq and more failure for their role.

And, actually, I don't know what is their role in Iraq and what is the objectives that the US intend to accomplish in Iraq so far.

I see nothing. I see the war as pointless. It caused lots of agony and disastrous result for the Iraqis.

An average Iraqi wake up in the morning, whether it's a child going to school or a farmer going to his farm or a worker going to his work -- and, by the way, there is 65% unemployment rate in Iraq, so not much work in Iraq.

But Iraqis are on a blind date. Every day they wake up with brutal death. Only the time and place determined for this brutal death to take place.

So, the end of Iraqis' dilemma, when that happen, but with the complete withdrawal of the US troops from Iraq immediately.

And we cannot justify the presence of the US troops in Iraq by saying, well, they will -- or they are doing anything good for the Iraqis to prevent such as civil war, so-called fight between Sunnis and Shias.

This is not a civil war.

This is a political war between who supported the US invasion, which is the current government and its death squads, and the people of Iraq, who resisted, resisted this occupation and is still resisting this occupation.

Iraqis are fed up with the administration allegation, and if there is any civil war taking place, they are saying, we should have it now, rather we have it later, one year later or five years later.

Let's have it now and get over with it.

Then we will have our country back, we can rebuild it, and we rule it.

We are the people that belong to an ancient multi-civilization country. It is Mesopotamia, where Hammurabi set his first code of law; the Sumerian, they came up with the invention of writing; the Babylonian; the Acadian; the Sumerian; and all the civilization that was built around Tigris and Euphrates.

AMY GOODMAN: Sami Rasouli, how do you get information in Iraq? What kind of media do you turn to?

SAMI RASOULI: Well, we have a direct contact with the religious authority leaders, whether through the Shiites' seminary in Najaf or the Sunnis' seminary -- it's not seminary, but the Muslim -- they call it Muslim scholar boards. So we met with those leaders and talked to them about the issues in current Iraq.

And, by the way, none of them, none of them, authorized, as we learned, to spill any Iraqi blood within this so-called the Sunnis against Shias, or vice versa.

They all are keen to get together and solve the problems through direct communications or indirect communications, due to the lack of security in Iraq.

We travel from community to another community, as members of Muslim Peacemakers Teams, to connect and build bridges and shrink the gaps between -- actually, when I talk about this, shrinking the gaps, they laugh and tell me, "There is no gap, Sami. There is an occupation, and the occupation is dividing us."

AMY GOODMAN: Sami Rasouli, what is your relationship like with US soldiers?

I mean, here you lived in this country for decades. You, of course, speak English. You returned to Iraq. How did the Iraqis see you? And how does the US military see you?

SAMI RASOULI: Usually, there are some -- many, many, actually, Iraqi checkpoints and some right now in the reduction, or becoming less and less the American checkpoints.

Occasionally we need to go and visit some American US military bases to discuss some detainees that they have for Iraqi families that we asked to go and check and see if those detainees are sentenced, are about to be released, or they are not there, missing or dead.

So we're kind of a link, and for me, as an American Iraqi-born citizen, I feel I'm privileged that I speak both languages and understood both cultures and is still learning about

both. My role is important, in a way, to be a medium between the Iraqis and the Americans.

For some -- like sometimes in January, last January -- actually 2006, January 23rd, I was traveling from Baghdad, coming from Najaf, going to Fallujah, and we couldn't -- the driver couldn't drive through the main highway. There was a fight between the US forces and elements of the Iraqi resistance. So the driver suggested to take a side road, which was dirt and unpaved.

So a few minutes later, when we were on that road, we were raided by three Humvees, and about twelve servicemen jumped from their vehicles, pointing their rifles at us, asking us to get out. An Arabic translator was there, also translating whatever the soldiers were saying. And I felt like, I'm not in a good position.

So I reached out to my American driver license, and I claimed I'm an American. And then the sweet young man looked at me, and he goes -- I don't know if I can say this -- "No sh**!" so and with a big smile. So I tell him, "You betcha." So he said, "Well, you must be a Minnesotan."

So he called upon his commander to come and check me out and give me sort of clearance. And when they talked to me, he asked me, "What the f-- you're doing here?" I told him, "Well, I'm visiting family, but what you are doing here?" They said, "We are looking for enemies, terrorists. They just killed two of us in Al Taji." So I replied, "Am I the enemy?" He said, "No, you look good. You can go."

And at that moment, I thought about it.

And while the panic was on, the mistrust, the fear among the other Iraqis who were selling, some vendors, on the right of the streets, so I thought about how many Iraqis have those little IDs, the driver license, or speaks English, and how many Americans understood or understand the culture of Iraq and can speak Arabic to communicate with.

The distance -- as Americans are the occupiers, so they are the enemy, it's there -- the distance between the Americans and the Iraqis, as the Iraqis are terrorist, such as I was suspected until my driver license saved my life and saved the driver's life.

When we left, the driver told me how many of his brothers got missing, killed, the relatives in the neighborhoods in Fallujah, and he told me what kind of trouble Fallujah went through for the last four years.

Our men and women who come back injured should be treated better than they have been treated in Walter Reed, and we believe they got robbed, because the billion of dollars that are spent for this war, it's not getting to their healthcare, it's not getting to the education and probably to the elderly who are probably soon will have no Social Security or retirement -- yes.

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.

GET THE MESSAGE?
"Yes Yes For Security"
"NO NO For Occupation"

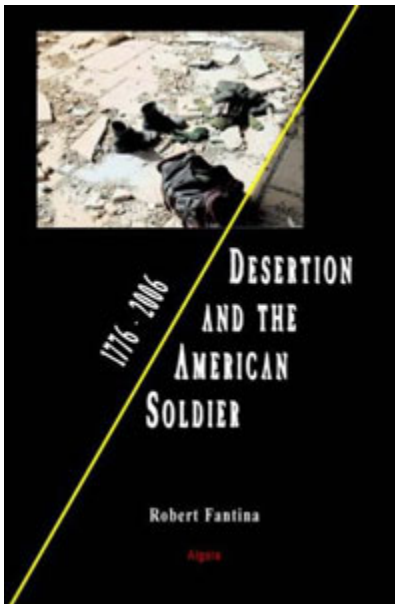


Demonstrators in Baghdad's Sadr city, April 2, 2007. About 5,000 demonstrators held a rally on Monday demanding that the Iraqi government deploy Iraqi security forces and checkpoints in the outskirts of Sadr city, and ending U.S. interference. The words on the placard read: "Yes yes for security", "NO NO for occupation."

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

**“Having Proved Their Courage On
The Battlefield They Are Now
Demonstrating It Again By Opposing
The Most Powerful – And Possibly**

Most Dangerous – Government In The World”



March 14, 2007 By Robert Fantina, AmericanChronicle.com

U.S. soldiers are deserting the military in ever-increasing numbers.

Many who have actually fought in Iraq are illegally leaving the military and speaking out against the war.

Lance Corporal Ivan Brobeck, who deserted after a tour of duty, witnessed the abuse of Iraqi detainees and the killing of Iraqi civilians. Sgt. Ricky Clousing, also a veteran of the war, deserted when he realized U.S. soldiers were not helping the Iraqis. His allegations of systematic abuse of Iraqi detainees are now being investigated by the military.

The list of brave men and women who served in Iraq, saw the war for what it actually is and subsequently deserted, is growing.

Having proved their courage on the battlefield they are now demonstrating it again by opposing the most powerful – and possibly most dangerous – government in the world.

They join a list of courageous soldiers that dates back to the American Revolution.

Desertion throughout the nation's history has had many common causes. Men and women enlist for a variety of reasons, many of them not at all related to feelings of patriotism. In the country's earliest wars financial rewards, called bounties, were offered to men for enlisting.

Farming was a main occupation, and for many men struggling to sustain their families these bounties looked very attractive. The potential recruit could enlist and send the money home to help his family.

However, once they enlisted too many men learned that the bounty would not be paid.

This left their families back home in an even worse situation: there was no money forthcoming, and the person mainly responsible for farming duties was off at war. Many men finding themselves in this situation simply returned home.

Today, recruiters make a wide variety of promises to potential recruits, none of which they are legally bound to fulfill. The guarantees of stateside or time-limited deployment are simply not true: anyone enlisting today can be sent anywhere the government chooses, and once the enlistment period is over, the military can arbitrarily extend it.

These promises made in 2006 are as meaningless as those made in 1776.

That soldiers enlist because they believe American interests are threatened in some way, then learn on the battlefield that the cause they were sold was nothing but lies and choose the only realistic option out of the U.S. military – desertion – is not new.

Also not new is the government's desire to skew their reasons and try to show them as cowards. This lie becomes less credible every day.

The War of 1812 was fought, ostensibly, because the British violated some trade agreements with the U.S. However, the expansionist aims of the American government soon became clear. At least partly as a result of this realization, state militias often refused to cross the border into Canada, and frequently would not leave their own home state.

Today many men and women went to Iraq hoping to protect America from weapons of mass destruction, and to liberate the Iraqi people from cruel dictatorship. Learning that there was no threat to America, and that the Iraqi people are worse off due to American occupation than they were under Saddam Hussein is causing many soldiers to desert.

More recently, during the Vietnam and Gulf Wars, soldiers recognized that U.S. security was not threatened by a civil war on the opposite side of the planet, or by conflicts between two nations over oil rights.

Then, as now, they desert rather than risk their lives, and the lives of other innocent people, and conform to the dictates of war-mongering world leaders, intent on forcing an unwanted way of life on another nation's people.

Robert Fantina is the author of "Desertion and the American Soldier, 1776-2006".

Description of the book:

Military desertion, its reasons and consequences, are not commonly known in America. In most cases, the reasons soldiers desert are inherent in the military system itself. The author investigates those reasons, from the American Revolution to the Iraqi occupation, and describes the government's often-brutal response to deserters.

[About the author:

[Robert Fantina is a long-time activist for peace and social justice. He has worked with the Coalition for Peace Action in New Jersey.]

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



A foreign occupation soldier U.S. from Gator Company 2-12 Infantry Battalion searches through the kitchen of an Iraqi citizens home during in the al-Dora neighborhood of southern Baghdad. (AFP/David Furst)

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

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

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

[U.S. sponsored polls reported recently that 60% of Iraqis favor killing U.S. troops. After reading this, 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.]

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

**Four U.S. Soldiers Killed;
McCain Calls It Progress;**

Surrounded By U.S. Armor And Troops, He Says Americans Not Getting Full Picture About Iraq



April 1, 2007: McCain (R-AZ) showing how safe it is to walk around Baghdad.
REUTERS/Sergeant Matthew Roe/10th Public Affairs Operations Center/Handout

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

April 2, 2007 By KIRK SEMPLE, The New York Times

Mortar attacks, suicide car bombs, roadside bombs, ambushes and gun battles killed at least two dozen people on Sunday, including four American soldiers, the authorities said.

The American military command said the soldiers were killed southwest of Baghdad just after midnight as they responded to an earlier bombing that had killed two other American soldiers. The insurgents have frequently tried to reap greater death tolls by carrying out attacks against rescue crews rushing to bomb sites.

The attacks coincided with a visit to Iraq by a Republican Congressional delegation led by Senator John McCain, who declared at a news conference that the new American security plan was “making progress” and that there was cause for “very cautious optimism.”

In sometimes testy comments to reporters in the heavily fortified Green Zone, Mr. McCain said the American public was not receiving “the full picture about what’s happening,” and he described the delegation’s visit to a downtown market where scores of people have died this year in multiple car bombings and other attacks.

There, the members of Congress said, they strolled around, haggled with merchants and drank tea.

But the outing was far from carefree. The delegation traveled in a convoy of armored military vehicles and was accompanied by a large contingent of heavily armed soldiers. The politicians wore body armor while they shopped.

“We had protection today,” Mr. McCain acknowledged when pressed by reporters.



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

“The Democrats’ Attempt To Put War-Funding Legislation In An Antiwar Package Is A Fraud”

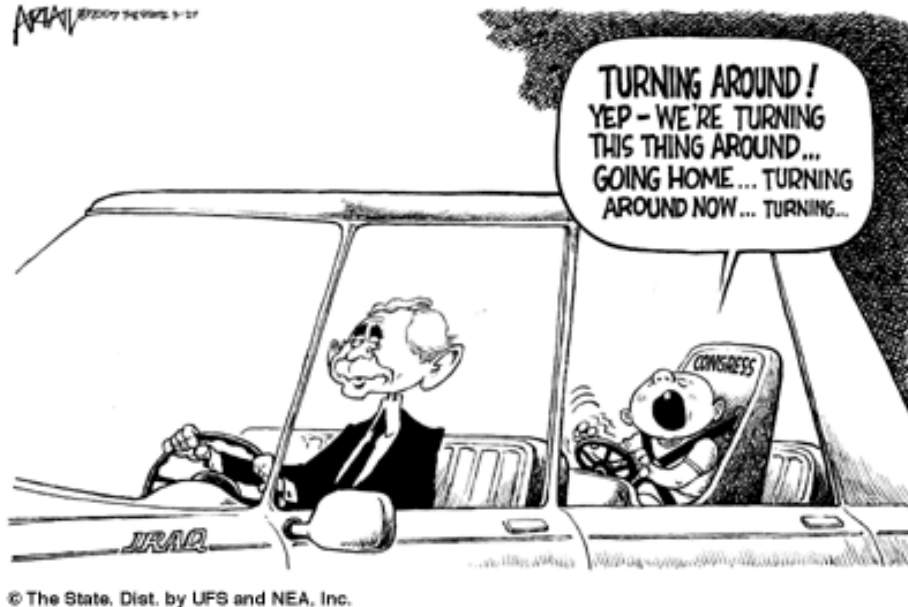
[Thanks to Katherine GY, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

March 30, 2007 Editorial, Socialist Worker [Excerpt]

The Democrats’ attempt to put war-funding legislation in an antiwar package is a fraud--a rhetorical gesture against an unpopular war would allow Bush to continue the occupation, while postponing the hard decisions confronting the politicians and the Pentagon brass.

This legislative deception underscores--once again--the mistake many leading voices in the antiwar movement made in looking to electing Democrats as the chief vehicle for ending the war.

While the Democrats' Out of Iraq Caucus offered verbal support to the movement, they failed to deliver when they had the opportunity to--a reflection of the fact that they are part of a political party that is as just committed as the Republicans to the maintenance of U.S. imperial power.



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[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

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

Received:

How About Some Help For Our Brothers And Sisters In Iraq?

From: bruce.burgess@us.army.mil
To: GI Special
Sent: March 29, 2007
Subject: Suggestion

Just throwing out a suggestion here. I have contacted IVAW about this as well.

This is just a thought, but a compilation CD that could be copied and passed around to the troops here would be great. My thought is that it should contain some type of commentary, like a DJ, even if it is a pre-recorded format.

Lastly, it goes without saying that Hip-Hop is the soundtrack of this conflict.

I really encourage you to check out <http://4th25.com/>

That entire album strikes home with all who hear it and is a regular favorite here. You should read some of the lyrics, like “Matter of Time”.

Well its just an idea.

We can handle making the copies and the distribution of this. We just need someone to make it.

If you have some contacts who may be interested pass this email along.

Thanks,
SSG Burgess,
LSA Anaconda

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

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

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

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

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

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

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