

## **GI SPECIAL 5D9:**

**BEEN ON THE JOB TOO LONG:  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



A Marine with 2nd Platoon, E Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, rests in a building March 22, 2007, in Zaidon, Iraq. Regimental Combat Team 6 is deployed in the Al Anbar province of Iraq. (AP Photo/ Cpl. Samuel D. Corum, US Marines)

**Their Morals And Ours;  
“I, As A Gay Veteran, No Longer Have  
To Be Lectured By Military Leaders  
On The Laws Of Morality”  
“It Is Immoral To Escalate The Violence  
In Iraq In Order To Protect The Military’s  
Collective Ego”**

Army Times  
March 26, 2007

**Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine Gen. Peter Pace's comments during his March 12 interview with the Chicago Tribune should not come as a surprise to anyone. This type of extreme homophobia among some military leaders has always been at the root of the military's discriminatory policies against gays and lesbians.**

**However, I, as a gay veteran, no longer have to be lectured by military leaders on the laws of morality.**

**The military has much to account for with respect to its own moral failings as an institution.**

**And Gen. Pace must accept the responsibility of reforming the military establishment to prevent future moral failings.**

**It is immoral to deny minorities, like gays and lesbians, equal protection under the law and a level of freedom of speech commensurate with other service members.**

**It is immoral to continue prosecuting an immoral war in Iraq, which was started and continued with poor and sometimes false military intelligence.**

**It is immoral not to properly equip our troops for such a war.**

**It is immoral to institutionalize torture in our armed services as was done in Abu Ghraib prison and in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.**

**It is immoral not to provide appropriate long-term medical care to our wounded veterans returning from combat duty — both gay and straight.**

**It is immoral to escalate the violence in Iraq in order to protect the military's collective ego.**

**It is immoral to fund billions of dollars of contracts for reconstruction projects in Iraq that have produced few improvements and to fail to take responsibility for such fraud, waste and abuse.**

**It is immoral to continue to allow troop shortages and an unsustainable operational tempo, which will undermine our military's long-term readiness, while enforcing a policy that not only discriminates against gays and lesbians but also prevents a significant number of potential recruits from serving openly.**

**I no longer need lessons of morality from military leaders.**

**I served on the Honor Committee at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., in the early 1990s, and I taught other cadets about honor and ethics.**

I also served honorably — and in silence — for several years in the Army. I am comfortable in my morality and am reaching a point of prayerful self-acceptance with God's help, despite the bigotry and prejudice I suffered in the military.

**It is exactly because of this institutionalized prejudice and discrimination that all freedom-loving Americans must stand up against “don't ask, don't tell” and for the equal rights and protection under the law for all American citizens — gay and straight.**

Former Army Capt. Steve Thornton  
Rockville, Md.

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Four U.S. Soldiers Killed In Diyala Province; One Wounded**

April 8, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070408-01

TIKRIT, Iraq – Four Task Force Lightning Soldiers were killed Saturday as a result of an explosion near their vehicle in Diyala Province.

One other Soldier was also wounded in the attack and was taken to a Coalition Forces' medical treatment facility.

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### **IED South Of Baghdad Kills Three U.S. Soldiers, One Wounded**

April 8, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070408-14

BAGHDAD — Three Multi-National Division – Center Soldiers were killed by an improvised explosive device during a patrol south of Baghdad April 8.

One Soldier was also wounded in the incident.

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### **U.S. Soldier Killed, Three Wounded South Of Baghdad**

April 8, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070708-15

BAGHDAD – One MND-B Soldier died and three others were wounded when an indirect fire attack targeted units operating south of the Iraqi capital April 8.

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## **Soldier With Local Ties Killed In Iraq; “He Never Should Have Been Sent Back”**



The remains of U.S. soldier Jason Nunez Fernandez, after they were returned to his native Puerto Rico, at Muniz Airbase, April 2, 2007. Fernandez was killed last week in a bomb attack against his convoy near Baqubah, Iraq. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

March 28, 2007 By Daryl Nerl Of The Morning Call

A Lehigh County native was one of four soldiers killed Sunday when a roadside bomb exploded near their truck in Baqubah, Iraq.

Army Cpl. Jason Nunez, 22, who was born in Fountain Hill but lived in Naranjito, Puerto Rico, was driving when the bomb went off, said his father, Sam Nunez of south Bethlehem.

“He didn’t drink. He didn’t smoke. He was a good kid,” said the elder Nunez, adding Jason had a wife and 6-month-old daughter.

He was assigned to the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division based at Fort Bragg, N.C., the Defense Department said Tuesday.

**Nunez became the 22nd person from the Lehigh Valley region, or with ties to the region, to die in either the Iraq or Afghanistan wars.**

He was born at St. Luke's Hospital-Fountain Hill. The family moved to Puerto Rico in 1988, when Jason was a toddler, and he lived there most of his life, his father said. He was to be discharged from the Army in August.

**Sam Nunez and Jason's cousin, the Rev. Santos A. Rosado, also of Bethlehem, said the family questions why Nunez wasn't previously discharged for medical reasons. He was wounded by a roadside bomb about two months ago and lost part of his hearing, they said.**

**"That's what the family is saying: He never should have been sent back," said Rosado, pastor of the Victory**

Nunez was hospitalized in Iraq for about a week, then sent back to his unit, the elder Nunez said.

Jason Nunez is survived by his wife, Damairis, and 6-month-old daughter, Jamarly, in Puerto Rico, where his mother and two brothers, Joel and Emmanuel, also live.

Father and son spoke on the phone on Saturday, the elder Nunez said. They talked about Jason's discharge and some of the things he planned to do, like buy a house for his family.

"He sounded very happy on the phone," Sam Nunez said. "I asked him, 'Are you afraid?' He said a little bit, but not too bad."

Burial is planned at the Puerto Rico National Cemetery in Bayamon, the elder Nunez said.

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## York County Soldier Killed In Iraq



Gonzalez

Everybody knew Orlando “Eric” Gonzalez was fast -- that’s why Patrick LeBlanc laughed when the two spotted a rabbit one day at the Summit Grove Camp in New Freedom. He turned to Gonzalez and joked that he should try to catch the animal.

LeBlanc recalled Gonzalez’s reply: “I’m not that fast, Mr. Pat.”

But a few minutes later, there was a knock at LeBlanc’s door. On the other side stood Gonzalez, holding a rabbit in his arms.

Recalling stories such as that, the stories that really capture Gonzalez’s “amazing energy,” have made it difficult to cope with the 21-year-old soldier’s death, said LeBlanc, executive director of the faith-based camp for enrichment programs.

Pfc. Gonzalez, an 82nd Airborne Division paratrooper from New Freedom, was killed in Iraq Sunday when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle.

Three other soldiers were killed by the blast while on combat operations in Baqubah, Iraq, which is about 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, according to the U.S. Department of Defense and the 82nd Airborne Division.

Gonzalez, a 2005 Susquehannock graduate, worked at the camp for two years and lived there during his senior year in high school, LeBlanc said.

“We were his family,” he said. “We really did love him here. He could just smile through anything.” Gonzalez called the camp regularly and was very proud of his work in Iraq, LeBlanc said. The last time he called, he said Iraq was the best place he has ever known, next to the camp, LeBlanc said.

“He loved being in the military,” LeBlanc said. “I think some people were born heroes ... I don’t think he would’ve changed anything even if he knew the outcome.” LeBlanc said Gonzalez was “a good Christian young man.”

And he was always running, but nobody knew why.

“No one knew why he did anything, actually,” LeBlanc said. “That was part of what was unique about him.”

‘Very upbeat’: This morning at Susquehannock High School, Principal Brian Cashman led the students in a moment of silence to remember the graduate and honor his military service, he said.

Cashman said he knew Gonzalez because he stuck out in the halls; he was always running.

“He was nicknamed ‘Speedy,’” Cashman said. “I don’t know if the students called him that, but I know a number of staff did.”

Cashman said Gonzalez was “a little bit of a handful ... but you couldn’t help but like him, even though occasionally he would drift around to the dark side a little.”

“He was a very likeable kid, very upbeat, always had a good attitude,” Cashman said. “He really wanted to go into the Army. That was his goal.”

He was invited to and attended Gonzalez’ induction ceremony, and felt that the military gave Gonzalez a place to belong. “And I think that’s what he needed at that time,” Cashman said.

He said he’s considering putting in place a memorial for Gonzalez and any other Susquehannock graduates who have been killed in action.

Cashman said Gonzalez is the school’s first casualty in Iraq.

Gonzalez joined the Army in June 2005 and was a scout Javelin gunner with the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, N.C., according to the 82nd Airborne Division.

Gonzalez has been awarded the Bronze Star medal, the Purple Heart, the National Defense Service medal, the Iraqi Campaign medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service medal, the Army Service ribbon, the Combat Action badge and the Parachutist’s badge.

Gonzalez is survived by his father, Orlando G. Gonzalez Jr., of Bridgeport, Conn., and his mother, Carmen M. Diaz. Family funeral arrangements have not been completed, according to the 82nd Airborne Division.

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## **REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. soldiers board a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter after conducting a mission in Kif, Iraq, December 19, 2006. (U.S. Air Force/Staff Sgt. Samuel Bendet/Handout/Reuters)

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed; Two Wounded, Nationality Not Announced**

4.8.07 By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer

A roadside bomb killed one NATO soldier and wounded two others Sunday in southern Afghanistan, an official said.

The bomb exploded Sunday morning, said Lt. Col. Maria Carl, a spokeswoman for NATO's International Security Assistance Force. She declined to give further details about the victims or where the attack took place.

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### **U.S. Convoy Attacked; One Wounded**

4.8.07 By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer

In the eastern Nangarhar province, a car bomber blew himself up next to a U.S.-led coalition convoy, said Ghafor Khan, spokesman for the provincial police chief. One soldier sustained minor injuries, a coalition statement said. **[How minor depends on whether you're getting blown up or writing a press release.]**

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### ***Afghans Say We Want The Taliban Back:***

**“In The Beginning You Had Only  
One Enemy. Then You Made Two,  
Then Three, And Now I Also Stand  
Against You,” He Declared**



# **“How Can We Forgive The Americans?”**

## **“I Will Fight Them Any Way I Can”**

[Thanks to Z, who sent this in.]

08 April 2007 By Chris Sands in Kandahar, Independent News and Media [Excerpts]

Faiz Mohammed Karigar, a father of two, fled Kandahar when the Taliban held power in Afghanistan because he was against their restrictions on education. Now he wants the fundamentalists back.

“When the Taliban were here, I escaped to the border with Iran, but I was never worried about my family,” he said.

“Every single minute of the last three years I have been very worried. Maybe tonight the Americans will come to my house, molest my wife and children and arrest me.”

The failure of NATO forces to deliver security and development and rising civilian casualties inflicted by Western forces in clashes with the Taliban have led to a loss of support in Kandahar.

**“How can we forgive the Americans?” asked Mr Karigar, who like most people here does not distinguish among the different elements in NATO. “I will fight them any way I can.”**

The Taliban failed last year to carry out its threat to seize back Kandahar, its former stronghold, and NATO insists the movement can never win a military victory against it, even if many Afghans believe it possible. But the occupiers have lost crucial support in the city, which has become one of the most dangerous places in Afghanistan.

Political and criminal violence has spread fear among the population, and most try to avoid going out after dark, when the only sounds are the helicopters flying overhead and the odd burst of gunfire in the streets. Suicide attacks are common, and on several occasions in recent months nervous NATO troops have shot civilians they mistakenly believed were about to blow themselves up.

Whatever the cause of the bloodshed, the local population almost always blames the foreign soldiers in their midst.

**Even moderate Afghans are openly declaring they will join the insurgency.**

The British Government calls the Taliban “terrorists” and “extremists”, but people in Kandahar associate it with security. Before the 2001 invasion, they say, they could walk the streets safely as long as they complied with the movement’s strict interpretation of Islamic law. Now even a simple outing to the local market is seen as a risk, and the

Taliban, established as a response to lawlessness in the 1990s, is gaining fresh strength.

“I think life under the Taliban was very good,” said Maria Farah, a mother of five. “If we did not have a full stomach, we could at least get some food and go to sleep, and if we went out somewhere there were no problems. How about now? If we go out, we don’t know if we will arrive home or not.

**“If there is an explosion and the Americans are passing, they will just open fire on everyone. The security problems are too much here.”**

Foreign attempts at development were waved aside by Haji Abdul Rahman, a tribal elder, who demanded: “If a road has been built and you are killed, what good is it? Everyone is a robber.

“I guarantee if you sit in my car and we go for a drive, no Taliban will take you away. But I cannot guarantee that about the police. If they stop you they will steal your money and your camera.”

**A recent poll of several thousand men in Kandahar and Helmand by the Senlis Council, a Brussels-based thinktank, found that Taliban support among civilians had jumped to nearly 27 per cent. Only 19 per cent in the two provinces felt that international troops were helping them personally.**

**In southern Afghanistan, said the report, people “are increasingly prepared to admit their support for the Taliban, and the belief that the government and the international community will not be able to defeat the Taliban is widespread”.**

**In the Panjwayi district west of Kandahar city, which saw heavy fighting last year, Mawlawi Abdul Hadid said 18 members of his family died in an air strike last May against suspected insurgents.**

**“In the beginning you had only one enemy. Then you made two, then three, and now I also stand against you,” he declared.**

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## **Assorted Resistance Action**

4.2.07 New York Times & April 7, 2007 CBC News & 4.8.07 By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer

In the eastern Paktika province, two Afghan guards were killed and five wounded during a four-hour firefight with Taliban militants near the border with Pakistan, according to the U.S.-led coalition, which is operating separately from the NATO-led force.

Militants fired mortars and a rocket on a coalition checkpoint in the village of Kakakhel. Troops returned fire and called in an airstrike, leaving two militants dead and three others wounded, the statement said.

Also Sunday, in the eastern Khost province, a gunman riding on the back of a motorcycle opened fire on Afghans working for ISAF, killing two of the men and wounding another, ISAF said in a statement.

A car bomb hit an Afghan Army convoy in the eastern province of Laghman on Sunday. Eight soldiers were wounded, the Defense Ministry said. The attack occurred in a bazaar in Mehtarlam, the provincial capital. The convoy was passing the market, carrying food for the army.

Seven people were killed Saturday in western Afghanistan in an attack on Afghan employees of an American landmine clearing company. Police believe the Taliban are behind the attack.

Afghan police said the Taliban ambushed a group of mine removers and their armed guards who were working for Ronco Consulting Corp., based in Washington D.C., in a populated area of the western province of Farah. The ambush injured four people.

Mohammad Anwar, spokesman for the Farah police chief, said the ambush occurred while the employees were travelling in two vehicles in a convoy on the highway that leads from Kandahar to the western province of Herat.

Six of the dead worked for Ronco, which provides a range of services, including mine clearance. Of the injured, two were employees and two were women caught in the ambush. All the victims were Afghan.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

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



The casket of Staff Sgt. Paul Latourney of Roselle, Ill. during funeral services at Arlington National Cemetery March 14, 2007. Latourney was killed earlier this month in Baghdad when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

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## **Iraq Combat Veteran Gets 7 Months In Prison; “Mark Witnessed The Changing Perception By Iraqis Of American Soldiers From Liberators To Occupiers”**



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

**The Court Martial room was filled to capacity with family, friends, and supporters including members of Iraq Veterans Against the War and approximately 15 active duty soldiers.**

April 5th, 2007 [Markwilkerson.wordpress.com](http://Markwilkerson.wordpress.com)

Yesterday, February 22nd Spc. Mark Wilkerson was sentenced to 7 months in prison with a Bad Conduct Discharge.

Mark was charged with an Article 85 (desertion) and an Article 87 (missing movement) after failing to return from block leave on January 3rd, 2005. In December he signed a plea bargain admitting to his guilt and lessening his sentence from a maximum of 6 years to a maximum of 10 months.

**The Court Martial room was filled to capacity with family, friends, and supporters including members of Iraq Veterans Against the War and approximately 15 active duty soldiers.**

The Court Martial began with a formal review of the charges and then proceeded to witness testimony.

**Six people testified on Mark's behalf including his mother, wife, brother (who is presently active duty and appeared in uniform), a Sergeant, Sergeant First Class and Staff Sergeant, two of whom served with Mark in Iraq.**

None of the witnesses were cross-examined by the prosecutors, nor did the prosecution present witnesses testifying on their behalf.

**Mark's Platoon leader described his performance as a soldier in Iraq as "outstanding." The Sergeant First Class described him as "a good person," as a soldier who was capable of successfully completing a myriad of missions.**

**The Staff Sergeant described him as reliable, and hard working. He went on to describe how he had been influential in persuading Mark's Command to grant him off-base and leave privileges after his surrender.**

Taking the stand, Sarah Wilkerson, Mark's wife, described in great detail the letters she received and phone conversations she had with Mark while he was in Iraq.

**She described how his initial honor to serve turned into concern and finally disgust.**

**How Mark witnessed the changing perception by Iraqis of American Soldiers from liberators to occupiers.**

How when an RPG was fired at a police station he was guarding he could not fire back although the person who launched the RPG was in clear site. And finally, how he had not been the same person since returning and the toll flashbacks and nightmares had taken on him.

Mark made the decision to plead guilty because to claim innocence would require an argument against the legality and justness of the war in Iraq. Although personally this may be what Mark believes, the process would be lengthy, costly, practically impossible for him to defend in a Court Martial and would incur a punishment upwards of 6 years.

**Despite the overwhelmingly positive evidence of Mark's character, the fact that Mark did not maliciously abandon his fellow soldiers and made every attempt to be discharged from the military through official means and then sought reassignment to a non-combat rear detachment, and the accolades and respect shared by his fellow soldiers, he was still given seven months confinement.**

**Why?**

**Because he was honest, and stood up for his beliefs.**

**But more importantly, for the government to let Mark off with anything less would be an admission of the unjustness of their war.**

Mark is currently severing 7 months confinement at Fort Sill, OK. He is in high spirits and hopes to post an update to the blog shortly.

Please send him your letters of support:

Mark Wilkerson  
c/o Sarah Wilkerson  
PO Box 25037  
Colorado Springs, CO 80936

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## **Military Family Members Say: “Forcing The Troops To Continue Fighting A War That They Themselves Are Increasingly Questioning And Opposing Is Not ‘Supporting’ Them”**

4.6.07 By Adam Turl, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

RECENTLY, THE Boston Globe printed a pro-war op-ed article by columnist and right-wing ideologue Jeff Jacoby.

Jacoby, whose pieces typically drip with anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism, used this occasion to attack antiwar activists who voice support and concern for U.S. troops while opposing the war.

Maureen and Michael Hearn; Carlos and Melida Arredondo; Karen Murphy, RN; Sarah and Robert Fuhro; Anne Chay; Kanchan Gokhale; Robert Froelich; and Khury Petersen-Smith--members of the Massachusetts chapter of Military Families Speak Out (MFSO)--sent this response to the Globe:

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ON FEBRUARY 18, 2007, in an opinion piece written by Jeff Jacoby, he argued that it is impossible both to oppose the U.S. occupation of Iraq and support the troops who are in Iraq as part of the occupation. Jacoby explained his logic through examples, saying, “no loyal Colts fan rooted for Indianapolis to lose the Super Bowl. No investor buys 100 shares of Google in the hope that Google’s stock will tank.”

We take offense to Jacoby’s trivialization of our concern for our loved ones and our opposition to the war by comparing them to sports and finances.

**Members of the Massachusetts Chapter of Military Families Speak Out met on February 19, 2007, the day after Jacoby's opinion piece was printed in the Globe.**

**In that room sat mothers, fathers, stepmothers, cousins and sisters of the troops who have served, are currently serving, or have been killed in Iraq.**

**Our conversation on Monday included discussion of how the troops currently serving purchase their own protective equipment, troops returning from combat encounter difficulties in accessing medical care, and how one Massachusetts Marine was killed during battle when his company had run completely out of ammunition.**

There is a great deal of hypocrisy involved in how the troops are not provided adequate resources while in the battlefield, are left on waiting lists for medical care, and are provided rat-infested conditions at the lodgings where they are expected to recuperate.

The Iraq war has been based on now admittedly faulty intelligence that has no defined enemy or definition of what success entails and deserves a healthy amount of questioning by all citizens. It has resulted in billions of dollars being unaccounted for. National defense now accounts for 59 percent of total discretionary spending while veterans' benefits and services account for 4 percent (and continue to get cut).

**As for the war, it has been lost.**

**Question: Do we show our support for our troops by leaving them to die in a conflict that has no purpose other than to save face for those who began it?**

**As a recently returned Iraq veteran wrote to his Massachusetts Congressman, "I do not believe that (voting against the escalation) is enough. I do not believe that Iraq can be salvaged.**

**"I do not know what victory looks like in Iraq, and I feel that the current policies have failed. I do not see how the sacrifice of more American lives will help to stabilize the situation.**

**"I would ask you to move forward in whatever way you see fit to disengage the United States from this terrible debacle as soon as possible."**

**This soldier articulated the views of many troops fighting in Iraq. Last March, Stars and Stripes reported that 72 percent of troops in Iraq wanted the U.S. to get out within a year. [Wrong. 72% in the February 2006 Zogby poll said they wanted all U.S. troops withdrawn from Iraq by 12.31.06.]**

**Forcing the troops to continue fighting a war that they themselves are increasingly questioning and opposing is not "supporting" them, it is the opposite.**

The troops "surely...deserve better than pious claims of 'support' from those who are eager" to continue the Iraq conflict.

Please note the increase in AWOL cases by the troops, conscientious objectors and those signing on to "Appeal for Redress" (a formal appeal made by an individual service members to their congressional representatives and U.S. senators to urge an end to the U.S. military occupation).

**Knowing that our loved ones face horror, possible injury and death each day, we know that the only way to support them is to bring them home now.**

**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**

## **The Talk In Pawhuska, Oklahoma: "They Use The Word Vietnam"**

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, The Military Project, Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, and D, who sent this in.]

Apr 7 By JUSTIN JUOZAPAVICIUS, Associated Press Writer

PAWHUSKA, Okla.: Many folks in Pawhuska, as in many small towns, support the troops. But some find themselves questioning the mission and why more of their employees, Little League coaches and leaders are going over there.

"Seems like all we've done is spend a bunch of money and got a bunch of people hurt," said Pawhuska resident Jerry Slinkard.

Between dips of chewing tobacco, they use the word "Vietnam" to describe what's happening over there.

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## ***And The Blood Money Award Winner Is... Top Guard Recruiter Earning \$94K In Bonuses***

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



April 7, 2007 The Associated Press

MACON, GA. — Sgt. Dana Kline is so good at recruiting new National Guard soldiers that he's set to make a small fortune - \$94,000 in bonuses.

Kline has managed to get 47 recruits in 11 months, earning him the state's Meritorious Service Medal and, so far, the highest bonus through the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program.

Through the program, Guard members are offered a \$1,000 bonus for every person they sign up and another \$1,000 when the recruit ships out to basic training. The program is credited with bringing in 25,000 new Guard members since its launch 15 months ago.

**Kline, who's not even a full-time military recruiter, has found many of his recruits on trips to area shopping malls, unemployment offices and schools.**

**"I like to recruit and to help guide young people's careers," said Kline, 33, of Macon.**

**"I love to tell them about my experiences and the opportunities available in the Guard."**

[Yes, indeed. Travel to exciting new locations. Meet millions of pissed off Iraqis eager for a chance to kill you. There's a really new opportunity. For sure you can't match that at the mall or the unemployment office. T]

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## **“Buy A Bus Ticket For Somebody Who's AWOL? That's Absurd,” The Sheriff Said; Maj. Anne Edgecomb Said “We Don't Do Hangings Anymore”**

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

March 21, 2007 Lansing State Journal

**MASON - In August, the Army had local deserter Elrico Hurley right where it wanted him: in the Ingham County Jail.**

**Somebody from the sheriff's department notified Army officials they were holding Hurley on a desertion warrant. And what did the Army do?**

**It faxed Hurley a voucher for a bus ticket and an invitation back to Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.**

**Hurley declined. He walked out of jail, but never got on the bus. Now, he's back in jail - nabbed again on the desertion warrant - and Sheriff Gene Wriggelsworth wonders what kind of game the Army is playing.**

"Buy a bus ticket for somebody who's AWOL? That's absurd," the sheriff said. "If the Army is not serious about deserters, it should take them out of the system and quit cluttering up our jails."

Sgt. Todd Jenkins, who got the job of wrestling with Hurley's paperwork, said this is actually the third time Hurley's status as a deserter has put him in the hands of local authorities.

Jenkins said the Army has displayed the same ambivalence toward at least one other Army deserter who landed in his jail.

The Marines, on the other hand, retrieve their deserters quickly - and in person.

Hurley, 28, went to high school in Kalamazoo, but calls Lansing home. In a telephone interview from jail this week, Hurley said he ran from the Army about a year ago before completing basic training. Hurley said he went AWOL because of "family issues."

Hurley said he was not surprised by the Army's nonchalance because he has been in touch with military officials in an attempt to arrange his separation from the Army.

He does, however, expect to be court-martialed.

In an e-mail response to my inquiry Army spokeswoman Maj. Anne Edgecomb quoted Army policy: "Military police will generally not be committed to proactive efforts to apprehend AWOL soldiers or deserters except when the provost marshal determines that such efforts are warranted by specific circumstances (such as) additional, more serious charges ..."

She added: "When apprehended, or when they return on their own, these soldiers are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and in accordance with the rights afforded them under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and Army Regulations.

"Our primary course of action is to attempt to rehabilitate the soldier and reintegrate him/her back into their unit. "Not all deserters are tried by court martial. Each case is evaluated on its own merits."

**Edgecomb confirmed execution is the maximum penalty for desertion in time of war, but said "we don't do hangings anymore."**

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# “As Support For The War Fades, Demand For Yellow Ribbons Has Collapsed”

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

March 2, 2007 By Andrew Ward in Atlanta, The Financial Times

For three years after the invasion of Iraq, it was difficult to drive more than a few miles through middle America without seeing a car displaying a magnetic yellow ribbon. The magnets, bearing the slogan “Support Our Troops”, became a symbol of patriotism for millions of US motorists.

**But as support for the war fades, demand for yellow ribbons has collapsed.**

Magnet America, the largest manufacturer of the product, has seen sales fall from a peak of 1.2m in August 2004 to about 4,000 a month and now has an unsold stockpile of about 1m magnets.

“We have enough supplies to meet demand for years to come,” said Micah Pattisall, director of operations. “Every product has a lifespan and this one has run its course.”

Only about half a dozen companies are still supplying the magnets compared with up to 200 at the height of the fad, according to Mr Pattisall.

When the company was founded in April 2003, during the initial invasion of Iraq, nearly all its revenues came from yellow ribbons. Today, patriotic products account for only 6 per cent of sales.

The yellow ribbon has been overtaken as the company’s best-selling product by a wristband promoting chastity before marriage with the slogan “True Love Waits”.

Resentful that the yellow ribbon has become associated with support for the president, George W. Bush, opponents of the war have introduced their own car magnets emblazoned with anti-war statements.

**On Ebay, the internet auction site, on Thursday, a black and white ribbon bearing the slogan “Out of Iraq, Bring ‘Em Back” was priced at \$5. Traditional yellow ribbon magnets, in contrast, could be bought for one cent.**

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

# **Mass Rally Against The Occupation: Iraqis Flock To The Holy City Of Najaf; “Spread Freedom And To Demand That The Occupation Forces Leave”**



Iraqi demonstrating against the U.S. occupation wave flags as they arrive in Najaf on 08 April 2007. (AFP/Ahmad Al-Rubaye)

**“Our feeling is like the feeling of any Iraqi who calls for sovereignty and freedom,” said 27-year-old Baghdad resident Abbas Kadhem, an electricity store owner who arrived in Najaf. “We are answering the call of Sayyed Moqtada al-Sadr to spread freedom and to demand that the occupation forces leave.”**

8 Apr 2007 By Khaled Farhan (Reuters) & AP

**Thousands of Iraqis flocked to the holy city of Najaf on Sunday for a big demonstration called by radical Shi’ite cleric [translation: anti-occupation nationalist] Moqtada al-Sadr against the U.S. presence in Iraq.**

Witnesses in some southern towns said Iraqi police were trying to stop Sadr’s supporters from getting to Najaf.

Sadr has urged Iraqis to protest in Najaf on Monday, the fourth anniversary of the day on which U.S. forces swept into central Baghdad in 2003.

The Baghdad-Najaf road was packed on Sunday with hundreds of vehicles crammed with passengers waving Iraqi flags and chanting religious and anti-U.S. slogans.

“No, no, no to America ... Moqtada, yes, yes, yes,” they chanted as they converged towards Najaf.

**“Our feeling is like the feeling of any Iraqi who calls for sovereignty and freedom,” said 27-year-old Baghdad resident Abbas Kadhem, an electricity store owner who arrived in Najaf.**

**“We are answering the call of Sayyed Moqtada al-Sadr to spread freedom and to demand that the occupation forces leave.”**

Sadr late last month said Iraq had “endured difficult years because of this oppressive occupation that claims it removed the destroyer (Saddam Hussein) to bring the ghost of a fake democracy” to the country.

**“The faithful should participate in a demonstration in Najaf on April 9, demanding that the occupiers withdraw from our lands. They should carry or wear Iraqi flags,” said a statement released by al-Sadr’s office.**

**On Sunday, Iraqi flags flew from most houses and shops in Sadr City. Drivers and motorcyclists affixed them to their vehicles. Police escorted convoys of pickup trucks overflowing with young boys waving Iraqi flags, en route to Najaf.**

**An Iraqi flag was hoisted over a military base in Basra, Iraq’s second-largest city, as Iraqi troops took control of the facility Sunday from British forces. The Shat al-Arab base is the second base transferred to Iraqi control in Basra over the past month.**

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## **Big Surprise: Resistance Recruiting Inside U.S. Concentration Camps**

April 8, 2007 By Ned Parker, L.A. Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

U.S.-run detention camps in Iraq have become a breeding ground for extremists [translation: Iraqis fighting to liberate their nation from foreign occupation] where militants recruit and train supporters, and use violence against perceived foes [translation: against collaborator informers planted in the prison population], say former inmates and Iraqi officials.

Iraqis swept up in security operations and held indefinitely while the Americans try to determine whether they have any links to the insurgency are susceptible to the extremists’ message, former detainees said.

After the Abu Ghraib scandal, the U.S. pledged to speed up processing of detainees, the vast majority of whom the International Committee of the Red Cross said had been wrongly arrested.

**But as U.S. troops continue to confront the insurgency, the inmate population has soared, to 18,000, from 10,000 in 2003.**

U.S. military officials acknowledge that they are battling militants for the hearts and minds of detainees, but deny accusations that they have lost control inside the prisons, or that detainees are treated harshly.

**Iraqi officials also struggle with a crowded system where prisoners can languish as long as two years before getting a trial.**

A former detainee at Camp Cropper, where Hussein and other high-profile prisoners have been held, said he once watched Sunni militants attack a former police officer they suspected of being an informer. He said six men, their faces hidden by towels, gathered around the victim in a dormitory at 2 a.m.

Two kept a lookout for U.S. soldiers while one man swung a sock stuffed with rocks at the inmate's head, he said. The man tried to get up, but another pressed him down with a foot to the chest. The attackers pummeled his head, spattering themselves with his blood, until he lost consciousness.

Other prisoners then dragged the victim to the front of the hall, where the U.S. guards would find him.

"They said this man was an informer; he had been put there to spy for the Americans," said the former prisoner, who was working as a guard for a secular political party when U.S. forces detained him and seven colleagues.

He identified himself only as Abu Usama; he and his colleagues, who recounted their story last week, two months after their release, spoke on condition that their full names and the name of the political party not be identified because they feared being detained again by the Americans.

**The radicals preyed on [translation: worked on recruiting] men who were being held indefinitely, without knowing whether they would be charged.**

**"You'd spend three months not charged with anything and you were innocent — they could get you," Abu Usama said.**

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## Assorted Resistance Action

08 Apr 2007 Reuters

A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol killed one policeman and wounded another in Falluja, 50 km (35 miles) west of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents killed an Iraqi soldier on Saturday in Hawija, 70 Km (40 miles) southwest of Kirkuk, police said.

A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol killed one policeman and wounded seven in the Adhamiya district in northern Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb targeting a police Scorpion Brigade patrol wounded three policemen in the Shi'ite city of Hilla, 100 km (60 miles) south of Baghdad, police said. Police raided neighbouring districts and arrested two suspected insurgents.

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



Children peer through the gate to their home wrecked by foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. during a raid in Baghdad's Sadr City, Iraq, March 10, 2007. (AP Photo/Samir Mizban)

**[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqi troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better**

and call it “sovereign,” and “detain” anybody who doesn’t like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

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

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

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

**Troops Invited:**

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

**DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

## **Government Agencies Catch Bush In More Stupid Lies About Troop Funding**

April 8, 2007 By FRANK RICH, NY Times [Excerpt]

Mr. Bush’s claim that military equipment would be shortchanged if he couldn’t sign a spending bill by mid-April was contradicted by not one but two government agencies.

A Government Accountability Office report faulted poor Pentagon planning for endemic existing equipment shortages in the National Guard.



The Congressional Research Service found that the Pentagon could pay for the war until well into July. Since by that point we'll already be on the threshold of our own commanders' late-summer deadline for judging the surge, what's the crisis?

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## **IF YOU DON'T FIGHT HIM NOW, HE'S GOING TO FOLLOW YOU HOME**



(AFP/Mandel Ngan)

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**“We Can’t Depend On The Democrats” To Stop The War:  
“They Got There And They Betrayed The Grass Roots That Put Them Back There”**

“The timeline is now, not 18 months, not two years, or whenever they feel like it,” said Sheehan.

Apr 6 CRAWFORD, United States (AFP)

Prominent Iraq war opponent Cindy Sheehan urged US President George W. Bush on Friday to “end this madness” and accused his Democratic foes of having “betrayed” their anti-war supporters.

Sheehan, whose soldier son Casey was killed in Iraq in 2004, led dozens of protesters to a security checkpoint near Bush’s Texas ranch, set up a makeshift altar, and read out names of some of the US dead in Iraq.

**The protesters will tell Bush “to end this madness for our families,” said Sheehan, who took a tough line against Democrats who harnessed anger at the Iraq war to recapture the US Congress in November.**

“They got there and they betrayed the grass roots that put them back there,” she said. “We can’t depend on the Democrats.”

“The timeline is now, not 18 months, not two years, or whenever they feel like it,” said Sheehan.

The anti-war movement “lost a little momentum during the elections, but it’s picking up again” because “the Democrats aren’t really doing anything” to end the conflict, she said.

**MORE:**

**“Nothing At All Has Happened Since  
The Democrats Rode To Victory In  
November Courtesy Of Popular  
Revulsion In America Against The  
War”**

**“The Democratic Leadership Chose  
Merely To Appear To Oppose The War  
While Continuing To Fund It”**

April 16, 2007 by Alexander Cockburn, The Nation [Excerpts]

Has the end of America’s war on Iraq been brought closer by the recent vote in the House of Representatives?

On Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi’s website we find her portrait of what US troops will be doing in Iraq following this withdrawal, or “redeployment,” should it occur late next year on the bill’s schedule. “US troops remaining in Iraq may only be used for diplomatic protection, counterterrorism operations and training of Iraqi Security Forces.”

So the bill essentially adopts and enforces Bush's war plan and attendant "benchmarks" as spelled out in his January 10 speech.

**Thus when it comes to the actual war, which has led to the bloody disintegration of Iraqi society, the death of up to 5,000 Iraqis a month, the death and mutilation of US soldiers every day, nothing at all has happened since the Democrats rode to victory in November courtesy of popular revulsion in America against the war.**

Bush's reaction to this censure at the polls was to appoint a new commander in Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus, to oversee the troop surge in Baghdad and Anbar Province.

**The Democrats voted unanimously to approve Petraeus, and now they have OK'd the money for the surge.**

Although nothing of any significance actually happened on March 23, to read liberal commentators one would think we'd witnessed some profound upheaval, courtesy of Nancy Pelosi's skillful uniting of the various Democratic factions.

What she accomplished in practice was the neutering of the antiwar faction. In the end only eight Democrats (plus two Republicans) voted against the Supplemental Appropriation out of opposition to the war.

**So, in Congress 420 representatives officially have no problem with the war in Iraq continuing until the eve of the next election.**

The real antiwar movement proved itself incapable of pressuring House Democrats to hold out.

**The January 27 demonstration organized by United for Peace and Justice did involve active lobbying of Democrats to hold their feet to the fire, but the demo itself was really a Bush-bashing session, with scant reminders that Bush's war has been and continues to be a bipartisan project.**

Will Congressional opposition to the war now get stronger, anchored by Pelosi's bill? Not likely.

The window of opportunity for that flew open right after the election, when antiwar forces roared in outrage after being snubbed by Pelosi and Reid, who omitted the war and the Patriot Act from their must-do agenda.

**Instead, the Democratic leadership chose merely to appear to oppose the war while continuing to fund it. This they have now achieved, amid the satisfied cheers of the progressive sector.**

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## McCain In Baghdad:

# **“Do They Think That When They Come And Speak Few Arabic Words In A Very Bad Manner It Will Make Us Love Them?”**

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

April 3, 2007 The Associated Press

Iraqis in Baghdad said Tuesday that U.S. Sen. John McCain's account of a heavily guarded visit to a central market did not represent the current reality in the capital, with one calling it "propaganda."

Jaafar Moussa Thamir, a 42-year-old who sells electrical appliances at the Shorja market that the Republican congressmen visited on Sunday, said the Republican congressional delegation greeted some fellow vendors with Arabic phrases but he was not impressed.

**“They were just making fun of us and paid this visit just for their own interests,” he said. “Do they think that when they come and speak few Arabic words in a very bad manner it will make us love them?”**

**“This country and its society have been destroyed because of them and I hope that they realized that during this visit.”**

**“I didn't care about him, I even turned my eyes away,” Thamir said. “We are being killed by the dozens everyday because of them. What were they trying to tell us? They are just pretenders.”**

Karim Abdullah, a 37-year-old textile merchant, said the congressmen were kept under tight security and accompanied by dozens of U.S. troops.

“They were laughing and talking to people as if there was nothing going on in this country or at least they were pretending that they were tourists and were visiting the city's old market and buying souvenir,” he said.

“To achieve this, they sealed off the area, put themselves in flak jackets and walked in the middle of tens of armed American soldiers.”

“Although these U.S. officials were using this visit for their propaganda to tell the Americans ‘we are gaining progress here don't worry,’ it left a kind of good impression with some of us,” he said.

“They are at least better than Iraqi officials who never venture out their Green Zone to talk to normal people and see their problems. I hope that this visit will encourage Iraqi officials to leave their fortified houses inside the Green Zone.”

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# No, These New Government Agencies Are Not A Satire; F.A.T.A.S.S. & A.S.S.H.O.L.E.S.

Apr 4, 2007 Libertypost.org

150 years ago, President Lincoln found it necessary to hire a private investigator - Alan Pinkerton for protection.

That was the beginning of the Secret Service.

Since that time, the federal government has produced a large number of multi-letter agencies such as: FBI, CIA, INS, IRS, DEA, BATF, etc., etc.

Now we have the "Federal Air Transportation Airport Security Service".

**Can't you see them now, these 'highly trained' men and women in their black outfits with jackets saying across their Backs: F. A. T. A. S. S.**

**The FATASS's are of course supervised by a special section of the Home Land Security Section known as: Airport Security Service Home Office Logistics Enhancement Section or the: A.S.S.H.O.L.E.S.**

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