

GI SPECIAL 5E19:



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

The V.A. Domestic Enemies At Work

Contemptible Scum Refuse To Admit
Evidence Of A Wound Is Evidence Of A
Wound, And Deny Iraq Vet His Benefits



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

[It would appear the only thing capable of getting these rats attention would be a few thousand fully armed troops visiting their headquarters in DC to have a word with them they would never forget. T]

[Thanks to James Starowicz, Vietnam Veterans and Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

May 2, 2007 by Team 8 Investigator Alan Cohn, (Southington-WTNH)

Ryan Riddle is a Connecticut veteran who has been fighting through that red tape ever since he was wounded in Iraq.

It was a dangerous job in a dangerous place, guarding a checkpoint from a bunker in Baghdad's Green Zone. But it was not insurgents Riddle had to worry about on a hot summer night two years ago, it was a bullet from an M-16 carried by one of his own comrades.

"It felt like someone took a sledge hammer to my thigh, I couldn't even stand," said Riddle. "I had to be walked to my vehicle and when I put up my leg the bleeding just started and it wouldn't stop."

It was an accidental shooting which left very real scars from shrapnel wounds to Riddle's wrist and legs. Doctors were unable to remove part of the bullet in his leg because it was too close to an artery.

Riddle received a commendation for his service at the checkpoint; the soldier who shot him got a reprimand.

Riddle was discharged and moved home to Southington.

He filed for service related benefits for the gun shot wound, and doctors at the Newington Veterans hospital told him there is no proof of his injury.

Riddle said he was told doctors were not sure if he was shot on the streets of Hartford or in Iraq.

Despite X-rays that clearly showed a bullet still lodged in Riddle's thigh the VA denied his claim saying "service records do not document a gunshot wound to the left thigh during service."

Somehow, Riddle's service records had been lost.

"I was taken a back, I didn't know what to say," said Riddle. "You know I thought when I served my country and fought a war that I'd at least be taken care of after it was done but it's just the system."

Both the VA and Defense Department would not help Riddle so News Channel 8 joined the fight.

First, tracking down the family of Riddle's sergeant, still stationed in Iraq. News Channel 8 also contacted Sgt. Dirk Humphries and received a detailed account of what happened. We also obtained a second letter from another soldier who was there at the time of Riddle's shooting.

As the collected evidence piled up in support of Riddle's story, the VA denied his appeal, again saying it still could not find evidence he was shot in Iraq.

So News Channel 8 went to Washington D.C. to confront the Veterans Administration. The VA declined a request for an interview, News Channel 8's Alan Cohn showed up at a Senate Veterans Affairs Committee hearing and waited for Ronald Aument, the VA's under Secretary for Benefits.

"The question is, how could a TV station from Connecticut reach out to people in Baghdad and confirm that this private was shot and the VA can't?"

"Frankly, I don't know the facts, but I'll be happy to look into it," Aument said.

Mary Ellen McCarthy is with the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and said by law the VA is required to help research claims.

But in reality, sometimes it is next to impossible because the VA cannot access the Defense Department's computer system to search service records.

"People are more interested in instruments of war than they are in providing a paper trail for a disabled veteran and until that changes I think we're going to continue to see some problems in this area," said McCarthy.

In the case of Ryan Riddle, News Channel 8 provided the evidence of the gunshot wound the VA was not able to get on its own.

"I can assure you we'll look into it promptly," Aument said. "We're going to do the right thing by every veteran who comes to us."

That was almost a month ago. News Channel 8 turned over a letter written on Army stationery by Riddle's sergeant who was with him when he was shot.

We even offered to give the VA the x-rays that show the bullet lodged in his thigh, but as of right now, Riddle's claim is still denied.

The VA said the documents help but it is still trying to get a hold of the soldiers that we had no trouble contacting to corroborate their story.

Rep. John Larson, who has been following the case, said it's ridiculous.

"It seems they are in deny, deny, deny mode instead of being there to help the veteran," said Larson.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Mississippi Sgt. Killed Near Baqubah



Army Sgt. Jason Walter Vaughn, 29, of Iuka, Miss died May 10, 2007, when a roadside bomb exploded near the vehicle he was riding in near Baqubah, Iraq. He was serving his second tour in Iraq and was a member of the Stryker Brigade based in Fort Lewis, Wash. (AP Photo/Vaughn Family)

Soldier From Navajo Nation Dies In Iraq

May 16, 2007 By The Associated Press

The family of Army Sergeant Christopher Gonzalez says he died yesterday, though the Department of Defense has not confirmed or released details of his death.

Navajo Nation Council delegate Leonard Chee said in a statement the entire Navajo community is in shock.

According to Chee, Gonzalez was carrying out his second tour of duty in Iraq and left behind a wife and child.

Funeral services are pending.

Survivors include his mother, Judy Nez of Birdsprings, Arizona. On Tuesday, Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley issued a proclamation in honor and in recognition of Sergeant Gonzalez.

Shirley also ordered flags on the Navajo Nation flown at half-staff from May 16th to May 20th in honor of Gonzalez.

Ex-Blinn Student Killed In Iraq

May 3, 2007 By APRIL AVISON, Eagle Staff Writer, The Bryan-College Station Eagle

Former College Station resident Glenn Dale Hicks Jr. stood bravely in front of an American flag with a stoic expression - the classic photo of a soldier taken after a graduation of some sort.

The image of the one-time Blinn College student was captured in a photograph released Wednesday by Fort Benning, Ga., just days after the soldier's death.

Officials at Fort Benning said Wednesday that they have little information about the explosion that killed Hicks, 24, and two fellow soldiers, 21-year-olds Pfc. Jay-D Ornsby-Adkins of Lone, Calif., and Pvt. Cole Spencer of Gays, Ill.

The three died Saturday in Salman Pak, Iraq, which is about 15 miles south of Baghdad.

Hicks had been at Fort Benning since July 2004, according to records.

Attempts to reach the soldier's family have been unsuccessful. Although he listed a College Station address when he joined the military, he doesn't seem to have lived in the area in recent years.

He attended Blinn College in fall 2002 and spring 2003, said a Blinn spokeswoman, but his permanent address on file at the college was in Tarrant County.

A newspaper in Lone reported that a candlelight vigil was held Tuesday evening for Ornsby-Adkins, who emigrated from Australia with his mother when he was 5 years old. Ornsby-Adkins had been married since December, the paper reported.

Spencer was engaged to be married and had been in Iraq for about a month when the bomb hit the Humvee in which he, Hicks and Ornsby-Adkins were riding, an Illinois TV station reported earlier this week.

The three young men were assigned to the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Officials at Fort Hood have been asked to provide "casualty assistance" to the Hicks family because of Killeen's proximity to the Hicks' home in Tarrant County, a spokeswoman at Fort Benning in Georgia said Wednesday.

Friends, Family Remember London Soldier Killed In The Line Of Duty

May 09, 2007 By Eric Steinkopff, Staff Writer, The Times-Tribune

There were no clouds overhead Tuesday afternoon, but gray skies overshadowed the community along Mitchell Creek Road west of London.

One of the community's own residents, Staff Sgt. Christopher N. Hamlin, 24, an Army sniper from London, was killed Friday by a roadside bomb on his third tour of duty in Iraq, following deployments to Afghanistan and Bosnia.

He was in Iraq with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas.

"He said that he wanted to travel the world and not watch it on television," said his mother Autumn Hamlin quietly, sitting on a porch swing and listening to a nearby creek flow lazily down the hollow. "He wanted to be right there."

Chris Hamlin grew up in Laurel County as the only child of a single mom, learning to be independent and to help others who were less fortunate.

"He was generous," said Autumn Hamlin as she looked away through the woods where her son once hunted and fished.

"He would help his friends out when they needed money and help them pay their rent," Autumn Hamlin said.

Helping others was a way of life for her son and his attitude affected everyone around him – even as a student athlete with North Laurel High School's basketball, cross country and track teams.

“He’d be hanging around, waiting for basketball practice to start and he’d help the janitor clean the school,” said Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps commander retired Navy Cmdr. Kenneth Vanourney.

It was this same desire to help that led the 6-foot 4-inch Hamlin to the Army.

“In basic training, he did a lot to help the other soldiers complete their training,” said stepfather Otis Johnson. “He was already physically fit and he would finish the course early and go back to encourage the others to complete or they would fail.”

Hamlin took to the Army like a duck to water, loving the outdoor life, the discipline and the camaraderie of his fellow soldiers.

He was able to enter the Army as a private first class – the third enlisted rank – as a sort of credit for his JROTC experience and he was promoted to the rank of staff sergeant - the sixth enlisted rank - based on outstanding performance.

At one point, he and another soldier from his unit went to sniper school at Fort Benning, Ga. - again hoping to help his fellow soldiers. This time, he would watch over U.S. forces and protect them from harm. Snipers typically work in pairs alternating with one man as the spotter and the other the shooter.

According to Johnson, this pair took first place in their class with Hamlin shooting 296 and his partner shooting a perfect score of 300.

“He never quit at anything,” Autumn Hamlin said. “He made good grades and he was kind of hyper, so he wanted to be outdoors.”

Chris Hamlin came home to visit his family last August before his last trip to Iraq, Johnson said.

“If I could have picked a son, I wouldn’t have picked someone who walked like him or talked like him,” said Johnson with tears streaming down his face.

“I would pick him.”

According to Vanourney, Hamlin’s caring nature came through even during patrols in Iraq when he would learn the names and personalities of all the children who would gather around. “He always talked about those kids in Iraq (and) the fact that they lived in such a tough area,” Vanourney said. “He told me, ‘I think we’re making a difference.’”

His group did make a significant difference for at least one family when they busted a nest of insurgents who were holding a local Iraqi man hostage to get others to comply with their wishes.

“Last month, he called home and they captured some insurgents,” Johnson said. “They saved a man who was being held hostage at an insurgent headquarters. They took him home and he had four daughters. They were crying and hugging him.”

On April 1, 2006, between training and deployments, Hamlin met his girlfriend of 13 months Valina Carballo, 28, of Killeen, Texas.

“His last e-mail to me was in November (2006) and he was real proud,” Vanourney said. “He met a girl in Texas and said ‘now I have something to come home to.’”

They managed to share about six months together over the next year of his deployments and began to make plans for a future.

“He was a wonderful man and I was very blessed to have had him in my life,” Carballo said. “He had a great heart and he was always willing to help people. He had big dreams and a lot of ambition. He would have succeeded in anything he tried. He was definitely worth waiting for.”

Hamlin felt so strongly about his relationship with Carballo that he sent framed photographs of the couple home to his mom and his grandmother.

According to Carballo, Hamlin had plans for a military career, buying a house and the couple talked about getting married.

“We didn’t have a lot of time together, but I will always cherish the time we had,” Carballo said.

Those who knew him said that Hamlin died doing what he always wanted to do and seeing places that he wanted to see.

“This is a Navy ROTC (but) from the day he walked in here he wanted to be a soldier,” Vanourney said. “Given another chance, he’d probably do the same thing. He reenlisted knowing that the unit was going back to Iraq.”

This week will be filled with sorrow and a very painful homecoming.

“We moved around a bit, but he always wanted to come back home,” Autumn Hamlin said.

Officials said his body is expected to be flown into Kentucky with a military escort Thursday, but details were not available.

Gov. Ernie Fletcher has directed that flags at all state office buildings be lowered to half-staff until sunset on the day of Hamlin’s funeral.

A North Laurel High School memorial service to honor Christopher Hamlin is scheduled for 9 a.m. Thursday.

Visitation is tentatively scheduled for 7 p.m. Friday and funeral services are planned for 1 p.m. Saturday, both at London Funeral Home on Main Street.

Manteca Man Slain In Iraq Remembered For Dedication

May 09, 2007 By Christian Burkin, Record Staff Writer

MANTECA - Cpl. Charles O. Palmer II, the Manteca man killed Saturday in Iraq, couldn't leave the Marine Corps behind, and now the Marines will bring him home to his final resting place.

Members of the Palmer family walked the grounds at Burwood Cemetery on River Road in Escalon on Tuesday, looking at burial plots. The cemetery is bordered on three sides by almond orchards, and the Stanislaus River flows past to the south. The Palmers felt it was the perfect place to bury their son, who was an avid outdoorsman and fisherman.

"It took us a while to realize it was a cemetery and not a park," his stepmother, Teri Palmer, said.

Palmer first served on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1992 to 1996. After honorable discharge from active duty, Palmer stayed close to the Marines, settling in Camp Lejeune, N.C. He worked a variety of jobs before settling in as a powder paint coater. But he always felt the call of the Corps.

"He loved the detail of (his work), but he was always a Marine," his stepmother recalled. "Even when he got out, he never changed his haircut."

Last year, shortly before his 35th birthday, Palmer, who had continued to serve in the reserves, decided to re-enlist.

Palmer was assigned to the 8th Communication Battalion, II Marine Expeditionary Force, based in Camp Lejeune. He deployed to Iraq in February and was scheduled to return in September.

During combat operations Saturday in Khalidiyah in Iraq's Al Anbar province, Palmer was manning a turret on a Humvee when an improvised explosive device exploded underneath, said Capt. Donn Puca, a Lathrop-based casualty assistance officer. Palmer and another Marine were killed in the blast.

"He paid the ultimate price, but he would have done that anyway," said his father, Charles "Chuck" Palmer, 54.

Palmer was born in Sacramento, but moved with his family to Manteca in 1979. He graduated from Manteca High School in 1989. He was an active and involved student. He wrestled and played football and volunteered for charities, family members said.

"He's always been my hero," said his younger brother, Jason Palmer, 33.

For Charles Palmer, military service wasn't just a personal commitment, it also was a family tradition. Chuck Palmer served two years in the Army during the Vietnam War. Jason Palmer was in the Navy, and sister Jeni Koop served in the Army.

The last time the Marine's father and stepmother saw him was in December, when they visited him in North Carolina.

"It was wonderful," his father said. "He was having a great time, and we could tell he was happy."

A Marine in full dress uniform will escort Palmer's body on this final trip home, from Dover Air Force Base in Delaware to Stockton. Palmer's body is scheduled to arrive Thursday at Stockton Metropolitan Airport, where it will be met by an honor guard.

Palmer will be buried with full military honors. Details of the burial ceremony, which will be open to the public, were not available Tuesday.

Palmer also leaves behind a 15-year-old son in Manteca, and a wife and two stepchildren, 6 and 8, at Camp Lejeune.

2 Valley Soldiers Badly Wounded

May 16, 2007 KGBT

Jamie Campos is preparing to meet her husband Sgt. Juan Campos in San Antonio. He's being flown to Brooke Army Medical Center after suffering severe burns from a roadside bomb in Iraq.

Jamie says she has limited information about the incident but was told that 4 others were traveling in the armored vehicle with her husband; one of them died.

"I guess it hit a fuel line and that's the reason it caught fire so quickly," Mrs. Campos said. "Like the whole thing caught on fire, flew up in the air, and exploded. When it fell down, the only reason any of them survived is because the doors flew open. And they all jumped out."

Jamie says her husband, who's on his second tour in Iraq and who just returned to Iraq from on R&R on May 3, suffered burns to 70-80 percent of his body.

She says the military told her to hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

"My husband has the worst injuries. The other guys are burned as well. One of them has both legs broken and all of four of them have their faces burned." Jamie isn't sure how she'll react to seeing her husband's injuries but can't wait to see him.

She tells us she never expected this would happen to him.

"There's nothing we can do. All we can do is hope and pray... that everything works out... and that he's okay."

Last night, Action 4 News also spoke with the family of Omar Avila, of Brownsville. He was in the armored vehicle with Sgt. Campos.

Guillermo Avila said his son suffered burns to 60 percent of his body and has both legs fractured. The Avila's are also planning to meet up with their son in San Antonio.

Green Zone Mortared: 2 Dead, 10 Wounded

May 16, 2007 Associated Press

At least nine apparent mortar rounds slammed into the U.S.-controlled Green Zone on Wednesday, the second such attack in as many days, an official said. A U.S. Embassy spokesman said two Iraqis were killed and 10 people were wounded. No American casualties were reported.

The explosions occurred shortly before 4 p.m., about the same time the Green Zone was hit Tuesday.

"Preliminary information indicates they were mortars, but that hasn't been confirmed," U.S. Embassy spokesman Lou Finton told The Associated Press.

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Battle at Tarmiyah: On Feb. 19, 35 soldiers faced an attack on their remote patrol base in Tarmiyah, Iraq. By the end of the four-hour battle, two of the men were dead and 29 were wounded. Staff Sgt. Oscar Ayala, whose face was cut by flying shrapnel, peeks out from behind a wall on the roof of the ruined patrol base. [U.S. Army Photo]

Truck Bombers Blow Up Tigris River Bridge

5.16.07 Reuters

Two suicide truck bombers destroyed a Tigris river bridge north of the city of Mosul, police said, in the latest attack against the country's infrastructure.

Resistance Force Hits Mosul In Company Strength

5.16.07 Reuters

Four policemen were killed and 30 were wounded when about 200 insurgents attacked an Iraqi police station and a prison and set off a series of bombs in Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed Near Chinah

5/16/2007 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Casualty Reports 07-01-03C

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan: Afghan Border Police and Coalition forces were attacked by an unknown number of enemy forces while operating near the village of Chinah, 43 kilometers southwest of Qalat in Zabul Province May 15.

The combined patrol returned fire and maneuvered to a defensible position to repel the enemy attack.

One Coalition servicemember was wounded during the engagement and medically evacuated to a nearby treatment facility, where he later died of wounds.

Helmand Province Landmine Badly Wounds Danish Soldier

May 16, 2007 CanWest News Service

COPENHAGEN -- A Danish soldier was seriously wounded Tuesday when an armoured vehicle carrying him and two others hit a landmine in Afghanistan's restive southern province of Helmand. The soldier was badly wounded in the leg and required surgery.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of Marine Lance Cpl. Walter O'Haire in Rockland, Massachusetts May 15, 2007. O'Haire was killed May 9 while on duty in Iraq. REUTERS/Brian Snyder

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Resistance Attacks Foreign Occupation Troops

May 16, 2007 Reuters:

A remote-controlled bomb killed four Ugandan soldiers in the Somali capital Mogadishu on Wednesday as Islamist militants followed through on a threat to wage an Iraq-style insurgency.

Five soldiers were also wounded in the attack on the African Union (AU) convoy, which an AU security source said was the first of its kind against the 1,600-strong Ugandan contingent -- who had previously only been shot at.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

UNCONQUERED UNCONQUERABLE



A demonstrator chants anti-Occupation slogans during a rally in Shi'ite's Kadhimiya district in Baghdad May 9, 2007. Iraqis denounced Dick Cheney's visit to Iraq. REUTERS/Mohammed Ameen

Al-Mahdi Army Offensive In Al-Nasriyah Province

May 16 (KUNA)

Violent clashes erupted Wednesday in Al-Nasriyah province among Al-Mahdi Army militias, police and army troops killing and injuring 25 people with the militias taking over public buildings in Al-Shatrah, Al-Refai towns and other parts of the governorate.

The clashes broke out after arrest of a leading member of Al-Mahdi militia members in Al-Gharraf area, for he was accused of setting off explosive devices targeting the Multi-National Force (MNF) in the province, police said.

Speaking to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Iraqi police Major Feras Al-Zerajawi said armed men from Al-Mahdi army attacked the house of the chief of emergency squad using RPGs, avenging arrest of their comrade.

The clashes closed the bridges in Al-Shatrah along with Al-Mahdi army controlling the police station there.

Witnesses said Al-Mahdi army militias tightened control on Al-Shatrah, Al-Garraf areas and a number of buildings in Al-Nasriyah city.

Assorted Resistance Action

16 May 2007 Reuters

Two policemen were killed when they took five prisoners to the hospital for medical treatment. The five prisoners took the policemen's arms and opened fire on them and ran away, police and hospital sources said.

The head of the Riyadh city council was killed along with another member in the council when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle in the town of Riyadh, 60 km (40 miles) southwest of the northern city of Kirkuk, police said.

Guerrillas attacked police Brigadier-General Najib al-Hiyali, the head of the Iraqi-U.S. Joint Coordination Centre of Diyala Province, killing two of his guards and wounding another, police said. Hiyali was not harmed in the attack.

Two Iraqi soldiers were killed and three wounded when guerrillas attacked an Iraqi army patrol in Falluja.

DIWANIYA: Clashes between militias loyal to Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and Iraqi forces wounded eight civilians, a policeman and an Iraqi soldier, hospital and Iraqi military sources said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

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

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

***The Real 9/11 Conspiracy:*
“This Neat Story Draws
Campaigners Away From Real
Issues – Global Warming, The Iraq
War, Nuclear Weapons,
Privatisation, Inequality – While
Permanently Wrecking Their
Credibility”**

The film's greatest flaw is this: the men who made it are still alive. If the US government is running an all-knowing, all-encompassing conspiracy, why did it not snuff them out long ago?

There is only one possible explanation. They are in fact agents of the Bush regime, employed to distract people from its real abuses of power. This, if you are inclined to believe such stories, is surely a more plausible theory than the one proposed in Loose Change.

February 17, 2007 By George Monbiot, AlterNet

There is a virus sweeping the world. It infects opponents of the Bush government, sucks their brains out through their eyes and turns them into gibbering idiots.

The disease is called Loose Change. It is a film made by three young men which airs most of the standard conspiracy theories about the attacks of September 11 2001. Unlike the other 9/11 conspiracy films, Loose Change is sharp and swift, with a thumping soundtrack, slick graphics and a calm and authoritative voiceover. Its makers claim that it has now been watched by 100 million people.

The Pentagon, the film maintains, was not hit by a commercial airliner. There was “no discernable trace” of a plane found in the wreckage, and the entrance and exit holes in the building were far too small. It was hit by a Cruise missile.

The twin towers were brought down by means of “a carefully planned controlled demolition.” You can see the small puffs of smoke caused by explosives just below the cascading sections. All other hypotheses are implausible: the fire was not hot enough to melt steel and the towers fell too quickly. Building 7 was destroyed by the same means a few hours later.

Flight 93 did not crash, but was redirected to Cleveland Airport, where the passengers were taken into a NASA building and never seen again. Their voices had been cloned by the Los Alamos laboratories and used to make fake calls to their relatives.

The footage of Osama Bin Laden, claiming responsibility for the attacks, was faked.

The US government carried out this great crime for four reasons: to help Larry Silverstein, who leased the towers, to collect his insurance money; to assist insider traders betting on falling airline stocks; to steal the gold in the basement; and to grant George Bush new executive powers, so that he could carry out his plans for world domination.

Even if you have seen or read no other accounts of 9/11, and your brain has not yet been liquidized, a few problems must occur to you.

The first is the complete absence of scientific advice.

At one point the presenter asks “So what brought down the Twin Towers? Let’s ask the experts.” But they don’t ask the experts. The film makers take some old quotes, edit them to remove any contradictions, then denounce all subsequent retractions as further evidence of conspiracy.

The only people they interview are a janitor, a group of firemen and a flight instructor.

They let the janitor speak at length, but cut the firemen off in mid-sentence.

The flight instructor speaks in short clips, which give the impression that his pupil, the hijacker Hani Hanjour, was incapable of hitting the Pentagon. Elsewhere he has said the opposite: he had “no doubt” that Hanjour could have done it.

Where are the structural engineers, the materials scientists, the specialists in ballistics, explosives or fire?

The film makers now say that the third edition of the film will be fact-checked by an expert, but he turns out to be “a theology professor.” They don’t name him, but I would bet that it’s David Ray Griffin, who also happens to be the high priest of the 9/11 conspiracists.

The next evident flaw is that the plot they propose must have involved tens of thousands of people.

It could not have been executed without the help of demolition experts, the security firms guarding the World Trade Centre, Mayor Giuliani (who hastily disposed of the remains), much of the US Air Force, the Federal Aviation Administration and the North American Aerospace Defense Command, the relatives of the people “killed” in the plane crashes, the rest of the Pentagon’s staff, the Los Alamos laboratories, the FBI, the CIA and the investigators who picked through the rubble.

If there is one universal American characteristic it is a confessional culture which permits no one with a good story to keep his mouth shut.

People appear on the Jerry Springer Show to admit to carnal relations with their tractors.

Yet none of the participants in this monumental crime has sought to blow the whistle – before, during or after the attacks. No one has volunteered to tell the greatest story ever told.

Read some conflicting accounts, and Loose Change’s case crumbles faster than the Twin Towers.

Hundreds of people saw a plane hit the Pentagon.

Because it collided with one of the world’s best-defended buildings at full speed, the plane was destroyed: even so, both plane parts and body parts were in fact recovered. The wings and tail disintegrated when they hit the wall, which is why the holes weren’t bigger.

The failure of the Twin Towers has been exhaustively documented by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Far from being impossible, the collapse turns out to have been inevitable. The planes cut some of the support columns and ignited fires sufficient to weaken (but not melt) the remaining steel structures. As the perimeter

columns buckled, the weight of the collapsing top stories generated a momentum the rest of the building could not arrest. Puffs of smoke were blown out of the structure by compression as the building fell.

Counterpunch, the radical leftwing magazine, commissioned its own expert – an aerospace and mechanical engineer – to test the official findings. He shows that the institute must have been right. He also demonstrates how Building 7 collapsed. Burning debris falling from the twin towers ruptured the oil pipes feeding its emergency generators. The reduction in pressure triggered the automatic pumping system, which poured thousands of gallons of diesel onto the fire. The support trusses weakened and buckled and the building imploded. Popular Mechanics magazine polled 300 experts and came to the same conclusions.

So the critics – even Counterpunch – are co-conspirators, and the plot expands until it comes to involve a substantial part of the world’s population. There is no reasoning with this madness.

People believe Loose Change because it proposes a closed world: comprehensible, controllable, small. Despite the great evil which runs it, it is more companionable than the chaos which really governs our lives, a world without destination or purpose.

This neat story draws campaigners away from real issues – global warming, the Iraq war, nuclear weapons, privatisation, inequality – while permanently wrecking their credibility.

Bush did follow a pre-existing agenda, spelt out, as Loose Change says, by the Project for a New American Century. But by drowning this truth in an ocean of nonsense, the conspiracists ensure that it can never again be taken seriously.

The film’s greatest flaw is this: the men who made it are still alive.

If the US government is running an all-knowing, all-encompassing conspiracy, why did it not snuff them out long ago?

There is only one possible explanation.

They are in fact agents of the Bush regime, employed to distract people from its real abuses of power.

This, if you are inclined to believe such stories, is surely a more plausible theory than the one proposed in Loose Change.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



Foreign occupation troops from US Marines 2nd battalion 6th regiment weapons company force Iraqi citizens at gunpoint to line up at a taxi stand 13 May 2007, in Fallujah. (AFP/Paul Schemm)

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country, publicly humiliating the citizens and generally treating them like shit to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there. And they will, at the first opportunity.]

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

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

The Great Catastrophe: **“Palestinians Are Reclaiming Their Past - Of The Nakba And Dispossession - And At The Same Time Preparing The Next Phase Of Their Fight For Justice”**

May 12, 2006 By Karma Nabulsi, The Guardian

Karma Nabulsi is a politics fellow of St Edmund Hall, Oxford University and a former PLO representative.

In the last week of April 1948, combined Irgun-Haganah forces launched an offensive to drive the Palestinian people out of the beautiful port city of Jaffa, forcing the remaining inhabitants to flee by sea; many drowned in the process.

My aunt Rose, a teenager at that time, survived the trip to begin her life in exile on the Lebanese coast. Each Palestinian refugee family grows up hearing again and again the stories of those final moments in Palestine, the decisions, the panic, as we live in the midst of their terrible consequences.

Throughout 1948, Jewish forces expelled many thousands of Palestinians from their villages, towns and cities into Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq. Hundreds of thousands of others fled in fear.

The purpose was to create a pure Jewish state, ethnically cleansed of the original inhabitants who had lived there for centuries.

The creation of the state of Israel was the heart of this cataclysmic historical event for the Palestinians - the mass forced expulsion of a people; the more than 50 massacres carried out over the summer of 1948 by various armed Jewish forces; the demolition of villages to ensure the refugees could not return - all this is summed up in a single word for Palestinians: nakba, the catastrophe.

"We must do everything to ensure they (the Palestinians) never do return ... The old will die and the young will forget," said David Ben-Gurion, the founder of Israel, in 1949.

But the young have not forgotten.

The event is remembered every year on May 15, and the youth are at the heart of it: at a rally on the site of the destroyed village of Umm al-Zinnat near Haifa, Salim Fahmawi, now 65, a primary school student when the soldiers entered the village 56 years ago to expel them, told an Israeli reporter: "The presence of so many young people, many of whom are third- and fourth-generation post-1948, gives me a sense of relief - because I know the torch has not been extinguished and is passing from generation to generation."

Nakba day has now become a profoundly political event - unlike other cultural and social manifestations of our national identity - because it is all about resistance to the current Palestinian situation rather than enshrining past memories of victimhood.

The project against the Palestinians begun at the start of the past century had two purposes: first, to deny the very concept of Palestine and destroy its political and social institutions, and second, to annihilate the spirit of the Palestinians as a people, so that they would forget their collective identity once scattered far from home. But the relentless and dynamic nature of the catastrophe - it is an ongoing daily Palestinian experience - binds this generation directly to the older one, and binds the exiled to Palestine.

Indeed, the past few years have witnessed a violent acceleration in this process of attempted destruction - hence the title of this year's event: The Nakba Continues.

The nakba is being lived again today in the brutal thrust of the current policies of the Israeli state.

More than 10,000 Palestinian refugees have been created by the construction of the concrete separation wall that has cordoned off huge new tracts of occupied land.

This wall, condemned as illegal by the International Court of Justice, has turned West Bank cities such as Qalqilya into ghost towns, and thousands of refugees have been created for the third and fourth time in the refugee camps in Gaza.

Yet it is not simply in the building of the walls and checkpoints by Israel's occupying forces, or the different roads created for Jews and Arabs on Palestinian land, or the use of specially constructed bulldozers that rip up Palestinian orchards and olive groves and demolish hundreds of homes, or the imprisonment of thousands of political prisoners, or the daily murder of Palestinian civilians, that demonstrates the continuing nature of the nakba.

It is also in the dedication of Israel's military and political machinery to the destruction of Palestinian resistance to their project.

This resistance operates on two levels, just as the nakba operated - and operates today - on both.

The first is the Palestinians' physical effort to resist Israeli attempts to dispossess, disinherit and physically control them and their land, to get rid of its people and to militarily control and legally disenfranchise those they cannot.

The second lies in the Palestinians' existential affirmation of their identity in the face of a systematic Israeli effort to fragment and destroy it, so that Palestinians will surrender, submit, forget.

But no matter how violently the first method is used by Israel, the second has been a failure: Palestinian identity is stronger than ever in 2006.

Nevertheless, the denial of the Palestinians' right to resist what has been imposed on them has been demonstrated dramatically in recent weeks.

We have witnessed the astonishing international policy of imposing sanctions as a form of collective punishment on an occupied people - rather than on their occupier who is maintaining that occupation through brute violence.

Vital international aid for basic services has been cut off by the European Union and the US - from Palestinians in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 - because they elected Hamas, voting for representatives who had campaigned on a platform promising to hold the line against this destruction of their national identity and rights.

The most malicious aspect of this policy is the fact that the money being withheld is only needed because the occupation tactics of curfews, closures and checkpoints have destroyed the Palestinian economy.

The financial catastrophe triggered by these sanctions is created entirely by the Israeli occupation itself, as World Bank and British parliamentary select committee reports have made clear. The punishment of starving the Palestinians is quite blatant: to force them to their knees and make them repudiate their elected representatives.

Even more absurdly, Israel has not accepted - or even been asked to accept - any of the parallel conditions being demanded of the Palestinians for a resumption of aid: an end to violence; the acceptance of the 1993 Oslo agreements; or the recognition of a Palestinian state in the territories occupied by Israel in 1967: the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. Instead they build expand settlements, denounce the Oslo accords, and have used increasingly indiscriminate violence in both Gaza and the West Bank.

The west's response in a conflict it helped created 58 years ago has fallen to a truly cruel, but also bizarre level.

This denial of Palestinians' worth has been demonstrated again in the way western media studiously ignore their daily suffering.

In April and May, more than 40 Palestinians have been killed by the army - most of them civilians, at least eight of them children - with the most perfunctory coverage in the western press.

Schoolchildren blown to bits while playing in Beit Lahia, like Mamdouh Obeid; Eitan Youssef, a 41-year-old mother from Tulkarm, shot in front of her children because troops "thought they saw a suspicious movement"; an old man, Musa

Sawarkah, herding his flock in Gaza, gunned down; a taxi-driver, Zakariya Daraghmeh, "accidentally" shot in the back in Nablus. Each one a story unheard, untold.

The predicament of life under military occupation is usually recognised in principle, but life in exile has its own characteristics, and continues to create its own bitter experience for Palestinians.

Most young Palestinians today live not in the West Bank or Gaza, but in the immediate region outside of historic Palestine in the Arab world: stateless, ID-less, jobless, without the international legal protections of other refugees from other countries.

Theirs is often a relentless struggle to live any kind of life at all.

The younger generation, wherever they are, possess a common character created through these harsh conditions of exile and passed on through others' memories of place names, old liberation songs, photographs of eternally absent relatives, intimate domestic connections and objects - above all, the rusted key to the front door of the lost house, never seen.

As the French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs first noted, human memory is an entirely collective engagement. In his book *La mémoire collective*, published in 1949 four years after he was executed at Buchenwald, Halbwachs was the first to recognise that memory itself is never really individual.

In 2005, young Palestinian activists helped to organise more than 100 meetings in refugee camps and exile communities in more than 28 countries.

The idea was to bring Palestinians together - whether under occupation or in exile - to discuss the things they want to do next.

I participated in many of these gatherings and witnessed the promise of this generation replicating something they have no first-hand experience themselves, for it is rarely talked about and is as yet unwritten: the secret history of the previous generation of Palestinian resistance activists and fighters.

Their current endeavors echo the same practices, the same spirit, and the same direction.

Although these huge meetings held last year were all organised locally, the transcripts - from places as far apart as Australia, Iraq, Egypt, Sweden, Lebanon, Canada, Saudi Arabia and Greece - show that a shared conversation is happening.

Palestinians are reclaiming their past - of the nakba and dispossession - and at the same time preparing the next phase of their fight for justice.

By some miracle of the general will, every Palestinian has somehow, through different journeys, arrived together at the same place.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

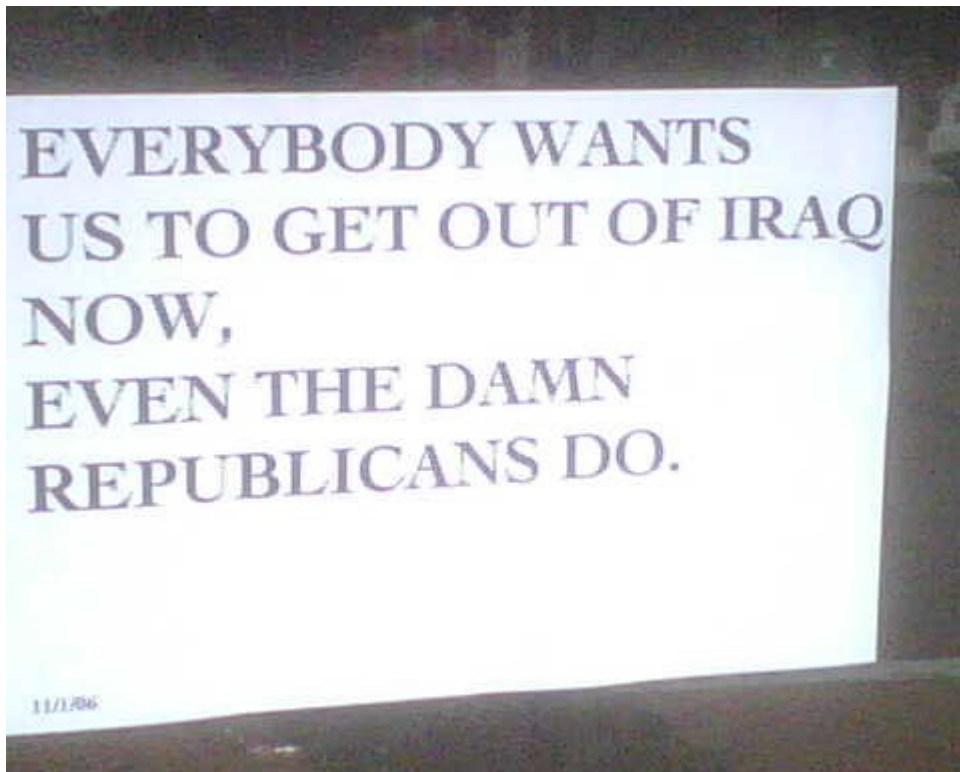
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[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]



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

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