

GI SPECIAL 5E31:

**“The More We Chase
Them Around,” He Said,
“The More They Know
Where We’re At”**



A wounded soldier was evacuated. The patrol, the Second Platoon, A Battery, Task Force 2-15, Second Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, also lost a man on Saturday. Michael Kamber for The New York Times

May 23, 2007 By DAMIEN CAVE, The New York Times Company. Diana Oliva Cave contributed reporting

MAHMUDIYA, Iraq, May 22 — The ground exploded under an ashen sky at dawn. Dust, dirt, blood and military equipment filled the air, clearing after several seconds to reveal a frenzied scene of horror.

Where Sgt. Justin D. Wisniewski, 22, had just been standing there was now a crater five feet wide and three feet deep. His body lay nearby. The wounded were scattered around him.

The soldiers swore.

“It was Ski,” one said, using the sergeant’s nickname.

Sgt. Joshua Delgado, 23, the unit’s medic, rushed in and went to work on the most seriously wounded soldier, who lay with shrapnel wounds to the face, arm and side. Two other Americans and an Iraqi were also hurt.



A medic bandaged the face of a soldier who was hit by shrapnel. Michael Kamber for The New York Times

One of the wounded, Staff Sgt. Robert Simonovich, 31, knelt off to the right. He had taken his body armor off and, with just a T-shirt on, it was clear he had not walked far enough yet to sweat. His hands rested on his knees, his head tilted down. Eyes closed, he said he couldn’t see.

“It’s not one of our guys, is it?” he said. No one answered.

Capt. Blake Keil, 31, who commanded the group of 11 Americans working with about 50 Iraqis, called for a medevac helicopter.

The bomb was the third planted away from a road that the soldiers had discovered since May 12, when they began searching for three soldiers from their unit who had been captured after an ambush that left four Americans and an Iraqi soldier dead.

After the attack on Saturday, the reality of the threat set in: the fields they had been crossing on foot for months might now be as dangerous as the roads they had learned to avoid. What they had just witnessed — a homemade land mine, or what the military calls a dismounted improvised explosive device — could be anywhere.

Some of the soldiers began to move more slowly. Seeking cover, they traced one another's footsteps to an abandoned house. Sergeant Simonovich continued to kneel alone.

"I'm worried about my guy out front, Sergeant Wisniewski," he said. His Ohio accent was thick enough to sound southern. Blood had splattered his face, which was bruised but intact.

"I have a question," he said, pointing to the left side of his head. "Is my ear still there?"



Soldiers protected a comrade as a helicopter landed nearby. Iraqi insurgents are putting bombs along footpaths and back roads. Michael Kamber for The New York Times

The army has a creed — no soldier left behind. The soldiers of Second Platoon, A Battery, Task Force 2-15, Second Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, lost one of their own on Saturday in an effort to follow that creed. Sergeant Wisniewski, 22, died at the start of a 10-mile trek through farms and over canals with the goal of finding the three missing Americans.

Both that ambush and the bomb that exploded beneath Sergeant Wisniewski reflected the changing dynamic the soldiers face in an area with unique terrain and a fresh set of American tactics intended to secure it.

Here, south of Baghdad, in the area known as the “triangle of death,” Iraq’s desert gives way to lush green vegetation. Sunni tribes are dominant, and irrigation canals are perhaps the area’s defining characteristic.

Since 2003, insurgents have focused on hitting military vehicles to undermine the American effort in Iraq. Most of those devices were planted along the major roads that could handle the weight of American vehicles. The craters appear everywhere, and American troops have named many of them, making them landmarks.

Because of that risk and the stepped-up counterinsurgency effort, troops have increasingly moved out of forward operating bases to smaller outposts where they can maneuver on foot.

But the shift to foot patrols has brought a progressively greater toll as insurgents have adjusted to the new tactics and begun placing bombs along footpaths and back roads.

Since taking over the command in September, 42 soldiers from the Second Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, have been killed in hostile attacks. Of those, 14 were killed during dismounted patrols. The search has added to the risks.

“I’m not out here to win any medals,” said Capt. Michael Abercrombie, leader of a platoon from B Battery, which had the unenviable task of replacing Captain Keil’s unit. “If you see soft ground, walk around.”

The Iraqi and American soldiers moved slowly through the area, reminding one another to walk 10 feet apart so that if another explosion hit, casualties would be limited. After about 15 minutes, they came across a one-story stone house with a wide grass lawn, a cattle pen and five young men whom the Iraqi soldiers had lined up against a wall. Their names were checked against a list of insurgents wanted for questioning in relation to the May 12 attack.

None of their names appeared, but Captain Abercrombie ordered them arrested anyway, in light of the bomb attack that morning.

“I’m detaining them all,” he said. “For proximity.”

Ski, as he was known, was a sarcastic joker. A native of Standish, Mich., he was tall, blond and decisive. He was young for a platoon sergeant. A winner of the Bronze Star and a Purple Heart, he was promoted by his commanders because he had the ability to inspire. And to goad.

At one point, his friends said, he made his soldiers wear their helmets and goggles on base — where no one else does — so that they would remember to keep them on at all times while on patrol.

In return, on his 22nd birthday, his friends gave him a gift they thought he would appreciate: they threw him in a Dumpster.

Losing Ski and seeing three other friends wounded brought out a mix of uncharacteristic honesty and anger in the platoon. Immediately after the explosion, the soldiers swore and kicked whatever they could find. One said he wanted vengeance.

But “I love you, man” was far more common.

Huge, strong men hugged, tears streaming down their faces.

When it was not clear whether the seriously wounded soldier on the ground would make it, “I love you” was said repeatedly, blurted out as if it was something they wished they had told Sergeant Wisniewski.

When one of the wounded soldiers insisted that the mushy stuff had gone too far, there was friendly resistance. “What, I can’t love someone now?” a soldier said.

“I love you,” he said. “I can say ‘I love you’ if I want to.”

The group had been fighting together for 10 months. Covering central Mahmudiya and parts of the surrounding area, they had been attacked by rockets, gunfire, mortar shells, grenades and roadside bombs. They had always survived. Ski was their first killed in action.

“I haven’t really accepted it,” Sergeant Simonovich said, after returning to his unit with minor shrapnel wounds to his face and a burst eardrum. “I haven’t accepted it.”

His eyes were open and intact. He had been wearing his goggles when the bomb exploded.

Four hours into Saturday’s search, the soldiers received more news they did not want to accept: a sniper shot hit another member of A Battery in the head. He had been on the roof of a house that was being searched, oblivious to the threat.

Capt. Aaron Bright’s unit, a platoon of B Battery, received the news, too. It was a few hundred yards north of Captain Abercrombie’s group when the call came in. The men were disappointed, angry, frustrated.

Seconds later, the word came down that the unit up ahead did not have a medic. Captain Bright’s unit did, so the group ran several miles to the house only to find that a helicopter had already picked up the wounded soldier.

His friends sat on the floor, on stairs, their faces showing they had been crying. A flak jacket with some blood on it rested next to a soldier leaning against a set of white kitchen cabinets. The body armor belonged to the soldier who was shot.

Captain Bright, 29, the battery commander, said the group would have to keep moving. "We have some more objectives we have to hit," he said.

The search operation continued in the midday heat. Captain Abercrombie's unit walked through farms, searched houses and struggled through a wide swath of mud that nearly claimed a few pairs of boots.

In a house close to where helicopters would later deliver bottles of water in black body bags, they rested once again. Sgt. Stephen Byers, 31, of Detroit said that Friday night was the first time he had a chance to call his wife and kids since the search started.

He said that he was too tired to say very much, but that his wife was clearly worried.

He had begun to wonder himself if the search was becoming more dangerous.

"The more we chase them around," he said, "the more they know where we're at."

But, he said, in a war without front lines and goals that are hard to achieve, the search offered the comfort of certainty, of a clear and noble goal.

"If we find them, we accomplish something specific," Sergeant Byers said.

"It's not like trying to bring peace to the area then finding out later that you didn't."

Saturday's searching turned up nothing significant. The three soldiers — Pfc. Joseph J. Anzack Jr., 20, of Torrance, Calif.; Specialist Alex R. Jimenez, 25, of Lawrence, Mass.; and Pvt. Byron W. Fouty, 19, of Waterford, Mich. — were not found.

On Sunday, the group welcomed the return of two of its wounded soldiers — Sergeant Simonovich and Pfc. Nicholas Barker, who had slight shrapnel wounds to the face. American soldiers are not allowed to drink alcohol here, so they had a barbecue. They celebrated. They talked.

And on Monday, it was back to work.

The men of Second Platoon prepared their Humvees for another day of walking, another day of searching. They reviewed the route for what would be a seven-mile march that they hoped to do in three hours.

Wearing dark glasses, his uniform bloodstained from two days earlier, Sergeant Delgado, the medic, was a picture of calm.

“We had our time to grieve, but after that you have to detach from your emotions and drive on,” he said. “We’re going to be here for another six months.”



American and Iraqi soldiers rested after patrolling for hours in the heat. Michael Kamber for The New York Times

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Six U.S. Soldiers Killed By Diyala IEDs; Three More Wounded

May 29, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070529-07

TIKRIT, Iraq – Six Task Force Lightning Soldiers were killed when explosions occurred near their vehicles while conducting operations in Diyala Province, Monday.

Three other Soldiers were also wounded in the incident and were taken to a Coalition Forces’ medical treatment facility.

Helicopter Down In Diyala; Two U.S. Soldiers Killed

May 29, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070529-06

TIKRIT, Iraq – Two Task Force Lightning Soldiers were killed when a helicopter went down in Diyala Province, May 28.

California Soldier Killed In Salah Ad Din Province



Spc. Gregory N. Millard, 22, of San Diego, Calif., an assistant machine gunner with 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division died from injuries sustained when a bomb detonated near a patrol in Salah ad Din Province May 26, 2007. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

Baghdad IED Kills Two U.S. Soldiers

May 29, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070529-10

BAGHDAD — While conducting a combat security patrol in the southern section of the Iraqi capital, two Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldiers were killed when an improvised explosive device detonated May 28.

Nebraska Soldier Killed In Iraq



Army Pvt. William L. Bailey III, was killed in Iraq, May 25, 2007, when a roadside bomb struck his vehicle. The 29-year-old Bellevue, Nebraska man was a five-year veteran of the fire department. Bailey leaves behind a wife and five children. (AP Photo/Bellevue Fire Dept., HO)

Occupation Staff & Mercenaries Captured By Insurgents Inside Finance Ministry

28 May 2007 Reuters & By RAVI NESSMAN, The Associated Press

At least three Westerners and foreign bodyguards were captured by insurgents Tuesday inside an Iraqi Finance Ministry office in Baghdad, according to Iraqi government officials.

There were conflicting reports on the nationality and number of those captured. A high-ranking Iraqi government official, who would only release the information on condition that he not be named or identified by the ministry he worked in, said three Germans working for a German computer company had been captured.

However, an official in the Finance Ministry, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear he would be fired for speaking with the media, said four people were captured — one German and three Britons.

The men were captured by a group of insurgents wearing police commando uniforms who arrived at the ministry office — down the road from the main Finance Ministry

building — in a huge convoy of white sports utility vehicles, which are often used by police, according to the two government officials and a police officer, who said use of his name could put his life in danger.

The witness, who did not want to be identified, said the lecturers had been giving Finance Ministry personnel a lecture on organising electronic contracts in a ministry building in Palestine Street.

The insurgents had entered the lecture room shouting "Where are the foreigners, where are the foreigners?" she said.

A fourth lecturer escaped being abducted because he was sitting apart from his colleagues.

The witness said the lecturers were employed by a U.S. organisation and had given at least 12 lectures at the ministry over the past year.

In McLean, Va., Steve Lunceford, a spokesman for the BearingPoint management consulting firm, said one worked for the company. The other four were employees with the Montreal-based security firm GardaWorld, according to Joe Gavaghan, a spokesman for the Canadian company.

Airman From Miss. Dies In Iraq During 4th Tour, His Mother Says

May 16, 2007 Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — An Air Force security officer, who was killed Monday and became the second Mississippi soldier to die in Iraq in less than a week, had volunteered for his fourth tour because he wanted to serve his country, his mother said Tuesday.

Staff Sgt. John T. Self, 29, of Pontotoc, was killed Monday by a roadside bomb in Baghdad, according to his mother, Jill Self.

Self was a member of the 314th Security Forces Squadron out of Little Rock Air Force Base, according base officials. He had been in Iraq since September.

"He had volunteered for this mission. He wanted to serve his country," Jill Self told The Associated Press Tuesday in a telephone interview. "His commanding officer called this morning and said he was good airman and his unit from Arkansas called and said he had done his job."

Self was a 1998 graduate of South Pontotoc High School where he played trumpet in the marching band. He later attended Itawamba Community College and joined the Air Force in 1999.

"He loved to deer hunt and fish and play computer games. He was a loving child. He was there for his family and friends," Jill Self said. "I loved him very much and he's going to be missed."

Self is the second Mississippian killed in Iraq in a matter of days.

Army Sgt. Jason W. Vaughn, 29, of Iuka, died last Thursday. Vaughn was also killed by a roadside bomb. The makeshift bombs, also known as improvised explosive devices, have taken a heavy toll on American forces in Iraq.

Vaughn was serving his second tour of duty in Iraq with the Stryker Brigade based in Fort Lewis, Wash., when he was killed. He was assigned to the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division.

The latest deaths bring to 55 the number of people from Mississippi or with strong ties to the state to die in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to an unofficial Associated Press count.

Soldier Steers Out Of Trouble Here, Into Deadly Enemy Fire In Baghdad

May 21, 2007 By Jamie Stiehm and Greg Garland, Baltimore Sun

Jonathan Victor Hamm had told family members he enlisted in the Army to steer away from the streets of West Baltimore, where he was raised.

Last week, the private first class died in Baghdad at the age of 20 - killed by what the Defense Department described as 'indirect enemy fire.'

A young man who had struggled in school, kept to himself and initially failed an Army test in seeking to enlist, Private Hamm tried again and succeeded a few months before his 18th birthday, relatives in Baltimore said yesterday.

He was sent to Kuwait 10 days after his mother's funeral in February and deployed to Iraq a month ago, the relatives - an aunt and uncle - said.

'That's what she (his mother) would have wanted him to do,' his aunt, Eleanor Smith Swan, said of her sister, Frances Smith McCullough, who died of breast cancer at 52.

His uncle, Reginald Swan, a Vietnam War veteran, said he encouraged his nephew to join the Army. 'He just wanted to make his life a little better because there was nothing out here for him but trouble,' Mr. Swan said.

'I'm glad Franny passed before he passed,' he added.

Private Hamm graduated from Carver Vocational-Technical High School in 2004 after a period when he came close to dropping out. The loss of his father, Jonathan Vincent

Hamm, who died in 2000 of liver failure, left the youth without a sense of direction, the relatives said.

Another aunt, Leah Hamm, a now-retired Baltimore police officer, stepped in to give him some advice and did not mince her words to her nephew.

'After my brother passed in 2000, there was a spiral of not going to class and hanging with the wrong people,' Ms. Hamm recalled yesterday. 'His mother asked if I would talk to him, so I told him what would happen to him: destruction, death or incarceration. And we talked about other options he had.'

'He took it upon himself to change his life,' she said. 'He seemed happy.'

Just as the young man seemed to be maturing, family and friends said, the news came that he had been killed.

Most knew him as 'Hammie' or 'Hamm' - few in his circle called him Jonathan.

'That was my friend, you know,' Carver classmate Devon Hodge said yesterday. 'He was a loner, but if he was your friend, you could trust him. He would stay in contact with you.'

'It's hard to find a job, being a boy, so he went in the Army,' said Mr. Hodge, also 20 and from West Baltimore.

In one of their last conversations, Mr. Hodge recalled, Private Hamm told him that the Army paid well. He also told his friend that if he ever needed to borrow some money, he would be glad to lend him some.

Mr. Hodge said he never took him up on the offer.

Eleanor Swan, his maternal aunt, said Private Hamm always treated her home as his, and vice versa.

A signature trait, she said, was his going out alone to explore Baltimore on the light rail or subway.

'He'd spend a whole day just being out,' said Mrs. Swan, a postal worker. 'He would go out to BWI Airport and look at the planes ... or go to the harbor.'

He would often say, 'I just rode the trains all day,' when asked what he saw or did. He might tell a fuller story at the dinner table, she said.

Reginald Swan, who owns a barbershop, said he also mentored Private Hamm at a critical point in his life. Early in his Army career, while undergoing training at Fort Benning, Ga., Private Hamm decided he had had enough of the Army.

His uncle intervened.

'I was like his big brother when he went AWOL during his training,' Reginald Swan said. 'He came into the bus station ... and I said, 'You have to go back in and stick it out.'"

The Swans said they are not supporters of the war in Iraq but could not be more proud of Private Hamm's maturing into a young man.

'He's fighting for his country,' Mr. Swan said. 'That's his obligation.'

Funeral arrangements were incomplete.

Private Hamm also is survived by two older brothers, Tyrone 'Skip' Smith and Robert McCullough, both of Salisbury.

Clovis High Grad Killed By Improvised Bomb In Iraq: Sgt. Steven Packer Was On His Third Tour After A Stop-Loss Order

5.19.07 By James Guy, The Fresno Bee

Sgt. Steven Packer couldn't wait to graduate from Clovis High School in 2002 so that he could join the U.S. Army and help fight the war on terrorism.

"I couldn't have convinced him not to join," his mother, Robin Davidson said. "He wanted to go. He was excited about getting out there and helping to fight al-Qaida."

But after two tours of duty, he looked forward to coming home and attending college, something that should have happened last May, his mother said.

Instead, Packer, 23, was sent back to Iraq for a third tour.

He died Thursday of wounds suffered when his patrol was hit by an improvised explosive device, the Department of Defense said Friday. A member of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Packer is the sixth Clovis Unified student to be killed in Iraq. He died while searching for three soldiers missing since an attack last Saturday.

Rather than coming home last May, Packer was "stop-logged," subjected to a military order that bars personnel who could otherwise leave when their volunteer commitments expire to remain for a longer term.

Packer's stoic return to Iraq even after he had fulfilled his original commitment is evidence of his strong character, said his stepfather, Mark Davidson. "He was very good at what he did, but he was not excited about being there."

Robin Davidson last heard from her son a week ago.

She didn't get a call from him on Mother's Day, and she was sure that was because he was out in the field.

In a sad twist, the family, which includes Packer's brother Chris, 24, sister Danielle, 20, and twin brothers Zachary and Jason, 6, received advance warning that the Army was on the way with bad news.

Within the last year, the family had moved from their old home in Clovis to a recently built one in Harlan Ranch. When Army officials came to the door of the old home, the family was warned by their old neighbors that the officials were on the way.

"We had about an hour to sit there and deny it," Robin Davidson said of what they knew was on the way.

The family remains proud of Packer's service in the military and said Packer's lieutenant had written in the past to praise his efforts.

"He couldn't say enough good things about him," Robin Davidson said. When the stop-loss happened, "he was sorry to tell us that he was going back to Iraq."

In Iraq, Packer was based along the Euphrates River near a half-completed power plant. His duty included control over the busy waterfront as well as searches for wire often used in explosives, his mother said.

Packer's father, David, was killed in 1993 in an automobile accident. His son, who took the death very hard, will be buried near his father in Fresno Memorial Gardens.

Fayetteville High Graduate Injured In Iraq

May 25, 2007 BY CHRISTIE SWANSON, Northwest Arkansas Times

A soldier from Fayetteville was severely injured Monday night while serving in Iraq.

Pfc. Adam Watkins, 21, was the driver of a Stryker Armored Vehicle that ran over an improvised explosive device (IED), according to his father, Phil Watkins. Strykers are light, mobile armored vehicles used by combat teams.

"He's got burns on 30 percent of his body, he has two broken legs and he's on a respirator," Phil said. "He's stable, and they are saying that his legs are repairable. Thank God he has no nerve or spinal cord damage."

Adam received second and third-degree burns on his arms, back of his head and neck, back, and buttocks. His father said his face did receive some second-degree burns, but his eyes appear to be OK.

Adam is a 2004 graduate of Fayetteville High School. He joined the U. S. Army in January 2006.

Phil and his wife, Susan, now living in Huntsville, were preparing to meet up with their son on Thursday night at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio.

"He was apparently the only person injured," Phil said.

After initial treatment at an on-site hospital in Iraq, Adam was moved to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany before being flown Thursday to San Antonio. Landstuhl is the largest American hospital located outside the United States.

Phil said they are not sure about the long-term prognosis at this point.

"When you get burned on 30 percent of your body, it's just hard on your body," he said.

Adam is member of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Cavalry, Bravo Troop in the 4th Stryker Brigade operating near Baquoba, located northeast of Baghdad.

When in Fayetteville, Adam was active in Boy Scout Troop 142 where was an Eagle Scout, and he is a member of the First Presbyterian Church.

"He's a tough kid," Phil said. "What's amazing to me is the outpouring of support we are receiving. People have been great."

Brady Soldier Seriously Injured In IED Explosion Near Baghdad

May 22, 2007 By James Stewart, Brady Standard-Herald, Inc.

For Bradyites Mack and Karen Langseth, the telephone call they received Saturday morning was one they'll never forget. When the short conversation ended, they were left with the news that their son, Tommy, a private in the U.S. Army on active duty in Iraq, had been injured in an explosion.

For the rest of the weekend, the scant report delivered by government officials left them hanging by a thread, fearing the worst, but hoping, and praying for the best.

"I knew when I saw the number on my caller ID that it wasn't going to be a normal call," said Mack during an interview at their home Monday.

Tommy, a 2004 Brady High School graduate, enlisted in the army in January 2006 and is stationed at Fort Benning, Ga.

An infantryman, he and his squad were on dismounted patrol six miles from his forward operating base approximately 20 miles south of Baghdad. According to his parents, Tommy was injured in the right upper portion of his torso when an improvised explosive devise (IED) was detonated near his patrol. Another soldier in the immediate vicinity was killed in the explosion and several others were injured.

"All we knew from the first phone call we received Saturday morning was that he was injured, the other boy was killed and they were taking him to Germany for surgery," said his mother. "We got a second call from a cell phone directly from his sergeant who was

relaying messages from Tommy. We weren't able to talk to him, but the sergeant told us he was coherent and wanted to call, but was not allowed."

The Langseths spent the rest of the weekend waiting and hoping the call with good news would come.

News of the incident spread like wildfire and concerned friends and family members soon began calling to see how they could help. Karen began documenting the phone calls to make sure they knew who had contacted them. As of Monday morning, the list had already reached the third page of letter-sized paper.

"Everyone has been so supportive," said Karen. "We have had so many people show us how much they care that it is hard to believe."

Tommy's younger brother, Jon, is a junior at Brady High School. When the phone call came in, he was attending The Truth, a religious retreat for high schoolers. Brady ISD Asst. Supt. Liesa Land, a close friend of the family, delivered the news to the group and escorted Jon home. "There was a reason he was at The Truth, surrounded by his friends when the news came in," said Karen. "Eventually, he went back out there and it gave him an opportunity to be a very powerful witness to how important it is to be right with God. He took it hard, but it was good that he was there because it allowed him to open up and talk about his relationship with Jesus Christ."

From their kitchen table in their home in north Brady, the Langseths beam with pride about their soldier, but the feelings of worry and fear are still painfully obvious on their faces. One of their two cell phones or their home telephone rings on a regular basis with people checking in for updates.

"It has been amazing how quickly the word has spread and how many people have called us to check in," said Karen. "We have been anxiously waiting here by the phones for the next call to give us another update."

After a weekend of virtually no information or updates, the Langseths finally got another call Monday morning. As of 8 a.m. Monday, Tommy had made it to Landstuhl Hospital in Germany and was headed into surgery.

"When we got the call today, we were a bit concerned because he was supposed to be in Germany on Sunday and he had just arrived. What we found out was that he apparently was stable enough to allow two other more seriously injured soldiers to go on ahead of him.

"That, in a way, was good news that they felt he wasn't in too much danger, but still, it is hard for a mother to accept anything other than the idea that they need to hurry up and make him well," she said.

With tears in their eyes and voices that get choked up, the Langseths are sad and worried about their son, but they are rejoicing in the fact that he is still alive.

"With everything going on, you have to look for the positive things," said Mack. "Tommy is alive and breathing. There are no injuries that are insurmountable, we can overcome

anything, I am just thankful that we are able to look forward to talking to him and seeing him again."

Since the first call came in Saturday morning,

the innate desire to be near her injured son has been difficult to deal with, but according to the information given by the military, the Langseths were instructed not to make any travel arrangements. They were told that Tommy would eventually be transferred stateside for additional recovery with the possibility of being sent to Brook Army Medical Hospital in San Antonio.

"We are waiting to see what they tell us next before we make any plans," they said. Until the next bit of information comes in from the military, the steady stream of friends, family members and well-wishers continues at the Langseth's home.

According to Karen, much of the strength she and Mack have is due to the community and more specifically, the kids who they have befriended throughout the years. The First Christian Church has begun collecting donations that will be used to offset travel costs the Langseths will incur. An account has been set up at Commercial National Bank for any additional donations.

A late update came Tuesday morning when the Langseths were permitted to speak with Tommy via telephone. According to Mack, Tommy was heavily sedated but was coherent and able to converse. Reports indicate Tommy could be transferred to Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington D.C. as soon as Wednesday. The family will wait until confirmation that he is stateside before making any travel plans.

**REALLY BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
HOPELESS WAR;**



**MILLIONS OF IRAQIS GETTING INCREASINGLY
PISSED OFF**

A foreign occupation soldier from U.S. Delta company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment searches an Iraqi citizen in Baghdad March 26, 2007, REUTERS/Fabrizio Bensch (IRAQ)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

HALF OF AFGHAN MEN BELIEVE RESISTANCE “WILL TRIUMPH AGAINST NATO FORCES” [AFGHAN MEN ALSO BELIEVE THE SKY TO BE BLUE]

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

May 28 by Michel Comte, AFP News

Half of 17,000 men surveyed in April in southern Afghanistan "chillingly" said they believe the Taliban will triumph against NATO forces, a think tank [The Senlis Council] said in a report Monday.

The Taliban's "very clever propaganda" tells young Afghan men that NATO does not care about them, and is only concerned about waging their own war, said Norine MacDonald, founder and lead field researcher for the group.

Afghans are "worse off (now) than under Taliban" rule, she said at the opening of the council's Canadian office in Ottawa.

TROOP NEWS

JONATHAN HUTTO SPEAKS IN ATLANTA - MEMORIAL DAY 2007

“Co-Founder Of ‘The Appeal For Redress’ Campaign Calling For The Prompt Withdrawal Of All US Troops And Bases In Iraq”



Jonathan Hutto with his son Jonathan, and his mother, Jacquelyn Fortson Hutto, following the church service at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church where he spoke on Sunday, May 27, 2007. (Photo by VFP member Debbie Clark)

VETERANS FOR PEACE Greater Atlanta Chapter 125, Including Atlanta IVAW;
Iraq Veterans Against the War: [Website www.vfp125.org/hutto.html] [Excerpts]

Native son of Atlanta and active duty US Navy seaman, Jonathan Hutto, returned home on leave in Atlanta for the Memorial Day weekend and spoke at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur on Sunday, May 27, 2007.

Jonathan, who served in Iraqi Operation Freedom and now lives and serves aboard the US Navy aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt based in Norfolk, Virginia, told Atlanta churchgoers and activists his personal story of growing up in Atlanta under the influence of his mother, Jacqueline Fortson Hutto, and the legacy left by Martin Luther King, Jr.

He spoke of his early activism as a college student, his reasons for joining the US Navy, his experiences as a sailor in the Navy, and how he came to co-found the Appeal for Redress campaign calling for the prompt withdrawal of all US troops and bases in Iraq.

Jonathan wrapped up his talk with some history of the GI resistance movement and showed a clip from the film documentary, "Sir! No, Sir!"

Jonathan has spoken at national antiwar rallies in Washington DC, has appeared on CNN, the BBC, and in the pages of the Washington Post and The Nation.

The events at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church were organized by Kevin Moran of the church's Peacemaking & Justice Committee. The afternoon event for the public was co-sponsored by Atlanta Veterans For Peace and the Georgia Peace & Justice Coalition/Atlanta.

The Appeal For Redress:

<http://www.appealforredress.org/>

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

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



The casket of Army Spc. Kyle A. Little, 20, of West Boylston, Mass. at the First Congregational Church in West Boylston, May 18, 2007. Little was killed Tuesday, May 8, 2007, by a roadside bomb during his second tour in Iraq. (AP Photo/Elise Amendola)

Despicable Rat Pace Doesn't Even Know How Many U.S. Troops Have Died In Iraq: JCS Chief Underestimates Iraq War Fatalities In Memorial Day Media Appearance

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in. He writes: **TOO BUSY WORRYING ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN TROOPS' BEDROOMS TO KNOW HOW MUCH BLOOD HE HAS ON HIS HANDS.**]

May 28, 2007 Michael Roston, Rawstory.com. "This article was completed with research assistance from Ron Brynaert and Muriel Kane, and video provided by David Edwards." [Excerpts]

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff dramatically underestimated the number of deaths of US Armed Service-members in the Iraq War. The gaffe came as General Peter Pace appeared on CBS News Monday morning to discuss Memorial Day.

"When you take a look at the life of a nation and all that's required to keep us free, we had more than 3,000 Americans murdered on 11 September, 2001.

"The number who have died, sacrificed themselves since that time is approaching that number," General Pace told CBS Early Show's Harry Smith.

"And we should pay great respect and thanks to them for allowing us to live free."

[T]he website Iraq Coalition Casualty Count puts the number of US service-members killed since the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003 at 3,455. The Pentagon only lists it as 3,441, with 14 deaths not yet being confirmed by the Pentagon.

With either number, the total number of fatalities long passed the count of victims who died on 9/11.

Maryland State Police Cowards Assassinate A Veteran Of Afghanistan:

Fucked Up By Combat Horrors And Redeployment Order, He Snaps; “This Paramilitary Operation Was ‘Directed At An Individual Down At The End Of A Dark Road, Holed Up In His Father's House, With No Hostages’”

[It would be poetic justice if the rats responsible for this murder got a taste of sniping themselves. See how they like it. However, it would much more effective if they were simply taken into custody, flown to Bagram, and turned loose in the Afghan countryside with all their Rambo high tech cop gear. Just to make sure they really show what they can do completely on their own, the troops there will be informed they executed a brother soldier back in the USA. If they're really courageous fighters against evil, how could they object? But everybody knows they're nothing but a pack of sniveling cowards ganging up on and sport shooting a fucked up vet. They wanted to show off for the media. And for that, they deserve payback. T]

[Thanks to Ben Chitty, Vietnam Veteran, for posting. He writes: Sometimes you just want to scream.]

5.27.07 By DAN BARRY, The New York Times

HOLLYWOOD, Md. -- The sniper fired. It was a clean shot, if there is such a thing. And down for good fell another American soldier.

His name was Sergeant James Dean, but everyone called him Jamie. He was the farm boy who fished, hunted and tossed a horseshoe like nobody else. He was the guy at the end of Toots Bar, nursing a Bud and talking Nascar. He was the driver of that blue Silverado at the red light, his hands on the wheel, his mind on combat horrors that made him moody, angry, withdrawn.

Now here he was, another American soldier, dead.

Only Sergeant Dean was killed at the front door of his childhood home, the day after Christmas and three weeks before his redeployment, shot by a sniper representing the government for whom he had already risked his life in Afghanistan.

His wife and parents received the news not by a knock on the door, but by gunfire in the neighborhood.

"If they had just left him alone," says his wife, Muriel.

In the summer of 2001, weeks before Sept. 11, Jamie stunned his family by enlisting in the Army; he was 23. A woman had just broken his heart, yes, but he explained that he wanted to experience life beyond installing air conditioners in confining St. Mary's County. And his younger sister, an Air Force medic, had been talking up the military.

From April 2004 to April 2005, Jamie served in Afghanistan, far from the Chesapeake Bay. Now and then he'd talk to family members by telephone. "Just, 'Hi, I'm fine,' " his mother, Elaine, says. "Or, 'It sucks here.' "

Jamie came back quieter in the summer of 2005, with "DEAN" tattooed on his upper back and a cobra tattooed on his muscle-defined arm. But he kept private any changes beneath the skin, his mother says.

"'You don't want to know, Mom,' he would always say."

One night at Toots, while drinking a beer, he met a woman named Muriel whose bluish-green eyes entranced him. The couple became inseparable, cobbling together a family that included her two children, three dogs and a cat. Muriel's good for Jamie, people said, even without knowing how she was nudging him to get counseling for nightmares so bad they would both wake up soaked in sweat.

"The patient states he feels very nervous, has a hard time sleeping, feels nauseous in the a.m., and loses his temper a lot, 'real bad,' " reported a Veterans Affairs evaluation from December 2005. "Was nearby an explosion that destroyed an Humvee with four G.I.'s killed in front of his eyes."

"The patient is tired of feeling bad," it said.

Jamie was prescribed some medication that did not seem to work at first. ("Cries for no reason," said a report in February 2006.) His doctor adjusted the prescription.

Things got better, it seemed. Jamie returned to air-conditioning work. He donned a white tuxedo and married Muriel in a summer ceremony at the Elks Lodge. He sang some country-western karaoke and talked about getting his wife to go deer hunting.

A few days after Thanksgiving, a FedEx truck delivered an envelope to the Dean farm just as Jamie was about to go hunting.

It was a form letter of redeployment, as impersonal as a bank statement.

"It was downhill after that," Muriel says.

He withdrew from the present, it seemed. He drank more, and took his medication less. Finally, on Christmas Day, he and Muriel returned from a family gathering with plans to watch his favorite football team, the Dallas Cowboys, on television. He went out to buy some beer -- but went to Toots Bar instead.

She called him, and he came home, livid.

He smashed some glasses, said something about winding up in a body bag, and sped away in his Silverado.

He wound up at the family home, alone, talking on a cellphone with his sister, Kelly, saying things like: "I just can't do it anymore."

When his sister heard a gunshot, she called 911. The deputy sheriffs arrived at the isolated farmhouse around 10 p.m. and quickly determined that Jamie was drunk, agitated and carrying a shotgun. He told the deputies to back off.

Based on something a family member had said, the police knew that Jamie had other shotguns in the house, but they mistakenly believed he was an Army Ranger. "Rambo," his mother says ruefully.

At 4:19 in the morning, the police shot dozens of tear-gas canisters, smashing the windows in front of Jamie's horseshoe trophies, piercing walls decorated with garland. Several minutes later, Jamie fired shotgun pellets in the general direction of a police car parked at least 50 yards away. Then he sat down on the back porch.

A situation in which an armed man was in his own house, alone and a threat to no one but himself, had now escalated into a military action.

On the ground, men with guns; in the sky, the whop-whop of helicopters. Now and then, Jamie would respond to some movement or sound with a shot into the ground or into the air.

Around noon, two negotiators pulled up to a family friend's garage, where Jamie's loved ones were cloistered a half-mile away. His wife was pacing. His mother was bracing herself. His father, Joey, was staring into the woods.

The negotiators asked them to say gentle things to Jamie into a tape-recorder. Muriel remembers calling him baby, saying she loved him and asking him to come on out.

At 12:25, a negotiator talked briefly by telephone to Jamie, who indicated he might come out; "I'm going home," he said. Then the police cellphone's battery died.

At 12:34, Jamie was reached again by telephone, but the volume was low and the negotiator could not make out what was being said.

At 12:45, the police cut power to the house and began shooting more tear gas through the front and the back of the house.

At 12:47, an armored vehicle called a Peace Keeper pulled up to the house. Jamie opened the front door and, according to the police, pointed his 20-gauge shotgun at the vehicle.

A state police sniper, positioned in a garage 70 yards away, took aim.

Later, a spokesman for the Maryland State Police would say the department was reviewing its actions, but would refer to a statement by its superintendent, Col. Thomas E. Hutchins, in which he said that Sergeant Dean bore "sole responsibility."

The police could not walk away, the colonel had said, because the soldier had the potential to do harm to himself or to others.

Later, Richard D. Fritz, the state's attorney for St. Mary's County, would criticize the state police as using tactics that were "progressively assaultive" and "most unfortunate."

In the end, he would say, this paramilitary operation was "directed at an individual down at the end of a dark road, holed up in his father's house, with no hostages."

And later, the Dean family would be left with the mess of absence. Jamie's blood on the cream-colored carpet. The dozens of holes in the walls. The family photo albums that still carry the whiff of tear gas, burning the eyes.

But at that moment, in the early afternoon of the day after Christmas, they heard the gunfire in the distance, and they knew another American soldier had fallen.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

GET THE MESSAGE?



Iraqis flash the victory sign in front of a burning SUV after a roadside bomb exploded in central Basra, May 25, 2007. The bomb targeted a SUV belong to a foreign security company, injuring 3 mercenaries (AP Photo/Nabil al-Jurani)

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



A foreign occupation soldier from the USA tells Baghdad citizens that they are violating the occupation curfew and ordered them to go back inside their homes.
Michael Kamber for The New York Times 5.28.07

[U.S. sponsored polls reported recently that 60% of Iraqis favor killing U.S. troops. Iraqis feel about U.S. troops trampling them in the dirt the same way Americans felt about British troops trampling them in the dirt in 1776. They are right to resist.
T]

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

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Welcome To The Occupied USA: Thirty-Two Kids Arrested For Grieving On Way To A Funeral: New York City: "A Police State For Young Men, Women And Children Who Happen To Be Black Or Hispanic" Cowardly Scum-Bag Cops Act Real Brave When Attacking Children

"They cursed us out and pushed the guys. And then they handcuffed us. We kept asking, 'What are you doing?' "

May 26, 2007 By BOB HERBERT, NY Times Op-Ed:

No one is paying much attention, but parts of New York City are like a police state for young men, women and children who happen to be black or Hispanic.

They are routinely stopped, searched, harassed, intimidated, humiliated and, in many cases, arrested for no good reason.

Last Monday in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn, about three dozen grieving young people on their way to a wake for a teenage friend who had been murdered were surrounded by the police, cursed at, handcuffed and ordered into paddy wagons. They were taken to the 83rd precinct stationhouse, where several were thrown into jail.

Leana Matia, an 18-year-old student at John Jay College, was one of those taken into custody. "We were walking toward the train station to take the L train when all these cops just swooped in on us," she said.

"They cursed us out and pushed the guys. And then they handcuffed us. We kept asking, 'What are you doing?' "

Children as young as 13 were among those swept up by the cops. Two of them, including 16-year-old Lamel Carter, were the children of police officers.

Some of the youngsters were carrying notes from school saying that they were allowed to be absent to attend the wake.

There is no evidence that I've been able to find - other than uncorroborated statements by the police - that the teenagers were misbehaving in any way.

Everyone was searched, but nothing unlawful was found - no weapons, no marijuana or other drugs. Some of the kids were told at the scene that they were being seized because they had assembled unlawfully. "I didn't know what unlawful assembly was," said Kumar Singh, 18, who was among those arrested.

According to the police, the youngsters at the scene were on a rampage, yelling and blocking traffic. That does not seem to be the truth. [Of course not. Lesson 1A for new cops: How to lie about anything anybody does when the cop arrests, beats, or kills them. Cops are nothing but organized criminal rats wearing uniforms.]

I spoke individually to several of the youngsters, to the principal of Bushwick Community High School (where a number of the kids are students), to a parent who was at the scene, and others.

Nowhere was there even a hint of the chaos described by the police.

Every account that I was able to find described a large group of youngsters, very sad and downcast about the loss of their friend, walking peacefully toward the station.

Kathleen Williams, whose son and two nieces were rounded up, was at the scene. She said there was no disturbance at all, and that when she tried to ask the police why the kids were being picked up, she was told to be quiet or she would be arrested, too.

Capt. Scott Henderson of the 83rd Precinct told me that the police had developed a "plan" to deal with youngsters going to the wake because they suspected that the murder was gang-related and there had already been some retaliation. He said he had personally witnessed the youngsters in Bushwick behaving badly and gave the order to arrest them. **[In a society that had some justice, Rat-In-Chief Henderson would, by now, be under arrest for giving false statements, and, hopefully, making friends with a large fellow prisoner on Rikers Island who hates cops and has been deprived of sexual release for a very long time. Then the other prisoners can swear that Rat Henderson solicited his sexual favors. After all, that's what Capt. Henderson is teaching, isn't it: how to lie about a criminal act, and throw the blame on the victims?]**

Many of the kids were wearing white T-shirts with a picture of the dead teenager and the letters "R.I.P." on them. The cops cited the T-shirts as evidence of gang membership.

Thirty-two of the youngsters were arrested. Most were charged with unlawful assembly and disorderly conduct. Several were held in jail overnight.

Police Commissioner Ray Kelly did not exactly give the arrests a ringing endorsement. He said, in a prepared statement, "A police captain who witnessed the activity made a good-faith judgment in ordering the arrests."

A spokesman for the Brooklyn district attorney, Charles Hynes, said, "It wouldn't be unusual for a lot of this stuff to get dismissed."

The principal of Bushwick Community High, Tira Randall, said, "My kids come in here on a daily basis with stories about harassment by the police. They're not making these stories up."

New York City cops stopped and, in many cases, searched individuals more than a half million times last year.

Those stops are not happening on Park Avenue or Fifth Avenue in Manhattan.

Thousands upon thousands of them amount to simple harassment of young black and Hispanic males and females who have done absolutely nothing wrong, but feel helpless to object.

It is long past time for this harassment of ethnic minorities by the police to cease.

Why it has been tolerated this long, I have no idea. **[Oh please. The function of the police in New York City is no different from the function of the police in any other corrupt society: to protect those on top and beat down those below. That's why, in revolutions from below against corrupt regimes, the soldiers joining in the revolution open fire on and kill the police who resist. They are right to do so.]**

Troops Invited:

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

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