

GI SPECIAL 5E5:



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

“Hope Fades”
“None Of The Soldiers In
Tarmiyah Talk About Winning
Anymore”
“‘Is What We Lost Worth It? Not
Even A Little Bit,’ Says Staff Sgt.
Chad Stallings”



Flying shrapnel from the blast sliced open the head of Spc. Benjamin Weber, left, who continued to defend the base despite his injuries. Behind him, Sgt. First Class Freddie Housey talks to Apache helicopter pilots overhead, who helped turn back the assault on the base by the insurgents. [U.S. Army Photo]

“At A Lonely Iraq Outpost, Soldiers Stay As Hope Fades”

[Front Page *Wall St. Journal* Headline]

May 3, 2007 By GREG JAFFE, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

TARMIYAH, Iraq -- For U.S. troops, just walking a simple foot patrol through this small, trash-strewn city 30 miles north of Baghdad has become unthinkable.

If the Americans spend longer than 10 minutes in one place, a sniper will track them down and begin shooting.

"It is getting to the point where we really can't interact with the people," says Lt. Cody Wallace, executive officer of the unit that patrols the city. Even the local police chief who oversees the area that includes Tarmiyah refuses to set foot in the town.

U.S. commanders in these areas lack the manpower to defeat insurgents or protect the locals. On most days there are fewer than 50 U.S. troops in Tarmiyah, a city of about 30,000, many of them angry and disenfranchised Sunnis. Their goal is to keep the enemy off-balance, with periodic raids.

It's the best they can hope for under the new U.S. "surge strategy," which some U.S. officers in Iraq say does little more than chase insurgents from one part of the country to another.

The experience of the soldiers from the Second Battalion, Eighth Cavalry Regiment's Demon Company here is a window into what motivates troops in a war that an increasing number of Americans have concluded is a lost cause.

Few of the soldiers in Tarmiyah expect to change the city, where support for the insurgency is strong and hostility to the U.S. presence is often overt. Instead they persevere for each other.

In mid-February a massive truck bomb sheared off the front of the soldiers' base in Tarmiyah, sending concrete and glass flying through the air like daggers. The soldiers at the small outpost spent the next four hours fighting for their lives against a force of 70 to 80 insurgents.

After the battle, the troops got a few weeks to heal. Those healthy enough to fight returned to a new patrol base that is so close to the ruins of their old building that soldiers on roof guard duty can look down on the spot where they faced down death.

Today most still have glass and shrapnel embedded in their skin from the February ambush.

None of the soldiers in Tarmiyah talk about winning anymore.

But even some of the most severely wounded soldiers from that attack argued with their commanders and doctors to return to the patrol base with their fellow troops.

"Is what we lost worth it? Not even a little bit," says Staff Sgt. Chad Stallings.

But like many of those badly wounded in the blast, he has returned to the base.

"I am not ever going to change the world, but at least I can be there for my soldiers," says the lanky 25-year-old sergeant from Dexter, Mo.

In spring 2006 Tarmiyah, on the surface at least, was a much more peaceful place. U.S. and Iraqi troops surrounded the city with razor wire, set up the patrol base in the city, and began a \$16 million campaign to rebuild the city's schools, clinics and sewer system.

Soldiers often referred to the city, located 30 miles north of Baghdad, as the "petting zoo," a nod to the number of top generals who came to see what U.S. commanders considered a success story.

Last summer Tarmiyah began to fall apart.

A battalion of about 300 to 400 Iraqi army soldiers that had been based in the city was transferred to Baghdad to support the new U.S.-Iraqi effort to stabilize the capital.

And in December, the 150-man Tarmiyah police force, which shared the patrol base with American troops, drew their weapons, saying they were going out on a patrol, and never returned.

The three dozen soldiers from Demon Company were the only security forces left in the city.

The soldiers typically spent four days at the patrol base, a spartan outpost without running water or hot food, and then rotated back to Camp Taji, a big U.S. base about 15 miles away, for four days. In February, Staff Sgt. James Copeland -- a broad-shouldered 30-year-old who has a tattoo of a skeletal Uncle Sam flashing his middle fingers snaking up his right arm -- was named acting platoon sergeant of one of Demon Company's four platoons.

Sgt. Copeland couldn't believe how far he had come. When he enlisted in 1997, he was working at a McDonald's in Hutchinson, Kan. He was then 20 years old, newly married and the father of an infant daughter. "Wow. Who would have thought that I would be a platoon sergeant," he wrote in early February in the journal he kept under his bunk. "If I stay out of trouble maybe someday I will make sergeant major. I have so much to learn."

On Feb. 16, Sgt. Copeland's platoon rolled out to Tarmiyah for a four-day rotation.

The soldiers noticed that something seemed wrong in the city.

On the roof of one house near the patrol base, they spotted a man tossing homing pigeons and waving a blue flag. Pigeons are often used by insurgents to send signals about the location of U.S. troops. A pickup truck rolled past with two children in the back, banging on metal propane canisters with sticks. The soldiers assumed the clanging was another signal.

The following day, the markets were empty. As U.S. troops walked through the city, fellow soldiers watched over them from a rooftop. One was Pfc. Justin Paton, a big, gregarious soldier from rural Michigan, who the troops nicknamed "Cornfed."

Out of nowhere, the soldiers heard the crack of an enemy sniper rifle. "Paton's down!" screamed a soldier.

Sgt. Copeland, the second-in-command of the platoon, sprinted to the roof. The 24-year-old private's chest had collapsed and blood was spilling into his lungs, suffocating him. The troops loaded Pfc. Paton into a Humvee, and sped off with the doors still open and Pfc. Paton's 6-foot-3 frame dangling part of the way out of the truck. He died an hour later.

Sgt. Copeland told one of his soldiers to wash the blood out of the Humvee and collect Pfc. Paton's personal items -- a few letters, a Timex watch and an iPod. He then retreated to the empty detainee-holding area to get away from everyone and cry. "I can't believe this happened," he scribbled in red ink in his journal. "I wish it was me and not him."

Commanders at Camp Taji asked the platoon if they wanted to cut short their stay and come back to the big base. Pfc. Paton was the unit's first fatality and his death shattered the feeling of invincibility many of the young soldiers felt.

Sgt. Copeland discussed the offer with Lt. Shawn Jokinen, the platoon's 27-year-old leader. They decided to finish their four-day stint.

The events that followed were pieced together in interviews with some two dozen Demon Company soldiers and U.S. Army records.

The following day, the soldiers got a tip telling them where the sniper who shot Pfc. Paton lived. At 2 a.m. on Feb. 19, they raided the house and two others, arresting seven men. The soldiers returned to the patrol base around 5 a.m. elated and exhausted.

Most of the soldiers went to sleep. Sgt. Copeland wrote a note to himself to buy a phone card when he got back to Camp Taji and call his 10-year-old daughter. At 6:50 a.m., he checked the time on Pfc. Paton's watch, which had been placed under his cot for safekeeping.

A few minutes later the soldiers woke to the sound of bullets pinging off the patrol base, followed by a frantic scream. "Get your s -- on!" Sgt. Copeland yelled. "They've breached the compound!"

A truck loaded with more than 1,000 pounds of explosives had, seconds earlier, smashed through the front gate of the patrol base. Sgt. Copeland, the laces still flapping on his untied boots, started to wake the troops. Lt. Jokinen fired a couple of shots at the driver.

The truck exploded and everything went black.

The blast killed Sgt. Pedro Colon, a 26-year-old soldier from the Bronx. Spc. Montrel McArn, who a few minutes earlier had been playing video games, was hit by shrapnel that sliced off half of his face and part of his skull, say soldiers.

Sgt. Copeland, his back and neck peppered with glass, quickly told his troops to search the compound for insurgents. Troops who were too hurt to fight were led over to a small one-story command-post building next to the patrol base.

At the command post a 20-year-old soldier was working feverishly to get the base's radios, which had been knocked out by the blast, running so the soldiers could call for help. A piece of glass was sticking out of his ear.

Pfc. Trent Gray, a 20-year-old from eastern Kentucky coal country, was sitting on the floor with the other severely wounded troops. "The blood wasn't just dripping from my head. It was squirting, pumping through my fingers," he says. He told himself that if the enemy made it into the compound he would kill himself with his 9mm pistol. "I don't want to get my head cut off and have my wife watch it on the Internet," he recalls thinking.

Lt. Jokinen, the platoon leader, looked otherworldly. His face was coated in white dust and streaked with crimson red blood. He had a concussion and was mumbling incoherently.



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. At the end of the four- to five-hour battle, little was left of the patrol base but rubble. The water-filled crater in front of the building and the truck's axle were the only remnants of the truck bomb. [U.S. Army Photo]

Sgt. Copeland grabbed Lt. Jokinen's body armor and Pfc. Gray's machine gun and led a group of soldiers to the roof of the patrol base to try to hold off the enemy until help arrived. They began firing at enemy fighters running through the streets, and shot into buildings where they thought they were taking fire.

Finally around 8:15 a.m. the soldiers got a hand-held radio working and rushed it to the roof. With the radio the troops could direct the Apache attack helicopters circling overhead to enemy positions.

Lt. Clint Burleson, one of the Apache pilots, began talking to a sergeant on the patrol-base roof. The soldier sounded "disconnected and out of it," Lt. Burleson recalls. "His voice was creaky like he had been crying."

"Hey, buddy, if you can point me in the direction that you are taking fire from, I will make it stop," Lt. Burleson told the sergeant, who calmed down. The Apaches began blasting away.

The enemy fire gradually died down. Around 11 a.m. the soldiers on the roof were relieved by fresh troops from Camp Taji. Sgt. Copeland searched through the rubble by his bunk for his journal, which he found buried near his cot, and Pfc. Paton's watch, which he couldn't find.

As the adrenaline faded, the troops began to experience pain from the shards of glass and metal that had sliced their faces, backs, arms and feet. A few were overcome by

fear. Sgt. Brandon Benton, a 23-year-old from Sacramento, Calif., threw up and then tried to cover it up with a sandbag so that no one would slip.

Sgt. Copeland held his emotions in check until he was ushered into the hospital at Camp Taji. He pulled off his shirt, revealing his back which was peppered with fragments of glass.

"How did you get wounded?" a doctor asked him.

He didn't answer. For the first time that day, Sgt. Copeland says, he began to sob.

The troops from Demon Company got about three weeks to heal and receive new equipment at Camp Taji before they were sent back to Tarmiyah.

The first few days in their new home -- a girls' school about 300 yards from the old patrol base -- were harrowing. They were hit regularly with machine-gun fire, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades. Some soldiers slept in their boots and others wore their bullet-proof vests to bed.

Many of the soldiers were angry at the people of Tarmiyah who they thought seemed to know a big attack was coming, but never told the Americans. "Right after the incident I was filled with a lot of hate," says Sgt. Copeland.

As his anger died down, Sgt. Copeland says he began to wonder what purpose he and his fellow soldiers were serving in the city. "The people here are not even trying to help themselves," he says. "Someone threatens them and they just cower." [Just the opposite. The "people here" are helping themselves, by backing the resistance. And when threatened by a military dictatorship run by George W. Bush, they certainly do not "cower," as this news report so perfectly demonstrates. What they do is take up arms and fight back for their national independence. Remember 1776? Unless, of course, you believe that people of a country living under a foreign occupation commanded by George W. Bush should turn traitor and be for Bush. T]

U.S. commanders say they are reluctant to give up the patrol base in the city out of concern that it will look like they have been driven out by the enemy.

"If we're not out here, they have won," says Sgt. Jason Fisher, a 24-year-old soldier who fought for hours from the roof of the old base. **[New flash: "they" already have won.]**

The attack that eroded the troops' faith in Tarmiyah seems to have made some of them more willing to fight for each other.

Before the Feb. 19 attack, Sgt. Benton, who had vomited when the fighting was done, insisted to superiors that he shouldn't even be in Iraq. The 23-year-old's enlistment contract ended in November, but the Army, which is short of sergeants, made him finish his one-year tour as part of its "stop loss" policy.

Sgt. Benton was furious, and in early February his superiors threatened in writing to demote him unless his performance improved.

"I have to undo a lot of stupid things I have done," he says today. "I have a strong bond with this platoon. I don't want to leave. And if I die out here I don't want to be remembered as the s -- head that everyone had to think of something nice to say about at my memorial service."

By mid-March, eight soldiers still hadn't returned to the patrol base. Pfc. Gray, whose temporal artery was spurting blood after the explosion, put off returning until Sgt. Stallings, his section leader, was ready to go back. "We've got a bond. We were blown up together," Pfc. Gray says. "Plus he makes me laugh, so that I am not thinking about getting blown up into a million little pieces." The two were cleared by doctors and returned together in late March.

The night before his doctor's appointment certifying him as healthy, Pfc. Gray says he couldn't sleep. The 20-year-old watched three movies on his DVD player and talked on the phone to his wife, who is pregnant with their first child.

He fell asleep around 5 a.m. and was jolted awake by a nightmare two hours later. In the dream, Sgt. Copeland was screaming that someone had breached the gate of their old patrol base. Pfc. Gray says he frantically tried to lace up his shoes. But he couldn't get them tied. The louder Sgt. Copeland screamed, the more he fumbled.

Early last month, Pfc. Gray decided he wasn't ready to stay at the outpost. "I had a really hard time," he wrote in an email. At his request, Pfc. Gray says his bosses assigned him to a headquarters job at Camp Taji. He says he hopes it will be "for a month or so until I feel better."

Sgt. Stallings, his friend who carries shrapnel in his body from a 2004 rocket-propelled grenade attack and glass from the February explosion, stayed.

The hardest decision for commanders was whether to let Lt. Jokinen, the platoon leader, go back with his troops. Today he is virtually deaf in one ear and seems to have limited hearing in the other one. He has to turn his head to hear.

At Camp Taji, Lt. Jokinen, who is married with two young children, says he had a hard time sleeping. When a rocket slammed into Camp Taji, he says he was overcome by a feeling of helplessness -- similar to what he felt in the immediate aftermath of the attack, when a bad concussion left him disoriented and afraid.

Last month, Lt. Jokinen returned to the Tarmiyah outpost. His superiors "wanted me to go on leave and rest up some more, but I had to get back out there with my platoon," he wrote in an email. "I also needed to prove to myself that I did not lose the ability to be a soldier and to lead. I needed to get over the wall of fear and get my confidence back."

Despite his misgivings about the mission in Tarmiyah, Sgt. Copeland says he never doubted that he would return with his troops.

"I don't deploy for the Iraqi people," he says. "We all come here to fight for the guys on our left and our right."



The 10 soldiers who hadn't been sent away for medical treatment posed for a photo after the battle and left that afternoon for Camp Taji. Back row, from left: Sgt. Copeland, Sgt. Housey, Pfc. Frazier, Sgt. Ayala, Sgt. Silvio Ortega and Pfc. Matt Olps. Front Row: Pfc. James Byington, Spc. Nathaniel Patterson, Sgt. James Walker and Sgt. Leonardo Alcaraz. [U.S. Army Photo]



A humvee sat buried in rubble. [U.S. Army Photo]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

“Senior U.S. Commander” Wounded At Barrier Wall In Baghdad; *Identity Being Kept Secret*

5.4.07 The Associated Press

BAGHDAD: A senior U-S commander has been wounded by small arms fire while inspecting a security [translation: outdoor prison] wall being built around a neighborhood in Baghdad.

Much of the construction is being done at night by troops wearing night-vision goggles. But the officer was wounded while conducting a daytime survey. The military has not released his identity.

Construction of the wall has drawn strong criticism from residents who say it is a form of sectarian discrimination.

California Soldier Killed In Baghdad; His Identity Not Being Kept Secret



Spc. Astor Sunsín-Pineda, 20, of Long Beach, Calif., was killed when his vehicle struck a roadside bomb May 2, 2007, in Baghdad. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

Two U.S. Soldiers Killed In Anbar

May 4, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070504-08

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – Two Soldiers assigned to Multi National Force-West were killed May 3 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province.

IED Kills Baghdad Soldier, Six Wounded

May 4, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070504-06

BAGHDAD – An MND-B Soldier was killed and six others were wounded when their vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device in an eastern section of the Iraqi capital May 3. The unit was conducting a combat security patrol in the area when the attack occurred.

U.S. Soldier & Terp Killed, Three Wounded By Baghdad IED

May 4, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070504-07

BAGHDAD – An improvised explosive device targeting an MND-B patrol killed one Soldier and wounded three others in a western section of Baghdad May 3. The unit was conducting a combat security patrol at the time of the attack. An Iraqi interpreter was also killed in the attack.

U.S. Soldier Killed, Two Wounded By Baghdad IED

May 4, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070504-01

BAGHDAD – A Task Force Marne Soldier was killed and two were wounded when their patrol was struck by a roadside bomb south of Baghdad today.

Putnam Soldier Killed In Iraq

April 24, 2007 By Alison Knezevich, Staff writer; Charleston Gazette

A Scott Depot man was killed in Iraq this weekend, less than a year after he joined the Army, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Pfc. Michael Slater, 19, died Saturday in Taji, about 20 miles north of Baghdad, from injuries sustained after his vehicle overturned during combat operations.

He was assigned to the 407th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, N.C.

Slater graduated from Winfield High School in 2005 and joined the Army last July, becoming a heavy-vehicle driver. He had been planning to go into the military ever since he was a freshman, Winfield High Principal Bill Hughes said.

"He always wanted to be in the Army," Hughes said. "From the ninth grade, he wanted to be in the Army. So it's kind of a sad irony ... that he accomplished his dream and it cost him his life."

At about 130 pounds, Slater was "little in stature" but had a big heart, Hughes said.

Rachelle Atkins graduated with Slater and described him as energetic, funny and happy. In high school, they worked together at the Red Line Diner in St. Albans, where he was a busboy.

"He was really fast," Atkins said. "I never had to worry about tables needing cleaning because he was always on top of things."

At school, Slater often spoke of his plans to become a soldier. "He couldn't wait to go," Atkins said.

Slater finished basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C., last October and motor transportation advanced training this January, according to a news release from the 82nd Airborne Division. After finishing his basic airborne course in February, Slater reported to his airborne division at Fort Bragg.

News of Slater's death hit Winfield High, where his father is the girls' softball coach, on Monday, Hughes said. "Things were a lot quieter at lunch today than they normally are," he said.

Slater was the first Winfield graduate to die in Iraq, and word of his death made some students realize the realities of war, Hughes said.

"You see the news at night," he said. "It really doesn't mean much to a high school kid because it's just a number on a TV screen. But all of a sudden, when it's a face and it's someone who's walked the halls, it hits home. It's reality."

Slater is survived by his father, Chuck, his mother, Patricia, and his sisters, Samantha and Shannon. Family funeral arrangements are incomplete; Hughes said it would take several weeks for Slater's body to be returned to the United States.

A Sad Homecoming For Fallen Marine

May. 04, 2007 By Larry King and Edward Colimore, Inquirer Staff Writers [Excerpts]

In the saddest of homecomings, Marine First Lt. Travis Manion returned to Pennsylvania yesterday, his flag-draped casket borne by a military helicopter to a somber ceremony at Willow Grove Naval Air Station.

A six-man Marine honor guard stood by as the helicopter eased down from the afternoon sky. It carefully transferred Manion's body to a gray hearse waiting outside Hangar 680 - a ritual seldom shown in public.

Manion, 26, was killed Sunday afternoon in Iraq, shot in Anbar province near Fallujah. The Doylestown resident will be buried tomorrow.

Manion had begun his second tour of duty Dec. 26, as the war approached its fifth year. By then it had claimed nearly 3,000 American lives, reordered national political power, and even prompted the revision of the process by which his body was delivered from Iraq.

Yesterday's transfer of the flag-draped silver casket was a scene the Pentagon has often taken pains to shield from public view during the Iraq war. It was displayed at the request of Manion's family, who cast the day as a celebration of his return.

"His passion and dedication are an inspiration to us, even as we mourn his passing from this Earth," the family said in a statement.

The handling of military remains has been a delicate subject in the last year. Family complaints of loved ones' caskets left unattended in commercial baggage areas prompted new regulations.

From Dover, Manion's body was flown to Willow Grove aboard a Marine helicopter.

His father, Thomas, a colonel in the Marine Reserve, stood in full uniform and saluted his son's arrival. His mother, Jannette, wept briefly, hand on her heart, while supporters held signs bearing messages such as "Welcome Home Travis" and "Thank You Travis."

Snohomish Soldier Hurt In Iraq Grenade Attack

May 4, 2007 By Jim Haley, Herald Writer

SNOHOMISH - It was the kind of call Cheri Ingram didn't expect and didn't want to receive. But it was a lot better than it could have been.

The U.S. Army officer on the other end of the telephone asked if she had heard from her soldier son lately. She hadn't.

Her son, Spc. Steven Ingram of Snohomish, had been wounded while serving on a patrol mission in Iraq, she was told.

Her heart raced until she was told that her 20-year-old son was injured, but not seriously. Two grenades hit the Humvee in which he and three other members of the 82nd Airborne Division were riding on Tuesday.

Steven Ingram has a piece of shrapnel in his nose, and his shoulder and right ear were injured. The wounds aren't serious enough to take him out of action long.

Steven Ingram was sent back to his patrol camp. Cheri Ingram doesn't know if her son has actually resumed patrols.

"It was an awful feeling," she said of the call. "It's always in the back of your head and you try not to worry."

Steven Ingram was treated in an Army hospital in Tikrit, about 80 miles north of Baghdad. He was able to e-mail his family, but couldn't call because the satellite phones weren't working, his mother said.

He's been in Iraq since August, and his unit isn't scheduled to leave until November after a three-month extension. The wounds aren't severe enough for Steven Ingram to be sent home, and he doesn't want to leave until his tour of duty is over.

"He just has a great attitude about the whole thing," Cheri Ingram said.

He wrote to her that bullets have hit his Humvee before. He told her, "The only thing different was I got a little wounded."

"He thinks its just part of his job," she said.

Steven Ingram attended Snohomish High School and joined the Army two days after his 18th birthday. His enlistment is up in about a year.

His mother and dad, Virgil Ingram, didn't discourage him from signing up because they knew that's what he wanted to do.

"I know he's a strong person, and he's always had a good head on his shoulders," Cheri Ingram said. "We always supported our children in anything they want to do. What can you do? You can't force them to stay home."

There's always a mother's worry when a son goes into harm's way, but the tone of his e-mails has helped. He's been upbeat.

"You can hear it in this e-mails," Cheri Ingram said. "His attitude comes through." He wrote to her that the upside of all this is he gets a Purple Heart.

He may not have his full sense of smell, and Cheri Ingram doesn't know the prognosis of his hearing in her son's right ear.

So, a mother worries.

"His attitude is that this is all in a day's work and (the soldiers) can handle what's going on out there," Cheri Ingram said. "I just try to keep (the danger) on the back burner, but stuff like this brings it up front."

U.S. Humvee Destroyed In Sadr City; Casualties Not Announced



A U.S. military vehicle burns in the Sadr City in Baghdad May 5, 2007. A U.S. Humvee was destroyed in a roadside bomb attack and there was no immediate information about casualties. (AP Photo/Ali al-Khazali)

Two Humvees Damaged In Amiriya

5.4.07 By Hussein Kadhim, McClatchy Newspapers

Baghdad: Around 4 pm, clashes took place between an American patrol and gunmen in Amiriya neighborhood having two Humvee vehicles damaged without casualties.

Fighting In Basra

5.4.07 By Hussein Kadhim, McClatchy Newspapers

Early morning, a British patrol was a target to RBG7 and light machineguns fire which made the British open fire on them injuring five of the attackers without casualties on the British side.

Early morning , three suspected were in custody of the British as the latter had a raid on Hay Al-Mudara (mangers neighborhood). The British patrol had been fired, but without casualties. Few hours later two men were released keeping one in custody.

4 Killed In Green Zone Rocket Attack

May 3, 2007 By THOMAS WAGNER, Associated Press Writer

A rocket attack on Iraq's heavily fortified Green Zone killed four Filipino contractors working for the U.S. government, the American embassy said Thursday. It was the third straight day that extremists used rockets or mortars to hit the area where Iraq's parliament meets.

The whistle of suspected rockets had been heard passing over the Tigris River in central Baghdad and into the Green Zone on Wednesday evening. It was the third straight day that the zone was hit by rockets or mortars, heightening concerns about security in the area.

NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME



U.S. soldier looks through bullet holes left in his humvee after his convoy was caught in a complex ambush in Mosul, Iraq, April 30. (AP Photo/U.S. Air Force, Staff Sgt. Vanessa Valentine)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

British Soldier Killed Near Garmsir

3 May 07 & 4 May 07 Ministry of Defence

It is with deep regret that the Ministry of Defence must confirm the death of a British soldier from 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards in Afghanistan today, Thursday 3 May 2007.

It is with great regret that the Ministry of Defence must confirm the death of Guardsman Simon Davison from 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards in Afghanistan on Thursday 3 May 2007.

Guardsman Davison was killed by small arms fire while manning a checkpoint near the town of Garmsir in Helmand Province. He was from 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, and was operating from Patrol Base Delhi in Garmsir District Centre, southern Helmand Province.

The soldier was killed by small arms fire while manning a checkpoint near the town of Garmsir in Helmand Province. He was from Number 3 Company Grenadier Guards, which is operating from Patrol Base Delhi in Garmsir district centre in southern Helmand Province. The Company is responsible for the protection of the Patrol Base and for local security in the immediate area.

In the early hours of Thursday morning, the soldier had formed part of a team manning the Eastern Checkpoint, one of three checkpoints in the district centre. At 0645 Afghanistan time the checkpoint came under attack from a force of between eight and ten lightly-armed Taliban fighters.

The Grenadiers returned fire with small arms and during the ensuing gun battle, the soldier, who was manning a General Purpose Machine Gun, sustained a gunshot wound. As the fire fight intensified, with the Taliban using Rocket Propelled Grenades as well as small arms, ISAF forces called in support from British artillery.

The soldier was pulled out of the firing line by members of the Quick Reaction Force from Patrol Base Delhi and was then flown to the medical facilities at Camp Bastion, the main British base in the area. Despite their best efforts, the medical teams on the helicopter and at the base were unable to save his life. Meanwhile the engagement continued at the Eastern Checkpoint; two Dutch F16 aircraft arrived to provide air support and, at around 0830, a 500lb bomb was dropped on the Taliban firing position.

The remainder of the team who had been engaged by the Taliban were then relieved by incoming troops and were able to return to base.

Denmark Suffers First Afghan Combat Death; Soldier Shot In The Throat In Uruzgan

May 03, 2007 Agence France-Presse & AP

DENMARK'S armed forces said it had suffered its first combat loss in Afghanistan after a soldier who was seriously injured in the war-torn country last weekend died in a Copenhagen hospital today.

The victim was shot in the throat when rebels attacked his unit in southern Helmand province last Sunday as it headed to join a NATO operation against the Taliban set to begin the next day.

The injured soldier was evacuated by helicopter to a field hospital before being flown to Denmark.

Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed: Nationality Not Announced

May 4th 2007 DPA

One soldier died in combat Thursday in southern Afghanistan, although his identity or nationality was not revealed,

Dutch Uruzgan Base Attacked By Bomber; “An Unknown Number Of Casualties”

May 4th 2007 DPA

A bomber attacked a Dutch base in southern Afghanistan Thursday, inflicting an unknown number of casualties, officials said.

The bomber blew himself up outside the Dutch base in Afghanistan's Uruzgan province, and there were casualties, NATO spokesman Peter Darling told The Associated Press.

Australian Soldier Wounded In Tarin Kowt

May 4th 2007 DPA

An Australian soldier received minor injuries Thursday in a bombing in the southern province of Uruzgan.

The Australian Defence Department said two Afghans were also wounded and the bomber died in the attack on an Australian vehicle checkpoint just north of a Dutch military base at Tarin Kowt.

Assorted Resistance Action

Apr 30, 2007 By Sayed Salahuddin, (Reuters) & 05/03/2007 The Associated Press

On Sunday night, two Afghan employees, one of a Western aid group, another from a local reconstruction firm were killed in two separate attacks in the north by Taliban fighters, police said.

A suspected Taliban bomber killed at least one Afghan guard of a U.S. security firm and wounded three more guards in the southern province of Kandahar on Monday.

KABUL, Afghanistan - A remote-control bomb hit an Afghan army bus in Kabul on Thursday.

The bomb was placed in a cart on the side of the road and exploded when the bus passed by, said Ali Riza, an Afghan National Army officer at the scene.

The driver of the bus was killed and 22 soldiers were wounded, said Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi, a defense ministry spokesman.

Sardar Mohammad, an eyewitness, said that the explosion sent the bus crashing into a wall.

The front of the bus was badly damaged, while windows of nearby houses and shops were shattered. The powerful blast also knocked out electricity in the neighborhood.

TROOP NEWS

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



The body of Lance Cpl. Daniel R. Scherry is carried from funeral services at Our Lady of Angels Church in Cleveland, April 28, 2007. Scherry, 20, of Rocky River, Ohio, who played for the team when he was in high school, was killed on April 16, while serving in Iraq. (AP Photo/Amy Sancetta)

Ft. Carson:
Dishonorable Scum
Deliberately, Knowingly
Denying All Benefits To Troops
With Traumatic Brain Injuries,
Then Kicking Them Out Of The
Army:
“Issues Were Buried For The Sake
Of Saving Money Or Quickly
Filling A Slot With A Deployable
Soldier”
Liars Said They Investigated The
Cases, But No One Talked Once To

The Soldiers Who Were Cheated And Betrayed

[Here it is again. Same old story. Used up, thrown away, and the politicians couldn't care less. To repeat for the 3,499th time, there is no enemy in Iraq. Iraqis and U.S. troops have a common enemy. That common enemy owns and operates the Imperial government in Washington DC for their own profit. That common enemy started this war of conquest on a platform of lies, because they couldn't tell the truth: this war was about making money for them, and nothing else. Payback is overdue. T]

April 30, 2007 By Kelly Kennedy, Military Times [Excerpts]

Six senators have requested an investigation into what they call “upsetting allegations” that the Army gave personality-disorder discharges to 18 Fort Carson, Colo., soldiers diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injuries.

The quest for information began after The Nation reported that 22,000 soldiers have been diagnosed and discharged from the Army for pre-existing personality disorders since the war began, and documented cases of soldiers who believe their combat-related mental health issues were buried for the sake of saving money or quickly filling a slot with a deployable soldier.

Veterans for America then requested an Army surgeon general investigation into the cases of 18 soldiers discharged for personality disorders.

Steve Robinson, director of veterans' affairs at Veterans for America, said the Army surgeon general wrote the group a letter stating that the soldiers' cases had been investigated, and that no improprieties took place.

However, Robinson said no one talked to any of the 18 soldiers during the investigation, thus sparking the Congressional inquiry.

“Four months later, we got a letter saying, ‘We thoroughly and thoughtfully reviewed these cases,’” Robinson said. “But how can that be if they didn't do follow-up exams and didn't talk to the soldiers?”

Spc. Jon Town is one of those soldiers. “Nobody talked to me,” Town said. “It's unbelievable that their investigation didn't involve talking to the soldiers.”

Town was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury when a rocket blew up two-and-a-half feet above his head in Iraq in 2005. “It was like I was kind of flying and then there was a fireball behind me,” he said of the explosion that caused his injury. He bled from his ears and passed out for about three minutes. He rested for 24 hours, then went to work the next day.

“As soon as I got back, it was in my medical records,” Town said. “But it took me two months to get my first appointment.”

He can't hear in his left ear, lost 50 percent of his hearing in his right ear, and has short-term memory loss and headaches that never go away. Town also has PTSD — common for soldiers with traumatic brain injuries.

“It's rather scary,” he said. “Yesterday, me and my wife were going to my mom and dad's house and someone blew a tire out. It scared the bejesus out of me.”

Town said he has flashbacks two or three times a day and only gets three hours of sleep a night.

Soon after he returned to Fort Carson, Town sat in a bathtub full of water. He plugged in a hair dryer and then tugged it into the water.

“It was a really bad day, bad time,” Town said. “Fortunately, it short-circuited.”

Though he checked into a hospital the next day, his command wasn't as helpful.

He received a bad write-up when he overslept one day because of his medication. He was written up again after one of his sergeants said something offensive about a friend who died in Iraq.

“I just yelled at the person,” he said. “He was a staff sergeant, and I was disrespectful. But he had no right to say what he said.”

Soon, his mental health diagnosis changed. “I had obvious symptoms of PTSD, and I was going to do the medical evaluation board,” he said. “But they sent me to psychiatrists who said I had a personality disorder.”

Though he had no history of mental health issues, Army physicians diagnosed Town with a personality disorder, then discharged him with no benefits because they determined the supposed disorder was a pre-existing condition.

“My commander told me it wouldn't affect my benefits, and if I signed the paperwork, he could get someone to take my place,” Town said. “But I lost everything, and had to pay the Army \$3,000 back because I re-enlisted and got a bonus. That's what I got for seven years of service.”

He was chaptered out and has been waiting for six months for an appointment with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Andrew Pogany, a former soldier who investigates cases for Veterans for America, said Town's case is typical, and then listed several others:

One American Indian soldier served two full tours in Iraq and has not been able to get treatment for his PTSD. Instead, the soldier said, his chain of command disciplined him for alcoholism and harassed him by calling him a “drunk Indian.”

Other soldiers signed statements saying the American Indian soldier was mistreated, and that they were ordered not to cooperate with investigators.

Another soldier served in Afghanistan for a year, then sought help for PTSD. He received none, then was redeployed to Iraq. While returning to Iraq after leave, he had a panic attack at the airport and said he could not get on the plane. He immediately called his unit, then sought mental health treatment. He was diagnosed with acute stress disorder, and then chronic PTSD. And then he was found guilty of "missing movement by design," reduced in rank from specialist to private and given 45 days of extra duty.

A 550-pound log fell on a specialist's head, causing lesions to the frontal lobe of his brain. His profile said he was undeployable and that he needed an urgent MRI, but he was cleared to go to Iraq.

One month after arriving, he suffered another traumatic brain injury in an explosion and was medevaced back to Fort Carson.

He faces an Article 15 for disobeying an order, even after a doctor said his brain injury was so severe he can't comprehend orders.

A soldier was given an other-than-honorable discharge even with signs of a traumatic brain injury.

One day before he was kicked out, the soldier was diagnosed with the injury. He was discharged anyway.

"It's just totally ridiculous," Pogany said. "It flies in the face of what they say publicly."

MORE:

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

May 05, 2007 Associated Press

DENVER - The investigative arm of Congress said Friday it will send a team to Fort Carson to examine mental health care for Iraq war veterans after complaints that some Soldiers with brain damage have been misdiagnosed.

The advocacy group Veterans for America has said it is looking into as many as 40 cases where Fort Carson Soldiers with brain damage or stress-related injuries may have been misdiagnosed with personality disorders.

"We can show them cases where Army rules have been violated. And this is just a beginning. We know of cases elsewhere," said Stephen Robinson, director of veterans affairs for the advocacy group.

Parents Of KIA Navy Corpsman Honor His Memory At Kent State Memorial Against The War In Iraq



Wes and Julie Emch of Brimfield, Ohio, share a silent moment at a pair of boots displayed in honor of their son on the campus of Kent State University May 4, 2007, as part of an anti-war display during the annual May 4, 1970, commemoration. Luke Emch, a Navy corpsman, was killed in action in Iraq in 2006, and his parents brought photographs and letters to the sight and placed them inside the boots. (AP Photo/Jeff Glidden)

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

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

GET THE MESSAGE?

#1



A supporter of nationalist cleric Moqtada al-Sadr waves a sabre during a protest rally against the U.S. occupation in Kadhimiya district in Baghdad April 30, 2007. Iraqis held a protest denouncing the U.S.-Iraqi operation in Kadhimiya district. REUTERS/Thaier al-Sudani

GET THE MESSAGE?

#2



Iraqi citizens demonstrating against the occupation hold pictures of Saleh al-Jezani as they chant slogans demanding his release from the custody of British forces, during a rally in Basra, May 4, 2007. Al-Jezani, a member of the Sadr political party was arrested by the British forces during a raid in Sadr party headquarters in Basra two days ago. REUTERS/Atef Hassan

5 Dead Collaborators Found Near Beiji



The bodies of five Iraqi police officers in a morgue in Tikrit May 5, 2007. The bullet-riddled bodies of the five police officers, who were dressed in civilian clothes, were discovered late Friday outside the city of Beiji. (AP Photo/Bassem Daham)

Assorted Resistance Action

5/3/2007 By Mukhles Khushnaw, (KUNA) & 04 May 2007, Reuters

Guerrillas assassinated on Thursday an official of the Iraqi Communist [pro-U.S. occupation] Party in the northern city of Mosul, police said.

A police source in Mosul told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that they shot dead Muthanna Mohammed Taleb, also known as Abu Thabet, in front of his house in the district of Al-Baladiat in the northern city.

Five Iraqi policemen were killed and two were wounded when their patrol was hit by a roadside bomb in the Hay al-Amel neighbourhood in southern Baghdad, police said.

A car bomb exploded outside a police station in Doura, in southern Baghdad, police said. There was no indication of casualties.

Six police officers were found dead in Baiji, 180 km north of Baghdad, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

***Good News For The Iraqi
Resistance!!***

**U.S. Occupation Commands'
Stupid Terror Tactics Recruit Even
More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops**



An Iraqi citizen is forced to face the wall in handcuffs in his own kitchen during an armed home invasion by foreign occupation soldiers from U.S. Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division in Mosul, Iraq May 3, 2007. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqi troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

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

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

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



The Iraqis will welcome us with open arms
and greet us with flowers.

- Dick Cheney April 2003

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

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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