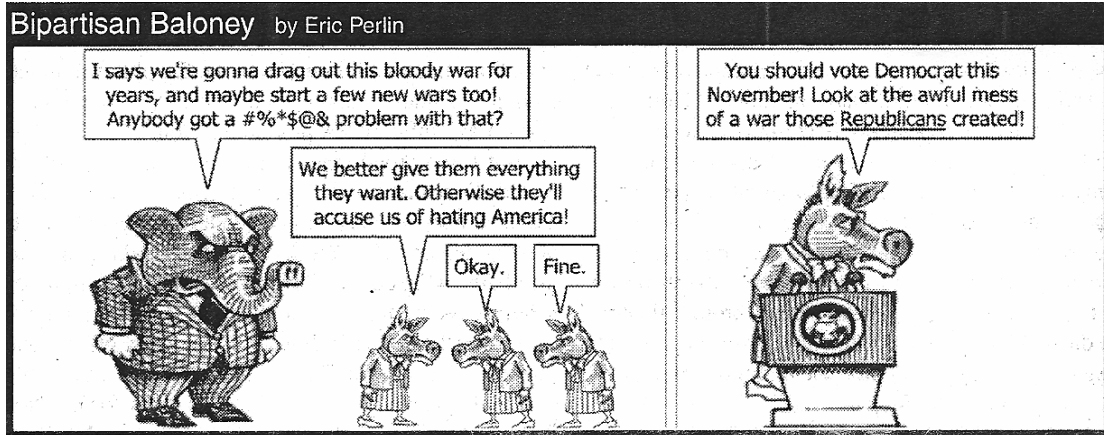


GI SPECIAL 5F27:



“He Died To Protect George W. Bush’s Interests”

“People Keep Saying He Died For My Freedom, But I Got My Freedom Back In 1776”

06/19/2007 By ROSE YBARRA, The Enterprise

VINTON, La. - Susan Moreno remembers her only son clapping his little hands and singing the popular children’s spiritual, “I’m in the Lord’s Army” at the top of his lungs during church services when he was a little boy.

That picture has played over and over again in Moreno’s mind since she learned that her son, Sgt. 1st Class John Michael Hennen, 26, was killed Sunday in Afghanistan.

He and two other soldiers died when an improvised explosive device detonated near their Humvee in Panjway, Afghanistan, according to the Department of Defense. “Now,

he really is in the Lord's Army," Moreno said in an interview from her Vinton home on Tuesday. "God needed another soldier."

The flags in Vinton were at half-staff in remembrance of Hennen, the first hometown son to die in the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. "He's not only my hero," Moreno said. "He's Vinton's hero too."

Hennen, a 1999 graduate of Vinton High School, was assigned to the Louisiana National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment in Lake Charles, La.

Hennen's body arrived at the military mortuary at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Tuesday. Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Nolen, the Army representative assisting Hennen's family, said the soldier's body is expected to arrive in Louisiana on Saturday. Funeral services are pending at Hixson Funeral Home in Vinton, but the day he ultimately is buried will be declared John M. Hennen Day by Vinton city officials.

Hennen enlisted in the Army when he was 17 years old. He served one tour in Iraq and was later deployed to Afghanistan.

Hennen set his sights on the Army from the time he was a little boy, Moreno said. She reluctantly signed a waiver for him to join before he turned 18.

"I tried to talk him out of it but I could see it in his eyes," Moreno said. "He was serious, so I signed. His dream was to serve his country and I respected that. He died doing what he wanted. They didn't take him kicking and screaming."

Hennen's father, Paul Moreno, said his son loved to go out hunting with his cousins.

"But his favorite thing was hunting girls," Paul Moreno said with a laugh. "He was a flirt, no doubt."

Hennen's 4-year old son, John Michael Hennen II or "T-John" as he is nicknamed, already learned a few tricks from his daddy's playbook.

"Everywhere he goes, he makes eyes at pretty women," Susan Moreno said. "He even tries to whistle at them."

Little T-John is aware that his father is gone.

"When we told him, he said, 'Give me a minute, my heart hurts,'" Susan Moreno said.

Later, when a group of Guardsmen stopped by to offer condolences to the family, Susan Moreno said T-John saluted them and said, "Those are my daddy's soldiers."

Besides his parents and son, Hennen is survived by four sisters, Suzanne Gragg, 30, Jeannah Stelly, 27, Katherine Bleichroth, 25, and Ashley Moreno, 21; and 12 nieces and nephews.

Hennen's sisters expressed anger about their brother's death.

“He was my only brother and I love him so much. But people keep saying he died for my freedom, but I got my freedom back in 1776,” Gragg said.

“He died to protect George W. Bush’s interests.”

“I have a great husband, I have a great family, but John was the greatest man I ever knew,” Bleichroth said. “He didn’t have to die.”

Hennen’s parents said they will fulfill one of their son’s goals in the future.

“He wanted to go to Australia with T-John when he returned to the States,” Paul Moreno said. “We decided we’re going to take him there when he’s a little bit older, when he can understand that it’s something that his daddy wanted for him.”

MORE:

“Nobody’s Morale Over There Is High”

“They Have Their Friends Dying Left And Right, And Half Of Them Are Stop-Lossed And They All Got (Their Time In Iraq) Extended” Iraq War Makes A ‘Widow’ Of 22-Year-Old

June 21, 2007 By William Cole, Advertiser Military Writer

Judi Arel and Army Sgt. Derek Roberts often talked on the phone about plans for a wedding that was delayed by Iraq.

The couple wanted to get married on the beach in Hawai’i where Roberts was stationed, and where he wanted to make their home. A knock on the door Friday morning changed all that.

“We were planning a wedding, and now I’m planning a funeral. Kind of a hard switch,” Arel said.

The 24-year-old California man was supposed to get out of the service in January 2007, but the deployment to Iraq kept him in.

They thought about September or October, after he had returned home, but his yearlong tour was extended to 15 months.

Finally, the couple decided that whenever he returned, they would invite family and friends in, and tie the knot, possibly on the North Shore.

Those plans are only a memory now.

Arel and Roberts' parents were told he had died along with two other Schofield Barracks soldiers June 14 in a roadside bomb blast that hit their Humvee in Kirkuk. Another soldier was seriously wounded.

Roberts' parents are devastated, Arel said. "Words can't even explain the shock and grief," Arel, 22, said.

The deaths that used to come singly in the more than four-year-old war are increasingly occurring in multiples — three, four and five — as more powerful bombs are employed that can take out a tank and simply demolish a Humvee.

The deaths Dec. 6 of five Schofield soldiers from a large roadside bomb that hit their Humvee in Hawija, southwest of Kirkuk, represented the single greatest combat loss for Hawai'i's 25th Infantry Division since the Vietnam War.

Twenty-eight Schofield soldiers have been killed since July on the 15-month deployment by more than 7,000 of the Hawai'i troops to northern Iraq. Five Schofield soldiers in total were killed last week.

By comparison, 13 died on a 2004 deployment of 5,200 soldiers to some of the same regions of Iraq.

The Pentagon yesterday also identified Spc. Val J. Borm, 21, of Sidney, Neb.; and Spc. Farid Elazzouzi, of Paterson, N.J., as having died in the Thursday attack. Borm's parents had previously confirmed he had been killed in the bomb blast.

The soldiers were with the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry at Schofield Barracks.

Arel said friends in the Army in Iraq told her "this was one of the biggest explosions we've seen."

"There was no way of predicting it, and it just wiped them out instantly," she said.

Arel, who moved in with Roberts' parents in Gold River, Calif., while she waited for his return, said her fiance had done his time in the Army and was looking forward to getting out.

He had joined out of high school with a buddy while looking for direction in life, and had previously deployed to Afghanistan.

The red-headed soldier with green eyes who loved "underground" music had just recently "come back to develop a relationship with God," Arel said.

Kristine Brewer, who along with her husband lived with Roberts and Arel at Iroquois Point before the deployment, said Roberts was “a very outgoing person and he was always full of life.” “It’s very, very hard for me to handle,” Brewer said. “It’s a shock to everyone. He was a really good guy.”

Roberts had a sensitive side, and treated his fiancée and fellow soldiers with respect, Arel said.

“He was so giving to other soldiers, like the new privates coming in; when all the sergeants were being mean to them, Derek would stand up for them, and say that it’s not OK to treat them that way,” she said.

Other soldiers in Kirkuk knew Roberts as someone who always had a smile, a witty comment, and a way to make every situation better, Arel said.

But the exterior also masked frustration at being “stop-lossed,” or kept in the Army longer than his contract called for because of the Iraq deployment.

“Nobody’s morale over there is high,” Arel said. “They have their friends dying left and right, and half of them are stop-lossed and they all got (their time in Iraq) extended.”

All the Schofield soldiers deployed believing they would be in Iraq a year, but the Army has extended tours for all soldiers in the country to 15 months.

One of the things that kept Roberts going was looking forward to marrying Arel back in Hawai’i.

“Being a widow at 22 is ... I just don’t even have words in my vocabulary to explain it,” she said.

But she also made Roberts a promise.

“No matter how long he was deployed, I would keep waiting for him, because I love him,” Arel said. “No matter how long I have to keep waiting for him, I’ll just keep waiting until I see him again in heaven.”

MORE:

**“Why Are We Doing This? Why Are We Killing Off Our Young Men? It’s Not Worth It, Not Worth It”
Indiana Soldier Killed In Iraq**

June 20, 2007 By Matt Millham, Stars and Stripes

Staff Sgt. Michael A. Bechert, a soldier based in Schweinfurt, Germany, died in an Army hospital in Texas on Thursday, a little more than two weeks after he was wounded in Baghdad, the Defense Department announced Sunday.

Bechert, 24, a member of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment "Vanguards," was injured May 30 by a makeshift bomb that killed three other soldiers in his vehicle. The unit is part of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

Bechert died at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, according to The Star Press newspaper in Muncie, Ind. He briefly attended high school in New Castle, Ind., according to the paper.

"He was a great father, husband," Daniela Bechert, the fallen soldier's wife, told television station WTHR, an NBC affiliate, in Indianapolis. "He fought for his country and died for it."

The couple met in Germany and had a son, Branden Andrew, who is 20 months old.

Bechert was raised by his grandparents, George and Doris Bechert. George Bechert told the station he didn't understand why he was planning a funeral instead of a welcome home party.

"Why did we go into Iraq, explain this to me. Why did we go in there when there was nothing there?" George Bechert told WTHR.

"Why are we doing this? Why are we killing off our young men? It's not worth it, not worth it."

Bechert was serving his second deployment in Iraq when he was wounded, his grandfather said.

He was awarded a Purple Heart for wounds suffered during his first tour of duty. He will be buried next to his mother, Angela Bechert, who died as a young woman, according to The Star Press.

Sgt. Bacilio E. Cuellar, Spc. James E. Lundin and Pfc. Joshua M. Moore were killed May 30 in the attack that led to Bechert's death. There is a memorial service today at 10 a.m. at the Ledward Barracks chapel in Schweinfurt for the three soldiers.

Information regarding a memorial service for Bechert was not available by deadline Tuesday.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Worst 3 Months For U.S. Troops In Iraq Since War Began; Toll 329 So Far

June 29, 2007 MSNBC TV & William Blanchard, Juancole.com

The toll for the past three months — 329 — made it the deadliest quarter for U.S. troops in Iraq since the war began in March 2003.

At least 3,576 members of the U.S. military have died since then, according to AP figures. The number includes seven military civilians. At least 2,936 died as a result of hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

For the first time, coalition fatalities have been over 100 for three months in a row. We've never had two months in a row before with more than 100 fatalities.

Baghdad Attack Kills 5 U.S. Soldiers; 7 More Wounded; “A Level Of Sophistication That We Have Not Often Seen So Far In This Campaign”

June 29, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070629-05 & MSNBC & By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD — Five Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldiers were killed June 28 when a roadside bomb detonated near a combat patrol in the Rasheed district of southern Baghdad where U.S. forces recently stepped up pressure on extremists.

A hail of gunfire and grenades followed shortly after the blast.

Seven other Soldiers were wounded in the attack.

All of the wounded Soldiers were evacuated to a combat support hospital following the attack. One Soldier has returned to duty.

“It was a very violent attack and we thought it did show a level of sophistication that we have not often seen so far in this campaign,” Army Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil

Jr., commanding general of Multi-National Division Baghdad and First Cavalry Division, said Friday.

He said a blast from a "very large" bomb buried deep in the ground triggered the attack, which was followed by volleys of small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades. Four soldiers were killed in the attack and a fifth died Thursday night of his wounds.

Insurgents have used similar "swarming" tactics for years, mostly in rural areas to the north and west of the capital. Militants have also been burying explosives deep in the ground, making them difficult to detect and triggering them as vehicles pass by.

Such "deep buried bombs" have been especially effective against U.S. vehicles, including Humvees, Bradley fighting vehicles and Strykers, prompting commanders in some areas to shift to foot patrols to avoid losing so many soldiers in a single blast.

British Main Bases Attacked

June 29, 2007 MSNBC TV

The British military issued a statement saying both of its two main bases came under attack from mortars or rockets in the past 24 hours, but there were no casualties or damage.

Green Zone Attacked “Almost Daily”

June 29 (Reuters)

A number of mortar bombs struck the Green Zone in Baghdad on Friday and Reuters reporters saw smoke rising from the vicinity of the U.S. embassy.

There was no immediate reports of casualties from the attack, an almost daily occurrence against the heavily fortified compound which is also home to key Iraqi government ministries and the country's parliament.

A Loss In Charlie Company: IED Claims 5 On Patrol From FOB Apache; “Please Say Good Things About These Guys”

July 02, 2007 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times

The call came in to Forward Operating Base Apache around 11 a.m. on June 21. A Bradley fighting vehicle with C Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, on patrol in the Adhamiyah neighborhood of Baghdad had rolled over and detonated an improvised explosive device powerful enough to flip the big vehicle upside-down and leave a crater large enough for a Humvee to fit inside.

More terrible news followed — the soldiers in the Bradley were trapped and the vehicle had caught fire. The gunner also was caught beneath the overturned vehicle.

Instantly, the air at the FOB seemed to become charged. The platoon members who had not gone out on the patrol remained hopeful on the outside. But an hour passed with no further word. “It shouldn’t be taking this long for them to get them back,” a soldier said.

The soldiers who stayed behind emitted a palpable sense of desperation for any word of their friends. Some soldiers hovered around a Humvee radio.

Spc. Gerry Denardi, who carried a guitar everywhere and always seemed to be grinning as he sweetly sang raunchy songs that he made up about his fellow soldiers, stalked past the aid station and threw a magazine at a wall. Others rushed madly to set up cots and shade.

They had to do something.

As Black Hawk helicopters hovered nearby, another explosion erupted. Word came that a second IED had hit a vehicle, shearing off a soldier’s legs, though he would live.

Soon enough, the bodies of those who hadn’t made it began arriving at the FOB, and the members of Charlie Company were ordered inside a nearby building while the grim business of offloading the remains took place.

Sgt. Erik Osterman had been ordered inside, but he wouldn’t go. He insisted on organizing the teams that clean out the vehicles — or he does it by himself. “I can handle it,” he said, and then checked himself. “Well, I can’t. But I have to do this.”

It seemed as if he checked in with everyone, handing out water, watching for stress signals. He sprinkled water on the roadway to try to keep the dust down.

This day showed why so many service members return home with mental health issues — and why there should be no stigma attached to seeking help for those issues. This day showed the courage and skills of 20-year-old line medics who performed tasks most civilian doctors haven’t done on their worst days, as well as soldiers who jumped in vehicles to go help their buddies even as they were attacked.

And it still wasn’t over. Yet another explosion sounded — an RPG had instantly killed an MP from the 630th MP Company, some of whose troops happened to be in the area and had responded to the attacks on the two Bradleys. A second MP was injured and brought back to the FOB.

Charlie Company's soldiers ran back outside when they heard more injured were coming in. Several lined up against a wall, heads in hands. Others stood to the side for a solitary cigarette.

Finally, all the soldiers were back inside the FOB. The final toll: Charlie Company had lost five soldiers, the MPs one. Several were injured.

Back inside the main building stood Sgt. 1st Class Tim Ybay, a platoon sergeant who quietly takes care of his soldiers with jokes and an ever-ready willingness to listen.

After the carnage of this day, his soldiers surrounded him to offer the same.

He had been in the second Bradley to be hit — and he had lost his boys.

He turned to a Military Times reporter.

“Please say good things about these guys,” he said, struggling to remain composed. “They’re better than anyone.”

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldiers of 2nd brigade, 12th Infantry Division, return fire from behind their armoured vehicle after an attack from insurgents in the Dora neighborhood in southern Baghdad, June 15, 2007. (AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Parents Mourn Loss Of Son Killed In Afghanistan



June 17, 2007 KDKA

This Father's Day, a Fayette County couple is mourning the loss of their son, who was killed in combat last Friday in Afghanistan.

Master Sergeant Arthur Lilley died on Friday after being wounded by enemy fire in Shkin, Afghanistan.

"You always have that fear, all you do is give it up to God, and say thy will be done, not mine," Lilley's mother, Elizabeth, tells KDKA.

Lilley, 35, is originally from Smithfield, Fayette County, but lived in North Carolina where he was assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group in Fort Bragg.

The Lilley's say they spoke with their son just last Sunday. His mother says he was upbeat, told them not to worry and that his Special Forces Group loved the trail mix she sent to them.

"He was a wonderful son, a caring son," says Elizabeth. "He would do anything for anybody, anyone you would talk to, anyone he talked to. He never met a stranger."

His parents say that Lilley joined the Army right out of high school.

"He was 18 when he went to Saudi Arabia, he was a child," says Lilley's father, Arthur Sr. "He came home a week before he turned 19, he was no longer a child."

Lilley married his high school sweetheart, and they have two children, a 7-year-old boy and a 9-year-old girl.

His father said that his son was a better father than he was.

“He spent more time with his kids, when he got the time,” Arthur says. “Just the way he talked to his children. He didn’t scream at them, he talked to them. I never took the time to do that, and I give him credit for it. He was an excellent father.”

Funeral services are tentatively set for Saturday at Free Methodist Church in Fairchance.

Although he lived with his family in North Carolina, the Lilley’s say their son will be buried in Uniontown.

Headless Translator Found

Jun 29 (AFP)

The body of an Afghan interpreter working with foreign forces was found beheaded in eastern Afghanistan.

The headless body of Mir Zaman, who had been working as a translator for NATO-led troops in the eastern province of Paktia, was found late Thursday in the neighbouring province of Logar, police officer Ghulam Dastgir said.

The interpreter had been captured several days ago, Dastgir said.

Welcome To Liberated Afghanistan: Another Family Butchered; “They Were Shopkeepers And Farmers And Labourers”

30 June 2007 Reuters & (AFP) Jun 29

US soldiers have killed four civilian members of the same family during a raid in Afghanistan’s eastern province of Nangarhar, an Afghan rights body said.

The soldiers also arrested 15 civilians during the pre-dawn raid in Khogiani district which lies in the foothills of the provincial capital Jalalabad, the head of Afghanistan’s Human Rights Group said.

Those killed in the raid were an 85-year-old man, Mohammada Jan, two of his sons and a grandson, Lal Gul told Reuters.

“The American soldiers blew up the gate of Mohammada Jan’s house and then martyred him along with his three family members,” Gul said.

“From there they went to several other houses, broke into them and arrested 15 civilians,” he added.

“The people who are killed and arrested by the coalition forces are innocent people,” [Katab Jan] told AFP by telephone from the area. “They were shopkeepers and farmers and labourers.

“They don’t have any relationship with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda people. They (the soldiers) were operating without strong information.”

TROOP NEWS

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



A trolley carrying the coffin of U.S. Army Specialist Ebe Firmin Emolo at the airport in Abidjan June 28, 2007. Emolo, from the Ivory Coast, but most recently a resident of Greensboro, North Carolina was killed by an improvised explosive device detonated near his patrol on April 7, 2007, in Zaganiyah, Iraq while his unit was conducting operations in the Diyala River Valley. REUTERS/Thierry Gouegnon

Marine Corps Command In Full Retreat:

Won't Discharge Leading Iraq Veterans Against The War Activist



6.29.07 AP

The Marines won't kick out Liam Madden, the Iraq war veteran who made anti-war statements in a speech and wore part of his uniform at a protest, the service said June 29, 2007 despite a recommendation to discharge him early.

The Marine Corps Mobilization Command in Kansas City said in a news release that it was dropping the case against Madden, 22, of Boston, because it had 'received sufficient indication' from Madden that he would no longer wear his uniform when engaged in political activities.

They also determined that his statements did not warrant further action.

However, Madden insists he never reached an agreement with the Marines and planned to keep wearing his uniform at protests.

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

Broke Down Army:

“Two-Thirds Of Active Duty Army Brigades Are Rated Not Ready For Their Mission”

June 29, 2007 By John King, CNN [Excerpt]

More than two-thirds of active duty Army brigades are rated not ready for their mission because of manpower or equipment shortages, most of which can be directly attributed to Iraq. It is a readiness domino effect.

The numbers for the National Guard are even more alarming: Nearly 90 percent of Guard units not in Iraq are rated not ready for missions.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

The Face Of Betrayal



(Photo: AFP/Ali Yussef)

6.29.07: AFP & MSNBC

An Iraqi weeps after a cleric announced that a march to Samarra was postponed. Nationalist cleric Moqtada al-Sadr has postponed a march by his followers to the

northern town called to protest at the destruction of a revered shrine there, a top aide has said.

“Muqtada al-Sadr has decided to postpone the march to Samarra for several reasons, including the government’s inability to secure the route and many officials’ appeals for a postponement,” said Sheik Asad Al-Nassiri, an aide to the cleric. He made the announcement during a Friday sermon in nearby Kufa.

Al-Sadr had said the march was aimed at bringing Shiites and Sunnis closer together and breaking down the barriers imposed by the American occupation.

Resistance Blows Up Pipeline, As Usual

June 29, 2007 MSNBC TV

A pipeline supplying fuel to a power station was blown up on Thursday night near Hawsa, 50 km (30 miles) south of Baghdad, police said, spilling crude oil and sparking a huge fire.

The explosives were planted under a stretch of pipeline in the Mowehlah area of Haswa, a town 30 miles south of the Iraqi capital, a police officer said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release the information.

The pipeline transmits crude oil from Iraq’s southern oil fields to the Dora refinery in Baghdad.

The blast ignited a huge fire around 5 a.m., the officer said.

By midday, firefighters were still struggling to extinguish the flames, which were fueled by a continuing leak of oil from the pipeline, he said. Workers also were looking for a way to temporarily cut off the oil flow, until a repair could be made, the officer added.

<p>IF YOU DON’T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

***They Tried This Bullshit Before:
“The Top Brass Were Fond Of
Asking Skeptical Journalists***

Questions Like, 'Would You Rather Fight Them Here Or In Pasadena?'"

From: WORKING CLASS WAR, by Christian G. Appy, U. Of North Carolina Press, 1984

The justification of the war that new soldiers found most persuasive was a version of the domino theory that emphasized the threat to the United States if communism triumphed in Vietnam.

The focus was not so much on the potential threat to other nations.

Instead, the soldiers were most drawn to interpretations that stressed the necessity of the war to prevent a direct attack on American security.

Moskos found these common responses: "The only way we'll keep them out of the States is to kill them here," "Let's get it over now, before they're too strong to stop," "They have to be stopped somewhere," and "Better to zap this country than let them do the same to us."

John Sack quotes this statement as typical: "The communists win in Vietnam it'll just be Laos, Thailand, the Philippines, and then we'll have to fight in California."

In 1968, Michael Herr found such views most pervasive among the top brass, who were fond of asking skeptical journalists questions like, "Would you rather fight them here or in Pasadena?"

("Maybe we could beat them in Pasadena, I'd think, but I wouldn't say it," Herr writes.)

Many "lifers" - career officers and NCOs -- did their best to indoctrinate their troops with this either/or proposition; either you fought in Vietnam or the entire U.S. population would be attacked.

Soldiers were to believe that even though they were on the other side of the planet, they were truly fighting for the folks back home.

Frank Mathews had his first experience of killing in 1966. After looking at the Viet Cong corpse, he vomited and remained sick and depressed for several days.

An "old salt" sergeant tried to lift his spirits with these words: "Just figure it this way -- that [man you killed] could have been the one that was in the States screwing your mama, or your wife, or your girlfriend, and that's the reason you killed him."

This psychosexual version of domino theory "made a lot of sense" to the young soldier.

He was a gung-ho combat volunteer and remained so through the remainder of his tour. While his motivation centered on avenging the deaths of buddies who had died -- a desire to pay back the enemy -- whenever he looked for a larger rationale for the war, he always returned to the sergeant's promise that the war was protecting American women.

MORE:

Two General [Ret'd] Condemn Iraq War Stupidity:

1: "The Idea That 'Fighting Them Over There So We Don't Have To Fight Them Over Here' Is Empty Rhetoric Used To Keep Americans Scared So They Don't Question The Administration's Foreign Policy"

2: U.S. Troops "Will Always Be Seen As Colonial Occupiers, And You Will Alienate The Population"

<p>Fighting in Iraq will not stop someone who wants to blow up a dirty bomb in New York. "These people are mobile," Gard said. "If they want to come in here, they'll come."</p>
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June 24, 2007 By Joelle Farrell, Monitor staff [Excerpts]

Two retired Army generals toured New Hampshire last week, hoping to pressure New Hampshire's congressional delegation to stand up to President Bush and put an end to the war in Iraq.

Lt. Gen. Robert Gard worked as executive assistant to Robert McNamara, secretary of defense during the Vietnam War. He believes Iraq, like Vietnam, is a failure, and the only responsible solution is to bring American troops home, he said.

"These troops are not expendable commodities to fulfill the pipe-dream vision of a group of people trying to remake the world in our image," Gard said.

"It's time for us to get the hell out of there."

Gard, a graduate of West Point and Harvard who served 31 years in the Army, said the idea that “fighting them over there so we don’t have to fight them over here” is empty rhetoric used to keep Americans scared so they don’t question the administration’s foreign policy.

Fighting in Iraq will not stop someone who wants to blow up a dirty bomb in New York.

“These people are mobile,” Gard said. “If they want to come in here, they’ll come.”

Gard, who served combat tours in Korea and Vietnam, said the situation in Iraq is “hauntingly similar” to the spring of 1968, when 25,000 troops were sent to Vietnam to bolster forces there.

“At that point in time, we had lost 24,000 U.S. killed in action,” he said. “Five years later, we had 34,000 more killed in action, a total of 58,000. And I would assert that we got no better settlement five years later than we could have had at the time of the surge in Vietnam.”

[Brig. Gen. John] Johns served as a combat arms officer for 26 years and taught leadership and ethics at the U.S. Military Academy before he retired from active duty in 1978. He then worked at the Department of Defense, serving four years as deputy assistant secretary of defense before becoming a political science professor at the National Defense University at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C.

The generals briefly recounted mistakes made early in the Iraq war that allowed a culture of lawlessness to spread and promoted a vigorous insurgency - invading with too few troops, turning a blind eye to looting and disbanding the Iraqi army.

But the time for more troops is over, Johns said.

And using the military to fight an insurgent war never seems to work out, as was illustrated in Vietnam, Johns said.

“I don’t even think you could’ve done it if we’d gone in with 300,000 troops,” he said.

“They will always be seen as colonial occupiers, and you will alienate the population.

“You have to keep it as advisory duty, and if the indigenous military and police forces can’t do it, then you just can’t do it.”

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.

Sound Familiar?

“It Just Doesn’t Seem Like We’re Accomplishing That Much”

“I Mean I Get Out There In The Field And I’ve Seen It, And I Can’t See Where We’ve Accomplished That Much”

Among enlisted men (and a growing number of junior officers), however, the success of an operation was increasingly measured not by how many enemy were killed but by how few Americans, not by how much fighting occurred but by how little. Moss says at one point, for example, “It was a good night -- no contact.”

From: WORKING CLASS WAR, by Christian G. Appy, U. Of North Carolina Press, 1984

In 1970 Capt. Brian Utermahlen of the First Cavalry Division told Life magazine, “Most officers frankly doubt they could get their men to fight another costly battle such as the 1969 assault on Hamburger Hill.” One of his men, Pvt. Steve Wright, said, “Two of them want to kill gooks - the Captain and the Colonel -- and the rest of us never want to see any again.”

During the years 1969-72 commanders who continued to pressure their men for high body counts were almost universally detested.

In April 1969, army historians in Vietnam interviewed members of the Fourth Battalion, Forty-seventh Infantry, Ninth Infantry Division. Though interviewed by the military, the men did not refrain from voicing their criticisms. Specialist Dennis Moss was a radio operator and therefore had direct access to communications between the various levels of command.

“Our Battalion Commander, in my opinion, is a very poor leader. Very poor. Every fifteen minutes he’s on the horn (radio) asking me where his body count is.

“Every 15 minutes, he never fails. I don’t even need a watch out there in the field because I know every 15 minutes the man is going to be on the horn asking where his body count is.”

The commander was constantly hectoring Moss’s company to make contact with the enemy.

As another man in the unit put it, "You have to come up with some good excuses if you haven't gotten in contact! It seems he doesn't realize that you can't be in contact 24 hours a day."

But they were in enough contact to lose, by Moss's count, about twenty-five men each month.

"I know for a fact that the Brigade Commander, Battalion Commander and my CO are pressuring for higher rank.

And I can just say if I was in their position, I wouldn't want all those men's lives on my conscience just to be a Brigadier General, a full bird colonel, and a major.

"They go through about 25 men a month in this company alone. . . . I can't believe this waste.

"I can't believe that this has actually happened to the American people.

"It just doesn't seem like we're accomplishing that much.

"They say we have, but I can't see where we have. I mean I get out there in the field and I've seen it, and I can't see where we've accomplished that much."

For Moss, American casualties were not so much the inevitable result of war but the result of ambitious officers willing to sacrifice their men for the sake of promotion.

Among enlisted men (and a growing number of junior officers), however, the success of an operation was increasingly measured not by how many enemy were killed but by how few Americans, not by how much fighting occurred but by how little.

Moss says at one point, for example, "It was a good night -- no contact."

Survival was always of paramount importance to American soldiers, but it became the overriding concern in 1969 when soldiers learned that gradual troop withdrawals might soon begin.

Hopes of shortened tours arose (in most cases, for naught), and no one wanted to be among the last Americans to die in a war their country was apparently going to leave.

Dennis Moss expressed the prevailing sentiment: "Maybe there's a reason, a good substantial reason, for the war, although I can say most of the men -- they don't know this reason.

"I think most of them are fighting just to stay alive. . . . Maybe in the future this war will come to an end. I think that's mostly what's driving the men on.

"There's been rumors going around that the 9th Division is going to pull out. I think that's what keeps these men going, cause they darn sure don't have nothing else except for the letters back home."

“The Democratic Party Got What They Wanted, Power”

“As If They Ever Wanted The War To Stop”

6.29.07 Gordon Soderberg, [US NAVY 1982 – 87] Via NOLA-C3-Discussion [Excerpt]

Well the election was over and the Democratic party got what they wanted, power; they really don't want change anything.

They just use the progressives in the party and the organizations they represent to do the heavy lifting and dirty work.

Once they get in office all support for progressive issue are dropped with the excuse well we don't have enough votes, we don't want to get into Katrina issues with the war going on.

As if they ever wanted the war to stop.

They are keeping that funded up until the next election when they will start support progressive issue again to get into the oval office.

After that, the war will most likely continue and expand and the Katrina issues will be shelved for some the same reason.

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OCCUPATION REPORT

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



Foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S.A. humiliate Iraqi citizens at gunpoint in their own home, which the soldiers invaded by force in the middle of the night of June 28, 2007. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

[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!**

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

***Interview With A Hamas
Commander;***

“The Fatah Men We Fought Are Not My Enemy,’ Said Abu Obieda. They Are Just Soldiers Like Any Of Us Here In This Room”

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in. She writes: I'm not sure if you know how rapidly Hamas established law and order in Gaza. A few Hamas members were sent out with rifles, on traffic control, with ordered to arrest anyone with a gun. Peace descended fast in almost the entire area. I'm sending part of an interview giving Hamas plans for the future. Note amnesty is given to all Fatah members except Dahlan and there are problems getting the ABC correspondent released.]

June 24, 2007 Mitchell Prothero, The Observer [Excerpts]

At the height of the fighting 10 days ago in Gaza City, the commander of the Hamas militants laying siege to the Palestinian Authority compound received a call from his Fatah counterpart inside. 'He asked if we were going to invade and take the building,' said Abu Obieda, the top Hamas military commander for the Gaza Strip.

'He said if we entered his compound, he would kill himself.'

'Abu Obieda begged him not to commit such a sin,' interjected Abu Khalid, one of his lieutenants. 'He promised him that he and all of his men would be protected if they just surrendered. And finally they did. And all of them are still alive and free in their homes.'

Fatah officials in Gaza confirm the story but asked that the commander not be identified for fear of shaming him.

In a unique interview, Abu Obieda - not to be confused with the man of the same name who acts as a Hamas spokesman - agreed to meet The Observer to discuss the conflict that has left scores dead in Gaza over the past few weeks.

Abu Obieda commands the Izzidine Qassam Brigades, the elite and secretive military branch of Hamas, and spends very little time in one place for fear of Israeli assassination.

We met in an office in one of the many formerly Fatah-controlled security compounds now controlled by the Hamas Executive Force, which is now acting as public police and security. Qassam fighters also use them while maintaining a low profile during elite operations against the Israelis.

'The Fatah men we fought are not my enemy,' said Abu Obieda.

'They are just soldiers like any of us here in this room.'

'The decisions they had to follow came from outside of Gaza: from Ramallah, from the Israelis, from America. I do not hate the men of Fatah; they are our brothers.'

Abu Obieda sees the fighting as a failure by the Palestinian people on both sides of the political divide. 'We are not happy,' he said. 'I am not proud to have defeated and killed the men of Fatah. This is a shame on all Palestinians because we love each other.'

The problem, he explained, was a corrupt security regime led by the Fatah security chief, Mohammed Dahlan, who had led repeated attacks, arrests and executions of Hamas members over the past decade.

Despite February's formation of a unity government of the two factions, Abu Obieda knew war between the two would come. He started planning even as the leaders tried to negotiate peace.

He said Israel 'forced us to this point, but we are not ready to do it again. People need help; they need jobs, money and police. They don't need fighting between brothers.'

Despite his months of planning for such a war, Abu Obieda was surprised by the speed of the victory: 'I expected it to take one month. That is what we planned for and trained for.'

“But then at the beginning, all the Fatah commanders escaped their compounds in ambulances and left for Egypt.

“They left their men to die. Who could do that?”

At one battle, for a security compound - where his men later found weapons, ammunition and food that would survive a three-month siege - he listened on a radio to Fatah fighters on nearby rooftops begging their commanders for more ammunition that never came.

'They all had left,' Abu Obieda said.

‘The Fatah fighters are brave but would you fight for a commander who left you alone to die for his war?’

He confirmed that some top Fatah officials with links to Dahlan were arrested and investigated. He insisted all had been released but admitted some summary executions happened during the fighting without authorisation.

'Hamas does not do that, but during the battle some men who were very hated for killing Hamas members were executed by the family members of their victims. We have put a stop to that, for it is wrong. Now any Fatah leader can return and will be safe.'

At a Friday sermon in a Gaza City mosque, Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh called for talks between Hamas and Fatah to heal the divisions, a suggestion that has so far been rejected by Fatah's president, Mahmoud Abbas, who denounced Hamas as terrorists.

'We forgive any Fatah official who wants to return and help us improve lives in Gaza,' he said. 'But 'Alafu' (the Islamic idea of forgiveness) can only be given once. If they do not stop their activities, then there will be no mercy.'

He admitted 'Alafu' will not apply to Mohammed Dahlan, currently in the West Bank. 'He can never come back here. Everyone in Hamas is ready for Dahlan to return, and the supporters of Dahlan who do anything will be met with force.'

While the Hamas Executive Force - the blue-uniformed paramilitary troops on the streets - conduct most of the policing and security operations, Abu Obieda and his Qassam Brigades have other more pressing issues. 'We have a lot of clan violence in Gaza and we are working to stop families from fighting each other over past things,' he said. 'But we also are working very hard for the release of Alan Johnston, the BBC journalist.'

Johnston, who has been held for more than 100 days by a group known as 'the Army of Islam', finds himself caught in a sticky situation. The group is made up of members of the Dogmash family, which has a long-running blood feud with Hamas. Executive Force and Qassam fighters surround the section of town controlled by the family and negotiations continue. But Abu Obieda said the BBC limited his options. 'I can have Alan Johnston out in two hours, if my men go in and take him by force,' he says. 'But several times, the BBC has called me and asked that I not attack and let the talks continue. So we will negotiate because we want no harm to come to this man.'

The other major issue is resistance to Israel. Hamas has asked all militant groups to halt rocket attacks into Israel for now, with some success.

'To shoot rockets into Israel is not a goal of Hamas; it is not a real target,' he said. 'But when Israel attacks us, it is our only way to respond. We do not hope to kill people in Israel with these rockets but it's a necessary response.'

Abu Obieda said he was personally negotiating with Islamic Jihad, a militant group that fires the most rockets. And, typically, he eschews both inter-Palestinian violence and ceasefires with Israel. 'We all understand that we need to wait until provoked. Maybe one week, maybe one month, but they will come and provoke us.'

'But for now, we need to fix the economy, provide the security for the people of Gaza and the foreigners who want to come here, and fix the problems with the families. We can't do anything before we do that.'

Sitting in the ornate office of a former security chief, he pointed to a plaque on the desk. It roughly translated to 'Whoever sits in this chair does not own the chair. Only the office owns the chair.'

'I keep this sitting here. Because even though I am now in the chair of command, it does not belong to me, it belongs to the people of Gaza,' he said.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Maj. Gen. Says Bush Has A “Thirst For Blood”

“This is a skilled and determined enemy. He’s ruthless. He’s got a thirst for blood like I’ve never seen anywhere in my life,” Fil told reporters. “And he’s determined to do whatever he can.” Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr., Baghdad, quoted by ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

**LIAR
TRAITOR
TROOP-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND
UNWORTHY OF OBEDIENCE**



Thirsty for blood: Photo: June 28, 2007, REUTERS/Jason Reed

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