

GI SPECIAL 5F9:

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



Burial services for Sgt. Maj. Bradley Dean Conner at Arlington National Cemetery May 31, 2007. Conner, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and attached to the 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group at Ft. Lewis, was killed in Al-Hillah, Iraq in an IED explosion. (AP Photo/Gerald Herbert)

**Used Up And Thrown
Away:
“Hundreds Of Millions A Day Is
Being Spent In Iraq And They
Can’t Afford Three More Days A
Week Of Therapy For Eddie
Ryan?”**

“They Will Never Admit It, But We Know It’s About The Money,” Said Chris Ryan, A Former Marine

[Here it is again. Same old story. Used up, thrown away, and the politicians couldn’t care less. To repeat for the 3,504th 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]

Jun 08, 2007 Paul Brooks, Times Herald-Record

June 8, 2007 - Ellenville, New York - Veterans Affairs officials — facing a lifetime medical bill that could balloon to \$17 million — cut back yesterday on care for wounded Marine sniper Sgt. Eddie Ryan.

“They will never admit it, but we know it’s about the money,” said Chris Ryan, a former Marine who has become an outspoken supporter of his son and a critic of bureaucrats. The 23-year-old Marine was hit in the head by two bullets fired from an American tank in 2005.

Last week, five Albany VA officials surprised Angela Ryan, Eddie’s mother, with a phone call.

They told her they wanted to change Eddie’s care by cutting back on the number of therapy visits he gets each week and perhaps sending him someplace besides his home.

“My son was a strapping 200-pound Marine. Now I have to change his diapers. You want me to agree to cutting back his therapies? I don’t think so,” Angie Ryan said she told them.

The conversation left her in tears.

Yesterday, the physical therapist at the Ryans’ home outside Ellenville said she could only come twice a week instead of five times a week, Angela Ryan said. Eddie gets speech and occupational therapy, among other rehabilitation services.

He has made progress. The former sniper pushes his wheelchair around and plays catch. Without the therapies, he could lose those gains, his dad said.

In one context, Eddie’s care is expensive. The bill over the course of Eddie’s life could hit \$17 million, according to Harvard professor Linda Bilmes. She and Joe Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate economist and former Bill Clinton adviser, did a study that pegged the overall cost of the war at \$1 trillion to \$2 trillion.

Eddie Ryan's case figured into two recent broadcasts on PBS, one in May on the cost of the Iraq War and the other in April about how veterans with traumatic brain injuries strain the system.

Rep. Maurice Hinchey, D-Hurley, has been helping the Ryans. His spokesman, Jeff Lieberman, was critical of the VA cutbacks. Officials from the VA could not be reached for comment.

"Hundreds of millions a day is being spent in Iraq and they can't afford three more days a week of therapy for Eddie Ryan?"

That's a slap in face to Eddie and his family. ... Our troops deserve better," Lieberman said.

Chris Ryan said the family will continue to fight back.

"All we want," he said, "is what is the best thing for Eddie."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed In Diyala

June 9, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070609-07

TIKRIT, Iraq – One Task Force Lightning Soldier was killed as a result of injuries sustained from small arms fire while conducting operations in Diyala Province, June 9.

Another New York Soldier Falls In Iraq

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

June 8, 2007 BY DEBORAH S. MORRIS, Newsday

It's the sight that every family with a loved one in the military fears.

For the family of Kimel Watt of East New York, that dreaded visit came at 9 a.m. Sunday when two somber soldiers knocked on their front door.

"I knew Kimel had died," said a weeping Clifton Watt, Kimel's father, recalling the moment he saw the officers.

The Department of Defense announced Friday that Watt, 21, had died June 3 in Baghdad, Iraq, of wounds suffered when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. His family said he was patrolling on a mountain side at the time.

Watt was assigned to the First Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, First Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, Germany, according to the defense department.

Watt emigrated from Manchester, Jamaica to the United States with his family when he was 6. His family said he was driven and family oriented, and that he was well-respected and popular around the neighborhood.

“He likes being around family,” said his sister, Selesha Gowins, 28, one of his 13 siblings. “We’d have family outings at Red Lobster.”

He graduated from Automotive High School in Brooklyn and passed up a scholarship to Johnson and Wales University in Rhode Island to join the military.

Soon after graduation, he enlisted in the Army and after completing boot camp, he served at military bases in Korea, Germany, Kuwait and finally Iraq.

“We didn’t know until January,” that he was being assigned to Iraq, said his mother, Naomi Watt, 52. “I don’t think he wanted us to worry.”

Watt last came home for 15 days in March to visit his father, who was hospitalized, the family said. His sister said, “He didn’t want to talk about things over there.”

The family said they communicated with Watt regularly through the Myspace.com Web site and phone calls, many that lasted 20 and 30 minutes. They said Watt was in good spirits the last time they spoke with him.

“He said ‘Don’t worry I’ll be back in June,’” Gowins said. “The only thing he said was he wasn’t on the front lines, that he was helping the Iraqi people with food, water and medical supplies.”

His mother said Watt was meticulous about staying in touch.

“He always called me,” his mother said. “He called me for Mother’s Day and then two weeks after.” She said the last thing he ever said to her was, “Mommy I believe in God.”

As his mother sobbed and reflected on her son’s life, she said. “He makes me proud to know that he went to do something good for himself. He didn’t stay back and hang around the corner, which is what his friends did.”

A wake will be held June 19 at New Jerusalem Church on Springfield Blvd. in Springfield Gardens, from 3 to 7 p.m. A funeral will follow immediately. Burial will be June 20 at Calverton.

Family Mourns Fallen Texas City Soldier



Spc. Michael James Jaurigue

May 29, 2007 By TJ Aulds, KHOU

TEXAS CITY – The true meaning of Memorial Day was never so evident for retired Marine Jose Jaurigue until now. On the weekend the nation pauses to honor those who gave their lives in military service for the country, Jaurigue's son joined the ranks of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Spc. Michael James Jaurigue, 20, was killed last week when an improvised explosive device detonated near his patrol in Iraq.

He was one of three Fort Bragg, N.C., soldiers who died last week in an explosion in Salahuddin province. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg.

The family of the Dickinson High School graduate was notified of his death Saturday just as they were set to celebrate the Memorial Day weekend.

"He was our everything," Jose Jaurigue said while showing The Daily News his son's bedroom at the family's north Texas City home Sunday. On the wall were photos of Michael's days as a soccer player for the Texas City Terminators as well as a pencil drawing of a polar bear he drew as a youngster.

"He was really, really dedicated and focused," Mr. Jaurigue said while choking back tears.

Jose Jaurigue said the events of 9-11 convinced his son he wanted to join the military. He joined the Army so he could eventually become a Green Beret.

"He told us he wanted to go to Ranger school and then eventually become a Green Beret," said Jose. "You knew he would do it too, because he was so focused."

An example of that focus was shown in Michael's senior year at Dickinson High School. After transferring from Texas City High School, the young man found that he would be two credits shy of being eligible to graduate with his senior class.

“So he took night courses to get those credits so he could graduate with that class,” said Jose. “Whenever he said he was going to do something, he did it.”

The same dedication was given to the Army and its mission in Iraq. While the war is controversial, Jose Jaurigue said his son saw his mission as part of something bigger. “He told is aunt that, ‘If I die at least I will know there’s a good reason,’” Jose recalled. “He was really, really hurt by 9-11. He was too young then to do something about it, but said someday he would (join the Army) to make sure (terrorists) don’t do something like that again.”

Jose last saw his son two weeks ago when the 20-year-old returned home for a 15-day leave from his first tour in Iraq. Michael returned to Iraq on May 14.

Jose Jaurigue was to meet with an Army liaison today to make funeral arrangements.

Jaurigue is the seventh Galveston County military service member to be killed in Iraq since the war began more than three years ago.

THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH; COME HOME, NOW



Thanks to Kevin Ramirez, CCCO. He writes: Pics showing what happens when US bases get mortared/rocketed. Obviously taken by a GI. I found them online, and don't know who took them.

TROOP NEWS

Iraq Veterans Against The War Occupy Manhattan: “The Intention Is To Raise Awareness And Organize Active-Duty Soldiers, To Reduce Their Support Of The War”



Members of Iraq Veterans Against the War staged a Memorial Day “operation” in Manhattan this year to bring home the reality of the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Chelsea Now photo by Lovella Calica

On the national level, all talk was of the group’s planned bus tour of military bases in the South, where at each stop’s small towns, “we will have mini-OFCs,” said board chair Reppenhagen. “The intention is to raise awareness and organize active-duty soldiers, to reduce their support of the war.”

June 1 - 7, 2007 By Chris Lombardi, Chelsea Now [Excerpts]

As the doors of the packed N train slid shut on Sunday morning, and the car began to leave the Times Square station, a group of young men in one of the cars started to hoot, startling some of the tourists headed downtown. Then a young man with oversized glasses called out, “Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen! Sorry to disturb you!”

But before New Yorkers in the crowd could give the usual snort, he got laughs instead, by adding: "We are not here collecting money for our basketball team!"

The speaker wore an Army basic desert uniform (BDU), with sergeant's bars and the name "Braga."

The car was also half-filled with other young men with BDU jackets, boots and desert hats. "We are not putting any money in our pockets!" continued Braga, a Bronx native. "We are Iraq veterans against the war, and we are conducting Operation First Casualty! Because what is the first casualty of war?"

"Truth!" the other veterans shouted back.

"And we are here," Braga shouted to the end of the car, "to bring the truth about the war to New York!"

As the train approached the Union Square station, Garret Reppenhagen, a six-foot-five former Army sniper in a webbed helmet, stood and shouted, "Move out!" The dozen soldiers began to pound up the stairs and headed to their destination.

At the station, the informal platoon checked in with former Navy Lieutenant Fabian Bouthillette, who asked them soberly, "Are you guys all set up for the riot?"

Thus began the military occupation of Manhattan.

The day before Memorial Day, New Yorkers sharing the picture-perfect summer day with tourists found themselves besieged by Operation First Casualty (OFC), a series of demonstrations of tactics used by occupying U.S. troops in Iraq.

At five locations in Manhattan and two in Brooklyn, soldiers "walked point," scoped in all four directions, and detained suspicious persons with hoods and handcuffs.

Of course, the "suspects" were civilian volunteers, the "actions" went on for less than 10 minutes each, and passers-by were given not citations but simple postcards, saying, "Scenes like this occur every day in Iraqi cities and towns, conducted by American soldiers and funded by your taxes."

Sunday's "operation," the second-ever conducted by members of the three-year-old organization Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), was intended to shake up what IVAW leaders see as American unwillingness to think about the war and occupation. IVAW members told Chelsea Now that choosing to make their dissent public, in uniform, had come at some personal cost:

At least two of the group's ex-Marines now face unprecedented charges from their former commands for participating in a previous OFC exercise. Sunday's operation shocked some locals and tourists, and confused others, though many Downtowners treated the events as just another memorable New York moment.

Close to 2,000 servicemembers in Iraq have signed an online withdrawal plea to Congress called the Appeal for Redress; anti-war opinion pieces signed by soldiers dot

newspapers; and individual soldiers, talking to reporters, are more willing than earlier to have their names used.

“Why are we here?” asked Staff Sgt. David Safstrom about Iraq, in a Monday New York Times article.

IVAW, by far the most upfront in its demand for withdrawal, was founded in 2004 by five recent returnees from Iraq, and now has thousands of members in 43 states as well as overseas, who speak to schools, churches and Congress of their experiences and their opposition the war.

Mentored by older veterans from Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), who assert that that earlier war ended only because soldiers and veterans spoke up against it, IVAW’s leaders modeled OFC on VVAW’s 1971 Operation Dewey Canyon, a three-day campaign in Washington most famous now for the moment when Lieutenant John Kerry asked the U.S. Senate, “How can you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?”

The War’s Impact, Once Removed

Even among the fit, young ex-soldiers gathered downtown Sunday morning, Garret Reppenhagen, chair of IVAW’s board of directors, stood out, and not just for his height, loud voice and desert boots. Older than most of the others at 33, Reppenhagen has also been at this the longest; he was one of the first to speak out from inside Iraq, co-authoring one of the first antiwar military blogs, Fight to Survive (<http://ftssoldier.blogspot.com>).

In an interview earlier this year, Reppenhagen told Chelsea Now that he arrived in Iraq in late 2003 fresh from service in Kosovo, where “we saved a church where Mother Teresa had lived,” only to be ordered to shoot “anyone in sight” including farmers who went out at night to water their fields, and witness the effects of cluster bombs on civilians. In April 2004, he started Fight to Survive along with two other buddies from his Army base in Baquba, Iraq; by the time Reppenhagen’s command found out about the blog, the trio was also quietly pasting the base with stickers that said, “Bush lies—who dies?”

“I meet vets and they tell me, ‘I remember that sticker!’” said Reppenhagen, who since his 2005 honorable discharge has worked as a liaison for the Washington group Veterans for America. But now, with IVAW growing so fast, he told Chelsea Now on Sunday, “This (IVAW) is all I do.”

Reppenhagen and the rest of IVAW’s board conceived of OFC while deciding what to do during March’s big antiwar protests in Washington.

So, the combat veterans among them, including Reppenhagen and former Marine Corps Civil Affairs Officer Adam Kokesh, devised “scenarios” to illustrate the damage that troops, often exhausted and enraged, inflict on civilians they don’t know or trust. And rather than wear just their Army jackets and “covers” (hats) over civilian clothes, they decided participants would have to be in full uniform—for many, the first time since being discharged from the military. That very act, which flirts with violating the military’s arcane and complex regulations, was in itself an act of protest.

“The first time we did OFC and I put the uniform on, it really freaked me out,” Kokesh told Chelsea Now in Union Square Park. “Because it means something, you know? It was the proudest day of my life, when I became a full Marine. I had to have moral conviction, protesting in an active-duty uniform.”

The uniforms drew stares from Union Square passers-by and tourists, about 50 of whom gathered to watch the veterans as they spoke from a podium. After each speaker, the crowd began to applaud, but were stopped by organizers pleading, “This is a press conference, not a rally. We’re trying to get information out.”

After veterans spoke, a mob of white-clad demonstrators began to approach, shouting: “Go home! Go home!” And the cheerful, sunsplashed veterans morphed into angry, paranoid soldiers, overwhelming the “rioters” and shouting obscenities in a fast-moving mass, forcing some to the ground and placing hoods over their faces—all part of the “operation.”

Earlier, at Rockefeller Center, the platoon treated the famed skating rink as a detention center, according to volunteer Elaine Brower of Military Families Speak Out. “They lined us up against the wall ... I started screaming out to the crowd below,” said Brower. “Those people... did not know what the hell was going on. There were hundreds of them looking up with their mouths agape, frozen in their tracks.”

As stylized in form as OFC is, the operation has already had concrete consequences for some participants. A few weeks ago, Kokesh received a memo from the Marine Corps that claimed he had violated military laws by “wearing all or part of your Marine Corps uniform while engaged in political demonstrations or activities.” Another former Marine in the first OFC, Liam Madden, got a similar memo, with the added charge of “making disloyal statements.” Despite both men being civilians now, the memo seemed to allege that military free-speech limits still applied.

Both Kokesh, who became famous this spring for heckling Attorney General Alberto Gonzales during his May testimony to the Senate, and Madden, one of the founders of the Appeal for Redress soldiers’ petition, were already on the military’s radar before OFC. But these charges, coming just as the U.S. Defense Department issued strict limitations on soldiers’ blogs and sharply limited their permission to testify before Congress, have implications for all soldiers and new vets.

“I’m mostly worried about the guys who are just beginning to speak out,” said Kokesh.

Kokesh told Chelsea Now that he would not wear his uniform—but instead “a suit, and all my combat medals”—at the hearing. IVAW is raising money to bring a bus of supporters to Kansas City next month, while others still in uniform are watching.

“I’ve gotten some great e-mails of support from guys on active duty, saying ‘We’re counting on you!’” said Kokesh.

As Memorial Day weekend faded into memory this year, both the veterans and civilians involved with OFC were proud of what they had done, and a little winded.

On the national level, all talk was of Kokesh's hearing and of the group's planned bus tour of military bases in the South, where at each stop's small towns, "we will have mini-OFCs," said board chair Reppenhagen.

"The intention is to raise awareness and organize active-duty soldiers, to reduce their support of the war."

As they described their plans, the veterans tended to smile and their body language loosened, like vets of any generation looking forward to a get-together. But their backs stiffened a little when asked if OFC was going to be an annual event.

"Hopefully, there won't be a need," wrote Reppenhagen in a post-event email, "because we will end the occupation in Iraq before a year's time." But if that doesn't happen, he added—if the U.S. military has not shut down the occupation by March 2008—IVAW is determined to conduct another operation in D.C., just in time for election season.

At the New York chapter, the vets were proud of what they'd pulled off, floating the idea of mini-OFCs in the outer boroughs, and trying to recover from an exhausting time, after the adrenalin of the operation had faded.

Fabian Bouthillette, the former Navy lieutenant, told Chelsea Now on Tuesday that it was hard just going back to the private school where he teaches, after two days of simulated war.

"I was fine Sunday and Monday, but I've had to choke back some tears in the classroom," said Bouthillette. "What we did Sunday was amazing, and we need more of it, but it's been way more emotionally taxing than what I was expecting."



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

Pace Fired

[Thanks to a lot of people who sent this in.]

Jun 8 by Jim Mannion (AFP) [Excerpt]

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Friday he was replacing General Peter Pace as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to avoid a divisive showdown in Congress focusing on the Iraq war.

Gates said he had intended to name Pace to a second two-year term as chairman in September, but changed his mind after consulting members of Congress, who also already have an eye on the 2008 presidential polls.

In deciding to replace Pace with Admiral Michael Mullen, who is currently the chief of naval operations, Gates also had to replace Admiral Edmund Giambastiani as vice chairman so that the top two military positions would not both be held by naval officers.

“Bottom line is Pace was vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff when we prepared the worst war plan in the last 35 years in this country, and probably one of the two or three worst in our nation’s history,” said Michael O’Hanlon, a military analyst at the Brookings Institution.

Generals In Revolt Or Revolting Generals?

May 13, 2007 Thinkprogress.org [Excerpt]

Appearing on NBC’s Chris Matthews Show this morning, Atlanta Journal-Constitution columnist Cynthia Tucker revealed that sources within the military are warning of “a revolt from active-duty generals if September rolls around and the president is sticking with the surge into ‘08.”

TUCKER: Look for a revolt from active-duty generals if September rolls around and the president is sticking with the surge into ‘08. We’ve already heard from retired generals. But my Atlanta Journal-Constitution colleague Jay Bookman has lots of sources among currently serving military officers who don’t want to fall by the wayside like the generals in Vietnam did, kept pushing a war that they knew was lost.

“So While His Buddies Are Making Summer Plans, Mr. Sleezer Must

Decide Whether To Return To A War He Doesn't Believe In” “We Were Like, What The Hell Are We Still Doing Here?”

Mr. Sleezer served two back-to-back, six-month tours in Afghanistan. Mr. Sleezer was recently recalled for a third tour of duty, this time in Iraq.

May 25, 2007 By PAULA WASLEY, The Chronicle of Higher Education

Charleston, Ill.

Don't ask Drew Sleezer if he's going to Iraq. He hasn't made up his mind.

On a Tuesday afternoon, he's trying to decide whether to attend his fraternity's big end-of-semester bash this evening. He has a test tomorrow in a business class, and he just realized that he must write a paper in two days, on a book he has not read.

Like many students, Mr. Sleezer, a sophomore at Eastern Illinois University, must often weigh fun against responsibility. As he sits eating potato chips in his off-campus apartment, where a Chicago White Sox banner and a beer bong grace the walls, Mr. Sleezer looks the part of an ordinary undergraduate.

On the coffee table, however, among magazines and food wrappers, lie photographs of Mr. Sleezer in Afghanistan, where he served in the infantry.

In one, he is wearing fatigues, holding a sniper rifle in one hand and balancing an AT4 antitank weapon on his shoulder.

Among his CD's, he keeps a homemade video that shows enemy rockets slamming into his Army base.

Those are mementos of a life that Mr. Sleezer, 23, had hoped to leave behind.

These days he is a business major and a fraternity brother. He has already served two tours of combat and completed the active-duty portion of the eight-year army contract he signed in 2001. "I've served my three years, and I did my job honorably," he says. "It's time to move on with my life."

But Mr. Sleezer is also a member of the Individual Ready Reserve, a division of the armed forces that was more commonly known as the "inactive reserves" until the military started calling up its members to fill personnel shortages in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Sleezer himself was recently recalled for a third tour of duty, this time in Iraq.

He has spent the last semester appealing his deployment so that he can stay in college, to no avail. He has considered going AWOL.

His combat boots sit in a closet at his parents' house. He has only a few weeks to decide whether he will put them on again or walk away from the military.

The promise of travel and adventure attracted Mr. Sleezer to the Army when he was a high-school student in Darien, Ill., a Chicago suburb. Recruiters offered him more money for college than his parents could afford to pay. And the surge of patriotism he felt after the September 11th terrorist attacks led him to enlist.

He was 17 at the time and needed his parents to sign a waiver. They opposed the idea. Drew's mother, Sharon Sleezer, had watched her own father, who also served in the Army Infantry, suffer emotional scars from World War II. She tried to talk Drew out of the idea for months.

Finally, Mr. Sleezer's parents relented. Two days after Christmas in 2001, he went with a recruiter to take blood tests and the Army oath. Because he signed on before his 18th birthday, he received a \$5,000 early-enlistment bonus.

Mr. Sleezer trained as a sniper for the Army's 25th Infantry Division. When his unit was deployed to Afghanistan to patrol the country's border with Pakistan for insurgents, in March 2004, he was excited.

But war was not what he had expected. For one, he says, it was often boring. Ninety percent of it was downtime in desolate terrain.

The other 10 percent was getting shot at. Mortar attacks on his camp, in the Paktika province, began the first week his unit arrived. During his year in Afghanistan, three soldiers from his battalion died. One was killed by a roadside bomb. Another was shot in the throat while on patrol. The third was crushed under a Humvee.

Amid the dust storms that blew several times a day, Mr. Sleezer patrolled border towns "looking for bad guys."

His battalion took over a small Afghan village and turned it into an army base.

Mr. Sleezer served two back-to-back, six-month tours in Afghanistan.

By the time winter arrived in the Afghan mountains, halfway through his second tour, he and some of his fellow troops were tiring.

"We were like, what the hell are we still doing here?"

He had always planned to go to college. So after receiving his honorable discharge, in September 2005, he enrolled as a freshman at Eastern Illinois. At first he struggled to pay attention in class, where memories of combat would intrude. He had nightmares. Loud noises made him jump. He was always on guard.

Gradually, those problems subsided. On the campus, Mr. Sleezer made friends quickly, despite being older than most of his classmates. He started working at a local bar, joined a fraternity, met his girlfriend, and maintained a B average.

He says he never mentions his time in combat unless someone asks about it. "I don't like to reflect on the longest year of my life," he says.

And there are some things he won't discuss. "If they're going to ask stupid questions like how many people did you kill, then I don't want to talk to them."

When the Pentagon announced in 2004 that it would begin recalling members of the semi-retired IRR to Iraq and Afghanistan, Mr. Sleezer's mother asked him whether there was a possibility he could be called up again.

"I never thought there was a chance," he says, "not in a million years."

Then, the week after Thanksgiving last year, Mr. Sleezer was in the middle of pledge initiations at his fraternity when his younger sister, Kelly, called to say that an official-looking package from the U.S. Army had arrived at his parents' house.

"You've got to read it and tell me what it says," he told her.

The letter inside ordered him to report for active duty on January 28. He was to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom for a period of no greater than 545 days.

"I was furious," he says. "I didn't want to talk to anybody. It brought back old issues. I was sitting there thinking about war again."

Within 20 minutes, Mr. Sleezer was on the phone to the Army requesting an exemption from service so that he could finish his degree. He received forms to fill out and was told to put his request in writing. A few days later, Mr. Sleezer sent the Army a letter: "I am begging the military to reconsider my reactivation and offer me an educational deferment. I am a 22-year-old man now, who has moved on in his personal life toward a higher education so that my future in this country is one of purpose and meaning. Please don't take this away from me."

He sent the application, along with his transcript and class schedule, to the Army. Then he waited.

Of the 10,128 members of the Individual Ready Reserve who have been called up for duty in Iraq and Afghanistan between September 11, 2001, and January of this year, 5,513 have filed for exemptions, according to Lt. Col. Kevin V. Arata, a spokesman for the U.S. Army.

About half of those requests were granted, he said, mostly because of physical or mental impairment, or hardship, such as being a single parent or having sick or disabled dependents.

The Army grants very few exemptions for students attending college, however. Of the 2,916 IRR members who have received exemptions in the past five years, only 118 cited higher education among their reasons for appealing their deployment.

After five weeks, Mr. Sleezer learned that his request had been denied, though the military did move his deployment date to June 3 so that he could complete the spring semester.

So while his buddies are making summer plans, Mr. Sleezer must decide whether to return to a war he doesn't believe in.

"When I was in Afghanistan, I believed in what I was doing," he says. "We knew Osama bin Laden had been training people there; there were terrorist camps and funding there. We knew we had to go over there and eliminate those people before they try to pull another 9/11."

But he doubts the legitimacy of military action in Iraq.

"With Saddam Hussein, he's dead now, and there were no weapons of mass destruction. What are we doing over there? Is there really a reason to be calling me out of college to do another tour? Is this going to help our country? I don't think so."

Nonetheless, he fears the possible consequences of not reporting for duty in June. According to Army regulations, after 30 days of being absent without leave, Mr. Sleezer would be considered a deserter in a time of war, and the military would issue a warrant for his arrest.

That means Mr. Sleezer could face a court martial, jail time, fines, and a dishonorable discharge - a felony that would remain on his record.

"What kind of employer is going to want to employ somebody like that?" says Mr. Sleezer, a business major, who hopes to become an investment banker or work at the Chicago Board of Trade.

The military deals with deserters on a case-by-case basis.

Although some experts predict that the pressures of a five-year war will prompt the military to crack down harder on soldiers who go AWOL, lawyers and military advocates agree that the Army for the most part treads lightly when it comes to the IRR.

Over 22,000 soldiers have deserted the Army since the 2000 fiscal year, The New York Times reported in March. "The vast majority of people who go AWOL are not prosecuted," says Bill Galvin, a counseling coordinator at the Center on Conscience & War, a nonprofit organization that helps conscientious objectors.

If Mr. Sleezer decides not to go to Iraq, however, he will probably lose his Army health and education-loan benefits. "Is losing my health insurance or my benefits for school worth my life?" he says. "I don't know."

With only a few weeks left till his ship-out date, Mr. Sleezer is weighing his options. People ask him all the time whether he will stay or go, but he says he will make his decision at the 11th hour.

He distracts himself by hanging out with buddies, sitting on the couch watching movies. He golfs whenever he can. One recent night he and a friend, Nick Nowak, played nine holes, downing a shot of Crown Royal whiskey for each.

"He's a great kid. I'd hate to see him go," says Mr. Nowak, who pledged Lambda Chi Alpha with Mr. Sleezer last fall.

When Mr. Sleezer's fraternity brothers first heard about his orders, they planned to create a petition protesting his deployment, but the idea fizzled. Now, Mr. Nowak says, they just try to listen to Mr. Sleezer. "No one wants to tell him what to do one way or another," says Mr. Nowak. "We're all hoping for the best."

Sometimes Mr. Sleezer catches himself making plans. He would like to try out for the golf team next fall or train for the university's annual Greek Week tug of war. And he might try to get a summer job. But what if he's not here?

His Army buddies sometimes give him a hard time about trying to avoid another combat tour, but they are sympathetic. "They're worried they're going to get a letter in the mail for this, too," he says.

Mr. Sleezer has received some criticism from strangers who question his sense of duty.

After a Chicago-area newspaper published an article about him, for instance, one reader wrote, in a letter to the editor of Hinsdale Suburban Life, "Sleezer seems to have forgotten that he made a commitment to his country, and he is now trying to duck it. He is turning his back on his fellow soldiers and dodging his responsibilities."

"Put yourself in my shoes," Mr. Sleezer says. "I understand I signed a contract. But there's guys in the active military who haven't seen war yet." **[And there's cowardly assholes writing letters to the newspaper condemning Sleezer who sit safely at home without going near a recruiting station.]**

Mr. Sleezer says he plans to sit down with his family to discuss the pros and cons of honoring his commitment. His mother has been helping him research all his options by speaking with lawyers, veterans, and psychiatrists. "She doesn't want me to go, of course," he says. "But ultimately it comes down to me."

His mother recalls how combat changed Drew. During his two-week home leave between his tours in Afghanistan, her easygoing son came back anxious and aggressive. "He looked like a caged animal," she says. She worries about what a year in Iraq would do to him.

Mr. Sleezer says the soldier the Army wants back no longer exists.

"I'm not the 18-year-old kid who was so gung ho about going to war anymore."

This afternoon he's just a sophomore in a red fraternity T-shirt. The only visible clue that he has been a soldier is on his left bicep - a tattoo that says "SNIPER" in large, bold letters.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Interview With Al Sadr: **“I Am An Iraqi, I Am A Muslim, I Am Free And I Reject All Forms Of Occupation”** **“Iraq Is A Matter For The Iraqis”**

03 June 2007 By Nizar Latif, Independent News and Media Limited

Moqtada al-Sadr, the man Washington blames for its failure to gain control in Iraq, has rejected a call to open direct talks with the US military and has accused the Americans of plotting to assassinate him.

The Shia cleric told The Independent on Sunday in an exclusive interview: “The Americans have tried to kill me in the past, but have failed... It is certain that the Americans still want me dead and are still trying to assassinate me.

“I am an Iraqi, I am a Muslim, I am free and I reject all forms of occupation. I want to help the Iraqi people. This is everything the Americans hate.”

Last week the US military said it wanted to open direct, peaceful talks with him, but the cleric told the IoS he rejected the idea.

“There is nothing to talk about,” he said angrily. “The Americans are occupiers and thieves, and they must set a timetable to leave this country. We must know that they are leaving, and we must know when.”

“We are fighting the enemy that is greater in strength, but we are in the right,” he said. “Even if that means our deaths, we will not stand idly by and suffer from this occupation. Islam exhorts us to die with dignity rather than live in shame.”

With US, British and Iraqi government forces still conducting operations against the Sadr movement and its army, the cleric warned he was prepared to launch another armed uprising. “The occupiers have tried to provoke us, but I ordered unarmed resistance for the sake of the people,” he said. “We have been patient, exercising statesmanship, but if the occupation and oppression continues, we will fight.”

Mr Sadr, whose rise to become one of the most influential figures in Iraq coincided with the US overthrow of Saddam, said his movement sought to follow the example of

Hizbollah, the Shia armed resistance movement in Lebanon. "Hizbollah and the Mahdi Army are two sides of the same coin," he said. "We are together in the same trench against the forces of evil."

Mr Sadr also insisted he opposed Iranian influence in Iraqi affairs, referring to tentative talks between the US and Iran. "We reject such interference," he said. "Iraq is a matter for the Iraqis."

Assorted Resistance Action

June 9, 2007 By SINAN SALAHEDDIN, AP & Reuters

BAGHDAD:- A truck bomber killed 12 Iraqi soldiers and wounded 30 others in an attack on an army checkpoint south of Baghdad on Saturday, police said.

There was some confusion over whether the huge explosion happened in Jurf al-Sakhar near the predominantly Shi'ite city of Hilla, 100 km (60 miles) south of the capital, or in nearby al-Iskandiriya.

Soldiers were digging through the rubble and the death toll was expected to rise, police said.

A police source said the truck bomber had already passed through one checkpoint before blowing himself up at a second barrier.

A rocket or mortar attack Saturday at a U.S.-run detention facility in southern Iraq killed at least six detainees and wounded 50, the military said. No American casualties were reported.

The attack was launched against the internment facility at Camp Bucca, the military said in a brief statement. It provided no other details.

Eight Interior ministry's commandos were wounded when a parked car bomb struck their patrol Saturday in Shaab district. One commando was killed in the blast.

The attack came about 90 minutes after guerrillas in a speeding car opened fire on police on a foot patrol, killing one officer and wounding another, a police officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he could also become a target.

A car bomb exploded near a police patrol in Adhamiya in northern Baghdad, killing two policemen, the U.S. military said in a statement. A third was shot dead immediately after the explosion.

A roadside bomb wounded three policemen in the Zaafaraniya district of southern Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb killed one policeman and wounded two others in Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. One policeman was killed and another wounded when gunmen attacked their patrol in central Mosul on Friday, police said.

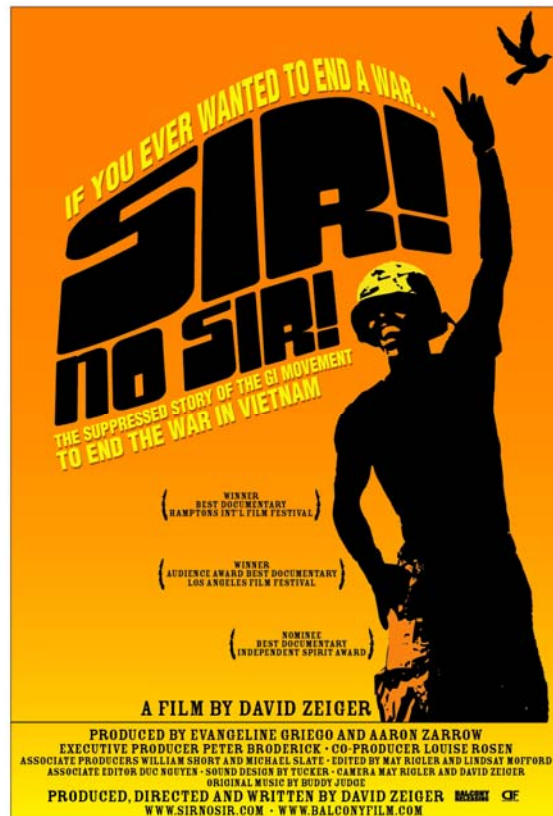
Police said they found the bodies of three Iraqi soldiers in southeastern Kirkuk.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

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

**“I Think This Probably Is One Of The
Most Important Documentaries Made
About War Resistance”**



To Whom it May Concern:

I just wanted to say thank you for this film, for raising my awareness, I never even knew some of these things happened.

I think this probably is one of the most important documentaries made about war resistance.

The movie was such an important driving force for me I had my own screening here in Ramadi Iraq and got at least 10 service members to sign the Appeal for Redress (a petition to congress, signed by over 1,200 soldiers, demanding an end to war-DZ) with me...

My whole work this deployment (my second) has been awareness and I thank you for giving me yet another tool to spread that awareness.

Thank you again,
SGT Spencer Batchelder

Sir! No Sir!:
At A Theatre Near You!
To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>

The Sir! No Sir! DVD is on sale now, exclusively at
www.sirnosir.com.

Also available is a Soundtrack CD (which includes the entire song from the FTA Show, "Soldier We Love You"), theatrical posters, tee shirts, and the DVD of "A Night of Ferocious Joy," a film about the first hip-hop antiwar concert against the "War on Terror."

**BUY SIR! NO SIR! FOR ACTIVE DUTY
SOLDIERS NOW**

**HELP GET SIR! NO SIR!
INTO THE HANDS THAT NEED IT MOST**

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

Insurgents Against Slavery Aided Deserters, Escaped Prisoners & Spies

[Thanks to Chris Lombardi, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

[Quote from the book by A. Sellow Roberts, "The Peace Movement in North Carolina, The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 11, No. 2. (Sep., 1924)]

But there was a movement on foot.... Its aim was to bring about peace through the defeat of the Confederacy. .

While they were mainly drawn from the poorer classes, their ranks included many men of influence and standing.

The movement took shape in the two secret societies that operated in North Carolina during the war.

These were the Peace Society, or the Constitutional Union Peace Society, which flourished in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina, and the Heroes of America, whose stronghold was in southwestern Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

Whether these two societies were not really one and the same under different names is an interesting question.

Both had the same general aims, to encourage desertion, to aid deserters, escaped prisoners, or spies, to give information to the enemy, and do all in their power to aid in the overthrow of the Confederacy.

Both had a very loose form of organization; there were no meetings, no formal lodges, and no roll call of members.

In each society new members were initiated by single individuals who were versed in its ritual and aims.

Owing to this looseness of organization, the orders were very difficult to break up.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

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



Foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. 1st Battalion 28th Infantry Regiment, Delta Company kick open a door to invade a home in the southwestern Bayaa neighbourhood of Baghdad. Iraqi citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed. (Photo: AFP/Roslan Rahman)

[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?]

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

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

"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."



An Iraqi woman weeps as she and her baby sit amid the mess left behind at her house following a raid by US forces in Baghdad's al-Orfali Shiite district. (AFP/Wissam al-Okaili)

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

Troops Invited:

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to 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.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

“Self Defence”



Gaza: Palestinians walk on top of the ruins of a Hamas base following an Israeli missile strike near Rafah. Photograph: Hatem Omar/MaanImages/AP

[Thanks to J, who sent this in. She writes: A small missile hitting anything at all in Israel is an act of terrorism provoking outrage and lots of media cover. The Israeli missiles are seen as self defence not terrorism.]

[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

UN Agency Still Looking For Those Weapons Of Mass Destruction: “I Think They Understand The Distance Their Work Is From Reality”

June 2, 2007 By Colum Lynch, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

UNITED NATIONS -- More than four years after the fall of Baghdad, the United Nations is spending millions of dollars in Iraqi oil money to continue the hunt for Saddam Hussein's alleged weapons of mass destruction.

Every weekday, at a secure commercial office building on Manhattan's East Side, a team of 20 U.N. experts on chemical and biological weapons pores over satellite images of former Iraqi weapons sites.

They scour the international news media for stories on Hussein's deadly arsenal. They consult foreign intelligence agencies on the status of Iraqi weapons. And they maintain a cadre of about 300 weapons experts from 50 countries and prepare them for inspections in Iraq -- inspections they will almost certainly never conduct, in search of weapons that few believe exist.

“The reality on the ground is there is no WMD there,” said Charles Duelfer, a former U.N. weapons inspector who published the landmark 2004 report of the CIA-led Iraq Survey Group, which concluded that Iraq's weapons had been destroyed.

“I think they understand the distance their work is from reality.”

“This is really absurd. We're approaching five years now of this exercise in futility,” said Feisal Amin al-Istrabadi, Iraq's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations.

The Traitor Bush Gave Mother Of KIA Soldier A Coin And Told Her Not To Sell It On EBay

May 31, 2007 by Mark Silva, The Swamp, The Chicago Tribune's Washington Bureau [Excerpts]

Several mothers who have lost children at war in Iraq took part in a new talk show today on National Public Radio.

One of them, Elaine Johnson, recounted a meeting that she had with President Bush in which he gave her a presidential coin and told her and five other families: "Don't go sell it on eBay."

The president told her that the war goes on because the U.S. has "a mission" to complete. But Johnson says she has discovered her own mission now: Fighting to bring the troops home.

"My son was killed November 2, 2003," Johnson said. "After they had my son's memorial in Colorado Springs -- that's Fort Carson -- I was interviewed by the Gazette Newspaper, and that started it all.

"So a couple of days after that they called me and said that President Bush would like to meet me. And I said well okay, only at his cost because I was not spending my money to meet him."

"And in the room that I was in it was only me and four more other families.

And I asked him questions you know, on um why we were over there? He couldn't answer that. I said, well what are we fighting for? He said to finish a mission.

"I said, why was my son and the rest of the soldiers on the Chinook helicopter, which was supposed to be only to transport cargos not humans?"

He said, well he didn't know. He referred me to General Wilson, which was in the same room. General Wilson's response was that they, you know, they was transporting them on that same helicopter and never was shot down.

"They flew over Fallujah; Fallujah was always the hot spot. Common sense would've tell them, if you fly them over Fallujah, you should have escorts that has the equipment to detect these weapons that would attack the plane.

"But you know, they so brilliant, they up there in D.C., now, that a mother with a high school diploma can sit down and day, okay, now I won't send them over a hot spot without protection.

"President Bush, he just didn't see that, and he told me I was kind of, seemed like I was kind of hostile.

I said, 'yes I am hostile, because you sent my son over there.'

So my thing is -- all the questions that I asked him, he didn't know nothing then, and he definitely don't know nothing now, because the United States is in worsen shape now that it was in 2003 that my son died."

Martin asked: "So when you left that meeting did you leave with determination to do something or did that happen over time?"

Johnson said: "When he told me -- I said what's, what's the mission? He couldn't give me an answer. I says, well I'm going to tell you what: I'm on my mission now. My mission

had just begun. And my mission is to fight to bring these troops home, to take care of these troops when they get home.

“Then he gave us a presidential coin,” she said.

“Now you check this out: He gave six of us a presidential coin, tell us not to tell the rest of the people that was there, and then after that he told us don’t go sell it on eBay.

“Now you tell me how insensitive that can be?

“What kind of caring person is that?”

[Answer:]

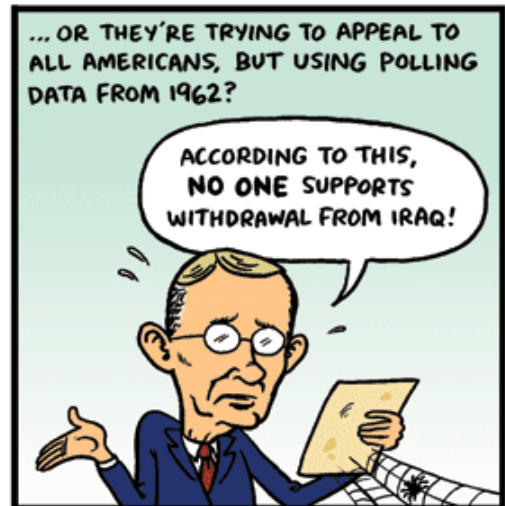
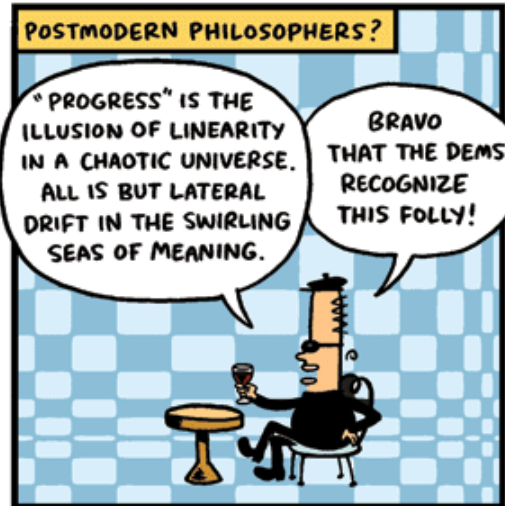
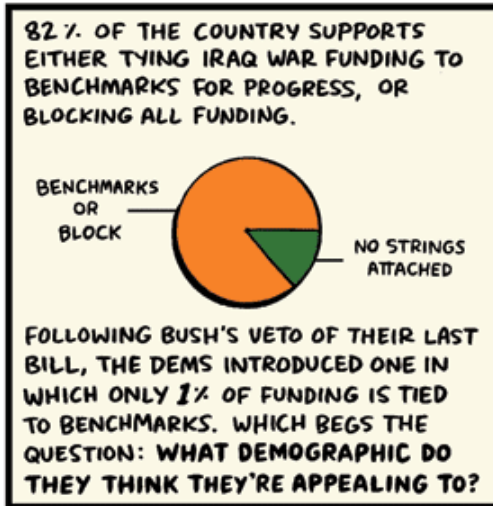
**LIAR
TRAITOR
TROOP-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND
UNWORTHY OF OBEDIENCE**



The traitor Bush, April 16, 2007, in the East Room of the White House in Washington.
(AP Photo/Gerald Herbert)

SLOWPOKE

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[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

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