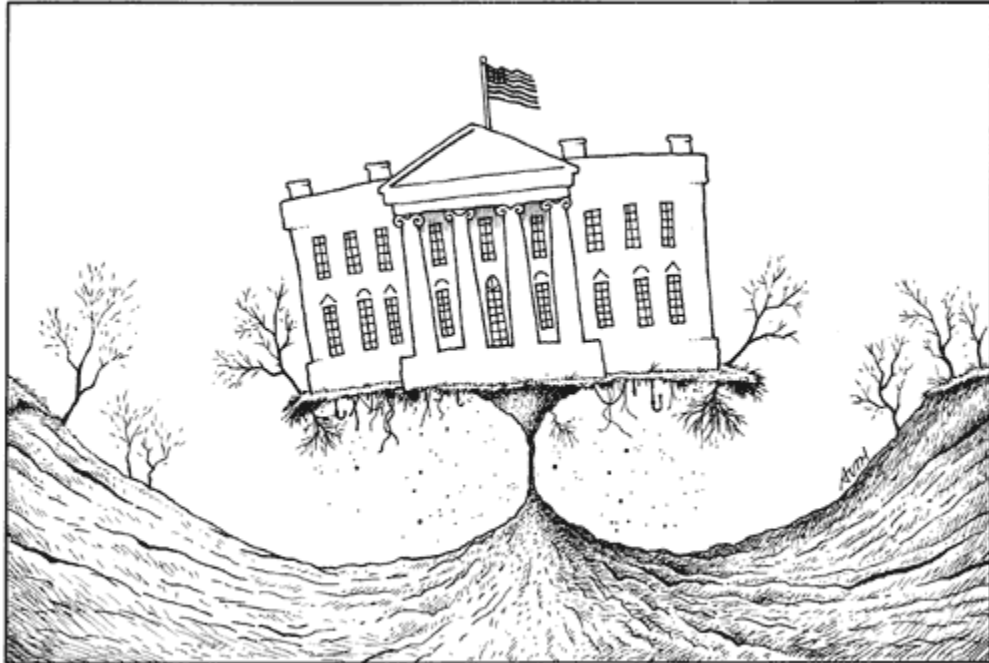


GI SPECIAL 5G12:



The Talk In Tipton, Iowa **Small Town America Doesn't** **Support The War Anymore;** **“It's Time To Get The Hell Out”**

July 14, 2007 By Peter Slevin, Washington Post Staff Writer

TIPTON, Iowa -- This farming town in Cedar County buried Army Spec. Aaron Sissel during the Iraq war's ninth month. It buried Army Spec. David W. Behrle during the 51st.

Along the way, as a peaceable community's heart sank, its attitude toward President Bush and his Iraq strategy turned more personal and more negative.

Sissel and Behrle were popular young sons of Tipton, a community of 3,100 where anonymity is an impossibility. Sissel bagged groceries at the supermarket and often

bowled at Cedar Lanes. Behrle served, just two years ago, as Tipton High's senior class president and commencement speaker.

The town, by all accounts, once gave Bush the benefit of the doubt for a war he said would make America safer and a mission he said was accomplished four years before Behrle died.

But funeral by funeral, faith in the president and his project to remake Iraq is ebbing away.

Deep into a battle with no visible end, many Republican and Democratic voters here say the cause is no longer clear, the war no longer seems winnable and the costs are too high.

After mourning Behrle, 20, and Sissel, 22, Tipton lost its heart for the fight and the president who is vowing to press on.

"It's hitting all around us," said Jim Allen, a salesman and former Bush voter at Fields Mens Wear on the town square.

"Once we got there, I thought, 'Let's get it taken care of.' Now it's dragged on and on. It's just every day, you hear of more casualties."



Family members mourn at services for Spec. David W. Behrle, 20, of Tipton, Iowa, a small town that has lost two of its own to the war. (By Scott Morgan -- Getty Images)

In the first six months of the year, 125 troops from 10 Midwestern states died in Iraq, the bloodiest stretch of the war so far.

Over the past year, 239 from those states have died, compared with 129 from July 2003 to June 2004.

While opposition to the war has been stronger and more visible on the East and West coasts, small towns in the heartland and the South have provided the Bush administration with some of its most steadfast backers.

But that support has cracked amid the echoes of graveside bagpipes and 21-gun salutes, which have been heard with greater frequency in recent months in small Midwestern communities.

Rep. Bruce Braley, a freshman Iowa Democrat who favors a firm timetable for Iraq, heard the pain when he met with the families of two fallen soldiers, Pfc. Katie M. Soenksen and Cpl. Stephen D. Shannon, on Memorial Day.

He said people shouted words of support -- "Good job!" and "Keep the pressure on!" -- as he marched in Fourth of July parades.

It is "the intensity and passion" of the desire for an end to the war that strike Braley as new.

"There's more unity in the opposition now," said Braley, whose district adjoins Tipton. "It was always easier to find optimists about the chances of success in Iraq two years ago. You don't now find people talking that way, even the most ardent supporters of the president's policy."

Retired electrician Bob Peck voted twice for Bush. The first time, in 2000, Democrat Al Gore defeated Bush in Cedar County by two votes, 4,033 to 4,031. Peck would not vote for him again, even if he could.

"The war and the way he's handled it. We've lost too many boys," said Peck, 71, a former Marine, as he sipped a drink at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2537.

"We've been there long enough, and it's not doing anything. It doesn't look like it will."

Woody Marshall, a Vietnam War-era Navy veteran, described his own evolution as he trained his gaze on an elegantly stitched tapestry of a smiling Aaron Sissel in a VFW corridor. At first, he was "thrilled" that U.S.-led troops toppled Saddam Hussein and his tyrannical government.

"I've never heard anybody now say the war is okay. Maybe around two years ago," said Marshall, who said Sissel was very close to a pair of his in-laws, who owned the bowling alley.

"It's time to get the hell out. It's a holy war, and you're not going to win it, no matter what you do."

The in-laws are Ernie and Kay Jennings. Sissel spent a lot of time at Cedar Lanes, becoming a smooth bowler and loyal worker under Ernie Jennings's tutelage. He sometimes stayed past midnight, talking about life as a teenager whose parents had split up. He joined the National Guard while in high school.

Then came Iraq.

"When he left," Jennings said, "we felt that all of them were coming back, and they all did, but one of them was horizontal. That was one of the roughest times in my life. He was like an adopted son."

Jennings is an energetic talker, but there are moments when he is discussing Sissel that his voice breaks and he cannot continue.

"I have mixed feelings about the war," Jennings said. "I'm a Republican. I agree with most things President Bush has done. I just don't know if we know what to do over there. I believe we have to come up with an exit strategy."

When word reached Tipton in May that Behrle was dead, Allen, the salesman, remembers thinking, "Out of the whole state of Iowa, why us?"

He considers the war every time Behrle's father, a good customer, comes into the store. Others mentioned the same thing, in a town where neighbors constantly cross paths.

Regular business at City Hall stopped for a week before Behrle's body came home, as staff members made sure routes were cleared, streets were swept and flags reached the right places.

"In a town of 3,000, you wouldn't expect two of them to be killed," Mayor Don Young said.

The town's weekly newspaper, the Tipton Conservative, devoted its entire front page to the rain-swept, flag-bearing crowds that greeted the return of Behrle's body. Photos of Behrle, from a childhood Halloween to a tour in Iraq, filled an inside page.

Included in the brief text was a comment from his family: "He is 'The Man,' and our hero."

Dixie Pelzer remembers there were three of them, soldiers in uniform who came to the door at about a quarter to 10 one night in late May. She is Behrle's mother, and she knew it was real -- David had been killed by a roadside bomb.

"Then it all just started," said Pelzer, who works with student organizations at the University of Iowa.

The six weeks since have been a fog, she said, an initiation into a parallel world occupied by the families of the 3,611 U.S. troops who have died in Iraq.

The support of friends and strangers has been magnificent, but her son is still gone, buried on an Iowa hilltop where she likes to think he would have been happy.

Behrle, she said, did not join the military in high school to embrace a grand cause. He enlisted at age 18 because he liked the idea.

He told his mother he would spend three years in uniform, then go to college.

“It’s not like he was a patriot, or political. It was just something he wanted to do,” Pelzer said quietly, speaking with a reporter for the first time. “He said, ‘It’s okay. I’ll be fine, Mom.’ “

She wondered if he would be fine. It was 2005. She figured Iraq would be calmer by the time his unit deployed.

Like so many Tipton residents who saw the war delivered like an unwelcome package when the cortege passed, Pelzer realized that it took her son’s death for her to focus on the war.

“I don’t know that you can win,” she said of the chances of victory in Iraq.

“But if you can’t accomplish what you need to accomplish, get them out of there.

“There’s been enough. One is too many.”

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

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

July 14, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070714-09

BAGHDAD — One Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldier was killed and another wounded when an explosively-formed penetrator detonated near their patrol during combat operations in an eastern section of the Iraqi capital July 14.

U.S. Soldier Killed Somewhere Or Other In Iraq

July 14, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070714-08

BAGHDAD — A Task Force Marne Soldier was killed when a landmine detonated during a dismounted patrol today.

Vassar Graduate, 29, Killed In Baghdad Attack



Roling

July 4, 2007 By Christine Pizzuti, Poughkeepsie Journal

A Vassar College graduate known for his skills on the soccer field was killed in Iraq over the weekend.

Staff Sgt. Robb L. Roling, 29, a native of Sioux Falls, S.D., died Saturday in Baghdad after being shot by enemy small-arms fire, reported Alumnae & Alumni of Vassar College.

Roling's father, Rex Roling, told the Sioux Falls Argus Leader newspaper the family's doorbell rang at 8 a.m. Saturday. As he and his wife, Margie, came around the corner to see who it might be, they saw two men standing outside the door.

"It was our worst nightmare," he said. "We knew what it was immediately. We grabbed each other and cried. It was a full minute before we could even let them in."

At Vassar, Roling was a physics and astronomy major and a star soccer player who in 1999 led the Vassar Brewers to their first shot at the NCAA. Roling was number 11.

"I recruited him, and Robb was an extremely intense, self-motivated, focused young man. It's tough for a freshman to be a leader, but certainly, he clearly had all the traits," said Vassar head coach Andy Jennings, who coached Roling his freshman year. He said Roling, who was the school's second all-time goal scorer, was always practicing on his own. "That kind of drive created the platform on which he could be successful," Jennings said.

Rolfing, he said, was always upbeat, outgoing and well-liked by his teammates. "We're hoping to do something in the fall to memorialize Robb and particularly his legacy and the kind of person he was," Jennings said. "Our current team needs to know what that person was like, and what we can learn from him."

Rolfing, who served with the U.S. Army's 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group at Fort Carson, Colo., wanted badly to go into pros.

"He made a decision and right about the middle of his sophomore year, he wanted to be a pro soccer player. That's what he wanted to be, more than anything else," said Chris Parsons, who coached Rolfing for the following three years. "He was great. He had a passion for soccer that was greater than most of the players Vassar has." Parsons, who coaches soccer for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., said Rolfing, who played in the forward position, improved more and more over the three years he coached him.

He said after Rolfing graduated, he tried out for a bunch of United Soccer League teams, and locally around New York state. The coaches, he said, told him to keep at it. Parsons said Rolfing wound up assistant coaching at Curry College in Massachusetts.

Nebraska Soldier Killed In Iraq



June 29, 2007 KETV

OMAHA, Neb. -- The Mayor of Ashland, Nebraska ordered flags to fly at half staff in Ashland on Friday.

It's a tribute to a 19-year-old hometown hero who died in the war in Iraq. Spc. Dustin Workman II's friends said he was killed by a roadside bomb.

"It's something you don't think about. Yeah, he's going over to the war. You don't think about the worst; you think about when you're coming home," said Workman's friend, Nick Stewart

"He just sent me a message on Facebook a couple days ago saying how excited he was to come back," said Workman's friend, Alicia Widger.

Stewart and Widger said they can't believe their friend won't be coming home alive.

"It's someone you're used to seeing all the time, and now you're never going to see him again," said Stewart. "You just don't think it will really happen until it really does. You hear about it all the time, to other families, but it doesn't hit until it's somebody you know," said Widger.

Stewart, Widger and Workman all graduated from Ashland Greenwood High School in 2005. One of Stewart's favorite memories of Workman is from graduation day.

"I had to walk with Dustin during graduation, and while we're leaving he jumps up into my arms, and I had to carry him out. It was so funny; that's probably my favorite moment," said Stewart.

Stewart and Widger said Workman was a great writer, loved to sing and had so many friends. They say he always wanted to be in the military.

"I'm surprised he didn't go in the Air Force; he loved it so much," said Widger.

Widger said Workman was supposed to come home from the war in five months.

**GUESS WHO'S WORRIED
GUESS WHO ISN'T
GUESS WHY
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. soldier guards the street in Baghdad's Yarmuk neighborhood on July 5, 2007.
REUTERS/Nikola Solic

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

***Great Moments In U.S. Military History;* “Mad Bomber” McNeill Sets A Record: U.S. Troops And Their NATO Allies Have Killed More Civilians Than The Insurgents**

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Felicity Arbuthnot, who sent this in.]

July 11, 2007 By RICHARD NEVILLE, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

You be the judge.

Following his appointment as commander of NATO’s forces in Afghanistan earlier this year, U.S. General Dan McNeill devised a daring strategy to defeat the Taliban. He would beat them at their own game.

That’s why this week marks an important milestone for General McNeill--”Bomber” to his troops--because his goal has been achieved.

This weekend it was confirmed that US troops and their NATO allies have out killed more civilians than the insurgents. UN and local rights groups tallied 314 civilians killed by McNeil’s forces and 279 killed by the Taliban and associates. Congratulations, Bomber, enjoy your victory.

It is what the air force does.

That its enemy lacks warplanes only intensifies its savagery. In bloodless bureaucratic prose, the official site of the US air force reports around 40 sorties each day in Afghanistan (90 in Iraq), which involve the extermination of (suspected) insurgents in tree lines and family compounds.

The killings of civilians cannot be excused as regrettable “accidents”. They may not have been intentional, but they arise from a military culture that makes such casualties inevitable.

In their hearts, the officers know this.

It is why they don't do body counts. It is why in the daily reports of hundreds of bombing raids, you'll never see any mention of death.

TROOP NEWS

Iraq Prime Minister Says All U.S. Troops Can Go Home Now

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in. He writes: Well that's embarrassing for Bush.]

7.14.07 By BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD - Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki shrugged off U.S. doubts of his government's military and political progress on Saturday, saying Iraqi forces are capable and American troops can leave "any time they want."

Al-Maliki sought to display confidence at a time when pressure is mounting in Congress for a speedy withdrawal of U.S. forces.

WHEN AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED, FAIL FAIL AGAIN! Bush Wants Troops In Iraq Until At Least Spring 2008

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

Jul 13 By ROBERT BURNS, AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON - While many in Congress are pushing President Bush to alter course in Iraq by September if not sooner, his new status report on the war strongly implies that the administration believes its military strategy will take many more months to meet its goals.

The report cited no specific timeframe, but its language suggests what some U.S. commanders have hinted at recently: The troop reinforcements that Bush ordered in January may need to remain until spring 2008.

He's Wearing An 'Impeach Bush and Cheney' T-Shirt: "Two Men In Military Fatigues Separately Flashed Discreet Thumbs-Up Signs As They Passed Me In The Terminal"

July 11, 2007 By DAVE LINDORFF, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

Austin—I just spent the weekend in this state capital, talking impeachment at a meeting organized by the Texas Green Party, World Can't Wait, Code Pink and Austin Impeach (www.austinimpeach.org), and was flying back home via Atlanta.

As I was boarding my flight, the pilot, an Air Force veteran like many commercial pilots, looked at the bold "Impeach Bush and Cheney" emblazoned across my chest, smiled and said, "I like your shirt." Some 20 minutes later when the flight attendant came through serving drinks and I asked for a bottle of red wine, she handed me a bottle and then waved away my proffered five dollars. "With that shirt, you don't have to pay," she said to me. The Texas and Georgia passengers sitting around me laughed appreciatively.

Instead of holding me up at the security gate in Newark, TSA inspectors there complimented me on my prominent call to oust their boss. I got more favorable comments from people waiting at the gate for the flight to San Antonio, including from several guys whose well-muscled physiques and buzz-cut hair suggested they were military.

Not one person even scowled, much less took issue with the sentiment expressed on the shirt.

It got more amazing when I landed in San Antonio, where two men in military fatigues separately flashed discreet thumbs-up signs as they passed me in the terminal.

Iraq Combat Veteran Arrested After Paying To Be Shot:

“Better Shot In Bronx Than In Baghdad” [And Better Convicted By 12 Than Carried By Six] “Aponte Believes The U.S. Is Losing The War And Urged President Bush To Bring ‘Everyone Back ASAP’”

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

July 14th 2007 BY CHRISENA COLEMAN, New York DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER & Jul 13, 2007 (CBS)

The war in Iraq was such hell for Bronx soldier Jonathan Aponte he decided he'd never go back again - no matter what.

“I have nightmares all the time. I hear people screaming, gunshots, explosions, and I can smell burning flesh in my dreams,” the 20-year-old told the Daily News yesterday as he fought back tears.

Rather than endure another tour of trauma, authorities say, Aponte hired a hit man to shoot him in the leg so he could stay home.

Aponte, his wife, Alexandra Gonzalez, 22, and the alleged shooter, Felix Padilla, were arrested and charged in the conspiracy. All face serious jail time.

The tall and handsome Aponte, who's on leave after 10 months in Iraq, said, “I was not going back one way or another. Some people can handle it mentally, but some can't. You have to know when to say enough is enough.”

Cops say Padilla took \$500 and put a slug in Aponte's leg at the corner of Bronx Blvd. and E. Gun Hill Road on Monday - the day Aponte was due to be redeployed to Iraq.

“I was desperate to stay home and at the end of my rope,” Aponte said. “I couldn't deal with being in Iraq anymore.

Aponte says the pain and potential of prison are a better option than another dose of duty.

“There are risks in prison, but as far as getting shot at everyday, I think it's better,” he said.

Aponte believes the U.S. is losing the war and urged President Bush to bring “everyone back ASAP.”

He said victory was virtually impossible when “we don’t know who the enemy is. In Iraq, the enemy is dressed in street clothes, or they’re pregnant ladies and sometimes even 8-year-olds with machine guns.”

The ever-present death and destruction, he said, takes its toll on all soldiers.

“There are some people mentally that can handle it. There are some people who just can’t. You need to know when to say enough is enough,” Aponte told WCBS exclusively Friday.

For Aponte, that day was Monday, the very day he was supposed to go back for another tour of duty to serve ten months on the front lines. He admits to WCBS, however, that he couldn’t face another tour of drama and devastation.

On his first day of combat Aponte said a female sergeant killed herself in the middle of chow hall, an image he can’t get out of his mind.

“She locked, loaded and shot herself in the head,” he recalled. “I also saw people being shot and being blown up. I was shot at more than once by Iraqi insurgents. Being in Iraq was like something out of a movie. I was horrified to be there.”

“Bullets being shot at me, almost being hit, with car bombs, burning flesh,” Aponte recalls of his first tour.

“I decided I wasn’t going to go back one way or another,” he said.

Aponte’s mother, Gwen, said her son is a “shell of the man” he was before he went to Iraq. “It’s heartbreaking, and I cry for my son all the time,” she said. “The death and destruction he was exposed to in Iraq has changed him.”

Aponte’s lawyer Marty Goldberg said he has spoken to military officials and they have promised to help Aponte when he returns to court in September. “This is an American soldier who fought on the front line for his country,” Goldberg said. “Now he needs compassion and treatment for posttraumatic stress. He’s as much a casualty of war as someone who’s been hit by a bullet.”

Aponte and his wife were charged with conspiracy and falsely reporting an incident.

Gonzalez was hit with additional charges - assault, conspiracy and harassment. She faces a stiffer sentence than her husband, up to 25 years behind bars. Padilla also was charged with assault and possession of a weapon.

Police said Aponte’s alleged plan began to unravel when cops started questioning his wife while he was being treated by doctors Monday.

Cops said Aponte later confessed, telling them, “I smoked a cigarette and kept my eyes closed because I did not want to see it coming. Next thing I know, I was shot in the knee.”

The trouble with the law apparently also has taken its toll on Aponte's 10-day marriage to Gonzalez.

The couple is considering getting an annulment.

White House Says Tillman Killing An Executive Privilege: Hiding Documents

July 13, 2007 Michael Roston, Rawstory.com

Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) revealed on Friday afternoon that the White House and Pentagon were holding up a House Oversight and Government Reform Committee investigation into the friendly fire death of former professional football player and Army Corporal Patrick Tillman.

"[T]he Committee wrote to White House Counsel Fred Fielding seeking 'all documents received or generated by any official in the Executive Office of the President' relating to Corporal Tillman's death," noted a press release from the Committee.

But the White House has apparently again invoked its executive privilege to hold up the documents sought by Waxman and Ranking Minority member Tom Davis (R-VA).

"The White House Counsel's office responded that it would not provide the Committee with documents that 'implicate Executive Branch confidentiality interests' and produced only two communications with the officials in the Defense Department, one of which was a package of news clippings," the Committee noted.

"The response of the Defense Department to the Committee's inquiry was also deficient."

Jury Finds Activists Against The War 'Not Guilty'

**"We Were Acutely Aware That We Might
Not Have Received The Same Verdict
Two Or Three Years Ago"**

July 13, 2007 By Gordon Clark, PORTSIDE [Excerpts]

On Thursday, July 12, I filed into DC Superior Courtroom 221 along with my six co-defendants to hear the verdict. We were apprehensive, given that the jury had deliberated less than one full day, but as the jury foreman spoke his words flowed over us like cool rain on a hot summer day - not guilty.

Not guilty! How often do anti-war protesters hear those words in a U.S. courtroom?

The trial was the result of a nonviolent action taken in the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. on March 29, 2007 - the day the Democratically-controlled Senate voted to continue funding the Iraq war.

As part of the ongoing Occupation Project, the National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance, or NCNR (formerly the Iraq Pledge of Resistance), organized a presence in the Hart building which consisted of more than 100 cardboard tombstones with pictures of American and Iraqi dead, accompanied by a reading of the names of the dead. Approximately 25-30 individuals participated, and seven of us were arrested by Capitol Police.

Our ability to get a jury trial (as opposed to a judge only "bench trial") was almost an accident, a product of the particular charge in the case which, because it carried a possible six month jail sentence, allowed us a jury trial upon request.

And as any activist who has ever gone through the process of a trial can tell you, if you get a chance to appeal to a jury of your peers, you go for it.

Under the expert tutelage of Mark Goldstone - chair of the Demonstration Support Committee of the Washington DC National Lawyer's Guild, and an invaluable resource to those challenging the government in our nation's capitol - we trained extensively to go "pro se," or represent ourselves, during the trial. We expected that the prosecution and court would attempt to shut us down whenever we talked about the war or our first amendment rights (they did), so we trained on how to get those messages into our presentation to the jury, as well as how to present opening and closing arguments, give direct testimony, and cross-examine government witnesses.

We were able to get government witnesses to support part of our case during cross-examination, and since the government decided to play a videotape of our action as part of their prosecution, the jury was able to see our protest over and over again.

A particularly sweet moment came when the prosecutors unfurled our 15 foot banner for the jury to see: "Another Year of War, How Many More Die?" We couldn't have done it better ourselves.

The trial turned, as they often do, on a relative technicality. While "demonstrations" per se are illegal in the Capitol buildings, along with picketing and parading, they are interpreted in case law through what is called "the tourist standard," which states that such activities can only be deemed illegal if they are "more disruptive, in degree or number, than activities engaged in by tourists and others without police intervention." (As you might imagine, there are all sorts of demonstrations, pickets, parades, gatherings, press conferences and equivalent activities going on everyday in capitol buildings, just not usually by those demonstrating against the government.)

Ultimately, the jury found us not guilty because the prosecution, which probably thought it had an open and shut case, was unable to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that we had in fact been “more disruptive” than an equivalent group of seven tourists (or others) “without police intervention.”

The jurors we spoke to after the verdict said that there was actually a majority ready to convict us of demonstrating illegally until they began discussing the tourist standard in earnest, and that their political views never came into play.

Or not, at least, that they were willing to readily admit.

While their judgement was indeed a sound one based on the law, we knew that we had a very sympathetic jury.

During the “voir dire” questioning - those are the questions asked of potential jurors by the judge to make sure they can view the case objectively - a full 16 of the 31 potential jurors interviewed answer “yes” to the following question: “Do you have such strong feelings about the war in Iraq that it would be difficult for you to be fair in judging this case?”

Two of the 16 were dismissed by the judge, and a few others were struck by the prosecution (each side gets three “strikes”), but several still made their way onto the jury. (Including, among others, a reporter for Al Jazeera!)

And still later, after the jurors who stayed around to talk thanked us for our work, one of them confided to us that there was no way he would have allowed us to be convicted - and while it might have been tough to maintain that stance indefinitely, the tourist standard gave him and the others the legal basis they needed to accurately find us all not guilty.

Overall, we were thrilled by the verdict, and pleased that our action, a photo of which also appeared on the cover of the April 16, 2007 Congressional Quarterly Weekly, netted such positive results. We gave thanks to those nonviolent activists that came before us, as well as remembering all those who have lost their lives in the horrible tragedy in Iraq.

We were acutely aware that we might not have received the same verdict two or three years ago, and we pledged to redouble our efforts to end the war once our celebration was done.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Public Meeting with President of the Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions

[Thanks to Ewa J, who sent this in.]

The President of the Iraqi Federation Of Oil Unions (IFOU), Hassan Jum'aa Awad will speak on the Struggle for trade union rights in Iraq and the opposition to the occupation's sponsored Oil Law.

Wednesday 18th July, 7pm
Small Hall
Friends Meeting House
173 Euston Road
London NW1
(Nearest Tube Euston)

Meeting Organized By: Naftana: The UK support committee of the IFOU and supported by: Stop the War Coalition and Hands Off Iraqi Oil Campaign

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



**“Troops Are Bound To Serve
Their Constitution Before Their
Orders”**

**“We, As Members Of The Armed
Forces, Are Sworn To Do More
Than Simply Obey, We Are Sworn**

**To Support And Defend The
Constitution Against All Enemies
Foreign And Domestic”
Policy Makers “Continue To Put Our
Young Service Members In A Position
Where They Must Kill Or Die For A Lie,
Oil, Or To Preserve The Remaining
Shreds Of Presidential Credibility”**



07/10/2007 by Liam Madden, Iraq Veterans Against The War. Served in: Iraq, Kuwait, Okinawa, Japan, Thailand, Korea, Virginia. [ivaw.org/] [Excerpts]

During his last year in the Marines, Sergeant Madden co-founded the Appeal for Redress, a campaign of service members demanding that congress halt the war in Iraq.

Liam Madden is currently the president of the Boston chapter of IVAW. He will be attending Northeastern University in the fall.

It is paramount that Iraq Veterans Against the War, as our generation’s articulate voice of resistance to a government run amok, defend ourselves in every arena of public discourse.

This defense includes what Adam Kokesh has done by skillfully manipulating the media to trap the Marine Corps in a public relations nightmare when they cracked down on his right to protest in uniform, and it includes defending what we do from the intellectual assaults against us by armchair protesters.

When I read a criticism of the Appeal for Redress in the Atlantic Monthly, I knew the time had come to defend our actions and firmly claim our position on the moral high ground.

It is unacceptable to allow academia and the left-wing intelligentsia who subscribe to magazines like the Atlantic Monthly to write us off as a gang of attention-craving, unthinking, unprofessional punk activists.

We are veterans and active military personnel, and they don't get to sit there and do little more than support a front running democrat while they deride us for actually mobilizing our military's conscience.

The article that attacks the Appeal for Redress can be read here.
<http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?t=109065>

I submitted the following article to the Atlantic Monthly in response. A slightly edited version will be available in the September edition. Enjoy.

Silence Is Not An Option

What is more dangerous to humanity, soldiers engaging in political discourse, or a generation that stands by silently as the military is recklessly committed to unwinnable and illegal war?

The Appeal for Redress, a movement of service members who have chosen to voice their opposition to the war in Iraq, is a manifestation of conscience within our ranks, not an unwarranted military influence on government policy. Recently, the Appeal for Redress received a cogent, consistent and thoughtful critique in this publication.

As a co-founder of the GI campaign, I must firmly defend the motives, intentions and actions of service members of conscience who choose to engage in the determination of my generation's most defining issue; the war in Iraq.

Dr. Bacevich makes the point in "Warrior Politics" that it is "short sighted and dangerous" for our society to permit a group of soldiers to join the debate.

It would be absurd to tailor national security policy to the whims of men and women in uniform, whether officer or enlisted. However, the context of campaigns such as The Appeal for Redress must be fully considered before judgment can be cast.

The proponents of this war, and sadly even the alleged "opposition" in the halls of power, are justifying the continued funding of the occupation of Iraq because to do otherwise would be, in their words, "abandoning our troops."

Whether it was House Minority Leader John Boehner's emotionally charged and logically distorted speech on the topic, or Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's concession giving "stand against" the war, we hear the same hollow sentiments.

The war must go on because "we must support our troops."

As long as the men and women of the military are being used as political human shields in the discourse about war funding, then troops are a component of the national dialogue whether they want to be or not.

The Appeal for Redress, which is entirely legal, becomes justified when politicians use the aura of the troops as a means to solidify their agendas.

It is unconscionable that policy makers are using troops as their rhetorical monopoly money, flaunting an imaginary moral authority while they continue to put our young service members in a position where they must kill or die for a lie, oil, or to preserve the remaining shreds of presidential credibility.

Therefore, the Appeal for Redress is not the military seeking a more prominent role in politics; it is in fact troops renouncing the role being projected onto them.

“Warrior Politics” claims that “Although (the soldiers, sailors and Marines driving the Appeal for Redress) are sworn to obey, they have undertaken to obstruct (their Commander in Chief.)”

What the article neglects to clarify is that we, as members of the armed forces, are sworn to do more than simply obey, we are sworn to support and defend the constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic.

All people, especially soldiers, are bound to their consciences before their Commander in Chief.

Accordingly, when I served in Iraq, I was a human being first and an American second.

Further, troops are bound to serve their constitution before their orders.

Accordingly, I was an American first and a Marine second.

This philosophy is what protects humanity from militaries in the wrong hands.

**Semper Fidelis,
Liam Madden
Co Founder Appeal for Redress
President, Boston Iraq Veterans Against the War**

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

“As In Every Country That Has Been Invaded Since The Beginning Of Time, Those Who Work With The Invaders Are Collaborators”

From: Felicity Arbuthnot
To: GI Special
Sent: July 11, 2007
Subject: Muddled thinking!

Re: “We’re all very frustrated. We’re trying to fix this country, but the Iraqis are having trouble recruiting and getting their numbers up,” said Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander of the Army’s 3rd Infantry Division, which is deployed in the area.

What planet is he on?

As in every country that has been invaded since the beginning of time, those who work with the invaders are collaborators. Quislings and pay the price.

Anyway the US and UK army broke it, so it is up to them to fix it - not bomb, wall, slaughter.

By the way, the US also disbanded the Iraqi army (which was entirely nationalistic and non factional) on the basis that they were so dangerously well trained. Now we are told the US and UK must stay until ‘Iraq can defend itself’.

What about handing over to the old army? Or would that mean that the US government wouldn’t have an excuse to stay for the eventual (they hope) oil grab?

The coalition of the less and less willing should not be dying for oil.

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.

“The People Of Iraq Have Already Spoken, And They Have Told Us To Get All Of Our Troops Out In A Very Loud Voice”

“Some Of My Friends Say We Are Never Leaving Iraq. I Say Tell It To The Vietnamese People”

July 13, 2007 by Ward Reilly, Baltimore Chronicle. [Excerpt]

Ward Reilly is active with Vietnam Veterans against the War and Veterans For Peace. He was a volunteer Infantryman in the First Infantry Division from 1971 to 1974. He writes from Louisiana.

With typical U.S. arrogance, our Congress, and the White House, now debate if, how, and when, to leave Iraq, and also about how many troops we should leave for a “training force,” if we are to leave troops there.

What they are blind and deaf to is the cold and bloody fact that the people of Iraq have already spoken, and they have told us to get all of our troops out in a very loud voice.

Nowhere in the discussion is heard a word about how the citizens of Iraq feel about our genocidal presence. You'd think that the USA wasn't guilty of an illegal war.

A small band of egomaniacs plotted to destroy Iraq, and now the choice of whether to stay there or not isn't ours to make.

Any U.S. soldier that is forced to stay in Iraq may well be killed, if left behind, and any Iraq citizen who complies with those troops is also subject to be killed.

There is only one way to leave Iraq, and that is completely. Once our troops are out, we are obliged, on our knees, to assist in rebuilding what the criminals that created this war have destroyed.

Many people say that we should leave troops there, but to do so is to sentence those troops to hatred and the likelihood of a violent death because of what we have done.

We have no right to leave any U.S. presence in Iraq.

It is a well established fact that attacking Iraq was a war crime, and to sit back now and debate how much control we are entitled to is disgusting, and a very sick joke.

We have dishonored ourselves, and our allies, through the actions of Bush and Cheney, and the only true justice will be when Bush and Cheney are forced to become the respective mayors of Fallujah and Baghdad.

Let them enjoy the “freedom and democracy” that they have brought to Iraq, and let them experience what they have forced more than one million U.S. troops to endure.

It is time to leave Iraq, lock, stock, and (gun) barrel.

Their people will never allow any U.S. occupation troops to live side by side with them in a country that will forever reflect the U.S. shame that Bush and Cheney have brought us to.

This war is lost. It was lost the day we invaded an innocent nation.

Some of my friends say we are never leaving Iraq. I say tell it to the Vietnamese people.

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

“The Democrats Consistently Betray The Anti-War Movement, And Liberal Leaders Of The Social Movements Tail The Democrats”

July 14, 2007, By Susan Rosenthal, powerandpowerlessness.typepad.com/ [Excerpt]

Polls consistently show that Americans are very concerned about the war, and most want it to end. Yet, they see no way forward.

The Democrats consistently betray the anti-war movement, and liberal leaders of the social movements tail the Democrats. This week’s vote to withdraw most American combat troops from Iraq next April is just another sham.

All troops must come home now, combat and occupation forces, because Iraq belongs to the Iraqis. Delaying the pullout only compounds the misery and gives politicians time to change their minds. While the powers-that-be promote war as necessary for peace,

prosperity and security, peace never comes, only the wealthy prosper and life becomes increasingly insecure.

The ordinary American, the American soldier and the people they are supposed to hate, all are victimized by the rich and powerful who feed off their suffering.

Americans don't need to care more about the war, they need an uncompromising anti-war movement that can organize them into a force powerful enough to end it.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



A foreign occupation soldier from the U.S.A. holds Iraqi women and children prisoner in a room in their own home while others participating in the home invasion search the other rooms. The town of Mushara is some 37 miles north of Baghdad. June 8, 2007. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

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.

[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?]

The women and children were moved into a room, where they huddled together in silence. The men had been forced down onto their knees wherever they were apprehended, their hands secured behind their backs with plastic handcuffs and their eyes covered by makeshift blindfolds. YOCHI J. DREAZEN, Wall St. Journal, 3.12.07

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

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**The Imperial Democrat Congress
Served Up "Another Bowl Of Political
Slush" This Week, "Operation Iraqi
Deception"**

**"Yes, Both Parties Plan To Stay. Read
That Loud And Clear"**

2007-07-13 Bill Scheurer, Editor; Peace Majority Report [Excerpts]

The Democratic Congress served up another bowl of political slush this week with its latest vote on Iraq, designed to isolate Republicans in November 2008.

Fortunately, no one seems to be paying much attention this time – partly because the Bush press conference on the Iraq interim progress report overshadowed it in the news, but mostly because more people in the peace movement are getting wise to their game.

We cannot endorse a bill that still empowers this President to develop a “comprehensive United States strategy for Iraq” that would assert “United States national security interests in Iraq and the broader Middle East region.” This is what he says he has been doing all along!

The so-called “redeployment” would still allow remaining forces to fully pursue “al-Qaeda and its affiliated organizations in Iraq,” and to train and equip “members of the Iraqi Security Forces.”

Combine these elements with massive air support, and you can see the bipartisan convergence for an indefinite occupation of Iraq, propping up complicit Iraqi governments at will.

While the corporate mainstream media cluelessly parrots the party line -- with headlines like “House Votes to Force Bush to Withdraw US Troops From Iraq” and “US House votes for troop pullout” -- more discriminating news sources are smelling the political stench.

Meanwhile, our sharpest analysts appropriately expose these maneuvers toward a so-called “exit plan” as an emerging political deal “to reduce the number of U.S. troops in Iraq in exchange for bipartisan Congressional support for the long-term (read: more or less permanent) garrisoning of that country.”

Yes, both parties plan to stay.

Read that loud and clear.

Sadly, this is where these votes are really leading, while the Democrats exact their political pound of flesh along the way.

Independence Day 2007: President Psyches Up Iraq-Bound Troops with Pep Talk About Olden Days War We Actually Won

July 4, 2007 WHITEHOUSE.ORG [Excerpts]

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, West Virginy! Happy 4th of July! You know, on this patriotic day of ant-infested picnics and firecracker-mangled fingers, I'm awful thrilled to be back here, in a state so red, it can't even tell it's knee-deep in the blood of all the dead hillbillies I've fed into the Vietraq meat grinder. (Applause.)

No, really, I love coming to your state, on account of no matter how badly I fuck up the world, most of you inbred coal monkeys are too sick with the black lung to even try to complain. (Wheezing Laughter.)

I'm proud to stand with the 167th Airlift Wing.

Hell, I'm proud to stand with any military folks, on account of they're the only Americans left who know if they so much as look at me funny, they will lose their jobs, their health insurance, their single-wives, and be scooping the family's dinner out of rusty old cans of cat food inside of a month.

Many of you have already been deployed to Iraq, or are due to ship out soon, or have loved ones deployed there now – some even on their sixth or seventh tours.

And so I've come here today to do what I do nearly every day: read some speech filled with empty platitudes about FREEDOM®, that employs cheap emotional hooks and appeals to vanity in order to squeeze applause out of whatever audience I'm cynically exploiting. (Applause.)

On Independence Day we remember. We remember a great war.

A war fought by a rag-tag band of scrappy insurgents, fighting against the occupying army of the most powerful Empire in the world. An Empire so arrogant and selfish, it thought it could lay claim to every corner of the earth, and snatch all the world's resources for itself.

An Empire so in love with itself, it thought it was God's favorite, and believed itself duty-bound to jam its style of government and way of life down the throats of anyone who disagreed with it.

Many said that the scrappy insurgents could never win, that the Empire would crush them like puny ants. But the rebels fought on, and their numbers grew, as citizen-soldiers dropped pitchforks and took up crude weapons to fight for their liberty and independence.

These brave and determined fighters dispensed with the rules of warfare. They hid in the shadows, launching devastating attacks on the soft underbelly of their fearsome enemy.

The Empire called them cowards and terrorists.

But in the end, the Empire lost.

Lost because of their undeserved entitlement.

Lost because of their greed and laziness. Lost because their so-called divine leader – a dude named King George – was a stubborn warmonger who couldn't accept that his ass had been whooped. Which wasn't a big surprise really, since dumb old George only got to be in charge on account of he was related to some older, smarter guy with the same name.

And you folks are the successors of those brave men. Like those early patriots, you're fighting a new and unprecedented war. So as you ship off to fight (and likely die) in Iraq, think back to that proud and victorious struggle, and let its lessons inspire you.

One thing though – you'll want to do a quickie reverse on all the details in your mind, so that the Empire (us) is the good guys and the scrappy oppressed terrorists (Iraqis) are the bad guys.

That way, all those grey war clouds will have silver linings – even when they're raining buckets of organs and your own severed arms and legs.

Yes, in my war in Iraq, you're showing the blind obedience which makes for quality cannon fodder.

One member of the 167th Airlift Wing, Master Sergeant JoBob Garvey, has deployed seven times since the 9/11 attacks – and has just volunteered to go to Baghdad for an eighth deployment in September. (Applause.)

Our fellow citizens should listen to what JoeBob said: "This war is something that has to be done – either over there or here. And I think it's best we fight it over there, so we don't have to face them where we live." (Applause.) "I'm proud to serve my country like those before me – for the cause of FREEDOM®."

What a lucky nation we are to have utterly non-vacuous FOX News rhetoric piped directly into the barracks, keeping unquestioning grunts like JoeBob pumped up on a steady mental diet of paranoia and misinformation! (Applause.)

Let us celebrate JoeBob's patriotic ability to mouth those inspiring Sean Hannity sound bytes – which were penned by Karl Rove himself – like a machine gun wielding ventriloquist's dummy! (Applause.) Go, JoeBob, Go!

You know, for the past six and a half years, it's been a real boner-popping rush to be the Commander of such a kickass military killing machine. It's an awesome experience, and a humbling experience to hold a powerful office like President. Well, "humbling" in a "wow, this is mad cool" kind of way – not a "whoa, I'm just some mortal loser" way.

That's because this job brings with it the ability to wage bloody, senseless war against whatever country I decide to call "evil." And until I draw my last breath, that will include Iraq. (Applause.)

I know this war has been a long, tough slog – for you people, anyway. Me, I struggle not to nap through the briefings on your injuries, your imploding morale, and your exploding PTSD and suicide rates. And even here, at command performance events, I hear the applause grow weaker, and see the doubt, weariness and disgust welling in your hollow eyes.

But today, by drawing simplistic, opportunistic parallels between Iraq and the American Revolutionary War, I trust that I have puffed y'all up with false, historically inaccurate pride.

Filled you with the willful ignorance to avoid facing the horrifying meaninglessness of all your back-breaking, soul-crushing labor.

Filled you with the bloodlust to keep fighting, and dying, and loving it.

Because that's what it means to be a Real American® today.

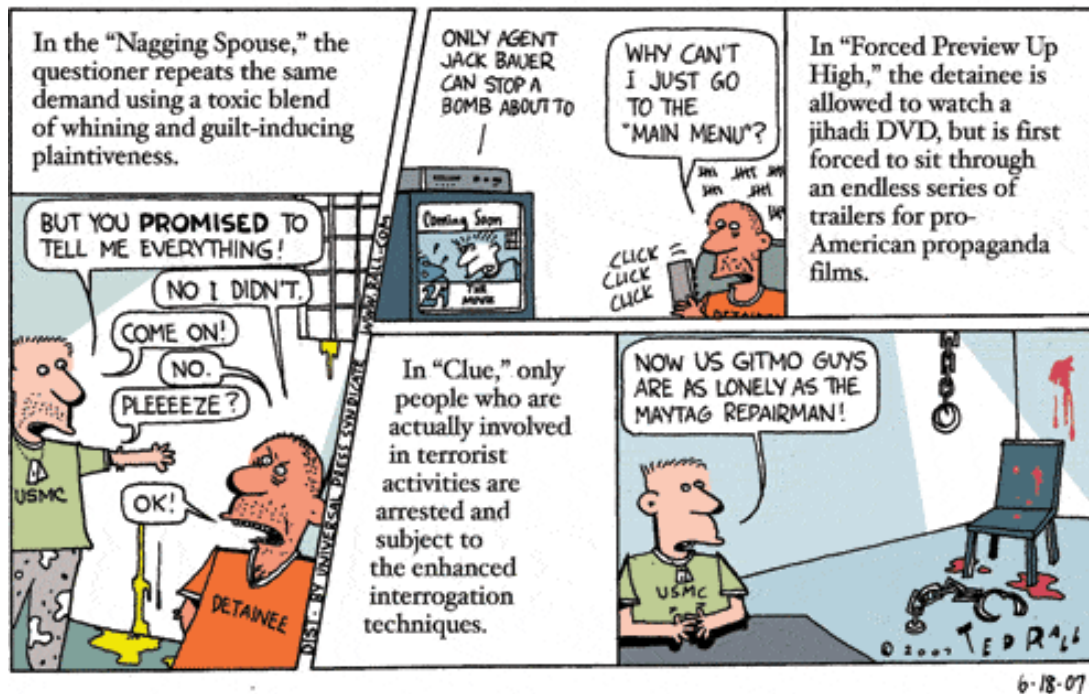
Hello? That was the big finale applause line! So CLAP already! Ladies, turn on the waterworks! Drop the fricking balloons!

(Sustained Applause.)

That's better.

Thank you, and may Jesus bless America and her wars.

AN INTERNAL REVIEW FOUND THAT AMERICA'S NEW "ENHANCED INTERROGATION TECHNIQUES" ARE ANTIQUATED AND INEFFECTIVE, URGING THAT BEATINGS BE SUPPLEMENTED BY "GOOD COP-BAD COP" AND MADISON AVENUE MARKETING TOOLS. HERE, MORE IDEAS FOR BETTER, KINDER TORTURE:



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