

GI SPECIAL 5G19:

**“He Was 19 Years Old
And Could See The
Futility Of Iraq Invasion
And Occupation”**

**“I Am The Mother Of The Driver
Of The Bradley You See Upside
Down And Burning”**



In this photo, six American soldiers and an Iraqi translator are burning to death inside an armored vehicle while members of Apache Company watch, as there was nothing they could do. (Sean Smith/Guardian)

“I Am So Angry, Because After All Of This — The Sacrifice — Bush And His Supporters Have Not Moved Forward On This”

[Thanks to James Starowicz, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

July 17, 2007 By DAVID MUIR, ABC News [Excerpts]

After “World News With Charles Gibson” aired exclusive footage of the troop surge in Iraq from British photographer Sean Smith, we received an extraordinary response on this Web site.

In one instance, troops are seen watching a Bradley armored vehicle blown up by an improvised explosive device as six American soldiers died inside.

Members of Apache Company were called to help. There was nothing they could do.

Apache Company was sent to Iraq in June 2006 for a 12-month rotation, which has since been extended to a 15-month tour.

The soldiers are seen speaking openly about the effects of the endless combat and the grueling daily routine.

“We got grenades going off, we’ve got an IED blowing up your vehicle ... and then, you are expected to go back in those four to six, four to five hours ... and relax!” said Cpl. Joshua Lake, 2nd Infantry Division.

“You just don’t have time to do it. Your body never gets to come down. You’re always on that heightened sense of alertness.”

Until Monday night’s report, Lake’s mother had not heard her son’s voice in a month.

“He’s up for hours at a time. He can’t sleep because his body is so tense when he comes back, and you know there’s no way of laying down,” Debbie Lake-McMahon told ABC News. **“He said that he lays there and his body just trembles.”**

We also received hundreds of e-mails from viewers, including one who said the report was “so disturbing that I had nightmares after what I saw.”

For another, the nightmare is real.

“I am the mother of the driver of the Bradley you see upside down and burning,” she wrote.

“He was 19 years old and could see the futility of Iraq invasion and occupation.”

Another relative of a fallen soldier wrote, “For one moment, we captured the sense of fear, hate, anxiety, stress, depression that befell our beloved one.

“We miss him.

“I am so angry, because after all of this — the sacrifice — Bush and his supporters have not moved forward on this.”

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Nebraska Soldier Killed In Iraq On Saturday

July 22, 2007 BY JON NYATAWA, WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

A Nebraska soldier was killed by a roadside bomb Saturday in Iraq, his family confirmed Sunday night.

Jacob Schmuecker, 28, died during his first tour in Iraq with the Nebraska National Guard.

Family members were notified Saturday night, but have not been given details of Schmuecker's death, according to one of Schmuecker's four brothers, Chris Sheppard.

Schmuecker joined the National Guard in 2001 and for the past 10 months, he had been serving with the 755th Chemical Company in Iraq He last visited Nebraska about three months ago while on leave.

He and his wife, Lisa, have been married for more than four years and have three young children, ages 4, 3 and 19 months.

Schmuecker was born in Kentucky, but attended West Holt High School in Atkinson, Neb. He attended Northeast Community College in Norfolk before becoming a police officer in Atkinson.

Sheppard said his brother then decided to join the military, just because that was something he'd always wanted to do.

"He admired everything about the military," Shepperd said. "He was proud to be able to put that uniform on and represent his country."

Lance Corporal Timothy Flowers Killed In Iraq

22 Jul 07 Ministry of Defence

It is with deep regret that the Ministry of Defence must confirm the death of Lance Corporal Timothy Darren Flowers from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in Basra City, southern Iraq on Saturday 21 July 2007.

LCpl Flowers, from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers but who was attached to the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, died as a result of an indirect fire attack on Basra Palace.

Westmont Grad Killed In Iraq Firefight

July 03, 2007 By FRANK SOJAK, The Tribune-Democrat

A Southmont native lost his life in Ta'meem, Iraq, on Sunday after being shot, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Raymond R. Buchan, 33, a 1991 graduate of Westmont Hilltop High School, died of wounds sustained from enemy small arms fire, the Department of Defense said.

Another soldier, Staff Sgt. Michael L. Ruoff Jr., 31, of Yosemite, Calif., also was killed Sunday in Ta'meem, the defense department said.

Philip Buchan of Southmont said other military personnel described his brother as, "The best of the best."

He said his brother, a standout football and basketball player for Westmont Hilltop, joined the Army after graduating from high school.

"He loved his family tremendously," Philip Buchan said, adding that his brother was a good father, husband, brother and son.

A funeral service will be scheduled in Johnstown. He will be laid to rest in his wife's hometown of Erie.

Philip Buchan said his brother, who along with his family resided in Schweinfurt, Germany, where he was stationed the past seven years, loved his country.

“He loved his work,” Philip Buchan said. “He wanted to be there for his troops. That’s what he truly loved.”

He said his sibling exemplified humility and had a genuine concern for the safety of everyone under his command.

“His troops are really taken by his loss,” the brother said. He will be surely missed by everyone who knew him, Philip Buchan said.

He said his brother, a defensive end for Westmont Hilltop, played in the Ken Lantzy Finest 40 All-Star Football Game in the summer of ‘91. He said his brother also was an excellent basketball player at the school.

“Everything that he did, he was excellent at,” he said.

Sgt. 1st Class Buchan also is survived by his wife Laura; two sons, Hayden, 8, and Andrew, 1; and parents Richard and Carol Jean Buchan, of Southmont.

Sgt. 1st Class Buchan is the eighth local soldier to have been killed in Iraq.

Memorial Service Planned For Marine Killed In Iraq



July 11, 2007 By Paul Fattig, Mail Tribune

The funeral service for Marine Lance Cpl. Juan Manuel Garcia Schill, 20, will be held in Klamath Falls on Sunday.

Services begin at 10 a.m. at the Eternal Hills Funeral Home & Memorial Gardens, 4711 Highway 39, Klamath Falls. Interment will follow at Eternal Hills with the Klamath Falls native buried next to his great-grandfather and great-grandmother.

Visitation will be from 8 a.m. Friday through 8 a.m. Sunday at the funeral home.

Survivors include father Manuel Garcia of Grants Pass, mother Brenda Ochoa of Chiloquin, brother Esteban Garcia Schill of Grants Pass and sister Sandra Garcia Schill of Chiloquin.

The Marine, a 2005 graduate of Grants Pass High School, was killed July 1 during combat operations in Anbar province in Iraq, according to the Department of Defense.

He was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, based in Twentynine Palms, Calif.

He moved with relatives from Klamath Falls to Grants Pass where he attended North Middle School and the high school. He earned a black belt in Tae Kwon Do and played football while still in high school. He also volunteered in an after-school program in Grants Pass to help younger students learn Spanish and how to play soccer.

After attending college for a term, he joined the Marine Corps in January of 2006. He enlisted in the military to help pay to go to college to become a teacher, according to his family.

“He was the type of person who would stick up for somebody who couldn’t stick up for themselves,” his aunt Elizabeth Schill told the Klamath Falls Herald and News newspaper.

He is the second person from Jackson or Josephine counties to die in Iraq.

Heroic U.S. Combat Action In Husseiniyah Liberates Seven Iraqi Children, Forever

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

“I don’t know why the Americans bombed these homes. “I know one was the house of Abu Mustafa. He’s a very poor man with only one boy and the rest of his family are girls. And he didn’t even have a rifle.”

July 22, 2007 Hannah Allam and Jenan Hussein, McClatchy Newspapers

BAGHDAD - This much is agreed upon: At least six Iraqis died overnight yesterday when American attack helicopters pounded a cluster of homes in a dusty, nondescript neighborhood on the northern outskirts of Baghdad.

But the story of why those homes were targeted and who was killed depends on the storyteller.

The U.S. military said the dead were insurgents and the homes in the Husseinayah district probably served as weapons depots; troops observed seven or more secondary explosions after the air assault. By the military's tally, six fighters were killed and five wounded.

Iraqi residents told a different version: The dead came from two Shiite Muslim families who lived in an area controlled by the powerful Mahdi Army militia.

The bodies pulled from the rubble, locals say, were ordinary parents killed with their children in the middle of the night.

Locals counted 11 corpses - two men, two women and seven children. Another 10 were injured. Some Iraqi authorities put the death toll as high as 18.

In Iraq, where new bombings occur before authorities can even investigate the previous day's violence, the truth about Husseinayah might never come to light. Roadblocks erected around the neighborhood prevented reporters from reaching the scene.

"Lies, lies, lies," sputtered Salam al-Rubaiye, 35, a computer technician who lives in Husseinayah and works in Sadr City.

"The Americans always try to change the truth, especially when it concerns the Sadrists," the collective name for followers of the Mahdi Army commander, cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

Al-Rubaiye visited the scene of the airstrike twice yesterday.

He first showed up early in the morning when, he said, volunteers were still digging the corpses of women and children from the rubble.

Later, he brought a camera and snapped 14 photos.

They showed several piles of cinderblocks where homes once stood. The interior of a severely damaged home showed only the detritus of family life: a potted plant, a wall hanging, a refrigerator, an electrical generator.

"For Sale" was written in Arabic on the only surviving wall of one home.

Rubaiye also e-mailed two short cell-phone video clips that showed at least seven bodies swathed in blankets, some with grayish feet sticking out at the ends. Two of the bundles were tiny, as if they shrouded young children.

Residents said they'd finished retrieving the dead by 8 a.m., and that two young girls were still missing.

"I took out with my own hands the bodies of two young children, two men, two adult women and four little girls," said Bassem al Musawi, 30, who lives in the neighborhood.

"I don't know why the Americans bombed these homes.

“I know one was the house of Abu Mustafa. He’s a very poor man with only one boy and the rest of his family are girls. And he didn’t even have a rifle.”

“They say they target the terrorists, so where are they?” asked a 45-year-old Husseinia resident who identified himself only as Abu Ghufan.

“Most of the dead are women and children. There is no justice in this life.”

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



An Iraqi man stands in front of his car while U.S. soldiers patrol a street in Baghdad July 10, 2007. REUTERS/Nikola Solic

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed; Nationality Not Announced

Jul 22 (AFP)

A soldier from NATO’s separate International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the country died Sunday in an ambush in the east, becoming the 112th foreign soldier killed in Afghanistan this year.

Resistance Campaign Against The Occupation “Increasingly Successful Since The Beginning Of This Year”

17 June 2007 John Simpson, BBC [Excerpts]

The Taleban have new confidence and new tactics, and their campaign against the government and its NATO backers has been increasingly successful since the beginning of this year.

In the east of the country, around Jalalabad, bombings have become such frequent occurrences that the road from there to Kabul is now known as “the Baghdad road”.

I have been coming to Jalalabad since 1989, but for the first time in my experience we needed a police escort to drive around there. In the countryside near the town, they urged us not to get out of our vehicle when we stopped, despite the intense heat.

“There are spies everywhere,” the police explained.

The police themselves are a major target for the Taleban guerrillas who operate here now.

Outside the main police headquarters in the town, a senior policeman ran out and ordered us to stop filming in case our presence attracted the attentions of a bomber.

There have been several attacks there, and an unexploded rocket is still lodged in a tree in front of the building.

Until the end of last year, Jalalabad was relatively quiet. Now it is becoming a battleground.

Along part of the length of the so-called “Baghdad Road”, local people point out the places where American soldiers fired at passers-by a few weeks ago, after an attempted suicide bombing.

As a result of this and other incidents in this part of the country, NATO and US troops are often regarded with dislike and distrust.

The Taleban’s tactics are designed to make people feel there is no safety anywhere.

Last week, just north of Kabul in an area which has always been a stronghold of support for the government and for the Northern Alliance which swept the Taleban from power in November 2001, the Taleban staged a fierce and concerted attack on a pro-government village.

With NATO troops mostly tied up in the southern part of the country, the Afghan police and army are finding it harder to operate elsewhere.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of Pfc. Le Ron Wilson during his burial service July 17, 2007 at Long Island National cemetery, Farmingdale, N.Y. Wilson, 18, a native of Trinidad and Tobago, died July 6 in Iraq of wounds suffered when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

“There’s A Lot Of Stress And No Downtime. People Will Do Desperate Things To Stay With Their Families”

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

July 22nd 2007 BY TAMER EL-GHOBASHY, DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

KILLEEN, Tex. - Bronx soldier Jonathan Aponte doesn't know yet if he'll be punished by his superiors, but he's already taking lumps from his peers.

Since returning to his base, the 20-year-old private has felt the scorn of other soldiers - through stares and words - who are appalled that he hired someone to shoot him in the leg to avoid returning to Iraq.

"Some guys have been giving me a hard time, here and there," Aponte told the Daily News at Fort Hood, where he arrived Thursday after being ordered back by the U.S. Army. "It's random people," he said. "Not really anyone I know. They've been saying, 'You're a piece of s---.' I'm trying to take it lightly."

Even residents and merchants near the base frowned on Aponte's actions, though they expressed a sincere appreciation for the difficulty of his job.

"He should have went about it in a different way," said Nancy Watts, 50, a manager at an Arby's. "There are people who can help you," said Watts, whose daughter is a retired Army medic. "I feel sorry for him that he felt he had to do something so drastic."

But one soldier confided he has thought about faking an injury to get out of service - saying the burden of war can leave the mind and body totally warped.

"I understand where he's coming from," said a 20-year-old grunt from Amarillo, Tex., who asked not to be named. "There's a lot of stress and no downtime. People will do desperate things to stay with their families."

Aponte had served 10 months in Iraq when he returned to the Bronx on a two-week leave in June. He was scheduled to be redeployed on July 9. Instead of reporting for duty that day, he arranged to be shot in the knee by an acquaintance in exchange for \$500, he has admitted.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

**“Attacks Will Go On Until
Americans Leave”**

**“Insurgents Form Political Front To
Plan For U.S. Pullout”**

**“Peaceful Resistance Will Not End The
Occupation. The US Made Clear It
Intended To Stay For Many Decades”**

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

July 19, 2007 By Seumas Milne in Damascus, The Guardian [Excerpts]

Seven of the most important Sunni-led insurgent organisations fighting the US occupation in Iraq have agreed to form a public political alliance with the aim of preparing for negotiations in advance of an American withdrawal, their leaders have told the Guardian.

In their first interview with the western media since the US-British invasion of 2003, leaders of three of the insurgent groups - responsible for thousands of attacks against US and Iraqi armed forces and police - said they would continue their armed resistance until all foreign troops were withdrawn from Iraq, and denounced al-Qaida for sectarian killings and suicide bombings against civilians.

Speaking in Damascus, the spokesmen for the three groups - the 1920 Revolution Brigades, Ansar al-Sunna and Iraqi Hamas - said they planned to hold a congress to launch a united front and appealed to Arab governments, other governments and the UN to help them establish a permanent political presence outside Iraq.

Abu Ahmad, spokesman for Iraqi Hamas said: "Peaceful resistance will not end the occupation. The US made clear it intended to stay for many decades. Now it is a common view in the resistance that they will start to withdraw within a year. "

The move represents a dramatic change of strategy for the mainstream Iraqi insurgency, whose leadership has remained shadowy and has largely restricted communication with the world to brief statements on the internet and Arabic media.

The last three months have been the bloodiest for US forces, with 331 deaths and 2,029 wounded, as the 28,000-strong "surge" in troop numbers exposes them to more attacks.

Leaders of the three groups, who did not use their real names in the interview, said the new front, which brings together the main Sunni-based armed organisations except al-Qaida and the Ba'athists, had agreed the main planks of a joint political programme, including a commitment to free Iraq from foreign troops, rejection of cooperation with parties involved in political institutions set up under the occupation and a declaration that decisions and agreements made by the US occupation and Iraqi government are null and void.

The aim of the alliance - which includes a range of Islamist and nationalist-leaning groups and is planned to be called the Political Office for the Iraqi Resistance - is to link up with other anti-occupation groups in Iraq to negotiate with the Americans in anticipation of an early US withdrawal. The programme envisages a temporary technocratic government to run the country during a transition period until free elections can be held.

The insurgent groups deny support from any foreign government, including Syria, but claim they have been offered and rejected funding and arms from Iran.

"We are the only resistance movement in modern history which has received no help or support from any other country," Abdallah Suleiman Omary, head of the political department of the 1920 Revolution Brigades, told the Guardian. "The reason is we are fighting America."

All three Sunni-based resistance leaders say they are acutely aware of the threat posed by sectarian division to the future of Iraq and emphasised the importance of working with Shia groups - but rejected any link with the Shia militia and parties because of their participation in the political institutions set up by the Americans and their role in sectarian killings.

GET THE MESSAGE?



Supporters of nationalist anti-occupation politician Muqtada al-Sadr burn U.S., British and Israeli flags as they marched to demand the withdrawal of the U.S. and its coalition in Basra July 19, 2007. The demonstration, with around 1200 participants, commemorated the anniversary of the death of Shiite religious leader Imam Ali Al-Hadi who was killed in 2004 in Samarra. (AP Photo/Nabil al-Jurani)

Assorted Resistance Action

July 22, 2007 By BUSHRA JUHI, (AP) & UPI & Reuters

Guerrillas shot dead police Brigadier Falah Khalaf in northern Baghdad's Ur district, police said. The senior officer working with the Interior Ministry was shot to death as he was driving his car.

An Iraqi interpreter working for Americans in Kut, 100 miles southeast of Baghdad, was killed by guerrillas. Also a policeman was killed in Kut late Saturday.

An improvised bomb killed six police officers in Mosul.

Five people were killed when a bomber drove a minivan packed with up to half a tonne of explosives into a house where tribal leaders acting as agents of the occupation were meeting north of Baghdad on Sunday, police said.

Police sources in Taji, about 20 km (12 miles) north of the Iraqi capital, said the five killed were all local tribal chiefs. Twelve others were wounded.

The leaders were meeting in an area known as Jurf al-Milih near Taji to discuss joining U.S. and Iraqi forces in their area.

An Iraqi army source said the local tribal chiefs were meeting after talks were held in Taji on Friday. Those talks were held under the protection of U.S. forces, the army source said.

Guerrillas killed a policeman in the town of Shanafiya, 90 km (60 miles) west of the southern Iraqi city of Diwaniya, police said.

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

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

***Will the Democrats PLEASE Shut
Up?***

**“Our Troops Are So Fed Up That
They’re Saying Stuff Like This: ‘We
Have People Up There In Congress
With The Brain Of A 2-Year-Old Who
Don’t Know What They Are Doing -
They Don’t Experience It’”**

This morning I read that the Senate, led by Nevada Democrat Harry Reid, is going to have an all night “Iraq debate” to “highlight Republican resistance to allowing a simple majority vote on a plan to withdraw troops from Iraq.”

Just what we need - more rich old white men yammerring on and on and on while our sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, cousins, uncles and aunts are dying in Iraq (not to mention the Iraqis).

NY Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer says there is “such urgency to bring an end to the war” that they are “stepping up the pressure.”

I don't know about you, but I don't think any Republicans will be upset about a Senate slumber party except those who have to skip their D.C. Madam visit that night.

Reid is whining because Republicans are threatening to use a filibuster, which can only be overridden with 60 votes, to block an amendment to a military spending bill that would embarrass Bush.

I've lost count of the ridiculous number of toothless nonbinding hand-wringing votes that have occurred since the Democrats took office last year.

No wonder Congress' approval rating is lower than Bush's.

People want them to shut up and start doing something about Iraq instead of just droning on and on about Bush.

That's why the comparisons between the U.S. and the Roman Empire are totally false - back then, when the Emperor angered the Senate, Senators stabbed him to death.

Senate Republicans aren't afraid to use a filibuster to stop an embarrassing vote for Bush but the Democrats won't do it to stop the killing in Iraq.

<p>It takes 60 votes, a super-majority, to end a filibuster undertaken by one Senator and the Republicans have only 49 seats. None of the Senators running for President - Obama, Clinton, Biden, or Dodd - filibustered the war-spending bill in the spring and none of them are filibustering the jaw-dropping \$648 billion Defense Authorization Bill which will fund the U.S. military through 2008 for everything including the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.</p>
--

Reid has said “the war is lost” yet continues to fund this lost war to the tune of billions of dollars a year. (Mr. Reid, I have some Enron stock you may be interested in buying.)

The impending vote on this monstrous bill is giving Senate Democrats the opportunity to do photo-ops, get sound-bites on the air, and have a slumber party over an amendment that will inevitably be voted down or blocked by intransigent Republicans.

The irony is that the amendment would not end the war, close the permanent bases the Pentagon is building in Iraq, or get any troops out of harm's way.

I've read the text of the doomed amendment. It would require some unstated number of troops to be withdrawn, starting within four months of the bill's passage and ending by April 30, 2008.

So Bush could withdraw a division of tens of thousands of troops or a single squad of ten soldiers on April 29, 2008 and satisfy the amendment's requirements.

After the deadline, U.S. forces in Iraq could only be used for the following purposes: protecting U.S. bases and personnel, training, equipping, and providing logistical support for the Iraqi military/police, and fighting Al-Qaeda and other freedom-hating terrorists.

Sound familiar?

It should.

These limits are identical to the pre-surge Rumsfeld-Casey strategy of "as Iraqis stand up, we will stand down," which was a smashing success.

These limits are also identical to the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, the grumpy old white men and foreign policy nerds who offered Dubya some political cover to change his war policy after the GOP thumpin' at the polls last November.

Reverting back to the old strategy will require the same number of troops as it did before (duh!) - about 100,000 or so.

Like Slick Willie on affirmative action, the Democrats' position on the Iraq occupation can be summed up as: "mend it, don't end it."

No wonder our troops are so fed up that they're saying stuff like this: "we have people up there in Congress with the brain of a 2-year-old who don't know what they are doing - they don't experience it.

"I challenge the president or anyone who has us for 15 months to ride alongside me. I (would) do another 15 months if he comes out here and rides along with me every day for 15 months. I'll do 15 more months. They don't even have to pay me extra."

Of course, if I were a 2-year-old, I would be deeply offended at the suggestion that my intelligence was equivalent to Harry Reid's, but I would understand the anger.

The anger about being lied to about Hussein's WMD and connections with Al-Qaeda, that "we will be greeted as liberators," about Iraq's never-ending progress, about "turning points" that come and go with no change in the situation, and about the historically unprecedented multiple yearlong deployments of continuous combat that have been extended to 15 months that troops have to endure.

That anger has fueled the explosive growth of Iraq Veterans Against the War from a handful of members in 2004 to over 500 today.

IVAW's growth is a hopeful sign amidst the divided, partially co-opted, and largely dormant American anti-war movement.

A strong anti-war movement can do what Senate slumber parties, meaningless nonbinding resolutions, and Democratic Party politicians won't: end the war by forcing the U.S. to close those permanent bases and bring all the troops home now.



"WE ALL AGREE: FRESH GRAVES FOR MEMORIAL DAY 2008!"

Betrayal



Medevac Helicopter An Khe, Vietnam 1970

From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: July 22, 2007
Subject: Betrayal

The Only Thing Worse Than Death Is Betrayal Malcolm X

**Mike Hastie,
US Army Medic,
Vietnam 1970-71**

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

Iraq Veterans Against the War: “Playing A Vital Role In Building A Movement Of Iraq Vets And Also Active-Duty Troops Who Can Bring An End To This Occupation”

July 20, 2007 BY Anthony Arnove, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]. Arnove is author of *Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal*, newly re-published with a foreword by Howard Zinn, and an editorial board member of the *International Socialist Review*.

SW:

THE BUSH administration is trying to spin a report on its escalation of troops to Iraq to say that the “surge” is succeeding. What would an honest assessment be?

AN HONEST assessment would be that the war has been lost.

No amount of surges or new “plans for victory” can alter the fact that the Iraqi people want the occupation to end--and that they will continue to resist it until all U.S. and international troops have left.

Attacks on U.S. troops are up. Troops are being killed at a higher rate since the so-called surge.

Iraq is in complete collapse and is a full-scale humanitarian disaster. The U.S. is now in the weakest position it has been in--regionally and internationally--in years.

Bush's popularity rating is the lowest of any president other than Richard Nixon at the height of the Watergate scandal, and establishment military analysts now publicly proclaim Iraq the greatest strategic error in the history of U.S. foreign affairs.

Bush is still talking about "winning" in Iraq, but at this point, elements of the administration are realizing that the United States is at best going to have to manage defeat.

WE'RE LIKELY to start hearing more from Democrats proposing "withdrawal" of U.S. troops from Iraq. But you've written that a lot of these proposals have provisions to allow a continued U.S. presence, in one form or another. Can you talk about these proposals for withdrawal or redeployment?

THE DEMOCRATIC proposals are all for limited, not complete, withdrawal.

The one exception is Dennis Kucinich, though he would replace U.S. troops with UN troops. **[What he proposes, on his web site, is that U.S. troops keep on dying in Iraq, and they not come home until and unless the UN decides to replace them with a UN army. Which means they stay in Iraq forever. T]**

Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton would both keep troops in Iraq, only in smaller numbers. These troops would be engaged in "force protection" (an oxymoron, since you only need such troops if you are keeping bases and troops in Iraq), "counterinsurgency operations" (which of course is Bush's cover for the ongoing presence of troops in Iraq) and training ("Iraqization").

This is really a recipe for keeping troops in Iraq for years to come.

SOME ANTIWAR activists look at the current situation, with even Republicans defecting from the White House, and conclude that the occupation will end soon--with U.S. troops perhaps "home by Christmas." What do you think?

I SEE no sign of that all.

Throughout the occupation, we have seen periodic headlines in the media about imminent troop withdrawals, projections of a smaller force and so on.

I think these headlines have a lot more to do with taking the pressure off elected officials than with any real planning.

It's an effort to lull the public into complacency: What's the point of marching or protesting if the troops are coming home soon anyway?

In reality, we see more troops being sent over now, and tours of duty being extended.

WHAT WILL it take to end the occupation?

I THINK it will take much more pressure at home and also within the rank and file of the U.S. military in Iraq.

There will be immense pressure on the antiwar movement to give up its independence and get behind whatever candidate the Democrats put forward in 2008, no matter what their limitations.

People will tell us this is how we can be relevant.

I think the antiwar movement would be irrelevant, though, if we did this.

We'll be much more effective if we articulate our own principles and demands--including immediate withdrawal--and fight for them.

And we also need to defend and support those soldiers who in greater numbers are speaking out, refusing service, declaring conscientious objection and, at great personal risk, organizing against the war.

In particular, I think we all need to help build Iraq Veterans Against the War, which is playing a vital role in building a movement of Iraq vets and also active-duty troops who can bring an end to this occupation.

SHOULD WE be optimistic? Is the antiwar movement stronger or weaker today?

I THINK we should be sober. On the one hand, we have come a long way. The majority of the country is with us--and on a whole range of issues, public opinion is shifting leftward.

The November 2006 elections were a clear vote against the war and for a serious change in priorities. And the frustration with the Democrats' betrayals since November is leading to some very interesting ferment in the country--some of which we saw at the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, and which is reflected in the growth of IVAW.

On the other hand, we have a long way to go. The level of organization of the antiwar movement is still low relative to the depth and breadth of antiwar sentiment. The level of public protest is still low compared to the stakes for U.S. empire in Iraq.

But there are definite grounds for optimism.

One is that the U.S. public has come to its stance against the war by using its own reasoning, in the face of repeated pro-war propaganda from political elites and the establishment media.

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

“Their General Du Jour, David Petraeus, Is Going To Say In September: ‘Gosh, Fellows, Things Are Looking Up, But Give Us Another Five Years. Or Maybe 10’”

George W. Bush is by no means the first Westerner to make a fool of himself by overestimating his powers and underestimating the determination of the people of the Middle East to rid themselves of foreign conquerors.

July 21, 2007 Charley Reese, King Features Syndicate, Inc.

It is now clear that the proper name for the war going on in Mesopotamia is the “Republican War.” Never before has a political party so decisively asserted ownership of a foreign war.

The Republicans refuse to share it with the Democrats, who, despite their many resolutions, have yet to call for a complete withdrawal of American forces. Democrats have not come close to proposing to cut off the war funding, which is the only way the war can be ended.

Yet Republicans act like jealous suitors and seem to want to keep the war as their very own. They have killed every single proposal to alter the strategy or the tactics.

They even killed a bill that would have done nothing more than guarantee that American soldiers would get a rest period at home equal to the time spent in the war.

Killing that bill, which had nothing to do with withdrawal or timetables for withdrawal, clearly proves that Republicans do not support the troops. They support the war.

There is a huge difference. Little Lindsey Graham, the Republican senator from South Carolina, has become so possessive of the war that he seems on the edge of hysteria.

He seems frightened to death of what will happen when Americans leave. In fact, nothing much will happen except that Iraqis will concentrate on killing each other rather than killing Americans and each other. Most normal people would consider that a positive development for us.

The Republicans and their shrinking number of warmonger supporters have long since forgotten that the Republican War is an illegal war, a war of aggression launched against a country that had not attacked us or ever threatened to attack us.

They have conveniently forgotten how the Republican War was sold to the American people with outright lies.

They ignore the fact that the war was bungled from Day One and that ordinary Americans have paid a terrible price for those blunders.

If ever there were a valid reason to shed the label “Republican,” the nutty administration and its war-loving allies in the House and Senate have provided it. They seem to have lost their collective minds.

They know darn well what their general du jour, David Petraeus, is going to say in September: “Gosh, fellows, things are looking up, but give us another five years. Or maybe 10.”

That would be insanity to the third power.

The Iraqis are killing us on the cheap with secondhand AK-47s, rifle grenades and homemade bombs created out of old artillery shells. We are using the most expensive weapons in the world, wielded by the most expensive army in the world, to kill them by the small handful.

I don't know what the insurgency has cost, but the Republican War has cost us half a trillion dollars, and all we have to show for it are 3,600 graves, several thousand wounded, a civil war and a corrupt, ineffective civilian government.

The Iraqi supply line stretches around the corner; ours stretches 7,000 miles.

The Iraqis know what their mission is; our soldiers don't have the foggiest notion of why they are still there.

Even to put the best face on it, we replaced a dictatorship and allowed the Iraqis free elections and time to adopt a constitution. At that point, the president should have said: “We've done our part. Now you're on your own. Goodbye.”

But no, he didn't do that, because his intention is for the Republican War to never end and for our troops to become a permanent part of the Iraqi landscape.

George W. Bush is by no means the first Westerner to make a fool of himself by overestimating his powers and underestimating the determination of the people of the Middle East to rid themselves of foreign conquerors.

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



Foreign occupation soldiers from the USA destroying Iraqi citizens' home and belongings in Yarmuk neighbourhood, during a patrol in Baghdad July 20, 2007. REUTERS/Nikola Solic

[61% of Iraqis say they approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces in their country, up from 47 percent in January. A solid majority of Shiite and Sunni Arabs approved of the attacks, according to the poll. 9/27/2006 By BARRY SCHWEID, AP & Program on International Policy Attitudes

[Iraqis feel about U.S. troops trampling them in the dirt the same way Americans felt about British troops trampling them in the dirt in 1776. They are right to resist. T]

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

This Is Not A Satire:

Study Advises U.S. Needs To Devise A Different ‘Brand’ To Win Over The Iraqi People; “Show Of Force” Brand Has Proved To Have Limited Appeal To Iraqi Consumers

They are less likely to help, the study says, when they become “collateral damage” in U.S. attacks, have their doors broken down or are shot at checkpoints because they do not speak English.

Cultural connections -- seeking out the local head man when entering a neighborhood, looking someone in the eye when offering a friendly wave -- are key.

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in. He writes: \$400,000 down the drain.]

July 21, 2007 By Karen DeYoung, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

In the advertising world, brand identity is everything. Volvo means safety. Colgate means clean. iPod means cool.

But since the U.S. military invaded Iraq in 2003, its “show of force” brand has proved to have limited appeal to Iraqi consumers, according to a recent study commissioned by the U.S. military.

The key to boosting the image and effectiveness of U.S. military operations around the world involves “shaping” both the product and the marketplace, and then establishing a brand identity that places what you are selling in a positive light, said clinical psychologist Todd C. Helmus, the author of “Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation.”

The 211-page study, for which the U.S. Joint Forces Command paid the Rand Corp. \$400,000, was released this week.

Helmus and his co-authors concluded that the “force” brand, which the United States peddled for the first few years of the occupation, was doomed from the start and lost ground to enemies’ competing brands.

While not abandoning the more aggressive elements of warfare, the report suggested, a more attractive brand for the Iraqi people might have been “We will help you.”

Many of the study’s conclusions may seem as obvious as they are hard to implement amid combat operations and terrorist attacks, and Helmus acknowledged that it could be too late for extensive rebranding of the U.S. effort in Iraq.

But Duane Schattle, whose urban operations office at the Joint Forces Command ordered the study, said that “cities are the battlegrounds of the future” and what has happened in Baghdad provides lessons for the future. “This isn’t just about going in and blowing things up,” Schattle said. “This is about working in a very complex environment.”

In an urban insurgency, for example, civilians can help identify enemy infiltrators and otherwise assist U.S. forces.

They are less likely to help, the study says, when they become “collateral damage” in U.S. attacks, have their doors broken down or are shot at checkpoints because they do not speak English.

Cultural connections -- seeking out the local head man when entering a neighborhood, looking someone in the eye when offering a friendly wave -- are key.

[Gee, why didn’t the British occupation troops try this shit in 1776? We would have just loved King George then, right? Forgotten all that silly stuff about fighting for our liberation, right? Fuck the Declaration Of Independence, we’d have been happy with a “friendly wave,” right? Right.]

The most successful companies, the Rand study notes, are those that study their clientele and shape their workplace and product in ways that incorporate their brand into every interaction with consumers.

Wal-Mart’s desired identity as a friendly shop where working-class customers can feel comfortable and find good value, for example, would be undercut if telephone operators and sales personnel had rude attitudes, or if the stores offered too much high-end merchandise. **[Or if the management ordered 500 pound bombs dropped on anybody that complained about their service? Or arrested the local mayor and the city council? Or maybe just butchered people at random who didn’t like Wal-Mart imposing a military dictatorship on them?]**

For the U.S. military and U.S. officials, understanding the target customer culture is equally critical.

“Certain things do not translate well,” the study warned. “Danger lies behind assumptions of similarity.”

A gesture Bush made during his 2005 inaugural parade -- the University of Texas “hook ‘em horns” salute with raised index and pinkie fingers -- stands for the “sign of the devil” in some cultures and an indication of marital infidelity in others.

A leaflet dropped to intimidate Iraqi insurgents, the study noted, “also reached noncombatants” and “gave everyone who picked it up the ‘evil eye.’”

“Words cause similar cultural confusion,” it said. The Arabic word “jihad,” for example, has religious connotations for Muslims; its repeated use to connote terrorism is insulting and also perversely lends legitimacy to violent acts.

Schattle acknowledged that much of what works for consumer advertising in the United States might not translate well in Baghdad. But urban ops, he said, is all about experimenting and adapting to new realities.

“We want to look at new concepts, new business practices, to see if there are things that we can learn,” he said.

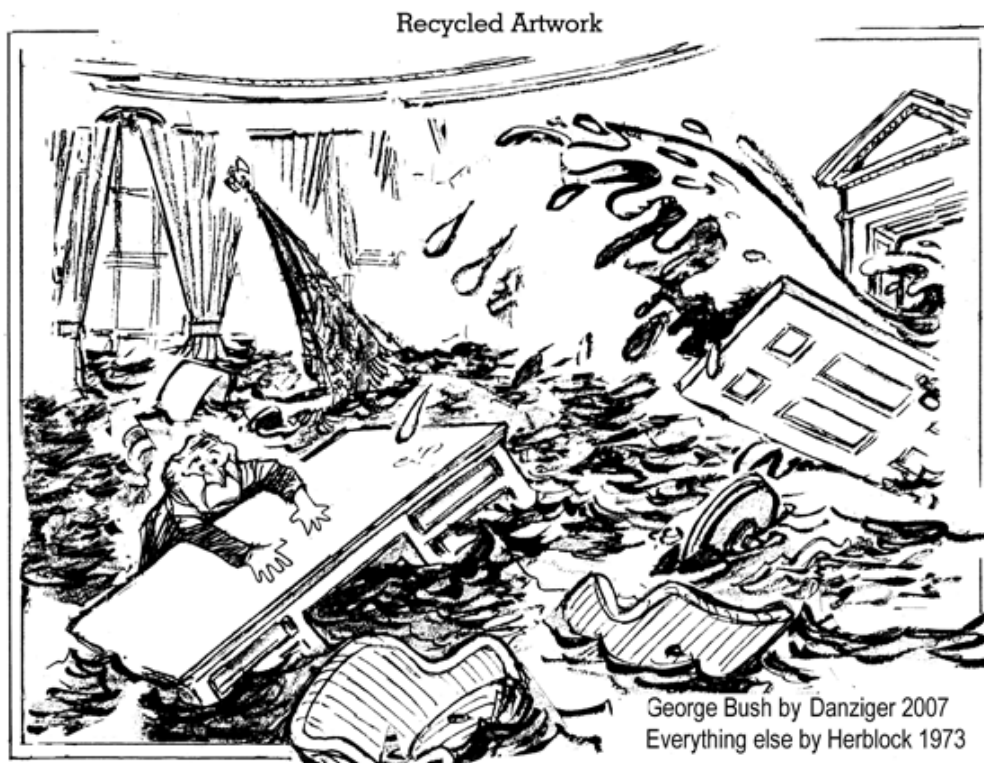
In Iraq, Schattle said, the “urban population is the center of gravity” and the problem is “how we influence them to be on our side, or at least not be an enemy” when “what they see is armor.”

Enemy forces have also learned that “doing good works is a classic approach to winning friends and influencing people” and frequently provide basic services that the U.S. military is unable to match.

At the same time, Helmus said, U.S. military and civilian authorities must stop thinking of themselves as a “good-idea factory” whose every thought has greater merit than those of their customers.

“Procter & Gamble doesn’t even do that,” he said.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Bush Accomplices Confer At The White House: The Traitor Greeted Co-Conspirators Who Also Want More U.S. Troops Killed In Iraq



The Traitor Bush showing off for reporters with representatives from military support organizations that want to keep on with the war and the killing of U.S. troops in Iraq

The bloodthirsty civilians, who have no intention of going to Iraq themselves anytime in the near future, were in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, DC.

Bush accused the overwhelming majority of Americans who hate him, and his war, and who want the troops to come home now, of turning their backs on US troops fighting on the front lines. Only a few idiots still pay any attention to this stupid bullshit. (AFP/Saul Loeb)

Received:

**PICTURES OF THE PAIN OF WAR (FUNERALS, THE
CRYING, THE ONES YOU DON'T WANNA SEE BUT ARE
THERE)**

From: Andy Springer

To: GI Special
Sent: July 16, 2007
Subject: GI SPECIAL.....HELL YEAH BROTHER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I AM A RETURNING WAR VET THAT IS AGAINST THE WAR AND THE TRAGIC LOSS OF LIFE!!!

FEEL SAFER YET???? IT SEEMS YOU FEEL THE SAME WAY WITH YOUR GI SPECIAL.....

I AM A HIP HOP ARTIST AND AM MAKING A WEBSITE AND AM TRYING TO BE THE VOICE FOR THE ANTI WAR MOVEMENT AND HONOR OUR LOST SOLDIERS AND SUPPORT THE TROOPS.

I AM EMAILING TO SAY FIRST I LIKE THE WORK MAN, AND SECOND TO SEE IF YOU CAN HELP ME HELP THE CAUSE.....BY E MAILING ANY PICTURES YOU HAVE OF THE PAIN OF WAR (FUNERALS, THE CRYING, THE ONES YOU DON'T WANNA SEE BUT ARE THERE) . WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S CURTAIN ON THE MEDIA AND FUNERALS BEING SUCH A PRIVATE THING IT IS HARD TO FIND THE PICTURES.

I WISH THEY WEREN'T THERE AND IT HURTS TO SEE AND PUT IT TOGETHER BUT I FEEL BY SHOWING AND LETTING THESE DUMBASS PEOPLE SEE WHAT THEY SUPPORT MAYBE THEN THEY'LL IMAGINE WHAT IF IT WAS THEM???

YOU KNOW.?? WAKE UP AMERICA THE SOLDIERS ARE DYING.

ANYTHING YOU CAN DO TO HELP I WILL APPRECIATE

IF NOT AGAIN I LIKE THE WORK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

AWALL THE WAR VET

REPLY:

Thanks for writing in and for your encouragement.

The source for hundreds and hundreds of photos of funerals of troops killed in Iraq is found at:

<http://images.google.com/images?q=Iraq+Soldier+Funerals&gbv=2&ndsp=20&svnum=10&hl=en&start=0&sa=N>

If that doesn't work, just go to Google, and click on Graphics, and then type in "Iraq soldier funerals."

Respect to you.

T

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out
GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

<http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html>;

<http://imagineaworldof.blogspot.com/>; <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>;

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.