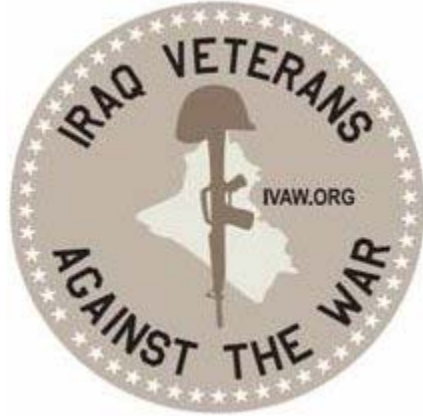


GI SPECIAL 5G21:



**“I Felt Like I Had Been
An Oppressor”**

**“I Had Spent 14 Months In A
Country That Did Not Want Me,
And I Had Tried To Push My
Values Upon Them”**



07/14/2007: Richard Peters, Iraq Veterans Against The War: **(This is NOT my story, reprinted here with permission, from Neil Heckman of California, who is a close friend and OIF vet as well.)** www.ivaw.org/]

A Soldier's Soldier

We were singing about battle, and how, if it ever came to it, we would proudly sacrifice our lives.

What none of us knew at the time, was that one day, we would survive the battles we were to face, but that the cadences we all so loved, would die, along with the image of ourselves that we had built inside our heads.

By Neil Heckman

I was running in formation with my fellow soldiers in basic training, singing wonderful martial cadences. We were running in the early morning sun, singing about killing the enemy—kicking ass and taking names.

We were singing about the glories of war: jumping out of airplanes, taking on enemy fire, and dying for a great cause.

We were singing about battle, and how, if it ever came to it, we would proudly sacrifice our lives.

What none of us knew at the time, was that one day, we would survive the battles we were to face, but that the cadences we all so loved, would die, along with the image of ourselves that we had built inside our heads.

I am writing this from personal experience as a soldier in the United States Army who severed for 4 and a half years, 14 months of which took place in Baghdad, Iraq.

In the army, I noticed I had created an idea of myself, which was impressed on me from the training I received and the society of soldiers with which I lived.

Now, I would like to share with you what I have learned to undo the destructive myths associated with heroism and honor.

From my very first day in the US Army, I entered into a society of soldiers.

We were told that we had become men, and were expected to behave like them.

Our sergeants gave us a Creed which we memorized along with 7 Army Values. The creed was meant to set us apart from civilians and the enemy. The creed was to serve as a corner stone for our new identities as soldiers.

It told us to that we were to “Live the Army Values, place the mission first, and never accept defeat.” Last of all—perhaps very last—it said that we were to be the “guardians of freedom and the American way of life.”

At the time, I was proud of the idea of adhering to these ideals. We were proud. And we stood as a team.

And we stood apart, as exceptional individuals who did things better than the civilians we began to look down upon. We also did more things: we woke up earlier, exercised together, trained in the mud for weeks without showers, worked longer, knew government secrets, and protected those who could not otherwise defend themselves.

Furthermore, we were better than the enemy. For us, there was no mission or task too great—there was no excuse for failure. Whatever the case was, we were American soldiers, who, for the sake of the mission, could go anywhere and do anything. Whatever difficulties we may be having, we just had to “suck it up and drive on.”

Our equipment was the better and we were taught to have confidence in it. At the museums around the base, there were army vehicles sitting next to enemy vehicles. Ours were big and mighty looking in comparison to the puny tin cans the enemy would be fighting us with.

The successes we had in Desert Storm were tales to prove how great we were. My unit in Germany had destroyed more tanks than any other in the history of armed conflict within just a mere few days of fighting.

What did I have to fear? What could strike me down?

Even if I was shot, my buddies would take care of me. We practiced combat first aid all the time, and were questioned about it daily: “What do you do with a sucking chest wound—put a piece of plastic on it to save the soldier’s life.” “What do you do for a gut wound—cover the intestines and the medics will put the soldier back together.” “What do you do to stop bleeding—apply increasing pressure to the wound until it stops. If it doesn’t, tie a tourniquet.” Whatever the case may have been, there was a way of saving the soldier—there was always a way to cheat death.

This is how it was in training.

In May 2003, we received orders to deploy to Baghdad, Iraq to fight the ongoing war.

In the months to follow, the only thing that seemed to hold true about my training was that we did things together... as a team? Most the time, I felt a little detached... from the team... after some of the things I saw. And I wasn't alone. I think we all slowly started to detach.

But, when we first got there, our values—our identities were still strong. We had gone to Iraq with brand-new equipment—we were trained and ready to kill... eager to kill. There was an enemy out there that must be destroyed so that democracy could take hold in Iraq.

I was a liberator—a liberator. I had come there, from America, to give those men and women the same liberties for which my forefathers had sacrificed their lives. And to me, it sure seemed like they were thankful for it.

They loved us. When I looked out of the turret of my humvee, wearing the American flag on my right shoulder, people—women, children, men, and the elderly—all waved. Children would ask for candy, and men always wanted to know where we were from. “Fuck Saddam,” they all said to me with big smiles on their faces. I would later learn that this was one of the only things we actually agreed upon.

As the weeks went on, the cheer seemed to fade, and when we drove through Baghdad, it was no longer like being a parade. Now, there was a sense—a strong since of hostility.

Attacks started, and mortars were shot into our compound daily.

Because everyone seemed pissed at us, we started to assume that they were all responsible in one way or the other for the attempts that had been made against our lives. My unit suffered its first casualty when one of our medics was blown in half with a grenade. The stories of death I had heard became a reality.

One of us had died. The men who were with him said he had lived for hours after they brought him to the hospital, but he eventually expired, surrounded by his friends. As I listened to the story of his death, it was hard to imagine that he actually died. It was hard for me to believe in death...until I started seeing bodies for myself.

After all the dead... after seeing all the motionless... the pale... the drained... I came back to America.

After seeing how men behave in war, after seeing... I could no longer hold the identity of myself I once had. I could no longer say, “I am a liberator.” I could no longer say, “I am a guardian of liberty and freedom.”

I felt like I had been an oppressor.

I had spent 14 months in a country that did not want me, and I had tried to push my values upon them.

Now, when I watch movies of war, they embarrass me with their lies of heroics and honor. Men do not stand bravely to face the enemy when they have fresh images of death on their minds. Men do not sacrifice shit for the mission, but care only about

saving their own asses. Men do not even stay true to their own wives, but lower themselves to sleeping with Iraqi women. No story held true.

All the honor, all the pride, all the duty, all the self-sacrifice went down the drain as quickly as the US army could wash the blood off the stained streets of Baghdad.

US soldiers, blown to pieces, look just like Iraqi men, blown to pieces.

And pretty soon I started wondering, why the hell I had been out there, blowing each other to pieces in the first place.

Was it because I was better? Was I following my orders... fulfilling my mission?

Was it because of 9/11?

Or, was it just because some men got a little carried away with themselves... forgetting all the things they share with one another... first and foremost ... being their right to life.

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Soldier Killed By Samarra IED; Two Wounded

July 23, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070723-21

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – A 13th SC(E) Soldier was killed July 21 as a result of injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee while conducting a combat logistics patrol south of Samarra, Iraq.

Two other Soldiers sustained injuries in the blast and were treated by Coalition Forces' medical personnel and are awaiting further medical assessment.

Nebraska Soldier Killed In Ballad



Nebraska Army National Guard Sgt. Jacob Schmuecker, 27, of Norfolk, Neb. died July 21, 2007, in a roadside bomb explosion in Balad, Iraq. (AP Photo/Family photo via the Norfolk Daily News)

IED Kills U.S. Soldier In Baghdad

July 23, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070723-01

BAGHDAD – One MNC-I Soldier was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated next to his vehicle during combat operations in Baghdad Saturday.

Marine Killed In Anbar

July 23, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070723-27

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to Multi National Force-West was killed July 21 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province.

U.S. Soldier Killed By IED Someplace Or Other In Iraq

July 23, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070723-19

BAGHDAD — A Task Force Marne Soldier died of wounds sustained after an improvised explosive device attack July 22 .

Austin Soldier Dies In Iraq



By Miguel Liscano

July 20, 2007 By Miguel Liscano, AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Shortly before Pfc. Ron J. Joshua Jr. shipped off for Iraq a few months ago, he drove his pickup from Austin to Donaldsonville, La. to visit family members and assure them that he'd be OK in the war zone, his godmother Warrine Joshua Lightfoot said.

On Tuesday Joshua, 19 of Austin, died in Baghdad after an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle, according to the Department of Defense.

Joshua had been in the country for just over two months, Lightfoot said.

"He wasn't but 19 years old," his grandmother Brenda Lawson said. "He hadn't even begun his life."

During his visit just before he left, Joshua hung out with cousins, visited Lawson and Lightfoot and ate boiled crawfish, one of his favorite dishes.

Lightfoot said some in his family were against him going to Iraq because they were afraid he wouldn't come back. But Joshua tried to put them at ease.

“He kept saying, ‘everything will be alright,’ “ she said.

Lightfoot said Joshua, who had two sisters, grew up with parents in the military.

His father, Ron Joshua Sr., is a master sergeant who also served in the current war in Iraq, and his mother, Ursula Joshua, formerly served in the Army, Lightfoot said.

Joshua was born in Germany and spent much of his life moving around with his parents, Lightfoot said.

He was a quiet child growing up, playing football in high school and always minding his manners around adults, Lightfoot said.

“He was a jewel,” Lightfoot said. “It was always ‘yes, ma’am’ and ‘no, ma’am.’ “

Lightfoot said Joshua would frequently say he wasn’t planning to join the Army like his parents.

But he signed up for the Army as soon as he graduated from Hendrickson High School in Pflugerville in 2006, relatives said.

She said he never explained why he went into the military.

“My grandson should have never went to Iraq that young,” Lawson said. “But, that’s what he wanted to do, go for his country.”

Lightfoot said she spoke with her godson over the phone a few weeks ago and he sounded happy.

She also said he sounded different on the phone: a little more like a man.

And again, he tried to put her at ease.

“‘Don’t worry, everything’s going to be alright,’ “ she recalls him saying. “That’s what he would always say.

“He was a child that once you met him, you’d never forget him.”

Joshua was assigned to the 401st Military Police Company, 92nd Military Police Battalion, 89th Military Police Brigade in Fort Hood, according to the Department of Defense.

Pfc. Brandon K. Bobb, 20, of Orlando, Fla., also died in Tuesday’s explosion, the Defense Department said.

Soldier Who Got Parents’ OK To Enlist At 17 Killed In Iraq



Army Pfc. Christopher Kube who died July 14 in Baghdad, Iraq.

July 17, 2007 ASSOCIATED PRESS

A teen who got his parents' permission to join the Army at 17 has been killed in the blast of an improvised explosive device in Iraq.

Pfc. Christopher D. Kube, 18, of Shelby Township died Saturday in Baghdad. He was one of two Michigan soldiers reported killed in Iraq last week.

Kube was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, based at Ft. Carson, Colo., the Defense Department said.

"He volunteered for that mission," his mother, Debbie Krupski, said Monday from the family's home. "My son wasn't even supposed to be there."

Kube was a gunner and the only soldier killed in the explosion, Krupski told the Detroit News.

Kube's parents let him enlist in the Army at 17, and he shipped out to Iraq in October, one month after turning 18.

"He enjoyed the military," his mother said. "He always met the challenge."

She said she last saw her son in February when he was on leave. While home, he married his girlfriend, Tianna, whom he met in Colorado.

Krupski said Kube loved riding dirt bikes and deer-hunting with his father.

He was the oldest of five children. Other survivors include father David Kube, brothers John and Jason, and sisters Jessica and Jennifer.

Funeral arraignments were incomplete, his mother said Monday.

On Sunday, the Pentagon announced the death Friday of Army Sgt. Allen A. Greka, 29, of Alpena, who was hit by a land mine while on patrol in Jisr Diyala.

“It’s very hard to deal with, but we’ve been getting a lot of support from everyone in the area,” his father, Steven Greka, told the Alpena News.

Allen Greka and his wife, Jennifer, were married about a year ago. The couple had a 4-month-old daughter, Lilith. Greka also had a 4-year-old stepdaughter, Rose, his father said.

Steven Greka described his son as a very professional soldier who loved what he did and enjoyed reading.

“Anything he read he retained,” Steven Greka said. “He was very intelligent.”

Allen Greka also is survived by his mother, Patti Greka. Funeral arrangements were pending Monday.

Greka was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division at Ft. Benning, Ga.

Notes From A Lost War:

**“Why Are They Killing Us? We
Have No One Left!” The Old
Woman Began To Shout:
“They Aren’t Saving Anyone, They’re
Killing Civilians. And Who’s Behind
This?”
“She Pointed To The American Soldiers”**

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

Jul. 23, 2007 Mohammed al Dulaimy and Hannah Allam, McClatchy Newspapers. (Al Dulaimy is a special correspondent for McClatchy Newspapers. Leila Fadel and special correspondent Laith Hammoudi contributed to this article.)

BAGHDAD — It was just another car bomb, this time an old, blue Volkswagen Passat that blew up in a busy shopping district of Baghdad, one of four that killed and maimed Iraqi civilians Monday.

But the array of first responders who descended on the smoke-filled scene exemplified how militants aren't the only force that's undermining the plan to restore order to the violent Iraqi capital.

After the blast near a busy shrine in the mostly Shiite Muslim area of Karrada, Iraqi firefighters, medical workers, Iraqi police, traffic police, Iraqi soldiers, American troops, members of two powerful Shiite militias and ordinary residents jostled for control. With so many forces picking through the charred, bloody wreckage, no single group emerged as the one in charge, and the already frenzied scene spiraled into pandemonium.

The bombings occurred on the eve of long-anticipated talks between U.S. and Iranian officials on ways to reduce the rampant bloodletting in Iraq. Three parked cars, including the Volkswagen, blew up within an hour Monday morning; a fourth detonated that afternoon outside a Kurdish restaurant near an entrance to the fortified Green Zone.

Iraqi officials said at least 18 people died and more than 40 were injured in those bombings. Two smaller explosions — one on a minibus and one near a police station — killed another Iraqi and wounded 11. Police announced that 24 corpses had been discovered throughout Baghdad.

At the scene near the shrine in Karrada, Iraqi firefighters turned their hoses on smoldering vehicles as medics attended to the injured or recovered the dead. Iraqi police interviewed one set of witnesses while Iraqi soldiers questioned another batch.

U.S. troops, who arrived in a convoy of Humvees, shooed away all the bystanders, including other possible witnesses.

Two unarmed Mahdi Army militiamen barred a journalist from photographing the scene, even though government authorities said they had no objection to the photos.

Three self-described members of a so-called popular committee, the neighborhood patrols established by the Iranian-backed Badr Organization, set up their own checkpoint about 100 feet from where U.S. and Iraqi authorities had gathered.

Neighborhood residents, skeptical of all the security forces' abilities, took it upon themselves to record license-plate numbers in their personal notebooks.

Some residents even began collecting shrapnel and other evidence, launching their own "investigation."

When the civilians overheard two Iraqi police officials recording what they considered an incorrect version of events, the locals yelled at the authorities and tried to block them from viewing the blast site.

“They put in that police checkpoint and it wasn’t useful,” said Ali Yousef, who survived the bombing with minor injuries; his computer shop was destroyed.

“They brought in more police, and it didn’t stop them. I think there’s nothing that can stop this.”

Another witness, a bespectacled professional who asked to be identified only by his first name of Haider because of fear for his safety, waved his arms and cursed the Iraqi government and security forces, whom he described as puppets of the U.S.-led occupation.

“We don’t have a government! It’s worthless,” Haider yelled. “Bring me one honest man from the Sunnis or the Shiites!”

An elderly woman in a white head scarf and colorful robes glared at the American troops who arrived at the scene, less than a half-mile from a bridge leading into the Green Zone compound, after the dead and injured had been retrieved.

The firefighters already had extinguished the blaze.

“Why are they killing us? We have no one left!” the old woman, who identified herself only as Umm Hussein, began to shout.

“They aren’t saving anyone, they’re killing civilians. And who’s behind this?”

She pointed to the American soldiers.

A man who said his relatives had been killed in a previous bombing in Karrada seethed as he surveyed the jumble of uniformed officials at the scene.

“What have we gained?” he screamed. “Damn religion! Damn prayers! Who’s going to bring back my father and uncle?”

Other residents led the man away, sharply warning him against blasphemy.

The latest violence came ahead of a meeting of Iranian, American and Iraqi officials scheduled for Tuesday in the Green Zone. The negotiating teams are expected to include the Iranian and American ambassadors to Baghdad.

Earlier, some Iraqi officials had complained that they were being sidelined; another example of overlapping forces at play in Iraq.

It was later agreed that Iraqi officials would observe the talks, though U.S.-Iranian interests would take center stage.

“I have no illusion that the erosion of confidence between the two (nations) is so deep it will take some time,” said Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari, who was instrumental in arranging the gathering.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



US soldiers in western Baghdad, 20 July 2007. (AFP/File/Olivier Laban-Mattei)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Paktika IED Kills Four U.S. Troops, Another Wounded

7.23.07 By JASON STRAZIUSO, Associated Press Writer & (Reuters)

KABUL, Afghanistan - A roadside bomb blast in eastern Afghanistan killed four American soldiers on Monday. Another was wounded.

The bomb blast came against U.S. soldiers conducting a combat patrol in the eastern province of Paktika, Gov. Mohammad Ekram Akhpelwak said.

Norwegian Soldier Killed In Logar And Another Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed In Kunar

7.23.07 By JASON STRAZIUSO, Associated Press Writer

Norway said one of its soldiers was killed in Logar province. Another NATO soldier was killed in an ambush in the eastern province of Kunar, the alliance said.

TROOP NEWS

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



The funeral for 3rd Infantry Division U.S. Army Sgt. Gene L. Lamie, 25 years-old, from Homerville, Georgia, who was killed in an explosion in Iraq earlier this month, at Arlington National Cemetery July 18, 2007. REUTERS/Larry Downing

**“We Will Have Spent 14 Months In
Contact, Basically Fighting All 14
Months,” Said Cpl. Joshua Lake
“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"

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

July 16, 2007 ABC News [Excerpts]

ABC News has an exclusive look at that campaign, a portion of which was filmed by British photographer Sean Smith of the Guardian newspaper, who was embedded with the U.S. Army's Second Infantry Division.

Smith spent two weeks with members of Apache Company and filmed them as they went on daily routine investigations, including one of a bomb making factory hidden in a private home.

"I challenge anybody in Congress to do my rotation," said Spc. Michael Vassell of Apache Company. "They don't have to do anything, they just come hang out with me and go home at the times I go home, and come stay here 15 months with me."

"Because 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," Vassell said. "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."

"It's a joke. We will have spent 14 months in contact, basically fighting all 14 months," said Cpl. Joshua Lake.

"Our battalion got right to Baghdad ... first week we were in Baghdad we lost two guys in our battalion ... it hasn't stopped since."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

July 23, 2007 The Associated Press & (Xinhua) & By Ahmed Rasheed, Reuters & (AFP) & Laith Hammoudi, McClatchy Newspapers

A female bomber Monday blew herself up into a police checkpoint in the center of Ramadi City, 110 km west of Baghdad, killing seven policemen, local police source said.

Three parked cars exploded in a predominantly Shiite area in Baghdad on Monday.

One went off near a Karrada office which issues identity cards to Iraqis. Police said the bomb's target appeared to be a passing police patrol and that three police officers were among six people killed.

"It was a horrible scene, suddenly fire spread all over the area. I saw two charred bodies of policemen inside their car and the wounded were lying on the ground, only their hands moving and asking for help," Abu Nour, a 45-year-old supermarket owner, told Reuters.

At least seven cars also were damaged in blasts which struck near the Interior Ministry's nationality and social affairs directorate and the 14th of July bridge in Karradah, he added.

Less than an hour later a third car bomb, again apparently targeting a passing police patrol, detonated in Karrada's al-Wathiq square, killing three people, two of them policemen.

Another car packed with explosives struck a police patrol in Elway square at about 11:30 a.m. in another part of Karradah, killing two policemen,

A policeman was killed in an armed assault at a police checkpoint in central Iskandiriyah,

The police officials all spoke on condition of anonymity because of fears they too would become targets.

Five Iraqi soldiers were killed in a roadside bomb near the Iranian border. Iraqi army Lieutenant Muntadhar Mohammed said the bomb targeted the soldier patrol between the towns of Badra and Bela Druz, 180 kilometres (110 miles) east of Baghdad.

A roadside bomb seriously wounded at least four policemen near Dujail, 90 km (55 miles) north of Baghdad, on Sunday night, police said.

The bodies of 8 Iraqi Kurdish soldiers had been delivered to their families today.

The commander of the 1st battalion in the 1st brigade in the 2nd Iraqi division said that 2 soldiers were killed and 2 injured in an IED explosion targeted their vehicle while searching some neighborhoods in Mosul city early morning today while the other 6 soldiers had been killed in separated operations in Mosul city.

The spokesman of Basra police said that a civilian was killed and 8 others wounded when the British forces bombed Kut Al Hajaj area downtown Basra city on Sunday evening. 8 houses were damaged.

2 electricity directorate workers were killed and a third one was injured downtown Muqdadiyah town north east Baquba city when their patrol was attacked by militants around 1,15 pm.

The director of Soleman Bek district north east of Tokrit city had survived today morning from an assassination attempt when an IED exploded targeting his vehicle on Kafri – Tooz Street. His chauffeur was injured in the incident.

2 civilians were killed and 2 wounded when gunmen opened fire targeting a pick up car of the ministry of oil in Waziriyah neighborhood today afternoon.

4 Iraqi soldiers were wounded when they were shot by guerrillas in Adhemiyah neighborhood north Baghdad around 1,00 pm.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Amnesia



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: July 23, 2007
Subject: Amnesia

**Those Who Fail To Study The Past
Are Condemned To Repeat It.
George Santayana**

**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)

OCCUPATION REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

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



Foreign occupation soldiers from the USA abuse and torment an Iraqi citizen in his own home during a raid in western Baghdad, 20 July. (AFP/Olivier Laban-Mattei)

“You get the interpreter and you get the man of the home, and you have him at gunpoint, and you’ll ask the interpreter to ask him: ‘Do you have any weapons? Do you have any anti-US propoganda, anything at all--anything--anything in here that would lead us to believe that you are somehow involved in insurgent activity or anti-coalition forces activity?’

“So you’ve just humiliated this man in front of his entire family and terrorized his entire family and you’ve destroyed his home. And then you go right next door and you do the same thing in a hundred homes.”

Sgt. John Bruhns

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

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

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

***Here’s One General Betrayus Can Put
In His Progress Report:
“The Karkh Side Of Baghdad Where
Nearly Half Of The City’s Six Million
People Live Has Been Without Electricity
For More Than 10 Days”***

July 22, 2007 Azzaman

The Karkh side of Baghdad where nearly half of the city’s six million people live has been without electricity for more than 10 days.

The Tigris River divides Baghdad into two parts – the Karkh and Rasafa. Baghdad has much less electricity than before the 2003 U.S. invasion.

Nationwide, electricity generation rates are also lower with major cities and towns often suffering more than 20-hour long outages.

As the output levels from major power plants decline, the authorities have almost done nothing to provide new alternatives.

Some residents in Karkh accused the government of 'negligence'. The authorities, they said, blame even the problems they create on lack of security.

Abdulkareem Radhi, a workshop owner, said power shortages were one of the reasons for the rampant unemployment. "My workshop relies totally on electricity. No electricity no wages," he said.

Rijab Abdullah said military operations by Iraqi and U.S. troops cause a lot of infrastructure damage in areas they target.

"Such military operations should be coordinated with the Ministry of Electricity," he said.

Some residents mocked official excuses that the outages are the result of violence and insecurity.

"The Ministry of Electricity has exerted no effort in the past five years to provide a solution," said Abduwahid Abdulhussein.

Among the options, he said, the authorities could have built small, gas-driven power plants to serve different quarters of Baghdad.

The Ministry of Electricity's allocations from the treasury and donors' money is estimated at billions of dollars in the past five years.

It is hard to sell the official rhetoric regarding the outages to the public.

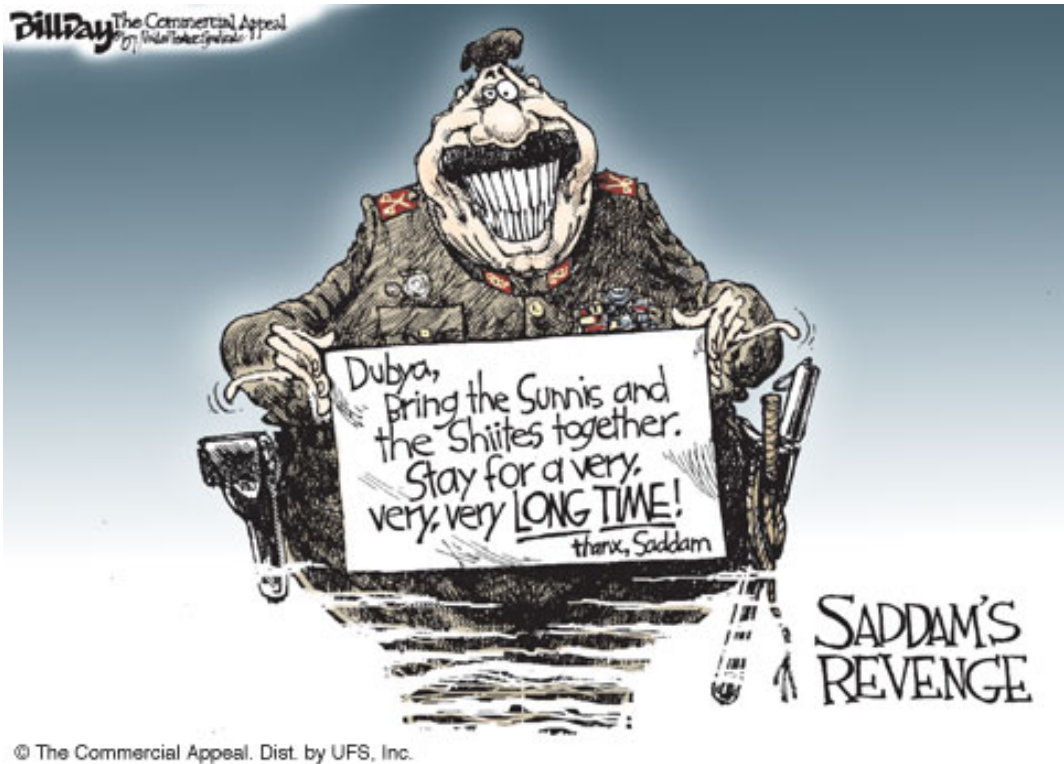
"According to the statements of the ministries of interior and defense thousands of gunmen have been killed or detained during latest military operations.

"We wonder, 'who is then destroying the national grid if all these numbers are being killed and captured,'" said Rasheed Zamel.

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.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



“Whatever ‘Leave Iraq’ Might Mean, No Candidate Of Either Party Likely To Enter The White House On January 20, 2009 Can Think It Means Letting Iraqis Determine Their Own National Policies Or Fate”

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

July 22, 2007 By Ira Chernus, Tomdispatch.com [Excerpts]

Pity the poor Democratic candidates for president, caught between Iraq and a hard place. Every day, more and more voters decide that we must end the war and set a date to start withdrawing our troops from Iraq.

Most who will vote in the Democratic primaries concluded long ago that we must leave Iraq, and they are unlikely to let anyone who disagrees with them have the party's nomination in 2008.

But what does it mean to “leave Iraq”?

Here's where most of the Democratic candidates come smack up against that hard place.

There is a longstanding bipartisan consensus in the foreign-policy establishment that the U.S. must control every strategically valuable region of the world -- and none more so than the oil heartlands of the planet.

That's been a hard-and-fast rule of the elite for some six decades now. No matter how hard the task may be, they demand that presidents be rock-hard enough to get the job done.

So whatever "leave Iraq" might mean, no candidate of either party likely to enter the White House on January 20, 2009 can think it means letting Iraqis determine their own national policies or fate.

The powers that be just wouldn't stand for that.

They see themselves as the guardians of world "order."

They feel a sacred obligation to maintain "stability" throughout the imperial domains, which now means most of planet Earth -- regardless of what voters may think. T

The Democratic front-runners know that "order" and "stability" are code words for American hegemony.

They also know that voters, especially Democratic ones, see the price of hegemony in Iraq and just don't want to pay it anymore.

So the Democratic front-runners must promise voters that they will end the war -- with not too many ideologically laden ifs, ands, or buts -- while they assure the foreign-policy establishment that they will never abandon the drive for hegemony in the Middle East (or anywhere else).

In other words, the candidates have to be able to talk out of both sides of their mouths at the same time.

The top Democrats agree that we must leave significant numbers of U.S. troops in Iraq, not only for selfish reasons, but because we Americans are so altruistic.

We want to prevent chaos and bring order and stabilization to that country -- as if U.S. troops were not already creating chaos and instability there every day.

But among the foreign policy elite, the U.S. is always a force for order, "helping" naturally chaotic foreigners achieve "stability."

For the elite, it's axiomatic that the global "stability" that keeps us secure and prosperous is also a boon for the people we "stabilize."

For this to happen in Iraq, time must be bought with partial "withdrawal" plans.

(It matters little how many foreigners we kill in the process, as long as U.S. casualties are reduced enough to appease public opinion at home.)

With an election looming, the Democrats portray themselves as the polar opposite of the Republicans.

They blame the Iraq fiasco entirely on Bush and the neocons, conveniently overlooking all the support Bush got from the Democratic elite before his military venture went sour.

Received:

“Day After Day Our Troops Get Killed Or Maimed By IED’s In This Stupid War”

From: Dar
To: GI Special
Sent: July 23, 2007
Subject: IED, etc.

How long do our troops have to die from IED explosions while better armored vehicles just sit on a production line?

What about MRAP’s?? or IED-proof APC’s?? (better known as “The Rock”) - the few that are sent are given to Marines, but what about the Army?

Hey! Cheney’s making enough profit from this war - he should be made to donate some!!

At least I’ve read of these vehicles - but day after day our troops get killed or maimed by IED’s in this stupid war while Cheney and the like make profits.

Just try and put them in a Bradley for a day, or one of their children. Yeah, right.

Not acceptable that Cheney disapproved any war with Iraq when he was Secretary of Defense under Bush, Sr. - but after his affiliation with Halliburton he changed shoes.

Such Hypocrisy and he just sits there and gets paid.

I lost the best man to Viet Nam - now my friends are losing their loved ones in Iraq.

For what??!!!

The word “MAD” doesn’t cover it!

Received:

“War is Slavery - An Awakening”

From: Arnold Stieber
To: GI Special
Sent: July 23, 2007
Subject: War is slavery

Folks,

I read your report about the horrors the kids are going thru in Iraq. The memories will never go away.

I'm a Viet Nam vet. Below is a piece I wrote that attempts to get at the “why”.

Peace,
ARNY
Arnold Stieber
War is slavery
734-475-0740

- If you have to hurt someone to solve a problem, YOU are the problem. -

War is Slavery - An Awakening

It was January of 2003, late at night, and I was home alone. I turned on the TV. The movie Platoon was on.

I had never watched any violent shows nor read anything about war or Viet Nam since I left there in March of 1971.

Now, all these years later, I figured it was time and I could handle it.

The scene was a US patrol entering a village. I saw the kids with their big dark eyes, skinny bodies and ragged clothes - and it all came back. The sights, the sounds, the smells.

I turned off the TV and sat in a darkened room. It was like a lightning bolt followed by thunder. It hit me . . . and then proceeded to roll through my mind.

Now what?, I asked myself.

The next day was a frenzy of activity. Answers. Answers. I needed answers. The internet (thank goodness for this powerful tool) became my life. Unstructured for the first few months, I consumed a new world of information.

At 57 years of age with an MBA, it seemed like I should have known these things. But I was almost totally ignorant.

Information on war, peace, politics, world affairs, religion, organizations, books, magazines, videos, DVDs, in depth radio and TV shows - and the list grew with each passing day. I needed structure. After several months I formulated two questions: Why war? and Why do we so proudly send our children to kill other children?

These two questions burned my brain. Howard Zinn helped with his book on US history. Marine Major General Smedley Butler helped with his booklet "War is a Racket". Many other authors and people and programs moved me along the path.

My research revealed that the main causes of war are money and markets.

There is always plenty of flag waving and bluster about the "evil ones", but every war I've studied, once you begin peeling back the layers, has money and markets as a common core.

Why do we send our kids to kill? Because that's how we raise them. Sometimes subtle, sometimes overt, but there is an ever present message that violence is the solution to conflict. Go into any park in any town and you'll probably see a military statue, or a cannon. Veterans' memorials are everywhere. Veterans and the military lead parades. The military carries the flag into sporting events. POW-MIA flags fly from Post Offices and other buildings. Highways are named after wars, war veterans, and generals. Battleships are named after Presidents. We have civil war reenactments. We call the military "service". We let violence into our language - "I could just kill my kids", "bullet points", and sports announcers inject "kill", "beat", "destroyed" into their descriptions. The more overt influences are easy - video games, TV shows, weapon toys, paint ball parks. It's there. Everyday. All of these lower the barriers to hurting others.

I've tried to summarize my findings into short, snappy slogans, to get people to think. I use to say that "war is failure". This worked for me for a while. But war is only failure for one side. For the other side, war is magnificent.

It is the best business in the world. High profits, little competition, products rapidly used. Weapons are the number one export product of the USA.

Thousands of people are employed in the death and destruction industry. Thousands also spend their lives teaching at war colleges and military schools. Other thousands plan wars and "covert actions". Mercenary companies are on the rise. I'm told that there are over 120,000 mercenary troops in Iraq. Contractors are used for everything from "security" to spies.

Thus I needed a new slogan, a new summary of my research. I found it in an unusual location.

As I walked through the Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati I began to feel what slavery was/is. It felt vaguely familiar.

The oppression, the hatred, the total dominance, the violence, the tearing apart of families are part of slavery, but there is also "the other side".

On the other side is the money and the righteous - the people who were not only comfortable with slavery, but promoted it. The preachers, the politicians, the teachers, the business people, the pillars of society said slavery was not only necessary, it was the only way the country could survive.

The slaves weren't people. They weren't human. It was OK to torture them and shoot them and hang them. It was OK to use dogs on them and beat them. They didn't have a brain. The Golden Rule - the summary statement of all religions - didn't apply to them.

Slavery will never be forgotten - on the one side. The scars are deep, bone deep, generations deep. Like war.

On the other side the masters and the foreman and the slave traders and the bankers and the pillars of society and all those who supported and profited from slavery didn't have bad memories. They didn't have loses. They knew that what they did was "right for the country". There was nothing to forget.

As I thought about slavery over the next months I began to realize that slavery and war are very similar. The one side (the slaves, or in war - the civilians and the lower ranks of the military) suffers. The other side says war is a great and noble thing and the only way the country can survive. War is slavery.

Arnold Stieber - Michigan - 2007

Received:

“A Soldier On Leave Soon Who Doesn't Want To Go Back To Iraq - Help Requested”

From: Yvette Coil tleecoil@yahoo.com

Sent: Sunday, July 22, 2007

Subject: A Soldier on leave soon who doesn't want to go back to Iraq - Help Requested

This is an urgent appeal to all who can or might want to help.

I have a friend who is currently in the Army in Iraq. In a few months he will be coming home for a few weeks of leave. He doesn't want to go back to Iraq but he doesn't want to go AWOL because he owes money to the US and he has a wife to support so he doesn't want to live in exile. Many of you may not appreciate his reasons for not wanting to go AWOL but instead of focusing on that, help me find a legal way to get him out of Iraq.

If you haven't thought about it (you might want to) but the US is basically making our young people indentured servants. Most of the people who take the sign on bonus, of however many thousands of dollars they promise you for joining, use it to benefit their families or get themselves out of debt or whatever they might use the bonus on. I am sure that many of them do not realize that this money they are taking is essentially the

price for their own lives. To my understanding, if they later wind up realizing that this war is a lie and their lives are worth far more than a couple of thousand, by then the money is spent and they are faced with having to pay it back if they go AWOL or whatever. It looks like modern day slavery to me. This isn't something America should be promoting and in fact we should be very ashamed and alarmed at this behavior that the military is displaying towards our youth. We should be contacting congress to stop this sign on bonus crap - if congress actually worked towards the benefit of the people. But back to the point of this email...

Right now, can anyone think of a legal way to get a soldier out of Iraq and or out of the Army (or any branch of service) all together without having to pay the military back? I have already called the GI Rights Hotline and they won't have live counselors until Thursday and I've called them before and haven't received answers so I'm thinking they are busy with other issues. Not to take away from their work which is VERY valuable and necessary, but I'm sure there are former soldiers and current who've read the regulations and know a way out without refusing to return or going AWOL. There used to be a way out of the Army by not passing two physical training tests in a row, but I think that they've recently let a lot of heavier individuals join the military so I don't think that counts anymore. And I don't think they do PT's while in a war zone do they?

Honestly, every bit of our money should be pooled and we should buy our soldiers back. What a wonderful dream that is.

But back in reality, my friend still needs help. We welcome all suggestions.

Take care but take risks and choose peace always,

Yvette and Tim Coil

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

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

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

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

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

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