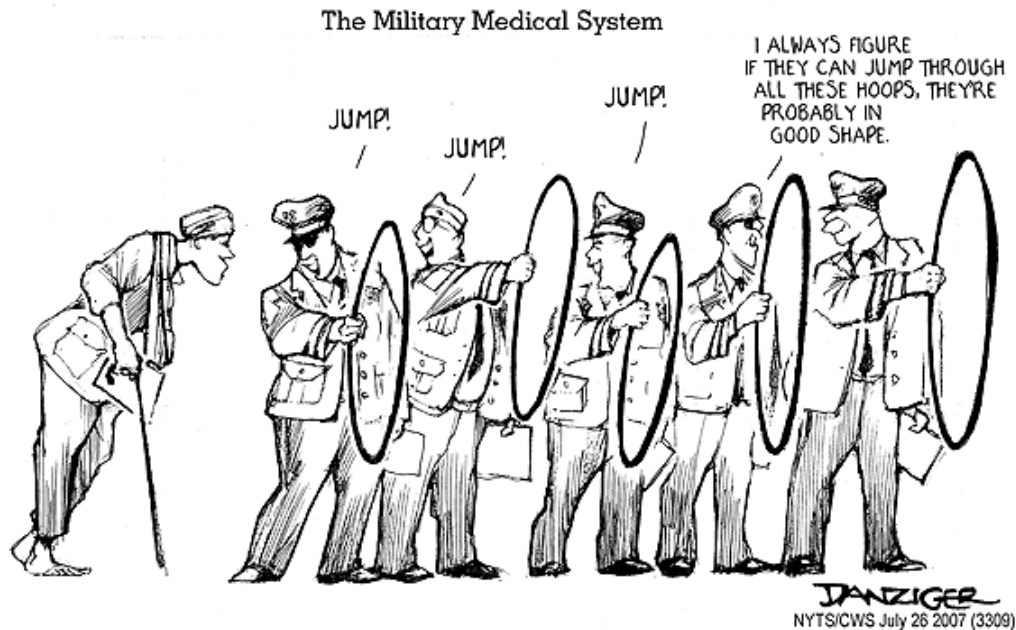


GI SPECIAL 5G28:



Soldiers In Revolt 2007: Chapter 1: “The Frustration And Anger Felt By Many Of Those Being Treated At Walter Reed Boiled Over At A Town Hall Meeting”

Comment: T

Those who remember news reports of town meetings during the last days of the Russian dictatorship in 1990, as frightened Party bureaucrats faced meetings of full of enraged citizens, will find this story familiar, including the pathetic, desperate closing line from the bureaucrat Col. at Walter Reed: “There isn’t anyone here that’s against you.”

It is understandable that the first to rise were the wounded at Walter Reed. Who in a better position to do so?

Some might say, "Soldiers in revolt? Don't be silly. Look at the tiny little issues they raised. A bad doctor. A problem with paperwork. That means nothing."

When a gathering of troops confronts their commanding officer in boiling rage, and faces him down, that means everything.

There will be more of this, in different settings, taking different forms. And it will not be confined to the wounded.

This is only the beginning.

July 31, 2007 By Steve Vogel, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

After revelations this year of squalid living conditions and bureaucratic nightmares at Walter Reed, the Army took the unusual step of creating the Warrior Transition Brigade.

To lead the brigade, senior Army officials tapped Col. Terrence McKenrick, a highly regarded Army Ranger whose previous assignment was at the Joint Operations Center for Multi-National Corps-Iraq.

The frustration and anger felt by many of those being treated at Walter Reed boiled over at a town hall meeting with the full brigade at 8 a.m. one day last week in the hospital gymnasium.

The bleachers were packed with soldiers bearing evidence of terrible wounds. Many used canes or crutches. Others wore prostheses and some had eye patches or disfigured faces.

Maj. Gen. Eric B. Schoomaker, Walter Reed's commander, took the floor. "This is the first brigade of its kind," he told the soldiers. "This concept is sweeping across the Army, in how we care for warriors. . . . We acknowledge that this is a work in progress."

When Schoomaker asked for comments, the complaints spilled out: Evelyn Williams, the mother of a wounded soldier, described how he had been given discharge papers to sign with no explanation of his options.

Two soldiers complained that an orthopedic surgeon had been repeatedly "abusive and demeaning" to patients and should be fired -- a demand that prompted cheers from the bleachers.

People were using the hospital's guest lodge as a party house, someone said, and soldiers who had suffered brain trauma were drinking alcohol.

Every soldier's room at Abrams Hall, where many outpatients are housed, had been outfitted with a plasma TV and a computer -- but many phones were not working, Sgt. Charles Eggleston complained.

Schoomaker and McKenrick addressed the complaints as best they could, but the answers did not satisfy all in the audience.

"It breaks my heart," Williams responded. "I'm standing here and hearing a bunch of hogwash."

McKenrick asked for patience. "We are just beginning, and have a lot of changes to make. . . . There isn't anyone here that's against you."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Florida Soldier Killed Near Baghdad



Pfc. Cody C. Grater, 20, of Spring Hill, Fla., with the 82nd Airborne Division was killed when his guard position was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade near Baghdad. Grater was killed Sunday. He was a vehicle driver with the 407th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

Three U.S. Soldiers Killed Somewhere Or Other In Anbar By Something Or Other; Cowards In U.S. Command Too Frightened Of Resistance To Say

July 30, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070730-01

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – Three Soldiers assigned to Multi National Force-West died July 26 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province.

Mom Struggles With Loss Of Son

07/24/2007 By CARYL CLARKE, Daily Record/Sunday News

Jul 24, 2007 — Deb Etheridge cried earlier this year when she happened on a photograph at the farmers' market in Thomasville of a soldier who had died in Iraq.

Stephanie Wright, who had posted the photo at her stall, said she was taken aback. The HelpAmerica Foundation employee said she was selling the tea-light memorial lanterns to earn money for the funeral of the dead soldier. Etheridge explained her son, Zachary Clouser, was in the same unit as the man in the photo.

They became friends, and Etheridge started helping the foundation, which raises money for homeless veterans and the families of soldiers killed in battle, Wright said Monday.

With excitement in her voice, Etheridge called Wright on Saturday, July 14. Clouser had phoned to say he would be home in six weeks, Wright said.

She next heard from Etheridge on Wednesday, July 18.

Zach was dead.

According to the Department of Defense, Spc. Zachary R. Clouser was one of four soldiers who died July 18 in Adhamiyah, Iraq, when their vehicle hit a land mine in the middle of small arms fire.

The soldiers were assigned to the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division of Schweinfurt, Germany.

Wright, who is the spokeswoman for Clouser's family, talked about the soldier's comments on MySpace, which his mother has since closed to the public.

He wrote he liked to work on cars and to ride fast, Wright said. She read a quote of his, "If you see me going slow, take another look. It's not me."

He wrote about being proud of his life, how hard it was being away from his family and his impatience to get home to his parents and five siblings.

Etheridge struggles in the mornings, Wright said, when she wakes up and realizes Zach is really gone.

His body is in the military mortuary of Dover Air Force Base in Delaware and will be transported to York County, Wright said.

Etheridge has made some decisions and delayed others. Her son will be cremated, and she will keep his remains with her at home, Wright said.

She has been waiting for her daughter to give birth shortly to a grandson, Wright said.

Wright said Etheridge told her she had to give her daughter the attention she needs and would deal with funeral arrangements after the baby arrives.

Etheridge wanted her son's life to have a purpose, Wright said, and asked that people remember him with a donation to the HelpAmerica Foundation instead of flowers.

Local Man Killed On Duty In Iraq

7.26.07 By Sandra T. Molina, Staff Writer, Whittier Daily News

WHITTIER - Following in the footsteps of his maternal grandfather, Daniel S. Noble joined the Navy on Oct. 4, 2005.

The young Whittier man remembered by family and friends for his sense of humor and kindness was killed Tuesday while conducting security operations in the Dilaya Province, Iraq, the Department of Defense announced Wednesday.

Noble, 21, a La Mirada High School graduate, was serving as a medic with the 1st Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force Pacific out of Camp Pendleton.

He is at least the seventh area serviceman to perish in Iraq.

"He will be missed by everyone who loved him," said Kelly Thomas, Noble's uncle.

Thomas remembered his nephew as having the wisdom of someone twice his age and said the young man was not concerned about joining the Navy at the height of conflict in Iraq.

"He just thought about helping people," Thomas said. "He had a true spirit of giving."

Thomas said Noble enlisted because he was inspired by his grandfather, Bill Thomas, who had served in the Navy.

Lt. Cindy Moore, Navy spokeswoman, said Noble was "specifically trained to treat wounded or sick Marines and sailors."

People in his neighborhood in the 15000 block of Saranac Drive in Whittier offered their sympathies to Noble's family on Wednesday.

"He was just a very nice young man," said neighbor Phyllis Reese as she brought vegetables to the family from her garden.

She gave the bounty to Noble's mom, Julie. Reese also offered her condolences.

Others walked up to the Noble residence with cards in hand. One home two doors down had its American flag flying at half-staff.

A memorial service is being planned for Noble at Rose Hills Memorial Park & Mortuary in Whittier. He is survived by his mother, Julie; his father, Barry; a brother and sister; and other relatives.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldiers at the scene of a car bomb attack in Baghdad, July 23, 2007. (Ceerwan Aziz/Reuters)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Royal Marine Killed In Afghanistan

30 July 2007 Ministry of Defence

A member of the Royal Marines has been killed during operations in southern Afghanistan on Sunday, the Ministry of Defence has said.

The latest death means four members of the UK armed forces have been killed in the region in the past week.

Texas Soldier Killed In Afghanistan



Pfc. Zachary R. Endsley, 21, of Spring, Texas, died of wounds suffered when his unit was attacked in the Arghendab District, Afghanistan, on July 23, 2007. (AP Photo/Endsley family via The Houston Chronicle)

TROOP NEWS

**“My Fellow Troops In This Story
Should Be Commended For Speaking
Out And The Military Needs More
People Like Them”**

“This Country Has Enough Apologists For Our Continued Occupation Of Iraq Across The Political Spectrum”



I'll never understand why some of the most ardent defenders of our actions in Iraq sit in offices typing letters in places like Manhattan when it would seem they should be in Iraq fighting what they believe is the good fight.

July 31, 2007 By Patrick Resta [Iraq Veterans Against The War] Philadelphia, PA Via BpVETforPEACE

I was disappointed but not surprised to read the response from Paul Rieckhoff of IAVA [Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America] regarding the article recently published in The Nation entitled “The Other War”.

I was one of the veterans interviewed for the story and I want to say unequivocally that nothing about what I had to say was taken out of context or distorted. I was told exactly what the article was about and the questions were very direct.

My interview was recorded as I imagine the others were, so Mr. Rieckhoff should be pointed with his criticisms and give specific examples rather than making vague accusations.

A “fog of war” does not exist.

Politicians and generals that are not even remotely close to a battlefield deliberate the bad decisions that are being made, not rank and file troops.

The invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq violates the UN Charter, the Nuremberg Accords, and the Geneva Convention. Subsequently, the politicians and military leaders that allowed and continue to allow the occupation of Iraq are guilty of war crimes. These crimes are further compounded by the assertions of those in the highest reaches of this administration that medical care be withheld from Iraqi civilians, that the Geneva Conventions don't exist in Iraq, and for not meeting the responsibilities of an occupying power under international law.

As an Infantry Officer Mr. Rieckhoff should know these things.

He should also know that you couldn't succeed in a "guerilla war" without the support of the majority of the indigenous population.

If we ever had that support we certainly don't now. Mr. Rieckhoff knows that every Iraqi killed, injured, or degraded makes an impossible mission even harder.

He also knows the futility of keeping US troops in a situation where there can be no military solution.

This article never alleged that US troops are intentionally gunning down Iraqis and I don't know anyone with a drop of sanity that has advanced that idea.

The Iraqis already know that these things have happened and are still happening and reporting them here in the US isn't going to change that.

Americans need to know what is happening in Iraq because it's being done in their name.

I have never heard Mr. Rieckhoff challenge politicians about Iraq.

In fact, he has done anything but that.

While doing PR work for his book release Rieckhoff was interviewed on NPR. During the interview he was pressed again and again about what needed to change in Iraq. He repeatedly ducked the question and finally responded with "it needs to be somewhere between the President's stay the course and Cindy Sheehan's bring them home now."

What does that even mean?

To me it means he's ready for a career in Washington.

While I commend Rieckhoff for the work that his organization does in pointing out a lack of care, training, and equipment for troops it seems a bit myopic.

It's like telling someone that is on fire that they'll have great burn care if they can put themselves out and survive the complications.

Our troops should never have been sent to Iraq and they need to leave now so that the Iraqis can have their country back and decide their own future.

The only way that anyone will be held accountable for what has happened in Iraq is for the men and women that have served there to continue to come forward.

This country has enough apologists for our continued occupation of Iraq across the political spectrum. What it needs are people that can speak plainly and tell the truth even when it isn't popular or easy to hear.

My fellow troops in this story should be commended for speaking out and the military needs more people like them.

I'll never understand why some of the most ardent defenders of our actions in Iraq sit in offices typing letters in places like Manhattan when it would seem they should be in Iraq fighting what they believe is the good fight.

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

The Media-Hound General And The Traitor In The White House Fall In Love:

**General Betrayus Collaborated On
A Classified Strategy Document
“That Will Keep American Troops
In Iraq Well Into 2009”**

**Bush Says General Is His Boss As
Betrayus Sets A New Record For
Blind Stupidity:**

**Consistently Wrong About Everything In
Iraq For Three Years Going On Four**

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

General Petraeus is famous for minding his press coverage, even to the point of congratulating the ABC News anchor Charles Gibson for “kicking some butt” in the Nielsen ratings when Mr. Gibson interviewed him last month.

July 30, 2007 By Frank Rich, The New York Times [Excerpts]

Sic transit Cheney.

Long live David Petraeus!

It was The Washington Post that first quantified General Petraeus's remarkable ascension.

President Bush, who mentioned his new Iraq commander's name only six times as the surge rolled out in January, has cited him more than 150 times in public utterances since, including 53 in May alone.

As always with this White House's propaganda offensives, the message in Mr. Bush's relentless repetitions never varies. General Petraeus is the "main man." He is the man who gives "candid advice."

Come September, he will be the man who will give the president and the country their orders about the war.

In a de facto military coup, the commander in chief is now reporting to the commander in Iraq. We must "wait to see what David has to say," Mr. Bush says.

Actually, we don't have to wait.

We already know what David will say.

He gave it away to The Times of London last month, when he said that September "is a deadline for a report, not a deadline for a change in policy."

In other words: Damn the report (and that irrelevant Congress that will read it) -- full speed ahead. There will be no change in policy.

As Michael Gordon reported in The New York Times last week, General Petraeus has collaborated on a classified strategy document that will keep American troops in Iraq well into 2009 as we wait for the miracles that will somehow bring that country security and a functioning government.

Though General Petraeus wrote his 1987 Princeton doctoral dissertation on "The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam," he has an unshakable penchant for seeing light at the end of tunnels.

It has been three Julys since he posed for the cover of Newsweek under the headline "Can This Man Save Iraq?"

The magazine noted that the general's pacification of Mosul was "a textbook case of doing counterinsurgency the right way."

Four months later, the police chief installed by General Petraeus defected to the insurgents, along with most of the Sunni members of the police force. Mosul,

population 1.7 million, is now an insurgent stronghold, according to the Pentagon's own June report.

By the time reality ambushed his textbook victory, the general had moved on to the mission of making Iraqi troops stand up so American troops could stand down.

"Training is on track and increasing in capacity," he wrote in The Washington Post in late September 2004, during the endgame of the American presidential election. He extolled the increased prowess of the Iraqi fighting forces and the rebuilding of their infrastructure.

The rest is tragic history.

Were the Iraqi forces on the trajectory that General Petraeus asserted in his election-year pep talk, no "surge" would have been needed more than two years later.

We would not be learning at this late date, as we did only when Gen. Peter Pace was pressed in a Pentagon briefing this month, that the number of Iraqi battalions operating independently is in fact falling -- now standing at a mere six, down from 10 in March.

But even more revealing is what was happening at the time that General Petraeus disseminated his sunny 2004 prognosis.

The best account is to be found in *The Occupation of Iraq*, the authoritative chronicle by Ali Allawi published this year by Yale University Press. Mr. Allawi is not some anti-American crank. He was the first civilian defense minister of postwar Iraq and has been an adviser to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki; his book was praised by none other than the Iraq war cheerleader Fouad Ajami as "magnificent."

Mr. Allawi writes that the embezzlement of the Iraqi Army's \$1.2 billion arms procurement budget was happening "under the very noses" of the Security Transition Command run by General Petraeus: "The saga of the grand theft of the Ministry of Defense perfectly illustrated the huge gap between the harsh realities on the ground and the Panglossian spin that permeated official pronouncements."

Mr. Allawi contrasts the "lyrical" Petraeus pronouncements in *The Post* with the harsh realities of the Iraqi forces' inoperable helicopters, flimsy bulletproof vests and toy helmets. The huge sums that might have helped the Iraqis stand up were instead "handed over to unscrupulous adventurers and former pizza parlor operators."

Well, anyone can make a mistake.

This general may well be, as many say, the brightest and bravest we have. But that doesn't account for why he has been invested by the White House and its last-ditch apologists with such singular power over the war.

On Meet the Press, Sen. Lindsey Graham, one of the Senate's last gung-ho war defenders in either party, mentioned General Petraeus 10 times in one segment, saying he would "not vote for anything" unless "General Petraeus passes on it."

Desperate hawks on the nation's op-ed pages not only idolize the commander daily but denounce any critics of his strategy as deserters, defeatists and enemies of the troops.

That's because the Petraeus phenomenon is not about protecting the troops or American interests but about protecting the president.

For all Mr. Bush's claims of seeking "candid" advice, he wants nothing of the kind. He sent that message before the war, with the shunting aside of Eric Shinseki, the general who dared tell Congress the simple truth that hundreds of thousands of American troops would be needed to secure Iraq.

The message was sent again when John Abizaid and George Casey were supplanted after they disagreed with the surge.

Two weeks ago, in his continuing quest for "candid" views, Mr. Bush invited a clique consisting exclusively of conservative pundits to the White House and inadvertently revealed the real motive for the Petraeus surrogate presidency. "The most credible person in the fight at this moment is Gen. David Petraeus," he said, in National Review's account.

To be the "most credible" person in this war team means about as much as being the most sober tabloid starlet in the Paris-Lindsay cohort. But never mind.

What Mr. Bush meant is that General Petraeus is famous for minding his press coverage, even to the point of congratulating the ABC News anchor Charles Gibson for "kicking some butt" in the Nielsen ratings when Mr. Gibson interviewed him last month.

The president, whose 65 percent disapproval rating is now just one point shy of Richard Nixon's pre-resignation nadir, is counting on General Petraeus to be the un-Shinseki and bestow whatever credibility he has upon White House policies and pronouncements.

He is delivering, heaven knows.

Like Mr. Bush, he has taken to comparing the utter stalemate in the Iraqi Parliament to "our own debates at the birth of our nation," as if the Hamilton-Jefferson disputes were akin to the Shiite-Sunni bloodletting.

He is also starting to echo the administration line that Al Qaeda is the principal villain in Iraq, a departure from the more nuanced and realistic picture of the civil-war-torn battlefield he presented to Senate questioners in his confirmation hearings in January.

Mr. Bush has become so reckless in his own denials of reality that he seems to think he can get away with saying anything as long as he has his "main man" to front for him.

The president now hammers in the false litany of a "merger" between Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda and what he calls "Al Qaeda in Iraq" as if he were following the Madison Avenue script declaring that "Cingular is now the new AT&T."

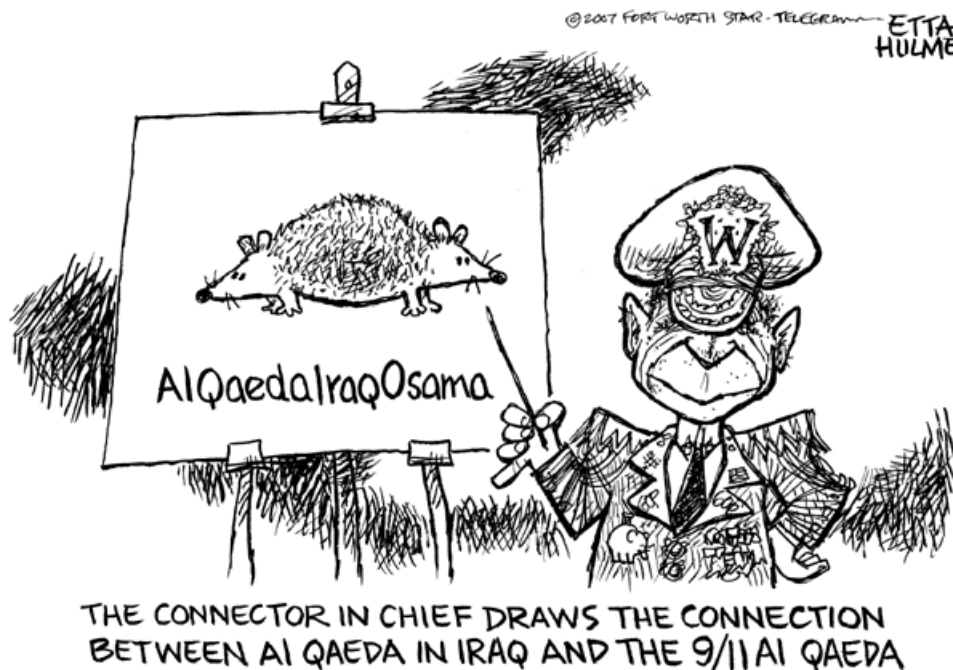
He doesn't seem to know that nearly 40 other groups besides Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia have adopted Al Qaeda's name or pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden worldwide since 2003, by the count of the former C.I.A. counterterrorism official Michael Scheuer. They may follow us here well before any insurgents in Iraq do.

On Tuesday -- a week after the National Intelligence Estimate warned of the resurgence of bin Laden's Qaeda in Pakistan -- Mr. Bush gave a speech in which he continued to claim that "Al Qaeda in Iraq" makes Iraq the central front in the war on terror.

He mentioned Al Qaeda 95 times but Pakistan and Pervez Musharraf not once.

Two days later, his own top intelligence officials refused to endorse his premise when appearing before Congress. They are all too familiar with the threats that are building to a shrill pitch this summer.

Should those threats become a reality while America continues to be bogged down in Iraq, this much is certain: It will all be the fault of President Petraeus.



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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.

Pentagon Panics As Recruiting Fails: \$20,000 Bonus Offered For Immediate Entry

[Thanks to Clancy Sigal, who sent this in.]

July 27, 2007 WLWT

CINCINNATI -- As the U.S. Army continues to keep thousands of troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, Army recruiters have a new perk to offer new recruits.

The Army is now offering a \$20,000 "QS" -- or "Quick Shipper" -- bonus to new and prior service recruits joining, selecting any job and shipping out for training within 30 days.

The Army has had trouble meeting recruiting goals, especially in southwest Ohio, in the past few months as the Middle East conflicts continue.

Soldiers have often complained about the traditionally low pay as well.

World War I Survivor, 109, Says "The Germans Suffered The Same As We Did. Too Many Died"



Harry Patch

30 July 2007 BBC

The last known surviving British soldier to have fought in the trenches of World War I has revisited the site where he fought 90 years ago.

Harry Patch, 109, from Somerset, made the trip to Belgium to recall his part in the Battle of Passchendaele which claimed 250,000 British casualties.

Tuesday marks the anniversary of the start of the Battle of Passchendaele.

Mr Patch served with the Duke of Cornwall's light infantry and was called up for service while working as an 18-year-old apprentice plumber in Bath.

During the fighting Mr Patch was badly wounded and three of his best friends were killed when a shell exploded just yards from where he was standing.

Mr van Emden showed him the five miles they advanced over 99 days which claimed 3,000 British casualties every day.

"Too many died. War isn't worth one life," said Mr Patch.

He said war was the "calculated and condoned slaughter of human beings".

Mr Patch laid a wreath at the site of the trench, which now forms part of a German war cemetery.

"The Germans suffered the same as we did," he said.

Germany also had heavy losses in the battle which has been described as one of the bloodiest and most brutal of the Great War.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

30 Jul 2007 Reuters & AP & (KUNA)

A fuel truck bomb targeting an Iraqi army and police checkpoint killed four and wounded six near the town of Balad, 80 km (50 miles) north of Baghdad, on Sunday, police said.

Guerrillas killed two policemen in a drive-by shooting in Diwaniya, 180 km (110 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb killed two Iraqi soldiers and wounded three in northwestern Baghdad

A police new recruit sustained a gunshot when he came under fire of gunmen on Kirkuk-Mosul highway.

An explosive charge went off targeting a police patrol in Al-Hajaj District, inside Kirkuk. The attack injured two policemen and a civilians who were hospitalized immediately.

A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol killed four soldiers and wounded three others in the Jamiaa district of western Baghdad, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

VIETNAM'S ARLINGTON



From: Richard Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: July 25, 2007
Subject: Vietnam's Arlington

VIETNAM'S ARLINGTON

**Two Vietnam veterans walk through
Vietnam's Arlington in 1994.
The only Gooks in Vietnam were
in my drill sergeants imagination.
I'm so glad I outlived my**

Basic Training.
It has made me a Global Citizen.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
July 25, 2007

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

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



Umm Zuhair, 65, stands in the rubble outside her home after an overnight raid in the Azamiyah neighborhood by foreign occupation troops from the U.S. troops in Baghdad,. Neighbors in the Sunni enclave say U.S. soldiers used explosives to gain entry. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

[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!**

A Collaborator Regime So Hated It's Judges Must Live In A Prison Camp To Stay Alive

July 30, 2007 By MICHAEL R. GORDON, The New York Times

In a city plagued by bombers and renegade militias, the Americans and the Iraqi government have turned to an unusual measure to help implant the rule of law: they have erected a legal Green Zone, a heavily fortified compound to shelter judges and their families and secure the trials of some of the most dangerous suspects.

The Rule of Law Complex, as it is known by the Iraqi government, is in the Baghdad neighborhood of Rusafa and held its first trial last month.

For Iraqi officials, working at the compound is so fraught with risk that it often requires separating themselves and their families from life outside the complex's gates.

"Our work is really a challenge," said a judge who lives in the compound with his wife and children and whose identity is protected by the court's security procedures. "I have not seen Baghdad for three months."

The notion of helping the Iraqis establish protected legal enclaves is an important element of the American campaign plan prepared by Gen. David H. Petraeus and Ryan C. Crocker, the American ambassador to Iraq. The hope is that a network of legal complexes will be established in other parts of Iraq, starting with the capital of Anbar Province, Ramadi, where work is expected to begin in the next several months.

The Rusafa complex, across the Tigris River to the east of the government Green Zone in central Baghdad, is still in its early days. Since the court began hearing cases in June it has tried 43 suspects, a rate of about one suspect a day.

The United States provides criminal investigators, lawyers and a paralegal staff to train the Iraqis to run the complex, which also includes accommodations for witnesses, investigators, the Baghdad Police College and an expanding number of detainees. The 55-member American team includes Justice Department and military personnel as well as contractors, and there are only four Iraqi investigators.

But an additional 26 Iraqi investigators are being trained by the F.B.I., according to Michael F. Walther, a senior United States Justice Department official who runs the American military's Law and Order Task Force. And by next March, the small courtroom where Abu Qatada was tried is to be replaced by an \$11 million court built with American reconstruction funds.

The Rusafa prison's capacity, which started at 2,500, will expand by more than 5,000 by the end of the summer. The main detention building at Rusafa is cleaner and less malodorous than many Iraqis jails, but with 15 detainees in each cell the conditions had reached maximum capacity under international standards.

When a reporter was escorted by the Iraqi prison director through one of the newly erected tent-covered jails a short drive away, a detainee who gave his name as Dawood Yousef, 46, pressed his way to the bars and yelled that he had been picked up in a sweep of Abu Ghraib and had spent five months in various jails, including a month in Rusafa, without being told why he had been arrested or when his case would go to trial. Colonel Martins took down the details.

An Iraqi investigator at the Rusafa complex raised another concern: sectarian agendas at the Interior Ministry. The investigator, who cannot be identified under the complex's security procedures, said ministry officials had made him the subject of an inquiry when he expressed his intention to marry a Sunni woman. "What kind of investigation is that?" he said with undisguised contempt.

The trials themselves seem relatively brief to observers familiar with the American system.

With the extensive security at Rusafa, it is not easy for Iraqis to attend the trials, so videotapes of the proceedings are made.

Success In Iraq: They've Learned The American Way

30 July 2007 BBC

Last year, Prime Minister Nouri Maliki's government only spent 22% of its budget on vital rebuilding projects, while spending 99% of the allocation for salaries, he said.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**“You Took The Land And Gave Me
Freedom Of Speech”
“Let’s Revise The Deal. Take Your
Freedom Of Speech And Give Me
Back Palestine”**

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

July 24, 2007 By Rory McCarthy, The Guardian

When war broke out in Lebanon last summer there were few dissenting voices in Israel. Opinion polls showed unprecedented public support for the conflict. Politicians and pundits crowded television studios to argue that Israel was fighting for its survival in its battle to wipe out Hizbullah.

But one Israeli MP saw it differently.

Hizbullah, he wrote, was a resistance movement, fighting a war brought on by an Israeli government led by “mediocrities, cowards and opportunists” who were responsible for “barbaric vandalism and the deliberate targeting of civilians”.

After a decade as a member of parliament in the Knesset, Azmi Bishara, politician, author and academic, had long established a reputation as the most outspoken political figure to emerge from Israel’s Arab minority.

Soon after the war was over, Bishara and a handful of MPs from his Balad party travelled to Syria and Lebanon, both “enemy states”, where he continued to denounce his government.

He did not have to wait long for a reaction: in September the Israeli attorney general ordered police to begin a criminal investigation.

It wasn’t the first inquiry into Bishara’s activities, and so he was not surprised when six months later he was called in to Petah Tikva police station, near Tel Aviv, for questioning.

He twice met two police officers and then left for what he insists was a prearranged speaking tour to Jordan.

It was only while he was away that investigators leaked details of the case to the Israeli press. Although Bishara has not been charged, it has now emerged that he is under

investigation for money laundering, contact with a foreign agent, delivery of information to the enemy and, most seriously, assistance to the enemy during war - a charge that can carry the death penalty.

These are some of the most serious allegations ever levelled against an Israeli MP and effectively mean that Bishara must either remain in exile abroad, or return to face the prospect of a lengthy jail sentence, or worse.

But Bishara is also the most prominent advocate of Arab political rights within Israel, and the investigation has exposed a widening rift in Israeli society between the Jewish majority and the 20% Palestinian minority.

Bishara has not returned home. In April he handed in his resignation from the Knesset at the Israeli embassy in Cairo. For now he is living with his wife and two young children in a friend's empty flat in an apartment block in Amman, Jordan.

"The symbolic action of bringing me to trial and condemning me - they want it. I know they want it," he says, in a rare interview with the Guardian. "I'm not going to let them succeed; I'm always two steps ahead."

He sits back on the sofa, dressed in a polo shirt and chinos, with his mobile phones laid out on the coffee table. On a desk behind him is a laptop and on it the draft of a new book he is writing about democracy in the Arab world.

Bishara denies the accusations brought against him, and argues that the real reason for the investigation is not his actions during the Lebanon war but his long-held and widely published call for a fundamental change to the nature of the Israeli state: his belief that the country should no longer be a Jewish state but must protect Arab rights and become a "state for all its citizens".

"They want to condemn the whole political ideology and put it as if it's a cover for another kind of activity, which is not true," he says.

Bishara is dismissive of those who argue that Arabs already have sufficient rights within Israel - notably citizenship, the right to vote and the right to speak out.

These are no more than concessions, he says.

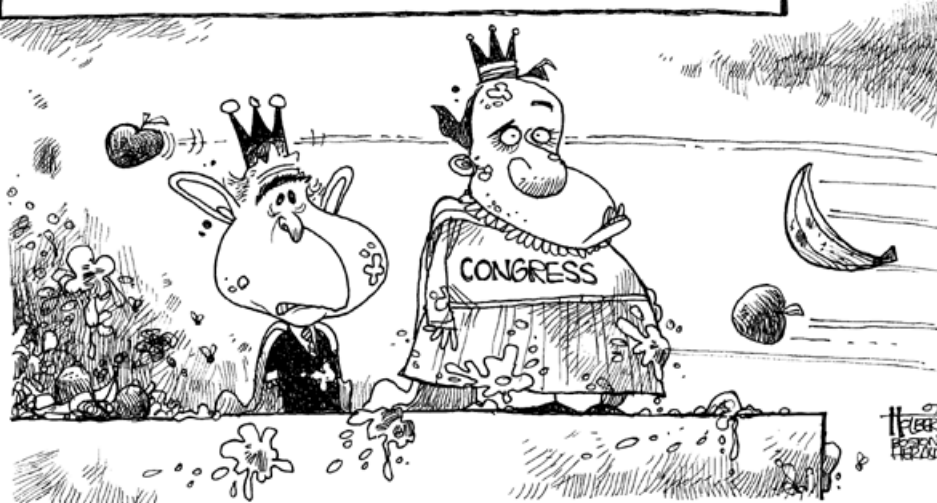
"You took the land and gave me freedom of speech," he says. "Who's winning here? Let's revise the deal.

"Take your freedom of speech and give me back Palestine. How about that?"

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

KING and QUEEN of the PROBLEM



A RECENT POLL SHOWS CONGRESS EVEN LESS POPULAR THAN THE PRESIDENT

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CLASS WAR REPORTS

While Troops Die, The Rich Have Other Priorities:

“A Large Super-Rich Class, Coupled With A Deepening Poverty In Many Communities, Is Starting To Tear At The Fabric Of Society”

“Buffett - The Third Richest Man In The World - Pointed Out That His Tax Rate Was 17.7% While His Secretary Was Taxed At 30%”

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

But while the super-rich have boomed, the earning power of the average and poor citizen has not nearly matched the performance of the elite. In 2005 the top one per cent of earners in the US gained 14 per cent in income in real terms, while the rest of the country gained less than one per cent.

July 22, 2007 Paul Harris, The Observer

On the surface, Mark Cain works for a time-share company. Members pay a one-off sum to join and an annual fee. They then get to book holiday time in various destinations around the globe.

But Solstice clients are not ordinary people. They are America's super-rich and a brief glance at its operations reveal the vast and still widening gulf between them and the rest of America.

Solstice has only about 80 members. Platinum membership costs them \$875,000 to join and then a \$42,000 annual fee.

In return they get access to 10 homes from London to California and a private yacht in the Caribbean, all fully staffed with cooks, cleaners and 'lifestyle managers' ready to satisfy any whim from helicopter-skiing to audiences with local celebrities.

As the firm's marketing manager, Cain knows what Solstice's clientele want. 'We are trying to feed and manage this insatiable appetite for luxury,' Cain said with pride.

As the rest of the country struggles to get by, a huge bubble of multi-millionaires lives almost in a parallel world.

The rich now live in their own world of private education, private health care and gated mansions. They have their own schools and their own banks. They even travel apart - creating a booming industry of private jets and yachts.

Their world now has a name, thanks to a new book by Wall Street Journal reporter Robert Frank which has dubbed it 'Richistan'. There every dream can come true. But for the American Dream itself - which promises everyone can join the elite - the emergence of Richistan is a mixed blessing.

'We in America are heading towards 'developing nation' levels of inequality. We would become like Brazil. What does that say about us? What does that say about America?' Frank said.

In 1985 there were just 13 US billionaires. Now there are more than 1,000. In 2005 the US saw 227,000 new millionaires being created.

One survey showed that the wealth of all US millionaires was \$30 trillion, more than the GDPs of China, Japan, Brazil, Russia and the EU combined.

The rich have now created their own economy for their needs, at a time when the average worker's wage rises will merely match inflation and where 36 million people live below the poverty line.

In Richistan sums of money are rendered almost meaningless because of their size. It also has other names.

There is the 'Platinum Triangle' used to describe the slice of Beverly Hills where many houses go for above \$10m. Then there is the Jewel Coast, used to describe the strip of Madison Avenue in Manhattan where boutique jewellery stores have sprung up to cater for the new riches' needs.

Or it exists in the MetCircle society, a Manhattan club open only to those whose net worth is at least \$100m.

At the same time government has helped by doling out corporate tax breaks.

In the Fifties the proportion of federal income from company taxes was 33 per cent, by 2003 it was just 7.4 percent.

Some 82 of America's largest companies paid no tax at all in at least one of the first three years of the administration of President George W Bush.

But who are the new rich? Some of the names are familiar, Microsoft tycoon Bill Gates and savvy stock investor Warren Buffett. But most are unknown, often springing from the secretive world of financial hedge funds.

Men like James Simons, who took home compensation of \$1.7bn last year. Last year the 25 top earning hedge fund bankers in the US earned an average of \$570m each. The average US household income is \$50,000.

It is such men - and they are usually men - who feed the outlandish luxury goods economy of Richistan. It is they who are responsible for the rebirth of the butler industry, which was all but dead in the Seventies and is now facing a shortage of trained staff. So keen is the demand that many can expect to earn a six-figure salary when they graduate from booming butler schools.

Then there is the runaway feeder-industry of luxury consumer items.

The new ultra rich turn up their noses at Rolexes; the sought-after brand is Franck Muller, which sells a high-end timepiece for \$736,000.

Or try a Mont Blanc pen, encrusted in jewels, for \$700,000.

Louis Vuitton's most exclusive handbag sells for \$42,000. Only 24 were ever made and none ever touched a shelf as all were pre-sold to Richistani clients.

In places such as Manhattan and Los Angeles, restaurants and bars outdo themselves in excess.

New York's Algonquin Hotel has a \$10,000 'martini on a rock' (it comes with a diamond at the bottom of the glass). City eateries sell burgers for more than \$50. One offers a \$1,000 omelette. In Los Angeles there is a craze for Bling mineral water - at \$90 a bottle.

Then there are the boats. The private yacht industry in America has been caught in an arms race of size and luxuriousness. So far, there has been a clear winner: Oracle-founder Larry Ellison's 450ft water palace, the Rising Sun. More than 80 rooms on five storeys and a landing craft that carries a Jeep, a basketball court doubling as a helipad and a fully-equipped cinema.

Now an Oregon-based company is taking things further: private submarines. An estimated 100 or so private subs are now drifting around the world's oceans.

Then there are the rockets - several notable billionaires are now leading the way in private exploration of space. One of them is Robert Bigelow who has ploughed \$500m into trying to build an inflatable space hotel. A miniature prototype model was successfully launched and tested last month. In a scene that perhaps James Bond would find familiar, armed guards now patrol the fences of Bigelow Aerospace's headquarters wearing badges decorated with an alien as their corporate logo.

But this is not just a world of riches gone mad that the rest of America can ignore. The growth of such a large super-rich class, coupled with a deepening poverty in many communities, is starting to tear at the fabric of society.

In a speech last month Buffett - the third richest man in the world - pointed out that his tax rate was 17.7 per cent of his income while his secretary was taxed at 30 per cent.

Defenders of low tax for the very rich point to the theory of trickledown economics - the spending power of the rich benefiting the poor.

But while the super-rich have boomed, the earning power of the average and poor citizen has not nearly matched the performance of the elite. In 2005 the top one per cent of earners in the US gained 14 per cent in income in real terms, while the rest of the country gained less than one per cent.

The situation is especially bad for the severely poor - those living at half the poverty level - whose numbers are at a 32-year high. The rich are getting richer but are not bringing everyone else with them. 'If you look at the impact of the last 20 years it seems pretty clear that trickledown just does not work,' said Paul Buchheit, economics professor at Chicago's Harold Washington College.

But few politicians, needing campaign cash from new millionaires, will get far preaching higher tax.

Bush has pushed to phase out taxes like the estate tax, which benefit only the rich. 'I don't see it changing. No matter what administration is in power,' said Buchheit.

But now that huge wealth has started to squeeze the 'middle class' out of existence, leaving the haves and have-nots in very separate worlds.

There are 7.5 million households in America worth up to \$10m. A further two million are worth \$10m-\$100m and thousands are worth more than \$100m.

There is now a two-year waiting list for 200ft yachts. If put end to end, the boats on that list, which cost \$50m each, would be 15 miles long.

Sebonack Golf Club in the Hamptons, Long Island, charges \$650,000 for membership. That doesn't include the \$12,000 annual dues, or tips for caddies.

Google founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page have a private Boeing 767.

John D. Rockefeller was America's first billionaire. Adjusted for inflation, he had \$14bn - less than the net worth of each of Sam Walton's five children today. There were 13 US billionaires in 1985. Now there are more than 1,000. There are as many millionaires in North Carolina as in India.

'Affluent' is Richistani for 'not really rich'.

According to Frank, you need about \$10m to be considered entry-level rich.

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