

GI SPECIAL 5H10:

**BEEN ON THE JOB TOO LONG;
COME ON HOME, NOW, ALIVE**



U.S. Army troops from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division rest in the Amariyah neighborhood of west Baghdad Aug. 4, 2007. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

**“Our Basic Mission Here
Is To Drive Around And
Get Blown Up”
“We Haven’t Done Anything
Here”**

Comment: T

A huge amount of ass-kissing happy talk from commanding officers about how great the surging is going has been removed in case readers have recently eaten.

What matters, always, is what the soldiers see and say. And there’s no stupid happy talk from them, at all. And no propaganda about sectarian feuds, blah blah blah.

They understand reality.

Iraqis want them dead for serving Bush's evil occupation for oil and Empire, and it doesn't matter which church or mosque any particular Iraqi goes to on Friday, Sunday, or whenever.

So, Bush's occupation is bringing Iraqis together after all.

To kill U.S. occupation troops.

Note also the comment of an officer politely saying that Bush's endless babbling about Al Qaeda in Iraq being an important resistance force is so much lying bullshit.

August 10, 2007 By Sudarsan Raghavan, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

KHIDR, Iraq -- In the pre-dawn gloom, through weary villages shaded in gray, the soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, searched for the enemy. An aerial drone had spotted men burying weapons in a nearby Sunni cemetery.

The soldiers walked along a thin ribbon of sandy road, flanked by tall reeds and palm trees, until they reached this forlorn place covered with crumbling gravestones. Silence mocked the unit, for the men had vanished.

Soldiers pried open graves searching for the cache and 15 minutes later found four guns and some ammunition.

Lt. Thomas Murphy, 32, wondered who the men had been. Members of al-Qaeda in Iraq? Loyalists of the former government? Tribesmen?

"Here we have so many different enemies," he said.

"We're fighting in multiple directions," said Col. Michael Garrett, commander of the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) of the 25th Infantry Division.

"We are in the middle of it," Garrett said, indicating the center of his area of operations, which is the size of Rhode Island.

Earlier in the day, a roadside bomb had exploded near a convoy of Humvees close to Kalsu.

Here, al-Qaeda in Iraq is neither the largest nor the deadliest opponent. U.S. commanders say foreign fighters working with the predominantly Iraqi group are rare in this region. Commanders estimate that there are as few as 50 hard-core al-Qaeda members, whose activities are mostly restricted to financing attacks in the area.

“We blow AQI and Jaish al-Islami up and make them bigger than they are,” said Lt. Col. Robert Balcavage, commander of the 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 25th Infantry Division, using an abbreviation for al-Qaeda in Iraq and the Arabic name for the Islamic Army, the dominant Sunni insurgent group in the region.

On a recent day along what they call Route Cleveland, Balcavage’s soldiers were on high alert. Since they began operations here in November, there had been at least six EFP attacks on the two-lane road to Iskandariyah. The convoy of Humvees moved slowly, the drivers avoiding large rocks or concrete blocks where bombs are typically planted.

They cautiously passed what they call the “EFP hot zone,” a sprawling apartment complex filled with Mahdi Army militiamen. Larger-than-life images of Sadr, the cleric, were plastered on buildings.

In Iskandariyah ... [s]ince November, there have been seven police chiefs. The sixth one was murdered last month. “The police are afraid to do anything,” Khafaji said.

A series of tit-for-tat mosque attacks had put the town on edge.

As a unit from the 1st Battalion rolled into the battle zone, not far from Khafaji’s factory, machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades suddenly targeted them, according to a military report.

“Both sides stopped shooting at each other, and both opened up on our men,” [Maj. Craig] Whiteside said. The Americans had to fight their way out.

[“OK Ahmed, here’s the plan. Make some noise, fire in the air and shit over by the mosques, and send somebody off to tell occupiers they got to come quick, Sunni and Shia bad guys are killing each other. They just eat that shit up. They’ll send a unit in and we’ll be ready and waiting.”]

Fifteen miles to the south, Col. Mohammed al-Mahawili is struggling to control Musayyib. Four months ago, U.S. commanders installed the 32-year-old former Iraqi army officer as the city’s police chief. His predecessor was found to have links to the Mahdi Army.

Mahawili, a tall, energetic Shiite, has escaped six attempts on his life -- one by machine gun, two by sniper fire and two by roadside bombs. A Katyusha rocket struck his police station.

Mahawili has his own concerns. Musayyib’s town council is controlled by Sadr loyalists who back the Mahdi Army, he said. The previous week, he had received an official summons to Baghdad. He refused, worried about an ambush.

“Anything can happen,” he said. “I can die anytime.”

“Any group you work with can turn on you,” said [Maj. Rick] Williams, the tribal liaison, noting that even Iraqi police units have attacked U.S. troops. “That is part of the operating cost.”

Unlike in Iskandariyah or Musayyib, U.S. troops seldom patrol in remote, isolated Sunni areas. The rough terrain and the bombs peppering the roads present formidable barriers. Extremists can find havens in villages and farms.

“We haven’t seen many of them yet,” said Murphy, the lieutenant in the cemetery,

“They have a great early warning system.”

Increasingly, U.S. forces are launching helicopter missions into these areas to learn the terrain and establish a foothold. “It’s detective work,” said Lt. Col. Valery Keaveny, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

But even before their mission to Khidr, frustration ran deep among his soldiers, who have spent months chasing a hard-to-define enemy.

“We haven’t done anything here.

“We’ll go for 24 hours and we’ll see nothing,” said Sgt. Josh Claeson, a radio operator, as he waited with nearly 200 soldiers under the glow of an orange moon for helicopters to Khidr.

“Our basic mission here is to drive around and get blown up.”

At the cemetery the next morning, after the discovery of the weapons cache, a soldier picked up one of the guns and raised it triumphantly.

“Hey, we are heroes,” he declared, posing for a camera.

By the end of the day, the search would yield a few more weapons, including an anti-aircraft machine gun, and commanders would declare the mission a success.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Extended Ft. Lewis Brigade Loses 10 Soldiers In A Week

4.10.07 Seattle Times

A Stryker brigade from Ft. Lewis, Wash., lost ten men in the week ended Monday from violence in Iraq.

They were at the tail end of a tour that was supposed to end in June at 12 months but was extended.

The 3rd Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division has some 4,000 soldiers at full strength, and has lost 47 since departing last June.

Marine Is 2nd From Area To Die In Iraq This Month; “He Was Ready To Come Home”

Jul. 27, 2007 By CHRIS VAUGHN, Star-Telegram

SPRINGTOWN — The insurgency in Iraq has claimed the life of another North Texas serviceman, a Marine from Springtown who left college and joined the military to fulfill a patriotic calling.

Cpl. James Heath McRae, 22, a 2003 graduate of Springtown High School, was killed Tuesday in the Diyala province, the Defense Department announced.

Relatives said he was driving a Humvee when a roadside bomb exploded. Two other Marines — Lance Cpl. Robert Lynch, 20, of Louisville, Ky., and Cpl. Matthew Zindars, 21, of Watertown, Wis. — also died.

“I talked to him Monday,” his mother, Rhonda McRae, said Thursday. “He was in good spirits, but he was tired. He was staying as busy as he could to make the time go by faster. He was ready to come home.”

Cpl. McRae is the 34th service member from the Fort Worth area to die in Iraq, and the second in four days. Army Cpl. Rhett Allen Butler, a Glen Rose native, died July 20.

Services for Cpl. McRae are pending at White’s Funeral Home in Azle. But his family has decided that he will be buried at Willow Point, a small cemetery in southwestern Jack County near the family ranch.

“We had never talked about that,” his mother said. “It’s where his dad and I chose.”

Cpl. McRae, born July 6, 1985, at Harris Methodist Northwest Hospital, grew up in Springtown, learning at an early age how to fix fences and work cattle and how to repair boat and car engines under the watchful eye of his dad, Bill McRae.

He enjoyed deer hunting and especially loved fishing, whether in the stock tanks on the family ranch or on a charter boat in the Gulf of Mexico.

“He was the baby and the only son,” his mother said.

But Heath, as he was known, was not strictly a country boy.

Outgoing and never wanting for a date, he played trombone in the Springtown marching band and the jazz band. His skill earned him a music scholarship to Weatherford College, which he attended for a year.

He taught himself how to play the guitar and tried to match Eric Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughan in a garage band that played at Springtown talent shows.

“He was a team player,” said retired Springtown band director J.B. Perry. “For one thing, he stuck with it all the way through, from sixth grade to his senior year. And he gave it his best and showed a good attitude the whole way. Not all students can do that.”

Cpl. McRae believed he needed to repay his debt to his country by enlisting in the service, his mother said.

In May 2004, he shipped off for boot camp and had been home very little since. He was serving as a diesel mechanic on Okinawa, Japan, when he was attached to a California-based unit destined for Iraq.

After a week at home in Springtown, he deployed in April to the Ramadi area, his mother said. “The day before he left from San Diego, we went to SeaWorld with some of his friends, and we went to the pier and ate out,” she said. “We had a wonderful time.”

Other survivors include two sisters, Misty Rix of Oahu, Hawaii, and Amy Styles of Springtown.

Cpl. McRae’s family has set up a memorial fund in his name that will benefit young people who want to pursue music education. Send contributions to Cornerstone Community Church, P.O. Box 836, Springtown, TX 76082.

“U.S. Forces Keep Their Distance” “They Fear An All-Out Insurrection If They Crack Down On The Mahdi Army” “Militiamen Patrol In The Tight Cluster Of Winding Streets Surrounding The Imam Al-Kadhim Shrine”

August 11, 2007 By LAUREN FRAYER, VICTORIA ADVOCATE PUBLISHING CO.
[Excerpts]

A Muslim imam dropped his cloak to the sidewalk. It was a signal for the guerrillas to move.

They surrounded the top Iraqi security official in a north Baghdad district. Iraqi military vehicles - commandeered by other militiamen - screeched into a cordon, blocking his exit. A gun was put to his head. Brig. Gen. Falah Hassan Kanbar managed to escape when his bodyguards pulled him into a vehicle that sped down an alley.

Details of the Aug. 5 ambush emerged this week in interviews with Kanbar, U.S. military and intelligence officials.

[T]here is no dispute that Mahdi Army operatives are busy planning for the future.

The militia is working behind-the-scenes to solidify control of rent markets, fuel distribution and other services in Shiite neighborhoods - taking a page from other influential groups across the region, such as Hezbollah, that have mixed militia muscle and social outreach.

For the U.S. military, the gun-wielding attack on the Iraqi brigadier general in Kazimiyah in northern Baghdad - highlights just how far the Mahdi commanders are willing to go against anyone they cannot control.

"(He) is the cleanest guy you can find in Kazimiyah, and he works with us. That's why they want him dead," said Capt. Nick Kron, 28, a Richmond, Va., native with the Army's 1st Infantry Division. [No shit?. People who help a foreign occupation army invade their country and set up a military dictatorship are known as "traitors." Nationalists, who want their country liberated, want them dead. That is not rocket science.]

Kazimiyah - home to Baghdad's holiest Shiite shrine - puts the Mahdi Army's strength on full display.

U.S. officials believe the head of the Kazimiyah faction is Hazim al-Araji, a Shiite imam and brother of Bahaa al-Araji, a Sadrist [translation: a nationalist, anti-occupation] member of parliament.

Through the al-Araji brothers, the Kazimiyah group has close ties to Iraqi politicians in the Green Zone, as well as to clerics in the holy city of Najaf, home to al-Sadr as well as Iraq's top Shiite religious figure, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

"With that political cover, these guys can get away with anything," said Lt. Col. Steve Miska, head of the 1st Infantry Division's Task Force Justice and the top U.S. officer in Kazimiyah.

Each day, militiamen in civilian clothes patrol in the tight cluster of winding streets surrounding the Imam al-Kadhim shrine.

U.S. forces keep their distance.

They fear an all-out insurrection if they crack down on the Mahdi Army, often called by the Arabic acronym JAM. Also, they acknowledge that the Mahdi presence helps keep Sunni insurgents away.

"We could go downtown and have direct confrontation with JAM, and it'd be a tactical victory for us, but the political backlash would make it not worth it," said Miska, of Greenport, N.Y.

“British Troops Forced To Abandon Basra City For The Shelter Of The Airport” U.S. Supply Line North Threatened

August 7, 2007 Ewen MacAskill in Washington and Julian Borger, Guardian Unlimited [Excerpts]

The UK government no longer claims Basra is a success but denies that it is a failure, with British troops forced to abandon Basra city for the shelter of the airport.

Ken Pollack, a foreign affairs expert at the Washington-based Brookings Institution, who returned last month from an eight-day visit to Iraq in which he spoke to US officers and officials, predicted that US and Iraqi forces would have to go into the south to fill the vacuum with the same level of commitment as they were showing with the surge.

“I am assuming the British will no longer be there. They are not there now. We have a British battle group holed up in Basra airport. I do not see what good that does except for people flying in and out.

“It is the wild, wild west. Basra is out of control.”

Colonel Sam Gardiner, who is retired but still carries out war games for the Pentagon, said the violence in the south is problematic for the US military who need secure north-south lines of communication for the day when they begin to move out of Iraq.

He said US forces could be out of Iraq and into camps in Kuwait within two months but it would take a further 10 months or so to embark all the heavy equipment, though he believed some of it could be left for the Iraqi security forces.

Referring to Basra, he said: “We have trouble in the rear right now. The rear has got problems.”

Some military analysts argue that private contractors are already protecting the convoy supply lines but Col Gardiner said that a British pullout would mean “we would have to establish security for the route from Baghdad to Kuwait. Troops would have to be taken from other missions to protect the road”.

Great Moments In U.S. Military History: **U.S. Air Strike Helps Resistance Cut Samarra Power Supply**

11 Aug 2007 DPA

At least eight Iraqi electricity workers have been killed and two wounded when a US aircraft fired at their vehicle, local news report.

According to the independent news agency Voices of Iraq (VOI), an Iraqi police source said that the workers were installing electricity wires and cables in a power station when their vehicle was hit by a US rocket.

The attack reportedly occurred in the southern neighborhood of al-Jalisiya in Samarra, capital of the Salah al-Din province, 100 kilometers north of Baghdad.

[Sorry. First Prize still goes to the British forces in Basra, who rocket-fired on a resistance position and hit a key oil pipeline instead, destroying a section, cutting off some of the flow of oil for export, and starting a huge oil fire in the area.]

REALLY BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
HOPELESS WAR:
BULLSHIT WALL-CRAWLING:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. soldier from the 2nd battalion, 32nd Field Artillery brigade climbs over a wall while another keeps watch in Baghdad August 11, 2007. REUTERS/Damir Sagolj

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed; Two Wounded

Aug 11 (AFP)

A soldier with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force was killed and two were wounded Saturday when their vehicle struck a bomb in eastern Afghanistan, the force said.

The soldiers were on patrol when they were hit, the 37-nation ISAF said in a statement that did not give the nationalities of the casualties.

“The three soldiers were medically evacuated to an ISAF medical facility where one later died,” it said.

The force did not say in which province the incident occurred. Most of the foreign troops in eastern Afghanistan are US nationals.

British General Says Afghan Victory ‘Could Take 38 Years’ “Scores Of Soldiers Have Succumbed To Heatstroke” “Almost 50 Out Of 160 Forward Troops Reported Severe Sickness And Diarrhea”

August 5, 2007 Mark Townsend in Sangin, Afghanistan, The Observer [Excerpts]

British troops could remain in Afghanistan for more than the 38 years it took them to pull out of Northern Ireland. That is the bleak assessment by Army commanders on the ground in Helmand province.

In an interview with The Observer at HQ in the provincial capital Lashkar Gah, Brigadier John Lorimer, commander of UK forces in Helmand, said: ‘If you look at the insurgency

then it could take maybe 10 years. Counter-narcotics, it's 30 years. If you're looking at governance and so on, it looks a little longer.

Lorimer said he could visualise UK forces staying in Helmand after the Taliban and a growing counter-insurgency was defeated. His comments came as British infantry, often fighting for hours in temperatures of up to 50C [122 degrees Fahrenheit] pushed north against well-defended Taliban positions.

Scores of soldiers have succumbed to heatstroke while hundreds have battled on despite debilitating illness.

Almost 50 out of 160 forward troops reported severe sickness and diarrhoea in the forward base at Sangin last month.

A number of troops have lost limbs during firefights in the upper Gereshk valley, south of Sangin.

The 1st Battalion of the Royal Anglians, with 650 soldiers in Afghanistan, has used 480,100 rounds since the start of April.

Former defence secretary John Reid envisaged operations could be conducted without firing a single bullet.

Resistance Wiping Out Collaborator Cops

8.10.07 Washington Times

Afghan police are dying at a record rate this year — more than 200 in the past 10 weeks, becoming easy targets for Taliban forces who have turned to hit-and-run attacks.

The police are especially vulnerable because they are spread so thinly. In some districts, there are just 25 to 30 officers to serve a population of 100,000 people.

TROOP NEWS

Animosity “Has Run High” Between Soldiers And Mercenaries

They're Killing So Many Iraqis "It Wasn't Possible To File Reports For Each One"

8.11.07 By Deborah Hastings, Associated Press [Excerpts]

There are now nearly as many private contractors in Iraq as there are U.S. soldiers — and about half of them are private security guards equipped with automatic weapons, body armor, helicopters and bullet-proof trucks.

They operate with little or no supervision, accountable only to the firms employing them.

And as the country has plummeted toward anarchy and civil war, this private army has been accused of indiscriminately firing at American and Iraqi troops, and of shooting to death an unknown number of Iraqi citizens who got too close to their heavily armed convoys.

Not one has faced charges or prosecution.

There is great confusion among legal experts and military officials about what laws — if any — apply to Americans in this force of at least 48,000.

But many soldiers on the ground — who earn in a year what private guards can earn in just one month — say their private counterparts should answer to a higher authority, just as they do. More than 60 U.S. soldiers in Iraq have been court-martialed on murder-related charges involving Iraqi citizens.

The wartime numbers of private guards are unprecedented — as are their duties, many of which have traditionally been done by soldiers.

They protect U.S. military operations and have guarded high-ranking officials including Gen. David Petraeus, the U.S. commander in Baghdad. They also protect visiting foreign officials and thousands of construction projects.

At times, they are better equipped than military units.

Since American contractors first swarmed into Iraq, animosity has run high between soldiers and private security guards.

Many of the latter are highly trained ex-members of elite military groups including Navy SEALs, Green Berets and Army Rangers.

"Most military guys resent them," said former Marine Lt. Col. Mike Zacchea, who spent two years in Iraq training and building the Iraqi army.

"There's an attitude that if these guys really wanted to do the right thing, they would have stayed in the military."

Zacchea, now retired in Long Island, N.Y., said that as a senior battalion adviser, he was offered jobs by several security companies, with average salaries of \$1,000 a day. He wasn't interested.

"I didn't want to go to Iraq as a mercenary. I don't believe in it. I don't think what they're doing is right.

"Really, these guys are free agents on the battlefield. They're not bound by any law. They're non-uniformed combatants. No one keeps track of them."

Last year, officials of the 3rd Infantry Division in Baghdad told visiting GAO auditors that lack of coordination continued to endanger the lives of soldiers and contractors.

Private security details continued to enter battle zones without warning, the military leaders said. In some cases, military officers complained they had no way of communicating with private security details.

In late 2004, the Reconstruction Operations Center (ROC) opened in Baghdad. Its purpose was to track movement of contractors and military troops around the country and to keep records of violent incidents.

Participation, however, is voluntary.

Many large contractors say their guards coordinate with the ROC, and file "after-incident reports" of shooting episodes.

But government auditors in Iraq reported last year that some contractors said they stopped detailing such shootings because they occurred so often it wasn't possible to file reports for each one.

Money Grubbing Traitors Busy Again;
DoD Devises A New Way To Rape Military Families And Troops:
After Blocking Free Public Web Sites On Military Computers, Pentagon Profiteers Will Charge Military Families \$99 A Year For Access To Theirs

[This is just so incredibly fucking low. What next, charging an extra \$5 for every letter to or from everybody serving in Iraq? Hey, that mail has to go a long way, right? Or how about every military family member and everybody serving in Iraq getting charged a flat fee, say \$99 a year, to get mail to and from home? How about that? What's the difference?]

8.10.07 Los Angeles Times

Websites for Heroes, an interactive Internet service for military families, is being marketed as an alternative to YouTube and MySpace, which were among 11 sites blocked on military computers by the Pentagon in May.

Although the Pentagon said the move would preserve precious bandwidth, critics argued that the ban stems an unfiltered source of information available to the public from troops fighting overseas.

After this first year, families will be charged \$99 a year for the ad-free service.

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



The casket of U.S. Army Pfc. Le Ron Wilson is carried into his funeral at Christ the King Church in New York July 17, 2007. Wilson, 18, from New York, died July 6, 2007, in Iraq of wounds suffered when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. (Shannon Stapleton/Reuters)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Key Collaborator Blown Up And Relatives Killed: “A Dramatic Act Of Retribution For His Role In Aiding The American Military” “He Had Turned Over Nearly 100 Suspected Insurgents To U.S. Forces During The Past Few Weeks”

August 12, 2007 (KUNA) & Washington Post

A Sunni cleric who had joined with U.S. forces to fight the insurgents was seriously wounded Saturday in a bomb blast at his Baghdad home, a dramatic act of retribution for his role in aiding the American military. Three of his relatives were killed in the attack.

A few hours later, two regional government leaders were killed in Qadisiyah, a predominantly Shiite province south of Baghdad.

In both cases, the victims were believed to have been targeted by members of their own sect, providing a glimpse into the complexity of allegiances in Iraq.

[Oh please. Complex only in the mind of the idiot who wrote this. You're either for the occupation or for the resistance. That isn't very complex, if you have a brain larger than a pea, and aren't obsessed with labels like "Sunni" and "Shia.".]

[This reporter would have had a horrible time figuring out the American Revolution, no doubt babbling bullshit about U.S. Protestants fighting British Protestants proving how "complex" things were in Philadelphia and New York.]

OK, it goes like this: some Sunni are traitors and collaborate with Bush. Some aren't. Some Shia are traitors and collaborate with Bush. Some aren't. Got it? Duh. T]

A bomb hit Wathiq al-Obeidi's home in the Adhamiyah area of northern Baghdad before dawn on Saturday, four days after insurgents had issued a four-page threat against his life.

“Obeidi is an agent for the occupier and a traitor. He is fighting against the mujaheddin and destroying Islam,” the statement said, using the Arabic term for holy warriors. [How “complex” is that?]

Local leaders said Obeidi was leading a group that was working with -- and receiving weapons from -- American troops.... [How “complex” is that?]

Questions have swirled about the wisdom of the U.S. military's newest alliances since it was first made public that the U.S. was arming Sunnis.

If a significant number of the Americans' new allies begin to fear for their lives, the system of “concerned citizens,” as U.S. commanders call them, could break down.

Mohammed al-Adhami, a community leader in Adhamiyah, said Obeidi had modeled his group on similar programs in Anbar province and in the western Baghdad district of Amiriyah....

He said Obeidi's cousin, an officer in the Iraqi army, had introduced him to American troops in the area.

Obeidi was given the power to make arrests, and he had turned over nearly 100 suspected insurgents to U.S. forces during the past few weeks, Adhami said. [How “complex” is that?]

“They gave him the green light to do whatever he needed to do,” he said.

A few hours after Obeidi's home was bombed, a roadside bomb killed the governor and the police chief of Qadisiyah province, as well as their driver and bodyguard, as they traveled home from a funeral for a local tribal sheik, police said.

The governor, Khalil Jalil Hamza, was a member of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, a powerful Shiite [collaborator] political group led by the influential politician Abdul Aziz al-Hakim.

The group has waged fierce battles with the Mahdi Army, Iraq's most powerful [nationalist, anti-occupation] Shiite militia, for control of the region, *where the U.S. military has maintained a relatively small presence.* [Whack-a-mole is back.]

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE

END THE OCCUPATION

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**Soldiers In Revolt
[They Won]**



Russia 1917

The Walk:

**“As I Looked Out Over The Vast
Parking Lot, The Sheer Lunacy Of
This Mission Hit Me”**

**“I Would Spend The Next Eight To Nine
Months Doing Counter-Productive
Missions Like This One”**



08/09/2007 by Justin C. Cliburn [Iraq Veterans Against The War] www.ivaw.org/

Army National Guard of the United States (ARNG)

Unit: 1st Battalion 158th FA Oklahoma ARNG

Rank: SPC

Home: Lawton, Oklahoma

Served in: LSA Anaconda: MSR Patrol, one month. Camp Liberty, Baghdad: PSD/IP Training, ten and a half months.

It was a May day like any other as we pulled into the poorly fortified Traffic Police Headquarters compound. We parked in our usual spots and the squad leader rallied us around him.

He had a BOLO (Be on the lookout) list in his hand, and we were to check license plates in the adjacent parking lot against it. He needed about half the squad; I was one of them.

It was about a 100 meter walk between the parking lot and our location in north Baghdad. In our way was a small market, but a crowded small market, and we made our way towards it.

As we fanned out, I saw all the blustering and posturing my comrades were doing; they looked ridiculous. You're wearing body armor, a helmet, sunglasses, a pistol, and a semi-automatic assault rifle; you don't need to intimidate anyone with your behavior.

As we approached the market, I saw the Iraqis' faces; they looked apprehensive. What was going on? What was going to happen? Why do they look so angry?

"Sergeant Jackson, can I fuck with somebody? Please, let me fuck with somebody!" one of our junior NCOs asked our squad leader.

The squad leader said that it might not be a good idea to piss anyone off, especially when we were outnumbered and had to come here practically everyday for the next nine months, never mind that it was just plain wrong.

Wrong was not something that the young sergeant would have responded to though, so I don't fault the man for omitting the most obvious argument against the request.

We continued walking towards the market and now I could make eye contact with the people there: the passers by; the shop keepers; the shoppers; the old men drinking chi under a canopy . . . all of them.

They looked frightened. They looked angry. They looked hopeless. I made eye contact; I smiled. "Salaam a'alaikum," I said. Some smiled back and replied "Alaikum a'salaam" in the same nervous manner that I had greeted them; others continued to stare.

Activity slowed all around us; we were the center of attention.

"Hey, Sergeant Stephens. That guy's staring at you!" one said with a laugh and a smile.

"I'll kick his fucking ass!" Stephens yelled with an exaggerated arch of his back and raising of his shoulders.

Now, everyone was staring and the looks of despair and hopelessness deepened. What could anyone do? What could the man in question do? We were armed to the nines and wrapped in body armor; the staring man was in a tunic and sandals.

. . . and why wouldn't he or anyone else stare?

They tolerated us at the police stations and on the roads, but this was their territory.

Why were we there? This was out of the ordinary, and they had every right to wonder, every right to stare. They were scared, worried, angry.

As we made our way into the market and started splitting up to search the parking lot, two old men sat at a table to my left. They were old; they looked wise. They both stared at me like they would a disappointing adult grandson: saddened; disappointed; resigned to my and their respective fates.

They weren't angry; they were just sad. There was a lot of wisdom in the creases that stretched out from their old, tired, brown eyes. They had probably seen more war than I ever will, and they were tired. I gave a nervous smile, an embarrassed smile, and made my way into the parking lot.

As I looked out over the vast parking lot, the sheer lunacy of this mission hit me.

Here we were, looking for ten cars in a city of five million people. It was unlikely that we'd find one of them, but it was highly likely that we had just alienated just a few more Iraqis.

At that moment, I empathized with the Iraqis still staring at me from the market. I felt hopeless, saddened, disappointed, just a tad angry, and resigned to my fate:

I would spend the next eight to nine months doing counter-productive missions like this one.

At the end of everyday, I would make a few more enemies than I killed or brought to our side.

I was embarrassed and humiliated that I ever thought differently; I wanted to tell the people behind me that I was sorry for what my country had done.

I was sorry we had interrupted their commerce.

Like a good soldier, I drove on. I continued to search; I continued to do my job, just as I would the rest of my tour.

In front of me, two men were trying to push start an old rickety van. I had thought of helping them, but I was carrying the M249 SAW machine gun with no sling; there was no way I was going to set it down or ask someone to hold it so I could help.

Then I heard SGT Stephens' muffled voice. "Fuck it; we're supposed to be winning hearts and minds, right?" Stephens sighed under his breath.

I watched, shocked, as the same man who had just lobbied to "fuck with somebody" slung his rifle and helped these men get that van started as I covered him from a safe distance. It was indicative of his seemingly bi-polar personality, I thought, and we all met up in the rear of the parking lot.

"Any luck?"

There wasn't any, and we made our back through the parking lot, to the market, through the market, to our humvees in the police station.

As I passed through the parking lot one last time, the same old men stared at me once again. Our eyes met again, and I nodded in their direction. They nodded back, and I felt like I was forgiven.

I made it back to my humvee, sweaty and slightly out of breath, and didn't think about those old men again for quite some time. It wasn't until August that I thought again of those men.

It was August and it was hot. We were running late, and, as we approached that police station, we saw a familiar plume of smoke: car bomb. We parked as usual, SSG Jackson asked me to monitor the radio and provide security while he and others went to investigate. I wanted to protest; I wanted to go.

I wanted to check on Ali and Achmed; I didn't see them and they could have been in the carnage. But I didn't protest; I did what I was told.

When the men returned, they told me of the carnage and I was slightly glad I didn't see it.

"Man, two old men were just sitting there drinking chi and it went off next to them; they're fucked up!" one soldier said, clearly not joking and clearly not making light of it.

. . . and there it was. The eyes that told me how hopeless and resigned to their fate the men were, the eyes that had forgiven me, were dead, never to pass on any of their wisdom again. I felt sad; I felt like the world had just lost a couple of good men, even though we never spoke.

I started to remember all the faces I saw during The Walk, all the eyes I looked into. How many were gone? How many had forgiven me and my country? How many would die before I left? It was unsettling, but it was by now not at all uncommon. I was tired, physically, but mostly emotionally.

Mentally, I just gave up and, as I hoped I would see Ali and Achmed soon, I slid deeper into my body armor and took a nap while my comrade monitored the radio.

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

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/)

OCCUPATION REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

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



An Iraqi citizen with her child holds a photo of her son as she waits for foreign occupation soldiers from the USA to search her possessions and belongings during a

home invasion in Yarmuk neighbourhood, Baghdad July 20, 2007. REUTERS/Nikola Solic

Iraqi citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed.

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

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

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

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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The Real Debate About Iraq Is Between Real Vs. Fake War Foes

August 5, 2007 By Ira Chernus, Daily Camera. Ira Chernus is a Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Colorado - Boulder.

The real debate about Iraq is just beginning to take shape.

It's not about whether U.S. troops should begin to leave Iraq.

A vast majority of Americans now agree on that point. Even at the White House, insiders say, they've accepted it as inevitable.

The real debate is between genuine opponents of the war, who really want to end our involvement in Iraq, and fake opponents who use antiwar language to mask their endorsement of a continuing, perhaps permanent, U.S. presence in that war-torn land.

Genuine opponents of the war argue that the U.S. cannot restore order in Iraq, because it is the U.S. occupation forces (civilian as well as military) that are the main source of disorder. You can't put out a fire by heaping more fuel on it.

Iraq will remain war-torn until all U.S. military personnel, civilian contractors, and private security forces leave. So they should leave. All of them. ASAP.

Genuine antiwar voices have been making these points for a long time. For most of that time, they were derided or ignored.

Now that the war is so unpopular, everyone with their finger to the political wind is rushing to catch the antiwar train before it leaves the station. Suddenly that train is very crowded. Genuine war opponents have a hard time getting their voices heard, since many of the newcomers have much more political clout and media savvy.

But the genuine faction now has something new to say, which you won't hear for a while in the mainstream media:

Far too many of the newcomers are fakes.

They shout loudly that they want the war to end now. But they choose their words very carefully.

They talk about withdrawing troops but are careful never to say "all troops." They endorse withdrawing "combat" troops (a technical term that covers less than half of all U.S. forces in Iraq) or just "starting to withdraw" troops.

They oppose “establishing” permanent bases, but they don’t say anything against keeping the bases (some of them small cities) that have already been built.

And they would let the Pentagon decide which bases are officially “permanent.” They never mention the ever-increasing air war, nor the civilian forces.

Behind that smokescreen, the fakes are busy building support for the next phase of the war.

In that phase, tens of thousands (perhaps up to a hundred thousand) U.S. troops would stay in Iraq.

What would they do?

There is an emerging bipartisan consensus among the fakes. Some troops would be “redeployed” to the north, to protect our friends the Kurds, and others “redeployed” to Afghanistan.

Some would stay to “defend” Iraq’s borders, which conveniently happen to be the borders of Iran and Syria too.

Some would wage the war on terrorism inside Iraq.

Some would “train” (read: help to lead) the Iraqi government’s fledgling army.

The top three Democratic candidates for president, among others, espouse all these plans.

How can they call this ending the war?

The premise is that most Americans don’t really care how many Iraqis are killed, as long as few American soldiers are killed. So the public would assume the war is over, stop paying attention, and allow U.S. forces to continue their long-range plan for securing a permanent and decisive presence in Iraq.

Those forces (including an increased proportion of Air Force and Special Forces) could do anything the government wants them to do, since no one would be watching. Meanwhile, the thousands of civilian security personnel could continue to do whatever they like and be wholly unaccountable.

Genuine war opponents often oppose this vision of continued war on moral grounds.

But they don’t have to. They can just point out the obvious practical problem: The fakes, who are trying to fool the nation, are most of all fooling themselves.

The fakes assume that if the U.S. military changes its modus operandi, far fewer Americans would die.

Do they think the Iraqi resistance fighters, who risk their lives to oust the 160,000 U.S. troops and countless civilian security forces, will call off the fight once there

are “only” 80,000 or 50,000 U.S. troops and countless civilian security forces still occupying their land?

Do they think Iraqis will let long-term U.S. forces go about their violent business without interference?

Do they think Iraqis will not see and resist a continuing U.S. effort to control their internal affairs?

Do they think the war will really end and Americans will stop dying?

If so, they are dreaming.

The only way to stanch the loss of American blood is to end the war — really, genuinely, completely.

So the debate between genuine and fake antiwar voices is the only real debate about ending the war.

The first step is to unmask the fakes and make them come clean about their true position. That means: read and listen carefully; separate the wheat from the chaff; and spread the word.

Troops Invited:

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

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

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