

GI SPECIAL 5H11:



<http://www.prairiefire.org/graphics/pp.gif>

PRISONERS AGAINST THE WAR

**“We Went All The Way To
Saigon To Fight A War, And
When We Came Back, There
Were No Jobs And No Means To
Support Yourself Or Your
Family”**

**“We Were Useful One Minute And
Flat-Out Abandon The Next”
“Bush Says, ‘They Hate Us Because
They Hate Our Freedoms’ What
Freedoms, With Over 2 Million
Incarcerated And Over 250,000 Of Them
Are Veterans And More Than 3500 On
Death Row?”**

During the fall of 2005, acting inside Statesville Prison in Joliet, Illinois, Stanley Howard organized a group of inmates in conjunction with the Military Project to found Prisoners Against The War.

Prisoners Against The War breaks new ground.

There has been no organization like this in recent American history. That may be an understatement, since no record of a similar organization has been found at any point in American history.

To the extent allowed by prison regulations, they circulate GI Special and Traveling Soldier. They will see this issues of GI Special, and provide support to family members on the outside resisting the war.

A variety of social critics have argued that the prisons and armed forces of a given society express most nakedly the underlying class nature of the society.

An organization bringing together civilian and military prisoners can open a new window on that reality, not least by destroying the myth spread by politicians and other servants of the rich and homicidal that prisoners are mere things without humanity or redeeming social value.

Prisoners Against The War hopes to inspire other prisoners, both in civilian and military prisons, to speak out against the war and organize their own chapters and spread the movement nation-wide.

They report many prisoners have relatives serving in the armed forces, and some prisoners are veterans of the Gulf and Vietnam wars.

Here, Stanley Howard interviews one of these veterans.

It was done behind the walls of Western Illinois prison in June of 2007.

It's brief, but very powerful.

By Stanley Howard

SH: What is your name?

DS: Darion R. Skipper. Everyone calls me "Skip."

SH: How old are you, and where were you born and reared?

DS: I'm 56 years old (African—American). Born June 10th 1950, on the Westside of Chicago, Illinois.

SH: Is this the first time you been incarcerated?

DS: No! Unfortunately, I've been incarcerated four other times on minor charges. And hopefully, this will be my last time coming behind these walls.

SH: How much time do you have remaining on your current sentence?

US: I have about three months left on my four year sentence.

SH: It is my understanding that you served in Vietnam, and I really appreciate you giving me this opportunity to ask you a few questions and for supporting Prisoners Against The War.

US: Please don't thank me — its my pleasure and I should be thanking you.

Reading some of the material you share with all of us and knowing about your work against the death penalty, police torture, this corrupt judicial and prison system, and against the war, I felt honored when you asked me to participate in this interview.

(Note: Stanley regularly shares his Socialist Worker, International Socialist Review, 0.1. Special, Traveling Soldier, Statesville Speaks, Prison Legal News, Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter, Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, and the New Abolitionist — the Newsletter of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty)

SH: Vietnam. Were you drafted or did you enlist?

DS: I was drafted in 1967. Based in Fort Leonard Wood, in Missouri.

SH: What do you think of the Vietnam war?

DS: I can write a book on all of that craziness. But in short, it was really fucked up. A lot of the young men like myself didn't want to go over there and didn't know the reasons why we were there fighting.

And back then, if your name came up on the draft list and you didn't go Downtown (Chicago) to report, they would come to get you and off to war you go.

I seen so much killing and death in Nam that I care to remember. I'm still haunted by it all today. I can close my eyes and see the bodies and faces, and hear the rapid explosions and gunfire.

SH: Sounds like you're still affected by that war today. Have you ever sought help to deal with what you went through?

DS: I never received any major physical injuries, but I was deeply affected by it mentally and emotionally. It changed my life and is still very much apart of who I am today. I never received any psychiatric or psychological help. I just deal with it like I have since 1970.

SH: I recently read that over 250,700 Veterans are incarcerated in U.S. prisons, and a lot suffer from post traumatic stress disorders. What do you think of that?

DS: It's a shame. For the ones that made it back, like myself, there was nothing for us to be happy about except for being home. That's it! Nothing else! There was no dignity or the honor that we deserved. A lot of guys were messed up physically, mentally, emotionally and financially, and needed a lot of help — the kind of help that wasn't available.

And the little help that was available was almost impossible to get because of all the red tape.

We went all the way to Saigon to fight a war, and when we came back, there were no jobs and no means to support yourself or your family.

We were useful one minute and flat-out abandon the next. Many men turned to the streets, becoming addicted to drugs or alcohol. A lot of veterans who served this country are living on the streets, homeless.

The way this government treated and treats it's Veterans, I'm not surprised so many are incarcerated. I bet that number was much higher in the 1970s and 1980s.

SH: You're probably right, and I wouldn't doubt it. When did you escape Vietnam with your life?

OS: 1970. Another crazy thing about it is that when Blacks were sent on the other side of the world to fight, we were fighting at home for basic civil and human rights. Think about it:

I could've stayed home and fought the real enemy.

SH: You're absolutely right, and can say the same today. Blacks on the other side of the world fighting while being oppressed in their own damn country. More Black men are in jail than college, and one out of every four are expected to be incarcerated before the age of 35.

What do you think of the war today?

OS: They should have never went into Iraq.

There were sanctions and no fly zones in placed. Nuclear inspectors been in there many times and found nothing.

So when they started talking about Saddam Hussein having WMDs, I kind of figured it was a lie.

All of those people died on both sides and are dying based on a lie.

The mission has changed so many times that I don't understand how Bush could get away with these atrocities. First it was WMDs, then to liberate the Iraqi people, then to fight the insurgent, and now, to fight Al Qaeda.

There is no mission and if I was there, I would go AWOL or be put in jail because I'm not fighting a war or getting killed trying to prove that I love a country that doesn't really love me.

They already showed me that when I came back from Nam, and I thank God I didn't come back in a body—bag.

SH: What are you saying? Are you telling the Troops to go AWOL or to jail just to leave or don't go to Iraq?

DS: No. I only have one life and I'm not putting it on the line for some Bush/ Cheney bullshit or for some secret mission.

The Troops over there must do what is best for them and their families, and I love and support them 100%. But I wouldn't stay or go in the middle of that bullshit.

SH: So you're against the war?

DS: Yes. People shouldn't be dying simply because a few so called "leaders" can't get their shit together, or dying for Iraqi oil.

SH: I agree with you wholeheartedly.

Blacks served in every military conflict this country has had, and served honorably for a country that has treated them worse than second class citizens and with much racial hatred.

Today, Blacks don't join the military for patriotic reasons or to kill other Human Beings on behalf of this country. They join, like most other people, to "earn money for college" or "to get an education."

This is why there were 51,500 Black military recruits in 2001, and only 32,000 in 2006. That's a 38% decline since the Afghanistan and Iraq wars began. And to hear Bush call himself the Commander-in-Chief and the Decider, I foresee and hope the decline will fall to 100%,

Bush says, "they hate us because they hate our freedoms."

What freedoms, with over 2 million incarcerated and over 250,000 of them are Veterans and more than 3500 on Death Row?

We thank you for this interview and for serving this country with honor and dignity.

We love you Brother Skip.

DS: No.

Thank you.

MORE:

Welcome To The Criminal Injustice System

July 3007 Prison Legal News

Tennessee: On May 9, 2007, the state of Tennessee executed Phillip Workman, 53.

For his last meal Workman had requested that a pizza be donated to the homeless of Nashville. The Department of Corrections refused, stating they do not “donate to charities.”

Upon hearing of the DOC’s response, a number of citizens around the city donated hundreds of pizzas to homeless shelters throughout Nashville in Workman’s name.

Workman had been convicted of killing a policeman in 1981 while robbing a Wendy’s to feed his cocaine addiction. He was homeless at the time.

July 3007 Prison Legal News

Utah: On April 26, 2007, Utah State University announced that it was ending its program of providing Bachelors and Masters Degrees to prisoners for a lack of funds.

It had offered prisoners classes online and over satellite TV for the past 20 years, awarding 91 degrees in that period. Prisoners would pay \$100 per semester, regardless of how many classes they take.

Vince Lafferty, director of Utah State’s distance learning program noted that not a single one of the school’s prison graduates had returned to prison after release.

Asking about efforts of seeking state funding, he was told it would “never be a priority” for the legislature.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Mail for Prisoners Against The War will be forwarded to Stanley Howard.

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 to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Four U.S. Soldiers Killed In some Kind Of Explosion Somewhere Or Other In Iraq; Four More Wounded

August 12, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070812-02

BAGHDAD — Four Task Force Marne Soldiers were killed and four others were wounded by an explosion during combat operations south of Baghdad Aug. 11.

Fallen Marine Honored As Hero



United States Marine Cpl. Sean Stokes, of Lake of the Pines, is remembered as a “fun-loving boy.” He was killed recently in Iraq. Submitted photo

Aug 3, 2007 By Greg Moberly, The Union

Sean Stokes, the local U.S. Marine corporal recently killed in Iraq, fought insurgents with his fellow Marines in Fallujah even while hiding shrapnel wounds on his arms and legs, said a writer embedded with Stokes' platoon in 2004.

Stokes' platoon and its role in the fight for Fallujah is the subject of a History Channel documentary, “Shootout, D-Day Fallujah,” which first aired in summer 2005.

“He actually hid his wounds so he could stay with the rest of the guys,” said Patrick O'Donnell, author of the book “We Were One” and one of the documentary writers. “That's (cause for) an immediate evacuation” from the field if platoon leaders discover the wounds, he said.

Stokes, 24, died Monday from wounds suffered while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, according to a United States Department of Defense press release. Stokes, a 2001 graduate of Bear River High School, was on his third tour of duty in Iraq. “Sean was our hero,” said Sean's stepmother, Sue Stokes, in a statement. “Sean was courageous, dedicated and passionate about what he was doing.”

“He cared deeply for his fellow Marines and volunteered to deploy on this last tour to watch out for his brothers in arms,” Sue Stokes said. “Sean had a huge heart and was well respected by everyone who knew him. ... We hope and pray for the safety of all of our troops in harm's way.”

O'Donnell's book focuses heavily on Stokes, of Lake of the Pines, and his platoon. It also includes gripping details about the November 2004 battle for Fallujah.

While attempting to secure a house in the city, Stokes was unable to escape as enemy fighters sprayed machine gun fire at him, O'Donnell told The Union.

“A grenade detonated next to him, sending him flying and giving him a concussion, but he was able to recover,” O'Donnell said. Then, he ran out of ammunition, he said.

Stokes' team leader had to knock down a side door and get him out of the house, O'Donnell said.

“The stories are even more amazing now,” O'Donnell said. “The sad thing is, hardly anybody knows anything about him.”

The author wrote to the Marine Corps in March to nominate Stokes for the Bronze Star for his heroism in Fallujah, he said.

Stokes received at least two Purple Heart awards for his injuries in Iraq, Sue Stokes said.

Family members expect the fallen Marine's body to be flown into Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield Saturday morning, Sue Stokes said. Funeral plans are pending but could be

held Sunday or Tuesday in Susanville, she said. Walton's Colonial Mortuary in Susanville is handling the arrangements.

U.S. Soldier Killed Somewhere Or Other In Iraq

August 12, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory

BAGHDAD — A Task Force Marne Soldier was killed by small arms fire while conducting a dismounted patrol southeast of Baghdad August 11.

Owego Soldier Killed By Bomb Explosion



Charlie E. Bilbrey Jr. is seen in a U.S. Army portrait. [The Ithaca Journal]

July 31, 2007 By Eric Reinagel, The Ithaca Journal

OWEGO — U.S. Army Specialist Fourth Class Charles E. Bilbrey Jr., 21, of Owego, was killed Friday in Iraq after an improvised explosive device hit his vehicle in Diyala province, his parents said.

The soldier's father, Charles Sr., said his son's captain told him two other U.S. soldiers died in the attack.

“He had volunteered for a risky mission,” Charles Sr. was told.

Bilbrey's captain “referred to him as a soldier's soldier. He had no fear of anything. I think that's why he volunteered for these risky missions,” his father said.

Charles Jr.'s mother, Barbara, said her son will be buried in Owego with a full military service. Services are expected later this week.

On Saturday, the reality of Charles Jr.'s death was still settling in as the family tried to stay busy. Charles Jr.'s 18-year-old sister, Shannon, was out with a friend, and his 9-year-old brother, Patrick, was just leaving the family's Valley Road home in Owego for a baseball game.

Before going, he said, "I really miss him, and he's a good brother."

Another sister, Brienne, 19, recalled her brother's love of the Japanese card game YuGiOh! and how he taught Patrick to count at the age of 3 by playing the game. She also laughed about Charles' antics in school.

"Charlie was a riot," she said. When he won the position of class treasurer at Owego Free Academy, his speech was, "I'm Charles Bilbrey and I'm too cool for this microphone. Peace out," she said with a laugh.

His parents laughed as they recalled their son's recent chance meeting with Van Halen singer Sammy Hagar in an airport.

While Sammy signed an autograph, Charles Jr. said, "I liked Van Halen better when it had David Lee Roth (the band's original lead singer)." Hagar ripped up the autograph.

"He was just that type of kid," his father said.

They also said Charles Jr. would be proud for people to know that he and his friends were once asked to leave an all-you-can-eat buffet because they ate so much food. Charles Jr. was not fat, just a good eater, his parents said.

The mood changed in the house, however, when Charles Sr. played an answering machine message his son left a week ago. Charles Jr.'s tired voice greeted his parents through a broken satellite transmission.

"We'll keep that always," his father said. His mother could no longer keep from crying.

She said the reality won't hit her fully until she sees her son's body.

"I think we're somewhat in shock," Charles Sr. said.

Charles Jr. enlisted in the Army a year before he graduated from Owego Free Academy in June 2005. His goal was to become an Army Ranger, and he climbed two ranks during his short time in the military. He was deployed to Iraq in January with Cavalry 5-7 of the 3rd Infantry Division, based in Fort Stewart, Ga.

His mother said that when he arrived in Kuwait, he called home and told her, "This place looks like Dr. Seuss built it," because of the buildings' alien architecture. Barbara said when her son first arrived in Iraq, he asked his family to send Jolly Ranchers so he could give them to the Iraqi children.

The last the family knew, Charles Jr. had been doing door-to-door searches in Diyala province.

**THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR
HEALTH;
COME HOME, NOW**



A U.S. soldier at the scene of a recent car bombing in Baghdad's central Karrada district August 11, 2007. REUTERS/Ross Colvin

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

IED Kills 3 U.S. Troops In Nangarhar

Aug. 12, 2007 (AP) & AFP

A roadside bomb blast killed three U.S. troops in eastern Afghanistan near the border with Pakistan on Sunday.

The three troops were engaged in combat operations in Nangarhar province when the roadside bomb hit their vehicle, a statement from the U.S.-led coalition said. A civilian interpreter was also killed.

The coalition did not announce the nationalities of the soldiers, though Noor Agha Zuwak, the spokesman for the Nangarhar governor, identified the troops as American. The majority of troops in eastern Afghanistan are from the U.S.

British Soldier From 1st Royal Anglians Killed Near Sangin On 11 August 2007; 5 More Wounded

12 Aug 07 Ministry of Defence

It is with profound sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm the death of a British soldier from 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment in Afghanistan yesterday, Saturday 11 August 2007.

The soldier was killed during an attack on his patrol base north east of Sangin, in Helmand Province. Five other soldiers received minor injuries in the incident.

At 1320hrs local time the patrol base came under attack from small arms fire, rocket propelled grenades, and indirect fire. It was during this engagement that the British soldier was injured. An emergency response helicopter took him to the medical facility at Camp Bastion for treatment, but sadly the soldier did not survive.

Copper Center Soldier Dies

July 26, 2007 By PETER PORCO, The Anchorage Daily News

The U.S. Department of Defense said Wednesday that a 20-year-old Alaska soldier was killed this week in Afghanistan by a roadside bomb.

The agency said Pfc. Jessy S. Rogers was from Copper Center. Rogers died Monday from wounds suffered when the vehicle in which four soldiers, including Rogers, was destroyed by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan's Sarobi District, the department said.

The bomb killed three other soldiers, according to the agency: Sgt. Travon T. Johnson, 29, of Palmdale, Calif.; Pfc. Adam J. Davis, 19, of Twin Falls, Idaho; and 1st Sgt. Michael S. Curry Jr., 37, of Dania Beach, Fla.

Their unit -- the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team -- is based in Vicenza, Italy, as part of the European Command's rapid response force.

Any relatives or friends of Rogers living in Alaska could not be located by Wednesday evening. An online database of state records indicates that Jessy Rogers and family

members collected Permanent Fund dividend checks for 2002, 2003 and 2004 while using a postal address in Palmer.

After that, they appear to disappear from state records. Any trace of Rogers in Copper Center could not be found Wednesday.

Sarobi is in the east-southeast part of Afghanistan where the Taliban insurgency has been particularly active.

Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed, “Several” More Wounded; Nationality Not Announced

Aug. 12, 2007 (AP)

One NATO soldier was killed and several others wounded in an attack Saturday in the south, NATO's International Security Assistance Force said in a statement Sunday.

ISAF did not give any further details such as the exact locations of the two incidents or the nationalities of the soldiers.

Five Canadian Troops Wounded In Supply Convoy Ambush Near Masum Ghar

August 12, 2007 Andrew Mayeda, The Ottawa Citizen; With files from Agence France-Press

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - Five Canadian soldiers were injured early yesterday after their supply convoy was ambushed by Taliban insurgents.

The soldiers were travelling in an RG-31 Nyala armoured vehicle as part of a convoy that was supplying a Canadian forward-operating base in Masum Ghar, southwest of Kandahar City.

On their way back from Masum Ghar, the vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device planted along the road. The convoy then came under fire from rocket-propelled grenades.

“Insurgents Attack Firebase Anaconda From Three Sides”

Comment: Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier:

“THE INABILITY OF VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS TO REACH CALIFORNIA SHOWS HOW INEFFECTIVE THEIR TACTICS ARE.” - PENTAGON SPOKESMAN, MAY 1, 1975 AFTER THE ROOFTOP EVACUATION OF THE EMBASSY THE DAY BEFORE:

“The inability of the insurgent forces to inflict any severe damage on Firebase Anaconda, while being simultaneously decimated in the process, should be a clear indication of the ineffectiveness of their fighters,” said Army Capt. Vanessa R. Bowman, a coalition spokeswoman.

Aug 7 By RAHIM FAIEZ, Associated Press Writer

GHAZNI, Afghanistan - A group of 75 Taliban militants tried to overrun a U.S.-led coalition base in southern Afghanistan on Tuesday, a rare frontal attack that left more than 20 militants dead, the coalition said in a statement.

The insurgents attacked Firebase Anaconda from three sides, using gunfire, grenades and 107 mm rockets, the coalition said. A joint Afghan-U.S. force repelled the attack with mortars, machine guns and air support.

“The inability of the insurgent forces to inflict any severe damage on Firebase Anaconda, while being simultaneously decimated in the process, should be a clear indication of the ineffectiveness of their fighters,” said Army Capt. Vanessa R. Bowman, a coalition spokeswoman.

MORE:

Firebase Anaconda Attacked Again

Aug. 12, 2007 (AP)

In southern Uruzgan province, Taliban militants attacked a U.S. military base Saturday evening for the third time this week in what the U.S.-led coalition said might be a rehearsal for a future attempt to overrun the outpost.

“Several” suspected Taliban were killed Saturday evening in the latest attack on Firebase Anaconda, in addition to four that were killed in an earlier attack on the base Saturday, the coalition said.

How It Is

August 12, 2007 New York Times

Afghanistan's embattled president, Hamid Karzai, said in Washington last week that security in his country had "definitely deteriorated."

One former national security official called that "a very diplomatic understatement."

Assorted Resistance Action

August 7, 2007 AP & August 11, 2007 Daily Times & AFP

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan: Taliban militants attacked a police vehicle in southern Afghanistan, killing two policemen and wounding eight others, an official said Tuesday. The attack occurred Monday night just outside Kandahar city, said provincial police chief Syed Agha Saqib. The attackers escaped and police are hunting for them, he said.

Taliban militants ambushed a joint Afghan and NATO army convoy, sparking a firefight that killed seven Afghan soldiers. Eight Afghan army vehicles were destroyed, he said.

Militants also ambushed an Afghan army patrol in Sangin overnight.

TROOP NEWS

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



The coffin containing the remains of US Army Staff Sgt. Wilberto Suliveras, shortly after it arrived at Muniz Airbase, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Aug. 6, 2007. Staff Sgt. Suliveras, who was killed a week earlier by small arms fire in Hor Al Bash, Iraq, is survived by a wife and two sons. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

**British Troops Defy
Government &
Commanding Officers:
They Will Not Be
Silenced
Despite Gag Order, They Have
Plenty To Say:
“What A Crock This Is”
“You Can Stuff This ... Up Your
Arsse”**

[Thanks to NB, who sent this in.]

August 10, 2007 Fred Attewill, Guardian Unlimited [Excerpts]

Unofficial army websites are full of reaction to the revelation the MoD has issued wide-ranging new guidelines to stop military personnel speaking out about defence issues without permission from a superior.

The backlash coincides with reports that troops' morale in Basra city is plummeting amid mounting casualties, stifling temperatures and falling public support for an increasingly unpopular war.

Below is a selection of comments from unofficial army website arrse.co.uk.

Many are scathing about the MoD and some also attack the media and politicians. A few posters on the site back the new guidelines.

Jim30 wrote: "No this is a blatant attempt by the MoD to gag and silence any voice of concern that service personnel may have."

Mr_Bridger wrote: "But what about the young paratrooper who lost both his legs in Helmand and has endured less than ideal and hygienic conditions in Selly Oak hospital, about which he is allowed to say nothing?"

ViroBono wrote: "I imagine that anyone planning to give a eulogy at a Service funeral, for example, will now need official permission to speak, and will presumably have to have his words checked and possibly censored by some MOD creature.

"It seems that what they are really saying is that they want to choose not to allow anything that isn't a happy-happy Soldier-stylee story into the public domain.

"Clearly they have realised that the veracity of everything ministers say, and MoD's own media people put out, is doubted, and have decided that rather than cleaning up their own act, they'll try to shift the responsibility."

MoistVelvet wrote: "So could anyone tell me what is defined as a 'defence' matter? If you must now obtain permission to discuss 'defence' matters is this forum now obsolete?"

Does this mean discussing the tragedy of Passchendaele of WW1, or squad tactics within an online game of Battlefield 2 are now banned? Just how far does this rule go, if you adopt this instruction by the letter then it seems very restrictive."

PartTimePongo wrote: "All the problems of kit and equipment and conditions can be dealt with, with a happy-smiley press release. The pen is indeed mightier than the sword."

ishinryu wrote: "At the end of the day (this) is just the official way of saying: 'Stop being so bloody selfish and blabbing to the press.' Remember the press are not your friends and they will use any little snippet of information to denigrate the MoD and Armed Forces."

halo_jones wrote: "What a crock this is and does the head shed (top brass) truly believe that only shiney shiney (sic) news will be allowed.

"Media Ops are a valid part of day-to-day forces life and operation but the constant spin and failing to tell the truth when it is plainly know is just 'Pravda'.

When will the head shed grow a pair and stop allowing the politicalisation (sic) of the MOD and forces?"

elovabloke wrote: "Leaks are the norm for the self-important people of high places. Don't blame the tom on the ground. Their concerns are greater. It's about time (they) listened

to the genuine issues that concern the man/woman on the ground then perhaps they wouldn't feel the need to go to the tabloids.

“I challenge media ops to publicly challenge the government who are releasing to the press, false information on military-only wards at Selly, numbers of adequate armoured patrol vehicles in areas of conflict and service personnel still running around with poor equipment.

“Blatant lies feed to the country. Media ops seems to feel it is ok for our MPs to go around lying but are not prepared to take them on. Leaving it to the tom on the ground.

Trackpen wrote: “Let's face it, the government has had quite a bit of egg splashed over its collective face in the past few months and this just looks like an attempt to gag anything that's 'off message'.”

Bravo_Bravo wrote: “An obvious effort in thought control. On the other hand, if the powers think that this applies to TA soldiers while not on duty, it does fly in the face of the description of the TA as casual labour. Gimme that pension...”

stinker wrote: “To be perfectly honest with you, you can stuff this ... up your arsse (sic). I have never read such a draconian regulation in my life.

“The powers that be have got to be on drugs if they think that this can stick. Tell you what, tell my solicitors, I'm sure they'd love to take the contents of this post to court.

“The military fights and has fought for the freedom and liberty of this country and I'll be fcuked (sic) if a piece of paper produced by a civil servant can prevent this.

In effect I could not be prosecuted for posting here as the reason for my prosecution would have to be revealed therefore breaking the DIN.”

offog wrote: “Every one should write in with an application so that they can talk to their mother, as she is a member of the public talking to her is banned. After 4,000 applications in a week they will get the message.”

verticalgyro wrote: “Will I be able to discuss with my wife when my next deployment is? She might get hacked off if I just bugger off to Afghanistan in the middle of the night.”

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

In Iraq? How Does This One Make You Feel?

Col. Defends Million Dollar Contracts For Mercenaries: Says “To Pay A Man Or A Woman To Come Over Here Knowing That People Want To Blow Them Up And Kill Them, You Gotta Pay To Get That Level Of Dedication”

August 12, 2007 By Steve Fainaru, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpt]

BAGHDAD -- The U.S. military has paid \$548 million over the past three years to two British security firms that protect the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on reconstruction projects, more than \$200 million over the original budget, according to previously undisclosed data that show how the cost of private security in Iraq has mushroomed.

U.S. officials and company representatives attributed the overruns to the cost of protecting a largely civilian workforce amid an escalating insurgency, as Corps of Engineers commanders demanded more manpower and increasingly expensive armor to guard their field staff.

“To pay a man or a woman to come over here, put the vest on every day and escort military and civilians around the theater, knowing that people want to blow them up and kill them, you gotta pay to get that level of dedication,” said Col. Douglas P. Gorgoni, senior finance officer for the Corps of Engineers in Iraq.

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.

Join Us On August 23d To Welcome This Brave Young Resister To Ft Drum

From: CitizenSoldier
Sent: August 12, 2007
Subject: Iraq War Author Hosted by the "Different Drummer"

Friends:

We are very happy to present Camilo Mejia, author of "The Road from Ar Ramadi" who will read from his new book at the Different Drummer internet cafe, 12 Paddock Arcade, downtown Watertown, N Y on Thursday, August 23d at 6:30 pm.

Mejia was the first Iraq war veteran to refuse to serve further combat duty in Iraq. He was sentenced to one year in prison and a Bad Conduct discharge for his courageous opposition to this illegal war.

His book is a powerful memoir of his transition from an idealistic soldier to a principled war resister while serving as a combat soldier in Iraq. Please plan to join us on August 23d to welcome this brave young resister to Ft Drum.

We expect that a number of soldiers from Ft Drum will also attend this reading.

Mejia will be happy to autograph copies of his book which will be available for sale.

The Yellow Ribbons Come Down In South Portland, Maine

Aug 7, 2007 The Associated Press

SOUTH PORTLAND, Maine — Beginning Monday, city employees began taking down yellow ribbons that were placed on trees and utility poles four months ago as tributes to U.S. troops fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The debate over yellow ribbons has been a source of friction among residents.

Critics say the ribbons can be interpreted as support for the Bush administration and the war in Iraq, while others view them as a show of solidarity for the troops and the hope that they return home safely.

“Christian” Filth Learn Vet Was Gay & Cancel His Memorial: Shit-Eating Dog Who Runs Church Caught Telling Stupid Lie About It



The church's pastor, the Rev. Gary Simons [turdpolish.com/]

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

Aug 11, 2007 AP

ARLINGTON, Texas - A megachurch canceled a memorial service for a Navy veteran 24 hours before it was to start because the deceased was gay.

Officials at the nondenominational High Point Church knew that Cecil Howard Sinclair was gay when they offered to host his service, said his sister, Kathleen Wright. But after his obituary listed his life partner as one of his survivors, she said, it was called off.

“It’s a slap in the face. It’s like, ‘Oh, we’re sorry he died, but he’s gay so we can’t help you,’” she said Friday.

Wright said High Point offered to hold the service for Sinclair because their brother is a janitor there. Sinclair, who served in the first Gulf War, died Monday at age 46 from an infection after surgery to prepare him for a heart transplant.

The church’s pastor, the Rev. Gary Simons, said no one knew Sinclair, who was not a church member, was gay until the day before the Thursday service, when

staff members putting together his video tribute saw pictures of men “engaging in clear affection, kissing and embracing.”

Simons said the church believes homosexuality is a sin, and it would have appeared to endorse that lifestyle if the service had been held there.

Wright called the church’s claim about the pictures “a bold-faced lie.”

She said she provided numerous family pictures of Sinclair, including some with his partner, but said none showed men kissing or hugging.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

They Can Do This Unopposed In Daylight: Time To Get The Fuck Out



Insurgents at an unknown location, setting up 49 rockets aimed at Forward Operating Base Hammer, about 30 kilometers (20 miles) east of Baghdad, Iraq, which were launched July 11, 2007, killing one soldier and wounding 15. The video also shows the set-up and execution of an Aug. 5 rocket attack against the base. The video was captured in a raid on, Aug. 7, 2007. (AP Photo/U.S. Army, HO)

Iraqi Insurgents Praise Soccer Win

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

August 07, 2007 Herald and Weekly Times

AN insurgent group congratulated Iraq's Asian Cup-winning soccer team overnight.

"We ask the Almighty that this joy may herald the grand joy when our country is liberated from the occupiers and their lackeys," Hamas al-Iraq, a relatively small insurgent group, said.

Iraq was the surprise winner of last month's Asian Cup, triggering a wave of celebrations that swept the streets of Baghdad despite security concerns.

In more comments on the website, one contributor mocked the Hamas al-Iraq statement by saying the group should set up its own soccer team.

"Maybe then you would change your (statements) ... from 'one of our mujahideen was killed in an ambush' to 'the other team fouled our player by tackling him from behind'," he said.

Assorted Resistance Action

11 Aug 2007 Reuters & 12 Aug 2007 Reuters & AP

The governor and police chief of Iraq's Diwaniya province were killed in a roadside bomb attack on their convoy near the city of Diwaniya, 180 km (110 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

More than 20 insurgents forced staff from a civil defence building in Baiji, 180 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, on Friday and then destroyed the building with a bomb, police said.

An Iraqi soldier was killed by guerrilla in a drive-by shooting in the town of Hashemiya 100 km (60 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

LATIFIYA - A roadside bomb struck an Iraqi Army patrol killing one soldier and wounding two others, police said.

Insurgents opened fire on a police vehicle on a road near Arif Koie, 10 Kilometers west of Daqouq today. Three policemen were killed in the attack: Hiwa Hweiz, Mahmoud Sabir and Muhsin Ali. One policeman was injured.

Guerrillas ambushed a police patrol southwest of the northern city of Kirkuk, killing three officers and wounding another, police Brig. Gen. Sarhat Qadir said.

A police major was killed in the Diyala province city of Baqouba, 60 kilometers (35 miles) northeast of Baghdad, when a bomb planted in his car exploded as he was driving, police officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to release the information.

Guerrillas killed an Iraqi army soldier near a bus station in Hawija west of Kirkuk.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



The ruins of shops and homes after an overnight raid in the Azamiyah neighborhood by foreign occupation troops from the USA July 12, 2007 in Baghdad. Neighbors in the say U.S. soldiers used explosives to gain entry. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)



Foreign occupation soldiers from the USA stop an Iraqi citizen on a public street and forces him to submit to the touching of his private parts during a body search in Yarmuk neighbourhood during a patrol in Baghdad July 20, 2007.

REUTERS/Nikola Solic

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

[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.]

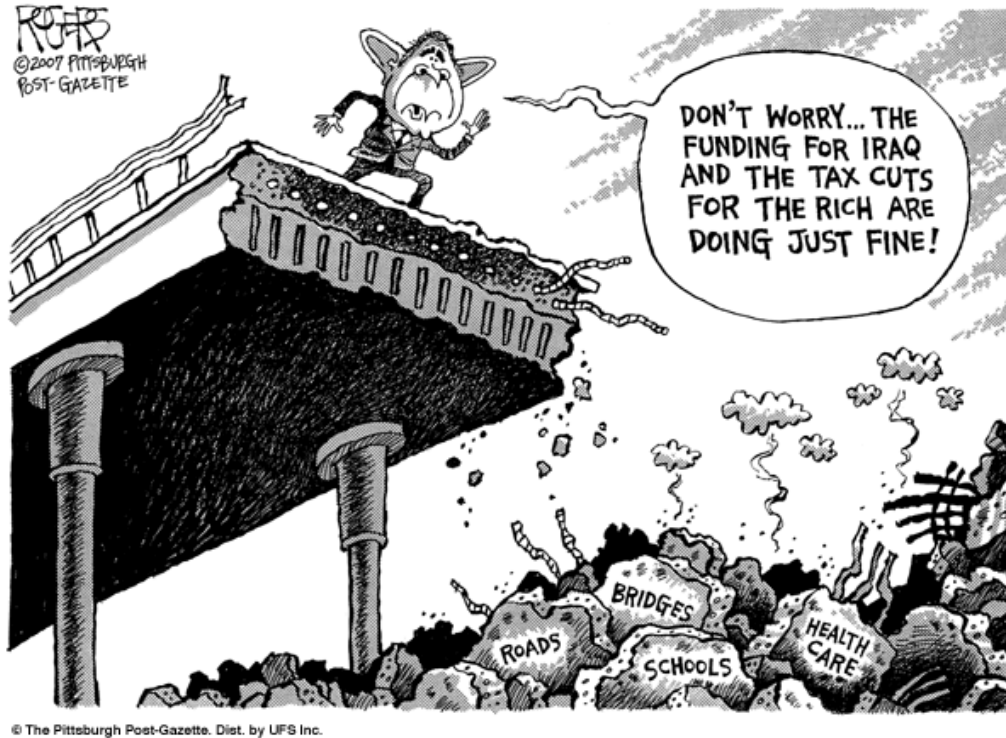
[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly 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!**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Received:

Support The South Chicago Cygnus Strikers: “We Are On Strike Because We See So Many Injustices”

August 08, 2007 by Orlando Sepulveda and Shaun Harkin and Lee Sustar; Zmag.org

CHICAGO-Management at the Marietta Corp./Cygnus soap factory told workers that if they couldn't resolve their immigration status by August 10, they'd be fired.

The 118 workers at the plant decided that they had had enough and went on strike July 30-even though they had no union representation, and almost all of them were temporary workers.

Eighteen-year-old striker Monica, who'd been working at Cygnus for five months, summed up the mood. “I think it's terrible that there's racism against Mexican people

here,” she said. “They just want to work. I mean people have families and they can't feed them if they can't work. We were told we were getting kicked out because we had no papers, so we decided to go on strike. We're getting together and we're putting pressure on them to listen to us.”

The strike soon won the support of International Association of Machinists (IAM) District 8 after union representatives visited the picket line on the second day of the strike.

Two days later, an overwhelming majority of the strikers had signed petitions to make District 8 its bargaining agent, and union organizers promised to demand that management immediately recognize the union. If the employers refuse, the IAM plans to file for an election.

The workers realize that even with the support of District 8, the struggle will be difficult. But they're determined.

“We are on strike because we see so many injustices,” said one striker, Maria. “We have been working for a long time. Then they left us without our jobs and we really need them back. They forced us out on strike.”

Besides management's use of workers' immigration status to threaten termination, the strikers' top grievance is low pay.

The starting wage was \$6.50 per hour until the recent increase in the state minimum wage to \$7.50. The top pay rate is \$8.50 for bottling and packaging soaps and detergents for private-label store brands marketed by Walgreens, Target, Wal-Mart and other big retailers.

Workers who've been at the plant between eight and 11 years make just above minimum wage-with no benefits.

Out of the 118 workers-virtually all of them Mexican immigrants-only 8 are considered full-time permanent Cygnus employees. The rest have been employed through the big Total Staffing Solutions temporary worker agency.

However, as Chicago Workers' Collaborative organizer Martin Unzueta points out, the workers aren't really temps, “because they have worked here for six years. Cygnus just doesn't want to pay them what they deserve.”

The company can certainly afford to pay more.

While the workers refer to the plant by the name of its former owners, Cygnus, that company has been absorbed by a series of mergers. In 2005, Cygnus' parent company, Packaging Advantage Corp, was acquired by Marietta Corp. Marietta, in turn, is controlled by Ares Management, a \$16 billion international private equity firm that owns the Samsonite luggage company, the Maidenform lingerie brand, the Serta mattress manufacturer and the House of Blues nightclub chain.

The decision by the workers to strike, despite having no union, reveals just how tightly the struggles for legalization for the undocumented and for labor rights are intertwined.

And, it also exposes the cynical measures corporations will use to keep wages down and marginalize immigrant workers.

In July, a group of Cygnus workers, with the support of the vast majority of permanent and temporary co-workers, approached management about a wage increase. Management's response was to tell workers that they had to resolve mismatched Social Security numbers by August 10. If they couldn't, they'd be fired.

The issue of Social Security status at Cygnus first appeared more than a year earlier. The company claimed it received "no-match" letters from the Social Security Administration indicating a discrepancy between their employees Social Security records and what the administration has on record.

Unzueta of the Chicago Workers Collaborative contacted Cygnus management and explained to the company that it wasn't legally required to take any action against the workers. The issue disappeared.

It wasn't until workers had voiced their demands for a wage increase that management again targeted their immigration status.

This is a tactic employers increasingly use to abuse vulnerable immigrant workers across the country, whether they have a union or not. But at Cygnus, management was stunned when workers fought back.

With workers picketing the plant entrance, chanting, "We are Cygnus, We want to work" and carrying homemade signs saying "Workers rights equal human rights" and "fair wages for our work," the company suddenly announced they would work with a new temporary staffing agency, Staffmark.

All of replacement workers Staffmark has hired at the plant are African American- and they weren't told that they'd be used as strikebreakers.

This highlights another cynical example of corporate policy in the U.S.: pitting the most vulnerable and oppressed workers against each other, hoping to inspire hatred on both sides.

Moreover, the scabs are being paid \$10.50 an hour, at least \$2.00 more than the workers they replaced.

"We want our jobs back. We want permanent jobs. We want to be paid the same as the new (scab) workers," said Edith, a Cygnus striker.

The fact that these workers had to confidence to say "enough is enough" should inspire all those who want to see a revival of working class militancy.

Just as inspiring has been the number of African-American workers who have stopped across the street in their cars, looked at the picket line and the signs, listened to the chants, taken leaflets from picketers--and then drove away.

Jorge Mujica, a leading organizer of Chicago's massive immigrants' right rallies over the last couple of years, has been a regular on the picket line. "People who are encouraged by the immigrants' rights movement are going to start demanding rights in their workplace," he said.

"We are going to see cases like this with people coming out on strike even though they don't have a union, a contract or collective bargaining, a grievance process, nothing. And the employer can't prevent it.

"What's important is that labor unions have to realize that this is happening and they have to find a way to come close to these workers. They have to approach groups of workers and set aside the idea that you can only organize workers in targeted shops. This can arise at any point, anywhere, in any city. So they have to come up with something creative to recruit, get members, to organize these workers.

"I mean, what better member can you get than a worker who, without a labor union, goes out on strike?"

Workers went a week on the picket line marching and chanting without any promise of strike benefits.

They've been joined by family and supported by members of the March 10th Movement immigrant rights coalition, the Southeast Chicago Coalition for Immigrant Rights, the Chicago Workers' Collaborative, the International Socialist Organization and the Juan Diego Community Center.

In the absence of union organization, it's been members of these groups who have raised funds, helped with making flyers, brought water, ice, snacks and other basic necessities to the picket line on a daily basis. Picketers have demonstrated their thanks to all who have turned up in solidarity.

Production has been impacted at the plant, but the company is digging in. The odds are stacked against this group of courageous workers. But if they win, it could encourage other workers, immigrant and native- born, to take a stand.

Victory is indeed possible. But that depends on keeping picket lines strong and winning the support of organized labor and pro-worker organizations with deeper resources. As one of the chants in the big immigrant rights' marches put it, "immigrant rights are workers' rights." The struggle at Cygnus points the way to winning both.

What you can do:

1) Visit the picket line and bring others. The shifts begin at 7am and 4pm. Cygnus is located at 340 E. 138th St., Riverdale, Ill., 60827

2) Hold a collection in your workplace or organization. Contact Martin Unzueta at 773-653-3664 if you have a donation. Publicize the struggle in whatever way you can.

3) Contact Cygnus Corp. at (773) 785-7100. Ask to speak to Jon White and tell him to treat Cygnus workers with respect and listen to their demands.

**(The authors of this article can be reached at orl_sep@yahoo.com,
shaunharkin@gmail.com and lsustar@ameritech.net).**

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