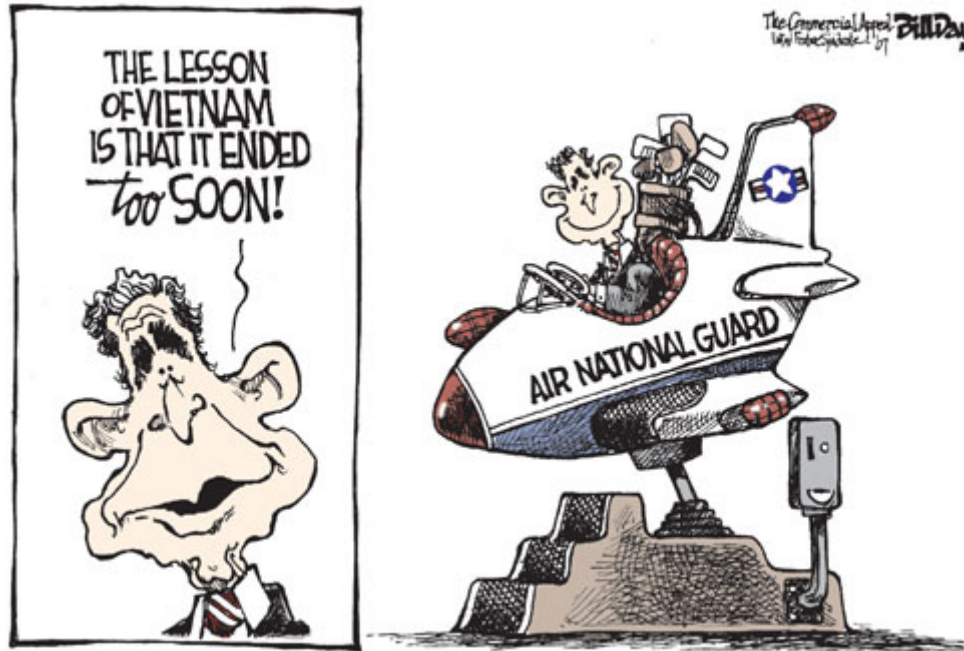


## GI SPECIAL 5H21:



# Losing Is Winning

From: Dennis Serdel  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 21, 2007  
Subject: Losing Is Winning

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace 50 Michigan, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

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## Losing Is Winning

What part of Vietnam did you not understand  
Is it the Vietnamese people who preferred Ho Chi Minh  
they set booby traps for us to step on  
you know the ones that we were supposedly freeing  
a War where the Soldiers gave up on winning

When the Vietnam War finally ended  
we all said "Never Again"  
But memories get old and they start to fade,  
just another test in High School history class  
and all us old Soldiers ask you once more  
what part of Vietnam did you not understand  
How do you know who's civilian or not  
and when an IED goes off you kill everyone  
you don't regret it because you hate them all  
Us old Vietnam Soldiers, we understand  
if the Iraqi people don't back you  
then why are you there  
You might as well give up on winning  
and end this brain dead crazy war  
the majority of Americans are on your side  
and they want all of you back home  
Just change the way you see it  
just try to survive, the hell with the flag  
"I love the Army I love my Country."  
To hell with everything you are supposed to say,  
it's you who will die if you keep on this way,  
it's you who will be wounded  
and what the hell for  
It's just another War  
that did not need to be fought  
The president and politicians have no excuses  
just ask them  
What part of Iraq do you not understand

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

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Mourners Recall Fun-Loving Soldier**

August 11, 2007 BY CATHY FRYE, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Inc.

Friends and family gathered Friday morning in Little Rock for Army Sgt. Bradley Marshall's funeral, during which they remembered not only a passionate and dedicated soldier, but the boy who, after a visit to the orthodontist, gamely sported a T-shirt that declared: "Braces make better lovers."

They recalled the mischievous teenager who, while on a renovation job with his dad, once rode a trash bin through McCain Mall after hours, setting off alarms. And they spoke of the husband who reassured his wife in regular phone calls and e-mails from Iraq: "Hey baby, I love you. I miss you. I can't wait to be home."

**Marshall, a 37-year-old paratrooper, was killed by indirect mortar fire July 31 while on foot at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq. A second paratrooper also died in the attack. Eleven others were injured.**

Marshall served in the Army from 1990 to 1994, then re-enlisted in 2006. He was assigned to Bravo Battery, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division. He deployed to Iraq in October.

"Brad was the love of my life," his wife of 17 years, Gina Marshall, said in a statement, read aloud at the service by the family's longtime minister Willard A. Zeiser. In her statement, Gina Marshall recalled the way her husband always told her she was beautiful and the plans they had for after he left the military.

"He was my life, and I will be forever broken," she wrote.

As the service opened, family members were presented with the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and several other honors specific to the war in Iraq.

Several friends then shared their memories of the fun-loving, athletic Marshall, shedding tears as they described a steadfast and dependable man who made sure things got done — cutting the grass at his church, remodeling a home for his former high school coach, chores around the house, vacations with his family — in his own quiet way.

A childhood friend who identified himself only as "John" broke down while describing the extent of Marshall's loyalty. "When I started my insurance career eight years ago, he was the only one of my friends to actually buy a policy from me," John said, laughing through tears.

Moments later, the crowd of hundreds laughed as a former coach recalled the time Marshall's more scholarly sister, Kim Mayo, wrote a high school essay for him. Marshall didn't bother to rewrite it in his own handwriting before turning it in, prompting this note from his teacher: "Brad, I know you didn't write this, but at least I could read it."

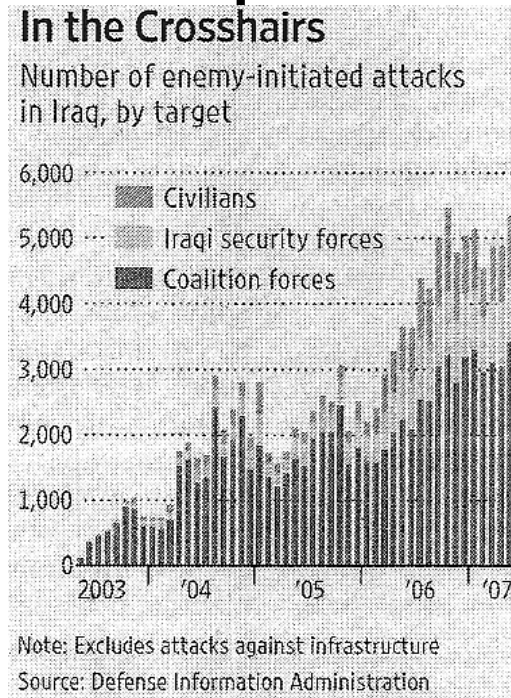
Another friend read a statement from Marshall's son, Wesley, who described how his dad stopped by his bedroom each night to say, "I love you." Marshall's other son, Tanner, put together a slide-show presentation — hundreds of pictures of his dad at home and in Iraq — which opened and closed the service.

Zeiser of Bingham Road Baptist Church shared a verse from the Book of John to describe Marshall: "No one has greater love than this, than to lay down one's life for one's friends."

He added: "Brad Marshall laid down his life for his friends. Brad Marshall is my hero."

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## The Next Time You Hear That "Sectarian Civil War" Bullshit From Some Lame Fool, Cram This Up Their Ass With A Sharp Stick



Wall St. Journal 8.21.07

[Gee, it looks like the overwhelming majority of attacks are against Occupation and Collaborator "security forces," doesn't it? How amazing. What a surprise.

[Of course, the pompous idiot windbags who babble endlessly about the "sectarian civil war" in Iraq don't give a shit about reality. Never did, never will: it doesn't fit their opportunistic little political agenda. The civil war in Iraq is between Iraqi traitors and collaborators with Bush's occupation, and Iraqi patriots fighting them. T]

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**UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH;  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



Thanks to Kevin Ramirez, CCCO. He writes: Pics showing what happens when US bases get mortared/rocketed. Obviously taken by a GI. I found them online, and don't know who took them.

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Heartbroken Family: A Soldier's Death Brings Grief, Confusion; "He Said He Was Tired Of Seeing (Afghan) Kids Die And Tired Of Kicking In Doors To Ask About The Taliban"**

August 14, 2007 By Julie Mack, Kalamazoo Gazette

As soon as Aubrey Goode heard the knock on her door Saturday, she knew her husband was dead.

She knew, even before she saw them, that Army officers in dress uniforms would be standing there.

She knew, even before they spoke, they would say that Jordan Goode -- her high school sweetheart, the father of her 2-year-old daughter -- had been killed in action in Afghanistan.

A roadside bomb Saturday morning hit the Humvee he was driving, they told her. He bled to death.

Pfc. Jordan Goode was 21 years old.

"We had just talked the night before," Aubrey Goode said. "He told me he had a new mattress and it was almost as good as the one at home, and he told me that he had just seen the movie 'Norbit' and that I should rent it."

Now Jordan Goode is gone and Aubrey Goode is a 20-year-old widow. Sunday, she and 2-year-old Amirah traveled from their base housing in Fort Bragg, N.C., to Kalamazoo, her and Jordan's hometown, to be with Jordan's parents, Tony and Sheri Goode.

Like Aubrey, Tony and Sheri Goode are devastated by the death. When Aubrey called Saturday, "I just let out a scream," Sheri said. "I kept saying, 'It can't be him. It can't be him.'"

Monday afternoon, the family -- which also includes the Goodes' other two sons, Domonique and Kelsey -- were still trying to cope with the news.

They recalled the little boy who was quiet around strangers but a natural ham around friends and family. The teenager who loved skateboarding and fashioned himself a rapper. The young man who became a father and husband and joined the Army in a matter of a few months in 2005, embracing adulthood with an enthusiasm that left his parents moved and proud.

"He stepped up to the plate," Tony Goode said.

And while Tony and Sheri were skeptical of how Jordan would take to military life, he thrived. "He loved what he did," Sheri said. "He believed in what he did. He was planning to re-enlist."

A member of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, Jordan was sent to Afghanistan in January. Before he shipped out, he, Aubrey and the baby came to Kalamazoo for Christmas. It was a wonderful time, Sheri recalled.

Before they left, there was a big party and Sheri Goode made everyone at the party say a prayer for Jordan, despite his protests. "Listen," Sheri told her son, "you can use all the prayers you can get."

**If Sheri was anxious then, she became even more so after Jordan arrived in Afghanistan and his reports became increasingly grim.**

**“He didn’t complain, but he said he was tired of seeing (Afghan) kids die and tired of kicking in doors to ask about the Taliban,” Sheri said.**

He was counting the days until October, when his unit was to come home. He and Aubrey -- who have known each other since middle school -- were planning a trip to Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Now Aubrey and her in-laws are left planning Jordan’s memorial service. Although days and times won’t be set until later this week, the plan is a visitation at Harper Funeral Home and a “memorial service and celebration” at the Christian Life Center.

As he discussed the funeral arrangements Monday, Tony broke into sobs and Sheri quietly took his hand, tears streaming down her face, too.

“You know it’s dangerous there,” she said quietly. “But you never believe it’s going to happen to you.”

Aubrey is the family member that worries her most now, Sheri said. “She told me she doesn’t have a Plan B” beyond being an Army wife, Sheri said. “My heart just breaks for her. Jordan was her life.”

As Tony and Sheri talked, little Amirah toddled into the room and noticed a photo display that Aubrey was assembling. The little girl, who turned 2 last month, pointed to a picture of a handsome young man.

“That’s my daddy,” Amirah said proudly. “He’s so cute.”

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# **3,700 From 4<sup>th</sup> ID And 3,500 From 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Off To Bush’s Imperial Slaughterhouse**

August 27, 2007 Army Times

### **3rd BCT Going Again:**

Fort Carson’s 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, is headed to Iraq for the third time. The soldiers will deploy to Baghdad to protect civilians so the Iraqi government can carry more of the burden of fighting insurgents, officials said.

“We want to get soldiers out into the community,” Col. John Hort, 3rd Brigade commander, said Aug. 14.

The team's 3,700 soldiers will begin leaving in late November for a tour expected to last 15 months.

#### **10th Mtn. Deployment:**

About 3,500 soldiers from 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, will leave for their second Iraq deployment in late August.

A deployment ceremony was scheduled for Aug. 23 at Fort Drum, N.Y., and the soldiers will leave fairly soon after that, spokesman Ben Abel said.

Elements of the brigade also have served in Afghanistan, Abel said.

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## **“Did You Serve In Combat Like These Other Men” The Major Answered “No, I Didn’t” “Well Don’t You Think These Other Men Might Be Right, Being That They’ve Seen What Actual Combat Is Really Like?”**

Spring 2007, By Jackson Potter, *The Veteran*, Vietnam Veterans Against the War  
[Excerpts]

Jackson Potter is a Chicago Public Schools high-school teacher and long-time supporter of VVAW.

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**On Wednesday, March 28 at Englewood High School in the Chicago Public Schools, an unusual thing happened. Instructors in the schools ROTC (Army Reserve Officer Training Corps) agreed to debate Vietnam and Iraq war veterans about the benefits and disadvantages of military enlistment.**

As part of a service project for the Constitutional Rights Foundation on the pros and cons of the draft, Englewood students constructed a debate format for the panelists to argue a myriad of issues pertaining to the War in Iraq.

**The panelists included; Barry Romo, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Sergeant Maurice Flowers, ROTC instructor, Aaron Hughes, member of Iraq War Vets against the War, Major Harry McEwen, ROTC instructor and a soldier on active duty in Iraq who is against the war who will remain anonymous.**



Five Englewood students sat by the panelists and fielded a series of questions for the guests to answer. Some of the questions asked included; “Do you think enlisting in the military is a good idea, why or why not?” and “What do you think about the 3,000 plus soldiers who have died in the war so far?”

The most important exchange occurred after Major McEwen commented that every decision in life involves a calculated risk. He asserted that driving a car was one of the most dangerous things a person can do, and many more die doing that than serving in Iraq.

In a passionate and angry response, VVAW’s Barry Romo disputed that logic, challenged the Major, “to compare dying in an auto accident to intentionally killing someone for no good reason is a terrible comparison.”

Students fixated on this moment and began to ask pointed questions directed at the ROTC instructors in the little time that remained.

**Senior Andrea Hendricks, heavily recruited by the Navy, asked the Major, “Did you serve in combat like these other men.”**

**In a very prosaic manner, the Major answered “No, I didn’t.”**

**Questions were then beginning to accumulate as another young woman in the audience followed up with “well don’t you think these other men might be right, being that they’ve seen what actual combat is really like?”**

**By that point, the Major had no choice but to concede the obvious.**

As a teacher of predominantly low income, African American youth, I can confidently say that on this day we dealt a powerful blow to the military recruitment machine. More discussions and forums like this one in our public schools would go a long way to counter the war propaganda parceled out daily by ROTC programs across America.

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**U.S. Capitalists Defy The Law To  
Fuck Over The Troops:  
Landlords And Financial Institutions  
Reluctant To Cancel Contracts, Cap  
Interest Rates And Waive  
Termination Fees For Troops**

# Deploying Or Receiving Permanent Change Of Station

**Army lawyers also mentioned difficulty faced by soldiers trying to cancel or suspend cell phones, auto insurance and home security contracts while deployed, which Murphy is trying to address by updating the law.**

August 20, 2007 By Rick Maze, Army Times

An Iraq war veteran elected to Congress last fall wants to put some teeth into the financial and legal protections for deployed and mobilized service members.

Rep. Patrick Murphy, D-Pa., a former Army judge advocate who deployed in 2003 to Iraq as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division, introduced what he calls the 21st Century Servicemembers Protection Act to expand the right to cancel or suspend service contracts when deploying or mobilizing.

The bill also would call for landlords, lenders and businesses who do not obey the law to be penalized up to \$10,000 in damages that would be paid to the service member.

Aides to the freshman congressman said Murphy was aware of some of the problems facing troops when he was on active duty, but the push to introduce a bill came when he was contacted by another Army lawyer, whom aides did not identify, who said landlords and lenders don't seem very concerned about obeying current law.

**Even after being contacted by military legal service officers, some landlords and financial institutions were reluctant to cancel contracts, cap interest rates and waive termination and late fees, the Army officer said, according to Murphy's aides.**

**Army lawyers also mentioned difficulty faced by soldiers trying to cancel or suspend cell phones, auto insurance and home security contracts while deployed, which Murphy is trying to address by updating the law.**

His bill, HR 3298, which has 22 co-sponsors, would expand current rights to cancel housing and auto leases when deployed or receiving permanent change-of-station orders.

**His bill specifically would apply to cell phone service, cable or satellite television service, Internet service, automobile insurance, water, electricity, oil, gas, telephone and other utilities.**

A chief co-sponsor is Rep. Timothy Walz, D-Minn., a retired Army National Guard command sergeant major. In a joint letter to members of the House asking for support for the bill, Murphy and Walz, who note they have a combined 34 years of military service, said:

“As we continue to send a new generation of service members into harm’s way, the time has come to update and modernize SCRA (the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act) for the financial obligations faced by today’s troops.”

**Under the proposal, a service member or dependent would have the option of terminating or suspending a service contract if the member receives orders for a permanent change of station to or from a location outside the continental U.S. or receives orders for a deployment of 90 days or more.**

**This would be in addition to the cancellation rights under current law, which allows residential leases to be canceled when a service member is deployed for 90 days or more and for vehicle leases to be canceled when someone is deployed for 180 days or more.**

**A company could not impose an early termination charge and would have to refund any fees paid in advance.**

In cases of fees paid in advance, a company would have 30 days from the effective date of termination to provide a refund.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

**“We Need To Eliminate PTSD As A  
‘Mental’ Disorder”**

**Images Of Traumatized Veterans**

**“Constituted Portraits Of  
Victimization”**

**“Bill Needed A Social Movement, Not  
Treatment, And The Same Can Be Said  
For Hundreds Of Troops And Veterans  
Today Who Are Similarly Disgusted”**

The needs of the current wars’ many victims will be best served not by public lamentations on the costs of war and pledges to support the troops but by an anti-war movement inclusive of the men and women sent to fight the war.

**We need to eliminate PTSD as a “mental” disorder and address it for what it is: A psycho-social anomie arising from our service on behalf of a power-mongering government out for political, personal, and capital gain.**

Spring 2007, By Dianne Ford Wood (interviewer), *The Veteran*, Vietnam Veterans Against the War [Excerpts]

This article originated as a review of *Camouflage & Lace (Camo)*, an audio book about Diane Ford Wood's experiences with Willie Hager, VVAW and PTSD in the early 1970s.

Vietnam vet Jerry Lembcke (*The Spitting Image*) also wrote about Hager related to the 1978 film *Coming Home*. This historical overlap revealed powerful ways that Vietnam veterans can support the post-traumatic struggles and understanding of today's returning veterans.

The interview evolved from there.

Jerry Lembcke is a professor at Holy Cross College in Worcester, MA. *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam* (2000) is available nationwide.

Willie Hager and Diane Ford Wood are principal organizers of PTSD-centered VetSpeak.org.

*Still at War* will soon be available at Wisbooks.com. *Camouflage & Lace* (2005) is available at [www.cdbaby.com/camo](http://www.cdbaby.com/camo).

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*Diane: What is your connection to the movie Coming Home?*

Willie: As the VVAW regional coordinator in LA at the time, I was interviewed extensively for the movie.

Screenwriter Waldo Salt asked me what was the hardest part of Vietnam. “Coming home,” I told him. For me, that was far more painful than Vietnam itself. I was given a role as a technical advisor which wasn't a completely new experience. In 1976, I helped make *Still at War*, one of the earliest documentaries on PTSD and mistreatment of paraplegic veterans on film.

After Salt got informally sidelined, the new writers revised Bruce Dern's character (loosely based on my life) in the same way society revised us. In an insightful and compelling way — and with the benefit of having reviewed the original UCLA interview transcripts — Lembcke got this.

**Coming Home began as a story about how a career Marine turns into an anti-war veteran organizer.**

**Dern's character and the script took a completely different turn from Salt's original story premise; it became a foil for the administration's reframing program. Go figure!**

**It wasn't the movie I had signed on to make. I probably wouldn't have become involved had I known how it was all to come out.**

Jerry: When I was writing *The Spitting Image*, I came across interviews that screenwriter Waldo Salt did with Willie and other veterans for the script of *Coming Home*.

**Speaking of what was then called "post-Vietnam syndrome" (PVS), Willie told Salt that their Vietnam experience had taught veterans that American society was a lie and that that same society did not want to deal with them.**

**I wrote that, in effect, the raised consciousness that men like Willie came home with was pathologized, beginning with the way Salt used Willie's story to construct the prototypical whacked-out veteran played by Bruce Dern in the film and later canonized by psychiatrists as the mental health problem, PTSD.**

**Images of spat-upon veterans and traumatized veterans constituted portraits of victimization.**

**These portraits displaced from public memory the fact that their time in Vietnam was one of empowerment and politicization for many GIs.**

**Reading books like Alan Young's *The Illusion of Harmony: Inventing Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*, I became aware of how the diagnostic category PTSD also functioned as a political and cultural concept.**

With the Vietnam-era "anti-war warrior" screened out by the "victim-veteran," it was no surprise that the current wars began with both the pro-war Right and anti-war Left pledging to support the troops.

**It was no surprise either when the film *Sir! No Sir!* (about the GI anti-war movement during Vietnam) pulled that piece of history back into view.**

It inaugurated a new anti-war coffee house near Fort Drum; a petition campaign against the war by military personnel; and new stories of spat-on veterans. This redirected public attention to the televised images of battered veterans images heretofore banned from public consumption.

Diane: *The Spitting Image* talks about how Willie's experiences were misunderstood by the VA, the military, Hollywood, society and even those closest to him. Camo describes living this nightmare from a woman's perspective. Were we all too caught up in the moment to have any kind of overview? How could so many caring people miss the point?

Willie: We were living history. We were blinded by the light.

**Jerry: Hollywood was a major player in displacing the story of the war itself with the story of GIs coming home to the country that had betrayed them and their mission.**

Coming Home, for which Willie's interviews were used, had powerful feminist and anti-war messages and was heralded as a contribution to the disability-rights movement.

For those who needed a different story, it also helped construct a mythical betrayal narrative for why we lost the war.

In Sir! No Sir! Bill Short recalls that one of his duties in Vietnam was to count the dead Viet Cong after a fight.

The task revolted him and when he refused to do it any longer he was sent to the unit shrink for psychiatric evaluation.

His resistance about to be pathologized as a mental health problem (he thinks), the psychiatrist turns instead and pulls from the shelf a copy of The New York Times with a full-page petition against the war signed by GIs.

**Bill needed a social movement, not treatment, and the same can be said for hundreds of troops and veterans today who are similarly disgusted with the war they've been sent to fight and depressed with the realization that there is no glory in inglorious war.**

Willie: The devil is in the details: The more you know about PTSD, the more pissed you become. Sure I have those feelings, especially when it is all coming around again as a result of our combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

**We need to eliminate PTSD as a "mental" disorder and address it for what it is: A psycho-social anomie arising from our service on behalf of a power-mongering government out for political, personal, and capital gain.**

Diane: Jerry, you are a Vietnam veteran, presumably with some level of disillusionment. Yet you found your way in society to become a college professor. How have you managed to survive in a society with which you have such issues?

Jerry: Janice Joplin sang "freedom is just another word for nothing left to lose." That was the mindset I returned with from Vietnam. One of the veterans in Gerald Gioglio's book, Days of Decision (about in-service conscientious objectors) says he never had more clarity about life than during his days of resistance. This is the kind of clarity that comes when you're stripped-down to the essentials of life. That's the way I felt. I vowed never again to be entrapped by this society's materialism or to be bonded to what Willie described to Salt as "little bullshit jobs that don't really count." At about that time, I read Neil Postman's book Teaching as a Subversive Activity. I used it as a kind of playbook for a dialectical engagement with society—surviving within it while simultaneously working for its transformation into something beyond itself.

Diane: Willie, you and veterans like Calixto Cabrera ("Alfredo" in Camo) joined the military as patriots and believers. You turned down a presidential appointment to Annapolis to become a Marine. Yet ultimately, you chose the outlaw life after Vietnam. How do you feel about that choice now?

Willie: I am still a patriot and always will be. I joined the Marine Corps in 1959 as a result of patriotism. Ten years later, I left and joined VVAW in 1971 – also as a result of patriotism.

It was a patriotic act to rally with the grassroots to maintain our Constitutional perspectives. We won.

Nixon and his band of thugs were ousted from power and for a while, the government did the People's Business. Remember the Erich Fromm quote: "The successful revolutionary is a statesman, the unsuccessful one a criminal"? Given the context, and using this history as a criterion, I consider "outlaw" an honorable definition of character synonymous with "patriot." Oh, yes; and I still believe.

Diane: In the '60s and '70s, VVAW trail-blazed post-traumatic stress research using their own lives as collateral. Can this make a difference to today's returning vets?

Jerry: The movement of in-service resisters and Vietnam veterans against the war called attention to the human costs of that war and mustered the political support for increased services for the mentally and physically wounded.

**The needs of the current wars' many victims will be best served not by public lamentations on the costs of war and pledges to support the troops but by an anti-war movement inclusive of the men and women sent to fight the war.**

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## **WELCOME TO IRAQNAM: HAVE A NICE DAY**



US soldiers conduct a foot patrol during Operation Gecko, south of Baghdad, 24 August 2007. (AFP/File/David Furst)

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# **“Soldiers Are Intuitive And Want To Know Why”**

## **“There Is Nothing Wrong With That”**

August 20, 2007  
Letters To The Editor  
Army Times

I read “Discipline matters” (Letters, July 16) and found myself not wholeheartedly in agreement with the letter writer.

As a former drill sergeant, I am surprised at some of the comments. The Army currently recruits older and more educated soldiers and the focus of training has gone more toward combat readiness than spit-shined boots and pressed uniforms.

If you witness a lack of discipline, do something about it. This is not just a drill sergeant issue. As noncommissioned officers, it is all of our jobs to make on-the-spot corrections and support fellow NCOs — not to sit by and complain about lack of discipline.

**The soldiers learn three times as much in the same amount of time as when I came in 15 years ago.**

**Soldiers are intuitive and want to know why.**

**There is nothing wrong with that.**

**That is a sign of wanting to understand and wanting to learn.**

Answer the question or tell them you will explain it to them later, and then do it.

Training a soldier without him knowing why is a great injustice to the soldier.

If you teach “React to Contact” to soldiers and do not teach them why they do it, then they don’t understand the importance of the lesson and it goes in one ear and out the other.

I have heard that the soldiers from basic are not disciplined and are out of shape. Before I went to drill sergeant school, I thought the same thing. You have to take a civilian who may be in his 30s or older, who is not physically fit and get him to score a 180 on the Army Physical Fitness Test.

You have nine weeks to do it — and you have to train, at a minimum, of 55 to 60 of these civilians. The standards are not waived, and neither is discipline. The focus has changed.

When the soldier comes to you and is “out of shape,” remember: A 180 APFT score and 30 days of PCS leave don’t mix. As for discipline, 99 percent of the new soldiers I have



seen coming to the unit have the right discipline. As NCOs, we have to enforce it and not let the soldiers slack off.

It takes a village to raise a child. The same can be said for training a soldier. We all have to do our part. What we all have to say is, "What am I doing to make him a better soldier?"

Staff Sgt. Aaron G. Diggins  
Fort Benning, Ga.

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## **“Why Isn’t The NRA Defending The Rights Of People Of Iraq To Have More Than One Automatic Weapon Per Household?” “And Why Aren’t Those Trigger Happy Gun Owning Youth Of The NRA Youth Group In The Military?”**

Spring 2007, By Barry Romo, *The Veteran*, Vietnam Veterans Against the War  
[Excerpts] Barry Romo is a VVAW national coordinator and a member of the Chicago chapter.

In Iraq, the US military has determined that one gun is enough to defend a household.

In Texas the average number of guns per person is 6, and they have the Texas Rangers to defend them.

Why isn't the NRA defending the rights of people of Iraq to have more than one automatic weapon per household?

In a war zone, where there are no banks, almost no use of credit cards, you have to keep all your money at home, but having more than one automatic weapon is used as an excuse for taking men to detention to be tortured.

If I lived in that situation I would want one for the front door, one for the back and maybe one on the roof in case you had to defend yourself from there.

**The NRA is in the same position with Iraq as they were with the Black Panther Party; supporting ownership of guns for people who don't really need them while denying them to people who really are in situations that actually call for home self-defense weapons**

And why aren't those trigger happy gun owning youth of the NRA youth group in the military?

I'm sure after the 15th month of the 3rd tour of duty they will have a better appreciation of the kinds of things they are calling for.

**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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org):. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

## OCCUPATION REPORT

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



A US soldier points his rifle at a group of Iraqi women after invading their home at night south of Baghdad, 23 Aug. (AFP/David Furst)



US occupation soldier at food distribution in Baquba. (AFP/File/Olivier Laban-Mattei)

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

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

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

***The Great Iraqi  
"Reconstruction" Fiasco Rolls  
On:  
Case History Of A Complete  
Disaster:***

# **Lying General Lynch Covers Up Fraud In Reconstruction Contacts; Honest Troops Tell The Truth: “I Wish They Had Taught Me How To Spend Money,” Said Staff Sgt. Christopher Barnes**

**Portions of the workshop’s ceiling were cracked or curved. The cafeteria floor had a gaping hole and concrete chunks. The auditorium was unfinished, with cracked floors and poorly painted walls peppered with holes.**

**Lynch, the top U.S. commander for Task Force Marne, which operates south of Baghdad, said the school could enroll thousands of students in the not-too-distant future.**

**[G]round commanders and civil affairs officers say the system is marked by inefficiency and waste and is vulnerable to corruption.**

August 25, 2007 By Sudarsan Raghavan, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

ISKANDARIYAH, Iraq -- Maj. Craig Whiteside’s anger grew as he walked through the sprawling school where U.S. military commanders had invested money and hope.

**Portions of the workshop’s ceiling were cracked or curved. The cafeteria floor had a gaping hole and concrete chunks. The auditorium was unfinished, with cracked floors and poorly painted walls peppered with holes.**

Whiteside blamed the school director for not monitoring the renovation. The director retorted that the military should have had better oversight. The contract shows the Iraqi contractor was paid \$679,000.

The story of the Vo-Tech Iskandariyah Industrial School illustrates the challenges of rebuilding Iraq. It also raises questions about how the military is managing hundreds of millions of dollars to fund such reconstruction, part of the effort to stabilize the country.

**Senior officers and commanders insist cases like the Vo-Tech are isolated and are quickly addressed.**

**But in this turbulent patch of Iraq south of Baghdad, ground commanders and civil affairs officers say the system is marked by inefficiency and waste and is vulnerable to corruption.**

Many Iraqi contractors are slow and unreliable. Some are dishonest.

**Meanwhile, inexperienced soldiers do their best to scrutinize millions of dollars in contracts and monitor projects they don't fully comprehend.**

**"I wish they had taught me how to spend money," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Barnes, of Charlie Company, 412th Civil Affairs Battalion.**

U.S. generals say reconstruction projects can lure insurgents away from violence.

They hope the Vo-Tech, this area's biggest project, will one day offer hundreds of Iraqis courses in computers, auto shop, welding and other trades. But nearly a year into the project, which will cost several million dollars to complete, there are only 32 students -- all enrolled in computer courses.

"We're trying to build as we go. We have to get people off the streets and not planting IEDs," said Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, referring to roadside bombs.

**Lynch, the top U.S. commander for Task Force Marne, which operates south of Baghdad, said the school could enroll thousands of students in the not-too-distant future.**

**After he left the complex, Whiteside, 38, who graduated from Springbrook High School in Silver Spring, Md., stepped into his Humvee, still incensed.**

**"It's what happens when you're throwing money at the problems," he said.**

A former infantry soldier, Barnes, 27, was studying at Fresno City College for a history degree when he decided to return to Iraq as a reservist. He joined a civil affairs unit. He said he received three weeks' training at Fort Dix, N.J., where he learned to deal with displaced civilians and administer humanitarian aid.

**Navy Capt. Donald McMahon, the top civil affairs officer for Task Force Marne, said the training provided adequate preparation.**

**But Barnes and other soldiers here disagreed. For example, there was no training in drawing up contracts, handling bids or using worksheets, they said.**

"I didn't learn a whole lot, actually," Barnes said.

**"It would have been nice if they had taught us the paperwork portion of it. Instead they focused on stuff we're not even doing here."**

Another former infantry soldier, Staff Sgt. Benjamin Johnson, 27, of Saginaw, Mich., described the civil affairs training course as "vague."

"We didn't go over any CERP projects, which is what we're dealing with here," said Johnson, referring to the Commander's Emergency Response Program, the main reconstruction fund used by U.S. generals in their areas of operations.

"I felt a little cheated," Barnes said.

By April, both Barnes and Johnson were attached to Forward Operating Base Iskan, run by the 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Four-person civil affairs teams, whose varied duties include handling economic issues and training Iraqi soldiers, are attached to each battalion on one-year rotations, sometimes less. Incomplete projects are handed off to the next team.

**When Barnes and Johnson arrived, they found disorganized files. They had no copies of payment receipts, which totaled \$7 million under the previous team.**

To learn the status of many ongoing projects, they had to speak with contractors and locals. "It wasn't done the way it should have been done," Barnes said. "We had to learn as we went how to do a project."

Some completed projects, they found, were not operational -- such as the medical clinic in a nearby village that the Iraqi government has not yet staffed. Some have to be fixed. "I know there have been other projects from past teams that are not working now, and we have to go and fix them and assess them and redo them," Johnson said.

Meanwhile, their three-man team -- they've been short-staffed since they arrived -- has 25 to 30 projects of its own to complete. The soldiers' duties also include attending meetings of the city council, agricultural union and other local groups.

"We kind of have to make do with what we have," said Sgt. Walter Jackson, 31, of Houston. "It's on-the-job training."

**They try their best to go out and visit projects, said Johnson, but sometimes they are forced to ask other soldiers out on patrol, with no civil affairs training, to stop by projects "to take a few pictures and let us know what they think of it."**

On a recent day, Johnson was scrutinizing a \$250,000 contract to renovate a secondary school in Musayyib, a Shiite city south of Iskandariyah.

The Iraqi contractor was charging \$50 per basketball and \$30 per soccer ball. In Baghdad, top-of-the-line basketballs and soccer balls cost no more than \$15.

Johnson's eyes went down the contract.

Was hooking up a power cable to the city's power supply really going to cost \$10,000? "I'm an ex-infantry guy. I don't know what this runs," Johnson said. "Maybe a cable like that costs a lot, but I really doubt it."

"If they are doing this to little stuff like basketballs, then how do I know they aren't cheating us on the big stuff, like the stuff I'm not qualified to assess?" he said.

### **Work Unfinished**

The contract to refurbish several buildings of the vocational school was signed in September. It called for renovations to be completed in 60 days. In February, shortly

after Whiteside's battalion took over responsibility for projects in the Iskandariyah area, he visited the complex.

The project was supposed to be 40 percent complete, and the contractor had been paid for that portion. But it was not done.

The contractor assured them he would finish, Whiteside said.

On Feb. 25, the contractor and the school's director came to the base. They wanted an additional \$400,000 to upgrade the project. The civil affairs team leader, Maj. James Ortolini, refused.

In his report, he warned of the contractor and director: "I think they are both trying to scam money from Coalition Forces and should not be used in future projects. I told them that the work I saw when I visited the school was not to standard and I wouldn't entertain the thought of spending more money for their mistakes."

He recommended canceling the project if there was no improvement. Several weeks later, Whiteside revisited the site and said he felt progress was being made.

In April, Jackson visited the site. The project was supposed to be halfway done, but the site was still chaotic.

"I don't know what constituted them as halfway through," Jackson said. "It was also our first project we really dealt with. We didn't have a whole lot to go off of, especially as far as experience goes. This kind of stuff, it was all new to all of us."

**By then, Sgt. Michael Cawley, a New England police officer, had taken over as team leader on the project. He was responsible for paying the remaining 50 percent. Satisfied with the work, on June 17 he made the final payment to the contractor.**

**On July 27, in the auditorium, Whiteside was angrily demanding an explanation from the school's director, Naseer al-Abbas.**

**He wanted to know why the contractor had failed. "What was this guy doing? Why didn't he take the initiative?"**

Abbas said, through an interpreter, that they had confronted the contractor numerous times but that he ignored them. He said Whiteside's soldiers should have done a better job in monitoring the school's progress, adding that the constant changeover of soldiers he dealt with didn't help matters.

Whiteside told him that civil affairs teams had been to the complex 10 times and demanded to know why Abbas hadn't complained to them.

Whiteside, speaking to a delegation of U.S. aid officials and a reporter, blamed the school director. "When there are no students and nothing going on, what was he doing? What are the 149 employees doing? What are they doing when the floor is falling apart? The answer to all of these questions is nothing."

**The following day, Whiteside said that Cawley's final inspection of the school wasn't done properly. "He just screwed up. He was in a hurry," Whiteside said, adding that Cawley was facing pressure from his superiors to finish projects.**

**But Whiteside added that Cawley, who was on his second Iraq tour, was experienced.**

**So much that he was promoted last month and now oversees a company of civil affairs soldiers.**

Whiteside said that he and his commander, Lt. Col. Robert Balcavage, also bore responsibility for what happened because they assigned Cawley to the school project and had to sign off on the final payment.

In a telephone interview, Cawley said he could not remember the last time he had visited the school, but said he felt he had done a good job. "I was able to get him to complete more than the scope of the work," Cawley said of the contractor. He declined to comment further.

Barnes's team has created a "continuity book" that lists all its projects with all the receipts -- to help the next team. But it still has to deal with past mistakes. On Aug. 10, Barnes met the contractor at the school and informed him that he needed to fix his shoddy work. Initially reluctant, the contractor agreed.

**As the convoy left the school, an explosively formed penetrator -- a sophisticated roadside bomb -- struck Barnes's Humvee, ripping it apart and wounding another soldier. Barnes survived.**

**MORE:**

**"If I Was In Battle Field With My Immedicate Boss (Officers) I Would Shoot! Not In The Back But Face Too Face!"**

**[Kamikaze tactics are a bad idea, born of rage combined with despair. Mass action works. But the extent of the rage in this letter is significant. T]**

[Excerpts from Washington Post comment log on this article:]

vicki48 wrote:

I worked for VA & DOD in peace & war. The erosion of leadership & poor training has finally come full circle. They cant even train properly to FILE medical reports. Not too mention checking up that work was being done.



Finding boxes of "chits" medical reports not filed but hidden would occur every six months.

Officers would accept medical records they had no business accepting & hiding them in basement closets. By golly, the officer would receive award & advancement before they left.

They can do a better job but they DONT CARE!

Advancement & retirement is all they care about. DONT ASK DONT TELL has been going on for years.

If I was in battle field with my immedicate boss (officers) I would shoot! Not in the back but face too face!

8/25/2007 6:25:24 AM

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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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## CLASS WAR REPORTS

# **Commercial Paper Market Roiled With \$550 Billion Due: The \$1.1 Trillion Market For Commercial Paper Used To Buy Assets From Mortgages To Car Loans Has Seized Up**

Aug. 21 By Mark Pittman (Bloomberg)

Ottimo Funding LLC, whose name is Italian for “excellent,” has the highest possible credit rating and doesn’t own subprime mortgage bonds. That made no difference to investors who refused to buy Ottimo’s \$3 billion of short-term debt this month as losses on home loans to risky borrowers infect the global credit markets.

“It’s pretty much a straight contagion,” said George Marshman, chief investment officer of Stamford, Connecticut-based Aladdin Capital Management, which oversees about \$20 billion, including Ottimo. “We think the assets are good enough” to attract investors, he said.

**The \$1.1 trillion market for commercial paper used to buy assets from mortgages to car loans has seized up just as more than half of that amount comes due in the next 90 days, according to the Federal Reserve.**

**Unless they find new buyers, hundreds of hedge funds and home-loan companies will be forced to sell \$75 billion of debt, according to Zurich-based UBS AG, Europe’s largest bank.**

**Those sales would drive down prices in a market where investors have already lost \$44 billion, based on Merrill Lynch & Co.’s broadest index of floating-rate securities backed by home- equity loans.**

**That may hurt the 38.4 million individual and institutional investors in money market funds, the biggest owners of commercial paper.**

**MORE:**

## **“That Means Of Payment Are Scarce During The Period Of Crisis, Goes Without Saying”**

From Capital, by Marx

That means of payment are scarce during the period of crisis, goes without saying. The convertibility of bills of exchange has substituted itself for the metamorphosis of commodities themselves, and so much more so at such times, as a portion of the firms operates purely on credit.

An ignorant and mistaken legislation, such as that of 1844-45, may intensify a money crisis.

But no manner of bank legislation can abolish a crisis.

In a system of production, in which the entire connection of the process of reproduction rests upon credit, a crisis must obviously occur through a tremendous rush for means of payment, when credit suddenly ceases and nothing but cash payment goes.

At first glance, therefore, the whole crisis seems to be merely a credit crisis and money crisis. And in fact it is but a question of the convertibility of bills of exchange into cash money.

But the majority of these bills represent actual sales and purchases, and it is the extension of these far beyond the demands of society which is at the bottom of the whole crisis.

**At the same time an enormous quantity of these bills represents mere swindles, and this becomes apparent now, when they burst. There are furthermore unlucky speculations made with the money of other people.**

Finally there are commodity-capitals, which have either become depreciated or unsalable or returns that can never more be realized.

**This entire artificial system of forced expansion of the process of reproduction cannot, of course, be remedied by having some bank, like the Bank of England, give to the swindlers the needed capital in the shape of paper notes and buy up all the depreciated commodities at their old nominal values.**

Moreover, everything appears turned upside down here, since no real prices and their real basis appear in this paper world, but only bullion, metal coin, notes, bills of exchange, securities.

Particularly in the centers, in which the whole money business of the country is crowded together, like London, this reversion becomes apparent; the entire process becomes unintelligible. It is not quite so in the industrial centers.

It follows from the above, that the commodity-capital largely loses its capacity of representing potential money-capital during a crisis, and during periods of business depression in general.

**The same is true of fictitious capital, interest-bearing papers, so far as they circulate in the stock exchanges as money-capital.**

Their price falls with a rise of interest. It falls furthermore through a general lack of credit, which compels their owner to throw them in masses on the market, in order to secure money.

It falls, finally, in the case of stocks, partly in consequence of the spurious character of the enterprises which they represent, partly in consequence of a decrease of the revenues, for which they constitute drafts.

The fictitious capital is enormously reduced in times of crisis, and with it the power of its owners to loan money on it in the market.

However, the reduction of the money denomination of these securities in the stock exchange quotations has nothing to do with the actual capital which they represent, but very much indeed with the solvency of their owners.

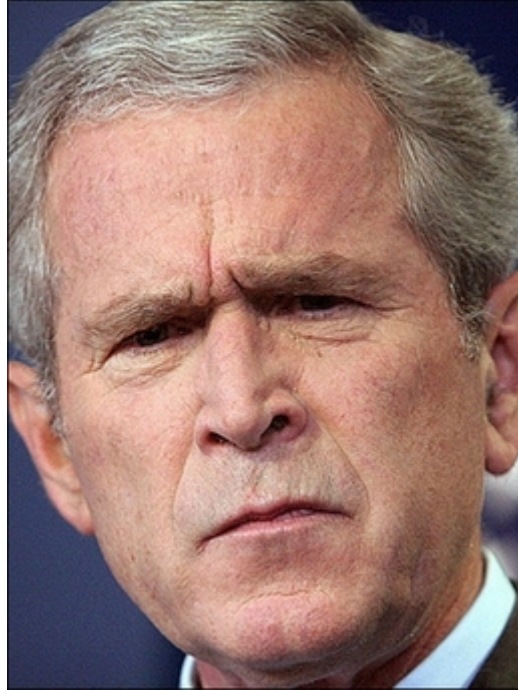


## **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

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/](http://www.ivaw.org/))

# FIGHT HIM NOW, OR HE'LL FOLLOW YOU HOME



(AFP/Karen Bleier)

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