

## **GI SPECIAL 5H22:**

### **HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WARS?**



Blood drips on the floor of the 28th Combat Support hospital in the Green Zone in Baghdad as doctors treat a seriously injured U.S. soldier, August 18, 2007. The soldier was brought to hospital by a military helicopter after an (IED) exploded under his vehicle. REUTERS/Damir Sagolj

**“I Don’t Want To Be Here  
Anymore”**

**“I Don’t See Any Progress. Just  
Us Getting Killed”**

**Troops In Iraq Are “Becoming  
Vocal About Their Frustration”**

# **“Some Say Two Wars Are Being Fought Here: The One The Enlisted Men See, And The One That Senior Officers And Politicians Want The World To See”**

## **“There Are Two Different Wars,” Said Staff Sgt. Donald Richard Harris**

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, The Military Project & Phil G, who sent this in.]

**Many soldiers are increasingly disdainful of the happy talk that they say commanders on the ground and White House officials are using in their discussions about the war.**

August 25, 2007 By Tina Susman, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

**YOUSIFIYA, IRAQ -- In the dining hall of a U.S. Army post south of Baghdad, President Bush was on the wide-screen TV, giving a speech about the war in Iraq. The soldiers didn't look up from their chicken and mashed potatoes.**

**As military and political leaders prepare to deliver a progress report on the conflict to Congress next month, many soldiers are increasingly disdainful of the happy talk that they say commanders on the ground and White House officials are using in their discussions about the war.**

**And they're becoming vocal about their frustration over longer deployments and a taxing mission that keeps many living in dangerous and uncomfortably austere conditions.**

**Some say two wars are being fought here: the one the enlisted men see, and the one that senior officers and politicians want the world to see.**

**“I don't see any progress. Just us getting killed,” said Spc. Yvenson Tertulien, one of those in the dining hall in Yousifiya, 10 miles south of Baghdad, as Bush's speech aired last month.**

**“I don't want to be here anymore.”**

**The signs of frustration and of flagging morale are unmistakable, including blunt comments, online rants and the findings of surveys on military morale and suicides.**

Sometimes the signs are to be found even in latrines.

In the stalls at Baghdad's Camp Liberty, someone had posted Army help cards listing "nine signs of suicide." On one card, seven of the boxes had been checked.

**"This occupation, this money pit, this smorgasbord of superfluous aggression is getting more hopeless and dismal by the second," a soldier in Diyala province, north of Baghdad, wrote in an Aug. 7 post on his blog, [www.armyofdude.blogspot.com](http://www.armyofdude.blogspot.com).**

"The only person I know who believed Iraq was improving was killed by a sniper in May," the blogger, identified only as Alex from Frisco, Texas, said in a separate e-mail.

Most troops in Iraq expected 12-month deployments. Those were extended in May by three months for the troop buildup.

Thousands already were on their second or third deployments.

**The result is a fighting force that includes many soldiers who are worn down, just as Petraeus, who took command of the war six months ago, is asking them to adopt intense counterinsurgency tactics.**

Those strategies emphasize living "outside the wire," in military-speak, in outposts that put troops close to Iraqis. The theory is that people will come to trust the soldiers and share information needed to quell the violence.

But these posts often lack basic amenities such as running water, flush toilets, telephones and Internet access, which troops at the forward operating bases enjoy, along with food courts and athletic facilities. Being on the front lines, troops in outposts also face greater danger than those at bases.

In Yousifiya, troops occupy the sun-scorched grounds of a former potato-processing plant. They use pit latrines and get showers only when there is enough water. They jog around a shade-less concrete lot that serves as a helipad and mortar-launching site. Other troops in this area have far less comfortable surroundings.

But the disparities in living and working conditions among soldiers heighten resentments, chipping away at morale.

So does the feeling that the mission is futile, a belief fueled by the Iraqi political stalemate and the unreliability of Iraqi forces.

**"There are two different wars," said Staff Sgt. Donald Richard Harris, comparing his soldiers' views with those of commanders in distant bases.**

**"It's a dead-end process, it seems like."**

**Asked to rank morale in his unit, Harris gave it a 4 on a 10-point scale. "Look at these guys. This is their downtime," he said, as young soldiers around him silently cleaned dust from their rifles at a battle position south of the capital.**

A fiery wind blasted through the small base, an abandoned home surrounded by sandbags and razor wire.

"It sounds selfish, but if we just had phones and Internet service," said Staff Sgt. Clark Merlin, his voice trailing off.

Their unit was supposed to go home this month but its tour was extended until November. That means three more months of using plastic sacks for toilets, burning their waste and hoping for packages from home.

"I think the extension has been 99% of the reason morale is low," said Merlin, rating it 4 or 5.

Counterinsurgency expert Stephen Biddle of the Council on Foreign Relations said the "two wars" issue is common in conflict zones as front-line soldiers grow to resent troops at the bases and come to believe their commanders are out of touch with the realities in the field.

"But this kind of war really highlights it," Biddle, who has advised Petraeus, said of Iraq. Soldiers' discomfort is compounded by the task of forging relations with people whom few trust, and who often make clear their dislike of the U.S. presence.

"All war is political, but usually privates and specialists don't have to think much about that part of it. In this conflict they do, to a much greater degree," Biddle said, referring to the community activities that troops have been drawn into. These include negotiating with tribal leaders who once harbored insurgents, striking deals with former insurgents to bring them into the Iraqi security forces, and listening to residents' complaints about lack of services.

"You have to help people despite the strong suspicion that lots of them mean you ill," Biddle said. "We're asking an awful lot of very, very young people."

It is especially difficult for soldiers trained to fight a uniformed enemy but in Iraq face an array of unconventional forces.

**Most thought their job was finished after Saddam Hussein was ousted. Instead, they found themselves directing traffic in Baghdad's chaotic streets. Four years later, they still are policing and doing community work they did not anticipate.**

"You couple that with getting blown up and shot at, and it definitely makes it harder to deliver service with a smile," said Staff Sgt. Kevin Littrell, whose plan to leave the Army in May was thwarted when his unit's tour was extended.

At another patrol base, Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander of U.S. forces in southern Iraq, was introduced to 1st Lt. Jeff Bess. The young man had just arrived for his first assignment.

**Asked how he liked the Army so far, Bess made an attempt to be polite. "It's a learning experience, sir," he replied.**

Lynch told him: “You’re making history here while those back home are watching it on TV.”

MORE:

**“Perspective About Something Immediately Tinged With The Odious Political Stench Emanating From Camp Victory These Days”**

**[The Mass Re-Enlistment Ceremony On The Fourth Of July]**

**“It Is A Simple Choice: Re-Enlist For \$10,000 And Shake Hands With A Senator, Or Get Stop-Lossed And Stuck In The Army As A Perpetual Indentured Servant”**



Evan M. Knappenberger

The Army, under mounting political pressure from an embattled administration and unable to protect itself (because it is being run by spineless pseudo-intellectuals like General Petraeus) has turned increasingly to underhanded appeals for re-enlistment.

08/16/2007 by Evan M. Knappenberger [Iraq Veterans Against The War]

Branch of service: United States Army (USA)

Unit: 1-4th Infantry

Rank: Cog

Home: Bellingham, Washington

Served in: Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Ft. Huachuca, Arizona; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Carson, Colorado; Fort Irwin, California; Udairi, Kuwait; Taji, Iraq

**Concerning the mass re-enlistment ceremony on Camp Victory, Baghdad, on the fourth of July, an obvious political stunt; I feel it is necessary to provide perspective about something immediately tinged with the odious political stench emanating from Camp Victory these days.**

I myself am recently returned from my year of service in the 4th Infantry on Camp Taji - just north of Camp Victory- and these ceremonies are a familiar sight there any time of year.

What makes them newsworthy on Independence day? Perhaps it is the fact that John McCain bothered to show up; maybe it is just good timing.

**Or maybe the ceremony was orchestrated as a political maneuver with the intent of deceiving the world as to the truly sad state of the US Army.**

To paraphrase Ayn Rand, "A quest for morale is proof of its lack."

**The Army, under mounting political pressure from an embattled administration and unable to protect itself (because it is being run by spineless pseudo-intellectuals like General Petraeus) has turned increasingly to underhanded appeals for re-enlistment.**

**I know this firsthand.**

**Foremost is the Stop-Loss policy, which plays a decisive role in getting soldiers to re-enlist.**

**It is a simple choice: re-enlist for \$10,000 and shake hands with a Senator, or get stop-lossed and stuck in the Army as a perpetual indentured servant.**

The end result is higher re-enlistment rates, and ultimately the preservation of the myth of an 'all-volunteer force', which, in the vision of the Bush administration, is straining at the bit to get down to business with the nasty foreign terrorists threatening our freedom.

This is part of a greater "marketing campaign" (in the words of Wolfowitz) that portrays the Army as the compass of the moral Majority, and re-enlistment as the indicator of good morale.

All of these premises are false.

**The truth is: neither is the Army "all-volunteer;" nor are there foreign terrorists threatening American freedom from just outside the gates of Baghdad International.**

I have to ask: which group is the intended target for these ornate ceremonies?

Is it the soldiers, desperately grasping to any shred of evidence that the war they are fighting is just?

Is it the American people, trying to reassure themselves that things are all fine and well?

**At any rate, this Iraq veteran's esteem drops every time he sees the energy of officials like McCain and Petraeus wasting their time on speeches and unnecessary officium instead of keeping the bloodthirsty terrorists from digging their nasty fangs into the jugular of freedom in places like Yusufiyah, Falahat, and Adhamiyah.**

**Just what is the cost of our moral ineptitude in this epic struggle?**



**MORE:**

**“If The Media Got Anything Right, It Was That The Surge Failed”**

**“The Idea, As Birthed In A Bloody, Mucous-Y Blob Of Counter Production By General Petraeus, Is Quite Simple On Paper,**

# **Impossible To Execute In A Meddling Reality”**

## **“This Occupation, This Money Pit, This Smorgasbord Of Superfluous Aggression Is Getting More Hopeless And Dismal By The Second”**

**It’s maddening to think that more than a year’s worth of blood, sweat and tears will lead to little more than a pat on the back and a hideously redundant speech from someone who did none of the bleeding, sweating or crying.**

**This position I’m in, shared by less than one percent of the U.S. population, has given me the distinct privilege of sharing my experiences and ruminations of this war, observations undiluted by perpetually delirious officials like General Petraeus and mainstream media sirens.**

August 07, 2007 By AH, Army of Dude

Going home is a beautiful, terrifying thought to have once it gets this close to happening.

**Not only am I in the twilight of the deployment, but of my military career that began three years ago yesterday.**

It was then when a nineteen year old chubby kid found himself bound for Ft. Benning, Georgia, fresh and malleable as molten copper. Weeks from completing a fifteen month tour, I’m as confused and apprehensive as that teenager with the twiddling thumbs and darting eyes that had no idea where he was going, or why.

You may want to sit down for this.

**This occupation, this money pit, this smorgasbord of superfluous aggression is getting more hopeless and dismal by the second.**

**It’s maddening to think that more than a year’s worth of blood, sweat and tears will lead to little more than a pat on the back and a hideously redundant speech from someone who did none of the bleeding, sweating or crying.**

Despite being in a meaningless situation, my life has never had this much meaning.

I watch the backs of my friends and they do the same for me. I’ve killed to protect them, and they’ve killed to protect me.

For friends and family, being deployed is like being pregnant or surviving a car wreck; everyone is nice to you all of a sudden. People I don’t even know send me kind words



and packages from all over. They came out of the woodwork knowing my plight and shared with me heartfelt hope and luck.

The fact that you're reading this now, dear reader, is a testament to that.

Would you have cared about what I thought, felt or did two years ago?

**This position I'm in, shared by less than one percent of the U.S. population, has given me the distinct privilege of sharing my experiences and ruminations of this war, observations undiluted by perpetually delirious officials like General Petraeus and mainstream media sirens.**

I have felt every extreme of the human condition, physically, morally and emotionally. I've never laughed so hard, cried so long or felt more ashamed of myself in all of my life.

In a matter of weeks it'll be over, and I'll have just the memories of enduring 130 degree heat, and poker games lasting well into the night.

I'll look back on the hysterical laughter during fifteen hour Baghdad clears, the terror of being pinned down by machine gun fire, the sight of a Stryker on its side and the unfolding of a body bag under the flames of a nearby school, unzipped tenderly to fit the body of Chevy as RPGs screamed overhead.

Soon this place will all be in the past.

What a beautiful, terrifying thought.

Next month we'll be the first unit home that completed a three month extension. We were one of few to see Iraq before and after the surge.

**If the media got anything right, it was that the surge failed.**

**The idea, as birthed in a bloody, mucous-y blob of counter production by General Petraeus, is quite simple on paper, impossible to execute in a meddling reality.**

The concept is that combat troops would move from their huge bases that housed obscene luxuries like beds, flushing toilets and running water, and into outposts within the most dangerous parts of the city. The key to it all would be 24/7 interaction with Iraqi Army and a constant presence among the Iraqi citizens, giving them confidence in the mission of coalition forces.

The building we picked used to be a whiskey distillery, and we've been busy putting up concrete barriers and wire around it.

**A house was too close to where the wall was supposed to be, so engineers blew it to smithereens and sent the family packing.**

**The father owned the plot for forty years and comes by every so often to collect the useful bricks left scattered a hundred yards in every direction. Before he entered once, I patted his seventy year old frame down like a common criminal.**

## **Talk about community interaction!**

Our mission now revolves around the outpost.

Engineers and Iraqi workers toil day and night to build it up to an acceptable level so we can hand it off to the unit replacing us. We conduct patrols, raids and selective clears of buildings identified by insurgents (1920s) that potentially hide other insurgents (Al Qaeda) while future insurgents (Iraqi Army) sleep all day and eat our food.

So close, yet so far.

Deployments start to get dangerous and deadly around month nine, when people start to let their guard down and get sloppy. There's nothing you can do to stop it.

We were ahead of the curve since soldiers in my unit didn't start dying with regularity until month ten.

Now in month fourteen, eight have died in the past week.

**General Petraeus must be given accolades for his selflessness.**

**A weaker man would have trembled at the arduous sight of forms authorizing a surge and extension.**

**Thanks to his steadfast character, I'm still here while eight men are not, working toward the noble goal of the surge: building an outpost in podunk Baqubah so the Iraqi Army has a place to sleep, sleep, sleep as the country goes to hell.**

**Thank your lucky stars we have produced such fine leaders that are brave enough to send us to man these outposts day in and day out.**

The most interesting reports in the world must come from the Army Center for Lessons Learned, a government think tank dedicated to updating doctrine based on what soldiers experienced in war.

They came out with shocking developments like putting doors on Humvees and having every soldier wear body armor.

**The most fundamental suggestion they issue, one we've heard countless times, is that we shouldn't set patterns. It boils down to simple things like changing patrol times and reorganizing the order of vehicles in a convoy.**

**But for these outpost operations, that gutless, nonsensical suggestion goes flying out the window.**

**We take the same roads in, at the same time, with the same vehicles going to the same place. It doesn't take a genius jihadist to see a pattern after a couple of days.**

**And that's how we've been leading our lives for the past year and two months.**

**Going from place to place and hoping we don't die on the way there or the way back.**

**With our GPS tracking satellites and laser guided warheads and scientifically developed helmets for ultra comfort, we're getting beat to the punch every day by a dude crouching behind a wall with a battery and a spool of wire.**

**We've been killing the innocent with the guilty because we don't have the luxury to tell the difference when that bomb goes off and you don't know which of your friends are dead or alive.**

In essence, we've come here to help each other survive.

It worked in most cases and sadly, not in others. We've still got a few weeks left until we cross the border of Kuwait, until someone else comes and tells us our job here is done.

**I have a chapter that I'd like to add to the next report from the Army Center for Lessons Learned, something that will hopefully be useful in the future of our country:**

**Chapter 1: Occupation**

**If you don't have to, don't.**

**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**

### **Marine, Local Grad, Killed In Iraq**

Aug 15 By Julie Patel and Jeff Thomas; MediaNews

With less than five months left in his third tour of duty in Iraq, Sgt. Michael Tayaotao started making plans to attend college and go on as many camping trips as he could.

Those dreams faded Thursday when Tayaotao, 27, a graduate of Fremont High School in Sunnyvale, died from wounds he suffered while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, the Pentagon said.

Tayaotao's spirit - and memories of his infectious laugh - are helping his family cope, his sister said. "No one would know what he was laughing about but that didn't matter as long as he was laughing," Leah Tayaotao said. "Even if it was something serious, he could bring the light out of it.

"Those memories we have are helping us go through what we are."

Tayaotao served with the 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force, based at Camp Pendleton. He worked as an explosive ordnance disposal technician, the military said.

Tayaotao joined the Marines in 1998 shortly after graduating from high school. Seven months ago, he volunteered for his third tour of duty in Iraq.

In addition to his sister, he is survived by his parents, Mario and Heidi Tayaotao. Her brother's loss is particularly hard for his family, his sister said, because of the death of their younger brother, Vincent, last November.

Leah Tayaotao said recent news about the death toll in Iraq worried her but she supported her brother's desire to serve in the military.

"Although I did have concerns about the number of deaths rising, my family including myself understand what comes with serving," she wrote in an e-mail to the San Jose Mercury News.

She said by phone from her mother's home in Ridgecrest that her brother had plans to start a new phase of life, traveling and pursuing other experiences "he didn't have the opportunity of doing" in the military.

Those experience included doing more of the family hiking, fishing and camping trips he enjoyed as a child.

Some of his favorite moments were spent fishing or sitting on the dock having a picnic at San Diego County's Lake Poway, Leah Tayaotao said.

She was there with him the day before his last deployment.

The loss reverberated among many other friends and family members, some of whom posted their thoughts in a blog.

"He was such a great guy with a wonderful sense of humor and a laugh I will never forget," wrote Dawn O., a high school classmate.

John M. Tanacio, Tayaotao's cousin, wrote back: "Dawn, I'm Mike's cousin and know that his friends from all over are starting to find out what happened to him. Mike was everything you explained and more."

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**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:**

## ROAD HAZARDS: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. Army tank passes by an armoured vehicle on a road connecting the airport and the city in Baghdad July 21, 2007. REUTERS/Nikola Solic

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## TROOP NEWS

### ***Iraq Combat Vet Condemns The War:***

**“No Matter What Government Is Established, It’s Always Going To Be Underneath Our Rifle”**

**“The Iraqi People Aren’t Going To Accept It”**

Spring 2007, By Brian Gryzlak, *The Veteran*, Vietnam Veterans Against the War [Excerpts] Brian Gryzlak is a research assistant at the University of Iowa (Iowa City, Iowa) and a member of the University of Iowa Antiwar Committee.

Barry Romo and Aaron Hughes came to Iowa City, Iowa in February to discuss the positions, strategies, and tactics of the antiwar movement.

Aaron is a former sergeant with the 1244th Transportation Company, Illinois National Guard, and was in Iraq for a total of 15 months.

Romo is a former Vietnam War army infantry lieutenant and a national coordinator of VVAW.

Both discussed the difficulties of transitioning to civilian life and the deep and complex personal issues that accompanied their realization that the reasons for going to war turned out to be lies.

Barry shared the issues that he faced during his deployment to Vietnam, and the process of channeling his antiwar sentiment into action: "I got to Vietnam and within two weeks I knew that it was not what I thought it was going to be. . . The people didn't want us there." He added that one of the most difficult things for him was to attend his first antiwar demonstration.

Aaron noted, "It took me a long time to join IVAW [Iraq Veterans Against the War]. When I got back I felt like I didn't have the right to say anything. Everyone told me I'm a hero. Everyone said 'Thank you for your service,' and how do you counter that?"

"How do you say 'Don't thank me for that crap. I'm not a hero. I'm guilty. I'm part of this messed up thing.' "

Aaron explained, "As long as we're there, no matter what government is established, it's always going to be underneath our rifle, and as long as that happens, the Iraqi people aren't going to accept it."

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## **Religious Fanatics Caught Encouraging Iraqis To Kill U.S. Troops: "OSU's Actions Reinforce The Idea Among Militant Muslims That The U.S. Is On A Crusade In The Middle East"**

August 27, 2007 By Karen Jowers, Army Times [Excerpts]

A religious group has dropped plans to send care packages to U.S. troops in Iraq with the controversial Christian video game "Left Behind: Eternal Force," along with Christian literature, Pentagon officials say.

OSU is a member of the Defense Department initiative "America Supports You," one of more than 250 groups supporting the troops by sending letters, e-mails and packages,

and by helping military families. The Military Religious Freedom Foundation, a watchdog group, first revealed OSU's plans to send care packages to Iraq. Mikey Weinstein, foundation president, said OSU is "blowing up the constitutional wall separating church and state."

Lawyer and minister Barry Lynn, head of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, said OSU's actions reinforce the idea among militant Muslims that the U.S. is on a crusade in the Middle East.

"There appears to be a very deep connection between this allegedly private group promoting evangelical Christianity and the military itself," Lynn said. "The government is supposed to be neutral."

Lynn, who called OSU a fundamentalist Christian group, noted that the Arabic translation of "More Than a Carpenter" clearly was meant for distribution by U.S. troops to local Iraqis.

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

# **Thousands March Against The Occupation And Raids, Arrests And Killings Of Iraqis By Occupation: [Perfect Time To Get The Fuck Out]**

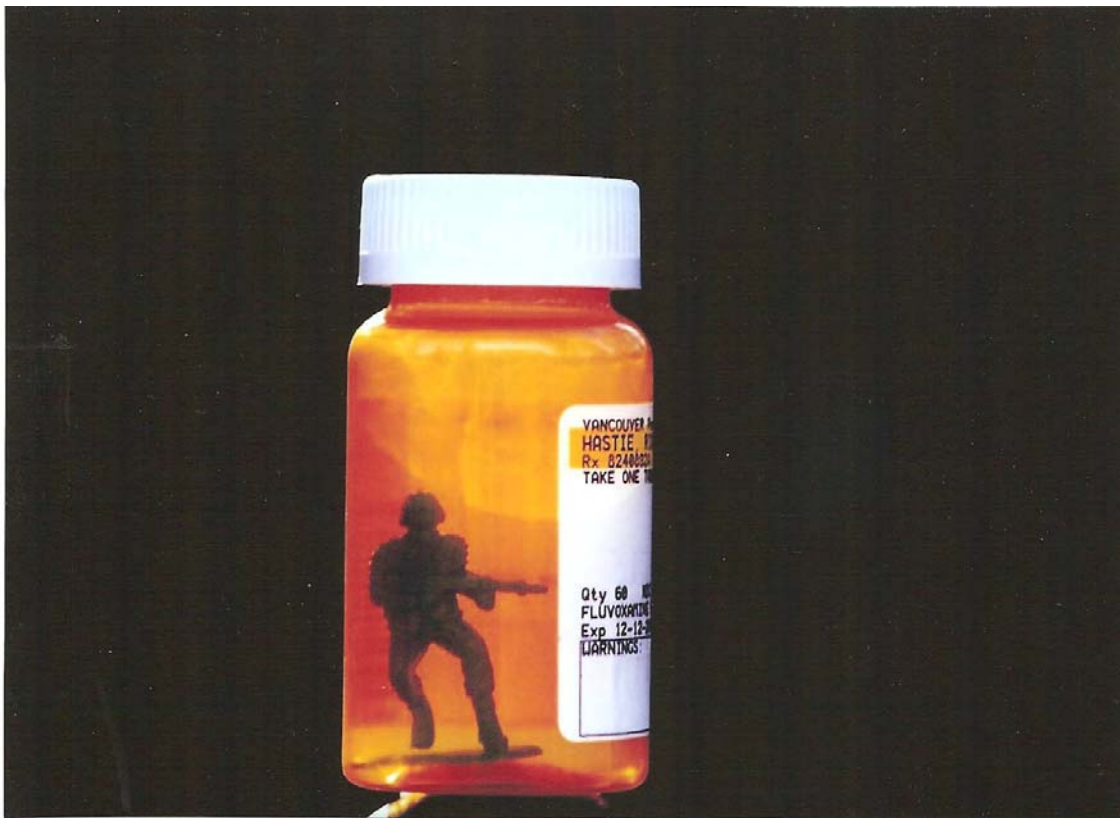


Thousands take to the streets in Baghdad August 20, 2007 demonstrating against the U.S. occupation of Iraq and recent raids, arrests and killings of Iraqi citizens by occupation troops of Iraqi citizens. REUTERS/Kareem Raheem

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

## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

# Soldiers In Pill Bottles



From: Mike Hastie  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 15, 2007  
Subject: Soldiers In Pill Bottles

**The emotional blow-back from the war in Iraq will be exactly like it was after the Vietnam War--unconscious self-destruction.**



**In 1980, nine years after I came back from Vietnam, I found myself in a padded cell of a psychiatric hospital. My diagnosis was: Post-Traumatic-Stress Disorder.**

**It was a fifty dollar phrase for Emotional Silence.**

**Every fiber of my being was contaminated with hatred for my government.**

**One word defined me--Betrayal.**

**My entire belief system was systematically altered with a lethal dose of LIES. The entire war in Vietnam was a LIE!**

**It had absolutely nothing to do with bringing freedom to anybody. The greatest truth I learned in Vietnam, was the inexplicable reality that the United States is a global Empire**

**I was a hired gun for the corporate rich in America.**

**Shortly before I left Vietnam, I experienced the suicide of an American soldier. He took his M-16, and blew his brains out in a tent. When it was over, I threw my blood-soaked uniform in a burning 55 gallon oil barrel. I was done with that war--I thought.**

**Nine years later, I was still trying to wash the blood off of my hands in that padded cell.**

**At the time, I did not realize I was trying to destroy myself. I did not fully understand how I was being set up to self-destruct by my government. We Vietnam veterans had become the scapegoat to our government's hidden disease of blaming the victim. We had become evidence that had to be destroyed.**

**Once corporate America had made billions of dollars off of our blood, it was time to blow up the building with us in it.**

**As always, Lying Is The Most Powerful Weapon In War.**

**Thirty-six years after returning from Vietnam, I continue to bear witness about the Political Incest of the Vietnam War, and how it is a carbon copy of the Iraq War.**

**Political Incest is about being used by your own government for the purpose of economic greed.**

**And, once the lie is over, the truth is buried in a grave site filled with shame.**

**I did not serve in Vietnam for the cause of freedom, I served Big Business in America for the cause of profit.**

**Ignorance of that truth has no mercy.**

**Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic**

Vietnam 1970-71  
August 15, 2007

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: ([hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

**“A War Based On Lies”  
“Yes, George, There Are Similarities  
Between Viet Nam And Iraq”**



8/24

To: GI Special  
Sent: August 24, 2007  
Subject: Letters To Editors  
From: Dennis Serdel [Vietnam Veterans Against The War]

On Aug 24, 2007, at 12:00 PM, Arny Stieber wrote: Dennis, I sent the following to a number of papers in MI and nationwide.)

\*\*\*\*\*

**I was in the Army, infantry in South Viet Nam in 1970 when George Bush was in the National Guard Air Force in south USA.**

George Bush is now saying that if we leave Iraq the same things will happen that happened in Viet Nam.

George needs a history lesson.

The war in Viet Nam was approved by Congress because of the Gulf of Tonkin incident. North Viet Nam, Congress was told, attacked a US Navy ship in the Gulf.

One big problem - the attack never happened. Then Defense Secretary McNamara in his recent film "The Fog of War" admits it.

**So, we invaded a country based on lies. Millions of Vietnamese were killed. Millions were traumatized. Their country was destroyed. They are still suffering from Agent Orange. Thousands of US troops died, and are still dying from that war.**

**A war based on lies.**

**Results felt for decades.**

**Yes, George, there are similarities between Viet Nam and Iraq."**

**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 to [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org):. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. Same to unsubscribe.**

## **A Classic Example Of How Command Arrogance, Stupidity And Contempt For Basic Rights Helps Fuel The Rage Against The War And Spread The Organizing Against It**

**They then informed me that I had been found in breach of good order and discipline, and that I was now under orders to remove the stickers from my car. It**

**is my understanding, that my Commanding Officer is the only one who can deem something a “breach of good order and discipline”, as stated in the DoD 1325.6.**

**Also, I Immediately posted a blog on my Myspace account, and received more support than I thought I would ever receive from my squadron mates.**

**More people on a daily basis now ask me why my stickers are gone, than I was ever asked about them being on the car. When I tell this story, my squadron mates and my wife and friends get pissed off and go off on tangents about how screwed up my squadron leadership is.**

08/20/2007 By James S. Huetteman, AME2(AW) USN [Iraq Veterans Against The War]

Branch of service: United States Navy (USN)

Unit: An Electronic Attack Squadron

Rank: Aviation Structural Mechanic/Equipment 2nd Class, Air Warfare

Home: Alexandria, Virginia

Served in: Pensacola, FL, Fort Worth, TX, Oceana, VA, Whidbey Island, WA,

Washington, D.C., Al Asad, Iraq, USS Theodore Roosevelt

About four months ago I took my wife to see one of my favorite bands of all time, Anti-Flag, a “Politipunk” band from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was at the 9:30 Club in downtown D.C., which is the perfect joint to hold a punk rock show.

I was decked out in my camouflage pants, DC shoes, cocked sideways hat, and a Military-Free Zone t-shirt. When the ticket guy scanned my ticket, and gave me the stamp on my left hand telling the bar tenders I was of age to drink, all I could see were 15-30 year old punk rockers, crazy hair, and more leather studded clothing than a bad porno.

By the merch tables was a group of people not selling CDs, t-shirts, or posters; but the truth.

**I happened upon three people from a group called IVAW, or, Iraq Veterans Against the War.**

**Being a member of the military, a twice veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and opposed to the war in Iraq, I checked it out. Actually my wife pointed it out, who is also fervently against the war in Iraq.**

They gave me their “sales pitch” about what they stood for, I listened, not only because it was applicable to be, but also because I like to keep an open mind about everything that affects the world we live in.

Much of the information I already knew from my own reading and inquisitions, but some of the information I had never heard of before. Things like “Stop-Loss,” the rising tolls of PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder), and a lack of Veterans Benefits were not in my daily vocabulary.

I was appalled.

I was already a supporter of Military-Free Zone, which is currently standing against the “No Child Left Behind Act,” which states that schools and other organizations are REQUIRED to hand over records containing names, phone numbers, addresses, dates of birth, ASVAB, SAT, and ACT scores, to military recruiters without the consent of the child or the child’s parents. If the schools/organizations do not comply with the act, they face the possibility of losing government funding.

So, after the Anti-Flag show, I IMMEDIATELY checked out IVAW.org, and mailed in a membership form.

On the website I found all sorts of pertinent information to me, and my situation (active duty war protester). I read all the rules, instructions, and looked over the UCMJ again, just to make sure I wasn’t going to do anything wrong, while still letting my voice be heard.

I took the Iraq Veterans Against the War bumper sticker I got at the Anti-Flag show, and put it on my car, next to my old squadron logo, and across from my Military-Free Zone sticker.

Shortly after I did this, the FCPOA (First Class Association, all the E-6s) in my squadron were voting on whom they were going to recommend for Junior Sailor of the Quarter, and Bluejacket of the Quarter. This is where they pick in their eyes, the E-5 and E-4 who they think is the stellar example of a Sailor in those pay grades.

And of course, my LPO (Leading Petty Officer) at the time was going to recommend me, again, for JSOQ.

When he came back from the meeting, he told me to tone down my open IVAW statements and recruiting. When I asked why, he said it was because it was brought up in the FCPOA meeting.

I was pissed, but that’s beside the point. I read into the 1325.6 a little more and realized that I was in fact not allowed to openly recruit people at work, in a duty status, or while on a military installation without consent from the Commanding Officer. So I throttled back.

**About a week later, I put another MFZ sticker on my car, which stated “F\*ck recruiters in our schools,” with the expletive not censored.**

Within about 2 weeks of my stickers being on my car, I was called to my Command Master Chief’s office, on his first day at my current squadron, to speak with him.

Master Chief was in civilian clothes because he was painting his newly acquired office. I had heard stories about this CMC from his guys in my squadron, about how cool he was, and how he is a fair guy, so I wasn’t too scared.

He asked me how I was, and how things were going downstairs in the maintenance department, etc. I told him it was business as usual, fixing jets and the like.

**He then proceeded to ask me about my bumper stickers.**

CMC asked me what they said, and I told him, and explained why I had them on my POV. He stated that he thought the MFZ sticker that contained an inappropriate four-letter word was in bad taste, and that it might offend someone. I concurred, knowing that at least in my home state of Missouri, it was illegal to have profanity on your vehicle, and Virginia being a commonwealth, it probably had some crazy law against it as well. I told him I would remove it at my earliest convenience.

Master Chief Jones told me that he was receiving phone calls from persons around the base, asking about this Huetteman guy with all the anti war stickers on his car.

**He then asked me about my IVAW sticker. I plead my case about how I felt about the war in Iraq, and knowing that in DoD instruction 1325.6, it stated nothing about placing stickers on your privately owned vehicle, or making a statement through said stickers.**

**He concurred, and said that he knew he couldn't tell me to remove the stickers.**

**All he told me was to think of another way to express myself.**

**In response to this, I told him that once I come through the fence and enter the squadron spaces, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy of the military sets in and I'm not allowed to talk about certain things, and people aren't allowed to ask me personal questions. He concurred.**

**I told him that if my stickers were opening people's eyes, then it was doing their job.**

I agreed to park farther away from the gate, so that I would not offend the Chiefs at the squadron adjacent to us in our hangar, when they were coming to, or leaving work. After that, we spoke of other things, and then I was dismissed.

At that moment I introduced myself because we had never actually met each other before that.

So my first run-in with someone in charge about my stickers went well in my opinion.

I still received harmless comments from my co-workers who jokingly called me a Communist, or a Nazi propagandist, but I was used to comments like this ever since the 2004 Presidential Elections when I told people I wasn't voting for Bush. I was stationed in Texas at the time, so there was a very Pro-War, Pro-Military, Pro-Right wing mentality.

Time went by, I'd say about a month or two before I heard anything else regarding my "dissent."

While detached to Las Vegas, NV, I casually and politely asked my Master Chief on the pool deck of the hotel if I was causing him any trouble with my actions. He told me I was fine, and that all he hears about me from the Maintenance Dept. is good things. I asked him if he was sure, and that I don't want a good man to have to do more work on my account.

He told me I was fine and not to worry.

About 2-3 weeks later, we had a new Warrant Officer check in.

**He was the epitome of good old boy, country bumpkin, with camouflage hats, sandals, and probably didn't own a collared shirt. He was also the epitome of pro-war, nuke them all, and sort them out later.**

**Well, one day when he was walking in the gate to the hangar, he asked a few sailors in the smoke pit who's car was the Grey Ford Focus with the stickers on it.**

The response was, "Huey's." He asked in a tone of "who they hell are you to talk to me like that," "Who's Huey?" The response was given back in kind, "Petty Officer Huetteman," like what are you new?

He thanked the sailors and walked inside, in a white t-shirt, which is against the uniform regulations, but that's a different story altogether.

When I reported to the hangar deck for the daily morning FOD (Foreign object debris) walk down, a Chief informed me that my division chief was looking for me.

**I already knew what it was about because the questioned sailors in the smoke pit gave me the heads up.**

**After FOD walk down was complete, and I was walking back to the hangar, my Division Chief approached me and asked me where in the instructions it states I can have "those stickers" on my car.**

I said, "oh, you mean in the DoD 1325.6?"

He asked, "Oh, is that it?"

In my head I was like, "Dude, if you're going to try to tell a story, read the damn book first."

He also asked if anyone in Base Security had talked me about them, I said, "No, why would they?"

I told my Chief that nowhere in the instruction did it say I could or could not have the stickers, but that it merely stated I was not allowed to make statements that were contemptuous in nature towards elected officials, superior officers, or higher ranking enlisted personnel.

None of which I was doing.

I told him I had a copy of the instruction in my shop, and I would be willing to let him borrow it to read. He said he would like to see it.

When I showed it to him, at no point in his reading was he like, "HAHA! Gotcha!" He just read it, and said that we were going to see the Warrant.

**Well the Warrant was busy, so that was the last I heard of it.**

Shortly after this incident, a fellow sailor in the Avionics Division (I'm in the Aircraft Division) told me that her Division Chief had a little "sit down" with everyone.

**During this "sit down" he asked everyone to make sure that if they see something wrong, wrongdoing, or if they thought something wasn't right, to report it to their Chief.**

**His examples were statements, displaying disloyal or subversive comments, wearing unauthorized patches (at the time, I had a patch on my coveralls that was technically against the uniform regulations, but was applicable to my rate, and it didn't offend anyone. I also had a patch on another set of coveralls, from my last squadron, that had been on there for 18 months, and no one had ever said anything), and anything else that seemed "out of place."**

**After I heard this, I got the feeling the Goat Locker (Chiefs mess) was trying to build a case against me to find me in breach of good order and discipline, which is the only way they could make me remove my bumper stickers.**

**A day later, the Quality Assurance Chief approached me, and told me to remove my Martin-Baker Ejection Seat Maintainer patch. I told him I had it there because that's what I do for a living, I have pride in my job, and the squadron had yet to give me a squadron Plane Captain patch after being a PC for almost a year.**

**He said he'd get me one, I still haven't seen it.**

**Well, I'm a little pot stirrer, so I went online and ordered some more Pro-Peace stickers to put on my car out of spite for the people who had a problem with my stickers.**

**To my back window I added an "Against the War, not the Warrior," and "War Sucks." I also added my current squadron logo, so that everyone on my base would know whom I was attached to.**

On our return flight from our most recent detachment to Anchorage, Alaska, I was one of the last persons on the plane, so I had to stand and wait for everyone to get situated before I could find a seat.

**Standing there, annoyed, in the center aisle, I heard, "Iraq Veterans Against the War, is that some sort of a club?"**

**I turned around and saw one of our Lieutenant Commanders sitting next to where I was standing and I realized I hadn't taken my IVAW button off of my backpack. The last thing I wanted to do was to stand there and argue with an officer about the validity of the cause, so my response was, "Eh, sort of, I guess so, sir."**

**To which he replied, "Well it's good you have your opinions, just as long as you keep fixing seats (I'm an ejection seat mechanic) and airplanes so we can kill those motherf\*ckers."**



**I laughed inside, knowing that he is an Electronic Countermeasures Officer (ECMO), not a pilot, and he flies in a pretty much non-combatant, electronic jamming aircraft.**

**Well, it didn't take long for the "issue" to be brought up again.**

**I was called down to Maintenance Control to speak with my Maintenance Senior Chief Petty Officer (MSCPO, E-8). He had in tow my Division Chief, and all three of us headed to the Squadron Duty Office, a poorly lit, 10' x 10' room with only a desk in it, where Sailors stand watches.**

**I was told to sit down, so the two of them could stand and tower over me.**

They asked me if I knew why I had been called in to see them. I had no clue, and that's what I told them.

**Senior's response was plain and simple, "your bumper stickers are becoming a problem."**

**In my head I said, "You've got to be kidding me, these guys obviously have nothing better to do!"**

I was asked to explain everything, again, for the hundredth time.

**They asked me how someone who was active duty, thought it would be okay to have stickers like the ones I had, on my vehicle. I told them it was my right, and I was allowed to display them.**

**Their response was that a number of officers, as well as enlisted had voiced their opposition to them being on my car to my CMC, as well as officers within my command.**

**I was surprised, because normally if someone has a problem with someone, they address it with that person before shooting up the chain of command with the grievance.**

They said that it had most recently been brought up because of the button on my backpack, which was, technically, against the rules, I was on an Air Force base, in a US Navy aircraft, in a duty status.

All things aside, I don't feel a button, or a sticker that plainly says, "Iraq Veterans Against the War," as a protest, but I guess it is.

All I think I am doing is making a statement. So apparently the officer that had a problem with it, on the airlift, was the same one who was joking with me about it.

**Weird. I then told my MSCPO about my previous conversations with the CMC about the issue, all he said was, "Things have changed."**

**My Division Chief chimed in with, "Again, how do you think this is okay, to make a statement of this kind?"**

I told him that when I started having an opinion on the war in Iraq, it was not well received. I was stationed in Texas, a red state, and most of the people in my squadron were very Pro-war, Pro-republicans, so it wasn't taken well that I was not a Bush supporter, and didn't support the war in Iraq.

**But over time, as the nation turned on the Iraq war, and the military being in Iraq, so did the military, and my actions were more received.**

My Chief immediately broke in with, "Well, we are in the military, and we are always Pro-Military."

The MSCPO then asked me where I saw my career going, and if I saw myself as a 20-year sailor. I said that I was thinking about it, and that I can say yes sir for that long. I also added, that just like when he was debriefing me on my periodic evaluation, where he gave me the #3 EP (third highest ranked, in skill and professionalism, E-5) that I love my job, and I love the Navy, that I show up to work and try my best to fix jets, and that I'm not going to do something stupid to jeopardize that.

His response was, "I know, you're probably my number 1 or 2 worker bee in the maintenance department, and you're modest, you're not in it for the glory or the awards."

I immediately remember the Navy Achievement Medal I was recommended for, for stopping a potential Class "A" mishap (Death or damage in excess of \$1,000,000) (Loss of an aircraft and probably 15-20 peoples lives) that apparently was denied, because I've never seen it.

He also stated that "he can't have, let's say 200 sailors in Afghanistan, and 20 of them oppose what we are doing over there, and are against the war, one of them might sabotage and aircraft."

He also asked me what would the junior enlisted think about my actions, which if a Second Class in my position was "protesting", what were they to do, follow or fight?

In my head I'm like, "What? How is my bumper sticker going to influence someone to sabotage an aircraft? If someone were to sabotage an aircraft, they would have made up their mind to do that long before I had ever heard of IVAW." I explained to him how IVAW doesn't stand for ideals like that, that it stands for peace, paying reparations to the Iraqi people to destroying their country, and veteran's benefits.

His eyes said, "Yeah, whatever."

He told me that I have already proved myself as a maintainer, and now that I've taken over my work center as LPO, the shop audit coming up will show what type of leader and supervisor I am.

This immediately made think they are going to use the results of that to give me an evaluation not nearly as good as the one I got last year.

**They then informed me that I had been found in breach of good order and discipline, and that I was now under orders to remove the stickers from my car.**

**It is my understanding, that my Commanding Officer is the only one who can deem something a “breach of good order and discipline”, as stated in the DoD 1325.6.**

### 3. POLICY

It is DoD policy that:

- 3.1. The Department of Defense shall safeguard the security of the United States.
- 3.2. The Service members’ right of expression should be preserved to the maximum extent possible, consistent with good order and discipline and the national security.
- 3.3. No commander should be indifferent to conduct that, if allowed to proceed unchecked, would destroy the effectiveness of his or her unit.
- 3.4. The proper balancing of these interests will depend largely upon the calm and prudent judgment of the responsible commander.

I don’t see how my actions can or could “destroy the effectiveness” of my unit. Also, I am never to wear my IVAW button, or anything else that could be construed as protesting, and I would be put on report, and sent to Captain’s Mast (Non-judicial Punishment).

**I was also told I was not allowed to partake in protests out in town, which I know is incorrect, but by this point I could care less to argue with an unreasonable man, I just wanted to leave.**

But he said, “You guys could probably talk about this subject for hours, just not at work, and you can say whatever you want on the Internet, like on Myspace or whatever, I know everyone has that.”

**My Division Chief said, “So let’s go get those stickers off of your car.”**

I told him I was far too busy with work that I couldn’t do it just then, but I’d do it later. “Well, give us a timeframe for them to be removed.” My Chief asked, I told him they wouldn’t be there when I came to work the next day.

My MSCPO said, “So It’ll just be the \_\_ (current squadron) \_\_ sticker and the \_\_ (previous squadron) \_\_ sticker on there tomorrow morning, right?” I replied, like a smart ass, “What? You don’t want me to take the \_\_ (previous squadron) \_\_ sticker off too?”

He looked at me confused.

After work, I removed ALL of my stickers; I didn’t want to be associated with my squadron whatsoever.

**Also, I Immediately posted a blog on my Myspace account, and received more support than I thought I would ever receive from my squadron mates.**

More people on a daily basis now ask me why my stickers are gone, than I was ever asked about them being on the car.

When I tell this story, my squadron mates and my wife and friends get pissed off and go off on tangents about how screwed up my squadron leadership is.

Friends from my previous command are in awe of the “witch hunt” that goes on everyday in my squadron. That’s all I have for now.



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## CLASS WAR REPORTS



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**Troops Invited:**

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

**OCCUPATION REPORT**

***Good News For The Iraqi  
Resistance!!***

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



8.21.07: Foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. 3-509 Para-Infantry Regiment stand guard over an Iraqi family after an armed home invasion as fellow soldiers search their personal belongings during Operation Marne Husky along the Tigris river south of Baghdad. (AFP/David Furst)

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

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

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

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

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