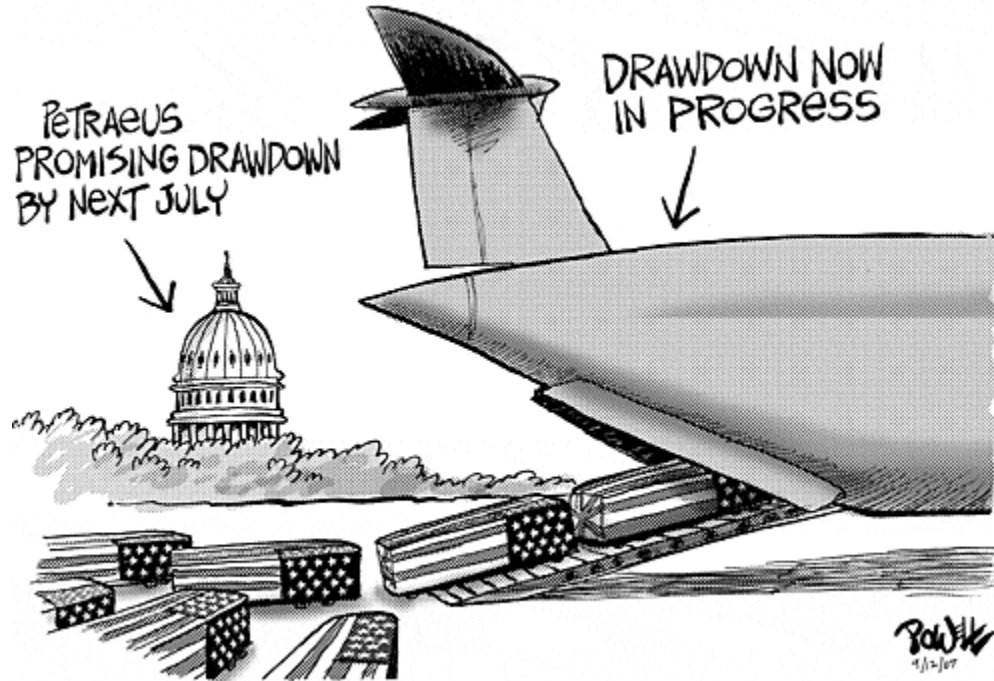


GI SPECIAL 5114:



[Thanks to James Starowicz, Veterans For Peace]

**“They Gave Him Prozac
And Sent Him Back To
Iraq”**

**“Now He’s Dead. What Good Is
A Dead Soldier To Them?”
Soldier From Las Vegas Kills
Himself:**

“His Last Screen Name Was ‘Lost Purple Heart,’ O’Brien Said”

September 01, 2007 By Ed Koch and Mary Manning, Los Vegas Sun

During a visit to his family in Pahrump in July, Army Pfc. Travis Virgadamo of Las Vegas shared his recent combat experience in Iraq.

He told of being ordered into houses without knowing what was behind strangers' doors. He talked of walking along roadsides fearing the next step could trigger lethal explosives.

Virgadamo told them he had been so frightened, he had sought and received psychiatric counseling from the military in Iraq. He received additional counseling during a trip home in late July, his family said.

On Thursday crisply dressed soldiers appeared at his family's door in Pahrump to report that the 19-year-old had died that day of a self-inflicted gunshot wound at a forward post just outside of Baghdad.

The family says he was in no emotional shape to be assigned to combat.

The Army knew he was suicidal, the soldier's grandmother, Katie O'Brien, said Friday.

His aunt, Rebecca McHugh, complained: “They gave him Prozac and sent him back to Iraq.”

“They (military) knew his circumstances. They gave him counseling in Iraq before he came home and they gave him counseling in Georgia before he was sent back to Iraq.

“Now he's dead. What good is a dead soldier to them?” McHugh said the family will call for a complete investigation.

Virgadamo, serving in an infantry unit, drove trucks shuttling ammunition. Virgadamo's death comes on the heels of a recent Pentagon report that at least 118 U.S. military personnel in Iraq have committed suicide from April 2003 to mid-August. That does not include unconfirmed reports of those who served in the war and then killed themselves at home.

Suicides have accounted for 3 percent of the overall Iraq war death toll, according to some Pentagon estimates. In mid-2006 the Veterans Affairs Department reported more than 56,000 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars had been diagnosed with mental illnesses, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and bipolar disorder.

In 2006 the Hartford Courant reported that the military is “recycling” troops who had sought mental health care, who had been diagnosed with mental diseases or who had indicated symptoms of mental duress and illness to their peers and chain of command.

The newspaper said some military personnel, after reporting mental duress, were pulled from duty, given 72 hours of rest and recreation, supplied with antidepressant medications, such as Prozac or Zoloft, and returned to their original duty stations.

The General Accounting Office reported that four out of five returning veterans who by the military's own standards are at risk for mental illnesses receive no treatment.

The number of troops taking antidepressants or other psychotropic drugs is unknown. However, Army reports indicate that medical treatment in Iraq involving psychotropic drugs has increased steadily.

Virgadamo is believed to be the first Nevada soldier to die in Iraq of a self-inflicted wound.

His family said the soldiers who told them of his death did not use the word "suicide," but rather said it was a "self-inflicted" gunshot wound.

When Virgadamo was on his 15-day leave in July, he told his grandmother that he had been seeing therapists in Baghdad and Kuwait. "He did not want to go back. He had had a couple of close calls," O'Brien said, including being involved in a vehicle rollover. McHugh said she heard of similar close calls from her nephew.

Virgadamo was born Aug. 17, 1988, in Victorville, Calif., and moved to Las Vegas with his family at age 5. He was home-schooled and worked as a box boy at an Albertson's in southwest Las Vegas.

His family said Virgadamo wanted to be a soldier or a police officer since age 4. As a teenager he joined the Nellis Cadet Squadron. In an Oct. 29, 2005, posting to MySpace.com, Virgadamo wrote with great enthusiasm of his pending enlistment: "In 16 days my paperwork gets sent in for transfer to senior membership and I become a living CAP Myth Hooah to going active Army."

His family said he was very proud when he completed boot camp and thought he had a future in the military or as a forest ranger. On his recent trip home, Virgadamo smiled when he saw a prayer poster for him at the Pahrump Taco Bell.

Virgadamo's other survivors include his father, Robert Virgadamo of the Philippines; his mother, Jackie Juliano of Pahrump; and two sisters, Katie Juliano of Pahrump and Nicole Virgadamo of the Philippines.

Virgadamo's father was told of his son's death by Philippine police officers. He is en route to Pahrump, his family said. Services are pending.

On his MySpace profile, Virgadamo described himself as 5 feet 9 inches tall with hazel eyes and dark brown hair. He said his "most missed memory" was "Vegas." Under "How do you want to die?" Virgadamo replied, "In battle."

Fighting back tears on the phone Friday, O'Brien said, "I just cannot believe it. "I was like his mother," O'Brien said. "I helped raise him. I just talked to him a couple of days ago. I talked to him at least twice a week.

“He was so young. He didn’t want to be there. He was so scared,” O’Brien said. “Then they put him on Prozac.”

He had lost his spirit to be in battle, she said. When Virgadamo saw O’Brien earlier this summer, he told her, “Grandma, maybe I’ll just go AWOL.”

O’Brien urged him to pray. “He went back praying and thinking it would be OK,” she said.

“For sure, it needs to be known he had problems,” O’Brien said. “They were going to discharge him. I really think they (military) are at fault to keep someone there.

“I think he just knew he was going to die,” O’Brien said.

His last screen name was “Lost Purple Heart,” O’Brien said.

MORE:

Combat Stress Suicide: “Excuses And Lies”

**“The Bad Commanders Are
Saying, ‘Shut Up, Toughen Up’”
“The Lower Ranks Are Suffering The
Brunt Of It” “A Lot Of Leaders Don’t
Go Out”
“His Command Said He Would Not Be
Promoted If He Went To Mental Health”**

<p>Often, leaders don’t know what their soldiers or Marines face because they remain at big bases in air-conditioned offices, rather than at the tiny outposts where troops often live in austere conditions: portable toilets, 20 men per room, several patrols a day and meals brought in by truck rather than made on-site.</p>
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September 10, 2007 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

All the services have worked to kill the stigma associated with seeking mental health care, but it still stands strong in some units.

Around midmorning, Hoffman [Lt. Col. Graham Hoffman, hospital psychiatrist]

goes to talk with a soldier in the intensive care unit. This one has tried to kill himself twice while in Iraq.

“He said his command said he would not be promoted if he went to mental health,” Hoffman said.

“And that other guys in his unit who had sought mental health treatment were not getting promoted.

“If he had gotten the treatment he needed in the first place, he might not be here now.”

Hoffman sent the soldier to Landstuhl.

“The bad commanders are saying, ‘Shut up, toughen up,’” he said.

“About half the units actively send their guys to mental health.”

But it’s more than going to see the doc, Hoffman said.

Often, leaders don’t know what their soldiers or Marines face because they remain at big bases in air-conditioned offices, rather than at the tiny outposts where troops often live in austere conditions: portable toilets, 20 men per room, several patrols a day and meals brought in by truck rather than made on-site.

“The lower ranks are suffering the brunt of it,” Hoffman said. “A lot of leaders don’t go out.”

And, as Iraq becomes more garrisonlike, with more support troops than infantry, Hoffman said the gap between conditions on the forward operating bases and outside the wire has grown.

Defense officials always issue suicide numbers with this caveat: “It’s much lower than the civilian population.”

The latest report came with the same comparison: The Army suicide rate per 100,000 soldiers stands at 17, while the U.S. adjusted rate for age and gender to match military demographics stands at 19. The Army’s suicide rate usually stands at 11 per 100,000.

The soldiers don’t buy it.

“We’re screened before we join,” said Sgt. 1st Class Chad Smith, an aid-station medic with 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry.

“That sorts out a lot of the mentally ill to begin with. So to say that we’re at 17 out of 100,000 for a suicide rate and then to say, ‘That’s still below the civilian rate,’ you have to put it into context.”

To Smith, the reasons behind the suicides seem clear.

“It’s a direct reflection of how we’re dealing with stress,” he said. “When you stop trying to defend everything and just look at it for what it is, it becomes obvious. We need to have that hope — that they’re working on it, that they do understand what’s going on.

“Otherwise, it looks like excuses and lies.”

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Four U.S. Soldiers Killed In Diyala

9.14.07 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070914-13

Four Task Force Lightning Soldiers were killed in Diyala Province Friday, when an explosion occurred near their vehicle. The names of the deceased are being withheld pending notification of next of kin and release by the Department of Defense.

Army Sergeant From N. Indiana Dies In Baghdad

September 13, 2007 Associated Press

ROCHESTER, Ind. -- Army Sgt. Nicholas Patterson of Northern Indiana died Monday in Baghdad, officials at Earl-Love Funeral Home in Rochester said.

Patterson, 24, was a 2001 graduate of Rochester High School, where he was a top basketball and baseball player.

“He was a highly competitive, high-energy kid,” baseball coach Brian Hooker said. “You never had to worry about him not bringing his full energy to the field.”

Patterson’s survivors include his wife, Jayme, and their 4-year-old son in North Carolina.

Linda Brennan, who was Patterson’s geometry teacher at the school, said he had a zest for life.

“He was hard-working and had a great attitude,” Brennan said. “He had such a great sense of humor and could make a tense moment light.”

Marine’s Burial Set For Friday In Sumter

September 13, 2007 Orlando Sentinel

MOUNT DORA - The body of Cpl. Christopher L. Poole Jr., a 22-year-old Marine who was killed in Iraq, will arrive home today, his family said.

Poole, a communications specialist from Mount Dora, died Sept. 6 in an explosion when a suicide bomber drove a truck into a security checkpoint in Al Anbar province, said his mother, Donna Hunsicker.

The 2005 graduate of Mount Dora High School will be buried at Florida National Cemetery in Sumter County's Withlacoochee State Forest.

The funeral is scheduled for 10 a.m. Friday at Purcell Funeral Home in Bushnell. Burial will be at 11:30 a.m.

Local Family Mourns Loss of Marine Killed in Iraq



Aug 31, 2007 WTVM

"It's still kind of a shock, and I just want my boy home."

The "boy" Melanie Tanner is referring to...is the youngster who grew into a responsible man...a marine, serving his country in Iraq.

It was there Corporal John C. Tanner was killed Wednesday during a roadside bomb explosion.

Tanner says she can't help but think about the baby she refers to as Corey...the fun-loving prankster of the family.

"He was very mischevious, always into trouble, but very, he was a sweetheart," says Tanner.

"He liked to get into trouble, he liked to get us into a lot of trouble," says John's older brother Henry Tanner.

That passion turned into a personal calling to serve. Tanner says that after 9-11, her son knew what he wanted to do. "He said that one, he wanted to get back at 'em, and two, he wanted to keep them from doing it again."

And Henry says it was that same spirit of determination that kept his brother going in Iraq. "Every time that we talked, he told me that he loved his job."

A job John Tanner lost his life fulfilling. But, for this family...it's not in vain. The 21-year-old soldier's wife is expecting the couple's first child next month. And it's through this baby, Melanie Tanner says she'll remember her own.

"I don't know if we'll ever be able to tell him how good his dad was, but I want to try."

Family Tries To Be Strong In Wake Of Soldier's Death

September 06, 2007 By Susan Harrison Wolffis, The Muskegon Chronicle

For four months, Louise Scheibner faithfully went to mass every morning at St. Mary's Catholic Church in downtown Muskegon, praying for her son's safe return from Iraq.

She kept pictures of him in his uniform on her refrigerator door and crossed off each day he served his country on her calendar.

"C'mon, you've got to get through another day, Danny," she'd say out loud, even though she was the only one in the kitchen.

At night before she went to bed, she petitioned God some more, using her mother's worn rosary beads to say the prayers she learned as a child, praying him home.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Scheibner, 40, was so close to safety when he was killed Aug. 29 in Al Noor, Iraq, the victim of a roadside bomb.

A platoon sergeant who had 20 years in the Army, Scheibner was on his last combat mission. He was being reassigned that day to headquarters where he'd handle administrative duties.

But first, he wanted to show the new platoon sergeant the ropes. Scheibner hopped in the back seat of the Humvee; the new sarge sat in front next to the driver where Scheibner usually sat. When the bomb went off, only Scheibner was killed.

"It was literally his last mission," says his sister, Diane Cottrell of Muskegon.

Four months into a 15-month deployment in Iraq, Scheibner was scheduled to retire when he came home stateside.

"It's so hard to understand," says Louise Scheibner, a woman who confesses her faith has been shaken.

"My heart's been torn out. I'll never be whole again."

Knowing Danny, as the family still calls him, he was laughing and talking with the new platoon sergeant when the bomb hit. The military authorities assure his family death came instantly.

"He was laughing, and then he was in heaven," his mother says, searching for comfort wherever she can. "We're the ones who are suffering now."

Daniel Scheibner is survived by his wife, the former Ann Aker of Muskegon, whom he told everyone was the "love of his life" even after 17 years of marriage. He leaves their 12-year-old son, Tyler, a child who told his grandmother they "need to be strong right now." Ann and Tyler Scheibner live in Tacoma, Wash., where Daniel Scheibner was stationed at Fort Lewis.

Other survivors include his mother, Louise Scheibner, 67; sister, Diane Cottrell, 43; brother, David Scheibner, 41; and the rest of his family in Muskegon.

The Scheibner family has faced adversity before.

In 1971, Louise Scheibner's husband abandoned her and the kids. She was left as their sole support and their "little family," as she lovingly calls them, drew close together to survive.

"Now we're the ones who have to get through another day," Louise Scheibner says.

When Daniel Scheibner was 5, his mother found the baby of the family on the rooftop, checking out the world.

"Look, Mommy!" he shouted to her.

He always had an adventurous streak. He climbed every tree in the neighborhood, built forts in the woods with his brother and "what one didn't think of, the other did," Louise Scheibner says. Only 14 months apart in age, everyone thought the Scheibner boys were twins, and even though they had the usual brotherly rivalry, they were always best friends.

"Still are," David Scheibner says.

In 1987, Danny Scheibner told his mom he wanted to follow his older brother, David, and join the Army. He was 20 and wanted to see what life had to offer and "spread his wings and see what there was outside of Muskegon," his brother says.

He served in Germany and Hawaii. He was a drill sergeant in Fort Sill, Okla., where he took his basic training earlier. He served in the 82nd Airborne at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Most recently, he was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division at Fort Lewis in Tacoma, Wash.

Twenty years ago, Louise Scheibner had her worries.

“As a mother, I was worried,” she remembers, “but I thought: We’re civilized now. There will never be another war, not after Vietnam. We’ve learned our lesson.”

Four years into his 20-year hitch in the Army, Daniel Scheibner went to battle in the first Gulf War.

“I was beside myself,” Louise Scheibner says.

She immediately tied a yellow ribbon around a favorite tree in her front yard and kept it there until he came home.

The minute he was deployed to Iraq in March, Danny’s mother tied a new ribbon around the same tree.

Earlier this week, someone placed flowers at the foot of the tree, in memory of the fallen soldier.

Today the hearse carrying Daniel Scheibner’s body home will stop briefly at the house where he grew up within walking distance of Mona Shores High School.

The last time everyone in his family was together was in March when the Muskegon relatives went to Washington state. They’ll return to Fort Lewis for another funeral Sept. 19.

“No parent should have to go through this,” Louise Scheibner says. “It scares me how many more we’re going to lose before this war is done.”

On Sunday morning, she went to Mass, as usual.

“I’ll still pray for our soldiers. I’ll pray for their families,” she says. “I’ll pray for my Danny.”

His family says he was “larger than life,” a 6-foot, 2-inch tall guy who’d grab hold of people and give them “rib-crushing” hugs.

Danny Scheibner loved to tinker with cars and trucks. His first car was a 1966 Cadillac that he bought for \$75 and nursed back to life.

“He couldn’t keep it in gas,” his mother says.

They describe him as “big-hearted,” the kind of man who looked for the common thread between strangers. In Iraq, he befriended an Iraqi barber who lost all of his equipment -- so Scheibner went to his PX and bought the barber some clippers so he could work.

Being a platoon sergeant was more than a job.

“He loved taking care of his men,” David Scheibner says.

In return, the soldiers called him "Smoke," a name reserved for field artillery platoon sergeants. But the men's respect extended to his family.

Scheibner's men always called Ann Scheibner "Mrs. Smoke."

In spring, Scheibner put in for retirement, but before he received his orders, he was deployed to Iraq. The day he shipped out, the U.S. Army extended soldiers' overseas duty from 12 months to 15 months.

Tragedy struck two months after Scheibner landed on Iraqi soil. Over Father's Day weekend, two of his men were killed by a roadside bomb.

The sergeant, a veteran of two wars, delivered their eulogy. A month later, two more of his men were severely injured.

"Then last week, it was Danny's day," his mother says.

Son Of Waukegan Teacher Dies In Iraq

August 30, 2007 NBC Universal, Inc

WAUKEGAN, Ill. -- The son of a popular north suburban Waukegan music instructor has been killed in Iraq.

Marine Lance Cpl. Matthew Medicott of Houston died Aug. 25 from wounds suffered while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq, according to the U.S. Department of Defense. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

His father, William "Bart" Medicott Jr., is director of orchestras at Waukegan High School and teaches strings at both the elementary level and at Jack Benny Center for the Arts. He has been an instructor in Waukegan schools for 11 years.

Matthew, 21, attended Waukegan High School's Alternative Optional Education Center during his freshman and sophomore years, according to his dad.

"He was highly regarded by his teachers," said an emotional Medicott on Wednesday. "He was a motivated student. He was a fine soldier, a wonderful son and a wonderful young man."

Medicott's older son, Nicholas, is also a Marine. Stationed in Honolulu where he works as a helicopter mechanic, he also has served in Iraq.

"Matthew was a fine, fine young man, completely dedicated to the U.S. Marine Corps," said his grandmother, Barbara Medicott, in a phone interview Wednesday from her home in Indianapolis.

The woman whom Matthew called “Ama” said her second-oldest grandson was proud to be a Marine.

“It was all he ever wanted to do,” she said.

Medlicott said she last saw Matthew during a December trip to California.

“He was just a doll,” she said. “He had a ready wit, a sparkly look in his eyes. He was fun.”

Bart Medlicott, a resident of Waukegan, said he is coping with his son’s death with the help of “enormous support from family and friends.

“The support from the community has been overwhelming,” he said.

Matthew, who was serving his second deployment to Iraq, earned many military awards including the Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

Also survived by his mother, Juyne Sauer of Houston, he will be buried with full military honors in Houston next week.

Medlicott is the 16th current or former Lake County resident to die in Iraq or Afghanistan since the United States invaded Iraq four years ago.

**GUESS WHO’S WORRIED
GUESS WHO ISN’T
GUESS WHY
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



A U.S. soldier from Bravo 112 Cav. Battalion take up position in the city of Baqouba, Sept, 2, 2007. (AP Photo/Karel Prinsloo)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Slain G.I. A Soldier, Father Who 'Wanted To Be An Example People Could Look Up To'

08/30/2007 By Jennifer W. Sanchez, The Salt Lake Tribune

U.S. Army Sgt. Rocky Herrera often joked about being the "good" and "best looking" son. He loved grilling steaks and drinking Budweiser beer with his brother. He also enjoyed camping with his sons. But above all, his relatives say Herrera believed in being the best soldier and leader he could be - even if it meant dying for his country.

Herrera was killed Monday in a roadside suicide bombing in Afghanistan, relatives said Wednesday. The Salt Lake City native was 43. "He always wanted to be in charge," said 22-year-old Matt Herrera, Rocky Herrera's son. "He wanted to be an example people could look up to."

While his unit was building a bridge, Herrera was killed when the soldiers were approached by a vehicle that later detonated. Two other U.S. soldiers died and six others were injured, relatives said.

After serving in Iraq a few years ago, Herrera departed for his Afghanistan tour in May. He left behind his wife, Traci; daughter, Clarissa, 16; step-daughter, Tristan, 20 - all who live in Fort Lewis, Wash., where Herrera was stationed. Herrera's sons Matt, 22, and Mark, 20, live in Salt Lake City.

Elaine Herrera, his mother, said she expected her son to return home sometime in early 2008. The family had already talked about taking a trip to Yellowstone National Park to celebrate his homecoming.

Instead, she said her other son, Angelo, came to give her the grim news Tuesday morning. Military officials came to her home later that evening.

Elaine Herrera said she sent her son a letter two days ago "to perk him up." The last time she spoke to him was about a week ago, and "he just told me that he loved me." Although she's been praying "for God to keep him safe and send him back to us," Elaine Herrera said she finds comfort in her son's dedication to serve his country.

"Rocky believed in what he was doing," she said wiping away tears. "And he had to protect his troops because it was his job."

Angelo Herrera, 40, said he doesn't know where to start, but he's hoping he can get 900 South re-named after his older brother. Elaine Herrera and her late husband, Henry "Chick" Herrera, moved into their house about 900 South and 1100 West some 40 years ago and reared their three kids there.

"I figure since he gave his life for his country, we can at least make a tribute to him," Angelo Herrera said as he drank a Budweiser in the backyard of his mom's house and visited with relatives on Wednesday.

Rocky Herrera was the eldest of three children. He started boxing when he was 9 years old, trained at Montoya's Boxing Club and eventually competed as an amateur boxer in the Utah area until he was about 25. He graduated from West High School. In his 20s, he joined the military and later left Salt Lake City about 10 years ago.

His relatives describe Rocky Herrera as easy going with a "special smile." He liked betting on football; his favorite team was the Miami Dolphins. He loved hunting deer and fishing.

Angelo Herrera, said his brother never worried and always tried to put a positive spin on negative situations. When there was a problem, Rocky would often joke that at least they had beer.

"He always looked at the lighter side," Angelo Herrera said.

For Matt Herrera, losing his father feels unreal.

He said he's still in shock about the news - he thought it could never happen to their family. Now, he is remembering all the good times they shared: bowling nights, going to the movies and a trip to Disneyland years ago.

He can't bear to think of family gatherings without his dad there.

"Every time he came to visit he told me he was proud of me and everything I had done."

Some of Rocky Herrera's relatives plan to be in Fort Lewis next week for a memorial service for him and the other soldiers. A service in Salt Lake City is being planned.

Three Australian Soldiers Wounded In Resistance Ambush

September 15, 2007 By Ian McPhedran, News Limited

TWO Australian soldiers were hit by enemy fire and a third hurt in a fierce Taliban attack in Afghanistan.

The release of details of the fire-fight came as the top brass moved to withdraw the Australian-made F1 hand grenade from service after a Defence civilian had his hand blown off at a Victorian testing facility on Wednesday.

Defence also belatedly revealed that several F1 grenades failed to detonate during operations in Afghanistan in 2006, resulting in troops switching to US-made weapons.

The F1 is the standard infantry grenade for Australian forces and thousands are in service.

Meanwhile, Defence refused to say exactly when or where the latest Afghanistan fire-fight took place apart from “earlier this month” somewhere in Oruzgan province.

Several groups of Taliban fighters ambushed the Australians using concentrated small arms fire from a number of locations.

Two soldiers were slightly wounded by shrapnel as enemy rounds ripped into their vehicle. Treated in the field they continued on patrol.

Defence would not divulge the nature of the third soldier’s injury, thought to involve a bone fracture. However, it did say the soldier had returned to Australia for specialised treatment.

Notes From A Lost War:

Occupation Forces “Are Unable To Stop Insurgents From Regenerating In Areas Cleared”

14 Sept. (AKI)

Afghanistan is facing a critical new security risk because NATO forces are unable to stop insurgents from regenerating in areas cleared by foreign troops, a key report has found.

“While NATO forces are able to clear any given area of insurgents, they do not have enough personnel to ‘backfill’ and hold a cleared area after a successful operation,” the delegation said in this report.

“Nor are there enough trained and capable Afghan National Security Forces to do the job independently. The end result is the re-infiltration of cleared areas by insurgents.”

As well as complaining about the inadequate number of NATO and Afghan forces, the NATO delegation said Afghanistan had been “without effective central government for the past 30 years”.

“Corruption, often linked to the surging drug trade, crippled efforts at every level of government from the ministry of the interior to provincial governors, judges and police forces.”

Resistance Action

September 13, 2007 By Amir Shah, ASSOCIATED PRESS & 14 September 2007 (Reuters)

Two national policemen were killed when a remote-controlled roadside bomb was detonated in the eastern city of Khost, a provincial official said. Three policemen were wounded.

Three police were killed in Herat province during a five-hour fight on Wednesday, and one Afghan soldier was killed in Farah province Thursday, officials said.

In fighting elsewhere in the country, an Afghan-NATO patrol discovered and defused three roadside bombs Wednesday in the Zhari district of Kandahar province and shortly after was ambushed by Taliban fighters.

In the southern province of Uruzgan, insurgents attacked a joint Afghan army and U.S.-led coalition patrol Wednesday with rocket-propelled grenades and gunfire, the coalition said in a statement.

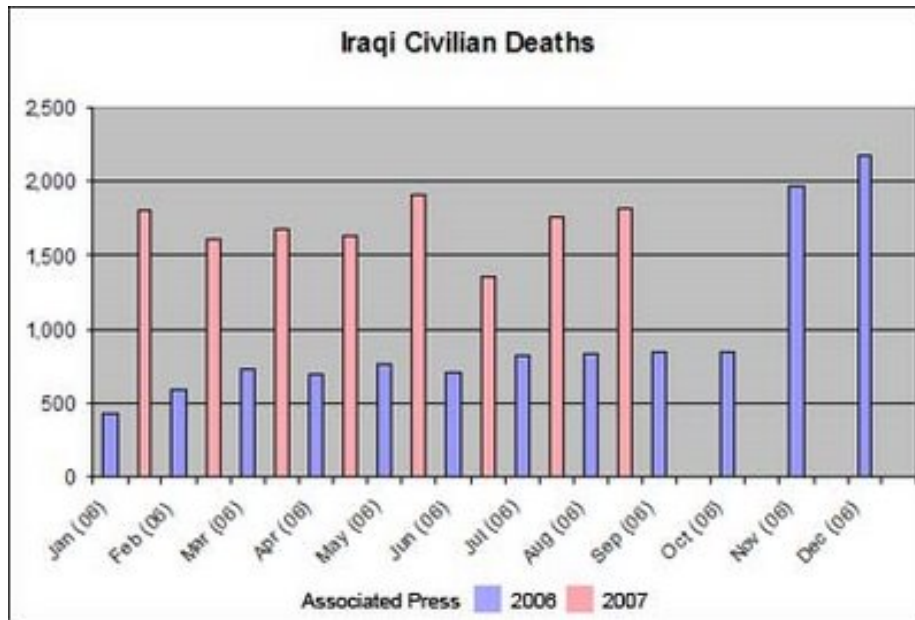
TROOP NEWS

Gen. Betrayus Toes the Party Line: “Apparently, Old White Guys In Suits And Four-Star Uniforms Know More Than The Average Iraqi About How Safe Their Streets Are These Days”

September 11, 2007 By Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Military Project

The Bush administration's answer to every piece of bad news coming from Iraq since the surge started in January has been "wait until Gen. Petraeus' report in September."

Yesterday was the first installment of Petraeus' testimony on Capitol Hill about how the surge is going, complete with cheap charts showing "progress" and "improvement" based on cherry-picked data and flat out lies about how civilian deaths have declined.



The corporate media has been crowing that the surge is succeeding militarily, as if it were some big accomplishment that the most well-armed and powerful military in the world is able to push around tens of thousands of meagerly-armed angry Iraqis for a few months.

But the surge was not a purely military operation - it had political objectives. It was a means to an end.

Theoretically, sending 30,000 more troops was supposed to create a more secure environment in Baghdad so the squabbling sectarian politicians in the Green Zone could get their act together, enact re-Ba'athification and pass an oil law handing Iraq's black gold to American corporations.

None of these objectives have been accomplished. Only 3 of 18 so-called "benchmarks" have been met, and those 3 are not very important. A full 70 percent of Iraqis believe that security has not improved in the areas where the extra troops went and a majority in Anbar province where Bush stopped in last week for a quick photo-op said the same thing.

Apparently, old white guys in suits and four-star uniforms know more than the average Iraqi about how safe their streets are these days.

They're probably being brainwashed by Al-Jazeera and Moveon.org to flee their homes in record numbers (50,000-60,000 a month) just to make our beloved Decider look bad, not because they actually feel unsafe.

Despite the facts, the Bush administration and its sock-puppet commander Gen. Betrayus, continue to ask for more time, more money, and most importantly, more lives for the surge, for a political strategy that has turned out to be a disastrous failure in an uninterrupted succession of disastrous failures that together constitute the war in Iraq.

Continuing the surge despite the complete and utter failure to achieve the surge's ends can only mean one thing: the Bush administration intends to keep the war going through the remainder of his term and let the next guy (or Hillary) deal with America's defeat in Iraq.

**Served In Iraq?
We Don't Give A Shit?
We're The Government:
Get Out And Go Away!
[Thanks For Your Service]**



Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) DC Chapter President Geoffrey Millard (L) and national co-chair Adam Kokesh are told to leave the hearing room hours before a joint hearing of the House Armed Services and Foreign Affairs committees on Capitol Hill 10 Sept in Washington, DC. (AFP/Getty Images/Chip Somodevilla)

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

**“Once Again, We Have A General Repeatedly Promising To Save Western Civilization By Turning The Corner In Yet Another Intractable And Unnecessary Foreign War”
“So, Ambassadors And Generals Lie.
“Get Used To It”**

September 12, 2007 By Robert Scheer, The Nation [Excerpts]

Of course, Gen. David Petraeus predicts success in the Iraq War.

What wonders couldn't generals achieve with more troops and more time? The battle is always going well until it is lost, and then they blame defeat on the politicians and the public.

There's no shortage of retired generals who will tell you we could have won in Vietnam, if only we had sent more troops, or bombed the dikes in the North, or been willing to kill more than the 3.4 million Vietnamese who died along with 59,000 American soldiers.

Instead, the politicians and public, led by that bleeding heart President Richard Nixon, lost the will to win.

Thus, the dominos fell to communism, and Red China and Red Vietnam now rule the world by dint of military force.

Have you been to Wal-Mart lately? The triumph of communism is total.

Once again, we have a general repeatedly promising to save western civilization by turning the corner in yet another intractable and unnecessary foreign war.

Back on Sept. 26, 2004, in the weeks before the midterm congressional elections, Petraeus took to the op-ed page of the Washington Post to make sure the voters didn't vote wrong.

Despite appearances, he claimed the war in Iraq was going very well: “I see tangible progress. Iraqi security elements are being rebuilt from the ground up,” Petraeus wrote.

“The institutions that oversee them are being re-established from the top down. And Iraqi leaders are stepping forward, leading their country and their security forces courageously ... there has been progress in the effort to enable Iraqis to shoulder more of the load for their own security, something they are keen to do.”

So keen, it makes one's heart swell.

But wait--Ryan C. Crocker, the US ambassador to Iraq, also testified before Congress this week with Petraeus, and he has more good news about what he still celebrates as the "liberation of Iraq." Remember that Bush Administration promise that the oil-rich Iraqis would pick up the check for the cost of their liberation?

Well, Crocker is bullish on that front: the Iraqi economy is on schedule to grow by 6 percent, according to his testimony.

Perhaps he is referring to the additional money dumped into Iraq's economy by American taxpayers chipping in for the surge. He certainly wasn't basing his estimate on any improvement in Iraqi oil production or any other economic component.

As the International Monetary Fund reported last month in its annual review of Iraq's economy, "Economic growth has been slower than expected at the time of the last (review) mainly because the expected expansion of oil production has failed to materialize." In case you haven't noticed, oil is the Iraqi economy, yet a recent GAO report stated an additional \$57 billion in US tax dollars will be needed to bring oil and electricity production to the level where it can satisfy Iraq's domestic demand by the year 2015.

At the current rate, Iraq will be liberated when there are no Iraqis.

Perhaps that is why this week's ABC/BBC poll shows that 70 percent of Iraqis believe security has deteriorated since the surge and that 60 percent believe attacks on US forces are justified.

And 93 percent of Sunnis, whom the general and ambassador claim are joining our side, want to see us dead.

As for optimism, only 29 percent of Iraqis now think the situation will get better, as opposed to 64 percent who shared that optimism before the surge--which almost 70 percent of Iraqis believe has "hampered conditions for political dialogue, reconstruction and economic development."

So, ambassadors and generals lie. Get used to it.

Troops Invited:

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

PARKING LOT FOR VETERANS WHO JOINED THE MARINES
THE DAY AFTER GEORGE W. BUSH ANNOUNCED "MISSION
ACCOMPLISHED" FROM THE DECK OF THE USS LINCOLN.



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Bush's Pet Sheik Blown Up: "A Huge Setback For U.S. Efforts In Iraq"

September 13, 2007 Associated Press & AFP & Reuters

The most prominent figure backing U.S. occupation forces in Iraq was killed Thursday in an explosion near his home in Anbar province, U.S. and Iraqi officials said.

Abdul-Sattar Abu Risha was leader of the Anbar Salvation Council, also known as the Anbar Awakening - an alliance of clans backing the Iraqi government and U.S. forces.

Abu Risha and two of his bodyguards were killed by a roadside bomb planted near the tribal leader's home in Ramadi, Anbar's provincial capital, said Col. Tareq Youssef, supervisor of Anbar police.

Abu Risha was among a group of tribal leaders who met U.S. President George W. Bush earlier this month at al-Asad Air Base in Anbar province.

A spokesman for Gen. David Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, confirmed the sheik's death in an e-mail from Washington, where Petraeus has been testifying before Congress on the state of conditions in Iraq.

Petraeus pointed to success in Anbar province repeatedly during his appearances on Capitol Hill and in a number of press interviews.

Two Pentagon officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the matter, said the assassination would be a huge setback for U.S. efforts in Iraq, because it sends a message to others who are cooperating with coalition forces or thinking about cooperating.

Abu Risha's alliance with the U.S.-backed regime in Baghdad drew threats on his life from militant groups.

However, he had recently begun traveling with fewer bodyguards, as the security situation improved in Anbar.

Within two hours of Abu Risha's death, resistance Web sites posted banners praising the sheik's killing. One called him "one of the biggest pigs of the Crusaders," in an apparent reference to U.S. forces in Iraq. Abu Risha would spend Ramadan "in the pits of hell," another posting said.

After the bombing, police announced a state of emergency in Ramadi and set up additional checkpoints throughout the city, Rashid said.

An Interior Ministry spokesman, Maj. Gen. Abdul-Karim Khalaf, said a committee would be sent from Baghdad to help Anbar police investigate the attack.

Khalaf said that after the first blast which killed Abu Risha, a car bomb exploded nearby.

"The car bomb had been rigged just in case the roadside bomb missed his convoy," he said. There were no casualties from the car bomb, he added.

Resistance Action

9.12.07 AP & RTE & Reuters & 9.13 Reuters & Sep 14, 2007 (Reuters)

Near Samarra, 60 miles north of the Iraqi capital, about 60 guerrillas attacked a police station and ignited clashes with residents and police — leaving two policemen wounded.

A bomber rammed a truck laden with explosives into two police cars near the northern Iraqi town of Baiji on Friday, killing at least seven policemen, a police source said.

An official at a joint police and army coordination centre put the death toll at 10, and said he believed it could rise further because identification cards had been found at the scene which did not belong to bodies so far recovered.

The police cars were parked outside a restaurant, 3 km (two miles) south of Baiji, the official said. He said eight civilians were wounded in the attack.

A sniper killed a policeman in Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. Guerrillas wounded another four policemen in two other attacks.

One policeman was killed and two wounded when their patrol was hit by a roadside bomb in Falluja, 50 km (30 miles) west of Baghdad, police said.

Shiites And Sunnis March Together Against The Occupation: [Get The Message?]



An Iraqi boy writes an anti-US Occupation slogan in Baghdad. Shiites and Sunnis marched together in protest at the building by US troops of a tall concrete wall separating their northwest Baghdad neighbourhoods. (AFP/Ali Yussef)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

No Man's Land



From: Mike Hastie

To: GI Special

Sent: September 12, 2007

Subject: No Man's Land

No Man's Land

**After returning from Vietnam in 1971,
I eventually found myself in emotional
no man's land.**

**Betrayal completely dismantled my life.
The entire God-damn Viet-nam War was a lie.**

**I was suicidal for years,
and treated numerous times at a V.A. facility
for severe depression.**

**My real problem was,
I hated America.**

**On one occasion, I left a therapy session so
emotionally distraught, I couldn't stop crying.
When I got into my car to drive home,
I couldn't see the road.**

So, I turned the windshield wipers on.
But,
it wasn't raining.

No man's land.

My rage and grief finally came together,
and all I could feel was waste.
Wasted.

I gave myself permission to despise my government,
and define the word betrayal.

The truth was finally born.
All of that emotional power was released.

Fast forward 36 years,
and America has another Julius Caesar.

The Bush administration and the Democrats who support
Him,
are destroying civilization.

The United States government is uncivilized.

Our government will stop at nothing.
Why?
Because the American people are doing nothing.
Bombs and missiles are not killing people.
Silence is killing people.

It is OK to break down with rage,
and see if the windshield wipers work.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
September 12, 2007

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

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



Iraqi children made to sit on the floor under guard after an armed night home invasion by foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. in the Zafraniya neighborhood in Baghdad September 8, 2007. REUTERS/Carlos Barria

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

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

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

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

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

7000 Down With Cholera: Epidemic Headed For Baghdad

September 12, 2007 By JAMES GLANZ and DENISE GRADY, New York Times
[Excerpts]

BAGHDAD, Sept. 11 — A cholera epidemic in northern Iraq has infected approximately 7,000 people and could reach Baghdad within weeks as the disease spreads through the country's decrepit and unsanitary water system, Iraqi health officials said Tuesday.

The World Health Organization reported that the epidemic is concentrated in the northern regions of Kirkuk and Sulaimaniya and that 10 people are known to have died. But Dr. Said Hakki, president of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, a relief organization that has responded to the epidemic, said that new cases had turned up in the neighboring provinces, Erbil and Nineveh, indicating that the disease had spread.

Most significant, Dr. Hakki said, were two cases in a village on the border between Kirkuk and Diyala Provinces, one involving a young girl. Baghdad is next to Diyala.

Because of that geographic spread, Dr. Hakki said, health officials at the Red Crescent estimate that cases will begin turning up in Baghdad in late September or early October, when temperatures are especially favorable for the growth of the bacteria *Vibrio cholerae*, which causes the disease by infecting the intestine.

Dr. Cerko Abdulla, chief of the Sulaimaniya health directorate, also said that the epidemic had begun spreading in adjacent provinces. "The water system represents the main problem," he said. "The disease can spread widely through water, and that's a very serious matter."

In a chilling reminder of how difficult it may be to maintain those levels, Dr. Mohsin said that chlorine imports had been severely curtailed as a result of recent insurgent bombs that had been laced with chlorine, which in concentrated form can be deadly.

"If the water has low chlorination, *Vibrio cholerae* will go through the central supply," Dr. Hakki said, and the disease will spread "like a fire in a haystack."

Dr. Burhan Omar, deputy director of Kirkuk General Hospital, said that because of such problems, water purification plants themselves could be contaminated with the bacteria. Those plants, in turn, can "bring the disease from the northern parts to the middle and southern parts of Iraq."

In fact, if those plants are contaminated, the epidemic could hopscotch all the way to Basra, in the south, Dr. Omar said.

Cholera is caused by infection of the intestine with the bacteria *Vibrio cholerae*. The infection can be mild or even have no symptoms, but about one in 20 infected people become extremely ill, with profuse watery diarrhea, vomiting and leg cramps. Without treatment, rapid loss of body fluids causes dehydration and shock, and a person can die within hours.

Cholera does not usually spread directly from person to person, so casual contact with infected people is not risky, and quarantine is not necessary. But household members, who have closer contact, may contract it, and can sometimes avoid getting sick by taking the antibiotic tetracycline.

People contract cholera by drinking water or eating food contaminated with the bacteria, which comes from the feces of an infected person. Exposure to raw sewage and contaminated, untreated drinking water can cause epidemics. If treated water is not available, boiling will kill the bacteria. During epidemics, people need to avoid raw vegetables.

Fadela Chaib, a spokeswoman for the World Health Organization, said: "Frankly speaking, it's possible that cholera will spread to neighboring provinces and even to Baghdad, because there is a lot of people movement. People can be carrying the bacteria in their bodies and show no symptoms, and the bacteria can stay in the body for 7 to 14 days and be shed, potentially contaminating other individuals."

Should cholera break out in Baghdad, it would be far more difficult to send in health workers and protect them.

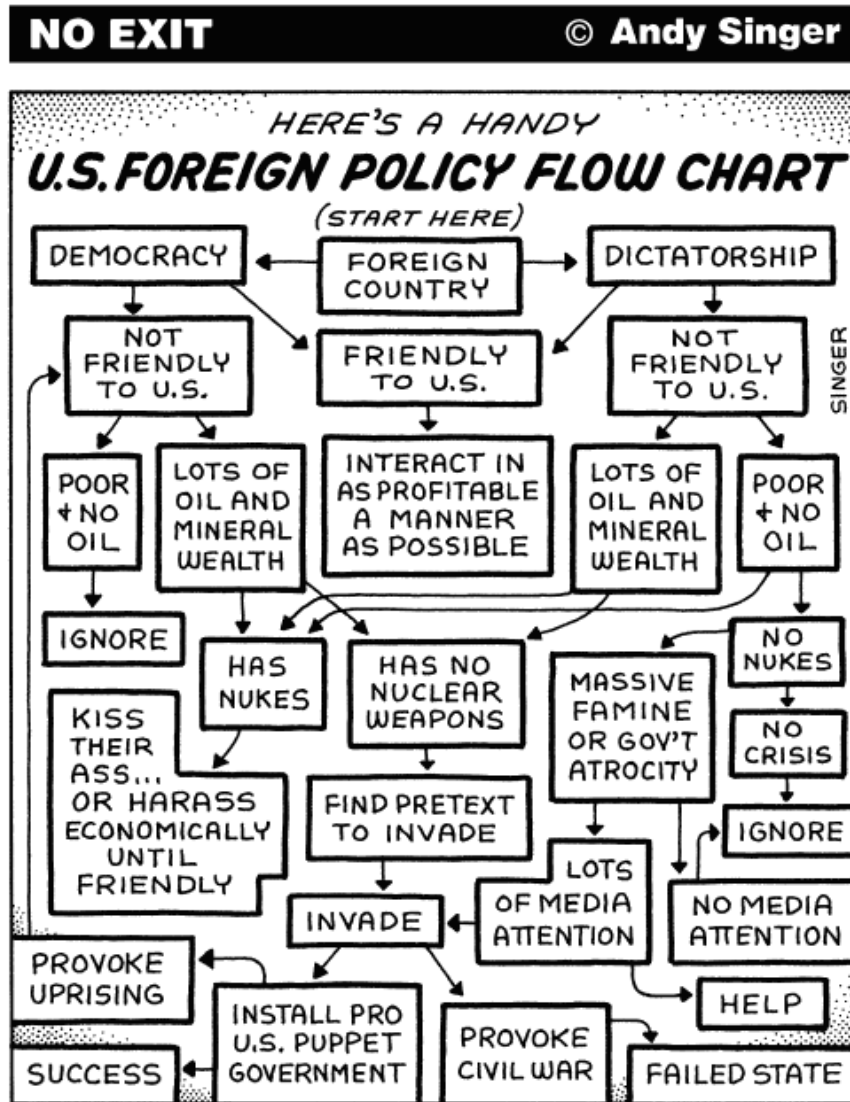
**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

**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/)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

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