

## GI SPECIAL 5/23:



# “It Needs To End” The Troops “All Need To Come Home” 19-Year-Old Succumbs To Iraq Injuries

By Fred Ortega Staff Writer, San Gabriel Valley Tribune

EL MONTE - The last time she heard from Marisol Heredia, Mountain View High School teacher Kris Hanna said her former French pupil had some special requests.

“She wanted me to send her Flaming Hot Cheetos, Doritos, beef jerky, truffles and a French dictionary,” said Hanna of the last e-mail she received from Heredia, adding that she was only able to include the Doritos and beef jerky in a small care package she sent her in May.

By the time the 19-year-old received the package, she was lying in an Army hospital bed with horrific burns all over her body, the result of an accident she suffered while stationed at her Army base in Baghdad, Iraq, on July 18.

When the El Monte native succumbed to her injuries Friday at a Texas military hospital, she became the first female soldier from the San Gabriel Valley to die in the 4 1/2-year-old Iraq War.

Hanna and family members described Heredia as a unique individual who was funny and quirky yet mature for her age, a young woman who loved French culture as much as she did rooting for her favorite basketball team, the Los Angeles Lakers.

“She was quirky, insightful, and had a mind of her own,” Hanna said.

She added that Heredia was a dedicated student with a GPA in the 3.5 range who graduated a half year early in 2005 to follow her older sister, Claudia, into the Army. “She definitely wasn’t run of the mill,” Hanna said.

Military officials declined to provide details about the incident that took Heredia’s life, other than to say that she suffered “noncombat-related injuries.”

“We still have it under investigation, so I can’t comment on it,” said Nancy Bourget, a spokeswoman at Fort Hood, Texas, where Heredia was assigned as a petroleum supply specialist for the 15th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

Heredia was deployed to Iraq last October, Bourget said in an e-mail.

Hanna said that according to family members, Heredia had been refueling a generator at her Army base at the time of the accident.

“They said there was a spark and the gasoline spilled on her, burning 80 percent of her body,” Hanna said. “The only parts of her body that weren’t burned were her feet, which were protected inside her boots.”

By the time Hanna heard about the accident at the beginning of the school year from Heredia’s younger sister, Carline, a junior at Mountain View, Heredia’s wounds had become infected and her condition had taken a turn for the worse. She died days later.

Heredia, one of four sisters, was a well-behaved child who was always very studious, said her stepfather, Jose Luis Dominguez.

“We were very proud of her,” said Dominguez, speaking from the family’s modest apartment on Penn Mar Avenue. “She was an excellent child, and was very good to everyone.”

He said the family tried to talk Heredia out of joining the Army after high school, but she was determined. The teen enlisted in July 2005, just six months after graduating.

“The last time I took her to the airport, I told her not to let her guard down, that there would be people out to get her,” said Dominguez, a textile worker whose family has lived in El Monte for 20 years and who only speaks Spanish. “But she told me, “Don't worry, Dad. I am well prepared.”

Even before his stepdaughter's death, Dominguez said he was against the war, and he disagreed with the assessment of military commanders in Washington this week that troop levels in Iraq must remain in place until at least next summer.

“I just don't think it is just,” he said. “It needs to end. (They troops) all need to come home.”

Hanna, who called the war “stupid,” said she was also dismayed when Heredia told her of her plans to enlist.

“She really looked up to her sister, and wanted to follow in (Claudia's) footsteps,” said Hanna, who taught both girls French at Mountain View. “Claudia tried to talk her out of the military, but she was very determined.”

Hanna said she believed that in addition to her dedication to her sister, Heredia chose an Army career because of the opportunities for travel it would afford her.

“She got to visit France with her sister, who was stationed in Germany at the time,” said Hanna, her eyes tearing up, voice trailing off. “She spent three weeks in Paris, saw the Louvre, everything.” Hanna plans to fly on Sunday to Baton Rouge, La., where Heredia will be buried on what would have been her 20th birthday.

“It is where her sister and her family live,” said Hanna. “They were very close. Claudia said she not only lost a sister, but a best friend.”

Heredia's death pushed the number of San Gabriel Valley residents killed in Iraq over 30, according to records compiled by the Tribune. About 3,762 American servicemen and women have died in the conflict so far, according to Department of Defense estimates.

Heredia is not the first local woman killed in overseas operations. Geraldine Marquez, a 31-year-old contractor and former resident of Azusa and Glendora, died during a suicide bombing at Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan last February.

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## **“It Was Hard For Him To Do Something He Didn't Want To Do” Queens Soldier Killed In Baghdad**

# “He Called Me And Said He Wasn’t Prepared”



September 20, 2007 BY TONIA N. CIMINO, The Queens Courier

Martha Clark couldn't bring herself to open the door.

When the knock came at about 10:30 p.m. on Friday, September 14 - and when she heard the soldiers' voices - Clark knew then that her only son, Specialist Jonathan Rivadeneira, 22, was dead.

“My heart shook and my body shook,” she told The Queens Courier. “I couldn't open the door - I had my friend do it.”

Rivadeneira, of Jackson Heights, was killed in Baghdad along with three others - Staff Sergeant Terry D. Wagoner, 28, of Piedmont, SC.; Specialist Todd A. Motley, 23, of Clare, MI; and Private Christopher M. McCloud, 24, of Malakoff, TX - when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near their vehicle during combat operations. They were assigned to the 6th Squadron, 9th U.S. Cavalry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Fort Hood, TX.

“It seems that the war has taken the lives of an inordinate number of soldiers from Queens with Jonathan now joining the ranks of our honored veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice,” said Borough President Helen Marshall. “On behalf of the people of Queens, I extend our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to Jonathan's mother, Martha, his wife, Heather and all his family, friends and colleagues.”

It was Rivadeneira's first deployment to Iraq in his four years of service - and only two months before the end of his tour.

“He was supposed to come home in November,” said his somber mother. “We had a lot of plans for Christmas.” Clark goes to the Corona home of Maria del Rosario Duran nightly to pray. Duran's son, Specialist Alex Jimenez, is still missing in action.

Clark recounted to The Queens Courier how Rivadeneira had enlisted in the Army as a medic at age 18 in order to defray the costs of college, and how she pleaded with him and admonished him to be careful.

"I was against it. I told him to think about it because there's a war going on in Iraq," said Clark.

After being sent overseas, she said, Rivadeneira became very depressed.

"He called me and said he wasn't prepared," she told The Queens Courier. "When he got his weapons, he said, 'This is terrible.' It was hard for him to do something he didn't want to do."

Clark also said that her son had a premonition that he would not make it home for good. "He told my sister, 'Every day here a lot of people die. Every day I wake up I wonder if it's my last day.' "

Rivadeneira's wife of two years, Heather, will fly to New York from Chicago next week for the funeral.

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## **Yonkers Native, 26, Killed In Baghdad**

**"No, I Don't Support The War, But I Definitely Support The Soldiers"**

**"So Many Lives Have Been Lost - Not Just U.S. Lives But The Lives Of Children Over There"**



Antonio Coaxum, left, and his wife, Hope Hollinsworth Coaxum, hold a photo of their son, Sgt. Courtney Hollinsworth, at their home in Yonkers. Sgt. Hollinsworth died in a roadside bombing in Baghdad, Iraq. Carucha L. Meuse/The Journal News

September 11, 2007 By LEN MANIACE, THE JOURNAL NEWS

YONKERS - When the doorbell rang Sunday evening, Hope Hollinsworth Coaxum figured it was her husband returning home for dinner.

Standing on the other side of the door, however, were two soldiers. Hollinsworth's thoughts turned immediately to her son, Army Sgt. Courtney Hollinsworth, who was stationed in Iraq.

"In my head, I was thinking, 'Maybe they are going to tell me he was hurt, or in the hospital.' But I never, ever thought they were going to tell me he was dead," Hollinsworth Coaxum said yesterday in the living room of the family's home on Onondago Street in Yonkers.

The soldiers who sat in the same room Sunday night had few details: Hollinsworth was killed by a roadside bomb while riding in a truck on patrol in Baghdad early Sunday. No further information was available yesterday.

Hollinsworth served in Afghanistan in 2002, then participated in the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 before returning for a second tour in February.

He loved life in the Army, his family said.

"This is what he always wanted to do," Antonio Coaxum said. "He loved to travel. And the people he met there in the Army - his buddies - they were a family."

Hollinsworth loved Army life so much that when he married this year, it was to a former soldier who understood the life. His wife, Stephanie Errebo-Hollinsworth, who has a child by a previous marriage, lives in Kansas City.

The war in Iraq was clearly on Hollinsworth's mind when the family heard from him three weeks ago.

"He was down. He said a couple of guys in his unit were killed," his mother said.

"And he said that the insurgents had gotten stronger - that they had gotten a lot stronger than before - and there was more violence than the first time around."

Growing up in Yonkers - where he attended St. Mary's School, School 22 and then graduated from Saunders Trades and Technical High School - Hollinsworth's earliest ambitions were to be a soldier, a police officer or a firefighter, his parents recalled.

He fashioned a play rifle from a stick and a belt and built forts in his bedroom, his mother said.

But in other ways Hollinsworth seemed an unlikely warrior, the family members said. They described him as gentle and a curious soul who, when his mother got a cold, brewed up a concoction of lemon and orange juices and tea.

“He would say: 'Mom, this will make you feel so much better,’” she said, “and as a mother I drank it, even though it wasn't the best-tasting thing.”

He was a protective big brother to his younger sister Nicole, now 18, who recently went away to college in Delaware, the family said, and also had a passion for cooking.

“When he got older, he would go to the supermarket and get vegetables, fry them up and add his own little things to it,” Hollinsworth said. “It was the most disgusting-looking thing, but it tasted so good.”

Upon graduating from high school in 1997, the teen tried to enlist in the Army, but needed his parents' approval because he was not yet 18.

His parents attempted to discourage him, but he was persistent and they relented. Hollinsworth eventually re-enlisted. The Army transformed Hollinsworth, his parents recalled, from a teen whose love of food was quite evident to a fit and athletic young man.

Coaxum recalled taking his stepson for a one-mile jog to help get him in shape for basic training. “We went running and he couldn't keep up. He kept ducking into stores along the way,” Coaxum said. “But when he came home after the Army, I was running from him.”

As the couple spoke about their son yesterday, they were visited by Hollinsworth Coaxum's sister, Joyce Corpas; her husband, Mark Corpas; and the soldier's grandmother, Audrey Hollinsworth, who all live in Yonkers. The Corpases were particularly close to Hollinsworth, often taking him on vacation trips to Florida and Puerto Rico.

The family members struggled with their feelings about the war in Iraq. To varying degrees, they questioned the purpose of the war. Audrey Hollinsworth was most adamantly opposed to the war.

“I'm always on the computer e-mailing senators about it - Hillary Clinton, Chuck Schumer and Harry Reid,” she said.

Hollinsworth Coaxum said she could not understand how the nation's focus changed from Afghanistan, as a response to the attacks of Sept. 11, to Iraq, where a threat posed by weapons of mass destruction never materialized.

“So many lives have been lost - not just U.S. lives but the lives of children over there. You get to the point where you don't want these guys to have died in vain,” Hollinsworth Coaxum said. “No, I don't support the war, but I definitely support the soldiers. My prayers are with them.”

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **U.S. Soldier Killed By Baghdad IED, Another Wounded**

September 23, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070923-04

BAGHDAD - One Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldier was killed and another wounded when an explosive-formed penetrator detonated on their patrol during combat operations in an eastern section of the Iraqi capital Sept. 22.

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### **U.S. Soldier Killed In Salah Ad Din**

September 23, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070924-13

TIKRIT, Iraq – A Task Force Lightning Soldier died of wounds sustained from enemy gunfire in Salah ad Din Province, Monday.

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### **Area Soldier Dead After Explosive Device Detonated In Iraq**



9/18 WPSD-TV

Another area soldier killed in Iraq leaving another family trying to cope with the loss. The soldier John Mele from Union City, Tennessee died late last week when an explosive device went off during combat operations in Iraq.

Mele was 25 years old. Mele grew up in Union City attended South Fulton Elementary and graduated from Obion County Central in 2001.



Mele's death adds to the growing number of US casualties in the Iraq war. More than 3,000 soldiers have died since the war started, 45 have died this month.

NewsChannel Six's Todd Faulkner spent time with the family of John Mele.

"He always wanted to be in the army," said Nicholas Mele.

Down a gravel road and beyond the trees, sits a house thousands of miles away from Iraq. Inside the home, the Mele family is grieving. Sergeant John Mele died last week while fighting in Arab Jarbour, a small town south of Baghdad.

"He was a good man," said Nicholas Mele.

It's here where people feel the impact of his death. Nicholas is John's youngest brother. He says John knew about the ultimate sacrifice.

"He always, you know, wanted to be in the army. He always figured, you know, he'd die that way," Nicholas said. John and his two younger brothers grew up here. John later joined the army and left west Tennessee. He and his wife Jennie along with their daughter Clarissa called Georgia and later Florida home.

Family members say even at an early age John took interest in the outdoors and the military. It started in his back yard digging ditches and building forts.

Now those memories are how this family is remembering their son.

There are plenty of photos and some unique gifts John brought back from the battlefield. One is an Iraqi flag, taken down and replaced with an American flag. "Well, one thing I'll always remember about Johnny is really, you know, he always stood up for what he believed for," said Nicholas. A family now in mourning, but eager to tell his story.

"I'll always remember him as a war hero," said Nicholas.

Family members will bury Mele at Arlington National Cemetery near his grandfather... who was a World War II and Korean War veteran.

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## Clare Soldier Killed In Iraq

09/18/07 By Terry Camp, (WJRT)

A soldier from Clare has become the latest Mid-Michigan casualty in the Iraq war.

Todd Motley, 23, was killed with three other soldiers when their vehicle was hit by an explosive device in Baghdad on Friday.

Motley was a 2003 graduate of Pioneer High School in Clare, where staff and students remembered an artistic student who made up his mind there that he would go into the military.

"It's a loss. We are a very small community inside a community," said Pioneer Principal Lori Enos.

Pioneer High School is an alternative school for those having trouble in a traditional classroom setting. And it was at the school that Motley established certain goals.

"He wanted to finish high school -- period -- and he wanted to go into the military," Enos said.

He was an artistic student, and he overcame personal obstacles to graduate.

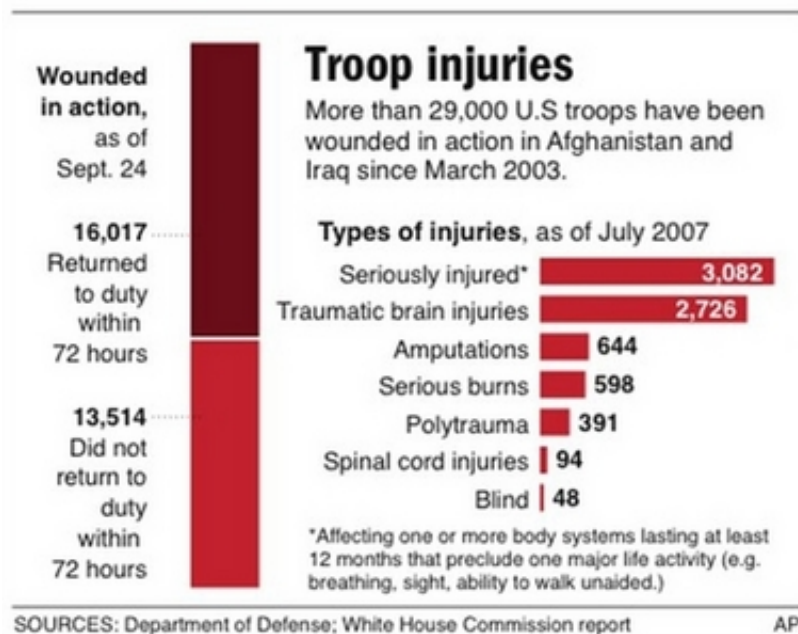
"Todd was very unique," Enos said. "He was one of those students that stuck out in your mind because Todd showed resilience that I haven't seen in a long time."

While he was at Pioneer, he met another student, Karen. They married and have two daughters, 9 months and 2 years old.

Kendall Gerow is a senior at Pioneer High School and interviewed Motley for a school project when he returned to talk to students last spring about his experience at Pioneer and in Iraq.

And while she is not happy with the war, she handles her discontent in a way that might surprise you. She has enlisted in the Army.

"I believe the war is unnecessary but I believe our country is worth fighting for," she said.



# **U.S. Sponsored Collaborators Meeting Blown Up In Baquba; Two U.S. Soldiers Wounded**

Sep 24 AP & Reuters & VOI

BAQOUBA, Iraq: A bomber struck a U.S.-promoted meeting of Shiite and Sunni tribal sheiks, killing at least 20 people, including the city's police chief, and wounding about 30 others.

Two U.S. soldiers were also wounded in the 8:30 p.m. blast at a Shiite mosque in Baqouba, a former militant stronghold about 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, according to U.S. and Iraqi officials, who gave the overall casualty toll.

The attack represented a major challenge to U.S. efforts.

Witnesses and officials said the bomber struck when most of the victims were in the mosque courtyard cleaning their hands or drinking tea during Iftar, the daily meal in which Muslims break their sunrise-to-sunset fast during the holy month of Ramadan.

Security guards approached a man after noticing him walking rapidly through the courtyard. As the guards challenged him, the man detonated an explosive belt, setting off the devastating blast, said police Maj. Salah al-Jurani.

Al-Jurani said he believed provincial Gov. Raad Rashid al-Tamimi was the intended target. The governor was wounded and his driver was killed, al-Jurani said.

**The dead also included Baqouba's police chief, Brig. Gen. Ali Dalyan, and the Diyala provincial operations chief, Brig. Gen. Najib al-Taie, according to security officials. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not supposed to release the information.**

**Two other police brigadier-generals were killed.**

Also wounded was the governor's brother, Sheik Mazin Rashid al-Tamimi, who has spearheaded Sunni-Shiite reconciliation efforts in the province.

The U.S. announced this month that top leaders of 19 of the 25 major tribes in Diyala - 13 Sunni and six Shiite - had agreed to support the government, although the province remains one of the most dangerous in the country with frequent and armed clashes.

The effort is loosely modeled on an U.S. sponsored alliance of Sunni tribes which banded together last year in Anbar province. The leader of that effort, Sheik Abdul-Sattar Abu Risha, was killed in a bombing Sept. 13.

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**UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH;**

## **BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



[Thanks to Kevin Ramirez, CCCO. He writes: Here's a Buffalo Minesweeper, that I suppose was either defective or met its match.]

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed Someplace Or Other In Afghanistan; Nationality Not Announced Either**

24 September 2007 (AP)

A NATO service member was shot Sunday in eastern Afghanistan, the alliance said in a statement. It gave no other details. Most foreign soldiers in the east are American.

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### **Spanish & Ecuadorean Soldiers Killed, Two Wounded In Shewan**

24 September 2007 (AFP) & (AP)

Two Spanish soldiers were killed and another three were seriously wounded on Monday when their convoy was hit by an explosion in Farah province's Shewan district, the Spanish defence ministry said.

An Iranian interpreter working with them may have also been killed, the ministry added.

The explosion that killed the soldiers with the Spanish contingent occurred as they were returning from a patrol at the head of a column of five vehicles near the town of Shewan, said Defense Minister Jose Antonio Alonso in Madrid.

One of the soldiers was Spanish and the other was Ecuadorean. Spain allows people from some Latin American countries to serve in its military forces while retaining their nationality.

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## **Three Australian Soldiers Wounded In Oruzgan**

September 25, 2007 Queensland Newspapers

THREE Australian soldiers have been injured and an explosive detection dog killed in two separate roadside bomb attacks by Taliban extremists in southern Afghanistan.

The Australian Defence Force yesterday revealed a Special Operations Task Group vehicle was hit by an explosive during a patrol in Oruzgan Province last week, slightly wounding two soldiers.

ADF spokesman Brigadier Andrew Nikolic said the wounded soldiers were given first-aid by their fellow soldiers and evacuated to a nearby hospital for more treatment.

One of the soldiers received specialist medical care but because of the nature of his injuries is to return to Australia for treatment, he said.

In a later routine clearance task, explosive detection dog Razz and his handler encountered a second roadside bomb, which exploded on discovery.

Razz was killed and his handler slightly wounded.

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## **Two Italian Soldier Wounded During Rescue**

24 September 2007 (AFP) & AP & (Xinhua)

NATO freed two kidnapped Italian soldiers in western Afghanistan Monday in an operation which left both troops wounded and up to nine of their captors dead, officials said. It wasn't clear if they were hit by bullets from the rescuers or the militants.

The Italian troopers, with one in serious condition, were rescued in Farah province two days after going missing in the neighbouring province of Herat, bordering Iran, with their Afghan interpreter and driver.

An Italian-led contingent of troops from the International Security Assistance Force intercepted the hostages and their kidnapers early on Monday, an ISAF statement said.

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## **U.S. Mercenaries Ambushed In Farah, 13 Afghan Guards Dead**

Sep 24, 2007 (Reuters)

HERAT, Afghanistan

Afghan guards of a U.S. private security firm were killed in an ambush by Taliban insurgents in western Afghanistan, officials said on Monday.

The attack on the convoy in Farah province on Sunday night was followed by a clash between the militants and the guards, officials said.

A provincial official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters that 13 guards had died in the attack.

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## **Resistance Action**

9.24.07 Reuters

**On Sunday, unknown armed men fired at a car carrying police and government officials in the northeastern province of Badakhshan, a provincial police official said on Monday.**

**Seven police men and five other, including three civil employees, were killed in the attack.**

A Taliban spokesman said members of the group was behind the attack in the province which has been relatively secure compared to southern and eastern areas where the militants are mostly active.

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**TROOP NEWS**

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



U.S. soldiers stand by the bed of their wounded comrade after he was brought to the emergency room of 28th Combat Support hospital in Baghdad August 21, 2007. REUTERS/Damir Sagolj

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## Weapons Of US Soldiers In Iraq “Plagued With Problems”

September 24, 2007 David Edwards and Greg Wasserstrom, Rawstory.com

The M-16, the choice rifle of the United States Armed Forces, turns 50 years old this month and is still plagued by many of the same problems it had half a century ago, putting American troops in Iraq at a severe disadvantage when it comes to small arms combat, the PBS program Newshour reported tonight.

“That AK-74 outthits the M-16 by two to one on full automatic,” said Jim Sullivan, referring to the Russian-made assault rifle, now in its third generation. “And the reason there were 100 million AK’s made wasn’t to equip the Russian army - it was to give [to] our Third World opponents. The United States can’t win ground wars anymore.”

**The M-16 and its successor, the shorter M4, are known for their finickiness, jamming in even the most innocuous conditions. In combat, the unreliability of the rifle can be deadly.**

Regarding his son currently serving in Iraq, Sullivan said, “He should have an AK.”

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**Thieving Major Who Stole \$10  
Million In Kuwait With Other  
Crooked Officers Told Church He  
Wanted His Kids To Have His  
Values;  
“The Largest Single Bribery Scheme  
Against The Military Since The Start  
Of The Iraq War”  
“‘We Are At Such Peace, With Such Zeal  
For The Lord,’ Major Cockerham Wrote”**

**At least two officers who worked at Camp Arifjan when Major Cockerham was there committed suicide after learning they would face bribery charges.**

September 24, 2007 By GINGER THOMPSON and ERIC SCHMITT, New York Times  
[Excerpts]

CASTOR, La. — On the fourth Sunday in July, John Lee Cockerham was here in his hometown for the baptism of his twin sons.

People in this northwest corner of Louisiana think of him as an unlikely success story, a man who started with nothing to become a major in the Army. He and his 17 siblings grew up without electricity and running water. His parents earned barely enough to keep everyone fed.

Yet even after he made it out of Castor, his ties to these backwoods remained strong. The congregation at New Friendship Baptist Church celebrated his last promotion with a parade.

**At his sons' baptism, he told fellow worshipers that he hoped to instill in his children the values he had wrested from hardship.**

**Less than 24 hours later Major Cockerham was behind bars, accused of orchestrating the largest single bribery scheme against the military since the start of the Iraq war.**



According to the authorities, the 41-year-old officer, with his wife and a sister, used an elaborate network of offshore bank accounts and safe deposit boxes to hide nearly \$10 million in bribes from companies seeking military contracts.

The accusations against Major Cockerham are tied to a crisis of corruption inside the behemoth bureaucracy that sustains America's troops. Pentagon officials are investigating some \$6 billion in military contracts, most covering supplies as varied as bottled water, tents and latrines for troops in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The inquiries have resulted in charges against at least 29 civilians and soldiers, more than 75 other criminal investigations and the suicides of at least two officers.

Much of the scrutiny has focused on the contracting office where Major Cockerham worked at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait, a world away from Castor in more than miles. Until the buildup to the war in Iraq, it was a tiny outpost with a staff of 7 to 12 people who awarded about \$150 million a year in contracts, according to Bryon J. Young, a retired Army colonel and the current director of the Army Contracting Agency.

But when tens of thousands of soldiers began pouring through Kuwait, Mr. Young said in an interview, his agency was forced to entrust nearly \$4 billion over the next four years to what he described as a B team of civilians and military officers with limited contracting experience. It was a setting flush with money, he said, but lacking the safeguards to prevent contracting officials from taking it.

**Pages of the affidavits in United States District Court in San Antonio involving Major Cockerham read like scenes from a spy novel.**

**They allege that unidentified businesspeople carried hundreds of thousands of dollars in shopping bags, delivering the money to Mrs. Cockerham as she played courier in the Middle East with her three small children, while her husband kept coded records of a mounting fortune.**

A criminal complaint filed with the court says that during a December 2006 search of their home at Fort Sam Houston, Tex., Major Cockerham and his wife admitted taking \$1 million in bribes. The investigation continued, and when the couple were arrested some seven months later on charges of accepting \$9.6 million in bribes, they pleaded not guilty.

Although a Justice Department official said it was too early to know if the suspects in the corruption investigation operated independently or in a network, public records indicate that several served overlapping tours.

At least two officers who worked at Camp Arifjan when Major Cockerham was there committed suicide after learning they would face bribery charges.

One, Maj. Gloria D. Davis of Missouri, shot herself in December 2006, a day after admitting she took at least \$225,000 in bribes, government officials said.

Like many poor young people from rural towns across America, John Cockerham saw the Army as the best way to advancement.

Over the next decade, according to family and military records, he served in Haiti and Germany, and earned a master's in business from Webster University in 2004. In June of that year, he was assigned to Camp Arifjan, one of the Pentagon's busiest supply centers.

The camp, a \$200 million logistics hub, stands like an island in the middle of the desert south of Kuwait City. Major Cockerham worked in a prefabricated two-story building with about 20 other military people and civilians, committing millions of dollars on the phone or with a few strokes on his computer in his cubicle.

Oversight was virtually nonexistent by design. There were no auditors at Camp Arifjan, and contracts worth more than \$500,000 were the only ones requiring review in Washington. Most contracts were written for about \$100,000.

It was also common for contracting officers to use "blanket purchase agreements," allowing them to open a line of credit with a company with little more than a promissory note, much like a customer at a small-town grocery store.

**At Camp Arifjan, a single contracting officer handled all three parts of the process, giving the officers broad discretion and creating opportunities for unit commanders to join conspiracies by inflating their troops' needs.**

**What resulted, said Mr. Young, the Army Contracting Agency director, was "a web of deceit."**

The Gulf Group, a Kuwait-based business, has sued the Army, claiming that its contracts were canceled for no reason. Major Cockerham and Major Davis were listed on the contract and cancellation documents. "My hunch is that my clients' contracts were canceled because we would not play ball," said Iliaura Hands, a lawyer for the Gulf Groups, "and another company, with a lot more money, did."

The accusations against Major Cockerham depict a corrupt family enterprise. The criminal complaint filed in Texas says he arranged for representatives of companies awarded contracts to deliver payments to his wife or his sister Carolyn Blake.

Ms. Blake moved to Kuwait because Major Cockerham told her she could make more money there than she was making as a teacher in Dallas, according to the court papers. Mrs. Cockerham, who lived at the couple's home at Fort Sam Houston, made at least two trips to Kuwait and Dubai, once taking her 7-year-old sons and 3-year-old daughter.

The company representatives would show up at her hotel room with bags of cash, then accompany her to put the money in safe deposit boxes, the records assert.

There is little evidence the couple went on buying binges. Investigators have seized \$175,000 from an account believed linked to them. During the December 2006 search of their home, court documents said, the couple confessed to accepting \$1 million in bribes.

However, investigators reported finding handwritten ledgers with coded entries for amounts from \$13,600 to \$2 million stashed in offshore bank accounts. The court

records allege that the major accepted bribes from eight companies, which are not named in the documents.

At church services in Castor on Sept. 9, Mrs. Egans told congregants of New Friendship Baptist Church that she had gotten a letter from Major Cockerham, who is in custody in a federal prison in San Antonio, Tex., with his wife. (Their children are staying with Melissa Cockerham's relatives in Kentucky.)

He wrote that his wife was busy with a new singing ministry for the other women in the prison and that he had preached two sermons to the men.

He thanked Mrs. Egans for reading the names of his sons when they were baptized, just as she had done at his own baptism more than 30 years earlier.

**He offered no explanation of the charges against him, nor did he express any sadness.**

**"We are at such peace, with such zeal for the Lord," Major Cockerham wrote, "that we know this is exactly where we are supposed to be for this short time."**

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **GET THE MESSAGE?**



**9.16.07: Anti-Occupation Iraqi nationalists hold the Iraqi flag as they step on an anti-US slogan during a protest in Baghdad. (AFP/Wissam Al-Okaili)**

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## **Baiji Oil Pipeline Blown Up Again**

9.23.07 Reuters

BAIJI - A pipeline carrying crude oil from Baiji, 180 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, to the Doura refinery in the capital was ruptured in a bomb attack, police said.

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## Resistance Action

21 Sep 2007 Reuters & 22 Sep 2007 Reuters & AP & Sept. 23 (Xinhua) & Reuters & 24 Sep 2007 Reuters & By Sahar Issa, McClatchy Newspapers

Two mortar rounds fell in the Green Zone at 08:00 this morning, said Iraqi Police. No casualties were reported.

A number of fuel tankers that provide the local fuel stations with various oil products were set afire by guerrillas near al-Gurma area to the north of Fallujah resulting in the death of a driver.

The police Station in Ameriyat al-Fallujah was targeted by mortar rounds. There were some casualties amongst the policemen, said eye witnesses. No official statement was made as to casualties.

Higher Education Minister Abd Dhiab Ajaili survived an assassination attempt as he returned to Baghdad from Tikrit, police said. Ajaili was unhurt but two of his bodyguards were killed when a roadside bomb exploded near his convoy and insurgents then opened fire.

A roadside bomb killed a soldier and a policeman and wounded a civilian in central Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

BASRA - An Iraqi police brigadier-general was wounded by a sniper in Basra, 550 km (340 miles) southeast of Baghdad, on Friday, police said.

Nationalist forces ambushed an Iraqi police checkpoint in Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, killing one officer and wounding five others, according to authorities.

A car bomber struck an Iraqi Army checkpoint outside a town in the province of Diyala northeast of Baghdad on Sunday, wounding two soldiers, a provincial police source said.

The bomber blew up his explosive-laden car into the checkpoint near the town of Hibhib at about 10:30 a.m. (0630 GMT),

A policeman was found shot in the town of Jbela, 65 km (40 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas killed an off-duty policeman in Mosul on Saturday, police said.

A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol killed a policeman and wounded another on Saturday in the city of Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Militants killed an off-duty police lieutenant and three of his relatives on Saturday when they attacked him in his farm in the town of Yathrib, near Balad, 80 km (50 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas wounded two policemen when they attacked their checkpoint in Kirkuk, police said.

Police found the body of a policeman in Hawija, 70 km (40 miles) southwest of Kirkuk, police said. The body had bullet wounds.

A bomb exploded near a police patrol and wounded two people, including a policeman, in the northern city of Kirkuk, police said.

Wasit province police chief Abdul-Hanin al-Imara escaped an assassination attempt when guerrillas opened fire on his convoy on Sunday in the city of Kut, police said. Imara was unhurt but two of his guards were wounded.

A car bomb targeting a local mayor's convoy killed one of his bodyguards and wounded seven, including three civilians in Kirkuk, police said.

Kirkuk province police chief Jamal Tahir escaped unhurt from a roadside bomb attack on his convoy in the city of Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. One of his guards was wounded.

A roadside bomb killed one soldier and wounded three others in Latifiya, 40 km (25 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

A truck bomb struck a joint Iraqi army and police checkpoint on Monday killing two policemen and a soldier, and wounded 17 in an attack on a checkpoint in the village of Abi Maria, 80 km west of Mosul, and blew it up in the afternoon," the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity. The blast also damaged several nearby buildings and civilian cars, the source said, adding that the toll could rise as ambulances and civilian vehicles continue evacuating the casualties, he said.

Kirkuk Police found the body of policeman Shihab Ahmed Khalaf, 36, with several bullet wounds to his head, yesterday evening.

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

**OCCUPATION REPORT**

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



An Iraqi woman holds her daughter after foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. force them out of their home at gunpoint while other soldiers search her house in southern Baghdad, 11 September 2007. (AFP/David Furst)



A U.S soldier from Bravo 6-9 Cav. inside an Iraqi citizens home wrecked during a search of the house on the outskirts of Muqadiyah, Iraq, Sept. 18, 2007. (AP Photo/Karel Prinsloo)

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

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

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

## **U.S. Army Assassination Teams Told To Execute Iraqi's Picking Up "Bait"**

**[Men? Women? Kids?  
Who Gives A Shit?]**

**Capt. Matthew Didier Ordered  
Soldiers To Kill All Civilians Taking  
"Bait"**

**"You Might As Well Ask Every Iraqi To  
Walk Around With A Target On His Back"**

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

09/24/2007 By Josh White and Joshua Partlow, Washington Post

**WASHINGTON - A Pentagon group has encouraged some U.S. military snipers in Iraq to target suspected insurgents by scattering pieces of "bait," such as detonation cords, plastic explosives and ammunition, and then killing Iraqis who pick up the items, according to military court documents.**

The classified program was described in investigative documents related to recently filed murder charges against three snipers who are accused of planting evidence on Iraqis they killed.

**“Baiting is putting an object out there that we know they will use, with the intention of destroying the enemy,” Capt. Matthew Didier, the leader of an elite sniper scout platoon attached to the 1st Battalion of the 501st Infantry Regiment, said in a sworn statement.**

**“Basically, we would put an item out there and watch it. If someone found the item, picked it up and attempted to leave with the item, we would engage the individual as I saw this as a sign they would use the item against U.S. Forces.”**

In documents obtained by the Washington Post from family members of the accused soldiers, Didier said members of the U.S. military's Asymmetric Warfare Group visited his unit in January and later passed along ammunition boxes filled with the “drop items” to be used “to disrupt the AIF (Anti-Iraq Forces) attempts at harming Coalition Forces.”

**Eugene Fidell, president of the National Institute of Military Justice, said such a baiting program should be examined “quite meticulously” because it raises troubling possibilities, such as what happens when civilians pick up the items.**

**“In a country that is awash in armaments and magazines and implements of war, if every time somebody picked up something that was potentially useful as a weapon, you might as well ask every Iraqi to walk around with a target on his back,” Fidell said.**

Details of the classified program appear in unclassified documents and in transcripts of court testimony. Investigators wrote that they found materials related to the program at the sniper unit's base.

**Members of the sniper platoon have said they felt pressure from commanders to kill more insurgents because U.S. units in the area had taken heavy losses.**

#### **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.**

## **Civilian NGOs Spying For Occupation Forced Out Of Mosul:**

**“They Use Us To Get Information About  
Insurgents” Staff Members Admits**



24 September 2007 (IRIN)

**At least five local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have recently closed their offices in Mosul, 390km north of Baghdad, as a result of increased violence against aid workers and volunteers, according to sources within the NGO community.**

“We had to stop our work in Mosul after three aid workers from local NGOs were killed by extremists in displacement camps,” said Saluwa Abdel-Aziz, a member of a Mosul-based NGO, Iraqi Voices of Freedom.

The five local NGOs - Mosul Human Rights Association, Supporting Children With Cancer, Ruweida Aid Agency and two others which preferred not to be mentioned for security reasons - all received threatening letters telling them to stop their activities in Mosul, Abdel-Aziz said.

Aid workers said local police had been arresting their volunteers when they delivered supplies to areas where insurgents might be hiding.

“As soon as we arrive from a displacement area, we are invited to go with a police officer to a nearby (police) station and give a full account of what we have seen and done in the area.

**“They use us to get information about insurgents, increasing fighters' animosity towards us,” said Omar Abdul-Karim, a volunteer for Iraqi Voices of Freedom which has received four threats since March 2007.**

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## **Cholera Epidemic Spreads To Basra And Baquba**

23 Sep 2007 Deutsche Presse Agentur

A death from cholera was disclosed Sunday by local health sources in the Iraqi city of Baquba.

Ahmed al-Biaty, head of the Adly hospital in Baquba, 60 kilometres north of Baghdad, said that this is the first death resulting from the epidemic in the city.

Two of the dead person's family have caught the disease and are currently under supervision.

A day earlier a cholera case was reported in Basra, the first to be officially recorded by the health department in the southern city.

The patient, currently under the supervision of the Basra health department, is a 7-month-old baby girl, according to a report by Voices of Iraq news agency.

Unconfirmed reports have meanwhile said that the illness has mildly spread to central Iraq, including the Baghdad area. [“Mildly”! This reporter should be doing Central Command press releases.]

But Saturday's case was the first to be reported in the south.

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

## OCCUPATION PALESTINE



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

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: [www.rafahtoday.org](http://www.rafahtoday.org) The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves “Israeli.”]

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**RECEIVED**

# “Iran Has No Gays, Ahmadinejad Says”

From: Charlie Hinton  
Subject: If Iran has no gays  
Date: Sep 25, 2007

Iran has no gays, Ahmadinejad says.

But who are those queers protesting in Toronto and Why does Pegah Emambakhsh fear she will be killed if she returns home and Who are Hamid and Amir and Babak and Taraneh and thousands of others too afraid to use their last names lest they be found out?

Who were those men beaten and arrested in Isfahan?

Who were the ones in Shiraz?

Why did Shahin Portofeh sew up his eyes and lips to try to avoid deportation?

It didn't help.

“They didn't show me any mercy... kicking me, punching me and sometimes using their batons to beat me up. They just beat me up and made ready my case to the court. The judge sentenced me to 60 lashes and the same day they lashed me - that was really painful. I was begging them for some treatment, asking them for some medicine, some painkillers, but they didn't show any mercy. (A guard) just pulled up my T-shirt and stubbed his cigarette on me.”

But Shahin escaped.

Who were those teenagers hung in Mashad?

Why were Mokhtar N. and Ali A. hung in Gorgan?

Who are those 4000 people executed since 1979 for homosexual acts, if Iran has no gays?

Will you please answer me that, Mr. Ahmadinejad?

Charlie Hinton  
72 Germania Street  
SF, CA 94117

**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.**

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