

## GI SPECIAL 5J1:



**25,000 IED Attacks In  
Iraq So Far This Year:  
“Hell, We’re Getting Our Ass  
Kicked,’ Said A Senior Officer  
At U.S. Central Command”  
[A Thousand In The First Half Of This  
Year In Afghanistan]**

September 30, 2007 By Rick Atkinson, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

It began with a bang and “a huge white blast,” in the description of one witness who outlived that Saturday morning, March 29, 2003.

At a U.S. Army checkpoint straddling Highway 9, just north of Najaf, four soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division, part of the initial invasion of Iraq, had started to search an orange-and-white taxicab at 11:30 a.m. when more than 100 pounds of C-4 plastic explosive detonated in the trunk.

The explosion tossed the sedan 15 feet down the road, killing the soldiers, the cabdriver -- an apparent suicide bomber -- and a passerby on a bicycle. Lt. Col. Scott E. Rutter, a battalion commander who rushed to the scene from his command post half a mile away, saw in the smoking crater and broken bodies on Highway 9 “a recognition that now we were entering into an area of warfare that’s going to be completely different.”

**Since that first fatal detonation of what is now known as an improvised explosive device, more than 81,000 IED attacks have occurred in Iraq, including 25,000 so far this year, according to U.S. military sources.**

To the extent that the United States is not winning militarily in Iraq, the roadside bomb, which as of Sept. 22 had killed or wounded 21,200 Americans, is both a proximate cause and a metaphor for the miscalculation and improvisation that have characterized the war.

**The 100 or so daily IED “events” -- bombs that blow up, as well as those discovered before they detonate -- have doubled since the 50 per day typical in January 2006.**

**The 3,229 IEDs recorded in March of this year put the monthly total in Iraq above 3,000 for the first time, a threshold also exceeded in May and June.**

**“The numbers,” one Army colonel said, “are astonishing.”**

**In Afghanistan, although IED attacks remain a small fraction of those in Iraq, the figures also have soared: from 22 in 2002 and 83 in 2003, to 1,730 in 2006 and a thousand in the first half of this year.**

**“Insurgents have shown a cycle of adaptation that is short relative to the ability of U.S. forces to develop and field IED countermeasures,” a National Academy of Sciences paper concluded earlier this year. An American electrical engineer who has worked in Baghdad for more than two years was blunter: “I never really feel like I’m ahead of the game.”**

The IED struggle has become a test of national agility for a lumbering military-industrial complex fashioned during the Cold War to confront an even more lumbering Soviet system. “If we ever want to kneecap al-Qaeda, just get them to adopt our procurement system. It will bring them to their knees within a week,” a former Pentagon official said.

“We all drank the Kool-Aid,” said a retired Army officer who worked on counter-IED issues for three years. “We believed, and Congress was guilty as well, that because the United States was the technology powerhouse, the solution to this problem would come

from science. That attitude was 'All we have to do is throw technology at it and the problem will go away.' . . .

**“The day we lose a war it will be to guys with spears and loincloths, because they’re not tied to technology. And we’re kind of close to being there.”**

Or, as an officer writing in Marine Corps Gazette recently put it, “The Flintstones are adapting faster than the Jetsons.”

**Indeed, “the sheer growth of the thing,” as a senior Army general put it, is what most confounds Pentagon strategists.**

“The IED is the enemy’s artillery system.

“It’s simply a way of putting chemical and kinetic energy on top of our soldiers and Marines, or underneath them,” said Montgomery C. Meigs, a retired four-star Army general who since December 2005 has served as director of the Pentagon’s Joint IED Defeat Organization, the Pentagon’s multibillion-dollar effort to defeat the weapon.

“What’s different is the trajectory. Three 152mm rounds underneath a tank, which will blow a hole in it, are artillery rounds. But they didn’t come through three-dimensional space in a parabolic trajectory. They came through a social trajectory and a social network in the community.”

Unlike conventional artillery, IEDs have profound strategic consequences, because the bomber’s intent is to “bleed us in a way that attacks American political will directly and obviates the advantages we have in military forces,” Meigs added. Thousands of bombs have also made U.S. troops wary and distrustful, even as a new counterinsurgency strategy expands the American military presence among the Iraqi people.

Insurgents often post video clips of their attacks on the Internet.

They also exploit the Web -- either openly or in password-protected sites -- to share bomb-building tips, emplacement techniques, and observations about American vulnerabilities and countermeasures.

**For example, a 71-page manual titled “Military Use of Electronics Prepared by Your Brother in Allah” was posted on a jihadist Web site earlier this year.**

Comparable in sophistication to an introductory college electrical engineering class, the manual provided color photos and detailed diagrams on “remote wirelessly operating circuit using a mobile phone for moving targets” and “employing timers to explode detonators using transistors.”

The lack of success in combating IEDs has left some military officials deeply pessimistic about the future.

**“Hell, we’re getting our ass kicked,” said a senior officer at U.S. Central Command, which oversees the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.**

**“We’re watching warfare that’s centuries old being played out in a modern context and we’re all confused about it.**

**“The toys and trappings have changed, but asymmetric fighting, and ambush, and deceiving and outwitting your opponent, and using the strengths of your opponent against him, are ancient.”**

**Insurgents appear “able to put out more IEDs to maintain that constant level of death-by-a-thousand-cuts,” a senior Pentagon analyst said.**

**“We have not seemed able to put an upper bound on that number.”**

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Baghdad IED Kills One U.S. Soldier, One Wounded**

September 30, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070930-09

BAGHDAD — A Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldier was killed and one wounded when their unit was attacked by an improvised explosive device and small arms fire in an eastern section of the Iraqi capital Sept. 29.

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### **Soldier With Ties To LP County Dies In Iraq**

09/12/2007 Derek Smith, Herald Argus

FORT WAYNE -- On Saturday at 4 p.m., the Woodward family of Fort Wayne received news of the worst kind. They were informed that Cpl. Ryan Woodward, the second of the family’s four children, had died in combat in Iraq.

Ryan’s mother, Sue Woodward, said Tuesday that she was still shaken as she remembered her son.

“He was really loved,” Sue told The La Porte County Herald-Argus. “He loved everyone, and he loved life. He was very adventurous. He loved sports, he loved motorcycling, he loved to travel.”

Although Ryan, who was 22 when he died, grew up in Fort Wayne, his mother is originally from La Porte and has several aunts, uncles and cousins in the county, all of whom “knew him and loved him well,” she said.

One of these, Sue's aunt, Debbie Morrie of New Carlisle, will remember Ryan's kindness to others.

"He was so kind," Morrie said this morning. "He wasn't the kind of child who needed to be the center of attention. It's such a cliché to say he was all-American, but he was."

Ryan enlisted in the Army in February 2006 after attending Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne for a short time.

"It came as a surprise to me, but he's always been that kind of guy," Sue said of her son's decision to enlist. "He was always in sports in high school. I think he liked the camaraderie."

He was also very proud of his grandfather, who served in the Korean War, and his uncle, who served in Vietnam, Woodward said.

Deployed to Iraq in December 2006 with the 82nd Airborne out of Fort Bragg, N.C., Ryan was stationed north of Baghdad. He served as a cavalry scout for the nine months he was there.

Throughout, he was able to keep in touch with his family through weekly phone calls, his mother said. During these conversations, Sue said her son remained positive.

"I'm sure he had his moments," she said, "but he was a very confident, enthusiastic and strong person."

When Ryan was visiting her during his two-week leave in August, Morrie said she asked him if he was afraid to go back.

"He just said, 'It's my job,'" she said. "He wanted to be there to help the Iraqi people," Sue said. "He wanted to make a better life for them and for us."

In July, Sue said, Ryan helped save the lives of two fellow soldiers, one of whom was his roommate and friend, Cameron Stroeh of Nebraska. Although Stroeh was two years younger, he and Ryan shared the same birthday. "They were like brothers," his mother said.

Ryan helped administer first aid to the two soldiers and protected them from further harm, Sue said.

His dedication and commitment to his fellow soldiers was one of the reasons Ryan wanted to return to the Middle East when his leave was up.

"He knew he needed to get back and help the other soldiers," his mother said.

Ryan is survived by his parents, Sue and Michael Woodward; two sisters, Tasha, 24, and Brooke, 19; and one brother, Ben, 18.

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# Bryan Soldier Hurt In Iraq Recovering

September 30, 2007 The Toledo Blade

BRYAN - A 22-year-old soldier from Bryan who was shot in the left shoulder while on patrol in Baghdad this week is recovering and is expected to return to his duty unit, his father said last night.

Spec. Noel Gaulard, who graduated from Bryan High School in 2004, called his father from a hospital in Baghdad on Thursday to say that he had been shot, Dr. Andre Gaulard said.

He said his son told him it "just felt like someone punched him in the shoulder."

Specialist Gaulard, who joined the Army two years ago, arrived in Iraq in August. He is the first person in his unit to be injured, Dr. Gaulard said.

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## BEEN ON THE JOB TOO LONG: COME ON HOME, NOW



9.10.07: A US soldier on top of a Humvee after returning from a night patrol in Baghdad. (AFP/David Furst)

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## AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

# How Do You Say “Uncle Tom” In Afghan? Karzai! Canadian Military Wrote Afghan President’s Speech

**“I never thought that the Canadian military would go this far. “This raises serious concerns about the independence of the Afghan president and origin of his recent comments to Canadian media in Kabul.”**

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & The Military Project, who sent this in. He writes: ]

September 25, 2007 CBC News

The federal New Democratic Party’s defence critic says she has proof that the Canadian military effectively wrote the Afghanistan president’s speech to Parliament last year in what she calls an ‘elaborately staged political stunt.’

At a news conference, Black released documents that suggest a team of military advisers prepared the initial draft of Afghan President Hamid Karzai’s speech delivered on Sept. 22, 2006.

Black quoted a situation report from Task Force Afghanistan that was obtained through access to information as saying: “Team prepared initial draft of President (Karzai’s) address to Parliament 22 Sep.”

Black said Gen. David Fraser reports in the documents that “key statistics, messages, themes, as well as overall structure were adopted by the president in his remarks.”

**“What Canadians heard was not the voice of the Afghan people, but the talking points of the Department of National Defence,” Black said. “It was an elaborately staged political stunt.”**

In the speech, Karzai thanked the families of soldiers killed in combat and painted an optimistic, but not rosy picture of his country’s future.

He also took aim at NDP Leader Jack Layton’s opposition to the war, saying those who believe the mission was weighted too heavily toward combat and not enough toward reconstruction were wrong.

“There has been speculation about the resources that the Department of National Defence is pouring into trying to sell this mission to the Canadian people,” Black said.

“I never thought that the Canadian military would go this far.

“This raises serious concerns about the independence of the Afghan president and origin of his recent comments to Canadian media in Kabul.”

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## **Resistance Action:**

Sep 30, 2007 (Reuters) & (DPA)

Two policemen were killed and the same number wounded in a failed attempt to defuse a bomb in the centre of the southern city of Kandahar Sunday afternoon, Kandahar Security Chief Abdul Hakim Angaar said.

A journalist working with local state-run television was also slightly injured in the incident, Angaar added.

Also in Kandahar, four policemen were killed Saturday night in an attack by fighters from Afghanistan’s Muslim extremist Taleban in the city’s outskirts.

Police officials said a group of insurgents attacked a police checkpoint in the Loya Wyala area late Saturday night sparking a brief clash.

Wounded in a rocket attack on their vehicle in Ghazni province early Sunday morning, Khogyani district chief Qudratullah Ghawsi said.

The road is being built from Khogyani to Jaghato district of neighbouring Maidan Wardak province.

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## **SOMALIA WAR REPORTS**

**Bush Collaborators Facing Defeat  
In Somalia:  
“A Raging Insurgency Has Confined  
The Government To A Handful Of  
Heavily Fortified Buildings In  
Mogadishu”**



# “Ministries Are Not Functioning, The Transitional Government Is Running Out Of Money”

9.24.07 By Jeffrey gettleman, The New York Times [Excerpts]

The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, a United Nations creation [translation: a collaborator government set up by Bush after his buddies from Ethiopia occupied Somalia] that was always considered a shaky, short-term compromise, was finally installed in Mogadishu, the capital, in December, but it, like many Somalis, is now teetering on the edge of survival.

A raging insurgency has confined the government to a handful of heavily fortified buildings in Mogadishu....

Government officials in Jowhar admit there are serious challenges. Ministries are not functioning, the transitional government is running out of money, and all the recent turmoil has created overwhelming needs, said Hussein Hassan Mahamoud, the deputy governor in Jowhar.

The question is, How much time is there before the insurgency causes such serious divisions in the government that it falls apart?

On Sunday, more than a dozen government soldiers were killed in a single raid.

Hit-and-run attacks like this one started when Ethiopian troops invaded in December to oust an Islamist movement that had briefly ruled much of the country and to shore up the transitional government, which has never enjoyed a lot of support.

**Now the Islamists have regrouped in the thickly forested areas of southern Somalia, where they operate with virtual impunity.**

Mogadishu, meanwhile, has become a Baghdad-like mess of suicide bombs, roadside bombs and assassinations.

This month the insurgents, a mix of clan and Islamist militias, held their own reconciliation conference in Asmara, Eritrea. They formed the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia, a movement openly dedicated to overthrowing the transition government.

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## TROOP NEWS

**THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:**

## **BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



A casket containing the mingled remains of three soldiers who died in Iraq during a group burial at Arlington National Cemetery September 13, 2007. Staff Sgt. Harrison Brown, Pfc. David Neil Simmons, and Pfc. Todd Andrew Singleton were members of the 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division in Fort Benning, Georgia. They were killed on April 8 when they came in contact with enemy forces using a makeshift bomb and small arms fire in Baghdad. REUTERS/Jim Young

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### ***Burma:***

**“Cracks In The Military Command”**

**“There Are Differences In The Rank  
And File Of The Army For The First  
Time”**

**“Officers Questioning The ‘Morality’ Of  
Their Orders And The Self-Interest Of  
The Generals In Charge”**

[Thanks to JM who sent this in. She writes: “I think my feelings about the monk led protest succeeding were wrong but this isn’t completely certain. The monasteries have been wrecked, the monks imprisoned or sealed in the monasteries, the population is terrified, although some are still protesting despite the knowledge they face tortured.

["Can anything stop the junta? What can will be a boost for GI Special if it happens. There are stories of soldiers who refused the command to fire on protesters.

**["The soldiers who do most of the dirty work are a special force trained to instant obedience no matter what happens. The ordinary soldiers are different."]**

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**'The junta relies on its psychological grip on the population. It requires people to be afraid. But people kept coming out day after day. You can say that its grip is lessening.' This weekend the Burmese junta does not seem necessarily stronger, only more desperate.**

September 30, 2007 Special correspondents in Rangoon and Bangkok, Justin McCurry in Tokyo, Jonathan Watts in Beijing, Alex Duval Smith in Oslo; The Observer [Excerpts]

The maroon-clad Buddhist monks from the monasteries at Moe Gaung, Ngwe Kyar Yan and elsewhere, who marched in their thousands to give impetus to a new generation of Burmese protesters challenging decades of military rule, are locked up in prison or behind their monastery gates. Their monks' cells have been smashed, stained with their blood and looted. Those who escaped have taken off their robes and sought refuge disguised as laymen.

But, perhaps, it is not the whole picture. For in Burma in these past two weeks of protests, two stories have emerged.

The first has been sharply visible in the images of the vast demonstrations against the military junta that have coalesced around Rangoon's symbolic centres of the Sule and Shwedagon pagodas, and the violent response of the regime.

**But there has been a second, more discreet story that has emerged.**

And what it has described is a sclerotic military regime that, while still brutal and controlling, has been struggling to impose the power it has for so long enjoyed.

**It tells for the first time of cracks in the military command, of officers questioning the 'morality' of their orders and the self-interest of the generals in charge.**

**'There are differences in the rank and file of the army for the first time,' said one exiled trade union activist last week.**

They are focused, too, on tensions within an army and bureaucracy that has long shared the financial fruits of power with the junta's generals and who, after four decades, have begun to feel as excluded as the vast majority of Burma's people.

When Senior General Than Shwe began the relocation of Burma's administrative capital to Naypyidaw - the 'Abode of the Gods' - in November 2005 the move was put down by some to folly and superstition. The reality, however, of the relocation of Burma's ministries and military headquarters to this area of tropical scrub, 200 miles distant from Rangoon, was more prosaic.

**A military dictatorship once confident of its ability to frighten the population had, in fact, become something close to being afraid itself, of its own people.**

It was a time of transformation in Burma - of changes that in large measure would lead directly to the showdown between the military and the Burmese people that began in the middle of August.

For there were consequences to the move that the generals could have anticipated. Transferring the entire government machinery to Naypyidaw has been a huge drain on public finances already stretched to breaking point in one of the world's poorest countries. So, too, has been the cost of maintaining the 375,000-strong army, which has nearly doubled in size over the past decade.

The move had other critical consequences. For as well as seeing the centre of power being shifted away, the centre of gravity within the regime was also being shunted.

'The junta used to be a dictatorship by committee,' says Mark Farmaner of the Burma Campaign UK. 'But around the same time as the move it began to become more of a traditional dictatorship centred around General Than Shwe.'

The military intelligence chief, General Khin Nyunt, was put under house arrest, and the balance of power with Vice Senior General Maung Aye that existed between the three generals began evolving around 2004 into the accumulation by Than Shwe of more power for himself and a few cronies.'

The shift in power within Burma's junta was reflected in another important aspect, according to opposition figures in the Burmese government in exile.

**Where once the generals had been careful to command the loyalty of the military by distributing the benefits of dictatorship among them, Than Shwe began concentrating the benefits of power in the same tight circle.**

And if a symbol for the physical remoteness and greed of the evolving new regime under Than Shwe was required, it was supplied in a desperately miscalculated act: the wedding in Rangoon last year of his daughter, a 10-minute video of which was leaked to the outside world.

Viewers were offended not only by the extravagance of the event, in which Thandar Shwe and her bridegroom, Major Zaw Phyo Win, a deputy director at the Ministry of Commerce, were showered with expensive gifts, including luxury cars, houses and jewellery, but also by its utter lack of taste.

It was not simply the widely claimed \$50m in gifts lavished on the bride that was symbolic.

The diabetic Than Shwe, then 75, looked frail.

Less visible things were happening to the regime as it settled into its new headquarters.

**Reports of desertions from a military no longer an elite apart began to emerge; a report leaked to Jane's suggested that many of its battalions were suffering manpower problems.**

Persistent reports began to emerge of criticism of the leadership even among the officer classes.

**'There was a lieutenant-colonel out of the country who said the Americans should bomb Naypyidaw,' recalls Zaw Tung, an official with the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma, which was among the organisers of the recent protests and a victim of the crackdown.**

Signs of dissent within the military have also been reported by Zin Lin, an official with the Burmese government in exile.

**'We have heard reports from inside the country of places where soldiers are not following orders to fire on demonstrators, including in Mandalay where they refused an order to fire on monks.'**

But there are more intriguing claims emerging that appear to contradict the narrative of the democracy movement being snuffed out without any gain in the last few days.

**Among them is the claim in Irrawaddy news magazine that the bubbling dissent within the armed forces has led to a serious falling out between the head of the army, Vice Senior General Maung Aye, and Than Shwe over the response to the demonstrations.**

Farmaner's organisation has heard the same accounts.

And if he is certain of one thing, it is that Than Shwe, secluded in his new capital, made a series of potentially disastrous miscalculations, beginning with the decision to increase the price of fuel by 500 per cent, leading to the first demonstration on 19 August.

By the junta's own standards, it seemed slow and confused about how to respond to the fuel protests and then to the mass revulsion that followed the beating of two monks by the security forces.

When it did use violence last week, to close the huge monasteries in Rangoon that had become the focus of the protests, arresting and beating hundreds of monks and looting property, it was in a way certain to alienate many who had not marched but stood on the sidelines in this devoutly Buddhist country.

'There seems to have been a massive series of miscalculations,' says Farmaner. 'They did not anticipate how unpopular the increase in the fuel price would be.'

**He added: 'The junta relies on its psychological grip on the population. It requires people to be afraid. But people kept coming out day after day. You can say that its grip is lessening.'**

'A Burmese said to me once that his country was hard on the outside and soft in the middle,' says Farmaner. 'I always thought if the junta was going to go it would be like one of the Eastern European ones, imploding rather than reforming itself away.'

**This weekend the Burmese junta does not seem necessarily stronger, only more desperate.**

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## **500 From Ft. Campbell Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse**

10.1.07 Army Times

The 86th Combat Support Hospital at Fort Campbell cased its colors Sept. 14 on Division Parade Field in advance of its imminent deployment to Iraq.

About 500 soldiers will deploy to provide Level III health support to coalition forces, conducting split operations in the areas of Baghdad and Mosul.

The 86th CSH and its subordinate units have deployed several times to Iraq and Afghanistan. The unit was last deployed to Iraq for a year in 2005.

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## **Iraq Veteran Returning National Defense And War On Terrorism Medals To Rumsfeld: "I Did Not Defend My Nation And I Did Not Help With The Global War On Terrorism"**

25 September 2007 By Ryan J. Foley, The Associated Press [Excerpts]

Madison, Wisconsin - An Iraq War veteran said Tuesday he is returning his military medals in what anti-war groups are calling a rare and powerful protest.

Josh Gaines, 27, plans to mail the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and National Defense Service Medal to former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. He said he will do so during a protest scheduled for Wednesday in Madison.

**"I'm going to give those back because I truly feel that I did not defend my nation and I did not help with the Global War on Terrorism," said Gaines, who lives in Madison. "If anything, this conflict has bred more terrorism in the Middle East."**

Gaines served a yearlong tour in Iraq between 2004 and 2005 with the U.S. Army Reserve.

The experience convinced him the war was a mistake and that a steady withdrawal of troops was the right course of action, Gaines said.

“To be quite honest, I felt like we wasted taxpayers’ money,” he said. “The mission just didn’t seem correct and right for that time.”

President Bush created the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal in 2003 to honor those who served after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The Department of Defense reauthorized the National Defense Service Medal for the same purpose in 2002.

Gaines said he is returning the medals awarded when he left active duty in 2005 to Rumsfeld because he is “the man responsible for my tour.” He said he would likely send them to the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, where Rumsfeld was recently hired to be a visiting fellow.

Gaines said he was given an “other than honorable” discharge after failing a drug test. He said he started smoking marijuana after he returned from Iraq to help him eat and sleep after he had trouble doing either for months.

**Ryan Hill, 29, who served with Gaines in Iraq, said Gaines was always challenging Army superiors and “he kept us cracking up.”**

“He did his job and did his best and was a team player and all that but that’s the thing that makes him stand out,” he said.

As for Gaines’ decision to return his medals, Hill said: “I’m proud of him for doing that. I feel the same way about my medals.”

**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**

***Pentagon Traitors Still At It:***

# Thousands Of U.S. Soldiers Are Being Discharged By The Military For Mental Health Reasons: “By Classifying Them As Having A Condition Unrelated To The War, The Defense Department Is Able To Quickly Get Rid Of Troops While Also Saving The Expense Of Caring For Them”

“One soldier I know received a diagnosis for a personality disorder after a 45-minute talk,” said the staffer, who spoke on condition of anonymity. “He’d been in the military 10 years, had made it his career, and then he was told he was being shuffled out in a couple of weeks. We keep getting these stories.”

09/30/2007 By Philip Dine, POST-DISPATCH WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — Thousands of U.S. soldiers who have served in Iraq — as many as 10 a day — are being discharged by the military for mental health reasons.

But the Pentagon isn’t blaming the war. It says the soldiers had “pre-existing” conditions that disqualify them for treatment by the government.

Many soldiers and Marines being discharged on this basis actually suffer from combat-related problems, experts say.

But by classifying them as having a condition unrelated to the war, the Defense Department is able to quickly get rid of troops having trouble doing their work while also saving the expense of caring for them.

**The result appears to be that many actually suffering from combat-related problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injuries don’t get the help they need.**

Working behind the scenes, Sens. Christopher “Kit” Bond, R-Mo., and Barack Obama, D-Ill., have written and inserted into the defense authorization bill a provision that would make it harder for the Pentagon to discharge thousands of troops. The Post-Dispatch has learned that the measure has been accepted into the Senate defense bill and will probably become part of the Senate-House bill to be voted on this week.

Bond said it also would “force the Pentagon to stop using this discharge until we can fix the problem.”



**Bond said he learned of the practice from returning Iraq veterans. He called it an “abuse” of the system and “inexcusable.”**

**“They’ve kicked out about 22,000 troops who they say have pre-existing personality disorders. I don’t believe that,” Bond said in an interview Friday.**

**“And when you kick them out, they don’t get the assistance they need, they aren’t entitled to DOD or Veterans Administration care for those problems.”**

**One Republican congressional staff member who works on military issues said the rationale behind the Pentagon’s practice was: “We didn’t break you, you were already broken. You’re not our responsibility.”**

**“One soldier I know received a diagnosis for a personality disorder after a 45-minute talk,” said the staffer, who spoke on condition of anonymity. “He’d been in the military 10 years, had made it his career, and then he was told he was being shuffled out in a couple of weeks. We keep getting these stories.”**

**MORE:**

## **Wounded In Iraq Combat & Tormented By Bullshit Paperwork: “He Got A Letter Yesterday Saying His Benefits Have Been Cut Off” Then The VA Tries To Fry His Brain With An MRI**

October 01, 2007 By Kelly Kennedy, Military Times [Excerpts]

On March 19, 2004, Justin Bunce’s world changed from that of a bright young Marine Corps officer to that of an invalid when an explosion in Iraq destroyed his right eye and left shrapnel in his right frontal lobe.

His family, which expected the military to support its own, said his case shows what needs to change in the care of service members with traumatic brain injuries.

**“All this paperwork is addressed to my son, who doesn’t understand any of it,” Bunce said.**

**“He got a letter yesterday saying his benefits have been cut off because he can’t handle his finances.”**

Bunce said he had to find care for his son himself, take over the paperwork Justin was incapable of understanding, fight for benefits from the military and then from the Veterans Affairs Department, and then fight to keep Justin in care that would help him progress rather than stagnate in a program that Bunce called “essentially geriatric care.”

Doctors and advocates on the panel, sponsored by the Military Officers Association of America and the U.S. Naval Institute, seemed unsurprised and said such problems persist even now.

**Meredith Beck, national policy director for the Wounded Warrior Project, said family members often end up having to quit their jobs to care for wounded veterans just to keep up with paperwork, doctors’ appointments, physical therapy and medications.**

Brain-injured veterans also have hit another bump that other injured troops have encountered: The military and VA medical records systems are incompatible, so records can’t be transferred electronically — a problem that almost killed Justin Bunce.

**Because he has shrapnel in his head, he can’t have a CT scan — the heat on the metal in his brain could hurt him further.**

**About a month ago, Peter Bunce said, his son began feeling dizzy and went to VA, where the doctor wanted to do an MRI.**

**“He stood up and was adamant,” Bunce said of his son. “I can’t have an MRI!”**

**VA, he said, accused his son of refusing medical care.**

**“Well, he’s right,” Bunce said he told the VA officials. “We could have had a disaster on our hands. His medical paperwork never made it to the VA.”**

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Resistance Action:**

Sep 29 (KUNA) & By Alexandra Zavis, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer & 30 Sep Reuters

The death toll of the car bomb that targeted an Iraqi police patrol in Al-Hamdaniya, 30 km in northeast Mosul, north of Iraq on Saturday rose to 6. The blast took place at 3.30 in the afternoon (local time) killing five policemen

A car bomb targeted a police patrol near the northern city of Mosul, killing four of its members.

A member of the Nineveh provincial council and his three guards were killed when insurgents sprayed their car with bullets in southeast Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Police said they found the body of an Iraqi soldier shot in Diwaniya, 180 km (110 miles) south of Baghdad. The soldier was captured on Saturday.

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

## **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.**

**“The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!”  
--Camille Desmoulins**

# **Cobra Never Had A Mother**



[Thanks to Katherine Gorell, The Military Project]

By Hart Vigés

**Hart Vigés served in the Army's 82nd Airborne Division 1/325 AIR in the battalion mortars platoon. He deployed to Kuwait in February 2003, then was part of the illegal invasion of Iraq in March. Upon returning in January 2004 he filed for Conscientious Objector and was given his Honorable Discharge in December 2004**

as a CO. He joined IVAW in March of 2005 and resides in Austin, TX with his fiance Alejandra.

From:

Warrior Writers: Move, Shoot And Communicate; A Collection Of Creative Writing By Members Of Iraq Veterans Against The War. Copyright 2007 by Warrior Writers, IVAW's first chapbook. Second Edition. April 2007

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## **Cobra Never Had A Mother**

I was four years old when I held my first machine gun  
I pictured Human Beings being killed by other Human Beings  
I was five years old when I drove my first tank  
I pictured Human Beings being crushed by the tank treads  
I was six years old when I flew my first fighter jet  
I pictured pieces of Human Beings flying through the air  
I was seven years old when I held my first bb gun  
I aimed at my neighbors daughters head and pulled the trigger  
I was twenty six when I made killing Human Beings a living  
I spent my first hours in Iraq asking for my friend to burn ma if I die  
I wanted my ashes in Iraq because I needed a lure for my family  
So they might come to Iraq and see what we did there  
I was disgusted when we found a dead body by the side of the road  
But not by the death  
By the way of my fellow soldiers jumping off the truck to have their  
pictures taken with this dead Human Being  
Because that Human Being was not their kill  
I felt they were taking credit for something they did not do  
Another time I raised my rifle to a young boy  
I was tired of seeing little boys beat up little girls  
As my aim was on this boys chest I roared an order "Drop the  
Rock!"  
My platoon was alerted as if we were about to take fire  
The boy just smiled as if I wanted to see him smash this little girls  
head in  
Then the day when two men with rpgs ran across our road  
I pulled my sight to this mans chest  
It was supposed to be an Easy Kill  
But his face, his eyes meet mine  
I am sorry Brother  
He was not evil  
He did not have a Cobra Mask on  
He was a Human Being  
He then closed the door and got away  
We go back in the village  
We find a hut with a family  
Myself and Blackman searched the hut while the family was surrounded by  
at least thirty troops two humvees with 50cal machine guns and M-19

automatic grenade launchers, two Bradley Fighting Vehicles, and two Apache Attack helicopters  
We come out of this tiny farmers hut with only a small 22 pistol  
No rpgs, ak47s, no explosives or mortar rounds  
No Proof  
That doesn't stop us from taking the two young men there  
I tell my Sergeant that these aren't the guys we are looking for  
I was told that these two young men are just other bad guys  
At that time, Who am I to argue?  
The Mother is crying and at my feet  
Trying to kiss my feet?  
Cobra never had a Mother

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## **Super-Patriot War Hawk Country Music Stars Running The Other Way: "Who, Me? I Was Never For The War"**

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

23/09/2007 By Tim Shipman in Washington, Telegraph [UK]

Country music has thrived for years as the soundtrack to redneck America, supplying the Republican heartlands with a diet of knee-jerk jingoism that has included flag-waving anthems supporting the war on terror.

But as the US death toll rises in Iraq and public patience with the conflict - and with George W. Bush - diminishes, many anti-war songs are emerging from Nashville, Tennessee, home of the genre.

No one has moved further than Toby Keith and Darryl Worley, two of the biggest names in country music.

**In 2002, Keith had a huge hit with *Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue*, which includes the lyric: "You'll be sorry that you messed with the US of A, 'cause we'll put a boot in your ass - it's the American Way."**

Worley's *Have You Forgotten* in 2003 justified the Iraq invasion as a response to the September 11 attacks. The military liked it so much he was presented with a flag that had flown over the Pentagon.

**Now Keith says he is a lifelong Democrat and has claimed he never supported the war, while Worley has had a hit with *I Just Came Back from a War*, about a soldier returning from Iraq with post-traumatic stress disorder.**

Tim McGraw - the biggest contemporary country star - has a hit single with *If You're Reading This*, about a dead soldier's last letter home, and the Dixie Chicks, boycotted in

2003 after lead singer Natalie Maines told an audience in London: “We’re ashamed that the President of the United States is from Texas,” won five Grammy Awards this year.

Brian Hiatt, associate editor of Rolling Stone magazine, said: “Popular music is reflecting the culture, as it always does.”

Keith’s switch, however, has angered conservative country fans and anti-war activists alike.

Jon Iwanski, a blogger in Chicago, said Keith had “damaged his credibility”, while opponents of the war accused the singer of opportunism.

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## **“THE PROOF IS IN THE POCKETS” [Oops]**

From: Don Bacon [The Smdley Butler Society]  
To: GI Special  
Sent: September 30, 2007  
Subject: THE PROOF IS IN THE POCKETS

### **THE AQI CORE LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN CRIPPLED --**

Sep 28, 2007, AP: U.S. military commander in Iraq says coalition forces have crippled the core leadership group of al-Qaida in Iraq in a series of raids over the past few months. Chief of staff of the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq, Brigadier General Joseph Anderson, said a U.S. airstrike earlier this week killed senior foreign terrorist Abu Usama al-Tunisi, who he called one of the most important leaders within al-Qaida in Iraq.

### **OOPS--LOOKS LIKE THE AQI ‘CORE LEADERSHIP’ WAS CRIPPLED LAST YEAR**

May, 2006: al Qaeda supporters hailed the “martyrdom” of al-Tunisi. A translation of the martyrdom message was posted online by terrorism analyst Evan Kohlmann in July 2006. “The martyrdom of Abu Usama al-Tunisi, the commander of Aeisha Brigade . . .I announce the news to the Islamic nation . . .”

### **WHENEVER “CRIPPLED”, AQI IS “VERY BROKEN UP . . .UNABLE TO MASS . . VERY ISOLATED”**

Sep 28, 2007, AP: Commanders have said previously that the increase in troops ordered by President Bush in January — and the increased operations that followed — have pushed militants into the remote parts of the north and south of the country. Additional operations have been going after those pockets of fighters. “We’re having great success in isolating these pockets,” Anderson said. “They are very broken up, very unable to mass, and conducting very isolated operations.”

**OOPS AGAIN--WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES!  
LOOKS LIKE AQI'S POCKETS ARE NO LONGER ISOLATED**

Sep 29, 2007, BAGHDAD — Gen. David H. Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, acknowledged today that violence had increased since Sunni Arab militants declared an offensive during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. “Certainly Al Qaeda has had its Ramadan surge,” Petraeus said in his first comments to reporters since he returned from Washington to give lawmakers a status report on the war in Iraq.

But he said the level of attacks was “substantially lower” than during the same period last year. . . He did not provide figures. Militants with the extremist group Al Qaeda in Iraq have launched a string of deadly bombings in recent weeks, including one this week that killed at least 24 people at a reconciliation meeting between Sunni and Shiite tribal, religious, political and security leaders in the Diyala provincial capital, Baqubah.

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**OCCUPATION REPORT**

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

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



Foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. soldiers menace an Iraqi citizen in his own house after a night home invasion in southeast Baghdad September 12, 2007.  
REUTERS/Carlos Barria

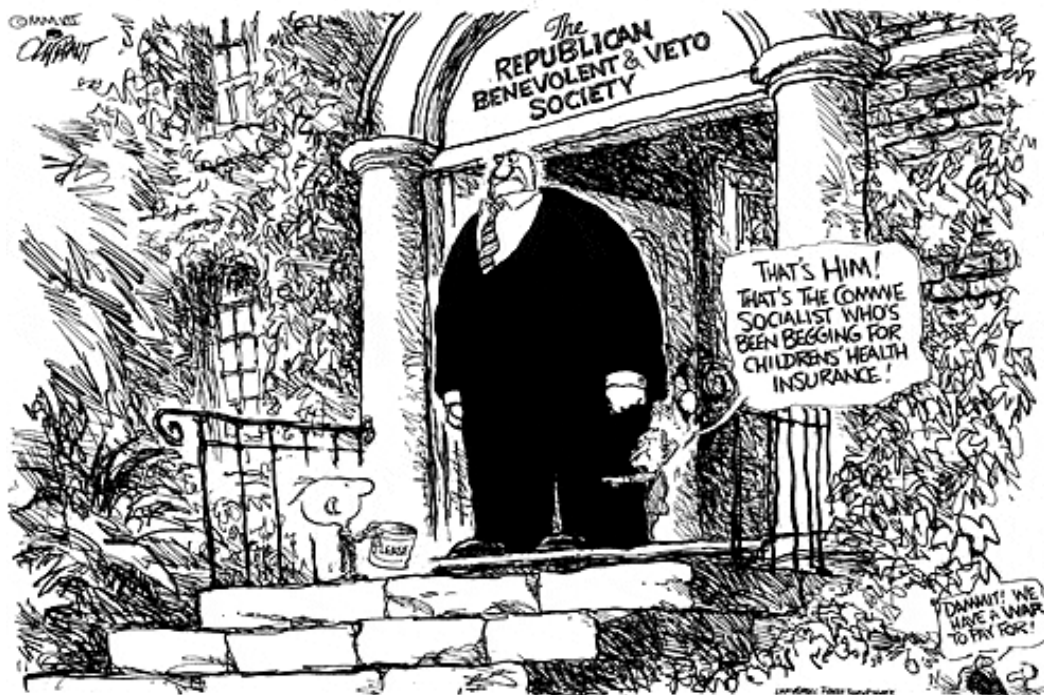
[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

[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!**

**DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**





# **“If You Care About Human Rights In The Middle East, Your Main Enemy Is At Home”**

## **“Bush Goes On To Claim That Iran Is The Main Threat To Peace In The Middle East. The Main Thing Destabilizing The Middle East Is The U.S. Interference”**

[Thanks to Katherine G, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

September 24, 2007 By MONIQUE DOLS and DYLAN STILLWOOD, Counterpunch. Monique Dols is a student in the School of General Studies and employee at Columbia University and Dylan Stillwood is an Alumnus of Columbia College, 2002. They can be reached at: monique.dols@gmail.com [Excerpts]

On the surface, the demonization of [President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad may seem like a natural reaction to his political statements and repressive policies.

But the media campaign should be taken with a grain of salt. The U.S. needs a new bogeyman. The war in Iraq is a dismal failure for Washington, and now Iran is now an even bigger obstacle to American domination of the Middle East.

### **Why has the president of Iran become a cartoon villain in American politics?**

**He’s a repressive ruler who holds reactionary views, but the same is true of many dictators and monarchs that the United States has supported, such as the Taliban, Saddam Hussein, and the House of Saud.**

The U.S. is not a principled opponent of repressive governments. The real origins of the recent saber-rattling lie in Iraq.

The U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003 expecting to take over quickly, without complications. The new Iraq would serve as a loyal client state, a massive source of oil, and a permanent base for controlling the rest of the Middle East.

Four years later, the American military is still struggling to secure anything outside of its Blackwater-fortified Green Zone.

The number of attacks against U.S. soldiers keeps rising. Iraqis widely support the resistance. The Americans can’t even control their puppets.

This failure has magnified the threat that Iran poses to American interests in the Middle East.

The Islamic Republic is the only major oil-producing country in the area not under U.S. control, and it has benefited from the quagmire next door.

The U.S. undeniably has an interest in regime change in Iran.

It's become fashionable among presidential candidates -- Republicans and Democrats -- to say that "no option is off the table," but in reality the costs of an invasion are extraordinarily high and there is still no consensus in Washington about how to deal with Ahmadinejad's regime. On the other hand, it's never too early to start spreading lies and misinformation.

**In late August, Bush accused Iran of trying to destabilize Iraq and of posing a threat to the entire region. This takes a lot of nerve coming from the man who invaded the country and overthrew its government.**

**The glaring reality is that the largest group of foreign fighters in Iraq is the 130,000 American troops.**

**Bush goes on to claim that Iran is the main threat to peace in the Middle East. The main thing destabilizing the Middle East is the U.S. interference.**

They have created a refugee crisis of Iraqis on par with the 1948 expulsion of Palestinians from their land. Millions of people have been driven from Iraq and now struggle to survive in neighboring countries such as Syria, Jordan, and Iran. In addition, the U.S. gives 6 billion dollars a year to Israel, a country which has regularly and recently attacked its neighbors.

We are constantly reminded that Iran's president is a fundamentalist tyrant. He is a right-wing politician with backward ideas, but the portrayal of Ahmadinejad as a lunatic terrorist falls back on racist stereotypes of Muslims.

This clash of civilizations argument serves as a justification for endless war on the world and fuels attacks on Arabs and Muslims at home.

**As long as the U.S. is in the Middle East, Ahmadinejad's hand is strengthened against his political opponents within Iran.**

**If you care about human rights in the Middle East, your main enemy is at home.**

#### **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.**

## CLASS WAR REPORTS



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***Welcome To The Occupied  
USA:  
Bring The War Home Now:  
Cops Using Tasers To Attack &  
Murder Unarmed Civilians:  
“If I Don’t Like You, I Can Torture  
You”***

September 28, 2007 By Eric Ruder, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

A 21-year-old student at the University of Florida was pinned to the floor by four police officers and shocked with a Taser gun after asking a question at a campus forum addressed by Sen. John Kerry.

Within hours, videos of the Tasing were posted on the Internet, turning the story into headline news--and thrusting the issue of police use of excessive force and stun guns into the public eye.

But the sharp increase in the use of Tasers by law enforcement agencies in the U.S. in the last five years has not only resulted in greater instances of police misconduct and torture, but more unnecessary deaths.

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**ROUGHLY 200,000 Tasers have been sold to law-enforcement agencies in the past nine years.**

**Some 270 people have died over the last five years after being shocked by the devices, which deliver a 50,000-volt jolt through two barbed darts that penetrate clothing and embed in the skin.**

The range of stories about police abuse of stun guns is frightening.

**Last year, Emily Delafield, a 56-year-old wheelchair-bound woman with a history of mental illness, died after Green Cove, Fla., police “Tasered her 10 times for a period of, like, two minutes,” according to Rick Alexander, an attorney that Delafield’s family hired to sue the police department.**

Last year, Colorado prisoner Raul Gallegos-Reyes died after being strapped to a restraint chair and stunned.

In a matter of weeks in 2004, Miami police used stun guns on a 6-year-old boy and a 12-year-old girl.

Ivy Gisclair also has a story to tell about Tasers. He was about to be released after being held by New Orleans police for unpaid parking tickets when Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005. After the nightmare of trying to survive with thousands of other prisoners in a flooded jail, Gisclair was transferred to a maximum-security prison.

**“Once there, Gisclair apparently had the nerve to inquire about being held past his release date,” according to a report on Taser abuse in In These Times magazine.**

**“Gisclair has testified that he was then restrained and stunned repeatedly with a Taser, before being thrown, naked and unconscious, into solitary confinement.”**

**Police are also increasingly using Tasers against nonviolent protesters.**

Philadelphia officers used stun guns against protesters during the 2000 Republican National Convention.

Antiwar activists in Pittsburgh and strikers at military contractor Raytheon in Chula Vista, Calif., have also been the victims of police Taser guns.

In Olympia, Wash., police used a stun gun against Navy veteran Wally Cuddeford, who along with more than 200 others was protesting the shipment of 300 Stryker tanks to Iraq.

"I was standing in the crowd of protesters, and the police grabbed me and threw me down on the gravel," said Cuddeford. "While being under a pile of about four police officers, they began applying their Taser to me in my back..."

**"They Tasered me three times while I was down on the ground and then dragged me across the pavement and charged me with third-degree assault."**

Matthew Fogg--a former U.S. Marshal, a long-time SWAT specialist, vice president of Blacks in Government, and member of the board of Amnesty International USA--argues that too many police use Tasers as "compliance mechanisms."

**"It's something along the lines of, 'If I don't like you, I can torture you,'" he says.**

This rise in police torture should come as no surprise at a time when the Bush administration has publicly defended torture techniques as legitimate measures against uncooperative detainees--and with the USA PATRIOT Act giving police broad new powers and curtailing basic civil liberties.

### **GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out**

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