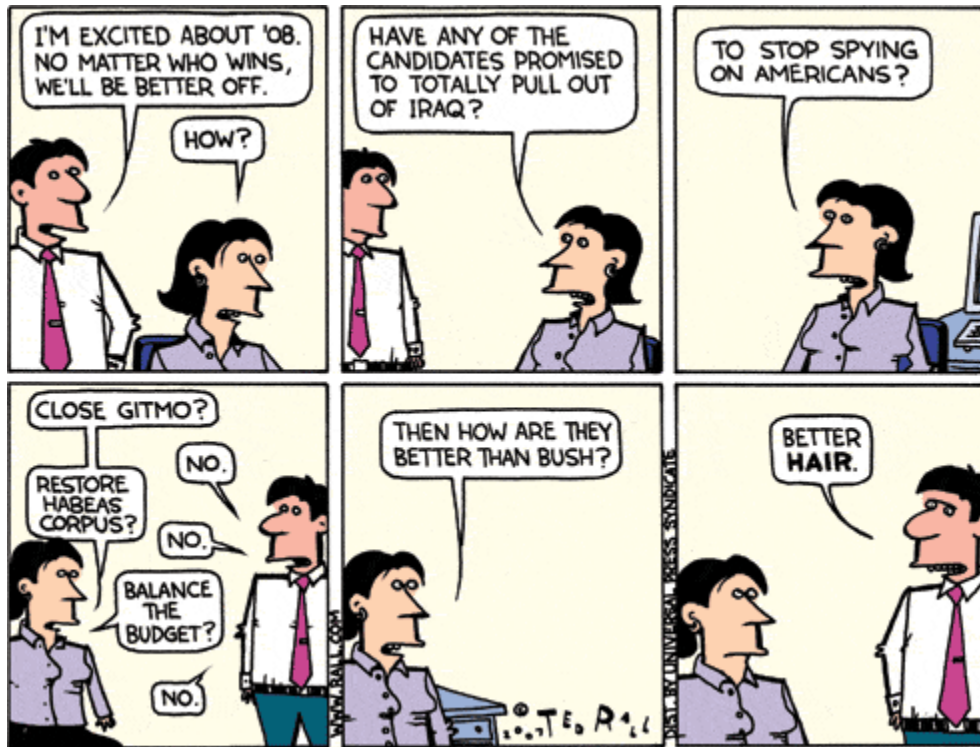


GI SPECIAL 5J7:



Petraeus Secretly Relieved Of Command; BBC Reveals Nobody Will Obey His Orders

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Military Project, for this one. Very special thanks to GRep of IVAW for some of the terminology below.]

7 October 2007 BBC NEWS [Excerpt]

Gen. Petraeus also delivered a more upbeat message on security in Baghdad in the wake of this year's "surge" by US and Iraqi forces.

He said in some parts of the capital it was secure enough for him to walk down the street unprotected. "Certainly in places you could do that.

"You could walk right down Haifa street right now," Gen Petraeus said.

But he added: "Nobody will let me do it."

Comment: T

Right.

Relieved of command.

"Nobody will let me do it."

If you're a General, the top U.S. military commander in Iraq, and you wish to walk down Haifa Street in Baghdad, Iraq, and not one single person, "nobody," will "let you" do it, meaning all will refuse to obey orders you give that you will walk down Haifa Street such and such a day and such and such a time, and that you will walk down Haifa Street "unprotected" – if nobody will obey your orders, you are no longer in command of shit.

Furthermore, if you will be restrained from walking down Haifa Street "unprotected," because that's what it means when you say, "nobody will let me do it," then not only have you been relieved of command, you are under house arrest.

The conclusion is inescapable: General David Petraeus, Commander of United States forces, Iraq, has been relieved of command and is under house arrest.

The other option, that he is lying in his teeth, is too preposterous to contemplate.

That would mean General Petraeus is a bottom feeding scum-sucking lowlife shit-eating slime-fuck clueless lame-brained limp-dicked waste of fucking space and bane of all human existence.

Perish the thought.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed Near Bayji

10/08/07 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory

An MNC-I Soldier died of wounds suffered during combat operations in the vicinity of Bayji Oct. 5. The name of the Soldier is being withheld pending notification of next of kin and release from the Department of Defense.

Marine Killed In Anbar

08 Oct 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20071008-17

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to Multi-National Force-West died Oct. 8 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province.

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. armored vehicles of 2nd Special Troops Battalion as a RPG rocket hits near a convoy in southeast of Baghdad September 10, 2007. REUTERS/Carlos Barria

Illinois Marine Dies From Wounds Received In Iraq In 2005

2007-09-20 (AP)

MONTROSE, Ill.: An Illinois Marine has died from wounds he received two years ago in Iraq, said Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn.

Sgt. Nickolas Lee Hopper, 27, of Montrose died in Havelock, N.C., on Sept. 8, Quinn said Thursday in a statement. The married father of one boy was wounded in June 2005.

“Nick was the most compassionate, kind, generous person that I ever knew,” his mother, Judy Hopper, said in a statement issued through Quinn’s office. “He was a loving father and a devoted husband.”

Hopper enlisted in the Marines in January 2001 after his younger brother joined and loved serving, Judy Hopper said.

“Nick saw his brother succeed and wanted to do it as well,” she said.

Hopper earned military honors including a Combat Action Ribbon, Purple Heart, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, National Defense Medal and two Good Conduct medals, his family said.

Hopper will be buried Friday at Camp Butler National Cemetery in Springfield, Quinn said.

Montrose is about 70 miles southeast of Decatur.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Spalding Soldier Dies From Afghanistan Injuries

Sep 27, 2007 By HILARY KINDSCHUH / Lincoln Journal Star

Pfc. Christopher Pfeifer never got to see his baby daughter.

The 21-year-old soldier from Spalding died Tuesday from injuries he received in Afghanistan in August, the Department of Defense announced Thursday.

Pfeifer’s wife, Karen, gave birth to their child on Thursday, said his great-aunt, Darlene Pfeifer. “He was so darn young,” she said.

Pfeifer died in San Antonio from wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit using small arms fire Aug. 17 near Kamu, Afghanistan. He was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, in Schweinfurt, Germany.

His family is in Texas making arrangements, Darlene Pfeifer said. He is survived by his parents, Mike and Dar, an older brother and an older sister, and his wife and daughter, his great-aunt said.

“Everybody liked him,” she said.

Pfeifer didn't really know what he wanted to do right after high school, said Jim Kleffner, a close family friend who grew up with Pfeifer's father.

Pfeifer worked with his father in Kleffner's shop, People's Service, for about a year and a half, Kleffner said.

Pfeifer met his wife when they were in JobCorps in Chadron, before he joined the Army, said Kleffner's son Troy.

“He needed direction, and when he met Karen, he found the love of his life,” Jim Kleffner said. “I think the service fit him real well.”

Pfeifer's father had told Jim Kleffner the doctors thought they could save his son, and things were looking good for a while, he said. “Then they took a very bad turn for the worse,” he said.

The community of about 600 people had not lost a soldier in action since 1951, Jim Kleffner said.

“We've been awful lucky,” he said. “All the flags are at half-mast in Spalding right now.

“It's a really sad day, a sad week. He was a very good person, and we hate to lose him.”

IED Kills Australian Soldier In Oruzgan Province, Another Wounded

[Thanks to Max Watts, who sent this in.]

08/10/2007 Radio Australia & ABC/AFP

The Australian Defence Force has confirmed that an Australian soldier has been killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

It is the first time an Australian soldier has been killed in combat while serving in either Afghanistan or Iraq.

One other Australian soldier was wounded when an improvised explosive device went off as a regular patrol passed along a road in the southern Oruzgan province.

Defence says the wounded soldier was given first aid and evacuated to a nearby medical facility by an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) helicopter.

“He is undergoing further treatment. His wounds are serious but are not considered life-threatening,” the statement said.

Hundreds of Australian soldiers provide security and work on reconstruction projects in partnership with Dutch troops.

They are based at Camp Holland near the town of Tirin Kowt.

Taliban militias occupy large areas of the province and have been involved in heavy clashes with Australian forces in recent weeks.

Resistance Brings Down Two Dutch Apache Copters; Three Left

Oct. 8 2007 The Associated Press

Two Dutch Apache helicopters were hit by enemy fire Monday, the Dutch Defense Ministry said in a statement. Both landed safely and their crews were not injured.

The helicopters were supporting ground troops when they were hit in the rotor blades. Dutch forces based in Tirin Kot have five Apache helicopters.

“We Want The Foreign Forces To Leave Our Areas And Stop Bombing Our Homes”

6 October 2007 The News (Pakistan)

About 800 angry Afghans demanded Saturday that US-led forces quit their area to end heavy fighting as an Afghan official alleged foreign troops had shot dead two civilians in error.

Demonstrators in Sawkai district of the eastern province of Kunar shouted slogans against the coalition forces, alleging a new bombing raid overnight had destroyed eight homes.

“Two men were killed and three other people including a woman were wounded when their car was fired at by foreign forces,” Manogai district chief Zalmai Yousufzai said.

“The Americans told us, 'We fired at a man who ran at the mountains but it hit the car'.” The coalition could not confirm the district chief's claims of civilian casualties.

Those involved in Saturday's demonstration demanded to know why bombs had been dropped overnight, saying there were no Taliban fighters in the area.

“We want the government to stop them,” a statement read out at the gathering said. “We want the foreign forces to leave our areas and stop bombing our homes.”

They also accused the US-backed government of not fulfilling its promise to bring development and security.

TROOP NEWS

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



A U.S. soldier is lifted off a stretcher by doctors in the emergency room of the 28th Combat Support hospital in Baghdad October 5, 2007. REUTERS/Fabrizio Bensch

**Soldier Who Lost His Legs In
Iraq Tormented By Vicious,
Stupid, Shit-Eating Rat Officer:
“There Are No Provisions At The
Fisher House For Pets” He Says:
Mom Says: “Before Adrian Got Her, He
Wouldn’t Go Out. Now He Wants To Go**

Out. This Dog Brought Smiles To His Face, Which I Haven't Seen In A Long Time”



Col. Carlos Angueira On The Job: rabidrat.org

October 08, 2007 By Karen Jowers, Army Times [Excerpts]

A 19-year-old soldier and his dog are at the center of a controversy about service dogs and wounded warriors.

Pfc. Adrian Garcia, who lost his legs in March in a rocket-propelled grenade attack in Iraq, was given a pit bull Sept. 4 to help him in his recovery.

Now Garcia and his mother, Lourdes, must leave the Fisher House at Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and move to an off-post apartment because the Army-run facility does not allow pets.

But Garcia, his mother and the founder of Canines for Combat Wounded, the newly formed group that gave Garcia his dog, Moukie, insist the animal is a service dog.

“She puts a smile on my face and helps me look forward to the day,” Garcia said. “They tell me that I have traumatic brain injury. My dog is helping me to remember. I feed her at this time, I take her out at this time. She helps get me into the routine of daily life.”

The situation highlights an issue that the military is just starting to address — the possibility that service dogs could help veterans with war wounds, physical as well as psychiatric.

The Justice Department says the Americans With Disabilities Act defines service animals as working animals, not pets.

“Service animals are ... individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, or performing other special tasks,” the Justice Department definition states.

Army Sgt. Ron Portillo, himself a wounded veteran of Iraq and founder of Canines for Combat Wounded, contends that Moukie should, in fact, be considered a service dog. He said the dog has had advanced obedience training and is important for Garcia’s psychiatric well-being, although Garcia and his mother both acknowledge that the dog needs more training.

Under the ADA, “a person can train their own dog,” said Sheila O’Brien, executive director of Dogs for Deaf and Disabled Americans. “The law doesn’t care how many hours of training or where the dog comes from.”

Her organization was the first to provide service dogs to wounded Iraq veterans, placing five, including two that are now at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, she said.

The group provides rigorous training for dog and handler, and consults with the patients’ medical providers at Walter Reed.

“I will train her to retrieve items,” Garcia said. “The more I progress, the more she can help me. Once I’m able to walk on prosthetics, she can help me with balance.”

Col. (Dr.) Carlos Angueira, Brooke’s deputy commander for clinical services, said Moukie is not a service dog, and “there are no provisions at the Fisher House for pets.”

“It’s a communal environment. You start infringing on the rights of other families,” he said.

“The ADA does not apply here.”

“We fully recognize the therapeutic value of dogs. And I recognize there’s a therapeutic potential for this dog,” he said.

“But to try to say it’s a service dog and we have to allow it, that’s not going to get it.”

Garcia found out four days before he was due to pick up the dog that she wouldn’t be allowed to stay overnight at Fisher House. For a few weeks, she was allowed to stay during the day, and a friend volunteered to keep her at night.

A local resident has offered to let the Garcias live in an off-post apartment, rent-free.

“We have no alternative ... we can’t get rid of the dog,” Garcia’s mother said.

“The dog made a lot of difference. Before Adrian got her, he wouldn’t go out. Now he wants to go out. This dog brought smiles to his face, which I haven’t seen in a long time.”

Portillo said the breed should be irrelevant, and noted that when he approached Garcia with the offer of a service dog, Garcia asked specifically for a pit bull.

The service dog community is divided between those who place dogs to help people with physical disabilities, and those who place dogs to help people with psychological disabilities, said Joan Esnayra, president of the Psychiatric Service Dogs Society.

“Most schools don’t want to train psychiatric service dogs,” she said. “So people are pretty much left on their own to train their dogs. The demand is more than the supply.”

BRITISH GOVERNMENT TRIES TO BAN ANTI-WAR RALLY; THOUSANDS DEFY THE GOVERNMENT AND MARCH ANYWAY



Despite police, demonstrators knock down a fence in Parliament Square during an anti-Iraq war demonstration in London October 8, 2007. REUTERS/Luke MacGregor

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

October 6, 2007 Brian Eno, The Guardian [UK] [Excerpts]

Stop the War Coalition planned a march from Trafalgar Square to Parliament Square on Monday - the day parliament resumes - to draw attention to the fact that a lot of us are still thinking about Iraq and to call for the immediate withdrawal of troops.

Using an archaic law (the 1839 Metropolitan Police Act), that demonstration has now been banned.

Now why would that be?

Stop the War Coalition has organised dozens of such demonstrations, and as far as I know not one person has been hurt. So it can't be public safety that's at stake.

No, it's the elephant in the room. This government wants to show itself as clean and new, and doesn't want attention drawn to the elephant and the mess it has left on the carpet.

So it invokes an old law, to shave a little more off the arrangements by which citizens communicate their feelings to government (a process, by the way, called democracy).

It would take courage for Gordon Brown to say: "This war was a catastrophe." It would take even greater courage to admit that the seeds of the catastrophe were in its conception: it wasn't a good idea badly done (the neocons' last refuge - "Blame it all on Rumsfeld"), but a bad idea badly done. And it would take perhaps superhuman courage to say: "And now we should withdraw and pay reparations to this poor country."

I don't see it happening.

But the demonstration will, legal or not: on Monday Tony Benn will lead us as we exercise our right to remind our representatives that, even if Iraq has slipped off their agenda, it's still on ours.

Black Armed Forces Enlistees Down 58% Since 2000: "The War Is Unnecessary" Jackson Said

October 7, 2007 By Joseph Williams and Kevin Baron, Globe Staff and Globe Correspondent [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON - African-Americans, whose longstanding relationship with the US military helped them prove their abilities and offered a way to get ahead, have turned away from the armed forces in record numbers since 2000, a period covering the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the start of the Iraq war.

Defense Department statistics show the number of young black enlistees has fallen by more than 58 percent since fiscal year 2000. The Army in particular has been hit hard: In fiscal year 2000, according to the Pentagon statistics, more than 42,000 black men and women applied to enlist; in fiscal year 2005, the most recent for which a racial breakdown is available, just over 17,000 signed up.

The unpopular Iraq war is the biggest reason, according to military analysts, Pentagon surveys, and interviews with young African-Americans. But they say mistrust of the Bush administration is adding to the problem - along with the notion that black soldiers are being steered to combat jobs, a lingering perception from the Vietnam War.

The decline in enlistment applications among blacks is by far the fastest of any demographic group.

Between fiscal 2000 and 2005, white applicants declined by more than 10 percent. Hispanic applicants dropped by almost 7 percent.

Interviews with young African-Americans confirmed a lack of faith in the president and the war.

Nathaniel Daley, a young African-American from Atlantic City, N.J., said he doesn't believe in the Iraq war and won't enlist because of it. Daley, 28, and two friends, Brian Jackson, 27, and Eddie Mickle Jr., 26, talked one recent afternoon at the Pentagon City Mall in Arlington, Va., a vast shopping complex just blocks from the military's nerve center. As they talked, uniformed servicemen and women, some wearing battle fatigues, passed by.

In high school during the late 1990s, Daley said, he signed a letter of intent to join the Army upon graduation, "to pay for my college, get a better job, and better myself." He said he broke that commitment for a higher-paying job at a nearby casino.

Though the Army would likely consider them ideal recruits - young, fit, high school-educated - each said the Iraq war and Bush's presidency, particularly after the Hurricane Katrina disaster in 2005, has kept them out of uniform.

"Why would we go over there and help them, when (the US government) can't help us over here?" he said, referring to the cleanup after Katrina.

The war "is unnecessary," Jackson said. "It's not our war. We got our own war here, just staying alive," he added, noting his hometown of Philadelphia has racked up more than 200 homicides so far this year, most involving young black men.

A recent CBS News poll showed 83 percent of African-American respondents said the Iraq invasion was a mistake.

In addition, the president's approval rating has hit rock-bottom with black voters at about 9 percent, according to a 2006 Pew Research Center poll.

At Oxon Hill High School, located in a predominantly black Washington suburb, guidance counselor Kabir Tompkins is also an Army National Guard sergeant wounded in Iraq. He tells interested students the Army can lead to better life: a good salary, health benefits, and tens of thousands of dollars for college. But their parents are harder to convince, he said.

"They see it from the aspect of . . . 'I don't care about the benefits, I don't care about the money, I don't care about nothing. I don't want my child going to Iraq,' " Tompkins said.

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

Air Force Idiots Win Ig-Nobel Peace Prize For “Gay Bomb” Proposal

Oct 5, 2007 By Mark Pratt - The Associated Press

BOSTON — Good news for your Viagra-using hamster: On his next trip to Europe, he'll bounce back from jet lag faster than his unmedicated friends.

The researchers who revealed that bizarre fact earned one of 10 Ig Nobel prizes awarded Thursday night for quirky, funny and sometimes legitimate scientific achievements, from the mathematics of wrinkled sheets to U.S. military efforts to make a “gay bomb.”

The recipients of the annual award handed out by the Annals of Improbable Research magazine were honored at Harvard University's Sanders Theater.

The Air Force won the Ig Nobel Peace Prize this year for its proposal to develop a “gay bomb” — a chemical weapon that would make enemy soldiers want to make love with each other, not war with the enemy.

Abrahams talked to a number of retired and active Air Force personnel to try and get someone to accept the prize in person on behalf of the military. None would.

“Who in their right mind would turn something like this down?” said Cornell University professor Brian Wansink.

***Army Values:* Two Really Stupid Colonels Arrested For Paternity Test Fraud**

Oct 6, 2007 The Associated Press

CARLISLE, Pa. — Two Army colonels are accused of switching identities to try to fool a paternity test, authorities said.

Scott M. Carlson, 51, and Bruce S. Adkins, 44, who is accused of trying to take the paternity test in Carlson's place, were charged Thursday with tampering with public records, tampering with evidence, forgery, theft and obstruction of justice, District Attorney David Freed said.

Adkins, who is stationed in Georgia, will testify against Carlson if necessary, his attorney said. "He's going to cooperate," attorney Gregory Abeln said. "He's going to do whatever he needs to do to rectify this situation."

It was not immediately known if Carlson, who is on duty in Egypt, had an attorney.

Both men had been members of the class of 2007 at the Army War College in Carlisle. Freed said Carlson appeared at the Cumberland County domestic relations office in March to arrange for a paternity test.

Carlson had been paying a Virginia woman child support for her 9-year-old daughter and she was seeking an increase, Senior Assistant District Attorney Derek Clepper said.

County domestic relations employees became suspicious when another man showed up in April, claimed to be Carlson and wanted to take the paternity test.

The man presented Carlson's out-of-state driver's license, signed papers as Carlson, provided a thumbprint, and provided a DNA sample, Detective Sgt. Earl Bock said in arrest papers. Bock said the man was identified through the thumbprint as Adkins.

After the criminal investigation started, Carlson sent a letter to the domestic relations office in August and said he had been paying support since January 1999, had not paid since December 2006, and wanted to resume paying.

Lt. Col. Bob Whetstone, a spokesman for Carlisle Barracks, the post where the War College is located, said it would be up to the commanders of Carlson's and Adkins' current units to determine whether military charges also should be brought against them.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

08 Oct 2007 Reuters & AP

A roadside bomb killed one policeman and wounded two in Hawija, 70 km (43 miles) southwest of Kirkuk, police said.

Four explosions hit near the Polish embassy in central Baghdad, a Polish diplomat said. He said there were no injuries or major damage at the embassy.

A car bomber wounded three policemen, in an attack on a police station near the city of Samarra, 100 km (62 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A bomber drove his truck into a police station north of Baghdad on Monday, crumbling the squat concrete building and damaging a nearby school.

The blast in Dijlah, a village 60 miles north of the capital, tore through a nearby empty school and several stores. At least three officers were killed.

The station, built in the 1980s on a thoroughfare that links Samarra with Tikrit, was poorly protected. It was surrounded by concrete barriers less than one yard high, even though it had been ambushed less than a month ago by dozens of gunmen.



A destroyed police vehicle lies at the site of a bomb attack at a police checkpoint in Tikrit October 8, 2007, killing three police and wounding six more. (AP Photo/Bassem Daham)

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

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. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. Same to unsubscribe.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

“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



“Like Any Guerilla War Throughout The History Of The World, I Mean, We Started To Take On The People”

“This Is About The Symbolism Of Me Being In A Foreign Country With My Uniform On, Serving In Any Capacity, Because I’m The Enemy Then”



“This is the way we can end the war—by supporting the soldiers, the service members who are now more and more understanding that this war is wrong and who will speak out against it.”

An interview with Mark Wilkerson [Iraq Veterans Against The War] by Aaron Glantz, co-produced by Sarah Olson, for KPFA Radio August 18, 2007. Transcript by Elizabeth Simonsen for Courage to Resist. [Excerpts]

Following his presentation at the Courage to Resist hosted workshop at the 2007 Veterans for Peace National Convention in St. Louis, Mark Wilkerson sat down with Aaron Glantz and David Cortright, author of “Soldiers in Revolt”.

At the time of this interview, Mark had just been released from the brig only days earlier.

Aaron Glantz: You just got, Mark Wilkerson, out of 5 months in the brig at Fort Sill in Oklahoma. How did you end up there?

Mark Wilkerson: It’s really a long story, but I enlisted in 2002 at the age of 18 years old.

I grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and I was in Iraq from March 2003 to March 2004.

I went over there the way a lot of people my age do, you know, a little young, a little starry-eyed, and naive. I thought that—at the time, I supported George Bush. I grew up in a conservative family, so I went over, and I didn’t really know what to expect. I was nervous, but I thought we were going to do wonderful things for the Iraqi people.

We got there-- the first week we were there, the kids were waving flags. About a month in, they started throwing rocks.

Then the IEDs started, and when we left in March 2004, they started the suicide bombings, and just—I had some experiences, throughout that. I grew up ten years in the year I was there, and I got back and I said, there's no way. I left too much of myself there the first time. There's no way I can do it again. I shared some of these feelings I had with my squad leaders, and some of them—one of them—suggested that I look into the idea of conscientious objector.

Aaron: What was it, in particular, that caused you to feel so uncomfortable?

Mark Wilkerson: Well, I think it was just that, like any guerilla war throughout the history of the world, I mean, we started to take on the people.

We were told we were going to win the hearts and the minds of the people. I know the listeners have heard that so many times, but that's what was drilled into us from day one, and we got there, and largely, I did not see that happening. You know, the enemy was not clearly revealed to us. It's not like they ran around in uniforms with rifles sticking out of it—

Aaron: With a big "E" on it, right, for "enemy"?

Mark Wilkerson: Exactly. So, we got there, and that's what we were expecting. But after the initial invasion, they went into hiding, and we didn't know who was good and who was bad, who had attacked Americans and who was just trying to move on with life.

They would snitch on each other; they would tell us because we were gathering intelligence, and as part of this intelligence, we would conduct house raids and sometimes neighborhood or block raids as well.

A raid, for me, is very... it's primeval, I guess. [I]t's also done under the cover of darkness, especially in the beginning.

We didn't have translators, so we would be told that there was somebody in here conducting suspicious activity, and we'd check them out.

So you'd get five people lined up at the door, you know, you've got security all around the block or the neighborhood to keep anyone from coming in or out.

You go room to room, knocking the people down, zip tying them, keeping them restrained, and then once you secure the house you start looking for weapons.

Sometimes we were very diligent and complete in these searches.

Sometimes we would shred up floors, couches and beds. We'd take all the women, children and old men (that was mostly who was in these houses—women, children and old men), we'd take them outside and throw them into the grass and we'd start yelling at them as to where weapons are, where the men are.

Sometimes, all that we needed was a knife or a gun. It could be something as small as a pistol, to justify taking away all the men in the house.

Aaron: Because otherwise, it would all be for nothing.

Mark Wilkerson: Well, sometimes, yes, it was, and we didn't want to admit that we were wrong or that the intelligence was wrong. So, sometimes, all we needed was a statement from a neighbor saying that they had seen this man dealing with terrorists or something.

A lot of paperwork wasn't done in the beginning, and we were very—we weren't overly aggressive, but we were aggressive, especially in dealing with the men.

Then we'd haul them into our trucks, haul them off to a holding cell, and that was it from our spots. And who knows how many of those men might still be there?

And that, for me, was so hard to understand, because we're trying to get these guys to be on our side, and we're taking out their neighbors' houses, and taking away all the men—all the boys, old men, and it just really started to change the way I viewed this war.

Aaron: So you raised that with other people in your unit?

Mark Wilkerson: Absolutely!

A lot of us—it got to the point where I said, "I'm not going to go into the houses anymore. I'll cover, I'll do security."

They understood, and I was not the only one who said I wasn't going to participate in them anymore.

Towards the end, our mission changed to where we weren't doing so many raids anymore; we were in Tikrit and Samara, the Sunni triangle. Things were very rough. We could say we had to do this because it was a hostile environment, but I think it was a little too random, and we would just kind of take everyone's word for it.

Aaron: At a certain point, the kind of idea of stepping back and not taking part in certain activities that you felt were upsetting—that was not enough for you.

Mark Wilkerson: No. It did not justify in my mind—there were several other situations, including every morning, we would receive an op order, or an AAR (active action review), and hear about other attacks all over Iraq, and there were some days it would go, "Oh, this convoy was attacked by people on blue motorcycles, so look out for blue motorcycles. If you see someone on a blue motorcycle and they pass us, I want you to shoot them."

As paranoid as we would get, you know, you do get a rush of adrenaline every day when you go out into the streets. There were days when I got up and said, "If I see a blue motorcycle, I'm going to blow them away."

And for me, just to take a step back at night, you know, you're winding down, looking up at the stars, going, "My God, I would have totally shot up a guy on a blue motorcycle for no reason, other than he's driving a blue motorcycle."

Aaron: Mark, you were talking about your frustrations being in Iraq, not knowing whether the people being shot or killed were actually the enemy or just innocent civilians, the frustration of going house to house searching people's houses, and just kind of the harshness of that. And I guess you must have ridden that out until you got back to the States?

Mark Wilkerson: Well, certainly. I discussed many of these issues with a lot of other soldiers there; a lot of them just didn't want to think about it at all. And then when I got back, to see the way the media portrayed the war and the way many people thought the war was going on, and then finally, after a few months, seeing some resisters coming on television—I remember seeing Camilo Mejia in an interview and thinking, "Wow, there are people out there like me, who are confused and angry and upset."

This "conscientious objector" that I applied for, it was a very rough patch for me. It was a period of—I ended up applying for conscientious objector in June. I took the rules for conscientious objector home, and in the course of one night, I answered all the questions. I filled out my form. It was mostly seething.

I was very angry, so I put all that emotion into what should be a very proper, very well thought-out document and application. I turned it in. I was told that I had a week to fill it out. And then over the next several months, I sometimes got in many arguments and heated debates with my chain of command—my first sergeant, my platoon sergeant, some military chaplains, military investigators, military psychologists...

Aaron: This is a very involved process.

Mark Wilkerson: Absolutely. They're all trying to decide, some of them, am I fit enough to make these statements? Some of them ask, "Is this well-thought out, does he qualify, or is he just trying to find a quick way out?" And I guess I was guilty of being too honest with these people. I've done my best to do it the right way. You know, I joined the military as a military policeman, and I always wanted to do the right thing. When this started happening, a lot of younger soldiers my age were saying, "Yeah, dude, you've got to keep going with this. We've got families, we've got other issues, but good luck to you."

And eventually, throughout this entire process, my application was denied in November of 2004, and we had orders to redeploy in January 2005.

Aaron: Well, because of the issues is that you need to prove that you not only think that the war is screwed up and you don't want to go fight in it. You also have to prove that you have a religious, moral conviction that all war is wrong. They don't let you say, "The Iraq war is wrong."

Mark Wilkerson: Yeah, certainly. They don't let you pick your wars, but the issue I tried to bring up was that I have only been alive long enough to see the first Gulf War and this one. I'm not a historian, I'm not highly educated. I didn't go to college and find out all the historical texts of the past wars, and I tried to say, "I can't sit here and say I'm opposed

or for these wars, because I don't necessarily believe what the historians have to say about them."

The victor always can change the texts of some past wars, so I didn't want to do that much research. All I knew was what was in my heart, and I knew that I didn't feel right being there, serving in any capacity with my uniform on. And they couldn't quite grasp that, they thought I was worried about my personal safety when it was denied. When they asked me if I would be okay working on a headquarters platoon working on the fort base and not going into the towns.

I said, "You don't get it. This isn't about my safety or my life—this is about the symbolism of me being in a foreign country with my uniform on, serving in any capacity, because I'm the enemy then, to a lot of fighters there.

Aaron: At what point did you say, "I just have to leave this base?"

Mark Wilkerson: You know, when I saw someone like Camilo on tv, I thought, "Wow, that takes some guts. It takes some courage." I heard about resisters in Canada, and I thought, "But I don't want to go AWOL."

I thought for sure, for this period of months when I was waiting for my application, I thought for sure it would be accepted. Surely they wouldn't make soldiers go over there against their will. Surely, if I went through this entire process, they would be okay with me leaving, and then when I found out they weren't, I was crushed.

I was twenty years old. I panicked, and really, it wasn't all that well thought-out. At the end of December, me and my wife, we packed up everything we had in our apartment in Fort Hood, and we packed up a U-Haul and left for Colorado Springs. I ended up being gone for a year and a half. There were good times, there were bad times, but it was preferable to serving in Iraq again.

Aaron: So, you grew up in Colorado, right? Did you head to Colorado?

Mark Wilkerson: Absolutely. It was my home, I knew. There was nowhere else for me to go.

Aaron: And what did your family think?

Mark Wilkerson: Well, my family, I mean, there's a large military history in my family, and I didn't share a lot of my feelings with them. I ended up disconnecting myself from them, and they knew that I wouldn't do something too rash.

When I told them everything, they started to support it. There were even some distant family members that I didn't tell, or I did, and they didn't want to have anything to do with me. They didn't like the mention of my name. It's all smoothed over now, and they've understood. When they see people stand behind me and stand behind fellow resisters, they're like, "It's okay to support this."

Aaron: The public support made a big deal not only in terms of your fight with the military, but also in terms of your family.

Mark Wilkerson: Well, you know, during the year and a half I was gone, I saw a complete turn-around in public opinion of the war.

People actually started to talk with veterans and find out what the conditions were really like, and the death toll started to climb.

Money, which isn't nearly as important as the lives, started to get out of control spending there, and people are going, "Wow, whoa, hold on here. What's going on?" I was gone for a year and a half, and I knew if I'd gone back when the war was still very popular—Camilo spent close to a year in prison—a year!—and I spent five months. Just in the period of a year and a half, public opinion changed so much that there was so much more support behind me a year and a half later that there wasn't for Camilo.

Aaron: That's the voice of Mark Wilkerson. He just got out of five months of prison at Fort Sill in Oklahoma for going AWOL in protest of the war in Iraq. You actually got out early for good behavior. They sentenced you to seven months, and you got out after five. What was so good about your behavior?

Mark Wilkerson: Well, there were certain work details we could sign up for, and I ended up working seven days a week in the kitchen washing dishes. For every—you know, if you work a whole month of weekends, you get two days, and signing up to paint something or this or that. So I did all that, and pretty much every inmate there writes a clemency letter.

You can write a letter to the general of the post you were at, in my case Fort Hood, and I received a letter back about a week and a half later, granting me a month's worth of clemency. So kind of a month extra added to the time I'd already earned.

And there were five or six AWOL soldiers from Fort Hood there, and they were consistently receiving a month or two off, so maybe somewhere deep in his heart, the port general thought that we were either being punished too harshly or, due to our experiences in Iraq, we were somewhat justified in what we felt was right.

Aaron: David Cortright, author of Soldiers in Revolt. You've been sitting here listening to Mark Wilkerson's story. What are your impressions of it?

David Cortright: Well, it's a powerful story. It's one that we also experienced in the Vietnam era.

Mark said a number of important things: one that really struck me was the fact that it takes so much courage and conviction to speak out for truth and to resist war, especially when you're in the military.

Sometimes they create this air that soldiers are opposing the war, they don't want to go to Iraq, because somehow they're concerned with their own safety. Not at all.

The soldiers who've been there, they put their lives on the line, and it's not a question of their willingness to sacrifice and serve their country. It's a question of understanding, from direct experience, that this war is wrong, that we're being lied to about the nature of this war, that it can't work, we need to end it.

To have the courage and conviction to say that publicly, to apply as a conscientious objector, against all of this pressure from the command not to do so, takes tremendous courage.

If you're weak of heart, don't even try it. It takes real conviction, and Mark, and so many of the other soldiers who are taking these acts to speak out, acts of resistance, are really reflecting the very best of human nature, the very best of the American spirit, to stand up for what is right. And they deserve our support.

We really need to help the Iraq Veterans Against the War movement, help support the appeal for address.

This is the way we can end the war—by supporting the soldiers, the service members who are now more and more understanding that this war is wrong and who will speak out against it.

Aaron: Talk about this issue of support, because we just heard Mark say that he went AWOL because he felt like he had no other choice, and he felt comfortable turning himself in once the public had turned in a very real way against the war. Can you talk about the interplay between the public at large and how its feeling about the war and the feelings about the war inside the military?

David Cortright: That's a very important point, and I feel like we're coming to a point of greater maturity in the country and society and in the anti-war movement, as Mark said.

Now we have a majority of Americans who want the troops withdrawn, who feel that we were lied to, that it was a mistake to go in there.

Increasingly, those Americans who oppose the war also realize that many in the military share that sentiment, and we're willing to support the troops and really support them in the right way, which is to provide psychological and other forms of material support, for soldiers like Mark and others who speak out, who resist.

We need to increase that effort and do everything we can, possibly, through working with groups like IVAW, to provide material, psychological, political support for the service members who are speaking out.

Aaron: What kind of support was most helpful to you, and what kind of support did you not get that you would hope that other people really would get?

Mark Wilkerson: That's a really good question, because so many people ask, "How can we support the troops? How can we support the troops?"

So, some of the support is monetary, some of the support is... if you find out there's a soldier who's AWOL, give them a hug and tell them that everything is going to be okay, and you'll be there for this person.

Pass them over to another veteran, especially if they have feelings against the war, and just give them a voice to speak out.

Help them feel safe, comfortable, and give them housing if they need it, help them to get a job so they can still sustain themselves while they're AWOL.

The Senate Votes To Break Up Iraq Into Three Countries? Fine: Let's Let Arabs Vote On Breaking Up The USA

[Thanks to Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

10/02/07 By Linda S. Heard, Special to Gulf News

As if they haven't done enough damage bombing and invading a country on false pretences, destroying its culture and leaving it a charred shell of its former self, they - American lawmakers who gave President George W. Bush authority to go to war - now want to divide Iraq up into easily manageable bite size entities.

Isn't Iraq supposed to be a sovereign nation with an elected government?

If so, then why is the US Senate attempting to meddle in its affairs by overwhelmingly passing a resolution calling for the country's partition into three, which is tantamount to ethnic cleansing?

Not to put too fine a point the shape of Iraq to come isn't their business.

Moreover, even if they had a stake in the country they are responsible for destroying, which they certainly do not, American senators who may or may not have enjoyed a two-day jaunt to Baghdad's Green Zone are not qualified to be the deciders.

The Iraqi government was quick to put a damper on the proposal. Its spokesman Ali Al Dabbagh said "It's the Iraqis who decide these sorts of issues, no-one else".

According to a recent ABC/BBC poll a mere nine per cent of Iraqis favour the break-up of their country.

It was Democratic Senator Joseph Biden, a presidential hopeful who initiated the vote.

Biden and his fellows should understand a simple principle. American troops are the interlopers not the Iraqi people, who have suffered enough already.

Here's a suggestion for the Arab world. How about a vote on the break-up of America?

How about giving California back to Mexico, returning Hawaii to its indigenous islanders and Alaska to the Eskimos and Indians?

Let's restrict Caucasians to the East and West coasts, and package-up a few states in between for African Americans and Latinos.

And while we're about it, let's invite foreign conglomerates to buy up the country's oil, gas and timber.

Outrageous ethnic cleansing that might be but that's exactly what Biden and friends think they have the right to do in Iraq.

Surely if such uninformed nose-poking is good enough for Washington, it's equally appropriate for the rest of us.

**Descendents Of British Officers
Who Slaughtered Nationalists In
India Find People Have Long
Memories:
“Protesters Shout ‘English Go Home’
And Call Them ‘Descendants Of
Savages’”
“Officers Like Havelock Are
Synonymous With Mass Killings, Rapes
And Burning Of Villages”**

[Thanks to Gerald Ali]

September 26, 2007 The Times [UK] & by BETH HALE and AMRIT DHILLON,
Associated Newspapers Ltd .

A group of British historians and retired soldiers yesterday abandoned plans to visit the site of an Indian uprising against colonial rule amid protests from Hindu and Muslim groups.

Instead, the tourists, who hoped to honour fallen ancestors on the 150th anniversary of the 1857 Indian Mutiny, found themselves barricaded in their hotel in the northern city of Lucknow.

Nationalist protesters shouted “English go home” and called them “descendants of savages”.

They were put under police guard after supporters of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) pelted their bus with rubbish and dirty water.

City authorities later advised against their planned visit to the Residency, the scene of a key and bloody event during the 1857 uprising known in Britain as the Sepoy Mutiny and in India as the First War of Independence.

The 40-strong group is on a three-week tour of India, retracing the course of an historic uprising sparked by the courtmartial of 85 Indian soldiers (sepoys) who refused on religious grounds to use rifle cartridges greased with animal fat.

Led by Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, a British historian, it includes direct descendants of the generals Sir Henry Havelock, Sir Hugh Rose and Sir Henry Lawrence, who played significant roles in suppressing the mutiny.

Protesters stormed the lobby of their hotel in Agra in the north and an angry mob also greeted them when they travelled south to Gwalior.

Lalji Tandon, a BJP leader, described the visit as an “insult to Indian freedom fighters” and a commemoration of “barbaric British rule”.

He said: “We will not allow anyone to make a mockery of our freedom struggle by eulogising those who oppressed us, rebuked and humiliated us for almost 200 years.”

Muslim clerics joined Hindu fundamentalists in saying they would allow no “celebration” of the anniversary.

The Britons said that their visit had been misunderstood. Their presence, however, has left a trail of enmity in northern India.

Last week former servicemen tried to present a stone plaque in Meerut at the site of the notorious courtmartial to commemorate their predecessors in the 1st Battalion, The 60th King’s Royal Rifle Corps.

They encountered protests by activists, who waved black flags and desecrated the graves of British officers, and outrage from Indian historians, who said that the episode exposed a latent superiority complex.

“To come to India, at places where the 60th regiment and officers like Havelock are synonymous with mass killings, rapes and burning of villages . . . speaks of an apathetic, sick, lingering and dangerously pro-imperialist, Western mindset,” Amaresh Misra, the Indian author, wrote in The Hindustan Times.

Anil Tiwari, a member of the World Hindu Council in Lucknow, said: “These visitors should be hanged from a tree and their bodies put on the first flight out of India.

“They have no business honouring their dead when so many Indians were massacred so ruthlessly.”

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



An Iraqi woman shouts “Don't shoot!” as US soldiers force her son and elderly husband to lie face down in the dirt south of Baquba. (AFP/Alexander Nemenov)

[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!**

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 The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

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