

## **GI SPECIAL 5K19:**

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



A U.S. soldier with Alpha Company first Special Troops Battalion, first Brigade Combat team, 101st Airborne waits before going on patrol in south Tikrit, November 22, 2007. REUTERS/Stefano Rellandini

**“Being In Iraq Fills You  
With A Darkness That  
Doesn’t Go Away”**

**“They Share The Anger And  
Disenchantment Of Many Veterans Who  
Have Returned From The Wars In Iraq**

# And Afghanistan. They Also Share A Determination To Speak Out”



**“For the second time in my life, a president has plunged our country into a quagmire where there is no way to win a victory which can be defined,” Davey says. “I thought we learned a lesson in Vietnam. I was wrong.”**

November 10, 2007 By Nick Coleman, Star Tribune

**Wes Davey, drafted during the Vietnam War, thought America learned a lesson in Vietnam. He never thought he'd spend his 54th birthday in Baghdad, or that a son would serve there, too.**

Brandon Day carries the names of 11 dead comrades tattooed on his right arm. But you don't need to see the tattoos to see his pain. It's in his eyes.

And Raymond Camper is one of the Minnesota National Guard members who served a longer stretch in Iraq than any other U.S. troops deployed there.

Camper, Davey and Day share more than their time in uniform.

**They share the anger and disenchantment of many veterans who have returned from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They also share a determination to speak out.**

**The three are among the founding members of the Minnesota chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War, a group established here in September.**

Today is Veterans Day (government offices will be closed Monday), and Iraq Veterans Against the War will join Veterans For Peace near the State Capitol this morning for a reading of the names of Minnesotans who have died in Iraq. Afterward, the antiwar vets hope new members will join them to help get word to other veterans that there is strength in numbers, and in telling the truth.

Drafted as a teenager during the Vietnam era, Davey was a National Guard and Army Reserve soldier who retired with the rank of master sergeant after serving in Iraq at the start of the war.

Now, at 58, he is president of the Minnesota chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

**Speaking last week at Augsburg College, Davey said the war was based on lies from the Bush administration and that, while servicemen and women and their families have borne the war's sacrifice, the affluent in the political and corporate worlds are sacrificing nothing and are profiting from the war.**

Davey said veterans returning from Iraq -- many suffering from undiagnosed or untreated physical and mental problems -- are angered by the attitude they encounter when they get back: "You volunteered. Shut up and die."

Nearly 4,500 Americans have died in Iraq and Afghanistan (this year has been the bloodiest to date, in both countries).

Meanwhile, the wounded and maimed return to a country where 70 percent of the public opposes the war but few do anything about it, including the "opposition" in Congress. No wonder there is rising anger among veterans.

Day, 29, enlisted after 9/11 and served two tours in Iraq, the second ending in September 2006. After 9/11, he had an eagle and a flag tattooed on his right shoulder, a sign of his desire to defend America.

Now, on that same arm, tattooed dog tags bear the names of 10 soldiers in his company who died in Iraq, as well as the name of a friend who committed suicide after coming home.

"Being in Iraq fills you with a darkness that doesn't go away," Day told a gathering at the Cathedral of St. Paul in September, recounting how he pulled another friend's body from the wreckage of a Humvee.

Now studying engineering at the University of Minnesota, Day finds that his outrage at the waste of lives in Iraq fuels his passion to speak against the war.

After four soldiers in his unit were killed in an explosion, he says, an Army psychiatrist counseled the grieving troops. But after two hours, the shrink looked at his watch and said, "Well, I guess we should get out of here."

After that, Day says, the soldiers decided they couldn't talk about their feelings. Instead, their attitude became, "The Army broke me, and they can't fix me."

Today's reading of the names of the dead will follow a 10:30 bell-ringing ceremony at the First Shot Memorial on the west side of the Veterans Services Building near the Capitol. Afterward, at noon, the group will meet at Macalester Plymouth United Church, 1658 Lincoln Av., St. Paul.

All Iraq-era veterans are welcome. They may also e-mail [Minnesota@ivaw.org](mailto:Minnesota@ivaw.org).

**“For the second time in my life, a president has plunged our country into a quagmire where there is no way to win a victory which can be defined,” Davey says.**

**“I thought we learned a lesson in Vietnam. I was wrong.”**

## **DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE?**

**Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657**

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Green Zone Mortared; “Body Hanging From A Damaged Minibus”**

22 Nov 2007 Reuters

Insurgents fired 10 mortar bombs at Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, police said, and a huge plume of black smoke rose into the sky as the sun was setting. The U.S. government public address system in the Green Zone warned people to “duck and cover” and to stay away from windows.

The heavily fortified area houses the U.S. Embassy, thousands of American troops and contractors, and Iraq's government headquarters.

A Reuters witness saw what appeared to be a body hanging from a damaged minibus.

Police said there were casualties but had not details.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

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

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



Photo by Nahrawan [Thanks to Kevin Ramirez, CCCO, who sent this in.]

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## **Deadline Nears For Holiday Overseas Mail**

11.21.07 Philadelphia Inquirer

The Postal Service is reminding customers that deadlines for sending holiday packages are approaching, particularly for those going to U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**To arrive before Christmas, mail going to members of the military in Iraq and Afghanistan should be sent by Dec. 4. Military mail headed to other overseas destinations should be sent by Dec. 11, the Postal Service said.**

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## **Feds Thieving From Troops & Veterans:**

**“In Improperly Collecting These Debts, The AAFES Has Steadily Appropriated Millions Of Dollars”**

**“The Army And Air Force Exchange Service Is Breaking The Law By Taking Money From Soldiers And Veterans Who Have Military Credit Card Debts”**

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

**“It is shocking that a U.S. government agency would illegally take this money from veterans who have served our country well, particularly from those veterans who may be depending on government benefits,” said Deepak Gupta, an attorney for Public Citizen who is working on the lawsuit.**

November 16, 2007 ConsumerAffairs.Com

**The Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) is breaking the law by taking money from soldiers and veterans who have military credit card debts that were either improperly calculated, too old to collect or both, according to a lawsuit suit filed by Public Citizen in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California in San Francisco.**

Public Citizen filed the suit on behalf of veteran Julius Briggs and a class of soldiers and veterans nationwide.

For years, the AAFES has offered credit cards, known as Military Star cards, to military personnel to purchase uniforms and other items from the stores it operates on military bases.

If a service member is delinquent in paying a debt, the government has the right to deduct the money owed from the member’s government benefits or tax refunds. The government can add interest, penalties and administrative costs as permitted by the credit card contract or federal law.

**AAFES, however, is not permitted by law to collect debts that have been outstanding for more than 10 years or amounts in excess of what the contract allows.**

**In improperly collecting these debts, the AAFES has steadily appropriated millions of dollars from soldiers and veterans nationwide, Public Citizen says.**

“It is shocking that a U.S. government agency would illegally take this money from veterans who have served our country well, particularly from those veterans who may be depending on government benefits,” said Deepak Gupta, an attorney for Public Citizen who is working on the lawsuit.

Briggs, the plaintiff, is a 21-year veteran of the U.S. Army and Army Reserves with an honorable record. He served in Germany and later in Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm.

While on active duty in 1977, he suffered a back injury that has since limited the number and types of jobs he can take.

Since 2004, the U.S. government has withheld more than \$2,300 in federal payments to Briggs to pay an AAFES debt that was outstanding more than 10 years.

The withheld payments have caused Briggs to be unable to pay his housing costs, leaving him homeless for several periods over the past few years.

Not only has the government collected money beyond the time limit, but it also has inflated the amount due through improper interest rate calculations.

“With any luck, this lawsuit will force AAFES to stop collecting money that it has no right to take,” said Briggs.

The lawsuit seeks an injunction against further illegal collection of debts by AAFES and restitution of all funds inappropriately collected.

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## **Veterans Slaughtered By Incompetent Staff At North Texas VA Hospitals; “The Care I Got At The VA Is ‘Don’t Care’”**

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

21 Nov 2007 Fox Texas

Marissa Evans has a tough time talking about her father. Hugh Turner was a U.S. Marine and Airman.

Evans just buried him in September but says her father’s troubles started years ago. Pictures Evans took of her father show an abnormal growth in his abdomen. “It just kept growing and growing,” Evans told Fox 4. “The VA would tell him to do sit ups and exercises.”

**Evans says her father needed surgery. But hospital records show the VA considered the surgery to be “elective” and in February 2007 scheduled Turner’s surgery six months later. Evans says all she could do is wait and watch as her father experienced vomiting, weight loss, and extreme discomfort.**

**Two days after his surgery in August, the VA released Turner. Within days, he was rushed to another hospital where records show he had a bowel obstruction and an infection. He died another 25 days later. “He really fought it,” Evans says. “He couldn’t hang on any more.”**

Sam Dillard was an MP in the Marines during the Cuban missile crisis in the 1960’s. Dillard was treated for a plantars wart on his foot. The VA removed it but Dillard says the wound wouldn’t heal.

**After 8-months he switched hospitals and learned he had developed cancer.**

**Dillard now has a prosthetic leg. He sued the VA, claiming negligence but the VA claimed it was a diabetic foot ulcer, not cancer. The VA denied wrongdoing but settled Dillard's case for \$80,000.**

**"The care I got at the VA is 'don't care,'" says Dillard.**

Gene Brown served twenty years in the U.S. Air Force.

**Gene's wife, Alice says her husband went to the VA for outpatient shoulder surgery. He now has brain damage, according to their lawsuit filed against the VA. "They had him strapped down and he was screaming, 'there is blood, blood, get me out,'" Alice Brown told Fox 4.**

**"These people where supposed to be taking care of him." Alice says her husband suffered memory loss and didn't know who he was or who she was and his conditioned only worsened. The Brown's are suing the government for negligence.**

Brown now has a tough time getting around and doesn't remember much of his past. He looked forward to spending his retirement on the road but his travel trailer now sits in the driveway, for sale.

**H.M. Abbott says he will never forget the words he heard at the VA Hospital in Bonham.**

**"Shortly after we arrived, the doctor came in and said, 'we lost him,'" says Abbott.**

**Abbott's 54-year old son, Ronald served in the Army. He went to the VA complaining of chest pain. The Abbott's lawsuit claims he was discharged from the hospital with a diagnosis of "skeletal pain" from "unaccustomed activity." Ronald returned hours later with "shortness of breath."**

**But again, he was discharged from the VA Hospital with pain medication. When his wife brought him in for a 3rd time, Ronald was "dead on arrival." The Abbotts claimed negligence. The VA denied wrongdoing but settled the case for \$400,000.**

"They have been through hell," says Amy Witherite, attorney for the Brown, Abbott, and Dillard families. "They've been through hell so we didn't have to go there." Witherite has sued the VA more than a dozen times for substandard medical care of veterans.

**"Delay, delay...and then when you finally get in to see the doctor you get a poor work up because they are only allocated 10 minutes," Witherite says.**

The VA treated Fox 4 the same way. Fox 4 requested interviews for six weeks. Finally the VA agreed to an interview after Fox 4 provided the required patient release forms from specific families. But Dr. Clark Gregg, Chief of Staff for VA's North Texas Healthcare System, allowed little more than 10 minutes for the interview.



**In 2005 the Office of Inspector General's report named the Dallas VA Hospital as the worst in the country.**

In 2006 congressional testimony alleged "significant deficits" in the Dallas VA's quality assurance program.

And a 2007 Office of Inspector General report accused the Dallas VA and ten other VA hospitals of falsely reporting veterans received timely doctor appointments.

Last year the federal government paid out \$67 Million in medical malpractice claims against VA Hospitals, nationwide. This year that figure is expected to top \$69 Million. Amy Witherite says Texas vets are not able to receive much in damages because of lawsuit reform limits.

"These end up being nuisance cases that they throw a little money at to make them go away," says Witherite.

**"For the most part, these guys who have served their country and gone thru hell and high water for all of us are completely devalued, first by the system and then by any lawsuit recovery that says they are just not worth that much."**

Marissa Evans has not yet sued the VA over her father's death. The VA says it is still reviewing Hugh Turner's case.

**Evans says she did hear from the VA recently when someone called to schedule a post-surgery appointment. "I said, 'well, it's too late. He passed away on the 19th."**

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## **Former Commander Of Army Recruiting Office Gets Prison For Distributing Child Porn**

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

November 21, 2007 The Daily Star, Oneonta, NY [Excerpts]

It is with no joy or satisfaction that we take note of last week's plea agreement that will send Michael J. Frascatore of Unadilla to federal prison, where he will begin serving at least a five-year sentence.

The former station commander of the Army recruiting office in Oneonta is being held without bail in Onondaga County Jail awaiting sentencing March 6 in Binghamton.

He had been named in an April 12 indictment charging him with five counts of distributing child pornography and one count of attempting to solicit sex from a minor.

The events that led to Frascatore's incarceration are beyond sad.

Since 2004, he had been using a Yahoo! screen name combining a version of his surname with an obscenity.

Who knows how many minors he had communicated with before beginning sexually charged Internet conversations with someone he thought was a little girl, but who was actually a male police officer posing as a 13-year-old named "Amber."

Frascatore has admitted transmitting five images of child pornography over his computer to "Amber," an undercover Washington State University police officer.

The explicit photos were of a naked girl Frascatore called "Sara," a 12-year-old from Virginia, according to an affidavit from an FBI agent involved in the case.

We can't begin to know the effect it has had on Frascatore's family. To discover that a husband, a father, a son is a sexual predator preying upon what he believed to be an underage girl and circulating those awful photos must have come as a great shock.

**MORE:**

## **Army Recruiter Arrested On Child Porn Charges**

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

Nov 22, 2007 JONESBORO, Ark. (AP)

Jonesboro police arrested an Army recruiter they say tried to solicit sex from a 16-year-old girl he met during a high school visit.

Greggory John DeBoer, 28, is charged with felony possession of child pornography, though police said he could soon face other charges.

The girl said she met DeBoer during a recruiting trip to her school in October and that the two began communicating by phone and the Internet the following day, Jonesboro police detective Ernest Ward wrote in an affidavit.

She said DeBoer asked her for photographs of herself, first clothed and then nude, and later asked her several times to meet for sex, but she refused, Ward wrote.

Police seized three computers and three cell phones during searches of DeBoer's home and office, Ward said. Two of the phones and a laptop computer were government property, he said.

The child pornography charge stems from a nude photograph of the girl found on one of DeBoer's computers, police said.

DeBoer is due back in court in January, when he is expected to enter a plea. At his hearing Wednesday, DeBoer said he planned to hire an attorney.

If convicted, DeBoer could face five to 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$15,000. A judge also issued a no-contact order on DeBoer, preventing him from contacting the girl.

DeBoer told officers he had been in the Army for 9 1/2 years, two of those in Jonesboro, Ward wrote. DeBoer is married and a father, and has no prior criminal record, Ward said.

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## **Captain And Warrant Officer Jailed For Killing Soldier: He Was Beaten With Belts And Thrown In A Dog Cage**

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

November 13, 2007 News Limited

A RUSSIAN military court jailed a captain and a warrant officer overnight for beating a young conscript to death during a drunken rampage at an elite space forces base.

The military court found the two soldiers guilty of causing death, grievous bodily harm and abuse of office for beating conscript Sergei Sinkonen to death at the Plesetsk Cosmodrome in the Arkhangelsk region of northern Russia.

Warrant Officer Vadim Kalinin was sentenced to 14 years in jail and Captain Viktor Bal was sentenced to 11 years in jail, Itar-Tass reported, citing the court decision. They also had their ranks revoked.

"When deciding the punishment, it was taken into account that Bal fully admitted his guilt and repented. Kalinin denied any involvement in Sinkonen's death but was proved guilty," Tass quoted military prosecutor Konstantin Olkhovatenko as saying.

At the time of the beating in August, officials said two soldiers had beaten up Sinkonen with belts and thrown him in a dog cage after heavy drinking at a wedding reception. Sinkonen later died from his injuries. The officials said another conscript was also badly beaten.

Defence Minister Sergei Serdyukov sacked a general who was acting head of the base and called for tough punishment for officers at the base who he said had been negligent in carrying out their duties.

**Bullying in the Russian army became a major political issue last year when doctors amputated the legs and genitals of a conscript who was bullied by fellow soldiers.**

Recruits in Russia's military serve 18 months and face abusive treatment by older soldiers called "dedovshchina", or "rule of the grandfathers".

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

### **Resistance Action**

11.22.07 AP & Guardian & Reuters

**Militants wearing Iraqi army uniforms killed at least 10 U.S.-backed fighters on Thursday, the latest attack on the American effort to form neighborhood-based armed patrols, Iraqi officials said.**

They shot dead three Iraqi soldiers at a checkpoint before attacking members of a neighbourhood security force, killing 10 people, the AFP news agency said.

Reuters said three soldiers had been killed. The unit killed the soldiers at a checkpoint in the Hawr Rajab area of southern Baghdad. Five soldiers were also injured.

According to AFP, the militants then seized a military vehicle and attacked the headquarters of the Hawr Rajab Awakening Council.

The military said the insurgents used small-arms fire throughout the morning against the Iraqi soldiers and the U.S.-backed fighters, known in military jargon as "concerned local citizens."

A roadside bomb targeting a police commando patrol wounded two policemen in the Diyala Bridge district of southern Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb killed one policeman and wounded another in Mosul, police said.

A car bomb targeting a police patrol wounded two policemen in a southern area of Mosul, police said.

Guerrillas killed a member of a municipal council near Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. The official was driving when he was shot from another vehicle.

Teenagers on a motorbike threw a hand grenade at a police checkpoint in Yarmouk in western Baghdad, wounding a soldier, police said.

A roadside bomb targeting an army patrol wounded two soldiers in central Baghdad, police said.

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

**NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW  
TRAVELING SOLDIER**

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! ([www.ivaw.org/](http://www.ivaw.org/))

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

***In Memoriam:***

***Film Producer Francine Parker:***

**“FTA Is The Only Film Made At  
That Time That Really Gives A  
Vivid Portrayal Of This Antiwar  
Upsurge In The Military”**



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

November 19, 2007 By Valerie J. Nelson, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

Francine Parker, a director best known for the film "FTA," a documentary with Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland that chronicles a tour of antiwar entertainers during the Vietnam era and that was inexplicably pulled from theaters within a week of its 1972 release, has died. She was 81.

Parker, who was one of the first female members of the Directors Guild of America and fought to expand opportunities for women in the industry, died of heart failure Nov. 8 at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, said Jay Stephens Rodriguez, a close associate.

**“Francine was a warrior for her causes,” Rodriguez said. “She was very much in love with political protest and fairness and justice. . . . ‘FTA’ was probably the single most important event of her life.”**

**The documentary had shrunk a weeks-long tour of military bases in the Pacific into a 90-minute film that devoted about as much screen time to the revue’s audience -- disillusioned servicemen -- as it did to the entertainers’ sharply critical political satire.**

**“FTA” stood for “Free the Army” -- or something more profane -- among thousands of soldiers who saw the show despite the military’s opposition.**

The movie opened in theaters in 1972 the same week that Fonda made her controversial trip to Hanoi, according to the Internet database All Movie Guide.

**American-International Pictures quickly withdrew it from circulation under “questionable circumstances,” according to filmmaker David Zeiger.**

**At a Directors Guild screening of the film in 2005, director Oliver Stone said Parker had concluded that “calls were made from high up in Washington, possibly from the Nixon White House, and the film just disappeared.”**

Speaking at the same screening, Fonda said, “I must say, looking at it now, it’s no wonder” the film was pulled from distribution. She produced the film with Parker and Sutherland.

**“When you see thousands of guys and women with their fists in the air who were active-duty military personnel, it’s a different slant. Now, in the context of Iraq, it’s very . . . subversive,” Fonda said, according to a report on the news website AlterNet.org.**

Zeiger called the film “a lost classic that has real resonance today.”

He incorporated footage from the “FTA” show in his 2005 film “Sir! No Sir!” that documents the antiwar movement by soldiers during the 1960s and ‘70s.

**“‘FTA’ is the only film made at that time that really gives a vivid portrayal of this antiwar upsurge in the military,” Zeiger told The Times last week. “It has a huge impact on how people see the 1960s.”**

**Rarely viewed since 1972, the film will be screened Thursday at the International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam, an event Parker had been scheduled to attend.**

**“This was her big film 35 years ago, and it really got buried,” said Zeiger, who worked with Parker on “FTA” over the last year.**

**“She was excited about the opportunity to bring it back into the world, and for it to have an impact.”**

Since arriving in Los Angeles from New York City about 1950, Parker tried to have an effect on the role of women in Hollywood.

In the early 1960s, she was chosen to appear on the television show “What’s My Line?” by producers who were sure that panelists would never guess a woman would hold the title of “TV director,” Parker recalled in a 1986 Times article. The game show was canceled before she could go on.

When she produced a series of one-hour plays for the Public Broadcasting Service called “Jews and History,” a 1966 Times article marveled at the “odds of a female producer selling anthologized culture on television.” The plays presented various contributions Jews had made to the arts.

As president of the newly formed Women for Equality in Media, Parker led a march against the American Film Institute in 1971 to protest the near absence of women in institute programs that were partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The protest shook the AFI, The Times reported in 1973, and the article noted that the number of women admitted to the institute’s Center for Advanced Film Studies had risen to seven from zero in 1969.

She was reportedly the 11th woman to join the Directors Guild, in 1971, and spoke out for the need to develop an “old-girls network.”

“When you’re powerless, what good is your network?” said Parker in a 1986 Times article that ran under the headline “Plight of Women Directors Improved -- But Not Much.”

Born in New York City on Dec. 18, 1925, Parker earned a bachelor’s degree from Smith College in Massachusetts and a master’s degree in theater directing from the Yale School of Drama.

In Los Angeles, she produced radio and TV programs for the University of Judaism, where she developed the “Jews and History” program that helped her make connections in Hollywood, Rodriguez said.

Parker often directed equity-waiver theater and had worked as an acting coach. For the last 18 years, she taught film directing at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena.

She is survived by her daughter, Amanda, of West Los Angeles and two grandsons.

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## **Sounds Like A Plan!**

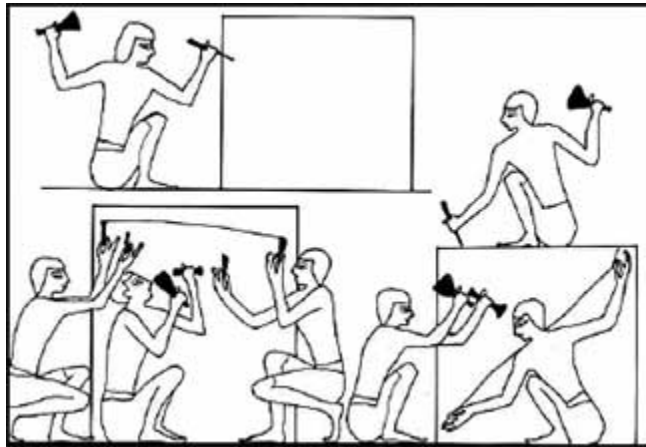


Nov 21, 2007 AP [Excerpt]

**The Army and Marine Corps will run out of cash to pay for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan if Congress does not quickly pass a \$178 billion war supplemental spending bill, a Pentagon spokesman warned Tuesday.**

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## **November 23, 1170 BC: The First Recorded Strike**



Carl Bunin Peace History November 19-25

The first recorded strike took place in Egypt when necropolis workers who had not been paid for their work in more than two months sat down and refused to work until they were paid and able to eat.

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## ***November 23, 1887:* Dishonorable Anniversary The Louisiana Militia Butchers Unarmed Sugar Plantation Strikers**

Carl Bunin Peace History November 19-25

Black Louisiana sugarcane workers, in cooperation with the racially integrated Knights of Labor, went on strike.

The Louisiana Militia, aided by bands of “prominent citizens,” shot and killed 35 unarmed black sugar workers striking to gain a dollar-per-day wage, and lynched two strike leaders.

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## “Many Were Told To ‘Run For Their Lives’ Before Being Summarily Executed”

By Stephen Kliebert, Dougriddle.com [Excerpts]

The Thibodaux Massacre of 1887 was the second most bloody labor dispute in U.S. history.

Although most of the blood letting occurred in the environs of Thibodaux, the strike encompassed a larger area. The strike affected sugar plantations in St. Mary, Terrebonne, and Lafourche parishes. These parishes make up an area known as the “sugar bowl.” Thibodaux is the parish seat of Lafourche.

**The plight of the sugar cane worker in 1887 was one of back-breaking labor and meager pay.**

Most field hands were paid approximately 13 dollars a month. They were also paid in script. Script was basically a coupon redeemable only at the company store owned by the planter. The store’s prices were normally marked up 100%.

**You can see that the worker usually wound up being indebted to the planter. Louisiana law stated that if a worker owed money to a planter he could not move off the planters land until the debt was paid. This law essentially reduced the plantation laborer to the status of serf.**

In 1885 the Knights of Labor was successful in organizing railroad workers who worked for the Charles Morgan Railroad and Steamboat company. The company owned a stretch of tracks that ran from New Orleans to Texas. The railroad passes through the communities of Des Allemands, Raceland, Schreiver, and Morgan City on its way to Texas.

The K. of L. felt that the sugar cane workers were fertile ground to expand their organization. In 1886 a L.A. (local assembly) of the K. of L. was established in Schreiver, La. for sugar cane workers.

**It was the probably the first assembly of a labor union that allowed both black and white members to join. During a time when a strict caste system was imposed this was one hell of an achievement!**

In late October, 1887 LA 8404 (Schreiver local) presented a list of demands to L.S.P.A. The L.S.P.A.'s (Louisiana Sugar Producer’s Association), members included local sugar planters. The workers wanted elimination of script, a small increase in their daily wages, and payment every two weeks.. The planter’s association rejected the demands

**The planter aristocracy ruled Louisiana at this point in time. They worked for many years to deny poor whites and blacks access to education, and better working conditions. They were not about to cede any of their power now.**

The Knights of Labor scheduled a strike to commence on the 1st of November 1887.

The strike began during the crucial harvest period known as “grinding.” On November 1st workers in St. Mary, Lafourche, and Terrebonne parishes refused to work, and refused to vacate their cabins that were plantation-owned. Attempts to evict tenants by local sheriffs were unsuccessful.

The sugar planters were faced with the possibility of losing their crops to a freeze if the strike persisted.

On the same day the strike began, the planters association called on the governor to send them help in the form of the state militia.

Governor McEnery(1881-1888) who was himself a plantation owner had no problem in ordering the state militia to the embattled region. The first militia companies arrived in Schriever, Louisiana from New Orleans on the first of November. They made the short trip to Thibodaux where they intended to store their equipment which included horses, rifles, and a Gatling gun in front of the Lafourche parish courthouse.

The two militia companies that arrived in Thibodaux were not the only ones to take part in strike-breaking. Other companies were sent to Houma and Lockport.

**Some 10,000 plantation workers took part in the strike. Most of the strikers were black, but nearly 1000 were white.**

The militia companies sent to the region worked with local judges in evicting strikers from plantations, and provided protection for “scabs” sent in to replace the strikers.

When striking plantation workers were faced with soldiers armed with Springfield rifles they offered little to no resistance. They heeded the orders to leave the plantations. Many congregated in the black section of Thibodaux.

Problems arose when white scabs were fired upon in Terrebonne parish. Strikers, who were forced off plantations, were believed to be involved in firing into sugar mills in Lafourche parish.

Pickets were placed in around the city of Thibodaux. The “pickets” were composed of white civilians from Thibodaux, and neighboring parishes. They were no doubt horrified by the rumor spreading around town that black strikers intended to burn the city down.

The struggle came to a head when two white picketers were fired upon while at their posts in a black section of town. The two picketers survived, but the incident enraged the white population of Thibodaux. White vigilantes rode through the neighborhood firing their weapons and wreaking havoc.

Strikers and their family members were rounded up by vigilantes. Many were told to “run for their lives”, before being summarily executed.

On the morning of November 23, 1887 anywhere between 30 to 300 black strikers were killed.

A company of militiamen known as the Shreveport Guards is considered to have taken place in the massacre.

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## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

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

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



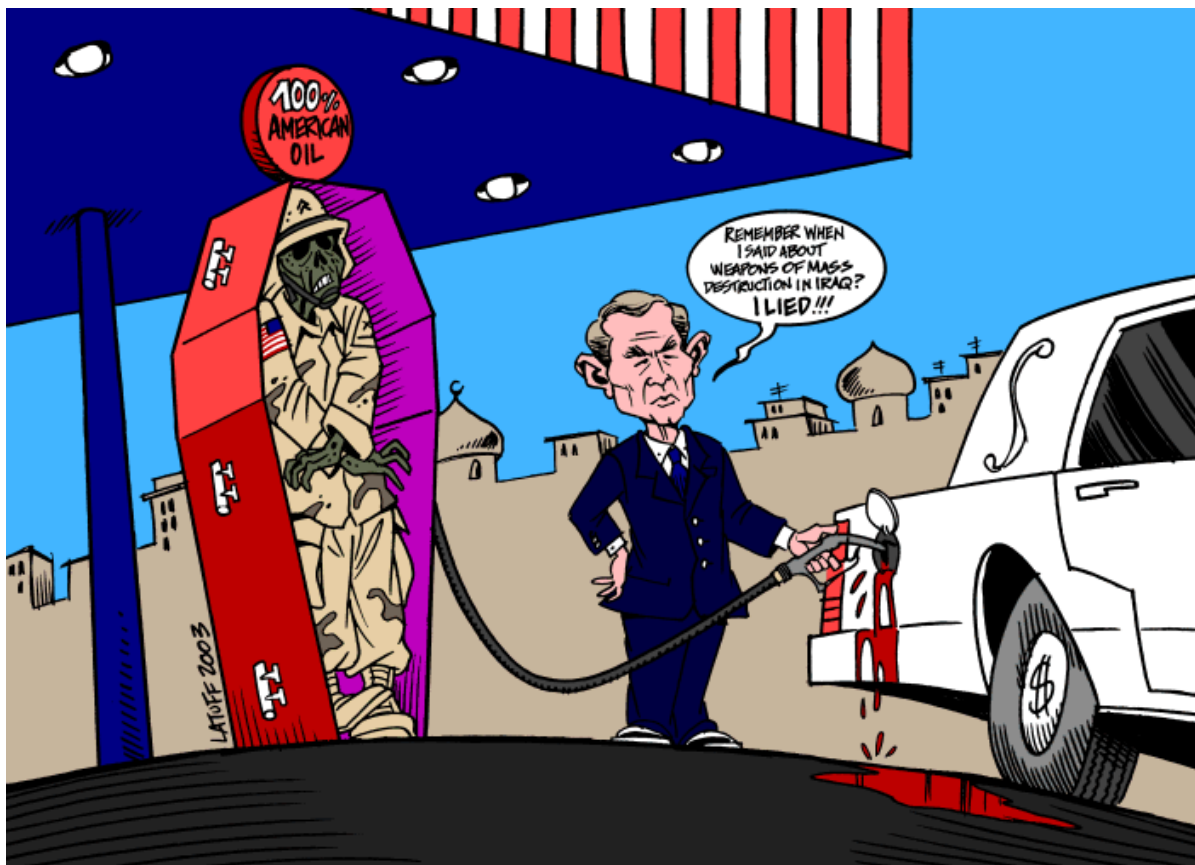
A foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. interrogates an Iraqi citizen during an armed home invasion raid in the town of Nahrawan, on the outskirts of Baghdad, November 8, 2007. REUTERS/Erik de Castro

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqi troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

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

**DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**



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

# **The Traitor Bush Gives Stronger Backing To Musharraf; He Says Military Dictator ‘Believes In Democracy’**

11.21.07 Washington Post

President Bush offered his strongest support of Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, saying the general “hasn’t crossed the line” and “truly is somebody who believes in democracy.”

The comments contrasted with previous administration statements, including by Bush himself, expressing grave concern over Musharraf’s actions.

In his first public comments on the crisis two weeks ago, Bush said his aides bluntly warned Musharraf that his emergency measures “would undermine democracy.”

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## **CLASS WAR REPORTS**

# **Rouosting The Cops In Occupied New York City: One Man Stands Up To NY City Police Terror; “Operation Clean Halls” Allows The NYPD To Stop, Search, Question, And Arrest Anyone In Or Even Near The Building In An Action Called A “Vertical”**

# **“No One Can Leave Their Home Without Their Papers”**

November 6th, 2007 by M. Chris Fabricant, Village Voice

**On a hot August night last summer in the South Bronx, David M. was walking toward the front door of his friend Dee’s high-rise public-housing building. As he approached the door, he saw an NYPD paddy wagon stationed on the corner and a police officer starting to climb out. So David thought better of it and decided not to visit Dee, to just keep walking.**

**Then he heard footsteps behind him.**

**Soon his face was pressed against the wall of Dee’s building, with his jeans pulled down to his ankles and his T-shirt pushed into his armpits as gloved hands ran over his body.**

**The police officer kept shouting at him to give up the stash, and David kept insisting he didn’t have anything.**

**Twenty minutes later, David was shirtless, chained to a few other people in the back of the paddy wagon, and charged with trespassing.**

**He spent the next four hours in the back of the sweltering NYPD meat wagon as police rounded up other young men for trespassing.**

David eventually became my client, but there is nothing unusual about his story.

Every attorney in my office has had dozens of similar cases. David’s story is unique in one way: He is fighting it.

**Unlike virtually all of my clients, he wasn’t worn down by the methodical torture of Bronx Criminal Justice and taking a guilty plea.**

Before coming to the Bronx Defenders (where I am a staff attorney), I had never had a misdemeanor case, and rare was the client I was certain was innocent.

In the Bronx, well over half of my cases are misdemeanors, and I have had a disgraceful number of innocent clients, many of whom plead guilty to a trespassing charge, either in a “Clean Halls” building or a New York City Public Housing building.

**“Operation Clean Halls” allows the NYPD to stop, search, question, and arrest anyone in or even near the building in an action called a “vertical.”**

**Clean Halls has been touted as a tool for keeping drugs and drug dealing out of low-income housing, but once a landlord signs a Clean Halls affidavit, no one can leave their home without their papers.**

Trespassing arrests are up a staggering 25 percent since 2002 — and this is no crime wave, no trespassing epidemic.

The Clean Halls program is a major component of “Operation Impact,” which was launched by the NYPD in 2003 and targets neighborhoods like the one David grew up in by flooding them with rookie police officers trying to make as many arrests as possible. In the 28-month period following the launch of the operation, 72,000 arrests were made in the targeted areas.

I have handled more trespassing cases than any other single criminal charge, and I’ve never had one actually go to trial. That was unheard of.

But the D.A. had offered a ridiculous deal—seven days of community service and five for social service — and when David refused, off to trial we went.

I was scared.

A conviction would mean that David, at 18 years old, would have a lifelong criminal record (there is no expungement procedure in New York); his DNA would be taken and forever stored in the state criminal database; and \$210 in fees would be assessed—maybe even more jail time.

**Now, in the elevator up to the courtroom, we prepped for trial. I read part of the complaint out loud: When asked who he was visiting in the building, the defendant failed to provide a name or apartment number and stated that he was there to purchase drugs, to wit: marijuana.**

**David clasped his hands over his head as if he were handcuffed and exhaled at the ceiling in an incredulous rage.**

**I had seen that same absurd statement attributed to my clients many times before, a routine, boilerplate lie.**

**Justice Phyllis Bamberger, a veteran judge in another trespassing case: “This Court does not credit testimony that the defendant disclosed to a person wearing a badge that he was going to buy marijuana . . . (that) makes no sense.” Indeed.**

**David grabbed my arm when the cop walked into the courtroom.**

**“That’s not the cop who arrested me!” he hissed. “That motherfucker wasn’t even there! I remember him. He was driving the paddy wagon; he never got out of the car.”**

The cop, who had sworn out the criminal complaint, was a year out of the Police Academy. He began his testimony by reciting his absolute authority over anyone he encountered while performing a vertical.

The cop reported that he had observed “the perpetrator” in the lobby of the building “loitering.” He went on to claim that he had questioned David as to his purpose and “he admitted he was in the building to buy marijuana from a chubby guy with a Chevy truck.”



**This was how the criminal-justice system looked to David.**

**It was a farce: Cops made stories up and the assistant district attorney—who had obviously done no independent investigation and never even questioned his witness—did the rest.**

I asked the cop to describe exactly where he'd been when he first observed David. He answered that he had been parked on a nearby corner, about a block from the building, rather than inside the building in the midst of a vertical, as he had testified on direct examination.

**Next I asked him how David had entered the high-rise, and he claimed that he had slipped in behind a woman with a key.**

**When I asked what had initially attracted his attention to David, the officer began to dig himself a hole. But he charged recklessly on, throwing in, almost casually, that he believed David was going to rob or assault the woman once inside the building.**

**“What made you think so?” I asked.**

**“Because, counselor,” he smirked at me, “your client stalked that woman for nearly a block.”**

**“You watched my client prepare to commit a violent crime . . . and you waited to exit your vehicle until my client had already gotten inside the building?”**

**“It happened very fast, counselor.”**

**He then balked when I pointed out the first door is unlocked and didn't require a key.**

**“How was it that the woman had used a key for the first door?”**

**“She had her key out, counselor.”**

**“David was alone when you observed him in the lobby?”**

**“Yes.”**

**“And you arrested him in the lobby?”**

**“Yes.”**

**“How did you get into the lobby?”**

**“I walked in.”**

**“So the door was open?”**

**“Ummm . . . yes, I believe so. I don't remember.”**

**The judge looked over his glasses at the cop and changed expression for the first time. I could see David shaking his head in disgust.**

The D.A. stood by his cop, arguing in his closing statement that he had observed my client trespassing in the lobby of a Clean Halls building and that any minor inconsistencies were irrelevant to the trespassing charge.

**My arguments were to the contrary: The officer's testimony on direct examination, I argued, bore no resemblance to his testimony on cross-examination, which, in turn, bore no resemblance to the criminal complaint he swore out.**

The judge acquitted David, reasoning that if he had been in the building to visit a specific individual, he had not been trespassing, even if he had been there for an illegal purpose. (Odd, if defensible, logic. My guess is that the judge was reluctant, as most judges are, to call any cop a liar.)

**I was elated, but David didn't feel vindicated—he was disgusted.**

**The entire process left him feeling only bitterness.**

**He had been falsely arrested for “trespassing” in his own backyard, like so many others before him.**

**Like so many others right now.**

### **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.**

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