

GI SPECIAL 5L1:



U.S. Iraq Casualties Jump To More Than 82,000:

**At Least 20,000 Troops Suffered
Brain Trauma In Iraq But Are Not
Counted As “Wounded In Action”**

US military occupation forces in Iraq suffered at least 55 combat casualties in the week ending Nov. 27, as the official total reached at least 62,044.

The total includes 31,744 killed or wounded by what the Pentagon classifies as “hostile” causes and 30,300 (a figure now almost two months old) dead and injured from “non-hostile” causes.

US media divert attention from the actual cost in American life and limb by routinely reporting only the total killed (3,878 as of Nov. 27) and rarely mentioning the 28,582 wounded in combat.

To further minimize public perception of the cost, they cover for the Pentagon by ignoring the 30,300 (as of Oct. 1) military victims of accidents and illness that caused death or were serious enough to require medical evacuation, although the 3,878 reported deaths include 716 (up one last week) who died from those same causes, including 130 suicides.

USA Today reported Nov 23 that at least 20,000 US troops suffered brain trauma in Iraq but are not counted as “wounded in action.”

The reason they are excluded from official Pentagon figures is that “Soldiers and Marines whose wounds were discovered after they left Iraq are not added to the official casualty list, says Army Col. Robert Labutta, a neurologist and brain injury consultant for the Pentagon.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed In Baghdad

November 29, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20071129-03

BAGHDAD – Small-arms fire killed one Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier in a western section of the Iraqi capital Nov. 28.

U.S. Soldier Killed Near Baquba

November 30, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20071130-11

BAGHDAD, Iraq – A Multi-National Corps - Iraq Soldier was killed today during military operations near the city of Baquba, Iraq.

While conducting a mounted combat patrol near the city of Baquba, Iraq, the Soldier's convoy was struck by an Improvised Explosive Device.

Arlington GI Is 31st From Tarrant To Die In Iraq

Nov. 14, 2007 By NATHANIEL JONES, Star-Telegram Staff Writer

ARLINGTON -- Spc. Jermaine D. Franklin became part of a family tradition when he joined the Army in 2004.

The Arlington High School graduate's grandfather fought in World War II. His father fought in the Persian Gulf War and the Iraq war.

So it seemed fitting that Spc. Franklin would follow in their footsteps.

That path was cut short Friday when the vehicle he was driving ran over a roadside bomb in Jisr Naft, Iraq, killing him. He was 22.

Spc. Franklin was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky.

He is the 31st person from Tarrant County to be killed while serving in Iraq.

"You keep death in the back of your mind, but you never think it's going to happen," Dwight Franklin, Spc. Franklin's father, said Tuesday. "The pain is still there, but it does give comfort to know that he died for his country."

On Tuesday, a large American flag hung on the Franklin home in east Arlington. The family said Spc. Franklin's body was expected to arrive within two days.

His stepmother, Yolanda Franklin, wept as she remembered the good times.

"I loved him like he was my own blood," she said. "He was a kind person who loved to tell jokes."

The elder Franklin, an Army reservist, is eligible to return to Iraq, which meant that father and son could have served there at the same time. Dwight Franklin said he wouldn't have wanted it that way.

"I would have been too worried about him and couldn't focus on what I was supposed to be doing," he said.

In high school, Spc. Franklin worked at the Chuck E. Cheese's restaurant at Fielder Road and Pioneer Parkway.

"He loved that job because it was dealing with kids," Dwight Franklin said. "He just loved being around them."

Spc. Franklin's other survivors include his mother, a sister, a brother and three stepsisters.

No Shit?

Nov 28 Reuters

Nearly 90 percent of U.S. journalists in Iraq say much of Baghdad is still too dangerous to visit.

NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME



U.S. soldiers from the 2nd battalion, 32nd Field Artillery brigade in Baghdad August 2, 2007. REUTERS/Damir Sagolj

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

2 Danish Soldiers Killed In Gereshk Valley

November 29, 2007 The Associated Press

Two Danish soldiers were killed Thursday in a gunbattle with Taliban fighters in southern Afghanistan, the Scandinavian country's military said.

The soldiers were part of a Danish reconnaissance unit that came under fire in Gereshk Valley in Helmand Province, the Army Operational Command said.

The two were evacuated by helicopter to a Danish camp, where they were pronounced dead.

Three Canadian Soldiers Wounded By Sperwan Ghar IED

November 28, 2007 Kelly Cryderman, CanWest News Service

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Three Canadian soldiers were injured Tuesday morning when their light armoured vehicle hit a suspected homemade bomb just outside Kandahar city.

The improvised explosive device (IED) went off at about 10 a.m., 40 kilometres west of the provincial capital near the village of in Panjwai district.

"They're all in stable condition," said Lt.-Cmdr. Pierre Babinsky, a Canadian Forces spokesman.

All three soldiers were evacuated to the multinational medical unit at Kandahar Airfield, where they were treated for non-life threatening injuries, Babinsky said. All families have now been notified.

Speaking to local reporters, Taliban spokesman Qari Yusuf Ahmadi claimed responsibility for the attack.

Panjwai and Zhari districts have been the site of dozens of Canadian deaths.

***Great Moments In U.S. Military History* Occupation Command Tricked Into Bombing Their Own Military Road Workers**

Nov. 28, 2007 The Associated Press

The U.S.-led coalition killed 14 road construction workers in airstrikes in eastern Afghanistan because of mistaken intelligence reports, Afghan officials said Wednesday.

The engineers and laborers had been contracted by the U.S. military to build a road in mountainous Nuristan, and were sleeping in two tents in Nurgaram when they were killed Monday night, said Sayed Noorullah Jalili, director of the Kabul-based road construction company Amerifa. There were no survivors, he said.

"All of our poor workers have been killed," Jalili said.

"I don't think the Americans were targeting our people. I'm sure it's the enemy of the Afghans who gave the Americans this wrong information."

Nuristan Governor Tamim Nuristani said the coalition conducted air strikes after receiving reports that "the enemy" was in the area, and hit the road construction workers as they were sleeping. Afghan officials often refer to the Taliban and other militants as "the enemy."

Jalili said the workers were from four nearby provinces, and that all but three of the bodies had been returned to their homes.

Amerifa, an 11-year-old company, received the contract to build 135 miles of road for the U.S. military last year, Jalili said.

Resistance Action

Nov 25, 2007 By ASSOCIATED PRESS & November 29, 2007 NOOR KHAN,
Associated Press

In Ghazni province, Taliban insurgents ambushed police in Khogyani district, and the ensuing clash killed one policeman.

Militants in Paktia province attacked trucks carrying supplies for foreign troops, killing one driver, said Din Mohammad Darwesh, spokesman for the provincial governor.

In neighboring Paktika province, a roadside bomb hit Afghan troops, leaving one soldier dead and three wounded, Mr. Darwesh said.

A bomb hit a border police convoy Sunday in southern Afghanistan, killing two policemen and injuring a third, officials said.

The roadside bomb struck the police convoy in the morning in Kandahar provinces's Spin Boldak district near the Pakistan border, said Gen. Abdul Raziq, Spin Boldak's border security commander.

TROOP NEWS

Deadly Mystery Disease Follows Troops Home: Infections Seen In Military Hospitals In Iraq Spread To U.S.

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

Hundreds of patients - the military says it has not tabulated how many - have been infected with the bacterium in their bloodstream, cerebrospinal fluid, bones or lungs. Many of them were troops wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan; others have been civilians infected after stays in military hospitals.

October 7, 2007 Jia-Rui Chong, Los Angeles Times

The young American Army medic would not stop bleeding.

He had been put on a powerful regimen of antibiotics by doctors aboard the hospital ship Comfort in the Persian Gulf. But something was wrong.

He was in shock and bleeding from small pricks where nurses had placed intravenous lines. Red, swollen tissue from an active bacterial infection was expanding around his abdominal wound. His immune system was in overdrive.

How odd, thought Dr. Kyle Petersen, an infectious disease specialist. He knew of one injured Iraqi man with similar symptoms and a few days later encountered an Iraqi teenager with gunshot wounds in the same condition.

Within a few days, blood tests confirmed that the medic and the two wounded Iraqis were infected with an unusual bacterium, *Acinetobacter baumannii*.

This particular strain had a deadly twist. It was resistant to a dozen antibiotics. The medic survived, but by the time Petersen connected the dots, the two Iraqi patients were dead.

It was April 2003, early in the Iraq war - and 4 1/2 years later, scientists still are struggling to understand the medical mystery.

The three cases aboard the Comfort were the first of a stubborn outbreak that has spread to at least five other American military hospitals, including Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and the Army's Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany.

Hundreds of patients - the military says it has not tabulated how many - have been infected with the bacterium in their bloodstream, cerebrospinal fluid, bones or

lungs. Many of them were troops wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan; others have been civilians infected after stays in military hospitals.

At least 27 people have died in military hospitals with Acinetobacter infections since 2003, although doctors are uncertain how many of the deaths actually were caused by the bacteria.

The rise in infections has been dramatic.

In 2001 and 2002, Acinetobacter infections made up about 2 percent of admissions at the specialized burn unit at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas. In 2003, the rate jumped to 6 percent, and then to 12 percent by 2005. Other military hospitals have reported similar levels.

In the early days of the war, there were so many infections in an intensive care unit on the Comfort that a nurse posted a sign: "Acinetobacter Alley." In two months, the bacterium was found in 44 of the 211 patients wounded in battle.

It was getting out of control.

Petersen pleaded for help with an e-mail to an infectious disease mailing list.

"Can anyone familiar with (the) soil biology of Iraq or the drug-prescribing practices of the preregime medical system explain the severe drug resistance pattern we are seeing among our trauma victims?"

It was no surprise that Petersen knew little about Acinetobacter - long seen as the slacker of the bacterial world.

The name Acinetobacter comes from the Latin word for "motionless" because the bacterium lacks flagella or cilia to move.

"Organisms that are relatively wimpy pathogens ... are not high on people's list," said Fred Tenover, a microbiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

The bacterium, however, is persistent and requires few nutrients. It lives naturally in soil and can survive for days on dry surfaces, such as door knobs or hospital equipment.

Acinetobacter usually threatens only people whose immune systems are compromised because of old age, trauma or disease. Even then, garden-variety Acinetobacter is controlled easily with common antibiotics.

But the situation started to change about two decades ago. Acinetobacter followed an evolutionary path trod by numerous other bacteria since World War II, when antibiotics were first widely introduced.

Bacteria not killed by an antibiotic would pass their resistance on to later generations. The process was hastened by the often profligate use of the drugs, which allowed more bacteria to develop resistance.

Today, a host of diseases, such as tuberculosis and gonorrhea, have highly antibiotic-resistant strains.

“If we use antibiotics to kill off everything else, what is left standing is very, very drug resistant,” said Arjun Srinivasan, an epidemiologist at the CDC. “Acinetobacter is one of those left standing.”

Tenover first noticed a strain of Acinetobacter with some drug resistance in the mid-1980s while working at a veterans hospital in Seattle. Several years later, he met with Ghassan Matar, a visiting Lebanese scientist at the CDC, whose samples of Acinetobacter baumannii from patients in a Beirut hospital raised another red flag.

The infections were a legacy of years of fighting. Positive tests for Acinetobacter more than tripled at the hospital from 1983 to 1984 and stayed high for years after. The samples Matar brought were resistant to two important classes of antibiotics.

In the following years, civilian hospitals in the United States and around the world reported sporadic outbreaks of drug-resistant Acinetobacter.

“You have an organism of relatively low virulence that became more important because you've run out of drugs to treat it with,” Tenover said.

The question that Petersen struggled with was how this bug had found its way into modern military hospitals.

Doctors could beat back an infection with the strongest antibiotics, and hospitals could try to scrub away the bacteria. But those weren't solutions.

They had to find the source of the contamination.

Responses to Petersen's plea on the mailing list poured into the Comfort.

A Canadian soil scientist who worked in Iraq in the 1970s described high rates of antibiotic-resistant Staphylococcus bacteria in dirt samples.

The scientist surmised they were caused by the erratic distribution of antibiotics in Iraq. A shipment of drugs would arrive and doctors would use them until they ran out. Then, they would prescribe whatever other antibiotic was sent next, the scientist said.

A microbiologist wrote to Petersen about Australian patients injured in the 2002 nightclub bombings in Bali, Indonesia, who returned home with astronomically high levels of very drug-resistant bacteria, including Acinetobacter.

“It gave me an idea that maybe it was something related to the process of aeromedical evacuation or the injury process,” said Petersen, 39.

After Comfort reported its first Acinetobacter cases, infections began springing up in military hospitals in the Middle East, Germany and the United States. The facilities took the cases seriously.

The night Marine Maj. K.C. Schuring arrived at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, a doctor told him that if his fever didn't subside within three days, his left leg probably would have to be amputated.

Schuring, barely conscious and lying on a gurney, heard the doctor tell him that the infection could spread: "This can kill you."

He was taken to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., and immediately isolated. He heard the word *Acinetobacter* for the first time.

Schuring, who had been shot in both legs in Iraq, could take bad news, but this worried him.

"I was happy they could treat it, though they said they couldn't necessarily cure it," he said.

Whenever he left the room, he wore a yellow gown to alert others of his infection. Everyone who visited him donned yellow gowns and gloves.

He felt "like a freak," he said.

In 2003, Dr. Clint Murray, then a 33-year-old Army major at a frontline aid station in Iraq, began to dig for answers.

Whereas some wounded soldiers were sent to aid stations such as Murray's, most were airlifted to more advanced facilities like the Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad.

Murray, an infectious disease specialist, asked a critical care doctor there to take samples from soldiers wounded by gunshots, improvised explosive devices, mortar blasts or other weapons. As doctors scrambled to stabilize patients, two swabs were inserted into the wounds to collect bacteria. Most of the samples were taken within 20 to 40 minutes of the soldiers' injuries.

Out of the samples taken from 49 patients, the doctors found no *Acinetobacter*, although there were plenty of other bacteria, such as *Staphylococcus*.

That still left the possibility that dirt and dust from beyond the battlefield had blown into a wound.

Murray joined a group, including Petersen and Srinivasan, that focused on dirt around field hospitals in Iraq and Kuwait - the next step in the medical evacuation chain that started at frontline aid stations and ended at hospitals in the United States.

The group gathered 18 dirt samples around seven field hospitals and also looked at 31 archived soil samples collected from around the combat zone.

Only one of the soil samples - taken from outside a field hospital mess hall - turned up positive. The group compared it with strains collected from casualties at the field hospital in Baghdad and larger hospitals including Landstuhl in Germany and found they were not related.

Dirt, it seemed, was not the culprit.

In late 2004, Murray returned to Brooke Army Medical Center. He wondered whether soldiers were carrying the bacterium on their skin and infecting themselves when wounded. He set to work on a study swabbing the nostrils of 293 soldiers at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, who never had been to Iraq or Afghanistan.

None of the soldiers tested positive for *Acinetobacter*, Murray and colleagues reported in the journal *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology* in 2006.

The search continued, and military doctors struggled to find an effective strategy to combat the bug. The treatment could be difficult.

Schuring said doctors experimented with different drugs. Schuring's situation was complicated by his allergy to penicillin.

At one point, he was taking four antibiotics. The infection had taken away his appetite and made him queasy. It took doctors about two weeks to narrow down his treatment to a relatively new intravenous antibiotic, tigecycline.

Doctors operated on him nearly every other day to clean out dead tissue in his legs.

When the infection began to settle down, doctors installed a 21-inch stainless steel plate along his left thigh. The surgery made Schuring dizzy, but the doctors didn't want to give him a blood transfusion for fear of inciting a new infection.

The treatment, Schuring said, was like going "through hell."

Evidence was building that the cause of the infections was something in the military trauma system.

The hospital-based transmission made sense because the bacterium had taken up residence in civilian hospitals.

While preliminary typing has not found a link between the U.S. civilian strains and the military casualty strains, the conditions in military hospitals were just right for the bacterium, said Srinivasan, the CDC epidemiologist.

In the hectic environment of field hospitals, it was also difficult to impose strict infection control measures, such as thorough cleaning of hands and equipment after each patient, Murray said.

It took about three years for Murray and his colleagues to look through the entire chain of trauma, from the battlefields, to the field hospitals, to the tertiary care center in Landstuhl and finally the military hospitals in the United States.

The results of their labor, published in May in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, showed that all seven field hospitals tested in Iraq and Kuwait had *Acinetobacter* in patient care areas.

“We can't be 100 percent sure, but the data supports that patients are probably getting exposed to Acinetobacter in field hospitals in Iraq,” Murray said.

How the bacteria became entrenched in the field hospitals is still unknown. But, in many ways, it is irrelevant.

It is there, and, as civilian hospitals have found, it is not going away easily.

The military strain of the bacterium has caused at least one civilian death.

Acinetobacter was growing in the lungs and bloodstream of a 35-year-old man whose immune system was suppressed because he had a kidney transplant at Walter Reed in 2005. There were no signs of infection until the man came down with acute shortness of breath one evening and died soon after.

For the most part, doctors have figured out the most effective drugs against the bacterium - an antibiotic called imipenem and an older class of drugs known as polymyxins. The drugs have made the infections fairly manageable. Through stricter controls, such as monitored hand-washing, infections rates have begun to show signs of dropping in some hospitals.

Petersen, who worked at National Naval Medical Center in Maryland after the Comfort's mission ended, treated just one or two cases of Acinetobacter infections in July, a dramatic decline from the highs of 15 to 20 a month in 2004 and 2005. So far this year, there have been less than a handful of cases each month, according to hospital figures.

But Murray now wonders whether Acinetobacter was the culprit after all.

He and others looked at patients with the worst outcomes at Brooke's specialty burn unit and found that Acinetobacter was associated with larger burns but was not causing more deaths by itself.

A study of 35 returning soldiers with the most extreme kinds of shin bone fractures found that Acinetobacter was the most common bacterium around fracture sites when the patients arrived, but it was easy to clear. Those who later suffered serious complications, including amputations, tended to be infected with other serious bacteria, such as Staphylococcus and Pseudomonas aeruginosa.

Acinetobacter, it turns out, might only be a marker of vulnerability. “It is not the worst bug,” Murray said.

Recently, scientists have noted signs that Acinetobacter strains are growing resistant to polymyxins and imipenem, said Tenover, the CDC microbiologist.

There are, however, small victories for humans.

Just before Christmas, after a month of treatment, Schuring returned to his home in Farmington Hills, Mich.

Schuring's wife, Lynn, was nervous about this strange bug her husband had brought back from the war. What if they kissed? What if her husband put down a drink and one

of their young children took a sip? Were her parents, who are in their 70s, at risk if they visited?

Doctors assured her that this bug was no danger to the strong. So far, no one in the family has gotten sick.

But his doctor warned them that they must keep an eye out for any sign of the bacteria, which could lie dormant for years.

Schuring, now a 38-year-old lieutenant colonel, has continued to improve and hobbles around on his own two legs. He has one last surgery at Bethesda in January and then, perhaps, he will run marathons again.

“You know, this is a long process for these guys and their families,” Lynn said. “I think we just take it one step at a time. ... Everything we’ve been through has taught me to take it one step at a time.”

Everybody Loves Free Speech For Disabled Vet Until He Goes After Bush And The War: “Many People Believe In Free Speech Until You Say Something They Don't Like”



Frederick “Fritz” Kaestner, a disabled vet, stands at his van yesterday. He isn’t shy about expressing his political views all over the vehicle. Times Herald-Record/DOMINICK FIORILLE

[Thanks to Ben Chitty, Vietnam Veterans Against The War]

November 16, 2007 Times Herald-Record, By John Sullivan

Monroe — Most people around here know Frederick Kaestner, or Fritz, as Uncle Sam. He gained notice after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks by dressing up as the symbol of American patriotism and driving around in a red, white and blue Ford Escort he painted to look like the American flag.

Back then, the former military policeman and Vietnam-era vet received pats on the back and smiles. Drivers yielded and honked. Tourists offered money to have photos taken with him when he drove to Times Square.

It was a euphoric time, especially for a disabled vet, former homeless man and village eccentric who has struggled with depression most of his life.

These days, however, Kaestner's patriotism has roiled the nerves of many of those who once applauded him. That's because he is taking on the very government he once supported, and in a similarly noticeable way.

His canvas this time is a 1988 Dodge Ram van. He painted stars and stripes on it like he did his Escort, but the message is dramatically different.

Among the van's most noticeable sayings are "F— Bush" and "F— the Republican Party."

Other tidbits include: "Bush Lied, They Died," "Iraq Had Nothing to do with 9/11," and "If you voted for the idiot, are you happy now!"

Look more closely, and you notice the painted folds of the American flag around the van's edges, as if it were draped over a box — a coffin, to be exact. Kaestner keeps a tally of U.S. military casualties in Iraq with removable magnets. It reads "Dead: 3,859," "Wounded: 28,451."

The van has created quite a sensation throughout the mostly conservative towns of Blooming Grove and Monroe, where Kaestner spends most of his time.

Local businesses have demanded he remove the van from their parking lots. Parents, with kids in their cars, have wanted to fight him on the street. Blooming Grove and Monroe police have started researching the laws on free speech.

Chris Conte, the owner of Vincenzo's Barber Shop on Route 17M, called police when Kaestner parked the van in front of his shop.

"The writing on the van is ugly, but that wasn't my main concern," Conte said, adding that he was concerned about the vulgarity and the lack of parking for his other customers.

Jean Siegel, owner of Jean Siegel Realty next door to Vincenzo's, was more forthcoming. "I believe in free speech, but by vocalizing it that way, it does, it offends my sensitivity," she said. "No matter what you think, Mr. Bush is still our president, and I think he deserves our respect."

Even local civil rights attorney Michael Sussman disapproved of Kaestner's tactics. "I think, as political expression, it's counterproductive," he said. The attorney, however, went on to support the principles that allow Kaestner to keep expressing his views.

"You have to rely on (and appeal to) people's common sense, rather than throwing prohibitions up all over the place," he said. "That's what the First Amendment is all about."

Monroe police Lt. Alex Melchiorre said if private businesses want to kick Kaestner off their property, he's got to go. But if he stays on public property, the van's OK.

So just how did Uncle Sam end up becoming Uncle Fester in some people's minds?

The way Kaestner tells it, he's an avid watcher of news and documentaries. Three months ago, however, he was watching a political news show about the president, and started yelling at the TV.

So he went out and posted his opinion of the president on his van.

A Republican friend saw the opinion, agreed with it, but said he would continue supporting the Republican Party anyway.

So Kaestner then printed his opinion of the GOP. And so on, and so on.

Kaestner's message is simple, printed on both sides of the van: "This is Free Speech. Millions served honorably to protect and defend Free Speech "¡ If you are against Free Speech, LEAVE THE UNITED STATES."

Standing next to the van, in the rain, while taking a deep drag of his cigarette, Kaestner phrased it another way.

"Many people believe in free speech until you say something they don't like."

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

Apologies For Delay

It sending out this week's GI Specials. Got hit with some computer security snags, the kind where there are endless repeated demands to install a program that's already been installed.

Yeah, you guessed it. Another astounding GI Special Raffle coming to pay for the work involved, with even more astounding prizes than last time.

Like an original 1972 GI Movement calendar. And of course, full sets of Vietnam GI. Hang on with baited breath, whatever the fuck that means. Coming out next week. Got to, no pennies left.

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IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Resistance Action

Nov. 28 (Xinhua) & 29 Nov 2007 & Nov 30 Reuters

A car bomb wounded two policemen in eastern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

One Iraqi police captain was killed and two other policemen were wounded when a suspected al Qaeda member blew himself up as they entered his home to arrest him in the town of Dhuluwiya, 70 km north of Baghdad, police said.

An Iraqi policeman was killed and another injured in two attacks in Mosul City on Wednesday, a local police source said.

A policeman was killed when unknown insurgents showered him with bullets in Mosul's eastern neighborhood of al-Karamah.

In separate incident, another policeman was severely wounded when guerrillas opened fire on him near his house in the Palestine neighborhood in southeastern the city

A team of explosives experts defused a car bomb and three roadside bombs in different parts of the city.

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

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**

American Soldier Home From Iraq



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: November 30, 2007
Subject: American Soldier Home From Iraq

American Soldier Home From Iraq

Betrayal is like an am-Bush
The White House waiting in the dark
Pulling the trigger to foster G.I. self-destruction
Hitman
Bounty Hunter
Sniper
Assassin
Politicians
Morticians
Making sure they destroy the evidence

Support The Troops
All the way to the grave
Taps is a cover up for betrayal

Like the American flag covering the casket

Welcome Home

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
November 30, 2007

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

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

**“This Time, I’m Not Going To
Acquiesce In The Fiction That The
Presidential Charade Has Any
Credibility Whatsoever”**

**“The Endless Cycle Of Unofficial
Hearings And Tribunals And Rallies
And Demonstrations And Internet
Petitions Never Has Any Effect On
Anything”**

**“They’re All Directed To Bearing Witness
Before An Officialdom That Doesn’t Care**

And Feels No Compulsion To Take Our Demands Into Account”

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

November 2007, By Adolph L. Reed Jr., The Progressive [Excerpts]

OK, HERE WE ARE AGAIN, a year out from a Presidential election, and we're all supposed to be figuring out which of the Democrats has the best chance to win — determined mainly by the standard of raising the most money — and subordinating all our substantive political concerns to the objective of getting him or her elected.

This time, I'm not going to acquiesce in the fiction that the Presidential charade has any credibility whatsoever. I'm not paying any attention to the horse race coverage — that mass-mediated positioning in the battle for superficial product differentiation.

The Democratic candidates who are anointed “serious” are like a car with a faulty front-end alignment: Their default setting pulls to the right.

The last straw for me was the spectacle of all the “serious candidates” falling over one another to link Castro and Chávez with Ahmadinejad, bin Laden, and Kim, thus endorsing the Bush Administration’s view that any government that does anything that ours doesn’t like — including giving its own people’s needs higher priority than those of our corporations — qualifies it as a supporter of terrorism, a rogue state, part of the Axis of Evil, or whatever comic book slogan is operative this week.

Then came the supposedly anti-war Obama buttressing his commitment to increase overall American troop strength with a pledge to invade Pakistan.

Then came his and HRC’s tiff over the etiquette of publicly declaring a willingness to use nuclear weapons on a case-by-case basis, with both parties treating the issue as purely a matter of foreign policy gamesmanship. And this was during Hiroshima and Nagasaki week, no less!

Each serious candidate has boosters who will tell us that we should be more sophisticated than to take what their candidates say at face value, that their empty, inadequate, or objectionable proposals are the best, most realistic versions of whatever we think we want — from ending the war, to universal national health care and access to quality education, to public investment in rebuilding the Gulf Coast and the rest of the country’s physical and social infrastructure, to worker protection and fighting environmental degradation.

A friend of mine characterizes this as the “we’ll come back for you” politics, the claim that they can’t champion anything you want because they have to conciliate your enemies right now to get elected, but that, once they win, they’ll be able to attend to the progressive agenda they have to reject now in order to win.

This time, the nominal frontrunners have Rube Goldberg health care proposals that protect the insurance and pharmaceutical industries, the chief sources of the health care crisis.

They discuss the murderous adventurism in Iraq and Afghanistan mainly in bloodless, managerial terms — as a “broken policy” or some other such technician’s euphemism.

Not only do their references to the tragic loss of American lives seem pro forma and constructed by focus-group engineers; they also reinscribe the presumption that only American lives count.

This is part of what undergirds the broader framework of a foreign policy hinged on cavalier use of military assault and invasion in the first place — what used to be clearly recognized as imperialism.

However, all of them have indicated a lusty willingness to attack Iran, Syria, or any other country that can be demonized either for not dancing to our government’s tune or even just because it’s convenient to do so as a prop for some other purpose.

At the end of the primary campaign, one of the “serious candidates” is going to get the nomination and form a ticket with another version of his or her triangulating self.

And I’m prepared to blow off every liberal who starts whining and hectoring, in that self-important and breathless way they do, about our obligation to protect “choice” or to make sure we can get another Stephen Breyer or Sandra Day O’Connor onto the Supreme Court.

I know that some outraged readers are going to write in, fulminating about how nihilistically ultraleftist I am to criticize the Democrats in this way and how irresponsible The Progressive is to publish the criticism — especially now, when the stakes are so great and it’s so crucially important for the future of the country, the world, the galaxy, the cosmos, that some Democrat — anyone, no matter how worthless — wins the Presidency.

(That they make the same cataclysmic claim about every election never seems to dull their self-righteous fervor.)

They’ll explain that we have to understand that we can’t get everything we want all at once, that the Democrats can’t go any further than they go, and that a half-hearted promise of part of a stale loaf of bread in some unspecified future is better than no bread at all — especially for those who don’t really need the bread at the moment.

Well, in part, they’re right. The Democrats are what they are. We should all know that by now, after two decades of their failing to stand up to the rightwing juggernaut, of presenting themselves as more responsible and steady managers of the country’s slide to the right.

By the time the national elections come around, there really are no options other than to vote for their predictably worthless nominee, make an existential

statement (or engage in wish-fulfillment, if you think it's more than that) by voting for a third party candidate, or just not bother.

This bleak reality reflects the left's failure to build any durable extra-electoral force between elections that can bring pressure to bear on the Democratic contenders and debate.

Elected officials are only as good or as bad as the forces they feel they must respond to. It's a mistake to expect any more of them than to be vectors of the political pressures they feel working on them. This is a lesson that progressives have forgotten or failed to learn.

As an illustration, consider the recent contretemps between John Conyers and the pro-impeachment, anti-war activists who attacked him as a sellout for failing to push impeachment over Nancy Pelosi's and the House Democratic leadership's opposition.

His critics accused him of betraying the spirit of Martin Luther King. But that charge only exposes their unrealistic expectations.

Conyers isn't a movement leader. He's a Democratic official who wants to get reelected. He's enmeshed in the same web of personal ties, partisan loyalties and obligations, and diverse interest-group commitments as other pols.

It was the impeachment activists' naive error, and I suspect one resting on a partly racial, wrongheaded shorthand, to have expected him to lead an insurgency.

Unfortunately, like the Democrats, our side fails to learn from experience. Despite a mountain range of evidence to the contrary, we — the labor, anti-war, women's, environmental, and racial justice movements — all continue to craft political strategy based on the assumption that the problem is that the Democrats simply don't understand what we want and how important those things are to us.

They know; they just have different priorities.

That's why the endless cycle of unofficial hearings and tribunals and rallies and demonstrations and Internet petitions never has any effect on anything.

They're all directed to bearing witness before an officialdom that doesn't care and feels no compulsion to take our demands into account.

To that extent, this form of activism has become little more than a combination of theater — a pageantry of protest — and therapy for the activists.

Then at the apex of every election cycle, after having marched around in the same pointless circle, chanting the same slogans in the interim, we look feverishly to one of the Democrats or some Quixote to do our organizing work for us, magically, all at once.

We need to think about politics in a different way, one that doesn't assume that the task is to lobby the Democrats or give them good ideas, and correct their misconceptions.

It's a mistake to focus so much on the election cycle; we didn't vote ourselves into this mess, and we're not going to vote ourselves out of it.

Electoral politics is an arena for consolidating majorities that have been created on the plane of social movement organizing. It's not an alternative or a shortcut to building those movements, and building them takes time and concerted effort.

Our actions don't raise public consciousness because they're treated dismissively, if at all, in the mainstream media. They don't even connect with the residents of the cities where we hold them because we agree to strict march routes and rally sites that make certain we don't engage with anyone other than ourselves.

And we agree not to disrupt routine daily life more than a homecoming parade would in exchange for having a designated place to gather and talk to ourselves.

Even the civil disobedience is carefully choreographed and designed to be minimally disruptive.

Whether or not we admit it, these are features of a politics that is focused mainly inward, on shoring up the spirits of the participants in the actions themselves.

They don't send a message that those in power can't simply ignore, and they don't inform, excite, or win over anyone who's not already on board with the movement's agenda.

It's telling in this sense that our movement culture has evolved elaborately clever techniques for keeping participants entertained through the stale, all-too-predictable cavalcade of speeches and chants and puppets on stilts.

To be clear, I'm not arguing that people don't need to engage in rallies and protests.

It is self-defeating, however, to collapse the difference between the activities that make us feel good and the work that is necessary to build the movement.

There are no shortcuts or magic bullets.

And, if we don't confront that fact and act accordingly, we'll be back in this same position, but most likely with options a little worse than these, in 2012, and again and again.

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

“The military are the final, essential weak point of Bush and Cheney.” David McReynolds 9.29.07

Troops Invited:

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

**Save The Date For Iraq Veterans
Against The War!
[New York City]**

Save the Date!

Party for Deploying Soldiers

- Date: 23 FEB 08
- Location: TBA
- For more info go to
www.myspace.com/ivawnyc

OCCUPATION REPORT

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

11.27.07 Reuters

RAMADI: - The civilian driver of a vehicle was killed when U.S. troops opened fire on his vehicle at a checkpoint in the city of Ramadi, 110 km (70 miles) west of Baghdad, on Sunday, the U.S. military said.

BAGHDAD - U.S. soldiers opened fire on a minibus which failed to stop at a roadblock in the Shaab district of northern Baghdad, killing two people and wounding four, the U.S. military said. A police source said the bus was carrying finance ministry employees. Another police source said four people were killed, including three women.

BAIJI - U.S. soldiers killed two men and a child when they opened fire on a vehicle which approached a roadblock near Baiji, 180 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad on Monday, the U.S. military said.

[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!**

Welcome To The New Iraqi Democracy; “He Has To Prove His Innocence”

Nov 30 By Waleed Ibrahim and Alaa Shahine, Reuters

Iraqi security forces arrested dozens of people, including the son of a leading Sunni Arab politician, in a pre-dawn raid on Friday after a car rigged with explosives was found near the lawmaker's office.

The incident threatened to increase political tension across Iraq's sectarian divide at a time when violence has been falling dramatically.

The Shi'ite-led government said Adnan al-Dulaimi, leader of the Accordance Front, the main Sunni Arab bloc, could be stripped of the immunity from prosecution he holds as a member of parliament if he was found to have links to car bombs.

"No one is above the law. Dr Adnan al-Dulaimi has immunity, but this does not exempt him from questioning and accountability," government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh said.

"The case is very serious and the accusations against him are very serious.

"He has to prove his innocence."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Welcome To The Occupied USA: The Filth In Blue Hate Our Freedoms: Driver Tased For Asking Rat Cop Why He Was Stopped As Pregnant Wife Looks On

[A useful purpose our troops can serve, once they all get home, is sweeping our streets and highways clean of this filth in blue. Cowardly scum infest every part of our nation and truly hate our liberties. T]

Taser use is being abused by police all over the country and beyond as cops are trained that torture is a perfectly acceptable response to somebody who acts out of the ordinary, asks the wrong question or refuses to show their papers.

Nov 21, 2007 Steve Watson, Infowars.net

A man was tased and arrested on a Utah highway after being stopped by an officer and refusing to sign a speeding ticket because he did not understand what offence he had committed or why he had been pulled over.

The encounter, captured on the police car camera on September 14th and released this week, is the latest in a long string of incidents involving the unacceptable use of Tasers by officers on citizens whom the evidence reveals are in no way threatening, acting unlawfully or resisting co-operation.

The video shows the Utah Highway Patrolman pull over Jared Massey and his pregnant wife who also had their baby with them in the car and ask for Mr Massey's license.

Mr Massey tells the officer he does not understand why he has been stopped or what he is being charged with, at which point the officer orders Massey to get out of the car.

The officer then puts down his clipboard and immediately takes out his Taser and points it at Mr Massey without any provocation whatsoever, yelling "Turn around and put your hands behind your back" as Massey attempts to point out the speed limit sign and engage the officer in conversation.

A shocked Massey asks "what the hell is wrong with you?" and backs away, turning around as the officer had demanded, at which point the officer unleashes 50,000 volts from the Taser into Massey's body, sending him screaming to the ground instantly and causing his wife to jump out of the car and yell hysterically for help.

Lying face down on the ground a shell shocked, Mr Massey says "officer I don't know what you are doing, I don't know why you are doing what you are doing" to which the officer replies "I am placing you under arrest because you did not obey my instruction."

Mr Massey then once again asks the officer several times why he was stopped and what he is being charged with.

He then asks for his rights to be read and points out that the officer cannot arrest him without doing this.

Instead of reading Massey his rights the officer then addresses another patrolman who arrives on the scene sardonically commenting "Ohhh he took a ride with the Taser" to which the other officer answers "painful isn't it".

The icing on the cake comes at the end of the video when the officer LIES to his own colleague about the encounter, clearly stating that he verbally warned Massey he was going to tase him, as is the law, when there was no warning whatsoever.

Mr Massey is planning to file a lawsuit against the Utah Highway Patrol. He says he was already slowing down as he approached the 40 mile per hour sign in the construction zone outside of Vernal. All charges except for the speeding ticket have been dropped.

This amazing video reveals how eroded civil and constitutional rights have now become. The officer had no legal right to make Massey sign any document he did not understand

Tasers are supposed to be the last response before lethal action, however, police now use them as if they are batons or pepper spray.

In the last year over 300 people have died in admitted cases in the US alone from being tased.

In the last week alone we have posted three separate stories of Taser deaths. Every week we post stories of incidents, which often feature old women, children and disabled people as the victims.

The weapons are even being used in schools.

The police are now trained that “pain compliance,” a euphemism for torture, is acceptable in apprehending anyone even if that person poses no physical danger. If you electrify any person, they suffer extreme pain and stand a high chance of being killed.

Despite this, idiotic media hacks such as Fox News host Brian Kilmead are happy to promote police state tactics, selling the idea that protestors or people that merely question authority in any way are threatening and should be tased or “beaten to a pulp”.

This phenomenon is out of control, how many more acts of wanton police brutality, torture and death by means of tasing are we to endure?

Taser use is being abused by police all over the country and beyond as cops are trained that torture is a perfectly acceptable response to somebody who acts out of the ordinary, asks the wrong question or refuses to show their papers.



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/)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

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