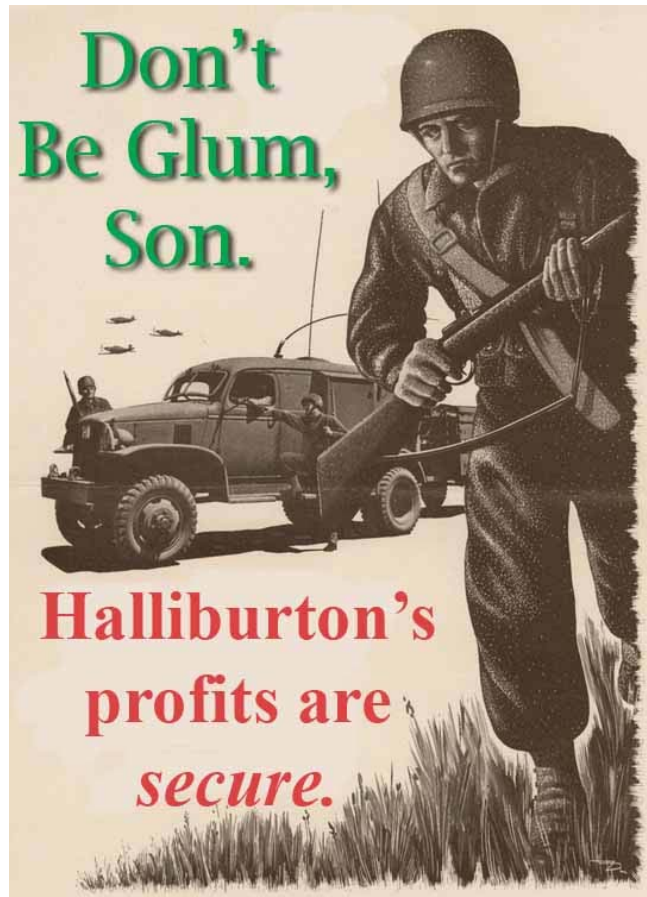


**GI SPECIAL 5L11:**



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

**Combat Refusal Iraq:  
“Not Us. We’re Not Going”  
“A Revolt In The Ranks”  
“No Judicial Action Ever Came Of It”  
“We — What Was Left Of The Platoon  
— Got To Come Back Home Alive”**

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace & Nancy S. & JFL, who sent this in. And all honor and respect to the members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon.]

**Though their commanders moved them from the combat outpost to safer quarters, members of 2nd Platoon would stage a revolt they viewed as a life-or-death act of defiance.**

Dec 14, 2007 by KELLY KENNEDY - Staff writer, Army Times

Spc. Gerry DeNardi stood at the on-base Burger King, just a few miles from downtown Baghdad, hoping for a quick taste of home.

Camp Taji encompasses miles of scrapped Iraqi tanks, a busy U.S. airstrip and thousands of soldiers living in row upon row of identical trailers. Several fast-food stands, a PX and a dining facility the size of a football field compose Taji's social hub.

The base had been struck by an occasional mortar round, and a rocket had hit the airfield two weeks before and killed an American helicopter pilot. But the quiet base brought on a sense of being far from roadside bombs, far from rocket-propelled grenades and far from the daily gunfire that rained down on the soldiers of Charlie 1-26 as they patrolled Adhamiya, a violent Sunni neighborhood in northeastern Baghdad.

Just two weeks earlier, the 20-year-old DeNardi had lost five good friends, killed together as they rode in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle that rolled over a powerful roadside bomb.

As DeNardi walked up the three wood steps to the outdoor stand to pick up his burger, the siren wailed.

Wah! Wah! Wah! "Incoming! Incoming! Incoming!"

The alarms went off all the time — often after the mortar round or rocket had struck nothing but sand, miles from anything important. Many soldiers and others at Taji had taken to ignoring the warnings. DeNardi glanced around at the picnic tables to make sure everyone was still eating. They were. The foreign nationals who worked the fast-food stands hadn't left; so he went back to get the burger he had paid for.

The mortar round hit before he could pick up his order.

"I turned around and all of Burger King and me went flying," DeNardi said.

He'd lived through daily explosions in 11 months with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, at nearby Combat Outpost Apache, a no-frills fortress smack in the middle of Adhamiya's hostile streets. He had rushed through flames to try to save friends and carried others to the aide station only to watch them die.

"I'm not getting killed at Burger King," he thought, and he dived for a concrete bunker.

People were screaming. DeNardi saw a worker from Cinnabon hobbling around, so he climbed out of the bunker, pulled shrapnel out of the man's leg and bandaged him. The

Pizza Hut manager was crying and said two more foreign workers were injured behind her stand — near the Burger King.

“Lightning doesn’t strike twice,” DeNardi said, “so I went back. But there were body parts everywhere.” The first man’s leg had been blown off, his other leg was barely attached and he had a chest wound. “He was going to die,” DeNardi said.

The other wounded man had shrapnel to his neck. DeNardi peeled off his own shirt and fashioned a bandage out of it as other soldiers started streaming in to help.

Then, “all clear” sounded over the loudspeakers as medics arrived and took over.

“I’m covered in blood, but I still have my hamburger receipt,” DeNardi said. “I went back to Burger King the next day, but they wouldn’t give me my burger.”

For all his dark humor, the “Hero of Burger King,” as fellow soldiers teasingly called him, was deeply rattled by the carnage of the explosion at the fast-food court. At Apache, he expected trouble. But not at Burger King.

“That affected me,” he said. For the next few days, he said, he slept in the open-ended concrete bunkers positioned between the housing units.

**It was just another bad day to add to many — and DeNardi’s platoon had already faced misery that seemed unbearable.**

When five soldiers with 2nd Platoon were trapped June 21 after a deep-buried roadside bomb flipped their Bradley upside-down, several men rushed to save the gunner, Spc. Daniel Agami, pinned beneath the 30-ton vehicle. But they could only watch — and listen to him scream — as he burned alive.

The Bradley was far too heavy to lift, and the flames were too high to even get close. The four others died inside the vehicle. Second Platoon already had lost four of its 45 men since deploying to Adhamiya 11 months before. June 21 shattered them.

**Though their commanders moved them from the combat outpost to safer quarters, members of 2nd Platoon would stage a revolt they viewed as a life-or-death act of defiance.**

With all they had done and all they had seen, they now were consumed with an anger that ate at the memory of the good men they were when they arrived in Iraq.

## **Primed For Revenge**

After June 21, most of Charlie Company moved out of COP Apache, their makeshift home on the grounds of one of Saddam Hussein’s son’s palaces. At Taji, the company would try to recover for a new mission.

Sgt. 1st Class Tim Ybay, 38, served as 2nd Platoon’s platoon sergeant, but also its father figure. The former drill sergeant teased constantly and tried to treat his men like

family. At memorial services for lost soldiers, he cried the loudest. He'd been on patrol June 21 when the five 2nd Platoon soldiers died in the Bradley. When he came back, his grieving platoon circled him as the weight of the loss forced him to his knees in the sand. He'd promised to bring all his boys home.

Now he would concentrate on the ones that remained.

"I knew after losing those five guys, my platoon had to get out of there," he said. "These were the guys they slept with, joked with, worked out with. I don't think they'd be able to accomplish the mission."

The tears came again as he spoke, and he looked away.

"And I was having a hard time losing my guys."

At Taji, the company had a week off. DeNardi looked more surfer than soldier after a couple of days at the pool. Ybay and his sergeants sat at the picnic tables drinking frozen coffee concoctions. The guys bought Persian carpets and brass lamps to send home as souvenirs — as if Taji were a vacation spot. But the anger over Adhamiya emerged even poolside, and erupted at the mental health clinic, which they visited in groups.

"You never really get over the anger," said Staff Sgt. Robin Johnson, a member of Charlie's scout platoon who had been especially close to Agami. "It just kind of becomes everything you are. You become pissed off at everything. We wanted to destroy everything in our paths, but they wanted us to keep building sewer systems and handing out teddy bears."

Some of the younger members of the platoon were particularly disillusioned.

Spc. Armando Cardenas, 21, had taken honors classes in high school but feared college would bore him. He wanted something challenging and found it in the Army, in Iraq. As a soldier, he was the guy who leaped out of a truck to chase an insurgent, or instantly returned fire with an uncanny ability to tell where the rounds came from. When a friend, Pfc. Ryan Hill, was killed in battle, Cardenas helped carry him back.

But Cardenas' anger was just as quick as his heroics.

He said the platoon had been waiting for June 21 — that they had known they would eventually hit a big IED and have a catastrophic loss.

Cardenas wanted revenge. "But they don't let us take care of the people responsible," he said. "It was a slap in the face."

Adhamiya remained under the control of 1-26, but the brass moved Charlie 1-26 to another combat outpost, Old Mod — so called because it used to house Iraq's Ministry of Defense — in a calmer area on the outskirts of Adhamiya. From there, they patrolled Kadhamiya.

"If my guys had stayed at Adhamiya, they would have taken the gloves off," said Capt. Cecil Strickland, Charlie's company commander. "We were afraid somebody was going to get in trouble."

There had been close calls before. DeNardi had to fight back a strong desire to kill an Iraqi — accused of triggering an IED that killed two Charlie Company soldiers — as he held a 9mm Glock handgun to the man's eye socket.

And Cardenas and Staff Sgt. John Gregory had been ordered to the Green Zone to talk to an investigator after they roughed up two insurgents. A week after Pfc. Ross McGinnis fatally threw himself on a grenade to save four friends, Cardenas and Gregory had chased a couple of guys on a scooter and managed to stop them. Cardenas kicked over a wooden box the two Iraqis stood next to.

"There was a grenade full of nails," Cardenas said. "We had to go see a major about detainee abuse. We told him (the Iraqis) didn't want to get in the Bradley."

Nothing came of the investigation.

Such incidents belied the squared-away record Charlie 1-26 posted during its deployment to Iraq. In 15 months, they had one incident when two soldiers were caught with alcohol, Strickland said, but that was all.

"I think the performance comes from the level of discipline," Strickland said. "And the discipline comes from the hardship. They're a little bit more mature than a lot of other units."

In Shiite Kadhamiya, Charlie Company found paved, clean streets. In Sunni Adhamiya, so many garbage collectors had been killed that the Shiite government workers refused to go there. "It was one road and one river away from Adhamiya," DeNardi said. "But there was civilization on one side and chaos on the other."

## **Suicide And A Twist Of Fate**

Lt. Col. John Reynolds replaced Lt. Col. Eric Schacht as battalion commander July 8. Schacht left after his son died of a heart condition in Germany, the same day Charlie Company lost five men in the Bradley. Even with the high operations tempo and the loss of so many men, Reynolds called the changeover "easy."

"It was the best transition you could get," he said.

But within days, he would lose five men, including a respected senior non-commissioned officer. Master Sgt. Jeffrey McKinney, Alpha Company's first sergeant, was known as a family man and as a good leader because he was intelligent and could explain things well. But Staff Sgt. Jeremy Rausch of Charlie Company's 1st Platoon, a good friend of McKinney's, said McKinney told him he felt he was letting his men down in Adhamiya.

"First Sergeant McKinney was kind of a perfectionist and this was bothering him very much," Rausch said. On July 11, McKinney was ordered to lead his men on a foot patrol

to clear the roads of IEDs. Everyone at Apache heard the call come in from Adhamiya, where Alpha Company had picked up the same streets Charlie had left.

Charlie's 1st Platoon had also remained behind, and Rausch said he would never forget the fear he heard in McKinney's driver's voice:

"This is Apache seven delta," McKinney's driver said in a panicked voice over the radio. "Apache seven just shot himself. He just shot himself. Apache seven shot himself."

Rausch said there was no misunderstanding what had happened.

According to Charlie Company soldiers, McKinney said, "I can't take it anymore," and fired a round. Then he pointed his M4 under his chin and killed himself in front of three of his men.

At Old Mod, Charlie Company was called back in for weapons training, DeNardi said. They were told it was an accident. Then they were told it was under investigation. And then they were told it was a suicide. Reynolds confirmed that McKinney took his own life.

A week later, without their beloved first sergeant, Alpha Company would experience its first catastrophic loss on a mission that, but for a change in weather, was supposed to go to Charlie Company.

**On July 17, Charlie's 2nd Platoon was refitting at Taji when they got a call to go back to Adhamiya. They were to patrol Route Southern Comfort, which had been black — off-limits — for months.**

**Charlie Company knew a 500-pound bomb lay on that route, and they'd been ordered not to travel it.**

**"Will there be route clearance?" 2nd Platoon asked. "Yes," they were told. "Then we'll go."**

But the mission was canceled. The medevac crews couldn't fly because of a dust storm, and the Iraqi Army wasn't ready for the mission. Second Platoon went to bed.

**They woke to the news that Alpha Company had gone on the mission instead and one of their Bradleys rolled over the 500-pound IED.**

The Bradley flipped. The explosion and flames killed everybody inside. Alpha Company lost four soldiers: Spc. Zachary Clouser, Spc. Richard Gilmore, Spc. Daniel Gomez and Sgt. 1st Class Luis Gutierrez-Rosales.

"There was no chance," said Johnson, whose scouts remained at Apache and served as the quick-reaction force that day. "It was eerily the same as June 21. You roll up on that, and it looked the same."

**The guys from Charlie Company couldn't help but think about the similarities — and that it could have been them.**

“Just the fact that there was another Bradley incident mentally screwed up 2nd Platoon,” Strickland said. “It was almost like it had happened to them.”

**The battalion gave 2nd Platoon the day to recover. Then they were scheduled to go back out on patrol in Adhamiya on July 18.**

**But when Strickland returned from a mission, he learned 2nd Platoon had failed to roll.**

**“A scheduled patrol is a direct order from me,” Strickland said.**

**“They’re not coming,” Strickland said he was told.**

“So I called the platoon sergeant and talked to him. ‘Remind your guys: These are some of the things that could happen if they refuse to go out.’ I was irritated they were thumbing their noses. I was determined to get them down there.”

But, he said, he didn’t know the whole platoon, except for Ybay, had taken sleeping medications prescribed by mental health that day, according to Ybay.

Strickland didn’t know mental health leaders had talked to 2nd Platoon about “doing the right thing.”

**He didn’t know 2nd Platoon had gathered for a meeting and determined they could no longer function professionally in Adhamiya — that several platoon members were afraid their anger could set loose a massacre.**

**“We said, ‘No.’ If you make us go there, we’re going to light up everything,” DeNardi said. “There’s a thousand platoons. Not us. We’re not going.”**

**They decided as a platoon that they were done, DeNardi and Cardenas said, as did several other members of 2nd Platoon.**

At mental health, guys had told the therapist, “I’m going to murder someone.” And the therapist said, “There comes a time when you have to stand up,” 2nd Platoon members remembered.

**For the sake of not going to jail, the platoon decided they had to be “unplugged.”**

Ybay had gone to battalion to speak up for his guys and ask for more time. But when he came back, it was with orders to report to Old Mod.

**Ybay said he tried to persuade his men to go out, but he could see they were not ready.**

“It was like a scab that wouldn’t heal up,” Ybay said. “I couldn’t force them to go out. Listening to them in the mental health session, I could hear they’re not ready.”

At 2 a.m., Ybay said, he’d found his men sitting outside smoking cigarettes. They could not sleep. Some of them were taking as many as 10 sleeping pills and still could not

rest. The images of their dead friends haunted them. The need for revenge ravaged them.

But Ybay was still disappointed in his men. "I had a mission," he said. "The company had a mission. We still had to execute. But I understood their side, too."

Somehow, the full course of events didn't make it to Strickland. All he knew, the commander said, was his men had refused an order, and he was determined to get them to Apache.

"When you're given an order, you've got to execute," Strickland said.

**"Being told, 'They're not coming,' versus, 'They're taking meds and went to mental health,' are different things. [Lesson learned.]**

It was just this weird situation where almost nothing connected."

## **A Revolt In The Ranks**

**"They called it an act of mutiny," Cardenas said, still enraged that the men he considered heroes were, in his mind, slandered.**

"The sergeant major and the battalion commander said we were unprofessional. They said they were disappointed in us and would never forget our actions for the rest of their lives."

***But no judicial action ever came of it.***

"Captain Strickland read us our rights," DeNardi said. "We had 15 yes-or-no questions, and no matter how you answered them, it looked like you disobeyed an order. No one asked what happened.

**"And there's no record — no article 15. Nothing to show it happened."**

**After the members of 2nd Platoon had spent a year fighting for each other and watching their buddies die, battalion leaders began breaking up the platoon.**

**Seven noncommissioned officers were told they were being relieved for cause and moved out of the unit. Three noncommissioned officers stayed at Old Mod. Two, including Sgt. Derrick Jorcke, would remain in Iraq for one month after 2nd Platoon went home in October because they had been moved to different battalions in different areas of Iraq.**

"In a way, they were put someplace where they wouldn't have to go out again," Johnson said. "But as an NCO, they took these guys' leaders away and put them with people they didn't know and trust. You knew 2nd Platoon would die for you without a second's hesitation. That's what made them so great. These guys need each other."

Then, they were all flagged: No promotions. No awards. No favorable actions.



“We had PFCs miss (promotion to) specialist for two months,” DeNardi said. “Bronze Stars and (Army Commendation Medals) were put on hold. You’re talking about heroes like Cardenas. These are guys who save lives and they can’t get awards.”

“I didn’t want to punish them,” Strickland said. “I understood what was going on. But they had to understand you couldn’t do something like that and have nothing happen.”

And things could not continue as they had.

**Strickland could not operate for three more months with a platoon that refused to go out.**

“Within the company, we made some adjustments,” Strickland said. “They needed a fresh start.

**“After looking into it, I didn’t feel the need to punish anybody.” However, he left the flags in place.**

“If anything was going to be punishment, that was it,” he said. For at least one soldier, that meant going through a promotion board again. Jorcke lost his promotion table status, but Strickland signed a memo re-establishing it. “I’ve tried to fix those issues. Almost everybody else has been promoted except one guy.” Jorcke made his E-6 on Nov. 1.

Even after the “mutiny,” Strickland said, he had a great deal of admiration for his soldiers.

“I understood why they did what they did,” he said.

“Some of the NCOs, I was disappointed in them because they failed to lead their soldiers through difficult times.

“They let their soldiers influence their decisions.

“But on a personal level, I applauded their decision because they stood behind their soldiers. I was disappointed, but I thought they had great courage. It was truly a Jekyll/Hyde moment for me.”

And though they were horrified at being torn away from each other, the soldiers themselves were conflicted about the outcome.

“For us being disbanded, now we definitely had unfinished business,” Jorcke said. “If we’d cleared Adhamiya, we could have said, ‘I left Iraq and my buddies didn’t die in vain.

**“But in a way, the disbanding was good,” he said.**

**“We — what was left of the platoon — got to come back home alive.”**

## **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

## **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT 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/))

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **U.S. Soldier Killed In South Baghdad**

14 December 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20071214-01

BAGHDAD – A Soldier from Multi-National Division-Baghdad was killed Dec. 13 in a small-arms fire attack in southern Baghdad.

---

### **Another U.S. Soldier Killed In South Baghdad**

14 December 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20071213-03

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Center Soldier died of wounds suffered when the Soldier's dismounted patrol encountered an improvised explosive device south of Baghdad Dec. 13.

---

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



U.S. soldiers with 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division Air Assault wait to go on patrol in Bayji, November 26, 2007.

**GI SPECIALS BY MAIL FREE FOR  
ACTIVE DUTY TROOPS**

IF YOU WISH TO HAVE A SELECTION OF GI SPECIALS MAILED TO YOU, EMAIL YOUR ADDRESS TO: [CONTACT@MILITARYPROJECT.ORG](mailto:CONTACT@MILITARYPROJECT.ORG) OR DROP A LINE TO: BOX 126, 2576 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10025-5657 USA

Please say how many you wish sent.

**NOTE WELL:** They will all be different issues of GI Special to satisfy DOD regs that you may possess copies, *provided you don't have more than one of the same issue.*

**TROOP NEWS**

**NOT ANOTHER DAY  
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR  
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



U.S. Army medics load a seriously-wounded soldier onto a helicopter after stabilizing him at Ibn Sina Hospital in the Green Zone in Baghdad Dec. 13, 2007. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

---

## ***While Bush Buddies Rake In Billions In War Profits: Pentagon Scum Won't Supply Wounded Women Troops With Clothes: They Must Go Begging For Help From Civilians***

December 14, 2007 By Amy Olson, Wausau Daily Herald [Excerpts]

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs aims to collect new women's undergarments and comfortable clothing for wounded female troops in Iraq awaiting medical care in Germany or the United States, said Gundel Metz, coordinator of female veterans' issues.

A service member's clothing often is destroyed by an injury, and the military often is unable to send personal gear immediately to a hospital, said Maj. Frances Wiedenhoft, a nurse anesthetist at the University of Wisconsin Hospital who currently is stationed in Iraq.

The 18-year reservist, who calls Madison home, said she got the idea when she arrived at Balad Air Base Hospital during her current tour in Iraq.

Wiedenhoeft said when she got to the intensive care unit at the hospital in Balad, the overwhelming opinion was there was a need for women's clothing that would be easy to put on after an injury.

---

## Women Win A Battle: Army Performs Surgery On Heraldic Lion



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

13 Dec 07 BY Paul O'Mahony, The Local Europe

Protests from female soldiers have led to the Swedish military removing the penis of a heraldic lion depicted on the Nordic Battlegroup's coat of arms.

The armed forces agreed to emasculate the lion after a group of women from the rapid reaction force lodged a complaint to the European Court of Justice, Göteborgs-Posten reports.

But although the army was eventually happy to make the changes in the interests of gender equality, the artist who designed the insignia was less than pleased.

"A heraldic lion is a powerful and stately figure with its genitalia intact and I cannot approve an edited image," Vladimir A Sagerlund from the National Archives told Göteborgs-Posten.

But the castrated lion has already won the day and is now worn on the arms of all soldiers in the battle group's Swedish battalions.

"We were given the task of making sure the willy disappeared," Christian Braunstein from the army's 'tradition commission' told Göteborgs-Posten.

"We were forced to cut the lion's willy off with the aid of a computer," he added.

The Nordic Battlegroup is one of eighteen such military groups in the European Union. Some 2,000 of its 2,400 soldiers come from Sweden, with the rest coming from Finland, Norway, Ireland and Estonia.

---

## IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

### “Leave, Leave Occupiers” [GET THE MESSAGE?]



Iraqis men march in Sadr city in Baghdad Dec. 14, 2007. Thousands took to Baghdad's streets following Friday prayers to protest the bombings in Amarah, which they blamed on U.S. troops, shouting 'leave, leave occupiers' and 'No to America, yes to Muqtada.' (AP Photo/Karim Kadim )

---

## 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**

**"When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, "No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country."  
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq**

## **U.S. Corporate Lack of Interest**



From: Mike Hastie  
Sent: Dec 13, 2007 5:04 AM  
To: GI Special  
Subject: U.S. Corporate Lack of Interest

**U.S. Corporate Lack of Interest**

**120 Veterans Commit Suicide Every Week.**

**Day in and day out.**

**Guns**

**Knives**

**Hanging**

**Jumping**

**Drug overdoses.**

**Alcohol full throttle.**

**Driving as fast as they can.**

**Lack of V.A. funding.**

**Lack of just about everything.**

**All of them head-on collisions  
with the lies of Empire.**

**America,**

**Support The Troops.**

**They are waiting for you to stop the war.**

**Mike Hastie**

**U.S. Army Medic**

**Vietnam 1970-71**

**December 13, 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](mailto: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**

### **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.**



# **Guess What He's Going To Be When He Grows Up?**

**[Do NOT Wait Around To Find Out. He Might Decide To Be A Patriot And Come Hunting. You.]**



A boy listens and watches as foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. Army stop and question his father during a patrol in Al Hamer, near Baquba, December 14, 2007.  
REUTERS/Bob Strong

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

## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

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

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



A foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. orders an Iraqi citizen to stop digging for survivors and sit in the dirt after a home was hit by a U.S. artillery round in the village of Shakarat, Diyala province, Dec. 13, 2007. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnyakovic)

**[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!**

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

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



## CLASS WAR REPORTS

### *Russia:*

### **Appeal By Strikers At St Petersburg Ford Factory:**

**“When All Other Rights Are Trampled Under Foot, The Right To Revolt Cannot Be Denied” Tom Paine;**

# **“How Our Children Live And How They Will Remember Us Depends On Us Alone!”**



November 27, 2007 Trade Union Committee of the Ford Motor Co Information Bulletin.  
Translated by David Mandel, International Viewpoint

We turn to our brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, who live in the Vsevolzhsk region and in St. Petersburg, to those who are working at our plant, and to those whose relative have some connection with the Ford plant in Vsevolzhsk. We have held out a week to win our goals, in particular a wage increase.

You have also seen the contemptuous attitude of the bosses to the demands of our collective and the surprise of our compatriots at our “huge” demands.

“You’re asking a lot,” they tell us, when they see we ask that the wages of welders and painters be raised to 30,000 roubles. But no one is surprised when they raise the salaries of department supervisors and other managers, which stand at 200,000, two times a year by 10-20% each time.

In other words, the bosses are worthy of salaries at the European level, but the workers who feed that bunch are supposedly not working at European standards and should get kopecks [pennies]... A dual approach and double standard.

We’ve went into this difficult strike so that our children do not have to go half-hungry and so that our parents will have decent pensions.

We are the first in Russia of the 21st century who have begun to defend our rights, relying on the law and our solidarity. We are skilled workpeople and we have a right to a wage that allows a decent human existence. Many of us have higher education and

have lived in the St. Petersburg-Leningrad region all our conscious lives, bringing much benefit to this land.

We turn to you, our compatriots! Today our victory will be the victory of all citizens of Russia working at any enterprise. Support us! Support yourselves!

We will win no matter what! But we would like to reach that victory together with you! We are ready to share our experience and our results with you!

The plant is not working. It has been shut down for a week.

The administration is hoping we will give in.

Our struggle is not taking place against bullets and shells. We are not forced to stand in the trenches and face tanks, as did our grandfathers at Stalingrad. We aren't facing snipers' bullets and mortar fire, as did our fathers and brothers in the mountains of Afghanistan and in the Caucasus.

**We are facing well-fed bourgeois and their lackeys, who see to it that the simple working person should work for a bowl of soup and a crust of bread and have no thoughts and claims, wishes or opinions.**

**For them the best worker is the one who works for pennies, and when his health fails, he brings his children to the assembly line to replace him and then goes to die in some ditch or to live in misery on an inhuman pension.**

**For the bosses this is normal and correct.**

**And if someone suddenly raises his head and declares that he is a person and has rights, then he is an extremist or terrorist – check whichever pleases most.**

It is not so!

Our brothers, fathers and grandfathers shed their blood so that we could have a just and happy life. We cannot stand on our knees, forgetting their heroism. Yes, it is frightening, though we are not at Stalingrad; yes it is dangerous, though we are not in the mountains of Kandagara.

It is just that no one in Russia has shut a factory for so long and forced the hand of a transnational corporation. It is always harder and more frightening for pioneers than for the next wave.

But if not we, then who?

Or shall we forget our heroic roots and get used to living on our knees? No!

Our memory raises us up and forces us to struggle and defend that for which our ancestors gave their lives.

**Can anyone really think that our grandfathers and fathers in the trenches dreamt that their children would lose their health and self-respect on the assembly line**

**under the shouts of supervisor-overseers, who allow workers go to the toilet only as an act of charitable kindness?**

If that is so, then we are ashamed to live in Russia and to call ourselves the Russian people. A victorious people cannot stand on its knees!

The shift bosses, who count other people's money and know the wages of each worker at the plant, and the supervisors, who lick the boots of the top management, are afraid... They are afraid of their boss and of organized workers!

Organize!

Brother Ford workers! If they call you to work from involuntary layoff (not all workers are on strike, but the plant is not working) in order to start up the assembly line, got to one of our activists, take a form, and write to the general director that you are joining the strike.

Don't lend your support to those who don't give a damn about workers, who are interested only in their own welfare and profit! Or have these people become closer to you that those with whom you work side-by-side on the assembly line and who are now fighting for our common well-being?

But if for some reason you cannot join the strike, then before starting work demand mandatory health-and-safety training, demand that they familiarize you with the operating instructions, the QPS, WES, especially if you are moved to a new operation. Remember that this is mandatory. Otherwise it is a violation of the law, and you are responsible for all possible consequences!

**Fellow countrymen, union brethren! Your support now is especially important. Any kind of support! Both moral and financial!**

**We need to hear you and see you.**

**It is important to us to know your opinion.**

**Come to the walls of our plant. Go to our site [www.ford-profsoyuz.ru](http://www.ford-profsoyuz.ru) and tell us your opinion.**

Our union is supporting the strikers financially out of our strike fund, but unfortunately it is not unlimited. We are into our second week and we will stay out longer! There are already citizens who have given the strikers financial support. Those who want to help will find our account number on the site.

And more...

Yes, the corporation is huge and churns out vast sums of money. It is very hard to oppose it. But for a HUMAN BEING nothing is impossible.

Remember the Spartans' battle at Thermopylae, remember the Russian's battle at Kulikovo Field (against the Mongols)!

**Who says the time of heroism and courage has passed, that they belong to history?**

**How our children live and how they will remember us depends on us alone!**

**MORE:**

## **Strike At Ford-Vsevolojk: The Background; “A Wind Of Strikes Is Blowing Over Russia”**

December 2007 By Carine Clément, International Viewpoint. Carine Clément is a sociologist and runs the Institute of Collective Action in Moscow

On November 20, 2007 at midnight the assembly line stopped. Of the 2200 workers at Ford-Vsevolojk (region of Saint-Petersburg), 1500 took part in the strike.

The management reacted by prohibiting the workers of the morning shift to enter the factory. It even called in the OMONs (Russian riot police) to block the entrance.

Since then, every day, hundreds of workers hold a permanent meeting in front of the factory, taking care not to let any possible strike-breakers pass.

In a dash of enthusiasm, they dance and sing.

The employees of the canteen, who are also on strike, distribute tea and sandwiches.

There is an atmosphere of euphoria and enthusiasm as they find themselves together again to fight for their rights.

The principal demand of the strikers relates to the level of wages, which they ask to be raised by 30 per cent. For the moment the average wages in the factory turn around 19,000 roubles (550 euros). The strike is attracting a lot of attention, linked to the massive strike movements in France and in other countries of Europe – you can hear the workers chanting: "France shows us the road to follow, hurrah! ", and also in relation to the next parliamentary elections, which will be held on December 2, 2007.

Especially, public opinion and even the traditional trade unions of the FNPR confederation, which are, however, hostile in principle to any open conflict with company managements, is starting to shift. A public letter signed by twenty sociologists of work, asking for a liberalization of the Labour Code in relation to the regulation of the right to the strike, was published by several newspapers. The trade unions and collectives of other companies of the country, and also from abroad, have sent messages of support.

Pickets in solidarity with the strike have been organized in Saint Petersburg and Moscow. The president of the FNPR, Mikhail Chmakov – allied with "United Russia" (Putin's party) in the elections – has dared to speak publicly of the need to revise the Labour Code, which was, however, adopted in 2001 thanks to him and the party in power.

On the other hand, the management of Ford Russia, for the moment, says that it will refuse any negotiation before the ending of the strike. The strikers have been warned that they will not be paid. Those workers who agree to sign a formal declaration of non-participation in the strike have been promised that they will receive two thirds of their wages for "forced unemployment".

Feeling that the strike was going to be prolonged, the strikers, meeting in general assembly on November 22, unanimously decided divide into two groups: one would resume work in order to be receive minimum remuneration; the other would continue the strike and the permanent meeting at the entrance to the factory. "In any event", - explains Alexei Etmanov, the president of the trade union of the factory, "that will not be enough to start up production again and will only worsen the financial losses due to the strike."

The case of the "Fordists" is rather unique and exemplary for Russia. A young trade union, which left the traditional FNPR confederation two years ago, continuous work on the ground by the leaders of the union in order get the workers to understand that the union is all of them and not a service agency in cahoots with management, an offensive strategy of trade union unity.

On the initiative of the Ford trade-union committee there was formed this summer the Interregional Car Workers' Trade Union, bringing together independent trade unions from several large companies, in particular the Lada factory in Togliatti (where a strike took place - savagely repressed - at the beginning of August) and the Renault-Autoframos factory in Moscow. So it is an exemplary case of a combative trade union supported by the majority of the workers.

It was following the first strike of the "Fordists" (concluded by the signature from a collective agreement), last February, that the strike movement started to develop in the country.

Since then, we have learned of dozens of cases of strikes. Most of the time, because of the regressive labour legislation and repression by employers, they ended in sackings, disciplinary actions and condemnations for "illegal strikes".

The most recent examples: the strike of the dockers of the port of Tuapse (November 4-7, 2007), then of Saint Petersburg (November 13-17, 2007), and that of the Post Office in Saint Petersburg (October 26, 2007). The first two were stopped by court decisions.

The third – in fact a work-to-rule - ended in the dismissal of three leaders of the Post Office lorry drivers' union.

But despite repression the epidemic is spreading.



For November 28 a strike is announced of the rail workers belonging to the independent trade union RPLBJ. The strike, even though it has not started, is already the object of a lawsuit initiated by the management. The railway workers nevertheless declare that they are ready to go into action. The demands relate to the regulation of wages and the right of the minority trade union to take part in collective bargaining.

So a wind of strikes is blowing over Russia.

Even if the dimension is less compared to what France is experiencing, the radicality of the change has to be put in the Russian context, where strikes had practically disappeared since the beginning of the 2000 decade, when Vladimir Putin came to power.

There is a change in mentalities, in the conception of what a trade union is, in the practices of solidarity which are being established.

There is also a change of generation, with the arrival of young workers who refuse to sell their labour power on the cheap, rightly demand the recognition of their qualifications and are less impregnated with traditional paternalist attitudes towards management and the trade unions.

These changes are also related to socio-economic evolutions. Stable economic growth, a rise in profits and in the salaries of management, galloping inflation - all these factors are accumulating to produce rising discontent.

To this should be added the incidences of globalization in Russia. Industrial disputes particularly affect the multinationals, as the workers see how trade unions function in other countries and measure the difference between their wages and those of the workers of other countries.

Lastly, the key factor is provided by the second wave (after that of the beginning of the 1990s) of the creation of independent trade unions, generally constituted at rank-and-file level, starting from a core of workers more conscious than the average.

**In short, although it is not comparable to the movements that are setting France ablaze, the germs of a change of tendency are undeniable.**

**And neither the elections nor repression will do anything about it.**

**The transformations, essentially qualitative, go much deeper.**

---

### **Capitalism At Work:**

## **‘Cleveland Five’ Betrayed By Rats Running Their Union;**

# **“They Are Trying To Starve Us Out,” Torrence Said**

**“We did nothing wrong,” said Whiteside, “except to have the audacity to do what a union local is supposed to do - stand up for its membership.”**

**The group members said they did exactly what the rank and file voted for when, on April 3, they called for members to go on strike.**

December 5, 2007, By J.R. Munoz-McNally, Statesville.com, Statesville, N.C.

Robert Whiteside is a workingman’s workingman.

But exactly eight months ago, he found himself among the ranks of the unemployed.

The father of three, Statesville resident, erstwhile employee of the Cleveland Freightliner plant and union leader was fired, ostensibly for allowing what the powers to be said was an unauthorized strike.

Since then Whiteside and four other members of the United Auto Workers Local 3520’s negotiating team have been fighting to get their jobs back.

The group - which includes fellow Local 3520 officers Allen Bradley, David Crisco, Glenna Swinford and Franklin Torrence - has come to be known as “the Cleveland Five” and they have come to symbolize flaws in the labor union system.

“We did nothing wrong,” said Whiteside, “except to have the audacity to do what a union local is supposed to do - stand up for its membership.”

The group members said they did exactly what the rank and file voted for when, on April 3, they called for members to go on strike.

The workers’ contract had expired at midnight on April 1, one day after the company had a massive layoff. Later that day, the UAW International leaders called on the local “to accept a package we had already voted to reject,” Torrence said.

“We were told to take this and ratify it and that ‘we could work out the open issues later,’” Torrence said

But the negotiating team saw right through that.

“There was nothing new and if we accepted the contract we would lose all our bargaining power,” Swinford said. “Once you ratify a contract, the deal’s over and you have what you have.”

And they didn’t think what they were given was fair.

“There were 22 open articles,” Bradley said. “And 86 sub-issues that involved health and safety matters. The contract was no good as it was.”

But, for reasons the five could only speculate on, the international arm of the UAW wanted the matter settled quickly.

Part of settlement involved workers agreeing to work only every other week to stave off even more layoffs.

“I think international wanted that so they could keep the union dues coming in,” Bradley said.

“But what happened is that by cutting back their hours so much, they lost their status as full-time workers and lost most of the benefits they fought for in the contract in the first place.”

But at least the workers still had jobs.

Initially, all 11 members of Local 3520’s negotiating committee were fired. Six have been reinstated.

“We don’t know what happened with the others,” Torrence said. “It seems like there was something political going on, but we really don’t know.”

The five who have remained without a job are running out of resources. They had to fight to get unemployment benefits, which were initially denied. Those funds have since dried up.

**The group also had to defend itself against internal charges brought by fellow union members alleging that the group “misled” the membership into going on strike.**

**And an arbitration meeting that was supposedly “guaranteed” to take place within eight weeks has still not happened. It’s been eight months.**

If the arbitrator rules in their favor - whenever the hearing takes place - the best the five can hope for is back pay minus any unemployment benefits and pay from other jobs.

**The five think the UAW International is hoping they fade away. One of the five - Crisco - has been forced to take another job.**

**“I guess they can drag this thing out until next summer,” Whiteside said.**

**“They are trying to starve us out,” Torrence said.**

Whiteside said the experience has left him wondering if organized labor can survive.

“We are all pro-labor and we still believe in the solidarity of the union,” he said. “But the structure of the UAW has to change or it will squeeze the middle-class workers right out of it. It’s not supposed to be like this.”

The Cleveland Five has gotten the attention of labor groups all over the country. The NAACP has also staked out a position in support of the group.

**“It is very strange for a members of a local to be forced to fight against their own union,” Whiteside said.**

**“But,” added Bradley, “Strange things have been happening with this union.”**

---

## **Received:**

### **Soldiers’ Truce**

From: Dave Stratman  
To: GI Special  
Sent: December 14, 2007  
Subject: Soldiers’ Truce

The story on the Xmas Truce was great.

I described the Xmas Truce in my book, *We CAN Change The World*.

We have a special display of pictures from the Soldiers’ Truce on our web site at:  
<http://newdemocracyworld.org/christmas2004/christmasindex.htm>

Click on the picture to open it.

Dave Stratman  
newdemocracyworld.org  
20 Moraine Street  
Boston, MA 02130

#### **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:

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2007/index.html>; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=6&l=e>; [http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi\\_special/](http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/);  
<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a “fair use” of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: [www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml) for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond ‘fair use’, you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

# **GI Special** [www.militaryproject.org](http://www.militaryproject.org)

*This is how Bush brings the troops home,  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.*



*GI Special is a near-daily news bulletin for service members  
[www.militaryproject.org](http://www.militaryproject.org)*

---

**If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.**