

GI SPECIAL 5L12:



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

**“I Often Say I Was Born In The
Military, I Married The Military
And I Gave Birth To The
Military”**

**“I Support Our Military, Not The
Reasons For The Wars”**

“I Speak Out Against The War, With My Family’s Full Support”

I wish I could believe this whole exercise in Iraq was completely justified, at least then if the worst happens, I could believe that the loss of one of my loved ones might actually accomplish something. Sincerely I hope I am proven wrong, for it to be otherwise is such an unbelievably painful place to be.

December 11, 2007 by Kay Jones, OpEdNews

Happily married military wife and mother of 6, grandmom of 16 and counting!

Social Worker, anti-war activist, Member of "Military Families Speak Out" & MilitaryProject.org. A deeply concerned American fighting for our nation’s soul.

Favorite Quotes: "We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." ~Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Why We Can't Wait, 1963 "If people behaved like governments, you'd call the cops." ~Kelvin Throop "People often say that, in a democracy, decisions are made by a majority of the people. Of course, that is not true. Decisions are made by a majority of those who make themselves heard and who vote - a very different thing." ~Walter H. Judd "It's not the voting that's democracy; it's the counting." ~Tom Stoppard, Jumpers

The recent Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg poll looking into the views of the military community, both service members and families on the war in Iraq, seems to have been big news to some, but to many military families it was just a statement of fact.

From the Military.com site an article from the Cincinnati Post entitled “Poll Questions Family Support of War” (December 10, 2007) gives a pretty clear explanation for why military family support for Iraq is on the decline:

“Today’s all-volunteer force is older and more married than any before it. ...At the same time, deployments have grown longer and more frequent as Soldiers rotate in and out of the war zone, sometimes three and four times, with no end date in sight, a wearing existence that has contributed to opposition to Bush and his war strategy.”

As one of those military family members, the bottom line is that we are so weary from the sustained level of stress from repeated combat tours, not just in one war effort, but two.

And how do you suppose it feels to hear our leaders talking about the possibility of a third?

My husband retired last year with 30 years of combined service with the USMC and the National Guard. Three out of our six children enlisted in the military, two of whom made a career in the military. I often say I was born in the military, I married the military and I gave birth to the military.

So I get that the ultimate cost/risk being in the military is the potential for combat, injury and/or loss of life. I accepted that voluntarily when I married into the military.

I am not a pacifist; I understand that wars are sometimes necessary. However, I expect that war should always be our last option as a nation and a people.

As a long time military family member, I have endured and supported my loved ones and friends fighting in both Iraq and Vietnam.

It makes me crazy when people are so full of opinions about Iraq, but would never consider going there themselves.

They have a multitude of reasons for not joining; just ask our Vice President why he sought five deferments during Vietnam. It was reported in an article on 5/1/2004 in the New York Times by Katharine Q. Seelye "Away from the hearing room, he (Cheney) told the Washington Post that he had sought his deferments because 'I had other priorities in the 60's than military service.'"

Increasingly over the last five years, both in the media and among average Americans, the rhetoric around this war has become so mean-spirited and attacking that dialogue has become impossible. Sometime statements are made with little understanding of what life in the military is like for both veterans and their families. Does anyone consider how the bipartisan bickering feels to us?

As recently reported on 12/6/2007 in the Grayson County News-Gazette, regarding the service members who have died in Iraq, Senate Leader Mitch McConnell was quoted as saying, "...Nobody is happy about losing lives but remember these are not draftees, these are full-time professional soldiers."

To that I ask "and that means what exactly?"

That volunteering for your country is relinquishing one's right to speak out when you disagree?

Or because our military are "full-time professional soldiers" rather than draftees, they and their families are supposed to hold their tongues and follow orders without a thought?

I expect statements like that made by Sen. McConnell, from people with a limited understanding or personal experience our current military.

But as the mom of a daughter, who is a single parent, set to deploy to Iraq before the end of this year, I was deeply offended.

I am offended when any politician attempts to use the lives of our loved ones as a political battering ram. We are not Democrats or Republicans fighting and sacrificing for our nation; we are Americans.

I just wish more Americans who believe Iraq is worth us losing our loved ones over, would head for the recruiting stations and actually walk the walk and not simply talk the talk.

Do you really want to support our Troops in a tangible way? Give our brave men and women a break from repeated tours, enlist.

Our military desperately needs enlisted personnel and officers; the maximum age of first-time enlistment has been raised to the ripe old age of 42.

Personally, I love and support our military and I speak out against the war, with my family's full support.

Both can exist in our nation and if that stops being the case, then we have lost who we are as a nation. What happened to "I may not always agree with what you have to say, but I will fight for your right to say it"? I long for the day when we can get back to having respectful, fact-based dialogues and disagreements.

Another point of contention I have regards something implicit in Sen. McConnell's above statement, which is about our so-called "all voluntary" military.

In the beginning when I began to make my feelings known, inevitably someone would try to throw that in my face, like it was supposed to silence me by pointing that fact out.

After hearing it one too many times I had enough and I came up with what I think is a well thought out response.

Our police, local, state, and federal, is also voluntary. The biggest current difference between our current military and our many law enforcement personnel is the simple fact that the latter, can quit any time they choose.

Their contracts cannot be involuntarily suspended. (i.e. Stop Loss Policy)

Our voluntary, though financially compensated, police force know exactly what they are getting into, do they not? They know each and every day that they are putting their lives on the line. They know that too often, they are out-gunned by the criminal element from which they attempt to protect us.

How many times have you ever heard the public or our government respond to the concerns of our police or their families by saying, "didn't you know what you were getting in to...no one forced you to choose law enforcement as a career?"

How often have you heard the concerns by police departments regarding an unacceptable level of fatalities, met with "these are not draftees, these are full-time professional police?" It would be insulting would it not?

Would we ever send a police officer into service without all the equipment and resources needed the job?

Would we ever push our police back to work before they had fully healed from any injuries they incurred in the line of duty?

So given that our police and military are both volunteers, why the difference in the way we treat them?

As a military wife and mom when I hear the difference expressed by so many, it feels like is our nation is essentially telling us to suck it up and stop complaining.

While as military families, we understand that we may pay the ultimate price for our loved ones service, it does not even begin to lesson our pain and loss when you tell us that the cause is noble and just.

Pain is pain.

But when we try to express our feelings, only to have them dismissed as a part of the bargain, what it feels like is that what our fellow Americans really mean when they say they "support the troops" is "we support you and all but we really are not interested in the details please. Let's just keep it abstract."

Give our loved the same consideration you would your police.

And on a real personal note, our daughter, deploying to Iraq after Christmas, while I support her decision to go, don't ask me not to be angry to my core if she is killed or wounded because of inadequate equipment or training?

How hard do you think it was to tell my Marine, the love of my life that even though I hate the Iraq war, it was his career and therefore his decision to volunteer to deploy, but that I would support his decision unconditionally?

I support our military, not the reasons for the wars.

And you can bet your life that I will do everything within my power, to demand that our government do right by each and every one of our veterans and their families for as long as it takes.

I wish I could believe this whole exercise in Iraq was completely justified, at least then if the worst happens, I could believe that the loss of one of my loved ones might actually accomplish something.

Sincerely I hope I am proven wrong, for it to be otherwise is such an unbelievably painful place to be.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed In Ninewa

December 15, 2007 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20071215-05

TIKRIT, Iraq – A Multi-National Division – North Soldier was killed Dec. 14 in a small-arms fire attack in Ninewa Province.

Arcola Graduate Dies In Iraq

November 29, 2007 By Meg Thilmony, News-Gazette

ARCOLA – Flags in Arcola and Douglas County were lowered this morning in remembrance of Marine Allen Roberts, who died in Iraq.

The Department of Defense hadn't released the details of Roberts' death this morning, but those who remember Mr. Roberts said he was a caring, helpful man who took his military duties seriously. Mr. Roberts was a 2004 Arcola High School graduate.

82nd Soldier Killed In Iraq

December 04, 2007 Kevin Maurer, The Fayetteville Observer

Dec. 4--Spc. Matthew K. Reece joined the Army to fight in Iraq.

"He was ready to go over there and get that straightened out," said his aunt, Sharon Reece, on Monday. "It was something he wanted to do."

Reece, who went by Kyle, died Saturday from his wounds after a roadside bomb detonated near his vehicle in Baghdad.

He was 24.

Sharon Reece said her nephew grew up with her sons in Arkansas. She said she still remembers them out in the yard playing.

"He was a typical child," she said. "I can still see him out in the yard just running around."

Reece joined the Army in September 2005. An avid hunter and fisherman, he took to being an infantryman. His aunt said he loved the service.

He arrived to the 82nd in November 2006 and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team,

"Spc. Reece will forever be a part of the battalion, especially a part of the lives of the paratroopers he served with," said Capt. Aaron King, the battalion's rear detachment commander.

Reece is survived by his wife, Chauntelle Reece, two children -- daughter Alyssa and son Teagan -- and his parents Preston Reece and Tammy Vanderwaal.

A memorial ceremony will be held for Reece in Iraq.

NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME



US "surge" soldiers from 1-30 Infantry Battalion rest during a foot patrol along the Tigris river south of Baghdad, 03 September 2007. (AFP/David Furst)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**The Taliban Have Captured Two
Districts Near Kandahar To Build Up
Pressure In That Province To Distract
NATO From Helmand**

From the province's southern district of Gramsir, bordering Pakistan, to the northern end of Baghran, large areas are partially or completely under Taliban control. Partial control means that district headquarters are under the control of the Kabul administration and all surrounding villages are under the control of the Taliban.

Dec 15, 2007 By Syed Saleem Shahzad, Asia Times [Excerpts]

KARACHI - British troops have once again recaptured the less than a few square kilometers of the district headquarters of Musa Qala town in Helmand province from the Taliban, but, as before, it could turn out to be a pyrrhic victory.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) headquarters in Kabul have heralded this week's operations as a "most strategic and significant success" in the province, where 80% of Afghanistan's poppy cultivation is located.

The Taliban put up token resistance this week, according to a Taliban commander in Kandahar, Moulvi Abdul Jalil, who told Asia Times Online on telephone that the organisation now aims to concentrate its efforts on Kandahar province and has already captured two districts near Kandahar city.

With regard to Musa Qala, Mullah Noormal (a jihadi alias), a lieutenant of Mullah Abdul Bari, said in a satellite phone interview with Asia Times Online, "They (British) fired continuous artillery shells for two days on the civilian population and as a result the people evacuated the area. The Taliban did not receive any casualties as we did not actually fight. Civilians were the only victims. We were under the command of Mullah Abdul Bari and retreated when the troops rolled into town.

"Now that the troops are in Musa Qala, we have taken over positions nearby, namely the towns of Raigi and Shaban. The British troops are now once again trapped, like they were in 2006. We will now retaliate at a time of our choice. They don't have even offices to stay in in Musa Qala as we destroyed the Olaswali (administrative office) before leaving the town," said Noormal.

"Now they are in Musa Qala's headquarters and we are sitting in all the villages around Musa Qala. They don't have a way forward or backwards."

Beyond Greskh district, on the way to Musa Qala, there is no road network. Vehicles have to travel on wide deserted plains, following the tire marks of other vehicles. The average speed is less than 10 kilometers an hour. The approach to Musa Qala is marked by agriculture fields and tress. The town itself comprises some shops, a hospital, a few mosques and inns and the district headquarters.

It is clear that NATO is obsessed with Helmand province in order to complete the renovation of Kajaki Dam, a hydroelectric project that will ensure uninterrupted power supply to Kandahar and Helmand provinces. This is strategically significant for a backward region where roads do not exist and the people still rely on natural rain water reservoirs.

From the province's southern district of Gramsir, bordering Pakistan, to the northern end of Baghran, large areas are partially or completely under Taliban control.

Partial control means that district headquarters are under the control of the Kabul administration and all surrounding villages are under the control of the Taliban.

US-led forces entered Helmand province without much resistance during the invasion of 2001 because it was a collective tribal decision to say goodbye to the Taliban and welcome the new power. It was believed the incoming forces would be able to provide basic necessities such as water, electricity, food and ultimately prosperity.

This did not happen, while efforts were made to curtail poppy cultivation, a vital cash crop. By 2005, the tribes - once again unanimously - decided that it was time to boot out the foreign forces (rather than welcome the Taliban again) so they could grow their poppy and lead their lives according to their own traditions and tribal codes without the intervention of the non-local Afghan army and police.

They did allow the Taliban to operate, and foreign forces were driven away from many areas.

However, apart from Baghran district, which is completely ruled by the Taliban, and Lashkargah, which is run by the Afghan government, all districts are run by local tribal councils, which allow the Taliban to stay.

Meanwhile, the Taliban have captured two districts near Kandahar to build up pressure in that province to distract NATO from Helmand.

“Concerns” The Mission Is Failing [No Shit?] “There Are No American Troops Readily Available”

December 16, 2007 (UPI) & THOM SHANKER and STEVEN LEE MYERS, The New York Times Company

U.S. government and NATO officials ordered sweeping reviews of the mission in Afghanistan amid concerns the mission there is failing.

Two U.S. reviews and one NATO examination signal a recognition that development on political and economic stabilization, counter-terrorist operations and curbing the production of opium and heroin trafficking is in a dire state, The New York Times said Sunday.

Taken together, these efforts reflect a growing apprehension that one of the administration's most important legacies — the routing of Taliban and Qaeda forces in Afghanistan after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 — may slip away, according to senior administration officials.

Unlike the administration's sweeping review of Iraq policy a year ago, which was announced with great fanfare and ultimately resulted in a large increase in troops, the American reviews of the Afghan strategy have not been announced and are not expected to result in a similar infusion of combat forces, mostly because there are no American troops readily available.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

“Open Guerrilla Warfare In The Streets”

December 13, 2007 By Carl Bloice, BC Editorial Board, Black Commentator [Excerpt]

For months now, the U.S. has been trying to get other African governments to send troops to augment the forces of the so-called African Union Mission to Somalia, offering cash incentives.

Thus far this has been to little avail. A contingent of 1,600 Ugandan troops has been on hand since shortly after the invasion but they are reported largely occupied with guarding the Mogadishu airport.

With the rump government installed in the Somali version of the 'Green Zone' and open guerrilla warfare in the streets, they could hardly carry out any military mission without taking sides in the civil conflict. This is the main reason no other African country has offered up its sons for the mission.

And, as if the aid situation in Somalia were not bad enough, President Abdullahi Yusuf is reported by international aid officials to have ordered restrictions that prevent food aid from being distributed in parts of the country. Ports and airports have been closed, shutting out aid convoys. Aid agency staff personnel are said to be barred from traveling to the areas most in need to food and medicines.

TROOP NEWS

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, SAFE



As night fell on the Korengal Valley in eastern Afghanistan, a patrol of soldiers from the 173rd Airborne in the second week of their 15-month deployment were ambushed by insurgents, who killed one and wounded another. The soldiers were rushed to the nearest surgical team by medavac chopper. 11.23, 2007 Peter van Agtmael, ABC News

380 From Pennsylvania Guard Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

December 17, 2007 Army Times

Pennsylvania Army National Guard soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 103rd Armor Regiment, were recognized Dec. 4 and Dec. 6 during four separate departure ceremonies with friends and family.

The 380 soldiers will be leaving for training at Fort Bragg, N.C., before deploying to Afghanistan. They will provide security for provincial reconstruction teams throughout Afghanistan.

“A Military Machine Geared To Train Killers And Dispose Of Them When They’re No Longer ‘Fit To Serve’”



December 14, 2007 By Brian Lenzo, Socialist Worker

WATERTOWN, N.Y.--In response to the appalling treatment of Sgt. Brad Gaskins, who the military arrested essentially for seeking outside mental health treatment, the Different Drummer Café, located outside Ft. Drum, held a public forum on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Speakers included trauma therapist Dean Anthony; Joe Gregory, the father of a Iraq combat vet who was killed after coming home with PTSD; Vietnam Veterans Against the War National Organizing Secretary Marty Webster; and Tod Ensign, attorney for Gaskins and leader of Citizen Soldier.

Some 30 people came to hear about the military's failure to treat veterans who return from war traumatized by their experiences. During the discussion, soldiers shared their firsthand stories.

An Iraq veteran explained, "I go into the VA three times a week, and all come out with is a handful of drugs and a bunch of paperwork."

Iraq Veterans Against the War members testified that the lack of veterans' health care is a logical outcome of a military machine geared to train killers and dispose of them when they're no longer "fit to serve."

Other speakers reminded the audience that the Iraqi people are facing "traumatic stress disorder, but it's not 'post' because the war is still raging for them every day."

Throughout the evening, it became clear that if veterans and soldiers are to get the treatment they deserve, we are going to have to fight for it, whatever administration is in the White House.

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

**He Finds The VA System Is His New Enemy:
“I Love My Country, But I Don't Trust My Government”
He “Drained His Bank Account, Sank Into \$40,000 Of Debt And Ultimately Lost His House On Spruce Street In North Tonawanda”**



EDDY DELMONTE, 21, IRAQ WAR VETERAN. Derek Gee/Buffalo News

[Here it is again. Same old story. Used up, thrown away, and the politicians couldn't care less. To repeat for the 3,517th time, there is no enemy in Iraq. Iraqis and U.S. troops have a common enemy. That common enemy owns and operates the Imperial government in Washington DC for their own profit. That common enemy started this war of conquest on a platform of lies, because they couldn't

tell the truth: this war was about making money for them, and nothing else. Payback is overdue. T]

He is now fighting for medical insurance for his wife and children.

“Once you hit 100 percent disability, you’re supposed to get medical insurance for the family, and they’ve been denying me,” he said. “They say I’m not totally and permanently disabled, but they are giving me 100 percent disability, so how is it I’m not totally and permanently disabled?”

12/16/07 By Lou Michel, NEWS STAFF REPORTER, The Buffalo News

You can see the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in their empty shirt sleeves, the scars on their heads, in their eyes so weary from sleepless nights.

Some 30,434 men and women in uniform have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, but the Pentagon does not say where they are from, so it’s unclear exactly how many of the wounded hail from Western New York.

Almost 1,700 of those veterans have sought medical treatment at the Veteran Affairs Medical Center in Buffalo since 2003, with a majority seeking help for war-related injuries.

But for the veterans who are trying to adjust while under the care of the local VA, the navigation of a sometimes unresponsive bureaucracy adds to the pain of life beyond the combat zone.

Christopher M. Kreiger returned from the Iraq War deaf in his right ear, but believes at least part of his hearing could be restored if the VA provided him with a better hearing device. Government rules, the Town of Tonawanda resident said, allow for new hearing aids every four years. So he’s waiting until next year to hear better.

Eddy Delmonte, another Iraq veteran who was raised in Orchard Park, said he was on prescribed pain medication — until his prescription was abruptly canceled without explanation by a VA physician’s assistant.

He said a doctor should have told him why he was taken off the medication for his back injury.

Almost three years have passed since Delmonte suffered his back injury, and he said he has yet to receive treatment from a VA orthopedic surgeon. So a few weeks ago, he found a private surgeon willing to accept government health insurance.

The local VA declined to release a figure on how many doctors it has caring for veterans, saying it is hard to break out the numbers because each veteran has a team of care

providers. But veterans and their advocates say the ratio could be as high as 700 veterans to one medical doctor.

Kreiger, 35, has a long list of medical problems that, he said, are related to his 2003-04 service in Iraq with the 105th Army National Guard Military Police Company.

His right leg was crushed when a Humvee he was riding in crashed. His left hip was injured when he was thrown from another Humvee during an attack.

Exploding mortars and roadside bombs — including a direct hit on a Humvee on which he was the machine gunner — stole hearing from one ear.

“All I remember of that attack is a flash and then blacking out. The next thing I remember is the lieutenant pulling me out. I was incoherent and had this constant ringing in my right ear, which started to bleed,” Kreiger said.

He has been diagnosed with a brain injury and is being treated for that at the Buffalo VA’s Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic. He suffers from memory loss, nausea, dizzy spells and seizures. Kreiger is one of thousands of returning veterans suffering from brain injuries.

Since April, the VA has screened 61,285 veterans nationally and 11,804 have “screened positive” for brain injury symptoms.

Two years after Kreiger returned home, doctors thought he suffered a stroke because of numbness in his body. It turned out he had tumors on his spinal cord.

“The doctors said the tumors were connected to my combat duty. They got most of them,” said Kreiger, who is on 10 different types of medication. “I live on painkillers.”

Looking at a stack of unpaid medical bills on his kitchen table, Kreiger said he has tried to take control of his life since returning from war — but he finds the VA system is his new enemy.

Married and the father of two young boys, Kreiger said he has had to wage a battle for VA disability benefits even though his medical conditions have left him unable to work.

The former ambulance emergency medical technician drained his bank account, sank into \$40,000 of debt and ultimately lost his house on Spruce Street in North Tonawanda.

Twice his family moved into different apartments before Kreiger was granted monthly disability checks and was able to buy a house in Tonawanda.

He is now fighting for medical insurance for his wife and children.

“Once you hit 100 percent disability, you’re supposed to get medical insurance for the family, and they’ve been denying me,” he said.

“They say I’m not totally and permanently disabled, but they are giving me 100 percent disability, so how is it I’m not totally and permanently disabled?”

Kreiger said he is yet to get an answer to his question and is working his way through government bureaucracy.

“I love my country, but I don’t trust my government,” he said, as his two boys — Cole, 4, and CJ, 6 — ran into the kitchen looking for a snack.

That stack of medical bills, totaling about \$2,000, remained on the table as he served them pop and cookies.

Army veteran Eddy Delmonte, who now lives in Hamburg, suffered the same sort of injuries that Kreiger did.

Delmonte was 18 when he arrived in Iraq in 2005 as part of the Army’s 2nd Brigade of the 211th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

He survived rocket-propelled grenades screeching over his tent, numerous roadside bombs and several firefights. Sixteen members of his brigade did not survive.

Delmonte was injured when a Bradley Fighting Vehicle he was in crashed. He was left with fractured vertebrae, a head injury that causes migraine headaches, vertigo, memory loss and a high-pitched ringing in his left ear.

On top of it all, his mind is in such turmoil that sometimes he can’t get out of bed in the morning.

Erica Delmonte said it is not easy to live with her husband. Eddy Delmonte said it is not easy to live with himself.

“Just thinking about what happened to friends you lost, thinking about friends who got arms blown off from massive shrapnel, and you go into a daze,” he said. “One night in bed I woke and had my wife in a headlock. She said, ‘What are you doing? It’s me, babe.’ ”

Delmonte was a patient of the VA’s post-traumatic stress facility in Batavia but left, he said, when he was threatened with being sent to jail because he was upset he was not given a new pain medication for his injured back.

“They said if I flipped out, they would throw me in jail. So I left,” Delmonte said.

And Now, More Wonderful News For Veterans

December 10, 2007 By Rick Maze, Army Times [Excerpts]

The federal court responsible for hearing appeals of rulings on veterans' benefits claims is so swamped that its chief judge can make few promises about the near-term prospects for reducing waiting times.

Veterans appealing an initial administrative decision on a claim can expect to wait two years or more for a final decision — after already waiting an average of six months for the initial VA decision on their claim.

War Profiteers Took \$32 Million For An Iraqi Base They Never Built

Dec 14, 2007 By Matt Kelley - USA Today [Excerpts]

The U.S. military paid a Florida company nearly \$32 million to build barracks and offices for Iraqi army units even though nothing was ever built, Pentagon investigators reported.

The project had to be abandoned because the Iraqi Defense Ministry couldn't obtain rights to the land where the headquarters was to be built, according to a report released this month by the Defense Department's Office of Inspector General. Contracting records show the buildings would have housed one brigade and three battalions of the Iraqi military in Ramadi, a hotbed of the Sunni Muslim insurgency and capital of Anbar province.

Still, the Air Force agency overseeing the project paid contractor Ellis Environmental Group \$31.9 million of the \$34.2 million obligated for the project, the report said.

The report said the military didn't keep adequate records of equipment for the Iraqis ranging from generators and garbage trucks to thousands of guns and grenade launchers.

In May 2006, the Air Force center awarded the Ramadi project to Ellis Environmental Group, according to federal contracting records.

The inspector general's report said vouchers provided by the contractor don't show purchased materials.

“Fear Is Not An Option”
Anti-War Activist Harassed By FBI:
“I Do Not Hide My Political Perspectives From Anyone”

“I Refuse To Be Intimidated Into Silence”

December 14, 2007 By Shemon Salam, Seattle; Socialist Worker

I WAS visited by the FBI at my residence on Thursday, November 29.

I am an Asian-American Muslim man, and an antiwar activist who believes that the U.S. military has no business in the Middle East or anywhere else in the world.

I do not hide my political perspectives from anyone.

I refuse to be intimidated into silence.

The two FBI agents claimed to be investigating a “complaint” from University of Washington (UW) students that I might have said “things” which could suggest that I advocate violence against the U.S.

This was in reference to my opposition to the “Islamofascism Awareness Week,” which the College Republicans hosted in mid-October.

During this week, the College Republicans showed a video that described all Palestinians as terrorists and posited a theory that Palestinian men are prone to violence because they are sexually repressed (ironic, coming from the College Republicans).

Michael Medved also spoke during this week.

I was part of a demonstration with a group of Muslims, students and people of color who were barred from entering the event. The event organizers cited full capacity as the main reason. Why is my opposition to this event being criminalized?

The FBI agents wanted to see a flyer that I was passing out. I told them no.

I asked them, “Is this Stalin’s Russia or McCarthy’s America?”

They have no business collecting literature from me or anyone else in the United States. Anyway, the flyers can be found all over campus, because I have nothing to hide from my neighbors.

This is not one isolated incident. Muslims and Arabs are being attacked, harassed and intimidated by the FBI across the country.

The FBI claims that anyone who opposes U.S. imperialism is a terrorist.

Some Muslim leaders have come out in public and said “good Muslims” should cooperate with the FBI to help them control the “bad Muslims.”

Meanwhile, the FBI has sent spies to our mosques and broken into our houses in the middle of the night to kidnap our brothers and sisters and send them to Guantánamo without evidence of any crime. Who is causing the terror here?

Most of the time, it goes unnoticed, and in the shadows, Arab and Muslim families are destroyed.

Let me make it clear--the FBI is a racist and anti-democratic organization. Granted, the two FBI agents who visited my house were very nice to me and even shook my hand. That should not cover up the crimes of the institution they work for.

Meanwhile, the College Republicans, who claim to be defenders of democracy and free speech, are inviting racists like Medved onto campus. The College Republicans advocate perspectives that lead to the deaths of Arabs and Muslims and people of color, and you don't see the FBI visiting them.

I am not advocating state repression against the College Republicans; I simply wish to point out the racist double standard here.

How did the FBI get my house address? My address is not listed anywhere. Did the university administration give it to them?

This would not be farfetched considering that university administrations across the country have made it clear that they will stand with the FBI before they stand in solidarity with Arabs, Muslims and students of color. Just look at their endorsement of the USA PATRIOT Act and the SEVIS registration system for international students.

Given this climate, the burden should be on the UW administration to prove that they are not collaborating with such McCarthyist surveillance of campus activists like myself. How can they claim to be the patrons of free speech and dialogue if they facilitate such intimidation?

Only democratic and anti-racist students can curb the power of racist university bureaucracies and the FBI. Student organizing is part of a rich tradition of American history that has made the U.S. a more democratic and anti-racist country than it would be otherwise.

However, across the country, university administrators and the FBI are working hand-in-hand to shut down and intimidate all who oppose U.S. empire and domestic racism.

UW and the city of Seattle claim to be liberal and progressive places where racism cannot be found. This is a myth.

Homegrown white supremacy stalks this campus. Every time we see the College Republicans, the FBI and the UW administration, it is a reminder that people of color and Muslims and Arabs are not safe yet.

However, we are not silent victims.

We do not know our own strength, and no one dares to tell us.

It is up to us to rediscover our democratic and anti-racist traditions. It is up to us to take back our university.

Fear is not an option.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action



The remains of the headquarters of the U.S.-allied Local Concerned Citizens patrol group after a bomb attack in Baghdad's Adhamiya December 15, 2007. (Reuters)

December 14, 2007 By PAUL von ZIELBAUER, New York Times & Reuters & Dec. 15 (Xinhua) & By Peter Graff, (Reuters) & By Laith Hammoudi, McClatchy Newspapers & By LORI HINNANT, Associated Press Writer & Dec 16 Reuters

Killed on Thursday was an Iraqi contractor working with the American forces, who was killed by insurgents in the relatively upscale Mansour neighborhood in western Baghdad. The contractor, whom the police identified as Firas Sadi Hussein al-Bayatti, worked for the Americans in the fortified Green Zone, the officials said.

In the northern Baghdad neighborhood of Azamiyah, a member of a U.S.-backed volunteer patrol was killed by an explosives-rigged bag he received from a stranger who claimed to have found it in the street, according to Iraqi army Col. Riadh al-Samaraie. The explosion wounded a second security volunteer, al-Samaraie said.

The leader of U.S.-backed group in a village in Salahudin province was shot dead by a group of insurgents on Saturday, a provincial police source said. They killed Ibrahim

Talab al-Jubouri, leader of the U.S.-backed al-Sahwa (or Awakening Council) group in the village of Kubaibah, east of the town of Duluiyah, some 90 km north of Baghdad. Four of his men were wounded in the attack, the source added.

According to the source, the attack took place when Jubouri was driving his car accompanying by some of his fighters in the area. Jubouri's death followed the killings of his two brothers who were separately assassinated by militants during the past few weeks.

In Baghdad's southern neighborhood of Doura, guerrillas attacked a checkpoint manned by another U.S.-backed group, wounding three.

Earlier in the day, an explosive charge detonated in the headquarters of U.S.-backed al-Sahwah in the Adhamiyah neighborhood in northern Baghdad, killing two of the al-Sahwa's members and wounding ten others, a police source in the neighborhood told Xinhua.

Guerrillas opened fire killing a traffic policemen inside his car in New Baghdad area east Baghdad around 8,30 am.

2 policemen were injured in an IED explosion in Al Alif Dar area (the 1000 houses area) in New Baghdad neighborhood east Baghdad around 7,30 am.

Six Iraqi policemen were wounded when a car bomber targeted a police station in the western province of Anbar near the border with Syria, police said.

In Diyala, the provincial deputy police chief resigned on Friday after insurgents abducted his son and threatened to kill him. Brig. Gen. Ayad Ismael quit in hopes his son — kidnapped two weeks ago — would be freed, said Diyala police Brig. Gen. Khudhayer al-Timimi. Police officials in Ismael's hometown of Kanan, who spoke on condition of anonymity in the town heavily infiltrated by militants, said the group was warning villagers in surrounding areas not to let their sons join Iraqi security forces.

Fighting erupted Saturday in Diyala villages outside Baqouba, beginning when insurgents attacked a police checkpoint nine miles north of the provincial capital, killing three officers, a police official said.

The onslaught lasted 90 minutes, until reinforcements arrived, the official said.

There were also clashes about seven miles south of Baqouba between militants and members of a U.S.-allied militia. The officer said the fighting lasted about an hour and casualties were unknown.

In the city of Diwaniyah, a former police chief and a police colonel were detained and accused of helping terrorists and militias in the region, Diwaniyah police said.

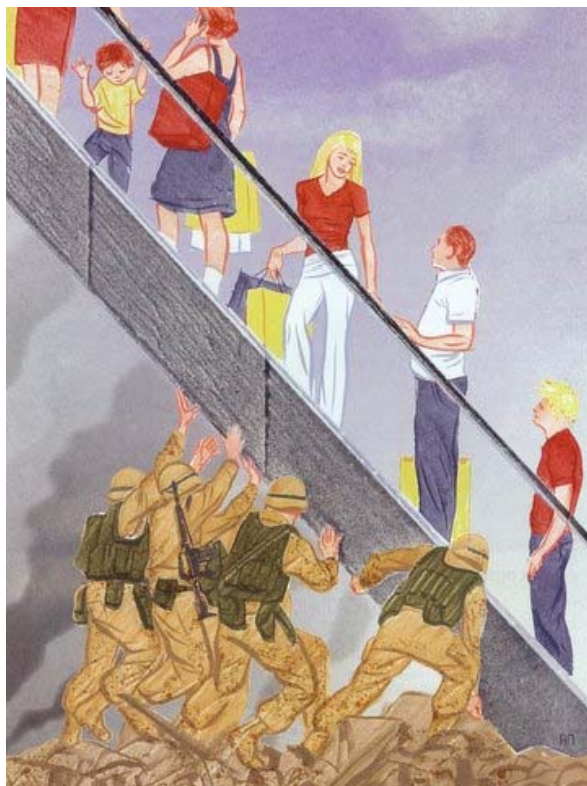
At least two policemen were killed and three others wounded when a roadside bomb struck their patrol 15 km (10 miles) east of Kerbala, police said.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE

END THE OCCUPATION

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**An Image That Is Worth A Million
Words**



From: Mike Hastie, Vietnam Veteran
To: GI Special
Sent: December 14, 2007
Subject: An Image That Is Worth A Million Words

Taken from the magazine "Foreign Policy," Nov./Dec. 2007

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.

“Perhaps Petraeus Didn’t Know That We Do Not Do Business With Terrorists”



12/10/2007 by Evan M. Knappenberger, Iraq Veteran Against The War [Excerpts]

If you take the exact opposite of what is being said by the people deceiving themselves in order to run this war, you get a clearer picture of the actual facts.

At the same time that Petraeus and Gates claim violence is dropping, the number of refugees is spiraling out of control.

There are many various factors to an insurgency, as I found out being an intelligence analyst in Iraq for a year, and they are all second-order affects which stem from our own occupation. If violence is down and "involuntary extension" of troops is up, it doesn't take much of a stretch of the imagination to conclude that maybe troops are "search and avoid"-ing, or giving up altogether.

If you shovel enough bribe money at insurgents they will hold off attacking you for a while.

How can Americans justify arming and paying insurgents? By claiming that they are "reformed," "former" insurgents. But this misses the bigger picture: one of outrageous moral hypocrisy.

According to a speech Bush gave after the Taliban requested peace talks offering to hand over Bin Laden, "We do not negotiate with Terrorists. We put them out of business."

All well and good, Mr. President, so why do you pay them and arm them? This sounds like a corporate takeover. How appropriately American.

In late 2007, we must have had a change of heart!

According to the AP headline on August 15th, "Former Insurgents Are Helping US Forces!"

Perhaps Petraeus didn't know that we do not do business with Terrorists.

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



A foreign soldier from the U.S. army points his weapon towards an Iraq citizen in an armed home invasion while others search his belongings during a night raid on the outskirts of Muqdadiyah, in occupied Diyala province, north of Baghdad Dec. 14, 2007. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnyakovic)

[Thanks to JM for the photo.]

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

[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]

"You get the interpreter and you get the man of the home, and you have him at gunpoint, and you'll ask the interpreter to ask him: 'Do you have any weapons? Do you have any anti-US propaganda, anything at all--anything--anything in here that would lead us to believe that you are somehow involved in insurgent activity or anti-coalition forces activity?'

"Normally they'll say no, because that's normally the truth," Sergeant Bruhns said.

"So what you'll do is you'll take his sofa cushions and you'll dump them. If he has a couch, you'll turn the couch upside down.

"You'll go into the fridge, if he has a fridge, and you'll throw everything on the floor, and you'll take his drawers and you'll dump them.... You'll open up his closet and you'll throw all the clothes on the floor and basically leave his house looking like a hurricane just hit it.

"And if you find something, then you'll detain him. If not, you'll say, 'Sorry to disturb you. Have a nice evening.'

"So you've just humiliated this man in front of his entire family and terrorized his entire family and you've destroyed his home. And then you go right next door and you do the same thing in a hundred homes."

Sgt. John Bruhns

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

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/)

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

STATE OF EMERGENCY! IMMEDIATE HALT TO DEMOLITIONS OF PUBLIC HOUSING IN NEW ORLEANS!



Join the New York Solidarity Coalition /w
Katrina & Rita Survivors & SUPPORTERS
For Press Conference and Rally to
Stop the racists' acts toward survivors and put a halt to all
demolitions!

Monday, December 17th 2007

12:00 - 12:30PM - City Hall Steps, Manhattan NY,
Rally and march to NYCHA and HUD at 26 Federal Plaza

- Calling for a state of emergency and a halt to all demolitions
- Immediate opening of all public housing units
- Immediate clean up and rehab of units not currently in a state of occupancy
- Immediate involvement of all tenants in the recovery plan to ensure a just path to return
- Immediate establishment of an emergency housing trust fund & end to all threats by HUD
- Waive all deadlines to acquire monies set aside for "affordable housing" for low-income families.

Support Senate bill #SB1668

For more information call 504 520-9521 or contact us at 212 969-0449
Visit us at www.NYKatrinaRita.org or www.myspace.com/NYKatrinaRita.org

MORE:

No Demolition Means No Demolition!!

The Movement Must Stop the Bulldozers at B.W. Cooper

The Public Housing Movement pledged itself to defend ALL the Public Housing apartments and developments in New Orleans — no exceptions.

We did not say all the developments, except those where non-representative tenant councils have agreed to demolition. We did not say no demolition, except where approval for demolition was taken before the hurricane. We did not say no demolition, except where 'movement leaders' claimed it was not convenient to protest. We said: No Demolition!!

On Wednesday, December 12th the movement made good on our promise. The movement mobilized when news broke that bulldozers were rolling at the B.W. Cooper development to destroy livable, badly needed public housing apartments. Underscoring how viable, the first building demolished was occupied legally, just prior to demolition, by maintenance staff!

The leading resident activist at Cooper called for action, and we effectively mobilized to stop the bulldozers.

Rank and file residents of Cooper supported the picket lines even though the Cooper tenant council president threatened tenants with eviction if they spoke out against demolition.

They were told that if their faces were seen on the news, or their voices heard against demolition, then they would lose their unit at B. W. Cooper.

In spite of these intimidation tactics, we won.

At Cooper we stopped the bulldozers and the criminal demolition plans.

Yet, after our victory, some forces in the movement said it was time to move back and abandon Cooper. We do not agree.

We have to be serious.

If we say no demolition, we have to mean no demolition. If demolition proceeds at Cooper without resistance it will only make it easier to demolish the rest of the developments.

Either it's true that New Orleans is facing a severe housing crisis that demands that all affordable housing be maintained or it isn't.

We believe it does face such a crisis which has several aspects. One is the large number of people, most of them Black who are exiled from the city, in part because there's no where they can afford to live. Another is the people being evicted from the FEMA trailers. A 3rd is the large and growing number of homeless people in New Orleans. Given all this, no affordable housing should be destroyed.

Join the struggle to stop demolition at Cooper and all the developments.

Make the right of return real and stop the ruling class' racial and class cleansing agenda.

**Residents and Friends of B. W. Cooper
Call 504-520-9521 or email carldix@hotmail.com**

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.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

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