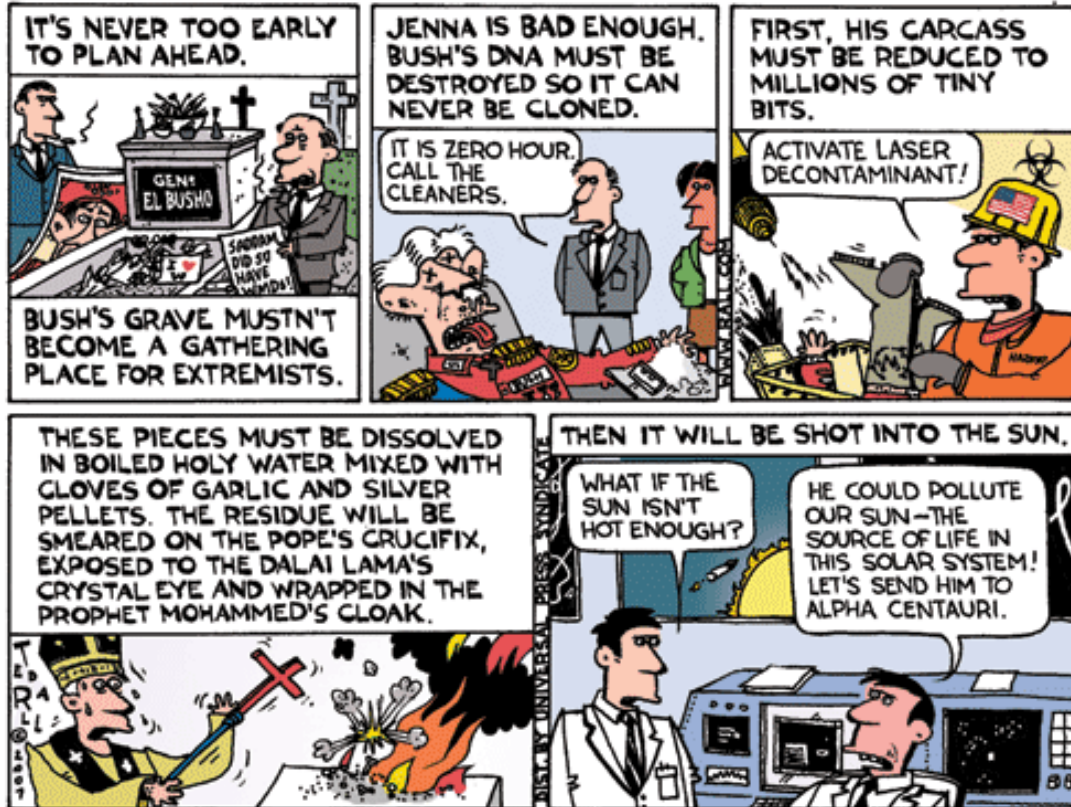


GI SPECIAL 5L14:



Big Surprise: Still #1: #2 Not Even Close U.S. Public Says Iraq Most Important Issue

[Politicians and major media lies to the contrary notwithstanding.]

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

12/19/07 Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR)

Most national polls suggest that Iraq is hardly fading; according to a recent CBS/NY Times poll (12/5-9/07), when asked to name the most important issue facing the country, the public named the Iraq War by a large margin--twice as many as the next issue (healthcare).

Big Surprise #2: World Class Idiots Report Occupation “Good News” They Say Iraqis Have A “Shared Belief”

**[Guess What It Is]
“Iraqis Of All Sectarian And Ethnic
Groups Believe That The U.S. Military
Invasion Is The Primary Root Of The
Violent Differences Among Them, And
See The Departure Of ‘Occupying
Forces’ As The Key To National
Reconciliation”**

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

December 19, 2007 By Karen DeYoung, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

Iraqis of all sectarian and ethnic groups believe that the U.S. military invasion is the primary root of the violent differences among them, and see the departure of “occupying forces” as the key to national reconciliation, according to focus groups conducted for the U.S. military last month.

That is good news, according to a military analysis of the results.

At the very least, analysts optimistically concluded, the findings indicate that Iraqis hold some “shared beliefs” that may eventually allow them to surmount the divisions that have led to a civil war.

[A] November poll found that 25 percent of Baghdad residents were satisfied with their local government and that 15 percent said they had enough fuel for heating and cooking.

The good news? Those numbers were higher than the figures of the previous month (18 percent and 9 percent, respectively).

And Iraqi complaints about matters other than security are seen as progress.

Early this year, Maj. Fred Garcia, an MNF-I analyst, said that “a very large percentage of people would answer questions about security by saying ‘I don’t know.’ Now, we get more griping because people feel freer.”

Outside of the military, some of the most widespread polling in Iraq has been done by D3 Systems, a Virginia-based company that maintains offices in each of Iraq’s 18 provinces.

Its most recent publicly released surveys, conducted in September for several news media organizations, showed the same widespread Iraqi belief voiced by the military’s focus groups: that a U.S. departure will make things better. A State Department poll in September 2006 reported a similar finding.

Few mentioned Saddam Hussein as a cause of their problems, which the report described as an important finding implying that “the current strife in Iraq seems to have totally eclipsed any agonies or grievances many Iraqis would have incurred from the past regime, which lasted for nearly four decades -- as opposed to the current conflict, which has lasted for five years.”

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.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE?

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Texas Soldier Killed In Tunnis



Sgt. Samuel E. Kelsey, of Troup, Texas, 24, died Dec. 13, 2007, in Tunnis, Iraq, from wounds he suffered in an explosion. Kelsey was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga. (AP Photo/Kelsey family)

War's Pain Hits Home For RHS; Sadness Overcomes Students, Faculty, Grads After Loss Of '04 Alum

December 13, 2007 BY BILL ENGLE, STAFF WRITER, Palladium-Item

Flags flew at half-staff at all Richmond Community Schools on Wednesday as shock began to lift and sadness of loss took its place.

It was the first visible sign of a community in mourning.

As war dragged on in Iraq, Richmond mourned the loss of Johnathan Alan Lahmann, who died Monday when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle while on combat operations in Tikrit.

His was the 3,888th U.S. death in Iraq since the war started in March 2003.

Spc. Lahmann, 21, the son of Alan and Linda Lahmann of Richmond, was a 2004 Richmond High School graduate.

"It's a very visible way of paying our respect," Richmond Community Schools Superintendent Allen Bourff said of flying flags at half-staff. "We still have students at Richmond High School who were his classmates. For the students his memory is not only important but also immediate. "We honor his memory and the sensitivity of the students he went to school with."

Lahmann studied auto repair and planned to become a mechanic.

"He was a very good student," Roy Reisinger, the RHS vocational education teacher for auto mechanics, said Wednesday. "He was a great kid, good listener, good learner, real sharp, real nice young man."

Reisinger said Lahmann would come to his house on weekends to help the teacher work on his own cars.

"He would have been a top-notch mechanic," Reisinger said. "Right now I'm just shaken up. He was an all-around good young man and I'm going to miss him."

Lahmann joined the U.S. Army in September 2005 and was trained as a combat engineer. He was assigned to the 59th Engineer Company, 20th Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade, based at Fort Hood, Texas.

He arrived in Iraq in November. He told his family back home that he was "doing paperwork behind a desk," said his 13-year-old cousin Tyler Grimes.

"He didn't want us to worry about him," Grimes said. "When I was little, me and him were friends and he was just the best kid you would ever meet. He was fun to hang out with."

Grimes, who attends Centerville Junior High School, said the news greatly upset his mother, Mariann Grimes.

"She hasn't said much since," Grimes said. "Everybody is really upset."

His classmates described Lahmann as a smart, friendly young man who cared about his work.

Billy Mann graduated with Lahmann and worked with him for several months at Mosey Manufacturing.

"He used to fabricate the parts that I cut on my saw," Mann said in an e-mail to the Palladium-Item. "We used to share rides to work and hang out and have drinks and talk all the time."

"He was the same as me. We worked at the same factory right next to each other. Since then I moved to Florida and started a new life and he went into the military. And this happened. This is a very sad day for me."

Pvt. Brian Evans also is in the Army and serving overseas. He e-mailed to say he went to Dennis Middle School and high school with Lahmann and the two were good friends.

"I remember sitting in classes with him and just laughing at the most random things," Evans wrote.

"We got into trouble a couple of times for that, but me more than him. I haven't talked to him in quite some time because after high school I had a family. It sucked to hear that a close friend of mine is now gone."

At Richmond High School, Principal Barb Bergdoll said the staff already has begun raising money for Lahmann's family. She said school officials want to do something to honor his memory. They will talk to Lahmann's family to find out what they might want, she said.

Bergdoll said Lahmann's death "brought the Iraq war closer to our students today."

"They see it on TV, but it's so distant, so far removed," Bergdoll said. "But it came to our door today."

THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH; COME HOME, NOW



U.S. army soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division examine a vehicle destroyed in a car bomb explosion in Baghdad Nov. 25, 2007. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

15 Mercenaries Killed In Farah

December 19, 2007 AFP

HERAT, Afghanistan: Fifteen Afghan security guards working for a private US firm were killed in a Taliban ambush in western Afghanistan last night, police said.

Nine other guards with the company, identified as USPI, were wounded in the attack in Farah province, said local police official Colonel Saydo Khan.

The guards were escorting a civilian supply convoy to a Western military base when they were attacked in the district of Bala Buluk, he said.

“Taliban ambushed them. Fifteen guards were killed and nine others were injured,” Colonel Khan said.

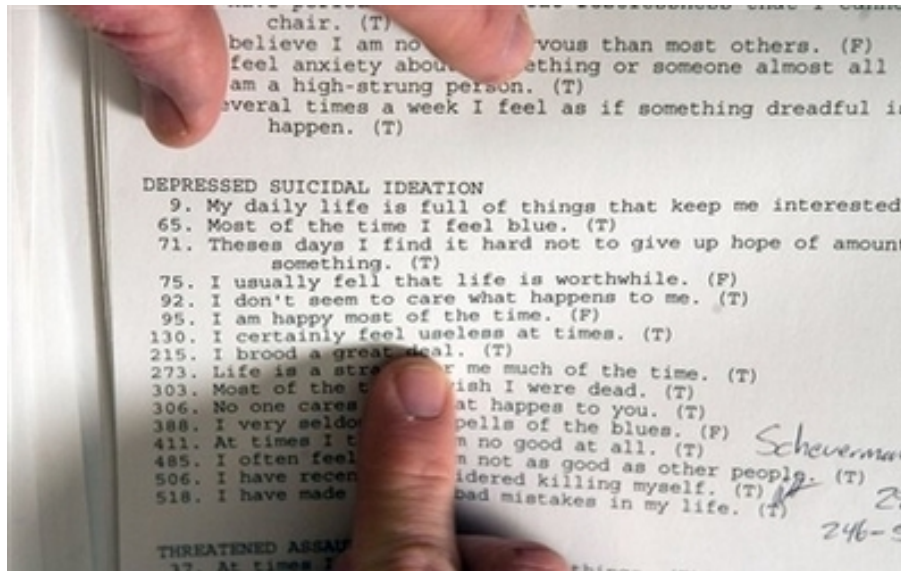
“I can see the bodies of the guards. We have evacuated the wounded to the hospital.”

Farah neighbours southern Helmand province, the Taliban’s main stronghold, and has experienced growing unrest in the past year, with the militants having been able to briefly capture several districts in recent months.

The insurgents regularly attack convoys that supply military bases in the region

TROOP NEWS

**“The People That I Trusted With
The Safety Of My Son Killed Him,
And That Hurts Beyond Words
Because We Are A Family Of
Soldiers”**



Chris Scheuerman reviews a copy of a medical questionnaire in Sanford, N.C., Nov. 12, 2007, that his son Jason answered before he took his life while serving as a soldier in the U.S. Army in Iraq. (AP Photo/Jonathan Fredin)

December 19, 2007 The Associated Press

SANFORD, N.C. -- Private First Class Jason Scheuerman nailed a suicide note to his barracks closet in Iraq, stepped inside and shot himself.

"Maybe finally I can get some peace," said the 20-year-old, misspelling "finally" but writing in a neat hand.

His parents didn't find out about the note for well over a year, and only then when it showed up in a government envelope in his father's rural North Carolina mailbox.

The one-page missive was among hundreds of pages of documents the soldier's family obtained and shared with The Associated Press after battling a military bureaucracy they feel didn't want to answer their questions, especially this: Why did Jason Scheuerman have to die?

What the soldier's father, Chris, would learn about his son's final days would lead the retired Special Forces commando, who teaches at Fort Bragg, to take on the very institution he's spent his life serving -- and ultimately prompt an investigation by the Army Inspector General's office.

The documents, obtained by Freedom of Information Act requests filed by Chris Scheuerman, reveal a troubled soldier kept in Iraq despite repeated signs he was going to kill himself, including placing the muzzle of his weapon in his mouth multiple times.

Jason Scheuerman's story -- pieced together with interviews and information in the documents -- demonstrates how he was failed by the very support system that was supposed to protect him. In his case, a psychologist told his commanders to send him

back to his unit because he was capable of feigning mental illness to get out of the Army.

He is not alone. At least 152 U.S. troops have taken their own lives in Iraq and Afghanistan since the two wars started, contributing to the Army's highest suicide rate in 26 years of keeping track. For the grieving parents, the answers don't come easily or quickly.

For Jason Scheuerman, death came on July 30, 2005, around 5:30 p.m., about 45 minutes after his first sergeant told the teary-eyed private that if he was intentionally misbehaving so he could leave the Army, he would go to jail where he would be abused.

When the call came out over the unit's radios that there had been a death, one soldier would later tell investigators he suspected it was Scheuerman.

Scheuerman spent his early years on military posts playing GI Joe. The middle child, he divided his time after his parents' divorce between his mother's house in Lynchburg, Va., and his father's in North Carolina where he went to high school.

He was nearly 6 feet tall and loved to eat. His mother, Anne, said sometimes at 10 p.m. she'd find him defrosting chicken to grill.

Likable and witty, he often joked around -- even dressing up like a clown one night at church camp, said his pastor, Mike Cox of West Lynchburg Baptist Church. But he had a quiet, reflective side, too, and sometimes withdrew, Cox said.

"You always knew how he felt. He wore his emotions on his sleeve," his mother said. "If he was angry, you knew it. If he was upset, you knew it."

Scheuerman liked military history and writing, but decided college wasn't for him. After a short stint in landscaping, he followed what seemed an almost natural path into the military. His mother had spent a year in the Army, and his father, a physician's assistant, retired as an Army master sergeant. One of his two brothers also joined and is now in Afghanistan.

He enlisted in 2004 and was sent to Iraq from Fort Benning, Ga., in January 2005 with the 3rd Infantry Division. On leave a few months later, Scheuerman told his father he was having a hard time with combat and killing people.

"I've seen war," his father said. "I told him that a lot of what he was seeing was normal. That we all feel it. That we're all afraid."

Back in Iraq, things didn't improve. One soldier -- whose name was blacked out on the documents like most others -- said he saw Jason put the muzzle of his rifle in his mouth, and told investigators other soldiers had seen him do something similar.

"He said it was a joke," the soldier said. "He said he had thought about it before but didn't have a plan to do it."

Scheuerman was reprimanded for not bathing or shaving and spending too much time playing videogames. He misplaced a radio and didn't wear parts of his uniform. Sometimes, Scheuerman was singled out for punishment, one soldier told an investigator. "I don't know why," the soldier said. Another said his noncommissioned officers were yelling at him "more days then not."

His platoon sergeant said in a disciplinary note that Scheuerman's actions put everyone in danger. "If you continue on your present course of action, you may end up in a body bag," he wrote.

In another, his squad leader said, "You have put me into a position where I have to treat you like a troublesome child. I hate being in this position. It makes me be someone I don't like."

Scheuerman was made to do push-ups in front of Iraqi soldiers, which humiliated him.

As he was punished, "it appeared as though he was out of touch with reality; in a world all his own," his platoon sergeant said in a report.

After the punishment, Scheuerman slept on the floor of his unit's operation's center in Muqdadiyah, about 60 miles north of Baghdad.

An Army chaplain who met with him about a month before he died said his mood had "drastically changed." He said Scheuerman demonstrated disturbing behavior by "sitting with his weapon between his legs and bobbing his head on the muzzle." He told Scheuerman's leaders to have his rifle and ammunition magazine "taken from him immediately" and for him to undergo a mental health evaluation.

Scheuerman checked on a mental health questionnaire that he had thoughts about killing himself, was uptight, anxious and depressed, had feelings of hopelessness and despair, felt guilty and was having work problems. But in person, the psychologist said, he denied having thoughts of suicide.

Less than a week later, Scheuerman's mother got an e-mail from her son telling her goodbye. She contacted a family support official at Fort Benning and later received a call saying her son had been checked and was fine. Later, her son sent her an instant message and said her phone call had made things worse.

The same day as her call, Scheuerman's company commander requested a mental evaluation, noting that the private was a "good soldier" but displays "distant, depression like symptoms."

Visiting with the psychologist for the second time, Scheuerman said he sometimes saw other people on guard duty that other soldiers do not see, suggesting he was hallucinating. And he said that if he wasn't diagnosed as having a mental problem, he was going to be in trouble with his leader. Yet he again denied being suicidal, the psychologist reported.

The psychologist determined Scheuerman did not meet the criteria for a mental health disorder, and that a screening test he had taken indicated he was exaggerating. He told

Scheuerman's leaders he was "capable of claiming mental illness in order to manipulate his command."

Still, when he sent Scheuerman back to his barracks, he told the private's leaders that if Scheuerman claimed to be depressed, to take it seriously. He recommended Scheuerman sleep in an area where he could be watched, that most of his personal belongings and privileges be taken away for his safety.

The evaluation "created in the leaders' minds the idea that the soldier was a malingerer all along," an officer from his unit evaluating the case as part of a post-suicide investigation would later determine.

Shortly after the psychologist's determination and a few weeks before he died, Scheuerman's Internet and phone communication were shut off. His parents did not hear from him again.

The night before he shot himself, his rifle -- which had since been returned to him -- was found in a Humvee. The next morning, one soldier said Scheuerman "was quiet and seemed depressed. He said he had a rough night and didn't sleep well."

Later that day, he was punished again and given 14 days of extra duty.

Scheuerman had tears in his eyes, but one of his noncommissioned officers said he was surprisingly calm before he went to his room, weapon in hand.

"I told him to go upstairs and clean his gear and change his uniform," his squad leader told investigators. "I was soo angry with him, I went outside to smoke and talk to someone so I didn't blow up."

Less than an hour later, he said he heard someone yelling that Scheuerman had done something.

"At that point, I knew I was already too late," he said.

Scheuerman's body was discovered in a closet, blood streaming from his mouth.

Initially, Scheuerman's father said he trusted the Army would investigate his son's death and take action.

"I did not want to believe that it was as bad as I thought it was, so I chose not to make hasty judgments," Scheuerman said from his kitchen table, sitting beside his ex-wife, whom he plans to remarry. "I chose to systematically try to get all the information that I could and once I received all the information I could, my worst fears were realized."

Each document that arrived brought more pain.

When a copy of his son's suicide note appeared, Scheuerman broke down crying.

In the note, his son said he wanted to say goodbye, but his ability to contact the family was taken away "like everything else."

He said he'd brought dishonor on his family and his Army unit.

"I know you think I'm a coward for this but in the face of existing as I am now, I have no other choice," Scheuerman wrote. "As the 1st Sgt said all I have to look forward to is a butt-buddy in jail, not much of a future."

Chris Scheuerman wants to see a more thorough investigation, and some of his son's leaders punished -- perhaps even criminally charged -- and the psychologist brought before a medical peer review committee. "We will not see a statistical decrease in Army suicides until the Army gets serious about holding people accountable when they do not do what they are trained to do," he said.

Citing privacy, Maj. Nathan Banks, an Army public affairs officer, declined to discuss the case.

Eventually, Jason Scheuerman's father sought the assistance of Rep. Bob Etheridge, D-N.C., who spoke with Army Secretary Pete Geren on Oct. 1 and asked him to initiate an investigation by the Inspector General's Office. Geren agreed.

The Scheuermans say they hope the investigation will bring about changes that will prevent other suicides.

"The people that I trusted with the safety of my son killed him, and that hurts beyond words because we are a family of soldiers," Scheuerman said.

NOT ANOTHER DAY NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR NOT ANOTHER LIFE



A U.S. Army medic monitors the breathing of a wounded soldier at Ibn Sina Hospital in the Green Zone in Baghdad Dec. 13, 2007. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Insurgent Cows Spoil Ambush



A cow approaches a U.S. army soldier from Blackfoot Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, as he lays concealed in thick grass during an ambush setup on the outskirts of Muqdadiyah, in the volatile Diyala province Dec. 19, 2007. The soldiers from Blackfoot Company had set up an ambush, but had to abandon their plans because their position was compromised by a group of cows. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnyakovic)

Resistance Attacks Key Bridge On Mosul Dam

12.18.07 AP

BAGHDAD -- A truck bomb parked on a bridge connecting two gates of the Mosul dam exploded Monday, killing a security officer, officials said.

Reconstruction work on the Mosul dam, which was built in the 1980s, has been one of the major projects undertaken with the nearly \$20 billion in funds that Congress approved for Iraqi reconstruction in 2003. The money was a one-time allotment, and only about \$2 billion is left, making extra costs caused by security breaches especially troublesome, said a U.S. official involved in Iraqi reconstruction work.

Syrian trucks coming from the northern Iraqi border use the bridge to transport gas and other goods.

U.S. forces and Iraqi security forces also use the bridge.

Get The Message?



Iraqi boys hold pictures of Hassan Salem, who is in U.S. custody after being detained 14-months ago, during a demonstration calling for the release of prisoners held in Sadr City in Baghdad, Dec. 18, 2007.

Salem was detained 14-months ago following a raid by US military forces and is not yet charged with any offence. (AP Photo/ Karim Kadim)

Resistance Action

17 Dec 2007 Reuters & December 18 (Reuters) & (KUNA) & News Limited

Three U.S.-allied neighbourhood patrol members were killed and four others wounded when insurgents attacked them in a market in western Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A mortar round wounded one Iraqi soldier in western Baghdad's Jamiaa district, police said.

In a car bomb attack, an Iraqi policeman was killed and seven others were injured. The attack targeted the building of the Speedy Intervention Forces in Ba'qubah city, Dyala governorate, northeast Baghdad, according to police sources.

A car bomber killed one policeman and wounded three policemen when it attacked a police checkpoint in western Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A mortar round wounded one Iraqi soldier and two civilians in western Baghdad's Jamiaa district, police said.

Guerrillas killed an employee of the committee in charge of purging members of the Baath party from public life, and wounded two others, in an attack on their car in al-Qahira district of northern Baghdad, police said.

A car bomb explosion killed one policeman and wounded two policemen in Nidhal street, in central Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas killed six men guarding oil pipelines near the city of Mosul.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Infantry Soldiers Reunion in Atlanta

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: December 18, 2007
Subject: Infantry Soldiers Reunion in Atlanta

**By Dennis Serdel: Schofield Barracks Hawaii, Vietnam Infantry 1967-68,
Purple Heart, Shit Burner Badge, Dinky Dau T-Shirt**

**Yes, we had one fine time in Atlanta,
one that I believe will be one of the highlights of our lives.
What struck me was the spontaneity
after all these years.
It was simply, if you were there with us in Vietnam, you were in.
It was 1968 almost 40 years ago and it was remember this,**

remember that, with everybody trying to get a word in.

It was looking through a tunnel of time at a young face

that was aged now, but still there.

It was sitting outdoors in the sun in Atlanta with a gentle breeze,

smoke 'em if you got 'em and order another beer.

Some were rich and some were poor

and some were in between and it did not matter, you were in.

We were all survivors in a wicked war and we were all one again.

Yes, we made it through, God knows how we did,

but we were there again and we did not have our guns,

we did not have to worry if we would die.

It was kick back, take it easy,

you were sitting and standing proof

that brotherhood still exists, no matter how,

no matter why.

We did not need a camera, the pictures are in our minds forever,

if we do not make it to next year's reunion, we have these.

Yes, our wives were back home,

they understood how much this meant to us

old Vietnam Soldiers, they understood it all,

maybe more than us, how war never goes away

once you've been there together.

We just had us and that was good enough, in fact better, together,

the hell with the world, the hell with everything for two long days.

It was a miracle when we all drove there,

I told Tex, it doesn't get any better than this,

he just smiled, said nothing and looked at me with knowing eyes,

can't-waiting, until we were there.

Ahh, those mountains, those roly-poly hills as we had humped

in Vietnam were now like a feather tick of warm feelings,

what's the next highway, we turn on, ahh just drive,

it's up ahead but not too far away.

Let me drive now, are we on the right road, see the sign,

it says straight ahead until there we were,

somewhere between tired and excitement.

Then others came and we hugged them hard with a 40 years hug,

we squeezed them hard

and we found something we had been looking for, for all these years.

There is a love between men that war welds together

and nobody can take it away,

it lasts forever and forever

until they die.

But the hell with death, remember Charlie's hog, packing up,

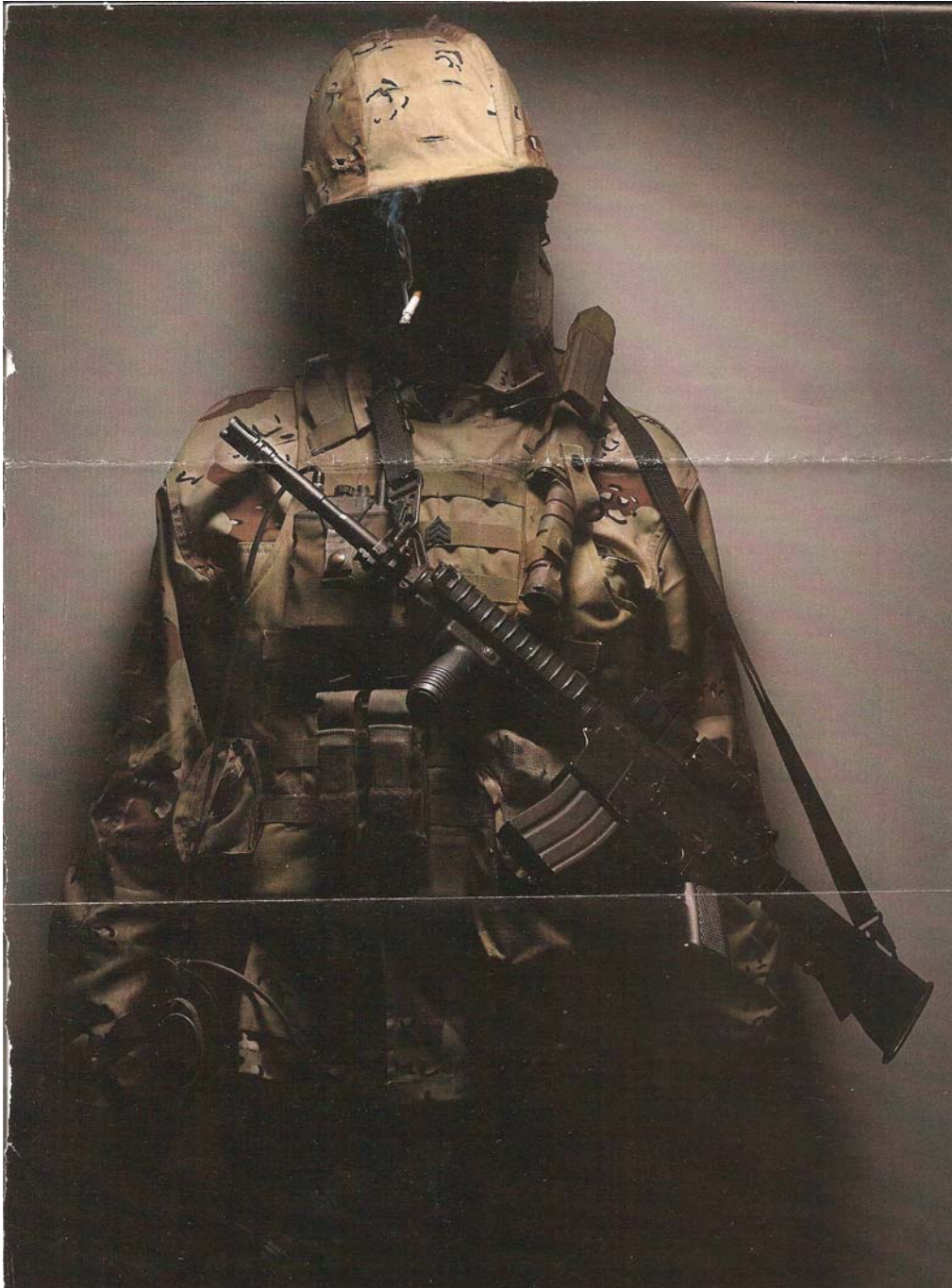
Tom's new truck, filling Tex's car, slugging coffee down,

squaring up and paying the hotel's bill inside, a nice kind of tired,

until next year

unless we die of old age,

there it is again.



Graphic thanks to Dennis Serdel: He writes: "Sent to me from a brother who I was in Vietnam with."

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

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

***June 16, 1918:
The Most Powerful Speech
Against Imperial War In
American History: [Part 2]***
**“In Every Age It Has Been The Tyrant,
The Oppressor And The Exploiter
Who Has Wrapped Himself In The
Cloak Of Patriotism, Or Religion, Or
Both To Deceive And Overawe The
People”**

“They Have Always Taught And Trained You To Believe It To Be Your Patriotic Duty To Go To War And To Have Yourselves Slaughtered At Their Command”



The Speech: Debs On The Platform, June 16, 1918

library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/debs5.jpg

“And here let me emphasize the fact—and it cannot be repeated too often — that the working class who fight all the battles, the working class who make the supreme sacrifices, the working class who freely shed their blood and furnish the corpses, have never yet had a voice in either declaring war or making peace.

“It is the ruling class that invariably does both.”

[To good to cut, and much too long to run in one GI Special. It frightened the government so badly they threw Debs in prison, where he ran for President, and received 2 million votes in 1920, still in prison.

[In the first part of his speech he attacked German Imperial militarism. Here he moves on to condemn the war for Empire being waged against Germany by the Imperial government in Washington DC. The Wilson government found that part of the speech intolerable and ordered his arrest. T

Via Carl Bunin Peace History December 10-16

Delivered: June 16, 1918

First Published: 1918

Source: The Call

Online Version: E. V. Debs Internet Archive, 2001

Transcribed/HTML Markup: John Metz for the Illinois Socialist Party Debs Archive & David Walters for the Marxists Internet Archive Debs Archive

I hate, I loathe, I despise Junkers and junkerdom. I have no earthly use for the Junkers of Germany, and not one particle more use for the Junkers in the United States.

They tell us that we live in a great free republic; that our institutions are democratic; that we are a free and self-governing people.

This is too much, even for a joke.

But it is not a subject for levity; it is an exceedingly serious matter.

To whom do the Wall Street Junkers in our country marry their daughters?

After they have wrung their countless millions from your sweat, your agony and your life's blood, in a time of war as in a time of peace, they invest these untold millions in the purchase of titles of broken-down aristocrats, such as princes, dukes, counts and other parasites and no-accounts.

Would they be satisfied to wed their daughters to honest workingmen? To real democrats? Oh, no! They scour the markets of Europe for vampires who are titled and nothing else. And they swap their millions for the titles, so that matrimony with them becomes literally a matter of money.

These are the gentry who are today wrapped up in the American flag, who shout their claim from the housetops that they are the only patriots, and who have their magnifying glasses in hand, scanning the country for evidence of disloyalty, eager to apply the brand of treason to the men who dare to even whisper their opposition to Junker rule in the United States.

No wonder Sam Johnson declared that "patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel."

He must have had this Wall Street gentry in mind, or at least their prototypes, for in every age it has been the tyrant, the oppressor and the exploiter who has wrapped himself in the cloak of patriotism, or religion, or both to deceive and overawe the people.

They would have you believe that the Socialist Party consists in the main of disloyalists and traitors. It is true in a sense not at all to their discredit.

We frankly admit that we are disloyalists and traitors to the real traitors of this nation; to the gang that on the Pacific coast are trying to hang Tom Mooney and Warren Billings in

spite of their well-known innocence and the protest of practically the whole civilized world.

I know Tom Mooney intimately — as if he were my own brother. He is an absolutely honest man. He had no more to do with the crime with which he was charged and for which he was convicted than I had. And if he ought to go to the gallows, so ought I. If he is guilty every man who belongs to a labor organization or to the Socialist Party is likewise guilty.

What is Tom Mooney guilty of? I will tell you. I am familiar with his record. For years he has been fighting bravely and without compromise the battles of the working class out on the Pacific coast. He refused to be bribed and he could not be browbeaten. In spite of all attempts to intimidate him he continued loyally in the service of the organized workers, and for this he became a marked man.

The henchmen of the powerful and corrupt corporations, concluding finally that he could not be bought or bribed or bullied, decided he must therefore be murdered. That is why Tom Mooney is today a life prisoner, and why he would have been hanged as a felon long ago but for the world-wide protest of the working class.

Let us review another bit of history.

You remember Francis J. Heney, special investigator of the state of California, who was shot down in cold blood in the courtroom in San Francisco. You remember that dastardly crime, do you not?

The United Railways, consisting of a lot of plutocrats and highbinders represented by the Chamber of Commerce, absolutely control the city of San Francisco. The city was and is their private reservation. Their will is the supreme law. Take your stand against them and question their authority, and you are doomed. They do not hesitate a moment to plot murder or any other crime to perpetuate their corrupt and enslaving regime.

Tom Mooney was the chief representative of the working class they could not control.

They own the railways; they control the great industries; they are the industrial masters and the political rulers of the people. From their decision there is no appeal. They are the autocrats of the Pacific coast — as cruel and infamous as any that ever ruled in Germany or any other country in the old world.

When their rule became so corrupt that at last a grand jury indicted them and they were placed on trial, and Francis J. Heney was selected to assist in their prosecution, this gang, represented by the Chamber of Commerce; this gang of plutocrats, autocrats and highbinders, hired an assassin to shoot Heney down in the courtroom.

Heney, however, happened to live through it. But that was not their fault. The same identical gang that hired the murderer to kill Heney also hired false witnesses to swear away the life of Tom Mooney and, foiled in that, they have kept him in a foul prisonhole ever since.

Every solitary one of these aristocratic conspirators and would-be murderers claims to be an arch-patriot; every one of them insists that the war is being waged to make the world safe for democracy.

What humbug! What rot! What false pretense!

These autocrats, these tyrants, these red-handed robbers and murderers, the “patriots,” while the men who have the courage to stand face to face with them, speak the truth, and fight for their exploited victims — they are called the disloyalists and traitors. If this be true, I want to take my place side by side with the traitors in this fight.

The other day they sentenced Kate Richards O’Hare to the penitentiary for five years. Think of sentencing a woman to the penitentiary simply for talking. The United States, under plutocratic rule, is the only country that would send a woman to prison for five years for exercising the right of free speech.

If this be treason, let them make the most of it.

Let me review a bit of history in connection with this case.

I have known Kate Richards O’Hare intimately for twenty years. I am familiar with her public record. Personally I know her as if she were my own sister. All who know Mrs. O’Hare know her to be a woman of unquestioned integrity.’ And they also know that she is a woman of unimpeachable loyalty to the Socialist movement.

When she went out into North Dakota to make her speech, followed by plain-clothes men in the service of the government intent upon effecting her arrest and securing her prosecution and conviction—when she went out there, it was with the full knowledge on her part that sooner or later these detectives would accomplish their purpose.

She made her speech, and that speech was deliberately misrepresented for the purpose of securing her conviction. The only testimony against her was that of a hired witness.

And when the farmers, the men and women who were in the audience she addressed—when they went to Bismarck where the trial was held to testify in her favor, to swear that she had not used the language she was charged with having used, the judge refused to allow them to go upon the stand.

This would seem incredible to me if I had not had some experience of my own with federal courts.

Who appoints our federal judges? The people?

In all the history of the country, the working class have never named a federal judge.

There are 121 of these judges and every solitary one holds his position, his tenure, through the influence and power of corporate capital. The corporations and trusts dictate their appointment. And when they go to the bench, they go, not to serve, the people, but to serve the interests that place them and keep them where they are.

Why, the other day, by a vote of five to four — a kind of craps game—come seven, come 'leven — they declared the child labor law unconstitutional — a law secured after twenty years of education and agitation on the part of all kinds of people.

And yet, by a majority of one, the Supreme Court a body of corporation lawyers, with just one exception, wiped that law from the statute books, and this in our so-called democracy, so that we may continue to grind the flesh and blood and bones of puny little children into profits for the Junkers of Wall Street.

And this in a country that boasts of fighting to make the world safe for democracy!

The history of this country is being written in the blood of the childhood the industrial lords have murdered.

These are not palatable truths to them. They do not like to hear them; and what is more they do not want you to hear them. And that is why they brand us as undesirable citizens , and as disloyalists and traitors.

If we were actual traitors—traitors to the people and to their welfare and progress, we would be regarded as eminently respectable citizens of the republic; we would hold high office, have princely incomes, and ride in limousines; and we would be pointed out as the elect who have succeeded in life in honorable pursuit, and worthy of emulation by the youth of the land.

It is precisely because we are disloyal to the traitors that we are loyal to the people of this nation.

Scott Nearing! You have heard of Scott Nearing. He is the greatest teacher in the United States. He was in the University of Pennsylvania until the Board of Trustees, consisting of great capitalists, captains of industry, found that he was teaching sound economics to the students in his classes. This sealed his fate in that institution. They sneeringly charged — just as the same usurers, money-changers, pharisees, hypocrites charged the Judean Carpenter some twenty centuries ago — that he was a false teacher and that he was stirring up the people.

The Man of Galilee, the Carpenter, the workingman who became the revolutionary agitator of his day soon found himself to be an undesirable citizen in the eyes of the ruling knaves and they had him crucified.

And now their lineal descendants say of Scott Nearing, “He is preaching false economics. We cannot crucify him as we did his elder brother but we can deprive him of employment and so cut off his income and starve him to death or into submission. We will not only discharge him but place his name upon the blacklist and make it impossible for him to earn a living. He is a dangerous man for he is teaching the truth and opening the eyes of the people.”

And the truth, oh, the truth has always been unpalatable and intolerable to the class who live out of the sweat and misery of the working class.

Max Eastman has been indicted and his paper suppressed, just as the papers with which I have been connected have all been suppressed. What a wonderful compliment they pay us! They are afraid that we may mislead and contaminate you.

You are their wards; they are your guardians and they know what is best for you to read and hear and know. They are bound to see to it that our vicious doctrines do not reach your ears. And so in our great democracy, under our free institutions, they flatter our press by suppression; and they ignorantly imagine that they have silenced revolutionary propaganda in the United States.

What an awful mistake they make for our benefit! As a matter of justice to them we should respond with resolutions of thanks and gratitude. Thousands of people who had never before heard of our papers are now inquiring for and insisting upon seeing them. They have succeeded only in arousing curiosity in our literature and propaganda.

And woe to him who reads Socialist literature from curiosity! He is surely a goner. I have known of a thousand experiments but never one that failed.

John M. Work! You know John, now on the editorial staff of the Milwaukee Leader! When I first knew him he was a lawyer out in Iowa. The capitalists out there became alarmed because of the rapid growth of the Socialist movement. So they said: "We have to find some able fellow to fight this menace."

They concluded that John Work was the man for the job and they said to him: "John, you are a bright young lawyer; you have a brilliant future before you. We want to engage you to find out all you can about socialism and then proceed to counteract its baneful effects and check its further growth."

John at once provided himself with Socialist literature and began his study of the red menace, with the result that after he had read and digested a few volumes he was a full-fledged Socialist and has been fighting for socialism ever since.

How stupid and shortsighted the ruling class really is!

Cupidity is stone blind. It has no vision. The greedy, profit-seeking exploiter cannot see beyond the end of his nose. He can see a chance for an "opening"; he is cunning enough to know what graft is and where it is, and how it can be secured, but vision he has none — not the slightest.

He knows nothing of the great throbbing world that spreads out in all directions. He has no capacity for literature; no appreciation of art; no soul for beauty. That is the penalty the parasites pay for the violation of the laws of life. The Rockefellers are blind. Every move they make in their game of greed but hastens their own doom. Every blow they strike at the Socialist movement reacts upon themselves.

Every time they strike at us they hit themselves. It never fails. Every time they strangle a Socialist paper they add a thousand voices proclaiming the truth of the principles of socialism and the ideals of the Socialist movement. They help us in spite of themselves.

Socialism is a growing idea; an expanding philosophy. It is spreading over the entire face of the earth: It is as vain to resist it as it would be to arrest the sunrise on the

morrow. It is coming, coming, coming all along the line. Can you not see it? If not, I advise you to consult an oculist. There is certainly something the matter with your vision.

It is the mightiest movement in the history of mankind. What a privilege to serve it! I have regretted a thousand times that I can do so little for the movement that has done so much for me. The little that I am, the little that I am hoping to be, I owe to the Socialist movement.

It has given me my ideas and ideals; my principles and convictions, and I would not exchange one of them for all of Rockefeller's bloodstained dollars.

It has taught me how to serve — a lesson to me of priceless value. It has taught me the ecstasy in the handclasp of a comrade.

It has enabled me to hold high communion with you, and made it possible for me to take my place side by side with you in the great struggle for the better day; to multiply myself over and over again, to thrill with a fresh-born manhood; to feel life truly worthwhile; to open new avenues of vision; to spread out glorious vistas; to know that I am kin to all that throbs; to be class-conscious, and to realize that, regardless of nationality, race, creed, color or sex, every man, every woman who toils, who renders useful service, every member of the working class without an exception, is my comrade, my brother and sister — and that to serve them and their cause is the highest duty of my life.

And in their service I can feel myself expand; I can rise to the stature of a man and claim the right to a place on earth — a place where I can stand and strive to speed the day of industrial freedom and social justice.

Yes, my comrades, my heart is attuned to yours. Aye, all our hearts now throb as one great heart responsive to the battle cry of the social revolution.

Here, in this alert and inspiring assemblage our hearts are with the Bolsheviks of Russia. Those heroic men and women, those unconquerable comrades have by their incomparable valor and sacrifice added fresh luster to the fame of the international movement.

Those Russian comrades of ours have made greater sacrifices, have suffered more, and have shed more heroic blood than any like number of men and women anywhere on earth; they have laid the foundation of the first real democracy that ever drew the breath of life in this world.

And the very first act of the triumphant Russian revolution was to proclaim a state of peace with all mankind, coupled with a fervent moral appeal, not to kings, not to emperors, rulers or diplomats but to the people of all nations.

Here we have the very breath of democracy, the quintessence of the dawning freedom.

The Russian revolution proclaimed its glorious triumph in its ringing and inspiring appeal to the peoples of all the earth.

In a humane and fraternal spirit new Russia, emancipated at last from the curse of the centuries, called upon all nations engaged in the frightful war, the Central Powers as well as the Allies, to send representatives to a conference to lay down terms of peace that should be just and lasting.

Here was the supreme opportunity to strike the blow to make the world safe for democracy.

Was there any response to that noble appeal that in some day to come will be written in letters of gold in the history of the world? Was there any response whatever to that appeal for universal peace? No, not the slightest attention was paid to it by the Christian nations engaged in the terrible slaughter.

It has been charged that Lenin and Trotsky and the leaders of the revolution were treacherous, that they made a traitorous peace with Germany.

Let us consider that proposition briefly.

At the time of the revolution Russia had been three years in the war. Under the Czar she had lost more than four million of her ill-clad, poorly-equipped, half-starved soldiers, slain outright or disabled on the field of battle. She was absolutely bankrupt. Her soldiers were mainly without arms.

This was what was bequeathed to the revolution by the Czar and his regime; and for this condition Lenin and Trotsky were not responsible, nor the Bolsheviki. For this appalling state of affairs the Czar and his rotten bureaucracy were solely responsible. When the Bolsheviki came into power and went through the archives they found and exposed the secret treaties — the treaties that were made between the Czar and the French government, the British government and the Italian government, proposing, after the victory was achieved, to dismember the German Empire and destroy the Central Powers. These treaties have never been denied nor repudiated. Very little has been said about them in the American press. I have a copy of these treaties, showing that the purpose of the Allies is exactly the purpose of the Central Powers, and that is the conquest and spoliation of the weaker nations that has always been the purpose of war.

Wars throughout history have been waged for conquest and plunder.

In the Middle Ages when the feudal lords who inhabited the castles whose towers may still be seen along the Rhine concluded to enlarge their domains, to increase their power, their prestige and their wealth they declared war upon one another.

But they themselves did not go to war any more than the modern feudal lords, the barons of Wall Street go to war.

The feudal barons of the Middle Ages, the economic predecessors of the capitalists of our day, declared all wars. And their miserable serfs fought all the battles.

The poor, ignorant serfs had been taught to revere their masters; to believe that when their masters declared war upon one another, it was their patriotic duty to fall upon one another and to cut one another's throats for the profit and glory of the lords and barons who held them in contempt.

And that is war in a nutshell.

The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose — especially their lives.

They have always taught and trained you to believe it to be your patriotic duty to go to war and to have yourselves slaughtered at their command.

But in all the history of the world you, the people, have never had a voice in declaring war, and strange as it certainly appears, no war by any nation in any age has ever been declared by the people.

And here let me emphasize the fact—and it cannot be repeated too often — that the working class who fight all the battles, the working class who make the supreme sacrifices, the working class who freely shed their blood and furnish the corpses, have never yet had a voice in either declaring war or making peace.

It is the ruling class that invariably does both.

They alone declare war and they alone make peace.

Yours not to reason why;

Yours but to do and die.

That is their motto and we object on the part of the awakening workers of this nation.

If war is right let it be declared by the people.

You who have your lives to lose, you certainly above all others have the right to decide the momentous issue of war or peace.

OCCUPATION REPORT

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

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



A foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. shines flashlight on three Iraqi women and two handcuffed men while others search their house during a night home invasion on the outskirts of Muqdadiyah, in Diyala province, north of Baghdad Dec. 14, 2007. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnjakovic)

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

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

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Attempting to Destroy CIA Tapes, Cheney Burns Down White House

December 19, 2007 The Borowitz Report

The White House, one of the most historic structures in the nation's capital, burnt to the ground today after Vice President Dick Cheney attempted to incinerate a cache of CIA interrogation tapes in his office.

According to White House aides, the blaze started shortly after twelve noon, minutes after Mr. Cheney slipped out of a cabinet meeting, saying that he had to "hit the head."

But rather than using the bathroom as he had stated, the vice president instead went to his office and put a blowtorch to a pile of CIA interrogation tapes which the White House had feared might be subpoenaed in the near future.

"I started burning those things and boom, they went up like a rocket," an apologetic Mr. Cheney later told reporters.

The accidental blaze quickly spread from the videotapes to a nearby stack of transcripts of phone conversations involving Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and singer Barbra Streisand that Mr. Cheney had obtained via a warrantless wiretap.

"Once those transcripts caught on fire, I knew the building was a goner," Mr. Cheney said. "There were literally thousands and thousands of pages of that stuff."

Speaking in front of the charred remains of the historic building, administration spokesperson Dana Perino said that the White House might have been saved had it not been for an unfortunate bureaucratic mix-up: "Instead of calling the fire department, President Bush called FEMA."

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/)

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