

GI SPECIAL 5L8:



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

Drug The Troops!
Combat Horrors A Problem?
No Problem!
**“It’s Still A Bummer To Be Over
There, But They Can Go Back On
Patrol”**

December 10, 2007 Army Times [Excerpts]

During 1-26's 2004 deployment to Samarra, Iraq, Lt. Col. Graham Hoffman embedded with them as their unit psychiatrist, going out on patrols and gaining their trust so they would allow him to help.

At first, he said, he tried to avoid medicating the men who needed extra help. But the anger issues that arose, as well as the fear of going back out made it nearly impossible for the unit to operate.

So he started prescribing medications — Prozac or Celexa.

“Thirty-one guys of 100 were on anti-depressants by the end,” Hoffman said. “We kind of pushed it a little. We stretched it because that’s what they’re doing in the civilian world.”

The meds, he said, helped.

After seeing five men killed and 22 wounded in one day, Hoffman himself went on Celexa after being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

When he stops taking it, he said, his own anger bubbles to the top. But with it, he feels calm.

“It’s like you’re Teflon-coated,” he said.

“It’s still a bummer to be over there, but they can go back on patrol.”

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.

ACTION REPORTS

Sending “Sir No Sir” To The Troops In Iraq:

“My Bro-In-Law Said In A Letter From Iraq That They Are Saying FTA Quite A Bit”



FTA Pin: Vietnam Days

From: Ward Reilly
To: GI Special
Sent: December 07, 2007
Subject: FTA

Thought you and the GIs would appreciate this email I just got... plus photo of my army address book and my FTA dog from '71 enclosed.

Peace from Ward,
Charter member, 'FTA' Army
Weapons Platoon,
C 1/16 infantry

Date: Fri, 7 Dec 2007 16:39:38 -0800
From: [XXXXXXX]
Subject: FTA
To: Ward Reilly

Just thought I would drop a quick line and let you know my bro-in-law said in a letter from Iraq that they are saying FTA quite a bit.

I asked him if he still had Sir No Sir but he did not.

I have a copy and will burn a few to send over to him.

Jsh



"I HATE THIS FUCKING PLACE"
"My army address book and my FTA dog from '71" – Ward Reilly

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

Michigan Soldier Remembered



November 20, 2007 (NEWSCHANNEL 3)

FRUITPORT: The U.S. Government says Iraq is now at its safest since the 2003 invasion. However, as a West Michigan family found out, patrolling the streets can be deadly.

Jason Lee, 26, of Fruitport died on patrol Sunday. An explosive detonated near his unit in Baquabah. Two others also died.

Jason Lee attended high school in Fruitport for two years in the late 1990's. But Tuesday, some teachers say they still have vivid memories of him as a teenager.

Jason Lee was a beginning Spanish student with Kerri Jacobs. "He was a free spirit," said Jacobs.

A teenager with long hair, always carrying his guitar. That love of music has stayed strong. But when Jason returned to Fruitport High a few years ago, Kerri saw someone else.

"He walked into my room and I didn't even recognize him," said Jacobs. He had joined the army and outgrown that teenage body. Monday, the corporal was on patrol in Baquabah when a bomb exploded nearby.

"It's shocking, makes me feel sad, upset," said Jacobs.

Tuesday the news of his death was just beginning to filter through the high school hallways. His family said in a statement - "He was a very good man with a huge heart. If you were lucky enough to meet him, it is unlikely you would or could ever forget him."

"Everybody loved him, he was kind of mischievous, but in a good way," said Jacobs.

Kerri Jacobs felt lucky enough to meet and teach Jason. Tuesday she's remembering the final time she ever saw him.

“He commented about how he matured and he apologized for his behavior in class, which he didn't need to do,” said Jacobs.

School records show Jason got his GED in 2005. He had only been in Iraq since June.

WELCOME TO IRAQNAM: HAVE A NICE DAY



U.S. soldier takes cover in the village of Asada near Baquba December 5, 2007.
REUTERS/Bob Strong

Adhamiya Blues:

**“War, It Degrades The Heart And
Poisons The Mind**

**“And We’re Tossed Aside By
Governments’ Lies.**

“But We Continue To Grieve”

[Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment]

December 03, 2007 & December 10, 2007, By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

When they arrived in August 2006, soldiers with 1-26 found about 250 dead Iraqi civilians a month. Many of the soldiers, including Staff Sgt. Ian Newland, 27, had deployed with the unit to Samarra in 2004, but that hadn't prepared them for Adhamiya.

They arrived upbeat and confident they could make a difference.

Such expectations eroded every time they went outside the wire.

The soldiers were tasked with joint patrols with the Iraqi army, but the Iraqi army didn't go out enough for there to be much "joint" involved.

"They'd set up a mission with us, but then they'd have an excuse: 'No gas.' 'It's too dangerous.' 'We don't have enough guys,'" said Spc. Gerry DeNardi, 20, the company smart aleck with high cheekbones and a mop of hair bleached by the sun.

"We had to pick up an Iraqi body once at Remy [Street] because they said they were out of gas, but then they rolled past us as we were coming back in."

Charlie Company patrolled constantly — each guy went out three or four times a day, with a one-and-a-half-hour break between patrols.

Every time they learned to evade the insurgents' methods of attack, the insurgents changed their methods. For the first five months, the Iraqis hit Charlie Company with snipers and firefights.

"I can't even tell you how many bullet rounds I heard popping off my gunner's turret," Staff Sgt. Robin Johnson said. But after the unit lost Staff Sgt. Garth Sizemore to a sniper's bullet Oct. 17, 2006, as he patrolled on foot, the soldiers learned to stand behind vehicles, not to stand in hallways or doorways, to watch the rooftops.

For several months after they arrived in Baghdad in August 2006, Charlie Company stayed at Combat Outpost Apache in the insurgent stronghold of Adhamiya only while they conducted day patrols. When they rotated to the night shift, they stayed at Forward Operating Base Loyalty and drove the 45 minutes into Adhamiya. At Loyalty, they could go to the gym, the store and the air-conditioned dining facility with its five flavors of Baskin Robbins ice cream and all-you-can-eat buffets. Apache, with only one building for the American soldiers, offered little but the safety of a shorter drive.

But when Sgt. Willsun Mock died five days later after his Humvee triggered a roadside bomb during the trip to Adhamiya, the company commander moved his men to COP Apache permanently.

Then the insurgents started with grenades. Spc. Ross McGinnis was killed Dec. 4 when a grenade was tossed into the turret of his vehicle; he threw himself on it to save four friends.

“So we covered the turrets,” Johnson said. They put up guards that deflected the grenades but still allowed the gunner to operate.

Then the insurgents began planting bigger improvised explosive devices — and more of them. One platoon ran over four IEDs within 24 hours. On Jan. 22, Pfc. Ryan Hill died when an IED exploded near his humvee.

So the soldiers began relying more on their heavily armored Bradley Fighting Vehicles.

“That was our fortress,” said Johnson, an even-keeled noncommissioned officer the younger soldiers trusted for advice. “We were fearless in that Bradley.”

If the guys were in a Bradley when an IED erupted, they walked away. So rather than patrol only in humvees, they went outside the wire with Bradleys at the front and tail, humvees in the middle.

Death and corruption

Now it was January, and as the chill wind of Adhamiya’s desert nights slipped through the unheated building where they slept, the soldiers of Charlie Company knew they still faced at least six more months in Iraq. Over that span they would watch two commanders leave, see nine more soldiers die, give up faith in their best defenses against the insurgents, refuse a combat mission and have three more misery-filled months slapped onto their deployment.

When the soldiers of 1-26 finally got to go home in October, the war had hit them harder than any other battalion since Vietnam.

In January, though, they knew only that they had to summon the courage to go out again. And again. The deaths, as well as broken bones, burned bodies and smashed limbs, scared them, and the young soldiers found that while the number of attacks against civilian Iraqis declined, the number of attacks against them increased.

The soldiers of Charlie 1-26 were convinced the Iraqi Army troops they worked with, Shiite forces already despised by the majority of Sunni residents of the area, were untrustworthy and knew more about the attacks than they let on.

“The corruption in the Shiite military was horrendous,” said Capt. Mike Baka, commander of Charlie Company.

Spc. Gerry DeNardi, 20, served as the company cruise director. Artistic and moody, he worried before his deployment that he might be the guy whose courage left him in the midst of battle. Because of his own fears, he wanted to make everyone else forget Adhamiya, too. So every evening, he’d break out his guitar and sing the silly songs he made up about his teammates. At 2 a.m., in the dusty dank basement where the soldiers slept at Apache, DeNardi led them in karaoke.

“There’s nothing better than listening to a bunch of soldiers singing Britney Spears at the top of their girly lungs,” he said. Really, it was more of a warble, but it carried through the building.

DeNardi joined the Army for the same reason so many other young men enlist. “My plans consisted of lying in a hammock,” he said. “I needed time to figure out what I wanted. And I don’t think you can say you’re an American or you’re a patriot without serving.”

But the bodies and violence shook him. He and Sgt. Ryan Wood talked about the politics behind this war — and complained that Americans knew more about Britney Spears than Iraq. Wood, wiry in a way more Billy Idol than Rambo, had already decided he wanted out of the Army.

“I’ve seen enough. I’ve done enough,” he said.

During a 2004 deployment with Charlie Company in Samarra, Wood watched as his platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Jorge Diaz, shot and killed a zip-tied Iraqi civilian. Wood turned Diaz in; the platoon sergeant was sentenced to eight years in jail and a dishonorable discharge, ending his 17-year Army career.

DeNardi and Wood both complained that the surge — five additional combat brigades sent into Baghdad — hadn’t reached Adhamiya, where Charlie 1-26 patrolled one of the city’s most dangerous neighborhoods. And they didn’t understand why they couldn’t attack the Abu Hanifa Mosque, even when they could see insurgents shooting at them from the holy site. Politics, they said, held them back. Politics meant they had to ask permission from the Iraqi government. Politics dictated that they provide comfort to known insurgents.

“They won’t let us do our jobs,” DeNardi said. “You have to finish the war part before you can start the peace part.”

Together, DeNardi and Wood wrote “Adhamiya Blues,” and they had to sing it together because DeNardi knew the music and Wood knew the lyrics:

Adhamiya Blues

*War, it degrades the heart and poisons the mind
And we’re tossed aside by governments’ lies.
But we continue to grieve.*

Politics would soon become an issue within Charlie Company, too.

Unwelcome change of command

Baka knew since before he left Germany that he would give up command of Charlie Company while in Iraq. Army leadership wanted to give as many commanders as possible experience leading in combat by rotating them through companies, and after 24 months as company commander, Baka’s time was up.

Yanking respected commanders out midtour can set back a combat unit, and so it was with Charlie 1-26.

“When you leave and they trust you, they feel slighted,” Baka said of his men. “If you have a company like mine, you don’t take out the team captain and expect the rest of the team to operate.”

Baka spent the majority of his time out on patrol with his guys, often participating in firefights. Most days, he didn’t take a break — just hopped in a vehicle with the next group going out.

But when Capt. Cecil Strickland arrived to replace him seven months into the deployment, the mission changed. So did the leadership style. Baka had treated his men like friends, but Strickland, a former enlisted soldier who had always dreamed of commanding a rifle company, kept a certain distance between his officers and soldiers.

The men missed their old commander.

“We didn’t want him to leave,” Johnson said. “[Strickland’s] a totally different leader. He leads through planning. Baka leads through execution.”

“Mike’s very charismatic,” Strickland said. “There’s always going to be that bond with Charlie Company. I’m a fool if I think I’m going to walk in and say, ‘Cut ties. You’re mine now.’”

But as the surge took hold last spring, Strickland said he was required to plan more night raids in search of high-value targets and coordinate joint raids with special operations units. That meant he spent most of his time in the operations room, planning missions. He went out on four or five patrols a week, compared to Baka’s daily patrols.

Strickland had tried to get to know the guys before he arrived, but it was hard because he had spent little time in Adhamiya, having served with the battalion at another FOB. It became even harder to bond when, four days after the March 9 change-of-command ceremony, he lost his first soldier.

‘Something was going to happen’

On March 13, Sgt. Ely Chagoya went out on patrol with Pfc. Alberto Garcia Jr. Garcia was the good soldier, always carrying a Bible and always the one to get a job done without being asked, said his boss, Sgt. Jake Richardson. But he had a playful side, too. A week after Garcia touched a guitar for the first time, Richardson heard somebody playing Johnny Cash. Garcia had already bought himself a guitar and learned to play it.

But March 13, some of the Charlie 1-26 soldiers had a bad feeling. Including Chagoya.

“We would get hunches: ‘I don’t feel like going on this street,’” Chagoya said. “‘I know this mission I’m not going to come back.’ When it’s more than one of the guys saying it, we knew something was going to happen.”

And it did. The explosion killed Garcia, 23, and left Richardson and Chagoya heartbroken.

Like Garcia, Chagoya played guitar, but soon stopped. “I quit playing over there because I feel when I play,” he said. “I decided to block everything and not feel so much. But when you stop yourself from feeling, it goes all the way around: You don’t feel good. You don’t feel bad.”

Chagoya said he tried to combat his angst by getting to know his friends better. “When you go outside the wire, you don’t know if you’ll see them again.”

The IEDs only grew more frequent — and bigger. At first, they’d just blow out the tire of a humvee. Now the guys waited for the big one — the one that would count as a catastrophic loss. A catastrophic loss is the military term for a vehicle destroyed with loss of its crew. On May 14, they moved closer to that gruesome mark when yet another Humvee hit an IED.

The IED hit the fuel tank, causing it to erupt in flames. Staff Sgt. Juan Campos and his men leaped from the vehicle, but they were ablaze. Other soldiers dodged small-arms fire to try to put the flames out as the men screamed. Pfc. Nicholas Hartge died that day. Campos died two weeks later at the burn center at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas. Three other soldiers suffered burns over 70 percent of their bodies.

After that, Charlie Company patrolled in Bradleys. But now, anger motivated them as much as the mission. Anger made them fearless — and sometimes reckless. It made them not themselves.

Three weeks after the humvee explosion, 2nd Platoon went looking for a high-value target: the triggerman who set off the IED that killed Hartge and Campos.

DeNardi and Staff Sgt. Vincent Clinard saw the guy outside a building. DeNardi grabbed an Iraqi Army 9mm Glock, and he and Clinard raced after Hartge’s accused killer. “We jumped a fence, but Clinard got caught up on a wall,” DeNardi said. “I ran inside and ran right into the guy coming down the stairs. I forced my gun into his eye socket, and that was when he started crying.

“I wanted to kill him so bad,” DeNardi said. “Instead, I pretty much crushed his eye socket. I got promoted to specialist like five minutes later.”

Charlie Company kept going out — three and four patrols per soldier per day. The feel of each patrol could be entirely different: searching for IEDs and blasting them with the bomb squad in the morning, then checking in with the neighbors in the afternoon to see if they had everything they needed, or if, by chance, they knew anything about the IED that had been found down the street. Charlie Company handed out chem lights and soccer balls, and they secured areas so schools could be built.

But they couldn’t get past the feeling that something worse loomed.

‘Nobody was coming back’

On the morning of June 21, Chagoya’s Bradley came in the gate at Apache as Spc. Daniel Agami’s went out. The two gunners grinned at each other and lifted their chins in greeting.

“We passed them and said, ‘What’s up?’” Chagoya said. “That’s the last time we said, ‘What’s up.’”

Within an hour, everyone heard the deep thud of an explosion. Faces immediately went grim, and then the call came in. Wood’s Bradley had hit an IED. It had flipped over. It was on fire. Six men were trapped inside.

DeNardi had the day off, but this was 2nd Platoon — his platoon. He raced to the gate, screaming at the guards to let him out.

“Open the door!” he yelled. “I can run it!” When the guards refused to let him out, he fired off a couple of rounds toward the Abu Hanifa Mosque. That’s where the explosion had come from. Then he ran back to the main building. He saw a guy sitting outside, not geared up, and said, “Where the f---k’s the [quick reaction force]?”

The soldier answered, “I don’t know. Go find it.”

DeNardi said he clocked him in the head with his Kevlar helmet and then ran to find Johnson, who immediately loaded up four humvees with Charlie Company’s scout platoon and pulled out of the compound.

Spc. Tyler Holladay and the other medics prepared the aide station, while everyone left at Apache set up stretchers and tried to create enough shade for a large number of casualties. Apache baked in 111-degree heat that day, and medics distributed water as everyone waited.

For an hour.

Then 30 more minutes.

“You pretty much knew nobody was coming back,” Holladay said. “But we thought they were still trapped, still fighting.”

Several soldiers, including DeNardi, sat with the guards at the gate listening to the radio.

“This is taking way too long,” a soldier in the aide station said. “They should have been here by now.”

They busied themselves with a wounded Iraqi girl. The blast had killed three children and an Iraqi woman in homes nearby.

“I don’t even care,” Spc. Armando Cardenas said. “I know that’s wrong, but they knew it was there. There’s no way they didn’t know it was there.”

The bomb was within 300 yards of an Iraqi Army checkpoint, and it was big enough to flip a 30-ton Bradley upside-down and leave a hole the size of a humvee. Somebody had spent some time digging, and somebody had seen it.

Outside the gate, small-arms fire sounded continuously as U.S. helicopters flew overhead waiting to evacuate the wounded. They shot off flares as the insurgents tried to shoot them down.

Then, another explosion.

Choi's truck had been hit by yet another IED. The blast broke both of his truck commander's legs. Choi had been responding to Charlie's call for help with the 554th Military Police Company, 95th Military Police Battalion.

More gunfire. Still no word on Wood's men. Charlie Company lined up against the wall with arms around each other, smoking cigarettes, trying to believe. But DeNardi had been listening to the radio. He stalked past and hurled a magazine into a wall. "They're all gone," he said, and kept walking.

Another explosion.

An RPG hit the driver's side of one of the MP vehicles, decapitating Spc. Karen Clifton, a 22-year-old soldier from Fort Myers, Fla., who had hoped someday to be a state trooper. Four more MPs came into Apache to be treated for smoke inhalation.

As wave after wave of despair hit Apache, Baka got the news back at the S-3 shop at nearby Camp Taji.

"I looked at my NCO," he said. "I knew it was Charlie."

When he heard Wood's name, he whipped his soft cap against the wall. The ballistic eye protection inside shattered. "I was able to get some soldiers out of this fight because of ETS dates," he said. "Wood was one I couldn't." Wood had been stop-lossed, ordered to serve beyond the date he otherwise was supposed to be discharged from the Army.

As he waited for more news, Baka learned a dear friend, Maj. Sid Brookshire, had been killed the day before by an IED in Baghdad.

"It was the worst day in our history," Baka said.

Johnson and his QRF arrived at Wood's Bradley in time to see medic Pfc. Timothy Ray trying to get past flames and gunfire to get to the vehicle. But the flames were too hot and too high. Johnson's best friend, Agami, struggled to get out from underneath the 30-ton Bradley, which was resting on his legs.

"The turret came off the Bradley," Johnson said. "[The guys] had to watch Agami try to get out of that hatch for 10 minutes. I'm never going to forget seeing him like that."

The 25-year-old soldier from Coconut Creek, Fla., burned alive as he tried to escape.

At Apache, Strickland ordered all of Charlie Company to go inside the main building. Sgt. Erik Osterman remained outside to clean the blood out of the vehicles. The medics handed out body bags.

“We have to identify the bodies,” Holladay said grimly as he prepared the paperwork for the task. Then later, “I will never forget the smell of burnt flesh, their facial expressions. These are my friends.”

In the aide station, the medics worked on Choi, who let out anguished howls. “Jeez, Chaps,” a medic said. “Your worst injury is the IV.”

But the attempt at humor couldn’t soften the real pain. Choi had a deep contusion to one leg from the IED, but, worse, he faced the task of explaining to Charlie Company why his God had let five of their friends die. Choi didn’t understand himself.

Far from done in Iraq

Choi gathered Charlie Company in the dining hall, crying and hugging each one of them. The soldiers entered the room flinging down body armor with their jaws set in anger and grief.

“Nobody wanted to hear what he had to say,” Johnson said. “Something like this happens, the last thing you want to do is talk about God. You want to hurt. You want to feel that pain. God? I hated him right then.”

But then they remembered each other. In their misery, they reached out. They streamed out of the dining room to huddle in tight groups.

“I love you, man.”

“We’re going to be OK.”

“They’re watching out for us now.”

That day, 2nd Platoon lost Agami, Wood, Pfc. Anthony Hebert, Spc. Thomas Leemhuis and Sgt. Alphonso Montenegro, as well as an Iraqi interpreter who can’t be named because the families of Iraqis who work with Americans are often killed.

As the guys mourned, Choi and Lt. Col. Eric Schacht, 1-26’s battalion commander, loaded a helicopter to head back to Taji. as the helicopter lifted off, more bad news waited for Schacht. Back home in Schweinfurt, on the same day he lost five Charlie 1-26 soldiers, his 15-year-old son Justin had arrived home from a youth group trip to Italy. The mop-haired rosy-faced kid grabbed a quick snack — then choked to death. Choi accompanied Schacht back to Alexandria, Va., to perform memorial services.

With the battalion commander gone, Charlie’s status was in limbo, but the patrols continued. Second Platoon took a couple of days off at Camp Taji. Standing in the music section of the PX, DeNardi bounced in a tense display of anger when he spoke, fists tight.

“Why can’t we just flatten them?” he said. “Why won’t they let us do our job? We need to do like Samarra and tell everyone they have 24 hours to leave, and then kill everything that moves after that.”

Soon, the 1-26 commanders realized they had to get Charlie out of Adhamiya — to a less volatile area of Iraq — to keep them from getting in trouble and from hurting anyone in anger.

At Taji, the guys went to mental health and tried to regroup. But no one could sleep. When they did, the nightmares seemed as bad as June 21 itself.

Their tour had been extended from 12 months to 15 months. They had been scheduled to go home June 20.

They still had four months to go.

TROOP NEWS



11/14

More Dead Marines Approved: Command Cuts Orders For IED Resistant Vehicles

12.7.07 Raleigh News & Observer

The Marine Corps has decided to buy a third fewer bomb-resistance vehicles to protect U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan from deadly roadside bombs.

Cracked F15s Cracking Up

12.7.07 Washington Times

Cracks were found in two F-15s deployed to Japan during an investigation that followed the crash of a fighter jet in the U.S. last month.

***This Is Not A Satire:* Army Says Deadly Nerve Gas Not Deadly**

12.7.07 USA Today, December 7, 2007

The Army will reveal plans today to expedite destruction of stocks of the deadly nerve agent sarin at the Blue Grass Army Depot, months after a major leak in a depot storage igloo.

The Army said the leak posed no health risk.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

December 7, 2007 Michael Howard in Baghdad, The Guardian & By HAMID AHMED, Associated Press Writer & Reuters

BAGHDAD - A truck bomber in Beiji attacked a police station in one of Iraq's major oil hubs on Saturday, killing at least seven people and injuring 13 in a neighborhood home to many refinery workers and engineers, police said.

The bomber on Saturday approached the police station in an explosives-laden truck about three miles north of the city center, a police official said

The official said five policemen and two civilians were killed in the blast, which damaged nearby homes and sent shards of glass flying through the air.

Another witness, Falih Salim, said he rushed toward the area after hearing the explosion and saw the bodies of two burned guards.

Near the city of Baquba, villagers say they come under constant attack by militants.

In the same province, Diyala, nine policemen were killed at a checkpoint yesterday.

Two police commandos were wounded by a roadside bomb targeting their patrol in central Baghdad's Harthiya district, police said.



An explosive device exploded beneath the strategic oil pipeline in al-Fatha, east of Beiji, in northern Iraq, Dec. 7, 2007. (AP Photo/Bassem Daham)

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

**“The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!”
-- Camille Desmoulins**

“When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, “No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country.”

-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq

GRAND DENIAL



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: December 06, 2007
Subject: Grand Denial

GRAND DENIAL

**Nine people killed in a Nebraska mall.
Nine more people added to denial.
"Grand Theft Auto " all across America.
Everytime you buy a boy a violent toy,
you trample his soul.
Everytime a boy's soul has been trampled,
there's a risk he will take it out on others.
America,
you just seem to reap what you sow.**

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran**

December 6, 2007

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

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

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

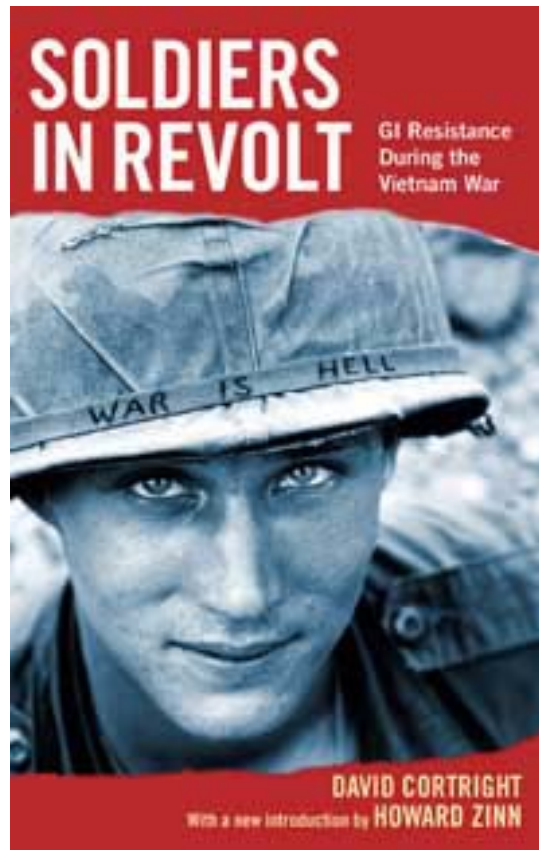
NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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/)

**“The Loyalties Of Many Troops
Lay Not With Their Commanders
But With The People”**

**“When The Secretary Of Defense Arrived
He Was Greeted By An Anti-War Petition
Signed By 250 Of The Men And By A
Picket Line Of Thirty GIs Outside The
Main Gate”**



From: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975. Now available in paperback from Haymarket Books.

While withdrawals from Vietnam in the long run sapped the strength of soldier resistance, the immediate effect was to exacerbate the internal crisis, by increasing the number of disgruntled combat veterans at stateside bases.

Indeed a principal reason for continued dissent within the Army in 1971 was the contagious defiance of military authority that returnees spread to other troops.

The General Accounting Office confirmed this in a 1972 study that stated that Army operations had been seriously disrupted by the reassignment to stateside units of Vietnam veterans, described as “extremely difficult to motivate.”

One of the main centers for combat veterans was Fort Bragg, and accordingly the Bragg Briefs organization and “Haymarket” coffeehouse prospered. Approximately fifty GIs were regular members of GIs United, and Bragg Briefs enjoyed an on-post circulation of over seven thousand.

One measure of the group’s influence came in March 1971, when approximately seventeen hundred Fort Bragg soldiers signed a petition requesting on-post facilities for the Jane Fonda anti-war entertainment show.

Another illustration of the disruptive role of Vietnam veterans occurred during the redeployment of the 173rd Airborne Brigade to Fort Campbell in September. The return of the battle-hardened unit was marked by a lavish welcome-home ceremony, including a personal visit from Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird.

When the Secretary arrived, however, he was greeted by an anti-war petition signed by 250 of the men (collected in just, four days) and by a picket line of thirty GIs outside the main gate.

Another important example of the persistence of anti-war organizing was the emergence, in the summer of 1971, of a new soldier group at the isolated desert outpost of Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

Soon after launching the appropriately titled paper *Where Are We?* the all-GI organization embarked on one of the most unusual actions of the GI movement.

In an unprecedented decision within the Fort Huachuca command, the group was granted a request to solicit for an anti-war petition on post and to set up tables for this purpose in front of the main PX.

It was the first time any GI group had succeeded in obtaining permission to exercise First Amendment petition rights on base. It probably will remain the last, too, for the effort met with astounding success.

On the appointed day, July 31, 540 people signed the petition, including 143 Vietnam veterans and twenty-three officers. The *Where Are We?* staff reported that at times during the day GIs were queued up in long lines waiting to sign.

Subsequent requests to repeat the petitioning were denied, and the petition thus had to be circulated surreptitiously thereafter.

When it was finally presented to Representative Morris Udall in the fall, 811 active-duty servicepeople had signed it.

One of the most vigorous new organizations appearing during the summer was the GI Co-ordinating Committee (GICC) in San Antonio—founded in late July at a meeting of some two hundred servicemen from Fort Sam Houston and nearby Air Force bases.

The Committee's first action came in early August, with a three-day series of anti-war actions to commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; on the last day, one hundred fifty GIs participated in a march in downtown San Antonio.

A month later, GICC played host to a performance of the Jane Fonda Show which attracted some fifteen hundred servicemen.

In the fall, the group continued its activities with another, more ambitious series of political protests.

On October 13, approximately seventy-five GIs and airmen joined two hundred other people for an anti-war march through downtown San Antonio.

On November 6, fifty servicemen traveled to Houston for a regional peace rally, and on November 20, seventy-five soldiers joined a march called by the local chicano community to protest police brutality.

The GI Coordinating Committee also was one of four Army groups that sponsored antiwar activities on Veterans Day 1971 — as Vietnam veterans and other soldiers attempted to recapture the original meaning of Armistice Day.

In San Antonio, over one hundred fifty soldiers and airmen marched from Mannke Park to the gates of Fort Sam Houston for a short memorial service, and then to nearby Brackenridge Park for a speech by Tom Hayden.

At Fort Campbell, over two hundred GIs, many of them from the 173rd Airborne, also marched to the gates of the base for an anti-war rally.

At Fort McClellan, GIs and WACs sponsored a rally at the entrance to the post and a march to a nearby park which attracted seventy-five servicepeople and fifty civilians.

The most extraordinary event of the day occurred in Killeen, where the Ft. Hood United Front again displayed great strength — and again clashed with local authorities.

When city officials refused to grant their request for parade permits, the United Front decided to proceed with plans for an October 25 demonstration.

On the day of the march, about two hundred people assembled in front of the coffeehouse, with another three hundred waiting hesitantly nearby; most were active-duty soldiers.

As soon as the demonstrators stepped off, however, Killeen police moved in and began mass arrests.

In all, 118 people were placed in jail, including ninety-one servicemen.

1972:

As American bombs fell on Indochina with increasing severity, clouded in a shroud of Pentagon secrecy, a handful of GI-movement activists and Vietnam veterans in the New England area established an unprecedented world-wide intelligence network, dubbed the “Ad Hoc Military Buildup Committee,” to monitor the mobilization of American forces.

Hoping to enlighten the American people on the extent of the U.S. attack, the Cambridge-based Committee began a massive information-gathering operation among anti-war servicemen throughout the United States and Asia.

Drawing on communications from civilian counselors and GIs in Japan, Okinawa, the Philippines, Thailand, Hawaii, and some twenty-five bases in the United States, the Committee was able to disclose secret American military preparations before they were publicly announced.

On April 13, for example, the group reported that the 548th Reconnaissance Group, at Hickam AFB in Hawaii, had been “drawing up extra large targeting charts for Hanoi and Haiphong.”

The notice preceded by two days the barbarous attack against those cities.

Through its extensive contacts among GI anti-war groups, the Committee was able to accurately predict the movement of 33,000 men, 60 planes, and over forty ships into the war zone during its two weeks of operation.

Like the Mayday actions in Washington a year earlier, the Committee’s work indicated that the loyalties of many troops lay not with their commanders but with the people.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

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



Iraqi citizens are stopped on their street by foreign occupation soldiers from the USA who demand their identity papers in Baghdad's Adhamiya district December 7, 2007. REUTERS/Stringer

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



" ONE TORTURE COMBO, PLEASE, EASY ON THE OVERSIGHT... "

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

OK, The Lying Bullshit Is Over: Democrats Will Give Bush His War Money

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in. He writes: Well, what a surprise. The jellyfish cave.]

12.8.07 By ANNE FLAHERTY (AP)

After weeks of tough talk, Democrats appear resigned to back down again on providing money for the Iraq war.

Democrats now are expected to allow Senate Republicans to attach tens of billions of dollars for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to a \$500 billion-plus government-wide spending bill.

The war money would not be tied to troop withdrawals.

Such talk runs contrary to the rhetoric just three weeks ago by other Democratic leaders.

Senate Republicans were blocking a \$50 billion bill that would have paid for combat operations and set a goal of bringing troops home by December 2008. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., told reporters the House would not respond by sending Bush the bill he wanted, without conditions on withdrawal. If efforts fail in the Senate, "we're not going to be taking it up anymore over here," she said at a Nov. 15 news conference.

The measure fell by a 53-45 vote in the Senate, seven short of the 60 needed. Afterward, Reid said the House "has made their position clear" and suggested the Senate would not revisit the issue.

"We're going to continue to do the right thing for the American people by having limited accountability for the president and not a blank check," he said. Because the Army has enough money through mid-February, he said, "everyone should rest with a good conscience."

Other Democrats stuck to that line.

"The days of a free lunch are over," said Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Rep. David Obey, D-Wis., chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, said: "If the president wants that \$50 billion released, all he has to do is to call the Senate Republican leader, Mitch McConnell, and ask him to stop blocking it."

But facing an uphill battle, the House is now expected to vote as early as Tuesday on the catchall spending measure and an estimated \$30 billion for Afghanistan and some domestic military requirements.

The bill would not initially include money for Iraq, until it makes its way to the Senate and faces the threat of a GOP filibuster.

That is when Reid is expected to allow a vote on a Republican amendment to add the Iraq money.

The House is expected to accept the deal.

MORE:

**DemoRat Leaders & Collaborator
“Anti-War” Organizations Happily
Cooperate To Keep On Killing U.S.
Troops & Iraqis:
Congress Can Stop The War Now,
But Won't
[Because They're For Continuing The
War: Big Surprise]**

2007-12-02 By David Swanson, AfterDowningStreet [Excerpts]

One of the two biggest open secrets in American politics is that no bill is needed to end the legal funding of the occupation of Iraq.

The occupation can be ended with an announcement by Congressional leaders that there will be no more funding.

Any proposal to fund it can be blocked by 41 senators, or by one if his name is Reid.

Bush has plenty of money for withdrawal (an understatement so dramatic it feels dishonest) and could be given more for that exclusive purpose (if Congress insisted).

When your television tells you that the Democrats need 60 or 67 senators in order to end the occupation, your television is lying to you.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid could if they wanted announce today that the House and Senate will no longer bring to a vote any bills to fund anything other than withdrawal.

Of course, Reid and many other Senators are routinely referred to as “critics” of the Iraq “war”. But a war is something that can be won or lost, a contest between two nation's armies.

What we have in Iraq is a hostile foreign occupation that can never be won. And a critic is someone who sits on the sidelines and critiques.

Senators do not sit on the sidelines of this occupation. On the contrary, they fund it.

But what about peace activist organizations?

Why do they go along with the pretense of supporting bills destined to be vetoed rather than demanding a cut off of funds or - what is ultimately required - impeachment?

I don't have a good answer, but part of the answer is the influence on activists of politicians who tell them that they are friends, who make them feel powerful, and who echo what everyone hears on their televisions about the Democrats' inability to act no matter how much they supposedly want to, and about the supposedly all-important elections 12 months away.

SOLDIER-KILLER DOMESTIC ENEMY DESPICABLE PIECE OF SHIT



**WANTED FOR THE MURDER OF U.S.
TROOPS AND CITIZENS OF IRAQ:
THE TRAITOR PELOSI**

**LIAR
SOLDIER-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
DESPICABLE PIECE OF SHIT**



varifrank.com/images/Preacher_Reid.jpg

**WANTED FOR THE MURDER OF U.S.
TROOPS AND CITIZENS OF IRAQ:
THE TRAITOR REID**

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



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