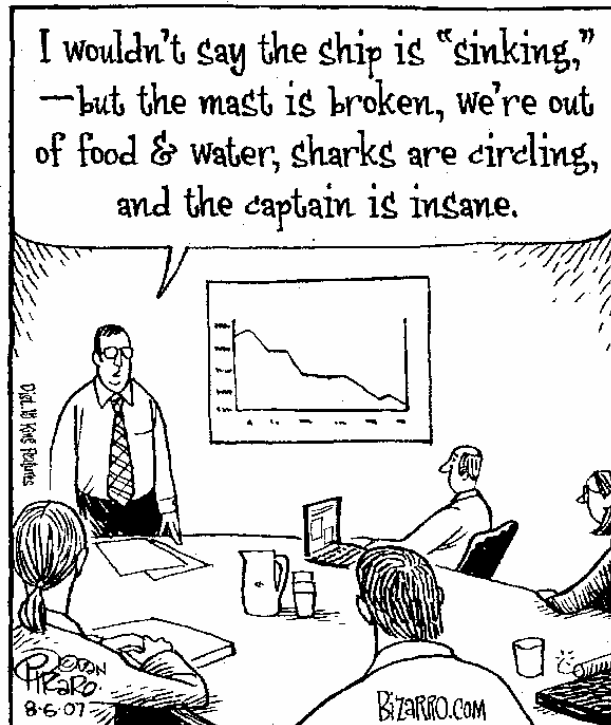


GI SPECIAL 6A13:



Delay In GI Specials:

A minor but crippling computer problem, now repaired, delayed GI Specials this week. Apologies. T

The Mission: Fuck What Iraqi Citizens Want: Defend The U.S. Military Dictatorship In Iraq

January 5 / 6, 2008 By KEVIN YOUNG, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

In August 2005, 82 percent were “strongly opposed” to the occupation; in January 2006, 87 percent favored a timeline for withdrawal; a year later, in September 2006, 71 percent wanted a full withdrawal by mid-2007.

Although these figures fluctuate somewhat, the March 2007 poll commissioned by US, British, and German news corporations presents a clearer picture of rising Iraqi opposition to the occupation over time.

This poll found that 78 percent of Iraqis “strongly” or “somewhat” opposed the occupation, and then compares this finding to answers to the same question from February 2004 and November 2005.

At the start of 2004, nearly one year after the invasion, 51 percent of Iraqis “strongly” or “somewhat” opposed the occupation; 21 months later, that figure had risen to 65 percent; by March 2007, it had climbed again to 78 percent.

By August 2007, the percentage “strongly” or “somewhat” opposed to the occupation had stayed more or less the same, increasing slightly to 79 percent.

This progressive rise in popular hostility toward the US-led occupation is confirmed by another crucial statistic: the percentages of Iraqis who approve of insurgent attacks on occupation forces.

In January 2006, 47 percent approved of such attacks; by September 2006, the figure had risen to 61 percent; in August 2007, 57 percent continued to approve of such attacks, including 93 percent of Sunnis.

The resentment of ordinary Iraqis toward the US goes a long way toward explaining how a small insurgency numbering fewer than 30,000 Iraqis and 800-2,000 foreigners has successfully prevented US-led and Iraqi government forces (which together total over 600,000) from establishing military dominance in Iraq for almost five years.

As journalist Patrick Cockburn noted in December 2007, “However much Iraqis may fight among themselves a central political fact in Iraq remains the unpopularity of the US-led occupation outside Kurdistan.”

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldiers Already Targeted In The First Two Weeks Of January By As Many IEDs As In All Of December

Jan 18 (AFP)

US soldiers have already been targeted in the first two weeks of January by as many explosives as in all of December, the US defense chief said Friday.

“During the first half of January there were as many IEDs (improvised explosive devices) as there were in all of December,” Defense Secretary Robert Gates told reporters aboard a plane after a visit in Charleston, South Carolina.

Tal Afar IED Kills Wisconsin Soldier



U.S. Army Pfc. Keith E. Lloyd, 26, of Milwaukee, died Jan. 12, 2008, in Tal Afar, Iraq, of wounds sustained when his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device, the U.S. Department of Defense said Tuesday, Jan. 15. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

Three More U.S. Soldiers From Ft. Campbell Killed In Salah Ad Din; Two Wounded

“Six Deaths In Eight Days”

1.16.08 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080116-03 & AP

TIKRIT, Iraq – Three Multi-National Division – North Soldiers from Fort Campbell were killed by small arms fire while conducting operations in Salah ad Din province northwest of Diyala Jan. 16, raising the total to six deaths in eight days.

Additionally, two other Soldiers were wounded and evacuated to a Coalition hospital.

U.S. Soldier Killed In Ramadi; More Wounded

BAGHDAD, Jan 19 (KUNA)

Eight Iraqi and American servicemen were killed and 17 others injured in twin bombings in the city of Ramadi on Saturday, a security source said.

The source told KUNA two bombers wearing belts packed with explosives blew themselves up against Iraqi police stations in Ubaidi neighborhood in northern Ramadi.

A third suicide was arrested before detonating the explosives, added the source.

Two Iraqi police officers, three of their bodyguards and two guards were killed in one of the blasts which also injured 14 others, said the source.

Sheikh Abduljabbar Al-Fahdawi, one of the tribal elders allied with the U.S., said one blast killed an American soldier and injured three others.

A Ramadi policeman said the bombers attacked policemen gathered for evening roll-call.

Baghdad IED Kills U.S. Soldier

January 19, 2008 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080119-01

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldier was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during combat operations north of Baghdad Jan. 18.

Soldier’s Death Mourned In Central Illinois Home

[Thanks to Lee Sustar, who sent this in.]

January 16, 2008 By Robert Mitchum, Chicago Tribune reporter

The body of a 20-year-old soldier killed in Iraq last week was returned to his central Illinois hometown Tuesday, the same day military officials said they were investigating whether he and two other soldiers in his unit were killed by friendly fire.

Phillip Pannier of Washburn, a rural community located about 25 miles northeast of Peoria, served in the 101st Airborne Division and was killed Jan. 8 near the city of Samarra in central Iraq during a firefight with insurgents, Army officials said.

On Tuesday, a hearse carrying Pannier's casket took the 2006 Roanoke-Benson High School graduate to the small town of Roanoke, a neighboring town where his funeral service will be held Friday. There hundreds of residents and his former schoolmates came out to watch the procession and pay their respects to the soldier, who had been serving in Iraq since last fall.

Pannier is survived by his parents, Donald and Robyn of Washburn, and two brothers, Dan and Ben. A third brother, Dale, died in September. His family could not be reached for comment.

Pannier was engaged to Jennifer Held of nearby Metamora, to whom he proposed before leaving for Iraq, childhood friend Angela Oltman said.

Friends mourned the loss of a fun-loving and athletic young man who played soccer and football, was involved in the Future Farmers of America, and hoped to become a police officer after leaving the service.

"He was too good of a person for something like that to happen to. He didn't deserve it," said Jillian Moritz, another longtime friend of Pannier.

Steve Hayes, who directed Pannier in school bands from 4th grade through high school, remembered him as a quiet, cheerful student.

"It truly was in Phillip's heart to do things for other people," Hayes said. "He was just a good, good kid."

His funeral service is scheduled to be held in Roanoke-Benson High School.

Residents of the area around Pannier's hometown took hard the news of his death and that friendly fire may have contributed.

"They're heartbroken; it's truly sad," Hayes said.

But regardless of the outcome of any military inquiry, Pannier will always be considered a hero, Hayes added.

"He still had served in a dangerous place, served honorably," Hayes said. "Regardless of what the investigation finds, in our minds, in our hearts, he's a hero."

The News They Won't Put On TV:

**U.S. Soldiers “Discovered An
Extensive Tunnel And Trench
Network”**

**Resistance Soldiers “Attacked The
Company With Mortars, Grenades
And Guns”**

**“An Intensive, Three-Hour Firefight In
The Salad Ad Din Province”**

**Three U.S. Soldiers “May Have Died
From Friendly Fire”**

1/15/2008 By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press Writer

Three Army soldiers who were gunned down during an intensive, three-hour firefight in the Salad ad Din province north of Baghdad last week, may have died from friendly fire, military officials said Tuesday.

The three 101st Airborne Division soldiers were part of an Army company that was attacked by as many as 15 insurgents on Jan. 8, after discovering several large caches of explosives.

Military officials said the incident is being investigated to determine whether the soldiers were killed by shots from the enemy or by U.S. forces, including members of their unit and aircraft called in for backup later in the battle.

A detailed account of the incident was described by several officials to The Associated Press. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is not complete.

The three soldiers were part of Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team. They were searching buildings southwest of Samarra early that Tuesday morning when they found more than 1,000 pounds of homemade explosives, two 55-gallon barrels rigged to blow up, a roadside bomb, and bullets and bomb-making materials.

Soon afterward they found that a second building was also filled with explosives, guns, ammunition and a disassembled suicide vest.

According to reports, the soldiers continued searching the area, and later discovered four vehicles loaded with explosives. And at that point they determined that there were at least two insurgents hiding nearby.

When they moved in on the insurgents, reports said the soldiers discovered an extensive tunnel and trench network that was being defended by 10 to 15 of the enemy, who attacked the company with mortars, grenades and guns.

The two sides fought for about three hours, escalating to a massive battle with U.S. aircraft blasting the insurgents with rockets, several 500-pound bombs and .50-caliber guns.

At some point during the fight, soldiers discovered that two members of their unit -- Pfc. Ivan E. Merlo, 19, of San Marcos, Calif., and Pfc. Phillip J. Pannier, 20, of Washburn, Ill. had been killed. Three others were injured, and one of them -- Sgt. David J. Hart, 22, of Lake View Terrace, Ca. -- died later.

It is not clear how many enemy insurgents were killed.

Huron Soldier Wounded In Iraq



Chris McGraw of Huron was injured while serving in Iraq. Provided photo

January 18, 2008 By KATIE WALSH, Sandusky Register

Kevin McGraw never expected to get the call. But it came Wednesday morning nonetheless -- his mother, Katy, telling him his brother Chris had been injured during his third tour in Iraq.

"I never even expected that he would be over there three times," Kevin said. "But it happened, and we've been dealing with it the best we can."

Chris, a staff sergeant in the 101st Airborne Division, was wounded when his unit encountered fire Tuesday, leaving three soldiers dead, said Kevin, a 23-year-old Sandusky firefighter.

The 30-year-old Huron native is the oldest of Brian and Katy McGraw's three sons. Their other son Eric, 28, lives in China.

Chris was treated at a military hospital in Germany for a bullet wound in his left shoulder and a badly injured right arm.

He will probably be transferred to Fort Campbell in Kentucky this weekend, Katy said.

"I think eventually he will be able to come home," she said. "We'll just have to go day by day."

Chris joined the Army in 1998, two years after graduating from Huron High School. The Iraq War would not start for five more years -- but when it did, Chris was among the first troops sent over, his mother said.

"He had mixed feelings about going to Iraq," she said.

"There are a lot of younger guys in his unit, and he really felt that he needed to be there and be a strong leader for them."

Ashlea Bache, Chris' girlfriend, described him as very passionate about his friends, his family, his country and his troops.

"Chris realized that a lot of parents were putting trust in him to take care of their kids," Bache said. "He took that responsibility very seriously."

Having Chris in Iraq has not been easy for his family, Katy said.

"It's not a comfortable feeling knowing that he's over there," she said. "I accept that it's his job, and I just hope and pray for the best."

To younger brother Kevin, Chris is a hero. Kevin was in middle school when Chris joined the military, and he has visited his brother at Fort Campbell several times. Kevin personally knows the three soldiers in Chris' unit who were killed, and said the loss is incredibly difficult for his brother.

"That's his biggest wound -- the loss of his guys," Kevin said. "They're in war together; they're a family. I can't imagine going through that."

Chris was also close friends with Staff Sgt. Jon Martin of Bellevue, another member of the 101st Airborne who was killed in Iraq in November.

According to Kevin, Chris was tentatively scheduled to get out of the military in March 2009. But his injuries may affect his release date.

"It's too soon to tell what's going to happen," Kevin said. "Right now he's just got to get through this."

Local Soldier Injured In Iraq; "Heavy Fighting" Around Baghdad Sunday

January 18, 2008 By RACHEL LANE, Staff Writer, New And Sentinel

PENNSBORO — A 23-year-old Pennsboro resident is in critical condition in a hospital in Germany after an explosion in Iraq on Sunday.

Army Infantry Spc. Randy Moore, 23, is expected to be transported back to the United States sometime today, his mother Debbi McCloy said Thursday night.

"He was on life support but he's been breathing on his own, so that's good," McCloy said.

She said he lost his left hand and the doctors are hoping to save his left arm and his legs.

"He had a lot of shrapnel cuts on his legs," she said. Much of his body has burns. His spine is fractured.

"The doctors are feeling confident that they can save his legs," McCloy said.

Moore will have a medical team with him on the flight, she said. The military tries to get soldiers stabilized and on a flight to the United States as quickly as possible, she said.

She said one of Moore's doctors, Dr. Kerns, has been keeping her informed. "She calls me at least twice a day from Germany," McCloy said. "She is absolutely wonderful."

She said an improvised explosive device, or IED, hit near Moore's Humvee when he was near heavy fighting around Baghdad Sunday.

"He was right in where all the heavy fighting is," she said.

Moore attended high school at Parkersburg South High School and Federal Hocking High School. He was on the wrestling and football teams.

"So many people knew him. So many people loved him," McCloy said.

She said Moore dreamed of enlisting in the military. "He wanted so much to fight for his country," she said. He enlisted shortly after his 18th birthday. He has been in Korea. This trip to Iraq began in May 2007.

"It's been a nightmare," McCloy said. "Sometimes it still seems like it didn't happen."

She said she spoke to her son Wednesday for a few minutes.

"He told the doctors he wanted to talk to his mother. He wanted to make sure I was OK. It was heartbreaking and a blessing all at once," McCloy said. "He was barely able to talk."

She said the doctors think his determination and strength will help him.

People she has never met have been coming to the house to offer their support. People she does know have been offering support and help.

"I just want to thank everyone," McCloy said. "We ask for prayers."

WELCOME TO IRAQNAM: HAVE A NICE DAY



12.07 US soldiers patrol the outskirts of the Iraqi village of al-Wajihya. (AFP/Ali Yussef)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

IED Kills Canadian Soldier In Arghandab: Four More Wounded In Zangabad

January 15, 2008 By The Canadian Press

Canada's 77th soldier has died in Afghanistan after the vehicle he was riding in struck an improvised explosive device early Tuesday in southern Afghanistan.

Trooper Richard Renaud, 26, of Alma Que., a member of the 12e Regiment blindé du Canada was killed in the blast involving a Coyote light armoured vehicle.

Brig.-Gen. Guy Laroche said Renaud and three other soldiers were involved in a reconnaissance patrol in the Arghandab district, about 10 kilometres north of Kandahar city, when the attack occurred around 7:15am local time.

One other soldier suffered minor injuries and was evacuated by land to hospital at Kandahar Airfield. He has since been released.

Four soldiers, however, were injured Sunday in Zangabad, about 35 kilometres southwest of Kandahar city, when their vehicle struck an IED that was planted along a dirt road.

The troops were involved in a road clearance patrol aimed at finding and defusing mines.

Family Of Reno Soldier Stunned

1/11/2008 DAVID JACOBS, RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Just three months from finishing his third deployment, a Reno soldier was killed Wednesday when his truck struck a land mine in Afghanistan.

Sgt. David J. Drakulich, 22, was a forward observer, rifleman and parachutist with the 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, based at Fort Bragg, N.C. "He was a Nevadan and an American," his father, Joseph, said Thursday night at the family's home in Stead. "His death and sacrifice will not go in vain. It has a purpose."

"He was my dearest friend and my son," the father said, "and a great snowboarder."

Drakulich had been deployed twice before to Afghanistan with the 3rd Ranger Battalion from Fort Benning, Ga.

"His death was very sudden, he probably didn't know what hit him," the father said amid a gathering of at least 20 family members and friends.

Drakulich enlisted in 2004 to join America's fight against terrorists.

“Four years ago, he said, ‘Dad, I’m going to be an airborne ranger,’” the father recalled. “I was floored by that.

“He was fearless. He knew what he was doing”

Recently, the sergeant was credited with saving his unit by calling in an air strike from his position as a forward observer. “He loved his country, and joined in order to serve,” said his mother, Tina. “We loved him very much.”

Part of an extended Nevada family of lawyers, teachers and real estate agents, Drakulich died as a Specialist 4th Class and was promoted to sergeant posthumously. “He went straight to heaven,” sister, Dana, said. “I know that.

He is also survived by a brother, Thomas, and sister Dana.

He attended Silver Lake Elementary School and O’Brien Middle School and was a 2003 graduate of Hug High School. He attended Truckee Meadows Community College for two semesters before enlisting in the Army.

Drakulich had planned to attend college when he returned from Afghanistan in April.

Funeral services are pending.

Joe Morgan, a neighbor, recalled seeing Drakulich running a few years ago in the North Valleys hills “all of the time” while training as a cross-county runner.

Drakulich is the 18th soldier from Northern Nevada and at least the 51st soldier with Nevada links to have died in Afghanistan, Iraq or other parts of the Middle East since Sept. 11, 2001.

Eight Killed In Resistance Attack On Occupation Offices; “This Will Certainly Affect Our Business” “We Will Target All These Restaurants In Kabul Where Foreigners Are Eating”

Jan. 14 (Xinhua) & Radio Australia & January 15, 2008 JASON STRAZIUSO,
Associated Press Writer

A Filipina, a Norwegian and a US national are among the dead after Monday's attack on the five-star Kabul Serena hotel - a hub of foreign businessmen and diplomats and home to embassies including Australia's often used by Western workers and officials.

Two Norwegians are among the injured on Monday in an explosion and firing attack at a luxury hotel in Afghan capital Kabul, according to reports reaching here from Oslo.

A journalist for Norwegian newspaper Dagbladet and an employee of Norway's foreign ministry were shot and were being treated by U.S. soldiers who rushed to the scene, the statement added.

Amrullah Saleh, the head of Afghanistan's intelligence service, said three militants stormed the Serena Hotel on Monday evening. A guard shot and killed one attacker at the gate to the hotel's parking lot, which triggered his suicide vest.

A second attacker blew himself up near the entrance to the hotel's lobby, and the third attacker made it inside the hotel and shot his way through the lobby and toward the gym, Saleh said. A man alleged suspected of being the third attacker was arrested Monday.

The three militants stormed the popular luxury hotel just after 6 p.m., hunting down Westerners who had cowered in a gym.

Saleh showed a picture taken from the hotel's security cameras showing a guerrilla in a police uniform inside the hotel's lobby, apparently the third attacker.

The official spokesman of the Kabul Serena said the hotel was closed for repairs, including damage caused by bullets and grenades.

“This will certainly affect our business,” said the spokesman, who asked not to be identified citing company policy. “The hotel was helping drive business in Afghanistan by creating a safe haven for international businessmen that wanted to invest and work here. This will dent that confidence.”

The Serena spokesman said three hotel employees and two guards were killed during the attack. Officials have said an American citizen and a Norwegian reporter also died, and the Philippines Foreign Affairs Department said a Filipina spa supervisor wounded in the attack died on Tuesday, bringing the death toll to eight.

A Taliban spokesman warned Tuesday that militants would increase attacks against restaurants in Kabul frequented by Westerners.

“We will target all these restaurants in Kabul where foreigners are eating,” Zabiullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesman, told The Associated Press by phone. “We have jihadists in Kabul right now and soon we will carry out more attacks against military personnel and foreigners.”

Occupation Agent Killed In Helmand

January 19, 2008 Xinhua

Taliban insurgents have killed a man on charges of spying for Afghan and foreign troops in Musa Qala district of southern province Helmand, an official said Friday.

“Abdul Wali, 22, a civilian and seller at a local market with a cart, was found hanged on a tree Friday morning,” Mullah Salam, the newly-appointed district chief of Musa Qala, told Xinhua via phone.

A letter left near the civilian’s dead body warned that any others working as spy for Afghan government and foreign troops would be treated in the same way, according to officials.

The man, married, was captured by the militants Thursday evening on his way home, local Taliban told media, saying there were reports indicating his involvement in spying activities.

“In Some Ways, We Were More Secure Under The Taliban. You Could Cross Afghanistan By Road And Feel Secure. Now, You Take Your Life Into Your Hands”

“These Days The Dead Are Described As ‘Taliban’; Or, If They Are Children, They Are Said To Be ‘Partly To Blame For Being At A Site Used By Militants’”

“Most of the people killed in this war are not Taliban; they are innocents,” Gulam Rasul told me. “Was the killing of my family a mistake? No, it was not. They fly their planes and look down on us, the mere Afghan people, who have no planes, and they bomb us for our birthright, and with all contempt.”

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Military Project, & Phil G, who sent this in.]

January 10th, 2008 by John Pilger, Dissident Voice [Excerpts]

I had suggested to Marina that we meet in the safety of the Intercontinental Hotel, where foreigners stay in Kabul, but she said no. She had been there once and government agents, suspecting she was RAWA, had arrested her. We met instead at a safe house,

reached through contours of bombed rubble that was once streets, where people live like earthquake victims awaiting rescue.

RAWA is the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, which since 1977 has alerted the world to the suffering of women and girls in that country. There is no organization on earth like it. It is the high bar of feminism, home of the bravest of the brave.

Year after year, RAWA agents have traveled secretly through Afghanistan, teaching at clandestine girls' schools, ministering to isolated and brutalized women, recording outrages on cameras concealed beneath their burqas.

They were the Taliban regime's implacable foes when the word Taliban was barely heard in the west: when the Clinton administration was secretly courting the mullahs so that the oil company Unocal could build a pipeline across Afghanistan from the Caspian.

"We, the women of Afghanistan, only became a cause in the west following 11 September 2001, when the Taliban suddenly became the official enemy of America.

"Yes, they persecuted women, but they were not unique, and we have resented the silence in the west over the atrocious nature of the western-backed warlords, who are no different. They rape and kidnap and terrorize, yet they hold seats in Karzai's government.

"In some ways, we were more secure under the Taliban. You could cross Afghanistan by road and feel secure. Now, you take your life into your hands."

Acclaimed as the first "victory" in the "war on terror", the attack on Afghanistan in October 2001 and its ripple effect caused the deaths of thousands of civilians who, even more than Iraqis, remain invisible to western eyes.

The family of Gulam Rasul is typical.

It was 7:45am on 21 October. The headmaster of a school in the town of Khair Khana, Rasul had just finished eating breakfast with his family and had walked outside to chat to a neighbor. Inside the house were his wife, Shiekra, his four sons, aged three to ten, his brother and his wife, his sister and her husband.

He looked up to see an aircraft weaving in the sky, then his house exploded in a fireball behind him. Nine people died in this attack by a US F-16 dropping a 500lb bomb. The only survivor was his nine-year-old son, Ahmad Bilal.

"Most of the people killed in this war are not Taliban; they are innocents," Gulam Rasul told me. "Was the killing of my family a mistake? No, it was not. They fly their planes and look down on us, the mere Afghan people, who have no planes, and they bomb us for our birthright, and with all contempt."

There was the wedding party in the village of Niazi Qala, 100km south of Kabul, to celebrate the marriage of the son of a respected farmer. By all accounts it was a wonderfully boisterous affair, with music and singing.

The roar of aircraft started when everyone was asleep, at about three in the morning. According to a United Nations report, the bombing lasted two hours and killed 52 people: 17 men, ten women and 25 children, many of whom were found blown to bits where they had desperately sought refuge, in a dried-up pond.

Such slaughter is not uncommon, and these days the dead are described as “Taliban”; or, if they are children, they are said to be “partly to blame for being at a site used by militants” — according to the BBC, speaking to a US military spokesman.

As Other Governments Abandon Afghan Imperial Slaughterhouse, Bush Sends 3000 More Marines To Die There: “3,000 Trainers And Helicopters Were Promised But Not Delivered By NATO Members”

Jan 15 (AFP)

The US military announced Tuesday it was sending 3,200 additional troops to Afghanistan to help counter an expected offensive by the Taliban militia and help train Afghan national soldiers.

The soldiers, all US marines, will make up part of a shortfall of 7,500 troops that NATO countries have failed to send, despite promises to provide men and combat equipment.

Coalition commanders in Afghanistan have complained that they are short three infantry battalions, 3,000 trainers and helicopters, which were promised but not delivered by NATO members. With its military already heavily engaged in Iraq, Washington has increased pressure on NATO allies to increase their contributions, with little success.

Currently, there are 26,000 US troops in Afghanistan.

Of the new US troops, 2,200 will be deployed in southern Helmand province, a Taliban stronghold.

TROOP NEWS

“Bring Our Kids Home” “Motorists Honked, Waved And Smiled As They Drove By. Protesters Smiled And Waved Back”



Parishioners protest the Iraq war outside St. John's Cathedral. Inside the church, the war dead are remembered — Americans with crimson crosses and Iraqis with gold stars. Lawrence K. Ho: Los Angeles Times

January 12, 2008 By K. Connie Kang, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

During a solemn 10 a.m. Mass at St. John's Cathedral on Sunday, Deacon Lester Mackenzie recited the names and ages of six Americans who had lost their lives in Iraq the previous week.

Pray for them, he told the congregation, and for prisoners of war and those missing in action.

On Wednesday evening, as they have done every week since April, priests and parishioners of this Episcopal church held a peace demonstration before the 6:30 p.m. contemplative Mass.

They started to gather shortly after 4 p.m. By 5:30, about 15 people, including three priests, were standing at two busy intersections near the cathedral -- South Figueroa and South Flower streets at West Adams Boulevard -- with a grand view of downtown buildings lighting up in the dark sky.

“Wage Peace, Not War,” “Bring Our Kids Home” and “Honk for Peace,” urged some of the homemade placards they held.

Motorists honked, waved and smiled as they drove by. Protesters smiled and waved back.

“At least at this intersection, we get the feeling we are preaching to the choir,” said Colin Gibson, who was at Flower and Adams with Lynne Gillies, the mother of an Air Force captain.

“Thank God he is not in the Middle East,” she said.

**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

**Pakistani Military Suffering
“Significant Numbers Of
Defections, Mostly Among
Soldiers Reluctant To Fight In The
Tribal Areas”
“Radicals Antagonized By Musharraf
And His Politics Of Cozying Up To The
United States”**

January 18, 2008 By JANE PERLEZ, The New York Times [Excerpts]

PESHAWAR, Pakistan — For centuries, fighting and lawlessness have been part of the fabric of this frontier city. But in the past year, Pakistan's war with Islamic militants has spilled right into its alleys and bazaars, its forts and armories, killing policemen and soldiers and scaring its famously tough citizens.

Any direct intervention by American forces would only strengthen the backlash now under way against soldiers and the police in Peshawar, said Farook Adam Khan, a lawyer here.

“Pakistani soldiers never used to be targets,” Mr. Khan said. “Now we have the radicals antagonized by Musharraf and his politics of cozying up to the United States. The actions taken by the army in Waziristan and Bajaur and Swat are causing the problems here.”

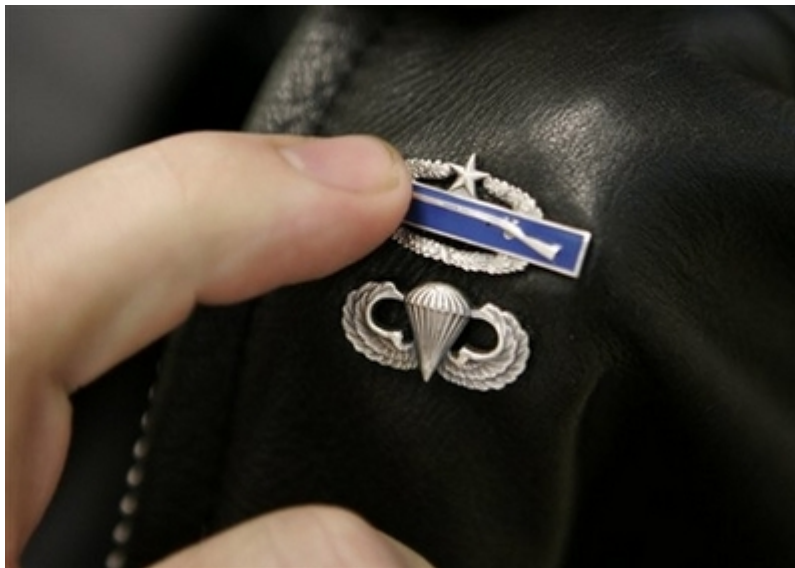
The standing of the Pakistani military is being further harmed by an increasing awareness here that it is for the first time suffering significant numbers of defections, mostly among soldiers reluctant to fight in the tribal areas.

The defections gain only scant mention in the press, but people talk about them.

There are rumors of courts-martial, although the information is tightly held by the army, former officers said.

Morale among the police in Peshawar has plummeted amid a series of police killings, making the city far from the glamorous posting it once was, when the police were fighting smugglers and other outlaws.

No Thanks For Your Service #1



Combat Infantryman Badge attached to leather jacket of Veteran of the Afghan and Iraq wars Peter Mohan at a veterans homeless shelter, in Leeds, Mass., Dec. 4, 2007. (AP Photo/Steven Senne)

#2

Judge Takes Away Soldier's Kid Because She's Sent To Iraq: Now She Can't Get Him Back; "A Growing National Trend" In Which U.S. Soldiers Are Losing Custody Of Children "Just Because Of Their Absences While On Active Military Duty" Troops Must "Choose Between Their Families And Service To The Country"

"Soldiers fighting in Iraq should not be burdened with worry that their children will be taken away because of their service." Yet that's exactly what happened to Towne, who even the Appellate Division acknowledged in its ruling would likely have retained control of Derrell had it not been for her 18-month activation.

January 17, 2008 By DENNIS YUSKO, Staff writer; Times Union [Excerpts]

Tanya Towne says she lost everything in Iraq, starting with physical custody of her first child.

Before Towne's 2004 deployment, a Montgomery County Family Court judge gave her son, Derrell Diffin, to her first husband because she was being sent to war.

This month, Towne lost an appeal to get Derrell back.

The decision has devastated Towne, a specialist and radio repairer with the New York Army National Guard's Rainbow Division in Troy.

It's also put her at the center of a legal battle that at least one lawyer who assists service personnel says will force future troops to choose between their families and service to the country.

"This decision marks a serious attack on our national security and the civil rights of military members," said Gregory Rinckey, who defended military personnel as a captain in the Army Judge Advocate General's Corps and now practices military and family law in Colonie.

“Soldiers fighting in Iraq should not be burdened with worry that their children will be taken away because of their service.”

Yet that’s exactly what happened to Towne, who even the Appellate Division acknowledged in its ruling would likely have retained control of Derrell had it not been for her 18-month activation.

There’s a growing national trend in which U.S. soldiers say they are losing custody of their children in family courts just because of their absences while on active military duty, according to the Poynter Institute, a Florida-based journalism think tank.

On many occasions, courts -- looking to establish a stable environment for the child -- have said it’s in the best interest of children not to be moved again, especially if there’s a chance the parent in the military could be deployed again.

Towne’s deployment to Tikrit, Iraq, strained her marriage to her second husband, Jason Towne, so much that they separated about two years ago, she said.

Broke from legal bills, Tanya Towne works full time as a materials handler at Watervliet Arsenal. She lives with her brother and her second son, 4-year-old Darren Towne, in an apartment in Canajoharie.

“Honestly, I don’t even look back at my time in Iraq,” Tanya Towne said Tuesday in an emotional interview.

“I look back and realize how much I lost because of Iraq. My time over there was easy compared to what I went through when I got home.”

Towne, who lived most of her life in Johnstown, married Diffin in 1993 and moved with him to an Army base in Germany, where Derrell was born. She and Derrell returned to New York together after the couple broke up after about five years of marriage.

Towne and Diffin shared joint legal custody of the boy, but she had physical custody and raised Derrell until he was 8.

In April 2004, Diffin petitioned for custody of Derrell after learning that Towne was being activated for training for Iraq that May, court papers say. Towne had sought to have Derrell stay with her second husband while she was gone. But a Montgomery County Family Court issued a temporary order placing Derrell with his biological father.

Towne trained seven months at Fort Drum before deploying to a base in Tikrit, where she served on convoy missions and supply runs and did guard detail.

She tried to regain physical custody of Derrell when she returned from overseas duty in November 2005. But following a trial with testimony from both sides, Family Court Judge Philip Cortese granted custody to Diffin with visitation rights for Towne, court papers show.

She appealed the decision.

In its ruling on Jan. 3, the Appellate Division of state Supreme Court ruled that uprooting the 12-year-old would not serve his best interests.

The appellate court says that Derrell had no preference as to where to live and the court called both Towne and Diffin "excellent parents." The court ruled that Towne's deployment, subsequent separation and move from the Towne family home represented "a significant change" in circumstances, and that remaining with Diffin would best provide stability.

"This is not an anti-military decision, not an anti-woman's decision," Diffin's attorney, Robert Cohen of Ballston Lake, said. "Through no fault of her own, she left her son."

But Rinckey, the military attorney, says the decision greatly decreases support for military families and undermines the rights of parents in the reserves.

Towne expects to be honorably discharged in the next year due to a back injury. She doesn't know what the future holds.

She said she will appeal the decision because she wants to live with Derrell again.

"I miss his energy, his smile, and he's a snuggle boy," Towne said as a tear rolled down her cheek. "He's a very lovable child."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

15 Jan 2008 (Reuters) & (Xinhua) & 16 Jan 2008 & Jan. 17 Reuters & AP & Jan 18, 2008 Deutsche Presse-Agentur & (Reuters) & By CHRISTOPHER CHESTER, Associated Press Writer & By Sahar Issa, McClatchy Newspapers & Jan 19 By STEVEN R. HURST, Associated Press Writer & By Sami al-Jumaili (Reuters) & by Basim al-Rikabi (AFP) & By ALEXANDRA ZAVIS LOS ANGELES TIMES & Reuters

BASRA - A large fire shut the major Shuaiba refinery near Iraq's oil hub of Basra and damaged gas and fuel production units, a source at the state-run Southern Oil Company said. The source blamed the fire on a mortar attack.

The head of a U.S. funded neighbourhood police unit in central Baghdad's Fadhil district was killed and six were wounded in clashes with insurgents, police said.

Elsewhere in Baghdad, soldiers loyal to nationalist moderate Muqtada al-Sadr pinned down [collaborator] National Security Adviser Muwaffak Rubaie inside a mosque in the northeast neighborhood of Shula, a stronghold of al-Sadr. Interior Ministry security forces safely escorted Rubaie out of the mosque several hours later.

Two roadside bombs wounded three policemen, in central Baghdad's Karrada district, police said.

A double bomb attack targeted a police checkpoint in a town in Salahudin province on Tuesday, killing a policeman and wounding eight, a provincial police source said.

In Shirqat, a bomb on a truck killed one policeman and wounded eight

The first attack occurred when a bomber wearing an explosive vest approached the checkpoint in the town of Sherqat, 280 km north of Baghdad, and blew himself up, the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity. The suicide bomber failed to hit his target after the policemen, manning the checkpoint, ordered him to stop, he said.

As security forces rushed to the scene, another bomber driving an explosive-laden truck carrying onions approached the checkpoint, but the policemen opened fire on the truck before reaching them and blew it up, the source said. The second attack resulted in the killing of a policeman and the wounding two others.

The two attacks apparently targeted Colonel Ismail al-Jubouri, a police chief of the town, who is leading the local security forces, including the U.S.-allied groups named Awakening Councils, he said.

The mayor of Sulaiman Pek, 160 km (100 miles) north of Baghdad, was seriously wounded in an attack by a bomber driving a small truck, police said. Three of his bodyguards were also wounded.

A car bomb seriously wounded the head of the Iraqi-U.S. Joint Coordination Centre in Dour, a town near Tikrit 170 km (105 miles) north of Baghdad, the centre said. Two of his guards were also wounded.

Insurgents captured a policeman in an overnight attack on a house in a village near Tuz Khurmato, 180 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

At least two policemen were injured on Friday as violence flared in the Iraqi city of Basra. The two were wounded when militants fired on a police patrol in the Maqal area in southern Basra, sources told Deutsche Presse- Agentur.

Independent news agency Voices of Iraq (VOI) meanwhile citing local witnesses reported numerous clashes between militants and Iraqi forces in the city, with an unconfirmed number of Iraqis wounded.

The Reuters cameraman in Basra said he also saw about 30 guerrillas dressed in black carrying semi-automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenade launchers. Some of them were driving at least two vehicles seized from police, he said. "They have been attacking security forces and disappearing," he told Reuters.

Friday's attack began when militants of Jund al-Samaa group carrying yellow flags or wearing yellow headbands fired mortars at a police station in Sumer and Salhiyah neighbourhoods, north Nasriyah. A shootout with police followed. A police officer said at least seven policemen were killed, including two senior officers, one the commander of

the armed brigade. More than 50 were injured after fighters stormed the building of a quick reaction force in the city.

Two policemen were killed by teenage snipers during Saturday's clashes in Nasiriyah. The snipers, two 14-year-old boys, were quickly arrested, police said.

A total of 14 police, two Iraqi soldiers and three civilians were also killed, according to the latest police figures.

Basra police chief Maj. Gen. Abdul-Jalil Khalaf said six security forces were killed.

A booby trapped house exploded in Abarat Buhruz, 7 km to the south of Baquba late this afternoon killing 2 policemen and injuring 2.

Clashes in Wajihyah, Muqdadiyah district between police and guerrillas caused the death of 2 policemen and the injury of 3 others.

Two policemen were killed and two wounded when gunmen attacked a police patrol in al-Wejaiheiah east of Baquba, police said.

<p style="text-align: center;">IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

Mehdi Army Ceasefire May End Soon

19/01/2008 Reuters

A six-month ceasefire by one of Iraq's most powerful groupings may not be renewed, an aide to nationalist Moqtada al-Sadr's warned today.

One of the key reasons for a decline in Iraqi violence in recent months has been the cessation of operations by al-Sadr's Mehdi Army.

But government attacks on the Mehdi Army operations have been condemned by Salah al-Ubaidi, a senior official in Sadr's political movement in Najaf.

He accused "criminal elements" within Iraq's security forces of attacking al-Sadr's followers and Mehdi Army fighters.

"If the government security forces do not stop their campaigns of detention and arresting our followers, we may reconsider our decision to freeze the Mehdi Army," Ubaidi said.

The six months of the declared ceasefire run out next month.

Police this month freed 51 al-Sadr followers held since the violence. Mr Ubaidi, however, said thousands were still being held.

“The government must release all of our people who were arrested, especially after the events of Kerbala last year,” Mr Ubaidi said.

Al-Sadr draws support from poor urban Iraqis and led two uprisings against US forces in 2004. His followers have been locked in a battle for control of southern Iraq and its oil wealth with followers of his main rival, the [collaborator, pro-Iranian] Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC), headed by Abdul Aziz al-Hakim.

Sadrists accuse SIIC followers of infiltrating the security forces and attacking them.

Violence across Iraq has fallen 60 per cent since June, and US military commanders say the Mehdi Army ceasefire has been crucial to the improvement in security.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

January 16, 1979: Happy Anniversary Soldiers Help Overthrow A Tyrant



Carl Bunin Peace History January 14-20

Faced with strikes, violent demonstrations, an army mutiny and clerical opposition to his repressive rule, the Shah of Iran, its hereditary monarch since 1941, was forced to flee the country.

He had been installed in a CIA- and British-engineered 1953 coup which overthrew elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq. Mossadeq's government had voted to nationalize Iran's oil industry, displacing the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

The U.S. gave substantial and continuous military and intelligence support to the Shah throughout his regime.

January 16, 1893: Unhappy Anniversary: U.S. Government Invades And Occupies Hawaii; U.S. Pineapple Tycoon Sanford Dole Takes Over



Carl Bunin, Peace History & Pbs.org:

On January 16, 1893, four boatloads of United States Marines armed with Gatling guns and hundreds of rounds of ammunition came ashore in Honolulu, capital of the independent Kingdom of Hawaii, “to protect U.S. interests.”

As the Royal Hawaiian band played a concert at the Hawaiian Hotel, 162 troops marched through the streets of Honolulu, heading for the palace. The Queen of Hawaii, Lili'uokalani, looked down from her balcony as the troops took up their positions.

The following day, she surrendered at gunpoint, yielding her throne.

A new provincial government led by U.S. pineapple tycoon Sanford Dole and pro-annexation wealthy white sugar growers was installed with Dole as president and petitioned the US for annexation. [Dole as in Dole Pineapples.]

In 1898, President William McKinley signed a joint resolution of Congress authorizing annexation.

January 17, 1993, native Hawaiians demonstrated against U.S. control of their homeland on the 100th anniversary of the U.S. backed overthrow of the independent Hawaiian government.

January 17, 2003: Forgotten Anniversary



Carl Bunin Peace History January 14-20

In frigid temperatures, 500,000 converged on Washington, D.C. to oppose the U.S. war on Iraq – the largest U.S. peace demonstration since the Vietnam era.

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/)

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



A foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. holds a family prisoner while other members of his unit search their house during a night home invasion in the village of Sinsil on the northern outskirts of Muqdadiyah, Diyala province, Jan. 8, 2008. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnyakovic)

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

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

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

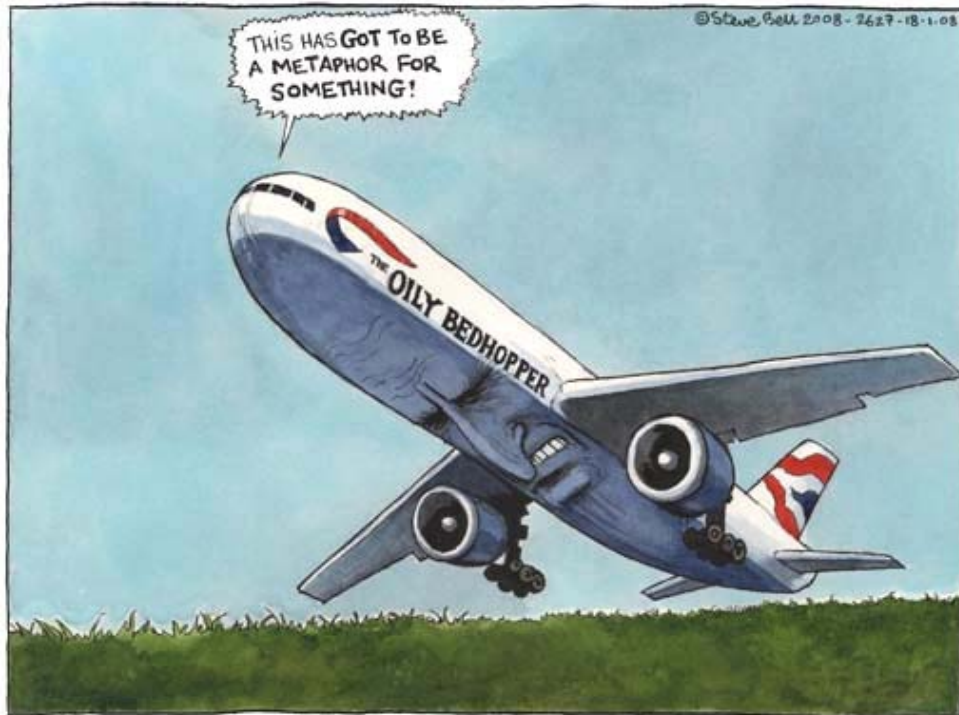


Bush's Grand Tour... #1



[Thanks to Z, who sent this in.]

Bush's Grand Tour... #2



[Thanks to NB, who sent this in, with the headline.]

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