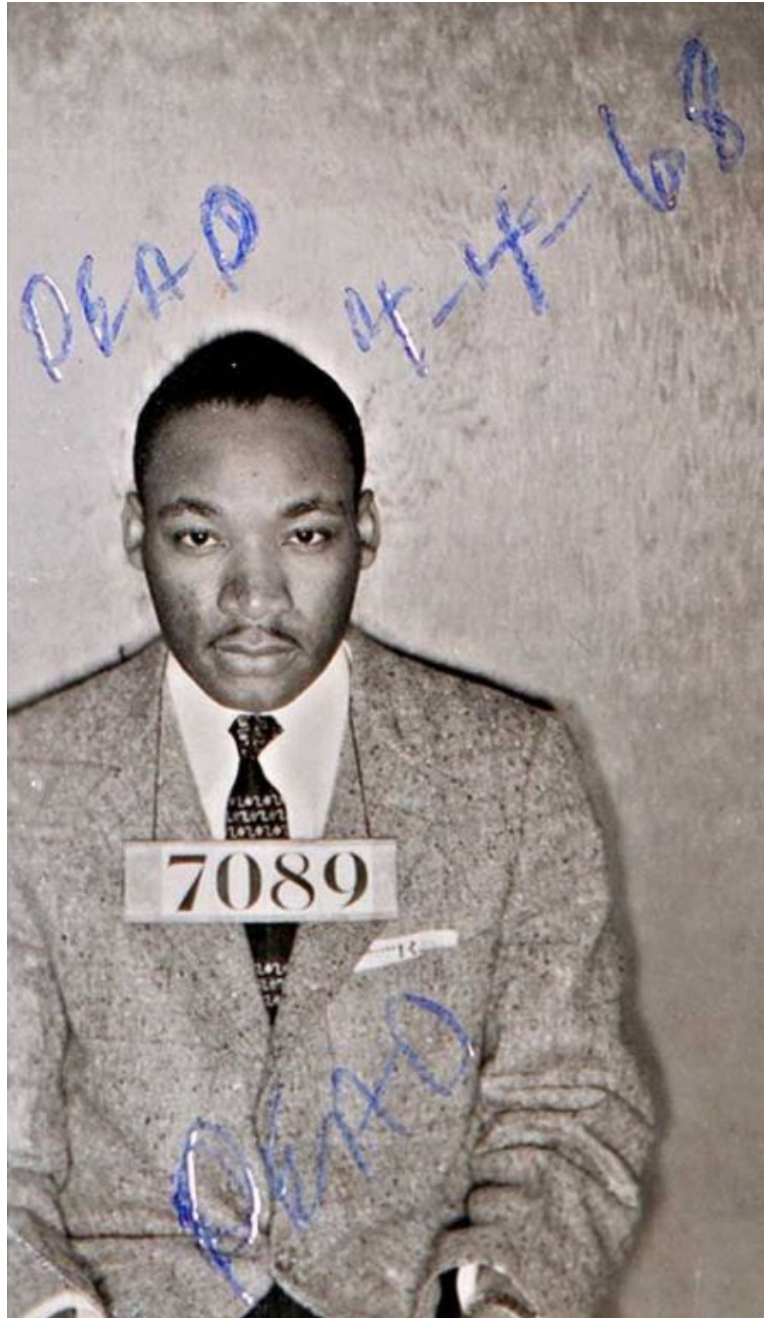


GI SPECIAL 6A14:



Martin Luther King Jr. was photographed by Alabama cops following his February 1956 arrest during the Montgomery bus boycott. The historic mug shot, taken when King was 27, was discovered in July 2004 by a deputy cleaning out a Montgomery County Sheriff's Department storage room. It is unclear when the notations 'DEAD' and '4-4-68' were written on the picture or by who. [But it's easy to guess, isn't it?] January 2006 Citypages

The Forgotten Occupation: “She Called To Say She Feels Cold”

**[Email From Occupied Palestine]
“She Had To Sleep On Floor, With No
Blanket Or Bed At The Hospital, This
Was One Night Before Her
Operation”**

[This is from Mohammed Omer, who publishes the outstanding, unique Rafah Today website referenced below, at risk to his own life. An article by Mohammed Omer from his website is just below this email. His work is courageous beyond measure. T]

From: Mohammed Omer
To: GI Special
Sent: January 10, 2008

sorry for not being able to answer e-mails lately, but I have been busy dealing with my mom's operation, she is having [xxxxx] operation and things are so bad for her for now.

she had to sleep on floor, with no blanket or bed at the hospital, as there were no blankets or beds!

this was one night before her operation.

She called to say she feels cold.

MORE:

“Fateful Christmas”

“Israeli-Manufactured Tragedies Prevail”

**“Oh, Holy Night, Our Stars Are
Quickly Dying. Unnoticed”**

**“Here In The Gaza Strip, Isolated And
Besieged, Bloodshed Is Rampant, Israeli
Attacks Still Taking Place On A Rapid
And Massive Scale, Yet Strangely Absent
From The Mainstream Media, Usurped
By More Important Distractions”**



Palestinian who was injured during the last Israeli attack on the middle area is carried into the hospital: Rafah Today

December 25th By Mohammed Omer, RAFAH TODAY, DAILY LIFE IN PALESTINE

Here in the Gaza Strip, isolated and besieged, bloodshed is rampant, Israeli attacks still taking place on a rapid and massive scale, yet strangely absent from the mainstream media, usurped by more important distractions.

All over the Strip, Israeli helicopters and F-16s hover, dropping deadly gifts, with tanks rounding out the almost daily invasions which, by some estimates, have killed at least 40 Palestinians in the last four weeks alone.

In their latest attack on December 20, Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) killed at least eight Palestinians in the central Gaza Strip region of Buriij and Maghazi refugee camps, leaving a further more than 30 injured.

The incursion started early morning at dawn of Thursday by intensive hovering of helicopters and F16s. Inevitably, in a region where Hamas is the ruling party, some of those injured were Hamas members, while others were civilians, including children. At least four were seriously injured according to Mawyah Hassaneen, director of Emergency and Ambulance services in Gaza.

This attack came on the second day of the four-day celebration of Eid al Adha, honoured by Palestinians as well as Muslims around the world.

Journalists and Medical Teams:

Among the seriously injured civilians, two cameramen, including one working for Reuters, were also among the wounded, when the Israeli forces fired upon the journalists.

Hassaneen reported that Israeli forces prevented Palestinian ambulances from reaching the scene of the attack to retrieve more potential casualties.

Israel called the incursions on the ravaged central Gaza Strip region, as well as the daily attacks all over the Strip, an assault on the “banks of targets,” referring to Hamas, the [freely elected] ruling party which led to the entire Gaza Strip being dubbed as a “hostile entity” since September.

According to Israeli sources, one Israeli soldier was also seriously wounded by a rocket-propelled grenade and two others slightly wounded during the clashes.

Meanwhile, Palestinian resistance factions continue to launch home-made Qassam rockets towards Israeli city of Sderot.

Although its residents complain of the rocket fire at this city close to the Strip, Israeli Housing Minister Ze'ev Boim is encouraging Israelis to move to areas proximate to Gaza's borders, offering free land to those who choose to build in areas as close as five kilometers to the Gaza border. According to Palestinian news sources, Boim has authorized the Israeli Land Administration (ILA) to construct fifty new developments in this region.

Islamic Jihad has pledged to continue launching home-made rockets in revenge for the killing of its Gazan general commander, assassinated last week in central Gaza by Israeli bombers, when at least two rockets hit a car he was traveling in. His death came immediately after those of 12 Palestinians, including two policemen, targeted throughout the Strip in the same period.

The assassinations continued Friday, with the killing of a 17-year old Palestinian resistance fighter who was shot and killed by Israeli Special Forces. Two more fighters were killed on Christmas Eve day, bodies torn apart by the missile which targeted them in al-Bureij refugee camp.

Not including medical cases and border-related deaths, this latest killing brings the death toll to over 20 within one week alone.

Border Injustices Know No Holidays:

In spite of the festive season, the massive suffering imposed due to Israeli border closures since June and an Israeli and international boycott of the destitute Gaza Strip continues with further deaths due to denial of medical care.

Wednesday, a 15 year old girl succumbed to kidney failure after Israeli prohibited her transfer for dialysis. She is but one of over 30 medical victims of Israeli refusal to allow crucial medical care to over 900 critically ill and diseased patients who cannot receive the care or medical supplies they need within the strangled Strip.

The Real Peace Process:

Dismissed Palestinian Prime Minister, Ismail Hanyeh, has offered and asked for truce, with a cease of home-made rocket fire in return for a cessation of the on-going Israeli air, sea, and ground attacks. The cease-fire pledge, not the first, was –for not the first time –rejected by Olmert’s government.

Instead, Israeli forces continue to launch rockets targeting leaders in Gaza, alongside near-daily ground invasions in Gaza.

This is allegedly with the aim of halting the near-daily firing of the home-made rockets and mortars from Gaza towards military positions near the walled-off border and the Israeli city of Sderot.

In Olmert’s rejection of the peace offer, he stated that Israel would not hold talks with the Hamas until it recognizes Israel, something which Hamas has repeatedly offered in the past.

Olmert did not, on the contrary, offer recognition of Palestinians and their rights to exist.

Olmert also stated that “this war will continue, while making sure to avoid a humanitarian crisis that could harm civilians who are not at all involved in terrorism.”

It is quite unclear whether he was referring to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza which his government has created, or whether he was attempting to drum up further fear amongst Israelis in order to justify the long on-going attacks and raids on Gaza.

A Few Favourite Things:

Meanwhile, Palestinians Christians are supposed to celebrate Christmas in Gaza in less than 48 hours. But due to the siege, the deaths, the lack of security, it seems like Christmas has chosen the wrong time and place to be celebrated.

Gazan civilians, already isolated in every imaginable way, are doomed to suffer further, severed from universal festivities.

While Christians all over the world are busy with last-minute preparations for celebrations –deliberating over gifts, planning family feasts, hanging decorations, caroling and spreading cheer, Gaza’s Christian community will pass the day in heightened fear, sorrows, and poverty, under the long-imposed siege and suffering enormously.

Aside from the very real tragedies of the daily deaths from Israeli warplanes and denial of medical care, there is the tragedy of material goods: there simply isn’t anything to buy, certainly no chocolates available.

Not to forget that basic essential goods are scarce and highly inflated, the few items that trickle in costing triple or quadruple the normal price, an impossible option for Gazans who have seen unemployment skyrocket since Israel shut down Gaza’s borders.

Imagine the parents who would create joy for their children, longing to show them that life is beautiful.

The magic, the special memories of secrets and baked goods that Christians around the world will enjoy are impossible aspirations.

Gingerbread and candy canes are but crazy dreams.

What kind of justice is there, when the people who would honor their religion are prevented from so-doing by Israel’s arbitrary and collectively punitive sanctions?

While television programs and classic films speak of the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future, Gazans try in vain to move beyond the graveyards of ghosts of loved-ones killed in the past, present, and certainly the future.

For in Gaza, there are no silent nights, and the holy peace has long been forsaken, shattered with each new Israeli invasion and attack, with each tightening of the siege, and with the increasing fuel cuts.

Oh, holy night, our stars are quickly dying.

Unnoticed.

[To check out what life is like under another murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves “Israeli.”]

MORE:

Zionist Terrorists Proudly Slaughter More Palestinian Civilians In Gaza; Their Fuehrer Promises To Continue “Without Compromise, Without Concessions And Without Mercy”



“Israel closed the crossings into Gaza yesterday and prevented even UN trucks from delivering food aid.”

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

An Israeli warplane bombed the offices of the Palestinian interior ministry yesterday, flattening one wing of the empty building, killing a woman attending a wedding party next door and wounding at least 46 other civilians, some of them children playing football in the street, hospital staff said.

January 19, 2008 Rory McCarthy in Gaza City, The Guardian

Moin al-Wadia lay on his hospital bed beneath a window yesterday, soaking up the last of the day's winter sunshine. Around him sat his family, with boxes of sweet pastries

and bouquets of flowers, as they tried to explain the growing anger and frustration of the people of Gaza.

Wadia had been working at a mechanics' market on Tuesday morning when the Israeli military launched a major ground incursion, beginning a new round of intense fighting in Gaza.

When he heard the sound of gunfire, Wadia began to leave but was knocked to the ground by the force of an Israeli shell.

It sliced off his left foot, shattered his right leg and shrapnel lacerated his stomach.

Doctors at the Shifa hospital have told him his best chance for any kind of recovery is to leave for treatment abroad, perhaps in Jordan.

But Israel closed the crossings into Gaza yesterday and prevented even UN trucks from delivering food aid.

It was the latest stage in an intensified Israeli operation in Gaza, but one which now effectively prevents food assistance coming in and people and exports going out.

The UN refugee agency said the latest closure left it unable to deliver 15 truckloads of aid yesterday and warned of growing despair in Gaza, where 80% of the population already relies on UN food.

Last night the Gaza death toll over the past four days stood at 34, among them at least 10 civilians.

An Israeli warplane bombed the offices of the Palestinian interior ministry yesterday, flattening one wing of the empty building, killing a woman attending a wedding party next door and wounding at least 46 other civilians, some of them children playing football in the street, hospital staff said.

Israel's defence minister, Ehud Barak, said no shipment would cross into Gaza without his personal approval. A spokesman for the defence ministry said the closure was a "signal" to Hamas, the Islamist group that won Palestinian elections two years ago and last summer seized full control of Gaza.

The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, warned that his military operations in Gaza would continue "without compromise, without concessions and without mercy".

On the other side of Gaza City yesterday, Ahmad Yazagi received mourners at a funeral tent near his home.

A few hundred metres away at midday on Wednesday his two brothers, Mohammad, 27, and Amr, 38, and his nephew Amir, eight, were killed when their car was struck by an Israeli missile.

The Israeli military later admitted it was a mistake, but Yazagi said his family had received no explanation, apology or offer of compensation.

“What is our guilt? We ask to live in peace and we ask them to leave us alone,” he said, surrounded by family and neighbours. “With one hand the Israelis talk about peace, with the other they continue fighting.”

The deaths left Yazagi, 26, the sole wage earner for his extended family. He earns 1,000 shekels (£135) a month as a temporary labourer at the health ministry and inherits the £15,000 debt of his brother, who was setting up a scrap metal business.

The UN says about half the strip’s 1.5 million people no longer have access to fresh water, because Israel has restricted fuel supplies, which in turn halts pumps and reduces electricity production.

MORE:

**“92 Children Were Murdered By
The IOF Since Abir’s Murder
Exactly A Year Ago And Most
Were In Gaza”**

**“Gaza Now Is New Concentration
Camp Conceived As Such”**

**“Let Us Not Wait For The Day When
Israelis Parade Before Mass Graves In
Gaza”**

January 20, 2008 By Mazin Qumsiyeh [Excerpts]

Yesterday in Connecticut, we had the honor to hear from the father, mother, and sister of 10-year-old Abir Aramin who was murdered by the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) in occupied Anata, Jerusalem, Palestine.

92 children were murdered by the IOF since Abir’s murder exactly a year ago and most were in Gaza.

Today we face a major catastrophic situation unfolding in this concentration camp otherwise known as the Gaza Strip (home to 1.5 million Palestinians, 70% of them refugees).

A very short message from a resident in Gaza reminded me with the call we heard from Jerusalem during the massacres by the Crusaders or other calls in history:

“Dear all:

“This is going to be short, as short as possible: At least 80% of Gaza under darkness. Not only the lights but every thing related to electricity.

“It is expected to have hundreds or even thousands of people dead if this situation continues.

“What can we do with this WAR CRIME?

“Bassam M. Nasser, Gaza, Palestine”

Of course that is still an understatement.

Already dozens have died for lack of medications.

Some are already hungry and 70% live below the poverty line thanks to the Israeli murderous siege (benignly referred to as “collective punishment”).

A European colleague candidly noted in an email that Gaza now is new concentration camp “conceived as such” and “needs a new Nuremberg trial.”

For those who know history they know that large scale deaths at concentration camps only occurred years after they were inhabited by thousands of inmates (communists, gypsies, homosexuals, Russians, Jews, Poles etc).

Let us not wait for this progression, let us not wait for the day when Israelis parade before mass graves in Gaza.

MORE:

“A Jew to Zionist Fighters, 1988” Do You Really Want To Be The New Gestapo? The New Wehrmacht? The New SA And SS?

[From GI Special 4H14]

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in. She writes:]

Something very different: a poem.

Have you heard of Erich Fried who is often referred to as the greatest modern, Jewish, poet?

He was born in Vienna in 1921 and escaped to England, with his mother, after his father was tortured to death by the Gestapo, in 1938.

Because of his experiences with racism and Fascism he became involved in the Palestinian cause.

He was a leader in the fight against both Fascism and Zionism.

I'm sending a copy of his best poem, in my opinion. It was first published in 1988 just before he died.

Please take the time to read it. I think it's wonderful.

A Jew to Zionist Fighters, 1988

What do you actually want?
Do you really want to outdo
those who trod you down
a generation ago
into your own blood
and into your own excrement
Do you want to pass on the old torture
to others now
in all its bloody and dirty detail
with all the brutal delight of torturers
as suffered by your fathers?
Do you really want to be the new Gestapo
the new Wehrmacht
the new SA and SS
and turn the Palestinians
into the new Jews?
Well then I too want,
having fifty years ago
myself been tormented for being a Jewboy
by your tormentors,
to be a new Jew with these new Jews
you are making of the Palestinians
And I want to help lead them as a free people
into their own land of Palestine
from whence you have driven them or in which you plague them
you apprentices of the Swastika
you fools and changelings of history
whose Star of David on your flags
turns ever quicker
into that damned symbol with its four feet
that you just do not want to see

but whose path you are following today

MORE:

One Answers No

[Thanks to June VI, who sent this in.]

1.8.2008 By: New Profile [Excerpt]

Dear Friends,

Ben Kogan, a pacifist conscientious objector, was sentenced to 21 days in military prison for refusing to serve in the Israeli army.

Ben appeared before the military Conscience Committee in December, but was rejected. The rejection was based on a distorted version of things said at the Committee. Upon his arrival at the prison, Ben had to undergo a humiliating ritual by other soldiers.

Ben refused to wear a uniform in prison and to refer to the prison commanders by their ranks. He was therefore sent to solitary confinement and denied telephone calls.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Kenosha Man Is State's 84th To Die In Hostilities In Iraq



U.S. Army Pfc. Timothy Hanson: Family Photo

Jan. 8, 2008 By JESSE GARZA, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

When U.S. Army Pfc. Timothy Hanson was studying history at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, he wasn't certain what he wanted to do after college.

He wasn't even sure that he wanted to keep history as his major - so he enlisted in the Army, hoping the world experience it offered would help him decide what field of study to pursue.

And though he was unsure about his college pursuits, he was more than sure that he wanted to join the military, his mother said Tuesday.

In fact, he lost 35 pounds in about four months to meet the Army's weight requirements, she said.

"He was determined to make weight," Susan Hanson said Tuesday, the day after her son became the second Wisconsin soldier in three days to die in Iraq.

"And he was very proud when he did."

Timothy Hanson was a mortar man with the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Ga.

He died Monday in Salman Pak, Iraq, of wounds suffered from enemy small arms fire. His mother said Tuesday the family was told he was shot in a tower while on guard duty in southeast Baghdad.

He was 23. "He was already talking about re-enlisting," Susan Hanson said of her son, who entered the Army in April 2006 and was deployed to Iraq in March.

Born Timothy Robert Hanson in Kenosha to Susan and her husband, Robert Hanson, he grew up there, attending Roosevelt Elementary School and McKinley Middle School before graduating from Indian Trail Academy high school in 2003.

He developed a fondness for the outdoors as a Boy Scout and acquired a passion for cinema, his mother said. "He loved everything from foreign films to romantic comedies," his mother said during a telephone interview. "He was definitely a movie buff."

During high school Timothy Hanson had a newspaper route for the Kenosha News, and during college he worked as a ride operator at Six Flags Great America and in the dairy department at a Kenosha Pick 'n Save, his mother said.

After high school he attended Northern Michigan University for about a year before transferring to the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, his mother said. He studied history at both schools but after about a year at Parkside expressed an uncertainty about earning a history degree, Susan Hanson said.

"I think that's why he entered the Army," she said. "He had intentions of coming back and finishing school."

When Hanson was deployed to Iraq, he took just about all of the 300 DVDs in his movie collection along with his portable DVD player, his mother said.

He called often and liked to pass the phone to his buddies, she said.

“When they called home, they would pass the phone to him so he could talk to their mothers. He got along with everybody.”

The last time he called was Saturday.

“He wanted to know what my work schedule was. He said, ‘Ok, I’ll call you Monday morning.’ “

Instead of getting a phone call from her son, Army officials came to the Hansons’ home Monday to inform them their son had been killed.

“He was kind of a quiet kid but he was very conscientious,” she said. “And he was proud.”

Along with his mother and father, Hanson is survived by his sister, Jennifer Clope, and brother, Andrew Hanson.

He is the 84th Wisconsin service member and second Indian Trail Academy graduate to die in the Iraq war.

Army Spc. Eric D. Clark, 22, a 2001 graduate of the school, was killed May 11, 2006, by a roadside bomb in Baghdad.

Bend Soldier Killed In Iraq By Explosion



Zachary McBride

January 11, 2008 By Sheila G. Miller and Hillary Borrud, The Bulletin

A 20-year-old graduate of Mountain View High School was killed in an explosion in Iraq on Wednesday, leaving Bend to mourn the young man whom friends called intelligent, quiet and dedicated to serving his country.

Spc. Zachary McBride, an infantry scout deployed in Iraq, enlisted in the Army in July 2005 shortly after graduating from Mountain View. Since enlisting, he had spent time in both Germany and Iraq.

McBride's parents, Marshall and Laurie, were told their son was killed around noon Wednesday in Diyala province, Iraq. McBride was killed along with five other soldiers by an explosive device detonated in a booby-trapped building during a house-to-house search, according to a news release from the Oregon National Guard. Family spokesman Roger Austin said a military spokesperson who visited the home Thursday evening told the family an investigation was ongoing and a full report of McBride's death might not be available for seven days.

The blast also killed a military interpreter, and military officials confirmed that the explosion took place while soldiers were clearing a building, according to The New York Times and other news reports.

Diyala Province runs north and east of Baghdad to the Iranian border, and thousands of former officers of Saddam Hussein's army reportedly live there, as well as members of 25 tribes. Beginning Tuesday, about 4,000 Iraqi and U.S. forces and their warplanes and helicopters moved into the Diyala river valley to attack al-Qaida in Iraq and other insurgents as part of Operation Phantom Phoenix.

At least nine soldiers have been killed since the Diyala offensive started Tuesday.

The McBride family moved to Bend from Oak Harbor, Wash., in 2002, when McBride, who was born in New York City, was a sophomore in high school. After arriving in Bend, the family maintained close ties with members of their church and school in Oak Harbor.

"Their whole family was very active in school and church," said Lynette Wright, a secretary for the Oak Harbor Christian School.

McBride's father, Marshall, was a pastor at First Reformed Church of Oak Harbor, overseeing music and worship and teaching band classes at the school. News of Zachary's death had reached the school through friends by Thursday afternoon.

"I know it was a great loss to our community," she said.

McBride attended fifth through eighth grades at Oak Harbor Christian School.

Zachary's fifth-grade teacher told Wright the boy loved computers even as a child and was "exceptional" intellectually — and also humble.

"She described him as having a godly character," Wright said.

He went on to attend a local high school and then started home schooling.

Oak Harbor is “all mixed together” with Whidbey Island’s Naval Air Station, Wright said, but she never noticed McBride having an interest in the military as a child.

“I know when we found out he was going into the Army, we were kind of surprised,” she said.

At Mountain View, McBride excelled in academics, particularly science, according to teacher Ana Ebeling. She currently teaches McBride’s sister, Sarah, and taught McBride over a two-year period in chemistry, forensic science and Advanced Placement chemistry.

Ebeling said behind McBride’s quiet exterior was an intelligent, witty student. She described him as a careful and dedicated A-student who always had his work done and who always had the answer, even if he didn’t offer it up right away. Passionate about science, McBride was particularly interested when the time came to study ballistics in Ebeling’s forensic science class.

“With his brains, he really could have gotten scholarships to go anywhere,” she said. “But his desire, he had so much passion about serving our country. That was all he wanted to do.”

But military wasn’t McBride’s only interest. John Lodwick, the senior pastor at Eastmont Church in Bend, knows the McBride family well. McBride’s father, Marshall, has worked as the worship pastor at the church for five years. “Zach was involved in our youth group; he went on mission trips with our youth,” Lodwick said. “When we had work parties around the church, and we would do things around the church, he would help with that.”

Everyone interviewed described McBride as a quiet and intelligent person, and Lodwick said he loved working with children.

On his Facebook account, McBride described himself as single, a Christian and a Libertarian, and listed among his favorite television shows “South Park,” “Family Guy” and “The Colbert Report.”

According to Lodwick, McBride had many close friends from his church.

At Mountain View, Ebeling said McBride participated in cross country and track as well as nordic skiing.

After joining the Army in 2005, Ebeling said, McBride scored so high on his entrance exam that the Army encouraged him to specialize.

“But he wanted to be a soldier,” Ebeling said. “And a soldier he was.”

Ebeling kept tabs on McBride after he graduated through his sister, Sarah, a 17-year-old senior. She provided updates on her brother, including his visit back to Bend in November.

"It's just tragic," Lodwick said. "It's a loss that I don't think parents ever fully recover from. I know God can help deal with it, and I know God is helping his parents handle this, but that's a loss that won't ever be fully recovered from."

According to Lodwick, the family was notified Wednesday afternoon that McBride had been killed in action. McBride's parents declined to comment about their son on Thursday, choosing instead to speak through Austin, who knows the McBrides through Eastmont Church.

"I would say they are a very tightknit family," Austin said. "They've had endless, overwhelming support; they're almost drowning from it ... it's their worst nightmare come true, and they loved him deeply."

According to Mountain View Assistant Principal Sean Corrigan, the school notified teachers by e-mail on Thursday of McBride's death. Teachers will read an announcement during first period today, and McBride's death will also be announced over the public address system. Counseling will be available to grieving students.

On Thursday afternoon, cars clustered in the McBrides' driveway and along their street in northeast Bend. Their neighborhood is just across Neff Road from Eastmont Church.

Neighbor Rob Hartsock, who also attends Eastmont, said he did not know McBride well but had heard only good things about him.

"I'd point to my 7-year-old son and say, 'Look to Zach McBride. He's a hero and a role model,'" Hartsock said.

North Country Family Mourns Soldier Killed In Iraq; "He Had Told Me He Was In A Bad Place"



Army Specialist James Gudridge, who was killed Sunday in Iraq.

1/09 Clear Channel Broadcasting, Inc.

Syracuse (WSYR-TV) – Funeral arrangements are being made for a local soldier who was killed in Iraq over the weekend.

Army Specialist James Gudridge, 20, Carthage, was traveling in a humvee near the Southern border of Iraq Sunday, when an I.E.D. exploded underneath it.

“The last time we talked was January 4 - and we talked for quite a while. And he was very concerned that I was worried about him - because he had told me he was in a bad place. And he said don't worry about me mom, I'm with family - he says this is my family over here. And I said I'm very worried about you. He said don't, I'll be fine,” said Judy Hoffman, Gudridge's mother.

Two days later, he was killed.

“He told us when we went to see him before he left for Iraq - he told us then that he needed his suit - he needed to have his suit nice and kept nice - cause he said when I come home I have to be buried in it. So please keep it clean. And I said, no you're not going to be buried in it - you're going to come back you don't need it for that. But I said I'll take care of it, don't worry and he said mom, if I get killed, it's going to be within the first two to three months and I need my suit, so please take care of it.” Hoffman said.

No one thought his prediction would come true.

“I said it's not true, it's not true. And then I asked them if it could be a mistake - could it be that he's just been hurt very bad - and they said no - the army makes very sure before they tell anybody that it is certain that this is what happened,” Hoffman said.

Specialist James Goodrich was supposed to return home in March, to spend two weeks with his family.

Now, he'll return in a casket, this Friday.

Soldier Killed In Iraq Was Hero To Friends

01/10 BY ERIN WOOD, Journal Star

WASHBURN - Family and friends of Pfc. Phillip Pannier gathered Thursday night in the fallen soldier's bedroom to celebrate his life.

Rather than wiping one another's tears, the crowded room of people laughed about memories of Pannier, 20, a Roanoke-Benson High School graduate and an infantryman with the 101st Airborne Division, who was killed Tuesday while serving in Iraq.

“He was a great friend and an even better person,” friend Cliff Oltman said. “He would do anything for anybody ... We love him and we'll miss him. He was a hero to us.”

Pannier's friends said two of his fellow infantrymen were killed with him and two others were injured.

The three soldiers who notified Pannier's family Tuesday night did not say when or where he died, and officials declined to comment, citing privacy rules that restrict them from commenting in detail.

Jake Washer, who called Phillip Pannier his best friend, said whenever his friend found time, he would sleep.

"Even if he just had 10 minutes, he would take a nap," Washer said with a laugh.

The group of friends joked Thursday night about Phillip Pannier's favorite quote: "Hard work pays off in the future. Laziness pays off now."

But jokes aside, friend Terry Aeschelman said Phillip Pannier was a devoted friend.

"He would do anything for anybody," he said. "Everyone is proud as hell to have had him as a friend."

Deadly Diyala: "The Treetops Provide Natural Concealment From Unmanned Drones And Attack Helicopters. The Roads Are Narrow And Unpaved, Creating Logistical Problems For Giant American Vehicles"

WELCOME TO IRAQNAM: HAVE A NICE DAY



12.07: A US soldier looks at burning houses during an air assault operation in the village of Sufeit, Diyala Province, south of Baquba. (AFP/Gianluigi Guercia)

Jan 14, 2008 By: ThisDudesArmy; Vetvoice.com

May 6th began for us like so many days before it, in the pre-dawn shadows of Baqubah. I had just returned from leave and was not too anxious to start patrolling again, with ten months of combat behind me and five left to push through.

We searched houses, courtyards, roofs, trash piles and warm bodies throughout the morning. Our squad was designated to take a roof to overwatch other squads maneuvering.

On the way to the trucks to grab cases of water, we heard the first reports of Alpha Company having hit an IED way down on Trash Alley, the road so dangerous we were usually barred from driving on it at all.

We heard at least one man was dead and they were trying to get to any survivors.

I was left behind on the Stryker to watch the rear as my squad moved to their building. Throughout the day we kept hearing reports about Alpha Company's loss. The number kept climbing. During the mid-day heat, the final tally came in.

Six men were killed, along with a Russian reporter. Only the driver survived the blast.

When I read about the six soldiers killed in the house explosion in Diyala a few days ago, I knew immediately it was the Stryker unit from Germany that had replaced us.

It was at the beginning of a new offensive to clear out the remaining insurgents after last summer's Operation Arrowhead Ripper.

This attack underscored a vital truth: despite a countrywide decline in attacks, Diyala remains one of the most dangerous areas for American soldiers in which to operate.

For an area that contains 40% of the violence of Iraq, it's been quietly pushed aside by the media in favor of Baghdad and Anbar provinces.

One look, however, shows a dynamic history of a region that became an insurgent safe haven two years ago and remains one today.

Once a popular retreat for Baath party officials, Diyala is at the epicenter of a flow of Sunni Iraqis who moved out of Baghdad, some 35 miles to the southwest. It houses a mix of both Shia and Sunni sects but the provincial government is predominately Shia. It shares its borders with Iran to the east and Kurdistan to the north, creating a microcosm referred to as "little Iraq."

What sets it apart from the deserts and towns on the outskirts of the province is the valley that contains dense palm groves that flourish on either side of the Diyala River.

The treetops provide natural concealment from unmanned drones and attack helicopters. The roads are narrow and unpaved, creating logistical problems for giant American vehicles.

The insurgents quickly found the environment suitable for their operations and began pouring into Diyala in 2006, overwhelming the small task force from First Calvary.

Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia declared Baqubah their capital in Iraq. During the surge's first few months in 2007, even more Sunni insurgents were drawn to Diyala, going where we weren't.

In March, my Stryker battalion was sent to put out the fire that had been raging since the year before, as all eyes were on Baghdad. For months we fought daily to retake the neighborhoods of Baqubah, one by one, until reinforcements from our brigade arrived to take part in the first major offensive of the surge.

Operation Arrowhead Ripper commenced in late June with the Air Force pounding wired houses with 500 pound bombs.

We had seen these houses before and took heed of the enemy's adaptability. They hit us with IEDs, so we got out and walked.

In response, they placed IEDs in houses where vehicles couldn't protect us. Three men in our brigade were killed when a house they were searching came down on top of them following an explosion.

It's a deadly tactic that isn't new but remains very dangerous when coalition forces conduct searches in hundreds of homes in a renewed effort to clamp down on insurgents and weapons coming into the area.

Diyala was the forgotten fight of 2007.

In 2008 it will be more of the same if the architects of the surge don't learn the lessons of the six men killed last May and the six more who were slain last week: the ground there is vital to the security of Iraq, and the insurgents are the only ones who have taken note.

2 Czech Soldiers Injured In Rocket Attack

January 20, 2008 The Associated Press

PRAGUE, Czech Republic: Two Czech soldiers were injured in a rocket attack on a base in southern Iraq early Sunday, the Czech Defense Ministry said.

The two servicemen suffered cuts to their arms and legs, ministry spokesman Andrej Cirtek said in a statement.

Cirtek said the injuries were not serious and following treatment the two will be able to continue in the mission.

The attack also partially damaged two vehicles and the facility where the troops are billeted, he said.

Odierno The Odious Wants U.S. Ground Troops In Iraq "For Five To 10 Years" [But, Personally, He's Going Back To Ft. Hood]

January 18, 2008 By Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpt]

The second-ranking U.S. commander in Iraq, Army Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, said yesterday that Iraq could require a U.S. military presence for many years.

For example, the United States could provide helicopters and other aircraft to support Iraqi combat operations for "five to 10 years," with "an appropriate number of ground forces that go along with that," Odierno told a Pentagon news conference.

Odierno, who next month will complete his 14-month tour as the commander of day-to-day military operations in Iraq and return to Fort Hood, Texas, emphasized that the

transfer of responsibility to Iraqi security forces must be carried out in a “slow, deliberate manner.”

**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



11.07: US soldiers at the site of a bomb attack in Baghdad. (AFP/Ali Al-Saadi)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**Dress Ranks For This Sgt. [Ret'd]
She Gives Us YAY! Day To
Celebrate;
“Date After Date Will Pass, Never To
Again Exist Under The Dark Cloud Of
This Greedy, Crony-Filled, Incompetent,
Lying, Power-Mad Administration”**

From: Nancy S [Veteran]
To: GI Special
Sent: January 18, 2008

Out here in Wyoming we're celebrating Sunday as YAY! Day.

Sunday, January 20th, will mark one year until Bush and Cheney leave office.

Just think: every calendar day that passes from Sunday on will be the last one they serve as (p)resident and vice (p)resident. (The 'P' is silent)

January 21st will be their last January 21st.

March 18th---the day we invaded Iraq---will be their last March 18th.

May 1st---"Mission Accomplished" day---will be their last May 1st.

June 20th---"Last throes of the insurgency" day---will be their last June 20th.

September 2nd---"Heckuva job, Brownie" day---will be their last September 2nd.

Date after date will pass, never to again exist under the dark cloud of this greedy, crony-filled, incompetent, lying, power-mad administration.

This fact alone---despite war and recession and constitution-shredding and the knowledge that one year of Bush/Cheney is like 5 human years --- will produce a little daily rainbow in my brain.

A little spring in my step.

A little tingle "down there" (in my toes, you pervs).

So we're declaring Sunday a holiday: Yes--A Year! Day. ("YAY! Day" for short.)

Nancy S.

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

**"The Army Has Successfully Cloned
150,000 Combat Ready Troops"
"The Only Identity You Need In The Army
Is Your Rank And Your Rating"**



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

Unconfirmedsources.com [Excerpts]

Breaking twenty years of carefully guarded silence, the Pentagon's chief medical officer, Army Maj. Gen. Anne S. Thesia, admitted today that research has been conducted since the 1980's at Ft. Detrick, the Army's secret biowarfare laboratory, on stem cell technology, and also that the Army has successfully cloned 150,000 combat ready troops from a single female sex cell.

The soldiers turn eighteen in January and are set to begin basic training in all branches of the service by spring.

"We're very excited," Gen. Thesia said. "Their mother was a Marine officer in Vietnam, a green beret. If only half of them take after her, our recruitment problems are over."

The General referred to recent reports that the US military is fighting desertion, recruitment shortfalls and legal challenges from its own troops.

The stock of several Halliburton subsidiaries rose sharply on the news.

"We expect this to do for war what interchangeable parts did for capitalism," said Elizabeth Cheney, spokeswoman for Kellog, Brown, and Root.

Not only can uniforms and armor easily be exchanged between damaged and functional clones, but blood and organs can be transplanted without the usual, sometimes fatal, screening delays.

"Because clones fall under the rubric of materiel rather than personnel," she explained, "they can simply be scrapped if they malfunction."

The clones will not be assigned fixed tours of duty, and that will preclude the need for the stop-loss retention and other forms of back-door draft that have caused so many legal problems for the Pentagon in recent months.

"We can just keep sending them into battle until we run out," Gen. Thesia said.

When asked what the clones were called, Gen. Thesia said that each one had been assigned a number from 1 to 150,000.

She said that research had determined that names were bad for morale.

“Individual names tend to breed individual thinking and individual personalities, and pretty soon launching an offensive becomes a little like herding cats.

The only identity you need in the Army is your rank and your rating,” she insisted.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

60% Of Iraqis Want U.S. Troops Dead: Big Surprise



1.16.07: Foreign occupation troops from the US storm into an Iraqi citizens home in a residential neighbourhood. (AFP/Jewel Samad)



[images.google.com]

English soldiers search an American settler's house (1770's)

[61% of Iraqis say they approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces in their country, up from 47 percent in January. A solid majority of Shiite and Sunni Arabs approved of the attacks, according to the poll. 9/27/2006 By BARRY SCHWEID, AP & Program on International Policy Attitudes

Iraqis feel about U.S. troops trampling them in the dirt the same way Americans felt about British troops trampling them in the dirt in 1776. They are right to resist by any means necessary. T]

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

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

**“The Iraqi Government Claims Lots
Of People Have Returned Home**

Because Of The Improved Security. That's Not True” “They Have Been Forced To Go Back Because They Cannot Get Residency In Syria”

18 January 2008 BBC NEWS

In the second of two stories from Iraqi women now living in Damascus, Noor describes why she and her family left and what life is like in Syria.

We had to go immediately, leaving everything: clothes, furniture, all the things you accumulate when you live more than 20 years in the same house.

Things had been getting worse for a while. One event especially, sticks in my mind.

Neighbours of ours had been forcibly removed from their home three houses down from us.

One morning a few days after they had disappeared, one of my daughters walked down the road and saw the heads of our neighbours lined up on the wall of the house.

The residency rules for Iraqis in Syria have changed recently. If you have children of school age - as we do - you can get it, but it's not easy. Those without children have to leave.

The Iraqi government claims lots of people have returned home because of the improved security. That's not true. They have been forced to go back because they cannot get residency in Syria.

We will return when we can get our house and furniture back.

We cannot think of going back right now because the place is still controlled by militias and by the American occupiers.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



1-9-08 the PHOENIX ILLUSTRATOR. UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE.

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/)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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GI Special www.militaryproject.org

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



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