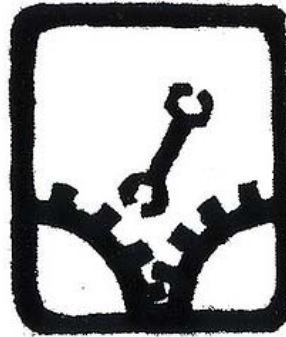


GI SPECIAL 6B17:

Bridging The Gap



From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: February 21, 2008

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace 50 Michigan, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

Bridging The Gap

There is a broken bridge that they call America
between the people and their government.
Stressed out cracked TV's, broken fractured newspapers
with jagged concrete facts that they call Iraq.
There's a broken bridge between our Soldiers
and what they were told they were fighting for.
There is a broken bridge across the Euphrates river
like a broken bridge across the Mississippi too.
Rivers of darkness and light that flow
a lightning bolt currents dark and dangerous,
pieces of humans lay at the bottom and who is responsible,
who does not care at all as the rain and sand
fall like teardrops trying to see through the murky waters,
trying to find a way out, trying to stop the bleeding,
trying to kill the cause and Americans
stand and watch the horror of civilization
pounded by combat boots, they want to stop it
but they doubt it like by voting the war away.

**Captain Amerika still acting like superman,
the Statue of Liberty is cracking like the economy,
who cares about a war debt, put it on a Chinese credit card,
green back dollars going down and down drowning
another bridge falling into the water.
To the energy poor depression crashed civilians
of a war wreck they once called America,
the Answer is within our Soldiers
when they come back from another tour.
The Answer is within Americans
when they stand behind the Soldiers
when they refuse to deploy on a no way next tour.**



U.S. soldier, Beijia village. Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

**From: J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War & The Military Project
To: GI Special
Sent: February 11, 2008 12:38 AM
Subject: Helmet with peace sign**

Thanks for the photo. This is a very powerful photo here.

A sure sign that the tide is beginning to turn. And I don't think I'm being idealistic about this.

Even while I was in [Iraq], you would not have made it 5 feet in public with a peace sign on your kevlar, especially one this size and so obvious.

It speaks volumes that so many of his peers and superiors allowed it for so long.

Very reminiscent of another time and another war, eh?

This is truly exciting.

-Jeff

MORE:

THE SUCCESSFUL ANTI-WAR REBELLION OF THE ARMED FORCES

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

Excerpts from an article by Col. Robert D. Heinl, Jr., North American Newspaper Alliance, Armed Forces Journal, 7 June, 1971

THE MORALE, DISCIPLINE and battleworthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at anytime in this century and possibly in the history of the United States.

By every conceivable indicator, our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and non commissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near mutinous.

Elsewhere than Vietnam, the situation is nearly as serious.

To understand the military consequences of what is happening to the U.S. Armed Forces, Vietnam is a good place to start.

It is in Vietnam that the rearguard of a 500,000 man army, in its day and in the observation of the writer the best army the United States ever put into the field, is numbly extricating itself from a nightmare war the Armed Forces feel they had foisted on them by bright civilians who are now back on campus writing books about the folly of it all.

"They have set up separate companies," writes an American soldier from Cu Chi, quoted in the New York Times, "for men who refuse to go into the field. Is no big thing to refuse to go. If a man is ordered to go to such and such a place he no longer goes through the hassle of refusing; he just packs his shirt and goes to visit some buddies at another base camp.

Operations have become incredibly ragtag. Many guys don't even put on their uniforms any more... The American garrison on the larger bases are virtually disarmed. The lifers have taken our weapons from us and put them under lock and key...There have also been quite a few frag incidents in the battalion."

"Frag incidents" or just "fragging" is current soldier slang in Vietnam for the murder or attempted murder of strict, unpopular, or just aggressive officers and NCOs. With extreme reluctance (after a young West Pointer from Senator Mike Mansfield's Montana was fragged in his sleep) the Pentagon has now disclosed that fraggings in 1970(109) have more than doubled those of the previous year (96).

Word of the deaths of officers will bring cheers at troop movies or in bivouacs of certain units.

In one such division -- the morale plagued Americal -- fraggings during 1971 have been authoritatively estimated to be running about one a week.

Yet fraggings, though hard to document, form part of the ugly lore of every war. The first such verified incident known to have taken place occurred 190 years ago when Pennsylvania soldiers in the Continental Army killed one of their captains during the night of 1 January 1781.

Bounties, raised by common subscription in amounts running anywhere from \$50 to \$1,000, have been widely reported put on the heads of leaders whom the privates and Sp4s want to rub out.

Shortly after the costly assault on Hamburger Hill in mid-1969, the GI underground newspaper in Vietnam, "G.I. Says", publicly offered a \$10,000 bounty on Lt. Col. Weldon Honeycutt, the officer who ordered (and led) the attack. Despite several attempts, however, Honeycutt managed to live out his tour and return Stateside.

"Another Hamburger Hill," (i.e., toughly contested assault), conceded a veteran major, is definitely out."

The issue of "combat refusal", and official euphemism for disobedience of orders to fight -- the soldier's gravest crime -- has only recently been again precipitated on the frontier of Laos by Troop B, 1st Cavalry's mass refusal to recapture their captain's command vehicle containing communication gear, codes and other secret operation orders.

As early as mid-1969, however, an entire company of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade publicly sat down on the battlefield. Later that year, another rifle company, from the famed 1st Air Cavalry Division, flatly refused -- on CBS-TV -- to advance down a dangerous trail.

While denying further unit refusals the Air Cav has admitted some 35 individual refusals in 1970 alone. By comparison, only two years earlier in 1968, the entire number of officially recorded refusals for our whole army in Vietnam -- from over seven divisions - was 68.

"Search and evade" (meaning tacit avoidance of combat by units in the field) is now virtually a principle of war, vividly expressed by the GI phrase, "CYA (cover your ass) and get home!"

That "search-and-evade" has not gone unnoticed by the enemy is underscored by the Viet Cong delegation's recent statement at the Paris Peace Talks that communist units in Indochina have been ordered not to engage American units which do not molest them. The same statement boasted - not without foundation in fact - that American defectors are in the VC ranks.

Symbolic anti-war fasts (such as the one at Pleiku where an entire medical unit, led by its officers, refused Thanksgiving turkey), peace symbols, "V"-signs not for victory but for peace, booing and cursing of officers and even of hapless entertainers such as Bob Hope, are unhappily commonplace.

Only last year an Air Force major and command pilot for Ambassador Bunker was apprehended at Ton Son Nhut air base outside Saigon with \$8 million worth of heroin in his aircraft.

The major is now in Leavenworth.

Early this year, an Air force regular colonel was court-martialed and cashiered for leading his squadron in pot parties, while, at Cam Ranh Air Force Base, 43 members of the base security police squadron were recently swept up in dragnet narcotics raids.

All the foregoing facts -- and mean more dire indicators of the worse kind of military trouble -- point to widespread conditions among American forces in Vietnam that have only been exceeded in this century by the French Army's Nivelle mutinies of 1917 and the collapse of the Tsarist armies in 1916 and 1917.

Sedition -- coupled with disaffection within the ranks, and externally fomented with an audacity and intensity previously inconceivable -- infests the Armed Services:

At best count, there appear to be some 144 underground newspapers published on or aimed at U.S. military bases in this country and overseas. Since 1970 the number of such sheets has increased 40% (up from 103 last fall). **These journals are not mere gripe-sheets that poke soldier fun in the "Beetle Bailey" tradition, at the brass and the sergeants.**

"In Vietnam," writes the Ft Lewis-McChord Free Press, "the Lifers, the Brass, are the true Enemy, not the enemy." Another West Coast sheet advises readers: "Don't desert. Go to Vietnam and kill your commanding officer."

At least 14 GI dissent organizations (including two made up exclusively of officers) now operate more or less openly. Ancillary to these are at least six antiwar veterans' groups which strive to influence GIs.

Three well-established lawyer groups specialize in support of GI dissent. Two (GI Civil Liberties Defense Committee and new York Draft and Military Law Panel) operate in the open. A third is a semi-underground network of lawyers who can only be contacted through the GI Alliance, a Washington, D.C., group which tries to coordinate seditious antimilitary activities throughout the country.

One antimilitary legal effort operates right in the theater of war. A three-man law office, backed by the Lawyers' Military Defense Committee, of Cambridge, Mass., was set up last fall in Saigon to provide free civilian legal services for dissident soldiers being court-martialed in Vietnam.

Besides these lawyers' fronts, the Pacific Counseling Service (an umbrella organization with Unitarian backing for a profusion of antimilitary activities) provides legal help and incitement to dissident GIs through not one but seven branches (Tacoma, Oakland, Los Angeles, San Diego, Monterey, Tokyo, and Okinawa).

Another of Pacific Counseling's activities is to air-drop planeloads of sedition literature into Oakland's sprawling Army Base, our major West Coast staging point for Vietnam

On the religious front, a community of turbulent priests and clergymen, some unfrocked, calls itself the Order of Maximilian.

Maximilian is a saint said to have been martyred by the Romans for refusing military service as un-Christian. Maximilian's present-day followers visit military posts, infiltrate brigades and stockades in the guise of spiritual counseling, work to recruit military chaplains, and hold services of "consecrations" of post chapels in the name of their saintly draft-dodger.

By present count at least 11 (some go as high as 26) off-base antiwar "coffee houses" ply GIs with rock music, lukewarm coffee, antiwar literature, how-to-do-it tips on desertion, and similar disruptive counsels. Among the best-known coffee houses are: The Shelter Half (Ft Lewis, Wash.); The Home Front (Ft Carson, Colo.); and The Oleo Strut (Ft Hood, Tex.).

Virtually all the coffee houses are or have been supported by the U.S. Serviceman's Fund, whose offices are in New York City's Bronx.

While refusing to divulge names, IRS sources say that the serviceman's Fund has been largely bankrolled by well-to-do liberals.

One example of this kind of liberal support for sedition which did surface identifiably last year was the \$8,500 nut channeled from the Philip Stern Family Foundation to underwrite Seaman Roger Priest's underground paper OM, which, among other writings,

ran do-it-yourself advice for desertion to Canada and advocated assassination of President Nixon.

"Entertainment Industry for Peace and Justice," the antiwar show-biz front organized by Jane Fonda, Dick Gregory, and Dalton Trumbo, now claims over 800 film, TV, and music names. This organization is backing Miss Fonda's antimilitary road-show that opened outside the gates of Ft. Bragg, N.C., in mid-March.

Describing her performances (scripted by Jules Pfeiffer) as the soldiers' alternative to Bob Hope, Miss Fonda says her case will repeat the Ft Bragg show at or outside 19 more major bases.

Freshman Representative Ronald V. Dellums (D-Calif.) runs a somewhat different kind of antimilitary production.

As a Congressman, Dellums cannot be barred from military posts and has been taking full advantage of the fact. At Ft Meade, Md., last month, Dellums led a soldier audience as they booed and cursed their commanding officer who was present on-stage in the post theater which the Army had to make available.



Vietnam Soldiers: Their resistance stopped an Imperial war

MORE:

[From GI SPECIAL 5C28:3.31.07. Looks even better now.]

**Bush Reveals New Plan To
Wipe Out Iraqi Insurgents As**

Unrest Breaks Out Inside The Armed Forces



Bush showing press his new anti-insurgency tactic. (AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

July 4, 2008

FTA News Service

Bush, at the North Portico of the White House today, flanked by Republican House Minority Leader John Boehner of Ohio, left, and Republican House Minority Whip Roy Blunt of Mo., revealed a new weapon against insurgents in Iraq that he said will guarantee victory.

He told reporters than when he stamps his left foot, the insurgents will all disappear. “See,” he said, “I am doing it now.”

He added that this won’t happen immediately, and that it will be necessary to keep U.S. troops in Iraq “until the power of my foot manifests itself.”

He promised to stamp his foot at least once a week until Iraq is “prosperous and peaceful.”

Democrat House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was quick to condemn the President's latest move.

She accused Bush of practicing the Satanic Ritual Of The Lifted Foot and added that if "this evil scheme" did not produce progress in Iraq by April 30, 2011, House and Senate Democrats would have no choice but to complain loudly and excitedly, sending him rude emails, wherever he might be by that time.

In other news, reports reached Washington this afternoon that at least five combat-ready brigades of U.S. troops have placed their commanding officers under arrest at Army and Marine bases in North Carolina, Georgia and New York today, elected new officers, and are moving on the nation's capitol to express their own views of how to end the war in Iraq.

A spokesperson for the troops, speaking for background only, told FTA News Service that as a result of their action, neither they, nor any other troops, will ever be deployed from the United States to Iraq or Afghanistan again.

However, she said that their newly-formed Joint Armed Forces Council -- made up of delegates elected from the Army, Navy, Marines, Airforce, National Guard and Reserves -- which now commands the armed forces of the United States, view it as dishonorable and cowardly to leave their brothers-and sisters-in-arms facing death in Imperial war overseas while they are safe at home.

She told FTA News "The Joint Armed Forces Council has agreed that upon arrival in Washington, and liberating it from the domestic enemies who now control the government, it will be necessary to order that all our brothers and sisters be brought home immediately."

She thanked the hundreds of thousands of citizens and veterans who are surrounding military bases all over America to show their support for the troops' decision to obey their oath to defend the Constitution and American citizens "from all enemies, foreign and domestic."

"The domestic assholes are history," she said.

"Now we have a cause worth fighting for."

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE?

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Chicago, IL - Roadside Bomb Kills Frum Soldier In Iraq



[Thanks to Al Jaccoma, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

February 22, 2008 Vosiz Neias

Chicago, IL - Albert Bitton אלוברט בייטון joined the Army after graduating from high school with hopes of receiving the training and financial help to someday become a surgeon.

"He enlisted for the benefits, to pay for medical school," said his wife, Melissa Handleman. "But also, in his heart, he wanted to fight for the country."

Bitton graduated in 2005 from Ida Crown Jewish Academy.

Rabbi Leonard Matanky, the dean of Ida Crown, remembered Bitton as an enthusiastic student who quickly caught up to his peers in the school's Jewish studies program, despite having attended public schools until 9th grade.

Bitton was killed in Baghdad on Tuesday when the Humvee he was in hit an improvised explosive device, friends said. Bitton's family said the soldier's body was expected to return to Chicago this weekend, and services are planned for Tuesday or Wednesday.

According to VIN News sources SPC Karan Raphael, a frum soldier currently serving in Baghdad 5km from where Albert was killed, Karan has set up a group of other frum soldiers, and they are learning mishna nezikim Leily nihsmas.

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



US soldiers take cover as air Force bombs and building in Diyala province near Baquba, northeast of Baghdad February 4. (AFP/HO/File/Ricky Bloom)

U.S. Embassy Lies About Casualties After Green Zone Hit By Resistance Attack

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

BAGHDAD, Feb 23 (Reuters)

A barrage of mortar bombs or rockets hit Baghdad's heavily protected Green Zone, home to the U.S. embassy and Iraqi government ministries, on Saturday, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

A siren wailed in the Green Zone warning people to take cover amid a series of at least 10 explosions, Reuters reporters said.

"I can confirm that we did receive indirect fire and that it was multiple rounds," said U.S. military spokesman Major Brad Leighton, referring further queries to the U.S. embassy.

U.S. embassy spokeswoman Mirembe Nantongo refused to say whether there had been casualties or damaged.

"To maintain operational security, we do not comment on indirect fire into the International Zone," she said. **[Stupid lie. Past reports after such attacks have reported on casualties. T]**

Have Some Free Reality! [You Pay Just Shipping, Handling And Blood]

Feb 21 AFP

A lack of forces has delayed the start of what Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has vowed will be a "decisive battle" against insurgents in the war-torn city of Mosul, an official said on Thursday.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Community Remembers Soldier Killed In Action In Afghanistan

2.15.08 Army Flyer

Fort Rucker will pause to remember a fallen hero who was killed in action Feb. 5 while serving with the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force in Afghanistan. Staff Sgt. Donald T. Tabb, 29, will be honored by Family, friends and fellow Soldiers during a memorial service at the Main Post Chapel Wednesday at 3:30 p.m.

While stationed at Fort Rucker, the Soldier served with the Military Working Dog Section, 6th Military Police Detachment, 1st Battalion, 13th Aviation Regiment.

Tabb's Specialized Search Dog, Bo, a 2-year-old black Labrador, was injured but is expected to recover.

A Norcross, Ga., native, Tabb is survived by his mother, Gloria Smith of Lawrenceville, Ga.

He served with the military police here for about three years before attending the Military Working Dog School at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. He graduated from the SSD handler program last March.

SSDs are specially trained in one field — detection. Unlike regular MWDs, SSDs aren't aggressive and can be released by the handler to search up to a quarter-mile, according to Staff Sgt. Brian Coleman, a MWD handler and one of Tabb's close friends.

Coleman attended the school with Tabb last year and knew him for three years. They also rode motorcycles together and Tabb often came to Coleman's home for dinner.

"If there was food there, he'd be there. He was always hungry," Coleman said with a laugh.

Coleman remembered Tabb as a guy who liked to work out, was laidback, outgoing and fun.

MWD handler Sgt. Michael Calvert said he had known Tabb for about four years.

"He was really easy to get along with. I would look forward to coming to work if I knew he was working. I knew if he was working I was going to have a good day," Calvert said. "He'll definitely be missed."

Tabb's sense of humor reached all of the MWD handlers he worked with, they said. Sgt. Audra Rose, another MWD handler, described Tabb as "shameless."

"He would do or say whatever — he didn't care what other people thought," she said. "If it was funny, he was going to do it even if no one else thought it was funny."

Tabb also gave Rose some of his motorcycle equipment when she purchased her bike, which she said she appreciated.

Although his peers and comrades remember Tabb as being funny and outgoing, they also portrayed him as an exceptional leader and friend.

"He's exactly what a (noncommissioned officer) should be. He would go out of his way to help anybody. All you had to do was ask him," said Sgt. John Stevenson, MWD handler.

Tabb earned the rank of staff sergeant in four and a half years, which is a huge accomplishment, according to Coleman.

Tabb was upfront and honest, he'd speak his mind and was a really good NCO, Rose said.

Calvert said he and the other dog handlers were shocked and saddened when they heard the news of Tabb's death.

The MWD Section is a close-knit group comprised of about 10 Soldiers, Rose said.

"It was hard (to hear the news). I just cried," she said.

Coleman said he spoke to his friend two days before he was killed.

"He and his dog were doing great and were successful (in Afghanistan) before the incident," he said. "It hurts to see a good friend go because you meet a lot of good people in the military."

Since enlisting in the Army on Jan. 26, 1999, Tabb deployed four times in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Tabb was eager to deploy and turned down permanent

change of station orders and drill sergeant school so he could deploy, according to Sgt. 1st Class Cecil Dawson, Directorate of Public Safety operations NCO and Tabb's former supervisor at the MWD Section.

"He was a proven combat veteran of three previous deployments to Iraq, Kosovo and Afghanistan," he said.

DPS Sgt. Maj. Marcel Dumais said Tabb volunteered for this deployment. "He felt strongly about our presence and our mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom ... he fully understood what was expected of him and he rose to the occasion, Dumais said. He is a true patriot and a great American, and I wish I had 10 more just like him."

Tabb's commander, Capt. Jay Massey, 6th Military Police Detachment, said Tabb was a role model and the epitome of a noncommissioned officer.

"Any time a Soldier of mine is deployed is a big deal," Massey said. "Every task or mission that Tabb was given was executed above and beyond what was asked and he performed 110 percent. I have a son who's 5 years old and if my son was 18 and he deployed, Staff Sgt. Tabb was the kind of guy you'd trust to lead your kid. He was a friend, he was a son and he was well-loved by every Soldier in my unit. He's going to be missed."

Tabb is the third Fort Rucker Soldier to die in combat in more than 18 months and the first Army MP dog handler to die in combat during the Global War on Terrorism.

Two Italian Soldiers Wounded In Farah

Feb 23 (KUNA)

The Italian Ministry of Defense announced on Saturday that two Italian soldiers working within the international forces in Afghanistan (ISAF) have been wounded in a blast that targeted a military patrol in the Farah province west of the country.

The ministry said in a statement that two soldiers suffered minor injuries this morning and their armoured vehicle sustained fire after the explosion that occurred on the side of a road.

The Italian military patrol vehicle was passing on that road when the blast occurred. The statement said the two injured soldiers were taken immediately to the military hospital in "Camp Arena".

TROOP NEWS



**I Know Why Maricela Guzman
Doesn't Sing:
"Maybe That's How Our Government
Views Our Veterans; Like An Envelope
Of Receipts We Keep To Prove What We
Purchased And Then, After Seven Years,
We Can Throw Them Away"**

September 18th, 2007 By April Fitzsimmons [Sgt. USAF (1985-1989)],
Madashellclub.net. April Fitzsimmons welcomes your comments. You can email her at
true2selph@aol.com.

Maricela Guzman enlisted in the Navy at 21.

In basic training, while she was on night watch, making her rounds, a man pushed her into a dark corner and raped her. She was so stunned she didn't know what to do.

She waited until the next day and when she tried to report it, she didn't follow the correct procedure to request permission to speak. She was so nervous that she said nothing.

Up until then she had high hopes of being a singer in the Navy choir. She was a soprano and even in basic training they had her pegged to sing. But after her rape, Maricela stopped singing.

She didn't speak another word about the incident. She moved on as fast as she could. Stationed in Italy, she threw herself into her work trying to forget what happened.

She excelled at everything, and became Seaman of the Year for her command.

At one point she got counseling but didn't bring up the rape. Her supervisor told her that if she continued therapy, she ran the risk of losing her clearance and her job. She stopped therapy and was honorably discharged just before the US invaded Iraq.

Not talking about her attack came at a great price: one divorce, one suicide attempt and multiple nervous breakdowns.

After hearing Maricela's story, I vowed that I would protect her like a little sister.

When I spoke an Anti War rally in 2005 I brought her along.

"Come on stage and say something. You can even say it in Spanish."

She was shy and said only a few words. But at the next rally she said a few more and the next thing I knew, she was speaking in schools, to congressmen and on panels.

My heart filled with pride as I saw layers of sadness and depression lift with the process of being in action and speaking her truth.

She organized an all-girls Veterans retreat and shared about her attack. As a result, other women opened up about their attacks.

At one point I noticed she was missing from the group and went outside to find her.

She was sitting under a tree at a picnic table, knitting and crying.

"What's wrong?"

"I'm just triggered. All these girl's stories, it brings up a lot of my pain. But, I've decided, I'm going to file my claim for PTSD. I'm going to ask for help," she said, her hands moving the yarn down the fat wooden needle.

“You’re so brave to come forward. Will your parents help you with the process?”

“No. They don’t know about my attack. I couldn’t tell them. I was a virgin when it happened and in my culture ...”

Her voice trailed off and she returned to her knitting.

On top of attending college full time, speaking at schools and on Vet panels, she filled out the VA Claim.

On July 25, 2007 the VA denied Maricela Guzman’s claim for PTSD.

They said she showed no “stressors” after the attack. If she really had suffered, they said, she would never have become a top-notch sailor.

“What criteria do they use to make their decision? What evidence do they have to say, if you do well after a traumatic event it means you aren’t suffering? The first thing they tell you in basic is to suck it up and pull yourself up by your bootstraps!” I shouted into the phone.

“Don’t get so mad April,” she said. “A lot of vets told me that this is what happens: they turn you down a couple times and then they approve you.”

I knew about the one’s they’d turned down. Many of them had hung themselves with a garden hose, or put a shiny bullet through their bright skulls or simply faded into the shadows forever.

After talking to Maricela and combing the VA claim, I saw that she did miss one appointment that perhaps would have beefed up her paperwork. The notice for the appointment was sent to her old address during her divorce and her ex never forwarded the paperwork.

The claim says that Maricela does not have PTSD. PTSD usually only occurs after combat, a natural disaster or a sexual assault.

By saying that Maricela doesn’t have PTSD, the VA is subtly saying the attack never happened.

A recent USA Today article reported that 29% of all women are sexually assaulted while on active duty. And those are just the stats of women who have reported their assaults. Maricela is not counted in that statistic nor is anyone else who is still suffering in silence.

I’ve read many accounts of our returning veterans, whose family and friends have reached out to the VA for help and said, “I know that my son, husband, sister or wife is going to kill himself or herself. I know they are suffering from PTSD. You’ve got to do something.”

According to the VA, they can only help the veteran.

“Have them call us,” the VA says.

Maricela Guzman called and what she got in return was a rejection letter with an electronic signature by "M. Kwok" and a 1-800 number to call with questions.

I wish M. Kwok had picked up the phone and called Maricela to follow up on her claim.

I wish M. Kwok had met with her to look in her eyes to understand the severity of her condition.

I wish this decision had been handled more personally rather than shuffling her claim around like it was just another tax return.

But maybe that's how our government views our veterans; like an envelope of receipts we keep to prove what we purchased and then, after seven years, we can throw them away.

M. Kwok's number at the VA is 1-800-827-1000. Please call and ask about Maricela Guzman's claim #346/rc/dr

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW 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/)

THIS ISSUE FEATURES:

1. "I, personally, don't believe in fighting for the profit of a handful of people. I also don't believe in fighting for a government that is willing, if not eager, to f--- its own people over" says a soldier stationed in Kirkuk, Iraq.
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.08.halliburton.php>

2. "Not us. We're not going." – A Unit Revolts

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.08.revolts.php>

3. Moving Forward Together - IAW member Liam Madden explains why building a grassroots GI movement, not voting for a pro-occupation presidential candidate, will bring the troops home.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.08.liam.php>

4. "The first time I put on that uniform I hoped I would wear it with honor. On Sept. 15, I finally did," says Iraq veteran Michael Prysner at an anti-war protest.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.08.prysner.php>

5. While Bush's Buddies Cash In On the War, Pentagon Scum Won't Supply Wounded Female Troops With Clothes Forcing Them to Beg Civilians for Help

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.08.female.php>

6. Download, print, and distribute this issue at your school, anti-war group, base, or armory:

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/TS16.pdf>

GI Resistance Radio Is Streaming For Fort Lewis!

02/19/2008 by Seth, Glvoice.org/

The purpose of GI Radio is to provide uncensored news, information, music and entertainment for service members, their families, veterans and the public.

Our message will promote awareness of world events, GI rights and GI resistance.

We're located near Fort Lewis in Washington State, though you can enjoy our programming anywhere in the world thanks to internet radio!

<http://www.Glradio.org>

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

GET THE MESSAGE?



Iraqis burn the U.S. flag in Kufa, central Iraq, Iraq, after prayers Friday, Feb. 22, 2008.
(AP Photo/Alaa al-Marjani)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“Just Lately, Though, General Petraeus Has Come Up With Another Zen-Like Idea: He Calls It A ‘Pause’”
“You Might Have Several Words To Describe This Situation, But ‘Success’ Would Not Be One Of Them”**

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

February 21, 2008 By Michael Kinsley, Washington Post [Excerpt]

In fact, President Bush laid down the standard of success when he announced the surge more than a year ago: "If we increase our support at this crucial moment, and help the Iraqis break the current cycle of violence, we can hasten the day our troops begin coming home."

At the time, there were about 130,000 American soldiers in Iraq. Bush proposed to add up to 20,000 more troops.

Although Bush never made any official promises about a timetable, the surge was generally described as lasting six to eight months.

By last summer the surge had actually added closer to 30,000 troops, making the total American troop count about 160,000.

Today, there are still more than 150,000 American troops in Iraq.

The official plan has been to get that number back down to 130,000 by July, and then to keep on going so that there would be about 100,000 American troops in Iraq by the time Bush leaves office.

Just lately, though, General Petraeus has come up with another zen-like idea: he calls it a "pause."

And the administration has signed on, meaning that the total number of American troops in Iraq will remain at 130,000 for an undetermined period.

So the best that we can hope for, in terms of American troops risking their lives in Iraq, is that there will be just as many in July -- and probably in January, when Bush leaves office -- as there were a year ago.

The surge will have surged in and surged out, leaving us back where we started.

Maybe the situation in Baghdad, or all of Iraq, will have improved. But apparently it won't have improved enough to risk an actual reduction in the American troop commitment.

And consider how modest the administration's standard of success has become.

Can there be any doubt that they would go for a reduction to 100,000 troops -- and claim victory -- if they had any confidence at all that the gains they brag about would hold at that level of support?

The proper comparison isn't to the situation a year ago. It's to the situation before we got there.

Imagine that you had been told in 2003 that when George W. Bush finished his second term, dozens of American soldiers and hundreds of Iraqis would be dying violently every month; that a major American goal would be getting the Iraqi government to temper its "debaathification" campaign so that Saddam Hussein's former henchmen could start running things again (because they know how); and that "only" 100,000 American troops would be needed to sustain this equilibrium.

You might have several words to describe this situation, but "success" would not be one of them.

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



An Iraqi woman walking down the street is stopped at gunpoint and her body is searched by foreign occupation soldiers from the US Army as she arrives for a market fair in the Azamiyah neighborhood in north Baghdad, Feb. 9, 2008. (AP Photo/Anja Niedringhaus)

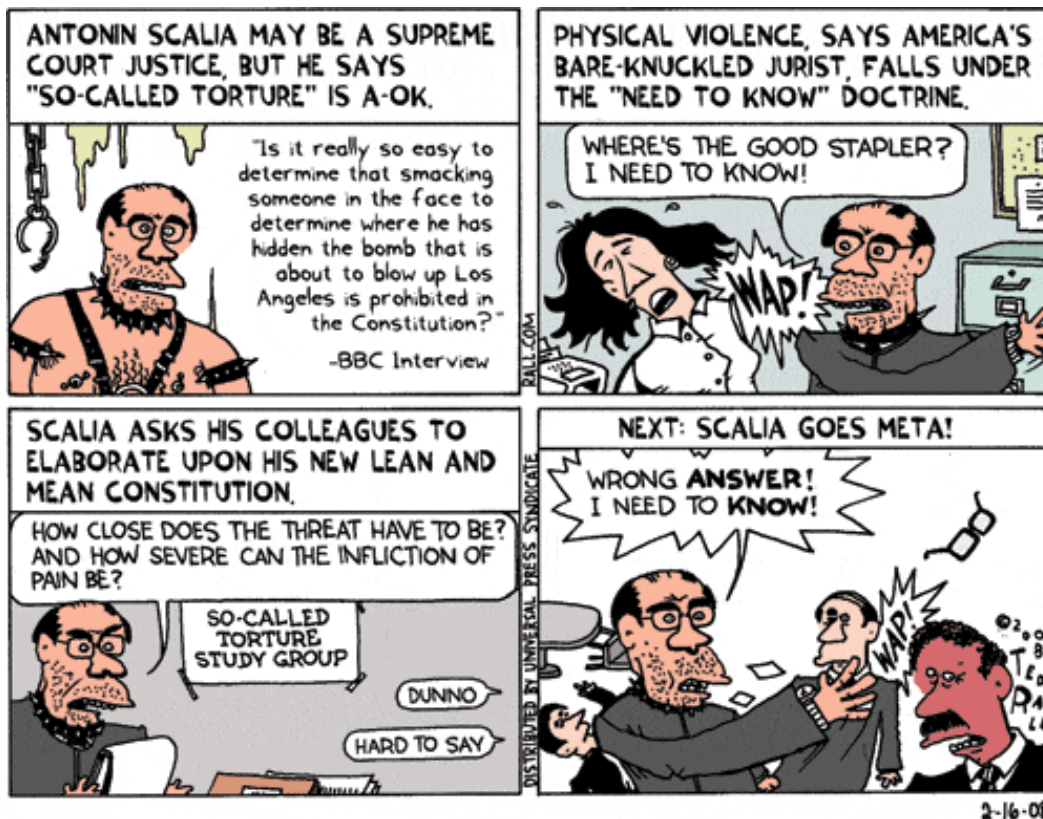
[61% of Iraqis say they approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces in their country, up from 47 percent in January. A solid majority of Shiite and Sunni Arabs approved of the attacks, according to the poll. 9/27/2006 By BARRY SCHWEID, AP & Program on International Policy Attitudes

[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**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



“The Bush Administration And Congress Couldn't Manage To Include An Extension For Unemployment Benefits In The Multibillion-Dollar Economic Stimulus Plan”

“A Similar Benefits Extension Was Passed In March 2002, When The Number Of Unemployed Workers Who Had Exhausted Their Benefits Was Fewer Than Today”

February 22, 2008 By Elizabeth Schulte, Socialist Worker [Excerpt]

TWO SCENES from different parts of the country paint a picture of the grim reality behind the government's statistics on unemployment.

In Akron, Ohio, 500 people braved a harsh winter storm on February 12 to apply for possible jobs at FirstEnergy Corp. When company spokespeople arrived, 50 people were huddled on the snow-covered sidewalks, waiting for the doors to be unlocked for the job fair.

The next day, in Sacramento, Calif., 48-year-old Irene Maciulla was scouring the binders of job listings at the state Employment Development Department. Eight months ago, Maciulla lost her job as an in-home care provider. She was recently denied a temp job stuffing and licking envelopes. "The man told me I had to have a year's experience," Maciulla told the Sacramento Bee.

The national unemployment rate jumped from 4.7 percent to 5 percent in December, and according to government statistics, the number of jobs in the U.S. fell in January by 17,000, the first decline in overall employment in five years.

Such figures tell an ugly story for the future of U.S. workers--but it's only one part of the story.

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Such figures tell an ugly story for the future of U.S. workers--but it's only one part of the story.

For a growing number of workers, being unemployed means being unemployed for a very long time.

According to the Department of Labor, 1.4 million people have exhausted their 26 weeks of unemployment compensation, but are still actively trying to find work. That's the population of San Francisco--times two.

For all of 2007, about 17.6 percent of those who were jobless had been out of work six months or more, according to a report at CNN Money.

That compares to 11.4 percent in 2000.

"You have to understand that 5 percent unemployment today is worse than 5 percent unemployment 10 to 15 years ago," Jason Furman of the Brookings Institution told CNN Money.

The time that workers are spending without employment is expanding, and so are the kinds of workers being affected. A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report released October 2007 showed that workers who didn't graduate from high school were not only more likely to be unemployed, but more likely to be long-term unemployed.

But now, it's common for long-term unemployment to hit workers who might previously have had an easier time finding a new job--workers with years of work experience, skills, training or education. In fact, prior experience--what is typically viewed as an asset to prospective employees--appears to be having an opposite effect in many cases.

According to the New York-based National Employment Law Project's analysis of Labor Department data, workers 45 years or older make up 27 percent of the total workforce, but they are 37 percent of the long-term unemployed.

One of them is Deborah EI, a 64-year-old resident of Pittsburgh. She was laid off from her job as a program coordinator at a nonprofit literacy agency, and her 26 weeks of unemployment benefits are set to expire this month.

EI, a diabetic, cares for her 26-year-old disabled daughter Orissa while she looks for a job and a place to live.

"I don't know what I'm going to do," she told the Associated Press. "I'm really scared. I've never been like this before. I've always been employed, I've always worked. I went back to school a few years ago and got a master's degree, but it doesn't mean anything."

In some cases, workers who have been unemployed for more than half a year stop looking completely. According to the October 2007 CBO report, "Spells of unemployment often ended with the job seekers leaving the labor force rather than taking a job.

About 70 percent of the unemployment spells begun by adults during the 2001-2003 period ended with the individuals taking a job; 25 percent ended with them stopping their search; and the remaining spells were still in progress when the survey ended."

So at least one out of four unemployed workers had totally given up--and is therefore doomed to fall through the cracks.

Seldom mentioned, too, are workers who are employed only part-time, even though they are seeking full-time positions--those considered "underemployed" in the government's statistics.

In January, 9 percent of workers were underemployed, according to the BLS--the highest level in two years.

In spite of these statistics, however, the Bush administration and Congress couldn't manage to include an extension for unemployment benefits in the multibillion-dollar economic stimulus plan passed by Congress last month.

This even though a similar benefits extension was passed in March 2002, when the number of unemployed workers who had exhausted their benefits was fewer than today.

Received:

Looking For Anti-War Veteran Speaker

To: GI Special
Subject: Looking for Vets
Date: Feb 21, 2008

Anti-War Action! is looking for an anti-war veteran/conscientious objector of Iraq or Afghanistan who is interested in speaking at a rally in Ann Arbor, Michigan on March 15, 2008.

If you are AWOL or in some unauthorized status we will endeavor to protect your identity so that you can speak without fear of arrest. We will need to see a DD-214 or similar ID to verify your status. If interested, please reply to fox_ecolag@trashmail.net

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

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<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

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