

GI SPECIAL 6C12:



**“Active-Duty Soldiers
Are Not Alone In Their
Opposition To The War”**
**“It’s Incredibly Important To
Have Other Organizations
Beyond IVAW That Are Willing
To Support A Chapter”**



March 14, 2008 By ERIC RUDER, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

“I was recruited into the IVAW [Iraq Veterans Against The War] by someone I had served with in my platoon,” said Aliff [Phil Aliff, a member of the IVAW’s executive board] in an interview.

“When he was discharged, he joined the IVAW. Later, he got in touch with me because he knew I was opposed to the war. That’s how I got involved. That initial connection--between me and my buddy who got out and joined the IVAW--was critical to the founding and success of the Fort Drum chapter.

“So I think the most important step for building active-duty chapters is for IVAW members to think about talking to the people they know who are still serving and are likely to be interested in getting active against the war.

“I also think it’s incredibly important to have other organizations beyond IVAW that are willing to support a chapter.

‘Our chapter at Fort Drum wouldn’t exist without the hard work of other activists and the Different Drummer Café, a GI coffeehouse, not only to help organize events near the base, but also to train us as organizers, since we’re so isolated from the rest of the IVAW.

With strong chapters, says Aliff, the IVAW can become known as the GI organization that fights for active-duty troops--that stands up for better health care and services on bases and at VA facilities, that exposes the war crimes that GIs are forced to carry out and sometimes even prosecuted for while the commanding officers go free.

“Active-duty soldiers are not alone in their opposition to the war,” said Aliff. “Winter Soldier shows that there is a large community of us. We are directly trying to end the war. And we want you to add your voice to the cause.”

Today’s veterans can stand on the experience of a previous generation of antiwar GIs who showed that organized dissent within the ranks is capable of hampering the effectiveness of the U.S. military as a fighting force--a decisive factor in Washington’s decision to withdraw the troops from Vietnam.

MORE:

“An Upswell Of Disgust And Disapproval For The Iraq War In The Military”

Mar 13 (AFP)

“There’s an upswell of disgust and disapproval for the Iraq war in the military,” intelligence sergeant Selena Coppa told AFP at the launch of the four-day “Winter Soldier” event.

MORE:

BRIDGING THE GAP: MAKING IT HAPPEN An Organizers Conference

April 5, 2008: 10 AM

**Middle Collegiate Church
50 East 7th St.,
New York, New York**



U.S. Army soldier patrols Bejjia village, Iraq Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WAR

THIS IS AN ORGANIZERS CONFERENCE FOR PEOPLE WHO WISH TO ACT TOGETHER TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN CIVILIANS AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES BY DIRECT CONTACT.

Program:

FIRST HAND REPORTS ON SENTIMENT AGAINST THE WARS IN THE ARMED FORCES; Organizers

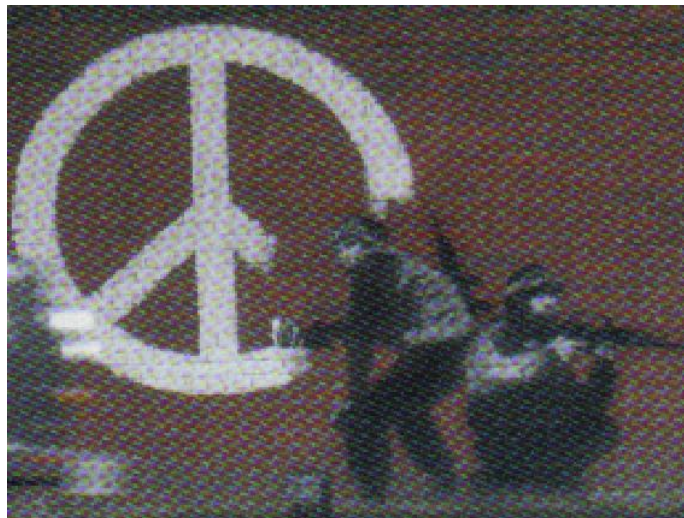
RESISTANCE THROUGH EVOCATION: PHOTOGRAPHS, POEMS; Mike Hastie & Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veterans; Al Jaccoma, Vietnam Veterans Against The War

TROOPS RESIST WAR; VIETNAM AND IRAQ: EYEWITNESSES: Richard Boyle, Vietnam War Reporter; Garrett Reppenhagen & J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War; Al Jaccoma, Vietnam Veterans Against The War

OUTREACH TO THE TROOPS [Organizing Tactics In The Real World] Fabian Bouthillette, Iraq Veterans Against The War & The Military Project

ON GUARD: "WE NEVER SWORE TO OBEY; WE SWORE TO DEFEND" Daniel Joseph Black, Iraq Veterans Against The War

IRAQ VETERANS + UNION WORKERS = HISTORY IN MOTION: Michael Letwin & Clarence Thomas, Local 10, The International Longshore and Warehouse Union, San Francisco



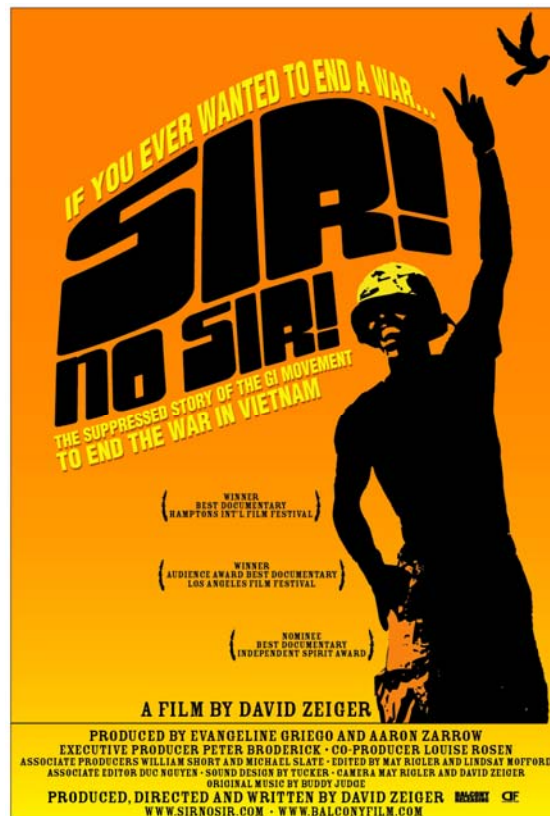
Tactical Painting: From Soldier X, Iraq, to GI Special 4.25.05

ORGANIZED BY:
The Military Project: contact@militaryproject.org
[With the assistance of Traveling Soldier & GI Special]

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 Suppressed Story Of The GI Movement To End The War In Vietnam”



Sir! No Sir!:

The Sir! No Sir! DVD is on sale now, exclusively at http://www.sirnosir.com/home_dvd_storefront.html

Also available is a Soundtrack CD (which includes the entire song from the FTA Show, "Soldier We Love You"), theatrical posters, tee shirts, and the DVD of "A Night of Ferocious Joy," a film about the first hip-hop antiwar concert against the "War on Terror."

To Whom it May Concern:

I just wanted to say thank you for this film, for raising my awareness, I never even knew some of these things happened.

I think this probably is one of the most important documentaries made about war resistance.

My whole work this deployment (my second) has been awareness and I thank you for giving me yet another tool to spread that awareness.

Thank you again,
SGT Spencer Batchelder

**BUY SIR! NO SIR! FOR ACTIVE DUTY SOLDIERS
NOW**

**HELP GET SIR! NO SIR!
INTO THE HANDS THAT NEED IT MOST**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Baghdad IED Kills Two U.S. Soldiers

3.17.08 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080317-01

BAGHDAD – Two Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers were killed when an improvised-explosive device struck the Soldiers' vehicle at approximately 12:20 p.m. March 17.

The Soldiers were conducting a route-clearance combat operation north of Baghdad when the attack occurred.

Texas Soldier Killed In Tallil



SPC. Dustin C. Jackson, 21, of Arlington, Texas, died March 12, 2008 in Tallil, Iraq, of wounds suffered when the vehicle he was in was hit by indirect fire. He was assigned to the 350th Adjutant General Company, Grand Prairie, Texas. (AP Photo/Jackson family VIA Fort Worth Star-Telegram)

Texas Soldier Killed In Baghdad



Cpl. Scott A. McIntosh, 26, of Houston died March 10, 2008 in Baghdad, Iraq, of wounds suffered when a bomber detonated an explosive device. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga. (AP Photo/ McIntosh family via The Houston Chronicle)

Cheney And McCain Welcomed To Baghdad By Indirect Fire On Green Zone

Mar 17 (Xinhua) & By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA & Kim Gabel, Associated Press Writers & By Hussein Kadhim, McClatchy Newspapers

On Monday morning, a series of roadside bombs rocked the Iraqi capital, including attacks that targeted the heavily fortified Green Zone shortly after the U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney arrived there in a surprise visit to meet top Iraqi and U.S. leaders.

Around 9 am, Katyusha missile hit the green zone (IZ).

Around 11 am, one mortar shell lobbed on the green zone (IZ).

The violence marred overlapping trips by Vice President Dick Cheney and Sen. John McCain to Baghdad.

Their visits were aimed at touting recent security gains and stressing Washington's long-term commitment to fighting insurgents in Iraq.

Helicopter gunships circled central Baghdad.

No details were immediately available on the explosions.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Three Occupation Soldier Killed Near Town Of Girishk; Four More Wounded

Mar 17 (AFP) & By Patrick Donahue and Tasneem Brogger, Bloomberg & Ceskenoviny

A Taliban car bomb ripped into a NATO military convoy in southern Afghanistan on Monday, killing three soldiers and three civilians, the alliance and police said.

An interpreter was also killed.

Two of the soldiers were Danish, that country's military said, and one of the soldiers was a Czech, the nation's defense ministry said.

The Czech was from a special military police unit, the server iDnes said.

The bomb in the southern province of Helmand struck a convoy near the town of Girishk on the main road linking the southern city of Kandahar with Herat in the west, a witness said.

Four soldiers with NATO's International Security Assistance Force were killed and four more were wounded in the attack, the ISAF media office in Kabul told AFP.

The blast struck near the town's bazaar and among people on foot and travelling by motorbikes, Girishk resident Feda Mohammad Khan told AFP.

The road was blocked off, but he said he could see shattered parts of the vehicle used by the attackers. "I saw Afghan police carry three men wounded to their vehicles and take them to hospital," he said.

Canadian Soldier Killed In Zangabad

March 16, 2008 CEFCOM

OTTAWA - A Canadian soldier was killed today by an explosive device while participating in a joint Afghan-Canadian foot patrol in the Zangabad region, in the District of Panjwayi, approximately 35 km South-West of Kandahar City.

The soldier was immediately evacuated by helicopter to the Canadian-led multinational hospital at Kandahar Airfield, where he later succumbed to his wounds. The incident occurred at approximately 8:20 p.m. Kandahar time.

At the time of the incident, the soldier's unit was conducting a dismounted presence patrol in the area with Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

TROOP NEWS

Winter Soldier:
**“If A Foreign Occupying Force Came
Here To The United States, And**

**Regardless Of What They Told Us,
Whether They Told Us They Were Here
To Free Us, To Liberate Us And To Give
Us Democracy, Do You Not Think That
Every Person That Owns A Shotgun
Would Not Come Out Of The Hills And
Fight For Their Right To Self-
Determination?”**



March 17, 2008 Democracy Now

US veterans gathered in Maryland this past weekend to testify at Winter Soldier, an eyewitness indictment of atrocities committed by US troops during the ongoing occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Soldiers spoke of free-fire zones, the shootings and beatings of innocent civilians, racism at the highest levels of the military, sexual harassment and assault within the military, and the torturing of prisoners. While the corporate media ignored the story, we broadcast their voices.

Jon Michael Turner, former Marine with the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines.

Jason Hurd, in 2004 he was deployed to central Baghdad with Tennessee's 278th Regimental Combat Team.

We begin with Jon Michael Turner, who fought with the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines.

“The Reason I Am Doing This Today Is Not Only For Myself And For The Rest Of Society To Hear, But It’s For All Those Who Can’t Be Here To Talk About The Things That We Went Through, Talk About The Things That We Did”

JON MICHAEL TURNER: Good afternoon. My name is Jon Michael Turner. I currently reside in Burlington, Vermont. I served with Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines as an automatic machine gunner.

There’s a term, “Once a Marine, always a Marine.” But there’s also the term, “Eat the apple, F the corps, I don’t work for you no more.”

AMY GOODMAN: That was Jon Michael Turner, stripping his medals and ribbons from his chest and throwing them into the audience to the applause of attendees at Winter Soldier. Turner then went on to describe some of his time in Iraq.

JON MICHAEL TURNER: On April 18, 2006, I had my first confirmed killed.

This man was innocent. I don’t know his name. I called him “the fat man.” He was walking back to his house, and I shot him in front of his friend and his father. The first round didn’t kill him, after I had hit him up here in his neck area.

And afterwards he started screaming and looked right into my eyes. So I looked at my friend, who I was on post with, and I said, “Well, I can’t let that happen.” So I took another shot and took him out. He was then carried away by the rest of his family. It took seven people to carry his body away.

We were all congratulated after we had our first kills, and that happened to have been mine.

My company commander personally congratulated me, as he did everyone else in our company. This is the same individual who had stated that whoever gets their first kill by stabbing them to death will get a four-day pass when we return from Iraq.

There was one incident, where we got into a firefight just south of the government center about 2,000 meters. We had no idea where the fire was coming from. And the way our rules of engagement were, pinpoint where the fire is coming from and throw a rocket at it.

So, at that being said, we still didn’t know where the fire was coming from, and an eighty-four-millimeter rocket was shot into a house. I do not know if there was anyone in it. We do not know if that’s where the fire was coming from. But that’s what was done.

Please go to the next image.

This man right here was my third confirmed killed. As you can see, he was riding his bicycle.

Later on in the day, we went ahead, and we had CBS's Lara Logan with us, but she was with the other squad, and so she wasn't with us.

So, myself and two other people went ahead and took out some individuals, because we were excited about the firefight we had just gotten into, and we didn't have a cameraman or woman with us.

With that being said, any time we did have embedded reporters with us, our actions would change drastically. We never acted the same. We were always on key with everything, did everything by the books.

The man on the bicycle, he was left in the street for about ten minutes until we realized that we needed to leave where we were. And his body was dragged about ten feet to the right of him, where his body was thrown behind a rock wall and his bicycle was thrown on top of him.

Another thing that we used to do a lot was recon by fire, where we would go ahead and try to start a firefight if we felt threatened in any way, shape or form.

There was one particular incident where we were working with the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Special Forces in downtown Ramadi, and with our squad and the Iraqi Army there was also lieutenant colonels, majors, first sergeants and sergeant majors—sorry, sergeants major.

With that being said, the Iraqi Army would go into the house, kick in the doors and then go ahead and shoot. And there were loud bursts of machinegun fire. We thought we were taking fire, but then we later found out that it was them.

House raids — because we were a grunt battalion, we were responsible for going on several patrols.

A lot of the raids and patrols we did were at night around 3:00 in the morning, around there. And what we would do is just kick in the doors and terrorize the families.

That was an image taken around 3:00 in the morning through night vision goggles. And that is the segregation of the women and children and the men.

If the men of the household were giving us problems, we'd go ahead and take care of them anyway we felt necessary, whether it be choking them or slamming their head against the walls.

If you go back to that one picture, that was one man that wasn't taking — that was taken care of in a very bad way, because of all the wiring that he had. We considered it IED-making material.

On my wrist, there's Arabic for "F you." I got that put on my wrist just two weeks before we went to Iraq, because that was my choking hand, and any time I felt the need to take out aggression, I would go ahead and use it.

Please go to the next picture.

Next, there's an instance of detainees and how they were treated in a nice manner.

Next, that is the Fatima Mosque minaret.

As you can see, it is ridden with bullet holes and holes in the top of it. Those were from mortars.

And the next video that I'm going to show you is a tank round that went into that minaret, where we weren't sure if we were taking fire or not.

Actually, I'll talk about this one. This is after one of the guys in a weapons company had gotten shot. This is a way that we would take out our aggression. For those of you who don't know, it is illegal to shoot into a mosque, unless you were taking fire from it. There was no fire that was taken from that mosque. It was shot into because we were angry.

Can you please play the next video?

(clip) We are on (inaudible), trying to suppress the blue-and-white minaret named Madinat al-Zahra. Hellraiser, Hellraiser, go ahead. You can move the tank around that door over — at that mosque door. Another round Kilo Two.

Next image.

That — OK, with that being said, there's many more stories and incidents for me to talk about, although we don't have the time to. But this just goes to show you that that was the aftereffect of the tank round. This just goes to show you that everyone sitting up here has these stories, and there's been over a million trips that have gone in and out of Iraq, so the possibilities are endless.

Next image, please.

The reason I am doing this today is not only for myself and for the rest of society to hear, but it's for all those who can't be here to talk about the things that we went through, talk about the things that we did.

Next image.

Those four crosses and this memorial service were for the five guys in Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines that we lost. Throughout our unit, we had eighteen that got killed.

With that being said, that is my testimony.

I just want to say that I am sorry for the hate and destruction that I have inflicted on innocent people, and I'm sorry for the hate and destruction that others have inflicted on innocent people.

At one point, it was OK.

But reality has shown that it's not and that this is happening and that until people hear about what is going on with this war, it will continue to happen and people will continue to die.

I am sorry for the things that I did. I am no longer the monster that I once was.

Thank you.

AMY GOODMAN: Former Marine, Jon Michael Turner, fought with the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines.

**“Ladies And Gentlemen, The Suffering In Iraq Is Tearing
That Country Apart”
“And Ending That Suffering Begins With A Complete
And Immediate Withdrawal Of All Of Our Troops”**

JASON HURD:

My name is Jason Hurd. I recently completed ten years of honorable service to my country in both the US Army and the Tennessee National Guard.

I served in central Baghdad from November of '04 to November of '05.

I'm from a little place nestled in the mountains of East Tennessee called Kingsport, and hence the mountain man beard. People don't really trust you if you're clean-shaven there. Kingsport is truly small-town America. There is a Baptist church on every street corner, and even the high-class restaurants serve biscuits and gravy.

My father, Carl C. Hurd, who died in 2000 — he was seventy-six years old — he was a Marine during World War II. Obviously, I was a latecomer in his life; he didn't have me until his late fifties. As a matter of fact, when he died, shortly after that, I have the two World War II battles he participated in tattooed on my arm, and my father had the same tattoo. He was in the Pacific campaign and participated in the battles of Tarawa and Guadalcanal, which were some of the bloodiest occurrences of that war.

I decided to join the military in 1997. I was seventeen years old. I had just graduated from high school, and I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do with my life.

My father was adamantly opposed to me serving in the military. My father was one of the most warmongering, gun-loving people you could ever meet, but he didn't feel that way when it came to his son, because he knew the negative psychological consequences of combat service.

Looking back — looking back, I know for a fact that my father had post-traumatic stress disorder. He had the rage, he had the nightmares, and he had the flashbacks.

AMY GOODMAN: Jason Hurd went on to describe his time in Iraq. In 2004, he was deployed to central Baghdad with Tennessee's 278th Regimental Combat Team.

JASON HURD: One of the observation points that overlooked the Tigris River looked out at the old Republican Guard barracks, which were across the river. And there was one of those buildings that was sort of dilapidated; however, we knew that squatters had taken this building over, and we actually used to make jokes that this place looked like a crack house and that they were running drugs out of there. We had no evidence of that; it was just joking.

One day, Iraqi police got into an exchange of gunfire with some unknown individuals around that building. Some of the stray rounds came across the Tigris River and hit the shield of one of our Hummers. The gunner atop that Hummer decided to open fire with his fifty-caliber machinegun into that building. He expended about a case and a half of ammunition.

And I'm no weapons expert — I'm a medic — but I talked to some of my colleagues just the other night, and to put this into perspective for you all, each case of fifty-cal ammunition holds about 150 rounds.

A case and a half is well over 200 rounds. Over 200 rounds of fifty-caliber ammunition could take out just about every single person in this room. We fired indiscriminately and unnecessarily at this building.

We never got a body count, we never got a casualty count afterwards.

Another unit came through and swept up that mess.

Ladies and gentleman, things like that happen every day in Iraq.

We react out of fear, fear for our lives, and we cause complete and utter destruction.

After we finished the mission manning those observation points, we moved on.

My platoon specifically was tasked with running security escort for two explosive ordnance teams, one US Navy and one Australian EOD team.

On day one, the US Navy team took us all aside for some specialized training.

They took us aside and said, "Look, EOD teams are some of the most highly targeted entities in Iraq. The reason being is because, hey, we're the guys that go out and we disarm car bombs, we mess up the tactics and the operations of the insurgency. That's why we're highly targeted. So you guys have to use more aggressive tactics to protect us."

And they explained to us that what we were to do is keep a fifty-meter perimeter, a fifty-meter bubble around our trucks at all times, whether we were driving down the road or whether we're stationary. And if anything comes in that fifty-meter bubble, we're to get it out immediately.

If it doesn't want to move, we use what are called levels of aggression.

Your first option is to try to push it out by using hand signals, hand and arm signals. Your next option is to fire a warning shot into the ground. And from there on, you walk bullets up the car.

And your last option is to shoot the person driving the car. This is for our own protection. Car bombs are a real danger in Iraq. In fact, that's the vast majority of what I saw in Baghdad, is car bombings. My unit adhered strictly to these guidelines for a few weeks.

But as time went on and the absurdity of war set in, they started taking things too far.

Individuals from my unit indiscriminately and unnecessarily opened fire on innocent civilians as they're driving down the road on their own streets.

My unit — individuals from my platoon would fire into the grills of these cars and then come back in the evenings after missions were done and brag about it. They would say, "Hey, did you guys see that car I shot at? It spewed radiator fluid all over the ground. Wasn't that cool?"

I remember thinking back on that and how appalled I was that we were bragging about these things, that we were laughing, but that's what you do in a combat zone.

That is your reality. That is how you deal with that predicament.

After we finished the EOD escort missions, we moved on to another mission: patrolling the Kindi Street area, which is right outside of the Green Zone.

Kindi Street is a relatively upscale neighborhood. Some of the houses in the Kindi area would cost well over \$1 million here in America. This area, from what we were told, had no violent activity at all, up until the point we started patrolling this area. We were the first US military to do so on any regular basis.

So we went in. We started doing patrols through the streets. We started getting out and meeting and greeting the local population, trying to figure out what sort of issues they had, how we could resolve those issues.

I remember we were out on a patrol one day, a dismounted patrol, and we were walking by a woman's house.

She was outside in her garden doing some work.

We had our interpreter with us, and our interpreter threw up his hand and said "Salaam aleikum," which is their greeting in Iraq. It means "Peace of God be with you."

And he translated back to us what she said.

She said, "No. No peace of God be with you."

She was angry, and she was frustrated. And so, we stopped, and our interpreter said, “Well, what’s the matter? Why are you so angry? We’re here protecting you. We’re here to ensure your safety.”

And that woman began to tell us a story. Just a few months prior to this, her husband had been shot and killed by a United States convoy, because he got too close to their convoy.

He was not an insurgent; he was not a terrorist.

He was merely a working man trying to make a living for his family.

To make matters worse, a few weeks later, there was a Special Forces team who operated in the Kindi area.

And as you know, Special Forces do clandestine operations. And so, even though this was my unit’s area of operation, we didn’t know what the Special Forces teams were actually doing there. They holed up in a building there in the Kindi Street area and made a compound out of it.

A few weeks after this man died, the Special Forces team got some intelligence that this woman was supporting the insurgency.

And so, they conducted a raid on her home, zip-tied her and her two children, threw them on the floor.

And I guess her son was old enough to be perceived as a possible threat, so they detained him and took him away. For the next two weeks, this woman had no idea whether her son was alive, dead or worse.

At the end of that two weeks, the Special Forces team rolled up, dropped her son off and, without so much as an apology, drove off.

It turns out they had found they had acted on bad intelligence.

Ladies and gentleman, things like that happen every day in Iraq.

We’re harassing these people, we’re disrupting their lives.

I want to tell you a very personal story, and I want you all to bear with me, because this is always difficult for me to tell.

One day, we were on another dismounted patrol through the Kindi Street area. We were walking past an area we called “the garden center,” because it was literally a fenced-off garden.

As is policy, we are to keep all cars and individuals away from our formation.

And so, a car was approaching us from the front. I was at the rear of the formation, because I was the medic and the medics hang out at the back with the platoon sergeant

in case anything happens up front so you can respond. They waved the car off down a side street, so that it would not come near our formation.

As I made it up to that side street, the car had turned around and was coming back towards us, because the street was blocked off by a concrete T barrier at the other end.

So I began doing my levels of aggression. I held up my hand, trying to get the car to stop.

The car sped up. And I thought to myself, oh, my god, this is it. This is someone who is trying to hurt us.

And so, instead of doing what I should have done according to policy and raising my weapon, instead, I did what you should never do, and I took my hands off of my weapon altogether and began jumping up and down, waving my hands back and forth, trying to get this car to stop and see me.

The car kept coming. And so, I raised my weapon, and the car kept coming. I pulled my selector switch off of safe, and the car kept coming.

I was applying pressure to my trigger, getting ready to fire on the vehicle, and out of nowhere, a man came off of the side of the road, flagged the car down and got it to pull over.

He walked around to the driver's side door, opened it up, and out popped an eighty-year-old woman.

Come to find out, this woman was a highly respected figure in the community, and I don't have a clue what would have happened had I opened fire on this woman. I would imagine a riot.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hate guns. I spent ten years in the military, and I carried two of them on my side in Iraq, but I think they should be melted down and turned into jewelry.

To this day, that is the worst thing that I have ever done in my life.

I am a peaceful person, but yet in Iraq I drew down on an eighty-year-old geriatric woman who could not see me, because I was in front of a desert-colored vehicle — or, excuse me, desert-colored building wearing desert-colored camouflage.

Another personal story from my experience, the next mission that we got was to man the main checkpoint that entered into the Green Zone.

We called this checkpoint Slaughterhouse 11, because the very first day we got into country, a car bomb went off in that checkpoint.

We were a couple of blocks away at the time, and none of us knew what it was, so we were asking around, "What was that? What was that?"

Oh, that's the car bomb that goes off every single morning at checkpoint 11. And that's where the name Slaughterhouse 11 comes from. You could literally set your watch by the time a car bomb would explode in that checkpoint every day.

Towards the end of my tour, we got the mission to take that checkpoint over.

And my unit said, "What is the matter with you people? We're getting ready to go home in just a couple of months. Why are you giving us Slaughterhouse 11? Are you wanting us to die?" Day one that we took that checkpoint over and ran it ourselves, a car bomb drove into it and exploded.

We found out that there was over a thousand pounds of explosives in that car afterwards. Luckily, it did not hurt any of my guys. My guys were able to find cover, and it didn't hurt them. But it killed untold numbers of Iraqi civilians in queue to come into the checkpoint and injured so many more. I treated five people that day myself, and I would imagine twenty or thirty others got carted off into civilian ambulances before I could get to them.

But I have an image that is burned into my mind to this very day.

And I remember a man running towards me at the front of the checkpoint, carrying a young seventeen- or eighteen-year-old Iraqi guy, very thin, very sort of pale. He came running to me with this guy and laid him at my feet. I looked down at him, and the guy was missing from here to here of his arm, and his forearm was only held on by a small flap of skin. The bones were protruding, and it was bleeding profusely. He had shrapnel wounds all over his torso.

And when I log-rolled him onto his side to check his rear for wounds, I noticed that his entire left butt cheek was missing, and it was bleeding profusely, and it was pooling blood. And to this day, I have that image burned in my mind's eye. Almost every couple of days, I will get a flash of red color in my mind's eye, and it won't have any shape, no form, just a flash of red. And every time, I associate it with that instance. So not only are we disrupting the lives of Iraqi civilians, we're disrupting the lives of our veterans with this occupation.

You know, conservative statistics say that the majority of Iraqis support attacks against coalition forces, the majority of Iraqis support us leaving immediately, and the majority of Iraqis see us as the main contributors to the violence in Iraq. This gives us a view at the prevailing sentiment in Iraq.

And I'd like to explain it to everyone this way, especially in the South, because it rings with some semblance of truth to people down there.

If a foreign occupying force came here to the United States, and regardless of what they told us, whether they told us they were here to free us, to liberate us and to give us democracy, do you not think that every person that owns a shotgun would not come out of the hills and fight for their right to self-determination?

And I'd like to sum it up like this: the prevailing sentiment in Iraq is this — another time that I was out on patrol in the Kindi Street area — as I said, part of our mission was to meet and greet the local population and find out what their problems were — and so, I

approached a man with my interpreter on the side of the road, and I asked him, I said, “Look, are your lives better because we’re here? Are you safer? Do you feel more secure?”

“Do you feel like we are liberating you?”

And that man looked at me straight in the eye, and he said, “Mister, we Iraqis know that you have good intentions here.

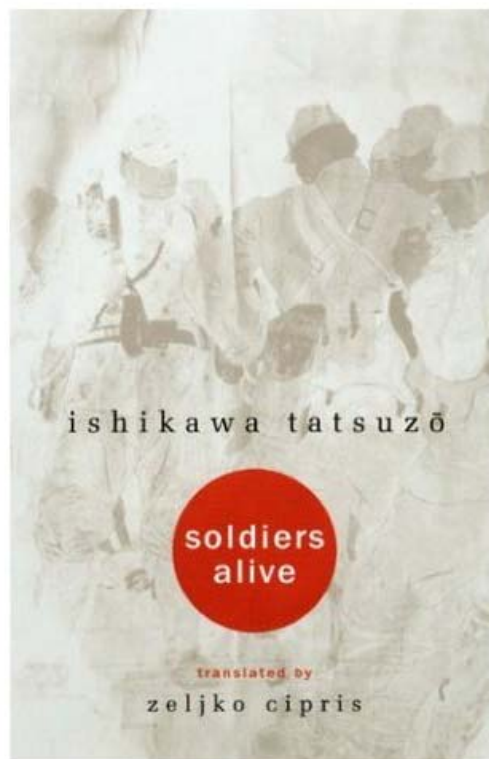
“But the fact of the matter is, before America invaded, we didn’t have to worry about car bombs in our neighborhoods, we didn’t have to worry about the safety of our own children as they walked to school, and we didn’t have to worry about US soldiers shooting at us as we drive up and down our own streets.”

Ladies and gentlemen, the suffering in Iraq is tearing that country apart.

And ending that suffering begins with a complete and immediate withdrawal of all of our troops.

Thank you very much.

Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there’s no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z



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.

NOTICE:

As activity by and for troops against the war increases, that takes time away from GI Special work.

That means it's not possible to reply with thanks as often for the fine news and articles sent in by troops, military family members, veterans, and civilians who understand why nothing is more likely to shorten the war than reaching out to the troops person to person, face to face, including the National Guards and Reserves who live right next to you.

It's very hard to fight a war without an armed force willing to do it.

So, please accept this way of expressing respect for and hand in hand solidarity with everybody who sends in all the good stuff. T.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

March 16 (Reuters) & VOI & Mar 17 By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA, Associated Press Writer & Reuters & By Hussein Kadhim, McClatchy Newspapers

The body of an Iraqi contractor working with Georgian troops was found with gunshot wounds in Numaniya, 120 km (70 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents killed an off-duty Iraqi policeman in front of his house in a drive-by shooting in northern Mosul, police said.

Around 7 am, a roadside bomb targeted a police patrol at [Baghdad] Mansour neighborhood at Ameerat street near teachers training institute .One policeman was killed and one was injured.

Three bodies of U.S.-backed neighbourhood police were found two days after they were captured in the town of Udham, 100 km (60 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas captured two off-duty Iraqi soldiers at a fake checkpoint on Sunday in western Tikrit, 175 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Sunday night, guerrillas opened fire on a supporting committee check point (U.S.-funded Sahwa council) at Al-Alam town (25 km north east Tikrit). The Captain of the check point was injured in that incident.

Around 7:30 am, a roadside bomb targeted one of the 77 company's vehicle (77 is a construction company) in Arafa neighborhood in Kirkuk city. One guard (an employee of the company) was injured with a civilian who was in the area.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

“Democratic Changes” Happy Iraqis Thank The Occupation For Wonderful Improvements In Their Lives

March 17, 2008 by Laith, washingtonbureau.typepad.com/iraq/

In the few coming days, we will say good bye to the fifth year since freedom and liberation visited Iraq.

For this great anniversary, I want to count some great democratic changes that happened during the five years of freedom and democracy.

The most important change is killing and displacing more than three million Iraqis. I think the record of Saddam had been broken long time ago.

Now we have Iraqis all over the world even in some places that I never heard about till this moment.

Another great and important change is painting the pavements, the bridges and the blast walls in Baghdad for many times.

I hear a funny comment from a young man about painting on the blast walls. The man said "I'm sure it would be cheaper if the Iraqi government just bought the original works of Salvador Dali or Da Vinci.

Reducing the CO2 and the other gases in Iraq.

We have big fuel crisis and people couldn't use the kerosene heaters in winter and they can't use the propane gas all the time because of the big shortage and the high prices.

Reducing the casualties of the electrical shocks.

The ministry of electricity supply most of the Iraqi governorates for less than three hours a day which forces the families to pay attention to every single ampere and to use it in turning on the washing machine or the water heater and not to allow their kids to waste electricity in playing or watching TV.

Most Iraqis became fit again and they started practicing compulsory the walking sport because either of the curfews or the sudden blocking of the streets.

Now we have less angina pectoris or myocardial infarction (although I was in hospital yesterday visiting my 38 years old neighborhood who is suffering from angina pectoris.

Of course, I must not forget that these great changes would not be done without the big support of the US administration to the Iraqi government.

“Under Saddam’s Regime, We Had Limited Salaries But We Had Security And Decent Services”
“This Government Gives With The Right Hand And Takes Away With The Left”
“When They Talk, Things Always Get Worse. It’s Better If They Just Stop Talking”

Stories abound of neighborhood militiamen commandeering power plants and forcing terrified engineers to flip the switches even during government blackouts, turning militants into heroes and further undermining the unpopular Maliki administration.

March 16, 2008 By Hannah Allam, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD — Iraq’s most prominent clerics have ruled that using a water pump on one’s own pipes is akin to stealing resources from a neighbor, so what does a person do when it takes half an hour to fill a cooking pot with water from the tap?

Iraqis pray for forgiveness, then pump away.

To them, the real crime is that five years after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, they still swelter in the summer and freeze in the winter because of a lack of electricity.

Government rations are inevitably late, incomplete or expired. Garbage piles up for days, sometimes weeks, emanating toxic fumes.

When the Iraqi government announced that 2008 would be “the year of services,” workaday Iraqis had their doubts.

“Under Saddam’s regime, we had limited salaries but we had security and decent services.

“Now, we have decent incomes but we lose it all to water, propane, groceries, fuel. We save nothing,” said Balqis Kareem, 46, a Sunni Muslim housewife who lives in the predominantly Shiite Muslim district of Karrada.

“This government gives with the right hand and takes away with the left.”

At Kareem’s modest, single-story home, a wall in the living room sprouts a tangle of electrical wires, a reflection of the three power sources she juggles throughout the day: the government’s supply, her own small generator and the neighborhood’s larger generator.

Even so, for five years she hasn’t been able to keep milk or meat in the refrigerator for more than a few hours because it spoils so quickly in the daily blackouts.

A kitchen cupboard holds a barely touched box of rationed tea, which Kareem described as “so bitter no amount of sugar can sweeten it.”

She said that she’d once used a magnet to clean metallic flakes from a bag of government-supplied rice.

She barred her four children from drinking tap water after she found worms floating in a glass she’d poured.

The family’s home phone rarely works, though earlier this month a worker from the phone company showed up demanding payment for calls that they both knew she hadn’t made. Like so many employees of government utilities, he wanted a bribe.

“I just got to the point and told him, ‘Don’t waste my time. How much do you want?’ “ Kareem said. “He told me, I paid him and then went on with my day. I’m practical.”

As another scorching summer approaches, everyone has to improvise to find electricity. Those who can’t afford generators have to grease the meter men to look the other way as they splice wires and steal more than their permitted amount of power. At most, they’ll be able to run a TV set, a couple of fluorescent bulbs and maybe the water pump.

Of course, that's only when the electricity is on — never more than five hours a day and typically closer to two.

A popular joke here goes that a distraught boy approached his mother and sobbed that his father had touched a live wire and was electrocuted, to which the mother replied, "Thank God! There's electricity!"

When a reporter asked the official spokesman Ali Dabbagh how the Iraqi government could restore faith in its leaders' promises of services, he hung up the phone, offended at the question.

Increasingly, Iraqis are relying on militias and other armed groups to fill the services void.

Stories abound of neighborhood militiamen commandeering power plants and forcing terrified engineers to flip the switches even during government blackouts, turning militants into heroes and further undermining the unpopular Maliki administration.

In some poor areas of Baghdad, militias or Iranian-backed charities have become the main source of propane tanks, food staples, garbage collection and other services that the government should provide.

"They always talk, but nothing is tangible so far," Karam Hussein, 60, a Shiite retiree, said of the government. He lives in Baghdad's Shaab neighborhood, which is mostly under the control of the Mahdi Army militia.

"On the contrary, when they talk, things always get worse. It's better if they just stop talking."

In the hardscrabble, mostly Shiite neighborhood of Shohada, 67-year-old Hani Abdel Hussein is desperately trying to sell the family home in hopes of moving to an area with better services. Damage from a stray mortar shell that plunged through the roof isn't the only deterrent for buyers, however.

Trash collection is so sporadic that residents tie up their garbage in plastic bags and fling them onto a reeking pile at the end of the street. Electricity is mainly from a private generator, and water shortages have forced Abdel Hussein to shower at a public bathhouse in another neighborhood.

His land line has been dead for the past three years, though he recently received a bill for about \$70.

"If the phone actually worked, I'd be happy to pay today," the soft-spoken father of three said.

"I don't believe it's that hard for the government to bring back services. But they had 50 sessions of parliament just to remove the stars from the flag. I guess they're too busy."

A Gift To The People Of Iraq From The Imperial Government In Washington DC; “They Experienced Violent Deaths Equal To Two 9/11 Attacks Per Month For The First Three Years Of Occupation”

March 16, 2008 Judith A. Weinstein interviewing Epidemiologist Les Roberts, Chicago Tribune [Excerpt]

Q: Given all of your experiences in Iraq, what is the one you would most like Americans to understand or appreciate?

A:

If we think of the 9/11 attacks on New York and realize that Iraq has just about the same population as the greater metropolitan New York area, this new report from the Iraqi government suggests they experienced violent deaths equal to two 9/11 attacks per month for the first three years of occupation.

That's according to the Iraqi government!

Our study suggests the equivalent of six 9/11 attacks per month.

Whether this was from the actions of our nation or the indirect and unforeseeable consequences of the invasion is of little importance.

There is no question that hundreds of thousands have died.

Which of our leaders has expressed contrition for this?

I fear that pride and political bravado on this issue are creating a role for us in the world that is almost the opposite of how we see ourselves.

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!</p>
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Anybody Remember That Lying Bullshit About All Those Happy Iraqis

Returning From Exile Because The Surge Is So Successful?

3.17.08 (AFP)

Iraqis are still fleeing their country five years after the US-led invasion and top the list of asylum seekers in the industrialised world, the UN refugee agency said Tuesday.

In 2007, the number of new applications for refugees in 43 industrialised countries rose 10 percent to 338,000 from 306,300 the previous year, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said in a report.

Iraqis topped the list of asylum seekers in industrialised countries for the second year running, accounting for more than 10 percent of the total with 45,200 applications last year, the UNHCR said.

“It is important to bear in mind, however, that Iraqi asylum seekers in industrialised countries represent only one percent of the estimated 4.5 million Iraqis uprooted by the conflict,” the report said.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

FIGHT THEM NOW, OR THEY’LL FOLLOW YOU HOME



The traitor Cheney and General Betrayus in Iraq on March 17, 2008. Cheney declared today that the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq a "successful endeavor." Photo: REUTERS/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Denny C. Cantrell-US Navy/Handout

CLASS WAR REPORTS



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/)

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

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