

GI SPECIAL 6C23:

Iraq Veterans Against The War

www.ivaw.org/



[Thanks to Katherine G, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

**“I Want Him Home”
“They Need To Get Them All
Out Of There,” She Says:
Local Soldier Injured In Iraq**

03/24/2008 Jay Hamburger, Of the Record staff, Park Record

A Park City soldier suffered what his mother describes as a “pretty serious concussion” when a roadside bomb exploded near his truck, the man’s mother says.

Adam Kelley, who is 22 years old and graduated from Park City High School in 2004, was in an armored supply truck near Mosul on March 20 when the bomb exploded, his family says.

His mother, Gena McNeil, says the blast knocked him unconscious, and he was taken to a military hospital. She says he continues to suffer from headaches. He is a sergeant in the Utah National Guard. He lives with his wife in Silver Creek.

McNeil says he was deployed to Iraq in May 2007 and she expects him to return to the U.S. in April.

“I want him home. They need to get them all out of there,” she says.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Minnesota Soldier Killed By Sniper On Base Near Baghdad



U.S. Army Spc. Gregory B. Rundell, 21, was killed by sniper fire Mar. 26, 2008 in Iraq while manning a guard tower on an Army base just north of Baghdad. Rundell resided in North St. Paul, Minn. (AP Photo/U.S. Army via St. Paul Pioneer Press)

Baghdad IED Kills Two U.S. Soldiers

3.29.08 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080329-08

BAGHDAD – Two Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers were killed when their vehicle was struck by an improvised-explosive device in eastern Baghdad at approximately 5:30 p.m. March 29.

IED Kills U.S. Soldier Somewhere Or Other In Iraq

3.28.08 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080328-12

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Center Soldier was killed as a result of wounds sustained from an improvised explosive device attack south of Baghdad March 28.

Arlington Soldier Due Home Soon Is Killed In Iraq

Mar. 14, 2008 By SALLY CLAUNCH, Star-Telegram staff writer

Dustin Jackson of Arlington was killed in Iraq on Tuesday, relatives said.

Mr. Jackson, who was in the Army, was married to Michelle Jackson, the granddaughter of Arlington City Councilman Gene Patrick. Mr. Jackson, 21, was killed when a roadside bomb struck the vehicle in which he was traveling.

Patrick said the Army did not identify Mr. Jackson's body until Wednesday and further details have not been released.

Mr. Jackson had been married for about a year, Patrick said. He was scheduled to return home in two weeks and planned to begin college.

Mr. Jackson is the second Patrick family member killed in the war.

His nephew Jeremy Ray of Houston was killed a week before Christmas 2007. Ray, a second lieutenant, had been in Iraq six weeks.

“This is one of these cases where Michelle and Dustin came together and carefully planned out their lives,” Patrick said.

Wounded Soldier Conscious

March 27, 2008 Lori Glenn, The Moultrie Observer

MOULTRIE — Sgt. Steve McCoy, critically injured by a roadside bomb in Baghdad Easter Sunday, was conscious Thursday afternoon at the U.S. Army burn center in San Antonio, Texas, according to his family.

McCoy, 23, of Moultrie is able to respond to questions by nodding, said brother-in-law Gadston Moore. McCoy's wife, Tabitha, and his parents are by his side at Brooke Army Medical Center.

A 2003 graduate of Colquitt County High School, McCoy is the only soldier to survive an explosion that occurred as he and four other Ft. Stewart troops were driving through southern Baghdad on Easter Sunday, family said. The deaths of the other soldiers pushed the U.S. death toll in Iraq above 4,000.

According to an Associated Press report, the Defense Department has identified the dead as 24-year-old Spec. Jose A. Rubio Hernandez of Mission, Texas; 22-year-old PFC Andrew J. Habsieger of Festus, Mo.; 21-year-old Pvt. George Delgado of Palmdale, Calif.; and 26-year-old Staff Sgt. Christopher M. Hake of Enid, Okla.

The Pentagon told AP the soldiers died the day after the explosion. All were assigned to 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Tabitha McCoy's parents, Steve and Becky Moore, will care for the young couple's 3-year-old twins for the time being, said Rhonda Deas of DeMott Tractor Co. Becky Moore works for DeMott Auction.

As an expression of compassion and gratitude to McCoy and his family, some in the community already are collecting money to help. DeMott Tractor Co. at 1659 Sylvester Highway has set out a collection jar.

"We almost collected about \$1,000 yesterday," said Deas.

Steve and Becky Moore's church, Heritage Church at 844 S. Highway 33, also is taking up donations, she said. Donations made through the church are tax deductible.

"We think we're so far away from it until it actually hits home, and it's somebody you know," Deas said.

Son-In-Law Critically Wounded In Iraq; Soldier Not Expected To Survive IED Blast

March 28, 2008 BY RICK CUNDIFF, STAR-BANNER

Ocala - For Ocala resident Kathryn Crowell-Grate, worrying about loved ones in the military is nothing new.

Crowell-Grate grew up in a military family, and her husband, Nathaniel Grate, is retired from the Navy and serving as a civilian contractor on a Navy ship in the Persian Gulf.

But Crowell-Grate couldn't be prepared for the news she received Monday. Her son-in-law, Army Sgt. Javon Jordan, was critically wounded in Iraq.

"When we got the call, everybody thought they were lying," she recalled Thursday. "You watch the news, and think 'OK, it's not going to hit us close to home.' It's always somebody else."

According to Crowell-Grate, Jordan, 32, was wounded Sunday by a roadside bomb that exploded next to the vehicle in which he was riding. Three of his fellow soldiers were killed.

Jordan was flown to a military hospital in Germany with a severe head injury, and is expected to be flown to Bethesda Naval Medical Center today if he is stable enough, Crowell-Grate said. She's planning to fly to Washington, D.C., today to join her daughter Michelle, Jordan's wife, at his bedside.

But the outlook is grim.

"If he's stable enough, they're going to fly him back," she said. "They're not expecting him to make it."

Crowell-Grate, the administrator of the Contemporary Christian Academy/The Children's Hub in Ocala, said she had known Jordan since he was a child in Norfolk, Va.

"This little boy was in third grade, and he said he's in love with my daughter," she said. "He practically lived at my house."

Javon and Michelle Jordan have been married for 13 years, and live in Virginia with their three children, Crowell-Grate said.

For Jordan, the Army was a ladder to success, she said.

"He loves his country, and the military was all he knew to be successful," she said. He was on his second tour of duty in Iraq, she said.

It's hard to comprehend the war injury that could take her son-in-law's life, Crowell-Grate said. But she's determined to be strong for her daughter and grandchildren.

"That (risk is) a part of his job, and I respect that, and that's a part of my husband's job, and I respect that, but when you're grieving, you can't see past that," she said. "I know because of my faith in God that He'll give me strength to be Grandma and everything that I need to be for them."

U.S. Command Wants Suicide Soldiers; Sends Ground Troops Into Basra Fight

3.30.08 by Hassan Abdul Zahra, (AFP)

On Sunday, the US military acknowledged that its ground troops had started participating in the Basra assault.

**GUESS WHO'S WORRIED
GUESS WHO ISN'T
GUESS WHY
ALL HOME NOW**



Iraqis hanging out on a street corner as U.S. Army soldiers on night patrol take cover in the Azamiyah neighborhood, north Baghdad, Feb. 12, 2008. (AP Photo/Anja Niedringhaus)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Blast Wounds 3 Dutch Soldiers Near Tarin Kowt

March 30, 2008 Reuters

Three Dutch soldiers from NATO-led forces in Afghanistan were hospitalized on Sunday after their vehicle hit an improvised explosive device near the town of Tarin Kowt, the Defence Ministry said.

One soldier lost both his legs in the explosion and his condition was critical, the ministry said in a statement posted on its Web site.

Electricity Office Blown Up In Helmand

03-29-2008 (AFP)

A bomb blew up a small electricity department building in southern Afghanistan's troubled Helmand province Saturday, killing two people and wounding eight, police said.

The insurgent Taliban movement said it had planted the bomb in the Gereshk district in an attempt to kill the district police chief, Razak Khan, who regularly held meetings there.

Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi claimed Khan was among the wounded in the blast but officials could not immediately confirm he had even been there.

The attackers had somehow been able to pass through security outside the building to plant the bomb, Helmand province police commander, General Mohammad Hussein Andiwal, told AFP.

"How it happened, we don't know but some explosives were planted inside the building which caused the explosion," he said.

"As a result of the explosion, two employees of the department have been killed, six other employees and two civilians have been wounded."

One of the wounded was the head of the Gereshk power department, said Tahir Rasouli, head of the local hospital.

The one-storey building, made from traditional mudbrick, collapsed after the blast, which caused scores of people to flock to the site, a witness named Fida Mohammad said.

The building, about 200 metres from a small hydropower plant, was where people came to pay their electricity bills or contact officials about their power supply.

Six New Zealand Soldiers Face Court Martial Over Afghan Drug Use

March 28 Telecom New Zealand Company

Six soldiers have been shipped out of Afghanistan back to New Zealand to face drug charges at a court martial.

The New Zealand Defence Force said the six members from the Provincial Reconstruction Team contingent in Afghanistan had returned to New Zealand on remand for trial by court martial for alleged drug use.

The six junior personnel are alleged to have used a Class B drug at the PRT base in Bamyán Province.

NZ Army Land Component Commander Brigadier Dave Gawn said a thorough investigation into the allegations was conducted which had resulted in the six being remanded for court martial.

“There is no tolerance for the use of drugs by service personnel whether under instruction, training or on operations. Such behaviour undermines the security, stability and reconstruction achievements of the more than 1200 NZDF personnel who have served in Bamyán since 2003,” Brig Gawn said.

The six will be disciplined if they are found to have used drugs. Disciplinary action might result in a fine, jail sentence or dismissal.

TROOP NEWS

170 From Virginia National Guard Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

March 24, 2008 Army Times

The Virginia Army National Guard's 1710th Transportation Company held a departure ceremony March 11 to mark the start of a mobilization to Iraq.

The 170 soldiers will train at Camp Atterbury, Ind., for about six weeks before deploying to Iraq.

Detachment 2 of the 1173rd Transportation Company also will deploy.

The unit's mission will be to provide truck support that will move critical supplies from logistical support areas to various forward operating bases.

160 From Iowa National Guard Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

March 24, 2008 Army Times

About 160 members of the Iowa Army National Guard's 248th Aviation Support Battalion are preparing for a deployment to Iraq.

The unit is expected to leave for training in June and later deploy to Iraq.

Once in country, the soldiers will perform aircraft diagnostics and maintenance work.

ENOUGH NO MORE TOO MANY GONE



Soldiers from the 37th Infantry Brigade Combat team, who are deploying to Iraq during a farewell ceremony, Thursday at III CORPS on Fort Hood, Texas, March 27, 2008. (AP Photo/ Killeen Daily Herald, David Morris)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

**Alley Fighters;
“Mr. Sadr And His Fighters Simply
Will Not Go Away In This War”
“Mr. Maliki Had Left Himself No Way Out
Of The Alley Except To Back Down”**



COMBAT READY A mirror reveals Shiite militiamen in Baghdad's Sadr City, where followers of Moktada al-Sadr have risen in protest against the Iraqi government's offensive in Basra. Ahmad Al-Rubaye/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

March 30, 2008 By JAMES GLANZ, The New York Times

BAGHDAD — Sometime during my four years of traveling to Iraq, I developed a recurring dream in which a Middle Eastern country invades the United States and occupies, among other places, my old neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago.

The dream flashed briefly through my mind on Thursday as I walked the dirty, broken streets of Sadr City, a teeming Baghdad slum that forms the power base of Moktada al-Sadr, the radical Shiite cleric.

Here is what happens in the dream: Because I know a little Arabic, I somehow find myself a translator for the invaders, even as some of my Chicago buddies are in the alleys plotting against my employers.

And each night when I walk home along my beloved Dearborn Street under the rusty elevated tracks and past the White Hen grocery store, I wonder what the guys poring over maps in their armored vehicles plan to accomplish against a few million South Siders fighting in their own alleys.

That's usually when I wake up.

That dream, a nightmare, really, flashed through my mind as I stood at the end of a filthy, pothole-riddled alley talking with a small-time deputy commander in the Mahdi Army, the militia that is the armed wing of Mr. Sadr's political movement. Standing there with his arms folded over his potbelly as his fighters scurried about behind him, the man who called himself Riyadh, 34 years old, was effectively deputy commander of an alley.

"We can't face the armored tanks of the Americans face to face, because all we have is light guns," he said. "So we just wait for a chance to attack something."

He could be dead now, because the next day at least one American helicopter swooped over Sadr City and engaged in a gun battle that killed four, according to American military officials, although Iraqi police put the toll much higher. Or the potbellied deputy could still be out there, plotting his next move.

Either way, before dismissing the ragtag Mahdi fighters, it would be well to remember that — partly because the alleys of the neighborhoods they control are too narrow for the Iraqi Army's armored vehicles — Mahdi units like Riyadh's have been fighting Iraq's federal forces to a standstill in Basra, the country's southern port city, for nearly a week now.

Alleys: they are dangerous only when used by those who grew up in them.

That is the basic reason Mr. Sadr and his fighters simply will not go away in this war.

What makes the case so difficult is that it is not just a question of a battle with American troops, here from half a world away carrying out operations that Mr. Sadr and his fighters consider an abhorrent occupation.

Some 3,500 troops in the Basra fight are Iraqis from outside the province, and witnesses say it is clear that few if any of the Iraqi security forces in the assault know the neighborhoods the way the Mahdi Army does.

Its fighters literally pop in and out of alleys, battling a federal force of nearly 30,000 to what is, so far, a stalemate.

What might be called the Alley Effect also has its influence in the political realm.

Many of Iraq's senior political leaders are former exiles, nearly all of them highly intelligent and well educated, and some extremely Westernized. (Although I can't mention names, some of the most senior leaders of this Muslim country are very fond of a drink now and then. Johnny Walker Red Label, for example, is a particular favorite of one of them — one of the most pleasant and effective, in fact.)

No one has ever accused Mr. Sadr of being brilliant, charismatic, or even above average in the intellectual realm. But he has one thing few of those leaders have: he never left, even in the worst years of Saddam Hussein.

And that does not just give him credibility on the streets. In a country where sheer social, religious, political, historical, geographic and psychological complexities are what seem to defeat all easy solutions,

Mr. Sadr is one of the few who have been here continuously, absorbing the shifting lessons of the place.

He has done his homework, he has put in his time.

And he has received the kind of props that must make an alley fighter proud.

Two weeks ago, when I learned of the impending assault during a trip to Basra, senior Iraqi officials said that the crackdown would be unrelenting. "Whoever gets in the way will be dealt with swiftly, decisively and with no mercy," one of them said.

But when Iraqi forces made little progress in Mahdi-controlled neighborhoods after the offensive began on Tuesday, Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, who staked his political credibility on the operation by traveling personally to Basra to direct it, issued a curious 72-hour ultimatum to the fighters to lay down their weapons — or face consequences.

It was hard to imagine, after the start of an assault involving 30,000 troops, what more severe consequences could be.

If the emptiness of the ultimatum was not enough to suggest that Mr. Maliki had left himself no way out of the alley except to back down, on Friday he said that he would offer money to anyone in Basra who turned in a weapon over the following ten days.

American forces have also found that they have little choice but to respect Mr. Sadr.

After years of referring to him as little more than a thug — including a vicious battle against his fighters in Najaf in 2004 — the American military has begun referring to him as "Sayyid," the honorific title accorded to a Muslim holy man. This is particularly true when military officials praise a loophole-riddled cease-fire that Mr. Sadr ordered last August, when he said that his militia should stop fighting but could respond in self-defense if attacked first.

"We have and will continue to show restraint in dealing with those who honor al-Sayyid Moktada al-Sadr's pledge of honor to halt attacks," Maj. Gen. Kevin J. Bergner, a spokesman for the American military in Baghdad, said in a press briefing on Wednesday in response to a question.

As I sit here writing this piece, listening to the intermittent whooshes and booms of rockets and mortars fired into the Green Zone, almost certainly by Mr. Sadr's fighters, I can no more predict where the conflict is headed than I can say what will be in my dreams tonight during the few hours of sleep that this war and my editors allow me.

But when it comes to Mr. Sadr's loyalists in the alleys of Basra and Baghdad, one thing is irrefutable.

In those alleys, waking up will not end the dream.

As Mahdi Army Captures Basra Broadcasting Station, Sadr Reps Say Maliki Regime Has Promised To Stop Attacks; They Declare Truce



Mahdi Army fighters storm a state al-Iraqiya TV facility in Basra March 30, 2008, forcing Iraqi military guards surrounding the building to flee and setting armored vehicles on fire. (AP Photo/Nabil al-Jurani)

March 30, 2008 The Associated Press & by Hassan Abdul Zahra (AFP) & Reuters

Dozens of Mahdi army fighters stormed a state TV facility in central Basra earlier Sunday, forcing Iraqi troops guarding the building to flee and setting armored vehicles on fire.

No casualties were reported but the attack illustrated the stark challenges facing al-Maliki's government in the oil-rich area amid anger by al-Sadr's followers over recent detentions and raids targeting his Mahdi Army militia.

Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr said Sunday that he was pulling his fighters off the streets nationwide and called on the government to stop raids against his followers and free them from prison. Basra.

Representatives of Sadr and the government had been engaged in negotiations in Najaf since Saturday to end the standoff.

Sadr aide Hazam al-Araji said the new orders to Mahdi Army fighters came in response to “guarantees given by the government to stop the arrests and fighting in all cities of Iraq”.

Six people were wounded, including four civilians, in clashes between Iraqi security forces and Mehdi Army fighters in Baghdad's Ur neighbourhood, police said.



Mahdi Army fighters drive away with captured Iraqi government vehicles outside a state run al-Iraqiya TV facility in Basra, March 30, 2008. (AP Photo/Nabil al-Jurani)

Resistance Action

March 27 (Reuters) & 28 Mar 2008 Reuters & 29 Mar 2008 (Reuters) & KUNA & March 30, 2008 The Associated Press & Reuters

A roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol, killing four policemen and wounding four in the town of Mahaweel, 75 km (45 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas attacked an Iraqi army patrol in the town of Daquq, 45 km (30 miles) south of Kirkuk, killing four soldiers, police said.

Mortars killed two policemen and wounded 13 policemen in Karma, a town 80 km (50 miles) north of Basra, police said.

A roadside bomb killed one policeman and wounded three others when it hit their patrol in the Amil district of southwestern Baghdad, police said.

Two Iraqi policemen were killed after being attacked in the city of Mosul northern Iraq, an Iraqi police source told KUNA on Saturday. The attack took place at a local market in al-Baladia area, which resulted in the immediate death of the policemen, the source added.

A car bomber killed five U.S.-backed Sunni fighters and wounded eight other people near the oil hub of Beiji, 250 kilometers (155 miles) north of Baghdad.

Guerrillas killed five policemen in Duluiyah, a Sunni-dominated area 75 kilometers (45 miles) north of Baghdad.

A car bomber killed five U.S.-allied neighbourhood patrol volunteers, and wounded eight in an attack on a checkpoint in Saniya west of Baiji in northern Iraq, police said.

Three police officers were wounded when their station was attacked in the New Baghdad neighbourhood, police said.

Three U.S.-backed neighbourhood patrol members were wounded by a roadside bomb in Hawija, 60 km (40 miles) south of Kirkuk, police said.

Ibrahim Bajlan, the head of Diyala provincial council, escaped an assassination attempt near Saadiya, 80 km (50 miles) north of the provincial capital Baquba, police said. Two of his bodyguards were killed in the attack.

Two policemen, including a police Colonel, Ziyad Qasim, were killed in clashes with guerrillas in western Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb killed an Iraqi army officer and wounded two soldiers when it struck their vehicle in northern Najaf, 160 km (100 miles) south of Baghdad on Saturday, a security source said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is

not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

Narcissism



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: March 25, 2008

Narcissism

**America,
you are finally reaping what you sow.
From the " Wall " in Washington, D.C.
to the collapse of Wall Street.
As Martin Luther King Jr. once wrote:
"No Lie Can Live Forever."
The Titanic Empire is approaching
the iceberg of lies.
America,
you have bombed,
sent missiles,
or military troops,**

into over 30 countries since 1965.
When the American people open their
personal cash registers to see what
they are worth,
there will only be dead American soldiers,
and an infinity of dead innocent civilians
around the world.
That's what happens when apathy
becomes a virtue.
Fasten your seat belts America,
the swarming locust are coming
home to feed.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
March 25, 2008

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

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

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

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

Lessons Unlearned:

“A Lull In Guerrilla Action Is Usually A Danger Sign, Not A Victory”

[Vietnam Then, Iraq Now]

They had never heard of General Gwynn and so did not realize that, in countering an insurgency, the military was fulfilling a police role and had to apply minimum, not maximum, force; nor would they have known of his warning that a lull in guerrilla action is usually a danger sign, not a “victory”.

The oft-expressed American desire to persuade the Viet Cong “to stand and fight,” a desire inherited from the French, was another pathetic fallacy. These were professional guerrillas who would not stand and fight—except on their own terms.

From: WAR IN THE SHADOWS: THE GUERRILLA IN HISTORY, BY Robert B. Asprey; Captain, USMC, ret’d; William Morrow And Company; New York, 1994

Whatever the President said about guerrilla warfare, these officers, in general, secretly believed that military professionalism would prove more than a match in any battle with “irregulars.” Although, in time, some of the younger advisers would realize this error, the bulk remained convinced that professionalism—by which they meant adherence to Western military doctrines—would *win the war*.

They had never heard of Major Callwell’s writings on small wars, so they would never have pondered his sage advice to regard the native as the professional, the newcomer as the amateur.

They had never studied Gallieni’s and Lyautey’s pacification campaigns. They had never heard of General Gwynn and so did not realize that, in countering an insurgency, the military was fulfilling a police role and had to apply minimum, not maximum, force; nor would they have known of his warning that a lull in guerrilla action is usually a danger sign, not a “victory”.

Lacking suitable background, the American command did not realize that Western-style warfare is quantitative and that insurgency warfare is qualitative. To fight the latter successfully is frequently to reverse normal standards of measurement, just as trick mirrors in an amusement park make a fat person thin and a thin person fat.

From the beginning, the American command erred by trying to use maximum, not minimum, force, and by designating the guerrilla the primary target rather than the population that supported him.

Dead guerrillas became “victories”—enough “victories” would “win” the war.

They did not understand that an insurgency is not “won”—except that it fades into relative quiescence.

Unlike the Western battlefield, a rising body count in an insurgency is a danger sign. So is the necessity for “surprise” encounters, no matter how successfully fought.

Progress is not made in an insurgency situation until local peasants are protected sufficiently and have sufficient reason to support government forces and supply necessary information on which to base operations.

The oft-expressed American desire to persuade the Viet Cong “to stand and fight,” a desire inherited from the French, was another pathetic fallacy. These were professional guerrillas who would not stand and fight—except on their own terms.

The Americans also failed to understand that qualitative warfare calls for careful target selection—that “saturation” of a battle area contains a number of built-in booby traps in an insurgency situation. The more units involved, the more-attenuated the lines of communication, thus the more targets available to the enemy.

Worse than this, saturation of a battle area invariably damaged the peasants’ crops and villages, frequently killing innocent people, thereby alienating the very persons the government needed to “win.”

Military commanders could not understand this. When General Harkins “. . . was asked about the political consequences when villages were hit with napalm, he replied that it ‘really puts the fear of God into the Viet Cong.’ ‘And that,’ he said, ‘is what counts.’”

“Impregably Armored By Good Intentions And Ignorance”

With a few splendid exceptions, American advisers did not understand very much. They came with confidence instead of caution; they taught before they learned. From Nolting on down, too many of them resembled Alden Pyle—Graham Greene’s Quiet American, “. . . who was impregably armored by his good intentions and his ignorance.”

The insurgencies of our time, not to mention those of history, might never have happened. The lessons they furnished weren’t so much lost— they were never learned. To accomplish the military goal in Vietnam, to win the war,” to achieve “victory,” the American military command sought to repair doctrinal deficiencies with machines.

It relied on technology as opposed to motivation, on helicopters and jeeps and trucks and armored personnel carriers, aircraft and ships as opposed to men.

It did precisely what the American military command in China had done nearly twenty years earlier. It attempted to remedy political, social, and economic deficiencies with metal.

The advisers were not at first discouraged because the new technology brought illusory success.

The South Vietnamese Government estimated that the Viet Cong began the year with about sixteen thousand hard-core guerrillas. They estimated that in 1962 they had killed about twenty thousand “guerrillas” (I use quotation marks because we shall never know how many innocents were included in the figure). Yet VC strength, they estimated, had increased to twenty thousand! . . . At the same time,” Roger Hilsman later wrote, “captured documents, interrogation of prisoners, and other intelligence indicated that at the most only three to four thousand infiltrators had come down the Ho Chi Minh trail.” The other replacements came from hamlets and villages, and if some arrived under duress, a great many others came freely.

Despite ARVN “victories,” the Viet Cong retained control of major areas.

In summer of 1962, this writer flew several missions with U. S. Marine Corps helicopter squadrons operating out of Soc Trang, south of Saigon, the mission being to haul ARVN units to this or that threatened area. Fuel for these machines came from Saigon by tank truck, the Saigon trucker paying the Viet Cong a “toll” in order to pass to Soc Trang.

This meant that at any moment the Viet Cong could prevent marine helicopters from flying. This rarely if ever happened—should it not have occurred to MACV that the effort could scarcely have been hurting the Viet Cong if the choppers were allowed to keep flying?

The fallacy of the new approach was already becoming evident. Initial Viet Cong fright soon turned to bewilderment; analysis followed to produce countertactics. Night operations increased, since helicopters at first did not fly at night.

Assassinations and kidnappings greatly increased, the reasons being to enforce discipline, demonstrate determination, and gain recruits. By spring of 1962, the Viet Cong were beginning to fight back, and, by autumn, were not only pursuing active guerrilla tactics but were standing against ARVN units. Once again, Viet Cong countertactics were immensely aided by intelligence derived from peasant networks that, while on the defensive, were scarcely defunct.

Marines at Soc Trang and American field units elsewhere were living, to use Bernard Fall’s term, in a fishbowl, their every movement, their take-off and landing, their resupply, noted and reported by Viet Cong agents.

Static Defense

The new technology did nothing to repair the existing gap between Vietnamese army units and peasants; indeed, helicopter delivery widened the intelligence gap by flying troops over villages and thus eliminating personal contact with the peasants—perhaps a good thing in the case of rapacious army units.

The new vehicles also proved expensive.

Helicopters and armored personnel carriers require large workshop and storage complexes, installations that in Vietnam demanded ground troops to provide security and nonetheless remained vulnerable to guerrilla attack, as did their lines of communication to major supply centers.

Troops so assigned inevitably assumed a static role, to the guerrilla's benefit.

Armor plate and motors did not erase poorly conceived plans. American and Vietnamese planners were trying to strike the enemy all over the place. All too often, these were random strikes, because the commands lacked proper intelligence on which to base specific and profitable operations.

Where good intelligence existed, Viet Cong intelligence frequently countered it. Helicopters and APCs are noisy, and a black-pajama-clad Viet Cong did not take long to ditch his weapon and either commence work in the field or hide along the reeded bank of a nearby canal.

By summer of 1962, frustrated American airmen had begun developing new tactics, for example "eagle flights," whereby helicopters landed a unit in a suspect area. If contact resulted, other, lingering helicopters immediately brought in reinforcements. The poverty of this tactic is too obvious for comment.

Blaming The Reporters

The conflict between Saigon and the field—between wishes and facts—had already produced a chilling corollary: extreme intolerance, on the part of both the Saigon regime and the American mission, of journalists who questioned the validity of allied performance.

In March 1962, Mme. Nhu had begun persuading President Diem to expel three troublemakers, the veteran news correspondents Homer Bigart of the *New York Times*, François Sully of *Newsweek*, and James Robinson of NBC, each of whom was increasingly harassed by the Saigon government, as were other correspondents who, in Joseph Buttinger's words, were ". . . accused of being part of an international Communist-inspired conspiracy to slander the regime."

"The U.S. mission was anything but forceful in defending these correspondents against abuse and ill-treatment, and almost apologetic in explaining that these men were merely trying to live up to the American concept of a free press. Ambassador Frederick E. Nolting, Jr., and General Paul Harkins in particular were incensed by the American newsmen's attacks on the regime. . . . They, as well as their superiors in Washington, spoke repeatedly of the "slanted" or even "irresponsible" press reporting out of Saigon, convinced not only that the correspondents who criticized the regime did harm to U.S.-South Vietnamese relations, but also that they were wrong."

Reporters who wrote favorable accounts, among them Marguerite Higgins, Joseph Alsop, and Richard Tregaskis, received comforting little pats for their part in what

was rapidly becoming the great deception. The Administration was running scared.

Recruiting for The Resistance, 1960's Style

Lansdale warned that the most urgent function is “. . . to protect and help the people”:

“When the military opens fire at long range, whether by infantry weapons, artillery or air strike, on a reported Viet Cong concentration in a hamlet or village full of civilians, the Vietnamese officers who give those orders and the American advisers who let them “get away with it” are helping defeat the cause of freedom. **The civilian hatred of the military resulting from such actions is a powerful motive for joining the Viet Cong.**”

On the following day, Ambassador Taylor joined the select group of officials to report on the Vietnam situation. His words could not have been more gloomy. A new civilian government in Saigon was proving no more effective than the former military government, either in the capital or in the provinces. The Viet Cong everywhere had advanced and were threatening to cut the country in half. Despite heavy casualties produced by an increasingly stronger professionally competent ARVN, the Viet Cong not only were making good their losses but were adopting new and improved tactics:

“The ability of the Viet-Cong continuously to rebuild their units and to make good their losses is one of the mysteries of this guerrilla war. . . . (We find) no plausible explanation of the continued strength of the Viet-Cong if our data on Viet-Cong losses are even approximately correct.

“Not only do the Viet-Cong units have the recuperative powers of the phoenix, but they have an amazing ability to maintain morale. Only in rare cases have we found evidences of bad morale among Viet-Cong prisoners or recorded in captured Viet-Cong documents.”

“Are We Really Going To Be Beaten By Iraqis?!”

[Excerpt from Human Smoke: The Beginnings Of World War II, by Nicholson Baker]

“Churchill told General Wavell to mount a general offensive in Iraq.

General Wavell contested the order -- there weren't enough troops, he said, and there were other countries to consider . . .

Churchill countermanded him, whereupon Wavell sent a warning . . . “The political repercussions will be incalculable.”

Churchill told him to stop worrying and “break into Baghdad even with quite small’ forces, “to install a friendly government.

When the attack went badly, Churchill’s under-secretary lamented: “Are we really going to be beaten by Iraqis?!”

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

**Welcome To Liberated Iraq:
U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING
DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR;
RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED
RESISTANCE THAT IS**



3.24.08: A foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. soldier questions an Iraqi citizen during an operation in Diyala Province, northeast of Baghdad.(AFP/David Furst)

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

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

"You get the interpreter and you get the man of the home, and you have him at gunpoint, and you'll ask the interpreter to ask him: 'Do you have any weapons? Do you have any anti-US propaganda, anything at all--anything--anything in here that would lead us to believe that you are somehow involved in insurgent activity or anti-coalition forces activity?'

"So you've just humiliated this man in front of his entire family and terrorized his entire family and you've destroyed his home. And then you go right next door and you do the same thing in a hundred homes."

Sgt. John Bruhns

Sometimes we would shred up floors, couches and beds. We'd take all the women, children and old men (that was mostly who was in these houses—women, children and old men), we'd take them outside and throw them into the grass and we'd start yelling at them as to where weapons are, where the men are.

Mark Wilkerson, Iraq Veterans Against The War

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

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

**The Great Iraqi Troop Training
Fiasco:
"It's Only People Armed With Assault
Rifles And Pickup Trucks And They Go
And Raid Like A Militia"**

Mar 30 By CHARLES J. HANLEY, AP Special Correspondent [Excerpts]

In its latest quarterly report, in early March, the Pentagon says some 197,000 military personnel have now been trained, but that number includes the equivalent of two divisions — 27,000 men — estimated to have gone AWOL in 2007.

Some 224,000 police are listed as trained, including an unknown number who left their posts.

The Iraqi military's list of unmet needs remains long: artillery and modern armor; advanced communications and intelligence systems; a logistics network able to supply everything from food and fuel to transport and ammunition; combat hospitals; airpower.

“This is not a balanced fighting force,” said al-Qassab, the retired Iraqi general. “It's only people armed with assault rifles and pickup trucks and they go and raid like a militia.”

Report From Baghdad; **“It's Unraveling A Months-Long Ceasefire”** **“While The President Is Calling This A ‘Defining Moment In The History Of A Free Iraq,’ He Is Not Acknowledging That The Battle Is Forcing The Mahdi Army To React In Perceived Self-Defense”**

March 29, 2008, Anonymous; washingtonbureau.typepad.com/baghdad/

It's the second day of curfew in Baghdad. We can't go anywhere, although the government who imposed the curfew is still scheduling press conferences.

On Thursday in a drive through Baghdad areas controlled by the Sadrists, followers of Shiite cleric Muqtada al Sadr, were sealed off either by the militia or Iraqi Security Forces. People trying to reach their homes got out of their cars and walked.

In parliament on Thursday Sadrists tried to speak about the battle in Basra, an offensive that began Tuesday mainly between Iraqi Security Forces and their militia, the Mahdi Army. They couldn't get enough votes to speak.

They disrupted the session screaming, “Maliki's a dictator,” referring to the Iraqi Prime Minister. Ali al Adeb, a lawmaker from Maliki's Dawa party spoke up.

“Let them speak, but let's do it in a civilized manner,” he said.

The Sadrist lawmaker Falah Shanshal stood up.

“You're not civilized,” he said. Then threw a water bottle at him. The session was adjourned.

While the government claims it is going after outlaws in Basra, the southern oil hub, it is clear they are targeting Mahdi Army controlled area. With the group under attack they are reacting and a freeze that Sadr put on his militia is unraveling.

Sadrists feel targeted and isolated among the Shiite parties. They believe that this battle is to undercut their reputation and popularity before the provincial elections in October. Their Shiite rival, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, (ISCI), retains control of much of the south but is far less popular than the Sadr trend. Provincial elections would take ISCI's monopoly on power in the south away.

While the President is calling this a “defining moment in the history of a free Iraq,” he is not acknowledging that the battle is forcing the Mahdi Army to react in perceived self-defense.

It's unraveling a months-long ceasefire that U.S. officials said was a huge factor in a drop in violence in Iraq. In Baghdad violence is climbing, two U.S. citizens were killed in attacks on the Green Zone.

Maliki will not back down and the Mahdi Army will not disarm.

We'll see what the coming days bring.

They Dont Think About Us: “They Never Realize That Hungry Stomachs Are Timed Bombs That May Explode Any Moment”

March 29, 2008 by Laith [Baghdad] washingtonbureau.typepad.com/iraq/

It had been my fourth days in the office.

I couldn't go home since I came on Wednesday. When I tried to go home on Thursday afternoon, I couldn't find a taxi because of the violence wave that swept Baghdad neighborhoods which pushed the government to announce curfew.

In a way or another, I could manage staying in the office in spite of the big pain in my heart.

I always think about my son. I miss him so much. I miss hugging him, I missed his sweet kisses on my face, I miss his sweet smile when he sees me, I miss his tears when my wife doesn't allow him to do whatever he wants and I really love his face when I defend him as if he teases his mother.

I was planning to tell my boss that I want to go early tomorrow and I know she wouldn't mind at all but it looks that planning for more than one hour is impossible in my country.

About less than one hour ago and while I was watching a football match with my colleague, our office manager told us that the government decided to extend the curfew until further notice which means I have to stay another night in the office.

When I heard the news, I started thinking seriously about the most important thing.

I started thinking about food, not my food but Iraqis food.

I'm really surprised with the way our government thinks because it didn't take in consideration the most important need for the people, the government didn't ever think about food.

Iraqi families are locked in their house for the last four days; they didn't store much food because they never expected such a curfew.

The food that the families usually store might be enough for two days as a maximum. The markets are empty since the second day of the curfew.

It looks that our great government forgot that not all the Iraqis are prime minister or high rank officials or it may believe that Iraqis use the solar power to live.

It looks that our politicians never read history; they never realize that hungry stomachs are timed bombs that may explode any moment.

Come on our great politicians, we don't have the money you have, we don't have the power you have and more than that, we have real human hearts not politicians hearts.

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/)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to NB & JM, who sent this in.]

Bush Praises Iraqi Resistance Fighters

"One day, people will look back at this moment in history and say, 'Thank God there were courageous people willing to serve, because they laid the foundations for peace for generations to come.'" George W Bush, March 24, 2008, Associated Press

LIAR

**TRAITOR
TROOP-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND
UNWORTHY OF OBEDIENCE**



(AFP/Saul Loeb)

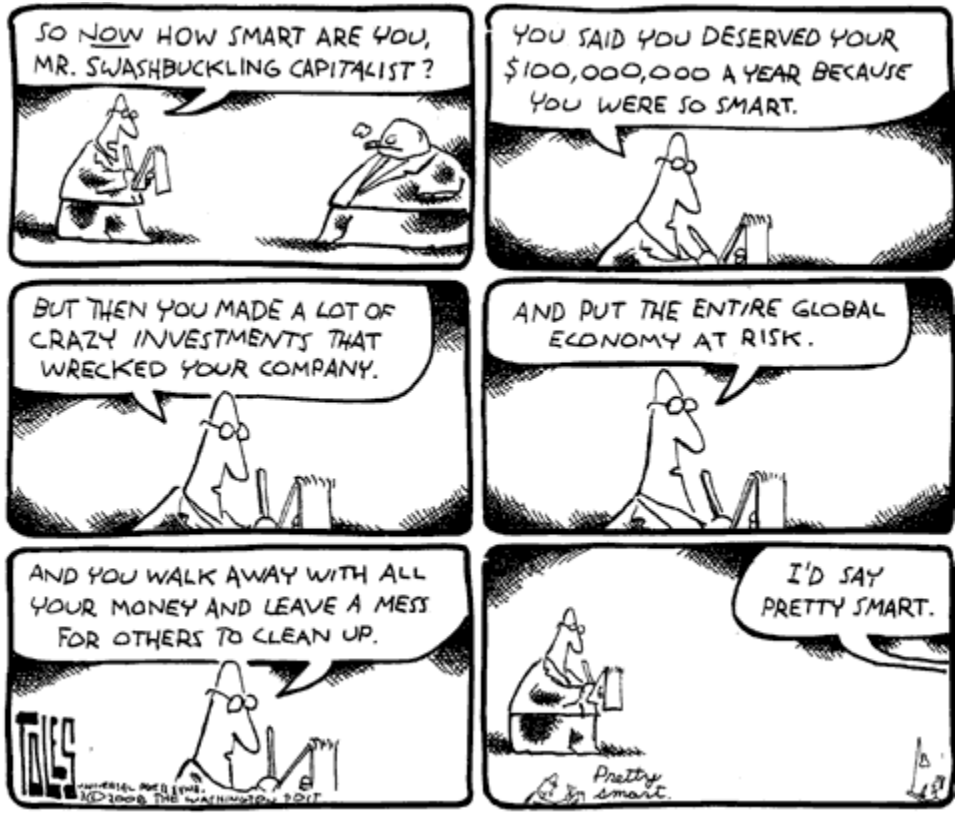
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