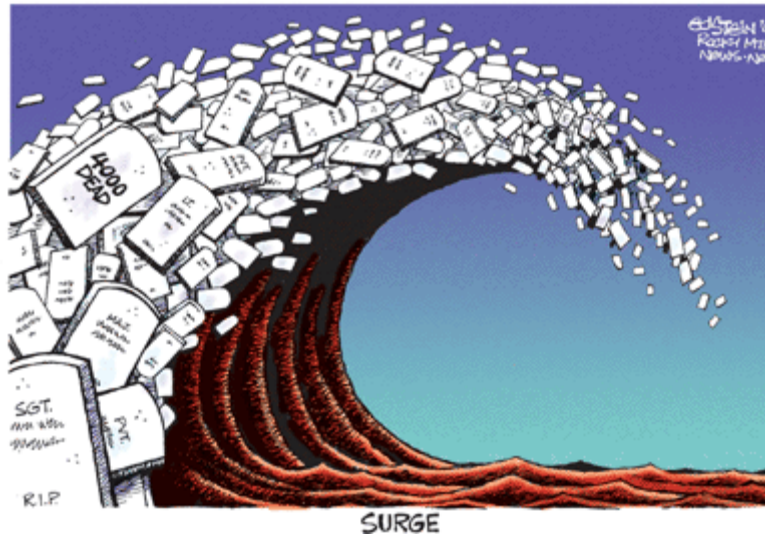


GI SPECIAL 6D16:



**“I Hope That Our Senior
Leadership Would Reconsider The
Overall Folly Of Continuing The
Iraq Occupation”**

**“Our Military Is Designed To Defend
Our Country, Not To Indefinitely
Occupy A Country Where We Are Not
Welcome”**

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
4.21.08

I noticed Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph E. Veppert's letter ["Retract E-6 change," Army Times, April 7] and completely agree. The current automatic promotions are hurting our Army for years to come by bequeathing future soldiers a severely weakened NCO Corps, which will later become a weakened Senior NCO Corps.

However, I disagree that the policy itself is folly.

The policy stems from the fact that we are hemorrhaging NCOs, to the point where people echelons above my paygrade have decided they have no choice but to promote weak leaders and hope that they will get better.

But this is a symptom, not the problem itself.

The problem is the slow breakdown of our military over the course of the Iraq occupation.

Our military is designed to defend our country, not to indefinitely occupy a country where we are not welcome.

With no draft, soldiers who are forced to repeat combat tours with not enough dwell time — extended in some cases as long as 18 months — are leaving the Army as soon as they are done being stop-lossed.

The policies in question are simply reactions to that.

I, too, would hope our senior leadership would reconsider its folly. But I place the buck higher.

I hope that our senior leadership would reconsider the overall folly of continuing the Iraq occupation.

**Sgt. Selena D. Coppa
Darmstadt, Germany**

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. Phone: 917.677.8057

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed In Salah Ad Din

April 19, 2008 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080419-02

TIKRIT, Iraq – A Multi-National Division – North Soldier was killed when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated while Soldiers were conducting a patrol in the Salah ad-Din Province April 18.

Baghdad IED Kills U.S. Soldier

April 18, 2008 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080418-06

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier was killed in an improvised-explosive device attack at approximately 1:45 p.m. April 18.

The attack struck the vehicle the Soldier was riding in while conducting a combat patrol just north of Baghdad.

Norfolk Soldier Dies From Wounds Suffered In Iraq



A picture from Sgt. Jevon K. Jordan's MySpace.com page.

April 2, 2008 By Steve Stone, The Virginian-Pilot

A soldier from Norfolk who was injured in an explosion in Iraq last month has died, the Pentagon said late Wednesday.

The Department of Defense said Sgt. Jevon K. Jordan, 32, died Saturday at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Landstuhl, Germany.

Jordan was wounded March 23 in Abu Jassim, Iraq, when the vehicle he was in encountered an improvised explosive device, the Pentagon said.

Jordan was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division based at Fort Stewart, Ga.

He was a tanker, meaning he was an armored crew member, said Kevin Larson, a spokesman for the base. Jordan was an expert on the M1 tank.

According to his page on MySpace.com, Jordan attended Granby High School from 1990 to 1993 before transferring to Salem High School in Virginia Beach where he graduated in 1994. He then went on to attend Tidewater Community College for two years and majored in Political Science.

He joined the Army in April 2003 and arrived at Fort Stewart in July 2006, Larson said. The 4th Brigade Combat Team deployed in November for 15 months.

"I'm about making it in life," he wrote on his page, where he listed himself as "a proud parent."

He leaves behind his wife, Michelle Jordan; daughter, Michelle Jevontae Jordan; son, Tony Jordan; stepsons, Cory Baker and Zakees Baker, according to his obituary. A wake will be held tonight at 7 p.m. at Graves Funeral Home at 1631 Church St. in Norfolk. A funeral will be held at the funeral home at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

He will be buried at Albert G. Horton Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk, his obituary says.

"I have big dreams for me and my kids," Jordan wrote on his page. "I hustle to get what I need. I'm a firm believer in working for yourself, and not anybody else... the American dream is alive and well and I plan on living it by any means."

Oakmont Soldier's Kindness Touched Others



Jason C. Kazarick

April 10, 2008 By Tony LaRussa, TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Friends of a soldier from Oakmont who was killed in Iraq remembered him Wednesday as a kind and gentle person who was proud to serve his country.

Army Cpl. Jason C. Kazarick, 30, and another soldier died Monday in a rocket-propelled grenade attack in Sadr City, the U.S. Department of Defense announced. Kazarick was deployed to Iraq on Aug. 15, 2007.

“He was very excited the day he told me he had joined the military,” said Cheryl Pierce, who owns the apartment building on Virginia Avenue where Kazarick lived at the time he enlisted in the Army in October 2005.

“He was working in an auto dealership, and I believe they liked him a lot, but he really felt like he wanted to do something more with his life. I think he saw serving in the military as a way to do that,” said Pierce, 61, of Wilkinsburg, a psychologist in private practice.

Pierce described Kazarick, a 1995 graduate of Plum High School, as an outgoing and gracious man who “put up with quite a lot” while living in her apartment building because it was being renovated. But rather than complain, Kazarick earned extra money by helping with demolition, construction and landscaping.

A neighbor in the apartment house said that after the remodeling work was completed, Kazarick continued to help out by cutting grass on the property and planting and caring for the trees, shrubs and flowers.

“One day he knocked on my door and was excited that the roses he had planted were blooming,” said Norma Jean Leslie, 69, who lived in the apartment above Kazarick.

“He handed me two roses and said they were the first ones that he picked. That little gesture really touched my heart. I kept those roses for the longest time,” she said.

Leslie said Kazarick was always quick to drop what he was doing to help carry groceries or trash bags for the residents in the apartment house.

“He was a very kind and respectful guy,” Leslie said. “He really left an impression on me. It truly breaks my heart to know that he is gone.”

Plum school officials, neighbors and family members along the Plum street where Kazarick’s mother, Susan M. Dubaich, lives declined comment on his death.

Kazarick also is survived by a brother, Taylor Dubaich, a sister, Marissa Dubaich, and his fiance, Susanne Hutzelmeyer.

Kazarick was posthumously awarded a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart.

Also killed in Monday’s attack was Sgt. Michael Lilly of Boise, Idaho.

The two soldiers were assigned to the Army’s 1st Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, based in Vilseck, Germany.

Trini-Born U.S. Soldier Killed In Iraq

April 5th 2008 Caribbean Voice

JUST three weeks before he was scheduled to return from Iraq, Trinidadian-born US soldier, Sergeant Dayne Dhanoolal, was killed in Baghdad.

Dhanoolal, 26, died of massive injuries when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle on Monday, the US Department of Defence said in a statement.

Dhanoolal was originally from Acono Road, St Joseph, before he migrated to New York 11 years ago.

Dhanoolal, who joined the US Army six years ago, was a combat engineer with the 3rd Brigade in Fort Benning, Georgia. He was supporting "Operation Iraqi Freedom". His older sister, Sergeant First Class Jillene Fenton, is on her fourth tour in Iraq.

Dhanoolal, the only son from five children, was the youngest.

In a statement yesterday, his sister, Darlene Dhanoolal, said, "This is a tough time for our family because we always knew this was a possibility, but we never imagined that it would happen."

Darlene added, "He was the type of person that left a happy memory wherever he went. No matter the situation he always tried to make the best of it."

"We will forever remember his gigantic grin... we know that you (Dayne) are definitely smiling down from heaven at us.

"You are gone but you will always be missed, loved and always remembered forever in our hearts."

Reports in the New York Post said three hours before Dhanoolal was killed, he text-messaged his 28-year-old wife, Kynesha, to tell her he loved her. It was the last thing he said to her.

The couple, who got married three weeks before he first went overseas, had been together over Christmas, before he had to return to Iraq, the paper reported.

Norfolk Widow Shares Story of Fallen Soldier

April 9, 2008 WTKR

On a rainy Wednesday afternoon, in an aged and chilly National Guard armory building, woman did one of the most difficult things anyone ever has to do.

She braved the bright lights and TV cameras to talk about the husband she just lost to a roadside bomb in the war in Iraq.

Staff Sgt. Jeremiah McNeal would have been American casualty number 4,024 or 4,025, but because Nikita McNeal decided to hold a press conference with Hampton Roads media, her husband will be remembered as much more.

She spoke these words through tears.

"I am here today to tell you about my husband, Staff Sgt Jeremiah McNeal. It is important for me to show was not another number. He was a son, a brother, a husband, a father and my best friend.

"Jeremiah was born in Norfolk and graduated from Booker T. Washington and proudly joined the National Guard. He joined to support his family and to better himself and his community and the Commonwealth. He was proud of his service and he enjoyed his life in the guard. He was very, very happy about serving and we are very proud of him. Although Jeremiah was very proud of his service, he worked hard to separate the military life from his family and I'm here to tell you about the man we grew to love.

"Jeremiah will always be my best friend. When he first saw me he kept staring at me and he walked up to me and said, 'You're pretty,' and he walked away. That's when he stole my heart. He always called me beautiful because he said Niki just didn't sound right. I had the joy of marrying him. We have a beautiful son. His name is Jordien. He's 4-years-old. I know that Jeremiah will be watching over us because Jeremiah will always be my angel.

"He liked to run and work on computers. He graduated at the top of his class at Tidewater Community College. I think he was a bit of a computer geek.

"He liked to fix things even though he broke them most of the time. He worked at Raytheon for past 2 years as a technical support associate and loved working for his company. Everyone there called him little brother.

"Jeremiah grew up in a very religious family - he was very spiritual. In fact, his fellow guardsman called him preacher man. When in Iraq he enjoyed mentoring junior soldiers. His fellow guardsman were like brothers to him. They tell me that Jeremiah was an inspiration to many who served with him.

"Jeremiah is loved by many and will be missed by all who shared the pleasure of knowing him. I want to say to him that we love you. And you will be missed and we will never never forget you.

South Tahoe High School Teachers, Friends Recall Sgt. Timothy M. Smith



4.11.2008 By Jeff Munson, North Lake Tahoe Bonanza

Army Sgt. Timothy M. Smith, a 2001 South Tahoe High School graduate, died Monday in Baghdad, Iraq.

According to an Army news release, Smith was killed when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device while conducting a route clearance patrol.

On Wednesday, STHS staff and friends fondly recalled their time with the South Lake Tahoe resident.

Irma Salazar, now a campus security guard at STHS, remembered Smith well. The two graduated together from the school in 2001 and were good friends.

Salazar recalled Smith as a good-natured teenager, "the class clown" who liked to skateboard and always was up to having fun with students and faculty.

"He got along with everybody and was very social with everybody. He was a real people person," Salazar said, recalling how the pair periodically goofed off.

She remembers, for instance, the time she carried Smith in her arms to class.

"We laughed the whole time," she said.

Dee Petrell, a STHS workability job developer, recalled Smith as a "very nice young man" who gently blended courtesy with a genuine sense of humor.

"He was a real sweetheart," Petrell said. "He would give everyone hugs when he'd see them. He was a loving person with a big heart."

As a paraprofessional educator at STHS, Eleanor Heckendorm worked with Smith for three years at the high school and also knew him when she worked at the Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe.

She said Smith was “an incredible young man, full of life and energy. He could make you smile. He could make you laugh, and sometimes he could make you angry. He was a just a great all-around kid.”

Smith joined the Army in April 2004 and completed basic and advanced individual training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., according to the Public Affairs Office at Fort Drum, N.Y., 10th Mountain Division.

Smith was assigned to Fort Polk, La., in September 2004. He previously deployed with his unit to Afghanistan from March to November 2006 and deployed to Iraq last November.

His military education included the Warrior Leader Course, Combat Lifesaver Course and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Team Course, according to Fort Drum.

Fort Drum listed Smith’s awards as the Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal and the Combat Action Badge.

Smith is survived by his wife and son, who are both of Fort Polk, La.; his father, of Reno; his mother, Patricia, of South Lake Tahoe, who is an employee at Barton Memorial Hospital; and his brother Tom and sister Jackie.

**Mehdi Army Fighters Counter-Attack Iraqi Army Positions In East Baghdad’s Sadr City: “I’m Giving The Last Warning And The Last Word To The Iraqi Government”
“We Will Declare An Open War Until Liberation”**

Loudspeakers At Mosques Warn Iraqi Security Forces Mehdi Army Is “Unbeatable”



Mehdi Army patrol, in Sadr City, Baghdad, April 9, 2008. (AP Photo)

The fighting came amid reports that Iraqi troops backed up by U.S. forces were trying to recapture a position in the district abandoned a day ago by a company of government soldiers.

Security forces in the area also have come under repeated attack by militants trying to prevent the construction of a concrete wall through the district.

April 19, 2008 CNN & Reuters & MSNBC & April 20, 2008 By Amit R. Paley and Ernesto Londoño, Washington Post Foreign Service

Amid blinding dust storms, Sadr’s Mehdi Army fighters attacked Iraqi army positions in east Baghdad’s Sadr City.

The fighting came amid reports that Iraqi troops backed up by U.S. forces were trying to recapture a position in the district abandoned a day ago by a company of government soldiers.

Security forces in the area also have come under repeated attack by militants trying to prevent the construction of a concrete wall through the district.

The wall — a concrete barrier of varying height up to about 12 feet — is being built along a main street dividing the southern portion of Sadr City from the northern, where Mahdi Army fighters are concentrated.

The Mehdi Army has encouraged desertions by telling Iraqi soldiers they will be forgiven and their safety will be assured if they drop their weapons - a message it repeated on Friday.

“To all our brothers in the Government’s army and police forces, we invite you to repent, return to the national line and to the arms of your people,” the statement read.

According to Sadr City residents, the Mehdi Army used loudspeakers at mosques Thursday to warn Iraqi security forces to avoid the area, saying the Mehdi Army was unbeatable.

Clashes broke out Friday evening in the Abu Dsheer in the district of Dora in southern Baghdad, where Mehdi fighters clashed with Iraqi security forces backed by U.S. troops in what was described as some of the heaviest fighting in Baghdad for weeks.

Moqtada al-Sadr on Saturday threatened an “open war” against the Iraqi government unless it halted a crackdown by Iraqi and U.S. security forces on his followers.

“What mistake have the followers made to escape the injustice of Saddam only to fall under the yoke of assassinations?”

Leewa Smeisim, the head of Sadr’s political bureau, said that the cleric had tried to avoid fighting but that the government had taken advantage of his cease-fire by carrying out mass arrests and executions, particularly in the southern cities of Basra, Diwaniyah, Nasiriyah and Karbala.

The specter of a full-scale uprising by Sadr sharply raises the stakes in his confrontation with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, who has threatened to ban the anti-American cleric’s movement from political life unless he disbands his militia.

“I’m giving the last warning and the last word to the Iraqi government -- either it comes to its senses and takes the path of peace ... or it will be (seen as) the same as the previous government,” Sadr said, referring to Saddam Hussein’s fallen regime, without elaborating.

“If they don’t come to their senses and curb the infiltrated militias, then we will declare an open war until liberation.”

“Do you want a third uprising?” Sadr said, adding that he wanted Iraq’s Shi’ite clerical establishment to set a date for the departure of American troops.

In Sadr’s Baghdad stronghold of Sadr City, one Mehdi Army commander said he was “thrilled” about the statement.

“We will wait until tomorrow to see the response of the government. Otherwise they will see black days like they have never seen before in their life.”

In Baghdad, police described battles between security forces and gunmen that began on Friday in Sadr City as among the heaviest in the capital since Maliki launched a crackdown on the Mehdi Army in the southern city of Basra late last month.

Police said 12 people had been killed in the Shi'ite slum. Hospitals said they received more than 130 wounded overnight.

In his statement, Sadr did not refer to the truce, but his spokesman in the holy city of Najaf, Salah al-Ubaidi, said the cleric was not bluffing.

"We mean every word," Ubaidi told Reuters.

Sadr issued his warning after Iraqi soldiers swooped on the Mehdi Army's stronghold in Basra.

MORE:

Fierce Fighting In Basra

April 19 (KUNA) & Reuters

Fierce fighting broke out on Saturday between militiamen loyal to the nationalist Muqtada Al-Sadr, and Iraqi government forces in the southern city of Basra, witnesses said.

The armed clashes broke out after the regulars burst into Al-Hayyaniah district, a main base for Al-Mehdi Army.

The dawn raid by government troops there was backed by a thunderous bombardment by U.S. warplanes and British artillery.

Leaders of Al-Sadri movement has called on authorities to lift the siege on the militia's strongholds.

MORE:

Iranian Government Supports Attacks On Sadr's Mahdi Army By U.S. & Collaborator Forces

[Of course they do. Sadr is a nationalist opposed to the Iranian-U.S. plan to break up Iraq into regional governments. Duh. And Iranian allies run the occupation government in Baghdad. And they all hate the Mahdi Army. Double duh. T]

April 20, 2008 By Amit R. Paley and Ernesto Londoño, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpt]

In a news conference, the Iranian ambassador to Iraq said his government supported Maliki's recent Basra offensive, saying the Iraqi government has a right to target "criminal groups."

MORE:

As Occupation Butchers Them, Sadr's Politicians Betray The Victims; “Why Does Everybody Keep Silent, Nobody Mentions The Suffering Of The Citizens In This City?”

April 19, 2008 By Raviya H. Ismail, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

Fighting overnight in Sadr City, the militia's main Baghdad support base, killed at least five people and injured 19, according to officials at the district's Imam Ali Hospital.

U.S. air strikes and daily skirmishes have made life extremely hard for the area's estimated 3 million residents. Food rations are in short supply and hundreds of families have fled Sadr City in recent days.

Residents expressed frustration and anger with both the Iraqi government and Sadr's political representatives.

“The missiles hit us without us knowing where they came from,” said Najam Abu Nour, 38, who lives in Sadr City.

“Where are the 20 Sadrist parliament members?

“Why don't we hear their voices?

“Why does everybody keep silent, nobody mentions the suffering of the citizens in this city?”

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

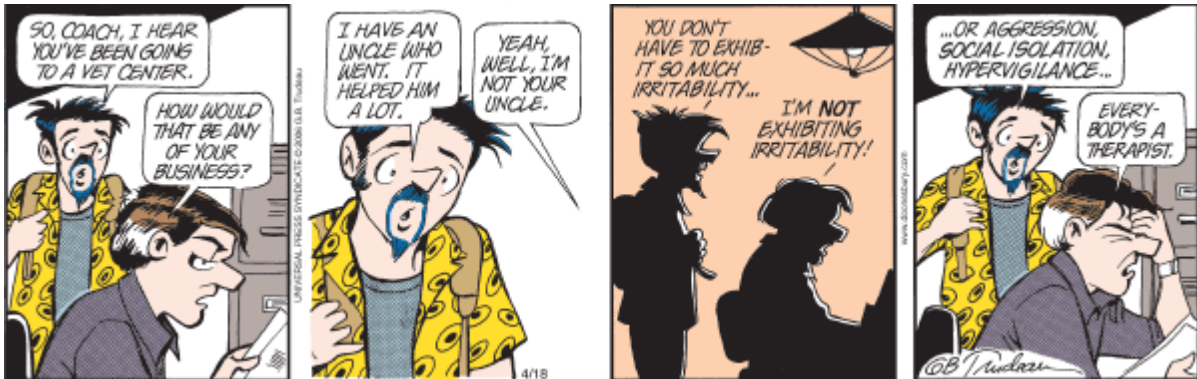
And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

WELCOME TO IRAQNAM: HAVE A NICE DAY



A U.S. Army soldier from 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment peers around a corner after hearing shots fired during their patrol in Sadr City in Baghdad, April 17, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

TROOP NEWS



**Message To Patriotic America:
“You Believe In The Cause, Then
Go Fight It, Until ‘Victory’”
“Then See How Much You Think It Is
A Great Idea”**



Apr 17 2008 by Reagan Sullivan [Iraq Veterans Against The War]

Branch: United States Army (USA)

Home: New Mexico

I served 3 years in the ARNG, 3 years active duty. Spent one year in Iraq (OIF1).

I'm sick of the situation our country is in, so called patriots banging the war drum on almost a daily basis, bashing those who disagree and calling them cowards, traitors, communists, etc... well, here is my response to the past few years of verbal and physical BS war-resisters, anti-war protesters, fed up civilians, and those who choose to speak out have put up with.

This is also for all those in the military who have not, or will not have an opportune time to get out of the service due to the need to support his/her family, stop loss, backdoor draft, IA, and have had to endure multiple tours in a seemingly endless occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan some despite having PTSD or other critical issues that should require them to stay in the US and get help.

This is for all those who have died for nothing, this is for all those who went out on pointless missions and died because their vehicle hit a bomb, this is for all the Iraqi people who have been needlessly killed because of BAD INTELLIGENCE and a reluctant administration that refuses to admit things are not going to work out as predicted.

On that note, here I go.

**If you are between the age of 18-35 (Or whatever the max age is now)
Support the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan
Are of sound mind and physically able to serve in the military
Believe you are patriotic**

THEN GO JOIN THE ARMY OR MARINES

And at this point in time I don't care if you are a veteran or not, you beat the war drum, you get to beat the streets of Iraq and Afghanistan.

I don't care if you are in college at this time, college will still be here if you came back alive.

It's your turn Mr. Patriotic American, your turn to sacrifice for the war effort.

You believe in the cause, then go fight it, until "victory".

Then see how much you think it is a great idea.

Thank you.

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. Phone: 917.677.8057

N. Y. Man Who Left Army In 2004 After Losing Hearing In One Ear In Afghanistan Recalled To Active Duty; May Be Sent To Iraq

Apr 18, 2008 Post Chronicle

A New York state man who left the Army in 2004 after losing hearing in one ear in Afghanistan has been recalled to active duty and told he may be sent to Iraq.

James Raymond told The Buffalo News he thought his stepfather was joking when he called him and told him about the redeployment notice.

Raymond, now a student at the University of Buffalo, spent three years in the Army. After he was honorably discharged, the Department of Veterans Affairs classified him as 10 percent disabled, awarding him disability payments of \$120 a month.

He said he was told when he received his discharge that his name was on the Individual Ready Reserve list. But he was also told he would not be called up unless World War III breaks out.

Soldiers can remain on the IRR list until their service, including active duty, totals eight years.

Raymond, who says he has gained 50 pounds since he left the Army, would prefer to remain in Buffalo, where he was chosen Homecoming King.

"I want families who have a son or daughter who got out to know their son or daughter might be redeployed," he said.

**“Undiagnosed Eye Problems
May Afflict Troops With
Traumatic Brain Injury”**

**“Minney Spent Time At Three
Major Military Medical Facilities,
None Of Which ‘Bothered To Look
Inside My Head’”**

**“New Blind Center Of Excellence Was
Mandated In 2008 But Was Not
Funded, And Has Since Been
Downgraded”**

**“He Wonders How Much Better His
Vision Would Be If His TBI Problems Had
Been Addressed Earlier”**

[Here it is again. Same old story. Used up, thrown away, and the politicians couldn't care less. To repeat for the 3,523rd time, there is no enemy in Iraq. Iraqis and U.S. troops have a common enemy. That common enemy owns and operates the Imperial government in Washington DC for their own profit. That common enemy started this war of conquest on a platform of lies, because they couldn't tell the truth: this war was about making money for them, and nothing else. Payback is overdue. T]

In the meantime, paperwork needed to complete his military disability retirement was locked in the mail room at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for two weeks, delaying his retirement, and his Blind Rehabilitation Outpatient Specialist quit the Richmond VA center because, Pearce said, he was frustrated by the bureaucracy and the lack of cooperation within the polytrauma network.

He was left with no care for his eyes from June until October 2007.

April 14, 2008 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

A few days after the blast from a mortar round almost threw him off the Haditha Dam in Iraq three years ago, Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Glenn Minney reported to sick call with a headache and itchy eyes.

The medics treated him for pinkeye.

When he returned a month later because he felt as if he were looking at the world through a veil, the battalion surgeon again treated him for pinkeye.

"I couldn't see well enough to fire my weapon," Minney told the House Veterans' Affairs oversight and investigations subcommittee April 2.

The next day, he woke up blind in his right eye. The unit decided to evacuate him. Immediately upon arriving in Germany, he had surgery on both eyes.

After returning to the States, he was sent home to recuperate.

"The second day I was home, I lost my vision," he said.

His eyes weren't the only problem. "The eye healed from the surgeries," he said, "but it was also the optic nerve that was damaged as a result of a traumatic brain injury."

Minney had also lost brain tissue in the occipital lobe, which controls the eyes, as a result of the blast, which isn't uncommon when the concussive wave of an explosion whips the head back.

An estimated 1,400 troops have vision problems caused by combat injuries, but hundreds of undiagnosed eye problems may afflict troops with traumatic brain injury.

According to the Blinded Veterans Association, 75 percent of service members with TBI also have complaints about vision problems including double vision, lack of peripheral vision, color blindness and total blindness.

“The numbers seem to be a moving target here,” said Thomas Zampieri, director of government relations for the BVA.

He said the numbers now are “drastically” higher than they were three years ago, but he has been unable to get a total from the Pentagon.

He’s also angry that a new Blind Center of Excellence was mandated in 2008 but was not funded, and has since been downgraded to little more than a registry.

Zampieri said he has talked to retired military sources who report that as many as 3,000 men and women may have been returned to duty in Iraq after being treated for eye injuries, and that as many as 7,000 veterans, if properly screened, would be diagnosed with some visual dysfunction.

But many vision-impaired soldiers are not quickly diagnosed because, like post-traumatic stress disorder or mild traumatic brain injuries, these eye injuries are not always readily apparent.

And some physicians don’t seem to know what to look for; if they’re looking for an injury to the eye itself, they may miss the brain injury, as they did in Minney’s case.

His TBI wasn’t diagnosed until 10 months later, when a Department of Veterans Affairs physician requested an MRI.

Minney spent time at three major military medical facilities, none of which “bothered to look inside my head,” he said. “The VA did.”

Army Staff Sgt. Brian Pearce lost his sight when shrapnel cut into his right occipital lobe in October 2006 in Iraq.

The day after the injury, his wife, Angela, learned that her husband had gone blind. Doctors decided not to worry about his vision, however, because his head injury was so severe that he was in a coma-like state for 47 days.

But even after he regained consciousness, the Pearces say they were told not much could be done about his eyes. Pearce also has problems with short-term memory loss.

Angela Pearce chose to transfer her husband to a VA treatment center in Richmond, Va., but no one connected his vision problems to the brain injury. If they had, Angela Pearce said she may have chosen a TBI center because nothing is wrong with her husband’s eyes — his brain simply can’t interpret the signals they send.

In the meantime, paperwork needed to complete his military disability retirement was locked in the mail room at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for two weeks, delaying his retirement, and his Blind Rehabilitation Outpatient Specialist quit the

Richmond VA center because, Pearce said, he was frustrated by the bureaucracy and the lack of cooperation within the polytrauma network.

He was left with no care for his eyes from June until October 2007.

He later entered the Eastern Blind Rehab Center, where he underwent six weeks of therapy, and he continues to receive VA treatment.

But he wonders how much better his vision would be if his TBI problems had been addressed earlier.

“Bad news doesn’t get any better with time,” he said. “‘Son, you’re blind.’ OK. Got it. Moving on. They didn’t do that.”

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

GET THE MESSAGE?



A concrete block wall surrounding a neighborhood in Baghdad in March 2008.
(AFP/File/Ahmad al-Rubaye)

Resistance Action

April 18 (Reuters) & April 19 (Reuters) & AP

Two Iraqi soldiers were killed overnight by a grenade in Sadr City, the U.S. military said.

Guerrillas shot and seriously wounded an interior ministry official in eastern Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb killed one Iraqi soldier on Thursday when it struck his patrol in Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb killed two Iraqi soldiers and wounded another one when it targeted their patrol in Tuz Khurmato, 180 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb struck a police patrol, killing one policeman and wounding two in the southwest of Kirkuk, police said.

One policeman was killed and three wounded in clashes with guerrillas near Nassiriya, 375 km (235 miles) southwest of Baghdad, hospital and police officials said.

One Iraqi soldier was killed and four others wounded when a roadside bomb struck their patrol in Yarmouk district, in western Baghdad, police 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

**"What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms."
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

**"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"
-- Camille Desmoulins**

**"When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, "No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country."
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq**

Winter Soldier II Investigation



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: April 20, 2008
Subject: Winter Soldier II Investigation

**Winter Soldier II Investigation
Silver Spring, Maryland
March 13-16, 2008**

**When the intellect can no longer
censor the soul, the truth is born.**

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71**

April 20, 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

OCCUPATION REPORT

So Much For That Lying Bullshit About “Iraqi Sovereignty”: U.S. Military Dictator Hard At Work In Al-Muqdadiyah; Arresting Police, Interrogating & Fingerprinting Iraqi Citizens, And Whatever Else Lt. Col. Coffey Orders Be Done

April 18, 2008 By Richard Tomkins, Radio Free Europe [Excerpts]

AL-MUQDADIYAH, IRAQ -- U.S. forces are targeting errant Iraqi police and criminal elements within their ranks to protect newfound gains in security and sectarian reconciliation in the towns and villages of Diyala Governorate, north of Baghdad.

About 200 soldiers from the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment last week cordoned off Al-Muqdadiyah's Al-Askari district and searched it for Iraqi police officers and others suspected of being members of Shi'ite kidnap-for-ransom gangs targeting Sunni residents of the city.

Elsewhere, less orchestrated detentions are taking place when strong evidence warrants.

“We’re going to continue to communicate that sectarianism isn’t going to do anyone any good,” says Lieutenant Colonel Rod Coffey, commander of the regiment responsible for Al-Muqdadiyah and its surrounding areas. “Also, we are simply going to arrest any IP (Iraqi police) that breaks the law.

“Now if an IP breaks the law it’s generally because he is doing something sectarian -- kidnapping or something. So we are going to continue to arrest corrupt IPs, and that’s corrupt not just in the economic sense but also in the sectarian sense.”

Al-Muqdadiyah is around 100 kilometers north of Baghdad.

Also, during the cordon and search of the community, all military-aged males were whiteboarded -- photographed, fingerprinted, and retinal scanned. That information was entered into a database together with their personal information, such as address, which can be used in future investigations.

[Captain Mike Stinchfield, the Hawk Company commander] said there would be more special detention raids on Al-Askari and elsewhere in Al-Muqdadiah in addition to regular presence patrols.

Other measures to shore up the police include whiteboarding of all officers, unannounced visits by U.S. troops to police offices and checkpoints, and advanced training of officers.

Civilian contractors from the U.S.-based Dyncorp oversee the "democratic policing" training, which is conducted by specially trained Iraqi instructors.

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Resistance Attack Wounds 13 Zionist Soldiers

Apr 19 AP

Hamas militants drove two booby-trapped military vehicles into another Israeli border crossing with Gaza under the cover of morning fog Saturday, detonating one and wounding 13 soldiers in one of Hamas' most ambitious attempts to target Israelis since Israel's pullout from Gaza in 2005.

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

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 to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

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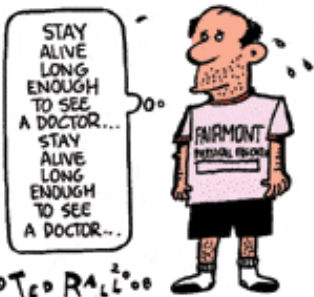
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“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

“The military are the final, essential weak point of Bush and Cheney.” David McReynolds 9.29.07

CLASS WAR REPORTS



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