

GI SPECIAL 6D20:

REPORT:



U.S. Army soldier wears peace sign as he patrols a village south of Baghdad, AP photo/Maya Alleruzzo

**“Bridging the Gap, Making It Happen” Organizers’ Conference
In New York City, April 5th
“Those Civilians Who Get It Must Organize To Do Outreach Wherever We Live, Whatever Military Installation You Can Frequent, And Talk To Those Soldiers, Sailors And Marines”**

“If You Are Paying Attention, You Will See That Not Only The Power Of This Resistance Is Mighty, It Is Increasing Daily”

“When I got out of the Navy, I knew the war was wrong, but didn’t know how to go about expressing that. I joined IVAW, and then met members of the Military Project. It dawned on me that this was the thing to do. Go and speak to the troops. And that’s what I have been doing ever since.”

From: Elaine Brower, The Military Project
To: GI Special
Sent: April 25, 2008

I. Introduction

Organized by The Military Project, with the assistance of *GI Special* (www.militaryproject.org) and *Traveling Soldier* (www.travelingsoldier.com), the Conference “Bridging the Gap, Making it Happen,” held on Saturday, April 5th in Middle Collegiate Church, New York City, was, to say the least, spectacular!

At last there was an organizers’ conference to bring together people who are sick and fed up with endless war, and endless protests, to exchange ideas, learn techniques and speak to others who are actually doing face to face outreach with active duty military, National Guard and Reserves.

Bringing together union members and veterans who oppose the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to do direct, face-to-face outreach to troops will prove to be a combustible combination that can help troops turning against the wars build a movement that stops them.

Speakers included Selena D. Coppa, an active duty Army Sergeant stationed at Darmstadt, Germany and a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW); Jeff Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW); Mike Hastie, Vietnam Veteran and photographer; Garrett Reppenhagen, IVAW; Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veteran and poet; Richard Boyle, author and Vietnam war reporter; Sanford Kelson, Veterans for Peace (VFP); and Clarence Thomas, National Co-Chair of the *Million Worker March* and Executive Board member of Local 10, International Longshore and Warehouse Workers Union based in San Francisco.

GI resistance was the instrument that ended the Vietnam War.

Those who spoke on the panels, such as “*First Hand Reports on Sentiment Against the Wars in the Armed Forces;*” “*Resistance Through Evocation: Photographs, Poems;*” “*Troops Resist War; Vietnam and Iraq, Eyewitnesses;*” “*Outreach to the Troops: Organizing Tactics in the Real World;*” and, a presentation from Daniel Joseph Black,

Iraq Veterans Against the War and Clarence Thomas, Local 10, International Longshore and Warehouse Union, totally roused the audience of veterans and civilians interested in talking face to face with active duty military, guard and reserves.

Richard Boyle, Vietnam War Reporter, and author of “*Flower of the Dragon: The Breakdown of the US Army in Viet Nam*”, spoke about how he personally risked his life to drop into Firebase Pace during a time when soldiers there numbered about 400 and the VC enemy forces were upwards of 4,000. He gave a chilling account of how the soldiers were told to perform a recon mission and scout the perimeter, while they all knew they were completely outnumbered and did not want to die in a useless bloodbath of a war.

They decided to refuse orders, and mutiny. Boyle documented the resistance with photographs and on his small cassette tape recorder. He was able to smuggle the documentation of this mutiny out of the country, where he then tried to get Congress to listen and learn about how, even though the Pentagon and military officials kept insisting there were no troops in that firebase, that they were there and had refused to fight.

(For more about Richard Boyle see <http://movies.nytimes.com/person/82692/Richard-Boyle>)

II. Iraq Veterans Against The War: Spread And Nurture Resistance!

Selena Coppa, active duty military Army Sgt. and a member of IVAW, as well as a mother, is an example of organizing against the war while still “on the inside” of the military.

She speaks to believing in the oath she swore to, and feels it is her duty to lead by example.

She joined IVAW believing it is the only moral thing to do in the current situation.

Sgt. Coppa is currently stationed in Darmstadt, Germany and spends time talking to other soldiers about the war. She organized active duty military while at Ft. Hood and also at Ft. Meade. She states, “I just start by asking someone ‘what do you think about this war?’ and get into a conversation.” “At first, the officers weren’t too happy about what I was doing, but now it is much easier.”

Daniel Joseph Black, United States Marine Corps, 2000 to 2005 (served in Fallujah, Iraq, as well as Kuwait) and a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War, spoke brilliantly about how he discovered after his tours in Iraq, that the war was illegal and immoral.

Black states, “We never swore to obey, we swore to defend and if defending requires our disobedience of an autocratic war criminal, then we are so bound by our oath to defend the Constitution.”

(Read more at www.ivaw.org/member/daniel-joseph-black).

Garett Reppenhagen (former Army Scout Sniper, 2-63 AR BN 1st Infantry Division 2002 to 2005) and Jeff Englehart (former Army Specialist, 19 Delta-Cavalry Scout from 2001 to 2005) served in Iraq at the same time, but were in different locations.

While stationed in Iraq, they started a blog against the war "*Fight to Survive*", which they did when each of them were stationed in different locations, not even spending time together. They worked along with fellow soldiers on the frontlines to keep the blog going.

This blog, the first of its kind, attracted the attention of the officers, and caused problems for one soldier.

However, the anti-war messages kept going out and received notoriety amongst the ranks. They were also inspired to continue their fight against the war while still stationed in Iraq by reading "*Flower of the Dragon*."

Both Garett and Jeff spent time in Iraq talking to other soldiers about the futility of the war, the total lack of reasons to be there, and the horror of it all. They put up stickers around the base where they were stationed which said "Bush Lied, Who Died!"

Now, members of IVAW, they continue their struggle to speak to active duty military at various military bases about organizing tactics against the war (visit the links to read more postings written by Garett (www.ivaw.org/member/garett-reppenhagen-0) and Jeff (www.ivaw.org/membersspeak/supporting-gi-resistance)).

Fabian Bouthillette, former US Naval Lieutenant, and a graduate of the Naval Academy; a member of IVAW and the Military Project, led the discussion about how important it was for members of the anti-war movement to do outreach to the troops.

He said, "When I got out of the Navy, I knew the war was wrong, but didn't know how to go about expressing that. I joined IVAW, and then met members of the Military Project. It dawned on me that this was the thing to do. Go and speak to the troops. And that's what I have been doing ever since."

III. Support From Labor Against The War, Veterans For Peace & Civilian Activists

Sandy Kelson, VFP, who organized two weeks of outreach at Ft. Stewart Army base, which is home to roughly 19,000 soldiers, of which approximately 15,000 are currently deployed, talked about direct outreach at the base.

In February, 2008, he and others, stood at a traffic light right before the entrance and distributed 500 copies of "Sir, No Sir!", the Dave Zieger film about GI resistance during Vietnam, and 385 copies of "The Ground Truth", a film documenting resistance by the military against the war in Iraq, as well as 1300 packets of leaflets, including VFP and

IVAW applications, Appeal for Redress, GI Rights pocket cards, and other materials. Sometime after they did this outreach they discovered that the PX and other locations on the base were discussing the materials that they had delivered.

Mike Hastie, Vietnam Veteran and photographer, presented his evocation against the war by displaying his vividly moving pictures from Vietnam. His photos were hung around the room surrounding the audience and reminding them about the quagmire that this Country led us into almost 40 years ago, and how eerily similar it was to what is happening today.

He particularly moved the crowd by removing 5 of his hanging photos and read stories related in the captions. Faces of Vietnamese children, men & women, soldiers who were all adversely affected by the devastation they had witnessed and lived through.

Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veteran and member of VFP, read his extremely moving and heart wrenching poems which can be found regularly in the publication GI Special at www.militaryproject.org. The audience was completely silent and greatly touched during the reading.

Other veterans who spoke about the importance of doing face to face outreach to the troops were Alberto Jaccoma, and Alan Stolzer, both members of VFP and the Military Project.

Jaccoma said, "I went to a meeting where a group was planning to do something... hold hands....and we did that, and I thought 'what does this mean'. Then I go to the armory and feel like I have accomplished something." "It's hard to be there at 5:30 in the morning, in the snow and rain, and you think 'what am I crazy?' but when you leave you feel like you've accomplished something."

Of course there are the civilians who believe that outreach to the troops is the way to end this war.

Presentations by Katherine Gorell, Johanna Petit and Elaine Brower, all of the Military Project, talked about how they got involved in this kind of work.

Katherine Gorell, whose father was a Vietnam Veteran, and died from agent orange poisoning, is a zealot when it comes to trips to the local Harlem armory. "There's nothing more productive, or useful. Protests just don't work." Johanna Petit, who lives by the naval base in Connecticut, started by handing out GI Rights materials to the sailors either in the mall or at the Groton Naval Base.

I spoke about roaming the Country in search of military installations to hand out flyers to the troops. Starting outreach at 29 Palms Marine Corps Base in California when my son was stationed there to leave for Iraq in 2005, I told the audience, "Before I left for California, I called some friends who are part of a local chapter of "World Can't Wait, Drive Out the Bush Regime. They met me and we went to the corner, about a block outside the main gate and we held a banner that said "Drive Out the Bush Regime!"

"We handed out flyers to cars at the intersection that talked about how bad the war was, as well as the problems with this government, and Marines in uniform

took them. They gave us the peace sign, thumbs up and fists up all the way and that was in 2005!

When I got back on the base to see my son, he said 'mom, some of the guys said they saw you on the corner with signs and stuff?', "no not me," I said.

Michael Letwin of New York City Labor Against the War (NYCLAW), who spoke and introduced a fellow union member from California, Clarence Thomas.

The conference wrapped up with a presentation by Thomas, National Co-Chair of the "*Million Worker March*", and Executive Board member of Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union who spoke on "Iraq Veterans + Union Workers = History In Motion." The history of this particular Local 10 and its members is one of courageous acts. Before the war started, Thomas addressed a crowd of over 2 million anti-war activists in London that February 2003.

In a statement made to labor leaders gathered last year in San Francisco he called on workers to stand up and take organized action against the war in Iraq, saying that politicians can't be counted on to halt the bloodshed.

"Until people get off their asses and do something, there won't be change."

On May 1st the ILWU, dockworkers plan to stop work for eight hours in U.S. West Coast ports. "No peace, no work" holiday was declared for May Day, International Workers' Day.

His fiery speech at the conference brought cheers as he spoke to the importance of union solidarity with Iraq Veterans Against the War and his commitment to supporting outreach to the troops. "It's a working man's military, and we are all part of the same union of brotherhood."

(To watch video go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jxhrDNzugo> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ms9-NBYItL4>)

IV. The New Generation Of Resisters

This conference helped provide materials, motivation and acted as a catalyst to those who understand that outreach to the troops is the way to end not only end the occupation in Iraq, but could exert an influence on how and when our government decides to deploy the armed forces.

Some of us remember the days of the GI resistance during the Vietnam war, and how it grew exponentially while the peace movement remained stagnant and ineffective.

Once the force of those military members turned against the governmental structure and all that it was doing, they were unstoppable.

We are seeing the growth of a new GI rebellion.

On the heels of “*Winter Soldier 2008: Eyewitness accounts of the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan*” (see <http://www.ivaw.org/wintersoldier/testimony>), this conference stressed the need to nurture that resistance by forming an alliance, or bridging the gap, between the civilians who are determined to put an end to the imperialistic occupation, and the members of the armed forces who are refusing to protect and defend a lie, continue the bloodbath that politicians refuse to stop, kill and die in the process.

If you are paying attention, you will see that not only the power of this resistance is mighty, it is increasing daily.

Members of the military completely understand what is happening in Iraq, as well as Afghanistan, and have the ultimate power to stop it.

Those civilians who get it must organize to do outreach wherever we live, whatever military installation you can frequent, and talk to those soldiers, sailors and Marines.

They want to hear you, see you, and hunger for the information you can share with them, as we have done.

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

ACTION REPORTS

SOME DAYS ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS

Armory Outreach – 4/18/08

Railroad Stations – 4/20/08

From: Alan Stolzer, The Military Project
To: GI Special
Sent: April 21, 2008
Subject: Some Days are Better than Others

It was enjoyable not to be soaked by rain when meeting the troops as our last outreach was at the National Guard Armory on [XXXX] This time we (dryly) passed out handouts comprised of: GI Rights Pamphlet, our Why We Are Here statement and the 3/08 issue of Traveling Soldier (#17).

As per usual we were got a friendly welcome from incoming soldiers. We discovered afterwards that two units had not come to drill. Consequently, of the 125 prepared handouts we passed out only 65. But the cookies and brownies (supplied by Sally D.!) were accepted and a first time outreach, Dee K., energetically distributed what was left of the cookies on the bus as the troops were leaving around 7:45 pm.

Making rounds at [XXXX] Station I was able to pass out 7 info packets (those prepared for 4/18 + GI Specials).

The first contact was a group of 3 soldiers which included a sergeant a bit reluctant to take the material since soldiers can't be seen holding anything but what they're ordered to. Nevertheless, she realized she could fold it and place it in the large pocket of her trousers. Once this was done the other two quickly followed suit.

3 more packets were given to patrolling soldiers, one who recognized me, and a young woman he was talking to who'd just joined the Army because "she likes the uniform." She received a packet as well with good luck wishes.

This brings me to the highlight of the day.

Another soldier was at an ATM. I waited until he was done and approached. He was in a hurry and after taking a handout he asked me how to get to 7th Ave. I told him and asked what unit he was in.

"69th" he replied, "and I'm headed for [XXXX] and I need a taxi." Once he walked away I slapped my forehead realizing he was headed for that armory address (the one we've been trying to access for over two years). After some well directed profanity at myself for not having realized this at once I remembered I still had [YYYYYY] Station to outreach and due to the wonders of modern transportation, hey!, I could take a subway to [XXXXXX] and check out the armory after all!

Profanities now having subsided I went to [YYYYYY] Station and found 5 Guardsmen clustered at an info desk, one who knew me. He told me he hadn't seen "Sir!, No Sir!" yet but planned to. He seemed appreciative of my presence, not because of any special charisma I emit but because SOMEBODY GAVE A DAMN ABOUT HIM IN THE FIRST PLACE! The other four seemed interested and willingly took the handouts.

Now, to the mentioned subway. Once at [XXXXX], I stopped in a store and after the purchase asked if the clerk knew anyone in the military. "No," he replied. "Why?" I told him and he said he had a cousin. I showed him my last info packet and he said, "I think she'll like it."

At the armory there were 6-8 soldiers on the steps. The soldier from [XXXX] Station was there and glad to see me.

The troops were loading onto a bus and seemed a bit rushed. One lingered on the steps a bit and I struck up a conversation. "Where you guys headed?" I asked. He told me they were volunteers to see the Pope.

We continued talking and I told him, no insult intended, that I found it contradictory that the Dalai Lama and the Pope (two men desirous of world peace) found it comfortable to pose with George Bush.

The soldier nodded and smiled.

I went on to explain who we were and he listened with interest. I asked him about drilling at the 69th and he said he'd provide a schedule via e-mail although his drilling is in [XXXX] where he will provide a schedule there too!

This a.m. I e-mailed him info on our lit and expressed desire to continue contact.

Helluva good day if we get into [XXXXX] this way. It was luck, really, since I usually head to [YYYYYY] Station first and then [XXXXX] Sta. But yesterday I reversed and the timing couldn't have been better.

MORE ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!

An effective way to encourage others to support members of the armed forces organizing to resist the Imperial war is to report what you do.

If you've carried out organized contact with troops on active duty, at base gates, airports, or anywhere else, send a report in to GI Special for the Action Reports section.

Same for contact with National Guard and/or Reserve components.

They don't have to be long. Just clear, and direct action reports about what work was done and how.

If there were favorable responses, say so. If there were unfavorable responses or problems, don't leave them out.

If you are not planning or engaging in outreach to the troops, you have nothing to report.

NOTE WELL:

Do not make public any information that could compromise the work.

Whether you are serving in the armed forces or not, do not in any way identify members of the armed forces organizing to stop the war.

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs his or her name be listed as reporting on the action.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Another Fallen Son



Dean Opicka

April 17, 2008 By BILL GLAUBER, Journal Sentinel Inc.

Luxemburg - Sometime next week, they will bring home the remains of Marine Lance Cpl. Dean D. Opicka.

They will transform the Luxemburg-Casco High School gym into a special place for a visitation, photos and flowers triggering reverence and remembrance. They will celebrate a life well lived in a Mass at St. Mary Catholic Church. And then, they will travel down the road to a small rural graveyard and bury a young man in the Wisconsin soil.

And surely it will be respectful and appropriate, because that is what small communities do in a time of war, at a moment of grief, especially communities that already know the very high cost of combat.

Opicka, 29, from the Class of 1997, is the third former student of Luxemburg-Casco High School to die in the Iraq war.

He was killed Monday in a roadside bombing in Iraq's Anbar province in a blast that also claimed the life of Marine Cpl. Richard J. Nelson, 23, of Kenosha.

Jesse Thiry died in 2004, and Luke Zimmerman died in 2006. They were members of the Luxemburg-Casco High School Class of 2000.

How much sacrifice can one school make? How many of its former students can it lose to a war?

"I said that with the first one," Steve Okoniewski, the school principal, said Thursday. "You certainly don't want to lose a second one. You don't want to lose a third one. That's the game you're in. You're in the military, in a dangerous situation. People perish."

The war in Iraq still remains an abstraction for many in the country. A war held at arm's length, fought by other people's kids.

But here, the war is painfully real, fought by kids from the community.

The dress blue Marine uniform Thiry once wore is encased in glass, next to the library at the school. In a trophy case, there's a Thiry Memorial Scholarship plaque with the inscription: "An ordinary farm boy who walked these halls, who gave his life for freedom for all."

Zimmerman's memory is honored at a springtime track meet.

And now, the school will have to find a way to memorialize Opicka, who was a member of Milwaukee-based Fox Company reserve unit and who lived in Waukesha. "All were athletes," Okoniewski said. "All were involved in school activities. All had character. They were determined, loyal people."

Opicka was a star in the Class of 1997, a three-sport athlete who quarterbacked the football team, played point guard in basketball and also played baseball. He was the prom king, a member of the National Honor Society and the student government. He sang in school musicals.

Opicka's father, David, a former farmer who is now a welder for a boat company in Sturgeon Bay, serves on the local school board. Two weeks ago, the father proudly showed off photos of his son handing out candy to kids in Iraq, Okoniewski said.

"The kid was an educator," Okoniewski said. "He wanted to come back and teach in the district. That's the memory I have, the last picture as an educator in Iraq."

The principal fought back tears. It has been an awful week. News of Opicka's death raced through the community late Monday.

Thursday, Okoniewski met with Opicka's younger brother, Darren, a Marine who is stationed in California but who previously fought in Iraq.

"Dean was serving in the same exact location as Darren," Okoniewski said. "Darren knew exactly the streets Dean was on."

Outside the principal's office, classes continued as kids walked in the hallways between bells.

In front of the school, the American flag flew at half-staff.

"A lot of the students themselves don't understand the concept of what is going on. But they will," said Chris Menden, 31, a health and physical education teacher.

Menden, a member of the U.S. Army National Guard, was based in Kuwait in 2005 and served on missions in Iraq. He said some people may have questions about the sacrifices made by so many from the school.

"Why we're still there always comes up," he said. "What are the troops still doing there? Does it make a difference? That's a question I don't know if anyone can answer."

For now, though, the community grieves and prepares to receive a fallen son.

Tim Kinnard, president of the local school board, is the fourth generation in his family to help operate the Wiesner-Massart Funeral Homes. He and his brother Jim are helping make funeral preparations. Tentatively, the casket bearing Opicka's remains is due to arrive early next week.

"We're going to get thousands of people come through the visitation," Kinnard said.

Kinnard will try to make sure everything is perfect. So will others, everyone from custodians at the school to parishioners at the church to those who will make ready a grave at St. Adalbert Catholic Cemetery in Slovan.

The cemetery was established in 1859. The name Opicka appears on several headstones.

"He'll be buried by his grandpa out there," Kinnard said. "He had told his parents he wanted to come back to his home area."

Parish Loses Fifth Soldier In Iraq War

April 16, 2008 By William Johnson, World

St. Landry Parish soldier Joseph "Little Joe" Richard has paid the ultimate price, giving his life for his country in combat in Iraq Sunday.

He is the fifth soldier from St. Landry Parish to die in Iraq since the beginning of combat there five years ago.

Neighbor Lois Lee said officials from the U.S. Army came by about 7 p.m. Monday to inform his family of the tragic news. They were told Richard had been on patrol when his Humvee was hit by a roadside bomb.

Lee said Tuesday his parents, Joe and Elaine Richard, were in DeRidder comforting Richard's wife, Monique.

"Monique called and told them, 'I need you,'" Lee said.

Elaine Richard is the owner of the Brambleberry Lane sewing shop on Creswell Lane in Opelousas.

"Our kids grew up together. It is like losing one of my own," said neighbor Marilyn LaFleur, who lives on the other side of the Richard home on La. 748, just down from St. Peter's Catholic Church in Grand Prairie.

LaFleur described Richard, the youngest of the Richard's three children, as about 27 or 28.

She was unaware of his rank or unit, but knew he was deployed to Iraq from Fort Polk for a third tour of duty in November, the same month the base's 3,500 man strong 4th Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division left for Iraq.

"His aunt asked him why he signed up for a third deployment. He told her, 'To save my country.' He was a very fine child," LaFleur said.

She described him as a likable, outgoing young man who loved to go hunting with his father. "He was good in school, very bright. All the children liked him," LaFleur said.

Richard graduated from Grand Prairie Elementary School and then Sacred Heart of Ville Platte before attending the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Lee said Richard and his mother spoke often over the Internet, most recently this weekend.

"He called and told her his best friend had just been killed by a roadside bomb. He told her he wouldn't be able to call her for the next three days because he was going out on a mission. He said it wasn't a good mission but promised he'd call her when he got back," Lee said.

"He asked her to pray for him," LaFleur said.

LaFleur described Richard as a very religious young man, dedicated to both his family and his church.

"He loved to pray, he loved St. Joseph. His parents raised him right," LaFleur said.

Indirect Fire Hits Green Zone "In The Fiercest Salvo In Weeks" Casualties Not Announced

4.27.08 By Alexandra Zavis, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer & By KIM GAMEL, New York Times

Militants hammered the U.S.-protected Green Zone Sunday in the fiercest salvo in weeks, apparently taking advantage of a sandstorm that blanketed the capital and grounded the American aircraft that normally prowl for launching teams.

Thunderous explosions resounded throughout the evening as rockets or mortar shells slammed into the heavily fortified area in central Baghdad.

In Baghdad, at least eight rounds slammed into the Green Zone, which houses the Iraqi government and U.S. Embassy, said a police official who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Sirens could be heard from the area and loudspeakers warned residents to take cover. There was no immediate word on casualties or damage.

The militants apparently were taking advantage of a sandstorm that blanketed the Iraqi capital Sunday and grounded U.S. helicopters and drones that normally track their activities.

Iraqi Political Leaders Protest U.S. Attacks On Sadr City Fighting Goes On

April 27, 2008 By Hussein Kadhim and Raviya H. Ismail, McClatchy Newspapers & By Alexandra Zavis, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — About 50 leaders representing a variety of Iraqi political blocs took to Baghdad's Sadr City on Sunday, a stronghold of fiery religious leader Muqtada al Sadr, to protest the U.S.-led siege of that area.

The leaders promised to work together with Sadrists to remove insurgents and weapons in the area. But they also had six other demands of the government, including that it immediately suspend military activity in the city, supply basic services to residents and prioritize peaceful solutions over military conflicts.

"Whatever point the crisis reaches we will keep our efforts to put an end to it," said Ahmed Radhi, a member of the Iraqi Accordance Front, the largest Sunni Muslim bloc. Radhi said the leaders formed a committee to meet with Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki to solve problems plaguing Sadr City.

"We have a delegation meeting with Maliki to let him know the real situation going on in the city," said Nassar al Rubaie, a Sadrist. "We have lawmakers from different blocs and parties to come and watch the situation on the ground."

Lawmakers representing the Iraqi National Accord, the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue and the Kurdish alliance also were present. The leaders said they were moved by pictures of civilian casualties as well as the health crisis plaguing residents in Sadr City.

At least five people were killed and 44 injured in overnight clashes in Sadr City, in northeastern Baghdad, according to police and hospital officials in the vast district.

Police and hospital officials also reported clashes today between Mahdi Army fighters and U.S. and Iraqi forces in two southern Baghdad districts, which they said killed at least one person and injured 15.

Iraqi police said two people were killed and 12 injured in Sadr City in exchanges of fire between joint Iraqi-American forces and fighters of the Mahdi army.

Four of the injured in the clashes early Sunday were young children, said an officer who declined to identify himself because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

In the southern suburb of Maalif, five people died and 14 were wounded in a clash with American and government forces, said a local police official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to give the information to the media. The U.S. military denied that its forces were engaged there.

BEEN ON THE JOB TOO LONG: COME ON HOME, NOW



3.11.08: US soldiers patrol in Diyala Province. (AFP/David Furst)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**Resistance Attacks President &
Government “Dignitaries” In
Reviewing Stands For Military
Parade In Kabul:
Collaborator Politicians Killed,
Military Officers Run Away;
“The Taliban Claimed Responsibility For
The Attack And Said That It Had
Disrupted The Ceremony To Show That It
Could Carry Out An Attack Anywhere In
Afghanistan”**



Afghan military officers run away during an attack on President Hamid Karzai and other U.S.-backed government officials assembled for a military parade in Kabul. Omar Sobhani/Reuters

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

April 28, 2008 By CARLOTTA GALL and SANGAR RAHIMI, New York Times & MSNBC News Services [Excerpts]

KABUL, Afghanistan – President Hamid Karzai survived an assassination attempt at a military parade in central Kabul on Sunday, when suspected Taliban insurgents fired mortars and bullets at the dignitaries assembled in the spectator stands.

Hundreds of people fled in chaos as shots rang out, just as the national anthem ended.

People at the ceremony ducked for cover then fled — among them Afghan police and soldiers who were assembled for the pageantry. Karzai had just completed a drive-past in a U.S.-supplied Humvee jeep.

Two people were killed, a tribal chief and a parliamentarian, and 11 injured in the incident, officials said.

Mohammad Saleh Saljoqi, a lawmaker at the ceremony, said there was continuous AK-47 gunfire and two rockets — which he described as rocket-propelled grenades — landed near the dignitaries. One rocket hit inside the Eid Gah mosque opposite where Karzai was sitting.

Two parliamentarians in a section of the stands not far from the president were seen falling from their chairs on television footage as gunfire rang out. Loud explosions could be heard some distance from the parade ground.

The president was whisked out of the back of the stands and quickly left the scene in a convoy of black armored vehicles as spectators scrambled for cover and security guards opened fire in every direction, witnesses said.

Afghan state television, which was showing the ceremony live, cut off its coverage as people fled the scene.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack and said that it had disrupted the ceremony to show that it could carry out an attack anywhere in Afghanistan.

“We cannot say Afghanistan is free. Afghanistan is still under the domination of infidels. This ceremony being held by Mujahadeen is baseless,” Zabiullah Mujahed, a Taliban spokesman, said when contacted by telephone.

Mr. Karzai was attending a military parade in front of the Eid Gah Mosque for the national day known as Mujahadeen Day, which celebrates the victory of the Afghan resistance to the Soviet occupation of the 1980s.

Cabinet members, parliamentarians, ambassadors and other guests were assembled in the stands as Mr. Karzai and Defense Minister Rahim Wardak inspected the military and police units from open-topped military vehicles.

Then they returned to the main stand and stood as the national anthem was played and an artillery gun salute was fired.

After the first four or five volleys, a mortar round slammed into a main street outside the parade ground. It was followed by a second mortar and then gunfire, a military general who had been standing close to the president said.

Two parliamentarians, sitting some 65 feet from Mr. Karzai, could be seen falling to the ground as the gunfire rang out on television footage. The leader of an ethnic minority known as the Qizilbash, Nasir Ahmad Latifi, was killed by bullet wounds to his chest, a relative confirmed later.

A parliamentarian, Fazel Rahman Samkanai, was wounded and later died in the hospital. A second legislator, Muhammad Daud Zazai, was wounded and was operated on.

Three army officers, police officers and civilians were among those wounded. Four of the wounded were in critical condition, the doctor said.

The insurgents were firing from a third floor room of a nearby three-story hotel, some 500 yards from the parade ground, according to an eyewitness, Ahmad Naweed, 35, who lives behind the hotel and heard the firing and saw gun flashes coming from the room. Police quickly surrounded the hotel and fired at the window, he said.

A military officer at the scene was overhead reporting the incident on a telephone and said that 12 men had gathered at a restaurant on the main street near the parade ground and had stashed Kalashnikov rifles and mortars in the restaurant before the event.

The attack came despite unprecedented tight security for Sunday's celebrations. For days Kabul has been ringed by checkpoints with security forces and plainclothes intelligence officials searching vehicles. The area where the ceremonies took place had been blocked off by troops, tanks and armored personnel carriers.

The live TV coverage of the assassination attempt will add to the sense of insecurity in the Afghan capital.



An Afghan soldier running away with his company's flag after resistance forces attacked a ceremony in Kabul, Afghanistan, April 27, 2008, forcing dignitaries including Afghanistan's president to flee. (AP Photo/Musadeq Sadeq)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

Apr 26 Associated Press & Reuters & By Tina Susman, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer & 4.27 (CNN) & The Associated Press & Reuters

A bomb targeting members of a U.S.-funded security force two guards and injured eight others today, police said. A man identifying himself as Abu Abed's security chief, who did not want his name published, said the blast occurred as Abu Abed and his guards were preparing to enter a building for a meeting. The bomb exploded near the front gate. He said Abu Abed was not badly injured.

One of the targets was Abu Abed, who heads a 600-man paramilitary force in Amiriya that has worked alongside U.S. troops to enforce law in the neighborhood. In December, the Los Angeles Times profiled Abed, a suspected former insurgent who is now one of about 90,000 Iraqis in the U.S.-allied Sawha movement.

In Mosul, 225 miles northwest of Baghdad, about 5 p.m. a car bomber blew up near an Iraqi army checkpoint, killing three soldiers and wounding six, police spokesman Brig. Gen. Khalid Abdul-Sattar said.

A female car bomber attacked an Iraqi security forces checkpoint in eastern Baghdad on Sunday, killing an Iraqi policeman and soldier. The bomber detonated her taxi near Shaab Stadium, in eastern Baghdad, the Interior Ministry said. Lt. Col. Steve Stover, a spokesman for the U.S. military in Baghdad, confirmed those details and said reports indicated that she triggered her explosives when she saw policemen on motorcycles. However, the U.S. military said the blast wounded eight traffic policemen.

A parked car bomb detonated in the al-Jamia neighborhood in western Baghdad on Sunday afternoon, killing one Iraqi army soldier, the Interior Ministry said. Four of the wounded were soldiers. The bomb targeted an Iraqi army patrol.

Another car bomb wounded seven Iraqi policemen near their checkpoint in western Baghdad's Mansour district Sunday afternoon.

MOSUL - A car bomber targeting a police patrol blew himself up, killing two policemen, and wounding three police, police said.

Two roadside bombs targeting Iraqi Army soldiers on a foot patrol exploded within minutes of each other, killing one soldier and wounding four in Mansour district, western Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents killed one Iraqi soldier in a drive-by shooting on Saturday near Tuz Khurmato, 180 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb blast near a police patrol killed two policemen and wounded three others on Saturday in Nineveh Province, northern Iraq, the U.S. military said.

Insurgents killed a policeman just outside his house in central Diwaniya, 180 km (110 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

One body of an off-duty policeman was found on Saturday north of Baiji, 180 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, the U.S. military said.

A bomber blew up a security checkpoint in the eastern neighborhood of Zayouna killing two Iraqi soldiers and injuring five.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Awakening



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: April 25, 2008
Subject: Winter Soldier II Investigation

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

Awakening

**An Iraq veteran feels the anguish of being emotionally overrun with the avalanche of George Bush lies.
Day by day, inch by inch,
the American soldier in Afghanistan and Iraq are realizing the brutality of betrayal. It is the same national betrayal that destroyed a generation of Vietnam veterans.
From soldiers to prophets, the Iraq Veterans Against the War, are fast becoming a powerful voice of moral dissent in America.
Listen to their voices of truth,
and join their awakening.
Don't let another generation of soldiers be destroyed by public apathy.
Silence is betrayal.
Please get it right this time.**

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
April 23, 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)

The Pig

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: April 27, 2008
Subject: The Pig by Dennis

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

The Pig

Rush Limbaugh awakes

and there is the jones again
not about a back ache
but the pain pills feel good addiction
to stop all the footsteps of the cockroaches
that are crawling all over his body
small red worms wiggling up his nose
in his ears, when he opens his mouth
it is filled with flag draped coffins and flies
and a red white and blue flashing neon sign
that says "Feed the Elite Your Sons"
while a migraine black hole
filled with needles poke
The Pig from behind his eyes
keeping his brain hot-plated
as he hallucinates and goes for his gun
but his bodyguard grabs his shaking hand
leads him to the bathroom
because The Pig has shit all over himself
Elvis Presley style
forces two large white pain pills
down his throat
washing them down his big mouth
with half shit water
then slapping him across the face
bringing him back to life again
although he knows it is only a job
he disdains The Pig for getting out
of going to Vietnam
because he had a cyst on his fat ass
that could have been pinched off
with a pair of pliers
as Rush The Pig takes a shower to clean
his own shit off of himself as the pain pills
kick in as he shouts from the bathroom
"Kill All the Muslims, Even If it Takes a 100 years,"
then ""The Only Good Muslim is a Dead Muslim"
as he gets going now
shouting to his bodyguard for two more
large pain pills that he washes down
with half shit water again,
in a little while The Pig
is sailing and spouting that "A 100 Year War
Is the Only Cure for the Middle East,"
then "Bomb Iran," "Torture Them,"
The Pig practices, he likes the way
the words of the Corporation,
The Rich bounce off the shithouse walls,
as his Mexican maid who buys cigar boxes
of pain pills, lays out his cloths to wear
making sure his \$7,000 suit
is brushed and squeaky clean

as The Pig towels himself off
but there are still small pieces of shit
on his back that they don't tell him about
because in his past, he would get angry
and throw lamps or whatever was handy
at his maid and bodyguard
so now they don't say anything as The Pig
asks for two more large white pain pills
tells them to get the white limousine ready
because it will not be long before
he is ready to tell the American people
what Bush and the Other Pigs
want them to think and cheer about
a true spokesman for the Elite
who tells who to hate
was missed so much when
he was busted for illegal pain pills
but took a 30 day cure
that other addicts know
that the volumes he takes
would take a year to get out of his system
but The Pig did not go to jail,
he is too valuable
ended up back on the airwaves
his listeners now know what to think again
as he pours out his "Nuke the Muslims"
into their brains feeling almost giddy.

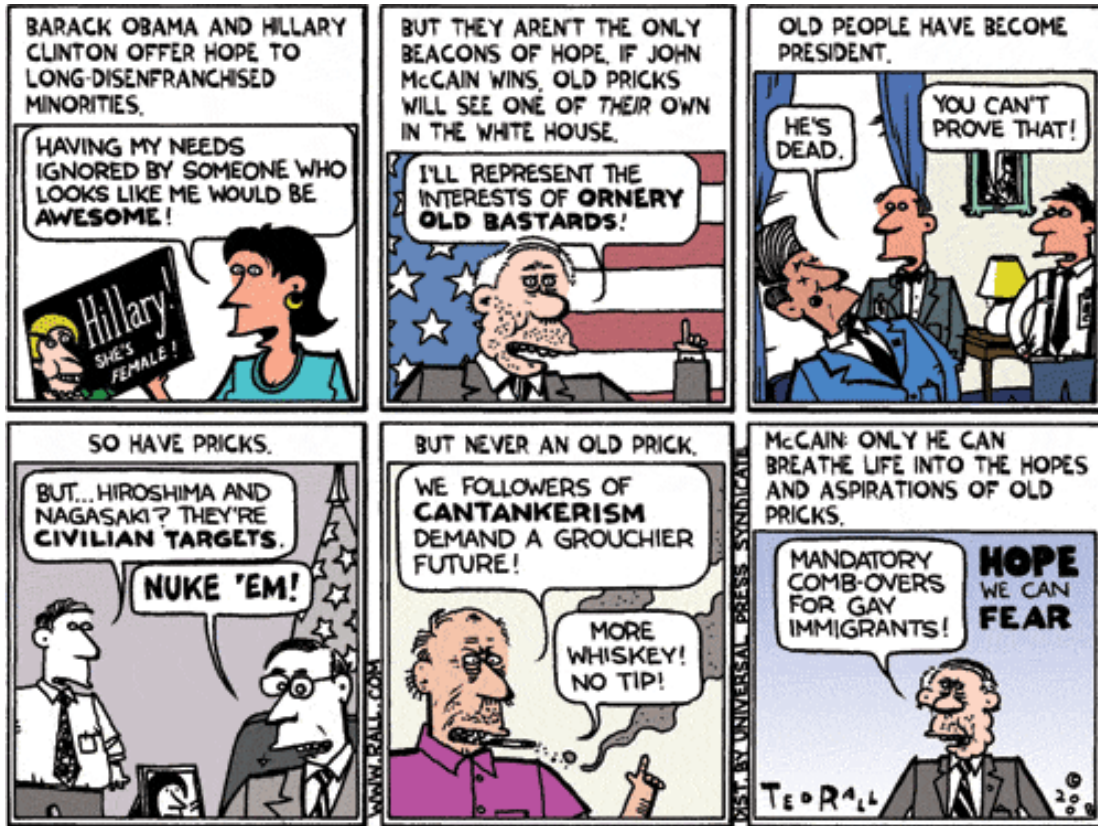
April 28, 2004: The Truth Comes Out



Carl Bunin Peace History April 23-29

The first photos of the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal were shown on CBS's "60 Minutes II." The photos had been taken by U.S. military personnel responsible for detaining and interrogating Iraqi prisoners arrested following the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

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/)

CLASS WAR REPORTS



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.

Justice for the Freightliner Five!

International Day of Action, May 9

As a result of a strike by members of UAW Local 3520 at the Freightliner plant in Cleveland, N.C., over health, safety and other issues in April 2007, management has fired five UAW elected officials—Robert Whiteside, Glenna Swinford, Allen Bradley, David Crisco and Franklin Torrence. All are members of their union's bargaining committee, and three are members of the union's executive board as well.

The struggle to prevent retaliation against union leaders is important, not only to defend their local, but also to show workers throughout the country that the labor movement believes that an injury to one is an injury to all.

It is especially critical that the labor movement support trade unionists organizing in the "right-to-work" South. These union leaders are also civil rights activists—four are members of the

NAACP. We need to show our solidarity as they stand up to union busting and retaliation by Freightliner, which is owned by the multinational corporation Daimler.

Join us in taking a stand against Freightliner's anti-union policies in an international day of action to demand immediate reinstatement with full back pay for the Freightliner Five.

Speakers:

KEN RILEY, president, Local 1422, International Longshoremen's Association*

DONNA DEWITT, president, South Carolina AFL-CIO*; national president, Labor Party*

TOM ADLER, works council member, Daimler AG Untertuerkheim, IG Metall, Germany

WOODY WOODWARD, president, Statesville, N.C. branch, NAACP*

* Organizations for identification purposes only

★ Friday May 9, 11:00am
Cleveland Park ★ Cleveland, N.C.

Local Holiday Inn discount available. Call (704) 878-9691 and mention Freightliner Five.

★ Solidarity actions at Freightliner/
Daimler locations internationally

SPONSORED BY THE FREIGHTLINER FIVE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

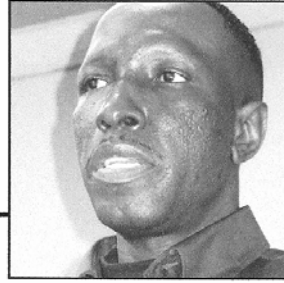
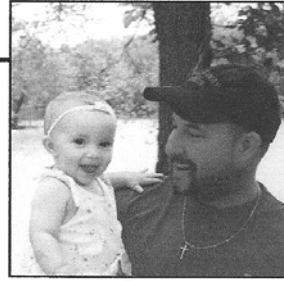
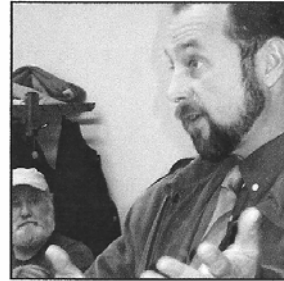
For more information, visit

www.justice4five.com

LABOR DONATED

The five, from the top: Robert Whiteside, Allen Bradley, Glenna Swinford, David Crisco, Franklin Torrence

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veteran & United Auto Workers GM retiree]



Received:

Re: The National Guard Massacre Of The Ludlow Strikers

[GI Special 6D19: 4.27.08]

From: SSG N (ret'd)
To: GI Special
Date: Apr 27, 2008

Every time I go to visit my mother, I stop at the Ludlow [Colorado] site along the way. One puny "Ludlow Massacre--" sign on I-25, an off ramp and a gravel road. It's been vandalized several times.

There's a spiral notebook where people have left their thoughts over the years.

I have put notes comparing the destruction in Ludlow to Iraq & Afghanistan, the calling in of military to quash democracy, and the power of organizing to overthrow oppression.

Next time I will write about the railroaders who would ship soldiers and those who refused to fight.

N

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

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

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2007/index.html>; <http://www.ুরুnet.info/?p=6&l=e>; http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/;
<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

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