

GI SPECIAL 6E11:

HONORABLE WORK FOR ANY SOLDIER



A Chinese Army soldier evacuates a woman to a relief centre in Beichuan, Sichuan province May 16, 2008. (Stringer/Reuters)



A soldier in the Chinese Army carries a baby at the earthquake-hit Beichuan county, Sichuan province, May 15, 2008. (Stringer/Reuters)

Obama Promises To Keep On Killing U.S. Troops & Iraqis: Will Deploy A “Follow-On Force” In Iraq To “Fight Terrorists, Protect U.S. Forces And Facilities, And Train Iraqi Forces” “Obama Has Not Provided An Estimate Of How Large That Force Might Be”

May 16, 2008 By Paul Richter, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON - After launching their candidacies with opposite positions on the Iraq war, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama seem to be edging toward a middle ground between them.

On Iraq, the senator from Illinois has made it a point in public comments to guard his prerogatives as president.

Obama says he wants to keep a “follow-on force” in Iraq that would fight terrorists, protect U.S. forces and facilities, and train Iraqi forces. Obama has not provided an estimate of how large that force might be.

In a debate with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton on April 16 in Philadelphia, Obama said: “I will always listen to our commanders on the ground with respect to tactics.”

Many doubt that a new president would risk his term by ordering a withdrawal that could strengthen Iran, distress Israel and cause regional upheaval.

A senior European diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity in keeping with diplomatic protocol, predicted recently that there would prove to be little difference in how the candidates acted on Iraq -- or for that matter, on Iran or on policy toward Israel and its Arab neighbors.

"I'm not sure they will have a very different foreign policy at all," he said.

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Mesquite Soldier Killed In Iraq

May 9, 2008 By MACIE JEPSON, WFAA-TV

Staff Sergeant Clay Craig of Mesquite was laid to rest at Dallas Fort Worth National Cemetery today. He is the 82nd Texan to die in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Craig wore the uniform of a Boy Scout and athlete growing up in Mesquite. "Really, really proud of Clay. He was always a good kid," said Clay's grandmother.

When he graduated from John Horn High School 5 years ago, he chose the uniform of a soldier.

His wife Cynthia says he wasn't rich, by any means- but he looked like a million bucks in that uniform.

She wrote him in a poem before he left for Iraq, and spoke them at his funeral the day she said goodbye again.

Staff Sergeant Clay Craig died April 29, hit in combat by small arms fire in Baghdad. His family knew what to do. "If something happened to him, he wanted a military funeral," said Clay's grandmother.

They say he didn't want to go back for the third tour.

His heart was with his wife and 14-month-old Izabell. Still- those who served with him in Iraq say his outlandish stories and laughter sustained them there.

Today, they called him best friend. A leader, a hero, father, and son.

"He was a good soldier and a good person. Very proud. Very proud," said Clay's grandfather.

Cynthia wrote in that poem that her husband never gave up and never turned his back on his country. His family believes Clay Craig's war is over- and he's getting his reward in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Two U.S. Convoys Attacked In Baghdad; Hummer Destroyed; Casualties Not Announced

May 15 By Sahar Issa, McClatchy Newspapers

A roadside bomb targeted a US military convoy in al-Qanat, near al-Amin neighbourhood at 1 pm. One Hummer vehicle was destroyed, according to Iraqi Police. No comment was available from the US military at time of publication.

A roadside bomb targeted a US military convoy in Fdhailiyah, northeast Baghdad at around 6 pm Thursday. No casualties were reported.

Australian Soldier Wounded By A Roadside Bomb While On Patrol Near An Nasiriyah

May 17, 2008 AAP

An Australian soldier has been wounded by a roadside bomb while on patrol near An Nasiriyah in southern Iraq.

The infantryman - a member of the Queensland-based 6th Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment - was travelling in an armoured Bushmaster Infantry Mobility Vehicle which was hit by a suspected IED (improvised explosive device) this morning (AEST), the Department of Defence said.

The unidentified soldier, who was serving in Iraq as part of the Overwatch Battle Group in Dhi Qar Province, suffered shrapnel wounds and was evacuated to a coalition-run medical facility, defence force chief Angus Houston said.

Air Chief Marshall Houston said the soldier's condition was serious but stable, adding his family had been notified.

It's Come To This:

Urban Warfare Over One Concrete Wall On One Street

[Stalingrad In Baghdad]

“A Daily Battle Of Attrition”

[And Guess Who Wins That]

[Not The Visiting Team, For Sure]



U.S. soldiers from Bravo Company (Bulldogs), 1-502 Infantry Battalion take cover during a patrol on the edge of the resistance-dominated Baghdad neighborhood of Shulla May 12, 2008. (Oleg Popov/Reuters)

But the fighters have blown a few gaps in the wall and, in one instance, appear to have hitched a truck to a damaged slab to yank it down.

To make it hard for the Americans to fix the holes, the fighters have continued to seed the strip south of the barrier with explosively formed penetrators, a particularly lethal type of roadside bomb. Some have been hidden in the cracks or depressions in the wall itself.

May 15, 2008 By MICHAEL R. GORDON, The New York Times [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD — An Iraqi soldier was watching over the concrete wall on Monday when a .50-caliber round ripped into his head.

Soon after the attack was reported on the tactical radio, two American military advisers were on their way to the scene, laser range finder in hand, to call in a Hellfire missile strike on a sniper position on the far side of a desolate no man's land.

This is the war over the wall.

It is a daily battle of attrition waged over the large concrete barrier that the Americans have been building across Sadr City

Shiite militias have been trying to blast gaps in the wall, firing at the American troops who are completing it and maneuvering to pick off the Iraqi soldiers who have been charged with keeping an eye on the partition.

American forces have answered with tank rounds, helicopter rocket strikes and even satellite-guided bombs to try to silence the militia fire.

On some stretches, the urban landscape has been transformed as the Americans have leveled buildings militia fighters have used as perches to mount their attacks.

"The enemy kept coming back to some of the same buildings," Col. John Hort, the commander of the Third Brigade Combat Team, Fourth Infantry Division, said during a recent visit at Thawra II, a joint American and Iraqi outpost that abuts a section of the wall that has been a hotbed of militia resistance. "We ended up having to use some larger ordnance out of our Air Force to reduce some of the buildings around here."

Even while American forces deploy reconnaissance drones and satellite-guided rockets, the American strategy in Sadr City is a throwback to a more primitive form of warfare.

It depends on concrete — lots of it, which comes in large slabs that are being assembled into an imposing barrier three miles long.

The Americans began building the wall a month ago, working east to west. The work started at night but soon extended into the day as American commanders sought to speed up the construction.

Supporters of Moktada al-Sadr, the anti-American cleric, denounced the wall as a nefarious effort to divide the city.

Militia fighters with rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns and small arms have been trying to halt its construction.

Those efforts have failed, and the barrier is now 80 percent complete.

But the fighters have blown a few gaps in the wall and, in one instance, appear to have hitched a truck to a damaged slab to yank it down.

To make it hard for the Americans to fix the holes, the fighters have continued to seed the strip south of the barrier with explosively formed penetrators, a particularly lethal type of roadside bomb.

Some have been hidden in the cracks or depressions in the wall itself.

Lt. Col. Michael Pemrick, the deputy commander of the Third Brigade Combat Team, and his security detail headed to Sadr City in armored MRAP, or mine-resistant ambush-protected, vehicles on Monday, when the cease-fire was announced.

Iraqi soldiers have a tendency to defend static positions, and the colonel wanted to see what the Iraqi soldiers were doing to monitor the wall.

Driving to an Iraqi Army position near the barrier, Colonel Pemrick pressed First Lt. Salwan Abd al-Amer to take some of his soldiers and join the Americans on a patrol through the alleys and streets.

But the patrol also identified a problem: the militias had destroyed one of the slabs in the wall.

Though it was just a few blocks from the Iraqi soldiers' position, the opening was undefended.

No sooner had the Americans arrived at the headquarters than there was a radio report that an Iraqi soldier at another combat outpost near the wall had been grievously wounded.

Capt. Beau Cleland and Master Sgt. Fernando Alicea, who were on the American team advising the Iraqi battalion, were anxious to get to the scene to call in a helicopter strike.

A sniper with a .50-caliber rifle had already shot several soldiers in the battalion and it looked as if he had struck again.

With a sniper on the prowl with a large-caliber rifle, the Americans were taking no chances. Climbing out of the armored vehicles, they darted up the street to the charred building that served as an Iraqi Army outpost and raced upstairs.

An Iraqi soldier taking cover in a hall on the second floor urged the Americans to stay away from the windows and to keep low.

“Sniper,” he said in English.

The floor was covered with broken concrete, empty cigarette packages and a dusty brown teddy bear, a fleeting reminder that the fighting position had once been someone’s home.

A splotch of red blood was in a corner room where the Iraqi soldier had been hit.

His fellow soldiers said that he had been sitting in a plastic chair and looking over the wall when a round hit the side of his face, ripping across his eyes.

Sergeant Alicea radioed the coordinates and described the target to a team of Apache attack helicopters. It seemed possible that the sniper had moved with the arrival of the Americans, but another rifle shot rang out.

Sergeant Alicea said it was important to strike nonetheless. Often, a sniper will leave his weapon so he can blend in with civilians on the street, he said. If nothing else, he said, the Apaches would eliminate another hiding place.

"We keep cutting down positions they can use," he said.

After a long wait, a Hellfire missile soared over the soldiers' position and slammed into the building, demolishing a wall on the top floor and setting it aflame.

No one could exclude the possibility that the sniper had moved to a lower floor or was hiding in a nearby building to fire at the Americans as they left the Iraqi outpost.

So Staff Sgt. Jason Condreay, the head of Colonel Pemrick's security detail, told the Iraqis his soldiers would unleash a volley of fire toward the ruined building and tossed smoke grenades as the Americans left.

"I am going to throw everything we got," he said. "I am going to lay down suppressive fire and pop smoke."

There was a deafening burst of .50-caliber machine-gun fire as the Americans scampered back to the armored vehicles and climbed inside.

On Tuesday, Colonel Pemrick went forward again to visit an Iraqi outpost near the wall that was commanded by First Lt. Adel Ali.

A small fleet of American armored vehicles was positioned nearby. They were working to extend the wall under the protection of two M1 tanks. The troops came under fire, and an M1 tank answered by firing three rounds into a building just north of the barrier, setting it alight.

As the colonel and his soldiers returned to their base the tactical radio crackled with reports of roadside bombs found, tips about hidden arms caches and enemy fire received.

The Iraqi troops where the soldier had been struck in the head on Monday were holding their ground, but they were under attack again. It was Day 2 of the formal cease-fire, and the fighting was still on.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Soldier From Greenup Killed In Afghanistan

May 08, 2008 By KENNETH HART - The Independent

GREENUP — A soldier from Greenup County has been killed in Afghanistan.

Family members of U.S. Army Spec. Jeremy Gullett, 23, said they were notified by the military on Wednesday that he was killed earlier that day by a roadside bomb. One other soldier was killed and two were wounded. One civilian also perished in the explosion.

Gullett was attached to the 101st Airborne Division out of Fort Campbell, according to his mother, Cheryl Gullett. His unit was deployed to Afghanistan in March, the weekend before Easter. He previously had been stationed for 2 1/2 years in Korea.

Gullett joined the Army after graduating from Greenup County High School in 2003, his mother said.

"He always dreamed he'd go into the service, ever since he was 6 years old," Cheryl Gullett said.

While at GCHS, Gullett prepared himself for a career in the military by enrolling in the school's Junior ROTC program. On Thursday, Sgt. Tom Fenchel, the program's instructor, recalled Gullett as a "great kid" who came from a supportive and loving family.

Gullett leaves behind a wife and an 21-month-old daughter. His wife, Janeth, is a native of the Philippines. The couple was in the process of adopting her 6-year-old daughter, who still lives in the Philippines, Cheryl Gullett said.

It was not immediately clear where in Afghanistan the explosion that claimed Gullett's life occurred. Jeremy Gullett's uncle, Ron Gullett, said the military had provided that information to the family, but he could not recall the name of the area.

Ron, Cheryl and Harold Gullett, Jeremy's father, all are members of the Little Sandy Volunteer Fire Department, as was Jeremy Gullett. Ron Gullett is the department's chief.

Ron Gullett said the family had been told that Jeremy Gullett's remains would be arriving home in a week to 10 days. He will be buried in a family cemetery with full firefighter honors in addition to his military rites, the family said.

Jeremy Gullett was the first soldier from northeastern Kentucky to be killed in the Middle East since April 2007, when Cpl. Joey Cantrell, 23, of Westwood, was killed by a roadside bomb in Taji, Iraq.

Two Canadian Soldiers Wounded In Nalgham

May 16, 2008 CBC News & May 17 2008 CTV

On Friday, militants targeted Canadian soldiers with either a remote or timer-controlled bomb in Zhari district, just west of Kandahar city. An Afghan soldier died in that attack. Two Canadian soldiers were wounded.

The soldiers were airlifted back to Kandahar Airfield for treatment after being attacked in the village of Nalgham, west of the city of Kandahar in southeastern Afghanistan.

Captured Pakistani Ambassador To Afghanistan Exchanged For Resistance Prisoners

May 17 (Reuters)

Taliban militants freed a captured Pakistani envoy on Saturday, in a prisoner swap involving the release of more than 40 Taliban, according to senior Pakistani security official.

Pakistan's ambassador to Afghanistan, Tariq Azizuddin, was captured on Feb. 11 as he was travelling from the northwestern city of Peshawar to the Afghan border on his way back to Kabul.

He was released in the Pakistani tribal area of South Waziristan, where he had been held by fighters loyal to Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the Pakistani Taliban, the official said.

The security official said he believed the ambassador's driver and guard had also been set free.

During the past few days more than 40 Taliban fighters held captive by the authorities had been released, according to the security officer.

In return the Taliban had released several members of the security forces.

Resistance Action

May 15 AFP & May 16 (AFP) & May. 17 2008 CTV

A bomber apparently wearing a burqa detonated in a busy bazaar in southwestern Afghanistan on Thursday, killing policemen, a provincial governor said. The Taliban movement, which regularly uses suicide attacks in its campaign against the government, immediately claimed responsibility for the blast in Farah province's Delaram district.

Police were the target, Farah deputy governor Mohammad Younus Rasouli said. "Four police have been killed and six others wounded," he told AFP.

Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi said a member of his organisation -- whom he identified as a man named Khalid -- carried out the bombing, which he said killed a dozen police and was aimed a police commander.

An Afghan soldier was killed in a bomb blast in southern Afghanistan Friday. Soldiers were on foot patrol in a volatile area of the southern province of Kandahar early Friday when a roadside mine exploded, killing one trooper and wounding three others, district army commander Rahamatullah Khan said.

A Taliban spokesman, Yousuf Ahmadi, confirmed the device had been planted by members of the militia. He said Taliban had also attacked a district centre in Zabul province overnight and five were killed in the return fire.

In a Kandahar city bomb blast targeting a police convoy, three police officers were wounded in Saturday's bombing. The explosives were reportedly strapped to a bicycle and detonated by remote control. The blast happened on a road outside a prison complex that had seen three separate bombings in a 24-hour period.

THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH; ALL HOME, NOW



U.S. Marines from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit near the town of Garmser, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, May 3, 2008. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

U.S. Military Dictatorship Building New Prison In Occupied Afghanistan: “The New Afghan-Run Prison Cannot Absorb All The Afghans Now Detained By The United States, Much Less The Waves Of New Prisoners” Some Prisoners “Have Been Held Without Charge For More Than Five Years, Officials Said”

May 17, 2008 By ERIC SCHMITT and TIM GOLDEN, The New York Times Company
[Excerpts]

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is moving forward with plans to build a new, 40-acre detention complex on the main American military base in Afghanistan, officials said, in a stark acknowledgment that the United States is likely to continue to hold prisoners overseas for years to come.

The proposed detention center would replace the cavernous, makeshift American prison on the Bagram military base north of Kabul, which is now typically packed with about 630 prisoners, compared with the 270 held at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Until now, the Bush administration had signaled that it intended to scale back American involvement in detention operations in Afghanistan. It had planned to transfer a large majority of the prisoners to Afghan custody, in an American-financed, high-security prison outside Kabul to be guarded by Afghan soldiers.

But American officials now concede that the new Afghan-run prison cannot absorb all the Afghans now detained by the United States, much less the waves of new prisoners from the escalating fight against Al Qaeda and the Taliban [translation: against Afghan citizens fighting to free their nation from a military dictatorship occupying their country run by the U.S. Imperial government].

American officials also acknowledged that there are serious health risks to detainees and American military personnel who work at the Bagram prison, because of their exposure to heavy metals from the aircraft-repair machinery and asbestos.

It became clear to Pentagon officials that the original plan of releasing some Afghan prisoners outright and transferring other detainees to Afghan custody would not come close to emptying the existing detention center.

Although a special Afghan court has been established to prosecute detainees formerly held at Bagram and Guantánamo, American officials have been hesitant to turn over those prisoners they consider most dangerous [translation: Afghan patriots who refuse to submit to foreign occupation.]

The Pentagon is planning to use \$60 million in emergency construction funds this fiscal year to build a complex of 6 to 10 semi-permanent structures resembling Quonset huts, each the size of a football field, a Defense Department official said.

Some detainees have been held without charge for more than five years, officials said.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Resistance Attack Takes Police Headquarters In Mogadishu Government Center

5.9.08 Wall St. Journal & 5.17.08 AFP

Islamist fighters seized the police headquarters at the heart of the [pro-occupation] government's stronghold in Mogadishu in an attack witnesses said killed two soldiers and two policemen.

The insurgents have tried many times to attack the heavily guarded district, but the raid was the first major success.

City Of Jilib Falls To Resistance Attack; Nationalists Demand “A Timetable For Ethiopian Troops To Withdraw”

5.16.08 Aljazeera

Fighters reportedly affiliated with the Islamic Courts' Union have taken control of the southern Somali city of Jilib after clashing with a government-backed militia group.

Witnesses said the fighters seized weapons and four armoured trucks from the tribal militia members in overnight clashes and continued to patrol the town on Saturday.

The transitional government has struggled to defeat remnant Islamic Courts' Union fighters after the [Bush-backed] Ethiopian army wrested control of Mogadishu from the group in December 2006.

The Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia, the main opposition alliance, which includes the Islamic Courts' Union, said it would not be involved in direct talks until the government agrees to a timetable for Ethiopian troops to withdraw.

TROOP NEWS

Martin Army Hospital, Fort Benning: World Class Shithole

May 15, 2008 By Halimah Abdullah, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpt]

At Martin Army Community Hospital [at Fort Benning], one of the nation's oldest Army hospitals, at least once a month corroding and antiquated pipes force the facility to shut down the entire plumbing system.

If the water is out for longer than a day, patients are forced to bathe in portable showers.

The roof needs replacing. The electrical system is at capacity, making it difficult to add additional circuits, hospital officials said. The heating and cooling systems are so old that temperatures cannot be adjusted in individual rooms.

Though the Army has longed identified both the hospitals at Fort Benning and Fort Riley as high priorities, the Iraq war funding has been routinely redirected to such places as Aberdeen Proving Grounds to deal with effects of chemical warfare and other war on terrorism-related threats, [Rep. Sanford Bishop, D-Ga.] Bishop said.

Wounded GI Bryan Currie Goes AWOL:

“Military Psychiatrist Described Bryan’s Profile As Undeployable, But After Pressure From His Unit’s Leadership, The Doctor Changed His Status To Deployable”

“They’d Give You A Bag Of Pills And They’d Say, ‘Here, Try These And If That One Doesn’t Work Try Another”



May 12, 2008 Courage to Resist

Bryan Currie joined the Army in November 2004 because he says, “I thought it would be a good thing to fight for my country.”

He was trained as an Infantry Grenadier and was deployed to Afghanistan in 2006 for 11 months.

He describes what he experienced when he got injured: “We were on a convoy to pick up another soldier. I was the driver. On the way back my truck got hit by a land mine.... me, I got burned, I lost four teeth, broke my jaw, got shrapnel on my hands, I was jolted forward so my knees are all swollen and my back’s always sore.” He was treated in Afghanistan and was out of combat for three weeks and was sent back to driving trucks.

When he returned to the US he saw several military psychiatrists who treated him for PTSD.

“They’d give you a bag of pills and they’d say, ‘Here, try these and if that one doesn’t work try another and if you find one that does, stick to it.’”

The military psychiatrist described Bryan's profile as undeployable, but after pressure from his unit's leadership, the doctor changed his status to deployable and Bryan was scheduled to redeploy to Afghanistan.

Bryan waited until two days before deploying.

He packed his bags and left. He is currently AWOL. He attempted turning himself in to a base in New York, but his fear of being sent overseas again caused him to leave. "I'm 100% against the military," he says, "I've done a complete U turn."

Judge Slaps Down Army; Iraq Combat Vet Wins CO Appeal

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

May 15, 2008 McClatchy Newspapers

The Army should grant conscientious objector status to Michael Barnes, a Fort Richardson, Alaska-based paratrooper who had his request for that designation denied last year, US magistrate John D Roberts concluded yesterday.

In a 26-page recommendation to the US District Court, Roberts noted that the Army failed to show "any basis in fact" to support its decision to deny Barnes's petition to be honorably discharged due to his religious beliefs.

At the same time, the record includes strong reasons to justify the request, including Barnes's own testimony, supporting letters from fellow soldiers and the opinion of an Army chaplain, the judge said.

"The evidence is overwhelming that Barnes, a motivated infantryman, is a person who takes his religious beliefs seriously, and there is strong evidence that his decision was motivated by those beliefs," Roberts wrote.

A native of Portland, Oregon, Barnes, 26, said he enlisted in the Army for five years in March 2005 with the idealistic goal of "defending freedom and helping other people in countries no one else would help".

That same year, however, while training for deployment to Iraq as part of the 4th Airborne Brigade Combat Team at Fort Richardson, he grew increasingly troubled by the tales he heard from soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq, Barnes noted in a statement he filed with his application.

"These stories included making the locals (do) degrading things so they could laugh at them, abusing the kids and taking others lives with ease. ... I told myself it's not really like that - that's just a few soldiers' perceptions of their experience."

But after his unit landed in Kuwait, then Iraq, in the fall of 2006, he began to witness bad behaviour firsthand, Barnes said.

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

Dishonorable Rat In Charge Of VA Diagnostic Team Tells Staff To “Diagnose Veterans With Mental Disorders That Have A Lower Disability Payout”

Too Many ‘Compensation Seeking Veterans’ Getting Help So -- “I’d Like To Suggest That We Refrain From Giving A Diagnosis Of PTSD Straight Out”

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) & Michael Letwin, NY City Labor Against The War, who sent this in.]

May 16, 2008 By Christopher Lee, Washington Post Staff Writer & (AP)

Two congressional committee chairmen said Friday they plan to investigate whether there were broader motives behind a Veterans Affairs Department employee's e-mailed suggestion to diagnose veterans with mental disorders that have a lower disability payout.

“Given that we are having more and more compensation seeking veterans, I’d like to suggest that you refrain from giving a diagnosis of PTSD straight out,” Norma Perez

wrote in a March 20 e-mail to mental-health specialists and social workers at the Department of Veterans Affairs' Olin E. Teague Veterans' Center in Temple, Tex.

Instead, she recommended that they "consider a diagnosis of Adjustment Disorder."

Veterans diagnosed with PTSD can be eligible for disability compensation of up to \$2,527 a month, depending on the severity of the condition, said Alison Aikele, a VA spokeswoman.

Those found to have adjustment disorder generally are not offered such payments, though veterans can receive medical treatment for either condition.

The VA has identified the sender of the e-mail as a post-traumatic stress disorder team leader at the VA medical center in Temple, Texas.

A recent Rand Corp. study found that about one in five troops who served in the recent wars have symptoms of major depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.

"Suspicious Washer" And A Cut Or "Broken" Wire Leads To Sabotage Hysteria At Pa. Chinook Plant

May. 15, 2008 Associated Press

RIDLEY PARK, Pa. - Investigators have concluded that two military helicopters were vandalized on the production line at a Boeing factory near Philadelphia, the Defense Department said Thursday as it offered a reward.

Federal officials were handing out fliers to workers at the Boeing Rotorcraft Systems plant listing a \$5,000 reward in the damaging of the two H-47 Chinook helicopters.

"We have determined that this was a deliberate act and not an accident," said Ken Maupin, resident agent in charge of the Philadelphia area office of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, at a news conference outside the plant.

He said 10 agents were investigating the case, but would not comment on specifics of the investigation or what led to the determination it was vandalism. A production line at the plant has not been fully functional since Tuesday, when two workers found what the company called irregularities in the helicopters.

U.S. Rep. Joe Sestak has said he was told that wires that appeared to be broken or severed were found in one helicopter and that a suspicious washer was found in a second.

DoD Helps War Profiteer Filth Steal From Taxpayers And Cheat Their Own Employees Out Of Workman's Comp Benefits; They Steal "Nearly \$600 Million"

May 15 By RICHARD LARDNER, WASHINGTON (AP)

A poorly run Pentagon program for providing workman's compensation for civilian employees in Iraq and Afghanistan has allowed defense contractors and insurance companies to gouge American taxpayers, a House committee said Thursday.

Insurance companies alone have collected nearly \$600 million in excessive profits over the past five years, says a Democratic staff report from the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, but the Defense Department refuses to adjust its approach for managing the program.

According to the committee, the Pentagon allows its contractors to negotiate their own insurance contracts. By contrast, the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development and the Army Corps of Engineers have all selected a single insurance carrier to provide the insurance at fixed rates.

"What makes the situation even worse is the people this program is supposed to benefit - the injured employees working for contractors - have to fight the insurance companies to get their benefits," committee Chairman Henry Waxman, D-Calif., said at a hearing Thursday.

"Delays and denials in paying claims are the rule."

KBR Inc., one of the largest defense contractors in Iraq, paid the insurance giant AIG \$284 million for medical and disability coverage under the Defense Base Act, a reference to the federal law mandating the insurance.

Due to the way KBR's contract is structured, this premium, along with an \$8 million markup for KBR, gets billed to the taxpayer.

"Out of this amount, just \$73 million actually goes to injured contractors, and AIG and KBR pocket over \$100 million as profit," Waxman said.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

May 15 By Sahar Issa, McClatchy Newspapers & May 16 (Reuters) & May 17 AFP & Xinhua & Reuters

A roadside bomb exploded targeting the motorcade of the Governor of Baghdad in Nasr Square, Sadoun Street, central Baghdad at 8 am Thursday. 1 security personnel was killed and 4 others as well as 2 civilians were injured.

A roadside bomb targeted a joint US military and Iraqi Army patrol in al-Khadhra neighbourhood, west Baghdad at noon Thursday. 1 Iraqi army serviceman was killed and 4 were injured, said Iraqi Police.

A car bomb killed four policemen and wounded nine other people in Falluja, 50 km (32 miles) west of Baghdad, police said. Police beat up a Reuters cameraman and a photographer when they tried to film the aftermath of the bombing. The photographer had to be treated in hospital.

Baquba, Iraq - A woman bomber targeted a US-backed militia office in the central Iraqi town of Baquba on Saturday, killing one woman and wounding 16, police and hospital sources said. The bomber detonated explosives strapped to her body in the office of the Sons of Iraq, a group of former insurgents who switched sides and are now funded by the Americans, Iraqi police Captain Kassa al-Zaidi said. A car bomb exploded at the scene soon after, wounding one policeman, police said.

Guerrillas attacked a U.S.-backed group base in a town in Iraq's Diyala province on Saturday, killing three of the group members and wounding six others, a provincial police source said. The attack took place in the morning when some 20 armed men stormed the base of the Awakening Council group in the town of Wajihiyah, 20 km east of the provincial capital Baquba, the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

No Shit

Excerpt from a review of: Fear Up Harsh: An Army Interrogator's Dark Journey Through Iraq; Tony Lagouranis and Allen Mikaelian; New American Library; 272 pages, \$15.00. Review by ELIZABETH WRIGLEY-FIELD; International Socialist Review March–April 2008

Assigning blame to the occupiers, rather than the occupied, requires overcoming the military's racist training programs.

Lagouranis, an interrogator, describes his reactions to being briefed on the "Arab mind": Arabs, apparently, can't create a timeline. They don't think linearly or rationally. They have a different relationship with truth than we do.... (Emphasis in original.)

Okay, so the people who invented algebra can't think logically?

That was news to me."

OCCUPATION REPORT

"America Out, Out" "A Soldier Used The Quran -- Islam's Holy Book -- For Target Practice"

05/17/08 BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN)

A soldier used the Quran -- Islam's holy book -- for target practice, forcing the chief U.S. commander in Baghdad to issue a formal apology on Saturday.

Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, commander of U.S. forces in Baghdad, apologized to leaders in Radhwaniya, in the western outskirts of Baghdad, for the staff sergeant who was a sniper section leader assigned to the headquarters of the 64th Armored Regiment.

It was the first time the incident -- which tested the relationship between U.S.-backed Sunni militiamen and the military -- was made public since it was discovered May 11.

A tribal leader said "the criminal act by U.S. forces" took place at a shooting range at the Radhwaniya police station. After the shooters left, an Iraqi policeman found a target marked in the middle of the bullet-riddled Quran.

Copies of the pictures of the Quran obtained by CNN show multiple bullet holes and an expletive scrawled on one of its pages.

A military investigation found the shooter guilty and relieved him of duty; he will be redeployed to the United States for reassignment away from the 1st Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division, a U.S. official said.

Tribal leaders, dignitaries and local security officials attended the ceremony, while residents carried banners and chanted slogans, including "Yes, yes to the Quran" and "America out, out."

Sheikh Hamadi al-Qirtani, in a speech on behalf of all tribal sheiks of Radhwaniya, called the incident "aggression against the entire Islamic world."

The Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq also condemned the shooter's actions and the U.S. military's belated acknowledgment of the incident.

"As the Association of Muslim Scholars condemns this heinous crime against God's holy book, the Constitution of this nation, a source of pride and dignity," the group's statement said, "they condemned the silence by all those who are part of the occupation's agenda and holds the occupation and the current government fully responsible for this violation and reminds everyone that God preserves his book and he is a great avenger."

"The Second Wish Was To Cover The Iraqi Man's Back With The American"

May 16, 2008 By Dulaimy [Baghdad], washingtonbureau.typepad.com/iraq/ [Excerpts]

Another Method to Write Down History A few years ago I bought a book, a history book, the writer chose writing down jokes annually to reflect the situation and the outlet people's use to express frustration and hope.

Here are some of the jokes told around and sent by e-mails in Iraq.

These jokes are not intended or written to make you laugh nor does it represent my point of view. –

An Iraqi man found an old lamp as he brushed it a Genie appeared. "Shubaik Lubaik, I will make your wishes come true," he said.

"I want you to build us a bridge to Sweden," the Iraqi man said.

"This is impossible make another wish," the Genie said.

"I want you to fix the electricity in Iraq," the Iraqi man said.

"How many lanes do you want on that bridge?!" the Genie replied. –

An American man, a French man and an Iraqi man were caught drunk in Saudi Arabia. They were sentenced to be whipped 20 times.

The executer came in happy because he got a phone call telling him that his wife gave birth and it's a boy.

He told the three men he will give each man a wish before he whips them.

The American wished to have a pillow attached to his back. After the first five whips the pillow were torn and the American received 15 whips.

The French man wished to have two pillows to cover his back after ten whips the pillows were torn and he received 10 whips.

The executer told the Iraqi man he has two wishes as he is an Arab and a neighbor.

The Iraqi man's first wish was to be whipped 100 times, the executer agreed with amazement.

The second wish was to cover the Iraqi man's back with the American.

An Iraqi and an American were playing chess. The American replaced a pawn with the queen, in Arabic the Minister, at the end of the chessboard.

The Iraqi made his knight, in chess the piece is called the horse in Arabic, cross to the other end of the chessboard and tried to change it with the queen.

The American objected.

"You cannot change the Horse to the Minister," the American said.

"Then why in my country did donkeys became ministers?!" the Iraqi said.

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

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.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

FIGHT HIM NOW, OR HE'LL FOLLOW YOU HOME



The traitor Bush April 29, 2008, in the White House. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

OUT OF CONTROL SHITTY SCUMBAGS AT WORK



(AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)

Alejandro Flores eats a taco at 'El Rey de Oros' taco truck in the Whittier district of east Los Angeles Thursday, May 15, 2008.

A new county law which went into effect today makes parking a catering truck in one spot for more than an hour punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and or six months in jail.

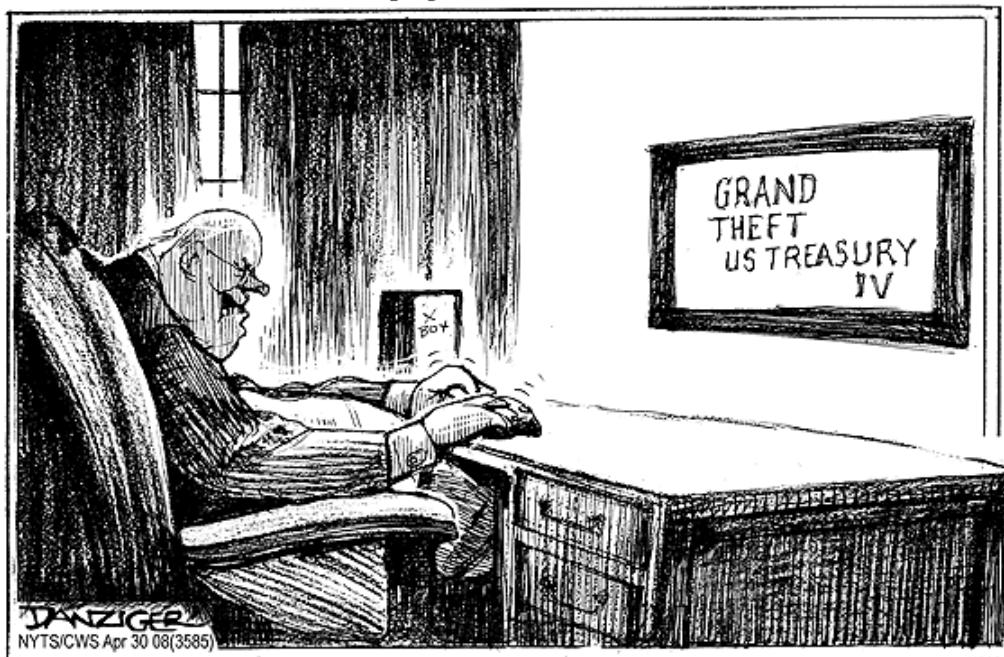
Comment: T

And politicians who pass a law like that ought to be punished by a fine of every fucking cent they possess, and/or six months clearing IEDs in Baghdad.

Of course the thieving politicians have helped themselves generously to the publics' money, so they can enjoy themselves in most expensive restaurants in the city, and do so, for hours.

Meanwhile, people who work for a living and get really good food at reasonable prices during lunch hour from catering trucks like this will have to go hunting for their favorite who the fuck knows where? This is nothing but harassment of people living work class lives. OK, if you have no other motivation, this is sufficient grounds for revolution, isn't it. Do NOT fuck with my lunch wagon. T]

Mr. Cheney Updates His Favorite Game



**"A FLYING YELLOW SUBMARINE
SOARS ACROSS THE SKY WITH A
HUGE FLUORESCENT BANNER**

TOUTING AMERICA'S VICTORY IN IRAQ THANKS TO PRES. JOHN MCCAIN"

Senator McCain Notes Five Years of the Iraq War



[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & The Military Project, who sent this in. He writes: IN OTHER NEWS TIMOTHY LEARY PREDICTS FLYING PINK ELEPHANTS WILL DRINK PURPLE RAIN DROPS AS A FLYING YELLOW SUBMARINE SOARS ACROSS THE SKY WITH A HUGE FLUORESCENT BANNER TOUTING AMERICA'S VICTORY IN IRAQ THANKS TO PRES. JOHN MCCAIN.]

May 15 By GLEN JOHNSON, Associated Press Writer

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Republican John McCain declared for the first time Thursday he believes the Iraq war can be won by 2013, although he rejected suggestions that his talk of a timetable put him on the same side as Democrats clamoring for full-scale troop withdrawals.

The Republican presidential contender, in a mystical speech that also envisioned Osama bin Laden dead or captured, and Americans with the choice of paying a simple flat tax or following their standard 1040 form, said only a small number of troops would remain in Iraq by the end of a prospective first term because al-Qaida will have been defeated and Iraq's government will be functioning on its own.

NEWS FROM A CHILLED LIBRARY:

In Australia, In Leichhardt, Australian Secret Police Scare Library Out Of Exhibition About Palestine

Jessica Moore, editor of the Wollongong University Student Association (WUSA) Monthly – is accused of supporting terrorist organisation Hamas. According to the anti-terrorist squad, or Wollongong Police, she had organised a meeting for Hamas in October.

She had covered a University meeting – not about Hamas. Not even Humus. But “Homos”.

From: Max Watts [Australia]
Sent: May 16, 2008 1:12 PM
Subject: NEWS FROM A CHILLED LIBRARY

1848 – Terra Nullius: Leichhardt, Ludwig, was a white (East) German explorer. Born, in what was then Prussia, in 1813.

He came to Australia in 1842 and “explored” parts of what is now Queensland and the Northern Territory. At the time, and until recently, the entire Australian continent was considered “Terra Nullius” – a place without people. Those, who have been living here since “the beginning” – also called Ab Origines – were disregarded. Dissed. For sure Australia didn’t belong to them.

Ludwig disappeared on his third exploration, in 1848. Perhaps killed by the then terrorists – i.e. Aborigines.

Much (rivers, plants, mountains..) and many (places) in Australia are named, then, and now, Leichhardt.

2007: Palestine, Israel: Hebron: One such place called after Ludwig Leichhardt is an Inner Sydney Suburb.

This Leichhardt has a quite proud lefty tradition, and - lefties read - a big library. Leichhardt Council has – since 2007 - been agonising about a possible “twinning” with the Palestinian/Israeli town of Hebron.

Agonising, for opinions about this action are divided. Some are against such twinning. Palestinians, some say, can be considered dangerous. Terrorists. Others, such as the Friends of Hebron, are for.

2008: Chilling the Leichhardt Library: The Friends of Hebron wanted to organise an exhibition in the Library. About Hebron. After many months of negotiations, - in extremis another group: the Inner West Chavera – also asked to also have an exhibition about ? Hebron, or the anniversary of Israel - this was OK'd.

For May 2008.

NB: May 2008, not quite accidentally, coincides with two 60th anniversaries. The foundation of Israel, and what Palestinians call “El Naqba”, the catastrophe.

On Thursday afternoon, 8 May 2008, the Friends of Hebron put up their exhibition.

Panels, many photos – some by Leichhardt residents visiting Hebron, some Palestinian folk-lore artifacts.

They were told they could only have half the expected space, to leave space for the Havera’s exhibition (which has not yet been sighted). Chief Librarian Marylin Taylor inspected, asked that one Hebron caption – that Palestinians had been “driven from their homes” be removed, as too divisive, troubling. Replaced by “displaced”. It was.

At 8 pm Librarian Taylor inspected the exhibition, found it fine.

The Big Chill: Even before the exhibits had been mounted two officers of the New South Wales “anti-Terrorist Squad” – one being from a newly created “Citizens Contact Unit” (apparently part of the anti-Terrorist Squad) – visited Chief Librarian Taylor.

According to a first statement by the Librarian, these “men in black” told her to “vet” the exhibition and ensure that there was “nothing inflammatory”. Subsequently Marylin Taylor has refused all comments.

Assistant NSW Chief Police Commissioner Peter Dean, later, to the media: “We (Police) only visited the Exhibition, the Library, to contact the Friends of Hebron”. We did not want to censure the contents.”

Murky and Curious. Several Friends of Hebron spent Thursday afternoon at the Library. They knew and know nothing of any attempt by the anti-Terrorist Squad to “contact” them.

Clear however: Friday morning – early – “top level” Leichhardt people met at the library.

Without any discussion with Friends of Hebron the exhibition was dismantled and locked away.

It could, so various spokespersons for Leichhardt council, have “endangered staff and/or public.”

In any case, it has now been judged unfit for viewing by the public.

Whatever reasons the Anti-Terrorist Squad, its bosses, now give for their visit, its CHILLING EFFECT has been very clear:

There is, and apparently there will be: NO EXHIBITION CONCERNING HEBRON IN THE LEICHHARDT LIBRARY. (maybe somewhere else ?)

Some relevant ps's:

1/ 1945-1950: "Zionists" then were considered – by the Australian governments – undesirable, dangerous, immigrants. Just as Communists. Terrorists.

After all "Zionists", such as future Israeli prime ministers as Menachem Begin, had been blowing up and hanging British soldiers, in Palestine.

However, at that time the Australian government did accept and encourage the immigration of many anti-semitic, fascist, murderers, supporters of the Nazis, from the Baltic countries and the Balkans. Jews then were not "in".

2/ 2007: Then Prime Minister J. Howard (now to be forgotten as quickly as possible): sends condolences to the family of an Australian killed fighting in the Israeli army in Lebanon. Says this was not only OK, but praiseworthy.

I ask Howard if – neutral – he would OK fighting on the other side? Spokesman Ben: "No, that would be illegal, for the other side, Hezbollah, is a criminal organisation."

I ask: "What about an Australian fighting in the Lebanese army ?" Ben: "We'll get back to you". I'm still waiting. Howard is gone, Ben probably too..

3/ October/December 2007: Jessica Moore, editor of the Wollongong University Student Association (WUSA) Monthly – is accused of supporting terrorist organisation Hamas.

According to the anti-terrorist squad, or Wollongong Police, she had organised a meeting for Hamas in October.

Puzzled, she checks her notes. She had not organised nothing. Anything.

She had covered a University meeting – not about Hamas. Not even Humus. But "Homos". Meeting protesting against (abovementioned) J Howards' stopping Canberra ACT government allowing gay (i.e. "Homo" – sexual) marriages.

It needed much effort to get her off the "terrorist" list.

And, just to close (for the moment): back to

November 1934: A – then small – anti-war, anti-fascist, movement invites famous Czech author Egon Kisch to come, speak, at its Melbourne Congress. About Hitler, fascism. The German government disapproves, tells Canberra.

Menzies et al are given job of stopping this rat-bag (terrorist supporter, he denies the Communists burned the Reichstag) from insulting a friendly government. (He says Hitler, Goering, did it).

Kisch is triply barred from Australia. The second bar was a dictation test in Scottish Gaelic. He failed and was declared a prohibited immigrant.

Given a six-month jail sentence. Freed on appeal. Later wrote book “Australian Landfall”. Says (truly): “Had they not made this fuss, I’d have spoken to 248 already convinced (plus 2 police from the Red-Squad, perhaps the parent of today’s anti-terror unit?) Australians. Thanks to their efforts, half a million people heard me, about Hitler. Useful.”

Leichhardt library has, we hope, some Kisch’s books.

And, I wonder: would an exhibition about Aborigines being forcefully dispossessed be allowed ?

Or too divisive ?

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