

## GI SPECIAL 6F18:

Oil Companies Get No-Bid Contracts Back in Iraq



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

# Desertions Up 92% Since 2004

June 21, 2008 By Chris Kenning, Louisville Courier-Journal [Excerpts]

In a nondescript barracks at Fort Knox, Pfc. James Burmeister awaits his fate for deserting his unit while on leave from Iraq.

The 22-year-old is set to face a court-martial at the Kentucky post -- one of only two U.S. processing centers for Army deserters.

Now his mother, Helen Burmeister, is doing everything she can to keep her son out of jail. She will demonstrate outside the post today in hopes of persuading the military to let her take her son home.

"I'm hoping to take him back to Oregon with me," said Burmeister, who says her son struggles with post-traumatic stress, injuries from a roadside bomb and questions about U.S. tactics. "He needs to get all this behind him."

**Burmeister is among the 4,698 U.S. Army soldiers who deserted in fiscal year 2007, a number that risen 92 percent since 2004.**

"Our leadership is concerned about desertion rates," said Lt. Col. Anne Edgecomb, an Army spokeswoman, "but not to the point we've taken drastic measures."

Many people who desert -- roughly defined as being absent without leave for more than 30 days with the intent to stay away -- are junior soldiers who leave after basic training for family problems, while others are combat veterans or those who object to the war, officials say.

Army officials don't actively pursue them, arguing they're too busy fighting a war. Most deserters turn themselves in to remove the felony warrant that is issued, or are caught during routine traffic stops.

The consequences vary. They can be as light as a reprimand and return to their unit, or as harsh as a court-martial resulting in a bad-conduct or dishonorable discharge that results in up to five years in jail. Most get an "other than honorable" administrative discharge.

Last year, the Army convicted 108 soldiers of desertion. The decision of whether to prosecute is often left to unit commanders.

Soldiers who have gone AWOL or deserted -- the vast majority do so in the United States, not while overseas -- are processed through either Fort Knox or Fort Sill, Okla.

Fort Knox officials wouldn't provide numbers, but it's likely that 40 to 60 soldiers accused of desertion pass through the Kentucky post each week, said J.E. McNeil, director of the Center on Conscience and War, a nonprofit group in Washington, D.C., that helps those on deserter status.

While there, they live in barracks with soldiers in similar trouble, working patrol or cleaning duty and meeting with their military and private attorneys. They are confined to base but nothing prevents them from leaving, military officials say. "The point is you're there (so you can) get on with your life," McNeil said.

Fort Knox spokesman Ryan Brus declined to discuss Burmeister's case, but confirmed that he was charged with "desertion with intent to shirk important service." If convicted, he could receive a reduction in rank to private, forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month for a year, 12 months of confinement and a bad-conduct discharge.

Even if he is simply discharged, "he's worried he'll lose his benefits, but at this point, it's not worth it," Helen Burmeister said.

Burmeister was unavailable for comment, and the military would not discuss his service history or any medical issues. But his mother and friends said in interviews he joined the

Army in 2005, hoping to help rebuild Iraq. Once there, he found himself manning a machine gun atop a Humvee.

He was disturbed by tactics that he told his family included a baiting operation designed to lure insurgents, an approach detailed in articles by The New York Times and Washington Post in 2007. The Army has said it doesn't discuss specific methods.

In February 2007, while assigned to the 18th Infantry Division in Iraq, his Humvee was hit by a roadside bomb. He suffered shrapnel to his face and hearing loss.

While on recovery leave in Germany, he decided to fly to Canada instead of returning to duty in Iraq.

"He was just a regular young guy who was shaken up, and didn't know what to do," Sonia Vani, a Canadian friend of Burmeister, said in a telephone interview from Ottawa. She said he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and had a seizure, possibly from a brain injury.

But he eventually decided to return, and since March, he's been at Fort Knox. Earlier this week, his mother came from Oregon in hopes of persuading the Army to grant him an administrative discharge with a loss of benefits, but so far the Army hasn't granted that request.

**"He did go to war, did what he was asked, now it's time to let him go," Helen Burmeister said.**

Anita Anderson of Lexington, an activist who helps deserters, said many young men who deserted have jobs and a new life and were apparently never reported as deserters.

Her son, Darrell Anderson, went AWOL in 2005 after deciding he couldn't continue to fight without killing innocent civilians. In 2006, he returned after 20 months in Canada and turned himself in at Fort Knox. He was given a less-than-honorable discharge with a loss of benefits.

Since then, he has worked as a security guard in Oregon and a busboy in California and now works at a grocery store in Lexington. He still struggles with post-traumatic stress, but said he doesn't regret his decision to go AWOL.

"It wasn't the easy choice, it was the hard choice," he said. "I lost my GI Bill, my veteran's benefits ... but I did what's right, and I've still got my pride."

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

# **Three Marines And Two Interpreters Killed:**

## **U.S. Occupation Meeting With Local Collaborators In Anbar Blown Up: Marine Area Commander Among Dead**

6.26.08 MSNBC News Services & KUNA & AP & By Adrian Croft and Dean Yates, (Reuters) & Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory & Jun 28 By HAMID AHMED, Associated Press Writer

Col. Fawzi Fraih, civil defense director of Anbar province, said a bomber detonated an explosive belt during a meeting of American representatives and local Iraqis in Karmah, about 20 miles west of Baghdad.

The U.S. military said three Multi-National Force - West Marines and two interpreters were among the dead in Anbar.

**Among the dead were the mayor of Karmah, several major tribal figures, two interpreters and the commander of Marines in the area, Lt. Col. Max A. Galeai of Pago Pago, American Samoa, U.S. and Iraqi officials said.**

Officials said the Iraqis were members of a group funded by the American government and were meeting with Americans when the attack occurred. At least 20 people were killed and 12 others wounded.

A local leader, Mizher Mshawih, and the head of the district council, Kamal Abdul-Salam, were among those killed, as well as three policemen.

The U.S. military would not confirm whether Americans were inside the building during the Karmah attack — the third against a municipal government meeting in Iraq this week.

Police said the bomber entered the building through a back door. Two policemen said the bomber was able to penetrate security because he was wearing camouflage uniform of the Iraqi police commandos.

The media office for Anbar province said the dead included the town's administrative director and at least two leaders of major militias in the area.

**The attack occurred only two days before U.S. troops are to hand over security responsibility for Anbar to the Iraqis, marking a major milestone in the campaign to lower the U.S. profile in an area that had once been center-stage of the war.**

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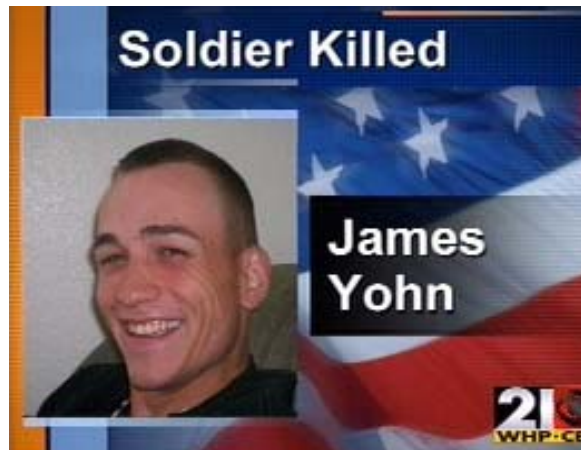
# U.S. Soldier Killed In Baghdad

June 26, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE  
No. 20080626-0

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier was killed as a result of an explosively formed projectile attack at approximately 9 a.m., June 25, in eastern Baghdad.

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## Local Soldier Killed In Iraq



06/26/08 By Jaime Meyers, WHPTV

A local community is mourning the death of a soldier. Private First Class James Yohn was killed while on duty in Iraq. CBS 21 News spoke to Jimmy Yohn's mother who says she is extremely proud of her son.

Jimmy, 25, worked at the Highspire Fire Department where the firefighters feel the same way. "Jimmy was a very fun guy, always made people laugh, smile, just a fun person to be around," says Michael Ondeck, Highspire Fire Department.

This was Jimmy's first tour of duty. The firefighters say he was excited about a recent new assignment - driving hummers.

But his mother says the Highspire native planned to leave after his deployment was up this November to focus on his new wife Amber. They just married in February and the baby she's carrying is due in less than a month. She plans to name the baby James Yohn, Jr.

His mother says they got the news just after 6:00 Wednesday morning when military officers knocked on her door. The details of Yohn's death haven't been released.

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# 101st Airborne Soldier From Antioch Killed In Iraq

06/13/2008 By Simon Read, East County Times

A 22-year-old soldier from Antioch was killed in Iraq on Thursday after a roadside bombing, the Department of Defense announced.

Sgt. John D. Aragon of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) died in Kadamiyah, northwest of Baghdad, from wounds suffered when his Humvee struck an improvised explosive device, military officials said in a news release.

A 2004 Antioch High School graduate, Aragon entered the U.S. Army in March 2006, his family said.

"He just always wanted to be in the Army," said his mother, Denise, a pair of her son's dogtags hanging around her neck. "He went to the recruitment office when he was still a senior in high school without telling me. I found out and made him go to (Los Medanos) College for a year and then make a decision.

"I told him maybe you'll meet the girl you're going to marry. You don't know what will happen."

The extra year did nothing to diminish Aragon's passion for the military. After arriving at Fort Campbell, Ky., he called his parents. "He said, 'I love the Army and the Army loves me,'" Denise Aragon said. "The two just clicked."

An American flag hangs outside the Aragon family home on Gentrytown Drive. A black flag with a white eagle's head, the emblem of the 101st Airborne, hangs by the front door. Aragon shipped out to Iraq on Oct. 16, 2007.

Denise Aragon said she naturally feared for her son but kept her apprehension to herself.

"If he knew I was scared, then he would have worried," she said.

Aragon's father, John, said his son wanted to be near the action. "He would say, 'A true soldier is a fighting foot soldier.'

"We wouldn't watch the news; we'd never turn on CNN. It was always this many soldiers were killed today, or that many killed."

Aragon, a diehard Oakland Raiders fan with the team name tattooed above his heart, purchased an Iraqi cell phone and a long-distance calling card and phoned home once a week.

Although proud to serve in the military, he did not harbor any romantic notions of war.

"He'd tell us it was pure hell," John Aragon Sr. said. "Those were his words: 'pure hell.'"

His family did what they could to provide him the comforts of home, sending care packages with brown sugar Poptarts (one of his favorites), granola bars and canned oysters. During his last conversation with his mother on June 4, he said he'd be home next month for 18 days and asked for a packet of Flaming Hot Cheetos.

"We never got to send them," Denise Aragon said.

Rendered "numb" by the loss of their only son, both parents said they are proud of what he accomplished, including the rank of sergeant in two years.

"It just made me beam," said Aragon's father. "I went and told all of my friends. I was extremely proud."

Mayor Donald Freitas said the thoughts and prayers of the city are with Aragon's family.

"His death brings the war closer to home," Freitas said. "It makes it more realistic. This is not an esoteric subject — it's more real."

Councilman Arne Simonsen, a 24-year Naval veteran whose son served in the first Gulf War, said such tragic news is always hard to bear.

"As a veteran, it's something that's always on your mind," he said. "It's something none of us ever want to deal with."

Aragon is the second serviceman from Antioch to die in Iraq.

On Sept. 24, 2005, Sgt. Daniel Scheile, 37, died from injuries he received while patrolling in southeastern Baghdad when a roadside bomb exploded near his armored vehicle. Scheile was with the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry.

**Aragon is the 12th serviceman from Contra Costa County killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.**

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## Marine Killed During 2nd Deployment

June 17, 2008 By Ian Shapira, Washington Post Staff Writer

A 19-year-old Marine from Virginia Beach has died from wounds suffered during combat in Iraq, the Defense Department announced yesterday.

Lance Cpl. Kelly E.C. Watters died June 11 from wounds he received while fighting in the Anbar Province of Iraq. He was based at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Watters was serving his second deployment to Iraq, according to Maj. Cliff W. Gilmore, a public affairs officer for the Marine Corps. Gilmore said Watters was wounded May 23 and was flown to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda.

"We know that his family was able to be by his side," Gilmore said.

Watters, who joined the Marines in November 2005, first served in Iraq from January to August 2007. His second deployment began in April. He was the recipient of two Purple Hearts and other awards, Gilmore said.

Peter Watters, the marine's father, said last night that based on a conversation he had with one of his son's team leaders, Kelly Watters died from wounds inflicted by a makeshift bomb. His son was patrolling in northern Fallujah, Watters said.

"He was out on the front lines. He happened to be out on the lead," the father said.

A week earlier, Kelly Watters had told his parents he wanted to save up for a new Dodge Charger and sell his truck. He also asked them to send him a care package of Slim Jims and his favorite crackers.

"He liked to live free and on the edge, no regrets," his father said. The younger Watters, a dance music devotee and a movie buff, "hadn't nailed down [his future] yet, anything from being a police officer to a massage therapist."

The Rev. Jeffrey Russell, of the Salem Baptist Church in Elizabeth City, N.C., where Watters's grandparents are members, said congregants prayed for Watters after he was wounded.

"We had a bulletin board where we listed people who are in the military," he said. "His grandparents are doing as well as can be expected. It's quite a difficult thing for anyone to go through, but at the same time they understand the price of freedom."

Watters attended Floyd Kellam High School in Virginia Beach for two years before dropping out in 2005, said Nancy Soscia, the school system's public relations coordinator.

Ryan Benzel, 19, a George Mason University student who attended high school with Watters, recalled that his friend made everyone feel at ease. "Kelly wanted everyone to feel comfortable no matter where they were. He put his friends before himself," Benzel wrote in a Facebook message to a reporter. Benzel also said that he had worried for Watters. "I remember asking him if he was ever scared while was he over there and he said, 'No,' " Benzel recalled.

Benzel said he told Watters once that he had set his cellphone to play Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A." when Watters called. But Watters told Benzel to change it.

The song "reminded him of his fallen 'brothers,' " Benzel wrote. "It's sad because he now has joined them."

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## **C-130 Goes Down In A “Barren Field” Somewhere Or Other In Iraq;**



# **No “Significant” Injuries, Whatever That Means: [A Classic Bullshit Press Release From Command]**

Jun 27 (Reuters)

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - A U.S. Air Force C-130 transport plane with 38 people aboard made an emergency landing in a barren field northeast of Baghdad's international airport on Friday, the Air Force said.

[Only about 33% of Iraq is “northeast” of the airport.]

There were no significant injuries, the Air Force said, adding all six crew and 32 passengers had been accounted for.

[Where or not an injury is “significant” tends to depend on whether you're the one who got the injury, or whether you write bullshit press releases for command.]

It was not immediately clear how far the plane was from the airport when it landed.

[Clear to who? If the “Air Force” can comment on injuries, are we supposed to believe they don't know where the plane came down?]

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## **The Stupidest Military Action By The Occupation In 2008, So Far: U.S. Military Attacks Collaborator Prime Minister's Hometown & Kills His Relative; U.S.-Allied Governor Demands “Killers” Who Raided The Town Face Iraqi Court**

June 27, 2008 By Hannah Allam, McClatchy Newspapers

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Outraged Iraqi officials demanded an investigation into an early morning U.S. military raid Friday near the birthplace of Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki,

saying the operation violated the terms of the handover of Karbala province to Iraqi security forces.

Karbala Gov. Oqeil al Khazaali said U.S. forces killed an unarmed civilian and arrested at least one person in the raid in the southern town of Janaja.

**The governor's brother, Hassanein al Khazaali, said late Friday that the Iraqi killed in the operation was a relative of the U.S.-backed prime minister.**

The governor is said to belong to the prime minister's Dawa Party.

Iraqi officials in Karbala said the operation began at dawn Friday, when U.S. aircraft delivered dozens of American troops to the rural Shiite Muslim town of Janaja, which is populated mostly by members of the Maliki tribe.

Raed Shakir Jowdet, the Iraqi military commander of Karbala operations, said that four Apache helicopters and a jet fighter soared over the area.

About 60 U.S. soldiers then stormed the town, "terrifying the families," he said.

Jowdet said that an unarmed civilian named Ali Abdulhussein was killed in his home.

He added that the man detained in the operation, Hussein Nima, was visiting the area and didn't reside in Karbala.

"Not one Iraqi soldier took part in the airdrop, and the operation was not coordinated with any Iraqi authority," he said.

"We are still looking for an answer as to why this has taken place, and we still have no logical explanation from the American forces."

Khazaali, the U.S.-allied governor, denounced the operation at a news conference, saying the U.S. military hadn't coordinated in advance with Iraqi forces, who assumed control of Karbala security in October 2007.

The governor said the raid set "a dangerous precedent" for areas ostensibly under full Iraqi control.

"The airdrop confuses the agreements, and America should answer for this violation," Khazaali said.

**Khazaali said the raid was based on false intelligence and that the U.S. military should "submit a report to clarify all the circumstances and to point out the killers and hand over the names of everyone who participated in the military operation in order for them to appear before the Iraqi judicial system."**

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**UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH;  
ALL HOME NOW**



Third Armored Cavalry Regiment soldier comes under fire in Mosul, 360 kilometers (225 miles) northwest of Baghdad, March 31, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Sayed Abad IED Blast Kills Three Americans And One Local Interpreter**

June 26, 2008 By LUIS MARTINEZ, JIM SCIUTTO, and GRETCHEN PETERS, ABC News

Three Americans and a local interpreter were killed this morning when a coalition force convoy was attacked in Afghanistan, according to the Pentagon.

The IED attack occurred while the convoy was on combat patrol in the Sayed Abad District. One vehicle was completely destroyed by the severe blast and fire damage.

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### **Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed In Gulistan, Five Wounded; Nationality Not Announced**

Jun 27 By AMIR SHAH, Associated Press Writer

KABUL, Afghanistan – One member of the U.S.-led military coalition in Afghanistan has been killed and five more wounded in the country's increasingly turbulent west, the military said Friday.

Two Afghan army soldiers also were wounded in the “engagement” Thursday during a reconnaissance patrol in the Gulistan district of Farah province, a coalition statement said.

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## **Three Foreign Occupation Soldiers Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan; “Remains” Not Yet Identified**

Jun 27 By AMIR SHAH, Associated Press Writer

On Thursday, a roadside bomb killed three coalition troops and an Afghan interpreter south of Kabul.

A day later, the military was still trying to identify the remains of the victims of the attack, in which one vehicle was severely damaged and burned. The coalition said three bodies were found at the site and the other in a nearby field.

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## **Two New York National Guardsmen Killed In Ambush Near Kandahar**

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, N.Y. City Labor Against The War, who sent this in.]

June 25th 2008 BY EDGAR SANDOVAL and LEO STANDORA, DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

Insurgents ambushed and killed two New York National Guardsmen as they headed to train police officers in southern Afghanistan, Defense Department officials said Tuesday.

A roadside bomb ripped apart an armored vehicle carrying Sgt. Andrew Seabrooks of Queens and Sgt. Anthony Mangano of Long Island on the outskirts of Kandahar Saturday, the military said.

The insurgents then riddled the vehicle with small arms fire. Two other Guardsmen were killed in the attack.

The soldiers were with A Troop, Second Squadron, 101st Cavalry, based in Geneva, Ontario County. They were part of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, a multinational force of more than 8,000 U.S. and NATO service personnel training the Afghan Army and police.

Seabrooks, 36, joined the New York Army National Guard in March 1994 and was assigned to Company G of the 427th Brigade Support Battalion in Jamaica, Queens, before deployment to Afghanistan last year. His widow and two of his children live in Newport News, Va.

Seabrooks' friend Glory Hedges, 22, said he did a tour in Iraq and volunteered in January to go to Afghanistan to save his family's home in South Ozone Park from foreclosure with his pay.

Hedges, her son with Seabrooks, Xavier, 4, Seabrooks' older sister Melissa, brothers Jeffrey and Willie, and another son Andrew, 15, all live in the house.

"He wanted to secure a home for his children," said Hedges, who vowed to do everything she can to keep the house. "It was his wish. I can't let it go."

"I've lost my best friend and my son lost his father," she said, her eyes misting. "But he's not going anywhere. He's still here in my heart and in my mind."

Andrew Seabrooks said his dad was a role model who made sure he and his friends walked the straight and narrow.

One of his favorite memories is of playing handball with his father. "He loved that game," the teen said, "He was a great father. He was a wonderful guy."

Neighbors also remembered Seabrooks, known on the block as Drew, as a friendly, family-oriented man who loved to tinker with the five Volkswagens he owned.

"We all kind of groaned when he went to Afghanistan, but not Drew," said his friend Kelvin Willks, 48. "He loved what he was doing."

Jacqueline Small, 79, said Seabrooks was devoted to sister Melissa, who has Down syndrome.

Mangano, 36, joined the New York Army National Guard in August 1991 and subsequently reenlisted.

His mother, Constance, 67, said her son, who owns a construction company in Greene County, was due to leave the service in December and "was looking forward to a normal life" with his wife of just six months, Tatiana, 34.

Speaking in the living room of her Greenlawn home, the mother opened a letter her son left behind. "This explains better than I can why he was there," she said. It read in part: "The most important to understand is this was my choice to go fight and die in the name of the United States of America, to defend the greatest country in the world."

"He was brave. He had a good heart. He worked hard and honestly I feel like he's a hero. I'm going to miss him so much," his mother said. Mangano also is survived by a brother and a stepsister.

His wife, whom he met on a vacation to South America three years ago and planned to settle down with in Florida, lives in Brazil. Mangano's mom said she was "hysterical" over the death.

Mangano was promoted posthumously from specialist to sergeant.

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## Local Marine Seriously Injured In Afghanistan



June 25, 2008 TurnTo23

BEAR VALLEY SPRINGS -- A Tehachapi High School graduate continues to recover in a German hospital after being injured while on patrol in Afghanistan on Monday.

Family members said Marine Sgt. Justin Clenard was on foot patrol with his platoon when they were hit by a mortar round or a land mine.

Clenard lost his right leg from the knee down and his lower left leg as well. He also suffered shrapnel injuries to his right arm.

The family is unsure when he'll return to the U.S., given the severity of his injuries as he is still in critical condition in Germany.

Family members said they spoke with Clenard Wednesday morning and he will undergo surgery on Wednesday.

When he's stable enough to travel, Clenard will be moved to Bethesda, Md.

Clenard was a 2004 graduate of Tehachapi High School and was on the varsity wrestling team.

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## U.S. Helicopter Down In Kunar; Two Injured

Jun 26 (AFP)

A US helicopter crashed in eastern Afghanistan, causing "minor injuries" to two soldiers on board, the force said Thursday. The chopper crashed Wednesday in Kunar province which shares a border with neighbouring Pakistan. The cause of the crash was not immediately known.

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## TROOP NEWS

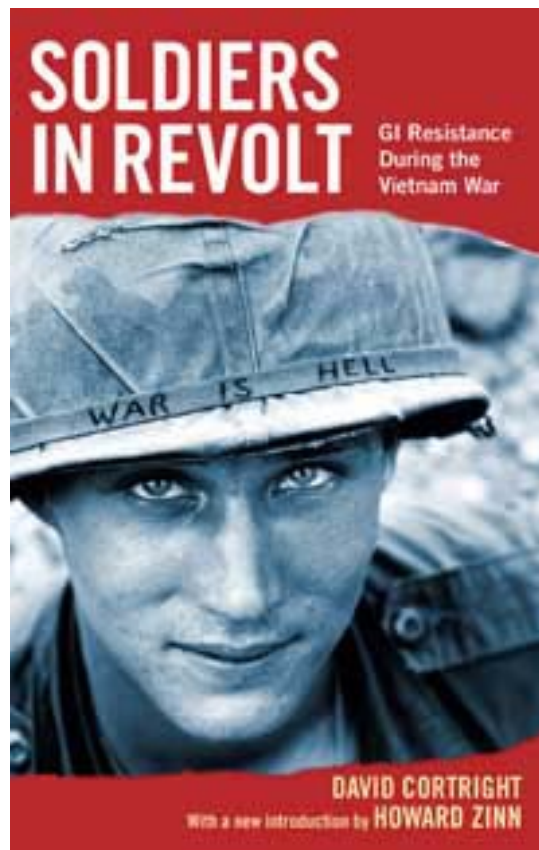
### How It Begins

June 30, 2008 By Michelle Tan, Army Times

**FORT LEWIS, Wash.:** During a recent four-day trip to visit troops, soldiers here and Marines at Twentynine Palms, Calif., pressed [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] Mullen on critical issues such as deployments, stop-loss and dwell time.



**Vietnam: They Stopped An Imperial War**



SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975. Now available in paperback from Haymarket Books.

### **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

# **The New Issue Of Traveling Soldier Is Out!**

This issue features:



1. "This is bullshit and I'm calling you out Uncle Sam!"

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.08.hannah.php>

2. Iraq Veterans Against The War Report on Outreach To GIs:

"95-98% Were Very Receptive" writes Iraq vet Wendy Barranco

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.08.outreach.php>

3. "The only way to stop Vietnam was for we the lowly jarheads and grunts to take our fingers off the triggers and say no" says a Vietnam Vet.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.08.vietvet.php>

4. "Bridging the Gap, Making It Happen" – Outreach To The Troops  
Report on the April 5th Military Project Organizers' Conference in New York City, April 5, 2008

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.08.conference.php>

5. Beware Of Useless Drugging For PTSD:

"Reliving A Traumatic Experience By Writing Or Talking About It Is The Only Therapy Proved Effective By Independent Research"

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/6.08.drugging.php>

6. Download the new Traveling Soldier to pass it out at your school, workplace, or at nearby base.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/TS18.pdf>

**NEED SOME TRUTH?**

**CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING  
SOLDIER!**

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

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

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

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

## **TRAVELING SOLDIER BY MAIL FREE FOR ACTIVE DUTY TROOPS, NATIONAL GUARD & RESERVES**

IF YOU WISH TO HAVE TRAVELING SOLDIER MAILED TO YOU, EMAIL YOUR ADDRESS TO: [CONTACT@MILITARYPROJECT.ORG](mailto:CONTACT@MILITARYPROJECT.ORG) OR DROP A LINE TO: BOX 126, 2576 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10025-5657 USA. 917.677.8057

Please say how many you wish sent.

**NOTE WELL:** DOD regs say that ACTIVE DUTY TROOPS may possess copies, *provided you don't have more than one of the same issue*. These limits do NOT apply to National Guard or Reserve troops UNLESS deployed or assembled at muster.

## **Decorated Iraq Combat Veteran Kicked Out Of Army For Acknowledging He's Gay; His Battalion Commander Knew It And Sent Him To Iraq Anyway**

Jun 27 By SUZANNE GAMBOA, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The Army has discharged a decorated medic who was deployed to Iraq despite acknowledging he was gay.

Darren Manzella, 30, said he revealed his sexual orientation to his military supervisor in August 2006, and was redeployed to Iraq anyway. He has since spoken out publicly several times about being a gay service member.

Manzella was discharged this month for "homosexual admission." His commander's discharge recommendation included a transcript of an interview he gave to television show "60 Minutes" in December 2007, in which Manzella said he is gay.

He did the same in a number of other interviews and even at a Washington news conference. The military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy prohibits active-duty service members from openly acknowledging they are gay or lesbian.

**Manzella first told a military supervisor about his sexual orientation in August 2006 while he was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, and working in division headquarters.**

**Three weeks after Manzella made the revelation, his battalion commander told him an investigation had been closed without finding "proof of homosexuality."**

**A month later, Manzella was redeployed to Iraq. Manzella and his supporters have said his case demonstrates how the military has been arbitrarily enforcing its "don't ask, don't tell" policy during the war.**

**Manzella enlisted in the Army in 2002. In Iraq, he provided medical care to other soldiers and accompanied his unit on patrols.**

**He was awarded the Combat Medical Badge.**

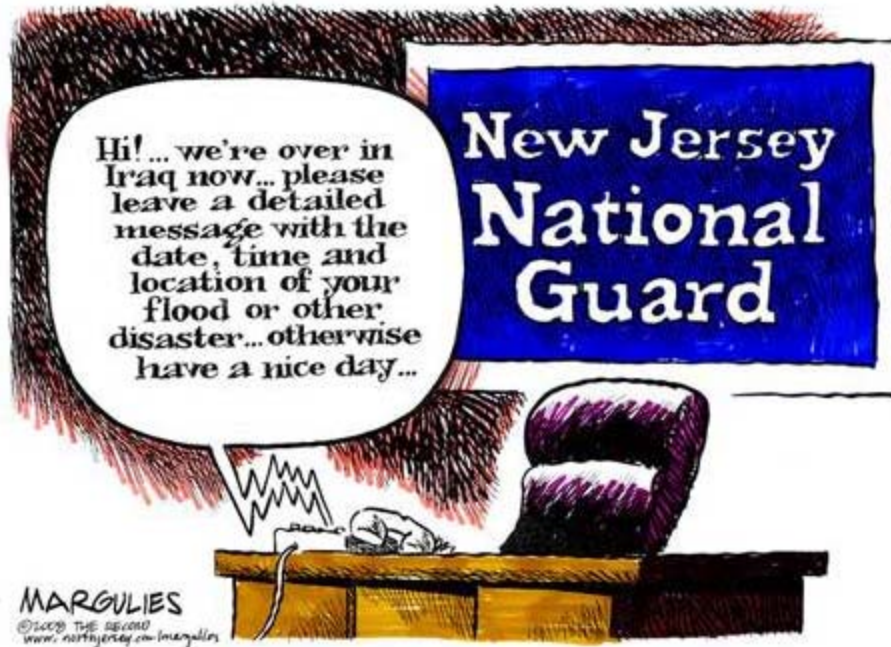
Manzella's last assignment was to Fort Hood with the 1st Cavalry Division.



Newsimg.bbc.co.uk

#### **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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057**



[Thanks to Elaine Brower, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

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## Troops Exempt From Most New Airline Baggage Charges

June 30, 2008 By Karen Jowers, Army Times

Military personnel traveling on official orders will not have to pay new fees for checked baggage in most instances, although the airlines are not exempting other government employees on official business from the fees, according to information provided by the General Services Administration Web site.

A spot-check of airlines shows service members traveling on leave would still have to pay baggage fees if airlines charge them. To receive waivers on the fees when traveling on contract fares — official government business — service members should provide identification.

Not all airlines have begun charging baggage fees, and most charge only for the second and subsequent bags. But American and United have begun charging \$15 for the first bag checked; US Airways has announced it will do the same starting July 9.

American Airlines is exempting civilian government employees and service members on government fares on domestic flights from the fee to check a first bag and from the \$25 fee for an additional bag.

But travel on American's commercial fares "may be" subject to fees for the first and second checked bag, GSA notes.

United and US Airways do not exempt government travelers on fees for the first bag, but do waive the fees for service members on travel orders. Troops also are exempt from the airlines' \$25 fee for the second bag.

Most airlines that charge fees for the second checked bag, ranging from \$10 to \$25, exempt military personnel on official travel. But JetBlue and Midwest do not exempt any government travelers from their baggage fee of \$20 for the second bag.

The government will reimburse expenses related to checked bags for people on official travel, so troops should keep their receipts if they pay such fees.

For more information, go to <http://www.gsa.gov>, click "Airfares: City Pair Program" at left; then click "baggage allowance" in first paragraph.

Officials also advise checking with individual airlines, agency travel management centers or commercial travel offices for details on their baggage policies.

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **GET THE MESSAGE?**



Iraqi nationalists display an Iraqi flag during a protest march after Friday prayers in Kufa, south of Baghdad, June 27, 2008. Thousands demonstrated in various Iraqi cities to protest at talks between Washington and Baghdad that would keep U.S. troops in Iraq after 2008, responding to a call by nationalist political leader Moqtada al-Sadr.

REUTERS/Ali Abu Shish

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## Resistance Action

6.26.08 (Xinhua) & (KUNA) & Jun 27 (AFP)

A car bomb and a roadside bomb went off coordinately near a convoy of the governor of Nineveh province in the capital city of Mosul on Thursday. The double bombing took place after midday and apparently targeted the convoy of governor Duraid Kashmoulah in the Bab al-Toub area in central Mosul, the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

Kashmoulah narrowly escaped unhurt and five of his bodyguards were among the wounded, the source said. Kashmoulah came under the attack when he was visiting a popular market in the old neighborhood hit by mortar rounds on Wednesday night, the source said. The US army said an Iraqi policeman was among the dead people.

\*\*\*\*\*

An Iraq Supreme Court judge was ambushed in Baghdad as he drove home from work, a court spokesman and security sources said on Friday. Judge Kamil al-Showaili was alone in his car when insurgents opened fire in east Baghdad on Thursday before racing off, court spokesman Abdel Satar Gafoor told AFP.

Showaili, who was in his 50s, was one of the country's most important judges, charged with handing criminal cases for the east side of the Iraqi capital. Security sources said the attack occurred around 5 pm (1400 GMT).

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

**GI SPECIALS BY MAIL FREE FOR  
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**Please say how many you wish sent.**

**NOTE WELL: They will all be different issues of GI Special to satisfy DOD regs that you may possess copies, *provided you don't have more than one of the same issue.***

## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

### Jon Turner At Winter Soldier



From: Mike Hastie  
To: GI Special  
Sent: June 27, 2008  
Subject: Jon Turner at Winter Soldier

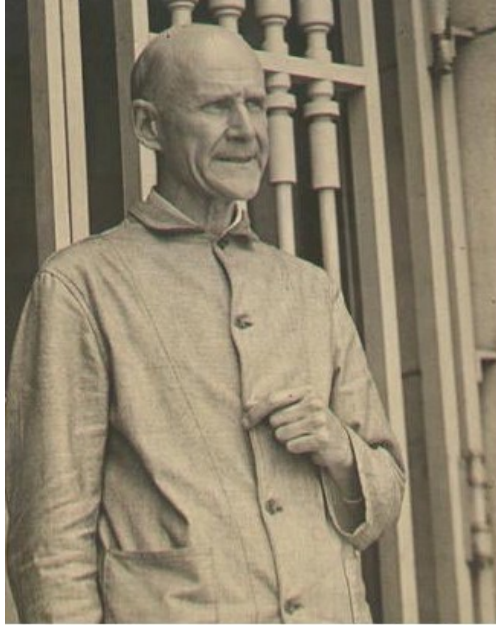
#### **Jon Turner At Winter Soldier**

**Pain so deep it cries a silent weep.  
Camouflaged in fear afraid to speak.  
In desperate hope a wounded heart revealed.  
The lies of Iraq no longer concealed.**

Mike Hastie  
Vietnam Veteran  
June 27, 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](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T

# June 26, 1918: Anniversary Of A Political Atrocity



Eugene V. Debs when he was a prisoner at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary, sentenced for opposing U.S. entry into World War I.

U.S. Department of Labor, "Labor Hall of Fame Honoree"  
<<http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/laborhall/evd.htm>>

Carl Bunin Peace History June 25 - July 1

**[S]ocialist organizer Eugene Debs was arrested for giving an anti-war speech in Canton, Ohio, 10 days earlier.**

He was charged with "uttering words intended to cause insubordination and disloyalty within the American forces of the United States, to incite resistance to the war, and to promote the cause of Germany," despite his repeated and vehement criticism in the speech of Germany and its landed aristocracy, known as the Junkers.

**“And that is war in a nutshell. The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles.**

**“The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose — especially their lives.”**

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## **OCCUPATION REPORT**



# **U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS**



An Iraqi family is forced at gunpoint to get out of their own home by armed foreign occupiers from the U.S. Army in Mosul, June 13, 2008. REUTERS/Eduardo Munoz

**[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqi troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]**

**[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people.]**

**[How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? [You'd want that in your home town, right?]]**

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

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

## RECEIVED

**“A Campaign To Stop Further New York State Units From Being Federalized, As Well As Asking The Governor To Bring Those In Iraq Back Home”**

From: Elaine Brower  
Sent: June 25, 2008 1:57 PM  
Subject: Save the NYS National Guard Petition!!

Military Families Speak Out of New York State have started a campaign to submit a resolution to the State Legislature to stop further New York State Units from being federalized, as well as asking the Governor to bring those in Iraq back home.

We have been working very closely with attorneys who have accomplished this resolution submission in 5 other states, including New Jersey and Vermont. If you go to the website [www.libertytree.org](http://www.libertytree.org) you will see all the work they have been doing.

I am asking you to sign our petition located at [www.nysavetheguard.com](http://www.nysavetheguard.com) and also if you would like to endorse, please add your name to the website.

Please sign the petition, and spread this information far and wide. You don't have to live in NYS to sign, just leave your residence blank. Our goal is to collect thousands of signatures over the next month, and we are also working with a few State Legislators on the resolution which you can read at the website also.

Thank you so much for your help.

Elaine Brower

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## **The Attack On Labour Rights Today: Iraqi, U.S. And U.K. Union Solidarity Against War, Occupation And Enforced Privatisation**

From: Ewa Jasiewicz (freelance)

Sent: June 27, 2008

Subject: The Attack on Labour Rights Today: Iraqi, US and UK solidarity -

**Monday July 7th  
6.30-8.30pm,  
Room D202, Clement House  
London School of Economics  
Aldwych, London, England WC2**

A meeting with Gene Bruskin Co-Convenor of the over 3 million strong trade union anti-war organisation US Labor Against War, plus a British trade unionist, TBA and an Iraqi workers solidarity activist.

Film excerpts from 'The Real Cost of Occupation' by USLAW and 'Winter Soldier' testimony from Iraq Veterans Against War will also be shown.

All welcome

**In occupied Iraq, Saddamist dictatorship law is still being used to outlaw trade unions.**

An Oil Law, drafted in secret and in consultation with International Oil Companies and the US and UK governments, is on the verge of being passed.

The Law will allow for the privatisation of Iraqi oil for up to 30 years and permit regions to pass their own laws and sign their own contracts with oil companies. Trade unionists and Iraqi oil experts say this risks breaking up the country and will pit regions and peoples against one another in a race to the bottom.

This meeting discusses building solidarity on common ground: to defend Iraqi trade unionists from attack; and the Iraqi peoples' assets and services from privatisation; and to work for an end to occupation.

Organised by LSE Staff Against War and Naftana - the UK Support Committee for the IFOU

See the following for more details: [www.basraoilunion.org](http://www.basraoilunion.org) and [www.uslaboragainstawar.org](http://www.uslaboragainstawar.org)

Contact Sabah Jawad Naftana, UK Support Committee for the IFOU, 07985 336 886 or Martha Mundy, LSE Staff Against War, tel 020 7955 6242



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

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2008/index.html>; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=6&l=e>; [http://www.traprokpeace.org/gi\\_special/](http://www.traprokpeace.org/gi_special/);  
<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

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