

GI SPECIAL 6F3:

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



Sadr City, Iraq: Tired 101st Airborne troops sleeping on a concrete floor. Photograph: Sean Smith; Guardian [UK] May 19, 2008. [Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

**Thanks For Nothing:
“Apparently You Have The
Money To Take Us On A 15
Month Date In The Desert And
Never Call Us Back!”**

**“The Government Is Worried
About The Estimated 4-6 Billion
Dollar Cost Of Veteran’s Health
Care Over The Next 2 Years”**
**“This Is Bullshit And I’m Calling You
Out Uncle Sam!”**
“Do Your Fucking Job And Deliver!!”



May 20, 2008 By Bryan Hannah [Iraq Veterans Against the War]

Branch of service: United States Army (USA)

Unit: 1st Cav

Rank: SPC

Home: Munising, Michigan

Served in: Fort Hood, Kuwait, Iraq.

“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 an e-mail to psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers at the Olin E. Teague Veterans’ Center in Temple, Texas, which is run by the VA. Her bright alternative was to “consider a diagnosis of Adjustment Disorder.”

VA staff members “really don’t...have time to do the extensive testing that should be done to determine PTSD,” said Perez.

Let me ask you this Ms. Perez: What is the VA so busy doing?

What is more important to the Department of Veterans Affairs than the Veteran’s Affairs?

These soldiers aren’t looking for a handout, they are expecting you to do your job and help them!!

They rely on your lazy asses!!

Do your fucking job and deliver!!

This is yet another sign that this war is producing problems we can’t deal with properly. We cannot simply throw our veterans to the curb with a bottle of Motrin and some sleeping pills. Some of these men and women are very sick and without this help, they are doomed to our bridges and culverts. Doomed to die drunk on the railroad tracks and in the homeless shelters or to be beaten cruelly by urban youth. Doomed to waste away as empty shells while their family stands by unable to reach their loved ones.

The government is worried about the estimated 4-6 billion dollar cost of veteran’s health care over the next 2 years, but apparently they have no problem spending 4 trillion on bombs and overpriced toilet seats.

Apparently you have the money to take us on a 15 month date in the desert and never call us back!

I feel pretty used.

These statistics don’t even include the hundreds of thousands on active duty for whom it is virtually impossible to seek treatment without unofficial or career shaking recourse.

Whether Norma Perez is acting on her own or at the behest of a higher power, this is bullshit and I’m calling you out Uncle Sam!



DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE?

Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 917.677.8057

ACTION REPORTS

All Honor And Limitless Respect To Louise L. And Her Friends



Louise at armory: Photo via Judy

From: Louise L
To: GI Special
Sent: June 04, 2008 11:03 PM
Subject: Louise at armory

I attended the Bridging the Gap Conference in the East Village back in April. The speakers were quite inspiring and gave me the tools (and the courage) to do some outreach.

It's going slowly, but successfully.

So far, I've passed out 13 packets with not one Guardsman turning me down.

I have been introducing myself as a veteran and asking if they would be interested in some free information on GI rights. Some are a bit hesitant and others say, "Sure!"

The packets include a copy of War Is a Racket, the Military Project Pamphlet on GI Rights, the Appeal for Redress, and IVAW and VFP application. I also passed out 10 copies of Sir, No Sir and will need to order more.

I've decided to include a flyer from MFSO because I'm catching these National Guardsmen and women on Sunday afternoons when they are driving home to their families.

Because it is a Headquarters, it seems that the vast majority are from different units and seem to be 'passing through'. This makes for the potential to pass out a lot of packets to a lot of different soldiers.

I live just a few blocks from the armory and can drive by on my way home from work. If there is a lot of activity, I grab the packets and head back (with a friend - I'm not going on my own).

I've decided to always catch them leaving rather than going in to the Armory, especially on Sunday afternoons when they are leaving to go home to their families.

Louise L, VFP, Chapter 152
At the National Guard Armory in Allentown, Pa.

REPLY: T

Louise L and her friends are doing more to build resistance to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan than any given 500 people who write long, windy articles for the internet, full of stale information everybody already knows, and yammering on and on and on about what a bad guy Bush is.

This honorable veteran has more courage and determination in her little finger than the self-appointed leaders of the civilian anti-war movement have if you were to stack them a dozen deep. While they endlessly grovel and beg, kneeling down before the Imperial politicians in Washington DC, what they call "lobbying," she and her friends act.

All honor and limitless respect to Louise L. and her friends.

Politicians can't be counted on to halt the bloodshed.

The troops have the power to stop the war.

MORE ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE WELL:

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

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

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

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

**Quit Whining And Pissing On Everybody
In Sight With Your Condescending
Bullshit About How Stupid & Apathetic
Americans Are:**

**If You Don't Spend Time In The Real World
Reaching Out To Real Troops, You Have Nothing
Whatsoever To Sneer At Others About.**

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

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed Near Baghdad

June 5, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080605-05

BAGHDAD – A Coalition force Soldier was killed by small arms fire June 4 during a patrol south of Baghdad.

The Soldier's name is being withheld pending notification of the next of kin and release by the Department of Defense.

Taunton Soldier Killed In Iraq

June 5, 2008 The Associated Press

TAUNTON, Mass. -- A soldier from Taunton has been killed in Iraq less than two weeks after returning from a short visit home.

Mayor Charles Crowley confirmed the death of Army Sgt. Shane Duffy. Crowley did not disclose details of Duffy's death but said the family was notified on Wednesday.

The 24-year-old Duffy's father, Keavin, is a Taunton firefighter.

Duffy was on his second tour of duty in Iraq, according to the Taunton Gazette. He served there for 10 months in 2004, and was re-deployed last September.

Duffy was honored at a Taunton High School softball game on May 23 in which his sister had the game-winning hit.

He leaves behind a wife and young child.

Kittanning Twp. Soldier Killed In Iraq

June 5, 2008 By Mitch Fryer, LEADER TIMES

KITTANNING TWP. -- Bonnie Waltenbaugh is counting on the strength that comes from having a large extended family and a lot of faith to cope with the death of her son, Army Private Joshua Waltenbaugh, who she said was killed recently near Taji in Iraq about 10 miles north of Baghdad.

The family of Waltenbaugh, 19, of Shay, in Kittanning Township, was notified Tuesday of his death by Army personnel.

The family had no details about the circumstances of his death other than he died from chest wounds received from small-arms fire in the past several days and that the incident is under investigation.

Waltenbaugh is survived by his wife of less than a year, Misti Walls Waltenbaugh, his mother Bonnie, father Bill Waltenbaugh, brothers Bill Crawford and James Darney, who is a sergeant in the Army Reserves, sisters Erin Darney and Jill Waltenbaugh Wranich and many aunts, uncles and cousins.

"We're leaning on each other," Bonnie Waltenbaugh said. "We have good faith. We know our days are numbered."

Bonnie phoned the mother of one of her son's best friends (Gary Jackson) to give her the sad news.

"She said 'we lost Josh,'" said Louise Jackson, Gary's mother. Louise Jackson said she knew Josh was in the military. She knew what that meant.

"When it hits you that hard you don't know what to say," Jackson said. "Just call me if you need anything was all I could get out."

Waltenbaugh was a 2007 graduate of the Lenape Technical School in Manor where he participated in the precision machining technology program.

Waltenbaugh becomes the second Lenape Technical School student to die in the war in Iraq. Army Spc. William Sturgess of South Bend was killed by a car bomb in January, 2004.

"It's so heart-wrenching to see these young people lose their lives," said Lenape's administrative director, Dawn Kocher-Taylor. "Josh was a nice kid, a good student and well-liked by the faculty and his peers." Kocher-Taylor said the school will be creating a memorial to both of the former students.

Six of Lenape's 2008 graduates were recognized for their joining the military at a recent graduation ceremony. "We're proud of all of our students who go on to serve in the military," Kocher-Taylor said.

Waltenbaugh was interested in many outdoor activities and was a member of the Boy Scouts and Venture Crew 630, the family said. He was an avid bowler and worked part time at King Lanes in Kittanning before leaving for military duty.

"Anytime you needed something, Josh was there willing to help," said Paul Klukan, Waltenbaugh's Boy Scout Leader and Venture Crew advisor. "He never attained the rank of Eagle Scout, but he's flying with the eagles now."

Paul's wife, Barbara Klukan, also was a Venture Crew advisor. She said when she closes her eyes and thinks of Josh, all she can see is his smile and him hugging everyone all the time. "He was a likeable young man with a promising future," she said.

Waltenbaugh was active in building Habitat for Humanity houses and other projects with the community service-minded Venture Crew group.

"Josh was good at building things," she said.

As a high school junior, Waltenbaugh joined the Army and completed basic training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri between his junior and senior years. After graduating from Lenape Tech, he went on to active duty and was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, before being deployed to Iraq.

He was a specialist in helicopter engine repair and a member of the Army's D.A.R.T. (downed aircraft recovery team) unit.

"Josh was proud to be serving his country," Bonnie Waltenbaugh said. "He volunteered. It was what he wanted to do."

"Anyone who joins the military to serve their country, anyone who goes over there, is a hero to me," she said.

Georgian Soldier Killed in Iraq

2008.06.05 Civil Georgia

A Georgian soldier was killed on a combat mission in Iraq on June 4, the Georgian Ministry of Defense said on Thursday.

Squad commander Irakli Kordzaia, 28, was killed when a checkpoint in the province of Diyala came under repeat fire, Giga Tatishvili, deputy chief of staff of the Georgian army, said.

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



Mar 11: A US soldier during a patrol in Diyala Province, northeast of Baghdad.
(AFP/David Furst)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Three Foreign Occupation Soldiers Wounded By Spin Boldak Bomb; Nationality Not Announced

June 4 (Reuters)

A suspected Taliban car bomber rammed a convoy of NATO-led forces in the town of Spin Boldak on Wednesday, wounding three alliance soldiers, police officers said.

Family ‘Reeling’ Over Santa Rosa Ranger’s Death:

“The Death Rate For U.S. Troops In Afghanistan Is Nearly Twice The Rate For Those In Iraq”



May 30, 2008 By GUY KOVNER, THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Army Ranger Christopher Gathercole called his grandmother in Santa Rosa from Afghanistan on Mother's Day. "He told me how much he loved me," Maryanne Haines said. "I never thought it would be for the last time."

Two weeks later, on Memorial Day, Gathercole, 21, a sturdy, blue-eyed blond who made friends easily but endured a rough childhood in foster homes, became the North Coast's 11th casualty from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Gathercole, an airborne commando whose job was hunting down insurgents in Afghanistan, died of wounds from small-arms fire during combat operations in Ghazni. His body was at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Thursday, and arrangements for a military funeral in Santa Rosa are pending, said his brother, Edward Gathercole.

"I'm reeling from everything," said Jennifer Daly, 28, of Santa Rosa, describing her brother as "a bright and shining person."

They grew up separately, but in the last five years had bonded, she said. Gathercole had stayed with her just before being deployed to Afghanistan in April.

"I was really looking forward to what life had for us going forward," Daly said.

Gathercole, who joined the Army in 2005, was the 509th American casualty in Afghanistan. Another California soldier died Wednesday, bringing the number to 510.

The death rate for U.S. troops in Afghanistan is nearly twice the rate for those in Iraq, ABC News said late last year.

Haines said her grandson called every two weeks, but never said much about what he was doing. He said he was on "night patrol," and she believes it involved hunting the Taliban and al-Qaida.

Haines said she was proud of her grandson, who spent three months in Iraq last year, and wasn't worried about him.

"I thought he'd be safe," she said. "He always told me he'd be coming home."

Born in Santa Rosa, Gathercole and his brother were in foster care by the time they were toddlers and shared a tough childhood.

Christopher spent his last year and a half in Santa Rosa at a treatment house for at-risk youth, where he made friends and "turned his life around," said Sue May, a house manager. "He was like a son to me," she said. When he came home on leave from the Army, Gathercole would visit the residents and staff at the house, May said. She drove him to the Army enlistment center in 2005.

"He never looked back," May said. "He did what he wanted to do."

"Some" Foreign Occupation Troops Ambushed In Sangin; Nationality & Numbers Wounded Not Announced: Two Vehicles Blown Up

June 4 (AFP)

The US announced that international troops on a mission in the southern province of Helmand had come under attack on Tuesday.

A vehicle had struck a mine near the town of Sangin and troops were then ambushed. A second vehicle later also hit a mine. A coalition spokesman told AFP some soldiers were injured but they were not US nationals and he could not give details.

Occupation Copter Down Near Kandahar, Two Dead: Nationality Not Announced

June 5 AFP

Two soldiers lost their lives when a helicopter crashed during a routine mission near the southern city of Kandahar, the force said. The coalition did not give the nationalities of the soldiers killed.

TROOP NEWS

**NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE
ALL HOME NOW!**



Ariel Martinez of the 395th Ordnance Company kisses his 7-month-old son, A. J., after meeting his family at the Army Reserve Center on Ballard Road in Appleton, Wis., on June 4, 2008. His unit spent the last year serving in Iraq. AP PHOTO / THE POST-CRESCENT / KIRK WAGNER

How The Pentagon Creates U.S. Suicide Soldiers

“Boy, It’s Really Nice To Have These Drugs So We Can Keep People Deployed”

“Nearly 40% Of Army Suicide Victims In 2006 And 2007 Took Psychotropic Drugs”

“In Iraq, You See The Doctor Only Once Or Twice, But You Continue To Get Drugs Constantly”

“There Were More Than A Few Convoys Going Out In A Total Daze”

Last year the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) urged the makers of antidepressants to expand a 2004 “black box” warning that the drugs may increase the risk of suicide in children and adolescents.

The agency asked for — and got — an expanded warning that included young adults ages 18 to 24, the age group at the heart of the Army.

Jun. 05, 2008 By MARK THOMPSON. Time Magazine [Excerpts]

Seven months after Sergeant Christopher LeJeune started scouting Baghdad's dangerous roads — acting as bait to lure insurgents into the open so his Army unit could kill them — he found himself growing increasingly despondent. “We'd been doing some heavy missions, and things were starting to bother me,” LeJeune says.

His unit had been protecting Iraqi police stations targeted by rocket-propelled grenades, hunting down mortars hidden in dark Baghdad basements and cleaning up its own messes. He recalls the order his unit got after a nighttime firefight to roll back out and collect the enemy dead.

When LeJeune and his buddies arrived, they discovered that some of the bodies were still alive. "You don't always know who the bad guys are," he says.

"When you search someone's house, you have it built up in your mind that these guys are terrorists, but when you go in, there's little bitty tiny shoes and toys on the floor — things like that started affecting me a lot more than I thought they would."

So LeJeune visited a military doctor in Iraq, who, after a quick session, diagnosed depression.

The doctor sent him back to war armed with the antidepressant Zoloft and the antianxiety drug clonazepam.

"It's not easy for soldiers to admit the problems that they're having over there for a variety of reasons," LeJeune says. "If they do admit it, then the only solution given is pills."

While the headline-grabbing weapons in this war have been high-tech wonders, like unmanned drones that drop Hellfire missiles on the enemy below, troops like LeJeune are going into battle with a different kind of weapon, one so stealthy that few Americans even know of its deployment.

For the first time in history, a sizable and growing number of U.S. combat troops are taking daily doses of antidepressants to calm nerves strained by repeated and lengthy tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The drugs are intended not only to help troops keep their cool but also to enable the already strapped Army to preserve its most precious resource: soldiers on the front lines.

Escalating violence in Afghanistan and the more isolated mission have driven troops to rely more on drugs there than in Iraq, military officials say.

At a Pentagon that keeps statistics on just about everything, there is no central clearinghouse for this kind of data, and the Army hasn't consistently asked about prescription-drug use, which makes it difficult to track.

Data contained in the Army's fifth Mental Health Advisory Team report indicate that, according to an anonymous survey of U.S. troops taken last fall, about 12% of combat troops in Iraq and 17% of those in Afghanistan are taking prescription antidepressants or sleeping pills to help them cope.

Given the traditional stigma associated with soldiers seeking mental help, the survey, released in March, probably underestimates antidepressant use. But if the Army numbers reflect those of other services — the Army has by far the most troops deployed to the war zones — about 20,000 troops in Afghanistan and Iraq were on such drugs last fall.

The increase in the use of medication among U.S. troops suggests the heavy mental and psychological price being paid by soldiers fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Pentagon surveys show that while all soldiers deployed to a war zone will feel stressed, 70% will manage to bounce back to normalcy. But about 20% will suffer from what the military calls “temporary stress injuries,” and 10% will be afflicted with “stress illnesses.”

Such ailments, according to briefings commanders get before deploying, begin with mild anxiety and irritability, difficulty sleeping, and growing feelings of apathy and pessimism.

As the condition worsens, the feelings last longer and can come to include panic, rage, uncontrolled shaking and temporary paralysis. The symptoms often continue back home, playing a key role in broken marriages, suicides and psychiatric breakdowns.

[A]ny drug that keeps a soldier deployed and fighting also saves money on training and deploying replacements.

“This is what happens when you try to fight a long war with an army that wasn’t designed for a long war,” says Lawrence Korb, Pentagon personnel chief during the Reagan Administration.

Military families wonder about the change, according to Joyce Raezer of the private National Military Family Association.

“Boy, it’s really nice to have these drugs,” she recalls a military doctor saying, “so we can keep people deployed.”

Such questions have assumed greater urgency as more is revealed about the side effects of some mental-health medications.

Last year the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) urged the makers of antidepressants to expand a 2004 “black box” warning that the drugs may increase the risk of suicide in children and adolescents.

The agency asked for — and got — an expanded warning that included young adults ages 18 to 24, the age group at the heart of the Army.

There have been 164 Army suicides in Afghanistan and Iraq from the wars’ start through 2007, and the annual rate there is now double the service’s 2001 rate.

At least 115 soldiers killed themselves last year, including 36 in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army said on May 29. That’s the highest toll since it started keeping such records in 1980.

Nearly 40% of Army suicide victims in 2006 and 2007 took psychotropic drugs — overwhelmingly, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) like Prozac and Zoloft.

“The high percentage of U.S. soldiers attempting suicide after taking SSRIs should raise serious concerns,” says Dr. Joseph Glenmullen, who teaches psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

“And there’s no question they’re using them to prop people up in difficult circumstances.”

Repeated deployments to the war zones also contribute to the onset of mental-health problems.

Nearly 30% of troops on their third deployment suffer from serious mental-health problems, a top Army psychiatrist told Congress in March.

The doctor, Colonel Charles Hoge, added that recent research has shown the current 12 months between combat tours “is insufficient time” for soldiers “to reset” and recover from the stress of a combat tour before heading back to war.

It wasn’t until November 2006 that the Pentagon set a uniform policy for all the services.

But the curious thing about it was that it didn’t mention the new antidepressants. Instead, it simply barred troops from taking older drugs, including “lithium, anticonvulsants and antipsychotics.”

The goal, a participant in crafting the policy said, was to give SSRIs a “green light” without saying so.

And yet the battlefield seems an imperfect environment for widespread prescription of these drugs.

“In Iraq, you see the doctor only once or twice, but you continue to get drugs constantly.” LeJeune says the medications — combined with the war’s other stressors — created unfit soldiers.

“There were more than a few convoys going out in a total daze.”

About a third of soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq say they can’t see a mental-health professional when they need to. When the number of troops in Iraq surged by 30,000 last year, the number of Army mental-health workers remained the same — about 200 — making counseling and care even tougher to get.

And just as more troops are taking these drugs, there are new doubts about the drugs’ effectiveness.

When he returned home in May 2004, [LeJeune] remained on clonazepam and other drugs. He became one of 300,000 Americans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and suffer from PTSD or depression.

“But PTSD isn’t fixed by taking pills — it’s just numbed,” he says now.

“And I felt like I was drugged all the time.”

So a year ago, he simply stopped taking them. “I just started trying to fight my demons myself,” he says, with help from VA counseling.

He laughs when asked how he’s doing. “I’d like to think,” he says, “that I’m really damn close back to normal.”

MORE:

Another PTSD Drug Kill

May 24, 2008 KIIITV News

This Memorial Day weekend, a Corpus Christi family is mourning the loss of a Marine who has ties to Coastal Bend. The Marine, 21 year old Chad Oligschlaeger is a former Carroll High School student. He was found dead earlier this week in his barracks at Twenty Nine Palms in California.

While the cause of his death is still being investigated, family members say Oligschlaeger was taking eight different types of medications to deal with post traumatic stress disorder after serving two tours in Iraq.

Now his family is speaking out, asking for better treatment for Marines and soldiers who return home with PTSD.

Byron Smith, Oligschlaeger's Uncle said, "the first tour he came back and he asked for help, and they sent him back over there. I guess that was their idea of help. He did what a marine does he went over there."

Oligschlaeger was a month away from finishing his service with the Marines. He joined when he was 17 years old.

Canadian Parliament Votes To Give Sanctuary To Iraq War Deserters From The U.S.: Canadian Government Will Ignore Vote

Jun 3 By JOHN WARD The Canadian Press

OTTAWA — American military deserters celebrated a bittersweet victory Tuesday as the House of Commons passed a motion calling on the Harper government to let them stay in Canada.

The opposition parties banded together to outvote the Conservatives and approve the motion to grant permanent residence status to deserters and their families.

But the measure, which passed 137-110, isn't binding — and the government is certain to ignore it.

There are thought to be about 200 American military deserters who have come to Canada to avoid service in Iraq.

Their efforts to win refugee status have been rejected by immigration officials and the courts alike and several face imminent deportation to courts martial and, perhaps, jail back home.

Grieving Father Of Dead Sailor Jailed Trying To Deposit Benefits Check: “He Will Bury His Son Today”

June 4, 2008 By Kathy Adams, The Virginian-Pilot

The Navy is investigating the arrest of a grieving father who was jailed for several hours on suspicion of forgery after he tried to deposit a government check for his son's death benefits.

Seaman Daniel Mayberry, a 21-year-old sailor aboard the Little Creek-based dock landing ship Carter Hall, died May 27 of injuries suffered in a car accident on Shore Drive in Virginia Beach.

On Friday, his father, John E. Mayberry, tried to deposit the \$100,000 U.S. Treasury Department check at a branch of Texas State Bank in Harlingen, Texas.

The bank's staff suspected the check was phony and called police, who arrested Mayberry.

The Navy intervened to have him released after six hours behind bars and the charges have now been dropped, said Cmdr. Flex Plexico, a spokesman for the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Although Mayberry was finally allowed to deposit the check Monday after the Secret Service stepped in, questions remain.

“Our priority is to make sure the Mayberry family has the support they need,” Plexico said. The Navy is working with local authorities “to find out as much as we can about how this could have happened.”

He said he has never heard of another such case. The Defense Department pays death benefits to a service member's next of kin to help with funeral expenses and provide additional support.

Cody Sparks, the bank's district retail executive, said the bank was simply following protocol meant to protect consumers.

The bank contacted the U.S. Treasury Department and was told that the check was fraudulent, he said. At that point, he said, the bank was legally obligated to call the police. It was the police officers' decision to arrest Mayberry, he contended.

The Harlingen Police Department confirmed Mayberry's arrest, but a spokesperson did not return phone calls seeking further comment.

Patti Correa of Newport News, a military spouse and mother who has worked in banking, said she thinks the bank should have taken further steps to help Mayberry and verify the check's authenticity.

"He went in saying, 'I lost my son, and this is the check,'" said Correa, who is involved in military support groups such as Blue Star Families of Hampton Roads.

"I think they should've investigated it further before they called the police. That just caused more harm to him in his emotional state."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Key Shiite And Sunni Leaders Reject A New Agreement With The U.S. That OKs Permanent U.S. Military Bases, And Allows The U. S. To Detain Iraqis Indefinitely:

"Iraq Is Still A Country Under Occupation, Consequently Any Pact Arrived At Between The Unequal Partners Will Be No Agreement"

2008-06-03 Abdus Sattar Ghazali, Middle-East Online [Excerpts]

Iraq's key Shiite and Sunni leaders have rejected a new open-ended security agreement with the United States that envisages permanent US military bases, immunity to American military personnel and security contractors if they killed civilians and allowing the United States to detain Iraqis indefinitely.

The proposed Iraqi-American agreement would provide a legal framework for US troops to remain in Iraq after Dec. 31, when their UN mandate expires.

The United Nation's mandate that allows foreign forces to occupy Iraq will not be renewed at the end of the year. So any future US military involvement in the war-torn nation can only continue with such an agreement.

The Guardian newspaper reported in April last that strategic framework agreement between the US and Iraqi government envisages an open-ended military presence in the country.

It authorizes the US to “conduct military operations in Iraq and to detain individuals when necessary for imperative reasons of security” without time limit.

At present US forces are exempt from Iraqi law and have essentially unchecked powers to arrest and jail Iraqi citizens as part of military operations.

Not surprisingly, the agreement has drawn sharp criticism from Iraq's political and religious leaders.

The country's most revered Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani has formally objected to the agreement, saying he would not allow the government to sign such a deal with “the US occupiers” as long as he was alive.

An influential Shiite political party leader, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, whose Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq is part of Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki's ruling coalition, has also denounced the agreement saying several parts of the agreement “violate Iraq's national sovereignty.”

Last week, tens of thousands people in Baghdad and southern Iraq, responding to a call by the cleric Moktada al-Sadr denounced the negotiations between the US and Al Maliki government.

At the same time, Omar al-Jabburi, a prominent Sunni lawmaker, says that Iraq is still a country under occupation, consequently any pact arrived at between the unequal partners will be no agreement.

According to Global Policy Forum, at present there are 55 US bases in Iraq, among which commanders have chosen a small number for long-term or “enduring” development. The base-building process is now far along, with construction of major concrete runways, communications, utilities and extensive amenities for troops.

A large majority of Iraqis oppose a long-term US presence in their country and consider bases as a key negative symbol of the occupation. Opinion polls have shown that Iraqis believe that the United States is planning to establish and keep such bases, even if the Iraqi government asks to remove them.

In a public opinion poll taken in mid-2006 by World Public Opinion, 78 per cent of Iraqis thought that the US military presence provokes more conflict than it prevents.

Iraqi public opinion overwhelmingly favors a decisive withdrawal of US forces from Iraq as Iraqis view US occupation forces as contributing to the deteriorating security situation in Iraq.

“No To The Agreement Between The Occupation And The Iraqi Government”

Tens Of Thousands Of Iraqis Took To The Streets In Baghdad And Other Cities



Iraqi demonstrators condemn U.S. occupation during a protest in the Kazimiyah northern district of Baghdad, May 30, 2008. Tens of thousands of Iraqis took to the streets in Baghdad and other cities to protest plans for a long term occupation by U.S. troops. The banner in the background reads: 'No to the agreement between the occupation and the Iraqi government'. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Justice?

“Michael, And Thousands Of Others Who Will Return From War To Face Their Own Storehouse Of Demons, Deserve People To Stand Boldly In Defense Of What Is Right And Just”

From: Monica Benderman
To: GI Special
Sent: June 04, 2008

[Monica Benderman is the wife of Sgt. Kevin Benderman, wrongfully imprisoned for being a Conscientious Objector to war. Please visit BendermanTimeline.com and BendermanDefense.org for more information.]

June 3, 2008 Monica Benderman

Earlier this week I was put in contact with the mother of a young Iraq veteran.

Michael is twenty years old, with experiences no young person should have to face.

Michael chose to serve in the National Guard. Michael returned from Iraq with more than one medal for his service.

But after a year long tour at Abu Ghraib, Michael returned with more than just medals – he brought a storehouse of experiences no person of good conscience could ever erase and this young man was not equipped with the tools he needed to quiet his mind and forget the reality of those memories.

Michael was not lost in the system. He received, and continues to receive counseling from the VA for his combat stress. He has the support of his command who has acknowledged the intense conditions under which Michael served. His family has watched over him, supported him and many in his community have embraced him. In the end, war has taken its toll.

Michael faces a trial this week and this decorated young veteran, after choosing to serve his country at war, now stands to add years in prison to the list of obstacles his choices have given him.

Michael could not erase the horrors of what he saw in Iraq. Michael is proud of his service – a soldier committed to supporting the soldiers he has served with because he knows firsthand just how much each has given.

Even more, Michael knows just how much understanding they now need. The medications couldn't hide the memories, and the intoxicating effects of the 70 proof contents of a simple glass bottle couldn't hide them either, bringing instead even greater heartache and the endless nightmare of a lifetime of regrets.

Michael lost his childhood in Iraq and returned to lose one remaining connection to better times when his attempt at self-medicating failed and his best friend lost his life in an accident Michael's intoxication caused.

Politicians stand at podiums and talk about the cost of war.

Anti-war advocates preach from microphones and bullhorns on the steps of our nation's capitol, outside city halls across the country and in parades down main streets in every middle-American community that they can reach.

Ignorant commentators issue harsh criticism of those who have volunteered, lashing out at the naiveté of the men and women who stood for what they believed, who acted in good faith and with trust for the words of commanders who had sworn not to abuse the lives entrusted to their leadership, as if those commentating had some higher enlightenment of right and wrong when more often than not they have never stood for anything more than photo opportunities.

Documentaries have been made showing bullet holes piercing the bodies of children no more than one year old; lives lost before they even knew to be afraid.

Many veterans have returned to offer public witness to their horrors while others have simply walked away in painful silence.

Americans shake their heads at the terrible effects of a natural rage – tornadoes, hurricanes, tsunamis, fires and floods destroying lives across the world – pity for the masses of people left homeless, sending care packages as a way to alleviate their guilt for not knowing the reality of what so many others have had to face. How many Americans turn a blind eye to the horrible effects of their own insatiable greed and ignorance for the truth of being human?

We blame our faults on the evil in the world – the evil side of a creator who gave us peace hoping we would know what to do with it; now standing watch as we pretend to have no control over the destruction we alone have caused.

Intellectuals congregate and discuss the psychological reasons for our lack of humanity.

Evangelicals shout from the mountaintops – “We MUST be afraid!”

A soldier stands alone as the chaos swirls around him – wondering “what have I done, where have I gone and how will I ever get back home?”

Wars come and go.

Men and women die. Children are born.

Economies falter, homes are lost, families are destroyed and futures questioned. The world circles and the cycles repeat themselves as a veteran generation remembers, issuing warnings of caution to a generation coming; a multitude believing themselves to be stronger against the tide than those who came before.

As another generation grows old learning that life happens in spite of the effort to control it, the repeated cycles of chaos and division are nothing more than giant spinning wheels churning the mud in a mad attempt to veil the simplicity of the answers to questions most don't even realize they are asking.

We know the prize; we talk about the dream, the vision, the goal. We paint it with psychedelic colors, glorify it in song, with poetic phrases; holding hands and lighting candles in the hope we can call it to the center of our circle, enjoined arms wrapping tightly to keep it from escaping our grasp. But it is not meant to be held, it is meant to be given with no obligation and no expectations. How long before we finally understand?

The war is coming home and still Americans don't fully comprehend what we are about to receive.

We will reap what we have sown.

Michael gave what he believed was needed as he stood in response to what he felt called to do.

Michael has paid a heavy price; more than any young man should have to pay.

It is only the beginning, and a long jail sentence will not bring justice for an accident caused by something far more deadly than driving while intoxicated, with a responsibility shared by thousands who will never realize the cost of their complacency.

Michael, and thousands of others who will return from war to face their own storehouse of demons, deserve people to stand boldly in defense of what is right and just.

They deserve people to work together to bring the changes we all need to help our world move a little closer to the goal of peace.

Michael stands to go to trial this week, but Michael should not be standing alone. Every citizen who has not yet stood to see that justice is served in the name of peace shall bear responsibility for what we all are about to receive.

Aren't we all responsible when a veteran returns from a war we allowed to happen, with a storehouse of experiences whose demons he is powerless to silence?

Aren't we all responsible for ensuring that true justice is served?

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



Foreign occupation soldiers from the US soldiers search an Iraqi citizen's house during an armed home invasion in Shulla neighbourhood in north-western Baghdad.
Photograph: Sean Smith, Guardian, 5.28.08 [Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

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

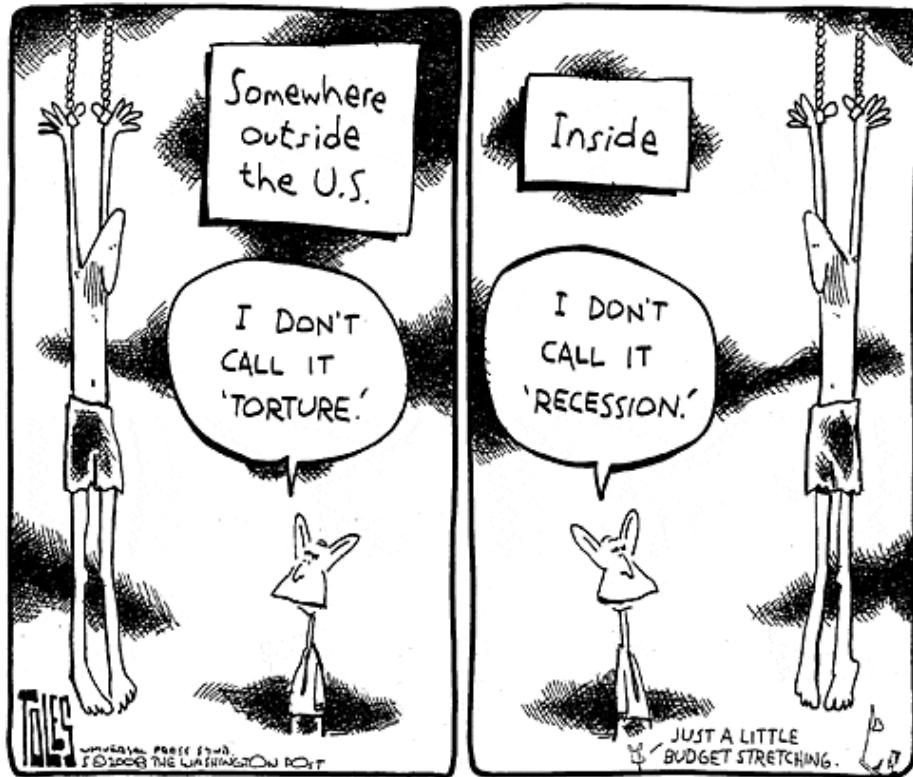
[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]

Iraqi citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed.

The women and children were moved into a room, where they huddled together in silence. The men had been forced down onto their knees wherever they were apprehended, their hands secured behind their backs with plastic handcuffs and their eyes covered by makeshift blindfolds. YOCHI J. DREAZEN, Wall St. Journal, 3.12.07

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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