

GI SPECIAL 6H3:



CHANGE WE CAN BEREAVE IN

7-31-08

Warning

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: August 03, 2008
Subject: Warning by Dennis

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

Warning

One kidney lays in a corner of the black bag
the top of his head with hair
is against an arm that blew off
his body cut in half with small deep cuts
all over his legs blackened
like shark's meat at a restaurant
One eye is laying on top of his liver
like an Elite obscene bloodymary
that sees the face of his killer
Do Not Open To View on the coffin
says a military sticker
under the American flag that tries
to hide it to cover atrocities
in the home of the brave
No. don't open this Bush
Cheney and Rice, don't even let his mother
who born him have just one last look
no one but the children know
the sobbing of a mother
Don't let the father see his son
that he housed, fed and loved
with his two hands of hard work
for 18 years as he dries his watery eyes
with his white handkerchief
as a surrender that all was for nothing
not even grand children
that he was looking forward to view
He died defending America
a friend tells him but some of the intestines
inside are not even his own
two teeth lay like dice
on top of a lung
snake eyes like Pelosi's
but they could not find his heart
that lays in another boy's coffin
his face all gone too
unviewable
warning, some of these images
may upset you
discretion advised.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Two U.S. Soldiers Killed, Another Wounded In Baghdad IED Strike

Aug. 4, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080804-01

BAGHDAD – Two U.S. Soldiers were killed and another wounded after an improvised explosive device struck their patrol in eastern Baghdad at approximately 9:30 a.m. Aug. 4.

The names of the Soldiers are being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT; ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. Marine, from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, near the town of Garmser in Helmand Province of Afghanistan July 10, 2008. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

Rockford Soldier Killed In Afghanistan Bomb Blast



Aug 03, 2008 By Isaac Guerrero, Rockford Register Star

ROCKFORD — A 23-year-old Rockford man was among a group of NATO soldiers killed in bomb blasts in Afghanistan Friday, said his mother Netha Morgan of Rockford.

Pfc. David John Badie was a member of an elite U.S. Army Special Forces team who celebrated his 23rd birthday Wednesday. Military officials delivered the news to his mother Friday. Grief counselors will meet with her tonight to further explain the details surrounding her son's death.

Morgan described her son as a kind man, "the kind of guy who would offer you the shirt off his back.

"He was romantic when it came to girlfriends," Morgan said. "He loved life. He loved sports. He was a little bit of a daredevil, I guess you could say. He was a beautiful young man."

Badie also is survived by his stepfather Daniel Morgan of Rockford, two sisters and a brother. He was born in Phoenix and moved to the Belvidere area with his family in 2000. He attended Belvidere public schools for about a year, then his family moved to Janesville, Wis. Badie attended and dropped out of Milton High School in Milton, Wis., and later obtained his general equivalency diploma.

He moved back to Rockford in 2004 and joined the Army just shy of two years ago "because he didn't feel it was right about what happened with 9/11 and he wanted to ensure our constitutional rights and other rights were upheld," Morgan said.

"He held his convictions, he believed in what he was doing and it was hard to convince him about seeing the other side of a story," Morgan said.

Though devastated by her son's death, Morgan attended services today at Emmanuel Lutheran Church. When Pastor Bill Gerber told the congregation about Badie's death, parishioners immediately rose from the pews and began praying with her.

When the service ended, Gerber said he witnessed "a holy moment." As he stood in the back of the church to greet parishioners, a long line of people queued up to offer Morgan their consolation and prayers.

The line was much longer than the usual throng of parishioners that shake his hand when services conclude and people exit the church. "There was no doubt in my mind that David's spirit was there in church with his mother this morning and it was his spirit that allowed her to get to church today. All she had was the congregation's love and support this morning. I was awed by her love and her courage."

Morgan went to the post office Friday to mail her son a birthday package before she learned of his death. But she couldn't send the gift because the ZIP code she was given for his present location was incorrect.

The package sat on the living room floor of Morgan's apartment Sunday, surrounded by childhood pictures of Badie that she had gathered as a makeshift memorial.

"The package was just stuff he said he wanted: a bath sponge, Head & Shoulders shampoo, face wash. And there were two birthday cards. One was a musical card that played the song "Tequilla," something he probably would have wanted on his birthday, I'm sure. And the other card was the nice, motherly one."

According to The Associated Press, bomb blasts killed five NATO soldiers in Afghanistan Friday, the latest in a surge of extremist attacks.

“A Military ‘Victory’ In Afghanistan Is Simply Not Possible”

**“Once A Population Turns Against
An Occupation (Or Just Decides
To Stay Neutral), There Are Few
Places In The World Where An
Occupier Can Win”**

“Afghanistan, With Its Enormous Size And Daunting Geography, Is Certainly Not One Of Them” “According To U.S. Counter Insurgency Doctrine, Afghanistan Would Require At Least 400,000 Troops To Even Have A Chance Of ‘Winning’ The War”

According to Der Spiegel, the Taliban are moving north toward Kunduz, just as they did in 1994 when they broke out of their base in Kandahar and started their drive to take over the country.

July 30, 2008 By Conn Hallinan, Foreign Policy In Focus [Excerpts]

The initial invasion in 2001 was easy because the Taliban had alienated itself from the vast majority of Afghans. But the weight of occupation, and the rising number of civilian deaths, is shifting the resistance toward a war of national liberation.

No foreign power has ever won that battle in Afghanistan.

There is no mystery as to why things have gone increasingly badly for the United States and its allies.

As the United States steps up its air war, civilian casualties have climbed steadily over the past two years. Nearly 700 were killed in the first three months of 2008, a major increase over last year. In a recent incident, 47 members of a wedding party were killed in Helmand Province. In a society where clan, tribe, and blood feuds are a part of daily life, that single act sowed a generation of enmity.

Anatol Lieven, a professor of war at King’s College London, says that a major impetus behind the growing resistance is anger over the death of family members and neighbors.

Lieven says it is as if Afghanistan is “becoming a sort of surreal hunting estate, in which the U.S. and NATO breed the very terrorists they then track down.”

Once a population turns against an occupation (or just decides to stay neutral), there are few places in the world where an occupier can win.

Afghanistan, with its enormous size and daunting geography, is certainly not one of them.

Writing in Der Spiegel, Ullrich Fichter says that glancing at a map in the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF) headquarters outside Kandahar could give one the impression that Afghanistan is under control. "Colorful little flags identify the NATO troops presence throughout the country," Germans in the northeast, Americans in the east, Italians in the West, British and Canadians in the south, with flags from Turkey, the Netherlands, Spain, Lithuania, Australia and Sweden scattered between.

"But the flags are an illusion," he says.

The UN considers one third of the country "inaccessible," and almost half, "high risk."

According to Der Spiegel, the Taliban are moving north toward Kunduz, just as they did in 1994 when they broke out of their base in Kandahar and started their drive to take over the country.

The Asia Times says the insurgents' strategy is to cut NATO's supply lines from Pakistan and establish a "strategic corridor" from the border to Kabul.

The United States and NATO currently have about 60,000 troops in Afghanistan. But many NATO troops are primarily concerned with rebuilding and development – the story that was sold to the European public to get them to support the war – and only secondarily with war fighting.

The Afghan army adds about 70,000 to that number, but only two brigades and one headquarters unit are considered capable of operating on their own.

According to U.S. counter insurgency doctrine, however, Afghanistan would require at least 400,000 troops to even have a chance of "winning" the war.

Adding another 10,000 U.S. troops will have virtually no effect.

By any measure, a military "victory" in Afghanistan is simply not possible.

TROOP NEWS

**"What We Did In Iraq, I Didn't Agree
With Most Of It"**

**"We Would Hurt And Kill Children
And Other Innocent People"**

"End The War In Iraq Immediately"



Iraq Veterans Against The War member Paul Melling rests his weary feet in Cottage Grove after hours of marching for peace. Anita Weier/The Capital Times

7/27/2008 By Anita Weier, The Capital Times [Excerpts]

Helene Hedberg is marching through much of Wisconsin to oppose the Iraq war.

Hedberg helps Iraqi refugee children in Stockholm and got to know march organizer Kathy Kelly during a human rights conference in Sweden. So when she heard from Kelly that Voices for Creative Nonviolence was organizing a march from Chicago to St. Paul, Minn., to arrive Aug. 31 in time for the Republican National Convention, Hedberg decided she had to participate.

The Witness Against War march includes about a dozen regulars who are marching most of the 450 miles, as well as many others who walk segments.

One of the marchers is Army veteran Paul Melling, 27, who served in Iraq in 2004 and 2005 in field artillery as a specialist E-4.

Melling, of Melrose, Minn., is a member of Iraq Veterans against the War.

“What we did in Iraq, I didn’t agree with most of it,” he said. “With harassment and interdiction, the fire was kind of random. While shooting up insurgent strongholds, we would hurt and kill children and other innocent people. I don’t feel we ever tried to win hearts and minds.”

The main objectives of the protest walk are to end the war in Iraq immediately and secure full funding for veterans’ initiatives, he said.

The group also wants to see funding for reconstruction efforts in Iraq and the cancellation of debts owed by Saddam Hussein’s former regime.

Another objective is to prevent future deployment of the Wisconsin National Guard.

The walkers also will take part in a Day of Action on Monday by participating in the regular noon peace vigil at the corner of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Doty Street.

They then plan to deliver a letter to the governor asking that he do what he can to prevent the Guard's deployment.



**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

**A Soldier's Truth:
"We Have Tried So Many Military
Strategies In Iraq In An Effort To
Clean Up President Bush's Mess"
"The Only Road We Haven't Explored Is
The Road Home"**

As an Iraq veteran it's very hard for me to grip the strong possibility that the troop surge in Iraq was all for naught. So recently I have been focusing on the successes of the surge in Iraq without political or ideological blinders.

I recently wrote a piece to touch on a different angle than my usual argument that the war is unjustified and illegal in the eyes of millions of Americans and the world community. However, this was all based on a hypothetical scenario that we actually had a compelling reason to invade and occupy Iraq in the first place.

This underscores the genesis of this disaster when we forgot about Osama bin Laden and refocused the war on terror to Saddam Hussein who didn't have WMDs, did not want war with us, and posed no threat to the United States.

So while recognizing the success that the surge had from tactical military standpoint, I remain strongly opposed to the war.

I will never dismiss the falsehoods of why we went to Iraq as a moot point. Too many people have suffered and died for the sane and rational to have the cavalier opinion of "to hell with it, forget why we are there, we just need to win."

I'll leave that to the people who will forever buy the Bush mantra hook, line, and sinker. They can't be reached and luckily they are in the lowest of the minority.

Their main argument: we have to fight them there so we don't have to fight them here.

Really?

Or is that just a way to legitimize sending another soldier or Marine back to Iraq for his fourth or fifth deployment?

As if the Iraqi insurgents could possibly come "over here" in the masses to invade America -- give me a break.

We are fighting the Iraqis "over there" because we are in Iraq -- plain and simple.

It's crucial for us all understand the Iraqi insurgency has been disguised by the Bush Administration as AQI -- Al Qaeda in Iraq.

Catchy name isn't it -- and oh what a convenient excuse to keep the war going.

Let's justify the last 5+ years of death and destruction by lumping the violent reaction of the Iraqi people to an occupation of their land into the same category as those who orchestrated and carried out 9/11.

This very same crowd living in a "fools paradise" continuously attempt to latch onto some illusion that this tragic episode of American/Iraqi history was a colossal failure that falls on the back of the U.S. intelligence agencies. Come on, Bush was going in regardless of what the CIA told him.

Now the latest propaganda being formulated by those in a perpetual state of denial is that the Bush Administration initiated this war and occupation as philanthropists for the Iraqi people.

Explain that philanthropy to the 4.5 million Iraqi refugees, the families of the uncountable number of dead Iraqi civilians, and the U.S. troops who had to bear witness to it and died in the process.

The same Iraqi government elected by its people who President Bush proclaims such compassion for are asking us to set a timeline to leave.

Why is the blatantly obvious impossible for the average warmonger to grasp? The reality is that their numbskulls deny them humility to admit it.

I'm well aware that this sounds irresponsible.

But if the Iraqis want to do it "John Wayne" style from here on out -- why should we interfere?

After all, according to the Iraqi government they are a free and sovereign nation capable of standing on their own.

Sound familiar?

We have tried so many military strategies in Iraq in an effort to clean up President Bush's mess.

The only road we haven't explored is the road home. Just something to think about.

MORE:

**“So You’ve Just Humiliated This Man
In Front Of His Entire Family And
Terrorized His Entire Family And
You’ve Destroyed His Home”
“And Then You Go Right Next Door And
You Do The Same Thing In A Hundred
Homes”**

“You go up the stairs. You grab the man of the house. You rip him out of bed in front of his wife. You put him up against the wall.

“You have junior-level troops, PFCs, specialists will run into the other rooms and grab the family, and you’ll group them all together. Then you go into a room and you tear the room to shreds and you make sure there’s no weapons or anything that they can use to attack us.

“You get the interpreter and you get the man of the home, and you have him at gunpoint, and you’ll ask the interpreter to ask him: ‘Do you have any weapons? Do you have any anti-US propaganda, anything at all--anything--anything in here that would lead us to believe that you are somehow involved in insurgent activity or anti-coalition forces activity?’

“Normally they’ll say no, because that’s normally the truth,” Sergeant Bruhns said.

“So what you’ll do is you’ll take his sofa cushions and you’ll dump them. If he has a couch, you’ll turn the couch upside down.

“You’ll go into the fridge, if he has a fridge, and you’ll throw everything on the floor, and you’ll take his drawers and you’ll dump them.... You’ll open up his closet and you’ll throw all the clothes on the floor and basically leave his house looking like a hurricane just hit it.

“And if you find something, then you’ll detain him. If not, you’ll say, ‘Sorry to disturb you. Have a nice evening.’

“So you’ve just humiliated this man in front of his entire family and terrorized his entire family and you’ve destroyed his home. And then you go right next door and you do the same thing in a hundred homes.”

Sgt. John Bruhns

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

“The Reductions In Violence Haven’t Changed Anything As Far As Iraq Veterans Against The War Is Concerned”

“We’re Still Occupying Iraq And The War Is Illegal And It Isn’t Good For The American People Or The Iraqis”



[Thanks to Katherine G, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

July 30, 2008 By MARK WALKER, Staff Writer, North County Times [Excerpts]

Though the region has lost nearly 1,000 Marines since the invasion of Iraq, the sounds of taps are being heard far less often across Southern California.

Through the first seven months of this year, eight Camp Pendleton-based Marines have died in Iraq, the lowest total for comparable periods since the war began in March 2003.

The reductions in violence haven’t changed anything as far as the group Iraq Veterans Against the War is concerned.

It continues to call for an immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops.

“The reduction doesn’t mean much about the reasons why we’re there,” said Del Mar’s Kenyon Ralph, a former Marine sergeant who had tours of duty in Iraq in 2003 and 2004 and heads the 30-member San Diego chapter of the group.

“We’re still occupying Iraq and the war is illegal and it isn’t good for the American people or the Iraqis.”

Signs Of Progress, For Our Side: “You Can’t Be Hanging Out Drinking Beer With The Enlisted Guys One Night

And Chewing Their Ass Out The Next Morning”

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

July 30, 2008 By Bill Sasser, Salon.com [Excerpts]

John Hagedorn, a sergeant who served in 2007 as a forward observer in the 82nd Airborne Division assigned to an artillery unit in Tikrit, said the high rate of NCO promotions disrupted the chain of command in the platoons to which he was attached.

The result in the platoons he observed was a breakdown in the chain of command, which followed the soldiers home: “There was really no difference between the enlisted guys and the junior leadership (in Iraq).

“They’re hanging out together, being buddies, not like back in the U.S. where the NCOs are constantly correcting soldiers of a lesser rank. Then you come home to a training environment like Ft. Bragg and it’s a problem.

“You can’t be hanging out drinking beer with the enlisted guys one night and chewing their ass out the next morning. You end up showing favoritism.”

“Why Aren’t Our Quartermasters Leaders Fighting For Us And Coming Up With A Better System?”

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
8.4.08

The July 7 “Shoe supplement” article talks about the new mountain boots issued to certain soldiers. Since the Army decided to take out the black boots, black belt and other items, cooks are using the tan boots in the kitchen. Two pairs of boots are not even enough, as the tan boots are not oil- or stain-proof, grease-proof or hot water-proof, and they are extremely hard to keep clean.

We are required to show up to our cook’s mount with a clean, pressed white uniform and clean boots. It doesn’t matter how many cleaning kits you use, some stains don’t come off.

For me, this has been a very difficult, disappointing and frustrating military occupational specialty. I was one of those 63B mechanics forced to change specialties in 2003.

We work long hours, weekends and holidays.

When everybody is with their families and friends and enjoying their time off, we are working. Everybody wants good service, but nobody understands or appreciates our hard work.

On top of that, we have to spend a lot of time and money just trying to keep clean boots and uniforms.

Why aren't our quartermasters leaders fighting for us and coming up with a better system?

Sgt. Ruben Gonzalez-Colon
Ansbach/Katterbach, Germany

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

**“We Insist On Continuing Struggle
Until Full Liberation Of The
Country’s Soil”**

**“What Was Taken By Force Cannot
Be Restored By Any Other Means”**

**IRAQI INSURGENCY SUPPORTERS
RALLY IN DAMASCUS**

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

While the association is known as a Sunni Arab group, conference participants included Iraqis from various backgrounds such as Kurds, Turkoman, Shias, Sunni Arabs and Yazidis.

1 August, 2008 Institute for War & Peace Reporting [Excerpts]

The Association of Muslim Scholars, an Iraqi Sunni group staunchly opposed to the United States-led occupation of Iraq, vowed in a conference in Damascus this week to continue fighting foreign soldiers in Iraq.

The association – made up of political, religious and tribal Sunni Iraqi figures – held a four-day conference that focused on ridding Iraq of US-led forces. It was the first time that five-year-old association held its conference in Damascus.

In the conference, the association remained steadfast in its support for the insurgency against the US presence in Iraq and the government in Baghdad, arguing that the Iraqi authorities are illegitimate because they were elected during an occupation.

“What was taken by force cannot be restored by any other means,” said Harith al-Dhari, the association’s secretary-general.

He claimed that the majority of Iraqis “reject the occupation and believe in the option of resistance”.

Dhari, who has expressed opposition to al-Qaeda in Iraq, was re-elected to another two-year term at the conference. Praising the insurgency as “brave”, Dhari predicted that resistance to foreign forces would spread throughout Iraq and accused some Iraqi leaders of promoting partition.

While the association is known as a Sunni Arab group, conference participants included Iraqis from various backgrounds such as Kurds, Turkoman, Shias, Sunni Arabs and Yazidis.

Association spokesman Muhammed Bahsar al-Faidhi said the groups were uniting “to mobilise resistance as the only option to liberate the country”.

He said the association aimed to create a political and economic vision for the future of Iraq, and “build a patriotic army without partisan and sectarian nepotism”.

Jawad Al-Khalisi, secretary-general of the National Iraqi Founding Conference and a leading Shia anti-occupation figure, praised his countrymen for not being drawn into a civil war, claiming that the US had wanted conflict between Iraqi groups.

The president of the Southern Iraq Tribes Council, Kadhil Al-Anizan, said that over 120 tribes in Shia-majority southern Iraq were involved in fighting foreign forces and that only seven were not members of the anti-occupation council.

Kanan Amin, spokesman of the High Command of Jihad and Liberation, an alliance of several armed groups, said in an interview with the al-Basra website that more than thirty jihadi groups had united at the conference.

The participants downplayed US and Iraqi government claims that Iraq is stabilising and that the insurgency is running out of steam.

“I say to enemies, ‘Do not be happy, for we are stronger today than any other time’,” said Al-Dhari.

“We insist on continuing struggle until full liberation of the country’s soil.”

Resistance Action



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Aug 2 By Sahar Issa, McClatchy Newspapers & Aug 3 (Reuters) & Aug 4 By KIM GAMEL, Associated Press Writer & Reuters & (Xinhua)

A roadside bomb targeted a checkpoint manned by Sahwa members, a U.S. backed militia, in Flaijah village 20 km to the east of Baquba, Saturday. The explosion killed four Sahwa members and injured another four.

Three policemen were wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol in eastern Baghdad, police said.

An IED attack Monday against an Iraqi police patrol vehicle in Mahaweel, about 35 miles south of Baghdad killed four policemen.

A roadside bomb explosion struck an Iraqi army patrol in eastern Baghdad on Monday. The bomb explosion hit the military patrol in Palestine Street near Mustansriyah University, killing a soldier. Nine soldiers were wounded by the blast which damaged a military vehicle and several nearby civilian cars, the source said.

MOSUL - A bodyguard for Nineveh province's Deputy Governor Khasro Guron was killed and six others were wounded when an improvised bomb exploded near the politician's convoy, police said. Guron was not in the convoy at the time of the explosion.

In Mosul, four police were wounded when a bomb planted in a parked car exploded, police said.

Another roadside bomb struck a police patrol in Baghdad's southern district of Doura, damaging a police vehicle and wounding two policemen aboard, the source added.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

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

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

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

“Bring 'Em On”



Arlington Northwest Seattle, Washington 2006

From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: August 03, 2008
Subject: “Bring 'Em On”

**“Bring 'Em On”
George Bush
July 2, 2003**

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



An frightened Iraqi girl cries as a foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. Army searches her family's house during an armed home invasion in Sa'ada, about 30 kilometers (20 miles) north of Baghdad in Diyala province on July 7, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

[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.

“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.”



[images.google.com]

English soldiers search an American settler's house (1770's)

Declared Bill Ehrhart, a marine in Vietnam:

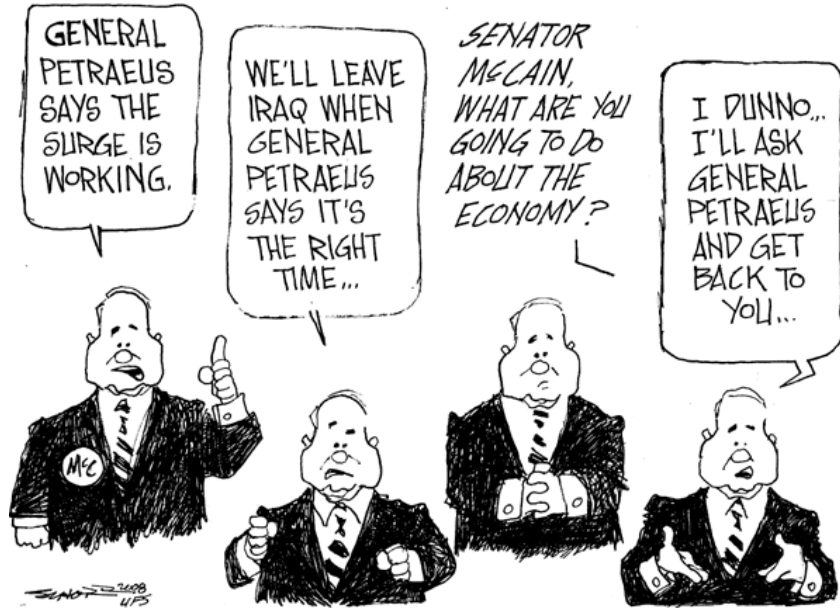
In grade school we learned about the redcoats, the nasty British soldiers that tried to stifle our freedom. Subconsciously, but not very subconsciously, I began increasingly to have the feeling that I was a redcoat. I think it was one of the most staggering realizations of my life.

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

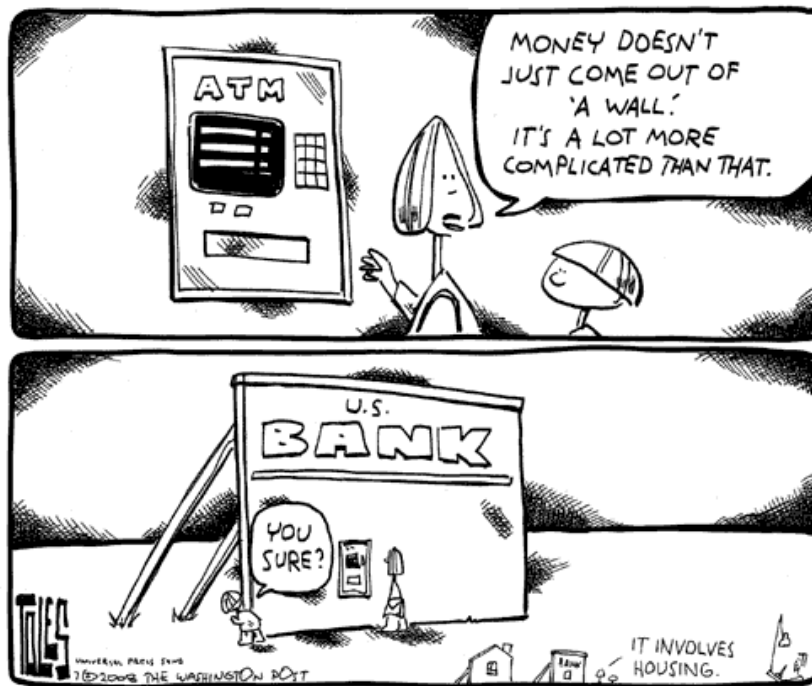
**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WAR**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



On The Side Of Immigrants: An Exhibit That Shows What The Art Of A Real Movement Looks Like



Suenos Humedos by Juan Carlos Macias

Reviews: *A Declaration of Immigration*, at the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, through September 7.

THE ART exhibit *A Declaration of Immigration*, currently on display at the National Museum of Mexican Art, reflects how the immigrant rights movement has impacted whole sections of the population, particularly artists who felt compelled to create work speaking on behalf of the movement.

With over 70 works in varying mediums, from paintings, prints, drawings and photographs to videos and installations, the exhibit is dedicated “to all who have marched and petitioned against anti-immigrant legislation.”

Declaration combines art and politics in a stylistically varied, exciting and powerful way. The works demand your examination--to get up close--utilizing strong lines, intense colors and a wide variety of genres and methods, from conventional to folk art to the experimental.

There are oil paintings on canvas and acrylics on metal sheets, photographs reproduced on vinyl and soft leather sculptures. The lithographs and woodcuts of the well-known left-wing artist Carlos Cortez have the twist of being printed on T-shirts or plain paper.

Declaration is also refreshingly unapologetic in its message.

In opening on July 4, an appropriate date to raise questions about freedom and equality for everyone, the exhibit's opening statement reworks the American "Declaration of Independence," concluding: "Immigrants have endured patient sufferance; and as such, it behooves our government to redeem itself from repeated injuries and usurpations."

Expressing frustration at the inactivity of both political parties--Democrats and Republicans--in enacting legislation in favor of immigrants after over two years of struggle, the exhibit declares the solution is discussion, debate and providing "a platform from which many immigrants can speak out--especially at a time in our history when, once again, countless immigrants are being scapegoated and blamed for many of the nation's problems."

The name of the exhibit is also a spin on the "Declaration of Immigration Status by Non-U.S. Citizens" cards, which need to be filled out when people enter the U.S.

It is hypocrisy that over 12 million undocumented immigrants work and pay taxes, but receive none of the benefits that go to native workers. But unfortunately, as the exhibit shows, this group of 12 million is not the first to suffer injustices.

Upon entering Declaration, a quote on the wall is juxtaposed to a small, but extensive collection of historical artifacts from 13 different cultural associations. The quote reads,

"The Presidents' Council of Economic Advisors report largely highlights the positive affects of immigration on the economy. It concludes that 90 percent of native-born workers have benefited from immigration, providing annual wage gains of \$30 billion to \$80 billion."

This quote is from a 2007 Wall Street Journal article, and most of the artifacts are from near the turn of the 20th century. The message is clear: Generations of immigrants played a part in building the U.S., creating enormous wealth, but they have constantly been treated as second-class citizens.

This reality is starkly portrayed by a single wooden shovel and pick ax placed together. These well-worn, basic tools symbolize the lives of Irish immigrants who built the Illinois and Michigan Canal, paid \$1 for a 15-hour day. In 1838, 1,000 out of 1,500 canal diggers lost their lives.

When completed, the canal connected the Mississippi watershed with the Great Lakes, and by 1882, transportation of goods through it surpassed the combined shipping totals of the ports of New York, San Francisco and New Orleans.

DECLARATION HIGHLIGHTS difficult issues facing immigrants, such as border crossing. "Welcome to El Norte" by Nicario Jimenez utilizes a traditional retablo, or three-dimensional box, from the Peruvian highlands. It has three tiers depicting different groups of immigrants--Mexicans, Cubans and Haitians.

On the far left, miniature figures start in their home country, and move to the next box, which depicts the experience of crossing for each.

The Mexican and Haitian figurines are met with border guards, dogs, helicopters and jailing.

The Cubans' passage, however, is calm and welcoming. The retablo is a smart choice for translating the blatantly unfair treatment of one immigrant group versus another by the U.S. government.

Jaishri Abichandani's recent work "Newyorkmumbai" is a composite photograph on a large vinyl banner, which blends the images of slums in two different places--Mumbai, India, and the West Point neighborhood in Queens, the last remaining place in New York City without sanitation.

It's difficult to differentiate between Mumbai and Queens in the piece. There is open sewage in one section of a crowded, narrow street, lined with shops with aluminum awnings and razor-wire overhead. The cut-and-paste images overlap, and the colors blur. This could be either place--that is the artist's point--and there is certainly no "American Dream" for immigrants.

One of most arresting works in the show is a large-sized, realistic-style photograph titled "Deportation Center" by Adrian Paci. It depicts a packed line of people on a boarding metal staircase in the middle of an airfield.

But there is no plane, and the airfield is otherwise empty. The people are stuck on the stairs, not going anywhere, in the middle of nowhere. With the photo dominating a whole portion on the wall, it creates a sense of helplessness and the unknown in the experience of detention.

Declaration also displays works opposing these conditions.

"Who's the Illegal, Pilgrim?" by Yolanda López is a popular poster image from the Chicano rights movement.

It is a powerful drawn image of an angry Aztec Indian warrior, jabbing a finger at the viewer, while crushing papers reading "Immigration Plan" in the other--clearly a spoof of the "Uncle Sam Wants You" poster.

It encapsulates defiance with just ink on paper. The poster was used in the late 1970s to protest the KKK's plans to patrol the San Diego border and apprehend "Mexican-looking" individuals.

Tucked in one of the later rooms is a small-scale aerial shot taken by a Chicago Tribune photographer of a massive crowd overflowing Chicago's Federal Plaza at the March 10, 2006, demonstration of close to 300,000 for immigrant rights.

Looking at it gives you a jolt, with an ocean of indistinguishable dots--people's actual heads--jammed into the Plaza.

The photo shows, off to the side, the only thing capable of showing up out of the throng--the Alexander Calder public art sculpture found in the middle of the Plaza, looking like giant orange metal boomerangs thrown into the crowd.

This image brings back the memories of standing in wonder in downtown Chicago as a sea of humanity streamed by, with no end in site.

Over two years later, the struggle continues, and this photo is a reminder of what is possible again.

THE POWERFUL message of A Declaration of Immigration echoes off the exhibit walls and flows out into the streets of the Pilsen neighborhood where the museum is located.

Along with La Villita--or Little Village, where ICE conducted a raid of the Discount Mall in late April 2007, and residents responded immediately with a sizeable protest--just to the southwest, this is one of the key communities for national immigrants rights movement organizing today.

The New York Times recently ran a story on Pilsen, which mentions Declaration, in its Sunday travel section, titled "Chicago's fashionable Latino neighborhood."

What this article fails to mention is that the neighborhood is one of oldest in the city of Chicago, where subsequent layers of newly arriving immigrants have always lived--Czechs, Poles, Mexicans. St. Adalbert's, a Catholic church two blocks from the museum, still has Sunday mass in three different languages--Polish, Spanish and English.

Pilsen also has a long history of political radicalism among immigrants--from striking and battling police around the 1886 Haymarket tragedy, to neighborhood and workplace organizing in the 1930s, to the struggles of the 1960s.

The current immigrant rights movement is no exception to this long tradition--organizing for the struggle takes place in coffee shops and meeting places blocks to the east of the museum.

Declaration gives a glimpse of what the art of a real movement can begin to look like today.

It is not about, as the Times puts it, "whether to be pro-immigrant or not."

A Declaration of Immigration demands taking the side of immigrants, and nothing less.

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