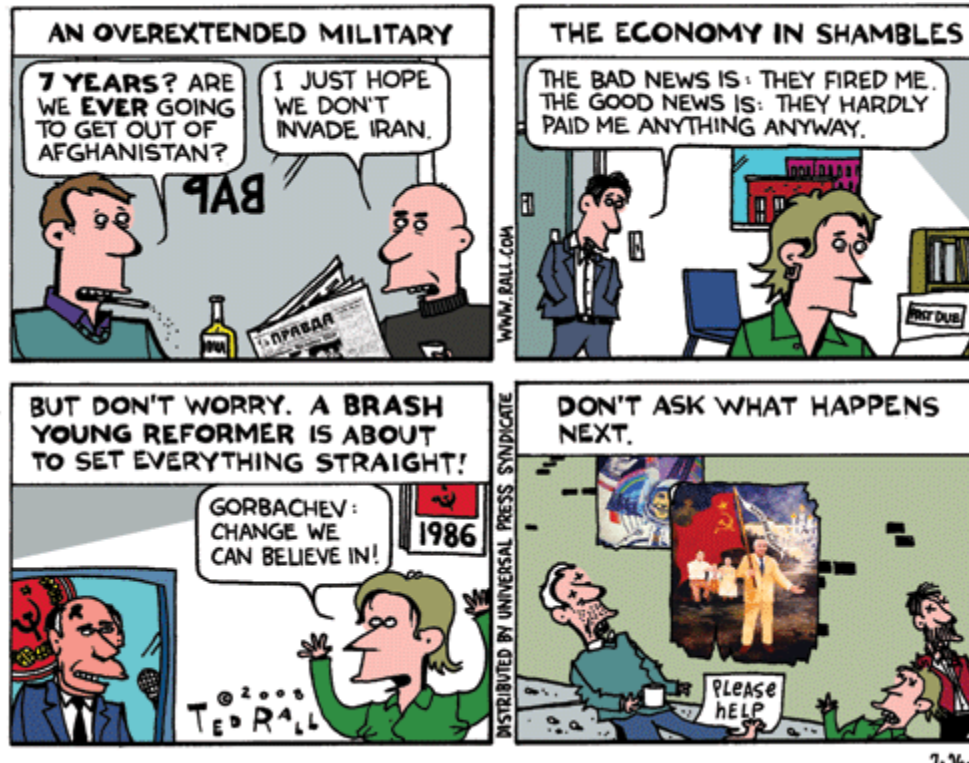


GI SPECIAL 6H4:



**“We’re Here To Help You
And Bring You Home”**
Indiana Iraq Veterans Against The
War Say “Their Concern About All
The Soldiers Still In Iraq Is Why
They’re Fighting A New Battle”
“I Don’t Want Any More Troops To Die”



Jul. 31, 2008 By Evan Goodenow, The News-Sentinel, Fort Wayne, Indiana [Excerpts]

For former U.S. Marine Sgt. Ken Mills, it was the sight of the little Iraqi girl barely alive with most of her face blown off that he pulled out of a pile of dead bodies. And the Iraqi corpse with crutches that U.S. tanks kept running over. And the truck driver Mills said the Marines killed for getting too close to their convoy.

For U.S. Army Cpl. Sara Wallace, now Sara Beining since marrying, it was her work as a military analyst reviewing daily accounts of the deaths of Americans and Iraqis, and working on intelligence for presidential briefings that she says President Bush purposefully distorted.

And the wastefulness of guarding at gunpoint Pakistanis working for military contractor KBR on jobs that could have been done for far less by U.S. soldiers.

It was these experiences that made the Iraq War veterans become members of Iraq Veterans Against the War and inspired them to form a Fort Wayne chapter.

They expect supporters of the war will accuse them of being traitors and undermining the morale of the troops while emboldening their enemies. But because of what they've experienced, they believe staying silent would make them complicit in a war that has killed some 4,100 U.S. soldiers and as many as 1.2 million Iraqis.

They say they have been jeered on the street, but when you have friends who have come home in body bags from Iraq, it's worth being harassed to speak out.

"It's hilarious when these people call us cowards and traitors. I have the medals and ribbons and the discharge papers to prove that I did my job, and I did it to the best of my ability," Mills said.

"I don't want any more troops to die."

Beining, 22, said she enlisted in 2004 after taking ROTC classes at Concordia Lutheran High School. She was looking for the discipline instilled in the military and money for college, not payback for the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

Mills, who also enlisted in 2004 after attending Lakeland High School in LaGrange, said he'd always wanted to be in the military and initially bought into Bush's contention that the invasion of Iraq was necessary to keep America safe.

But Mills, 24, believes the war is endangering America by creating hatred for it among Muslims due to the tactics of the U.S. military, which he and Beininger say is guilty of war crimes.

Mills said he witnessed it during the second and third battles of Fallujah in 2004 and 2005, which he took part in. The first attack occurred shortly after the March 31, 2004, killings of four Blackwater professional soldiers after they accidentally drove to the city.

The men's burnt corpses were hung from a bridge, eliciting outrage from the Bush administration and U.S. military. Fallujans were bitter over an accidental bombing of a marketplace in 1991 by the U.S. in the first Gulf War and with the 82nd Airborne for firing into a crowd, killing 13, during a protest shortly after the 2003 invasion.

Fallujans said the protesters were unarmed.

Of the 2004 siege, Mills said, "They said it was a hotbed of insurgent activity, but really it was revenge for Blackwater contractors getting killed." Some 70 Marines were killed, and while the U.S. military does not record how many people it kills, media accounts said hundreds of Iraqis died.

Mills is not alone in accusing the Marines of war crimes in Fallujah. While the Geneva Conventions say "fixed establishments and mobile medical units of the medical service" are to be "respected" and "protected," a front-page New York Times article on Nov. 8, 2004, described how U.S. soldiers captured Fallujah General Hospital because the U.S. said hospital employees exaggerated the number of Iraqi casualties they treated as a propaganda weapon.

The BBC and Reuters reported that the U.S. bombed a health center in Fallujah, killing 35, which the U.S. denied.

And Jean Ziegler, United Nations special rapporteur on the right to food, said U.S. and British soldiers violated international law by denying Red Cross water shipments to civilians to isolate the resistance.

Mills remembers the Marines dropping napalm-like white phosphorous bombs on Fallujah each day. After initially denying it, the U.S. admitted to using the highly flammable bombs – which burn to the bone – in Fallujah, but denied dropping them on civilians. The Pentagon has said it primarily uses white phosphorous for smoke screens and to mark targets. A 1980 U.N. chemical weapons treaty bans the use of incendiary chemicals like white phosphorous, but the U.S. has never signed it.

Mills said Marines in Fallujah employed a shoot-first-ask-questions-later mentality.

"Every house we went into we poured machine gun fire into. We shot anything that moved or didn't move," Mills recalled.

“Our whole mentality was, ‘Why send a Marine when you can send a bullet?’ That’s what we were told. We’d just pound a house full of rounds and search it.”

Mills said Marines had a guilty-until-proved-innocent mentality with prisoners, most of whom he said were civilians in the wrong place at the wrong time.

He said Marines mistreated prisoners because they resented the hassle of having to deal with them.

“I guess it would be like the police beating people up because they had to fill out a report,” he said.

Mills admits he was no angel in Fallujah. Like most soldiers in a kill-or-be-killed situation, he was scared, angry and frustrated and sometimes took it out on Iraqis.

Mills said Marines frequently trashed civilians’ houses they searched or commandeered. His specialty was destroying the fan control systems of Iraqi houses – no minor act of vandalism in a nation where temperatures regularly hit 120 degrees in the summer. “We were supposed to be going after the terrorists that attacked us, and all we ever did was harass civilians and blow up their houses,” Mills said.

“I remember piling everything people owned in one room of the house and setting it on fire just because we found some guns there that probably were put there after the family fled the house.”

Mills recalled Marines in a convoy fatally shooting a truck driver who got too close to their convoy because they feared he was a suicide bomber.

The Marines were supposed to fire a warning flare first, but Mills said they didn’t, and he refused a commander’s order to shoot one off after the killing to cover up the violation of their rules of engagement.

Marine Capt. Amy E. Malugani, a Marines spokeswoman, refused to be interviewed by The News-Sentinel about Mills’ contentions, but in an e-mail said if Mills witnessed or was involved in inappropriate behavior, he had a responsibility to report it to investigators.

Malugani said the Marines thoroughly investigate allegations of misconduct and hold individuals accountable.

But Mills said he complained to his company commander about an Iraqi man he believes was badly beaten by Marines at a checkpoint, but the commander insisted the beating was in self-defense.

Mills said the incident – which he said led other Marines to label him a “haji lover” – soured him on reporting misconduct.

For Beining, helping to compile a daily body count meant gleaning all the gory details of the deaths of Americans and Iraqis, a task she said sickened her. The suicide of a fellow soldier further troubled her. Beining said the military prescribed an antipsychotic drug to keep her functioning, and she considered shooting herself in the leg to get home.

“They were purposefully doing more harm than good just to keep me over there,” she said. “They didn’t care what happened to me.”

Despite becoming disenchanted with the war, both Beining and Mills said they felt an obligation to their fellow soldiers to stay.

“I looked at it like I’m saving other soldiers’ lives,” she said. “My intel’s going to help them survive.”

Beining said disciplinary problems led to her eventually receiving a general discharge shortly after returning from Iraq in 2006.

Mills was honorably discharged last year.

Both Beining and Mills say they believe most soldiers and families of soldiers in Iraq are pro-war because they don’t want to believe that their sacrifice was for an illegal, unprovoked war of choice. “The government’s attitude is: we’re America, we’re the biggest kid on the block, we have the biggest stick, we’re going to do whatever we want,” Mills said.

Mills says the U.S. cannot defeat the resistance.

He said anyone with a basic knowledge of guerrilla warfare should understand guerillas rarely attack an enemy with superior numbers and firepower, in this case the U.S., but bide their time.

Mills worries about his younger brother, who is in the Marines. He has served in Iraq and is being sent there again. Beining worries about her three younger brothers enlisting.

Both say their concern about all the soldiers still in Iraq is why they’re fighting a new battle at home.

“We’re here to help you and bring you home,” Mills said of their message to the troops in harm’s way.

“We don’t have any other agenda.”

Sir, No Sir

Iraq Veterans Against the War was formed in 2004 in Boston.

It is calling for a complete and immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, contending the war is illegal and is breaking the back of the U.S. military.

A Fort Wayne chapter of the group is being formed: ivawfortwayne@yahoo.com.

1,250: Number of members overall

30: Members in Indiana

3: Members in Fort Wayne

49: Number of chapters

Source: Iraq Veterans Against the War

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

3 Indiana Guardsmen Die In One Week In Iraq: Cass County, Ind., Man Remains 'Seriously Injured'

August 05. 2008 (AP)

Three Indiana National Guard soldiers have died in Iraq in the past week and a fourth lies wounded in one of the deadliest weeks in years for the state's Guard units. Sgt. Brian K. Miller, 37, of Pendleton died Saturday from injuries he suffered in a vehicle rollover during combat operations in Abd Allah.

Two other Hoosier guardsmen — Sgt. Gary Henry, a 34-year-old Indianapolis firefighter, and Spc. Jonathan Menke, 22, of Madison — died Monday when a roadside bomb detonated under their vehicle near Baghdad.

A third soldier in that vehicle, 25-year-old Spc. John Blickenstaff of the north-central Indiana town of Twelve Mile, was injured and was listed in "very serious" condition.

All four of the soldiers were on their first tour of duty in Iraq and were scheduled to return home early next year.

Indiana Adjutant General Major General R. Martin Umbarger said Henry, Menke and Blickenstaff were part of the Guard's 38th Military Police Company out of Danville and were deployed to Iraq to train the Iraqi police.

National Guard spokesman Staff Sgt. Jeff Lowry speculated that Miller may have died in a vehicle rollover when he swerved to miss what he thought was a roadside bomb.

"There's a lot of debris and a lot of trash in the road, and for soldiers to have to make spot-on decisions like that is awfully tough," Lowry said.

Miller was a vehicle mechanic who had served 19 years in the Indiana National Guard. He was part of the 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's 3,400-troop deployment to Iraq in March. Lowry said the brigade was expected to be there for about a year with the mission of convoy support and security.

In southern Indiana, Dan Menke of Madison said Tuesday that he was notified Monday that his son, a 2005 graduate of Madison Consolidated High School, had died in the roadside bombing.

Jonathan Menke had been an honor roll student with a booming voice that wowed audiences who saw him perform in "Beauty and the Beast" his senior year, his father said.

Dan Menke said his son joined the Indiana National Guard in March 2004 in his junior year in high school. During basic training, he found that he had a booming voice and he put it to good use when the guys would sing in their barracks during their off-duty time.

Menke played football and was on the track team at Madison Consolidated High School, but he turned to theater his senior year after undergoing hand surgery.

He went to tryouts for the school's production of the play "Alice in Wonderland," thinking he would do stage work or build sets. But instead he was given the part of the Mad Hatter.

Friends encouraged him to try out for "Beauty and the Beast" and he got the role of Gaston — a singing part. His commanding performance stunned his friends and family.

"He was perfect for that role," said Aaron Kelsey, a Madison teacher who co-directed the musical.

Menke's talents extended to art. He won the school's sculpture award his senior year.

Madison Consolidated High School's retired choir director, Lynn Maricle, said she was stunned by the news of Menke's death.

"It really is a gray day. He was such a great kid. What a wonderful person," she said.

Indianapolis Fire Department Captain Killed In Iraq



Gary Henry

Aug 4, 2008 by Jennifer McGilvray, (WISH)

Flags are at half staff to mourn an Indianapolis firefighter killed serving in Iraq.

Gary Henry was a 12 year veteran of the Indianapolis Fire Department and a 10-year veteran with the Indiana National Guard.

His colleagues said he was a true asset to any team he belonged to.

"It's amazing that people like Gary and others provide such public service almost their entire lives," said Mayor Greg Ballard.

He was a captain with the Indianapolis Fire Department as the Special Operations Rescue Coordinator.

Captain Gregg Harris said, "Gary was a person that was always giving back to the community, giving to his family, his church and back to the citizens."

But when duty called for his Danville-based unit to serve in Iraq, Henry proudly switched uniforms. He arrived in theatre in April.

"Very dangerous being a first responder in a city and then still wear the uniform of the armed forces," said Major General R. Martin Umbarger.

Major General Umbarger said Henry died from an Improvised Explosive Device while helping train Iraqi police.

"Things had been going very well, but the number one issue or the threat to our soldiers is these IED's," said Umbarger.

A soldier from Madison, Indiana was also killed and another specialist from Indiana was seriously injured.

All the flags at Indianapolis fire stations are flying at half staff in Henry's honor.

"This has hit home even closer. This is a member that we've spent the past 12 years with. And some of the department, they knew Gary before he came on. And it's hard," said Harris.

Henry was married and he had three kids. He was supposed to come home just before February. Now, friends, family and firefighters will gather at the Indianapolis Fire Department Station #7 to honor him on Wednesday at 11 a.m.

Henry's family is still working with the Indiana National Guard and the firefighters to plan his funeral.

Bomber Wounds U.S. Soldier In Mosul

Aug 5 (Reuters)

A bomber wounded one U.S. soldier and one other person on Monday in Mosul, the U.S. military said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

MARINE KILLED IN FARAH

August 6th, 2008 (CNN)

A U.S. Marine in western Afghanistan has died from wounds received in a roadside bomb attack, the U.S.-led coalition said Wednesday.

The service member — assigned to the 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalion, Marine Corps Special Operations Command — was on a security patrol in Farah province on Monday evening when the incident occurred. The name was not released pending the notification of relatives.

Herat IED Wounds Four Foreign Occupation Soldiers

August 5 (Reuters)

A roadside bomb hit a convoy of U.S.-led troops and wounded four soldiers in an area of western Herat province late on Monday, the U.S. military said.

Good News For The Afghan Resistance!!

U.S. Occupation Commands' Stupid Terror Tactics Recruit Even More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops



A U.S. Marine breaks the door of a house during armed home invasions in the town of Garmser in Helmand Province of Afghanistan July 9, 2008. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

One of the squadron's great successes over the past year, says Lt. Col. Kolenda, has been weaning less-committed local boys away from the hard-liners through jobs, schooling and support for the elders.

He says the young men of Mirdish village, for instance, joined the insurgency because a couple of years ago American troops kicked down some doors and searched some homes.

TROOP NEWS

More Meat For Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse; 1,250 Marines Not Leaving Afghanistan On Schedule: "Efforts To Press Other NATO Nations To Increase Their Troop Levels At The Time Had Failed"

Aug 5 By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON - The Pentagon has ordered roughly 1,250 Marines serving as trainers for the Afghan security forces to stay on the warfront almost a month longer to continue a mission that military leaders say is a top priority, according to a senior military official.

In addition, Defense Secretary Robert Gates has authorized the deployment of up to 200 other troops to Afghanistan to support the Marines. That includes eight helicopter crews that could be shifted from Iraq if commanders decide.

The decision to extend the tour of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment in Afghanistan comes just a month after defense officials told the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit that it would stay an extra month in Afghanistan.

The extension means that the battalion would return home in late November.

The remainder of the support forces being deployed are smaller units, including engineers, route clearance troops and explosive ordnance disposal teams.

It was not clear Monday whether those support forces also would return home in late November, or if they would stay longer in Afghanistan.

The Pentagon announced in January that the Marine Expeditionary Unit, which is based at Camp Lejeune, N.C., was being ordered to Afghanistan, largely because efforts to press other NATO nations to increase their troop levels at the time had failed.

At the same time, the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, which is based at Twentynine Palms, Calif., was ordered to deploy also.

Civilian Defense Attorneys “Know That They Can Steer People To Certain Installations And Get A Light Punishment And Sometimes No Punishment For Desertion”

August 11, 2008 By Mathew B. Tully - Special to the Army Times [Excerpts]

Mathew B. Tully, Esq. is a field artillery officer in the New York National Guard and a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is also the founding partner of Tully, Rinckey and Associates (<http://www.fedattorney.com>), a law firm in Albany, N.Y. E-mail your legal questions to askthelawyer@militarytimes.com.

If you think the military justice system is fair and equal from military installation to military installation, I have news for you.

It's not.

Think I'm wrong? OK, does your installation newspaper print the photos of people accused of drunken driving? Well, Fort Drum, N.Y., does.

Honestly, I think it's a good idea that should be adopted by other installations. I give Maj. Gen. Michael Oates, the post commander, credit for taking a tough stand.

Oates is a tough guy. When I was deployed to Iraq, he visited my division headquarters and I recall he was the only general officer I saw who carried an M4 rifle with a full basic combat load instead of the pistol carried by most flag officers.

While Fort Drum is known by criminal defense attorneys for being tough on drunken drivers, it has a reputation — rightly or wrongly — as being not so tough on deserters.

In fact, many civilian defense attorneys representing military personnel know that they can steer people to certain installations and get a light punishment and sometimes no punishment for desertion.

How is that possible?

Let me briefly explain the three main Uniform Code of Military Justice articles on this subject:

Article 85, Desertion. This offense carries a maximum penalty of death. A myth exists that you must be absent for more than 30 days to be charged with desertion; that is not true. Desertion requires you have the intent to remain away on a permanent basis. You can be absent for a few days and be charged with desertion — but a prosecutor must show that you intended to remain away permanently.

Article 86, Absent without leave. This offense, which carries a maximum penalty of one year of confinement, is more often treated under Article 15 procedures than courts-martial because of the light penalty involved.

Article 87, Missing movement. This offense carries a maximum penalty of two years of confinement. The most common events that result in this charge involve missing your ship in the Navy or Marine Corps or missing your airplane in the Air Force or Army (often a flight to hazardous duty).

Here is a little secret that many civilian defense attorneys use to help clients:

If you a desert, you are generally dropped from the rolls of your unit.

In the Army, for example, if you were in an elite unit (airborne, Ranger, Special Forces), you would normally be dealt with harshly by your unit.

But if you are dropped from the rolls, you are no longer assigned to that unit and you generally can turn yourself in to any installation or to your service's deserter collection point.

Some installations are known for processing out deserters within three days with a general or other-than-honorable discharge, while other installations are known for confining deserters. And some deserters are returned to duty with zero consequences.

Just because you are dropped from the rolls does not guarantee you can avoid being punished by your old unit.

But lack of publicity (publicity increases the odds that your command will make an example of you), time, and being dropped from the rolls seem, in my opinion, to help you get off lightly, perhaps even without a scratch.

Of course, I think rank also plays into this. If you disappear from basic training, your punishment likely will be less than if you're an officer who bails on a combat deployment.

I'm not saying that's the way it should be — it simply is what it is.

While drunken driving is wrong and should not be tolerated, it's not subject to the death penalty like desertion is.

Yet many installations have their military police focus hard on drunken driving, but have nobody who goes after deserters.

That's good news for the clients of defense attorneys like me.

My firm's defense of deserters has soared, and we have had solid success in getting no punishment for these offenses.

The information in this column is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to constitute legal advice. Readers are encouraged to seek the advice of an attorney or other professional when an opinion is needed.

***Stupid, Criminal Soldier-Killing
Scum Calling The Plays:***

“The Chief Physician At Fort Hood, Texas, Had Warned That Dunne’s Hearing Was So Bad That He Should Be Removed From Combat Duties”

“Others In The Army Overruled Him And Sent Dunne Back To Iraq For His Third Combat Tour”

“Now, A Member Of Dunne’s Squad — Sgt. Richard Vaughn, 22, Of San Diego — Lay Dead From A Sniper’s Bullet”

Since 2003, 43,000 Troops Who Were Classified As Medically Unfit In The Weeks Prior To Deployment Were Still Sent To War, Pentagon Statistics Show

Aug 5, 2008 By Gregg Zoroya - USA Today [Excerpts]

The bombs along the Baghdad road exploded one after the other, leaving one soldier unconscious and another screaming from his wounds. Staff Sgt. Kevin Dunne's squad was under attack. Rifle and machine gun fire pinned them down.

Then, shots from a sniper.

Dunne yelled orders, but he and his squad were at a disadvantage.

Dunne said he couldn't hear well enough to tell where the sniper fire was coming from.

"I had no idea," he wrote in an e-mail to USA Today.

In the four months before the April 7 attack, the chief physician at Fort Hood, Texas, had warned that Dunne's hearing was so bad that he should be removed from combat duties.

Others in the Army overruled him and sent Dunne back to Iraq for his third combat tour.

Now, a member of Dunne's squad — Sgt. Richard Vaughn, 22, of San Diego — lay dead from a sniper's bullet.

"He was lying in the middle of the street motionless," Dunne wrote. "I blame myself a lot for not being able to identify the threat simply because of the way I heard the shots."

Hearing loss is one of the most common ailments that affects troops sent back to combat, according to the Pentagon and government researchers.

One in four soldiers serving in Iraq or Afghanistan have damaged hearing, the Army said.

Dunne, who in Iraq was part of the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Hood, is now back home. Besides his hearing problems, he shows signs of PTSD and has severe back problems.

After more than five years of war marked by multiple deployments, many combat veterans are developing long-term health problems, raising the risk that ailing troops are being sent back into combat.

Since 2003, 43,000 troops who were classified as medically unfit in the weeks prior to deployment were still sent to war, Pentagon statistics show.

"As much as I wanted to get out there ..., I'm seriously physically challenged by not being able to hear," Dunne wrote. "The guys to my left and right don't deserve anything to happen to them because of my personal pride."

"I'm now at 29, feeling like I'm 50," he wrote before leaving Baghdad.

He has fought off and on in Iraq since 2003, when his unit was profiled by USA Today. Dunne has been in occasional contact with the newspaper since then.

Meanwhile, Dunne began a series of routine medical exams and screenings to understand the war's toll on him.

Doctors found:

- Hearing loss. His hearing declined dramatically during Dunne's first tour. Army audiological records show loss in various frequencies, particularly in his left ear, said Anthony Cacace, an audiologist and professor at Wayne State University in Detroit. Cacace reviewed Dunne's medical test records provided by USA Today.

The weakness leaves him struggling to hear consonant sounds, especially if there is background noise.

"He's going to have one hell of a time understanding what people say if he can't get visual cues," Cacace said, adding Dunne has the hearing of a 70-year-old in his right ear and worse than that in his left.

- Severe lower back pain dating to his first Iraq tour from April 2003 to April 2004. By his third tour, Dunne required regular painkiller injections.
- PTSD symptoms after his second tour, when Dunne was near a suicide bomb explosion.
- Tinnitus, or ringing in the ears that never stops.

To sleep, he listens to rock music on his iPod, a common means of coping for troops with tinnitus, said Army Maj. Dan Ohama, an audiologist working in Baghdad.

Service-connected back and neck injuries have left nearly 50,000 Iraq- and Afghanistan-era veterans permanently disabled, Department of Veterans Affairs records show. VA has treated 75,000 such veterans for PTSD and placed nearly 35,000 on permanent disability.

And almost 70,000 suffer from tinnitus, VA records show.

In December, weeks before Dunne went to Iraq for his third tour, his company commander spelled out the staff sergeant's chief physical problems.

The soldier's battle-damaged hearing, Capt. Alex Garn wrote, "limits his ability to identify enemy locations by sound, hear commands from his team leaders, hear radio traffic over a squad radio, or speak with local nationals in combat, which could have negative ramifications to the mission."

On Dec. 19, the chief physician and medical commander at Fort Hood, Texas, where Dunne is based, urged that he be taken out of infantry.

"At risk of continued hearing loss," Col. Jeffrey Clark wrote.

Clark was the only doctor on a five-member panel reviewing Dunne's fitness for combat on Dec. 19. He was overruled by the other four panelists.

Dunne's brigade commander and three senior sergeants agreed that Dunne should stay in infantry and go to Iraq.

"Hearing loss is present in all forms ... in the Army," wrote one panelist, Master Sgt. Ulysses Martin.

"It's impossible to validate whether he will lose his hearing more or less in the future. I feel that infantry is his best place."

One factor in their decision was Dunne's desire to return despite his hearing loss. He said he felt a responsibility to be with his platoon. His unit's young soldiers, he wrote from Iraq, "needed as much help as they can get."

"That's pride," said Geni Gillaspie, Dunne's girlfriend and the mother of his two children. "That's Kevin ... wanting to lead his men and do the right thing."

The attitude impressed Dunne's brigade commander, Col. Theodore Martin.

"Very dedicated soldier," Martin wrote during the review. "Wants to stay infantry. This is his life. I vote he stays infantry."

Despite his desire to deploy, Dunne thought his commanders would limit his combat exposure because of his hearing loss.

Garn had recommended in his memorandum that Dunne be given a hearing aid to wear into combat.

Neither happened.

During that April firefight, Dunne realized he was truly handicapped.

"I came to terms with myself and realized that I was not as confident in my ability to continue my job," he wrote in an e-mail May 6. "It was better for me to realize this than to ignore it."

Even then, he said, he hesitated to speak up.

"I don't know how to approach (commanders) and tell them of what my feelings are," he wrote in an e-mail April 26, "because I've been around long enough to know that I'll be looked at as a quitter."

Army regulations allow troops with health problems to go to war if their job comports with their physical limitations and if there are resources in the combat zone — such as psychological counseling — to treat them.

But a Government Accountability Office report released June 10 found the rules are not always followed.

It said that after doctors identified significant health issues among dozens of soldiers from three installations — Fort Drum in New York and Forts Stewart and Benning in Georgia — infantry commanders failed to limit their duties or schedule review boards to determine whether they should be moved to different jobs or out of the Army.

Troops with hearing unfit for combat are showing up in the war zone, Ohama said.

"We see cases of soldiers deploying when they did not meet the hearing standards," he said.

As troops prepare for war, medical officers need to be forceful, said S. Ward Casscells, the Pentagon's chief of military medicine.

"The commander has to make the call based on the mission, but the doctors should make the case very clearly that deploying Cpl. X against his or her medical judgment is a decision that could be held against the commander," Casscells wrote in his Internet blog.

The risks of a mistake are too high, said James Martin, a retired colonel and expert on military culture at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania.

"This is a disability you don't want to get worse," he said. "You don't want this person to be put in a position where he might hurt himself or others."

At the time of the April attack, the forward operating base in Baghdad where Dunne was deployed was under constant mortar and rocket fire.

He sought counseling with one of the Army's combat stress teams.

"They say my symptoms are mimicking signs of depression. Who the hell knows what that means?" he wrote on May 6.

"They gave me three sheets of paper with breathing techniques, another describing how to imagine being in a happy place ... and to remind myself to relax when I started getting anxious."

With the installation under daily rocket or mortar fire, Dunne said, the recommendations were impractical.

"For them to tell me to think happy is what will resolve my issues immediately — I have no faith in their judgment," he wrote May 22.

Dunne finally was moved from the front lines only after he complained by e-mail to Gillaspie; his mother, Diann Dunne; and after USA Today inquired about Dunne's combat fitness.

He was given another hearing exam by Ohama in Baghdad. The results confirmed the earlier findings.

Martin said it is a mistake to rely too heavily on the service member suffering the disability when it comes to the question of fitness.

"You can't ask the person to make the determination because emotionally, they're too connected to wanting to overcome their disability."

In a telephone interview from Texas, Dunne said he is uncertain about his long-term future.

Another fitness hearing is scheduled and he has been assigned to a rear-detachment unit.

So shortly before coming home, Dunne accepted an offer to re-enlist for three years with an \$11,000 bonus. He hoped the Army would find a place for him away from combat.

Last week, he said he received some good news on that front — a new assignment as a casualty liaison officer for 4th Infantry Division wounded who arrive at the Army's Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. All casualties from Iraq and Afghanistan pass through that facility.

"I get back to helping out and doing things for these guys," he said. "I'm really excited."

**Out-Of-Control Nutcase Petty
Tyrant Running Arlington:
Pressures Families Of KIA To
Refuse Press Coverage;
He Fires A Former Soldier And 12-
Year Veteran Of Army Public Affairs
For Doing Her Job Trying To Honor
Their Wishes;
Army Official Says "It's A Hostile Work
Environment, Clearly"**

Gray's supervisors found fault with petty matters, as well, she said. After a meeting with White three weeks before she was fired, Gray said White sent her a memo that included the admonition: "No pin-up posters in the office."

The poster, Gray said, was a photo of Chesty the Bulldog, the Marine Corps mascot.

Aug 5, 2008 By William H. McMichael, Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

The former spokeswoman for Arlington National Cemetery says the facility's No. 2 official has been calling military families to try to talk them out of media coverage of their loved ones' funerals, despite his denials that he does so.

Gina Gray, who was fired June 27 after 2½ months on the job, said Deputy Director Thurman Higginbotham told her in early May that he had been making such calls for about a year — while denying he did so at least three times, including once in an April 30 meeting with Pentagon reporters to discuss the cemetery's media policy.

Gray, an advocate for a more welcoming policy for the media at the iconic cemetery, said Higginbotham also frequently asserted that many families have told him they don't want media coverage.

But after reviewing all Arlington paperwork for troops killed in Iraq or Afghanistan since 2001 and buried at the cemetery, Gray found that 63 percent of the families agreed to media coverage, wishes relayed through their casualty assistance officers to Arlington officials.

If Gray's assertions are correct, however, it would indicate a concerted effort at Arlington, apparently led by Higginbotham, to limit media coverage of wartime military funerals at the nation's leading and most visible military cemetery.

"The media is not the enemy," said Gray, a former soldier and 12-year veteran of Army public affairs.

"It's ridiculous that Arlington should have any kind of hostile relationship with the press," added Mark Zaid, Gray's lawyer.

Gray said her stance led her supervisors to limit her authority, constantly track her comings and goings, occasionally refuse to reply to her e-mails or even speak to her and, finally, to fire her.

One Army official familiar with the situation said Gray is "totally on the level" and also confirmed her account of what appears to be a power struggle at Arlington over the conduct of public affairs and the relationship of cemetery officials to their public affairs officers and the media.

"It's a hostile work environment, clearly," the official said. "There needs to be some oversight over there."

The federal regulation that lays out visitors' rules for Arlington requires only that the family of the deceased consent to media coverage. The Army public affairs regulation on Arlington — the Army is the executive agency for the cemetery — also makes no reference to limitations on media coverage of military burials.

Equally vague are rules that govern how close reporters and photographers who are granted permission to cover a funeral can be to the next of kin — a question that arose after the funeral of Marine Lt. Col. Billy Hall on April 23, when the media was kept at a distance and out of earshot.

The words spoken at the service, as well as the images, are considered important elements of such stories.

A Washington Post column derided Arlington's handling of that funeral. Gray said that at a subsequent staff meeting, held two days before the media roundtable, Higginbotham stated: "We need to make (reporters) think we work hard" on giving them the best possible position to cover funerals.

Gray said she argued for better positioning and access, citing Army and Pentagon regulations.

She said Higginbotham replied: "We don't follow those rules."

One watchdog group has concluded that the only policy at Arlington is what Higginbotham wants it to be.

"The new unofficial policy, enforced with apparent whimsy by cemetery officials, reeks of politics," said Lucy Dalglish, executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.

"It does not serve the best interests of the public or ... military families."

Dalglish said Higginbotham has not responded to repeated requests for an explanation of the Arlington media policy.

Gray was the cemetery's third public affairs officer in three years. All were women, and all, like Gray, were former soldiers. She said they all shared the same contentious work experience at Arlington.

She said that from the day she began in her GS-12 position, officials sought to limit her ability to do it — demanding that she not escort media into Arlington without notifying Higginbotham and White, for example.

The job description states that the public affairs specialist is "the sole official spokesperson and primary contact for local and national media, which requires immediate responsiveness. ... Evaluates and approves or denies media requests ..."

Gray also said she was told repeatedly after internal staff meetings not to inform Arlington Superintendent John Metzler about what had transpired.

Sources said Metzler delegates nearly all operational control to Higginbotham.

Gray's supervisors found fault with petty matters, as well, she said.

After a meeting with White three weeks before she was fired, Gray said White sent her a memo that included the admonition: "No pin-up posters in the office."

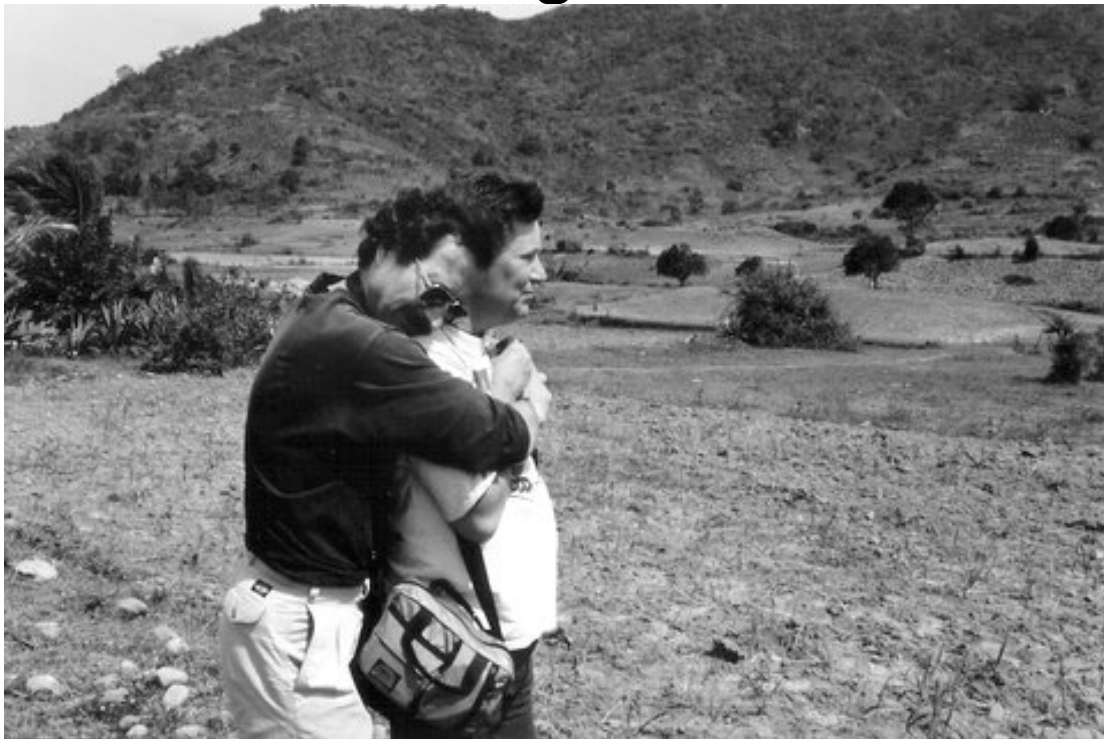
The poster, Gray said, was a photo of Chesty the Bulldog, the Marine Corps mascot.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Coming Home War



Two of my close Vet friends support each other's painful memories when we went back to Vietnam in 1994.

From: Mike Hastie

To: GI Special
Sent: August 05, 2008
Subject: The Coming Home War

The Coming Home War

**If someone asks you how you are doing,
tell them the truth.
Depression is caused by stockpiling your
emotional wounds.
We are healed by staying connected to other
Vets who understand the same pain.
It is all about survival,
from countless memories.
A "Dustoff" e-mail can help save a friend's life.**

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
August 5, 2008**

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

**“An Insurgency Supported By The
Public Is Bound To Win,
Irrespective Of The Tactics
Adopted By The Occupation
Regime”**

**“A General Learns To Prepare For
Battle And Win It, But His Opponents,
The Guerrilla Fighters, Avoid Battle
Altogether”**

“Every Drop Of Blood Spilt Is A Drop Of Blood Wasted”

Is it possible that the very situation of occupation and resistance condemns the occupiers to stupid behavior, turning even the most intelligent into idiots?

09/02/08 By Uri Avnery, Gush-shalom.org/ [Israel] [Excerpts]

A WISE person once said: "A fool learns from his experience. An intelligent person learns from the experience of others."

To which one could add: "And an idiot does not even learn from his own experience."

So what can we learn from a book which shows that we do not learn from experience?

All this is building up to a recommendation for such a book. I don't recommend books as a rule, not even my own. But this time I feel the need to make an exception.

This is William Polk's book, "Violent Politics", which has recently appeared in the United States.

Polk was in Palestine in 1946, at the height of the struggle against the British occupation, and since then he has studied the history of liberation wars.

In less than 300 pages he compares insurgencies, from the American Revolution to the wars in Afghanistan.

His years on the planning staff of the State Department involved him with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. His conclusions are highly illuminating.

I HAVE a special interest in this subject.

When I joined the Irgun at age 15, I was told to read books about previous liberation wars, especially the Polish and Irish ones.

I diligently read every book I could lay my hands on, and have since followed the insurgencies and guerrilla wars throughout the world, such as those in Malaya, Kenya, South Yemen, South Africa, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Vietnam and more.

In one of them, the Algerian war of liberation, I had some personal involvement.

When I belonged to the Irgun, I worked at the office of an Oxford-educated lawyer.

One of our clients was a high British official of the Mandate government. He was an intelligent, pleasant and humorous person. I remember once, when he passed by, a thought crossing my mind: How can such intelligent people conduct such a foolish policy?

Since then, the more I have become engrossed in other insurgencies, the stronger this wonderment has become.

Is it possible that the very situation of occupation and resistance condemns the occupiers to stupid behavior, turning even the most intelligent into idiots?

Some years ago the BBC screened a long series about the process of liberation in the former British colonies, from India to the Caribbean islands. It devoted one episode to each colony.

Former colonial administrators, officers of the occupation armies, liberation fighters and other eye-witnesses were interviewed at length.

Very interesting and very depressing.

Depressing - because the episodes repeated each other almost exactly.

The rulers of every colony repeated the mistakes made by their predecessors in the previous episode.

They harbored the same illusions and suffered the same defeats.

Nobody learned any lesson from his predecessor, even when the predecessor was himself - as in the case of the British police officers who were transferred from Palestine to Kenya.

In his compact book, Polk describes the main insurgencies of the last 200 years, compares them with each other and draws the obvious conclusions.

EVERY INSURGENCY is, of course, unique and different from all others, because the backgrounds are different, as are the cultures of the occupied peoples and the occupiers.

The British differ from the Dutch, and both from the French. George Washington was different from Tito, and Ho Chi Minh from Yasser Arafat.

Yet in spite of this, there is an amazing similarity between all the liberation struggles.

For me, the main lesson is this: from the time the general public embraces the rebels, the victory of the rebellion is assured.

That is an iron rule: an insurgency supported by the public is bound to win, irrespective of the tactics adopted by the occupation regime.

The occupier can kill indiscriminately or adopt more humane methods, torture captured freedom fighters to death or treat them as prisoners of war - nothing makes a difference in the long run.

The last of the occupiers can board a ship in a solemn ceremony, like the British High Commissioner in Haifa, or fight for a place in the last helicopter, like the last

American soldiers on the roof of the American embassy in Saigon - defeat was certain from the moment the insurgency had reached a certain point.

The real war against the occupation takes place in the minds of the occupied population.

Therefore, the main task of the freedom fighter is not to fight against the occupation, as it may seem, but to win the hearts of his people.

And on the other side, the main task of the occupier is not to kill the freedom fighters, but to prevent the population from embracing them.

The battle is for the hearts and minds of the people, their thoughts and emotions.

That is one of the reasons why generals almost always fail in their struggle against liberation fighters.

A military officer is the least suitable person for this task.

All his upbringing, his whole way of thinking, all that he has learned is opposed to this central task.

Napoleon, the military genius, failed in his effort to vanquish the freedom fighters in Spain (where the word guerrilla, little war, was originally coined), no less than the most stupid American general in Vietnam.

An army officer is a technician, trained to fulfill a particular job. That job is irrelevant to the struggle against a liberation movement, in spite of its superficial appropriateness.

The fact that a house-painter deals with colors does not make him into a portrait painter. An outstanding hydraulic engineer does not become a skilled plumber. A general does not understand the essence of a national insurgency, and therefore does not come to grips with its rules.

For example, a general measures his success by the number of enemies killed.

But the fighting underground organization becomes stronger the more dead fighters it can present to the public, which identifies with the martyrs.

A general learns to prepare for battle and win it, but his opponents, the guerrilla fighters, avoid battle altogether.

In order to succeed all along the way, the insurgents need an idea that fires the enthusiasm of the population.

The public unifies around them and provides aid, shelter and intelligence. From this stage on, everything that the occupation authorities do helps the insurgents.

When the freedom fighters are killed, many others come forward and swell their ranks (as I did in my youth).

When the occupiers impose collective punishment on the population, they just reinforce their hatred and their mutual assistance.

When they succeed in capturing or killing the leaders of the liberation struggle, other leaders take their place - as the Hydra in Greek legend grew new heads for every one that Hercules chopped off.

After all, the end is not in doubt.

The only question is how much more killing, how much more destruction, how much more suffering must be caused before the occupiers arrive at the inescapable conclusion.

Every drop of blood spilt is a drop of blood wasted.

OCCUPATION REPORT

BOHICA

**While U.S. Troops Die And The
Empire Goes Bankrupt Spending On
The War:**

**Iraqi Collaborators Rack Up \$79
Billion Budget Surplus From Selling
Oil;**

**They Stick It In Their Bank Accounts,
Among Other Places**

08/06/08 AP

Iraq could finish the year with as much as a \$79 billion cumulative budget surplus as oil revenues add to leftover income the Iraqis still haven't spent on national rebuilding, according to a report by the Government Accountability Office made public Tuesday.

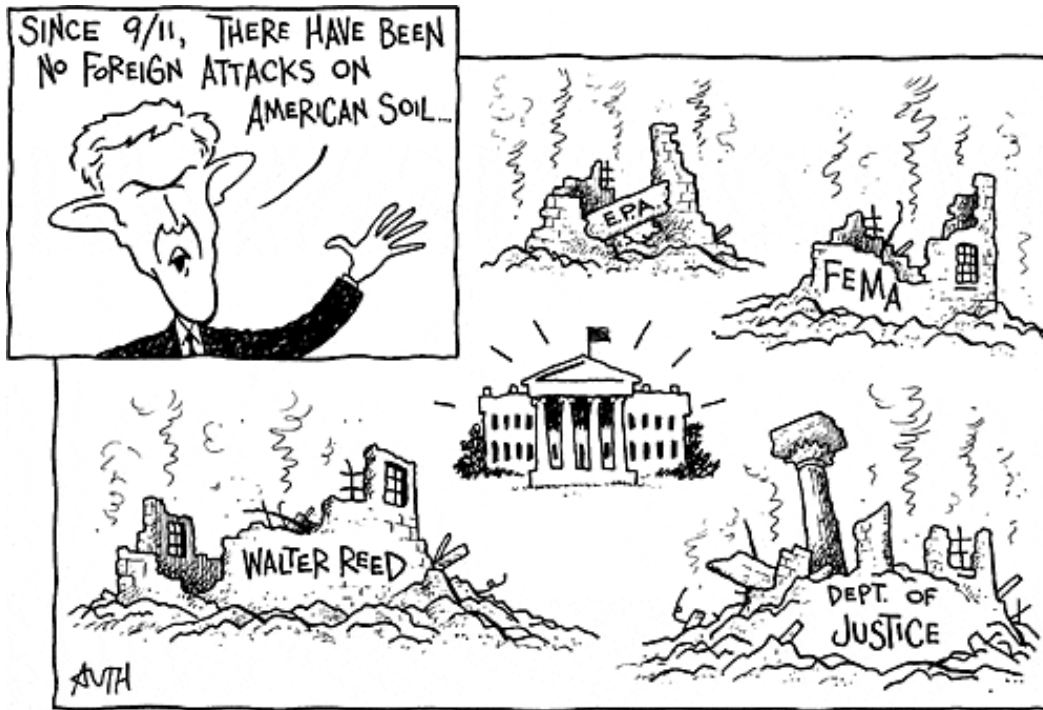
In the report, the GAO said Iraq had an estimated budget surplus of about \$29 billion from 2005 to 2007 and could have an additional surplus of up to \$50 billion this year.

Nearly \$10 billion of the estimated surplus is held by the Development Fund for Iraq at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, according to the report.

Every month, the government-owned State Oil Marketing Organization offers to sell Iraqi oil at an announced price. Oil companies interested in buying then request shipments. Preference is given to major international companies and those that have previously done business with Iraq.

Revenues are then deposited in the Development Fund account, which the Iraqi government has controlled since 2004. The Central Bank of Iraq is free to draw from the account, but the government decides how to spend the money. Other revenues are held by the Central Bank and Iraqi commercial banks.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

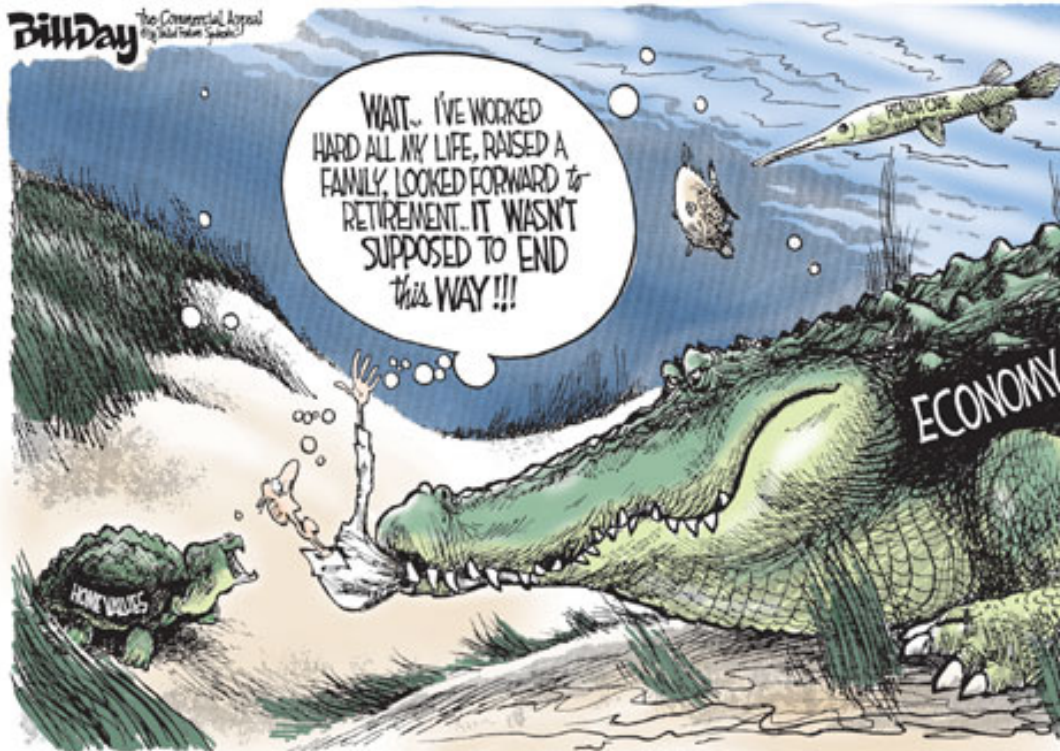
Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces.

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

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

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS



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