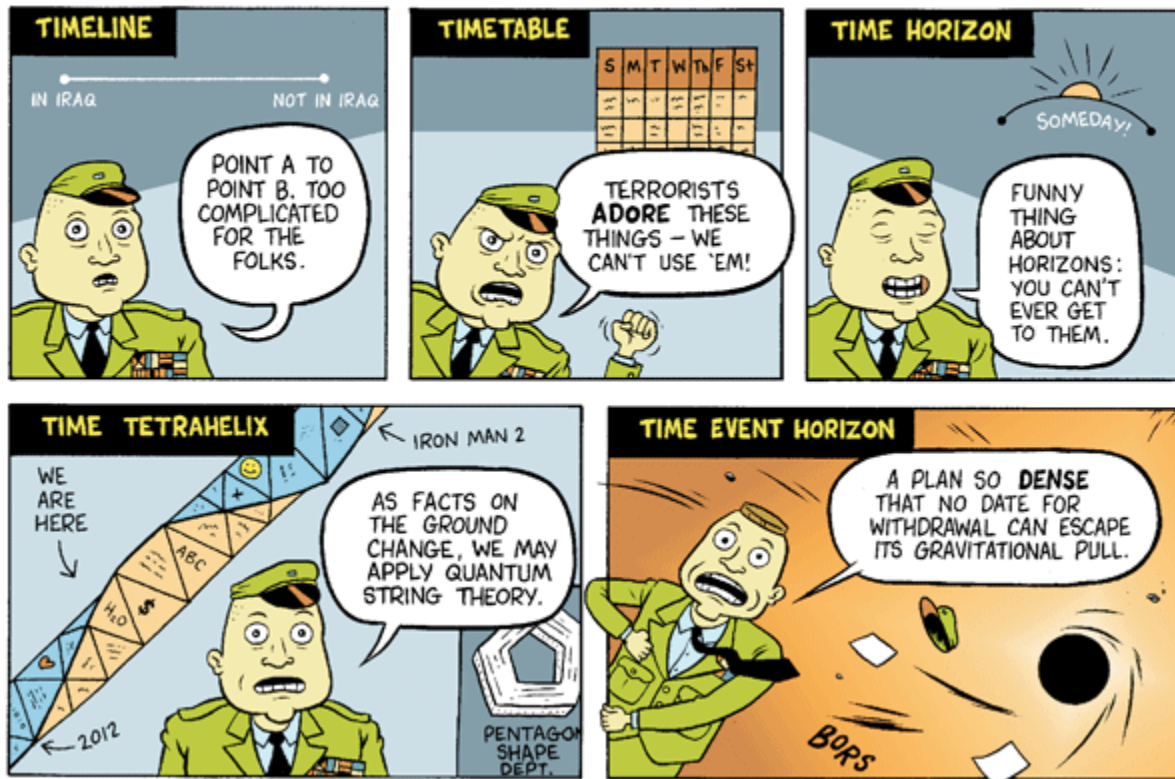


GI SPECIAL 6H5:

MAPPING VICTORY IN IRAQ



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STOP-LOSS:
“They’re Pretty Much Screwing Us Over Because We Can’t Go Home”

“We Got Hit So Hard That Most People Don’t Want To Have Anything To Do With It”

“‘I Think A Big Part Of It Was How Bad The Last Deployment Was,’ He Said About His Reluctance To Return To Iraq”

August 11, 2008 By Rick Maze and Michelle Tan - Staff writers, Army Times [Excerpts]

A \$487 billion defense funding bill approved July 31 by a key House subcommittee includes a long-sought reward for more than 160,000 people — more than 120,000 of them soldiers — whose military service was involuntarily extended because of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Along with a 3.9 percent military raise on Jan. 1, a \$1.4 million increase to improve barracks and hospitals and a \$1 billion boost for training, the House Appropriations defense subcommittee has approved a \$500 monthly payment for soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines whose separations or retirements were delayed by stop-loss orders since October 2001.

Staff Sgt. Jose Villa, 25, is preparing for his third deployment to Iraq. The section leader with 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade, in Grafenwoehr, Germany, was supposed to leave the Army in February 2009. Instead, he will deploy at the end of the year with his fellow soldiers.

He anticipates he will be under stop-loss orders for about 12 months.

“The way I look at it, they’re pretty much screwing us over because we can’t go home, but if they’re giving us an extra chunk of change, at least we’re getting something out of it,” he said.

Villa added that he’s skeptical the stop-loss payments will become reality.

“I guess it could help with morale because it is a good lump of change, until I actually see it, then I’ll believe it,” he said.

Since joining the Army in January 2002, Villa has deployed once to Kosovo and twice to Iraq. His last Iraq tour, from August 2006 to October 2007 in northeast Baghdad, was deadly, and his platoon lost nine soldiers.

Spc. Nicholas Golden, 21, also assigned to 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, will return to Iraq at the end of this year with Villa. This will be his second Iraq tour, even though he was supposed to leave the Army in December.

He estimates he will fall under stop-loss orders for at least 15 months.

“At first it was kind of heart-breaking because we had a rough deployment last time and I was really excited to get out, and now I have to deal with that again,” he said.

“To find out we’re going back kind of crushed me, but as time went on, you kind of get used to it and accept that there’s nothing you can really do about it.”

The \$500 monthly payments will be nice, Golden said.

“Honestly, I’d rather get out than go back, but ... it makes it a little easier, I guess, to know you’re getting a little extra money for going back,” he said.

He said he plans to save the extra money so that he can use it when he’s allowed to leave the Army.

“I think a big part of it was how bad the last deployment was,” he said about his reluctance to return to Iraq.

“We got hit so hard that most people don’t want to have anything to do with it.”

MORE:

Many Soldiers Affected By Stop-Loss Have Felt Betrayed: “Like Everything We Stand For In This Country Was Getting Violated Every Step Of The Way”

21 Jul 08 By Edward Colimore, Philadelphia Inquirer Staff Writer [Excerpts]

The pay “would make me feel good, that my service had been acknowledged,” said [Army Spec. Joe] Fabozzi, 29, a Waretown, Ocean County, resident and air-traffic controller at Northeast Philadelphia Airport.

“Getting the \$1,500 is great, but given the choice of getting the \$1,500 or going home, I would have gone home,” he said.

Many soldiers affected by stop-loss, though, have felt betrayed, "like everything we stand for in this country was getting violated every step of the way," said Fabozzi, who would be eligible for at least \$6,000 under the proposed measure.

"Giving us money now and still forcing soldiers to stay is like admitting they were wrong."

The additional money, however, "would help right now," said [Army Spec. Garrett] Reppenhagen, 33, a Colorado Springs, Colo., resident who was an infantry sniper in Iraq and hopes to become a high-school history teacher.

"It would have helped more (in Iraq), so I wouldn't have had the feeling like I was being used and abused by the military," he said.

MORE:

STOP-LOSS: Up Close And Personal

[This is from a series of articles about the 5,000 men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, of the Minnesota National Guard who were forced to stay for a 22-month deployment in Iraq, the longest deployment of the Iraq war. T]

Aug 8, 2008 By Sharon Cohen - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

New Year's Day and the turning of the calendar to 2007 meant one thing to the soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team.

They were going home.

They were due back in spring, and couldn't wait. Many simply wanted to resume lives that were in limbo. They had crops to plant, colleges to attend, families to see.

Some had special vacations planned. In his office at Tallil Air Base, the unit's commander, Col. David Elicerio, displayed the postcards of Hawaii that his wife had sent, anticipating their spring trip.

The soldiers had been gone 16 months, including six months training in Mississippi. It was a long time. But soon they would leave for home.

Or would they?

Sgt. 1st Class Janelle Johnson was on the Webcam with her husband, Chad, back home when he said, "You got extended, huh?"

"Don't believe any of the rumors," she said calmly. "They're not true."

“Well, that’s kind of funny,” he replied, “because the governor’s on TV right now ...”

Janelle ran a mile to the battalion office. As she raced up the stairs, she heard a voice on a speaker phone talking about an extension.

She ran to the bathroom to cry, and returned to the office to see an older soldier crying.

Janelle dreaded telling her 5-year-old daughter, Elizabeth. The family would have to put off a trip to Disney World, planned for April.

“The president says Mom and the troops are doing such a good job and we need to stay here a little longer,” she told Elizabeth on the phone.

Elizabeth was quiet at first. Then she said: “You’re going to miss my birthday again.”

“Don’t worry,” her mother said, searching for words of comfort. “I’m still coming home.”

The extension was ordered as part of the surge in troop strength to try to quell violence that had been convulsing Iraq for months. The brigade was extended another 125 days. The soldiers would not return to Minnesota until the summer.

But somehow, news of the new orders reached families before the troops — even before the commander.

“When were you going to tell me?” Elicerio’s wife, Leslee, asked.

Reporters in Minnesota took up the question in a satellite news conference where the colonel tried to explain what had happened.

Standing in the darkness at the Tallil Air Base, Elicerio acknowledged the error. “Do I feel bad about apologizing for the Army? Hell no,” he said. “Certainly we admit that a mistake was made.”

Yes, he said, his soldiers were upset at first, but they’d get over it.

[For that stupid, cruel piece of bullshit, may he burn in hell forever.]

[The reporter got it right in another part of the story:]

John Kriesel, Josh Hanson, J.R. Salzman, Corey Rystad, Bryan McDonough ... some came back with broken bodies, some came back to eulogies and grieving loved ones and final resting places.

But none of them — none of the 5,000 men and women of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, of the Minnesota National Guard — came back unchanged by their 22-month deployment, and their sojourn into the cauldron of Iraq.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

2007 Marine Death Recognized As Iraq Casualty

Aug 1, 2008 By Dan Lamothe - Staff writer, Army Times

More than a year after his death and three years after he was wounded, a reservist staff sergeant was formally recognized as a casualty of the Iraq war for the first time Wednesday.

Staff Sgt. Faoa L. Apineru, 31, of Yorba Linda, Calif., died July 2, 2007, from wounds sustained while supporting combat operations in Anbar, Iraq, Defense Department officials said. He was assigned to Headquarters Company, 23rd Marines.

Apineru was patrolling the northern border of Iraq on May 15, 2005, when he was hit by a roadside bomb, according to obituaries published when he died. The wounds he received to his head left him with traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder, extreme memory loss and frequent nightmares, and he had to re-learn how to drive and speak, the obituaries said.

Apineru died at the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System Hospital in California, where obituaries said he was known as "the mayor" because of his kindness to others.

After his death, however, a medical examiner concluded that Apineru did not die from wounds sustained in the explosion.

Defense Department officials said Wednesday that in a second opinion, the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology "indicated that his death was a result of his injuries sustained in Iraq." The statement did not specify how the decision was made, and officials could not be reached for comment.

In media reports released shortly after his death, family members did not specify what Apineru's cause of death was, but attributed it to wounds he received in Iraq. A friend in the Corps told the San Francisco Chronicle shortly after his death that Apineru went to sleep the night he died and never woke up.

In a 2007 interview before he died, Apineru told the San Francisco Chronicle that he sometimes saw Iraqi insurgents when walking city streets in the U.S. after the explosion and suffered through the same recurring nightmare, which replayed the moment his Humvee was hit by a bomb.

"My nightmares are so real," he said. "I can feel it, I can smell it."

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:

ALL HOME NOW



U.S. Army soldiers from Second Stryker Cavalry Regiment respond to shots fired in Sadr City in Baghdad, Iraq, April 15, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

500 U.S. Troops Dead In Afghanistan, So Far

Aug 8, 2008 By Jason Straziuso - The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The deadliest three months for American forces in Afghanistan have pushed the U.S. death toll to at least 500, forcing a war long overshadowed by Iraq back into the headlines.

The U.S. military suffered 65 deaths in May, June and July, by far the deadliest three-month period in Afghanistan since the war began in 2001. The previous deadliest three-month period was in the spring of 2005, with 45 U.S. deaths.

Afghan Roadside Bomb Attacks Hit Four-Year Peak

7 August 2008 FOCUS News Agency

Washington: Roadside bomb incidents involving U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan hit their highest level in at least four years between April and June, the Pentagon said on Wednesday Reuters.

There was a peak of about 200 such incidents in Afghanistan in the three-month period, data released by a Defense Department office that oversees efforts to thwart attacks by improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, in Iraq and Afghanistan showed.

About 120 of the devices exploded, including some 40 that resulted in U.S. and NATO casualties, the data showed.

Western forces discovered and cleared another 80 before they could be detonated by insurgents.

“Roadside Bombs Have Gotten Less Sophisticated And As A Result Harder For Troops To Find Or Avoid”

August 7, 2008 (AP)

Metz [Army Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, who heads the military's counter-IED organization] who was the No. 2 commander of U.S. forces in Iraq in 2004-05, said the enemy [in those years] was more likely to use explosives triggered by cell phones or other similar radio waves.

But now militants on both warfronts have moved to less sophisticated triggering mechanisms, such as command wires or pressure plates.

Those incidents, he said, resulted in some of the highest monthly coalition casualties due to roadside bombs in the past four years

Some of the shift came as the U.S. developed better sensors and other technologies to detect and defeat the more sophisticated models.

But the low-tech bombs, he said, “create a harder problem for us. We are seeing that, more and more.”

Metz said it is difficult for troops -- rolling down the road at about 30 mph -- “to have a device that can look into the ground and detect, at a very low false positive rate, a pressure plate that's under there.”

A “false positive” refers to an indication that signals a bomb is there when it's not.

6 Canadians On Patrol In Zhari Wounded By Taliban Ambush

August 07, 2008 Graham Thomson, Canwest News Service

ZHARI DISTRICT, Afghanistan - Six Canadian soldiers were wounded Thursday after being ambushed by insurgents in what is arguably the most dangerous area in Afghanistan.

The soldiers were conducting a patrol shortly after dawn in the troubled Zhari district of Kandahar province when their armoured vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device. The soldiers quickly got out of the vehicle only to find themselves under attack once again, this time from insurgents with automatic weapons.

Other soldiers rushed to their aid as artillery at a Canadian forward base opened fire with 30 rounds of high explosive shells to help drive the insurgents back.

The wounded Canadians were flown by helicopter to a multinational hospital in the main coalition base at Kandahar Airfield where they were treated. Their injuries were not considered serious and all were released, according to military officials who do not provide the names of wounded soldiers or the nature of their injuries as a matter of course.

Ironically, the latest round of violence happened immediately before Canadian and Afghan officials met to celebrate the opening of a new joint co-operation centre in Zhari district.

The centre - adjacent to bases for the Afghan police, the Afghan army and coalition forces - is designed to allow all three to work more closely together to improve security in the troubled area.

As if reminding everyone of the fragile state of security here, the thundering boom of artillery could be heard from howitzers at the nearby Canadian firebase as local dignitaries and military officials gathered for the opening ceremonies.

“Without question we have a lot of work to do,” said Brig.-Gen. Denis Thompson, Canada's top soldier in Kandahar province.

Insurgent activity in the Zhari district has proven to be among the most resilient in the country.

Occupation Forces Drone Down in Paktika

08/07/08 NATO

KABUL, Afghanistan - An ISAF unmanned aerial vehicle crashed earlier today in Paktika province.

The aircraft, a Shadow reconnaissance vehicle, was unarmed and the wreckage has been located.

Notes From A Lost War:

The Great Afghan Collaborator Police Training Fiasco: “The Insurgency Is Getting Stronger In Your District, Sir, And Your Police Force Is Getting Smaller”

Aug. 6, 2008 By Candace Rondeaux, The Washington Post [Excerpts]

CHAHAR DARREH, Afghanistan - Lt. Col. Abdul Hamid, a new police commander, was having trouble doing the math. When he took control of this district in the country's north in early July, he had 54 officers. Since then, some had been transferred; others had disappeared.

How many were left?

The commander looked up at the bare light bulb hanging from his office ceiling. Nearby, Maj. Vincent Heintz, a barrel-chested National Guardsman and onetime New York prosecutor, put his palm to his temple and leaned toward Hamid.

“Sir, would it be fair to say you don't know how many officers you have working here?” Heintz boomed.

Hamid, reed thin and swimming in his oversize police uniform, smiled affably while the question was translated. He nodded.

“No, I don't know how many officers work here,” he said.

It was another summer day in the district of Chahar Darreh, where Heintz, 40, and his team of U.S. military advisers are experiencing firsthand the challenges of turning a few dozen Afghans into a frontline counterinsurgency force.

The United States has spent about \$6.2 billion since 2002 to transform Afghanistan's national police into a bulwark against the Taliban and other Islamist fighters.

About 730 American military advisers have been deployed to help train and equip the force.

But as of this spring, not a single one of the 433 police units that have received the training has been judged fully capable of handling its mission or the Taliban threat, according to a Government Accountability Office report.

Across Afghanistan, meanwhile, roadside bombs have become more frequent and firefights have grown fiercer. In May and June, more foreign troops were killed in Afghanistan than in Iraq.

Seven years after the United States began its fight against the Taliban, the insurgency is proving more resilient.

About 50 officers a month have been killed this year. From January 2007 to last month, 991 police officers were killed in action, according to U.S. military statistics.

Here in Chahar Darreh, Heintz and the other U.S. advisers -- most from the New York National Guard's 69th Infantry Regiment (Light) -- have a daunting mission: to teach about three dozen men, who earn about \$100 a month, how to breach the door of a house like SWAT team commandos; show them how to patrol their beats, interact with residents and gather intelligence; and inspire them to pursue the Taliban, village by village.

The U.S. soldiers who came here are firefighters, paramedics, police officers, civil engineers and information technology consultants, most from New York City. They were seasoned by years in the National Guard and a tour in Iraq.

Back in Hamid's office at police headquarters, Heintz stared at Hamid a long minute.

"Whether you work out here as police commander or not, we have to get this force back up to speed because the insurgency is getting stronger in your district, sir, and your police force is getting smaller," Heintz said.

"We have to fix this now. This is an emergency."

Chahar Darreh is located in Kunduz province in a vast stretch of remote steppe and rural valleys in northeastern Afghanistan.

While the Taliban is most active in the country's south and east, the threat posed by insurgents is growing here.

A week before Hamid arrived, a suicide bomber on a motorcycle made an unsuccessful run at a German convoy. Later, insurgents opened fire with guns and rocket-propelled grenades on two police substations.

Hamid, an 18-year police veteran, is the third commander to be assigned to Chahar Darreh in nearly five months. When he arrived in the district from the western province of Herat, he brought an entourage: a brother who served as his driver and another relative who acted as Hamid's personal bodyguard.

Heintz, who helped convict New York mob boss John Gotti Jr. for racketeering, had little patience with Hamid's methods. This is not the best way for the new commander to win the hearts and minds of the locals or inspire the confidence of his men, Heintz told Hamid.

A few days after his first meeting with the new commander, Heintz advised Hamid to drop his brother as his driver. Ditto the personal bodyguard. And no more burning up scarce government fuel resources on nightly trips home in the government-owned patrol truck, Heintz told Hamid.

Heinz, a blunt-spoken New Yorker who during his tour in Iraq also helped prosecute Saddam Hussein, said he wanted Hamid to get down to the real business of policing his district.

"My question to you, sir, is what is your plan to defend this district?" Heintz asked.

Hamid seemed bewildered. He looked to one of the Afghan officers sitting next to him. Silence.

"My plan is to enforce the law," said Hamid, 42. "I'm not very familiar with the villages or which villages are vulnerable, and I don't have a plan. But I think we should ambush the Taliban."

Hamid did not have a premier fighting force under his command.

His officers wore an assortment of hand-me-down combat boots and black vinyl shoes. The old Soviet-era machine weaponry they hauled around was caked with dirt. The men chafed under the weight of the heavy body armor the U.S. soldiers ordered them to wear.

Most were, at best, semiliterate. Many were poor marksmen. Only some knew how to communicate on the standard police radios donated by Western nations.

Several wondered whether they should join the dozens of other police officers who had recently walked off the job after learning they would go unpaid for a second month straight.

At the U.S. forward operating base in Kunduz, New York Guard Capt. Brian Higgins, 30, stared at a map in the communications center. The map was studded with clusters of red pushpins that marked the spots where roadside bombs had either exploded or been uncovered in recent months. Tiny mug shots of various bearded men with turbans were also pasted to the map.

Back in the United States, Higgins works a plainclothes street crimes detail with the New York City police.

Much of what he learned about developing a counterinsurgency he picked up from 10 years in the National Guard and six years of working the police beat. Just like civilian criminals in the United States, the insurgents here aren't always easy to identify, Higgins said.

"At a certain point, it becomes detective work," Higgins said. "The enemy is moving among the people."

For U.S. police trainers such as Heintz, part of the job entails teaching Afghan police to recognize and confront insurgent elements in their midst. Alliances forged in wars past have made for strange bedfellows in post-Taliban Afghanistan. As in the rest of the country, few people in Chahar Darreh's small power elite are what they really seem.

Many carry with them a complex history of deals done, lives lost, trusts betrayed. For Afghan police, defeating the insurgency means first unmasking the enemy.

Taliban commanders and other warlords used to run this province. Many of them remain in the area. Some are now businessmen; some are landowners; some are criminal defense lawyers. Hasta Khan, a former commander who fought under the infamous warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, is all three.

Heintz had learned from a local shopkeeper that a threatening letter -- signed by the Taliban in Khan's name -- had been circulating in Chahar Darreh. If the shopkeeper didn't vacate a tract of land that, according to the letter, belonged to Khan, the shopkeeper would be hearing from the Taliban, the letter read. Khan, Heintz said, would have to be dealt with diplomatically.

A few minutes after Heintz and his convoy pulled into the police headquarters at Chahar Darreh on a recent day, Khan arrived. Thin and elegant in his gray turban, white salwar-kameez and closely trimmed salt-and-pepper beard, Khan swept into the commander's office with a flourish. He briskly shook hands with everyone in the room. Then he flashed Heintz a Cheshire grin.

"Welcome, you are most welcome here in Afghanistan. We are happy that you are here to help us rebuild our destroyed district of Chahar Darreh," said Khan, 54, although he had met Heintz several times before.

Khan, a tribal elder in the nearby village of Nawabad and a landowner, is something of a chameleon, Heintz and local Afghan officials said. One minute he defends the rights of common criminals and insurgent fighters. The next he is cozying up to the police and local investigators with Afghanistan's national intelligence agency.

"I'm sure you're going to help our country. There are people coming here from Pakistan and Iran who want to destroy our country. There's been 30 years of war," Khan said. He grinned again as he settled into a rickety chair in the corner of the police commander's office. "I get calls from people in Pakistan all the time, telling me not to work with the Americans. But I know that's not right."

Heintz cut Khan off. Voice booming, the American squared his shoulders. His hands chopped the air as he talked. The tension in the room was palpable.

“Thank you, sir. I'm sure you'll understand then when I tell you that I am concerned because we are hearing reports that people are using your name to threaten people in this district, saying that they are the Taliban,” Heintz said, stabbing a finger in Khan's direction. “I want you to listen to me, Mr. Khan. I can tell you right now that if any of these people in this district are harmed in any way, Mr. Khan, you are going to be the first person I'm going to look at to blame.”

“It's a conspiracy against me. They're making it up,” Khan protested.

“Well, I hope you'll forgive me for having my suspicions, Mr. Khan. But as a wise man once told me here in Chahar Darreh . . . I believe it was you who told me, 'Every jungle has its fox,' “ Heintz said.

Khan chuckled, waved his hand dismissively and got up to leave.

TROOP NEWS

Fayetteville/Fort Bragg: “It Was Important That Members Of The Military And Veterans Understand It's OK To Oppose The War”



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

August 07, 2008 By Drew Brooks, Staff writer, The Fayetteville Observer

Jason Hurd started speaking out against the Army's involvement in Iraq after he returned from that country in 2005.

The Asheville native said he quickly found a shared view and camaraderie with a group called Iraq Veterans Against the War.

On Wednesday, the group sponsored a free concert for soldiers and veterans at Docks at the Capitol on Hay Street in Fayetteville. Two bands, The Greens and Rebel Inc., played.

About 30 people were there at 8:30 p.m.

Hurd said the group has received a positive response in Fayetteville, and there is talk of starting a chapter here.

Hurd said group members are taking their message on the road, visiting nine military communities in seven states as part of their "State of the Union" tour.

Hurd said it was important that members of the military and veterans understand it's OK to oppose the war.

"Look, you're not alone," Hurd said. "We're with you and we're here to support you."

Founded in 2004, Iraq Veterans Against the War now counts 1,250 members who share their belief that the occupation of Iraq is unconstitutional and illegal.

Hurd said he became disillusioned by the death and destruction he saw while serving as a medic in central Baghdad. Others in the group, he said, are sick of the war's effect on their families.

"When your spouse goes off to war, you're essentially alone," he said.

Hurd said the group wants to dispel the notion that you can't support the troops and oppose the war at the same time. The vets in the group, he said, give it more credibility. He said it was all right for soldiers to express their First Amendment views so long as they aren't in uniform.

Hurd said the group wasn't in Fayetteville to force its message on soldiers. While on the U.S. tour, the group makes no speeches, aside from short introductions, before the concert begins. Volunteers are available to talk with soldiers individually.

The group will host a Veterans Affairs health-benefits workshop Friday at 7 p.m. at Docks at the Capitol.

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

700 From Oklahoma Guard Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

8.11.08 Army Times [Excerpts]

About 700 soldiers from the Oklahoma National Guard's 45th Fires Brigade will leave in mid-August to train at Fort Hood, Texas, before deploying to Iraq, according to a press release.

The soldiers are expected to be at Fort Hood for 60 to 90 days before going to Iraq, where they will conduct convoy security missions.

Sailors Accuse Chaplain Of Rape, Harassment: “He Said All He Had To Do Was Make One Phone Call And He Could Have My Boyfriend Taken Care Of” Finding Jesus “Wearing Only His Underwear”

August 11, 2008 By Andrew Scutro, Army Times [Excerpts]

NORFOLK, Va. — They said he spoke of himself in the third person, boasted of White House connections, claimed to have endured traumatic ground combat in Iraq and bragged of his prowess on the basketball court.

One sailor said she accepted his support after the death of a shipmate. Another said she accepted his persistent mentorship and applied for a nurse commissioning program. And both female enlisted sailors said their relationships with Navy Lt. Shane R. Dillman quickly led to sex with him in late 2007.

The two accusers appeared July 24 in a courtroom testifying — and, at times, crying — about their alleged encounters with the then-command chaplain of the aircraft carrier Carl Vinson.

The following day, a third female witness in the Article 32 hearing testified via telephone from Iraq.

She said she met Dillman — a spokesman said he's Pentecostal — through Bible study in Kuwait and had a sexual affair with him at Camp Arifjan, starting in the fall of 2005.

Their alleged relationship continued back in the U.S. until the spring of 2007, she said. When she broke up with him, she said, he told her “the Lord had taken his hand off of me, that I was following the devil, and that I was a bad person.”

A fourth female witness, a Carl Vinson crew member, testified to a relationship with Dillman that was at times “awkward” but involved him lending her money and a credit card when she was in financial trouble.

Dillman, 35, faced multiple counts of sexual misconduct and other violations during the Article 32 hearing that featured testimony from 10 witnesses, including the four young enlisted women who had allegedly been involved with him in one way or another.

He is accused of five charges with multiple specifications including rape, harassment, adultery, fraternization, making threats and “calling a female enlisted service member to his office while wearing only his underwear.”

The allegations date back to September 2005, when Dillman was at Camp Arifjan and continue up to January of this year. There also are allegations of events in the Wilmington and Jacksonville areas of North Carolina; Hampton Roads, Va.; and Bethesda, Md.

Dillman reported aboard the Vinson in July 2006 and was assigned as command chaplain until the end of January, when the investigation was underway. He was reassigned to Naval Air Forces Atlantic.

The investigation was kicked off when in late December, one accuser's live-in boyfriend, a Navy petty officer second class, discovered intimate text message traffic with Dillman on her mobile phone.

Witnesses said Dillman told tales of enduring ground combat in Iraq as a chaplain, although that is not reflected in his Navy biographical data or any of the ship's literature lauding his good works.

“He talked about war a lot,” one accuser told the court, noting that he'd shown her photos of carnage. One of his charges involves possessing “visual images depicting human casualties.”

One sailor said Dillman told her he had been shot while acting as an “interrogator,” that he was part of a special operations team and had taken part in secret missions. Whether he went to Iraq is unclear.

In the hearing, the two young E-3s said they had trouble interpreting Dillman's alleged advances, given his role as a religious leader and an officer.

“He started asking me weird questions about my past,” one said. “I trusted him. He was the chaplain.”

He’s also accused of making threats.

One of the alleged victims testified that Dillman said he would have the parents of his former lover — the enlisted female now serving in Iraq — audited by the IRS.

The alleged victim testified she was concerned for the safety of her boyfriend, the petty officer second class who later sparked the investigation by discovering the text messages.

“He (Dillman) said all he had to do was make one phone call and he could have my boyfriend taken care of,” she told the investigating officer, Cmdr. Stephen Jamrozy.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

Aug 5 (Reuters) & Middle East News & By SELCAN HACAOGLU, Associated Press Writer & 06 Aug 2008 Reuters & By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA, Associated Press Writer & 08/08/08 VOA News & (Reuters)

A roadside bomb wounded two policemen in Palestine street, in eastern Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents killed a senior leader of a U.S.-allied group and six of his guards in an ambush south of Baghdad, a group member and residents said Tuesday. Sheik Ibrahim al-Karbouli's convoy came under attack Monday in Youssifiyah, according to one of his followers and several residents in the town. The sheik was a senior leader of the so-called awakening council in the town, about 12 miles south of the Iraqi capital.

Police also discovered the bodies of three awakening council members who were captured several days ago, police Brig. Gen. Sarhat Qadir said.

Insurgents slit the throats of three tribal policemen while they were asleep in an attack on a checkpoint in the multi-ethnic city of Kirkuk, police sources said Tuesday. Iraqi tribal police, also known as 'Awakening Councils,' are US- backed units. The attack targeted an Awakening Council checkpoint near the village of Hindiya to the west of Kirkuk.

A car bomber, targeting an Iraqi army patrol, wounded one soldier in central Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

In Mosul, three Iraqi policemen were killed when a booby-trapped wooden cart exploded after they arrived to collect a body that had been left on the street beside it, police said.

Three policemen were wounded when a car bomb exploded in the parking lot belonging to the police directorate in Baaj, a town 375 km (235 miles) northwest of Baghdad, said Abdul-Rahim al-Shimeri, the town's mayor.

Three U.S.-backed neighbourhood patrol group members were killed and two wounded on Wednesday when gunmen in a car opened fire at their checkpoint in the Sulaikh district of northern Baghdad, police said.

Iraqi police say a car bomb blast has wounded 5 police officers at a crowded market in the northern town of Tal Afar, near Mosul.

A roadside bomb killed a policeman and wounded two others in Iskandariya district, 40 km (25 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

One member of a U.S.-backed neighbourhood patrol was killed and four were wounded during clashes with militants on Thursday in Mussayab, 60 km (40 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas killed an Iraqi soldier when they ambushed a patrol on Thursday in western Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

How It Is

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Military Project, who sent this in.]

Aug 2, 2008 Jon Meacham, NEWSWEEK [Excerpt]

...this is not a normal year: a friend of mine was buying a plate lunch from the Church of God on Natural Bridge Road in Franklin County, Tenn., in July—you have to get there early, because the fried chicken goes fast—and overheard a couple of white truckers denouncing President Bush and the GOP in virulent terms.

If you are a Republican in a nation at war and you have lost the truck drivers at the Church of God on Natural Bridge Road, you cannot be sure of anything.

“What Does Obama Want To Do With His Soldiers Once He Withdraws Them From Iraq?”

Send Them To Afghanistan, “That Graveyard Of Foreign Armies Where The Taliban Were So Utterly Defeated In 2001 That They Are Now Stronger Than Ever”

2 August 2008 By Robert Fisk, The Independent [Excerpt]

No one follows the narrative any more because it is so repetitive.

Take Nouri al-Maliki, the PMIGZ – Prime Minister of the Iraqi Green Zone – who's suddenly gone from being the Democrats' favourite target to being their election buddy-buddy, as Max Boot sagely noted in The Washington Post.

Maliki suggested to Obama that Iraq will be ready to assume responsibility for its own security by 2010. Bingo.

This chimes in perfectly with Obama's promises.

But wait a minute.

In May, 2006, Maliki announced that “our forces are capable of taking over the security in all Iraqi provinces within a year and a half”.

Five months later, the PMIGZ said that it would be “only a matter of months” before Iraqi security forces “take over the security portfolio entirely and keep some (sic) multinational forces only in a supporting role”.

Then in January, 2007, Maliki boasted that “within three to six months our need for the American troops will dramatically go down”.

Four months later, he was at it again, claiming that Iraqi forces would control all security “in every province” within eight months.

Quite apart from the idea that there is a security “portfolio” in Iraq, his own military chums don't agree with any of this bumph.

The PMIGZ's own defence minister claims his forces can't assume responsibility until 2012, while the Iraqi commander in Basra wants US troops to stay until 2020!

Even if we ignore all this drivel, what does Obama want to do with his soldiers once he withdraws them from Iraq?

He's going to send the poor devils back to Afghanistan, that graveyard of foreign armies where the Taliban were so utterly defeated in 2001 that they are now stronger than ever.

I would recommend that Obama glance through Appendix XXIV of the official British account of the 1878-80 Second Afghan War where he will find the British announcing victory over a massed Afghan force which included a fierce group of fighters known as "talibs".

These men would choose a particular soldier in the British ranks and make a suicidal attack to seize him and cut his throat in front of his comrades.

And I am "minded" (as Jack Straw used to say when he was showing off his English) of the bleak conversation I had with an adviser to the Taliban "elders" of Kandahar, a certain Mullah Abdullah, in the last days of the dark militia's rule in 2001.

"If our people return and take back this lost land, it's a success," he told me. "If we are killed trying to do so, we have received martyrdom and this will be a great success for us too... If we are thrown out of Kandahar, we will go to the mountains and start the guerrilla war as we did with the Russians."

The Taliban would fight on, he said. They would ambush the Americans in ever greater numbers.

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

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

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



Iraqi citizens are forced at gunpoint by foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. Army to get out of their homes and sit in the dirt behind barbed wire while in Nahr al-Imam, about 90 kilometers north of Baghdad in Diyala province on, July 30, 2008. The soldiers searched homes and examined identity papers. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

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

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives.]

[They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country.]

[What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush.]

[Why, how could anybody not love that?]

[You'd want that in your home town, right?]

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

U.S. Military Dictatorship Locks Up Iraqis In Tiny Wooden Crates

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

08/07/08 CNN & Rawstory [Excerpts]

The military released photos of what it calls “segregation boxes” used in Iraq.

Three grainy black-and-white photos show the rudimentary structures of wood and mesh.

Some of the boxes are as small as 3 feet by 3 feet by 6 feet tall, according to military officials.

There was no image released of a box that size.

The average Iraqi male is 5 feet 6 inches tall, according to the Iraqi Ministry of Health. That leaves little room for a prisoner to move once placed inside.

The photos were made public after a blogger filed a Freedom of Information Act request in 2005.

[W]hile the military insists the prisoners held in 'segregation boxes' are given food, water and access to a toilet, “human rights advocates warn that as long as the US military puts people in these conditions, the day may come when a captured US military member is held in a wooden crate somewhere in the world.”

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

***“Both Would-Be Presidents
Have Already Sold Us Out”***

**“Meet The New Boss, Same As
The Old Boss”**

**“Why Would Corporate Giants
Throw So Much Weight Behind A
Man Who Promises To Strip Them
Of Billions In Tax Breaks?”**

**“The Answer To That Question
Increasingly Appears To Be That
Obama Is, Well, Full Of Shit”**

**“The Message Is That He's Going To Be
A Friend To Wall Street”**

Both would-be presidents have already sold us out. They've taken the money and run — completing the cyclical transformation of the American political narrative from one of monopolistic Republican iniquity to an even more depressing tale about the overweening power of corporate money and the essentially fictitious nature of our two-party system.

When you live in million-dollar Manhattan townhouses and make billions in profits betting on the pain of the ordinary foreclosed homeowner, you shouldn't get to run around on TV with the prospective president on your arm. You should be hung by your balls.

Aug 21, 2008 By MATT TAIBBI, Rollingstone [Excerpts]

The magnitude of what we're dealing with here: the biggest pile of political contributions in the history of free elections, nearly a billion dollars given to presidential candidates in this season alone.

The truth is that the campaigns of both Barack Obama and John McCain are being inundated with cash from more or less exactly the same gorgons of the corporate scene.

From Wall Street to the Big Oil powerhouses to the military-industrial complex, America's fat-cat business leaders know that the Animal House-style party of the last eight years that made almost all of them rich with bonuses, government contracts and bubble profits is about to come to an end, and someone is going to have to pay to clean up the mess.

They want that someone to be you, not them, and they've spared no expense to make sure both presidential candidates will be there to bail them out next year.

They're succeeding.

Both would-be presidents have already sold us out.

They've taken the money and run — completing the cyclical transformation of the American political narrative from one of monopolistic Republican iniquity to an even more depressing tale about the overweening power of corporate money and the essentially fictitious nature of our two-party system.

In layman's terms, we've gone from being screwed to being fucked.

Overall, Obama is flat-out kicking McCain's ass when it comes to Wall Street contributions, raking in nearly \$9 million from securities and investment executives, compared to \$6.2 million for McCain.

Obama has received more contributions from Goldman Sachs than from any other employer — more than \$627,000 at this writing — not to mention \$398,021 from JP Morgan Chase, \$353,922 from Lehman Brothers and \$291,388 from Morgan Stanley. Even among hedge-fund executives, who have an unequivocal interest in electing McCain, Obama is whipping the Republican, collecting \$500,000 more than McCain.

All of which begs the question: Why would corporate giants like these throw so much weight behind a man who promises to strip them of billions in tax breaks?

Sadly, the answer to that question increasingly appears to be that Obama is, well, full of shit.

He has made no bones about his plans to raise income by soaking the rich, promising to roll back the Bush tax cuts for people making over \$250,000, increase the top tax rate on capital gains to 25 percent and raise the top rate on qualified dividends.

He has also pledged to deliver a real stomach punch to hedge-fund managers, raising the tax rate on most of their income from 15 percent to 35 percent.

These populist pledges sound good, but many business moguls appear to be betting that the tax policies, like Obama himself, are only that: something that sounds good.

“I think we don't want to make too much of his promises on taxes,” says Robert Pollin, professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts. “Not all of these things will happen.”

Noting the overwhelming amount of Wall Street money pouring into Obama's campaign, even elitist fuckwad David Brooks was recently moved to write, “Once the Republicans are vanquished, I wouldn't hold your breath waiting for that capital-gains tax hike.”

Obama withdrew his pledge to filibuster the immunity bill [giving retroactive immunity to telecom companies for spying on Americans] right around the time the Democrats announced that AT&T would be sponsoring the Democratic convention.

So no filibuster on retroactive immunity from the top Democrat — but conventiongoers in Denver will get tote bags emblazoned with the AT&T logo. So that's something.

Look, we all knew this was coming.

Once Obama vanquished Hillary Clinton, it was inevitable that his campaign would start roping in the Clinton moneymen for the fall confrontation with McCain.

Among those snagged by Obama were Iranian millionaire and former Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee chairman Hassan Nemazee, venture capitalist Alan Patricof and the touchingly plugged-in Wall Street power couple Maureen White (First Boston) and Steven Rattner (Morgan Stanley). Rattner and White, the former chief fundraiser for the DNC, are longtime friends of the Clintons; she quit the DNC in 2006 to build Hillary's war chest, while he backed Joe Lieberman against Ned Lamont and flirted with a Mike Bloomberg presidential run. Such are the people who are now whispering in Obama's ear.

Over the summer, the Obama camp has relentlessly pushed the notion that its record fundraising is mainly the result of small online donations. In truth, Obama is still raising tons of money from big corporate donors.

In June alone, as Obama was raking in more than \$30 million from small donors, he also bagged \$6 million in a single fundraiser at Ethel Kennedy's home in Virginia and another \$5 million at an event in Hollywood.

But time and time again, you see Obama aides boasting about how the day of the big-dollar donor is over. "More people are involved, and I think that necessarily dilutes the impact of any individual — which is probably a good thing," one prominent Obama supporter recently declared.

This staunch champion of the small donor happened to be none other than James Rubin, son of former Goldman Sachs co-chairman Bob Rubin.

"The message is that he's going to be a friend to Wall Street, just as Bill Clinton was a friend to Wall Street," says Pollin. "Wall Street will want to be at the head of the table."

By now it should be clear what type of service Wall Street will demand.

The financial disaster dumped on us by eight years of Bush's mismanagement has left America with the prospect of short-term solutions in the form of massive government bailouts, and long-term solutions in the form of reform and regulation.

A big chunk of the \$1 billion in cash that will be spent on the presidential race this year represents Wall Street's desire to make sure that both candidates can be counted on to make the short-term bailouts large and passionate, and the reforms gentle and halfhearted.

“They want to make sure there's socialism when they need it — bailouts — and capitalism when they need that,” says Pollin.

This, folks, is the way of the world.

Forget all the promises to make the rich pay their fair share.

As the candidates get closer to office, the actual paying customers move to the front of the line.

The point is that politicians are intensely loyal to the people who give them money — and not anywhere near as loyal to the promises they've made to suckers like us.

No matter who's in the White House, the direction of the government has remained remarkably stable.

Clinton's treasury secretary, Rubin, was a Goldman Sachs man; Henry Paulson, the current secretary under Bush, is also a Goldman Sachs man.

It'll probably be a Goldman man again next year.

Meet the new boss, same as the old boss. In sickness or in health, the faces may change, but the money remains.

“It's not an accident that both administrations picked for leading economic advisers people from Goldman Sachs,” says Pollin.

Goldman Sachs posted a record profit of \$11 billion last year, much of it from betting against the subprime mortgage market they themselves helped to fuck up. That little energy exchange Goldman set up, the ICE, made a profit of \$240 million last year, as gas prices skyrocketed.

It may suck to be you right now, but all that pain isn't so bad if you are a big oil speculator.

When you live in million-dollar Manhattan townhouses and make billions in profits betting on the pain of the ordinary foreclosed homeowner, you shouldn't get to run around on TV with the prospective president on your arm.

You should be hung by your balls.

It's the same old story: Money talks, and bullshit walks. And don't be surprised if we're the ones still walking after November.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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