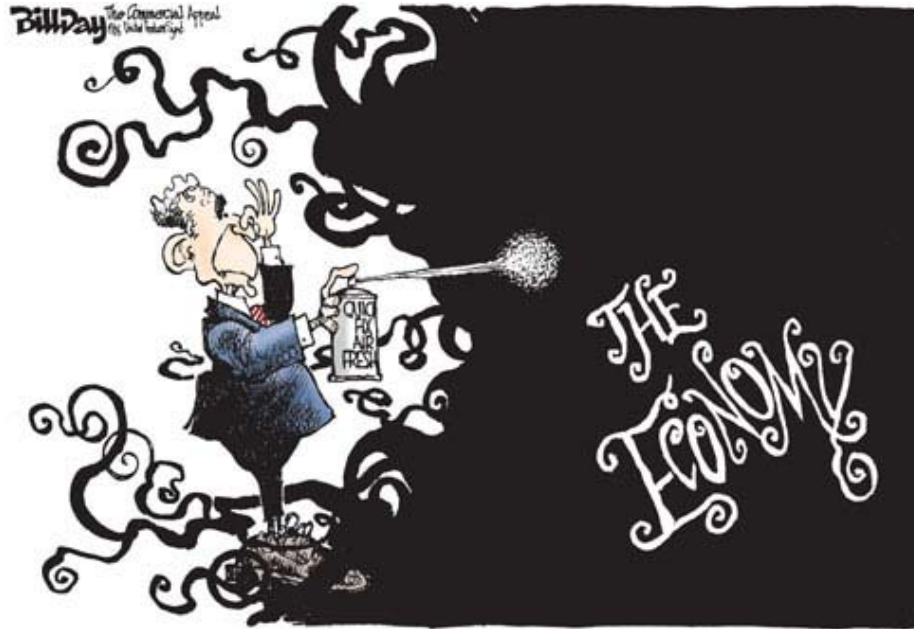


GI SPECIAL 6/11:



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“Kill The Invaders” Pakistani Army Command Issues “A Dramatic Order” To Kill U.S. Troops Operating Inside Pakistan

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

September 13, 2008 Bruce Loudon, South Asia correspondent; News Limited & 9.12.08 Washington Times & September 11, 2008 New York Times [Excerpts]

KEY corps commanders of Pakistan’s 600,000-strong army issued orders last night to retaliate against “invading” US forces that enter the country to attack militant targets.

Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, Pakistan's powerful but media-shy army chief, said nearly a week after a deadly American ground assault in Pakistani territory that Pakistan would defend its sovereignty and that there was no deal to allow foreign forces to operate inside its borders.

What amounts to a dramatic order to "kill the invaders", as one senior officer put it last night, was disclosed after the commanders - who control the army's deployments at divisional level - met at their headquarters in the garrison city of Rawalpindi under the chairmanship of army chief.

In an unusually strong statement criticizing the United States for sending commandos into Pakistan, the chief of the Pakistani Army said that his forces would not tolerate such incursions and would defend the country's sovereignty "at all costs."

"No external force is allowed to conduct operations inside Pakistan," Gen. Kayani, said in what amounted to a direct rebuff to the United States by the Pakistanis.

President Bush secretly approved orders in July that for the first time allow U.S. Special Operations forces to carry out ground assaults inside Pakistan without the prior approval of the Pakistani government, according to senior American officials.

Leading English-language newspaper The News warned in an editorial that the US determination to attack targets inside Pakistan was likely to be "the best recruiting sergeant that the extremists ever had", with even "moderates" outraged by it.

The order to retaliate against incursions by "foreign troops", directed specifically at the 120,000 Pakistani soldiers deployed along the border with Afghanistan, follows US President George W. Bush's authorisation of US attacks in Pakistan.

Washington's determination to launch such attacks has caused outrage across Pakistan, with Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani last night strongly backing a warning by General Kayani that Pakistan would not allow its territorial integrity to be violated.

Anger at all levels in Pakistani society was summed up last night in The News, not normally sympathetic to the militants.

"There is an escalating sense of furious impotence among the ordinary people of Pakistan," the newspaper said.

"Many - perhaps most - of them are strongly opposed to the spread of Talibanisation and extremist influence across the country: people who might be described as 'moderates'.

"Many of them have no sympathy for the mullahs and their burning of girls' schools and their medieval mindset.

"But if you bomb a moderate sensibility often enough, it has a tendency to lose its sense of objectivity and to feel driven in the direction of extremism.

"If America bombs moderate sensibilities often enough, you may find that its actions are the best recruiting sergeant that the extremists ever had."

MORE:

The Background: 9.4.08 U.S. Army Attacks Inside Pakistan

September 04, 2008 AP

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — A senior U.S. military official has acknowledged that American forces conducted a raid inside Pakistan, in the first known foreign ground assault in the country against a suspected Taliban haven.

The Pakistan government condemned an incursion that it said killed at least 15 people.

ACTION REPORTS

New York Army National Guard; “We Were Recognized Several Times, One Soldier Exclaiming ‘You Guys Are Here Tonight Too?’”

From: Alan Stolzer & T. Barton, The Military Project
To: GI Special
Sent: September 14, 2008
Subject: Re: Outreach

The rain didn't stop 3 Military Project members and one VFP member from outreaching to New York army National Guard troops again for over two hours at the [XXXX] armory last Friday night. Assembling in uniform with full packs, they were off for weekend training at a base in a nearby state.

Several troops recognized us at the corner and more than one was welcoming.

One refused a “Sir! No Sir!” because he'd seen it the day before in company with Vietnam Vets.

He mentioned how much more serious things were becoming with the number of tours/deployments.

Most others accepted our handouts comprised of a new National Guard GI Special, the latest Traveling Soldier, the GI Rights wrapper and the “Why We Are Here” statement, all packaged with either cookies or brownies in a snaplock plastic: it’s easier and more compact that way, especially in the rain, no fumbling in pockets just handouts.

We noticed the earlier the arrivals the less willing they were to accept our material but later arrivals almost unanimously took the offerings without hesitation.

We were recognized several times, one soldier exclaiming “you guys are here tonight too?” Another troop thought we might be handing out voter registration forms and said it was important for soldiers to register and vote democratic.

All in all we passed out 57 handout packs and 18 DVDs.

Many thanks to EB and SD who provided much of the preparation.

The most favorable response at one of our two locations at the Armory was to an introduction of the handout package by one Military Project participant remarking that, among other things, it contained material “from Iraq veterans who do not love George Bush.” The warmth of the smiles that got made the whole evening glow.

Another useful tactic was used in an area of curb on the public street, where family of National Guard soldiers were dropping them off by car.

We made a point of offering a package of publications to the family remember also, and not one refused when they understood the contents were pro-soldier and opposed to using troops for occupation, including articles by Iraq Veterans Against The War. Although not including the DVD, which is tightly restricted to active duty, National Guard and reserve troops, the publications package is strong enough as it is.

And every package taken was a kick in the teeth for the policies and politicians promoting the Empire.

One note for future reference; several soldiers with weight issues declined the package because the brownie was included in the pack, rather than handed out separately as had been past practice. On previous outreach, a number of soldiers had taken the package but declined the brownie.

To sum up: rain doesn’t make for a lot of conversation with troops headed for the armory, but there were plenty of friendly and encouraging remarks letting us know we were welcome back.

“And gentlemen in England now-a-bed
Shall think themselves accurs’d they were not here”

**MORE ACTION REPORTS
WANTED:**

FROM YOU!

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE WELL:

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

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

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

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

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

Spokane Soldier, 23, Killed In Iraq: Carlo Alfonso Leaves Behind Wife, 2- Year-Old Son

August 31, 2008 Shawn Vestal, Staff writer, Spokesman Review

Rose Marie Alfonso said she was prepared for some kinds of bad news when her husband, Carlo, deployed to Iraq.

Post-traumatic stress disorder, perhaps. Struggling to return to civilian life.

But she said she had not braced herself for the news she received last week: that he'd been killed by an improvised bomb in Iraq.

"It's always a stress," she said of the life of a military wife. "It is. They go on these missions, and you know what they're doing. You know the risk. So it's scary. But I never thought something like that would happen."

A combat engineer specialist with the Army's 40th Engineering Battalion, Carlo Alfonso died Tuesday, the week before his 24th birthday, the family said.

Rose Marie Alfonso, 22, said her husband was killed by an improvised explosive device, or IED. Two other soldiers were injured in the explosion.

The day of his death was also the couple's eight-month wedding anniversary.

Carlo Alfonso moved to Spokane from the Philippines in 1997 with his mom, and he and Rose Marie met as fellow students at West Valley High School, she said Saturday. The couple has a 2-year-old son, Kyle.

"He was friends with everybody," she said. "Nobody hated him. He was a really sweet person."

Carlo Alfonso was not yet a U.S. citizen, though he was working toward it and was proud to serve in the military, Rose Marie Alfonso said.

He was stationed in Baumholder, Germany, and had been called to Iraq in April for a 15-month tour.

His body is expected to be returned to Spokane on Friday.

He was three months away from getting a leave, Alfonso said – one that would have allowed them to celebrate their first wedding anniversary together.

ENOUGH SHEEP SHIT:

ALL HOME NOW



4.7.08: A US soldier in Diyala Province. (AFP/File/David Furst)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

UK Soldier Killed Near Kajaki

14 September 2008 Ministry of Defence

A British soldier from the 2nd Battalion has been killed in an explosion in southern Afghanistan, the Ministry of Defence has said.

A member of the Parachute Regiment, he died while on a routine patrol near Kajaki in Helmand province on Saturday. His next-of-kin have been informed.

He is the second from the regiment to die in the region in 48 hours.

**“Anyone Who Occupies Our
Country On Behalf Of The
Americans Must Be Killed”**

“Salam’s Fighters Are Already The De Facto Rulers Of Entire Districts In Kunduz Province”

“We Will Exact Revenge For Every Innocent Afghan Killed, And We Will Continue The Holy War Until We Have Driven The Germans Out Of Kunduz And All Other Occupiers Out Of Afghanistan”

Two-thirds of German citizens are opposed to the Bundeswehr’s Afghanistan mission, and politicians in Berlin read opinion polls more often than reports on the military situation.

09/08/2008 By Konstantin von Hammerstein, Susanne Koelbl, Alexander Szandar and Sami Yousafzai; SPIEGEL. Translated from the German by Christopher Sultan

Kunduz is once again the Taliban’s operational center in the north.

About one-third of residents are Pashtuns from the Ghilzai tribe, originally from the southern provinces of Kandahar and Helmand, where the Taliban enjoys strong support. The extremists use family ties to develop local contacts and find shelter. The Taliban already launched into brutal attack mode last year, when a suicide bomber killed three German soldiers and five Afghans in a crowded Kunduz market.

Kunduz, an old market town and trading hub, has been the scene of bloody atrocities again and again in the last few decades. Hatred is deep-seated, and memories are long.

If there is one man who fuels this animosity more than anyone else, it is Mullah Salam from the Imam Sahib district.

As the radical Islamic extremists’ military chief for north-eastern Afghanistan, Salam’s influence within the region under German ISAF command extends well beyond Kunduz Province to Baghlan and Takhar and the region bordering Tajikistan.

Last week, Salam agreed to a telephone interview with SPIEGEL in Pakistan. All attacks “in the holy war against German soldiers in Kunduz,” Salam claimed, were being conducted under the “direct command” of the notorious Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar.

“Anyone who occupies our country on behalf of the Americans,” Salam continued, “must be killed, whether they are Germans, Turks or from any other nation.

The Germans are the main aggressors in the north and have stooped to being America’s paid puppets.”

According to Salam, people have had “enough of the occupiers, and everyone hates their culture.”

He left no doubts as to the Taliban’s ultimate objective: “We will exact revenge for every innocent Afghan killed, and we will continue the holy war until we have driven the Germans out of Kunduz and all other occupiers out of Afghanistan.”

Salam’s fighters are already the de facto rulers of entire districts in Kunduz Province.

Attacks on German patrols have become so common that most incidents are hardly even noticed in Germany anymore.

Two-thirds of German citizens are opposed to the Bundeswehr’s Afghanistan mission, and politicians in Berlin read opinion polls more often than reports on the military situation.

Notes From A Lost War:

“Our Government Is Weak And Corrupt And The American Soldiers Have Learned Nothing”
“This Is Our Land. We Are Afraid To Send Our Sons Out The Door For Fear The American Troops Will Pick Them Up”
“It Is Now So Dangerous Outside The Capital That Afghans Are Afraid To Travel Hundreds Of Miles Of Newly-Paved Roads”

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

9.5.08 By KATHY GANNON, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts]

GHANI KHIEL, Afghanistan - The bearded, turbaned men gather beneath a large, leafy tree in rural eastern Nangarhar province.

When Malik Mohammed speaks on their behalf, his voice is soft but his words are harsh.

Mohammed makes it clear that the tribal chiefs have lost all faith in both their own government and the foreign soldiers in their country.

Such disillusionment is widespread in Afghanistan, feeding an insurgency that has killed 195 foreign soldiers so far this year, 105 of them Americans.

“This is our land.

“We are afraid to send our sons out the door for fear the American troops will pick them up,” says Mohammed, who was chosen by the others to represent them.

“Daily we have headaches from the troops. We are fed up. Our government is weak and corrupt and the American soldiers have learned nothing.”

A strong sense of frustration echoed through dozens of interviews by The Associated Press with Afghan villagers, police, government officials, tribal elders and Taliban who left and rejoined the religious movement. The interviews ranged from the capital, Kabul, to the rural regions near the border with Pakistan.

The overwhelming result: Ordinary Afghans are deeply bitter about American and NATO forces because of errant bombs, heavy-handed searches and seizures and a sense that the foreigners do not understand their culture.

They are equally fed up with what they see as seven years of corruption and incompetence in a U.S.-backed government that has largely failed to deliver on development.

Even with more foreign troops, Afghanistan is now less secure.

“It certainly is a mess. Security is the worst that it has been for years. Corruption is out of control. It impacts every single Afghan,” says Doug Wankel, a burly 62-year-old American who coordinated Washington’s anti-drug policy in Afghanistan from 2004 until 2007 and is now back as a security consultant.

“What people have to understand is that what ordinary Afghans think really does matter.”

The fear and fury is evident among the neighbors at Akhtar Mohammed’s walled home deep within Nangarhar province, reached by a dirt road along a dirty brown canal.

A dozen men lie on traditional rope beds beneath a thatched roof. Some wear the full-bodied beard of the devout, with a clean-shaven upper lip. Others have dyed their gray

beards a flaming orange with henna to show that they have made the pilgrimage to the holy site of Mecca.

They live barely an hour's drive from an errant bombing last month that hit a wedding party and killed about 50 people.

Khieel Shah says his home was raided two months earlier, and troops killed his nephew, a high school student.

An old man sits by moaning, "No, no, they weren't Taliban. They were going to the bathroom. They weren't even carrying guns."

Villagers want to know why people who give false information are not arrested, and they say American soldiers still can't sift the good intelligence from the bad.

"But now this is seven years. I am hopeless. They haven't learned until now," says Akhtar Mohammed.

NATO's top Gen. David D. McKiernan blames civilian deaths on insurgents who hide among the population. But the problem could also be one of strategy, says Robert Oakley, a former U.S. ambassador and National Security Council staff member.

"There is a contradiction between wanting to minimize Afghan civilian casualties and minimizing U.S. military casualties," he says. "For the former, we should go on the ground. For the latter, go in from the air."

Villagers say the U.S. does not understand how complex alliances, violence and even drugs play out in their culture.

The eyes of elderly Malik Bakhtiar well with tears as he recalls his brother's arrest by U.S. troops for apparently running a drug laboratory in his home. In certain regions of Afghanistan, people grow opium for their livelihood.

"They don't understand us," Bakhtiar says. "Every house has a gun. Every house has opium."

Inside the walled compound of the Independent Human Rights Commission in Kabul, workers are knee-deep in statistics that measure the dissatisfaction of Afghans. An army of workers crisscrossed 33 of the country's 34 provinces and took the opinions of 15,200 people, mostly in rural areas.

The survey, done annually for the past three years, shows a steady deterioration in the social and economic stability of Afghans, Nadery says. Average debt last year was \$1,000 and is now 20 percent higher.

And up to 73 percent of Afghans say they cannot go to the government for help unless they have money or power.

"Elders say when they go to government officials, they face humiliation," Nadery says in his cramped ground floor office.

Najib, a policeman who asks not to be identified beyond his first name for fear of losing his job, reflects the general anger.

Since he joined Afghanistan's police force in 2001, he has been mistakenly bombed by a U.S. airplane that killed seven of his colleagues.

He has paid bribes to government officials, he says, and taken bribes to balance his books. He recalls watching a friend buy a police job for \$2,000, and notes that posts with better opportunities for bribery are available for upward of \$10,000.

Corruption has made it easier for the Taliban to infiltrate police ranks and carry out lethal attacks, according to Najib.

"The president is crying, but nothing has changed," says Najib, who still walks with a limp from the U.S. bombing.

"People are unhappy, and more and more it will become difficult for the Americans and good for the Taliban.

"These people (U.S. troops) are not making one mistake, but they are making one thousand mistakes and they are killing many people."

It is now so dangerous outside the capital that Afghans are afraid to travel hundreds of miles of newly-paved roads, and most international aid groups have forbidden their staff to do so altogether.

Truck drivers who have no choice often say thieves and thieving police are a bigger worry than the Taliban.

"An Afghan trucker put it succinctly: 'Forget the Taliban, our biggest problems are with the police,'" says Seth Jones, an analyst with the U.S.-based RAND Corporation and author of a report on the rise of Afghanistan's insurgency.

Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Zemer Bashery puts the corruption level at barely 20 percent of the force, and says efforts are being made to tackle it. But many Afghans think otherwise.

Kidnappings in Kabul are in the double digits this year, according to the attorney general's office, and Afghans suspect police involvement. Most are for ransom rather than because of politics.

In the meantime, the Taliban is advancing.

Out at the heavily fortified, sprawling U.S. military base at Bagram, north of Kabul, Brig. Gen. Mark Milley says the Taliban and al-Qaida are enemy number one, and corruption is enemy number two.

But he claims the troops are inching forward in bringing security to the country.

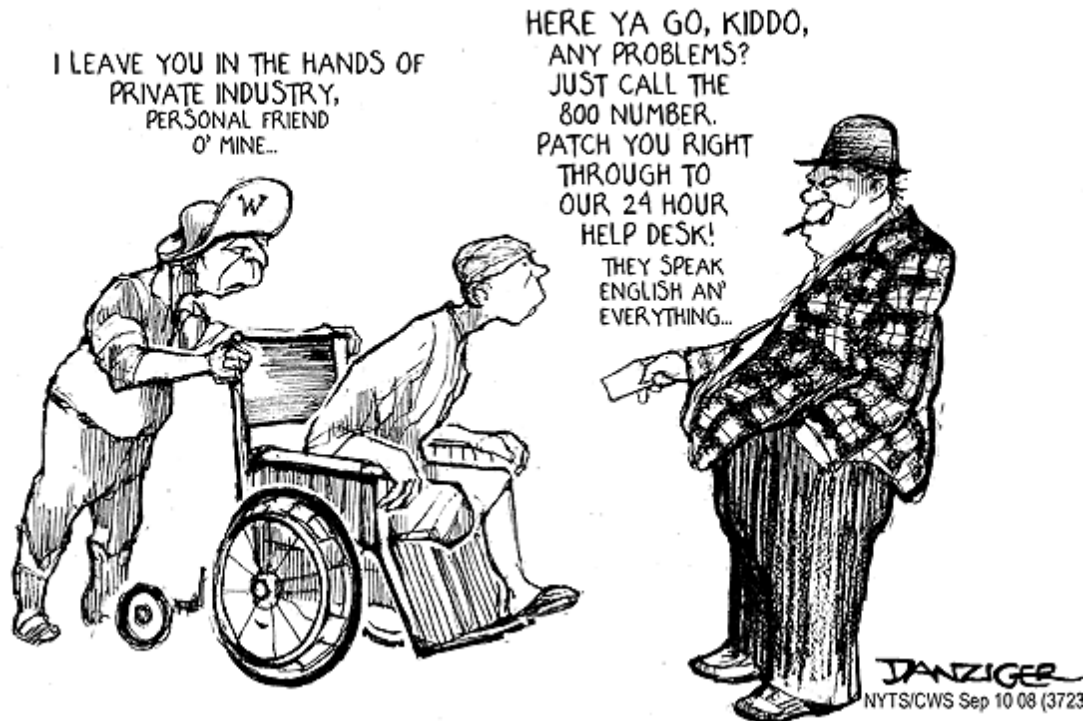
“The western forces, international forces, Americans in particular are the most disciplined in our use of deadly force,” says Milley, the deputy commanding general of operations. “We think we are succeeding.”

Back at the tribal council, or shura, in Nangarhar, the eldest of the elders disagrees.

“It is a shame for them,” says Abdul Samad, a tall, lanky man in his seventies with a silver beard on his gaunt face. “It was a good opportunity after the Taliban. But it is gone.”

TROOP NEWS

Bush Plans to Privatize the Veterans Administration



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

**“No Matter Your Thoughts On The
War And The Military, You Will
Want To Go Back”**

“Everyone Does Whether They Admit It Or Not”

“We Have Earned Through Blood And Sweat A Fresh, Shrewd Perspective On The World That Many In Our Country Are Not Afforded”

September 11, 2008 By Alex H, Armyofdude.blogspot.com [Excerpts]

It was appropriate that my journey to Iraq ended like it began - on September 11.

The men I had the utmost pleasure to serve with will be my closest friends until the day I die. It's all downhill from here; I'll never make new friends that are on the same level of the men I shared life, love and loss with during our fifteen month combat deployment.

This Friday marks one year since the bulk of my battalion landed outside of Tacoma, Washington.

I wasn't fully prepared to have clean air infiltrate my lungs or cool September air swirl around us as we departed the plane after nearly 24 hours of flying.

Though nearly half of my fellow soldiers had one tour under their belts, it was difficult to anticipate how we would deal with coming home.

With that said, I hope to be of assistance to those coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan by dishing out a bit of advice based on my experience of redeploying, getting out of the Army, finding a job and starting school.

Sensory Overload

-You'll notice right way that your senses are in overdrive, from hearing and vision to motor functions. As a result of keeping alert and constantly scanning, everything will be felt in high contrast.

To test this, go to a club with loud rap music where everything used to be one loud noise. This time, you will hear several individual conversations and every note in Low by Flo Rida, which in this case isn't exactly a good thing.

-Loud noises are going to happen, and at first, you're going to either A: jump or B: pretend not to react.

I opt for option B, which is useful working in a warehouse with other dudes. Any unexpected loud noise still drains the blood from my face.

This will never go away.

It will only be less frequent.

Learn to deal with this new aspect of your life.

-When you get into a car for the first time, try to be in the passenger seat.

I rode in a windowless Stryker for over a year, losing my concept of speed and distance after never going faster than 45 miles an hour.

The first time I got on a highway, it felt like I was going down a runway in a fucking space shuttle.

-You're likely well aware of that rifle or pistol that you've been toting around for a year or more.

You'll be glad to get rid of it, but you might wake up in the middle of the night and feel around for a weapon that isn't there. Luckily, this will go away.

Going Back

No matter your thoughts on the war and the military, you will want to go back.

You will crave the adrenaline rush of a firefight and the intertwining smell of gunpowder and rotting trash under the desert sun.

Compared to the civilian world, deployed life is resoundingly simple.

You're not concerned with car payments, traffic, American Idol or getting your hair to do that flippy thing.

In combat, you're looking to avoid your ass getting shot.

You aren't worried about how many carbs you're eating but that you're eating more than once a day. Fuck Miller Lite and Jagerbombs when you're dropping iodine tablets in Iraqi water to make it safe to drink. It's wake, eat, patrol, kill, sleep. Over and over.

When you get the bill for textbooks in your first semester and add it to your other costs, you'll realize how simple life used to be.

And you'll crave it again.

Everyone does whether they admit it or not.

We were there not only making history, but writing it.

Back in the states, you're another face in the crowd, paying taxes like every other sucker. Take away our guns and we're nothing. Not a damn thing.

On the flipside, life is sweeter coming out the other side.

I'm still amazed to drive down the road, pick up groceries and arrive back safely.

The satisfaction of a completed deployment will not lift any time soon.

We have earned through blood and sweat a fresh, shrewd perspective on the world that many in our country are not afforded.

It might not be apparent yet, but a whole lifetime of experience is crammed into a deployment.

You have a different way of looking at things when you realize it was you at the other end of the sniper's scope.

Life will forever be different, for better and for worse. But you certainly will enjoy it a hell of a lot more.

Hundreds Of Indiana National Guard Troops Exposed To Deadly Chemical In Iraq: KBR Told Their Safety Inspector To Keep Problem Secret Until Soldiers Started Getting Sick; “I Was Kind Of Shocked That Fellow Safety And Medical Professionals Were Telling Outrageous And Blatant Lies”

“I guess the thing you think about ... is that you never know if there's something in you that's going to kill you an another year, or 10, or 15,” he said. “I hate to say it, but there's a lot more honor in dying from a bullet than in dying from cancer years later.”

September 14. 2008 By ADAM JACKSON, South Bend Tribune Staff Writer [Excerpts]

Qarmat Ali may not be hell on Earth, but in 2003, it seemed pretty close.

Indiana National Guard soldiers assigned to guard a water treatment plant in the southeastern Iraq city were greeted with looters, angry residents, blistering heat and wind-driven dust. For most who have been there, it is a place to forget.

But for hundreds of soldiers and workers who spent time there, forgetting Qarmat Ali may prove impossible -- as impossible as forgetting the poisonous time bomb it may have left in their bodies.

The Indiana National Guard notified more than 400 soldiers who served at the plant shortly after the beginning of the war that they may have been exposed to a deadly carcinogen.

Some believe that a civilian contracting agency in charge of the site knew of the contamination and did little to protect those working there.

Dave Rancourt smiles a little as he stands in the kitchen of his tidy South Bend home, talking about his service at Qarmat Ali in 2003. At the time, the married father of two small boys was part of Charlie Company, 1-152 Infantry Battalion of the Indiana National Guard.

Now, he's a worried veteran.

"I guess the thing you think about ... is that you never know if there's something in you that's going to kill you an another year, or 10, or 15," he said. "I hate to say it, but there's a lot more honor in dying from a bullet than in dying from cancer years later."

Rancourt, who now works in the security business, was based at Kuwait International Airport during that period of his deployment and estimates that he traveled to Qarmat Ali at least a dozen or so times, driving in a convoy the 100 kilometers or so from his billet in Kuwait to the water plant. At the plant, which pumps water to nearby oil fields, he and his fellow soldiers were detailed to provide security for workers from the contractor Kellogg, Brown and Root, the Texas-based company hired by the United States to rebuild the facility.

"At that time, that part of the country was pretty quiet," Rancourt said. "Our biggest worries were probably the looters, and the riots by some of the locals. They were kind of upset that KBR had brought in (workers from other countries), while they didn't have jobs."

In snapshots Rancourt brought home from Iraq, the crumbling buildings and flat desert of Qarmat Ali are a sobering background to images of the young soldier and his comrades inspecting a Land Rover used by British troops in the area, or clambering over the blackened carcass of a burned-out Iraqi T-54 tank.

But what can't be seen in the photos is the ever-present orange dust that Rancourt said coated the ground in some areas of the water plant compound, which blew in the wind and settled thickly on flat surfaces within the compound.

That dust, which investigators identified as sodium dichromate, looks a little like the stuff in an orange Pixy Stix.

But its effects on the human body are far less innocuous.

The chemical compound may be familiar to some by the name of one of its components: hexavalent chromium. That is the moniker used in "Erin Brockovich," a film adapted from a true story about a utility company's dumping of the chemical.

Accounts differ as to how the chemical came to be liberally sprinkled around the compound.

According to testimony at a Senate Democratic Policy Committee hearing on the matter in June, townspeople told investigators that Baath Party saboteurs took bags of the powder -- used as a corrosion inhibitor in water pipes at the plant -- and dumped them around the site during the 2003 invasion in hopes of contaminating the coalition soldiers they knew were coming.

Or the culprit could simply have been the frantic greed of looters, who swept many areas of the country in a wave of lawlessness after Saddam's government collapsed, grabbing whatever they could find in government installations.

However it ended up there, the dust was readily apparent to the men who worked at the compound.

"It was just a red dust on the ground," said Ben McIntyre, a Bourbon resident and Indiana National Guard soldier who pulled duty at the plant site several times during his 2003 deployment.

"You could see it pretty easily."

And so, apparently, could the KBR employee who was responsible for worker safety.

Edward Blacke, who was assigned to work at Qarmat Ali as a health, safety and environmental coordinator for KBR, testified in a June 20 hearing before a Senate Committee that he tried to warn his supervisors about the contamination -- and claims he was rebuffed.

"When I arrived at the plant, as is required of our profession, I made a risk assessment of the facility and the surroundings where I noticed during that assessment a reddish, orange material spread on the ground, spilling from damaged bags in the injection building, a storage building, and then in the drainage ditches," Blacke testified.

"I asked for information on this material from my manager ... in Kuwait, and was sternly advised that it was a non-issue."

Blacke testified that when he further researched the material and discovered what it was, he was concerned, as winds at the facility often blew the powdery dust into the air where it could be easily inhaled.

He attempted to bring the matter to the attention of supervisors, only to be rebuffed.

And when workers -- and soldiers -- at the facility began showing signs of exposure, they were told that the powder was, at worst, a mild irritant.

“I was kind of shocked that fellow safety and medical professionals were telling outrageous and blatant lies to the workers,” Blacke said at the hearing.

According to the Material Safety Data Sheet on sodium dichromate, the material is a potent carcinogen, can cause damage to the respiratory and endocrine systems and can even eat a hole through the septum of people who inadvertently breathe it.

Eventually, people at the site began reporting symptoms: nosebleeds, shortness of breath, coughing.

Not everyone fell ill, but there was enough of a problem that KBR eventually admitted that the site had a contamination issue and moved to clean it up.

KBR did not, however, admit any wrongdoing.

To date, no official action has been taken as a result of the Senate committee hearing.

Rancourt said he doesn't know whether KBR knowingly exposed him and other troops and workers to the chemical, but he does have his doubts about its efforts.

“From what I could tell, they just laid down a lot of asphalt to cover it up,” he said. “Not sure if that did any good or not.”

According to Indiana National Guard estimates, close to 600 Hoosier soldiers spent at least some time working at Qarmat Ali. Lt. Col. Jeffrey Shafer said more than 100 of those soldiers spent a significant amount of time there.

Shafer said the Indiana National Guard has been conducting a campaign to notify all of the soldiers via mail. But some of the soldiers left no contact information. It is those soldiers he hopes will read media accounts and then contact the Guard's Health Hotline at (800) 237-2850, ext. 3128.

“There are still some soldiers we have not been able to reach,” Shafer said. “That has been our biggest problem.”

Neither McIntyre or Rancourt knows whether he breathed enough of the stuff to cause any problems, and they might not know for years.

“Since I came back, I've had some more sinus problems than I used to get, or at least it seems that way,” McIntyre said. “But who knows if (Qarmat Ali) caused it or not?”

Rancourt echoed that sentiment, noting that he suffers from an occasional cough and, every once in a while, a nosebleed.

Naturally, he hopes it is just a coincidence: “I just don’t want it to come back on me in the future, you know?”

“Failure Of The Pentagon’s Program To Stop Sexual Assault In The Military” Condemned

Sep 12, 2008 By Gina Cavallaro, Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

The military’s chief sexual-assault prevention officer was grilled Wednesday by impatient members of a House subcommittee seeking answers on the failure of the Pentagon’s program to stop sexual assault in the military.

A Government Accountability Office report found that the incidence of sexual assault may be exceeding the rates being reported, suggesting that the Pentagon and Coast Guard have only “limited visibility” over the incidence of such occurrences.

The report also cited other challenges such as limited policy implementation guidance and resources, inconsistent training effectiveness, limited access to mental health services and confusion among affected service members over how to report sexual assault.

At the 14 installations GAO visited, investigators found 52 percent of service members who had been sexually assaulted over the preceding 12 months had not reported the assaults.

Dr. Kaye Whitley, who has been director of the Defense Department’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office since it was created in 2004, was commended for her work and her knowledge on the subject of sexual assault.

But the 90-minute hearing before the Oversight and Government Reform Committee’s national security and foreign affairs panel grew increasingly tense as Whitley attempted to explain delays in the implementation of an inter-service tracking system, the continued growth of sexual assaults, and her failure to ensure that a Defense Task Force created to evaluate the program’s effectiveness was holding regular meetings or even doing its job.

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

Katherine's Birthday/IVAW Benefit



Friday, September 26, 2008 at 9:00pm
Sutra Lounge: 16 First Avenue @ 1st St. (NYC)

Special DJ: Afrika Bambaataa



\$20 (suggested) donation
to Iraq Veterans Against the War.
All proceeds go to IVAW!

Note:

The venue is waiving the cover charge for our guests.

*Just tell them at the door that you're there for the IVAW benefit and they will
direct you to our table.*

Please RSVP: kgorell@gmail.com

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

09/13/08 Reuters & 14 September 2008 AFP & Reuters & By VANESSA GERA,
Associated Press Writer

A car bomb killed two people, including a policeman, and wounded two others when it exploded in central Baghdad's Karrada district, police said.

Insurgents killed two policemen and wounded another in an attack on a police checkpoint on Saturday in Mosul, police said.

A bomb attached to a car carrying U.S.-backed neighbourhood guards wounded three of them in the Adhamiya district, northern Baghdad, police said.

Militants killed a guard from a U.S.-backed neighbourhood patrol at their checkpoint in the town of Iskandariya, 40 km (25 miles) south of Baghdad, on Saturday, police said.

BAQUBA, Iraq - Three successive roadside bombings on Sunday killed five policemen and wounded five more in Diyala province, local police and medic told AFP. The bombs in the town of Jalawla, 100 kilometres (62 miles) east of provincial capital Baquba exploded as a police patrol was passing, police Major Mohammed al-Karkhi said.

On Saturday night, a bomb killed the leader of a U.S.-backed armed group in the al-Furat neighborhood of western Baghdad. The bomb exploded in the car of Fuad Ali Hussein, killing him as well as his deputy and two bodyguards.

A roadside bomb wounded four policemen when it hit their patrol in the district of Doura in southern Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded the head of the Sulaiman Pek district and two of his guards in Sulaiman Pek, 160 km (100 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Ron Paul: Anti-War, Anti-Veteran Opportunist Hypocrite: “Paul, For The Record, Voted Against Expanding Education Benefits For Returning GIs And Against Providing Housing Assistance To Very Low-Income Veterans”

September 11, 2008 By Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Military Project

Iraq Veteran Against the War member Adam Kokesh, who briefly interrupted McCain's acceptance speech, is a big supporter of the anti-war Republican Ron Paul. Paul participated in the Republican debates and ripped his fellow Republicans for supporting wars and expanding the American empire.

He also called for more deregulation of just about everything - the airline industry, health care, and even went so far as to oppose mandatory immunization for children.

Sadly, Paul won a large amount of support from young people, progressives, and anti-war activists who were fed up with the two parties that are both pro-war, pro-corporate, and anti-civil liberties.

The fact that someone who opposes the minimum wage, has made racist remarks past and present, hates unions, opposes immigrant rights, and doesn't believe in evolution [could attract that kind of interest] says a lot about how politically weak and organizationally almost non-existent the American left is these days.

I don't know Kokesh personally, but I see his endorsement as another example of someone who was pulled to Paul's campaign for lack of anything else.

Paul, for the record, voted against expanding education benefits for returning GIs and against providing housing assistance to very low-income veterans.

As a result, Paul has earned himself a dismal 41% rating from the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

When your candidate's rating on vets issues matches Bush's IQ, you have a problem.

Not only has he voted against veterans, he's also an opportunist. In his announcement that he would not endorse McCain, he said that "the strongest message can be sent by rejecting the two party system. This can be accomplished by voting for one of the non-establishment, principled candidates."

Funny that he calls on voters to reject the two party system, because is part of it - he's a Republican.

Then there's the fact that his congressional district gets its fair share of federal dough.

There's a word for this. It's called hypocrisy.

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

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

Bankrupt Empire: "The Iraq War Has Been Financed Entirely On Credit"

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

September 11 2008 Joseph Stiglitz, Guardian.co.uk [Excerpt]

Even the largest and richest country in the world has limited resources.

The Iraq war has been financed entirely on credit; and partly because of that, the US national debt has increased by two-thirds in just eight years.

But things keep getting worse: the deficit for 2009 alone is expected to be more than a half-trillion dollars, excluding the costs of financial bail-outs and the second stimulus package that almost all economists now say is urgently needed.

The war, and the way it has been conducted, has reduced America's room for manoeuvre, and will almost surely deepen and prolong the economic downturn.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Idiots Running Iraqi Regime Dumping 79,000 Armed Militia Members; “I Don’t Trust A Word They Said,” Said One, Afterward: Meeting In Baghdad “Highlighted Distrust Between The Two Sides”

September 12, 2008 Los Angeles Times & Arizona Daily Star

A meeting in Baghdad aimed at sowing faith between Iraq’s government and leaders of U.S.-funded paramilitary forces instead highlighted distrust between the two sides, three weeks before Iraq takes control of the armed groups.

Leaders of the so-called Sons of Iraq disputed Iraqi government plans to absorb only 20 percent of the fighters into the Iraqi military and police, and they expressed doubts that their members would be protected when the U.S. military turned over responsibility for the units to Iraqi officials.

The hand-over of the Sons of Iraq, who are mainly Sunni Arab, to the government is to begin Oct. 1

The leaders of the so-called Awakening Councils listened warily.

“I don’t trust a word they said,” said one, afterward.

The Iraqi government is due to take control of the 99,000-strong militias Oct. 1, absorbing 20,000 into the police and army and promising to provide jobs, schooling or vocational training for the rest.

<p>OCCUPATION ISN’T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!</p>
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OCCUPATION PALESTINE

ARAB REFUGEES, PALESTINIAN INFILTRATORS, AND WHAT I SAW, BACK WHEN ..: A SOUVENIR



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, The Military Project]

[This article is from Max Watts, who began helping GIs resisting the Vietnam War in the 1960's, and has never stopped helping soldiers opposed to Imperial wars. T]

September 08, 2008 By Max Watts

As usual, belatedly: Just noted some correspondence between Paul Reti, a to me unknown Jock Falkson and Gerard Michaud. Subject that the "Arab (they mean Palestinian) exodus from Israel (in 1948) was "virtually entirely voluntary".

I wasn't there, in 1948.

As almost all Lefties I was supporting the Israeli fight against the Brits and later the "Arabs" (whom we considered Brit colonial troops), elsewhere. Far from Palestine/Israel. In the USA, in Europe. Others have - at length - written, discussed, those years. Events. However, thanx to the US Army's notion that I should be in Korea, shooting Koreans, whom I did not know (and my personal feeling against shooting people I don't know, reinforced by the bad Korean habit of shooting back) - a bit later there I was one afternoon riding my (then small) motorbike "Little Putt" between Meggiddo and Afula, along the foot of the Harei Ephraim. In - now somewhat Arab/Palestinian-cleansed - Israel.

And I can well remember that particular day.

It was early 1951. As most (almost all) good Lefties, I was "for Israel".

I chugged along - Noted an army/police jeep some distance in front of me. There was no other visible traffic. Suddenly the jeep veered off, to the right, into the empty fields.

Me, a journo, wondering what was up, followed.

Some distance into the field the jeep stopped, the (I now saw) four young men jumped out, started beating someone in the field. Aha ! A story !

I bumped thru the field, approached, and pulled out my camera (still, 35 mils).

The four young men in uniform, I now noted they were military Police (Israeli, of course; the Brits had left 2 years before) were beating up - what - on inspection - turned out to be an old lady. .

On the ground, all around, were, I think, carrots. Which the old (maybe 40-50 year old) woman, she could not, in that situation, have been a lady, had been holding in her voluminous, somewhat soiled, skirt.

We were not, as I had been - in a somewhat similar situation a year before, in Laurel, Mississippi. There I had been muchly scared, the 4 cops there had their pistols out, pointed at me. In Laurel I had actually been quite relieved when the jailhouse doors closed on me. Unshot. (Another story).

But this was, after all, Israel. These cops were - it turned out - Iraqi Jews.

I asked what was up?

In our halting languages (their English, my Hebrew, was - or is it were ? - limited - but it turned out that at least one of these Iraqi (Jews, obviously) spoke some French, so do I) anyway, they, holding the old woman, (they'd stopped beating when they saw my camera) said: MISTANENIM! Infiltrator !

I was puzzled: riding my motorbike in the region (between Ramat Hashofet, Afula, Haifa, Meggiddo) - sometimes at nite, I had been warned that I might be shot (at, or dead) by mistanenim, infiltrators. (I never was, only later, far to the South, between Ein Hussub and Eilat, but that is another story).

The old woman/lady didn't fit that bill. As far as I could make out, she had no gun. Only some carrots.

The four MP's, not too happy at my clicking away, were bundling the old lady into the back of their jeep. The carrots remained in the mud. By now pretty well trampled.

I needed to flesh out the story, details. Ill at ease, the cops (I guess Jewish Pigs!) explained that this was a standard operation. SOP.

The Palestinians sent their old ladies across the border (a few kilometers to the South of the Afula Haifa Road) to infiltrate. Steal carrots. They didn't - cowards - come themselves - because the MP's would beat them.

I said they seemed to be beating the old lady, alright! (They said: "not really, not hard"). I saw no blood, but she did look quite unhappy.

I said: Whose carrots?

They said: this may be Meggiddo land. (A Hashomer Hatzair - Left wing) kibbutz. I did note that there had been Arab villages in the area, but I saw no property deeds.

Never did find out ... if, as some told me later, the old lady may have been stealing carrots from land "they" used to own. Who knows ?

The Jeep, with the old lady, (we'll send her back over the border, later, they told me) left. So did I.

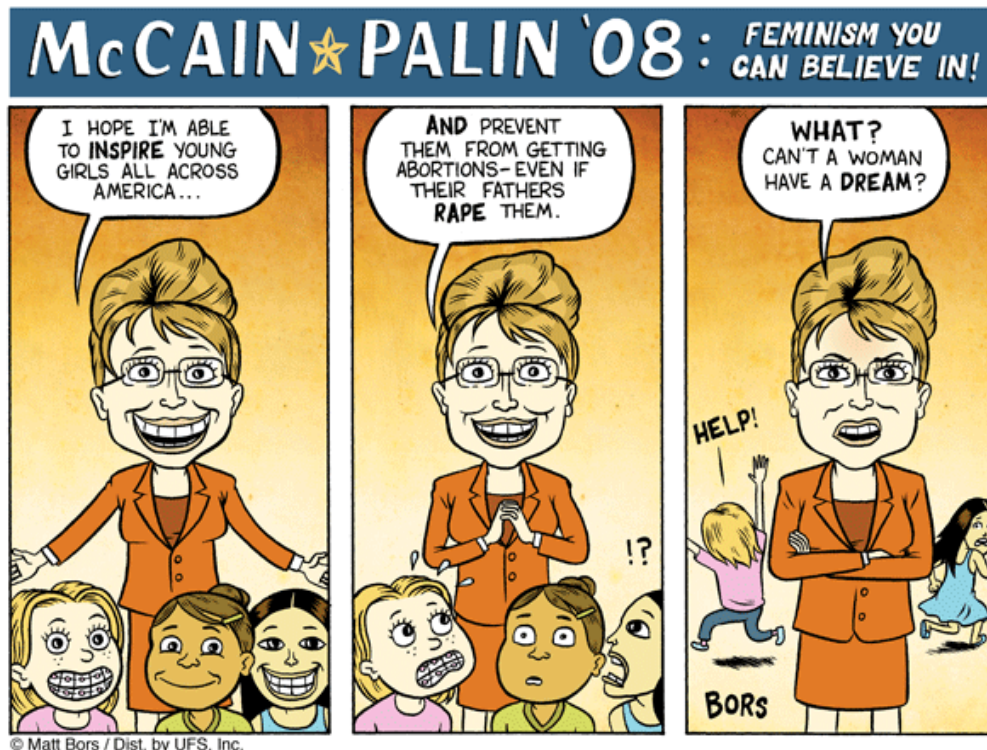
My (once quite positive) opinion about Israel, an anti-Imperialist (British Imperialism) struggler, began to deteriorate. Continued to, till five years later, when the Israeli army tried to recover the Suez Canal for British and French Imperialism.

I doubt that the old lady had left her carrots virtually voluntarily.

Personally, I don't like carrots.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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