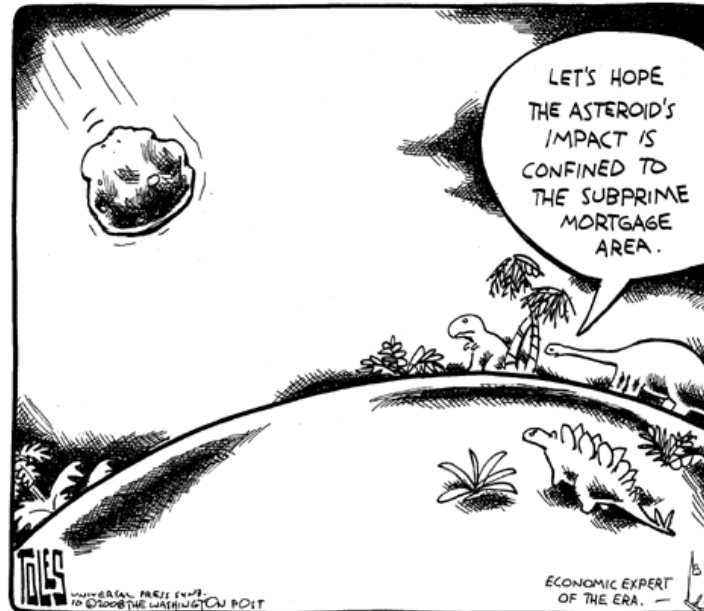


## GI SPECIAL 6J17:



**“I Would Not Follow  
Illegal Orders And Many  
In The Military Today  
Won't Either”**

**“If This Administration Or Any  
Other Thinks It Can Hold On To  
Power By Using The Military To  
Suppress Dissent Then The  
Military Should Overthrow Them”**

**“The Great Concern Is, Will He And His Fellow Soldiers - Will All Of Us - Have The Moral Courage To Stand Up And Say: ‘This Is Not Right, It Is Illegal, And It Goes Against The Very Fibers Of Our Democratic Society’”**

**Comment: T**

**The letters reported below refer to an article published in Army Times. So the letters will make sense, the article is first reprinted from GI Special 6123: 1<sup>st</sup> Brig. 3<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Div.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Brig. 3<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Div.**

**“It Makes Me Feel Good As An American To Know That My Country Has Dedicated A Force To Come In And Help The People At Home”**

**Looks like this Brigade is key.**

**We should all get to know them better.**

**T**

Sep 24, 2008 Army Times

Washington – The 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division’s 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team has spent 35 of the last 60 months in Iraq patrolling in full battle rattle, helping restore essential services and escorting supply convoys.

Now they’re training for the same mission — with a twist — at home.

**Beginning Oct. 1 for 12 months, the 1<sup>st</sup> BCT will be under the day-to-day control of U.S. Army North, the Army service component of Northern Command, as an on-call federal response force for natural or manmade emergencies and disasters, including terrorist attacks.**

It is not the first time an active-duty unit has been tapped to help at home. In August 2005, for example, when Hurricane Katrina unleashed hell in Mississippi and Louisiana, several active-duty units were pulled from various posts and mobilized to those areas.

**But this new mission marks the first time an active unit has been given a dedicated assignment to NorthCom, a joint command established in 2002 to provide command and control for federal homeland defense efforts and coordinate defense support of civil authorities.**

After 1<sup>st</sup> BCT finishes its dwell-time mission, expectations are that another, as yet unnamed, active-duty brigade will take over and that the mission will be a permanent one.

“Right now, the response force requirement will be an enduring mission. How the [Defense Department] chooses to source that and whether or not they continue to assign them to NorthCom, that could change in the future,” said Army Col. Louis Vogler, chief of NorthCom future operations. “Now, the plan is to assign a force every year.”

The command is at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colo., but the soldiers with 1<sup>st</sup> BCT, who returned in April after 15 months in Iraq, will operate out of their home post at Fort Stewart, Ga., where they’ll be able to go to school, spend time with their families and train for their new homeland mission as well as the counterinsurgency mission in the war zones.

Stop-loss will not be in effect, so soldiers will be able to leave the Army or move to new assignments during the mission, and the operational tempo will be variable.

Don’t look for any extra time off, though. The at-home mission does not take the place of scheduled combat-zone deployments and will take place during the so-called dwell time a unit gets to reset and regenerate after a deployment.

The 1<sup>st</sup> of the 3<sup>rd</sup> is still scheduled to deploy to either Iraq or Afghanistan in early 2010, which means the soldiers will have been home a minimum of 20 months by the time they ship out.

In the meantime, they’ll learn new skills, use some of the ones they acquired in the war zone and more than likely will not be shot at while doing any of it.

**They may be called upon to help with civil unrest and crowd control or to deal with potentially horrific scenarios such as massive poisoning and chaos in response to a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosive, or CBRNE, attack.**

**[No doubt their mission would also be quite clear should traitors seek to use the power of government against us.]**

Training for homeland scenarios has already begun at Fort Stewart and includes specialty tasks such as knowing how to use the “jaws of life” to extract a person from a mangled vehicle; extra medical training for a CBRNE incident; and working with U.S. Forestry Service experts on how to go in with chainsaws and cut and clear trees to clear a road or area.

**The 1<sup>st</sup> BCT’s soldiers also will learn how to use “the first ever nonlethal package that the Army has fielded,” 1<sup>st</sup> BCT commander Col. Roger Cloutier said, referring**

**to crowd and traffic control equipment and nonlethal weapons designed to subdue unruly or dangerous individuals without killing them. [Like members of Congress.]**

“It’s a new modular package of nonlethal capabilities that they’re fielding. They’ve been using pieces of it in Iraq, but this is the first time that these modules were consolidated and this package fielded, and because of this mission we’re undertaking we were the first to get it.”

The package includes equipment to stand up a hasty road block; spike strips for slowing, stopping or controlling traffic; shields and batons; and, beanbag bullets.

“I was the first guy in the brigade to get Tasered,” said Cloutier, describing the experience as “your worst muscle cramp ever — times 10 throughout your whole body. “I’m not a small guy, I weigh 230 pounds ... it put me on my knees in seconds.”

The brigade will not change its name, but the force will be known for the next year as a CBRNE Consequence Management Response Force, or CCMRF (pronounced “sea-smurf”).

“I can’t think of a more noble mission than this,” said Cloutier, who took command in July.

**“We’ve been all over the world during this time of conflict, but now our mission is to take care of citizens at home ... and depending on where an event occurred, you’re going home to take care of your home town, your loved ones.”**

**“If we go in, we’re going in to help American citizens on American soil, to save lives, provide critical life support, help clear debris, restore normalcy and support whatever local agencies need us to do, so it’s kind of a different role,” said Cloutier, who, as the division operations officer on the last rotation, learned of the homeland mission a few months ago while they were still in Iraq.**

Some brigade elements will be on call around the clock, during which time they’ll do their regular marksmanship, gunnery and other deployment training. That’s because the unit will continue to train and reset for the next deployment, even as it serves in its CCMRF mission.

Should personnel be needed at an earthquake in California, for example, all or part of the brigade could be scrambled there, depending on the extent of the need and the specialties involved.

The active Army’s new dwell-time mission is part of a NorthCom and DOD response package. Active-duty soldiers will be part of a force that includes elements from other military branches and dedicated National Guard Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Teams.

**A final mission rehearsal exercise is scheduled for mid-September at Fort Stewart and will be run by Joint Task Force Civil Support, a unit based out of Fort Monroe, Va., that will coordinate and evaluate the interservice event.**

In addition to 1<sup>st</sup> BCT, other Army units will take part in the two-week training exercise, including elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> Medical Brigade out of Fort Hood, Texas, and the 82<sup>nd</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade from Fort Bragg, N.C.

There also will be Air Force engineer and medical units, the Marine Corps Chemical, Biological Initial Reaction Force, a Navy weather team and members of the Defense Logistics Agency and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. One of the things Vogler said they'll be looking at is communications capabilities between the services.

"It is a concern, and we're trying to check that and one of the ways we do that is by having these sorts of exercises. Leading up to this, we are going to rehearse and set up some of the communications systems to make sure we have interoperability," he said.

**"I don't know what America's overall plan is — I just know that 24 hours a day, seven days a week, there are soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines that are standing by to come and help if they're called," Cloutier said.**

**"It makes me feel good as an American to know that my country has dedicated a force to come in and help the people at home."**

[Considering the type of people who own and control the government in Washington DC, say amen. We may need that help soon enough.]

## **[And Here Are Letters From Military Times Forums:]**

**"I Would Not Follow Illegal Orders And Many In The Military Today Won't Either"**

**"If This Administration Or Any Other Thinks It Can Hold On To Power By Using The Military To Suppress Dissent Then The Military Should Overthrow Them"**

**"The Great Concern Is, Will He And His Fellow Soldiers - Will All Of Us - Have The Moral Courage To Stand Up And Say: 'This Is Not Right, It Is Illegal, And It Goes Against The Very Fibers Of Our Democratic Society'"**

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. she writes:

You might want to dig through the comments posted at Army Times about the 1st BCT being posted for duty stateside.

NOT what I expected for readers of their paper.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Militarytimes.com/forums/**

09-24-2008 WeaponMit  
Recruit

Re: Brigade homeland tours start Oct. 1

I don't get it, the tone of this article makes this seem like a good thing.

What about laws? Posse comitatus anyone?

How about the fact that military policing citizens goes against the foundation that this country was built on.

Are we turning into the Soviet Union?

What next? Suspension of elections? Internment camps? Complete suspension of the constitution?

Are we going to buy tyranny hook line and sinker so long as it is sold to us as a "patriotic" response to fear?

\*\*\*\*\*

09-25-2008 SteveMDFP  
Platoon Daddy

Re: Brigade homeland tours start Oct. 1

This report is extremely disturbing.

The Brigade is to act inside the US? Using Tasers on people? "Crowd control"?

The contemplated role is blantly illegal, and a potential danger to the very essence of democratic rule in the US: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Posse\\_Comitatus\\_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Posse_Comitatus_Act)

The brigade, ultimately, answers only to the President.

As an example, what is to prevent an unscrupulous President from ordering all opposition members of Congress from being detained by the First Brigade as enemy combatants?

\*\*\*\*\*

09-28-2008 raceagainstatrophy  
Recruit

Re: Brigade homeland tours start Oct. 1

Yeah, this one scared the hell out of me too. I found a link on my favorite left-wing conspiracy website and followed it. I couldn't believe my eyes when it brought me to Army Times.

Very important points to remember:

**1. When I was in the Army I took an oath to the Constitution, not a party or its current leader. I worry about the politisization of our armed forces.**

**If this administration or any other thinks it can hold on to power by using the military to suppress dissent then the military should overthrow them.**

2. US soldiers should NOT be used for domestic disturbances for darn good reasons.

**I would not follow illegal orders and many in the military today won't either.**

**I can forsee soldiers killing soldiers and civilians all for a mad power grab by the rulling class.**

3. We are an armed country. Our gun rights and in the Constitution because they allow us to protect ourselves from tyranny. I am armed and will fight with all my considerable skills to protect my rights.

\*\*\*\*\*

09-29-2008 MitchellJD1969  
Recruit

Re: Brigade homeland tours start Oct. 1

You guys sound like the kooks over at the Daily Kos talking about the same thing.

\*\*\*\*\*

10-03-2008 SteveMDFP  
Platoon Daddy

Re: Brigade homeland tours start Oct. 1

"MitchellJD1969 Wrote:

"You guys sound like the kooks over at the Daily Kos talking about the same thing."

Somebody else said: "What we learn from history is that we don't learn from history."

The Reichstag fire did happen. It was a pretext for suspension of liberties and freedoms and the birth of Nazi totalitarianism in Germany.

Is something similar \*likely\* to happen in the USA? Probably not.

But paying attention to the small risks of horrific outcomes is called PRUDENCE.

It's why we have life insurance, disability insurance, homeowner's insurance. It's also why we write wills.

Shining a public spotlight on potential tools for power-hungry maniacs is like spending a few dollars to buy a life insurance policy. It's nothing at all like fashioning a tinfoil hat.

Conventional wisdom is frequently wrong. When the conventional wisdom is comfortings ("oh, that can't happen here") a wise person is more skeptical of the value of that conventional wisdom, not less.

Buy some life insurance. Make out your will. Purchase flood insurance for your home. Pay down your credit cards. And write your congressman to get the Posse Comitatus Act reinstated. It's all the same kind of prudence.

\*\*\*\*\*

10-04-2008 SoldiersWife  
Recruit

Re: Brigade homeland tours start Oct. 1

My husband is apart of this "new mission" and these soldiers are not breaking any laws.

If you read this article, these soldiers are training for the worst possible sernario. When there is disaster, people tend to panic. These soldiers are preparing for that.

The tactics they are learning does not mean they will use them on US citizens. And if you read further, they are training for their next deployment as well. People waste too much time judging what the military does, Just stand behind them. OR Stand infront of them?!

\*\*\*\*\*

10-07-2008 Doc1/69  
Recruit

Quote:

*Originally Posted by SoldiersWife*

*My husband is apart of this "new mission" and these soldiers are not breaking any laws. If you read this article, these soldiers are training for the worst possible sernario. When there is disaster, people tend to panic. These soldiers are preparing for that. The tactics they are learning does not mean they will use them on US citizens. And if you read*



*further, they are training for their next deployment as well. People waste too much time judging what the military does, Just stand behind them. OR Stand in front of them?!*

**SoldiersWife: I am speaking as an Iraq war vet. An infantry medic and career soldier.**

No one could possibly support the troops more than I have and do.

I appreciate the position you are in, considering that your husband is a member of this unit, but what concerns me is you automatically assume that any of these comments were an attack on your husband or the soldiers in the 1st BCT.

The reality couldn't be further from that. My concern and the concern of many others out there is that from the looks of this, the President and/or DOD are committing an illegal act.

We already have a force structure in place to deal with natural and man made disasters: the National Guard and we already have a force structure in place to legally deal with civil unrest: the police.

This nation was founded at a time where the ruling executive used troops based in the States to police, coerce, and terrorize the people and politicians into submission.

There are specific sections and amendments to the Constitution that ban exactly what is happening for exactly that reason. It is a slippery slope my friend. And one, that once "slid-down," requires great work and blood to correct.

Every uniformed service member takes an oath to the Constitution first, and the President second to defend this country, its citizens, and perhaps most importantly its ideals.

What you husband is doing, as with all the soldiers in the 1st BCT, is commendable from a service standpoint and he is obviously following orders with honor and integrity I'm sure.

**The great concern is, will he and his fellow soldiers - will all of us - have the moral courage to stand up and say: "This is not right, it is illegal, and it goes against the very fibers of our democratic society."**

In all seriousness, please go read the Constitution (every word), all amendments (including the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence.

If you still feel that the comments on this board are out of line, then I really don't know what to tell you.

God Bless America and Support the Troops

HOOAH!

\*\*\*\*\*

10-09-2008 sonsofliberty  
Recruit

Quote:

*Originally Posted by SoldiersWife*

*My husband is apart of this "new mission" and these soldiers are not breaking any laws. If you read this article, these soldiers are training for the worst possible sernario. When there is disaster, people tend to panic. These soldiers are preparing for that. The tactics they are learning does not mean they will use them on US citizens. And if you read further, they are training for their next deployment as well. People waste too much time judging what the military does, Just stand behind them. OR Stand infront of them?!*

Wake up & smell the coffee! You people aren't even smart enough to realize what's at stake here. BUT before you pass judgement on me & say that i don't know what's going on or that I don't have a clue, you better read this first.

**I spent 15 yrs as an PSYOPS officer.**

**I worked on plans & operations that DO involve the existence of Martial law in America. We also conducted studies to determine whether or not American Soldiers could be counted on to shoot (if necessary) their fellow Americans!**

Look out America, theirs a reason for Guantanamo, secret tribunals, Rapid Response, etc. etc.

**MORE:**

## **Q & A:**

**“I Asked A Woman I Am Working With To Ask Her Husband Who Is In The Navy If They Would Go Against The American People”**

**Q:**

**From: Johanna Pettit  
To: GI Special  
Sent: October 15, 2008**

**I asked a woman I am working with to ask her husband who is in the navy if they would go against the American People.**

**I haven't seen her yet am waiting for an answer.**

I hope the answer is no.

**A:**

**From:** Johanna Pettit  
**To:** GI Special  
**Sent:** October 16, 2008  
**Subject:** The answer

I got the answer today.

She said, she asked him what would you do if you were ordered to go against the American People who were protesting.

He said, I would go to jail, lose my pay and wouldn't be able to see my family.

But, I think I wouldn't do it.

I would walk away.

I think so too.

**Troops Invited:**

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters 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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE  
MILITARY?**

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 wars, 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**

# **U.S. Army Spc. Christopher A. Bartkiewicz Is Honored As His Body Is Brought Home From Iraq**

Oct 09, 2008 By BRENDA ROTHERT, Journal Star

CANTON — A fallen Fulton County soldier was brought home Thursday by his family to an emotional ceremony at Canton's Jones Park.

U.S. Army Spc. Christopher A. Bartkiewicz, 25, of Dunfermline was killed Sept. 30 in Iraq when insurgents using small arms fire attacked his patrol.

No words were spoken at the ceremony, which bridged generations as both young and old came to honor Bartkiewicz.

Stephen Wagner, 90, of Canton is an Air Force veteran and member of American Legion Post 16. He came to the ceremony with fellow American Legion members, who all said it's important to honor Bartkiewicz' sacrifice. "He served our country - gave his life for our country," said Ray Studer, 78, of Canton.

"We were all fortunate to return," said Pete Mosher, 57, of Cuba. "The family needs to know people out here really care."

Amber Herkless, 23, of Canton came to the ceremony with friends to support Emily Bartkiewicz, Christopher's wife.

"We worked with her at Wal-Mart," Herkless said. "(Christopher) was always in the store. On her lunch breaks, he would come in with the girls so she could see them."

Christopher and Emily's two daughters, McKayla, 6, and Morgan, 2, watched the ceremony with their family.

Dozens of American flags waved in Jones Park as the crowd waited for Bartkiewicz' family to arrive. The white hearse carrying his body was led to the park by Patriot Guard Riders, who flew large American flags from the backs of their motorcycles.

After the family stepped out of a white limousine, the 16 members of the Canton High School Madrigals sang "The National Anthem," "America the Beautiful" and "The Lord Bless You and Keep You."

Bartkiewicz' family members wiped away tears as the students sang.

When the park filled with the sweet, melancholy sound of bagpipes, several family members wept and embraced each other. The ceremony closed with the trumpeting of "Taps."

Bartkiewicz' body was taken to Murphy-Sedgwick Memorial Home at 209 E. Chestnut St., where a visitation will be held from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday. A private family funeral will follow at Greenwood Cemetery.

Dave Greenlief, a spokesman for Bartkiewicz' family, said they were moved by the gathering.

"They were very appreciative of the outpouring of people there - many of them they didn't even know."

Canton High senior Rachel VanMiddlesworth, 17, a Madrigals member, said it was an honor to salute the Bartkiewicz family.

"You see(the war)going on, but it hits when it's so close to home. It was sad. The looks on their faces were just - they were really sad. They were devastated," she said. "It was really deep to me."

Another singer, senior Breanna Freitag, 17, said the ceremony was special to her.

"It's really important to support this soldier and his family," she said. "It's a good feeling to be part of that support group."

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**BAD IDEA:  
NO MISSION;  
POINTLESS WAR:  
ALL HOME NOW**



A U.S. soldier searches a house in Baquba in the Diyala province, 40 miles northeast of Baghdad October 14, 2008. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

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## TROOP NEWS

# **“Soldiers I Have Contact With Are Asking, ‘Why Are We There?’” “They Don’t Hold With The Ideas Of The War**

October 16, 2008 By Nick Chin, Amirah Goldberg and Eric Rehder; Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

IN SEVERAL cities across the country, antiwar activists turned out October 11 to mark the six-year anniversary of congressional vote authorizing the invasion of Iraq.

One of the largest protests was in Boston, where 1,000 people turned out in the first citywide demonstration against the war in nearly a year.

The October 11th Mobilizing Committee, a grassroots coalition of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) members, students and activists from antiwar coalitions around the city, organized the protest. The group demanded a stop to the wars and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan; money for jobs education, health care and housing; no sanctions or attacks on Iran; a stop to the racist scapegoating of Arabs and Muslims; and a stop to the assault on human rights and civil liberties.

“This event should be used for bringing new people into the movement, “ explained Carlos Harris of IVAW.

“Soldiers I have contact with are asking, ‘Why are we there?’

“They don’t hold with the ideas of the war. They’re there because they have a family to support.”

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## **Resisting Empire: A National Anti-War Speaking Tour**

**Saturday, October 25th  
7pm**

**New York University**

**19 West 4th Street, Room 101 (near Broadway),  
New York City**

**Sliding Scale Admission: \$5/10/12**

[N, R to 8th Street; B,D,F,V to Broadway Lafayette; 6 to Astor Place; A,C to West 4th Street]

**By Haymarket Books  
Co-sponsored nationally by AlterNet, Nation Books and  
Iraq Veterans Against the War**

Here and around the world, people want to see an end to the Iraq War and a change in the reckless direction of U.S. foreign policy.

U.S. aggression has inflicted a humanitarian catastrophe— from Iraq, to Afghanistan, and beyond—with millions of people killed or turned into refugees.

American troops continue to suffer and die, while schools and hospitals fall apart.

A new resistance needs to be built from the ground up.

To build it, we need to hear the stories the mainstream media refuse to tell: the stories of war resisters, unembedded journalists, and activists.

Resisting Empire starts with us.

**Speakers:**

**Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejía was the first veteran to publicly refuse to redeploy to Iraq. He is the Board Chair of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), and is the author of a memoir, Road From ar Ramadi (Haymarket Books, 2007).**

Michael Schwartz is a founding director of the Undergraduate College of Global Studies at Stony Brook University, and author of the new book, War Without End: The Iraq War in Context (Haymarket Books, 2008).

Jeremy Scahill is a correspondent for Democracy Now! and the author of the Polk-award winning New York Times bestseller Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army (Nation Books).

Laila Al-Arian is a freelance journalist and co-author, with Chris Hedges, of Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civilians (Nation Books, 2008). She has written for The Nation, USA Today, United Press International, The Huffington Post, and The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs.

The New York City stop of this tour is co-sponsored by the NYU Radical Film and Lecture Series, Iraq Veterans Against the War-NYC, AlterNet, Nation Books, Campus

Anti-War Network-NYC and Hunter College, Military Families Speak Out-NYC, Adalah-NY: The Coalition for Justice in the Middle East, Military Project, NYCoRE, International Socialist Organization and World Can't Wait

For more information or to endorse the NYC tour stop, please contact [jenroesch@gmail.com](mailto:jenroesch@gmail.com).

For more information about the national tour and a full list of speakers and tour stops, please see [www.resistingempire.org](http://www.resistingempire.org) or contact 773-583-7884.



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## **Large Pissed-Off Squirrel Drop- Attacks Iraq Vet In Park: Sgt. Says “I Never Thought A Squirrel Could Kick My Ass”**





The scratches inflicted by the squirrel are visible on Fran Garren's head. Shannon Kirshner/The State Journal-Register

Oct 14, 2008 By AMANDA REAVY, THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

Frank Garren is tough guy. The 6-foot, 4-inch former Army sergeant was awarded a Purple Heart after surviving a roadside bomb while deployed in Iraq in 2004.

He knows about combat and quick reactions.

An angry squirrel is another matter, said Garren, who reported just such a run-in recently in Washington Park.

"You might expect a mugging in the park, but not to be attacked by a tree rodent," the 34-year-old Springfield resident said Monday.

"I never thought a squirrel could kick my ass."

**He said the animal, which Garren estimated weighed 2 to 3 pounds, pounced on his head after he simulated a squirrel call to get its attention Sunday afternoon.**

Garren walked away with several scratches on his face and head, and a newfound respect for a squirrel's agility.

"I think next time I'll keep my distance," he said.

As with any wild animal, squirrel attacks are possible but not common, said Greg Largent, director of operations for Sangamon County Animal Control.

"People encounter wildlife in a variety of situations, and you know wildlife is unpredictable, so who knows what the squirrel was thinking, but for whatever reason, it behaved that way," he said.

Garren said he's not exactly sure what provoked the attack.

He and his girlfriend, Amy Stone, frequently go to Washington Park. The Sunday afternoon outing allowed Garren to work on an assignment for his biology class at Lincoln Land Community College.

"I had to look for lichens and other fungus," he said.

The couple were on the west side of the park near one of the ponds when Garren spotted an "enormous" male fox squirrel on a tree branch. Garren has hunted squirrels before, and said he's never seen one that size before.

"He was as fat as a softball," he said, adding that the squirrel appeared two feet long, head to tail.

**Garren said he made a squirrel call to get the animal's attention, thinking it would impress Stone.**

**“Whatever I said in squirrel language must have made him mad,” Garren said.**

**The squirrel latched onto Garren’s head and face with its claws before running off.**

“I was left dumbfounded,” he said, noting he only saw a flurry of fur and eyes. “It was like someone had hit me with a brick.”

The couple said Stone was “rolling on the ground laughing” until she realized Garren was bleeding.

Stone said the attack happened quickly. “I was a little freaked out, I guess, but I was also laughing,” she said.

The couple went to Memorial ExpressCARE at Koke Mill Medical Center to have Garren checked out. Garren suffered a scratch on his forehead, two on his head and two scratches on his left cheek. The scratches were not deep enough for stitches, so medical staff cleaned the wounds, gave him antibiotics and reported the incident to Animal Control, he said.

Garren said he became concerned when he was told he might have to receive a rabies shot.

“As a retired military guy, I was still pretty nervous. But I’m not going to have to have one. I was current on all of my shots.”

Though he can joke about it now, Garren said he realizes the attack could have been worse, especially if he had not been wearing sunglasses.

“The claws were very sharp, and if it had wanted to bite me, it could have done some serious damage. They crack acorns like it’s nothing,” he said.

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## **Be Aware: Pentagon On Guard Against Willy- Nillyism**

[Thanks to SSG N (ret’d) who sent this in. She writes: Its good to know our troops aren’t in Iraq for any “willy-nilly, arbitrary . . . goals.”]

17th October, 2008 Big News Network.com

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates is consulting with congressional leaders on the U.S.-Iraq status of forces agreement that will allow American troops to remain in Iraq after Dec. 31.

The United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing the U.S. military presence in Iraq runs out on that date, and U.S. and Iraqi officials must reach an agreement for

American troops to continue operations and continue to train the Iraqi security forces, Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said during a news conference on Thursday.

“We’ve talked about goals,” Morrell said. “Any withdrawal dates that are in this – and there are dates in this document – are entirely conditions-based. These are not ad hoc, willy-nilly, arbitrary timelines.

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## **Veterans Applications For Help Put In V.A. Shredders; “Thousands” Of “Unprocessed Benefits Applications” “Delay, Deny And Hope That I Die”**

[Thanks to Katherine G, The Military Project & SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: I know some vets who have been waiting years for their claim to b processed.]

10-13-2008 by Larry Scott, VAwatchdog.org & October 16, 2008 Paul Egan The Detroit News & Oct 17, 2008 By Rick Maze, Army Times & October 18, 2008 By Leo Shane III, Stars and Stripes [Excerpts]

Many veterans who have filed disability claims with the Veterans' Benefits Administration (VBA) of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) will relate horror stories of misdated, misfiled or lost documents all leading to delays in processing or an outright denial of the claim.

**The mantra for veterans dealing with the VBA has become: “Delay, Deny and Hope that I Die.”**

**It has been assumed by many veterans, their Service Officers who help file claims and attorneys who specialize in veterans' law that the VBA operates in such a way as to deliberately stall or hinder the claim process with the goal of frustrating the veteran to the point where they just forget about the claim and go away.**

**While this viewpoint has been labeled cynical by some and outright paranoid by others, new information is surfacing that shows the cynics, and even the paranoids, to be correct.**

Veterans Affairs officials have ordered a halt to all document shredding after a routine check found unprocessed benefits applications tossed into disposal piles at four regional offices.

**VAOIG [The VA's Office of Inspector General] discovered hundreds of claims, documents critical to claims and other valuable information in the shredder bins.**

**Those bins were removed from the shredder area and the documents were screened by upper management.**

On October 2, 2008, the Detroit VARO Director began a “no record mail” program.

This was meant to find all mail in the offices for which there, literally, was no record.

**Quoting from an employee directly involved in this process: “...discovered in the thousands of pieces of ‘no record mail’ we found original applications, medical evidence for veterans’ claims that had not been included in the decisions, informal claims (that likely could affect original dates of claims), and other relevant identifiable mail items.”**

**Among the records found waiting to be shredded were applications for disability compensation, education benefits, home loans and pensions for low-income veterans, officials said.**

**VFW National Commander Glen Gardner said the problem could be significant. He suggested that some claims may have been set aside for shredding by employees who did not want to complete them or were trying to hide a backlog.**

**A mid-September inspection by officials from the Office of Inspector General found “hundreds of claims, documents critical to claims and other valuable information in the shredder bins.”**

**Early this month, an internal search found thousands of pieces of mail in the Detroit VA office that had never been recorded as having been received. The mail that had never been put into the system included original claim applications and medical evidence to support veterans’ claims, Scott reported.**

**“It appears that when people get behind and overworked and you get untrained employees, they will just take documents and stuff them in a desk drawer.”**

In a conference call with veterans groups Thursday, VA officials said the department’s inspector general found five unprocessed documents waiting to be shredded in the Detroit regional office.

Three more were found in the St. Louis office, two more in Waco, Texas. Officials said more were found in a Florida regional office but could not specify how many.

Leaders at the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. called the revelation a “disgraceful management failure” and called for better enforcement of the department’s own paperwork safeguards.

**“With almost 850,000 VA claims in the backlog, the question that begs to be asked and answered is how many veterans had their disability and compensation claims disappear down a paper shredder,” VFW national commander Glen Gardner said in a statement.**

The VA would not specify what types of documents were found in the shred piles.

In a statement Secretary of Veterans Affairs James Peake acknowledged the misplaced paperwork could have affected some veterans' eligibility for the financial aid.

VA undersecretary for benefits Patrick Dunne on Thursday ordered the regional offices to suspend all document shredding until a broader investigation into the problem is completed.

Peake promised any employees found improperly disposing of documents would be held accountable and said regional directors will now have to certify that no original copies of key documents are being destroyed in their offices.

Under department rules, original copies of military discharge orders, marriage and death certificates, and other essential paperwork are returned to veterans or families after benefits processors can verify them.

Duplicate copies of those papers are destroyed after the claims are processed to protect veterans' privacy.

Rick Weidman, director of government relations for the Vietnam Veterans of America, said his group has complained to the VA for years about mishandling of documents at the regional offices.

"I wish we could say we're surprised by this, but the only real surprise is that they admitted it," he said. "We told (Dunne's) predecessors about this, but nothing has really happened.

"We can keep holding hearings and filing lawsuits, but I don't know what it's going to take to get them to obey the law."

Of 11,846 of the most common type of claims in the Detroit office, 35.4 percent had been pending for at least six months, according to a recent report posted on the Department of Veterans Affairs Web site.

That was the highest percentage of six-month-old claims of any office in the department's eastern area and the second-highest percentage of six-month-old claims at any regional office in the country, the report showed.

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

**“To Ignore The Class Element Of The Sadrist Resistance Is To Fail To Tell The Story Accurately”**

# **“We Are Waiting For The Cease-Fire To Stop So We Can Show The Iraqi Army What We Will Do To Them”**

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

October 2008 By David Enders, The Progressive [Excerpts]

ALI APPROACHES ME AT A FRIDAY prayer service in Sadr City. He wants to talk.

A U.S. missile, he says, hit his house in May and killed his two sisters and badly wounded his mother.

He is a member of the Mahdi militia and can no longer return home for fear the Iraqi army will arrest him. He is careful not to be seen talking to me, since unauthorized contact between us could get him in serious trouble with the militia. We quickly arrange to meet a few hours later at my hotel, and then he shakes my hand and walks away, disappearing again in the crowd of thousands of worshippers.

Like the bulk of the Mahdi militia, Ali has gone to ground.

He abides by the cease-fire that Muqtada al-Sadr has ordered, but he chafes at the presence of Iraqi troops, who patrol Sadr City.

“We’ve had three Saddams. The first is gone. The second wears the clothes of a cleric. The third wears sunglasses,” Ali says, referring to Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC), a rival Shiite political party, and Nouri al-Maliki, the Iraqi prime minister.

The Iraqi army has taken up positions on Schwader Street, where thousands have prayed outdoors each Friday since the U.S. military deposed Hussein. The presence of the army at Friday prayers has heavy overtones of the previous government, which forbade such gatherings entirely.

In parts of southern Iraq, the Iraqi military has shut down many of the Sadrists’ mosques and arrested hundreds.

On a recent Friday, men from Sadr’s local office linked arms to prevent young worshippers from confronting the army.

**“We are waiting for the cease-fire to stop so we can show the Iraqi army what we will do to them,” Ali says.**

**At my hotel, Ali says the militia moved its heavy weaponry well before the Iraqi army arrived.**

He puts in a video of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) he says he is waiting to use. The bombs, he explains, are set off with anything ranging from a cell phone to a modified television remote control.

He sets aside a quarter of his bus driver's salary, less than \$20 a day, to pay for the weapons.

"We displaced families that were collaborators with the Americans and we displaced families that were Sahwa," he said, referring to the Sunni militiamen who have made a marriage of convenience with the United States.

"They are collaborating with the Americans," Ali says.

In the U.S. press, Sadr is usually depicted as a firebrand or an upstart. His first two names in English are evidently "Radical Cleric."

But to understand what he and his followers are up to, it's necessary to talk with people like Ali.

And at the moment, it looks like they're just biding their time.

Sadr City, where I met Ali, is commonly referred to as a slum in the U.S. media, but by Third World standards, it is not so bad. There is some running water and electricity and most of the standing piles of sewage that were common four years ago are gone. But it is still one of the poorest neighborhoods in Baghdad, and its more than two million inhabitants are more densely packed than in most other neighborhoods.

It comprises the major base of support for Sadr. Since 2003, his militia, Jaish al Mahdi (literally, "Mahdi Army"), ruled Sadr City, and Tayyera Sadrieen, the political party that is linked to the militia, controlled almost every level of the government and provided basic services.

That was until May, when the U.S. assault forced the militia out of the neighborhoods.

The militia put up fierce resistance, but were little match for U.S. air power and armored vehicles. The Iraqi military built a three-mile-long wall across the southern portion of Sadr City and put up other walls all over the area, effectively controlling all traffic in and out. Sadr City was the last neighborhood in Baghdad to be ghettoized in this manner, and residents say that entire buildings were destroyed in order to neutralize single snipers.

Sadr himself now spends most of his time in Iran. Nonetheless, he is still arguably the most popular political figure in Iraq.

That is because, since the beginning of the occupation, he has steadfastly demanded the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

If the Iraqi government doesn't make good on that demand, Sadr will probably remain the voice of the opposition. If it does, he can say he was partially responsible for pressuring the government to make the call.

Sadr has proven himself a canny political actor who can exercise pressure on the Iraqi government from within and without. His promise in August to disband the militia entirely if the U.S. agreed to a timetable for withdrawal is an excellent example. In some ways, he can't lose.

Will he reactivate the militia?

The best answer is that if he wants to, he can. And that would make Ali happy. But for now, it appears that a full-scale armed confrontation is out of the question.

A move toward Hezbollah-style cadres, better trained and well armed, appears more likely.

ASadr spokesman, Salah al-Obaidy, arrives for a scheduled interview in a light grey dishdasha rather than his cleric's robes. Many of the group's officials are moving undercover. I had arranged to meet al-Obaidy at the Sadr office in Kadhimiya, a neighborhood that is home to a Shiite shrine and heavily guarded by Iraqi army and police.

When we arrive at the checkpoint to enter the neighborhood, the police ask where we are going. They emphatically inform us that there is no longer a Sadr office in Kadhimiya. A few minutes later, al-Obaidy calls and gives us directions to an alternate location.

Al-Obaidy explains why Sadr ordered the cease-fire, but he suggests it may not last forever.

"The Americans have started to think of reducing their troops and pulling out of Iraqi cities," he says. "They have started to change their thinking, and we have to change our thinking. We have made the decision to freeze Jaish al Mahdi, but still, as long as there are occupying troops, we have to keep some people working for the opposition, because we are afraid U.S. troops would return to Iraqi cities. This period of calm will give us some time to rediscipline them. We hope that negotiations between the Iraqi government and the American government will reach a timetable and we will not be in need of these groups."

He addresses the issue of the group's links to Iran.

"We have the right to cooperate with anyone who can help us here and there, including the Iranians. But we are not the followers of the Iranian" line, he says.

**"Our agenda is working against the occupation."**

**He is careful to point out that the Iraqi political party with the closest links to Iran is SIIC, which he also says is using the cover of law and order to disenfranchise Sadriens across the country ahead of the next round of Iraqi elections, which aren't likely to happen until early 2009.**

To ignore the class element of the Sadrist resistance is to fail to tell the story accurately.



The differences are obvious at Buratha mosque, where Jalal al-Deen al-Saghir, one of the SIIC's leaders, preaches almost every Friday.

While the Sadrieen pray in a dusty street than can burn your feet through a pair of tennis shoes, Buratha has air conditioners and a simulcast for those who cannot fit in the main prayer hall.

The Sadrieen represent Iraq's traditionally disenfranchised, while SIIC represents the country's shrunken middle class and leaders who had the ability to leave Iraq during Saddam's reign.

SIIC is careful not to engage the class issue. It prefers to paint Sadr's supporters as a bunch of hotheaded youths who don't know any better.

"Those who support Tayyera Sadrieen are young and they support using weapons," says Jenan al-Obaidy, a member of parliament with the SIIC.

She also dismissed the need for a timetable for American withdrawal.

"The American troops cannot leave until the army is ready," she said.

South of the wall in Sadr City, where the U.S. military continues its operations against the militia, soldiers proudly guide journalists through markets where merchants can once again operate without paying taxes levied by the militia.

"Their capabilities are severely, severely degraded," says Captain Andrew Slack of the First Armored Division. "They have talking power—threats, graffiti—but they don't have the means to contest coalition forces right now."

**One of Slack's translators, a young Iraqi medical student from Sadr City, isn't so convinced the war is over.**

**He still covers his face when he works with the Americans, and one evening, out of earshot of U.S. soldiers, he approaches me with a desperate plea.**

**"The Jaish al Mahdi will come back," he says.**

**"I need to find a safer job. Can you help me?"**

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## Resistance Action

October 18, 2008 BBC & Associated Press & Reuters & AFP

On Saturday, Iraqi officials said the leader of a U.S.-funded group was killed in a drive-by shooting south of Baghdad. Abdul-Hadi al-Janabi was a local leader in the Sons of Iraq group in the town of Mussayab, 60 km (40 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

The US military says five people have been killed and a pregnant woman wounded in an armed attack on the home of a US-backed militia group north of Baghdad. The US

military says the shooting occurred Saturday on the southern outskirts of Balad, the site of a major American military base. Insurgents came out of nearby palm groves and attacked the home of a local leader of the Sons of Iraq and then escaped. Sons of Iraq is the term for Sunnis who turned against al-Qaida and joined forces with the Americans.

Police said three policemen were wounded in a bomb attack targeting their patrol in the northern oil city of Kirkuk.

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

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

## **OCCUPATION PALESTINE**



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Project]

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

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

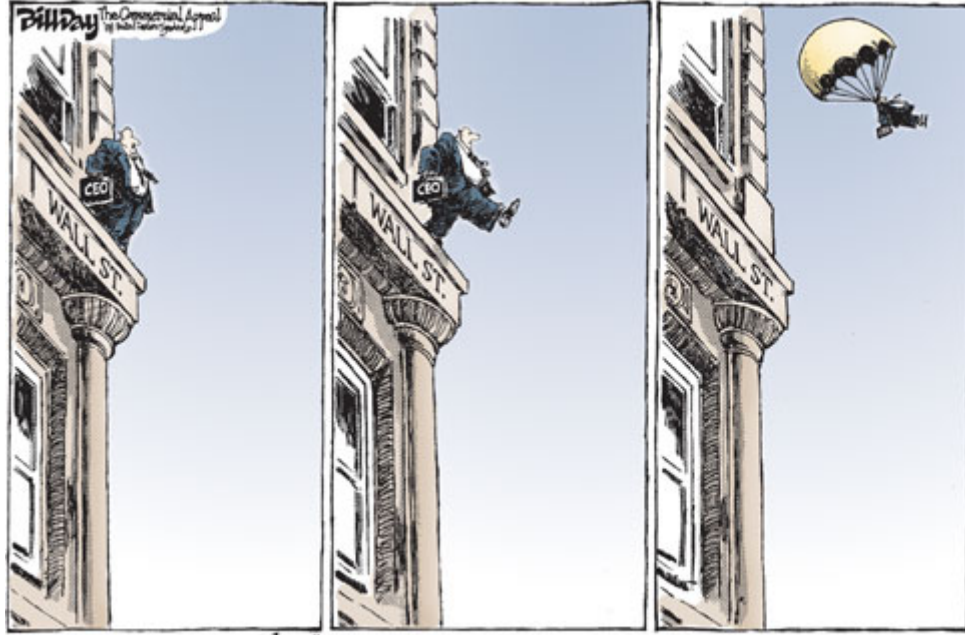


**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT  
THE BLOODSHED**

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

Got an opinion? 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 to [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

**CLASS WAR REPORTS**



The \$700 BILLION GOLDEN PARACHUTE

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## RECEIVED

### Update

From: William Bowles [UK] [website: <http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2008/index.html>]  
To: GI Special  
Sent: October 18, 2008 3:43 AM  
Subject: Update

Y'know GIS is still getting 45-50,000 visits a week!

#### **GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out**

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2008/index.html>;

[http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi\\_special/](http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/);

<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

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