

GI SPECIAL 6K6:



U.S. soldier in Beijia village Iraq, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

**“We Cannot Allow Any
President To Shift Focus
To Afghanistan”**

**“Obama Has Promised To
Continue Pouring Troops Into
That Country And To See The
War Spill Into Pakistan If He
Deems It Necessary”**

**“Regardless Of Who Gets Elected,
The Work Of Building A Better
World Rests On Our Ability To
Assert Ourselves As The True
Architects Of Our Future”**

**“This Is The Work Of The People, Not
Of The Politicians”**

**“It Has Been Going On, It Continues, It
Can Never Stop, Not For One Minute”**



November 7, 2008 By Camilo Mejia, Interviewed by Socialist Worker

Camilo Mejia was the first active-duty soldier to go public with his decision to refuse redeployment to Iraq and is the chair of the board of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

During the final presidential debate at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y., members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) requested that moderator Bob Schieffer allow them to ask each candidate a question.

The question for Sen. McCain was about veterans' benefits since, being a war veteran and former POW himself, he should have a better voting record when it comes to veterans' well-being. The question for Sen. Obama, who voted against the invasion of Iraq and called the invasion illegal at one point, focused on whether he would be willing to support soldiers who wanted to become conscientious objectors.

Not only was IVAW not able to ask the questions, but we were attacked by the Hempstead mounted police. Ten of our members, along with some civilian activists, were arrested, and two of our members were injured, one suffering a broken cheekbone.

Neither candidate mentioned either Iraq or Afghanistan during the entire 90-minute debate.

The promise of a better nation, one whose resources are dedicated to improving social conditions and where wealth is distributed to lift up the working ranks of society, rings hollow when military veterans can't ask a question without being violently repressed.

All this is to say that regardless of who gets elected, the work of building a better world remains in the hands of the people and rests on our ability to assert ourselves as the true architects of our future.

Obama is regarded as the antiwar candidate for having voted against the invasion of Iraq and for promising a progressive withdrawal of troops from that country, and both he and McCain have spoken about the success of the troop "surge" in Iraq.

But to seriously address the situation in Iraq and the eventual withdrawal from it would require Obama to address the 180,000 private contractors in Iraq, the permanent military bases, and the diplomatic and corporate complex from which the U.S. government intends to run the country. And of course, the "success" of the surge fails to recognize that more than half of the population of Iraq is either displaced, in need of emergency aid or dead.

The "global war on terror," the name given by the past and now present administrations to justify profit-driven invasions and occupations, needs a new centerpiece.

The Iraq war has become too unpopular to continue justifying the U.S. imperial agenda.

We cannot allow any president to shift focus to Afghanistan in order to continue American warmongering.

President Obama has promised to continue pouring troops into that country and to see the war spill into Pakistan if he deems it necessary.

The antiwar movement has to realize the need to continue the struggle for peace and justice, a struggle that starts at home where, in opposing costly and illegal wars of aggression, we wage battles against poverty, racism and exploitation of the working class by the ruling elite.

Only by building a true grassroots movement to combat a corporate-controlled government will we be able to create a world where peace, justice and social equality can prevail.

This is the work of the people, not of the politicians, regardless of who is president.

It has been going on, it continues, it can never stop, not for one minute.

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

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

**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

Alarm Over Growing Use Of “Sticky Bombs” In Iraq

November 7, 2008 (Reuters)

Iraqi and U.S. officials are concerned about an apparent surge in “sticky bombs,” explosives fixed to vehicles with magnets or glue, as a tactic for assassinating Iraqi officials.

The use of such small explosives by Sunni insurgents and Shi'ite militiamen is not a new phenomenon in more than five years of war in Iraq.

But U.S. and Iraqi security officials are paying renewed attention on the bombs in the last two months, especially in the capital Baghdad.

“It seems we have had an uptick, 21 sticky bombs in the last month of October (in Iraq),” U.S. military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Steven Stover said.

Personnel were being told to check their vehicles before driving and to be alert while they traveled, he said.

Bombs are usually stuck to the target's car while it is parked then is triggered by remote control.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATIONS

Lollerskates: “The SCO Doesn't Seem Too Concerned With Our Health”

November 6, 2008 By Joe; Fobbits Need Ice Cream Too; Kbrsecurity.blogspot.com/

Age: 23

Gender: Male

Industry: Military

Occupation: Ice Cream Man

Location: An Nasiriyah, Scania, BIAP, TQ, Taji, Balad, Mosul, Baqubah: Iraq

November 3, 2008

Things are getting busy around here; two of the cav troops have been pulled off the lines to train the new guys which means we have to step up and carry the extra mission load.

No big deal really, we've been doing the brunt of the work since we got here.

Our mission tempo right now is very high and has us leaving Kuwait at mid-afternoon, arriving up north around midnight, coming back down to Kuwait early morning, and going back up at mid-afternoon.

Pretty busy, and dangerous but with 50% of his squadron off the line already, the SCO doesn't seem too concerned with our health. It rains constantly and the roads are a nightmare.

We implemented an active rest plan where we rotate through the TC seat to sleep one leg of the trip; the person in the gunner's seat is in charge and the driver handles the radios.

The guys with ASVs handle any Blue Force Tracker reports or messages since the ASV gunner can reach the BFT from his seat. Joes are about 2 weeks from being off the road and the TCs are about 3 weeks off. Cleaning the 240B for the last time will be nice. After we're off the road, the only thing left to do is scrub our gear down and pack it up, then wait about 3 weeks to leave.

Speaking of leaving, our 1SG got relieved of duty.

He was turned in for forging his PT card. Turns out he hasn't taken a PT test in a very long time and pencil-whipped one for the paperwork to get promoted to sergeant major.

Whoops.

The acting 1SG came to the motor pool before our last mission to tell us.

I've never seen the man in PTs or at the gym so I guess if you don't want to get in trouble, don't cheat.

He will be a master sergeant at some desk somewhere else in Kuwait until we go home while one of the platoon sergeants assumes the 1SG position. He seemed like a nice guy but he never did anything for me; coming to his desk with my financial issues got nothing done,

I guess because he was too busy eating Baskin Robbins and falsifying documents.

Lollerskates.

**So Much For That Happy, Safe,
Secure Baghdad Bullshit:
“If Baghdad Remains Dangerous,
Bring The Business Meeting To
The Heavily Guarded Airport
Compound”**

**“The Firms Had Yet To Find Tenants
For Their Eight Floors”**

**“Anybody Who Wants To Do Business
And Stay Or Have A Meeting In Iraq, It Is
Better For Him To Come Here. Better
Than Going Out To The Red Zone”**



Waiting for guests at the Baghdad International Airport Hotel. Saad Khalaf: Los Angeles Times

On opening day, a few Japanese, Ukrainian and American guests frequented the hotel,

November 7, 2008 By Saif Rasheed, Los Angeles Times [Excerpts]

Reporting from Baghdad — The hotel receptionists from the Philippines wear gray blazers and smiles. Bellboys in gold-buttoned vests wait for luggage to carry. Plastic red dandelions and white roses decorate the shiny white linoleum corridor. The bar is stocked with beer and whiskey, and you can wander into the hair salon if you need a trim before clinching that million-dollar deal.

Inside the Baghdad International Airport compound, a few entrepreneurs are betting that boom times are around the bend. The saying goes: If you build it, they will come.

In this case, a British company and an American firm opened the Iraqi Airways International Business Center and the separate Baghdad International Airport Hotel today in hopes of luring private investors and corporations to this war-ravaged country.

“It is getting better and better everyday,” said Ammar Urfali, an Iraqi American whose company, Sigma, is one of the partners in the project.

Some would call Urfali and his colleagues gamblers in a land where ethnic and sectarian tensions reign, corruption remains entrenched and private enterprise is limited mostly to reconstruction projects funded by the U.S. and Iraqi governments. But Urfali is not fazed. Today, he cut a red ribbon, announcing grandly, “Baghdad is open for business.”

The Iraqi, who returned to Baghdad after Saddam Hussein’s fall, did not seem worried that the firms had yet to find tenants for their eight floors of office space located in a solemn-looking brown Iraqi Airways building. On opening day, a few Japanese, Ukrainian and American guests frequented the hotel, built by the U.S. Army and then furnished by Urfali and his fellow investors.

Urfali's firm has partnered with a British company, named Veritas, and the Iraqi government. Sigma and Veritas hold a three-year lease on the facilities and have invested \$10 million. The Iraqi government will receive half of their profits.

The center's pitch is this:

If Baghdad remains dangerous, bring the business meeting to the heavily guarded airport compound.

If visitors need to head into Baghdad, the center can hire a private security firm to drive them.

If someone needs to exercise, the hotel has a gym. If a person falls sick, it has a clinic. If a businessperson needs a translator, the staff can supply one.

"Anybody who wants to do business and stay or have a meeting in Iraq, it is better for him to come here.

"Better than going out to the red zone," said Veritas' regional director Jabbar Seigh, using the U.S. military's term for the world outside fortified enclaves in Baghdad.

Most members of the hotel's staff come from the Philippines, the source of many immigrant workers in the Persian Gulf region, but some Iraqis have been hired. Maiyada Wahid, 28, had been working at the airport's duty-free shop, which sells electronics and khaki clothing, popular with contractors. Wahid saw a job as a hotel receptionist as a good opportunity.

"They were looking for someone with English, computer expertise and, of course, nice looks," she said, dressed in the hotel's blazer-and-miniskirt uniform.

Even as she raved about the job, she admitted that she still did not feel safe enough to go home into the city everyday. Worried about being targeted for working with foreigners, she visits her family once a month in Baghdad.

The investors believe the payoff could be huge despite the slow start. Its manager, Maurey Bond, said he had already received calls from European and Chinese firms.

American companies were calling less.

And A Bankrupt, Dying Empire Parties On: "At New Embassy In Baghdad, A Silver Fountain" "And, On A Buffet, An Eagle

Had Been Carved Meticulously Into The Side Of An Upended Watermelon”

November 5, 2008 By SUADAD AL-SALHY and KATHERINE ZOEPPF, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

The vast, new American Embassy in Baghdad, which cost well over half a billion dollars, has not yet officially opened. But the ambassador, Ryan C. Crocker, welcomed about 250 Iraqi officials, diplomats and dignitaries for a preliminary glimpse on Wednesday morning in what was described as a party to celebrate the 2008 American presidential election.

“The size of this embassy and the number of employees who will occupy it are a sign of the American government’s commitment to democracy in Iraq,” said Hoshiyar Zebari, Iraq’s foreign minister. He did not remember the details of the original lease agreement for the land, he said, “but it was a very long lease.”

A few feet behind Mr. Zebari, a waiter served green-tinted fruit punch out of a silver fountain. A cake the size of a cafeteria table, with a State Department seal drawn in shiny black icing, anchored one end of the room. Scenes of President-elect Barack Obama’s victory speech were projected on a wall and, on a buffet, an eagle had been carved meticulously into the side of an upended watermelon.

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. soldier from Second Stryker Cavalry Regiment runs towards the site where an explosive device went off inside a house in Diyala province. REUTERS/Andrea Comas

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

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



A U.S. soldier kicks a gate during a mission in Baquba, in Diyala province, some 65 km (40 miles) northeast of Baghdad, November 4, 2008. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."



[images.google.com]

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

Declared Bill Ehrhart, a marine in Vietnam:

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS



Steve Bell November 6 2008

Two Spanish Soldiers Killed In Heart, One Wounded

Nov 9 (Reuters)

Two Spanish soldiers were killed and one was seriously wounded in an attack on Sunday in the south of Herat province in western Afghanistan, a Spanish military spokesman said.

A spokesman for the Italian military, which currently commands NATO forces in western Afghanistan, said the Spanish unit involved had been providing support to Afghan security forces in the area of Shindand, south of Herat.

Bartlett Soldier's Family: 'Daddy Is In God's Home'

10/30/2008 By Kimberly Pohl, Daily Herald

The Grieco children are still expecting Dad home soon.

For weeks, they've been hearing about taking a trip somewhere and eating Thanksgiving Dinner together during his upcoming visit.

"Now I try to tell them Daddy is in God's home," said Rashmi Grieco of her husband. "They don't understand."

On Monday, U.S. Army Sgt. Kevin Douglas Grieco died of wounds suffered in a suicide bomber attack in Baghlan, Afghanistan.

The Bartlett soldier was killed just two days after his 35th birthday and three weeks before he was to return home - his first leave since being deployed in August.

He leaves behind Rashmi and their children, Joshua, 4, and Angeli, 2.

Grieco served 13 years in the U.S. Navy and Navy Reserves, training for two weeks in Spain every year. Wanting to become an officer and see more action, he enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard in 2006. Rashmi said Grieco's model was his father, Ralph, a retired Army colonel in Winfield.

Assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery, out of Crestwood, Grieco's unit was training Afghan police. "He believed so much in his work and thought they were doing a good job," said Rashmi. "He kept telling me he would die three times as long as it's serving his country."

Grieco was an avid outdoorsman and worked as a contractor for a lawn-mowing company. In 2004, he earned a degree in recreational park administration from Aurora

University. He was an assistant scoutmaster in Boy Scouts and hoped Joshua would become an Eagle Scout like him.

A representative with the Guard said Grieco's body has already been flown back to the States.

Grieco is the first soldier from Bartlett to be killed in action since operations began in Afghanistan and Iraq. He'll surely be recognized by the Bartlett Veterans Memorial Foundation, which is currently raising money to build a memorial at Stearns and South Bartlett roads.

Rod Harms, Bartlett VFW Post 11018 commander, said he's spoken with Grieco's father about standing guard over the casket at the wake.

Local Soldier Killed

28 Oct 2008 Cleveland Fox

Three-year-old Nicholas Casey Jr., and his two-year-old brother Curtis have been waiting for their mom and dad to come home to Canton.

Their mom, Rachele Casey, is an Army private stationed in Virginia.

Their father, Sgt. Nicholas Casey, was serving in the Special Forces in Afghanistan when he was killed on Monday.

The family must now find the right time to tell the boys their dad will not be coming home.

"We're going to tell them all the positive things about Nick, Nick was a wonderful, wonderful human being, he gave his life for this country." said Sgt. Casey's mother-in-law, Audrey Wendling.

Late Tuesday, the military allowed Rachele Casey, to fly home to Canton to be with her sons.

22-year-old Nick Casey was a 2004 graduate of Timken High School, where he played football.

Relatives say he initially enlisted in the Air Force but decided he wanted to do more at a time of war and transferred to the Army, where he served in Iraq for a year and a half.

His father, Samuel Casey, spoke to Nick the night he was killed.

"He said he was safe, this is short term, he'll be home in January, he said he's got a lot of people around him to protect him." said Samuel Casey.

The U.S. Military told the family that the sergeant was killed by a suicide bomber at a police station in northern Afghanistan on Monday.

“One of them snuck in an Afghan uniform and he got close enough where they took off their helmets and their vests and then unleashed it on them.” said Samuel Casey.

Some of Sgt. Casey’s relatives were already in mourning when they learned of his death.

Just a week and half ago, his cousin, U.S. Marine Lance Corporal Stacey Ann Dryden, died of non-combat injuries in Iraq.

Sgt. Casey’s father says “Even though they knew where they were going, what they were doing and what they signed up for, it just doesn’t seem right at that age, they’re just too young to die like that.”

Arrangements to bring the remains of Nick Casey home to Stark County are pending.

“The Taliban Hold Sway In The Countryside Around The Dam And Even Charge People For Electricity”

November 8, 2008 By CARLOTTA GALL, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

KAJAKI DAM, Afghanistan — Five shipping containers marked with the Afghan flag, some of them still wrapped in plastic, now sit in the construction camp at Kajaki Dam, Afghanistan’s biggest hydroelectric project.

They hold the United States government’s largest single gift to Afghanistan of the past seven years: massive pieces of a new 200-ton hydroelectric turbine that, when installed, will double the electricity supply to the towns and districts of southern Afghanistan.

“It is slow,” said Sayed Rasoul, 52, an employee at the Kajaki power plant for 28 years and now its chief engineer. “We have a difficulty with transport.”

Mr. Rasoul is now in charge of the next stage, with an American engineer, George H. Wilder, 62, who works for the American contractors in charge of the project, the Louis Berger Group. They work and live in a small construction camp next to the dam, protected by a battalion of British and Afghan soldiers who keep the Taliban, who hold the surrounding villages, at bay. Everything the workers and soldiers need comes by helicopters that fly high over the brown, barren mountains and then spiral down over the green-blue reservoir into the camp to avoid enemy fire.

Extraordinarily, Afghan workers have kept the power station running throughout the past 30 years of war and upheaval, and even now have negotiated with the Taliban so they can travel to work from their villages.

Mr. Rasoul, dressed in faded blue dungarees and a hard hat, clipboard in hand, leads a team of 43 workers, most of whom are white-bearded older men who have been working at the dam since it was built in 1975.

The Taliban hold sway in the countryside around the dam and even charge people for electricity, so they can be persuaded to let the workers keep the power plant running, the workers said.

TROOP NEWS



"That can't be no combat man. He's lookin' fer a fight."

By Bill Mauldin, Up Front, 1945 W.W. Norton & Co., New York
[Thanks to "Comrade Tribune," Vietnam Veteran, who sent this in.]

V.A. = Violent Assholes:

**Iraq Combat Veteran Beaten Up & Arrested By VA Hospital Scum For Trying To Help A Suicidal Marine Buddy With Severe PTSD:
“I Just Needed To Talk To Someone,” Marine Says, But VA Drug Dealers Paid No Attention To His Plea:
“They Are Doping People Up Instead Of Treating Them”**



Attacked and arrested by VA filth, Aaron Hughes, Iraq Veterans Against The War, served in Iraq in April 2003 to July 2004 as an 88M truck driver. Photo: Mukti Broner/Contributor

“The cop pulled me out of the room, slammed my head into a computer and put me into a cell,” Hughes told the Chicago Journal. “A few minutes later the director of security informed me I was preventing Jason’s medical care. I said, ‘I was helping facilitating it, you guys ruined it.’” Jason Larson rushed out of the hospital. He hasn’t been back since.

November 09, 2008 By JESSICA PUPOVAC, Staff Reporter, Chicago Journal [Excerpts]

Four years removed from his time in Iraq, Marine Pvt. Jason Larson is still on the battlefield. He wears combat boots and a crew cut, addresses people as “sir” and “ma’am” and is constantly on edge.

He has flashbacks, delusions and suffers from insomnia. He gets into fights and drinks heavily. He admits to having thoughts of suicide.

Larson says he served in the Marines for eight-and-a-half years and has been homeless since one month after his return.

He struggles with severe post-traumatic stress disorder and grows uncomfortable talking about his time in the service.

“We were not nice people over there,” he says.

Larson has been treated at Veterans Administration medical centers in Monterey, Calif., and Raleigh, N.C., and has sought treatment at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago.

“All the psychiatrist was ever there to do was to give me this prescription paper and tell me to go to the pharmacy,” he said, adding that VA psychiatrists had put him on a battery of pharmaceuticals, including Geodon, Zoloft, Zyprexa, Seroquel and Lithium, but nothing helped.

“I didn’t want pills,” he said.

“I just wanted someone to hold my hand and tell me it was going to be OK.

“I know it sounds weird, but I just needed to talk to someone.”

NOTE WELL: As the following articles make clear, Pentagon studies have found the drugs the VA is dealing are useless at best, dangerous at worst, and do nothing to relieve PTSD.

Marine Larson is right: research evidence finds that doing just what he says, talking about experiences, is the only practice that offers relief for PTSD.

All the rest is stupid, dangerous, useless bullshit. And the troop-killing rats at the VA know it too. They are perfectly aware of the studies reported below, and don’t give a shit what happens to their victims.

Drug dealers never do. T

Last summer, a few months after landing in Chicago, Larson met fellow veteran Aaron Hughes, who found him a temporary place to stay and kept in close contact.

“Jason’s been suicidal and no one is helping him,” said Hughes, who served in the National Guard from 2000 to 2006 and is currently a graduate student at Northwestern University.

“The VA is only offering to put him on drugs.”

Hughes, who has met hundreds of veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years, says it is an all-too-common response.

“They are doping people up instead of treating them,” he said.

Brett Keen, an Afghanistan veteran and former Army reservist, echoed Hughes’ criticisms.

After he “hit rock bottom,” Keen said, he went to the Elgin VA clinic and was only offered a monthly, 15-minute session with an online psychiatrist.

“And all he wanted to do was give me drugs,” Keen said.

“He didn’t want to talk about anything useful, like how’s it going or are you trying to kill yourself.

“They just kept changing the dosage or adding new meds.”

Keen said that he was also offered the option of attending a weekly support group at the Hines VA just outside of Chicago, but that it was during the day and he had to work.

Some local veterans claim the level of care at Jesse Brown falls into that “less than minimally adequate” category.

Besides charges that doctors rely too much on medication and too little on therapy for mental health issues, young veterans are also reporting a failure to treat young patients with respect and patience, and a lack of much-needed services.

In September, Larson decided to seek help for alcoholism and mental illness, but he says he was told by Dr. John Mundt, a staff psychologist at Jesse Brown, that that facility did not have a detox program.

Hughes said Mundt encouraged them to find detox services elsewhere, but didn’t know where to send them.

“He started looking for places on the Internet,” Hughes said.

But none of the non-profit detox centers panned out, either, because they were already filled to capacity or because they had shut down. So, after some hesitation-and encouragement from Hughes and others-Larson agreed to check himself into the VA.

“I didn’t want to go, because I had had such negative experiences at other VAs,” Larson said.

On Sept. 15, after spending “all morning” filling out paperwork and waiting, Larson was brought into a room at the ER, with Hughes by his side, at his request.

Soon after, they say, security guards entered and asked Larson to turn over his weapon. Larson says he got nervous and wanted to leave, but he cooperated. He lifted up his shirt and gave the guards permission to search him.

The guards, they say, told Larson he could not leave, and ordered Hughes to go. Hughes, sensing Larson's unease, stood between the guards and his friend and told him he was going to stay until Jason was comfortable with that.

Hughes was forcefully removed, handcuffed and issued a violation.

"The cop pulled me out of the room, slammed my head into a computer and put me into a cell," Hughes told the Chicago Journal. "A few minutes later the director of security informed me I was preventing Jason's medical care. I said, 'I was helping facilitating it, you guys ruined it.'"

Larson rushed out of the hospital. He hasn't been back since.

Parry [Bruce Parry of the Coalition of Veterans Organizations] says he counseled more than 500 veterans last year, most of them from the War on Terror, and that while confrontations like the one Larson and Hughes describe "doesn't happen that often, it does happen every few months."

In addition, says Parry, for many the process can be daunting, if not impossible. The VA requires all veterans to prove their wounds are "service-connected," and the application for benefits is 23 pages long.

It includes obscure and personal questions and goes into detail about a veteran's experiences in the military, relationships and assets.

"A lot of young vets literally don't have the ability to be patient, to follow any kind of complicated instructions," said Parry. He attributes the problem to both the symptoms of PTSD and "the medications that most of the VA doctors put them on."

And once they do fill out the paperwork, many wait and self-medicate or deal with their problems with no assistance, while the VA weighs their claims. According to Jim Benson, VA spokesman in Washington, D.C., as of June 30, 2008 more than 52,000 veterans of current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan had pending claims for VA coverage.

Aaron Hughes initiated a writing group where veterans are encouraged to express their thoughts. The group recently published a book of poetry, *Warrior Writers*, and has since evolved into *Voices of the Vet*, a weekly writing workshop that also includes veterans' families.

Hughes says it is important to him to be there for his fellow veterans, but wishes the government was doing more to live up to their end of the bargain.

"Why do we have to have someone volunteer," he said, "when we are supposed to be getting these services from the government we served?"



Jason Larson, former Marine, returned from Iraq four years ago. "I just needed to talk to someone." Photo: Mukti Broner/Contributor



**V.A. management meet over lunch to discuss what drugs to deal today.
Photo: [Wolfstad.com]**

MORE:

From GI SPECIAL 6E15: 5.24.08:

**This Information Could Save
Your Sanity, Or Your Life:**

If Somebody Tries To Drug You Or A Buddy Or Family Member, The Fact The Information Below Appeared In Army Times Can Be A Powerful Weapon Of Self-Defense

Comment: T

Because of the extreme importance of this information to every member of the armed forces, for or against the war, it is being reprinted again from a previous GI Special.

This news report below makes clear that there is now new evidence based research about what works and what doesn't work for troops experiencing PTSD.

The credibility and importance of this research -- initiated by the Department of Veterans Affairs -- is underlined by publication of the findings in Army Times, rather than appearing on some obscure web site or other as somebody or other's opinion.

The V.A. has long practiced drugging troops with all kinds of very dangerous pills as a "treatment" for PTSD. As this article documents, that's useless. And dangerous: overdoses can kill. Benzodiazepines [Valium & Librium are well known examples] are viscosly addictive and potentially deadly drugs handed out to troops like bags of popcorn.

As the article below reports, the only effective treatment for PTSD so far is "exposure therapy; reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it."

A lot of quacks, including at V.A. facilities as well as privately, are hustling other bullshit phony treatments, ranging from moving your eyeballs around to eating herbs and weeds.

Excuse a personal note, but I've been working professionally with traumatic stress survivors for over 30 years, both military and civilian, both at VA and private facilities, and can testify that the research finding reported in this article is 100% right: the only effective treatment for PTSD so far is "reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it."

But you don't have to believe that.

Here's the report, from Army Times.

Assuming you give a shit about whether troops live or die, send it around, word for word, and be sure to mention it comes from Army Times in case some idiot thinks you sucked it out of your thumb.

Most important, if somebody in command or at the V.A. tries to drug you or a buddy or family member, the fact this information appeared in Army Times can be a powerful weapon of self-defense:

**“Research Has Not Shown Serotonin Re-Uptake Inhibitors, Such As Prozac, Zoloft Or Celexa, To Be Effective In Treating PTSD”
“Exposure Therapy -- Reliving A Traumatic Experience By Writing Or Talking About It -- Is The Only Therapy Proved Effective By Independent Research”**

April 14, 2008 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

“Problems related to getting troops adequate mental health treatment cannot be resolved unless two issues — stigma and access — are addressed,” Todd Bowers, director of government affairs for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, told the House Veterans’ Affairs subcommittee on health on April 1.

Almost 59,000 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been diagnosed with PTSD by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Army post-deployment health assessments have found that 20 percent of active-duty and 40 percent of reserve-component troops had symptoms of PTSD, and some experts say the real numbers could be much higher.

But because PTSD hasn’t been addressed until fairly recently — the first scientific paper about the disorder in veterans of the 1991 Persian Gulf War didn’t come out until five years after that war ended — VA and Pentagon officials say much needs to be done to determine good screening techniques and therapies.

“This is the first war where DoD and VA recognized the psychological impact going in,” said Army Col. Charles Hoge, chief of psychiatry and neuroscience at the Walter Reed Institute of Research.

Combat vets are not sleeping, experience startle reactions and are hyper-alert.

“All of these things that we label as symptoms are things they need in combat,” Hoge said. “No sooner are they transitioned back home than they’re right back in rotation.”

At the House hearing, Hoge said an Army assessment last summer showed that the numbers of soldiers with PTSD is going up with each deployment.

“There’s a direct connection between mental health and multiple deployments,” he said, adding that troops also need more time between deployments.

David Matcher, of the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, said a recent study found that research has not shown serotonin re-uptake inhibitors, such as Prozac, Zoloft or Celexa, to be effective in treating PTSD.

Exposure therapy — reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it — is the only therapy proved effective by independent research, he said.

Other treatments exist, but they have been tested mainly by the same people who developed them.

That’s an important point because the Defense Department and VA use several such methods, including group and drug therapy, to treat combat veterans.

MORE:

Confirmation!

**“Only One Treatment Method —
Exposure Therapy — Has Been
Proven To Help PTSD In Studies
By Objective Researchers”**

**Previous Research Finding
Confirmed By Atlanta V.A. Test
Program;**

**“81% Showing ‘Clinically Significant
Improvement,’ Which Was Still At 81%
Six Months Later”**

July 28, 2008 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times

Three new studies looking at combat stress have found group exposure therapy seems to work, that troops with traumatic brain injuries are more likely to have post-traumatic stress disorder, and that stress debriefings held after traumatic events don't appear to prevent PTSD.

The research comes as the Department of Veterans Affairs works to find the best treatment methods for combat veterans.

It follows a report by Rand Corp. that showed only one treatment method — exposure therapy — has been proven to help PTSD in studies by objective researchers.

The first study looked at a program that had been in place for four years at the Atlanta VA Medical Center. The center's Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team began researching group-based exposure treatment.

Past studies have shown group therapy to be ineffective on veterans with PTSD, but authors of this study, published in the April issue of the Journal of Traumatic Stress, said the amount of exposure therapy — 60 hours — in this group may be the key to why it works.

First, nine to 11 people get to know each other and talk about their experiences before they joined the military. Then, they spend several weeks talking about their wartime experiences.

A total of 93 Vietnam veterans, four Gulf War veterans, one Korean War veteran and two Iraq war veterans took part in the study, with 81 percent showing “clinically significant improvement,” which was still at 81 percent six months later.

And the study found something else: VA clinicians indicated to researchers that they do not use exposure therapy out of concern for possible increases in suicide ideation, hospitalizations and dropout rates, but “we found the opposite to be true,” the study's authors said.

Many patients said hearing others' traumatic experiences evoked painful recall of what had happened to them, but “none reported any negative lasting effects, and many indicated that this process helped them put their own experience into better perspective,” the study said.

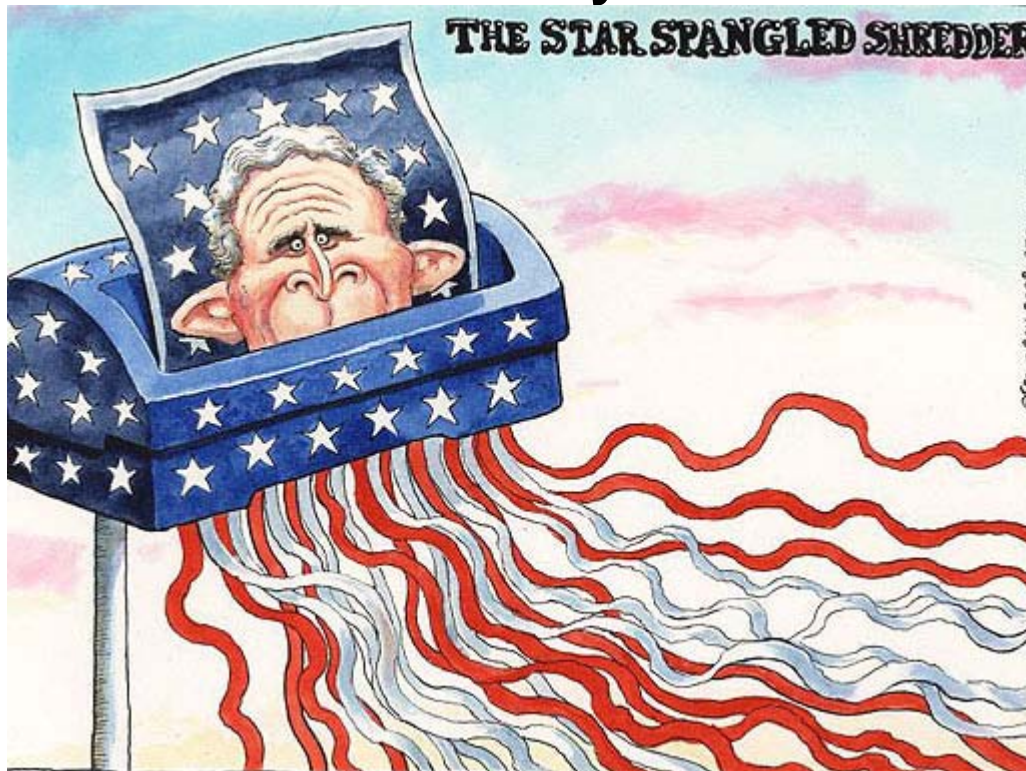
For example, one-third of the group members said they had frozen under fire. “Learning how common this was helped reduce the shame and guilt that many patients had felt for decades,” researchers said.



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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Election Day 2008



Steve Bell November 5 2008

“Obama’s ‘Let’s Not And Say We Did’ Position On Withdrawal From Iraq Is Unacceptable”

“Challenge Obama From The First Day He Takes Office, With Public Protest And Mobilization”

“Now Is Time For A Radical Break”

November 7, 2008 By Anthony Arnove, Socialist Worker [Excerpts] Anthony Arnove is the author of Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal and is also on the board of Haymarket Books.

THE FIRST thing to say is that there should be no honeymoon.

The Democrats have held a majority in the House and Senate for two years, yet have continued to fund the occupation of Iraq, to allow warrantless wiretaps, to expand the military budget.

But the Democrats can no longer use the excuse of Bush and the need to win the White House to continue to defy the widespread desire for change.

That means we need to challenge Obama from the first day he takes office, with public protest and mobilization.

Second, we have to insist that Obama’s “let’s not and say we did” position on withdrawal from Iraq is unacceptable.

Withdrawal means withdrawal, not redeployment of some troops to Afghanistan while leaving tens of thousands of troops for “counter-insurgency,” maintaining long-term bases, establishing the largest foreign Central Intelligence Agency station and U.S. embassy in Baghdad, and allowing mercenaries to remain.

We can’t let Iraq slip into the background, out of the headlines, and accept a repacking of the occupation as a solution.

Now is not a time for “bipartisanship.”

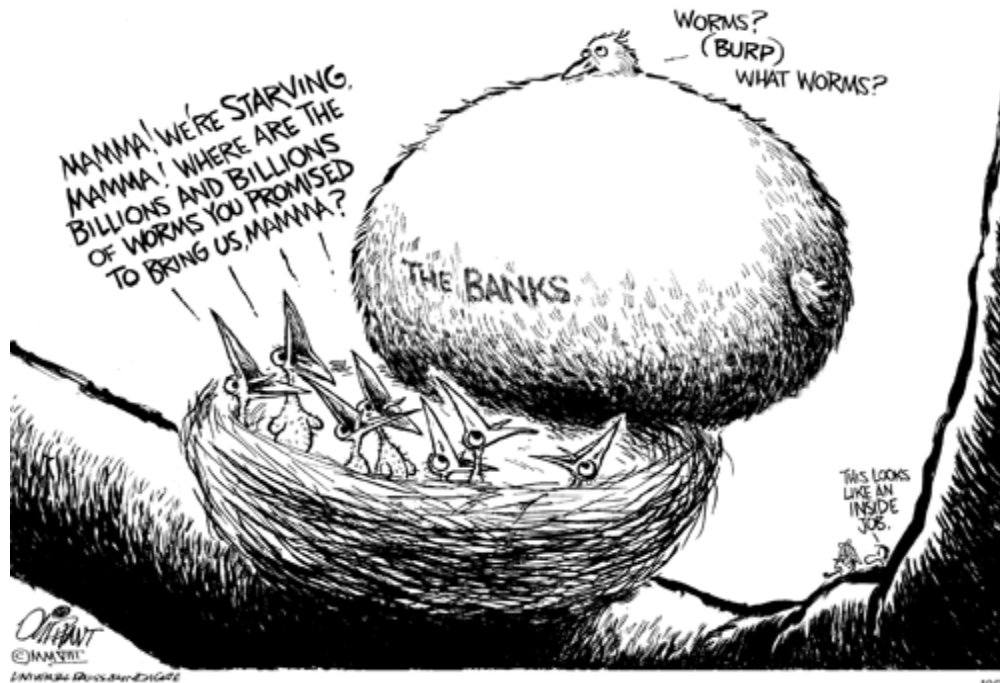
We have seen all too much of that.

Bipartisanship has led to all the problems we presently confront, with the complicity and, in many cases, full-throated support of the Democrats.

Now is time for a radical break.

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: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

CLASS WAR REPORTS



China:
“Some Cities Have Seen Work-Related Protests Rise By Anywhere From 70% To 300% This Year”

NOVEMBER 4, 2008, By SKY CANAVES, Wall St. Journal

Thousands of taxi drivers in China's fourth-largest city staged a strike Monday, an example of wildcat work action in China that's rare but on the rise.

Morning rush-hour commuters in Chongqing were stranded as most of the 9,000 cabbies in the urban areas of the southwestern Chinese city stopped work to protest grievances including fuel shortages, heavy fines for traffic violations and competition from unlicensed cabs, the state news agency Xinhua said.

Strikers occasionally turned violent, smashing the windows of taxis that continued to operate and pulling their drivers and passengers from the vehicles.

Xinhua said about 20 vehicles were smashed, including three police cars. No injuries were reported.

Chinese workers have been emboldened by labor laws that took effect this year, which have shifted bargaining power in their favor and raised their awareness of legal rights. This comes as China's growth is slowing due to global economic woes.

"There has been an increase in labor conflict broadly speaking, and that includes lawsuits as well as strikes," says Mary Gallagher, an assistant professor at the University of Michigan who studies Chinese labor issues.

She said some cities have seen work-related protests rise by anywhere from 70% to 300% this year, though violent acts such as those reported in Chongqing are unusual.

Chongqing authorities acted quickly to stem the unrest and promised to take measures to address the drivers' concerns.

Transportation officials called on cab drivers to resume work, and police were dispatched to ensure the smooth flow of traffic. By Monday afternoon about 800 drivers had returned to work.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

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

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

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

GI Special www.militaryproject.org

*This is how Bush brings the troops home,
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.*



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