

GI SPECIAL 6L7:



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

ACTION REPORTS

“My Most Enduring Fans!” [New York National Guard Outreach]

From: L.U.
To: GI Special
Sent: December 09, 2008\
Subject: New York National Guard outreach report

Outreach report –[XXXX Armory] December 6, 2008

Last Saturday, six hearty souls attended another successful Military Project outreach at the National Guard armory in [XXXX].

While the morning was one of the chilliest ones of the season yet, we successfully distributed 28 DVD copies of “Sir, No Sir!” as well as approximately 110 packets of GI literature, each including an issue of “GI Special,” a copy of the GI Bill of Rights, and an informational flier for Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW).

And of course, accompanying the packets were bags of brownies, given away even more easily that day on account of there being little kids attending a family event inside the armory.

There may have been more materials distributed more quickly because there were definitely more troops there than usual. All of [XXXX] was filled with parked cars only shortly after we arrived (after 6 am, or so).

Kudos to the three new people who showed up for outreach.

They all did a fantastic job, and seemed themselves impressed over how receptive the troops were.

I know that one of them in particular had been worried beforehand at feeling unwelcomed, but her anxieties were soon mollified as more and more troops accepted the materials we handed to them

Just before we left, we were able to speak (again, for a few of us) to one particularly jovial GI who had engaged us in conversation at the last outreach.

He first stood in the doorway of the armory, held his arms out, and shouted, "My most enduring fans!"

He then came to talk to us, saying that he had been trying to stir interest among his comrades over "Sir, No Sir!" and was disconcerted by many troops' indifference regarding the current political climate/issues.

But his endearing and enthusiastic attitude allowed me to leave the outreach on a really good note.

MORE:

**“We Were Not Sure If That Was All An
Act For The Officers, Or If Someone
Really Took It Without The Angry
Soldier Knowing”
[Outreach To Troops Long Island &
Staten Island]**

From: Elaine B
To: GI Special
Sent: 6 Dec 2008
Subject: Outreach today in Long Island & Staten Island!

Here is my report from this morning's activities:

Two of us headed out at 5:00 AM early Saturday morning, to meet up with 2 more eager outreachers at the [XXXX] Long Island Armory where there was a drill scheduled.

Me and [XXXX] of Movement for a Democratic Society (MDS), left from Staten Island to meet [XXXX] of Long Island Peace Alliance and the VFP LI chapter, and [XXXX] of LI Pax Christi, who live close to the armory.

I had the literature neatly packaged in bundles with the December Guard GI Special, IVAW pamphlet, "Bring The Guard Home" brochure, Why We Are Here statement from the MP, and wrapping it all up was the GI rights pamphlet. We also had DVD's of "Sir, No Sir!"

[XXXX] made the cookies. We got there at about 6:40 AM, and met up with the crew already there.

We immediately started handing out our stuff to inquisitive troops from the [XXXX] armory unit. They had absolutely no idea what a bunch of crazies were doing out there in the middle of nowhere, in below freezing temperatures, with goodies for them.

The reception ranged from friendly, to warm to downright rude! But we were a determined bunch of frozen humans.

We broke up in pairs, 2 at the front door, but remaining on the street since there were no sidewalks leading to the pathway, and 2 at the back gate where cars were entering to park in the lot behind the building.

There was a steady flow from the parking lot, and the soldiers took the handouts either from the car, or when they walked out of the lot to enter the front door. Some parked in the street, and the 2 in the front were able to catch them before they entered the building.

These troops were packed for a long stay, they all carried at least 2 duffle bags, and boxes, so they had to adjust their weight to grab what we were handing them. [XXXX] and I had a bet that in 20 minutes the cops would show up since it was Nassau County. However, they didn't. But shortly after 7:10 AM, some of the soldiers came out on the front steps and were about 25 feet away from [XXXX] and [XXXX] yelling "Are you against the war (making circular motions with their hands as if to be including themselves)?" We heard the yelling, and I walked back over to them.

The shouting continued, "Are you against the war?" then, "Take your stuff and get out of here!" A DVD case came flying across the grass at Karen. She wasn't fazed, and picked it up asking me if I needed it back. The soldiers went back inside.

We looked in the DVD case, but the DVD was gone! So, someone inside had pocketed the DVD, and then the case was thrown at us.

We were not sure if that was all an act for the officers, or if someone really took it without the angry soldier knowing. We had a good laugh, as the icicles were forming around our noses.

We went back to our respective spots, and then I noticed that the back door was open, so that anyone driving in could just go right inside. Oh, well. They got the word that we were there, but we were able to hand out about 25 packets of lit, and 10 DVD's. At 8 AM, the flow of soldiers stopped, and we decided to head out. It was great meeting [XXXX] and [XXXX], who liked what we did and hoped to do more of it in the future.

[XXXX] and I headed back to Staten Island, hit lots of traffic, and then headed to the SI armory just to see if there were any soldiers drilling.

Bingo! The lot was full, and soldiers walking around outside. We pulled up, tired by smiling, next to one soldier who was so new his uniform smelled like the factory. We asked him what time the drill was over, and he said "Don't know, but soon." "This is my first drill." We handed him the last DVD, and a lit packet, he refused the cookie. He smiled and said thank you.

An officer then walked up to the car and I asked him about the drill, and he said it would be over soon, it was a party today. He refused the lit, but smiled and said good morning.

Since we were both exhausted, we decided to go home and refuel, and make a trip back to the armory, not far from us. I got home to my family and never was able to get back out. But I did call the armory, and the nice soldier told me they were having a holiday party and I was invited!

Of course, I told him I was the mother of one of the military members, Sgt. [XXXX]. He didn't know him, but invited me anyway. I wanted so much to go back. [XXXX] did, however. He wandered inside to the party, found the drill schedule on the wall, and took a picture with his camera phone! He called me and told me what the schedule was, and now we can go back there for the next 6 months!

I have to admit, I am sad that I never was able to go back, but [XXXX] had it covered, and he said that by 4 PM the place emptied out. We'll catch up with the [xxxxx] mechanized division the next time!

[This is from a response to the Huntington outreach on 12/6:]

i guess it went good: inventory for the end of the year that is why you saw us with a lot of equipment, on a regular most of us just come with what we need for the drill, it was mixed reviews from what i saw, That is all i can say for now, be well.

thanks for the info packs.

**MORE ACTION REPORTS
WANTED:
FROM YOU!**

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE WELL:

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

All identifying information – locations, personnel – will be omitted from the reports.

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

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

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**Wow! Big Surprise!!
Iraq's Top Government Spokesman
Wants U.S. Troops To Stay For
Another Ten Years**

December 12, 2008 By Adam Ashton, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD — Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki last month sold the Iraqi people on a security pact with the U.S. that he called a “withdrawal agreement” to end the presence of American forces in his country by the beginning of 2012.

His top government spokesman, Ali al Dabbagh, undercut that claim this week, however, when he said in Washington that the U.S. might be needed in Iraq for another 10 years, a statement that reverberated with political leaders in Baghdad, renewing criticism of the deal.

The security agreement, which takes effect Jan. 1, doesn’t allow U.S. personnel to remain in Iraq after Dec. 31, 2011.

Iraq and the U.S. could negotiate another agreement to keep Americans in the country after that date, however.

“We do understand that the Iraqi military is not going to get built out in the three years. We do need many more years. It might be 10 years,” he said.

However, Dabbagh’s statement reopened the primary attack on the security agreement, that it would justify the U.S. presence in Iraq and lead to an extended occupation.

“This statement comes to appease the Americans,” charged Sheikh Ali Hatem, a tribal leader from Anbar province, west of Baghdad.

“We already have an agreement, and if the government thought that the three years mentioned in it were not adequate, why didn’t it fix 10 years instead? Was it simply to get the agreement approved and then to go ahead with other plans?”

The agreement’s fiercest opponents seized on Dabbagh’s statements to press their assertions that Maliki was insincere when he negotiated the deal.

“The agreement is not a withdrawal agreement,” said Ahmed al Massoudi, a member of parliament from a party tied to radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al Sadr.

“It is a mandate, because the American troops won’t withdraw from Iraq within the next three years, and all of that is misleading.”

U.S. Military Dictatorship Defies Iraqi Court: Refuses To Free Reuters Photographer:

“Iraqi Prosecutors Said They Had Asked The U.S. Military Repeatedly For The Evidence It Had Against Jassam But That U.S. Forces Had Failed To Provide Any Material”

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: Today Bush said that all torturers should be held accountable. My attitude in bold.]

Tue Dec 9, 2008 BAGHDAD (Reuters)

The U.S. military in Iraq is not obliged to obey an Iraqi court order to release a freelance photographer working for Reuters news agency and will hold him into 2009, a spokesman said on Tuesday.

The Iraqi Central Criminal Court ruled on November 30 that there was no evidence against Ibrahim Jassam Mohammed, and ordered the U.S. military to release him from Camp Cropper prison near Baghdad airport, where he has been detained since September.

“Though we appreciate the decision of the Central Criminal Court of Iraq in the Jassam case, their decision does not negate the intelligence information that currently lists him as a threat to Iraq security and stability,” said Major Neal Fisher, spokesman for the U.S. military’s detainee operations in Iraq.

“He will be processed for release in a safe and orderly manner after December 31st, in the order of his individual threat level, along with all other detainees,” Fisher said in an email to Reuters.

“Since he already has a decision from the CCCI, when it is his turn for release he will be able to out-process without having to go through the courts as other detainees in his threat classification will have to do.”

Jassam was detained in early September in a(n **illegal unwarranted**) raid on his home in Mahmudiya by U.S. and Iraqi forces. His photographic equipment was also confiscated. Jassam works for other Iraqi media, in addition to Reuters News, a Thomson Reuters company.

“I am disappointed he has not been released in accordance with the court order,” Reuters News Editor-in-Chief David Schlesinger said on Tuesday.

In the ruling issued by the Iraqi court at the end of last month, Iraqi prosecutors said they had asked the U.S. military repeatedly for the evidence it had against Jassam but that U.S. forces had failed to provide any material.

Fisher said that the U.S. military was “not bound” to provide military intelligence to Iraqi courts.

The legal situation changes next year when a security pact with the United States enters into force, replacing a U.N. mandate governing the presence of foreign troops and paving the way for U.S. forces to withdraw from Iraq by end-2011.

Under the pact, the U.S. military will no longer be able to detain people. **[Uh-huh]**

Most of the more than 15,000 detainees currently held in Iraq by U.S. forces will have to be set free as a result. Others who are subject to Iraqi arrest warrants will be transferred to Iraqi prisons. The pact gives no timeline for that process to happen but says it should be conducted in an orderly manner. **[Does this mean 15,000 were arrested without warrants?]**

Fisher declined to arrange a meeting between Reuters and the U.S. commander of the prisons operations, Brigadier General David Quantock, to discuss Jassam’s continuing detention.

“I will not ask him to make this detainee more important than the other 15,800 detainees, when he has already made his decision,” Fisher said.

Reuters and international media rights groups have criticized the U.S. military’s refusal to deal more quickly with suspicions apparently arising from the legitimate activities of reporters covering acts of violence. **[Echoes of the RNC]**

Texas Sgt. Killed In Mosul



U.S. Army Sgt. John J. Savage, 26, of Weatherford, Texas died from wounds suffered from an improvised explosive device Dec. 4, 2008 in Mosul, Iraq. Sgt. Savage was assigned to the 103rd Engineer Company, 94th Engineer Company, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. (AP Photo/Savage Family via Weatherford Democrat)

ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT; ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldier from the 4th Infantry Division during a patrol in Sadr city, Baghdad, Iraq, May 8, 2008. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Four UK Marines Killed In Helmand Province

Dec 13 2008 AFP & Belfast Telegraph

“Four Royal Marines were killed in two separate incidents in the Sangin area of Helmand province this morning,” the Ministry of Defence said in a statement on Friday.

Both the Afghan attacks were in the Sangin district, the first at about 10am.

Marines from 45 Commando were on foot patrol passing through a village when they were approached by an attacker pushing a wheelbarrow containing the bomb, which exploded.

In the explosion which occurred south of the town of Sangin, three marines - two from 45 Commando and one from Commando Logistics Regiment - were killed.

“They were taking part in a routine operation against enemy forces in the area,” the MoD said.

One marine died instantly, a second died of his wounds before he could be evacuated and the third died of his wounds in the hospital at Camp Bastion, Britain’s main base in Afghanistan.

An hour later, a Jackal armoured vehicle struck a mine in the Sangin area. One soldier from 45 Commando, who was taking part in a routine patrol, was killed as a result. He died of his wounds while being taken to Camp Bastion.

The Jackal, a new type of heavily armoured vehicle, is designed to be mine-resistant and had been tested last year by the SAS.

But this was the second fatality involving the vehicle, which was recently deployed in Afghanistan, with another marine killed on 12 November, providing evidence that the Taliban are adapting their tactics and using more potent devices.

U.S. Troops Give Resistance A Helping Hand; Kill Six Collaborator Cops, Wound 13 More As They Attack Police Station

December 11, 2008 By KIRK SEMPLE, New York Times

KABUL, Afghanistan - United States forces killed six Afghan police officers and one civilian on Wednesday during an assault on the hide-out of a suspected Taliban commander, the authorities said, in what an American military spokesman called a “tragic case of mistaken identity.”

Thirteen Afghan officers were also wounded in the episode.

“Multiple attempts to deter the engagement were unsuccessful,” the statement said.

But the deputy police chief of Qalat, said the police officers had been in a police station when they came under American fire, which destroyed the station.

Great Moments In U.S. Military History;

The Wardak Civilian Passenger Bus Massacre

December 12, 2008 Associated Press

NATO troops fired on a civilian bus Friday in central Afghanistan, killing four passengers.

Wardak Gov. Halim Fidai said at least 10 other passengers were wounded. The ISAF statement said the wounded were evacuated to military hospitals.

The bullet-ridden bus had been moved to the side of the road by the afternoon, and U.S. troops cordoned off the area, according to an AP cameraman on the scene. The windows of the blue bus were shattered.

The shootout happened in Wardak's Sayed Abad district, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) south of Kabul.

Taliban Leader Says “The Planned Increase In U.S. Troops In Afghanistan Will Give His Fighters Incentive To Kill And Maim More Americans Than Ever”

Dec 8, 2008 By Fisnik Abrashi, The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban's fugitive leader said the planned increase in U.S. troops in Afghanistan will give his fighters incentive to kill and maim more Americans than ever.

Mullah Omar, who is believed to be sheltered by fiercely conservative tribesmen on the Afghan-Pakistan border, said battles would “flare up” everywhere.

“The current armed clashes, which now number into tens, will spiral up to hundred of armed clashes. Your current casualties of hundreds will jack up to thousand casualties of dead and injured,” said the statement, which was written in broken English and posted on a Web site Sunday that has previously carried militant messages.

Omar's message, released at the start of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, or the “Feast of the Sacrifice,” also rejected any talks with the government of President Hamid Karzai while foreign troops remain in the country.

“Do not ever presume that in the presence of the occupation forces, the followers of the path of Islamic resistance will ever abandon their legitimate struggle merely on your empty and farcical pledges, material privileges and personal immunity,” Omar said.

Omar also called on his fighters to administer “Islamic punishment” on anyone who kidnaps people for ransom. He said that the protection of people’s lives is a major goal of jihad, or holy war.

In his statement, Omar also called on those Afghans who fought against Soviet troops in the 1980s to abandon their government jobs and join the ranks of the Taliban.

He also said that the idea of creating tribal militias in order to fight the Taliban and other insurgent groups in the country will not work.

“No Afghan will lower himself to such an irrational and insensitive position to fight against his own brothers for the interests of the invaders and lose his life and faith for ... the pleasure of the invaders,” the statement said.

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

Notes From A Couple Days Getting Nothing Done And Making No Difference At All: [And The Resistance Watches Every Move Up Close And Personal]

December 11, 2008 Jason Motlagh, Washington Times [Excerpts]

DILA, Afghanistan. The Chinook helicopters surged toward a hot landing zone. Another pilot scouting ahead had sighted a band of suspected Taliban fighters in the area, and gunfire was expected.

“There are at least 20 guys down there. It could be a good day,” said Lt. Chris Dewey, a plug of tobacco bulging from his lower lip.

Moments later, two Army platoons from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry charged out into the open, heaving themselves to the ground, rifles forward, as the helicopters pulled away and the dust cloud whipped up by their huge twin rotors settled back on the uncertain terrain.

Coalition forces have begun a disruptive operation in this province before registration for next year's national elections, which are scheduled to take place across the province over the next month. The goal, according to U.S. officers, is that insurgents will no longer be free to maneuver without looking over their shoulders.

"Hopefully, the enemy will be confused by our presence, worried about it enough to carry us through voter registration," said Capt. Jeff Farmer, the field commander of last week's operation. **[This is a real quote, not a satire.]**

The operation has taken them to Dila village, a patchwork of crumbling mud buildings in Afghanistan's western Paktika province. The province is a vast and sparsely populated moonscape bereft of roads, economic prospects and the rule of law [translation: "bereft" of the rule of U.S. occupation "law"].

U.S. forces were last on the ground here more than two years ago, and the district center that once housed Afghan police was abandoned over the summer.

Since arriving at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Kushamond in late September, Capt. Farmer has been busy consolidating his own foothold in a new battle space he describes as "austere."

Built by U.S. engineers shortly after the 2001 invasion, FOB Kushamond was originally meant to be a staging area for the construction of a road network to integrate the backcountry. But the project never materialized, and the base fell into disrepair.

That's changing. Charlie Company has reinforced the dirt-packed blast walls around the perimeter, constructed wooden barracks with piped heating, and is in the process of boring a well for water, which is currently air-dropped each day by Russian pilots.

During the military operation in Dila, interpreters tasked with monitoring Taliban radio traffic picked up their cryptic talk: "We are watching to see what they do next, be ready," and "Don't worry, I'll give you everything you need."

For two days, the troops of Charlie Company went door-to-door in the village. They followed out-of-date maps on which each home was numbered, checking one off only to find two new ones that were undocumented.

Encounters with the locals were mostly pleasant but vague.

In dozens of conversations, people said the Taliban passed through and took what they wanted.

How frequently they did so -- and their current whereabouts -- were impossible to pin down. Some said fighters had come on foot four months back; others just four days before.

The only consensus was that they had all gone to Pakistan for the winter, a line that company members did not buy for a second.

Late in the day, the lieutenant's platoon uncovered a small weapons cache at a home in a far corner of the village. It contained loose rounds for a PK machine gun and a Russian Dragunov sniper rifle, a rusty handgun, sleeping bag and an old Red Army belt.

Finally, the men thought, a lead that might go somewhere.

A next-door neighbor said the owner had crossed the border and that he was unsure when the man would return. A respected elder later said the man was a former mujahideen who had fought the Soviets in the 1980s. Similar stockpiles were to be found everywhere, he said.

The next morning, a shura, or meeting, was arranged in front of a mosque at the center of the village.

The chief of police from Kushamond, Abdul Ahad, stood before the crowd of about 150 people and introduced himself.

He then announced a plan to raise a village police force, though he wondered aloud why able-bodied men seemed to be scarce.

They have gone to Kandahar, Pakistan, and as far away as Iran to find work, came the answer. And anyway, people here are too busy working to survive to think about fighting.

Malik Mohammed Mazir, the local patriarch of the Alikhel tribe, could not hold back his frustration.

"You are wasting your time," he shouted.

"Millions of dollars have come into this country, and Kabul doesn't even look at us," he said.

Asked whether they would vote if registration were carried out, some of the men seated next to him replied, "What for?"

The impasse ended when food and clothing were brought out for distribution. Because supplies were limited, 30 men were selected based on seniority and need to receive sacks of rice and beans doled out by Afghan police. Elbows flew when a box of children's jackets was unpacked.

In the background, the sound of voices again crackled over handheld radios. Taliban lookouts were watching the gathering.

Company officers, who had been informed that a suicide bomber dressed in an Afghan police uniform might try to strike, scanned the surrounding rooftops and elsewhere for a sign.

Word soon got back that two men with radios standing in a field had started running when called after.

Some squad members gave chase but the weight of their body armor was too much to keep up. It was the closest brush with insurgents of the entire operation.

“We should have just shot them,” one of the soldiers later said.

The radio chatter ceased.

As Charlie Company prepared for the 13-minute flight back to FOB Kushamond, the nervous owner of a compound that had been commandeered as a temporary command post began to protest. The militants were angry with him, he said, in what seemed to be an attempt to haggle for better payment from the officers.

He was given supplies of clothing and food and was finally satisfied by a bonus stash of Army-issue Meals Ready to Eat.

Capt. Farmer quipped that he couldn't be sure they wouldn't wind up feeding the Taliban.

“The American Presence Is Loathed In Afghanistan Even Among Those Who Don't Want To See The Taliban Back In Power”

December 10, 2008, By Yvonne Ridley, Information Clearinghouse [Excerpts]

THE Taliban now holds a permanent presence of 72 per cent of Afghanistan according to the latest report by an influential think tank.

But within hours of the International Council on Security and Development (ICOS) releasing this news various politicians and ambassadors from Afghanistan, America and Britain criticised its contents.

The reality is none of these people really know what is happening on the ground in Afghanistan because it is not safe to travel and if any of them do venture out it is rarely beyond the confines of Kabul.

The British Ambassador to Afghanistan Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles commented on the report on the BBC Radio 4 Today Programme on Monday morning in a dismissive fashion, saying: “I'm afraid the methodology in the report is seriously flawed. I mean for example its map of Kabul, which I have in front of me, shows the area where I'm sitting talking to you from now, across which I drove this morning to see President Karzai, as being under heavy Taliban influence.

"It's quite the reverse: Afghans are strolling in the streets, celebrating the Eid. It counts as one incident in the province the size of Yorkshire, meaning that that province is under permanent Taliban control. It's a very thin peace of work".

The arrogance and ignorance of Sir Sherard is nothing short of breath-taking. No foreigner dare venture out for a stroll in Kabul unescorted because of kidnap fears.

I have seen the British Embassy in Kabul - it is hidden behind vast mounds of concrete bunkers, barbed wire and a heavily armed guard presence. You can't just stroll in to the embassy there like I did in March 2003.

Also speaking on the Today programme was Afghan MP Shukria Barakzai who when asked about the report said: "I'm surprised. This is not the truth. If Taliban's that much powerful so where's these Coalition forces and Afghan Government themselves? I don't think the Taliban will be that much powerful although there is a lack of security, this is the truth.

"The Taliban is still a threat for security and somehow the Coalition forces, also in some places they are threat for security, particularly for civilians, but I completely disagree with such figures which has been made."

I've also had the pleasure of meeting Shukria, an amazing woman from an extremely wealthy and privileged background - being rich is not a crime but I can tell you that Shukria will not have stepped outside of Kabul unless by air.

The American presence is loathed in Afghanistan even among those who don't want to see the Taliban back in power. This is down to many things not least of all their arrogance, refusal to acknowledge or even try and understand the culture and their habit of shooting at any motorist who tries to overtake their slow-moving convoys.

Think about it - when you have an open road ahead why should you have to sit behind a bunch of armoured personnel vehicles doing less than 20mph.

And try talking to an Afghan motorist who sits patiently in a traffic jam only to have his car scrunched and shunted to the side by a US convoy which has decided to create its own traffic free lane. he will tell you exactly what he thinks about the behavior of Uncle Sam's boys.

Then there's the endless list of US missile strikes on wedding parties which have slaughtered innocent Afghans - very rarely are these murders followed up by an apology but they continue to happen.

Norine also called for a free and open media - that would be nice but there is also documented evidence that anyone writing against the US occupation can expect a visit from the Americans. I spoke to one young such journalist who ended up being kidnapped, beaten and thrown in a cell in Bagram for 18 hours after revealing out of date US army rations were being sold on the black market in Kabul.

Guess what, the story is true as I found out trolling through the goods on sale at an open air market in Kabul. There indeed were US army rations on sale - and we have Hassan's film to prove it.

The western leaders can either choose to remain in denial and send in more troops while listening to pompous civil servants, politicians and diplomats who say only what they think their masters want to hear, or they can sit down and read the ICOS report and act upon it.

There are solutions to the Afghan crisis and removing the arrogant, ignorant US military is one way - and take out the Brits too because Afghans can no longer distinguish between the two.

TROOP NEWS

**THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



The funeral of Master Sgt. Anthony Davis, Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2008, at Arlington National Cemetery. Davis, 43, killed near Biaj in Iraq when he and six others were shot. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

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

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

“Most Iraqis Thought We Were There For Oil And Business Interests” “GI Resistance Is A Very Important Part Of Questioning Military Legitimacy”



December 02, 2008 by Mark Larabee, The Oregonian [Excerpts]

Activists from several peace groups will go before the Portland City Council today seeking support for making Portland a sanctuary for military resisters -- service members who have gone AWOL to protest the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Benjamin Lewis could soon be one of them. The 23-year-old served two tours with the Marines in Iraq and was honorably discharged in 2007. He has been notified that he will be recalled in April or May as part of the Individual Ready Reserve but has vowed not to go because he's opposed to the "open-ended war of aggression."

Because of his language skills, Lewis said, he was often employed as a translator between U.S. forces and Iraqis. "Most Iraqis thought we were there for oil and business interests, and a lot of them thought it was a Christian crusade against Muslims," he said.

Lewis said he will testify today as the only Corvallis member of Iraq Veterans Against the War. The Oregon chapter was founded last month.

"GI resistance is a very important part of questioning military legitimacy," he said.

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

All South Korean Troops Leaving Iraq



South Korean soldiers of Zaytun unit board a troop carrier in Iraqi city of Irbil December 10, 2008. The remaining 500 soldiers will withdraw to Seoul around December 20 via Kuwait. REUTERS/Lee Jung-ah/The Hankyoreh

**“I Feel Like The Army Has
Ripped Me Off”
“The Defense Department Is
Trying To Move Wounded
Veterans Off Its Financial Books
So That The Service Doesn’t Have
To Pay For Long-Term Disability
Care”**

“Congress Last Year Ordered The Pentagon To Accept Appeals From Wounded And Injured Troops”

“So Far, Officials Have Yet To Examine A Single Case”

[Here it is again. Same old story. Used up, thrown away, and the politicians couldn't care less. To repeat for the 3,531st time, there is no enemy in Iraq or Afghanistan. Their citizens and U.S. troops have a common enemy. That common enemy owns and operates the Imperial government in Washington DC for their own profit. That common enemy started these wars of conquest on a platform of lies, because they couldn't tell the truth: U.S. Imperial wars are about making money for them, and nothing else. Payback is overdue. T]

Dec. 10, 2008 (AP)

FORT BRAGG, N.C.

There was nothing dramatic about how Spc. Cristapher Zuetlau's career in the Army came to an end: he stepped in a hole. But the damage to the tank crewman's wrenched back was so brutal he can barely walk.

The Army agreed he was no longer fit to serve, but in doing so determined his disability was not severe enough to warrant long-term care by the military.

That turned his health care over to the Department of Veterans Affairs, which left him with no retirement benefits and cut off his family from government health care.

Thousands of similar stories caused veterans advocates to protest that the military was manipulating disability ratings to save money, and Congress last year ordered the Pentagon to accept appeals from wounded and injured troops.

So far, officials have yet to examine a single case.

In the Army alone, thousands of soldiers injured since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks - including many hurt in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan - are eligible for a review of the numerical disability rating issued by the Army's Physical Evaluation Board.

That rating is critical.

A number is assigned to the disability based on its severity and long-term impact. Those rated below 30 percent disabled receive a severance payment that is taxed instead of a monthly retirement check.

The veteran continues to get health care, but from the VA rather than the military.

But his family, once covered by military health insurance, no longer receives government provided health care.

A rating above 30 percent means a service member gets a monthly retirement check and his family is eligible for care at military hospitals.

"I feel like the Army has ripped me off," said Zuetlau's wife, Breana.

"When he joined the service he was a fully functioning man. When he left the service, he is like my child. I have to take care of his needs. He should have been retired instead of just being kicked out."

Investigations by the Defense Department and The Washington Post found inconsistencies in how the military assigns disability ratings.

Veterans advocates claim injuries rated below 30 percent by the Defense Department were being rated much higher by the Department of Veterans Affairs, while the government's Veterans Disability Benefits Commission has found the Army consistently assigns the lowest ratings.

The VA, for example, rated Zuetlau 100 percent disabled, and the Social Security Administration found him eligible for disability benefits for the back injury and several other ailments, including mental health issues, right shoulder tendinitis, and injuries to a wrist and knee.

The three-member Physical Disability Board of Review, created by Congress last December and managed by the Air Force, is charged with reviewing appeals from members and former members of the armed forces who received disability ratings of less than 30 percent.

Before Congress ordered this streamlined review process, veterans were subjected to a lengthy review by a military panel that rarely changed the ratings.

The board was supposed to be in place 90 days after the bill was signed, according to the Congressional mandate. But its formation wasn't formally announced until June, and officials have said they hope to take the first application for review this month.

"They move slow on those things they don't like to do," said retired Army Lt. Col. Mike Parker, an advocate for wounded soldiers.

"If the Senate or House had approved a major acquisition program in their version of the (budget) that DOD had proposed, DOD would be ready to hit the ground running when the (budget) finally passed."

Loren Dealy, a spokeswoman from the House Armed Services Committee, said lawmakers are not concerned about the delay, but are "keeping an eye on the progress of the board."

But veterans advocates said the delays reinforce a belief the Defense Department is trying to move wounded veterans off its financial books so that the service, already strapped for resources as it fights two wars, doesn't have to pay for long-term disability care.

Panel Blames White House, Not Soldiers, For Abuse [Guilty As Charged, Case Closed]

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

11.11.08 By PAMELA HESS, Associated Press Writer & Rick Maze, Staff Writer, Army Times & December 12, 2008 By Joby Warrick and Karen DeYoung, Washington Post Staff Writers

WASHINGTON – The physical and mental abuse of detainees in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, was the direct result of Bush administration detention policies and should not be dismissed as the work of bad guards or interrogators, according to a Senate report released Thursday.

A bipartisan panel of senators has concluded that former defense secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and other top Bush administration officials bear direct responsibility for the harsh treatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay, and that their decisions led to more serious abuses in Iraq and elsewhere.

The techniques included forced nudity, painful stress positions, sleep deprivation, and until 2003, waterboarding, a form of simulated drowning.

The report from the Senate Armed Services Committee, approved Nov. 21 but not released until Dec. 11, concludes that abuses — interrogation techniques that appear to have crossed the line into torture or inhumane conduct — were wrongly blamed on a few troops who were not obeying orders.

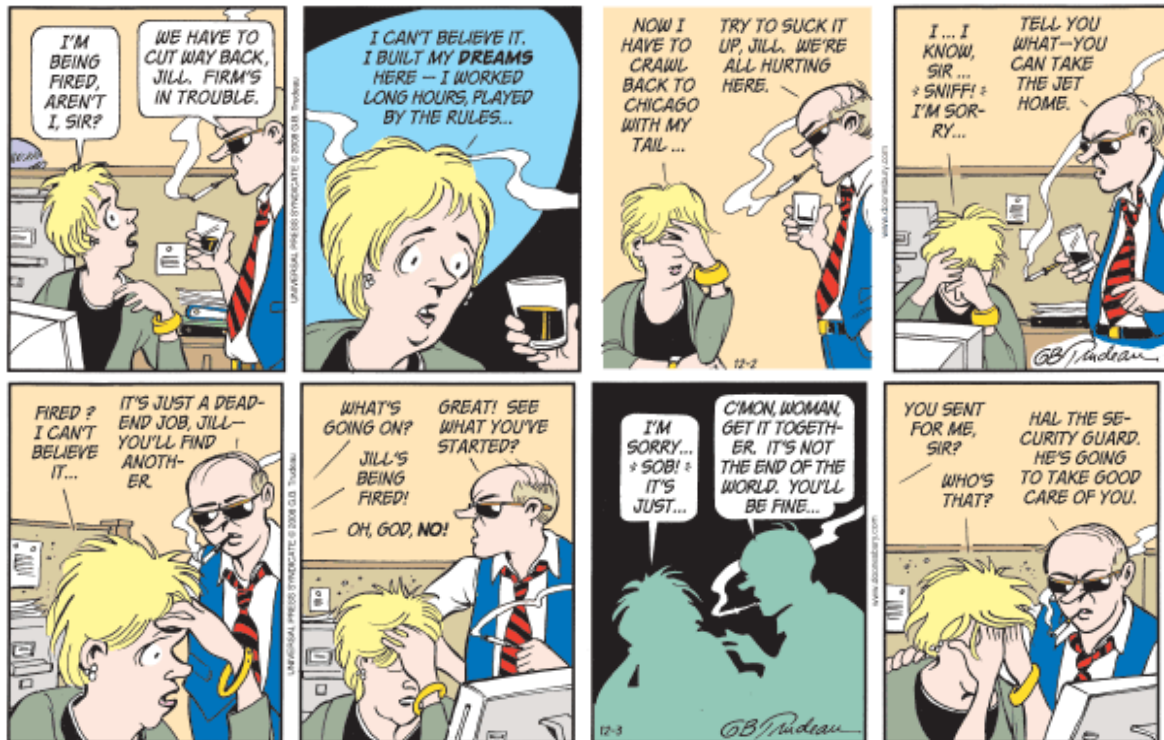
“Attempts by senior officials to portray that to be the case while shrugging off any responsibility for abuses are both unconscionable and false,” Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., the committee chairman Levin said. “Our investigation is an effort to set the record straight.”

Levin said in a statement that the blame falls on military leaders.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



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contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

The Future Confronts The Past



A boy shouts at riot police during anti-government demonstrations in front of the Greek parliament building in Athens, December 10, 2008. (Oleg Popov/Reuters)

Somali Pirates To Acquire Citigroup: “The Pirates Will Finance Part Of The Purchase By Selling New Pirate Ransom Backed Securities (PRBS’s)” “Paulson: Tarp Pirate Equity Is An ‘Investment’, Will Pay Off”

December 09, 2008 Via Ed Pearl

By Sid Shniad

Bloomberg

December 2, 2008

The Somali pirates, renegade Somalis known for hijacking ships for ransom in the Gulf of Aden, are negotiating a purchase of Citigroup.

The pirates would buy Citigroup with new debt and their existing cash stockpiles, earned from hijacking numerous ships, including most recently a \$100 million Saudi Arabian oil tanker.

The Somali pirates are offering up to \$0.10 per share for Citigroup, pirate spokesman Sugule Ali said earlier today. The negotiations have entered the final stage, Ali said.

“You may not like our price, but we are not in the business of paying for things. Be happy we are in the mood to offer the shareholders anything,” said Ali.

The pirates will finance part of the purchase by selling new Pirate Ransom Backed Securities.

The PRBS's are backed by the cash flows from future ransom payments from hijackings in the Gulf of Aden.

Moody's and S&P have already issued a AAA investment grade rating for the PRBS's.

Head pirate, Ubu Kalid Shandu, said “We need a bank so that we have a place to keep all of our ransom money. Thankfully, the dislocations in the capital markets have allowed us to purchase Citigroup at an attractive valuation and to take advantage of TARP capital to grow the business even faster.”

Shandu added, “We don't call ourselves pirates. We are coast guards and this will just allow us to guard our coasts better.”

Bloomberg News 10:24 AM:

CITI IN TALKS WITH SOMALI PIRATES FOR POSSIBLE CAPITAL INFUSION

WILL REQUIRE ALL CITI EMPLOYEES TO WEAR PATCH OVER ONE EYE

SOMALIAN PIRATES APPLY TO BECOME BANK TO ACCESS TARP

PAULSON: TARP PIRATE EQUITY IS AN “INVESTMENT”, WILL PAY OFF

KASHKARI SAYS “SOMALI PIRATES ARE ‘FUNDAMENTALLY SOUND’”

MOODY'S UPGRADE SOMALI PIRATES TO AAA

HUD SAYS SOMALI DHOW FORECLOSURE PROGRAM HAD “VERY LOW” PARTICIPATION

FED OFFICIALS: AGGRESSIVE EASING WOULD CUT SOMALI PIRATE RISK

FED AGREED TODAY TO TAKE "WHATEVER STEPS" NEEDED FOR SOMALI PIRATES



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