

## GI SPECIAL 7C24:

WALL ST. BACKS \$1 TRILLION TOXIC DEBT BAILOUT



# Cruel Stupid Vicious Bullshit Of The Year, So Far:

V.A. Refuses To Pay Iraq Veteran  
Her Disability Allowance, Claiming  
She's Incompetent To Handle Her  
Own Money!

# **“Murray, 24, Says The Statement Goes Beyond Insulting”**

## **“Murray’s Mother, Suspects Her Daughter’s Anti-War Stand Is Now Delaying Her Benefits”**



Ann Marie Hacker, left, stands with her daughter, Robynn Lynne Murray, an Army sergeant who served in Iraq and received a medical discharge in 2007. The VA is questioning Murray’s competence. Charles Lewis / Buffalo News

**Insisting she is as competent as any soldier who has participated in war, Murray and her family believe the government is now raising the competency question as a stall tactic to delay paying her \$27,000 in back disability pay or, perhaps worse, as retribution for going on an anti-war speaking circuit, though she cannot prove either suspicion.**

03/30/09 By Lou Michel, BUFFALO NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Robynn Lynne Murray looks formidable on the cover of Army magazine, along with two other female soldiers, all holding machine guns in Baghdad.

The Niagara Wheatfield High School graduate says it was part of a persona she invented to survive the war in Iraq. The Army liked her approach and rewarded her with the job of protecting her superior officer.

But when psychological and physical ailments caught up with her, Murray said, she found out just how expendable she was.

“The Army acted like a little kid who has discovered their toy has been broken and they threw it away,” Murray said.

Medically discharged in 2007, she was left to fight for VA disability benefits.

**She was finally awarded the benefits, but then the government decided to withhold the payments.**

**It claimed she might be incompetent.**

**Murray, 24, says the statement goes beyond insulting.**

The Army had refused to acknowledge her claims of post-traumatic stress, she noted, when she was on active duty status.

**Insisting she is as competent as any soldier who has participated in war, Murray and her family believe the government is now raising the competency question as a stall tactic to delay paying her \$27,000 in back disability pay or, perhaps worse, as retribution for going on an anti-war speaking circuit, though she cannot prove either suspicion.**

**Those who know Murray at Iraq Veterans Against the War say their experiences with her have left them with the impression that she is fully competent and that sexual discrimination may be at play.**

**“I know many veterans who receive VA disability benefits, and some are unable to manage their money, and their competence never comes into question,” said Kelly L. Dougherty, the organization’s executive director.**

She described Murray as a “bright and interesting young woman” who is mentally competent.

Geoff Millard, a Buffalo native and co-chairman of the organization’s board of directors, says sexual discrimination may be at play.

“I know dozens of male veterans who are 100 percent disabled from post traumatic stress, and the government mails them checks made out to them every month,” Millard said. “I honestly believe it’s because Robynn’s a woman. If she were a male veteran, there would be no question of her competency.”

Murray left the Army with an injured left hip and a deep frustration over how the military was quick to prescribe psychiatric medication, yet would not put in writing her post traumatic stress.

Her “scary looking” persona was history.

Like thousands of other Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans, she set out on a journey through a bureaucracy, hoping to obtain VA disability benefits in order to survive.

Twice, she says, the VA lost her paperwork.

Making matters worse, she realized she did not fit in back home with relatives in Niagara County and began staying with different friends for free, sometimes earning a stipend for speaking at anti-war rallies for Iraq Veterans Against the War.

She was a different person from the high school honor roll student and varsity athlete she had once been at Niagara Wheatfield.

In February, it seemed as if her life took a turn for the better.

**The U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs rated her 80 percent disabled from post traumatic stress and the hip injury that had left her dependent on a cane and painkillers.**

**But there was a catch.**

**The VA questioned whether the ex-sergeant was competent enough to manage her \$1,400- a-month disability pension.**

"I've been told a VA field representative will have to come out and observe me to determine if I'm competent. That could take another 120 days," Murray said.

If she is ruled incompetent, the VA would designate someone to pay her bills.

**"They say, though I am too emotionally stressed to pay my own bills, I am not too disabled to work or go to school because I'm not rated 100 percent disabled," she said.**

**"I'm not incompetent, and the only problem I have with money is that I don't have any."**

**She makes no secret of struggling with war-related mental illness involving nightmares and loud noises.**

**"That doesn't mean I can't pay my car payment on time," Murray said.**

In a statement, Skip Henning, the VA's spokesman, noted it is not unheard of that a veteran would question the handling of a claim, but that the VA has the right to assess the competence of a veteran and oversee financial matters if incompetence is determined.

Murray says she is not angry with the VA workers.

**"I don't have a problem with the people who are there at the VA. It's the system that sets the claimants up for failure. It's all the different paperwork and never knowing who to talk to," Murray said.**

**Murray's mother, who suspects her daughter's anti-war stand is now delaying her benefits, said she was amazed at the list of medications that have been prescribed to her daughter in the last few years as the result of 115 doctors' appointments.**

**"It had to be 14 feet long. It was a printout, and some of the medications made her worse," said Ann Marie Hacker, who believes her daughter is capable of managing her VA disability payments.**

**"My daughter is a very levelheaded, independent woman," Hacker said.**

Both Hacker and Murray say they hope the government will move quickly and start paying the disability benefits directly to her.

With the money and other medical assistance, Murray believes she will one day live a healthy and productive life.

“Just like she used to,” her mother added.

---

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

**“Targeting The Awakening Leaders Is A Red Line, And We Shall Not Allow Anyone To Cross It”**

**“If The Government Doesn’t Pay Us And Incorporate Us Into The Security Services, I Swear, Bad Things Will Start Happening Here A Month From Now”**

**“The Americans, He Adds Bitterly, Have Broken All Of Their Promises”**

March 29, 2009 By ALISSA J. RUBIN, New York Times & March 30, 2009 by Lourdes Garcia-Navarro, All Things Considered & By Robert H. Reid - The Associated Press & By Sudarsan Raghavan and Anthony Shadid, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

Tensions are high in Baghdad after fierce weekend clashes in which several people were killed and wounded; U.S.-backed Sunni paramilitaries fought with Iraqi and American forces in the Baghdad neighborhood of Fadhil.

The battle erupted when U.S. and Iraqi forces arrested one of the neighborhood paramilitary leaders.

Now, Fadhil is on lockdown. Dozens of tanks and Humvees, and hundreds of Iraqi troops backed by U.S. forces, control the area. They are conducting house-to-house searches looking for weapons and wanted men.

“The Awakening is not present anymore,” said Khalid al-Sammaraie, one of Mr. Mashhadani’s deputies. “Men whom we depended on handed over their weapons at the beginning.

**“Targeting the Awakening leaders is a red line, and we shall not allow anyone to cross it,” said Essa al-Rufai, an Awakening leader in the northern city of Balad.**

**The leader of the Sunni councils in Diyala, Nazar al-Daghestani, demanded the government release al-Mashhadani and pull troops out of Fadhil or his followers would stop manning checkpoints and assisting U.S. and Iraqi forces with security patrols.**

**Such a move would force the government to send more police and soldiers to Diyala, where Sunni and Shiite militants still operate.**

**Shogaa al-Aazami, an Awakening Council commander in west Baghdad, said the crackdown in Fadhil followed the arrest two days before of a council leader in the city’s Ghazaliyah district.**

**“The situation is now very fragile, and no Awakening member would remain silent over this injustice,” said Saad Abbas al-Luhaibi, leader of an Awakening group in Anbar province.**

Until this weekend, the U.S.-backed paramilitaries known as the Sons of Iraq kept security in Fadhil.

But when Iraqi and U.S. forces arrested their leader, Adil al-Mashadani, his men fought back. The clashes left more than a dozen people dead and injured.

Iraqi soldiers conducted door-to-door searches in Fadhil with the help of informants, targeting Awakening fighters.

**At one entrance to the neighborhood, once an al-Qaeda in Iraq stronghold, men were dragged from their homes, blindfolded and placed into Humvees. An Iraqi intelligence official calmly crossed off names on a wanted list.**

Still, the clampdown in Fadhil has provided a spark for anger that has been building for months, particularly since the government took responsibility for paying the Awakening fighters.

**In the Baghdad neighborhoods of Dora, Adhamiyah and Amiriyah, Awakening offices were closed. Nearly a dozen of their leaders had switched off their cellphones or declined to answer calls.**

**“We are being chased right now by the government,” said Ihab Zubai, a spokesman for the Awakening in Amiriyah, in the west of the city.**

**“We’re moving from place to place.”**

**“Not even God would accept this,” said Raad Saadoun, a militiaman leaning on his Kalashnikov rifle at a checkpoint in Adhamiyah, in northern Baghdad.**

**“The Americans brought us here, organized us, then abandoned us,” he said.**

At its height, the Awakening counted 100,000 fighters, who played a decisive role in bringing quiet to Baghdad, Anbar province and other regions. The government promised to bring a fifth of them into the security forces, but only a relative few have made the transition.

In Dora, in southern Baghdad, fighters said the number was minuscule. Of 125 militiamen in one area, three became policemen, said Alaa Abdullah, a 30-year-old fighter. Half simply quit.

Awakening fighters across Iraq had the same list of complaints: They had gone without their \$300-a-month salary for two, sometimes three, months; the government was trying to marginalize them; and their leaders were being arrested on dubious charges.

**An older Fadhil resident angrily denounced the raid, shouting repeatedly, “This is a war against the Sunni areas.”**

**Iraqi army officers quickly arrested him, abruptly accusing him of planting roadside bombs.**

**Nearby, another woman cries out that the army arrested her son for no reason.**

Dozens of other residents line the street, silently watching the security operation.

Iraq’s government promised to keep paying the men until they can find them jobs in Iraq’s security forces or ministries. So far, only 5 percent of the Sunni paramilitary forces have been incorporated into the police and army.

And many of the paramilitaries say they have not been paid in months.

Mustafa Kamel, the Sons of Iraq leader in the Baghdad neighborhood of Dora, says the government has not kept its word.

“Honestly, we’re worried about the future. If the government doesn’t pay us and incorporate us into the security services, I swear, bad things will start happening here a month from now,” he says.

The fear is that these former fighters could return to the insurgency and plunge the country into a renewed cycle of violence. That could imperil the timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops

Kamel, the Dora leader, says the U.S. military needs to give them more than words.

“If anything happens to our members, it will be the responsibility of the U.S. government. The Americans completely abandoned us,” he says.

The Americans, he adds bitterly, have broken all of their promises.

---

## **FUTILE EXERCISE: ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. Army soldiers wait go out on a routine patrol in Baladiyat, an eastern neighborhood of Baghdad, March 19, 2009. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

---

## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Green Troops Meet The Lost War:**

**“Separating The Population  
From The Insurgents Is Hard  
When The Insurgents Are Part  
Of The Population, Something**



**Senior International  
Commanders Appear Not To  
Have Noticed”  
“The Americans Have Guns And  
Money But Will Eventually Leave”  
“The Insurgents Have Less Of Both  
But Are Going Nowhere”  
“Another Village Is Just Plain Bad. We  
Got Stones Thrown At Us There”**

29 March 2009 Jason Burke in Qalai Mohammed, Afghanistan; The Observer [Excerpts]

The old man smiles and offers tea, salaams and blessings.

He listens attentively as the commander from the Afghan National Army explains that the soldiers sitting on the mud walls either side of his home are there to help.

A few yards further away stands Captain José Vasquez of Cherokee Company, 3-71 Cavalry, Taskforce Spartan, Tenth Mountain Division. He, too, is listening attentively.

The house is that of a suspected Taliban sympathiser.

A “surge” of more than 20,000 troops has already been announced. Vasquez, originally from El Paso, Texas, and his men are among the first to arrive.

Taskforce Spartan, 2,500 men with everything from portable internet cafes to the latest in armoured, air-conditioned trucks, were sent to the volatile Logar and Wardak provinces.

Their aim is to roll back growing insurgent influence to the south and east of Kabul.

“Our aim is to separate the people from the enemy,” said Colonel David Haight, who leads Taskforce Spartan.

The tactic is known as the Petraeus doctrine, after US general David Petraeus who pioneered it in Iraq and who now commands all US troops both there and in Afghanistan.

Yet out in the villages things appear more complicated.

Vasquez leads his men out at dawn, bumping in heavily armoured trucks down mud and gravel roads. The force of well over 100 heavily armed soldiers dismount and move slowly through the villages, past low, fortified farmsteads.

Vasquez and his men do not have the right to search these compounds, though insurgents could be hiding in any of them, for fear of offending cultural sensibilities.

The villagers are poor, seven years of drought have taken their toll and the brightest and most literate have left for Kabul.

It will take a lot of development to dry the insurgents' recruiting pool.

The villagers watch the troops walk by with studied impassivity.

"They are pretty neutral here," says Vasquez, "but five kilometres up the valley they love to get involved... sadly, not on our side."

The problem is not the senior Taliban commanders, who can be identified and eliminated, but the support networks.

Separating the population from the insurgents is hard when the insurgents are part of the population, something senior international commanders appear not to have noticed.

"Sometimes we are talking to people then someone joins us and the villagers all go quiet," Vasquez said. "In one village there are three brothers who say they have no power but clearly run the place and clearly are not on our side."

"Another village is just plain bad. We got stones thrown at us there."

Interviews with MPs, officials and judges from Logar revealed a typically web of shifting loyalties, divided communities, inter-generational tensions and desperate bids by village elders to gauge who is the best guarantor of security and resources: the Americans who have guns and money but will eventually leave, or the insurgents who have less of both but are going nowhere.

**The Afghan National Army, though improving, still relies on international help and command and is also dominated by northern ethnic groups, virtual foreigners in the south and east of the country.**

"We are trying to teach them to run, but they are still at the crawling stage," said one US soldier.

Soon the weather will be warmer and the fighting season will begin in earnest.

"We are in something of a honeymoon period," said Haight.

---

## **Round Lake Beach Soldier Killed In Afghanistan Roadside Bombing**



3/17/2009 By Lee Filas, Daily Herald Staff

As word of the death of U.S. Army Specialist Robert Weinger spread through Round Lake Beach, hometown family and friends remembered him with glowing terms.

True friend.

Loyal family member.

Incredible soldier.

True American hero.

The 24-year-old man was one of three soldiers and one airman killed Sunday by a roadside bomb in eastern Afghanistan, the defense department announced Tuesday.

Mary Weinger said her grandson was a devoted child with a zest for practical jokes, but who held a tender side for family and friends.

“He was also a devoted soldier,” she said “It’s just a shame he won’t be here any more.”

Funeral arrangements are pending.

Round Lake Beach Mayor Rich Hill said he was informed of the death Monday, and ordered flags in the village lowered to half staff in Weinger’s honor.

Hill said Weinger was a lifelong resident of Round Lake Beach and a 2002 graduate of Round Lake High School, who enlisted in the Army National Guard in January, 2006. It was Weinger’s second overseas deployment after having served in Iraq from September 2006 through October 2007.

“He was a friend to the community, and close with my own family,” Hill said. “He will be missed, but he did what he wanted to and served his country honorably.”

Weinger was honored by the Round Lake Beach village board in 2007 for his service after his tour in Iraq.

He died with two other soldiers from the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team out of Woodstock.

Weinger's MySpace page is filled with tributes to the fallen soldier from friends and well-wishers, thanking him for being a hero.

Friends described him as someone quick with a laugh and willing to do anything for someone in need.

"He was always nice and always was willing to put other people before himself," said longtime friend Heather Simmons of Ingleside. "He would do anything for anyone he knew."

---

## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

**“Mohammed Is One Of Many Iraqis Who Still Believe In The Resistance”**

**“He Has One Rule: Target Only American Troops, Never Civilians”**

**“Most Iraqis Think That Today's Lower Level Of Violence Is The Eye, Not The End, Of The Storm”**

**“It Isn't Americans She Wants To Fight, Or Her Children To Fight, It's The Occupier”**

# **“History Will Not Have Mercy On America,” Abu Sleiman Said. “I Believe That It Reached Its Peak, And Now It Is On Its Way Down”**

**“The people who are with the occupier, we consider him an occupier. These are the same looters, criminal gangs and killers who were in for money,” Mohammed said.**

**“If the resistance is stopped, the U.S. will not leave. . . . They want Iraq to be subjugated and to strip it, and now the police and sahwa (Awakening) do their work for them.”**

March 30, 2009 By Leila Fadel, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

***“Are my people aware of what’s happening to me?”***

***“Ask the river, does it still remember me?”***

***“And the people, do they still hold their noses high?”***

***“Are they sleeping in comfort and in peace?”***

***“With an unembarrassed smile upon their lips,***

***“Tell them I am a hostage to humiliation.”***

***Abu Izzuddin, a recently released Iraqi detainee***

GARMA, Iraq — Mohammed walked in disbelief through the rich green grass that carpets the farm behind his modest family home. For more than three years, he’d seen no green, no hanging branches in the orchards near his home in Garma, in Anbar province in western Iraq.

For more than three years, he’d worn a yellow jumpsuit in the U.S. detention center of Bucca in the hot desert outside Basra, hundreds of miles from home. He waited for his family’s rare visits, and his heart lifted.

Between those visits, there was darkness. He was convinced that he’d never see this familiar place, his fiancée or his family again.

“Sometimes I ask myself, ‘Am I truly here or am I dreaming?’” he said.

Even with his release, however, the 23-year-old never surrendered his principles, though he learned what he had to say in order to be freed: “Yes, I fought you. No, I won’t do it again.”

In America, the U.S. “surge” of additional troops to Baghdad is heralded as a success, and President Barack Obama has said he’ll draw down American forces in Iraq and turn his attention to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In Iraq, however, what the U.S.-led invasion and occupation started is far from over.

**Most Iraqis think that today’s lower level of violence is the eye, not the end, of the storm, and that the decisive power struggles are just beginning.**

**The U.S.-backed Iraqi government is widely regarded as an undeserving group of exiles who returned to Iraq on the backs of American tanks.**

Although the Sunni insurgency that earlier had battled U.S. troops and Iraqi security forces and killed thousands of civilians is weakened, Mohammed is one of many Iraqis who still believe in what he calls the muqawima, the resistance.

He always will.

Mohammed is one of the thousands of detainees who’re being released from U.S. detention centers as America prepares to withdraw forces from Iraq. There are about 13,400 detainees in U.S.-run prisons, and on average 50 are released each day.

Some are guilty of crimes, others are innocent, many have never been afforded due process and some have become radicalized by their time in prison.

Iraqi officials worry that releasing detainees will trigger a new wave of violence.

**In some cases, local police are using vigilante law and killing people who’ve been released from U.S. detention centers, according to residents in Anbar.**

**Most are too afraid to talk about it.**

**Mohammed came home late last year still determined to resist.**

**He has one rule: Target only American troops, never civilians.**

**“There are people who are just killers, and then there are people who are resistance,” Mohammed said.**

**“I am resistance.”**

Mohammed is from a family of “resistance.”

His late father, Farouq, is almost legendary in nearby Fallujah. He’s known as the first man to face American forces in that town, once the heart of the Sunni insurgency and a death trap for U.S. forces.

Farouq was detained shortly after the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003. For months, his family didn’t know where he was. That May, he came home a changed man, said his brother Abu Sleiman. Farouq became obsessed with avenging his personal and national humiliation.

“They wanted to mold him like dough in their hands,” Abu Sleiman said of the Americans. “He was so hurt.”

Farouq organized with others in Garma, and the emerging resistance fighters trained in the vast land behind his home as U.S. tanks drove through the streets and American soldiers raided homes.

At the end of 2003, Farouq went to the outskirts of Fallujah with nine other men to attack the Americans. He and his compatriots wouldn't plant a bomb and run away, as others had. For them, there'd be no retreat.

**Mohammed followed his father to the battle. Farouq protested, so Mohammed trailed the fighters by almost a mile.**

**In the dark of night, he watched the tracer fire of the battle. His father didn't retreat. The lone survivor of the battle said that Farouq had drawn fire to himself to help him get away. His family says that Farouq became a martyr that day, a hero.**

**“This was my brother, strong to the end,” said Mohammed's uncle Abu Sleiman, who's a teacher.**

**Farouq's wife — Mohammed's mother, Umm Mohammed — was widowed with her seven children, and Abu Sleiman became a father figure to his nieces and nephews. Her grief, however, was mixed with pride.**

**“I tell my children to follow his footsteps. Walk the same path your father did,” Umm Mohammed said. She cradled her 7-year-old daughter in her arms.**

**“The Americans have done us an injustice, a very big injustice.”**

She ticked off the men in her family, one of them her young son, whom U.S. troops have killed; some with stray American bullets, others as they attacked the Americans.

She thinks that her 16-year-old son was caught in a crossfire and killed by the Americans.

Abu Sleiman still sobs when he's reminded of his nephew's death. He couldn't protect the boy, and his silence carries the guilt that he cannot voice.

“An uncle is not a father,” is all he can say.

Mohammed and the rest of his family never worked with al Qaida in Iraq. When the militant group made it halal, or permissible, to kill Muslims, specifically Shiites, it undermined what the family calls the “honorable resistance.”

“Al Qaida broke the back of the resistance,” said Mohammed's uncle Abu Sleiman.

Another one of Abu Sleiman's brothers, a religious sheik, left the country for a time rather than work with al Qaida in Iraq.

Abu Sleiman blames America for the rise of the violent extremist group, which emerged only after American tanks rolled into the country.

**Still, Abu Sleiman and his family will continue to resist.**

**“This generation has learned to hate, more and more,” Mohammed said**

**Throughout the war, the family members joke, their home was a pit stop for American soldiers.**

**Every time a tank passed, another member of the clan was picked up. Almost every man in the family was detained. Mohammed and his uncle Abu Izzuddin, a tribal sheik, spent the longest time in prison.**

Abu Izzuddin wrote poetry to remind himself of his loved ones and his beloved town.

A respected leader in the community, he was detained in his home in front of a crowd of guests.

Only one other act could be more humiliating: his guests being detained in his home.

Mostly, Abu Izzuddin wrote about love and his longing for his wife and children:

***“And in me is grief and pain that hurt me in a way***

***“That no pen and paper can describe***

***“Injustice, subjugation and deprivation are crushing me***

***“And the wounds of my heart are oozing pus and pain***

***“When I see you, I see Paradise approaching***

***“Towards me, and all the wounds of my soul will heal.”***

Before they were detained, the U.S. fought two bloody battles to try to retake Fallujah from Sunni fighters, and the city morphed into a prison. Residents were forced to walk in and out of Fallujah through U.S. checkpoints with American-issued IDs.

While Mohammed and his uncle waited in prison, stripped of power and forced to follow the orders of foreigners, Iraq changed.

A new, U.S.-backed central government formed in Baghdad.

After three years, Mohammed lost all hope of returning home. Three times, he was called before an American panel to review his case. Three times, the Americans asked him whether he'd attacked U.S. forces. Three times he denied it.

“Terrorist,” they called him, and back to detention he went.



The fourth time he told the truth.

“I am resistance. I had weapons,” he said.

“Why?” they asked.

“You are an occupier. You humiliate our people,” he replied.

“Will you continue to do it?” they asked.

“No. You were acting bad, but I hear you’re behaving in a better way.”

A little more than a month later, his jailers let him go.

Mohammed had told one lie, however. He’d never abandon the fight.

“I wanted to save myself,” he said, explaining why he’d faked rehabilitation.

The day after he was released, Mohammed married his fiancée. His wife is four months pregnant now.

Mohammed scorns much of the Sunni Awakening, now known as the Sons of Iraq, for selling out its principles, taking cash from the occupier and turning against its own people.

**“The people who are with the occupier, we consider him an occupier. These are the same looters, criminal gangs and killers who were in for money,” Mohammed said.**

**“If the resistance is stopped, the U.S. will not leave. . . . They want Iraq to be subjugated and to strip it, and now the police and sahwa (Awakening) do their work for them.”**

The police, known for brutalizing anyone slightly under suspicion of connections to al Qaida [translation: connections to the resistance] in Iraq, detained and beat one of Mohammed’s brothers. When he was released, his mother sighed with relief, even at the sight of her son’s bruises.

“I thanked God he was released; so many boys never come back,” she said.

Mohammed was offered a job with the police. He refused it. He paused and thought about why. Would he be able to detain all these men that Americans said were terrorists?

“If I became a policeman, would I shake the hands of the Americans when they came to the police station?” he asked. “If I was ordered to detain a man whom I knew to be resistance, could I say no?”

“At this moment, it is better for us to sit and be quiet. Once we start fighting . . . ,” Mohammed said, and then his words trailed off. “Everything I’m doing is being watched.”

As Umm Mohammed offered fruit and other food to her guests, the gracious host stood firm in her beliefs.

She needed it to be understood, however, that it isn't Americans she wants to fight, or her children to fight, it's the occupier.

If it were any other foreigners, she and her family would fight them, as well.

"The Americans should get out of Iraq, leave Iraq to the Iraqis," she said. "What happened here is because of them, and they will be held accountable."

No one thinks that the Americans will leave, despite Obama's promises to draw down troops.

Iraqis have heard American promises before, promises that never came to be.

"History will not have mercy on America," Abu Sleiman said. "I believe that it reached its peak, and now it is on its way down. America was hijacked from the Americans."

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

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

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**



**“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.**

**“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.**

**“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”**

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

---

## **Homeless Vietnam Veteran Portland, Oregon 1986**



From: Mike Hastie

To: GI Special

Sent: March 30, 2009

Subject: Homeless Vietnam Veteran Portland, Oregon 1986

### **Homeless Vietnam Veteran Portland, Oregon 1986**

**History always repeats itself,  
because the past was a  
repetitious lie to begin with.  
Another Empire President  
doing exactly what he is  
supposed to do.**

**Why,  
Because the American  
people still believe in  
fantasies.  
Since I came back from Vietnam,  
I have forgotten how many countries  
the United States Government has  
sent military troops into.  
If you want to know the truth about war,  
visit any mental health waiting room in  
VA hospitals across America.  
You can feel the anger intensity in the room.  
You can feel the, "I got fucked attitude."  
I love vets.  
They have such great bull shit detectors.  
I was a medic in Vietnam.  
I would still risk my life to save one of those  
bullshit detectors.  
God, I love vets.**

**Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71  
March 30, 2009**

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: ([hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71  
December 13, 2004**

**“Two Of My Sons Are Activated  
Again In The Arizona National Guard  
For Their Second Tour In Iraq”**

# “The Two Party System Is Not The Solution, And Is Frankly The Problem”

March 29, 2009 By [AD], Military Counseling Service/G.I. Rights Hotline Utah; former Marine Sgt/Army Major/Utah; Vietnam Veterans Against The War contact, Via: [vvawnet@vvaw.org](mailto:vvawnet@vvaw.org) [Excerpts]

**Subject: Cannot Support President Obama’s Afghanistan Strategy**

Two of my sons are activated again in the Arizona National Guard for their second tour in Iraq.

Yes the two party system is not the solution, and is frankly the problem. They point fingers and posture for the next election.

They don’t represent us, only corporate America.

Who got caught admitting he allowed AIG executives to retain their bonuses in the last bank bail-out? Chris Dodd.

All these vet groups want your money to continue sabre rattling and keep the military industrial complex (defense contractors) in business.

Same stuff, different administration.

And so it goes.

## **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. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057**

# “It Is Really The Story Of A Unit Whose Training, Equipment And Overall Background Left Them Supremely Unready To Face An Iraqi Insurgency”

# **Book Review: “JOKER ONE; A Marine Platoon’s Story Of Courage, Leadership, And Brotherhood”**

[Thanks to Elaine Brower, Military Project, who sent this in.]

March 22, 2009 By JAMES GLANZ, New York Times

JOKER ONE; A Marine Platoon’s Story of Courage, Leadership, and Brotherhood  
By Donovan Campbell  
313 pp. Random House. \$26

\*\*\*\*\*

In a way that has always been awkward to discuss with friends, I feel pity for anyone who has never traveled a war zone in the company of Marines.

That feeling has nothing to do with the experience of combat. Instead, it relates to something much more impersonal, something that comes with being around the toughest and most lethal fighters in the world. A regular citizen caught up in war is able to see, record and report the things that humans do to one another, from the generous to the horrible, in a situation where it would ordinarily be too terrifying to think of anything but getting out alive.

The arrangement known as “embedding” — the almost complete immersion in the movements and life of a military unit — is the standard way for reporters to travel with Marines or the other service branches in a place like Iraq.

Embedding is seldom available to nonjournalists. But a new book by Donovan Campbell, a former Marine lieutenant who led a 40-man platoon in the Iraqi desert city of Ramadi during the most violent days of the insurgency there in 2004, is its literary equivalent.

“Joker One: A Marine Platoon’s Story of Courage, Leadership, and Brotherhood” should be read by all those who have ever wondered what conclusions they would have drawn about the Iraq war if they had been dropped into the middle of the conflict in much the same way my colleagues and I were.

Be advised that Campbell, though he is a graduate of Princeton and Harvard Business School, never stops being a Marine, thinking like a Marine or using the jargon and profanity of a Marine, so do not expect much guidance on larger matters like whether the war was justified or well planned.

But that is the point: Campbell provides the raw, bullet-by-bullet footage, and it is up to the reader to decide what it all means.

The book, named for the platoon's radio call sign, is ostensibly about a young lieutenant whose faith in God, the Marines and his own leadership is shaken, then restored, as his men are maimed and killed on the filthy streets of Ramadi.

But it is really the story of a unit whose training, equipment and overall background left them supremely unready to face an Iraqi insurgency. The Marines may not have comprehended what they were up against, but of course they fought anyway.

Campbell himself never really comes to grips with how deplorably his beloved Marines were prepared for Ramadi.

But a central virtue of "Joker One" is that the narrative is honest — and remarkably detailed, relying on Campbell's logbooks and diary, as well as his formidable memory — even when the story makes him or the Marines look bad.

Reflecting on the unit's training exercises at Camp Pendleton before the deployment to Iraq, for example, he notes in passing that "when all is said and done, a 19-year-old Marine lance corporal from Idaho with a bedsheet over his head has only limited success simulating a Sunni Arab woman, no matter how hard he tries."

Once that sophisticated cultural training was complete, it was time to go to Iraq.

As the Marines landed in Kuwait and crossed the border to Iraq in March 2004, Campbell found that his unit's seven-ton trucks had no armor, the radios did not work properly, and no translator would be provided for the dangerous overland trip to Ramadi.

**Almost immediately, Campbell sensed that something was wrong in the city he had been told was "on the glide path to success."**

On an early patrol, the men of Joker One hand out candy and pencils to local children, who seem delighted: children are the same everywhere, he reflects.

Then, after the Marines have handed out everything they have, the children begin showering them with rocks — large rocks. Incredibly, the unit still does not have a translator, so there is no way to find out why this is happening or even to tell the kids to stop.

But after Campbell pulls out of the area, one of his men radios that he has fixed the problem the Marine way. "I grabbed some old man standing by, pointed to the little kids throwing rocks, and he chased them away," the Marine, named Carson, says. "We're good to go, sir." "Oh. Good work. Thanks, Carson. Keep it up," Campbell radios back.

At the base later on, still unnerved, Campbell begins to realize that something is seriously amiss in his understanding of the city he must patrol for seven months. He muses, "What kind of child tries repeatedly to stone someone who has just given them a present?"

Welcome to Ramadi, gents.

**Having been wrapped in a cocoon of ignorance by their pathetically insufficient training, Campbell's Marines are left to deal with the consequences as the**

insurgency explodes on the crooked streets of one of the meanest and deadliest places on earth.

What follows might be characterized as a cross between the Battle of Agincourt as seen from the French side and the opening scenes of “Saving Private Ryan,” with no one to save.

Near the beginning of his book, Campbell reflects that “it’s so hard to tell the truth, because the telling means dragging up painful memories, opening doors that you thought you had closed and revisiting a past you hoped you had put behind you.”

He never quite puts his finger on the meaning, if any, of the extraordinary violence that imbues the truths he tells in “Joker One.”

But he has laid it all out for anyone else who wants to have a try.

---

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

---

## **Bought And Paid For: Barack Obama (D) Top Contributors**



The Center for Responsive Politics

**This table lists the top donors to this candidate in the 2008 election cycle.**

The organizations themselves did not donate, rather the money came from the organization's PAC, its individual members or employees or owners, and those individuals' immediate families. Organization totals include subsidiaries and affiliates.

Because of contribution limits, organizations that bundle together many individual contributions are often among the top donors to presidential candidates. These contributions can come from the organization's members or employees (and their families).

The organization may support one candidate, or hedge its bets by supporting multiple candidates. Groups with national networks of donors - like EMILY's List and Club for Growth - make for particularly big bundlers.

<b>University of California</b>	<b>\$1,385,675</b>
<b>Goldman Sachs</b>	<b>\$980,945</b>
<b>Microsoft Corp</b>	<b>\$806,299</b>
<b>Harvard University</b>	<b>\$793,460</b>
<b>Google Inc</b>	<b>\$790,564</b>
<b>Citigroup Inc</b>	<b>\$657,268</b>
<b>JPMorgan Chase &amp; Co</b>	<b>\$650,758</b>
<b>Stanford University</b>	<b>\$580,904</b>
<b>Sidley Austin LLP</b>	<b>\$574,938</b>
<b>Time Warner</b>	<b>\$547,951</b>
<b>National Amusements Inc</b>	<b>\$541,251</b>
<b>WilmerHale</b>	<b>\$524,292</b>
<b>Union Bank S AG</b>	<b>\$522,019</b>
<b>IBM Corp</b>	<b>\$518,557</b>
<b>Skadden, Arps et al</b>	<b>\$510,274</b>
<b>Columbia University</b>	<b>\$503,566</b>
<b>Morgan Stanley</b>	<b>\$490,873</b>
<b>General Electric</b>	<b>\$479,454</b>
<b>Latham &amp; Watkins</b>	<b>\$467,311</b>

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

## THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WARS

### 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

## CLASS WAR REPORTS



# RECEIVED

## **“I Received The Info. From Several SFG Members I Communicate With In Iraq....It Is Absolute Treason And Exactly What Hitler Did”**

From: [SFG Veteran]  
To: GI Special  
Sent: March 30, 2009  
Subject: Question on new Policy

**I received the info. from several SFG members I communicate with in Iraq....it is absolute Treason and exactly what Hitler did.**

It's time to impeach this shithead and hang him. I've had quite enough.....

\*\*\*\*\*

NOTE:

I've gotten emails recently from several of the 'boots on the ground' in Afghanistan and Iraq that I communicate with that The Military Oath is to (soon) start being sworn to the President rather than to the Constitution, EXACTLY as Hitler did with the German Military beginning in 1933!

A blatant attempt to grab personal power like this, should make the hair stand up on the backs of everyone's necks especially those of you who, like myself, are ex-Military.

When I entered the Army in the 70's it was, of course, to the Constitution and nothing else.

The information I'm getting is that well over 50% of current Military personal are more than 'up in arms' about this and will refuse any order to take such an oath.

This CANNOT be tolerated! There is a feeling among some groups that a monster was unleashed when Osama Obama was elected through the emotional resentment of the last administration. Obama has a history of being anti personal gun ownership to the extent of a man not having the right to defend himself and his family with firearms in his own home. I would remind everyone the only reason we can even discuss this is due to personal gun ownership.

**I would hate to see the elimination of the clause that prohibits the use of American military against American people, as well.**

According to the "Outdoor News," (USPS 286-440, Plymouth MN), "Since the day after the election gun sales have skyrocketed." The National Shooting Sports Foundation reported a 42% increase in FBI background checks for gun purchases in November of

2008 alone. In December they jumped 24% and another 28.8% in January, 2009. This move is obviously fueled by people who see the handwriting on the wall. There is a bloody Revolution coming and coming soon. It is long overdue. We need to arrest, prosecute and hang for treason every Politician (except Kent), Lawyer, Judge, Banker and Industrialist and start over in this country.....Now.

Right now, a bill in Congress, HR 45, would create what is currently called "Blair Holt's Firearm Licensing and Record of Sale Act of 2009." This bill was named after a 16 year old boy who was killed on a bus in Chicago by gun fire. All great states like Nazi Germany, Communist Russia, and Hungary, etc, have had mandatory firearms licensing, followed by firearms confiscation - in exactly that order. Hitler did it in 1933 with the 'Enabling Act', which the 'Patriot Act' is scripted after. EXACTLY after.....

If HR 45 is passed into law, gun owners would have to submit:

- a formal application
- photo identification
- finger prints
- MEDICAL records
- MENTAL HEALTH records
- a completed firearms test
- and of course a fee

before being allowed to license a firearm. It would then be illegal to possess any unlicensed firearm!!! At that point all honest Americans with now legal firearms who did not, or were not able to, register a firearm would become instant criminals.

If you failed to report the transfer, loss, or theft of a firearm within 72 hours, or a change in your address with 60 days, you could be charged with a crime and jailed - most likely in a FEMA concentration camp facility where you would receive "re-education", as well. Sound familiar?

Considering the history of the U.S., I can't see such an abomination as HR 45 ever passing. But it should be an indication of the direction the government is going with its relationship toward the American people.

**With every "emergency", (first foreign terrorists on foreign soil, then foreign terrorists on American soil, and now domestic terrorists on American soil) there has been some infringement and reduction of Constitutional rights using 'terrorism' as an excuse - and it is nothing but an excuse.**

We, as a Nation have gone through multiple wars, including WW I & II, the so-called 'cold war' and so on and there was no need to infringe upon our Constitutional rights.

Now, suddenly, there is a need? Nonsense.....

If this trend continues, there is no future for any American believing in freedom and independence.

**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 unless you request identification published.



### GI Special Available In PDF Format

If you prefer PDF to Word format, email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org)

### 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://williamsbowles.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=res2&mod=newse&lan=1>

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: [www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml) for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

**If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.**

