

GI SPECIAL 7G19:



Boiling Point:

“The First Time A Senior Iraqi Commander Has Sought To Detain U.S. Soldiers”

“They Kill The People In The Street, Even If They Are Civilians Or Children. This Is An Old Habit Of The U.S. Army”

**“The Father Of One Of The Victims
Began Chanting ‘Tha’ar, Tha’ar,’
Which Means Revenge In Arabic”
“A Senior Iraqi Army Commander
Concluded That The Americans Had
Fired Indiscriminately At Civilians And
Ordered His Men To Take The U.S.
Soldiers Into Custody”**



“I hate the Americans,” said Sufian Neda, 9, who was wounded by U.S. troops. (By Ernesto Londoño -- The Washington Post)

“They shot randomly,” said Hussein Neda, 47, the father of one of the slain men. “They were running with weapons, and they killed my son before we got to him.”

Neda’s 9-year-old son, Sufian, said he was wounded when a bullet grazed his left shoulder. “I hate the Americans,” the boy said quietly. “I never liked them, even before this happened.”

July 25, 2009 By Ernesto Londoño, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

ABU GHRAIB, Iraq -- When insurgents attacked an American convoy with AK-47 rounds and a couple of grenades on a dusty highway in a Baghdad suburb this week, U.S. soldiers returned fire, chased the suspects through narrow alleyways and raided houses.

Tuesday's clash killed two Iraqi adults and a 14-year-old and wounded four people, including two children.

A senior Iraqi army commander who arrived at the scene concluded that the Americans had fired indiscriminately at civilians and ordered his men to take the U.S. soldiers into custody.

The U.S. military said the soldiers had acted in self-defense and had sought to avoid civilian casualties; U.S. commanders at the scene persuaded the Iraqis to back down.

The incident, apparently the first time a senior Iraqi commander has sought to detain U.S. soldiers, signals a potential escalation of tensions between U.S. and Iraqi forces trying to find a new equilibrium as Iraq assumes more responsibility for its security.

Both sides have starkly different interpretations of vaguely worded restrictions on the authority and movement of U.S. forces that went into effect more than three weeks ago.

Word of the incident quickly spread among U.S. soldiers in Baghdad. Several said it heightened concerns that the split-second decisions they make now have the potential to draw a sharp rebuke from Iraq's increasingly assertive security forces.

And reaction from Iraqi military officials seemed to confirm those fears.

"What happened is a crime," the Iraqi commander said Friday during a brief interview in his office.

"Civilians were killed."

Hospital and police officials said the two wounded children were 9 and 12.

"They shot randomly," said Hussein Neda, 47, the father of one of the slain men. "They were running with weapons, and they killed my son before we got to him."

Neda's 9-year-old son, Sufian, said he was wounded when a bullet grazed his left shoulder.

"I hate the Americans," the boy said quietly. "I never liked them, even before this happened."

Sami al-Fahad, a doctor, was on duty at Abu Ghraib Hospital on Tuesday when the victims of the crossfire arrived.

"This is an old habit of the U.S. Army," he said nonchalantly, sitting behind a desk as he checked a man's blood pressure. "They kill the people in the street, even if they are civilians or children."

As the wounded were being treated, the father of one of the victims, awaiting news of his son, began chanting “tha’ar, tha’ar,” which means revenge in Arabic.

But because the conduct of American troops increasingly is viewed through a political prism here, and because Iraqi and U.S. officials remain at odds over how the security agreement should be applied in urban areas, commanders from both countries are closely reviewing the incident and its ripple effects.

In recent days, Iraqis have questioned American soldiers at checkpoints in Baghdad, at times preventing them from driving into neighborhoods. In one incident, an Iraqi soldier drew a weapon on a U.S. armored vehicle, American officials said.

Another officer said U.S. soldiers have been taken aback by the sudden intransigence of their Iraqi partners.

The police major overseeing the Iraqi investigation into the incident said he knows who the real culprits are -- and intends to arrest them soon.

“All the ones who were shot are innocent,” he said, sitting on a sofa in his office while smoking a cigarette.

He said he holds no ill will toward the Americans and appreciates the training and support they have given Iraq’s security forces. But he said he does not want his men going on missions with U.S. forces.

“We don’t need them,” he said. After a pause, he added: “except for fuel.”

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Royal Artillery Soldier Killed In Lashkar Gah

25 Jul 09 Ministry of Defence

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that a soldier from 40th Regiment Royal Artillery (The Lowland Gunners), attached to The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, has been killed in Afghanistan today, 25 July 2009.

The soldier was killed as a result of an explosion that happened whilst on a vehicle patrol in Lashkar Gah District, central Helmand Province, this morning.

Foreign Occupation Soldier Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan

7.25.09 KABUL (AFP)

NATO troops came under gun and rocket-propelled grenade fire as they tried to search a house in the east of the country, the military said.

One NATO soldier was killed in the exchange of fire, it said, without revealing the nationality of the victim or the exact location of the clash.

Zanesfield Native Dies In Afghanistan

July 16, 2009 By J.D. Bruewer, Limaohio.com

ZANESFIELD — A Marine from Zanesfield was killed Monday in Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. David S. Spicer, 33, of Zanesfield, as well as Sgt. Michael W. Heede Jr., 22, of Delta, Pa., died Monday while supporting combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan, the Department of Defense announced Wednesday.

He was an explosive ordnance disposal technician assigned to 8th Engineer Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade. He joined the Marine Corps in October 1994 and was promoted to staff sergeant in November 2007, according to a release from the Marines.

Spicer deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in May. His awards include the Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and numerous campaign, unit and service decorations.

His most recent duty station was Camp Lejeune, N.C. The graduate of more than a dozen service schools, including Marine Scout Sniper School and Marine Close Quarters Combat Instructor's Course, had been selected for promotion to the rank of gunnery sergeant, a rank he will receive posthumously.

Spicer was a new father who enjoyed being a Marine, his brother told the Columbus Dispatch.

“He was as good a guy as you could ever meet,” said Tim Stacy, of Zanesfield, one of Spicer’s brothers. “He was in the military for 15 years. He loved the military. It was his life.”

Spicer joined the Marines after graduating from Benjamin Logan High School in Zanesfield in 1994. Zanesfield is southeast of Bellefontaine.

Spicer's wife, Kate, 36, gave birth to their first child, a daughter, a year ago and is pregnant with a son, Stacy said.

His mother, Sandra Lockwood, and father, David Spicer, were in Delaware on Tuesday when the body arrived at Dover Air Force Base, he said. Besides Stacy, Spicer is survived by two other brothers and a sister. Stacy said the military hasn't revealed the circumstances surrounding his brother's death.

Spicer will be buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery, Stacy said.

Middleburg Marine Killed In Afghanistan

July 11, 2009 News4Jax

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- A Marine from Middleburg was killed Wednesday while serving in Afghanistan.

The Department of Defense said 36-year-old Master Sgt. John E. Hayes died on Wednesday while supporting combat operations in the Helmand province of Afghanistan.

Another Marine, Lance Cpl. Roger G. Hager, from North Carolina, was also killed.

The family of 36-year-old Hayes said he had e-mailed his wife from Afghanistan sometime last Wednesday and told her he was doing OK.

Just a short time later, Hayes and another soldier were killed when their vehicle was hit by a road-side bomb.

Betsy Kahmer didn't have a good feeling when her son-in-law Hayes embarked on his fourth tour of duty. This time she had the feeling she would never see him again.

"We were lucky enough to get him back the other three times he was over," Kahmer said.

"The family knew that every time he went, the chances of getting him back were less and less and less."

Hayes was coming off patrol Wednesday when his vehicle was hit by an IED. The family said Hayes and 20-year-old Roger Hager were killed instantly. Shannon Hayes learned about her husband's death later that night.

"She's devastated," Shannon's brother Sean Hall said. "I've been trying to talk to her. I've talked to her a couple of times since. Trying to get to talk to her for more than five minutes at a time is really hard to do."

“She’s holding out for the kids, but she’s really hurting bad.”

John and Shannon Hayes were high school sweethearts. They moved to North Carolina shortly after John enlisted in the Marine Corps.

The couple had three children and frequently came back to visit their hometown. They made a stop in Middleburg earlier this year, right before John left for Afghanistan.

“He was just here. Just here at Easter,” Hall said. “I mean it gives me the chills now just talking about it.”

“There’s nothing you can do actually,” Hall added. “Just thoughts and prayers are with my sister, and the family is supporting her any way they can. It’s horrible.”

“He’s loving and good and everything a mother would want their daughter to have,” Kahmer said, “and I just can’t believe he’s not going to be here anymore.”

Hager, 20, of Gibsonville, and Hayes were both assigned to the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion.

Hayes, was the operations chief for Company A, 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 3, according to a press release from II Marine Expeditionary Force. He joined the Marine Corps in July 1991 and was promoted to the rank of master sergeant in September 2008. Hayes deployed to Afghanistan in April.

His previous deployments included Kosovo and Albania in 1998, Kuwait in 1991 and Iraq in 2003 and 2007.

Hager was a small arms repairman assigned to Company A, 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 3, 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade, according to the release.

He joined the Marine Corps in August 2007 and was promoted to the rank of lance corporal in March of 2009. He deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in April.

According to the Defense Department, as of Friday at least 657 members of the U.S. military have died in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan as a result of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001.

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 Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

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



Foreign occupation troops from the U.S. conduct an armed home invasion in the Garmsir district of Helmand province on July 12, 2009. (AFP/File/Manpreet Romana)

Afghani citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed.

[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?]

One of the squadron's great successes over the past year, says Lt. Col. Kolenda, has been weaning less-committed local boys away from the hard-liners through jobs, schooling and support for the elders.

He says the young men of Mirdish village, for instance, joined the insurgency because a couple of years ago American troops kicked down some doors and searched some homes.

-- Michael M. Phillips, Wall St. Journal, 7.18.08



[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.

Resistance Attacks Khost Government Buildings

25 July 2009 Quqnoos.com & BBC

Taliban militants, including several bombers, have attacked government buildings in the south-eastern Afghan city of Khost.

At least seven bombers equipped with rifles staged attacks on a police headquarters in eastern Afghanistan, wounding eight, including five policemen.

The attacks occurred Saturday afternoon in the volatile Afghan city of Khost, narrowly missing an Afghan presidential candidate, Ramazan Bashardost who was campaigning in the city.

Quqnoos' correspondent Qadir Shah in Khost province said eight to ten blasts were heard in the city today between 1:30 and 2:30 in the afternoon. An Afghan official said the main targets appeared to be the police headquarters, courts and a local bank branch.

Khost resident Mohammad Goal Jan described the confusion during the fighting.

"I can hear a lot of gunshots and loud explosions from the police chief's office.

"Police and army have blocked the main roads. Khost city is empty. There is a lot of confusion at the moment."

The attack is a big blow to the authorities who have promised better security for the elections next month, says the BBC's Bilal Sarwary in Kabul.

After attacks in Khost, Paktia and Ningarhar provinces recently, security was beefed up specifically on the outskirts of the city which borders Pakistan.

According to local residents, all vehicles coming in and out of Khost were checked on regular basis.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATIONS</p>
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**The U.S. Suicide Soldiers Of
FOB Baylough:
One Cut-Off Platoon Sent To
Occupy Deh Chopan District,
"Which Has A Population Of
40,000 To 50,000 Spread Across
Almost 2,000 Square Kilometers"
"The Base Is 26 Kilometers From The
Nearest U.S. Force"**

“With The Number Of Insurgents In Deh Chopan Estimated In The Hundreds, The Counterinsurgent Force Is Easily Outnumbered”

But after three years of 1-4 troops rotating through FOB Baylough, the area they control stretches no farther than the closest ridgelines, and perhaps not even that far. With the number of insurgents in Deh Chopan estimated in the hundreds, the counterinsurgent force is easily outnumbered.

7.27.09 By Sean D. Naylor, Army Times [Excerpts]

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BAYLOUGH, Zabul Province, Afghanistan:

“Welcome to FOB Baylough,” bellows Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Carney at new arrivals above the din of their departing helicopter. “The most important thing you need to know about FOB Baylough,” he said, is how to use the primitive latrine facilities, which include plastic bags.

How those infantrymen are faring says a lot about the course of this war, because it is at FOB Baylough and other small outposts spread across southern Afghanistan where America’s counterinsurgency campaign meets a burgeoning guerrilla movement hiding among a rural Afghan population deeply suspicious of foreigners and their promises.

FOB Baylough occupies what must be one of the most beautiful sites of any U.S. military installation. At 7,500 feet above sea level in a valley the troops call the “Baylough Bowl,” the base is surrounded by mountains that glow in the sunsets. The valley floor is a lush green carpet of almond and apricot orchards.

Individual platoons from 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, have been spending six-month tours at Baylough since 2006.

At present, 2nd Platoon shares the base with an Afghan National Army squad, a four-man Romanian mortar section and private Afghan security guards.

A few hundred yards down the road, about 40 Afghan National Policemen occupy the district center.

Together, these disparate elements constitute the only Afghan government or coalition presence in northern Zabul province’s Deh Chopan district, which has a population of 40,000 to 50,000 spread across almost 2,000 square kilometers.

The base is 26 kilometers from the nearest U.S. force and about 60 kilometers from its higher head-quarters at FOB Lagman, in the provincial capital of Qalat.

Because of the distance, and because the only road out is vulnerable to road-side bombs and is impassable in winter, all troops and supplies must be brought in by helicopter or fixed-wing cargo planes, at which insurgents sometimes fire rocket-propelled grenades.

The troops at Baylough are undoubtedly a thorn in the insurgents' side as they try to push men and supplies through northern Zabul west into Kandahar, Oruzgan and Helmand provinces.

But at the heart of the Army's counterinsurgency doctrine is the principle that the insurgents must be separated from the population.

With the exception of the Baylough Bowl, that is not happening in Deh Chopan.

The U.S. soldiers here talk about how they're "taking the fight to the enemy," such as with a May 28 operation conducted with Special Forces elements a few kilometers north of here that resulted in an estimated 35 dead insurgents.

But after three years of 1-4 troops rotating through FOB Baylough, the area they control stretches no farther than the closest ridgelines, and perhaps not even that far.

With the number of insurgents in Deh Chopan estimated in the hundreds, the counterinsurgent force is easily outnumbered.

Whenever the troops here venture from the base, they know the enemy is watching.

"There's never not a patrol where you're being watched by the Taliban," except when it's raining, [Staff Sgt. Joseph] Blanchard said, adding that U.S. troops and their interpreters hear the insurgents monitor their movements on unsecured hand-held ICOM radios.

"It's a pretty creepy feeling when you get ICOM chatter saying 'We can see them,' " Blanchard said. "It's better knowing than not knowing, though."

The nominal governmental authority in Deh Chopan, the district chief, lives in the district center but wields little power. He is an appointed — rather than elected — official, and he disappears for weeks or months at a time to Qalat, U.S. officers in Zabul said.

On a sun-drenched patrol, the troops pick their way along the edge of the valley between boulders the size of minivans. The ground is littered with shards of shrapnel.

The soldiers occasionally pause in the shade of apricot and almond trees. The scene is idyllic. Birds sing as scores of white butterflies flit to and fro in the dappled sun-shine. It seems easy to forget that there's a war going on and that men were recently killed within sight of this spot. But Spc. (P) Brett Anderson has little trouble maintaining his combat focus.

"It's only pretty when you're in the FOB looking out," Anderson said.

When the troops set off again, for a long time there's no sound other than that of boots crunching in the dirt. A farmer tills a field using two bulls drawing a crude wooden plough fashioned from a tree branch. Grubby sheep fleeces are laid out to dry on rocks.

In a village, scruffy children cluster around, asking the soldiers for pens. Some of the kids proudly display their copybooks from school.

Two men arrive, wearing turbans and shalwar kameez pajama-style garments. [First Lt. Jason] Basilides peppers them with questions about whether they've seen the Taliban, never taking his sunglasses off as he addresses them.

The younger of the two men says no, but then seems to reconsider and says he's heard there are some Taliban in the mountains.

The older man remains silent and unsmiling throughout.

PRIME MINISTER GORDON BROWN INSISTS BRITISH TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN HAVE ENOUGH HELICOPTERS



[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

GI Special Available In PDF Format

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NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME



Soldiers from the U.S. Army 26th Infantry patrol in Korengal Valley, Afghanistan's Kunar Province, May 8, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

TROOP NEWS

Duped



Jul 23 2009 by Michael David Kotyk, Iraq Veterans Against the War

Branch of service: United States Navy (USN)
Unit: USS Harry S Truman (CVN-75)

Rank: Chief Petty Officer / E-7
Home: Elkins Park, Pennsylvania
Served in: Gulf War (eastern Med), Kosovo Campaign, Iraq War 2003; 2004-05.

After I retired from the Navy, I still felt a desire to do something. The War in Iraq and Afghanistan were still on my mind and I wanted to see an end to them.

I got myself involved in Senator Barack Obama's Presidential campaign because I truly felt, as he was one of the very few to speak out against the war, that he would end both wars.

I was determined that Senator Obama was the man for the job of President. I believed in him.

I spent 9 grueling months walking the streets of my neighborhood, making phone calls and even giving a speech to Obama's Foreign Policy team at Arcadia University.

When Senator Obama defeated Senator McCain to become the next President of the United States, I was ecstatic. I felt I had contributed to what I saw as the light at the end of the tunnel and the end of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

But now, I'm feeling as if the wool has been pulled over my eyes.

The holding cells at Guantanamo Bay are still active.

There are still men and women fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan and I'm not so sure about the 2011 pullout from Iraq (now, I hear it is 2012).

I'm feeling a little duped.

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



Army Pfc. Anthony Lightfoot July 21, 2009 at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Lightfoot, from Riverdale, Ga., was killed in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

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

Iraq Veteran Reviews The Hurt Locker:

**“The Movie’s Epitaph Lingers On
The Screen. War Is A Drug”
“Sanborn And Eldridge Briefly
Discuss Fragging James To Save**

Their Own Skins. With James In Charge, They Figure, It's Only A Matter Of Time Before They Get Killed”

“It's A Shame Some People Can't Look Past Their Narrow View To Enjoy The Best Iraq Movie To Date”



July 22, 2009 By Alex at Army Of Dude; armyofdude.blogspot.com/

Warning: There are minor spoilers below. Read at your own risk.

Enjoying a good war movie after you've been there, done that requires a bit of finesse.

The casual moviegoer doesn't watch closely for errors in rank, patches, vernacular or procedure. They simply want to be entertained for a couple of hours.

A veteran, conversely, is tortured with an onslaught of technical blunders that the average viewer will miss.

Filmmakers must walk a tightrope to appease both sides; technical and accurate enough for the discriminating military crowd but still accessible to viewers who don't know the difference between CAS and SAF.

So far, no Iraq-themed movies have walked that fine line. The bar has been set ridiculously low; Redacted, the reigning champ of tasteless war movies, makes Stop Loss look like A Bridge Too Far.

But don't let the sad state of Iraq movies keep you away from the cineplex this week.

Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker* is not without its narrative problems, but it's a solid and dramatic entry that can satisfy both sides of the fence.

The story follows a three man team of EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) techs in the final month of their deployment in Baghdad in 2004.

The team is headed by SSG James (Jeremy Renner), a reckless cowboy that routinely puts his life and the lives of his men in constant danger.

The movie's epitaph lingers on the screen long after the words fade. War is a drug.

It is clear from James' first mission that he feeds off the adrenaline rush of bomb defusing at any cost. When he should be wearing his suit or utilizing a remote-driven robot, James goes right for his clippers, wearing nothing more than his uniform.

His two subordinates, Sgt. Sanborn (Anthony Mackie) and Specialist Eldridge (Brian Geraghy), quickly grow weary of James' vigilante ways. As James becomes more cavalier with his work, the calendar slowly crawls toward the date they are supposed to redeploy.

Sanborn and Eldridge briefly discuss fragging James to save their own skins. With James in charge, they figure, it's only a matter of time before they get killed.

The way the team goes about their missions is completely absurd.

The three men drive alone, all over Baghdad and its periphery, in a single Humvee. No escorts, no convoy, just a gun truck and three soldiers.

To leave a FOB in the real world, you need a minimum of three trucks, and even that is stretching it.

In one scene, the solitary truck arrives on an empty street where soldiers should be setting a cordon. James, puzzled by an empty Humvee in the road, finds an infantry platoon hunkered down in a courtyard like a box full of helpless puppies. One of them manages to point him in the direction of a suspected VBIED. Only then do soldiers beyond the EOD trio emerge to cordon off the area and evacuate local Iraqis.

In a later scene, James leaves the base by himself to confront an Iraqi man about a local boy that peddles DVDs on the base.

I had to bite my tongue from erupting in laughter when James, left by his hostage taxi driver, had to run all the way back to base dressed in fatigues and a sweatshirt.

He couldn't have been more obvious if he had shot his pistol into the air and shouted, "COME AND GET ME!" His life expectancy would have been measured in seconds by that point.

I understand why Bigelow kept scenes mostly free of extras. The audience can only take so many characters in combat gear before they all start looking the same.

Directing EOD to a possible bomb is tricky and cumbersome in combat. Striving for complete accuracy by showing each step of the way would bog down a movie that relies on suspenseful and a fluid narrative. The time between finding an IED and its eventual destruction can flow into hours of tedium that climax into a few moments of spectacular explosions.

The script is taut and disciplined, willing to trim away the superfluous moments and get to the core of what EOD techs do.

The rest of the war drops away in the margins and the audience is left with the essence of three men doing incredibly dangerous work.

There is no war, or even earth, beyond the cordon. Just three soldiers left to tinker with homemade destruction.

My chief complaint about the film is that it goes too far with this view.

Besides a scene with a team of mercenaries, the team is alone outside the wire constantly.

Civilians can overlook that, but those with field experience might be rolling their eyes at yet another scene involving James cutting the right wire just in time.

I've seen dozens of controlled detonations, and I can't think of any that had an EOD tech waltzing up to the bomb to clip wires. That's what the robot is for. It does happen, but not as frequently as the writer has you believe.

In one of the final scenes, the team is called out to assess the damage of a VBIED detonation. James spots a possible escape route for the triggerman, and in a wildly implausible decision, takes his team into three separate alleys in the dead of night.

Shockingly, one of the men is nearly carted off by militants.

Instead of a close call changing the way James thinks about his leadership, he keeps on with his reckless self.

In the end he learns nothing.

Of course, who knows what happens when he comes back to the FOB to find a stack of Article 15s.

I don't think it was out of neglect that such unrealistic moments crept into a generally realistic movie. I applaud the efforts of the technical advisers that worked on this film.

The movement of the soldiers, particularly inside an IED factory, was textbook perfect. They operated in concert, double clearing hallways and moving with an air of urgency and flow.

Combat scenes from Home of the Brave and Redacted looked like they were filmed in Brian de Palma's backyard.

The Hurt Locker, filmed in Jordan, has an authentic feeling that is light years ahead of any Iraq movie released. They nailed the environment, the crushing paranoia of watching Iraqi bystanders eyeballing you, everything.

Toward the end of the film, James is back home, crippled with Sudden Civilian Syndrome.

He gazes at a wall of breakfast cereals in a grocery store, confounded about the sheer amount of choice.

It is here where we see James suffering from combat withdrawal.

In Iraq he was on his game, disarming bombs with a few snips. The EOD suit he wears is his real skin. When it comes off, he's an alien on a planet he doesn't understand.

As he explains to his infant son, there is only one thing he loves in the world. His body is home safe, but his heart and mind are still in the desert.

The (few) criticisms I've read are largely without merit.

From Breitbart's Big Hollywood, dueling bozos of bromance Alexander Marlow and John Nolte both decry the characterization of Iraqis in the movie.

This is a part of the narrative that should follow reality as close as possible, and it succeeds for the most part.

Outside the wire, you shake kid's hands, you kick around a soccer ball and you act like a decent human being. But not for one second should your guard come down when it comes to the locals.

Nolte feigns outrage about a scene involving a taxi driver running a roadblock. After a tense standoff, a soldier takes down the driver and violently handcuffs him.

With what I imagine is a straight face, Nolte takes umbrage with the quote, "If he wasn't an insurgent, he sure as hell is now." Man, that was a favorite joke of mine!

I said that about a man who owned a courtyard where I found two Molotov cocktails. Moments before he opened his trunk for us. It was full of whiskey, a rarity to see in a Muslim country. We laughed and pretended to stumble around drunk, but after I found those cocktails and the IP shoved his face into a brick wall, we weren't laughing anymore. I joked that next time, there would be a spring loaded boxing glove that came out.

Nolte doesn't realize that most people weren't too happy to see us, or consider the possibility that combat operations are a societal irritant.

No, that is too complex a notion.

He just decides to phone it in as a liberal slight and call it a day.

There must be a shortage of veterans in West Hollywood (tip: if someone describes their residence with a cardinal direction, they probably have a gargantuan chip on their shoulder).

Nolte could have passed his hissy fit about Iraqis to someone who knew what they were talking about. Quoth the Noltmeister: “The men are alternately terrorists, a menacing presence, victims, the butt of jokes or utterly clueless.”

The movie is about guys who go find bombs buried in the road. What kind of person lingers around that environment John?

You guessed it. Terrorists, menacing civilians, victims and clueless people.



I can agree with Marlow and Nolte that the order from a full bird to let an insurgent bleed to death is out of place, poorly staged and irrelevant to the plot. I could see what they were going for, but it translated horribly to the screen.

Things like that do happen, as some of you might remember (long story short: we watched some insurgents bleed to death, and we watched a blindfolded guy die in slow agony after his house exploded and fell on top of him).

A field grade officer ordering his men to let an insurgent bleed out is over the line though, and should have been left on the cutting room floor.

It's a shame some people can't look past their narrow view to enjoy the best Iraq movie to date.

Though flawed with a serious case of the WTFs, The Hurt Locker more than makes up for it with technical prowess and unbelievably tense moments.

In the only theater in Austin currently playing the movie, I heard a steady stream of gasps and "Oh shit!" moments in a nearly packed house.

That kind of audience involvement is a testament to how well crafted the story is, regardless of the basic absurdity of the plot.

General moviegoers will have plenty to rave about, and seasoned vets can walk away satisfied if they willfully suspend their disbelief for a couple of hours.

I'm sure your wife or girlfriend won't mind that you stop whispering "That totally wouldn't happen" every five minutes.

Final Verdict: 3 1/2 Burning Cars out of 5



Update: West Hollywood is a town apart from Hollywood? Holy crap. I guess H-Town reached critical mass of people like John Nolte. A Manifest Douchery, westward to the sea!

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. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

Give It A Fucking Rest

Endless tedious, meticulously detailed, terminally boring emailed articles about Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld; who did what horrible crime in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 blah blah blah.

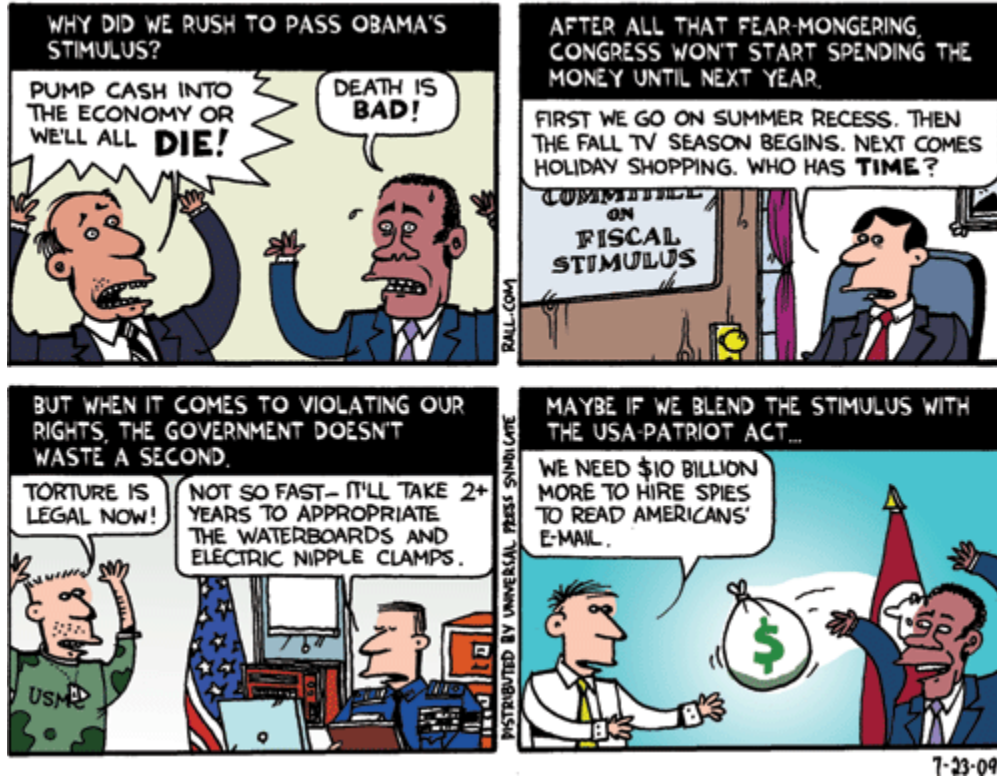
Big News Flash:

Iraqis, Afghans and U.S. Troops occupying their nations are now being killed by President B. Obama and the Democratic Party, which, in case you missed it, won the election and run the Empire now.

Eyes front, not looking behind you from up your ass.

T

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

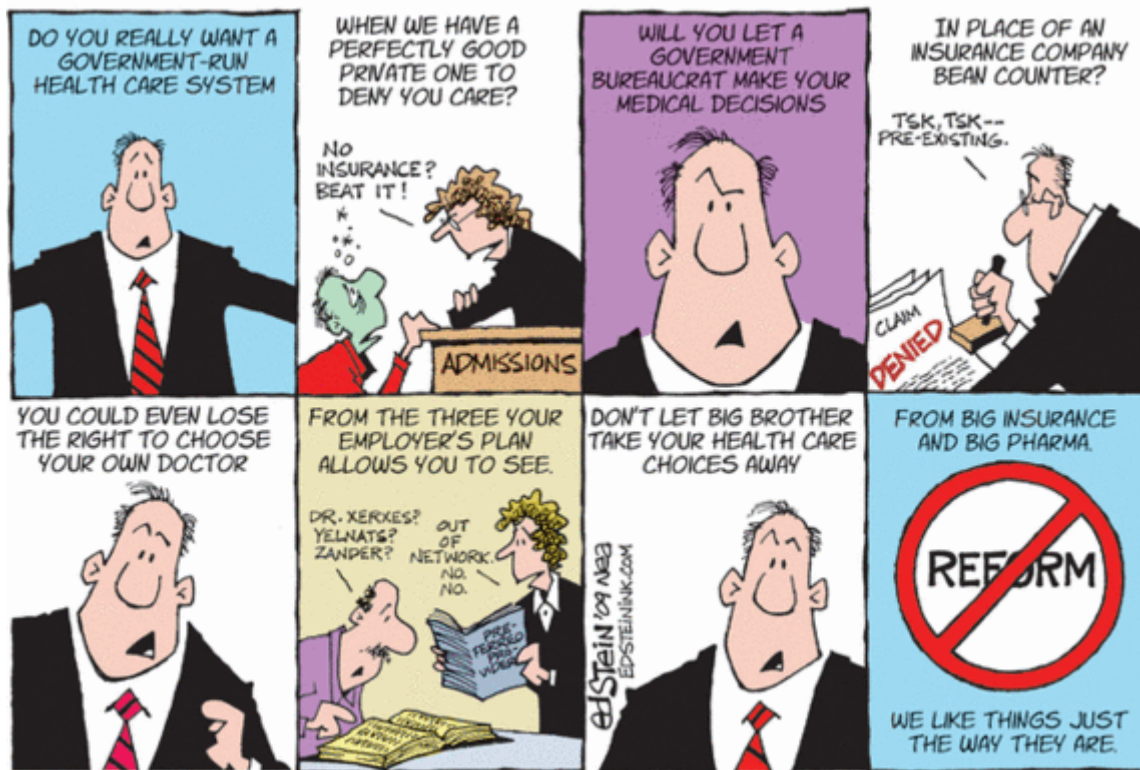
**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

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CLASS WAR REPORTS



“None Of Us African-American Residents Of Cambridge Are Surprised Or Shocked By The Humiliation And Harassment Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.”
“When You Scratch Below Cambridge’s Surface There Is Also A Liberal Racism

That Is As Pernicious, Vile, And Intolerant As Southern Racism”



Cambridge Police At Work

July 23, 2009 Mark Thompson interviews Rev. Irene Monroe; BlackCommentator.com

None of us African-American residents of Cambridge are surprised or shocked by the humiliation and harassment Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 58, of Harvard University encountered at the hands of Cambridge police.

My partner, Dr. Thea James, an Emergency Room physician who would drive from home to work was stopped all the time for “driving while black.”

And when the Cambridge cops realized she’s a woman, and a lesbian one at that, their unbridled homophobia surfaces. Thea now takes the bus.

My girlfriend’s kids and their friends hang out at the Cambridge’s Galleria Mall like kids do.

The Cambridge police in the mall stop my girlfriend’s kids and their friends; one white and two Asians are not, because “shopping while black” is always mistaken as shoplifting.

These constant shakedowns of us have been deliberately on the down low to the public because Cambridge, proudly dubbed as “The People’s Republic of Cambridge, is ranked as one of the most liberal cities in America.

And with two of the country’s premier institutions of higher learning - Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology- that draw students and scholars from around the world, Cambridge’s showcase of diversity and multiculturalism rivals that of the U.N.

Cambridge is also proudly known for a lot of firsts in this country. For example, it was the first city in Massachusetts to issue a legal application for same-sex marriage. It’s the

first major city in the country to elect an African American openly gay mayor - Ken Reeves. And Cambridge elected its first African American openly lesbian mayor in the country this year with E. Denise Simmons. Deval Patrick is the first African American governor of Massachusetts. Cambridge is no doubt a progressive city.

However, when you scratch below Cambridge's surface there is also a liberal racism that is as pernicious, vile, and intolerant as Southern racism.

But unlike Southern racism that sees race and tries to keep blacks in their place, liberal racism claims it does not.

Ironically, however, Cambridge's liberal ruling class maintains its racial boundaries not by designated "colored" water fountains, toilets or restaurants, but rather by its zip codes, major street intersections known as squares, like the renowned Harvard Square; and residential border areas that are designated numbers, like the notorious Area 4, a predominately black poor and working-class enclave.

It did not matter that the call to police by a white woman, who doesn't live on the block let alone the area, stating that two African-American men were breaking and entering into one of the expensive homes on a tree-lined street was not only false but actually Gates's home.

The woman's call was her civic duty in preserving the neighborhood's integrity, because after, all this was happening in the zip code area of 02138, which is Harvard Square.

And it did not matter that once Gates validated his residency to the cop with a legitimate Harvard I.D., that the whole incident should have, at that very moment, ended.

But instead, the arresting officer called the Harvard University police to once again verify Gates occupancy in his own home.

Also, it did not matter that the suspected robber is a Harvard professor, public intellectual and recipient of the MacArthur Foundation "genius" award. (Some say this incident serves as a cautionary tale to those who want to now define America as being post-racial with the election of Obama.)

What was of great concern for both the white woman who called the police and the arresting officer who eventually had to handcuff Gates?

Was it the shock and perhaps outrage they experienced seeing this unknown black man in this well-known, high income, and professional area of Cambridge, breaking and entering into someone home's and not in the city's known and expected troubled spot - Area 4?

Segregation in this city is not only along race lines but also class. And poor working-class whites and white immigrants do not experience the fullness their white skin privilege would abundantly afford them if they, too, were part of Cambridge's professional and/or moneyed class.

Area 4 has been labeled a troubled area of Cambridge, an area plagued with all the problems of urban blight and very little resources to ameliorate them. As a densely populated area, its average household income was \$34,306 according the 2005 city census. Harvard Square, on the other hand, in the same year its average household income was \$79,533.

Area 4 used to house the city's police station.

And white Cambridge police officers assigned to this area unabashedly target and harassingly patrol neighborhood blocks and activities of black male residents - young and old.

And their reasons for doing so can easily be attributed to the Cambridge Police Department's lack of funds in its budget to do cultural sensitivity trainings. But their reason is just as much about this country's horrific racial legacy between the two groups as it is also about Cambridge's liberal ruling elite exploiting these tension by their claims to not see race, until of course, an unknown black man appears in their neighborhood.

The tension escalated between Gates and Sgt. James Crowley when Gates flipped the script on him.

As the person-in-question, Gates exercised his legal right to also question:

"Is this happening because you're a white cop and I'm a black man? Is this why this interaction is still taking place?"

The charges against Gates have been dropped.

But many white Cantabrigians chiming in on this incident felt that Gates was being uppity, feeling entitled, and exploiting the race card.

And who would know better about this than them.



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