

GI SPECIAL 3A53:

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



US Army soldiers walk out of the Guadalupe Temple carrying the coffin of Army Pfc. Jesus Fonseca, Feb. 1 2005, in Degollado, Mexico. Jesus Fonseca, 19, of Marietta, Ga. was killed in action in Iraq. (AP Photo/Guillermo Arias)

Re: Leishmaniasis; Cover-Up At Walter Reed

Finding out about the leishmaniasis was, at first, a relief. The happy talk sounded good but we were already skeptical about the Walter Reed gang.

The staff and doctors were wonderful and very helpful. These cover ups I am sure are not their idea.

From: [Marcie Hascall](#)

To: GI Special

Sent: February 20 & 21, 2005

(My husband is ex navy eod but now a civilian and was there [in Iraq] as a civilian. He didn't agree to go to a war zone. He and his teams were flown in in the early hours of May 2, 2003 Baghdad time shortly after the mission accomplished speech. He didn't go

for the money as he was making his regular pay. His job is to work after the bullets stop flying. Just want you to know he was not one of the "mercenary" types.)

By Marcie Hascall:

Re: leishmaniasis, I have read much of the happy talk from DOD.

While the CDC admits that there is no cure and that the parasite is transmitted sexually, DOD continues to blatantly insist that family members are not at risk.

They also insist that a one year deferral on blood donations on anyone coming from Iraq and Afghanistan is sufficient. This parasite can take 20+ years to event present symptoms in a healthy person. We are very fearful of our blood supply being contaminated. It can live for 30 days in refrigerated blood.

My husband was on Ward [XX] at Walter Reed for 3 weeks in [XX] 2003. The original lesions were already on his knee. They did not diagnose it or tell us it was a possibility.

It was five months later that I read about it in a USA Today article. During this time it had attacked his reconstruction and his civilian doctors were clueless. They overdosed him on Amikacin because they thought they were trying to kill the acinetobacter, which had never colonized or caused an infection.

I was frantic thinking he would surely lose the leg.

Finding out about the leishmaniasis was, at first, a relief. The happy talk sounded good but we were already skeptical about the Walter Reed gang.

The staff and doctors were wonderful and very helpful. *These cover ups I am sure are not their idea.*

At that time I was a little whacked myself over my husbands condition and what he was going through. I didn't even know what questions I should have been asking. Closer to the end of our stay I was told that all of the patients from Iraq were in isolation for a bug.

When I picked up his ruck sack they told me to be very careful with it and to launder everything immediately because the dirt from there had that bug and that it was very dangerous. The dust had permeated everything.

I learned that the bacteria my husband had was the acinetobacter from the sketchy records they sent to the civilian hospital with us. I could find out very little about it though there are now endless pages of info on the internet. **Walter Reed would not and has not released his complete medical records nor any lab results. [Check that out with a Vets service group near you. They may be committing a criminal act by refusing a patient's request for his own medical records. Assuming you have a Congressperson or Senator who isn't a useless hack, you might also call the office in DC and raise some hell there too.]**

I contacted the CDC three or four times to find out if what my husband had was what the soldiers at Walter Reed had. Run around non answers. I contacted DODGEIS with the same question. More run around non answers. My last email I said never mind I'll just go to FOX News. I had a phone call within hours from the Army Surgeons General Office answering my questions.

I have no idea why they would need to cover up the acinetobacter. There is really no fault to them that I can think of. Maybe there is more I don't know yet. I was wondering how a bacteria could become so resistant to antibiotics in a country where didn't have any drugs for 10 years or so under the embargoes. A researcher in Israel said it could be from exposure to DU and/or exposure to products and byproducts of the petroleum industry.

The leishmaniasis they were warned about before the war started by the CDC. They knew about the viscerotropic type that is endemic to the area. They sent the soldiers in unprepared to protect themselves from the sand flies, nor did they educate them about it initially.

My husband had (xx) people over there doing demining work under a State Department contract and they were never told a thing about it. It also infects dogs and they had all of their demining dogs there too. They were all in tents on the ground, no nets. They got eaten up by the sand flies, the females were testing at 2-3% positive for leish.

There is a huge liability there for them which I imagine is why they insist on lying about it. I have already been told it is considered a matter of "national security". How convenient.

I have not been able to get any news organization to write about this. You will only see the propaganda spots put out by Walter Reed.

There is a newer drug, miltefosine, that can be used orally for 30 days with much less toxicity than Pentosam. It was just approved in Germany and I believe India. It kept a dog alive in GA for an extra three years but they started using it late in the game.

This drug is much closer to a cure than the pentosam though still not 100%.

As of December Walter Reed had not even asked about using it. Their response to this is posted on the Gulflink site.

This is all for you.

I am preparing something more literate with documentation and links for my site but wanted to get you the story of what has happened to us. We'll be Okay but we don't want anyone else to go through what we have. The only site I know of that has addressed leishmaniasis at all is the Gulflink.org site. It's the only one that comes up on searches.

I don't understand why the other veterans groups have not addressed it. I will get with the contacts you have given me and see what we can get going.

Thanks for your help and for your efforts to help our soldiers. They deserve so much more than they get.

They should get the best health care available not overcrowded, understaffed facilities.

I read that they aren't allowed to hire any new help because this is temporary!!

I feel certain that every American regardless of their political views would expect the best for our soldiers and would demand more if they were aware.

Will stay in touch
Marcie Hascall

[Respect to you for fighting for what's right. As long as people don't just sit back and take it, there is hope for us all. T]

[Check out the website at: www.acinetobacter.org]

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL 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 war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Resistance Attacks US Patrol In Baghdad; Three Dead, Eight Wounded

BAGHDAD, Feb. 21 (Xinhuanet) & Aljazeera.Net

Three US soldiers have been killed and eight wounded in a bomb attack in Iraq, the US military said.

"At approximately 8.00am (0500 GMT) on 21 February, three US soldiers were killed and eight were wounded when an IED (improvised explosive device) detonated during a medical evacuation of a soldier," a statement said on Monday.

"The soldier was injured in a convoy accident caused by a civilian vehicle," it added, without specifying where the attack took place.

The death brings to 1482 the number of US military personnel killed in Iraq since the US-led war in March 2003.

The attack took place at Dora neighborhood in southern Baghdad.

RPGs Get Two Vehicles In Hiyt

21 February 2005 Aljazeera.Net

In the city of Hiyt, two US military vehicles were destroyed by rocket-propelled grenades.

U.S. Launches New Offensive

February 20, 2005 By PATRICK QUINN, Associated Press Writer & Aljazeera.Net

Just west of the capital, U.S. Marines and Iraqi security forces launched a joint operation to crack down on insurgents and terrorists in several troubled cities, the military said, three months after a weeklong battle to drive out insurgents who controlled the volatile city of Fallujah. The Marines succeeded in gaining control of the city in Anbar province, but the insurgency has continued.

The new operation was under way in several other Euphrates River cities in Anbar, including Heet, Baghdad, Hadithah and the provincial capital Ramadi, where authorities imposed a nighttime curfew, the military said.

In Haditha, US warplanes bombed government buildings including a municipality office following clashes between US forces and armed fighters.

***Baghdad “Under Siege”* Highly Effective Resistance Attacks Cutting Off Vital Supplies**

February 21, 2005 By James Glanz, The New York Times, BAGHDAD, Iraq

Attacks by insurgents to disrupt Baghdad's supplies of crude oil, gasoline, heating oil, water and electricity have reached a degree of coordination and sophistication not seen before, Iraqi and U.S. officials say.

The new pattern, they say, shows that the insurgents have a deep understanding of the complex network of pipelines, power cables and reservoirs feeding Baghdad, the Iraqi capital.

The shift in the attack patterns strongly suggests that some branch of the insurgency is carrying out a systematic plan to cripple Baghdad's ability to provide basic services for its 6 million citizens and to prevent the fledgling government from operating.

A new analysis by some of those officials shows that the choice of targets and the timing of sabotage attacks have evolved over the past several months, shifting from economic targets to become what amounts to a siege of the capital.

In a stark illustration of the change, of more than 30 sabotage attacks on the oil infrastructure this year, no reported incident has involved the southern crude oil pipelines that are Iraq's main source of revenue. Instead, the attacks have aimed at gas and oil lines feeding power plants and refineries and providing fuel for transportation around Baghdad and in the north.

In an indication of how carefully chosen the targets are and how knowledgeable the insurgency is about the workings of the infrastructure, the sabotage often disrupts the lives of Iraqis, leaving them dependent on chugging, street-corner generators to stave off the darkness and power televisions or radios, robbing them of fuel for stoves and heaters, and even halting the flow of their drinking water.

The overall pattern of the sabotage and its technical savvy suggests the guidance of the very officials who tended to the nation's infrastructure during Saddam Hussein's long reign, current Iraqi officials say.

The only reasonable conclusion, said Aiham Alsammarae, the Iraqi electricity minister, is that the sabotage operation is being led by former members of the ministries themselves, possibly aided by sympathetic holdovers.

“They know what they are doing,” Alsammarae said. “I keep telling our government, ‘Their intelligence is much better than the government’s.’”

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation 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 - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

Orlando Soldier On Third Tour Killed By Improvised Bomb

February 21, 2005 **ORLANDO, Fla.**

A soldier from Orlando was killed in Iraq from injuries caused by an improvised bomb, military officials said.

Army Sgt. Carlos J. Gil, 30, died Friday in Humaniyuh, Iraq from "injuries sustained from an improvised explosive device detonation," according to a Department of Defense news release posted on its Web site late Sunday.

Gil was assigned to the 377th Transportation Company, 181st Transportation Battalion, Mannheim, Germany.

The soldier's mother in law, Carmen Alicea of Kissimmee, said Gil had been sent to Iraq for the third time in January.

Alicea said her daughter, Farah Lee, met Gil in Orlando when they were both cleaning offices. They have been together for about seven years and have a 4-year-old daughter, Jalissa, Alicea said.

Most recently, the family was living on an Army base in Kansas.

Alicea said Gil's parents live in Orlando and were devastated by their son's death.

"They're heartbroken. He was their second son," she said.

Rolling Coffins Chalk Up 7 Rollovers So Far

[For over a year, GI Special has reported articles from various sources, including Col. Hackworth, about these useless, deadly pieces of shit. So far, Strykers have offered extraordinary service only to the war profiteer that builds them, and, of course, to Col. Peter Fuller, the project manager, whose job rides on telling everybody how wonderful they are. Now the death toll is starting to attract some attention.

[Because their armor was so weak it wouldn't stop a .50, a mountain of steel was slapped on the sides, making it about as stable as a man standing on one hand. Of course it rolls over. It can't not rollover. But hey, Col. Fuller doesn't have to risk his life in one. How about transporting him to Iraq for a year inside one, if he thinks it's so great? Why, he must be sooo sorry he's not there in combat in person that he can't sleep at night. Considering how many troops these things have killed and will kill, he *shouldn't* be able to sleep at night. But of course that's

a silly idea. If he didn't sleep, how could he dream about the big bucks he'll get working for a war contractor when he retires? Time for some payback to counter the payoffs.]

February 21st, 2005 MICHAEL GILBERT; The News Tribune

The two vehicles that plunged into a canal Dec. 8, 2003, near Duluiyah, Iraq, weren't the only Strykers to roll over during the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division's deployment to Iraq.

The Army investigated at least five other rollover accidents involving Strykers during the brigade's year in Iraq, according to the U.S. Army Safety Center.

"We don't believe that the Stryker is more of a risk for rollover than any other vehicle with have in our inventory," Col. Peter Fuller, the Stryker program manager, told reporters during a recent news briefing on the vehicles. [And there you have a truly world class lie.]

Officials at the Safety Center at Fort Rucker, Ala., said their investigators' reports of the Stryker accidents are not yet available for public release.

TROOP NEWS

Reality:



Iraq Wounded: New England Journal Of Medicine
<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/351/24/2476/F7>

[You're for the war? Fine. Unless you're a coward, you'll be going over to fight in it, right? Right now. Why wait? You don't even have to join the Marines or the Army. Hop a plane and buy a weapon. Plenty of them there for sale. Go out into Sadr City or Ramadi and yell "Bring It On." Somebody is sure to oblige you. Old, young, it don't matter. Man, woman, it don't matter. Those are the people fighting in the resistance; old, young, men, women, kids, vets. You have no excuse for letting these soldiers take this shit while you act all brave and patriotic sitting in front of your TV set. Repeat: Go to Iraq yourself or shut the fuck up. T]

Feb. 21, 2005 BY CARY LEIDER VOGRIN, The Gazette, COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (KRT)

Spc. Travis Williams turned from the driver's hatch toward the screams behind him but couldn't see through the smoke.

Pain seared his shoulder and arm, but the young soldier kept driving - hauling butt away from the ambush as a machine gun spun over his head.

He floored the "track" - the armored personnel carrier - intent on saving himself and the five other Fort Carson, Colo., soldiers inside.

"Finally, I looked back again, and the smoke was cleared."

The interior was red with blood. Three soldiers lay there, each with a leg blown off.

"The entire track, it looked like a meat locker."

A shoulder-fired rocket, about the diameter of a quarter, had pierced the carrier.

It hit Pfc. Tristan Wyatt first, slicing through his right thigh. He lay propped in the back right corner. Sgt. Erick Castro was on an adjacent bench, a gaping hole where his left leg was supposed to be.

The rocket hit Sgt. Mike Meinen last, exploding his right leg.

"Meinen was holding his own bandage there, quiet as can be," Williams said.

The battle, though, raged around them.

Sgt. Jose Graulau took over Meinen's .50-caliber machine gun and blasted into the fields. Hot shell casings from the gun rained down on Castro, burning off a patch of hair as he lay on the bench.

Spc. Matthew Cabrera began tying tourniquets. Castro's wound was so severe, though, that his tourniquet was useless.

"Castro, that guy ... I don't know how in the hell he survived. We were trying to give him what bandages we had left," Meinen said. "We were just sticking them in his leg everywhere."

"Tristan's (thigh) was completely severed," Meinen said. "He picked it up and wedged it underneath the rest of his leg to try to keep it elevated so he wouldn't bleed out."

Meinen's own leg was hanging by mere strands of tendon and skin.

"I'm trying to keep guys from stepping on it, because I'm afraid if somebody pulls it, it's going to hurt."

Still, he tried to reassure the others.

"I grabbed Tristan's hand. He looked at me and he's like, 'Are we gonna die in this track?' I told him 'no.' And he was like, 'How do you know?' I said, 'Sgt. Meinen said so, damn it. We're not going to die. We've got better things in life planned for us.'"

Meinen said he remembers locking eyes with Williams, the driver.

"He's sitting there with (body) parts on him," Meinen said. "He turns around and he looks at me, and I could read his lips. He was like, 'Oh, shit!'"

"I don't know what he was thinking, but he reached up next to him and he grabbed our little, tiny first-aid kit, and he handed it to me. I was like, 'What am I going to do with that?'"

Their legs had blown open with such force that bone fragments had wedged into Williams' shoulder and arm.

It would take another 40 minutes before Williams could maneuver the carrier back to base.

Aug. 25, 2003, started off the same as other days for the soldiers charged with ensuring Route 10 between Khaldiyah and Fallujah was safe for a supply convoy.

"We were kind of like the bait," Williams said.

Still, the patrol was old hat for the members of 43rd Combat Engineer Company, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. They had done it about 20 times.

It was scorching hot at 7:30 a.m. when their carrier - E12, known as "Engineer One-Two" - set off east from base in Khaldiyah, accompanied by two other carriers.

Their orders: Look for roadside bombs.

Halfway into the patrol, Cabrera saw someone lurking in tall weeds in the field between the road and the Euphrates River.

"As soon as he saw it, he bumped me and he pointed at the guy," Graulau said.

"RPGs started flying from that field. It was like three of them at one time," Williams said of the rocket-propelled grenades.

Meinen recalled yelling: "Here we go. Try and find them, and let's get through this."

Dozens of insurgents were crouched in a trench across the field and ducking behind a dirt berm.

"We need to flank them! We need to flank them!" Meinen yelled.

Williams turned the carrier and headed into the field toward the enemy. The other two vehicles stayed on the road to provide cover.

"As soon as I got to the berm, I turned straight down toward the trench, and we could see 'em all in the trench," Williams said. "Mike started to blaze away, and his .50-cal jammed. He was wanting my M-16. I could hear everyone shooting."

That's when the rocket hit.

Wyatt felt dizzy, fell back into the carrier and looked at his leg and the gore spattered around him.

"Gosh, this can't all be from me," he thought.

Meinen didn't know what had hit him, either.

"I just felt like somebody, you know, pulled on my leg and I kind of fell down. So I was in the hatch and I stood back up and I kept fighting. I looked down, and it was pretty awesome: You only got one leg down there."

Graulau grabbed him and helped him down into the carrier.

Williams radioed for help.

"We were trying to call for helicopters to come get us, and they were like, 'We can't. It's too hot.'"

A tank, instead, was sent to lead them back to base.

The whole way back, Graulau kept shooting, firing into empty fields, not believing what had happened.

"I started crying like a baby," he said.

Williams worried the carrier would quit. The rocket had pierced the engine, spewing antifreeze and oil.

"As soon as I pulled in the gate, the track died," he said.

Williams took a shower and was back at work the next day.

His buddies were on their way home.

Not everyone knows how to react when they see Meinen in person.

He most appreciates children's honesty, recalling a time at Wal-Mart when he was wearing a pair of shorts.

"This little boy ran up to me and looked up my short leg and said, 'Hey, where's your leg at?'"

"Adults won't say anything. I think the adults can really learn a lot from a kid. Adults still stand back and stare at me in the grocery store from like five aisles away."

REACH OUT TO THE TROOPS! COME TO FT. BRAGG MARCH 19

2.20.05 By Lou Plummer. Lou Plummer is a member of Fayetteville Peace With Justice and Veterans for Peace. He can be reached at lou.plummer@mac.com.

Why pick Fayetteville, NC as the site for an anti-war rally? I can think of at least 49 reasons. Each of those reasons has a name and each were members of our community prior to their deaths in Iraq.

Some may argue that voicing opposition to war in a military town is somehow disrespectful. Tell that to the military families and veterans from many wars, including the current one, who plan to gather in Rowan Street Park on March 19, 2005 for a three-hour rally.

Thousands of their supporters will be there to join them. The majority of Americans now reject the reasons used to justify the war and most feel that the US government failed to successfully plan for what has happened.

Antiwar activity is not new to the park. During the Vietnam War a GI-led demonstration drew 4000 people. On the first anniversary of the war last year, the park saw Fayetteville's largest demonstration for peace in nearly 35 years. That rally drew national and international attention. It was conceived and planned locally with support from groups like Vietnam Veterans Against the War and Military Families Speak Out.

Local activists lead the peace movement in our community. Fayetteville Peace With Justice, a local grass roots group began to challenge the drumbeats for war immediately following September 11, 2001. The group conducted weekly vigils at the Market House during the opening weeks of the US invasion of Iraq. The early vigils met with catcalls from those in Fayetteville holding on to outdated opinions of peace demonstrators. **As the disaster in Iraq became evident, derision subsided and vocal support emerged.**

There are many NC military connections to the peace movement. Jeremy Hinzman left Ft. Bragg for Canada, applying for status as a refugee on the grounds that he was being forced to participate in an illegal war. North Carolina resident and former Marine, Jimmy Massey, left the military after 11 years, reeling from the senseless killing he witnessed in Iraq. **Fayetteville's own Drew Plummer (my son) was convicted by the Navy for disloyalty for telling a reporter that the war was about oil and that "our guys shouldn't be dying in Iraq."**

The incoming executive of Veterans for Peace, Michael McPhearson is a Fayetteville native. He served as a field artillery officer in the first Gulf War. He has a son stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY. He will speak at the March 19 rally, just as he did last year.

Kara Hollingsworth, a young African-American woman from Washington, DC now lives in Fayetteville. Her husband is on his second deployment to Iraq. She will speak here on March, 19th. Busloads of activists from her hometown are coming to lend support to Kara and to her message - that it is time to bring the troops home now.

On March 18th, Lila Lipscomb, whose son died in Iraq, will visit Fayetteville. Many will recognize her from the documentary, "Fahrenheit 911." She will appear with others at a press conference in support of the goals of the local anti-war movement. The evening of the 18th will feature a concert with hip-hop artists Little Brother and Ricanstruction, to connect with the most vulnerable segment of our community, youth targeted by recruiters who continue to paint an unrealistic picture of military service.

A former NC based Marine, Michael Hoffman, recently announced that the first national meeting of the organization he co-founded, Iraq Veterans Against the War, will occur in Fayetteville on March 20th. On that day Military Families Speak Out and Gold Star Families for Peace will also hold their first national meetings ever. These groups decided to meet in Fayetteville. They chose Fayetteville because this community has been as involved in the antiwar movement as any in the country. They chose Fayetteville because this community is the home of many affected by the war like no other Americans.

The National anti-war coalition, United for Peace and Justice, and over 80 groups from around the state and country, are supporting the rally in Fayetteville as their national focus on March 19 for similar reasons. Groups like the North Carolina Council of Churches and other co-sponsors of the event believe that REAL support for the troops means Bring Them Home Now.

Peace,
Lou Plummer
Military Families Speak Out Bring Them Home Now! Fayetteville Peace With Justice

Cimarron-Memorial Graduate Back In Las Vegas Recovering From Injuries;

"I'm Glad He's Not Going Back."

February 21, 2005 By Keith Rogers, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Wearing a pair of size 13 sneakers and his "Wounded Warrior" sweats, Staff Sgt. Joshua Johnston walked slowly outside his parents' home in northwest Las Vegas, being careful not to reinjure the spot where a bullet ripped through his abdomen a month ago.

The lanky, 28-year-old Cimarron-Memorial High School graduate said he didn't expect to be home from Iraq so soon, especially as one of the many soldiers in the 503rd Infantry Regiment who've been wounded in action.

"I'm really lucky," he said Friday, sitting in a chair with his mother and father at his side.

"We almost lost him," said his dad, Darrel Johnston, recalling his son's ordeal from wounds to shock to morphine and surgeries.

Joshua Johnston was leading his squad, "Punisher Three," on a security detail Jan. 19 in Ramadi, an insurgent stronghold 60 miles west of Baghdad. His Humvee was in front of a platoon of soldiers on foot, who were moving slowly up a street, searching houses for any Syrian or Jordanian gunmen who had been launching attacks in the area.

"On a daily basis you always got hit with mortar, rockets or RPGs between 5 and 6:30, right before prayer time or right after," he said.

On this day, Johnston along with his driver and gunner were looking for car bombs or movement on rooftops. With the Humvee stopped and his armor-plated door open, he scanned the street through the scope of his M-4 rifle.

"I spotted a `peeker.' A lot of times they'll peek once or twice then they come around with an RPG," he said, referring to a rocket-propelled grenade.

"I yelled, `We got a peeker.' Then I saw a guy turn around with a black mask. I saw him set his weapon down and then I started firing at him," he said.

Then gunfire erupted.

"I got in the vehicle. I don't know how but thank God I did. I put my feet in and then, `bam,' rounds started flying and I heard an explosion. It happened so quickly. It wasn't even two seconds and I felt like someone had hit me with a bat in the legs," Johnston recalled.

"I yelled, `I'm hit, I'm hit.' Then the driver said he was hit, just in the leg. He said he was OK. I started to go into shock. ... I saw the blood and I knew it wasn't good," he said.

The bullet had hit a main artery in his upper thigh after it ripped through his lower intestine. Another bullet had hit his other leg.

He passed out and woke up as soldiers loaded him into a cargo Humvee.

"They got me out of the area," he said. "They were slapping me and trying to keep me awake. It pissed me off at the time but it was good they did that. I have to say the scariest moment of my life was seeing white sparks. I thought I was dead at that time."

At a combat outpost, medics worked on his wounds before he was flown by helicopter to Habbaniyah, near Ramadi. The next thing he remembers is waking up in a hospital in Germany.

His mother said she's thankful she got a phone call about her son wounded in action instead of a personal visit by soldiers to tell her he was killed in action.

Said Darrel Johnston: "I'm glad he's not going back. I can't imagine what parents go through when their sons or daughters are killed."

Recruiting Crisis Hits Regular Army, Marines

Yet Army officials see worrisome signs that young American men and women -- and their parents -- are growing wary of military service, largely because of the Iraq conflict. "We're hearing things like, 'Well, let's wait and see how this thing settles out in Iraq,' " he said in an interview.

February 21, 2005 By Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post Staff Writer

The active-duty Army is in danger of failing to meet its recruiting goals, and is beginning to suffer from manpower strains like those that have dropped the National Guard and Reserves below full strength, according to Army figures and interviews with senior officers .

For the first time since 2001, the Army began the fiscal year in October with only 18.4 percent of the year's target of 80,000 active-duty recruits already in the pipeline. That amounts to less than half of last year's figure and falls well below the Army's goal of 25 percent.

Meanwhile, the Army is rushing incoming recruits into training as quickly as it can. Compared with last year, it has cut by 50 percent the average number of days between the time a recruit signs up and enters boot camp. It is adding more than 800 active-duty recruiters to the 5,201 who were on the job last year, as attracting each enlistee requires more effort and monetary incentives.

Driving the manpower crunch is the Army's goal of boosting the number of combat brigades needed to rotate into Iraq and handle other global contingencies. **Yet Army officials see worrisome signs that young American men and women -- and their parents -- are growing wary of military service, largely because of the Iraq conflict.**

"Very frankly, in a couple of places our recruiting pool is getting soft," said Lt. Gen. Franklin L. Hagenbeck, the Army's personnel chief.

"We're hearing things like, 'Well, let's wait and see how this thing settles out in Iraq,' " he said in an interview.

The Marine Corps fell short of its monthly recruiting quota in January for the first time in nearly a decade.

Because the Army is the main U.S. military ground force, its ability to draw recruits is critical to the nation's preparedness to fight current and future wars. **[Translation: keep the Empire going.]** The Army can sustain its ranks through retaining more experienced soldiers -- and indeed retention in 2004 was 107 percent -- but if too few young recruits sign up, the force will begin to age. **Moreover, higher retention in the active-duty Army translates into a dwindling stream of recruits for the already troubled Army Guard and Reserve.**

The Army is now working to add 30,000 soldiers by 2009, expanding the active-duty force from 482,000 to 512,000, as it builds 10 to 15 new combat brigades to add to divisions for overseas tours.

Newly trained troops are essentially being rationed out -- a process Army officers call "turning on the faucet" -- a few months before the brigades are to deploy to Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere. The military plans to keep about 120,000 troops in Iraq through 2006.

"The priority fill goes to deploying units to make sure they are at full strength before they go overseas," says Col. Joseph Anderson, who until this month served as chief of staff of the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Such demands have led the Army to deplete its reservoir of enlistees in the Delayed Entry Program (DEP). The DEP consists of people who have signed enlistment contracts but opt to delay their entry to training camps for up to a year. DEP numbers fell from 33,249 at the beginning of fiscal 2004 to 14,739 at the start of this fiscal year, according to U.S. Army Recruiting Command statistics.

As a result, while the Army began last year with 45.9 percent of its recruiting goal filled by the pool, this year it started with just 18.4 percent in the pool -- the lowest amount since 2001 and well below the 30 percent average for the past decade. That means the Army must redouble its efforts to meet this year's target.

Meanwhile, netting each new recruit is proving more difficult and time-consuming, Hagenbeck said, requiring the Army to put hundreds more active-duty recruiters on the job.

In January, the Army announced a new six-month advertising contract with Leo Burnett USA worth an estimated \$100 million. The Army is offering bonuses of as much as \$20,000 to enlist on active duty for four years, with special monetary incentives for candidates who have college degrees, sign up for high-priority jobs or agree to move quickly into training.

The Army is offering higher ranks to enlistees who have spent time in college or junior ROTC, and as a result is bringing in more recruits at ranks above private, or E-1.

Such policies could partly explain a shift in the Army's junior enlisted ranks that has perplexed military analysts. The number of privates (E-1 through E-3) in the active-duty Army has sharply declined from 126,100 in October 2001 to 107,500 in December 2004. Meanwhile, the number of corporals and specialists (E-4) has risen from 95,400 to 115,500.

Another explanation is that the active-duty Army is maintaining its force strength more through retention than recruitment, resulting in a subtle aging of the force -- a trend already evident in the Army Reserve, officials said.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action:

2005-02-21 Middle East Online & (Xinhuanet) & Aljazeera.Net

An Iraqi truck driver was killed overnight in an attack northeast of Baghdad on his convoy carrying equipment for the Iraqi army, police said. Two other drivers were missing.

An Iraqi soldier was killed in a mortar attack outside Samarra.

In the northern city of Mosul, police Lieutenant Colonel Essam Fathi was shot dead as he left home.

A group calling itself the "Honor Brigades" of the Islamic army in Iraq said it had captured three subcontractors, including a Turk, working for the US military.

A statement handed out in several northern Iraqi cities said the "three unbelievers helping to build camps for the American infidels" would be executed "by virtue of God's judgement".

Also in Baghdad, "A police patrol found a body riddled with bullets, inside a car in eastern Baghdad," a police officer said, adding that "after investigations we identified the victim as an officer from the new Iraqi intelligence."

Armed fighters in Iraq seized a female Iraqi television presenter in the northern city of Mosul, an official from her local television network said.

Wazan, who works for a branch of the local station Iraqiya, was taken by several masked armed men on Sunday night while she was returning to her house in Mosul's al-Shahwan neighbourhood, an official said on Monday.

Last Wednesday, half a dozen mortar rounds were fired at the Mosul TV station, wounding three technicians working there.

In the city of Baquba, armed fighters killed a truck's driver and set ablaze three trucks carrying supplies to the Iraqi army.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Which Side Are You On? The Future Of The Antiwar Movement

While these antiwar leaders are looking upward (to Congress) and to their right (to conservatives) for allies, they are missing the radicalization gathering momentum below, among those rejecting their intended role as cannon fodder for the war who are already organizing protests outside the auspices of the established movement.

February 18, 2005 By Sharon Smith, Socialist Worker

IT IS unfortunately a little-known fact that thousands of high school and college students across the country organized walkouts against the war on January 20, marching as organized contingents to counter-inaugural demonstrations in Boulder, Colo.; Los Angeles; Chicago; San Francisco; Austin, Texas; and other cities.

At Seattle Central Community College (SCCC), students took a few minutes on their way out of the building to confront military recruiters--forcing them to flee under the protection of campus security officers. One of the recruiters, claiming student protesters flung newspapers and water bottles in his direction, told the Seattle Post Intelligencer, "They were all going by, making offhand comments and saying 'no war.' We just waved at them. Five minutes later, there was just a mob of 500 people surrounding the table."

There is a student rebellion in the making, coalescing around opposition to the war and its military recruiters--with students by the hundreds defying threats of disciplinary action.

Despite their potential to transform the political landscape, however, the significance of these militant student actions has so far escaped the leaders of the nation's established antiwar organizations.

Indeed, after fostering the illusion that supporting pro-war, neoliberal John Kerry represented the only “realistic” strategy for those who oppose the war, these antiwar leaders now seem to have learned all the wrong lessons from Kerry’s defeat in November.

Rather than seizing the opportunity in the months before the election to strengthen the antiwar movement as a clear alternative for the millions opposed to Bush, virtually the entire movement came to a standstill to support the Democratic Party’s chosen candidate--leaving those against the war with no organized expression to the left of Kerry’s “hunt down and kill the terrorists” mantra.

Even as the torture scandal at Abu Ghraib surfaced, and the U.S. invaded Falluja and Najaf, finally flattening Falluja in November, the U.S. antiwar movement maintained its silence.

SINCE THE election, the antiwar movement is showing signs of revival, but the same leadership responsible for the movement’s hiatus during the presidential campaign is once again seizing the reins of control over the movement.

These antiwar leaders have yet to acknowledge their own role in the Kerry debacle, much less the antiwar movement’s decline. Most accept the view that Bush’s re-election provides indisputable evidence that “Christian values” and conservative politics dominate among the U.S. population--requiring those on the left to adapt yet further rightward in the aftermath of Kerry’s defeat.

United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) co-chair Bob Wing lamented recently, “Our original hope was that the movement would grow...But things have not worked out that way, and it is dangerous and unstable for a coalition to have a broader and deeper political unity than most of its member groups.”

Medea Benjamin, cofounder of the women’s peace group Code Pink, told the San Francisco Chronicle on January 23: “It was easier to mobilize people before the war. Now, many people have fallen into thinking that we can’t just cut and run.”

This pessimistic conclusion is somewhat premature--and disingenuous, since the antiwar movement itself has thus far failed to attempt to build an opposition that is clear on this question. On this basis, however, some antiwar leaders now propose continuing a self-defeating strategy for the foreseeable future.

As the headline of a January 16 San Francisco Chronicle story put it, “Bush Protesters Rethink Tactics: Critics hope to move beyond self-satisfaction of antiwar protests, gain wider voting base.” The article stressed antiwar leaders’ desire to retreat from organizing mass demonstrations in order to begin “preaching beyond the choir box.”

“We’ve got to start reaching out to people who don’t agree with us,” Leslie Cagan, United for Peace and Justice’s national coordinator, told the Chronicle. The paper’s report added, “In its recent short-term plan, the 850-organization umbrella behind many of the

nation's larger protests over the past few years conceded that 'the antiwar movement must reshape its work.'"

In a follow-up interview, Cagan put forward some suggestions for reshaping the movement's strategy, including greater emphasis on winning allies in Congress: "For instance, when Bush goes to Congress (later this year) with a request for another \$100 billion for the war, we will do what we can to get a "no" vote.' She adds, 'It's a long shot, but we're going to try.'"

This certainly is a "long shot," considering that Democrats have squandered the opportunity to define themselves as an opposition party. The main Democratic Party proposal on Iraq, in fact, is the introduction of yet more U.S. troops.

The speed and aggression with which U.S. imperialism has pursued its global aims since September 11 has been possible only because this is a bipartisan project, in which Democrats as well as Republicans have enabled all of Bush's policies to pass, often enthusiastically.

The Institute for Policy Studies' Phyllis Bennis drew out further implications of a Congressional strategy in widely circulated notes to the UFPJ steering committee, elaborating on the need to move beyond forging links with Democrats--to right-wing Republicans voicing doubts about Bush's losing occupation strategy. "We need to figure out how to strengthen this popular [antiwar] opposition, perhaps linking it with growing elite and particularly right-wing opposition," she argued.

While these antiwar leaders are looking upward (to Congress) and to their right (to conservatives) for allies, they are missing the radicalization gathering momentum below, among those rejecting their intended role as cannon fodder for the war who are already organizing protests outside the auspices of the established movement.

IN REALITY, U.S. society today is characterized by sharp polarization on virtually every social and class question, including the war--dividing workers, students and military families. This polarization was very much in evidence during the 2004 election, and has only grown in its aftermath.

The right wing only appears so dominant because of the absence of a genuine left opposition. Yet so many who led the U.S. left on its disastrous course have taken no responsibility for the results--a barely discernable political left in the face of a confident, coherent and growing right.

To influence Congress, our most effective tool is not compromise, but a confident, coherent and growing opposition to the Iraq occupation. We should exploit every division at the top, even between Republicans, but this can only be done effectively by wielding a clear ideological counterweight, backed up by mass forces.

Students organizing walkouts and sit-ins against the war are far in advance of the established antiwar movement in building this kind of opposition. **It is worth noting that the vast majority of student walkouts have taken place not on elite campuses, but**

at working-class commuter colleges and high schools--the main targets for military recruiters seeking to prey upon working-class students facing the increasingly unattainable goal of a college education.

The No Child Left Behind Act requires high schools to turn over student contact lists to military recruiters. But some schools are affected more than others. For example, the exclusive (and private) Chicago Latin School, while receiving \$40,000 in federal money last year, has not been asked by recruiters to turn over its student list for the last six years. "It's a little embarrassing," spokeswoman Evelyne Girardet admitted to the Chicago Tribune.

Students at working-class high schools, in contrast, receive regular calls from recruiters. "We do not want the military in our schools asking our friends and family to fight for a war that is wrong," SCCC student Nicole Thomas argued, defending the student walkout. "We want recruiters out of our schools."

These students--joining vets and active duty military resisters--are part of a growing rejection of the war among those expected to fight it, pointing the way forward for the antiwar movement as a whole.

An effective strategy must mobilize real forces around clear goals. And leadership is earned not by title or even words, but by action and results.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

Proposal For Action: A Campaign To Confiscate The Capital Gains Of The War Profiteers

From: P. de Klerk, The Netherlands
To: GI Special
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2005 5:25 AM
Subject: Re: Defending Sgt. Kevin Benderman

The motives behind the Bush administration, in the sense of financial profit for the administrators are far better arguments, in Benderman's letter.

He may argue the right to quit at a moment at which he felt certain that the army is being used for a criminal violation of national and international conventions and treaties with intent to capital gain for the perpetrators.

With united effort it is not at all unrealistic to envisage one day Cheney and his cronies in the same dock as Milosovic.

Bush is only a shifty-eyed two-bit clown who remains immune until the nation indicts him.

So find out more about their profits and initiate a campaign to demand confiscation of their goods. However chanceless, it will certainly find much press attention.

It takes a lot of investigation but it is well worth a try. Lobby especially in military circles, where you seem to be well connected. If I know anything about veterans, it is that they hate war profiteers much more than journalists.

Good luck to your soldier with a conscience and if he must suffer, may it be for most noble principles.

OCCUPATION REPORT

CPA Looters And Strikebreakers At Work Grabbing Millions While Soldiers Died

Feb 15 Brian Dominick, The NewStandard

Witnesses testifying at a special Congressional hearing yesterday told Democratic lawmakers about severe and rampant mishandling of American and Iraqi funds managed by the former US-run occupation government, as well as censorship and manipulation of Iraqi media in the service of pro-American propaganda.

On at least one known occasion, cash was handed to a private US mercenary firm, ostensibly to be spent on its operations in Iraq, though the cash was not properly accounted for once it was paid. Former CPA employee Frank Willis said that company, Custer Battles, was handed \$2 million in shrink-wrapped \$100 bills in his presence, and he displayed a photograph taken just moments before the handing over to prove it.

A lawyer attended the hearings to represent two former associates of Custer Battles who declined at the last minute to testify in person for fear of retribution from both the mercenary firm and the Bush administration.

Alan Grayson said his clients have filed a sealed claim against Custer Battles alleging, in part, that the company accepted \$15 million from the CPA to provide

security for Iraq's civilian airline, which was in fact grounded for the duration of the contract and in no need of the company's services.

Journalist Mark North, who covered the invasion for National Public Radio and was employed by the CPA to train Iraqi journalists to report for the US-founded Iraq Media Network (IMN), told the hearing that CPA officials regularly directed and censored the activities of the TV news station. He said "a laundry list of CPA activities" was handed down to dictate subject matter with which to replace stories Iraqi journalists preferred to report, such as those pertaining to the problems of post-war life in the embattled country.

"The original plan for IMN seems to have been jettisoned by CPA officials who were more interested in managing news for Iraqis and Americans," North told the committee. He said the CPA made the Iraqi media operation into "another Voice of America," referring to the US government-run propaganda outlet that broadcasts to millions of people in foreign countries. He said CPA officials told him IMN was to be "a public diplomacy operation" for the occupation authorities.

North testified that on occasion, CPA officials specifically ordered stories critical of the occupation and its effects to be cut and insisted that IMN run stories about positive work undertaken by occupation forces.

News content was not the only problem North reported. A labor conflict also arose during his four-month involvement at IMN. "For the first two months, the local staff of about 200 journalists and technicians were not paid their salaries," North said. "Finally, they went on strike. CPA would not negotiate. Striking staffers were told to go back to work, or the US Army would remove them from the studios."

Furthermore, while private American contractors were lavishly wasting CPA funds on five-star hotels in Kuwait and unnecessary supplies in Baghdad, the Iraq Media Network lacked even basic equipment.

According to North, a request for just \$200 with which to print a journalism training manual in Arabic was never fulfilled. North said he had to use his only day off to teach a journalism course.

The Great Iraq "Reconstruction" Fraud: Billions Supposedly For Water & Electricity Goes To Mercenaries & Occupation Guards Instead

That means that an estimated \$8 billion — or 43% — of the reconstruction money will wind up paying to improve security for Iraqis or for contractors, far more than originally intended.

February 21, 2005 By T. Christian Miller, L.A. Times Staff Writer

William Taylor, a U.S. diplomat who oversees Iraqi reconstruction efforts, said the country's violent insurgency had created a "security premium," gobbling up money that otherwise would have been spent to provide clean water, electricity and sanitation for Iraqis.

"I'm amazed at how a program meant for reconstruction that could have provided more services and could have effected stabilization could be cut so drastically," said interim Iraqi Public Works Minister Nasreen Mustapha Berwari.

When Congress initially approved \$18.4 billion in November 2003 to help rebuild Iraq, the majority of the money was intended to improve electrical and water systems, which had suffered from years of neglect during United Nations-imposed sanctions. But the reconstruction program has struggled to take off in the face of violent attacks, intimidation of workers and allegations of fraud.

In the face of spiraling violence, reconstruction officials have shifted funds during the last few months to improve security.

Now, the largest chunk of money, about \$5 billion, pays for weapons, uniforms and other equipment to help Iraqi forces quell the insurgency.

As the reconstruction has focused on security, private contractors working on the rebuilding program have had to increase the amount of money they spend to protect themselves and their projects. Security costs now range from 5% to 25%, depending on the project.

The effect of the violence ripples through construction projects. **A convoy of bulletproof cars and armed guards can cost more than \$5,000 a day. Truckers who cannot travel on dangerous roads charge for sitting in parking lots. Attacks on electricity plants deprive cement factories of much-needed power, driving up the price of concrete.**

U.S. officials had assumed that security issues would total about 10% of the money going into projects. Now, as the violence has steadily risen, reconstruction officials are estimating that an additional \$1 billion will have to be tacked on to that figure, for a total of nearly \$3 billion.

That means that an estimated \$8 billion — or 43% — of the reconstruction money will wind up paying to improve security for Iraqis or for contractors, far more than originally intended.

U.S. officials said the latest cuts would hit water and electricity projects the hardest. U.S. officials said they were hoping to move some projects up, to get more immediate

effect, while focusing their cuts on longer-term projects that would not have come on line for years.

The Bush administration's recent proposal for additional funding for Iraq included no money for infrastructure, but an additional \$5.7 billion to purchase more equipment for the security forces.

But Berwari said the most recent cuts had caused her to immediately scale back plans for new water treatment plants in Fallouja and Mosul, meaning less clean water for 500,000 people in two of Iraq's most rebellious cities.

"We need more than Power Point presentations," Berwari said, referring to the ubiquitous computer slide shows at U.S. government offices. "We need more water in the pipes."

The reconstruction effort has been dogged by criticism that it has moved too slowly. **So far, about \$3 billion of the \$18.4 billion has been spent, most of it on the equipment for the Iraqi security forces.**

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**The Government Bush Keeps Fucking With
Can Cut Off 40% Of World Oil Supply:
Threat To Key Strait**

[Wall Street Journal, February 17, 2005, Pg. 4]

U.S. intelligence reports that Iran has the military capability to temporarily halt ship traffic moving through the Strait of Hormuz, the Persian Gulf checkpoint through which about 40% of the world's oil supply passes.

**Bush Wants To End Occupation --- Of
Lebanon!**

[Thanks to PB who sent this in. He writes: **BUSHS MIDDLE EAST POLICY:
DOWN WITH THE OCCUPATION OF LEBANON! LONG LIVE THE OCCUPATION
OF IRAQ!!**]

Feb 21, 2005 By Nadim Ladki, BEIRUT (Reuters)

Syria indicated on Monday it would start withdrawing some of its troops from Lebanon soon, but President Bush insisted it should "end its occupation" of its neighbor.

Received:

Freedom Of The Press?

From: H
To: GI Special
Sent: February 21, 2005
Subject: Freedom of the Press???

"Feb 20 BAGHDAD (AFP) Iraqi security killed or captured three rebels producing websites depicting tortured hostages."

What is this?

After oppressing the Muslims and trying to suppress Muqtada's newspaper last year, now they are killing people for "glorification" of things they don't want the world to know about.

These "propaganda" people have not been said to have really committed any crimes themselves. They had simply recorded the crimes and commented on them; and that is enough to be targeted and killed for???
--

This is true american freedom! They call this one "freedom of speech". If you "glorify" their terrorism, you are a hero but, if you have an opinion that disagrees with their evil plans, you should be attacked, killed, or in some way silenced?

What's next? Are they going to start killing Muslims for reading about Islam on the internet?

What these attackers should know though is that when the Muslims are abused for writing the truth with their pens, they will continue to defend Islam with their guns, RPGs, mortars, booby-traps, box cutters, or even their bare hands - if they have to; until this offensive stink stops attacking the good people of the middle east, who want to peacefully practice their religion, by themselves; without any feeble idiot bush supporter trying to re-invent their religion or history.

Received:

Links:

From: ben frank ben@benfrank.net
To: GI Special
Sent: Monday, February 21, 2005 Subject: link

Hey GI Special-

thanks for your work. thought you might be interested in posting this collection of lies and a link to the slideshow- 3 min video designed to wake up people.

Images from Iraq combined with audio clips of Dubya's pre-war 'intelligence' make a powerful case for War Crimes Prosecution of the Bush Regime.

The Heart of Iraq- 3.2 mb AVI video http://www.indybay.org/uploads/heart_of_iraq.avi

"We've also discovered through intelligence that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas. We are concerned that Iraq is exploring ways of using these UAVs for missions targeting the United States."

"Our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein has the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and vx nerve agent. In such quantities these chemical agents could also kill untold thousands."

"Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraqi regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."

-- George W. Bush

"We know for a fact that there are weapons there... We have high confidence that they have weapons of mass destruction, and that's what this war was about."

-- Ari Fleischer

"The area in the south and the west and the north that the coalition forces control is substantial. It just happens not to be the area where weapons of mass destruction were dispersed. We know where they are, they're in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and uh east, west, south and north somewhat."

-- Donald Rumsfeld

"One of the big concerns early on was the southern oil fields. I have frequently talked about the southern oil fields or general, and at least in the south they are secure- and that is positive news for uh, for all of us."

-- George W. Bush

Peace Now

ben frank

ps- reading about the troops rapping- thought you might consider posting some music to inspire the movement. ie- an mp3 a day ... check out Emcee Lynx (hip-hop)- empires fall, nature of the threat... is Paris - "what would you do" too much?
http://www.benfrank.net/nuke/Free_Peace_mp3s.html

Web Copies

For back issues see: GI Special web site at <http://www.militaryproject.org/> .
The following that we know of have also posted issues: www.qifightback.org,
<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>, www.williambowles.info/gispecial,
<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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